



“We Learned to Cry Without Tears...”



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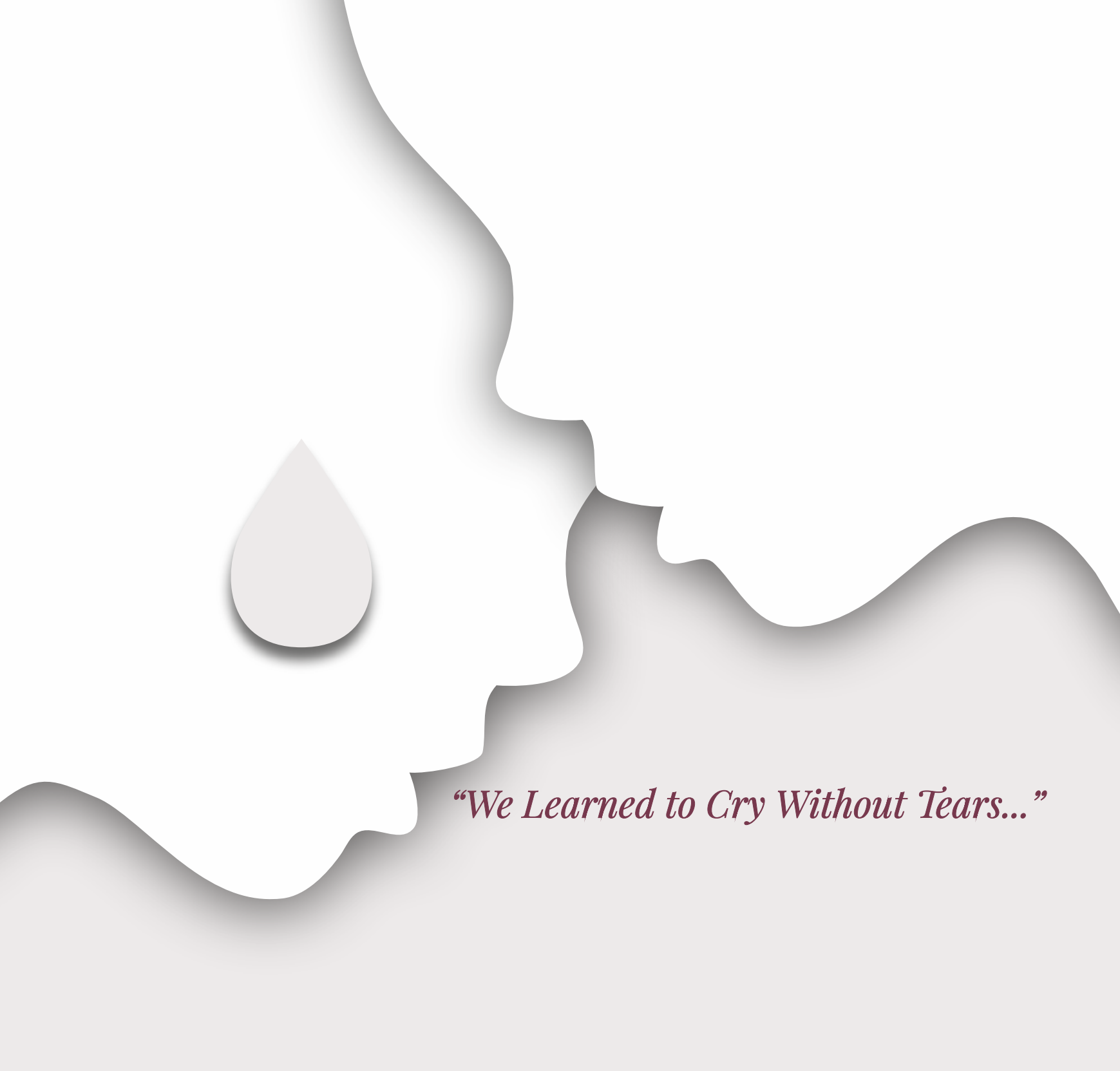
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**museum
of polish
children**

victims of totalitarianism



“We Learned to Cry Without Tears...”



PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND
Andrzej Duda

Warsaw, 26 October 2021

Introduction
to the publication entitled
“We Learned to Cry Without Tears...”
The Museum of Polish Children
–Victims of Totalitarianism in Łódź

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen!

The Museum of Polish Children–Victims of Totalitarianism in Łódź and this publication, prepared by historians related to the Museum, are setting an extremely important objective for themselves. They help restore from oblivion one of the most shocking manifestations of our nation's martyrdom during World War II and thus complete the image of the horrifying cruelty of Hitlerian occupiers and the terror of social reality in which a totalitarian ideology makes people create places such as the Nazi German concentration camp for Polish children on Przemysłowa Street in Łódź, also known as Little Auschwitz due to the high rate of mortality of its prisoners. It is hard to remain calm while thinking about the suffering that our young compatriots experienced there, less than 80 years ago. It is even harder to put it in words. Perhaps some people will even refuse to accept these experiences as truth due to an understandable protective psychological reflex.

This is why the decision of the authors to publish the source materials seems even more justified, as it gives voice to the victims themselves. The letters of imprisoned children sent to their families, and the memories of the surviving prisoners of the camp, are documents that should participate in the permanent formation of the historical memory and the identity of future generations of Poles, Europeans and the whole of humanity. The publication also has additional informative value, thanks to the presentation of profiles of camp oppressors, against whom criminal proceedings were conducted in post-war Poland. These fragments can be considered another warning against tolerating any ideologies that spread contempt and hatred.

I would like to thank the authors of this book and all the authors, employees and collaborators of the Museum of Polish Children–Victims of Totalitarianism, which is a very important and necessary place. I would like to assure you of my support for pursuing the mission of the Museum. I am deeply convinced that only the complete historical truth can lay foundations for peaceful and just relations between nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

“We Learned to Cry Without Tears...” is the title of the book you are holding in your hands. In a symbolic yet harrowing manner, it will reveal the shocking extent of the inconceivable torment brought upon the youngest victims of the terror of World War II. The utmost cruelty suffered by those helpless, little prisoners, the only crime of whom was their Polish origin, is borne through testimonies of the survivors, heartrending iconographic content and, above all, in children's hand-scribbled notes, which slipped through the camp's censorship.

Making the very first publication from the *Museum of Polish Children–Victims of Totalitarianism*, the book restores the memory of the atrocities committed against thousands of Polish children in the German concentration camp on Przemysłowa Street in Łódź. It is an account of a tragedy, given by several dozen people from different regions of occupied Poland—both those who managed to survive and the unfortunate many who did not make it through the camp's nightmare and perished prematurely.

This forgotten story is now being discovered anew thanks to *the Museum of Polish Children–Victims of Totalitarianism*, which is Poland's only standalone facility solely dedicated to the commemoration of the youngest victims of German war crimes. The Museum has joined a vast network of over 200 Polish cultural institutions, that have in recent years been established, transformed or are presently in the course of development, all of which is done to shape future generations' knowledge and appreciation of history.

We all are under a moral obligation to honour those innocent victims of the war, never allowing their tragic demise to sink into oblivion, as it is remembrance that plays a key role in strengthening the sense of togetherness and maintaining common identity.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the authors of this publication for their steadfast commitment to documenting the historical truth. This is of particular importance in the face of attempts to falsify history and shamelessly whitewash the actual perpetrators of utter inhumanities.

I hold a strong belief the story written on these pages will become not only a permanent element of collective memory, but also an act of solemn warning against any delusions of totalitarian regimes.

Prof. Piotr Gliński

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Culture and National Heritage





REPUBLIC OF POLAND
Ombudsman for Children
Mikołaj Pawlak

Warsaw, 2 November 2021

“A nation that loses its memory ceases to be a nation”

Marshal Józef Piłsudski

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Hunger, humiliation, pain and death from emaciation—it is impossible to imagine the limitless suffering experienced by the helpless little prisoners of the German camp on Przemysłowa Street. An enormous tragedy, and yet one that has remained nearly forgotten for so many years.

As the Ombudsman for Children, I am the guardian of the children's right to live, to be happy and to have a family, but also their right to remembrance and their own history. That is why it is my obligation to provide the next generations with the truth about the suffering of child victims of German terror. Let us restore the memory of the tragic fate of Polish children during World War II on the pages of school textbooks, but also through the Museum of Polish Children—Victims of Totalitarianism, the activity of which I initiated and wholeheartedly support.

The memories and letters collected on the pages of this publication constitute heartrending evidence of inconceivable cruelty towards children. They are unforgettable and do not leave anyone indifferent. Among the most powerful are the personal accounts of those who managed to survive and, despite their terrible mental scars, kept on living in the shadow of the trauma suffered. The voices of the Survivors ring with full force, testifying to the horror of wartime under the German occupation.

Thanks to the work of the historians and the documents collected, we also remember those whose lives ended in the camp nightmare. Innocent children, deprived of the care of adults, lost the uneven fight with soulless tormentors and inhumane living conditions in the camp.

Their fate is a warning to us. It makes us aware of the fact that we not only owe remembrance to the victims, but also education to the next generations which—thanks to historical awareness of the truth—will be able to avoid similar nightmares in the future. Meanwhile, our obligation is to remember and warn others against totalitarian ideologies spreading contempt and hatred.

RZECZNIK PRAW DZIECKA
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PRESIDENT
of the Institute of National Remembrance
Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes
against the Polish Nation
Karol Nawrocki, PhD

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,


It is with great interest that I read the first publication of the Museum of Polish Children-Victims of Totalitarianism. Nazi German Camp for Polish Children in Łódź (1942-1945), since it expands the knowledge of the atrocious activity of the German camp for Polish children on Przemysłowa Street. Particularly heartrending are the biographical entries of the underage prisoners, as their experiences reveal the unusual cruelty of the perpetrators and the depravity of the Nazi ideology, which saw the enemies of the Third Reich even in young and helpless children.

For the Institute of National Remembrance-Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, this publication is the source of great satisfaction because compiling and analysing the archive sources filled in the blanks in our understanding of the life in the camp, while the insight into events and processes expanded our knowledge and facilitated reconstruction of the actual history of the place. One of the results of our research and educational activities is a multifaceted presentation of the tragic history of about 1,000 Polish children; another is drawing attention to the political aspects of the historical narrative during communist times, which overestimated the number of prisoners and victims of this German concentration camp. However, the horror was not in the inmates number but rather in the nature of the place.

When creating the Sicherheitspolizei-managed camp (Polen-Jugendverwahrlager), which became operational in 1942, and housing it on the grounds of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto, the Germans modelled the facility on a similar one in Moringen in Lower Saxony. However, the regulations for young boys and girls in the Litzmannstadt camp were much harsher than the measures applied to the male inmates of Moringen: they were younger, their work hours longer, and food basically starvation rations. The camp, which operated for 25 months, was one of many wounds inflicted upon occupied Poland. Most of its victims do not have proper graves, while survivors had to deal with their trauma for decades.

The suffering of the Polish children during wartime occupation is a telltale testimony to the cruelty of total war and to the consequences of the reign of atrocious ideologies. The Germans applied collective responsibility even to a few-year-old boys and girls—which more clearly than anything else identifies perpetrators and victims. Today, commemorating these events, we take particular care to restore the dignity of the victims and to educate the young generation of Poles. By working together and speaking with one voice, we can arouse international interest in the camp history and provide readers with the most recent findings, as well as previously unknown archival records.

Best regards,



*“We Learned
to Cry
Without
Tears...”*



*Bolen-Jugendverwahrlager
Ligmannstadt*

Introduction

On the map of places of memory related to the martyrdom of Polish people during World War II there are certain points, the names of which alone evoke dramatic images, stories and feelings–Auschwitz, Majdanek, Pawiak, Katyń... However, there are also areas that are only now beginning to break into the collective consciousness after being gradually discovered. One of those places is **Polen-Jugendverwahrlager der Sicherheitspolizei in Litzmannstadt.**

It has been somewhat exceptional even on the map of crimes committed in Poland during World War II, which is riddled with places that witnessed the unprecedented inhumanity of both the German and Soviet occupiers. In this case, the major factor contributing to the sinister uniqueness of this place of torment was the identity of its victims–**Polish children.**

The Polen-Jugendverwahrlager camp was opened on 1 December 1942 by the German occupation authorities in Łódź, renamed to Litzmannstadt. The camp was located in the area surrounded by the Łódź Ghetto. For its needs, an area was carved out between the following streets: Górnicza (Tristanstraße), Emilii Plater (Gunterstraße), Przemysłowa (Fauststraße) and Bracka (König-Marke-Straße). Since Przemysłowa Street led straight to the main gate of the camp, the name “Przemysłowa Street camp” appears frequently among the common names for it.

The area of Polen-Jugendverwahrlager was secured against presumptive escape attempts by surrounding it with tall wooden fencing with watchtowers, finished with barbed wire stretched along the top. The eastern limit of the camp was the wall of a Jewish cemetery.

The first transport of child prisoners was recorded barely a few days after the camp was opened, on 11 December. However, this event was just the culmination of a long period of planning, discussions, and debates that took place among the highest authorities of the Third Reich. As a part of these, an opinion stating the necessity of creating such an establishment where Polish children would be imprisoned and exploited was expressed, among others, by Reinhard Heydrich-SS-Obergruppenführer, the head of the Security Police and SD-in his letter of 2 November 1941 addressed to Heinrich Himmler-SS-Reichsführer and the main organiser of the German extermination policy with regard to conquered nations.

It is exactly the wording in this letter of Heydrich, providing grounds for the formation of the camp for Polish minors, that is probably the most powerful expression of motives guiding the architects of this unique place of torment:

“On the new German lands in the east, especially in the Warta district, the demoralisation of Polish youth has grown into a dire and serious safety issue for the German children living there. The reasons behind this negligence lie in the unbelievably primitive living standards of Poles (...).

Next to that, the war has uprooted many families from their former living conditions and those responsible for upbringing are incapable of meeting their obligations, while the Polish schools are closed”.

Children, victims of the murderous German policy, thus became a sort of “threat” in the eyes of the leaders of the Third Reich, also due to the fact that... they deprived these children of proper care. It is hard to find a clearer example of the perversity in the perception of Polish people by the occupiers.

¹⁾ Quote translated on the basis of translation by S. Rybacka, based on:
AIPN Ld, Prosecutor's files in the case against Pol/Pohl Eugenia, signature: Ld 503/106,
letter entitled "To SS-Reichsführer and Head of the German Police", 02.11.1941, Vol. 18, p. 316.

The pages of archival materials documenting the plans of the creators of Polen-Jugendverwahrlager are full of statements of similar meaning. When reading them, we are amazed at how great was the murderous determination of the occupiers to have the Polish children ground by the gears of the Third Reich's genocidal machinery. German intentions within that scope were expressed quite clearly:

“The purpose behind the camp is designed to root out evil, and then employ male and female youth capable of working in order to make use of them in a manner contributing to the common good. (...) From the racial point of view (...), a Pole is a person of low value, (having) the nature of a slave, and therefore shall be treated as such. Being a slave, a Pole shall be obedient and receive sustenance for their work, and if they are lazy and sluggish, they need to be hastened with a knout”².

Thus, the life of children imprisoned in the camp on Przemysłowa Street was measured in the rhythm of destructive work. For example, during the period from April to October, boys aged 7-12 lived according to the following schedule: **wake-up at 5:00 AM, 6:00 AM–assembly, from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM–work time with a one-hour dinner break, 6:30 PM–return to the camp, then supper, and from 7:45 PM to 9:00 PM–“cleanup work”³.**

This was followed by a few hours of restless sleep on a hard bunk bed in a barrack that was not heated during wintertime, in appalling sanitary conditions, among the abundance of annoying insects... and then another wake-up call in the morning...

**without a single break,
7 days a week.**

²⁾ AIPN Ld, Prosecutor's files in the case against Pol/Pohl Eugenia, signature: Ld 503/106, Projekt zatrudnienia i podziału pracy dla polskich młodocianych, którzy będą skierowani do młodzieżowego obozu przejściowego (Employment and work distribution design for Polish youth intended to be directed to the transitional camp for the youth), 30.08.1941, Vol. 18, p. 309.

³⁾ Ibid, p. 311.

67

87

der Lagerinsassen hat in diesen Fällen der anfordernde
 selber zu sorgen. Bewachung wird durch das Lager
 Bei der Unterbringung der männlichen Jugendlichen ist
 wichtig, daß die älteren und jüngeren Jahrgänge in
 getrennt gehalten werden.
 praktische Durchführung der Erziehungsmaßnahmen inner-
 ers soll folgendermaßen vorgenommen werden.

Tageseinteilung
Jugend

- 600 - 600 Uhr Wecken,
 - 600 " Waschen, Betten bauen,
 - 700 " Revier reinigen, Kaffeesmpfang,
 - 700-1800 " Antreten zum Arbeitsappell,
 - 1830 " anschließend Arbeitsverteilung und Unter-
weisung in den jeweiligen Arbeitsgebieten,
 - 1900-1945 " Abrücken zur Arbeitsstelle,
mit einer einstündigen Mittagszeit,
 - 1945-2100 " Rückkehr ins Lager,
Essensempfang,
 - 2100 " Reinigung der Essgeschirre,
Ordnungsdienst (Körperreinigung und
Säuberung und Ausbesserung der Kleidung),
Lagerruhe.
- Von diesen jüngeren Jahrgängen wird der Arbeitsdienst inner-
halb des Lagers und des zur Verfügung stehenden Geländes
einschl. Gartens verrichtet.
- b) Gruppe II (13 bis 16 Jahre)
- 500 - 500 Uhr Wecken
 - 500-600 " Waschen, Betten bauen,
 - 600 " Revier reinigen, Kaffeesmpfang,
Antreten zum Arbeitsappell,

anschließend



Daily camp schedule,
 AIPN, signature: Ld 540/1, Vol. 14, p. 100.

The food rations distributed among the minor prisoners of Polen-Jugendverwahrlager were at starvation level. They consisted of breakfast in the form of a loaf of poor quality bread and a brew that was referred to as coffee. For dinner, the children received a soup that was often made of things like unpeeled potatoes or discarded vegetables. In their accounts, former camp prisoners mention that children were finding sand or insects in their soup portions. Supper was the same as breakfast, unless there was not enough bread for it. In the end, children not only worked beyond their strength and lived in unsuitable conditions, but also experienced constant hunger, all of which contributed to a ravaging of their young bodies. In consequence of this, diseases such as typhoid, pneumonia, bronchitis, bladder infection, nephritis, tuberculosis, scabies, scurvy, and trachoma were commonplace in the camp. They led to many deaths of child prisoners or to permanent damage to their health.

Reduction or suspension of food rations was also one of the forms of punishment used in the camp. Another commonly used punishment was locking children away in wet and cold solitary confinement. However, the insane pace of work and the general rigour were enforced mainly through various forms of corporal punishment, the memories of which are very frequent among the Survivors. The children were beaten for “improper” performance of work or other infringements of the camp inhumane rules. They were also beaten for other reasons that are impossible to define clearly, and the common ground of which was always the cruelty of supervisors. Beating, next to diseases, was the second most frequent cause of death or disability of the child prisoners. The children were also beaten for crying. As some of the Survivors say, paraphrasing the sentence of one of their campmates—Jan Maciejewski—the little prisoners of the camp

“learned to cry without tears”.

Polen-Jugendverwahrlager
Ligmannstadt



Inspection assembly in the camp on Przemysłowa Street in Łódź,
fourth from the left on the foreground—Camillo (Karl) Ehrlich, the commandant of the camp,
AIPN Ld, signature 503/106, Vol. 25, photograph 16.

The function of Lagerkommandant—head of the camp on Przemysłowa Street—was performed by the chief of criminal police in Łódź, SS-Sturmbannführer Camillo (Karl) Ehrlich. On his behalf, the authority over the camp was initially held by Hans Heinrich Fuge, who was succeeded by his protégé, Arno Wruck, after taking up the function of manager of the camp branch located in Dzierżazna next to Zgierz. Wruck, however, did not prove himself in that role, according to Ehrlich, and was ultimately replaced by Karl Enders. The personnel of Polen-Jugendverwahrlager consisted of SS men, policemen and civilian workers. There were several dozen of them in total. After World War II, only a few of them answered for their crimes before courts. Those who did kept denying that they had anything to do with deaths of any of the children murdered in the camp.

They usually admitted only to administering corporal punishment to prisoners, understating their participation in this instance as well and shifting their responsibility to one another.

A telling example of this “shying away from responsibility” is provided by the statement of commandant Ehrlich who testified as follows in the first half of the 1970s during the proceedings taking place in Munich:

“All the prisoners were supplied with new, clean clothing and underwear manufactured for them. The person responsible for delivering it was Starbatty, the head of the Supply Department of the Criminal Police in Berlin”.

AIPN, signature: Ld 540/1, Vol. 22, p. 564.



Assembly of boys standing barefoot before commandant Ehrlich (second man from the left), among others, AIPN Ld, signature 503/106, Vol. 25, photograph No. 11.

*“I personally ordered the prisoners
to report to me from time to time
in order to have a chance
to inspect them.
I have never found any signs
of mistreatment”.*

AIPN, signature: Ld 540/1, Vol. 22, p. 554.

Due to the fact that much of the evidence of these crimes has been obliterated by the Germans, it has not been possible to establish a precise number of children who went through Polen-Jugendverwahrlager or a number of victims of this camp. Some older estimations mentioned over twelve thousand prisoners⁴. According to the most recent findings, the camp claimed the lives of nearly 200 victims, and 2-3 thousand children were held prisoner there in total⁵. It may never be possible to determine precisely the actual extent of atrocities committed in Polen-Jugendverwahrlager.

However, scientific research devoted to this matter is currently being conducted. Thanks to the employees of the Museum of Polish Children–Victims of Totalitarianism, it has been possible to establish the burial places of almost eighty children who died in the camp on Przemysłowa Street (research status as of the second half of October 2021).

This important discovery gains special significance nowadays, as it is possible to compare it with the testimonies of commandant Ehrlich:

*“I know about one prisoner being shot
by the camp guard and that there
were one or two cases of dying from
tuberculosis. I know nothing about
any other cases of death in the camp.
It is impossible that they
remained unnoticed”.*

AIPN, signature: Ld 540/1, Vol. 22, p. 555.

⁴) J. Witkowski, *Hitlerowski obóz koncentracyjny dla małoletnich w Łodzi*, Ossolineum 1975, p. 113.

⁵) A. Ossowski, *Proces Eugenii Pol a historia Polen-Jugendverwahrlager*, [in:] *Łódź pod okupacją 1939-1945. Studia i szkice*, edited by T. Toborek and M. Trębacz, Łódź-Warsaw 2018, p. 371.

Boleń-Jugendverwahrlager
Sigmannstadt



*Assembly for the newly arrived children at the camp on Przemysłowa Street in Łódź,
AIPN, signature: 503/106, Vol. 25, photograph 14.*

This publication is aimed at showing you a piece of history of Polen-Jugendverwahrlager through the prism of selected wartime biographies of its former prisoners. In our opinion, such a perspective enables seeing the complete horror of the everyday situation of the child prisoners of the camp, torn away from their families and thrown by order of the German occupier into a place that should never have been created... and yet it was. By learning the stories of specific victims of the camp on Przemysłowa Street we also learn the stories of attempts to survive despite the brutal reality of the occupation, as well as of determination and the will to live that lies deep within even the weakest among us.



**museum
of polish
children**

victims of totalitarianism

Ireneusz Piotr Maj, PhD - Acting Director

Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz, MA

Andrzej Janicki, PhD

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Prisoners

*of the German camp
for Polish children in Łódź*



A letter from the camp on Przemysłowa Street,
written by Edward Baran, 6 December 1943,
MTN-Ł, signature: A-7412.

Edward Baran

Edward Baran was born in 1929 in Montigny-en-Gohelle in the north of France, but spent his childhood and the rest of his life in Sosnowiec.

The son of Józef and Józefina, he was arrested by Germans in August 1943 and imprisoned in the camp in Łódź for eight months—from October 1943 to July 1944.

He had two numbers in the camp system—818 and 795. He was released as a result of a buyout.

After returning home, he required hospital treatment since his stay at the camp and the serious diseases that he had gone through there ruined his health—Edward was suffering from, among other things, conjunctivitis, pneumonia, and ascites. As an adult, he suffered from rheumatism. He died in 2005.



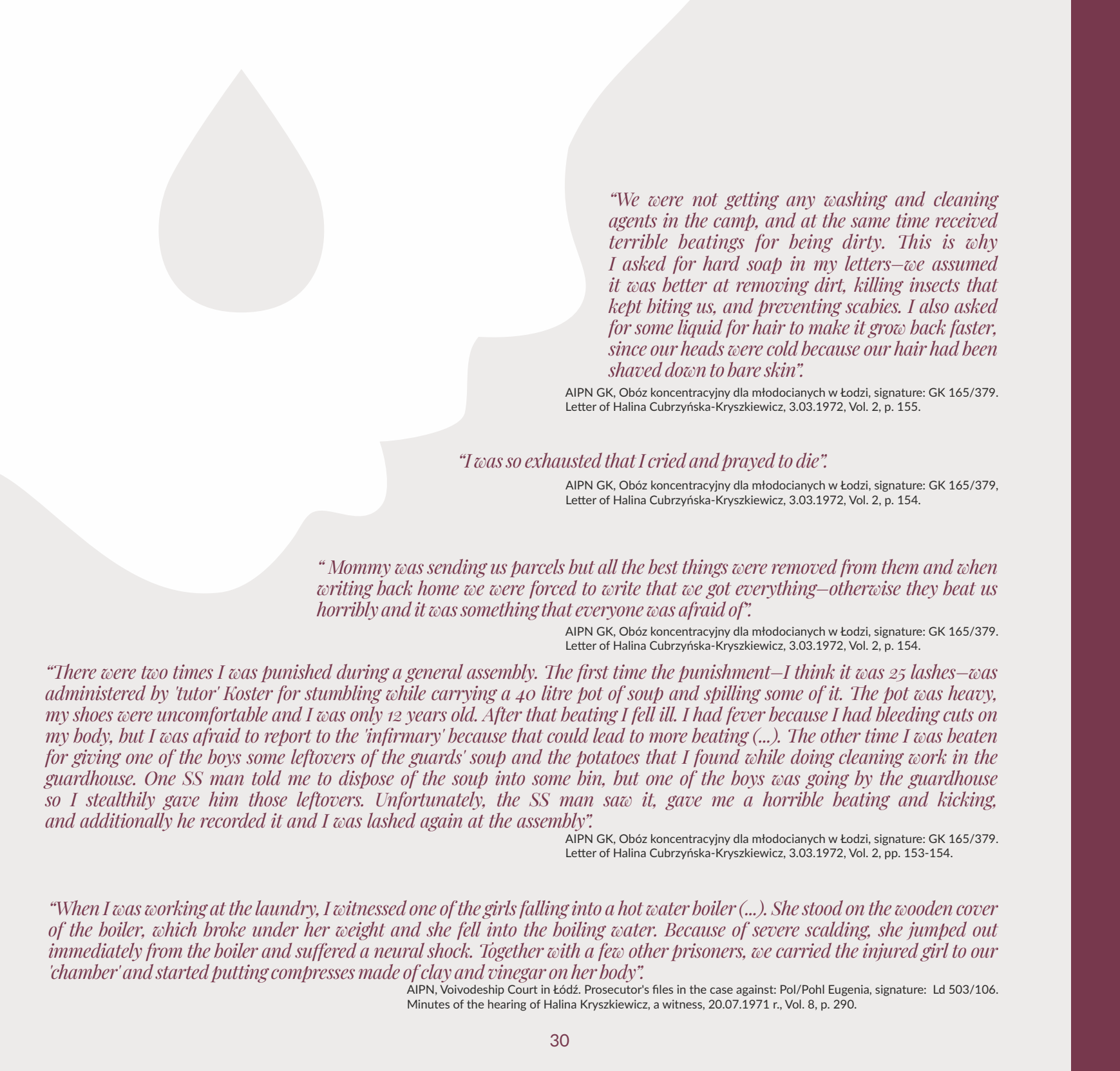
Edward Baran, prisoner of the camp on Przemysłowa Street, from the private collection of Bohdan Kończak.



