

JAKUB GORDON

On 17 May 1945 in Oświęcim, Jan Sehn, regional investigating judge, member of the Commission for the Investigation of German-Nazi Crimes in Oświęcim, on the motion, in the presence, and with the participation of Dr. Wincenty Jarosiński, deputy prosecutor for the Regional Court, in accordance with art. 254 and pursuant to art. 107, 109, and 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, interviewed as a witness Dr. Jakub Gordon, a former prisoner of the Auschwitz concentration camp, prisoner number 92 627, who testified as follows:

Name and surname	Jakub Gordon
Date and place of birth	20 June 1910 in Wilno
Names of parents	Ibram and Estera <i>née</i> Tabrycka
Occupation	medical doctor
Religious affiliation	Jewish
Nationality	Jewish
Citizenship	Polish
Place of residence before the arrest	Jeziory, Grodno county
Current place of residence	Auschwitz camp

On 12 July 1942, guerilla units raided the village of Jeziory, in Grodno county, and took some grocery items. On 13 July 1942, large units of police and Gestapo arrived in Jeziory and killed one of the guerillas, causing the rest to flee the village. My brother Mojżesz and I were arrested on 12 July 1942 on the pretext of aiding the guerillas. We were not interrogated, only they kept insisting that we had been helping the guerrillas and beat us indiscriminately with sticks, a bullwhip, and an iron rod. Beaten up, we were then transferred to the Grodno prison. There, we were separated. I ended up in Gestapo cell 2, and my brother in Gestapo cell 4. During

almost four weeks I was not interrogated once, nor was I beaten. In the meantime, prisoners from my cell and also from adjacent cells were taken out to the corridor almost daily. After they were taken out of the cells, we would hear loud screams and sounds of blows. The prisoners taken to the corridor were violently beaten with bullwhips and rods. After these tortures, they were thrust into cells half-alive. People would usually die after such a beating. The food we would get was very poor: 650 grams of coffee, or rather water, in the morning, 650 grams of soup for lunch and then for supper, and 100 grams of bread each day.

On 7 August 1942, two Gestapo men took me out of my cell for an interrogation in the Gestapo building on Horodniczańska Street. There were already several Gestapo men in the room where I was interrogated. They surrounded me and after collecting my personal data they kept insisting that I had been helping the guerillas and demanded that I confess and give up their whereabouts. I had no direct contact with the guerillas, but at the insistence of the local farmers and through their agency I was passing medications and dressing materials to them. Seeing that the Gestapo had no concrete evidence to incriminate me, I decided not to confess to aiding the guerillas. So, when I did not cave in to the Gestapo's demands to confess, they started to beat me violently and indiscriminately with rods and bare hands such that I almost passed out. However, this was not the worst part, because then, having tied my hands behind my back with some leather strip, they pulled me up a special contraption, a so-called pole, and I was hanging loose, not touching the floor, for around half an hour. After taking me off, the Gestapo men started to repeat the charges against me and wanted me to plead guilty, and when I denied the accusations once more, they beat me again. This interrogation lasted from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Finally, I had my hands and legs tied up with a leather strip and I was taken to the basement. The basement had no windows and no air circulation. It had not been cleaned at all and there was a lot of feces and urine on the floor, and the stench was terrible. I was kept there for two days, with no food or water. On 9 August 1942, I was taken back to the prison, without any further interrogation. I remained in the prison until 12 November 1942.

Over this entire period which I spent in the Grodno prison, I was able to personally witness so-called "transports". Roughly every two weeks, the names of around three quarters of the current prisoners were read out and then these people were sent off. The "wardens" at the Grodno prison told us that these prisoners were all being taken to the so-called tenth front and executed there. The overall number of inmates, however, was always sufficient, because

new transports arrived daily. On 13 November 1942, all the Jews were called out and told they were going to be released. There were seven Jews, including myself. We were ordered to get in a van, warned against trying to escape – on pain of death – and transported to the Kiełbasin camp, near Grodno, which was called “Lager Losowna” in German.

