

HELENA HEGIER

Warsaw, 14 September 1945. Investigating judge Mikołaj Halfter, acting on the motion of the prosecutor and through the agency of expert medical witnesses, Prof. Dr. Adam Gruca (son of Kazimierz and Dorota, director of the Central Institution of Trauma Surgery, temporarily residing at the Baby Jesus Hospital in Warsaw, no relationship to the parties, no criminal record) and Prof. Dr. Wiktor Grzywno-Dąbrowski (head of the Forensic Medicine Department of the University of Warsaw, resident of Warsaw, Grochowska Street 24b), a sworn-in expert witness, conducted a medico-legal examination of Helena Hegier, aged 29, unmarried, an office clerk of the Executive Committee of the State National Council.

Anamnesis: before her stay at the Ravenbrück camp hospital, she suffered from no serious ailments. She was interned at the Ravenbrück camp (Mecklenburg) between September 1941 and April 1945. During her internment at the camp, she had experienced no health issues until she underwent a medical procedure. While in the camp and in good health, she was sent to the camp hospital, where she was given around 20 cubic cm of a transparent liquid, had her legs shaved below the knees, and received some injection in her thigh, as a result of which she felt sedated and inert. She was then moved to an operating theater, where she received another injection (in her arm) and passed out. Her friends subsequently informed her that she had been in the operating theater for about half an hour; she regained consciousness 15 minutes after she was brought to the general patients' room. She was completely numb in the legs. At her request, her friends uncovered her legs and she saw a gauze fixed to her legs with plasters, on both thighs and cruses, on the outer side. The gauze and the gown were covered in blood.

She spent two weeks in bed. Over that period, she had a temperature above 39 degrees Celsius. No one changed her dressings during that time so she did so herself, using dressings she got from Polish prisoners working at the hospital.

During that time, she was administered some liquid which sedated her and made it possible to sleep. After two weeks, she was given an injection and she passed out. She was told that she had been unconscious for around half an hour. When she came to, she noticed that one of her wounds had been opened. She concluded that on the previous occasion they

must have made incisions on her legs. She was in bed for six months. Three of her wounds suppurated (the fourth one, on the left crus, did not). During these six months, she had a temperature above 38 degrees. The doctors were only interested in her wounds during the surgeries. After six months, she started to learn to walk again; she only began to make some progress after nine months, but still does not walk normally because the scars hurt.

Current condition: the patient's height is below average, she is sufficiently nourished, of medium built. Patellar reflexes: weak in the left knee, somewhat more pronounced in the right; Achilles reflexes: rather distinct on both sides, more or less even. Other than that, no nervous system abnormalities observed. On the outer side of the right thigh, in the middle-lower part, there is a scar running downward, approx. 17 cm long, 1-1.5 cm wide, pale-pink, not tender to palpation, not tethered. On the right crus, more or less in the middle part on the outer side, there is a similar scar, approx. 12 cm long and 1 cm wide. Upon palpation in the upper part of the scar, the patient claims to experience an electric-like sensation running to the toes. The scar is slightly tethered. On the outer side of the left thigh, there is a scar 16 cm long, up to 1.5 cm wide, slightly concave in the upper part, moveable, slightly tender on palpation. On the outer side of the left crus, there is a scar 14 cm long, 1 cm wide, moveable, not tender to palpation, greyish-pink. Movements and strength of the lower extremities normal, normal gait. No abnormalities in palpable internal organs detected.

When asked specifically, the experts pass the following tentative opinion, unanimously: based on the anamnesis and examination, we conclude that in the course of medical procedures Helena Hegier had parts of her body incised and most likely infected. After opening the wounds, they were probably infected again. Consequently, the patient's life was in constant danger for many weeks. The lower extremities were dysfunctional for a period of many months.

In order to pass the final opinion, it is necessary to X-ray Helena Hegier's extremities and examine the scans of both her thighs and cruses.

The report was read out.