This document attempts to collect together evidence from various sources in such a way as to present a comprehensive picture, particularly with regard to evacuation. It does not attempt to review events in areas now in Allied hands, nor to give exhaustive details of matters (e.g. the transport situation) which are common knowledge and of general application. Material used has in the main been restricted to that valid for a period later than November 1. Comments and additions will be welcomed.

A. Particular Areas

The following main zones call for separate treatment:

1. The areas immediately behind the battlefield.
2. Cologne.
3. Other areas West of the Rhine.
4. The Ruhr.

1. The areas immediately behind the battlefield

This is the chief scene of compulsory evacuation, which seems to occur as soon as the battle approaches. Its effectiveness appears to depend largely on the date at which it is enforced and the speed of the Allied advance. In the Aachen area proper and in the Saar at the end of November it was applied late enough and the Allies advanced fast enough for the resistance, which it everywhere provokes, to have relatively good chances of success. In other areas East and North-East of Aachen, it was applied at an earlier stage, since the Party had had time to improve its organisation and, by means of a new system of withdrawing ration cards and issuing new ones only to those entitled to remain, has devised a control which makes evasion more difficult. (1) Those who wish to evade must lay in stocks of food, which they can only expect to last if there is some prospect of the Allies arriving soon; the only other alternative is to induce the local authorities to issue cards to unauthorised persons, which is said to have occurred here and there. Moreover a hard-fought battle does more damage to property and deprives the evaders of their shelter even if it does not put them in acute danger. For all these reasons, it is not surprising that the number of civilians found in the places conquered in the Ruhr valley should have been smaller than elsewhere. Since the institution of the Volksturm, of course, men liable for service in it are compelled to remain behind. (2)

2. Cologne

During October an attempt was made to evacuate Cologne, except for factory workers and municipal employees, both by force and by withholding rations. (5) It is reasonable to assume that these measures met with a considerable measure of success since an estimated population of 568,000 at the beginning of July (4) had fallen by the beginning of November to somewhere around 350,000. (5) On the other hand, the compulsory measures led to serious riots (4), and nothing more has been heard of them. It would, however, be overhasty to assume that they were abandoned as impracticable. For there is a general consensus of opinion that the Allied air raid of October 31, which damaged many of the buildings hitherto intact, induced large-scale voluntary evacuation; (7) several estimates for mid-November suggest that the population figure of 100,000 might be on the high side (8), and in that event compulsory evacuation would
hardly be needed. Many offices have been evacuated (9). Gas and water were entirely lacking in the central areas in November and (except for those who made private arrangements to get provisions from the country) food could only be obtained from NSV Canteens which required customers to produce a certificate proving that they were engaged on essential work (10). In the suburbs, things were much easier. French prisoners are said to have been moved some time ago to the areas in the centre of Germany (11), but other prisoners were remaining quite recently quartered in barracks at Leverkusen and elsewhere (12). There are a number of Foreign workers at large in the city (though the figure of 117,000 given in July for the Regierungbezirk is probably now too high) (13), where they mix with stragglers and deserters (14). Interrogations of Aachen police suggest that the foreign workers who stay put will mostly be those working on individual contracts for small firms, those employed on block contracts by big firms being much more easily controlled. The Kölische Zeitung continues to be published, but contains little local information of a factual character (15).

3. Other areas West of or on the Rhine

Here there would seem to have been a fair amount of voluntary evacuation in such towns as Bonn, Koblenz and Mainz where any serious bombing has occurred (16). The only place where compulsory evacuation has been mentioned is Frankfurt (17). It had not occurred at Mannheim as late as the end of November, although it was talked of as imminent (18). Indeed, Ludwigshafen, despite all its attacks, seems to have received a certain influx of miners, probably from the Sauer (19). It is clear that there were some anti-Nazi demonstrations in Mannheim in August (20).

Outside the main towns, letters and interrogations suggest that life goes along fairly normally. At Andernach, for example, supplies are satisfactory except for occasional trouble over butter and fat; electricity, gas and water are all available (21). One P/L said that to go from Mainz to Wiesbaden (here food was ample) was to go from war to peace. The villages and smaller towns are all full, as they have been one of the chief reception areas for evacuees from the larger towns in the Rhine and Ruhr valleys (22).