A letter from the Przemysłowa Street camp, written by Edward Baran, 6 December 1943, MTN-Ł, signature: A-7412.

Sources:

AIPN, GK 165/379, Vol. 1, pp. 96-97, 107-108;
Straty.pl.



“We were not getting any washing and cleaning agents in the camp, and at the same time received terrible beatings for being dirty. This is why I asked for hard soap in my letters—we assumed it was better at removing dirt, killing insects that kept biting us, and preventing scabies. I also asked for some liquid for hair to make it grow back faster, since our heads were cold because our hair had been shaved down to bare skin”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Halina Cubrzyńska-Kryszkiewicz, 3.03.1972, Vol. 2, p. 155.

“I was so exhausted that I cried and prayed to die”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379,
Letter of Halina Cubrzyńska-Kryszkiewicz, 3.03.1972, Vol. 2, p. 154.

“Mommy was sending us parcels but all the best things were removed from them and when writing back home we were forced to write that we got everything—otherwise they beat us horribly and it was something that everyone was afraid of”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Halina Cubrzyńska-Kryszkiewicz, 3.03.1972, Vol. 2, p. 154.

“There were two times I was punished during a general assembly. The first time the punishment—I think it was 25 lashes—was administered by ‘tutor’ Koster for stumbling while carrying a 40 litre pot of soup and spilling some of it. The pot was heavy, my shoes were uncomfortable and I was only 12 years old. After that beating I fell ill. I had fever because I had bleeding cuts on my body, but I was afraid to report to the ‘infirmary’ because that could lead to more beating (...). The other time I was beaten for giving one of the boys some leftovers of the guards’ soup and the potatoes that I found while doing cleaning work in the guardhouse. One SS man told me to dispose of the soup into some bin, but one of the boys was going by the guardhouse so I stealthily gave him those leftovers. Unfortunately, the SS man saw it, gave me a horrible beating and kicking, and additionally he recorded it and I was lashed again at the assembly”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Halina Cubrzyńska-Kryszkiewicz, 3.03.1972, Vol. 2, pp. 153-154.

“When I was working at the laundry, I witnessed one of the girls falling into a hot water boiler (...). She stood on the wooden cover of the boiler, which broke under her weight and she fell into the boiling water. Because of severe scalding, she jumped out immediately from the boiler and suffered a neural shock. Together with a few other prisoners, we carried the injured girl to our ‘chamber’ and started putting compresses made of clay and vinegar on her body”.

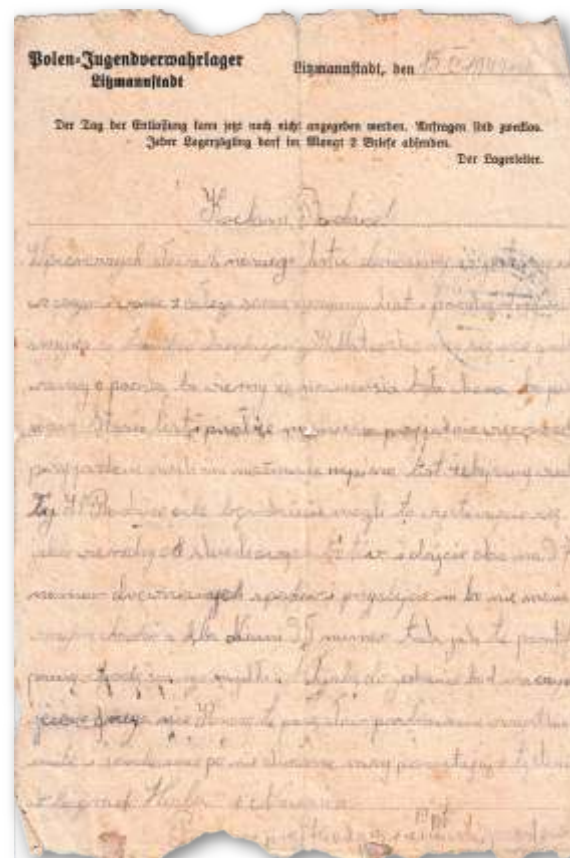
AIPN, Voivodeship Court in Łódź. Prosecutor’s files in the case against: Pol/Pohl Eugenia, signature: Ld 503/106.
Minutes of the hearing of Halina Kryszkiewicz, a witness, 20.07.1971 r., Vol. 8, p. 290.

Halina and Adolfina Cubrzyński

Halina and Adolfina Cubrzyński (born in 1931 and 1933 respectively)–the daughters of Marian and Weronika, were born in Warsaw and lived there on Marywilska Street. Their father was beaten to death by the Germans in 1944. They were both arrested on 17 January 1943 in Myszyniec near Ostrołęka during an attempt to cross the border and exchange manufactured articles for food. Two months later they were taken to the camp in Łódź, where they survived until the Red Army entered the city in January 1945 and they were released from captivity.

The younger of the sisters, Adolfina, received prisoner number 49, while Halina received number 50. They worked in the kitchen, laundry and tailor's workshop, cleaned the camp area and worked at the farmstead of the agricultural enterprise in Dzierżazna. While in the camp, the girls suffered from pneumonia, frostbite of extremities, ulcerations, scurvy and scabies, and their chronic health problems after the war were diseases of the joints and the gastrointestinal tract.

After the Germans abandoned the camp, both sisters were extremely emaciated and one of the families from Łódź took care over them.



A letter from the camp on Przemysłowa Street, written by Halina Cubrzyńska, 15 February 1944, Museum of Polish Children.


Soon after, they were found by their mother who took them home to Warsaw. Halina died in 2000.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 165/379, Vol. 2, pp. 146 et seq.;

J. Witkowski, *Hitlerowski obóz koncentracyjny dla małoletnich w Łodzi*, Ossolineum 1975, p. 255;

Straty.pl.



“We lost a lot of papers, and those that remained do not always tell the truth. My place of birth written in them is Pila, even though I have never been there. Many of my campmates mentioned errors in the documents, which were prepared hastily and without consulting our parents, the majority of whom died during the war”.

The account of Czesława Henke, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“When the camp branch in Dzierżązna was created, I was transferred there straight away. We worked hard doing various jobs in the field. Helena Biederman, a Polish supervisor, was frequently bringing me sandwiches and giving me some orangeade to drink. To do this, she always called me upstairs, where the rooms were, and told me: 'don't tell anyone'. She kept doing that for a long while. I have no idea why. She probably helped others too, but it was a secret”.

The account of Czesława Henke, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

Czesława Dylewicz

Czesława Henke was born in 1929 in Inowrocław as the daughter of Czesław and Wiktoria (née Dylewicz).

She arrived at the camp on Przemysłowa Street in June 1943, after a few weeks spent first at the Gestapo station in her home city, then at the Criminal Police jail, where she was imprisoned and forced to clean shoes, at the transition camp in Błonie, and finally in the prison of Kriminalpolizei in Łódź located at Kilińskiego Street No. 152.

During her time as a prisoner of the Łódź camp, she was forced by the Germans to do heavy agricultural work at the camp branch in Dzierżązna.

She was released in October 1944, after she turned 15. When she arrived at Inowrocław by train, it turned out that she was suffering from typhoid fever. She spent the next 3 months in a hospital, and for a long time afterwards she was so weak that she was unable to move around on her own.



Czesława Dylewicz-Henke,
from the private collection of Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

Afterwards, she had to recover for many years due to her experiences at the camp.

Sources:

The account of Czesława Dylewicz-Henke, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz; Straty.pl.



“One just kept saying the ‘Hail Mary’ prayer in their thoughts there and feeling that longing for home. And constant fear”.

The account of Kazimierz Gabrysiak, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“Night shifts were from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM. (...) the children were tired and weak... I also fell asleep once, although I was not allowed to as a duty worker. August woke me with his whip and pushed my body to a hot furnace tube. I have a scar on my abdomen from the burns I got then”.

The account of Kazimierz Gabrysiak, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“Sometimes it was possible to snatch a carrot or an apple, but they punished you horribly with beating if you got caught”.

The account of Kazimierz Gabrysiak, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

Kazimierz Gabrysiak

Kazimierz Gabrysiak was born in 1930 in Poznań as the son of Wojciech and Zofia (née Kowalski).

His father worked on the railroad while his mother took care of the household and their five children.

When the war started, Kazimierz was a *zuch* (cub scout) in the Poznań Śródmieście 5th Scout Troop. Once the scouts went underground, he and his friends joined the sabotage activities carried out by *Szare Szeregi* (Grey Ranks).

For this activity, in the autumn of 1942, he was sent to Poznań following his arrest for a few weeks of brutal interrogations, and then in December he was transferred to the camp in Litzmannstadt, as one of the first of its prisoners.

He worked on the construction of barracks and cleaning of the camp area. His longest job was in the leather workshop, where children sewed carbine belts, pistol holsters and knapsacks.



Kazimierz Gabrysiak,
from the private collection of Kazimierz Gabrysiak.



“At 6:00 AM there was a wake-up call and an assembly”.

The account of Kazimierz Gabrysiak, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“If someone broke the rules in any way, the whole chamber had to do frog jumps until everyone was exhausted”.

The account of Kazimierz Gabrysiak, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“In December 1942 I was already in Łódź. Once I saw the watchtowers, machine guns and the wall, I started crying”.

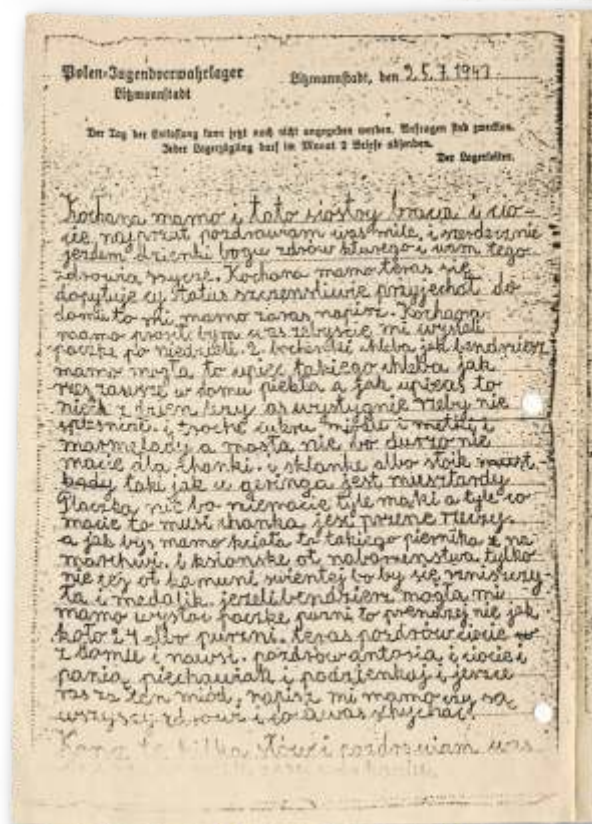
The account of Kazimierz Gabrysiak, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz

He was a witness to the mistreatment of children on multiple occasions. He went through typhoid fever and other contagious diseases, but what was harassing him the most were the ubiquitous lice and scabies.

After the war, he fought for his health for many years. He suffered from recurring face muscle spasms, had a burn scar, and experienced back pain for the rest of his life as a result of being struck by a guard with a shovel.

He always referred to his stay in the camp on Przemysłowa Street as: **“608 days, or about fourteen thousand hours of hell”**. After being released in the middle of 1944, he returned home. After the war, he finished technical high school and learned a trade.

Until the end of his days he cared over his younger siblings. He died in 2020.

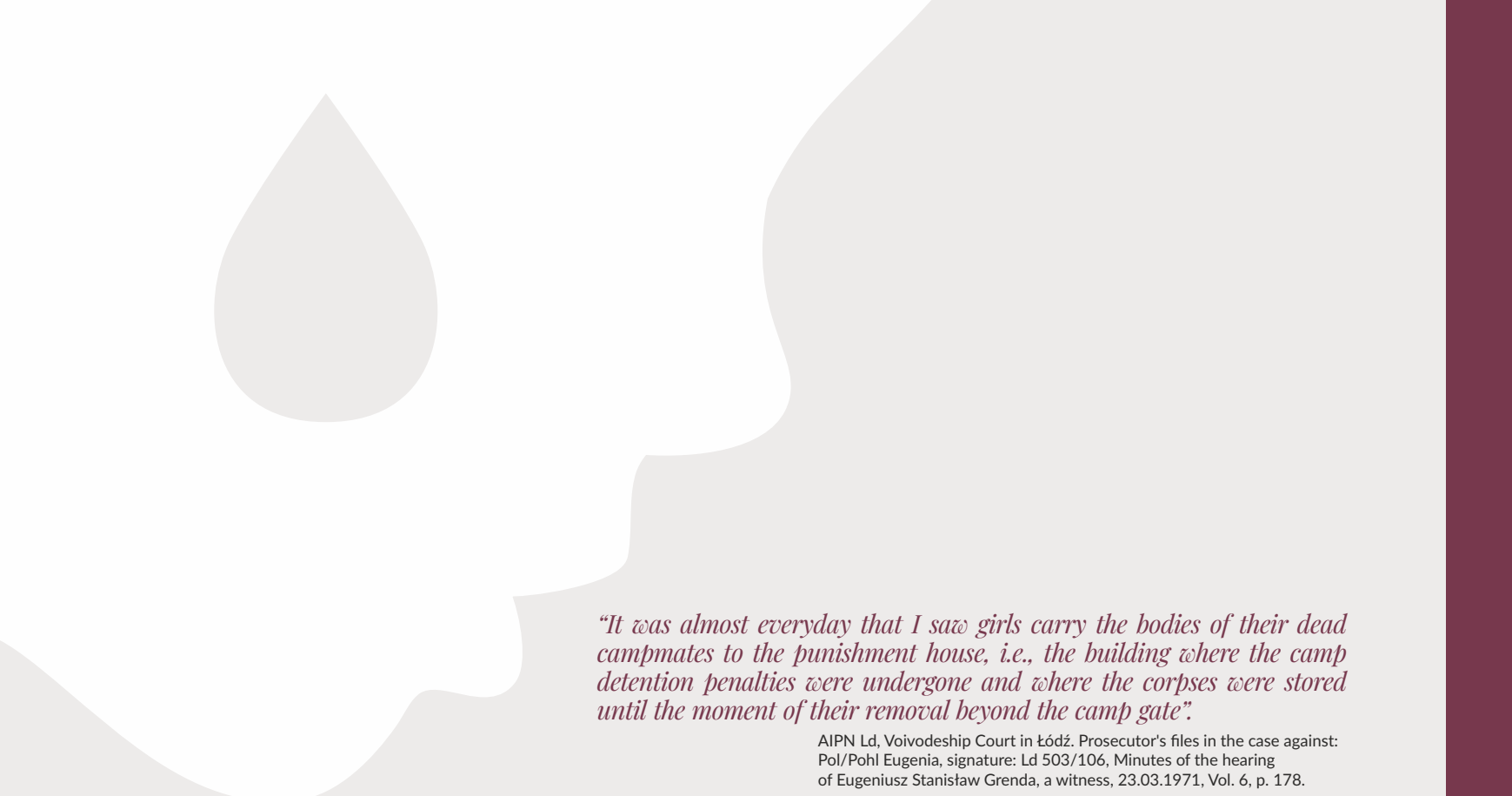


A copy of the letter from the camp on Przemysłowa Street, written by Kazimierz Gabrysiak on 25 July 1943, from the private collection of Kazimierz Gabrysiak.

Sources:

E-kartoteka.net;

The account of Kazimierz Gabrysiak, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz; Straty.pl.



“It was almost everyday that I saw girls carry the bodies of their dead campmates to the punishment house, i.e., the building where the camp detention penalties were undergone and where the corpses were stored until the moment of their removal beyond the camp gate”.

AIPN Ld, Voivodeship Court in Łódź. Prosecutor's files in the case against: Pol/Pohl Eugenia, signature: Ld 503/106, Minutes of the hearing of Eugeniusz Stanisław Grenda, a witness, 23.03.1971, Vol. 6, p. 178.

“There was one moment that stuck in my memory, namely the typhoid fever that was decimating us—a whole lot of children were lying on their bunk, unconscious and incapable of standing up. When drunk, August was forcing them to stand up and he beat me up so badly that I was lying unconscious for two days”.

AIPN Ld, Voivodeship Court in Łódź. Prosecutor's files in the case against: Pol/Pohl Eugenia, signature: Ld 503/106, Minutes of the hearing of Eugeniusz Stanisław Grenda, a witness, 23.03.1971, Vol. 6, p. 178.

“There was also one Sunday when we were punished (I don't know what for) together with the girls. We had to pour the toilet waste from one toilet to another, and then back. It took us the whole Sunday, and we were (...) starving because they didn't allow us to eat”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379. Letter of Jerzy Grenda, 24.02.1969, Vol. 3, p. 273.

Eugeniusz, Jerzy, Urszula and Domicela Grenda

Eugeniusz, Jerzy, Urszula and Domicela Grenda (born in 1927, 1929, 1933 and 1937 respectively)–the children of Wincenty and Helena (née Kaczorowska), siblings from Mosina, arrested in connection with the “Mosina case”, i.e., the dismantling of the group of Doctor Franciszek Witaszek, head of Związek Odwetu (Union of Retaliation) in the Poznań District of Związek Walki Zbrojnej (Union of Armed Struggle), by the Germans. Their father was arrested in 1940 and a year later he was taken away and murdered in the Mauthausen concentration camp (No. 10925).

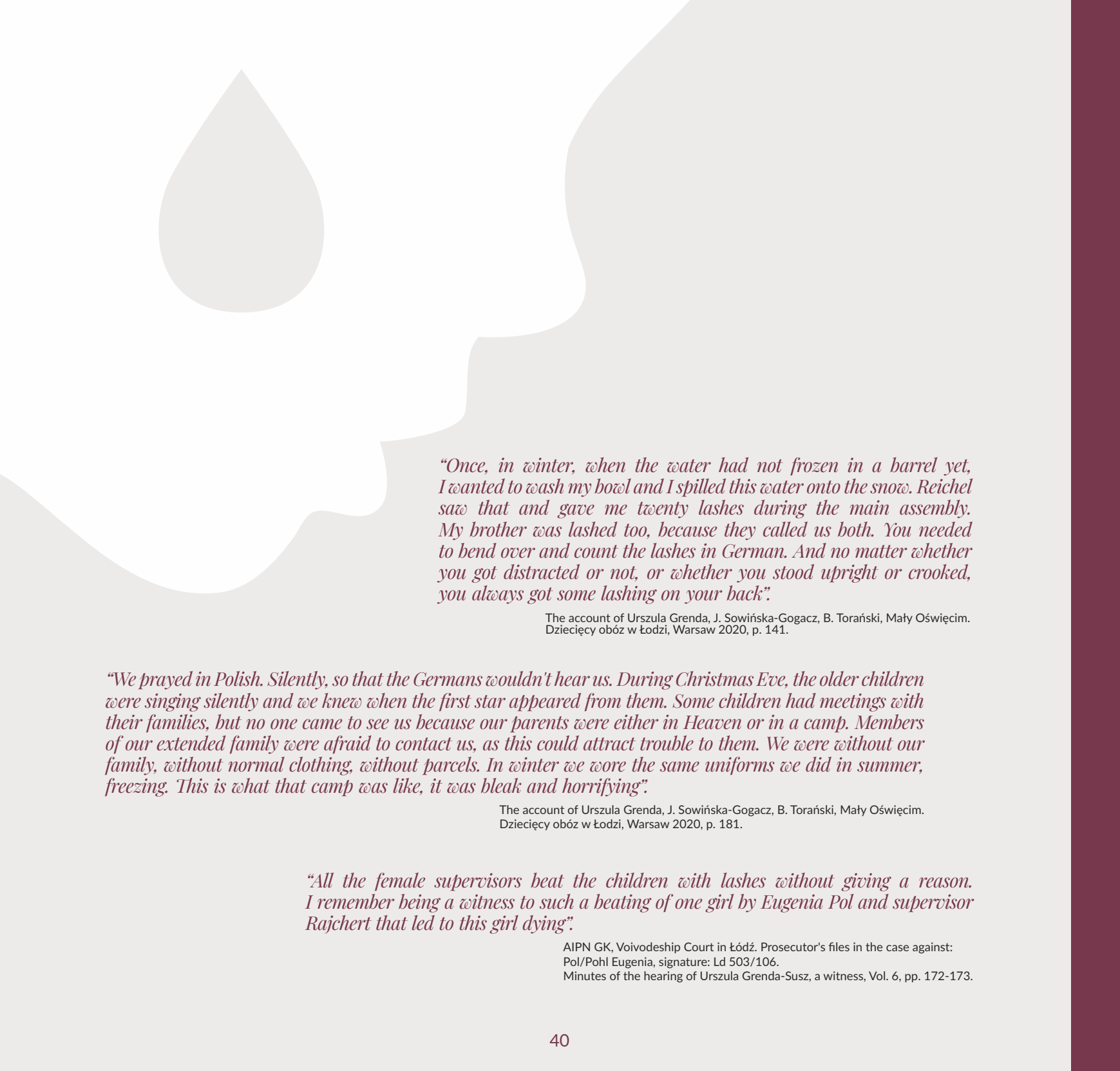
The two oldest brothers–Marian and Henryk–were captured in 1941 and were taken away to an unknown location. They never returned. Their mother and two older sisters, Janina and Irena, were sent to KL Auschwitz-Birkenau in the autumn of 1943, where the eighteen-year-old Irena died a day before Christmas Eve. The mother, previously imprisoned at the camp in Żabikowo, managed to survive the war.



Identification photograph of Eugeniusz Grenda, prisoner of the camp on Przemysłowa Street, No. 348, 14 September 1943, Art Gallery in Mosina, signature: H-516.



Identification photograph of Jerzy Grenda, prisoner of the camp on Przemysłowa Street, No. 343, 14 September 1943, Art Gallery in Mosina, signature: H-516.



“Once, in winter, when the water had not frozen in a barrel yet, I wanted to wash my bowl and I spilled this water onto the snow. Reichel saw that and gave me twenty lashes during the main assembly. My brother was lashed too, because they called us both. You needed to bend over and count the lashes in German. And no matter whether you got distracted or not, or whether you stood upright or crooked, you always got some lashing on your back”.

The account of Urszula Grenda, J. Sowińska-Gogacz, B. Torański, Mały Oświęcim. Dziecięcy obóz w Łodzi, Warsaw 2020, p. 141.

“We prayed in Polish. Silently, so that the Germans wouldn't hear us. During Christmas Eve, the older children were singing silently and we knew when the first star appeared from them. Some children had meetings with their families, but no one came to see us because our parents were either in Heaven or in a camp. Members of our extended family were afraid to contact us, as this could attract trouble to them. We were without our family, without normal clothing, without parcels. In winter we wore the same uniforms we did in summer, freezing. This is what that camp was like, it was bleak and horrifying”.

The account of Urszula Grenda, J. Sowińska-Gogacz, B. Torański, Mały Oświęcim. Dziecięcy obóz w Łodzi, Warsaw 2020, p. 181.

“All the female supervisors beat the children with lashes without giving a reason. I remember being a witness to such a beating of one girl by Eugenia Pol and supervisor Rajchert that led to this girl dying”.

AIPN GK, Voivodeship Court in Łódź. Prosecutor's files in the case against: Pol/Pohl Eugenia, signature: Ld 503/106. Minutes of the hearing of Urszula Grenda-Susz, a witness, Vol. 6, pp. 172-173.

Four of the siblings were taken to the camp in Łódź. The youngest of them, Domicela, was transferred in August 1944 to the camp in Potulice, together with other little children.

After he turned 16, Eugeniusz, the oldest of the brothers, was sent to KL Gross-Rosen (No. 87585), then to KL Mittelbau-Dora, and finally to Bergen-Belsen (No. 111762), where he was liberated in 1945.

Urszula and Jerzy remained in the camp on Przemysłowa Street until it ceased to function, which means over 16 months in total.

The Grenda siblings arrived at the camp in Litzmannstadt on 14 September 1943. Urszula and Jerzy were each assigned at least two numbers in the camp system—161 and 332, and 343 and 774 respectively, while the number assigned to Eugeniusz was 348. The work that the children were forced to do included leatherworking, straightening of industrial needles, potato peeling, and the production of artificial flowers. Urszula was also employed in agricultural works at the camp branch in Dzierżązna.



