

The Murderers of Częstochowa Jewry

The Nazi regime had mobilised an entire staff of schooled, sadistic murderers to eradicate Częstochowa Jewry. The main culprits in the Jewish tragedy are the National Socialist Reich's leadership, headed by Hitler, Goebbels, Streicher and Himmler.

Hitler, Chancellor of the National Socialist Reich, dictator and chairman of the party, was the one who created the project of robbing all Jewish possessions, making use of the Jewish workforce and, finally, murdering the entire Jewry.

Goebbels and Streicher were in charge of the anti-Jewish propaganda and prepared the ground for putting Hitler's plans into action. Himmler, the bloodiest tyrant in the history of the world, was the one who gave the orders as to how the Jews were to be exterminated.

Then comes Hans Frank, extraordinary minister¹ of the Nazi government and General Governor of Poland. Directly after becoming General Governor of Poland, he issued a manifesto in which he declared that there would be no place for Jews in Poland. Already then, in 1939, he foretold the annihilation of Polish Jewry.

Poland, or the "*Generalgouvernement*", as the Nazi regime called it, was divided into ten districts. Each district had a governor, who fulfilled the commands of General Governor Hans Frank. Every district had a special political department for Jewish affairs. The city of Częstochowa belonged to the district of Radom. The chief of the Gestapo in the district of Radom, [Herbert] Böttcher, was the arch-murderer of Częstochowa Jewry. He was the one who issued the regulations and commands as to how and under which circumstances the Częstochowa Jews were to be exterminated, beginning with the first persecutions and ending with the gruesome means by which the various *akcje* were carried out.

This is the plan for the systematic eradication of Częstochowa Jewry, which was conducted based on his orders - namely unpaid forced labour, "contributions", deportation to the camps, requisition of merchandise, "Aryanising" Jewish property by introducing "trustees" into the factories and businesses, the regulation of wearing badges of shame, evicting the Jews from their dwellings, taking furs from Jews on pain of death, creating the "Jewish Quarter" ghetto (open and closed ghetto²), forming the *Judenrat* and the Jewish police, political persecutions by arresting the pre-war communal activists and murdering them, the liquidation of the "Big Ghetto", "resettlements", *akcje* against the masses and individuals, barracking, sending Jewish working hands to the HASAG factories, raids and arrests, forming the "Small Ghetto", selections and deportations on a regular basis, the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto" and the regulations pertaining to the Jews barracked in the factories.

The apparatus to carry out his orders, regarding the Częstochowa Jews, consisted of an incredible number of Nazi sadists of various nationalities - primarily *Reichsdeutsche*, *Volksdeutsche*, Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians and others.

¹ [TN: This most likely means "minister without portfolio", which Frank was.]

² [TN: Apparently ref. to the Big Ghetto.]



Picture № 19: The National Socialist ethics

It is impossible to ascertain the names of all the murderers of Jews in Częstochowa, who participated in the deportation *akcje* from 22nd September 1942 to the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto" on 25th, 26th and 27th June 1943, as well as the selections in HASAG, ul. Garibaldiego and Warta.

It is impossible to ascertain the names of all the murderers of Jews, who destroyed Jewish lives and robbed Jewish property, from the establishment of the ghetto to the definitive Nazi downfall. Those were the people whose sole occupation consisted of murdering and robbing the Jews. Those listed [below] lived permanently in Częstochowa until their escape.

They were Degenhardt, Ibischer [sic Überschr], Rohn, Werner, Kulfisch [sic Klipsch], Dzierzan, Schott, Hantke, Schimmel, Hiller, Passow, Sapport, Laszynski, Kühnel, Schlosser, Bartel, Opitz, Schmidt, Kessler [aka Köster], Jarzyński-Marbach, Rachner, Willi Unkelbach (Degenhardt's chauffeur), Schönfelder, Fischer, Kirsch, Klemm, Opel, Franzke, Niziołek and many others whose names it is impossible to ascertain.

[Paul] Degenhardt held the rank of *Hauptmann [der Schutzpolizei]*³. He carried out the orders to form the ghetto in Częstochowa and formed the Jewish police, which was at his disposal. He accepted large sums of money to admit Jews into the police. To this purpose, he had his "little man" Josef Gryn there, who carried through the "transactions".

