

## MICHAŁ KULA

On 11 June 1945 in Kraków, Examining Judge Jan Sehn, a member of the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, acting upon a motion of Prosecutor Edward Pęczalski, in the presence and with the participation thereof, in accordance with the procedure provided for under Article 254 in connection with Articles 107 and 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, interviewed a former prisoner of the concentration camp in Auschwitz, who testified as follows:

---

Name and surname	Michał Kula
Date and place of birth	7 September 1912 in Trzebinia, district of Chrzanów
Parents' names	Jan and Antonina Kosowska
Occupation	mechanic
Religion	Roman Catholic
Nationality and citizenship	Polish
Marital status	bachelor
Place of residence	Trzebinia, Słowackiego Street 11

---

I worked and lived permanently in Warsaw until the outbreak of the war. After Warsaw's capitulation, I returned to the city and reported to work at the Lilpop company.

I was immediately arrested and ordered to give away the plans. *Reichsdeutscher* Jankowski was already the *Treuhänder* [fiduciary] of the company and I explained to him that I had no access to the plans and didn't know anything about them. Wanting to get out of the trap that I had fallen into, I swore to Jankowski that I would go to work at a factory in Leipzig, as he insisted. He released me then. From that moment, I kept changing my place of residence, because I didn't want to go to Leipzig, and the police were searching for me on Jankowski's order.

At that time, I came into contact with Czesław Stolzmann, residing at Krucza Street 23, flat 26. In his flat, I met Sergeant Major Kowalski from Ursus. Together, we decided to prevent the young work forces from departing to Germany. Because of Kowalski's carelessness, an informer, whose name I don't remember, infiltrated our group. As a result of his denunciation, I was arrested on 6 August 1940 in Czesław's flat and put into prison at Pawia Street (Pawiak Prison), where I was interrogated and beaten. Over the course of the interrogation, I deduced that the informer had not yet discovered our plans or intentions and that he didn't know the members of our group. He only knew that we were to meet on 6 August 1940 and he informed the police about that. Luckily, when the Gestapo entered Czesław's flat, only his wife and I were present, so the other members of our group remained safe. At least I didn't hear about any of them being arrested. Despite being beaten, I didn't betray any of them and I didn't admit to anything.

On 14 August 1940, a group of 300 prisoners, including me, was transported in cars from Pawiak to the cargo terminal in Warsaw. We were loaded into cattle wagons, 50 people per wagon. We were attached to a large transport and taken to Auschwitz. The journey lasted from 5 a.m. on 14 August 1940 to 4.30 a.m. on 15 August 1940. On the way, three out of 1,730 prisoners from that transport were shot dead for trying to escape.

In Auschwitz, we were unloaded on the railway siding ramp. The ramp and the entire road leading to the camp were lined with SS men standing along the road or lying in the grass with machine guns ready to shoot. Additionally, they were armed with batons and accompanied by police dogs. Apart from the regular beating, the whole transport, comprised of men only, was herded to the roll call square, where an SS man, standing on a table and surrounded by a group of other SS men, read out the names of the prisoners from the list that he'd been delivered along with the transport. Everyone whose name was read out from the list had to run next to the table, where the SS men would beat him with batons. All the prisoners placed themselves in groups of ten on the other side of the roll call square. Over there, we were joined by the *kapos* from the first 30 ordinary criminals, brought over from the Reich to serve as *kapos*. They removed our bands and rings, took our watches and medallions, and they beat us to unconsciousness.

Next, we were all hounded to the yard between blocks 15 and 16. There was a young priest from Warsaw in our group. The SS men and *kapos* turned his hat upside down, put a noose

around his neck, tied the other side of the cord around his waist and gave him a broom. Dressed like that, he was running around the entire transport while we were herded from the roll call square to the yard between blocks 15 and 16. The SS men and *kapos* tortured him ruthlessly and beat him with whatever they had in their hands until he collapsed. I don't know what became of him, I never saw him among the prisoners again.

In the yard between blocks 15 and 16, we had to take off our clothes, we were shaved and we received our numbers. The numbers were not yet being tattooed at the time. We got pieces of cardboard with the numbers of prisoners written on them. From there, we were herded to the bathhouse while being beaten. The bathhouse was then located in block 18. Of course, there were no baths, we could only splash ourselves with cold water. We were also examined by doctors – who were also prisoners – in the same block. A doctor would ask the prisoner if he was healthy and, regardless of his answer, he would tell him to move on. We were taken from the bathhouse to the yard between blocks 17 and 18, where there were two large piles of striped denim prison clothes. We had to dress ourselves on the run and line up at the roll call square. That's where we were divided into groups of 100 and escorted to our blocks.

My group was put in block 4. Apart from the one hundred of us, they also squeezed in five hundred more, so that there were 600 prisoners from our transport living in block 4 at the time. We met a small group of Silesians from the previous transport there. They all hated the residents of Warsaw. They preyed on us and stole from us. They took the money that some of us had managed to smuggle under the pretext of buying us things from the canteen. Obviously, we never saw the things they were supposed to buy for us at the canteen.

*Reichsdeutscher* Maks was the block leader in block 4 at the time. He came from those first thirty German ordinary criminals brought to Auschwitz to become *kapos*. As I found out, he was the most tolerable of them. He didn't beat the prisoners himself, but had others act in his stead: his deputy, a Silesian from Chorzów named Alfred Skrzypek and another Silesian from Radzionków named Michel, who served as the block leader's *Schreiber*. Wilhelm Bieniek from Chorzów, who was also a *Stubendienst*, was the helper of the deputy block leader, i.e. the Skrzypek's helper. The block leader, Maks, selected other helpers from the people that arrived in our transport. He entrusted the function to Jurek from Warsaw, Myszkowski, a member of *Chór Dana* [Dan's Choir], and some *Reichsdeutscher* from Gdańsk, who also

served as a barber in the block. I don't know Jurek's last name, but he was a man of medium height, well built, dark-haired, with eyes close together and a round face. He might have been around 24 years old. From his comportment and way of speaking, as well as his stories, we found out that he was a Warsaw urchin from the area of the Wola district. Bieniek was the confidant of block leader Maks and informed him about everything. Then, after block leader Krankenmann took charge of block 4, he became his right hand. Skrzypek, Michel, Jurek, Myszkowski, and the hairdresser from Gdańsk beat the prisoners. We later explained to Myszkowski that he shouldn't behave that way. He understood that and resigned from his post as a *Stubendienst*, despite its benefits, such as being exempt from doing gymnastics first and foremost, and receiving more food. *Stubendienst* Jurek has the most victims on his conscience. In block 4 alone, he killed or injured about 80 prisoners, mostly from among the intelligentsia. This most often took place in the evening, when the prisoners were going to sleep.

As I have already mentioned, 600 prisoners were crammed into block 4. We slept on narrow mattresses with no beds. Three prisoners would lie on one mattress. In order to do that, we had to line up in front of the mattress in single file and fall onto our side on the mattress at the same time. Jurek would then walk among the prisoners and beat them on their heads with a wooden stick or a rubber baton. He slept on a mattress placed on a table. Prisoners slept under the table. He placed the beaten prisoners who were still alive next to the table and jumped onto them from the table, landing mostly on their chests. Maltreated in this way, the prisoners usually died. In the morning, the corpses would be carried out in blankets to the mortuary, which was located in block 20 at the time.

The block numbers at the time corresponded to those given in Father Augustyn's brochure. The prison carpentry workshop and the locksmith's workshop were located between blocks 1 and 2. The other half of the same yard, the one facing the blocks, was occupied by the camp kitchen with pot-kettles in the open air. The kitchen mapped on the plan in Father Augustyn's brochure was then under construction. Between the military command building and the SS hospital building, which were located outside of the camp's barbed wire, there was a barrack built by the prisoners from our transport, which contained flats for the SS men, *Blockführers*. The barrack was then demolished and replaced in 1943 by a storied brick building which housed the Political Department and the administration.

The barracks for the Political Department were also built next to the crematorium in 1943. That's where prisoners were interrogated and tortured. In 1940 the Political Department was located in the building that's marked [as] the SS hospital on the plan in Father Augustyn's brochure. The Department was located on the ground floor to the left of the entrance, and to the right there was the SS canteen. The Political Department was later located within the camp itself, in block 17 according to the old plan. The block was then renamed block 25 after the camp had expanded. Obviously, this wasn't the entire Political Department, only its branch office dedicated to the issues concerning the prisoners in the camp.

One of the people who worked there was a Ukrainian by the name of Bogdan Komarnicki. He was a camp informer from the start. In 1942, when the transports with Russian POWs arrived, they were placed in the blocks located between the roll call square, the kitchen, and the command's buildings. All of these blocks were separated from the rest with barbed wire. At night, their residents were chased out to block 11, where they were shot dead by Palitzsch. Komarnicki was on duty in block 24 at the time and he would decide which Russian prisoners were to be executed. In January 1945 he was transported to Mauthausen with us. During the journey, he was in a constant company of the transport commandant *Obersturmführer*. It's only thanks to that that he arrived in Mauthausen alive. Once there, we 'recommended' him to the local prisoners, who did indeed beat him, but he made it out alive and the SS transferred him to the *kommando* in Melk, 60 km away from Mauthausen. There, he became the *Obersturmführer's* helper. I think that Komarnicki is alive and that he's in an English occupation zone. He's a tall, dark-haired and very handsome man with beautiful teeth like pearls. I believe he's no more than 30 years old.

