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UNITED NATIONS WAR CRIMES COMMISSION

(Research Office)

M Zivkovic(2)

SECRET.

DOCUMENTS SERIES
NO. 2.

September, 1945.

DR. KURT GERSTEIN.

The following correspondence regarding Dr. Gerstein, who is indicated as a "very important witness in trials of war criminals," is circulated for information.

I.

(R/G/6/6/C)

REPORT RECEIVED FROM SHAEF.
June 6th, 1945.

Secret.

CIOS CONSOLIDATED ADVANCE FIELD TEAM.
ASSESSMENT REPORT.

To: CIOS Secretariat, SHAEF (Rear).

1. Target No.: Opportunity.
2. Full Title of Target: Bergassessor Diplomingenieur Kurt GERSTEIN.
3. Location: Rottweil, Black Forest.
4. Condition of Target: Not applicable.
5. Description.

The assessors met Dr. Gerstein by a chance encounter in a requisitioned hotel in Rottweil. He stated that we were the first British or Americans he had met and that he wanted to tell us of his experiences in German concentration camps. He informed us that he was a close personal friend of Monseigneur ? Niemoeller, and that working as a secret agent for him he had obtained a post of responsibility in the Nazi party. In this capacity he attended conferences at which the fate of the inmates of concentration camps was discussed. When asked if he knew of the use of gas chambers for killing the inmates, he replied that as he was an engineer he had often been made to advise in the operation of these chambers. He stated that the two gases used were hydrocyanic acid and exhaust gases from internal combustion engines. He could not give any figures for the concentrations employed and implied that no particular attention was paid to this point. He stated, however, that in case of HCN death was almost instantaneous, while a delay of 15 to 20 minutes occurred when exhaust gases were used.

Dr. Gerstein only escaped from the Nazis about three weeks ago; he is still visibly affected by his experiences and found difficulty in speaking of them. He was most anxious, however, that the guilty parties should be brought to trial for their crimes and stated that he was fully prepared to act as a witness in any court. He hoped that his information would be passed as soon as possible to the appropriate authorities in London. He handed over to the assessors a note in English, a seven page typewritten statement in French, and

some invoices from the firm of DEGESCH for the supply of "ZYKLON B" (blausäureprussic acid) to concentration camps. He also produced a religious pamphlet which he had written in 1938, as evidence of his past activities.

6. ITEMS GUARDED. None. It is for consideration whether Dr. Gerstein should be afforded some protection against local Nazis.

7. PRIORITY ASSESSMENT. No further action is considered necessary as far as Group 3 is concerned, but it is thought that Group 7 will wish to interview Dr. Gerstein.

8. OTHER REMARKS.

Dr. Gerstein gave the following as his permanent address:-
Gartenstrasse 24, Tübingen. He has permission from the French to travel between Tübingen and Rottweil. All the documents received from Dr. Gerstein are being handed over to Group 7 for necessary action.

9. DATE OF ASSESSMENT: 5 May 1945.

1 C. ASSESSOR'S NAMES: Major D.C. Evans.

Mr. J.W. Haught.

6th Army Group
CIOS Item 8 of Group 3.

Enquiries which were made in regard to the documents mentioned in paragraph 8 of the above report, produced the following answer, forwarded by CIOS. under cover of letter of August 30th, 1945.

II.

U.S. Group Control Council
(Germany)
A.P.O 742.
Office of the Director of Intelligence
Field Information Agency, Technical.

24 July, 1945.

1. The documents mentioned in your letter dated 11 July 1945 were forwarded by CAFT Leader Group 7 Sixth Army Group to G-2 Economic Section SHAEF Main on 9 May 1945 for distribution to War Crime Agencies.

2. A description of these documents is given below:

- (a) Statement in English dated 26 April 1945 by Kurt Gerstein.
- (b) Report in French same date and same author regarding concentration camp killings.
- (c) Correspondence and invoices on deliveries of prussic acid.
- (d) Pamphlet "Honor and Purity" issued by Gerstein in 1938.

3. Because of the move from Versailles to Frankfurt and subsequently the dissolution of SHAEF we have been unable to trace the documents. Presumably they were sent to the Consolidated Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects (CROWCASS) Paris.

4. We feel that these documents per se are unimportant because they can always be supplied again by Dr. Gerstein. His willingness to testify in a world court and his desire to write a book on what he has seen should make him a very important witness in trials of war criminals.

5. We regret that we are unable to be of further assistance at this time. We have made a number of inquiries with regard to the documents and shall advise you of any further developments.

HENRY S. BARLERIN.
Economic and Finance Branch.
