JEWISH REACTION TO THE HOLOCAUST
BASED ON THE ACCOUNTS OF SURVIVORS

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INTRODUCTION

With the end of World War II, historians began writing about the Holocaust. My purpose is not to repeat what others have said, but to show what effects the events that have been labeled the Holocaust had on the people who lived through them. How did they feel, what did they think, what did they do, when confronted by their Nazi persecutors? Why is it that so many were killed, yet some survived? Lastly, how do these survivors feel today about what happened to them?

To answer these questions, I went to the survivors themselves and asked them about the Holocaust. These survivors are primary sources, eyewitnesses to the past. They do not have all the answers, but they were able to tell me what they experienced and why they acted as they did. Although this paper focuses on the experiences of a relatively small number of Jews from Central and Eastern Europe, their testimony is valuable for it shows how ordinary people responded to the day to day horrors encountered under the Nazi regime.

Some of the people with whom I talked had never spoken of their experiences to anyone outside of their own families. Their responses to my questions were spontaneous, often revealing their inner doubts and confusion about the nature of their own actions and those of others whom they knew. Though recalling events that took place a long time ago, their testimony enables us to discern the feelings and impressions people experienced during that time.

Others whom I interviewed have told their stories before. They believe it is important to tell others about the Holocaust in an effort to prevent it from happening again. People who repeatedly attempt to recall their
past often find that, over time, their recollections sound polished, and sometimes artificial. In some cases, this was true of those I interviewed as well. Also, in their concern for accuracy, some of these people have studied the writings of others about the Holocaust. Therefore, some of their information includes facts and figures they became aware of only after the events had taken place.

Wherever possible, I have included accounts of the actual experiences of these survivors to illustrate general statements regarding their thoughts and feelings about events in the past. I have also referred to selected secondary sources to support or supplement their testimony.

Before analysing in detail what happened to the Jews during the Holocaust it is important to show to what extent those whom I interviewed were representative of the European Jewish population at that time. Therefore, my paper begins with a detailed description of their lives in the years prior to the rise of the Nazis, and an explanation of where they fit into the Jewish community as a whole. It is also useful to know something about those major historical events that directly affected the lives of European Jews, as this knowledge can provide some clues as to why Jews and their Christian neighbors behaved as they did. Therefore, I have included a brief history of European Jews in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Since the economic, political and social status of the Jews who lived in Central and Eastern Europe on the eve of World War II was vastly different, I have devoted separate chapters to discussion of the Jews living in each of these regions. Chapters One and Two provide historical and biographical information about the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe, and Chapters Three and Four deal with their experiences during the Holocaust.
The fifth and final chapter in this study is a comparison of some of the historical evidence presented in the earlier chapters with three fictional accounts of this period: The Missing Years, by Walter Laqueur; Badenheim 1939, by Aharon Applefeld; and Night, by Elie Wiesel. Since people often make use of novels as sources of information about the Holocaust, it is important to examine the extent to which literature reflects history, and thus determine its value in providing a clearer picture of that time.

My ultimate purpose in writing this paper is to discover what happened during the Holocaust, particularly, what the Jews did, or did not do, in their efforts to save themselves and their families. I believe that the closer we come to accomplishing this task, the better our chances will be of preventing another Holocaust.
CHAPTER ONE

In order to determine how the relationship between Jews and Gentiles before the Holocaust influenced their reactions to the ensuing Nazi take-over, it is useful to explore briefly some of the conditions in Europe prior to 1933. One needs to know how Jews and Gentiles related to each other as individuals, and as members of their communities. How long had they lived in their respective countries? What was their economic status? Was the average Jew religious or non-religious? Was he isolated from his Gentile neighbors, or assimilated? Was there little anti-Semitism prior to 1933, or a great deal?

In answering these questions my goal is to find out if conditions before the rise of fascism were in any way responsible for the inability of people - Jews or non-Jews - to prevent what happened. This first chapter will provide fairly detailed answers to the questions above, based on the interviews of five Central European Jews. Four of them were German, and one was Austrian. As I noted in the introduction I found a considerable difference existed, in background and subsequent experiences, between these Jews and Jews from Eastern Europe. Though all suffered from their encounters with Nazism, their reactions to their experiences, and the response of their non-Jewish friends, acquaintances or the community at large, were often very different. Thus, I have divided my discussion of the backgrounds of the Jews into two segments; Chapter One deals with Central European Jews, while Chapter Two will be about the Jews of Eastern Europe.
By 1939 all but one of the Central European Jews I interviewed had escaped from Europe. One of them, Lorelei L., does not in fact consider herself to be a Holocaust "survivor." But I do. All of these people were exposed to fundamental changes in their society and experienced major upheavals in their lives as a result of the Nazi rise to power. All suffered the loss of their livelihoods, homes, and later, family members. All saw their husbands or fathers taken to prison or concentration camps, or were themselves arrested, though later released. I found their testimony valuable because it was in Germany that the Holocaust began, and it is in Germany that one can begin to look for the reasons why the Nazis were not stopped.

Mrs. Lorelei L. was born in Westphalia in 1897. At eighty-three she is the oldest of the people I encountered in my research. She came to the United States in 1939. She was one of three children in her middle class family. Her father had been a cattle dealer. Mrs. L. lived in a "completely mixed" neighborhood of Jews and Gentiles. There were no restrictions as to who could live where. She also attended German public and private schools. Although Mrs. L. had no idea how long her family had lived in Germany, she knew her great-grandparents had been Germans. Her grandfather had served in a special regiment in the army in 1870, and she was certain that their German nationality could be traced much further back. She had relatives who had been very active in the political life of Germany, and she herself had been interested in politics during her adult life.

Mrs. L.'s family was typical of many Jewish families in Germany in that they were Jewish, but not particularly religious. In telling of
of her background she stresses that they were a very "liberal" family. By this she means two things. They belonged to a Liberal synagogue, similar to a Conservative Synagogue in the United States. She notes that there were no Reform Congregations or they might have been Reform instead. Also they were "liberal" in the sense of being assimilated Germans. She states that:

We didn't have a kosher house. We belonged to a "Conservative" synagogue, going there on the High Holidays and sometimes on a Saturday, but that was all. My father was such a typical Westphalian. My mother was from the Rhineland. So in that respect we were very much Germans.

Their Judaism was important to them, but they considered themselves Germans first.

They exhibited their "liberalism" in other ways as well. Mrs. L. went to school with "Christian friends and Jewish friends." "My father," she states, "had Christian friends; there was always a good relationship with them." Lorelei noted that not all Jewish families related to the Gentile community in the same way. There were those whose Judaism made them "different" from their neighbors, and thus they were unassimilated. There were also those who hid the fact that they were Jewish, and tried to live as Christians. She tells one story of a young "Gentile" school friend:

I went to a private school before high school. I was very good friends with a Gentile girl. Her father was the head of a gas company.... I never thought that there was any Jewish blood in that family at all. When the Hitler time came, I wasn't living there any more, but I heard about it. Her mother was Jewish, no one ever knew, and there were many such cases.

Mrs. L. does not feel that these people had deliberately concealed their Jewish ancestry, because she does not believe it was necessary to
do so. She states that Jews were not subject to discrimination, and did not need to fear losing status because of their religious affiliation. According to her, "Living quarters, houses, apartments and resorts" all were unrestricted.

As an adult, Lorelei was married to a dentist. Her husband had begun his practice in 1911. The L.'s had many Gentile friends; among them were other professionals, university professors, and the like. Many of her husband's patients were non-Jews, and Mrs. L. states, that among Gentiles and Jews "there was no difference." In other words, she did not feel that Jews were discriminated against, nor did she believe that the Gentile community was prejudiced against them.

But there is evidence from her remarks that there was indeed some difference between the way Gentiles treated each other and the way they treated the Jews, though there was less anti-Semitism in Germany than in the United States at the time. Private social clubs were restricted; generally, Jews formed their own social centers similar to Jewish centers in America, and Gentiles had their own clubs. She notes one casino in particular that had one Jewish member, a very prominent doctor, and she suspects that he may have converted. Lorelei also mentions that there were few "mixed" fraternities at the university her husband had attended. Fraternities often had "arranged duels" between members and "the Christian fraternities, the very fancy ones, wouldn't fight the Jews." Lorelei states that the academic world was less accepting of Jews than the community as a whole.
Mrs. L. felt that when Jews were not blatant about their Judaism they did not encounter anti-Semitism. She states, "If you have this, shall I say, segregated feeling, if you are very different from your neighbors, mostly it (anti-Semitism) comes through this."

Although she did not elaborate on this idea, it is evident that Lorelei L. felt that Jews who were more observant than the average German Jew encountered more anti-Semitism. In particular, it is probable that she is expressing the common belief among assimilated Jews of that time that the presence of the Ostjuden, or Eastern Jewish immigrants from Poland and Galicia, was a cause of anti-Semitism in Germany. Mrs. L. also noted her distaste for the Zionists:

The Zionists were very intolerant and if you were not a Zionist they did not believe you were a good Jew. You could be a very good Jew, but the Zionists didn't consider you one.

Since a large number of Zionists in Germany were East European immigrants, these two views were quite consistent.

One senses that Mrs. L. felt comfortable in her German-Jewish existence but only up to a point. It is not possible to determine whether she would have wanted to be a more religious Jew, but feared losing her right to be considered a real German if she had been, or that she had no desire to be more "Jewish." But it is apparent that she and her family did not consider it proper for good German families to be too conspicuous in their Judaism, and that they did not look too favorably on those who were different. They were, perhaps, a little apologetic about Jews who put their religion on an equal footing with their nationalism. It is also possible that they would have reacted
unfavorably toward Christian Germans who had been more overtly religious as well. Without exactly saying so, Mrs. L. simplifies that she believes the cause of anti-Semitism lay in the Jews themselves, not the Gentiles.

Among Germany's Jews she was not alone in her attitude toward her religion and toward her fellow Jews. In *The Course of Modern Jewish History*, Howard Sachar discusses the progress of German Jews in their fight for emancipation. He notes that, in 1848, at the meeting of the Frankfurt Parliament, Jewish representatives of the Liberal movement were extremely vociferous in their demands to be treated, not as German Jews, but as Germans of the Jewish faith. "They were determined to secure their civil and religious rights as Germans, not as Jews." Thus, one finds that as early as the mid-nineteenth century, Jews in Germany were demanding their rights to be considered Germans first. Says Sachar, "This self-consciousness... was now on its way to becoming the distinctive cultural malaise of German Jewry." In order to maintain the freedoms they had won, and to be accepted by the German populace, Jews were "faced with the choice of 'making a fuss' about their Jewishness," or giving up much of their distinctive culture. Wanting to be treated like everyone else, most Jews became assimilated, but not without suffering what Sachar calls a "psychic insecurity." Even though the non-Jewish world had begun to accept them as "neighbors who had clearly and demonstrably risked everything - their funds, their honor, their lives - to be accepted as citizens," they were constantly fearful of losing this acceptance. They gave up that part of their lives that made them appear different, yet often felt guilty for doing so. Thus we
find, in the early 1900s, many German Jews who were still practicing their religion, but who were no longer Orthodox Jews, and some who even converted to various forms of Christianity. Even today in the United States, an unwillingness to display a strong adherence to Judaism is evident in some segments of the Jewish population when it is felt that one's religious affiliation is a detriment to one's career. But conversion to Christianity, unless one is marrying a Gentile, is quite rare. The more common response is to become a non-practicing Jew. Insecurity is of course not the only reason for the assimilation of German Jews. It is also true that the demands of a modern, industrialized society were partially responsible for the abandonment of old traditions, but the desire to be accepted by non-Jewish society certainly affected the behavior of the Jews very strongly.

Eve S., though a much younger woman, came from a family that was very similar to that of Lorelei L. She was born in Hanover, Germany in 1926, but she grew up in Berlin. For twenty-one years, her father was the managing director of a factory that made comforters. The family was middle class, "not as rich as some of the family members" but fairly well off. They were the only Jews living in their apartment house in Berlin. Their neighbors were mainly professionals, including the Gentile owner of the building, a Baron who was also a lawyer.

Eve's family had been in Germany for almost five hundred years. Her father's family were businessmen, her mother's family mostly professionals. They had been active in German civic life for many years. During World War I her grandfather had served in the military.
In his study he had a "whole wall full of certificates honoring his civic and military service, including a personal letter from Kaiser Wilhelm of which he was extremely proud." For a time he had been active in a Veterans organization. In addition to contributing to many German universities, Eve's grandfather had been one of the founders of the Berlin Zoo. Her father had also served in the army and had been a prisoner of war in France during the First World War.

The family also considered themselves to be "liberal," assimilated Jews. With regard to religious upbringing, Eve's testimony sounds much like that of Lorelei L. While the grandparents in her family were observant Jews, the younger generation was not.

We were religious in the sense that at Passover time we would go to my grandparents' home. We were not very observant, but we had a Jewish consciousness. It was kept alive, I would say, by our grandparents.

The education of the children, both Eve and her younger brother, was secular, and they had no outside religious training.

Eve's family was very proud of their German heritage, of their contributions, and that of other Jews, to German life. "They thought of themselves as Germans first, of Jewish background, Jewish religion." She states, "I grew up with an awareness that you could be a Catholic, a Protestant, or a Jew. Just as you could in this country." Many of their friends were non-Jews, "We were friendly with everybody." They also found their non-Jewish neighbors to be accepting of them. In fact, quite a few members of their family had married non-Jews.

As a child Eve did not encounter any overt hostility, or sense any anti-Semitism among her non-Jewish acquaintances.
In fact, I played with the children upstairs and really had a happy time before, I would say, 1935 or 1936. Until I was about ten it was okay. Nobody even said anything that hurt anybody's feelings. It was rather pleasant.

Her father was "staunch friends" with the owner of the apartment building. Since serving in the army with the district chief of police, her father had maintained a close friendship with him as well. Her father also had a very close relationship with the people with whom he worked. Many of these people were to remain his friends even after Hitler took over, though some did not. (One became a member of the S.A.)

Although Eve's family had close relatives in America, before 1935 no one had ever considered joining them. "On the whole," she says, "until I got to England (in 1938) as a refugee, I didn't know what real unhappiness was all about."

The third German survivor whom I interviewed was Rabbi Hans B. On the surface, Rabbi B.'s background appears to differ from that of the other Germans for his family was more religious than theirs.

One might therefore expect his relationship to the non-Jewish community to be dissimilar as well, but this does not appear to be the case. Rabbi B. was born in Bad Nauheim, Germany in 1914. His father was missing in action in World War I, and he was raised by his mother and his retired grandfather. His mother owned a small shoe store, and the family, which included an older sister, was fairly poor, but not at all destitute. Rabbi B.'s family had also been in Germany for quite a long time, at least as far back as the eighteenth century.
The family was observant, but Conservative, not Orthodox. The Jewish population of Bad Nauheim was very small so there was only one synagogue in town. Says Rabbi B. "It had a diverse membership, of liberals to the very Orthodox, and included some who were not religious at all. It was a Jewish Congregation, period." Life for Jews in Germany's small towns was very much like life in the bigger cities. Jews did not live apart from non-Jews, and Rabbi B. attended public schools until he went to the Jewish Seminary in Cologne. Later, he did post-graduate work at Breur Yeshiva in Frankfurt am Main. His mother had "lots of non-Jewish friends" for there were very few Jews. As a child, he had only non-Jewish friends. He still maintains some of these friendships today.

When asked about the existence of anti-Semitism, Rabbi B. notes that:

...there was always a certain amount of anti-Semitism around, as there is today. There was great anti-Semitism in 1923, but even then I was never attacked. I had a good relationship with non-Jews, my friends and the whole population. That doesn't mean that they didn't call you a 'dirty Jew' here and there.

Although Rabbi B. was much more observant than the other German Jews discussed in this paper, he still considered himself an assimilated Jewish German. When asked if his family considered itself German, his reply was "naturally." Although anti-Semitism was present in the town, there was little overt manifestation of prejudice. For the most part, Jews in Bad Nauheim were accepted by their Gentile neighbors, and felt comfortable in their town. The only time Rabbi B. felt "different" was during the Jewish holidays, when he had to ask his teacher for
permission to miss school and attend synagogue: not an uncommon experience for Jewish children today, in many American communities.

The Rabbi's family did not look unusual, nor did they speak a different language from that of their neighbors, and it is apparent that before Hitler's take-over most of the non-Jews of Bad Nauheim considered Jews to be good German citizens, totally integrated into the community.

Berthold G. was an Austrian, not a German, but he is included in this section for two reasons. His background more closely resembles that of the German Jews than that of the East European Jews I interviewed, and the behavior of the Austrian Gentile community toward Mr. G.'s family, both before the rise of fascism and during the Holocaust, was similar to the actions of the German Gentiles encountered by those Jews discussed above.

Mr. G. was born in Vienna, in 1926. His family was quite well off. His father was a physician who was born in the Bucovina, which at the time was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Bert's father later attended the University of Vienna Medical School, graduating in 1920. At one time Dr. G. considered becoming a rabbi, and was quite learned in Jewish studies.

Bert's father's family had come to Austria from Spain, during the Spanish Inquisition. His mother was born in the Ukraine, and came to Vienna when the Russians invaded Galicia in 1914.

The family lived in a large municipal apartment building in the working man's district. Prior to World War II Austria had a type of socialized medicine, so the government provided Dr. G. with two
apartments, one to be used as a dwelling, and the other as an office.

There was only a small number of Reform Jews living in Vienna in the 1920s, and no Conservative or Liberal Jews, so most were Orthodox, as was Bert's family. They were observant Jews, but not so strict that the father would refuse to treat patients on the Sabbath. The family was not Hasidic and thus did not wear distinctive Hasidic clothing or hair style.

Bert G. attended public schools for the first four grades, and later went to a private Jewish gymnasium. As a young child he attended religious school, and had private Hebrew lessons in addition to his secular education.

Just prior to World War II approximately 6 per cent of Vienna's population was Jewish. On the whole, the Jews were friendly toward their non-Jewish neighbors, but on the adult level there was little social contact between Jews and Gentiles.

Since the majority of his father's patients were assigned by the government, and consisted of working class people living in Bert's district, most were not Jewish. His private patients were Jews. Once the rise of National Socialism began, some of Dr. G.'s assigned patients left him, but a good number remained loyal until Dr. G. left the country in 1939.

According to Berthold G., the Jews in Austria were not as strongly assimilated as the German Jews, but they still considered themselves patriotic Austrian nationals. His father had been active in the Social Democratic Party in the 1920s and early 1930s, and had also been given the honorary position of "State Physician," as had a number
of Austrian Jews. Jews were legally treated as equals, but Bert notes:

Although the Jews considered themselves nationals, they were not as nationalistic as the Jews in Germany. There was always a Jewish consciousness, part of it voluntary, part of it forced on you. The Germans considered the Jews as Germans. In Austria, the division was very clearcut, and part of it could be because Austria is a very Catholic country.

In other words, Bert G. believed that Austrian Jews were not as welcome in Gentile society as were German Jews. He also blames this on the fact that the Catholic Church, more powerful in Austria than in Germany, was often a proponent of anti-Semitism. Though many Jews held high positions in Austrian universities, and were noted in the fields of literature, science, philosophy, medicine and the like, they were not, in Bert's opinion, treated as social equals.

Austrian Jews also experienced more overt, though non-violent, anti-Semitism than did their German counterparts. The anti-Semitism encountered by Berthold was manifested mainly in the form of name-calling. He recalls that once, on a vacation in the country, he was called "Christ-Killer" by other boys, but he experienced no other anti-Semitism until the fascists took over in the early 1930s.

Though Bert's family's relationship to the non-Jewish community was quite similar to that of the German Jews, it was atypical of Austrian Jews on many counts. In the early thirties there were approximately 200,000 Jews in Austria, 175,000 of them in the city of Vienna. By 1938 this number had fallen to 185,000 (170,000 in Vienna), as many of them had been expelled or had emigrated due to a sharp increase in anti-Semitism.
Most Austrian Jews were members of the lower middle class, and had suffered a severe financial set-back during the disastrous economic decline of the early 1920s. They had also become, during that period, the target of much anti-Semitic activity, particularly the 100,000 Jews who had fled Galicia during World War I. Unlike Bert G.'s mother, most of these Eastern Jews were expelled from Austria in 1921. During this period anti-Jewish literature was widely distributed, anti-Semitic parades were held in the cities, and a strictly enforced *numerus clausus* limited the number of Jewish students in universities to one-tenth of their pre-war Jewish population. But, from 1922 until the depression began in 1930, the economic situation in Austria improved and the wave of anti-Semitic activity receded. Since Berthold was not born until 1926, and his family had been fortunate in escaping many of the restrictions against Jews (his father had been one of the few who managed to graduate from the University of Vienna), he did not experience the hardships of many of his fellow Jews.

Just prior to 1930 the Social Democratic Party in Vienna, of which Berthold's father was a member, actively sought, and obtained, reforms for Vienna's working class. The Social Democrats were opposed by national agricultural and industrial leaders, and by the Catholic Church. Displeasure on the part of these groups with the reform measures instituted by the Social Democrats, coupled with the fact that many liberal leaders were Jews, insured that political anti-Semitism never completely disappeared during this period.

Once the depression arrived, membership in the Christian Socialist party grew. This party represented rural, Catholic Austria, and was
extremely anti-socialistic and anti-Semitic. By 1933 this party, and the country, were controlled by Dr. Engelbert Dollfuss, who led the attack against the Social Democrats and the Jewish community, until he was assassinated by the Nazis in 1934. While in power, Dollfuss' administration issued restrictions that denied Jews and Socialists entrance to public hospitals, public schools, welfare organization and businesses.

In March, 1938 Germany invaded Austria. Once this happened anti-Semitism in Austria increased dramatically. Notes Howard Sachar, "West of Poland, no people, not even the Germans, match the Austrians in anti-Jewish brutality."

In the course of my research I listened to the recording of another German Jew, Mrs. Arthur S. Mrs. S. came from a home similar to that of Eve S. and Lorelei L., namely an upper middle class, assimilated, German family. She and her family had both Jewish and non-Jewish friends. The children attended German public schools until the age of fourteen, when they were sent to private non-Jewish finishing schools. The family attended a Reform synagogue on the High Holidays (Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur), and the children went to religious school on Sundays and Wednesdays after public school.

According to Mrs. S. she had a "nice, peaceful life" before Hitler came to power. They considered themselves members of an average Jewish-German family. I mention her case to show that the ones on which I choose to concentrate my research are probably representative of most German Jews. In other important respects Mrs. S.'s experiences were
much the same as the others, and I shall make use of her testimony in subsequent pages.

Since most of this study revolves around the experiences of a relatively small number of European Jews, it will be helpful to show how the background of these survivors compares with that of the rest of Central European Jewry for two reasons. First, it is necessary to determine how representative they were of the Jewish community that existed at the time. The testimony of these few Jews regarding their lives during the Holocaust is historically valuable only to the extent that it can reveal to us more than simply a few individual accounts of personal experiences. Second, once they have been identified as members of the Jewish community, rather than just as individual Europeans, it is possible to show to what extent they have been influenced by those historical events that have affected European Jewry as a whole, and thus gain a better understanding of the response of these particular Jews to the events of the Holocaust. In order to do this one must turn to some of the secondary sources that deal with this subject.

In The Course of Modern Jewish History, Howard Sachar writes of the German Jews' participation in the nineteenth century Liberal crusade to establish a democratic, unified Germany. To the extent that the non-Jewish, German bourgeoisie gained economic and civil rights, so too did the Jews. In spite of this progress, under Bismarck's rule there was a resurgence of elements of the old-fashioned anti-Semitism that had been so prevalent in Germany in earlier times. In addition, notes Sachar, a nationalistic, anti-Semitism was introduced into Germany by men such as Prussia's Court Chaplain Adolf Stocker. As German
conservatives became aware of the usefulness of anti-Semitism as a political weapon, their political parties began to adopt anti-Semitic platforms. Eventually, even Bismarck was persuaded of the utility of such a weapon in gaining support of the lower middle class. Because of this, according to Sachar, Jew-hatred gained respectability.

This resurgence of anti-Semitism was not peculiar to Central Europe. In France, there developed a similar lumping together of "liberals and nationalists, of aliens and of Jews as enemies," and here too the use of anti-Semitism as a political tool was adopted by some, despite the fact that by 1900 only thirteen-hundredths of one percent of the population of France was Jewish. But political anti-Semitism did not make much headway until the Dreyfus Affair. Then, together, the royalists and the Catholic Church exploited the fictitious charges against the Jewish artillery officer as a means of intensifying anti-Semitism, thereby gaining support for their drive to topple the republican government. Eventually they were thwarted by liberals in France and throughout Western Europe, but the idea of using nationalistic anti-Semitism as a political weapon remained.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the "Aryan" myth became popular and racist anti-Semitism was adopted by various political splinter groups. The volkisch-racist idea, that all human history has consisted of a struggle between the German "race" and the Jewish "race," in which the Jews have relentlessly pursued a course of world domination, was made popular by the Englishman-turned-German, Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Those who espoused this peculiar world view were to become the chief
distributors of a strange piece of forgery known as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. This document, which was actually a whole series of forgeries, first published in France and Russia, was purported to be the minutes of a meeting at which a small group of powerful Jews outlined their plans to take over the world.