Identification photograph of Urszula Grenda, prisoner of the camp on Przemysłowa Street, No. 332, 14 September 1943, Art Gallery in Mosina, signature: H-516.



Identification photograph of Urszula Grenda, prisoner of the camp on Przemysłowa Street, No. 332, 14 September 1943, Art Gallery in Mosina, signature: H-516.

noch nicht angegeben werden. Anfrag
9 darf im Monat 2 Briefe absenden.

A letter from the camp on Przemysłowa Street,
written by Eugeniusz Grenda, 24 March 1944,
Art Gallery in Mosina, signature: H-190.

The diseases the children suffered from included trachoma, conjunctivitis, scabies, frequent diarrhoea, typhoid fever, pediculosis and alimentary oedema.

Jerzy miraculously survived a brutal beating by one of the guards. Due to a torn abdominal cavity, he was transported to the Polish hospital in Litzmannstadt where he underwent surgery.

Thanks to the efforts of the Polish Red Cross, Domicela was placed in a foster family after the war. Only in 1947 did her mother eventually find her.

Because of the burden of wartime memories and suffering associated with their home in Mosina, the family never returned to it. By decision of their mother, the children went to live with her in Poznań.



A letter from the camp on Przemysłowa Street, written by Eugeniusz Grenda, January 1944, Art Gallery in Mosina, signature: H-190.



Urszula Grenda-Susz,
from the private collection of Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 165/379, Vol. 3, pp. 265-272 and 275;

AIPN, signature: Ld 503/106, Vol. 5, pp. 176-178;

Auschwitz.org;

Straty.pl;

The account of Urszula Grenda, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.



“I was given 5 lashes for nothing, because there was a perfect silence and someone said ‘don’t peel them so thick or you’ll be lashed,’ and then Pohl started to punish every single one of us with a beating. She told us to lie down and everyone got 5 lashes. The blades for potato peeling were made of sheet metal without a framework and they often cut into our hands making us bleed”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Statement of Jadwiga Heigelmann, Vol. 4, p. 7.

“When I was 11 years old I was unable to write, so I asked my older friends to write my letter to aunt Krukowiecka, who then started sending me small food parcels anytime she could. It was a great joy and extra nutrition for me in such conditions. The parcels were opened, inspected, and only then given to us. When distributing the letters, there were a few times when our German supervisors told us to ask our relatives to send us cleaning brushes and paste, and if someone did not include this, their letter was torn to pieces. These items were then taken out from our parcel and we never got any”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Statement of Jadwiga Heigelmann, Vol. 4, pp. 5-6.

Jadwiga and Tadeusz Heigelmann

Jadwiga and Tadeusz Heigelmann (born in 1932)-twins from Mosina, the children of Ludwik and Klara (née Niedziela), were arrested because of their mother's triple refusal to sign the Volkslist. Their mother was then taken to KL Auschwitz-Birkenau and murdered there. Klara's mother and brother, i.e., the grandmother and the uncle of the children, died together with her.

Their father fought in the defensive war in 1939 and as a result of further military actions he found himself in England.


The siblings arrived at the camp at the end of 1943, joining the group of children whose fate had been determined by the "Mosina case". Tadeusz was assigned the number 776, while Jadwiga had two numbers in the camp system-157 and 356.



Identification photograph of Jadwiga Heigelmann, prisoner of the camp on Przemysłowa Street, No. 356, 14 September 1943, Art Gallery in Mosina, signature: H-516.



Identification photograph of Jadwiga Heigelmann, prisoner of the camp on Przemysłowa Street, No. 356, 14 September 1943, MTN-Ł, signature: I-10449.



...ego listu
...estremu zdro
...nego zdro
...na Ciocina pa
...chujaja i W
...o i Ote Ciocin
...matem niek Cioc
...ei kosi ze jem pa
...ocin bo ja to tyte
...moze pisac tylko
...mi wysli Ciocin jak bys mogl
...w tym Ciocin wysli mi
...mke do rozmowa
...bys mogla to mi wysli
...pisy do mnie mi wysli
...sty w mi
...ieci

A letter from the camp on Przemysłowa Street,
written by Tadeusz Heigelmann,
Art Gallery in Mosina, signature: H-521.

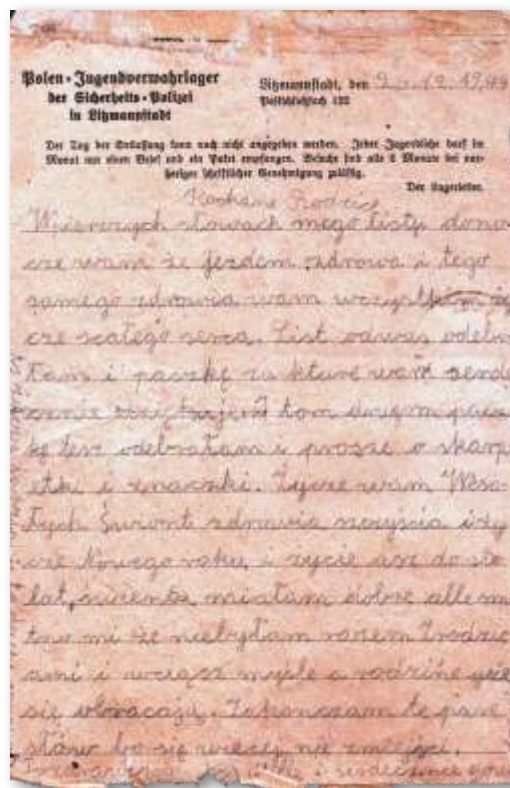
The girl did gardening jobs at the camp, wove strings, and worked at the farmstead of the agricultural enterprise in Dzierżązna.

The boy worked in the shoemaker's workshop, built air raid shelters, and wove straw covers for military footwear.

While in the camp, both children suffered from ulcerations, scurvy, scabies, frostbite, alimentary oedema, typhoid fever and trachoma.

Tadeusz was kicked strongly by one of the guards, which resulted in the breaking of his ribs and one of his legs. When the Germans abandoned the camp he was extremely emaciated.

They both survived the camp on Przemysłowa Street until the moment of its liquidation. They were taken care of by an unrelated family from Łódź, thanks to which the children regained some strength and were taken back to Mosina. After they arrived, their aunt took care of them.



A letter from the camp on Przemysłowa Street, written by Tadeusz Heigelmann, 26 December 1944, Art Gallery in Mosina, signature: H-521.

Their father stayed in England after the war, convinced that both his children were dead. Jadwiga and Tadeusz eventually met him in their adult years.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 165/379, Vol. 4, pp. 32 et seq.;
AIPN, signature: Ld 503/106, Vol. 6, pp. 209-211, 227-229;
J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 261.



Władysław Jakubowski

Władysław Jakubowski was born in 1930 in Służewo near Ciechocinek as the son of Władysław and Klara (née Rutkowska). His mother died when he was 5.

In 1944, the Germans arrested the whole family—the father, his second wife, and their children. The trek of the Jakubowski family took them through western and southern Poland and ended in Linz in Austria, where the father was forced to work. In the middle of the year, they were transferred to the relocation camp on Łąkowa Street in Łódź.

The 14-year-old Władysław escaped from there, but he was soon caught by German policemen. He was severely beaten and taken to the camp on Przemysłowa Street, where he remained imprisoned from the middle of 1944 until January 1945.

In the camp in Łódź he was assigned to the shoemaker's workshop.



Władysław Jakubowski,
archives of the Museum of Polish Children.

He also worked on the leveling of the camp roads and doing other routine tasks. When he left the camp, he was suffering from pneumothorax and tuberculosis.

After the war, his family settled in Toruń. Władysław studied in a school of commerce as well as a forestry school. He graduated from law studies at the University of Łódź.

Sources:

The account of Kazimierz Gabrysiak, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz; Straty.pl.



“Once upon a time I opened my eyes and saw a German shepherd dog’s muzzle in front of me. Terrified, within a second I covered my head with a blanket as if it was supposed to give me a chance to return to sleep and I spent the whole time until the morning like that, paralysed with fear”.

The account of Jerzy Jeżewicz, J. Sowińska-Gogacz, B. Torański, Mały Oświęcim. Dziecięcy obóz w Łodzi, Warsaw 2020, p. 100.

“After leaving the camp we were unable to interact with the world like normal people, we were unable to think, we could only follow orders”.

The account of Jerzy Jeżewicz, J. Sowińska-Gogacz, B. Torański, Mały Oświęcim. Dziecięcy obóz w Łodzi, Warsaw 2020, p. 100.

Gabriela, Edward and Jerzy Jeżewicz

Edward and Jerzy Jeżewicz—brothers from Mosina, the sons of Leonard and Klara (née Marchelek), were two of the youngest children imprisoned in the camp on Przemysłowa Street. At the time of their arrest on 10 September 1943, Edward was four years old, and Jerzy was almost three.

Because of their parents' participation in the group of Doctor Franciszek Witaszek, the whole family was taken to concentration camps—the mother died in January 1944 in a gas chamber of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (No. 67408), the father, after staying in Żabikowo and Oświęcim, was shot in Mauthausen (No. 52249), and their children found themselves in Litzmannstadt.

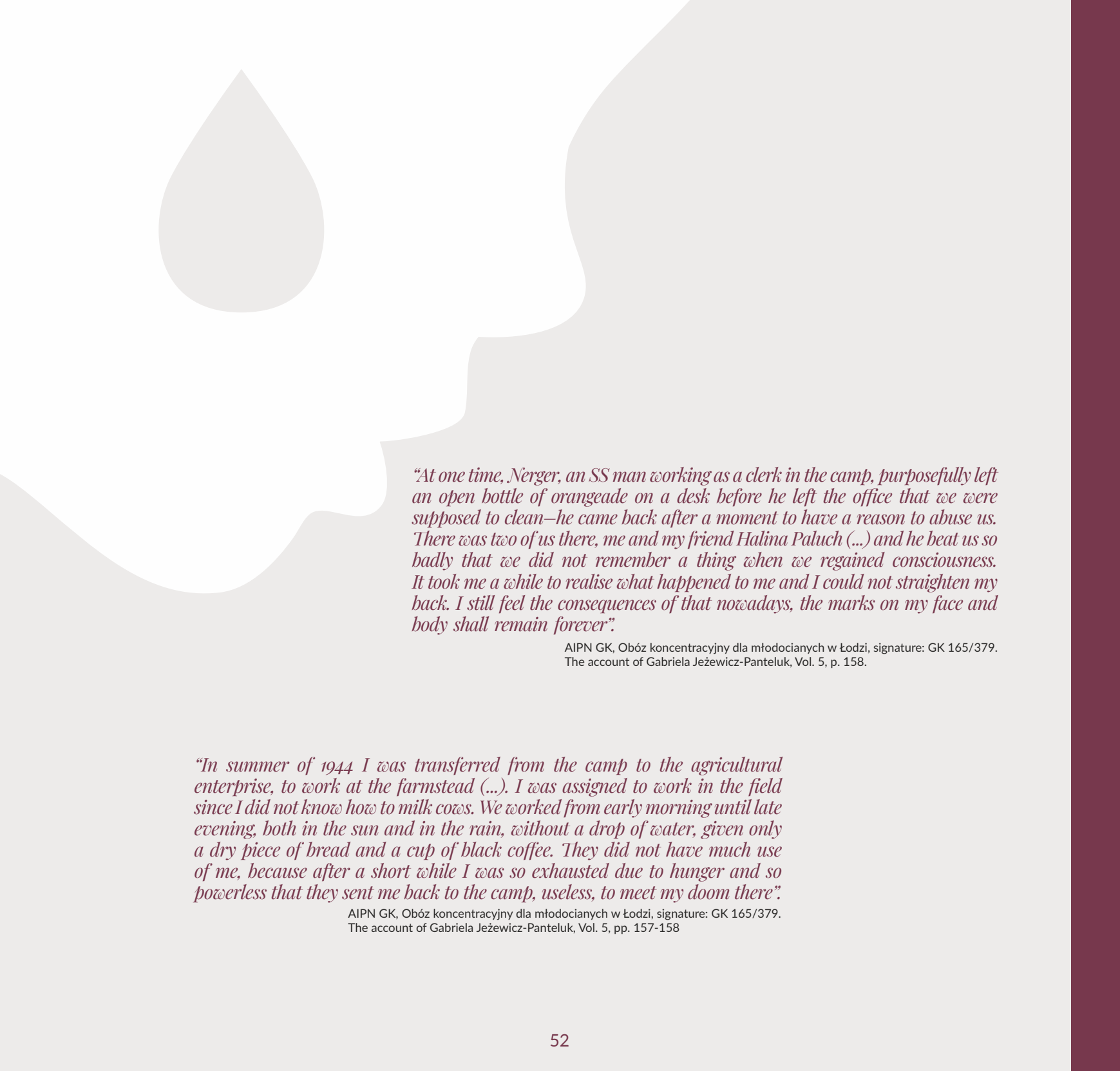
The boys were placed in the building intended for the youngest prisoners, where infants and children up to the age of 7 years old were kept. In August 1944, the brothers were transferred, together with other little children, to the camp in Potulice, where they remained imprisoned until it ceased to function, for almost half a year.



Jeżewicz brothers after being liberated from the camp, Art Gallery in Mosina, signature: H-516.

The youngest children were not forced to work, but the lack of proper sanitary conditions, lack of health care and starvation rations issued threatened their health and lives on an everyday basis. In the camp in Łódź, Edward and Jerzy suffered from otitis, pneumonia, diphtheria, trachoma, chickenpox, scarlet fever and ulcerations.

Their fate post-war saw them separated for many years. At first, both of them were taken care of by foster families and later by their own family from two different ends of Poland.



“At one time, Nerger, an SS man working as a clerk in the camp, purposefully left an open bottle of orangeade on a desk before he left the office that we were supposed to clean—he came back after a moment to have a reason to abuse us. There was two of us there, me and my friend Halina Paluch (...) and he beat us so badly that we did not remember a thing when we regained consciousness. It took me a while to realise what happened to me and I could not straighten my back. I still feel the consequences of that nowadays, the marks on my face and body shall remain forever”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
The account of Gabriela Jeżewicz-Panteluk, Vol. 5, p. 158.

“In summer of 1944 I was transferred from the camp to the agricultural enterprise, to work at the farmstead (...). I was assigned to work in the field since I did not know how to milk cows. We worked from early morning until late evening, both in the sun and in the rain, without a drop of water, given only a dry piece of bread and a cup of black coffee. They did not have much use of me, because after a short while I was so exhausted due to hunger and so powerless that they sent me back to the camp, useless, to meet my doom there”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
The account of Gabriela Jeżewicz-Panteluk, Vol. 5, pp. 157-158

During the mass arrests conducted in Mosina in September 1943, Gabriela Jeżewicz, the daughter of Roman and Stanisława (née Nowicki) and a teenage (born in 1929) aunt of Edward and Jerzy, being the youngest sister of their father, was taken to the camp in Łódź together with the boys.

The year 1943 turned out to be extremely tragic for that family. The father was arrested in January and murdered in Gross-Rosen in August. The mother died in KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (No. 67450), a day after Christmas. Gabriela was arrested and taken to Litzmannstadt in September. She was assigned the number 152 and was employed in potato peeling, and then in agricultural works at the camp branch in Dzierżązna.

Gabriela survived in the camp until it ceased to function. While staying there, she suffered from ulcerations, trachoma, pneumonia and scurvy. She also bore visible marks of beatings on her body for the rest of her life. After the war, she took care of her orphaned six-year-old nephew, Edward. After returning home to Mosina, she found nobody there, which led her to start a new life away from the memories, in Lower Silesia. She died in 2004.



Gabriela Jeżewicz,
from the private collection of Aleksandra Kasińska.



Gabriela Jeżewicz with her mother,
from the private collection of Aleksandra Kasińska.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 165/379, Vol. 5, pp. 152 et seq.;
J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 264;
Straty.pl.

Arbeitslager

Bismannstadt, den 9. II. 1943

Die Besetzung kann jetzt noch nicht angegeben werden. Anfragen sind zwecklos.
Der Lagerjüngling darf im Monat 2 Briefe absenden.

Der Lagerleiter.

Rodrice. W pie trzech stowach
mam ja sie znajduje
w lograch. Mam tu dobre
Rodrice prosze was bardzo prosze
poczke o ile maciecie bo tu
na przes poczke wyszka ma na
lac tylko nie reczy bo tu dosta-
ma Kochany Tatusiu. ma na pisac
listy ma na napisac a poczke co dwa
tygodnie. Wiec prosze was napiszcie
do mnie pare slow. Kochani Rodrice
prosze was przylicz mi troche mysli
i troche prawdy. Kochana Mamma
nie prosze o tym wartosc ptarmicy
i prosze o troche zywosci wiec
Kochani te pare slow zostaniesz

A letter of Urszula Kaczmarek sent to her parents in Poznań, written in the camp on Przemysłowa Street, 9 February 1943, MTN-Ł, signature: A-6856.

Urszula Kaczmarek

Urszula Kaczmarek was born in 1929 in Poznań as the daughter of Franciszek and Jadwiga (née Skóra). She was the eldest of their three children and she took care of her younger siblings while the parents left for work. She was arrested during a round-up in September 1942, and imprisoned for three months in a jail in Poznań. In January of the following year, she was transferred to the camp in Litzmannstadt.

She was one of the first female prisoners and was assigned the number 21. Among other children, she was known for having difficulties in coping with hunger. In order to survive, she risked her life by stealing bread, which led to frequent beatings by the female guards. The constant battering resulted in the child ending up in the infirmary, where the food rations were even smaller.

Urszula is considered the first casualty of the camp on Przemysłowa Street. As a result of the injuries suffered and hypothermia, she died on 9 May 1943.




A photograph of Urszula Kaczmarek, AIPN, Ld 503/106, Vol. 25, photograph 34.

On her death certificate, the Germans wrote “heart attack” as the cause of death.

She was buried on 11 May 1943 at the St. Wojciech Roman Catholic cemetery in Łódź. Urszula's father came for the burial, but the camp authorities had it performed a day earlier. At present her grave does not exist anymore.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 165/379, Vol. 6, Part 1 (pp. 3-7);
AIPN, signature: Ld 503/106, Vol. 12, p. 123;
J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 265.



“So many years have passed and I still keep having nightmares about all of this. I am hiding in some houses and corridors, escaping, and they keep following me with their guns, looking for me. These experiences are still walking behind me...”

The account of Elżbieta Konarska, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“I was 10 years old. They were waking us up at night and were ordering us to march around the building in which we lived. What for? I have no idea. In winter, in those shoes... Our legs were frostbitten afterwards”.

The account of Elżbieta Konarska, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

Elżbieta and Alina Konarski

Elżbieta and Alina Konarski (born in 1933 and 1938 respectively), were native inhabitants of Poznań, the daughters of Teodor and Stefania. They were detained by Germans in September 1943 in relation to the activity of their family members in the group of Doctor Franciszek Witaszek. Their mother and the family on their father's side died in German camps. Teodor Konarski was executed on 8 January 1943 in a prison in Poznań, located in Fort VII. He was only 31 years old.

Both sisters were sent to the camp on Przemysłowa Street in Łódź. Elżbieta was assigned the number 335.

In her dramatic account, Elżbieta mentions being severely beaten during an assembly by one of the camp tormentors—Eugenia Pol. It was a punishment for not hearing Pol's superior—Sydonia Bayer—calling her and other prisoners to a gathering. Elżbieta did not hear that call because she and some of her campmates were trying to remove insects from the soup.



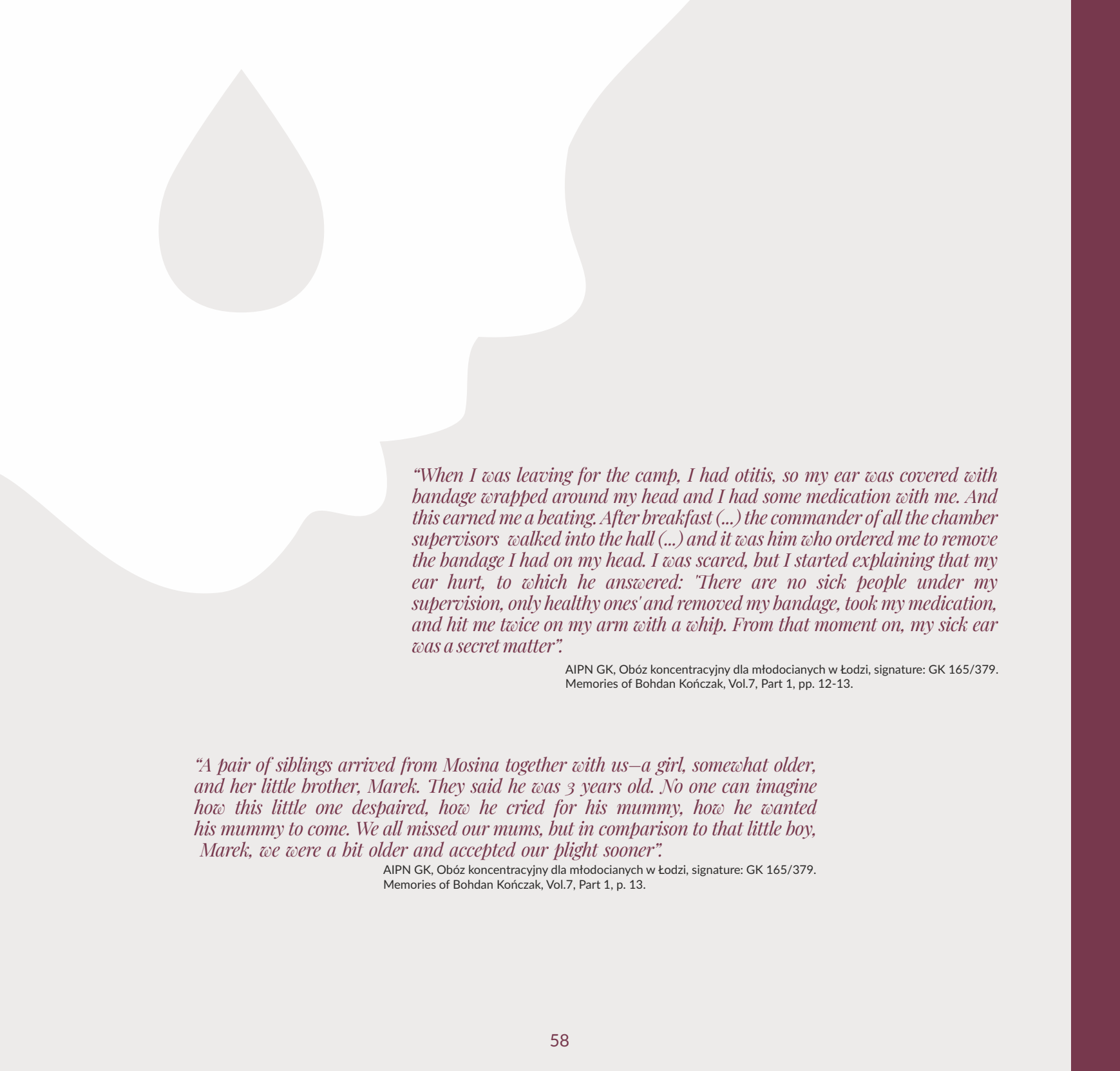
Elżbieta Konarska (on the right) and Alina Konarska after the war, from the private collection of Elżbieta Konarska-Nowak.

In the camp, Elżbieta worked in the needle production facility. After the war she was adopted for some time, but eventually her aunt from her mother's side of the family found her. Alina remained in Toruń in the adoptive family that provided her with a good childhood and education.

Sources:

J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 267 and 336;

The account of Elżbieta Konarska, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz; Straty.pl.



“When I was leaving for the camp, I had otitis, so my ear was covered with bandage wrapped around my head and I had some medication with me. And this earned me a beating. After breakfast (...) the commander of all the chamber supervisors walked into the hall (...) and it was him who ordered me to remove the bandage I had on my head. I was scared, but I started explaining that my ear hurt, to which he answered: ‘There are no sick people under my supervision, only healthy ones’ and removed my bandage, took my medication, and hit me twice on my arm with a whip. From that moment on, my sick ear was a secret matter”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Memories of Bohdan Kończak, Vol.7, Part 1, pp. 12-13.

“A pair of siblings arrived from Mosina together with us—a girl, somewhat older, and her little brother, Marek. They said he was 3 years old. No one can imagine how this little one despaired, how he cried for his mummy, how he wanted his mummy to come. We all missed our mums, but in comparison to that little boy, Marek, we were a bit older and accepted our plight sooner”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Memories of Bohdan Kończak, Vol.7, Part 1, p. 13.

Bohdan and Ireneusz Kończak

Bohdan Kończak and Ireneusz Kończak (born in 1935 and 1936 respectively)–siblings from Mosina, the sons of Marian and Wanda (née Siąkowska). Charged with collaborating with the group of Doctor Franciszek Witaszek, six people from their family were sent to KL Auschwitz-Birkenau by the Germans. Three of them died there. The trail of their father ends in Fort VII in Poznań, while their mother went through Arbeitserziehungslager Żabikowo, KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (No. 67410) and Ravensbrück, from which she returned in the spring of 1945 and despite her poor health, she started looking for her sons right away.

Both brothers, together with many other children, were arrested and taken to the camp in Łódź in September 1943. They were assigned numbers 705 and 707.