One of the most dangerous informers was Dorosiewicz, apparently also a Ukrainian. He claimed, however, that he came from Warsaw. He was employed as a *kapo* at the measurements department. He accompanied the prisoners who worked at that department to their place of work in the field, always accompanied by an SS man from the Political Department. He spied on the prisoners, learning about their connections to the outside world, and then he denounced them to the SS men. As a result of his denunciations, 12 prisoners from the measurements department were hanged in the summer of 1944. Prior to the execution, as the case of those 12 prisoners lasted very long, Dorosiewicz managed to escape with some Jew employed in the Political Department. They probably went to Vienna. Dorosiewicz collaborated on the case of those 12 prisoners from the

measurements department with another informer, Krahle, a *Reichsdeutscher* employed at the *Bauleitung* offices and in the Political Department.

\* \* \*

Another informer was the leader of block 15, Kowalski from Gdańsk. Both of the above-mentioned were sent out with a transport and probably got murdered on the way by the prisoners. At least those were the reports that reached the camp. On the *Zugang* [arrival] list from 22 May 1941 that I was shown, Kowalski is listed under no. 15671 as a Polish ordinary criminal. According to that list, his first name was Bolesław and he came from Łódź. It is stated that he was a laborer, born on 10 April 1895. Of course, I have only mentioned the ace informers. All of them were recruited from among the prisoners. They represented all nationalities and religions. They served for the Political Department, which assigned them to given *kommandos*, of course excluding the *Arbeitsdienst* and the *Arbeitseinsatz*. An informer was admitted to an *Arbeitskommando* on the basis of a card issued by the Political Department. On the basis of the same card, he was moved to another *kommando* after he had finished his work in the previous one. Usually, after such an informer had finished his job, several people from a given *kommando* were executed.

In 1940 the camp kitchen was built and the stables located just outside the camp's barbed wire were remade into carpentry workshops, locksmith's workshops, car workshops and electric workshops. In 1941 stories were added to the previously one-story blocks: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, and 19. What was later called the *Bauhof* was also remade in that year. In 1942, eight more one-story blocks were built on the roll call square.

The construction works started with what were later renamed blocks 4 and 15. Huge pits were dug for groundwork at the time. The pit for the groundwork of block 15 was filled with water and the Jews were drowned in it. The *kapo* of that *kommando*, Reinhold, a *Reichsdeutscher* and a criminal, was employed to dig those pits. Together with the block leaders of the neighboring blocks, he tortured the people who worked in his *kommando*. I remember that, once, he threw an elderly Jew into the pit that was filled with water. The son of that Jew was watching the scene. When his father rose up and tried to get out of the water and the pit, Reinhold and the SS men, who were also watching the scene, told the son to get into the pit and drown his father. The son executed the order: he got into the pit,

took his father by the neck, put his head under the water and held it until his father gave no signs of life. Then, as ordered by Reinhold and the SS men, the son came up to the edge of the pit. Reinhold and another prisoner, whom I didn't know, took him by his arms and legs, swung him and threw him into the pit. The other Jews, who were extracting gravel from the water, had to drown him.

I would like to emphasize that the penal companies dug the pits for the groundwork of blocks 4 and 15. Initially, there were two of them: a penal company consisting of about 150 prisoners and a didactic penal company, which consisted of about 400 prisoners at the time. The first one was for the Jews and the Poles accused of high treasons in the camp. The second one was only for the Aryans, who got sent to the penal company for trifling offences, such as e.g. failing to take their hats off in the presence of an SS man, smoking cigarettes, keeping their hands in their pockets, etc. Such a division, however, didn't last very long and at the time of Christmas in 1942, there was only one penal company (SK, [*Strafkompanie*]), which was located in what was then block 13, later renamed as block 11.

The most difficult *kommandos* were chosen for the penal company. [The prisoners] worked constantly, either in the water or in the *Kiesgrubes*, always in the open air. Due to such harsh work conditions, people from that company died very quickly. In 1942, a hundred people were taken into the company from the Warsaw transport which arrived in Auschwitz on 3 May 1942. The prisoners from that transport were employed to level the ground next to the railway track. Since there was no toilet, one of the prisoners relieved himself in the open field, while a train with a military transport was passing next to the place of work. A few hours later, a report reached the camp, which stated that said prisoner had deliberately showed his backside to the passing military transport. As a result, the entire *kommando* consisting of a hundred people was sent to the penal company. Nobody made it out alive. Apart from the hard work in the *kommandos* outside the camp, the penal company also had to work on the camp premises after the evening roll call up until the first gong. Besides the labor, the people also suffered due to a lack of clothes, starvation and the housing conditions in block 11. They worked in winter and summer with no socks on, wearing Dutch clogs and drill fabric. The food that was brought in pots was issued at the whim of the block leader, whose function in 1942 was performed by Krankemann. The nights in block 11 were usually sleepless because of constant yelling and beating. The prisoners lay on a bare floor with no

mattresses and they had to leave their clothes folded into squares in the corridor, so that they couldn't use them as blankets at night. The block was unheated. It wasn't surprising that people's health declined very quickly in such conditions. Until 1943, the sick from the penal company were not allowed to be admitted to the hospital. So if somebody fell sick, they had to die – and die they did – with no medical aid in block 11. However, the highest percent of people died as a result of murder.

Krankemann himself had his own way of killing people. He would place them at the edge of the wall, hit them in the jaw, as a result of which the jaw would break, while the other side of the head would hit the edge of the wall. This caused severe injuries and, in most cases, death.

In winter 1942/1943, a huge Jew, who was kept especially to kill people, prowled block 11 and the penal company in all the *Arbeitskommandos* in which the company was employed. He didn't work and he was well fed. He stood in the place of work, leaning on a long bar about 70 mm in diameter, and yelled: '*Bewegung* [move]'. Whenever he didn't like a prisoner, he would summon them and kill them on the spot, hitting them on the neck with the bar. Another method he used was suffocating. A prisoner had to button up his blouse all the way to the top and then the torturer would grab the back of the collar with one hand, and with the other he would push the delinquent's head down, so that the collar and the hook under the neck pressed on the larynx and caused suffocation. The third method was suffocating with the bar on the ground. He would place the prisoner facing up, put some soil or a brick under the nape of his neck, and then he would put the pole to the throat and stand on its both ends with his legs, long enough for his victim to die.

Killing people was common practice at the time, not just the penal company's specialty. The then *Lagerführer* Majer [Aumeier] picked boys under 18 years of age from the transport that I had arrived with, as well as from other transports, and he put the minors in block 5, according to the old numbering system. Baldasiński from Brzesk was its senior block leader, while Stefan Wierzbica from Silesia, called 'Krwawy Stefan [Bloody Stefan]', was his deputy. Despite Aumeier's speeches, in which he assured the boys that they came to the camp to be educated and gave a civil word of honor that after two years in the camp they would become *Reichsdeutschers* and they would be able to pick their place of work according to their will, Baldasiński and his helper Wierzbica, through harassment, exterminated the majority of



the boys that they were in charge of in block 5. They would pour cold water on them, make them go outside in the cold and run in the snow barefoot under the pretext of washing their feet. Baldasiński himself would run like crazy on the bodies of the boys who were lying on the mattresses. After a short period of time spent in block 5, the boys grew weak and died. Only those who worked in *kommandos* under the roof remained alive. Aumeier's successor, Fritzscher, dissolved block 5 that functioned as the minors' block and assigned the remaining survivors to various other blocks, depending on which *kommandos* they worked in.

Baldasiński and Wierzbica came to Auschwitz from Tarnów or Wiśnicz in one of the first transports. Baldasiński was released from the camp in 1942 or at the beginning of 1943. He was a giant man, well built, fattened up, about 40 years old. Wierzbica was later moved to Birkenau, where he first served as a *kapo* in the local penal company, and then in the *Straßenbau kommando*. He was moved, because he had been found in possession of huge amounts of golden teeth. He pulled them out of the people who died in the *kommando*. In principle, some other prisoner would be executed for a similar offence. Wierzbica must have had some merit, seeing that he was released and his only punishment was getting moved to a different *kommando*. Wierzbica remained in Birkenau until the evacuation of the camp. In January 1945 he joined the walking transport on the way to the Reich and escaped from it in Jastrzębie-Zdrój. The senior block leader, Reinhold, after he had left the penal company, took charge of block 22a which housed the *kommando* employed at the workshops, and later the *kommando* employed at the leather factory on the Soła River. The factory also included another part of the "Canada" complex, notably all shoes, suitcases, and other leather articles were stored there. That's how Reinhold came into possession of gold and diamonds. After that was revealed, he ended up in the bunker of block 11, where he hanged himself. The Jew-custodian of the penal company later went insane. He was urged to go beyond the guards' chains by an SS man, who then shot him from behind.

The word "Canada" entered the camp jargon thanks to prisoner Tadeusz Walczak, who arrived in Auschwitz with the first Warsaw transport. Walczak was born in Lublin. He was a cheerful man and he liked to talk a lot. When transports of Slovak Jews started arriving in the middle of 1943, he said that it would be like in Canada in the camp, with an abundance of everything. These Slovak Jews were deprived of all their possessions at the railway siding in Auschwitz, located from the side of Birkenau, where the track of the siding crossed the road leading to Birkenau. The clothes that were taken away from the

prisoners there were stored in the *Effektenkammer* next to the *Bauhof*. Shoes, suitcases, and other leather goods were taken to the leather factory near the bridge on the River Soła in Auschwitz. Items made from gold, diamonds, and other valuables all went to the first building of the commandant's office.

Once invented by Walczak, the term "Canada" soon spread around the entire camp, and became widely used not only by the prisoners, but also by the SS men, who eventually adopted it as the official name of the former *Effektenkammern*, used for storing the personal items robbed from those who arrived in the camp and were sent to the gas. First of all, the prisoners applied the name "Canada" collectively to all the commodities (and thus mainly food) that appeared in the camp in the manner described above, but also to the locations where such items were taken away from the new arrivals. And so, in camp jargon "Canada" referred to the ramp in Birkenau, to the *Effektenkammer* next to the *Bauhof*, the *Effektenlager* in Birkenau, and the storehouses in the leather factory. Finally, one more "Canada", used mainly for storing underwear and clothes, was located in Praga-Halle, near the train station from the side of Birkenau.