Degenhardt [personally] shot Jews inside the ghetto and outside of it for not wearing the badge of shame.

During the period of the deportations, starting from 22nd September 1942, when he carried out the selections, he wore white gloves and held a small stick in his hand, and each gesture of his signified either death or slave labour. From his confidantes, Jewish degenerates, he took money to send desperate Jews to *Metalurgia*, because they thought that, in this manner, they would be saved. From *Metalurgia*, Degenhardt sent them away with the transports to Treblinka. He was in charge of all the mass-scale and individual *akcje* and the selections of sending Częstochowa Jews to Treblinka. Following the liquidation of the "Big Ghetto", he formed the "Small Ghetto".

His appearance was loathsome and matched his criminal character. When he appeared in the "Small Ghetto", the older people and children would hide, because they saw in him a direct murderer.

In November 1942, he ordered that some of the doctors be sent away to Radomsko, where the "resettlement" *akcja* to Treblinka was taking place at the time, and Częstochowa's Jewish doctors made the last tragic journey together with their Radomsko brethren.

There were about sixty children in the "Small Ghetto", who had been hidden in various bunkers in the *Möbellager* and other places. Degenhardt guaranteed that nothing would happen to the children, and ordered that a children's home be established for them. This children's home was at ul. Mostowa 9. He ordered that the children be served special food

³ [TN: Ger., Captain of (State) Protection Police.]

and that comforts to be made for them - toys, tubs for bathing, etc. Four weeks later, he ordered the police to hand over the children, sent them to Radomsko and, from there, to the gas chambers in Treblinka.

He ordered that [the workers] be searched upon leaving the "Small Ghetto" and when they returned from work. Whatever he found in the workers' possession was taken from them, and he also beat them murderously.

On 1st May 1943, he ordered that the ghetto be surrounded with a large number of guards and that no one be let out to work. His intention then was to annihilate the last Częstochowa Jews. Lüth, the political director of HASAG, was opposed to this because he wanted unpaid working hands. So, he travelled off to Radom and convinced Böttcher to "lend" him the Jews of the "Small Ghetto" for his factory. Degenhardt kept the Jews of the "Small Ghetto" in a state of suspense of mortal fear for three days.

On 25th, 26th and 27th July 1943, he managed the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto", during which 2,000 Jews were killed and most of the houses were blown up.

On 20th July 1943, he ordered the selection of 300 Jews in HASAG-Pelcery and, on 20th July, he personally carried out the selection of 100 Jews on ul. Garibaldi, among whom was the entire Jewish police force, with the commandant Parasol at their head.

The underground movement passed a death sentence on Degenhardt but, each time, the attempts failed. After his bloody deeds in Częstochowa and the entire district, he was sent off to Greece. The Greek partisans immediately found out who he was and carried out an attempt on his life. For his disgraceful, bloody deeds, he fell at the hands of the Greek partisans and freedom fighters⁴.

[Otto] Ibischer [Überschär] held the rank of *Hauptwachtmeister* [Chief Warden] and was the commandant of the ghetto. He actively participated in the deportations and selections of the "Big Ghetto" and perpetrated an unheard-of number of atrocious deeds. He was in charge of loading the Jews onto the wagons which were then sent away to Treblinka. He separated the families and ordered everyone to take off their shoes. He also particularly engaged in seeking out Jews who had hidden on the "Aryan side". He caught them and shot them brutally. He also has the killing of the "Small Ghetto's" Jewish intelligentsia on his conscience.

[Felix] Rohn held the rank of Lieutenant of the *Schutzpolizei*. He actively and murderously participated in all the resettlements, selections and expulsions⁵.

Four weeks after the liquidation of the "Big Ghetto" in Częstochowa, an ordinance appeared on part of the German authorities to the effect that ghettos were being formed in an entire array of localities, where the Jews could live in peace, reside and work. Their purpose was to

⁴ [TN: As the author writes in the 1966 work "Czenstochover Landsmanschaft of Montreal", p.174, this was a story concocted and spread by the mass-murderer, himself, in a bid to cover his trail. Many years later, however, he was found alive and well, and was finally tried in Lüneburg in 1966. Sadly, the only punishment he received was life in prison.]

