



## JANINA KOŚCIUSZKO

The ninth day of the trial, 3 December 1947. The session begins at 9:05 a.m. The composition of the Tribunal is the same as on 2 December 1947, with the exception of prosecutor Dr. Cyprian, absent, and with the participation of prosecutor Gacki.

**Presiding Judge:** Witness Dr. Janina Kościuszko.

(Witness Dr. Janina Kościuszko appears.)

**Presiding Judge:** Please state your personal details.

**Witness:** Janina Kościuszko, 50 years of age, Roman Catholic, no relationship to the parties.

**Presiding Judge:** I am advising the witness in accordance with art. 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the obligation to speak the truth. Making false declarations is punishable by conviction with a maximum penalty of 5-year imprisonment. Do the parties wish to file motions as regards the procedure of interviewing the witness?

**Prosecution:** No.

**Defense:** No.

**Presiding Judge:** The witness will not be sworn in.

I would like the witness to tell us what she knows concerning the case, especially what she knows about the defendants.

**Witness:** I was at Auschwitz during 1943 and 1944. After a quarantine at Birkenau, I was moved to the *Statsgebaude*, where female prisoners who worked there lived in the basement. Some of them worked as clerks at the political department and other offices. The basement also housed a hospital for 30 patients. The first and second floors were occupied by female overseers, most notably defendant Mandl. Several female prisoners were assigned as servants to these overseers. On the basis of my own observations and stories told me by these prisoners, I had an opportunity to learn about the bog of moral decay among these overseers. They often returned at night, drunk, after parties. They would then throw bottles of club soda



around the block. It was only the prisoners that drank tap water. The SS men had wagonloads of club soda delivered to them, as a result of which there were always several boxes of club soda in their flats or in the corridor. After such parties, in the morning, prisoners had to take out baskets full of shards of glass. In 1944, Mandl set up her own villa and female prisoners had to assist her in the process. During the transport of Hungarian Jews in May 1944, after selections performed at the ramp, there were parties thrown at Mandl's, in which Liebehenschel took part, bringing drinks taken from the prisoners brought in on the transports. I heard about it from a German woman, one Klimaszewska, a Bible Student, who had served at Mandl's for a month. She said that Mandl had kept a log in which she recorded all incoming Auschwitz transports, selections performed, and the number of people sent to the gas. This was corroborated by another German, Keller, who later worked at Mandl's; she said Mandl kept this log in a drawer. I do not know where this log is now.

From *Statsgebäude*, I was moved to Birkenau, where I served as a doctor. I often saw Mandl, who while riding her bicycle would stop next to children walking in the street and take them in her arms and stroke them. But the same Mandl assisted in selections at the railway ramp, where hundreds and thousands of children were sent to the gas chambers. During her time in charge, infants were drowned just after they were born and then burned in the furnace at a block. Later, after this policy was relaxed, children were spared, but mothers were kept in such abject conditions, violating every conceivable rule of hygiene, that many of these children died. Wooden blocks were essentially stables with just one door, so there was no natural ventilation. Women slept on so-called bunks, three-storied. There was no water in the block so mothers had no way to wash their children's clothes. Such a small block accommodated around one hundred women with children. Each child was tattooed a few days after birth and recorded as a prisoner of Auschwitz. Jewish children were not recorded and received no camp alimentation. It happened that children were only taken away from their mothers and incinerated after they had grown a little, which resulted in the great despair of the mothers, who often asked to die together with them.

One day, an order came which stipulated that children would be taken away from mothers. I witnessed horrific scenes. If a mother came to the camp in early pregnancy, she knew from stories told by her fellow prisoners that her child would be taken away from her after she gave birth. I remember one such mother, who braced herself from the beginning for this to happen. For reasons unknown, she was allowed to keep the baby and she tended to it for



five months. She struggled to keep the baby alive in these abject conditions. She lived in hope that the war would end soon and that they would not take her baby away. When the baby was five months old, there came an order that it be taken away from her. The mother begged for the life of her child, she despaired. Consequently, she was taken to the gas chamber together with her child, and it was filed in the records of the political department that she died of pneumonia on the same day as her child.

In March 1944, children were taken away from the mothers from the Smoleńsk area. After one month, an order came stipulating that children would be taken away from their mothers. The sick ones would be sent to the camp hospital and the healthier ones to the camp. The mothers literally banged their heads against the wall in despair; I saw horrific scenes then. Everything was to no avail. All the children were taken away; it was said that they were sent to special camps. In any case, they have not been heard of since.

