

REPORT

Given on October 19, 1973, in Oswiecim; Mr. Zygfryd Halbreich, born November 13, 1909 in Dziedzice County Bielsko/Biala, pharmacist ("magister farmacji"), presently residing at 329 South Doheny Dr., Beverly Hills, Calif., 90211, U.S.A., former inmate of concentration camps; from October, 1939 to September, 1941 in KL (Concentration Camp - trans.) Sachsenhausen; from September, 1941 to October, 1942 in KL Gross-Rosen; from October, 1942 to January, 1945 in KL Auschwitz III - Monowitz; from January, 1945 to April, 1945 in KL Mittelbau (subcamp Nordhausen); made the following report concerning his experiences in the camps, with particular attention to his stay in KL Auschwitz III (in KL Auschwitz he was identified by the camp number 68233) and to his work with the camp resistance movement.

When in September of 1941 I was conducted from KL Sachsenhausen to KL Gross-Rosen in a transport group numbering 400 Jewish prisoners, the latter camp consisted of just 6 wooden barracks. The unbelievably primitive living conditions as well as the terror and arduous labor decimated our ranks at a fast tempo. I must note that in the early summer of 1942 a transport group of sick prisoners left KL Gross-Rosen. We were informed that they had gone to a sanatorium. Only later, when I had already arrived at KL Auschwitz, did I learn that this had been a lie, for in reality the sick were taken to another location where they were liquidated.

In the summer of 1942 in the concentration camp Gross-Rosen,

a typhus epidemic broke out. In this instance the SS authorities took extraordinary measures in the administration of the so-called quarantine. I presume that they wanted to prevent the spread of the epidemic. At the same time we also learned of an order, issued by Himmler, which called for the removal of all Jewish prisoners from those concentration camps located on German territory and for their transfer to the concentration camp "Auschwitz" in Oswiecim, Poland. We tried to guess the purpose behind this transfer -- doubtless it concerned depriving us of life. When this order was carried out at KL Gross-Rosen, only 17 Jewish prisoners remained from the above-mentioned 400, which had been transported from the camp Sachsenhausen in September of 1941.

Hence, in the month of October, 1942, there formed in KL Gross-Rosen a small transport group numbering 17 Jewish prisoners, among whom Jews from Poland and Germany predominated. We were taken to the concentration camp Auschwitz in Oswiecim. Registration, along with the tattooing of prison numbers (I was tattooed on the left forearm with the number 68233¹), took place in the parent camp. We were temporarily located for about ten days on block 10. At the same time, additional transport groups of Jewish prisoners were brought from KL Sachsenhausen and KL Buchenwald. The quarantine in block 10 did not last long, only a few days. Unfortunately, I do not remember the names of the functional prisoners; owing to the shortness of the stay in that block there

1. On October 16, 1942, there arrived at Auschwitz the so-called Sammel transport, in which there were 156 male prisoners, designated by numbers in the series 68153 - 68308 (T.I.).

was neither the time nor the opportunity to take note of such details. Not long after, I was taken to the camp in Monowice (also called "Buna").

At the end of October, 1942, a large transport group of prisoners, to which I was added, was formed in the parent camp and we were conveyed to the camp in question. I, at present, do not remember the exact date of the transfer, but it doubtless took place during the last days of October. About 1,000 of us were transferred then, perhaps over a thousand.

When we arrived at the camp in Monowice, we found standing only some twenty barracks; these were barracks designated by the numbers 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17, as well as the hospital barracks (I do not remember how many), and the barracks of the prison kitchen and the Bekleidungskammer barrack. (My presumed conception of the state of construction at that time is represented in a freehand sketch, which will be enclosed with this report.) I do not remember exactly where the SS-men lived. During the day a sentry line guarded the entire observable terrain of the camp. But at night, these guards were withdrawn from the uninhabited and unbuilt parts of the camp. These sections were separated further from the rest of the camp by a hedge fence. After our arrival the construction of the camp continued as more and more wooden barracks were erected.

After my arrival at Monowice I was located in the barrack designated as No. 17 (this barrack was later added to the hospital complex and in it resided the so-called Internal II). It was, like those

still remaining today, a wooden barrack, in the interior of which was one collective room for the prisoners. We slept on tiered wooden bunks. I do not recall whether we slept singly or two-by-two on the straw mattresses. I also do not remember the name of the prisoner who worked in that barrack in the capacity of blockaltester; it was a German at any rate. He appointed another prisoner and me as room-servants (Stubendienst). I worked in that capacity for only a short time, for not long afterwards it was announced that all trained specialists should present themselves. I declared my profession, pharmacist, for which I had trained and in which I had worked before the War. I was then taken to the Krankenbau (KB) or camp hospital for the prisoners.

As it turned out, however, the position of pharmacist was already filled in the hospital. The job was held by a prisoner of Russian origin, whose name I do not remember but of whom I have a clear memory. I could not be employed there, since they did not need a second pharmacist, and so I was transferred to hospital barrack No. 19. I was subordinated to a doctor, also a prisoner by the name of Silber. Dr. J. Silber came from Strasburg and was a highly competent and well-known internist before the War. He was brought to Auschwitz, if I remember correctly, the same time as I. In barrack No. 19, I carried out all the orders given me by Dr. Silber. We did our best to provide the maximum degree of care possible to the sick who stayed at the camp hospital. In the evening, the sick prisoners would present themselves at the dispensary, and a portion of them would be kept at the hospital. I should

mention, however, that at this time everything was still in the organizational stage; there was not as yet, for example, a Surgical Division. The camp hospital occupied, if I am not mistaken, only three barracks. Later, the hospital was extended to more barracks, among which were those in which the Surgical Division was located (Surgery I, Surgery II). The Division of Internal Medicine was also extended to other barracks. I worked in the prisoners' hospital for about three to five months, i.e. until my transfer to the so-called Erziehungslager.

My transfer to a separate part of the camp designated for detention-rehabilitation prisoners (Erziehungshaftlinge) took place in the Spring of 1943, hence in March or April; unfortunately I do not remember the exact date. At this time, the dispensary was administered in one of the barracks in that part of the camp set aside for the prisoners. This barrack later bore the number 41 and was situated just in front of the fence of the camp. By creating a separate dispensary in E-lager, the authorities sought to alleviate the burden on the prisoners' hospital. From this time on, I was responsible as a "physician" for the EH (prisoners who presented themselves at the dispensary.) If the necessity arose, however, I directed those needing medical help to the camp hospital (Haftlingskrankenbau -- HKB).

