



EUGENIA BIEGA

Puławy, 10 December 1945. Judge F. Klaude interviewed the person named below as a witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, of the obligation to speak the truth and of the significance of the oath, the witness was sworn and testified as follows:

Name and surname	Eugenia Biega
Age	born in 1906
Parents' names	Karol and Maria
Place of residence	Puławy, Lubelska Street 23b
Occupation	dental surgeon
Religion	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none

I was arrested in Puławy on 24 February 1941. Until 23 September 1941 I was detained in the prison in Lublin, and on that day I was taken to the concentration camp in Ravensbrück as a political prisoner. I was part of a transport of some 170 women. Throughout our period of detention in the camp we were known as the Sondertransport, which was intended for all sorts of medical experiments.

Following our arrival we underwent six weeks of quarantine and did not perform any work during this period. We were accompanied in quarantine by a transport from Kraków, all of us – some three hundred women – jammed into one hall.

We were directly supervised by a so-called block warden, a German inmate by the name of Hermina, I do not know her surname, who terrorized us: she would readily beat us for

speaking (silence was ordered for the whole day), for leaving anything in the bathroom, etc. I would like to stress that the said Hermina came from Poznań. She had a dozen or so victims on her conscience, whom she reported to the authorities as unbalanced and abnormal, disturbing her peace and disrupting order in the block (these were all elderly or neurotic women); they were duly gassed to death. I would like to add that this was an established camp custom – the elimination of “unnecessary” people. I remember the surnames of the following women whom she turned in: Szczęsna from Warsaw (elderly), Morawska, Boguńska from Kraków.

Having passed through quarantine, I was sent to perform hard physical labor: constructing roads, felling trees, building houses (carrying bricks, lime, heavy beams), the construction of sewage systems, etc.; we were also used as draft animals to pull wagons filled with vegetables, rubbish, and snow. We worked from 6.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., with a half-hour lunch break. When during work the weaker women fainted, they would be made conscious by the female German overseers, the so-called *Aufseherins*, who would kick or beat them and often lock them up in the so-called bunker, where the victim would be kept for a few weeks in a completely dark and cold cell, with no bed or blanket and no food (a cup of black coffee and a slice of bread every other day).

From 14 December 1941 I was forced to work in the so-called *Betriebs*. We would sew straw boots for the soldiers and also uniforms, underwear and sheepskin coats. We worked day and night shifts, a week or two at night and then a week or two in the day. We were “chained” for 12 hours (we were not allowed to walk away from the machines) and controlled closely when we went to relieve ourselves. The SS *Aufseherin* who supervised us, by the surname of Gunkler, distinguished herself with her immense cruelty. She was a seamstress by profession, aged about 40, with ginger-black dyed hair and a face that was especially wild and brutal. Acting on her orders, one of the German inmates – following the arrival of our women at the workshop at 6.00 a.m. – would write down the numbers of the Polish prisoners so as to later call them out in order for us to relieve ourselves. The registration would last up to four hours (there were around 700 of us), and then the numbers were called out. A woman with the last number could remain unsummoned for a few days, and if she soiled herself she would receive a harsh penalty, for example being forced to stand for four hours (in the freezing cold) wearing only her skirt, with no underwear.

The following administered the *Betrieb*: Obietz, with an SS officer's rank, Graff, with an SS non-commissioned officer's rank, Binder, with an SS non-commissioned officer's rank, and Pitsch, also with an SS non-commissioned officer's rank. They usually came to the workshop drunk and beat up anyone – with fists in the face – for even the slightest infraction. To this day, I have a lump behind my left ear that resulted from being hit by Pitsch.

I would like to explain that these infractions included the incorrect sewing on of a button, breaking a needle in a machine, a machine breaking down (this was considered and punished as sabotage), etc. One Russian woman whose machine broke down was hit so hard on the head by Binder that she fell dead on the spot.

