

## JADWIGA DZIDO

Warsaw, 5 October 1945. Investigating judge Mikołaj Halfter interviewed the person specified below as a witness at the Center of Trauma Surgery. Having advised the witness of the criminal responsibility for making false declarations and of the obligation to tell the truth and the significance of the oath, the judge swore in the witness, after which the latter testified as follows:

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Name and surname	Jadwiga Dzido
Age	27
Names of parents	N.N. and Katarzyna
Place of residence	temporarily at the Institute of Trauma Surgery in Warsaw
Occupation	student at the Faculty of Pharmacy in Warsaw
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none
Relationship to the parties	victim

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I was arrested in Łuków, in a drugstore where I worked. It was on 28 March 1941. I lived at the drugstore, in a staffroom. While arresting me, the Gestapo men conducted a thorough search of the room I occupied. I was also frisked. Neither search revealed anything that could incriminate me. I was the only person on the drugstore's staff who was taken. Living with me was Helena Pawlak, another employee. She was not present during the search and her wardrobe was locked. The Gestapo men could not open it, they were livid, and they hit me across the face, demanding that I give them the keys. I could not do so because my roommate had them. Eventually, they smashed in the door.

Inside, there was no incriminating evidence, either. They addressed me in German, a language I speak a little. Also, Mr. Radziński, the Pole who ran the drugstore, was with me all the time; he spoke excellent German and acted as an interpreter whenever I needed.

I was then taken in a car to a police station (there was no Gestapo station in Łuków).

I do not know the names of the four Gestapo men (they wore civilian clothes) who arrested me.

I was arrested at 9:30 a.m. and I spent a few hours at the station. In the meantime, I was interrogated three times: I was accused of being involved with the underground, and since I would not confess, I was beaten. They used batons and rods. I did not pass out or bleed, but my entire body was sore after these interrogations. I had been arrested as a result of a denunciation.

From Łuków, I was taken to Radzyń, where I was placed at the municipal detention facility. On the evening of that day, I was taken to a small room where some thirty Gestapo men were waiting. Straight away, I was told to undress. I refused. Then, they started to jostle me and they took my clothes off. They did not beat me on that occasion. [illegible] two interpreters: Neuman (I do not know his first name) from Radzyń (a permanent resident of Radzyń, a *volksdeutsch* and a well-known figure in town, officially with the Gestapo) and Zielke (I do not remember his first name), aged around 18, a student of the Polish Secondary School in Łuków, later a *volksdeutsch*. They tried to convince me that there was no use withholding information, that I would be better-off coming clean about everything. This lasted for about half an hour. Then, I was told to get dressed, warned not to tell anybody about what I had been through, and sent to the cell. Two days later, I was transferred to the Gestapo. Neuman was the person who escorted me to the Gestapo building. There, I was not interrogated, and I was only asked some random questions from time to time.

The interrogation took place in an office. Besides myself and the Gestapo man who interrogated me, there were many other Gestapo officials in that room. The interrogation lasted several hours. During that time, the Gestapo man who interrogated me only once hit me across the face very hard. After the interrogation, Neumann took me to the cell at the Radzyń detention facility, warning me that if I did not confess, they would lock me in the facility's basements, which was infested with rats.

The detention facility in Radzyń was a small one-story house in a yard. It had two or three cells for men and one for women. I did not see the cells for men. The women who were in the cell with me told me that around two hundred men were locked up in the men's cells at that time. If I am not mistaken, they had been arrested in Radzyń, Ostrów, and Parczew. We were watched by a guard named Bołba, a Pole who behaved terribly: he was reportedly a permanent resident of Radzyń or its environs. Bołba was 30, tops. We were told that he beat prisoners severely. Reportedly, he did this for money.

When I was interned in Radzyń, I heard people crying. Once, I heard all the men being taken to the corridor. They were ordered to sing. Then, over the next few hours, I heard the sounds of hitting, I heard screams, people crying in pain, and all the time these sounds as if people were being shoved against the wall. At that time, many priests were incarcerated there. They were tortured as well.