In E-lager there were five wooden barracks, as I have indicated on the enclosed provisional plan. A functional prisoner, the so-called Lageraltester, answered for the whole of the matters of order and discipline. This function was fulfilled by Rudi Kahn,

who had been ranked by the Hitlerite-racist law as a so-called halbjude. I lived together with him in a single room in barrack No. 41. Rudi Kahn was a German Jew, and although we slept in a single room, we hardly talked with one another. Kahn never sought conversation: beyond that, he had his duties, I had mine and, to tell the truth, there was no time for it. In the evening after the roll call, we devoted our designated free time to reading the books we had managed to "organize". By degrees, and in time, however, he came to trust me and even confided in me the fact that he was thinking of organizing an escape from the camp. Although he proposed that I join him and that we make our escape together, I thanked him for his trust but preferred not to risk my life. Meanwhile, insofar as the opportunities existed, I tried to afford him some assistance; offering for example, a wristwatch and a little money, which I had managed to come by. Once refusing to take part in the escape, I soberly contemplated the possibilities for success of such a venture: at this time (1943) almost all of Europe was under the control of Hitler and his followers, and hence where could we go even if we were to successfully escape from the camp? These and other difficulties did not deter Rudi Kahn. He realized his intentions one Sunday in the Spring of 1943; I do not remember the exact date of his escape. As noted, Kahn effected his escape on a Sunday. At the same time, on the parade grounds in the camp a match between a team of workers from the camp hospital (HKB) and a team representing the entire camp was taking place. Of course, it was the prisoners who came out for both teams.

I should note that the detention prisoners could not leave the grounds on which the barracks they occupied were located. This order did not apply to me. Officially, as a worker in the prisoners' hospital, I wore a binde (armband) which afforded me freedom of movement throughout the terrain of the entire camp; both through the separate area of E-lager and through the part occupied by the other prisoners of KL Auschwitz III - Monowitz. In the instance of a control check I could justify the necessity of my exit as dealing with "official" hospital matters.

After the above-mentioned match, I visited with some other friends employed at the prisoners' hospital. I did not return to E-lager until evening. Initially, Kahn's absence did not surprise me. I was accustomed to his returning later in the evening as well. Darkness fell, but Kahn did not appear. The night passed by and in the morning I took the roll call, a job normally conducted each day by Kahn himself. I, thereby, informed the SS-man who came for the report of the roll call of the absence of one prisoner: the Lageraltester from E-lager. I assume that the authorities of the SS had already learned of the escape of some prisoner or group of prisoners, for the fence alongside the unbuilt part of the camp had been cut through. This cut fence indicated the location and means of Kahn's escape. After first cutting the wires of the camp fence, Kahn probably fled from E-lager to the neighboring, unbuilt (and at night unguarded) sector and from there escaped, exploiting the darkness.

When I reported Kahn's escape, the SS-man took the report

and immediately left E-lager. After a while, the SS-Hauptscharfuhrer, Taute, from the Political Division (E-lager was immediately subordinate to the Politische Abteilung) appeared. Taute summoned me and I answered the questions he put to me. I related what I had done on the previous day and indicated that I had known the escapee for barely more than a couple of weeks. Hence, I had not been informed of his activities. My explanation must have seemed plausible for Taute went away without saying anything further. About two hours later, he summoned me again and told me that he was appointing me Lageraltester in the camp for detention-rehabilitation prisoners in place of the fugitive Kahn.

Working in this new capacity, I of course had more to do. For this reason a prisoner and physician, Dr. Alfred Winter, who came from Czechoslovakia, was detailed to assist me. His main task consisted of directing the dispensary for the detention-rehabilitation prisoners. I worked in the capacity of Lageraltester, I believe, until November of 1944.

As concerns the detention-rehabilitation prisoners, I recall that their number varied between 400-600 individuals. After my appointment as Lageraltester I continued to live in barrack No. 41 (in a separate room), the prisoners occupied the remaining space. In this barrack, as I have already noted, was located the dispensary. It was not additionally partitioned from the other barracks designated for the detention-rehabilitation prisoners.

These prisoners came from the various countries occupied by the Hitlerites. There were workers deported to the Reich for

compulsory service. They were imprisoned for such things as violating work discipline; for example, the prolonging of one's leave. The severity of punishment depended on the type of "offense" and amounted to from four weeks to six months in the detention rehabilitation camp. It seemed that some returned several (six or seven) times. Whenever I spoke with these prisoners, they said openly that under my care they felt much better than at their respective places of work. This certainly afforded me some measure of joy and satisfaction, because I sincerely tried to help those prisoners in the best way possible, under the arduous circumstances. Through acquaintances (also prisoners) in the camp kitchen, I would sometimes manage to obtain an extra kettle of soup for them.

The detention-rehabilitation prisoners worked in separate groups from the other inmates at the camp. I do not know how they were treated during the day. Personally, I felt sorriest for the juveniles, who were also directed here "for training". Some were teenage boys, only 14-16 years of age. I sheltered them with particular care, employing them, for example, in cleaning the grounds of the camp, the barracks, etc.

The roll calls of the detention-rehabilitation prisoners took place in the space between barracks No. 39 and No. 41. Functional prisoners called blockmen (Blockaltester) were responsible for the matters of order and discipline in the individual barracks. Unfortunately, I do not remember any of

their names. In barrack No. 41, where I slept, there was no blockman. I remember that for a certain period of time two German prisoners, denoted by their green triangles, worked in the capacity of blockmen. As lageraltester I could not tolerate their behavior and the demoralizing influence they exerted upon the juveniles, whom they often forced into gratifying their homosexual desires. I informed the supervisor (lageraltester) in the adjacent main camp about these practices, and he effected their transfer to another subcamp. I do not recall the surnames of the two Germans.

As a prisoner of many years in the Hitlerite concentration camps and, in addition, while working in the capacity of lageraltester in E-lager, I had many more means at my disposal than the average prisoner. My fluent knowledge of several languages helped me in establishing contacts; and I assume that this fact probably, in part, determined my appointment as lageraltester, for I could freely communicate with all of the prisoners in E-lager.