As a matter of fact, Binder was one of the foremost tormentors and the terror of all the workshops. When Teresa Śliwowska, a teacher at a secondary school in Zamość or Chełm, who was walking along with a heavy pile of sheepskin coats, failed to step out of his way, he hit her so hard in the face that her face was streaming with blood in an instant. Graff would walk between us with a thin rubber whip and hit the women in their faces. During this time we were terribly malnourished, nearly starving. In the morning we would be given a cup of black, unsweetened coffee; for lunch – a quarter liter of soup made from beet or rutabaga leaves, invariably with no fat, and two rotten jacket potatoes, completely inedible; while for dinner – barely one half liter of soup, similar to the one we got for lunch, and approximately 200 g of bread. What is more, from 1 April 1942 we were deprived of our winter clothing, including shoes and stockings. We received summer skirts and thin underwear and had to walk barefoot. Oftentimes, those guilty of infringements were thrown outside, having to spend a few hours in the cold. We remained in this state of undress until 1 October. I remained in the *Betrieb* until 4 October 1942, after which I was assigned to the dental station and employed there as a dental technician right up to the end of my period of detention in the camp, that is until 26 April 1945.

In May 1942 the entire Lublin transport (nine women had already been shot dead by that time, on 13 April 1942; I remember the following: Emilia Radecka, 28 years old, from Krasnystaw; Romualda Sekuł, 17 years old; Grażyna Chrostowska, 18 years old; Apolonia Chrostowska, 22 years old; Maria Mućko, 40 years old; Żytko, 35 years old; Maria Dobrowolska, 34 years old; Maria Apcio, 22 years old; Maria Wiśniewska, 32 years old – all of them from Lublin) was summoned to the camp administration, where we were stood in front of a committee

comprising the camp director, Koegel, *Oberaufseherin* Mandel, known throughout the camp for her cruelty, the senior camp physician, Schiedlausky (Schiedlausky from Zakopane), aged around 37, the no. 2 camp physician, Dr Rosenthal, the no. 3 camp physician, Dr Oberheuser (a woman), Professor Gebhardt, who ran a sanatorium for German war invalids in Hohenlychen near Ravensbrück, Professor Gebhardt's assistant, one Dr Fischer, and some lesser known persons. The committee looked at our legs and hands and after this we were simply sent back to work. On the next day a special instruction was issued for the Lublin transport, namely that the said transport could be employed only on the premises of the camp and was not to be sent to work outside. After a few days a certain group of people (from the Lublin transport), about 30, was recalled to stand before the same committee. Five women were picked from this group and taken to the camp hospital, the so-called *rewir* [from the German *Revier* – sick room, hospital; translator's note]. As we learned from the hospital personnel – Polish women – a small room had been prepared in the facility, with beds for five people; it was closely guarded by German SS nurses. Next, all the inmates who were working in the *rewir* that day were sent back to their block, with only the German SS nurses remaining in the hospital. The next day, when our column was walking to work and passing by the windows of the sick room, we were informed in secret by one of the five women who had been taken to the hospital that they had been put to sleep and upon waking discovered that their legs were bandaged from the ankle to the knee, and also that their legs had been incised during some sort of operation. All of the five were young girls, completely healthy, who had never complained of any leg ailments. The operatees were closely guarded by the SS nurses and access to them was impossible. When the nurses left the room the door would be locked shut. On the same day two healthy men were brought over from the adjacent male camp; they too underwent an experimental procedure and were taken back to the camp by ambulance. After five – six weeks the five women mentioned above returned to the block and we were then able to have a look at their leg wounds, which had not yet healed. The wounds, in all cases on the outside of the calf, were approximately 20 cm long and rather deep. They had been anesthetized with intravenous injections of Evipan [hexobarbital; translator's note], with their operations being performed by Professor Gebhardt in the presence of his assistant, Dr Fischer, and Dr Schiedlausky, Dr Rosenthal, Dr Oberheuser, and SS nurses. The operatees felt unwell, they were exhausted and unfit for work. Dr Schiedlausky issued an instruction whereby they were exempted from work and standing at roll-call. Later on, they gradually got back to normal, but one sign of the experiments remained – temperature spikes up to 40 degrees, which led to the formation

