to convert the carbon monoxide chambers to the hydrogen cyanide method. The unwelcome guests stayed to watch a gassing which took an especially long time (over three hours) because the diesel engine had failed. To Wirth’s great embarrassment and mortification, Gerstein timed the operation with a stop watch. Facing the greatest crisis of his career, Wirth dropped his pride and asked Gerstein “not to propose any other type of gas chamber in Berlin.”

The killing centers there was fierce competition and rivalry.

Let us pause now to review the essential facts about the six camps (see Table 78).

### Table 78 / Characteristics of the Death Camps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Type of Killing Operation</th>
<th>Number of Jews Killed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kulmhof</td>
<td>Wartheland</td>
<td>Higher SS and Police Leader (Koppe)</td>
<td>gas vans (CO)</td>
<td>over a hundred thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belzec</td>
<td>Lublin district</td>
<td>SS and Police Leader (Globocnik)</td>
<td>gas chambers (CO)</td>
<td>hundreds of thousands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sobibor</td>
<td>Lublin district</td>
<td>SS and Police Leader (Globocnik)</td>
<td>gas chambers (CO)</td>
<td>hundreds of thousands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lublin</td>
<td>Lublin district</td>
<td>WVHA</td>
<td>gas chamber (CO)</td>
<td>tens of thousands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treblinka</td>
<td>Warsaw district</td>
<td>SS and Police Leader</td>
<td>gas chambers (CO)</td>
<td>hundreds of thousands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auschwitz</td>
<td>Upper Silesia</td>
<td>WVHA</td>
<td>gas chambers (HCN)</td>
<td>one million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gerstein obliged, ordering the Zyklon to be buried on the pretext that it had spoiled.\(^{83}\)

Höss and Wirth were henceforth enemies. The Auschwitz commander — even after the war — spoke proudly of his “improvements.”\(^{84}\) Conversely, Wirth looked down on Höss as a latecomer and called him his “untalented pupil.”\(^{85}\) Thus there had arisen a class of “founders” and “originators” in mass death devices, and among these architects of a special apparatus for the gassing of people. Administratively, we must therefore look at the killing centers as concentration camps with a special task. The two WVHA centers, Auschwitz and Lublin, actually had been concentration camps before the gassing machinery was added to them. They retained large numbers of Jewish inmates for labor purposes, and they also had many non-Jewish prisoners who were not subject to gassing. Hence Auschwitz and Lublin followed the elaborate pattern of camp administration in the Reich most closely.

The four camps of the Higher SS and Police Leaders were more exclusively death camps. They were built

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\(^{83}\) Statement by Gerstein, April 26, 1945, PS-1553.

\(^{84}\) Affidavit by Höss, April 5, 1946, PS-3841.

\(^{85}\) Affidavit by Dr. Konrad Morgen, July 19, 1946, SS(A)-67.
as killing centers and had no non-Jew-
ish inmates. Except for very minor in-
dustrial activity in Treblinka and
Sobibor, they were not linked with war
production. Krüger’s and Koppe’s
camps were therefore simpler in struc-
ture. They had to concern themselves
only with the confiscations of personal
belongings brought into the compounds
by the deportees and with the mainte-
nance of an efficient killing procedure.
We may therefore regard these four
camps—and especially Belzec and
Kulmhof—as the most “advanced” kill-
ing centers, for these institutions
recognized no other purpose than the
rapid and thorough destruction of their
victims. These, then, are the differences
between the six killing centers which
should be kept in mind (see Table 79).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Gasing Devices</th>
<th>Industrial Activity</th>
<th>Non-Jewish Inmates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kulmhof</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belzec</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sobibor</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treblinka</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lublin</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auschwitz</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three most important officials
in the standard prewar concentration
camp in Germany were the com-
mander, who had over-all respon-
sibility for the camp; the Schutzhaftlager-
führer, who was charged with inmate
control, and a chief of administration,
who attended to financial matters, proc-
curement, etc. In Dachau, Buchenwald,
and Sachsenhausen, the camp com-
mander was a Standartenführer (colo-
nel), the Schutzhaftlagerführer an Ober-
sturmbannführer (lieutenant colonel),
and the administrative chief a Sturm-
bannführer (major). Besides these top
officials, there was a deputy Schutzhaft-
lagerführer, an adjutant, a camp engi-
neer, a camp doctor, etc. This basic
hierarchy could also be found in the
Lublin and Auschwitz camps.
The Lublin organization was as fol-
lows:  

Commander (in succe ssion):
Opitz  
Stuf. Koch  
OSTubaf. Koegel  
Stuf. Florstedt  
OSTubaf. Weiss  
OSTubaf. Liebehenschel  

Schutzhaftlagerführer (in succession):
HStuf. Haukamm  
HStuf. Wimmer  
OSTubaf. Thurmam  

Administration (in succession):
HStuf. Worster  
HStuf. Michel  

Commander of guard forces
(in succession):
OSTubaf. Borrell  
Stuf. Langleist  
HStuf. Melzer  

Similarly, Auschwitz was organized
in the following way:

Leader: OStubaf. Hüss  
Administration: (Burger) OStubaf. Möckel  
Zentralbauleitung: Stufaf. Bischoff  
Guards: Stufaf. Hartjenstein  
Chief physician: HStuf. Writz  
Political division: UStuf. Grabner  
Rapportführer (inmate count): OSchaf. Poltch  
Crematoriums: OSchaf. Moll  

