



## ARON CZECHOWICZ

Łódź, 11 October 1945. 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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| Forename and surname  | Aron Czechowicz                         |
| Age                   | 41                                      |
| Names of parents      | Chaima                                  |
| Place of residence    | Łódź, Zachodnia Street 66               |
| Occupation            | craftsman skilled in making shoe uppers |
| Religious affiliation | Judaism                                 |
| Criminal record       | none                                    |

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On 10 September 1942 I was brought to the extermination camp at Treblinka in a transport that consisted of about 8,000 men, women and children from the Warsaw Ghetto. Our wagons were taken onto the ramp of the Treblinka camp in groups.

After the first group of wagons (where I was) had been emptied, the people were herded into a courtyard and the men were separated from the women and children. The commandant of the camp chose 80 people out of the men to be laborers in the camp. I was among them.

On the first day, I sorted clothes; later I was transferred to the part of the camp where the gas chambers were located (the so-called *Totenlager*). I worked for two weeks there; one day, when I was busy carrying boards near groups of laborers from the first part of the camp (which did not have gas chambers but only storehouses and residential huts), taking



advantage of a Ukrainian's inattention, I managed to mingle with a group of laborers from the first part of the camp. I stayed there working as a clothes sorter.

I can give the following details concerning my work in the so-called *Totenlager*. When I arrived, three gas chambers were in operation there. Looking from the outside, the building that housed the chambers looked similar to a shed. On one side, in its wall were three large hatches that could be lifted up, through which corpses were removed after the extermination process was over. On the roof of the building were three openings surrounded with a pipe shaped like a little chimney; I could see with my own eyes that after the chambers were filled with people a Ukrainian poured some liquid inside through these openings from a tin can (an ordinary can like a paraffin can). Simultaneously, a motor started working, which was located in an extension and was operated also by a Ukrainian. At first, one heard screams from inside the chamber; then, they died down. I suppose that over 500 people could be fitted into one chamber.

During my stay in that camp, the chambers were filled with people about four times a day. I carried corpses into pits (at that time, cremation was still not used). I can remember that one day I was carrying a man who was still alive out of the chamber, and taking pity on him (so that he would not be buried alive), I went up to an *SS-Soharführer* supervising the work and asked him to finish the man off. The German shot him to death.

One obligation of the laborers who carried the corpses was also the extraction of gold teeth from people's oral cavities. As far as I know, the men were put in the chambers separately from the women.

I can remember a day when we worked until 3 a.m.. By all accounts, 21,000 people were killed in the chambers that day. Towards the end of my stay in the *Totenlager* I was used to carry wood (it was then that I managed to escape). The wood was intended for the construction of other chambers, whose construction was already being completed at that time (they were being roofed). I do not know how many chambers were inside the new building.

After the escape to the first part of the camp, which I described above, I continued sorting clothes. One day, towards the end of November 1942, I hid in a pile of clothes in the evening, and in the night, I managed to scale the fence and escape from the camp.



During my stay in the camp, I guess that at least 8,000 people were exterminated daily, without a break.

It is difficult for me to determine how many transports arrived every day.

The laborers who worked in the camp were treated with cruelty. During my stay in the *Totenlager* I saw a labourer who tried to escape get caught. They cut off his nose, ears and penis, and hung him by his legs. This was done by Ukrainians. I also saw two cases of hanging by the legs when I was working in the first part of the camp.

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