

Edith  
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My experiences during the time of persecution

Caption after photo copying  
Kramer

In 1942 I still lived in Berlin. I had to call myself "Medical practitioner for Jews" and was no longer allowed to treat "Aryans" but many of my former patients came through the back door. On the other hand there came also agents provocateurs who attempted to induce me to illegal actions, e.g. abortions.

Soon deportations of Jews started in Berlin which of course caused the greatest anxiety. These were disguised as "Workers transports" but nobody understood why people should be taken out of Berlin where there was plenty of work to be done. Even Jews who had been working in essential industries were called up.

It was also alarming that children and old people were not exempt. Nearly every day patients came to me who had received the ominous letters. Many asked me to certify that they had contagious diseases and were not capable to work. Strangely enough these certificates were taken notice of - until the next transport. Others asked for prescriptions of sleeping tablets and wanted to know the lethal dose. Very often I was called to certify the death of suicides or to arrange for transport to the hospital. There their last wish was respected and no attempt was made to revive them.

It also happened that Jews faked suicide and then disappeared. Amongst them was my friend Elsa Danziger, since deceased. She was lucky enough to share a house with an "Aryan". This woman, Gertraud Bartels whom I am proud to count among my friends and who is one of the unsung heroes of the Nazi period hid Elsa Danziger for 3 years and protected her. Furthermore she hid about 15 Jewish men during the so-called "Crystal night". Such "crimes" were punished with death when discovered and we knew of many frightening examples.

Many of my colleagues had already been deported to Birkenau when - in June 1942 - I received an order to report to the police. The call-up was one of the customary forms, used also for "Aryan" people. I was assured that my call-up was not a deportation order in fact would protect me from being deported. Berlin, I was told, would remain my place of residence and I would have to find another doctor to take over my practice in the meantime. I was to report at once at the German Labor Front office at Posen (Poland), where I was to receive further orders.

This is a verbatim transcript of a spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

took the train for ~~Posen~~. During the journey I was not molested by fellow travellers (mostly soldiers on leave) although I wore the Jewish Star.

In Posen I created some sensation as people were not accusal of seeing Jews in the street without an escort of SS men. The trams had signs "Only for Germans" while the trailers were for "Poles only". I boarded one of the latter. All Germans wore Nazi Party badges and children were proud of their swastikas and were conscious of their importance as members of the master race. They showed this by their reckless behaviour towards elderly Polish people.

Having arrived at the German Labour <sup>jest</sup> ~~Prolet~~ Office I reported to the medical officer who was in charge of the Jewish Camps. He was courteous to me - although he wore the golden party badge - and informed me that there were 1200 Jews in working camps, among them 600 women who had been without a doctor until now. He had visited the camps very seldom. Recently an epidemic of typhus had broken out in one of the camps - Fort Radziwill - and it would be my duty to prevent the spreading of the epidemic to the population outside. Failure would have disastrous consequences for me. Later he asked me to look also after the 2 other camps where there were numerous cases of T.B. and other diseases.

What means did you have to stop the epidemic - medicines - hospital beds

What production work was done in this camp?

From the <sup>tram</sup> terminus I saw a red brick medieval tower on the bank of the river Warthe surrounded <sup>This was Fort Radziwill.</sup> by a barbed wire. Inside I noticed women of all ages cowering on the ground, clad in old wearing the star of David - not only on the left breast, as all German Jews, but also another one on the right shoulder so that they could be distinguished also from behind. When they noticed me they all jumped up and welcomed the doctor they had been longingly waiting for. Crossing the draw bridge I was at once taken to the camp commander by the guards. He was a Pole and had served in the Polish army but after the German invasion had discovered his German origin. The Germans did not trust him and had given him charge of the Jewish camp as a test. He was tall, powerfully built, about 40 years of age and looked particularly brutal. This first impression did not deceive me as I found later.

There were girls and women of all ages in the camp, children

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12 years of age who looked not more than 9 and old women who were really not more than 60. Only 4 weeks ago many had been taken from their families in towns of Western Poland and had been deportet as "Volunteer Workers". Seldom were relatives left together in the same camp. Men and women were separated of course. It often happened that husbands and wives were kept in different camps and it was regarded as an extraordinary favour if they were allowed to see each other, once every few months, under guard at the barbed wire fence.

The whole camp smelled strongly of Lysol. The dormitories arranged in a circle had very small grated windows. There were sleeping bunks three high, leaving no room for any other furniture. Each girl had only one thin palliasso and 2 light cotton blankets, Only very few had any other bed clothes. To get warm usually 2 girls crawled under 4 blankets. This accounted for the enormous spread of Scabies and other diseases. Typhus cases were isolated in a room that was even darker than the others. The patients were lying on straw without bed clothes. There was no possibility to make the patients comfortable. They had to use a convenience situated in the middle of the yard. The recovery of the few that got better took a very long time owing to the lack of proper food. As they were not able to work I had to report them as sick and they were listed for "Transport back home" to which I shall refer later.

When examining the girls I found 80% were suffering from Scabies The camp commander insisted that he must be present at all examination but I was able to prevent this. Many girls were afraid to attend the examination and when they were forced by the camp police I found marks of thrashings on their bodies. At last they would confess that the marks were inflicted by the camp commander himself for trivial offences. Thus he could show his power and satisfy his sadistic inclinations.

Another room was reserved for cases like pneumonia, scarlet fever, dysentery and scabies. In this infected room which held dozens of dangerously ill women I had to treat them and even operated. The only equipment was a raw wooden table and a bench. The operations had to be performed without anaesthetics because those were not available for Jews. One can imagine how much the sick and feverish girls suffered when they heard the cries of the ones being operated

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These 2 size groups were not usually kept alive in camps. What difference was there between the camp in Posen and the others?

Was there a nurse? Who administered the medicine? Who gave the injections? Who gave the pills?



To prevent starvation the girls ate raw potatoes, barley and vegetables. Cooking in the camp was strictly forbidden, so they collected roots and other inedible things on their way to work and potato peelings out of rubbish tins which caused serious digestive troubles.

#### Discipline

A private firm was guarding the camp. The guards were very strict and returned Polish girls to the camp if they were found away from the camp. The guards were very brutal and had unlimited power over the girls. There were only a few decent ones who would not lend themselves to starvation. One young guard boasted of having killed several Jews.