⁵ [TN: While "resettlements" denotes transport to the death camps, "expulsions" most likely refers to forced labour camps.]

fool the small number of surviving Jews, who were hiding in bunkers and on the "Aryan side", in order to further concentrate them and then kill them.

As soon as the "Small Ghetto" was established in Częstochowa, on 4th January 1943, Rohn carried out a selection of 500 Jews to be sent off to Radomsko and from there to Treblinka. To that purpose, he affected a rollcall of all the Jews in the "Small Ghetto", who numbered 4,000 people. During this selection, two members of the underground, [Mendel] Fiszlewicz and Izio Fajner, set upon Rohn with weapons - but the attempt failed. Rohn carried through the selection and, afterwards, chose twenty-five more Jews, whom he [had] shot along with the two young combatants.

Werner was the manager of the Jewish movable property, which was left ownerless following the liquidation of the "Big Ghetto". The warehouses on ul. Garibaldiego were under his supervision. He looted these possessions unmolested, and sent huge suitcases of valuables to his wife, children and acquaintances in Germany. His family members frequently came to visit, taking away with them suitcases with valuables from the Jewish property and goods.

Dzierżan held the rank of *Revierwachtmeister* [Station Sergeant]. He always went about with a vicious dog, whom he would turn upon Jews whom he found on the street, inflicting [injury upon] many victims. His arrival caused everyone great fear. When he appeared, the Jews hid from him.

Hantke held the rank of *Oberwachtmeister*; known by the nickname "White Head". He behaved cruelly during the entire period from the establishment of the ghetto to its liquidation. He would carry out searches on the Jews and take anything he found on them and also beat them murderously. He shot many Jews. He also supervised the newly-vacated Jewish dwellings, from which he robbed Jewish property.

Schimmel and Hiller, during the period of the *akcje* and selections, cheated Jews out of large sums of money and valuables in a refined manner, in order to transfer them to *Metalurgia*, after which they sent away those same Jews in the transport to Treblinka, or shot them on the spot. They participated in all the killings and murdered many Jews.

Passow held the rank of *Hauptwachtmeister*. He actively took part in all the *akcje*, selections and murders during the liquidation of the "Big Ghetto".

Sapport held the rank of Lieutenant and was the manager of the "Small Ghetto". He actively participated in liquidating the "Big Ghetto". He took the Jews on the right to *Metalurgia*, where he later conducted selections. He took those, whom he chose in the selections, to the railway line, to be sent away to Treblinka. He took an active part in liquidating the Jews at ul. Katedralna 10. On 4th January 1943, he actively participated in the selection to send 500 Jews to their deaths - twenty-seven young men were then shot on the spot. He assisted Rohn in his crimes in the "Small Ghetto", actively participating in the liquidation of it. He shot many Jews in the cemetery.

[Heinz] Laszynski made a name for himself with his cruelties and sadistic deeds during the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto". He shot numerous Jews at ul. Mostowa 11 and threw them into the lime pits there. He [also] robbed Jewish property. He was a *Volksdeutsch* from Poland.



Photo №20: The arrow indicates the lime pit into which the murderer of Jews Laszynski threw the victims of the "Small Ghetto".

[Kurt] Klipsch actively participated in liquidating the "Big Ghetto", after which he was in charge of supervising the Jewish workers on ul. Garibaldiego. He treated them brutally and shot numerous Jews at work.

[Adolf] Kühnel was the yard foreman at ul. Garibaldiego. He treated the Jewish labourers strictly and cruelly. He robbed Jewish belongings and sent them to his family. He came from the Sudetenland - a *Volksdeutsch*.

[Georg] Schlosser, *Oberwachtmeister* of the German *Schutzpolizei*, oversaw the Jewish property that had become ownerless on ul. Garibaldiego.

Bartel, *Revierwachtmeister*, managed the work of clearing out the liquidated "Big Ghetto". He shot all the Jews whom he found hidden in dwellings, attics and cellars. He has the murder of many Jews on his conscience.

