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THE NORTH MERIDIAN REVIEW

SUMMER 2023 VOLUME 3 ISSUE 2

A JOURNAL OF CULTURE AND SCHOLARSHIP

THE NORTH MERIDIAN REVIEW:
A JOURNAL OF CULTURE AND SCHOLARSHIP

ESTABLISHED 2019

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AUSCHWITZ IN COURT: THE FRANKFURT AUSCHWITZ TRIALS - TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

VALENTINA CONCU AND STEVEN MCCLAIN

The Frankfurt Auschwitz trials, which began in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's birthplace on December 20, 1963, are significantly less well known than the more famous hearings that took place in Nuremberg in November 1945. The main difference between these two trials is that the hearings in Frankfurt were conducted under ordinary statutory law instead of international law. When the trials began, West Germany had to carry out the hard task of grappling "with genocide by means of ordinary criminal law" which, at the time, was mainly designed to deal with lesser crimes committed by individuals or small groups. Despite these limitations, the atrocities that these trials brought to light are second to none. From the gassing of thousands of women, men, and children to the employment of torture devices including the "swing"¹ utilized by Schutzstaffel (SS) officer Wilhelm Boger, or phenol injected directly into the heart of the camp's detainees, these trials provided the first detailed account of the brutal killings carried out behind the gates of the Auschwitz concentration camp.

A total of 359 witnesses testified during the trials; 211 of them were camp survivors.² Only 90 of them were Jewish, since most of the Jewish prisoners did not survive, given that many of

¹ The "swing" was a torture device consisting of a wooden frame and horizontal pole from which prisoners were suspended during interrogations.

² Devin Pendas, *The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, 1963-1965: Genocide, History, and the Limits of the Law*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 102.

them were sent directly to the gas chambers as soon as they arrived at the camp.³ As reported by Rebecca Wittmann, the trials “ended with more than nine-hundred pages of judgment, in which all but three defendants were convicted either of murder (*Mord*) or of aiding and abetting murder (*Behilfe zu Mord*).⁴

The trials were originally audiotaped, and those tapes were supposed to have been destroyed after the court’s sentences were delivered. The recordings were instead given to the central archive of the German state Hesse in Wiesbaden in 1989. In 1993, the state broadcast company of Hesse used these materials for the first time to produce an extensive documentary about the trials, a record still available today in DVD format. More than ten years later, the Fritz Bauer Institute—named after the attorney general in charge of the Auschwitz trials—made 420 hours of the recordings available at the central archive. However, only in 2013, exactly fifty years after the beginning of the Auschwitz trials, were the recordings made available online in audio and PDF format (see www.auschwitz-prozess.de).

Despite a ban on the use of cameras in the courtroom, the Frankfurter trials received extended coverage not only in the West German press but also internationally. As is also observed by Wittmann, however, the Auschwitz trials are often still mistaken as being part of the Nuremberg trials, and as a result are largely ignored by those unfamiliar with the works of Holocaust historians. Moreover, the lack of research in this area is often seen as the result of the aforementioned law system in place in West Germany at the time, which was designed to deal with lesser crimes far removed from the genocide committed behind the Auschwitz gate. As is explained by Wittmann:

³ Pendas, 102.

⁴ Rebecca Wittmann, *Beyond Justice: The Auschwitz Trial* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 6.

Prosecutors had to adhere to rigid interpretations of the murder statute and subjective definitions of perpetrators and accomplices that in the end condemned only those who had gone beyond the acts of murder ordered by Himmler and Hitler. In effect, those who carried out the state-ordered genocide were convicted—if they were convicted at all—only as accomplices to murder⁵.

This missed opportunity to hold the murderers of Auschwitz accountable for the crimes they committed is one of the main reasons why Fritz Bauer defined these trials as a failure, given that they prompted the “wishful fantasy that there were only a few people with responsibility ... and the rest were merely terrorized, violated hangers-on, compelled to do things completely contrary to their true nature.”⁶ However, he continues, “this had nothing to do with historical reality. There were virulent nationalists, imperialists, anti-Semites, and Jew-haters. Without them, Hitler was unthinkable.”⁷ The Jewish German philosopher Hannah Arendt also expressed her disappointment, due to the aggressive behaviors of the defendants “who almost succeeded in turning the trials into a farce.”⁸ A distorted view regarding who should be made to bear responsibility for the genocide that took place in Auschwitz from 1940 until the camp’s liberation by the Red Army in January 1945 unfortunately persists. This distortion has been made worse by the lack of substantial research on the trials to date; two outstanding exceptions are accounts by Wittmann and Devin O. Pendas. Reasons behind this gap in the literature are that trial recordings became accessible online only recently and that the material has only been made available in German. Hence, this project aims to offer access to the recordings of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials by providing an English-language guided translation of select trial tapes. This English translation will make the recordings accessible to a broader scholarly audience, and, in a more general sense,

⁵ Wittman, 7.

⁶ “Did the Frankfurt Trials Fail Auschwitz Victims?,” Aug. 20, 2015, *The Local.de*, <https://www.thelocal.de/20150820/atoning-for-auschwitz-the-frankfurt-trials>.

⁷ “Did the Frankfurt Trials Fail Auschwitz Victims?”

⁸ Hannah Arendt, *Auschwitz: A Report on the Proceedings against Robert Karl Ludwig Mulka and Others before the Court at Frankfurt*. Translated by Jean Steinberg (New York: Praeger, 1966), xi.

to those who hope to gain a better understanding of atrocities committed at Auschwitz through the words of the witnesses, survivors, and judges involved in the trials.

The trials, their defendants, and the charges leveled against them.

The trials began in October 1963, more than a decade after West Germany had begun investigating approximately 30,000 former Nazis, convicting only 155 of murder. Such a staggeringly low number of sentences was due, according to Wittmann, to the fact that the investigations were not systematic and were in large part improvised. Furthermore, the Nuremberg trials gave a false sense of justice for the crimes committed by Nazis, curbing the push to continue investigating countless perpetrators responsible for the murder of millions behind the bars of concentration camps. Finally, older prosecutors were reluctant to investigate Nazi officers, since many of the prosecutors had been also members of the Nazi party. During the trials' opening session on October 7, 1963, the presiding Judge Josef Perseke began by listing charges against the following twenty-three former SS officers:

1. Robert Karl Ludwig Mulka
2. Karl Höcker
3. Friedrich Wilhelm Boger
4. Hans Stark
5. Klaus Hubert Hermann Dylewiski
6. Pery Broad
7. Johann Schobert
8. Bruno Schlange
9. Franz Johann Hoffmann
10. Oswald Kaduk
11. Stefan Baretzki
12. Heinrich Bischoff
13. Johann Arthur Breitwieser
14. Franz Bernhard Lucas
15. Willy Frank
16. Willi Ludwig Schatz
17. Victor Capesius

18. Josef Klehr
19. Herbert Scherpe
20. Hans Nierzwicicki
21. Emil Hantl
22. Gerhard Neubert
23. Emil Bednarek

The defendants Boger, Dylewski, Broad, Hofmann, Kaduk, Baretzki, Bischoff, Capesius, Klehr, Nierzwicki, and Bednarek were accused of murder:

“committed intentionally, crimes perpetrated alone or in cooperation with others, acts driven by murderousness and other insidious, cruel motives which at times made use of dangerous means.”

Opening order of the regional court (p. 4)

The defendants Höcker, Dylewski, Broad, Schoberth, Schlage, Stark, Breitwieser, Lucas, Frank, Schatz, Scherpe, Hantl, and Neubert, conversely, were accused of:

“having knowingly aided, through direct action, in the perpetration of crimes suggested by third parties.”

Opening order of the regional court (p. 4)

The presiding judge then read the charges against each of the defendants. The charges against Robert Mulka and Karl Höcker, for instance, explicitly referred to the gassing of prisoners using the pesticide Zyklon B:

“The defendant played an important role in the implementation of the National Socialist extermination program (setting up, operating, and securing the gassing facilities procuring the Zyklon B required for gassing; organizing, handling, and securing the selection of incoming transports of civilians by the *Wachsturmabteilung*, participation in the selection on the ramp; transporting the persons selected for gassing to the gas chambers with the trucks of the camp motor pool”

Opening order of the regional court (p. 5)

The detailed list of actions perpetrated by the defendants makes clear the extensive research undertaken by prosecutors, who dealt with the difficult task of checking the reliability of

sources used to reconstruct the crimes committed by the defendants. Thanks to their meticulous research, the prosecutors could present charges to the court with highly detailed descriptions of the crimes committed by the defendants and by other SS officers who helped. The prosecutors' detailed descriptions also included additional information regarding the time(s) when and place(s) where the atrocities were perpetrated. The charges against Hans Stark, for instance, indicated the exact number of the prisoners killed by him at the so-called *Schwarze Wand* (black wall):

In the period from the end of 1940 to December 1941 and from March 1942 to November 1942, as *SS-Unterscharführer*, later as *SS-Oberscharführer* and as head of the admissions department of the Political Department, the defendant Stark participated:

1. in an unspecified number of cases, in the shooting of prisoners in a room specially provided for this purpose in the so-called Small Crematorium. In May/June 1942, together with the then *Rapportführer* Palitzsch, he participated in the shooting of two groups of 20 prisoners each; among them were several women, and children between the ages of 5 and 12;
2. in an unspecified number of cases in the unlawful shooting of prisoners, in particular Soviet prisoners of war, at the so-called black wall between Blocks 10 and 11. More specifically:
 - a) in the fall of 1941, together with other SS members, shot approximately 20 to 30 Soviet commissars at the "black wall" between Blocks 10 and 11, in turn, personally killing five or six;
 - b) in the spring of 1942, shot a prisoner at the "black wall," after he had initially shot another prisoner together with *Rapportführer* Palitzsch due to confusion resulting from identical names.
3. in the fall of 1941, in the Small Crematorium, the defendant Stark, together with an SS paramedic, sprayed the poison gas through an opening provided for this purpose in the gassing room, as a result, approximately 200 to 250 Jewish men, women and children were killed;
4. from the summer of 1942 on, in an unspecified number of cases, carried out selections on the Birkenau ramp, and then transported the prisoners from the selection site to the gas chamber. In some cases, he forced many of them into the gas chamber.

Opening order of the regional court (p. 8)

Some of the charges include the names of other notorious SS collaborators that, at the time of the trials, were still at-large in different parts of the world. Such is the case for charges against Dr. Victor Capesius, who worked as an assistant of Dr. Josef Mengele. Mengele worked as chief

physician in the gypsy camp and is known to have used Auschwitz prisoners, including twins and children, for human experimentation. The charges against Capesius state explicitly that he aided Mengele in the selection of prisoners to be used during experimentation and in the experiments themselves:

In the period from the end of 1943 until Christmas 1944 as *SS-Hauptsturmführer* and from November 9, 1944, as *SS-Sturmbannführer* and head of the SS pharmacy of the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, the defendant Dr. Capesius

1. in the spring and summer of 1944, participated in the selection of an undetermined number of Jewish prisoners after their arrival at the ramp in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Consequently, these prisoners were sent to the gas chambers for gassing in an unspecified number of cases. He carried out or supervised the use of Zyklon B by the *Sanitätsdienstgrad*. In particular, in April 1944, the accused, together with the camp physicians Dr. Mengele and Dr. Klein, participated in the selection. On May 5, 1944, he independently selected prisoners from a train from Romania. On May 25, 1944, together with the camp physician Dr. Mengele, selected prisoners from a train from Romania. On June 11, 1944, independently selected prisoners from a train from Hungary. In August 1944, participated in the selection of prisoners from Romania, a group comprised of approximately 1,000 people;
2. In at least 5 cases participated in the selections in the Birkenau camp, whereby in each case numerous prisoners were gassed and killed. During a selection in the Birkenau women's camp, the accused searched for women who were hiding and found one who was then also gassed. On two different days in the summer of 1944, he assisted Dr. Mengele in the selection, translating Dr. Mengele's request that sick women had to report to him in Hungarian. The women who responded were then gassed. In August 1944, together with the camp physician Dr. Mengele and two other SS leaders, forcibly returned two Hungarian Jewish boys to the camp. The boys, who were housed in the children's barrack, had attempted escape. Four days later, all the children from this barrack, about 1200, were transported to the gas chambers and killed. On October 13, 1944, together with Dr. Mengele, he supervised female prisoners marching to the gas chambers. On July 31, 1944, together with Dr. Mengele and other SS officers, ordered and supervised the liquidation of the gypsy camp;
3. conducted experiments with narcotic drugs on prisoners, mixing Evipan and morphine with coffee and increasing the dose in each case, so that at least two prisoners died after drinking the solution;
4. requested the killing of prisoners by phenol injection, supervising the medical personnel who carried out the lethal injections.

Opening order of the regional court (p. 15)

Carpesius was not the only doctor who was accused of having supervised the use of Zyklon B to kill prisoners in the gas chambers. Three other doctors—Dr. Franz Bernhard Lucas, Dr. Willy Frank, and Dr. Willi Ludwig Schatz—had similar charges. While the first was a general physician, the last two were dentists who worked in the *Zahnstation* (dental station) in Birkenau. These three doctors were said to have:

in an undetermined number of cases, after the arrival of Jewish prisoner transports at the ramp in Auschwitz-Birkenau, participated in or supervised the selections, whereby an unspecified number of prisoners were subsequently transported to the gas chambers. There, [they] supervised the use of Zyklon B by the medical staff.

Opening order of the regional court (p. 15)

Additionally, Capesius was not the only doctor who was accused of having ordered the execution of prisoners through the injections of phenol into their hearts. Three other SS officers were accused of using lethal injections at Auschwitz: Josef Klehr, Hans Nierzwicicki, and Emil Hantl. The charges against Klehr, in particular, showed how often this SS officer used phenol during his time at Auschwitz:

From 1941 to 1944, [the defendant] as SS-Oberscharführer, Sanitätsdienstgrad, and head of the so-called gassing squad:

1. in an unspecified number of cases, helped the selections at the Birkenau ramp and in the inmate infirmary, or he independently carried out selections in the inmate infirmary, whereby numerous prisoners were selected for gassing and killed. In particular, the accused:
 - a) on April 20, 1942, sent approximately 300 inmates who were staying in the so-called *Schonungsstube* in Block 20 to the gas chambers;
 - b) on August 29, 1942, together with the SS camp physician Dr. Entress and the accused Scherpe, selected and sent approximately 700 sick prisoners from block 20 to the gas chambers, supervising their loading onto trucks;
 - c) in January 1943, he selected about 40 to 50 prisoners for gassing on the ramp from an incoming transport of prisoners,
 - d) in the spring of 1943, sorted out the index cards of sick prisoners from the infection block of the prisoner infirmary in the main camp, thereby designating the

prisoners for gassing; at the same time, he also selected prisoners who appeared ill in the corridor for gassing;

e) in May 1943, selected approximately 70 prisoners from the prisoners' infirmary of the main camp. In the fall of 1944, he sent several prisoners wounded in a bombing raid to the gas chambers.

f) at a point in time which can no longer be determined, he selected several sick prisoners for gassing in Block 21 of the prisoners' infirmary of the main camp. Among them was the prisoner Szende, who suffered from frostbite.

2. in an unspecified number of cases—often several times a week—assisted in selections carried out by SS doctors, whereby numerous prisoners were selected to be killed by phenol injections into the heart muscle. In an undetermined number of cases, he assisted in the killing of selected prisoners by means of phenol injections into the heart carried by other prisoners who were forced to do so. He also performed the lethal injections himself.

In particular, the accused:

a) in the summer of 1942, after a dispute in the women's camp, administered a heart injection to a woman, who died immediately;

b) in the years 1942 and 1943, he killed numerous prisoners who had undergone experiments by phenol injections;

c) in the summer of 1942, killed a Soviet political commissar by phenol injection;

d) In September 1942, he killed the prisoners Teofil Cyron, Dr. Phil. Weiner, and Siegmund Stobiecki (student), who were to be shot but were not fit for transport, by phenol injections;

e) on Christmas Eve 1942, he killed about 200 prisoners in the prisoners' infirmary by phenol injections;

f) in late 1942 or early 1943, he killed 20 prisoners by phenol injection;

g) in Block 20, he killed several young prisoners using phenol injections;

h) in the summer of 1942, he killed a group of 15 Jewish prisoners—persons employed in the Jawischowitz subcamp who had arrived at the main camp for outpatient treatment—by phenol injections;

(i) in the summer of 1942 or 1943, he killed two female prisoners, including Terlikowska, a Polish woman from Warsaw, by phenol injections;

(k) in 1942 or 1943, he killed Dr. Samson, a prisoner, in the morgue of Block 28, with a phenol injection, after having previously tortured him by calisthenics (so-called *Sportmachen*); in an unspecified number of cases, as head of the gassing squad, carried out the mass gassing of prisoners.

3. In an unspecified number of cases, as head of the gassing squad, carried out the mass gassing of prisoners. In particular, in the fall of 1942, the accused carried out the gassing of an unspecified number of prisoners in the Small Crematorium, and in the spring of 1943 the gassing of approximately 200 prisoners also in the Small Crematorium (gassing of a special commando);
4. in the second half of 1942, several prisoner nurses working in the attic of a block of the inmate infirmary in the main camp were tortured by so-called exercise for such an extended period of time that inmate Rudek died of heart failure;

5. In May or June 1944, he pushed an elderly Jewish woman and her daughter into an incinerator because they did not want to separate after a selection for one of the incineration sites dug into the ground near the Birkenau crematorium.

Opening order of the regional court (pp. 15-16)

At the end of the trials, the only defendants that were sentenced to life in prison were Wilhelm Boger, Franz Hoffmann, Oswald Kaduk, Josef Klehr, and Emil Bednarek. The other defendants were given prison sentences of five years, on average. Johann Schobert, Arthur Breitweiser, and Willi Schatz were acquitted. These sentences provoked a wide range of public reactions, from blatant disappointment to great enthusiasm. Some saw these trials as a way for Germany to confront and overcome its past. The press focused on the atrocities committed by defendants such as Kaduk, Baretzki, and Bednarek. Others complained that the duty of the court was not to deal with the past and that the defendants needed to be tried separately.

In the sections below, we will first offer a brief description of the three translations presented in this volume: the testimony of the Jewish-Austrian doctor Otto Wolken, the testimony of Boger's formal Jewish secretary, Maryla Rosenthal, and the closing remarks of the defendants before the verdict. These descriptions are meant to facilitate access to essential historical accounts of the trials. Since both Otto Wolken and Maryla Rosenthal were asked about crimes committed by specific defendants (i.e., regarding Stefan Baretzki in the case of Otto Wolken, and Wilhelm Boger in the case of Maryla Rosenthal), the descriptions are accompanied by translations of the charges against these defendants similar to those presented above. These translations will aid in a more complete understanding of the hearings in which Otto Wolken and Maryla Rosenthal participated, given that both witnesses were asked to describe to the best of their ability what they saw while imprisoned at Auschwitz.

The Translations

The first translation we present is by Otto Wolken. Wolken was sent to Auschwitz in 1943 because of his participation in an underground, anti-Nazi-regime resistance movement in Vienna. His prisoner number was 128,828, and after being initially held in Auschwitz I, was transferred to Auschwitz Birkenau. He stayed at Auschwitz until the Soviet Army liberated the camp on January 27, 1945. Selected for death in the gas chamber, Wolken was saved by another Austrian prisoner who recognized his Austrian accent and decided to help him. Wolken's skills as a doctor increased his chances for survival in the camp. He worked in the Birkenau infirmary and, because of his position there, his testimony contains extensive details about the sanitary conditions of the camp, how sick prisoners were treated, and how the SS-doctors sent prisoners to the gas chamber. His lengthy testimony covers many other aspects of life in the concentration camp: morning roll calls, the unjust distribution of food, the mistreatment and torture of prisoners by SS-guards, the "sport activities" that were forced onto the prisoners, the "rabbit hunts," and the frequency of the prisoner suicide carried out on the electrified fences surrounding the camps. Wolken's recollection of the events he witnessed will provide readers with a unique perspective on everyday life behind Auschwitz's gates. His testimony is invaluable given that Wolken recorded events within the camp as they occurred. As a result, Wolken was, during the trials, prepared to testify for two hours regarding the events he witnessed at Auschwitz before being interrogated by prosecutors.

During his testimony, the attorney general asked specific questions about the defendants Stefan Baretzki, Klaus Hubert, Hermann Dylewski, Pery Broad, Johann Schobert, Josef Klehr, and Victor Capesious. Although Wolken did testify on numerous crimes perpetrated by SS

officers—including the mass murder of prisoners from a Lember transport on April 10, 1943—
Wolken was most familiar with the defendant Bareski, who was accused of having committed the
following crimes:

In the years 1942 to 1945, the defendant Stefan Bareski, in his role as *SS-Sturmmann* or *SS-Rottenführer* and *Blockführer* in the Birkenau camp,

1. participated in an unspecified number of selections on the Birkenau ramp and in the Birkenau camp, events during which numerous prisoners were sorted out for gassing and subsequently gassed to death. He assisted with the loading of prisoners to be sent to the gas chambers onto trucks and accompanied the transports to the crematoria.
2. in an undetermined number of cases, killed prisoners with his bare hands, which he described to other SS members as a “special hit;
3. removed or pushed away the chair or box on which prisoners were standing with a noose around their neck during the execution of prisoners carried out by hanging in numerous cases.
4. pushed prisoners against the electrified wire of the camp fence in order to prevent their attempted escape with inmates from the Birkenau women’s camp, Section C at the beginning of 1943. Two prisoners died as a result.
5. on October 4, 1943, participated in cooperation other SS members in a so-called hare hunt—i.e., event during which they pushed prisoners against the charged electric wire of the camp fence. 11 prisoners from a Polish transport from Lemberg were shot;
6. on April 19, 1944, beat prisoner Michael Liczka (prisoner number 85140) to death with a stick;
7. in the summer of 1944, killed a prisoner in the corridor of a camp barrack;
8. in 1944, at the arrival of a prisoner transport from Lodz, shot a woman who was already a prisoner in the Auschwitz camp after recognizing her.
9. in March 1944, participated in the liquidation of the family camp (Terezín Camp) in Birkenau, event during which approximately 4,000 camp inmates were gassed;
10. in the fall of 1944, after a prisoner uprising in a crematorium with other guards, shot at prisoners from a bicycle, killing several of them;
11. in 1944, shot a Jewish prisoner in the Birkenau camp with a pistol arbitrarily, and without cause.

Opening order of the regional court (p. 12)

Wolken, who personally knew the defendant, witnessed many of Baretzki’s crimes, including the indiscriminate beating and shooting of prisoners, and the pushing of prisoners against the camp’s electrified fences. The detailed depictions of crimes committed by the defendant in Wolken’s testimony irritated the defense attorneys, who accused him of being influenced by the testimony

of another Auschwitz survivor, the well-known Austrian historian Hermann Langbein. Otto Wolken's lengthy testimony is presented in this volume for the first time in English. Accompanying footnotes will help readers navigate the complexity of the Auschwitz genocide.

The second translation we present is the testimony of Maryla Rosenthal, the secretary to the defendant Friedrich Wilhelm Boger, known as "the devil of Auschwitz" for his brutal treatment of prisoners and for his employment of torture devices during interrogations he carried out in the camp. Wilhem Boger was arrested after a letter was sent to the Stuttgart prosecution office in which Boger, who at the time was living in his neighborhood, was accused of crimes including murder at Auschwitz. Afterward, another letter with similar accusations against Boger was sent by Hermann Langbein, who, like Otto Wolken, had also participated in the communist resistance movement against the Nazi regime until his arrest in 1942. Thanks to these letters, Boger was apprehended in early October 1958. The list of charges against Boger—perhaps the longest of any of the twenty-three officers at the Frankfurt trials—includes the following:

The defendant Boger, from 1942 to 1945, as SS-*Oberscharführer* and investigating officer of the Political Section

1. participated in numerous selections in which an undetermined number of prisoners were selected for gassing. The defendant was also involved in numerous selections on the Birkenau ramp and in one selection in the Gypsy camp;
2. In an unspecified number of cases, he regularly cooperated with other SS members of the political unit, carrying out selections of prisoners from the detention block who were to be shot;
3. In an unspecified number of cases, he assisted in mass shootings of prisoners at the "black wall" between Blocks 10 and 11. More specifically:
 - a) in February or early March 1943, with a small caliber rifle he shot about 50 to 60 Polish prisoners at the "black wall."
 - b) About 14 days after the incident described in (a) he shot 40 Polish prisoners in the same way.
 - c) At the beginning of April, he shot about 100 prisoners, mainly of Polish nationality, in the same way.
 - d) in April 1943, he actively participated in the shooting of about 40 Soviet commissars, among whom there were also three women, at Block 11.

- e) in September 1943, he shot prisoner Kalinowski at the “black wall” between Blocks 10 and 11.
 - f) he killed two Soviet officers in Block 11 by shooting them in the neck.
 - g) in the summer of 1943, together with *SS-Oberscharführer* Palitzsch, Boger, next to the crematorium, shot 94 men and 8 women who had been sentenced to death by a mock trial by the *Standgericht*, on the “black wall.”
4. In an unspecified number of cases, he mistreated prisoners so severely during interrogations that they died as a consequence immediately afterwards. The accused used a special device in order to extract confessions from the prisoners, who had their hands tied above their knees while being hung over a bar that was suspended in a rack. The prisoners referred to this device as the “Boger swing.” Specifically:
 - a) in February 1943, he tortured a prisoner named Slecarow so severely that he died the following day as a result.
 - b) in February 1943, during an interrogation, he tortured the prisoner Janicki, who was tied up and hung over a pole. He beat him so severely that Janicki died the next day.
 - c) following the interrogation described in (b), tortured the prisoner Wroblewski on the “swing” and shot him in the bunker, after Boger found an old, rusty revolver in Wroblewski’s possession.
 - d) in 1943, tortured a Polish prisoner to death.
 - e) in the summer of 1943, after the fire in the German weapons station, tortured a young Polish prisoner in a room and beat him so severely that the prisoner died immediately afterwards.
 - (f) in 1943, he tortured a Polish prisoner—a person suspected of having stolen meat—to such an extent that the prisoner died the same evening at the police station.
 - g) in 1943, he killed the Polish prisoner Jan Lupa through torture during interrogation.
 - h) on September 15, 1943, he tortured the Jewish prisoner Walter Windmüller during interrogation and caused him such severe injuries to his testicles and kidneys that he died on September 21, 1943.
 - i) he imprisoned the prisoner Wienhold and two others in the bunker of Block 11 for attempting to escape. He tortured them during their subsequent interrogation. Two of the prisoners died because of the injuries they had suffered.
 5. he ordered executions by gunshot for members of a Polish resistance group; among those shot there were: Colonel-Pilot Gilewicz; Colonel-Pilot Dziama; Colonel Stamirowski; Count Maurycy Potocki; Major Boncza; Major Kurczewski; Lieutenant Lisowski; Lieutenant Szumielewicz; Sergeant Karp; and Lawyer Wozniakowski;
 6. In defiance of the refusal of the camp doctor, shot a prisoner from Block 21 following the prisoner’s recovery from an operation;
 7. he killed 22-year-old Slovak prisoner secretary Lily Toffler in the washroom on the first floor of detention block 11, Toffler was shot twice by Boger using a pistol;
 8. during transport from Camp B (Terezín camp), journalist Novotny was shot dead when she resisted being loaded onto a truck taking prisoners to the gas chambers;
 9. shot a prisoner from Warsaw at Block 10;

10. hanged a Soviet prisoner on gallows set up next to the camp kitchen;
11. in October 1942, in the prisoners' kitchen, forced the head of a Polish clergyman, approximately 60 years of age, under water until he drowned;
12. in the spring of 1943, a Polish couple with their three children between 3 and 10 years of age, were led into Block 11, where he shot first the children and then the parents from a distance of about 3 meters with a pistol;
13. on May 9, 1943, while drunk, shot a Polish prisoner in the head with a revolver during interrogation. The prisoner died from the gunshot wound.
14. in June 1943, in infirmary Block 28, killed Polish General Dlugiszewski, an emaciated prisoner suffering from psoriasis;
15. in the summer of 1943, carried out the hanging of 4 Soviet prisoners of war who were sentenced to death for alleged illegal political activity; one of these prisoners was a Soviet cultural adviser;
16. in late 1943 or early 1944, show a young Polish prisoner who had been ordered by another member of the SS member to fetch water in a boiling vessel at the watering place;
17. in the spring of 1944, executed a transport of Jewish prisoners from Hungary by beating them with a bullwhip, forcing them toward the crematorium where he participated in their gassing;
18. in 1944, participated in execution by hanging of two Polish girls;
19. in the spring or summer of 1944, hanged the block elder of Block 28 in the d camp of Birkenau;
20. Around the middle of 1944, 46 prisoners from the "Union" command, who were no longer able to work due to physical exhaustion, were shot with a pistol in Block 11;
21. in August 1944, in front of the camp kitchen, hanged four Soviet prisoners of war, who had escaped from the camp and been recaptured;
22. in the fall of 1943 or 1944, after the suppression of an uprising of prisoners from a special prisoner detachment in the crematorium —approximately 100 persons who had resisted transport to the gas chamber— he ordered the prisoners to lie on the ground. In cooperation with the SS-*Oberscharführer* Hous and SS-*Oberscharführer* Houstek Erber, Boger shot the prisoners to death;
23. on December 30, 1944, participated in the hanging of prisoners Bernard Swierczyna, Ludwig Vesely, Ernst Burger, Rudi Friemel, and Piotr Piaty;
24. in the summer of 1944, participated in the extermination of the Gypsy camp, the inmates of the camp were forcibly driven into the gas chambers.

Opening order of the regional court (pp. 5-7)

The witness Maryla Rosenthal was asked about many of the charges against Wilhelm Boger. Her testimony provides a unique picture of Boger's crimes. She was also asked about the case of the prisoner Lilly Tofler, who was shot by Boger after being found in possession of a love letter Tofler had written to another prisoner. In this volume, Rosenthal's testimony will be

published in English for the first time. Footnotes accompanying the testimony will help readers navigate data related to the Auschwitz genocide.

Finally, our English translation includes the closing remarks of all defendants, statements delivered at the end of the hearings before the verdict of the court was received. While some of the defendants' statements asked the court for a fair judgment, others openly challenged the trustworthiness of some of the witnesses' testimonies, while complaining about the fairness of the trials.

Fritz Bauer

Before allowing readers to begin their journey into the trials' testimonies, it is, however, important to draw attention to one of the hearings' protagonists, Attorney General Fritz Bauer, a figure without whom the trials may not have taken place.

Bauer was born in 1903 in Stuttgart to a German Jewish family. After receiving a doctorate in law, he worked as a magistrate. In 1933, he was captured by National Socialists and imprisoned in a Heuberg, concentration camp in southwest Germany. After spending more than ten years in Copenhagen and Stockholm, he returned to Germany in 1949 to participate actively in the prosecution and punishment of Nazi war criminals.⁹ Bauer is also remembered for his vital role in capture of Adolf Eichmann in Argentina. Bauer's plan to see Eichmann tried in a German court never materialized.

Accompanying Bauer's desire to capture and try the SS men who participated in the murder of millions at Auschwitz was his wish to uncover crimes behind the creation of the Auschwitz

⁹ Ronen Steinke, *Fritz Bauer: The Jewish Prosecutor Who Brought Eichmann and Auschwitz to Trial*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 2020, 14-15.

death machine. To do so, he repeatedly invited writers and poets to the trials and tasked them with writing about the atrocities in a variety of forms. Bauer believed that the trials alone could not succeed in unraveling the workings of Nazi genocide. According to Bauer, it was necessary to allow authors to write in their own way about the trials because only a more complete understanding of the genocide itself would serve to inform and teach the public about the events,¹⁰ and, as such, prevent the crimes of Auschwitz from being repeated.¹¹ According to Bauer:

There would have to be a division of labor . . . between the Auschwitz judge and the Auschwitz poet. The Auschwitz judge chastises, the Auschwitz poet should educate. This division of labor is necessary, and I tell you as a jurist, we jurists in Frankfurt have cried out in horror, cried out with all our soul, for the poet who expresses what the trial is not capable of expressing.¹²

The attorney general's words reflect his belief regarding the role of poets and writers in narrating the events of the trials. Only authors will succeed, Bauer contends, in opening the eyes of the German people to allow them to confront the past.

One of the scholars who answered Bauer's call was Peter Weiss, a German Swedish writer, painter, and experimental director of international fame thanks to the success of his play *Marat/Sade* in 1964.¹³ Weiss also strongly criticized the Auschwitz trials since he believed it was impossible to use ordinary laws to punish crimes like the ones committed by the defendants.

The result of Weiss's participation in the trials as a spectator is his theater play *Die Ermittlung: Oratorium in 11 Gesängen* (The investigation: oratorio in 11 cantos). In this work,

¹⁰ Fritz Bauer, *Die Kriegsverbrecher vor Gericht* (Zürich: Europa Verlag 1945), 155.

¹¹ Christoph Weiß, "Auschwitz auf dem Theater? Ein Podiumsgespräch im Württembergischen Staatstheater Stuttgart am 24. Oktober 1965 aus Anlaß der Erstaufführung der Ermittlung," in *Deutsche Nachkriegsliteratur und der Holocaust*, ed. Stephan Braese et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1998), 74.

¹² Kerstin Steitz, "Juristische und Epische Verfremdung. Fritz Bauers Kritik am Frankfurter Auschwitz-Prozess (1963-1965) und Peter Weiss' Dramatische Prozessbearbeitung *Die Ermittlung. Oratorium in 11 Gesängen* (1965)," *German Studies Review* 40.1 (2017): 79.

¹³ Steitz, "Juristische und Epische Verfremdung," 89.

Weiss reconstructs the journey of several prisoners arriving at Auschwitz, from the moment of their selection at the ramp until their death through phenol injection, gassing in the gas chambers, or by gunshot at the “black wall.” In some cases, Weiss reported the dialogues almost verbatim from witness and defendant testimony, combining official documentation and literary narrative in the production of a unique stage play.

While employing trial recordings as source material, Weiss’s play makes use of structures reminiscent of Dante’s “The Divine Comedy.” For example, the Florentine author also divides his comedy into cantos. Notes at the beginning of Weiss’s play illuminate the author’s principal goal: in his play, only facts are presented; as such, only specific characters (that is, the defendants Borger, Kaduk, Stark, and Klehr) are mentioned by name while the remaining characters (witnesses, judges, prosecutors, and defendants) remain anonymous. Weiss’s method reflects camp practices, given that the prisoners were stripped of their identities and made mere numbers. The anonymity of Weiss’s characters can also be linked to effects of alienation, as it renders identification with any character difficult while steering readers’ or viewers’ attention to the facts and defendants.

One of the testimonies used by Weiss in *Die Ermittlung: Oratorium in 11 Gesängen* is included here among the English translations presented in this issue of the *North Meridian Review*: the testimony of Maryla Rosenthal. Rosenthal appeared as a witness at the Frankfurt trials on March 13, 1964. Weiss used the 52-minute audio recording of Rosenthal’s testimony as source material for Witness 5 in his third canto, a section including Boger’s swing, and in his fifth canto, which details the murder of Lili Tofler. In many of Weiss’s passages, we find direct references to the same trial transcripts here published in English for the first time. Examples include statements regarding Boger’s ostensibly humane behaviors during his interactions with Rosenthal—that is,

Boger's efforts to save Rosenthal from punishment and execution, events detailed separately in the trial recording of Rosenthal's testimony. Weiss, however, includes Rosenthal's statements at the same point:

Maryla Rosenthal: Mr. Boger was very humane and very decent to me. For example, he would bring back his cookware from the canteen, take away just one spoon, and then he would say to me, "Maryla, please go and clean the cookware." That meant, of course, that I could eat what remained. Officially I wasn't allowed to eat it. I then called my two friends in, and we went to the toilet. We locked the door and ate. Mr. Boger also brought me a warm jacket and shoes from Birkenau. So, he was very kind to me as a coworker. He said a few times: 'I have nothing against Jews. I hate the Polacks, the damn Polacks.' That was his way of saying it. Of course, when Mr. Boger went to the men's camp, everybody knew that a massacre would take place there. I didn't see it because I was always in the office. But word got around.

Maryla Rosenthal: As soon as Mr. Boger came back. He visited Mr. Westphal, and he probably heard about my situation. Both Mr. Boger and Mr. Westphal then did everything in their power to convince the Lagerälteste Drechsler not to let me go to the penal unit. I can say that they saved my life, and they put me in the political unit in the Gypsy camp.

In Weiss's play, the words from Witness 5 are a summary of Maryla's statement:

Witness 5: Boger always treated me humanely. He often gave me his cooking utensils with the rest of his food. Once he saved my life when I was to be transferred to the punishment company.

The witness's testimony also refers to Boger's torture device, the swing or speaking machine.

Regarding Boger's swing:

Maryla Rosenthal: One day, Mr. Boger appeared in the office and took me out of there. He was looking for a writer and an interpreter. So, I started working for him and wrote down and translated all the interrogations – these were always political prisoners, including people who had tried to escape and similar important things. The prisoners were, of course, very shy, and some didn't want to speak at all. Herr Boger didn't hold back from slapping their faces, he also kicked them with his boots. Then he came up very close to them, right in their face, almost piercing them with his eyes. And if a prisoner absolutely didn't want to speak, he would say: "You're going to the 'talking machine' now."

Witness 5: In the end he came even closer to him and said: I have a machine that will make you speak.

In some passages, the statements or the witness are reported almost unchanged:

Maryla Rosenthal: Yes, and [the crying] happened more than once. But Mr. Boger told me “You have to shut down your feelings here.”

Witness 5: Once Boger saw that I was crying. He said: here you have to shut out your personal feelings.

The section of Rosenthal’s testimony in which she talks about what happened to the murder of inmate Lili Toffler is used by Weiss in a separate canto. However, some of the canto’s details do not align exactly with Rosenthal’s testimony, suggesting that Weiss used another source in crafting his description of the torture and subsequent murder of Tofler.

