

A French woman tells her experience in Auschwitz before the Nuremberg Trial

Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier

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Morning Session

M. DUBOST: With the authorization of the Court, I should like to proceed with this part of the presentation of the French case by hearing a witness who, for more than 3 years, lived in German concentration camps.

[The witness, Mme. Vaillant-Couturier, took the stand.]

THE PRESIDENT: Would you stand up, please? Do you wish to swear the French oath? Will you tell me your name?

MADAME MARIE CLAUDE VAILLANT-COUTURIER (Witness): Claude Vaillant-Couturier.

THE PRESIDENT: Will you repeat this oath after me: I swear that I will speak without hate or fear, that I will tell the truth, all the truth, nothing but the truth.

[The witness repeated the oath in French.]

THE PRESIDENT: Raise your right hand and say, "I swear."

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: I swear.

THE PRESIDENT: Please, will you sit down and speak slowly. Your name is?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Vaillant-Couturier, Marie, Claude, Vogel.

M. DUBOST: Is your name Madame Vaillant-Couturier?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes.

M. DUBOST: You are the widow of M. Vaillant-Couturier?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes.

M. DUBOST: You were born in Paris on 3 November 1912?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes.

M. DUBOST: And you are of French nationality, French born, and of parents who were of French nationality?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes.

M. DUBOST: You are a deputy in the Constituent Assembly?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes.

M. DUBOST: You are a Knight of the Legion of Honor?

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MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes.

M. DUBOST: You have just been decorated by General Legentilhomme at the Invalides?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes.

M. DUBOST: Were you arrested and deported? Will you please give your testimony?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: I was arrested on 9 February 1942 by Petain's French police, who handed me over to the German authorities after 6 weeks. I arrived on 20 March at Sante prison in the German quarter. I was questioned on 9 June 1942. At the end of my interrogation they wanted me to sign a statement which was not consistent with what I had said. I refused to sign it. The officer who had questioned me threatened me; and when I told him that I was not afraid of death nor of being shot, he said, ""But we have at our disposal means for killing that are far worse than merely shooting." And the interpreter said to me, "You do not know what you have just done. You are going to leave for a concentration camp in Germany. One never comes back from there."

M. DUBOST: You were then taken to prison?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: I was taken back to the Sante prison where I was placed in solitary confinement. However, I was able to communicate with my neighbors

through the piping and the windows. I was in a cell next to that of Georges Politzer, the philosopher, and Jacques Solomon, physicist. Mr. Solomon is the son-in-law of Professor Langevin, a pupil of Curie, one of the first to study atomic disintegration.

Georges Politzer told me through the piping that during his interrogation, after having been tortured, he was asked whether he would write theoretical pamphlets for National Socialism. When he refused, he was told that he would be in the first train of hostages to be shot.

As for Jacques Solomon, he also was horribly tortured and then thrown into a dark cell and came out only on the day of his execution to say goodbye to his wife, who also was under arrest at the Sante Helene. Solomon Langevin told me in Romainville, where I found her when I left the Sante that when she went to her husband he moaned and said, "I cannot take you in my arms, because I can no longer move them."

Every time that the internees came back from their questioning one could hear moaning through the windows, and they all said that they could not make any movements.

Several times during the 5 months I spent at the Sante & hostages were taken to be shot. When I left the Sante on 20 August 1942,

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I was taken- to the Fortress of Romainville, which was a camp for hostages. There I was present on two occasions when they took hostages, on 21 August and 22 September. Among the hostages who were taken away were the husbands of the women who were with me and who left for Auschwitz. Most of them died there. These women, for the most part, had been arrested only because of the activity of their husbands. They themselves had done nothing.

M. DUBOST: When did you leave for Auschwitz?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: I left for Auschwitz on 23 January 1943, and arrived there on the 27th.

M. DUB OST: Were you with a convoy?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: I was with a convoy of 230 French women; among us were Danielle Casanova who died in Auschwitz, Mal Politzer who died in Auschwitz, and Helene Solomon. There were some elderly women...

M. DUBOST: What was their social position?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: They were intellectuals, school teachers; they came from all walks of life. Mal Politzer was a doctor, and the wife of the philosopher Georges Politzer. Helene Solomon is the wife of the physicist Solomon; she is the daughter of Professor Langevin. Danielle Casanova was a dental surgeon and she was very active among the women. It is she who organized a resistance movement among the wives of prisoners.

M. DUBOST: How many of you came back out of 230?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Forty-nine. In the convoy there were some elderly women. I remember one who was 67 and had been arrested because she had in her kitchen the shotgun of her husband, which she kept as a souvenir and had not declared because she did not want it to be taken from her. She died after a fortnight at Auschwitz.

THE PRESIDENT: When, you said only 49 came back, did you mean only 49 arrived at Auschwitz.

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: No, only 49 came back to France.

There were also cripples, among them a singer who had only one leg. She was taken out and gassed at Auschwitz. There was also a young girl of 16, a college girl, Claudine Guerin; she also died at Auschwitz. There were also two women who had been acquitted by the German military tribunal, Marie Alonzo and Marie Therese Fleuri; they died at Auschwitz.

It was a terrible journey. We were 60 in a car and we were given no food or drink during the journey. At the various stopping

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places we asked the Lorraine soldiers of the Wehrmacht who were guarding us whether we would arrive soon; and they replied, "If you knew where you are going you would not be in a hurry to get there."

We arrived at Auschwitz at dawn. The seals on our cars were broken, and we were driven out by blows with the butt end of a rifle, and taken to the Birkenau Camp, a section of the Auschwitz Camp. It is situated in the middle of a great plain, which was frozen in the month of January. During this part of the journey we had to drag our luggage. As we passed through the door we knew only too well how slender our

chances were that we would come out again, for we had already met columns of living skeletons going to work; and as we entered we sang "The Marseillaise" to keep up our courage.

We were led to a large shed, then to the disinfecting station. There our heads were shaved and our registration numbers were tattooed on the left forearm. Then we were taken into a large room for a steam bath and a cold shower. In spite of the fact that we were naked, all this took place in the presence of SS men and women. We were then given clothing which was soiled and torn, a cotton dress and jacket of the same material.

As all this had taken several hours, we saw from the windows of the block where we were, the camp of the men; and toward the evening an orchestra came in. It was snowing and we wondered why they were playing music. We then saw that the camp foremen were returning to the camp. Each foreman was followed by men who were carrying the dead. As they could hardly drag themselves along, every time they stumbled they were put on their feet again by being kicked or by blows with the butt end of a rifle.

After that we were taken to the block where we were to live. There were no beds but only bunks, measuring 2 by 2 meters, and there nine of us had to sleep the first night without any mattress or blanket. We remained in blocks of this kind for several months. We could not sleep all night, because every time one of the nine moved-this happened unceasingly because we were all ill-she disturbed the whole row.

At 3:30 in the morning the shouting of the guards woke us up, and with cudgel blows we were driven from our bunks to go to roll call. Nothing in the world could release us from going to the roll call; even those who were dying had to be dragged there. We had to stand there in rows of five until dawn, that is, 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning in winter; and when there was a fog, sometimes until noon. Then the commandos would start on their way to work.

M. DUBOST: Excuse me, can you describe the roll call?

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MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: For roll call we were lined up in rows of five; and we waited until daybreak, until the Aufseherinnen, the German women guards in uniform, came to count us. They had cudgels and they beat us more or less at random.

We had a comrade, Germaine Renaud, a school teacher from Azay-le-Rideau in France, who had her skull broken before my eyes from a blow with a cudgel during the roll call.

The work at Auschwitz consisted of clearing demolished houses, road building, and especially the draining of marsh land. This was by far the hardest work, for all day long we had our feet in the water and there was the danger of being sucked down. It frequently happened that we had to pull out a comrade who had sunk in up to the waist.

During the work the SS men and women who stood guard over us would beat us with cudgels and set their dogs on us. Many of our friends had their legs torn by the dogs. I even saw a woman torn to pieces and die under my very eyes when Tauber, a member of the SS, encouraged his dog to attack her and grinned at the sight.

The causes of death were extremely numerous. First of all, there was the complete lack of washing facilities. When we arrived at Auschwitz, for 12,000 internees there was only one tap of water, unfit for drinking, and it was not always flowing. As this tap was in the German wash house we could reach it only by passing through the guards, who were German common-law women prisoners, and they beat us horribly as we went by. It was therefore almost impossible to wash ourselves or our clothes. For more than 3 months we remained without changing our clothes. When there was snow, we melted some to wash in. Later, in the spring, when we went to work we would drink from a puddle by the road-side and then wash our underclothes in it. We took turns washing our hands in this dirty water. Our companions were dying of thirst, because we got only half a cup of some herbal tea twice a day.

M. DUBOST: Please describe in detail one of the roll calls at the beginning of February.

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: On 5 February there was what is called a general roll call.

M. DUBOST: In what year was that?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: In 1943. At 3:30 the whole camp

M. DUBOST: In the morning at 3:30?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: In the morning at 3:30 the whole camp was awakened and sent out on the plain, whereas normally the roll call was at 3:30 but inside the camp. We remained

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out in front of the camp until 5 in the afternoon, in the snow, without any food. Then when the signal was given we had to go through the door one by one, and we were struck in the back with a cudgel, each one of us, in order to make us run. Those who could not run, either because they were too old or too ill were caught by a hook and taken to Block 25, "waiting block" for the gas chamber. On that day 10 of the French women of our convoy were thus caught and taken to Block 25.