The Kiełbasin camp was built completely underground. It consisted of six blocks. Each block had 16 barracks. During my time in the camp there were 400 prisoners in each barrack. The barracks were completely dark and, being located in the ground, they were very damp. The camp was built by the Germans, who initially populated it with Russian POWs. In 1941, there were 22,000 such POWs. During my time in the camp, I treated *Oberscharführer* Karol Rinzler, the camp’s commandant, and when he was drunk, he told me that these 23,000 prisoners were reduced to 300 over one winter, and these, in the spring of 1942, were then transferred to another camp. In November 1942, after the camp was emptied of POWs, Jews from Grodno and Sokółka counties were moved there. In total, there were 29,000 Jews there. It was a transition camp, from which prisoners were sent to Treblinka and Auschwitz. Transports departed once or twice a week, and new transports came in in their place.

The conditions at the camp were dire because there was no water and the two hand-operated wells which were supposed to serve the entire camp broke down every day. The water they supplied was non-potable. Rinzler ordered that we get unpeeled potatoes with water once a day, but because there was either no water or no firewood, we received a warm dish every two days, half a liter each. The only product we received daily was bread, 170 grams each. Due to these nutritional conditions and camp hygiene, diseases started to spread, prisoners soon turned into “mussulmans”, that is, they lost all strength, and the mortality rate rose very high.

The camp was guarded by the German police and military and governed by *Oberscharführer* Rinzler, with some administrative functions fulfilled by the *Judenrat*. In my opinion, members of the *Judenrat*, wanting to save their own lives, were dishonest toward us. They reassured the prisoners earmarked for transport that they were going to Auschwitz for labor and that it was nothing sinister, and they convinced us because we did not have detailed information about Auschwitz. They kept from us the fact that some transports were sent to Treblinka, because we knew full well that this was an extermination camp. The police and the military guarding the camp rarely entered the premises, but when they did, they beat prisoners for no reason. Rinzler stood out for particular cruelty. He was a tall, athletically built man of

considerable strength. He beat and killed prisoners for no reason, shooting at them and killing them with whatever object happened to be handy. I remained at the Kiełbasin camp until its liquidation on 19 December 1942. On that day, all prisoners who were still at the camp, that is, around 3,000 individuals, were marched to the Grodno ghetto. Those seriously ill were transported in horse carriages sent by the ghetto authorities. I was among the last ones to depart because I had been loading the sick onto the carriages. At the Kiełbasin camp, I came across my parents, wife, and child, and together we arrived at the Grodno ghetto, where I remained for a month.

On 19 January 1943, the liquidation of the Grodno ghetto commenced. It lasted five days. The Gestapo came to the ghetto, assisted by the military, and ordered the Jews to assemble in the synagogue. From there, transports of around 3,000 people departed for a depot in Łosośna, from where, having been loaded into wagons, they were transported to Auschwitz. In the process, the Jews were treated in a particularly brutal manner and in the streets you could see scores of men, women, and children who had been killed or executed. My family and I were transported to Łosośna on 21 January 1943. We were loaded into cargo wagons in groups of 120 people per wagon. Inside, we found some bread and sausage: approximately half a kilo of bread and 25 grams of sausage per person. The wagons were then locked up by the SS men who had been escorting us and the train departed for Auschwitz at noon.

We arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau on the night of 22 January. During the journey, we were not given anything to drink, and if a civilian attempted to pass us some snow or water, they were shot at by the SS men. When the train stopped at Auschwitz, we heard shouts: "*los, schnell, raus*", and also cries and sobs of the prisoners. We were ordered to step out of the train swiftly and leave our luggage aside. The entire transport was told to form rows of five and then SS men armed with rods, sticks, bullwhips, etc. divided the newcomers into four groups. The first one included young men, myself and my brother among them; the second one included young women fit for work, the third one consisted of elderly men and young boys, and the fourth one was made up of elderly women, women with children, and children. The latter two groups were loaded onto trucks and taken – as I later learned – straight to the gas chambers, where they were poisoned. The groups of the young were ordered to go to the Birkenau camp. From the entire transport of 2,650 people, 265 men and 80 women were sent to the camp. From among my family only I myself and my brother were left. I personally witnessed as my parents, wife, and child were loaded onto trucks, which were to take them to the crematorium.

