



LUBOMIR DONTEN

Warsaw, 10 May 1946. The investigating judge Halina Wereńko, delegated to the Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, heard as a witness the person specified below. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the importance of the oath, the witness was sworn and testified as follows:

Name and surname	Lubomir Donten
Parents' names	Stanisław and Julia <i>née</i> Geske
Date of birth	17 July 1903 in Warsaw
Occupation	railway physician and a Pruszków insurance company physician
Education	doctor of all medical sciences
Place of residence	Pruszków, Kraszewskiego Street 13, flat 4
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic

During the German occupation, I worked in Pruszków as a railway physician. In June 1944, I refused to see *Volksdeutscher* and as a consequence, in July I was suspended from duty by the railway workshops management.

At the beginning of August, I don't know on whose decree it was from Warsaw, but on the order of the local commissioner, von Bock, a transit camp for the evacuated Warsawians was set up in Pruszków. Polland (I don't know his first name), an inspector of several Labor Offices (*Arbeitsamt*), was appointed the first commander. The guard was kept by the Gendarmerie.

An acquaintance of mine, Dr Szupryczyński, also a railway physician, was appointed the chief physician of the camp. I would like to emphasize that the camp was in a state of chaos then, and I don't know who, Polland or the Pruszków commissioner Bock, chose Dr Szupryczyński



for this post. The physicians in the camp were supposed to tend to the injured, make lists of people with infectious diseases, women in the eighth and ninth months of pregnancy, and old people [over] 70 years old, in order to release them from the camp, while those with infectious diseases were to be directed to the hospitals.

I came to an understanding with Dr Szupryczyński, and I began to go the camp from the second day of its existence to provide Polish people with medical assistance. At first the guards recognized my railway physician's card, and later a Gestapo officer, Diehl, issued me a pass. When the Wehrmacht seized control of the camp, colonel Siebert issued me another pass. During the first days it was virtually impossible to provide any aid. I tended to the sick in the shacks, but I could not examine them properly in such conditions. The Germans did not provide any dressing materials. There were some dressing materials from the Central Welfare Council and the Red Cross. Besides, all the Polish people wanted was to regain their freedom. My task was mainly to issue medical certificates, on the basis of which the Germans were at first releasing people from the camp after such a leave had been signed by Polland or Diehl. After a week, Polland resigned.

Polland was very cruel towards Polish people, I heard that once, when he had learned about some action of the Central Welfare Council's deputy chairman, Mazurek, aimed at releasing Poles from the camp, Polland came at him and was strangling him.

After Polland's resignation, the Wehrmacht assumed power over the camp. Colonel Siebert became the commander, and he seemed to be a decent man. Captain Prokiesz was his right hand, and he was also rather calm. Nevertheless, the camp was a very grim place under their command. At that time the SS came to the camp and took up residence in the so-called green carriage, where Diehl was a commander.

During the rule of Polland, who was a drunkard and a brute, shooting could be heard all the time in the camp and the Polish people were being shoved by the gendarmes. Nevertheless, in such a commotion it was easier to get more people out of the camp. When the Wehrmacht assumed power in the camp, although the shooting ceased and some order was introduced into the camp – it was much more difficult to get people released. The shacks got covered in wire, latrines were made next to them. Polish doctors and paramedics were assigned to particular shacks, but other people were no longer

admitted to the camp by the guards. Polish physicians could not release the sick from the camp. A German, Dr König, was appointed the chief physician and his helpers were also Germans, including Kelnert. Polish physicians were still making lists of the sick, each in a given shack, but they had to be approved by the German physicians from the 2nd shack. A German physician had to sign the list, sometimes he would cross out [some] names after an examination of the sick or without one. The list, approved by the German physicians, had to be approved by the Gestapo from the "green carriage", where – as I had seen – a non-commissioned officer (I don't know his name) was handling it. He was often crossing out the names of the younger prisoners.

I don't remember the date, but it was during the Wehrmacht rule, one day some sort of observation hospital was set up in the 2nd shack, where a Russian prisoner of war (I don't remember his name), a colonel, was appointed as chief physician. A second "hospital" of that sort was organized in the 7th shack by Dr Rudny, who was trusted by the Germans. In those "hospitals" there were no beds, the sick were lying on dirty pallets and were not being treated at all. The mortality rate was very high. At the end of the camp's existence, even the list of the sick was being made by the German physicians according to those people who were pointed to as being sick by the Polish physicians.

I was working usually in the 2nd and the 5th shack. Generally, the German physicians were accommodating as far as releasing Polish people from the camp is concerned. The assignment of Polish physicians to particular shacks took place three weeks after the Wehrmacht had assumed power. The most widespread diseases were dysentery, total nervous breakdown, and typhoid. Almost all Warsawians were sick, starved, and overtired. But it was impossible to examine them all properly, thermometers were not being used. The emergency rooms were for the injured mainly. The only real help was to get those people out of the camp conditions, that is, to release them from the camp.

As far as I know, neither the Germans nor our sanitary personnel made lists of the dead, there was no decree concerning this matter. What was being done with the bodies, I do not know. Recently I have heard that the corpses of two women who had been shot by a German gendarme and buried on the spot were uncovered between the rails in Pruszków. The exhumation is being carried out by the Pruszków Municipal Board.

