



## WOJCIECHA BURACZYŃSKA

Warsaw, 26 November 1945. Investigating Judge Halina Wereńko interviewed the person named below as a witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the significance of the oath, the witness was sworn and testified as follows:

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**Name and surname: Wojciecha Buraczyńska, known in the case of K.**

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I arrived at Ravensbrück in a transport of women from the Lublin and Warsaw prisons on 23 September 1941. Our group, from Lublin, numbered 145 women. The train drew into Fürstenberg station at 5.00 a.m., and we could see female SS overseers waiting for us with dogs. The SS-women arranged us in fives, beating and shoving us; we were harassed incessantly. From there we were taken in trucks and Black Marias, terribly crowded, to the camp. Our personal details were written down in the office, from where we were sent to the bathing room located in the same building. This took nearly one whole day.

In the bathing room the SS-women and their cooperating female prisoners, mainly German, took our clothes, leaving us only with a piece of soap, a toothbrush and a comb, while after the bath they gave us prison clothes comprising a striped skirt, ill-fitting underclothes (a shirt and panties), a headscarf, wooden clogs and stockings, also unmatched. From there, pushing and shoving, they led us to block no. 15 for the quarantine.

In the bathing room we underwent a superficial medical examination – naked prisoners would walk up to a doctor by the surname of Sonntag, who looked into their mouths, while at the same time harassing the women, pushing them and – as I witnessed myself – hitting the older ladies in the face. The quarantine lasted three weeks. The block was administered by one Hermina Kubitza, a warden who treated the prisoners with a refined cruelty, shouting, beating and shoving them without any hesitation. Sometimes she would throw the prisoners



out into the biting cold an hour before roll-call. During the three weeks of quarantine we experienced terribly overcrowded conditions, having to sit at the table two or even three to a stool. Such were the instructions of the authorities. The block warden ordered us to maintain silence, doing everything in her power to make it impossible for the prisoners to communicate. She terrorized us with her constant screams and shouts, cursing us for no reason, thereby trying to bully us into submission. She would not allow the weaker prisoners to lay down and rest during the day, even though we did not perform any work during quarantine. If someone committed even the slightest infringement, for example spoke, she would make a complaint to the overseer, who in turn selected the punishment, such as standing in the cold or the forfeiture of lunch.

Our daily sustenance was as follows: 250 g of bread, half a liter of coffee in the morning, half a liter of vegetable soup and a few potatoes for lunch and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a liter of soup for dinner. While in quarantine, each one of us had to go – once – to the political office located outside the walls; there, our personal details would be taken down again, a physical description drawn up and photographs taken. We went escorted there by an overseer.

After three weeks I and the prisoners who had arrived with me were left in the same block, however the difference being that we started going to work, shoveling sand under the foundations of the barracks. The work was hard. We were supervised by the overseers and prisoners who had been incarcerated in the camp for a longer time. Later on we toiled outside the camp, building roads, felling trees and unloading ships. During this time the overseers treated us badly, hurrying us and meting out beatings. This state of affairs lasted until December 1941. Later on the Germans set up a workshop in the camp where we made straw boots for the army. Work was organized in three shifts, one a night shift. The labor was very hard and the quotas imposed on us exceeded our strength. Overseer Gunkler, whose name I do not remember, demonstrated particular cruelty; for example, after the completion of work she would not let us return to the barrack directly, instead forcing us – poorly dressed – to stand in the bitter cold, groggy with exhaustion, sometimes for two hours at a stretch. During work we were also guarded by SS-men, and they treated us brutally. I remember the surnames of two of them, Graf and Binder, but not their names.

This organization of work remained in force until March 1942. During this time I was allocated – along with the majority of my girlfriends – to the military tailoring shop, the so-called



*U-Barake*, on the premises of the camp. We would repair old uniforms and sew gloves and fur-lined flying suits. Gunkler continued to function as our overseer. She harassed us just as intensely as in our previous place of employment.

