

# ACTIONS AGAINST THE JEWS IN NORWAY DURING THE WAR\*

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The deportations of Jews from Norway in 1942 and 1943 represent the climax of a series of actions by both the Germans and the NS (Nasjonal Samling, "National United Action", political Nazi party founded 1933), beginning in the summer of 1941 and appearing more clearly as a part of a consistent anti-Jewish policy from the outset of 1942. More sporadic actions had, however, already occurred from the very first days of the German occupation. They began in the middle of May 1940 when the Norwegian police, on order from the German police, confiscated radios belonging to Jews. This occurred before Administrasjonsrådet (Administrative Council of officials loyal to the Norwegian constitution, April 15 — September 25, 1940, appointed by the Supreme Court) was informed and was able to remonstrate. At a later inquiry conducted by the council, the Regierungspräsident (chief administrative officer) Delbrügge in the Reichskommissariat (wartime Nazi German political administration of occupied Norway) stated that the German authorities were forced to handle the Jewish question internationally, and that the authorization for the confiscation was found in a decree from the Führer. The action was repeated in July 1941 when Untersturmführer Böhm (American equivalent: a 2nd lieutenant, Böhm was a subordinate officer of the Gestapo office in Norway for Jewish affairs) gave order to Det Mosaiske Trossamfund (the Jewish congregation) in Oslo that the Jews,

within three days, should deliver radios they still had in their possession.

The German police, in May 1940, also commanded the local Norwegian police to prepare lists of members in the Jewish communities in Oslo and Trondheim. Investigations were made by the German police in the spring of 1940 about Germans, Czechoslovakians and others of Jewish origin from the Continent, even in their places of origin, about their situation and behaviour. The purpose was to find out what could be important for the treatment of those Jews by the German police in Norway. Jewish organizations in Oslo were ordered to hand over membership lists, and, in August of the same year, the German police demanded from the Jewish community in Oslo lists of Jews who were not affiliated to the community. This additional demand may have been connected with the order from Auswärtiges Amt (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in Berlin to the Reichskommissariat to compile complete lists. It was Legationsrat (councillor of legation) Rademacher from Auswärtiges Amt, who was after the number of Jews in Norway, their properties, and industries and business enterprises where the Jews had decisive influence.

It is quite evident from documents in Yad Vashem archives in Jerusalem that Auswärtiges Amt also tried to obtain information on the number of Jews in Copenhagen and Stockholm. Other organizations, too, became involved in this. On March 24, 1941 "Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland" sent a letter to the Jewish community in Oslo. Attached to the letter, was a questionnaire about the number of Jews in Norway, divided into "Glaubens- und Rassenjuden" (Jews of faith

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and Jews by race), specified in four age groups and also according to employment. Only the Germans themselves could be interested in this type of information. Certainly not the Jews in Germany. The declared purpose was to obtain a statistical survey of the Jewish population in all European countries. This type of statistical survey was obtained, and is found in the minutes of the Wannsee-Conference of January 20, 1942 on "Die Endlösung der Judenfrage" (Final Solution). Accompanying the minutes is a letter, dated March 2, 1942, from the chief of the German Reich Security police and Security service (S.D.), Heydrich to Unterstaatssekretär (deputy permanent undersecretary) Luther in the Auswärtiges Amt (Foreign Office). According to this letter, Norway is estimated as having 1300 of Europe's 11 million Jews.

In the spring of 1940, actions also occurred in various cities around the country — in Kristiansand, Moss and Fredrikstad — and posters proclaiming "Jüdisches Geschäft" (Jewish shop) were put up by the local German authorities wanting to draw the attention of their own soldiers. The posters posted on Jewish shops in Moss, were, however, written in Norwegian. The inhabitants of Moss and even the NS in Moss protested to the highest German authorities, asking why the text was in Norwegian when it was intended for German soldiers. The matter was dropped temporarily and then taken up again in 1941 when the Reichskommissariat began to compile lists of Jewish firms. Lists had already been set up on the local level in the summer of 1940, and now they were to be compiled on the central level by the Reichskommissariat. New, more extensive and complete lists were prepared in the winter of 1941/42. The various departments in the Reichskommissariat worked independently of each other in order to compile lists, thereby, providing much extra work. In a monthly report for March 1942, the department for Wirtschaftspropaganda (economic propaganda) in the Reichskommissariat confirmed that the lists this time were based on information from the NS.