4. The Ruhr

In this area, attention centres round Essen. By the end of October, morale and conditions were both bad (23). The regular air-raid alarm had been destroyed and the firing of an AA gun had to serve as a signal that enemy raiders were actually approaching (24). The increasing severity of the raids made it essential to allow men to use the shelters which had previously been reserved for women and children; the result was that shelter accommodation became inadequate (25). Transport dislocation made it impossible to provide enough food and medical supplies for the 400,000 (or a 15% normal of 768,000) who remained in the city (26). Workmen began to apply for transfers to other areas because they had nowhere to live. It began to look to the authorities as though the enemy was on the point of succeeding in his object of forcing the population to abandon their places of work (27).

Faced by this emergency, the authorities decided on four steps:

(a) An order was issued saying that all space in works and offices in any way suitable for dwelling "even with the most primitive means" were to be used for the purpose (28).
(b) The construction of a number of new shelters was put in hand. Plans for some such shelters (especially hospital shelters) appear to have been put up by the local authorities to the centre in the past and rejected ((29)).

(c) On Nov. 17 the Deputy Gauleiter announced that all non-essential persons throughout the Gau were to be forcibly evacuated; (30) this was the first time that so drastic a measure had been applied to any district in Germany not directly threatened by enemy ground forces. It was hoped by this means to reduce the population of Essen itself to 300,000 (31). The first of a series of evacuation trains had already left when the announcement was made, but it must have been clear at the time of the announcement that transport conditions would complicate the application of this order to be gradual, those actually homeless getting priority (32). In actual practice, the population would appear to have been applied to at any rate at all rigorously, and in parts of the Gau outside Essen, local authorities seem to have been given discretion as to how far to enforce the order (33). The difficulty was not merely transport, but also lack of accommodation in the reception areas, all those in the neighbourhood being full. Within 4 days of the Deputy Gauleiter's order, proceedings were suspended while an appeal for help was made to remoter districts (34). There is no clear evidence yet to show that the process has been resumed. On Nov. 29 one local paper despatched that it would continue, and blamed those who circulated rumours to the contrary, based apparently on another rumour that a definite date had been given by which the authorities would find effective defences against Allied aircraft and bring the air war to an end, but on Dec. 3 another paper admitted that a definite date had not yet been set (35). For reasons unknown there was a considerable hold-up in the arrival of food-stuffs at the beginning of December and coupons had to be allowed to retain their validity into the next rationing period (36).

(d) Besides evacuating the population, a certain amount appear to have been done towards evacuating the actual industries of Essen; according to one story, part of Irupa were to move to Brunsbuettel (37).

As a further alleviation of the difficulties of those left behind, main shops were said to be arranging for the opening of branches in the suburbs so as to save people the need to walk all the way to the centre of a tramless town (A woman buying 10 RM worth of postage stamps at all once explained that she had had to walk for an hour to reach any post-office which was still open) (38).

There has been considerable evidence of discontent and opposition in Essen and its environs. It is accordingly all the more significant that the local paper (always supposed to represent the interests of the bearing and the industrialists) criticized throughout November a series of items (39) criticizing the central authorities for their failure to give the town effective help and on occasion criticizing the local authorities also for bad organisation. These failures in particular were slowing down considerably the pace at which bomb damage was cleared away. No doubt the expression of criticism in the paper is deliberate and is intended as a safety-valve; its apparent sympathy for the proletariat corresponds to general trends in recent Nazi policy. Yet Essen's combined need to evacuate and inability to do so is likely, if prolonged, to produce a serious crisis and if the local party leaders are going to excuse themselves by putting the blame on the centre and on other parts of the Reich, they will be encouraging a centrifugal tendency of considerable importance for Allied politics.