When all the internees were back in the camp, a party to which I belonged was organized to go and pick up the bodies of the dead which were scattered over the plain as on a battlefield. We carried to the yard of Block 25 the dead and the dying without distinction, and they remained there stacked up in a pile.

This Block 25, which was the anteroom of the gas chamber, if one may express it so, is well known to me because at that time we had been transferred to Block 26 and our windows 'Opened on the yard of Number 25. One saw stacks of corpses piled up in the courtyard, and from time to time a hand or a head would stir among the bodies, trying to free itself. It was a dying woman attempting to get free and live. The rate of mortality in that block was even more terrible than elsewhere because, having been condemned to death, they received food or drink only if there was something left in the cans in the kitchen; which means that very often they went for several days without a drop of water.

One of our companions, Annette Epaux, a fine young woman of 30, passing the block one day, was overcome with pity for those women who moaned from morning till night in all languages, "Drink. Drink. Water!" She came back to our block to get a little herbal tea, but as she was passing it through the bars of the window she was seen by the Aufseherin, who took her by the neck and threw her into Block 25. All my life I will remember Annette Epaux. Two days later I saw her on the truck which was taking the internees to the gas chamber. She had her arms -around another French woman, old Line Porcher, and when the truck started moving she cried, "Think of my little boy, if you ever get back to France." Then they started singing "The Marseillaise."

In Block 25, in the courtyard, there were rats as big as cats running about and gnawing the corpses and even attacking the dying who had not enough strength left to chase them away.

Another cause of mortality and epidemics was the fact that we were given food in large red mess tins, which were merely rinsed in cold water after each meal. As all the women were ill and had not the strength during the night to go to the trench which was used as a lavatory, the access to which was beyond description, they used these containers for a purpose for which they were not meant.

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The next day the mess tins were collected and taken to a refuse heap. During the day another team would come and collect them, wash them in cold water, and put them in use again.

Another cause of death was the problem of shoes. In the snow and mud of Poland leather shoes were completely destroyed at the end of a week or two. Therefore our feet were frozen and covered with sores. We had to sleep with our muddy shoes on, lest they be stolen, and when the time came to get up for roll call cries of anguish could be heard: "My shoes have been stolen." Then one had to wait until the whole block had been emptied to look under the bunks for odd shoes. Sometimes one found two shoes for the same foot, or one shoe and one sabot. One could go to roll call like that but it was an additional torture for work, because sores formed on our feet which quickly became infected for lack of care. Many of our companions went to the Revier for sores on their feet and legs and never came back.

M. DUBOST: What did they do to the internees who came to roll call without shoes?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: The Jewish internees who came without shoes were immediately taken to Block 25.

M. DUBOST: They were gassed then?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: They were gassed for any reason whatsoever. Their conditions were moreover absolutely appalling. Although we were crowded 800 in a block and could scarcely move, they were 1,500 to a block of similar dimensions, so that many of them could not sleep or even lie down during the whole night.

M. DUBOST: Can you talk about the Revier?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: To reach the Revier one had to go first to the roll call. Whatever the state was...

M. DUBOST: Would you please explain what the Revier was in the camp?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: The Revier was the blocks where the sick were put. This place could not be given the name of hospital, because it did not correspond in any way to our idea of a hospital.

To go there one had first to obtain authorization from the block chief who seldom gave it. When it was finally granted we were led in columns to the infirmary where, no matter what weather, whether it snowed or rained, even if one had a temperature of 4011 (centigrade) one had to wait for several hours standing in a queue to be admitted. It frequently happened that patients died outside

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before the door of the infirmary, before they could get in. Moreover, lining up in front of the infirmary was dangerous because if the queue was too long the SS came along, picked up all the women who were waiting, and took them straight to Block Number 25.

M. DUBOST: That is to say, to the gas chamber?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: That is to say to the gas chamber. That is why very often the women preferred not to go to the Revier and they died at their work or at roll call. Every day, after the evening roll call in winter time, dead were picked up who had fallen into the ditches.

The only advantage of the Revier was that as one was in bed, one did not have to go to roll call; but one lay in appalling conditions, four in a bed of less than 1 meter in width, each suffering from a different disease, so that anyone who came for leg sores would catch typhus or dysentery from neighbors. The straw mattresses were dirty and they were changed only when absolutely rotten. The bedding was so full of lice that one could see them swarming like ants. One of my companions, Marguerite Corringer, told me that when she had typhus, she could not sleep all night because of the lice. She spent the night shaking her blanket over a piece of paper and emptying the lice into a receptacle by the bed, and this went on for hours.

There were practically no medicines. Consequently the patients were left in their beds without any attention, without hygiene, and unwashed. The dead lay in bed with the sick for several hours; and finally, when they were noticed, they were simply tipped out of the bed and taken outside the block. There the women porters would come and carry the dead away on small stretchers, with heads and legs dangling over the sides. From morning till night the carriers of the dead went from the Revier to the mortuary.

During the big epidemics, in the winters of 1943 and 1944, the stretchers were replaced by carts, as* there were too many dead bodies. During those periods of epidemics there were from 200 to 350 dead daily.

M. DUBOST: How many people died at that time?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: During the big epidemics of typhus in the winters of 1943 and 1944, from 200 to 350; it depended on the days.

M. DUBOST: Was the Revier open to all the internees?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: No. When we arrived Jewish women had not the right to be admitted. They were taken straight to the gas chamber.

M. DUBOST: Would you please tell us about the disinfection of the blocks?

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MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: From time to time, owing to the filth which caused the lice and gave rise to so many epidemics, they disinfected the blocks with gas; but these disinfections were also the cause of many deaths because, while the blocks were being disinfected with gas, the prisoners were taken to the shower-baths. Their clothes were taken away from them to be steamed. The internees were left naked outside, waiting for their clothing to come back from the steaming, and then they were given back to them an wet. Even those who were sick, who could barely stand on their feet, were sent to the showers. It is quite obvious that a great many of them died in the course of these proceedings. Those who could not move were washed all in the same bath during the disinfection.

M. DUBOST: How were you fed?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: We had 200 grams of bread, three-quarters or half a liter-it varied-of soup made from swedes, .and a few grams of margarine or a slice of sausage in the evening, this daily.

M. DUBOST: Regardless of the work that was exacted from the internees?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Regardless of the work that was exacted from the internee. Some who had to work in the factory of the "Union," an ammunition factory where they made grenades and shells, received what was called a "Zulage," that is, a supplementary ration, when the amount of their production was satisfactory. Those internees had to go to roll can morning and night as we did, and they were at work 12 hours in the factory. They came back to the camp after the day's work, making the journey both ways on foot.

M. DUBOST: What was this "Union" factory?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: It was an ammunition factory. I do not know to what company it belonged. It was called the "Union."

M. DUBOST: Was it the only factory?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: No, there was also a large Buna factory, but as I did not work there I do not know what was made there. The internees who were taken to the Buna plant never came back to our camp.

M. DUBOST: Will you tell us about experiments, if you witnessed any?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: As to the experiments, I have seen in the Revier, because I was employed at the Revier, the queue of young Jewesses from Salonika who stood waiting in front of the

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X-ray room for sterilization. I also know that they performed castration operations in the men's camp. Concerning the experiments performed on women I am well informed, because my friend, Doctor Hade Hautval of Montbeliard, who has returned to France, worked for several months in that block nursing the patients; but she always refused to participate in those experiments. They sterilized women either by injections or by operation or with rays. I saw and knew several women who had been sterilized. There was a very high mortality rate among those operated upon. Fourteen Jewesses from France who refused to be sterilized were sent to a Strafarbeit kommando, that is, hard labor.

M. DUBOST: Did they come back from those kommandos?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Very seldom. Quite exceptionally.

M. DUBOST: What was the aim of the SS?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Sterilization-they did not conceal it. They said that they were trying to find the best method for sterilizing so as to replace the native population in the occupied countries by Germans after one generation, once they had made use of the inhabitants as slaves to work for them.

M. DUBOST: In the Revier did you see any pregnant women?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes. The Jewish women, when they arrived in the first months of pregnancy, were subjected to abortion. When their pregnancy was

near the end, after confinement, the babies were drowned in a bucket of water. I know that because I worked in the Revier and the woman who was in charge of that task was a German midwife, who was imprisoned for having performed illegal operations. After a while another doctor arrived and for 2 months they did not kill the Jewish babies. But one day an order came from Berlin saying that again they had to be done away with. Then the mothers and their babies were called to the infirmary. They were put in a lorry and taken away to the gas chamber.

M. DUBOST: Why did you say that an order came from Berlin?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Because I knew the internees who worked in the secretariat of the SS and in particular a Slovakian woman by the name of Hertha Roth, who is now working with UNRRA at Bratislava.

M. DUBOST: Is it she who told you that?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes, and moreover, I also knew the men who worked in the gas kommando.

M. DUBOST: You have told us about the Jewish mothers. Were there other mothers in your camp?

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MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes, in principle, non-Jewish women were allowed to have their babies, and the babies were not taken away from them; but conditions in the camp being so horrible, the babies rarely lived for more than 4 or 5 weeks.