Norman Cohn, in his book *Warrant for Genocide*, states that:

When the Protocols came into contact with the Volkisch-racist outlook the result was an apocalyptic vision not only of contemporary politics but of all history and indeed of all human existence on this planet. And it was in the name of this quasi-religious world-view that the Nazis and their accomplices undertook the extermination of the Jews of Europe, as a prelude to the extermination of Jews throughout the world.

It must be noted that circulation of the Protocols was not limited to Germany. Prior to 1920 it was read in several European countries, and in 1920 it was published in the United States, by Henry Ford's newspaper *The Dearborn Independent*, under the title *The International Jew*. Over a half-million copies were put into circulation in the United States, and the book was subsequently translated into sixteen languages. States Cohn, "All in all *The International Jew* probably did more than any other work to make the Protocols world famous."

Prior to the rise of Nazism, the activity of these movements seems to have had only a marginal effect on the German Jews. The emancipation that was partially won, by the 1870s, was complete by World War I. As late as 1933 the average Jew in Germany appears to have been fairly secure in his German-Jewish identity, though not completely at ease. Most Jews saw themselves as patriotic German citizens, highly assimilated into German life, just as did the survivors described above.
Most were not terribly religious Jews, but only a relatively small number had abandoned Judaism altogether. Moreover, these German Jews felt accepted by their non-Jewish friends and neighbors. If the bulk of their social activity was spent with Jews, they still did not feel uncomfortable associating with Gentiles outside of a purely business or civic environment.

According to Lucy Dawidowicz in *The War Against the Jews*, of the five hundred thousand Jews in Germany before the rise of Nazism 80 percent were natives and 80 percent were Liberal Jews. Sixty percent were in trade and commerce, twenty-five percent in industry and manual trades and one-eighth in public service and the professions (law and medicine). One-third of the Jews lived in Berlin, and forty percent in other large cities. Most (60%) of the Jews belonged to the CV *(Centralverien deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*) - a secular Jewish organization that "stood for the belongingness of German Jews in Germany, not only in the Civil polity, but also in German Culture and society." The remainder of Germany's Jews fell into two basic categories: The Orthodox Jews (15%) and the East European Jews. The life of the Orthodox Jew focused on his religion, but his attachment to his homeland was nonetheless significant. "German Orthodox Jews were unique among European Orthodox Jews in that they shared with all German Jews a profound sense of German identity."22 The East European Jews who had recently emigrated to Germany generally associated themselves with the Zionists (20% of the Jewish population). These Zionists were regarded by many German Jews as "alien to the German Jewish community."23 One other significant group, among a variety of others on the left
and the right, to which Jews gave their allegiance was that of the moderately rightist Federal Union of Jewish War Veterans. A patriotic anti-Zionist organization, its members "shared the simple minded patriotism of all veterans' groups." 24

Thus, writes Lucy Dawidowicz, "The modal German Jew, then, was native, metropolitan, a businessman or professional, liberal in his practice of Judaism, centrist in his politics, with a more passionate attachment to Germany than to Jewishness." 25

As a group, the German Jews I have discussed above differ little from this description.
CHAPTER TWO

The typical Polish Jew of the 1930s contrasted sharply with his assimilated counterpart in Central Europe. When compared with his countrymen, the Polish Jew looked different, dressed different and often, though not always, spoke a different language from his fellow Pole. Even more significant is the fact that Jewish attitudes toward the role of religion in one's life, and the role of the Jews in the social and political life of their country, were not at all like that of the Jews in Germany. Few Jews had become assimilated into the Polish Gentile community. This was partly a result of a conscious decision on the part of the Jews themselves. Whereas in Germany there was a rising, educated middle class into which the Jews could fit comfortably, in Poland this was not the case. In 1931, one-third of the Polish mercantile class was Jewish, although only 10 percent of the total Polish population was Jewish. More than three-quarters of the Polish Jews lived in cities and towns, where they constituted twenty-seven percent of the urban population. In contrast, only 20 percent of the Gentile population were urban residents. Jews made up a considerable proportion of the intelligentsia, and a much higher percentage of the university and secondary school population, relative to their numbers, than Gentiles. Since the average Pole was an uneducated peasant, there were few Gentiles with whom the Jews, slightly wealthier than most and far better educated, could associate. The backward cultural level of the Christian community had little attraction for the Jews, and most chose to retain their own religious
and cultural heritage.\textsuperscript{29} This usually meant retaining their unusual
customs and style of dress as well, and they were looked upon by the
Poles, even those who lived in the cities, as a people apart. They were
therefore the target of much anti-Semitism and were generally treated as
second class citizens.

This contrasts sharply with conditions in Germany where most Jews
found the rich cultural climate attractive enough to want to assimilate,
and where the Gentile community was enlightened enough to accept them.
As far as the Polish Christian was concerned a good Jew could not be a
good Pole. The feeling that they were not accepted members of their
communities, or of their nations, is expressed by all of the Polish Jews
whom I interviewed. Anti-Semitism, often erupting into violence, was
an ever-present phenomenon. Sometimes this anti-Semitism was
accompanied by official government restrictions on the Jewish community;
sometimes it was not.

In this section on East European Jewry I have included material
drawn from the interviews of three Polish Jews and one Russian Jew.
Though anti-Semitism existed in Russia before World War II, incidents of
violent pogroms and the imposition of discriminatory legislation was
not as prevalent, following the first World War, as it was in Poland.
Reasons for this phenomenon will be discussed at the end of this
chapter.

The first person interviewed was Joseph K. Mr. K. was born in 1928
in Bucovina, in a small Polish town of about eighty thousand, of whom
50 percent were Jewish. Joseph's hometown was a far cry from the
industrialized urban centers of Western and Central Europe. Although,
by 1939, the town had electricity, many similar towns did not.

Hot and cold running water was a luxury. Water was brought into the homes in buckets from a common well. Radios were at a premium, and possession of guns was against the law. In 1939 the horse was still the predominant means of transportation, as only half a dozen townspeople owned cars or trucks. Joseph's father was a butcher, and his mother joined in the operation of the store. The family was small, two girls and Joseph, and fairly well-off by local standards. Though not wealthy, they were definitely members of the small, Polish, middle class. They owned some land, a farm in the country, which contributed to their income. The family had been living in Poland for "a long time," though Joseph did not know how long.

The family did not live in a separate part of the town, for Jews and Gentiles lived side by side. Joseph attended regular public schools in the morning, and had Hebrew lessons in the evening. The Jewish community in the Bucăvina was Orthodox, there being no Reform or Conservative movement in Poland at the time. So Joseph's family was also Orthodox, but not Hasidic. Mr. K. mentions that on the Sabbath, and during the Jewish holidays, his father's attire was similar to that of the Hasidim. But in practice,

He was not that fanatic. I don't think my father was an actual Hasid. He studied the Bible continuously, and I recall when we were traveling on the road he would stop the wagon, get off, and pray. Regardless of where he was he always prayed. This is the kind of background I grew up in, and I felt comfortable in it.

To Polish Jews, according to Joseph K., Polish nationality was important, despite the fact that religion was the most important factor
in their lives.

We considered ourselves as Polish citizens. Both my parents spoke Polish, and both read and wrote Polish. We all went to Polish schools. I would say we considered ourselves very much as Polish citizens. However, we were always aware of being Jewish. First of all through our own belief and dedication. We were totally Orthodox.

The second reason: they were constantly made aware of their Jewishness by the presence of a strongly felt anti-Semitism amongst their neighbors. Although the Jews were willing, even eager, to be loyal, patriotic, Polish citizens, enjoying the same rights, privileges and duties as the other Polish people, the Gentile community was unwilling to let them be both Jews and Poles.

Jews, such as Joseph K., living in small Polish towns, were constantly subjected to the anti-Semitic actions of their Christian neighbors. According to Joseph, signs, like graffiti, on sidewalks, on fences, on the walls of houses, saying "Jew get out," "Jew go to Palestine," "Jew you are not wanted," appeared often in the streets. They "got along well," with their non-Jewish neighbors, attending to the courtesies of a "good morning," or "hello," when meeting, but they were only neighbors, never friends. "And those were the nice people," says Mr. K.

For me it was difficult to strike up a true friendship with a Polish boy or girl. In school, boys always had to defend themselves. I remember that if I got caught on a street in which there were mostly non-Jewish boys, I was in constant fear that I would get beaten up. I was, on many occasions. But that was not just me. Most of the Jewish boys had that to contend with. The Polish people in our area, by and large, were not kindly disposed toward us. We were not kidding ourselves. We knew we lived in a hostile environment, but we learned to live with it, and we managed very well.
Though Mr. K. does not recall specific laws restricting the behavior of Polish Jews, he does remember certain unofficial practices of national organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, and universities, that eliminated all significant Jewish participation. In fact, there was legislation passed between 1919 and 1939 that very definitely restricted Jews. Few Jewish boys went to universities, and when they did go, it was usually to schools outside of Poland. Under Pilsudski the Polish government vacillated between a policy of legislative anti-Semitism and economic measures that, while not stating a specific anti-Jewish aim, served, in fact, to systematically eliminate Jews from the Polish economy. "Officially Poland was a democracy," Joseph noted. "Unofficially it was the furthest thing from a democracy."

By 1936 there was an unofficial numerus clausus against Jewish students, and by 1937 "ghetto benches" had been established at all Polish Universities. The left side of the classroom was set aside for Jewish students, and this policy was implemented by "clubbing Jewish classmates, wrecking lecture halls, insulting and hooting down liberal professors." The Jewish students, supported by Polish liberal and labor groups, and the Jewish working class, went on strike in an attempt to persuade the government to end this practice, but they were not successful.

In 1937 Joseph K. was only eleven years old, but discussions of the "bench ghetto" must have made a strong impression on him, for when he speaks today of this policy it is with anger. "It was a mocking, ridiculing way of segregating the student within a learning facility. I feel this was extremely cruel." Those members of his family who became
professionals had to leave the country to do so. His brother-in-law studied medicine in Italy, and a cousin studied law in Austria.

If opportunities for Joseph K. were limited, and violent anti-Semitism a common factor in his family's life, why did they remain in Poland? "Because we were comfortable," says Mr. K. Over the years they had developed a way of life that they were reluctant to give up. His mother had a large family living nearby. And, though his father's family, three sisters and two brothers, had moved to America, his father was afraid that once in America he, or his children, would lose their ties to Judaism. At one time Joseph's father had obtained the papers necessary for emigration to the United States, but while on a visit to the American consulate in Warsaw, he attended a service at a local synagogue where he heard that "religion takes a back seat in America." Says Joseph, "He felt he would not like to trade his life for theirs." For, difficult as life was for the Jews in the Bucovina, it was not unbearable. Between some Jews and Gentiles there were even some close relationships. Life in the abstract was threatening, but on a day to day basis one dealt with whatever happened.

My father felt quite secure amongst the non-Jewish peasants in his village. He grew up with these people, and in the first World War they had served together in the Austrian army. So my father had developed tremendous friendships with these people throughout the years.

Later, during the Nazi occupation, Joseph's father was to be bitterly disappointed in the behavior of his friends. But during the early 1930s they often welcomed his family into their homes.

When compared to Joseph K.'s life in a small town, Mark and
Bernice S.'s life in the city of Lodz, Poland, a city of some six hundred thousand people, was somewhat different. They were not married until after the war, and, before the creation of the ghetto by the Nazis, they lived with their families in different sections of the city. Taken together, their stories provide a fairly comprehensive description of life for Jews before World War II in one of Poland's largest cities.

Mark S. was born shortly before World War I. He, and his five brothers and sisters, grew up in Lodz. His father owned a small factory, and, Mark states, they were members of the lower middle class. The family was Hasidic, but "not fanatics of the Williamsburg variety." He feels they were a "normal Polish family" that just wore different attire. He attended private grammar schools, but his was not unusual for children in Lodz. His wife notes that one had to be very poor to go to the public schools. At school he was taught both religious and secular subjects. After grammar school, Mark attended an Orthodox seminary in Warsaw, but at the age of eighteen he quit his studies, for "personal reasons," and decided to be a non-practicing Jew. Though a synagogue member today, he still does not consider himself a religious man.

Though Mark's family was financially "comfortable" living in Lodz, its relations with the non-Jewish population were decidedly uncomfortable. "We felt like foreigners. We were treated like foreigners in every respect. Polish Jews, from the day Poland was declared a free country, (before 1918 it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) were second class citizens." Most of the Jews of Lodz were engaged in commerce, but few played a part in heavy industry, banking or higher education. Most
of those Jews he knew who did manage to become professionals received their training outside of Poland, usually in Germany. These men rarely had any Gentile clients, or patients. "We made a living there, and there were some wealthy Jews in Poland, but the working class had it very tough." The Jewish community in Poland was represented in the Sejm (lower house of parliament) and in the Senate, but there were few Jewish deputies or Senators. Though Jews were active in a variety of political parties, they rarely held high posts in government. Jews could be found living in all parts of the city, but they tended to congregate in "Jewish sections." Speaking of the Jews in general, Mark states "We were in ghettos there always, in every city, we had a Jewish section."

Jews were easily identifiable, particularly Hasidic Jews, and thus were clear targets for anti-Semitic action. Many Jews, particularly the men, who looked more unusual than women, were afraid to travel through non-Jewish districts:

We wore a different kind of attire. We did not wear the secular attire that everybody else wore. We wore the round hat and a long caftan... The Poles were very good at recognizing the Jews. The Jews had mostly dark eyes, dark hair, crooked noses, at least a little bit. The Poles were mostly blond, with pug noses.

The Jews I have talked with were very conscious of the differences between themselves and their Gentile neighbors, but the fears they expressed do not seem imagined or unreasonable. "Where my wife lived, with her parents," notes Mark, "I wouldn't even dare to go. Her father and brother, they were Hasidic,* and I don't know how they managed to

*According to Bernice they were Orthodox, but not Hasidic, though they still dressed in Hasidic garb.
stay in that neighborhood. It was a strictly Polish neighborhood, and you were not safe there in the night, especially if you were in that type of attire."

The most dangerous time of the year was Christmas. Says Mrs. S. "You stayed in. You didn't look for trouble, and always somebody got beaten up."

Apparenty the teachings of the Catholic church had a lot to do with the anti-Semitic feelings of the Polish people. Mark was born in the town of Lanchitza and remembers quite clearly the effect of the church's influence on the non-Jewish members of that community.

In Lanchitza there was a picture of Joseph. People made pilgrimmages to the town several times a year. During the pilgrimmages, which drew several thousands of people, the Gentile merchants would hold bazaars, but the Jews couldn't display goods. They had to hide for fear of pogroms. I remember as a young child going home from Yeshiva (religious school). I was scared stiff, because I could get beaten up any time. We went in groups so we could put up some resistance.

He feels that anti-Semitism was taught by the church. It was "ingrained in the Polish people" having been instilled "since the cradle." In addition to the medieval belief that the Jews were Christ-killers, often the Poles voiced the standard anti-Semitic myth that the Jews were the landlords, despite the fact that most of Poland's Jews were quite poor.

Mark's wife Bernice was born in Lodz in 1918 into a middle class family. She was one of eight children. Her father was the representative for a French company that sold silk. The family had
several servants and was rich enough to spend summers in the country. As noted above, they did not live in a Jewish section of Lodz, but in an apartment building in a non-Jewish section of the city. Though they were friendly with their Gentile neighbors, they did not associate with them socially.

Bernice's family had been in Lodz "for ages," though she did not know exactly how long. They spoke Polish at home, as well as Yiddish, and also were quite fluent in German, another indication that they were in the middle class. Most of their neighbors were of German origin.

All of the children were sent to private schools, but Bernice's father could not afford to send them on to universities. It was almost impossible to get accepted into Polish colleges, and going away to school was too expensive. Also, noted Bernice, her brothers had studied mostly religious subjects, and were not really prepared for university studies.

When asked if she had been happy living in Poland, Bernice expressed mixed emotions. Her family was well-off financially, but was constantly reminded of their lower social status and their position as "second class citizens." Their encounters with anti-Semitism went well beyond the name calling stage, and she and her family were very often afraid to leave their home.

Yet they remained in Poland, and they remained Jews. The Jewish community made it very difficult for its members to convert to Catholicism. Its leaders issued sanctions against those who converted, and the average Jew did not look favorably on those who did convert. As Mark states, "They were not recognized by Jewish society. In fact, most
of our troubles came from these 'misha' (fools) who converted to another religion. They were more Pope that the Pope, if you know what I mean." One can assume from this statement that Jews who did convert made a point of disassociating themselves from their families and friends in an effort to be accepted by the general, non-Jewish, population.

If in the 1920s and 1930s one was unable to live securely as a Jewish Pole, and converting to Christianity necessitated a break with family ties, why didn't the Jews move to America, or even to Palestine? Joseph K. noted the reluctance among Jews in his family to abandon their cultural heritage. Bernice S. makes another observation. It was difficult to get to Palestine or America. The bureaucracy was extensive, and the cost was high. Also, having no relatives outside of Poland, unless one could take a whole family with him, including married children and their families, there was no compelling reason to say goodbye to the only people one loved. Noted Bernice, "If you don't have anybody, anyplace in the world, what are you going to do? Where are you supposed to go? You don't run that quickly."

In the course of my research I also listened to a taped interview of Dr. Philip L., a Rabbi. Dr. L. has written a book about his experiences during the Holocaust, and some of my information comes from this book as well. Dr. L. grew up in Belitzah, Lithuania, a section of Eastern Europe that is now a part of the U.S.S.R. but was independent under the Treaty of Versailles... It was annexed by the U.S.S.R. in 1940. Ethnically the town of Belitzah was predominantly Polish.

Dr. L.'s description of his childhood in Belitzah is interesting
in that it reveals a distinct contrast between the Polish speaking
Gentiles of Lithuania and the non-Jewish Poles discussed above. It
seems apparent that the Gentiles in Belitzah were much less anti-Semitic,
at least in outward behavior, than the non-Jews in Poland.

Apart from this lack of anti-Semitism, Dr. L.'s background is very
similar to that of Joseph K. He was born in 1930 and was the oldest of
five children. His father was a businessman who owned several miles of
the Niemen River and employed fishermen to work along the river. He
sold their catch in the nearby cities. The mother owned a fabric store.
Thus they were fairly well off. They lived in a four room house, which
was considered quite large by the standards of the times. The town
itself was rather primitive, having no electricity and no telephones.
It was a "calm, peaceful," old-fashioned village.

The family was very religious and sent the boys to private Jewish
tutors when they reached the age of five. Later the boys attended
public schools. In 1939 when the Russians occupied the town the
children were sent to Russian schools.

The family spoke Yiddish at home, and the children learned Polish
at school. Under the Russian occupation they were taught Yiddish and
Russian in school, but were not allowed to learn Hebrew.

According to Dr. L., life for the 30 percent of Belitzah's
citizens who were Jewish "was quite pleasant." Although they had
experienced pogroms prior to World War I, there had been none since.
This is in marked contrast to the experiences of Jews in Poland during
the same period, about which Lucy Dawidowicz writes: "Pogroms marked
the inauguration of Poland's independence and were a recurring
phenomenon in the twenty years of independent Poland."

The Jews of Belitzah thought of themselves as Polish people. Speaking another language and dressing strangely, they were somewhat set apart. But, according to Dr. L., "They were treated like everyone else, except that they worshipped at the synagogue across the unpaved street from our house." Jews were active in Lithuanian politics, and were elected to the Lithuanian parliament. Dr. L. also speaks of having non-Jewish friends.

When the Russians moved into Belitzah (1939-41) Dr. L.'s family was singled out from some of their non-Jewish neighbors, but not because of their religion. The Russian Communists considered them "exploiters" because of their economic situation, and they prepared for exile in Siberia, as did the other merchants and landowners in the town. Dr. L.'s mother was forced to turn over her store to the Communist government, and his father was put out of work. For a while they lived by bartering what goods they had, but at the end of 1940 the father was put to work supplying fish to the Soviet government. They were never sent to Siberia.

Under Russian rule the family was considered "different" because it was middle class. Says Dr. L., "In school I often felt tense, especially when the other pupils became aware that my family did not qualify as members of the working class." But they were not discriminated against because they were Jews.

Prior to 1939 the Jews of Belitzah led a fairly comfortable life. Dr. L.'s grandfather had been to America, but had eventually decided to return to Lithuania. Dr. L. had experienced little anti-Semitism during

*All words in brackets are those of the author.
during his childhood though the Jews in general could not really be thought of as assimilated into the community.

From the testimony of these four people, Joseph K., Bernice and Mark S., and Dr. Phillip L., one can see that Jews in Eastern Europe did not have the same relationship toward their respective homelands as Jews in central Europe. It is also apparent that the nature of the experiences of Eastern European Jews, prior to World War II, varied and depended upon the nationality of the people. The absence, or presence, of anti-Semitism, the economic status of the Jews, government policies directed at the Jewish community, and the attitude of the Jews themselves toward their fellow countrymen, all were influenced by a long list of factors: historical, religious, economic and political.

In Poland just prior to the Holocaust, the economic and social status of the Jews had deteriorated. Beginning in 1920 the cities of Lodz and Warsaw experienced a series of pogroms, followed by what has been termed a "cold pogrom," during which the government systematically eliminated the Jews from the economic life of Poland. In 1923 the government reduced its subsidy to Jewish schools and the Jewish welfare system. Although it was not until the mid-1930s that there appeared specific anti-Jewish legislation, earlier the government nationalized those industries that were primarily created and owned by Jews, and fired the Jewish employees. Jews were then denied civil service jobs and government contracts, which were the remaining sources of employment for many urban workers. This led to a severe loss of buying power in the Jewish community. Combined with the world-wide depression, these anti-Semitic policies eventually led to disaster. According to Howard
Sachar, by 1931, one million out of the 3.3 million Jews in Poland belonged to unemployed families. The city of Lodz, once called the "Manchester of Poland," had been reduced to the status of an "industrial morgue."³⁴

As noted above, during the 1920s and early 1930s the Jews made up about 10 percent of Poland's population, and most lived in urban areas. As I will show in subsequent chapters, this concentration made it extremely easy for the Nazis to locate the Jews and put them into ghettos. A good portion of the Polish middle class were Jews, though most were lower middle class workers, or small businessmen. In 1931 only 3.7 percent of the population was engaged in commerce, but 34 percent of them were Jews. Forty percent of the Jewish population was in industry and crafts, one-third in trade and commerce and 6 percent in the professions. Though few were wealthy, many Jews were better off than their non-Jewish countrymen until the increasingly anti-Semitic government policies eventually stripped them of their livelihoods.

Many reasons have been offered to explain the prevalence of anti-Semitism in Poland. It is not within the scope of this paper to include the entire history of Polish anti-Semitism. But, as it was so much a part of the lives of those people about whom I am writing, and as the anti-Semitism of the Poles played an increasingly violent role in the lives of Jews once the Nazis took over Poland, some discussion of its causes is necessary; particularly since the survivors I interviewed attribute much of the success of Hitler and the Nazis to the cooperation of the Polish people.

After World War I when Poland was established as an independent
nation, many minority groups were added to Poland. Among these were 3,000,000 Jews. Officially these minorities were entitled to civil and political equality with the rest of the Polish people, of whom there were approximately 19 million. But in reality, all suffered some form of harassment. Sachar attributes the harsh treatment of Polish minorities to a fear on the part of Poland that it would again be partitioned if it did not actually suppress these diverse groups living within its borders. "It was fear, even more than hatred, which led Poland into a policy of repression, of applying to minority peoples the same galling discriminations from which she, herself, had suffered for centuries." Being the only minority that did not have a national ally outside of Poland, or what Sachar refers to as a "brother" nation, the Jews were quite vulnerable to attack. But it is also true that those ethnic groups that had backing from outside of Poland were exploited by these nations as well.

They were also a very conspicuous minority. As noted earlier, one of the main causes of anti-Semitism was the fact that Poland had no significant middle class into which the Jewish population could assimilate. The Jews therefore did not attempt to become more like other Poles. Whether Orthodox or Hasidic, their clothing, language, hair styles and religious customs made them a highly visible minority. According to the testimony of my sources, even their physical features marked them as Jews. (Historians have noted that because of the belief that Jews look different from Gentiles a number of non-Jews were fingered by anti-Semitic Poles and handed over to the Nazis.)

Eighty percent of the Polish Jews spoke Yiddish and adhered to the
to the Eastern European traditions. Approximately 8 percent spoke Hebrew as a way of "recreating a purely Jewish culture." The remainder continued to follow their Jewish traditions, but were assimilated into Polish life and spoke either German or Polish.

According to Sachar, three interest groups were responsible for keeping Poland "on the brink of bankruptcy": the monopolist landowners, the Industrialists and the Church. These groups wished to maintain the status quo, and to divert attention away from their own manipulation of the economy they placed the blame for Poland's troubles on the Jews, calling for the Jewish middle class to "step aside" and make room for a "native" middle class. They continued to hold on to their unequal share of Poland's land, and neglected to use her resources to expand the Polish economy. "It was the inflexibility of these vested interests, together with the loss of foreign markets, which was the root of Polish poverty."