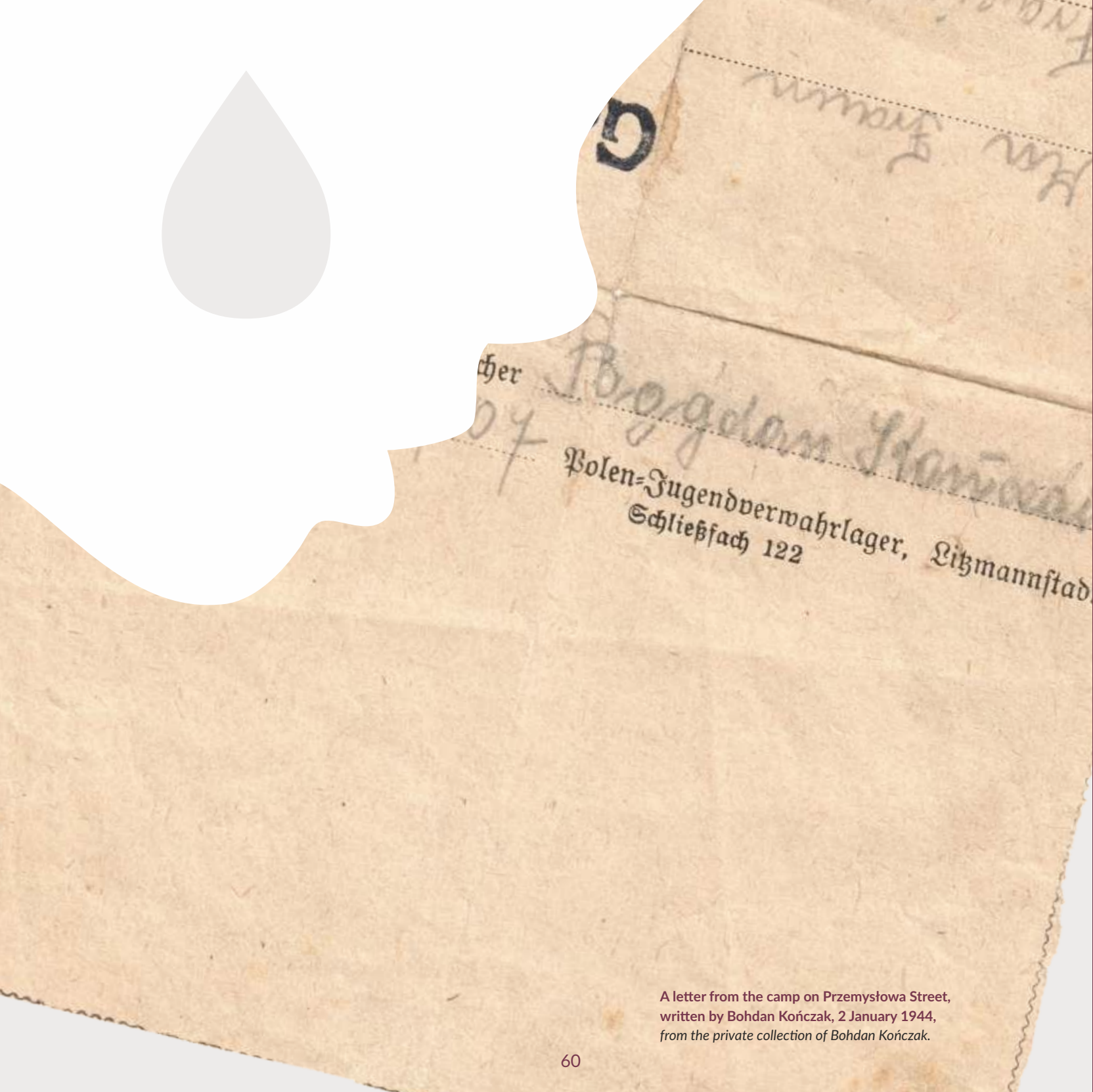
While in the camp, they suffered from otitis, scurvy, ulcerations and trachoma. Bohdan, being the older of the brothers, worked in different workshops in the camp and witnessed many acts of violence by adults towards the children.



Kończak brothers with their mother,
Art Gallery in Mosina.



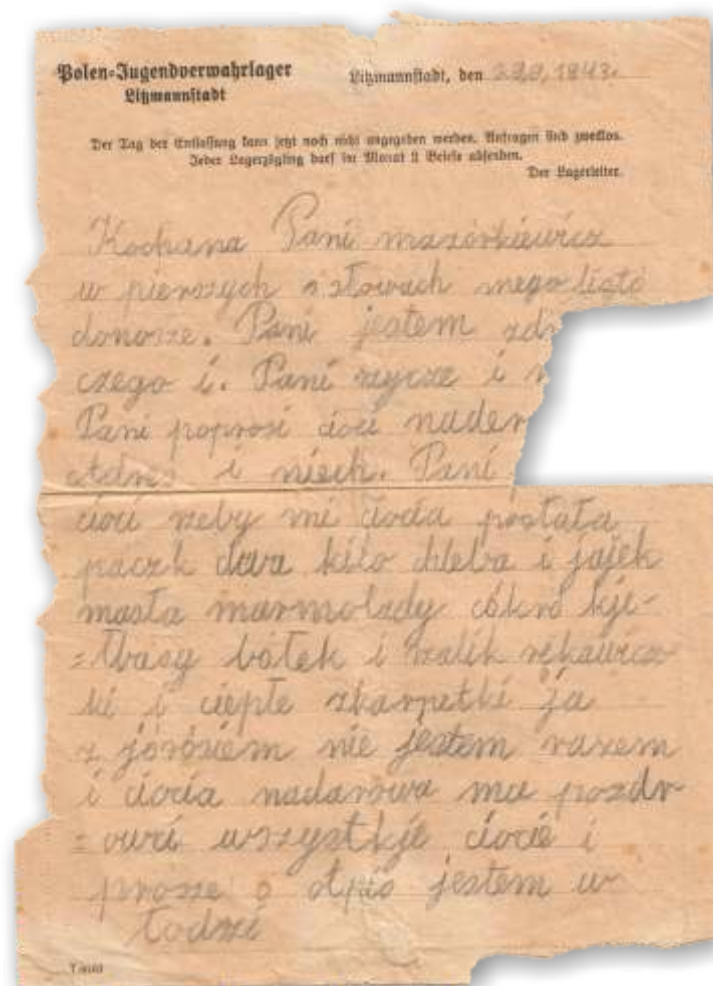
A letter from the camp on Przemysłowa Street,
written by Bohdan Kończak, 2 January 1944,
from the private collection of Bohdan Kończak.



A letter from the camp on Przemysłowa Street, written by Bohdan Kończak, 2 January 1944, from the private collection of Bohdan Kończak.

The particularly dramatic moment that he remembers from their joint travel to Łódź was the despair of the youngest child from Mosina, Marek Zakrzewski (who was 2 years and 3 months old at the time). By the end of the war, he got seriously ill and freedom found him in a hospital in Łódź. In the middle of 1944, the Germans transferred Ireneusz to the camp in Potulice.

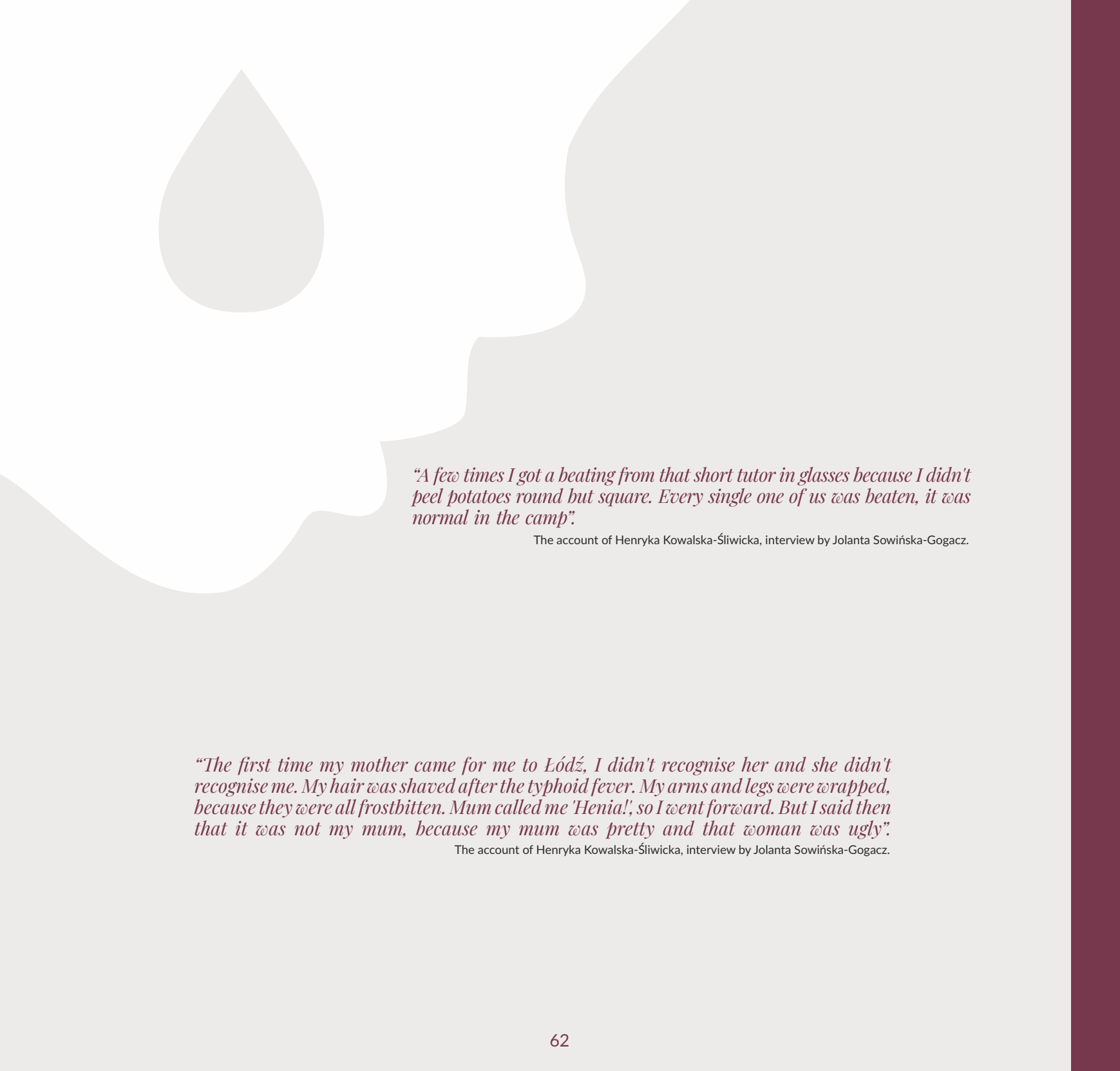
Before they returned to their family's home in Mosina and into their mother's arms, they lived in children's homes and with foster families.



A letter from the camp on Przemysłowa Street, written by Bohdan Kończak, 29 September 1943, from the private collection of Bohdan Kończak.

Sources:

AIPN, GK 165/379, Vol. 7, Part 1, pp. 2 et seq.;
Straty.pl.



“A few times I got a beating from that short tutor in glasses because I didn't peel potatoes round but square. Every single one of us was beaten, it was normal in the camp”.

The account of Henryka Kowalska-Śliwicka, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“The first time my mother came for me to Łódź, I didn't recognise her and she didn't recognise me. My hair was shaved after the typhoid fever. My arms and legs were wrapped, because they were all frostbitten. Mum called me 'Henia!’, so I went forward. But I said then that it was not my mum, because my mum was pretty and that woman was ugly”.

The account of Henryka Kowalska-Śliwicka, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

Henryk and Henryka Kowalski

Henryk and Henryka Kowalski (born in 1930 and 1934 respectively)–siblings from Inowrocław, the children of Kazimierz and Klara (née Lewandowska). The indirect reason for arresting the whole family, together with the children, was the escape of their father from German imprisonment. While running away, he was shot. While he managed to arrive at the door of his house, he had no idea that his wife and children were forced to live in the pig pen by the Germans. His mother dragged him to a safe location, but he died. She burnt all his documents and reported this death to the police, unaware of the consequences for her family. One of the punishments was the imprisonment of the whole family in the camp at Błonie, and then the transfer of Henryk and Henryka to the camp in Litzmannstadt at the end of 1942.

In the camp files, Henryka had the number 53 assigned. She worked both in the main camp and in the camp branch in Dzierżazna. Since she was barely nine years old, the war deprived her of the possibility to learn and she experienced deficiencies with regard to all kinds of skills. The Germans kept changing her assigned job every now and then, and so she worked in almost all of the workshops, ending with toilet cleaning, as this did not require precision. Every task that was



Henryka Kowalska-Śliwicka,
from the private collection of Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

performed incorrectly or insufficiently led to beating. She suffered from typhoid fever and tuberculosis and had numerous cases of frostbite. Her older brother left the camp not long before the end of the war, while she remained in the camp on Przemysłowa Street until it ceased functioning. Her mother came for her twice, because they did not recognise one another during the first attempt. Henryka had her arms and legs bandaged and her head shaved. Her mother also had experienced the physical impact of the war.

Henryk did not manage to recuperate fully after the war. He died at the age of 30.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: Ld 503/106, Vol. 20, p. 55;

The account of Henryka Kowalska-Śliwicka, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz; Straty.pl.



“When Lagerführer was coming and hitting his whip against his bootlegs, we had to stop and bow to him”.

The account of Helena Leszyńska, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“I remember fragments of an event that took place in the camp and started in the infirmary. Bayer and Pohl were torturing some girl in that room by beating her with sticks (...). That torturing was a horrifying experience to me and even though I was sick and feverish then, I remember some fragments of what was happening. I saw Bayer and Pohl standing on both sides of that girl and beating her with sticks. They were clearly beating her hard, because she was screaming a lot and loud”.

AIPN Ld, Voivodeship Court in Łódź. Prosecutor's files in the case against: Pohl/Pohl Eugenia, signature: Ld 503/106, Minutes of the hearing of Helena Leszyńska a witness, Vol. 5, pp. 204-205.

“Children were treated like criminals. If parcels were sent to them, they would not receive them. Their meals were restricted, they were sent to solitary confinement more often. And in solitary confinement, one of the first rooms there, they were struck dumb. They were panic-stricken, there was a single bunk bed, the place was very humid, with fungus on the walls, water on the floor and abyssal darkness. Children in solitary confinement received food and water once a day”.

The account of Helena Leszyńska [in:] J. Sowińska-Gogacz, B. Torasiński, Mały Oświęcim. Dzieciency obóz w Łodzi, Warsaw 2020, p. 107.

“Gienia lived right next to the camp, but her mom was not allowed to see her anyway. She cried many times. All the girls were nice, we respected one another a lot”.

The account of Helena Leszyńska, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

Helena Leszyńska

Helena Leszyńska was born in 1931 in Poznań as the daughter of Franciszek and Magdalena (née Dawidzińska). Her father took part in the Greater Poland Uprising and her mother was fluent in German. The reason for the arrest of Helena, according to the Germans, was allegedly due to insufficient parental care.

Before she arrived at Litzmannstadt in September 1943, she was imprisoned in the Gestapo jail in Poznań.

In the camp in Łódź she worked in the needle production facility and laundry. She was also employed in manufacturing bags and artificial flowers. What helped her survive the diseases and hunger was the parcels with food sent by her mother, which Helena always shared with other children.

After the liberation, she received support and care from an unknown family from Łódź. When she returned home to Poznań, her mother was exhausted by the war and Helena had to substitute for her in many tasks.




Helena Leszyńska with her brother,
from the private collection of Helena Leszyńska.

Because of that, sixteen-year-old Helena abandoned further education and took any job available. She remained in Poznań, helping her mother until the end and starting her own family there.

Sources:

AIPN, Ld 503/106, Vol. 5, pp. 203-206;

The account of Helena Leszyńska, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.



“The first thing I remember noticing is being surprised that boys are wearing dresses. It turned out that those were shaved girls. Władek! You’re here!?! Stasia Góralczyk was also short on luck”.

The account of Władysław Łąka, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“It was in Haus VIII where the most children were dying, it was where they put the weakest ‘pissers’. They were only skin and bones—not moving anymore”.
(This refers to a room intended for children who wet themselves at night involuntarily, suffering from kidney and bladder diseases).

The account of Władysław Łąka, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“During dinner there had to be total silence. If someone even whispered something to someone else, the guards ordered the end of the dinner. Then they took positions in the doors and beat the children leaving (...) with sticks and belts. Then there was an assembly, with frog jumping and burpees. If someone did not go fully prone, a guard walked onto his back to make him understand what going prone meant”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Memories from the camp in Łódź from the years 1943-1944 r., Vol. 8, p. 166.

„(...) the guards took about a dozen child prisoners to the paint shop. There they painted red stripes on the clothing. (...) It was supposed to mark these Polish children that were the most active or the most dangerous to Germans. From that moment on, these children were going through hell. The tutors beat them with iron rods at random. I also didn’t manage to avoid it. They focused us in a single place, i.e., the so-called Haus 3. We were treated the worst among everyone else. When they saw red stripes, the guards never walked by without hitting you or telling you to do something, even impossible, just to punish you for not following orders”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379,
Memories from the camp in Łódź from the years 1943-1944 r., Vol. 8, p. 166.

Władysław Łąka

Władysław Łąka was born in 1929 in Jaworzno as the son of Władysław and Tekla. His father died before the war, and his oldest brother was sent to do forced labour in Germany at the beginning of the occupation. Thus, the ten-year-old Władysław provided solid support for his mother and his three younger siblings. He obtained food and cleaning agents and travelled around Silesia in search of support for his family. After he was caught smuggling a block of butter and a bag of potatoes, his mother was arrested for three months.

In March 1943, Władysław was detained in Bogumin for smuggling cookies. After he was beaten and locked up at the police station in Czechowice-Dziedzice, he was not allowed to return home. His peer and friend, Stanisława Góralczyk, was arrested together with him.

Initially, the children were imprisoned in Bielsko-Biała, then in Mysłowice, and in April 1943 they were transported to the camp in Litzmannstadt. Władysław was given the number 353 and assigned to work in the leather workshop.



Władysław Łąka,
from the private collection of Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.


However, as a “juvenile delinquent”, he had to be first included in the penal company. These children were assigned the hardest work and beaten with exceptional brutality. For a certain period, he stayed in the barrack intended for children suffering from cystitis and nephritis, the so-called “dying room”. He also suffered from scarlet fever and numerous colds.

In July 1944, he was released from the camp in Łódź and assigned to work in a leather workshop by the Arbeitsamt (German employment office) in Jaworzno. He returned home barefoot when his aunt came to take him back.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 165/379, Vol. 8, pp. 166 et seq.;

The account of Władysław Łąka, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz;
Straty.pl.



“We slept on double bunk beds and for the little children they made something resembling a crib and they slept there, one next to another”.

AIPN, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379,
Letter of Joanna Maciejewska-Piotrowska, 12.12.1968, Vol. 9, p. 35.

“As for me, I do not remember much from those 'cheerful' childhood years and especially from the camp, since I was 4 years old then. (...) I only remember that I had trouble tying my shoelaces whenever there was a nighttime alarm and I always asked one boy to help me. I think his name was Włodek”.

AIPN, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379,
Letter of Joanna Maciejewska-Piotrowska, 12.12.1968, Vol. 9, p. 35.

Janina, Jan, Józef and Joanna Maciejewski

Janina, Jan, Józef and Joanna Maciejewski (born in 1929, 1931, 1932 and 1939 respectively)–siblings from Mosina, the children of Jan and Jadwiga. The whole family was separated by the Germans in September 1943 because of the conspirational activity of the parents and taken to concentration camps.

All of the closest relatives of these children were murdered. The youngest, four-year-old Joanna, stayed in the camp in Łódź until the end of July 1944. Then, by order of the Germans, she was forced to leave her siblings and transferred to the camp in Potulice.

After the war, she was taken care of by the Polish Red Cross in Toruń, who handed her over to a foster family and then moved to a children's home. She missed her parents for many years and could not understand why they were nowhere to be found.

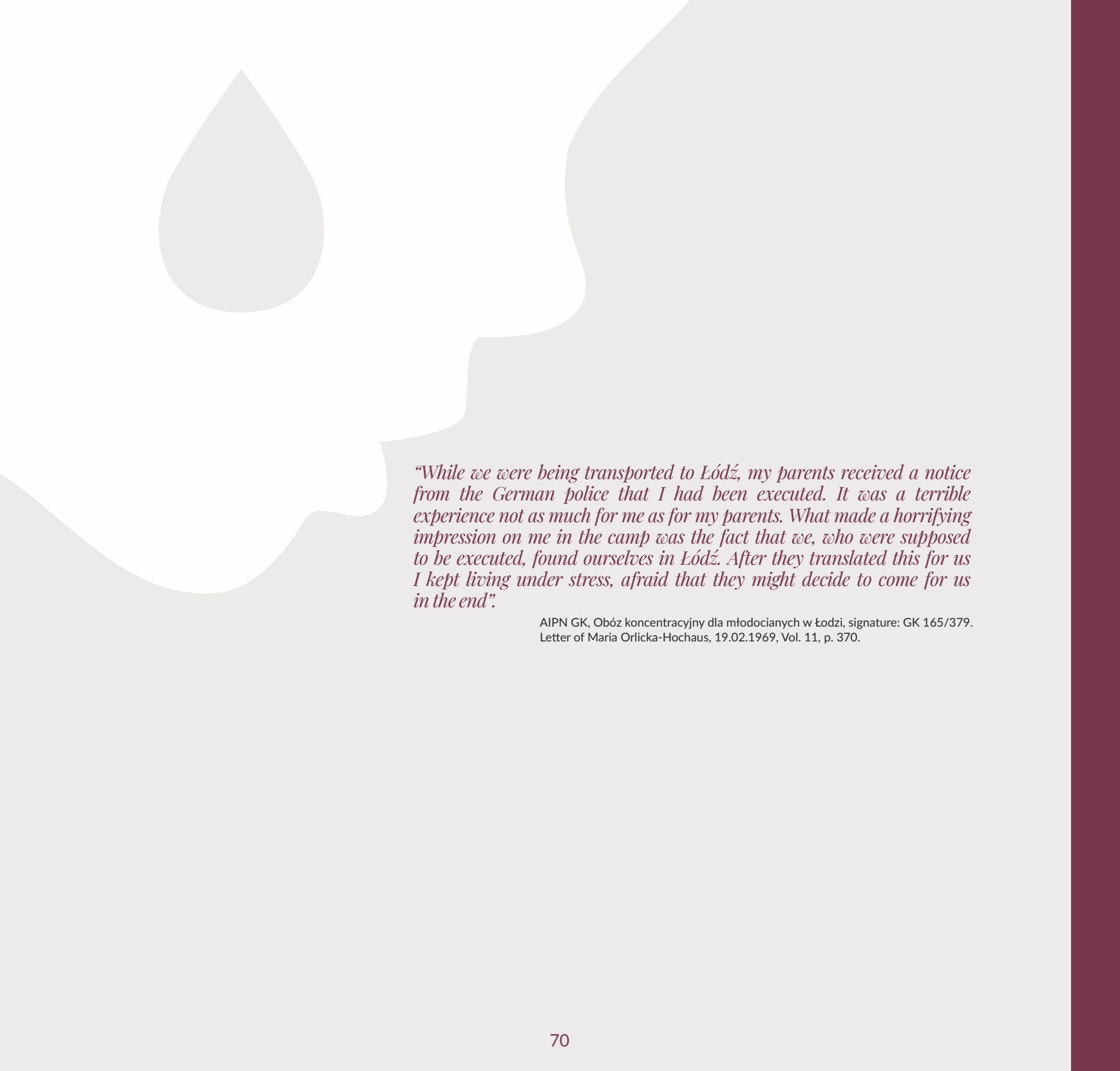


Joanna Maciejewska-Piotrowska,
from the private collection of Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

The fifth child, a girl born after the father was arrested, was taken by the Germans. Little Kazimiera was found after the war.

Sources:

AIPN, GK 169/379, Vol. 9, pp. 34 et seq.;
J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-272;
Straty.pl.



“While we were being transported to Łódź, my parents received a notice from the German police that I had been executed. It was a terrible experience not as much for me as for my parents. What made a horrifying impression on me in the camp was the fact that we, who were supposed to be executed, found ourselves in Łódź. After they translated this for us I kept living under stress, afraid that they might decide to come for us in the end”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Maria Orlicka-Hochaus, 19.02.1969, Vol. 11, p. 370.

Maria Orlicka

Maria Orlicka was born in 1928 in Jaworzno. As a fourteen-year-old girl she was arrested during a round-up in Bielsko-Biała when she was buying food at a bakery. The Germans first kept her imprisoned in a Gestapo jail, and then took her to KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (No. 39849), where she was held in the death block. The summary court in Oświęcim waived the death penalty with regard to Maria and ordered her transferred to the camp in Łódź.

Her parents were erroneously notified of her execution.


In 1943, Maria arrived at Litzmannstadt and was immediately sent to perform agricultural works at the camp branch in Dzierżązna. She suffered from typhoid fever, trachoma, scurvy and numerous ulcerations and frostbite. Thanks to the efforts of her mother, Maria returned home before the end of the war in November 1944, but she was gravely ill. Her stay in Oświęcim and in the camp in Łódź devastated her health permanently.



Maria Orlicka, prisoner No. 39849 in KL Auschwitz,
Archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: 165/379,1.11, pp. 360 et seq.;
Auschwitz.org;
J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 275.



“At assemblies we had to show that our hands were clean. And there was no water or soap. In Łódź, it was worse than in Oświęcim, because adults were there. Assemblies, cold, hunger and beating were the worst. Food? Water with rotten vegetables and dry bread”.

The account of Gertruda Piechota-Górska, interview by Jolanty Sowińska-Gogacz.

“Yes, the smallest children were there. Older girls went there to feed them. One night, the Germans took these children somewhere”.

The account of Gertruda Piechota-Górska, interview by Jolanty Sowińska-Gogacz.

“I remember one Christmas Eve. Boys stole some bread from the storage, broken it into small pieces, and we made a Christmas tree from a piece of a twig”.

The account of Gertruda Piechota-Górska, interview by Jolanty Sowińska-Gogacz.

“For failure to maintain personal hygiene and for a having a button torn off we were punished during an assembly. I received twenty lashes for each”.

AIPN, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379,
Letter of Gertruda Piechota-Górska, Vol. 12, 4.01.1969, p. 164.

Gertruda Piechota

Gertruda Piechota-Górska was born in 1933 in Krzyżowniki near Poznań, as the daughter of Józef and Anna. Gertruda's father participated in the Greater Poland Uprising. His sister and brother-in-law died in Fort VII in Poznań. Gertruda's grandmother was a German born in Westfalen. She married a Pole and refused to sign the Volkslist. Gertruda was arrested during a round-up on a street in Poznań and in June 1943 she arrived at the camp in Łódź. Prior to that, the Germans imprisoned her father and brothers.

At the camp on Przemysłowa Street, Gertruda was employed in gardening works and bag gluing. Similar to all the other minors, she also performed tasks that were ordered on a daily basis. She also worked at the farmstead of the camp branch in Dzierżazna.