The fact that Weiss had access to different documents can be also seen in the canto, which details Nazi employment of phenol. For the canto, it is likely that Weiss made use of testimony from Polish prisoner Ján Weis, recorded on November 6 and 12, 1964. The recording of Ján Weis’s testimony is more than three hours long and contains specific information regarding the use of lethal phenol injections into the hearts of prisoners. This testimony also contains details about the role of Klehr, defendant who carried out most of the phenol murders. References to the phenol procedure, to Klehr, and to the murder of more than one-hundred children through phenol injection are taken from the Weis testimony and used in the third part of Weiss’s canto. Separate sections of the same canto are, however, lifted from other testimonies. Weiss combined various documents to compose his cantos, showing how historical records—witnesses’ testimony—and fiction itself can be used in conjunction during confrontation with historical atrocity.

Because of the importance of Weiss’s play in an understanding of the trials and the role played by Fritz Bauer, this issue of the *North Meridian Review* concludes with “Creative Facticity in Peter Weiss’s *The Investigation*,” a scholarly work by Jennifer William. In her essay, After

providing historical background on the author's writing process, William argues that in Weiss's play "fictionality and facticity are complementary rather than contradictory forces." We discover, for instance, that Weiss did not have complete access to all recordings while he was working on the play. William describes the framework she uses for her analysis as "creative facticity," arguing that Weiss's play demonstrates how the playwright makes use of the objectivity of the testimonies given during the trials. William's framework emphasizes the creative process behind Weiss's *The Investigation*, a literary procedure through which historical documentation is mixed with literary elements to guide readers through Auschwitz using eleven cantos modeled on Dante's Hell. The emphasis that William places on Weiss's "interdisciplinary synthesis between archaeology and creative practice" is useful in an analysis of Weiss's work, a play in which fiction and reality collide. Moreover, William's discussion of the role of working memory in witness testimony will give readers additional tools for approaching Weiss's work, documentary theater as a genre, and legal testimonies in general. Of great importance is also William's discussion of historical narrative and its ability to evoke strong feelings in the audience. However, as Williams contends toward the end of her piece, emotions evoked by historical narrative can also create a dangerous, false sense of accessibility to historical events. Weiss's play should not, William argues be seen as a way to access and understand atrocities committed in Auschwitz.

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TRANSLATIONS

Witness Otto Wolken

19th day of the trial 02.24.1964

1. Frankfurt Auschwitz-Trial

»Criminal case against Mulka and others. «, 4 Ks 2/63

District Court Frankfurt am Main

19th day of the trial 02.24.1964 and 20th day of the trial 02.27.1964

Interrogation of witness Otto Wolken

Witness Otto Wolken:

We had to line up for roll call.¹⁴ Then the *Blockführer*¹⁵ came, and they counted the people. We stood in rows of ten, a long column, block by block. The *Blockführer* came, and the *Blockälteste*¹⁶ reported how many people he counted. Corpses had to be brought to the roll call as well and added to the count because only those corpses that had already been added to the count were in the morgue.

I have a story to tell. Around ten o'clock in the morning, the corpse clerk (I think his name was Neumann) came to me and wrote down how many dead there were in the death chamber. Then he went up to the office and removed the number of corpses from the prisoner count. People who had died in the meantime, during the day, still had to be counted along with the other prisoners in the block. Then, they were brought to the morgue and placed in separate sections.

At around twelve o'clock at night, the vehicle that transported corpses came to where I was in the quarantine camp. It was an ordinary, heavy truck that, on its way to where I was, had already been to the women's camp and other sections of the men's camp. The bodies were stripped naked. The *Leichenkommando*¹⁷ I was assigned to consisted of four men. Two men climbed onto the wagon, onto the bodies that were already there. Two remained standing behind the truck, grabbed the bodies by the feet and hands and pulled them up and stacked them one on top of each other. Then the SS man confirmed the number of bodies he had collected and drove to the next section of the camp.

After roll call, as I said, they served dinner. The dinner consisted of a piece of bread and, twice a week, something else: a piece of sausage, a portion of margarine, and a spoonful of jam. And once a week we got cheese. They called it German farmer's hand cheese. The name was *quargel*.¹⁸

¹⁴ Prisoners were counted every day during roll calls, regardless of weather conditions. Roll calls also served the purpose of checking the health of prisoners and, if no longer healthy, prisoners were sent to the gas chambers.

¹⁵ The *Blockführer* (block leader) was responsible for the orderly behavior of prisoners in the blocks. Every morning, the block leader had to report the prisoner count and check the status of the beds and the prisoners' locks.

¹⁶ The *Blockälteste* (block elder) was an inmate in charge of a single concentration camp barrack.

¹⁷ The *Leichenkommando* was a work unit in charge of corpses in the camp.

¹⁸ *Quargel* is a soft cheese with a strong scent, distinctive pungent taste, and yellowish color.

There was a method behind the way they rationed the food. Firstly, the rations were already very small. On top of that, a very, very large amount of food was stolen. Or, as they used to say, “organized differently.” The SS guards, the *Blockführer* and the *Rapportführer*,¹⁹ all went to food storage—the person working at the storage building was a prisoner—and took two or three sausages, and two, three, or four portions of margarine.

The food had already been rationed, the sausages were already pre-cut, apparently with a machine, into slices that hung together loosely, and the guards took that food away. And when the prisoner working at the storage building had to prepare rations, he could not put the rations together properly because a lot of the food was already gone. This happened very often, and because of that, we often got only half portions. For every two men there was a slice of sausage that was hardly an inch thick anyway, and that was divided between two men. A slice of sausage, that was all there was. Instead of a tablespoon of jam you only got a teaspoon. Sometimes, even if it did not work, you poured a little bit of tea in with the jam and mixed it together. Later, you could get a teaspoon of jam. And because of these quarrels, it was often the case that there was only one *quargel* for every three men.

A lot of the food was stolen. And I would like to add that the guards—and I know this from my own experience because I’ve seen it—the guards, the *Blockführer* and so on did not steal food out of hunger. They wanted to exchange food for schnapps. The *Blockälteste* Oftringer from Block 8, for example, stole from other *Blockältesten*. He gave what he stole to the *Rapportführer* Kurpanik. And in return Kurpanik came back with a bottle of schnapps, and they sat down and drank schnapps, the *Blockälteste* with the *Rapportführer* or with other SS men.

And theft, of course, contributed to the fact that the prisoners died very quickly, especially the people in the quarantine camp who did nothing or did little work. My death statistics show that people lost weight rapidly, and that happened very quickly. And even during the quarantine period, we had many die because of starvation.

Originally, in our own statistics, we distinguished between two types of emaciation: dry emaciation and wet emaciation, depending on whether prisoners had severe hunger edema, that is, severely swollen legs and hands, or whether the prisoners’ bodies were completely emaciated. It was only after the liberation, when the Russians came, that they brought a team of pathologists; that happened a few days afterwards.

The dead bodies—there were over 500—were autopsied outdoors on tables, and the doctors dictated the autopsy report to a typist. Every dead body that was found was listed under a number. For most of them, the SS-men only knew the number, they did not know the names. The number of the corpse was filed together with the findings of the autopsy. And in the process, I also found out that what we called dry starvation was in fact galloping tuberculosis.

¹⁹ The *Rapportführer* (report leader) was a mid-level SS non-commissioned officer in charge of a group of *Blockführer*.

The amount of tuberculosis in the camp was far greater than we knew. But that was due in part to severe, widespread emaciation. And the emaciation was, of course, due to the fact that a lot of the food intended for the prisoners was stolen, taken away, and the inmates could not get it.

I will now describe differences I saw in prisoner camp BII,²⁰ a camp in which I spent two months. This was the labor camp. You could go to the ambulance after you finished eating. So, everyone rushed to the ambulance to bandage wounds or to get help with this or that. The doctors did their best because it was late, and the block had to be locked down at eight o'clock. That meant that everyone had to be back in the block by eight. The doctors tried hard to finish as quickly as they could, but they couldn't. And as it got closer to 8pm, all you could do was ask for a doctor's note. That meant that people received a note that said that they could return to the ambulance in the morning the next day. In any case, that was risky because then you might arrive late to work and that would end badly. But there was nothing you could do about it.

Either the patient gave up his food so that he could get to the ambulance quickly and be the first in line, and at least have a chance of being seen by the doctor. Or else the prisoner had to wait, while wounded, until the next day or the day after that until he was lucky enough to get to the ambulance.

Most of the prisoners' wounds were the result of being mistreated, beaten with a stick, or shot with a gun. Of course, work injuries also occurred. And then, what was especially horrible in the camp was the furunculosis. It happened because prisoners lived in extremely unhygienic conditions and their skin became infected. Due to starvation, the body's defenses were very weak, and bacteria penetrated the skin and caused boils. Furunculosis was the root cause of many deaths because furunculosis became an excuse for sending prisoners to the gas chambers.

Also, it often happened that the guards punished prisoners with furunculosis. The guards beat them up so that their furuncles would be squeezed open forcibly, pressing the pus into surrounding tissue. The prisoners then developed terrible gluteal phlegmons. I have seen several such horrific cases in which all the flesh from the buttocks to the hipbones had been eaten up by pus. And people died in the most terrible agony. These were impossible cases. Not even the greatest doctors on Earth could have saved them. People were lucky to die before reaching that stage because of a weak heart or high fever due to sepsis.

In this context, we should also consider the destiny of those who were on the ramp.

Public Prosecutor Großmann:

Mr. Wolken, please speak a little louder. We can't hear anything from this corner, Your Honor.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, maybe I have to come closer.

²⁰ The concentration camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau (also known as Auschwitz II) was divided into three *Gefangenelager* (prisoners camps) named BI, BII, and BIII. The B stands for *Bauabschnitt* (construction section).

The destiny of those who were chosen on the ramp, and immediately sent to the gas chamber was a sad and terrible one.

There were often a lot of young people there, young mothers with small children. At first, they did not know what was going to happen to them, and when they did find out, they only had to endure the horror for a short period of time.

For those who were lucky enough to be accepted for work in the camp, for them it also ended in death, but only after terrible torment, fear, and torture. It's hard to say who had better luck. Because even the few who survived, they were marked for life. They have to confront what they suffered there for the rest of their lives. They must deal with it mentally and physically.

There was just not enough food, and, above all, the food was not intended to keep people alive for very long, especially with the hard work that was required in the camp. Still, it's amazing how long one could survive on that food. If I was able to keep my mind busy, to think of something to prepare for later, then I did not feel as hungry. I was not hungry. But those who were hungry could only concentrate on what would keep them alive. And only the strong-willed, people who knew what they wanted, those were the ones who survived.

It happened repeatedly that prisoners would voluntarily throw themselves onto the electric fence to put an end to their suffering. They did that so they would not have to face the terrible day on which they would have to stand in front of the camp doctor and be sent to death. And that was a new kind of suffering. Because the ones who were chosen were stripped of their clothing first. They were given either a shirt, a pair of pants or a coat. They would lock you in a block and you had to wait a day, often two days, until they came to collect you. Then, late at night, the trucks came. The SS men sealed off the block and announced a blockade. Nobody was allowed to leave the block. And then they began to load people onto trucks. It was a kind of lock down.

You might ask how I know all this.

Well, when I was in the ambulance with the other prisoners, there were only a few of us. We stuck together. We put two tables one on top of the other and looked out through the skylight in order to see what was going on outside. We left a narrow crack in the door and looked out to see what was going on. The *Blockälteste* also helped. Not everyone, only those who willingly supported the work of the SS.

I have mentioned those names many times in my writings: Oftringer, Katarzyński, and others. Of course, they were chosen to help with the lockdown, and I spoke to Oftringer often. I talked to him humanely. And for a while he was a sensible, reasonable person. He even staged a cabaret in his block. The prisoners put together a cabaret show, and the SS people were invited to the performance. A lot of people from Vienna arrived in a convoy, performed in their traditional way and told their own jokes. Well, then there were selections, some of the actors were sent to the gas chambers. That was the end of Oftringer's cabaret experiment, and he then went back to his old ways, participating in the extermination of prisoners together with the *Rapportführer* Kurpanik.

I would like to mention that what I am telling you only refers to the time that I was in the camp, and that was from mid-1943 until the liberation in January 1944. During that time, the atmosphere in the camp changed depending on who the *Blockführer* and the *Blockälteste* were, their mood—

Presiding Judge:

Did you just make a mistake? Did you say from mid-1943 until January 1944?

Witness Otto Wolken:

1945, until January 1945.

Presiding Judge:

Until January '45. Thank you very much.

Witness Otto Wolken:

January 1945, until the liberation. And what was possible one day, was impossible the next. And it was always impossible to predict what would happen the next day.

Prisoners with typhus were placed on a separate block and were cared for. They survived typhus and were recovering. They made an effort to help them. They even gave them more food. And then those same prisoners were sent to the gas chambers. Why go to all that trouble then?

One of my colleagues was beaten up by the camp doctor for not keeping an accurate medical history. He left out something in the medical history. But that patient was sent to the gas chamber in the end. Why write a medical history then? Their solution was to simply send sick prisoners to the gas chambers and wait for new ones to arrive. Well, besides typhus caused by contaminated water, and in addition to furunculosis and scabies—scabies was rampant in the camp—there was also a type of typhus that was caused by lice.

The prisoners were infested with lice. I do not want to waste your time making you look up what I wrote. Perhaps it will come up again during the trial.

I have told you that the prisoners' uniforms were changed four times a year. When people work and sleep, day and night, in the same clothing, when they are outside in bad weather, they get soaked, and their clothing dries on them again. If prisoners are made to live in close quarters, lice infestation cannot be prevented. And it did not help that there were signs everywhere in the blocks which read: "Lice will be Your Death."

How could you prevent lice? The prisoners couldn't shower. They simply couldn't. I repeatedly reported this to the camp doctor. And one day a miracle happened: They brought in a mobile shower system to the camp, and we began to give people showers. But we did not get the heating materials needed for the shower system, and after a few days the whole operation was shut down. After all, how can I use even the most beautiful shower system if I do not have any means of heating the water?

The prisoners' uniforms, when they changed them, were taken to the sauna and disinfected. They did not wash the uniforms. There was no time for that. You also heard that from the SS report

about clothing that we read earlier. I am keeping that as evidence. There was no time to do laundry. The uniforms were disinfected and then returned. And there were spots on the uniforms where boils had burst open. The pus that had dried on the cloth was disinfected in the sauna. The prisoners got a shirt. There were traces of blood and holes. There were uniforms the guards had removed from corpses. And those same uniforms were given back to the prisoners.

But the disinfection was also poorly done. And I told the camp doctor many times that the lice in the camp could not be stopped because arriving convoys carrying new prisoners infested with lice kept coming into the camp.

The camp doctor, that was Doctor Thilo, then talked to the head of disinfection about it, to whom—please, I do not know what rank he had, I think he was *Oberscharführer*²¹ Klehr. Klehr denied it. He said: “That is not true. People get infested with lice on their way here.” Then I invited the camp doctor to see for himself. I said to him: I’ll keep the next transport waiting until Herr *Hauptsturmführer*²² arrives, and I will show you that the people are still infested with lice even when wearing uniforms fresh out of the sauna. They come into the camp with lice. And the camp doctor saw that it was true. I left the prisoners standing outside, across from the kitchen barrack. They stood there until the camp doctor came. Then I returned with my doctors. The prisoners took off their shirts, and we examined them.

Lice inspection was one of the most important times at the camp, and the daily report to the camp doctor had to state how many lice were found during these inspections. And then we showed him the lice on the shirts that had just come out of the sauna.

That being said, you often had the feeling that they were only pretending to do the right thing. You try to keep people healthy. You try to get rid of the lice and do all these sorts of things. And then the camp doctor arrives, and they lock down the block. The prisoners line up naked. The doctor goes through the rows, and, with the snap of his fingers, sends some of them to the gas chambers. All our work was in vain.

Towards the end, we had an SDG, a *Sanitätsdienstgrad*²³ named Flaggle. I think he was from Cologne, if I remember correctly. He was a very kind man, and it was pleasant to work with him. He helped us get medicine. He tried to get medicine into the camp. He tried to improve medical care. And he cared a lot about children in the neighboring camp, *Theresienstadt*²⁴. That was in section B, where the family camp *Theresienstadt* was, that is until July of 1943. And his favorite way to pass the time was there. There was a kindergarten there, and he often played with the children in the kindergarten.

²¹ An *Oberscharführer* was typically a squad leader, answering to the *Blockführer*. It was the lowest rank in the SS hierarchy.

²² A *Hauptsturmführer* was a mid-level commander, the equivalent to a captain in the German Army.

²³ ²³ A *Sanitätsdienstgrad* was an officer of the medical corps, which was one of the obligatory divisions present in the concentration camp.

²⁴ *Theresienstadt* was a transit camp for Czech Jews. It was also a labor camp with a high mortality rate. It was the only camp with a rich variety of cultural activities, a library, an educational center, and a kindergarten.

In July 1944, a tragedy of unimaginable proportions happened there. All the men from *Theresienstadt* had been taken away the day before and transferred to other camps. Then the mothers were ordered to leave their children and go to a labor camp, but the mothers refused to do that. Then, the guards tried to force them. The mothers clung to their children. Then they sent those women to the gas chambers with their children.

When that happened, Flagge was standing in my section of the camp, behind my block, looking at the camp. I saw him standing there, and I approached him. And I saw that he had tears in his eyes. And I couldn't think of anything better to ask him then, "What's going on over there?" Then he said: "Don't you see? They are killing children!" Then, he turned away and wiped his eyes. It was then that I realized what kind of man he was.

After a selection, they brought me the files of people that had been selected on the ambulance. Flagge was in charge of compiling the list of those who were to be sent to the gas chambers. The list had to be sent to the political unit, and the political unit then took care of the prisoners. I then learned that these prisoners were in protective custody. These prisoners did not arrive on normal convoys. They arrived separately with a note stating: "Because of their behavior, the above-mentioned person is a danger both to the security of other people and the State."

Flagge, making a list, started writing down the prisoners' numbers on a piece of paper. And I sat across from him and watched him. He said: "I know him. I can't...Look, that's him. He's a healthy person. You can't do that." And he would remove a prisoner's file, and I would remove the next file and then another. All of a sudden, he said, "For God's sake, when the camp doctor comes!" I interrupted him saying: "I have a guard outside that is on lookout. He'll tell us when the camp doctor comes." And just like that, I was able to remove a large number of files at each selection. And he let me do that.

I wanted to tell you this in order to show that if someone was a bit human and had some empathy, he could contribute a great deal—as I said earlier—to slowing down this murder machine. I am not one of those people who says: "Oh well, someone was killed. That's it. Why are the newspapers writing so much about it?" I saw thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of people murdered.

No, to me a single death is just as harrowing as the murder of thousands of people. And we should not, we must never forget the immense value of a human life.

I mentioned this earlier: Auschwitz was not only a camp for Jewish prisoners. Even then, usually, only Jews were sent to the gas chambers. Usually! I would like to tell you that on November 28th, 1943, there was a convoy of Russian prisoners of war from Viljandi in Estonia who had been seriously injured and arrived in the Quarantine camp where I was. At that time, we still used a lot of bandages to treat prisoners who were injured. And after a few days, at night, those same prisoners were taken away and sent to the gas chambers. And the same thing happened at another time with a different convoy—I can't remember it very well now—with 44 Russian officers who were also seriously injured. They were sent to the gas chambers too. The same thing happened with a convoy of French prisoners, non-Jewish French prisoners.

Once, I was looking for the French prisoners, and by chance I found a thing in the laundry room. And it said, and I had written that same thing again and again in the daily reports sent to the camp doctor: “We need to change the prisoners’ uniforms.” And yet prisoners in 1944 got fresh uniforms only on April 15th, on June 30th, on August 22nd, on September 20th, and on October 21st. And you never knew when and how that would happen. Sometimes it happened more quickly, sometimes less quickly. But even those uniforms could no longer be called uniforms.

The principal infestation in the camp was lice. And if they tried to contain the infestation, it was because of typhus. And the question is: Who needed to contain the infestation the most? If people died of typhus, it would no longer be necessary to kill them in the gas chambers. However, typhus did not know the difference between prisoners and SS men, and SS men also got sick. And that’s why they decided to fight typhus. And that’s why they decided to get rid of the lice.

The delousing operation started at night, and they shaved the prisoners throughout the night. Hair was removed from all hairy parts of the body. Some of the prisoners said they were hairdressers. In many cases, that was not true. We did not have enough razor blades either, so we started using broken glass. And while some prisoners were being shaved, you were passed a razor blade in order to sharpen the glass until you thought it was sharp enough. There was no soap. They used only water and cut the prisoners’ skin in the process. And it lasted all night long.

In the morning, you had to strip completely naked, and your clothing was brought to the lower section of the camp to be washed in the barracks. There were huge vats filled with some kind of solution—I think it was a hydrocyanic acid solution or something similar—and they threw the clothing in. They threw the blankets in too, everything. And then you returned naked to the square for roll call.

To clarify: The “roll call square” was the name given to the space between two barracks. The longitudinal space between two barracks was always the assigned area for roll call. For each barrack, the roll call area always faced in the direction of the camp entrance at the front of the barrack.

In the meantime, some prisoners and *Blockältesten* would seal off the blocks. This meant that they took wood wool out of the straw bags. It was not something unusual because the roof was not entirely stable. It was loose, so they had to seal off all of its sections. And then, after that happened, a *Häftlingskommando*²⁵ came.

The prisoners were equipped with gas masks and given pieces of wood. They lit the central chimney in the block to keep it warm so that the gas could be produced more efficiently from the grains. The block doors were locked, and the prisoners were forced to remain naked between the two blocks in the roll call area until it was their turn to go to the bathroom.

So, the delousing campaigns in which I took part occurred in August and in November of 1943—I think it was in August 1943. I do not want to commit myself to these dates now. I would have to look it up carefully in my writings. They led us out of the camp, along the camp street, and then

²⁵ A *Häftlingskommando* was a group of prisoners who were given camp privileges refused to other prisoners.

through the corridor between Camp C and D down to the ramp, over the ramp into the women's camp and into the women's camp's "sauna."²⁶ Completely naked. We were always three or four blocks together. And there we stood, naked, in our Eden-like nudity.

On the other side, the women stood and waited until we could enter the so-called "bathroom" in groups. Tepid water trickled down from the ceiling. You tried to get wet as best you could. After a very short time, the guards would scream: "Get out! Out! Get out!" So, you had little time to wash yourself. Outside there were prisoners standing by a vat with a rag. In this vat there was Cuprex. It was a lice-killer. Some kind of petroleum-like liquid. I think it was manufactured by Bayer.

Presiding Judge:

Was it from Merck?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Merck manufactured it? Yes, Merck manufactured the Cuprex. And we applied it quickly to the hairy parts of our body. It burned terribly, of course, especially where we had wounds and sores. Our skin became inflamed. We couldn't walk for two or three days because of it, until we felt better.

And then they brought us back to the camp, to the roll call area and we stood between the blocks and waited until late into the evening. We got our food there. On that day, as an exception, they served us dinner at noon, and we did not get warm food until the evening when they opened the block again.

And then, of course, the poison gas they had used in the block—the blocks weren't well sealed—was hovering above us. And some of the prisoners started vomiting violently, those who were more vulnerable, and some of them were poisoned. Well, they knew that would happen because—allow me to tell you about Special Order Number 17 from 1943...

Presiding Judge:

Wait a minute, Mr. Wolken. I am concerned that you might be reading from your writings. If you have the document and hand it to the court, we can read it when we choose. But I am concerned that you are giving us false information. You should only tell us what you remember from memory.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Well, I know all that from memory. I mean, I do not know it from memory. What I mean is it is not only my opinion that the camp commander knew exactly how dangerous it was because he forbade the SS personnel, all SS personnel, from entering the camp that day. The exception was for those from disinfection and those equipped with gas masks, because of the risk of poisoning. The prisoners were left standing between the blocks in which they were using the gas for the whole day.

²⁶ The sauna was a building used to disinfect the prisoners upon arrival to Auschwitz. Prisoners had to hand over their belongings and get through the sauna to shower, get disinfected, and receive the camp uniform.

In the evening, they opened the blocks again. They let the gas out of the blocks, and then we were allowed into the blocks. And later, we were told that we could go to get our clothing back. Down there, at the end of the camp area, by the washroom and toilet barracks, they had hung up ropes. And a *Häftlingskommando*—I do not know which one—fished the things out of the vat and hung them up so that they could dry off and drain.

And so, we tried to find our clothing. We recognized our clothing because everyone had their number sewn onto them. Every prisoner had a white striped shirt. On it was his nationality, his category, whether he was a political prisoner or a criminal and whether he was a Jew. Then the prisoner number. We also had something like that on the side of our trousers. To find our clothes, we had to look for the number.

Of course, it happened that some prisoners who had damaged clothing would look for newer clothing, tear off the number, write their number somewhere with an ink stick, and that was it. And because of that, many prisoners couldn't find their clothing. And there was a great uproar and screaming, and everyone was happy when they found their wet clothing again. Then we stood in the block, which was freezing, and did not know what to do. We had to spend the night in our wet clothing again.

And to sum up the whole operation, I have to say that many lice survived, but not all the prisoners. Because when they wanted us to march again—the SS men were on bicycles and forced us to run, beating us—those who couldn't keep up were knocked down and trampled. So, the delousing operation also ended with a number of deaths.

Presiding Judge:

Could you please go back to what you said to us or what you said to the public prosecutor's office on November 14th, 1960, about the so-called rabbit hunts, the "hat throwing" command and so on. What happened to you there? Or what else did you want to tell us about that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, the "hare hunts" refer to what I told you before about the camp's atmosphere, and how it always changed, depending on who was in charge.

I was brought to the ambulance in Camp BII²⁷ as a doctor. At that time, there was a crazy *Blockälteste*. His name was Thiem. They said that later he was able to join the SS. It could also be the case that he had come to serve under Dirlwanger²⁸. I do not know for sure. So, I would ask you not to include that as part of my testimony, but only as one of my personal remarks.

Well, he made our lives a living hell. He tortured the prisoners with Kurpanik and the other *Blockführer*. "Sport" was on the agenda. "Sport" meant: "Jump! Lay down! Stand up! Jump! Lay

²⁷ This refers to Birkenau, also known as Auschwitz II.

²⁸ Oskar Paul Dirlwanger was an *SS-Oberführer* (German military officer), war criminal, and commander of the Nazi SS unit "Dirlwanger" during World War II. He is known for having committed some of the war's most horrific crimes, including, for example, rape and murder.

down! Stand up! Roll around!” It did not matter if the whole camp was covered in dung. Prisoners had to roll around in the dirt, then jump up and lie down, and then rush into the pond used as a water reserve—there was a pond in front of the camp entrance—and climb back out of it. Those who could not keep up were kicked and beaten. And if someone tried to run away, they would be shot. Or they were forced onto the electric fence, close to the watchtowers. You can see the watchtowers of the quarantine camp drawn there. And, of course, the guards on the watchtowers had the instruction to shoot at prisoners as soon as any prisoner approached. So, the guards waited there until someone came too close and they shot them. And they always pushed the “sports enthusiasts” there, in that area. It was a particular type of entertainment.

Also, during roll calls, if someone did not stand up correctly, if a guard did not like a prisoner’s face, well, anything could be used as a reason to be tortured, beaten, or kicked. And if there was something political going on outside the camp—I remember, for example, when they bombed the refinery in Trzebinia. You could see the flames coming up from there. We could see the smoke, and people from there told us that that was Trzebinia on fire because those black oil clouds could not have come from anywhere else—then we could feel it in the camp. If someone did not look sad, then the guards said: “Aha! Of course, you are happy, you piece of shit!” And that was another reason to be beaten and tortured.

In this statement, I referred to October 4, 1943, when eleven people from a convoy from Lemberg were shot during a “hare hunt.” Only one of them, having received a bullet through his chest—that was inmate 138134, Wierzbowski, Tadeusz—was smart enough to play dead in the trench, and we took him out in the morning.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Your honor, I do not want to interrupt, but I would like to draw the court’s attention to the fact that the witness is apparently using an interrogation protocol. Otherwise, he would not have been able to give, for example, such an exact number, that he surely read. I would like to remind anyone that he, the witness, is not supposed to read from his interrogation protocol.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, I have told the witness already.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

But he does it anyway, your Honor.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Wolken, you can only tell us what you remember. You can no longer tell us what you do not remember, even if you mean well. You can refer to your previous interrogations later on to support what you are telling us now. You may still be able to remember this or that, but you are not allowed to read it.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Your Honor, first of all. I would ask you to establish or clarify whether the witness is in possession of an interrogation protocol, his own notes from 1945, something like that or—

Presiding Judge:

Are those your own notes?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, these are my own notes from 1945.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, I think so.

Witness Otto Wolken:

This is called “Chronicle of Quarantine Camp BIIb.” It was written as an excerpt from the death records. Look, I do not understand. They ask me to talk about facts. And I am in the fortunate position of helping the court establish the truth...I am not accusing anyone specifically in this case, but rather I want to help you to find out the truth, to get to know the camp’s atmosphere. And I have only included in these writings what I saw at that time, at that point in time—and that was in February and March of 1945—on the basis of the records I saved. Otherwise, from memory, yes. How should I remember those names only from memory? How should I remember all that from memory? I would like to prevent any mistakes...Perhaps this morning someone misunderstood something I said.

I am a doctor. People who went back to their homeland or were looking for another country to emigrate to. I was the chief physician of the Rothschild Hospital in Vienna, which was at that time, a notorious transit camp for all the other concentration camps. I examined 170,000 people during that time. In the years afterwards, I examined thousands more people, and dealt with the fate of thousands of people. And because of that, because of this enormous number of people and because of my job, which gave me— thank God—no time to think much about the past, because of this job, I no longer remember these things. I first had to read through this again. I had to bring it all back to the surface to be able to testify here in front of you. And God, I would have preferred not to, because it is all very stressful for me.

Presiding Judge:

That’s understandable. It goes without saying. Mr. Laternser, there is nothing wrong with the witness using his own notes and records to help him remember. And since he has his own notes here, which he also handed over to the court, neither the Reichsgericht nor the Federal Supreme Court are against letting the witness rely on them.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I was not saying that. I only said the following: You told the witness, your Honor, that he had to give more detail on such and such events. You also mentioned the date. And then I saw the witness taking a document from his papers, from which, as it appeared to me, he was reading.

Presiding Judge:

But it was not—

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I only wanted to bring it to the attention of the court. I believe that if I draw attention to a possible violation, the court should at least take it into consideration.

Presiding Judge:

Well, Mr. Laternser—

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Because of course the witness can use his notes. There is no problem with that. He's just not allowed to use—and it seemed as though he was using—the records of his interrogation. If that is not the case, then I have nothing to complain about.

Presiding Judge:

Good then, let's continue.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

I would like to point out that such incidents can be avoided in the future. The public prosecutor's office did not hand over any interrogation protocols to the witnesses. So if the witnesses are using something to aid their recollection, those are their own notes.

Presiding Judge:

Good.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I just want to add that I do not have any protocols. I do not even know what is in the protocol they are talking about.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, Mr. Wolken, we have clarified that now, and I would ask you to continue.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Nonetheless, I would ask the court to remember that these events did not happen yesterday or a year ago, but nineteen years ago. And that details about such events are not always as precise as a court might wish.

Presiding Judge:

Yes. Let's move on. You were telling us about people who were forced onto a fence only to be shot.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. The "rabbit hunts."

Presiding Judge:

Yes. Do you remember any person in particular? Or based on your notes, can you still give us the names of the people who were involved?

Witness Otto Wolken:

As usual, the *Rapportführer* Kurpanik was involved. The SS men were Dargelis, Weiss, and Baretzki. I clearly remember two episodes with Baretzki. One happened on April 15, 1944. At that time, they selected 184 people to be sent to the gas chambers. In the evening—and here I can't say exactly because it was not clear whether they would take the prisoners away the same evening or the next evening, or after two days. So, it could have been two days later. Regardless, they would take them away the same evening or the next evening, or after two days. Because these people—

Presiding Judge:

How many people?

Witness Otto Wolken:

184, according to my notes.

Presiding Judge:

184. And may I also ask who selected them?

Witness Otto Wolken:

That was doctor Thilo.

Presiding Judge:

Doctor Thilo. Was he the camp doctor?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Presiding Judge:

And was there someone helping him with the selection?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. When the camp doctor made a selection, the *Blockführer* were present and the SS staff participated as well. The camp doctor made his choices alone. The others merely kept things in order and took the people away. The camp doctor always made his choices alone.

Presiding Judge:

So, it was the camp doctor who selected the prisoners. And he selected 184 prisoners. In which block did that happen?

Witness Otto Wolken:

It was in the entire camp.

Presiding Judge:

And how did you find out about it? How do you find out that there were exactly 184 prisoners that had been selected from the entire camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

The selection was not secret. So, you knew exactly how many there were. You knew that they selected exactly 184 prisoners. That meant that they selected prisoners from all over the camp. That was the first step. The second step was to check the daily report. I received the report from the office the next day. Then I noticed a difference between the numbers from the previous day and the numbers from that day.

Presiding Judge:

Even though the prisoners were still alive.

Witness Otto Wolken:

They had already removed them.

Presiding Judge:

Even though they were still alive.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. They were removed even though they were still alive. They were taken out of the count without anyone having left the camp. In my daily reports to the camp doctor, there were the arrivals, there were the departures, there were the prisoners that had been transferred to the infirmary. And with the arrivals, the departures, and the transfers to the infirmary, you had the updated count of the prisoners for that day. And all of a sudden, there was a difference of 184 in the count, and no one had left or been transferred to the infirmary.

Presiding Judge:

So, suddenly there were 184 prisoners missing, and those were the prisoners that were sent to the gas chambers.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Presiding Judge:

And what happened next?

Witness Otto Wolken:

They put them together in one block.

Presiding Judge:

In one block?

Witness Otto Wolken:

They were always put together and locked up in a block. And they were put in that block, and hidden there. The guards kept them there. They had already been removed from the count and taken out of the camp. So, they were removed from the count of the prisoners in the camp. They were still there in the block. And they waited to be picked up.

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And when they came to pick them up, you would see terrible things. Those prisoners went without food for two days. Most of them were—let's say to a large extent—prisoners who were already weak. They couldn't get onto the truck very quickly, although sometimes the guards would bring wooden stairs so the prisoners could climb onto the truck. Then you knew that they were going to the gas chambers—and you did not hurry on your way to the gas chambers. So, the *Blockältesten* and the *Blockführer* went inside the block and beat the prisoners up and forced them out and onto the truck. And they told all sorts of jokes. And Dargelis and Baretzki were the ones who helped with loading the prisoners, who made jokes at the expense of their victims and then shot those few who tried to flee.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Wolken, would you like to explain that and describe it to us in more detail? So, you said that the prisoners that had been selected were locked in a block. They were kept without food for a day or two. Then the trucks came, and they loaded the prisoners onto the trucks, beating them up to force them out. You say that Baretzki and Dargelis helped do this.

We would like to know, first of all: How do you know that? Did you see them loading the prisoners? Were you nearby or did you see it up close? And how do you know that Baretzki and Dargelis were there? And how were you able to see what they did to the prisoners? We would like for you to answer those questions.

Witness Otto Wolken:

First of all, as far as I could see—we kept the gate of the block slightly ajar, and from there we looked out. We were locked in the blocks and only the *Blockältesten* could leave. So, we looked out to see what was going on outside. We saw it. Oftringer and Katarzyński told me who it was. Of course, I couldn't see well from a distance who it was.

Presiding Judge:

Oftringer and...?

Witness Otto Wolken:

And Katarzyński. There were two *Blockältesten* who were helping, and at the time, they were standing outside of Oftringer's block, the eighth block. They picked them up from there, I think—or it was block four, eight or four. They were very open about who it was.

We asked: "Who was shooting out there?" And they told me what happened.

Presiding Judge:

So, you asked, "Who was shooting?" and they told you who they were.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Dargelis and Baretzki.

Presiding Judge:

Did they say Oftringer and Katarzyński?

Witness Otto Wolken:

They both had the same answer. I did not ask them at the same time. I asked one of them first, and then the other. Also, they did not know that I was asking.

Presiding Judge:

And what did they tell you about the shooting? Did they tell you that they shot someone dead?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Presiding Judge:

How did they tell you?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I asked: "So, were there deaths?" and he said: "Yes."

Presiding Judge:

Ok, let's continue. You said that they did things other than shooting.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, they forced prisoners to kneel. You could see that.

Presiding Judge:

Did you see that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

We all saw it. And I have to say, I couldn't tell the difference myself. But my comrades with me, who were also looking outside, were able to distinguish them by their shape: That is Dargelis, and that is Baretzki. They weren't very similar. Dargelis was much bigger. So, they recognized who was who. Not me, because my eyes were not good enough for that.

Presiding Judge:

And what else did they do? Did they force prisoners to kneel down?

Witness Otto Wolken:

They let them kneel down, and they had to ask to be set free.

Presiding Judge:

And then did they mistreat them?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, they mistreated them while they were chasing them. And then they said, "Well, run! Go! Go! Go!" And then the prisoners ran away and thought they were free and—

Presiding Judge:

So, they said “Go! Go! Go!” and the prisoners ran away, right?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Presiding Judge:

And then did they shoot them?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Presiding Judge:

But you did not see it. You heard about it from the two people you just mentioned.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I saw it myself. I heard the names of those two people.

Presiding Judge:

Aha. Yeah. So that was around the 15th or 17th of April 1944. Can you still remember a similar “hunt” on October 4, 1943, when they shot nine people from a convoy of Polish prisoners from Lemberg?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I can.

Presiding Judge:

Who were those people then? Do you want to tell me about it?

Witness Otto Wolken:

They made prisoners “practice sport.” Then they started to force them towards the electric wire. Then the guards—

Presiding Judge:

They shot them from up there.

