

Report on the Shooting of Jews and Gypsies

Confidential

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As agreed with the SS *Dienststelle*, I have brought the selected Jews and Gypsies from the Prisoner of War camp of Belgrade. The trucks put at my disposal by field headquarters 599 have proven to be unsuitable for two reasons:

- they are being driven by civilians. Secrecy can therefore not be maintained
- The trucks had no covering, so that the population of the city saw whom we had on the vehicles and where we were going. The wives of the Jews were assembled in front of the camp. They were crying and screaming as we drove out.

The location where the shooting took place was very advantageous. It is situated north of Pancevo, directly on the Pancevo-Jabuka road, where the shrubbery is so high that one can hardly climb up. Across this shrubbery is an area of swamps, and beyond that – a river. When the water level is high (as it was on October 29) the water reaches almost up to the shrubbery. Therefore it takes only a limited number of guards to prevent escapes of prisoners. In addition, the sandy soil is of advantage, since it facilitates the digging of ditches and saves labor time.

After arriving at about 1.5-2 Km from the chosen place, the prisoners were taken off the trucks and walked to the location, while the trucks with the civilian drivers were sent back immediately to prevent them from having any possible basis for suspicion. After that, I ordered the road blocked for any kind of traffic for reasons of security and secrecy.

The site was secured by 3 machine gunners and 12 sharp shooters against attempts of prisoners to escape and for protection of the force against possible attacks by Serb bandits.

The digging of ditches takes most of the time, whereas the shooting is very quick (100 men 40 minutes).

Luggage and valuables were collected beforehand and taken in my truck to be handed over to the NSV [National Socialist Folk Welfare].

The shooting of Jews is easier than that of Gypsies. It has to be admitted that Jews are very composed as they meet death – they stand very quietly – whereas the Gypsies cry, scream and constantly move around once they reach the execution site. Some of them even jumped into the ditches before the shots were fired and pretended to be dead.

At first my soldiers were not impressed. On the second day, however, it became clear that one or the other did not possess the nerves to carry out the executions for a longer period of time. It is my personal impression that one does not have any mental qualms while actually shooting. These appear days later while one reflects upon it quietly in the evening.

Lieutenant

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