There was one block where the Polish and Russian mothers were. One day the Russian mothers, having been accused of making too much noise, had to stand for roll call all day long in front of the block, naked, with their babies in their arms.

M. DUBOST: What was the disciplinary system of the camp? Who kept order and discipline? What were the punishments?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Generally speaking, the SS economized on many of their own personnel by employing internees for watching the camp; SS only supervised. These internees were chosen from German common-law criminals and prostitutes, and sometimes those of other nationalities, but most of them were Germans. By corruption, accusation, and terror they succeeded in making veritable human beasts of them; and the internees had as much cause to complain about them as about the SS

themselves. They beat us just as hard as the SS; and as to the SS, the men behaved like the women and the women were as savage as the men. There was no difference.

The system employed by the SS of degrading human beings to the utmost by terrorizing them and causing them through fear to commit acts which made them ashamed of themselves, resulted in their being no longer human. This was what they wanted. It took a great deal of courage to resist this atmosphere of terror and corruption.

M. DUBOST: Who meted out punishments?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: The SS leaders, men and women.

M. DUBOST: What was the nature of the punishments?

NNE. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Bodily ill-treatment in particular. One of the most usual punishments was 50 blows with a stick on the loins. They were administered with a machine which I saw, a swinging apparatus manipulated by an SS. There were also endless roll calls day and night, or gymnastics; flat on the belly, get up, lie down, up, down, for hours, and anyone who fell was beaten unmercifully and taken to Block 25.

M. DUBOST: How did the SS behave towards the women? And the women SS?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: At Auschwitz there was a brothel for the SS and also one for the male internees of the staff, who were called "Kapo." Moreover, when the SS needed servants,

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they came accompanied by the Oberaufseherin, that is, the woman commandant of the camp, to make a choice during the process of disinfection. They would point to a young girl, whom the Oberaufseherin would take out of the ranks. They would look her over and make jokes about her physique; and if she was pretty and they liked her, they would hire her as a maid with the consent of the Oberaufseherin, who would tell her that she was to obey them absolutely no matter what they asked of her.

M. DUBOST: Why did they go during disinfection?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Because during the disinfection the women were naked.

M. DUBOST: This system of demoralization and corruption-was it exceptional?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: No, the system was identical in all the camps where I have been, and I have spoken to internees coming from camps where I myself had never been; it was the same thing everywhere. The system was identical no matter what the camp was. There were, however, certain variations. I believe that Auschwitz was one of the harshest; but later I went to Ravensbruck, where there also was a house of ill fame and where recruiting was also carried out among the internees.

M. DUBOST: Then, according to you, everything was done to degrade those women in their own sight?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes.

M. DUBOST: What do you know about the convoy of Jews which arrived from Romainville about the same time as yourself?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: When we left Romainville the Jewesses who were there at the same time as ourselves were left behind. They were sent to Drancy and subsequently arrived at Auschwitz, where we found them again 3 weeks later, 3 weeks after our arrival. Of the original 1,200 only 125 actually came to the camp; the others were immediately sent to the gas chambers. Of these 125 not one was left alive at the end of 1 month.

The transports operated as follows:

When we first arrived, whenever a convoy of Jews came, a selection was made; first the old men and women, then the mothers and the children were put into trucks together with the sick or those whose constitution appeared to be delicate. They took in only the young women and girls as well as the young men who were sent to the men's camp.

Generally speaking, of a convoy of about 1,000 to 1,500, seldom more than 250-and this figure really was the maximum-actually

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reached the camp. The rest were immediately sent to the gas chamber.

At this selection also, they picked out women in good health between the ages of 20 and 30, who were sent to the experimental block; and young girls and slightly older women, or those who had not been selected for that purpose, were sent to the camp where, like ourselves, they were tattooed and shaved.

There was also, in the spring of 1944, a special block for twins. It was during the time when large convoys of Hungarian Jews about 700,000-arrived. Dr. Mengele, who was carrying out the experiments, kept back from each convoy twin children and twins in general, regardless of their age, so long as both were present. So we had both babies and adults on the floor at that block. Apart from blood tests and measuring I do not know what was done to them.

M. DUBOST: Were you an eye witness of the selections on the arrival of the convoys?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes, because when we worked at the sewing block in 1944, the block where we lived directly faced the stopping place of the trains. The system had been improved. Instead of making the selection at the place where they arrived, a side line now took the train practically right up to the gas chamber; and the stopping place, about 100 meters from the gas chamber, was right opposite our block though, of course, separated from us by two rows of barbed wire. Consequently, we saw the unsealing of the cars and the soldiers letting men, women, and children out of them. We then witnessed heart-rending scenes; old couples forced to part from each other, mothers made to abandon their young daughters, since the latter were sent to the camp, whereas mothers and children were sent to the gas chambers. All these people were unaware of the fate awaiting them. They were merely upset at being separated, but they did not know that they were going to their death. To render their welcome more pleasant at this time-June-July 1944-an orchestra composed of internees, all young and pretty girls dressed in little white blouses and navy blue skirts, played during the selection, at the arrival of the trains, gay tunes such as "The Merry Widow," the "Barcarolle" from "The Tales of Hoffman," and so forth. They were then informed that this was a labor camp and since they were not brought into the camp they saw only the small platform surrounded by flowering plants. Naturally, they could not realize what was in store for them. Those selected for the gas chamber, that is, the old people, mothers, and children, were escorted to a red-brick building.

M. DUBOST: These were not given an identification number?

MM. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: No.

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M. DUBOST: They were not tattooed?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: No. They were not even counted.

M. DUBOST: You were tattooed?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes, look. [The witness showed her arm.] They were taken to a red brick building, which bore the letters "Baden," that is to say "Baths." There, to begin with, they were made to undress

and given a towel before they went into the' so-called shower room. Later on, at the time of the large convoys from Hungary, they had no more time left to play-act or to pretend; they were brutally undressed, and I know these details as I knew a little Jewess from France who lived with her family at the "Republique" district.

M. DUBOST: In Paris?

MIKE . VAILLANT-COUTURIER: In Paris. She was called "little Marie" and she was the only one, the sole survivor of a family of nine. Her mother and her seven brothers and sisters had been gassed on arrival. When I met her she was employed to undress the babies before they were taken into the gas chamber. Once the people were undressed they took them into a room which was somewhat like a shower room, and gas capsules were thrown through an opening in the ceiling. An SS man would watch the effect produced through a porthole. At the end of 5 or 7 minutes, when the gas had completed its work, he gave the signal to open the doors; and men with gas masks--- they too were internees---went into the room and removed the corpses. They told us that the internees must have suffered before dying, because they were closely clinging to one another and it was very difficult to separate them.

After that a special squad would come to pull out gold teeth and dentures; and again, when the bodies had been reduced to ashes, they would sift them in an attempt to recover the gold.

At Auschwitz there were eight crematories but, as from 1944, these proved insufficient. The SS had large pits dug by the internees, where they put branches, sprinkled with gasoline, which they set on fire. Then they threw the corpses into the pits. From our block we could see after about three-quarters of an' hour or an hour after the arrival of a convoy, large flames coming from the crematory, and the sky was lighted up by the burning pits.

One night we were awakened by terrifying cries. And we discovered, on the following day, from the men working in the Sonderkommando-the "Gas Kommando"- that on the preceding day, the gas supply having run out, they had thrown the children into the furnaces alive.

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M. DUBOST: Can you tell us about the selections that were made at the beginning of winter?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Every year, towards the end of the autumn, they proceeded to make selections on a large scale in the Revier. The system appeared to work as follows-I say this because I noticed the fact for myself during the time I spent in Auschwitz. Others, who had stayed there even longer than I, had observed the same phenomenon.

In the spring, all through Europe, they rounded up men and women whom they sent to Auschwitz. They kept only those who were strong enough to work all through the summer. During that period naturally some died every day; but the strongest, those who had succeeded in holding out for 6 months, were so exhausted that they too had to go to the Revier. It was then in autumn that the large scale selections were made, so as not to feed too many useless mouths during the winter. All the women who were too thin were sent to the gas chamber, as well as those who had long, drawn-out illnesses; but the Jewesses were gassed for practically no reason at all. For instance, they gassed everybody in the "scabies block," whereas everybody knows that with a little care, scabies can be cured in 3 days. I remember the typhus convalescent block from which 450 out of 500 patients were sent to the gas chamber.

During Christmas 1944-no, 1943, Christmas 1943-when we were in quarantine, we saw, since we lived opposite Block 25, women brought to Block 25 stripped naked. Uncovered trucks were then driven up and on them the naked women were piled, as many as the trucks could hold. Each time a truck started, the infamous Hessler-he was one of the criminals condemned to death at the Luneburg trials-ran after the truck and with his bludgeon repeatedly struck the naked women going to their death. They knew they were going to the gas chamber and tried to escape. They were massacred. They attempted to jump from the truck and we, from our own block, watched the trucks pass by and heard the grievous wailing of all those women who knew they were going to be gassed. Many of them could very well have lived on, since they were suffering only from scabies and were, perhaps, a little too undernourished.

M. DUBOST: You told us, Madame, a little while ago, that the deportees, from the moment they stepped off the train and without even being counted, were sent to the gas chamber. What happened to their clothing and their luggage?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: The non-Jews had to carry their own luggage and were billeted in separate blocks, but when the Jews arrived they had to leave all their belongings on the platform. They were stripped before entering the gas chamber and all their

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clothes, as well as all their belongings, were taken over to large barracks and there sorted out by a Kommando named "Canada." Then everything was shipped. to Germany: jewelry, fur coats, et cetera.

