

Transcript of the *Shoah* Interview with Franz Suchomel

German Translation by Uta Allers - Volunteer – Visitor Services – Summer 2012

Interview

FIRST CASSETTE, FIRST SIDE

Audio Reel Suchomel_1-1-2 (STARTS WITH A SECTION IN FRENCH)

Question: Are you ready? Are you ready?

Response: Yes

Qu. We can start?

Re. We can start.

Qu. Good. (In French) We can go ahead. (In German) How is your heart? Everything okay?

Re. Well, my heart... at this point, I'm not in pain. If I get pain, I'll have to tell you. Then we'll have to take a break.

Qu. Yes, of course. But your health in general?

Re. Yes. I'm very pleased with this day. Because the weather is good. High pressure system, eh? That's good.

Qu. Yes, you look really good. Yes. First I'd like to... we'll start with Treblinka.

Re. Yes, go ahead.

Qu. I think that's the best way. You could give a description of Treblinka. How was Treblinka when you arrived there? I think you arrived in Treblinka in...

Re. Mid-August

Qu. On the 20th or 24th of August?

Re. On the 18th of August.

Qu. On the 18th?

Re. I don't know exactly. I got there around the 20th, with seven others.

Qu. From Berlin?

Re. From Berlin.

Qu. From Lublin?

Re. From Berlin to Warsaw, from Warsaw to Lublin, from Lublin back to Warsaw and from Warsaw to Treblinka.

Qu. And how was Treblinka at that time?

Re. Yes – at that time Treblinka was operating at its peak.

Qu. At its peak?

Re. At its peak. There came... the Warsaw Ghetto was being emptied at that time. About three trains arrived in two days, each with three, four, five thousand people, all from Warsaw. But in between trains came from

- Re. Kielce and from other areas too. And three trains of Jewish transports came – which, because the Stalingrad Campaign was taking place then – were left standing at the train station. And they were mostly in French train cars made of tin. So, of the 5,000 who arrived in Treblinka, 3,000 of them were dead.
- Qu. In the...
- Re. In the train cars. They cut their veins or just died; they were half-dead or half-crazy when they were unloaded.
- Qu. One moment. (in French: I didn't understand that very well. The interpreter translates the preceding.) French train cars?
- Re. French train cars.
- Qu. But with Polish Jews?
- Re. With Polish Jews. All Polish Jews. People, Jews, were already waiting there for two days...
- Qu. Where, in Treblinka?
- Re. Yes, in Treblinka, the reception camp.
- Qu. Treblinka, in the reception camp.
- Re. There in the front.
- Qu. No, the reception camp is here.
- Re. Here. Viewed from here, there was the ramp, coming in.
- Qu. Yes. You'll explain that later in detail.
- Re. ... were in the reception camp for two days because the small gas chambers couldn't keep up. They were working day and night back then.
- Qu. Yes, but please, can you describe exactly your first impression of Treblinka in detail. Very precisely. That's important.
- Re. The first impression of Treblinka for me and some of my colleagues was catastrophic. Because we weren't told how and what... That people are being killed there... No one told us that.
- Qu. You knew nothing of that?
- Re. No.
- Qu. That's incredible.
- Re. Yes. But that's how it **was**. I didn't want to go.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. That's been proven by the courts. And I was told, "Well, Mr. Suchomel, there are big workshops for tailors and shoemakers, which you will supervise. You know?"
- Qu. But you knew that it was a camp?

- Re. Yes, we were told, “The Führer has ordered resettlement programs. It’s an order from the Führer.”
- Qu. Yes, yes.
- Re. Do you understand?
- Qu. Resettlement programs.
- Re. Resettlement programs. No one ever said “killing”. And we couldn’t imagine that people would be killed when a war is to be won – to kill people who could work.
- Qu. Yes, yes, I understand that. Yes, good, but please. Mr. Suchomel, we’re not talking about you. We are talking only about Treblinka because you’re an important witness and you can explain what Treblinka was. Fine. You arrive in Treblinka...
- Re. Well, then the Spiess, that is, the Stadie showed us the camp.
- Qu. Stadie?
- Re. Stadie.
- Qu. Stadie was SS?
- Re. He was something like I was, except that he had a higher rank.
- Qu. Corporal?
- Re. Technical Sergeant.
- Qu. Weren’t you also a Technical Sergeant?
- Re. No, no, no, no. Corporal. I was never part of the SS. That was all a lie.
- Qu. You were never SS?
- Re. Well, what for, naw...
- Qu. Yes, but how... Please, we’re not talking about you.
- Re. But don’t use my name.
- Qu. No, no. I promised you. For me, you are a technician. But I read that you arrived in Treblinka on August 18th. Stangl arrived...
- Re. ... hadn’t arrived yet.
- Qu. Yes. There are other witnesses, for instance, a Jew Vierny, etc. Yes, but all these people say and write that when you arrived there it was like Dante’s Inferno. Can you explain that?
- Re. Yes, Stadie led us through the camp, around the back of it, and when we came up, the doors of the gas chambers were just opened and the people fell out like potatoes.
- Qu. Like potatoes?

- Re. Yes, that shocked and appalled us, of course. We left and sat down on our suitcases. We cried like old women. Then we went to Eberl.
- Qu. To...
- Re. Eberl. He was the camp commandant. And we asked to be sent back where we came from. And he said, "That's not possible. I can't send you away. My people are worn out. You have to stay here." We went out and I went to Eberl again with a colleague. I said, "First Lieutenant, I can't stand this. I'm physically too weak; I can't work here." Eberl said, "Suchomel, just say that you don't want to do it. Just say it. Then I'll get you to where you belong. So, please..."
- Qu. What does it mean, "where you belong"?
- Re. Yes, on the probationary trash heap of the Waffen SS.
- Qu. On the front?
- Re. On the front. And there you prove yourself only when you've died.
- Qu. And you didn't want to go to the front?
- Re. No, I wanted to go back, but that wasn't possible. Then I spent days avoiding (*the work*), drank a lot...
- Qu. You drank?
- Re. Yes, of course. Vodka. Well, what could we do?
- Qu. Why did you drink? To forget?
- Re. Because I was terrified. Imagine the situation when you come into such an inferno as a decent human being.
- Qu. Yes, but I read that... Excuse me, give me that (*the pointer*). I read that there weren't only corpses in the gas chambers, but that there were corpses everywhere, at the train station, on the train ramp...
- Re. One moment, one moment, one moment. I told you... let it be, Mr. Lanzmann... I told you about the trains with the 5,000 people of whom 3,000 were dead – three trains arrived. In the others, **at least** half were dead. They were stacked up here, here, here and here. That was thousands of people, piled one on top of another.
- Qu. Here at the train station?
- Re. At the train station.
- Qu. There were corpses too?
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. Everywhere?
- Re. Everywhere. They were stacked up like wood, eh.

- Qu. Yes, and were there corpses at the train tracks, kilometers from Treblinka?
- Re. No. I didn't see that. But it's possible. Everything is possible. I didn't see it, eh? Once I saw two, three corpses in the woods.
- Qu. But where did you yourself arrive?
- Re. Here.
- Qu. Here – at the train station. And when did you see the first corpses? In the train?
- Re. No, not in the train. Two hours later. At the gas chamber.
- Qu. But there were corpses everywhere.
- Re. That only happened with these transports. There were corpses lying around everywhere. I mean, people came from nursing homes; the Ukrainians shot them. Because back then, there was no rules as under Stangl; back then it was...
- Qu. You know, that is very important. For there is a history of Treblinka and various phases.
- Re. Well yes. I'm telling you about the first phase.
- Qu. And I'm very interested because it's very important to understand that, at the beginning of the extermination. There is the talk about German orderliness, etc., but the beginning was a bordello.
- Re. Yes, yes.
- Qu. Yes, could you explain that. It's very important.
- Re. Yes, listen to me...
- Qu. Please feel free, it's not you...
- Re. Sorry, I forgot... I'll give you... I'll send you something in writing, which I published; it's the story of Treblinka, as I experienced it, that is, mainly through Christian Wirth, you understand. And with that, you can get more. But now I will tell you a lot...
- Qu. Yes, as you were saying...
- Re. A lot, eh?
- (An exchange in French: "Is your thing working?" "Yes, yes". "You should (*move?*) a bit... because he looks at you a lot. And you, Jean, you should not put yourself completely in the corner. Look, I'm going to smoke a cigarette." In German: "He has to change the tape.")
- Re. Beasts, that is too mild an expression.
- Qu. What? (Interpreter: That is too mild and expression.)

- Re. Well, let's get back to it.
- Qu. Of course – that's a very important topic.
- Re. Very important. Without Christian Wirth...
- Qu. Yes, that's another question. Fine, but you were about to explain...
- Re. Yes, so due to the frequency of the transports, and after Eberl was unable to stop the transports from Warsaw – the higher-ups wanted to liquidate the Ghetto as quickly as possible...
- Qu. The Ghetto?
- Re. The Ghetto. Now more and more people were arriving, ever more, who couldn't be killed.
- Qu. It wasn't completed? It wasn't ready?
- Re. The gas chambers had inadequate capacity – the small gas house, eh?
- Qu. Which small gas chamber? The old gas chamber?
- Re. (*Points*). See?
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. There were only... they had three small compartments, see? Three.
- Qu. How many people could these old gas chambers manage?
- Re. 300.
- Qu. 300?
- Re. I can't say exactly. You know, I totally avoided having anything to do with the higher-ups; I'll be honest. I was horrified, you know? Because, you have to imagine... well yes, it was too much. So. Because people had been there two or three days, Eberl finally got through, had called to Lublin and one night, Wirth arrived.
- Qu. Eberl called to Lublin and what did he say in Lublin? Lublin was the headquarters?
- Re. Yes. "We can't do it; I can't manage it. There has to be a stop to it."
- Qu. Because the people kept coming...
- Re. Yes, yes, and couldn't...
- Qu. Yes, and what happened with the people who were there?
- Re. Nothing – they believed – back then still! Please, back then people still believed that they wouldn't be killed! Can you imagine?
- Qu. No. You have to help me.
- Re. Eh... they still hoped and believed.

- Re. Some not. For example, there were Jewish women, who cut the veins of their daughters in the night and then their own. You know? Then twenty or thirty corpses were found,
- Qu. (In French) Yes, but that's a contradiction to what he said before. He said that the people didn't believe they would die and they commit suicide. (Interpreter translates.)
- Re. Let me go on. To this point not. Then came Wirth. He looked at it all and left again right away. Then he came with people from Belzec. That is, with technicians. Three people, Staff Sergeant and ten Ukrainians. And Wirth was able to get the transports to stop. But at that point there were still about a thousand Jews in the reception camp. And then one Jew, (*killed*) that Biala, what was his name...

Audio Reel Suchomel_3-4

- Qu. A Berliner...
- Re. That...
- Qu. Max Biala...
- Re. Stabbed that Max Biala. Eh?
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. You know? Then Wirth had hundreds of Jews shot. So there would be fewer people. Understand?
- Qu. Yes. But the worker Jews?
- Re. Back then, there were no worker Jews. The Jews who worked up on top of the trenches and those who dragged the corpses from the gas chambers, they were chased into the gas chambers by the Ukrainians in the evening or shot. Every day. And at that time, before Wirth, under Eberl, they calculated that in Treblinka one shot was fired every hour.
- Qu. One...
- Re. One pistol shot. Could you translate that? (Translation) So, one person was shot (*per hour*).
- Qu. Oh yes.
- Re. Get it?
- Qu. Yes. (In French) This is not good that he's looking at you all the time. Camera man: "But that's very good. He is there... I am in your line of vision."
- Re. And then the whole camp was cleaned up within three days. Wirth had this trench made, and here, that's where the corpses went in, and here, they were all buried. And covered with chlorine lime. And then Wirth

- Re. sent Eberl away, and then that Gretschuss (?), who had the Ukrainian guards – they weren't guards, they were criminals. And then Wirth reorganized people, that is, the Germans.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. Everyone got an assignment.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. And I became – shall I say it? – the head of the Gold Jews.
- Qu. Of course, you have to say it.
- Re. I became – it's well known – so, I became the head of the Gold Jews.
- Qu. Head of the Gold Jews?
- Re. Yes.

BREAK

- Re. Can I give you my impressions from up there? In the beginning?
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. So, Jews who were selected, every day a hundred, they carried the corpses into the trenches. See?
- Qu. The corpses... from where?
- Re. From here.
- Qu. Yes, yes.
- Re. They stood on a hill... Visualize it like this: up here were the gates of the gas chambers and here was the ground. That's where they fell out.
- Qu. Yes, yes. And it was full up?
- Re. Completely full. They put the corpses into the trenches. Those were the hot August days.
- Qu. The hot...
- Re. Hot, hot
- Qu. Yes, the heat.
- Re. The earth moved like waves due to the gases.
- Qu. The gases from the corpses?
- Re. Yes. You have to visualize that the trenches were perhaps six, seven meters deep and full of corpses, one next to the other. A thin layer of sand and the heat. Yes? It was an inferno up there.
- Qu. You saw that?

- Re. I saw that. Only once, on the first day, eh. Then we vomited and cried... and...
- Qu. Cried?
- Re. Cried too, yes.
- Qu. And how was the smell?
- Re. The smell was infernal.
- Qu. Infernal?
- Re. Yes, yes. Because the gas was constantly seeping out. That reeked terribly, so that it was (*perceptible?*) for kilometers...
- Qu. For kilometers?
- Re. For kilometers.
- Qu. Was there a smell everywhere?
- Re. Everywhere.
- Qu. And not just in Treblinka?
- Re. Everywhere. Depending on how the wind was blowing, that's how the smell was. Understand?
- Qu. Yes and the people who lived in the village, the Polish people...
- Re. They were Poles.
- Qu. They were...?
- Re. Poles.
- Qu. Yes, I know.
- Re. They didn't like the Jews. I don't want to attest to it, eh.
- Qu. But yes, yes.
- Re. Yes, I can tell you something else about that. I'll tell you something else, but after lunch. The Poles didn't care; they were scared. Because there was a big SS camp in the area, Treblinka 1 under Doctor... well, what was his name... von Alken. Under von Alken. There were the real SS people; that was different. And that's where a lot of Poles were sent. And that's why the residents in the villages all around were scared. They had been intimidated.
- Qu. Yes, but the residents smelled this odor?
- Re. Yes, of course. Of course!
- Qu. And what did they think?

- Re. I don't know. Nothing.
- Qu. They knew about that?
- Re. They knew about that. But they didn't do anything.
- Qu. Yes, all the people who lived around Treblinka knew?
- Re. They knew. That is, as time went on, they knew because they smelled it. That was a corpse stench, kind of sweet-sour, eh. Terrible.
- Qu. But it was everywhere... here too... there was the smell? Everywhere?
- Re. Everywhere, everywhere. That is, less down here. Just depending... if there was an easterly wind, you know, then down here too. And that's where the notice board was, under Eberl. I'll explain that later. It said, "Warsawers, take note! You are being resettled into the Ukraine. First you will go into the showers, then each of you will get two shirts, two pairs of socks, a suit and a pair of shoes and food. And the same for the women and children." And then they were...
- Qu. That was a lie?
- Re. Well yes, of course, you know? And then the people were... I drew it into my plan...
- Qu. Where is your plan?
- Re. My wife has it, in her bag. From here, a hundred people were always led, either a hundred men or a hundred women, and here, in this room, a man, that was the Stadie, gave a talk, again "Have no fear – you will go into the shower and will be resettled into the Ukraine. You can leave your things here – you will get them back." See?
- Qu. No, no, I don't understand. It doesn't work with... Do you see this plan exactly?
- Re. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. That is...
- Qu. You said the plan isn't accurate.
- Re. I have a more accurate plan.
- Qu. Yes, but...
- Re. I described everything to you and I'll explain it again.

- Qu. Yes, please – okay. Could you explain to me this and this... the technical procedure.
- Re. Well yes. Now look here. That was under Eberl. Under Eberl.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. That's when the people were led in here. Either a hundred women or a hundred men, gave them a talk, and then the tube went up there.
- Qu. Yes, but the tube is over here, isn't it?
- Re. That was a different tube.
- Qu. Ah... with Eberl.
- Re. Yes, at Eberl's time, see? That was a different tube. And that's how they got into the gas chambers right away. They even jockeyed for position to get in there sooner, eh.
- Qu. Yes, but there were – you say two hundred people... a hundred.
- Re. A hundred women or a hundred men – do you understand me? Always just a hundred, because the gas chambers couldn't hold more. Understand?
- Qu. And where were the other people?
- Re. They waited. They waited here in these barracks on this place. Ukrainians were standing there.
- Qu. How long did they wait?
- Re. When I arrived, one day, two days, three days. Some of them.
- Qu. Three days?
- Re. Yes. Here.
- Qu. Naked?
- Re. No, no. Not undressed yet. They got undressed here, and this is where their clothing went.
- Qu. Did they get something to drink or eat? In those three days?
- Re. They had something to eat but no water. That was the worst. It was hot and there was no water. So, water had to be brought in big buckets. What is one bucket for a hundred people? Tell me, what is one bucket for a hundred people?
- Qu. Nothing.