Immediately after we arrived at the camp, we were thrust into some block, from where groups of prisoners were then taken to another one. At that block, the so-called *Effektenkammer* [property storeroom], we were thoroughly searched, and it should be mentioned that the prisoners were divested of everything, even handkerchiefs. The search was supervised by two SS men and carried out by prisoners, who sorted out the confiscated belongings according to types: jewelry, money, fountain pens, and other items. Immediately after the search, prisoners were sent to the bathhouse, where we had our civilian clothes taken away and our heads shaved, and then we were ordered to take a cold shower and were issued underwear and camp garments. Each of us received a shirt, pants, and light clothing. We did not get caps. Each of us could spot huge lice on the underwear. After the shower, we were taken to the field and despite the freezing cold we had to stand in rows up until the morning roll call. Already before the roll call, duty prisoners drilled us in taking our caps off and putting them back on in tempo. Now I remember that it was not on the same day but only two days later, after we were issued caps. After the roll call, we were sent to block 22, the so-called *Aufnahmeblock* [admission block], where we stated for the record our personal details and had prisoner numbers tattooed on our arms. After we were recorded, we were once again stood in rows in the field and remained like that until the evening roll call. In the meantime, at lunchtime, we were each given one liter of kale soup. We had no spoons, so we had to drink this soup. Practically none of us could eat, anyway, since we were very tired and anxious. Then, sick elderly prisoners, so-called muslims, came up to us and asked us for the soup we had not eaten. Each of us was happy to oblige, but that turned out to be to the detriment of both parties, because if one of the block seniors noticed this, he beat both the one who shared his soup and the one who received it. As a result, many muslims died. After the evening roll call, we were told to go to block 19, a quarantine block. We did not get supper that day. Immediately after we entered the block, we were told to go to sleep on the bunks. There were some 1,000 people there, so the space was very cramped and it was difficult to find any room. If a prisoner did not lie down in time or said something to a comrade, duty prisoners and block seniors beat him with rods. In general, over the two days I spent at this block, we were beaten for no reason or for the slightest infractions. We remained in the block only at night, while during the day we had to stand in rows in the field, all day long.

For breakfast, we got two liters of tea, in one bowl, and we were to share it between ten people. Since everybody was very thirsty, only the first couple of people got to have a drink,

while the others got nothing. Every evening, we got 250 grams of bread each (instead of the 350 grams we were entitled to) and some margarine, marmalade, or sausage. These were microscopic portions, a few grams per person, since the rest was appropriated by the duty prisoners. On 24 or 25 January 1943, together with the majority of prisoners from my transport, I was assigned to labor block 26, and incorporated into the *Strassenbau* [road construction] detail. Immediately after the morning roll call, this detail, consisting of 200 people, under the command of German Kapo Martin, a cruel man, was ordered to form rows and we marched to work, one and a half or two kilometers outside the camp. The labor was very hard: it involved hacking down the ground's elevation with a pickax, then grinding stone, spreading it with shovels across the road, and firming it. We worked with no lunch break, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. During work, for no reason at all, prisoners were beaten so severely that each day we cleaned the labor site of up to a dozen or so corpses. The number of corpses grew by the day so that at one point we had to transport them on a special rolling cart. New prisoners were added daily to the commando so that the numbers would be sufficient. We would return to the camp at 4 p.m., which was the roll call time. After the roll call, which sometimes lasted a few hours, we were given dinner and then, at the block entrance, we got some bread and the so-called rations, and we were forced to go to sleep on the bunks.

I worked with the *Strassenbau* detail until March 1942. This whole time we were not allowed to have a shower once, and there was nowhere we could clean up, nor was there any water we could use. We were given no fresh underwear. If someone wanted to wash himself with snow and was spotted by a duty prisoner, this person was then beaten. Due to these hygienic conditions, contagious diseases started to spread quickly, such as spotted typhus, dysentery, scabies, and diarrhea. The mortality rate at the camp was huge. At my block, the daily death toll was initially two prisoners, then it was eight, ten, twenty, until it was fifty, not including those who died or were killed during labor. The situation was similar in other blocks. The camp authorities did nothing that might indicate that they were trying to prevent these diseases. The working conditions took a considerable toll on my health, I moved with great difficulty, was exhausted and covered in bruises; I weight 39 kilograms, and I still had to pretend that I was working as if I was healthy because I was afraid I could be killed. I felt that if I continued to work with this detail, I would not last long. I then asked one of the older prisoners, a doctor, whose name I do not know, for help. Following his advice, I approached the infirmary clerk in hospital block 12, a Pole, whose name was Karol, and his second name

was Ordowski, I believe. I told him I was a doctor and that I could not work with such a hard detail, asking him to get me a job that would be linked to my profession. Next day, Ordowski, delivering on his promise, sent me to block 23 – the *Aufnahmeblock* – as an orderly. Aside from myself, the block seniors and six duty prisoners were also working at that block as functional prisoners.