We worked in two 12-hour shifts, at night or in the day. The nightwork was extremely grueling, for it was followed by a roll-call during which the workers were counted – this would normally last a few hours; furthermore, when the women who had worked the night shift were sleeping, the other shift – then working – would eventually come in for meals and their movements made it difficult to sleep. Of all Gunkler's torments, the one that was most difficult to bear was when she would not allow us to go to the lavatory – often for a whole 12 hours. During the day, the prisoners who had worked the night shift had to get up and bring food both for themselves and their colleagues working in the day. When working at night, there was a half-hour break during which the hall was aired; meals were not given during this time. During the break we would be guarded by the same SS-men as before. If a woman fell sick, she would have to report to the block warden in order to be allowed to go to the prison hospital, while she would be excused from work only if she had a high fever (39°) or suffered from an ailment that affected her arms or fingers.

In the spring of 1942 the camp began to starve – our food rations were reduced, the bread weighed less, while loaves were divided amongst five people; we would receive unsweetened coffee in the morning and evening and a quarter of a liter of vegetable soup for lunch, along with one or two inedible potatoes. During this time the camp commandant was Koegel, while the senior overseer was Mandel, with one Zimmer as her deputy.

These women maintained a very strict discipline in the camp and even the slightest infringements were punished with 25 lashes, forfeiture of food, being sent to the penal block, cutting off of hair and forced standing for a few hours at a time.

The penal block was located on the premises of the camp, but it was separated from the other blocks with wire. The prisoners who were sent there were not allowed to communicate with the others.

I myself was never sent to the penal block, but I was told about it by friends who had received this punishment, although today I do not remember who by. The work performed in this block was particularly harsh, such as draining lakes, cleaning sewage pits and rubbish dumps, etc. The roll-calls were longer and forced standing was applied more frequently.

Prisoners were forbidden to walk arm in arm or keep their hands in their pockets on the premises of the camp. I myself once saw how the camp commandant, Koegel, approached one of the prisoners and started kicking and beating her for no reason. I do not know her surname. Mandel – the senior overseer, and her deputy, Zimmer, also distinguished themselves with their cruelty, however at the present moment I do not remember any specific instances of harassment; nevertheless, I do remember that they would hit and beat the prisoners (I no longer remember which ones) for any slight infractions or even without cause.

From April 1942, prisoners from various transports would be executed on a monthly basis. Lists of surnames would be sent to individual blocks and the victims taken to the local gaol; from there, prison vehicles would transport them outside the camp, where they were executed. I do not know what the conditions were in the camp gaol.

I know that the women who were taken away were executed, because we frequently heard salvos followed by single shots – most probably delivering the coup de grâce to the wounded. Furthermore, the prison truck would return some time later, loaded with bloodied clothes carrying the numbers of the unfortunate inmates. Prisoners would be taken from the gaol in groups numbering a dozen or so each, but also individually. Proceeding in this way, between April 1942 and 1945 the Germans executed every fourth prisoner from transports arriving from Lublin, Radom, Częstochowa and Warsaw. I do not know on what basis the women were selected for execution.

I survived in the conditions described above until November 1942, when I was taken for an experimental operation. I returned to the block following an illness in January 1943 and until April did not work anywhere, for I was unfit for work during this time. For a year from April 1943 I was employed knitting stockings, just like all the other prisoners who were unfit for labor. During this time there were mass transports from the camp to munition factories in Germany and new groups of prisoners flowed into the camp constantly.

From August 1944 female evacuees from Warsaw started to arrive at the facility. In total, there were 12,217 women. I was provided the above data by Urszula Wińska (she used to reside in Kraków, but I do not know her present address) towards the end of the camp's existence. She also told me that from 6 September 1939 until 31 January 1945 exactly 32,445 Polish women – including evacuees from Warsaw – passed through the camp in

Ravensbrück. Up to 10 April 1945, the Germans murdered 4,375 women in the death camp, the so-called *Jugendlager*, which was located outside the premises of our camp. The following methods of execution were used: powders, injections, destruction of the cranium with a metal bar, the gas chamber and the crematorium. As I stated previously, I learned the above from Wińska. As far as I know, the *Jugendlager* camp was set up in the second half of 1944 and was situated outside the walls of Ravensbrück camp proper. Women ostensibly unfit for hard labor were selected to the *Jugendlager*; their "disability" was determined during the first medical examination carried out during quarantine. The examination was not comprehensive, for the women would be given no more than a cursory glance.