Opitz took an active part in liquidating the "Big Ghetto". During the period of the *akcje*, he ran about with a revolver, shooting Jews.

Schmidt⁶, a *Revierwachtmeister*, treated the Jews brutally and murderously. He carried out searches, over the course of which he became wealthy by stealing valuables from Jews. He also looted Jewish property during the period when the “Big Ghetto” was being cleared out.

Jarzyński-Marbach, an *Oberwachtmeister*, was actively involved in the liquidation of the “Big Ghetto”. His main occupation was overseeing the Jewish workers employed at ul. Garibaldiego in clearing out the ghetto. He robbed Jewish property and made “dodgy deals”, selling the now ownerless Jewish property and goods. He became rich at the expense of the Jewish misfortune.

[Heinrich] Kessler⁷ **[Köster]** actively participated in the resettlements, selections and killings during the liquidation of the “Big Ghetto”. Following liberation, he was arrested in Wrocław. He was brought to the place where he perpetrated his crimes - to Częstochowa. The tribunal sentenced him to death by hanging. The verdict was carried out in Częstochowa.

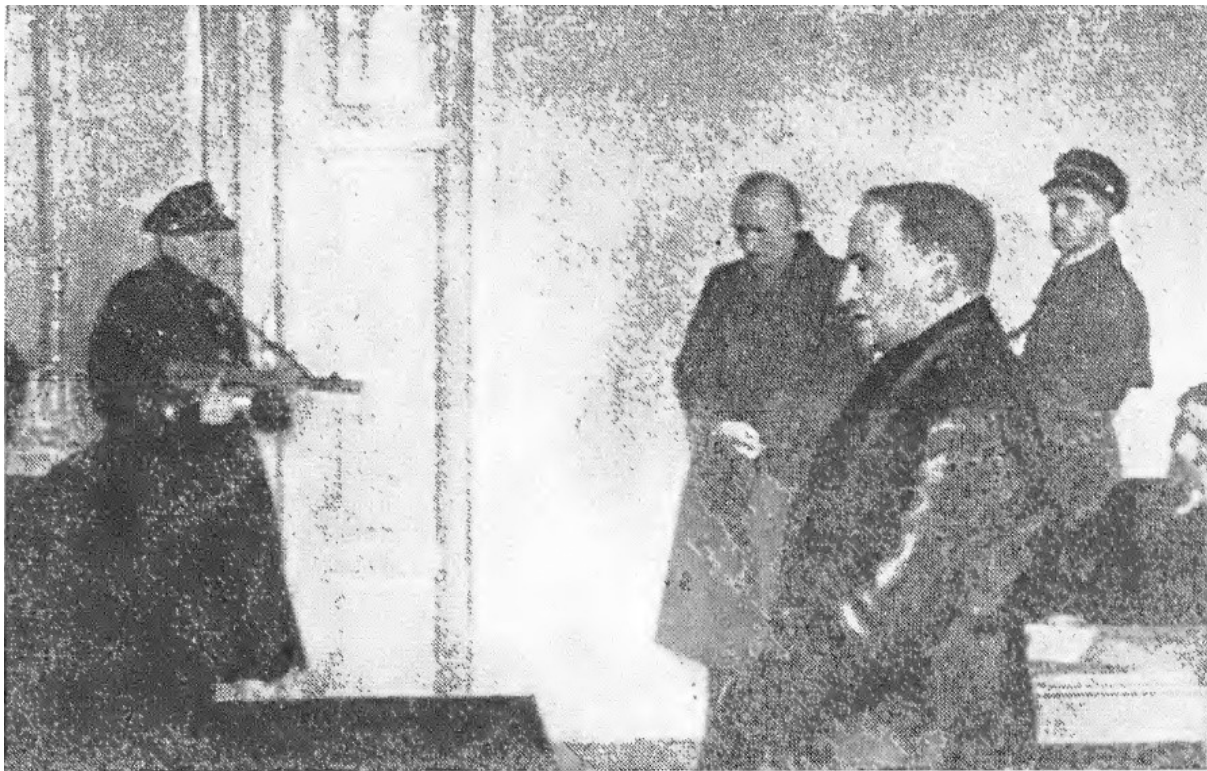


Photo №21: The murderer of Jews, Keßler, stands with his head bowed. Next to him, on the right side [of the photo], stands the witness Aron Owieczko and recounts Keßler's gruesome deeds before the tribunal, to the effect that during the liquidation of the ghetto, he burnt Jews alive.