In November, 1943, Hüss was tem-
porarily replaced by Obersturmbann-
führer Liebehenschel and the camp
was simultaneously broken into three
parts (see Table 80). Auschwitz I was
the Stammlager (old camp); Ausch-
witz II, in the Birkenau Woods was
the killing center; Auschwitz III, also
called Monowitz, was the industrial

1. Budget for Waffen-SS and concentration
camps for fiscal year 1939 (signed Ober-
führer Frunk), July 17, 1939, NG-4456.
2. Mainly from an affidavit by Friedrich
Wilhelm Ruppert (chief of technical division
at Lublin), August 6, 1945, NO-1303.
camp. Liebehenschel (with his headquarters) remained in overall control and had to be consulted by the commanders of Auschwitz II and III in all important questions; but they in turn had direct access to Amtgruppe D, and the guard forces were placed under their direct command.  

So much for camp organization; let us now consider what type of people manned the concentration camps, what qualifications and characteristics were required for camp duty. At the outset we should make a distinction between the administrative officials and the guard forces, for these two groups posed separate problems.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liebehenschel (after May, 1944, return of Höss)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Auschwitz I</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commander: Ostuf. Liebehenschel (HStf. Bär)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Auschwitz II</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuf. Hartjenstein (HStf. Krammer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's camp: UStf. Schwarzhuber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's camp: UStf. Hössler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Auschwitz III</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HStf. Schwarz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The core of the administrative force consisted of a few hundred officers and men who had served in concentration camps before the outbreak of war.  
This core contained a number of old SS men whose outlook upon life was  

5. The ratio between administrators and guards in Auschwitz was approximately 1:6 (500 to 3000). Affidavit by Höss, March 20, 1946, D-749-B.  
6. The total administrative force, listed in the budget of the Waffen-SS and concentration camps for fiscal year 1939 was 933, including 62 officers, 791 enlisted men, and 100 women. Budget, signed by Obf. Frank, July 17, 1939, NG-4456.

completely identified with SS ideology and who were capable of carrying out any task assigned to them by their Reichsführer-SS. Such a man — to cite the most prominent example — was Höss.  

Born in 1900, Höss had had a modestly good education (six Gymnasium classes). He was brought up in a very strict Catholic home, and his father intended him to become a priest. “I had to pray and go to church endlessly, do penance over the slightest misdeed.” During the First World War he volunteered for service at the age of fifteen and fought with the Turkish Sixth Army at Bagdad, at Kut-el-Amara, and in Palestine. Wounded three times and

a victim of malaria, he received the Iron Cross Second Class and the Iron Crescent. From 1919 to 1921 he fought in Free Corps in the Baltic area, Silesia, and the Ruhr. While French occupation forces were in the Ruhr, a German terrorist, Leo Schlageter, was betrayed to the French by a schoolteacher, Walter Kadow. Höss murdered the schoolteacher. In consequence of this act, he was sentenced to ten years in prison (serving five).  

Already somewhat distinguished, he joined the SS in 1933 without any rank. From 1934 on he served in concentration camps, rising in the hierarchy until he became commander of Auschwitz
and an Obersturmbannführer. SS-Gruppenführer von Herff found him to be soldierly, a good commander, a good farmer, quiet and simple, practical and sure of himself. In Herff’s words, “He does not push himself forward but lets his actions speak for him.” Compared to the intellectuals in the Einsatzgruppen and the paymasters in the WVHA, the man was almost made for his job. In one respect he had become a bit more bourgeois: while commanding an enterprise in which a million people were killed, Höss did not personally commit another murder.  

Höss was the ideal SS-man, ideally suited for his work, but he was by no means typical of all camp officials. The hard core of men like Höss was supplemented by a good many officials from the WVHA and its depots and by other personnel with administrative backgrounds. These reinforcements were not exactly camp enthusiasts. Many took their assignments indifferently and even apathetically. When Möckel, an experienced WVHA official, was ordered to take over the administration office in Auschwitz, he declared that he did not like to go to a concentration camp and “especially not to Auschwitz”; however, Brigadeführer Famslau, the WVHA personnel chief, sent him to Auschwitz anyway. The administrative personnel of the concentration camps was consequently a mixture of old-type SS men identified with the “movement” and a number of bureaucrats specialized in finance and general administration.

Let us now consider the guard forces. Up to 1939 the guard personnel were drawn from the Totenkopfstandarten – Death Head Regiments, as they were called. After the outbreak of war the departure of these “elite” units to the front and the expansion of the camp network necessitated the assignment of about 15,000 new men. The continuation of the war and the uninterrupted growth of the camps resulted in further turnovers, in the course of which the guard forces began to look more and more like second-rate SS troops.  