The physicians who worked at the camp during my period of imprisonment were Dr Sonntag and his wife, also a physician, Dr Oberheuser, Dr Schiedlausky, Rosenthal, Trommer, and Treite. They took turns participating in the examinations which I mentioned above. The examining doctor and *Schwester* would also send older women, the short-sighted and the handicapped to the death camp. I heard from various people (whose surnames I no longer remember) that the level of starvation in the death camp was greater than in our facility, and that the persons sent there were gradually executed in groups. I heard from other people (I no longer remember their surnames either) that powdered phenobarbital and injections of some sort were used to kill the women in the death camp. The block warden in the death camp was a Pole, Halina Kwiatkowska (I do not know her present address, nor do I know where she comes from), and as an eyewitness she could provide more information about the death camp. As far as I know from her subordinate prisoners, she enjoyed a very good reputation. I do not remember the surnames of any other people from the death block.

In January 1942 the Germans formed two so-called death transports. During the first medical examination in quarantine they selected women who were crippled, suffering from venereal diseases and tuberculosis, and the elderly, 1,500 in total, while a few days later some 900 women were picked. Both these transports were taken in motor vehicles in an unknown direction and executed along the route. The fact that these transports were executed was mentioned by the German doctors and the *Schwesters*, and it was from them that the prisoners gained this information.

On 3 February 1944 another such transport was readied and everyone was certain it was also a death transport. This transport, comprising 945 elderly, sick and – ostensibly – unfit



for work women, of which 75 percent could in fact perform lighter work and had full control of their mental faculties, was sent to Lublin, to the camp in Majdanek. There were more than 110 Poles in the group, a few of whom are difficult to identify, and a small number of Russians – Red Army prisoners of war – were added; two of them were war invalids. When the Russians tried to protest, they were threatened with execution. Also added were two Polish women from the group of those who had been interned in Yugoslavia; they had arrived in the camp three weeks earlier. One of them was completely healthy, while the other suffered from asthma. Many of the women in this group were fit for work and were taken only due to their age – over 60. The selection of victims for this transport was conducted thus: a doctor visited factories in Germany where inmates from the camp in Ravensbrück worked and announced that those who were tired of work, who could not keep up the pace, or were sick, could return to the camp for treatment and rest. His deceitful actions resulted in the recruitment of a large number of young and healthy women who did not want to work in munition factories; as it turned out, they ended up in the death transport. Some of the lung patients in the transport could have been successfully treated. Sick women were carried on stretchers, and as far as I know 40 died during the transport. The transport left in goods wagons. I am providing these details concerning the death transport of 3 February 1944 on the basis of a letter which I sent from the camp and which survived in my parents' home. The death transport spent some time in Majdanek, where the women could not be finished off, however, due to the evacuation of the camp. Some of the inmates from the transport were taken to the camp in Oświęcim and survived.

The report was read out.

## WITNESS INTERVIEW REPORT

Warsaw, 30 November 1945. Acting Investigating Judge Halina Wereńko interviewed the person named below as a witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the significance of the oath, the witness was sworn and testified as follows:

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**Name and surname: Wojciecha Buraczyńska, known in the case.**

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In January 1945 the so-called selections started in the camp in Ravensbrück, lasting until 30 March. The selections were conducted as follows. All of the prisoners were gathered before the blocks and duly arranged in front of a committee comprising the camp commandant, Suhren (I do not know his name), his deputy, Schwarzhuber (I do not know his name), labor inspector Pflaum (I do not know his name), senior camp overseer Bintz (I do not know her name), camp doctors Treite and Trommer, a dentist (I do not know his name), a doctor who came to the camp especially to attend the selection, one Wilkemman, and a number of overseers whose surnames I do not remember. Apart from the members of the committee, SS-men – whose surnames I do not know – also took part in the selection. The prisoners, barefoot, were arranged in fives in front of the committee and had to run a distance of a dozen or so paces. Afterwards the committee would randomly select those who were unfit for work from the group of five and order them to stand to one side, while the other women stood to the other. The group of those deemed unfit for work included women who were gray-haired, elderly, crippled, looked pale, had traces of carbuncles on their bodies, suffered from scabies and also young women whose legs were swollen due to their exhaustion through hunger and labor.

