



HALINA NELKEN

Eleventh day of the hearing, 5 December 1947

Presiding Judge: Please summon the next witness, Halina Nelken.

Witness Halina Nelken, 22 years old, a student at the Jagiellonian University, religion – Jewish, relationship to the accused – none.

Presiding Judge: I would like to remind the witness of the obligation to speak the truth. The provision of false testimony is punishable by a term of imprisonment of up to five years. Do the parties want to submit any motions as to the procedure according to which the witness is to be interviewed?

Prosecutors and defense attorneys: We release the witness from the obligation to take an oath.

Presiding Judge: The witness shall be interviewed without taking an oath. I would ask the witness to say what she knows about the case in hand, and in particular if she recognizes the individual accused and what she has to say about their behavior with respect to the prisoners?

Witness: I recognize the accused Orlowski and Danz. I first encountered the accused Orlowski in Płaszów in the summer of 1944. I saw that Orlowski, popularly called “the Tomboy”, this due to her masculine voice and manners, was the terror of the camp. She was the head of the laundry, but she would always be seen in the camp with a carpet-beater in her hand, stopping prisoners and then inspecting and beating them, or at best showering them with the most vulgar language.

I once witnessed the accused Orlowski beating a prisoner. This was during a roll call in the summer of 1944. The accused was counting the inmates of individual blocks, and a roll call had been called at ours. One of the inmates, who stood in the next line of five to my side, was sick. The roll call was very long and she did not have the strength to stand at attention for so long. When the accused Orlowski saw that the prisoner had moved, she pulled her out of the line and proceeded to give her a terrible beating, and when her victim threw up



her hands to defend herself, she said: "We shall see who will tire first – you or I?" When she [the inmate] fell, Orlowski grabbed her by her hair and pulled her to her feet.

I encountered Danz in Płaszów, too, and saw her beating one of the prisoners during roll call. She beat like a professional would, as if she had been taught boxing. Namely, she hit the woman on her nose and under the chin with her fist, and simultaneously kneed her in her stomach.

I next met Danz in February or towards the end of January 1945 in Malchow. This was a subcamp of Ravensbrück, and we ended up there after the evacuation of Auschwitz. The accused Danz was an *Oberaufseherin* [senior overseer] at the camp and I think that she was thereby responsible for the terrible state of hygiene and health existing there. Many blocks had no pallets at all, and the inmates were forced to sleep on the ground. As regards food, the situation was catastrophic. We would be given a tiny loaf of bread – green with mold – for eight to ten of us. A saltless soup, completely inedible, would be issued with such irregularity that one day we would receive dinner at 6.00 a.m., and on another at 5.00 p.m.

There were no drugs at the *Revier* [hospital]. Due to the terrible food, diarrhea and jaundice were rife, while you would not even get an aspirin at the *Revier*.

When some Russian woman escaped, Danz held us at roll call for seven hours. And if one takes into consideration our frightful exhaustion, little wonder that one half of us collapsed of fatigue. At the time, we were not given any bread.

In April 1945 we were sent to Leipzig. The previous day we had not been issued any bread, and when we were being sent on our way, Danz and a few *Aufseherins* [overseers] carried out a search, which consisted in us being deprived of all the warm items of clothing that we had been given in Auschwitz prior to the evacuation. In actual fact, some articles of clothing had already been stolen following our arrival in Malchow, so that then they were taking away the remainder. They stripped us of our shoes, instead giving us clogs with two thin bands, in which we simply could not walk. Next, they took our spoons, bowls and indeed all the dishes that we had. I saw Danz appropriating the flask of a friend of mine, one Rysia Halpern, and beating her over the head with this flask for such a length of time that the vessel broke and my colleague went to the transport with a wound to her head.



Further, the transport did not receive any food, and so we had to make do without bread – even though bread was in stock. After we arrived in Leipzig, the camp commandant ordered that this [stocked] bread be given out to us, and was surprised why Danz had not issued it along the way (especially as there was an abundance of it).

Presiding Judge: Are there any questions?

Prosecutor Szewczyk: Does the witness know one Grün from Płaszów?

Witness: I do not recollect a person by this surname.

Prosecutor Szewczyk: And as regards Orlowski, did she also carry out searches in the barracks?

Witness: In actual fact I did not witness this in Płaszów, however I frequently saw Orlowski walking through the barracks and throwing out the prisoners' personal items.

Prosecutor Szewczyk: Can the witness on the basis of her personal observations and the accounts of other prisoners state whether Orlowski, as it is alleged, beat people to death?

Witness: I did not witness this and there is nothing I can say regarding the matter.

Defense attorney Wolska-Walas: And how did Orlowski behave in her direct contacts with the laundry personnel?

Witness: I did not work there, but her behavior was not bad. Each superior would usually spare her subordinate prisoners.

Defense attorney: Does the witness know anything about Orlowski being called "Mutti"?

Witness: This I do not know, all that I can say is that she was called "the Tomboy" and "Jump, jump, further along".

Defense attorney: Does the witness know whether Orlowski helped inmates obtain information from their families?

Witness: This would not have been impossible.

The accused Danz: Your Honor, in connection with the testimony given by the witness I would request permission to submit a statement.



Presiding Judge: Please do so.

The accused Danz: In April 1944 I arrived in Płaszów from Majdanek. In Płaszów I was not assigned to any duties, I would leave the camp at 7.00 a.m. and work as an overseer at the German enamel goods factory. I was absent from the camp throughout the day.

In the camp in Malchow I was not a senior overseer, but an overseer. In the staff Revier there was a doctor, one Erna Weiß from Pressburg [Bratislava]. Ms Weiß may attest that twice or thrice a week I would go to the pharmacy and bring drugs therefrom. Before my arrival, the camp in Malchow itself had a thousand prisoners. These prisoners were provided with food by the factory. One transport, numbering a thousand women, left for Malchow. The next transport, of 2,000 women, was sent from Malchow to Leipzig. It was escorted by an *Oberscharführer* whose surname I do not know.

The sentries and overseers who escorted the transport had been detailed from the camp in Ravensbrück.

No items were taken from these prisoners, they were allowed to take everything with them, and they received food along the way. One of the overseers, who lived near Leipzig and assisted in escorting the transport, declared after her return that the transport arrived in Leipzig healthy.

Presiding Judge: Does the witness maintain her testimony?

Witness: Yes, absolutely.

Presiding Judge: The witness may step down.