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diseased body. The Jews are the purulent appendix in the body of Europe."

Anti-Semitism was not only one of the fundamental tenets of the Nazi creed, it was probably the only point of the doctrine, apart from the sacred person of the Fuehrer, which even the more rationally minded Nazis would refuse to discuss. Either you were of the faith or you were not. Anti-Semitism is not an indispensable ingredient of Fascism as a social system; the attitude of Mussolini has proved the contrary; its importance as a safety-valve and as a means of enriching discontented followers should not, however, be under-rated. It was precisely because there was no rational link between Anti-Semitism and the social system of Nazi-Fascism that the irrational, emotional connection was so strong and any discussion of this point so hopeless.

This specific atmosphere of German Fascism—of Nazism—turned "Judenbeguenstigung"—the "Aiding and Abetting of Jews", as the technical term ran—into the most despicable crime anyone could commit. Because I committed it, I was sent to the concentration camp.

Actually I had done very little. In fact, too little. There were some friends of ours, Jews, who lived in Poland. An "Aryan" Pole brought us news from them. He told us that the Germans had killed six or seven million people in Poland—Poles and Jews. Could we help our friends and, if possible, other Jews to escape abroad? Someone who had succeeded in getting away had left us the address of a man who had helped him. We thought we could help others through him. Our friends came to us with the papers of Polish agricultural labourers; we had them for a few days in our house in Vienna, before they could be taken to the Swiss frontier. The man who was supposed to help them was himself a Jew. But he was a spy, a Jewish Gestapo spy: he had allowed one person to escape so that he might catch others with greater certainty. He led our friends straight into the hands of the Gestapo. That was the story, as far as the Gestapo found out. But, in addition, they discovered that we had let a Jewish girl live with us for three months, without registering her with the authorities. Also, a letter happened to arrive from some Jewish friends of ours who lived in the United States and wrote to us via Switzerland, in an attempt to get news about their old people whom they had left behind. This was enough to convince the Gestapo that we had built up a vast organisation which they believed to be in close contact with the Polish resistance movement, as the people concerned were Polish Jews. The most aggravating single circumstance was the fact that I had been a member

of the local branch executive of the Austrian Social Democratic Party.

My case appeared to be so important that the Head of the Political Search Bureau (*Politisches Fahndungsamt*), a certain Dolfi, decided to handle it himself. At the interrogation I managed at first to clear myself reasonably well. I found that the dreaded omniscience of the Gestapo was nothing but a myth. In reality they were fumbling in the dark. Any word which admitted the slightest detail was one word too many. This in itself was part of the danger. It was bad enough if the Gestapo discovered something. But if they failed to do so, they took you to be diabolically clever and subtle, as you had apparently succeeded in covering your tracks. And that was worse. For then they regarded you as the "intellectual enemy" whose mere existence was a menace to the Reich. You had to grant them a certain power of intuition: they were able, if not to convict their enemies by proof, at least to smell them out.

Sometimes they liked to have political discussions with their prisoners. My conversation with Dolfi will always remain fresh in my memory; I will give a short account of it to show the mental level of a man who after all had a certain standing within the Nazi hierarchy. He asked me: "Why did you want to get those Jews to Switzerland? All we wanted to do was to take them to Poland and settle them there in a closed Jewish area. Thousands of Germans have been conscripted and directed to work away from their homes, in the course of this war, but apparently you had no wish to interfere then!" When I told him I had acted as I did because the Jews were being sent to Poland to be killed, and that I could not stand by passively, watching it happen, he retorted: "You are completely crazy! The people there are working in factories."

Those were Dolfi's own words. Later I was to find that the pattern always repeated itself: those people did things which they would at first deny with every sign of abhorrence, and which, once they could no longer uphold their denial, they would defend with every sign of sincere conviction as being right and just.

And yet it was just thinkable that the police officer really had no clear picture of the things happening out there in Poland: it was the great art of these people to organise their doings so that the right hand was able to ignore what the left hand was doing. After all, factories did exist in which some Jews had to work for a time before they died. . . .

