



JANINA UNKIEWICZ

On 25 January 1947 in Lublin, Investigating Judge from the Fourth Region of the District Court in Lublin with its seat in Lublin, this in the person of Judge A. Kowalski, heard the person named below as a witness. Having advised the witness of the criminal liability for making false declarations, of the provisions of Article 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and of the significance of the oath, the judge took an oath therefrom pursuant to the provisions of Article 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, following which the witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Janina Unkiewicz
Age	29 years old
Parents' names	Eugeniusz and Maria
Place of residence	Lublin, Konopnickiej Street 5
Occupation	secretary at the Zamoyski Middle School
Religion	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none
Relationship to the parties	none

I stayed in Auschwitz from 12 December 1942 to 16 January 1945, i.e. until the liquidation of the camp. I was sent there from the Lublin Castle.

In Auschwitz I was incarcerated in the women's camp in Birkenau, a commandant of which was Maria Mandl, universally known as "Mandelka." Mandelka was first and foremost a terror of the women's camp, and the men who came to that camp as craftsmen and laborers for sewage and electricity works were afraid of her and avoided all contact with her whatsoever.



I saw for myself how she organized and conducted a personal search of the men by the gate and how she punched them in the face. She was notorious for her powerful punch and the method of beating. She was ruthless and cruel towards all women. The sight of her yellow car was enough to inspire panic among the women.

I never spoke to Mandelka nor came into direct contact with her. However, I frequently saw her at the roll calls, during which she ordered us to stand for several or even several dozen hours because the number of prisoners wouldn't add up, this due to the fact that in the meantime some prisoners perished at the barbed wire or died in the barracks or other places on the camp premises immediately before the roll call.

Popular opinion had it that Mandelka did absolutely nothing to improve the conditions in the women's camp. She would beat the women who worked outside the camp for smuggling foodstuffs and vegetables from their workplace to the camp premises. During the general segregation of women of all nationalities who were incarcerated in the camp, Mandelka was personally in charge of selecting women for the so-called death block. The first time she chose about 2,000 of them, and the second more or less the same number. It was in February 1943 when we stood in the cold during the roll call from 6.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Then, about 20 women died during the roll call itself, as they didn't have warm clothes, and many caught a cold and developed serious illnesses, of which they later died in the *Revier*. Following these roll calls, the mortality rate was approximately 300 women per day. When the roll call was over, the inmates had to go – one by one and running – through the gate leading to the camp. Behind the gate they were awaited by the camp authorities, Mandelka, a man by the surname of Taube and Mandelka's helpers: Drekslerka [Drechsler] and Hasse. All of them pushed to the ditch those women who crossed the gate clumsily, tripped or fell. Next, these women were taken to the death block, and afterwards gassed. Allegedly a small number of them were released from the death block. The greater part of women were selected for this block by Mandelka. We heard that orders would sometimes come from Berlin to diminish the number of inmates, or when new transports of women were to arrive at the camp and it was full, special roll calls were organized, and the weakest inmates were selected. In order to determine our condition, the Germans would order us to run while carrying sand for a few hours. Those women who couldn't run or were exhausted were put aside, up to 2,000 of them, depending on how many inmates there were in the camp at the time. By way of example, I can describe the selection which had been



conducted a few days before my arrival at the camp. It was carried out on 5 December 1942. The camp in Birkenau was established in March 1942, and when I came there I received number 26000, and according to the inmates, on the day of my arrival at the camp there were over 3,000 prisoners. Apart from general roll calls, there were daily roll calls in 1942 and 1943 (in the first months, even up to the summer). When some women were chosen for labor, the rest would remain in the camp, hiding, most often due to illness or exhaustion. Then Mandelka would usually organize another roll call, during which the majority or even all women who were shirking work were chosen. They were sent to the death block, from which some were later released back to the camp. I was extremely lucky; one day, being sick, I hid and didn't go to work, and later during the second roll call I was sent along with the others to the death block, as that day Mandelka selected all women who shirked work to be sent to the death block. There weren't many of us – maybe some ten women. I stood in the rear. Mandelka walked among us and stopped by me. She said to Taube, "Aber sie ist gaus jung" [but she is very young], and sent me back to the block. I heard from Polish inmates, the women who worked in the so-called front camp (*przedobozie*), that Mandelka held Polish "politicals" in higher regard than German "black badges" and was more inclined to believe what the Poles told her – naturally with respect to the general camp matters, which had nothing to do with their political charges.

As for the camp commandant Rudolf Höß, I don't recall such a person. If I saw him, maybe I would recognize him to be one of the camp commandants.

The report was read out.