According to camp jargon, those employed to sort and transport the items robbed from newly arrived prisoners worked in a "Canada" *kommando*. When such a *kommando* returned to the camp from work, all its members were meticulously searched by the SS men, who took away everything they found. All foodstuffs fit for consumption was sent to the TWL (*Truppenwirtschaftslager*) storehouses, where they were loaded onto train cars and dispatched to Armies in the east. Whatever remained – spoilt goods, products that had been spilled or dirtied – was sent to the prison kitchen, where it was used to make soup for the prisoners. The cook would put this garbage into the cauldron using a shovel, so it was no surprise that the soup tasted like soap and often contained razor blades. I have heard that once somebody found a condom in the soup.

Items delivered from the ramp to the *Effektenkammern* were thoroughly searched for money and valuables. Items of clothing were regularly ripped up, and soles and heels torn off of shoes, for it soon transpired that the majority of valuables were hidden in the heels. Bars of soap would be broken apart, tubes of toothpaste torn to shreds, and even shaving brushes would be prized apart in the search, oftentimes successful, for jewelry. Clothes that could still be worn were put in packages and sent to the Reich, while those that were worn

and tattered were given to the prisoners. Large squares were cut out in shirts and trousers, and striped patches were sewn in so as to mark the prisoners.

As I already mentioned at the beginning, I arrived at the camp in Auschwitz at 4.30 a.m. on 15 August 1940. The admission procedure that I have described lasted until 7.00 p.m. Next, we received some rotten asparagus soup and went to sleep. Almost nobody ate, because everybody was thirsty and we didn't get any water to drink. At night, the block stank terribly, as we were not allowed to open the windows despite the fact that so many people were jammed together.

On the next day, we were woken at 4.00 a.m. We were herded onto the roll call square and made to do gymnastics until noon. Surrounded and beaten by the SS men and the *kapos* from the first thirty criminals, we would do frog jumps, dance with our hands held in the air, and run in a circle with our bare feet on the graveled roll call square. Many people collapsed from exhaustion on that very first morning. The *kapos* dragged such people to the side, where *Lagerälteste* Leo finished them off by pushing the bar, which he always carried with him, into their mouths. The ones reluctant to run were caught by the SS man whom the prisoners called "Perełka" [Pearl]. He walked them behind block 8, where he killed them by hitting them on the neck with a stick.

At 12 o'clock we were lined up for the roll call, which lasted 45 minutes. We had 15 minutes left to retrieve our bowls from the block, eat some hot soup, wash the bowls and take them back to the block. At 1.00 p.m. the SS men and the camp's elderly would have us line up at the roll call square again and they would teach us to sing. The singing lasted until 3.00 p.m. During this time, despite the fact that the majority of us didn't know German, we managed to learn some German songs, which Leo sung to us just once: "Schwarzbraun ist die Haselnuss" and "Im Wald, im grünen Walde". Even though, in my opinion, we sang very well for beginners, the teachers were not satisfied with our singing. They would beat us and make us sing while squatting and in the "down" position. In this position, they would beat us and step on us with their legs.

From 3.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. there was gymnastics again. The evening roll call took place at 6.30 p.m., which usually lasted about two hours, then we went back to the block. During the evening roll call, people were punished by flogging for the smallest offences. After the evening roll call, we were given our daily allowance of bread and black coffee.

The next day began in the same way. I was exhausted before noon and I was running slower, so "Perełka" walked me behind block 8. I don't know to what I should attribute the fact that he asked me about my occupation then. When I told him I was a locksmith, he declared that he needed somebody like that. He told me to grab a bucket and pour water over the people who were fainting because of the gymnastics. I performed this task until noon and then after the singing until the evening roll call.

On the third day, I didn't find the bucket, I lost my "function" and I had to do gymnastics with the others. On the same day in the afternoon, people were chosen to carry gravel in wheelbarrows. I ended up in that group, too. The work had to be done running and it didn't matter whether a prisoner was pushing empty or loaded wheelbarrows. I only worked the wheelbarrows for about two hours, because *kapo* no. 8 hit me so hard on the back with a wire-rope that I couldn't continue to work. I abandoned the wheelbarrows and moved over to the gymnastics group.

In that group, the prisoners had to climb a thin tree. About 50 prisoners were supposed to climb it at once, which obviously was physically impossible, as the tree broke under the weight of the first several prisoners. During this "fun activity", which took place in the presence of the SS men and the camp's elderly, we were beaten. First, we were beaten for not being on the tree, and then – for breaking the tree.

On the fourth day, during the midday roll call, *kapo* Müller from the locksmith's workshop was looking for an engraver. I volunteered, I was accepted by Müller and on the fifth day I was working at the locksmith's workshop. The rest of the group with which I had arrived at the camp continued to do 'sport' and gymnastics for about two more weeks. Many of them died during that time. The rest was injured and had swollen legs from the constant running barefoot on the gravel, barbed wires, and nails. Of course, the injured prisoners were allowed to report to the infirmary. A prisoner-doctor would give him a note saying they could only perform sedentary jobs. Such people were employed to clean old bricks from mortar. The bricks were meant for the kitchen, which was under construction at the time. The work took place in the following way: the prisoners were sat on wooden stakes embedded in the ground with the sharp ends pointing up. So the prisoners sat on those sharp ends of the stakes, one prisoner per stake.

Konrad was the *kapo* of that *kommando*. He was also one of the aforementioned thirty *Reichsdeutsche*s. He made sure that the prisoners did indeed work in a seated position for the whole day, without standing up. If anyone stood up or fell, he beat them unconscious and left them without any help.

I worked at the locksmith's workshop from 20 August 1940 until October 1944. At the beginning, the locksmith's workshop was located in the middle of the yard between blocks 1 and 2. Initially, 40 prisoners were employed there and I joined them as the 41st. The number of people employed at the workshop slowly grew. In November 1940 the locksmith's workshop was moved to one of the stables, i.e. where it's still located to this day. At the time when it was moved to the new building, the *kommando* already consisted of 70 prisoners. At first, there was no proper equipment at the workshop, apart from several hammers, pliers, and a piece of rail that was supposed to serve as an anvil. The new locksmith's workshop had the equipment and machines, which had been removed from the friary workshop of the Salesians in Auschwitz. With the development and expansion of the locksmith's workshop, the prisoners used the tools they had at their disposal to build more technical equipment and machines for the workshop. In the spring of 1941 the locksmith's workshop was expanded. A foundry and a workshop for making nets were added and equipped.

Kurt Müller, no. 6, *Reichsdeutscher*, was the first *kapo* of the locksmith's workshop *kommando*. An ordinary criminal, he had already spent four years in prison before arriving in Auschwitz. He was a young man, very ambitious. He said he was a locksmith, however – as we managed to find out – he wasn't a prominent specialist in the field. He had the ambition to make the locksmith's workshop the most serious work *kommando*. Hence, he selected the people who said they were locksmiths from the *Zugangs*, examined them and put them in his *kommando*, wanting to make it the largest. We took advantage of this weakness of his, suggesting that he admit our friends and comrades, as they were prominent specialists. This way, I managed to get Florczyk, among others, into the workshop. He was a professor of mathematics from Warsaw. Obviously, Florczyk knew nothing of the craft, so he swept the floor in the workshop. However, he wasn't content with the job and moved on to repair socks in a different *kommando*. We managed to get many valuable people into the workshop and save them from death caused by working in the open air.

On the other hand, Müller wanted to impress his superiors with the performance of the locksmith's workshop. Of course, he presented the work done by the prisoners as the work designed by him and performed in his *kommando* under his supervision. Among others, all the ironwork for the office of the camp commandant, Höß, was done by us in the locksmith's workshop. Höß was very pleased with the work and that's how Müller earned his backing. Of course, wanting to distinguish himself by the work of the prisoners, Müller had to take care of his *kommando*. This was manifested in the fact that he gave us additional portions of soup, he didn't let the others, e.g. the block leaders, harass the prisoners. I recall that when I returned late from work at the workshop and, not having found a place to lay myself to sleep, I sat on a stool in the aisle between two rows of mattresses, I got beaten by the block leader deputy Skrzypek, whom I have mentioned before. I was working on a harness plate for Höß's horse at the time and Müller was really set on having it done on time. Because of that, the day after I had been beaten by Skrzypek, Müller ordered me to return to work after the roll call. I declared to the then translator, Engineer Krzetuski from Mościce, that I couldn't work after the roll call, because there was no place for me to sleep when I came back later, and I got beaten by Skrzypek the previous night for sitting on the stool. Krzetuski repeated my statement to Müller, who then took me and ran to block 4, where he beat Skrzypek very severely in the presence of *Blockführer* Maks and told him to always reserve a place for me to sleep. Skrzypek tried to execute this order and he kept a place for me when the prisoners were laying down to sleep. However, the boys would move while sleeping, so when I returned from the locksmith's workshop around 11 p.m. on the second night, I didn't find a place to sleep. I sat on the stool in the aisle between the mattresses again. Skrzypek then called me to his room, where I slept with him for a few nights. Fearing Müller, he didn't harm me again in any way during that time.

With Müller's attitude, we were able to get rid of the informers sent to the locksmith's workshop by the Political Department in a very short time. Müller threw such people out of the workshop and always beat them severely before they left. One time, some *Reichsdeutscher* informer from Łódź snuck into our *kommando*. Of course, we made sure that Müller found out about it as soon as possible. When he did, together with his deputy Herfurth, he hanged the informer by his arms on a chain in the tool storehouse, beat him and threw him out. Palitzsch intervened in the matter, but Müller, backed by Höß, told him that the people who were sent in disorganized his work, that he selected the people he

was sure of and that he took responsibility for those people. Thanks to that, there were no informers at the locksmith's workshop in Müller's time and only to that can we attribute the fact that nobody from the locksmith's workshop *kommando* was shot dead as a result of denunciation.