The classification was very strict and a great many women were assessed as unfit for work. I cannot provide an exact number, for in each instance it was different. The group of people unfit for work was sent either to the *Jugendlager* or directly to the gas chamber, to the crematorium. Everyone in the camp knew that this was the procedure – it was talked about

by the inmates, the SS-men, and the prison overseers. This was additionally proven by the smoke that belched non-stop, day and night, from the furnaces of the crematorium, which was located on the premises of the camp, but on the other side of the wall.

Initially, the selections were conducted once every few weeks, but in March they were held twice a week. In addition to the above, starting in January 1945 the physicians commenced selections of patients from the sick blocks (there were a few on the premises of the camp), applying the same criteria as the committee about which I have previously testified, whereas later on patients deemed unfit for work were sent only to the crematorium. The women were transported in terrible conditions: they were thrown onto trucks like rag dolls and, crowded together, taken away to the crematorium.

I do not know how executions were carried out in the crematorium, and different stories were told about this in the camp. I learned about the selections carried out in hospitals from the inmates who worked there. In autumn 1944 the inmates were afflicted by an infectious disease, which the doctors called *Durchfall*; it manifested itself by the inability to ingest food and the patient was also troubled by diarrhea. Its forms were varied, some more severe than others, but it led to many women being sent to the crematorium, for the disease wasted the body terribly, especially as no drugs were administered and our level of nourishment was insufficient.

In addition, a year or so before the camp was liquidated, other infectious diseases – among them typhoid fever, spotted fever and dysentery – were rife. Only inmates who were doctors and also wardens working with the sick attempted to treat the patients; the camp authorities did nothing in this regard. The selections ceased on 30 March 1945, Good Friday, when the first motor vehicles of the International Red Cross arrived to take the inmates. Norwegian women left on the first transport, followed by the French, Belgians, Dutch and – finally – Poles. In this way, some 4,000 Polish women departed the camp for Sweden. The first few hundred – the sick and convalescents – were driven away on trucks, while the next transport, due to the approach of the front, was sent by train. In order to terrorize the Poles still remaining in the camp and discourage them from registering for the journey to Sweden, camp physician Treite spread rumors that the train carrying the inmates had been bombed by the Russians. The rail transport left on 25 April, while on 28 April the general evacuation of the camp was started.





All of the prisoners with the exception of the sick were ordered to leave the camp. Prisoners who wanted to stay behind as nurses and care for the sick were not allowed to do so. Those who remained were forced to hide on the premises of the camp. The inmates left in groups numbering up to 2,000 people, guarded by the overseers and SS-men, and were directed west. A small number of prisoners (I am unable to state how many) received Red Cross parcels for the journey, while the rest were given no food at all. The march was arduous. We walked without pause, day and night, stopping to rest for no more than two hours at a time. The roads were crammed with soldiers, while passing through German cities we were exposed to bombings, which resulted in a number of deaths. The march lasted until 2 May 1945. The township of Lubz had been captured by the Americans and they directed us to a room in a sugar mill, where for the first time in days we slept under a roof. Since there was a rumor that the Americans were to withdraw, our group retreated to the township of Parchim, where there were Russian forces, and from there, using our own initiative, we tried to get back to Poland in smaller groups.

I know nothing specific about the fate of the sick women who remained in the camp, but I learned that they were cared for by the inmates who remained at the facility to provide them aid, and were conveyed to Poland once the camp was seized by the Russians.

The report was read out.

## WITNESS INTERVIEW REPORT

Warsaw, 3 December 1945. Investigating Judge Halina Wereńko interviewed the person named below under oath, having first informed the witness of the criminal liability for making false declarations.

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**Name and surname: Wojciecha Buraczyńska**

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In response to the question concerning my previous testimony, I would like to explain that I did not take part in the selections, because I was concealing myself due to the scar on my leg. I realized that I would have been qualified for the death camp. My girlfriends who had undergone experimental surgery would usually disguise themselves during selections, too. We did this by donning red armbands, which were normally worn by the police – and policewomen were not forced to participate in selections. Only once did I take part in a selection, but luck was with me and I was sent back to the group of healthy inmates.

As regards the experimental operation that I underwent, I provided the details in my previous testimony and shall now talk about the other operated women in order to supplement my deposition.