The town of Gelsenkirchen just east of Essen and across the Gau boundary in Westphalia-North suffered much the same experience. It was heavily raided at the beginning of November, the entire centre
of the town being destroyed (40). Shelter accommodation proved inadequate under the new conditions. Many, both workers and non-workers, evacuated of their own accord and work was seriously interrupted for three weeks and more (41). Perhaps as a result, a serious shortage of coal was reported in this, the largest mining town in Germany, on Nov. 26 (42), while 5 days later a neighbouring paper declared that no improvement in the supply situation was to be expected for several months (43). To assist the evacuation process, special trains were run daily to the eastern end of the Ruhr, and were filled to capacity. In the last week in November, there was talk of 20 extra trains, with baggage accommodation, and non-workers were urged to make use of them. Whether because of transport shortage or because of the difficulties experienced in making people even in the same Gau take in evacuees, the only hint so far given of compulsion here has been a warning to non-workers against waiting until it is adopted (44). As late as Dec. 15, the Gauleiter confirmed that it had not been thought practicable (45).

There is less detailed information about the other towns in the area. A P/I stated, obviously as a rough estimate, that Duisburg and Dusseldorf were both 50% evacuated at the end of Nov. At Duisburg in mid-November many people were living in cellars but supplies of food and water were still adequate, and about 50% of the houses had electricity (46). In Dusseldorf, where communism and opposition of all kinds was widespread, morale is said to be low and damage considerable (even if the 90% mentioned by a P/I is regarded as an exaggeration). The same P/I said no orders for evacuation had been issued (valid for mid-Nov.) In Dortmund early in November, there were serious epidemics, directly attributable to bombing, of diphtheria, scarlet fever and spotted typhus. (The latter began among foreign workers, but spread to German camp employees). The authorities claimed that by vigorous measures, which included the complete closing of the central area and the establishment of numerous canteen stations, they succeeded in getting the situation under control (47). The heavy raid on Essen on Dec 2/3 led to considerable disorganisation, including delays in accommodating the bombed-out, and a heavy strain on the facilities for community feeding. An extra evacuation train was promised at an early date, while motor transport was to be provided from the shelters for women with children (48). Wattenscheid near Gelsenkirchen is another place said to be 80% evacuated.

B. Where do Evacuees go to?

Evidence already quoted from Essen and Gelsenkirchen suggests that in the first resort accommodation is sought within the same Gau. But this is clearly not always the case. Reference has already been made to the accommodation of evacuees from the "front towns" in small Rhineländ villages (49); evacuees from Cologne came to Andernach (50); children from Dortmund were taken to Freiburg (51); children from Aachen went to Augsburg; on the other hand, a number of evacuees from Aachen were dumped close at hand. The women from the Hore area (on the West bank of the Rhine, opposite the Ruhr) seem to have been taken to a variety of destinations, mostly in Gau Magdeburg-Anhalt (52). Evacuees from Nurnberg, near Saarbruecken were taken to the Nuremberg area (59); evacuees from Saarlautern were only taken about 20 miles (53). The Seconace area was packed by the beginning of December, the population of Konstanz having risen from 35,600 to 70,000 and of Heidelberg from 1,700 to 4,000 (38). With the possible exception of Friedrichshaven, the nearest areas likely to be seeking accommodation here would be Stuttgart and Karlsruhe. In mid-November, civilians from Duren, Eschweiler and Cologne were being taken to South Wurtemburg (57). A possible, but by no means certain, deduction is that the centre of the Reich is kept for evacuees from the frontier areas, whereas those evacuated for A.R.P. reasons are in general kept close at hand.
C. General Conditions. The scope of this Section deliberately excludes Military and Volkssturm activities, Party activities and repression, factory conditions and production, resistance and civilian morale.