It was not hard to win the support of the peasants and the labor class in the attack on the Jews because anti-Semitism had been present for centuries, fed and nurtured by the Catholic church. In writing of the 1920 Polish invasion of the Ukraine Sachar states, "The typical Polish peasant-soldier, ardently - even fanatically - Catholic, had been weaned on anti-Jewish folk legends."* Possessing a natural fear

*In Warrant for Genocide, Norman Cohn attributes the extreme anti-Semitism of the Poles during the invasion of Russia to the efforts of the Polish Catholic clergy to encourage belief in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a forgery that purports to be a report of a worldwide conspiracy by Jews to take over the world. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969), p. 165
of those who are alien—who look and act differently from oneself—combined with an age old belief in the Jew as the Christ-killer, the uneducated Polish peasant was an easy mark of anti-Semitic propaganda. Seventy-five percent of the Polish people were members of the peasantry. Despite the fact that it was unnecessary to impoverish the Jews in order to improve the Polish economy, the Polish government decided to do just that, thus weakening Poland's economy. Each special interest group, the church, peasants, laborers, lower middle workers and aristocrats supported this action.

It does not seem to have been this economic situation which created the differences between life for the Polish Jews living in Poland and the Jews in Dr. Philip L.'s town in Lithuanina. Though the Christians in each country were of Polish origin, and the town of Belitzah seems to have been no better off economically than the small towns of Poland, there was not a strong campaign on the part of the government to blame the Jews for the existence of poverty, although nationalistic feeling in Lithuania did lead to intensified anti-Semitism as time went on.

Between World War I and World War II there was relatively little anti-Semitism evident in the U.S.S.R. as well. In the past, Russian Jewry had often been subject to the hardships of anti-Semitism, both government sponsored and unofficial. Under the extreme Russification policies of Peter Stolypin, Minister of the Interior for Nicholas II, and the Czar himself, the Union of the Russian People was encouraged to carry out a series of brutal pogroms throughout the Russian Pale of Settlement. Stoylpin also intensified enforcement of the hated May
Laws. Jews were mercilessly expelled from cities outside the Pale and from the public schools. The government refused to protect Jewish cultural and religious institutions from attack, and many were eventually shut down. Government owned newspapers labelling Jews "werewolves," "traitors," and a "criminal race," even revived the myth of ritual murder. Economically and culturally the Jews of Russia had never suffered so much as under Nicholas II. But under Soviet rule the situation of the Russian Jews improved, and though anti-Semitism eventually returned, it never reached threatening proportions until the Nazi invasion.

Basically the Soviet Communists concentrated on eliminating the Jewish religion, along with all other religions, rather than attacking the Jewish people. The Pale was opened up; Jews were sometimes resettled on collective farms in the Ukraine or the Crimea, and many participated in the industrialization process. For a time the government even sponsored a program to eliminate anti-Semitism, calling it counter-revolutionary.

Being an anti-nationalistic movement, the Communist government,

*The Protocols originated in Russia during this time and were also read by Nicholas II. Although, at first, he sincerely believed the ridiculous forgery and intended to use it to gain support for his campaign against the Jews, he was later convinced it was a fake and decided to "Drop the Protocols. One cannot defend a pure cause by dirty methods." (Cohn, p. 115)
initially, did not favor the Russian language over that of other minorities living in the Soviet Union. Therefore, Yiddish was allowed as one of the languages of instruction in the schools, although the curriculum was secular. But, the pressures of collectivization, and the economic hardships of the time, left little room for cultural or Yiddish language appreciation. By 1939 Yiddish was spoken by less than one-quarter of the Russian Jews.

The Soviets did not forbid religious observance, but they no longer allowed religious institutions to control education or philanthropy, or to repair religious structures such as synagogues or cemeteries. The reading of Bibles was discouraged, and a new calendar abolished the Sabbath and religious holidays. Even Jewish Communists opposed and ridiculed religious practice. Because of this extreme atheism, adherence to Judaism, particularly among the younger generation, died out.

Whereas other ethnic minorities can depend upon many non-religious customs and traditions to maintain their distinctive identities, Jewish identification is primarily based upon adherence to religious practices. By taking Judaism away from the Jews, the Soviets were succeeding where others had failed, in eliminating Jews from Russia. In other words, Soviet Jewry was becoming assimilated. Says Howard Sachar, "They were no longer persecuted as Jews - not, at least, before World War II; but as the generations went by, the historic beliefs and traditions that had made life meaningful to them were gradually dissipated."

By 1939 there were three million Jews in the U.S.S.R. More than 70 percent were wage earners or white-collar and professional employees of
the State. About 50 percent of these Jews lived in the Ukraine. Although Jews were no longer subjected to government sponsored anti-Semitism, according to Lucy Dawidowicz, "popular anti-Semitism still existed, especially in the Ukraine."

To sum up, it is apparent that the Jews of Germany and the Jews of Eastern Europe in the period before World War II lived in two very different worlds. For the most part, Germany's Jews were "Jewish Germans," treated, in almost every respect, like other Germans. It is impossible to say whether this was because the Jews behaved more like other Germans, or because the Gentile world in Germany, being more educated, and more modern, was also more tolerant. Most likely, it is a combination of these factors.

A combination of factors is also responsible for creating the intense anti-Semitic atmosphere of Poland in the years before the Holocaust. As stated in the introduction of this chapter, the absence of a viable middle class in Poland meant that Jews could not assimilate into the mainstream of Polish life without giving up the kind of cultural environment to which they had been accustomed. Though the Jews believed themselves to be patriotic citizens of Poland, their adherence to religious traditions and habits that were markedly different from the average Pole made them suspect in the eyes of the Christians. Thus it was impossible for them to be treated as true Polish citizens. When talking to Polish American Jews I noted that they often referred to the Gentile Poles as the "Polish" people (as in "a strictly Polish neighborhood") thus eliminating themselves from the group.

The Jews of Eastern Europe, in both Poland and the U.S.S.R. had
lived for centuries as separate nations within nations. After World War I, Polish and Lithuanian Jews, realizing that it would never be possible to win the right to be treated equally as individual Jewish citizens, set out to convince the peacemakers at Versailles to make the granting of Minority Treaties a requirement for the recognition of successor-state sovereignty. Rather than try to become assimilated Jewish Poles, or Jewish Lithuanians, they opted for the attainment of rights as Polish or Lithuanian Jews. Since they were not the only ethnic minorities, they were joined in their demands by other peoples living within the newly created states. Eventually, Minority Treaties were accepted, but no provisions were made for enforcement, nor could they be enforced.

Living as a member of a minority people, even assuming one's rights are being protected (and most of the time they were not) is not equivalent to being accepted as full citizens, who just happen to worship in a synagogue instead of a church. As is evident in the testimony cited above, Eastern Jews were still dealt with as a separate people - as Jews - not as Jewish citizens, and were therefore still set apart from Christian society.

As to the Jews of the Soviet Union, though for the most part they were not subjected to the anti-Semitic actions of other East European countries, they were none-the-less being deprived of their ethnic identity.

When the Holocaust began, the German Jews and the Eastern European Jews interviewed reacted quite differently. Obviously one cannot expect this to be otherwise. In Germany, there was a gradual build-up of power in the hands of the Nazis, and the people, both Jews and Gentiles, had
more time to react to the increasingly hostile government. In the other countries, Poland and Russia, the take-over by the Nazis was brought about suddenly, through war. There was a profound contrast between the way the Jews, and the Gentiles, of each area reacted to their situations, and to each other when the Nazis came to power. Apart from the purely chronological causes of this discrepancy, the way in which these Jews dealt with the events of the Holocaust had a great deal to do with the way in which they had lived before these events began. And, the attitudes and behavior of their non-Jewish friends and neighbors during the Holocaust reflected previous attitudes toward the Jews on the part of the Gentile world.
CHAPTER THREE

It was clear that anti-Semitism, in the period just prior to World War II, was far more prevalent in the backward, peasant communities of Eastern Europe than in the highly civilized region of Central Europe. Thus it is ironic that it should reach its peak in Germany, perhaps the most advanced of European nations. One might expect to find the origin of the Holocaust in Poland, not in Germany. But the roots of a nationalistic form of anti-Semitism go at least as far back as Bismarck, and the peculiar form of racist anti-Semitism adopted by the Nazi Party was espoused by some German historians and anthropologists during the second half of the Eighteenth century.

The combination of the underlying current of anti-Semitism, the devastating economic conditions that engulfed post World War I Germany, and the bitterness engendered by the Treaty of Versailles, made it possible for Adolf Hitler to gain support for his fanatical ideas. This chapter is concerned with the initial reactions of German Jews to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of the German Reich, and with the responses of both Jews and Gentiles, during subsequent years, to the gradually escalating persecution of the Jews.

Chapter Three also provides some answers to two questions that are often asked with regard to the behavior of the German Jews during this period: Why didn't they leave Germany before it was too late? and Why didn't they try to stop the Holocaust when it was still possible?

When asked to recall their initial reactions to the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor of Germany, every one of the German Jews I interviewed made the same response: They believed, "It will all blow over soon."
Following this remark each of them elaborated, giving his or her own reason for this optimism. They had all possessed a profound disbelief that the German people would allow a man of Hitler's caliber to remain in office for long. As patriotic Germans they had a strong faith in Germany as a nation whose government was based upon laws: laws made to protect all of its loyal citizens. This is indicative of the extent to which they had adopted a typically German attitude toward the relationship between politics and the law. Notes Eve S.:

We were almost born with the belief that unless you were proven guilty of a crime you were alright, and justice would prevail. And it came as a shock when it didn't.48

These Jews also were extremely reluctant to leave Germany, and thus were eager to believe that things were really not as bad as they might appear.

Rabbi Hans B. noted that, though his family was apprehensive, they were not frightened enough to say "come on, let's pack up and leave the country." They believed that the times were difficult, but that eventually Germany would solve her economic problems, and the government would become more stable.

Of course, Hitler was very loud, but we had the attitude that we should let him take over the country, and, just like his predecessors, in four or five weeks they'll change the government and that's it.49

This faith in the ability of the German people to recognize the dangers posed by Hitler and the Nazi government was mentioned by Eve S. as well. Her parents believed that

the people would recognize Hitler for what he was.....They looked upon him as an idiot and believed that people were going to find out he was really just a second rate painter and there was nothing much to worry about.

They also believed that as good German citizens they had nothing to fear.
In her unpublished book, Eve writes:

Grandfather would concentrate on his civic contributions. He even had a personal note from Kaiser Wilhelm... How, he asked over and over again, could anything go wrong with such credentials?

And how, her family asked, could anything bad happen to them in "a civilized country with a society founded on law?" Says Eve, "That is why, I suppose, I was the only one to come out alive."*

Another reason why these people were so hopeful was the fact that they did not want to leave Germany. During the first few years of the Nazi rule their lives changed very little, and they were quite happy living in Germany. Lorelei L. continued to play tennis with her Gentile friends. Her husband continued to see his private patients, although he had been relieved of his duties at the army hospital. Rabbi Hans B. finished his schooling and was hired by his first congregation. Eve's father was not laid off from his job until 1935. Until then the fabric of their lives remained much as it had been.

Some, like Lorelei L. and her husband, were too old to want to start building their lives again, in a strange country with an unfamiliar language:

We didn't want to leave Germany. We loved it, you know. Life in Germany was beautiful. Much easier than it was here (In the 1930s), more leisurely. We had a very comfortable life - all my life.50

Gradually, these Germans became more apprehensive as the atmosphere became more anti-Semitic, but they sought ways to allay their fears. For example, Eve's mother, fearful that her daughter would be exposed to prejudice in school, went to visit the teacher. "She returned triumphantly.

*At the age of 13, Eve was sent to England by her parents. Her parents and her younger brother did not obtain visas in time to immigrate to the United States. The boat on which they had booked passage was due to sail from Lisbon on December 9, 1941. Once the United States entered the war, the voyage was cancelled.
He had assured her that with him only justice matters," and that as long as he was teaching there would be no prejudice. "That sounded good and made my mother happy." So, Eve remained in school. Lorelei speaks of a similar situation. In 1935, her daughter, Greta, was ready to attend the gymnasium. But first, Lorelei spoke to the Director of the school. He told her that he would very much like to have Greta attend his school (she was very bright and once in the United States received a scholarship to a noted girls preparatory school), but he was afraid that she would have a "hard time" and sending her there would "Do her no good." He suggested they send Greta to the Jewish school. Mrs. L. notes that the Jewish school was "marvelous" since it was run by university professors who had been relieved of their positions, and Greta received a fine education. But under normal conditions, the Jewish school would never have been Lorelei's first choice. She was just not that religious and preferred to send her daughter to a secular school. She was doing her best to adjust to life in Germany under Nazi rule in the hopes, of course, that this solution was only temporary. By 1938, all Jewish children were barred from German public schools and went, instead, to newly created Jewish schools. Long before that date many had decided, as Lorelei had, that Jewish schools would provide a better atmosphere for their children than public schools.

Rabbi Hans B. relates that he had no problems finishing his education at the University and starting his career. The Nazi takeover had little direct effect on him at first. Although his Christian schoolmates stopped talking to him by the time he left for college, he was only home during vacations so he was not overly concerned. He did not blame them for their actions. "If they would talk to a Jew that
would have been the end of them." In order to avoid trouble, states Rabbi B., "The Jews were smart enough to stay away from them." Rabbi B. probably wished to avoid being hurt, or embarrassed as well.

Rabbi B. notes another reason why Jews wished to remain in Germany. He states:

There was a notion that if you go to America, there is no Judaism. American Jews there are so liberal and so far away from us. (meaning their Jewish traditions) I had that feeling then. We were under a completely distorted impression.

Distorted or not, the feeling that they would lose their religious traditions kept Rabbi B. and his family from recognizing the realities of their situation. Like Lorelei and Eve's parents, he wished to stay in Germany, and, though somewhat fearful of what the future might bring, he believed he was better off at home.

The organized Jewish community expressed the same hopefulness, and patriotic desire to maintain a Jewish presence in Germany, as the individuals I have quoted. On February 2, 1933, just three days after Hitler's rise to power, the Centralverein (Central Organization of German Jews), in its publication C-V Zeitung, reported the following:

We are convinced that no one will dare to violate our constitutional rights. Every adverse attempt will find us at our post ready for resolute defense... stand by calmly.

On March 9, 1933 they reiterated their belief in their rights as German Citizens: "Germany will remain Germany and no one can rob us of our homeland and of our fatherland."

By September 1933, Jewish leaders in Germany, responding to the need for strong central leadership, established the Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden, the Federal Representation of German Jews. The Reichsvertretung represented all Gemeinde (local congregations) associations and all national organizations except the Zionists. It too
expressed the goal of "a vigorous and honorable Jewish life on German soil within the German state." 53

Other leaders counseled the Jews to remain in Germany too. Joseph Lehmann, Rabbi of the Reformgemeinde in Berlin, told his followers that to emigrate was cowardly. "We, as Jews, reaffirm a life in Germany and for Germany." 54 Some who had admonished the Jews to stand firm later suffered bitter feelings of guilt "for not having advised those hundreds of thousands who were later murdered to flee right away at all costs." 55 But in 1933, few Jews believed that the penalty for their loyalty would be death. They believed they were in for some rough times, but that eventually normalcy would return.

Of course, during that first year some did leave. Approximately 37,000 Jews, or 7 percent of the Jewish population, fled Germany in 1933, and by 1935, another 23,000 had left the country.

Between 1932 and 1934, .7 percent or 350, committed suicide. 56 But many of those who left Germany returned in 1934, believing that legality had been restored. Indeed, violent spontaneous outbursts of anti-Semitism had ceased following the June, 1934 massacre of the S.A., and no important anti-Semitic legislation was passed during that year. 57

Despite the peaceful hiatus of 1934, Germany's Jews experienced a gradual and humiliating deterioration of their economic status and a dissolution of their rights as citizens. Each of the families I have discussed suffered its own particular ordeals, but they all had similar problems that needed to be addressed: loss of livelihood; harassment by government officials or anti-Semitic neighbors; humiliating restrictions on where they could go and with whom they could associate; and, most frightening of all, the arrest of loved ones.
The most common reaction to most of these hardships was to find an immediate solution that would provide food for their families, education for their children, and reassurance that even if things did not improve they certainly could not get any worse. From the testimony of the five individuals I interviewed it is clear that one thing they did not do was organize, or participate in, any effective attempt to halt anti-Jewish legislation or to protest against anti-Semitic attacks. Although at first some Jews, and Jewish organizations, did try to protest against these attacks, they were usually met with extreme, violent, opposition on the part of the Nazis. Thus, they chose to meet each upset in their daily lives as a separate problem with which they must cope. Taken singly, no problem was considered unmanageable.

On April 1, 1933 the Nazis proclaimed a national boycott of all Jewish owned enterprises. Mrs. Arthur S. recalls her anger when the Nazi soldiers sat in front of their shop and home, keeping their customers from entering. Later their Gentile customers requested that Mr. S. make his deliveries at night, through the back door. Though not yet fearful of the future, Mr. S. eventually responded to his wife's anger by investigating the possibility of emigration. But neither was as yet anxious to leave, and it was three years before they emigrated to America.

On April 7, 1933, Jewish professionals and civil servants were informed that they could no longer practice. Lorelei's husband worked in an army hospital. Though he was dismissed from this position, he still maintained his private practice. At first, his Gentile patients continued to come to his office; then, gradually, they found other dentists. Says Lorelei:
One man was one of my husband's oldest patients. He didn't want to pay the last bill. And when my husband saw him on the street, he looked aside. We had more of such cases.

Dr. L.'s case was similar; eventually, all of Gentile patients left him; but since he still had Jewish patients, he was able to make a living.

Eve's father was more fortunate than many German Jews, since he was neither a civil servant nor a business owner. The factory in which he served as managing director did not dismiss him until 1935. In Eve's opinion:

He had kept the job longer than most Jews thus employed, and he was proud. They gave him a party and a long beautiful letter that he was very proud of. They did what they had to do, the way they saw it. But they tried to be as decent about it as they could.

The letter helped her father keep his pride; his relations helped him feed his family. In ordinary times, the loss of a job by the middle-aged head of a household is often very traumatic. In 1935, it was even more upsetting because the chances of Eve's father finding employment were non-existent. Yet, says Eve:

They somehow managed. People weren't really starving in Germany until 1939. My father didn't have a job so he worked for my uncle. He sold things. (Her uncle was in the process of liquidating his business) Somehow, people continued to live. They shared homes; they restricted their expenditures.

Eve's parents had saved some money, although eventually most of it was taken by the government. Her mother had a lot of jewelry which she hid in the homes of Gentile friends, gradually selling bits and pieces. This was against the law since the Nazis wished to confiscate Jewish property, and required quite a lot of courage on the part of their Gentile friends as well as Eve's mother. Thus, Eve's parents managed to provide for their family. Later, they also helped others.
Their house became a "clearing station" for relatives waiting to leave Germany, for those who had been thrown out of their homes by Gentile landlords, and for those, such as her great aunt, whose families had emigrated, leaving them alone.

Rabbi Hans B. also found a way to solve the problem of supporting himself. By 1936, rabbis' salaries were no longer being paid by the state. Rabbi B. was then living in Felsburg, near the city of Kassel. He notes that national Jewish organizations, and the Jews in each town, assumed the responsibility of contributing to the support of the German Rabbis. Thus, Rabbi B. was able to continue making a living in his chosen profession.

Berthod G. remembers that, even before the Anschluss, Austria's Christian-Socialist government began enacting anti-Semitic legislation. At one point his father's honorary title of "state physician" was revoked. But his mother went to see the wife of the President and somehow managed to have his title restored. In February of 1934, there was a four-day revolt against the Christian-Socialists, on the part of the Social-Democratic workers in Vienna. Due to the violence in their neighborhood, Bert's family was forced to move to a different section of Vienna to live with an aunt. Despite the shooting, his father returned to their home each day to go to his office. 58

In each of the cases above, the Jews met disruptions in their lives - loss of jobs, patients or salaries - with concrete solutions. They were angry at what happened to them, but their response was to solve the immediate problem, since it was not possible to participate in an organized protest, without being arrested, and they did not, as yet, feel threatened enough to leave the country.
These Germans also noted that Jews worked together trying to help each other through the crisis. "There was a feeling of solidarity, of getting together and helping" among the Jewish people. 59

On the national level, the Reichsvertretung* took upon itself the task of providing education, culture, relief and welfare when these things were denied the Jews in Germany. 60 It also attempted to defend the Jews against the Nazi regime by petitioning the government to release arrested persons, halt its anti-Semitic abuse, reinstate Jews ousted from employment, and arrange a systematic plan for Jewish emigration. In each of its petitions, the Reichsvertretung referred to the interest of the German Reich in the hopes that the government would see the logic in the argument that what hurt the Jews hurt Germany. Their efforts were futile. 61

On the local level, those attempts by Jews to protest their treatment at the hands of the Nazis were equally unsuccessful. Rabbi B. recalls one such attempt on the part of the Jews of Bad Nauheim.

I remember being at one meeting, in 1932. It was infiltrated by by the Nazis and after a short while, they shouted everyone down and took it over and that was the end. Their numbers were small and the Nazis came organized. There was not a chance.

The Nazi government did not just deprive German Jews of their livelihoods. It also stripped them of their rights to citizenship and attacked their self-esteem. On September 15, 1935, the first of the Nuremberg Laws was enacted. The intent of these laws was to "deprive the Jews of their status as citizens of the state and to separate them irrevocably, both politically and socially, from the German population." 62 The Nuremberg Laws served to legalize racism. They forbade intermarriage

*According to H. Arendt, there was two Reichsvertretunger. An early one formed by the Jews themselves and dissolved by the Nazis in 1939, and a later one appointed and controlled by the Nazis. (Arendt, P. 64)
or extramarital relations between Jews and "Aryans." Also, Jews were forbidden to employ in their homes German women under forty-five years of age, to display the German flag or listen to "German" music. The most significant piece of legislation, The Reich Citizenship Law, relegated Jews to the status of German subjects rather than citizens and carefully delineated who was and who was not a Jew.* Only those people who were both "racially pure and politically subservient" would be granted the rights of citizenship.63 Of course, it must be noted that by 1935, even "racially pure" Germans had few rights. But the Nuremberg Laws placed the Jews outside the protection of the law and at the mercy of the Nazis.64

Enactment of these laws merely gave official sanction to a situation that already existed in practice. To most Jews, it did not appear to signify any dramatic alteration in the condition of German Jews. In fact, German officials were quoted in Jewish publications as stating that the government had no intention of prohibiting Jews from living in Germany. The C-V Zeitung quoted Dr. Hans Frank of the Academy of German Law (September 26, 1935):

*Jews were divided into three categories:

1) Jew — anyone with at least three full Jewish grandparents, or someone with two full Jewish grandparents and who belonged to the Jewish religious community on September 15, 1935, or who later joined, or who was married to a Jew then or later, or who was the offspring of a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew that occurred after September 15, 1935, or who was born out-of-wedlock after July 31, 1936, the offspring of a Jew.

2) Mischling, first degree — "part-Jews" — a person with two Jewish grandparents that did not fit into one of the groups defined above.

3) Mischling, second degree — a person with only one Jewish grandparent. (Dawidowicz, p. 91)
"The publication of the Nuremberg Laws brings to an end, for the moment, the process of revolutionary development in Germany. I would just like to emphasize the fact that the Jews will be able to remain and to function unhindered as a Jewish body. We will, however, prevent any association with that race, which is racially alien to us." 65

The Zionists were told by the Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm Frick, that:

The Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of the Race and the regulations concerning their implementations are not intended to harm the members of the Jewish race on the grounds of racial origin. The Jews will not be deprived of the possibility of living in Germany!66

Most German Jews agreed with the view expressed by the Reichsvertretung that the Nuremberg Laws would "create the basis for a better relationship between the German and the Jewish nations."67 They also hoped that, by establishing a formal relationship between the Jewish community and the German government, these laws would eliminate the need for the continued "acts of degradation" that had been suffered by the Jews.68

By the end of 1935, many of the obvious signs of anti-Semitism, such as signs forbidding Jews from entering vacation areas, had been removed, and anti-Semitic terrorism had abated, in preparation for the Winter Olympics held in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in 1936. This development, seen in conjunction with statements of Nazi officials such as those quoted above, made it difficult for Jews to believe that conditions would worsen. In 1935, many were nervous, but they were trying to cope with the situation.

Still, applications for emigration increased substantially, as a result of the new laws, but Jewish organizations responsible for preparing Jews to leave Germany were ambivalent in their feelings towards this response.69 Some reasserted the right of Jews to remain in Germany
and hoped that isolation from the Gentile community would "enhance Jewish creativity and strengthen their inner unity." Even the Zionists, who had always advocated emigration to Palestine, were fearful of a mass emigration that "might spell the end of German Jewry."70

In the end, most decisions to emigrate were made on an individual basis, rather than as part of a national movement. Most of those whom I interviewed did not respond to the anti-Semitic laws with immediate plans to leave Germany, but sought ways to circumvent them or to insulate themselves from their effects. Sometimes, they were successful, but not always. But when they finally came face to face with the violent measures used to enforce the Nazi regulations, they became angry and frightened. Eventually, it was this fear that drove them from Germany.