- Re. And when Wirth saw that the people were getting water, he dumped the bucket and he said, "They're going to croak anyway." So, that was still under Eberl.
- Qu. Yes, but these people – yes, that was under Eberl. That is the first phase.
- Re. The first phase.
- Qu. And these people who waited two, three days – what were these people thinking? Did they know...
- Re. They suspected it. They suspected it. They may have had doubts, but some of them would have known. Because they also heard the running of the motors.
- Qu. The engines of the gas chambers?
- Re. Yes, the gas chambers. You could hear the clatter of the motors.
- Qu. What kind of motor?
- Re. Diesel.
- Qu. Diesel. But a tank... a tank motor or what?
- Re. That was a tank motor in this gas chamber.
- Qu. But in Treblinka there was a difference compared with Auschwitz. In Auschwitz it was Zyklon.
- Re. No, no, no, no. In Poland only exhaust fumes were used.
- Qu. Carbon monoxide?
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. Not Zyklon.
- Re. No. Zyklon was Auschwitz. So, this is still the Eberl period. Then I told you that Eberl was replaced by Wirth. Within three days, the camp was reorganized. No more transports arrived – the corpses were removed.
- Qu. All the corpses that... there...
- Re. ... were lying there, which were lying around, or here even, in the women's barracks. They were put into these trenches, mainly into this trench.
- Qu. It was a large trench?
- Re. That was a big trench, yes. Very big and very deep.
- Qu. Very big and very deep?
- Re. Very deep. Then Wirth had the sand embankments built all around the camp
- Qu. Sand embankments?
- Re. A sand embankment.
- Qu. A sand wall?

- Re. Yes, about seven meters high.
- Qu. How many meters?
- Re. Seven.
- Qu. Seven meters high?
- Re. Yes. So you couldn't look into the camp.
- Qu. There weren't any before?
- Re. No, no. Only a wire fence. Only barbed wire. And under Wirth, the watch towers were built.
- Qu. Watch towers?
- Re. Yes. And then the tube was shifted. Meanwhile, working there were...
- Qu. The new tube?
- Re. The new tube. But meanwhile, the old gas chambers were in operation. And because so many people were coming, so many dead ones that couldn't be removed, for days piles of people were lying around in front of the gas chamber. Underneath these people was a sewer...
- Qu. Sewer?
- Re. Ten centimeters high – blood, worms and filth.
- Qu. Where?
- Re. In front of the gas chamber. Understand? No one wanted to clean it up. The Jews would rather be shot and wouldn't work there.
- Qu. Would rather be shot?
- Re. Be shot.
- Qu. Why? It was so...
- Re. It was terrible. To bury their own people and then to see the whole thing... from the corpses... the flesh came off... So Wirth himself went up there. With some Germans and had straps cut, long straps that were put around the chest of the corpse and had them dragged away.
- Qu. Who did that?
- Re. Germans.
- Qu. Wirth?
- Re. Germans and Jews. Yes.
- Qu. Germans and Jews?
- Re. Germans and Jews.
- Qu. Yes, but – Jews too?

- Re. Jews too.
- Qu. Yes. But what did the Germans do? Did they beat the Jews?
- Re. They forcibly drove the Jews to it, or they also helped in dragging the corpses out.
- Qu. Which Germans did that?
- Re. Yes, from our guard unit, the ones that were sent up to Camp II.
- Qu. Yes. The Germans themselves did that?
- Re. They had to participate.
- Qu. They gave the orders.
- Re. They gave the orders – they got the orders and they gave them too.
- Qu. Yes. I think the Jews did that.
- Re. In this situation, Germans had roll up their sleeves too. Wirth forced them to do that. And one of them, named Keimel, he shot himself because he didn't want to do it.
- Qu. Yes. A German?
- Re. A German, understand? Within a few days, there was...
- Qu. And what did they do with this sewer?
- Re. Poured sand over it.
- Qu. Yes – and with the corpses that were in the sewer?
- Re. They were put into the trench.
- Qu. Ah. And this trench was already...(In French) How do you say “already dug out”?
- Re. Yes, look here. First there was this and this trench. Then they built this trench and this one. And at the end, this one. But it wasn't... that was in winter, it wasn't filled, because the order to burn came down. Eh. But that's from the Stangl period.
- Qu. Yes, that was something else.
- Re. In the meantime, the new gas chambers were built.
- Qu. When, in which month?
- Re. September.
- Qu. And who built the gas chambers?
- Re. Hackenhold. Under the leadership of Hackenhold and Lambert these gas chambers were built by Jews.
- Qu. The Jews worked? Built them?

- Re. The Jews worked. The Jews built the gas chambers, eh. That is, the brickwork. The doors, those were made by the Ukrainian carpenters. The Ukrainians made those. And the doors in the gas chambers, those were iron doors from bunkers. Those were brought, I think, maybe from Bialystok – there were Russian bunkers there.
- Qu. Yes. And what was the capacity of the new gas chambers? There were two gas chambers, weren't there?
- Re. Yes. The old one was shut down, but not demolished. When a lot of transports came, that is, a lot of people, then this gas chamber was used too.
- Qu. Yes, of course.
- Re. And here – the Jews say five on each side; I say four, but only the ones on this side were used – during operation, this side, see.

Audio Reel Suchomel_5-6-7-8

- Qu. And why not the other side?
- Re. Because then the transportation of the corpses would have been too complicated.
- Qu. Aha. Too far?
- Re. Yes. Because Wirth then had this camp built and for up here, had worker Jews assigned. That was a regular Jewish Detachment of around 200 people.
- Qu. Those in the death camp...
- Re. Who always worked in the death camp. And then there were...
- Qu. Only 200?
- Re. 200, yes.
- Qu. Women too?
- Re. They came later. So the men could stand it better. The most beautiful young Jewesses, eh.
- Qu. The most beautiful?
- Re. Yes, yes – Steiner got that right. Very beautiful, eh. Imagine – with this inferno. There is nothing to laugh about.
- Qu. Oh no.
- Re. There's nothing to laugh about. Because love was the only comfort.
- Qu. Yes. Ah – love was the only comfort?
- Re. Yes. They were such poor people, eh? Such poor people.
- Qu. Yes

- Re. Then stretchers were built. Say, can you translate that for him? Stretchers for carrying. Primitive stretchers were built...
- Qu. Primitive ones?
- Re. Yes. And then the corpses were put on them and carried to the trench.
- Qu. Yes. But what was the capacity of the new gas chamber?
- Re. The new gas chamber – well, you could be done with 3,000 people in two hours.
- Qu. Yes. Done. But how many people could (*fit into*) the gas chamber?
- Re. That – I can't tell you exactly as a German. The Jews say 200.
- Qu. 200?
- Re. Yes. 200. You have to imagine that in one room that's the size of the room over there.
- Qu. In Auschwitz, it was a lot more.
- Re. Yes, Auschwitz was a factory.
- Qu. And Treblinka, that was a...?
- Re. I'll give you my definition. Remember it. Though Treblinka was very primitive, it was a well-functioning assembly line of death.
- Qu. Assembly line?
- Re. ... of death. Do you understand?
- Qu. Yes, yes, yes. I think you're right. But primitive.
- Re. Primitive. **Granted**, primitive. But a **well-functioning** assembly line of death.
- Qu. And Belzec was primitive?
- Re. Belzec was the studio. Wirth was the camp commandant there. And Wirth tried everything out there.
- Qu. Experienced it?
- Re. Yes. At the beginning he had bad experiences. The trenches were overfilled, the sewer went to the front of the dining room, it stank...
- Qu. In front of the dining room?
- Re. In front of the dining room. In front of the barrack.
- Qu. Did you ever see Belzec?
- Re. No. Wirth tried things there with his people – with Franz, with Oberhauser, with Hackenhold. Then they were supposed to put three corpses into the trench, so Wirth would know,

- Re. how much room he'd need. When they didn't want to do that – Franz didn't want to – he beat Franz with the whip, and Hackenhold too, eh?
- Qu. Kurt Franz?
- Re. Kurt Franz. That's how Wirth was. And Wirth came to Treblinka with these experiences.
- Qu. To Treblinka and to Sobibor too.
- Re. Sobibor was behind him. He'd already been there. Yes, he was also an Inspector at Sobibor, but for him, the main camp was Treblinka. The main camp, eh. Wirth reorganized everything, then new transports came, then he constantly selected. Understand? Choosing a thousand or five hundred men, having them stand at attention, here, from those thousand men, he selected again and sent so and so many off to be shot. People heard that, that there was shooting here...

FIRST CASSETTE, SECOND SIDE

- Qu. Good, good, good, it's working. Yes, yes.
- Re. Go ahead, ask.
- Qu. Yes. Could you talk about this waiting time again?
- Re. Yes. During the time when Wirth was there, there was waiting too. There were at least still three hundred Jews here in the reception camp, eh. Women, men and children. They had to go. They were cleared away, that is, either by shooting or gassing. Then, when Wirth reorganized, there was no more waiting. At most – that is, the men were driven into the gas chambers faster. Primarily the men, who got undressed here, or here too, see, eh.
- Qu. That's the second phase.
- Re. Second phase.

- Qu. Yes, good. If you like, talk about the second phase. I think best for me... you describe precisely: how was it possible in Treblinka at the height, 18,000 people?
- Re. 18,000 is too high.
- Qu. I read that in the report. To process 18,000 people. To liquidate. To exterminate.
- Re. Mr. Lanzmann, that's reaching too high. Believe me.
- Qu. Okay – how many?
- Re. Twelve to fifteen thousand. But for that, they had to use half the night. Understand? The transports often arrived at six in the morning already.
- Qu. Always at six in the morning?
- Re. Not always. Sometimes. The transports weren't punctual. Sometimes they came at six in the morning, then one would come at noon, or late in the evening another one, eh.
- Qu. Fine, fine. A transport arrives. And I'd like it if you would describe precisely the whole process. From beginning to end. With that, because I have to...
- Re. So, without sparing Eberl, Stangl and Wirth.
- Qu. In the most important phase.
- Re. Aha, the most important phase.
- Qu. The most important phase, the Stangl phase, when everything was...
- Re. Okay. The transports (we're going to start from the very beginning) came from the Malkinia Station to the Treblinka Station.
- Qu. How many kilometers between Malkinia Station and Treblinka Station?
- Re. I can't say, really. Ten kilometers or more, maybe. Treblinka was a village. A small village. The train station became significant because of the transports of Jews. Thirty to fifty train cars came.
- Qu. Thirty to fifty?
- Re. Yes. Ten, twelve, fifteen cars were always driving into Treblinka; the rest stayed there.
- Qu. With people?
- Re. With people. At the Treblinka Station.
- Qu. That means, the train with thirty cars.
- Re. Yes. It was divided into ten. Ten to twelve cars were (*moved*) into the camp at Treblinka.
- Qu. Onto the ramp?

- Re. ... brought onto the ramp. On the ramp, for every car, there were two Jews from Detachment...
- Qu. Blue.
- Re. Blue at the ready...
- Qu. Two Jews?
- Re. Two for each.
- Qu. For each car two Jews?
- Re. Two Jews. So it would go fast. They said, "Get out, fast, fast, fast, fast." Nothing more. Then Ukrainians stood there, Ukrainians and here Germans too.
- Qu. How many Germans.
- Re. Three to five.
- Qu. Not more?
- Re. Not more – guaranteed not more.
- Qu. Yes. And how many Ukrainians?
- Re. Ten.
- Qu. Ten. And ten Ukrainians, five Germans, two, that is, twenty Blue Detachment people...
- Re. Yes, yes. The people from the Blue Detachment were here and here and directed the people in. Here was the Red Detachment.
- Qu. The Red Detachment. What was the work of the Red Detachment?
- Re. The work of the Red Detachment was the clothes – the clothes left by the men and the clothes left by the women – to get them up here immediately.
- Qu. Yes. How long between the ramp and the undressing procedure?
- Re. So, for the women, let's say one hour total. One to one and a half. The whole train. In two hours, in two hours everything was done.
- Qu. Between arrival...
- Re. ... and dying.
- Qu. And dying. Everything was over in two hours?
- Re. Two hours. Two and a half hours. Three hours.
- Qu. A whole train?
- Re. A whole train.
- Qu. Yes. And for just one day, for ten cars – how long?
- Re. You can't count that because the train came one after another and the people kept coming ever and ever anew, do you understand? The men, they mostly sat there, or

- Re. here; they were sent into the tube right away and up. The women, they were done at the end, eh.
- Qu. At the end?
- Re. At the end. They had to go up here and often had to wait. Always in rows of five.
- Qu. Five?
- Re. Always in fives, eh. Fifty people, fifty – women with children, eh. They had to wait till there was room again. Here.
- Qu. Naked?
- Re. Naked. In summer and in winter.
- Qu. In the winter. It can be very cold in Treblinka.
- Re. It was. In winter, in December, after Christmas. But it was cold before Christmas already, eh. After Christmas the transports stopped.
- Qu. After Christmas?
- Re. Yes. There were fewer transports. And then the women were held back here at the hairdressers, see? I did that. I stood there, eh.
- Qu. Why, why?
- Re. So they wouldn't be cold.
- Qu. You did that...?
- Re. Yes, yes. The Jews also said, "Mr. Boss, the women are standing outside in the cold." I told the hairdresser, "Go slow with the hair cutting, so they will stay here longer. So they won't have to stand outside."
- Qu. It was possible for you to do that?
- Re. Yes. It was possible for me... I did that. No one was allowed to see that. Not Wirth. Stangl didn't bother with it. Kriegner let me do it.
- Qu. Yes. But before Christmas it was very cold too. What temperature? Minus twenty?
- Re. No. It was above ten and between ten and twenty. It was bitter cold. Because I know, in the beginning, the Jews had to wait here, had to get up at six a.m. Then they had to wait, the worker Jews, eh.

- Qu. Yes. The worker Jews?
- Re. And that's where the first roll call site was. It was here, eh. The other roll call site didn't exist then. They had to stand here for roll call, and it was bitter cold for us too. We didn't have adequate uniforms.
- Qu. It was cold for you too?
- Re. It was cold for us too.
- Qu. But I think it was colder for the...
- Re. For those poor people it was...
- Qu. In the tube?
- Re. In the tube it was very, very cold
- Qu. Very, very cold. And can you describe this tube precisely – how many meters and how were the people in this tube?
- Re. The tube was about four meters wide.
- Qu. That's like...
- Re. Like this room.
- Qu. Like this room?
- Re. On both sides were walls so high, or let's say, this high.
- Qu. With brick walls?
- Re. No, no. Barbed wire and in the wire, woven in, very thick, were branches from trees, from pines. Do you understand me? Trees from the forest, so-called camouflage. There was a Camouflage Detachment of twenty Jews, who brought new things every day.
- Qu. From the woods?
- Re. Yes, from the woods. Everything was covered. Everything, everything. They couldn't see out. They couldn't see to the left or right. Nothing. You couldn't see through it. It was that thick.
- Qu. That wasn't possible?
- Re. Impossible. Also, here, here, here and here and here.
- Qu. Impossible too?
- Re. Impossible to see through. Then here, here too – no, not here anymore. Here were sand embankments. Here too there was camouflage everywhere, eh.

- Qu. Okay, and it was three meters high.
- Re. Two and a half meters. Two and a half meters – let's not make it more (*than it was*). Two and a half meters was enough.
- Qu. Yes. Fine – and... I have to visualize it. The people went into the tube and what happened? Totally naked?
- Re. Totally naked. Here stood two Ukrainian guards – mainly for the men. The men who didn't want to go in – then they were beaten.
- Qu. Stangl...
- Re. With the whip. With the whip. And here too. Here already, see. The men were driven, the women not.
- Qu. The women were not beaten?
- Re. No, no, they weren't beaten. That is, I didn't...
- Qu. Why this humanitarianism?
- Re. I didn't see it. I didn't see it. Maybe they were beaten too.
- Qu. Why not? Why not? It was death one way or another, wasn't it? Why not?
- Re. In front of the gas chambers certainly too.
- Qu. Beaten in front of the gas chambers. Women too? I think so.
- Re. I mean, Mr. Lanzmann, even if I don't say it – I'm often ashamed.
- Qu. Excuse me?
- Re. I'm often ashamed. But everything you can imagine – it happened.
- Qu. Yes, yes, I'm very grateful. And that's very important. Now it's history.
- Re. That **is** history.
(Interpreter:
Do you understand? He's told you now. I'm ashamed of myself.
- Qu. Yes, but you mustn't have disgrace (*shame?*). For that is history now. We are here, you and I, for the sake of history and you must make an effort. That is very important. I can't imagine it, and everything must be stated. Have no fear.
- Re. Mr. Lanzmann, we can say that if people didn't want to, they were beaten.
- Qu. Yes. And people wanted or not?

Re. There were several different phases. In the beginning, they didn't know it. Only when people, Jews, of Treblinka were able to flee – that is, they were packed into clothing transports. You have to visualize it: here, here and here, everything was full of clothes, shoes, underwear, whatever you can imagine – was there. I packed up half a train car full of ritual kitchenware.

Qu. Ritual?

Re. Ritual. That's to prepare fish and the Sabbath candleholders, etc. Half a train car full. The Warsaw Jews brought that, eh, when they thought... In later phases, later, the people were so poor, that the women didn't even have wedding rings. They were in the ghettos where they didn't get anything to eat or very little, and the Poles bled them dry. Red Cross nurses from Malkinia, who worked at the train station, told me that with the trains to the front, with the Germans, that the Poles demanded a wedding ring for a bucket of water. Understand?

Qu. Yes.

Audio File Suchomel_9-10-11

Re. If you and I had the gold twenty dollar coins that were circulating around Treblinka or still are, then both of us would be rich people.

Qu. Rich?

Re. Rich.

Qu. Very rich?

Re. Very rich people. We'll get to that chapter.

Qu. Yes, that's another chapter.

Re. Yes. Another chapter. So, now I've told you about that, eh. There were also two German Jews from Berlin, Max and Moritz, eh, they were particularly aggressive in driving people, eh.

Qu. What, what?

Re. Two Berlin Jews – they were very aggressive. They chased the people out and beat them too.