There were many women in the camp who had been raped, among them also 14-year-old girls. On the camp premises, there were some cases of murdering Polish people. During Siebert's rule, as I heard from a licensed nurse, Modejska (currently in Gdańsk-Wrzeszcz), a Gendarmerie *feldwebel* [Company Sergeant Major] (I don't know his name) shot a young Polish man after checking his identity papers. It happened near the kitchen. Another occurrence, also noted by Modejska, took place by a train carriage. A Polish man who was getting under the carriage got shot by a sentry, a German gendarme (I don't know his name).

I also heard rumors that the insurgents were being taken from the camp to the so-called clays near Wrzesin in Pruszków and were being executed there. I don't know any details concerning these executions.

How the relation between the Gestapo and the Wehrmacht looked, I do not know. As far as I can tell, the Gestapo had more power in the camp.

The sick who got released on the basis of the list which had been approved by the Gestapo were being taken, sometimes in cars, to the local hospitals in Tworki, Pruszków, Milanówek, Grodzisk etc. The lists were being made in two copies, one for the sentries, and the other for the hospitals in which the sick were being placed.

Transports from Warsaw were coming irregularly, at night and at day. They were leaving Pruszków irregularly as well. It was impossible to count them, and as far as I know nobody kept count of them. The transports comprised varied numbers of people as well: some were of several thousand, some up to a thousand. I cannot tell the number of the Warsawians who went through the camp. It cannot be stated either on the basis of the number of dinners distributed by the Central Welfare Council, since there was always not enough food, and besides, the transports were also coming and leaving at dinnertime and were thus not eating dinner that day. Moreover, people were being brought to the camp not only from Warsaw. Some were caught in the round-ups of Warsawians on the outskirts. In this way, some people were coming back several times to the Pruszków camp even though they had been released from it.

Apart from the legal release from the camp by the doctors due to illness, about which I have testified above, the Warsawians were getting out of the camp in illegal ways, that is: 1) with the help of the railwaymen employed in the workshops, who were taking people through a tunnel leading to the tracks, and – as I heard – charged PLN 1000 per person for this; 2)

through the Central Welfare Council kitchen, sometimes for free, as the corruptible Germans were gathering by the kitchen and the women who worked there could reach an agreement with them.

During Siebert's rule, Dr Kiełbasińska was appointed the chief Polish physician, as she was as trusted by the Germans as the above mentioned Dr Rudzki.

Once, I don't remember the date but Siebert was already the commander then, a Swiss Red Cross deputation came to the camp. During a meeting of Polish physicians without the Germans, a delegate asked us whether the German physicians were recognizing the leaves issued by Polish physicians. In response, Dr Oszkielowa said that they were not. Then Dr Kiełbasińska and Dr Rudzki zealously protested and said that the German physicians were always recognizing our diagnoses. As a result Dr Oszkielowa was summoned to the "green carriage" to explain her stance in the case. Later she was denied access to the camp.

Dr Dreszerowa was a prominent figure in helping Polish people in the camp, and she was deported to a concentration camp on the charge of accepting bribes for helping people to get out of the camp. We all knew that the charges were false. There was a rumor that Dr Dreszerowa was deported for maintaining contact with the Home Army members.

At first the paramedics came to the camp voluntarily, just as the physicians were. Later, due to cases of dishonesty, an effort was made to qualify the candidates. The Central Welfare Council was to submit candidates, but clearly it was not done properly and there were all sorts of people among the paramedics up to the end of the camp's existence.

When a transport of Warsawians had been brought and segregated by the German physicians, those who were to be deported to the General Government were placed in shack no. 1, the sick in shack no. 2, men to be deported to the Reich in shacks no. 6 and 5, women and men in shack no. 4. Near shack no. 1, where the old and those unable to work were to be placed, I saw for myself that a former chief of the *Arbeitsamt* from Łuków, Müller, now delegated to work in the camp, was waiting. Along with others, he was choosing younger people from the 1st shack and joining them to the transport to the Reich. Segregation was not being carried out meticulously, and as so many transports were coming, people were getting into various shacks by chance, with the exception of the 1st and 2nd shacks. Where the departing transports were going, I cannot exactly tell.



On 8 August 1944, my family was deported in a lighter transport (shack no. 1), so one going to the General Government territory, to the Auschwitz camp. My brother, Ryszard Donten, with his wife and three children were deported there. My sister-in-law with a son and younger daughter were released after the Red Army entered Poland. My brother and his older daughter were allegedly deported from Auschwitz for forced labor to Germany. Presently my brother's daughter was found in the American Zone of Occupation, but nobody has heard from my brother. My sister-in-law Janina Donten (residing at Ludwiki Street 6, the Social Insurance Company building) came back with tuberculosis lesions in her lungs. Her 9-year-old son died nine days after returning from the camp due to exhaustion.

For transports of people, freight wagons were being used, sometimes open, sometimes not. People were being packed so tightly that it was impossible to sit down.

As I have already emphasized, all medicaments and dressing materials were being provided by the Central Welfare Council, the Red Cross, private individuals, and companies. I did not see the ones delivered by the Swiss Red Cross for myself.

At the end of September 1944 I stopped visiting the camp.

At the end of September, in the 3rd shack they began to store some things brought from Warsaw by workers brigades, consisting also of Warsawians, who had been used for various works in Warsaw. They lived in the 13th shack. As far as I could tell, they were fine. I saw that they were drinking vodka and selling things, clothes and valuables.

The report was read out.