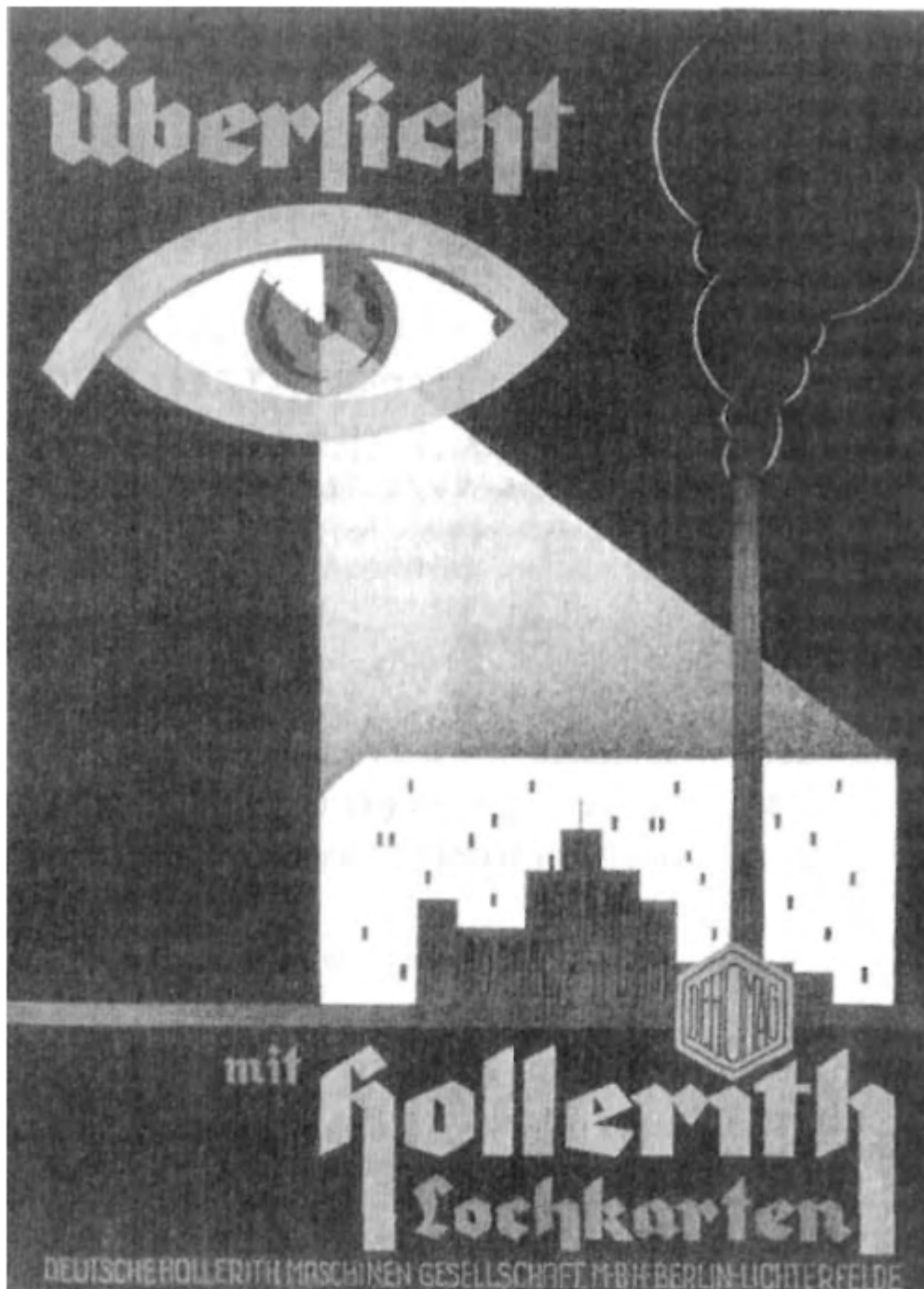




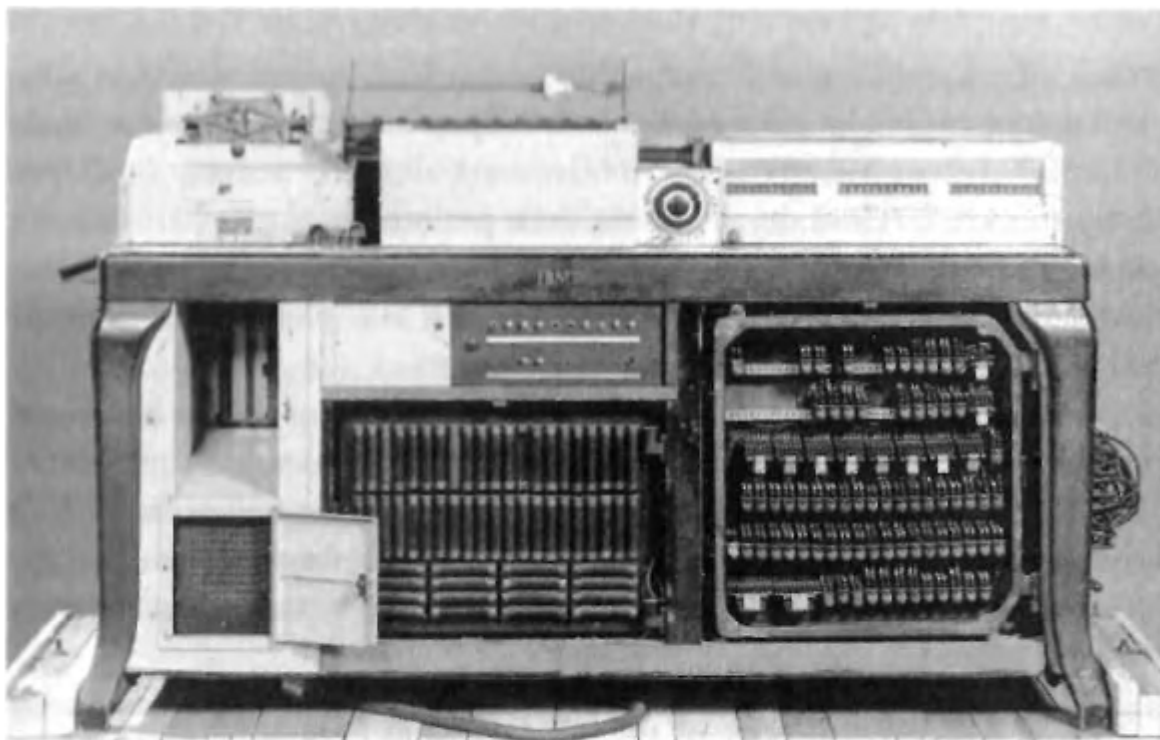
IBM: Computerised crimes against humanity

Description