Generally, the initial response to the Nuremberg Laws was to find ways to get around them. Lorelei L. recalls that one of her husband's Jewish patients had a Gentile girlfriend. The couple would pretend to visit the dentist's office, then sneak upstairs to the L.'s home to meet in secret in Lorelei's living room. Eventually, the two married.

When signs reading Juden Verboten appeared, Jews found different resorts to visit, or separate sections of parks in which to have their picnics. Eve S. remembers reading in the newspaper Der Stuermer that Goering did not want the Jews to visit the German woods anymore, but "he was willing to set up a small reserve For Jews Only.... He thought a few Jewish looking animals like the elk might make Jews feel at home." Eve was upset by remarks such as these, as she was at other times when she witnessed the torchlight parades outside her bedroom window:

I used to hear them in the streets. You cannot help but tap to the music, but then you realize what the words say: "put the Jews against the wall and kill them all." For a young girl, this is a terrible dichotomy. This is happy music;
these are handsome people; they are all together. You want to be proud of them, but they are out to kill you and you don't know why.

To allay her fears, she would escape into a world of fantasy:

I'd be skipping along with an ice cream cone, and I'd say to myself that I'd see Hitler and I'd tell him how nice my parents are, and he should come home for supper and he'd find out.

When she first faced anti-Semitism, Lorelei tried to counteract it with gentle persuasion. She tells this story of an encounter with a German-American while traveling on a train.

I was sitting alone in a train compartment with a man. He began to make all kinds of anti-Semitic utterances, and I thought, I'll let him. I'll hear him out. He didn't seem to think I was Jewish. I remember, because at the end, he said he could always recognize a Jew immediately. I said, "Are you really sure you would?" And he said, "One hundred per cent. If I am with a Jew, I would know it was a Jew." And I said, "Well, I'm sorry, but I have to disappoint you. I am Jewish." He couldn't get over it. And you know, he apologized.

But later encounters with anti-Semitism were not so easy to dismiss.

Once Jews were restricted from Gentile summer resorts, Lorelei found other places to take her daughter for a swim. She speaks of one frightening incident she witnessed in 1935, at a swimming pool owned by a friend:

There was a swimming pool on the river Rhine. The owner was a Gentile but his wife was Jewish. He didn't put the sign up. There we went swimming. One day, I was there with my daughter, and the Nazis came in and began to beat up the man. I was scared. They never recognized me as a Jew, and they didn't do anything to me, but it was just as bad to see it.

Though Lorelei had hoped to find an alternate place to entertain her daughter she found that in this particular case, she could not escape from the hatred that surrounded them. Following this incident she went home and told her husband that she believed it was time to leave Germany. But they were to remain in Germany for almost five more years.
Even children were subjected to anti-Semitism on the part of the police. Once, shortly after Crystal Night (1938), while Eve was accompanying her mother on a walk, she riding her bicycle, her mother walking beside her, she was stopped by a policeman and told not to make U-turns in the street.

Since he had stopped me ahead of my mother, I assumed he would understand if I made just one more U-turn to get back to her. He did not.

He arrested Eve and brought her, and her mother, to the police station. After questioning her, one of the officers yelled:

Your kind disgusts me. You are guests in this country and instead of obeying our laws, you break them every single day. There's no place for the likes of you in the Third Reich. You can kiss your bicycle goodbye.

All this to a girl of twelve who had driven her bicycle in the wrong direction. Many years later, Eve would still be able to recall her frightening experience.

Eventually, anti-Jewish propaganda and government pressure caused many Gentiles to abandon their Jewish friends. Though a few became violent (on one occasion, one of Eve's former school friends gave her a good beating), most of the Gentile friends of these survivors were polite and sympathetic, but none-the-less, determined to break off their friendships. States Rabbi Hans: "My good friends turned on me too. They were just not allowed to talk to me anymore."

In the early days of the Nazi regime, Lorelei found that her friends "stayed just the same." One Gentile professor organized a "League for Peace and Freedom," to oppose the Nazis. According to Lorelei, he was beaten up and sent to teach in another city. Since he was not allowed to return to Mannheim, he insisted that she visit him instead, which she did. On April, 1933, the day that Jews were
first required to affix Jewish stars to the signs outside their offices, Lorelei met another Gentile acquaintance on the street outside her home. He came to me and he said "I am so ashamed to be German."

But some of their friends were not so sympathetic. One of her husband's colleagues joined the Nazi party. "He was one of the first to run around with the swastika and we just couldn't believe it." She recalls that there were quite a number of men in academic circles who supported the Nazi movement.*

And later, some of her acquaintances seemed to have a change of heart regarding their Jewish friends. Lorelei also described the behavior of her landlords. They bought the building when the Jewish owners had been forced to sell.

At first, the new landlady was very nice. When my husband was in Dachau, she came up to see if we had enough food. But later, when we were leaving, she wanted me to get out faster, even though the rent had already been paid. My leaving fit into their plans. I could see the change in attitude. As if they were saying, "You are nice, but..." When there's something they wanted that they couldn't have had in normal times, they never would have acted that way toward Christian people...When I saw people changing, that really struck me horribly at the time.

In other words, though her landlords may have been anti-Semitic all along, under normal circumstances they would not have tried to force Lorelei out of her apartment any more than they would have done so to a Christian tenant. But once the opportunity to benefit from the misfortunes of the Jews presented itself, the landlords revealed their prejudices. To Lorelei, the realization that some of her acquaintances were anti-Semitic came as quite a shock.

*For a good description of the extent to which the German academic community adopted the Volksisch-racist outlook, see Cohn, pp. 174-76.
Eve's family also experienced rejection by their friends, this time coupled with sympathy. One day, the lawyer's wife who lived upstairs came to call on them:

She had tears in her eyes and she said she believed this was only temporary, and things would change, but she thought for the time being, it would be best that her son and my brother didn't play together. She brought us a bunch of flowers and some chocolates. This is what she could do. She could not be a heroine and go against the wishes of the Nazi Reich.

Eve recalled that her parents "understood."

They kind of parted friends. What she did was to show us in her way that it was not a personal thing. She did that much. She couldn't really do any more.

At the start of this chapter, I noted the irony that the Holocaust should have begun in the one European country that had seemed to accept the Jews most whole-heartedly. It is even more ironic that the reasons why so few German Jews chose to emigrate from Germany before 1938 were, in part, the result of this assimilation into German society. Not only had the Jews with whom I talked prospered in Germany, they had also felt warmly accepted by their non-Jewish friends. It was this personal relationship with the Gentile community, perhaps even more than economic security, that made it so difficult for German Jews to perceive at the start the danger that faced them. Over and over again, I was told of Gentile friends, such as the lady in Eve's house, who approached Jews with expressions of sympathy and assurances that, although they might wish to part for the time being, they really disapproved of Hitler and believed that problems experienced by their Jewish friends would only be temporary. Some even stated that they would always be there to give assistance when things got really bad. When surrounded by such well-meaning people the Jews found it difficult to believe the country was against them.
Eve recalled many other Gentile friends who came to her parents with assurances of support. The Baron who owned their apartment building not only insisted, despite harrassment from his Nazi neighbors, that "as long as he owned the house we would be able to stay there," he also succeeded in obtaining the release of Eve's father from prison. As mentioned above, Lorelei S. had a number of friends who did not join the Nazi movement, and continued to associate with their Jewish acquaintances.

Incidents of public protests were also recalled by these survivors. After Bert's father was taken to Dachau in May of 1938, a group of his patients, some whose husbands were Party members, marched to Gestapo headquarters shouting "give us our doctor back." After a few minutes, a young SS lieutenant came out and said "if you like him so much, we'll send you there with him." Of course, they then dispersed and went home, but the support they offered their Jewish doctor was encouraging and very courageous.

Mrs. Arthur S. reported that when the SS confiscated her car, she was told by an acquaintance, who had joined the Nazi Party in the 1920s, that the SS had no right to do so, and that they should protest. Though it is doubtful that he was truly sympathetic, he did lead Mrs. S. to believe that Germany was still a country that operated according to law, and that if even an avowed Nazi appeared to be on their side, justice would prevail, however long it might take.

In the early years of the Third Reich, all of these Jews were aided by Gentile lawyers in effecting releases from jail or concentration camps. Though by the time that was necessary most had decided to emigrate, this support is evidence that many of the expressions of
sympathy noted above were genuine. It was apparent, too, that Eve and the others did not doubt the sincerity of their Gentile acquaintances.

Believing that there were many non-Jews who were willing to help them, if things got really bad, gave these Jews a false sense of security, and made it even less likely that they would rush to leave the country, particularly when they had little desire to do so in the first place. Unfortunately, most Gentiles were not as sympathetic as those noted above. But even those who did not offer their support to Jewish acquaintances often left them with the impression that they did not intend to go along with Nazi policy. Perhaps this was due to the fact that many Germans were too "civilized" to exhibit blatant anti-Semitic behavior, even if they did approve of what the Nazis were doing. Or, it could simply be that too few Germans cared to expose themselves to danger and intervene on behalf of the Jews. Although they didn't hate the Jews, they were just not that concerned.

Thus, until very late in the 1930s, many German Jews continued to believe they were in no great danger.

But by the end of 1937:

Life was changing. People were leaving, emigrating. No sooner had you made a friend, she would go off to a place like Hong Kong. Teachers emigrated, schools closed, and the lines in front of every consulate, including the Chinese one, were long. Jewish professionals and civil servants, actors, musicians and journalists had lost their livelihoods. In addition, many Jewish workers and employees had been forced from their jobs due to pressure from the Nazi party. A series of decrees and "voluntary transfers" in 1938 led to the liquidation or "aryanization" of most of the remaining "Jewish" firms.
Even at this late date, of the 500,000 Jews living in Germany before the rise of Hitler, only 150,000 had emigrated. 73

Of those whom I interviewed, only Mrs. S. left for America before 1937. Sometime during that year, Eve's father began his efforts to obtain visas for the United States, but when he received his papers, he turned them over to his brother.

Father's youngest brother was in a concentration camp. My father decided that he would transfer his papers to his brother's family, and then he would get his in the next mail, and it would just be a question of a few months. He didn't think - he wasn't being heroic.

Even by 1938, Lorelei's husband still did not want to leave. Thus, he insisted that, though they obtained the necessary affidavits, visas and passports, they put off departing until the last possible moment. Neither Bert G. nor Rabbi Hans B. had even considered finding new homes by 1937.

One year later, all would witness the frightening events of November 9 and 19, 1938, called Crystal Night. Eve S. recalls:

In 1938, we lost our innocence; we knew more and understood less. There was a constant chipping away of what was left of our liberty and our dignity... (By November 10, 1938) It was no longer a matter of chips, but rather of people wholly disappearing into jails, camps, or altogether... This terminated once and for all any slender hopes, held tenaciously by some who still dared to believe, that patriotic participation in the last war, or civic contributions, would make a difference. 74

For the Jews with whom I talked, 1938 also brought the horror of arrest and imprisonment.* These two events, Crystal Night and deportation to camps or imprisonment in local jails, forced them to make final plans to leave Germany. It is apparent that these German Jews (and their families) were unable to recognize the dangers that surrounded

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*About thirty thousand Jewish men were arrested during Crystal Night. (Dawidowicz, p. 36)
them until their very lives were threatened. Until then they had rationalized, believing that Jews had always survived despite their hardships and would do so again, or that, when times got bad, there would always be friends to help them out. Eve remembers that:

My father concentrated on happy events. He spoke of all the good people he knew and what they were doing to help us... There was Baron von L. who not only lived upstairs and who assured us of our home, but was also the best lawyer around with lots of connections. The Chief of Police who had served with my father during the war (had) whispered we could rely on him.

And all had continually told themselves that if they waited long enough, "it would all blow over."

Jewish leadership showed the same failure to perceive the direction of events. Leo Baeck, "teacher, scholar, and Rabbi extraordinary of Liberal Judaism," has been quoted as saying, in 1934, "My idea is still this: I wake up one day and find on the billboards posters with this imprint: "I have taken over executive power - General von...""

After Crystal Night, another 150,000 people left Germany, many of them forced to emigrate as a condition of their release from prison or concentration camps. But by then, it was clear that life for Jews in Germany was dangerous, though no one could know as yet how dangerous.

On November 9, 1938, the SS took Lorelei's husband to Dachau. I questioned her about that night. Forty-three years later, her voice still trembled when recalling that event.

L.L. Oh God, if I could draw, I could draw those men who came!
C.S. What did they say?
L.L. Say? They just came. They just took him, and then they came back again. They went through the whole apartment looking into everything.

Mrs. L. obtained the release of her husband after five days. He had to
promise to leave Germany immediately.

So that's what we did. My husband came home. Of course, his face - in the concentration camp - there was a great, great difference. It changed his ideas of humanity. It was a terrible experience. And, of course, he didn't know what would happen there, so he was lucky he came out.

Mr. L. and his daughter left for America immediately. Soon after, his wife joined him.

Until his arrest the day after Crystal Night, Rabbi B. had no plans to leave Germany. The events of Crystal Night changed his mind too. On the morning of November 10, a man came to his school warning him that the Nazis were coming. At first, Rabbi B. was skeptical, but the man convinced him to dismiss the school children. Rabbi B. then went to a neighboring town where he learned that all the Jewish men, all his friends, had been arrested. He remembers that, "The atmosphere was thick with anti-Semitism." He watched a synagogue burn. "It was on fire and everybody was laughing and having fun. There was no fire department in sight."

Rabbi B. called his mother to say that he was on his way, but he was told that the SS had been asking for him. He decided to try to get home anyway. At the railroad station, he was caught by some Nazis and beaten, but then, allowed to leave. The next night, he was arrested. After spending the night in an armory at the train station, he was taken to Buchenwald where he was to spend five horrifying weeks. "Already people were being killed," he notes. One of his friends committed suicide by running into an electrified fence. A Reuters dispatch printed in the English newspaper the Manchester Guardian in August, 1938 provided a report on the activities of Buchenwald. According to the reporters:
Everybody in Weimar knows of the Buchenwald and will readily indicate in general terms where it is, but no one mentions the dread words 'concentration camp.'

In this same article, the reporter noted the plight of families whose relations had been taken to the camp:

But more poignant than loss of work or business is the news of friends who suddenly disappear and are engulfed into the great concentration camp of Buchenwald. From this dread spot in the heart of beautiful Thuringia, the relatives of those interned there have sometimes received a curt official intimation that the prisoner has died on a certain date, that he has been cremated, and the ashes may be collected. Sometimes, these notices reach the relations very soon. The Buchenwald is not a healthy place.

On the morning before his arrest, November 11, Rabbi B. visited his synagogue. He found that it had been destroyed.

In those days, I was still young and I was rather bitter, and rightly so. I found a prayer book in the debris of the burned synagogue. Inside the book I wrote: "Oh God, let me be in the hour of your revenge, the tool of your revenge."

When Rabbi B. was released from Buchenwald, it was on the condition that he leave the country immediately. There was no time for revenge.

Eve also remembers Crystal Night:

On the morning of the tenth, we woke to the strains of "Put the Jews against the wall," sung by black-clad SS troopers. It sounded quite invigorating if you did not listen to the words. You tried not to, but you knew them already having heard them before, so that did not help. We went to school as usual. As soon as we arrived, we were immediately dispatched home, and told to take the straightest, most direct route home, not to go by the synagogue. Naturally, we went home by way of the synagogue, or rather what had been the synagogue. We had seen nothing like it ever before, and, for a while, we just stared. The windows had been broken and some jagged pieces of glass still clung to burning or smoldering wooden frames. What had been a proud grey stone facade, had changed into a shabby blackened ruin. Thick black smoke escaped through the roof from a huge consuming cauldron that had run dry. The smoke made us cough and our eyes water. I looked up and tried to remember near which window my grandmother had sat when we had visited her, and that's when panic took hold. I glanced at the people around

*A diplomatic report to the British Foreign office in 1938 also noted that relatives were required to pay three marks for the victim's ashes. (Morse, p. 184)*
me and then started running without turning back - straight home.
I even forgot about my friends who had been standing next to me.

Eve recalls that her father did not come home from work that evening,
and her mother feared he'd been arrested.

Home, for the first time, was pervaded by a sense of doom...My
mother kept repeating for the twentieth time that he had gone
to Uncle Max's office... My brother said what was on everyone's
mind: "He has probably been sent to a camp." My mother slapped
him so hard that his nose started bleeding. Then she felt worse,
and started sobbing.

Her father did return later that night. But a week later, he was
arrested for "tax evasion." This was preferable to being arrested for
religious reasons because it meant that he was taken to jail rather than
a concentration camp.

With the help of the Baron, their landlord and a lawyer, Eve's
father was released from prison the day before Christmas. By this time,
her father realized that he might not get the visas and affidavits
necessary for emigration in time to save his family, and he began
desperate attempts to find homes for his two children outside of Germany.
Eventually, a refugee committee found a place for Eve, but not for her
brother. Before the year was out, Eve was safe in England. The rest
of her family remained in Germany until each was deported to Riga,
and then to Auschwitz.

Even before Crystal Night, Bert G.'s father had applied for
United States visas, but at the time of the Anschluss, he was still
hoping things would improve in Austria. On March 13, 1938, Germany
annexed Austria. Bert remembers the day vividly:

Hitler went on the air to announce the bloodless takeover.
Five minutes later, I saw swastikas flying outside the windows
in our apartment block, even before they went up on official
buildings.

That night, the signs outside his father's office were broken, and
the police confiscated his father's car. Still his father didn't "rush" to get out. But by April, he realized that things were going to get worse.

There had been several attempts on the part of the police to have him arrested. On May 27, 1938, they succeeded. Previously, non-Jewish friends and neighbors had spotted the police and sent them away insisting that Dr. G. was "alright." Eventually, the police appeared in civilian clothes. Unrecognized, they were not accosted by the neighbors. Not wanting to alarm his family, Dr. G. left his home peacefully, and it was not for several hours that his wife realized he was not coming back.

Following Crystal Night, Bert's mother decided that it was imperative that they get her husband out of the camp, and that they leave the country. She contacted a lawyer in Berlin who gave her the name of a Gestapo official who might be willing to get Dr. G. released.

She went to Gestapo headquarters, but got thrown out. Then she went in another entrance, went up two flights of stairs and saw the Gestapo official. She convinced him that my father could leave the country. (Although he couldn't because he had not completed the necessary red tape required by the United States government.) She had paid fifty marks for a steamer ticket he couldn't have used because he had been arrested before he had had the physical examination required in order to obtain a visa. But the official bought the story, and on December 29, father was released.*

Dr. G. had signed a paper saying that he would leave the country within four weeks, and that he would not tell anyone what had happened in the camps. Since he still needed to obtain their visas and passports, they overstayed the allotted time.

*Dr. G. was at the camp gates when the officials realized he hadn't been shaved for several days. (Inmates were forced to have their heads shaved.) They called him back. He missed his train, but made the next one, and arrived home on December 31.
If, during the last four days in Vienna, my father had been
stopped on the street for papers, that would have been it. He
would have been right back in for good.

On February 2, 1939, Bert's family departed from Vienna. Several
days later, they arrived in Paris. It was not until then that his
father said a word about his ordeal in Buchenwald; he was so afraid of
being forced to return.

The only one of the survivors that I interviewed who left Germany
before 1938 was Mrs. Arthur S. Perhaps this is because her husband was
arrested in 1934, long before the others, and therefore, was more aware
of the precarious situation of Germany's Jews.

Mr. and Mrs. S. owned a car. In the fall of 1934, the Nazis took
their car, used it, and returned it a few days later. Inside the car,
the S.'s found a "mess of human ---" which they had to clean up. Shortly
after this incident, two members of the SS came to their home and told
Mr. S. to come with them in the car to the next town. The SS men took
him to a neighboring village, and for three hours, they beat him with a
rubber hose.

With some help from a Gentile lawyer, Mrs. S. located her husband.
The lawyer got the SS to agree to free him on the condition that he sign
a paper saying that his injuries were the result of a fall on the steps
of the high school. He also had to promise he would have no visitors
until he no longer appeared injured. (Mrs. S. remembers that her husband's
entire body was swollen and that he had "not one white spot anywhere on
his body.")

Prior to this time, Mrs. S. had experienced other frightening
incidents. Once, in 1933, when her husband was away on business, the
SS told her he would never be allowed to return home if she did not pay
her debts. She owed no one anything at the time, but she gave the SS all
the money in the house. Stated Mrs. S.:

They could do anything with you. They could come in your house and shoot you. The Jew was an animal in the forest.

Mrs. S. and her husband applied for visas in 1934, but were not able to leave Germany until January, 1937.

When questioned about the emigration of the Jews from Germany, Lorelei L. remarked: "I do not imagine that in 1938 there was anyone who stayed in Germany because he wanted to." But many could not leave.

Eve S., Lorelei L., Rabbi Hans B., Berg G. and Mrs. Arthur S. were lucky. All of them were able to escape the Nazi terror. How lucky they were becomes apparent when one considers the obstacles that had to be overcome before they could find a country which would accept them. All of the emigrants were forced to leave loved ones behind who were unable to overcome these obstacles.

As noted above, Eve was the only member of her family to survive the Holocaust. In late 1938 and 1939, just prior to the outbreak of World War II, the English people took in nine thousand German children, nine-tenths of whom were Jewish. Among them was Eve S. Had England behaved as the United States did, when Congress was asked, and refused, to shelter 10,000 German children until the end of the war, Eve would have ended up in Auschwitz with the rest of her family.

Bert's father had applied for a United States visitor's visa in 1927 and therefore, in 1938, found himself at the top of the quota list, unlike other Austrians of Rumanian extraction who were forced to wait years before their names came up. The fact that the United States consulate allowed him to immigrate to America was even more unusual in light of the attitude expressed by American physicians toward prospective immigrant doctors. In his book, While 6 Million Died,
Arthur D. Morse states:

The attitude of organized medicine was perhaps best illustrated by the magazine Medical Economics. Its article "Refugees, Unlimited," purported to give a factual account of foreign doctors arriving in a steady stream, ready to debase American medicine... "No ready-made solution seems to fit the problem," concluded Medical Economics. "Meanwhile, cheap competition streams down the gangplank."

This same article described foreign doctors as follows: "They charged fifty cents a visit, their diagnoses were hasty, their surgery radical." It is a wonder Dr. G. and his family made it to the United States at all. But he was forced to leave his father in Austria. In 1940, Bert's grandfather died after a three week stay in Buchenwald.

The others whom I have discussed were also able to immigrate into the United States, having the necessary funds and United States relatives to vouch for their characters and their ability to stay off the public dole, but they too lost family members in concentration camps and death camps, or to suicide. Lorelei's sister had initially obtained a Cuban visa, but it was later revoked. Then, she was told that she could obtain a United States visa if she had $5,000. in a United States bank account, an impossibility in 1940. During our discussion, Lorelei recalled:

My sister would have fit in here terrifically. She spoke French and English, and she had nurses training and wouldn't have any difficulty getting a job. On the transport to the concentration camp she committed suicide.*

Lorelei's husband lost his sister and his two nieces in a camp as well. Rabbi Hans B.'s mother also died in a camp. Though she had applied for a visa to come to the United States, her quota number was much higher than her son's. States Rabbi B.: "That number killed her."

* Lorelei's statement reflects the attitude of American immigration officials that only certain people were worthy of being saved. In some respects, particularly with regard to the quota laws, their criteria were not much different from the Aryan, racist ideas of the Nazis.
From these accounts of families left behind, one might assume that although the United States did not increase the number of Germans permitted to enter the country under the quota system, in response to the Nazi persecution, it did accept German immigrants within the limit allowed. This was not the case. In 1933, the United States quota laws provided for the immigration of 153,744 aliens. In that year, only 23,068 people were admitted to the United States, and of that number, only 1,798 were Germans. In 1934 and 1935, 9,833 Germans were admitted to the United States. Of these 11,000 immigrants, only one-third were Jewish. In the three-year period between 1933 and 1936, more Germans permanently departed from the United States than entered.82

By 1938, total United States immigration from all parts of the world since the Nazi take-over of Germany in 1932, was 241,962. Only 26 per cent of the German quota had been admitted in that six year period, although most Americans believed that immigrants had been pouring into the United States, swelling the ranks of the unemployed.83 During those six years, 246,000 people left the United States for good.