#### Camp Antonienhof.

From Fort Radziwill <sup>the girls and I were</sup> ~~I was transferred~~ to Camp Antonienhof which was a former farm east of the city of Posen. Only a few weeks before the family who had owned the property for generations suddenly got notice to quit but was allowed to take their furniture with them. So the house was empty when the girls moved in. Sanitary arrangements suited a large family but not hundreds of people. Nothing would have shown that this old Polish family residence was now a concentration camp had it not been for the electrically charged barbed wire fence and the notice "Property of the city of Posen" and "Strictly forbidden to enter". There was a POW camp nearby. Sometimes English prisoners would meet Jewish girls on the road or came near the camp. They managed with great skill to give the girls much desired cigarettes, chocolate, bread etc. on which they wrote "For our sisters".

#### Sanitary conditions.

I had been warned before that sanitary conditions here were much worse than in Fort Radziwill. However I found things worse than I possibly could have imagined. The girls, their hair cut off, were in a dreadful state. They were pale, emaciated and half of them had their legs swollen and suffered from dangerous infections. There was T.B. and diarrhoea and young girls barely older than children showed alarming signs of starvation. Their frail bodies were susceptible to any infection, the smallest injury to their hands or feet became dangerous. So minor surgery became the most important part of my work.

I had to watch a young person dying from appendicitis as I was not allowed to send her to an "Aryah" hospital in the city. Although one of the buildings had been turned into a hospital and sick girls from other camps were brought here, there was a complete lack of instruments, medicaments, desinfectants and nursing facilities. Attempts of One girl of 17 <sup>raped by a guard</sup> arrived pregnant and tried to conceal this. In spite of her condition she worked as hard as the others. Her camp mates were looking after her most tenderly, shared their meagre food ration with her and hid her from the guards. I admired this attitude of the enslaved and helpless girls. At last I had to keep her away from work and should have reported her to the Gestapo. Failing to do so was punishable with death but fortunately a premature birth occurred. The child died after 10 days and I declared it a still born case which saved the mother from being deported.

Health conditions in the camp had to be reported to the Gestapo daily. Diagnoses like "Starvation" or "Emaciation" were classed as atrocity propaganda and prohibited. More than 5% sick were not permitted, a camp doctor who would report a higher percentage was regarded as a saboteur and deported to the East (see later).

Altogether I had to attend to ~~in order to be able to visit~~ the three camps which were a good distance from each other <sup>and</sup> I was given a bicycle and certain streets were marked on a map which I was allowed to use. I was the only Jew who could move freely outside the camps without guard. Where the camp inmates came from.

Early in November 1941 it was announced in the Ghetto of Litzmanstadt (Lodz) that men and women could volunteer for work in Germany. They were told that it would be work in a sugar refinery, that they would be paid and could send money back to Litzmanstadt. As conditions in Litzmanstadt were unbearable - people were starving and expected to die - one had nothing to lose and a number of persons (mainly young ones) volunteered. They thought: Where there is work there will be food. However their destination turned out to be the collecting station for prison camps where they had to stay for days without blankets and straw even though it was November. Before leaving everybody was bathed. This provided a good

chance for the SS men to beat the naked girls with whips. The prisoners were then taken to Posen in cattle trucks.

Litzmanstadt, a few hundred also directly from townships and communities of Western Poland.

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When I arrived in Posen in June 1942, this number had been reduced considerably by death and deportations. In the camp Antonienh there were about 350 women at that time, the same number in Fort Radziwill and only about 150 in the camp "Sedan". The Nationality of most of the women was Polish, but there were also German, Austrian and Czech girls amongst them.

#### The administration of the camp.

After they had arrived in Posen the girls were summoned by a Gestapo man and were told that they would be taught to work and, if they worked well, would be treated well. They also were promised payment which they could spend as they liked. Amongst the few German Jewesses girls for key positions like camp constables or camp stewards were picked. <sup>( "Kapd" )</sup> The position of "Senior Jewess" (camp steward) was very important and the well being of the whole camp could depend on that person. She was the connecting link between the Jewish camp mates and the German camp commander. Fortunately there were very suitable "Senior Jewesses" in the woman's camps. They were of good morals, just and incorruptible. I must state that in the man's camps unscrupulous subjects had pushed themselves forward who had acquired SS manners and who were hated by their mates as much as by the SS itself.

Second after the position of "Senior Jewess" came the Senior Police women who had to see that there was order and no friction in the camp. When the girls returned from work they had to queue up for the evening meal. It was one of the main duties of the camp police to maintain order there. They had to be on duty day and night and were made responsible whenever anybody tried to escape. In spite of the heavy duties these positions were very much in demand. They were safe from bad weather whilst the outdoor workers had to be in the open all day long.

#### Outdoor work.

The Jews were used for earth works, for the Board of Works, for a Steel Construction Company or for the Town Gardens. Nearly all the road repairs, new paths and improvement of scenery between 1941 - 1943 were made by Jews. The girls had to work as hard as the men. They had to dig holes into the wet ground, had to fill the heavy clay into wheel barrows. Only the old and infirm were put on farm under any weather conditions. In the cold winter

of 1942/43 the girls had to work without gloves. The result were countless frozen fingers which had to be amputated. When I reported this to the German authorities I was given the reply that the soldiers had to work outdoors too, at 20° frost.

The Polish firms employing the Jewish girls received large orders from the German municipal authorities. From records I happened to see I understood that the Gestapo had put these "Political Internees" to the disposition of the DAF ( Deutsche Arbeits Front ) Posen and the DAF sublet them to Polish firms. These firms were assured that the workers in question were "young and strong". When reading the documents one felt like being put back to the times of slavery. The half starved Jewish workers of course were unable to fulfil the demands upon their working abilities. But the Polish farmers - who received premiums for making them work hard - drove them on with threats and beating. It often happened that the Polish foremen knocked down the girls with their fists and nailed boots. Still this treatment was gentle compared with what the men had to endure. The men carried stretchers with them to work, as nearly every day they had to carry mates home who had been knocked to cripples or even knocked dead. The German<sup>ns</sup> cynically blamed the Poles for crimes like this, passing remarks about the "inferiority of this nation".

Remuneration.

During the fir t months the Jewish workers received RM -.30 per working hour, but RM 45.- were deducted from their monthly wages for food and lodging. They were allowed to use their earnings to buy coupon free articles in the camp cantine or else to send the money to Litzmanstadt. The sick ones, who could not work, therefore got involved in debts which was the reason for their being put on the list for "Rücktransporte" (return transports).

However, after some time all payments stopped, allegedly to counteract the ever increasing endeavours to escape.

Timetable.

Reveille was at 4.30 a.m., then came making beds - in winter in the dark, as there was no electric light. Washing in the yard at the water tap or in one of the few sinks. One piece of substitute soap was given to each person every 2 months. At 5 a.m. they had to queue up for "Coffee". 5.30 roll call in the yard, counting up and leaving for work (under guard). After one hour's march work started at 7 a.m.