On 4 April 1941, the men and ourselves were moved to Lublin Castle.

Upon my return, I learned that Zielke, Neuman, and Bołba had been killed during the German occupation.

In Lublin, I spent ten days in the castle, after which I was taken to the Gestapo facility in the "Under the Clock" building. It was the second day of Easter, so the Germans were drunk. I was placed in a cell in the basement and taken for an interrogations a few hours later. When I entered the office, seven SS-men were already there. One of them covered the windows straight away. When I did not confess, they undressed me, laid me on the table, tied me by my arms and legs, and started to beat me.

Let me say that when I was still in Radzyń, I read a report (Neuman showed it to me), in which I was accused of involvement with the underground.

I do not remember if I saw a signature. I do not know if it was a genuine report. I know that the person who testified against me died in Auschwitz.

On that occasion, I was interrogated for some four hours. I was beaten most severely by a man we called "Cyclops" (I do not know his name), because he had a glass eye. He beat me with zeal.

After the interrogation, I was taken back to the cell. I remained at the Gestapo facility until 26 May 1941, when I was moved to Lublin Castle. There, I was placed in a cell which housed around twenty people. The cell was small and we slept on the floor because there were only six beds. Relatively undisturbed, I was interned there until 21 September 1941, when I was transported, together with the entire batch, to Ravensbrück.

We were transported in passenger cars and each of us had a place to sit. In Ravensbrück, we were in quarantine for three weeks, and then we were sent for labor, initially outside the camp's grounds. We were tasked with moving stones and soil. We were watched by some very unpleasant guards who beat us. Then, we worked pouring sand near the blocks. After the quarantine, we were allowed to send home some forms, which only stated our address. We were not allowed to write anything on these forms except our signatures. Only after we got a reply were we allowed to write a real letter. We had the right to send one letter a month, and also to receive one letter from home.

As far as I know, during the first few years of internment at the camp, each prisoner had the right to write letters, but in the latter period, 18 women (there may have been more, there may have been fewer) were banned from conducting correspondence with their families (they were mostly persons brought in from the Gestapo in Radom).

I do not remember their names. I know that some of them returned to Poland in 1945. They were the so-called NN. I think that none of them were executed.

In 1943, a lot of Belgian and French women were brought in, who were also designated NN. They, too, could not exchange letters. The NN lived in a separate block and were not allowed to work outside the camp. There was a German among them.

On 13 December 1941, women from the Warsaw, Lublin, Tarnów, and Kraków transports, as well as those prisoners who had no permanent work assignments, were ordered to the camp's main street. It was announced to us that we would be working at the so-called *Betrieb*. I was tasked with sewing straw shoes for the soldiers. I worked there until mid-February 1942. Then, I was transferred to the shoemaker's shop. At first, it was possible to choose your job – if you had some connections through your fellow prisoners, that is – under the supervision of a particular guard. In the latter period, tasks were assigned unilaterally and it was impossible to transfer without permission.

On 27 July 1942, another women and myself were told to assemble in front of the office, where we had our names checked and then we were excused. Two days later, the entire Lublin transport and some women from the Warsaw transport were again ordered to report and we had our personal details reviewed individually. Then, we were sent to the blocks. On the next day, the young women were told to gather in front of the hospital, where we were examined by SS-men. Ten women were ordered to report to the hospital, four of whom then returned to the block. The other six later returned to the block, too, and they said that they had told them to drink something, after which one of them vomited. Each of them received a *Bettkarte* (meaning they were exempt from working) valid for a week. But on 1 August, they were ordered to report to the hospital again, where they remained. It was impossible to get in touch with them for a few days because the camp police did not let anyone near the hospital's windows. It was only later that one of the women threw a note out of the window, in which she wrote that they had had their right cruses operated upon, that they were not getting any extra food, had a high fever, were very hungry, and were kept under lock and key at night, and that they were having a very difficult time.

