

ALEX FINDER PAPERS, 1944-1996
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Appendix A. Transcriptions of newspaper articles

The following transcriptions of newspaper articles are housed in the donor files of the United State Holocaust Memorial Museum. The creator of the transcriptions is unidentified.

Letters from Readers...

The municipality of Ebense received 4,000 shillings for proper maintenance of the Concentration Camp cemetery!

Referring to the article written by the pilot of the Canadian Army, which was published in the last issue of "Głos" (Voice) – Mr. Alexander Finder, former political prisoner of German concentration camps wrote the following:

"After reading the item about the state of the concentration camp cemetery in Ebense, I came to the conclusion that the claims of the Canadian pilot are justified. Our holy place looks like a forgotten and neglected piece of land. Only the Crosses and the Stars of David showing among the overgrown grass, testify that this is a cemetery, where our comrades from different nations and religions are buried here.

Fifteen months ago, on May 5th, the representative of the municipality of Ebense stood here at the podium and solemnly promised in the name of the inhabitants of the city and his own, that this place will be dear to them and will be kept accordingly.

Today we see the sad results of these promises. We asked very little from the city. We raised among ourselves 4,000 shillings and on the first anniversary of the liberation we gave this sum to the representative of the city. We didn't want to be a burden to anyone. All we asked for was for the municipality to have funds to take good care of the cemetery. How come just the opposite happened?

The same day I walked near the SS cemetery, near the Steinkogl hotel. It is beautifully taken care of. No money was raised from the public and no promises were given publicly – and still someone's hands are taking care of all the graves and the whole cemetery. The difference between these two cemeteries speaks for itself. Those who should be remembered, are neglected and those, who caused the

catastrophe, their graves are beautifully decorated with flowers and greenery! The concentration camp cemetery is located in a beautiful location, right next to the road from Ebensee to Bad Ischl. Just this location should make the city officials think about its condition. What will the visitors coming to the area think about it?

The weeds need to be pulled and not only the ones, which obscure the gravestones. The weeds of hatred in the hearts and minds of humans need to be pulled out. Those buried at the cemetery are human beings, whose lives were taken in the name of LOVE.

Aleksander Finder (Bad Ischl)

Dedicated to Murdered Jews – Remembrance

All Saints' Day is a day of remembrance, day of mourning. Death is unrelenting; death takes all. Friends and relatives; unknown and strangers.

There are periods in history, there are social disasters like wars, when human beings are closer together and as if suggests death. The last world war was such a phenomenon. Millions of people died. The question is – why? Every nation made a sacrifice to the war Moloch; every nation spilled blood to defend its land, its motherland, its language.

Why was the Jewish nation destroyed? Jews lost 6.5 million people during the last war; 80% of European Jewry was lost and 40% of world Jewry. This nation did not endanger others; this nation did not spread hatred between people and the losses of this nation are disproportionate in comparison to other nations. Today is not the time to analyze; today we stand at the graves of our best and closest. Only very few of this army of millions were destined to find a final resting place in earth. Millions were turned into smoke and ashes, which escaped from the crematoria chimneys. This army did not consist of soldiers and not of men able to carry weapons. This six and a half million army consisted of babies, small children, women and elderly. Against them were directed modern weaponry and ancient methods of cruelty. It wasn't a battle between equals and the result was appalling. The German monster didn't recognize differences. It didn't identify valuable people; spiritual people or people of achievement. The only qualification was: a Jew. This was good enough a reason for destruction. Today we pay tribute and our hearts are filled with those we should consider saints. We should be proud of the masses of unknown heroes; those who died defenseless and those who fell on barricades and basements and those who lost their lives while reading or working and all those who died for the sanctification of G-d. Today we are, our

dear friends, closer to you and we vow that your sacrifice is in our hearts and if it didn't resonate yet in the world – it will resonate soon in every heart with brotherly love. Rest in peace comrades – we stand on guard and watch...
Peace to all people of good will...

By Aleksander FINDER (Bad Ischl)

Shoes, shoes, shoes

Seemingly a simple, even banal word. Many times as we walk in a street we see store windows filled with shoes: small and large, white and yellow, black and multicolor, different quality and fashion. Usually not very interesting. We stop and look at the display only in the event if we need a pair or if we got a new suit and we need a new pair of shoes, which has a similar color. But how it used to be, "a long time ago, during the pagan times", when the ruler had tall boots, Prussian boots, with nails at the sole and initials "SS"? I will remind you the times when such SS boots ruled and stomped all over Europe as well as in the hot Africa; when these shoes were splattered with blood of innocent millions; young and elderly, of all races and nations. These were terrible times when the Prussian boots trampled cultural achievements of humanity; treaded heavily the land dear to other nations and dishonored temples and ethics. The Prussian boot stepped arrogantly in all of Europe – from Narvik to the Mediterranean Sea; from Bretagne to the Caspian Sea. There wasn't a piece of land where he wouldn't step and destroy all that lived – the proud Germanic boot!

And right next to them, walked the oppressed nations in shoes...in clogs. Funny, right? These were the symbols of two worlds – the world of masters and the world of slaves.