On 12 April 1942, the Lublin transport was forbidden to go to work outside the camp and 20 inmates from the group were ordered to report to the senior overseer, who looked at their legs. On 22 July the 30 youngest women from this transport, myself amongst them, were summoned before the camp authorities and doctors from Hohenlychen. The camp authorities comprised the commandant, Koegel, and senior overseer Mandel, while the physicians from Hohenlychen included Professor Gebhardt and Doctor Fischer; I do not know the surnames of the others. On 25 July the senior overseer, Mandel, inspected the personal details of the entire Lublin transport and also of five women from the September transport from Warsaw. On 26 July the 75 youngest women from the Lublin transport, myself amongst them, were summoned to the camp hospital, before the camp commandant, Koegel, and physicians

from Hohenlychen. Ten from this group, selected at random, were detained in the hospital and examined, superficially, by the doctors. Six of them received injections of morphine and returned to the block. The objective of these activities was completely unknown to us and there was no operation on that day.

On 1 August the same six prisoners who had previously been given morphine injections were called to the hospital and, without any answer to their questions as to what was going to happen with them, operated on. This was a medical procedure aimed at infecting the muscles. I know this from the sisters of mercy – inmates working at the hospital and also from the German doctors who would talk about the operations in the presence of inmates. The following were operated on: Wanda Kulczyk (20 years old; currently resident in Warsaw), Aniela Okoniewska (24 years old; I do not know her present address, only that she survived the camp), Rozalia Gutek (20 years old; executed on 28 September 1943), Marianna Gnaś (25 years old; executed in January 1943), Wanda Wojtasik (20 years old; currently resident in Kraków, where she is studying medicine), and Maria Zielonka (28 years old; executed on 28 September 1943).

On 14 August 1942 the following were operated on, in spite of the protests of the entire group: Jadwiga Kamińska (28 years old; currently in Western Europe, I do not know her address), Zofia Kormańska (30 years old; she resides in Gdańsk, I do not know her address), Zofia Kawińska (20 years old; a lung sufferer, currently resident in Chełm Lubelski), Władysława Karolewska (30 years old), Alicja Jurkowska (20 years old; currently resident in Sweden), Maria Karczmarek (28 years old; currently in Zamość, I do not know her address), Urszula Karwacka (27 years old; currently resident in Bydgoszcz), Krystyna Iwańska (23 years old; currently resident in Łódź, I do not know her address), Janina Iwańska (19 years old; she has already given testimony to you, citizen Judge). Reactions following the operation were similar to those in the first group.

The following were operated on between 17 August and 1 September 1942: Janina Mitura (a procedure aimed at infecting the muscles; she survived the camp, but I do not know where she lives), Aniela Sobolewska (both legs – a bone operation; executed on 28 September 1943), Krystyna Dębska (both legs – a bone operation; she is currently resident in Lublin, but I do not know her address), Zofia Stefaniak (both legs – a bone operation; she is currently resident in Lublin, but I do not know her address).



On 15 September 1942 the following underwent operations on their unhealed wounds: Wanda Kulczyk, Rozalia Gutek, Maria Zielonka, Jadwiga Kamińska, Władysława Karolewska, Urszula Karwacka.

On 21 September 1942 the Germans operated Zofia Sokólska for the first time (28 years old; she underwent a clean muscle procedure on her left leg; she was operated on thrice; currently resident in Sweden).

After 30 September 1942 the following women underwent operations aimed at infecting the muscles: Maria Nowakowska (28 years old; she survived the camp, but I do not know her present address), Pelagia Rakowska (52 years old; executed on 28 September 1943), Wiktoria Szuksztul (17 years old; she survived the camp, but I do not know her present address), Maria Pajączkowska (22 years old; executed in January 1943), Weronika Kraska (30 years old; she died three days after the operation, in terrible agony), Zofia Hoszowska (28 years old; she has already given testimony to you, citizen Judge), Stanisława Młodkowska (33 years old; currently resident in Warsaw at Targowa Street, I do not know her exact address), Stefania Łotocka (30 years old; resident in Łuków, Piłsudskiego Street 45), Halina Pietrzak (30 years old; she has already given testimony to you, citizen Judge), Alfreda Prus (20 years old; she died on 30 October 1942 in the camp as a direct result of the operation, due to blood loss).