Thus we find that an Auschwitz company commander, Untersturmführer Hans Mehrbach, owed his position to the fact that he was suffering from paralysis of the heart muscles; that, at the end of 1941, ethnic Germans (Volksdeutsche) made their appearance in Auschwitz; and that, in

9. The statistics indicating Waffen-SS men in the WVHA camps are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of Personnel in WVHA Camps</th>
<th>Number of Personnel in Auschwitz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May, 1940</td>
<td>ca 15,000⁰</td>
<td>1,800⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1942</td>
<td>ca 25-30,000⁴</td>
<td>ca 3,500⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December, 1943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April, 1945</td>
<td>ca 30-35,000⁶</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1942-April, 1945</td>
<td>ca 45,000⁶</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cumulative figures include those of the following:

a. Affidavit by Höss, March 20, 1946, D-749-B.
b. Affidavit by August Harbaum (Stuuf., Chief of WVHA A-V-4), March 19, 1946, D-750.
c. Auschwitz administration (HStof. Wagger) to WVHA D-JV, March 25, 1942, NO-2148.
d. Affidavit by Pohl, March 19, 1947, NO-2571.
e. Affidavit by Höss, March 20, 1946, D-749-B.
f. Affidavit by Harbaum, March 19, 1946, D-750.
g. ibid. Cumulative figures include rotations.
h. Affidavit by Höss, March 20, 1946, D-749-B.

10. Affidavit by Hans Mehrbach, February 24, 1942, NO-2192.
1942, Ukrainian guards filled Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor. We may therefore look upon the guard forces as a residuum assigned to dirty work while the better units of the Waffen-SS were selected for the more enabling task of shedding their blood on the battlefield.

The concentration camps exerted a certain influence upon the guards and administrators, an effect which was produced by the enormous distance between SS-man and inmate. Because of this distance many members of the camp personnel lost their perspective and fell into patterns of behavior which could no longer be reconciled with conduct desired or prescribed by Nazi policy. The immediate danger of such lapses in conduct was their threat to the over-all efficiency of the concentration camp, but beyond this narrow consideration there were fears, far wider in scope, which we shall presently consider.

The personnel problem arose in two different forms—sadism and corruption. The former was posed primarily by the guards, the latter chiefly by the old officials of the camps.

With regard to sadism, it must be kept in mind that the bureaucracy was not so much concerned with the suffering of the victims as with the contamination of the perpetrators. Thus the SS paid no attention whatsoever to the host of indirect tortures which it had built into the camp routine: hunger, exposure to freezing weather, overwork, filth, and utter lack of privacy. All this suffering was a consequence of the very nature of SS camp maintenance and operations. It was simply no problem.

11. Ergänzungamt der Waffen-SS/Dienststelle SS Oberabschnitt Donau (signed OStof. Dietz) to SS-Hauptamt/Ergänzungamt, October 22, 1941, NO-3372.

Beyond these built-in tortures there was a category of pain which was administered for the achievement of specific aims: punishment for infractions of discipline, medical experiments on live human beings, and above all the gassing of the Jewish victims. These operations and the suffering they caused were considered necessary. They were therefore subjected only to an over-all control mechanism which, as we shall see, consisted of directives and procedures designed to hold to a minimum the possibilities of individual action by participating SS personnel. In short, the perpetration of that suffering had to be impersonal.

A third category of torture was a little more problematical. Many times, for instance, inmates had to perform exhausting calisthenics for a guard or to pick up a cap or some other object while an SS man playfully shot them with a bullet from his rifle. This kind of exercise was called Sport machen (“to make sport”). Essentially it was regarded as a way in which the guards relieved their boredom, and while not exactly encouraged in official directives, little was done to stop that practice.

The whole problem of sadism was therefore narrowed down to a special kind of activity: the so-called excesses. In general, an “excess” involved a massive orgy or a sexual aberration. Among survivors certain persons acquired a reputation for such sadistic behavior. An example might be Irma Grese, a woman guard in Auschwitz who sought out well-formed Jewish women and cut their breasts open with a whip. Her victims were then brought to a woman inmate doctor who performed a painful operation on them while Irma Grese watched, cheeks flushed, swaying rhythmically and foaming at the mouth. So far as we know,
the camp administration never interfered with Creese's doings.

Another Auschwitz personality, Ober-
scharführer Moll, who was in charge of the crematoriums there, is mentioned quite often in survivors' literature. Among other things, Moll is said to have selected from a newly arrived transport twenty of the most beautiful women. He stood them up in a row, stark naked, and practiced shooting at them; some of the women were hit in several places before they died.14

Although Auschwitz was to become the subject of a special Nazi investigation, these particular incidents appear to have been overlooked. There was no concerted effort to curb sadism. Such an effort would have been difficult in any case. The only prescribed remedy would have rendered the offending guards into "asocials" (sex criminals). However, the problem was recognized. For one thing, the camp administration established a number of brothels.15 Another measure was to charge inmates instead of guards with the performance of disciplinary action, including the beating of prisoners. That substitution (to be discussed in connection with the inmate hierarchy) had far-reaching effects on the inmates. As a last resort, there was the possibility of getting rid of personnel who were overdoing things, but that remedy seems to have been applied only very rarely. On one occasion when SS men

and German political prisoners tossed ninety Jewish women from a third-floor window into a courtyard below, the SS men were transferred to another post.16

Sadism, then, was regarded—insofar as it was conceived of at all—as a menace to the health of the 50,000 guards who circulated through the camps. The other problem, corruption, was seen as a threat to the entire Nazi system. Here was a practice which was taken much more seriously and which called for much stronger and concerted countermeasures. As early as 1941 Nebe's corruption specialists (RSHA-V) and an SS and Police Court began to pay attention to this vital issue. The corruption investigations were an extremely touchy matter because they came to the core of a dilemma which was very acute, particularly among the old Nazis. A man could not be an idealist and at the same time stuff his pockets, make love to Jewish women, or engage in drunken orgies. That was why Himmler, who regarded the SS as an organization sanctified by its mission to safeguard the future of the German nation for hundreds of years, could not tolerate such "lapses" by his SS men. The corruption officers therefore had a very firm basis upon which to proceed, but they had to be careful lest someone be implicated who had too much power.