Witness Otto Wolken:

From up there. It was after the roll call. They were left standing in the roll call area. Some of them had already left, the others were left standing in the roll call area. And they said that they were doing it because they were misbehaving, or because they did not stand properly. They weren’t even assigned to a block.

Presiding Judge:

So, that evening they did not lock down the blocks?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, they did not lock them down.

Presiding Judge:

Could you see anything from your block?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, we saw it from our block.

Presiding Judge:

Was your block close to the fence?

Witness Otto Wolken:

All the blocks were close to it, because the quarantine camp was only half a camp, so to speak. It was close to the guards. That is why it was easy for the guards to shoot them, because it was very close.

Presiding Judge:

And those prisoners who were shot, were they from your quarantine camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

In that part of the camp there were only—

Presiding Judge:

Only prisoners.

Witness Otto Wolken:

That was in my section. It was surrounded by an electric fence. No one else could get in there without passing the office of the *Blockführer* and reporting to him. You could come inside only if you had a specific reason for doing so.

Presiding Judge:

Do you know how many people were shot there?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Just from memory, I can't recall.

Presiding Judge:

You said once in a previous interrogation that there were eleven prisoners from Lemberg.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Eleven prisoners, yes.

Presiding Judge:

Is that correct?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Presiding Judge:

And do you know who else was involved?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not know about that. And I do not think I said anything about that either. I only gave the names of the people I was absolutely certain about.

Presiding Judge:

So, during your interrogation you said: “The guards shot at the prisoners who were approaching the electric fence from the watchtowers. The *Blockführer* shot from behind. The SS men were involved too—I can no longer remember their ranks—Kurpanik, Dargelis, Baretzki and Weiß. During one of these “hare hunts” on October 4, 1943, they shot eleven people from a convoy from Poland, from Lemberg.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Just a second. I need to see that. I believe—

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Wolken, can you still remember?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I can’t find it in my writings now. I do not have any names listed in the notes about that that I have here. It’s possible that it is in the other protocols that—

Presiding Judge:

In your notes, which you submitted, on page 97, you said something about it. What was it, please? So, now they are telling me that a judge will be unable to be here because he got sick this morning. We’ll have to stop here for now. There’s no point in taking a break, we can’t continue.

—Break—

Witness Otto Wolken:

It was written on this toilet paper. But it is so, and I am referring here to my records of April 24, 1945—that is a court record that was made in court in Krakow—and it says on page 10: “The witness presents 50 or 54 sheets, daily reports to the camp doctor.” These were the daily reports. That was the piece of paper on which I wrote down everything for the camp doctor. I would tell him about it first and then give him the paper. The monthly reports and other reports were also on white paper. That was printed paper, and you can check them in the earlier protocols as well. Those were questionnaires for prisoners, and we wrote the reports on the back because we did not have our own paper.

All these things are still in the museum in Auschwitz, and you can view them anytime. I told you that we were not allowed to write the real cause of death in the death records when prisoners died of starvation. I had to write that it was because of a weak heart or something else. Alimentary dystrophy basically means starvation. That was precisely what we were not allowed to write, and it was not a diagnosis that we could write. I think that some newspapers misunderstood that too. A newspaper wrote that furunculosis was caused by prisoners being beaten. But it was not like that.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I disagree with this statement, your Honor. Last time, the witness told us what he saw, heard, or read. It is neither necessary nor important to mention the newspapers and what they may have misunderstood. That is what the witness has to do.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Laternser, the witness does not want to correct the press. What he is saying is that in that case people misunderstood, not only in newspapers, but also in the court. I would like to clarify that again. Perhaps I did not explain myself clearly. That is how I understood the witness. And why shouldn't he do that? The witness should testify fully, everything he knows, and he should avoid any misunderstandings of his testimony. If he believes that his statement could be misunderstood, I cannot cut him off.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Yes, if something is unclear, there is always the opportunity for those involved to ask questions.

Presiding Judge:

If you notice—

—Break—

Witness Otto Wolken:

Due to the living conditions and poor hygiene, the body's defenses were diminished. The bacteria that were everywhere, on the skin, in the dust, and dirt, all these things led to furunculosis. If a prisoner with furunculosis was beaten up and his boils were broken open by a blow—intentionally or unintentionally, I do not want to claim anything here—the pus, which contained thousands, billions of bacteria, got into the tissue. At that moment, the furunculosis becomes a severe phlegmon or a sepsis, which usually leads to death. So that's the thing. The furunculosis was not caused by beatings. It was caused instead by—

Presiding Judge:

So, the furunculosis led to the prisoners' death.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that was the cause of death.

Presiding Judge:

I see. That is how I understood it.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. The SS man I mentioned before, Mr. Flagge, was not a doctor. He was a so-called SDG, an officer from medical services who helped where he could. And in this context, I would like to recount a short episode: It was back in March 1944, and I was drafting a long report for the camp doctor.

SDG man Voigt sat at the table I was working at with his back to me. He was originally from Berlin, and he had big teeth, but he did not stand up much. He came, looked around the ambulance, then lay down on the bed of the *Blockälteste*. I had to put a guard at the gate to warn everyone when the camp doctor arrived, and that is the only thing he did. He was just there to fulfill his duty, fulfil his assignment. He did not stand out that much otherwise.

So, while I was working on that report, somehow the numbers did not match up. It was very, very difficult to keep track of the exact numbers, because the prisoners who were supposed to be sent to the gas chambers were not removed from the count as deaths, but there was a gap in the numbers. They simply were no longer there.

So, there was something wrong with the numbers. And I do not remember what happened, if I sighed or made some other noise. Voigt turned to me and said: “What is going on with you?” And then I said: “How long do I have to sit here and write down numbers for the camp doctor?” Then he pointed his finger at me and said that I was going to leave the camp through the chimney too.”

And then he said to me: “You? No, you won’t. You will survive. But us? They know about us in London. We’ll pay for being involved in this mess.” In March 1944, I knew an SDG man whom I never saw torturing anyone or hitting a prisoner. I know he felt guilty even though he was only a medical officer.

I would now like to talk about an episode with Doctor Helmersen. Doctor Helmersen was a camp doctor. One of those who was in charge of selections in our camp. One day, when he was very busy, he visited me in the ambulance and asked: “Any news?” and he told me that I had to prepare a list of prisoners that could no longer work.

I was very shocked by the assignment, because to make a list of those unfit for work meant that I oversaw the selection that time. I was not ready for it. And I was looking for a way to not do it. Well, in every barrack there was a space at the far end in which you could find prisoners whose emaciation was so severe that they could no longer go to the latrine on their own. They were laying there. They did not care about anything anymore. They were people who had a day, two, maybe three days left to live. A condition that was irreparable, irreversible. Even with the best efforts of modern medicine, it would not have been possible to keep these people alive. So, I went from block to block and wrote down the numbers of those that were lying in those areas—I do not know, it was 26, it was 28, I do not know anymore.

The next day Helmersen came in and asked me for the list. I took it out and gave it to him. He looked at it. “That’s all? You couldn’t find more of them?” He punched me in the face twice. He locked down the block and carried out a new selection. I can no longer say today how many he selected. 200. 300. I do not know.

Afterwards, he came back to the ambulance. He slapped my face twice. “I’ll help you to sabotage operations. You go to the *Strafkommando*,²⁹ and I will take care of it.” Then he went away. I waited two days in fear—not only in fear, but I also had to listen to my comrades accusing me: “There you are. If you had given him at least a list of 50. Now they took 300. It’s your fault that they will kill so many!” “I am sorry” I said, “but I couldn’t help it. I’ll never send anyone to death. I just can’t.”

Doctor Helmersen did not come. And on the third day, I asked the person in charge to record the number of corpses: “What about Helmersen?” He replied: “Don’t you know? He was assigned to the paratroopers.”

I stayed in the camp. A new SS doctor came to take his place. When he arrived, I showed him around. I showed him how people lived. I showed him the washrooms. I showed him the latrines. And from his remarks, I could see that he did not like it. He did not like the conditions in the camp.

As far as I know, afterwards he visited other sections of the camp. Professor Epstein told me about it. The famous children’s doctor Epstein from Prague, a doctor imprisoned in the Gypsy camp. This SS doctor visited him too. He showed him everything, and suddenly stopped and said: “I know I know you! What’s your name?” Epstein replied. He said: “You are the children’s doctor, Epstein from Prague? I studied pediatrics under you. Well, the mother of my child does not need to know about it,” he said and left. It was Doctor Bartzelt, SS-*Hauptsturmführer*.

He left and never came back to the camp. He did not take the position in the end. And we did not know if they punished him for it. Doctor Thilo came after him. And after Doctor Thilo, and that was in December 1944, Doctor Horstmann. At that time, I was no longer in the quarantine camp. The quarantine camp had already been shut down, and I was employed in the infirmary in BIIf.

Doctor Horstmann came to the block every day. They showed him the sick prisoners, and then gave orders to prepare them for the next Tuesday. And every Tuesday—I would like to add—they held a medical meeting in the wash house. All the doctors from the camp attended. The doctors from the neighboring women’s infirmary also came. They were also invited. They studied sick prisoners with special cases. The doctor in question had to give a lecture on disease, which was followed by a discussion. He called us “Dear colleagues” and the lectures were very, very interesting, because we knew everyone who participated.

In addition to the aforementioned Professor Epstein from Prague, who was the oldest doctor in the camp at the time, there were also the famous Vitamin Mansfeld, Professor Mansfeld from Budapest, Professor Limousin from Marseille, Professor Grossmann from Zagreb, Professor

²⁹ The *Strafkommando* (penal commando) was a group of camp prisoners (mostly Jewish prisoners), and their duty was to help with the disposal of gas chamber victims.

Fischer from Prague—a lot of professors. You could learn something in these meetings, and Horstmann took advantage of it. He treated us humanely. You could—it probably happened very, very late. It was already at the end—but you could establish some decent relationships. And we got medication. And I know that in one case he brought an unusual drug, prostigmine. And he did that so that, after the lecture, he could show how to cure a disease with prostigmine that hadn't yet been cured.

Now with this new drug, you could keep someone healthy for a long time. It was muscular dystrophy, a disease in which all muscles relax suddenly. The person collapses and is unable to move. There was a prisoner who had fallen off a roof. And at the beginning, they thought that he was paralyzed because he had fallen off the roof. And Professor Grossmann clarified the case and said: “No, he's not paralyzed. He's got nothing. It's muscular dystrophy, and with prostigmine you can heal a man and make him stand on his feet.” He then brought the drug, and he showed all the doctors in attendance and the camp doctor himself how the prisoner suddenly got up from the stretcher two minutes after he received the injection and moved about like a normal person. So, they could do that now with similar cases.

I would also like to describe my arrival at Auschwitz. I did not arrive at the ramp. I came with another convoy, I arrived at Auschwitz I with a collective transport.

Presiding Judge:

Was it in mid-1943?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Mid-1943.

Presiding Judge:

Yeah.

Witness Otto Wolken:

And I arrived in Auschwitz I, the Auschwitz main camp. It was quite a long way from the train station to the camp, and we were accompanied by SS men who approached us on the way and asked: “Do you have any money? Do you have any money? Do you have a watch? Give it to me. You won't get it back anyway. They will take away everything from you anyway! Give it to me, then I'll help you in the camp!” So, they began to steal the few things that we, the prisoners, still had with us. And there were people among them who were carrying very heavy suitcases. And then we arrived at the camp.

It was surrounded by an electric fence. We could tell by the insulators that were there. And above it you could clearly read “Work Sets You Free.” We marched in through the gate. On the left-hand side you could hear waltz music, the camp band was practicing. Well, we did not get the impression that we had arrived in Hell. Everything looked so peaceful, so calm.

And then they took us to a block, and the first thing they said was: “Take off everything!” Everyone got a sack. “Please throw your things into this sack.” We went to the so-called political unit with the sack. And then we handed in the sack and received a small piece of paper with a number written

on it. We were told that we should keep this number safe. The number was important because without it, we wouldn't get our things back.

And then they took us to a washroom. It was a big room with a concrete floor. There were puddles of water on the floor, and water was dripping from showers. And that was where they brought us. We were 80 or 90 at the beginning, then more and more arrived.

It was about noon when we got there. Hours went by and new people, also naked, kept coming in. We were tired. We could no longer stand on our feet because we had already been on the road for a day and a half without food. And so, everyone sat down on the concrete floor in the pool. We did not care, and we waited and waited. And we waited to get something to eat.

The only thing we could do was collect some of the dripping water and lick it off our hands. And then it was night. They forced us out of the block at night and we had to stand in the roll call area next to the block. And we had to stand there all night. It was a very cool night in May. The wind was blowing, and the rain was cold. We stood there until the next morning.

In the morning, they started shaving us. More than shaving us, they pulled the hair out of all hairy parts of our bodies. Also, there was no soap. They were torturing us, not shaving us. Then they smeared us with the famous Cuprex. And that's when we knew for the first time what being in that camp really meant.

When we came out of the shaving room, we had to get on a pedestal. An SS man stood in front of it and checked us to see whether we were completely shaved. And if we weren't well shaved, they would beat us and send us back, even though we had not shaved ourselves. We had been shaved by someone else. When the SS man was finally satisfied with the shave, we were allowed to take a shower. After that, we had to go outside onto the other side. And there we stood until everyone had finished. Then we went into a block. There were prisoners standing there, each with a pile of clothing that they would throw to each one of us. "Everything is custom-made." And you got a shirt. They gave me a children's shirt, the sleeves only came up to my elbows. I couldn't close the shirt in the front because it was too small. But I got a pair of pants that would have fit a giant. I had to turn up the pants' cuffs four times so I could walk and not trip over them.

From there we had to go back to the political unit. Only then did we find out what the small notes with the numbers meant. We had to show the number, uncover our left arm and get those numbers tattooed on it. That was our future identification number! They made it clear to us that from that moment on, we were only numbers, not people.

I can't say much about the quarantine period. We had to stay in one square between two blocks all day. They lifted two concrete lids from the floor and placed a wooden frame around it. And that was the latrine for this whole group of people. We were 800 in the end. Everything happened in that place. There was this frame and if someone had to relieve himself, then he had to sit on the frame or stand by it, depending on the situation. And whoever was sitting on one side of the frame was splashed by someone on the other side.

After the quarantine period, I was on a construction team for a few days. One day, my group did not leave. We stayed in the block. The SS men came around noon, checked the prisoners and made them go outside in front of the block. The sick prisoners formed a line outside. At the beginning, they only took out the sick prisoners who had certificates saying that they were allowed to stay in the block. My command did not get transferred, so I was allowed at first to stay in the block. But then the block clerk arrived. He took a friend out of the line of assembled prisoners that were about to be sent away and said to me: "Get in line!" And I went and suddenly I was standing alongside sick prisoners. When I protested, they beat me up and took me to Birkenau, to the gas chambers. We walked as far as the crematorium, or at least very close to it, specifically between Crematorium IV and V. Up here on the right (Pointing to a picture).

Presiding Judge:

On the right of "Canada?"

Witness Otto Wolken:

Excuse me?

Presiding Judge:

On the right of—

Witness Otto Wolken:

On the right of "Canada." An SS man came towards us, waved his hand and negotiated with the guards that were escorting us. They brought us back to Camp D, at the very end of the camp, to an empty block.

I found out later that the gas chambers were not empty yet because of large French convoys that had come during the night. So, they could not send us there yet. For this reason, we had to wait in that block until they came [to] pick us up. The "hyenas of the battlefield"³⁰ came, the *Blockältesten* and the *Kapos*,³¹ to see what they could steal from us.

Everything in the camp was valuable, even a spoon, a spoon carved from wood, because we had a shortage of spoons. I always kept a piece of bread on the side, and someone came up to me who spoke an Austrian dialect: "What is that?" "Well," I told him, "nothing, just a piece of bread." He heard my Austrian dialect. There weren't many Austrians in Auschwitz. He asked me: "Where are you from?" I said: "I am from Vienna," and he said "Well, I am from Linz." Then we started talking. I told him that I was a doctor. He replied that he knew someone that could help to get me out of there, and that everything was a mess. I also told him how I had ended up at that block. And actually, sometime later, an SS man arrived and asked me: "Are you a doctor?" "Yes, from Vienna." "Are you a good doctor?" I said, "I do not know." He asked me to follow him. And he took me out of there and put me in a block. He saved me.

³⁰ "Hyenas of the battlefield" is a term that refers to persons who descend on an area in which a battle has occurred to rob dead soldiers and who sometimes kill soldiers that are badly injured.

³¹ A "kapo" was a prisoner chosen by the SS guards to supervise other prisoners while working or carry out administrative tasks.

In the evening, the other prisoners that stayed in the block where I had been were sent to the gas chambers. That was in Camp BIId, and I was in Block 18.

I then worked as a night watchman in Block 18. And one day, in the morning during roll call they announced that all doctors among the prisoners should report to the ambulance. So, I went over to the ambulance. There was a prisoner doctor there, a Pole, Doctor Zenkeneller. He had the trust of the camp doctor, Doctor Helmersen. This Pole was allowed to examine the prisoners in his presence. I got lucky because I was a doctor, and I was transferred to the ambulance in the quarantine camp. And that was when I actually found out what their goal was. Only then was I able to see clearly how things worked there. Those prisoners from the transports who were able to work were selected, and they were exploited as long as possible. And when they were no longer able to work, they had to be made to disappear somehow. Well, death came quickly enough anyway.

And looking at my statistics here, which I have compiled based on the death records, I can clearly see the enormous number of people who did not even survive the three weeks of quarantine that they spent with us in the camp, sometimes only four weeks. They had already become “Mussulmen,”³² as they would call them! And the *Blockältesten* took advantage of the circumstances. They were all just dead people on vacation. The prisoners were beaten to death, brutally beaten—and yet—the prisoners died too slowly.

And when brutality and hard labor did not kill enough prisoners, well, only then did the camp doctor intervene. The camp doctor did it in an elegant way. Whether winter or summer, he said to the prisoners: “Take off your clothing! Line up in the roll call area!” He then walked through the rows and with a wave of his finger he selected the people that were to be sent to the gas chambers. Well, they did not check the prisoners very carefully and, in five minutes, they selected 500 prisoners. The ones who did not look well, prisoners with wounds, a disfiguring scar, scabies, a boil, anything was enough to be sent to the gas chambers. We did our best. We put make-up on people. We did everything we could to make them look well before selections. We did the best we could.

In the protocol of March 24, 1945, that we mentioned earlier, in the part I named “Camp Pictures”, I described exactly what happened during the selections, how it went, and what people did. I believe it is worthwhile to know how people reacted when they knew they were about to die.

In my daily reports to the camp doctor, I always had to report the number of prisoners. And so it was easy for me after the liberation to say how many prisoners had been sent to die simply by comparing the numbers of prisoners on the days they did selections: on August 29th, 1943, 462, on October 3rd, 139, on October 10th, 327, on October 21st, 219, on November 14th, 167, on December 15th, 338, on January 2nd—this was in 1944—144, on January 15th, 363, on January 22nd, 542, on April 15th, 184, on April 18th, 361.

³² *Muselmann* was a slang term used amongst Jewish prisoners in German Nazi concentration camps to refer to those prisoners suffering from starvation and exhaustion, as well as those who were resigned to their imminent death.

Then came a long break. They were too busy with the Hungarian convoys and did not have time to look after the camp. And on September 19th, they sent 330 victims. That was during the celebration of the Jewish New Year. On October 2nd, 101 victims, on October 7th, 20. They had started already with the evacuation transports. There were fewer and fewer. On October 29th, 64. On March 9th, there were 3,792 men, women, and children from the Theresienstadt camp, who stayed in our camp temporarily, and were then sent to the gas chambers.

I still remember three episodes, events that I will never forget because there were children involved. It was after the large selection on January 21st, and a man among those who had been selected to be sent to the gas chambers, lost his nerve, screamed. So, they sent me from the ambulance to the block to see what I could do about the man.

And there was also a little boy from the town of Będzin who was with us in the camp. And I asked him, “Well, Jurek, how are you?” And he said, “I am not afraid. It’s all so terrible here. It can only be better up there.”

Every three months, two transports came from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz. I only found out later that those prisoners were supposed to stay in our camp for a period of exactly six months. So, after six months, the entirety of the first transport was sent to the gas chambers. The second transport, which arrived three months later, was still in the camp. And I witnessed a *Blockälteste* talking to a nine-year-old boy from the Czech camp on the other side of the fence. He was also from the Theresienstadt camp. And he said to the boy: “Well, Karli, you know a lot!” And then the little boy said: “I know that I know a lot. And I also know that I won’t be able to learn anything anymore. And that’s the sad thing.”

It was already summer when one day, a group of 90 children suddenly arrived at our camp—and we seldom had children at that time. It was always just a coincidence. The ghetto in Kovno³³ had been shut down. The women were sent to Stutthof, and male children with their parents to Dachau. The children were then sent from Dachau to Auschwitz and arrived at my quarantine camp. They stayed there for a while, and then they were killed in the gas chambers. The leader of this group of children was a 14-year-old boy, and he said to them: “Just get in the car. Just get in the car!” And when he was up there and the children began to scream, he said: “Do not scream. You saw your parents and your grandparents killed. Well, now it’s our turn. We’ll see them soon again up there.” And then he said to the SS men: “But do not think that you will get away with this! You will die just like us!” They beat him up, but he said it anyway because he had too. What a brave child!

I mentioned earlier, when I was talking about the selections—that the convoys from Hungary caused a sudden change in the number of people killed. Eichmann was supervising transportation again, and in a day, we would get four, five, six, and on some days even ten transports. There was a lot going on at the ramp. Thousands and thousands of people were killed every day in the gas chambers. The crematoriums were no longer sufficient to burn all the bodies. They started digging

³³ The ghetto of Kovno was a ghetto in the city of Kaunas used to hold the Lithuanian Jews of the city during the war. At its peak, the Ghetto held more than 29,000 people, most of whom were later sent to different concentration and extermination camps.

huge graves in the ground and burning bodies outside of the crematoriums. The fires blazed day and night. At night, the sky was blood-red for a long time. And when the wind was bad, there was a smell of burnt flesh in the camp.

The *Sonderkommando*, which was made up of prisoners assigned to handle the bodies that were accumulating, were too few and had to get reinforcements. The camp doctor, Doctor Thilo, then assigned 400 Greek Jews from the transports arriving from Corfu and Athens to this *Sonderkommando*. Those who refused to do the work when they got there became the first to be sent to the gas chambers. The others then started doing the job. What was their job? The process used to send people to the gas chambers was as follows: Women's hair was cut off, and it was collected for some kind of industrial purpose. A team of so-called "dentists" took the gold dentures out of the mouths of the bodies and collected them—and they did that with great precision. There were various kinds of lists and on these lists they wrote things like: "From body number so and so we took this and that." If the body was from our camp, and it already had a number, they would write an exact protocol stating which gold teeth they had removed. In the crematorium, in the case of transports that had no numbers, it went like this: They would remove the teeth and throw them into a box.

You might ask yourself how it is that I know about this. A prisoner from the *Sonderkommando* who I met very often—I can't remember his name at the moment, I mentioned him here in my notes—he told me every single detail.

And then there was a team of gynecologists. They had the task of looking into the female bodies to see whether they were hiding any valuable objects, money or something else in their genitals. The prisoners who were sent to the camp tried to take things with them, smuggle things in, in order to improve their lot. Those bodies were examined in order to find things in those places as well.

The Hungarian Jews who were chosen to work were then sent to the Gypsy camp, which had been shut down. As I have already told you, there were 1,000 to 1,200 in one block. A convoy of Hungarian women arrived at Camp C, BII³⁴c. And there were up to 2,000 in one block, so they had to sleep in two shifts—one shift by day and one shift by night. They managed to get a few blocks in Section BIII³⁵ ready, which was in the camp to the right of the central camp. They moved those women there. This section was called "Mexico" among the prisoners. The name came from the fact that some of these women were completely naked, some of them were only wearing a shirt. They were often taken to the "sauna" to shower, and they would use some quilts that had come from the transports. And as you know, these quilts usually have bright colors, yellow, purple, red, and green. And those women wandered on the camp roads wrapped in those blankets. With a touch of humor and imagination, they started calling that camp "Mexico."

The women walked past our camp. And on the street that passed our camp—and we could see it very well—that was so important for us because we could see what was going on outside. We could also see when there was a selection in the women's camp, in BI. And when they would load these women on the trucks and take them to the crematorium—mostly to Crematorium IV or V.

³⁴ Birkenau II

³⁵ Birkenau III

We could see these transports passing by our camp, and then at the top of the camp around the corner to the crematorium.

We stood for roll call. And outside, the trucks drove by with the naked women that were screaming. They shouted to us men. They were begging us for help, of course. They were screaming. And we stood there, paralyzed and shivering watching those women. In front of those trucks, at the front, there was a motorcyclist, then a truck, behind that was an SS man on a motorcycle and again a truck, and in that way, they drove in a line.

One day, we saw one of the women jump off the truck, from one of those trucks. The SS man who followed behind on the motorcycle shot her. The next truck stopped, someone got down, picked up the body and threw it back into the truck, and they continued driving. And at the end of this column, there was the Red Cross car. But it was not transporting sick people. It was carrying poisonous gas. It was, I would like to say, the most shameful abuse of this international symbol of human civilization.

I would also like to say something about the gas. It was Zyklon B, hydrogen cyanide. And the gas that was used to gas people was different from what they would normally use. After the liberation, as a member of the Polish inquiry commission, I had the opportunity to inspect the facility used to store this gas. And there we found two types of cans. The first type was a can used to disinfect clothing. They were used in accord with legal requirements. The legal requirement was that every poison gas must be marked with warning signs, so that every person who comes near it is aware of the danger. Here there were serious hazards. The cans that were used in the gas chambers were marked with the following sign: "Caution! No hazard!" Those who had delivered it, and those who used it, knew why they wanted to hide the fact that they were using a dangerous gas.

There were also a number of young people from the convoys of Jews from Hungary who, for whatever reason, because they were strong for their age, were kept alive. I also believe that, because it became so difficult to remove all those dead bodies, the selections on the ramp were no longer so rigorous. And because of that, at some point, there was a group of around 500 young people, all Hungarian boys. Scarlet fever broke out among the children, and they were transferred to my quarantine camp. It was my job to check the children every day, find those suffering from scarlet fever and report them to the camp doctor.

I submitted my first report with the belief that I would have the opportunity to keep the sick children in a separate block and look after them there, isolated from the healthy children. My report to the camp doctor, Doctor Thilo, brought a truck instead, and the children were sent to the gas chambers. So, I decided not to report any children with scarlet fever in the days that followed, and created a kind of isolation area inside the block. And when the camp doctor arrived I said: "No, I have no new cases of scarlet fever." Once, he discovered my isolation area. I said: "No, that's rubella. It's from nervousness."

The camp doctor understood what I was doing, and called a doctor from the prisoner infirmary that he trusted. That doctor was supposed to treat the children from that point on. Then they took these children away from us again. I did not see them for months. Many died because of the selections. And it was not until the end of September that those children who survived were sent

back to me in the quarantine camp, as a so-called “potato squad.” These children had to be at the ramp at six in the morning, had to unload tons of bags of potatoes, carry them into the bunkers and were outside until six in the evening, no matter the weather.

At six o’clock in the evening, they came back so tired and exhausted that they did not even want to eat their food anymore. They fell on their bunks and slept. These children would get sick very easily. And I found a few who survived until the end and were still in the infirmary at the time of the liberation. That infirmary was built for the surviving prisoners. And despite our best efforts, those children died—mostly because of tuberculosis.

To conclude, I would like to comment on something that I mentioned at the beginning—namely, I had initially said that dying in the gas chambers was not just a privilege reserved for the Jews. And I spoke from my own perspective—and if you were to look at the entire camp complex, you would note that I could only see what was going on in the camp from there. I had a view of the ramp from the rear, and I had a view of the street.

Also, I was often obligated to go to another camp to exchange medication or to transfer sick prisoners to the infirmary. And if you—I think they are in your files somewhere here as well—look through the quarantine lists, that is, the convoys that came through my quarantine camp, then you will see from the gaps in the numbers that many, many convoys did not arrive where I was. They arrived at one of the 20 surrounding sub-camps. They all had their own quarantine stations, so that only a relatively small portion of them went through my camp. And yet what I can say about these convoys is that non-Jewish transports were also sent to the gas chambers.

In May 1944, a convoy of 2,000 French prisoners arrived. They were tattooed with numbers from 185,000 to 186,000. They were brought to the neighboring Camp B. The sick ones were brought to us in the camp. After a few days, the French prisoners were out of our camp as well as from BIIb and sent to the gas chambers.

I remember one particular episode from these transports. Among the sick prisoners there was a priest. And when they arrived at our camp, the *Rapportführer* Kurpanik came to check them at the entrances and discovered the priest’s cross on his chest. He tore it off, stomped on it, and beat the man until he was left bleeding on the ground.

I can tell you about a second transport that arrived with seriously injured Russian prisoners of war from the Viljandi camp in Estonia. This transport arrived on January 28th, 1943, with 334 men.

Presiding Judge:

When was it, Dr. Wolken?

Witness Otto Wolken:

28th November 1943.

Presiding Judge:

November.

Witness Otto Wolken:

November, yes. I said February because I confused the number 11 with the number 2. 334 men. All of them were injured because of the war. On December 10th, late in the evening, they took this whole group away on several trucks, all 334, and allegedly transferred them to Lublin. We did not see any transports departing, and we paid attention to those things.

And when the Lublin camp was shut down in April 1944, and the prisoners from that camp were transferred to our camp, naturally we asked about the Russian prisoners. I mentioned at the beginning that there were two Russian doctors in my clinic. Those two were military doctors who worked in my clinic. We all were particularly concerned about the fate of those Russian prisoners. They never made it to Lublin. We kind of knew it. When they picked up prisoners late at night, with trucks, then you knew that they were up to something bad.

Because, when they wanted to transfer prisoners to another camp—and prisoners were often transferred from our camp to work somewhere in Germany—one time they transferred a watchmaker, another time a mechanic, they did it during the day. When the camp doctor was looking for workers for a labor camp somewhere in the Reich, he would come and select the people himself. The day after they had been selected, I had to go to the “sauna” with these people. After a shower, they received new clothes, and I had to take their temperature with my doctors. They were only allowed to leave if they did not have a fever. So, if they arrived at night, and loaded prisoners onto trucks, they certainly weren’t transferring prisoners to another camp.

About the true mortality rate in the camp, I already mentioned that I was able to save my notes. And I had no legal interest in that material, but I was interested in statistical research. So, I tried to put everything I had in terms of materials into some kind of scientific order. As a member of the investigative commission in Krakow, I found a fascicle in a half-burned barrack with the title “Transportation of Jews, Not Photographed.” And this fascicle contained the complete list of 15 convoys carrying Jews from different neighboring areas. The list contained the date of the transportation, the name of the prisoner, the prisoner number he received, his date and place of birth. And next to this information, there was another number and a date. Because of my comrades—many survived from that time, and for me there were many, I knew some who had these numbers—I was able to determine that all of them, or at least all of those I knew, had no number next to their information.

And during the investigation, it turned out that there was a hardworking clerk in the photography office who entered the daily death reports from the list. And when they said: “Well, we do not need to photograph him anymore, he is dead”, he wrote the date of death on the picture. And based on these lists, I was then able to make a calculation. What was going on with these convoys? The first of these convoys arrived on April 21st, 1942, the last on July 17th.

Presiding Judge:

In what year?

Witness Otto Wolken:

1942. All 15 of these convoys are from the year 1942. Unfortunately, this prisoner was apparently killed in August because these entries stop on August 15th. From August 15th on there are no more

entries. It is interesting to note that for each of these convoys, the survivors were reported on August 15th—transport number one: 973 arrived, of those only 88 are still alive on August 15th. Transport number two: 464, ten are alive on August 15th. Transport number three: 543, 41 still alive. Transport number four: 442, 23 alive. I mean, always on August 15th. Transport six: 1,000, 53 live. Transport seven: an even 1,000, 217 live. This transport arrived relatively late, the seventh one. And that may not sound interesting, but it also shows the nationality of these people and how resilient they were, which was very interesting to see. The majority of these people died in a relatively short time. But when you look through the list, there is something else that is interesting and noteworthy—I'll give you some numbers briefly: On April 12th, there were—

Presiding Judge:

Wait a moment, Dr. Wolken. Weren't those the people who were killed in the gas chambers? So, according to the numbers you read, it turns out that roughly between five and ten percent were still alive, and the rest died.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Excuse me?

Presiding Judge:

Weren't these the people were selected for work and survived, and the others, the ones who had been evaluated as unfit for work, sent to the gas chambers?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Sorry, I may not have explained myself very clearly. Those were people who were sent to the gas chambers right after the selection.

Presiding Judge:

I see.

Witness Otto Wolken:

They had a number and were working in the work commando. And I have a second statistic that shows the daily number of deaths from each of those transports.

Presiding Judge:

From the camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, only from those fifteen transports.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, but those were people that had been declared fit for work from the transport—

Witness Otto Wolken:

They were assigned to different sections in the camp. I am sorry, but it might be that, for example, this one convoy, which had a relatively low mortality rate, was working in some particularly good

unit. Well, there is one other interesting thing to mention: One day there were no deaths from these transports. It was June 17th, 1942. That was the day on which Himmler came to inspect the camp.

Presiding Judge:

I see.

Witness Otto Wolken:

And now I would like to talk about events that happened in the quarantine camp. To begin, I would like to say that I wrote this "Chronicle of the Camp," which you also saw, immediately after the liberation. I wrote down those things that were fresh in my mind back then, that I could remember very clearly. And I did not write it to incriminate or hurt anyone, but as a purely historical chronicle.

At that time, I did not even think that one day, we would have an Auschwitz trial or anything like it. And I wrote down what I could remember. To help my memory, I used the death reports that I had with me, and the list with the transfers to the infirmary. And if I am going to mention facts from this chronicle, it is by no means complete, because I really only wrote down what I could remember, what I could remember very clearly. I did not write down many of the incidents that had to do with murder and with serious, deadly injuries. Those that were less impressive, those are the ones I could not remember afterwards. But, if you compare the number of fatalities mentioned here in this chronicle with those in the statistics that are also available to you, the death statistics, namely those prisoners who were brutally killed, then you will see that there are no names. That means that I no longer know why a particular prisoner died back then and what that was. I did not remember and couldn't write about it afterwards.

And then, I put all this data together chronologically, just as things happened. After a short introduction that described the conditions in the camp in general terms, I started writing about all the incidents that I could remember. And there is the first incident that I reported. That was particularly shocking for me. At that time, we were standing for roll call and watched what they were doing with a transport with Polish prisoners from Lviv.

We were standing there in the area for roll call, and I already said that roll call always took place between two blocks, the space between two blocks was also the roll call area for these blocks. The thing with the Polish prisoners happened across from us, on the other side of the road, on the open space between the electric fence and the camp road. There was an open field in our camp, at exactly the point in which there was a second row of barracks in the other camps. The Polish prisoners were standing there, and that was where everything happened. And we could all see what was going on while we were standing there. We were standing in silence. Because nobody could help, and a riot or something similar would have been pure madness. And so, we saw how people were chased out of the transport, forced to do "sport," and beaten. At first, they were only beating them up. Because of that, the prisoners scattered, everyone wanted to avoid being beaten, so they started to run. And that is when they start shooting them. The *Rapportführer* himself and his *Blockführer* were the ones shooting.

Presiding Judge:

Do you remember their names?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Kurpanik, Dargelis, Weiß, Baretzki.

Presiding Judge:

Did you see them yourself?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I saw them with my own eyes. And I would like to say this once again: these are fresh memories, and I am ready to swear that that is what I saw everywhere. I also wrote this at a time when I had no idea that there would ever be a trial. I wrote it down from memory as it happened. And as you can see, there were often long pauses before I started writing about the next episode I could remember.

On October 19th, 1943, in the evening, the lights were cut off in the camp. It was some kind of short circuit. The guards on the watchtowers got nervous. They were supposed to guard a camp with tens of thousands of people. They were alone in their watchtowers and began to shoot like crazy into the camp. To this day, I still can't be sure how I managed to save myself from that situation. I was on the way from the office where I received the reports to give to the camp doctor. And when they started shooting and the bullets were flying—I was on the camp road—I ran to the next block to get to a safe place.

I opened the gate. And as I opened the heavy gate—those were huge wooden gates—a prisoner who had probably been helping in the kitchen, and got a bowl of soup, came running up to me, pushed me to the side and slipped in front of me. I followed him, and I closed the door, and we stood there in the darkness. Somebody started screaming, and then suddenly the lights came on again. The poor man with the soup was dead on the floor. A bullet that had passed through the gate just next to my head, and had, it seems, been misshapen by the iron bolt it had struck and tore off the top of his skull. And in front of us stood someone who was still screaming. And then we knew why he was screaming. The same bullet, or maybe a different bullet, had taken an eye out of his head. It was prisoner Einhorn, Josef. Number 135,415. On October 25th, 1943—as revenge for the *Lagerführer* Schillinger, who had been killed the day before—they started shooting into our camp with machine guns. We were outside, across the street.

I do not know if you know this story already. A transport which was said to be carrying American Jews arrived. So, these people had somehow obtained American visas and were therefore considered Americans. Their transport should have arrived in Switzerland. Instead of going to Switzerland, they ended up in Auschwitz. Among those people, there was a woman who came from the areas near Auschwitz, and therefore knew what was going on. Or, according to another version of the story, she had already been in the camp and had escaped, we did not really know. And this woman started warning those people: "Be careful, we're in Auschwitz. They are going to kill us." And when they were put into a bunker, they refused to undress. The *Lagerführer* Schillinger went in to persuade them, and the woman took a gun from him, shot him and injured

others as well. I was not there. We only heard that from other people. This is true. The gentlemen from the SS who are here will testify that this really happened.