The block senior was Pinkus Chmielnicki, a Jew from Łódź. I don't remember the names of the duty prisoners. Both he and the duty prisoners beat people for the slightest infractions. However, Leon Stachowiak, a Pole, my previous block elder at block 26, was worse. He not only beat people but also killed them. I was there until mid-April 1943, and, having more time and greater opportunities to move around other blocks, I witnessed the mass murders of prisoners. There were a few ways of doing this.

Immediately after a transport was received, during a so-called selection, around 90 percent of the newcomers were sent straight to the gas chambers. Out of those who were still alive then, many died while working with their details. Many died of natural causes, following widespread epidemics and hunger. Many prisoners died at the hands of block seniors and functional prisoners, and, finally, scores of people died after selections carried out in hospital blocks and among the sick in regular blocks in the camp. Essentially, there were three hospital blocks at Birkenau: blocks 7, 8, and 12. Block 12 was the least troublesome, since the lowest number of people were taken from there for gassing. Actually, it was only from block 7, and sometimes from block 8, that people were sent directly to gas chambers. All the sick selected to be gassed were first transferred to block 7. If the patient reported to the infirmary – no matter what his affliction was – he was admitted to the hospital, a short medical record was compiled, and then, if the disease was chronic, a German doctor performed a selection and arbitrarily collected the records of the sick whom he would condemn to death. These records were then copied by the *Schreibstube*, and a list was drawn up according to which people were then taken to be gassed. During each such selection, around 80 percent of patients were taken away. Selections were carried out by German doctors, aided by Roman Zenkter, a Polish prisoner, number 20 000-something. He was a particularly malevolent man, which was reflected in his treatment both of doctors and orderlies and of prisoners, whom he beat for no reason whatsoever. He was a coward and he fawned on the Germans, and, in fulfilling his duties, he was often more zealous than the Germans themselves. Aside from selections, round-ups also took place in the camp, whereby SS men took up their positions at the gate,

and when details departed for labor, they randomly selected prisoners, whom they sent to block 18. It sometimes happened that when the feebler prisoners noticed that a round-up was taking place they would escape, hiding in latrines, garbage heaps, or wherever they could. SS men and duty prisoners would catch these people and send them to block 18 as well.

Block 18 was an unfinished barrack, with no fittings. During my time at the camp, there were around a dozen such round-ups, but I personally witnessed only three or four. Prisoners caught in the process were detained for two or three days, without food or water. Then, vans drew up, onto which these prisoners were loaded and then taken to the crematories. This worked as follows: Before the prisoners were loaded onto vans, *Rapportführer* [report leader] Palitsch entered the block, assisted by SS men, and the latter chased the prisoners outside. Whosoever could still walk had to drag himself to the van. The others were dragged by orderlies appropriated from the hospital blocks. Often, these prisoners were actually dead already. Not having had anything to drink for three days, prisoners suffered terribly from thirst, and when outside, they tried to eat some snow to quench it. In such cases, Palitsch and other SS men beat these prisoners mercilessly with rods. The same took place when the prisoners were loaded onto vans. All of them knew they were going to meet their death, so many shouted to the Germans, "You'll pay for this one day, your time will come". Then, the SS men beat these people with exceptional cruelty.

I watched the behavior and appearance of the prisoners as they were about to meet their death. None of them cried, but their gazes were distracted and their faces greyish-green. I had remained in block 22 until mid-April 1943, when I was moved to block 3, the so-called *Reserweblock*, which housed prisoners who had just been discharged from the hospital. I often witnessed situations whereby a prisoner discharged from the hospital as "fit" was in such a condition that he died two days later.

At this point the report was adjourned until 18 May 1945.

Continuation of the report from the hearing of witness Dr. Jakub Gordon, compiled on 18 May 1945. The constitution of the commission as previously.