My conversation with Dolfi turned to other anti-Semitic measures of the Government. I voiced my opinion that a nation which prohibited the use of seats in public parks to a certain

group of the population made itself ridiculous. Thereupon he told me a rambling story about an old lady who went for a walk along the "Promenade" of the Semmering, one of the Austrian health resorts in the mountains; when she was tired she was unable to find a seat on one of the benches because all were occupied by Jews. "And what do you say now?" he concluded his lucid argument. Weary of the discussion, I shrugged my shoulders and said: "I suppose the Corporation should have provided more seats." This brainwave of mine struck him dumb. But as a matter of fact we had, symbolically, touched on the crux of the matter. In the years before Hitler there had not been enough "seats" in Germany and Austria. Not enough seats, but by no means lack of space in which to erect seats. The situation had become critical; but under Hitler the people of Germany and Austria took the worst possible way out: they made room for some of those who had been standing (many, it is true, for a very long time) by chasing away some of those who had been sitting—that is, the Jews and the anti-Fascists. For those who remained they supplied powder-barrels, on which they sat down quite happily—at first.

My interrogation was not particularly interesting in itself. Much to my surprise, it was conducted in a fairly civilised manner. Apparently by that time—the autumn of 1942—the period of arbitrary, purposeless tortures for the sake of sadistic pleasure was past. They seemed no longer to get a thrill out of beating up prisoners—it is characteristic of such "amusements" that they pall quickly. I found my impression confirmed when I asked my fellow-prisoners about their experiences. Those whose cases had been clear-cut were not ill-treated. My own case had been of that kind. At first I had lied successfully; the Gestapo had believed me; and so there had been no reason for violence. Later they had found out the truth, without me; no uncertain points had remained; and again there had not been any need for violence, from their point of view. Women who refused to answer questions were put into solitary confinement, without work or exercise; whether they were tortured at a later stage was something their fellow-prisoners had no means of finding out. I was told of one woman who had been exposed to the glare of powerful searchlights and almost blinded, but I never saw her myself. Later, in the concentration camp, I usually tried to discover whether new-comers had been tortured or ill-used during their interrogation. German prisoners frequently answered in the negative. Nearly all the foreign prisoners answered in the affirmative. I myself saw Polish women lying on the floor of the reception hut at Auschwitz unable to move: their buttocks, swollen and purplish-blue, showed

bleeding gashes, three to five inches long, up to one and a half inches wide, up to an inch deep. Those women had been traveling for three days, and their wounds were not even dressed. The police had tried to make them give away the hide-out of a group of Polish partisans. I pointed them out to Dr. Rohde, at that time the camp doctor—a good-natured man who liked to show some consideration to prisoners of every nationality, particularly to women. I said to him: "Look at these women; that's how they arrive here after their interrogation." He appeared very unhappy. I could see that he was embarrassed by what he saw, that he disapproved of it, and that he reflected on the unpleasantness it would mean for him if he were to report the case.

Though it could be argued that a report from the S.S. doctor would in all probability have helped neither those poor women nor future victims, it is by no means a foregone conclusion. A friend of mine whom I met in Dachau Concentration Camp told me that in the Dutch camp at Fught the camp doctor reported on principle every case of this kind which came to his notice, and so succeeded in getting a Gestapo chief—one of the worse offenders—removed from his post. Even under the conditions of concentration camps personal courage sometimes achieved results; but it was not surprising that it was a rare thing, under the given conditions. In the case of the Polish women, Dr. Rohde shrugged and mumbled something about the injuries being merely superficial. The women were left without medical attention until the following morning. Yet that same camp doctor had once roused our Chief Doctor and the dispenser in the middle of the night to get salicylate for an old woman who complained of rheumatic pains. . . . But those were contradictions which I came to know at a later stage, not during my novitiate in the police prison of Vienna.