On November 26, 1943, Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long testified before the House of Foreign Affairs Committee on matters concerning a resolution to formulate a plan "to save the surviving Jewish people of Europe from extinction at the hands of Nazi Germany."84 Long denied the need for such a plan on the ground that the State Department was already rescuing the Jews. At that time, he stated:

We have taken into this country since the beginning of the Hitler regime and the persecution of the Jews, until today, approximately 580,000 refugees.85

This was a lie. From 1933 to 1943, only 476,930 aliens entered the United States from all the countries of the world, and only 138,000 of
them were Jews escaping Nazi persecution. The immigration laws could have allowed about 1.5 million to enter the United States during that period.\(^{86}\) There were 1,244,858 unfilled places on the quota, and 341,567 had been allotted to citizens of countries dominated or occupied by Germany or her allies.\(^{87}\)

Thus, even if the relatives of those with whom this paper is concerned had been fortunate enough to reach the top of the quota list, they would not necessarily have been given United States visas. A supposed lack of space under the quota system was not the only criterion for denying immigrants entry to the United States.

According to the various United States Immigration Acts there were four criteria that had to be met before visas could be issued. Because of the peculiar circumstances under which Jews were forced to leave Germany, or German occupied territory, each of these criteria had particularly menacing provisions for these potential immigrants.

Section 7 (c) of the Immigration Act of 1924 required visa applicants to provide a certificate of good character for the previous five years from the police, a ridiculous requirement under the circumstances, but one that was strictly adhered to.\(^{88}\)

Another requirement was that the United States Consul certify that the applicant was not "likely to become a public charge." This provision had rarely been applied before 1930, but was applied diligently after that date.\(^{89}\) In addition, the criteria used to judge the likelihood of the applicant becoming a public charge became much more stringent. Physicians, merchants, dentists, electricians and many other skilled and educated people, for whom affidavits had been supplied by relatives stating a desire and an ability to support these applicants, were denied
visas on the ground that they might "possibly" become public charges. Usually, the reason given for the denial was that "the cousin, sister and friend have no direct obligation" to the applicant.\footnote{90}

Should the applicant attempt to solve the problem of becoming a "public charge" by finding himself a job before leaving Germany, the law included a "catch-22" that still prevented him from being accepted. Because of the repeal of the Contract Labor Law in 1885 (an action intended to protect immigrants from unfair labor contracts), it was illegal for an immigrant to enter the country under an employment contract. Thus, someone who could have shown that he was unlikely to become a public charge because he had the promise of a job from an American relative or friend would be barred from entry on the ground that he violated the contract labor provision.\footnote{91}

Lastly, the Immigration Act of 1917 posed additional problems for Jewish applicants for visas. This law provided for the "exclusion of persons whose ticket or passage is paid by any corporation, association or society, municipality or foreign government either directly or indirectly."\footnote{92} By the time most Jews decided to leave Germany, few had the resources to pay for their own passage to America. Before 1938, the German government required emigrating Jews to put their money in a blocked account which could be liquidated abroad only with a loss of between 25 and 90 per cent.\footnote{93}

By 1938, Jews were not allowed to retrieve any of their funds. In addition, in April of 1938, the Nazis sequestered all wealth over $2,000. per person.\footnote{94} Jews were also required to pay a special "flight tax" amounting to 25 per cent of their yearly income should they choose to emigrate.\footnote{95} Lastly, they were forced to pay 20 per cent of their taxable
wealth as their portion of a $400,000,000 fine for damages done to their own property by the Nazis during Crystal Night. Recognizing the fact that their Jewish brethren in Germany were in dire straits, many American Jewish organizations (and German ones such as the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden) made arrangements to pay for the passage of German immigrants to America. But, according to Law, Jews who wished to take advantage of this aid were denied visas. States Arthur Morse, "The United States not only insisted upon its immigration law throughout the Nazi era, but administered it with severity and callousness."

It was not until the Evian Conference of 1938, that the United States agreed to accept its full, legal quota of 27,370 Germans and Austrians per year. That was the United States' sole concession at this conference of thirty-three nations, called by President Franklin Roosevelt for the express purpose of aiding political refugees from these two countries.

With few exceptions, the remaining countries present at the Evian Conference were no more enthusiastic about opening their doors to refugees than the United States. Author Hannah Arendt characterizes the Evian Conference as "a resounding fiasco... which did great harm to German Jews." The reluctance to provide a haven for those Jews who could escape Germany and Austria encouraged the Nazis to persist in their anti-Semitic persecution. Following the conference, one German newspaper, The Danziger Vorposten, wrote:

We see that one likes to pity the Jews as long as one can use this pity for "wicked" agitation against Germany, but that no state is prepared to fight the cultural disgrace of Central Europe by accepting a few thousand Jews. Thus the conference serves to justify Germany's policy against Jewry.

*France, Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Italy had taken in some refugees in the past, and some continued to do so.
Despite the fact that many Jews waited until it was too late to leave Germany, it was obvious, even in the beginning, that the era of Emancipation was over. Why then didn't more of them protest, or try to stop the growing power of the Nazis? The primary reason, of course, was fear. Simply being Jewish created severe problems for them, and though they did not know for certain how bad things were to become, they reasoned, correctly, that resistance to the Nazis would surely increase their difficulties. Lorelei spoke of a Jewish friend of hers who was asked by the government to provide a list of older people whom the Nazis could deport. He refused to do so and was shot. Stated Eve S., "People did what they could (to survive) without getting in trouble."

According to those with whom I talked, non-Jews also had reason to be afraid. Eve recalled what happened to one Gentile Communist who lived in her neighborhood:

One day, he disappeared and there was whispering; he was sent to a labor camp for opposing the state. About six months later, he returned. His back was bent...his hands shook. His bushy hair had turned virgin white. He looked like some broken prophet demonstrating the message.

Lorelei talked of a Catholic priest who protested against the Nazis, and was sent to a concentration camp. He too, was later released.

But Lorelei and Eve were the only ones whom I interviewed who actually knew of non-Jews who spoke out and were arrested. No one knew any Gentiles who had been killed by the Nazis for protesting or aiding Jews, although they did recall several instances, such as these noted above, in which the actions of Gentiles on behalf of Jewish friends were effective, and these friends were not arrested. In my research, I also came across testimony of other Gentiles who were successful in
defying government officials on behalf of Jews.*

But if few had any real proof that defiance of government regulations, or protests against the Nazi's treatment of the Jews by Gentiles meant risking one's life, many believed this to be so. And examples of the manner in which Hitler first came to power showed many that the Nazi government openly favored the use of violence and terror. Thus, for the most part, within a very short time, even those who did not support the Nazi movement did little to help the Jews. Among the Gentiles that Rabbi Hans B. knew there was a firm belief that "...if you were not a Nazi you would lose your job. You would be isolated. You could end up in a concentration camp." And believing this, though many felt bad about abandoning their Jewish friends, few Gentiles believed they could do otherwise.

The fact that their non-Jewish friends deserted them while, at the same time, expressing sympathy toward their plight, made it doubly hard for Jews to fight back. Against whom would they fight? When Eve's father was "laid off" from his job, his employer gave him a big farewell party and a glowing letter of recommendation. To whom was he to direct his protest? He could hardly be angry with his boss of twenty-three years, who so obviously felt terrible about letting him go, but was afraid not to. Eve believes her father's employer did "what he had to do," in order to protect himself from the government retaliation. Lorelei even found it difficult to find fault with the officials at Dachau once she had met them. In her testimony, she stated: "You see, they were very nice. There were no Nazis there. It was just under the regime. They

*See Yad Vashem Studies, Volume VI, "Testimony of Herman F. Graebe," pp. 283-313.
were very nice and kind." Apparently, some Jews found it extremely
difficult to place the responsibility for their persecution on those
Germans with whom they came in contact. Rather, they chose to
distinguish between those people who merely worked for the government,
and the "regime," over which they had no control.

Oddly enough, the statements of some of these survivors also reveal
a belief that even the government was not always at fault. When Lorelei
returned home from witnessing the brutal beating at the swimming pool,
she told her husband: "Let us go. This is not a country that you stay in
where you don't have police protection." But it was members of the SS,
working to enforce anti-Jewish laws, who had done the beating. Above all
else, these Jews were Germans, and they simply could not believe that a
German government could be guilty of denying them their rights as
citizens of the Third Reich. It was even more inconceivable to them that
the government could support, let alone initiate, acts of violence
against them.

The idea that the Nazi government was somehow not responsible for
attacks on Jews was fostered by the government itself. For example, during
the April 1933 boycott, organized by Hitler's government, the Nazi
party instructions were to avoid violence, but the police were told not
to provide protection for Jews against whom violence was directed all
over Germany. Earlier in a speech made by Göring at a gathering in
Essen, he pledged:

I will ruthlessly set the police at work wherever harm is being
done to the German people. But I refuse to make the police the
guardians of Jewish department stores.

The notion, reinforced by Nazi propaganda, that anti-Jewish brutality
was the work of "hooligans" beyond the control of Nazi officials, was
widespread. The fact that some outbursts of violence were spontaneous
leant credibility to this idea. 104 All of these factors: their German
character; their belief in the incorruptibility of the law and the
government; and Nazi propaganda; made it impossible for these German
Jews to focus on who or what was to blame for their persecution.

And this inability to believe that their German friends, or their
beloved homeland, would do them harm, prevented them from even attempting
to fight back. They were abandoned by friends who silently opposed the
Nazis, and could not bring themselves to criticize those who failed to
help them.

In addition to those Gentiles who, out of fear of retaliation,
went along with government regulations, there were those who, out of
apathy, or outright greed, also leant passive support to the Nazi regime.
One American journalist, in an article dated March 19, 1933, described
many instances of brutality directed against Jews, noting particularly
that bodies were often found in the woods surrounding Berlin. At the
end of the article, the reporter stated:

The feature of all this which most impresses Americans seems
to be the comparative indifference displayed by the German
people as a whole. 105

Many, such as Lorelei L.'s landlady, became the benefactors of Nazi
regulations when Jewish owned businesses or apartment buildings became
"Aryanized." As Jews lost their rights to work, thousands of jobs were
opened up to other Germans, who willingly applied for them. 106 When
Nazì officials announced their plans to remove Jews from their homes
and place them in less desirable sections of their cities,

Eager Aryans swamped the housing authorities with applications
for a chance to replace their dispossessed neighbors. 107
Deprived of the help of those who secretly opposed the Nazis, and exploited by those to whom the persecution of the Jews meant increased opportunities, the Jewish community, numbering only 500,000 out of a population of 63 million, could do little more than issue protests, and attempt negotiations totally ignored by the government, while doing its best to provide for the basic necessities of life denied them under the Nazi regime. In 1932, 14,000,000 voters (out of 45 million) sent members of the NSDAP to the German Reichstag. During the next few years, the remainder of Germany's population did very little to help their Jewish countrymen survive under the new Nazi regime.

Once the Nazis discovered that neither the German people, nor the world at large, intended to interfere with their treatment of the Jews, they were free to begin their attack upon the rest of Europe's Jews.
CHAPTER FOUR

On September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Earlier, under the Ribbentrop–Molotov Agreement, Hitler and Stalin had agreed to divide Poland between them. The two men also agreed to "desist from any act of violence, any aggressive action, and any attack on each other, either individually or jointly with other Powers". On June 22, 1941, Hitler repudiated his pact with Stalin and sent troops into the Soviet portion of Poland and into Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Soviet White Russia, parts of the Ukraine, the Crimean and Russia itself. As a result of the invasions of Poland and the U.S.S.R. Germany gained control over approximately five million more Jews.

In this chapter, I shall discuss the treatment of those Jews who fell under Nazi domination, and how they responded to persecution. Since most of the East Europeans whom I interviewed were Polish, the bulk of my discussion will deal with conditions in Poland, but I shall include some material relating to the Soviet Union as well.

The campaign against Poland took less than a month to complete. The Jews, along with the rest of the Polish people, suffered tremendous casualties during the blitzkrieg. City after city was destroyed. Bernice S. recalls, "I can remember the bombing of Lodz. We tried to run away to Warsaw, but the highway was bombed. So I went home."

Many other Polish Jews, and non-Jews as well, also tried to escape from the Germans.*

"Thousands upon thousands of Jews set out on foot, on carts, in

*About 300,000 Jews fled to Soviet-occupied Poland. (Dawidowicz p. 536).
Joseph K.'s older sister and her fiancé succeeded in escaping to the East, but Joseph's father chose to remain in Poland.

I recall when the war broke out. People started to panic and the evacuation began to the east. My father felt at that time that, should we leave our home and get caught in the panicky evacuation, we would have nothing to come home to. He was equating the situation with his experiences during World War I when he was in the Austrian army. Whenever they invaded an area, the homes that were occupied were left alone. The homes that were empty, they would ransack and vandalize. So my father felt that it would be folly to try to outrun a modern, mechanized army and if death had to come, he wanted to be in his own home, not in somebody else's field or backyard. He did not want to expose us to this kind of experience.

With the surrender of Warsaw on September 27, 1939, the occupation of Western Poland was complete. The city of Danzig was annexed to Germany into the greater Reich. This area was divided into two districts: Danzig - West Prussia and the Wartheland. The remainder of Poland was labelled the General Government of Poland and placed under German Civil Administration, as was the Western sector of German-held Russian territory once that area was occupied.

Even before the civil government in Poland was established, the Germans had formulated plans for the treatment of the Jews in that country. In a directive issued on September 21, 1939, by Reinhard Heydrich, Head of the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA) and the Gestapo, and responsible to Heinrich Himmler (Reichsführer-SS and Chief of German Police) for the execution of Hitler's "racial" program, these plans were set forth. First, the Jews were to be removed from the German Reich

*This plan was expanded to include Poles and Gypsies as well. (Hilberg, p. 138, Dawidowicz, p. 154)
and the incorporated territories (except for Lodz), and concentrated in urban areas, mostly in the General Government.* Next, Jewish councils (Judenräte) were to be established, in each community, that would be responsible for carrying out the orders of the Einsatzgruppen (death squads).* The Jews would then be confined to certain sections of the cities, in ghettos. Lastly, "prompt Aryanization" of Jewish businesses was to be undertaken. All this was to be accomplished by the Einsatzgruppen under the general direction of Heydrich.

As soon as Poland was occupied, this plan was put into operation. All phases of the plan were carried out simultaneously. Since it is difficult to discuss each phase at once, I will talk first about the expulsion of the Jews from the incorporated territories and small towns of the General Government, since this began as soon as the Germans entered Poland. The "Aryanization" of Jewish property was a continuous process that lasted right up until the Jews were taken from the ghettos and deported to the death camps. This process will be described next. The creation of the Judenräte began with the German invasion, and their functions continued as long as the Jews remained in the ghettos. Their roles will be mentioned in the discussion of life in the ghettos. Once the Jews were concentrated in the ghettos, they were virtually shut off from the rest of the world. Life within the ghettos was so complex that

*The Einsatzgruppen was a paramilitary police force that operated under the direction of Himmler. It was first used in the invasion of Austria to hunt down people suspected of opposing National Socialism. There were six Einsatzgruppen attached to the army during the Polish campaign. "Their wholesale murder of Poles and their sadistic atrocities against Jews shocked some army generals." (Dawidowicz, p. 152) Later, four "mobile killing units" were responsible for the elimination of thousands of Russian Jews as well. (Hilberg, p. 187)
I will deal with this topic separately and last.

Although Jews in pre-war Poland lived in over sixteen thousand localities, the bulk of the Polish Jewish population (75%) could be found in urban areas. Thus, the task of relocating them to the General Government and concentrating them in ghettos was fairly easy. But it was not a peaceful process. Expulsion from towns and villages was always accompanied by humiliations, terror and sometimes death.

Terror enveloped the Jews. The Germans reenacted the Kristallnacht in every town and city they invaded and occupied. All over Poland, synagogues went up in flames.

Even in those areas in which Jews were allowed to remain, torture, murder and shame were daily occurrences.

One week after the Germans invaded Poland they occupied Joseph K.'s town. He recalls that:

The High Holidays were observed in hiding because the synagogues were destroyed. Torahs and prayer books were burned and worship forbidden.

Of his uncle, who had lived for many years in Chicago, but had returned to Poland in 1939 to visit his children, Joe states, "he was shot in front of my eyes as he was coming to our home for the Sabbath meal."

Children, too, were the target to Nazi brutality, "I saw Germans kill Jewish infants by tossing them into the air and shooting them."

Mark S. remembers being stopped on the street by a German S.S. and taken to a barber where he was forced to have his head shaved. The incident embarrassed him so much; he left Lodz and went to Warsaw, where he attempted to escape to Russia. Unable to find a guide to help him reach Bialystok, he eventually returned to his family in Lodz.

Bernice S. also witnessed sadistic behavior on the part of the
invaders:

They started catching Jewish girls and boys and men and women and forcing them to do filthy work. They caught my father once on the street, and made him pull a wagon like a horse.

Pogroms and arbitrary terror continued during the first six months of the Nazi occupation. During this period, from the invasion of Poland to the formation of the ghettos, the Germans carried out a systematic plan designed to label, isolate and impoverish the Jewish community. To ensure that no Jew could escape identification, the Nazis required all Jews over the age of ten to wear the Star of David at all times. Failure to do so was punishable by death. A twelve year old schoolmate of Joe's was shot to death because he forgot to wear his star.

Jews were also restricted in their movement within the cities. In the General Government, they could not change residence without approval from the proper authorities, nor could they be out on the streets between 9 P.M. and 5 A.M. Also, no Jewish children were allowed to attend school.

The Germans employed additional tactics to isolate the Jews from the community and turn them into outcasts. As a result of the bombing, food was scarce. In the city of Warsaw the Germans agreed upon payment by the city government of one million zlotys, to set up soup lines to feed the hungry. Although Jews were to be fed along with the rest of the population, the Germans arbitrarily ejected them from the lines, calling on Poles to do the same. Bernice S. recalls such a situation in Lodz and tells of how she and her sister were able to obtain food for their family:

I had a sister who was blond, and we worked together. We stayed in lines like the Poles and made believe we were German or Polish. We spoke German pretty well. My sister was blond with blue eyes; I was light-haired and my eyes are light. I would
wear bright colors like blue and yellow to make them appear lighter. So I got away with it. I stayed in the lines, and when they came to pull out the Jews, they never pulled me out. I was lucky in that respect.121

If one considers that relations between Jews and Gentiles in Eastern Europe during the years before the war had never been too friendly, it is easy to understand why the Germans believed, correctly, that they would be able to turn the Gentile population against their Jewish neighbors.

It was interesting to observe, wrote an eyewitness, how quickly the brotherhood born under the continuous danger of death disappeared and how quickly the difference between rich and poor, Christian and Jew once again became apparent.122

In Chapter Two, it was noted that many Polish Jews were easily distinguishable from non-Jews by their appearance. Not only did they dress differently from their non-Jewish neighbors, but often their dark features or strange haircuts contrasted sharply with the blond, blue-eyed Poles. But this was not always the case, especially with upper-middle-class Jews like Bernice, who were less apt to dress differently. This does not mean that Polish-looking Jews were safe. In many cases, Gentile neighbors identified the Jews to the unsuspecting Germans.

When the Germans came, before we were shipped to the ghetto, we were still living among the Poles. The Germans really did not know who was a Jew except the Jews who wore Hasidic garb. But take a person like me. The Germans didn't know if I was Jewish or Polish or what. But the Poles told them which apartments belonged to Jews. They pointed them out. They worked hand in hand. They're the ones that told them, "That's a Jewish family, go ahead." So they helped the Germans.123

In addition to making the Jews social outcasts and depriving them of food, the Nazis immediately began implementing their plan to "aryanize" Jewish-owned businesses and industry, and to confiscate property. In large cities, such as Lodz and Warsaw, trucks were used to cart away Jewish possessions. In smaller towns, the Germans took Jewish hostages,
to guarantee that their orders would be obeyed, then demanded that the Jews turn over all their gold.

In the event that the German orders were not obeyed, the hostages would be executed. By doing this, they assured themselves of complete submission on the part of the Jews. 124

Even after the Jews complied with orders, the hostages were rarely released.

After the Jews moved into the ghettos, the Germans confiscated their "abandoned" property as well. The final step in this process of impoverishing Jews occurred in the ghetto itself. Jewish businesses were administered by German authorities: thousands of Jewish firms were liquidated, and valuables were continuously hauled out of the ghetto districts. 125 Once the ghettos were liquidated, German police and the local Polish population helped themselves to what little personal property was left behind. In the General Government larger quantities of goods were confiscated by the governor, Hans Frank, but not before Himmler had removed machinery, taken over "choice real estate" and collected 11,000,000 zloty in debts owed to the Jews by their Polish countrymen. 126

Despite having possessed what appears to have been large amounts of booty, the Jews were a rather poor group of people, particularly after the anti-Jewish legislation passed in the pre-war period. Their most valuable asset was their labor. As noted in Chapter Two, Polish Jewry comprised a large portion of the middle class, and over 70 percent of the Jewish population were skilled laborers. 127 Two and one half million Jewish workers did not go unnoticed by the Germans. 128 Just as the Germans benefitted from the concentration of Jews living in cities, they benefitted from their newly acquired source of highly skilled slave labor.

The impressment of forced labor was conducted in several ways. During
the initial phase, which occurred during the first few weeks of the German occupation, Jews were simply seized at random and put to work on emergency tasks. Later, this method of obtaining labor was replaced by a more orderly procedure in which Jews were organized into "forced labor troops." "Columns" of laborers were put to work on special projects and then released, or not. "Sometimes, they were released at the day's end and allowed to return home, but more likely, they were kept for a week or two, incommunicado, unable to inform their families of their whereabouts or even of their very existence." Eventually, labor camps were established in which large-scale projects were undertaken. There were 125 Jewish labor camps established in the General Government.

In his testimony, Joseph K. tells of his participation in all three of the situations described above:

In the beginning, each male Jew of twelve or over had to work for the Germans three days each week in order to qualify for food rations. Later, I worked for the German authorities almost all the time. The work varied from snow removal to road building, as well as removing the bodies of Jews killed in the Gestapo building area.

Eventually, I became a steady worker at the wood-processing factory near our town. At first, they used us for loading freight cars. This was a terrible experience, since the German in charge was a sadist and used to sic his German Shepherd on us. The foreman used his whip to make us work faster.

After each day's work, the laborers were allowed to return home, but a few months later, Joseph L. and the other workers were forced to live in a barrack within the factory limits.

Living quarters were not heated; water was brought in barrels on horse drawn wagons. Latrines were of a temporary, wooden type like an outdoor privy. We worked from sunrise until late at night.
After the liquidation of his ghetto (in December 1942), Joseph K. was taken by truck to another labor camp in the mountains near the Czechoslovakian border. In April of 1943, he was taken to a concentration camp outside an aircraft factory. Conditions were no better there than at the labor camps.

When we arrived, the inhabitants of this camp were just getting over a typhoid epidemic. Many died and the survivors looked more dead than alive.

Throughout this period, Joseph K. and his fellow workers experienced continual deprivation. They suffered from disease, hunger bordering on starvation. "We had no solid food, only grass soup twice a day. The only meat we found in this soup was worms." Exhaustion became normal too "after working 12 hours a day in the factory, we were sent out to do field work around the factory." They also lived in constant fear, as they witnessed, or heard about, the murders of their fellow Jews.

Joseph K. describes this incident that took place before he left home:

One day, while I was working in the yard piling boards, a young Polish worker was bragging to me how he took part in a mass burial of about 900 Jewish people from a neighboring town. He made a special point of telling me how "some people were still alive when we covered them with dirt:"

In his testimony, Joseph K. notes, "I can still recall the fear within me. The sleepless nights and visions of mass executions." Later, he witnessed first hand the killing of his fellow workers. One group of workers was executed "for so-called sabotage." Another group was shot because someone escaped from a labor camp.

One night, during the night shift, we were coming back to the camp area for lunch. We saw many dead bodies lying in the road. We found out later that somebody had escaped.

These were not isolated cases.

There were many executions for no reason known to us. Gestapo from the nearby city would come into camp. Then we were lined
up and one of them would count to ten as he walked by the ranks. Each tenth man would be pushed into a circle by men with machine guns. They would then be marched into the nearby woods where a pit had been dug, shot and dropped into the pit. Sometimes, the pits were dug in the morning by the victims themselves though they were unaware of their intended use.

By far the most productive form of labor existed in the ghettos. Before explaining how this labor was extracted, I will discuss the formation of the ghettos themselves.

In order to insure that the Jews moved into the ghetto and, once there, obeyed instructions, the Germans ordered that Jewish Councils (Judenräte) be established in each community. It was intended that these councils be comprised of "influential persons and rabbis" whom the community could be expected to follow. In some cases, the Jewish communities, recognizing the need for leadership, formed their own councils. In other cases, the Germans mistakenly appointed men who had not been respected leaders to head the Judenräte. Sometimes when the Nazis threatened to shoot hostages unless a Judenrat was formed, Jews snatched people from the streets to form a council. Before the ghettos were closed, some of the leaders of these communities fled, hoping to get help, and in the eastern part of Poland, the occupying Russians murdered many of the Jewish leaders before the Nazis arrived. Thus, oftentimes, none of the real leadership was available to serve in the councils. There has been a great deal of controversy over the role played by the Judenräte in the ghetto. For the present, I will limit my

*This was the case in Lodz where Mordecai Chaim Rumkowski was appointed head of the Judenrat. In The War Against the Jews, Lucy Dawidowicz notes that, though the story has not been substantiated, Rumkowski was chosen when the Nazis entered the offices of the Kehilla (legally incorporated religious community) and asked who the "Eldest" was, meaning the leader. Rumkowski, thinking they meant the "oldest;" responded, thus becoming the appointed head of the Judenrat. The same story was told to me by Mark S. and Bernice S. (Dawidowicz, p. 305)
discussion to their role in the creation of the ghetto. Later, I will discuss the question of whether they helped or hindered the Jews.