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... brought from the camp mostly cold. 20 minutes rest



sheltered ~~rooms~~ <sup>http://collections.ushmm.org</sup> <sup>reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection</sup> ~~not even in winter or in bad weather.~~

At 5 p.m. they knocked off, returned to the camp and again there was a roll call and counting up. Then followed queuing up for the evening soup and bread which often occupied time till late in the evening. In some camps they had so called "order calls" at night. This was a speciality of the camp commander at Fort Radziwill, who coming home late and being drunk would go and inspect the dormitories. Whenever he noticed the least offense everybody had to get out (without having time to dress) and he made them stand in the yard for one hour. On Saturday afternoon the whole crowd bathed in big wooden tubs. 4 girls used the same water as it had to be fetched from the river in buckets. Very often they were made to work on Saturdays as well so that the girls hardly found time to mend their clothes and linen.

After work the girls used to sit together and they sang Polish, Russian and Jewish Folk songs or even some they had made up themselves and which described very vividly and - in spite of all the misery - even with humour the camp life. A book of these songs and short sketches which I collected myself unfortunately got lost with my other belongings.

#### German administration of Jewish Camps.

In spring 1941-42 the City of Posen took over the administration of the camps, as previously the DAF - by its mistakes and coarse bribery - had starved hundreds of people to death or let them be infected by epidemics. The responsible employers decided they would feed the Jewish workers a little better, not because they felt pity for them but because they had to preserve the manpower which was scarce already - there was no chance of getting other workers. For a period the interest in manpower was put above the extermination principle of the Gestapo. There were many differences of opinion between the SS and the municipalities as far as this matter was concerned.

For the important position of the camp commander deserving party members were chosen, for instance SS men or faithful Germans who had lived in other countries but had "come home to the Reich". They were not subject to any controls and the fate of hundreds of human beings depended on their good or bad will. A German woman from

~~the Baltics~~ was thus appointed commander of the camp Antonianhof.

Her saying at the Gestapo headquarters that she was an Antisemite was considered proof enough for her ability to be a camp commander. She had no idea of administration but I was very much surprised when she told me that she had been enticed out of her country by Hitler under false pretences and that she hated the Nazi system ardently. Her religious convictions would not tolerate any oppression of the church or persecution of Jews anyhow. That these words were not empty phrases I found out in many instances during the one year I had to be together with her. She always cooperated with the Senior Jewess and with me, thus saving many human lives.

This camp commander once helped me to escape an unpleasant and dangerous situation, in fact she probably saved my life: The camp was to be enlarged and the girls had to erect the brick walls themselves. To inspect their work a "building inspector" came from time to time who did not shrink from attacking the poor girls sexually. He visited me also in my office where except for an examination table and 2 chairs there was no other furniture. He tried to persuade me with all sorts of promises to submit to his wishes. Of course I was not only physically disgusted but also feared that he would try to get rid of me as an unwanted witness after having had his will. So I kept running around the table which served as a barrier from his attacks and cried - nearly out of my senses - : "The Führer doesn't want it". This only increased his greed and rage. He was not far from catching me when the good camp commander appeared and freed me from the situation. Later I heard that he was hanged by the Poles after the war as a collaborator.

#### Mail and parcels.

The camp mates were allowed to write a card every 4-6 weeks. They also received replies from their relatives, mostly from Litzmanstadt, Austria and Germany. These messages were subjected to severe censorship. However, in 1942 - when people tried to escape - all mail was stopped. Any communication between the camps in Posen was strictly forbidden. It happened that people heard of the death of relatives as late as a year after, although these had lived in the same city, but in another camp.

Sometimes the camp commanders unscrupulously robbed the camp mates of gifts that were sent to them. They would use any trick if it was to their advantage. So f.i. the men in one camp were told

camp commander simply confirmed them all. They even made the men sign for the receipt of the goods.

Return transports.

I was ordered to make a list every few weeks of those who were unable or would soon be unable to do hard work. This list had to correspond with my daily reports about the 3 camps. Also the number of persons recommended for "Return Transports" had not to be less than a certain minimum fixed by the authorities. We were told that the people in question would be sent back to the Ghetto of Litzmanstadt. This sounded true, as at that time there was a factory for military uniforms in Litzmanstadt and many relatives of our girls were reported to work there. Therefore at first, many volunteered for these back transports, hoping that they would meet their relatives again and also get rid of the hard labouring. The girls promised to write soon, secret codes were made up, even illegal communications with the aid of helpful Polish people were planned. However, no news arrived, not even after several of these transports had left. When letters from Litzmanstadt came, addressed to girls who had left, we became alarmed; there were rumours that the transports instead of going to Litzmanstadt were put onto a side track. Some of the Polish guards told us in confidence that they had been ordered to return before the trains were thus diverted. They had been told that new barracks had been built near a small station and nobody was allowed to enter these except the SS and Jews. They were called "Bathing Huts" but some said they were gas chambers. People in the neighbourhood noticed that the chimneys were smoking for days after the arrival of every transport. These stories sounded so phantastic that one simply refused to believe them. However I became very careful with my reports and tried to put in the name of people only whose life was lost in any case. Nor did the girls volunteer any more but tried to keep from the transports with all their force. Even if it was beyond their capacity and after the transport had left collapsed altogether. Others were hiding and only reappeared later. But many were so weakened that they let themselves lift apathically onto the trucks which stood ready. The SS guards even beat the miserable ones if they did not get in quickly enough. Thousands of Jews disappeared like this from the Posen camps and have never been seen again.

there remained after one year only the tenth part of the original number of 12.000 Jews. The Bosen population had no knowledge of the events in the camps, as is illustrated by the following little incident: A new camp commander had - by mistake - instead of sending the list of the girls chosen for return transport to the Gestapo, sent the girls themselves, accompanied by a guard. Some of the girls collapsed on the way and people in the street became attentive. A girl cried and called out to the bystanders in Polish "For Heaven's sake help me, they want to send me away, they want to kill me, I have always worked hard." Some people wanted to know more about these strange miserable beings, but soon Germans appeared who called the police and the crowd was dispersed. They declared the girls were insane and the camp commander and the guard responsible for the incident were deported.

Escaping.