In the camp, the story, the exact circumstances that they recounted were: They shot them while naked and then they sent them to the gas chambers. In revenge, they opened fire on our camp, and that resulted in 13 deaths and four prisoners seriously injured. I have listed the names of those who were seriously injured by name as well as a number of people who were less seriously injured. After Schillinger's death, the conditions in the camp suddenly improved. That crazy Tinn, the *Lagerälteste*, who was perhaps the brains behind it, or at least an active participant in the "rabbit hunts," the "sporting activities," and the torture, went away. And then another *Lagerälteste* arrived who was a calmer and more level-headed man, and the camp became quieter. Even if the guards continued attacking the prisoners.

Kurpanik stayed. He was the *Rapportführer* who committed many atrocities over and over again. And the atrocities he committed are unimaginable. A *Blockälteste*—I have already mentioned him, his name was Oftringer, a German—made a bet with Kurpanik for a bottle of schnapps. The bet was that the Kurpanik would be unable to shoot a person in the neck from a distance of 50 paces. After making the bet, they placed a bowl 50 paces from the block, and then they called a prisoner and told him: "Go get the bowl!" Well, he ran over to get the bowl, you heard a bang, and the prisoner was dead on the ground. He won the bet. That happened. And I saw that myself, that it happened. Kurpanik has already paid for what he did.

On August 29th, 1943, they carried out a selection, 462 prisoners. I've already told you about it. I will tell you about it again, only this one time. On December 5th, 1943, a transport arrived from Flossenbürg or Flossenburg, in Bavaria. Originally, those prisoners should have been sent to the gas chamber, but in the meantime, they avoided using the gas chambers to kill Aryans, and so they came to our camp. They loaded 1,200 men from Flossenbürg. Of them, only 948 arrived at the camp alive. About 80 of them, the ones who were weakest, were ordered by the SS men to lie on the ground. I wrote "the *Lagerführer*" here, but if I have to testify here in court, I will have to say that I did not see them giving that order myself. Anyway, they made these 80 prisoners lie down on what was called Holzhof, that place between the—

Presiding Judge:

The washroom and the other barracks?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is correct. There was a strip like this that ran between the last two barracks and the other barracks. It was an open space. They put the prisoners there, and then they gave the order, and the *Blockälteste* came and poured water on them so that they would die from frostbite more quickly. At night, all the people that worked in the ambulance with me, we heard the groans because that was next to us. We were nearby.

And when it got quiet in the camp, we sneaked out and started poking the bodies trying to figure out who we could save. Which of the prisoners could we drag out of there? So, we found several of them and dragged them to the block where their other comrades were staying. We left 33 of them lying there, we had to leave them where they were. There was no point in trying to save them.

But the next morning, we found someone who had buried himself under three other bodies, who was trying to warm himself under the other bodies. He was still alive, but when we brought him onto the block, he died in our arms.

These people who came from Flossenbürg looked so terrible that even the camp doctor, Doctor Thilo, who was very diligent in his selection of prisoners, was shocked. And he ordered us to take special care of these people. And I was in charge of giving him a special daily report about them. From those transports, from this convoy, and based on the reports that I wrote, which are still in their original form in the museum at Auschwitz, I can get copies of them...The order from the camp doctor came on the 18th; on the 5th they arrived, on the 18th the camp doctor gave the order to take care of them. And then, that day, only 799 were still alive. On January 18, only 571 were alive, on February 18, 393. If you want to know the condition these people were in, I've selected a few: Prisoner 87,078, 180 centimeters tall, 43 kilos; 95,433, 175 centimeters tall, 39 and five tenths of a kilo; 17,132, 1.80, 36.5 kilograms; 16,6400, 1.73, 39 kilos, 16.6000—

Presiding Judge:

Well, we do not want to go through them all. So, you are saying that the majority of these prisoners were completely malnourished, and that means—

Witness Otto Wolken:

Completely malnourished. I had someone under 28 kg.

Presiding Judge:

28 Kg.

Witness Otto Wolken:

On December 15th, there was another selection in the camp. On December 20th, a cold wind, a blizzard, made standing for the roll call almost unbearable, especially because of the inadequate clothes and the bad shoes without stocks. The *Rapportführer*, Kurpanik, whom I have already mentioned, was angry about the prisoners not standing up correctly during the roll call and punished them. One of them tried to flee and was shot in the back. After three days, a gunshot wound in a prisoner's arm led to massive swelling and inflammation, and the prisoners had to be sent to the hospital. Four of those prisoners had to be transferred to the infirmary with phlegmon in days that followed. That was on December 23rd, and on January 2nd there was another selection with 144 victims, and on January 15th a selection with 363 victims.

Presiding Judge:

Dr. Wolken, we know about these mass selections. You have already told us when they took place. We can't talk about them all here. We would like for you to talk about specific episodes that you witnessed. That would be preferable.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I can. I wrote about it in the "Chronicle." It happened after a couple of days. Then, on January 22nd, they killed more people in the gas chambers. There had been another shooting, a few days earlier. On Block 14, we had a very nice *Blockälteste*, a French Jew who had the ominous name Unglik Szaja. He bribed an SS truck driver. He was supposed to take him out of the camp in a

wooden box and help him escape. So, this man tried that with that SS man, and Szaja disappeared into his car. In the evening, Szaja was brought back dead. We learned that he had made it to the garage. There the SS man shot him and reported that he had hidden in the truck without his knowledge and then attacked him. That is why he shot him there. His body was brought back to our camp.

We had to stand for the roll call for a very, very long time. The body of Unglik was tied to an armchair and put on the camp street so that we could always see him. On the morning of the next day, they brought the armchair with his body over to the BIId, to the labor camp, almost in front of the place where the camp band used to play. When the work unit marched out to go to work, the band would play, and when they came back, the band would play again. They positioned Unglik on the armchair on the other side of camp street, in front of the band. They wanted to make clear to all the prisoners what would happen if they tried to escape. And the band played music to accompany it.

On February 17th, the prisoner Klismann was hit on the head by the SS man Weiß. He had fracture of the top of his skull.

Then the *Blockälteste* Katarzyński and Karasiewicz met with the people from Flossenbürg, about whom I talked earlier, to discuss their condition, since they were emaciated and starving. They had complained that their rations had been stolen. And that is an issue I haven't told you about yet. I told you about the fact that people were stealing things from storage and from everywhere else. So, when the food finally arrived in the block, the *Blockälteste*, who knew nothing about that, started to divide what was left of the food. They had square loaves of bread, a quarter per head, and they looked for the smallest pieces, and from these small pieces, they cut a slice out of each piece in the middle. And the leftover parts from left and right, they were cut in half. And that was given out as a portion of bread.

The room attendants and some *Kapos* and some special prisoners, they would get three or four thick slices instead of the quarter portion of bread that they had cut out. And there were whole loaves of bread leftover for the *Blockälteste* that he used to do business within the camp. Because you couldn't do business with slices of bread, only with whole loaves. When the margarine arrived, it was already pre-cut into little pieces by the administration. These pieces were also cut from all four sides, and instead of a long piece, they would only give out a small one, which was the tail-end of those pieces. And these people complained that their food was being stolen from them and that they were going to die because of it. And then, their block's *Blockälteste*—that was Karasiewicz, that was block 15, and his good friend, Katarzyński, who was sentenced to life in prison in Poland because of how he behaved in the camp—they rushed over there. And in the presence of the *Rapportführer* Kurpanik, those who had complained were punished for their complaints. Then there were a number of injured prisoners, some with gluteal phlegmons and so on.

On March 9th, that was an episode with the 3,752 prisoners from the Theresienstadt camp, who only stayed in our camp for a short time and then were sent to the gas chambers. In the middle of March, 184 Dutch Jews, women with children who had been taken away from some monasteries or something—these were what remained of the Dutch Jews—came to our camp. They were not

added to our camp's count. They stayed for only a few days. And then something strange happened. These Dutch Jews arrived with children. Then, the camp doctor ordered milk for the children. The children were given milk, but after two days, they were sent to the gas chambers. That is what happened to them.

On April 9th, 1944, the first transport arrived from Lublin. So, the front was moving closer, from the east, and the camps farthest to the east were being shut down. 1,725 prisoners. They were on the road for eight days without water. I do not know how many deaths there were on that transport. 99 of them had died already when they were loaded into the trucks to be transported to our camp. So, we had 99 corpses in the trucks when the prisoners arrived. And on the first night, another 86 died. There was a very small morgue. There was no room for all these bodies. And so, they piled them up against the wall in front of Block 2, a huge mountain of bodies, until they picked them up, and disposed of them like they used to do with the other dead prisoners. The clothing worn by the dead was infested with lice, and among them there were many prisoners with typhus. And that was the only time when our camp looked like a real hospital. The blocks were suddenly turned into blocks for sick prisoners so that typhus did not spread from there, and the lice were kept away from the rest of the camp. And as I said on Monday, that transport was the reason why I finally managed to get the camp doctor to get a mobile disinfection station with a shower and so on into the camp, which worked for some time.

On April 15th, then the thing happened with that convoy with prisoners who were supposed to be sent to the gas chambers. Those prisoners were horribly tortured by Dargelis and Baretzki. As I have told you already, we could see what was going on through cracks in the doors.

Presiding Judge:

When was it?

Witness Otto Wolken:

On April 15th, 1944. On April 18th, 1944, we had another tragedy in the camp. 299 girls and two infants from the Lublin camp arrived at our camp. People like me who worked in the ambulance, were given the task of examining them to see if they were in good health. They were all very healthy young people. They were supposed to stay with us only temporarily and then they would be transferred to the women's camp. A special commando picked them up late in the evening and made them walk. When they did that, when they picked up prisoners at night and made them walk, we knew that they weren't being transferred to another camp. And for hours, we could hear the desperate screams of those girls coming from the crematorium, who knew what was about to happen to them. We also heard the shouts and the shooting from the guards that were with them. We couldn't see anything. We could only guess what was going on there. We knew they were going into the gas chambers when we saw the special commando.

On April 12th, the prisoner Hromoyev, who wanted to protect his brother from mistreatment by an SS man, was stabbed by him. I can't say who the SS man was. I do not know. I am just reporting the facts.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Your Honor, I apologize. I would just like to draw your attention to the fact that I have been following the testimony of this witness and comparing it with what there is in this book, “Auschwitz. Testimonials and Reports.” I have to say that, for the most part, it corresponds word by word.

Presiding Judge:

I see. And?

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

A witness must testify from memory and cannot read. I would say that this is not a testimony anymore. I am ready to show the court immediately which of the statements have been read by the witness in the last ten minutes.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Laternser—

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I am just saying that this is not a real testimony.

Presiding Judge:

For his testimony, the witness is using his own notes. We discussed this during the last meeting. We have also established that, according to case law of the Federal Court of Justice and the Reich Court of Justice, the use of one’s own notes by a witness is permitted. If the witness has already published the notes that he has made and these have been printed, then of course, there may be some overlap in the wording. I do not see any wrongdoing on his part in relation to his right to testify using that.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Yes, and I am reporting this and asking that the court include my complaint in the minutes.

Presiding Judge:

Agreed. Defense attorney Laternser complains that some of the statements made by the witness Dr. Wolken coincide literally with a book in his possession entitled *Witnesses of Auschwitz*.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

No, “witnesses and testimonies.”

Presiding Judge:

“Witnesses and testimonies.” Please, continue. And, to clarify, you are referring here—as you told us last time—to your own notes, written by you...No, you no longer need it.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Excuse me, your Honor.

Presiding Judge:

You already showed it to us last time.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I wrote them in 1945.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, you have already given it to the court, and yes, your handwriting corresponds to these notes.

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

Director, I would like you to add to the minutes that the book that Mr. Laternser is talking about, was written by the witness.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, that is correct. Dr. Wolken, did you write this book?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I have published my notes in this book—I also own it—which appeared under my name. We also have—

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

The witness's statements...and what Laternser is saying.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I would like you to make sure that when Mr. Kaul is talking about me that he addresses me with "Mister" and does not just use my last name "Laternser" [Laughter in the hall].

Presiding Judge:

I call you all to order! Under no circumstances do I want to hear such complaints here. The lawyer, Dr. Laternser, has the right to be addressed as "Mister." That is clear. To be put in the minutes: In response to this complaint, the witness Dr. Wolken stated that he was only reading or, in order to aid his memory, was referring to the notes which he himself wrote in 1945 and which he later published in a book. That is all, and you can now proceed.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. On April 19th, 1944, the prisoner Liczka, Mihail, because he did offer a greeting in the way that we were supposed to, was beaten with a stick by the SS man Baretzki in such a way that he died of nephritis with severe hematuria.

Presiding Judge:

Hematuria. That is a severe bleeding in the urine.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Bleeding in the kidneys.

Presiding Judge:

Right, bleeding in the kidneys.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. Hematuria. Translated into German. Hematuria.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, hematuria.

Witness Otto Wolken:

On April 26th, when another prisoner was about to pick dandelion leaves from the pond, he was killed by three gunshots from the guard.

Presiding Judge:

Well, Dr. Wolken, we are mainly interested in these specific episodes in this trial. Especially when it comes to people who have been accused here. And so, I would first like to ask you: Do you know any of the defendants personally?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Personally, I know—I should say—I only know Baretzki. I haven't seen him since then.

Presiding Judge:

Did you know him back then?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, back then I knew him personally.

Presiding Judge:

What was his position back then?

Witness Otto Wolken:

He was a *Blockführer*.

Presiding Judge:

Of which block?

Witness Otto Wolken:

So, the *Blockführer*, they were each assigned to different blocks. In our camp, a *Blockführer* had to take the reports from a number of blocks, and they changed. One day we had one *Blockführer* come, and on another day, someone else.

Presiding Judge:

Was not the *Blockführer* in charge of a particular block?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No. I believe that in all Birkenau, we had maybe three or four *Blockführer*. I really do not know. There were eight blocks.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, in all Birkenau.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Presiding Judge:

And in the quarantine camp, how many *Blockführer* were there?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I meant, in the quarantine camp there were only three or four *Blockführer*.

Presiding Judge:

And the accused Baretzki was also in the quarantine camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, he was.

Presiding Judge:

In your quarantine camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I knew him already because he had also been *Blockführer* in the D-camp.

Presiding Judge:

In which camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

In D, as in David.

Presiding Judge:

D, Dora. Ah, that was where you were staying temporarily and then transferred?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, yes.

Presiding Judge:

I see. You knew him personally and also by name, so there is no room for confusion whatsoever. Let's continue now. During the time you were there, that is to say from mid-1943, the defendant Boger was there initially in the Political Department. Had you ever heard of or seen him before?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I was only a simple prisoner there. I was only a doctor.

Presiding Judge:

That could have been possible.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I did not have anything to do with the elite in the camp.

Presiding Judge:

The defendant Dylewski was there too? Have you ever heard of him?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No.

Presiding Judge:

The defendant Broad was there too.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I do not know him either.

Presiding Judge:

You did not know him either. What about the defendant Schobert?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I do not know him either.

Presiding Judge:

You did not know him either. There was also the *Schutzhaftlagerführer* Hofmann. What about him?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not know him.

Presiding Judge:

You do not?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not. You see, the names—if Schillinger hadn't been shot, I wouldn't have found out his name. It was only through the things that were going on that we discovered that there was a Schillinger. After him came a—

Presiding Judge:

Well, that may be so, and I believe you, because those people did not introduce themselves. I can imagine.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Schwarzhuber. After Schillinger came Schwarzhuber.

Presiding Judge:

Ok, then there was the *Rapportführer* Kaduk.

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not know him.

Presiding Judge:

You did not know him.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I want to add now, however, that I believe that Klehr is also among the defendants.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, he is.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I met him in the “sauna.”

Presiding Judge:

Oh, we will talk about him soon. Then there is Bischoff. Did you know him?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not know him.

Presiding Judge:

You did not know him. Then, Doctor Lucas?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not know him.

Presiding Judge:

He was not there at the time; he arrived in 1944. What about the dentist Frank?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not know him.

Presiding Judge:

Then Klehr. You just said that. What did you know about Klehr?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, he was working in disinfection. And I had an issue with him at the time because I told the camp doctor that people were arriving already infested with lice. He denied that.

Presiding Judge:

I see.

Witness Otto Wolken:

As I said, from my perspective, he was, shall we say, known in the camp as a dangerous man, so to speak, but I cannot say anything from my own experience.

Presiding Judge:

You did not hear anything from other prisoners either?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No.

Presiding Judge:

More than saying that was “famous” in the camp, you can’t add anything else?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I can’t.

Presiding Judge:

You can’t tell us details—

—Break—

Presiding Judge:

So, you said that the following day, the defendant Baretzki also took part in it. Beating people, also shooting them. And that a number of people were killed that night as a result of the shooting. Can’t you give us an exact number?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I can’t.

Presiding Judge:

But it was more than one, correct?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, more than one.

Presiding Judge:

Could you tell us the names of these SS men again?

Witness Otto Wolken:

That was Kurpanik, Baretzki. There was Weiß and Dargelis.

Presiding Judge:

And did you see them yourself?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did.

Presiding Judge:

And you said, this all happened on October 4th, 1943.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Presiding Judge:

And you saw how these SS men first hit the prisoners with clubs, and then every prisoner that tried to avoid being struck was shot.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. They tried to avoid the blows, and they scattered, and some of them started to run.

Presiding Judge:

They scattered and some of them started running.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. They started running and then they shot at them.

Presiding Judge:

And did you see that the defendant Baretzki was also involved in the shooting on this occasion?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. They were all shooting.

Presiding Judge:

And did you see that the defendant Baretzki was also involved in the shooting?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. This happened about 20 years ago, and you are asking me for so many details—

Presiding Judge:

You have to understand, Dr. Wolken. And this is a question that you may not be able to understand straight away—I do not know whether it is actually a question for a witness—but I

would at least like to ask you: What was it actually? The meaning of these barracks for the sick—or what would you call them?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Infirmaries.

Presiding Judge:

Infirmaries, yes. What was the point of these buildings? I have heard so many contradictory things that I do not really understand what it means. People reported being sick. They were sent to the infirmary. As you have told us, you took care of them as well as you could, and gave them medicine. Some even received special food because we heard from one of the defendants that there was a designated kitchen for that.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is correct.

Presiding Judge:

And then, they went through the selections.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Sent to the gas chambers.

Presiding Judge:

And sent to the gas chambers.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Presiding Judge:

So, why did they have an infirmary at all? Maybe it was only to look good from the outside for visitors or for other occasions.

—Break—

Witness Otto Wolken:

During their time in the camp, they knew: Going to the infirmary, that meant a quicker death. It was better to stay where they were.

Presiding Judge:

I see.

Witness Otto Wolken:

And because of that, we also had a number of sick people in the quarantine camp. We also had the same people working there, and they did not want to go to the infirmary.

Presiding Judge:

Yes. Now, Dr. Wolken, there is one more thing to clarify. During your interrogation, you talked multiple times about the fact that they did these so-called “hare hunts” on a regular basis. And once, during your interrogation, you estimated that around 30 prisoners were killed because of these events.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did.

Presiding Judge:

And you said that a large number of these prisoners were not killed, but were, to greater or lesser degree, seriously injured. And you estimate that about 90 percent of these seriously injured prisoners also died.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is correct.

Presiding Judge:

When you first talked about this, you made the following statement, namely—write in the record: Keep the witness away from his interrogation on November 14, 1960, page 6.94941—you said the following: “This statement is important because I am accusing Baretzki, Weiss, Dargelis and Kurpanik of having killed many prisoners through their brutal behavior. I am also able to give the names and prisoner numbers of those involved.” Does this statement refer to what you have described to us, (a) with regard to these eleven prisoners, and (b) with regard to these 184 prisoners who were transported at the time?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, this refers to the entirety of the thing that I included in my chronicles.

—Break—

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

It is possible that they are accusing him of other things. However, these things are coming up here at this moment. I just wanted to point that out as a precaution.

Presiding Judge:

I see, Mr. Gerhardt.

—Break—

Presiding Judge:

That was exactly what you were supposed to tell us here. Did you know the defendant Dr. Capesius?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I did not know him.

Presiding Judge:

Have you ever talked to Dr. Mandel in Vienna?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did.

Presiding Judge:

And...?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Doctor Josef Mandel is now an assistant at the Jewish hospital in Vienna. He is a heart specialist and comes from Slovakia. And he once told me in a conversation: "You know, I was very surprised. I arrived there in Auschwitz, and we got on the ramp, and suddenly someone greets me: "Oh, doctor, are you here too?" That was Capesius. He was a representative of IG Farben in Czechoslovakia, so he knew me from back then. That's all.

Presiding Judge:

Well, Dr. Wolken, you told us that you did not know Doctor Capesius.

Witness Otto Wolken:

No.

Presiding Judge:

And you said that he did not have anything to do with the infirmary.

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, we received our medicines from the infirmary. There was a prisoner there who was in charge of distributing medicines. And how he got those medicines, I do not know.

Presiding Judge:

So, you do not know anything specifically about him. I might have one more question to ask. But I think I can put it on hold until all the other questions have been asked. There is one more question. You told us the other day that you could see what was going on on the ramp from time to time, but the train practically stood between you and what was happening on the ramp. This should have more or less blocked your view, and what you could see. You said, you saw what happened there through the gaps in the train or under the train.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did. I would like to add: We had people arriving at the camp from the ramp every day, and everyone told us the same thing. So we were, so to speak, informed exactly about what was going on out there, thanks to the unanimous statements of all prisoners who came to us in the camp. Even if we hadn't seen it ourselves, we'd heard a lot about it, we were, so to speak, aware through word of mouth. The prisoners came and talked about it.

Presiding Judge:

Do you also know who oversaw the selections?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Those were the SS doctors.

Presiding Judge:

How do you know that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

The prisoners were saying that. A doctor came.

Presiding Judge:

So, the prisoners would say that. Do you know if someone else other than the doctors was involved in the selections?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I do not know.

Presiding Judge:

You do not know that, and that is ok. Then I will stop my questions now and ask the public prosecutor to ask the witness his questions.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Dr. Wolken, first of all, would you explain again why you ended up in Auschwitz in the first place? What was the reason they sent you to the concentration camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. I was a member of a group of socialists. We recently had the 30th anniversary of the fascistization of Austria. So, in Austria, which was a fascist state, the social democratic party to which I belonged was banned and the workers' organizations were dissolved. I was the founder of the Austrian labor maritime movement. I founded Samaritan groups everywhere, gave lectures and worked for the Republican Protection Association.

—Break—

Witness Otto Wolken:

I became an illegal socialist. I was the leader of a group of illegal socialists. And some, or one or two of my people, just weren't patient enough to wait until things got better. They turned to the National Socialists, not for ideological reasons, but because they were angry with the fascist government in Austria and believed—and they were right to believe that, as history has taught

us—that with the help of the National Socialists, you can make the fascists in Austria pay for what they did to us. And they became Nazis. And then, when the Nazis arrived, one of those people revealed that I was leading a group of people.

It was of course an illegal group, the members did not know each other, only I knew everyone. And they wanted me to tell them who these people were. I was tortured by the Gestapo until someone gave me some advice: “Go and say you’ve done something. Say you stole something. Say anything so that you can get away. So that you can get to a court, because there is still a lot going on at the court, but at least you’re done with the Gestapo.”

So, I said: “Very well, I committed fraud through my health insurance company.” I was then transferred to the ordinary court, and they started investigating my case. When they started checking my bills, they found abortions, which I had charged correctly to the health insurance company on the basis of the documents that were there and medical certificates. Nevertheless, I was tried and sentenced. The colleagues who wrote those certificates were all Aryan. They were not called to court. They simply said that they had done it out of courtesy. And my objection to the verdict was rejected. And on top of that—not just because I was political—I was also a Jew. And now I was also a criminal, and that’s how I arrived at—

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

So, you arrived at the camp in custody, that is, with a warrant?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did. “The above-mentioned person’s behavior endangers the security of the people and of the state and is therefore to be taken into protective custody. Signed: Kaltenbrunner.”

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And if I understood you correctly, did not you go through a selection process when you arrived at Auschwitz?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I did not.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Was it a smaller transport then?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, it was a collective transport.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

First you arrived at the main camp in Auschwitz, in quarantine, and then immediately afterwards in the quarantine camp.

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, in the interim I was in D.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

I see. You were in D. How long did you stay there? Do you still remember that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I was there for five weeks.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

I see. So, did you arrive at the quarantine camp in the summer of 1943?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Is that right? Summer of 1943?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, at the end of the summer.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

How long did you stay there?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Until after the liberation. It happened like this: On the night of January 18th, suddenly at midnight—we had a night watch there in the camp. He always went around and brought the newspaper from the *Blockführer* room. We had a subscription to that newspaper. My turn was always at one o'clock in the morning. That's when I got the newspaper and got the latest news, as far as you could get reliable news from the German newspapers.

Well, he hadn't been gone even an hour—half an hour after he got the newspaper—that we suddenly heard the gong at midnight. "Everyone get up! All nurses and doctors line up immediately!" Well, I got up too and got dressed and thought: What's going on now? The nurses and doctors were already lining up, but first I wanted to know what was going on. It was an air raid alarm. The camp was completely dark. So, I went quietly to where I could hear voices, and I saw the SS men with flashlights. There were nurses and doctors too. They were counting them. And one of the SS men shouted: "Quick, quick, quick! Hurry the hell up! Do you think we'll wait until the Russians get here?" Then I thought: Aha. I do not need to hurry. And then I went back to my room again. On the way, when I was still back there, I heard them counting to 100: "About-face! March!" And they marched off. They no longer needed to take care of the rest, and everybody stayed behind.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Did you also say that you were in BIIIf at that time, or did I misunderstand you?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Oh yes. The quarantine camp BIIa was shut down on November 3rd, 1944. More specifically, the camp was closed on November 1st, 1943, and I was transferred to F on November 3rd, 1944—on November 4th, 1944, please excuse my mistake. On November 4th, 1944, another convoy with 990 Jews arrived suddenly from the Sered camp³⁶. It should have gone somewhere else but was sent to Auschwitz by mistake. As soon as they arrived, they went to the quarantine camp. And the camp doctor instructed me to go over there with some other prisoners and stay there until those people were taken away. And so, I stayed with them there for three days and then came back and was then in hospital BIIIf, block 12.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Good. Was section BIIIf an infirmary only for the prisoners from Birkenau, or did they also send prisoners there from other camps?

Witness Otto Wolken:

We got people from Monowitz. I do not know if that was the rule. But we had people from Monowitz there, and from other neighboring camps as well.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And did they come there to be taken care of, or why did they send them there?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Well, I should say the following about that: November 1st, 1944—we had the uprising in October 1944 in Crematorium III. After that, they started dismantling the crematoriums. They were using the gas chambers less and less. They did not hold selections anymore, and everything was ready for demolition. At the time, they only came to our camp to be treated.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

You arrived at BIIIf after November 1st, 1944. By then had they stopped using the gas chambers?

Witness Otto Wolken:

That is correct. They weren't using them anymore. I had been there several times before because I had to take the sick prisoners there. And when I wanted to go for a walk, sometimes I accompanied those prisoners personally, and did not send someone else to do it. And at the time, no, they weren't using them anymore because everyone knew that the Jewish blocks in the infirmary were emptied out about every 14 days.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Did you see the prisoners that you sent there come back after they had recovered, for example? Or did you not see them again afterwards?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I did not see any of those people later because if one of those prisoners managed to recover, his quarantine time was up. Then he was taken to the men's camp if he survived the treatment.

³⁶ Sered was a labor and transit camp built by the Nazis in the Slovak Republic in 1941.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And how do you know that before November 1st, 1944—before you arrived—that during that time they carried out a selection in the infirmary every 14 days?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I went there often.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Did you see it yourself?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did, and people talked about it too. The prisoners were afraid to come to us in the ambulance. Those who had been in the camp a long time, and who knew what was going on, did not call in sick because they were afraid to be placed in the infirmary, and from there be sent to the gas chambers. They preferred to stay in the camp with the others. During a selection, which lasts a minute or so, if you pull yourself together a bit and stand straight, you couldn't see that someone had a fever. You couldn't see that someone was sick if he did not have any external signs, and he could get through. But if he was lying there with a case history of typhus, then it was over. So, the people went into hiding, many of them hid their illnesses so that they wouldn't be sent to the infirmary. And we tried to avoid sending many people there, if there was a possibility of keeping them in the camp and treating them as outpatients—because we knew what would happen to them otherwise.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Were there paved roads in the Birkenau camp, or were there unpaved, mud roads?

Witness Otto Wolken:

They were mud. And when it rained, your feet got stuck in the mud. If you did not go to the “sauna” like I did, that is, where they handed out clothes. There was someone from Vienna there, named Glazier, the *Kapo*, and I said to him: “Please, look at what kind of shoes I am wearing!” And I got some sort of boots, and I could walk. But those who walked in Dutch wooden slippers—that was part of the camp uniform—when it was raining, they kept losing their shoes. They got stuck in the mud and they were forced to walk barefoot.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

What was the prisoners' uniform like?

Witness Otto Wolken:

It consisted of a shirt, trousers or a skirt, and a pair of wooden shoes.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

That was it?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. Some transports were lucky. When there weren't any wooden shoes left, they allowed the prisoners to keep their own shoes. There was a doctor who worked in my outpatient clinic, Doctor Mostowoy from Brussels. And he was lucky that there were no wooden shoes left when he arrived. He had \$200 hidden in his shoes. And he brought them to the camp and was able to keep himself alive by using them.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

So, there weren't any coats?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Coats? No, we did not have any coats.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

So, what were conditions like on a rainy, cold November day, for example? The prisoners marched to work in the morning, starving, and worked in the rain during the day.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Well, I do not know. I remember the women wore coats, some type of coats, when they walked by—we saw them. I can't really say today whether those were their clothes or their coats. I can't say whether the work commandos that were outside had coats, because they wouldn't walk by the quarantine camp. But I think there were coats somewhere. But I can't say for sure today whether all the commands got them.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Alright, then. Then they came back from work. Was there any way to dry your clothing at all?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, there was not.

—Break—

Witness Otto Wolken:

After all, I had to be able to boil the tweezers and the scissors, and I needed a bit of wood to do it, so that—

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

In any case, this is how it happened: When it rained, the prisoners went into the barracks in which it was also raining because the roof was leaking, without having the opportunity to dry off or get warm. Then, they slept in the barracks, which, when it rained, were just as muddy as the roads outside the barracks.

Witness Otto Wolken:

That is right. We did not have any towels or rags.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

As a doctor I am sure you saw that these conditions must have led inevitably to pneumonia.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, after the liberation, I dealt mainly with the medical aspects of life in the camp. And after I had succeeded in saving my death reports and my ambulance books, I once made a summary from these reports and tried to categorize and classify them to see what was going on. And a large number of prisoners had pneumonia.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

How could you treat these cases of pneumonia as a doctor in the camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Actually, I could not.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

You could not.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Basically, I could not. And we had to transfer those prisoners to the infirmary. We did not have penicillin, and we did not have enough sulfonamides. And there was not enough in the infirmary either. It was up to the individual's own physical strength as to whether they survived or not.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Can you tell us something from your medical experience about psychoses in the camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. We had many people with psychiatric illnesses. I even have a note here on those prisoners, and I know you are referring to the note that I wrote about it. I do not quite remember it because, unfortunately—or shall I say, thank God—I no longer had to deal with those things. It happened again and again that people went crazy and started screaming. The mentally ill often came directly into the camp, from the Polish transports, which were not selected, or from the Russian transports, which were also not selected. Then they came to the camp, and they were mostly killed after a short time. They did not have a note that said, "I am mentally ill." They kept disrupting order and were beaten until nearly dead.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Regarding the question of the prisoners' health, you mentioned—I wrote it down word for word: "The doctors did their best to help the prisoners." Did I understand you correctly? Those were only prisoner doctors?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, the doctors that were prisoners. I was very, very strict with my people, with my doctors in the ambulance. And my doctors in my outpatient clinic worked from seven in the morning until ten at night, trying to save those who could be saved, trying to prevent as many deaths as possible. A lice check was required twice a week. We checked for lice every other day. We divided the blocks into

two groups and searched man by man in order to find every louse we could. Prisoners with lice were brought to the “sauna” to get disinfected and then returned to the camp.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

If those were the duties of the doctors that were also prisoners, what were the duties then of the SS-doctors?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Well, the SS camp doctor came in to get the reports. Otherwise, he was mainly involved in the selections. He stayed longer in the camp when there was a selection. Otherwise, he was only there once in a while, and he took the reports. As I pointed out to him at that time in relation to the Lubliner prisoners—I do not know how much work they had to do—he was there when we received the mobile disinfection system in our camp. But apart from that, I couldn’t really say much about the role of the SS doctor. We did all the work.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

No medical activities?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No medical activities.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Were the selections in the prisoner infirmary carried out according to certain criteria? Were they carried out at fixed intervals or were they carried out when the prisoner infirmary was considered overcrowded? Were there certain illnesses that automatically resulted in prisoners being sent to the gas chambers? Is there anything you can tell us about that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I can’t say anything about that.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

You can’t say anything about it.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Before I came to the infirmary, to be honest, I was not interested in the schedule. I knew they were much, much more common there than where we were. It was probably occurred when the numbers were too high. But that is likely an assumption that I cannot confirm.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

You did not see it yourself?

Witness Otto Wolken:

That’s likely. I can’t tell from my own first-hand experience. The selections would not happen very often in our section. They would carry out a selection at certain times, but that came mostly as a surprise to us. They were never announced beforehand.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And that was in the quarantine camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, it was in the quarantine camp.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Were there unannounced selections?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, but not there.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

You've talked about a family camp, the Theresienstadt family camp. If I understand you correctly, they killed all the prisoners from that camp. Or did they also select prisoners?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No. Two convoys arrived, three months apart. And after six months, and it was six months to the day, the entire first transport was sent to the gas chambers. Without selection, without anything. They were wonderful people.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And you know about it because the prisoners from the Theresienstadt family camp were initially brought to you in the quarantine camp for a few hours and from there to the—

Witness Otto Wolken:

They stayed in my camp for a whole day. They were brought from the Theresien camp and sent to me. There, they were split into groups: children, women, and men. They lived there in a terrible disorder, and they were also separated. And then the next day, at night, the trucks came.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Do you perhaps know how many trucks did come?

Witness Otto Wolken:

They would come and go.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Did they come and go continuously?

Witness Otto Wolken:

There were perhaps five or six trucks. The route was not very long, so they would just come and go.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And could you name any of the SS members who were involved in the annihilation of this section of the camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I can't give you any names.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

You do not know any names.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I do not know. I only know that at the time when they killed everyone in the Theresienstadt family camp many SS came to the camp. I think they employed all the *Blockführer* who were available from all sections of the camp. That was after roll call, at night, so the gates were closed, and the guards were up in the watchtowers. And, as far as I know, not only all the *Rapportführer* and *Blockführer* available in Birkenau were involved at that time, but also obedient *Blockälteste* from the D-camp and from our camp as well. There were a number of them. They worked for the SS and against the prisoners—they were used for lock downs and camp security.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

During your interrogation on Monday, you mentioned that there were always far too few bowls and tablespoons for the prisoners when they were serving food. For this reason alone, there were many troubles among the prisoners and not everyone could get their food at the same time.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Is it true that when the camp was liberated, they found large quantities of bowls and spoons in the warehouse, but that those were not given to the prisoners?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. I was shocked. A few days after the liberation, the entire Birkenau infirmary was moved to Auschwitz I. And I was assigned—there was a big building there—to look for disinfectants and delousing agents in that building. There was a huge warehouse. There were tree crop sprayers, which could also be used for disinfection, portable syringes, by the dozen, nicely stacked, eating utensils, tablespoons. When the Russians were there, we had absolutely no shortage of dishes, we all got new dishes.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

In your own opinion, after the liberation of the camp, did you have the impression that it would have been possible for the camp administration to give to each prisoner eating utensils from those available in these warehouses?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Oh yes.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

But that did not happen?

Witness Otto Wolken:

There were enough.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

But the SS did not do that.

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, they did not. Nobody cared about that.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

I see. I have two pictures. Please have a look at them and tell the court whether this was the wash barrack or a wash barrack and a latrine in Birkenau.

Witness Otto Wolken:

It's a latrine. And that there, here, that was probably the wash barrack in the F-Camp, because it had a stone trough. That should have been the wash barrack from the F-Camp. But our wash barracks looked different because there were three wooden troughs in exactly the same position. And it was the same with the toilets.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Please, give that to the court. At the beginning, or at the beginning of your interrogation, you mentioned this "sport" in the camp. According to some of the defendants, we had the impression that this "sport," these so-called sports activities, were more or less voluntary activities for the prisoners that they could do in their free time. In other words, these activities were intended to encourage prisoners to exercise and to help stimulate circulation a bit. Is that right?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, it is not. These sports activities were a punishment.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

They were a punishment.

Witness Otto Wolken:

They were a punishment. And during "sport" people were tortured if they fell down. They had to jump. They had to throw themselves on the ground. They had to get up again. They had to run. They had to jump. They had to jump with their knees bent. Those who couldn't keep up were kicked by the guards with their boots: "Get going!" Everyone tried to be first so they wouldn't get kicked from behind.

In front of the kitchen barrack, there was a pond. It was made so that water would be available in case of fire. And when people in Auschwitz contracted malaria, they put Schweinfurt Green in the pond so they could stop the spread of malaria, the Anopheles. And oftentimes during “sport” the prisoners were pushed into the pond, made to jump out of the pond, forced to roll in the street and ordered to jump again. And doing “sport” like that took a very, very long time and people were exhausted by the end. I remember, for example, that Hellwink, who was a clerk in the office, was killed during a sports activity that Weiß ordered. He chose all the clerks, including ambulance clerks, that was me, and we had to do “sport.”

And we had some non-swimmers among us. And that pond was deep. I think a little over two meters, and they couldn’t swim. And so, we had to try, even though we were exhausted, and could hardly continue, to keep the non-swimmers afloat so that they wouldn’t drown.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And those were the so-called “sports” at Birkenau, correct?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, those were the so-called “sports.”