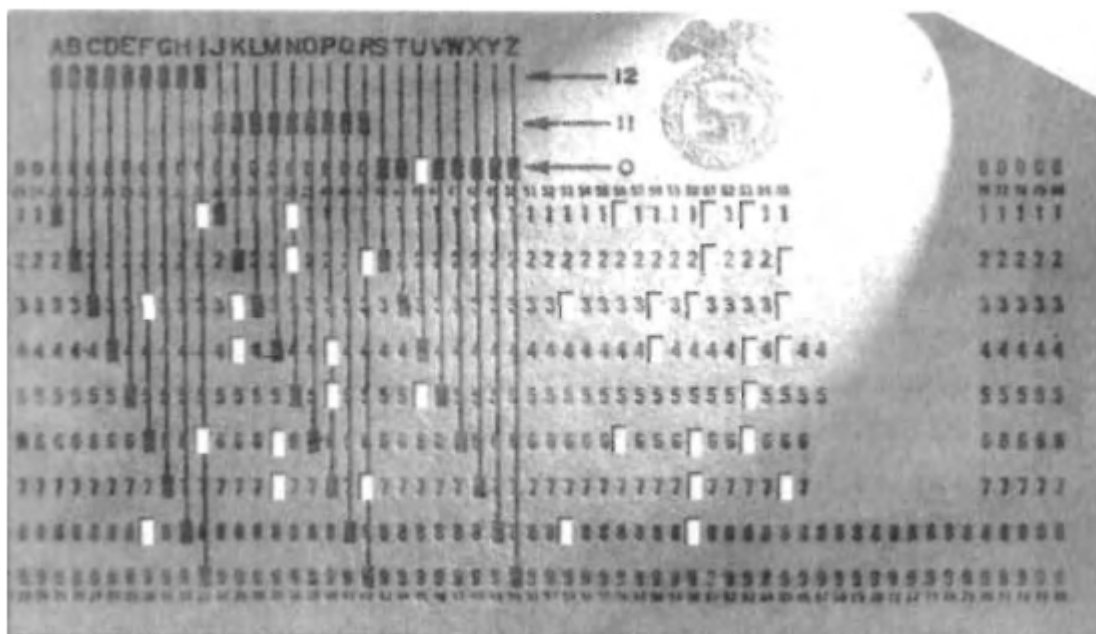


A Dehomag (IBM's German subsidiary) poster, circa 1934. Approximate English translation is, "See everything with Hollerith punchcards."