I also recall that Müller, walking through the roll call square one time when the prisoners were being flogged on a gymnastic horse, pointed his hand in the direction of the place of torture and said: "Here is the monument of the culture of the German nation". In Müller's time, the locksmith's workshop *kommando* expanded to 200 people, and by the end it comprised about 250 people. As a principle, Müller didn't admit any *Reichsdeutsche*s to his *kommando*. If I remember correctly, three of them worked there at the most. One time he admitted a *Reichsdeutscher* blacksmith, who ran to him with a complaint that the prisoners were not doing anything but warming themselves by the fire, smoking cigarettes, and cooking. Müller beat him and threw him out of the workshop, saying that he knew exactly what the prisoners were doing. Whereas he told us that he threw the blacksmith out, because if he complained about us to him that day, the next day he could complain about him to the SS men. Müller didn't let the SS men into the workshop. He beat the prisoners severely himself, however he didn't torture them in a vicious way. He beat the prisoners when he caught them red handed, e.g. smoking cigarettes or cooking. He said that he beat them because the prisoners let themselves be caught, and since they let themselves be caught by him, then surely they wouldn't be safe in case of some inspection from the outside.

Müller was the *kapo* of the locksmith's workshop until September 1942. He was released in that month and as a civilian worker, he took charge of all the workshops, including the locksmith's workshop.

Willi Kühne replaced Müller as the *kapo*. He was also an ordinary criminal from the one hundred *Reichsdeutsche*s that were later sent to Auschwitz.

Müller was the civilian leader of the workshops for about two months. Slightly drunk, he argued with *Lagerführer* Seidler in the SS canteen, accusing him of coming to Auschwitz as a beggar with a bag and getting rich, stealing from Poles and taking away their property. Seidler then shot Müller with his revolver, causing minor injuries. The case ended with Müller being locked in the bunker of block 11, where he remained for almost a year. In the fall of



1943, at Seidler's order – Seidler himself was sent to Mauthausen-Gusen in the meantime – Müller was moved to the camp as a prisoner.

At the time when Müller was in charge of the locksmith's workshop as a civilian worker, his successor as the *kapo*, Kühne, behaved decently. The SS men didn't harass the prisoners employed at the locksmith's workshop either. After Müller had been locked in the bunker, he was replaced by *Rottenführer* Blanke in taking charge of the workshops. He was an extremely tall, dark-haired man with a flat, bony face, a large head, and a long neck. He could be about 28 years old. He always walked around the workshops with a stick, beating, kicking, and torturing the prisoners in every possible way. Kühne behaved exactly the same. He completely changed his attitude to the prisoners after Müller had been locked up. Albert Wojtas, a *Reichsdeutscher* with a black triangle, was Kühne's deputy. In Müller's time, he worked with me at the drill and kept quiet. After Müller had been locked up, he beat the prisoners just like Kühne and Blanke.

The locksmith's workshop *kommando* initially didn't have an SS *Kommandoführer*. The first *Kommandoführer* was assigned to the locksmith's workshop in the fall of 1942. The post was taken by *Rottenführer* Edward Lubusch from Bielsko. He beat the prisoners at first, but he changed later. Until January 1943, the locksmith's workshop functioned under the leadership of the *Bauleitung*. In January 1943 it was taken over by the Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke (DAW) board and Lubusch was then moved to a different *kommando* of the *Bauleitung*. His place in the locksmith's workshop was taken by my *Oberscharführer* Kassner and his one-armed deputy *Rottenführer*, whose name I don't remember. He didn't have his left arm. Despite his disability, he beat and tortured the prisoners.

There were no special *Vorarbeiter*s in the locksmith's workshop. We were divided into work units [*Kolonne*], each working at a given workshop table. One of those who worked at the table, the more intelligent one, who knew how to draw, was the *Kolonnenführer*. He managed the work at the table and he was responsible for it. At first, we worked together with Jews, Russians, and people of other nationalities. In 1944 the Jews created a separate unit and worked at the wire workshop, whose *Kolonnenführer* was also a Jew. The *Schreibers* at the locksmith's workshop were: *Reichsdeutscher* Bruno Gałuszka (no. 10415) from Cieszyn, *Reichsdeutscher* Pioch from Gdańsk, and the Poles: Bodnarowski from Kraków and Wilhelm Czaja from Silesia. Engineer Kubiński from Mościce was the storekeeper of the central tools



storehouse and Edward Huberkiewicz from Leszno was his helper. Bolesław Ginin from Warsaw was the workshop's draftsman.

When I was assigned to the locksmith's workshop on 20 August 1940, I didn't find any etching tools there, nor any tools that could help me make the etching tools. By some primitive means, I forged a chisel and with that chisel I made the first nameplate for the then camp commandant, Krammer. I worked on that for several days. Because Müller liked my work, I got permanently employed as an engraver. I etched inscriptions on various plates and copper dishes, forged by prisoner Kaim. I worked as an engraver throughout the entire time when the locksmith's workshop was located in the old building between blocks 1 and 2, and continued working in this character in the new workshop until December 1940. In that month, Müller employed prisoner Jan Buchta from Kraków as the second engraver, and moved me to the turnery workshop.

I worked as a turner until the end of my stay at the locksmith's workshop, first as an ordinary turner and then as the *Kolonnenführer*. The unit was called the *Maschinenkolonne*. Apart from me, the other employees were: Kazimierz Zając from Okocim (no. 261), Kazimierz Kaszubski from Kalisz, Alojzy Brylski from Silesia, Antoni Kubica from Bielsko, Ryszard Malinowski from Brzeszcz, Stanisław Lasoń from Maślachowice, Józef Pogaczar – a Yugoslav from Ljubljana, and – for some time – Kazimierz Cichecki from Wyszaków, who was transported to Hamburg in 1942 to work at the shipyard.

As I have previously mentioned, the locksmith's workshop was first under the leadership of the *Bauleitung*, which is why we mostly worked on the orders of this department of the camp administration. We mostly produced nails, metal hinges and hooks, which were needed to build the barracks and blocks, as well as other iron articles that were needed to furnish those blocks (door mats). Also through the *Bauleitung*, we received orders for various items for the flats of different SS men. Those were usually candle holders, ashtrays, standing lamps, hangers, decorative items, etc. Jan Liwacz (no. 1010) was a specialist when it came to such things. He had a separate unit for this type of work, which included, among others: Roman Struzik from Limanowa, Obtulowicz from Żywiec, and the artist Lenczewski from Nowy Sącz. I also recall other members of the unit: Radwański from Warsaw and Rygusik from the Poznań Voivodeship, probably from Leszno. After Liwacz's departure, Rygusik took charge of his unit. Durski from Nisko, a railroad worker by trade, was the

blacksmiths' *Kolonnenführer*. Dunikowski from Nowy Sącz was the *Kolonnenführer* of the nets workshop. Apart from the those, the following people also worked at the locksmith's workshop: Józef Dyntar from Kraków, Modest Walczyński from Mława, Zygmunt Goderski from Poznań, Zygmunt Kostkowski from Lublin, Jan Łoboda from Limanowa, Wróbel, a Holy Bible researcher from Silesia, Rygusik from some village near Leszno, Stanisław Trynka from Kraków, Mogilska Street 81, Stanisław Szablewski from Warsaw, *Reichsdeutscher* Hesl, Józef Zalewski from Warsaw, Stanisław Mirek from Nowy Sącz, Puzyger – probably from Tarnów, Pluta from Silesia, who later joined the German army, *Reichsdeutscher* Teschner, who died in Auschwitz, Eugeniusz Niewiadomski from Warsaw, Steriwko, Kibala, Lepich, Wachtel, Winterer, and others, whose names I don't remember.

As I have mentioned before, most of the locksmith's workshop equipment came from the workshops of the friary school of the Salesians in Auschwitz. The casting molds were also brought from there. They were usually figures of Jesus Christ, crosses, images and figures of saints. The casting molds were piled in the locksmith's workshop. The SS men and the German *kapos* would break those things, step on them, they would come up to us and laugh at us, saying how stupid we were for believing in a piece of iron. Sometimes, they would also beat the prisoners and ask them: "Why doesn't he protect you?", pointing to the figure of Jesus Christ or a saint and sticking it in their faces. In order to end this, Engineer Kubiński from Mościce, who was employed at the locksmith's workshop, hid the casting patterns. Müller's deputy Herfurth found out about it. He insulted Kubiński, who then melted all the metal patterns in the furnace and burned the wooden ones.

In 1942 the camp command brought the first church bell to the workshop in order for it to be remade into a gong for the camp. The bell came from a church in one of the nearby villages. It was decorated with ornaments and religious inscriptions. Müller ordered for them to be removed in the turnery and for the inscription "KL Auschwitz" to be engraved on the bell. The first bell was turned by prisoner Władysław Milecki. The bell was placed on an iron tripod in front of the kitchen. But because it was hung rigidly, so that only the bell's clapper moved, it broke after four months. The next two bells were brought in simultaneously. They were turned, the ornaments and religious inscriptions were removed, and they were also rigidly fixed. The second bell was placed in the corner of the kitchen near the music square, and after that one broke, the third one was placed on the kitchen building. All three of them were mounted rigidly and that's why they broke. The fourth one was put in a shrine

in front of the kitchen, which still remains. That bell was mounted in such a way that it was movable, and it has survived to this day. We named the booth in which it was placed "the shrine of St. Kaduk", after the famous *Rapportführer* Kaduk, who received reports in that booth. He was a Silesian from Chorzów and he spoke Polish very well. A tall, hunched man, about 35 years old. He was always drunk and everyone in the camp was afraid of him. He beat the prisoners for no reason. He burst into the blocks and performed searches. When he found any prisoner in possession of something that came from outside of the camp, he took it away or walked such a prisoner to the Political Department, or made a deal with him and then blackmailed him. Most often, he demanded vodka and sausages from the prisoners. I met him in Mauthausen after the liquidation of the camp in Auschwitz.