Qu. They beat them too?

Re. From the Blue's Detachment?

Qu. Yes.

- Qu. They beat the people too?
- Re. About those two, I know that. So, about those two, I know that. Because the Head of the Gold Jews, that is, my Kapo, told me, “Mr. Boss, go up there. Max and Moritz are beating people.”
- Qu. Who was your Kapo?
- Re. Glepfisch. I had three: Dieselder, Glepfisch, yes, and one name, that is momentarily...
- Qu. Polish Jews?
- Re. Polish Jews from Litzmannstadt... from Lodz. They were specialists. Dentists or watchmakers, “makers of pointers” – Jews said ‘pointer’, eh, about a watch.
- Qu. Very good ones?
- Re. Very good people. Specialists and dental technicians. They were artists. Artists. They were artists. I had twelve people, ten people; Wirth didn’t allow for more. Ten people.
- Qu. Only ten?
- Re. Yes. He told me, “I’ve reprimanded them now”, then came Franz and said, “Don’t do anything if Jews are beating Jews; it’s none of your damn business.” I mean, I don’t want to say that to stay above this (*to appear innocent*). But I say it because it happened. And the Blue Detachment also had the job (*to lead*) the old and sick...
- Qu. Yes. That’s a very, very important point.
- Re. ... into the hospital.
- Qu. Yes. Can you explain that?
- Re. Yes. They had a Kapo, and it was the Germans who determined who was to be sent to the hospital. The Germans, who were standing here. Either Küttner...
- Qu. Küttner?
- Re. Küttner or Mieter or Möller or Florian, you know. They made the decision. The Jews of the Blue Detachment were just the ones who carried out the orders, who led the people in here or brought them on stretchers.
- Re. Fine, but – I understand. The Germans said, “These, these and these...”
- Qu. Yes. The Germans selected.

- Qu. The people for the hospital?
- Re. Yes. And the people of the Blue Detachment brought them in.
- Qu. Of course. Yes, and what was the function of this hospital?
- Re. In the hospital, the people had to get undressed...
- Qu. Get undressed?
- Re. Get undressed. Naked. Women, children, old people. Had to sit down on a sand embankment...
- Qu. An earth embankment?
- Re. Well yes, an earth embankment – it was maybe this high, this high and then there was the trench, eh.
- Qu. A trench?
- Re. Yes. Five, six meters deep.
- Qu. And what was in the trench?
- Re. One moment. They had to sit down. Then they were killed with a shot in the neck.
- Qu. A shot in the neck?
- Re. ... killed with a shot in the neck and they fell into the trench.
- Qu. Yes, but why that? Why weren't these people...
- Re. Because they would have disrupted the procedure in the gas chambers. It would have taken too long with the old people.
- Qu. Ah, these people were old people?
- Re. Old and sick. Yes, that would have been too slow, so Wirth...
- Qu. The procedure?
- Re. The procedure would have been too slow.
- Qu. Yes. So this was for a good development (*uses the wrong German word for 'processing', which sounds similar*).
- Re. Yes. For a good **processing**.
- Qu. A good processing. Fine. That means that old people...
- Re. ... and sick ones.
- Qu. Children too?
- Re. Children too.
- Interruption of the video for two sentences.
- Re. ... killed. I cried. None of that helped me; I never got out of that vicious cycle. It was impossible. I knew of two secrets of the regime, eh. The first was euthanasia and the second, Treblinka. It was hard for us.
- Qu. Yes, it was hard for you, certainly.
- Re. And if we had the war... if the war had gone differently

- Re. ... we wouldn't be alive now. They would have killed us. Or we would be somewhere in Russia, drunk and whoring, and would have had to do the same.
- Qu. The same, yes.
- Re. Yes, for Globocnik had plans after all; he had already sketched in each of the stations of the extermination camps. (Interpreter translates the preceding.) But I found that out only during the trial in Düsseldorf. Oh well, let's keep going.
- Qu. Yes. The hospital. You said (in French) I believe, that the children were also in the tube.
- Re. Some, yes. Certainly. The children were always with the women. Only the bigger boys were with their fathers, but girls of all ages were with their mothers, as well as smaller boys.
- Qu. Yes, but which children were sent to the hospital?
- Re. Sick children, or if the mother was sick, or the grandmother was old, then the children were sent with the grandmother, for she didn't know anything – a hospital, there was a white flag with a red cross on it.
- Qu. Ah, there was a Red Cross?
- Re. Yes. They didn't know, after all, that they would be shot there. And you have to imagine, the people had been traveling perhaps a whole day in a train, standing, and more than a hundred people, to relieve themselves they had one bucket, men and women together, and those were civilized people, you see? And ONE pail of water – that needs to be acknowledged too. These train cars – the assignment of the Blue Detachment, of these people on the ramp – was that they cleaned the cars with a broom.
- Qu. Cleaned?
- Re. Yes, with water and (*inaudible*) – there was excrement, urine; whatever didn't fit into the bucket, went onto the floor.
- Qu. Everywhere?
- Re. Everywhere. Look here...
- Qu. Stench too?
- Re. Stench too. After all, the people were in, in... I mean, the Jews, the Polish Jews and the Russian Jews were all transported in cattle cars.

- Qu. In what?
- Re. In cattle cars, that is, steam engine train cars. Do you understand? And the windows, those were covered with barbed wire, so no one could get out. And on the roofs were the bloodhounds, the Ukrainians and Latvians.
- Qu. Bloodhounds?
- Re. The Latvians were the worst. I mean, the biggest pigs. The Ukrainians were bribable. “Jude dai Sloto”, eh, “Jude dai Sloto” – Jew give money, eh, But the Latvians couldn’t be bribed. They were Jew haters.
- Qu. Jew haters?
- Re. One hundred percent.
- Qu. Yes. With Ukrainians there was a small chance to buy them off with money. (Interpreter translates the preceding.) Yes. Was there killing of Jews in the cars?
- Re. Well, from the outside, from Latvians – from the Escort Detachment, shall we say – Jews were not killed, not that I know of. At most, they would have poisoned themselves.
- Qu. In the car.
- Re. In the car. Or cut their veins, eh.
- Qu. You mean, Jews committed suicide...
- Re. Suicide.
- Qu. In the car?
- Re. Did it in the car.
- Qu. Yes. But there were other people who were dead in the car, not through suicide, tired or sick or...
- Re. That too. That too.
- Qu. In every car was there...?
- Re. I don’t know about that. I wasn’t on the ramp, eh. I know only what I heard or sometimes saw.
- Qu. But you were never on the ramp?
- Re. Never. In the beginning, with the Germans... 5,000 Jews, 3,000 dead, Eberl told me. I had to pitch in. I personally helped unload, because the people were “meschigge”.
- Qu. Meschugge?

- Re. Well yes, crazy. I'm saying...
- Qu. The Jews?
- Re. I'm saying it in Yiddish.
- Qu. But "meschugge" is a Jewish word.
- Re. I know! "Meschigge", eh. I know a little Yiddish.
- Qu. But you think the Jews were "meschugge"?
- Re. Yes. In this transport that I described, where so many thousands of people were dead, where the corpses were stacked up.
- Qu. You (*stacked?*) the corpses yourself?
- Re. Yes, I had to pitch in too. Red Cross nurses, that is, Jewish Red Cross nurses, and a few worker Jews. I couldn't find anyone for that. Then Eberl came and said, "Yes, what are you doing there? This can't go on." I said, "First Lieutenant, take a look at this scene." I said, "Most of them are dead, the rest are incapable of doing anything."
- Qu. 3,000 people?
- Re. Of 5,000, 3,000 were dead.
- Qu. In one transport?
- Re. In one transport.
- Qu. From Warsaw?
- Re. No, no. They came from a different ghetto. From Kielce or somewhere.
- Qu. Kielce. How (in French) how is this possible?
- Re. That's what I described in the beginning. They were loaded into French train cars. They were very long and made of metal.
- Qu. Metal?
- Re. Metal cars. And they were, in order to supply the front, left standing at a sidetrack, two days, and the heat of August, and maybe inside the car, two hundred to two hundred fifty people, no water, nothing – so they cut their veins or died in some other way, eh. There too. We pulled out corpses that were blue.
- Qu. Blue already?

Re. Yes. When I... That's an inferno... I had to say this a few times in Düsseldorf, and in Frankfurt too, I had to describe it.

Qu. You described that?

Re. Yes, I described that.

Qu. During the trial?

Re. Yes. As it was. Regardless of the consequences.

Qu. It was terrible.

Re. I say this to you again – I said it at the trial too: A fly had it better than a Jew. Because a fly could fly away if you wanted to do anything to it. A Jew had to stand there.

Qu. Of course.

Re. That's how it was.

Qu. But what was your personal reaction, when you (*had to deal with?*) such a ...?

Re. Yes, during this situation, I cried. I had a nervous breakdown. And a Polish Jew screamed, "Obaga, obaga, a Oberscharführer place" – "Look, look, a Staff Sergeant is crying."

Qu. A Jew ... that?

Re. A Jew screamed that. I just couldn't help myself. I cried like a little child. I was completely out of it.

Qu. You drank?

Re. Yes. Later.

Qu. And there was no chance to get out of there?

Re. No. No. No. Look here – we needed orders to transfer. We couldn't get that. You see? Without that, you couldn't get anything while in uniform. And as a civilian – back then, that didn't work. As long as the fronts in the East were holding and the Russians were still hundreds of kilometers away... And then there was the risk of (*inaudible*) my two old parents, my wife and my three children.

Qu. Yes. Where was your wife at this time?

Re. In my hometown.

- Qu. Where?
 Re. In Krumen in Bohemia.
 Qu. That's near Litmeritze?
 Re. No, no. Down in South Bohemia. Gonjowitze, etc... But please don't mention that.
 Qu. No, no. But that's another chapter. We'll come back...
 Re. Please, ask me.
 Qu. We're not finished with the hospital.
 Re. Yes. The people were shot there.
 Qu. Yes. Who shot the people in the hospital?
 Re. That Mentz. That Mentz and the Ukrainians too. Or Paul Bredow too
 Qu. Who?
 Re. Paul Bredow. He's not alive anymore. Mentz is still alive.
 Qu. Yes, I know – in prison.
 Re. Müller too.
 Qu. And how big was this room in the hospital?
 Re. It wasn't a room. There on the trench side – that isn't sketched in so precisely, eh – on the side of the trench was a bank and a shed. A barrack, that is, a shed – it wasn't even as long as this room, and behind it were boards and a roof, and in the front it was open. And then there was Kapo Kurant with another Jew and always Mentz. And this Kurant told people in Polish what to do.
 Qu. What exactly did he say, this Kurant?
 Re. I didn't hear it. They should get undressed and should sit there...
 Qu. But they knew, the people who...
 Re. Yes, they had seen it by then.
 Qu. They had seen it?
 Re. Yes – **there** they saw it. But all around, the hospital was camouflaged. Do you understand? With a fence too, two and a half meters high. An alley went along it, and as long as they walked there, they didn't see anything. First like this. And then of course, they saw the bodies in the trench.

Audio File Suchomel_11-12

- Qu. And there was always a fire in this trench?
 Re. Yes. There was always a fire.
 Qu. With what – gasoline?
 Re. With gasoline, with garbage – that is, paper. And people

- Re. ... burn very well.
- Qu. Human beings burn very well?
- Re. Yes. Very well.
- Qu. Yes?
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. Which burn better, men or women?
- Re. The ones who have more fat. The women burned better.
- Qu. Women better. Fatter.
- Re. Yes, yes.
- Qu. And how many people were there? How many with legs in the...
- Re. Yes. Like this and this.
- Qu. And the neck?
- Re. And the neck.
- Qu. And Mentz was a neck-shot specialist?
- Re. A specialist.
- Qu. A little one?
- Re. No, no, no – as big as here.
- Qu. And how many people per transport? How many people were shot in the hospital? Roughly, a statistic?
- Re. Yes, it may have been twenty in one day – if we take it per day, not per transport.
- Qu. Per day...
- Re. Could have been twenty, but also two hundred.
- Qu. Also two hundred?
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. Two hundred?
- Re. Also two hundred. I don't mean 201 or 199, understand? I mean, in general. It could have been two hundred. Even 250. It's all possible.
- Qu. For you, which was the worse death: hospital or gas chamber?
- Re. In the hospital it was quicker.
- Qu. Quicker. Yes. It was punctual. And in the gas chamber, how was it?
- Re. Twenty minutes.
- Qu. Twenty minutes?
- Re. I heard, twenty minutes. Maybe quicker, eh? I don't know. It depended. Look here – **one** motor, one single motor had to service three or four gas chambers.

- Qu. There was only one motor?
 Re. There was only one motor.
 Qu. And which people were operating the motor?
 Re. Ukrainians. Ivan and Nikolai. Ivan – 1.90 meters tall.
 Qu. 1.90 meters?
 Re. 1.90 meters. Stocky, an iron pipe. And they pushed the people in there, those two.
 Qu. What? (Interpreter translates.)
 Re. One after the other, eh. Whoever didn't cooperate, got a few knocks on the head.
 Qu. Okay. The people were here in the tube... five...
 Re. Yes, yes. Always in fives. In Treblinka, you had to line up in fives, at the roll call place too, because it's easy to count in fives: five, ten, fifteen, twenty, see?
 Qu. Always five?
 Re. Always five. Always five. Wirth started that, always five, eh. Women in fives, always in fives.
 Qu. And how long was this tube? Between the ramp and...
 Re. ... the gas chamber... One moment – yes, 50 meters at most.
 Qu. So. I read, I think, 80.
 Re. That can't be.
 Qu. For here it says, about 50 meters this part and 30 meters this part.
 Re. Yes, yes, that could be.
 Qu. And there were people with whips here, here, here and here?
 Re. Not here. Always just here.
 Qu. Always just here?
 Re. Always just here.
 Qu. Yes.
 Re. There was often a Jewish Kapo there too.
 Qu. A Jewish Kapo? Yes, and what did the Jewish Kapos do?
 Re. The same – whatever the Germans did, or the Ukrainians.
 Qu. Beatings?
 Re. Among other things.
 Qu. Among other things?
 Re. Among other things. You know, there were people among the Jewish Kapos who wanted to earn privileges. That wasn't just Kapo Blau, but there were others too.

- Qu. Blau. Yes. Blau was one...
- Re. Oberkapo Blau.
- Qu. (In French) How do you say informant?
- Re. He did act as an informant. **He did.** But he... Kapo Blau's contribution was that, within a few days, he organized the workers, the worker Jews from the lower camp. Blau was **this** fat when he came and after two weeks, he was only **this** fat. But not because he had nothing to eat, rather...
- Qu. Ah yes.
- Re. He had a whip this long. And he always said "Guretz, guretz", eh. Guretz means whore.
- Qu. Whore, yes.
- Re. Yes, that a Polish expression. "You whores, you will work."
- Qu. And why?
- Re. Stangl promised Blau that he will get a farm.
- Qu. After the...
- Re. He will get a farm, eh. And Blau knew Stangl from Austria.
- Qu. Yes, I read that. What is the story about... You once said, this story with shit in the tube.
- Re. Yes, yes.
- Qu. Can you tell that?
- Re. Yes, I'll tell it. My station was here.
- Qu. Here, at the counter?
- Re. Here, at the counter.
- Qu. Why?
- Re. That's where... Among the Jews, the women had the valuables and the money in the beginning. (Interpreter translates.) Do you understand?
- Qu. Yes. Why?
- Re. That's how it WAS among the Polish Jews, eh. We had five... three Gold Jews worked here; they took the watches from the men. Do you understand?
- Qu. Earrings?
- Re. Yes. And here the Red Kapo said, "You have to turn everything in", eh. The Kapo of the Red Detachment, he was a pig.

CASSETTE TWO, FIRST SIDE (Tape 5 and 6)

- Re. But here – no German was ever here. Out here was a German. He gathered up the shoes. Wirth organized all that. The women and children had to take their shoes off and tie them together, eh, and to throw them onto a pile, eh. And then the women were allowed to enter. And then there was the order “Get undressed”. And then they came here along the wall, and at the counter here – there were two Gold Jews and I, or before me, my predecessor, eh – and there they had to hand over their rings or money or whatever they still had.
- Qu. But excuse me – the women were naked already?
- Re. They were already naked.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. Then they went to get their hair cut.
- Qu. To...?
- Re. ...get their hair cut.
- Qu. No. We’re at the counter. And the women gave...
- Re. ... the rings and money if they had any, or bracelets or necklaces, eh, had to give everything up. And a little girl begged me and said, “Let me keep that, it’s Moises”, eh. That is, Moses.
- Qu. She said that to you?
- Re. Yes. And ten minutes later, Wirth came and threw it in my face and said, “Why are you stationed there then? Why do you have the order to take everything?” I said, “Major, it’s not worth anything.” “I don’t give a shit about that. It has to go.” He said to me, “You just exist, you can only eat (*uses the derogatory word for “eat”, as used with animals*) and shit a big pile. Go upstairs and clean up the shit as punishment.” From the women, eh. I had to go up, find a shovel, find a bucket and clean that up, eh. I did that for one or two days, then they sent me a Jew from up above, and then he did it, every day.
- Qu. (In French) Excuse me, I don’t understand. (Interpreter translates.) (Still in French) Another question. The woman gave all their valuables, their jewelry, their rings, etc., everything they had – but I think they were also subjected to deep probing. (Interpreter translates.)

Re. One moment. That's what was stated in the trial. That's not true. That's not true.

Qu. That's not true?

Re. No. That's not true. That's impossible. Everything had to be completed in two hours. And the way Mr. Borax described it, you see, the women had to lie on a table and were examined there, eh.