A few actions against the Jews were attempted by the NS after the Party (which had forfeited credit under Administrasjonsrådet) had been restored to a political instrument by the Reichskommissar (Reich commissioner) in September 1940. Jewish doctors (refugees) who

were not Norwegian citizens were deprived of their licenses to practice medicine. In the autumn of 1941, a couple of Jewish lawyers were deprived of their licenses. About the same time, Minister of Justice, Riisnæs, sent a confidential order to the provincial governors about making an inventory of all real Jewish property. The personnel in the provincial offices were ordered to give information about persons they knew were of Jewish descent. He also suggested, to the Ministry of Agriculture, that Jews should be prevented from buying real estate. In 1941 and 1942 the Ministry of the Interior sent a questionnaire to all national, regional and local, authorities about employees of "Aryan" descent. In some cases Jews were dismissed.

In the summer of 1941, the head of the Church and School Ministry, Skancke, wrote two letters, dated June 13 and August 13, wanting the Bishop of Oslo, Berggrav, to comment on a change in the marital legislation, a change that would entail a prohibition of mixed marriages with Jews, (and with Lapps) and their descendants in as far as the third generation. Bishop Berggrav responded to the letter on behalf of all the bishops. They opposed this type of prohibition from a Christian point of view and protested against Norwegian citizens being classified as inferior human beings. A few months before the church had clearly indicated its position. Dean Fjellbu (after the war bishop in Trondheim), with the support of all the clergy in Trondheim, protested against the German plan to deprive all Jews in Trondheim of their homes, and threatened to alarm the whole country if the Jews were placed in a category for themselves.

The most well-known protest of this kind is, most likely, that of the church November 10, 1942. Antisemitic propaganda had become wilder and wilder in Norwegian radio and newspapers and culminated in the autumn of 1942. It is interesting to note that a number of Norwegian newspapers immediately prior to the deportation on November 26 published anti-Jewish declarations once made by Martin Luther. The protest of the church against persecution of the Jews created an international sensation and was the subject of many reports in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin. The ministry considered this protest so important that a statement on it (this time from a newspaper in Geneva, "L'Essor") was in

person submitted not only to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but to the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Propaganda and to several party organizations. Less well known is it that the protest of the legitimate leadership of the Norwegian Church, the bishops, the teachers of the theological faculties and of 25 religious communities and other Christian organizations, was sent for comment to the bishops installed by NS. The responses from the Nazi bishops are not filed in the Ministry of Church and School, but the responses from four bishops, however, are registred in the journal. The Nazi bishop of Bergen stated that he found imprisonment of the Jews to be entirely proper. In a number of issues of "Norske Nyheter" in London from February 4, 1943, it is said that the same bishop concluded that the Jews were "the plague bacteria of society". Skancke did not attempt to alter the marital laws in 1941, but on December 11, 1942, after the deportation had already started, he signed a circular to the marriage authorities on precisely this matter. It was an announcement about a law which would, in all likelihood, categorize the spouse of a Jew as a Jew (according to a circular from the Ministry of Justice November 28). The wedding documents in such cases were to be sent to the Ministry of Justice before the wedding took place.

The NS sought to boom the resolution of March 12, 1942 by the Quisling government (which had been inaugurated by the Reichskommissar on February 1, 1942). It was a resolution which restored the prohibition of § 2 in the Constitution of 1814 barring admission of Jews into the country. This resolution, in point of fact, was partly due to German pressure. In a letter, dated January 9, about a meeting in the Reichskommissariat is found the following statement: "Zur Klärung der Judenfrage beabsichtigt das Reichskommissariat keine einschneidenden offiziellen Massnahmen vorzunehmen. Es wird aber dafür Sorge getragen, dass die Juden aus dem Staatsdienst ausscheiden" (For the clearance of the Jewish question the Reichskommissariat does not intend to resort to sweeping measures. However, it will see to it that the civil service is purged of Jews). The Reichskommissariat wanted to work for a revival of the discarded paragraph of the Norwegian constitution, but did not want to be the official instigator of change

and left this to the Norwegian authorities instead.