1. Transport and Travel

Owing chiefly to lack of skilled personnel and locomotives, rail travel is extraordinarily difficult. For journeys over 30 km, police permits or other documents are required which have to be applied for four days in advance (66). Trains, when they arrive, are packed full and cold (66). Besides the check of tickets by the conductor, military personnel examine the papers of soldiers and the Gestapo those of civilian passengers (60). Trains are perpetually being held up while en route, often for hours at a time, and stories of 3-hour journeys taking 36 are frequent. If an air-raid alarm sounds as a train approaches a stopping place, it may run straight through and leave passengers to make their own way back from the next station (61). Stocks of locomotive coal are dangerously low (62), and difficulty is experienced in providing engines to work trains when electric traction fails owing to the overhead wires being damaged by bombing (a result which experience in Italy showed to be considerable). Timetables have been heavily cut; no express trains run on Sundays or Wednesdays. Although most lines in Western Germany are probably kept working by superhuman efforts, it is unlikely that there is now much civilian traffic. Most of the Ruhr, while during the first week in November the goods traffic from the Ruhr was reported to be one-third of the normal, and only a fifth of the traffic despatched arrived safely at its destination (63).

By road, the use of petrol is strictly controlled, though Party officials are widely suspected of using it for private purposes (64). In some areas vehicular transport of all kinds has been registered and has to be available on demand. Entrance into areas close to the battle is forbidden to those without police permits, though workers and men of military age can get through by showing their mobilisation papers (65). Hitch-hiking on military vehicles is popular and is not forbidden, though the State disclaims all responsibility in the event of accidents (66). Many of the bridges over the Rhine are prepared for demolition and some (e.g. at Dusseldorf) are closed to civilians (67).

2. Mail

Bad transport conditions lead to delayed mails. It has been said in the Ruhr that it would be far quicker to carry a letter by hand to a town 50 km away than to send it by post (68), and mail from West of the Rhine to Central Germany appears to take at least 14 days (69). This is certainly not abnormal. Letters to Berlin from a village near Leipzig were said in October never to have arrived at all (70). Postal deliveries have been reduced in number (71) and sometimes are only made in the immediate vicinity of post-offices. In the hope of ensuring speedy delivery, people are sending letters by registered post or substituting telegrams. But the Post Ministry has announced that telegrams cannot be transmitted any faster than letters, and, since appeals against abuse of the registered post have proved inadequate, has restricted its volume to 5% of the level of July 1939 (before delays and the consequent expansion of the civil service all set in) (72). Parcel post has been abolished or restricted over considerable areas in the West. Lack of news leads naturally to rumours. Thus a story spread through Oberhausen after no news of safe arrival had been heard for five days from people who had left on an evacuation train, that it had met with disaster owing to bombing (73). Similar
rumors spread in Stuttgart about casualties caused to children evacuated at Freiburg during the November raid on the latter town (74). Many captured letters reveal what a strain the lack of news puts on both civilian and Wehrmacht morale. Another effect it has is to make it easy for members of the same family to lose one another. The official system by which all interested bodies are informed of evacuees new addresses by the Police has obviously broken down in face of the volume of work involved and it does not even seem possible to compel evacuees to register with the police. There appears to be no remedy except to reaffirm the regulations and appeal to persons concerned both to register and to inform their relatives of their new addresses (75).

3. Food

There is no evidence of real food scarcity. On the other hand there is abundant evidence of fluctuations, temporary delays in supply and the absence of particular foodstuffs (particularly vegetables) in certain urban areas (76). Difficulty has been experienced in honouring the extra ration promised at special times such as Christmas and to raided towns; one such town waited in vain for over 6 weeks (77). In November the authorities issued a clear warning that districts would have to become more self-supporting and could not expect to get things not grown in their own areas (78). Anxiety about the continuance of supplies is also widespread among the public (79). The black market and hoarding exist, but it is hard to tell on what scale. Food distribution in South Baden (an agricultural area) was said at the beginning of December to be "completely disorganised" (60) – whatever that might mean – while in the confusion of the previous autumn farmers on the left bank of the Rhine below Cologne thought that they need no longer deliver their quotas. Otherwise there is no widespread evidence of withholding by producers (81).

4. Fuel

Restrictions in gas and coal supplies have been announced from all over Germany (e.g. Lübeck, Dresden, Innsbruck). The surprising phenomenon of shortage in Gelsenkirchen and the dangerous position on the Reichsbahn have already been mentioned (A.4 and C.1. above). While part of the shortage is due to the interference of air-raids with production, the main cause is undoubtedly lack of transport.