Presiding Judge:

Can I ask a question? Do you think that there could have been any prisoners, given their diet and general health, who would have wanted to do sports?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, there were prisoners: the *Blockälteste*, the *Kapos*. They were well nourished.

Presiding Judge:

I am not referring to them now.

Witness Otto Wolken:

We even had a football field.

Presiding Judge:

I am not referring to them now.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Not the prisoners. No, they were happy if they could stay on their legs at all.

Presiding Judge:

I was referring to that. Because a defendant told us that the prisoners practiced “sport” on their own and of on their own free will in order to stay fit. I mean, I do not think one should make too much out of such a statement.

Witness Otto Wolken:

It must be a joke.

Presiding Judge:

Right. Please, go ahead, Mr. Vogel.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

With regard to the gas chambers, you mentioned that, sometimes, they would use them not only in the case of Jewish prisoners, but also with Aryan prisoners.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Could you tell us the exact date when that changed?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Perhaps we want to put it this way: Did they initially use the gas chambers for all Jewish prisoners, and later for the so-called Aryan prisoners? And this would include both Polish and German prisoners, and French and Dutch prisoners. Were all these prisoners sent to the gas chambers? And did that change later? What happened then?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I can only comment on that from my work with the Polish commission of inquiry. When I arrived at Auschwitz, let's say...

—Break—

Witness Otto Wolken:

Especially when they had just started using the gas chambers, they did some testing with them, the Aryan prisoners.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

May I ask an additional question: Was it during the selections in the prisoner infirmary and with you in the quarantine camp that they would select the prisoners to be killed in the gas chambers?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Did they make a distinction on these occasions between Jewish prisoners and other prisoners?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, they did.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

How did that happen?

Witness Otto Wolken:

In the infirmary, the prisoners were divided into Jewish and non-Jewish blocks, but not in our quarantine camp; there it was mixed. But in the infirmary, there were only Jewish and non-Jewish blocks. And the prisoners in the non-Jewish blocks did not go through the selection, while those in the Jewish blocks did. And there were people who managed to disguise themselves as Aryans. And they got into non-Jewish blocks and were able to survive there. As Aryans.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And what happened to prisoners who were not Jewish but were seriously ill, for example, prisoners with typhus?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I know from what my comrades told me that people like that were “injected,” as they then called it. They received phenol injections into the heart, gasoline injections, and petroleum injections. That’s how they got rid of them, in the past. And later on, they just waited for them to die.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

But what you have just told us is primarily based on what your fellow prisoners told you?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, as I mentioned at the beginning.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Was the ramp in Birkenau already completed when you arrived at Birkenau?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, it was already completed.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

It was already working.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, it was already working.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Could you—and this is a question that would, of course, be very difficult to answer, even if your memories were still fresh— but can you give us any numbers? For example, how often did transports arrive? How big were these transports on average and what percentage of those prisoners were admitted to the camp in the end? And how many of them were sent to the gas chambers? Or are you unable to tell us because you do not remember?

Witness Otto Wolken:

From my memory of that time, I cannot. But I have the quarantine list I made here in front of me. I mentioned that I had to keep a record for the camp doctor, which transports did not need to be quarantined and those which needed to be quarantined. I had to vaccinate the transports against typhoid. That means that I had to do three typhoid vaccinations, and I had to keep a list so that I knew on which day the prisoners from the transports had received the first typhoid vaccination, the second, and the third. I had to know how many people there were because I had to report it to the camp doctor. And I always asked those same people: “Well, how many prisoners were you on the train?” And so on. And that gives an average of 22 percent of prisoners that arrived at the camp.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Did you come up with this number based on your records at the time?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, it refers to the men from the transports.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Only to the men.

Witness Otto Wolken:

For women, I think the percentage is much, much worse, numerically, because the children were immediately sent to the gas chambers. Then, the women were negatively impacted by all those children being killed. The percentage of those who arrived at the camp may even drop to ten.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Did they actually tattoo all the prisoners who arrived at Auschwitz? Or did they make a distinction between Jewish and—

Witness Otto Wolken:

At the beginning, all prisoners got tattoos. Later on, the German prisoners were not tattooed. Everyone else, Poles, French, Belgians, Spaniards, Romanians, Russians, all of them got tattooed. The Russian prisoners of war got their tattoos on the chest, the others on the forearm. Only then, when the big transports from Hungary arrived, that was in summer 1944—the transports from Hungary began to arrive in May 1944. At that time, they started the operation and in the summer of 1944, they captured the highest number of prisoners. The political unit could no longer handle so many prisoners, and you did not know where the prisoners would be sent.

Those able to work—at that time, there was also a shortage of workers in Germany. So they made sure to have workers for Germany, and the prisoners from the transports of Hungarian Jews were sent out into the Reich. And since you often did not know where they would end up—Sachsenhausen, for example, had its own system of numbering—they did not get a number, they were sent without a number. And they were not added to our count. Those without a number, they were staying in the former—by that time it did not exist—the former Gypsy camp. They did not have any numbers. In December of 1944, those in the camp who were not yet tattooed were then re-tattooed with numbers from the B-20,000 series and up.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Do you remember when the guards were in the watchtowers? Were the guards in the towers day and night, or were there no guards during the day?

Witness Otto Wolken:

During the day, the guards left. They only came back for roll calls in the evening. When the roll call was over, they went up to the watchtowers, because after the roll call, the camp was locked down. The *Blockführer* and *Rapportführer* who were in charge of the camp would leave. At night there was only the night shift with the guards on the towers who remained in the front of the quarters of the *Blockführer*.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Was the fence electrified day and night or—

Witness Otto Wolken:

It was electrified day and night.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Was this fence built around the entire camp? Or did it also run between the individual camps?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Between the individual camps too.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Are you sure about that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I am sure about that because the prisoners would often throw themselves onto the fence in order to kill themselves.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

During the day as well?

Witness Otto Wolken:

During the day too. They went there. And once there was an accident. I had a very nice young man, a nurse, with me in the ambulance, and his brother worked in the kitchen. And he knew a girl over in the B-Camp and wanted to give her something to eat under the fence. But it was very muddy, and he slipped and fell against the fence. And he was dead. That was during the day.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Yes, that is relevant. At least one of the defendants has claimed that the fence was not electrified during the day. Can you tell us something about how the death reports worked? Initially, Auschwitz had its own registry office. I want to know from you what you can say about it from your own experience. Was that also the case for Birkenau or just for the main camp? What can you tell us about that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that was part of the administration. And I had nothing to do with administration. For me it was like this: I kept the death reports for my camp. I would enter information for every prisoner that died: number, name, and the cause of death when I was allowed to write it down. The cause of death, that's it. And then the person who was in charge of collecting those death reports came, Neumann whom I mentioned before. He went all over place in the camps. He visited me in the morning. I handed the reports to him, and he wrote down the names he needed. Then he gave the reports back to me, went to the main office which was the camp office (because each camp was an administrative complex of its own) to communicate those names. Then he came back to my office and said: "Please, remove these from your count." Those prisoners were removed. And those who were removed from our count, they were then taken away in trucks at twelve o'clock at night.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And each camp had records for the number of its prisoners?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Do you remember if the Russians made any videos when they arrived?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, they did.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Did you watch those video?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I did not. Once, I got a picture from that one movie with me in it.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Were you in it?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I was.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Were the films Russian propaganda? And how did they make them? Or do you know anything about that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, it happened like this: the Russians came and looked at the whole thing first. Then they saw all the prisoners there—they were all standing together—and they set up a camera and said: "Come over here so you can form a line because we want your relatives to know that you are still alive."

We could not form a line, so we marched past the camera, making a mess, and they recorded everything. But they did not do anything else.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Were Jewish prisoners and other prisoners treated the same at Auschwitz? Or was there any difference in the way they treated these groups of prisoners?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Well, there were differences. First of all, Polish prisoners and French prisoners. They were allowed to receive packages with food from home from time to time and could, therefore, improve their living conditions.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

So, the Jewish prisoners were not allowed to receive any packages?

Witness Otto Wolken:

That was not allowed for Jewish prisoners. They couldn't receive anything, and neither could the Russian prisoners. The Russians and the Jews were treated equally in that respect.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

You mentioned this morning that you were once nearly assigned to the penal unit. But you weren't there yourself and can't give us any information about conditions there, right?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I can't say anything about it. But I can give you the name of a nurse who was on duty with me in the ambulance, Franz Piechowiak. I think he lives in Gleiwitz now. He attempted to escape with a doctor from my ambulance, Doctor Wagschal, and a third prisoner. They managed to get out of the camp. And two days later, they were already a long way from Auschwitz. They believed they were safe at night. There was an air raid alarm, and so they thought they could walk on the street. They thought that no one would be out on the street—and then they were captured by an SS patrol and were brought back to Auschwitz. Wagschal and Kenner, who were Jews, were hanged after being tortured. Piechowiak was sent to the "Sonderkommando." I met him three years ago, in 1961, at a meeting in Warsaw, and I was glad that he had survived it. He can tell you exactly what was going on there.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

How did SS men address the prisoners?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Informally with "you."

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

With the informal "you." With the name. Last name or with their number?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, if the SS man knew the names, then he would use them. The average prisoner did not know the name of the SS man, and the SS man did not know the name of the average prisoner either.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

How did you have to report yourself when you had to do something with the SS-men?

Witness Otto Wolken:

With my prisoner number.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

So, you had to introduce yourself with your prisoner number.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. For example, if I went to the infirmary with sick prisoners, I had to go to the front. There was a gate there. There was an SS guard by the gate. I went through it and outside there was a barrack called the *Blockführer* office. There I had to stand at attention and report: "Prisoner 128.828 with six men to BIIf." They wrote it down, and I continued walking.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Well, that's enough, Doctor Wolken. During your interrogation, you once mentioned that after the liberation of the camp you discovered cans with Zyklon B, with and without warning labels.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Do you know where they kept those cans?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, in a warehouse in Auschwitz 1.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

In the main camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, in the main camp.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Do you know exactly where?

Witness Otto Wolken:

They took pictures of them. Those pictures are in the Auschwitz Museum.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Sure, but we want to hear it from you today.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Today I can't remember what those places where they found the cans were called.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

That is alright. Where did you meet Beretzki for the first time? Was he the *Blockführer* in the quarantine camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

In the D-camp. The work camp.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Were you in the work camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And later you met him again in the quarantine camp. So you know him well.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I do.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

So, that was for a long period of time.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is correct.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Because of the incident on October 4th, 1943, the so-called hare hunt for prisoners of the Lemberg transports, the presiding judge asked you whether you had seen Baretzki shooting. You then said: "I did not see an SS man who did not shoot."

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is correct.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Let us go back now. Did you see Baretzki there too?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, he was there too. And they were all shooting. But in a circle. If you ask me: "Did you see whether he was aiming at someone? Did you see how he did it? I would have to say "No" because when they were in a circle—they were all shoot[ing]. They were shooting and you could see it all.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

I do not think there was an overwhelming number of SS men there. How many were there, roughly speaking?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I think they were four, I believe.

Defense Layer Gerhardt:

I object to the way these questions are being asked. The question can only be answered with a “yes” or “no” from the witness.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

This makes the interrogation go faster.

Defense Layer Gerhardt:

No, you can’t give the witness the answers already. You can’t say “you could see it,” “you could do that.” You have to ask: “What could you see?” Well, that is my opinion.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

But he had already said “yes.” And it was only for a question—

Presiding Judge:

This question was answered by the witness earlier. He told us: “Kurpanik, Dargelis, Weiss, and Baretzki were the four who were shooting at the time, and I saw no one who did not shoot.” That was the testimony of the witness.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Exactly. I just wanted to clarify that one more time. Thank you. And about the Mihail Liczka case: Did I understand correctly that you witnessed Baretzki hit him and that you treated Liczka’s wounds afterwards?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I witnessed it.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Ok, so you were there up until the death of that prisoner, and it happened in the ambulance. Good, I have no more questions.

Presiding Judge:

No more questions.

—Break—

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Hummerich, please go ahead.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Dr. Wolken, I want to start from your last statement about Liczka. Was Liczka a “Muselman?”

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, he was.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

You of course knew that. The question is: Did everyone know in the camp, and the SS men too, that you could knock down a “Musselman” with a feather?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, of course.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

And did everyone know that when you hit someone, even with a fist, that those prisoners would collapse?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, everyone knew that.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Did they collapse on their own?

Witness Otto Wolken:

When you saw these “Muselmen,” they were like walking corpses. It was a skeleton, covered with skin. They wobbled back and forth, they were slow, as I have already told you, slow in their movements. You could see that from afar. And it was precisely that which caught the attention of everyone.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

That means that even a punch would have killed them, like a bullet.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Almost...

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Almost. Ok, that was one thing. Now I have another thing to ask. You said that one of the *Hauptsturmführer*, the doctor who removed the ones who came to the paratroopers, did not stay in the camp very long. He signed off and refused to stay.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is what I said.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

And did you ask about it, or how did you know that nothing had happened to him?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I actually do not know. We never found out what happened to him.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

The opposite question now. Were you sad when this doctor that you have mentioned left Auschwitz?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I was.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

You were sad.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I was.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Would you have preferred that he had helped you try to slow down the killing?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, of course.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

What would you tell him today if he were sitting here among the defendants?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I do not think he would be among them. There are others too among those who are suspected, who have had to face a lawsuit, but were then absolved. As I testified in the case of Flagge, Voigt, and Horstmann, and like I said in the preliminary proceedings: What do you want from this man? He was like godsent to us.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

So, you could have helped every time?

Witness Otto Wolken:

What do you mean by “every time?”

Presiding Judge:

This is not a question for the witness. It has nothing to do with him.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Your Honor, it does, actually, have something to do with Doctor Wolken.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, but only as a doctor.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

It was just a question.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I would like to say that in a selection process, for example, he would only have chosen the disabled, the crippled, the sick who could no longer be helped. He wouldn't have chosen healthy people. I could not help them either. There was nothing you could do for them anymore. It was the job of the doctor. I understood that we were in an emergency and that you did not want to have extra people to feed.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

I would like to ask another question. I do not know if the public prosecutors know Doctor Mandel's address.

Unidentified Speaker:

We know it.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

You know it?

Unidentified Speaker:

We do.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Doctor Mandel is also listed as a witness.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

The defendant Baretzki said in this very room that he had never been in that part of the camp.

Witness Otto Wolken:

But the SS men keep switching their statements. One day they were there, and the next they were in another place. They were on duty wherever they were told by them to go. I know for a fact that he was in the A-camp. He also said once that he only led the command to the ramp and then left. And I can prove through an SS order that I have here that it was forbidden to leave the command. He was obligated to remain with the command that he was leading until he had returned it to the camp. That's an order I have here.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Ok, let's continue. This Mister Flagge. Was he the one who built the kindergarten?

Witness Otto Wolken:

He did not build it. The kindergarten was there. He frequently went there, took care of everything, and took care of the children.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Someone said that there was also a kindergarten in the Gypsy camp.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I do not know about that.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Thank you very much. Now I have another question. The question shouldn't be uncomfortable for you. You said under oath: "And I used the bread intended for sick prisoners who had nothing to eat for extortion." I do not want to know about that. That was your right. I want to know what kinds of things were going on, what things you could use in order to extort other people.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. Well, excuse me. I am used to telling it as it was, and I do not want to sugar coat anything. I mentioned earlier that I made my doctors work from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Not only did we have a lot of responsibilities, but our work was very dangerous. We dealt with lice, we dealt with typhus, we dealt with typhoid fever, we dealt with tuberculosis, with everything. And unlike everyone else—we doctors were actually worse off than everybody else. There were so many sick people who were about to die in the block who weren't eating anything. Their portions were left over, and there were a lot of people in the block, 600, so there would be something left. So, someone who worked all day could have some additional food and feel better. There were so many sick people in the infirmary, half of them stopped eating. Those in the infirmary had enough to eat. But we, from the ambulance, we only worked, and had nothing to eat. We had too little. And I went to the kitchen and said to the kitchen *Kapo*, a prisoner, "You listen to me. We have so much work to do. Send me double portions of soup for the ambulance." We were 16 in total. "Send me thirty liters of soup!"

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

That was it?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I demanded that from him. And to that he said: "No." I said: "Look, we need it. Why are you such a bad person?" He replied: "Go away or I'll file a report!" And then I said to him: "You will beg me to take your soup. You will see." And I went away and told the camp doctor the next day that we had a few typhus cases in the camp again: "*Hauptsturmführer*, it is necessary that we check the entire kitchen staff for typhus. It is normal in every kitchen, in every major kitchen, that they check the staff for typhoid before they are allowed to work. We have to do that here too. Take a look in the kitchen. Maybe someone there is infected." And he then ordered these tubes and everything from Rajsko, and the next day we had to be at the kitchens at two o'clock. And then I said to the *Kapo*: "You see, all I need to do is put a cross on your name, and they will take you out of the kitchen, and you won't survive in the camp any better than the others, because you have been too comfortable. "Well, he begged me to take the soup, and then I got thirty liters of soup every day and a bucket of potatoes twice a week for the ambulance, for our doctors. That was the extortion I was doing. But that was extortion, nonetheless.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Dr. Wolken, you went often to the infirmary, correct?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Do you perhaps somehow remember that in 1943, there were children in the infirmary, but not random children, but a particular group of children?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, there were twins there.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Right, Doctor Mengele's twins.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Doctor Mengele's twins.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Yes, that's not what I mean. Somebody said that there was a transport with children that was transferred from Auschwitz I to Birkenau to be sent to the gas chambers. A defendant said: "Yes, they transferred them in order to treat them in the infirmary."

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, they were never in the infirmary. Only Mengele's children were there. Nobody else.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Never children.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Never.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

And you were often in the infirmary, correct?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I was there very often. I went there twice a week. And in 1943 there were no children there at all. The first children did not show up in our camp until the year 1944.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Another question about your statement. You said that the lice disinfection performed by Klehr did not work at all.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. It did not work.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

He told us that he had built a good shower for disinfestation. But the camp doctor got upset because the shower was worthless. And he had to take it down again.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I believe that, but I do not know. Probably Mister Klehr remembers it better. He was called in by the camp doctor to monitor how I checked for lice and how I found them. That happened when he was there.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

May I ask another question about Baretzki? You told us on Monday that, in one instance, you could not see him very well, only his shape. And independently of what your colleagues have said, you claimed: "Yes, it was Baretzki." When was that? Was that the Lviv case, or when was it?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, that was when they were moving prisoners to the gas chamber. But, please, let me clarify. Those were not my colleagues. They were helping the SS men. Oftringer and Katarzyński. They were there. They were there every time the SS men did anything.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

When we referred to these 184 prisoners, you said that they must have been dead. Are you certain? Were there any corpses left lying around? How can you claim that there must have been deaths during the transfer of these 184 prisoners?

Witness Otto Wolken:

There were deaths. They threw them in the trucks. They did not leave them where they were. They threw them back in the trucks. They picked them up and put them in the trucks. We saw it.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

Did you?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did.

Supplementary Judge Hummerich:

I do not have any further questions.

Presiding Judge:

What about a break? Do we want to take a break?

—Break—

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

Did they smuggle illegal medicines into the camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, of course.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

How did they supply the camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Various commandos came to the camp, and they brought medicine with them to the ambulance so that we could help sick prisoners. The *Blockälteste* were organized in that sense. There was always medicine under the luggage on the ramp, and these medications were taken by the prisoner commando. And because everyone stole, the prisoners stole too, putting the medications in their pockets, and because of that, we could get some of that medicine from “Canada” and the D-camp.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

Which nationality held the highest posts in the so-called “prisoner administration?”

Witness Otto Wolken:

Those were Germans from the Reich, and then Polish people.

Presiding Judge:

Any more questions?

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

What was the consequence of mostly having Polish people taking care of Polish prisoners?

Witness Otto Wolken:

They took care of those prisoners. And that’s why the Poles held such high positions, because they were the first prisoners there and the oldest. After regular German criminals, who were the first group to be sent to Auschwitz, then the Poles arrived. They already knew how the camp worked, and the SS men made their work much easier. And they did so by simply putting people who already knew how the camp worked in different administrative posts. “You do that. You do this. And you do that!” Of course, the Poles took care of their people. The Poles came to the concentration camp as patriots and not because they had committed crimes. And of course, they took care of their, shall we say, national concerns and preferred their comrades over others. And it also happened that a Pole removed a friend from the group of prisoners that had to be sent to the D-camp and sent me in his place.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

Was there an institute for hygiene in the administration of Auschwitz, and did this institute combat the risk of epidemics?

Witness Otto Wolken:

There was a Hygiene Institute in Rajsko, the Hygiene Institute in Rajsko. I know that it existed because—as I mentioned earlier—I asked the camp doctor to test the kitchen staff for typhus, and the instruments to do that came from the Hygiene Institute in Rajsko. We also sent the results there.

One day, the scientists from Rajsko did a large-scale typhus test. I was involved in that as well, and we received a whole box full of test tubes. We had to take blood from every single one of the prisoners from a convoy of Russians, and then write on these tubes whether they had typhus. They could tell because of some kind of blood reaction. That is what Rajsko did. And once we got a new Bayer drug from Rajsko, something, I do not remember the number of the drug anymore. I only remember that the prisoners who we were supposed to give this drug to—that, I think, was intended to treat typhus, if I remember correctly—they turned completely pink, every inch of their skin. They all looked like young pigs, all pink from this injection. And then they called the operation off, and we sent the remaining prisoners back.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

Another question: Have you heard the name Flagge?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I have.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

And I do not think I misunderstood when you said you testified on his behalf. Was Flagge involved in any lawsuit after 1945, and what happened to him?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I do not know, and I did not testify on his behalf. I only mentioned him and complimented him here in the preliminary investigation.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

Thank you. That is enough for me. Another question: You mentioned the name Katarzyński. Was he a hardened Polish criminal?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes. Whether he was a professional criminal or not, I do not know. In the camp, he was simply a criminal.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

Another question: You mentioned that they sent convoys full of Jews to the Reich, to other camps. Was that a large number, or am I mistaken? Did they send convoys to the Reich?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, they did.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

Jewish transports as well?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, those too.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

Was that a large number of transports?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, those were Hungarian Jews. It was back in the late summer of 1944. And they were looking for specialists, all of them were specialists. Watchmakers, precision mechanics, and so on—

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

And you do not know why that was done, do you?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I do. It was to manufacture detonators. For the war.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

Another question then: You mentioned a number earlier, in response to a question from the lawyer Ormond, that three million people died in Auschwitz. Were they Jews or other prisoners?

Witness Otto Wolken:

That number is in reference to everyone. I said it already at the beginning of my interrogation: Auschwitz was not only for Jewish prisoners. They killed persons from all European nations and from all religions. The Jews there were, numerically speaking and in percentage—

Presiding Judge:

The largest part.

Witness Otto Wolken:

The largest part.

Presiding Judge:

The witness also said: “We estimated the number by taking into account the capacity of the crematoriums and the statistics we had, and from that we estimated a number between 2,900,000 and 3,000,000. We counted everyone who died there.”

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

I see. And how high do you think the number of Jews was?

Witness Otto Wolken:

At least 2,500,000.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

When you talk about this estimate, is that the estimate that the Russians made? Because if I am not mistaken, the Russians estimated—excuse the ugliness of the expression—according to the capacity of the crematoriums. Or is it an estimate from your work for the Polish Inquiry Commission?

Witness Otto Wolken:

This is based on my activities in the Polish Commission of Inquiry, on the basis of Reich railway transport lists and corresponding documents. However, I have not dealt with these things since 1945, and I have been completely absorbed by my profession, thank God, and have forgotten a lot of these things. Even though my wife claims that you can't sleep next to me at night because I scream and stomp around in my sleep, I feel calm during the day.

I have not dealt with these things since then, and so I cannot comment on numbers like these—how we came up with these numbers back then. I just want to say one thing: We took these things very seriously. And when the lawyer reads through the protocol that was made in Krakow, he will see the accuracy with which we described every single part, every single piece of paper that I submitted, also with regard to its format. He will see how every single selection calculation was recalculated, then you will see that we did everything very precisely and correctly. The magistrate who examined all those documents at the time, Professor Sehn, is now a professor at the University of Krakow and the director of the office for judicial affairs. So, a very serious and conscientious man. And if he appears here during this trial, he will be able to provide you with better and more authentic information than I can.

Presiding Judge:

Did that answer your question?

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

Thank you. Yes it did. And a related question: Do you know the number of Jews killed in Auschwitz—a number which the Institute of Jewish Affairs of the World Jewish Congress reported and calculated in 1961—which is 900,000?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I have never heard of it.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

And you aren't familiar with the estimate by Professor Raul Hilberg from the University of Vermont in the United States, which comes close to a million?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not know about that.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

One final question: Do you know that in September 1944 the International Red Cross sent a commission to Auschwitz?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I've heard about it, but I haven't seen the Commission myself.

Defense Lawyer Aschenauer:

Thank you.

Presiding Judge:

Alright then. Maybe now we want to hear from Mr. Gerhardt, because he represents the defendant Baretzki, who was mentioned here.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Doctor Wolken, have you looked around in the room and identified the defendant Baretzki?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I have not.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

May I ask you to take a look around the room and see if you recognize him?

Presiding Judge:

Please put that in the record: At the request of lawyer Gerhardt, the witness identified the defendant Baretzki from among the people present in the conference room. There you go.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Dr. Wolken, in response to the public prosecutor's question, you said that you had not been subjected to any selection. I have gathered from your report that you went through a selection, you were also selected, but it was only because of people you knew that they did not send you to the gas chambers. Is that correct?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, that is a misunderstanding.

Presiding Judge:

The witness said something different. The witness said that he was placed among the prisoners who had to be transported to the Birkenau camp and then sent to the gas chambers, after a clerk had taken someone out who had been selected. The witness was supposed to take his place. Is that how it happened?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is correct.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Good. Then I have a question: Do you remember the month when you arrived at Auschwitz in 1943?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I was on a transport for 23 days. I can't say for sure. It was, I think, the end of May, the beginning of June. I can't say. We lost track of time. I had been detained for five years by that time.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

And do you know when you arrived at the so-called "D-camp" in Birkenau? How long did you stay there?

Witness Otto Wolken:

That was at the end of July 1943.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

1943. And how long did you stay there before you got to the A-camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

End of July, all of August, and I think the first week of September.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

If I read your reports on the selections that were carried out in front of you correctly, then I believe that you reported for the first time about a selection in the A-camp on August 18th. Is it possible then that you were already in the A-camp in August? You said that this morning too, Dr. Wolken.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I believe so—regarding the date of that very first selection—that is what it says in the minutes in Krakow, where I got the number from.

Presiding Judge:

Well, they are asking: To Camp-D at the end of July, and from Camp-D to Camp-A?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Late August, early September. About that time.

Presiding Judge:

At the end of August, you mean. Please go on.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

So, you spent only a few weeks there.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

During which section was Baretzki, whom you have identified, *Blockführer*?

Presiding Judge:

What is the question? I did not hear it.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

In that section, in the barracks where the defendant Baretzki was *Blockführer*, at the time when the witness was in the D-camp.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I saw him in the camp. In my block, he was not the *Blockführer*.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Did he have a particular block? Can you say anything about that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, they never had specific blocks. They always had several blocks together, and that changed too.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Would it be accurate to say, as you claimed on Monday at the beginning of your hearing, that everything you have given us is based solely on what you wrote down then, after 1945?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, of course.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

I see, thank you. How did you feel health wise after 1945? We have heard about your illnesses, the individual symptoms. I would like to know now how you were feeling overall.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I mentioned earlier that, on the day of the liberation, I only weighed 38 kilograms. Then I had a very high typhoid fever caused by hunger. I mean, you can't really call it typhoid fever. We had our first solid meal, and my stomach just couldn't hold it, and I had severe diarrhea. And my colleagues, namely Professor Epstein and Professor Grossmann, tried very hard to help me.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Thanks. That's enough. Because of your health, wouldn't it have been somewhat difficult for you to write this very extensive report?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, it was not. I was sick for only 14 days. I recovered fairly quickly, and then—this is a Russian specialty—I was made chief therapeutic advisor of the entire hospital that they built there. And I did not have too much to do. I had a very nice room and sat all day.

Presiding Judge:

Well, you finished it anyway and wrote the report.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Can you tell me the names of the *Blockführer* who were in the A-camp, that is, in the quarantine camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Weiß, Dargelis, Baretzki. Then I think Wolf. I do not know any more people.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Good. How long do you think that Baretzki was *Blockführer* in the quarantine camp, in your opinion? You know that Baretzki says he never was one. Never.

Presiding Judge:

How could the witness know? He was not there at the hearing. At most, he could have read it in the newspaper.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I did not read anything about it beforehand.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

No, wait. I mean, I asked the witness if he knew how long Baretzki was a *Blockführer* in the quarantine camp.

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I had my job in the camp. They changed. Once he came to the report, to the roll calls, once another man came and he did not. I was not informed about the duties of the SS men. I only ever saw those who came to my camp.

Presiding Judge:

No, the lawyer wants to know something else. He wants to know when the defendant Baretzki was moved from the A-camp. Or was he there until the end?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I do not know about that. I can't say anything about that, I believe.

Presiding Judge:

You can't say with certainty.

Witness Otto Wolken:

They changed very often, and they came to the camp sometimes to substitute someone else.

Presiding Judge:

You told us that you saw him there even after the SS men withdrew.

Witness Otto Wolken:

But not in the quarantine camp.

Presiding Judge:

Not in the quarantine camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, no, no, no. There wasn't a quarantine camp anymore. That was outside. We cut the wires from F to E and from E to D. And then we went back and forth and brought food supplies.

Presiding Judge:

So, you do not know if he was there at the end?

Witness Otto Wolken:

At that time, I saw him there with an SS group led by Poloczek.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

On page 5653, there is a mention of a "Barecki." Does that also refer to Baretzki, or is it someone else?

Presiding Judge:

Could it maybe be the way you write "Baretzki" in Polish?

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Well, I am afraid that—

Presiding Judge:

May I ask for the page number again?

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

You said C-K, written "Barecki," but you pronounce it "Baretzki."

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Just let the witness talk. Also, Baretzki was not Polish.

Presiding Judge:

Well, Mr. Gerhardt is pointing out that here, during your interrogation...Or wait a minute. Four, three, two, one, yes, that's in our files here. However, page 1 is missing. It seems to be your deposition: "Based on the original documents from Doctor Wolken." That's it, isn't it? And it says here on page 6: "On April 15th, the camp doctor arrived suddenly and ordered all the Jews that were there to line up"—184 namely—"and ordered that they be sent to the gas chambers. When they were taken away from the block in the evening, they were wearing only underpants. The

Rapportführer *Kurpanik* and the two SS men Dargelis and Baretzki”— “Barecki” is written here “had fun beating them up and kicking them.”

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that was Baretzki.

Presiding Judge:

Was that Baretzki?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

I now have a few additional questions about case number 6 in the opening order, Doctor Wolken. That is the case with Mihail Liczka.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

How long did you know the victim before this incident?

Witness Otto Wolken:

How could I remember that now after 20 years? I would have to look that up. He belonged to the group from Flossenbürg—i.e., to those who arrived at the camp in December, December 5th, 1943. The incident happened—if you could help me—I believe...

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Yes, that was in 1944, I believe in March.

Witness Otto Wolken:

April.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Or April.

Witness Otto Wolken:

March or April. But I had already known him for five months.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Did you see him often?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, of course. I checked people, and weighed them every week, and wrote that down in the reports.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Did you also check his health? Did I understand that correctly?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did. As best as I could with what I had available. We did not have an X-ray machine.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

When exactly after April 19th—I did find that out, that it happened on April 19th, 1944—how many days later did Mr. Liczka die?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I think it was on the second or third day. I do not know.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

The second day after that. Do you think that—and this is a question that should be asked to an expert, but I will ask you now—do you think he was a so-called “Muselman?” And excuse me for using that expression in this context. Do you think that only being struck with a club could have been the cause of his death?

Witness Otto Wolken:

At that time, yes.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

The defendant has often said—

Presiding Judge:

Wait a moment, Mr. Gerhardt. I want this to go into the minutes. To Dr Gerhardt’s question—

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Without the title “doctor.”

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Gerhardt. To the question as to whether the witness was of the opinion that the injuries inflicted on Mihail Liczka by the defendant Baretzki were the cause of his sudden death, the witness said: “In my opinion, yes.”

Witness Otto Wolken:

At that time, yes.

Presiding Judge:

Right. At that time, yes.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

What was the stick used by the defendant like?

Witness Otto Wolken:

How could I describe that to you? I was not standing next to him. Also, I did not see whether the stick was carved or something. Usually they had shovels, you know, they had those...They went into the camp armed with sticks.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Well, I have to ask you: It could have been a club. It could have been a simple stick. It could have been a rod. Obviously, there are many differences between them, differentiations.

Witness Otto Wolken:

The clubs that they beat people with were very sturdy.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Good. I do not remember correctly: Did they hit the prisoners several times or only once? And how far away were you?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I think it's six to eight meters. I do not know how big the roll call area is. It all looked alike. Let's say, ten meters, something like that.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Thanks. That's enough. You said this morning that the prisoner died from a kidney hemorrhage. Did you determine the cause of death on your own, or were other doctors present?

Witness Otto Wolken:

There were other prisoners in the ambulance.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

I mean the cause of death.

Witness Otto Wolken:

When diagnosing the disease, not really, because there was blood in his urine.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Did any prisoners die in your ambulance without having been beaten up beforehand, or after other confrontations?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No.

Presiding Judge:

Excuse me? I did not hear that question correctly. Did other prisoners also die without being beaten up beforehand?

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Yes, without being beaten up beforehand.

Presiding Judge:

But Mr. Gerhardt, the witness has been describing to us for days how many hundreds and thousands of people died of exhaustion, typhoid, and all kinds of diseases. Of course, people also died without being beaten to death. I believe that the witness described that to us here with absolutely impeccable clarity. We really do not need to ask that question anymore.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Alright, yes. I now come to the second charge against the defendant Baretzki. Who reported the eleven deaths?

Witness Otto Wolken:

They brought those eleven dead bodies to me in the death chamber. I had to enter them in the death report.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Gerhardt, the prisoners did not receive any report. Whenever someone was reported, it was reported to the supervisor, the *Blockführer* or whoever else was there. Presumably he only made the entries in his death reports after checking who was dead.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is correct.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

When or how many days afterwards did you make the entry?

Witness Otto Wolken:

On the same day. I reported those deaths right away.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Were there any other murderers committed that day besides the one we are talking about now?

Witness Otto Wolken:

As far as I know, no, there were not.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Not as far as you know. Besides these eleven deaths, were other people, prisoners, injured?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, they hit them with a stick.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

They shot them as well?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I think someone was shot as well.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Did you see which rifle the defendant Baretzki is said to have used?

Witness Otto Wolken:

He did not shoot a rifle. He shot revolvers.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

With revolvers. In this context, I would perhaps again like to ask the question that the public prosecutor asked here. This morning—I must say this in advance—when the court asked if you had seen Baretzki shooting, you did not say anything at first. Then you said: “I did not see anyone who did not shoot.” In response to the same question from the public prosecutor earlier you said: “It was such a mess, they shot in a circle.” That was what you said. You also said: “Even with my best efforts, I cannot say for sure if Baretzki was shooting.” That you did not know. You explained that at noon today. The judge then said: “The question has already been answered. The witness said this morning that he didn’t see anyone who was not shooting.” I would now like to know which of these two contrasting versions is correct.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Look, these events happened twenty years ago. At the time, I wrote it down fresh from my memory. And when you ask me here today...And I have a conscience and I do not want to burden someone for no reason. I am trying hard to recall the image from that time in order to be able to give a clear answer. I do not want to hurt anyone. I do not want to unjustifiably accuse anyone, and that’s why I have to think about it. It was in a circle. And everyone was firing, including Baretzki, even though I can’t seem to recall an image of him with the revolver at the moment, so to speak. But I know everyone was involved. And given all these things, it never occurred that two SS men were shooting, and the others just stood by and watched. Everyone had a revolver in their hand and shot. Because at that moment there was already a small revolt. People were running away, they were scattering. And everyone felt obligated to keep things in order.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

May I ask you, what was the distance between you and Baretzki and the other shooters you mentioned?

Witness Otto Wolken:

About forty meters. Forty, fifty meters.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Is it possible that not all of the people you mentioned were standing together? That they were somehow scattered and that perhaps someone stood in a barracks to shoot?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that could have been possible, but I didn’t see it.

Defense lawyer Gerhardt:

Thank you. I have no other questions.

Presiding Judge:

No more questions. Mr. Laternser?

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Dr. Wolken, in addition to the contribution to the book *Testimonials and Reports. Chronicle of the Birkenau Quarantine Camp*, did you write any other reports about your time in Auschwitz?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, a complete series. I submitted them all to the court.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Did you publish all those reports? Were those printed?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I only published the chronicles of the camp as a literary work. The other reports are not that interesting. They are only statistics.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I see.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Well, I published a few things in Krakow in a medical journal which deals with the problems of disease in the concentration camps. It's a journal. I just remembered. I published two articles about concentration camp diseases and these health statistics have now published in the January issue.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

This article that you published in this journal, did you write it as early as 1945?

Witness Otto Wolken:

As early as 1945. And you should have seen it from the Nuremberg trials, because it was there already.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Dr. Wolken, yes, I saw that this work was published in 1962.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Have you made any significant changes to the original version from 1945, and the article you published?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I absolutely did not. I have emphasized that today already. I am a doctor. I work from early in the morning until late at night, and I am happy that I do not have to deal with these things anymore. And when someone approached me to make a contribution, I said: "There you have the chronicle, use it!"

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Yes, that's enough for me. Well, Dr. Wolken, you said you were a member of the investigative commission in Krakow?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I was.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

From when to when?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I cannot tell you exactly when for two reasons: Originally I was just a witness. Originally! And then I became a member of the commission. When that happened, I do not remember anymore. But it was no later than July 15th. I left Krakow around July 15th. Then I finished my work and returned to Austria. But it just occurred to me: I believe that this document contains the exact date.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

The exact date is not so important. I just wanted to know how long you've been there. So, you said—but I do not want to make you look it up now...