See also: Edwin Black – IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance Between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation (2002)



A Dehomag Hollerith machine. (Photograph courtesy United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.)





In December 2023, IBM released Quatum System 2



Version 1







JULY 5, 1937

Your Excellency

Adolf Hitler

Berlin

Before leaving Berlin, I wish to express my pride in and deep gratitude for the high honor I received through the order with which you honored me. Valuing fully the spirit of friendship which underlay this honor, I assure you that in the future as in the past, I will endeavor to do all in my power to create more intimate bonds between our two great nations. My wife and my family join in best wishes for you.

Thomas J. Watson

International Business Machines¹



JULY 4, 1938

Mr. Thomas J. Watson

International Business Machines

New York

Dear Sir:

I must offer you my apologies for taking the liberty to write you and to request your kind attention for the following matter. Like many [of] Jewish confession, I am facing a

very terrible moment in life and I am obliged to leave this country and to procure in another land my means of living. I am born on the 17th of June 1906 and was educated in the elementary and high school in the country. During eight years until 1933, I have worked as an operator of the Hollerith punching machine for the Reich Statistical Office in Berlin.

Now I have spoken with Mr. Drines, the manager of the Hollerith company in Berlin about my plans to find work abroad. Mr. Drines has advised me to write to you somehow with my plans and I hope that with your kind help I would be able to find work in a foreign country. No doubt you know the condition of living here and it would be useless to give any further reasons for my immigration.

I would be very grateful to you for your kind assistance and please accept in anticipation my thanks.

Hoping to be favored with your reply, I remain

Sincerely Yours,

Ilse Meyer

Berlin²



NOVEMBER 25, 1938

Your Excellency:

In July 1937, as President of the International Chamber of Commerce, I received by your order the Merit Cross of the German Eagle, which was presented to me by Dr. Schacht on behalf of the German Government, in recognition of my efforts for world peace, and better economic relations between Germany and other nations.

In expressing my thanks to you, I stated that I would cooperate with you in the future as I had in the past in connection with these two important issues. This, I am still most anxious to do; but upon my recent return to my country after an absence of several months I find a change in public sentiment and a loss of good will to your country, and unless something can be done to bring about a more friendly understanding on the part of our people, I feel it is going to be difficult to accomplish mutually satisfactory results in connection with our trade relations.

The change in sentiment referred to has been brought about through the decisions of your Government in dealing with minorities, and I respectfully appeal to you to give consideration to applying the Golden Rule in dealing with these minorities.

I have read with the greatest interest the statement that your Government is prepared to make arrangements with a committee of leading Quakers to assist German Jews in the spirit of charity and the Golden Rule, I venture, therefore, to accept this act as a symbol of willingness on your part to grant more generous treatment to minorities.

If your Excellency would follow up this act of kindness with policies inspired by its humanitarian effort, it would, in my opinion, be the one way by which those interested in the exchange of goods and services and high ideals might find the opportunity to help Germany regain the valuable trade and good-will which she has lost.