The time I spent in prison was on the whole uneventful, interesting mainly by reason of the observations I was able to make. I lived for four months in a cell about nine feet square; it was intended as a single cell, but I shared it with three or four other women. During all that time I had no exercise whatsoever, no work, no book, no newspaper. According to regulations, we should have been taken to the prison yard for exercise under supervision. But since there was a shortage of staff no one was available for supervision, so we stayed in our cells. As a political prisoner I was entitled to buy a daily newspaper; but since the authorities always put a common criminal into our cell—probably on purpose, so as to cancel out the privileges of the political prisoners—I was never able to get a newspaper. The officer in charge of my case had given me permission to read and write.

bility of putting them down for "hut convalescence", which meant that for some time they did not have to go to work and were allowed to stay in their huts during the day. Nevertheless, they had to be present at roll-calls. Now, in the sick ward patients were not allowed to be out of bed, not even for a few hours; they had no clothes, only their nightdress, unless they managed to get something else in an underhand way; also there was literally no room for many patients walking about in the ward. This meant that a sick woman had to stay in bed up to her very last day in hospital, to be fetched out at six o'clock the next morning. Then she was given clogs and a coat, which she had to put on over her nightdress, but no underclothing and no stockings. In this state she had to walk five minutes to the central office; if she was unlucky, she had to wait there one or two hours, in an unheated room, after which she was put under an ice-cold shower and given new clothing. From the office she had to go to her hut, which as a rule was not heated either, and in the evening she had to stand outside the hut during the hours of the roll-call. In summer this was just bearable; in winter it merely meant that the women returned to hospital the next day.

After the roll-call the working parties formed up and marched away. I cannot report about the work done by prisoners from my own experience, as I worked only in the hospital, inside the camp. To judge by the information my patients gave me, it varied very much. There were groups which did nothing at all. This did not mean that the prisoners posted to them had a pleasant life; every day they had to walk several miles in heavy clogs, with torn stockings, and stay the whole day out in the open, in every sort of weather; but they did nothing more—to take the example of the tree-nurseries—than cut off or pick up branches, until they were marched back to camp.

A very pretty young prostitute from Vienna who was forewoman—Capo—of one of the working parties told me: "I don't do any work at all. I go to the ponds outside, with a hundred Jewish women. There the S.S. man who escorts me starts fishing. I fry the fish he catches, and we eat them together. In the meantime the Jewesses cart round some pieces of turf and pile them up somewhere, I don't know what for. Every now and then one of the S.S. chiefs comes round, shouts at us and says our whole work stinks, so then the Jewesses have to pile up the turf somewhere else. I don't bother about them; I go and fry my fish."

She was a so-called "good" Capo—a prefect who left the other prisoners in peace as long as she herself was left in peace; presumably frying fish was not the only thing she did for the S.S. man. Other Capos beat the prisoners of their unit, mainly

The firms paid the S.S. up to 13 Reichsmark per day for each skilled male worker, and proportionally less for other workers and women. For this the S.S. undertook to provide the prisoners with accommodation, food and clothing. The "accommodation" was our huts; food was produced by other prisoners working on the land, in bakeries and slaughter-houses within the vast precincts of the camp; the clothing was sewn by prisoners or, when the stock of uniform dresses with their blue-and-grey stripes was exhausted, we wore clothes from the wardrobes of gassed Jews—clothes marked on the back with a broad red dab in oil paint. Thus the expenses of the S.S. consisted merely in the scanty medicaments and the pay of the camp guards. The difference between the real expenses and the hire paid by the firms was the net profit of the S.S. The total number of inmates of all the camps belonging to the Auschwitz group was certainly far more than 100,000, and it may be assumed that at least half of them were sold on that slave market. This will give an idea of the sums involved. In 1944, when the home consumption, so to speak, was satisfied, an export drive began. Outlying working parties of Auschwitz went as far as Trautenau, Gablonz, Neustadt, and many other towns, where "subsidiary camps" of Auschwitz were set up, and supplied with human material from the centre.