of abscesses near the wounds. Such recurring fevers, accompanied by the abscesses, were experienced throughout her detention in the camp by Janina Iwańska, 17 years old, from Lublin (present address: Łódź, Narutowicza Street 91, flat 9). A week after the return of the first five, the next group, numbering 12 or so women, was summoned – this time by name. These women had to report in person to the *Oberaufseherin*, from whose office they were taken to the sick room. The second group – and this held true for successive parties, too – was not subject to such strict supervision and the procedures that they underwent were not shrouded in such secrecy. A part of this group had incisions made on their calves, just like the women before them, with the difference however that their experience was more severe, for – as far as I know – their wounds were deliberately infected with malignant pyogenic bacteria, tetanus and gas gangrene. Three from this group: Zofia Stefaniak, Krystyna Dąbska, Aniela Sobolewska – all from Lublin – had bone procedures performed on both legs. Some time later, while I was working at the dental station, I had the opportunity to look at the radiogram of Aniela Sobolewska, which showed that fragments of the tibial bone (length 10 cm, width 2 – 3 cm) had been cut out. Those who underwent bone procedures had their legs put in plaster for a few months. Successive groups were operated on while I was already working at the dental station. When I arrived at the *rewir* (the dental station was located on its premises), the most serious experimental operations were being performed. During this time Maria Kraska (aged around 22) died in terrible agony, this due to the infection of her leg wound with tetanus. The disease progressed with all the symptoms typical of tetanus, i.e. the spine bent into a semicircle, lockjaw, etc.

The next to die was Alfreda Prus (aged 20) from Zamość, left without any medical care; her agony was no less horrific. Her wound had been infected with gas gangrene. The gangrene progressed very rapidly, destroying the larger blood vessels of the lower limb, which resulted in major bleeding from the wound – the hemorrhage was so strong that the victim literally swam in her own blood, a pool of which gathered under her bed. No help was provided, while when the Polish inmates working in Dr Oberheuser's *rewir* asked for assistance, she just shrugged her shoulders and refused.

I would like to add that when I started working in the *rewir*, the operatees would be left without care, and access to their part of the room was granted only to trusted German inmates, so that we – the working Polish prisoners – could get through to them only in secret. In effect, the patients had to fend for themselves.

I would like to stress that the candidates for operations were taken during the morning roll-call, having worked for the entire night, tired and hungry. The next group would be called even when the patients from the previous group were still present in the sick room.

The women selected for the procedure were bathed, then their legs were shaved, and just before the operation they received an injection of morphine. This group underwent extremely arduous experimental surgery, just as the previous batch. Zofia Kiecol (33 years old) from Chełm Lubelski died immediately after the procedure, without regaining consciousness. During her detention in Lublin prison, she had fallen seriously ill with typhus and pneumonia, while in the camp she had survived pneumonia with inflammatory exudate.

I would like to stress that the victims of these experiments did not undergo medical examinations before the procedures. Maria Lefanowicz (around 40 years of age) died the next day due to the infection of her leg wounds with gas gangrene; this was in October 1942. The next fatality was Kazimiera Kurowska from Dęblin (19 years old); the wound in her left leg had been infected with gas gangrene and put in a plaster cast from the knee to the ankle. I managed to observe that the part of her leg that was outside the cast was dark blue and cold to the touch, while the developing gas gangrene had ripped open the entire foot and destroyed all the toes. The victim suffered terribly for two days, whereafter she was given a fatal shot of Evipan. Indeed, the experiments were a harrowing, life-threatening ordeal for all the women, even those who survived, such as Czesława Kostecka (34 years old), whose wound had also been infected with gas gangrene. The gangrene completely destroyed her calf muscles and damaged the motor nerve in the tarsal joint; the wound of Maria Kuśmierczuk (22 years old) from Zamość had also been infected with gas gangrene, leading to the destruction of her calf muscles and motor nerve. Her wound continued to suppurate right until the end of our detention in the camp. The next camp physician, Dr Treite, attempted to carry out a replantation by grafting tissue from the thigh, but the procedure was unsuccessful. Jadwiga Dzido (22 years old) from Łuków, a student of pharmacy – her wound had also been infected with gas gangrene, which completely destroyed her calf muscles and damaged the nerves. The bones of her leg remained uncovered and suppurating for a number of months. Eugenia Mikulska (24 years old) – the wound was infected with gas gangrene, and the symptoms were the same as in the previous woman.