As a result of selection, she was considered "racially valuable", but in the end she was not subjected to Germanisation due to her poor health. She suffered from jaundice, scurvy and pneumonia and was treated in a hospital on the territory of the ghetto. She survived in the camp until the end of war.

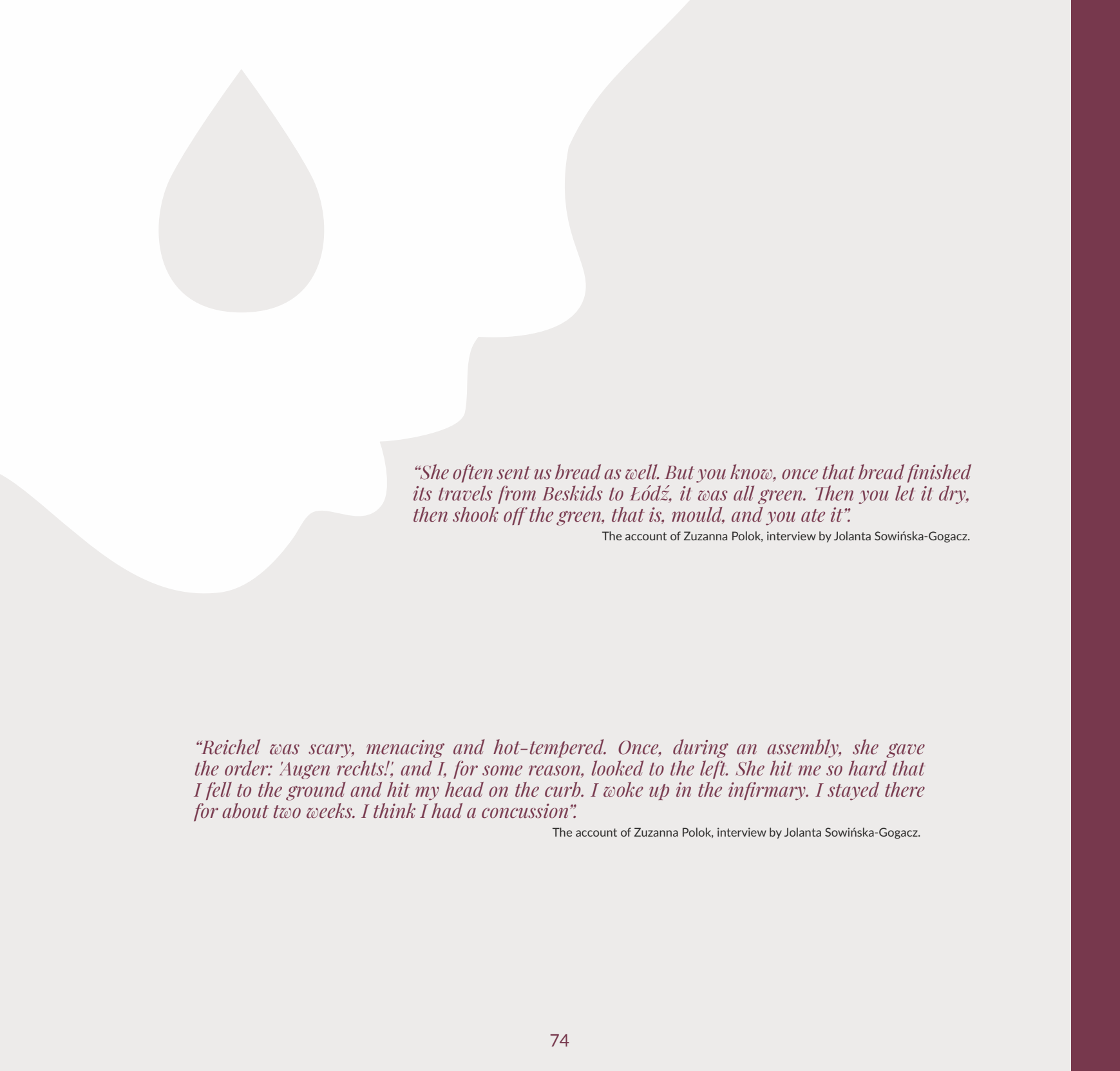


Gertruda Piechota-Górska,
from the private collection of Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

When the Germans abandoned the camp, Gertruda was severely ill. She was transported to the seat of the Polish Red Cross in Kórnik, where a foster family was found for her first, and then she was sent to a children's home. From there, her extended family took care of her. After the war, her health was in such poor condition that she was unable to start any job. She spent the latter part of her life in Poznań.

Sources:

AIPN, GK 165/379, Vol. 12, pp. 160 et seq.;
The account of Gertruda Piechota-Górska, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz;
Straty.pl.



“She often sent us bread as well. But you know, once that bread finished its travels from Beskids to Łódź, it was all green. Then you let it dry, then shook off the green, that is, mould, and you ate it”.

The account of Zuzanna Polok, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“Reichel was scary, menacing and hot-tempered. Once, during an assembly, she gave the order: 'Augen rechts!'; and I, for some reason, looked to the left. She hit me so hard that I fell to the ground and hit my head on the curb. I woke up in the infirmary. I stayed there for about two weeks. I think I had a concussion”.

The account of Zuzanna Polok, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

Zuzanna and Jan Polok

Zuzanna and Jan Polok (born in 1932 and 1935 respectively)–siblings from Wisła, the children of Andrzej and Maria (née Nogowczyk).

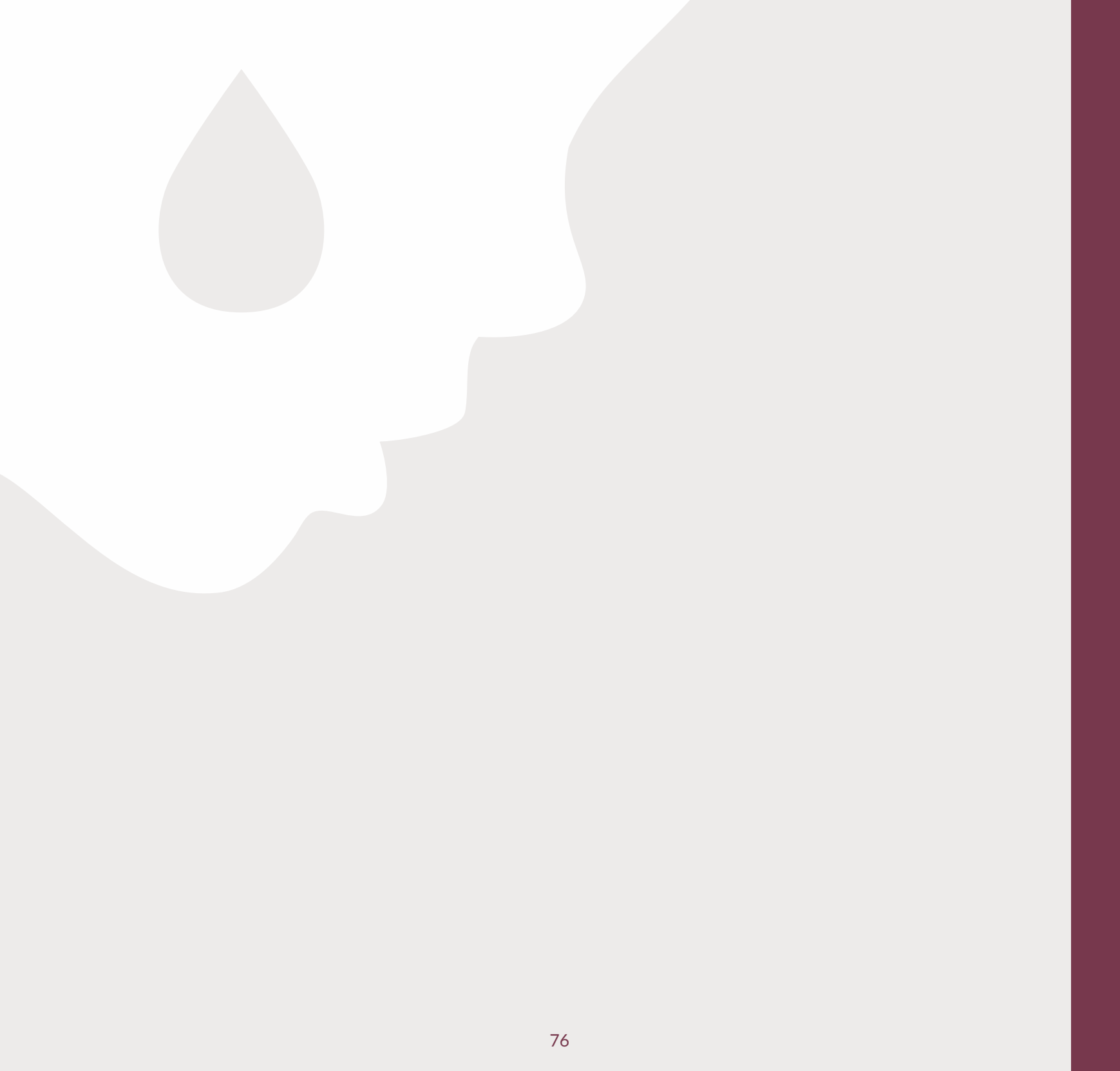
Because they were members of the Jehovah's Witnesses, both their parents and four of their uncles were murdered in KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (the father was assigned No. 44693, the mother's document went missing). Once the parents were gone, the siblings, together with their youngest brother, the four-year-old Andrzej, went to live with their family in Istebna, a nearby village. From there, the Germans took them together with a group of other underage coreligionists to the Polen-Jugendverwahrlager in Litzmannstadt.

Jan was usually employed in cleaning the camp, while Zuzanna wove strings from cellophane and then made baskets out of them. She also worked in the camp garden and, for a short time, in the needle production facility. She lived in a brick building, and her brother in a barrack.



*Zuzanna Polok with her parents,
from the private collection of Zuzanna Polok.*

On one occasion, she was hit so hard on the head by the guard Reichelt that she fell down, lost consciousness and had to recuperate for many days in the camp infirmary with symptoms of concussion.



Both siblings suffered from trachoma, cystitis and frostbite. Jan also contracted tuberculosis, while Zuzanna had to deal with pediculosis. After the war, they found themselves in different children's homes. Zuzanna was cared over by Catholic nuns at the orphanage in Łódź, who provided her with the conditions for living and learning and of whom she has very fond memories today.

When her extended family found her in 1946 and took her back to Wisła, she found only burned-out ruins where her family home used to be. Being 14 years old and having traumatising experiences from the camp, she had to start her life anew.

Jan was transferred a few times to different orphanages, starting with Łódź and ending with Zakopane. In 1946, the care over the siblings was taken over by their paternal aunt.



Zuzanna Polok (first from the right) and Jan Polok (in the middle),
from the private collection of Janina Cieślak.



Andrzej Polok, prisoner No. 44693 in KL Auschwitz,
Archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum
in Oświęcim.

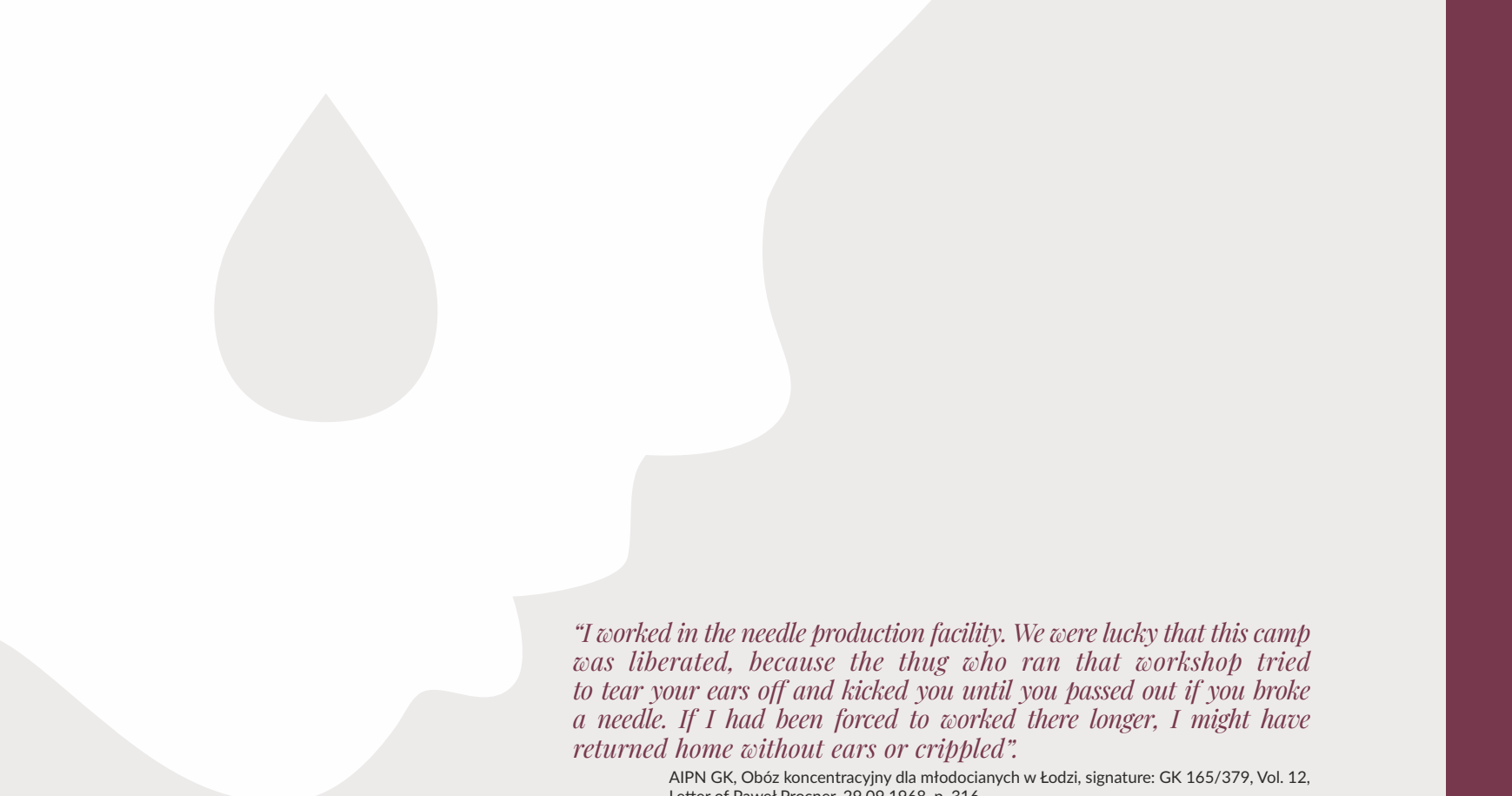
Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 165/379, Vol. 12, pp. 280 et seq.

AIPN, signature: Ld 503/106, Vol. 18, pp. 112-126;

J. Witkowski, op. cit., pp. 277-278;

The account of Zuzanna Polok, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz;
Straty.pl.



“I worked in the needle production facility. We were lucky that this camp was liberated, because the thug who ran that workshop tried to tear your ears off and kicked you until you passed out if you broke a needle. If I had been forced to work there longer, I might have returned home without ears or crippled”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379, Vol. 12, Letter of Paweł Procner, 29.09.1968, p. 316.

“Beetroot soup. When I saw it and smelled it in my bowl, I thought it's impossible for something so awful to pass down my throat and I poured my portion back into the pot. After a second I sorely regretted doing that. The German hit me so hard on the head with the ladle that I collapsed and others had to help me stand. That's the kind of welcome you got in that camp”.

The account of Paweł Procner, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“The assemblies were nightmares that were making survival much harder. Whenever someone did anything against the rules, they applied collective responsibility. At one time, one of us went missing. The Germans were missing one number. I remember that assembly. We were standing for many hours, without moving, without any food or drink, until that boy was found. It was severely exhausting. In summer it was possible to handle, but in autumn and winter we were dealing with rain, snow, freezing. It was also during the assemblies that the penalties for transgressions were administered—the lashes, 20-25 or more. It hurt...”.

The account of Paweł Procner, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

Paweł Procner

Paweł Procner was born in 1932 in Wisła as the son of Józef and Helena (née Polok). Since the members of this family were Jehovah's Witnesses, the Germans employed particularly harsh punishments against them.

The father was taken to KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (No. 26803) and murdered there in 1942. The mother survived the war.

Paweł, who was almost nine years old, was arrested in April 1943 for not paying respects to Hitler and belonging to a family whose creed questioned service to the Third Reich. The steadfast children of Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted at schools from the very beginning of the war, through both physical violence and mental pressure.

After staying for a few days in the camp at Sikawa in Łódź, Paweł arrived at the camp on Przemysłowa Street in May 1943, together with his cousins and friends from Wisła-children from the Bujok, Polok, Pilch and Wiśetka families.

That group included seven boys and three girls, aged from 8 to 14. In the camp, he suffered from recurring tonsillitis, colds, ulcerations and trachoma. His worst memories came from the needle production facility, where one of the guards beat him severely and he narrowly escaped death.

In January 1945, the children left the camp free and were searching for a way home. A harsh winter was underway, but they received help from strangers in a farmstead near Łódź, which allowed them to survive.

The majority of adult Jehovah's Witnesses died in Hitlerian death factories, which made their children orphans after the war. All of the children from Wisła survived the camp in Łódź, but their families were decimated by the Germans. Although the post-war poverty forced Paweł to stop his education and start hard work, he was lucky, because his mother was waiting for him at home, which he reached in the spring of 1945.

Sources:

AIPN, GK 165/379, Vol. 12, pp. 310 et seq.;
The account of Paweł Procner, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz;
Straty.pl.



“The gates were closed and a guard was standing next to an open high wicket. When I handed him a written permit from camp authorities allowing me to see my son, he told me that the camp was quarantined due to typhoid fever and that it was forbidden to enter the camp. In reaction to my insistent pleading, the guard went to the camp authorities and returned with a message that my son would come to see me. (...) Suddenly, through the open wicket, I saw two boys approaching, holding hands. I saw the stronger of them helping the younger, weaker one, but I didn't recognise my son in either of them. (...) Suddenly, one of the boys, an emaciated little skeleton, approached me, and in a weak voice, in which I heard a hint of joy, said 'mummy'. It was then that I recognised my son in him. I was so severely shocked at seeing my son, that I could not utter a single word and fainted”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379,
The account of Halina Rutkowska, 15.01.1970, Vol. 13, pp. 149-150.

“On the 16th of December 1943 I went to the criminal police, hoping that they would return my poor child to me, and I received the devastating news of his death. They told me that a coffin with my little boy's body would be brought to the cemetery in the Chojny district of Łódź. On the 18th of December 1943, since the early morning, I was waiting for the little coffin, which was brought and placed in the local chapel of the cemetery. I buried my beloved, innocent child, inhumanely murdered by the Hitlerian murderers, at the cemetery in Łódź, and took home only a small lump of earth from his grave that I left in this distant land”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379,
The account of Halina Rutkowska, 15.01.1970, Vol. 13, p. 150.

Jerzy Rutkowski

Jerzy Rutkowski was born in 1934 in Płońsk as the son of Edward and Klementyna (née Dygowska). He was a grandson of Leon Rutkowski, a doctor, anthropologist, and a collaborator with the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. Leon Rutkowski had also been a famous community worker and patriot, after whom one of the streets and a school in Płońsk are named. In the central city square of Płońsk there is also a monument dedicated to him.

The Rutkowski family, being members of the Polish intelligentsia, were targeted by the German authorities from the very beginning of the occupation. Already in 1940, the mother and son were expelled from their home and deprived of their property.

Meanwhile, the father remained imprisoned in an Oflag (a POW camp for officers). In October 1943, the nine-year-old Jerzy was accused of setting fire to a barn, and in November he was arrested and taken to the camp in Litzmannstadt. He was already suffering from active tuberculosis.



Jerzy Rutkowski,
Płońsk City History Documentation Laboratory signature:
ZH 3530.

Jerzy managed to survive a month and a half in the camp in Łódź. During a visit, his mother did not recognise him at first. Three days later, on 16 December, he died. His grave has been preserved at the St. Wojciech Catholic cemetery in Łódź.

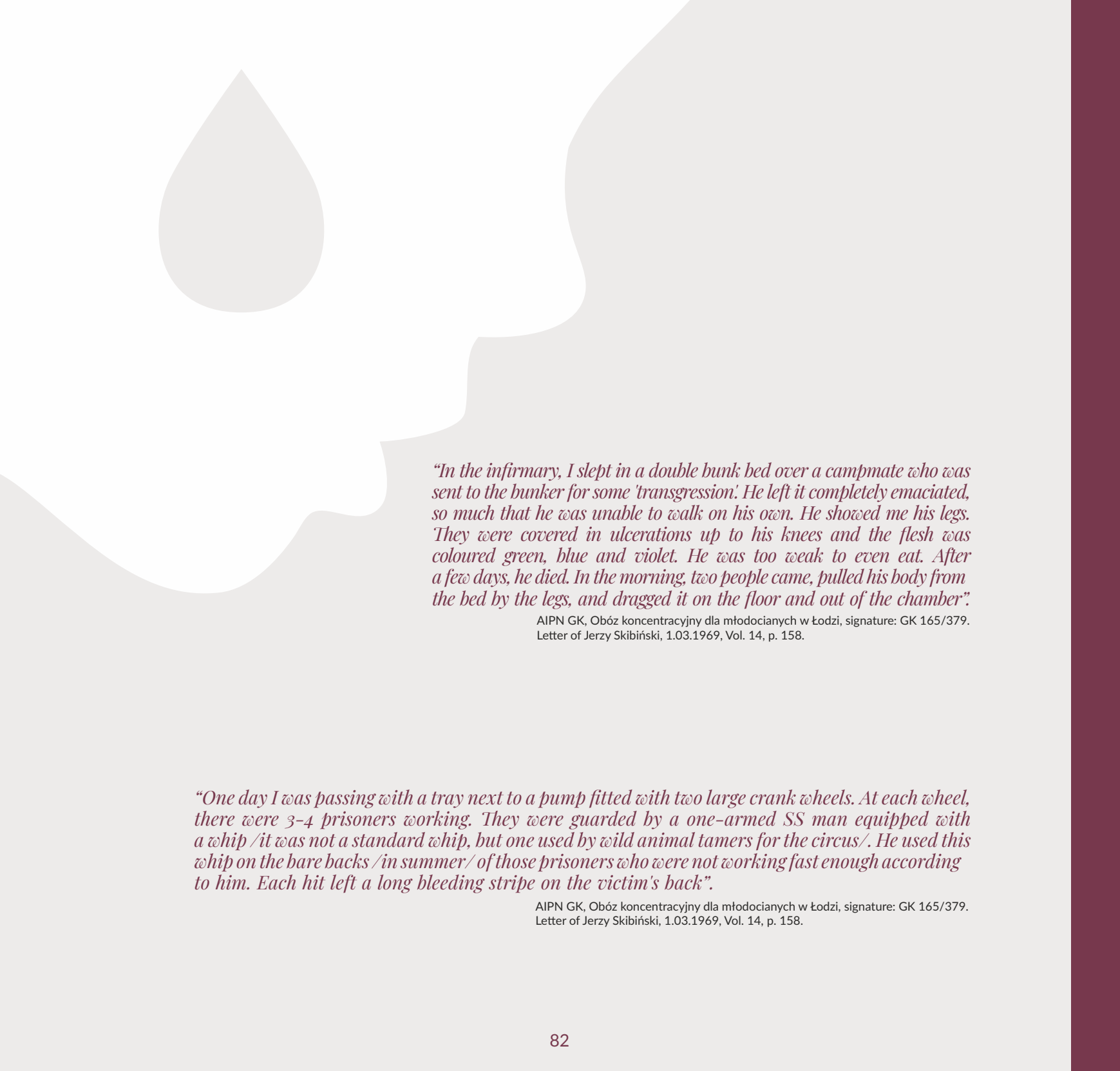
After the war, it turned out that little Jerzy had been unduly accused of setting fire to the barn, and the actual perpetrator put the blame on a child in order to protect his own life.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 165/379, pp. 142 et seq.

J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 279;

Życie i praca Leona Rutkowskiego – lekarza, antropologa, metrologa, archeologa, publicysty oraz działacza społecznego i niepodległościowego (1862-1917), elaborated by M. Krysiak, Płońsk 2012, *passim*.



“In the infirmary, I slept in a double bunk bed over a campmate who was sent to the bunker for some ‘transgression.’ He left it completely emaciated, so much that he was unable to walk on his own. He showed me his legs. They were covered in ulcerations up to his knees and the flesh was coloured green, blue and violet. He was too weak to even eat. After a few days, he died. In the morning, two people came, pulled his body from the bed by the legs, and dragged it on the floor and out of the chamber”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Jerzy Skibiński, 1.03.1969, Vol. 14, p. 158.

“One day I was passing with a tray next to a pump fitted with two large crank wheels. At each wheel, there were 3-4 prisoners working. They were guarded by a one-armed SS man equipped with a whip /it was not a standard whip, but one used by wild animal tamers for the circus/. He used this whip on the bare backs /in summer/ of those prisoners who were not working fast enough according to him. Each hit left a long bleeding stripe on the victim’s back”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Jerzy Skibiński, 1.03.1969, Vol. 14, p. 158.

Wiesława, Jerzy and Wojciech Skibiński

Wiesława, Jerzy and Wojciech Skibiński (born in 1933, 1935 and 1940 respectively) –siblings from an intelligentsia family from Mosina, the children of Czesław and Teresa (née Namysłowska).