Among other people, his wife Jadzia Owieczka, aged thirty-two, and his little five-year-old daughter Halusia Owieczka were burnt by the murderer.

Rachner was a sadist and a murderer. He shot many women and children. He actively participated in the liquidation of the “Big Ghetto”, in which he stood out for his mass shootings and tortures.

⁶ [TN: Most likely ref. to Georg Paul Schmid, who was in the Schutzpolizei in Częstochowa, where he was executed in 1949.]

⁷ [TN: Also spelt “Keßler” on the forthcoming page; as the murderer's surname appears as “Köster” in several other sources, it is unclear whether Kessler/Keßler is erroneous or an alias which the criminal went by.]

Willi [Wilhelm] Unkelbach was Degenhardt's chauffeur. He took an active part in liquidating the "Big Ghetto". He was present at all the killings perpetrated by Degenhardt. He surpassed Degenhardt with his bestialities. He, Willi Unkelbach, shot the victims whom Degenhardt did not wish to shoot. Before shooting someone, he gave them terrible beatings. He would set up small children at graves and practiced marksmanship by shooting at their heads. He robbed a great many possessions by taking all the valuables from the victims whom he shot.

Schönfelder held the rank of *Oberwachtmeister*. He actively participated in the liquidation of the "Big Ghetto". He distinguished himself by searching for Jews in hiding places, bunkers and chimneys, shooting anyone whom he found.

Fischer held the rank of *Oberwachtmeister*. He took an active part in the liquidation of the "Big Ghetto" and "Small Ghetto". When the "Small Ghetto" was liquidated, he opened the shooting with an automatic rifle.

Kirsch was a *Revierwachtmeister*. He was known by the nickname "*Fessele*" [Little Barrel]. He took an active part in liquidating the "Big Ghetto" and "Small Ghetto". Following the liquidation of the "Big Ghetto", he was in charge of the furniture that had been robbed from the Jews who had been sent to their deaths. He has many Jewish lives on his criminal conscience. During the liquidation of the "Big Ghetto", he shot many Jews on ul. Nadrzeczna. He became rich by plundering, for his own benefit, the ownerless Jewish property on ul. Garibaldi.

Klemm was Chief of the *Werkschutz* in HASAG-Pelcery. Known by the nickname "The Little Lame Jew", he treated the Jewish labourers brutally, tormenting and beating them during the rollcall and in the guardroom. He shot thirty Jews, whom he took out of a bunker in the "Small Ghetto" and actively participated in the selection of 20th July 1943 in the HASAG-Pelcery factory. He led the *akcja* of those selected from ul. Garibaldi by stunning the victims, tying them up with barbed wire, throwing them onto the freight vans and transporting them to the cemetery. He became wealthy by looting Jewish property.

Opel was the foreman of the construction department in HASAG-Pelcery and was known as "*Morsz*". He stunned those, who had been selected, by a blow to the head with a heavy hammer. He always treated the Jewish workers brutally, beating and torturing them. He robbed Jewish possessions and became wealthy.

[Alfred Wilhelm] Franzke and Niziołek, the engineer and foreman in HASAG[-Pelcery]. They carried out the selection on 20th July 1943 and caused the deaths of 300 Jews.

[Fritz] Bartenschlager was Chief of the *Werkschutz*, first in Skarżysko[-Kamienna] and later in Warta in Częstochowa. From November 1944, he was in charge of all the HASAG factories in Częstochowa. He transformed the HASAG factories, which were forced labour camps, into concentration camps, implementing the most acute forms of terror there. He murderously beat and shot many Jews and carried out selections. In July 1944, when the evacuation

transport from Dęblin, with 200 Jews, arrived in Częstochowa at the HASAG-Warta factory, he conducted an *akcja* of shooting fifteen children in the cemetery⁸.

⁸ [TN: Bartenschlager was also a notorious rapist. He was executed in 1946.]