During this time, the four small rooms set aside in the *rewir* for experimental operations on Polish women from the Lublin *Sondertransport* were constantly jam-packed. The beds were double-deckers, more or less ten to each room. The next group, numbering around ten, underwent a different type of experiment: namely, they received an intramuscular injection in the calf region with no anesthetic. An hour after the shot, the patients would start running a high temperature, ranging from 40 to 42 degrees, which did not subside for a number of days; thereafter the point of injection reddened strongly and the leg swelled, with intramuscular abscesses forming. Once the abscesses had formed completely, the patients would be anesthetized and the point of infection cut open. After the procedure the patients received shots of Tibatin, a drug newly developed by the Germans. As I managed to observe, this drug – having first been tested on the victims of the experiments – was used to treat all purulent infections.

The experiments were of two types: aseptic bone procedures and infected wounds. As regards the former, I was able to peep through the keyhole and observe the procedure performed in the operating theater on Barbara Pietrzyk (17 years old) from Warsaw by Dr Fischer. This consisted of breaking the tibial bone of the left leg with a hammer, followed by the drilling of holes in the right tibial bone. Both legs were then put in a plaster cast which extended above the knee. The date of the procedure was written on the cast. After some time passed – but I do not remember exactly how much – the cast would be removed and the patient anesthetized yet again (always using Evipan). Another procedure would be performed (I do not know what it consisted of), whereafter the legs would be put in plaster again. Such experiments would be carried out seven or even eight times on the same woman, who would be anesthetized each time. The following underwent these procedures: Barbara Pietrzyk, Stanisława Śledziejowska (16 years old) from Świdnik near Lublin, Zofia Baj (25 years old) from Kraśnik, Barbara Pytlewska from Warsaw. Due to the bone experiments carried out on her, Barbara Pietrzyk's left leg became complete bent and she also experienced considerable (approximately 10 cm) depletion of the tibial bone, while her thigh bone would slip from the knee joint when she walked. Later on, an abscess developed in the place where Ms. Baj's leg had been incised, and this caused her to have high temperatures. When requested by the Polish inmates, the next physician, Dr Treite, x-rayed her leg and determined that a surgical needle and a ball of thread had been sewn up inside it. The same physician, Treite (the most humane of the lot), removed the sewn in objects.

Another type of experiment consisted of the infection of periosteum. To this end, incisions were made on the shin and also on the thigh. These procedures, too, would be repeated on the victims multiple times and they would be anesthetized before each operation. Once the wound had healed up it would be reopened. Apart from an incision on the shank and thigh, one of the women from this group, Bogna Bąbińska, also had incisions on the right side, in the groin. I overheard German SS nurses saying that this was done in order to introduce the infection through the blood vessels. I would also like to add that the first two groups were operated on by Professor Gebhardt himself, while all the other procedures were performed by his assistant, Dr Fischer.

After a lengthy break lasting approximately half a year, throughout which time we hoped that these terrible experiments had come to an end, in August 1943 ten women were summoned once again; amongst them were inmates who had already been operated on. These ten women were brought before *Oberaufseherin* Bintz, and they asked her whether they would once again be subjected to experiments. Bintz gave her word of honor that there would be no more experimental procedures in the camp, while at the same time ordering that they be taken to the *rewir*. Upon hearing this instruction, the candidates for new victims ran away to their block, where all of the prisoners – 600 women, exclusively Poles – voted to protect them from being taken to the *rewir*. After half an hour the woman administering the block, Svedik, a Czech of great kindness, received an order to arrange all the inmates before the block, whereupon the *Oberaufseherin* appeared in the company of *Aufseherins* with police dogs and demanded that the previously summoned group of ten come out voluntarily. The inmates refused outright. Bintz then ordered that the ten victims be taken by force to the so-called bunker. There they were locked up in two cells, five to each. They were kept there for two days. During this time the senior nurse, the *Oberschwester*, known for her cruelty, but whose surname I do not remember, instructed that all of the instruments and surgical materials be taken from the operating theater to the bunker, and there, in an ordinary cell, the Germans performed the horrendous, criminal procedures as usual. The victims were taken by force and were not prepared in any way in the cell. Władysława Karolewska, who had already been operated on once, defended herself by biting and kicking the doctors, so that two SS-men had to be called over to hold her down. Her own sister, Helena Piasecka (both from Lublin, Królewska Street 9), behaved in the same way. Once the procedure had been performed, the victims were thrown onto their shakedown and left there, with