The first job given the councils was to take a census of the Jews in their areas, and to supervise their evacuation from the countryside to the cities. 136 Joseph K. recalls that there was a large influx of people to his town:

Little by little, they began a systematic encirclement of the Jews, bringing them from the surrounding villages and herding them into the Jewish section of our town.

In the larger cities, the formation of ghettos did not start for another six months, but in the case described by Joseph K., it began right away:

In the Jewish section, the Jews could be dealt with at will. Leaving the ghetto without a guard was punishable by death. Any Jew who did not have working papers on hand got the death penalty. There were only four to six Gestapo agents in our town, but they terrorized the entire vicinity.

Plans for the establishment of the first major ghetto, in Lodz, were devised in December of 1939, but evacuations did not begin until February of 1940, and the ghetto was not sealed off until May 1 of that year. 137 *

In his testimony, Mark S. described the process of ghettoization as it occurred in Lodz. The Lodz ghetto was second in size to Warsaw, and existed for over four years - the longest duration of any Nazi ghetto. 138 Although the method by which Jews were forced to move into the ghettos was not subject to an overall general plan handed down from above, the pattern was basically similar in all cities. 139 In Lodz,

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*Ghettos in other major cities were created as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warsaw (the largest ghettos)</td>
<td>October 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krakow</td>
<td>March 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lublin</td>
<td>April 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radom</td>
<td>April 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lvov</td>
<td>December 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Hilberg, p. 148)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 1942, only a few ghettos were still to be established.
the ghetto was created in the poorest section of the city. The district contained 62,000 Jews already, but 100,000 more were relocated from other sections of the city, and the Gentiles were moved out. The order was given on February 8, 1940 for the process to begin. People were purposely given little warning so they would be forced to leave many of their belongings behind.

They evacuated the Poles from the ghetto and near the ghetto because they didn't want the Poles to have any contact with the Jews. Jews were transferred from their homes to the ghettos in blocks. Some were even brought from other cities. Everybody scrambled to get a room, bringing their goods in hand-drawn carts.

Once all the Jews were moved into the ghetto, it was closed. "Warsaw and Lodz, with the largest Jewish populations, were the most tightly, almost hermetically, sealed ghettos." The penalty for leaving the ghetto, or helping someone else escape, was death.

Movement within the walls of the ghetto was circumscribed as well. A curfew was established, prohibiting anyone from appearing in the streets between 7 P.M. and 7 A.M.

The Nazis also prohibited communication with the world outside the ghetto. "They demolished all of the houses outside of the ghetto where the fence was, so nobody could be in contact with us." All printing presses and radios were confiscated and possession of these things were punishable by death. According to Mark S., most of the time there was "no communication with the outside world whatsoever," not even mail. At one point in his testimony, Joseph K. noted "for the most part, there was no contact with the outside world. No mail. There was nobody left to write to us anyway." (This was after his parents and many others had been murdered). One Zionist had a radio hidden in his office, which was
discovered by the Germans when the man was out. Hearing that he was wanted by the Nazis, he chose to commit suicide rather than be put to death.\textsuperscript{147} Private telephones were also removed from Jewish homes, limiting their contact even with each other.\textsuperscript{148}

In order to enforce their directives, the Nazis employed various types of police forces. The fence surrounding the ghetto was guarded by the Order Police.\textsuperscript{149}

If you went too close to the fence, you just got shot. My grandfather got shot. He was too close to the fence and the guard just felt like shooting him. He killed my grandfather for just walking on the street near the fence.\textsuperscript{150}

Within the ghetto, the Gestapo (State Police) and the Kripo (Criminal Police) kept order.\textsuperscript{151} The Germans also created a Jewish police force which was required to enforce German orders. The Jewish police force was known to have committed numerous acts of extortion, looting and bullying, and were often resisted by the general community.\textsuperscript{152}

In the Soviet Union during the German occupation, a similar pattern of impoverishment and concentration of the Jews into ghettos took place. But there is a distinction between the actions of the Germans in Poland, and their behavior in Russia. In Poland, terror as an accompaniment to the expulsion of the Jews from their homes and their incorporation into ghettos, was more or less a random ingredient in this process. The initial purpose of terrorizing the Jews was to guarantee that they would obey instructions to turn over their wealth, move into the ghettos, and work for the Germans. In Russia, from the very beginning, the aim of the Nazis was to kill the Jews. The desire to put them into ghettos resulted only from the realization that it was not possible to murder them all at once. Thus, a temporary means of confining them in one place until such time as it would be possible to
kill those remaining after the "first sweep" of the Einsatzgruppen, from June, 1941 until the summer of 1942, necessitated the creation of ghettos. The killing of the Jews in Russia was a far more systematic operation than in Poland. Once the first wave of mobile killing units had passed, the Jews were put into ghettos to await the next attack, or "second sweep," which began in the Baltic area in the Fall of 1941 and spread to the south during the next year. By November of 1942, eighteen months after the German invasion, the Einsatzgruppen had succeeded in annihilating close to 1,000,000 Jews. (Estimates of the number of Jews killed in the Soviet Union vary from 900,000 to 1.4 million).

The testimony of Dr. Philip L. provides a picture of the step by step process followed by the Nazis in this operation. The first step was the invasion of the Germany army. On June 28, 1941, the Germans invaded Dr. L.'s town of Belitzah, located on the Neimen River in Lithuania. The inhabitants of Belitzah found themselves caught between the armies of the Soviet Union and Germany. Dr. L.'s family hid in their basement, while above them, the Germans set fire to the village. The family was eventually discovered and forced out of their home so that it too, could be burned. They spent that night in a field with hundreds of their neighbors.

As in Poland, the initial response of many Jews was to flee from the invading German army. Estimates as to the number of Russian Jews who succeeded in escaping to the interior of the Soviet Union vary tremendously, from a "few thousand," to "two thirds of Russian Jewry," or approximately 2,000,000. Dr. L., his brother and his father eventually escaped from the Nazi authorities and became what
have been called "Forest Jews," about whom there will be more later.

The day after the German invasion of Belitzah, Einsatzgruppe A arrived. Recalls Dr. L.:

They randomly selected ten Jews, including our Rabbi, and used them as horses to pull a wagon, whipping the men to make them go faster. Then, they cut the Rabbi's beard in the middle, leaving two sides hanging. They made the Rabbi wash some horses, then drink the water he used, forcing him to keep drinking, even as he vomited.

Some of the men, including Dr. L.'s father, fled to the woods on the outskirts of the village. Dr. L. made daily visits to his father, bringing him information about what was happening in the village.

Once I had to tell him that thirty men, some of the most intelligent and respected members of the community, were forced to work at hard labor. When they finished the job, the Germans made them dig a large hole. Then, the Germans killed the men, one by one....the hole they dug was their grave.

According to Dr. L., the Germans killed most of the community leaders, then began killing the rest of the men in the town. Both his father and his grandfather remained in hiding.

We lived in fear, and there is no way to adjust to living with fear, to accept death.

Similar operations were carried out all over Russia. Four units of Einsatzgruppen were sent into the Soviet Union. The Germans also recruited help from non-German auxiliaries, particularly Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Latvians, and Poles.159 In each village, or town, the Einsatzgruppe first sought out Jewish leaders and obtained a list of all the Jewish citizens. Next, it rounded up Jews and took them to a place of assembly from which they were loaded into trains, trucks, wagons or some other form of transportation and taken to the woods, where they were shot to death.160

On November 10, 1941, the second stage, expulsion from the smaller
towns and ghettoization in cities, began for the Jews of Belitzah. Dr. L. and his family were told to go to Lida, but his parents had heard that life was better in the city of Zetel, about twenty miles away. So that is where they went. Dragging a wagon loaded with their belongings, they travelled at night "because it was too dangerous for Jews to be seen on the road during the day." When they arrived in Zetel, the Nazis put Dr. L.'s father to work in a flour mill.

In the Fall of 1941, the Germans began moving the Jews of Zetel into one section of the city, thus creating a ghetto. The creation of ghettos in the Soviet Union followed the same basic pattern that was used in Poland. First, the Nazis took hostages and demanded that they be ransomed with gold and other valuables.

One day, they grabbed a woman and accused her of not turning over all her gold....They killed her.

On February 22, 1942, the next step in the ghettoization process occurred in Zetel. All Jews were required to wear a yellow Star of David. The Nazis also demanded that the Jews form a Judenrat.

In the last step, the Jews were forced into the ghetto. Dr. L.'s family of seven was put into a twelve by eight-foot room. The family had little furniture, slept on the floor, and "were constantly in one another's way....the depravity (sic) was beyond imagination."

Once the Jews were confined to the ghetto, the German authorities decided to eliminate those whose labor was not needed. On April 28, thousands of Jews were forced to gather in the market place. Dr. L. recalls seeing Germans, Lithuanians and Poles shooting people indiscriminately, in an effort to round up the Jews in his town. He also remembers seeing one soldier bayoneting a small baby. Once assembled,
the Jews were told that some would be chosen to work in another city, but in fact, they were to be shot.

Those chosen to live, temporarily, were men and women capable of labor, and those who would be of use, such as doctors and nurses. Those chosen to die were the aged, the infirm, pregnant women, and children.163

People selected to serve the Nazis were issued cards identifying them as workers.164

Dr. L.'s family had dug a cave next to their house, and they remained in hiding during the round up. Dr. L. was sent to stand watch over the cave; and was caught by the S S and taken to the market place. He was temporarily adopted by another family, and was saved from being shot.

A few months later, the Einsatzgruppe carried out the "second sweep" in Zetel. The S S surrounded the ghetto shouting "Juden raus" (Jews come on out!). Raiding parties were sent into the ghetto to collect the Jews and bring them to a movie house. While the round up was taking place, some Nazis proceeded to search abandoned homes for valuables. Then they opened the ghetto to the surrounding populace.

Villagers who had once been neighbors, were looting our home, ripping it apart in the hope of finding hidden valuables, or taking doors and wood for their own places.

Although most of Dr. L.'s family managed to stay hidden for several days, they were eventually discovered and pulled from their cave.

The farmers went beserk. They began kicking grandpa, who fell to the ground almost immediately, weakened by the lack of food and five long days cramped in the underground shelter....Then they turned on my mother, beating her to the ground.

Once they had been discovered, Dr. L.'s mother gave her older children instructions to do what they could to save themselves. Dr. L.'s brother escaped from Zetel, but ended up in another ghetto, in Dvoretz.
Dr. L. stayed with his mother, and they were taken to the movie house. His father had remained at the mill where he worked, and thus managed to escape the round-up. He sent a Gentile policeman, whom he had befriended, to rescue the family, but the man was unable to find them amongst the hundreds of people locked in the theater.

When trucks with SS men arrived outside the theater, Dr. L. tried to convince his mother to escape with him through the window. They had watched Jews being pushed into trucks and hauled away, and by this time, were quite sure the Jews were to be killed. But his mother had her youngest child with her, and was afraid to jump out of the window for fear that he would be killed. She finally talked Dr. L. into escaping without her.

Eventually, Dr. L. found his brother in the ghetto in Dvoretz. After several weeks, their uncle, learning that the boys were still alive, joined a group of Jews returning to the ghetto after a day's work in the field. He smuggled the boys out, and they were able to join their father in the forest.

Although the rest of Dr. L.'s family were killed, he, his brother, and his father survived the war by remaining in the forests of White Russia.

They were not alone. Although here again, estimates of the number of Jews vary, there were thousands of Jews living in the forests. There were three types of "Forest Jews": individuals simply hiding from the Nazis; Jews who joined the Soviet partisan movement; and Jews living in special Jewish units. In February of 1942, the Germans began a campaign against these Jews. Within a few months, the Einsatzgruppen had successfully hunted down most of them, leaving only a few thousand,
Dr. L. among them, to survive until the arrival of the Red Army. 165

It is apparent that, although the pattern of German activity in the Soviet Union was similar to that in Poland, the mobile killing operation was much quicker, and initially more devastating. The Einsatzgruppen entered the Soviet Union with the intention of killing as many Jews as possible, as fast as possible. The only chance of survival lay in escaping to the interior of Russia. Although some did take this route, most did not, for several reasons. The main reason was that few had any idea what the German occupation would bring. Some Jews even moved into German-occupied territory, believing at first, that treatment by the cultured Germans was preferable to life under the Communists. Also, the Soviet Union had carefully refrained from reporting news of German atrocities, while the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact was still in force. Thus, when the SS arrived in each Russian town, the Jews had no idea what fate awaited them. 166 It was easy to convince them that "selection" meant resettlement in the east, not death.

By the time the second wave of killing began, most Jews were better informed about the intentions of the Nazis, but were now imprisoned in ghettos. The ghettos of Russia do not appear to have been as tightly sealed as those in Poland, probably because they were meant to be temporary. Thus it was possible to escape, and some did. But most did not. Where could they go? Life in the forest was difficult in the extreme, and only those who were relatively young and healthy had a chance of surviving. Finding refuge amongst the non-Jewish population was a very rare occurrence. Thus most Jews remained in the ghettos until they were killed.

In Poland, the Jews were imprisoned in the ghettos for a much
longer period of time. Although deportations from the Wartheland to the killing centers began in December of 1941, the last ghetto, Lodz, was not liquidated until August of 1944.

In September of 1941, there were still 144,000 people living in the Lodz ghetto. With only 25,000 rooms available, there was an average of 5.8 people crammed into each room. Conditions in Lodz were typical of those found in ghettos throughout Poland, so a discussion of living conditions there will serve as an example of life for most Polish ghetto inmates.

Their biggest problem was hunger. In order to obtain food, one had to have a ration card. Cards were only issued to those who worked. Earlier I discussed the German policy of using the Jews for forced labor. Denying rations to those who did not work was one means of enforcing compliance with Nazi demands. But not everyone was allowed to work, and those who did not work were not given ration cards.

Naturally, children didn't work. Supposedly we were not to have children in the ghetto. We were not supposed to have old people either. So, these people did not get rations.

It became the job of the Judenrâte to make sure that food was distributed throughout the ghetto.

It was divided by the council. It was divided right. They knew the count (number of people) so they divided it right away so the kids and older people would get it too...Food came in train cars. You got so much a week and then you had to manage. If you ate it all in two days, you starved the rest of the week. That's why people were starving. Even if you knew how to manage it - each day a little bit - it was still a starvation diet.

To give the reader an idea of the quantity of food provided to inhabitants of the Lodz ghetto here is a description of the ration per person, for one month in 1941: less than one and one-half pounds of meat, one egg, 12 pounds of potatoes and two ounces of cheese. This
meager diet was not available to everyone because food was not free: it had to be purchased. To supplement their diet, people planted gardens in tenement yards, various party organizations ran soup kitchens, as did the Judenräte, begging and stealing were rampant. Under conditions such as these, people who find ways to get a little more than their "share" live, and those who don't die. Bernice S. was lucky:

They needed office workers for bookkeeping. I was really pretty lucky. My grandfather was a councilman. He knew Rumkowski, so I took advantage of this. This way, I could provide a little better for my family. Don't kid yourself, if you've got connections, it's like everywhere else. (Author's note: in this case, it was worse - having "connections" meant staying alive). At that time, you were desperate for help. So I had a little more than the majority. I would have a special ration once a month.... You tried to survive any way you could.

Had it not been for the illegal importation of food, all the inhabitants of the ghetto would have starved to death.

Fuel and medicines were also scarce commodities. Though typhus reached epidemic proportions in Warsaw, and in the smaller ghettos in the Wartheland, "a single tube of anti-typhus medicine cost several thousand zloty." Bernice's father was a diabetic. Her sister was able to smuggle insulin into the ghetto before it was sealed off completely, but not enough. Even before the doors were locked, their father died. "The hospitals tried their best, but they had nothing to work with."

*The average daily wage was 20-35 zloty. (Hilberg, p. 172) By May, 1942, the price of a kilogram of bread was 15 zlotys. (Dawidowicz, p. 282) Wages were not paid by the Germans. Money was collected by the Judenräte from those who could afford to buy work exemptions; then redistributed as token wages to forced laborers. (Dawidowicz, p. 312)
To obtain fuel, the Judenrat in Lodz dismantled stores, shops and fences. One man was arrested for concealing the fact that he had an extra room in his apartment that he was dismantling and burning to keep warm. Children froze in the streets while the Nazis continued to confiscate clothing.

As noted above, living quarters in the ghetto were extremely crowded. At times, the noise level was unbearable. "My ears are filled with the deafening clamor of crowded streets and cries of people dying on the sidewalks." Plumbing, toilets and sewage were used so much, they broke down. Disinfectants and soaps were practically nonexistent. "The only thing that relieved the congestion was death." On top of all these problems the Germans added the hardship of forced labor. "Of the more than one million (Polish) workers in war industries, over 300,000 were Jews." In Lodz, the largest armaments manufacturer in Poland, 80,000 Jews did 95 percent of the armaments work and 66 percent of the textile production. Stated Mark S., "There were thousands of workers producing shoes, ammunition, hats, clothing." To his list could be added: uniforms, brushes, brooms, baskets, mattresses, containers and toys. None of these goods were used by ghetto workers. Bernice S. worked for a "top-notch" clothing designer. "Fancy" dresses were designed and manufactured by the Germans, while the inhabitants of the ghetto were freezing. In all, there were 117 factories, workshops and warehouses in the Lodz ghetto.

The Jews in Nazi ghettos were deprived of food, clothing, fuel, medicine, sanitary facilities, living space and sleep. They were forced to live in the bombed-out slums of Warsaw, Lodz and other cities with no parks or even empty lots. In one ghetto there was only one tree. They also lived in constant fear of being deported or killed.
There were times when the Germans would surround the ghetto and pick up the kids. They would go from house to house and from room to room and take away the kids. My younger brother, the one who survived, God knows how he survived, was all ready to be shipped out, but through connections I got him released at the last minute.188

In Joseph K.'s small ghetto the Germans decided to dispose of those for whom they had no use. Tailors, shoemakers, members of the Jewish council and the Jewish Police were saved. As for the rest:

The Gestapo and police went on a door to door search for Jews. All those found in hiding were shot on the spot.

Out of a Jewish population of four thousand, one hundred families were spared. Joseph's family attempted to escape to a nearby village.

Although there were many in that village who knew my father well there was nobody who would hide them. After walking aimlessly for a week they returned, broken in spirit and lacking in strength. The day after they returned, while I was at work, I saw a group of people being herded down the road. When I returned from work, I realized that those were my people. I never saw my father, my mother or my second sister again.189

In Warsaw the Germans arbitrarily snatched people off the streets for forced labor.190 People stayed home whenever possible.

What were the effects of these inhuman conditions? The most obvious effect was of course a tremendous death rate. In Lodz, between May 1, 1940 when the gates were closed and June 30, 1942, 29,561 people died. In Warsaw, by 1942, 5,000 people were dying each month. In all, there were 550,000 deaths resulting from the poor treatment of Jews in Polish ghettos alone.191

You could see all day long.... There were those death wagons running back and forth constantly. When you walked down the street and you looked at people they were like skeletons. They were like dead people walking and they walked until they fell and they were dead. At times, we couldn't keep up with the burying of the dead. That's how it was.192

Before hunger kills there are other signs of malnutrition: anemia, fatigue, dizziness, nausea and diarrhea. The lack of food affected the
ability to do physical labor and the ability to think clearly. Tempers flared, manners disappeared, incidents of greed and dishonesty increased tremendously, particularly with regard to the theft and black marketing of foods. Malnutrition also increases one's vulnerability to disease. One of the most common illnesses associated with crowded, unsanitary conditions, and spoiled food is typhus, which, as noted above, was prevalent in the ghetto. But it was not the biggest killer. Thirty percent of all deaths in Lodz were caused by heart disease, the result of the tension and stress of ghetto life. Other diseases also stalked the ghetto: dysentery, tuberculosis, and diseases of the digestive track. The worst off were the very old and the very young who were least able to stave off hunger and disease. One other group, German refugees, forced to live in a hostile environment, away from home and family, housed in public buildings unsuited for such purposes, died in far greater numbers than the Poles. Their presence in the ghetto was greatly resented as it added to the overcrowding and lessened the food supply.

It is the purpose of this study to determine how the Jews reacted to persecution on the part of the Nazi regime. In the previous chapter, I discussed the fact that it was not possible for German Jews to halt the onslaught of Nazism without substantial aid from the Gentile population, which they did not receive. Thus their primary means of escaping persecution was emigration. Since most German Jews were not aware of the grave dangers they faced until the Nazi regime was firmly established, and even then could not imagine the ultimate fate that awaited them, many did not choose this alternative until it was too late. Some 250,000 Austrian and German Jews, unable to emigrate, were eventually deported to concentration camps and extermination camps, some stopping first in the ghettos of
Warsaw, Lodz and elsewhere. As noted above, many German Jews died in the ghettos, though most were killed later in the death camps. If stopping the Nazis or escaping death was difficult in the Greater Reich, it was almost impossible in the ghettos of Poland. The ghettos, particularly those in Lodz and Warsaw, were almost totally isolated from the outside world. Though they were able, at times, to smuggle some goods into the ghetto, obtaining weapons was practically inconceivable. I will discuss resistance below.

Escape from the ghetto was nearly as difficult. Though a few did escape and attempt to get help from the outside world, most could not. Many of those who escaped were members of political parties who served as couriers bringing news, money and moral support to fellow party-members in other ghettos. Mark S. recalls:

There was practically no way to escape. A few people got out through a connection in Warsaw for which they paid a large sum of money. But these were isolated cases. On the whole, we had no means of escaping because we did not go on any work detail outside the city.

According to Mark S.'s testimony, the supervision of Jews was done by other Jews, and thus few had any contact with outsiders, even with Germans, except if one were caught on the street past curfew.

The Lodz ghetto was split into two sections with a corridor in the middle for the streetcar. In order to go from one side to the other, people had to walk on an elevated bridge. The gates to the bridge were guarded by the Gestapo.

At times, they would let you cross from one side to the other, but people tried to stay away from the gates because once in a while, if a Gestapo who stood at the gate didn't like your face, he would just shoot you....

Both the gates and the streets were closely watched, prohibiting communication and travel to such a great extent that escape in any signi-
ficant numbers was not possible.

In the smaller ghettos, such as that in Joseph K.'s town, escape was no more feasible than in Lodz. Although Joseph K. and his family were able to escape death during the first house to house search, by fleeing into the non-Jewish section of town and hiding in a hay loft for two days, others in a similar situation were not so lucky. "Across the street, a Jewish family was found and shot." Eventually, Joseph and his family were forced to leave the shelter of the loft because they had no food for almost three days. For a short time after, Joseph was able to protect his family because he obtained "a stamp on his papers" enabling him to work, but eventually, his family was unable to find anyone to hide them and they were arrested.

It was the intention of the Nazi government that most of the Jews would die within the ghetto walls, but a remarkable number, almost two million, did not. Given their circumstances, how was it possible that so many managed to survive the ghetto long enough to be deported to the death camps? In answering this question, I will discuss the concept of resistance as it applied to the Jews in the ghettos.

The word resistance usually implies some form of armed uprising. Although a few such incidents occurred, these were rare and, as history has shown, ineffectual. Given the nature of their captivity such resistance has no more possibility of success than an armed revolt in any well-guarded prison, and perhaps even less. Furthermore, resistance on the part of one individual or segment of the population (e.g. a political party) was usually met with instant death or random retaliation against other members of the community. Thus, it was necessary to weigh the benefits of any act of defiance against the
possible consequences to family, friends and the community at large. Despite the dangers inherent in taking up arms against the Nazis, such actions were frequently discussed among members of political organizations such as the Bund or the Zionists. In most cases this type of resistance was rejected by Jewish leadership at all levels, by those on the Jewish Councils as well as by members of political organizations. I will discuss the reasons for this in later pages.

Aside from open rebellion against the Nazis, there were other forms of resistance that were constantly being employed by the Jews of the ghettos. Just staying alive was looked upon as a form of resistance in itself. The inmates of the ghettos were continually exhorted by their religious leaders to "hold on and hold out." If it was the goal of the Nazis that Jews should die, they would defy their oppressors and survive. It was believed that "each Jewish survivor is a hero resisting the Nazis because he refuses to extinguish his precious life." Suicide was discouraged and an astonishingly small number of people used it as a means of escape. Noted Mark S.:

Strangely enough, there were very few suicides among religious Jews. There were suicides, but mostly among the assimilated Jews, because they couldn't take it. Their whole house of cards fell apart. They believed that the world was going to take some action. They didn't have the strength to survive. Among the religious Jews, hardly a suicide occurred.*

Whether fewer religious Jews committed suicide because of adherence to their faith, or because they were living in familiar territory among friends and family, is not really clear. But suicide, among pious Jews, does not appear to have been an option chosen by many.