In the fall of 1942 an airman from the Wehrmacht, *Oberleutnant Obermedizinalrat* Dr Schumann, a professor from Berlin, appeared in Auschwitz. He was a tall man, about 38 years old, with a scar on his left cheek. With the help of Siemens's engineers and workers, he installed two X-ray machines in block 30 of the women's camp in Birkenau. After Siemens's workers had gone away, he employed a Czech, Stanislav Slezak from the electricians' unit of the *Bauleitung*, whose job was the maintenance of the X-ray machines. Slezak and I lived in the same block. He would tell me what the machines were used for and how they were constructed. The X-ray machines were placed on metal bases and moved on rails, which had been concreted over. Each machine had a *Rentgenbombe*. They had the power of 250,000 V and 40 mA. The cables were constructed in such a way that they were cooled with fluid that ran inside them. The fluid was cooled by the cold water that ran through a copper spiral, which was installed inside the pump tanks. There was also a mercuric switch that protected the machines from overheating. Both X-ray machines had cables that connected them to a booth with 5-millimeter lead-shielded double walls, which contained control equipment and the devices to operate the *Rentgenbombe*. Schumann sat in that booth with a leaded window, watching the course of the procedure and dosing the radiation.

Men and women were sterilized with those machines. Women were placed on a stool between the two machines, with one *Rentgenbombe* filter aimed at their lower back and the bomb filter of the other machine aimed at their front. The X-ray exposure lasted from 5 to 15 minutes. The voltage and rate, as well as the time of exposure, were controlled by Schumann himself, depending on what he wanted to achieve. Many women vomited after

such a procedure. We saw them walking from Birkenau back to Auschwitz, where they were put in block 10. They walked with their backs bent, holding their stomachs. Many of those women died in block 10 due to the burning of the parts that had been X-rayed. Others, who suffered from ulceration, were gassed or injected with lethal solutions.

Men were X-rayed with only one machine. Only one testicle was burned, the other one was shielded with lead during the exposure. After the procedure, they returned to their usual blocks. They had one day off at the most and on the next day, regardless of their health condition, they were forced to work. Many men died due to the radiation. Those who survived were castrated by Schumann in the hospital a month later. Schumann would put the cut-out testicles in jars and take them to Berlin.

The people selected for the procedures were mostly Greek Jews, young and healthy. Schillinger picked them from given blocks on Schumann's order.

Schumann performed the procedure on about 30 women in a single session. Initially, in the first months, he would organize the X-ray sterilizations two to three times per week. In May 1943, the pump controlling one of the machines broke. According to the locksmith's workshop book, I was supposed to repair the pump at the time (current position: no. 433). Slezak recommended me to Schumann. Schumann gave me a permit, which allowed me to enter the female department. I removed both pumps, examined their construction, and deliberately installed one of them in such a way that it broke and couldn't be fixed with the tools that were at the disposal of the locksmith's workshop. That's how one of the machines got permanently inactivated. Schumann sent it to the Reich to be repaired. From that moment, women were no longer sterilized, because both machines were needed for that, and only one was available. Men were sterilized up until September 1944. In September 1944 Schumann left. After he was gone, Mengele took charge of the X-ray machines in block 30 and used them for his own purposes. The rest of the equipment was dismantled and taken to the Reich in December 1944.

Schumann also used the equipment described above for experiments on curing cancer. For this purpose, he had Gypsy children aged 3-16, who had been selected from the Gypsy camp, delivered to him. They had cancerous ulcerations on their heads or in their mouths and on their lips in most cases, which was caused – so we were told – by artificial transplants. Schumann performed such experiments on about 80 Gypsy children, all of whom died.

They were exclusively at Schumann's disposal. He would go to the Gypsy camp and choose the children to experiment on. All the prisoners noticed that it was children who suffered from cancer, but we didn't encounter any older Gypsies affected by the disease.

I didn't return my permit issued by Schumann in May 1943 in connection with the reparation of the pump in the X-ray equipment. I kept it on me at all times almost until the end of 1944 and on that basis, I could move freely around the entire camp in Birkenau. Slezak, who was permanently assigned to the maintenance of the equipment, spent his whole working day in block 30. Because of that, he was permanently moved to the camp in Birkenau in January 1944. With my permit, I visited him in block 30 and I had the opportunity to thoroughly examine the equipment that was there and to learn from Slezak about some details of the procedures that Schumann performed using that equipment.

Women undressed and subjected themselves to the radiations reluctantly. Schumann had a long, thin rod, which he used to beat the reluctant women. Walking around the women's camp, I realized that the SS men (both female and male) beat the female prisoners equally as much as they beat the male prisoners. I myself witnessed the procedure of letting the women returning from their work *kommando* back to the camp. *Rottenführer* Taube stood in the camp gate, holding a cane about 50 centimeters above the ground. The women, coming back from work with Dutch clogs on their feet, had to jump over it. Those who jumped over the cane went to their blocks, while the names of the ones who didn't manage to jump over the obstacle were written down by Schillinger, who then directed those women to block 25. It was a storehouse of people unfit for further work, who were transported in cars to be gassed after the block had filled in. I would like to emphasize that the women who were returning from work were famished, as they didn't receive any dinner in the work *kommando*. They had their meal in the evening, back in the camp.

Slezak possessed the exact schematics of the X-ray equipment, the prospectuses with photographs illustrating the usage of the equipment, as well as the list of the people on whom Schumann performed the procedures. On 4 January 1945 Slezak and five Aryans from the *Sonderkommando* were sent to Mauthausen. Before Slezak went to the sauna, I asked him to give those documents to me for storekeeping. But he insisted on taking them with him and when I saw him returning from the sauna, he didn't have the briefcase in which he kept the documents. In Mauthausen, where I was later transported, I found out

that Slezak and the Aryans from the *Sonderkommando* were shot dead after two days in the camp in Mauthausen. I first received the news from Władysław from Starachowice (whose last name I don't remember) and then it was confirmed by the former *Rapportschreiber* in Auschwitz, Kistel, a prisoner who was employed at the political office in Mauthausen. Before he was taken to Mauthausen, Slezak declared to me that he was leaving Auschwitz on a special order from Schumann and that he would continue to work for him.

In the spring of 1943, I completed my first job for the camp slaughterhouse. As regards organization, the slaughterhouse belonged to Deutsche Lebensmittel GmbH. However, disguised as a limited liability company, it was under the camp administration and it was managed by the SS men. The company was managed by *Untersturmführer* Engelbecht, while the slaughterhouse was first managed by *Unterscharführer* Loss and then by *Unterscharführer* Ormańczyk [Ormanschik]. After Ormanschik, *Unterscharführer* Jany from Opole became the leader of the slaughterhouse.

The first job that I completed for the slaughterhouse was repairing the syringe used for the production of sausages. While at this work, I met people employed at the slaughterhouse, notably my friend who worked there, Engineer Stanisław Załęcki, an electrician from Warsaw. We made an arrangement between ourselves that Załęcki would break something in the slaughterhouse from time to time and that he would ask me to repair it. It was all so that I could go to the slaughterhouse and take out some meat, pork fat, sausages, and other provisions. Since we did all the work for the slaughterhouse in the locksmith's workshop without the order of its command, I could talk to Loss, as well as Engelbrecht, about taking out meat articles from the slaughterhouse. They announced to the policemen that they were officially rewarding me with provisions for the work I did for the slaughterhouse and that there was no need to search me. Of course, they only permitted me to take out a piece of sausage, meanwhile I would take six sausages each time and bring them to the locksmith's workshop. Being at the slaughterhouse, I ate my fill, so that I could distribute the stolen sausages between my colleagues or send them to the hospital. Besides, I arranged it with Załęcki that I would distribute three sausages in the locksmith's workshop, and another three would be sent to the blocks and to the hospital.

I was taking out the goods from the slaughterhouse under my belt. At first, I wasn't too skilled at that, but I gained experience with time and, as I have already mentioned, I managed

to take out six one-kilogram sausages at one go. We transported the part for the camp by loading the sausages into the cavity in the drawbar of the cart which was used to bring us dinner, [or] into a soup pot made especially for this purpose, or to the bottle of the welding machine.

The slaughterhouse *kommando*, together with their *kapo* Zdzisk from the Poznań Voivodeship, worked very selflessly. They made it easy to take out the goods from the slaughterhouse. The people from that *kommando* took out a lot of goods from there themselves. Prisoner Tadek Baut from Żywiec, who was employed to carry the bones away from the slaughterhouse, was a specialist in this field. He loaded the wheelbarrow with sausages, covered them with bones and took them past the guards at the slaughterhouse, from where the goods were taken by other prisoners and smuggled to the camp. A lot of goods were taken out of the slaughterhouse by Father Augustyn Mańkowski, among others. In relation to that, I should also name prisoner Mieczysław Zawadzki from Warsaw, who worked in the slaughterhouse's cold store and in a completely selfless way allowed for the goods to be stolen, sending them up in the lift, so they could be taken by other prisoners.

