

EHRI Online Course in Holocaust Studies

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Germans and the Holocaust – A Society of Shared Guilt?

Translation: *E05 British protocol of secretly monitored German POWs talking openly about German War Crimes*

Georg Neuffer – Major General (commander 20<sup>th</sup> Antiaircraft Division) – taken prisoner in Tunisia on 9 May 1943

Gerhard Bassenge – Major General (commandant of the fortress area Tunis/Bizerta) – taken prisoner on 9 May 1943

Information recorded: 10 July 1943

Neuffer: What will they say when they find our graves in Poland? The O.G.P.U. couldn't have done anything worse. I saw with my own eyes a train in Ludowice (?), directly near Minsk. I have to say that it was awful, a sickening sight. There were lorries full of men, women and children – really small children. That sends a shudder through you, this mental picture. The women, the small children, who were naturally unsuspecting – awful! I naturally didn't watch how they were then murdered. The German police stood around with automatic pistols, and you know who they had there? Lithuanians or something like that, in the brown uniform, they did it. The German Jews were also sent to the area around Minsk and were also slowly got rid of, if they'd not already succumbed to the other treatment. By treatment I mean: accommodation, food and so on. That's how it's been done: when some Jews were transported away in Frankfurt – they only found out just before, then they were only permitted to take a few very things with them, a little bit, a hundred marks, nothing else, and then at the station the hundred marks was demanded from them as fare. But all this is well known – when the world public gets hold of it all – that's why I was so puzzled about how we got so worked up about the case of Katyn.

Bassenge: Yes.

Neuffer: It's just so trivial in comparison to what we've allowed ourselves.