absolutely no medical attention. These procedures were performed by some newly arrived doctors, whom we had not seen previously in the camp. Details concerning the last group of operations could be provided by Urszula Karwacka (aged around 26) from Bydgoszcz, who had previously been operated on and had been in the above mentioned group of ten, for she was assigned to take care of the five operatees in the bunker. The remaining five, who for reasons unknown were not operated on, were sent back to the block. After a week the operatees were taken to the hospital, to a separate room, entrance to which was forbidden. They were entrusted to the care of Urszula Karwacka. The five victims had bone operations performed on both their legs, while Helena Piasecka and Władysława Karolewska had their wounds infected. The legs of all the women were put in plaster. The procedure was repeated three more times on these victims. The after effects were most serious for Helena Piasecka; I had the opportunity to look at the radiograms of her legs, which showed a semicircular excision of a fragment at the epiphysis of the tibial bone, with a length of 10 cm, as shown in the figure. The damage caused to the bone was so considerable that when after lying in bed for a few months she got up and took just a few steps, she fell and her leg broke in this place. The bone was not set and had grown back together bent; the patient remained in bed for nearly a year.

All that I have hitherto testified concerns the Lublin transport. The victims had a special name in the camp: *Kaninchen* – rabbits. I would hereby like to give a list of the surnames of the women from this transport who underwent experiments (and whom I remember).

List of those who survived:

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| 1. Wacława Andrzejczak | from Chełm Lubelski |
| 2. Irena Backiel | from Chełm Lubelski |
| 3. Zofia Baj | from Krasnystaw |
| 4. Eleonora Bień | I do not know from where |
| 5. Bogna Bąbińska | from Warsaw |
| 6. Wojciecha Buraczyńska | from Piastów near Warsaw |
| 7. Jadwiga Bielska | from Lublin |
| 8. Stanisława Czajkowska | from Zamość |
| 9. Krystyna Czyż | from Lublin |

10. Maria Cabaj	I do not know from where
11. Krystyna Dąbska	from Lublin
12. Alicja Jurkowska	from Warsaw
13. Zofia Chorzowska	from Warsaw
14. Jadwiga Gisges	from Zamość, the wife of a doctor
15. Stanisława Jabłońska	I do not know from where
16. Helena Hegier	I do not know from where
17. Krystyna Iwańska	from Lublin
18. Janina Iwańska	from Lublin
19. Władysława Karolewska	from Lublin
20. Czesława Kostecka	from Międzyrzec
21. Zofia Kormańska	from Zamość
22. Urszula Karwacka	from Bydgoszcz
23. Zofia Kawińska	from Chełm
24. Maria Karczmarz	I do not know from where
25. Genowefa Kluczyk	from Lublin
26. Wanda Kulczyk	from Warsaw
27. Jadwiga Kamińska	from Zamość
28. Irena Krawczyk	I do not know from where
29. Maria Kuśmierczuk	from Zamość
30. Leokadia Kwiecińska	from Lublin
31. Stefania Łotocka	from Łuków
32. Jadwiga Dzido	from Łuków
33. Pelagia Maćkowska	from Zamość
34. Stanisława Młotkowska	from Chełm
35. Zofia Modrowska	from Chełm
36. Janina Marczevska	from Lublin
37. Władysława Marczevska	from Lublin

38. Eugenia Mann	I do not know from where
39. Janina Mitura	I do not know from where
40. Stanisława Michalik	I do not know from where
41. Pelagia Michalik	from Lublin
42. Eugenia Mikulska	I do not know from where
43. Maria Nowakowska	I do not know from where
44. Barbara Pietrzyk	from Warsaw
45. Halina Piotrowska	from Lublin
46. Maria Plater	from Warsaw
47. Halina Pietrzak	from Lublin
48. Helena Piasecka	from Lublin
49. Barbara Pytlewska	from Warsaw
50. Izabela Rek	I do not know from where
51. Joanna Szydłowska	from Lublin
52. Stefania Sieklucka	from Zamość
53. Zofia Sokulska	from Lublin
54. Stanisława Śledziejowska	from Świdnik
55. Zofia Stefaniak	from Lublin
56. Weronika Szuksztul	I do not know from where
57. Anna Sienkiewicz	from Warsaw
58. Wanda Wojtasik	from Lublin
59. Anieka Okoniewska	I do not know from where; she was taken away to a place unknown