We, the Auschwitz prisoners, were much in demand. The staff managers of big firms came to the camp to select women for their plants. It was an odd experience for us to see men in civilian clothes. They would arrive with somewhat embarrassed expressions on their faces; the women had to form up for their benefit, so that they could make sure of getting strong young girls; and it looked as if at any moment they would pinch their leg and arm muscles to test them. One manager would take 100 "pieces", another 500 or 1,000, plus a few nurses or a couple of women doctors, and then another customer would turn up. We never felt sure whether it was an advantage or a disadvantage to be taken away. Certainly it meant the danger of bombing raids; and perhaps the only thing to comfort us in the torture of camp life was the fact that the Allied airmen knew and avoided the camp. On the other hand, it was tempting not to sit behind electrified wire at a time when the end of the war was in sight. We heard that there was more freedom of movement and better food in the small factory camps, but women who were brought back to Auschwitz unfit for work, with crippled limbs, told tales of cruel exploitation. In some cases they were not allowed to go down to the shelters during air raids, and the most terrible labour accidents occurred when they were racked by nervous fear. Many of

a time, they would get illegal extras, such as potatoes, margarine, sausage, vegetables and bread.

An incredible amount of theft and barter went on in the camp. Every morning at three a woman from the kitchen would turn up in our room, with a little bag of potatoes tied round her waist under her apron. In exchange we would give her any bread we could spare, either from the supplies some of us got from home, or out of rations left over in the hut during epidemics, when ten to twenty women died in the course of a day, many more were unconscious and thus unable to take food, and the bread rations destined for them were used by the medical personnel. This was a privilege of the hospital. Other prisoners worked in the stores or on the bread distribution, still others in the clothing depots, where they would filch things and exchange them for food. A few prisoners worked in the factories, and were in touch with civilians who would give them food in exchange for clothes, shoes, trinkets and many other things.

I was always particularly upset by the traffic in medicaments in the sick wards. A piece of bread was worth two aspirins, margarine or fat bacon was paid for with cardiazol or sulphonamides. Once I got hold of a girl who was peddling medicines in my hut, and tried to tell her that it was not right to snatch the last bites away from sick comrades in exchange for a little medicine. The girl was Jewish. She told me that she had already been on the list for the gas chamber because of general physical debility, and had decided there and then to get more food for herself. She was working in the storage rooms. Every day she carried a few ampoules back to the camp in her mouth, at the risk of the gravest penalty if the control caught her, and sold them for bread and fats. She looked well and strong, and it was difficult to blame her, as she had stolen the medicaments from the S.S., not from her fellow-prisoners. Later I found myself frequently compelled to tell my typhus patients that they should get stimulants in this way, because I simply had not enough for them.

Practically all the goods which were used for barter had been the property of Jewish prisoners. The Jews from every European country who were to be "settled" in Poland were assembled by the Gestapo in reception centres, schools or transition camps near their homes, and organised in transports. They were told that they would be put to work in Poland, and that they should take with them their clothes and tools, including medical instruments, as well as food for three days. Finally, Jewish Gestapo agents spread the rumour that it was advisable to sew valuables such as foreign currency and jewellery into their clothes. I myself had kept at home money and jewellery for a number of Jews. All



under-clothing, but was permitted only a single set. In the course of the next few days all of us wore our confiscated clothes, the S.S. saw and recognised them, and nobody bothered or asked about their origin.

It must be obvious that this sort of large-scale theft was possible only because the S.S. men and women, who were supposed to supervise the prisoners at their work in the stores, stole themselves, in competition and accord with the prisoners. No matter whether they were lower ranks or higher ranks, they stole, every one of them. Even the best types among the S.S., as far as we knew them in the camp, were no exception. For instance, the camp doctor, Dr. Rohde, before going on leave which he was spending with his wife, went to a Polish prisoner and asked the man to find him a nice present for her. What he got was a large pigskin dressing-case. When he returned from leave he told the prisoner that his wife had liked it very much and sent many thanks.