In the camp I had many friends and associates. As a functional prisoner, I did not imitate the others working in similar capacities, who, in "organizing" vodka or some equivalent, thought above all of themselves. I tried, as I have already noted, to afford the prisoners subordinate to me the maximum chance for survival. If I could do something good for the prisoners, it was undoubtedly thanks to the cooperation from other associates in the camp organization of the resistance movement. I wish to

mention the name of one, the former (Leiser Silman) Leon Stasiak. I did not agree at all with him as far as actual or theoretical politics were concerned (Stasiak was a Communist, I a pre-War activist in the various Zionist organizations), but we always found a common platform for action as far as the good of the prisoners or the struggle against the authorities of the SS was concerned. Stasiak attempted to influence the youth among the prisoners in accordance with his Communist persuasions; I, gathering the young prisoners around me, sought to instill in them the ideals to which I subscribed (we sang, for example, various songs and conversed on various topics.) But this did not prevent us from being the best of friends. I also knew the prisoners Stefan Heymann, Rutkowski (who was a decent man although he came under the influence of Stefan Budziaszek) well, as well as many others, mainly those whom I had known during my stay at KL Sachsenhausen or KL Gross-Rosen.

I knew Ludwik Worl, the predecessor of Stefan Budziaszek, in the capacity as the lageraltester in the hospital by sight only. Worl worked in that capacity only briefly. As concerns the individual Budziaszek, it seems to me that at that time, i.e. during my stay at KL Auschwitz, he did not possess full qualifications as a medical doctor. In all fairness to him, I should mention that he cooperated meticulously with the prison medical personnel, among whom many were able to contribute a high degree of knowledge and practice. The prisoner-doctors really tried to help the sick, as much, of course, as the conditions of the camp

allowed. The sick prisoners in the hospital (HKB) could remain there only for ten to twenty days. Some, however, were kept longer, this being one of many of the forms of activity of the resistance movement. As time went by, the hospital for the prisoners was enlarged, and new barracks were incorporated.

I did not like Budziaszek; I did not trust him, and assumed him a self-serving liar. If one of the prisoners wished to obtain a work assignment in the camp hospital he could secure it if he knew how to "buy" his way into Budziaszek's favor. Naturally, this cost a good deal. One could also obtain such an assignment if one had the patronage of an influential prisoner. I did not like this; neither did many others. We tolerated Budziaszek only in light of his involvement with the matters of the hospital (equipping it with the necessary accessories, furnishings, etc.) To tell the truth, it remains an unsolved mystery to me to this day why I was placed in E-lager as the head of that dispensary. I assume it was due to his suggestion or urging, because as lageraltester of HKB he had a good deal of influence in such matters. How it actually came about is difficult to determine with complete certainty. But it was, perhaps, my knowledge of languages which served as a decisive factor in this case.

After my appointment as a "physician" in the dispensary in E-lager, I saw Budziaszek daily as I had to report on the number of prisoners staying in the dispensary (there were usually between ten and twenty of them at one time). When the need arose, Budziaszek called in other doctors for help in the decision of

medical questions. Conversations with Budziaszek were cordial, sometimes even warm, but they never passed outside the realm of professional matters. I discussed more serious matters, among other things underground activity, in another circle; Stasiak, Hess, Markovitsch. We formed a unified, underground group based on mutual trust.

Our group also made use of radio monitoring. I personally obtained a radio and kept it in the room where I slept. I will return to this subject, but first wish to devote a few sentences to the SS-men of the Political Division. I have already noted that the Politische Abteilung, and not the Lagerfuhrer, was responsible for the rehabilitation prisoners. The head of the Politische Abteilung in the camp at Monowice was the SS-hauptscharfuhrer, Taute. I do not remember what part of Germany he came from. He dealt with the affairs of the detention-rehabilitation prisoners. I served as an intermediary, i.e. when he needed some data he would call me into his office, he would never come to E-lager. Two other SS-men were employed in the Political Division, SS-unterscharfuhrer Hoffer and oberscharfuhrer Josef Wiczorek. Toward the end of the War there was employed yet another, SS-rottenfuhrer Kaufmann; he being a very young man.

If my contacts with SS-hauptscharfuhrer Taute were limited exclusively to official matters (in addressing me he always used the form "Herr" Halbreich), it was quite different as far as the SS-man Jozef Wiczorek was concerned. In order to clarify this

circumstance I must recollect some earlier years. I spent my youth in Tarnowskie Gory, where, in 1928, I graduated from the gymnasium. My mother used to send me or my brother to the nearest bakery, where we did the shopping for baked goods. It was there that I met Jozef Wieczorek. He was, at that time, the master-worker in the bakery. Once in KL Auschwitz III-Monowice, we met again, but in such an altered situation and setting! Wieczorek was in an SS-uniform, I in prisoner's stripes. Wieczorek, nevertheless, recognized me and we renewed our acquaintance and friendship. As lageraltester, I "entertained" him every day at my table for dinner, the meals, at that time, for SS-men being neither tasty nor generous. This provided an occasion for long conversations. While we often returned in our reminiscences to prewar times, we did not avoid subjects of current interest. To offer a complete characterization, Jozef Wieczorek was a very simple person with an uncomplicated psyche: he spoke Polish as badly as German -- a typical "Slazak." My acquaintance and frequent visits with Jozef Wieczorek enabled me to obtain valuable information concerning various matters and situations relating to the camp. I obtained this information during our conversations, and I quite frankly made use of Wieczorek's loquacity, for I do not suppose that he did this consciously and deliberately. In this manner, for example, I would learn the dates of forthcoming "selections" in the prisoners' hospital, which the physicians in the SS carried out. With this knowledge, I could warn associates who could discharge a certain portion of the sick men from the

hospital, and thereby save the lives of these prisoners. This practice concerned, above all, the young prisoners, whom our associate Gustav Herzog, employed in the arbeitseinsatz, who were placed in work units. After the "selection" was concluded, those who had been discharged were readmitted to the hospital. Among those who participated in these affairs was the lageraltester Paul Kozwar, called "Peka" (this nickname came from his initial P.K.). Paul Kozwar perished in 1945 in the camp Nordhausen during an air-raid. I was present at this event.