Since the Jewesses were sent to Auschwitz with their entire families and since they had been told that this was a sort of ghetto and were advised to bring all their goods and chattels along, they consequently brought considerable riches with them. As for the Jewesses from Salonika, I remember that on their arrival they were given picture postcards, bearing the post office address of "Waldsee," a place which did not exist; and a printed text to be sent to their families, stating, "We are doing very well here; we have work and we are well treated. We await your arrival." I myself saw the cards in question; and the Schreiberinnen, that is, the secretaries of the block, were instructed to distribute them among the internees in order to post them to their families. I know that whole families arrived as a result of these postcards.

I myself know that the following affair occurred in Greece. I do not know whether it happened in any other country, but in any case it did occur in Greece (as well as in Czechoslovakia) that whole families went to the recruiting office at Salonika in order to rejoin their families. I remember one professor of literature from Salonika, who, to his horror, saw his own father arrive.

M. DUBOST: Will you tell us about the Gypsy camps?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Right next to our camp, on the other side of the barbed wires, 3 meters apart, there were two camps; one for Gypsies, which towards August 1944 was completely gassed. These Gypsies came from all parts of Europe including Germany. Likewise on the other side there was the so-called family camp. These were Jews from the Ghetto of Theresienstadt, who had been brought there and, unlike ourselves, they had been neither tattooed nor shaved. Their clothes were not taken from them and they did not have to work. They lived like this for 6 months and at the end of 6 months the entire family camp, amounting to some 6,000 or 7,000 Jews, was gassed. A few days later other large convoys again arrived from Theresienstadt with their families and 6 months later they too were gassed, like the first inmates of the family camp.

M. DUBOST: Would you, Madame, please give us some details as to what you saw when you were about to leave the camp, and under what circumstances you left it?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: We were in quarantine before leaving Auschwitz.

M. DUBOST: When was that?

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MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: We were in quarantine for 10 months, from the 15th of July 1943, yes, until May 1944. And after that we returned to the camp-for 2 months. Then we went to Ravensbruck.

M. DUBOST: These were all Frenchwomen from your convoy, who had survived?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes, all the surviving Frenchwomen of our convoy. We had heard from Jewesses who had arrived from France, in July 1944, that an intensive campaign had been carried out by the British Broadcasting Corporation in London, in connection with our convoy, mentioning Mal Politzer, Danielle Casanova, Helene Solomon-Langevin, and myself. As a result of this broadcast we knew that orders had been issued from Berlin to the effect that Frenchwomen should be transported under better conditions.

So we were placed in quarantine. This was a block situated opposite the camp and outside the barbed wire. I must say that it is to this quarantine that the 49 survivors owed their lives, because at the end of 4 months there were only 52 of us. Therefore it is certain that we could not have survived 18 months of this regime had we not had these 10 months of quarantine.

This quarantine was imposed because exanthematic typhus was raging at Auschwitz. One could leave the camp only to be freed or to be transferred to another camp or to be summoned before the court after spending 15 days in quarantine, these 15 days being the incubation period for exanthematic typhus. Consequently, as soon as the papers arrived announcing that the internee would probably be liberated, she was placed in quarantine until the order for her liberation was signed. This sometimes took several months and 15 days was the minimum.

Now a policy existed for freeing German women common-law criminals and asocial elements in order to employ them as workers in the German factories. It is therefore impossible to imagine that the whole of Germany was unaware of the existence of the concentration camps and of what was going on there, since these women had been released from the camps and it is difficult to believe that they never mentioned them. Besides, in the factories where the former internees were employed, the

Vorarbeiterinnen (the forewomen) were German civilians in contact with the internees and able to speak to them. The forewomen from Auschwitz, who subsequently came to Siemens at Ravensbruck as Aufseherinnen, had been former workers at Siemens in Berlin. They* met forewomen they had known in Berlin, and, in our presence, they told them what they had seen at Auschwitz. It is therefore incredible that this was not known in Germany.

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We could not believe our eyes when we left Auschwitz and our hearts were sore when we saw the small group of 49 women; all that was left of the 230 who had entered the camp 18 months earlier. But to us it seemed that we were leaving hell itself, and for the first time hopes of survival, of seeing the world again, were vouchsafed to us.

M. DUBOST: Where were you sent then, Madame?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: On leaving Auschwitz we were sent to Ravensbruck. There we were escorted to the "NN" block meaning "Nacht und Nebel", that is, "The Secret Block." With us in that block were Polish women with the identification number "7,000." Some were called "rabbits" because they had been used as experimental guinea pigs. They selected from the convoys girls with very straight legs who were in very good health, and they submitted them to various operations. Some of the girls had parts of the bone removed from their legs, others received injections; but what was injected, I do not know. The mortality rate was very high among the women operated upon. So when they came to fetch the others to operate on them they refused to go to the Revier. They were forcibly dragged to the dark cells where the professor, who had arrived from Berlin, operated in his uniform, without taking any aseptic precautions, without wearing a surgical gown, and without washing his hands. There are some survivors among these "rabbits." They still endure much suffering. They suffer periodically from suppurations; and since nobody knows to what treatment they had been subjected, it is extremely difficult to cure them.

M. DUBOST: Were these internees tattooed on their arrival?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: No. People were not tattooed at Ravensbruck but, on the other hand, we had to go, up for a gynecological examination, and since no precautions were ever taken and the same instruments were frequently used in all cases, infections spread, partly because common-law prisoners and political internees were all herded together.

In Block 32 where we were billeted there were also some Russian women prisoners of war, who had refused to work voluntarily in the ammunition factories. For that reason they had been sent to Ravensbruck. Since they persisted in their refusal, they were subjected to every form of petty indignity. They were, for instance, forced to stand in front of the block a whole day long without any food. Some of them were sent in convoys to Barth. Others were employed to carry lavatory receptacles in the camp. The Strafblock (penitentiary block) and the Bunker also housed internees who had refused to work in the war factories.

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M. DUBOST: Are you now speaking about the prisons in the camp?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: About the prisons in the camp. As a matter of fact I have visited the camp prison. It was a civilian prison, a real one.

M. DUBOST: How many French were there in that camp?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: From 8 to 10 thousand.

M. DUBOST: How many women all, told?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: At the time of liberation the identification numbers amounted to 105,000 and possibly more.

There were also executions in the camps. The numbers were called at roll call in the morning, and the victims then left for the Kommandantur and were never seen again. A few days later the clothes were sent down to the Effektenkanimer, where the clothes of the internees were kept. After a certain time their cards would vanish from the filing cabinets in the camp.

M. DUBOST: The system of detention was the same as at Auschwitz?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: No. In Auschwitz, obviously, extermination was the sole aim and object. Nobody was at all interested in the output. We were beaten for no reason whatsoever. It was sufficient to stand from morning till evening but whether we carried one brick or 10 was of no importance at all. We were quite aware that the human element was employed as slave labor in order to kill us, that this was the ultimate purpose, whereas at Ravensbruck. the output was of great importance. It was a clearing camp. When the convoys arrived at Ravensbruck, they were rapidly dispatched either to the munition or to the powder factories, either to work at the air fields or, latterly, to dig trenches.

The following procedure was adopted for going to the factories: The manufacturers or their foremen or else their representatives were coming themselves to choose their workers, accompanied by SS men; the effect was that of a slave market. They felt the muscles, examined the faces to see if the person looked healthy, and then made their choice. Finally, they made them walk naked past the doctor and he eventually decided if a woman was fit or not to leave for work in the factories. Latterly, the doctor's visit became a mere formality as they ended by employing anybody who came along. The work was exhausting, principally because of lack of food and sleep, since in addition to 12 solid hours of work one had to attend roll call in the morning and in the evening. In Ravensbruck. there was the Siemens factory, where telephone equipment was manufactured as well as wireless sets for aircraft. Then there were

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workshops in the camp for camouflage material and uniforms and for various utensils used by soldiers. One of these I know best...

THE PRESIDENT: I think we had better break off now for 10 minutes.

[A recess was taken.]

M. DUBOST: Madame, did you see any SS chiefs and members of the Wehrmacht visit the camps of Ravensbruck. and Auschwitz when you were there?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes.

M. DUBOST: Do you know if any German Government officials came to visit these camps?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: I know it only as far as Himmler is concerned. Apart from Himmler I do not know.

M. DUBOST: Who were the guards in these camps?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: At the beginning there were the SS guards, exclusively.

M. DUBOST: Will you please speak more slowly so that the interpreters can follow you?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: At the beginning there were only SS men, but from the spring of 1944 the young SS men in many companies were replaced by older

men of the Wehrmacht both at Auschwitz and also at Ravensbruck We were guarded by soldiers of the Wehrmacht as from 1944.

M. DUBOST: You can therefore testify that on the order of the German General Staff the German Army was implicated in the atrocities which you have described?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Obviously, since we were guarded by the Wehrmacht as well, and this could not have occurred without orders.

M. DUBOST: Your testimony is final and involves both the SS and the Army.

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Absolutely.