The resolution did not have any immediate consequences. Its significance was more a matter of principle. The decree issued by Jonas Lie, Minister of Police, on February 10, 1942, regarding the identification of Jewish persons through the indication of the letter "J" in their identification cards, contributed far more to the predicament the Jews found themselves in. It is evident from a rough draft of a letter to the chief of the Norwegian State Police (Statspolitiet), Marthinsen (October 27, 1942) that the Ministry of Police had, on October 10, 1941, been approached by Befehlhaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD (the commander in chief of the German Security police and Security service in Norway) on this matter. The chief of the Norwegian Security police asked the German Befehlhaber der Sicherheitspolizei a question about who was to be classified as Jewish. The answer he received, formed the basis for decisions which were prepared. In the meantime, in NS quarters work was also proceeding on this matter. In the rough draft just mentioned it is stated that the initiator was the NS statistical office, and that the office intended to use the material for examining the Jewish problem in Norway statistically. The NS contacted the Germans (Einsatz-Stab, Wegener) regarding the regulations for the duty of registration. Police Minister Lie decided to make the preliminary draft of the questionnaire that all Jews were to fill in more inquisitive. He subsumed the questionnaire with questions concerning "Jewish criminality", as he called it.

The first "physical" police actions against the Jews as a group occurred in June 1941. But even prior to this date, and with increasing intensity from the autumn of 1941, Jews were individually arrested and some of them were even deported before the sweeping deportations took place. Most of the Jewish men in Northern Norway were arrested on June 18, 1941 and were not released later on. When Germany attacked the Soviet Union four days later, the stateless Jewish men in Norway were arrested. These were, however, released in the beginning of July — most of them having been imprisoned at Vollan prison (Trondheim) and at Grini, the German prison camp near Oslo. In the autumn of 1941 the actions against the Jews in Trondheim began. Families were, one

after another, deprived of their possessions and family members were, in many cases, imprisoned (first at Vollan and later on at Falstad, the German prison camp 80 kilometres from Trondheim). This was undoubtedly due to the fact that Trondheim had, on October 11, 1941 got a new Gestapo chief, Ernst Flesch. But even as early as in the spring of 1941, Wehrmacht had, without notice, begun to use the synagogue as living quarters for soldiers. The synagogue was subjected to considerable devastation and vandalization. The interior was quite destroyed and the Stars of David in the lead-encased windows were replaced by swastikas.

Arrest actions in Trondheim continued in the beginning of 1942. On March 7, four of the city's Jews were shot, after, being sentenced to death as stated in the court records, for listening to and spreading news from London. In the days of martial law in Trondheim at the beginning of October, the rest of the male Jews were arrested. Among the ten executed on the first day was a Jewish man who had been arrested as early as January. He had been transported to the north in August, and had then been taken south again to Trondheim a few weeks before martial law was declared in Trondheim. This was hardly a coincidence. In the following month, three older Jews in the Falstad camp, who allegedly should have been taken to hospital, were shot in the forest around Falstad.

In the summer of 1942, Jews were arrested in smaller cities and, in August, actions began against Oslo Jews who had rented summer houses in Nærnes, 30 kilometres from Oslo. Ten adult men were arrested — including the congregation's rabbi.

Then the incident occurred which gave the Germans the excuse they were looking for — if they needed any — in order to initiate decisive action against the Jews. The incident occurred on the 22th of October. The leader of a refugee transport, a transport which was to bring 10 Jews to Sweden, shot a Nazi police officer on the train to Halden. Events then began to happen in rapid succession. A law which was enacted two days later (October 24) gave the NS government the authority to arrest the Jews — males first — and enjoin upon women to report themselves. This was done pursuant to a law in which the word Jew did not exist. The law of October 24 referred

back to a decree from the previous year (October 6) regarding persons suspected of violating the Reich commissioner's ordinances from 1940 (September 25, October 7), which was now, in October 1942, extended to persons who "were suspected of having committed or intending to commit actions subversive to the state or to the people". The decree of 1941 referred back to paragraph 39 of the criminal code which applied to such measures as the duty of registration, deprivation of freedom, banishment from places of residence, measures against the mentally insane, alcoholics, and people who were mentally retarded.

