

Sources on the Holocaust

Source A: The World Jewish Congress in New York asks the War Department to bomb the crematoria at Auschwitz, August 9, 1944. The War Department turns down the request (August 14, 1944)

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

August 9, 1944

Hon. John J. McCloy
Under Secretary of War
War Department
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I beg to submit to your consideration the following excerpt from a message which we received under date of July 29 from Mr. Ernest Frischer of the Czechoslovak State Council through the War Refugee Board:

"I believe that destruction of gas chambers and crematoria in Oswiecim [Auschwitz] by bombing would have a certain effect now. Germans are now exhuming and burning corpses in an effort to conceal their crimes. This could be prevented by destruction of crematoria and then Germans might possibly stop further mass exterminations especially since so little time is left to them. Bombing of railway communications in this same area would also be of importance and of military interest."

Sincerely yours,

A. Leon Kubowitzki
Head, Rescue Department

14 August 1944

Dear Mr. Kubowitski:

I refer to your letter of August 9 in which you request consideration of a proposal made by Mr. Ernest Frischer that certain installations and railroad centers be bombed.

The War Department had been approached by the War Refugee Board, which raised the question of the practicability of this suggestion. After a study it became apparent that such an operation could be executed only by the diversion of considerable air support essential to the success of our forces now engaged in decisive operations elsewhere and would in any case be of such doubtful efficacy that it would not warrant the use of our resources. There has been considerable opinion to the effect that such an effort, even if practicable, might provoke even more vindictive action by the Germans.

The War Department fully appreciates the humanitarian motives which promoted the suggested operation, but for the reasons stated above it has not been felt that it can or should be undertaken, at least at this time.

Sincerely,

John J. McCloy
Assistant Secretary of War

From: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/holocaust/filmmore/reference/primary/bombworld.html>

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Source B: Heinrich Himmler was a leading member of the Nazi party in Germany and one of the people most responsible for the Holocaust. In the two quotes below, he expresses his thoughts on homosexuals.

"Anyone who thinks of homosexual *love* is our enemy. We reject anything which emasculates our people and makes it a plaything for our enemies, for we know that life is fight, and it is madness to think that men will ever embrace fraternally"

Heinrich Himmler, 14 May 1928

"I wish to explore a few ideas on the subject of homosexuality. Amongst certain homosexuals there exists the following point of view: "what I do is of no importance to anyone else, it is a personal and private matter". Everything which touches upon sexual matters ceases to be private when the life or death of a nation depends on it. It is the difference between world domination or annihilation.

A nation with many children can gain supremacy and mastery of the world. A pure race with few children already as one foot in the grave; in fifty or a hundred years it will be of no significance; in two hundred years it will be extinct. It is essential to realise that if we allow this infection to continue in Germany without being able to fight it, it will be the end of Germany, of the Germanic world. Unfortunately this is not the simple matter it was for our forefathers. For them, the few isolated cases were simply abnormalities; they drowned them in bogs. Those who found bodies in the mire did not know that in 90% of the cases they found themselves face to face with a homosexual who had been drowned with all his belongings. This was not punishment, more the simple elimination of this particular abnormality. It is vital we rid ourselves of them; like weed we must pull them up, throw them on the fire and burn them. This is not out of a spirit of vengeance, but of necessity; these creatures must be exterminated.

Heinrich Himmler, 18 Feb 1937

From: <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/naziviews.asp>

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Source C: Rudolf Hoess born in 1900, joined the SS in 1933, and eventually commanded the massive extermination center of Auschwitz, whose name has come to symbolize humanity's ultimate descent into evil. This is his signed testimony at the Post-War trials of Major War Criminals held at Nuremburg.

