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“Aryans” and “Muslims¹”

The Jews, who were left after all the hitherto *akcja*, assessed the constant peril hanging over them. They realised that the evil fate would not pass them by and that the Germans would [only] let them live for as long as they could draw some use from them. Consequently, the thought occurred to many that only those, who would be able to set themselves up as “Aryans”, would survive. But, for that, one needed to have an “Aryan” appearance and “Aryan papers”.

In order to look like an “Aryan”, black-haired women began dyeing their hair blonde and men grew thick moustaches and also dyed them blonde, along with their hair.

As regards “Aryan papers”, one could obtain them, through the recommendation of acquaintances, from special *machers* [fixers], who took large sums for it.

Poles would come to the Craftsmen’s House who, from the Jews, took photographs and money and, after a few days, brought finished “Aryan papers”, with birth certificates from which it could be seen that the person in question was an “Aryan” since countless generations.

But in addition to the “Aryan appearance” and “Aryan papers”, one also needed to possess a great deal of money in order to be able to maintain oneself in a strange city because, in one’s own city, there was a fear that acquaintances and strangers would recognise the person and give him away.

Jews, with “Aryan papers” travelled mostly to the larger cities or to health resorts, where it was easier to settle down. But a multitude of blackmailers rose up - Poles who specialised in finding “Aryan” Jews. These people would boldly and insolently approach someone in the street and say to him, “You’re a Jew!” If the Jew’s face changed and he was startled, the blackmailer saw that he had guessed correctly and demanded 10,000 zloty or even more. If the Jew was able to pay, the matter was concluded with the blackmailer - for the time being. If the Jew had no money, the blackmailer handed him over to the Gestapo or to the police, and the Jew was doomed.

The captured “Aryan” Jews were forced, through torture, to reveal their place of residence, and, on such occasions, the Gestapo would often find the trail of other false “Aryans” and of those who produced “Aryan papers”. In many cases, the Poles, who had rented dwellings to the “Aryan” Jews, were also shot along with the Jews.

¹ [TN: Viz. Mohammedans or Muslims.]



The mountain of ash that was left of the Częstochowa Ghetto



The desecrated study-hall named after the Rabbi of Częstochowa, Reb Nachum Asz

Polish policemen also blackmailed Jews and extorted money from them. If a Jew tried to stand his ground insisting that he was an Aryan, he was led off to the Gestapo, where they checked whether he was circumcised. Women, on their part, were examined as to whether they knew Catholic prayers and were familiar with different religious practices.

Real Catholics, who had a Semitic appearance, would frequently be stopped. But, they received just a little harassment on part of the blackmailers and were let go.

Despite the fact that “Aryan papers” were not much of a remedy, almost every Jew wanted to have them. People wished to fool themselves because, upon closer inspection, the forgery was immediately apparent. But the *machers* did good business and they also came up with even more innovations. Thus, they “invented” making out papers as “Muslim”, who, after all,

are also circumcised. These papers were costlier than the regular "Aryan" ones, because they were deemed to be surer. In reality, however, these "Muslim" papers did not have the slightest value because, upon verifying the identity of a "Muslim", the German or Polish police immediately realised with whom they were dealing.

But the desperation among Jews was so great, that they clutched onto anything - as a drowning man onto a straw.