M. DUBOST: Will you tell us about the arrival at Ravensbruck. in the winter of 1944, of Hungarian Jewesses who had been arrested en masse? You were in Ravensbruck-this is a fact about which you can testify?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes, of course I was there. There was no longer any room left in the blocks, and the prisoners already slept four in a bed, so there was raised, in the middle of the

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camp, a large tent. Straw was spread in the tent, and the Hungarian women were brought to this tent. Their condition was frightful. There were a great many cases of frozen feet because they had been evacuated from Budapest and had walked a good part of the way in the snow. A great many of them had died en route. Those who arrived at Auschwitz were led to this tent and there an enormous number of them died. Every day a squad came to remove the corpses in the tent. One day, on returning to my block, which was next to this tent, during the cleaning up . . .

THE PRESIDENT: Madame, are you speaking of Ravensbruck or of Auschwitz?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: [In English.] Now I am speaking of Ravensbruck. [In French.] It was in the winter of 1944, about November or December, I believe, though I cannot say for certain which month it was. It is so difficult to give a precise date in the concentration camps since one day of torture is followed by another day of similar torment and the prevailing monotony makes it very hard to keep track of time.

One day therefore, as I was saying, I passed the tent while it was being cleaned, and I saw a pile of smoking manure in front of it. I suddenly realized that this manure was

human excrement since the unfortunate women no longer had the strength to drag themselves to the lavatories. They were therefore rotting in this filth.

M. DUBOST: What were the conditions in the workshops where the jackets were manufactured?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: At the workshops where the uniforms were manufactured...

M. DUBOST: Was it the camp workshop?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: It was the camp workshop, known as "Schneiderei I." Two hundred jackets or pairs of trousers were manufactured per day. There were two shifts; a day and a night shift, both working 12 hours. The night shift, when starting work at midnight, after the standard amount of work had been reached but only then-received a thin slice of bread. Later on this practice was discontinued. Work was carried on at a furious pace; the internees could not even take time off to go the lavatories. Both day and night they were terribly beaten, both by the SS women and men, if a needle broke owing to the poor quality of the thread, if the machine stopped, or if these "ladies" and "gentlemen!" did not like their looks. Towards the end of the night one could see that the workers were so exhausted that every movement was an effort to them. Beads of sweat stood out on their foreheads. They could not see clearly. When the standard amount of work was not reached the foreman, Binder, rushed up and beat up, with all his might, one

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woman after another all along the line, with the result that the last in the row waited their turn petrified with terror. If one wished to go to the Revier one had to receive the authorization of the SS, who granted it very rarely; and even then, if the doctor did give a woman a permit authorizing her to stay away from work for a few days, the SS guards would often come round and fetch her out of bed in order to put her back at her machine. The atmosphere was frightful since, by reason of the "black-out," one could not open the windows at night. Six hundred women therefore worked for 12 hours without any ventilation. All those who worked at the Schneiderei became like living skeletons after a few months. They began to cough, their eyesight failed, they developed a nervous twitching of the face for fear of beatings to come.

I knew well the conditions of this workshop since my little friend, Marie Rubiano, a little French girl who had just passed 3 years in the prison of Kottbus, was sent, on her arrival at Ravensbruck, to the Schneiderei; and every evening she would tell me about

her martyrdom. One day, when she was quite exhausted, she obtained permission to go to the Revier; and as on that day the German Schwester (nursing sister), Erica, was less evil-tempered than usual, she was X-rayed. Both lungs were severely infected and she was sent to the horrible Block 10, the block of the consumptives. This block was particularly terrifying, since tubercular patients were not considered as "recuperable material"; they received no treatment; and because of shortage of staff, they were not even washed. We might even say that there were no medical supplies at all.

Little Marie was placed in the ward housing patients with bacillary infections, in other words, such patients as were considered incurable. She spent some weeks there and had no courage left to put up a fight for her life. I must say that the atmosphere of this room was particularly depressing. There were many patients several to one bed in three-tier bunks-in an overheated atmosphere, lying between internees of various nationalities, so that they could not even speak to one another. Then, too, the silence in this antechamber of death was only broken by the yells of the German asocial personnel on duty and, from time to time, by the muffled sobs of a little French girl thinking of her mother and of her country which she would never see again.

And yet, Marie Rubiano did not die fast enough to please the SS. So one day Dr. Winkelmann, selection specialist at Ravensbruck, entered her name in the black-list and on 9 February 1945, together with 72 other consumptive women, 6 of whom were French, she was shoved on the truck for the gas chamber.

During this period, in all the Revieren, selections were made and all patients considered unfit for work were sent to the gas chamber. The Ravensbruck gas chamber was situated just behind the wall of

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the camp, next to the crematory. When the trucks came to fetch the patients we heard the sound of the motor across the camp, and the noise ceased right by the crematory whose chimney rose above the high wall of the camp.

At the time of the liberation I returned to these places. I visited the gas chamber which was a hermetically sealed building made of boards, and inside it one could still smell the disagreeable odor of gas. I know that at Auschwitz the gases were the same as those which were used against the lice, and the only traces they left were small, pale green crystals which were swept out when the windows were opened. I know these details, since the men employed in delousing the blocks were in contact with the personnel who gassed the victims and they told them that one and the same gas was used in both cases.

M. DUBOST: Was this the only way used to exterminate the internees in Ravensbruck?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: In Block 10 they also experimented with a white powder. One day the German Schwester, Martha, arrived in the block and distributed a powder to some 20 patients. The patients subsequently -fell into a deep sleep. Four or five of them were seized with violent fits of vomiting and this saved their lives. During the night the snores gradually ceased and the patients died. This I know because I went every day to visit the French women in the block. Two of the nurses were French and Dr. Louise Le Porz, a native of Bordeaux who came back, can likewise testify to this fact.

M. DUBOST: Was this a frequent occurrence?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: During my stay this was the only case of its kind within the Revier but the system was also applied at the Jugendlager, so called because it was a former reform school for German juvenile delinquents.

Towards the beginning of 1945 Dr. Winkelmann, no longer satisfied with selections in the Revier, proceeded to make his selections in the blocks. All the prisoners had to answer roll call in their bare feet and ex* pose their breasts and legs. All those who were sick, too old, too thin, or whose legs were swollen with oedema, were set aside and then sent to this Jugendlager, a quarter of an hour away from the camp at Ravensbruck. I visited it at the liberation.

In the blocks an order had been circulated to the effect that the old women and the patients who could no longer work should apply in writing for admission to the Jugendlager, where they would be far better off, where they would not have to work, and where there would be no roll call. We learned about this later through some of the people who worked at the Jugendlager-the chief of the camp was

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an Austrian woman, Betty Wenz, whom I knew from Auschwitz and from a few of the survivors, one of whom is Irene Ottelard, a French woman living in Drancy, 17 Rue de la Liberte, who was repatriated at the same time as myself and whom I had nursed after the liberation. Through her we discovered the details about the Jugendlager.

M. DUBOST: Can you tell us, Madame, if you can answer this question? Were the SS doctors who made the selection acting on their own accord or were they merely obeying orders?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: They were acting on orders received, since one of them, Dr. Lukas, refused to participate in the selections and was withdrawn from the camp, and Dr. Winkelmann was sent from Berlin to replace him.

M. DUBOST: Did you personally witness these facts?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: It was he himself who told the Chief of the Block 10 and Dr. Louise Le Porz, when he left.

M. DUBOST: Could you give us some information about the conditions in which the men at the neighboring camp at Ravensbruck lived on the day after the liberation, when you were able to see them?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: I think it advisable to speak of the Jugendlager first since, chronologically speaking, it comes first.

M. DUBOST: If you wish it.

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: At the Jugendlager the old women and the patients who had left our camp were placed in blocks which had no water and no conveniences; they lay on straw mattresses on the ground, so closely pressed together that one was quite unable to pass between them. At night one could not sleep because of the continuous coming and going, and the internees trod on each other when passing. The straw mattresses were rotten and teemed with lice; those who were able to stand remained for hours on end for roll call until they collapsed. In February their coats were taken away but they continued to stay out for roll call and mortality was considerably increased.

By way of nourishment they received only one thin slice of bread and half a quart of swede soup, and all the drink they got in 24 hours was half a quart of herbal tea. They had no water to drink, none to wash in, and none to wash their mess tins.

In the Jugendlager there was also a Revier for those who could no longer stand. Periodically, during the roll calls, the Aufseherin would choose some internees, who would be undressed and left in nothing but their chemises. Their coats were then returned to them. They were hoisted on to a truck and were driven off to the gas

chamber. A few days later the coats were returned to the Kammer (the clothing warehouse), and the labels were marked "Mittwerda." The internees working on the labels told us that the word "Mittwerda" did not exist and that it was a special term for the gases.

At the Revier white powder was periodically distributed, and the sick were dying as in Block 10, which I mentioned a short time ago. They made

THE PRESIDENT: The details of the witness' evidence as to Ravensbruck. seem to be very much like, if not the same, as at Auschwitz. Would it not be possible now, after hearing this amount of detail, to deal with the matter more generally, unless there is some substantial difference between Ravensbruck and Auschwitz.

M. DUBOST: I think there is a difference which the witness has pointed out to us, namely, that in Auschwitz the prisoners were purely and simply exterminated. It was merely an extermination camp, whereas at Ravensbruck they were interned in order to work, and were weakened by work until they died of it.