Witness Otto Wolken:

Ok.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

You said that you were called as a witness by this commission.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is correct.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Is there any written record of that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

A written record.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Did you testify under oath at that time?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Do you have notes of that interrogation?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I have two copies. There were two interrogations: the one record that I have already mentioned from April 24th, 1945, and then there is a second record, that is all.

—Break—

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Would you be willing to provide copies of these minutes in the event that the court wants to use them?

Witness Otto Wolken:

They are all there already.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

All of them?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, all of them. Both protocols and all additional documents. Everything is in one file here with the court. I do not own it; I only have parts of it. But the court has all of them.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I see. OK. Good.

Witness Otto Wolken:

The second protocol is from July 22nd, 1945.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Dr. Wolken. Were you part of another commission that investigated what happened in Auschwitz?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I was not.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Weren't you part of the Auschwitz committee in Vienna?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I am a member of the International Auschwitz Committee. But this is a friendly group of Auschwitz survivors, a group through which we try to help one another.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I see. Is the main headquarters of this committee in Vienna?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, in Vienna. The Austrian committee.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

And who is the director of this committee?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Doctor Ella Lingens.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

What is the job of this committee?

Witness Otto Wolken:

We try to—

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

Your Honor—

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I would be happy to provide you with information. We have collected funds and brought thirty Polish ex-prisoners to an Austrian institute for pulmonary diseases in order to cure them. That was our job. We are also collecting money to make a memorial for the victims.

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

We are not asking this to—

Presiding Judge:

Why shouldn't he answer? Why shouldn't he?

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

If you were to ask him: "What did they do?"

Presiding Judge:

He told us that. What are your concerns?

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

I have misgivings because it has nothing to do with the witness's testimony. It has absolutely nothing to do with the evidence the witness is being asked about. It is clear to me that Mr.

Laternser's question is intended to find some type of discrimination among the membership of a purely charitable body.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I object to such conclusions from Mr. Kaul.

Presiding Judge:

Wait, Mr. Kaul. No. Mr. Laternser, you heard that his organization had a charitable purpose.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Yes, that is what I was asking.

Presiding Judge:

Exactly. And now we are done with that.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I would ask you to allow me to ask additional questions.

Presiding Judge:

Please, go ahead.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Dr. Wolken, did you participate in any sort of interrogations in this committee?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, not in this committee.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

And by members of this committee?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Are you sure about that? Are you really sure?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I guess you are thinking about Mister Langbein.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Yes, I am.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Mr. Langbein is just an ordinary member of our committee, just like a member of any party. What he does privately is none of our committee's business. He has no role in our committee.

Presiding Judge:

That is what I want to know. Doctor Langbein was earlier also a secretary.

Witness Otto Wolken:

He was a secretary.

Presiding Judge:

Secretary General.

Witness Otto Wolken:

He was Secretary General, and he did a great deal of research on war criminals. So, yes, there are people like that who do that.

Presiding Judge:

Wait a minute, and then I think the committee moved to its headquarters in Warsaw. And then he was no longer Secretary General?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, because a Secretary General in Vienna has no interest in a committee in Warsaw.

Presiding Judge:

You do not need to explain that to me. I was just asking if that was how it was.

Witness Otto Wolken:

It was like that.

Presiding Judge:

Tell me, is Mr. Langbein now a completely normal member of this Auschwitz Committee in Vienna?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Our committee in Vienna. Yes, he is.

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

Well, in his job as a secretary, he did not go out of his way to find witnesses?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, of course he did.

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

We will hear from Mister Langbein as a witness. We have to. According to Paragraph 242 of the Criminal Code, I object to the question and justify this objection, just as the defense did at the time.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, Mr. Kaul...

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

I would ask you not to allow this question because Mister Langbein..

Presiding Judge:

Dr. Kaul, we can't both speak at the same time, can we? You will speak just like the other gentlemen when you are given the floor. You want to have the floor here to object to a question. You have objected to this question, and you have given the reason for this complaint, and that was that it did not belong in the testimony. Is that correct?

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

Yes, it is.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

And I would like to make a statement about that. Your honor, you can clarify that.

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

But I would like to give a more detailed reason.

Presiding Judge:

To give more details. Then give us more details.

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

So, this is about a person, someone who we do not know anything about, but who in turn has already been called as a witness by the public prosecutor, and the truth of whose credibility—obviously the questions are related to that—we are trying to establish here.

— Break —

Presiding Judge:

Your question—

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I will now explain why I have to ask that question. We have been listening to the witness for two days now and, as we have gathered from his testimonies, he is very knowledgeable. He lives in Vienna. We will be hearing from many witnesses who were in some way connected to commissions. It is important to figure out what activities these commissions carried out in order to determine whether the information given from Witness X to Witness Y did or did not influence the testimonies of the witnesses—if not consciously, then unconsciously. In my opinion, it is extremely important to understand that. And the activities of these commissions must be scrutinized in order to determine whether we haven't been influenced—I am not saying consciously or unconsciously—taking into consideration the testimonies that are coming up. We

need to know whether we are dealing with clear, independent testimony. I do not need to reply to what Herr Kaul said otherwise. Please, your honor, allow me to ask this question.

Presiding Judge:

And your question is...

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

My question is whether Mister Langbein actively sought out witnesses while he was working as a secretary of the Auschwitz committee.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, of course he did. It was part of his duties.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Good. Then the question has been answered.

Presiding Judge:

A moment please. There are some contradictory statements here. I can accept this answer only if we all agree.

Witness Otto Wolken:

This is exactly the same process used when a newspaper calls for witnesses after a traffic accident. This is exactly how Mr. Langbein looked for witnesses.

Presiding Judge:

So, that is the first question. Proceed.

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

I still object.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, of course. We are still deciding here. You can come down. So, do you have another question? We are taking the question back because—

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Yes. I still have several questions, Your Honor, and I would ask you not to ask whether I have another question after every question, please. I would like to put them in context.

Presiding Judge:

I do not understand you, Mr. Laternser.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Oh, I think you do.

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

Mr. Laternser, you alone—

Presiding Judge:

Just a moment. Wait a second, Mr. Kaul. We're not having a conversation here. Mr. Laternser, you asked a question. The question has been disputed. You know very well that this complaint must be agreed upon, and that the court does that. Since I do not want to ask the court to deliberate on every single issue that will be disputed, I asked you whether you had any further questions. It's a very clear procedure. In my opinion, I do not understand your complaint now.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Good, then please just consider it a misunderstanding.

Presiding Judge:

Good.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Mr. Wolken, do you know if he recorded any of the witnesses?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

You do not know if he recorded any of the witnesses or not?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

You do not know. Did Mr. Langbein have any sort of correspondence with the witnesses while he was working as the secretary of the Auschwitz Commission?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I think so. If he puts an ad out and looks for witnesses, and a witness comes forward, he has to ask: "About what can you testify?"

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I see. Do you know if he forwarded witnesses' statements to other witnesses?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

You do not know.

Presiding Judge:

You do not know or does that means that—

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not know. I really do not. Vienna is a big city, and Mr. Langbein lives very far away from me.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Have you ever attended any meetings with the witnesses?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I haven't.

Presiding Judge:

Well, wait, be careful answering that question. You were a member of the Auschwitz Committee. I assume that you all got together there once. I also assume that there were several people there who were also in Auschwitz, and that you also met them there, right?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, but we did not talk about the trials. That's the main thing. We got together, not as witnesses. We were together as Auschwitz comrades. We talked about Auschwitz Committee's problems. We never got together as witnesses.

Presiding Judge:

That is the way it should be understood.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Yes, that was exactly what I meant by my question. Mr. Wolken, do you know of the indictment?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

You do not. And have you ever testified as a witness in other trials?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I have, in the trial against Dr. Peters from Degesch.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

When was that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

It was about two or three years ago.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Here in Frankfurt?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, here in Frankfurt.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Mr. Wolken, you described to us what you knew about what happened on the ramps. You said that you heard personally that the first thing they said was that those who were sick, old, and unable to work, women and children should step to the left. And that camp doctors were supposed to take care of the rest.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I did not hear about what happened to the rest.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

You did not? Really? But that's what you said. That's your statement. And you said that these camp doctors volunteered for these selections. How do you know?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No. What I said was that the camp doctors took part in the selection, some of them even voluntarily. Mengele did that often because that was where he chose his twins and so on.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I remember your statement differently. I remember that you said that the camp doctors offered to do the work. Then, your statement—

Presiding Judge:

He said that, and he has said that again now, using the same words.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Good. Now, Mr. Wolken: Were you somehow informed about the course of these negotiations by any party recently, before you started to testify as a witness?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I was not.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

No, you were not.

Defense lawyer Gerhardt:

Your honor, may I ask a question that is of general interest? Didn't you just say, Mr. Wolken, that the defendant Baretzki only came to the ramp with his superior and then left? And that you had documents in hand, but that was not true?

Witness Otto Wolken:

It was just by coincidence that I found a page out of a newspaper in my hotel room with Baretzki's statement in it. It was an old newspaper lying there, which I read, and that's where I found Baretzki's statement. But it was by coincidence that I found it.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Could you tell me which newspaper it was or if there was a picture in it?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I can't. It was only a page.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Was it the Frankfurt newspaper?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that was it.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

Great. Thanks. I will find out. Do you know, Dr. Wolken, if what is happening here during the trial is being recorded by non-official parties?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not know.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

So, the Auschwitz Committee in Vienna did not inform you about the course of the trial?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, the Auschwitz Committee in Vienna, what we do is just a watered-down summary for our members. We get together at a small restaurant once every two or three months. And we hear some kind of report about reparations or the status of the memorial campaign or any trip that we're going to take, but—

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

When you came to Frankfurt, did anyone here draw your attention to any important point in your future testimony?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, nobody did.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Nobody did. Now I have just one question that I would like to draw your attention to.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Mr. Laternser, I would like to draw your attention to one thing: What I said here today, I wrote it down 19 years ago. I did not add any words today and did not remove a word from it. And I wrote it at a time when I did not know anything about the existence of a Hermann Langbein, about the existence of an Auschwitz Committee or any of those things. I haven't changed a thing, and I stand by these things the way I wrote them 19 years ago. I did not add anything. I did not take anything out. That's how things were. So, I said them here. I am happy to swear to them. I do not understand

what it has to do with Langbein, what it has to do with the Auschwitz Committee and other things. I haven't changed anything.

Presiding Judge:

Did you have a last question, Mr. Laternser?

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Yes, I have one last question. Mr. Wolken, and you do not need to answer. In response to the question from the acting public prosecutor, you said earlier that someone was putting together a case against you. May I ask how many cases there were?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Three.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Three cases, OK. And the sentence—you do not need to answer that—how many years did they give you?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Six years because I was Jewish.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

I do not have any further questions.

Presiding Judge:

You can take a seat. Does anyone from the defense still have questions? Mr. Steinacker. And how many questions?

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Two or three. Could we do them tonight? Perhaps we could release the witness afterwards.

Presiding Judge:

Two or three. Could we do them tonight? Then maybe we could release the witness afterwards.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Yes, I think so.

Presiding Judge:

Great. Go ahead.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Mr. Wolken, when you were selected in July 1943 for the gas chamber with 80 other inmates, how healthy were you at the time?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I was still doing fairly well.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Isn't it the case that by that time you were already, to use the expression, a "Muselman?"

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, and I will also explain to you why that is so. Look how I got to Auschwitz, by then I had already been in various other camps for five years. I already had a second doctoral degree, so to speak, in how to survive life in the camp. And when I was in quarantine in Auschwitz I and saw that that could have been the end of me, I noticed the dirty windowpanes on the block and said to the block senior: "Look how dirty the windowpanes are. If you have a rag, I'll clean your windows." Once an SS man is in a bad mood, then there's a fuss. And he agreed. And while the others sat outside, I sat all day, cleaning the windows on the first and the ground floors, cleaning them so that they glittered and shone. The SS man, the report leader, noticed that. He then made a fuss in the other blocks, and I always got extra. And I told you that I even had an extra loaf of bread. I became a real hero at the time.

Presiding Judge:

So, he was in good health.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Good, so you were in good shape. Got it. Mr. Wolken, in the book *Auschwitz. Testimonies and Reports*, we already talked about your report "Chronicle of the Birkenau Quarantine Camp." It begins with the following sentence, which I would like to repeat. I would then ask you to confirm whether the sentence is correct in this form, because I have another question after that. "In July 1943, I was transferred with about 80 other prisoners from the Auschwitz main camp to Birkenau to be sent to the gas chambers," which you described this morning and during the day. "Through a friend who had a connection to inmates working in the political unit and thanks to my profession—I am a doctor—I was taken out of the group at the last minute and thus saved from death." End of the citation so far. So, the phrase in the sentence is "through a friend." Do you remember who that friend was?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Do you remember Dr. Samuel from Frankfurt?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not.

Presiding Judge:

Does he need to remember that?

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Yes, he does. He is the friend he was talking about.

Presiding Judge:

Then the question should be: Do you remember? That is an intransitive verb, right?

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Yes. "Do you remember?" Sure.

Presiding Judge:

Good, go ahead then.

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

You do not remember anything about Dr. Samuel?

Witness Otto Wolken

No, I do not.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Do you then remember who this friend was who had a connection to the political department?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I do. He was someone from Linz. I haven't seen him since then. And he said he had someone who would take care of it. So, I do not really know who took care of that, and I did not see that person afterwards.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

You know, the only thing that bothers me is the phrase "through a friend." A fellow inmate is not necessarily the same as a friend. Is the phrase, if you wrote it at the time, "a friend"—is that your account, or perhaps the author of the report to whom you gave it phrased it that way? Or is this only your original writings?

Witness Otto Wolken:

That is a phrase that I did not write myself.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Is it not yours?

Witness Otto Wolken:

My version is: In July 1943, I was...wait a moment.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Is that the original version?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is the original version. "Through an acquaintance in the political unit" it says here, "and thanks to my job." That is the original version. They changed "acquaintance" to "friend."

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

So, you do not know whom you have to thank from the political division for getting you out of there?

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I do not.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Good, then I do not have any further questions.

Presiding Judge:

No further questions.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Oh wait. Yes. One more. My apologies. I have to come back to the question: big cordon, small cordon, electric fence. If I remember correctly, when the public prosecutor asked you, you said that the fence was also charged during the day.

Presiding Judge:

Correct.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, it was.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Do you remember where the big cordon was?

Witness Otto Wolken:

The big cordon was set up when the work units were outside. That was when the big cordon was there. The small cordon was set when everyone was in the camp. The small cordon also came after the roll call. Sorry, but I've never really cared about those. As I mentioned earlier, I do not know much about the technical, administrative things that concerned life in the camp. So, I can only make assumptions.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Good, I understand. And an additional question: According to statements made by various defendants, they did not turn on the fence when the main cordon was up or was set up?

Presiding Judge:

In the internal camp?

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Yes, of course.

Presiding Judge:

Is that so?

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Do you know anything about that? Can you say anything about that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I can neither deny that, nor can I confirm it. I know that during the day, when no one was in the watchtowers, the electric fence was on. Because we had accidents, and we had those who voluntarily walked towards the fence. I do not know exactly when they turned on the fence or not.

Defense Lawyer Steinacker:

Ok. I do not have any further questions.

Presiding Judge:

All the accused have the right to ask questions and to make statements after hearing this witness.

Accused Klehr:

Yes, I have a question for the witness.

Presiding Judge:

Go ahead.

Accused Klehr:

The witness said that I, supposedly, was in charge of the disinfection unit.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, that is correct.

Accused Klehr:

Then I have to ask the witness for how long I was in that position.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I do not know that. I do not know.

Accused Klehr:

Yes, you do, Mr. Wolken. You said that it was in 1943.

Witness Otto Wolken:

1943, no. I met you in 1944. And that's when Doctor Thilo came to you and said: "It doesn't work. I believe that people come out of the "sauna" full of lice." And you spoke very disparagingly. And

then I said to Thilo: "There you go. See for yourself." And that's when he brought you. The people were lined up outside, in front of the kitchen barracks. I came with other doctors, and we examined the people. And we showed you the fresh lice on the laundry personally. So that's what happened. So, at that point you were the one responsible for it.

Presiding Judge:

That is correct. Mr. Wolken has already talked about that. Mr. Klehr, do you want to know if the witness knows from when until when you were in charge of the disinfection unit?

Accused Klehr:

That is correct.

Witness Otto Wolken:

That I do not know.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Wolken is saying "I do not know that. I could not know that. I can only remember this episode."

Accused Klehr:

Your Honor, I just wanted to draw the witness' attention to this: Dr. Wolken is saying that, where he went after being at the Birkenau camp, there was already a ramp between the women's camp and the men's camp. As long as I was in Auschwitz, I never got to see this Birkenau ramp.

Presiding Judge:

Well, we will have to see how your statements overlap.

Accused Klehr:

When I was in Auschwitz, the ramp was between the central camp and Birkenau. I never saw the new ramp between the women's camp and the men's camp.

Presiding Judge:

And you arrived in 1943.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did.

Presiding Judge:

Good. In 1943, until the end.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is correct.

Presiding Judge:

And during that time, you came across the ramp, right?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is correct.

Presiding Judge:

And you, Mr. Klehr, you had not been to Auschwitz until August 1943, right?

Accused Klehr:

Exactly. Until August 1943.

Presiding Judge:

That means that it is very possible that, in August 1943, you did not see the new ramp. And Mr. Wolken, who arrived after August 1943, saw it afterwards.

Accused Klehr:

Of course.

Presiding Judge:

The timeline does not overlap at all.

Accused Klehr:

Your Honor, the witness is saying that I was in charge of the disinfection division. And he is also saying that the new ramp was already between the women's camp and the men's camp.

Presiding Judge:

Ok, now I have a question, Dr. Wolken. Are you sure you want to say: "When I arrived at the Birkenau camp?" That was probably in June, you said, or in July, at the end of July, at the beginning of August. "At that time the ramp was already there?" Or do you want to say: "It was built during my time in the Birkenau camp?"

Witness Otto Wolken:

I do not know anything about the construction of that ramp. Or exactly when it was made. Let me explain: Up until, let's say, three weeks after my arrival in the quarantine camp, that means when I worked as a doctor in the outpatient clinic, I was only a subordinate, a simple prisoner, just like the others. So, I did not know anything about what was happening outside the camp. I did not know who the individual people were unless I happened to hear one name or the other. So, I did not have a chance at all to see what's going on outside the camp.

Presiding Judge:

At the beginning?

Witness Otto Wolken:

At the beginning, I did not know. That is why I can't say anything. But from the moment that I became a knowledgeable prisoner, so to speak, when I had, let's say, climbed [a] bit in the camp

hierarchy, I was able to take care of a number of things and look around. At that point, the ramp already existed. That's when they had transports arriving at the ramp. And that was...

Presiding Judge:

And that was at the time when you...

Witness Otto Wolken:

If it was already August or September, I do not know exactly, but it was about that time.

Presiding Judge:

Was the ramp already there?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I was not there when they built it. Probably other witnesses know more about that, especially the one from the women's camp.

Presiding Judge:

Any other questions?

Accused Klehr:

Yes, I wanted to ask something again, your Honor. Earlier on, he asked the witness if I was the one who had set up a disinfection division, and that I had to tear it down again afterwards. This statement was made by Neubert. It was not made by me. I never stated that I was the one who set up a disinfection division.

Presiding Judge:

Right, that is correct. It was a mistake. Neubert already made a new statement. Any other questions?

Accused Klehr:

No, I just wanted to say that, starting in August, I did not work in Auschwitz, but I was in the sub-camp. Shortly after—

Presiding judge:

Wait a moment, Mr. Klehr. This is very important. Mr. Wolken, you said that you met Mr. Klehr with the camp doctor—

Witness Otto Wolken:

Dr. Thilo.

Presiding Judge:

And there was a time when you were already in the quarantine camp.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, in Birkenau, in the quarantine camp.

Presiding Judge:

And you said that you arrived in the A-camp in September or October. And at that time, Mr. Klehr should have also been—

Witness Otto Wolken:

This episode happened towards the end, shortly before they decided to disband the camp. That was in 1944.

Presiding Judge:

In 1944?

Witness Otto Wolken:

In 1944. So, who was there in the disinfection division?

Accused Klehr:

After my transfer, the *Unterscharführer* Koch was in charge of it. I was transferred to the sub-camps from the moment they built it. And then cases of typhus were reported in the subcamps. And from there, I was transferred to the satellite camps and had to do disinfection in the satellite camps. And my successor was the *Unterscharführer* Koch. And this part of the camp, as is shown there, the quarantine camp, did not even exist when I was there. Where I was in Auschwitz, there was a women's camp, then a boys' camp, a men's camp, and then there was a Gypsy camp. The rear section did not exist at all during my time there.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I see. But look, in August it was already there.

Presiding Judge:

Well, Mr. Wolken, it is important for us that you say exactly when this episode with the camp doctor and Mr. Klehr happened—

Witness Otto Wolken:

Oh well, maybe it was Mr. Koch. Maybe that was Mr. Koch. It was such a minor thing. So maybe, it was Mr. Koch.

Presiding Judge:

But you can't say that for sure?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I had never seen Mr. Klehr before that. It was a name that I heard. And it could be that it was Mr. Koch.

Presiding Judge:

Good, the question was answered.

Witness Otto Wolken:

As I said, it was not a sensational story.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, which accused? Baretzki?

Accused Baretzki:

Mr. Wolken.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Accused Baretzki:

If you were a doctor in the A-camp, you must also know that there was a writer in the camp, Mr. Hauptmann. What type of writer was he?

Presiding Judge:

What does that mean?

Accused Baretzki:

The one who knows about everything in the camp. What do you call it, the writer?

Presiding Judge:

I do not understand.

Witness Otto Wolken:

The report writer.

Accused Baretzki:

Exactly, the report writer. Do you know who he was? What his name was?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I do not remember his name.

Accused Baretzki:

Who was it? A Jew or a Polish person?

Witness Otto Wolken:

He came from Poland.

Accused Baretzki:

Do you want me to tell you his name?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Sure.

Accused Baretzki:

Do you recall a Mr. Maximilian Sternol?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Sternol? No, I do not.

Accused Baretzki:

No, you do not? He was the report writer in A-Camp. You should know him if you were a doctor there.

Presiding Judge:

How do you know that, Mr. Baretzki, if you had never been in the A-Camp?

Accused Baretzki:

Yes, let me tell you how I know that. I was confronted about Mr. Maximilian Sternol by a magistrate, and he said to me that he was a report writer in the A-Camp. I said to him: "I do not know any report writers from the A-Camp." "Well," he said to me, "he was a report writer." I replied to him: "Well, if you had been a report writer, then I would know you." "Yes," he said, "I was not a report writer in the D-Camp where you were. I was a report writer in the A-Camp." I said: "Then you know me from the A-C or from the D-Camp?" "No, I do not know you from the A-Camp. Before my time as a report writer in the A-Camp, I was a *Blockältester*. I know you from that time," he said, "but I did not meet you when I was a report writer in the A-Camp."

Presiding Judge:

Alright then, that could be true. Regardless, this witness said that he met you in the D-Camp.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, and later again in the A-Camp.

Presiding Judge:

And later, when he was in the A-Camp. You were a *Blockältester* there—

Accused Baretzki:

No, you mean *Blockführer*, right?

Presiding Judge:

When you were a *Blockführer*. And as such you were in a position to witness what he told us today. But I will ask you again: How does that relate to the fact that you had never been in the A-Camp?

Accused Baretzki:

That is correct. I hadn't. If I had been in the A-Camp, the report writer would have known me. Because the report writer works with the *Blockführer*. They work very closely. They must know each other, although the doctor and the *Blockführer* come in contact less often. But a report writer and a *Blockführer*, they work together every day. They put the work force together from the camp. Well, they must know each other. And the man did not know me as a report writer from the A-Camp, but Doctor Wolken claims he knows me. May I tell you something else, Mr. Wolken?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Sure.

Accused Baretzki:

You met Mr. Kurpanik. Kurpanik was the *Unterscharführer*. He was the report writer, right? Dargelis was a *Blockführer*, Weiss was a *Blockführer*, and as fourth *Blockführer* (because they must have had four *Blockführer* in the A-Camp). Have you ever met, Mr. Meier? Do not mistake me for *Blockführer* Meier. Take a good look at me. Look at me carefully. Do not mistake me for *Blockführer* Meier. *Blockführer* Meier and Dargelis, those were two compatriots who came from East Prussia. Take a good look at me. Because there will be more people who will come and say that I did not work in the A-Camp. I never did anything in the A-Camp. I would not be a coward and say, "I was in the A-Camp." But I never worked in that camp!

Witness Otto Wolken:

Look, I recognize you, although I have not seen you in 20 years, and I feel sorry for your personal situation, but—

Accused Baretzki:

Mr. Wolken, answer my question now—

Presiding Judge:

Yes, please continue, do you still claim—

Witness Otto Wolken:

Sure.

Presiding Judge:

...that Baretzki is the one you were talking about?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I do.

Presiding Judge:

Do you have any other questions?

Accused Baretzki:

Do you know the other *Blockführer* who worked in the A-Camp?

Witness Otto Wolken:

I have already mentioned Mr. Dargelis

Presiding Judge:

That is correct, he said that about three times—

Accused Baretzki:

Yes, but always the same four people!

Presiding Judge:

Always the same four people.

Accused Baretzki:

But he also said they changed all the time.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Oh. OK. Well—

Accused Baretzki:

And you always talk about the same four people, Mr. Wolken.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Oh well, you know, there were *Blockführer* that you did not see at all. They did not show up at all. Nobody cared what their names were, and no one knew their names.

Accused Baretzki:

You walked by a *Blockführer*. You had to leave the camp. You should have known...What was my rank?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Excuse me?

Accused Baretzki:

What was my rank?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Unterscharführer, I think. I can't swear to it though.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Wolken, it is possible that there were other *Blockführer* in the camp, but you do not remember their names anymore?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, that is possible.

Presiding Judge:

So, yes, that is possible. Do you have any other questions?

Accused Baretzki:

No, I do not.

Presiding Judge:

You do not have any other questions for the witness?

Defense Lawyer Joschko:

Your Honor, Mr. Wolken did not really say if he knew *Blockführer* Meier or if there was a *Blockführer* named Meier.

Presiding Judge:

Oh well, you know—

Witness Otto Wolken:

I do not remember anything about *Blockführer* Meier now. You know, I could barely recall Mr. Weiss, although he did terrible things to me.

Presiding Judge:

So, you can't remember anything about a *Blockführer* named Meier.

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, now I can't.

Defense Lawyer Joschko:

I have one more question. Dr. Wolken, how is it that you know the name Baretzki?

Witness Otto Wolken:

The name Baretzki? Well, he made a very public appearance, also in the D-Camp. He was not what he is pretending to be here today. I can still see him today riding his bike through the camp. He would hit people left and right with the handlebars. There were a lot of people who were afraid of him.

Accused Baretzki:

Mr. Wolken, you mentioned camp leader Schillinger, did not you?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes, I did.

Accused Baretzki:

What year was it, with camp leader Schillinger?

Witness Otto Wolken:

That was in 1943, October or November.

Accused Baretzki:

He was a camp leader before, right? Where was the camp leader? You said: "Then Schwarzhuber arrived as camp leader." Where was Schillinger before that?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Today, I have repeatedly said that I know nothing about the camp hierarchy or about senior officers who were sitting in some office somewhere. That I never got to see myself. Or if I saw them, I did not know who they were.

Accused Baretzki:

If you—

Witness Otto Wolken:

I only knew the ones who worked where I was.

Accused Baretzki:

May I tell you who Schillinger was? I know the name Schillinger from the files. That was an *Unterscharführer* from the “Sonderkommando,” not a camp leader. A camp leader must have been at least an officer. He was a *Unterführer* from the Sonderkommando. I got that from the files. And you come here and say he was a camp leader. There must be a mistake. You must have meant someone else.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I gave him a promotion for free then. That happens.

Presiding Judge:

Well, the witness is saying: “As a prisoner, I can’t tell exactly who held what position at the time.” Do the other defendants have any questions for the witnesses? No other questions to ask? Mr. Kaul, did you already decide on your objection?

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

No, I did not.

Presiding Judge:

No, you did not. Mr. Kaul withdraws his objection to Mr. Laternser’s question. We have to make you swear to your statements.

Witness Otto Wolken:

Yes.

Presiding Judge:

The question was answered earlier. I just postponed receiving that answer. We accept them now. Dr. Wolken, before we swear you in, I’ll give you the opportunity to consider whether you want to tell us anything else, if there is anything else you want to correct, if you want to make any additions, or if you have anything else you want to tell us.

Witness Otto Wolken:

No, I—

Presiding Judge:

Nothing more?

Witness Otto Wolken:

Nothing more.

Presiding Judge:

Excuse me? Because of the swearing in, the parties involved in the process are unlikely to make any requests. Will they? No requests? No requests made. Then you must take the oath.

Defense Layer Gerhardt:

I want to request that you do not allow the witness to swear in.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Gerhardt, you could have said that before we stood up. The court has to discuss it. Mr. Kaul. I would like to tell you something: The evidence that you presented, whether or not we will get to that tomorrow is an important question.

Associate Prosecutor Kaul:

But it's already in Frankfurt.

Presiding Judge:

Wait a moment, Mr. Gerhardt. No one is saying that Mr. Baretzki hurt this witness. Other people did that.

Defense Lawyer Gerhardt:

OK. I take my statement back.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Your Honor, you want to swear him in now?

Presiding Judge:

Yes, that is correct.

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

Can I ask a question?

Presiding Judge:

Yes. To whom? The witness?

Defense Lawyer Laternser:

No, the—

Presiding Judge:

So. I will recite the oath to you: You swear by God, the Almighty and All-Knowing, that you have told the truth to the best of your knowledge and have not concealed anything. Please lift your right hand up and repeat after me: I swear it.

Witness Otto Wolken:

I swear it.

Presiding Judge:

So help me God.

Witness Otto Wolken:

So help me God.

Presiding Judge:

Thank you.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal

26th day of the trial 13.03.1964

1. Frankfurt Auschwitz-Trial

»Criminal case against Mulka and others. «, 4 Ks 2/63

District court Frankfurt am Main

26th day of the trial 13.03.1964

Interrogation of the witness Maryla Rosenthal

Presiding Judge:

Ms. Rosenthal, you will be questioned here as a witness. It's understandable that you hate to think back to the time that we are discussing in this trial. However, we must ask you to put in some effort, use your recollections and tell us everything you remember from that time. According to the law, you must be sworn to your testimony. And your oath will also state that you have not concealed anything from us. I must, therefore, ask you again to tell us anything you know, even if you find it difficult to talk about, even if you would prefer not to speak about these things at all. But I have to tell you this in the interests of those who are searching for the truth. That is why I must ask you to take your duties here very seriously. It is my duty to clarify to you the meaning of the oath and that perjury is an offense punished by the law. If you do not mind, we'd like to record your statement on tape. This is not for publication, but only for the court, so that we will not need to write down your testimony. As a sort of memory aid. Just for the court. Do you agree?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I do.

Presiding Judge:

Good. May I ask you first to give me your personal information? What is your first name?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Maryla.

Presiding Judge:

Maryla. Rosenthal?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, that is correct.

Presiding Judge:

How old are you, Mrs. Rosenthal?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

55.

Presiding Judge:

55. Are you married?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I am, but I am separating from my husband now.

Presiding Judge:

But you are not separated yet?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, not yet, but it should happen any time soon.

Presiding Judge:

So, you are still married.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I do not live with my husband.

Presiding Judge:

OK. Married. If you want, we can record it as “lives separately.”

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, please.

Presiding Judge:

Do you have a job?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I am a secretary.

Presiding Judge:

Secretary. Where do you live?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

In Zurich.

Presiding Judge:

In Zurich. Are you related to any of the defendants here?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I am not.

Presiding Judge:

Should I read the list of the defendants to you or is that unnecessary?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I do not think it's necessary.

Presiding Judge:

You are not related to any of—

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No. Absolutely not.

Presiding Judge:

Do you recall a former *Blockführer* named Bednarek? You should know him, or maybe you don't—

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I don't know him.

Presiding Judge:

You don't.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I don't.

Presiding Judge:

Not related to any of them. Were you born in Obstfeld?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I was.

Presiding Judge:

Well, Mrs. Rosenthal, I would be grateful if you would tell us very briefly how you arrived at the camp, where you stayed, what tasks you had, what work you did, and whether you observed anything during that time, including things related to the accused Boger.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes. Sure.

Presiding Judge:

Please, go ahead.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Well, I arrived at Auschwitz in July 1942. I was first assigned to a commando where I had to pour sand onto a truck with a very heavy shovel. I couldn't do it well at all. The supervisor was a German, an Upper Silesian, who, because according to him I could not do the work well, insulted me and also hit me with a shovel. I also heard him speaking in Polish, which of course I understood.

The way to work took half an hour and that was only one way. We were barefoot and bare headed, and they shaved our hair. I could never walk barefoot. I wasn't used to it. It was a rocky road. My feet and my legs became swollen and sore very quickly. These were, of course, the first things that they could use to send you to the gas chamber.

After a few days, I was standing in roll call—we were tens of thousands of women. They were looking for a woman who knew foreign languages, including Czech. I didn't want to say anything because I can't speak Czech. Then another woman, also a Pole, persuaded me to do it. I spoke up then, without knowing where I was going of course.

I was taken first to the 'sauna'. I took a bath. They gave me shoes, a new dress, and a hat that was more like a white cap. Then they brought me to an office where, I think they were Mr. Wosnitza and Mr. Pyschny, both of them, they said to me: "What you see and hear here, you didn't see and didn't hear, otherwise you'll pay for it with your life."

They brought me afterwards to a clerk's office. I think we were 16 women and the Kamphus. They only wrote death certificates there. And I became very dizzy. I couldn't process where I was or what that place even was. I can't remember how long I worked there.

One day, Mr. Boger appeared in the office and took me out of there. He was looking for a writer and an interpreter. So, I started working for him and wrote down and translated all the interrogations. These were always political prisoners, including people who had tried to escape and similar important things.

The prisoners were, of course, very quiet, and some didn't want to speak at all. Mr. Boger didn't hold back from slapping their faces, he also kicked them with his boots. Then he came up very close to them, right in their face, almost piercing them with his eyes. And if a prisoner absolutely didn't want to speak, he would say: "You're going to the 'talking machine' now." And then the two of them went out.

I can't remember whether it was an hour or two hours that they were there with this "talking machine." In any case, the prisoner was carried back on a stretcher. I didn't recognize him at all after that hour or after those two hours. He didn't look human anymore. He couldn't stand. He couldn't talk. I thought: "That's a dead person already."

Mr. Boger was very humane and very decent to me. For example, he would bring back his cookware from the canteen, take away just one spoon, and then he would say to me, "Maryla, please go and clean the cookware." That meant, of course, that I could eat what remained. Officially I wasn't allowed to eat it. I then called my two friends in, and we went to the toilet. We locked the door and ate. Mr. Boger also brought me a warm jacket and shoes from Birkenau. So, he was very kind to me as a coworker. He said a few times: 'I have nothing against Jews. I hate the Polacks, the damn Polacks.' That was his way of saying it. Of course, when Mr. Boger went to the men's camp, everybody knew that a massacre would take place there. I didn't see it because I was always in the office. But word got around.

Presiding Judge:

I see. You stayed there until January 18th, 1945, then you went to Ravensbrück where you got typhus.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I had typhus because of hunger. In fact, we had nothing to eat, and, after a while, I couldn't even eat the little piece of bread that they gave us. And that is what I got from the camp. My salivary glands do not work well.

Presiding Judge:

I see.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I would like to drink some water now, if I may.

Presiding Judge:

Now? Of course. You will get a glass of water. Mrs. Rosenthal, let's talk in more detail about your work for Mr. Boger. You just told us that Mr. Boger never gave you any reason to complain.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, never.

Presiding Judge:

On the contrary, he helped you on numerous occasions, and he should not have done that at all.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, that is correct.

Presiding Judge:

However, you witnessed many of these interrogations. You talked about a "speaking machine." Did you ever see this machine?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Once but only briefly, when I went to the green barrack. I do not remember it very well, but I saw a shape through the window, but I can't describe it very well.

Presiding Judge:

Would you mind showing us on this map where your office was, where you slept, and where you think you saw that machine. So, if you are standing in front of this map, there is the kitchen block in the middle. And on the left, that's where the political division should have been. You were in the main camp at Auschwitz, weren't you?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes.

Presiding Judge:

So, those are all barracks and those are houses. On the right side of the barracks, we find the barracks for sick prisoners, barrack twenty and so on, where the sick prisoners....

Public prosecutor Vogel:

Your Honor, those were not barracks. Those were stone buildings. Those were outside of the main camp. I think, that is..

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Birkenau.

Public prosecutor Vogel:

No, here..

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I do not recognize those barracks. Maybe it was Birkenau.

Presiding Judge:

No, Birkenau is on the right, on your right. This is Birkenau. And this is the main camp at Auschwitz. And these individual buildings are stone buildings, like Mr. Vogel has correctly stated. Can you tell us where your office was or the political division?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

On the ground floor in the commander's office.

Presiding Judge:

And where is that on the map?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

On the right, coming from that side.

Presiding Judge:

Do you know where it is that on the map?

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

May I help somehow?

Presiding Judge:

Yes, you may.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

The gate of the camp with the sign "Work Sets You Free."

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

That was the entrance to the men's camp.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Yes, that is correct.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

“Work Sets You Free.” I just arrived.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And here was the old crematorium.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I worked in the barracks, but mostly in the main office, in the stone building.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

There was the camp fence, and outside of the fence, there were three buildings.