The State Police's zeal is evident in the dossiers containing separate individual forms for every Jew. On October 26, the police set out to arrest all Jewish men in the morning at 6 o'clock. If the person the Police was ordered to arrest was not at home, the policed returned at 8 o'clock and 10 o'clock and once again during the evening. The same procedure was to be repeated two days later. Arrest orders were sent to police stations around the country, raids on cinemas and on streets in smaller towns occurred. All this and further details can be substantiated in documents in the State Police's archives. Inquires were made to taxi stations about people who had fled from a hospital and requested taxi transport.

When the men were arrested on October 26, they were forced to sign a declaration stating that they would relinquish all they owned. This was in accordance with a law that was passed a little later on in the morning. The law of October 26 legalized the confiscation of Jewish property. An ordinance regarding the seizure of the German Jews' property in Norway had already been prepared in the Reichskommissariat in July. The only change made in the rough draft from the Reichskommissariat was that the month was changed from July to October. This was after Quisling had put his law into effect. The German decisions were not to be made public. The Norwegian decisions did not, however, deviate much from the German decisions. On a few issues, moreover, they were more extensive.

The newspapers did not report the arrest action of all Jewish men starting on October 26, nor did they report the succeeding deportations — at least not in plain language. The Jewish men were sent to Berg (near the city Tønsberg), where a Norwegian prison camp

now was brought into use, even if the necessary preparations for that use had not been carried through. The Jews arrested in Oslo were first sent to the Bredtveit prison outside Oslo and then some days later to Berg. No one was taken from Bredtveit to Berg after the 28th of October. This is a clear indication that it was already apparent to the Germans at that time that such an action was an unnecessary and roundabout way of dealing with the situation since the Jews would, most likely, be deported — as rumor had it — as early as November.

On the 17th of November the law regarding duty to register was passed. This law pertained to all Jews having permanent places of residence or sustenance in the country as well as all who were full, half or quarter Jewish. This law — patterned after the German law — also defined who was to be considered a full, half or quarter Jew. The Norwegian lawmakers, however, went further than their German teachers. In a letter to *Auswärtiges Amt* in Berlin, dated March 16, 1943 and signed by *Oberregierungsrat* (Chief Government Counsellor) Schiedermaier, the *Reichskommissariat* commented on the decision on "Mischlinge" ("bastards"). According to the Norwegian law, "Mischlinge" would be considered as Jews, but the German decisions on deportation had several nuances. Schiedermaier commented on the Norwegian rule by stating that it was intended to use this law as widely as possible: "Es ist in Aussicht genommen von dieser Bestimmung möglichst weitgehend Gebrauch zu machen." The Norwegian decisions also created problems in Germany since they also included foreign citizens. A systematic application of the Norwegian decisions would negate the promise that *Auswärtiges Amt* had given to foreign governments. This included that attempts against Jews would not begin in those occupied areas where "Mischlinge" who were citizens of the foreign country lived. In a letter to the *Reichskommissariat*, dated April 15, 1943 and signed v. Thadden, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin suggested that the interested governments be first given the opportunity to recall such citizens. Eichmann was also involved because *Auswärtiges Amt* asked *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* to encourage support for this proposal through his branch in Oslo.

The Church's plea on November 10 for an

end to the persecution of Jews was not capable of preventing the deportations which were then about to occur. The first deportation occurred on November 19 and involved 21 Jews, two transports followed the next week, on November the 26th: The "Monte Rosa" with 26 Jews and "Donau". The Germans stated on the same day that the "Donau" transport included 532 persons. Since the list of names included only 531 persons (two persons are even listed twice, on the other hand at least the name of one deported is not listed), this number might be not entirely correct.