In August 1944, entire families were brought to the camp from the Warsaw Uprising. The youngest children were a-few-month-old infants and the oldest patients were around 80 years of age. Children were taken away from their mothers and about 450 of them were placed in the brick-built block at Birkenau. This was the worst block, where between 6 and 10 children were placed on a single bunk. Only four so-called nurses were assigned per 450 children. Children were poorly dressed because they had been divested of their own garments and clothed in some old rags. They were malnourished and could not play in the fresh air since they were not allowed to take a walk, except in a small yard in front of the block fenced with barbed-wire. The so-called *Blocksperr*e [curfew] was in effect all the time and nobody was allowed into that block. I had access there since I was filling in for a doctor who had fallen ill. Terrible scenes happened also in front of this block. Mothers were denied access to their children. They pushed forward and tried to find an opportunity to at least catch a glimpse of their children. Within a short period of time, epidemics of scarlet fever, whooping cough, and diphtheria broke out at the children's block. A lot of children died then. Many of them also died of tuberculosis and to date I still meet patients from this block who are suffering from tuberculosis or are in danger of contracting it.

I will not discuss delousing since I do not want to repeat what previous witnesses stated. I would only like to emphasize some aspects from the medical point of view. After the delousing, during which women stood naked for a dozen or so hours, and sick patients



had to lie on plain wooden boards (the bed ticks had been burned), with nothing to cover themselves with, we always recorded several deaths from exhaustion, sometimes even a couple of hundred of them. Very often, female prisoners died of pneumonia. Delousing always posed a risk of death.

**Selections.** The final one took place in October 1944. It was prepared by Dr. Mengele. He issued an order that all sick Jewesses be transferred to another block because a separate Jewish block was to be set up. In the evening, a curfew was imposed and cars with SS personnel drew up, supervisors Mandl and Drechsler among them. They pushed all sick Jewesses onto the vans. We found out about it from nurses. We could only hear the terrible screams of the women loaded onto cars, who were transported to the crematorium. In the evening, fire burst from the crematorium chimneys, which was visible from Birkenau.

**Nutrition.** That nutrition was insufficient is known to everybody. Soups cooked for prisoners were seasoned with the "Avo" spice, which, on one hand, led to diarrhea, and on the other, if a female prisoners ate too much of it, it led to considerable leg swelling, which reached above the knees. I saw this for myself, since I took care of one prisoner who ate an increased portion of this soup, claiming that she would die of starvation otherwise. When I finally managed to convince her that these portions of soup also posed a fatal risk to her she stopped eating it and the swelling let up.

A testimony to the quality of nutrition is the fact that when in 1944 Dr. König ordered nurses to find among the Auschwitz female prisoners those who had been living off the camp diet for a year, no such persons could be found. This means that female prisoners relying solely on camp food could not survive a year. The food was particularly characterized by lack of vitamins. The way women protected themselves against this was that when they were passing through the camp to work in the field, they tried to bring pieces of carrots, onions, or cabbage – for themselves and for their comrades. Unfortunately, Mandl with the staff and SS men, including Kramer, stood at the gate. She frisked the prisoners to keep vitamins off the camp. Once, a female prisoner threw a cabbage head over the fence. A nurse caught it to take it to the sick. SS man Kramer soon after burst into the camp hospital, looking for this nurse, but she had managed to hide. Then – it was evening – an *antretten* of all doctors and nurses was ordered and he started to look for this person among us. He said that if she was not found, he would give us "sport" for this cabbage head.



When I came to the camp in 1943, there were no toilets at all. At the quarantine block, where around 700 women were staying, there were only iron wheelbarrows, which kept toppling over and the prisoners were repeatedly infected. During a three-week quarantine, more than a half of them contracted abdominal typhus. At that time, there was no water for cleaning up and washing clothes at the camp. Female prisoners did not clean up for weeks and it was not possible to leave the quarantine. At that time, there was one well at the camp and when this well was inoperative in February 1943, not even the lousy coffee or herbs could be cooked for lack of water. As a result of these conditions, *Durchfall* spread. This was a large intestine inflammation, which finished off those bodies that were exhausted anyway.

At the turn of 1943, a terrible epidemic broke out at Birkenau, which saw over 200 women die daily for six weeks. But because, fortunately, also *Aufseherins* fell ill, it was decided that the sanitary conditions would be improved. A water supply system was installed and even toilets and washrooms with running water were set up. These were large earthenware troughs in which you could clean up perfectly, so the issue of cleanness was more or less addressed. But after three or four days, a strict order came which stipulated the closing of the amenities and prohibited the use of the washroom and toilets. Under the gravest punishment of beating, bunker and assignment to the penal company, using these amenities was prohibited. And again, nurses were forced to take out buckets of excrement a few times a day, and other female prisoners had to come with a barrel, scoop this excrement and take it outside the camp.