Presiding Judge:

Alright. Please take a seat if you do not remember it exactly. So, you do not have any memory of this instrument that you just described to us as the “speaking machine.” Do you know whether this “talking machine” also had other names among the prisoners?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, it was the “swing,” “Boger’s swing.” Mr. Boger always called it the “speaking machine.” He always said to the prisoners: “You’re going to the speaking machine. You’ll talk for sure!”

Presiding Judge:

And how often did you see a prisoner or a witness that needed to be interrogated taken to this “speaking machine?”

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Two or three times. But it wasn’t always the case.

Presiding Judge:

But in these cases, the prisoner was brought back on a stretcher, and was so badly beaten that you said: “I thought he was half-dead.”

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I didn’t recognize him anymore.

Presiding Judge:

You didn’t recognize him anymore. Was his face also beaten up?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, he was not human anymore. You couldn’t recognize the person after that hour or two hours.

Presiding Judge:

Do you know what happened to these prisoners?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I don't.

Presiding Judge:

Where did they take them?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I do not know that.

Presiding Judge:

Where did they take them afterwards?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I do not know that. I was always in the room during the hearing.

Presiding Judge:

Can you remember if someone called Lilli Tofler was imprisoned?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Oh, yes. I do.

Presiding Judge:

Where was Lilli Tofler?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Lilli Tofler was in the political division for a while. And then, I believe, she was in Rajske working outside, I do not remember that very well though.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, we heard her name from...

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes. But Lilli Tofler had an admirer, a prisoner. Some girls dared to do that. They wrote letters to each other and received things from these prisoners. And once, an SS man died, and they sent flowers to the main office. An inmate brought it. And this man, Lilli Tofler's admirer, put a letter in there for her.

Presiding Judge:

I see.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

This letter fell on the floor in the hall of the main office, and Mr. Grabner found it. He gave it to Mr. Boger.

Presiding Judge:

Why?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Well, Mr. Boger took care of a lot of things. He was pretty important.

Presiding Judge:

And did Mr. Grabner hold any hearings?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I saw him once with Mr. Pilsudski's assistant. How he was beating people up. But whether he also took part in the interrogations, that I do not know.

Presiding Judge:

You do not know.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, because I was with Mr. Boger.

Presiding Judge:

So, Mr. Boger was then in charge of the interrogation?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes. And so, she came. I can't remember if she said anything or not. I do not remember anymore. However, Mr. Boger said to me: "Unfortunately, Lilli Tofler is a lost cause because Mr. Grabner found the letter. Otherwise, I could have saved her." And then I heard she was taken to the Bunker, the infamous Bunker 11. And then we heard she was shot. We did not see her again.

Presiding Judge:

You did not see her again.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I did not.

Presiding Judge:

And you only heard rumors that she was shot.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, that is correct.

Presiding Judge:

Did Mr. Boger have a nickname among the prisoners in Auschwitz?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, they called him "the Devil of Birkenau."

Presiding Judge:

And why “Birkenau?”

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Well, Auschwitz and Birkenau, they were kind of the same. It was like, I do not know, 2 kilometers away. Auschwitz was the main camp.

Presiding Judge:

Right.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

And Birkenau was...

Presiding Judge:

I just wanted to know if he was very active in Birkenau, so much so that the prisoners there started to call him “the Devil of Birkenau” and not “the Devil of Auschwitz.”

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I can’t comment on that.

Presiding Judge:

You do not know.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I do not know.

Presiding Judge:

But you do remember that they called him that.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, “the Devil of Birkenau.” That was his nickname.

Presiding Judge:

You said earlier that in two or three cases you saw people abused on the “swing,” and you saw those people again afterwards when they came back. And do you remember who those prisoners were?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I don’t.

Presiding Judge:

Was one of those prisoners Polish?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I think those were almost always Polish prisoners.

Presiding Judge:

Is that so?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes.

Presiding Judge:

And you also said, you were so shocked when you saw what had happened to those prisoners that you could not avoid crying.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, and that happened more than once. But Mr. Boger told me: "You have to shut down your feelings here."

Presiding Judge:

And then you told us that once you saw a prisoner that was beaten up so badly that you believed, as you have already stated, that he would not survive.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, that was my impression because of the way he looked. I thought, maybe he'll only live for another hour, maybe two.

Presiding Judge:

And that was your impression?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, exactly. That was my impression.

Presiding Judge:

Did you ever hear the prisoners screaming in a terrible way?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Oh yes, I did. They would scream "Jesus." Those were mostly Polish prisoners. They were tortured. But I can't say for sure that that was Mr. Boger. Because there was also Mr. Broch and Mr. Lachmann. They also tortured the prisoners.

Presiding Judge:

What was the other name? Broad?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Broch and Mr. Board. But Mr. Lachmann was awful as well.

Presiding Judge:

Oh well. We've never heard of Mr. Lachmann, and I do not think that now we can...

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

And Mr. Broch, he was a real torturer. He was a big man. He was a famous torturer.

Presiding Judge:

Was Mr. Broch not the same as Mr. Broad?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Oh no, he wasn't.

Presiding Judge:

I see. Well, during these hearings did you ever hear or see people being shot by Mr. Boger?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

If I saw that?

Presiding Judge:

Yes.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

That I did not see. I couldn't see that. That happened in the men's camp.

Presiding Judge:

In the men's camp?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes. I couldn't see that.

Presiding Judge:

So, nobody was shot during these interrogations?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Slapped in the face, kicked with boots, and pushed.

Presiding Judge:

Pushed and slapped?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, and they would be right in their faces. He was...

Presiding Judge:

Terrifying.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Completely disoriented.

Presiding Judge:

And Mr. Boger did that?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Not all the time. I can't say that.

Presiding Judge:

So, there was someone else...

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

If a prisoner did not want to talk, or if, according to Mr. Boger, that prisoner had done something wrong, and he had to find out from him what it was, then he was bad too. He even once said to me when I was crying: "You must shut off your personal feelings here." And: "I am just executing an order from the RSHA to conduct the hearing. How I do it, it is none of their business. I have to get what I want." I took that as an apology or something of the sort.

Presiding Judge:

Do you remember if a Polish prisoner named Borek was ever imprisoned? If you do, please, tell us about it.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I do. Borek was a young Polish man. Supposedly he was listening to news on the radio and spread the news around the camp. They brought him to Mr. Boger. But he didn't want to say a word. He was like a wall. He didn't answer. Mr. Boger spoke to me in German, and I had to translate: "Tell him he needs to talk." I told Mr. Borek: "Mr. Borek, you have no idea what is at stake here. It's a matter of life and death. Talk!" But no, there was nothing that could be done for him. I heard he was shot, or they hung him. I do not know.

Presiding Judge:

Did Mr. Boger also use his swing on Mr. Borek and torture him?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I do not know, but I do not think so. He did not mishandle him. The thing was that you couldn't get a word out of him. He kept his mouth shut.

Presiding Judge:

Well, what I mean is that, in cases like this, Mr. Boger was pretty hard on the prisoners, right?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Not with Mr. Borek, I remember that.

Presiding Judge:

He did not beat him up.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, he did not.

Presiding Judge:

In one of your earlier testimonies, you said that this Mr. Borek was hanged in the camp.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, that's what they said.

Presiding Judge:

That is what you heard from the others, but you can't so say yourself.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I can't.

Presiding Judge:

How, who and when was that. Yes. You testified once, on December 10th, 1959, before the public prosecutor Kögler: "I didn't understand what I saw and heard there, and couldn't process it. This may be one of the reasons why I am no longer in a position today to give you specific details that I may have known at the time."

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, that is correct.

Presiding Judge:

You said that once.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

In 1959?

Presiding Judge:

1959. In the meantime, based on what you still remember, can you tell us a little more than what you have told us until now already? Or do you really not remember anything else?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I have to think about that. I do not know what else I could add.

Presiding Judge:

Were you in the Gipsy camp for about eight or nine months?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I was.

Presiding Judge:

And why were you there? With whom were you there? And what did you do there?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I was. It happened like this: There was a *Kapo* and she was working as a spy for...

Presiding Judge:

What was her name?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Edith.

Presiding Judge:

Edith was her first name, so we can identify her.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Edith, and she was a *Kapo* for the political unit.

Presiding Judge:

And what were her tasks?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Well, she went in front, ran the whole unit, gave all sorts of orders, and watched us. And she stood with the Slovaks, but she could not tolerate the prisoners from Poland.

Presiding Judge:

What was her nationality?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Slovak.

Presiding Judge:

Was she Slovak?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, she was. She couldn't stand me. I think it was because I could speak foreign languages, and she was a seamstress. I had proper qualifications. And she was very ugly and wanted to take revenge on me. And she reported me for no reason whatsoever. She complained that I was not dusting properly. Because there was a time in the camp when we had to dust the room before we started office work. So, she complained about that. Because of that complaint, they transferred me to a penal unit. And everyone knew what a punishment that was. I probably wouldn't have lasted more than three days there.

One day, I wasn't made to leave with the unit from the headquarters building. I didn't know what that meant. I found out from others who came back to the staff building twice a day: Edith said that I was ill. Which of course wasn't true. Of course, she didn't want the *Hauptscharführer* Westphal to know about that. At that time, I think Mr. Boger had been sent to some officer's course or something of the sort. I do not know exactly.

And I was then transferred to the *Hauptscharführer* Westphal, who was higher in rank but didn't hold a candle to him. He didn't have important things to take care like Mr. Boger did. So, I stayed

in the headquarters building. I was very desperate. I do not know how that could have happened. As soon as Mr. Boger came back. He visited Mr. Westphal, and he probably heard about my situation. Both of them, Mr. Boger and Mr. Westphal then did everything in their power to convince the *Lagerälteste* Drechsler not to let me go to the penal unit. I can say that they saved my life, and they put me in the political unit in the Gypsy camp.

Presiding Judge:

Who was there?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Mr. Boger was there for a while. Then Mr. Lachmann. I think Mr. Broad was there too, but I didn't work with him. And there was also a *Unterscharführer* named Hoffmann. They interrogated prisoners there.

Presiding Judge:

Can you recall if they killed prisoners in the gas chambers in the Gypsy camp?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Ah, I do not remember exactly. But I remember once during the night—I can't say when it was. We were always three Jewish women from the political unit. In the middle of the night, we heard something terrible: Screams, moans, and curses. But I just can't remember. I asked myself: What did the Gypsy camp look like the next day? I can't even remember that. The next day, we heard that the whole Gypsy camp had been gassed. And that was what we had heard in the middle of the night. We were shocked. We didn't sleep all night, and then we heard that it was the gassing from the Gypsy camp.

Presiding Judge:

You mentioned Mr. Broad a couple of times. What do you know about him?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I never worked with him. So, I can't say much about him.

Presiding Judge:

Did prisoners in the camp also believe he was a terrible person like Mr. Boger?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, they did not.

Presiding Judge:

Did you hear anything about what he did or did not do?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I do not remember.

Presiding Judge:

You do not remember.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I can't.

Presiding Judge:

Are there any other questions from the court?

Judge Perseke:

Yes, I have a question.

Presiding Judge:

Go ahead.

Judge Perseke:

You said at the beginning that you wrote the protocols. Did I understand you correctly?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

In the camp? Yes, I did.

Judge Perseke:

You did the translations and wrote the protocols.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I did.

Judge Perseke:

This means that they recorded the interrogations in a protocol.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Maybe I did not explain myself correctly. I wrote down the protocol, that means that Mr. Boger asked the prisoner something, the prison responded, and I wrote it down.

Judge Perseke:

So, you wrote it down, right?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I did.

Judge Perseke:

Did you do that with a typewriter?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Sentence after sentence. Sometimes I did shorthand, but mostly I used the typewriter. Sentence after sentence.

Judge Perseke:

Sentence after sentence. Did they read the protocols afterwards to the prisoner?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, they did. Sometimes the prisoner read it and then they would sign it.

Judge Perseke:

During these interrogations, was Mr. Boger alone or were there other SS men?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, he was alone.

Judge Perseke:

He was alone.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

There was Borger, me, and the prisoner. There was only one episode with Piłsudski's adjutant, and that's when Mr. Grabner came in. He had a bunch of keys, it was large. The prisoner then waved something in his face like that, it drove him completely crazy. And he beat him up. I do not remember if Mr. Boger was also involved, but I know for sure that he was Mr. Grabner.

Judge Perseke:

And are you sure that Mr. Boger went to this "speaking machine" only two or three times. Or could it be that it happened more often?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

It could be, but I do not remember.

Judge Perseke:

So, you only remember those two or three times.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I saw that two or three times. But there were more people who came after me who worked with him. But I worked with him the longest.

Judge Perseke:

How long did you work with him?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Two years, more or less.

Judge Perseke:

And according to what you remember today, you can recall only two or three times that Mr. Boger used this "speaking machine."

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, that is what I can remember.

Judge Perseke:

But you cannot be certain that he didn't use it more often.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I don't remember.

Judge Perseke:

Mrs. Rosenthal, did you only translate for Mr. Boger, or did you also do that for other members of the political unit?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I also did that for other members.

Judge Hotz:

When you wrote down the protocols and translated for Mr. Boger, was that only with Polish prisoners?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Mostly, yes. They weren't Jewish prisoners.

Judge Hotz:

Mostly Polish prisoners.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Because most of them were Polish political prisoners who had been active in the underground movement when they were still on the outside. Or other prisoners who escaped and were then brought back. In all those cases, there was an interrogation.

Judge Hotz:

I see. Thank you.

Presiding Judge:

You said earlier that the shootings happened in the men's camp.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, that is correct.

Presiding Judge:

What do you know about that?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

They talked about it. That was on the Black Wall.

Presiding Judge:
On the Black Wall?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:
Yes, they shot at prisoners. They shot many of them.

Presiding Judge:
Did they shoot many of them?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:
Yes, they did.

Presiding Judge:
And they talked about it?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:
Yes, of course they talked about it.

Presiding Judge:
And did they also say why they shot them?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:
It was after an interrogation or because they were political suspects. I do not know.

Presiding Judge:
Did you see if someone from Berlin gave the order to shoot those prisoners?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:
That I do not remember. I believe they received some red sheets. The executions took place there.

Presiding Judge:
Those were orders.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:
I do not remember.

Presiding Judge:
Do you know if the order to carry out these shootings arrived from Berlin on those red sheets or was that only once in a while?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:
I think that it all came from the RSHA³⁷ from Berlin. I think so. For the interrogations. They interrogated the prisoners, and then the protocols were probably sent to Berlin.

³⁷ The *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* or Reich Security Main Office

Presiding Judge:

You are saying “probably.”

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Because I am not sure about that.

Presiding Judge:

You never did it yourself.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I did not. I don’t know now.

Presiding Judge:

You do not know.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, I do not.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Let me repeat that for you: You wrote the protocols for the interrogations. They brought in the prisoners, they were interrogated, and you wrote down the protocols.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, that is correct.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

It has been mentioned here on various occasions that in cases where the prisoners did not want to talk or where the interrogator believed they were not telling the truth, they did an “enhanced interrogation.” This means that the prisoners were slapped, beaten up, and abused. Did you also write down protocols during interrogations and abuses of that kind?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I already said that I saw how they slapped and beat up the prisoners.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Yes, you did.

Presiding Judge:

And kicked.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, they did.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And kicked.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I saw that.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

And when they couldn't get the testimonies they wanted, did they use the "speaking machine?"

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I saw that two or three times.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Did they interrogate the prisoners again after they used the "swing?"

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, because they were not able to testify anymore.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

That means that there was not another interrogation after the "swing?"

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, there was not.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

For the record: In your first testimony in February 1959, on page 514, you said: "According to my observations, Boger almost exclusively used this so-called 'speaking machine' with prisoners. I can also recall hearing horrific screams from prisoners when they were with Boger on this 'swing.'" Your Honor, I have an objection. According to this statement, it seems, at least based on your memory at the time, that it happened in more than just two or three cases. Otherwise, you could hardly have explained anything of the sort at the time.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I can't remember.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

There is no way for you to remember that at all?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Now I can't remember exactly. I went to the green barracks to get some files or something like that. I heard terrible screams there, in the barracks. But that wasn't during the interrogation. Let's say I had to get some documents. I can't remember today what it was that I was sent to the barracks for. And when I went into the corridor, I heard terrible screams.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Can you say something about that, or can you clarify the statement that Boger used this "speaking machine" almost exclusively? That means at least more often than two or three times. Or today do you not know anything more?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

If he was using it on a regular basis, I do not know. I can't comment on that either. Because there were interrogations where it wasn't necessary. When the prisoners testified, the "speaking machine" wasn't necessary. He only used that in cases where he believed that the prisoner didn't want to talk or were lying.

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

How often did that happen? I still can't understand how it is that the witness said earlier —and I would like to point this out again so I can come to it at the end of my questions, Mr. Aschenauer—that he used this "speaking machine" exclusively. And today she still says he used it two or three times. I think you can allow me to...

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Almost exclusively?

Defense Attorney Aschenauer:

Your Honor...

Presiding Judge:

Mrs. Rosenthal, I think there is a misunderstanding here.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I do not think I can say that he used that machine almost exclusively.

Presiding Judge:

Maybe you meant: He was the only one who used the "swing" during the interrogations. The others did not use the "swing" at all.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Probably not.

Presiding Judge:

You said earlier that: "According to my observations, only Boger, and not the others, used it."

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Exactly. That means that only Boger used it.

Defense Attorney Aschenauer:

Your Honor, I think it should be pointed out —namely on page 514— that: "Only with regard to Lachmann can it be said that he also used the 'swing' on prisoners." That is the context.

Presiding Judge:

I see. Do you have any other questions, Mr. Vogel?

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

Yes. Do you still remember whether it was only Boger who used the “swing?” What do you want to say about that?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, everyone knew that Boger used the “swing.”

Public Prosecutor Vogel:

I see. Thank you. I do not have any other questions.

Presiding Judge:

No more questions. Mr. Ormond?

Supplementary Defense Attorney Ormond:

Mrs. Rosenthal, have you always had memory problems, or did you suffer from memory loss when you were in the camp?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Of course, I do not have as clear a memory now as I did before ending up in the camp. But what caught my attention, what I have in my head, that I know very well.

Supplementary Defense Attorney Ormond:

To what extent have you been considered disabled according to compensation regulations?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

What is that?

Supplementary Defense Attorney Ormond:

You probably receive some compensation for your health, for what you went through in the camp. What is your established level of disability?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

50%.

Supplementary Defense Attorney Ormond:

Are those mental disabilities only or physical disabilities as well?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

What I got from the camp is that I am afraid to take the elevator, for example. I always have the feeling that I can't get out, that I am being locked in. And then, let's say, in a café, in a toilet, I do not lock the door either. And recently, for example, a doctor sent me for an X-ray, the doctor was on the eleventh floor. I couldn't get to the eleventh floor. I had to ask a friend of mine to come with me. I couldn't even imagine getting into the elevator because I always have the feeling, I am afraid, I am terribly afraid that I won't get out.

Supplementary Defense Attorney Ormond:

Mrs. Rosenthal, can you tell me, in this room, if today you are still afraid of Mr. Boger?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No. When I arrived here, my heart started beating like crazy. I almost couldn't control myself. But I calmed down pretty quickly. I think I was just nervous.

Presiding Judge:

I see. What Mr. Ormond wants to know is if the presence of Mr. Boger is affecting you or if you would prefer that we send him away while you give your testimony.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, not at all.

Presiding Judge:

Maybe you could tell us something more if he weren't here.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

No, that's not the case.

Supplementary Defense Attorney Ormond:

Mrs. Rosenthal, did Mr. Boger or other members of the political unit take part in the selections? Do you understand my question?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I do. The prisoners at the selections?

Supplementary Defense Attorney Ormond:

No, my question is if Mr. Boger or other SS men of the political unit with whom you worked took part in the selections on the ramps?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I do not know about that because I was always in the office. I couldn't see if Mr. Boger went to the ramp. But people said that the SS men went to the ramp and were there during the selections. They said that, but I didn't see it myself.

Supplementary Defense Attorney Ormond:

I see. However, it could also have happened that, while you were writing down your protocols, someone from the political unit came in and announced the arrival of a new convoy. So you had to stop doing what you were doing because they all had to go to the ramp. Do you remember something like that happening?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Mr. Boger left the office on different occasions on his bike. But he didn't tell us where he was headed. And I didn't ask. I couldn't know where. He left several times. He stopped the interrogations and left on his bike. But to where, I do not know.

Supplementary Defense Attorney Ormond:

I have one last question. Did you lose family in Auschwitz?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

In Auschwitz or in Treblinka?³⁸ Of course, I did.

Supplementary Defense Attorney Ormond:

Who?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

My siblings, my mother, and many others.

Supplementary Defense Attorney Ormond:

Your fiancé too?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, my fiancé too. It was five days before our wedding. He was not Jewish. Our marriage was already registered. I was caught by the Gestapo in his apartment with him. And the wedding didn't happen. He didn't come back from the camp. He was also temporarily in Auschwitz. He was then taken to Mauthausen³⁹, and they threw his body down a hill. His parents told me that.

Supplementary Defense Attorney Ormond:

I do not have any more questions, Your Honor.

Supplementary Defense Attorney Kaul:

No questions.

Defense Attorney Aschenauer:

One more question, Mrs. Rosenthal. Could you tell us, and I know it is hard to answer, when Mr. Boger was at officer training?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

When could it be? In 1944, I was in the Gypsy camp. That means that it must have been in 1943.

Defense Attorney Aschenauer:

Fall? Summer? Some general indications.

³⁸ Treblinka was an extermination camp built by Nazi Germany in Poland during World War II. It was located in a forest north-east of Warsaw, 4 km south of the village of Treblinka.

³⁹ Mauthausen was a Nazi concentration camp built on a hill above the town of Mauthausen in Upper Austria.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I do not know. All I know is that I then went to see the *Hauptscharführer* Westphal. But that was probably in 1943. Because in 1944, I was already in the Gypsy camp and also worked there for a short time for Mr. Boger. I also cannot remember who worked there. Why he stopped. I also worked with Mr. Lachmann for a while.

Presiding Judge:

Could it be that it was maybe at the end of 1943 until February 1944?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, it could be.

Defense Attorney Aschenauer:

I see. I have just one suggestion: Perhaps it would be possible for the witness to make a sketch of the premises or the green barracks with Mr. Boger's offices, [because] I believe that we will need that information in the near future.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Well, that's impossible because I can't draw.

Defense Attorney Aschenauer:

Oh well, you do not need to draw, only...

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I can't draw. There is nothing that I can do about it. I just can't draw.

Presiding Judge:

Well, what about if Mr. Boger draws it, and we show it to Mrs. Rosenthal, and she tells us if it is right or wrong?

Defense Attorney Aschenauer:

Sure. We can do that.

Presiding Judge:

Yes? Good. Are there any other questions for the defense or for the accused? Do you want to add anything, Mrs. Rosenthal? Could you swear to what you have told us today?

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes, I told the truth.

Presiding Judge:

You told the truth.

Defense Attorney Aschenauer:

The drawing first. Maybe, if we take a break for a while.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

I can't orient myself with a drawing. You saw that. I couldn't do it with that one either.

Presiding Judge:

Yes, I saw that.

Witness Maryla Rosenthal:

Yes. I am not good at drawing.

Presiding Judge:

If you want to try it, Mr. Aschenauer.

Defense Attorney Aschenauer:

Yes, let's try it.

Presiding Judge:

Let's try it.

Defense Attorney Aschenauer:

We can also take a break.

Presiding Judge:

Let's have Mr. Boger draw and when he is done, let me know. We will take a break until 11:35.

Closing remarks of the defendants.

1. Frankfurt Auschwitz-Trial

»Criminal case against Mulka and others.«, 4 Ks 2/63
District court Frankfurt am Main

Day 180th and day 181st of the trial 12.08.1965

Last statement of the defendant Mulka:

Defendant Mulka:

Your Honor. As the first of the defendants here to give his final statement, I do not want to add anything to the statements already made in subjective, objective, and legal respects by my lawyer. I want to limit myself to confirming those statements, and I fully agree with the content of the statements made for me. With that being said, I entrust my fate and that of my unfortunate family to the hands of the court. I do this with the deep conviction that all the circumstances that led me to my unfortunate situation are taken into consideration accurately, down to the last detail. In this respect, I look forward to receiving a fair decision.

Presiding Judge:

Take your seat.

Last statement of the defendant Höcker:

Defendant Höcker:

Your Honor. When I was transferred to Auschwitz at the end of May 1944, I had no idea what it was. There were three separate camps: 1- Auschwitz, 2 - Birkenau, and 3 - Monowitz. Each camp was independent and had its own commander and assistants. The commander was responsible for their respective camp area. I only found out about what was happening in Birkenau later on and had nothing to do with it. I had no way of influencing these events in any way. I did not want them to happen, nor seek them out. I did not harm anyone, nor did anyone die in Auschwitz because of me. As early as 1952, I voluntarily turned myself in to the public prosecutor's office in Bielefeld and submitted all the information I had about my work in the concentration camp. What more could I have done? Would someone have done what I did this if they had felt guilty? In summary, I agree with the statements made by my lawyer, Doctor Stolting, and Doctor Eggert. I place my fate in the hands of the court and ask for a fair verdict.

Presiding Judge:

Please, take your seat. Mr. Boger.

Last statement of the defendant Boger:

Defendant Boger:

During the National Socialist regime, the only important thing for me to do was to carry out the orders given to me by my superiors without hesitation. I was sent to Auschwitz not because of my doing—I don't want to refer to it. Today I see that the idea I believed in was ruinous and wrong. I don't want to sugarcoat anything. I want to leave no doubt that I was the one carrying out those "enhanced interrogations," as ordered by my superiors. At the time, however, my efforts were not for the extermination for European Jewish prisoners in Auschwitz but focused solely on combating the Polish resistance movement and Bolshevism.

Presiding Judge:

Please, take your seat. Mr. Stark.

Last statement of the defendant Stark:

Defendant Stark:

Your Honor. I participated in the killing of many people. I have confessed that from the beginning and without reservation. After the war, I often asked myself whether that made me a criminal. I did not find an answer that worked for me. I believed in the *Führer*. I wanted to serve my people. At the time, I was convinced that what I was doing was the right thing to do. Today I know that the ideas I believed in were wrong. I very much regret my mistake at that time, but I can't undo what I have done.

Presiding Judge:

Please, take your seat. Mr. Dylewski, go ahead.

Last statement of the defendant Dylewski:

Defendant Dylewski:

Your Honor. I agree with the statements made by my lawyer, and I declare once again that the statements I have made are correct. I wasn't on the new ramp. I was never in the old crematorium. I did not shoot anyone in the courtyard of Block 11. The statements made by the Polish witnesses, the block writers, are true. The testimonies of the Czech witnesses are untrue. I say that with the utmost vehemence. I ask for your understanding, Your Honor, if I limit myself to these words in my position as a defendant in this trial.

Last statement of the defendant Broad:

Defendant Broad:

You know that I deny ever being directly involved in the killing of people. I must repeat this because it is true. However, I feel compelled to tell you one more thing about one particular matter. You know that the witness Fabián appeared here last fall and incriminated me in an unbelievable way. I ask the court to imagine themselves in a situation where they are unjustly accused in such a way. I can only ask the court to believe me when I say that I never did what the witness Fabian said I did. That's all I have left to say.

Presiding Judge:

Thank you. Mr. Schoberth.

Last statement of the defendant Schoberth:

Defendant Schoberth:

Your Honor. I have to repeat that no one died in Auschwitz because of me. If I may comment briefly on the statements of the witnesses Kagan, Weiß and Schaner. For a long time, I have wondered how it is that Mrs. Schaner can claim that she saw me with a gun. Mrs. Weiss brought it to my attention because she said it Sunday afternoon. That's exactly right. We had target practice that Sunday morning. It wasn't my fault that I was the best rifleman under the commander. I got a bottle of schnapps, and we drank it right away among comrades. So, I came back drunk with the gun. I also ask the Court to consider that I was ten years old when Hitler came to power. We were brought up to become National Socialists. At the age of 18, I was drafted into the Waffen-SS. I was wounded four times. I had five awards before I came to Auschwitz. If I had been in the *Wehrmacht*,⁴⁰ I would definitely have been dismissed because I was unfit for service. I went back to the front in 1944. I was wounded again, and I was taken prisoner by the Russians. I would like to ask you to consider what is left of our class of 1922. What I went through: five wounds, eight surgeries, Russian imprisonment. I don't know what else to say. Aren't we also victims of National Socialism? I ask the court to consider that.

Presiding Judge:

Thank you. Mr. Schlange.

Last statement of the defendant Schlange:

Defendant Schlange:

Your Honor and members of the court. Since Mr. Vogel quoted Nietzsche in his plea, I would like to say the following: I don't need to hide anything here, but I also don't want to sugarcoat anything. But most importantly, I absolutely don't need to lie here. At this point, I would like to expressly emphasize that I have never in my life, neither as a soldier nor as a civilian, let a person starve in my presence, shot anyone, or even killed anyone in some other way.

Then and now, I have always believed that, as much as I would like to live, my fellow human beings would also like to live. Those who were human before the war were still human during the war, and remained human even when they were in Auschwitz. When Mr. Vogel calls me a jailer, this word makes it sound like we are still in the Middle Ages. I was a warden in Block 11, just like wardens are in prisons today. I had no rights and no power there. If Mr. Vogel goes on to say that I was abroad to... Excuse me.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Lang, please, give him a chair.

⁴⁰ The *Wehrmacht* was the unified army of Nazi Germany from 1935 to 1945.

Defendant Schlange:

Since Mr. Vogel went on to say that I was abroad to learn languages in order to be able to use those skills later in Auschwitz, I would like to say the following: In the years from 1928 to 1938, I did not yet know that I would go to Auschwitz. The few of languages that I had learned there were only used for understanding. I would like to emphasize at this point that we were a construction business for industry. We built concrete roads, bridges and did piling work on water and land.

Between 1928 and 1938, I was in eleven countries, mostly in Scandinavia. I worked there as a specialist and site manager. I did manual work. As a result, I had no time to study languages. If I had been the person they are claiming I was, I would have been like that from the beginning. At that time, I had authority over hundreds of foreign workers.

I would therefore like to emphasize once again: If one is a decent human being at one time, they will remain a decent human being throughout their life. You don't become a murderer, not even in five years, and certainly not if you come from an orderly family. A killer is born. I had no contact with the NSDAP, the SS, the SA or any of their branches. I have never had anything to do with the police or a court. My records are clean to this day. When Germany was at war, I became a soldier, like any young, healthy man, with the only difference being that I was lied to right away.

When I got the order to report myself, it said: "You have to make yourself available to the police force in Plock, Southeast Prussia." In reality, this police force was the 22nd SS-Standarte. I went to this SS unit against my will. There was no possibility for me to be transferred as a recruit. I can also claim that that possibility never existed for me.

I was then trained in that unit, which was a field unit, as an infantryman for war. When our troops finished training, and we were waiting to be deployed, I was unlucky enough to be sent to Auschwitz. We were also lied to at the train station in Auschwitz. The *Transportführer* told us at the train station that we were going to a re-education camp. We did not understand that at all, especially because we were not aware of any wrongdoing on our part. When we asked why they were sending us there, they told us: "You'll find out everything soon enough." When I later found out what the Auschwitz re-education camp really was, namely an extermination camp, I submitted a transfer request to be sent to do what I was trained for, namely, to fight on the front. This request was dismissed with the remark: "Schlage, you're not serious, are you?" My request was torn up and thrown in a wastebasket. After some time, I submitted a second request. This time I was called to headquarters. There Nebbe told me I had to do my job where I had been placed by the *Führer*. If I tried a third time, I could end up behind the electric fence.

Now I ask you, Your Honor, and all who were soldiers: What should I have done if I did not want to endanger the life of my family and my own life? My answer is: Whether I wanted to or not, I had to execute the orders given to me as my superiors asked me to do.

Your Honor, what is done today, in normal times, with those who refuse to do military service? How much more severe would the punishment have been for us if we had disobeyed orders,

especially since our fatherland was at war? My answer to that is: Even if they don't want to admit it, we would all have been shot dead for disobeying orders. The oath I had to swear to as a soldier was binding unless I were to take my own life first.

The question now arises: What is a soldier who is forced to wear the so-called "robe of honor" and then labeled as a murderer? This soldier is a state assassin. These orders to kill applied to all units, at the front, behind the front, in the occupied territories and at home. We did not have time to think about those orders and reject them. We were told that we had to carry them out immediately.

What was the meaning in Auschwitz of the training and Knittel's lectures, the training director who is often mentioned here? I contend that these training courses and lectures only served the purpose of incitement and contributed to the extermination of the people in Auschwitz. I am firmly convinced that if we, who wanted to leave Auschwitz, had been let go, perhaps only those who would have considered extermination as their life's work would have stayed.

Since I am accused of having let people starve to death in Block 11, I must ask: Who gave the order? I would have had no right or power, and least of all, any interest in starving people. Through tireless work, my lawyer succeeded in getting the witness Bergerhausen to testify. She testified here at the court in Frankfurt in the Gallushaus that I was in Golleschau at the beginning of the year 1943. The witness Mirbeth also testified that he saw me in Golleschau around April 15th, 1943. These statements from both witnesses correspond to the truth. Golleschau was about 35 to 40 kilometers away from Auschwitz, so there was no way for me to work in Golleschau in the morning and drive back to Auschwitz after work.

The witness Severa claims that between the start of 1943 and April 1943, I let the musician Bruno Graf from Düsseldorf starve to death in Block 11 in Auschwitz. This statement is untrue. The witness Severa made this statement twice under oath. Here, too, my lawyer has successfully provided you with evidence that the musician Bruno Graf from Düsseldorf died of natural causes in 1952. I ask the court to examine thoroughly the testimonies of the witness Severa. Whether it is enough for me to be sentenced is at the discretion of the court.

Furthermore, I ask the court to carefully examine the testimonies of the Russian witnesses and the testimonies of the Czech witnesses. Regarding the testimonies of the Russian witnesses, I would like to expressly emphasize that I was never a *Blockführer* and *Kommandoführer* in the Russian camp. It is clear to me that my name Schlage has been confused with the name Plagge. According to the "Auschwitz Journals," Plagge was a *Blockführer* and *Kommandoführer* in the Russian camp.

The witness Fabian from the Czech Republic was interrogated on February 20, 1964, in Prague. He testified there that he arrived at Auschwitz in October 1942 and was transferred to Buna at the end of October 1942. And from Buna, at the end of November 1943, he was moved back to Auschwitz. This witness changed these statements during his interrogation here in Frankfurt, so, I have nothing to comment on regarding his contradictory testimony. The witness claimed during his interrogation in Frankfurt that I shot someone in Block 11. Well, that statement is untrue. I'll emphasize this again: I have never shot a person in my life. The witness Fabian further asserts that I killed a Gypsy in Block 11 using at least ten to fifteen bullets from a small caliber rifle. He said that I said to that man, then still showing signs of life: "Come on, Gypsy get up!" The man tried to get up, and then I killed him with ten shots from a small caliber rifle. I don't want to comment

on that either. Because you don't kill a person with about 35 or even 40 shots. Such statements can only come from people speaking out of hatred and revenge. On a side note, it should be said that the Czechs became famous after the war for their behavior towards Germans. I would like to ask the court to examine the statements made by the witness Fabian thoroughly, since his statements are also intended to help establish the truth in this court.

Finally, Your Honor, I ask you to consider that for years, I have had a seriously ill, helpless wife, to whom I have been married for 40 years, but who lost her support because of my arrest. Furthermore, I ask the court to take into account that my family was affected severely during the occupation of our fatherland. The principal figures who tormented my family so badly were former German citizens with whom I grew up: the brothers Herschel and Moritz Silberberg, the brothers Kurt and Walter Bohm, the brothers of Doctor Jakoby—one of them was a doctor, the other a lawyer—and many others.

In my family, my father was murdered, my mother-in-law, who gave birth to 13 children, was raped multiple times, and then murdered. My brother-in-law Karl Hühke was murdered, his 17-year-old daughter Ursula was raped numerous times and then murdered, and his 16-year-old son Werner was murdered. My brother-in-law Paul Wischnewski, who attempted to protect his wife from being raped, was also murdered.

Furthermore, to this day, four children of the family of my brother-in-law, two girls and two boys, who are now adults, are being held in the former German territory occupied by the Poles. My efforts, in conjunction with Pastor Blum, to bring these German people to the Federal Republic with the help of *Caritas*, failed because the Polish authorities responsible there refused. The refusal read: "Only Polish citizens who live in Poland."

I also ask the court to consider what was left of the 15,000 German prisoners, children, women, men, and old people in the Potulice camp,⁴¹ after the armistice, up to the day of my release. By the day I was released, 12,000 German children, women, men, and old people had been killed through starvation, beating, shooting, hanging, drowning, and strangling.

I would like to use an example to show how German men capable of work were exterminated. In the Potulice labor camp, a men's detachment of 25 prisoners was set up to carry logs, including myself. We had a trunk of three quarters to one and a quarter solid meter on our shoulders and, when we were about to move, guards came and beat the prisoners' legs from under their bodies with their clubs. The remaining prisoners could not hold up the trunk and German prisoners were killed under the trunk. I don't want to go into detail here about what happened next. I was beaten up so badly that to this day I am a cripple unable to work, and I receive an early disability pension for it.

They exterminated German prisoners in different ways. Among other things, they set up a body rescue unit of 20 German prisoners, including myself. This unit had to open 21 mass graves from Schneidemühl to Bromberg in order to save the Polish citizens shot by the Germans and to give

⁴¹ Potulice was a concentration camp built and operated by Nazi Germany during World War II in Potulice, near Nakło, in the territory of occupied Poland.

them a proper burial. Sometimes we waded up to our ankles in mud full of corpses while doing this work. Many of our comrades died from corpse poisoning. Seven comrades who allegedly had damaged a corpse were also shot while doing this work. A corpse could be damaged if a hand, arm, foot, leg or even the head was ripped off.