THE PRESIDENT: If there are any other distinctions between the two, no doubt you will lead the witness, I mean ask the witness about those other distinctions.

M. DUBOST: I shall not fail to do so.

[To the witness.] Could you tell the Tribunal in what condition the men's camp was found at the time of the liberation and how many survivors remained?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: When the Germans went away they left 2,000 sick women and a certain number of volunteers, myself included, to take care of them. They left us without water and without light. Fortunately the Russians arrived on the following day. We therefore were able to go to the men's camp and there we found a perfectly indescribable sight. They had been for 5 days without water. There were 800 serious cases, and three doctors and seven nurses, who were unable to separate the dead from the sick. Thanks to the Red Army, we were able to take these sick persons over into clean blocks and to give them food and care; but unfortunately I can give the figures only for the French. There were 400 of them when we came to the camp and only 150 were able to return to France; for the others it was too late, in spite of all our care.

M. DUBOST: Were you present at any of the executions and do you know how they were carried out in the camp?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: I was not present at the executions. I only know that the last one took place on 22 April, 8 days before the arrival of the Red army. The prisoners were sent, as I

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said, to the Kommandantur; then their clothes were returned and their cards were removed from the files.

M. DUBOST: Was the situation in this camp of an exceptional nature or do you consider it was part of a system?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: It is difficult to convey an exact idea of the concentration camps to anybody, unless one has been in the camp oneself, since one can only quote examples of horror; but it is quite impossible to convey any impression of that deadly monotony. If asked what was the worst of all, it is impossible to answer, since everything was atrocious. It is atrocious to die of hunger, to die of thirst, to be ill, to see all one's companions dying around one and being unable to help them. It is atrocious to think of one's children, of one's country which one will never see again, and there were times when we asked whether our life was not a living nightmare, so unreal did this life appear in all its horror.

For months, for years we had one wish only: The wish that some of us would escape alive, in order to tell the world what the Nazi convict prisons were like everywhere, at Auschwitz as at Ravensbruck. And the comrades from the other camps told the same tale; there was the systematic and implacable urge to use human beings as slaves and to kill them when they could work no more.

M. DUBOST: Have you a nothing further to relate?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: No.

M. DUBOST: I thank you. If the Tribunal wishes to question the witness, I have finished.

GEN. RUDENKO: I have no questions to ask.

DR. HANNS MARX (Acting for Dr. Babel, Counsel for the SS): Attorney Babel was prevented from coming this morning as he has to attend a conference with General Mitchell.

My Lords, I should like to take the liberty of asking the witness a few questions to elucidate the matter.

[Turning to the witness.] Madame COUTURIER, you declared that you were arrested by the French police?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Yes.

DR. MARX: For what, reason were you arrested?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Resistance. I belonged to a resistance movement.

DR. MARX: Another question: Which position did you occupy? I mean what kind of post did you ever hold? Have you ever held a post?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Where?

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DR. MARX: For example as a teacher?

MAO. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Before the war? I don't quite see what this question has to do with the matter. I was a journalist.

DR. MARX: Yes. The fact of the matter is that you, in your statement, showed great skill in style and expression; and I should like to know whether you held any position such, for example, as teacher or lecturer.

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: No. I was a newspaper photographer.

DR. MARX: How do you explain that you yourself came through these experiences so well and are now in such a good state of health?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: First of all, I was liberated a year ago; and in a year one has time to recover. Secondly, I was 10 months in quarantine for typhus and I had the great luck not to die of exanthematic typhus, although I had it and was in for 31/2 months. Also, in the last months at Ravensbruck as I knew German, I worked on the Revier roll call, which explains why I did not have to work quite so hard or to suffer from the inclemencies of the weather. On the other hand, out of 230 of us only 49 from my convoy returned alive; and we were only 52 at the end of 4 months. I had the great fortune to return.

DR. MARX: Yes. Does your statement contain what you yourself observed or is it concerned with information from other sources as well?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Whenever such was the case I mentioned it in my declaration. I have never quoted anything which has not previously been verified at the sources and by several persons, but the major part of my evidence is based on personal experience.

DR. MARX: How can you explain your very precise statistical knowledge, for instance, that 700,000 Jews arrived from Hungary?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: I told you that I have worked in the offices; and where Auschwitz was concerned, I was a friend of the secretary (the Oberaufseherin), whose name and address I gave to the Tribunal.

DR. MARX: It has been stated that only 350,000 Jews came from Hungary, according to the testimony of the Chief of the Gestapo, Eichmann.

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: I am not going to argue with the Gestapo. I have good reasons to know that what the Gestapo states is not always true.

DR. MARX: How were you treated personally? Were you treated well?

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MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: Like the others.

DR. MARX: Like the others? You said before that the German people must have known of the happenings in Auschwitz. What are your grounds for this statement?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: I have already told you: To begin with there was the fact that, when we left, the Lorraine soldiers of the Wehrmacht who were taking us to Auschwitz said to us, "If you knew where you were going, you would not be in such a hurry to get there." Then there was the fact-that the German women who came out of quarantine to go to work in German factories knew of these events, and they all said that they would speak about them outside.

Further, the fact that in all the factories where the Haftlinge (the internees) worked they were in contact with the German civilians, as also were the Aufseherinnen, who were in touch with their friends and families and often told them what they had seen.

DR. MARX: One more question. Up to 1942 you were able to observe the behavior of the German soldiers in Paris. Did not these German soldiers behave well throughout and did they not pay for what they took?

MME. VAILLANT-COUTURIER: I have not the least idea whether they paid or not for what they requisitioned. As for their good behavior, too many of my friends were shot or massacred for me not to differ with you.

DR. MARX: I have no further question to put to this witness.

[Dr. Marx started to leave the lectern and then returned.]

THE PRESIDENT: If you have no further question there is nothing more to be said. [Laughter.] There is too much laughter in the court; I have already spoken about that.

[To Dr. Marx.] I thought you had said you had no further question.

DR. MARX: Yes. Please excuse me. I only want to make a proviso for Attorney Babel that he might cross-examine the witness himself at a later date, if that is possible.

THE PRESIDENT: Babel, did you say?

DR. MARX: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I beg your pardon; yes, certainly. When will Dr. Babel be back in his place?

DR. MARX: I presume that he will be back in the afternoon. He is in the building. However, he must first read the minutes.

THE PRESIDENT: We will consider the question. If Dr. Babel is here this afternoon we will consider the matter, if Dr. Babel makes a further application.

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Does any other of the defendants' counsel wish to ask any questions of the witness?

[There was no response.]

M. Dubost, have you any questions you wish to ask on reexamination?

M. DUBOST: I have no further questions to ask.

THE PRESIDENT: Then the witness may retire.

[The witness left the stand.]

M. DUBOST: If the Tribunal will kindly allow it, we shall now hear another witness, M. Veith.

THE PRESIDENT: Are you calling this witness on the treatment of prisoners in concentration camps?

M. DUBOST: Yes, Mr. President, and also because this witness can give us particulars of the ill-treatment to which certain prisoners of war had been exposed in the camps of internees. This is no longer a question of concentration camps and of ill-treatment inflicted upon civilians in those camps, but of soldiers who had been brought to the concentration camps and subjected to the same cruelty as the civilian prisoners.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you won't lose sight of the fact that there has been practically no cross-examination of the witnesses you have already called about the treatment in concentration camps? The Tribunal, I think, feels that you could deal with the treatment in concentration camps somewhat more generally than the last witness. Do you hear what I say?

M. DUBOST: Yes, Your Honor.

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal thinks that you could deal with the question of treatment in concentration camps rather more generally now, since we have heard the details from the witnesses whom you have already called.

[The witness, Veith, took the stand.]

M. DUBOST: Is the Tribunal willing to hear this witness?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

[To the witness.] What is your name?

M. JEAN-FREDERIC VEITH (Witness): Jean-Frederic Veith.

THE PRESIDENT: Will you repeat this oath: I swear that I will speak without hate or fear, that I will tell the truth, all the truth, nothing but the truth.

[The witness repeated the oath in French.]

THE PRESIDENT: Raise your right hand and say, "I swear."

VEITH: I swear it.

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THE PRESIDENT: Would you like to sit down and spell your name and surname?

M. DUBOST: Will you please spell your name and surname?

VEITH: J-e-a-n F-r-e-d-e-r-i-c V-e-i-t-h. I was born on 28 April 1903 in Moscow.

M. DUBOST: You are of French nationality?

VEITH: I am of French nationality, born of French parents.

M. DUBOST: In which camp were you interned?

VEITH: At Mauthausen; from 22 April 1943 until 22 April 1945.

M. DUBOST: You knew about the work carried out in the factories supplying material to the Luftwaffe. Who controlled these factories?

VEITH: I was in the Arbeitseinsatz at Mauthausen from June 1943, and I was therefore well acquainted with all questions dealing with the work.

M. DUBOST: Who controlled the factories working for the Luftwaffe?

VEITH: There were outside camps at Mauthausen where workers were employed by Heinkel, Messerschmidt, Alfa-Vienne, and the Saurer-Werke, and there was, moreover, the construction work on the Leibl Pass tunnel by the Alpine Montan.

M. DUBOST: Who controlled this work, supervisors or engineers?

VEITH: There was only SS supervision. The work itself was controlled by the engineers and the firms themselves.

