

Document 1a.

Telephonogram from the Chief of the Main Security Bureau of the Third Reich, Rudolph Heydrich, Berlin, September 21, 1939.

To Chiefs of all Einsatzgruppen* of the Security Police

Subject: The Jewish Question in Occupied Territory

I refer the conference held in Berlin today, and again point out that the planned total measures (i.e., the final aim – Endziel) are to be kept strictly secret.

For the time being, the first prerequisite for the final aim is the concentration of the Jews from the countryside into the larger cities.

This is to be carried out speedily.

In doing so, a distinction must be made

1. Between the zone of Danzig and West Prussia, Poznan, Eastern Upper Silesia, and
2. The other occupied zones.

As far as possible, the areas referred to under 1) are to be cleared of Jews; at least the aim should be to establish only few cities of concentration.

In the areas under 2) as few concentration centers as possible are to be set up, so as to facilitate subsequent measures. In this connection it should be born in mind that only cities, which are rail junctions, or are at least located on railroad lines, should be selected as concentration points. [...]

Abschrift

M. 100/37 (22P)

Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei
PP (II) - 288/39 geh.

Berlin, den 21. Sept. 1939

①

107/99

Schneel i b r i e f

An

Die Chefs aller Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei

Betrifft: Judenfrage im besetzten Gebiet.

Ich nehme Bezug auf die heute in Berlin stattgefundene Besprechung und weise noch einmal darauf hin, dass die geplanten Gesamtmassnahmen (also das Endziel) streng geheim zu halten sind.

Es ist zu unterscheiden zwischen

- 1.) dem Endziel (welches langere Fristen beansprucht) und
- 2.) den Abschnitten der Erfüllung dieses Endzieles, (welche kurzfristig durchgeführt werden.)

Die geplanten Massnahmen erfordern gründlichste Vorbereitung sowohl in technischer, als auch in wirtschaftlicher Hinsicht.

Es ist selbstverständlich, dass die heranstehenden Aufgaben von hier in allen Einzelheiten nicht festgelegt werden können. Die Nachstehenden Anweisungen und Richtlinien dienen gleichzeitig dem Zwecke, die Chefs der Einsatzgruppen zu praktischen Überlegungen anzuhalten.

1.

Als erste Voraussetzung für das Endziel gilt zunächst die Konzentrierung der Juden vom Lande in die grösseren Städte.

Sie ist mit Beschleunigung durchzuführen.

Es ist dabei zu unterscheiden :

- 1.) zwischen den Gebieten Danzig und Westpreussen, Posen, Ostoberschlesien und
- 2.) den übrigen besetzten Gebieten.

Nach Möglichkeit soll das unter Ziffer 1) erwähnte Gebiet von Juden freigemacht werden, zum mindestens aber dahin gezielt werden, nur wenige Konzentrierungsstädte zu bilden.

In den unter Ziffer 2) erwähnten Gebieten sind möglichst wenige Konzentrierungspunkte festzulegen, sodass die späteren Massnahmen erleichtert werden. Dabei ist zu beachten, dass nur solche Städte als Konzentrierungspunkte bestimmt werden, die entweder Eisenbahnknotenpunkte sind oder zum mindestens an Eisenbahnstrecken liegen.

Es gilt grundsätzlich, dass jüdische Gemeinden mit unter 500 Köpfen aufzulösen und der nächstliegenden Konzentrierungsstadt zuzuführen sind.

Dieser Erlass gilt nicht für das Gebiet der Einsatzgruppe I, welches etwa, östlich von Krakau liegend, umgrenzt wird von P o l a n i c o, J a r o s l a w, der neuen Demarkationslinie und der bisherigen slowakisch-polnischen Grenze. Innerhalb dieses Gebietes ist lediglich eine behelfsmässige Judenählung durchzuführen. Des weiteren sind die nachstehend behandelten jüdischen Ältestenräte aufzustellen.

Document 2.

KARSKI IN THE GHETTO

They [members of the Jewish underground] offered to take me to the Warsaw ghetto so that I could literally see the spectacle of a people expiring, breathing its last before my eyes. [...] As an eyewitness I would be much more convincing than a mere mouthpiece.

[...]We had reached the ghetto by a secret passage that must have been obvious to anyone who scrutinized the district at all carefully. [...] Everywhere there was hunger, misery, the atrocious stench of decomposing bodies, the pitiful moans of dying children, the desperate cries and gasps of a people struggling for life against impossible odds. [...] Frequently we passed by corpses lying naked in the streets. 'What does it mean?' I asked my guide. 'Why are they lying there naked?' 'When a Jew dies,' he answered, 'his family removes his clothing and throws his body in the street. If not, they have to pay the Germans to have the body buried. They have instituted a burial tax which practically no one here can afford. Besides, this saves clothing. Here, every rag counts.

