



PIOTR DENISOW

On 27 September 1947, Municipal Court in Opatów, with Judge I. Kamiński presiding, interviewed the person named below as an unsworn witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the provisions of Articles 107 and 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Piotr Denisow
Age	58 years old
Parents' names	Michał and Anna, <i>née</i> Bezpolot
Place of residence	Lublin, [...]
Occupation	building engineer
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none
Relationship to the parties	none

I met the defendant Erich Muhsfeldt in 1942. He served as head of the crematorium in the Majdanek concentration camp. I used to see Muhsfeld as I worked as a civilian engineer building the sewage system in the camp near the crematorium in fields V and VI. Having learned from the former prisoners about his cruelty, I avoided any contact with him. Quartered beside the crematorium, he remained insensitive to the groans of the dying people. His task was to oversee those who worked in the crematorium. The work involved carrying corpses, undressing the victims, pulling out golden teeth, pulling jewelry and rings off the corpses, etc. These prisoners, known as crematorium men, were often replaced. On Muhsfeld's orders, they were sent to the gas chambers and new people were placed in their stead. Muhsfeld often took part in carrying out "selections", that is, the elimination

of those who were ill, weak and unable to work and who were sent to the gas chambers to be exterminated. Muhsfeld's very name sent chills down the spine of every prisoner, and everyone tried to keep out of his sight.

Since gold, diamonds and jewelry passed through his hands, he derived much profit from his position. His cruelty served to preserve the function he exercised and to ingratiate himself with his boss, Thumann (the former deputy of the camp commandant) known for spreading terror throughout the camp. Other prisoners told me that on Thumann's order he had thrown a Polish woman, still alive, into the fire for refusing to strip naked before the execution as other women had done.

I was also told that he had once insidiously lured five crematorium men (a Jew and four Soviet prisoners) into the gas chamber on the pretext that he wanted them to take off the clothes of Jewish children. When the men entered the crematorium he bolted the door shut and let the gas in. He did this to eliminate those who had provided him with gold and who then threatened to reveal his theft. [They complained to] the commandant Thumann who was very displeased [with what he had learned]. As a result of their complaint, Muhsfeld's apartment was searched. During the search, 8 kilos of gold were found, which filled Thumann with anger and led to Muhsfeld's removal first from his position and then, in May 1944, from the camp.

He even treated his favorite dog with great cruelty. Before moving out of Lublin he threw the dog alive into the crematorium furnace since he didn't want to give it to anyone else.

I have learned what I have just said from former prisoners.

The following witnesses – the former prisoners who got into contact with Muhsfeld – may provide more detailed information:

- 1) Engineer Stanisław Zelent who resides in Warsaw [...]
- 2) Counsellor Czesław Kulesza who resides in Warsaw [...]
- 3) Engineer Architect Helena Kurcysz who resides in Szczecin [...]
- 4) Kazimierz Milczewski who resides in Łódź [...].