*According to Lucy Dawidowicz, in Lodz there was a higher suicide rate among assimilated German and Czech Jews than among Polish Jews. In Warsaw, the number of suicides in 1940-1942 was only 65% of the number in 1939. (Dawidowicz, p. 292)
Using their intelligence and their ingenuity to outwit the Germans, the Jews were able to circumvent many of the restrictions and prohibitions meant to deprive them of their physical existence and their cultural heritage. They disobeyed decrees continually, by smuggling food and medicine into the ghetto, publishing newspapers, warning neighbors of forced-labor round-ups, refusing to report for deportation, running underground schools, and observing the traditions of their religion, all despite knowledge of the severe consequences they faced.

Perhaps the most significant factor in their survival was their sense of family and communal solidarity. In each family those who were able to work provided for the rest, often including aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins within the family circle. Even those with no family were rarely left to fend for themselves. Jewish organizations of all kinds flourished, providing social welfare, political leadership, cultural activities and a strong sense of belonging to help build morale.206

The Jewish community fought death and despair in the same way Jews had always attempted to guarantee the survival of the community in extremity, by using their culture to transform their environment. When the Nazis prohibited education, Jewish schools went underground. Six months after the Germans invaded there were 180 underground religious schools established in Warsaw. In other ghettos thousands of children were taught their Jewish lessons in secret.207 Forty thousand children received their secular education in private homes and public kitchens in Warsaw.208 In some areas, the Germans did allow elementary schools to be established, but often these schools were subsequently shut down.209 In Lodz, the Judenrat was responsible for the secular and religious education of the children.210 There were ten thousand students in forty-five schools.211
Adults also participated in cultural activities.

Cultural life flourished. There were concerts, meetings, lectures, high quality theater performances. The Zionist organization was very active. They tried to keep up our spirits.\textsuperscript{212}

In an effort to comfort the children, the community found ways to entertain them. School children performed for the adults as well. Warsaw, Lodz, Vilna and Kovno had orchestras. The orchestra in Lodz had 25 professional musicians and ten amateurs. Many of the ghettos had libraries as well. Here again, in some areas libraries were permitted: Lodz had one library with 7,500 books and 4,000 subscribers; and in some areas, they were not: Warsaw was forced to establish underground libraries.\textsuperscript{213}

The Jews of the ghettos also created their own literature. In Warsaw there existed a documentary centre and intelligence service referred to as Oneg Shabbat.\textsuperscript{214} People were encouraged to write and submit to the center, diaries, chronicles and essays depicting life under German rule.\textsuperscript{215} Similar enterprises were undertaken in other ghettos. People wrote prayers, poetry, songs, even jokes.\textsuperscript{216} In this way, Jews not only vented their rage against Nazi oppression, fighting off depression through intellectual pursuits, but also gained a small measure of immortality. Unable to tell the world of their sorrows while they were still alive, they could at least hope to be remembered after death.

I have shown that the Jews did not simply give up and give in to Nazi demands. They resisted by defying German laws and by refusing to cooperate wherever possible with the Nazis' outrageous demands. In doing so, they succeeded, in some measure, in sabatoging the efforts of the Germans to use their labor to aid in the war effort. In Lodz, an underground movement continuously circulated the slogan "P.P.," which symbolized the Polish words for "work slowly." Fires were ignited in factories, and in other ghettos
similar acts of sabotage were perpetrated, while underground newspapers exhorted their readers to "work badly and slowly."\textsuperscript{217}

But in spite of all their efforts, the Jews failed to save themselves. Many were able to stay alive within the ghetto walls, but were eventually deported to concentration camps or death camps. The question that remains is whether or not the Jews in the ghettos knew what fate awaited them, and if they knew, why, when it was clear that the possibility of "holding on and holding out" no longer existed, they did not attempt to fight to remain in the ghetto.

In June of 1944 when the Germans began the liquidation of Lodz this issue arose. At that time, Mark S. and his friends determined that they should discover where people were being taken. They had been told by the "Leadership" of the Jewish Council:

We're going to the camps. We'll have a much better life. We are not going to be separated from our families.

But Mark S. found this hard to believe:

People were sent out of the ghetto in cattle cars. Some of the cars came back and some people were given the job of cleaning them out. I had a friend who worked at the cars. Another of my friends was sent out in the car. We asked him to let us know what happened at the camps by putting a slip of paper under the window so it would be concealed. We marked the car so it could be identified when it returned. My friend wrote what happened. He said we are going to Auschwitz and families are being separated.\textsuperscript{*}

Mark and his friends went to the leaders of Lodz's Zionist organizations with their information, and again the feasibility of resistance was discussed. But the ghetto was so cut off from the rest of Poland, that it lacked weapons of any kind, and was unable to receive even minimal guidance from any quarter.\textsuperscript{218} It was decided that:

\textsuperscript{*}Mark noted that by 1944 they thought they knew what Auschwitz was, although they did not know it was a death camp, only that conditions there were far worse than in the ghetto. I will return to this subject shortly.
You cannot fight the German Empire with sticks. We could not, under any circumstances, obtain any weapons. And we did not have the slightest chance. At that time, there were still over 60,000 Jews in Lodz and we knew quite well that if we put up any resistance at all, thousands and thousands of people would die. Sure they died later on anyway, but at that time, we didn't know that would happen. We just could not morally take the responsibility of jeopardizing those people.219

Although Mark S. and the others firmly believed that fighting the Nazis would be futile, they still felt guilty for not resisting:

Unfortunately, and this is something we are not very proud of, we did not have much resistance against the Germans.

Why, if they believed that thousands would die should a revolt be attempted, did they still feel so guilty for not resisting more forcefully their deportation to the camps? From our perspective, it is obviously because, in the end, they discovered that almost everyone was killed anyway. But Mark S. felt guilty at the time for doing so little. Did he know then what fate awaited the Jews of Lodz? The answer is yes and no. In their testimony both Mark S. and Bernice S. state that although people in the ghetto, themselves included, were aware that conditions in the camps were probably worse than in Lodz, it is their opinion that no one believed Jews were being subjected to wholesale slaughter.

It was not that we didn't want to believe. It was that your brain - it was inconceivable. You can't believe that one human being can do this to another human being. It is beyond comprehension that people could be capable of such atrocities. So we actually did not believe it, no matter what we heard.220

In his book The Terrible Secret, Walter Laqueur makes it clear that theoretically the facts about the final solution were known to the world at large, and even to the inhabitants of Lodz and other ghettos, as early as 1942. Witnesses to atrocities in the Soviet Union and in death camps such as Chelmno, only forty miles west of Lodz, had written to friends and family still locked in the ghettos.
Post offices in Poland continued to function, warnings continued to arrive from all over the country. The existence of these letters shows that many Polish Jews did know at an early date about the final solution.

But for a myriad of reasons, most people simply did not believe what they had read. Some doubted the truth of the information they had received; others could not accept the fact that a similar fate awaited them.

Throughout Europe each Jewish community was convinced that although the Germans had annihilated some other group, Poles, or Greeks, or Russians, or Italians, or whomever, their own people would be safe. "The information existed, but the psychological mechanism of suppression was also at work." 

Thus, when the Jews of Lodz, and other ghettos, were forced to face the question of what actions were most likely to safeguard the lives of the greatest number of Jews, they were unable to make the correct decision.

In the case of East European Jewry the acceptance of reality might have induced more people to flee or to resist. Most would still have died but less than actually perished.

Even if the Jews were not aware of their ultimate fate, most did not want to be removed from the ghetto, and some people, survivors, historians and others, still feel that some attempt at outright resistance should have been made. It is the feeling of some that the lack of a strong resistance movement was the fault of the leadership of the Jewish Councils. Some have even accused the Councils of collaborating with the Germans in an effort to save themselves.* But the opinions of historians regarding the behavior of the Judenräte vis-à-vis the Nazi government is at best conflicting, and, at times, totally contradictory. Even when

*The most notable proponent of this theory is Professor Paul Hilberg in his book The Destruction of the European Jews, (pp. 146, 154 ff), although he has changed his position somewhat since then.
referring to identical pieces of evidence, historians have used the same data to draw widely divergent conclusions.

In The Destruction of the European Jews, Raul Hilberg concludes emphatically that much of the blame for carrying out the will of the Nazis lies with the Jews themselves. Had they not complied with orders, "to register their property, obtain identification papers, report at a designated place for labor or deportation, or shooting ...." the final solution would have been halted.

Only when one realizes how large a part of the destruction process consisted of the fulfilment (sic) of these measures can one begin to appraise the role of the Jews in their own destruction.224

According to Hilberg, the responsibility for this compliance rests with the Judenrâte. Yet others tell us that the Jews did not cooperate until it was patently obvious that disobedience would result in their instant death, or, even worse, in death for many others.225 In most cases, the decision as to whether or not even to accept a position on the Jewish Councils was cause for great debate. Most leaders of the pre-war Jewish community did not wish to serve as a tool of German oppression, but were reluctant to leave their communities defenseless.226 In the end, those who joined the Judenrâte did so with grave misgivings,227 and their fears were soon justified.228 In Lodz, thirty leading members of the community formed a consultative council in October of 1939. On November 7, they were arrested. Some were killed immediately; the rest were killed later, in the death camps.229

Isaiah Trunk, in his book Judenrat, discusses the tenure of the members of the Judenrâte. Of 724 council members discussed in his survey, only 6 percent served for three or more years, and 45 percent served no longer than one year. In regard to the fate of 720 members of the Judenrâte, Trunk states that only 11.9 percent survived the Holocaust.230
In his study of Jewish leadership in occupied Poland, Aharon Weiss evaluates the behavior of the Judenräte members in 146 communities. Of those serving in the "first term of office,"* 30.9 percent received a "positive evaluation," (i.e. assisted the community, refused to carry out financial directives, warned of approaching AKTION), 38.1 percent either resigned, because they were not willing to give in to Nazi policy, were removed from office by the Nazis, were killed for refusing to cooperate, or committed suicide. Of the remaining 31 percent, 1.3 percent served in some form of underground movement, 2.7 percent died soon after taking office, .7 percent were replaced by the Jews, and lastly, 9 percent received a "controversial" evaluation and 14.3 percent received a negative evaluation for having carried out German orders.

The figures reported for the Judenräte in the last period are strikingly different. Of the members of the Judenräte in 101 communities, 60 percent received a negative evaluation. Weiss' conclusion: of those who resisted Nazi demands most were "liquidated or removed" and replaced by those "less attuned to the interests of the community; during the stages of mass extermination and brutal terror they carried out the Nazi orders."231

Another reason for the increased cooperation of later Judenräte is the fact that by the end of the war, the Nazi death machinery was far more efficient than it had been at the start, and resistance was much more difficult.

Thus, Weiss believes that "responsible" Jewish leadership worked to protect the interests of the community, but those who had no previous leadership experience, and who had witnessed the devastating consequences of refusal to cooperate with the Germans gave in to their demands.

*The majority of them were liquidated or removed; thus Weiss evaluates Judenräte members in subsequent terms of office as new councils.
Whereas Hilberg feels that the Jews complied with Nazi demands because of their centuries-old habit of refraining from resistance in the belief that no matter what happens to individual Jews the Jewish people would survive, and resistance would only increase their hardships in the future,\textsuperscript{232} Weiss concludes that the Jewish leadership of the ghettos had in fact adopted a quite different policy. They recognized the fact that, although in the past they had to maintain the existence of the Jewish community under rulers who would be in power for considerable lengths of time, their present situation was temporary.\textsuperscript{233} They were, therefore, determined to "hold out" until Hitler was defeated. Thus, they felt that there could be no cooperation with German authorities because demands upon the Jewish community (e.g. on only those who worked, who received rations, etc.) lessened their chances of holding out until help arrived.

In my talks with ghetto survivors, I found that their attitudes toward the Judenräte are extremely ambivalent. There are a number of reasons for this. My two major sources on ghetto life are both from Lodz. Unlike that of most other councils, the operation of the Judenrat in Lodz was completely controlled by one man: Mordecai Chaim Rumkowski.* As I mentioned earlier, Runkowski was chosen by the Nazis not because he was an "Elder" of the community but because he was present at the wrong time in the wrong place. His leadership was characterized by his cunning and his "crude megalomania,"\textsuperscript{234} and he was universally hated. Rumkowski's control of the ghetto may be one cause for the failure of the development of any viable resistance movement in Lodz.\textsuperscript{235} But although he was directly

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*Lucy Dawidowicz cites only three other ghettos in a similar situation, and in only two of these was the leader despised as much as Rumkowski.
responsible for halting strikes,\textsuperscript{236} it is difficult to blame him for the lack of armed resistance in Lodz, when the likelihood of such action was so inconceivable. Rumkowski also believed, as did other members of the ghetto, that the only chance of survival rested on their ability to make themselves useful to the Germans through their labor, and thus buy time until the war was over.

When the liquidation of the ghetto began (in August of 1944) very few Jews obeyed orders to report for deportation. Rather, political parties, such as that in which Mark S. was a member, exhorted their followers to hide. Thus, the Germans had to root out the Jews and make them report to the train depot. Perhaps, had Rumkowski and the Jewish Council encouraged these organizations that favored passive resistance, they could have slowed down the deportation process and saved some lives. Though it probably would have made no difference anyway, their inaction earned them much criticism.

There are additional reasons why people found fault with the Councils, that are not particular to the Lodz ghetto. As I mentioned in my discussion of ghetto life, in a situation in which there are extreme shortages of food, clothing, medicine, and even living space, the temptation of those who control the resources to show favoritism towards their family or friends is very great. The use of "connections" to obtain extra rations was common.\textsuperscript{237} In fact, it is the opinion of both Mark and Bernice that without having gained some measure of extra rations, they and their families would not have survived the ghetto. Even by using "connections," Bernice was not able to procure enough medicine to keep her father alive. And, having taken advantage of her more favorable situation, she felt extremely guilty, despite the harsh circumstances. To this day,
Bernice feels both defensive about what she did and guilty for not having done enough. Although many people behaved as Bernice did, they also faulted the Council for participating in such actions. 238

From the preceding statements, it would appear that people felt nothing but contempt for the members of the Judenräter. But many recognized that the Councils were charged with an enormous task for which they were quite unprepared. In addition to the role, placed on them by the German authorities, of seeing that orders were carried out, they were expected to provide for all the needs of the community. Their responsibilities included the providing and supervision of: welfare, education, medical care, housing, utilities, police protection, fire protection, a judiciary, food production and distribution, transportation, postal services, sanitation, factory production, water, cemeteries and employment. 239 They had few resources and found it necessary to tax almost everything in order to provide for the needs of the ghetto. 240 They also had little experience since few Jews had held positions in civil administration in Poland prior to this time. They also had the job of pleading with the Nazis to lessen demands for labor, halt the violence, provide more food, space and medical care, and, in many other ways, ameliorate the plight of the Jews.

As I have shown in this chapter, the Nazis had embarked upon a campaign to deprive the Jews in these ghettos of the necessities of life. Thus, it was impossible for the Jewish Councils to succeed in their roles as providers, hard as they may have tried. Though, intellectually, people understood this dilemma, emotionally they responded to the failures of the Judenräter by blaming them for the hardships of the ghetto and by withdrawing their respect and cooperation.
In his interview, Mark S. stated that:

After the war, the members of the Judenräte that he knew went through a lot of agony. But, they did an awful lot of good. I would be the first to testify on their behalf that they did more good than bad.

With regard to the question, then, of whether the Jewish Councils are to blame for the success of the Nazi program, it would appear that, given the conditions under which they operated, few had any choice but to behave in the way they did. The vast majority of the council members did not choose to serve in an effort to improve their own situations; nor did most of them willingly comply with the demands of the Nazis, but rather tried, to the best of their ability, to save as many people as they could. That their efforts were in vain cannot be taken as reason enough to blame them for what happened to the Jews.

In the opening chapters of this study, I stated that the experiences of Central European and Eastern European Jews during the Holocaust differed, due to the circumstances in which they lived prior to this period. At the end of the war, 66 percent of the Jews in White Russia, 60 percent of the Jews in the Ukraine, and 90 percent of those who lived in Poland, the Baltic countries, Germany and Austria when the Final Solution was begun, were dead. But almost 60 percent of German Jews and 50 percent of Austrian Jews who were living in those countries when Hitler came to power managed to escape the Holocaust. These statistics illustrate one major difference between the situation of Central and East European Jewry. Had German Jews been less reluctant to leave their homeland, far more of them could have escaped the horrors of the Final Solution, because for a long period of time escape for them was possible.

In Poland and the Soviet Union, the factors that prevented the Jews from fleeing were mostly external rather than internal. Long before East
European Jews had heard of the atrocities being committed in the camps and by the Einsatzgruppen, few willingly chose to stay under Nazi domination. Unlike their fellow Jews in Germany and Austria, they were under no illusions that their credentials, their Gentile friends, or the law-abiding citizens of Germany would protect them. They wanted to leave, but were prevented from doing so.

There was little time to evade the attacking army or the deadly Einsatzgruppen. Within one month, Germany had subdued Poland; within five months, 500,000 Russian Jews had been slaughtered by the Einsatzgruppen. There was virtually no place for Jews to go, and once the ghettos were closed, it was extremely difficult for them to escape, even as far as the forests.

The Jews of Eastern Europe did not fail to emigrate because they were unaware of the dangers of Nazism, or because they were too patriotic to leave their homelands. For the most part, they remained in Europe because they had no choice. They were even less welcome in Western countries than in the wealthier, more assimilated and better educated Jews of Germany and Austria. By 1939, East European Jews had little money, and few had any relatives abroad who could help them emigrate.

There were other differences between the experiences of Central European and East European Jews, as well. Since most Russian and Polish Jews were much more religious than their German counterparts, a far greater percentage dressed in the traditional Hasidic style. This made it easier to identify them as Jews. They were also easier to locate. Seventy-five percent of Poland's Jews, and a substantial proportion of Russia's Jews lived in cities. Many even lived in special Jewish sections of their cities. In countries composed mainly of peasants, finding the Jews, and concentrating them in ghettos was not too difficult.
I showed in Chapter Four that anti-Semitism in pre-World War II Eastern Europe was far more prevalent than in Central Europe. As one might expect, persecution of the Jews on the part of non-Jewish Poles and other East European Gentiles intensified during the war. Even in areas in which there had been little violent anti-Semitism, such as Dr. L.'s town in Lithuania, most members of the Christian community were overtly hostile toward their Jewish neighbors. There was none of the politely apologetic behavior exhibited by the Germans. Dr. L. recalled that his family did receive food and supplies from Christian friends, though often in return for money, but not always. But, as Bernice S. noted, the Gentiles in her Polish city helped to identify those Jews in their neighborhoods who did not "look Jewish" and turned them in to theNazis.

The behavior of Polish non-Jews after the Germans left their country was not very commendable either. In 1944, as the Russian army advanced westward, the Germans began moving inmates of concentration camps into German labor camps. When a group of Jews arrived at the German labor camp in which Bernice S. was living, and told her of their experiences on their forced march from Poland, she decided to attempt to escape. Bernice and a young girl, whom she had been watching over since their deportation from Lodz, escaped from the camp and began walking to Poland.

We walked. We went on bikes. We found a horse. We traveled by horse and buggy and on coal trains. Then they threw us off the coal trains because they were for the military. But on the way back to Poland, I couldn't tell the Pollacks I was Jewish. The Pollacks kept telling me how good it was that the Germans killed the Jews. So again, I had to hide the fact that I was Jewish.242

Bernice went back to Lodz only because her family had agreed that, should they survive the war, they would go home to find one another.

Several months after the war ended, Mark S. also returned to Lodz, and
he and Bernice were married. In 1949, fleeing from a revival of Polish anti-Semitism, they and their infant son immigrated to the United States.

It is clear that the treatment of East European Jews was harsher in some respects than that suffered by the German Jews, but those German Jews who did not get out in time found life in the ghettos even more horrifying than did the more pious East European Jews. The strong religious orientation of the East European Jewish community created a sense of solidarity that boosted morale and helped them maintain their sanity.

Despite the differences between the starting points of the two groups of Jews discussed in this paper, in the end there was no difference at all. Once the ghettos were liquidated and the inhabitants shipped to the death camps, it mattered little what type of Jew one was.
Chapter Five

Thus far, in my discussion of the events of the Holocaust and the behavior of its victims, I have used as my sources only the testimony of witnesses, and selected historical works. One can also use fictional accounts as sources of information about this event, and it is instructive to examine the extent to which fiction reflects fact. In the final chapter of this study, I shall discuss the ways in which three novels: The Missing Years, by Walter Laqueur; Badenheim 1939, by Aharon Applefeld; and Night, by Elie Wiesel, parallel the historical evidence presented in this paper. Rather than attempting to cover all the aspects of the Holocaust discussed in previous chapters, I shall focus on two touchstones, two major themes: the reluctance of the Central European Jews to emigrate, and the inability of Eastern European Jewry to defend itself against Nazi persecution. I shall also comment upon the advantages of fiction over non-fiction in recreating the emotional climate of the period, and in portraying the reactions of the Jews to the Final Solution.

In each of the novels listed above, the Holocaust is presented in a different form. The Missing Years is a conventional novel, written in the style of a memoir. It is a very straight-forward account of the life of the narrator, a German-Jewish doctor who describes his experiences in Germany from his early childhood at the turn of the century, until the close of World War II.

In Badenheim 1939 we find a surrealistic portrayal of Austrian Jewry caught in the Nazi trap. As the story unfolds, the reader feels as though he were viewing a movie in which the characters are doomed; and he is forced to watch in horror as they remain oblivious to the danger that surrounds them.
Lastly there is *Night*, a moving account of the tragedy that befell the Jews of Hungary. Wiesel's narrative combines the historical style of *The Missing Years* with the psychological intensity and horror of *Badenheim 1939*.

The *Missing Years* was written by a noted historian, and, as one might expect, its attention to detail and historical accuracy is substantial. The narrator, Richard Lasson, closely resembles many of the survivors discussed in this paper. He comes from an assimilated, middle class family to whom being German is far more important than being Jewish, though he does not deny his Jewish heritage. The town in which he is raised is very much like that of Rabbi Hans B. It had only one synagogue, and a small Jewish community. "None of the local Jews took their religion seriously," he notes, and he does not recall any "open manifestation of anti-Semitism. If there was vicious anti-Jewish feeling, I certainly did not come across it."243

When faced with the possibility that Hitler might take over the government, Lasson is concerned.

What will become of Germany? The rise of the Hitler movement seems irresistible; it is frightening how many decent people are jumping on the bandwagon...244

But like most German Jews, he is not yet ready to consider leaving Germany. He recites all the ways in which the rise of the Nazis may prove to be less dangerous than some people fear: France and England may not tolerate a Nazi regime and will move to prevent its assumption of power; Hitler may learn that politicians must behave responsibly and "stop playing the wild man"; those who support Hitler may succeed in controlling him as well, etc., etc. Lasson concludes that "There may be difficult days ahead, but there is no reason for despair."245
Once Hitler assumes power, Lasson begins to weigh the pros and cons of emigration. Though his life is becoming more restricted, and many of his friends are leaving the country, he chooses to remain in Germany. In retrospect he notes that "This was, of course, a fatal mistake," but cites the usual litany of excuses for his decision, ending with the fact that "...even in 1937 the great majority of German Jews were not in concentration camps; they were impoverished but did not starve." He also notes that many others stayed, "not because they were resigned to their fate, but because they did not know what their fate would be." 246

Lasson also shows the same characteristic German faith in the ability of the laws to protect him that is manifested by my eyewitness accounts.

Germany was a civilized country and though 1933 had been a deep shock, the great majority of us still believed that there were limits which no legal authority could possibly overstep. We had been educated, in short, to behave according to certain rules, and I realized only belatedly that the rules were no longer in force. 247

Unlike the survivors whom I have examined so far, Lasson is never arrested, nor is a member of his family ever taken to prison or a concentration camp. As I noted in Chapter Three, it was not until this happened that most German Jews began to make serious plans to leave the country. Married to a Gentile, Lasson is considered by Nazi standards as a "privileged" Jew. Thus he does not feel as threatened as other Jews.

In the course of my research I listened to the tape of another German Jew who remained in Germany throughout the way, Joseph B. From 1939 until 1942 his wife worked in a munitions factory and she and her husband were therefore exempt from deportation for a time. In 1942, Joseph B.'s wife became ill and could no longer work. By this time the Jews had been crowded into houses specially designated for them, and were living on reduced rations.
Deportations were continuing at top speed: They were picking people up from all over; people were committing suicide. They were even picking up people who were working. Joseph decided to go into hiding.

Fortunately, he found a Gentile woman who was a "Nazi hater," and who agreed to help him. "She was friendly to Jews and had no signs prohibiting Jews from entering her tavern." Although, at first, she tried to find him shelter in the home of other non-Jews, she could not. Eventually she agreed to take him and his wife into her home for a few weeks. Joseph B. left a suicide note in his apartment, and he and his wife went to live with the woman. They remained in hiding, with monthly trips to the black market for food, until the Russians occupied Berlin.