5. Housing

There is a serious shortage, at any rate in the Ruhr and lower Rhineland, of materials like tiles, roofing felt and planking, with which to give first-aid to bombed houses and prevent further deterioration from weather (82). In at least one case the authorities at first encouraged people who found themselves in difficulties for this reason to take what they wanted from houses so wrecked as to have been abandoned; later they found it necessary to insist that this must not be done without the owner's consent (83), but the condition is unlikely to be very scrupulously observed. Lack of skilled labour for repairs is also of course so short as to be practically non-existent (84).

With transport as short as it is, evacuees have of course to leave most of their furniture behind, though attempts to circumvent this have been made and have caused indignation (85). Such attempts are more explicable by an announcement in a bombed town in another area reminding evacuees that they are fully responsible for any damage to the property of flat owners, exceptional wear and tear, loss of household utensils, etc. This was said to apply particularly
to homeless people accommodated in flats whose owners are not present (68). Little imagination is needed to picture the kind of thing which will have made such a reminder necessary.

6. Health

There were widespread reports of a serious influenza epidemic in South-West Germany in November, but they have not been sustained. Diphtheria and scarlet fever on a considerable scale have also been reported from several places, while the spotted typhus epidemic in Dortmund has already been mentioned (A.4). There is an acute shortage of doctors and of medical supplies. The lack of soap cannot contribute to hygiene.

7. Education

It is clear that education must have ceased in most of the larger cities. In some, however, the children have returned from evacuation and, in order to exert some form of control over them, "school parades" have been instituted at which an increasing amount of instruction was given. These parades in turn encouraged other parents to bring their children back. The authorities have contented themselves with deploiring the tendency, without stopping the parades (67).

Schools have, however, continued in smaller places, even in the West. A woman writing in November said that, though the schools at Hanau had shut, elementary schools remained open in the neighbourhood, and two gymnasias at Wies appear to have continued till the beginning of December, though deciding to evacuate them (88).

8. Amusement

Most theatres have, of course, closed since the total mobilization decree. Cinemas remain for those who have the time to go to them, though sometimes the film has failed to put in an appearance owing to transport breakdown. Cinemas are one of the few places at which advertisements are displayed since except for a few official posters, they have disappeared from hoardings. Newspapers are small and few; in any case, many people have given up reading them seriously. Most escapist literature and fiction has been suspended for the duration. This makes the relief likely to be obtained from the wireless all the greater, but where electricity is lacking, that too will not be available.

9. Conclusion

To complete the picture roughly sketched in the preceding paragraphs, it is necessary to remember the long hours of work, the lack of goods of all kinds in shops (except for the bombed out and a few handkerchiefs at Christmas time), the inevitable queues and the inroads on free time involved by Volksturm training. The surprising thing is not that there are stories of oppositional activities sabotage, Communist groups, defacing of posters in daylight, attacks on individual Party members and the like - but rather that they are not more widespread and more ambitious. As likely as not, the chief explanation is that people have neither the time nor the energy to organise such activities.
Note: NZ - National Zeitung. When followed by a place name this indicates a local edition.
NL - Westfälische Landeszeitung
NSZ - National Sozialistische Zeitung
NK - Kölnische Zeitung

(1) Interrogations of civilians. The process may be carried out in several stages, with different cards for each stage. On Oct. 31, the NSZ Westmark announced that special circumstances made it necessary for all the people living in Stadtriss Saarbrücken to re-register. This may well have been a preparation for using this sanction to enforce evacuation.

(2) Captured Documents
(3) Prisoners of War
(4) NE
(5) 3 Ps/IV estimated 400,000; less than 400,000: 250,000
(6) Ps/IV: Captured letters: NZ Nov. 17.
(7) Ps/IV
(8) 2 Ps/IV estimated 40,000 and 20,000, but these figures are incredibly low and probably fail to take into account the people in the suburbs who would not be immediately obvious.

(9) Vlaamsche Post Nov. 8: Morgenlandingen Dec. 15: Ps/IV
(10) NZ Nov. 17: Ps/IV
(11) Frenchman working at Cologne till September
(12) Ps/IV
(13) NE: The figure was for "displaced persons" but such persons are likely in this area to be mostly workers.