Among these 21 mass graves were two mass graves with Polish bodies. In one mass grave there were 17 Polish bodies, in the second mass grave, 23 Polish bodies. These 40 Polish bodies were all recovered and given a proper burial. The other bodies in the 19 mass graves were German. These corpses were thrown back headfirst into the mass graves, and the mass graves were filled in. You could see that there were people buried there before opening the mass graves. After the work was done, everything was covered up because only German people were in there.

In the Potulice labor camp, 34 former SS men were also hanged without a sentence. I lived in Potulice under my real name. If I had committed a crime in Auschwitz, I would definitely have been hanged there. In relation to the rest, I fully agree with the pleas of my defense lawyers and ask the court for a fair judgment.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Hofmann, go ahead.

Last statement of the defendant Hofmann:

Defendant Hofmann:

Your Honor, ladies and gentlemen, members of the jury. Today is my second time in front of a jury. It is known to the court that a third trial is also taking place at this time. I still can't find words. I leave everything else to the court. I wholeheartedly agree with the statements of my defense attorneys, Dr. Staiger and Dr. Göllner.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Kaduk, go ahead.

Last statement of the defendant Kaduk:

Defendant Kaduk:

Your Honor, ladies and gentlemen, members of the jury. I was sentenced by the Soviet military court for the Auschwitz complex. This is my second time before a German court. Secondly, I agree with what my lawyers, Dr. Jugl and Dr. Reiners, have said. Otherwise, I don't have anything else to say.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Baretzki.

Last statement of the defendant Baretzki:

Defendant Baretzki:

Members of the jury. When I arrived at Auschwitz, I had absolutely no idea what was going on there. That was in the spring of 1942. They say 1941. In 1941, I hadn't even been to Auschwitz yet. The Russians accused me of being there, but I hadn't been to Auschwitz before. I hadn't seen Auschwitz. I couldn't have been there. I came to Birkenau in the summer of 1943, around August 28th. I stayed in Auschwitz until the end. I've always been a stormtrooper. I've never been promoted. If I had been—how should I put it—as eager to serve as I appear to be in the depiction presented by the public prosecutor's office, I would have been promoted at least once. I was never promoted. I always remained a stormtrooper, until the end of the war. I only carried out the orders that the camp commander gave me. When the *Lagerführer* gave orders, they were sacred. You couldn't say that you did not want to do it or anything else. His orders were sacred. If he said black is black even if it was white ten times, there was nothing to be done about it. I did not beat anyone to death or choke anyone in Auschwitz. Otherwise, I have nothing more to add. I agree with what my attorney said.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Breitwieser, go ahead.

Last statement of the defendant Breitwieser:

Defendant Breitwieser:

Your Honor and members of the jury. This is also my second time in front of a jury in an Auschwitz trial. In the Krakow trial, in which, after four weeks of hearings, they sentenced 23 of the 40 accused to death, I did not exercise my right to a final statement. The testimonies of the 137 witnesses questioned without any right to a defense lawyer seemed so new in relation to my own observations and so improbable that I thought I wouldn't find the right words to counter the accusations made against me.

Then, as now, I can only say that the allegations were not true. The verdict passed by the Poles in December 1947 seemed to the public prosecutor's office to be enough proof, in the current proceedings, to accuse me. That my actions in Auschwitz were likely done because I wanted to take revenge for what the Poles had done to me.

As a former Polish citizen, I was drafted in 1931, and was found unfit for military service. Hence, I should only have been deployed in the event of general mobilization. But when war started in 1939, things turned out differently.

On the morning of September 1st, 1939, at 5 am, I was captured and sent to Baresakartuska, a Polish concentration camp, together with 1,000 Germans from Bromberg. After nine days, the German troops managed to overtake us. In this way, I saw the first victims of the war, those unable to march from our column who were shot by the Polish column escort crew.

This experience and the fact that my father was arrested by the Poles in the twenties during the Polish-Ukrainian War might imply that my actions were acts of revenge, as the prosecutor said. I hope, however, that the testimonies of the witnesses in this court will give a different picture of me. I was drafted into an active unit in the *Waffen-SS*, but I was sent to Auschwitz because I was

unfit to serve at the front, and for this reason alone, I did not get away from there. When the prosecution mentioned the names of some SS members, those names referred always to people who served at the front but, after being wounded, were sent away, and deployed somewhere else.

Mr. Vogel said in his statement that for the pharmacist Storch, it would have been easy for him to get away. Ms. Storch said here that he was sent temporarily to Auschwitz only for the purpose of setting up a pharmacy.

Members of the court, my death sentence issued in Krakow became a sentence of life imprisonment one month after that, and in 1959, I was released into the Federal Republic because of an amnesty. Because of my 14 years of imprisonment, I was in very bad physical condition. Thus, I could not adapt to the new circumstances, settle down, provide for myself, and live independently, and on my own. I was dependent on the support of my family.

My slow recovery and my hope to find a normal job were abruptly interrupted when I was arrested on June 9, 1961. The reason for my arrest was the testimony of former prisoner Petzold in 1945 given upon the request of an American officer. Petzold claimed to have witnessed the first gassing, which he said he saw from the window of Block 27. He even gave a number of details, which he was able to gather because Block 21, which was in front of his block, had not yet been filled with prisoners. Mr. Petzold repeated this information to the jury. He also confirmed his statements when the chairman mentioned Petzold's arrest in East Berlin due to unfriendly remarks about concentration camps. He asked him whether the witness Petzold was willing to tell the truth, and only the plain truth as far as events in the concentration camp were concerned. And the witness Petzold said: "Yes."

Because of his repeated accusations against me, and because Petzold was recognized as a credible witness, I was arrested, and I couldn't fight it. My situation would have been hopeless if they had not discovered that there was no window in Block 27 and that the Block 21 was, at that time, filled with prisoners, as the witnesses Smoleń and doctor Paczuła, among others, have said in their testimonies.

In support of Petzold's allegation, they used Schlupper's testimony. My defense counsel, Dr. Zarnack, argued against these statements which were based only on hearsay. I just want to add that Schlupper, despite stating the contrary, was my superior from the end of 1940 to the beginning of 1942. Mr. Schlupper was on duty for a short time because he was allowed to work there only for a shorter time. A document available to the public prosecutor proves that this statement was incorrect.

When I shot my hand while cleaning my gun in December 1941, Schlupper, as my superior, who was normally, completely overzealous about everything, filed a very superfluous report about the incident, although this had already been done by the unit doctor. The file dated December 4th, 1941, is part of my personnel file and is with the public prosecutor now.

Doctor Głowacki also claimed to know something about the first gassing. He claimed that I was involved in it because I did clothing disinfestation, although I could have been called in to carry out other tasks too. If it seems so obvious now, would it not have been just as obvious in 1947, if

the Poles didn't know better? Dr. Głowacki, who testified as a witness in Krakow did not say anything similar to me at the time.

Other longtime former Polish prisoners who testified in Krakow, and at this trial, who knew me or must have known me, had nothing to say in this regard.

In November 1964, the witness Eugeniusz Motz, as named by the prosecutor, appeared in Warsaw before the jury. He should have known about it, but he did not. The journey from Warsaw to Krakow, from which he would have acquired this information would have been closer than to Frankfurt. And in Kraków maybe you would have believed him. I haven't been able to refresh my memory about him. Large, dark glasses prevented me from recognizing him, and besides, he turned his head as he passed by.

And his statement: He denies that Petzold was *Kapo* of the clothing unit at the time. The opposite has been proven. He claimed that once I said to several prisoners: "Now we finally have the means not only for disinfection, but also to exterminate inmates" and thus made me out as the one who wanted to do the gassing. Luckily, Mr. Vogel proved that that would have been impossible. And that is because of the following: Among other things, the witness Motz referred to the former prisoners Gírlotka and Świerczyna, who are said to have overheard the statement I just mentioned. Bernard Świerczyna is known to the jury from various testimonies. He is the same man who was executed on December 28, 1944, after he tried to escape. He is the same one who was referred to in the testimonies as Bennie, a first lieutenant in the former Polish Army, who had been in the clothing unit from the very beginning and—as testified before this court for example by the witness Paczuła on 8.5.1964—belonged to the resistance group. As the witnesses said, important events in the camp were reported to Kraków, and investigations of incidents and camp personnel were collected by members of the resistance group and sent out. And that was precisely what happened according to Dr. Paczuła. This activity was the responsibility of the aforementioned Świerczyna. Would such an active member of the resistance group have reported details about the first gassing?

And Gírlotka, he was the best friend of the witness examined here, Monsignor Dr. Kruczek, who in his statements excluded the possibility of my participation in the gassing. Would he have been able to do that if he had learned something different from Gírlotka? Unfortunately, Gírlotka died of angina pectoris three years ago, and we cannot ask him anything about it. The fact that large portions of those statements are full of confusion and memory error is proven by the statements of two witnesses who gave information about me as the head of the clothing unit. These witnesses could not have known me, since they came to the camp at a time when I was no longer working in the clothing unit but far outside the camp in the accommodation unit.

A Soviet witness knew my name, although he claims to have seen me only once in Auschwitz, where, as he said, I was standing around. If I had to tell you about my time in prison, which lasted 14 years, I could hardly give you a name, or recognize a face and be so sure about it. I could not say who beat me—and I have been beaten. Nor do I remember who was on duty for four weeks in front of my cell on death row, and that is a unique experience after all. Although one would think that after one and a half years of a trial the information would be sufficiently clear, nevertheless, even here, there are still mistakes in the reports.

For example, on the radio I was called a block leader, and in the East German press, Mr. Hirsch referred to me as a paramedic. And one last thing. Just because the press keeps bringing it up: I would like to emphasize something in front of this German court. My Krakow verdict states: "Mistreated prisoners and carried out harsh punishments. He volunteered for the SS and shirked Polish military service." That is the verdict and is unlike what Mr. Sommer writes in the "Neue Presse: "Because of his murderous activity in Auschwitz, Breitwieser was sentenced to death."

Members of the court, I did not play with the fate of the prisoners in Auschwitz. I did not mistreat anyone. I did not harm anyone. I did not volunteer for the SS but joined the *Waffen*-SS and was deployed to Auschwitz. I did not shirk Polish military service, but when the war broke out, the Poles did not draft me. They arrested me. I've had a lot of bad luck in my life. I grew up as a German in Poland with all the problems that a national minority has to endure. I was affected by my conditions when I returned to Germany, and then I was deported to Auschwitz in 1940. I was severely punished for it and now, for the same reason, put on trial and arrested once again. I have been dealing with this for more than 25 years, almost half my life. And all these false statements about me can only complicate what still remains of my life. I thank the court for its attention.

Presiding Judge:

Take a seat. Dr. Lucas.

Last statement of the defendant Lucas:

Defendant Lucas:

The time when I was assigned to serve in the concentration camps against my will is a period of my life that I will never be able to forget. The most terrible thing was that I was forced to work on the ramp. In my hopeless situation, I tried to save as many Jewish prisoners as possible. But I am constantly haunted by thought: And the others? I have made up my mind to tell you the truth. So, I can only hope that you will reach a verdict that will help me to find a new way to live.

-Break -

Last statement of the defendant Frank:

Defendant Frank:

Your Honor, members of the jury. I was at the front until I was no longer fit for frontline duty due to a severe liver disease and was no longer fit to serve at the front. After my discharge from the hospital, I ended up in Auschwitz, in exchange for a colleague who was fit for the front.

The prisoners I dealt with told you how I behaved there. None of them incriminated me. On the contrary, they all said that I treated them humanely, and several said they owed their lives to me. I have never denied that I was on the ramp, but I never did a selection. My task on the ramp was to identify dental personnel and dental material. I know this is not an excuse, but it is true that I

created between 20 and 25 dental stations for our prisoners because of the staff that I found on the ramp. I got material for this exclusively from there. Berlin did not give us anything for it.

After I was in Auschwitz and saw what was happening there, I took every opportunity to get away from it. Eventually I succeeded. In August 1944, I was able to leave, and from that fall on I was back at the front again, although I was still not fit for war service. I did not harm anyone in Auschwitz, and I therefore ask the court for an appropriate verdict. Thank you.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Schatz, go ahead.

Last statement of the defendant Schatz:

Defendant Schatz:

Your Honor, members of the jury! I would like to assure the jury once again that I never carried out a selection. On the ramp, I was fortunate enough to be able to keep myself away from any such activity. I would also like to confirm the remarks made by Dr. Laternser and Mr. Steinacker.

Presiding Judge:

Thank you. Mr. Capesius.

Last statement of the defendant Capesius:

Defendant Capesius:

Members of the jury! In August 1943, towards the end of the war, I was still a Romanian captain and a Romanian citizen. At that time, I did not know what Auschwitz was. Then came the international agreement between Romania and Germany. We Germans were examined, and I was found unfit to serve for the SS. You know, I am married to a half-Jewish woman. Despite this and despite being unable to serve for the SS, I was called to serve for the *Waffen*-SS. It also happened that in 1944, the pharmacist in Auschwitz was sick, and I had to work there temporarily. Then, the pharmacist died, so what was meant to be only temporary became a permanent position.

As a Romanian pharmacist and a Romanian citizen, married to a half-Jewish woman, unfit to work in the SS, in mid-February 44, the last year of the war, I found myself working as a senior SS pharmacist in Auschwitz, about whose existence I did not know anything about before that time.

They gave me the order to work there without having done the slightest thing to deserve it. I did not harm anyone in Auschwitz. I was polite, friendly, and helpful wherever I could be. I was on the ramp several times, in order to get medical supplies for the prisoners' pharmacies. I never made any selections, something I would like to emphasize. I fulfilled my duties as a pharmacist as well as conditions there allowed. This was also confirmed by the witness and pharmacist Sikorski, my coworker.

I did not enrich myself from the prisoners' property—the contrary is a malicious invention—I can assure the court with a clear conscience that that was never the case. My best witness, the Jewish prisoner pharmacist at Auschwitz Strauch, who was still my friend after the war, died in 1957.

If I were the person I am now being portrayed as being, Strauch would not have been able to have an open friendship with me after the war, a friendship that started in Auschwitz. I am not guilty of anything for my time at Auschwitz. I ask you to declare me innocent.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Klehr.

Last statement of the defendant Klehr:

Defendant Klehr:

High Court. It cannot be helped. In my final statement, I have to say again and again that in all these proceedings I have testified only to the facts and to the truth regarding my activity in the HKB⁴² of the main camp as well as during the periods I have indicated. The periods of time I indicated, up to my appointment as a disinfectant for disinfection.

I was never the head of the gassing command, and I never made independent selections. I never made any independent selections. I, a man of lesser rank, was not the master of life and death for those unfortunate people. If anything, I acted as a companion to the selecting camp doctor. All statements of witnesses to the contrary are untrue, and, as has also been shown, mostly contradictory, and proven false.

I only carried out the orders given to me by the camp doctor or site doctor. I can assure you that this was done only with deep inner reluctance. That was also the reason for my repeated requests for transfer to the front, but my requests were always rejected.

At that time, I did not join the *Waffen-SS* voluntarily but was called up. Fate brought me to Auschwitz in a roundabout way. I knew nothing about what was going on there until I saw it all with my own eyes. If I am now accused of murderousness, low-mindedness, and knowledge of illegality, then I must state that this is not correct.

I remember a recent newspaper report from the Sachsenhausen trial in Cologne. There, the prosecutor Foge, who is now in office in Kaiserslautern, testified something to the effect: "I was acting judge in Minsk in 1942. My colleagues and I knew the orders and the procedures. We talked about it at the beer table, but we were simple soldiers. However, we did not consider the procedures and orders unlawful." High Court, if that was the opinion of a former and current judicial officer, how then should I, as a simple person, have recognized the illegality of things ordered by the highest German legislator?

In addition, there were the training hours, which, as reported, included severe punishments, even death sentences, for the refusal to follow orders. This was not only for the individual, but also for their family. That was another reason why we carried out the orders given to us. How it really was inside of me, and this was also confirmed by witnesses, is shown by my behavior after my transfer to the subcamp.

⁴² HKB was a concentration camp in Vilnius, Lithuania.

There I was an independent SDG and, as confirmed by witnesses, only ever had quarrels with the camp commander because of my good-naturedness toward the prisoners. In Auschwitz, I had deep sympathy for the victims, and I reported this mess to Dr. Entress.

In return, for the final three months, I was ordered to carry out the selections. As a soldier subject to orders, I had no other choice at that time. I had no other choice and had to obey the order. I agree with the statements and motions of my defense counsel, and I firmly believe that the High Court will not misjudge my situation in the time and will deliver a just decision accordingly.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Scherpe.

Last statement of the defendant Scherpe:

Defendant Scherpe:

High Court. I concur with the remarks of my defense counsel. And I would only like to emphasize that I have not harmed any person, and I am not aware of any personal action against anybody. I am not guilty. That is all.

Presiding Judge:

Mr. Hantl.

Last statement of the defendant Hantl:

Defendant Hantl:

High Court. I support the statements made by me in relation to the testimony. I acted from the ideological point of view of pure reason, without any racial prejudice, class distinctions or nationality. No one lost his life because of me. I start from this point of view: The one standing in front of me could be myself. Auschwitz was, for me, not only the story of a millennium, but of several.

Last statement of the defendant Badnarek:

Defendant Badnarek:

I did not kill people, and I did not beat people to death. And if I had punished or beaten someone, I had to do it in order to save many other inmates from severe measures on the part of the superiors. I could not have done otherwise. I do not feel guilty before God and man. I agree with the statements of my defense counsel.

-Break -

ARTICLE

CREATIVE FACTICITY IN PETER WEISS'S *THE INVESTIGATION*

JENNIFER MARSTON WILLIAM

Peter Weiss's play *The Investigation* (*Die Ermittlung*, 1965) is set in the Frankfurt courtroom where, nearly two decades after the end of World War II and the Holocaust, many graphic and gruesome details of the Nazi concentration camps were exposed during the Auschwitz trial. Building on, while also diverging from, the foundation he had set with his *Frankfurter Auszüge* (Frankfurt excerpts, 1965), in which some of the testimony is recorded nearly verbatim, Weiss incorporates into *The Investigation* media sources such as journalist Bernd Naumann's newspaper reports of the trial in the *FAZ* (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung). However, as explored in the research of German studies scholar Sonja Boos, the author was most interested in his own firsthand observations of the trial. Boos reports that Weiss "assembled a large number of citations taken verbatim from the Frankfurt proceedings, some of which he had transcribed himself in 1964 (Weiss was invested in seeing the procedures in person rather than reading about them in the newspaper or seeing them represented in photographs)" (p. 163). Weiss didn't have access to the many recordings of the trials that came out later; if he had been given the opportunity to review those at the time, then it is possible he would have included more verbatim quotations in the play. But given the author's focus on subjective experiences of existence within the utterly oppressive atmosphere and harsh conditions in the camps, while eschewing attempts to futilely pursue some

sort of objective truth about them, we can speculate reasonably that the creative rather than literal use of quotations from the trial would have still largely characterized this work. As Robert Holub notes, “Weiss abandoned traditional dramatic structure and constructed his drama around a creative citation and adaptation of the documents themselves. He did not aim to reconstruct or to invent a narrative of events, but instead sought to recount in systematic form various aspects of the concentration camp” (p. 731). This method, as Holub observes, stood in contrast to Rolf Hochhuth’s also-well-known play *Der Stellvertreter* (The deputy, 1963), which addressed the roles of the Catholic Church and Pope Pius XII in the Holocaust; while both pieces are usually characterized as “documentary theater,” each controversial in its own way, Weiss adhered more closely to the actual documents in his much less conventionally structured play. Still, Weiss was not putting himself forth as an authoritative documentarian, even while the many facts that are soberly presented in the play may seem to hint at such intentions.

In this essay, I first briefly review the major debates that have taken place surrounding the use of documents in *The Investigation*, and then I focus on what Holub calls Weiss’s “creative employment of documents” (p. 732) to elaborate on how the play displays the artistic mode of creative facticity. I argue that understanding fictionality and facticity as complementary rather than contradictory forces in this work allows us to appreciate the creative representation of historical reality that Weiss’s play offers in its expression of the uncertainty and terror that concentration camp prisoners experienced during the Holocaust.

“Brainwashing on Stage” or “Hard Facts”? Debates and Controversy

In her reflections on the large amount of media attention garnered by the play when it premiered in October 1965, Boos notes that:

no other play in the German postwar era caused as much controversy or was met with as much repugnance as *The Investigation*. In addition to having to cope with the unexpectedly gruesome subject matter, which was presented in literally unheard-of detail, the audience was confronted with a play that radically subverted the formal conventions of theater (p. 167)

The piece premiered at more than a dozen theaters at once in both East Germany and West Germany; the reception was mixed, and the play provoked anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi sentiments at some of its venues (Vegesack, 83). Debates ensued over Weiss's aesthetic approach as well as over individual directorial choices, particularly in productions in which the roles of defendants, witnesses, and victims were implicitly interchangeable. Some took offense at the play's accusations toward firms such as IG Farben and others which were complicit in the machinery that sustained the Holocaust, and those parts of the play were even left out in some cities' productions (Vegesack, 82). Journalist Günter Zehm of *Die Welt* newspaper called the play "brainwashing on stage" ("Gehirnwäsche auf der Bühne," Vegesack, 80). Other prominent voices, such as the famous director and fellow socialist Erwin Piscator, defended Weiss from being overly political with this play, stating that it was "not about Peter Weiss's political expression here. Besides the fact that the statements are mostly only inexactly quoted or are taken out of context, *The Investigation* has nothing to do with political confessions but rather with hard facts" (Vegesack, 80). As Vegesack points out, some critics claimed that Weiss distorted the minutes from the trial for his purposes, while others criticized him for taking statements from the proceedings verbatim into his play (p. 83). It seems that Weiss couldn't win when it came to his contemporary critics, but Walter Jens probably comes closest to the truth about Weiss's artistic form in his article in *Die Zeit* from 29.10.1965; Jens writes of the play as a "passion play" ("ein Passionstück") and stresses the work's creative elements (cited in Vegesack, 75). It wasn't the case that Weiss had simply put

Naumann's reports from the trial into verse—there was so much more depth to what Weiss had created, extending far beyond some verbatim testimony that he used as his starting material.

Cohen (1998) outlines some of the harsh criticism that the play later received in the 1970s through the 1990s, particularly by Lawrence Langer (who had, at first, praised the work), Alvin H. Rosenfeld, Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, and James E. Young in their writings on Holocaust representations: “In their view Weiss’s play was a distortion and exploitation of the Holocaust for ideological reasons; it was artless, lifeless and mechanical and, most disturbingly, it wasn’t even about the Jews” (p. 44). Indeed, Weiss avoided the words *Jew*, *German*, and even *Auschwitz* altogether in the play, lending it an aura of universality that was undesirable for many critics. One common interpretation of the author’s omission of these descriptors and his references to an unspecified traumatic environment (even while the context of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial is immanently clear) is that Weiss wanted to foreground an anti-capitalist, anti-hierarchical ideological stance in the work. The Third Witness, a member of the camp’s resistance group, is arguably the main mouthpiece for such social critique, as the witness in the play thought to be the central figure (see Thomas, 560) and, presumably, “the witness [Weiss] would have been had he himself been a survivor” (Holub, 735). This figure is crucial to the author’s portrayal of the prisoners having been turned into perpetrators themselves, illustrating how “the dynamic of forced collaboration functioned as a destabilizing force that dislodged the stability of the distinct division between the positions of victim and perpetrator, thus shifting the guilt from the perpetrator to the victim” (Thomas, 571). Holub summarizes the argument that the Third Witness carries in the play as follows:

The Third Witness first notes the hermetic nature of the camp, the interchangeability of guards and prisoners, and their mutual implication in a system based on hierarchy and injustice. In contrast to the common contention that

Auschwitz was an exceptional situation, incomprehensible to the world, he claims that it was an extension of what was—and is—familiar to everyone (p. 734)

The Third Witness thus draws attention to the uncanny familiarity of the camp situation, an extreme microcosm of twentieth-century, post-industrial society and Western capitalism. Interestingly, although he is some ways the most fleshed out in his reflectiveness and tendency to express opinions, the Third Witness is the one whose statements correlate the least with those found in the documentation of the actual trial participants (Holub, 734). Through this witness, Weiss editorializes powerfully about the events that went on in the camp, as seen in this eloquent testimony:

We must drop the lofty view
that the camp world
is incomprehensible to us
We all knew the society
That produced a government
capable of creating such camps
The order that prevailed there
was an order whose basic nature
we were familiar with
For that very reason
we were able to find our way about
in its logical and ultimate consequence
where the exploiter
could expand his authority
to a degree never known before
and the exploited
was forced to yield up
the fertilizing dust
of his bones (p. 191)

While some ideological underpinning in the play is evident, discussions about it may have distracted certain scholars and critics away from discerning Weiss's true impetus for writing *The Investigation* and from the creative artistry behind it. Boos makes the excellent point that Weiss's main concern with this play is not actually about representing the concentration camps and the prisoners' experiences accurately and comprehensively, nor is it even about the fact that such a

precisely veritable portrayal is an unattainable goal. For Weiss in *The Investigation*, there are more pressing matters to address, as Boos observes:

Much of the scholarly debate on *The Investigation* has focused on the question of whether Weiss's representation of the trial does justice to the experience of the victims and survivors. Linked to the broader question of whether it is at all possible to bear witness to and aesthetically represent the experience of the Holocaust, this debate fails to do justice not only to the play's most urgent concern but also to its most innovative aspect. At the center of *The Investigation* is the investigation itself, and not the crimes that were under investigation or the historical event that gave rise to them. To reiterate, *The Investigation* does not take Auschwitz or the unrepresentability of Auschwitz as its subject matter, but rather it engages the status and legitimacy of modern democracy with respect to this judicial and ethical burden (Boos, 174)

In other words, Weiss implies in his play that the impossibility of accurate representation is to be taken as a given; it is the starting point rather than the end point of his work. What is at stake for humanity and for the post-Holocaust present and future, Weiss seems to be saying, extends beyond the guilty verdicts that came out of the trial (which are not addressed in the play) and even beyond the individual fates of his composite-character victims, as unique and lamentable as each of those are.

Creative Facticity: An Archeological Analogy to Documentary Theater

Observed reality and reported facts form the basis for numerous creative works that vary in their levels of facticity and fictionality: documentary theater and its counterpart of the radio or television docudrama; documentary filmmaking; historical fiction; "biopic" films; and other art forms that are characterized by various degrees of realism and historicity. In each case, the fissure between the historical reality and the artworks representing that reality is bridged by human creativity and imagination. In Weiss's documentary play *The Investigation*, this ingenuity is seen in several ways: the "Oratorio in Eleven Cantos" structure as indicated in its subtitle and modeled on Dante's

Inferno; the rhythmic free verse form into which the author puts the testimony from the Auschwitz trial; and the creative combination of direct quotations from the defendants during the proceedings and representative—while not verbatim—statements made by composite witness figures.

In considering how to describe Weiss's methods of historical literarization, the phrase "creative facticity" occurred to me. Upon googling this term to see if and how it had been used by others already, I came across writer and digital humanities specialist Spencer Jordan's recent essay "Creative Facticity and 'Hyper-Archeology'" (2021), which details the approach of "psychogeography as a methodology by which an interdisciplinary synthesis between archaeology and creative practice can be investigated" (p. 96). To understand the context of a place in more depth, psychogeography relies on historical fact along with concrete archeological artifacts, both of which are given more contour through imagination and fictionalization. It is a playful approach with the serious intent of investigating an environment's effects on individuals (see the entry "Psychogeography" in the *Dictionary of Critical Theory*). Documentary theater is, in a sense, analogous to archeology in that it also involves the investigating, digging up, and analyzing of historical artifacts. Further, at least as manifested in *The Investigation*, documentary theater explores in a somewhat psychogeographical manner how the extreme environmental circumstances of the concentration camps impacted individuals—whether victims, perpetrators, or by-standers—during the Holocaust. Reasons for the remarkable differences in behavior and the disparate effects of the conditions among those who experienced the same miserable environment during the same dreadful time are not deliberated upon overtly; rather, the audiences and readers are left to speculate, to fill in the gaps with their own imaginations and from their unique perspectives. A cognitive space is thereby created that ultimately has little to do with the accuracy of measurements and statistics about the camp that are undoubtedly a heavy focus in *The*

Investigation, and more to do with making visible the futility of portraying an objective and comprehensive version of the concentration camp reality, on stage or otherwise. The value of this piece of documentary theater thus does not lie in the presumed facts that were extracted from the documents but instead in the voices, both real and imagined, that grapple with the veracity and implications of those facts in the play. By means of creative facticity, Weiss acknowledges in *The Investigation* implicitly what he has made explicit elsewhere: the Auschwitz that he visited safely as a tourist in 1964, and that he referred to as “my place” (*meine Ortschaft*) and as a place for which he was destined, resists both imagination and facts due to the unfathomability of its scope for the human mind. We depend on artists like Weiss, with the ability to transcend the limits both the factual and the imaginary realms through their creative representations of the horrors of the camps, to prevent us from forgetting what must not be forgotten.

The Space Between Witness and Testimony

Thinkers throughout the ages have pondered the problems inherent in the temporal and representational gaps between a real historical event and a later account of it (whether more factual or more fictional). Considerations about Weiss’s theatrical investigation of the Nazi concentration camps via the Auschwitz Trial must also include the nature of the gulf between the witnessing and the experiencing of something so horrific and traumatic, and the testifying about it later. In his work on Holocaust representation and what he terms “forgetful memory,” Michael Bernard-Donals addresses this space in-between:

Witnessing is the act of seeing as we are confronted with or involved in a set of circumstances; testimony is what we say about those events. What intervenes between these two acts—one spontaneous and the other intentional—is memory and its opposite, forgetting (p. 5)

The issue addressed here is not just the temporal distance between the acts of witnessing and the acts of testifying, although the many years that passed between the end of World War II in 1945 and the beginning of the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt in the early 1960s may well have contributed to less factually accurate testimony in some cases. But many other factors besides the passage of time can make people forget details: for instance, it is commonly thought that trauma can cause the traumatized person to repress certain memories as a protective psychological mechanism; human perception within a given environment and situation is not generally all-encompassing, and in a chaotic environment like the camps, different individuals' attention will have been drawn to different things at any given moment, which would influence what they remembered and reported about their experience later. Bernard-Donals argues in his work that forgetting in such situations does not indicate a failure or shortcoming of memory; instead, forgetting is inherent in the act of remembering, reminding us of the important truth that some things are simply not fully knowable or are unable to be brought forth to a conscious level.

The structure of Weiss's play prompts us to reflect on the actual, realistic processes of recollection and of forgetting that come to light during eyewitness testimony. For instance, when the questioning turns to the topic of the selection process at the train platform, where some arriving prisoners who said they didn't feel well were shot immediately, the Seventh Witness recalls how a guard once shot five or six people. When this witness is asked whether he sees that guard in the courtroom, he responds tentatively as follows:

7 th WITNESS:	Your Honor it has been many years since I last stood in front of them and I find it hard to look them in the face That one looks like him That could be him His name is Bischof
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JUDGE: Are you sure
or do you have any doubts
7th WITNESS: Your Honor
I could not sleep at all last night
COUNSEL FOR THE
DEFENSE: We question the credibility
of the witness
It may be assumed
that he recognized the face of our client
from pictures published in the press
Certainly the exhaustion of the witness
does not inspire confidence
in the validity of his testimony (pp. 130-31)

Defendant #15 then claims to not understand what the witness is saying, particularly questioning why he says that five or six people were shot rather than giving the exact number. If the witness had been specific with his figure, though, one imagines that the defense then would have questioned how he could possibly know and remember with certainty the precise number of deaths that resulted from this chaotic incident on the platform so many years ago.

While the passage of time and the extreme circumstances of the Holocaust—in addition to the stress caused by the trial—undoubtedly impacted the memory of some who testified, it is plausible that others claimed amnesia in pursuit of amnesty. Weiss is not interested in resolving this tension in his play: we remain ignorant as to whether witnesses or defendants are lying deliberately under oath or have honestly forgotten the truth in the meantime. This uncertainty for the reader or audience member parallels the situation for those who were present in the courtroom. For example, at the end of the second Canto, the Prosecuting Attorney questions the Second Witness the rewards given to guards at Auschwitz for shooting prisoners who were attempting to flee:

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: The court has in its possession
documents which show
that in a number of instances
sentries were rewarded for

shooting prisoners attempting escape
 Furthermore lists of prisoners
 shot while attempting escape
 were posted and periodically brought up to date
 2nd WITNESS: That's news to me
 [...]
 PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: Some of these lists
 bear your signature
 2nd WITNESS: It's possible
 that on some occasion
 I had to sign as a matter of routine
 I can't remember (p. 161)

Weiss thus skillfully uses the genre of documentary theater to emphasize that physical documents do not always aid memory, nor do they necessarily provide concrete evidence that would bring us closer to a universally agreed-upon truth.

Complete Knowledge and Clear Understanding are Not the Goals

In Alex Rosenberg's *How History Gets Things Wrong: The Neuroscience of Our Addiction to Stories* (2018), the author—a novelist and philosopher of science—endeavors to explain through cognitive science “exactly what it is about the human brain that makes almost all the explanations history has ever offered us wrong” (p. 1). He is referring primarily to narratives, the use of stories to explain the past: “explanation of what happened in terms of the motives and the perspectives of the human agents whose choices, decisions, and actions made those events happen” (p. 2). Rosenberg argues that historians and biographers can get all the facts exactly right while still getting the explanations exactly wrong, because of the nature of narrative and the way our human brains process it. In the past few decades, cognitive-literary scholars have shown how literature necessitates and activates readers’ theories of mind—the “set of hypotheses we employ to explain and predict behavior” (Rosenberg, 79)—at the same time that it highlights these processes in

interactions between literary characters (see for example: Mancing; Palmer; Zunshine). When it comes to reading historical narratives with varying degrees of fictionality and facticity, Rosenberg sees the likely innate and clearly imperfect faculty of theory of mind as a hindrance, even “malevolent,” as we “unleash our hostile emotions against people we don’t even know, people who may even be long dead or far away” (p. 248). Our strong feelings evoked by historical storytelling not only get in the way of our understanding of history, but they also make us believe, mistakenly and dangerously, that we actually do comprehend it well. According to Rosenberg, stories and narratives of all types are enjoyable and appealing, playing to our emotions in various ways, and for this reason they should remain in the realm of entertainment rather than education. Rosenberg’s position is unequivocal on these points:

Narrative history is not verifiable because it attributes causal responsibility for the historical record to factors inaccessible to the historian. And they’re inaccessible because they don’t exist. The causal factors narrative history invokes—the contentful beliefs and desires that are supposed to drive human actions—have all the reality of phlogiston or epicycles. So narrative history, even at its best, is just wrong about almost everything besides the chronologies it reports (p. 247)

While Rosenberg’s arguments may be oversimplified, there are aspects of his considerations that are highly pertinent to discourse about representation of the Holocaust, and thus to the current discussion of Weiss’s *Investigation* and its deliberate lack of conventional narrative structure.

The Holocaust, as it has been argued persuasively and often, is not a concept that can be fully understood by those who weren’t there to experience the atrocities firsthand. It is a paradox in that it is a story that needs to be told, and at the same time, cannot really be told. Narrative representations, whether leaning toward being more fictional or more factual, may play an important role in making people more aware of the occurrence of historical events, but they cannot be said to explain all causalities and motivations that led to them—particularly not with such a

large-scale human catastrophe as the Holocaust. Narratives tend to give us the illusion that we can comprehend the trauma that survivors experienced; to fill in the blanks, we use not only our flawed theory of mind but also our imagination, which is also inherently limited, as LaCapra describes:

Extremely traumatic series of events beggar the imagination, and such events often involve the literalization of metaphor as one's wildest dreams or most hellish nightmares seem to be realized or even exceeded by brute facts. Such facts go beyond the imagination's powers of representation. Indeed, when things of an unimaginable magnitude actually occur and phantasms seem to run rampant in "ordinary" reality, what is there for the imagination to do? Such events cannot be intensified through imaginative recreation or transfiguration (pp. 180-81)

Weiss undertakes the opposite of such imaginative recreation, despite the artistic skill required to conceive of the play's form and to fictionalize its source material by creating composite figures and representative if not always authentic testimony. Instead of trying to imaginatively recreate the experience of the camps by using them as his theatrical setting, Weiss tacitly acknowledges in his work set in the postwar courtroom that "Holocaust testimony is often both extrinsically incredible (the events to which the witness testifies seem impossible, unreal) and intrinsically incoherent (exhibiting gaps, silences, and disjunctions)" (Bernard-Donals, 11). *The Investigation* reinforces that the atrocities of the past are neither to be swept under the rug as if they hadn't occurred, nor to be dealt with as something surmountable that we can consider conquered once we have properly acknowledged them.

Conclusion: Inconclusive

The Investigation is such an impactful and powerful work not because of its documentation of certain facts about the Holocaust and the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, nor solely due to the artistic license that Weiss takes with the presentation of these facts and with the dramatic form, but rather as a result of the unique combination of all these aspects. Holub expresses the effect of Weiss's

creative dramatic structure as follows: “Composed on a contrast between documentary facticity and constructed representation, *The Investigation* is itself a testimony to the power of the documentary form in dealing with the Holocaust, and, simultaneously, to the impotence of documentation to convey an intelligible, cohesive story” (p. 735). This self-consciousness in respect to its form extends to register and genre in a way that highlights the participatory, collaborative nature of theater, as Boos elaborates:

By allowing two different registers—reality and fiction—to coexist, the theater ceases to function as an institution where politics are taught and reflected on, a Brechtian *politische Anstalt* (political institution). Instead, it gives shape to an event during which everyone (voluntarily or not) partakes in politics. By arranging a performance that is virtually coterminous both temporally and spatially with a real-life political event, Weiss all but eliminates the divide between illusion and reality, art and politics (p. 172)

Weiss’s elimination of these divisions through the mode of creative facticity and his refusal to weave into his Auschwitz trial play a clear-cut “moral of the story” or unequivocal judgments of its characters ensures that this particular investigation will never be considered a closed case.

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