In spite of the strictest security measures, people often tried to escape, but these endeavours were mostly unsuccessful. The meagre and bald shaved men and women looked too strange even if they succeeded to procure good clothes for themselves. But most of them had exchanged their last few good clothes in the Ghetto for food and wore utterly torn clothes and shirts. They also wore shabby wooden shoes and this alone frustrated many endeavours to escape. The penalty for trying to escape was death, furthermore the whole camp was <sup>punished</sup> disciplined. Depriving of meals, work on Sundays, beating every Tenth, parading in the yard for hours in any weather. Most of the fugitives were captured and brought to the Gestapo. For many the lack of documents was fatal. If anybody was caught his own mates were made to hang him.

The 5th October 1942.

Often finding money in possession of Jews, the Gestapo thought of a way to take all the money from them at once. On October 4th an order was issued to assemble all inmates, sick or healthy, in the camp yard with all their belongings, ready to leave. A terrible panic broke out as we thought that we all would be sent to the gas chambers <sup>straightaway</sup> now. Some tried to commit suicide and nobody would sleep that night. After hours of standing in the yard in tense expectation the Gestapo <sup>did</sup> ~~came~~ not <sup>come</sup> with the notorious trucks for deportation but in stylish private cars. One of them addressed us

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keep it all for us. <sup>Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection</sup> Everyone should surrender what he possessed, money or jewels. Those however who would disobey, he would have to punish most severely. Intimidated, most of us gave him their poor belongings, often only Pfennig's and he collected RM 150 altogether. He also checked on a few girls if they had kept anything but found nothing. Some were dismissed and glad to have a narrow escape. In the men's camp things did not turn out so well. When searched, ~~some~~ <sup>some</sup> men still had money and were hanged on the next tree.

#### Burying the dead.

The hearse came more often than the bakers cart. A horse waggon of a Posen firm appeared with a long undressed wooden box into which the body was thrown. Often the hearse came from other camps having a sad load already to which a new body was added. All the bodies showed the same signs of complete starvation, right to the skin and bones. To prevent spreading of epidemics, all dead bodies had to be completely undressed and shaved and handed to the driver without a shroud. The mates accompanied the dead to the gate of the camp. Death was no horror, rather liberation from a life that was too hard to be endured.

#### Men's camps in Posen.

The lodgings of the women were not suitable for human beings but they were still heavenly compared with the conditions in the camps for men. In stables and ruined huts the men slept on the ground, without blankets or straw. In those dirty places vermin and diseases of all kinds spread. The men had to work even heavier than the women whilst the food was equally insufficient. Correspondingly the mortality was enormous and some of the camps died out completely. Punishment was even harder than in the women's camps. Smuggling letters, stealing, trying to escape was punished with hanging. The executions took place in the "Stadion" and in presence of delegations of the other camps. After the execution the women were ordered to dance around the hanged bodies. The condemned persons mostly died bravely. At one execution where I had to be present the young fellows shouted at the gallow, before the rope was put round their necks "revenge us!"

A former staff surgeon who had served in the first world war was in medical charge of the Posen camps. His name was Dr. Sieburg and he came about once a week. Dr. S. was not a member of the Nazi Party and was certainly not in favour of the way the Jews were treated. He had a leaning towards the German National Party (as National Socialist Party).

When I drew his attention to the terrible conditions he

tried to bring about some improvement. He suggested I write a report and point out the existing state of affairs, the hygienic defects and the low allotment of calories. He promised to support me to state malnutrition as cause of death in the death certificates. He was convinced that the dreadful conditions were not in the intentions of the government.

Actually, after this report had been submitted an improvement became noticeable. Food was more plentiful and the work better organized. The prisoners of the Antoninek Camp thanked me for my help.

Unfortunately the improvement did not last long. After a few weeks an official came to arrest me and brought me to the Gestapo prison in Poznan. There an SSman accused me of "sabotage of German work", shook me by the shoulders and threatened to destroy me. Everything else I would learn in Berlin where I was to be brought for further questioning. My luggage was taken from me and also my diary which I had kept during the 15 months I had spent in Antoninek. I have never seen it again.

As far as Dr. Sieburg was concerned I learned later that he was sent by way of punishment to the Russian front where he fell.

In the Poznan Gestapo prison I stayed for about 3 weeks under wretched conditions. One of my co-prisoners (a woman) had helped English prisoners of war to escape. In a waggon behind bars the men handcuffed, we were transported in a group of 20 to Berlin.

Before I describe my experiences in Berlin, I want to mention a woman in Poznan. Her name was Magdalena Nowitzka and she was previously housekeeper with the Stablewski family (the former owners of Antoninek). She used to give me and the other women of the camp food - although she had no abundant supply herself. Later some time after I had been arrested the whole camp was to be broken up and all inmates to be sent to Auschwitz into the gas chambers (see page 15). At that time she hid 3 girls in the attic of her small cottage. There they were found by the Gestapo and arrested together with Mrs. Nowitzka. The girls perished but Mrs. Nowitzka was later released.

In Berlin we were put into the prison Alexanderplatz at  
I have seen myself and other prisoners were brought in the

in Bessemer Street (now in the Eastern Sector) where I spent another 3 weeks. The inmates were women of all nations, some of them Jewesses who waited for their transport to the nearest concentration camp.

From the windows we could see the Gestapo training police dogs to jump at fluttering skirts which were fastened to wooden rods. At that time there was often Air Raid Alarm. Of course we were not allowed to go to the shelters. Later I heard that a bomb had hit the prison and there were many casualties.

One Sunday afternoon I was called before the woman supervisor of the prison. On the dirty floor of the corridor there lay a young Ukrainian woman about to give birth to a baby. I asked for a pair of scissors and thread and delivered the child. As a reward I received half a loaf of bread which I shared with my co-prisoners. They wished I could deliver a baby every day. We were 12 in one cell.

Again I had to enter a green police car and was driven to the Gestapo at Alexanderplatz for further questioning. There I was asked what offence I had committed as no papers could be found. I answered cautiously that some administrative oversight may have occurred with the death certificates. Thereupon the official said with a cynical smile: "All your patients are already in a camp in the East and you are going to follow them". I could gather from his look what he meant; it was too obvious. Later the sad truth was confirmed: All my poor girls and men patients had been sent to the gas chambers after my departure. Up till now I have not heard of any survivors of the camps in Posen and I believe to be the only one.

Next day I came into the collecting camp in the Grosse Hamburger Strasse. This building, an old school, was divided into 2 departments. The first floor housed all those who were to be transported to Theresienstadt, while those on the second floor were to be sent to the East. I fell into the second category, my name had already been entered on the list.

I was desperate and near suicide. Then in a miraculous way another incredible piece of good luck happened which undoubtedly saved my life. I met amongst the people around me the M. couple who previously had been patients of mine in Berlin. They told me they would be released the same afternoon and intended to go to Sweden. They had bought their freedom through bribing a Gestapo man.