In 1941 SS and Police Court XXII in Kassel started an investigation directed against Koch, the Buchenwald commander. The proceedings failed, and Pohl congratulated Koch in writing. In this letter, which was to become notorious in SS circles, Pohl said in effect that he would step in shadily "whenever an unemployed lawyer should stretch out his hangman's hands

15. Ukrainian guards could secure the services of Polish women for two reichsmark (one mark to be paid to the prostitute, the other to be deposited into a special account). Glicks to camp commander, December 15, 1943, NO-1545. The brothel did not, of course, close off the outlets for sadistic behavior. But in competition with those outlets it could possibly arrest and prevent the growth of the abnormal impulse into a dominant and lasting pattern in the individual's life.
again to grasp the white body of Koch” (wenn wieder einmal ein arbeitsloser Jurist seine Henkershände nach dem weissen Körper Koch’s ausstrecken wolle.) But the court did not let loose. After Koch had taken over the killing center of Lublin, two corruption officers from the RSHA (Hauptsturmführer Dr. Morgen and Kriminalkommissar Hauptsturmführer Wied) trailed him to the Generalgouvernement. On August 20, 1942, he toppled from his post.

While Koch was being held for trial, the investigation started in earnest. In Buchenwald a Hauptsturmführer Koehler was arrested as a material witness. A few days after his arrest he was found dead in his cell, apparently poisoned. The investigating officer, Dr. Morgen, was furious. Suspecting the camp doctor (Dr. Hoven) of the murder, Morgen ordered that samples of the chemical found in the dead man’s stomach be administered to four Soviet prisoners of war. The four men died in the presence of several witnesses, including Morgen, corruption officer Wehner, and Hoven’s colleague Dr. Schuler (alias Ding). Armed with this proof, Morgen arrested Hoven.

17. Affidavit by Dr. Werner Paulmann, July 11, 1946, SS-64. Paulmann was Second Judge and later chief of the SS and Police court in Kassel.


19. Pohl to chief of SS Personnel Main Office (OGrf. Schmitt), July 28, 1942, NO-1994. Ostubat. Brandt to Pohl, August 23, 1942, NO-1984. Transfer order by Finslau, sending Krogel to take Koch’s place as commander of Lublin, August 24, 1942, NO-4334. At the same time the commander of Flossenbürg, Ostubaf. Künstler, was removed from his post because of “feasts and drunkenness,” and the commander of Dachau, Ostubaf. Piorwowski, was removed for more serious offenses to stand trial. Brandt to Pohl, August 23, 1942, NO-1984.

20. Testimony by Eugen Kogon, Case No. 1, tr. pp. 1183-84.

himsel could not escape from the net – he was tried, sentenced to death, and executed. 21

The vise also closed upon Koch’s immediate subordinate, the Lublin Schutzhaftlagerführer Hackmann. Condemned to death, Hackmann was later put into a punishment unit. 22

Having bitten into the Lublin camp, the corruption officers suffered a reverse: they discovered that all potential Jewish witnesses there had been killed. Deciding to investigate this matter also, the SS and Police court was confronted with the mass murder of all the remaining Jewish inmates at Lublin. 23

Resistance increased in other camps, too, as the old guard fought for its life. Thus in Sachsenhausen the corruption commission was “thrown out bodily” (gewaltsam herausgesetzt). 24

SS and Police Court XXII in Kassel now constituted itself into the “SS and Police Court for Special Purposes.” Preparations were made to capture the greatest prize of all: Obersturmbannführer Höss of Auschwitz. A special commission (chief, Hauptsturmführer Drescher) was installed in the camp, and an informer in the person of Hauptsturmführer Gerhard Paltsch gave information about Höss. The commander, he said, was responsible for the pregnancy of an inmate, Eleonore Hodys, born in 1903 in Vienna. After considerable difficulties, corruption officers interrogated Hodys. 25 But the Auschwitz campaign was doomed to failure. The suction mechanism of the camp began to work. Open threats


22. Affidavit by Dr. Erwin Schuler, July 20, 1945, NO-255.

23. Affidavit by Paulmann, July 11, 1946, SS-64.

24. ibid.

25. Affidavit by Gerhard Wiebeck, February 28, 1947, NO-2330. Wiebeck, a subordinate of Morgen, questioned the woman in October, 1944.
were sent to the SS and Police court. In the camp itself, Hauptscharführer Palitsch was discovered with a Jewish woman and thrown into a coal bunker. Höss had won.

The savage attack by the SS and Police court had claimed its victims, but the camp structure as a whole withstood the attack, protected by the almighty hand of Pohl, who stood ready to shield and defend his commanders in their hour of crisis.