Jozef Wieczorek also worked as executioner at Monowice. To be explicit, he either activated the trap door of the gallows or pulled out the chair from under the condemned men. He administered executions on the grounds of KL Auschwitz III-Monowice and at the subcamps as well.

Taute treated Jozef Wieczorek with contempt, let us say, as a master would treat a servant. I do not know whether Wieczorek was aware of this. I suspect not. At any rate, my acquaintance with him afforded us immeasurable advantages. Wieczorek would talk naively about those matters in which he himself had first hand knowledge, and, in all probability, about things of which he had no clear understanding. There was, in effect, an hierarchy of secrecy within the SS.

But I shall return to the matter of the radio. For a prolonged period of time, the same SS-men from the force at KL Auschwitz III performed guard duty along the fence beside barracks Nos. 41 and 44 (at that time these were next to one another, the

area between was not yet built-up with barracks.) I have already explained that the entry guards kept watch only over that part of the camp which was already built-up. One evening I caught the attention of one of the SS-sentry guards. He was about 30 years old. It was apparent that he was bored with his spell of sentry duty, hence he was quick to engage in conversation with me. This occurred, thereafter, every time he was on guard. I quickly realized that this SS-man was not among Hitler's supporters or sympathizers. He openly defined his position concerning the War and even declared that he sympathized with me, for he knew that I was innocent. He was a strange person. He certainly did not know me; nevertheless, he came to trust me and declared outright that when the proper time arose he would relay arms to us. One night he handed me a radio, stating that we must surely want to listen to the news. This was totally unsolicited. I accepted the present, conscious of the danger to which I was exposing myself. I hid the radio in such a manner that not even my roommate, the physician Winter, who slept with me in the same bunk, knew of its existence. Winter was a man worthy of trust, a Jew; we had become friends, but in spite of this I preferred not to risk anything. I relayed the news I heard over the radio to my associates. I do not remember exactly when this incident, the acquisition of the radio, took place; most likely it was before the construction of the portion of the camp adjacent to E-lager.

One portion of our underground activity was maintaining

contact with the British prisoners of war, who worked on the grounds of the plants of the I G. Farbenindustrie but lived in the camp adjacent to ours. We did not maintain these contacts with the English directly, but only through a few trusted prisoners working in the capacity of Kapos, or foremen or vorarbeiter of the work teams. These teams worked together or near the English POW's on the grounds of the plants of I.G. Farbenindustrie. Through these contacts, foodstuffs, items of clothing, bedclothes and blankets were brought in or out of the camp, often obtained by the prisoners as gifts from the English. Numerous methods for smuggling existed. I recall that many of these items reached our camp via the kettles from which the working prisoners were supplied soup during mealtimes. As for food, we obtained items such as chocolate, cheese and sausage. While these were never in great quantities, they nevertheless, aside from their morale significance, made possible a distribution of products among and to those who needed them most.

From the English captives we also received a constant flow of information concerning the situation at the front. Their information came primarily from radio monitoring. In turn, we reciprocated when and if we received news. I have already noted that this information was transferred by those prisoners who had continual outside contacts at their places of work. From time to time, I too ventured onto the grounds of the plant (c. once a month), but had no occasion to make or to maintain acquaintances. Furthermore, my arm-band with the inscription "Lageraltester"

prompted distinct impressions and reactions -- even the SS-men were apparently not as "emboldened" in relation to my person as they were wont to be with the other prisoners.

The crowning achievement of our system of contacts was an altogether unprecedented event. In order to afford the English POW's a greater understanding of the sort of terror that prevailed in our camp, we smuggled in one of their number. He changed into our prisoners' stripes while a fellow prisoner found his way to the English POW camp. Naturally this arrangement lasted only a brief period of time. Nevertheless, it gave the English representative a unique opportunity to directly experience and encounter the conditions in which the prisoners of KL Auschwitz III-Monowice existed.

In reference to the camp hospital, I cannot ignore the SS-man who served in the capacity of SDG. This was SS-man Gerhard Neubert. His intellectual level was more or less on a par with that of the SS-man Joseph Wieczorek, described above. He was, however, a German, young and totally locked within himself (quite contrary to the loquacity of Wieczorek). As SDG, Neubert had ample opportunity to either partake or interfere with all matters concerning the camp prisoners' hospital. However, as broad as his jurisdiction was, he rarely exploited the opportunities. He usually wandered about with a cigarette in his mouth or an apple in his hand, and responded with simple, terse "yes" or "no" answers to the questions put to him. This was one side of his character; for he knew quite well how to "organize", to

use the camp jargon. He was greedy for anything and everything which carried some kind of value. He spurned neither apparel nor gold, nor, in a word, anything which might be useful to him personally. Here was a petty, little man, who exploited every chance to increase his material wealth.

Budziaszek was on good terms with Neubert, and hence he had a free hand in matters concerning the prisoners' hospital. I wish to mention here one particular activity with which Budziaszek became involved: the selections of the sick. When an order came for carrying out the selection among the sick, and the SS-lagerarzt did not appear, his official subordinate SDG-Neubert was obliged to carry out this operation. This matter did not interest Neubert. While compelled to be present at the examination of the sick, he did not select them. Budziaszek did this. I, personally, experienced this episode when I was still working at the camp hospital, before my transfer to E-lager. Present at this selection proceeding were SDG-Neubert, Budziaszek and Dr. Silber. When I recall this scene I still wonder which member of the trio was supposed to carry out the actual selection. Perhaps it was Silber? As both physician and guardian of the sick stationed in the barracks consigned to him, he, ultimately, was the best informed as to their conditions. Yet, despite several of whom were in a hopeless condition, he refrained from singling out any of the sick. This decision was always taken by Budziaszek, who -- I must admit -- asked Dr. Silber about the state of the sick man in each case. One may wonder, though, whether it was right

that Budziaszek carried out the selection, for it could have been someone else, such as Neubert.

In any case, Budziaszek was not constrained in the selection. I should emphasize that Budziaszek did me no personal wrongs. When I worked in the capacity of head prisoner at E-lager, he would often visit me (for he would then benefit from the products I had managed to "organize") and would chat without any enmity.