This is a verbatim transcript of a spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy. They offered to help me and to bring me in contact with an intermediary.

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Did I have any money? I answered in the affirmative and gave them name and address of my sister in Berlin who was married to an "Aryan" and kept some money for me.

At the last moment, on the eve of the transport to the East a Berlin advocate, Dr. J. <sup>Kobzoh</sup>, appeared. I should go with him to the chief of the Gestapo and should leave it to him to answer any questions I may be asked. The first question was: where was my husband? Dr. J. replied that my husband had died because of injuries received during the first world war and had obtained the Iron Cross, 1st and 2nd class. Further questions referred to children and profession. These questions were truthfully answered. Obersturmführer D. asked Dr. J. how many persons were listed for Theresienstadt. Dr. J. replied: 69. "All right," D. said, "let's make it a round figure". This is how I was sent to Theresienstadt instead of to the East which was the same as escaping certain death. I made a note of the East-Transport number and learned later that none of the about 2000 persons had survived.

After the war my sister told me that she had given Dr. J. 300 Mark and 300 cigarettes which - so he said - he passed on to some official.

Thus on August 4th 1943 I joined the transport to Theresienstadt. It comprised the whole personnel, doctors and sisters of the Berlin Jewish Hospital. Everybody was wondering how I had managed to go with them but I could not disclose the real reason.

In Theresienstadt I stayed for 18 months. Like all other inmates I had first to join the so called "Hundertschaft" ("group of hundred" that is to say to perform physical work. For some time I worked in a timber yard then I had to dig potatoes. In between - together with three other women doctors - I cleaned the office and bedroom of the notorious Eichmann, which was considered to be privileged work.

After about 3 months I was allowed to work as a doctor and was assigned to the "Genie-Kaserne", in particular to the TB ward. This also meant that I received somewhat bigger food rations. Although Theresienstadt was considered to be a privileged camp, the nourishment was so inadequate that I still suffered from malnutrition and hunger oedema.

At first I was housed in an attic together with 300 women. <sup>had been</sup>  
New arrivals had to sleep on straw and to wait until beds became available through transport or death. Most of the window panes were broken and there was not heating. Since my re-appointment as a doctor

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were women doctors. It was understandable that they were not  
overjoyed about the new arrival. In addition the Czechs had an  
aversion to <sup>any</sup> everything German, even German fellow Jews. Later, when  
we came to know each other better, the situation improved and I  
became quite friendly with one of the doctors. Her name was Anna  
Krasa and I shall mention her later again. Tragically none of my  
room mates are still alive. They were transported to Auschwitz  
and ended in the gas chambers.

One day Dr. J appeared in my room. Together with his wife  
and 2 children he had been sent to Theresienstadt and immediately  
brought before the Ghetto court. He had acted as Gestapo informer  
in Berlin. So for instance he made appointments with Jews to  
come to his office to pick up false passports for which he had  
received money. When his poor clients came they were arrested by  
the Gestapo who waited downstairs in the entrance hall. He approached  
me now with the request to speak in his favour as he had rendered  
a great service to me. I tried my best but my intervention failed.  
Too much evidence had accumulated against him. Dr. J., his wife  
and his children had to join a transport immediately and disappeared.

In Theresienstadt I stayed until February 1945 when I was  
lucky enough to be liberated and brought to Switzerland by train,  
together with 1200 persons.

<sup>Let me try</sup>  
~~Now I would like~~ to describe the atmosphere during the  
last few ~~days~~ <sup>months</sup> before this transport left:

It was about 4 months since the last trains to the East  
had left Theresienstadt. It had become quiet and the streets were  
desolated. Where previously lots of men and women hurried to work,  
only few persons were seen. In the evening the little town seemed  
to be empty. The few remaining people missed their loved ones they  
used to visit after work. <sup>Everybody</sup> ~~one~~ thought closer contact with each  
other, the thoughts went to to the many who were absent.

When the last transport in autumn 1944 <sup>had</sup> left we <sup>had been</sup> told, that  
it was for "work in Germany". Although we were generally suspicious  
of the SS, this time there was some probability of truth. Had not  
all privileges been cancelled that otherwise applied to deportees?  
Even people with war decorations, cripples and blind had to go.  
It is true the question arose what work could these persons do?  
One consoled oneself and the deportees with the hope that - as in  
Theresienstadt - they would find some work in the kitchen or in an

but could this be expected? The deportees were certainly in a closed camp <sup>http://collections.ushmm.org</sup> and had <sup>Control reference numbers for further information about this collection</sup> no means of smuggling letters. These difficulties we knew from own experience. We drew comfort from the thought that the war would end soon. The news that leaked through - we had 2 secret radio sets, built into beds - sounded hopeful. Even the communiques of the German army conceded defeat. The last offensive in the Ardennes had been repulsed.

Christmas was celebrated. Our Christian co-prisoners had got hold of some small trees. New Years Eve came, would it be the last one in Theresienstadt. Or the last one altogether? One never knew what the Gestapo was up to although they had solemnly declared that no further transport would take place.

Theresienstadt was to be "cleaned up". Actually, in the middle of winter bed bugs were exterminated. This was certainly necessary as even in the cold the insects continued their gay activity and tortured us and particularly the bed-ridden. It was difficult to transfer these poor people in the heavy frost from one part of the barracks to another. In the icy cold rooms the sick were even more miserable and would have preferred to stay in the heated though bug-infested rooms.

Coal was now plentiful since 20,000 persons had been deported. New arrivals came, this time mixed-marriage couples from Moravia and Germany. All of these were comparatively well fed and optimistic. They confirmed the reports of the army communications we had intercepted but nobody had heard anything of our deported mates. The new arrivals comforted us and said that Germany was in such a state of chaos, <sup>overrun</sup> what with bomb victims, foreign workers and refugees, that nobody could get any news from anyone.

Almost every night new trains arrived. I was often on duty at the railway station, that is I had to examine the newly arrived for their health. Compared with our people these were well nourished. Nevertheless each train brought some dead. Eichmann who was frequently present asked me eagerly about their number and when I replied so and so many dead, he would acknowledge it with the single word: "Good".

The Ghetto was to be replenished, so the rumour went. We were driven to work. New barracks were built, much to our astonishment. Wasn't there enough space in spite of the new arrivals? ~~Had not Theresienstadt~~ housed 60,000 people and now there were hardly 19,000? Why these remote barracks on the ~~border~~ which had

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such a strange appearance? It struck us as strange that they had no windows. Were we supposed to live in them? We were accustomed to many kinds of dwelling. Garrets with dormer windows, attics that hardly allowed light to penetrate, cellars with broken window panes. But no windows at all?