Document 3.

Karski in a Camp, Izbica Lubelska*, Summer of 1942

A few days after my second visit to the Warsaw ghetto, the Bund* leader was to arrange an opportunity for me to see a Jewish death camp. The camp was located near the town of Belzec, about one hundred miles east of Warsaw, and was well-known all over Poland from the tales of horror that were circulated about it. The common report was that every Jew who reached it, without exception, was doomed to death. That was the only reason to be sent there. The Bund leader had never been in it but had the most detailed information in its operations, which he had had principally from the Polish railroad workers. [...]

I was to wear the uniform of one of the Estonians* who would stay home while I went in with his papers. [...] I was assured that chaos, corruption, and panic prevailed in the camp to such an extent that there was no chance of my disguise being penetrated. Moreover, the whole expedition was perfectly organized in advance. [...] I would go through a door habitually guarded only by Germans and Ukrainians, for an Estonian might sense a stranger in me. The Estonian uniform, itself, constituted a pass, so that my papers would probably not be inspected. [...]

The plan seemed simple and flawless. I agreed without any hesitation and without the slightest fear of being caught.

Early in the morning of the day we had selected, I left Warsaw in the company of a Jew who worked outside the ghetto in the Jewish underground movement. We took the train to Lublin. A hay cart was waiting for us there. [...] We arrived in Belzec shortly after midday and went directly to the place where the Estonian was supposed to be waiting to give me his uniform. It was a little grocery store that had once belonged to a Jew. [...] An hour or two later the Estonian who was to accompany me arrived. [...] The camp was about a mile and a half from the store. [...]

As we approached to within a few hundred yards of the camp, the shouts, cries, and shots cut off further conversation. I again noticed, or thought I noticed, an unpleasant stench that seemed to have come from decomposing bodies mixed with horse manure. [...]

It was on a large, flat plain and occupied about a square mile. It was surrounded on all sides by a formidable barbed-wire fence, nearly two yards in height and in good repair. Inside the fence, at intervals of about fifteen yards, guards were standing, holding rifles with fixed bayonets ready for use. Around the outside of the fence, militia men circulated on constant patrol. The camp itself contained a few small sheds or barracks. The rest of the area was completely covered by a dense, pulsating, throbbing, noisy human mass Starved, stinking, gesticulating, insane human beings in constant, agitated motion. Through them, forcing paths if necessary with their rifle butts, walked the German police and the militia men.

To my left I noticed the railroad tracks which passed about a hundred yards from the camp. From the camp to the track a sort of raised passage had been built from old boards. On the track a dusty freight train waited, motionless. It had at least thirty cars, all filthy. [...] The Jewish mass vibrated, trembled, and moved to and fro as if united in a single, insane, rhythmic trance. They waved their hands, shouted, quarreled, cursed, and spat at each other. Hunger, thirst, fear, and exhaustion had driven them all insane. [...] When they had been rounded up they were given permission to take about ten pounds of baggage. [...] On the train, the Germans who accompanied them stripped them of everything that had the slightest value, even snatching away any article of clothing to which they took a fancy. [...]

Those who left the train without any food starved continuously from the moment they set foot in the camp. [...] The sheds could not accommodate more than two to three thousand people and every 'batch' included more than five thousand. This meant that there were always two to three thousand men, women, and children scattered about in the open, suffering exposure as well as everything else. The chaos, the squalor, the hideousness of it all was simply indescribable. There was a suffocating stench of sweat, filth, decay, damp straw and excrement.

*Karski thought he was taken to a camp in Belzec, but historians later verified that it was actually Izbica Lubelska

*They were actually Ukrainians, which Karski either did not know or wanted to protect their identity

*a Jewish labor party

Document 4a.

AN ACCOUNT OF KARSKI'S CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT (July 28, 1943, excerpted)

PRESIDENT: What does the German terror look like?

KARSKI: It is different than, for instance, the Bolshevik terror. The Bolsheviks, aside from deporting hundreds of thousands of people to Russia, primarily attempted to destroy the Polish Underground movement. They had a great system of espionage, of observation, they knew how to use agents and provocation. They were penetrating the Underground resistance. They were trying to catch everyone who had any kind of political past. The Germans have different methods. They don't have time or personnel for the aforementioned methods; a very tough attitude from Polish society makes it impossible for them to use most of these methods. They act primarily through mass terror and collective responsibility. They find a doctor in a town who is involved in the resistance, and they arrest most of the doctors in that town. They find a printing press, they arrest all the men they find on the nearby streets. They organize a street roundup, they arrest 10 or 20, or even (in Warsaw, in July of 1942) 35,000 people, assuming that among that number there will surely be some culprits. Everyone else is sent to forced labor, to camps. The suspects are interrogated, tortured, shot. As a result of this terror, the losses among the Polish population are huge, often worse than you would think based on the information published by our authorities.