In November of 1944, I was removed from the post of lageral-
tester. One day Taute called me in and, indicating a letter from higher authorities, informed that there had arisen some question concerning E-lager. It turned out that the object of their interest was a certain group of individuals who had returned several times "for rehabilitation". I have already noted that this was indeed the case. Someone, having become familiar with these facts, had evidently reached the conclusion that something was amiss in E-lager. The rehabilitation clearly had no impact. This was my interpretation of the summons by and conversation with the head of the Politische Abteilung.

I told Taute that I really had no idea what this was all about, I had tried scrupulously to fulfill both his orders and my purposes there. Taute himself did not know what this was all about, but nevertheless deemed it suitable to remove me from my post. He communicated his decision to me during our conversation. My assistant until then, Dr. Winter, became my successor. He worked in that capacity until the end of the camp's existence. I, then, was left without an occupation. I went to Stefan

Budziaszek asking what he intended to do with me. He answered that he was directing me to the newly organized barrack called Surgery II (surgical department). It was barrack No.14. I later organized the schonung barrack (for convalescents). This happened, I think, in December, 1944, and for that purpose barrack No.13 was designated.

In the schonung block, selections were also made. Neubert was present, as was Budziaszek, Rutkowski (assistant to Budziaszek), and sometimes Dr. Silber. It was Budziaszek, however, who carried out the selections. This I hold against him. I know that these matters are not easy; when selections of the seriously ill took place the pflegers or "male-nurses" loaded the automobiles. I too had to carry out these operations at times. But this was something completely different from making the actual selections.

In the camp the necessity arose in several settings for making selections. Here is an example. As an orderly in the camp hospital, I had under my care 30 prisoners who had pneumonia. Each day, however, I received only 12 sulphuric acid tablets (Sulphamides -- not known before the War); which, in order to be effective, met the dosage needs of only one person each. Hence, it was necessary to make a choice. I discussed this at great length with Dr. Silber before we jointly made a final decision. Our choices for dispensing the medicine would usually fall upon the younger prisoners, who in point of view of their ages had better chances for survival in the camp. Oftentimes there were individuals whom we wanted to save at any cost. In these cases,

I would approach SDG-Neubert and claim that I needed an additional 12 tablets. Neubert did not utter a word to me; he did not even indicate a confirmation or denial of my request. He would go out and return in half an hour, placing 12 tablets on the table in silence. Sometimes he took me with him to the SS pharmacy, apparently under the pretence of my preparing the medicines - or put them in order (by profession I am a pharmacist). Making the best use of these occasions, I packed my pockets full of medications and medicines necessary to care for and save the lives of the prisoners.

Neubert knew about this. Whenever one of the SS-men, reputed for their extreme strictness, stood in front of the gate to the camp (it could be, for example, Rachers, who knew me very well and yet still searched every pocket and recess of my prisoners' stripes), I would hand over the medicines to Neubert for transfer into the camp. Neubert did not cooperate out of humanitarian motives, for, as I have pointed out, he was also adept at looking after his own interests. If he was "helpful", then it was first because he trusted me and second because he knew that I would pay him for it.

As concerns other events connected with my stay in KL Auschwitz III-Monowice, I mention our contacts with the women prisoners employed in Rajsko. One day a prisoner who worked in the capacity of gardener at KL Auschwitz III (this was a German Jew; I do not remember his name) approached me and said, "Listen -- you have greetings from a cousin." I expressed

surprise, wondering which cousin this was. He mentioned the name of Genia Halbreich. Neither the word nor the name brought anything to mind, and I wondered if there was any possibility for personal contact with this individual. The gardener informed me that the above-mentioned prisoner worked in Rajsko and that he could arrange a visit for me. As usual, we resorted to some trickery, and explained to Neubert that we had to put a flower bed near the hospital. Neubert expressed his consent.

The gardeners and I, under escort, went to Rajsko. Upon arrival I asked for Genia Halbreich. After a few moments a pretty, young girl came towards us. She worked as part of the office professional force (secretary). When I entered the area where she worked, Genia turned to her supervisor, the SS-hauptscharfuhrer, and, motioning towards me, stated that I was her cousin. The SS-man must have been a humane fellow, for he left the room, and let us be alone. As it turned out, Genia was my distant relative by marriage to someone in our family (I did not even know her husband, who came from Crakow). After this initial meeting, the prisoner-gardener served as our intermediary on several occasions. In addition, I sent my cousin such items as sardines, and she reciprocated with vegetables from Rajsko. She also passed on packages to my sister who was also interned in KL Auschwitz and labored in the munitions factory, Union-Werke. I do not recall which part of the camp my sister was staying in at that time.

Having mentioned my sister, I wish to add that she was one of the female prisoners who smuggled out explosive materials to the prisoners from Sonderkommando. When her associates were arrested, she came close to sharing in their fate; sentenced to hanging. My sister told me later that at the last moment she had managed to jump out of the window of the transport train and then mingled with a group of prisoners preparing for departure. I assume that my sister can describe this incident personally. I will provide her address at the next possible opportunity.

Escapes from the camp at Monowice did occur from time to time. A well-known incident was that of several prisoners who participated with a blockman. One was a Jew from Bedzin or Sosnowiec whose first name was Chaim, his last name I cannot recall. Their escape took a tragic course. Along the way, one or two of the escapees were murdered, while the rest were taken by the Hitlerite authorities and brought back again to the camp, where they were sentenced to death. I do not remember the details of this matter. Among the escapees were a couple of prisoners previously employed in the camp kitchen.

I remember more precisely the matter of the attempted escape of three Jewish prisoners. One of them had been a student before the War and came from Lodz; his name was Weisman. The second was named Janek Grossfeld, and the third Leon Diament. I knew about their preparations, and I must

confess that the plan of escape was not the most ingenuous. Other associates who knew of their intentions were of the same opinion. Nevertheless, despite repeated warnings and attempts to persuade them to abandon the escape, they clung to their idea. The actual event took place in either August or September, 1944. It ended tragically. They were rounded up by the functionaries of the Political Division and placed in the bunkers under camp arrest. Following this event, fear seized all those who had been privy to their intentions or had afforded them assistance of one sort or another. But above all, the feeling of sorrow predominated, for these three were beloved by all.