Obviously, with a developed system of injections, there were also victims here. In the fall of 1943 four people were shot dead for taking meat and sausages from the slaughterhouse. The slaughterhouse employees Stanisław Cygan from Kraków, Stanisław Witek from Limanowa, and a Polish prisoner whose name I don't remember took out half a pig from the slaughterhouse. Wilhelm Kłak from Krynica, employed at the paint workshop, picked up the meat from them and transported it to block 15a, where it was distributed among the prisoners. The previously-mentioned informer for the Political Department, Dorosiewicz, found out about this and informed on him. Kłak was summoned to the Political Department, beaten and brought in to the slaughterhouse. All the prisoners were lined up and Kłak pointed out the thieves: Cygan, Witek, and the third one, whose name I don't remember. More prisoners were involved in this case, but Kłak didn't denounce them. Cygan and the other two, despite being severely tortured at the Political Department, didn't betray any of the collaborators, so they and Kłak were the only ones who got executed.

Prisoner Stanisław was employed at the slaughterhouse to clean veal tripe. We called him "Stanisław Rodzinka [Family]", because he would always say to everyone: "How are you doing, my dear family?". He was an elderly man and the work was hard, so he complained



to me, saying that had it not been for the food, he would have quit that job. Looking at the tools which "Rodzinka" used on the tripe, I realized that they could be improved and I came up with the idea to build a special machine for cutting the veal tripe. I told "Rodzinka" about it and he told Loss, who was in charge of the slaughterhouse. He negotiated with me, then agreed to feed me and allowed me to take out some sausage from the slaughterhouse, provided I construct a machine for him. I deliberately prolonged the work for quite some time. I would often come to the slaughterhouse with some piece of iron, I would try it with the tripe and that way, I took about three weeks to build the machine. Loss started to get impatient and I eventually had to finish the job and I actually built the promised machine.

It made the work ten times faster and completely effortless. Loss was very pleased with my work and demanded that I make technical drawings and a technical description of the machine for him. When I asked him what he needed that for, he gave me an evasive answer. It later turned out that Loss patented the machine that I had had built, using his name, in Katowice or in Wrocław, and he sold the patent to some butcher company. Sometime later, I was summoned to the Political Department, where I was shown a letter they had received, according to which the camp's locksmith's workshop was forbidden from producing that type of machine. The content of the letter was communicated to me and I was informed that I would be punished by the court if I didn't respect the prohibition. I had to sign a statement to such effect at the Political Department.

When he left the slaughterhouse, Loss took the machine built for that place with him. Engelbrecht then asked me to build another one. However, I changed its construction, wanting to avoid a conflict with the Political Department and a breach of Loss's patent laws. The principle remained the same, I only changed some technical details. The machine which is currently the property of the Commission is precisely the second one which Engelbrecht ordered me to build for the camp's slaughterhouse.

Because I was building the machine, Loss, as well as his successors and Engelbrecht, let me take out meat and sausages from the slaughterhouse. On my request, they also let me take a bucket of soup for the prisoners who worked with me at the locksmith's workshop. The prisoners employed at the slaughterhouse put finely ground meat into that bucket, dissolved liver sausage for the SS men in the soup and added lard, so that I could feed many prisoners with that dish. I didn't eat the soup myself, because I had my meals at the



slaughterhouse. As I was full, I gave away my camp food portion to the prisoners. I distributed the soup from the slaughterhouse among the weakest, who had completely lost their energy because of hunger. Of course, there were some distribution-related misunderstandings, as I couldn't feed 200 people with one bucket. I was mostly governed by whether someone really needed to be fed extra due to their health condition when I distributed the food.

After the betrayal of Dorosiewicz and Kłak, the slaughterhouse was controlled more diligently and I would also be searched. As a result, we had to look for other ways [of taking out goods]. The prisoners employed at the slaughterhouse sent them out via the dairy, through the opening that led to the dairy. It was well concealed and known only to the insiders. Załęski was the person in charge.

We transported the goods from the slaughterhouse to the locksmith's workshop in the bottles of the welding machines. I built a false bottom into those bottles, 150 mm away from the valve. I filled the space between the second bottom and the valve with acetylene. With a small burner, I could use this amount of gas to weld for about an hour. The rest of the bottle was used to transport sausages. We put them inside after removing the bottom of the bottle. Załęski himself made sure that the welders were needed in the slaughterhouse as often as possible. We also used such bottles for transporting meat and meat products to the women's camp in Birkenau, for the mothers and the sisters of the prisoners from the slaughterhouse or those employed with us, and for other acquainted prisoners. A lot of products from the slaughterhouse were delivered to the sick prisoners.

About 120 prisoners worked at the slaughterhouse. Large amounts of meat were processed there on a daily basis and some days it so happened that up to 80,000 kilograms of meat could be found in the cold store. *Kapo* Zdzisek was in charge of the slaughterhouse's accounting and administration. Obviously, he would omit the information about everything that was illegally transported outside of the slaughterhouse. In October 1944 Zdzisek was transported to the Reich, as were many other prisoners. *Reichsdeutscher* Willi replaced him as the *kapo*. After the books were settled, it turned out that around 10,000 kg of good had gone missing – mostly lard and fat – during Zdzisek's time as *kapo*, even though Zdzisek and his people tried to make up for the shortages caused by transporting the goods to the camp by replacing them with water and in other ways that were known to them. Manek, a prisoner who was the *Schreiber* under Zdzisek, explained this case to the Political Department.

He was a *Volksdeutscher* from Silesia. After his explanations, three SS men were sent out from Auschwitz to bring Zdzisek for an interrogation. Zdzisek realized what was going on and jumped out of the train during the journey. I don't know what happened to him or if he's still alive. Either way, the SS men didn't bring him to Auschwitz.

I observed the first execution of prisoners that took place after my arrival at the camp from the locksmith's workshop, where – as I have already mentioned – we also worked after the evening roll call. The executions at the time took place near the stakes which used to be located in the place of the new slaughterhouse, which was built later. There were eight stakes embedded in the ground at a distance of about three meters apart from one another. Each stake had an iron ring to which the prisoners were tied with their arms bent backwards. The executions were carried out by a special platoon in helmets, which was led by the SS orderly officer. The people who were shot dead were shirtless and they were not blindfolded.

In December 1940 a bus brought in 40 Poles from Katowice. They were dressed only in clothes from drill fabric, with no underwear, no shoes, and no hats. They were kept barefoot in the snow for about half an hour. After some time, the camp commandant, Höß, came with Grabner from the Political Department and informed the convicts that they would not be shot dead, because they had been pardoned and the death penalty had been exchanged for a life sentence. All of those prisoners were marked with the letters "IL" [im Lager – "within the camp"], placed in the Penal Company and put in block 11, which was known as block 13 at the time. Those people, dressed the way I have already described: barefoot, with no underwear and no hats, worked at the roll call square. They were rolling wire and chipping away mortar from bricks. They had to work seated on a rock. All of them died from freezing within a week.

Later, the execution platoon performed the killings in the pits where the *Blockführerstube* is currently located, in front of the front gate [with the inscription] *Arbeit macht frei*. The execution square was then moved further toward the railway siding, in the direction of the present *Bauhof*. That's where the first larger execution took place in July 1942. Namely, 82 Poles were shot dead. The majority of them came from Kraków, all of them were selected from among the other prisoners by the Political Department. Łyko, a football player for Cracovia, was in that group. I remember him, because he worked at the locksmith's

workshop prior to his execution. People from Łyko's group were executed in groups of ten. All of them had their hands tied behind their backs with a wire. The people from the last group had to watch the whole time as over 70 of their companions were shot dead in front of them. We learned that from the prisoners who were employed to remove the corpses after the executions and the prisoners employed in the kitchen, who watched the whole execution scene from the windows. Apart from the details I have already mentioned, they also told us that after the execution platoon killed each group of prisoners, *Lagerführer* Fritzsche, known among the prisoners as the devourer of Poles, and his deputy Seidler, would come up to the executed prisoners and one of them would fire off a "one-gun salute" in the head of the already massacred corpses that were lying on the ground, after the salute of the execution platoon. Fritzsche would also say: "You dirty dogs, you Poles, you're not worthy of this shot".

In the late summer of 1942, the so-called black wall of death was built in the yard of block 11. As we know, blocks 10 and 11 are connected with a tall wall. In front of the wall, on the side with the wires, railroad ties were embedded in the ground on the yard of block 11. They were about two meters tall and no more than four meters wide. Sand and soil was put between this wall made of ties and the actual wall itself. The front of the new wall was covered with tarpaper. From that moment, the executions by shooting took place at the "death wall". The first people to be executed there, on 11 November 1942, were 42 Poles, selected from the prisoners by the Political Department. Prisoners Przybyło and Kowalik, both from Bochnia, were among those prisoners. Those two also worked in the locksmith's workshop, so I remember their names. All of the 42 prisoners were shot dead by Palitzsch. Apart from him, Fitze [Pfütze] and Lachmann, both from the Political Department (*Rapportführer* Pfütze), and one more SS man, the deputy *Arbeitsdienstführer*, whose name I don't recall, took part in other executions. The executions at the death wall took place in the following way: the leader of block 11 brought two prisoners into the yard and stood with them arm in arm, facing the "black wall". Palitzsch walked up from behind and shot the convicts directly in the back of their heads. The *Lagerälteste* would push the executed prisoner to the side and the corpse would be collected by the prisoners acting as orderlies at the hospital. The bodies were placed crosswise on a pile. Initially, two corpses were put in one coffin and taken out to the crematorium in a wagon. The orderlies collected the blood into iron troughs with shovels and poured it out into canal. Then, they scattered sand over the

entire yard. It was only after such cleaning that the people from the Penal Company could come out onto the yard. The entire path that the wagon with the corpses had to follow from the yard of block 11 all the way to the crematorium was stained with blood that was dripping heavily from the bodies.