M. DUBOST: Did these engineers belong to the Luftwaffe?

VEITH: On certain days I saw Luftwaffe officers who came to visit the Messerschmidt workshops in the quarry.

M. DUBOST: Were they able to see for themselves the conditions under which the prisoners lived?

VEITH: Yes, certainly.

M. DUBOST: Did you see any high-ranking Nazi officials visiting the camp?

VEITH: I saw a great many high-ranking officials, among them Himmler, Kaltenbrunner, Pohl, Maurer, the Chief of the Labor Office, Amt D II, of the Reich, and many other visitors whose names I do not know.

M. DUBOST: Who told you that Kaltenbrunner had come?

VEITH: Well, our offices faced the parade ground overlooking the Kommandantur; we therefore saw the high-ranking officials

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arriving, and the SS men themselves would tell us, "There goes so and so."

M. DUBOST: Could the civilian population know, and did it know of the plight of the internees?

VEITH: Yes, the population could know, since at Mauthausen there was a road near the quarry and those who passed by that road could see all that was happening. Moreover, the internees worked in the factories. They were separated from the other workers, but they had certain contacts with them and it was quite easy for the other workers to realize their plight.

M. DUBOST: Can you tell us what you know about a journey, to an unknown castle, of a bus carrying prisoners who were never seen again?

VEITH: At one time a method for the elimination of sick persons by injections was adopted at Mauthausen. It was particularly used by Dr. Krebsbach, nick-named "Dr. Spritzbach" by the prisoners since it was he who had inaugurated the system of injections. There came a time when the injections were discontinued, and then persons who were too sick or too weak were sent to a castle which, we learned later, was called Hartheim, but was officially known as a Genesungslager (convalescent camp). Of all of those who went there, none ever returned. We received the death certificates directly from the political section of the camp; these certificates were secret. Everybody who went to Hartheim died. The number of dead amounted to about -5,000.

M. DUBOST: Did you see prisoners of war arrive at Mauthausen Camp?

VEITH: Certainly I saw prisoners of war. Their arrival at Mauthausen Camp took place, first of all, in front of the political section. Since I was working at the Hollerith I could watch the arrivals, for the offices faced the parade ground in front of the political section where the convoys arrived. The convoys were immediately sorted out. One part was sent to the camp for registration, and very often some of the uniformed prisoners were set aside; these had already been subjected to special violence in the political section and were handed straight over to the prison guards. They were then sent to the prisons and never heard of again. They were not registered in the camp. The only registration was made in the political section by Muller who was in charge of these prisoners.

M. DUBOST: They were prisoners of war?

VEITH: They were prisoners of war. They were very often in uniform.

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M. DUBOST: Of what nationality?

VEITH: Mostly Russians and Poles.

M. DUBOST: They were brought to your camp to be killed there?

VEITH: They were brought to our camp for "Action K."

M. DUBOST: What do you know about Action K and how do you know it?

VEITH: My knowledge of Action K is due to the fact that I was head of the Hollerith service in Mauthausen, and consequently received all the transfer forms from the various camps. And when prisoners were erroneously transferred to us as ordinary prisoners, we would put it on the transfer form which we had to send to the central office in Berlin; or rather, we would not put any number at all, as we were unable to give one. The "Politische" gave us no indications at all and even destroyed the list of names if, by chance, it ever reached us.

In conversations with my comrades of the "Politische" I discovered that this Action K was originally applied to prisoners of war who had been captured while attempting to escape. Later this action was extended further still, but always to soldiers and especially to officers who had succeeded in escaping but who had been recaptured in countries under German control.

Moreover, any person engaged in activities which might be interpreted as not corresponding to the wishes of the fascist chiefs could also be subjected to Action K. These prisoners arrived at Mauthausen and disappeared, that is, they were taken to the prison where one part would be executed on the spot and another sent to the annex of the prison, which by this time had become too small to hold them, to the famous Block 20 of Mauthausen.

M. DUBOST: You definitely state that these were prisoners of -war?

VEITH: Yes, they were prisoners of war, most of them.

M. DUBOST: Do you know of an execution of officers, prisoners of war, who had been brought to the camp at Mauthausen?

VEITH: I cannot give you any names, but there were some.

M. DUBOST: Did you witness the execution of Allied officers who were murdered within 48 hours of their arrival in camp?

VEITH: I saw the arrival of the convoy of 6 September. I believe that is the one you are thinking of; I saw the arrival of this convoy and in the very same afternoon these 47 went down to the quarry dressed in nothing but their shirts and drawers. Shortly

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after we heard the sound of machine gun fire. I then left the office and passed at the back, pretending I was carrying documents to another office, and with my own eyes I saw these unfortunate people shot down; 19 were executed on the very same afternoon and the remainder on the following morning. Later on, all the death certificates were marked, "Killed while attempting to escape."

M. DUBOST: Do you have the names?

VEITH: Yes, I have a copy of the names of these prisoners.

[The Tribunal recessed until 1400 hours.]

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Afternoon Session

MARSHAL: If the Court please, it is desired to announce that the Defendant Kaltenbrunner will be absent from this afternoon's session on account of illness.

THE PRESIDENT: You may go on, M. Dubost.

M. DUBOST: We are going to complete the hearing of the witness Veith, to whom, however, I have only one more question to put.

THE PRESIDENT: Have him brought in.

[The witness, Veith, took the stand.]

M. DUBOST: You continue to testify under the oath that you already made this morning.

Will you give some additional information concerning the execution of the 47 Allied officers whom you saw shot in 48 hours at Camp Mauthausen where they had been brought?

VEITH: Those officers, those parachutists, were shot in accordance with the usual systems used whenever prisoners had to be done away with. That is to say, they were forced to work to excess, to carry heavy stones. Then they were beaten until they took heavier ones; and so on and so forth until, finally driven to extremity, they turned towards the barbed wire. If they did not do it of their own accord, they were pushed there; and they were beaten until they did so; and the moment they approached it and were perhaps about one meter away from it, they were mown down by machine guns fired by the SS guards in the watchtowers. This was the usual system for the "killing for attempted escape" as they afterwards called it.

Those 47 men were killed on the afternoon of the 6th and morning of the 7th of September.

M. DUBOST: How did you know their names?

VEITH: Their names came to me with the official list, because they had all been entered in the camp registers and I had to report to Berlin all the changes in the actual strength of the Hollerith Section. I saw all the rosters of the dead and of the new arrivals

M. DUBOST: Did you communicate this list to an official authority?

VEITH: This list was taken by the American official authorities when I was at Mauthausen. I immediately went back to Mauthausen after my liberation, because I knew where the documents were; and

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the American authorities then had all the lists which we were able to find.

M. DUBOST: Mr. President, I have no further questions to ask the witness.

THE PRESIDENT: Does the British Prosecutor want to ask any questions?

BRITISH PROSECUTOR: No.

THE PRESIDENT: Does the United States Prosecutor?

UNITED STATES PROSECUTOR: No.

THE PRESIDENT: Do any members of the Defense Counsel wish to ask any questions?

HERR BABEL: I am the defense counsel for the SS and SD. Mr. President, I was in the Dachau Camp on Saturday and at the Augsburg-Goggingen Camp yesterday. I found out various things there which now enable me to question individual witnesses. I could not do this before, as I was not acquainted with local conditions. I should like to put one question. I was unable to attend here this morning on account of a conference to which I was called by General Mitchell. Consequently I did not have the cross-examination of the witness this morning. I have only one question to put to the witness now. I should like to ask whether I may cross-examine the witness further later, or if it is better to withdraw the question?

THE PRESIDENT: You can cross-examine this witness now, but the Tribunal is informed that you left General Mitchell at 15 minutes past 10.

HERR BABEL: Yes, but as a consequence of the conference I had to send a telegram and dispatch some other pressing business so that it was impossible for me to attend the session.

THE PRESIDENT: You can certainly cross-examine the witness now.

HERR BABEL: I have only one more question, namely: The witness stated that the officers in question were driven toward the wire fence. By whom were they so driven?

VEITH: They were driven to the barbed wire by the SS guards who accompanied them, and the entire Mauthausen staff was present. They were also beaten by the SS and

by one or two "green" prisoners, who were with them and who were the "Kapo." In the camps these "green" prisoners were often worse than the SS themselves.

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HERR BABEL: Thus, in the Dachau Camp, inside the camp itself, within the wire enclosure, there were almost no SS guards, and that was probably also the case in Mauthausen? However...

VEITH: Inside the camp there was only a limited number of SS, but they changed, and none of those who belonged to the troops guarding the camp could fail to be aware of what went on in it; even if they did not enter the camp, they watched it from the watchtowers and from outside, and they saw precisely everything.

HERR BABEL: Were the guards who shot at the prisoners inside or outside the wire enclosure?

VEITH: They were in the watchtowers in the same line as the barbed wire.

HERR BABEL: Could they see from there that the officers were -driven to the barbed wire by anyone by means of blows? Could they observe that they were driven there and beaten?

VEITH: They could see it so well that once or twice some of the guards refused to shoot, saying that it was not an attempt to escape and they would not shoot. They were immediately relieved from their posts, and disappeared.

HERR BABEL: Did you see that yourself?

VEITH: I did not see it myself, but I heard about it; it was told by my Kommandofuehrer among others, who said to me, "There's a watchguard who refused to shoot."

HERR BABEL: Who was this Kommandofuehrer? The chief of the group?