Qu. That never happened?

Re. No, no one did that. But some women – and the Gold Jews eyed them – had sanitary pads. And if they were too heavy, they spoke with the women. And if there was something inside them, they had to hand it over. So, that's true. But vaginal examinations were non-existent. That is **not** true.

(Interpreter translates the preceding.)

I said that in Düsseldorf too, eh, about the sanitary pads. But Mr. Kortleger (?) purposely ignored that, eh. I did not hold to that. Nor that with the sanitary pads. My predecessor did that, Windmüller; he was a genuine SS man. I didn't care about that whole thing.

Qu. Yes. How was the alley?

Re. That was only a kind of shed – so, so wide, and there was a window, and on that side a door – it was very primitive, see, and that's where that was put and tossed into baskets. And later, those were...

Qu. Like a bank counter?

Re. Yes, yes.

Qu. A primitive bank.

Re. Primitive.

Qu. Yes. But at this moment, did the women know already?

Re. Yes, yes. They already knew, yes. They already knew. Yes, yes. They already knew. Because many mothers – but that was in later phases, let's say, November (I was on vacation for 19 days in September, eh), that is, in October, when I was back, I learned that the mothers cut the veins of their children.

- Qu. Ah, yes.
- Re. Yes, yes. The blood was flowing down, see.
- Qu. Where – in this barrack?
- Re. In this barrack. In this barrack. They already knew, eh – they went, I was shocked, eh, and one girl was crying, and her mother said, “Don’t cry – you’re a Jewess.”
- Qu. You’re a Jewess?
- Re. Yes. “Don’t cry, you’re a ‘Jiddele’. Eh – in Yiddish: “You are a Jewess.” They were very, very brave.
- Qu. But there were many cases?
- Re. Many cases. Many cases. Certainly.
- Qu. With what did they...
- Re. With razor blades.
- Qu. Yes. With razor blades?
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. And the children were dead?
- Re. They were not dead. No. They only cut the veins so they would die more easily, do you understand?
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. In the gas. They knew.
- Qu. Gas – they knew?
- Re. Yes, yes. That they would be killed. They knew that.
- Qu. How many women were in this barrack?
- Re. Whatever arrived. It could have been 200, it could have been 300. It could even have been 400 at once.
- Qu. 400?
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. Yes. And after the counter, what happened?
- Re. After the counter, the hairdressers were here.
- Qu. Meaning...?
- Re. ... they had four, five benches and they cut the women’s hair.
- Qu. How... how... repeat that!
- Re. Yes – hair. The hair off.
- Qu. How?
- Re. With scissors. And also...

- Qu. Completely?
 Re. Well, yes.
 Qu. With what?
 Re. With scissor, as well as with such scissors. They were hairdressers in a white coat, eh.
 Qu. In a white coat?
 Re. In a white coat.
 Qu. How many hairdressers?
 Re. Six.
 Qu. Six?
 Re. Six with one Kapo.
 Qu. And Jewish ones?
 Re. They were Jews. Of course they were Jews.
 Qu. And do you remember the names?
 Re. One was Borax.
 Qu. What?
 Re. Borax. The other names I don't remember.
 Qu. There is an Abraham Bomba.
 Re. Could be.
 Qu. He lives in New York. He is a hairdresser too.
 (There is a knock on the door. The interpreter: One moment. It's a woman.)
 Qu. Ah, excuse me. A brief exchange between Suchomel and the woman – inaudible.
 Qu. Yes, we...
 Re. Another fifteen minutes.
 Qu. At what time do you want to eat?
 Re. At twelve.
 Qu. At precisely twelve?
 Re. Well yes.
 Qu. At twelve thirty?
 Re. Well yes, okay.
 Qu. Twelve thirty. We can work until twelve thirty and afterwards... Okay. At twelve thirty I'll treat you to lunch.

Audio Reel Suchomel_13-14-14-15-16

- Re. (To the woman.) What did you find out?
 Woman: Heart and stomach. The usual.
 Re. So. Well then, okay....

- Qu. Yes, there is someone who is a hairdresser in New York.
- Re. That Bomba? Yes, that could be. That could be. I remember that name. Yes, yes. That name, Bomba. Because he was a witness. But what he was called in Treblinka, I don't know. There, they had only their first names – Yenkel or Moishe or whatever – we weren't allowed to say that at all, eh. Once I called a Jew by his name, Arthur Gold, the leader of the orchestra, eh, and I was reprimanded. So, this Bomba, that could be.
- Qu. Yes, and... that was a terrible procedure, this...
- Re. Yes. The people were, one could say, robbed of their human dignity. They even took the hair on their heads. That was total humiliation. The Jews were not treated like human beings, but worse than animals.
- Qu. Yes. Not like human beings?
- Re. Not like human beings. Worse than cattle.
- Qu. Yes. And you personally, did you see them as people or not anymore?
- Re. I saw them as people.
- Qu. Always?
- Re. Always.
- Qu. For, it was an emotional burden, wasn't it?
- Re. It happened that my Kapo said, that Klepfisch, "Mr. Boss, go into the workshop; you look ashen. We'll take care of it." Eh. Often, I was nauseated and I was so affected... especially when German Jews came, eh.
- Qu. German Jews?
- Re. The women didn't keep their mouths shut. They told me some interesting things, eh.
- Qu. The German Jewesses?
- Re. Yes, yes.
- Qu. What did they say?
- Re. "You... You can't kill all Jews, and you didn't win the war either. And then you have to reckon with the American Jews. They'll help you." Or such things, eh.
- Qu. No.
- Re. Or – one German Jewess said to me, during processing, eh...

- Re. “You’re really competent people. Very competent people. You can be proud. You’ll surely win the war. You can **never** lose it. Never and never.” And then she went.
- Qu. (In French) What did he say? (Interpreter translates.)
- Qu. But was it irony?
- Re. Of course. Do you want to hear more or...?
- Qu. Oh yes. Oh yes. Oh yes.
- Re. Once my colleagues came to me and said, “Franz, there’s woman who’s causing a terrible commotion; she’s driving all the women crazy.”
- Qu. She...?
- Re. Did you understand? (Interpreter translates.)
- Qu. “... is driving all the women crazy. Go and talk to her.” I was still some distance away, from here to there (please, this is very realistic now): “Oh, you SS pig, you dirty one. Do you want me? Come here, you dirtbag.” I went to her and said, “Girl, aren’t you ashamed? How can you offer yourself?” She looked at me and said, “I just said it because it’s incompatible with the honor of an SS man. I offered myself to you and called you a pig. You have to shoot me. Please, spare me the gas chamber.” And I said, “I can’t do that. I can’t do that.” “Shoot me.” There was another Jewess with her and I asked her, “Where are you from?” “I’m from Berlin, but for months I’ve been in Warsaw, that is, since we were deported.” I said, “What’s your name?” “My name is Sarah Anusstench.” That was a lie, of course, eh. She wanted to provoke me still. And with her was another Jewess, a Polish Jewess, and she told me, among other things, “I had...” – I mean, she said this in Yiddish, eh, but I’m saying it in German – “I had rich parents. I was allowed to go to university. I read Plato. And today the sun is shining upon my death. I was married to the brother of this woman. Six weeks. We were very happy.”

- Qu. She said that? Where?
 Re. Here.
 Qu. Here – in front of the tube?
 Re. In front of the tube.
 Qu. And the Jewess who said that was a German Jewess?
 Re. Yes, a Berliner Jewess.
 Qu. Berliner Jewess.
 Re. “Do you want to have me? Want to...”
 Qu.. “Do you want to have me?”
 Re. “Do you want to screw me?” she said. That I didn’t...
 Qu. “Do you want to...?”
 Re. Screw.
 Qu. Screw?
 Re. That’s the German expression for... I won’t say it. I say “Do you want to have me.”
 Qu. You can say it. Please, you can say it. You say it all.
 Re. But she wanted to provoke me. She didn’t mean it. Just provocatively. And later she said, “You have to excuse me.” We drank a bottle of wine after that.
 Qu. Yes. That was there?
 Re. That was there, yes.
 Qu. After the hairdresser?
 Re. After the hairdresser. And yet another thing. Do you want more of that?
 Qu. Yes!
 Re. Once three young, Jewish girls came. They had their arms linked and were singing.
 Qu. Singing?
 Re. Singing. They sang, eh.
 Qu. What?
 Re. Whatever. Polish, not Yiddish. Polish.
 Qu. Naked?
 Re. Naked. I said, “What’s with you that you’re in such good spirits?”
 Qu. You asked them?
 Re. Yes. They said, “Well yes. Why, why should we be sad? What could we become under you Germans? Shoemaker or tailor, nothing else. We’re going across, as you say, to resettle in the Ukraine.” And then one came to me, and we had that lock with the strap, eh.
 Qu. The what?

- Re. The lock from the straps. We had a strap on the belt.
(The interpreter translates.)
- Qu. Ah yes, your, your...
- Re. And that's locked in the front, eh, and she looks and she says, "Oh, it doesn't say, 'God is with us'. There's something else there. For God is not with you. The devil is with you."
- Qu. She said that?
- Re. She said that. Laughingly. And went on.
- Qu. And what did you think?
- Re. Nothing.
- Qu. Nothing?
- Re. Nothing.
- Qu. That was here?
- Re. That was here too. Just in passing.
- Qu. And what is the meaning of "Banke" (in German)?
- Re. Bänke (in German). Benches. Well, at the hairdresser's. A bench.
- Qu. Ah so. A bench. Of course. And – this story with shit in the tube?
- Re. I told you that.
- Qu. No.
- Re. Yes!
- Qu. No, no. I asked, but you didn't respond right away.
- Re. Yes – I told you that I had to clean up shit for two days. And then, they sent me from Camp II...
- Qu. No, no, that's not it. That's in the tube, where all the people... all the women shit... And Wirth...
- Re. Ah yes. That Stangl... Is that the one?
- Qu. Yes, that's the story.
- Re. Stangl said, "In my camp, in Sobibor, buckets were set up." And to that Wirth said, "I don't give a shit about what you did in Sobibor. Here they can shit on the floor."
- Qu. But why? Can you explain... The people in this tube...
- Re. Look here, the people.

FILMING IS INTERRUPTED FOR A BRIEF MOMENT.

- Re. Okay, now back to the women in the tube. The women in the tube had to wait. They heard the motors of the gas chamber.
- Qu. Ah – it was possible... the motors...
- Re. Yes, it was possible to hear them.
- Qu. They were big...
- Re. That was a lot of noise, eh. Maybe they heard the people screaming and praying in the gas chambers, see. Well, while they were standing there, mortal fear gripped them...
- Qu. Mortal fear...
- Re. ... and in the grip of mortal fear, the person lets go, you see? One has a bowel movement. Either the front or the back. And so it was possible that, where the Jewish women were standing, you see, there were five or six rows of excrement.
- Qu. Standing up?
- Re. No, no. They could stoop, eh. Or standing, eh. I mean, I wasn't watching. I just know from Kurt...
- Qu. But only the women?
- Re. Not the men. Just women.
- Qu. The men not?
- Re. No, the men were chased in, eh. Only the women... the women had to wait... until a chamber was ready.
- Qu. And the men?
- Re. Not the men. They were the first to be forced in, eh.
- Qu. Ah yes.
- Re. Do you understand?
- Qu. The men were always the first?
- Re. The men were **always** the first. Always the first.
- Qu. And they didn't have to wait.
- Re. They didn't have time, eh.
- Qu. Didn't need to wait.
- Re. No, no, no, no.
- Qu. No... and mortal fear?
- Re. Out of mortal fear... one lets... That's an old... When a person is scared and knows, that he will die, even in bed, it can happen, you see. My mother knelt in front of her bed...

Qu. Your mother?

Re. My mother... there was a big pile there.

Qu. Yes.

Re. That's how **it is**. That's been medically proven, you see. Because... what you wanted to know: as of the time of the unloading, the people were, I mean, when they were loaded in Warsaw or wherever, already being beaten. Heavily beaten, harder than in Treblinka, I can guarantee you that.

(Interpreter translates.)

Then they had the transport, where they stood in the train car, no sanitary conditions, nothing, a bit of water, fear, then the doors were opened and then it continued. "Brense, brense, brense", you see. "Schipsche, schipsche, schipsche" – I can't say it properly, because I have false teeth, eh. In Polish. "Brense" or "schipsche".

Qu. What is "brense, brense"?

Re. That's a Ukrainian expression. Hurry, hurry, hurry. They were driven; there were a few standing there; they didn't spare the whip. That Kiepten (?) had one this long... women left, men right. And always forcibly driven.

Qu. They had no time?

Re. They had no time. In there, undress, schipsche, schipsche, schipsche, you see.

Qu. And always running?

Re. Always running, always running, eh.

Qu. Running and screaming?

Re. And that's how the people were done in, you see.

Qu. That was the technique?

Re. That was the technique.

Qu. That was a very...

Re. That was the organizational technique of Wirth. It wasn't like that before. But through Wirth... And Wirth kept checking if it was being implemented.

Qu. Yes. That was very clever.

Re. Because... he was an organizer, I mean, as much as he was a beast, he was that good an organizer. Because... you have to keep calculating – it had to be fast, because the removal of the corpses, that took longer. For the corpses, if they had gold teeth...

- Re. ... they still had to be pulled out, you see.
 Qu. Yes, but... after death, there was time... there was eternity, right?
 Re. Excuse me?
 Qu. After death, there was time, there was eternity.
 Re. Eternity. And then at first, they were brought into the trenches... Should we talk about the burning and such?
 Qu. Yes, of course. Everything.
 Re. Everything. So, now I've told you... the Death Jews up above. They were called Death Jews or Camp II.

Audio Reel Suchomel_17-18-18

- They were specialists in removal, you see. And if they weren't running, they were helped – with the whip, so that they did run.
- Qu. They also had to...
- Re. Run, always run. Running, always sprinting, always sprinting. If a transport was on site, always sprinting, always sprinting, eh.
- Qu. Always sprinting?
- Re. Yes. At first people were brought to the trenches. And then when the situation in Katyn – do you know what Katyn is?
- Qu. I know.
- Re. Where... where the Russians shot the Polish officers. Then the order came from Berlin, the corpses have to be dug up and burned. Of course, Stangl was beside himself, see. He said, "It's easy for the people in Berlin to say. How are we supposed to do that? Everything is decomposed. How are we supposed to do that?"
- Qu. It was because of the evidence...
- Re. ... to destroy it.
- Qu. Evidence of extermination...
- Re. ... to be destroyed. And then we started to try to burn the corpses, and we didn't succeed. Then they brought in a specialist from Belzec.
- Qu. From Belzec?
- Re. From Belzec.
- Qu. A German?
- Re. A German. A Staff Sergeant. He implemented it then. From the railway, they took a sort of concrete base and put train tracks over it, and

- Re. wood, and on top of that were placed the corpses. If they weren't from the trenches, they burned easily, eh, for the women and so on... That is...
- Qu. You mean, the fresh ones...
- Re. The fresh corpses burned more quickly. The others, that had become... partially gelatin already, eh. Those were decomposed because they had been covered with chlorine lime, eh. That was harder. Stank terribly. Then with two bulldozers, I mean, two tractors worked non-stop and emptied the trenches.
- Qu. Aha. That means these... these trenches...
- Re. All these corpse trenches. All the corpse trenches. Even this one – it was only half-full.
- Qu. Yes. But it was this grill – this grate...
- Re. No – it was two grates.
- Qu. Two grates?
- Re. Yes. They only admitted to one, eh.
- Qu. That was the Belzec specialist?
- Re. That was the specialist from Belzec.
- Qu. This one... you see... that's this grate.
- Re. Yes, yes. And now I'll tell you, why the Jews were furious with one Kapo.
- Qu. Why the Jews what?
- Re. Raged. That is, were furious with a Kapo. That was the first Camp Elder. I don't know – it wasn't Kalewski. I don't remember his name. He was shot.
- Qu. Yes. It was Schorrlein... no... Schorrenzinsky... hm... yes.
- Re. Anyway – you will think of his name and maybe I will too. This man... this Jew offered to go with volunteers to get tracks from Camp I, Treblinka I, eh, during the night under supervision.
- Qu. Tracks?
- Re. Tracks. Train tracks, eh. They were stolen in the night. And because he led that, see, the surviving Jews will never forgive him for that. Because he got the grates with other Jews for the incineration.

- Qu. Yes, you mean this grate was built. (In French) What did he say? (Interpreter translates.)
- Re. Train tracks... wood...
- Qu. Wood?
- Re. People.
- Qu. People.
- Re. Do you understand? There was a draft from below and that's why it burned. At first, that was done on a big tin platform and then it didn't burn. Because there was no draft from the bottom. No air.
- Qu. No air, yes.
- Re. That's very simple – just like with a kitchen stove.
- Qu. Yes, yes. And how many days or months?
- Re. It took months.
- Qu. Months?
- Re. That took months... it lasted through January, February, March, April, May, June, July.
- Qu. July, 1943?
- Re. Yes, yes, that's how long it took.
- Qu. To (*empty*) all the corpse trenches...
- Re. ... open them and these gelatin or what was left. The tractors, in with the gripper, eh, they just took what they could get.
- Qu. Yes. But the people who were killed in the gas chambers, were they put onto the grate right after their deaths?
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. Yes?
- Re. Yes. Right onto the grate. But at this time – I mean, January, February, March – there were almost no transports. The first transport coming again... yes, that was the German transports from Berlin – two, then three from Bulgaria and in April, after the Ghetto Revolt in Warsaw...
- Qu. The Warsaw Ghetto?
- Re. ... about 20,000 Jews still came from Warsaw. And then no more.
- Qu. Was it sad, Treblinka without transports?
- Re. I wouldn't say that, that the Jews were sad. They became sad because they knew... well yes, that...