List of those who died in the course of experiments:

1. Zofia Kiecol	from Chełm
2. Alfreda Prus	from Zamość
3. Kazimiera Kurowska	from Dęblin

4. Aniela Lefanowicz I do not know from where

5. Kraska I do not know from where

List of those who were operated on and subsequently shot dead:

1. Maria Gnaś I do not know from where

2. Rozalia Gutek I do not know from where

3. Aniela Sobolewska I do not know from where

4. Apolonia Rakowska I do not know from where

5. Maria Zielonka I do not know from where

6. Maria Pajączkowska I do not know from where

Apart from the operations performed on Polish women from the Lublin transport, the Germans also conducted a number of experiments in the utmost secrecy, and I would like to describe a few of them. Namely: the amputation of an arm together with the shoulder blade, performed on a Russian whose surname I do not know. This experiment was conducted by Dr Fischer, who drove up right to the *rewir*; the procedure was carried out in great haste, and afterwards Dr Fischer departed with a small bundle. The victim did not return to the hall. We only saw how the German SS nurses carried her out in a sheet to the morgue, which they then locked shut. One of the Poles working in the *rewir* managed to get into the morgue through the window. She determined that the Russian operatee had had her arm cut off together with the shoulder blade.

A Ukrainian had her leg amputated in a similar manner; she too was killed following the procedure. I heard that someone had her brain removed, although I do not know the details of this experiment.

During the first years of my detention in the *rewir*, lethal injections were used on a wide scale. These were administered to all the seriously ill and neurotic women. A specialist in the application of lethal injections was Dr Rosenthal, accompanied by his lover, a German inmate by the name of Gerda Quernheim (the surname may be inaccurate), who killed her victims with particular sadism. Doctor Rosenthal and Gerda were also specialists in the removal

of fetuses from pregnant women. In the handful of instances that a child was born, Gerda would strangle it and then, having placed it in a rubbish bin, carry it off to the so-called *Heizung* (central heating furnace), where the baby would be incinerated. Mothers were told that their children had been sent to an institution. At night, Dr Rosenthal and Gerda would perform autopsies on the bodies of their victims, during which – and this was observed – they satisfied their sexual cravings. Dr Rosenthal was tasked with changing the “rabbits” dressings. He went about it with complete brutality, taunting and laughing at the victims.

Another type of procedure that I personally witnessed was sterilization, performed on a total of 600 Gypsies aged between 12 and 50. The sterilization was performed by a German physician, unknown to me, who arrived from Oświęcim. The procedure consisted of performing some sort of injection into the ovaries, whereafter the underbelly would be exposed to Roentgen radiation. The Gypsies did not receive any anesthesia, so they writhed in pain, screaming and crying.

In the beginning of 1945 (January – February) a large-scale “cleansing” was carried out at the camp, which consisted of the seriously ill and those suffering from tuberculosis, typhus, neurological disorders, general exhaustion and diarrhea being thrown naked into trucks and driven off to the crematorium, where they were burned alive. I would like to stress that all of these women had lost their health while performing arduous work in munition factories and, being unfit for work, were transported to the camp in Ravensbrück.

In March 1945, a so-called selection was performed. Its course was as follows: all of the women detained in the camp were forced to march, barefoot, in front of a committee made up of the camp physicians and authorities, whereafter those with swollen and injured legs were set aside. Next, these women, numbering around 4,000, were taken to the neighboring *Vernichtungslager*, the extermination camp, where they were murdered by SS-men with an ax blow to the back of the head and incinerated in the crematorial furnaces. The furnaces belched out smoke around the clock, while the smell of burnt human flesh, bones and hair suffocated us, making sleep all but impossible.

At this point I would like to end my testimony.

The report was read out.