On 22 November, I, too, was taken for surgery. Nine other women were taken with me. They were Jadwiga Gisges, Wojciecha Buraczyńska, Maria Broel-Plater, Krystyna Czyż, Jadwiga Bielska, Wacław Andrzejak, Eugenia Mann, Eugenia Mikulska, and Anna Sienkiewicz. On 24 November 1942, we had our legs shaved and we were administered morphine orally.

I do not recall the moment when they took me to the operating theater. Let me emphasize that I was among the last to be taken there. Consequently, I could see others from our group return from the operating theater, one by one. They were brought on wheelchairs, already conscious. The nurse, a German, did not help them out of the wheelchair but told them to get up themselves. They were surprised with this order because they thought their legs had been operated upon, but the nurse told them to go to their beds. Then, each of them could see that their legs had not been operated upon. But when they shifted the balance on the right leg, they felt an acute, piercing pain in the heel and shooting up the leg, a kind of a jab.

I know that because each of them screamed upon taking the first step with the right leg. After limping to their beds, each examined their leg and found out a mark on the calf, as if from a centesis.

I went through the same. Soon after I lay on the bed, I developed a fever. Let me emphasize that I had no incision, either. I had a fever for a couple of weeks. I have no recollection at all of how they operated upon my leg. I only regained full consciousness on 1 January 1943. I felt indescribable pain in my right leg, some splitting, burning pain in my feet and a terrible burning sensation in the right heel.

I did not undergo any further surgeries, I only had my dressings changed. I had my head covered when they changed my dressings. When I was getting better, in mid-February 1943, I still wore a splint on my leg. When I caught a glimpse of my leg when they were changing my dressings, I noticed that on the posterior part of my calf there were two wounds which had healed. Both were 3 to 4 cm wide, both were concave, and there was a major concavity under my knee.

I was running a fever, but my temperature was gradually dropping.

On 9 or 10 March 1943, I left the hospital on crutches and went to the block. I was issued a *Bettkarte*. I was on leave from work until 25 May. In May, I started to walk without crutches. The same month, a hospital doctor – I do not remember it well, but I think it was Dr. Klimek, who was a Czech or a Pole, but I do not know for sure because he did not stay at the camp for long – extended my work leave further.

I only returned to work in the fall of 1943, when I was ordered to knit stockings. Later, the "guinea pigs" were turned into a police force tasked with guarding the anti-aircraft shelter, and I became a policewoman. I continued in that post until 4 February 1945, when a list with our names was sent to the block, instructing us to report to the office on 5 February because we would be leaving on a transport to Gross-Rosen. But we knew that the Germans had already abandoned Gross-Rosen. We were sure that we were going to be executed so we called a general meeting of the "guinea pigs". Additionally, the list included the names of three or four women who were not "guinea pigs": 1) Regina Małkowska, 2) Mrózowa, 3) Marta Birkówna, and one more, I think.

During the meeting, we decided that we would go into hiding and that we would not report for the transport. At night, my friend and I moved to another block, where, having taken Marysia Mrozek, the block elder, into our confidence, we hid in the attic, above the guard's room. We spent the whole day there. From time to time, when the guards were out, the

block elder entered that room and spoke loudly about what was going on in the camp, whether they were looking for us or not. That way, we were up to speed. The most dangerous moment was the roll-call, when the prisoners were counted and any numerical discrepancies became apparent. On the first day, during the roll call (that is, on 5 February), there were nine of us missing. The block elder did not report us missing. The inspection was very early and it was quite dark. I think that on that day the male prisoners broke the electrical lighting. They were familiar with our case.

We spent the whole week in the attic, and at night, assisted by the block elder, we would go downstairs to her block and sleep there. At that time, the electrical lighting malfunctioned all the time. I think we owed it to the men's camp.