I'm sure you remember how important were shoes in the concentration camp. Today it is an issue of minor weight, but then? Then the word "clogs" had it's own charm. It was like Hamlet's question: "to be or not to be." The shoes decided if you could march to work; if you could continue in your state. The shoes were the defence from cold and from hits. You'll ask what is the connection between the two? If you had on your painful legs some falling apart shoes, you could escape the whip of SS or the rod of the capo. At night, you probably dreamt of patent shoes, which you purchased to go to your first dancing ever.

In your dreams you imagined dancing the tango with a beautiful girl and you were careful that other dancers shouldn't step on your new shoes. A moment later you woke up to a horrible shriek of the *Stubendienst* – (barrack commandant) "Get up" and all the dreams escaped. You pull your shoes from under your head (fearful that someone might steal them at night), you awful shoes, the wooden clogs. You watched the window hoping that the weather would be warm. You were shivering thinking of the trek to work. Morning roll call! You already felt the dampness in your shoes. A moment later a flow of water entered the shoes and exited via another opening. The shoes swallowed the mud just to make your life even more miserable. And still, you were a lucky one; others had to run to work without any shoes. Their feet wrapped in rags and often even not this. The results of it were clear to all. Remember? You know the cause of death of Janek, Felek, Romek and the impossible to count others. You know the reason. It was a short story: runny nose, pneumonia, Tuberculosis. Stay in the barrack, later the sickbay and the last stage – the body left in the camp washroom, before being taken to the crematorium. This is the way my or your father disappeared from our group, your or my best friend. Do you remember clothing storeroom? All the clothes and the shoes on the shelves? The shoes don't talk, don't complain and don't cry, but they do have certain eloquence and expression. Tragedy of those who owned these shoes. Small, tiny...big, bigger... and the fate of the former owners is well known. We saw the executions of children, target shooting. One was pushed down from a rock, another died in a sickbay, and another one shot and killed while escaping, or died of hunger...and the shoes were taken to the storeroom and kept the whole tragedy of their owners. May 1945 arrived, spring for oppressed people. The disgusting boots of SS-men disappeared, Prussian boot-tops were hidden, but the clotted blood on the boots left eternal contempt and disgrace for those who claimed to be most cultured people

on earth. Honors to those who sacrificed their lives on the altar of humanity!

Was is interesting? Not so much! It was just one chapter, called "shoes"...

Aleksander FINDER (Bad Ischl)

Mützen ab! (Hats off)

Everyone knows this phrase - at the roll-call plaza, at work, in the barrack, during a march and during rest. Everywhere and always, where this person appeared - an animal in uniform, with the sign of the Death Scull - there this shred, a human rag - prisoner number X, immediately took off his hat. He took it off for the better kind, showed honor to those who gave him new life, new kind of existence in...stripped uniform, behind electrified barbed wire fence.

Many of us kept this souvenir from the "glorious" times and many wear it during memorial services - in striped hat.

Do you remember? They transported you to Mauthausen, made you wear the stripped uniform and on your head they put Mütze. Oh, well, just a hat! No, not a regular hat - brown or gray, which you wore "before". Oh, no! Completely different one, given to you by the Third Reich, by the Reich's office, by the Reich's Security Office, by the German parliament. This new law was enacted based on article 509 of German Industrial Norms. These institutions gave you the honor of wearing a hat, a stripped hat.

We all know what a holy item it was.

-Roll-call! We quickly stand in order otherwise you'll be hit on the head. A well-known order, as if someone pulled a string - everyone took the hats off. It was ... "Mützen ab!"

If you didn't pay attention, your fate was miserable...

In Steyr the roll-call was done with hats on. The Rapportfuhrer didn't count those who were barefoot nor the ones who had concave or bloated bellies, nor those who had yellow faces – he counted only the hats.

It happened that someone lost the hat or it was stolen as he entered a shelter during an air alarm. Then the poor man stood at roll-call without a hat. One such shaved head among thousands hats at the roll-call plaza was like a red cloth for a bull. The crazed SS-man immediately noticed this naked head among the rows. He rushed to it at hit is until there was no need for a hat, because a hat without a head is like a fish without water and like SS-man without a whip. This is how the song about a man without a hat ended. The human carcass was dead and the hat travelled on. For just three cigarettes "Zora" and half (*I cannot understand what is "alami" Teresa P.*) the hat went to a man who got up in the morning and realized that he got up without a hat.

As you were on the third level bunk, you held the hat close to your chest like a most valuable item, so no one would steal it from you.

How much trouble you had because of the hat? This constant taking it off for the chosen nation of rulers! You immediately carried out all orders, you took the hat off during entering and leaving the camp as well as in the factory, while working with a pick, while eating the soup of potato peels and at every meeting of SS uniform.

The hat protected your shaved head from cold, it often served as a cup to drink water. The hat was an essential part of your outfit, because you and your comrades formed an army of urchins.

Everywhere and always you were followed in this miserable camp life by a yell: "Mützen ab!"

Aleksander Finder (Bad Ischl)

Kostträger heraus! (The food carrier is outside!)

There were few such pleasant and original screams in the concentration camp as Kostträger heraus!

