



JECHIEL RAJCHMAN (HENRYK ROMANOWSKI)

On 12 October 1945, in Łódź, 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:

Forename and surname	Jechiel Rajchman (Henryk Romanowski)
Age	33
Names of parents	Efraim
Place of residence	Łódź, Piramowicza Street 8
Occupation	director of a factory
Religious affiliation	Judaism
Criminal record	none

On 10 October 1942 I arrived at Treblinka in a transport of Jews from the Lublin Voivodeship (towns: Lubartów, Ostrów, Łęczna, Parczew and Kamionka). The transport consisted of about 12,000 people, with each wagon containing about 150 people. The wagons had been loaded at the railway station in Lubartów.

After the arrival at the Treblinka railway station, the wagons were moved onto the ramp of the camp in groups. In my group, the men and women were ordered to strip naked and to fold their clothes. Then, a number of naked men was selected to carry the clothes. After the work had been completed (I had also been selected to do it), one of the Germans asked if there was a barber among us. I then volunteered as a barber and was ordered to get dressed again; I was then sent into the area of Camp no. 2 (in which there were gas chambers) in order to shave the naked women.



The shaving took place in a single chamber, the first one, which had been turned into a barber's shop.

The building housed ten gas chambers, each of them sixty four square meters and about two meters high. The entrance into each chamber led from the corridor; outside, each chamber had a hatch that could be lifted up to remove corpses.

The killing of people consisted of pumping air out and pumping in the gas from the motor. The motor was located in the extension next to the chambers. I can remember that once when the frequency of the transports was lower, the Germans performed an experiment and did not pump the gas in; they only pumped the air out. After 48 hours, when the chamber was opened, there were still people in there showing signs of life.

Next to the building with the ten chambers was another smaller one with three chambers and with a motor too.

About 1,400 people were put into a single chamber in the building that housed ten large chambers. At the times when the extermination process was at its most intensive all 13 chambers were used.

After three days' work shaving women I was permanently assigned to Camp no. 2, where I worked until the outbreak of the uprising, initially as a corpse carrier, and later I extracted false teeth and gold crowns from the mouths of the corpses.

The cremation of corpses did not start on a large scale until January 1943, when the new head of Camp no. 2 arrived, an SS-man and an expert on the cremation of corpses. Then, they constructed five or six furnaces which consisted of concrete foundations with pieces of iron railway tracks put on them above the surface of the ground. On the top of this grate, about 2,500 corpses [extracted] from the pits by *Bagier* diggers were put at any one time and it was set on fire from the bottom up. Later, in the spring, the cremation intensified with the furnaces being constantly in operation almost until the outbreak of the uprising.

The pits from which corpses had been extracted were then filled with their ashes mixed with earth to cover up traces. The pits were not filled with ashes up to the top, but were covered with a thick layer of earth. Special attention was paid to not leaving any traces of



the extermination on the surface. A special group of laborers was even formed that had to gather bones and cremate them.

I remember that it once happened that in one pit, after the corpses had been removed, there were a lot of human remains and a liquid produced by decomposing corpses. A laborer was then forced to undress and to climb down into the pit. He had to take out all the remains until there was nothing left.

From my arrival at the camp until about 25 December 1942, there were about 10,000 people sent to the camp for extermination daily and sometimes up to 18,000. After New Year's Day, the frequency of transports decreased. I suppose that during that time, until the middle of May 1943, the frequency was about three transports a week. The last transport came in the middle of May 1943, from the Warsaw Ghetto.

There were about 300 Jewish laborers working constantly in Camp no. 2. They were treated cruelly and killed every day; at least 20 people out of those who were ill or weak were shot to death at the pits every day, and their number was constantly replenished with new ones from fresh transports.

As for the names of the German SS-men, I remember the surname Matias, an SS-*Unterscharführer*, who was the first commandant in this part of the camp. He was succeeded by the SS-*Scharführer* Karol Spezinger; I also remember the SS-*Unterscharführer* Lofl. There were also Ukrainians in the camp, who mistreated the laborers and the victims selected for extermination to the same degree as the Germans did.

During my whole stay in the camp I was a member of an underground organization, which staged a successful uprising on 2 August 1943. I took part in this uprising and I freed myself from the camp.

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