Although the narrator in The Missing Years does not have to go into hiding, his experiences in Berlin are very much like that of Joseph B. He too has a Gentile friend who helps him survive the war, bringing him food, warning him of informers in the neighborhood, and keeping him informed about decisions made regarding the status of Jews in mixed marriages. In his "memoir," Lassan also tells us of the plight of those who have been forced to go into hiding. They are called submarines:

Some found a little attic or a cellar or a blockhouse which they would leave only in an emergency. For food and drink they had to depend on others; when they were ill they could not see a doctor.

Throughout the novel we are told of the myriad of events and problems facing the Jews of Berlin. The dilemma of Jewish leaders, such as Dr. Leo Baeck, who try to lessen the plight of the Jewish community, while being forced to transmit and enforce the orders of the German authorities, is discussed in depth. The problems caused by Jewish agents who inform on their fellow Jews is also described in the book. There is even a scene,
similar to that described by Berthold G. [See Chapter Three above] in which a group of Gentile women, in this case the wives of Jews who have just been arrested, stage a protest demanding the return of their husbands.252

The tone of The Missing Years is restrained, almost muted, reflecting not only the historical bent of its author, but also the attitude of the German survivor. In his narrative, Laqueur condemns no one, but paints a picture of people beset by unfortunate circumstances, missed opportunities, and poor judgement. His sympathetic portrayal of the non-Jewish Germans is echoed by the Jews whom I interviewed. In her talk with me, Eve S. remarked:

I hate insensitivity and cruelty and it doesn't really have a label on it. I am unable to say that Germans are guilty and Jews are holy. I can't see that when thinking about my particular life and the experiences I had in Germany.

I think people are very gullible. If you stage things right, if you give the people spectacles and a feeling of pride, they will follow you. People follow their leader, especially given the circumstances that the Germans were in. There was a disastrous defeat. There was a lack of pride and a lack of jobs. Under Hitler, everyone had something to do and something to go to. So, therefore, they dismissed those things that were unpleasant.

Lorelei L. also displays the same willingness to make allowances for the behavior of the German people.

You mustn't forget one thing. It's very easy to say why didn't you protest more, but it was their lives at stake.... It's hard to have courage if your family or your life is in danger.

Both Eve S. and Rabbi Hans B. recently returned to Germany for a visit. Though both of them lost their entire families, and
cannot, of course, forgive Hitler or the Nazi regime, they are still willing to renew their ties with German friends. It is difficult to tell whether this tolerance is due to the fact that they suffered less physical abuse than did the East Europeans with whom I talked, or to the fact that they were Germans and still find it hard to hate the German people. Probably it is the result of both factors. Although the Polish Jew has no qualms about blaming the Germans for what happened to them, the upper-class, assimilated, German Jew has a great deal of ambivalence. As a Jew, he abhors what the Germans did to him and to the Jews of Europe, but, as a German, he simply cannot condemn his own countrymen. This attitude prevails, and Walter Laqueur's depiction of the German Jews is faithful to this fact.

In contrast to historians, such as Lucy Dawidowicz, who, knowing what happened to the Jews, use their hindsight to point out early symptoms of the Holocaust, novelists, such as Laqueur, offer the perspective of those who lived during that time. Though historians tend to be less forgiving of people who failed to respond to early warnings that are clear to us today, Laqueur shows us why, in the midst of this crisis, it was impossible for anyone to see where events were leading, and he is particularly adept at showing us the plight of the upper-class, assimilated, German Jew, who loves his country, has faith in its laws and its people, and thus becomes locked within its boundaries.

Though its basic message is the same, Aharon Applefel's novel, Badenheim 1939, is an entirely different sort of book. It does not provide the reader with historical details, nor does it depict realistic people. Events in the Austrian spa at Badenheim possess a nightmarish quality, and the characters who are part of this nightmare each symbolize a particular type of Austrian Jew.
The story is told on two levels, and almost every sentence has a double meaning. On the surface, the author describes events as they occur during the summer of 1939. Each summer there is an influx of vacationers, mostly middle class, Austrian Jews, to the town. In 1939 the Jews return to Badenheim, acting as if this year were no different from any other in the past. Waiting to greet them are Dr. Pappenheim, the "impresario"; Martin, the Jewish pharmacist; and Trude, his wife. To Trude, the returning visitors "looked not like the familiar vacationers, but like patients in a sanitorium." Her husband insists that she is hallucinating, but she will not listen to him.

As the story progresses, it becomes clear that it is not Trude who is hallucinating, but the vacationers, who continually deny reality, refusing to recognize the implications of encroaching events. Gradually they become more and more apprehensive. The narrator writes of a "secret worry," and later tells us that "a secret seemed to be drawing the people together." But as the "Sanitation Department" begins to restrict their lives, no one but Trude is willing to talk about the true source of their problems. "Estrangement, suspicion, and mistrust began to invade the town. But the people were still preoccupied with their own affairs—the guests with their pleasures and the townspeople with their troubles."

The Sanitation Department puts fences around the town, presumably in preparation for a Festival. "There'll be fun and games this year," say the people. Later, the Jews are told to "register" with the Sanitation Department. Eventually, communication with the outside world is cut off, food supplies dwindle, and they are told to prepare for deportation to Poland. To this they respond, "Warsaw was the capital of Poland and it had everything that anyone could possibly want."
Nowhere in the story is there an explanation of why these events are taking place. Not once are the words "Nazi" or "anti-Semitism" mentioned by any character. We are presented with a picture of a group of Jews who are totally oblivious to reality. The mood is one of constant hysteria, as people continually stuff themselves with pastries, trying to have a good time.

This year their hunger knew no bounds.261 The guests were investing their money in strawberry tarts.262 In the end, a freight train arrives to transport them to Poland. Even at this late date they cannot accept the truth. In the last line of the novel, Dr. Pappenheim states: "If the coaches are so dirty it must mean that we have not far to go."263

Within this tale of self-delusion is a complex delineation of the individual ways in which specific kinds of Jews responded to the Holocaust, not in the year 1939, but from the beginning of the Nazi take-over until the annihilation of the Jews in the camps. The author shows us, not only how they reacted to the Nazis, but how they treated each other as well.

Dr. Pappenheim represents the leaders of the organized Jewish community. He is continually sending out telegrams in an attempt to get more "artists" to come to Badenheim.

He stood in the Post Office and sent one telegram after another; save me, rescue me, you can't leave in the lurch like this. The telegrams went off into the distance, but there were no replies.264 The "artists" represent famous Jews to whom Dr. Pappenheim is applying for help. In the end we are told that Pappenheim "stood in the doorway like an out-of-work actor."265 He has been unable to help the Jews in his care, and though he is constantly trying to reassure them that in Poland "No one will be deprived,"266 eventually they turn on him. He becomes "the arch
Ostjude and the source of all our troubles."267

The other musicians symbolize the bulk of the Central European Jewish population, the assimilated Jews. At first they do not recognize the dangers surrounding them. States one musician, the vacationers were "very impressed with the extent of the preparations this year. He was sure that they were in for a lot of surprises."268 But later the musicians become more aware of the "surprises" they are in for and try to blot out the truth.

If it hadn't been for the musicians guzzling themselves sick and then slinking into heavy gloom and melancholy, things would have been more pleasant. But the musicians had seen a lot in their lives and they were braided to what they knew like roots in heavy soil.269

Their roots are in Poland, and they recognize Jew-hatred when they see it.

We learn of the reaction of other Jews as well. There is Samitzky, the Ostjude, who tries to convince everyone, including himself, that life is much better in Poland. It has a "healthy cold, a clear cold, with hope for the future."270 And there are the Jews who deny that they are even Jewish, or who believe that the Nazis have simply made a mistake in including them with the more religious Jews. "The conductor, who was wearing a tailored cloak, stood to one side as if it all had nothing to do with him."271 His parents were baptized Jews. Dr. Langmann becomes furious when told he must register with the Sanitation Department.

I still regard myself as a free Austrian citizen. Let them send the Polish Jews to Poland; they deserve their country. I landed in this mess by mistake.272

There is even a Jewish war veteran.

For two days the major fought the Sanitation Department. He cursed the Jews and the bureaucracy and terrorized the streets of the town. In the end he shot himself in the head.273

Even the few Gentiles in the novel evoke images of certain groups of Germans. In addition to the Sanitation Department, obviously the symbol of the Nazi regime, there is a sentry. The sentry guards the gates into
Badenheim and feels sorry for himself. "What have you got to complain about? You don't have drill or guard duty, do you? His complaint sounds very much like Himmler's address to his SS commanders:

Most of you know what it means when 100 corpses lie here, or when 500 corpses lie there. To have gone through this and—apart from a few exceptions caused by human weakness—to have remained decent, that has made us great.274

Thus we find Jews and Gentiles refusing to face the truth. "Every year in Badenheim was a celebration, and this year was no exception."275 They are "preoccupied with their own affairs," while the Sanitation Department "showed them what reality was."276

The author also draws a picture of the fate of these Austrian Jews. The ghoulish nature of this tale is reinforced by the peculiar narrative style. At times, the author appears to be giving a meaningless series of non-sequiturs. But he is not. The unusual style forces the reader to look for a deeper meaning in the words. Thus, when we are told that the Sanitation Department has fenced in the town with "roles of barbed wire, cement pillars, and all kinds of appliances suggestive of preparations for a public celebration,"277 we realize what is really going on is the enclosure of the Jews in the ghetto. The "celebration" is the annihilation of the Jews.

Later, the Department puts up posters in its office. It "now resembled a travel agency," urging people to visit Poland. But the slogans on the posters are reminiscent of those posted on the gates of Auschwitz: "Labor is Our Life."278 And the pastry cook whose "long years by the ovens had left him with no will of his own"279 reminds us of the Sonderkommando—Jews who worked in the Death camps emptying the gas chambers and disposing of the dead. "The old pastry cook prepared them for burial and buried them at night."280

In a number of ways this novel bears a resemblance to some of the writings of Franz Kafka. As an assimilated, German-speaking Jew, living in Czechoslovakia, Kafka, like the Jews of Austria during the 1930s, was caught...
between two worlds. Hated by the Czechs for being upper-class German, as well as for being Jewish, he experienced a great deal more anti-Semitism than the Jews in Germany before the Nazi era. Kafka resented the fact that his father had deprived him of a Jewish heritage that might have given him the sense of security needed to withstand anti-Semitism. Though he was assimilated, he felt alienated from the Gentile world that would not accept all the Jews.

In his short story The Metamorphosis, Kafka presents the problems of such a man. Samsa, the salesman, is unhappy living in a world in which the sole aim of man is the worldly pursuit of money. His life lacks spiritual sustenance. When he is metamorphosized into a huge insect, though he is at first resentful, he eventually welcomes his fate. He loses all interest in materialistic objects, even food, and finds sustenance on a higher plane. As he listens to his sister's violin-playing he thinks: "Was he an animal, that music had such an effect on him? He felt as if the way was opening before him to the unknown nourishment he craved." Yet as a large, verminous, insect, he has become totally alienated from his fellow man.

Although the word Jew is not found in this story, the analogy between Samsa, the cockroach, and the Jews of Central Europe is there. In a letter to his friend, Milena, Kafka wrote:

I've spent all afternoon in the streets, wallowing in the Jew-baiting. "Prašivé plemeno" - "Filthy rabble" I heard someone call the Jews the other day. Isn't it the natural thing to leave the place where one is hated so much?...The heroism which consists of staying on in spite of all is that of cockroaches which also can't be exterminated from the bathroom."

Not only can one find in *Badenheim 1939* a similar portrayal of the alienated Jew, but also examples of Kafka's surrealistic technique, coupled with an allusion to the character of Samsa. Here too we find a salesman, Salo, who seems happy in his work, and oblivious to the dehumanizing events going on around him. When told that he is to be sent to Poland he remarks:
"So it's back to Poland!...! And I once ran away from there!..."
"What's the point in going back there now?...The idea of going back there doesn't appeal to me in the least."284

As he becomes more aware of his predicament, Salo, like Samsa, at first wishes "they could all sleep in peace."285 But, by the end of the story, he has not only accepted his fate, but finds it preferable to his previous existence.

"I spent my childhood and youth in Poland. I know them well. You'll get up in the morning and go to synagogue. Is that bad? You'll pray. Is that bad?...I'd advise you to leave your arrogant ways behind you. In Poland people treat each other with respect."286

The similarity between Samsa and Salo is heightened when one notes that, though the fate of both men is insanely bizarre, neither appears to be truly aware of that fact. Appelfeld has drawn parallels in the situations of the two characters, as well as in the ways in which each reacted to his condition. Although it is not possible to consider this novel a good source of factual information about the Holocaust, it certainly provides a better understanding of the confusion and apprehensions felt by its victims, and shows us a reason why, when faced with the horrifying implications of the Final Solution, they were unable to accept reality.

In Night, Elie Wiesel presents a step by step chronicle of events, that begins before the arrival of the Nazis in the Hungarian town of Sighet in 1944, and ends with the liberation of Buchenwald in 1945. He also tells how the Jews of Sighet felt, what they thought, and what they did at every step. In this way the reader is shown why it happened that the Germans were able to deport and annihilate East European Jewry with so little difficulty.

The story begins with a description of Moché, the Beadle, who is Eliezer, the narrator's, teacher and friend. When the foreign Jews are expelled from Sighet, Moché the Beadle must go with them. He returns with a horrifying tale: the deported Jews were slaughtered in the Polish forests by the Germans.
Like the East Europeans whom I have described, the Jews of Sighet refuse to believe Moché's story. "What an imagination he has! they said." They believed that he had gone mad. Each time they hear reports of German atrocities the Jews of Sighet convince themselves that they have nothing to fear. "The Germans won't get this far. There are strategic and political reasons..."

Once the Germans occupy Sighet, the Jews are still unwilling, or unable to believe that they will come to any harm, since at first they are treated politely by the invaders.

"Well, there you are, you see. What did we tell you? You wouldn't believe us. There they are your Germans! What do you think of them? Where is their famous cruelty?"

When Eliezer asks his father why he does not leave Sighet, he is told: "I'm too old, my son...I'm too old to start from scratch again in a country so far away." His answer is that of many others.

Once the Germans arrest the leaders of the Jewish community, "The race toward death" begins. The behavior of the Nazi Einsatzgruppe is familiar to us, but not to the people of Sighet, who have refused to heed the warnings of others. "I warned you," cries Moché the Beadle, before fleeing into the forest. But no one follows his lead.

The response of the Jews is also familiar. When told that they must wear the yellow star they acquiesce. "The yellow star? Oh well, what of it? You don't die of it...." They do not understand that the star makes it easier for the Nazis to identify them. The narrator notes the supreme irony in their remarks: "Poor father! Of what then did you die?"

The German authorities concentrate the Jews into a ghetto. Having only a knowledge of the past to use as criteria by which to judge the future, the Jews see in the ghetto, not a place in which they will await death, but a revival of the old medieval ghetto in which their culture and their people can
survive. Wanting desperately to believe that they have a future, they view the ghetto as

"a little Jewish republic....Everyone marveled at it. We should no longer have before our eyes those hostile faces....Our fear and anguish were at an end. We were living among Jews; among brothers...." States Eliezer "It was neither German nor Jew who ruled the ghetto - it was illusion."293

Like the authors discussed above, Wiesel tells us that the inability of Jews to conceive of a plan for mass murder prevented them from escaping destruction. They were willingly deceived by Nazi pronouncements that no harm would come to them,"...that we're going somewhere in Hungary, to work in the brick factories...."294 And when the time came for deportation they complied. "To the very last moment, a germ of hope stayed alive in our hearts."295

More than simply a statement of facts about the Holocaust, Wiesel's novel is a sensitive examination of the emotional trauma experienced by its victims. Though the Jews of Sighet continually tell each other that all is well, we can see that one part of their consciousness knows full well this is not so. When confronted with the fact of Nazi brutality, they respond with a paralyzing fear. Eliezer is told to awaken the Jews so that they can prepare for departure, but he can barely get the words out. "My throat was dry, the words choked in it, paralyzing my lips."296

As they begin their journey, "In everyone's eyes was suffering drowned in tears."297 In one poignant passage Wiesel shows us the horrifying reality of deportation.

I looked at my little sister Tzipora, her fair hair well combed, a red coat over her arm; a little girl of seven. The bundle on her back was too heavy for her. She gritted her teeth. She knew by now it would be useless to complain. The police were striking out with their truncheons...."Faster! Get on with you, lazy swine!"298

In the Destruction of the European Jews, Hilberg states that
The masses of Jewish deportees, numb, fantasy-ridden, and filled with illusions, reacted with mechanical cooperation to every German command. The Jewish council, hoping against hope for a postponement of the inevitable, woke up too late to act.299

Whether it was possible to act, even if they had chosen to do so, is still a hotly debated issue. As I have shown in previous chapters, at that time many believed that resistance was far too risky. Once the outcome of the Final Solution was known, it became obvious that the consequences of an attempted revolt could not have been any more disastrous than inaction proved to be. But, in Night we are shown that the Jews were emotionally unable to resist, and the reader wonders whether he too might have responded in the same way.

A survivor himself, Wiesel reveals his own feelings of guilt over his failure to protect his family. Night is a highly introspective novel. In it we find the anguished remorse of a man who has watched his home, his friends and his family destroyed, as he stood by, incapable of saving them. When Eliezer's father dies in a concentration camp we are told by the narrator: "In the depths of my being, in the recesses of my weakened conscience, could I have searched it, I might perhaps have found something like — free at last!"300

As a child, Eliezer is relieved that he no longer has to care for his father. As a man, he condemns himself for his failure to do so.

Bernice and Mark S., both survivors of Auschwitz and the German labor camps, display this same sense of guilt. Though they blame the Germans for carrying out the Final Solution, says Mark, "The whole nation went beserk," while they denounce the rest of the world for refusing to come to their aid, they also blame themselves for failing to save their people. Mark notes that at one point the inhabitants of the Lodz ghetto were asked to join the Polish Socialists in a resistance effort and they refused. "This is something we are not very proud of." His wife Bernice bitterly regrets that she did not
protect her family; only she and her youngest brother survived.

Through this examination of three novels one can see that fiction does indeed mirror fact. Though novelists obviously do not portray events the way historians do, the underlying themes, the basic truths, are accurately represented. It is possible to learn a great deal about the Holocaust through its fictional accounts.

But what the reader learns above all is somewhat different from what he finds in historical accounts. The novels provide what history often lacks: an appreciation of the mood of the times and an understanding of the emotional state of those who lived in them. In studying the past both history and literature are needed, and when considered together, they more closely approach the truth of the time than either one can taken alone.
CONCLUSION

Thirty-six years ago the inmates of Hitler's camps were liberated. Of the ten million Jews who had lived in Europe on the eve of World War II, only half were still alive when the war was over. In this paper I have described what happened to the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe under Nazi domination. Although I have written about only a few of the survivors, I have shown that, for the most part, their experiences and their response to Nazi persecution were typical of the Jewish community as a whole. Therefore, it seems permissible to draw some general conclusions from their testimony, about the behavior of the Jews, and of the Gentile populations among whom they lived.

As I noted (see Chapter Four above) once the Jews were transported to the camps, it no longer mattered whether they were Germans or Poles, assimilated or non-assimilated, pious Jews or baptized "Jews." All were equally subjected to Hitler's Final Solution to the Jewish problem." But there were great differences in the initial responses of these Jews to the actions of the Nazi regime. The Jews of Central Europe, wealthier and more assimilated than their East European counterparts, had far more opportunities to escape from the Nazis than did the East European Jews. Essentially, it was their German character; their faith in the inherent justice of German laws, and their love for their country and its people, that kept the German Jews from recognizing the dangers that surrounded them. They had a warm, friendly
relationship with the German Gentile community, and the reassurances of their Gentile friends that all would be well further blinded them. Had they not been so much a part of German society, they might very well have taken flight.

These Jews were also extremely reluctant to abandon their comfortable middle-class existence. Their families had lived in Central Europe for centuries, and they were quite well off. They were also very proud of the contributions of their fellow Jews to German life, and of their own accomplishments in commerce, the professions, medicine and the arts. The Jewish community insisted that it had the right to maintain a Jewish presence in Germany, until it became obvious that such demands were futile, even dangerous.

With only one exception, all of the Central European Jews whom I have discussed in this paper waited, until someone in their family was arrested by the German government, before deciding to leave the country. These people had such strong commitments to their homelands that it was not until they felt totally betrayed that they were willing to emigrate.

In the East the situation was different. Anti-Semitism was not new to Europe. Although no one was able to envision the terrible fate that awaited them, most of the Jews in this region did not need to be convinced that it would be wise to emigrate. Unfortunately, they had neither the time, nor the money, needed to escape. Within a few weeks of the invasion of Poland, the Nazis began their systematic persecution of the Jews. The fact that most of them were middle class urban dwellers meant that locating and isolating the Jewish community was a relatively simple process, and the prevalence of anti-Semitism in this region enabled the Nazis to gain the cooperation of the native
Gentile population in their undertaking. Also, the peculiar manner of
dress and unusual hair style of many East European Jews made identifi-
cation of them much easier than in Germany or Austria. Lastly, the
harsh treatment of the Jews by the Gentile community made it almost
impossible for them to find refuge outside the ghettos, and escape
into the forest was far too difficult for most even to consider.

For most Jews, therefore, once the war began the chances of escaping
persecution were nil. Caught in Europe, some discussed the feasibility
of resisting the German authorities. But without help from the Christian
community, resistance was practically impossible. Though it is clear
today that rebellion might have saved more lives, and could hardly
have made things any worse than they were to become, at that time few
believed that one could attempt resistance without further endangering
the lives of others. Even in Germany, in the early days of the Third
Reich, protests on behalf of the Jews were met with violent reprisals
against protestors and Jews.

Today, the feelings of the survivors about their experiences during
the Holocaust reflect, in some ways, their Central or Eastern European
heritage. Although all of them hold Hitler and the Nazi regime responsible
for the death of millions of Jews, the German Jews are less willing to
blame the German people as a whole for the behavior of the Nazis. They
recognize that, without the tacit approval of the German people, the
Holocaust would not have occurred, but they also believe that conditions
in Germany had much to do with the way the Germans behaved. Also, they
regard the people who worked for the German government as divorced from
the hated "Nazi regime." Thus, they find it hard to condemn even those
Germans for carrying out the Final Solution.
The German survivors feel guilty for not recognizing the need for emigration before it was too late, and some are even angry with their parents, who waited too long and ended up in the death camps. Some even feel ashamed for not speaking out against the Nazi regime once they were safe in America, despite the fact that their reluctance to do so was based on the very realistic fear that the families they left behind would suffer even more as a result of such actions.

The East European Jews feel just as ambivalent about their behavior during the Holocaust as the German Jews. As I noted earlier, many of them knew that unless they were able to obtain extra rations, or favorable employment, neither they nor any member of their families would survive. Yet they feel guilty for having used these connections to gain special treatment, and remorse for having failed to do enough to save their brothers, sisters and parents.

All of the survivors believe that if we are allowed to forget what happened during the Holocaust it could very well happen again. In their opinion, it was the indifference of the outside world, more than anything else, that enabled Hitler to carry out his plans for the Jews. They also feel that the inability of the Jews themselves to believe that such a thing could happen kept them from saving their people.

It is not possible to determine who is to blame for the catastrophe that befell the Jewish people. Nor is it necessarily a good idea even to try. To blame an individual or a political party for the Holocaust makes it easy to say that, since Hitler and the Nazis were peculiar to a certain time and place, these events will never be repeated. To blame the whole world is such a generalized accusation that, in effect, everyone would be absolved of responsibility, since it would mean that it is
not within the power of mankind to stop such things. Either conclusion would justify the desire to forget the past. Rather than point a finger to others and say "it is because of you" that millions were killed, one should try to determine what happened and how it could have been prevented. It is only in that way that we can improve our chances of recognizing the earliest symptoms of a Holocaust, and therefore attempt resistance, and prepare for flight, before it is too late.
FOOTNOTES

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37. Castellan, p. 189.
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65. Margoliot, p. 77.
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69. Ibid., p. 77, 85, and 93.
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80. Ibid., Chapter XIV.
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83. Ibid., p. 214.
84. Ibid., p. 81.
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88. Ibid., p. 115.
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90. Ibid., pp. 113-20.
91. Ibid., p. 116.
92. Ibid., p. 117.
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100. Arendt, p. 66.
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103. Ibid., p. 69.
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106. Dawidowicz, p. 80.
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114. Castellan, p. 188.
118. Hilberg, p. 145.
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121. Interview with Bernice S., West Hartford, Connecticut, 18 October 1980.
122. Dawidowicz, p. 269.
123. Interview with Bernice S., 18 October 1980.
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143. Dawidowicz, p. 276.
144. Interview with Bernice S., 18 October 1980.
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147. Interview with Mark S., 6 November 1974.
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Tape recordings of all interviews are filed with the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford, 335 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford, Connecticut, and are available to the public.

Secondary Sources


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