- Re. ... I have to explain to you in addition, eh. That is a question unto itself, eh.
- Qu. Yes, that is its own...
- Re. That is a question unto itself, eh.
- Qu. Yes, I know.
- Re. The Jews... at first, they believed, the worker Jews...
- Qu. The worker Jews?
- Re. ... that they will survive. But when they got less to eat in January, because Mr. Wirth said, "There are too many worker Jews"... there were five or six hundred in Camp I below...
- Qu. That was Camp I?
- Re. Yes. So with those, so they wouldn't become restive, they were not shot or gassed, rather they got nothing to eat, and then epidemics broke out, typhus... a kind of typhus, eh. From then on the Jews no longer believed, because they were left to die, let them die like flies.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. We could say... I said only... every day, we had to say, "Yes – you will continue to live." We almost believed it ourselves, see. But if you lie all the time, you almost believe it yourself.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. But then they said to me, "No, Mr. Boss, we're just corpses on vacation."
- Qu. Corpses on vacation. (Interpreter translates.)
- Re. And with one Jew, I – that was a Czech Jew, eh; I got on well with the Czech Jews; they were very intelligent and we just understood each other, see...
- Qu. Understood well?
- Re. Yes, yes. And about that, Küttner... before he had Jews shot, he organized a circus: in a circle and

- Re. in the middle stood the German with the long whip, and the Jews had to run in the circle and were beaten until they dropped. So, those were mostly sick Jews, eh, sick and old ones. Worker Jews. And once, I pulled two out, a Czech Jew and a Polish Jew. And I came into the barrack and said... I sent him to the hospital, that is, into the Jewish recovery room. He had hemorrhoids and was weakened from not eating and so on. Now, at some point, he was sitting in the sun and said, "Well, Mr. Boss, you're expecting me to thank you. I won't do that. Because – I'd rather be up there than sitting here."
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. Or how it happened with me (I forgot that at the beginning, eh). A man came toward me, a naked Jew, and introduces himself. Says, "From your talk, I can tell that you're an Austrian. (I have an Austrian accent, eh.) I say, "Yes." Stands at attention and says, "First Lieutenant from the former Emperor's and King's Dragoonier Regiment. If we're going to be driven to the slaughterhouse like calves, please, for once, be honest enough to say that we died like heroes." You see, that...
- Qu. You're crying?
- Re. (Cries.)
- Qu. And during that time you cried too?
- Re. Every evening, every night. I prayed.

Qu. You prayed?

Re. Yes.

Qu. For God?

Re. To God.

Qu. To God.

Re. He should forgive me. Look here – the situation was like this: you couldn't talk with anyone. To no German, no matter how level-headed he was, could you state your opinion. We weren't allowed to say anything. Nor among the Jews, because among the Jews there were also informants, who betrayed us.

Qu. Yes?

Re. Yes. That happened. Not many. Not many. But two, three are all it takes.

Qu. That means there was a lot of isolation?

Re. Yes. Look here – I preferred talking with Jews. In the evenings, in my workshop, we organized concerts. I was asked, "Look now, we can't go into the sleeping quarters – it stinks there." Or the women would say, "See here, allow us to be there with our friends!" I let the camp band play there in the evening; I had conversations with Kalewski; I talked with Irene or with others – there were intelligent people among the Polish and Czech Jews. With German Jews, I was careful – I didn't talk with them.

Qu. With German Jews careful?

Re. Yes.

Qu. But were there many German Jews among the worker Jews?

Re. No. Very few. But there were Kapos. Kapo Siegfried... several Kapos... Kapo Blau, Kapo Siegfried. Then there was another Berliner Kapo. A Frankfurter Kapo. Four or five German Kapos.

Qu. Yes. (In French) Good. We'll stop here for now. Anyway, I am tired. We'll stop.

(END OF THE FIRST SIDE OF THE SECOND CASSETTE)

SECOND CASSETTE, SECOND SIDE

Audio Reel Suchomel_16-17-18-19-20

Qu. (In French) Very, very complicated, very, very complicated – the deceptions... Beautification maneuvers...

Re. Meaning...?

Qu. I will explain. Yes, that and that. Difficult. Everything is very difficult. Talk a bit, Jean; please, so we won't hear the noise... Ivan and Nikolai.. master shitters... No – the masters of shit. .. Shit masters...

Re. Yes.

Qu. Masters of shit. Same with the zoo. There was a zoo

Re. There was also a zoo, yes.

Qu. That's a beautification strategy.

Re. Yes, yes.

Qu. (In French) The Czechs... His love for the Czechs... Rudi Masarek... Willy Fürst...

Re. Excuse me? Willy Fürst was with me.

Qu. Yes, I know. Gold Jews, of course. (In French) There is the story of the revolt of Treblinka. (whispers something in French)... Yes, he says that he saw them as men.... (Interpreter: He has to wash his hands.)

Okay, then – you translate that. That he said that he saw them as human beings every day. Until the last moment. Or... ask him if he still saw them as men when they were there – as human beings – or if he saw them as a herd. But there's something interesting in the book by Sereny...

There's an interesting thing in the Sereny book. She asks Stangl what was the part of the whole camp where it was the worst. She asks Stangl and he replies, "The undressing barrack" which means that was the moment where a human being was transformed into a herd. Was it the same for him?

(Interpreter translates.)

Re. Yes, Stangl may have said that. For me, they continued to be human beings. But if he said, that that was the worst place (if he didn't say it ironically, which can always be the case with Stangl, eh), then he could have meant that, with the women, if it was about the women, their dignity was further taken from them – they had to undress to complete nakedness in front of men...

- Qu. (Interpreter) But for you, how did you see them. That's what he asked you.
- Re. I always saw them as human beings.
- Qu. Always?
- Re. Always.
- Qu. In the toop too?
- Re. Too... they were still human beings. And in the gas chamber too, they were still human beings to me. But I couldn't help them, eh.
- Qu. And did you see the gas chambers... how these people died in the gas chambers?
- Re. No, I didn't see that.
- Qu. Never?
- Re. I **never** saw it.
- Qu. Why not?
- Re. Because I didn't want to, because my place was either here or here... after all, I had to supervise over a hundred Jews – aside from the Gold Jews, all the tradesmen, and to sum it up, you see, I didn't want to know about any of that.
- Qu. But did you at least see how it happened at the doors of the gas chambers?
- Re. No. Only once did I see how the doors were opened and the people fell out like potatoes. That I saw. But nothing else. I wasn't curious about it, nor was I ordered to do it.

- Qu. Yes, on the first...
- Re. Yes, it was on the first day.
- Qu. On the first day. With Eberl?
- Re. With Eberl. Stadie took me upstairs, eh. Took us, not just me. There were six of us.
- Qu. And what did he say?
- Re. Yes. "Those are the gas chambers." Eh. "Back there are the trenches."
- Qu. How... Treblinka, this extermination camp, where so many people were exterminated... it wasn't big, was it?
- Re. It wasn't big. It wasn't big.
- Qu. How many meters?
- Re. I can't tell you at this late date.
- Qu. One kilometer?
- Re. Oh no! Maybe here... we calculated it at the time. It wasn't a square, rather more of a rhombus. It was like... like... up on an angle... like that.
- Qu. Six hundred?
- Re. Oh no. Five hundred meters at the widest part.
- Qu. Five hundred. No more?
- Re. No more.
- Qu. No more.
- Re. Because – you have to imagine – it was there, and then it started to go uphill. On the highest point was the old gas chamber. On the highest point...
- Qu. Yes, a hill?

Re. ... of the hill. It wasn't a high hill, just a hill that went down on all sides, eh. On the highest point was the old gas chamber; the new one was a little farther down, eh. All around everything were fences, you couldn't see through them, and in between were woods, tall trees and brushwood.

Qu. And the tube was dubbed, "The Way to Heaven"?

Re. The Jews called it "Ascension Way" ... then "The Last Road" – I heard only two names.

Qu. Two names?

Re. Those, the ones I just said.

Qu. Yes, and did people... it was...

Re. You had to go up. You had to go up, yes, yes.

Qu. Yes. It was no more than six hundred meters?

Re. No, no, it wasn't any more.

Qu. That's not much, is it?

Re. That's not much.

Qu. Yes. And now can you (*describe*) the difference in treatment between the East Jews and the West Jews... West transports and East transports. First, was there a difference?

Re. Ah yes. One moment. The East transports all came in livestock cars. There are livestock cars... yes, they were livestock cars, in which horses were transported to the Front, livestock cars on transport trains.

Qu. Yes.

Re. The West Jews, the Germans, the Czech – the Germans from Berlin... three transports arrived. From Theresienstadt, I don't

- Re. ... know, but I think also three or four.
- Qu. Yes, yes, that was the case.
- Re. And I think from Bulgaria there were also three. They all came in regular train cars.
- Qu. Passenger cars?
- Re. In passenger cars. They were escorted by German police, eh, in every car there were one or two, in every one, eh... people knew... they could really believe that they were being resettled. Only when they were inside the camp did they know what was happening. For instance, the Berlin Jews brought with them an entire dental laboratory and quite a few surgical tools, in general, lots of medical things.
- Qu. Brought with them?
- Re. They came from Berlin. He (*referring to the audio technician*) should stop, if he can; for I have heart pains.
- Qu. Okay, okay, okay. No, no. That's it, that's it – you continue. (Camera man: I will pretend to stop. I'll continue.) You have pains? Heart pains?
- Re. Angina pectoris.
- Qu. Angina pectoris.
- Re. Yes, yes. Only for a moment. Just five minutes.
- Qu. Yes, yes. I won't smoke. But is it because you are getting upset?
- Re. Yes, because I'm getting upset. When I am asked to remember, eh. Yes, but also because I ate too much.

- Qu. Yes, I think you ate too much. Yes, it was ...
- Re. Yes, yes. We will continue in a minute. I'll be back right away, eh.
- Qu. Yes, yes – it's the smoked salmon.
- Re. Excuse me?
- Qu. It's the smoked salmon; those are whipped cream pains.
- Re. Yes. We can continue.
- Qu. Fine. (In French) Yes, yes, we'll go on.
- Re. The Bulgarian Jews, well, they brought a few possessions with them and the ones from Theresienstadt too. I experienced only one transport from Theresienstadt, eh; I wasn't there for the others. I was on vacation.
- Qu. When was it, this Theresienstadt transport?
- Re. They came in the fall and one came in the spring. That's when I was there.
- Qu. Spring, 1943?
- Re. Spring, 1943. And the Bulgarian transports all came in the spring of 1943.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. And all in the same way, eh.
- Qu. And the Theresienstadt transport was a transport of German Jews?
- Re. German and Czech Jews.
- Qu. Czech?
- Re. German and Czech Jews.

- Qu. Yes, yes, and – okay. These people arrived in passenger cars?
- Re. In passenger cars. In regular train cars. Regular ones – not old cars, but regular ones that Germans used.
- Qu. Yes. (In French) I would like to know this – the Jews who arrived from Poland were already completely exhausted from the life in the ghetto, from lack of food, from the trip, from the terrible conditions of the trip, etc. Okay – then they were forced out, and immediately shouted at and driven into a state of panic. Did it happen the same way with the Jews coming from the West?
- Slavik (?): When the Jews came from Poland...
- Re. ... they had been terrorized, they were tired... worn out.
- (Interpreter translates the rest of the question.) Was it that way with the West Jews?
- Re. No.
- Qu. Could you explain?
- Re. Yes. There were only Ukrainian guards at the... of course, the unloading personnel was there, but without whips, eh... no beatings; the order from the Commandant was that no one was to be beaten. No one. They were only escorted up, and then they knew what was going on, eh.
- Qu. When did they know?
- Re. When they were there in the yard...
- Qu. Hier?
- Re. ... and were being separated. Understand: when the order came, “Women left and men right”, the Germans knew – now it’s over.
- Qu. They were already beaten then?

- Re. No, no. They weren't beaten at all. They were not beaten. They were never that many, eh. Of course, they would have been pushed. Crowding. But there was no beating.
- Qu. But no – I would like to know – how did it look upon arrival? For Stangl said that they made a façade of a train station with a clock... (Interpreter translates.)
- Re. Yes, yes. That came from Stangl, from Franz and from Küttner. They wanted to keep the worker Jews occupied, so outside around the facility, grass was dug up, which was brought into the camp, a nice yard was made a sign "Obermaydan" – Obermaydan, eh. Then a counter with schedules (painted) and a clock (painted) on this barrack, eh.
- Qu. Yes. A painted clock?
- Re. A painted clock. And here was a big sign – a board with a sign – real nice "Obermaydan".
- Qu. Obermaydan?
- Re. Yes. That was more Franz's doing. But Stangl tolerated it, of course, see, he...
- Qu. (In French) No – but what was really the difference in the treatment?
- Re. That they weren't beaten. That they were brought in regular trains... but they were still gassed.

Audio File Suchomel_21-22

- Qu. Yes. In the end, it was the same. Yes, but for instance, was there the tube?
- Re. Didn't need it, because it was too... well, yes, they would have been forced in, eh. I didn't see it myself, eh, I can't say anything about that.

- Re. But I know that the order was that West Jews... there was to be no beating, see.
- Qu. Were they more afraid of a revolt by the Jews of the West than a revolt by the Jews of the East?
- (Interpreter translates.)
- Re. We just didn't think that it would come to that, eh. I often spoke with Masaryk...
- Qu. With Rudi Masaryk?
- Re. With Rudi. He was with me in the workshop. Twice I saved his life, eh. Twice. Once with typhus, so he wouldn't be shot, and once a corporal wanted to take him away and shoot him, eh. And we were... he trusted me a lot, eh. And I said to him, "Rudi, if you (*in the plural*) want to escape from here (and that's what you're thinking about; I don't hold it against you), then not en masse, but in a small group." I secretly told him which technical devices there are – telephone, pistols, rockets – they knew all that... he knew all that, eh.
- Qu. No, I don't understand. I'm not talking about this revolt.
- Re. Ah so. The revolt... the first revolt came from the Czech Jews. The first plan to escape, eh? From Czech Jews. But then also from the Polish ones. They...

(INTERRUPTION OF THE RECORDING)

Re. We can begin.

Qu. Yes. We can?

Re. I experienced with the last Czech transport from Theresienstadt, I left my place and went out to the men and asked if someone is among them from my hometown. And there was a schoolmate of mine among them – that was Dr. Rubin, his brother and his father.

Qu. From your...?

Re. From my hometown.

Qu. In the Südetenland.?

Re. Yes. In the Südetenland. Erich Rubin, Paul Rubin and Papa Rubin. And I was in a class with Erich Rubin for five years. I was in contact with him... till 1937. He was a Doctor of Jurisprudence. And he was there and I said, "Hey, do you want to stay with me?"

Qu. He was naked already?

Re. He was naked already. He said, "I'm not alone, I have a wife." I said, "I can get her out too." "Yes, but she's pregnant." I said, "In which month?" "In the third." I said, "That'll work." I said, "Should I get your wife?" "Yes, she is Czech. She doesn't speak German." I went into the women's barrack and yelled, "Marie Rubinowa – is she here? Marie Rubinowa!" I yelled a few times, was told that she's gone already. Went out.

- Re. ... and said, "Unfortunately, your wife is gone already, but please, stay here." He said, "No".
- Qu. Excuse me. He knew what you meant when you said, "Gone already?"
- Re. Yes – she's gone already, she went away.
- Qu. Yes, but did he know?
- Re. Of course he knew what it was. He said, "No, I'm going to my wife. Thank you." Then his brother came and said, "Suchi, couldn't you take me?" Then I looked at him and saw that his whole face was beaten up from being whipped...
- Qu. Beaten up?
- Re. Green and blue. I said, "I'm sorry, but you are beaten up. I can't take you out, because no one is allowed to see that." And that was with at transport from Theresienstadt. So that's the proof, that Jews who were in that, were beaten too. And would have happened with other transports from the West too. But I'm telling you only about the one, because I witnessed that, eh.
- Qu. Could explain why it was impossible to rescue a man who'd been beaten up?
- Re. Other Jews in the camp would have seen that, the worker Jews, see.
- Qu. Could you explain?

Re. I can't explain it. That was an order from above – from Stangl, from Franz and from Küttner too.

Qu. What was the order?

Re. They would never have pulled out people who were beaten up. Do you understand me?

Qu. But why?

Re. I don't know. That I don't know. But I know that it happened a few times that Polish Jews wanted to pull out colleagues/friends, and they weren't pulled out because they were beaten up, eh.

Qu. Yes, but I read, for instance, among the worker Jews, one worker Jew who was beaten, (in French) I want to say this: That the worker Jews who were beaten, who were marked, that meant they were immediately sent to the hospital, or the gas chamber. Can he explain that? (Interpreter translates)

Re. I can't tell you that. I can't tell you why with regard to the transport Jews.

Qu. But that's the truth, isn't it?

Re. That's the truth. I can't say why.

Qu. Steiner, for instance, says, "The Jews were marked with a punch of the fist..."

Re. Yes... he means the worker Jews?

Qu. Yes.