From the documents presented at the Eichmann trial and other material which formed the basis for the legal interrogations in this case a detailed chronology of the "Donau" transport can be obtained. Among the documents are the Police Chief Reinhard's announcement from Oslo to the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* in Berlin and *Stapoleitstelle* (regional headquarters of the Gestapo) in Stettin on the night of November 24 of the navy's sudden procurement of a ship for transport (according to other sources the Wehrmacht had consistently refused to assist in an undertaking of this kind) and *Sturmbannführer* (SS Major) Günther's answer in the afternoon of November 25 with a request to use to the outmost the possibility for transport available at that time. Günther also took the opportunity to give the guidelines for who was to be — as he termed it — "evacuated". Excepted from this evacuation were Jews in mixed marriages and the "Mischlinge" who were not classified as Jews. An important section deals with the situation of the deported Norwegian Jews. They lost their Norwegian citizenship after they left Norwegian territory and the Norwegian government's right of inquiry about individual Jews was dispensed with. The return of deported Jews was out of the question. This section read as follows: "Weiter bitte ich zu erwirken, dass die abeförderten Juden nach Verlassen des norwegischen Gebietes ihre norwegische Staatsangehörigkeit verlieren und die norwegische Regierung keinerlei Ansprüche mehr hinsichtlich einzelner Juden erhebt. Ein Rückkehr abeförderter Juden nach Norwegen kommt in keinem einzigen Fall mehr in Frage."

The "Donau" crossing was estimated to last 21½ days. Bad weather delayed the boat by one day. The storm was so hard in Swinemünde that the border police could not get a telegraph-

hed message regarding the "Donau" 's passage through Swinemünde to Stettin. The "Donau" was able to dock at Dunzig wharf in Stettin only after a 92 hour crossing. The train was delayed from the station by two hours. It is stated in documents dated November 30 from Stapo Stettin (three are signed Dr. Riedel): "Der Eisenbahntransportzug hat Stettin vom Breslauer-Bahnhof ab 17.12 hr verlassen und trifft nach Angabe der Reichsbahn am 1.12.42 zwischen 16 bis 17 Uhr in Auschwitz ein. Im Transport befinden sich 532 Juden. Führer des Transportes ist Krim. Sekr. Schapals. Stärke des Begleitkommandos 17" ("Vermerk", remark). Another document dated November 28 stated that the necessary agreements on the formality of customs at the ship's arrival were arranged. Übergabeprotokoll (transfer protocol) was posted in both Stettin and Auschwitz. The one in Stettin was signed by SS Untersturmführer (2. lieutenant) Grossmann from Oslo as "Übergebender" (delivering part) and Schapals as "Übernehmender" (accepting part). After the transport reached Auschwitz at 9 pm on the first of December, an Oberscharführer (platoon leader) in Auschwitz prepared the following short Übernahmebestätigung (acceptance document): "Die Übernahme von 532 Juden aus Norwegen wird hiermit bestätigt" (The delivery of 532 Jews from Norway is hereby confirmed). After carrying out the task, Schapals returned to Stettin and reported that the provisions which were loaded on board the ship in Oslo and had not been delivered in Stettin, had been immediately delivered in Auschwitz. "Besondere Schwierigkeiten entstanden während des Transports nicht. Todesfälle waren nicht eingetreten". (There were no special difficulties during the transport. There were no death casualties). The last sentence reveals what could have happened during such transports, and it is substantiated in what we know from statements from other sources. It was an oppressive journey, but, in spite of this, many tried to be courageous and they also said their prayers which were recited, in accordance to Jewish tradition, three times a day.

The same irrevocable faith in God is also evident in a letter from Bredtveit. At the turn of the year 1942/43 more than 150 Jews sat in prison there. Many of them were from Trondheim, northern Norway and the west-coast and spent three months at Bredtveit.

They received a visit from Mr. Skancke, the Minister of Church Affairs, after he had heard that the prisoners had been ill-treated during their residence in Falstad. There is, however, not any information that either Skancke or Quisling prevented 158 Jews from being deported with "Gotenland" on February 24 (embarkation the 24, the ship left Oslo the next morning). On the February 25, Eichmann informed Stettin of the 158 Jews to Berlin. From Berlin they would be sent with a transport of Jews who were to go to Auschwitz on the first of March. Grossmann was, once more, "Übergebender", and in a "Vermerk" from Stapo II it was announced on February 26 that the train with the prisoners would leave on February 27 at 7.53 pm from the central freight station in Stettin.