Witness Dr. Jakub Gordon continues his testimony:

When I was at block 3, I came across Kamiński, a patient of mine from Porzecze in Grodno county. Kamiński served as Kapo with the *Sonderkommando* [special detail] and lived in block 2, located directly adjacent to block 3, where I lived. This state of affairs made communicating with him easier. Normally, you were not allowed to communicate with *Sonderkommando* prisoners. Kamiński trusted me because I was his countryman and he often told me about the *Sonderkommando* and the work in the crematorium, but I do not remember which one – I think it was crematories II and III. Kamiński was a Jew and a credible man. He came to the camp in November or December 1942 and was immediately assigned to the *Sonderkommando*. His number was 80 000-something. Kamiński told me that both Jewish and mixed transports underwent selections already at the Birkenau ramp and were transported from there straight to a crematorium. Just a small percentage of people were sent to work in the camp. After prisoners arrived at the crematorium, they were told to undress and were thrust – men and women alike – into a room which looked like a bathroom. The sign above the door read "Bathroom and disinfection room". This sign was replaced depending on the nationality of the transport which was about to be gassed. Between 2,000 and 2,500 people – or even more – were driven inside the gas chamber. Since the space was crammed and people did not want to crowd in there, dogs trained specifically for such occasions were unleashed on them. Once the chamber was full, the door was locked up and a German camp doctor peeped through the porthole to see if everything was in order. In the meantime, groaning, crying, and sobbing could be heard coming from the chamber. People trampled each other and a lot of them died that way before the gassing began. Having ascertained that everything had been done properly, the doctor ordered an SS man standing by to throw in the zyklon, saying, "Give 'em something to eat". After this order was carried out, the doctor again assessed the prisoners inside the chamber. All of them died after approximately 12 minutes, but usually they were still in a standing position, because they were so tightly packed. Already before the gas was thrown in, fans were started to suck the air outside. These fans were started again after the gassing, this time to pump out the gas and pump in the air. Then, the *Sonderkommando* accessed the chamber and moved the bodies to the elevator next to the chamber. This elevator took the bodies one story up,

where the crematorium was located. There, the special *Goldarbeiters* commando proceeded to pull out the gold teeth from the mouths of the gassed, while other prisoners shaved women's heads, their hair then being loaded into huge bags. Afterward, the corpses were loaded into furnaces and incinerated. The burned bones were then ground to ash, which was removed to a river. I personally witnessed as the ash from the incinerated people was scattered across the roads, and we were ordered to firm it. Daily, the crematorium could incinerate as many people as were killed in the chamber in a single gassing. If there were more bodies, the crematorium worked around the clock. By August 1943, that is by the time I was transferred to Auschwitz I, approximately 2.5 million people had been gassed and incinerated, according to what Kamiński told me. From what I know, Kamiński was shot dead in the camp, allegedly for staging a mutiny in the *Sonderkommando*. Recounting these events, Kamiński often cried, and he once told me that "if the crematorium walls could speak, very few Germans would be alive after the war".

In June 1942, together with all block 3 prisoners and the entire Birkenau camp, I was transferred to another location, a kilometer away from the original one, to *Bauabschnitt D*, and from there, on 9 August 1942, together with a group of nurses, doctors, dentists, and pharmacists, to Auchwitz I. There, I was placed in block 21. It was a sanitation and surgical block. At first glance, it seemed as if the conditions – especially hygiene-wise – were better than at Birkenau. The blocks were brick-built, had toilets and water for cleaning up. But later it turned out that the camp was no different from other extermination camps and was part of a huge death factory.

Just like at Birkenau, selections at the hospital were carried out here. Such selections took place every week, or at least every two weeks. On each occasion, 50 percent of the sick were taken away. Selections also took place from among the prisoners in other blocks. When details marched out to work, SS men randomly selected the feeblest of the prisoners and sent them to be gassed. During each such selection, around 1,000 people were picked up, who were then placed in some block for a day or two, and then transported in vans to Birkenau. While at block 21, I could see what was happening in block 11, where the SK [*Strafkompanie*, penal company] was located. This block saw transports of prisoners brought in from the camp itself or from those who had just arrived. The latter were called *Polizeihäftling* [police prisoners] in the camp. Those to be moved to the SK in block 11 from the camp were identified on the basis of random misdemeanors, or alternatively they were

those who the camp authorities were to liquidated on the orders from the Gestapo or some other authority. Ending up in block 11 meant a death sentence.

Each Friday, and sometimes twice a week, “hearings” were held in block 11 before the *Sondergericht* [special court]. They took place in the courtyard of block 11, so I could watch them. It might have been dangerous, because we were ordered to cover the windows with blankets, but we watched the activities of the *Sondergericht* anyway.