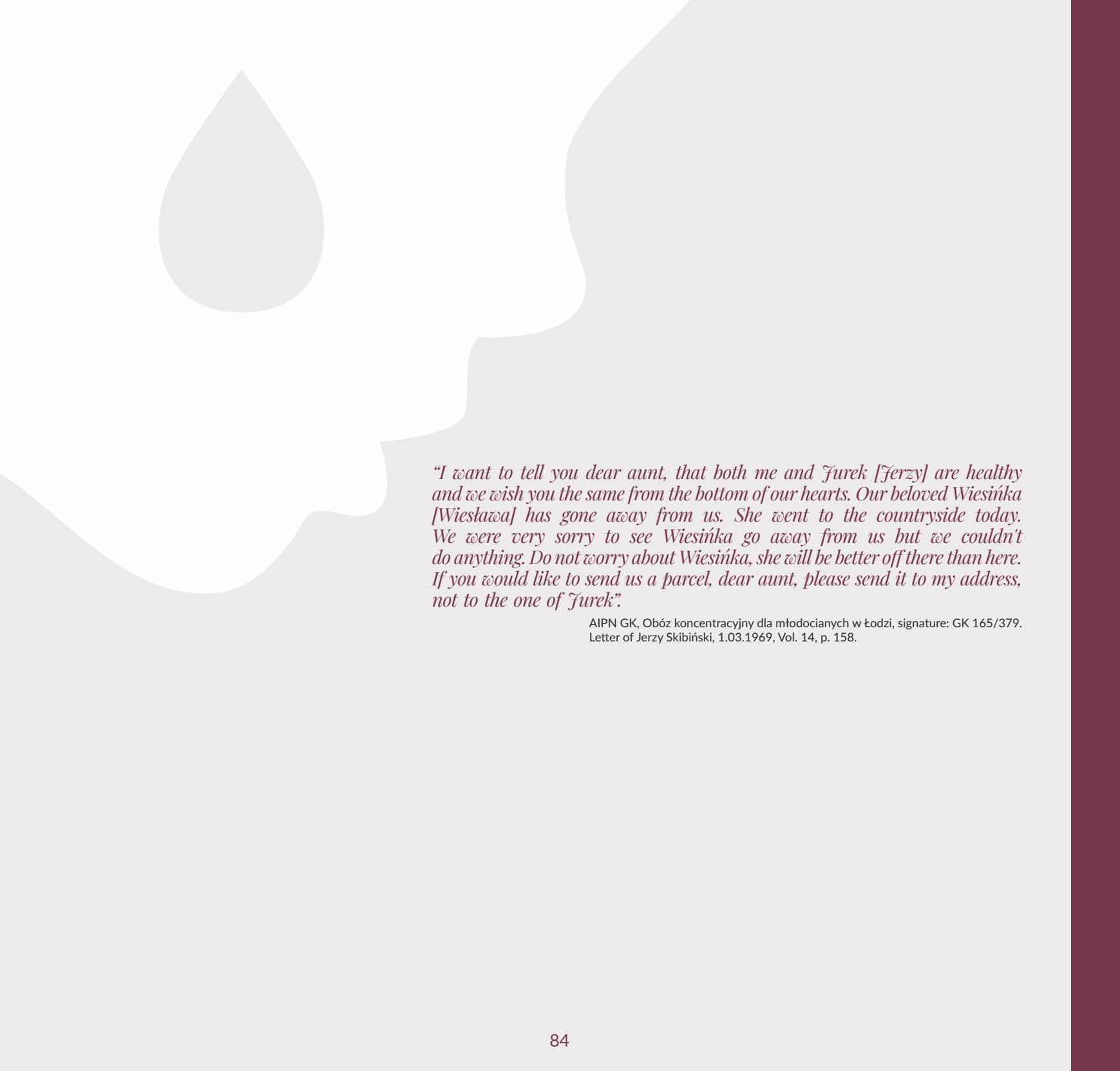
The family was punished by the Germans for cooperating with the anti-Nazi underground, related to the “Mosina case”.

The year 1943 was a time of particularly difficult experiences for the Skibiński family—the father died in Fort VII in Poznań and the children were separated from the mother who was first taken to Żabikowo, then to KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (No. 67447), and then to KL Ravensbrück, where she survived until the end of war.

All three children arrived at the camp in Łódź on 14 September 1943, together with a large group of children from Mosina. The youngest of the siblings, Szczęsny, was taken care of by extended family.



Jerzy Skibiński and Wojciech Skibiński,
from the private collection of Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.



“I want to tell you dear aunt, that both me and Jurek [Jerzy] are healthy and we wish you the same from the bottom of our hearts. Our beloved Wiesińska [Wiesława] has gone away from us. She went to the countryside today. We were very sorry to see Wiesińska go away from us but we couldn't do anything. Do not worry about Wiesińska, she will be better off there than here. If you would like to send us a parcel, dear aunt, please send it to my address, not to the one of Jurek”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Jerzy Skibiński, 1.03.1969, Vol. 14, p. 158.

On one of the preserved camp photographs, Wiesława has the number 352, while her number in the records was 160. She worked in the tailor's workshop and at the farmstead of the agricultural enterprise in Dzierżązna. For a long time after the war she refused to reminisce about the torment in the camp, but since the 1970s she participated actively in preserving the memory of the children she met in the camp and who were hurt or died here. She died in 2005.

Jerzy was employed in cleaning the camp area and in the workshop where children were making flowerpots and artificial flowers.

At the moment of his arrest, Wojciech was only two years and five months old, so he stayed in a separate building intended for the youngest children, who were cared over by their older siblings and designated female prisoners.

In July 1944, the Germans sent both brothers to the camp in Potulice, where they stayed until it ceased operations in January 1945.

After the war, they were cared over by the Polish Red Cross, which found them foster families. Later they were found by their mother after she returned from Ravensbrück.

During their stay in the camp, all the siblings suffered from pediculosis, scurvy, ulcerations, frostbite, trachoma, scabies, pneumonia, diphtheria and recurring colds.

All the Skibiński siblings completed higher education, which was rare among the survivors of the camp in Łódź.



Wojciech Skibiński with his wife,
archives of the Museum of Polish Children.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 165/379,1 14, pp. 155 et seq.;

AIPN, signature: Ld 503/106, Vol. 7, p. 45;

J. Witkowski, op. cit., p. 280;

Straty.pl.



“For breaking one of these clay bowls they slammed my head into a wall”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Memories from the road leading to Polenverwahrlager in Łódź–Jan Spychała,
Vol. 14, p. 341.

“I remember cutting bread into small cubes so as to eat it as long as possible (...). I remember well the 5-day fast forced upon me because of a steel crowbar missing from some warehouse. And after those 5 days they gave me some soured soup, barely enough to cover the bowl bottom. Many boys had diarrhoea back then and so did I”.

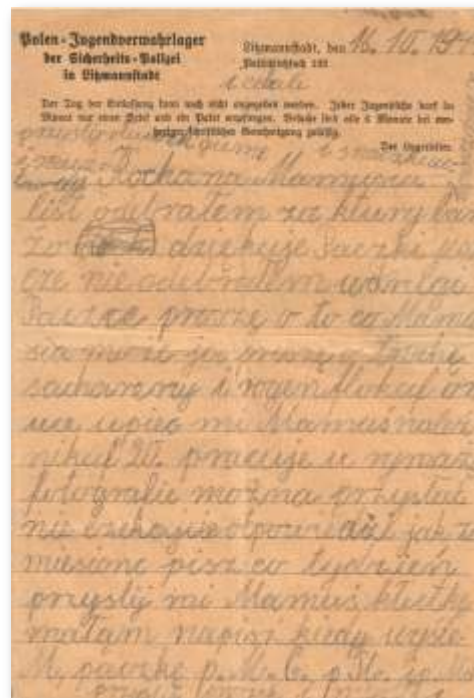
AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Memories from the road leading to Polenverwahrlager in Łódź–Jan Spychała,
Vol. 14, p. 341.

Jan Spychała

Jan Spychała was born at the end of 1931 in Grudziądz as the son of Marcin and Bogusława. In August 1944, he was arrested by the Germans for taking six kilograms of flour from a mill.

For this reason, he was taken to the camp on Przemysłowa Street in Łódź. Although the camp had been functioning for over 20 months and the number of children imprisoned there was around one thousand, the number he was assigned in the files was 6. The Germans ordered him to work in the leather workshop.

In the camp in Łódź, he suffered from trachoma, scabies and tonsillitis. He also fell ill with scurvy, had numerous ulcerations and, in winter, also frostbite. When the German staff abandoned the camp in January 1945, he was extremely weak. He survived thanks to the help of strangers, inhabitants of Łódź, and returned home at the end of March.



A letter from the camp on Przemysłowa Street, written by Jan Spychała, 16 October 1944, Museum of Polish Children.

After the war, he settled in Szczecin. He died in 1998.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 165/379, Vol. 14, pp. 331 et seq.;
J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 280-281;
Straty.pl.



“Our only desire was to eat some bread”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Genowefa Świstak-Herman, 20.02.1969, Vol. 16, p. 25.

“When we were peeling potatoes, we smelled aromas coming from the kitchen that cooked meals for the Germans, aroma that I will never forget. I was wondering when we, children, would eat a dinner like theirs at least once. It was only a dream. We missed even dry bread and potatoes, so no one wanted anything more than that and to have a good night's sleep on clean bedding”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Genowefa Świstak-Herman, 20.02.1969, Vol. 16, p. 25.

“There is one more fact that stuck in my memory—distributing the soup to the youngest boys. A drunk SS man was stirring the soup in the pot and pouring it on the ground. The starving children were waiting for that bit of water, as it was hard to call it a soup, so they jumped to it and started eating from the ground whatever the soil didn't absorb. For that, that angry SS man started kicking and beating these children. It was a sight you just couldn't bear to behold”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Genowefa Świstak-Herman, 20.02.1969, Vol. 16, p. 24.

Genowefa Świstak

Genowefa Świstak was born in 1928 in Ogródzieniec in Silesia as the daughter of Franciszek and Weronika (née Grzebieluch). Her mother died when she was 2, and her father died in January 1943 as a result of a bullet wound in his left lung that he received while fighting the Germans in 1939.

The reasons for arresting Genowefa are unknown, but it is certain that she was detained at the end of March 1943. She arrived at the camp in Łódź at the beginning of May, and remained in the Polen-Jugendverwahrlager until October 1944. In the camp files, she was recorded under the number 77.

She was one of the oldest girls in the camp. Genowefa, who was 15 at the time, was sent to work at the farmstead in Dzierżązna. While in the main camp, she worked in the laundry and peeled potatoes. She suffered from scabies, scurvy and trachoma, and had ulcerations and frostbite on her body.



Photograph of Genowefa Świstak, 6 August 1944,
AIPN, signature: Ld 503/106, Vol. 4, sheet 245.

Following her release, she was severely emaciated and for three months she was hidden by her family, not appearing at the Jugendamt in Olkusz in spite of a German order to do so. Her letters written after the war to one of the guards, Eugenia Pol, are one of the most interesting documents remaining from the prisoners of the camp on Przemysłowa Street.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 165/379, Vol. 16, pp. 21 et seq.;
AIPN, signature: Ld 503/106, Vol. 7, pp. 190-193;
AIPN, signature: Ld 503/106, Vol. 20, pp. 44-45;
J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 283.



“My dream was to see my mum and not getting beaten by the Gestapo”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Bronisław Weinhold, 28.02.1972, Vol. 17, p. 73.

“Gertruda was complaining about being beaten severely every day by their supervisor (the person recognised – Pohl). With each passing day, Gertruda looked and felt worse. When I saw her for the last but one time before death, she looked horrible. Her whole body was beaten, swollen and bruised. During that visit Pohl caught me, for which I also received a severe beating as I was visiting my sister secretly”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Bronisław Weinhold, 22.02.1972, Vol. 17, p. 69.

“After a few days, an ambulance appeared and I saw my sister lying on a stretcher, all battered. I tried to approach her but a Gestapo policeman prevented this and chased me away. (...) I immediately ran to the other side of the ambulance and there, from my campmates, I learned that my sister is dead”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Bronisław Weinhold, 22.02.1972, Vol. 17, pp. 69-70.

Gertruda, Bronisław and Mieczysław Weinhold

Gertruda, Bronisław and Mieczysław Weinhold (born in 1929, 1932 and 1935 respectively) –siblings from Toruń, the children of Fryderyk and Cecylia (née Bajmler). They were arrested in either 1941 or 1942 due to their parents refusal to sign the Volkslist.

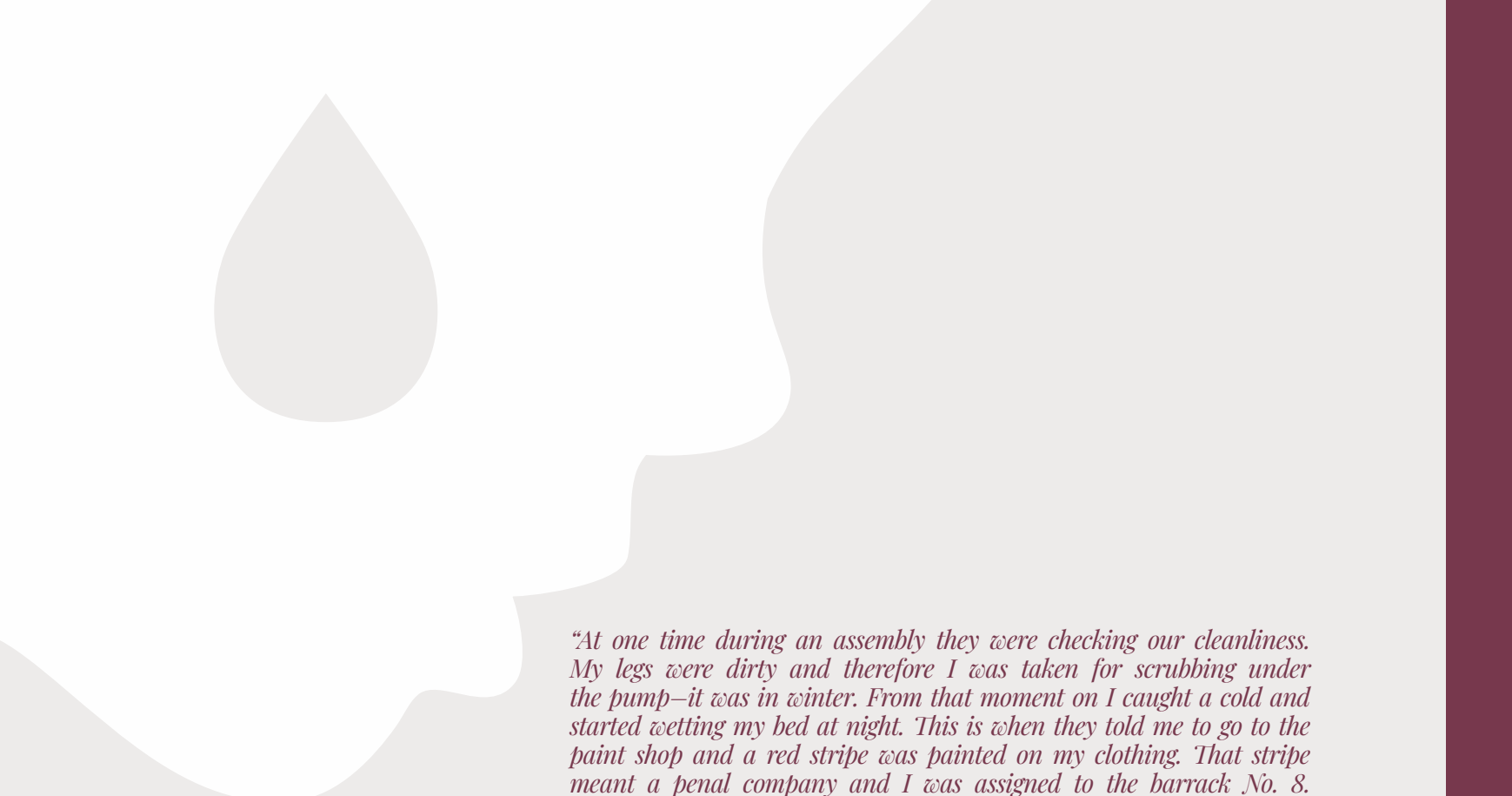
The children were first placed in the centres in Wejherowo (brothers) and Kamień Pomorski (the sister and the two youngest brothers, Jan and Maksymilian). Then, at the beginning of 1943, the three older siblings in the camp in Łódź.

Right after arriving at the camp, the almost fourteen-year-old Gertruda was sent to work at the agricultural enterprise in Dzierżązna. For unknown reasons, she was brought to the Przemysłowa Street camp at the end of July 1944 and on 1 August, she died after being severely beaten by the Germans. The official cause of death recorded by the camp authorities in the documents was meningitis.



Gertruda Weinhold,
Art Gallery in Mosina.

Four days later, Gertruda was buried at the St. Wojciech Catholic cemetery in Łódź.



“At one time during an assembly they were checking our cleanliness. My legs were dirty and therefore I was taken for scrubbing under the pump—it was in winter. From that moment on I caught a cold and started wetting my bed at night. This is when they told me to go to the paint shop and a red stripe was painted on my clothing. That stripe meant a penal company and I was assigned to the barrack No. 8. Once I entered it, I saw naked children being tortured”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Mieczysław Weinhold, 6.04.1972 r., Vol. 17, p. 104.

“I suffered (...) from trachoma and laid in the infirmary, but even there (I) didn't manage to avoid beating and torturing. After my trachoma was cured, I returned to the barrack No. 8. And then the terror (from the guards) and waking up every two hours started again”.

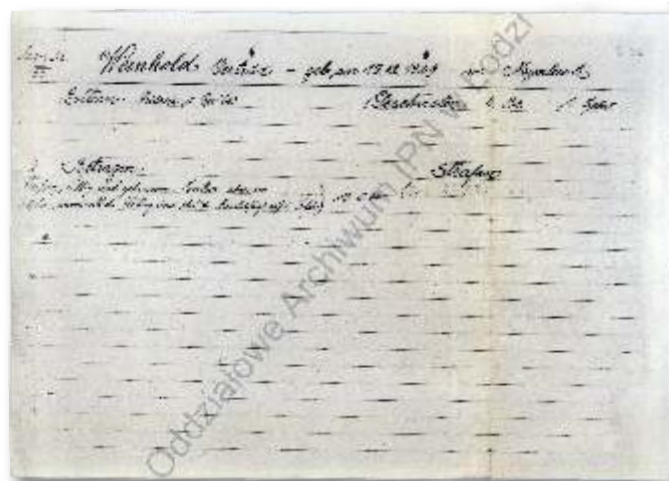
AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Letter of Mieczysław Weinhold, 6.04.1972 r., Vol. 17, p. 104.

Bronisław was beaten on the head in the camp, which led to partial hearing loss. He worked as a leatherworker, in a vegetable warehouse, and in a workshop where straw covers for the boots of German soldiers were made. Mieczysław peeled potatoes, cleaned the camp area, and worked in the vegetable garden.

In the camp, they suffered from typhoid fever, trachoma, scurvy, ear diseases and cystitis. They also had ulcerations and frostbite.

They were imprisoned in the Polen-Jugendverwahrlager until the Red Army entered Łódź in January 1945.

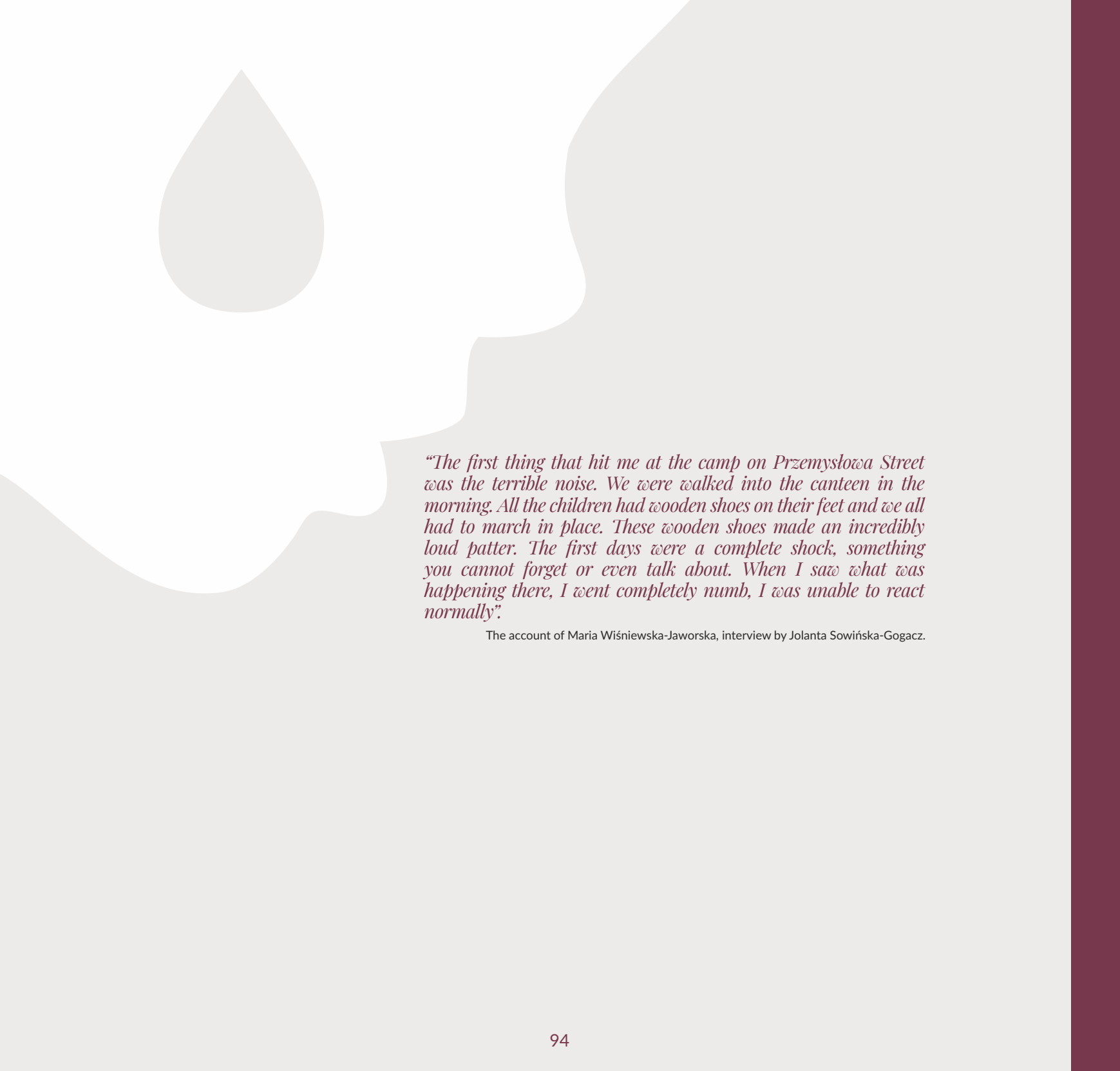
After leaving the camp, the boys were wandering around the city, hiding from the cold in basements and abandoned houses. Finally, they found themselves at the children's home of the Municipal Kids Shelter, and in March they were found by their parents. Both of them returned to Toruń.



Extract from the camp log of the camp branch in Dzierżazna, featuring an entry regarding Getruda Weinhold, AIPN Ld 503/106, Vol. 24, p. 168.

Sources:

AIPN, GK 165/379, Vol. 17, p. 69;
AIPN, Ld 503/106, Vol. 12, p. 125;
AIPN, Ld 503/106, Vol. 14, pp. 187-188;
J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 285.



“The first thing that hit me at the camp on Przemysłowa Street was the terrible noise. We were walked into the canteen in the morning. All the children had wooden shoes on their feet and we all had to march in place. These wooden shoes made an incredibly loud patter. The first days were a complete shock, something you cannot forget or even talk about. When I saw what was happening there, I went completely numb, I was unable to react normally”.

The account of Maria Wiśniewska-Jaworska, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

Maria and Tadeusz Wiśniewski

Maria and Tadeusz Wiśniewski (born in 1928 and 1931 respectively)–siblings from Poznań, the children of Aleksander and Gertruda (née Kaczmarek).

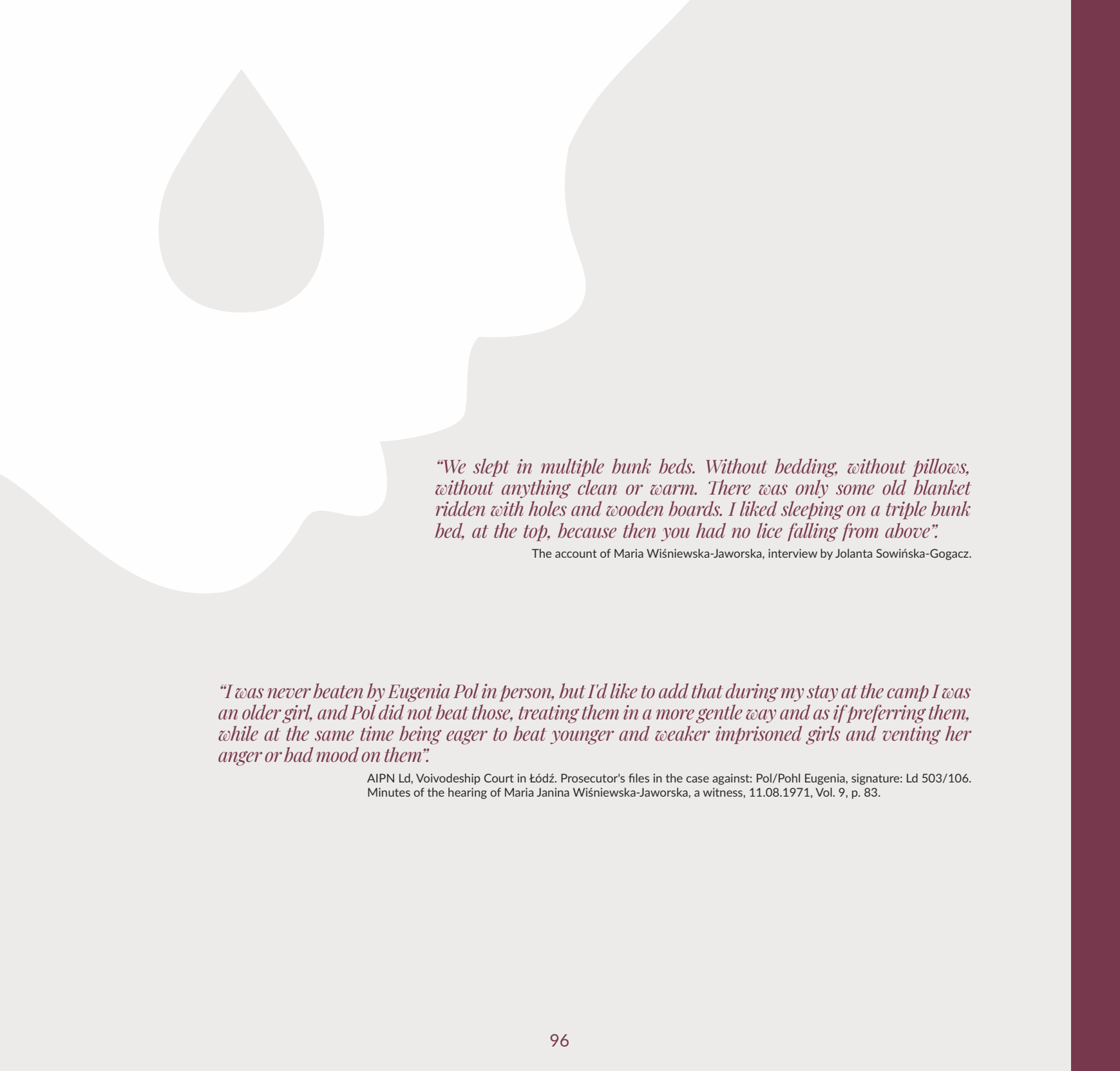
Their father was a teacher in a junior high school for boys, and involved in the development of Polish education in the Greater Poland region. This was the reason why the Germans kept following his activities from the very beginning of the occupation. In 1943, they charged him with collaborating with the group of Doctor Franciszek Witaszek. He was murdered in Fort VII.