The goods lying about had no owner, and everyone who had anything to do with them, whether S.S. man or prisoner, non-Jew or Jew, functionary or cleaner, tried to get hold of as much as possible. Once I heard how a little S.S. man, an N.C.O., begged one of the Jewish prisoners who worked in the reception office to get him a fountain pen; the prisoner told him grumpily to come back another day, at the moment he had no time for him.

The corruption among the S.S. was past imagination. For a pullover they would post letters, for toilet soap they would carry messages to neighbouring camps, for a watch they would regularly supply foreign radio news. A Medical N.C.O. caught a young nurse with her lover, an inmate of the men's camp; for two pounds of sugar he left them alone with each other. Dr. Klein, the camp doctor, had made himself unpopular with the Hut Seniors of the hospital; they bribed one of the Medical N.C.O.s with food and cigarettes to report the doctor for "excessive intimacy with the women prisoner-doctors", so that he was transferred to the gypsy camp and we were rid of the most dangerous of anti-Semites. (I do not know if he treated the gypsies equally savagely.)

As a result of these conditions, some of the prisoners in the camp had everything they wanted, perhaps more than they used to have when they were free, and in fact they were more powerful than many an S.S. man. Again and again there were inspections, again and again scandals, many and heavy penalties were imposed, but everything failed. The first Head Wardress in Auschwitz Camp, a Frau Längenfeld, was sentenced to thirty months' hard labour. Prisoners were shot, or flogged, or degraded from their special positions—others replaced them and did exactly the

führer Klaus, recommended typhus patients to my special care. Those people knew, of course, that the prisoner-doctors kept typhus cases secret, but it would have been difficult to prove this, among such a multitude of patients. The camp doctor at that time—Dr. Kitt—could have found out, but he was afraid to. On the one hand he knew perfectly well that the “benzine treatment” did not halt the epidemic—he seemed not to approve of it—and on the other hand he feared that higher quarters would blame him, as the man responsible for hygiene in the camp, because he had failed to stamp out the epidemic. Therefore he preferred to accept our “influenza” cases at their face value.

It is doubtful whether we were right in our attitude. By not reporting typhus we relieved the S.S. of the obligation to take energetic measures against the epidemic.

I was still fumbling for a way out when I myself contracted typhus. After my convalescence the situation was different. We had a new camp doctor—Dr. Rohde, from Marburg-on-the-Lahn, one of those kindly, muddle-headed people of whom it seems impossible to understand why and how they could have volunteered for the S.S. He was so popular with the prisoners that a young Jewish nurse whose life he had saved went so far as to say: “I would protect him even if it costs my own life.” But—he, too, was S.S. Camp Doctor at Auschwitz. . . .

When the special Jewish sick hut proved insufficient, he took the Jewish patients into the hospital compound and put them together with the other patients; he reorganised the huts in surgical, internal and infectious wards, while previously they had been organised according to nationalities, and generally tried to proceed reasonably. In that summer of 1943 things seemed to improve, the infectious diseases declined. And yet . . . in October, 1943, there were officially twenty cases of typhus on the sick list—Jewish and non-Jewish women, but no Germans. One day they were all taken away: they never came back. They were killed. The man under whose regime we had begun to breathe more freely had not prevented their murder, just as he had not the courage later on to refuse his co-operation in selections for the gas chamber. We at once stopped reporting further typhus cases, with Dr. Rohde’s silent connivance. He feared himself that he might get another order to commit murder, and he was grateful to us, the prisoner-doctors, when we pretended to believe that he knew nothing of the new outbreak of a typhus epidemic.

In fact, typhus was only stamped out when Hauptsturmführer Dr. Mengele, the ruthless cynic, became camp doctor. He collected the 1,500 worst cases among the Jewish patients in a hospital hut and sent them to the gas chamber. Thus he obtained an

empty hut, which was disinfected and supplied with new paliasses and clean blankets. Then the patients of the nearest hut were de-loused, examined and taken naked into the vermin-free hut, which was put out of bounds. The same with the next hut, and so on, until everything was clean. Given the circumstances, this was the correct way of fighting and overcoming the epidemic. But that the camp authorities did not think it necessary to build a new hut for the purpose, that the cleaning-up began with the murder of 1,500 Jewish women—that was part of the horror of a situation in which everything was perverted from its meaning, in which evil was good and good evil.