Poor prisoner dreamt about this moment all the time. This beautiful melody, which the wind brought over from the camp kitchen, via the roll-call plaza, to the barracks – immediately reached the prisoner's soul. Both mental and physical pains overcome the prisoner. The thought that in a moment I'll be filled, brought us some kind of ecstasy, state of shock. Anyone that never experienced being a prisoner in German camps will never understand what is hunger under whip.

We are familiar with the subject of prisoners of concentration camps. We know well what was the constant subject of conversations. Working the lathe, or working with trowel; in the quarry or in the bathroom, in the latrine or in the sickbay... everywhere and always the conversation was about...food. People were puzzled and tried to solve only one mystery: what and how much food will be given today? Margarine or sausage, 1/6th or 1/8th of a loaf of bread, or maybe even soup? People counted days, hours, quarters of an hour, minutes and many times even seconds until the next meal. Usually prisoners received their portion of bread before marching off to work. At 3 AM. It was dark and

cold. They forced us to leave the barrack. Block supervisor issued one loaf of bread to six prisoners. The act of dividing the bread was like a religious ceremony! I cannot believe that a surgeon would approach his patient on the operating table, with more respect. We had more reverence during this act. Each group thought long how to go about dividing the bread. How to cut it, which side to start from? And later we had to guess who gets it: Ivan, me, Andre, Sasha, Fernando and Staszek. That was not the end. You were not lucky that morning and you received a few crumbs less than the other guy. You felt very unhappy. You believed that these few crumbs would fill up your hunger.

There were some who were more practical – they had scales. Not an automatic that you can see in a food store, oh, no! quite a primitive one. Here the ceremony of bread division was done with the same respect and attention. Well, the bread distribution was over. If you think that from that moment on the prisoners stopped taking about food – you would be mistaken, now we all counted minutes till lunch. In the factory, working a machine, you dreamt that a miracle would happen and a piece of metal would become a piece of heavy bread, instead of becoming a part of a machine gun. It didn't matter what you dreamt; usually at such a moment you were woken up by an SS-man standing over your head. The gray reality returned, the stomach growled from the constant hunger.

11AM is the lunch hour for a prisoner standing at his machine since 5 AM. Usually you asked for the time your foreman about an hour before the time for

food. Your equipment was ready – the spoon and the bowl. You just awaited opening of the gate and the entrance of cauldrons with food. In that very moment all rushed to get a good place in a queue. Kicks and pushes were just a part of regular behavior. And in the eyes of the SS-men one could see sparks of joy – they succeeded to make animals out of human beings.

Next to you was a Frenchman, former lawyer; a Dutchman, former diplomat; a Yugoslav, an artisan; a Pole, a farmer or a teacher – all nations, all social layers. Each one of them reacted the same way to hunger; each one wanted to fill his stomach. But your wish was never fulfilled. You got a bowl of thin soup, a few potato peels and that's the whole meal. You went back to your workstation embittered and most important...hungry. This feeling never left you and followed you like a shadow and there was no way to ward off the hunger.

Again, all you heard in the factory hall was a commentary on the contents of the soup, the method of distribution by the capo and the fact that he would give double portions to his favorites etc. It helped to take anger out and it helped drown down the hunger.

And later, standing at the lathe, you talked with your friend about the times when your mother (it sounds so beautiful, right?) put dinner on the table when you returned from work...She put her hard working hand on your head and asked: "is it tasty, my dear son?" And you kissed her hand and replied: "Yes, Mom, very much!..."

Working, we dreamt about hearing this most beautiful melody known to a prisoner in concentration camp – the order: Kostträger heraus!

Former prisoners of Concentration Camps! Jews and Jewesses!

On May 5th we will celebrate. The day, the gates of torment opened to freedom. The gates of concentration camps opened, but millions of our sisters and brothers did not live to see that day. Many died after regaining freedom as a result of the tortures and suffering they experienced during the imprisonment. The day of May 5th is a day of memory for what we went through during the six years of the domination of Hitler's thugs. It is a day during which, we, the few witnesses who survived have to accuse the criminals who served under the sign of swastika in front of the civilized world.

On that day we will gather at the graves of our comrades, to show our respect to those who suffered with us all the tortures.

Please come all of you who were imprisoned in the Concentration Camps. All of you who experienced the "care" of SS and you whose freedom was taken by murderers in brown uniforms, who took your families and all that is dear to every man – the warmth of home.

On that day we will pledge to the shadows of our beloved, that the sacrifice made of your lives will become our guide to extinguish human hatred forever.

We call on you to come, participate and pay respects during this funeral ceremony.

Program of the funeral on May 5, 1946

9:30 AM – departure from hotel Goldenes Kreuz Hotel, Bad Ischl

10 AM - start of the ceremony at the cemetery of the prisoners of the concentration camp in Steinkogl (Ebense – 2nd station)

Guests arriving on May 5th at 10 AM from Linz, Bad Gastein, will be expected at the train station and taken by bus to the ceremony.

Delegates of groups and organizations are asked to bring their flags and those who have concentration camp uniforms, should wear them.

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE

TO COMEMORATE THE MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Bad Ischl, Hotel Goldenes Kreuz