In the meantime, ever since we went into hiding, our friends Jadwiga Kamińska and Zofia Bajowa – very clever and intelligent women – had been negotiating with the camp commandant Suhren or Zuren (whose right-hand man was adjutant Schwarzhuber) and his adjutant, whom they told that we would not voluntarily report for the transport because we knew that in reality we would be executed. The commandant and the adjutant maintained that they only intended to send us off as part of the evacuation of the camp. They spoke to Ms. Bajowa and Ms. Kamińska in a very polite fashion. After a week, me and my friend returned to the block, and I would even report for roll-calls. Our block elder was Elżbieta Cetkowska, who was helping us. She never reported us missing. I think she acted in cooperation with a German, who was a *Blockalterin* [block elder] at our block.

The whole of March looked like that (the *Blockalterin* knew that we, the "guinea pigs", were not working and she did nothing about it). At the beginning of April, *Oberin* Binz returned from vacation; our case caught her attention, so she summoned Ms. Kamińska and Ms. Bajowa and told them that the "guinea pigs" were fine and that she knew of many "guinea pigs" who had left the camp (they managed to leave the camp under false names and were sent to work in factories). Let me say that this took place around the time when scores of prisoners were being sent from the camp to factories. It was an evacuation of sorts. They did not check the transports in detail in the process. At that time, only 48 "guinea pigs" were still left at the camp. Binz did not take any repressive measures against us, she only checked the names of those who had remained.

In the middle of March 1945, selections started at the camp. The procedure was as follows: prisoners from each block were lined up in the main camp street and they were examined by the panel of Auschwitz and Ravensbrück doctors, as well as by doctors from the *Arbeitsamt* [employment office] (e.g. one Pflaum was on this panel and he treated the prisoners in a brutal way). One by one, the women approached the panel, barefoot, with no outer garments, and were often ordered to uncover their breasts, and then the emaciated, anemic ones, with varices on their legs, or whose legs were not too straight, as well as the elderly women, were set aside. They were sent to the so-called *Jugendlager*, and then to gas chambers.

Thanks to block elder Centkowska, we managed to avoid these selections. The “guinea pigs” who looked fine and walked normally reported for the selections and were cleared. In the meantime, during the selections, we, the limping ones, hid in the attic or elsewhere, and the block elder knew about it. I did not participate in any selection.

These selections lasted until 29 March 1945. Reportedly, some 4,000 women were executed at that time: Polish, French, and others. I do not know how many really died. My friends told me that 4,500 Poles alone were killed.

After the selections had concluded, the camp commandant told Ms. Kamińska and Ms. Bajowa that he would see that the “guinea pigs” would be sent off once he had dealt with the transports of evacuees (from the Warsaw uprising, who had been brought to Ravensbrück too). The operation of sending the Varsovians (those who avoided the gas chamber) to factories took a week and a half. So during that time [illegible] we were on high alert, but we were nevertheless more assured. One strange thing was that over that period no general roll-calls were held, during which name lists and attendance were usually carefully checked.

In mid-April, the first Red Cross vans arrived from Switzerland and picked up the French. One person who left with them was Karola Roszkowska (a prisoner), who was a block elder and was familiar with our case. We hoped that she would bring up this issue in Geneva. Until the day of the evacuation, we did not know what would happen to us. I think that on 23 April a transport of prisoners (around 4,000) departed for Sweden. Me and a few fellow prisoners of mine made it onto that transport (we volunteered because Poles had been allowed to).

However, after an hour, me and the other "guinea pigs" were withdrawn from that transport. On 29 April, there was the general evacuation of the camp to Malchow, where Swedish vans were supposed to be waiting. Two days later, on our way there, we were liberated by Soviet troops. The report was read out.

I submit a list of women who underwent experimental surgeries in Ravensbrück (the witness has submitted a list, written in pencil. It is appended to the present report).