On 7 October 1942, infectious operations were performed on the following: Aniela Lefanowicz (40 years old; she died six days after the operation in terrible agony), Irena Krawczyk (35 years old; currently resident in Częstochowa, I do not know her address), Pelagia Maćkowska (40 years old; currently resident in Zamość, I do not know her address), Stanisława Jabłońska (35 years old; currently resident in Chełm Lubelski, I do not know her address), Jadwiga Łuszcz (24 years old; she was taken from the camp – allegedly to Pawiak, but there was no further information about her), Zofia Kiecol (35 years old; she died four days after the operation without regaining consciousness, in pain), Genowefa Kluczek (20 years old; currently resident in Chełm Lubelski), Maria Kuśmierczuk (22 years old; she has already given testimony to you, citizen Judge), Kazimiera Kurowska (19 years old; she died on the sixth day after the operation, in pain), Maria Kapłan (I do not know her age; she currently lives in Zamość, but I do not know her address), Czesława Kostecka (34 years old; currently resident in Międzyrzec Podlaski).

On 1 November 1942 the Germans operated Barbara Pietrzyk (16 years old). This was a bone procedure on both legs, whereas I would like to add that Barbara Pietrzyk was operated on five times over a period of five months.

On 3 November 1942 the following people were operated on: Barbara Pytlewska (25 years old; a clean muscle procedure on both legs, she was subsequently operated five times; currently resident in Międzyrzec Podlaski, but I do not know her address), Stanisława Śledziejowska (17 years old; a clean muscle procedure on both legs, she was operated on a total of five times; currently resident in Kraków, but I do not know her address), Izabela Rek (19 years old; a bone procedure on both legs, she was operated on a total of four times; currently resident in Lublin).

On 4 November 1942 the Germans operated on Zofia Baj (29 years old; a bone procedure on both legs, she was operated on twice; currently resident in Western Europe, but I do not know her address), Irena Backiel (20 years old; a bone procedure on both legs, she was operated on twice; currently resident in Chełm Lubelski).

On 15 November 1942 they operated Leonarda Bień (20 years old; a bone procedure on both legs, she was operated on a total of five times, but survived the camp; I do not know her present address).

On 17 November 1942 the Germans operated Bogumiła Bąbińska (27 years old; a muscle procedure and incisions of the abdomen, six incisions; she has already given testimony to you, citizen Judge).

On 20 November 1942 they operated Maria Grabowska (33 years old; a procedure aimed at infecting the bones, performed on both legs; she was operated on a total of three times; currently resident in Kraków, but I do not know her address).

On 22 November 1942 the Germans operated Helena Hegier (20 years old; she has already given testimony to you, citizen Judge) and Stanisława Czajkowska (19 years old) – both underwent clean muscle procedures on both legs. Czajkowska presently lives in Zakopane, although I do not know her address.

On 23 November 1942 they operated me and the other women from my group; I have already testified regarding this procedure.

On 2 December 1942 the Germans operated Pelagia Michalik (22 years old; a bone procedure, she was operated on twice; she died in September 1945 in Lublin), Janina Marciniak (20 years old; a bone procedure, she was operated on a total of three times; currently resident in Lublin), and Władysława Marczevska (32 years old; a bone procedure, she was operated on a total of three times; currently resident in Gdańsk, but I do not know her address).

On 3 December 1942 they operated Janina Marczevska (22 years old; a bone procedure, she was operated on twice; currently resident in Gdańsk, but I do not know her address).

On 5 January 1943 they operated Stanisława Michalik (32 years old; a bone procedure; currently resident in Sweden).

On 19 January 1943 the Germans operated Zofia Modrowska (36 years old; a bone procedure; currently resident in Chełm Lubelski, but I do not know her address).

On 30 January 1943 they operated Halina Piotrowska (27 years old; currently resident in Lublin, but I do not know her address).