Some said the new barracks were probably intended as store rooms for food. With increasing war danger the SS had brought their families to the safer Theresienstadt. Buildings and barracks were evacuated for them and renovated. Did they intend to store in these new barracks their coal and other provisions? Or perhaps ammunition? Mountains of files arrived from Berlin. Did they want to preserve the most important documents there?

Still, there remained little time for speculations. We were driven to work hard and the remaining inmates had to cope with the additional tasks that ~~were~~ <sup>had been</sup> previously performed by the deportees. Anybody who complained was pointed out the privilege of having remained in Theresienstadt. Therefore the work on the new barracks went on and nobody knew their true purpose. Only after the collapse it became known that these strange structures were to serve as gas chambers.

A heavy, strenuous week had come to an end. It was the last February 1945 a grey dull day as so many before. No new events were expected, perhaps some army <sup>reports</sup> communiques or new arrivals. Then, suddenly, a rumour swept the Ghetto like wild fire: A transport to Switzerland was to go. This was received with scornful laughter. Another transport, although we had been assured that no more deportations would take place. Of course, three months had passed since the last transport. This was the usual interval. Nevertheless, the rumour persisted that this time it was different. This transport was said to have been organized by the Red Cross. Volunteers should come forward, women and children would be favoured. But who would believe this?

It was not long ago that orphans had come to Theresienstadt, half starved children who were housed in separate buildings. They were cared for by selected physicians and sisters. All this was most mysterious they were not even allowed to talk to others. A few weeks later they disappeared - allegedly to Switzerland.

We never heard of them again. Would they not have written if they really arrived in Switzerland? Postcards from this country arrived with valuable food ~~came~~ were

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At first volunteers did not come forward as nobody would believe this fairy-tale. Better to stay until the end of the war which was expected within the next few months.

During this night hardly anybody slept. All Austrians, Germans, Czechs and Dutchmen were called to report in the Sokolovna (where the administrative offices were) at 3 o'clock in the morning. Significantly, no Danes were included. These always received special treatment, never had to join a transport and received monthly small parcels with the senders name: "The King of Denmark". The notice forms were differently worded from the usual notorious slips of paper of deportation order. Nevertheless nobody trusted the appeal. However, as one was used to obey orders all those who were ambulant went to the meeting place. We doctors were told to be prepared for duty on the departure of the transport.

The Sokolovna was brilliantly lit in spite of the existing black out regulations. Jewish employees of the Gestapo sat on long tables and drew up records. No signs of SS-men. We were asked: "Do you want to join the transport to Switzerland, or do you renounce voluntarily?". Most of the interviewed renounced. The Jewish clerks themselves tried to dissuade us. Nobody had confidence in the truth of the destination. Besides many had personal reasons to remain in Theresienstadt. Some did not want to be separated from their relatives who could <sup>did</sup> not <sup>want to</sup> join. For many Czechs the consideration was decisive that they did not want to leave their country but would rather stay near home now that the end of the war was in sight.

For most inmates the old soldiers' motto prevailed: "Never report voluntarily". It had been estimated that 2000 persons would join the transport but less than half put their names down. The unheard of procedure that one had to choose whether to join the transport or to renounce in writing had different effects: many were set at ease, others decided it could only be a bluff of the Gestapo as usual.

As far as I was concerned, Rabbi Dr. Leo Beck and his niece Dr. Kelly Stern advised me to join. I took Dr. Stern's place who had been appointed transport doctor but <sup>who</sup> did not go as she wanted to stay with Dr. Beck.

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Those who had decided to join were to queue up in the <sup>take the risk</sup>

stand in the yard from 3 a.m. until 7 p.m. Names were called, numbers shouted and the persons concerned led in groups to the camp commander Rahm.

As it was to be expected the lists were not correct. Some who had refused were called up. Others who were prepared to go waited in vain, myself amongst the second group. It turned out that whole lists had disappeared. But without enrolment nobody could reach Rahm and therefore not depart. Some unyielding persons - amongst them myself - stepped through a window into the Hamburg barracks, which were closed that day and in which we suspected the lost papers to be. We were successful. The <sup>missed</sup> lost sheets were found and the numbers were issued.

In the meantime it had become late and ~~we were told~~ <sup>it was said</sup> that Rahm had already enough and would close down. However in his office, the SS headquarters, the lights were burning. Long queues had formed before the building. It was still raining and we were wet and hungry. But who cared? The queue did not get smaller as people remained upstairs for a long time. Only two persons were allowed simultaneously. Many returned who had been refused. A Dutch colleague with 4 children had to stay behind and no reason was given. A pale care-worn woman in front of me also was rejected. She had asked Rahm to be allowed to go to Switzerland to inquire into the fate of her relatives who had been deported to the East. "Rather stay with us for another while" Rahm said to her.

Finally my turn came. In the large hall which I had never entered before two men sat at a large table. Rahm and Brunner. Eichmann stood behind them. In the door stood the "Race Researcher" Günther and his brother from Prague. I was also aware of other prominent personalities but this time they appeared mild and nothing reminded of the savagery of past days. They looked at us with faint irony.

A supervisor called my name and I was led to the table. Rahm asked my marital status. "Widowed". Your husband died in a concentration camp?". "No, of an illness before the war". This reply seemed to satisfy him. "How many children?". - "None". "Have your relatives been transported to the East?" - "No".

I saw that Rahm stamped my papers and I guessed that I was accepted. The passport was ready. Finger-prints had already been taken in the Sokolovna and a photo was attached, obtained

I rushed "home" <sup>to pack for the transport</sup> <sup>which</sup> was due to leave the next morning. For luggage an "elegant suitcase" was prescribed. My suitcase which had been through two concentration camps, prisons and disinfection stations looked anything but elegant but was intact. According to orders no rucksacks were allowed. What a nonsense! I never had travelled in Switzerland without my rucksack, why should I this time? I was sure I would miss it. I mended it in a great hurry and put in it all my warm things except those I wore. I did not possess a winter coat, only a worn out skiing dress.

Soon the suit case was packed. The few effects I had inherited from deportees - unfortunately all of us had to rely on such sad gifts - did not look too elegant.

Before the departure of the train on February 5th 1945 each participant received an extraordinary large helping of soup; in addition other provisions such as a generous piece of bread and tinned food. This came apparently from Swiss gift parcels that had not been distributed amongst us. Certainly it was intended to show the Swiss that the gifts had reached their destination and that we had been provided for plentifully.