Let me add that among those interned at the Ravensbrück camp were Halina Chełmicka and her stepmother. They came from Berlin or the western territories. She was released from the camp and worked in Hochenlychen for Prof. Gebhardt. As the rumor at the camp had it, she compiled charts concerning our surgeries. She was eighteen. Reportedly, she was forced to leave, or simply left, with Gebhardt to the West. They may have eliminated her as a person who knew the details concerning the surgeries.

The report was read out.

List of persons who underwent surgeries at the Ravensbrück concentration camp, the "guinea pigs":

1. Wacława Andrzejak	Chełm
2. Maria Backiel	Chełm
3. Bogumiła Bąbińska	Warsaw
4. Zofia Baj	in the West
5. Jadwiga Bielska	Lublin
6. Leonarda Bień	Leśna Podlaska
7. Wojciecha Buraczyńska	Warszawa
8. Stanisława Czajkowska	Zakopane
9. Krystyna Czyż	Lublin
10. Maria Cabajowa	did not return
11. Krystyna Dąbska	Lublin
12. Jadwiga Dzido (b. 1918)	Warsaw, Polish Red Cross, Piusa XI Street
13. Jadwiga Gisges	Łódź
14. Maria Grabowska	Kraków
15. Helena Hegier	Warsaw

16. Zofia Hoszowska	Warsaw
17. Janina Iwańska	did not return
18. Krystyna Iwańska	Warsaw
19. Stanisława Jabłońska	Chełm
20. Alicja Jurkowska	Sweden
21. Jadwiga Kamińska	in the West
22. Władysława Karolewska	Lublin
23. Urszula Karwacka	Bydgoszcz
24. Zofia Kawińska	Chełm
25. Maria Kapłon	Chełm
26. Genowefa Kluczek	Chełm
27. Wanda Kulczyk	Lublin
28. Maria Kuśmierczuk (b. 1920)	Warsaw, Polish Red Cross, Piusa XI Street
29. Zofia Kormańska	Lublin
30. Czesława Kostecka	Międzyrzec
31. Irena Krawczyk	?
32. Stefania Łotocka	Łuków
33. Leokadia Kwiecińska	Lublin
34. Pelagia Maćkowska	Zamość
35. Eugenia Mann	?
36. Janina Marciniak	Lublin
37. Janina Marczevska	Sweden
38. Władysława Marczevska	Lublin
39. Pelagia Michalik	Lublin
40. Stanisława Michalik	did not return
41. Eugenia Mikulska	Zamość
42. Janina Mitura	?
43. Stanisława Młodkowska	Puławny
44. Zofia Modrowska	Chełm?
45. Maria Karczmarz	Zamość, City Hospital
46. Helena Piasecka	Lublin
47. Halina Pietrzak	Warsaw
48. Barbara Pietrzyk	Łódź

49. Maria [Broel-]Plater	Warsaw
50. Barbara Pytlewska	Warsaw
51. Halina Piotrowska	Lublin
52. Stanisława Śledziejowska	Kraków
53. Zofia Sokulska	Sweden
54. Stefania Sieklucka	Lublin
55. Anna Sienkiewicz	Krasnystaw
56. Wiktoria Szuksztul	?
57. Joanna Szydłowska	in the West
58. Zofia Stefaniak	Lublin
59. Wanda Wojtasik	Lublin

Left the camp:

- 60. Aniela Okoniewska
- 61. Jadwiga Łuszcz

Executed at the beginning of August 1943:

62. Maria Gnaś	aged around 30
63. Rozalia Gutek	aged around 20
64. Pajączkowska	aged around 25
65. Apolonia Rakowska	aged around 49 – 52
66. Aniela Sobolewska	aged around 30
67. Maria Zielonka	aged around 30

Died following the surgery:

68. Zofia Kiecol	aged around 35, died on 10 October 1942
69. Kraska	aged around, died on 6 October 1942
70. Kazimiera Kurowska	aged around 19, died on 16 May 1942
71. Aniela Lefanowicz a	ged around 50, died on 14 October 1942
72. Alfreda Prus	aged around 22, died on 12 October 1942