The oldest of the brothers, Ludomir, was first taken to KL Gross-Rosen and then to Mittelbau-Dora. The mother was first imprisoned in the camp in Żabikowo, then sent to Ravensbrück, and at the end of the war, to Bergen-Belsen.

The two younger children were arrested in December 1943 and transported by train to the camp in Litzmannstadt.



Maria, Tadeusz and Ludomir Wiśniewski,
from the private collection of Maria Wiśniewska-Jaworska.



“We slept in multiple bunk beds. Without bedding, without pillows, without anything clean or warm. There was only some old blanket ridden with holes and wooden boards. I liked sleeping on a triple bunk bed, at the top, because then you had no lice falling from above”.

The account of Maria Wiśniewska-Jaworska, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

“I was never beaten by Eugenia Pol in person, but I'd like to add that during my stay at the camp I was an older girl, and Pol did not beat those, treating them in a more gentle way and as if preferring them, while at the same time being eager to beat younger and weaker imprisoned girls and venting her anger or bad mood on them”.

AIPN Ld, Voivodeship Court in Łódź. Prosecutor's files in the case against: Pol/Pohl Eugenia, signature: Ld 503/106. Minutes of the hearing of Maria Janina Wiśniewska-Jaworska, a witness, 11.08.1971, Vol. 9, p. 83.

Maria (who was assigned the numbers 219 and 501 in the files) worked in a tailor's workshop and cleaned the rooms of the headquarters. Tadeusz (No. 873) was assigned to the leather workshop and the shoemaker's workshop. Both children suffered from typhoid fever (Maria twice), scurvy, eczema and frostbite.

When Maria turned 16, the Germans sent her, as an adult, to the Ravensbrück camp, where she managed to find her mother. In spite of the hardships and severe illnesses, they both survived until they were liberated in Bergen-Belsen.

Prior to leaving the camp on Przemysłowa Street, Maria asked one of the campmates who came from Łódź to take care of her brother, Tadeusz, and take him home with her in the event of the war coming to an end—and so it happened.

Out of the whole, large family, only four of them returned home after the war.

They lost everything, including their beautiful home in the Dolna Wilda district of Poznań. The mother died, ravaged by her experiences in the camps, not long after regaining freedom. Ludomir died in 1976 and Tadeusz in 2016. Maria graduated from law studies and reached the age of 93.

She died in October 2020.



Maria Wiśniewska-Jaworska,
from the private collection of Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

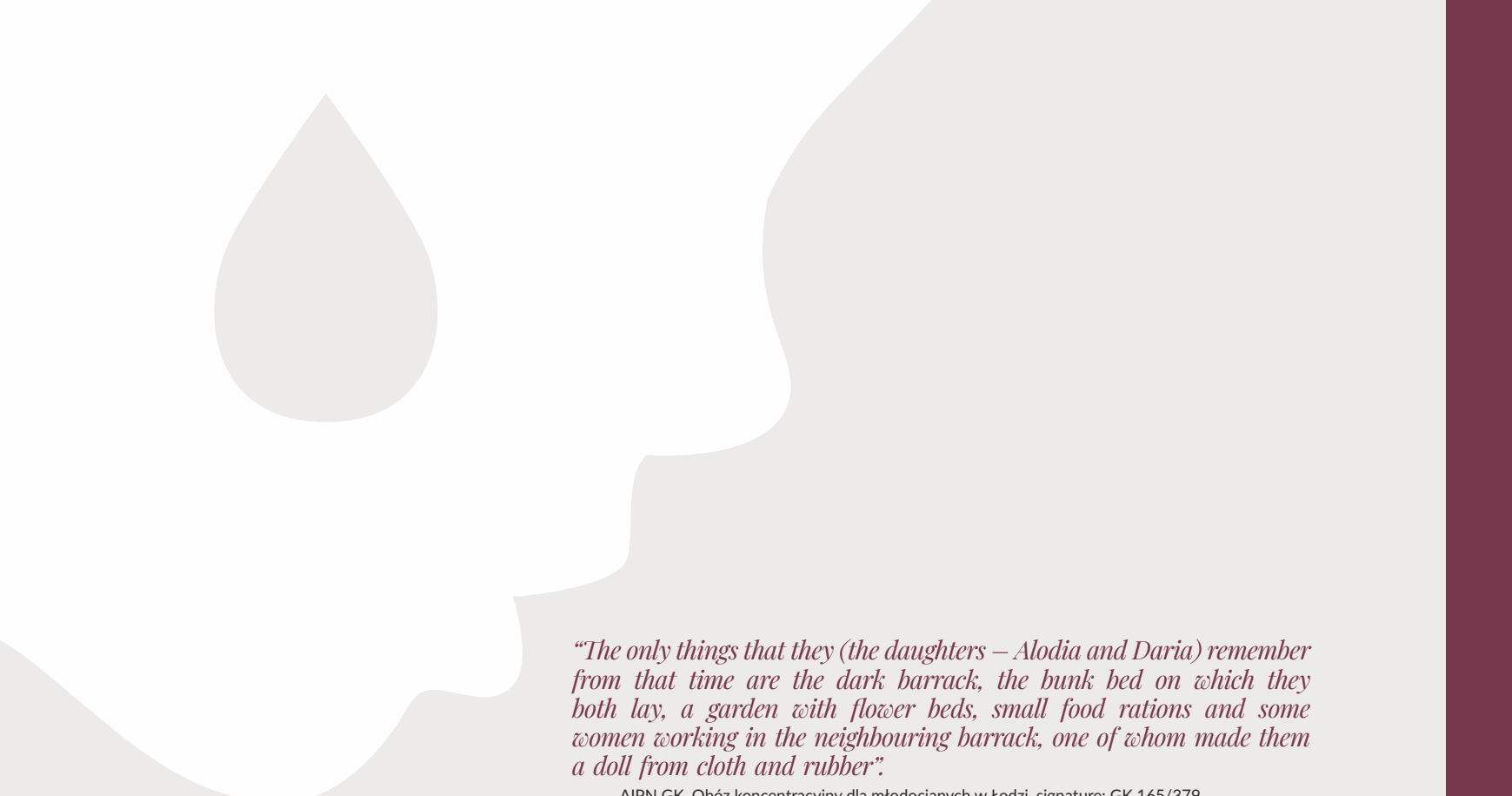
Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 165/379,1.17, pp. 195 et seq.;

AIPN, signature: Ld 506/109, Vol. 9, pp. 80-89;

J. Witkowski, op. cit., pp. 286-287;

The account of Maria Wiśniewska-Jaworska, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.



“The only things that they (the daughters – Alodia and Daria) remember from that time are the dark barrack, the bunk bed on which they both lay, a garden with flower beds, small food rations and some women working in the neighbouring barrack, one of whom made them a doll from cloth and rubber”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Data regarding the children of Doctor Franciszek Witaszek – a physician and scientist from Poznań – during the period of Nazi occupation for the period from the year 1943, Vol. 17, p. 292.

“Already in the second half of October (...) they (the daughters, Alodia and Daria) found themselves in the SS-Kinderheim in Kalisz. In the last days of November they were found there by my brother, Zygmunt, from Ostrów Wielkopolski. (...). Both girls stayed in the SS-Heim in Kalisz until the middle of January 1944. It was also there that they were partially Germanised. My brother was forbidden from visiting them. (...) After they were taken away from Kalisz, there was no trace of them. Only after a few years I managed to retrace the further course of their fate. From Kalisz, they were both taken to the SS-Heim in Półczyn. (...) Their Germanisation continued. At the moment of leaving that facility, both of them could speak German only. (...) After the war I kept searching for my two darling daughters”.

AIPN GK, Obóz koncentracyjny dla młodocianych w Łodzi, signature: GK 165/379.
Data regarding the children of Doctor Franciszek Witaszek – a physician and scientist from Poznań – during the period of Nazi occupation for the period of the year 1943, Vol. 17, p. 292.

Alodia and Daria Witaszek

Alodia and Daria Witaszek (born in 1938 and 1939, respectively)–siblings from Poznań, the daughters of Franciszek and Halina (née Muszyńska).

Their father was a well-known physician and a scientist at the Medical Microbiology Department of the Adam Mickiewicz University. He was also a member of Związek Odwetu (Union of Retaliation) in the Poznań District, a sabotage organisation within the Związek Walki Zbrojnej (Union of Armed Struggle). In the spring of 1942, the group of Doctor Witaszek was compromised by the Germans and its main actors were sentenced to death. Doctor Witaszek refused to cooperate, for which he was imprisoned in Fort VII in Poznań and murdered on 8 January 1943 by beheading. Prior to performing the execution, the convicts were told that their families would meet the same fate. The spouses Witaszek had five children–Mariola, Iwona, Alodia, Daria and Krzysztof–of whom two girls were sent for a few weeks to the camp on Przemysłowa Street. In March 1943, the mother was sent to KL Auschwitz-Birkenau and later transferred to Ravensbrück, where she managed to survive until the end of the war and she was freed.



Alodia Witaszek-Napierała,
archives of the Museum of Polish Children.

The other three children were hidden by the family, while Alodia and Daria, who were only a few years old then, arrived at the Polen-Jugendverwahrlager in Litzmannstadt. The two girls were subjected there to racial selection and sent to be Germanised in the centres in Kalisz and Połczyn Zdrój. Their first and last names were changed and then they were separated, with Alodia being sent to a new family in Germany, and Daria to Austria.

The girls were found in 1947. At the time of their return home to Poznań, they no longer knew even a single word in Polish.

Sources:

AIPN GK, signature: 165/379,1.17, pp. 286 et seq.;
J. Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 287.





Tormentors

*at the German Camp
for Polish Children in Łódź*

Bohlen-Jugendverwahrlager
Ligmannstadt



Assembly of the prisoners of the camp on Przemysłowa Street during an inspection performed by the head of the Criminal Police, Camillo (Karl) Ehrlich, AIPN Ld, signature 503/106, Vol. 25, photograph 15.

Camillo Ehrlich

Camillo (Karl) Ehrlich was born on 23 February 1893 in Löbnitz (Saxony). He was a veteran of the First World War, and from 1920 to 1937 served as a police investigator in Chemnitz.

In 1937, he arrived at the Criminal Department of the Reich Police in Berlin. In the same year, he joined the National Socialist German Worker's Party. In 1939, he was supposed to be nominated to the office of Kriminaldirektor (Head of Police) in Saxony, but in the end became the head of the Criminal Police in Chemnitz.

On 1 October 1942, he was promoted to the position of the government and police advisor, and then transferred to Litzmannstadt. On 17 January 1942, he took the position of the head of the Criminal Police there. Among other tasks, he served as the commandant of the camp on Przemysłowa Street. On 17 January 1945, he left Łódź, escaping from the coming Soviet forces. He reported first to Berlin, and then to Karlsbad.

Tormentor

at the German camp for Polish children in Łódź

In May of 1945, he was arrested by the NKVD. He was imprisoned, among others, in Speziallager No. 2 in Buchenwald. On 10 February 1950, he arrived at the prison in Waldheim. During the period from April to June 1950, before the special Criminal Chambers of the local State Court, the trials of 3400 people charged with collaboration with the Nazi regime were conducted. The court sentenced Ehrlich to life imprisonment. He was charged with handing over anti-Nazi activists into the hands of the Gestapo, which led to their deaths in a concentration camp, while serving as the head of the Criminal Police in Chemnitz in 1933.

In 1956, Ehrlich was released from prison without any known explanation. In the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), his conviction was considered groundless. After being released, he moved to the FRG and applied for employment in the Criminal Department. His application was rejected in view of him reaching retirement age in 2 years. He died on 6 June 1974 in Munich.

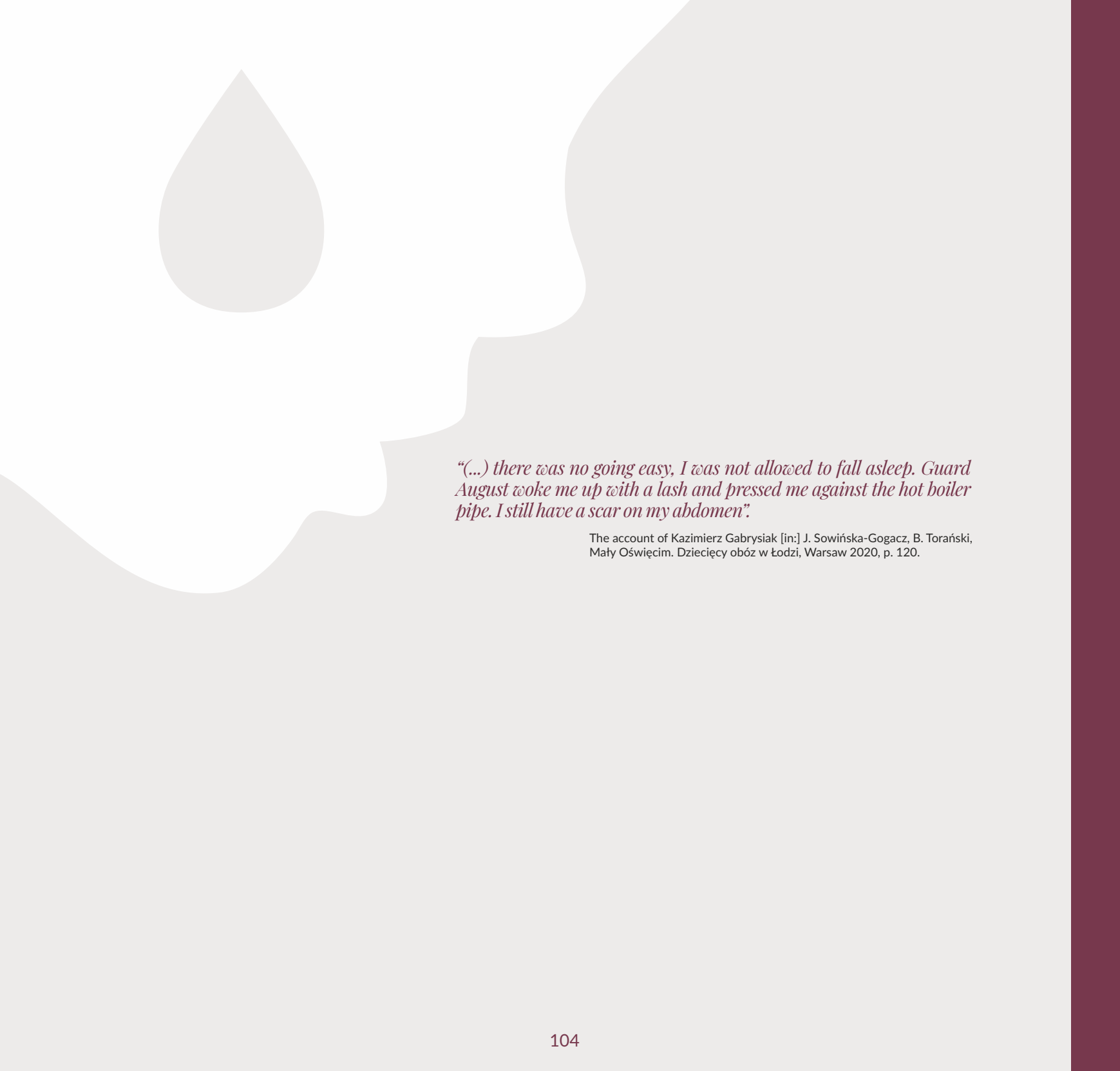
Sources:

AIPN, signature: Ld 540/1, Vol. 22, pp. 546-548;

Fuge, Heinrich Louis Wilhelm, u.a., wegen Teilnahme an angeblichen grausamen Tötungen...

(Staatsanwaltschaft Hamburg 147 Js 10/70), 1942-1980 (Series), Hamburg city Archives (Staatsarchiv Hamburg), signature: 213-12_28;

Extract from "Lagerjournal Speziallager Buchenwald", provided by Rene Emmendorfer from Stiftung Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora on 25.10.2021.



"(...) there was no going easy, I was not allowed to fall asleep. Guard August woke me up with a lash and pressed me against the hot boiler pipe. I still have a scar on my abdomen".

The account of Kazimierz Gabrysiak [in:] J. Sowińska-Gogacz, B. Torąński, Mały Oświęcim. Dziecięcy obóz w Łodzi, Warsaw 2020, p. 120.

Edward August

Edward August was born on 11 April 1909 in Łódź. He came from a German family. He was the son of Juliusz and Michalina (née Schuster). In terms of education, he finished 3 sections of common school. He was a factory worker by profession and also married. He lived in Łódź at Piłsudskiego Street No. 18 (presently Wschodnia Street).

In 1934, he was arrested, charged with theft, and sentenced to six months of imprisonment by the county court in Bydgoszcz. He served in the 9th Infantry Regiment in Zamość. He was captured in September 1939, but after declaring German nationality he was released and returned to Łódź.

In 1940 he signed the Volkslist.

From June to December 1940, he was a worker at the cloth warehouse at Pomorska Street No. 44 and then at the Geyer Factory at Piotrkowska Street No. 282. From January to April 1943, he lived in Tuszynek.

Tormentor

at the German camp for Polish children in Łódź

From April 1943 to 6 January 1944, he worked as a supervisor in the camp on Przemysłowa Street. He was one of the most brutal tormentors in the camp. He subjected children to tortures of various kinds, such as drowning in a water barrel, burning with a cigarette, or cutting with a penknife. He abused alcohol notoriously.

*"I did not abuse children,
I just punished them like
a father would".*

Testimony of Edward August during the main trial on 29 December 1945,
AIPN GK209/1168, p. 31.

August's repeated violation of the rules drew the attention of the deputy commandant. For disrespecting the Lagerführer, August was put in the camp jail, and later in the Kripo jail at Kilińskiego Street No. 152 in Łódź.

August Edward
Wiercisz w Łodzi
ul. Szterlinga 16.

Łódź, dn. 29. 12. 1517

Do
Obywatela Prezydenta
Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej
w Warszawie

1000 33

Prośba

Mdmie dirajozym wyrokim Specjalnego Sęda
Karnego w Łodzi zostalem skazany na karę
smyci za wrogie zachowanie się w okresie
okupacji do ludności polskiej.

W związku z tym zwracam się do Obywatela Prezy-
denta z gorzącą prośbą, o darowanie mi tej kary.

Prośbę moją motywuję tym, iż nie tylko nie ons-
całem się nad ludnością polską, lecz w tym
okresie okresie dla ludności polskiej photo-
nitum i o obywatelu o wydobyciu mi be-
epieruistwie ze strony władz okupacyjnych.

Wierzę, że w sprawie oparte jedynie na
faktach moje zarządki świadczą o niewinności na-
szym, który stwierdził, iż pobitem dracim pol-
skim, lecz nie mógł nawet pisać nawiadła

tego dracim, przynajmniej, że był taki mpa-
del pobicia dracim, lecz nieznaję to bli-
ższego opowiedzenia się, iż było to dracim

polskie, jedynie dla utrzymania wstaci-
nego stosunku tych dracim między sobą, gdy

dracim to pnieżyło się w tym czasie, a
drugiemu dracim. Gdyby tak nie po-
sta, pió, dracim niewybył jeszcze większa

teny od siebie. A więc moje prośby

Letter of Edward August with a petition for a pardon,
AIPN, signature: GK 209/1168, p. 44.

Tormentor

at the German camp for Polish children in Łódź

After the end of the Second World War, he was arrested on 15 May 1945, and confined to the prison located at Sterlinga Street No. 16, in Łódź. In his indictment on 2 October 1945, he was charged with: **“acting to the detriment of the Polish State and Polish citizens, particularly by beating Poles and being a 'tutor' in the punitive camp for minors located in Łódź on Brzezińska Street during the period from April 1943 to the beginning of 1944 in Łódź, in support of the German occupation authorities and as a member of the S.S., a military body of the N.S.D.A.P. used together with the Gestapo, S.A. and S.D. for police service, pacification service, Polish people displacement campaigns, etc”.**

The hearing against Edward August before the Special Criminal Court of the District of the Court of Appeal in Warsaw, seated in Łódź, took place on 29 December 1945 in Łódź.

August did not plead guilty. In the end, by decision of the Special Criminal Court, Edward August was sentenced to death. President Bolesław Bierut did not take advantage of the right to grant pardon in this case. The execution took place on 28 January 1946, in the prison at Sterlinga Street No. 16.



The notification of execution of Edward August on 28 January 1946, issued by the Prosecutor of the District Court in Łódź, AIPN GK209/1168, p. 53.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 209/1167, *passim*;

AIPN, signature: GK 209/1168, *passim*.



“A German woman, Bayer, was abusing Polish children, beating them on their faces for even the smallest transgressions or beating them with a lash with five thongs”.

Testimony of Zofia Stawicka of 12 March 1945,
Case files of the prosecutor of the Special Criminal Court in Łódź in the case of Sydonia Bayer,
signature: IPN GK 209/1165, p. 14.

“At one time that I remember, Sydonia Bayer, the head of the girl's camp, came to our place and hit each of us 20 times with a stick, without any reason, just like that. She always walked around with this stick and kept beating someone, as if she couldn't behave otherwise. She never pushed you, never pointed at you, but always hit you. She was horrible. Extremely unpleasant to children”.

The account of Maria Wiśniewska-Jaworska, interview by Jolanta Sowińska-Gogacz.

Sydonia Bayer

Sydonia Bayer (alias: Isolde Bayer), was born on 12 December 1903 in the village of Kwiatkowice (Łaski powiat). She was the daughter of August and Anna (née Littmann). The nationality of her family was German. Her education consisted of four classes of commerce school, and a course for nurses. During the occupation, she lived at Gdańska Street No. 17, in Łódź. In 1941, she worked for 10 weeks as a ward head in the female prison at Gdańska Street No. 13, in Łódź.

On 12 September 1941 she signed the Volkslist.

In the years 1941-1942, she worked in the Sanitary and Vice Department of the police as a doctor's assistant.

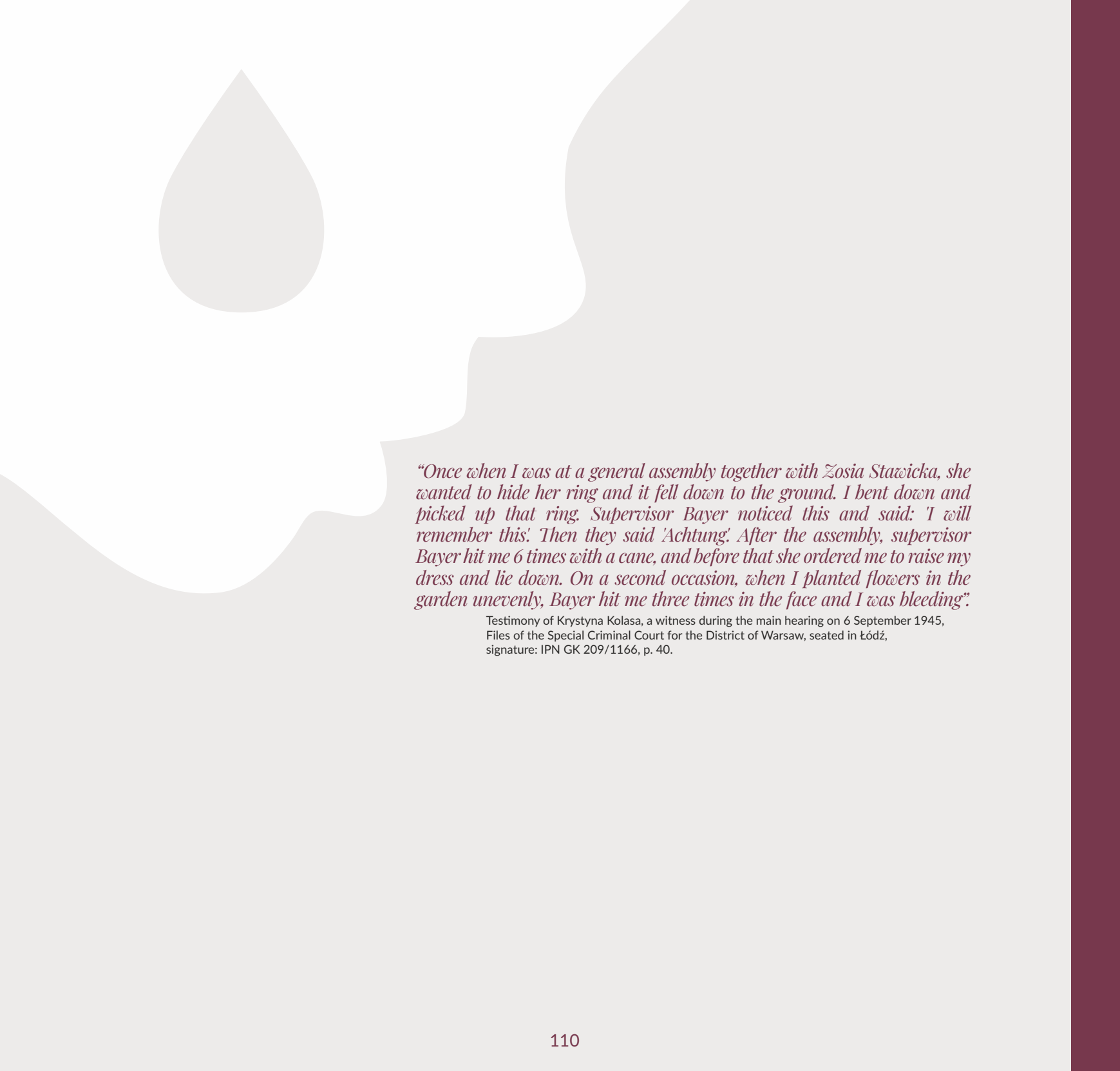
From December 1942, she was employed in the camp on Przemysłowa Street, where she served as the head of the girl's camp and maintained supervision over the work of doctors and over the so-called "infirmary". In July 1944, her employment at the camp was terminated.