- Re. After all, only those who were not wanted anymore were beaten. Those were beaten before, so they would be demoralized and then they were sent to the hospital. That was standard procedure.
- Qu. That was standard procedure?
- Re. That was standard procedure.
- Qu. (In French). What does one say when one wants to condemn a man to death, one begins to punch with the fist or beat with the whip?
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. It was standard procedure?
- Re. That was standard procedure.
- Qu. (In French) Another question. Is it true that certain ones who were marked wanted to hide, so they walked like this, hiding their face?
- Re. Yes. That's also partly true. But that was only with the worker Jews. Only with the worker Jews.
- Qu. Yes, yes, yes, I know.
- Re. Only with the worker Jews. Not with the transport Jews. Only with the worker Jews, eh. For instance, when Franz was in a bad mood and saw someone who was tired, he made him stand at attention and tried out a mortal blow on a living human being. I saw that personally, eh. Otherwise I wouldn't mention it. A mortal blow on a living human being. That person had to have the luck to be allowed to continue living or he would send him to the hospital. Küttner used the back of the whip,

- Re. with the whip handle to beat people's faces...only.
- Qu. ... Yes.
- Re. Yes. **Only** that.
- Qu. Only the face.
- Re. Only the face, yes. A specialist. In the face.
- Qu. In the face, yes. How are you? Are you in pain?
- Re. Yes, a bit. It's getting less. It upsets me, please excuse me. But continue with your questions.
- Qu. Yes. And now you can...
- Re. Now – the revolt of... I'll tell you, about the transport Jews. So, what we were afraid of were the transports from Bialystok.
- Qu. Why?
- Re. Because it happened several times that they... hardly had the door been opened, the men threw bottles. Bottles at the Germans and the Ukrainians, and twice hand grenades. Small hand grenades, eh. Little, round ones – they just caused splinters, eh. So, the Bialystok Jews were dangerous.
- Qu. Wild?
- Re. That I know, eh. Besides that, they beat up their camp police, who were police in the ghetto, you see. When they came out, the men attacked them and beat them up, beat them, eh. Then they got the Kapo from the Blue Detachment – I think his name was Meier – there were two brothers Meier, one in the lower and one in the upper, they wounded his arm with a razor blade or a knife

Re. ...eh. But he was allowed to recover. He wasn't sent to the hospital. He recovered and survived, eh. Besides that, I said that the Camp Jews started to... the most educated ones, the head of construction, the camp elder... that they started to destroy currency.

Qu. Currency?

Re. Yes, dollars. People brought dollars with them, after all. Dollars and pounds. But mostly dollars. The Polish Jews all dollars. And pieces of gold. They were wealthy... into the hundreds of thousands. That was worth hundreds of thousands in Reichmarks... in DM (Deutsch marks) what was coming in there. So, in dollar pieces. Twenty dollar pieces, ten dollar pieces and Russian gold pieces, etc., etc. But the Ukrainians used just as much money for prostitution here in the area, eh. They used up a fortune screwing around in one night. The best whores of Warsaw were present all around the camp in the villages, eh. But that – the revolt, I mean, the psychological resistance started very soon... with sabotage. And then, when the Jews got nothing to eat, they were desperate, of course, and started to calculate. And said, "So and so many worker Jews are going to die; they won't get anything." And when the Bulgarian Jews came, they brought dried lamb, which was cooked; then they had diarrhea for a week, stomach aches... the fat... they couldn't tolerate fat.

Qu. Worker Jews?

Re. The worker Jews. They no longer believed anything. They asked me every day, "Mr. Boss, what's going to happen, what's going to happen?" Well, and if I said, "You're going to be resettled", eh, they said, "No, no, we're just corpses on vacation." So, I just kept telling them, "You have to have hope."

Qu. Hope?

Re. ... "I'm going to make your life here as pleasant as I possibly can."

Qu. In Treblinka?

Re. Yes. I mean, in my workshops. Just in my workshops. That's where I was in charge, there's where I could kick any corporal out, because the orders could only be given by Stangl and Franz, eh. And I was the supervisor and gave the orders, "Nothing shady, nothing underhanded", eh.

Qu. (In French) Is it true that people were literally walking in money, in gold?

Re. No, that's not true. I'll get to that. In the beginning, when the undressing barrack was still here, there was a place where the Polish bank bills ... they were piled up that high, eh.

Qu. That high?

Re. That high. That high.

Qu. Polish bank bills.

- Re. Polish bank bills. We didn't even count them; they were packed into suitcases, just the zlotys, the 500 notes, they were bundled. All the other bank bills were bundled, all the bank bills, eh. And we had those in the beginning... yes... a whole area full of big bags, big suitcases, full of bank bills – when I started to sort them with the Gold Jews, you see.
- Qu. But excuse me, that means that these Jews, who came to Treblinka, had money.
- Re. They still had money – in the beginning. In the beginning. The ones from Warsaw, the ones from Tschienstau, the ones from Bialystok. They all had money at that time. In the beginning. But then, after Christmas, they no longer had anything, eh.
- Qu. Nothing.
- Re. Eh. Well, we had gold, we had currency, diamonds; I had to hand those over to Stangl if anything was found, eh. Then there were gold watches by the thousands, other watches by the ten thousands, glasses, alarm clocks, everything under the sun by the hundreds of thousands.
- Qu. And there were dollars too?
- Re. There were a lot of dollars in the beginning, a lot. But then they were ripped up. But the Gold Jews gathered up the torn ones too and glued them together.
- Qu. Yes, and can you explain precisely... what was... you were the head of the Gold Jews.
- Re. I was the head... Stangl was the head, but I was the man of action, eh.

Qu. Yes, but what does that mean exactly. Could you explain?

Re. Yes. So, my...

Qu. The Gold Jew work and such.

Re. Yes. The Gold Jews were there to sort out the accumulated valuables. Meaning, the paper money according to country, gold according to country, then dollars, pounds and rubles. Gold watches – that is, gold wristwatches, gold pocket watches, nickel wristwatches; rings – gold rings, platinum rings, silver rings or imitation – nothing was discarded. Then glasses – hundreds of thousands of glasses were arriving now, which weren't used in Germany anymore, or hardly, eh. That was all important for the war. That was all gathered up in big suitcases, packed into big suitcases, marked and sent off to Lublin. In the beginning, a truck came every week. And later, just one a month.

Qu. A truck with what – with glasses?

Re. No, no – to take it away. For gold, paper money, watches, glasses, etc.

Qu. And gold from teeth?

Re. Gold from teeth was brought down from the upper camp.

Qu. From Camp II?

Re. Yes. But I'll tell you about that... now, that wasn't just gold, because not all the Jews were millionaires or could have gold teeth made. There was a lot of other stuff there – iron...
Once

Audio Reel Suchomel_23-24-25

Re. the Kapo of the Gold Jews said, “Mr. Boss, go up there. They shouldn’t be doing that anymore, it’s just a lot of ‘Schmattes’”, eh. ‘Schmattes’ in the vernacular means, “That’s a lot of rubbish, a lot of scrap, garbage’. I went up to the so-called dental technicians (inaudible), they were sitting in the first gas chamber, in the old...

Qu. Who was the dental technician?

Re. Well, they were a bunch of dental technicians, so-called dental technicians and watchmakers in the upper camp, in the death camp.

Qu. Jews?

Re. Jews. Then I told the Kapo, I said, “Stop doing that”. I said, “There’s nothing there. That’s nothing. You can see that.” “Yes” he said, “Mr. Boss, please let us do this, otherwise we have to carry corpses.”

Qu. Ah, they would rather...

Re. ...pull the teeth then carry corpses, eh. “Let us do it, otherwise we have to carry corpses out there and will get beaten.” Do you understand?

Qu. Yes. And that was your occupation?

Re. That was my assignment. And at first I also had the tailors and shoemakers; we made uniforms for the Ukrainians – the Ukrainians still had a lot of Russian uniforms, then they got black uniforms, eh. I had to supervise that.

- Re. I had about twenty tailors. We made uniforms for a whole month and for all the Germans; because we came there in the summer, everyone got a suit for Christmas, eh.
- Qu. A civilian suit?
- Re. A civilian suit. We weren't allowed to go home in uniform, eh. Always in civilian clothes.
- Qu. And what was your uniform like in Treblinka?
- Re. SS.
- Qu. SS?
- Re. Yes, but without... without that (inaudible).
- Qu. With a skull?
- Re. Only the skull. We weren't real SS people; we had the uniform... we were... the status was: assistant police of the General SS.
- Qu. Yes. But with the skull?
- Re. With the skull on the cap, eh. And the bird here.
- Qu. What color was it?
- Re. Field gray.
- Qu. Field gray?
- Re. Yes. The field uniform of the Waffen-SS, eh.
- Qu. (in French) Did they melt the gold down? (Interpreter translates.)
- Re. I don't know. It all went to Lublin.
- Qu. But in Treblinka?
- Re. Nothing was melted down, nothing. All to Lublin. All to Lublin.

- Re. Eh. And then I supervised (so I can continue the tailors and shoemakers and furriers. From lamb's fur we made Wehrmacht winter fur coats, from boots, that were cut down to here, made German army boots, hundreds, thousands of pairs, eh. Then I ... all of them...
- Qu. But excuse me... all these Gold Jews had money for themselves?
- Re. Only what they stole.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. I didn't frisk them. Only Franz caught one, Stern, and he ... him.
- Qu. I read that there was money everywhere in Treblinka. Everyone had money.
- Re. That happened. That happened. That happened.

(END OF THE SECOND CASSETTE, CORRESPONDING WITH THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH TAPE.)

THIRD CASSETTE, FIRST SIDE

(Ninth and tenth tape)

- Qu. (in French) Yes... my dear Christian... (in German) my dear Christian... (in French) Are you ready? Okay, good.
- Re. Yes, when it's said or asked, that all Jews had money in Treblinka, that could be. But only to be understood in the sense that

- Re. ... the Jews, who had access to it – that is, whether they were part of the Gold Jews, part of the Red or Blue Detachment, or the Jews who sorted the clothes in the big sorting barrack (the money was often sewn into the clothes or the heels of shoes, you see), that they found gold there or money. Mainly, it was a matter of gold – of “sloto” (*Polish for ‘gold’*). Paper money was worthless, eh. gold. That they had access to gold there, that stands to reason and is quite possible. No one frisked them. No one.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. And never.
- Qu. (In French) There’s something I want to understand. Was the SS allowing them, so to speak, a lot of freedom? I want to say: The people sorting the clothes in the big sorting barrack, had the sense from time to time that there was money on the inside of the clothes, which they opened and found full of dollars. But the SS was perfectly calm because they knew that they were all condemned to death and that in the end, the money would come back to them.
(Interpreter translates.)
- Re. Yes, well – I can’t give you exact information, but I don’t think they knew about it. For Miete and company, Miete, Küttner and company, who supervised that, they were no angels. If they had found something, then the

Re. ... step would have been the hospital... Just like Stern, he had a twenty dollar gold piece down there on his stool. And if someone came to here, into the room, the Jews had to get up and stand at attention, you see. And that's when Franz saw the twenty dollars under his chair, eh, he beat him up so bad that his nose was just hanging there. And he had to stand in front of the camp in a bent knee position, like this. And then someone came to me – the Kapo of the Gold Jews – I was in the tailor shop at that moment, and said, “Mr. Boss, only you can... only you can help. Franz took Stern out.” I went out, saw Stern there and said, “What happened?” He said, “The Second Lieutenant beat me up.” I went into a rage and said to Franz, “What happened to the Commandant's order? We're forced to lie to people all the time and you beat them to a pulp.” And I said, “You free that man. I won't tolerate it.” And he let him go. And I said, “Stern, get up and leave.” He said, “No, I thank you, you meant well, but I'm not leaving.” Then he was taken to the hospital, beaten again, taken to the hospital and shot. I was so upset that I went to the doctor in the recovery room and had him give me something. But then I had a disciplinary action with Franz. Franz was an officer, after all, eh.

Qu. Yes.

Re. I said that at the trial too. Not just to you. Franz didn't deny it.

Qu. But you personally as the head of the Gold Jews and... did you take gold or money for yourself?

Re. No.

Qu. Why not?

Re. Because we had been threatened with being shot. That was strictly forbidden for us.

Qu. You didn't take anything? Not one ring?

Re. No, no, no.

Qu. No? (In French) But wasn't he tempted?

Re. I come from a background of poverty, but didn't dare to... I'm telling you the truth. I was too much of a coward for that. Because I know that the T4 people punished those who stole rings during the time of emotional illness, eh. They were put into a concentration camp. And for us it was strictly forbidden. Okay, one could... haggle with the Polish farmers, you see. We took ham home with us on vacation, we took honey home with us, we took vodka... we got three liters of vodka every two weeks, and I didn't drink it, see.

Qu. Yes and fur coats too?

Re. No. Yes, Suck (?) said that, but no. No. No. Look here, that would have been noticed back home. We had to be careful. We were in a police state.

Qu. Yes, that is...

- Re. People envied me... people envied my wife, because I got more vacation than others, you see? We got more vacation.
- Qu. More vacation?
- Re. Yes. Once every three months. And the soldiers once a year, if that was possible. And we every quarter – plus... I'm telling you honestly. The guards, they brought us chocolate, from the outside. Yes. They had packets... after all, they were always trading with the Jewish... with the Polish speculators. They brought us sardines, and so on and so forth. Yes – I (*took*) that home, we took that home. I can only speak for myself; I don't know what the others did.
- Qu. Yes. But were there Polish speculators all over?
- Re. All around the camp. All around the camp. After the revolt, I went out in camouflage with one of the detachments... with twenty Jews...
- Qu. Why are you laughing?
- Re. I'm laughing... we were sitting around there, Jews and Goyim; the Ukrainians went to the nearest farmer on the field, they gave him gold and then the packets arrived. And then the Jews ate and we ate – so, that's what they could do with me, eh, and then we went back. So, the worker detachments, if they had a good corporal, they were able to eat themselves full and fat, every day.
- Qu. Yes?

- Re. Yes, yes. So it wasn't so bad for the camp Jews. In the beginning, yes, in the beginning, they had it very bad.
- Qu. But is it true, that there was a big speculation economy in the area?
- Re. Yes, yes, yes, that's true. Twice as much gold as we sent to Lublin stayed in the area. That was paid only with gold, not with paper.
- Qu. Only with gold?
- Re. Only with gold.
- Qu. With whom... with farmers, with Polish...
- Re. With farmers. With Polish farmers. Look here, in March... in February I had "wolphynien" fever.
- Qu. Wolhynien fever?
- Re. Yes. We had the first cucumbers. We had oranges. All that came from the outside. I don't know from where. Probably from Wehrmacht supplies, from which it was stolen, eh. But it was available. The Ukrainians brought it all in. There were vast amounts of money in the villages of this area. Vast amounts.
- Qu. That means that all the Polish farmers in the area knew exactly...
- Re. Yes, yes, yes. They have "sloto" – sloto, that's gold.
- Qu. And they knew that it was Jewish money...
- Re. ... that it's Jewish money. Of course, they knew it.
- Qu. Yes. And is it true that in the area of the camp there were also whores from Warsaw?

- Re. Whores from Warsaw. Yes. There were.
- Qu. Yes?
- Re. Yes. There were.
- Qu. Why?
- Re. Look here – the Ukrainians stuffed themselves, drank, had an easy job which didn't tire them out, and of course, they wanted that other thing too, you see. And one such whore brought the next one along.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. Well yes, they were there. Then Wirth came and he found out about it. Then he brought in ten Ukrainian women, ten Ukrainian women who should serve the guards. And those girls were so clever and decent, they picked out the non-commissioned officers among the guards, eh. And they slept with them... or loved them... but not with the regular guards. They had to go out again.
- Qu. The whores were only for Ukrainians?
- Re. Only for Ukrainians.
- Qu. Not for Germans?
- Re. No. We weren't allowed to go out.
- Qu. Why not?
- Re. We weren't allowed... It was too dangerous for us. Because of partisans, and then we weren't allowed to fraternize with the civilian population. We weren't allowed to do that. We were, however, allowed to go to Malkinia to the train

- Re. personnel, to the Germans. That was permitted. But not into the nearest Polish villages. That was too dangerous, eh. That was forbidden for us. That's why we had more vacation too, you see.
- Qu. Ah...
- Re. Get it?
- Qu. Got it.
- Re. Once there were two corporals who drove out for several evenings. And when Stangl found out about it, he transferred them to Sobibor as punishment. Sobibor was in the middle of the woods, eh. You couldn't get away with that – "daiki traha" (?)
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. That's how it was.
- Qu. (In French) But my question is this: The whores from Warsaw, women from the area who prostituted themselves – everybody knew that Treblinka was an extermination camp? (Interpreter translates.)
- Re. Yes. They knew it. They knew it. One hundred percent. They knew it.
- Qu. One hundred percent?
- Re. Or must have known – like that. I didn't talk to anyone about it. But please – the stench and the talk... Then there was a Polish underground army; they knew it too... I mean, they never looked out for the Jews, they didn't do an attack on Treblinka,

- Re. ... never... The Russians flew over our camp with bomber planes three times. Dropped fluorescent screens, but no bombs.
- Qu. (In French) I'd like to pose another question. What does he think of people who say that the Jews let themselves be driven to their death as to a slaughterhouse?
(Interpreter translates.)
- Re. You have to tell me that in German.
- Qu. (Interpreter) There are people who say the Jews didn't defend themselves enough and let themselves be driven off like sheep to the slaughterhouse.
- Re. Yes. Okay, okay, okay... In the beginning the Warsaw Jews still believed they would really be resettled. They gladly went – from other ghettos too. In the beginning. In the beginning. One could say, until the Wirth time. Afterwards it was different. Then it was maybe half and half, that one part believed that it can't be all that bad, eh. But later, the people were already so poor and demoralized, that they no longer defended themselves. Nor could they defend themselves anymore. They couldn't defend themselves because they would have been shot in the ghetto, on the transports, or in Treblinka, though on the train platform, no one was shot, but yelled at.
- Qu. But that's not an answer.
(Interpreter) What do you think about **people** who make those assertions?