As regards cleanliness at the camp hospital, one would hardly imagine that a hospital could exist in such conditions. The hospital was located in the stables, beds were three-storied, and during the epidemic, four patients lay in a single bed. If someone was severely sick and you wanted to help them just a little, then it was possible to organize things in such a way that there were two or three people per bed. But when the conditions improved slightly, it was seen to it that the aisle running across the room was clean and that the furnace in the center of the room was limewashed. I saw an incident whereby at block 10, after an SS man came from Rajsko on the orders of the doctor (this happened a few times), soon after a roll call a couple of dozen frozen women were called up and driven to the washroom, and a large table was placed in the toilet on which these women were placed and had their blood collected, of between half and three fourths of a liter. If it was impossible to collect that much blood from a woman, the SS man became very angry. Obviously, blood



collection adversely affected the women's strength. One German woman assisted in the procedure and she told me that this blood was to be taken to the front, to be transfused to German soldiers.

Did defendant Mandl beat female prisoners? She had her special method of beating: she hit people with her hand, or rather with a fist, in the face, in such a way that blood gushed from the nose on the first strike. I remember once when female prisoners started to gather for a roll call by the *Stabsgebäude* and it was very cold, and one woman, hunching, put her hands in the pockets. Mandl was riding by some hundred steps out. When she noticed it, she rode up to her and smacked her so hard that blood gushed from her nose. This prisoner was so terrified by the appearance of the mighty Mandl that she kept her hands in her pockets. Then, Mandl grabbed her head and started to hit it against the wall, causing heavy bleeding. I dressed her wounds myself.

Defendant Mandl, during one camp inspection of the Rajsko camp, hit the prisoner by the name of Ułan so hard on the face that she sprained her jaw. Next day, I took her to the X-ray station, though for different reasons.

In June 1944, Mandl carried out a raid on Rajsko, where there was a special *kommando* of 300 female prisoners who had better living conditions. Dr. Cezar was there; he was breeding plants which yielded rubber. The girls there were intelligent and their work was hard, but it was scientific. Mandl could not stand this. She came to the camp and under the pretext of searching prisoners for gold she smashed their instruments and took away everything they had, including parcels sent to them from their homes. She had dresses and aprons torn off them and had them clothed in ugly dresses. That Mandl saw Birkenau as a much worse camp is best proved by the fact that if a prisoner committed an offense at the Rajsko camp or at the *Stabsgebäude* she was taken to Birkenau.

There was a Czech from Prague called Binder, on whom cigarettes were found that she was keeping in her pockets. Her punishment was three weeks in block 11, and when she did something again, she was sent to Birkenau.

Defendant Brandl was in charge of the *Bekleidungskammer* [clothing storeroom], where there were plenty of good clothes, underwear, shoes and stockings. Female prisoners were issued with the worst items – shoes that were impossible to fit. All the rest was sent out, for



Germans, while the female prisoners were insufficiently dressed. As regards warm underwear and stockings, they were confiscated. On 15 April, on the orders of the camp commandant, all female prisoners were divested of stockings, sweaters and warm blouses. The female prisoners were woken up at 4.00 a.m. and chased outside so they all caught a cold. If anyone had hidden a sweater, it was taken away from her by force.

I remember when people were brought in to the camp from Warsaw; they were divested of everything, just like we were. When at that time there were no striped uniforms, female prisoners were clothed in dresses and had crosses painted on their backs. These dresses were rags made of georgette or silk, which fell apart after two or three days.

Whenever a sick woman came to the camp hospital, she was stripped naked. Night gowns issued to female prisoners were full of stains left by fleas and there were squashed lice on the other side. In 1943, when the camp was infested with lice, a transport of underwear came, full of worms and lice.

I only came across defendant Aumeier once at the *Stabsgebäude*. The room was so thickly crammed that it was impossible to get through. A dark corridor served as the dining room. Aumeier burst there, and, being unable to get through, he started to shout and beat people. Female prisoners dropped their soup bowls and there was immediately room for Aumeier. That is all from me.

**Presiding Judge:** You mentioned infants being murdered.

**Witness:** Between 1942 and 1943, a mother with a child was initially sent to the gas chamber, later the mother was spared and the child drowned, murdered and incinerated. Toward the end of 1943, children were spared, but they were kept in poor living conditions.