Upon conclusion of the inquest, the SS-authorities publicly administered the death penalty. The escapees died valiantly, setting an heroic example to the prisoners who had gathered by order of the SS on the parade ground and who were forced to witness the deaths. No fear was seen or detected on the faces of the condemned men. Their cries urged the remaining prisoners to have faith in ultimate survival. One of the condemned men called out, "Kopf hoch Kameraden - wir sind die Letzten!" The second shouted, "Es lebe die Freiheit!" I do not recall whether the third also took up a cry. An intense atmosphere prevailed; the presence of a large number of SS-sentries attested to the fact that the camp authorities were wary of possible prisoner reactions.

Fredy Diament, brother of the executed Leon, survived the personal tragedy. He had worked for a long period of time as a "Kalfaktor" for the Lageraltester P.K., but at this time was working on the grounds of the plants. In an effort to alleviate the probable stress and pain, his friends took him to the camp hospital before the execution, where he received an injection which put him to sleep.

I do not remember the exact date of the execution; it was in the Autumn of 1944. Notwithstanding the death of these three, we remained troubled over the uncertainty as to the means by which the Political Division had picked up the trail of their actions and preparations for escape.

I did not initiate any discussion with Jozef Wiczorek on the subject of this tragic event. He himself began to talk about it. He knew, after all, that I had been acquainted with the executed men. After Wiczorek began the conversation on this subject, I indicated that nothing in particular about this case had concerned me. "Of course," he said, "it is a pity for your associates, since for some an escape succeeds, but for them not." He then added, somewhat perfunctorily, that the SS knew that in every camp there existed an informal and illegal organization -- in KL Auschwitz III-Moniwice as well. Whether or not the Politische Abteilung actually knew, it did not have any concrete proof. Towards the end Wiczorek added, in the form of a warning, that we

should be careful, for some "talk(ed) too much." He mentioned the name of Budziaszek, "watch out for Budziaszek".

I must acknowledge that I did not repeat the substance of this conversation to anyone, not even Fredy Diamant with whom I had maintained a close friendship. Only in recent years did I relate this to him during the writing of a presentation in Los Angeles, and thereafter during a trial in Frankfurt am Main.

Budziaszek must have feared some reprisal on the part of the prisoners for his own conduct in the camps since immediately after the War he took some corresponding action: he married a Jewess. I learned later from the prosecutors who examined me in Frankfurt that the trial of Budziaszek had come to nothing. In his defense stood three Jews who filed written depositions to the effect that he had saved their lives. I should add that these three Jews are all very wealthy individuals, half of Hanover probably belongs to them. Budziaszek who changed his name to Buthner, is also a well-to-do and influential man today. As a physician, he operates his own sanatorium in Hanover.

Among other camp experiences I recall the following event. One day in August of 1944, the head of the Political Division, Taute, called me in. He informed me that on the following day there would arrive at E-lager a new transport group of detention-rehabilitation prisoners from Katowice, among whom

would be a miner who had killed a prisoner in one of the Auschwitz-Branch Camps. When he finished speaking, he asked: "Did you understand what is at issue?" I answered in the affirmative, for I knew the typical SS-member's mentality: only they had the right to kill prisoners, and interference of any kind on the part of the foremen or the civil personnel was not to be tolerated. After our conversation I returned to my quarters.

The next day a transport group of several dozen prisoners arrived at E-lager. Subtly inquiring among the newly arrived, I soon determined whom the individual was. He was a civilian worker in a mine (I do not recall his name) in which some prisoners of KL Auschwitz were also employed. This miner did not hide the fact that he had beaten a prisoner, yet he did not speak of the death of the battered individual. I treated him somewhat more "kindly" than the others. He got a sufficient portion of camp soup, and at the end of the meal I had him do some "rollen" type exercises. Of course this was just an introduction to camp existence, and beyond that I personally left him alone.

The next day these new arrivals were conducted to the camp prisoners' hospital for their medical examinations. My associates, warned as to whom they would have in the hospital, handled the criminal prisoner appropriately. He returned to the barracks in a pitiable and sorry state. He received his

work orders the following day, and was placed inside the camp confines rather than with an outside squad. After his first day he returned utterly exhausted and battered by the foreman. He was in such bad condition that I decided to transfer him to the camp hospital, where that day he died. As I indicated earlier, I do not remember either the precise date of this event or the name of the prisoner. It was my feeling that he met with justice for the impious act he had committed.

The day following the death of the miner, Taute summoned me to the Politische Abteilung. As he began to speak, a certain agitation made itself felt. He brought up the subject of the miner and asked how it was possible for a completely healthy man to die after only two days' stay in the camp. What sort of explanation could be given to the outpost of the Gestapo in Katowice? Maintaining my composure, I declared that the explanation of this fact was very simple. This was a prisoner of fairly profound corpulence; he had spent the greater part of his life at work in an underground mine. Once in the camp, he had to work above ground and, in addition, during a sunny, hot day. His heart simply could not withstand this environment. Taute relaxed visibly upon hearing my explanation. He realized and agreed that this explanation for the death of the prisoner was a highly plausible one. The diagnosis of "Herzschlag" (heart attack) dispelled all doubts.

In the camp, traitors were not tolerated. I recall that

a transport group of French Jews was once brought to Monowice. I do not remember the date of this event. As usual, we asked the new arrivals who they were and under what circumstances they were arrested and conveyed to the camp. The prisoners pointed to one among their number, a traitor who had denounced them to the Gestapo and thanks to whom they had been captured in their hiding place. This prisoner "died" after two days' stay in KL Auschwitz, shortly after he too had received his directive to report to the camp hospital. Unfortunately, his demise was a necessity, for he could easily have continued his counterproductive activities within the camp.