- Re. Yes – I can only think to myself: you didn't see it; you don't know, how it was and you are insulting those who were murdered. That's all I can say.
- Qu. What? (Interpreter translates.)
- Re. I know, Steiner, for instance, writes, "The young Jews will ask, 'Why didn't you stand up for yourselves?'" But the young Jews in Israel don't know how the people were bullied. You have to realize – you know yourself, have read enough about the Warsaw Ghetto, where the people were lying in the gutter and died and were starving. And then, on top of that, they were promised, "If you will let yourselves be resettled, you'll each get a loaf of bread."
- Qu. Did you see the Warsaw Ghetto?
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. Yes?
- Re. I was in there for two hours.
- Qu. When?
- Re. When we got our uniforms. In Lublin we got uniforms and then had to register in Warsaw in Eisen Street 2002, or wherever that was.
- Qu. When was that?
- Re. In August, 1942.
- Qu. Ah, at the time of the big resettlement.
- Re. Yes. When it started. When it started. You could see the work

- Re. detachments marching; they all had to remove their caps in front of us, you see. Those people, look here, they were humiliated at every step of the way. And then, on top of that... for example, no Jew talks about this, whether Steiner or any other one, that the camp Jews, the ones with us in Treblinka, got two rows of shorn hair cut into their hair, eh. That's so one could recognize them, so the Poles would recognize them if they were to flee, that they're Jews from Treblinka. Do you understand what I said?
- Qu. Hm.
- Re. Here – that's where the hair stood up and there too, but here they were shorn bald.
- Qu. (In French) Why were they killing the Jews?
- Re. That was the insane conviction of Hitler and his environment. And Himmler and Göring. First of all... I see one cause in the racial hatred, "The Jews are our misfortune", you see, which was preached there for years. The other cause was greed and the desire for enrichment. It was known that not all Jews are poor, that there were very rich Jews. I think there were rich Polish Jews, there were rich German Jews, there were rich Czech Jews and there were very rich Dutch Jews, who were sent to Sobibor.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. You see? They were all rich, and Göring had a lot of influence, see, and Himmler was just as big a fanatic as his boss.

Qu. Yes, but... (in French) What did he think when it was discovered that most of the Jews were very, very poor and very wretched people?

(Interpreter translates.)

Re. Yes, you know – that there aren't just rich Jews, I experienced that during my time in the military with the Czech army. In the city of my garrison, sixty percent were Orthodox Jews, eh. They were... most of them were poor. And in Poland I knew too that the majority... I'd heard that from my Gold Jews already that the majority of Jews in Poland were poor.

Qu. (Interpreter) What did you think at that time?

Re. I thought that's how it is.

Qu. Yes.

Re. It's a fact. I never saw only rich Jews. In my hometown, there were thirty-two Jewish families; there were millionaires among them, and there were Jews among them who lived from hand to mouth, and from the alms of the rich. Do you understand? I don't know Jews just from Mr. Steiner's paper – I went to school with them.

Qu. But did you yourself have a hatred toward them?

Re. No, no. I mean, not in this way. Certainly not in this way, eh.

Qu. But in which way?

Re. Actually... actually, in no way. It's just that there was a difference; they were different from us. They were smarter, partly they were more intelligent – they did ran ... business with us... well, of course, so did the goyim.

Qu. Yes, but, but yes. Yes – that’s interesting.

Re. I can tell you – I never wanted that...

BREAK IN THE RECORDING

Camera man: That took ten minutes.

Claude: For what?

Camera man: For this.

Qu. (In French) No, no, - let’s continue to talk about anti-Semitism. (In German) What do you think about Jews now? Today, after thirty years?

Re. That they have a right to live, just as we do. Like everyone else. And that they have a right to live as free citizen in their state of Israel.

Qu. But do you have sympathy for Jews or are Jews for you a completely different peoples?

Re. No – I **now** see Jews as human beings, just like you and me. There are different characteristics among Jews and there are among us, I mean, among other nations, or among us Germans various characteristics. That’s my opinion.

Qu. Yes. But do you feel... do you feel guilt... (in French) how does one say... (in German) do you feel somewhat guilty?

Re. How shall I say this...

Qu. However you want.

- Re. I'm ashamed that I was in Treblinka and that I had to be in Treblinka. I'm ashamed of that. And I... I can't express it... yes... I do feel somewhat guilty for having been there. If I'm **completely** honest – yes, I do feel somewhat guilty. But please – I didn't want that, what was done to people. And I can prove that as a written fact, in my court case how the judges decided about me. And how individual, decent Jews judged me. I had fourteen men, after all, who held up three fingers and said the pure "Emes" (?), the pure truth. So, as far as that is concerned, since I was there and had to be there, yes – I said that to the pastor too, after the sentencing.
- Qu. And was there no other possibility?
- Re. I'm not a man who says, "That was the Führer's order". I couldn't do it any other way. I couldn't do it other than that. I just couldn't do it any other way. I couldn't stand up to them. I had a sick father, a sick son, a wife, an old mother and a total of three children. I couldn't defend myself. I couldn't rock the boat. I had to stay very, very small, if I wanted to keep them and to survive for them. Nor was there for me a chance to be assigned to the army. That wasn't possible for me because we were the bearers of state secrets.
- Qu. Yes. Could you explain the meaning of "bearer of state secrets"?

Re. We were **all** aware of two “Reich” secrets: the secret of euthanasia and the secret of the extermination of Jews. Those were state secrets. And then a third was added: the secret state secret (*he uses the word ‘secret’ twice*) of Operation Burning (*in German “Einsatz Brand”).*

Qu. Yes.

Re. I don’t know the details of it, but that was a state secret too.

Qu. What was Operation Burning?

Re. I wasn’t there. I can... I read a letter from someone who was shot in Sobibor... I had to look through all the mail, that is, to confiscate it, and there I read, “Dear Rudi, we’re doing the same as you, but we do it with injections.” So, in Germany, people who were very seriously wounded in the bomb shelters or who went crazy, were given injections so they would die.

Qu. That was Operation Burning?

Re. That was Operation Burning.

Qu. Yes – but...

Re. But please, I can’t prove it. I can only draw that conclusion because I read it. But (whispering), it’s true.

Qu. That’s history.

Re. That’s history. I’ve told it only to you.

Qu. But it was... Operation Burning... it was against the Jews?

Re. No! Against the goyim. Against Germans.

Qu. Against Germans, it was... it was a form of euthanasia?

- Re. It was a form of euthanasia.
- Qu. But it was at the same time?
- Re. At the same time. So, Operation Burning started maybe... I can't say exactly. September 1942 – certainly not sooner.
- Qu. But I think it was for children.
- Re. Excuse me?
- Qu. It was for children.
- Re. No, no, no, no. Not this operation. They were stationed in the middle of Germany with buses, and when big bomb attacks happened with heavy casualties, then they drove into those places.
- Qu. Ah yes. It was because of the air raids?
- Re. Yes, yes. That was the third state secret, eh.
- Qu. Yes, but did you sign anything?
- Re. Excuse me?
- Qu. You said that you were a bearer of secrets.
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. Bearer of state secrets.
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. Yes – but did you sign something?
- Re. We had... I signed with T4; I told you about that, without knowing what I was supposed to do. In Lublin we signed that we would keep quiet... we are subject to the SS jurisdiction... that is, the jurisdiction of the Waffen SS and we had to keep quiet.

- Re. At that point, we didn't know what that was actually all about.
- Qu. Did you know Kurt Gerstein?
- Re. Whom?
- Qu. Gerstein. Kurt Gerstein.
- Re. No. But his chauffeur.
- Qu. Yes?
- Re. Yes. I know... that was in the camp, there were all those barracks, these, these, these, they were full of clothes, and Gerstein came in, and I don't know what he said, how it could all be disinfected, or how it could all be removed. At any rate, things were moved then. And Gerstein wrote a report, eh. The so-called Gerstein Report. About Sobibor, about Treblinka – mainly about Sobibor.
- Qu. Yes. Did you... did you think about suicide? Or not?
- Re. Suicide... I didn't think about suicide. I can honestly say that, eh. Because I had an old, sick father and a wife with three children.
- Qu. Yes, but please, I want to understand precisely. Every day you sent thousands of children and women to death. And how can you talk about your wife, your children, your old father?
- Re. Yes – that's one of your questions. But please – every human being thinks about survival. Everyone.
- Qu. That's true.
- Re. There are few martyrs. True martyrs. There are few.
- Qu. That's true. That's true.

- Re. That's my (inaudible). I lived in dread, I suffered – please, I'll suffer to my last hour. Mr. Lanzmann, you can believe me. I did not like being in Treblinka.
- Qu. You didn't...
- Re. I didn't like being in Treblinka.
- Qu. Yes. I believe you.
- Re. I didn't feel good about it. And I will... that will remain a burden for my whole life. Till my death. I'm a character... my name is not Kurt Franz or whoever, nor (*one who can*) shake that off, that it was the order of the Führer or such. I thought to myself, the Führer is the biggest mass murderer in history.
- Qu. You believe that?
- Re. But I couldn't tell that to anyone. Today I can say it. But not back then. It would have cost me my head.
- Qu. But you thought that?
- Re. That's what I thought, yes. I was often...
- Qu. In Treblinka?
- Re. In Treblinka. I was often very desperate. **Very** desperate. I can tell you that – it wasn't pleasant. If you've had children yourself and other ones passed by you, eh. I had bad dreams as a result of that.
- Qu. You dreamed?
- Re. Yes.

- Qu. And what were you thinking when you were on vacation? With your wife, your children, etc.? How could you these two worlds, Treblinka and your comfortable...
- Re. I'll ... you...
- Qu. ... comfortable home...
- Re. I'll tell you something. My father was sick, but we had six people in the shop. When I came back on vacation, I didn't take a leisurely walk with my spouse, because too many people would have asked me how I'm doing, etc. I went into the shop and worked for eighteen... sixteen days... except for Sundays. That's what I did.
- Qu. On vacation?
- Re. On vacation. So I could let off steam. I couldn't ... my wife... I couldn't pour out my heart to anyone, not to anyone.
- Qu. Your wife didn't know?
- Re. She knew nothing. Nor my mother. Once I told my father.
- Qu. Your father knew?
- Re. Yes – I mean, by implication. I said, "Father, I don't want to go on." And he said, "Franz, you are a bearer of state secrets. That could be counted against you." You see. But my father didn't know the whole story either. I couldn't tell it to anyone. Because – my father would have told my mother and my mother my wife. What would have come of that? My wife

- Re. ... (*would have told*) her family... her sister.
- Qu. What... what's with the sister?
- Re. My wife would perhaps have told her sisters, you see.
- Qu. Aha.
- Re. I couldn't do that. All of us had to stuff that down.
- Qu. Stuff that down?
- Re. Yes. That's hard.
- Qu. And... (in French) I don't know how to say this. When he was in Treblinka, did he have the feeling of being all powerful, the master of life and death?
(Interpreter translates.)
- Re. I could have been that, if I had wanted to... I didn't want it. I didn't send a single Jew to get beaten; I didn't beat a single Jew working for me. I never felt that I was master over these people. Only a few of us (*did*) that... very few.
- Qu. Can you explain why the Jews called you Yom Kippur?
- Re. Yes – I had that name, the nickname Yom Kippur. So I asked Rakowski...
- Qu. Who (*came up with*) that... this nickname...
- Re. The Jews came up with that.

Audio File Suchomel_28-29-30

And Rakowski told me, “Mr. Boss, you have a name of honor. Yom Kippur is the highest of the holy days of Orthodox Jews; you have that name because you are so good

Re. ... and mellow – you don't beat anyone.
Qu. You never beat anyone?
Re. No.
Qu. Not once? Please! Not once?
Re. I once beat a no-good guy. And I beat the two Berlin Jews. I did that.
Qu. Yes.
Re. Yes. I beat them...
Qu. Hard?
Re. Not hard. Across the back. Not in the face. Across the back.
Qu. With what, with what?
Re. With the whip.
Qu. Yes.
Re. I was no saint. I won't make myself holy. But I never beat anyone for the sport of it nor when I was in a bad mood. But I beat them because they beat Jews and, above all, women. I saw that.
Qu. Ah yes? All the SS had nicknames?
Re. No. Well yes – so I was Yom Kippur, the Captain was...
Qu. You're speaking with a Yiddish accent.
Re. What? Yom Kippur.
Qu. Yes. You have a Yiddish accent.

- Re. Well, yes. I know a little Yiddish.
- Qu. You know Yiddish?
- Re. Yes – a bit. I forgotten a lot, eh. But I always spoke Yiddish.
- Qu. Could you speak a bit of Yiddish as an example?
- Re. I think... (in Yiddish) speaking in Yiddish?
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. Yes, that... maybe I come to it, but what...
- Qu. Please!
- Re. Yes... I'm not good at it any more.
- Qu. But you learned Yiddish in Treblinka?
- Re. I spoke only Yiddish. Only High German with the Czech Jews, with the Polish Jews in Yiddish. Or in High German too, depended. But the ordinary Polish Jew spoke only Yiddish. Yes. I'll tell you something. Okay. Do you want to hear it?
- Qu. Everything.
- Re. We had one in the camp, Yankel Biak...
- Qu. Yankel?
- Re. Biak. Yankel, the drunkard. He was the electrical... the electrical Jew, you see. The one who laid the electrical wiring in the whole camp. And he was a drinker. And when we went on vacation, we had to bring our suitcases to the Commandant's headquarters, to Stangl – the suitcases were checked. For gold and valuables. And then this Yankel came and said, *(all of Yankel's dialogue is in Yiddish; Suchomel's in partial Yiddish)* "Mr. Boss, I'll carry the suitcases for you. Will

- Re. you let me carry the suitcases, Mr. Boss?” “Yes, Yankele, you will carry the suitcases.” “Will Mr. Boss have ‘Bronfen’ (spirits) for me?” “Yankele, you will get ‘Bronfen’.” Then Yankel came and brought them to headquarters. “Do I get ‘Bronfen’ now?” I gave him a glass of ‘Bronfen; (adds in a whisper: ‘Schnaps’, eh?) Yankel drank it, “To the health of Mr. Boss.”
- Qu. To the “Gesint”? (*Yiddish for the German, “Gesundheit”*)
- Re. Yes. “Does Mr. Boss have a wife?” “Yes, I have a wife.” “I’ll drink to the health of the madam.” Poured him another. Yankel Biak drank it down again. “Does Mr. Boss have children?” “Yes, I have children.” “How many?” “If Mr. Boss will pour me another ‘Bronfen’, I’ll drink to the health of the children.” Yankel Biak drank again to the health of the children of Mr. Boss. Then he said, “If Mr. Boss makes another child on vacation, then I will always drink a lot of ‘Bronfen’ to its health.”
- Qu. Yes, and did you do it?
- Re. No. Not another one. Three was enough for me.
- Qu. Three.
- Re. Because I no longer believed...
- Qu. How old was Yankel?
- Re. Yankel was about twenty-five.
- Qu. Twenty-five.

- Re. Yes. He had three years of schooling in Warsaw because he was working – he was the ‘Schtoker’ (electrician), Yankel, the ‘Schtoker’, Yankel Biak, the ‘Schtoker’.
- Qu. And you were called “Mr. ‘Chef’ (Boss)”?
- Re. Mr. Boss.
- Qu. Always?
- Re. The golden boss.
- Qu. The golden boss?
- Re. The golden boss. The golden boss.
- Qu. That’s nice, isn’t it? The golden boss.
- Re. And then, in the washroom...
- Qu. And you liked it, to be Mr. Boss...?
- Re. I was the only one. Early in the morning when I came into the shop, the Kapo yelled, “Attention!” I went up to him and gave him my hand and said, “Good morning.” I wasn’t allowed to do that after all. I wasn’t allowed to look at a Jew with...
- Qu. You... you...
- Re. I gave him my hand. Yes!
- Qu. Like now, today.
- Re. Then they sang in Yiddish. In the washroom was the “Handka” (?) But those weren’t Yiddish songs, they were Yiddish pop songs.
 “That I cannot tell you,
 Not today, not tomorrow;

Re. That I cannot tell you
 Where it's hidden.
 My heart is broken
 Into a thousand pieces
 I just can't tell you
 That I love you."

So, it's half Yiddish, eh.

Qu. Yes, yes.

Re. And then they... we had a singer; that was Salve, the singer.

Qu. Yes?

Re. And he often sang in the evening, in the shop, at concerts, arias from 'Bajazzo' (the Clown), or when they wanted "A Yiddish Mame". Do you know it?

Qu. No.

Re. Well, I can't sing it. I can't sing it. It'll take too long. That's a Yiddish song; the Yiddish mother sings it, how good she is to her children, and such. Everyone cried then.

Qu. You too?

Re. I didn't understand it.

Qu. You didn't understand it?

Re. I didn't understand everything. But I felt sad about how the others were crying, eh. And then... after the Warsaw Revolt, a singer came, but an old man who was a bit meschigge. And he

Re. sang real Yiddish folklore, from Surrele, Surrele, surrele, but I can't sing it, eh? – I didn't hear it often enough. And Kurt Franz, once he wanted the Jews to sing a Polish song from "Korale", and that means in the refrain, the Korale, that is, the mountain farmer (Koral is the farmer in the mountains in the Tatras – those are the Korale). "He lives in the woods and he is free." Do you understand? (Sings in Polish: "Korale...") Eh. And then the Camp Elder, Goderski, told me, "Today I'll sing something for Franz." And the roll call was over and Franz said, "So..."

END OF THE TENTH TAPE
END OF THE THIRD CASSETTE, FIRST SIDE.

THIRD CASSETTE, SECOND SIDE
ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH TAPE

Re. Kalewski said to me...