There were twins among the infants. In 1943, Dr. Mengele took an interest in twins and a special block was created for these children, of whom there were about a thousand.

**Presiding Judge:** Was the order to murder the children issued by the camp administration or did it come from Berlin?

**Witness:** We got the order from the camp administration. I cannot tell if this was Mandl's order or if it came from the top. But Mandl must have known about it.



**Presiding Judge:** You mentioned children from the Zamość area.

**Witness:** It was not Zamość but the Smoleńsk area. They all perished at the camp, except maybe one or two who survived.

**Prosecutor Gacki:** How does one explain that defendant Mandl, passing on her bike, stroked them, and at the same time participated in selections which concluded with their death? How do you explain this as a doctor?

**Witness:** I think it is symptomatic of degeneration. Mandl believed that children should all be drowned. I am a pediatrician and I deal with children in social care. I have also had the opportunity to visit basements, but I have not witnessed such abject circumstances as those that children lived under at the camp. There was a room at the camp, three by four meters, where 17 children were kept. Dr. Mengele came, and Mandl said, "Children are having a good life here, they have never had it better".

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** Did you see defendant Brandl beating prisoners?

**Witness:** I can confirm that defendant Brandl was also dreaded at the camp. She never carried a rod because she always hit people with her hand on their faces. In 1942, when the women's camp was still at the men's camp, she participated in the first selections. I did not see this myself, but I heard stories to that effect.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** You stated that Mandl assisted in selections and sent people to the gas chambers, especially children.

**Witness:** Mandl used to be present at the ramp.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** With this question, I wanted to clarify if defendant Mandl only sorted children or also adults?

**Witness:** It applied to everybody.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** So she sent people to the camp and to the gas chambers?

**Witness:** That is correct. If a mother was holding a child in her arms, she was sent directly to a gas chamber. I remember when a transport came on which there was a grandmother, mother, and child. On the other side of the wires stood their sister, a prisoner. The prisoner



shouted to her sister, who had just arrived at the ramp, telling her to pass the baby to the grandmother or she would be gassed. The mother passed the child to the grandmother and saved her life that way.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** You mentioned that in October 1944 a larger number of women was selected and sent to a crematorium. Can we specify this number?

**Witness:** It was upward of 500.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** During the investigation, you testified that during selections Mandl used a rod to drive the women designated for gassing.

**Witness:** It was not like that. In January 1943, a large selection was carried out, a so-called general roll call, in a meadow in front of the camp. Female prisoners spent the entire day there. All the camp authorities were present, and so was Mandl. Then, the women were ushered in through the camp's gate, at which Mandl stood, holding a whip. Those prisoners who were running slowly were taken to block 21, which was the death block. From there, they were transported to be gassed at the crematorium. I remember that when we arrived at the camp, the block elders threatened us, saying, "you step out of line, you go to block 21".

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** Mandl had a special method of beating. Did she beat people often, repeatedly, or were these isolated incidents?

**Witness:** A prisoner was not allowed to approach her at all. An order was issued, stipulating that female prisoners were not even allowed to walk down a camp street, but were supposed to move through ditches, in the mud. If a female prisoner was walking down a street and was spotted by Mandl, then Mandl beat her up. I remember an incident whereby a woman suffering from malaria came close to Mandl, having failed to notice her – she was severely beaten for that.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** Did the delousing carried out at the camp have some significant effects as regards the killing of bugs?

**Witness:** There were no effects whatsoever.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** But I hear that people died in the process. So delousing killed people instead of lice?



**Witness:** During such delousing, women stood naked for long hours, regardless of the season. Their dresses were dripped in some liquid and returned to them wet. At the slightest opportunity, everything they had received from their families in parcels was taken away from them. Then, this was done differently, namely, every Sunday, a doctor had to check on every patient of theirs, and if a patient had lice, they were set aside to be deloused in a different way.

**Presiding Judge:** Are there any further questions?

**Defense attorney Walas:** Who made decisions about issuing clothes and underwear? Did defendant Brandl carry out orders or did she make the decisions herself?

**Witness:** Defendant Brandl was in charge of the *Bekleidungskammer*. She got the orders about issuing clothes from her superiors, but she decided which clothes to issue. As regards block elders, they always got better items. I am categorically stating that prisoners' clothes were grossly insufficient.

**Presiding Judge:** Are there any further questions for the witness?

**Prosecution:** No.

**Defense:** No.

**Presiding Judge:** Then the witness is excused.