As concerns my former associates and friends in the camp, Dr. J. Silber died of a heart attack at the airport in Paris in 1972, just prior to his intended flight to Israel. Dr. Silber practiced medicine in the French city of Metz following the War. Dr. Cuenka today lives and maintains a private practice in the city of Lauzanne, Switzerland. Both were unusually kind individuals and helped those who were sick as much as they could, making full use of their knowledge and experience. I also remember the names of Dr. Hugo Orenstein, who had been brought to the camp in the transport group from France, and of Dr. Lubitch, who at present lives in Bordeaux. Afterwards, Dr. Orenstein was transferred to subcamp Gliwice 2, I believe. He was shot and killed during the evacuation by lagerfuhrer Moll. After the War several other prisoner-doctors from the

prisoners' hospital at Monowice died, among them Dr. Sperber and Dr. Epstein from Prague. My closest co-worker at E-lager, Dr. Alfred Winter (who was named to replace me after my removal from the post of lageraltester), survived the camp. After the War he returned to his native country of Czechoslovakia and worked as a railroad doctor. He wrote me saying that he was not doing (feeling?) very well. I also remember the name of the Dr. Kovac, who came from Czechoslovakia.

A few transport groups of prisoners were taken directly to KL Auschwitz III and, hence, still carried their baggage with them. I remember the arrival of a transport group from Italy and a few groups from Hungary. During their arrival ("reception" is a better translation, but it has a different connotation and would produce a comical effect) SS-men were present, among others SDG-Neubert, who "organized" whatever and as much as he could. A small quantity of food and other items usually found its way into the camp thanks to prisoners who had access to these new arrivals. In these cases, it was generally a conscious act on behalf of the interests of all of the prisoners.

A prisoners' orchestra was also in operation in the camp. I met one of the prisoners who played in this orchestra in the United States at the fifteenth anniversary of the liberation of KL Auschwitz. This was Bronislaw Stasiak, the band-leader, if I remember correctly.

Since the end of the War, I have been in continual contact with the former prisoner, Dr. Franz Unikover, who presently lives and works in Frankfurt am Main. He is by profession an attorney and works closely with radio broadcast stations as well as with the Ministry of Education on such matters as textbooks. As a prisoner at KL Auschwitz, he was employed in the office of the Political Division. Unikover recalled recently that, according to the information he had, Jozef Wiczorek was brought to trial in Poland after the War and received a sentence of four years imprisonment. This relatively light sentence resulted directly from the favorable opinion held by the prisoners of KL Auschwitz of him. Unfortunately, I am not familiar with and have not heard about his present situation. I must confess, he was the only SS-man with whom I ever cared to speak.

From 1944 on, a brothel-house was in operation in KL Auschwitz III-Monowice in which the female prisoners were placed. This repository could be visited only by the "Aryan" prisoners, but mostly the functional prisoners such as the Blockaltester and foremen made use of it. I recall that the above-mentioned Fredy Diament, then working as the Kalfaktor for Lageraltester Paul Kozwara, also experienced an occasional adventure. Fredy was forced by Kozwara to accompany him to the brothel and to have relations. I remember hearing about a brawl which erupted from some excessive drinking on

the part of the SS-sentry (guarding the brothel) and the subsequent entry into the brothel of the functional prisoners, who had arranged a drinking party for themselves.

For some period of time the parade grounds of the Monowice camp were scattered with pitched tents in which lived, among other, Jews brought from Hungary. These tents were later destroyed after the construction of an additional lot of dwelling barracks.

While at Monowice, I neither received nor heard about the assignment of so-called "pramienscheinen." I remember, on the other hand, that when I was in KL Sachsenhausen some Jewish prisoners did have money in camp deposit. From time to time the camp authorities permitted withdrawal of this money which was then used to purchase small quantities of bread. Unfortunately, a so-called "chain purchase" was involved here, which meant that it was necessary to buy other products in addition to the bread. On one occasion there were barrels full of pickled beets, another time a quantity of syrup. The results of an excessive consumption of, for example, the pickled beets were tragic. Many of the prisoners suffering from starvation were simply unable to restrain themselves from consuming great quantities of beets. Most of the time, they paid for this with their lives.

While in KL Auschwitz III, I neither heard nor knew anything concerning the crematorium which, it was rumored, the authorities intended to install in the camp. On the other

hand, as concerns the selection from among the prisoners, I can confirm that selection was conducted, predominately in the camp hospital. I had heard that one particular selection was to have taken place in a normal dwelling block, but do not recall any fuller details on this subject.

In deference to the lack of time I have to spend here, I shall not describe the evacuation of Monowice in today's report. I have previously written my recollections on that subject, published in the form of articles in the foreign press. If I can locate copies of these articles, I will make them available to the State Museum in Oswiecim (they were written in English and in German.)

Following the evacuation in January of 1945, and after an interminable journey under primitive and harsh conditions which swallowed up hundreds of human beings, I found myself at the camp Nordhausen.² This was one branch of the concentration camp Mittelbau (Dora). While I had the good fortune of arriving at this destination point alive, hundreds of other prisoners perished during the journey. In Nordhausen, my luck did not abandon me. Immediately after my arrival, I was named as head of the camp hospital (Lageraltester des HKB). Soon thereafter, Otto Kozdas, whom I had known from my work in the

2. A short description of his stay at Auschwitz as well as the evacuation is also in the protocol made by Z. Halbreich at Wiesbaden on 9/10/1945 (Archive of the State Museum at Oswiecim records of the trial against the former Kommandant of the concentration camp at Oswiecim R. Hoss, syg. Dpr. Hd/5, vol. 5 K. 147-157).

camp hospital at Monowice, was brought to this camp. Kozdas was an Aryan, originally from Vienna. Hence, I was relieved from my post and replaced by him.

This was generally the normal course of affairs. As a Jewish prisoner I had no recourse in such an instance. Beyond this, the prisoners' medical service in Nordhausen was not in any condition to provide effective aid to our sick associates. Everything was lacking: food, fuel, not to mention medicine. Under these circumstances the medical personnel were forced to limit their activities to the daily counting of the dead. Prisoners died in masses. Many prisoners had advanced tuberculosis, which, coupled with the hunger and primitive living conditions (prisoners lay in the production halls), increased the mortality rate.

Nothing really changed when Kozdas assumed the post; he "managed", but in actual fact I had to handle all matters. People turned to me with various inquiries, questions, etc. Kozdas' pride suffered because of this and he decided to get rid of me. One day the camp schreiber (secretary) informed me that I had been added to a transport group of sick prisoners which was to leave the camp. It was a secret to no one, much less for me, what fate the sick ones were to meet. Resigned, I surrendered to fate, and having exchanged farewells with my associates I awaited the day on which my destiny was to be fulfilled. In truth, while I accepted the fact of my addition to the transport group designated for

extermination, in my thoughts I composed a plan for action. I intended to save myself by jumping out of the train car during the journey. I had an advantage in relation to the sick prisoners in that I could walk -- I was, after a fashion physically dexterous.