Of the 530 (532) in the "Donau" transport 250 men, between the ages 16—50, were sent into the camp, according to the reports of survivors. The "Kalendarium der Ereignisse in Konzentrationslagern", (Auschwitz, number 3—1942) about this transport states under December 1, 1942 that 186 were sent into the camp as prisoners and the others were gased: "Nach der Selektion lieferte man 186 Männer als Häftlinge ins Lager ein. Sie bekamen die Nummer 79064 bis 79249. Die Übrigen wurden vergast". The same fate (the gas-chamber) awaited about 130 of the 158 of the "Gotenland" transport on their arrival in Auschwitz the night before March 3. The last deportations occurred as late as the summer 1944. All together 760 persons, whom the Germans considered to be Jews (some of them not believers in the Jewish faith) were deported. Out of these 760 only 25 survived. Twenty-two Norwegian Jews lost their lives as a result of war casualties, executions and in other circumstances, so that the total loss for the Jewish population of Norway was 757, that means more than 42 % of all Jews in Norway.

There are also German documents on the escape of Norwegian Jews to Sweden. The Germans could not understand how it was possible to help the Norwegian Jews escape. On the 4th of December, the German ambassador (minister) in Stockholm, the Prince of Wied, telegraphed Berlin that he had received information from a "Vertrauensmann" (confidant) that 400 Jews had come to Sweden during the previous months. Deputy perman-

ent undersecretary (Unterstaatssekretär) Luther wanted party member Rademacher to explain how this was possible. The Security service in Oslo was repeatedly requested to prepare a report on this situation. It was stated in a report from the commander in chief of the German Security police and Security service in Norway, lieutenant colonel Fehlis to Reichssicherheitshauptamt on November 14 that the relatively small number of Jews accompanying the "Donau" transport was explained by the fact that a large number of persons had managed to escape to Sweden or had hidden themselves in remotely located cottages in the mountains. It is stated in a report "Meldungen aus Norwegen" Nr. 50, dated the 17th of January, 1943 that a number of relief organizations were established with the intention of helping Jews across the border. It is inserted that in most cases help was given in return for payment. "An diesem Judenschmuggel waren Polizeibeamte, andere Beamte und Intelligenzler beteiligt" (In this smuggling Norwegian police officers, other civil servants and intellectuals were involved). But not a single word about all the others who participated in the rescue.

It is stated in a secret message from the Reichskommissar Terboven to the German NSDAP office dated November 6, 1942, that the three most important political events of the past few weeks were the NS party convention, the martial law in Trondheim and the efforts against the Jews. In reference to the last event, he stated that the Jewish question, up to that time, had played no role in Norway. There were 1200 people of the Jewish race who had lived peacefully and quietly. "Es gibt unter ihnen sogar tüchtige Bauern und Handwerker, die im guten Ansehen stehen, und die bisher als absolut loyale Staatsbürger gegolten haben. Die Vermögensbeschlagnehmung hat zunächst wenig Verständnis gefunden, und die 'armen' Juden werden auch hier bedauert. Die Partei hat sich inzwischen auch dieses Problems angenommen und zur Klärung der Judenfrage in vielen Schriften und Zeitungsartikeln beigetragen." The German Police chief Fehlis stated in a report that the Norwegian police, in accordance with the Reichskommissariat, surprisingly had arrested all men. It was, however, clarified that the Norwegian State Police had planned and implemented the arrest action. It was also stated that the news

of this event spread through the population like wildfire, but without arousing much interest. A number of people sympathized with the "poor, harrassed and innocent Jews". The opposition manifested by the Church was mentioned and the special services and prayers for the Jews.