1, RUDOLF FRANZ FERDINAND HOESS, being first duly sworn, depose and say as follows: 1. I am fortysix years old, and have been a member of the NSDAP since 1922; a member of the SS since 1934; a member of the WaffenSS since 1939. I was a member from 1 December 1934 of the SS Guard Unit, the so-called Deathshead Formation (Totenkopf Verband). 2. I have been constantly associated with the administration of concentration camps since 1934, serving at Dachau until 1938; then as Adjutant in Sachsenhausen from 1938 to 1 May, 1940, when I was appointed Commandant of Auschwitz. I commanded Auschwitz until 1 December, 1943, and estimate that at least 2,500,000 victims were executed and exterminated there by gassing and burning, and at least another half million succumbed to starvation and disease, making a total dead of about 3,000,000. This figure represents about 70% or 80% of all persons sent to Auschwitz as prisoners, the remainder having been selected and used for slave labor in the concentration camp industries. Included among the executed and burnt were approximately 20,000 Russian prisoners of war (previously screened out of Prisoner of War cages by the Gestapo) who were delivered at Auschwitz in Wehrmacht transports operated by regular Wehrmacht officers and men. The remainder of the total number of victims included about 100,000 German Jews, and great numbers of citizens (*mostly Jewish*) from Holland, France, Belgium, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Greece, or other countries. We executed about 400,000 Hungarian Jews alone at Auschwitz in the summer of 1944. 4. Mass executions by gassing commenced during the summer 1941 and continued until

fall 1944. I personally supervised executions at Auschwitz until the first of December 1943 and know by reason of my continued duties in the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps WVHA that these mass executions continued as stated above. All mass executions by gassing took place under the direct order, supervision and responsibility of RSHA. I received all orders for carrying out these mass executions directly from RSHA. The "final solution" of the Jewish question meant the complete extermination of all Jews in Europe. I was ordered to establish extermination facilities at Auschwitz in June 1941...

So when I set up the extermination building at Auschwitz, I used Cyclon B, which was a crystallized Prussic Acid which we dropped into the death chamber from a small opening. It took from 3 to 15 minutes to kill the people in the death chamber depending upon climatic conditions. We knew when the people were dead because their screaming stopped. We usually waited about one-half hour before we opened the doors and removed the bodies. After the bodies were removed our special commandos took off the rings and extracted the gold from the teeth of the corpses...

The above statements are true; this declaration is made by me voluntarily and without compulsion; after reading over the statement, I have signed and executed the same at Nurnberg, Germany on the fifth day of April 1946.

From: <http://legacy.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/1946hoess.asp>

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Source D: Christa M. was born in Saarbrücken, Germany in 1930. Her father had served in World War I and was an ardent German patriot. Although he was not fond of Hitler, he made a great deal of money as an industrialist, profiting from the war industry and slave laborers. He would have liked to have served in the military, but because he was too old, he became a strategy advisor... He protected his family from the war by having them move to remote areas. While living outside of Munich, in April 1945, Christa was sent by her mother to obtain some cheese. On a country road, crowded with fleeing soldiers and civilians, Christa M. encountered prisoners from nearby Dachau.

"Still now, it's just so hard for me because there are no words, there really are no words for it, there are no words, I can't find words. Well, there were people leaning against that wall, sort of hunched, quite a few, and there were some few standing in the middle of the street in little clumps. And they all had the blue and white striped uniforms, or maybe it was black and white, but they were striped uniforms, and we had seen uniforms like that in the paper and so on. But, I thought--I knew they were prisoners, but I didn't know what prisoners. But then, my God, they were skeletons, I mean skeletons. I'll never forget the eyes. The eyes were three times the size because there were no more faces. I was just... and skeleton hands. And I see all these people and the ones that were against the wall, they couldn't even walk. They could not walk."

...So I immediately went toward them... It was just a reaction... these people must get food and all I had was the cheese. So I started opening my rucksack and the minute I reached in and got the first piece, these people came literally crawling, if you can imagine crawling, as much as they could, on hands and knees, towards you. Just looked at you. To this day I see those eyes. I see those faces.

...So I gave the cheese out. ...An SS guy...he's got the big German shepherd and he screamed at me. ...If you give those bastards one more piece of whatever you got there, he said, I'm going to make you join them. ...And I started running."

"I wasn't ever going to talk about it. But you can't let it go by. ...I hope it will never happen again. But it could have been stopped too. Nobody did."

From: <http://www.library.yale.edu/testimonies/excerpts/christam.html>