Tormentor

at the German camp for Polish children in Łódź



Ausweis der Deutschen Volksliste,
issued under the name of Isolde Bayer, 12 September 1941,
MTN-Ł, signature: A-8550.



“Once when I was at a general assembly together with Zosia Stawicka, she wanted to hide her ring and it fell down to the ground. I bent down and picked up that ring. Supervisor Bayer noticed this and said: ‘I will remember this!’ Then they said ‘Achtung!’ After the assembly, supervisor Bayer hit me 6 times with a cane, and before that she ordered me to raise my dress and lie down. On a second occasion, when I planted flowers in the garden unevenly, Bayer hit me three times in the face and I was bleeding”.

Testimony of Krystyna Kolasa, a witness during the main hearing on 6 September 1945,
Files of the Special Criminal Court for the District of Warsaw, seated in Łódź,
signature: IPN GK 209/1166, p. 40.

Tormentor

at the German camp for Polish children in Łódź

Sydonia Bayer was arrested on 14 March 1945, and confined to the prison located at Gdańska Street No. 13, in Łódź. A hearing before the Special Criminal Court in Warsaw, seated in Łódź, took place on 6 September 1945. Sydonia Bayer was charged with the following:

“supporting the German occupation authorities during the period ending on 1 July 1944, in Łódź, as a supervisor in the penal camp for Polish children, participating in abusing those children and, in particular, contributing to the death of Urszula Kaczmarek and Danuta Jakubowska”.

The court sentenced Bayer to death. President Bolesław Bierut did not take advantage of the right to grant pardon. Her execution took place on 12 November 1945 at the prison at Sterlinga Street No. 16, in Łódź.



Group photograph with Sydonia Bayer on the right, AIPN Ld 503/106, Vol. 25, photograph 2.

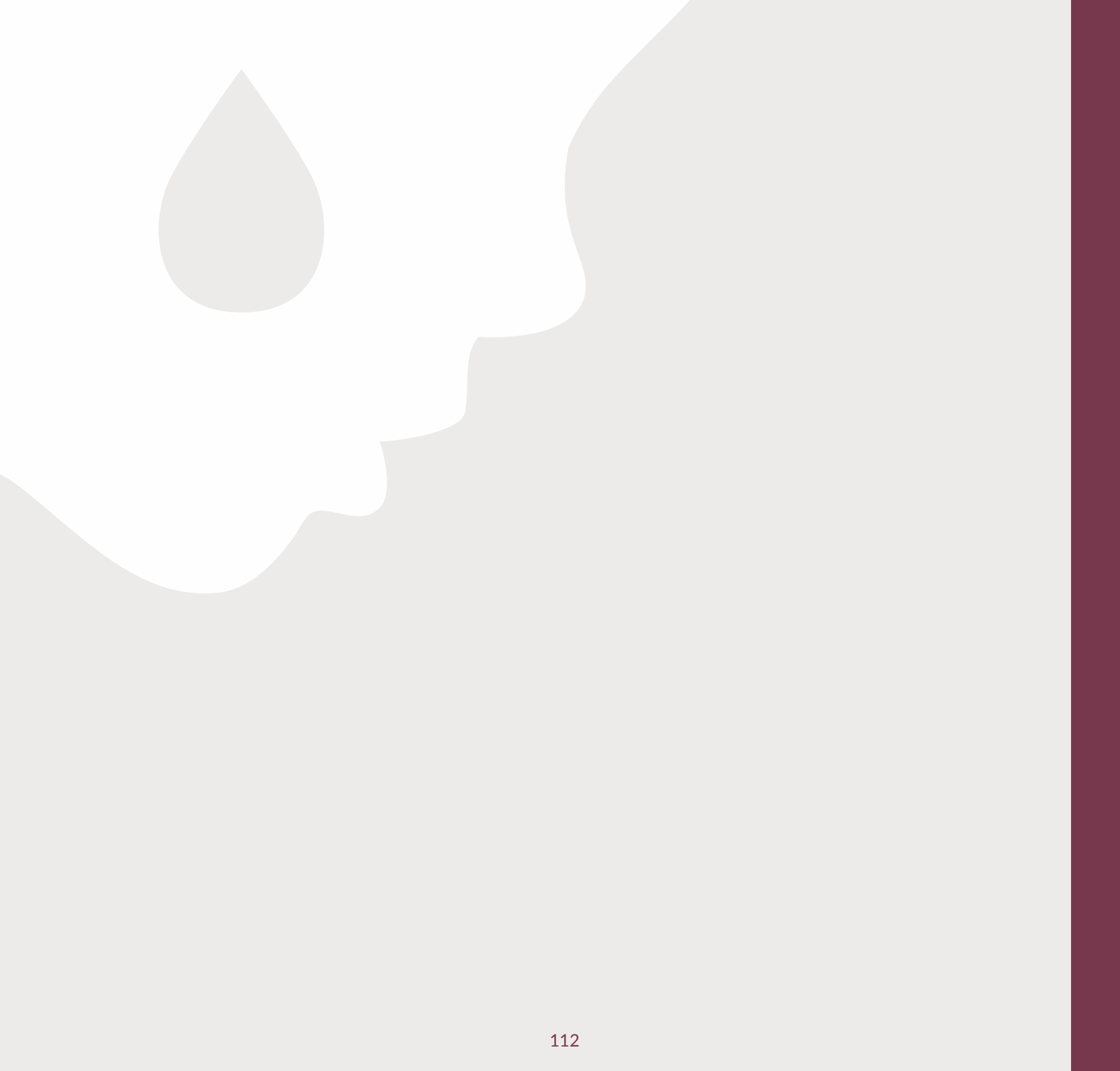


The notification of execution of Sydonia Bayer on 12 November 1945, issued by the Prosecutor of the District Court in Łódź, AIPN GK 209/1166, p. 65.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: GK 209/1166, *passim*;

AIPN, signature: GK 209/1165, *passim*.



Theodor Busch

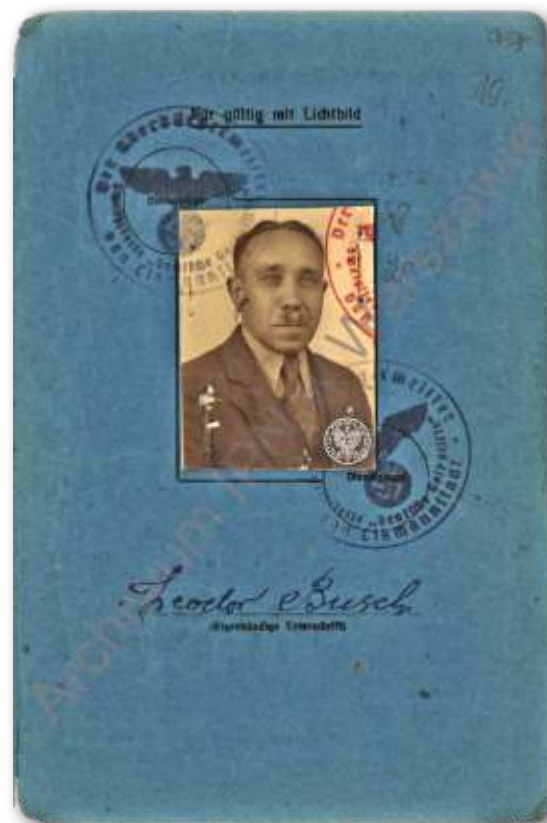
Theodor Busch was born on 18 September 1890 in the village of Nowe Górkki (Gospodarz gmina, Łódź powiat). His family was of German nationality. He was the son of Eugeniusz and Amalia (née Wiese). He had no permanent place of residence. His education consisted of four sections of common school. He was a worker in a textile factory. He was married and a father of three children. Prior to the war, he was an active supporter of the National Socialist movement. In January 1939, he was sentenced to 4 years of prison for smuggling Germans across the Polish border (after an appeal, the sentence was reduced to 1 year of imprisonment). After the outbreak of the Second World War, he joined the SS and the security police.

On 2 September 1941 he signed the Volkslist.

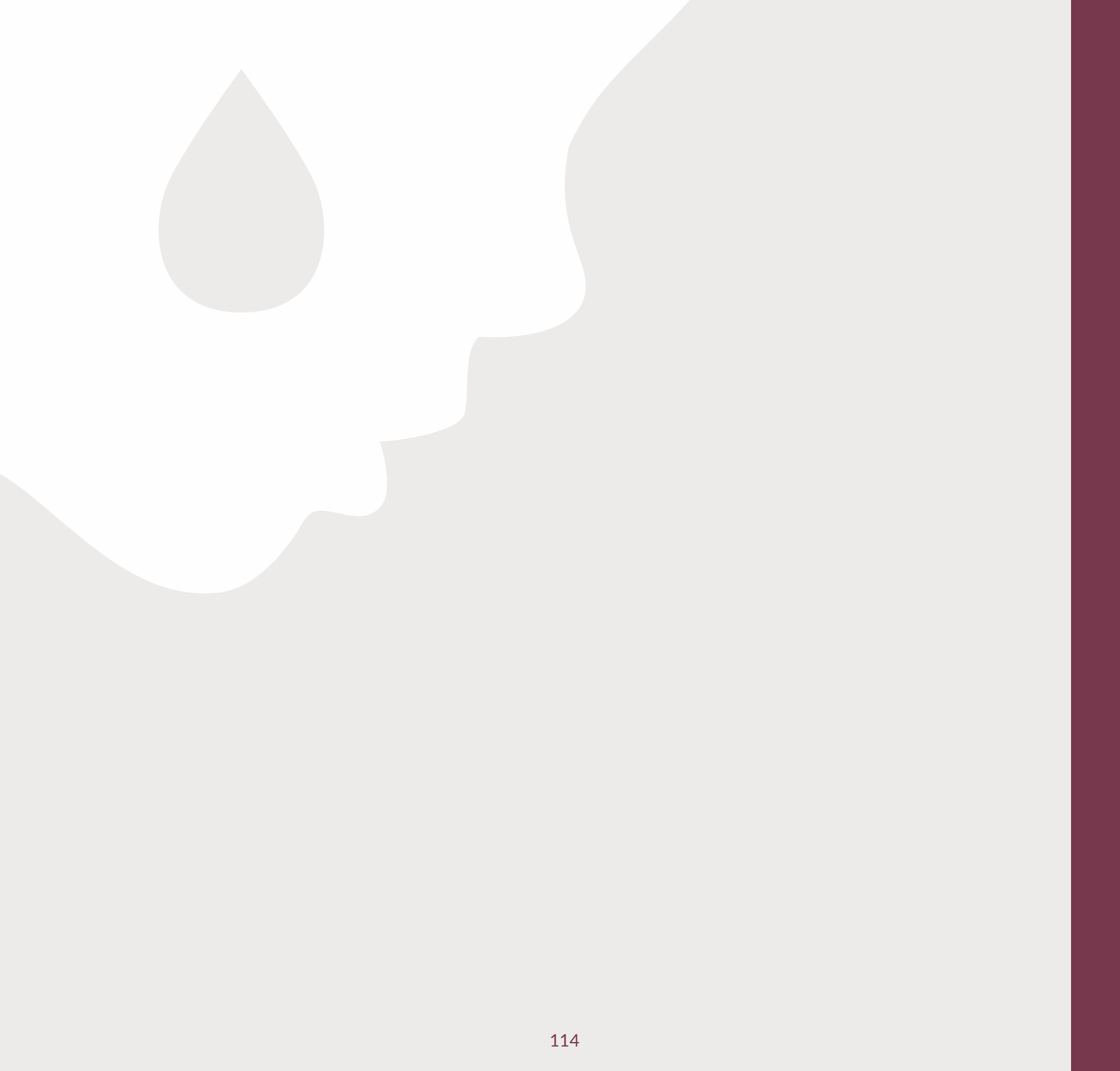
He lived in the Chojny district of Łódź at Grzybowa Street No. 34 (presently Kongresowa Street). In the middle of 1943, he was appointed to the position of block supervisor (Blockleiter). He took an active role in the arrests and searches conducted against his Polish neighbours.

Tormentor

at the German camp for Polish children in Łódź



Ausweis der Deutschen Volksliste issued to Theodor Busch, 2 September 1941, AIPN GK209/1218, p. 19.



Tormentor

at the German camp for Polish children in Łódź

He performed his duties in the camp on Przemysłowa Street from the 1st to the 18th of January 1945. Because of his short stature and characteristic facial features, the children in the camp referred to Busch as “the booted cat”. He was one of the most dangerous guards in the camp. He abused alcohol and treated children without mercy. He always had a lash with him that he used for beating the child prisoners until they lost consciousness. On 18 January 1945, he abandoned the camp along with the rest of the German staff, and fled to Germany. A few months later, he returned to Łódź. On 23 June, he was recognised and arrested. At first he was confined at the prison on Kopernika Street in Łódź, and later, was transferred to the prison in Łęczycza.

In his indictment on 27 April 1946, the Special Criminal Court in Warsaw, seated in Łódź, charged Theodor Busch with the following:

“supporting the German occupation authorities during the period ending on January 1945, in Łódź, as a 'block supervisor'

of the N.S.D.A.P. /National-Sozialistische-Deutsche-Arbeiter-Partei/ and an officer of the military body of this party, i.e., S.S. /Sturm-Staffeln/ (sic) acting to the detriment of the Polish people”.

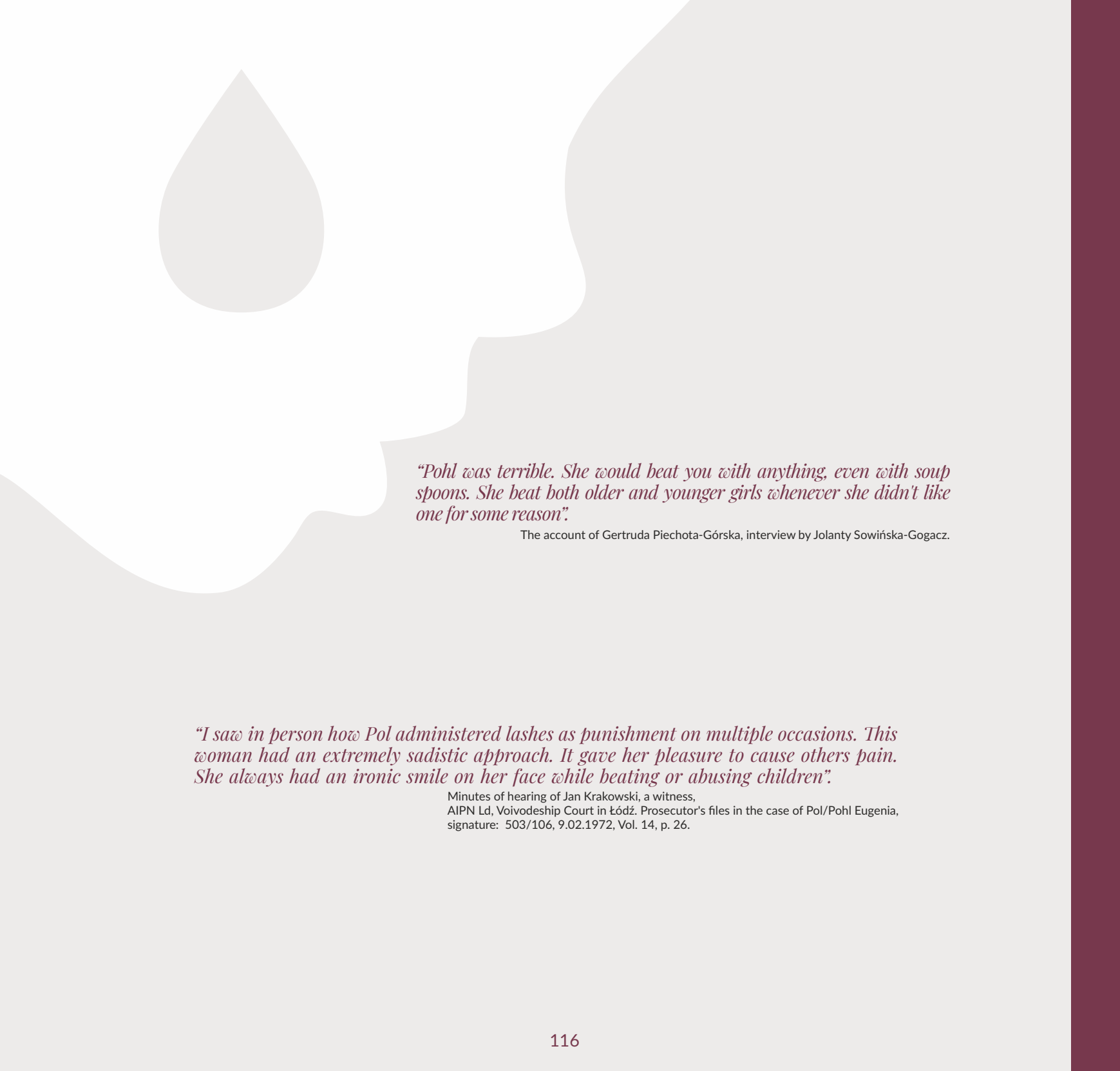


Ausweis der Deutschen Volksliste bearing the name Theodor Busch, 2 September 1941, AIPN GK209/1218, p. 18.

Before his trial started, Theodor Busch died in prison on 5 July 1946. The official cause of death recorded was “general weakness of the body”.

Sources:

AIPN GK209/1218, pp. 2, 5, 39.



“Pohl was terrible. She would beat you with anything, even with soup spoons. She beat both older and younger girls whenever she didn't like one for some reason”.

The account of Gertruda Piechota-Górska, interview by Jolanty Sowińska-Gogacz.

“I saw in person how Pol administered lashes as punishment on multiple occasions. This woman had an extremely sadistic approach. It gave her pleasure to cause others pain. She always had an ironic smile on her face while beating or abusing children”.

Minutes of hearing of Jan Krakowski, a witness,
AIPN Ld, Voivodeship Court in Łódź. Prosecutor's files in the case of Pol/Pohl Eugenia,
signature: 503/106, 9.02.1972, Vol. 14, p. 26.

Eugenia Pol

Eugenia Pol (alias: Genowefa Pohl), was born on 23 February 1923 in Ozorków. She was the daughter of Jan and Janina (née Wróblewska). She finished 7 classes of primary school. She was a tailor by profession. She remained unmarried until her death.

She went to primary schools in Łódź—on Zagajnikowa Street (presently at Kopcińskiego Street No. 54), and in the area of Księży Młyn. During the years 1937-1939, she lived together with her family in Dęby (Tarnobrzeg powiat). In September 1939, she returned to Łódź and lived at Chełmońskiego Street No. 16a.

She applied for signing the Volkslist in June 1940, and on 28 October 1941, she received documents bearing the name Eugenie Pohl.

In 1942, Eugenia Pol reported to the German employment office, where she received a referral to the Criminal Police (Kripo) station at Kilińskiego Street No. 156. From there, she was assigned to work in the newly created camp on Przemysłowa Street.

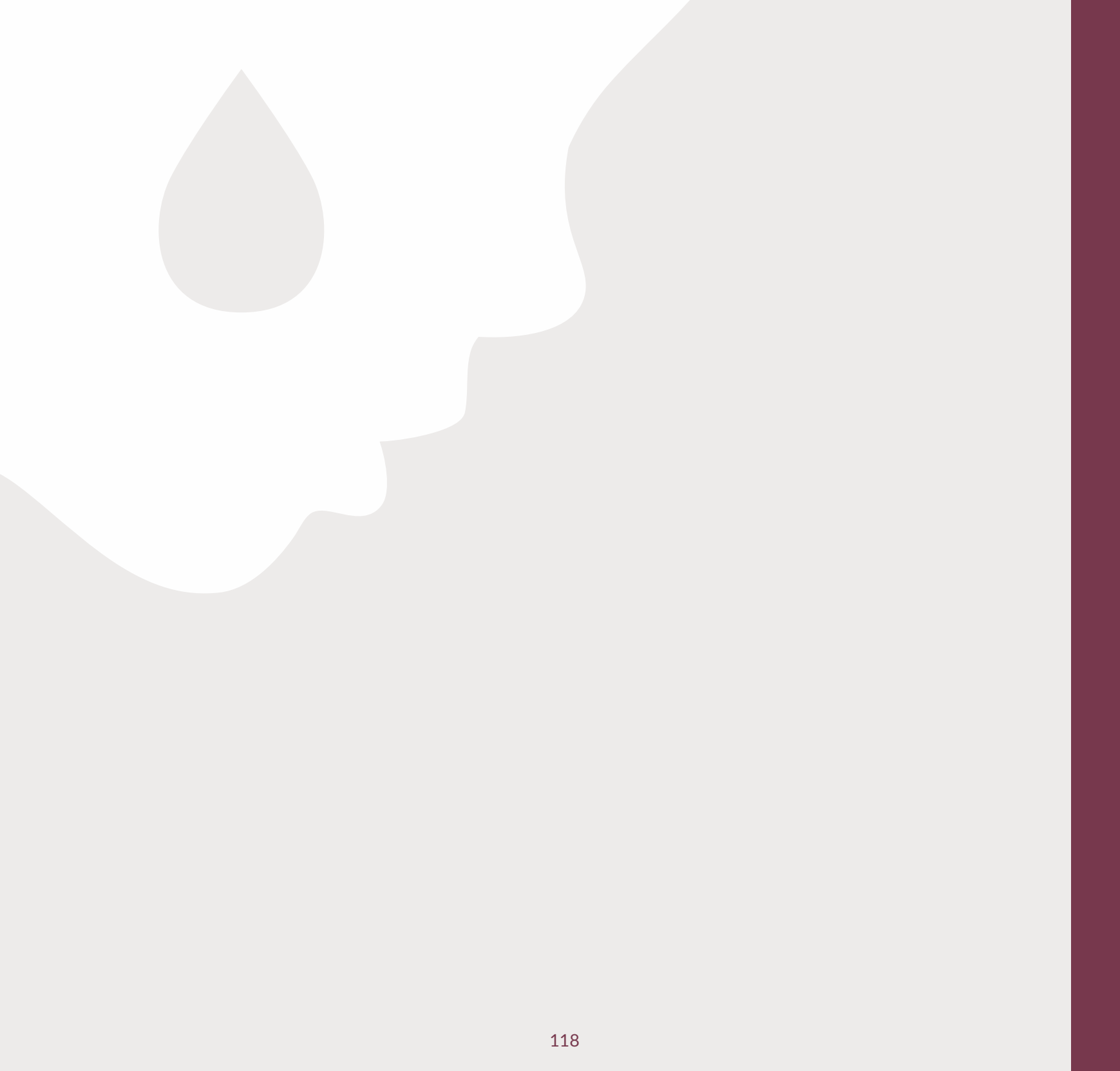
Tormentor

at the German camp for Polish children in Łódź



Identity card photograph of Eugenia Pol,
AIPN Ld. 503/106, Vol. 25, photograph 4.

Eugenia Pol worked there until 18 January 1945. She served as an assistant (Hilfskraft) to the head of the girl's camp, Sydonia Bayer. During the years 1943-1944 she periodically stayed at the camp branch in Dzierżazna, where she oversaw the work of the female prisoners.



Tormentor

at the German camp for Polish children in Łódź

After the end of World War II, Eugenia Pol remained in Łódź, and lived together with her brother, Mieczysław, in a house on Chełmońskiego Street. During the years 1945-1946, she participated in administration and commerce training courses. In the 1950s, she was a member of the "Włókniarz" and "Łodzianka" sports clubs. From 1956, she worked as an authorising officer in Zakłady Przemysłu Bawełnianego im. Armii Ludowej (People's Army Cotton Industry Plant) at Starorudzka Street No. 5/7 (presently Pabianicka Street No. 184/186).

Never pursued by any authorities due to her work in the camp, on 26 November 1962, she submitted her account regarding her work in the camp at the Museum of History of the Revolutionary Movement in Łódź. It is worth noting that former prisoners participated in this meeting. From 1965, she was a member of ZBoWiD-Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację (Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy). On 11 December 1970, Eugenia Pol was arrested and confined to the prison at Radziecka Street No. 38/40

(presently Prison No. 1 at Beskidzka Street No. 54). Then she was transferred to the detention centre at Kraszewskiego Street No. 1/5. The trial against her began on 8 February 1972. The hearing took place at the Voivodeship Court at Dąbrowskiego Street No. 5, in Łódź. It received a great deal of publicity both within the country and abroad. Pol did not plead guilty, and wrote the following in response to the testimonies of the witnesses:

*"they are not based on truth
and I categorically deny all
these testimonies".*

Eugenia Pol was convicted on 2 April 1974 by the Voivodeship Court in Łódź, and sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment. Two years later, the Supreme Court in Warsaw upheld this sentence. In 1989, Eugenia Pol was released from prison prior to serving her entire sentence. She went on to live with her brother in the Dąbrowa district of Łódź. She died in 2003.

Sources:

AIPN, signature: Ld 503/106, Vol. 14, *passim*;

A. Ossowski, *Proces Eugenii Pol a historia Polen-Jugendverwahrlager*, [in:] *Łódź pod okupacją 1939-1945*.

Studia i szkice, edited by T. Toborek and M. Trębacz, Łódź-Warsaw 2018, pp. 341-376.

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**Nazi German Concentration Camp
for Polish Children in Łódź
(1942-1945)**

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