In January 1943, after repeated protests from the operatees, the camp doctor, Oberheuser, promised that there would be no more operations, with the exception of experiments to be performed on those who had been operated on previously and were currently hospitalized. In spite of this, the following inmates were summoned to the hospital in March 1943: Michalina Marczevska, Regina Małkowska and Irena Pełczyńska. The women declared to Dr Oberheuser and Dr Schiedlausky that they did not agree to the operation and would not go. At the same time, those who had been operated on previously – called “rabbits” by the physicians – submitted the following letter to the camp commandant, Suhren, through the agency of senior overseer Langefeld: “The undersigned political prisoners hereby turn to you, the camp commandant, with a request for a hearing concerning the following matter: from August 1942 Ravensbrück concentration camp has been the site of experimental operations conducted on completely healthy Polish political prisoners, without their consent. The word “rabbits”, commonly used within the hospital and camp, confirms the nature of these procedures. When we turned to the doctors for an explanation, our request was ignored. In January 1943 the doctors promised that there would be no more operations, and yet successive inmates have been summoned for procedures. We request that you, the commandant, explain whether the operations that are being performed on our persons



are the result of sentences unknown to us, for as far as we are aware international law does not provide for the carrying out of such operations even on criminals without their consent". I cannot state whether this was the exact wording of the letter, but it was most certainly similar.

The letter was delivered in person by the operatees, who walked on crutches and canes to the senior camp overseer. The commandant did not receive the delegation and gave no response, although the protest helped in the sense that operations were not performed on the three inmates mentioned above and no new operations were conducted until 15 August 1943.

The report was read out.

## WITNESS INTERVIEW REPORT

Warsaw, 4 December 1945. Investigating Judge Halina Wereńko interviewed the person named below as a witness, having first taken an oath. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

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**Name and surname: Wojciecha Buraczyńska, known in the case.**

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On 15 August 1943, the following were summoned to the camp hospital: Stefania Sieklucka (33 years old; currently resident in Lublin, but I do not know her address), Joanna Szydłowska (37 years old; currently resident in Lublin, but I do not know her address), Helena Piasecka (27 years old; she has already given testimony to you, citizen Judge), and also the following, who had been operated on previously: Halina Piotrowska, Władysława Karolewska, Zofia Kormiańska, Pelagia Michalik, Urszula Karwacka, Zofia Sokólska and Bogumiła Bąbińska. The women did not report to the hospital, as they had been informed by inmates working there that the facility had been prepared for fresh operations.

As a result of their resistance, all of the inmates from block XV – in which the operated women were detained – were ordered to leave the barrack and arrange themselves in line. All political prisoners in the camp were forbidden to step outside its gates. The summoned inmates, ten in number, whom I have mentioned above, were called out from a list by the senior overseer, Bintz, to whom they categorically declared that they would not go for the operation and did not consent to it. Senior overseer Bintz gave her word that there would be no operations and that after being examined by the doctor the prisoners would be sent to work in a factory. They replied that they knew full well that the Lublin transport was prohibited from walking out of the camp gate. In response, the senior overseer asked the ten selected prisoners to go with her to the office, where she would show them a letter that would convince them that they are indeed to be sent to work. The women acquiesced and, together with the senior overseer, walked up to the office. Bintz then went to see the camp



commandant, who was in the canteen. One of the prisoners working in the canteen (I do not remember her surname) happened to pass by the women standing before the office and warned them that the commandant was readying SS-men to have them surrounded, whereupon they ran away towards the inmates from block XV, who were still standing in front of the barrack, and hid in their ranks, from where they were pulled out by force by policewomen and taken to the camp gaol; next day five of them were led away – in dirty dresses, with dirty legs and in terrible hygienic conditions, and in spite of their attempts at resistance and self-defense – to the hospital for operations. These were the following women: Władysława Karolewska, Helena Piasecka, Halina Piotrowska, Joanna Szydłowska, Stefania Sieklucka. One of the five forced to go to the hospital – Urszula Karwacka – was ordered to care for her sick friends. The operation was a bone procedure and details have been provided by Piasecka, who has already given testimony to you, citizen Judge. During the operation all of the camp doctors refused to administer any drugs, and – acting in a systematic and premeditated manner – refused any help and care in the event of post-procedural complications, which were common. In the course of these experimental operations the placement of dressings would be postponed from day to day for the most insignificant reasons, for example a lack of time, for even up to 14 days, even though the leg wounds suppurated awfully. The women, falling sick after these procedures, had to endure hideous hygienic conditions – there were cockroaches under the plaster casts, and pieces of glass, material and operating needles were found regularly in leg wounds.