SS judges in military uniforms came in cars to block 11, and then they sat behind a table, while block 11 prisoners were brought before them. I did not hear what was read out to these prisoners and what they were asked about, but in any case such a hearing lasted about two minutes, after which the prisoner was taken back to the cell.

Within two to three hours, between 200 and 300 prisoners were tried. After the “hearings” were concluded, the SS judges left, and the prisoners who had been tried were taken back to the yard. These prisoners were then divided into three groups. One was usually two or three persons, another was up to a dozen, and the last one included the remaining convicts. I later learned that this last group was made up of people sentenced to death, while the first one was of people to be released. The medium group included prisoners sentenced by the court to time in the camp. The prisoners sentenced to death were then taken back to the block, where – as my comrades later told me – they were told to undress, and then duty prisoner Jakub, a man of great strength, took them away, one by one, to the so-called death wall. At that wall, the SS men who were then in the yard killed the prisoners with a shot in the back of the head, using a special gun that barely gave off a sound.

One day, our block senior told all the orderlies to go to the block 11 yard. It was on a Friday, after a *Sondergericht* session. Having arrived at the site, I saw a stack of corpses in a corner by the wall. We were ordered to load these corpses onto vans. There were around 200 bodies, including five women. We had to drag the corpses by the feet to a van parked nearby. Two prisoners stood by the van, who had to load the bodies. Sometimes there were survivors who had not died from their gunshots on the spot. Some of them were still groaning. Then, an SS man would come up and kill them with a shot through one eye. People of different religious affiliations and nationalities, both men and women, were executed in the yard of block 11. Among others, a 200-strong group of former Polish

officers was executed there. Russian POWs who the Germans suspected were officers, or worked as political commissars, or were members of the intelligentsia were all selected from transports and also executed in block 11.

My fellow doctors who worked in block 20 told me that patients suffering from spotted typhus and other diseases were killed there with intracardiac phenol injections. One day, in 1943 (I don't remember the exact date), around 167 boys under 16 years of age were brought there and also killed with phenol. The boys had been previously told they would be trained as orderlies. My comrades told me what the injection procedure looked like. The victim was sat on a chair, which resembled a dentist chair, and two other prisoners held his arms, while a third one, having wrapped a towel around the boy's head to cover his eyes, held him by the head. Then SS *Oberscharführer* Clair [Klehr] came up, drove a long needle through the boy's heart, and injected four grams of phenol. After the injection, the prisoner did not die instantly, but he was woozy. Then, the prisoners aiding in the injection took him to another room and tossed him on the ground there. He would die within several seconds. The room where this procedure was performed was located directly by the block entrance, to the left, while the bodies were stacked on the other side of the corridor, in the *Waschraum* [bathroom]. Lethal injections were used to murder a total of several thousand people, but I cannot tell how many exactly. More detailed information pertaining to this issue can be provided by Dr. Samuel Steinberg, currently residing in the Auschwitz camp.

While I was in block 21, I often came across patients on whom the Germans experimented with fertility loss. I had previously read extensively on this and conversations with prisoner-doctors led me to believe that experiments in that field were aimed at developing a method of preventing scores of people from procreating. Individuals selected for these experiments were young people, between 16 and 30 years of age, the fittest ones. Experiments were conducted at the Birkenau camp, in the women's section. There, x-ray sterilization was performed, with individual prisoners exposed to different radiation doses. Often, as a result of high radiation doses, the people exposed developed 3rd-degree burns, which led to many deaths. Sometime after the exposure, the patients went into surgery and had either both or one of the testicles removed, or sometimes even part of a testicle. The removed tissue was sent for histological examination to the Reich, to Wrocław, I believe. The surgeries were performed by Entress, a German medical doctor, and others, as well as by Dr. Dering, a prisoner-doctor. Dering was from Warsaw and was a Pole, who then became a *Reichsdeutsch* and was released from the camp.

Another type of an experiment was subcutaneous kerosene injections. The aim was to identify changes in tissue caused by this compound. I do not know if it was pure kerosene or a mixture. In any case, it was a kerosene preparation. Kerosene caused severe ulceration in patients, which did not heal well. After such an injection, skin was excised from the injection site and sent for examination. If the skin fragment was excised on the same day, the wound healed quickly, and if it was done after a couple of days, the healing process was very long.