Ninety-nine per cent. of the prisoners had a typhus attack between the third and tenth week of their stay in the camp. In the autumn of 1943 the total of women prisoners in Birkenau-Auschwitz was 32,000, of whom 7,000 were in hospital, as a constant figure. In the months from October, 1943, to February, 1944, the average number of deaths was between 100 and 150 per day. Despite the steady trickle of new-comers from outside, the total figure of prisoners fell within two months to 24,000. The only group among the prisoners of which a considerable number never went down with typhus was the Russian group. Many of them had passed through the illness when they were young children, others had only a light attack. I had many Russian patients. When they had a high temperature they would pull the blanket over their heads and refuse treatment by the doctor. After a fortnight they would emerge and ask to be released from hospital. It was rare for them to suffer from complications.

When I was in charge of the convalescent hut practically all those convalescing from grave illnesses were under me for a fortnight to four weeks to "recover". In the course of my work I acquired so much practice in the auscultation of hearts that I could say at once whether the patient had had typhus or not. Only with the Russian women did I often make mistakes: their heart-beats sounded as if they had had no more than a running cold. With people from most of the other national groups it was safe to assume that it took them from two to three months to get fit for work—if they ever got fit again. Their resistance was lowered to a point where they were extremely susceptible to other illnesses. With them typhus rarely passed without simultaneous or subsequent complications. Nearly all the patients had one or more of the following very serious illnesses: otitis media (inflammation of the middle ear), parotitis (inflammation of the auricular glands), pneumonia, pleurisy, abscesses, phlegmones, temporary or permanent psychoses of a toxic kind, and above all debility of heart and circulation.

lined in the luminous summer sky. The heat and the fleas made sleep impossible. Suddenly I heard in the distance loud shrieks and shouts from a hundred throats. The noise came nearer, then it dwindled, then it ceased. After a few minutes it approached again, from the same side, and died down in the other direction. A third time, a fourth time. I could not stay in bed. I got up and went to the door.

I saw one open lorry after the other driving towards the camp from the station. Each was crammed to bursting point with people—as far as I could make out, women and children—stretching their arms to the sky. I walked through the hut to the other door, and saw the lorries disappear in the direction of the crematorium. I stared after them and began to understand. "It's starting again!" said the woman on guard at the door.

Scarcely fifteen minutes later the chimney began to belch thick clouds of a black, sweetish-smelling smoke which belled across the camp. A bright, sharp flame shot up, six feet high. Soon the stench of burnt fat and hair grew unbearable. And still the lorries drove past, on the same route. We counted sixty batches that night. The last was an ambulance car which carried the Red Cross on roof and sides as though in mockery.

I stood there, leaning against the door-jamb, and my brain refused to function. Now I knew that it was true. It was true that they were committing direct, shameless mass murder. I could not breathe. I felt that I wanted to scream, to run there, to throttle the men who did it, to throw myself in front of the wheels—but I only stood there in the radiant summer night, motionless, helpless, and mumbled: "How can this ever be expiated?" Soon after the last car had disappeared the first lorries came back laden with the luggage and clothes of the dead, which they took to the depot. It was over. But the chimney smoked all the following day.

Later I worked out why I had noticed nothing during my first six months in the camp. The whole previous autumn and winter transports like those I saw in August, 1943, had been taken directly from the station to the gas chamber, without discrimination. A few times high S.S. officers had gone to the station and claimed persons who belonged to one or other profession then needed in the camp. The medical and sanitary personnel were usually kept alive. Towards the end of the winter several entire transports had been taken into the camp; they were used to increase the number of prisoners. For at that time new huts had been set up, new subsidiary camps opened, labour was needed for the spring sowing on the large estate which was administered by the camps and fed the prisoners as well as the S.S. garrison. Now, by August, they had sufficient man-power for the harvesting; also,