We were 1200 persons. At last we had settled in the waggons which process had taken many hours. The SS men cursed and called us names because the procedure was too slow. But how could the elderly people climb the high steps? It is true they were supported by the transport helpers but the latter could not assist everywhere and had enough to do with stowing away the luggage. I was very proud because I had succeeded in smuggling my rucksack through the controls. Everybody's travelling gear had been critically inspected as on occasion of previous transports but ~~now~~ this time with a difference: <sup>On earlier occasions</sup> Before one was not allowed to carry suit cases, only "soft luggage". This time suit cases were even prescribed. Surprisingly enough some people were able to get hold of hand baggage of comparatively civilized appearance. As was to be expected the luggage was mixed up and strange pieces were stowed over our heads.

I kept my rucksack on my knees, did not let it get out of my hands. It used to accompany me on my hiking trips in happier days and had remained faithful to me throughout the sad years.

stations and had endured ~~collections~~ ~~things~~. Now the outer pockets contained the provisions for the next few hours, also a small bookle the sporting gift from Kelly. In this I had entered the addresses I had been given by those who remained behind. I was to try to ascertain the whereabouts of their relatives and friends and get into touch with them. Outside the eating bowl was fastened which some months ago I had "bought" for half a loaf of bread. It held about 1 pint. How useful it was, how many portions had I fetched in it from the kitchen, anxiously watching that it be filled at least half-full. This time there was a second helping. As farewell we received the usual goulash-soup which was given to all deportees before leaving, probably to cheer them up. This time the soup was tasty as never before. Allegedly the SS had ordered it and plentiful. Some people started to eat from their travelling provisions before the train left. However their stomachs, used to hunger, could not digest the rich repast and they became sick.

For hours the train stood in the railway station. It was a long one but not Red Cross waggons as we had expected. In the last minute Dr. Beck and Nelly came to say good-bye. Finally the train was locked and left, accompanied by SS-men. For 3 days, i.e. until we reached the Swiss frontier we actually did not know whether we really went to our freedom.

Although we were forbidden to look through the windows we could see the rubble heaps in Germany. During the night the train stopped because of air raid danger. In Augsburg the order was issued "All the men out!". There was general panic. Everybody thought this was the end. However we only had to change trains and the men were to transfer the luggage to the other waggons.

Finally on the third day we approached the Swiss frontier. We were told by the SS-men to take off the Stars of David (Judenstern) and to "beautify" <sup>beautify</sup> "pretty-up". They even distributed lipsticks for this purpose. This was the last order the SS issued and this they admitted. They withdrew and wished us - to our enormous astonishment - all the best. Only now we realized that we were really going towards freedom. Married couples embraced, many wept and sobbed. It was unbelievable that we should be free. Only Youth was not quite so sentimental, a young girl sang when the Gestapo went: "Say softly servus as farewell and "Who will weep when we separate....".

But once again our confidence was shaken. Shortly before the Swiss frontier the train stopped for hours in front of a barn.

would lead us into this large barn and kill us there. The whole night we spent in terrible suspense but ~~next morning~~ <sup>http://collections.ushmm.org</sup> the train rolled slowly into Kreuzlingen station.

We saw the Gestapo discuss something with Swiss civilians, documents were <sup>rv</sup> handed over, a few waggons were opened and obviously superficial tests made. We were free. Swiss conductors entered the train which seemed to us beyond comprehension. We asked them whether they really were Swiss?

From now on rows of people stood on the platforms and in the streets, waved and shouted and threw chocolates, cakes and bread into the train. Our first stop was St.Gallen where we were housed in a school. The 2 trains with waggons of the Swiss Bundes Bahnen (SBB) which had brought us from Konstanz were directed onto a side track to the station St.Fiden, so that we would have only a short walk to our destination, the Hadwig-Schule. Most of us were able to cover this distance on foot, even though "we looked very worn out and draged our luggage along laboriously" as the Swiss papers reported the next day.

February 1945  
7  
In the school we were welcomed by the president of the Joint Committee, Sally Mayer, who delivered a short speech. He said how glad one was to know us to be safe and stressed that <sup>Ex-president NWS 4</sup> Alt-Bundesrat Musy - who stood by - had prepared our transport and that we owed our liberation to him to a great extend.

I had been introduced to Mr.Mayer as one of the doctors of the transport and when he mentioned Musy my first impulse was to step forward and to thank him. I was just wondering whether I could supress my sobbing, when Mr.Mayer - who had apparently guessed my intention - held me back, saying: "Don't thank him, Mr.Musy would not appreciate it". A few days later I learned that Mr.Musy had initiated the whole action by negotiating with Himmler and other Nazi officials with whom he stood on good terms. One suspected that he himself was finacially interested.

In the Hadwigschule we spent 3 days, slept on straw but in freedom. The first meal impressed us very much. We were given real plates filled by Red Cross sisters from a bucket. I was advised to throw my tin pot away but could not make up my mind to do so. Postcard were distributed with postage stamps so that we could write to our friends in Theresienstadt. We were to tell them that the journey had been very pleasant and that we were received with great friendliness

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We were advised to do this immediately as a further transport from Theresienstadt was expected. However this never arrived. Hitler was told about the matter, got an attack of frenzy and forbade any more transports.

It was pointed out to us that reporters would interview us about our experiences in Theresienstadt. In view of later transports we shouldn't say anything unfavourable. When the reporters finally came, we followed these instructions. Only an old granny, who was deaf and had heard nothing, told freely - the reporter shouted the questions into her ears - how much she had suffered and described the terrible conditions. All this appeared later promptly in the newspapers.

Shortly after our arrival thanksgiving services of all confessions were held. All compared our liberation with the miraculous salvation of the children of Israel from the Egyptian bondage. Then the Jewish and other Swiss population was led to us - naturally not very close lest any contagious disease was contracted. The disappointment of those who had hoped to find their beloved ones in the transport in vain was tragic.

Our next stop was a former hotel near lake Lemane where we were put in quarantine. We were deeply impressed when on our trip there we saw lighted windows with curtains and people sitting at dining tables. All these were things which we had not seen for a long time.

Now we refugees - we had changed our status from that of a prisoner to that of a refugee - tried to prepare ourselves for a normal life. All these years we had waited for the moment of liberation and thought that now all our worries would be over. But hardly had the first excitement passed it appeared that the energy used so far for self-preservation would be necessary for a new struggle. This realization came quite unexpectedly to many and was a terrible shock <sup>to those</sup> who had thought they would receive preferential treatment as martyrs.

Many felt not to be up to the new struggle and even amongst my four room-mates 2 committed suicide, also victims of the Nazi regime.... Others gained strength from past experience, a strength they had never been able to foresee. They continued the battle for existence.