Nothing came of these plans. An air raid took place on the day before the planned departure of the transport group during which the railroads were destroyed. This thwarted the plans of the SS, and the transport group in question never left the camp. On the next day, another air raid took place which destroyed the entire town of Nordhausen as well as the camp. For the next ten days we stayed in the neighboring forest -- up until the liberation.

During those ten days we lived in the woods in complete isolation with no knowledge as to what course the struggle at the front was taking. Immediately following the liberation, I returned to the grounds of the erstwhile Nordhausen camp and sought out my associates. I also wished to learn where Kozdas was staying. I am not vengeful by nature, but felt urged to settle accounts with Kozdas because of his ruthless attitude, oftentimes directed at me. It turned out that the accounts were settled, for Kozdas had already met with a terrible, albeit much-deserved punishment. My associates told me that he had been liquidated by his fellow prisoners after the liberation. I understand that Kozdas, during the last

moments of his life, had asked to see me. He evidently assumed that I would stand in his defense, that perhaps I would say something positive on his behalf.

I also encountered SDG-Neubert in the camp at Nordhausen. He worked in the same capacity (SDG) he had earlier at Monowice. I recall that a few days prior to the bombardment of Nordhausen Neubert had approached me, asking me if I could get him a bicycle. He explained that with the end of the struggle in sight, he intended to flee the area. Naturally, I had no intentions of arranging any part of this for him. I answered that I did not have the means at my disposal. After that episode I did not see Neubert for many years.

We met again in a courtroom in Frankfurt am Main, as I came forward to testify as a witness. I wish to point out that in describing my experiences at KL Auschwitz III in relation to Neubert I sought to tell only the truth -- I avowed that in my opinion Neubert was not an evil man. Once establishing this fact, I could then be consistent with my conscience. The doubts which troubled me were also eased by the Rabbi of my congregation who advised me to testify at the hearing only to those events which I remembered in fact or to which I had been an eyewitness. Some former associates and fellow prisoners of mine in the camps were not at all pleased with my statements. I even met with concealed threats such as "better avoid Israel..." This was not pleasant, for I simply

fulfilled my obligations and spoke the truth. I should point out that I have appeared as a witness numerous times, and have always testified consistently: when witness to the bestiality of the SS-men, I never concealed it. This was the case, for example, in the trial against the SS-hangmen from the former KL Sachsenhausen, against whom I gave a lengthy and heavily incriminating testimony.

I noted at the beginning of this report that before I was condemned to KL Auschwitz I had stayed in two concentration camps, KL Sachsenhausen and KL Grossrosen. I recall that escapes from Sachsenhausen by prisoners did take place and were often successful. Yet as a consequence for such escapes, those remaining were given punitive "roll-calls" lasting for from ten to twenty hours. After one particular escape, we were kept on the parade ground for two days and two nights -- and, of course, were not served meals. There was also a penal squad in KL Sachsenhausen, but I cannot recall anything specific on that subject. During my stay, the Jewish prisoners occupied four blocks at Sachsenhausen: blocks 37, 38, 39 and 40. As a direct result of the cruelties inflicted upon us, our numbers dwindled rapidly.

I cannot recall whether any public executions were conducted in KL Sachsenhausen. While escapees surely perished during the chase, no public executions by hanging similar to those conducted in KL Auschwitz III-Monowice occurred. I do

not recall any escapes from Gross-Rosen, where particularly inhumane conditions prevailed.

As concerns the sanitary conditions and the general atmosphere, I should point out that KL Auschwitz III-Monowice was the best in these respects. My comparison, naturally, is with the conditions endured in the two other camps, KL Sachsenhausen and KL Gross-Rosen. I wish to emphasize, however that this conclusion is due largely to the older prisoners at KL Auschwitz III. We, referring to the political prisoners, exerted a great deal of influence over the functional prisoners such as lageraltester Paul Kozwara. There were also the difficult types, among whose number I would first rank lagercapo Emil Worgul. In general though, there was good company to work with in KL Auschwitz; associates who were employed in the camp personnel office (e.g. Gustaw Herzog), in the hospital (e.g. Stefan Heymann), and in many other sections. It took a long time to develop this atmosphere of cooperation and prisoners who arrived at the camp at a later date could not imagine how it had been in the beginning.

I should emphasize once again that the functional prisoners were a diverse lot. Even Jewish foremen would beat prisoners and assist in condemnations. Such individuals are to be found in almost all environments. Despite these exceptions, the majority of the functional prisoners acted fairly

and were unbiased. It was this atmosphere which distinguished the camp at Monowice from others. One must not lose sight of another aspect: the attitudes of the SS-men changed visibly after 1942. They too observed the course of the War and adjusted their behavior with respect to the prisoners accordingly. Beyond this, prisoners' work also increased in scope.

Personally, I judge the conduct of lagerfuhrer Schottle in a positive fashion. He was never known to have personally beaten a prisoner. His antithesis was the rapportfuhrer Rackers. Here was a man always prepared to go to great lengths for material goods, for the opportunity to "organize". Naturally, he was "benevolent" to those prisoners from whom he could acquire something. It was unfortunate, however, for any individual who somehow managed to displease Rackers; without mercy, he would torment such a prisoner. He could kill with his bare hands. The arbeitsdienstfuhrer Stolten was extremely dangerous; it was advisable to avoid him. From among the physicians of the SS, I remember the names of Fischer, Konig (I knew him at Gross-Rosen), Kitt and Mengele.

The report is here ended. The report was drawn up, using a tape recording, by an employee of the State Museum at

Oswiecim, mgr Tadeusz Iwaszko. Then followed the signatures
of mgr Iwaszko and mgr Halbreich -- trans.

The report was drawn up in four copies.
2 copies for the Archiwum PMO
1 copy for author of the report
1 copy for transcriber of the report



Były więzień obozu koncentracyjnego Auschwitz -
Zygfryd HALBREICH. Zdjęcie wykonane dnia
19.10.1973 r.

Fotografował T. Iwaszko