I saw the execution at the "black wall" on 11 November 1942 in person. I was repairing the sheet-metal next to the chimney on the roof of block 20 with prisoner Stetiwka from the locksmith's workshop. We hid behind the chimney so that we wouldn't be spotted and we could carefully observe the whole execution from there. We saw that the prisoners brought before the "black wall" would cross themselves, unless their hands were tied. After they crossed themselves for the first time, Palitzsch commanded: *Noch einmal* [Once again] and when the prisoners put their hand to their forehead once more, a shot was taken.

In December 1942 many Russian POWs were executed there at night. Hundreds of them were herded to block 11 for the morning. I slept with Szablewski, Maliszewski, and Walczak in the corridor of block 10 at the time, so I heard every shot. One night, two SS men were carrying out the executions. I suspect that Pfütze, whose voice I recognized, was Palitzsch's helper. I believe they executed about 1,500 Russian POWs from 9.30 p.m. to 4.00 a.m. that night. When I glanced at the yard of block 11 from the *Waschraum* of block 10, it was entirely covered with corpses. The corpses were transported to Birkenau and buried there.

In 1943, 260 prisoners that came in the transport from Lublin were shot dead in block 11. As we were told later, some serious sabotage was going on in the Lublin Voivodeship at the time. By the order of the Gestapo from Lublin, the Political Department selected the prisoners who had been transported from Lublin. All 260 of them were placed in block 11 and then executed by Palitzsch and Pfütze.

Throughout this entire time, i.e. from 1940 until May 1943, executions took place continuously. The prisoners were very nervous and anxious. The Political Department came to the conclusion that they had to find some other way of killing, because the shootings were causing fear in the camp. Palitzsch held a briefing for all the block leaders and ordered them to communicate to the prisoners in the blocks that there would be no more shootings in the camp, because the death penalty had been abolished. From that point onward, all the convicts sentenced to death by the Political Department were placed in the lawnmowers' *kommando*. In principle, that *kommando* comprised 60 people. Apart from that, all prisoners

sentenced to death were assigned there, also by the *Arbeitsdienst*, but on the clear order of the Political Department. Those people were executed in their workplaces on the pretext of an attempted escape. They were brought into the camp in wagons covered with grass. The details concerning the shootings in block 11 can be best described by Ryszard Malinowski from Brzeszcze, who resided in block 11 for 14 months at the time of the largest executions.

I observed the first executions by hanging in the camp in the summer of 1943. Those executions took place after the evening roll call. All the prisoners from the entire camp were placed on the roll call square, where two gallows were erected during the first execution I witnessed. The convicts were placed next to the gallows. That's where Lachmann read their sentence in Polish, from which it emerged that they had been both sentenced to death by hanging for an attempted escape. Both convicts had their hands tied behind their backs, they were wearing nothing but their prison uniforms, they had no underwear, no shoes, and no hats. They were young Poles, one might have been 20, the other about 25 years old. As ordered by the then *Lagerführer* Aumeier, after hearing their sentences, they were taken to the *Schreibstube* in block 24, where they were additionally hit with sticks 25 times. They were then brought to the gallows. Each of them climbed onto the base of one of the gallows, using a stool. Two prisoners, brought to the gallows from bunker 11 together with the convicts, put the nooses around their necks. They too were sentenced to death and hanged in the same way on the same gallows a few days later. The ones that put the nooses around their necks were the *kapo* of the *Fahrbereitschaft*, a known informer in the camp, *Reichsdeutscher* Johann Maniewski from Poznań. He was a former Gestapo chauffeur, he had a number with a red triangle.

The gallows were built differently. On one of them, prisoners would have a stool they were standing on snatched from under their feet; the other had a trap door with a crank. During the execution of the first two prisoners, the stool from under the prisoner's feet was pulled out by *Lagerälteste* Bruno no. 1, a *Reichsdeutscher* with a green triangle. His last name was Brodniewicz and he also came from Poznań. The trap door was cranked open by SS man Kaduk. The hangman from the gallows with the trap door suffered for quite a long time. His noose must have not been put on right, because he tried to support himself on the edge of the trap door. But then Bruno ran up to him and yanked him by the legs a few times. The corpses remained on the gallows throughout the entire night. Both convicts acted

in a completely calm manner before the execution. They stood with their heads up, they didn't cry and they didn't say anything.

A dozen or so days later, another two convicts were hanged in the same place, on the same gallows. They were young boys, also Polish, who were sentenced to death by hanging for trying to escape. Once more, an SS man from the Political Department who spoke Polish read out the sentence. One of the convicts cried and begged not to be hanged, saying he had something more to testify. This attempt wasn't successful and he was hanged.

The third execution took place in the alley between blocks 6 and 16. One civilian from outside of the camp was hanged for helping the prisoners. The 12 prisoners from the *Bauleitung*, from the measurements office, who were betrayed by Dorosiewicz, were hanged in the yard in front of the kitchen. Two posts were embedded in the ground there and a rail was placed across the top of them. 12 nooses were attached to the rail and 12 stools were placed underneath. A German, *kapo Strassenbau* Sepl, hanged the prisoners. All the convicts stood on their stools and watched their colleagues being hanged one by one. The twelfth prisoner from that group witnessed the deaths of all the 11 prisoners before him.

Later, prisoners were hanged in the yard of block 11. Of course, other prisoners no longer assisted in these executions. The gallows were taken out of block 11 two more times and two Jews were hanged at different intervals. One of them got lost during an alarm. He made it past the guard line on the Soła River. He was afraid to get in the water to get to the other side of the river, so he returned to the camp. He got arrested by the guard and sentenced to death by hanging for allegedly trying to escape.

The public hangings were carried out to scare the other prisoners away from trying to escape. The corpses of the prisoners who were shot while escaping were demonstrated publicly for the same purpose. More often than not these prisoners had had no intention of escaping at all. They had simply fallen asleep somewhere in the hay or in some other hiding spot and didn't show up for the evening roll call. In such cases, a search operation was organized, and when the missing prisoner was found, he was shot dead on the spot. The corpses were then propped on the table in front of the *Blockführerstube*, next to the gate with the inscription *Arbeit macht frei*. The following morning, all the *kommandos* setting out for work had to pass the bodies on their way. All the prisoners had to look to the right as they walked, i.e. in the direction of the corpses. They were usually terribly massacred.

I recall that, one time, we were marching by four corpses with guts spilling out of their stomachs. We were sure that the bodies were mutilated after death in a way that was supposed to create a horrifying, repellent view. The four prisoners had been shot dead by the guard SS man in the work *kommando*. Five prisoners worked in that *kommando*. When the SS man fell asleep, one of the prisoners escaped. After the SS man woke up, he shot the remaining four. He then explained to his superiors that all of the prisoners tried to escape and that he shot four of them as they were escaping, while the fifth one managed to get away.

People were also hanged in the camp in Birkenau. There, the executions took place on the brick columns of the water tank, which stood in front of the camp kitchen. Among others, prisoner Edward Galiński from Jarosław (no. 531) was hanged there. He was a 20-year-old boy. Before he was killed, standing on the stool under the noose of the gallows, he yelled: "Long live Poland", put his head in the noose and tried to remove the stool from under his feet. The SS men ran up to him, removed the noose from his neck, someone beat him, put the noose around his neck again, and hanged him.

Three Russians, who escaped from the camp and who were caught some time later, were also hanged on the same gallows. Apart from escaping, they were also accused of murdering some German. One of the Russians, a very strong man, already standing under the gallows, yelled: "Long live Russia, long live Stalin, long live Poland. We are marching into our deaths, but we will be avenged, because our brothers will not forget us". SS man Boger from the Political Department, who was present at the execution, hit the Russian in his mouth with the butt of his revolver. In spite of that, the Russian continued to yell and when Boger was mounting the stairs to the table on which the Russian was standing beneath the gallows, he kicked Boger in the throat. Boger fell from the stairs. He got up and mounted the table again. He wanted to stuff a handkerchief into the mouth of the Russian, whose hands were tied behind his back. When he didn't manage to do that, he took out a knife, cut both sides of the Russian's mouth, unclenched his teeth with a piece of iron and cut out his tongue with a knife. Mutilated in this way, he was hanged together with the other two Russians, who were passive. The execution was watched by Poles and Russians. Without any command, they took off their hats to honor those who were dying.



According to what I know, the first gassing took place in the bunkers of block 11 on 14 August 1941 at night and on 15 August 1941 during the day. I remember the date clearly, because it coincided with the first anniversary of my arrival at the camp and also because that's when the first Russian POWs were gassed. In the evening of 14 August 1941, the orderlies moved about 250 sick prisoners from the hospital blocks to block 11. Then, several hundred Russian POWs were herded to that block. When they first arrived at the camp, we were told that they were political commissars. Both the sick prisoners and the Russian POWs were placed in the bunkers of block 11, the windows of which were made airtight with soil. The SS man *Blockführer*, known among the prisoners as "Tom Mix" and whose last name I don't remember, dumped gas into the bunker through the door that opened onto the corridor.

On 15 August around 4.00 p.m. Palitzsch, wearing a gas mask, walked through the roll call square to block 11. Because it was the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we had the afternoon off and we could watch the scenes which I am now describing. Mietek Borek and Waław Ruski, the helpers in bunker 11, were telling me that Palitzsch, wearing a gas mask, opened the door to the bunkers and concluded that the people kept in there were still alive. Admittedly, they were moving on all fours and they were powerless, but still alive. "Tom Mix" was then summoned and he dumped the contents of a gas can into the bunkers. The bunkers were opened again in the evening of 16 August 1941. None of the people who had been kept there remained alive. The *Pfleger*s of the hospital blocks would carry the gassed prisoners to the yard, where the corpses would be undressed, loaded onto the wagons and transported to Birkenau. That lasted all night.