AMBASSADOR: It proves that the government announced numbers and facts are indisputable and can be proved.

KARSKI: I noticed that they do not recreate the reality adequately. At our Consul General Strakacz's in New York. I saw a brochure published by our information agency a few weeks ago. I was astounded by the numbers. They stated in the brochure that the Germans shot 60,000 Polish members of the intelligentsia, and that they had murdered 1,200 000 people. In Auschwitz alone, although it is the most horrible concentration camp, from 80,000 to a 100,000 people, mostly intelligentsia, have lost their lives. And Auschwitz is only one of the concentration camps for Poles in Poland and in Germany. There's also Majdanek, Treblinka, Belzec, Stanislawow, Dachau, Oranienburg, Mathausen, a special camp for women in Ravensbrück. The collective responsibility is particularly difficult for our rural population, because the names of the hostages [prisoners] are always published by the Germans, and these hostages, who haven't even been [officially arrested] are responsible for keeping the rural communities quiet and loyal. All these people know each other. It is very difficult and awful to organize resistance or fighting on territories where all the villagers know who will be shot or hung [if they resist the Germans], when the victim is their friend, relative, neighbor, etc. We are coping with this by sending Poles from other regions to carry out the sabotage, armed struggle and diversion.

I am certain that most people are not aware of the horrific fate of our Jewish population. Over 1,800,000 Jews have been murdered in our country. There is a difference between the terror used against the Poles and the Jews. The Germans want to destroy the Polish nation as a nation, but they want the Polish population on these territories, deprived of their political, intellectual, religious and economic elites, with only farmers, workers and the city middle class. With the Jews, they want to destroy the entire Jewish nation biologically [organically]. I brought an official announcement for my Government from the Government Delegate [for Poland] and the Home Army Commander, saying that if the Germans don't change their methods toward the Jewish population, or if there is no Allied intervention – whether it is through repressions, or other methods - if there are no unexpected circumstances, in a year and a half from my departure from the country, the Jewish population in Poland, with the exception of those working in the Jewish Underground resistance, will cease to exist.

Box 1
folianty 7

51-20

JM/M. 185 Opracowanie: Levine, Kartke

Notatka z rozmowy z Prezydentem F. D. ROOSEVELT'em w środę, 28/VII.1943r.

Obecny przy rozmowie:

Pan Ambasador J. Ciechanowski.

Pan Ambasador J. Ciechanowski zorganizował mi rozmowę z P. Prezydentem w ten sposób, iż odbyła się ona z inicjatywy Prezydenta. Ludzie z jego otoczenia (Cohen, Frankfurter, Bullitt, Henderson, (Cor) opowiadali Prezydentowi o moich materiałach, zachęcając go do zapoznania się z nimi osobiście. Zaproszenie przyszło nagle, po rozmowie Prezydenta z p. Bullitt'em, b. Ambasadorem USA. we Francji. P. Bullitt wskazywał Prezydentowi na szczególne znaczenie moich informacji o metodach działalności agentów komunistycznych na ziemiach Polski. Następnego dnia, o godz. 8-ej rano p. Ambasador otrzymał telefon, iż o godzinie 10:30 tegoż dnia Prezydent nas oczekuje.

Przed rozmową otrzymałem dokładne instrukcje od p. Ambasadora, które rzeczy specjalnie wypuklić, oraz wskazówki, co do sposobu raportowania. Uprzedził mnie, że będzie starał się nie uzupełniać mojego referatu, nie chcąc stwarzać pozoru nastawiania mnie, poza ewentualnymi uzupełnieniami technicznych moich braków językowych i ewentualną dyskusją polityczną, gdyby taka między nim a Prezydentem na tle moich materiałów wykonała się.