There are quite a few documents in Yad Vashem in Jerusalem which describe the attempts made by Swedish authorities to bring to Sweden people who were in prison in Norway and even Jews who were already deported. When the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs approached the German legation in Stockholm regarding the situation of the Jews in Norway, the legation responded by asking the Swedish government what right it had to approach the legation in regard to events which had occurred in Norway (according to a telegram sent to Berlin from the German ambassador the Prince of Wied, dated December 3, 1942). Two weeks later the Swedish minister (ambassador) in Berlin, Richert, made a démarche to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is stated in a memo written by Staatssekretär (deputy permanent secretary) Weiszäcker and dated December 17:

"Der Schwedische Gesandte begann heute bei mir ein Gespräch darüber, dass die schwedische Regierung bereit wäre, die aus Norwegen abzutransportierenden Juden norwegischer Staatsangehörigkeit in Schweden aufzunehmen. Ich habe Herrn Richert gleich gesagt, ich möchte hierüber in ein amtliches Gespräch mit ihm nicht eintreten. Würde er von seiner Regierung zu einer Mitteilung dieser Art beauftragt, so glaube ich ihm von vornherein einen Misserfolg voraussagen zu können."

Then the Swedes asked about individuals, mostly people who had been deported. The Germans were reluctant to give an answer, gave unsatisfactory answers and made the excuse that they did not know where these people were living in the East (letter Reichssicherheitshauptamt July 23, 1943). Eichmann stated in a letter regarding an older Swedish-born woman who was deported with "Donau" (written to the Legationssekretär v. Hahn and dated March 1, 1943) that the woman had become very sick during the transport and died at the place of destination, in spite of medical efforts, "verstarb schliesslich am Bestimmungsort trotz ärztlicher Bemühungen". When it is stated that no one died onboard

the "Donau" or on the way to Auschwitz (compare Schapal's report), Eichmann in other words is stating that she died in the gas chamber. He also added: "Von ihrer Abtransport wäre abgesehen worden, wenn die Mitteilung über ihre wiedererworbene schwedische Staatsangehörigkeit früher in Oslo eingetroffen wäre" (she would not have been deported if it had been reported earlier to Oslo that she had become Swedish citizenship again). This is obviously the opposite of what was stated in the last part of the letter. In this part of the letter, Eichmann pretended that the Swedes were trying to sabotage the measures the Germans were taking against the Jews, but the Germans would not take account of such Swedish citizenship.

"Ich gebe hiervon Kenntnis mit der Bemerkung, dass beabsichtigt ist, Juden norwegischer Staatsangehörigkeit, die in der geschilderten merkwürdigen Weise von der schwedischen Regierung noch schnell in dieser tendenziösen Form eingebürgert werden, ohne Rücksicht darauf in die laufenden Judenmassnahmen einzubeziehen."

The energetic attempts made by the Swedish General Consulate in Oslo to save Jews angered the Germans. The consulate contacted Norwegian Jews and gave them the necessary forms to fill in. According to a letter from the Reichskommissariat dated February 18, 1943 this even applied to Jews in Bredtveit prison. In a letter dated March 1, Eichmann stated that he knew of 40 such cases. And, on the same day, Sturmbannführer (major) Günther, in a letter to Auswärtiges Amt, wrote that the Swedish attempts were quite obvious and that it would have been appropriate if the Swedish government had, at a considerably earlier date, concerned itself about the citizenship of those persons and had not waited till the last minute. However, in spite of this opposition, a few individuals (about 20) who had got Swedish citizenship were released from Bredtveit during the month of February and March 1943.

The Swedes continued their efforts until the last days of the war. On March 3, 1945 the Finnish physical therapist Felix Kersten visited, on behalf of the Swedish government, Himmler to try to get 57 Norwegian Jews released. Kersten wrote in his book (Norwegian edition page 105) that Himmler consented to the release. It was shocking for me to read the list

of names because names of some of the people closest to me appeared on the list and also because many of them had died in the gas chamber on exactly that day two years earlier. Kersten, in good faith, wrote this. Kersten was also instrumental in persuading Himmler to transfer all the "Aryan-married" Jewish prisoners at Berg who had not been deported together with the other Jewish men in November 1942. The Swedes had been struggling for a solution all through 1944. The application was made through the consulate in Oslo. The Security police for the German state wanted to turn down the application on "Sicherheits- und abwehrpolizeilichen Gründen" (police-security and counter intelligence reasons). It was suggested in a secret "Vortragsnotiz" from the ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin (dated October 11, 1944) that the Swedes should be informed that they were not entitled ("legitimiert") to intervene on behalf of the Jews and that, even if the Jews were granted Swedish citizenship, they would still be considered as Jews by the Germans. The Germans also found ways and means to delay their decision on the Swedish request. On October 27, Auswärtiges Amt decided on the following plan of action: First it would not give the Swedish government an answer to its request, since the Swedes had neither officially applied to Auswärtiges Amt in Berlin nor to the legation (embassy) in Stockholm. Furthermore, the Chief of the Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police) in Oslo was to receive a message that he should not bring up the issue again. If the Swedish General Consul in Oslo applied again to the Chief of the Security Police, the chief was instructed to say that he was not authorized ("befugt") to negotiate with foreign representatives on questions of this sort. The issue was to be drawn out and was not finally solved until the last month of the war. On the second of May these prisoners came to Sweden.