Qu. Wait, wait, wait...

Re. "Tonight we'll show Franz something. We're supposed to sing a song, but it will be our prayer." After the roll call was done, that is, on that evening no one was beaten with the whip, Franz said, "So, Camp Elder, let us sing." He marched ahead in military style, makes a military turn and commands, "Jews, at attention! Jews,

Re. hats off!” It was all in military style, eh. Like that. That’s how it had to be. Every day.

Qu. Who did...

Re. Kalewski.

Qu. Kalewski?

Re. Germans never gave commands to Jews – were not allowed to give commands. That was always done only from Jews to Jews. Eh.

Qu. Can you say that again?

Re. Germans were allowed only to give their commands to Jewish Kapos and those gave the commands to the Jews. Kalewski, as I described, could give the command, “Attention, hats off!”

Qu. Jews off!

Re. Yes. “Jews, hats off. Sing!” Then they all took an “at attention” position, eh... then they sang three stanzas of the Korale song. I told you the refrain, “The Korale is free, he lives in the mountains,” eh. That means, they **wanted** this freedom, the Jews of Treblinka. And when they finished singing, he again commanded, “Hats on, move!” And announced to Franz, “Mr. Second Lieutenant, the Jews have sung!”

Qu. And what did Franz reply?

Re. Nothing. I don’t know if he got it.

Qu. But you got it?

Re. I knew it!
Qu. You were there?
Re. Excuse me?
Qu. You were there?
Re. Yes, of course. We had to be there, eh.
Qu. Yes, but...
Re. That was really something, eh!
Qu.. Yes, but what was the Treblinka song? There was a Treblinka song?
Re. Yes.
Qu. A German song?
Re. A German song. Franz composed it, eh. The melody comes from Buchenwald, where Franz was a guard. Guard and cook, eh?
Qu. And what is it?
Re. (Sings)
 “With a steady stride and pace,
 and eyes always straight ahead,
 looking ever brave and cheerful at the world,
 the column marches to work.
 For us, nothing matters today except Treblinka,
 which is our fate.
 That’s why we’ve totally adapted ourselves
 to Treblinka in short order.
 We obey the orders of the Commandants and
 listen to their signals and respond to everything
 that our duties demand of us in stride and pace.
 Work is everything to us, as is obedience and duty.
 We want to work more and more

- Re. until a bit of luck beckons us. Hurray!
 Are you satisfied with that? That's an original. No Jews knows that anymore.
- Qu. Yes, again please. (In French) Because that's the beginning. It will be like this. Exactly like this. (In German) Again, but louder.
- Re. No...
- Qu. Please, again, but louder. That's a very powerful song.
- Re. Yes. We're doing it with laughter and it's so sad.
- Qu. No one is laughing.
- Re. Don't hold it against me.
- Qu. Excuse me?
- Re. Don't hold it against me, please.
- Qu. Against...?
- Re. Yes. (Interpreter translates.) I mean, you want history and I sang you history.
- Qu. Yes. But this song once more.
- Re. Yes, I'll sing.
- Qu. That's very important. But with gusto!
- Re. (Sings)

“With a steady pace and stride,
 and eyes always straight ahead,
 looking ever brave and cheerful at the world,
 the column marches to work.
 For us, nothing matters today except Treblinka,
 which is our fate.

- Re. That's why we totally adapted ourselves to Treblinka in short order.
We obey the orders of the Commandants and listen to their signals and respond to everything that our duties demand of us in stride and pace.
Work is everything to us, as is obedience and duty.
We want to work more and more until a bit of luck beckons us. Hurray!
- Qu. (In French) I hope you are serious. I hope. (*Not clear to whom this is addressed, as he uses the familiar "tu".*)
- Re. No look. If Neo-Nazis were to hear this, they would say, "That Suchomel is a pig." But let them say it. They can kiss my ass, understand?
- Qu. Yes. I believe you. Yes. And this... (in French) this song, they sang that every day?
(Interpreter translates)
- Re. Every day. Every day. And if new Jews arrived in the morning, they had to be taught that, and in the evening they had to sing along already.
- Qu. When new Jews...?
- Re. When new worker Jews came, they had to learn that in a hurry and sing along with gusto in the evening already.
- Qu. Ah – new worker Jews.
- Re. That was always sung when marching off, when roll call was over, then they went here... here the Court Jews were standing, here is Block I, here Block 2, Block 3. Then there was the order (Suchomel murmurs something to himself) "Turn right!" And so they marched off.

- Re. Like this, like this, like this, like this, like this and the music leading the way. With violins, trumpets, saxophone and a big drum.
- Qu. And women too?
- Re. The women had to march too. At the front and sing along with gusto.
- Qu. And Franz himself did...?
- Re. Franz composed the text. He denies it, but...
- Qu. Franz was a poet!
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. You have a good voice.
- Re. Yes – had.
- Qu. A very good voice. Only the Jews had to... this song...
- Re. Only Jews (*sang*) this song, yes. But we can continue to sing it; that Treblinka is our fate, see. The Jews... they are there; they can't talk anymore – my fate continues to be Treblinka.
- Qu. Do you think that?
- Re. Yes – I won't be able to shake it off any time soon. It's a relief what I've had the chance to tell you. And am still telling you, eh. I mean, I can you... He should turn the recorder off.
- Qu. Yes, yes, yes, yes. (In French) Pretend to stop.
- Re. First I'll ask, if you want to know this. The Camouflage Detachment were Jews from the countryside. And they sang a dirty Polish song, eh.
- Qu. A...?

- Re. An obscenity – now, do you understand? (Interpreter translates) Now... (Suchomel says a phrase in Polish): “Madame Mother, I’m sick, I have to go to the doctor.” See. And then she went to the doctor Adrian and he has **such** a long one, eh. (Polish phrase). That is, a tail to his knees.
- Qu. Ha, ha, ha, ha.
- Re. And they had to sing that all the time, when they came marching into the camp. And one day, Küttner found out. That is, no, the woman doctor, Jirga Newkowitch heard it and went to Küttner and said, “Mr. Technical Sergeant, this a blasphemy, that the Jews have to sing this dirty song in front of us girls.” In the evening, all of the Jews, including the girls, had to sing this when marching off – as punishment from Küttner.
- Qu. Punishment?
- Re. Yes. Because one woman got upset about this dirty song, about this mean, so everyone had to sing it. But we won’t record that on the tape.
- Qu. It was a... these Jews were Jews from where? From Poland?
- Re. They were Polish Jews, yes.
- Qu. From Camouflage?
- Re. The Camouflage Detachment.
- Qu. Camouflage?
- Re. For the fences, they brought the wood, the foliage.
- Qu. (In French) What does he remember better – is it the euthanasia period, is it Treblinka or is it a certain

Qu. period in Treblinka?... (Interpreter translates)

Re. Say it again.

(Interpreter translates)

Re. Now... with euthanasia I had only the mindless work (thank God) of photographing. I have... have no ... that's nothing... that I was in Berlin and that I got out of Berlin and came to Hadamar. In Hadamar, when we learned that we were being spied on (I'm very grateful to you for that).

Audio File Suchomel_30-31

Treblinka, as a whole, will stay in my memory. My whole life. The bad stuff, and things like Yankel Biak and Hanka Bujuig, Kapo Volpolina, etc., etc. These things too. Or Arthur Gold too, with whom I got on well, since I was a musician too; that I will remember – the bad and the good. So, highlights, good highlights of my life, they certainly were not. Rather, I got involved in a vicious cycle from which I couldn't free myself, and there's actually... there's nothing to be pleased about.

Qu. Hmm.

Re. Nothing at all. And I remember only that I was in a camp where 700,000 or 800,000 were killed only because they were Jews.

Qu. Yes.

Re. I carry that knowledge and it weighs me down. And had it been only a thousand, it would be the same.

- Qu. Yes. Okay – what does he think, and other SS... did they see the Jews as completely submissive? Could they imagine that there could be a revolt in Treblinka? (Interpreter translates)
- Re. Not one of us believed in an armed revolt.
- Qu. No one?
- Re. **No one.** We didn't think it possible. No one and never.
- Qu. Why?
- Re. Where would they get weapons? We didn't think that that was possible. We thought of escape possibilities – please, attempts were made in Camp II, at Christmas time... between Christmas and New Years, I think... a tunnel was dug, or however that was.
- Qu. In Treblinka?
- Re. In Treblinka. But aside from that, Jews tried to escape in the beginning; I was on vacation then; Franz let them be hanged, eh.
- Qu. Hanged?
- Re. Yes. With the head down. That's true, eh. I didn't see it, but I know of it from others.

- Qu. Yes, but there were other...
- Re. Others were hanged too – up in Camp II, Franz did that too. Like this, with the noose around the neck, eh? But as I said, escape possibilities...
- Qu. (In French) No – but my question is: Were all the Jews, who were saying “Boss, Boss”, completely subdued; did he think that they would one day find the courage to revolt?
(Interpreter translates)
- Re. I didn’t think about it. Please – I didn’t think about it. I’m not saying that I wouldn’t think it possible. But after a person had lied the **entire** time, he starts to believe his own lies, do you understand? There are... if you have to lie every day and say every day... I was asked ten times a day: “Mr. Boss, what will become of us?” That started in the kitchen... among the girls, among the Gold Jews, among the worker Jews and among my tailors it continued. You start to believe it yourself. But, as I said, several tried to escape. Some did escape, but some were caught and then the Jews were intimidated by executions.
- Qu. (In French) But... did he think the Jews were incapable of fighting, that the Jews were cowards?
(Interpreter translates)

- Re. I? I personally and the majority of the other Germans were of the opinion that Jews – that is, Polish Jews – were not capable of military action. That’s what we thought.
- Qu. Why?
- Re. I can’t tell you that – why. Why, why, why? Because the Polish Jew, as I knew him, always walked around bent over and fearful. Respectful toward us, you see? I mean, there were Jews, if one walked across the courtyard, who took their hats off. They didn’t have to do that, eh.
- Qu. Didn’t have to?
- Re. No. They didn’t have to do that. Have to.
- Qu. But... (in French) What did he think when there was a revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto?
- Re. That’s a chapter unto itself. We didn’t learn the truth about that. We learned only... we went on vacation and had to transfer a long way before Warsaw and there we saw how Stukas, fighter planes, were attacking, and the explosions. And then we heard that there’s a revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto. When we returned from vacation... the revolt lasted several days after all...
- Qu. Weeks!
- Re. Weeks. Then the remaining 20,000 Jews were brought to Treblinka. And that was the end of believing in survival among our worker Jews, see. Then they said to my face, “Mr.

- Re. Boss, in Warsaw the Jews were shot like dogs, those who worked for the Germans.” Do you understand that? I said it in half-Yiddish, half-German.
- Qu. Hmm.
- Re. They shot the Jews, who also worked for the German, like dogs. Then it was over. The Warsaw Jews, who survived the revolt, infected out worker Jews. You see? And from that the general will for a revolt may have grown and have begun. I’m completely convinced about that.
- Qu. Ah yes – you think there’s a connection between the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and the revolt...
- Re. Yes, yes, yes, yes. They talked about how they fought, you see, etc., etc. and then our worker Jews became active too, you see. Because they no longer believed in a survival in freedom. Rather, that they will have the same fate as the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, who worked for the Germans. And it was just the same in Bialystok: the order from the Reichs Führer “The ghetto will be liquidated”, whether the workers made shoes or army uniforms was irrelevant. They had to go, on the double.
- Qu. Yes. (in French) Does he think that the revolt in Treblinka was very, very heroic?
(Interpreter translates)
- Re. I’ll give you my opinion...

Qu. Yes, absolutely.

Re. Only a very certain, small circle knew about the imminent revolt in Treblinka...

(INTERRUPTION IN THE RECORDING)

Re. Christian Wirth was a most brutal human being – human being – I can't even classify him as a human being – whom I've ever seen or experienced. (A knock on the door.) He was... oh, that's my wife.

Qu. (In French) Yes, yes. Let her in.

Re. He was famous for his brutal interrogation techniques in Stuttgart at the Gestapo.

Qu. Yes.

Re. And because they didn't want him there... probably, when people were needed for the euthanasia program, he was transferred to the euthanasia program. At the euthanasia program, it was recognized that Wirth was a very brutal human being.

Qu. He was an inspector in the euthanasia program?

Re. He... also in the... yes... Purification Commissioner, let's say. If there was too much disorder in one of the institutions, if people were drinking too much or pulled down crucifixes from the walls and threw them into the street, or threw a holy bridge statue into the Lahn River in Hadamar – in such rioting, Wirth was brought in and he restored order. And in Hadamar, he put two men into a concentration camp – a certain Steiner and the other one whose name I don't recall.

- Re. They were there for six months. Then they came back to Treblinka, eh. From the euthanasia program he was sent to Poland, because... Becker and his predecessors couldn't cope with this type of work; they were too soft. That's how Wirth became Commandant of Belzec.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. And there, he studied the whole procedure from the ground up, the death and murder machinery, and then transferred it, as I've stated, to Treblinka. And Treblinka was the most suitable for this purpose. It wasn't far from Warsaw. Two trains per week came to Belzec, in the beginning, but it was a failed plan. And then it became partisan territory. To Sobibor, it wasn't possible to get to by train, because the trains could go only 30 km per hour – the tracks were so bad that many Jews jumped out. So, Wirth was the organizer in camps of Poland who created wonders. With his brutality, his organizational talent...
- Qu. Skills...
- Re. His skills, to think of every trick and every evil act. And to (*treat*) Jews and Ukrainians so ruthlessly and brutally – in the beginning the Ukrainians were still being beaten, with leather belts across the backside and the Germans were coerced and threatened with being sent to a concentration camp or to probationary battalion of the Waffen SS. That was his intimidation technique.
- Qu. Yes. And he was the head inspector for all...?

- Re. For all three camps.
- Qu. All three extermination camps?
- Re. For all three camps and for the Lublin Camp. But what was going on in Lublin, I don't know. I was never in there.
- Qu. You were afraid, because...
- Re. We were all afraid. We were ALL afraid when Wirth appeared. Everyone just ran to get out of his way, that he wouldn't see you. Because he was mean to everyone. And that was still the case in Italy.
- Qu. Yes. And he had a hatred toward Jews?
- Re. He was a Jew hater – you couldn't imagine a worse kind.
- Qu. Yes, good. Good, good, good, good, good. Good.
- Re. Are you satisfied?
- Qu. I'm satisfied, but not completely satisfied.
- Re. Yes, but that's not my fault.
- Qu. No, that's not your fault. No.
- Re. That's not my fault.
- Qu. That's not your fault... I'll do that. You were the head of the Gold Jews?
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. Yes. And now a Jew will give you money.
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. Yes. What do you think of that?

- Re. Mr. Lanzmann, I told you, I'm only taking this as compensation and not as a reward for the interview.
- Qu. What do you mean by compensation?
- Re. I'm... I'm suffering from this.
- Qu. Yes?
- Re. Yes. And tomorrow and the day after I'll surely have to be in bed, eh.
- Qu. I hope not. But you asked for German marks...
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. I didn't have time. This is Swiss money.
- Re. That's fine.
- Qu. It's exactly the same. A thousand in Swiss money is a thousand German marks.
- Re. Mr. Lanzmann, I only did that so you wouldn't give me check. Not because I'm distrustful – I'm not distrustful. I don't care... at the bank, they don't need to know; I would have to take the check to the bank.
- Qu. Yes, yes.
- Re. And too many people would know, with French francs, etc. I won't do that.
- Qu. Yes. That's two thousand Swiss francs; that's DM.
- Re. Thank you.
- Qu. But – it's not finished. You know, everything went well. Hmm... good. And I am... no!
- Re. I have to get up! I'm hurting.
- Qu. You have to get up – I'll get up too. But you understand, one day – that's not enough.

- Re. That's not enough.
- Qu. (In French) Explain to him that he has my word of honor – he saw that I did not betray anything – for the same amount of money, because I will give him more money; we have to see each again.
(Interpreter translates)
- Re. Well yes, okay.
- Qu. We can do that.
- Re. Well yes, not gladly.
- Qu. But it's important.
- Re. Well yes, Mr. Lanzmann, but not in the near future.
- Qu. No! Later.
- Re. Can you come to a different place where I'll be on vacation?
- Qu. Oh yes!
- Re. Good. I'll write you.
- Qu. On this vacation in May, for example.
- Re. Yes. I'll give you exact instructions which you must follow, eh. Because I'm not alone there. There are people from my city there.
- Qu. Yes, but...
- Re. Eh. You have to go into a different hotel.
- Qu. Yes.
- Re. Or, there's a big camping area there. There you can rent – how do they say that in Swiss – a... well, a little house, eh. It's a wonderful camping area. Rent a small house for two, three days. And we'll do everything in peace and quiet.

- Qu. And I'll give compensation too. (In French) Ask him to promise it.
(Interpreter translates.)
- Re. Yes. My word of honor.
- Qu. Word of honor?
- Re. Word of honor.
- Qu. Word of honor – when?
- Re. In May.
- Qu. You will write me in Paris.
- Re. I'll write you in Paris – quite right.
- Qu. Quite right.
- Re. I'm up there for three weeks; it doesn't matter about the day.
- Qu. Good, good.
- Re. Got it? There's no Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Do you understand?
- Qu. Good, good. And we can two days together?
- Re. Yes.
- Qu. And I'll everything. (In French) How do you say, "to listen"?
- Re. We have to stop now. I have to go home.
- Qu. Fine. You have to go home. (In French) Then, wait, let me get all my things in order...
- Re. I mean... Mr. Interpreter...
- Qu. (Interpreter) Yes, please...

THE END