Tak jak poprzednio ze wszystkimi kluczowymi osobistościami polityki amerykańskiej, tak i obecnie p. Ambasador zwrócił mi uwagę, abym przy raportowaniu w żadnym razie niczego nie przesadzał, opowiadał ścisłą prawdę, bowiem jest pewny, że obraz Polski zarówno podziemnej jak i ogólne warunki życia w Kraju są najlepszym naszym argumentem politycznym. P. Ambasador życzył sobie, ażeby wypuklić: stosunek Polaków do osoby Prezydenta, nielojalna i szkod-

REPUBLIC OF POLAND

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

THE MASS EXTERMINATION
of JEWS in
GERMAN OCCUPIED POLAND

NOTE

addressed to the Governments of the
United Nations on December 10th, 1942,
and other documents



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RETROSPECTIVE

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arded, but for statistical purposes the letters may be ection. Letters marked " Personal " are forwarded

Yours faithfully,

Mr. Karski,
24 Blomfield Road,
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THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Programme Contracts Department.

STORY OF A SECRET STATE



JAN KARSKI
LECTURER

Irem Temple, Wilkes-Barre, May 3rd, 1945

Document 8: Video Clip



Jan Karski about his meeting with Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter

Video excerpted from interview from film SHOAH created by Claude Lanzmann

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YVTfG_qE2Y



WHEN THE NAZIS
OVERRAN POLAND,
LT. JAN KARSKI
JOINED THE
UNDERGROUND.*



AS COURIER, HE WAS THE CONTACT
WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN-EXILE.



NUNS IN NAZI PRISON
HOSPITAL HELPED HIM
ESCAPE FROM GESTAPO!



HE VISITED NOTORIOUS JEWISH DEATH
CAMP, DISGUISED AS ESTONIAN GUARD,

*
STORY OF A SECRET STATE
by JAN KARSKI
BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB SELECTION

More resources at: www.jankarski.net

Teachers' Notes:

Document 1a.

* Einsatzgruppen - paramilitary death squads of Nazi Germany that were responsible for mass killings, primarily by shooting, during World War II.

SOURCE: Documents of the Holocaust, Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union Ed. Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, and Abraham Margaliot, pp. 173-174

Teachers can show a map of the German occupied areas of Poland – to which this directive applies:

http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/learning_environments/sites_map.asp, or

http://karski.muzhp.pl/karski_en/wojna_agresja_niemiecka.html

(Be sure to keep discussion focused on the idea that Jews were singled out for especially abusive treatment within three weeks of Germany's invasion of Poland.)

Background on Reinhard Heydrich, author of Document 1:

Reinhard Tristan Eugen Heydrich (7 March 1904 – 4 June 1942) was a high-ranking German Nazi official during World War II, and one of the main architects of the Holocaust. He was SS-Obergruppenführer (General) and *General der Polizei*, chief of the Reich Main Security Office (including the Gestapo and Kripo) and *Stellvertretender Reichsprotektor* (Deputy Reich-Protector) of Bohemia and Moravia (in what is now known as the Czech Republic. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reinhard_Heydrich)

Document 1b.

Heydrich's famous "Schnellbrief" of September 21, 1939, concerning the concentration ("ghettoization") of the Jews in occupied Poland. (Yad Vashem file M.1.DN/37). Another copy of the same document can be found among the Nuremberg trials documentation under the number PS-3363.

Document 2.

J. KARSKI, *STORY OF A SECRET STATE*, PP. 306 – 315

Document 3.

J. KARSKI, *STORY OF A SECRET STATE*, PP. 320-326

Document 4a

JAN KARSKI'S REPORTS: COURTESY OF ANDRZEJ ŻBIKOWSKI, PH.D.

http://www.karski.muzhp.pl/karski_en/misja_raporty_karskiego_rozmowa.html

Document 4b

Copy of Jan Karski's account of his conversation with President

Roosevelt http://www.karski.muzhp.pl/karski_en/raporty/rozmowa/rozmowa_1.jpg

Document 5.

"A brochure published by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, based on Karski's report. It was the first document of this weight regarding the annihilation of the Jews which was made public in the West. (From the Hoover Institution archives).

Document 6.

"Jan Karski's invitation for a BBC radio show, during which he was supposed to talk about the Polish Underground State (From the Hoover Institution archives)

Document 7

"Brochure with the "Story of a Secret State" lecture program, organized by the Americans of Polish Descent Organization in 1945. It was one of a series of lectures promoting Jan Karski's book (published in 1944) with the same title (From the Hoover Institution archives).

Document 8.

Video clip of Jan Karski.

Document 9.

This cartoon by William Sharp was used to advertise Jan Karski's 1944 book "Story of a Secret State"

<http://img.jSPACE.com/this-cartoon-by-william-sharp-was-used-to-advertise-jan-karski-s-1944-book-story-of-a-secret-state-f-108407.jpg> **NOTE:** Karski was rescued from the hospital through a sophisticated Polish Underground operation, which involved a member of the Polish Underground posing as nurse (not nun).