Very respectfully yours,

Thomas Watson⁴⁰



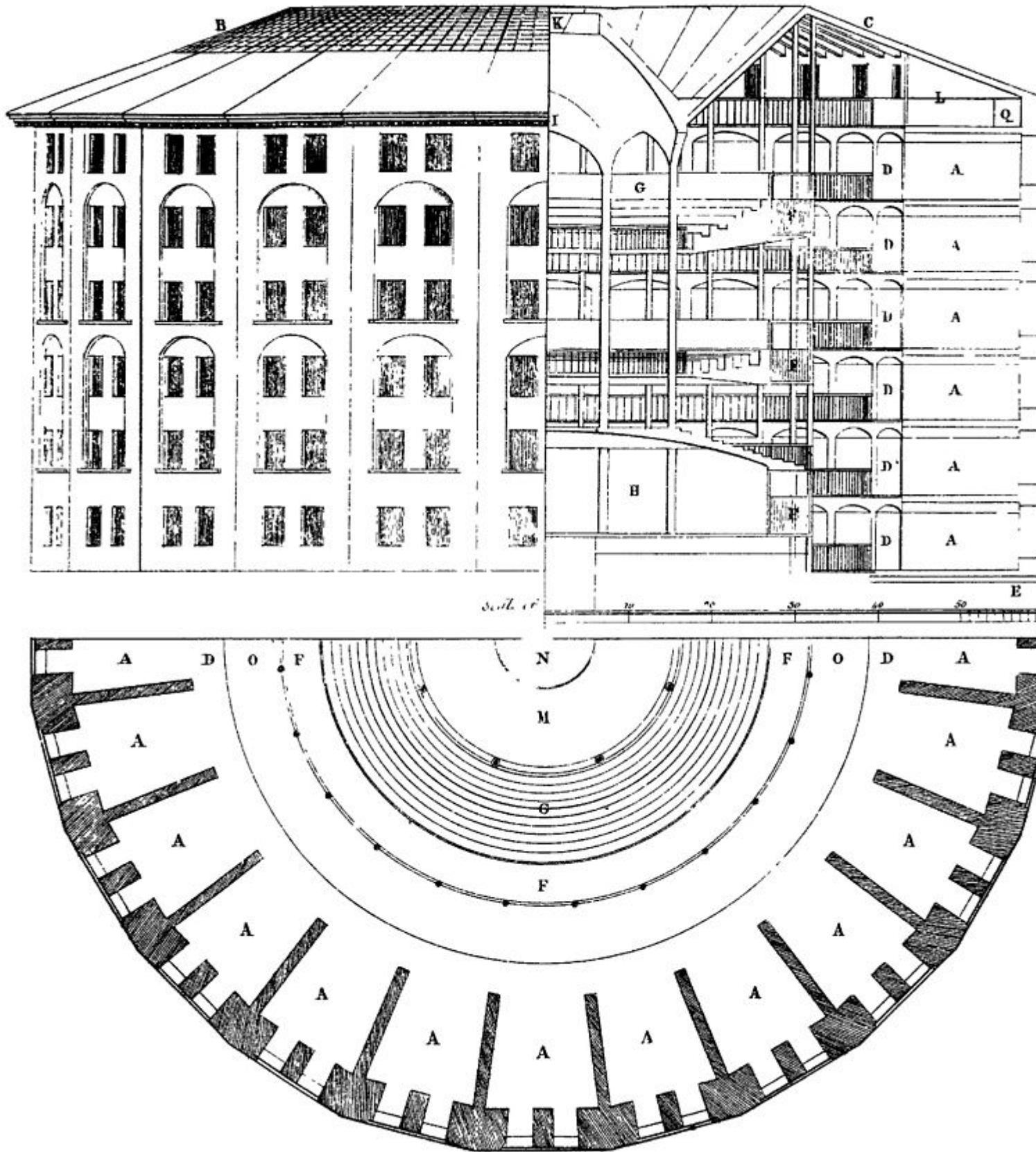
Watson would be able to show his direct and unequivocal protest letter to anyone as evidence of vociferous objection to Hitler's anti-Semitism. Presumably the letter could be exhibited with the same flourish Watson employed in displaying other letters to and from world leaders, some of which he routinely carried in his inside suit pocket. Surely, the November 25, 1938,

letter would put Watson on record as unalterably opposed to Hitler's campaign. But somehow, Watson's explicit letter to Hitler was . . . misaddressed. Watson could always say it had been mailed. But in truth the Post Office returned it—unopened. Watson's secretary tried again four months later.⁴¹

People of conscience throughout the world were outraged at the Hitler regime. Yet Germany was on the verge of expanding its use of Hollerith systems to an unprecedented level. Watson needed to cover himself in the Reich and at home. He would now pursue a strange public posture, essentially speaking from both sides of the punch card. Deftly, he would mix his messages of subtle advocacy for Reich territorial and economic hegemony with patriotic assertions supporting American defense measures, and almost polyanish aphorisms offered to Germany about its brutal anti-Semitism. Watson would always be able to point to out-of-context portions of his remarks to satisfy any audience—be it those listening in the Nazi Reich or the United States. At the same time, all mention of Germany as the linchpin of IBM's overseas operation was conspicuously dropped from IBM press statements.

Benthams Panopticon







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