



## ELEONORA MAKOWSKA

Warsaw, 10 November 1947. Member of the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, Judge Halina Wereńko, interviewed the person named below as a witness, without an oath. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the obligation to speak the truth, the witness testified as follows:

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<b>Name and surname</b>	Eleonora Makowska, <i>née</i> Makowska, former prisoner of the concentration camps in Ravensbrück and Buchenwald
<b>Parents' names</b>	Wacław and Jadwiga, <i>née</i> Kozłowska
<b>Date of birth</b>	28 September 1904, Wilno
<b>Religious affiliation</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Place of residence</b>	Milanówek, Parkowa Street 9
<b>Citizenship and nationality</b>	Polish
<b>Education</b>	Warsaw School of Economics
<b>Occupation</b>	head of the printing department at the "Dorgan" cooperative

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On 13 December 1943, I was arrested by the Gestapo on charges of printing illegal fliers. On 4 April 1944, I was transported from the Pawiak prison, together with about fifty other women, to the concentration camp in Ravensbrück, where I received the number 34340. On 15 August 1944, together with about a thousand female prisoners, I was transported to Magdeburg and assigned to a *kommando* of the Buchenwald camp, where I received the number 40360. I stayed in Magdeburg until 13 April 1945.

The *kommando* was a concentration camp, whose prisoners were employed at the "Polte" arms factory. The factory produced weapons and ammunition, employing 1.8 thousand



workers, who were divided into four categories: 1) German civilians, 2) Italian and French prisoners of war, 3) foreign laborers sent over by the *Arbeitsamt*, mostly Russians, 4) prisoners of concentration camps.

The camp for the prisoners employed at the factory was located on the factory premises and consisted of six thousand prisoners, mostly from the Ravensbrück camp. There were two thousand Polish women, about two thousand Russian women, and about two hundred Jewish women. At the beginning of 1945, a transport of a thousand Jews from Stutthof arrived.

I do not know the name of the factory director and I never saw him. I never saw the person on the photograph I have been shown (the witness was shown a photo with the inscription Nathusius Hans Friedrich 29 14155, sent with a letter from the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland of 25 October 1947, No. 2617/47) because the prisoners did not have contact with the director.

The commander in Magdeburg was *Scharführer SS Oberaufseherin* Anna Fridrichs (I am not completely sure of her name). I heard that the factory management paid the camp about five marks a day for each prisoner, but the camp was in charge of supplies. In other factories, the management had some insight into the life of the camp, and even for the sake of work efficiency, they improved the living conditions of the prisoners. At the "Polte" factory, the management had no influence over the prisoners' living conditions in the camp, and they gave the camp authorities absolute freedom to finish off the prisoners.

The conditions in the camp were as follows: the prisoners lived in wooden barracks without floors and ceilings. The roof was leaky and rain would fall inside; the barracks were not heated. The sewage system was out of order due to numerous bombings. During five months, starting from December 1944, I never washed myself. At that time, the sewage system was operating at the factory, but prisoners were severely punished for washing themselves there. The prisoners wore rags and they were not given stockings in winter. Food was not nutritious; we usually ate unseasoned rutabaga.

Because of the dirt and cold, scabies were very common. Due to the fact that the camp had been built for the prisoners to work in it, the sick were not kept in the camp, but were gradually sent to a death camp (such as Bergen-Belsen), so the sick did not report to the hospital and people often died while operating machines at work. On 22 November 1944,



due to a high fever, I was sent to the hospital and, on the same day, I was sent by the camp commander, along with other sick women, to clean rubbish bins for twelve hours without a break in the rain. Afterwards, I tried to avoid the hospital.

The prisoners, unlike other workers, were not allowed access to the factory hospital and infirmary. Other workers were not allowed to talk to female prisoners or give them anything. We had the roll call system in the camp, just like in concentration camps: two roll calls per day, lasting several hours each.

The working conditions at the factory were as follows: we worked in two shifts – day and night; the prisoners worked by day for a week and then a week by night. The work lasted twelve hours and we had a half-hour break for dinner, [which was] water with rutabaga from the camp. From January 1945, we also worked on Sundays and holidays.

Every worker had to meet efficiency targets, which were constantly increased by the factory management. There were also bonuses for meeting efficiency targets, but the prisoners received the bonuses in the form of powder and pencils, although writing was strictly forbidden by the regulations. The majority of Polish women and I refused to accept such bonuses; however, they demanded our signatures on the list confirming that we accepted the bonuses anyway. There were no repressive measures for not accepting such “bonuses.”

My task was to check ammunition. It was very hot there, and afterwards we had to leave wearing the same clothes and stand in snow and cold during a roll call. My job consisted in constantly placing ammunition into a machine, but I had to carry it in 30-kilogram boxes. The target was set at 1.5 tons of ammunition per day, that is, forty 30-kilogram boxes, plus scraps that we discarded. The machine was situated above the level of my head and I had to constantly bring more ammunition and place it into the machine – I was not allowed to sit down even for a moment. If the machine was empty, a pin popped out, which was a signal for the foreman, who stood on a platform and could immediately see it. The foreman would immediately transfer such a prisoner to the paint shop or report the offense to the SS woman from the camp, who was always present in the room. Then, the prisoner was punished in the camp.

The worst working conditions were in the paint shop, where only prisoners worked. Their task was to rinse the ammunition in a hot solution that emitted acetone gases.



As a punishment, prisoners were locked in a dark bunker in the camp: 1) with a blanket and in clothes, 2) with a blanket, without clothes, 3) without a blanket and without clothes.

There were also individual punishments, penal roll calls on Sunday, forced standing at night, and starvation.

The only moment we could have some rest was during an alarm, but then we were squeezed in basements with low ceilings covered in sewage pipes. There was no place to sit; we were all sweaty.

Because of the working and camp conditions described above, the mortality rate was high, [but] I cannot provide statistics.

On 13 April 1945, six thousand prisoners were evacuated. We were herded on foot to the Ravensbrück camp. Five hundred people from that transport reached Ravensbrück alive, so not many prisoners survived.

I worked with Helena Kukulak (currently residing in Szczecin, Baden Powella Street 28) and Stanisława Kowalewska, who worked in the paint shop (if I remember correctly), currently working at the Infant Jesus Hospital on Oczki Street in Warsaw.

At this point, the report was concluded and read out.