After many discussions in the different ministries concerning the dissolution of the Jewish religious communities the Norwegian minister-president himself, Quisling, on May 21, 1943 made the resolution to dissolve the communities. The NS Attorney General, Norvik, who stated that the persecution of Jews had injured the Quisling authorities, had advised against the Ministry of the Church assuming the authority for the dissolution of



the Jewish communities, because he was afraid that this action would catalyze the opposition of the Norwegian Church. But the minister, Skancke, wrote in a letter dated December 19, three weeks after the "Donau" transport: "Since the superintendents and the members of the congregation have moved from the country — as far as one knows — this ministry has nothing against the community being disbanded and its property and possessions confiscated." Neither did the minister oppose the use of the synagogue in Bergstien (Oslo) for profane purposes. No considerable damage was made in the synagogue in Bergstien, contrary to what happened in Trondheim. If the war had lasted on for some weeks more after May 8, 1945 even the Jewish cemetery in Trondheim would have been totally destroyed.

I have intentionally avoided mentioning examples of gruesome prison treatment and maltreatment of the Jews in Auschwitz and in the camps in Norway. In Grini there were five different kinds of regulations ("Haftstufen") for prisoners. The fifth and worst was for earlier criminals, asocial persons and Jews. All prisoners belonging to this group were not allowed to receive letters and visits.

I have also left out the outstanding help the Norwegian Resistance Movement gave to Jews in their attempts to flee to Sweden. This would require a whole lecture in itself. We Norwegian Jews will always keep in our minds and be grateful for the solidarity shown us under dangerous conditions.

So many years have passed since the war ended. The atrocities of the war might now be past history to most people, and history has to be relearned by the young. But for many of us, this time is still near past. These events were, in a great degree, about us and about people who were close to us.

## Sources

The documents used in this article are essentially from the following institutions:

*Yad Vashem, Jerusalem*

German documents about Jews in Norway and

refugees of Jewish origin. Reports to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin concerning the protest of the Norwegian Church against the persecutions. Correspondence between Auswärtiges Amt in Berlin and the Reichskommissariat in Oslo about "bastards". Documents concerning deportation and transports from Norway and orders from the Reichssicherheitshauptamt. Documents concerning Swedish intervention for Norwegian Jews.

*Norwegian National Archives (Riksarkivet, Oslo)*

Archives of the State Police, actions against Jews, registration and arrest orders, dossiers of every individual Jew. Documents from the Gestapo IV B 4 b and from the Reichskommissariat. Lists of Jewish firms, of arrested Jews and of Jewish prisoners in the camps and prisons in Norway. Documents from trials against quisling ministers. Correspondence between German and NS authorities.

*Trial in Baden-Baden 1967 against the Gestapo chief in Norway*

Document about regulations for prisoners in the Grini camp. Reports from German authorities in Norway to Germany (NSDAP), partly concerning the escape of Jews to Sweden and the assistance of the Norwegian Home Front.

*Archives of the Ministry of the Church (Oslo)*

Documents about mixed marriages, the dissolution of the Jewish communities, confiscation of their properties and use of the synagogues. Statements of Nazi bishops.

*Det Mosaiske Trossamfund, Oslo (The Jewish Community), Correspondence 1940—45*

*Norsk Lovtidende (Norwegian Legal Journal) 1942*

Anti-Jewish laws: March 12 (§ 2 in the Norwegian Constitution of 1814 (Prohibition against admission of Jews to Norway), October 24, October 26 (confiscation of Jewish property), November 17 (duty to register).