Let us now shift attention from the camp personnel to the inmates. The first question which should logically be asked is: How did it happen that a killing center had any inmates at all? Why should anybody have been left alive? Jews were left alive mainly for three reasons: temporary congestion of the killing installations (gas chambers and crematoriums), camp construction and maintenance, and labor for industrial purposes. Persons remaining in barracks because of temporary overcrowding in the gas chambers or the ovens were no administrative problem at all. They were not registered; they were not given numbers. In most cases they were not given clothes or food. Administratively speaking, they were already written off, already dead. Camp maintenance did not require many inmates; in the pure killing centers and in those which had little industrial activity (Kulmhof, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka) there were relatively few work parties. Only two camps had a large inmate population: the WVHA camps, Auschwitz and Lublin. These, then, were the only camps which posed a maintenance problem: the provision of shelter, food, and medical care for the prisoners.

Maintenance planning was characterized by a lack of concern for life itself. It is significant that “accounting for the life of an inmate” (even a German inmate) was defined as a complete and accurate report of his death (name, birth date, nationality, etc.). When a Jew died, no special report had to be made; a death list sufficed. Whether an individual Jew lived or died did not matter at all.

There had to be a sufficient number of inmates to take care of work requirements, and if the supply was too big, the SS weeded out the Jewish inmate population by sending the excess number to the gas chamber. The inmate count was therefore subject to great fluctuation. Depending on the arrival of new transports or a selection of victims to be put to death, the camp population could be doubled or halved within a matter of weeks or even days.

Obviously, expenditures of money for the upkeep of inmates were extremely low. Living quarters were

28. Clicks to camp commanders, November 21, 1942, NO-1543.
29. Ibid. WVHA D-I (signed Liebenson) to camp commanders, July 15, 1943, NO-1246. Memorandum by Höss (WVHA-I), undated, NO-1553.
30. KL Auschwitz/administration (HStSt. Wagner) reported to WVHA D-IV on March 25, 1942, that it expected an inmate increase from 11,000 to 27,000 in the next few days; NO-2146. On October 17, 1944, the women's camp in Auschwitz II had 29,925 inmates. On November 25, 1944, the number was 14,271. Frauen-Lager KL Au II/Abt. IIIa (Birkenau) strength reports, October 18 and November 26, 1944, Dokument i Materialy, I, 118.
31. Auschwitz as a whole had 11,000 inmates in March, 1942, 140,000 inmates in December, 1943, 67,000 inmates in April, 1944. Wagner to WVHA-D-IV, March 25, 1942, NO-2146. Affidavit by Höss, March 14, 1946, NO-1210. Pohl to Himmler, April 5, 1944, NO-31. Lublin dropped from 20,000-25,000 in September, 1942, to 8000 in December, 1943. Affidavit by Rupprecht, August 6, 1945, NO-1903. Interrogation of Wied, July 21, 1945, G-215.
about as primitive as could be imagined. Lublin, for example, in the fall of 1942 had five blocks with a total of twenty-two barracks. The barracks were partially unfinished. Some had no windows. Others had cardboard roofs. None had water. Provisional latrines (fill-in type) spread odors throughout the habitat. During an Auschwitz construction conference on June 16, 1944 (Pohl, Maurer, Höss, Bischoff, Bär, and Wirths participating, among others), the "completion" (Ausbau) of barracks in Camp II was still a subject of discussion. In this connection, it was pointed out that the installation of washing and toilet facilities was necessary only in every third or fourth barracks.

The overcrowding in the barracks was a constant plague for the inmates; there was simply no limit to the number of people who could be put into a hut. Inmates slept without blankets or pillows on so-called Pritschen, wooden planks joined together. On October 4, 1944, the administrative division of Auschwitz II wrote to the central administration for 230 new Pritschen. Instead of having been used by five inmates, as regulations prescribed, each of the Pritschen had held up to fifteen inmates. Because of this weight the upper layer of the Pritschen had broken apart, and all the inmates had fallen on top of the people lying on the middle layer. The second layer had thereupon collapsed, and everybody had crashed through the lowest layer. The result was a twisted mass of bodies and splinters.

31. Affidavit by Ruppert, August 6, 1945, NO-1903.
32. Summary of Auschwitz conference, June 17, 1944, NO-2339. In Auschwitz II, at that time, up to 32,000 women shared a single latrine barracks. Perl, I was a Doctor in Auschwitz, pp. 32-33.
33. Kommandantur KL An II/Verw. to Zentralverw. An, October 4, 1944, Dokumenty i Materialy, I, 95-96.

In the matter of clothes the situation was even worse. Jews arriving in camps were deprived of all their belongings, including their clothes. Up to the beginning of 1943, prisoners' clothing was issued to all inmates. Estimates of requirements were sent by Amtsgruppe D to Amt B-II, which had to bargain with the civilian sector (Speer and Economy Ministry) for allocations. As shortages increased, the supply of prisoners' clothing was choked off. On February 26, 1943, it was therefore ordered that inmates were to get ordinary clothes (properly marked), with remaining supplies of the striped variety to be given only to work parties moving about outside the camp compounds. Since any clothes which could be dignified by the word were generally picked out for distribution to needy Germans — a complicated confiscation process to be described later — the Jewish inmates usually received only rags. Such things as toilet articles, handkerchiefs, and paper (including toilet paper) were not issued at all. During 1944, conditions were such that many thousands of people had to go around without any clothes whatsoever.