On 5 February 1943 all of the operated inmates, 61 in all, were prohibited from leaving the block. Such an order would usually be given before an execution. In consequence they decided to stall for time and conceal themselves in order not to be shot. They hid in other barracks, in attics, dug tunnels under the blocks, and failed to appear at roll-call. While hiding, I also used the methods described above (among others). Fifteen of the operated women, making use of the confusion caused by the transfer of the camp from Oświęcim to Ravensbrück and availing themselves of the fact that female inmates from Oświęcim were deported for labor to factories in Germany, left with the transport from Oświęcim to Neustadt-Glewe under assumed names.

While imprisoned in Ravensbrück, from February 1943 I maintained a secret correspondence with my family, informing them about everything that was going on in the camp. I did this in two different ways: I would write in invisible ink on camp notepaper and send such



communications normally, through the camp censors – however none of these letters have survived – or I would solicit the help of girlfriends who worked outside the camp and were in touch with Poles or Frenchmen who, being in regular employment, would be able to put my letters, also written in invisible ink, in a postbox. A few such letters have survived and I have them in my possession.

The statistical data that I provided in my report were gathered in the camp in March 1945, with the assistance of my friends, and taken to Poland by Władysława Dąbrowska (currently resident in Puławy, but I do not know her address).

I would like to stress that when giving the ages of my friends, I was referring to the period mentioned in the report.

The report was read out.

## REPORT

Warsaw, 30 November 1945. Investigating Judge Michał Halfter – through the agency of Professor Wiktor Grzywo-Dąbrowski (resident in Warsaw at Hoża Street 61, flat 4), director of the Institute of Forensic Medicine of Warsaw University, appointed in the capacity of court expert and duly notified of the obligations incumbent upon court experts – performed a medico-legal examination of Wojciecha Buraczyńska, 25 years of age, daughter of Wiktor and Zofia, resident in Kutno at Post Office No. 1, with no profession.

### Medical history

On 23 November 1942 I received an injection in my thigh, probably of morphine, after which my legs were shaved and I was taken to the operating theater. Before I was conveyed there, I received one more injection – I was ordered to count and when I reached number 18, I lost consciousness. When I woke up on my bed, I noticed a small piece of sticking plaster on my right calf. I removed it and determined that there was no incision, only a mark as if from an injection. Other inmates who had been taken with me (9 in all) had the same marks. Just a few hours later my temperature began to rise. After three days I noticed that I had red streaks on my legs, right up to my hip. I had a chill. During the first three days my temperature rose to 40°. After three days I received a fresh injection, morphine I think, and was put to sleep in the operating theater with ether. When I woke up in the theater, I felt that a doctor was holding down my leg. I think that he was bandaging it at the time. As I found out later, an incision had been made on my calf. I lay in bed for eight weeks. My temperature fell gradually. In January 1943 I was sent back to the barrack, but over the next few weeks I would return to have my dressings changed. Presently I do not have any pain while walking, but I do feel as if there is something in my calf that makes muscle movement difficult. I do not have a limp. Presently I do not have any ailments that could be connected with the incisions and infections which I have undergone.

Present condition:

The subject is of medium height, well-built and properly nourished, and no post-traumatic changes were disclosed in the nervous system or internal organs. On the skin of the right



shank, to the rear, there is a grayish-pinkish scar, slightly retracted, running from top to bottom, with a length of 17 cm and a width of 3 to 5 cm; it is painless when pressed and slightly coalesced with the deeper layers of tissue. The muscles of both shanks are very well developed, while the right shank is somewhat thicker than the left. The subject walks normally, without a limp. She performs knee bends correctly.

When duly queried, the court expert stated as follows:

1. Bearing in mind the contents of the subject's medical history and taking into consideration the results of the examination, I have come to the conclusion that the scar on the right shank, described hereabove, came into being following the healing up of the post-operative wound, which suppurated for some time.
2. In all probability, the subject received some sort of injections to the tissue of the right thigh, which resulted in suppuration combined with a high fever. These injections were administered without any medical indications.
3. The suppuration referred to hereabove caused the subject to experience a disorder of health connected with the dysfunction of the right leg for a period in excess of 20 days.

In her present condition the subject does not suffer from any disorders that could be associated with the procedures undergone thereby.

Thus, it has been determined that the subject has in no way lost her fitness for work.

At this point the report was brought to a close. The report was read out.