These experiments were conducted in block 28 by SS *Hauptsturmführer* Fischer, a German doctor. Another type of an experiment was the examination of the effectiveness of different sedatives. Young men, mostly orderlies, were given the drug and forced to take it. The more resilient ones resisted the effects of the drug and were only befuddled for a while, while others, who were apparently administered higher doses, died. One day, two completely healthy prisoners died after taking these drugs, and on another day it was seven.

Women were also experimented upon. I personally saw a couple hundred women in block 10 at Auschwitz I (I later learned there were 460 of them) who did not work at all. Often, a female prisoner from that block was marched or carried to our camp, 21, for her to be surgically castrated. These surgeries were performed by German doctors and Dering. Previously, according to this woman, she had been sterilized through X-ray radiation. The surgery performed at block 21 concerned opening the abdomen and removing the ovaries. Up to 12 such procedures were carried out daily, and during my time, around a hundred were performed. Immediately after the surgery, the patients were taken to block 10. After the wounds healed, the women were sent to Birkenau to work or straight to the gas, and were replaced by others. My fellow doctors told me that the experiments performed on women had multiple stages. For example, cancer cells were planted onto the cervix. I suspect the idea was to examine the issue of cancer contagion. Next, part of the cervix was excised and sent for examination. Patients considered this one of the mildest procedures. Then, new metrosalpinography [hysterosalpinography] agents were tested. Metrosalpinography is a regular medical procedure, but is employed only when necessary, to determine the cause of infertility in a woman or identify other pathological changes in the birth canal. In the present case, however, the experiments were conducted on healthy women, in order to test new agents. After such experiments, women were sick for a while and complained of severe pain, but there were no fatal cases. Other procedures performed on women involved attempts at artificial fertilization and testing hormonal preparations. I do not know the technical side of

these experiments. They were carried out and supervised by Prof. Dr. Clauberg, a German. He was assisted by Dr. Samuel, a German Jew, who was later gassed.

I remained in block 21 until the Soviet troops entered Auschwitz. On 15 January 1945, we learned about the launch of a massive Soviet offensive. On the night of 17 January 1945, *Lagerartz* [camp doctor] Fischer and two of his medical service assistants came to the block and ordered us to take the blankets and go to the attic to get the documents stored there. They were watching so that nobody would hide any of these documents. Despite these measures, we managed to conceal some documents, which we submitted to the Soviet commission. We were taking the documents in front of block 11, where they burned all night long and into the morning. On 18 January, the evacuation of the camp commenced: healthy people were evacuated first and the hospitals began to be evacuated in the evening. The patients were evacuated on foot. Then, together with my two comrades, Dr. Wolman and Dr. Steinberg, I decided, paying no mind to the ramifications, to remain in the camp with the sick. Seeing this, the patients would also not report for transports. With the departure of the transports, SS men departed as well, so we remained in the camp completely unsupervised for almost a week. Then, we stormed the food storages and gave the food to the patients. We had no water or electricity. On 15 January, a considerable number of SS men came to the camp and ordered all those who could get out of bed to get ready for a transport. From their behavior we concluded that their intention was to execute us all. They placed us at the gate and we were just about to leave when two SS men came in a car. They discussed something with those who were supposed to escort us and moments later all of them left. Railway men later told us that these SS men had come to “liquidate the camp” for good and were supposed to leave at 7 p.m. But because the Soviet troops were approaching and shots could be heard, and the SS men could have easily been flanked, they scrapped their plans and took flight. On the next day, some German soldiers did come to the camp, but they only asked for some water and civilian clothes.

On the afternoon of 27 January 1945, Soviet troops entered the camp. I was in the camp when the Soviet commission investigating German crimes was working there. In the course of their proceedings, a letter in a bottle, written in Yiddish, was found buried in the ground. I translated the contents of this letter into Russian to the members of the commission. The letter’s author was prisoner Gradowski. I cannot tell you what the exact contents of this letter were, but I can describe it. The letter was composed for those who would find it after

the liberation of the camp, and the author described the terrible work that members of the *Sonderkommando* had to do, wrote about the plans for a *Sonderkommando* rebellion, which actually did later take place, in October 1944, and expressed his hope that the atrocious Nazi crimes would not go undiscovered and unpunished.

At this the report was concluded and after it was read out it was signed as a faithful record of the testimony of witness Dr. Jakub Gordon.