The third plague was the lack of food. The administrative basis for food allocation in the camps was the ration system worked out by the Food and Agriculture Ministry, complete with discriminatory rations for Jews. Each camp administration obtained the supplies from the food depots of the Waf-

34. Affidavit by Georg Lömer, December 1, 1945, NO-54.
35. Liebehenschel to camp commanders, WVHA D-II, and WVHA D-III, February 26, 1943, NO-1530.
36. Hungarian Jewish women in Auschwitz were particularly affected. Friedman, Os-

37. Inspectorate to camp commanders, October 15, 1943, NO-1536. Decree by Food Ministry (signed Dr. Moritz), August 6, 1944, NG-465.
fen-SS (Standartenführer Tschentscher) and in the open market.\textsuperscript{38} What happened to the food after it got into the camp was the administration’s own business. The basic diet of Jewish inmates was watery turnip soup drunk from pots;\textsuperscript{10} it was supplemented by an evening meal of sawdust bread with some margarine, “smelly marmalade,” or “putrid sausage.”\textsuperscript{40} Between the two meals inmates attempted to lap a few drops of polluted water from a faucet in a wash barracks.\textsuperscript{41}

The living conditions in the killing centers produced sickness and epidemics—dysentery, typhus, and skin diseases of all kinds. Sanitation measures were almost nil. The Auschwitz grounds were not suitable for canalization; hence fill-in latrines were the only facilities available. Water was not purified. Soap and articles for cleansing were very scarce. Rats ran loose in the barracks. Only occasionally was a block fumigated with Zyklon. Hospitals were barracks, and inmate doctors worked with few medicines and few instruments. When the sickrooms became overcrowded, the SS doctor made an inspection and dispatched the worst cases to the gas chamber.\textsuperscript{42}

38. Affidavit by Wilhelm Max Burger, May 14, 1947, NO-3255. Burger was administrative chief of Auschwitz before Mückel.

39. The soup was the midday meal. “There were pieces of wood, potato peeling and unrecognizable substances swimming in it.” Perl, \textit{I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz}, pp. 38–41. The soup meal was issued in cans which weighed about 120 pounds. They had only two handles and no cover. Before it was distributed in the pots, the scalding brew had to be carried under the bows of SS men from the kitchen to the block. Report by a De Gaulist, August 20, 1946, NO-1960.

40. Perl, \textit{I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz}, p. 36.

41. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 32. For an expert discussion of the medical aspects of nutrition in the camps, see Dr. Elie A. Cohen, \textit{Human Behavior in the Concentration Camp} (New York, 1953), pp. 51–58. The author is a survivor of Auschwitz.

The prisoners tried to survive, and they worked out a few compensatory mechanisms. Food was stolen and traded in the black market.\textsuperscript{43} Inmate doctors worked frantically and tirelessly, but the tide of death was too great. Up to the end of 1942, Lublin had received 26,258 \textit{registered} Jewish inmates. A total of 4568 had been released: 14,348 had died. Auschwitz had obtained 5849 \textit{registered} Jewish inmates up to the same date; 4436 had died.\textsuperscript{44} In July, 1943, Auschwitz was short of inmates for its industrial requirements, and a commission was sent to Lublin to take some prisoners from there. Out of 3800 people set aside for Auschwitz a preliminary check revealed only 30 per cent fit for work. The Auschwitz commission was so indignant that the Lublin administration scraped up everyone whom it could call fit for work “with a good conscience”; after a second examination a Lublin doctor, Untersturmführer Dr. Rindfleisch, admitted that Lublin inmates could not really be classified as employable.\textsuperscript{45} Fifteen hundred inmates were finally chosen. When they arrived, five women were already dead, forty-nine

42. On diseases and sick treatment, see Cohen, \textit{Human Behavior in the Concentration Camp}, pp. 58–81.

43. A few Auschwitz black market prices were as follows:

\begin{verbatim}
Ons cigarette  RM  6-7
1 lb of bread  RM  150
1 lb of margarin RM  100
1 lb of butter  RM  200
1 lb of fat    RM  280–320
1 lb of meat  RM  400–480
\end{verbatim}

Report by a De Gaulist, August 20, 1946, NO-1960. Most often there was only barter trade. An old man in Auschwitz traded a sack of diamonds he had smuggled in for three raw potatoes which he ate at once. Perl, \textit{I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz}, pp. 114–15.

Women sometimes lent their bodies to German or Polish political prisoners in order to eat. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 76, 78–79.

44. Report by Korherr, March 27, 1943, NO-5194.

were dying, and most others had skin eruptions or were suffering from "exhaustion" (Körperschwäche).\(^{46}\) Whatever other talents the camp officials may have had, keeping prisoners alive was not one of them — even if on rare occasions that became necessary.

For the SS, a far more serious task than maintaining inmates was the problem of keeping them under control. To have an iron grip on the inmate population, the camp administration expended a great deal of money and effort. The three elements of inmate control were guards, contraptions, and internal controls. We shall examine these measures in reverse order, for the most important means by which inmates were held in check were internal controls.