I spent that night in block 21, in dentist's office of Janusz Kuczbara. From that office, I could observe the transporting of the corpses. The wagon broke beneath the windows of the office, the bodies fell to the ground and that's when I saw that they had a greenish color. The *Pfleger*s told me that the corpses were slimy and the skin was peeling off of them. In many cases, they had their fingers bitten off and their throats bitten. From that, it was evident that those people had died in horrible suffering.

The next gassings took place in the chamber of Crematorium I. Hössler was in charge of the gassing in that crematorium. From the stairs of the former block 4 (block 12 according to the new numeration), through the gap between the two administration buildings, I watched



Hössler dump the contents of the gas canister into the bunker through the chimneys, which stuck out over the mound of the crematorium, near the ventilator. From the SS hospital's *Zahnstation*, I saw aquamarine-blue pebbles the size of beans scattered next to the opening through which they were dropped into the bunker. After the evening roll call, the people who were supposed to be gassed were herded to the yard in front of the entrance to the crematorium. The yard was surrounded by a tall wall made of cement slabs. The cries coming from that place would reach our blocks. We also heard shots that came from that direction. The gassing took place after the evening gong. The crematorium furnaces would be burning non-stop during that time. Russian POWs, Jews, Polish Aryans and the "Muselmans" picked from the hospital were gassed at that time.

The corpses of the sick prisoners and the Russians gassed in August 1941 in the bunkers of block 11 were not burned in the crematorium, but – as I have already mentioned – transported to Birkenau, where they were buried in the ground. Even though the layers of bodies were covered with chlorine and calcium, in the summer of 1942, the corpses started to rot and the mound sagged like a bog due to the heat. After some time, putrid gases erupted, so the graves had to be liquidated. The graves were dug and the putrid masses found there were gradually burned with the help of flame-throwers. Because I was repairing a broken valve in a gas bottle brought to the locksmith's workshop by SS man "Perełka" at the time, I know that acetylene flame-throwers were used to burn those corpses. The bodies of the people who were later gassed in the cabins in Birkenau were also buried in the ground. They were later dug out and burned in the crematorium in Birkenau.

We didn't do any major construction work for Crematorium I in Auschwitz in the locksmith's workshop. I recall that we made, according to the Topf company's model, a cart for carrying the corpses to the furnaces, grates, iron frames for the chimney, grates for the generators and a ventilation pipe for the gas chamber. Those were the things that we made for the crematorium in the locksmith's workshop. Apart from that, we did some minor repair works there. In connection with these works, I knew the people employed in the *Sonderkommando*, which was in charge of Crematorium I.

I recall that, one time, I was roasting a rabbit on the generator with Mietek, Józek and Wacek. That's when Lachmann, carrying a light machine gun, almost entered the room preceding the gas chamber, so I couldn't leave and I had to wait behind the furnace until he left the

crematorium. From my hiding spot I saw that Lachmann, who was standing behind the door, was shooting the people who were entering the second room before the gas chamber. Two prisoners from the *Sonderkommando* would catch the prisoners who fell after the shot and put them to the side. In my presence, [Lachmann] shot six [people] dead. All of them were Poles, brought in a car from Silesia, probably from Mysłowice.

We made iron frames for all the crematorium furnaces, all the grates, all the hoists for lifting the corpses, fittings for all doors, and hooks, pokers, and tools needed to operate the furnaces and to burn the corpses in the pits. The installers did the water and sewage systems for the crematoria. The majority of those works is recorded in the book of orders of the locksmith's workshop, which was presently shown to me.

The locksmith's workshop was responsible for manufacturing, among other things, fake showers for the gas chambers and net posts to dump the contents of the Zyklon cans into the gas chambers. They were about three-meter tall posts with a square cross-section (about 70 cm). Such a post was made of three nets placed one inside the other. The outer net was made of wire (3 mm in diameter), strengthened on square timbers (50 mm by 10 mm). Such square timbers were placed in all corners of the post. They were joined on the top and on the bottom with the same square timber. Each mesh in the net was about 45 sq mm. The second net was constructed in the same way and placed inside the first one, about 150 mm apart. Each mesh in that net was about 25 sq mm. In the corners, the two nets were connected with iron bars. The post was empty inside, made of a thin zinc sheet, whose cross-section was about 150 sq mm. It had a cone-shaped ending on the top and an even, square base on the bottom. Square metal bars were soldered onto thin posts made of sheet metal, about 25 mm from the edges of the post. A finely meshed net (one mesh was about 1 sq mm) was spread on the metal bars. The net ended at the base of the cone. From there upwards, it transitioned into a sheet metal frame that reached the top of the cone. The contents of the Zyklon can were dumped from above onto the distribution cone. That allowed for an even distribution of the Zyklon on all four walls of the post. After the gas had dissipated, the whole middle post was taken out and the silica was removed. The air ducts of the gas chamber were hammered into the walls of the chamber. The vents were covered with zinc sheets, which had circular holes in them.

The SS men in the camp tried to choose those informers from among the prisoners who would tell them about everything that was happening in the camp. They used various systems for selecting the informers. They tried to persuade those who would be inevitably sentenced to death to turn informers in, in exchange for having their lives saved.

I know of one such case, which concerns a prisoner named Józek, whose further personal details I don't know. He was a 17-year old boy, a Pole from Brzesko. He was friends with Kazimierz Zajac (no. 261), who worked with me at the locksmith's workshop. In 1943, Zajac asked me, the locksmith workshop's *Kolonnenführer*, to get Józek employed at the locksmith's workshop. Since Zajac and I were on good terms and I wanted to help his friend Józek, I did make sure that he was employed at the locksmith's workshop. Observing Józek, I realized that he often snuck out of the workshop to sell the items he had bought or stolen from the storehouse, the so-called *Unterkunft*. One day, Józek didn't show up to work and I received information that he had been placed in the bunker of block 11 after having been interrogated in the Political Department because an SS man had caught him transferring curtains. After a week or so, Józek came to work again. I was surprised by his return, because prisoners would normally be executed for the type of actions of which he was accused. I asked him how he managed to avoid death. He gave me an evasive answer. So I started to watch him more closely, suspecting that the SS men surely didn't let him out of the bunker for no reason. Soon, at lunch, I noticed that Józek was leaving through the hole in the fence with a lady's scarf hidden under his clothes. An SS man from the Political Department approached him at that moment, searched him, reached his hand for the scarf, but didn't take it. He let Józek keep [it], talked to him for a while and walked away, allowing Józek to act freely. That's how I realized that Józek must have been serving for the Political Department. So I talked to him openly and Józek admitted that when he was in the bunker, he was placed in front of the "death wall" to be executed. But at the last moment, he was released [on the condition that] he would act as an informer of the Political Department. He also told me that, according to the deal he had made with the SS man who caught him with the scarf, he was supposed to sell that same scarf to one of the prisoners in the electrical department and put it in that prisoner's drawer. The SS man could then retrieve the scarf from there, arrest the prisoner and find out with whom he maintained trade relations. I then had a serious conversation with Józek, appealing to his conscience to let him know what his job as an informer meant for his fellow prisoners and demanding that he quit [that work].

Under the influence of our conversation, Józek took the scarf to the electrical department, but he didn't put it where he was supposed to according to the deal he had made with the SS man. He put it in a drawer in one of the workshops, which was accessible to all the prisoners. When the SS man came to perform a search, he found the scarf in that common drawer, so he didn't manage to find out who it was meant for. He then demanded an explanation as to who had put it in that place. The prisoners pointed to Józek. The SS man ordered Józek to name the prisoner who was supposed to receive the scarf. However, Józek didn't betray the prisoner this time, but declared that he wanted to sell the scarf himself. As a result, he was arrested by the Political Department again and executed by shooting two days later.

Apart from [collaborating with] the informers, the SS men also tried to get the information about what was going on in the camp in different ways. For instance, in 1942 *Oberscharführer* Palitzsch ordered the prisoners to put anonymous letters in a black letterbox installed in block 15, to inform the camp authorities about the issues that concerned the prisoners and the relations in the camp. Palitzsch himself emptied the box every morning, as he was the only one who had the key. Often enough, Palitzsch would retrieve a bigger or smaller number of anonymous reports. The letterbox was located in a visible spot, so the prisoners usually left their letters at night. It lasted until Palitzsch was moved to the Gypsy camp in Birkenau. The box no longer functioned from that moment on.

Since I could move freely around the camp, I had the opportunity to contact and talk to many prisoners who came from different countries and belonged to different classes. Many of them trusted me entirely and didn't hide anything from me. Therefore, I was very well informed about what was happening in the camp, both in the open, as well as in secret. On the basis of that knowledge, I declare that there did not exist any larger political organization of prisoners that would group the people arrested by the unified leadership in a military way on Auschwitz territory. In particular, it was not at all possible to accumulate any type of weapons in secret from the SS men and their informers. I admit that the prisoners managed to organize many things within the camp illegally and in secret, but that happened thanks to the agreement between several or a dozen or so people, as well as the sacrifice of individuals. In relation to that, some sporadic actions took place, but they were not connected or coordinated into one planned action, led by some organized chief command of a political or military character. Hence why I'm surprised by the statements

on this subject, which have appeared recently, either published in journals or coming from individual former prisoners of the camp in Auschwitz. According to these statements, there existed a mass clandestine organization on the territory of the camp in Auschwitz, which included members of different nationalities. Supposedly, it even had special weapon storehouses at the camp, prepared so that they were ready to be used at the right moment, in a fight against the camp authorities. I don't know anything about the existence of such an organization. I'm surprised that, while mentioning the organization, no names of its leaders are given, which in today's conditions is not only safe, but would also bring honor and pride to the person making the statement.

As I have already mentioned, I was transported from Auschwitz to Mauthausen, from where I was moved to Greditz near Leipzig. After that *kommando* had been liquidated, I escaped from the transport and made my way home – first on foot, and then by joining a transport.

The report was read out. At that, the protocol from 19 June 1945 was concluded.