



## LUCJAN PUCHAŁA

On 26 October 1945, in Kosów, Judge Z. Łukasziewicz interviewed the person specified below as a witness, without swearing him in. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

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<b>Forename and surname</b>	Lucjan Puchała
<b>Age</b>	48
<b>Names of parents</b>	Jan
<b>Place of residence</b>	Wólka-Okraglik, Sokółów county
<b>Occupation</b>	level crossing attendant with Polish State Railways
<b>Religious affiliation</b>	Roman-Catholic
<b>Criminal record</b>	none

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I worked on the railways at the Małkinia station during the occupation. In June 1942 I was assigned to be in charge of the construction of a railway track branch from the Treblinka station to the so-called gravel pit. The construction started on 1 June.

Being the person in charge I received a pass in German, which I submit now. At first, we did not know what the purpose of the railway track branch was; it was not until the end of the construction that I learnt, from conversations of the Germans, that the branch line was to run to a camp for Jews. The construction continued for two weeks and came to an end on 15 June. At the same time as the construction of the railway track branch, earthworks were carried out. The person in charge was a German, an SS captain.

At first, in order to carry out the earthworks, Polish laborers were used, the ones from the labor camp which was already operational at Treblinka; then they started bringing Jews from



Węgrów and Stoczek Węgrowski using vehicles. Two or three vehicles full of Jews arrived every day. Several dozen people were killed daily by the supervising SS-men and Ukrainians out of the laborers who were brought to work; so, when I looked from my workplace at the area where the Jews were working, I could see that it was always covered in corpses.

The laborers who were brought were used to dig deep ditches and to build various huts.

I know, in particular, that a building made of brick and concrete was erected, in which – as I learnt later – there were chambers for exterminating people. I heard that there were eight chambers like that, and that each of them could hold about 700 people.

At the same time, huge fences were erected surrounding the camp premises, with another fence inside, around the building containing the chambers.

On the first day of July 1942, after we had finished working on the branch line, I was sent to work as a member of the administration of the gravel pit, where I worked until 14 May 1943, i.e. until I was put in the labor camp.

Since the gravel pit was near the extermination camp, I was able to observe many facts connected with the operation of the camp. I know that right after 1 July 1942 three *Bagier* diggers were brought in, and used to dig pits that were several dozen meters long, about fifteen meters deep and about ten meters wide. On the day when the work on the railway track branch was completed, the building intended for housing the gas chambers was almost ready.

Right from the middle of July, railway transports of Jews started to arrive. At first, there was one transport a day, sometimes two. Transports were brought onto the track in groups of 20 wagons each, since the railway track branch could not hold more. There were from 200 to 280 people in each wagon (inscriptions in chalk on the wagons).

Working in the gravel pit, I was able to observe the area of the camp from the top of a mound. I know that after a transport arrived, SS-men and Ukrainians threw Jews out of the wagons and separated men from the women and children. After they had been separated, they were ordered to strip naked and were then driven into a courtyard and killed with machine guns. The corpses were buried in the previously prepared pits.



This method was used until approximately the middle of August 1942, when the pits full of corpses and covered only with earth opened up as a result of decomposition of the corpses, and there was a horrible stench. Then, the transports were put on hold for about two weeks and during that time the top surface of the pits was cemented.

From about 1 September 1942 the operation of the camp intensified. That was the time when the chambers had already been operational and people started to be exterminated in large numbers. There were two or even three transports arriving every day without a break, each consisting of 60 wagons.

I am certain that during that time, until about January 1943, there were never fewer transports per day than two. After New Year's Day 1943 the number of transports was considerably lower, but I cannot give any more details regarding this matter.

As for the cremation of corpses, it already started in the autumn of 1942. From winter onwards, it seems after Himmler's inspection, the wholesale cremation of corpses started and – as I heard – Himmler issued an order which specified that the gold teeth of the victims were to be extracted.

There was a number of Jewish laborers always used in the extermination camp. They were treated in a cruel way and killed in large numbers. I saw myself, in the autumn of 1942, 18 Jews who buried corpses be killed. These corpses were lying in a field outside the camp and I think they were the corpses of people who had tried to escape from the camp. The Ukrainians supervising the burial of these corpses then killed the 18 Jews who had previously dug a grave and gathered the corpses.

After the uprising, which took place in August 1943, there was still a number of laborers left used to carry out the liquidation of the camp. The area of the camp was ploughed and sown. A Ukrainian, called Strebel, was settled there as a farmer.

The laborers whom I mentioned above, who were used to liquidate the camp, were loaded into wagons and were then taken out of the wagons in groups of ten and executed.

A number of them was transported away to Majdanek.

The camp was finally liquidated at the end of 1943 and the beginning of 1944.



The camp was manned by SS-men and Ukrainians, whose names I do not remember.

As for the labor camp in Treblinka, as I already mentioned above, it was located at a small distance from the extermination camp. I was put in it on 14 May 1943. I had been sentenced to six months for delivering packages of food to the camp. One day, my house had been searched and they had found packages and letters to people in the camp. I had been sentenced to a stay in the camp by the commandant of the camp, van Eupen. When I was put in the camp, there were between 500 and 1,000 Poles and about 3,000 Jews there.

The camp was divided into two parts. In the first part were Jewish craftsmen living in separate huts and workshops in which they worked. In the other part were huts for Polish and Jewish manual laborers. The manual laborers were sent by rail to work in Małkinia and the other group worked in the gravel pit.

Large numbers of Jews were killed at work. I remember that they brought 20–30 corpses from Małkinia every day. Jews were also killed in large numbers when working at the gravel pit, and it also happened that people were buried alive there.

Poles were also killed and I remember at least six incidents which I witnessed. I also know that in the morning one could often come across corpses of Jewish women whom the Germans had taken to the casino to have some fun with.

In the autumn of 1943, typhus epidemic broke out in the camp. Together with Paciorek, a doctor from Żyrardów, I volunteered to look after the ill people. I have a list of 147 people who died of typhus between 12 November and 20 December 1943. I will submit a copy of the list.

In the woods located near the camp, there were constant executions, and, as far as I know, there are 32 graves there.

As for the provision of food, it consisted of 15 decagrams of bread, black coffee without sugar and a thin soup.

The witness interview report was read out to the witness and he confirmed it by signing it on each page.