The Germans proceeded from the fundamental assumption that an individual prisoner would not resist. He would obey an order even if it were against his interests. When confronted with a choice between action and inactivity, he would be paralyzed; he would reason that nothing is ever certain, not even death in Auschwitz.\(^{47}\) The primary danger of resistance was consequently not the reasoning power of the individual — for he was helpless in spite of it and because of it — but the establishment of an organization which would pit against the concentration camp a compulsive mechanism of its own. Internal controls sought to prevent the formation of any such resistance movement. Camp commanders were ordered to watch developments in their camps at all times, lest one day they be surprised by "major unpleasant events."\(^{48}\) The commanders were to keep track of things by making use of inmate spies,\(^{49}\) and inmate resistance was frustrated further by the institution of an inmate bureaucracy and inmate privileges.

The distribution of power and privilege among the inmates was determined in the first instance by the racial hierarchy. Even in a concentration camp a German was still a German; a Pole was a Pole; a Jew, a Jew. This stratification could not be broken by the inmates; the racial hierarchy was as rigid as any bureaucratic hierarchy had ever been. No combining, no delegation of power, no mutiny, was possible here.

The inmate bureaucracy was divided into two parts: one in charge of quarters, the other in charge of work parties. In quarters, the hierarchy was Lagerältester (highest in camp), Blockältester (in charge of block), and Stubendienst (in charge of barracks). In work parties, it was Oberkapo, Kapo, and Vorarbeiter. In Auschwitz and Lublin the top echelons of the inmate bureaucracy were filled by German prisoners;\(^{50}\) consequently, there was an inmate leadership, but it was responsible, and responsive, to camp command.

Not only were German prisoners in the most important positions of the inmate bureaucracy; they also enjoyed the most extensive privileges within the framework of concentration camp life, such as the right to receive packages, supplementary food rations, less overcrowding in barracks, and bed linen in camp hospitals.\(^{51}\) Far less privileged and much worse off were Poles, Czechs, and other Slavs.\(^{52}\) On the bottom were the Jews. Between the Jew-

\(^{46}\) Standaart (camp doctor) Auschwitz to Kommandantur Auschwitz, July 8, 1943, Dokumente i Materialy, I, 138–40.


\(^{48}\) Civics to camp commanders, March 31, 1944, NO-1554.

\(^{49}\) Ibid.


\(^{51}\) Lingens-Reiner, Prisoners of Fear, pp. 52, 86, 100.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., pp. 44, 49.
ish and the German inmates there was an unbridgeable gulf: the Germans were entitled to live—they had at least a minimum of privileges to make a fight for life; the Jews were doomed. It is characteristic that the Jews in Auschwitz were hoping that an air raid might destroy the killing installations, while the Germans were consoled by the thought “that the Allied airmen knew and avoided the camp.”

Perhaps the extreme example of the crushing force that separated Germans from Jews is this incident told by Dr. Ella Lingens-Reiner, who had been sent to Auschwitz because she had hidden some Jews in her apartment in Vienna (Judenbegünstigung). In Auschwitz she took under her protection a young Jewish woman from Prague, Gretl Stutz. One day Stutz was brought into the hospital hut with typhus, one patient among seven hundred. As Dr. Lingens-Reiner gave her an injection, a voice protested from the German corner: “Of course, you give something to the Jewess, and let us Germans die like dogs. You’re a nice example of a German prisoner!” Thereupon she did not visit her friend again. Gretl Stutz was transferred to another ward and after a few days she succumbed, deserted, to her sickness.

Another internal control measure was marking. In the concentration camp, too, the Jewish inmate had to wear the six-pointed Star of David. In addition, his registration number was tattooed on his arm. Still another precaution was taken in the form of daily roll calls which sometimes lasted hours. The roll calls kept track of all prisoners and prevented hiding within the camp. The prisoners were not dismissed until everyone was accounted for, dead or alive. As a last means the Germans also resorted to reprisal, usually a public hanging. They thus sought to frustrate the formation of an internal resistance movement by a system of spies, inmate bureaucracies, inmate privileges, marking, roll calls, and reprisals. However, preventive measures did not stop with these devices.

In February, 1943, Himmler became worried that air raids on the concentration camps might occasion mass breaks. To prevent any such occurrence he ordered that each camp be divided into blocks, 4000 inmates per block, each block to be fenced in with barbed wire. Every camp was to be surrounded by a high wall, and barbed wire was to be strung on both sides of the wall. The interior passageway between wire and wall was to be patrolled by dogs; the outer passageway was to be mined, just in case a bomb tore a hole in the wall. In the vicinity of the camp, dogs trained to tear a man apart (zerreissen) were to roam at night. All these elaborate contraptions were set up pursuant to Himmler’s wishes. Searchlights were mounted on poles of the wire fence, and the interior wire was electrically charged. Inmates who tried of life had only to lean on this wire to end their misery. The third element of inmate control was the guard force. In spite of all internal measures and the construction of contraptions, there had to be an armed body of men to deal with the eventuality of “major unpleasant events.” However, these camps, in which more than 3,000,000 people were killed, were—all other devices notwithstanding—rather thinly guarded. All in

54. Lingens-Reiner, Prisoners of Fear, p. 36.
55. Ibid., pp. 83–84.
all, about 6000–7000 men may have manned the killing centers at any one time; about 10,000–12,000 if rotation is taken into account. Auschwitz had about 3000 guards; Lublin had a battalion; Treblinka may have had about 700 men, including Ukrainians; Kulmhof was run by a Sonderkommando of 150 to 180 men. Little is known about the guard forces of Belzec and Sobibor, except that they numbered in the hundreds and that, again, they were mostly Ukrainian. In the WVHA camps the guards were equipped with small arms, including machine guns mounted on observation towers. At night they trained searchlights on the camp grounds. Getting these guards—even though their number was small for the size of the task—was no easy problem. Curiously enough, an even bigger obstacle proved to be the acquisition of their armament.