(14) Ps/IV
(15) Noteworthy PID Dec. 27.
(16) Ps/IV
(17) Ps/IV interrogated Dec. 6, said force had been needed to make evacuation effective.
(18) Maksenbraunenber Nov. 24.
(19) NSZ Westmark Nov. 24.
(20) one Ps/IV said Hitler was mobbed; according to another, the SS shot a woman demonstrating for peace.
(21) Ps/IV, veil mid-Nov. Only a few bombs had fallen near the town and these had mostly been on fields.
(22) Scandinavian Telegraph Bureau Berlin correspondent Dec. 4.
(23) The Deputy Gauldier threatened to hand rumour-mongers to the Gestapo, an unusually severe measure (NZ Oct. 22): a "P/IV said Goebbels was mobbed at Essen-Verde in October and his car wrecked; a returned French worker talked of the town being guarded by an SS Division.
(24) NZ Nov. 26.
(25) NZ Nov. 3. The same thing occurred at Gelsenkirchen (NZ G. Nov. 27) and Düsseldorf (P/IV)
(26) NZ Nov. 18.
(27) NZ Nov. 17.
(28) Edem
(29) NZ Nov. 22.
(30) NZ Nov. 16: NZ Wessel Nov. 28 shows application to entire Gau.
(31) NZ Nov. 16.
(32) NZ Oberhausen Nov. 21: NZ Nov. 16.
(33) NZ Wessel Nov. 28: NZ Dec. 3.
(34) NZ Oberhausen Nov. 21.
(35) NZ Oberhausen Nov. 29. NZ Dec. 3.
(36) NZ Dec. 12.
(37) NZ Nov. 23: OSS reports. Curious is a report that the Rheinmetall-Borsig works at Düsseldorf are to move to Vohwinkel which is only about 15 km away.
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(36) NZ Dec. 3.
(39) e.g. Nov. 9, 22.
(40) P/I
(41) NZ Gelsenkirchen Nov. 27.
(42) NZ Gelsenkirchen Nov. 28.
(43) NZ Rocklinghausen Dec. 3.
(44) NZ Gelsenkirchen Nov. 27.
(45) NZ Gelsenkirchen Dec. 12.
(46) P/I
(47) WL Nov. 1, 23.
(48) Captured letter
(49) STB Berlin correspondent Dec. 4.
(50) P/I
(51) WL Dec. 6.
(52) FID/OSS Summary October: Civilian interrogations
(53) NZ MfRs Dec. 12.
(54) P/I valid early Dec.
(55) Civilian interrogations
(57) OSS Report T.836
(58) OSS Reports B.567, B.568, B.809.
(59) OSS Reports B.7283.
(60) OSS Reports B.567, 568
(61) OSS Report B.709.
(62) OSS Report B.746.
(63) OSS Report B.746A.
(64) Hannoversche Zeitung Nov. 10, Dec. 14.
(65) NZ Rocklinghausen Dec. 8.
(66) NZ Vessel Dec. 5.
(67) P/I
(68) NZ Duisburg Nov. 24.
(69) NZ MfRs Dec. 12.
(71) NZ Nov. 26
(72) Stuttgartner NS Kurier Dec. 8: DNB Dec. 22: WL Scost Dec. 7. (The remark about telegrams may only be a local emergency condition.
(73) NZ Oberhausen Nov. 21.
(74) WL Dortmude Dec. 5.
(75) DNB Dec. 9: NSZ Westmark Dec. 16.
(76) P/I WL Dortmude Nov. 5.
(77) DNB Dec. 8.
(78) DNB Nov. 15, 19.
(79) See letters quoted in FID/OSS Summary of Dec. 29.
(80) CSS Report
(81) NZ Vessel Oct. and Nov.
(82) NZ MFs Nov. 26, NZ Nov. 22
(83) NZ MfRs Nov. 18.
(84) e.g. NZ Nov. 22.
(85) NSZ Westmark Dec. 18.
(86) WL Scost Dec. 7.
(87) DJZ Dec. 9.
(88) NZ MfRs Dec. 10.