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Before I end my report I would like to mention a couple

I owe my acquaintance with the Hesse's to Anna Krasa (see Page 17) who was a schoolday friend of Ninon's. Poor Anna! What had she done to deserve her terrible fate while I was so incredibly lucky to escape the Nazi hell?

Anna and I met 1943 in Theresienstadt where we both were forced to work as doctors. Anna had a bed in a small room in which she lived with 6 other women. As there was no room for another bed I was told to sleep on the floor. However Anna would not allow this and offered at once to share her bed with me. Thus we became friends and clung together in this terrible time. One lived in perpetual mortal fright, was forever subject to chicane, suffered hunger, froze and had still to work 70 hours a week to help the poor sick. Anna and I discussed our problems, hopes and fears. Unfortunately the latter ones were only too <sup>well</sup> founded: On October 28th 1944 there was <sup>another</sup> again one of these dreaded transports to the East and Anna was "enrolled". This was all the more tragic as it was the last transport to Auschwitz. The liberation armies were already advancing and the gas chambers in Auschwitz were stopped on November 2nd. Nearly 4.000 unfortunate people were still gassed at the last moment.

Before Anna left, we exchanged addresses of friends so that we should have some meeting place in case we both survived. If not the other one should give the last greetings to the friends. Anna gave me the address of the Hesses. At that time I did not realize how soon I would have the opportunity to comply with her wish. Not quite 4 months later I was liberated and arrived in Switzerland by the only train ever to reach freedom from Theresienstadt. We were about 1200 persons and were lodged in an abandoned hotel in Les Avants sur Montreux. I wrote to Ninon Hesse at once, gave her Anna's regards, <sup>briefly</sup> described in short my experiences and apologized for not having stamped the letter. The reply came by return of mail: A warm, heartfelt letter of welcome, asking me to tell <sup>her</sup> about Anna, whose fate worried her greatly. Ninon added greetings <sup>from</sup> of her husband and expressed the hope that we should meet soon. A whole sheet of postage stamps was enclosed.

This ~~manuscript~~ a correspondence started which lifted

me up ~~transcendently~~ as I had neither friends nor relatives in Switzerland and I gathered new hope and regained faith in the

A few months later I was transferred to a Home for Refugees in Brissago, beautifully situated at the Lago Maggiore. I was the doctor in charge. Lugano was not far away and soon I received an invitation to come to Montagnola (where the Hesse's lived). I took 2 days off and walked on foot over the mountains - partly for economical reasons, partly because I liked hiking.

Ninon came to meet me at the garden gate, a beautiful woman full of charm and dignity - and Hermann Hesse greeted me (friendly and) warmly. He was dressed like a gardener and wore a big hat which protected him from the sun; he had just worked in the garden. His cat Schneewissen (Snow White) never left his side. The house was <sup>Cosy</sup> ~~homely~~ but simply furnished. Below a large room with rows of books, upstairs the bedrooms and Ninon's studies. She was an Archeologist and had a scientific library.

I was invited to stay the night. Soon after Breakfast I had to report about myself, my experiences in Theresienstadt and above all about Anna. While I still hoped for her survival, the Hesses at once feared the worst. Unfortunately they proved to be right. As I heard later, Anna had been sent to the gas chambers on arrival from Theresienstadt.

Hermann Hesse asked me to report in detail, even such things as seemed unimportant to me. From his questions I gathered that he never missed anything I had already told him. He encouraged me to write down my experiences and said emphatically that these were quite exceptional and worth <sup>recording</sup> to be recorded in all details. He was simply interested in everything. So for instance he produced a hiking map of the <sup>surroundings</sup> environs and made me point out which way I had <sup>crossed the mountains</sup> come across. He also discussed with me my work in the Home and spoke about my future. He advised me to work in the Kanton Hospital - he understood at once that I had lost touch with the medical world for years and therefore had to <sup>brush</sup> freshen up my knowledge. I succeeded in obtaining the transfer to Zürich where <sup>the</sup> Hesses visited me quite frequently. They helped me to find lodgings and invited me to concerts, to theater performances and to friends.

This was the time (1946) when Hesse was awarded the Nobel-Prize. As his health was not the best, he did not go to Stockholm but a celebration was arranged in Bern instead.

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He told me that a friend had donated an amount on this occasion.  
was to

received monthly support. <sup>http://collections.ushmm.org</sup> I suspect that Hesse himself was the <sup>Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection.</sup> friend, for he did not allow me to thank the anonymous donor. I visited the Hesses also from Zürich several times. One afternoon - we were just sitting at the coffee table - the maid brought a visiting card: RICHARD STRAUSS. However, to my regret, Hesse did not receive Strauss. He did not wish to be in contact with people who in his opinion had lacked backbone during <sup>the</sup> Nazi time.

In the meantime I had settled in Switzerland, worked in a sanatorium in Davos, when an old friend of mine sent me a permit to emigrate to Australia. At the same time it happened that I was invited by the O.S.E. (Organisation Secour Enfants) to take charge of a transport of children to Australia. I asked Hesse's advise whether I should venture such a risky step. I told <sup>them</sup> about my friend, a musician, whom I liked very much but whom I had not seen for many years. Hesse <sup>recommended</sup> advised at once to try a new life in Australia and sent me on this occasion his poem "Steps":

#### "Stufen"

...Es muss das Herz bei jedem Lebensrufe  
Bereit zum Abschied sein und Neubeginne  
Um sich in Tapferkeit und ohne Trauern  
In andre neue Bindungen zu geben  
Und jedem Anfang wohnt ein Zauber inne  
Der uns beschützt und der uns hilft zu leben  
Wir sollen heiter Raum um Raum durchschreiten  
An keinem wie an einer Heimat hängen,  
Der Weltgeist will nicht fesseln uns und engen,  
Er will uns Stuf um Stufe heben, weiten....

#### "Steps"

...The heart must ready be to part  
At every call of life and each new start  
To enter bravely without regret  
Into such tasks it has before not met.  
And each beginning bears a magic spell,  
Protects, and helps us on this earth to dwell  
Serenly should we step through space and space  
And shall not cling to any native place.  
World spirit does not want to hem us or to chain  
But lift us step by step to reach new heights again....

I took Hesse's advise, married my friend and set up a medical practice in Sydney - not without having passed a 4 year course at the Medical Faculty of <sup>Johannes University</sup> for my German

When today I lead a normal life again and have overcome -  
though not forgotten - the time of terror, I owe this to a great  
extent to <sup>the</sup> Hesses: They led me with superior understanding to  
settle again in human society.

Dr. Edith Kramer

9/16/2011 - Doris Str