Since the guard forces were not exactly first-class units, the SS men in charge of weapons supply did not consider it necessary to furnish them with first-class arms. The distribution of weapons and munitions in the entire Waffen-SS was handled by the SS-Führungshauptamt, the main office concerned with purely military matters. In the WVHA, Amt B-V, under Standartenführer Scheide, handled weapons and munitions for the WVHA camps. Whenever the WVHA had requests for weapons, Scheide submitted the requests to the Führungsbeamten; very often, however, he was turned down.

59. Pohl to Himmler, April 5, 1944, NO-21.
63. Pohl to Himmler, April 5, 1944, NO-21.

or was offered Italian rifles without ammunition, etc.

All in all, Amtsgruppe D obtained only about 15,000 rifles and 30 machine guns for all its camps. This was of course not enough, so it made use of its business connections to procure weapons independently. Companies making use of camp labor, particularly the Steyr armaments firm, were approachable in such matters. Scheide protested to Glücks against this gun-running (Waffenschieber), whereupon Glücks replied that he would take his weapons wherever he could get them. In the matter of trucks, the situation was the same: the trucks were usually obtained when firms made available the necessary transport to get laborers, then somehow forgot to ask for the return of the trucks. Thus by hook and crook the guards and the weapons and the transport were assembled. But Pohl was still worried. There were many doomed people in the camps. In a report to Himmler dated April 5, 1944, Pohl outlined the preparations he had made for the eventualities of a mass break from Auschwitz.

The number of Auschwitz inmates was then 67,000; from that total he deducted 18,000 sick inmates and 15,000 in work parties who could be “done away with” (abgesetzt) “so that practically one has to count 34,000 inmates.” At that time, he had 2950 guards. From the Higher SS and Police Leader in the area, Obergruppenführer Schmauser, he procured another police company of 130 men as a standby force. At the start of a mass break, a defense line in the interior of the camp would be manned by all the guards; in addition, Schmauser had made an agreement with the commander of the VIII Corps, General der Kavallerie von Koch-Ersachs, in pursuance of which

64. Affidavit by Rudolf Hermann Karl Scheide, January 16, 1947, NO-1588.
the Wehrmacht was to man an outer defense line. Furthermore, the air force had promised to furnish 1000 men if the breakout did not coincide with an air raid. Finally, the Kripo-Leitstelle in Katowice was prepared to undertake a major search (Grossfahndung) for the capture of anyone who got through.65

There was no mass break from Auschwitz. Only a few inmates managed to run the triple gauntlet of informers, wires, and guards, and most of them were brought back. Sometimes the corpse of an escaped prisoner was propped up on a chair with a sign reading, "Here I am."66 Only a handful made good their escape.

In two of the smaller camps, Treblinka and Sobibor, the unexpected happened. Unlike Auschwitz, which had a very large inmate population, Treblinka kept only a few work parties (all Jews) for maintenance and other purposes. The inmate-guard ratio in Auschwitz during 1943–44 ranged from about 20:1 to 35:1. In Treblinka the inmate-guard ratio was about 1:1 (700 inmates to 700 guards). Nevertheless, Treblinka had a breakout. Precisely because they were only 700 men, these inmates could not reason that they would get through the war alive; within the square-mile compound there was no possibility of hiding, no possibility of eluding one's fate. After a while every inmate realized this.

The breakout plan was very simple. A locksmith made a duplicate key to the arsenal, and a former captain of the Polish Army, Dr. Julian Chorazyski, worked out the escape plan. He was killed just before the coup was to take place, but his place was taken by a new inmate, the physician Dr. Leichert, also a former officer. On August 2, 1943, 20 hand grenades, 20 rifles, and several revolvers were secretly removed from the arsenal. At 3:45 P.M. the guards were rushed. Of 700 men in the camp, 150 to 200 got out. The escapes were hunted down one by one. About 12 survived.67

The Sobibor revolt by about 150 inmates was an almost exact duplication of the Treblinka break. The date of the battle was October 14, 1943. The Germans lost an Untersturmführer in the fighting.68

3 / LABOR UTILIZATION

The primary reason for keeping up an inmate population was labor utilization, although the use of Jews for construction projects, maintenance, or industry was merely an intermediary step to be followed by killing. As in the case of the mobile killing operations in the East, the Jews were to be granted only a respite, or, in the ponderous words of Pohl, "Employable Jews who are migrating to the East will have to interrupt their journey and work in war industry [Die für die Ostwanderung bestimmten arbeitsfähigen Juden werden also ihre Reise unterbrechen und Rüstungsarbeiten leisten müssen]."69

Unlike the respite granted to the Jews in the occupied eastern territories, the postponement of killings in the camps was occasioned and desired entirely by the SS. Those among the

68. Tenenbaum, Underground, pp. 281–64. The author's account is based on two survivors' accounts.
69. Pohl to Himmler, September 16, 1942, NI-15392.
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by RAUL HILBERG

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