VEITH: The Kommandofuehrer was Wielemann. I do not remember his rank. He was not Unterscharfuehrer, but the rank immediately below Unterscharfuehrer, and he was in charge of the Hollerith section in Mauthausen.

HERR BABEL: I thank you.

I have no more questions to ask just now. I shall, however, make application to call the witness again, and I shall then take the opportunity to ask the rest, to put such further questions to him as I consider necessary. I request you to retain him for this purpose, here in Nuremberg. I am not in a position to cross-examine the witness this afternoon, as I did not hear his statements this morning, and I would request that the witness ...

THE PRESIDENT: You ought to have been here. If you were released from an interview with General Mitchell at 1015, there seems to the Tribunal, to, me at any rate, to be no reason why you should not have been here while this witness was being examined.

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HERR BABEL: Mr. President, this morning I discussed with General Mitchell some questions with which I have-been occupied for a long time. General Mitchell agreed in, the course- of our, conversation that my duties and activities are so extensive that-it will now be necessary to appoint a second defense counsel for the SS; my presence at the sessions claims so much of my working time and has become so exhausting and so burdensome that I am often compelled to be absent from the Court. I am sorry, but in the prevailing circumstances, I cannot help it.

Further, I would like to say this: So far, over 40,000 members of the SS have made applications to the Tribunal; and although many of these are collective and not individual applications, you can imagine how wide the field is.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, no doubt your work is extensive, but this morning, as I have already told you, General Mitchell has informed the Tribunal that his interview with you finished at 10:15; and it appears to the Tribunal that you must have known that the witnesses who were giving evidence this morning were giving evidence about concentration camps.

In addition to that, you had obtained the assistance of another counsel, I think, Dr. Marx, to appear on your behalf, and he did appear on your behalf; and he will have an opportunity of cross-examining this witness if he wishes to do so now. The Tribunal considers that you must conclude your cross-examination of this witness now. I mean to say, you may ask any further questions of the witness that you wish.

HERR BABEL: It all amounts to whether I can put a question, and this I cannot do at the moment; therefore, I must renounce the cross-examination of the witness.

THE PRESIDENT: Are there any other questions to put, M. Dubost? There may be some other German counsel who wish to cross-examine this witness.

M. Dubost, do you wish to address the Tribunal?

M. DUBOST: Your Honor, I would like to state to the Tribunal that we have no reason whatsoever to fear a cross-examination of our witness or of this morning's witness, at any time; and we are ready to ask our witnesses to stay in Nuremberg as long as may be necessary to reply to any questions from the Defense.

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Babel, in view of the offer of the French Prosecutor to keep the witness in Nuremberg, the Tribunal will allow you to put any questions you wish to put to him in the course of the next 2 days. Do you understand?

HERR BABEL: Yes.

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DR. KURT KAUFFMANN (Counsel for Defendant Kaltenbrunner): Before I question the witness, I allow myself to raise one point which, I believe, will have an important influence on the good progress of the proceedings. The point I wish to raise is the following, and I speak in the name of my colleagues as well: Would it not be well to come to an agreement that both the Prosecution and the Defense be informed the day before a witness is brought in, which witness is to be heard? The material has now become so considerable that circumstances make it impossible to ask pertinent questions, questions which are urgently necessary in the interest of all parties.

As far as the Defense is concerned, we are ready to inform the Tribunal and the Prosecution of the witnesses we intend to ask for examination, at least one day before they are to be heard.

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal has already expressed its wish that they should be informed beforehand of the witnesses who are to be called and upon what subject. I hope that Counsel for the Prosecution will take note of this wish.

DR. KAUFMANN: Yes, I thank you.

A point of special significance emerges from the statements of the witness we heard this morning, as well as from the statements of this witness; and this point concerns something which may be of decisive importance for the Trial as a whole. The Prosecution ...

THE PRESIDENT: You are not here to make a speech at the moment. You are to ask the witness questions.

DR. KAUFFMANN: Yes. It is the question of the responsibility of the German people. The witness has stated that the civilian population was in a position to know what was going on. I shall now try to ascertain the truth by means of a series of questions.

Did civilians look on when executions took place? Would you answer this?

VEITH: They could see the corpses scattered along the roads when the prisoners were shot while returning in convoys, and corpses were even thrown from the trains. And they could always take note of the emaciated condition of these prisoners who worked outside, because they saw them.

DR. KAUFFMANN: Do you know that it was forbidden on pain of death to say anything outside the camp about the atrocities, anything in the way of cruelties, torture, et cetera, that took place inside?

VEITH: As I spent 2 years in the camp I saw them. Some of them I saw myself, and the rest were described to me by eyewitnesses.

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DR. KAUFFMANN: Could you please repeat -that again? Did you see the secrecy order? What did you see?

VEITH: Not the order, I saw the execution and that is worse.

DR. KAUFFMANN: My question was this: Do you know that the strictest orders were given to the SS personnel, to the executioners, et cetera, not to speak even inside the camp, much less outside of it, of the atrocities that went on and that eyewitnesses who spoke of them rendered themselves liable to the most rigorous penalties, including the death penalty? Do you know anything about that, about such a practice inside the camps? Perhaps you will tell me whether you yourself were allowed to talk about any observations of the kind.

VEITH: I know that liberated prisoners had to sign a statement saying that they would never reveal what had happened in the camp and that they had to forget what had happened; but those who were in contact with the population, and there were many of them, did not fail to talk about it. Furthermore, Mauthausen was situated on a hill. There was a crematorium, which emitted flames 3 feet high. When you see flames 3 feet high

coming out of a chimney every night, you are bound to wonder what it is; and everyone must have known that it was a crematorium.

DR. KAUFFMANN: I have no further question. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Does any other counsel for the defendants wish to ask any questions? Did you tell us who the "green prisoners" were? You mentioned "green prisoners."

VEITH: Yes, these "green prisoners" were prisoners convicted under the common law. They were used by the SS to police the camps. As I have already said, they were often more bestial than the SS themselves and acted as their executioners. They did the work with which the SS did not wish to soil their hands; they were doing all the dirty work, but always by order of the Kommandofuehrer

This contact with the "green" Germans was terrible for the internees, particularly for the political internees. They could not bear the sight of them, because they realized that we were not their sort, and they persecuted us for that alone. It was the same in all the camps. In all the camps we were bullied by the German criminals serving with the SS.

THE PRESIDENT: M. Dubost, do you wish to ask any other question?

M. DUBOST: Your Honor, I have no more questions to ask.

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THE PRESIDENT: Then the witness can retire.

[The witness left the stand.]

M. DUBOST: I shall request the Tribunal to authorize us to hear the French witness, Dr. Dupont.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Very well.

[The witness, Dupont, took the stand.]

THE PRESIDENT: Is your name Dr. Dupont?

DR. VICTOR DUPONT (Witness): Dupont, Victor.

THE PRESIDENT: Will you repeat this oath after me? I swear that I will speak without hate or fear, that I will tell the truth, all the truth, nothing but the truth.

[The witness repeated the oath in French.]

THE PRESIDENT: Raise your right hand and say, "I swear."

DUPONT: I swear.

THE PRESIDENT: You may sit down.

M. DUBOST: Your name is Victor Dupont?

DUPONT: Yes, I am called Victor Dupont.

M. DUBOST: You were born on 12 December 1909?

DUPONT: That is correct.

M. DUBOST: At Charmes in the Vosges?

DUPONT: That is correct.

M. DUBOST: You are of French nationality, born of French parents?

DUPONT: That is correct.

M. DUBOST: You have won honorable distinctions. What are they?

DUPONT: I have the Legion of Honor, I am a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. I have 2 Army citations, and I have the Resistance Medal.

M. DUBOST: Were you deported to Buchenwald?

DUPONT: I was deported to Buchenwald on 24 January 1944.

M. DUBOST: You stayed there?

DUPONT: I stayed there 15 months.

M. DUBOST: Until 20 May 1945?

DUPONT: No, until 20 April 1945.

M. DUBOST: Will you make your 'statement on the regime in the concentration camp where you were interned and the aim of those who prescribed this regime?

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DUPONT: When I arrived at Buchenwald I soon became aware of the difficult living conditions. The regime imposed upon the prisoners was not based on any principle of justice. The principle, which formed the basis of this regime was the principle of the purge. I will explain.

We-I am speaking of the French-were grouped together at Buchenwald almost all of us, without having been tried by any Tribunal. In 1942, 1943, 1944, and 1945, it was quite unusual to pass any formal judgment on the prisoners. Many of us were interrogated and then deported; others were cleared by the interrogation and deported all the same. Others again were not interrogated at all. I shall give you three examples.

On 11 November 1943 elements estimated at several hundred persons were arrested at Grenoble during a demonstration commemorating the Armistice. They were brought to Buchenwald, where the greater part died. The same thing happened in the village of Verchenie (Drome) in October 1943. I saw them at Buchenwald too. It happened again in April 1944 at St. Claude, and I saw these people brought in in August 1944.

In this way, various elements were assembled at Buchenwald subject to martial law. But there were also all kinds of people, including some who were obviously innocent, who had either been cleared by interrogation or not even interrogated at all. Finally, there were some political prisoners. They had been deported because they were members of parties which were to be suppressed.

That does not mean that the interrogations were not to be taken seriously. The interrogations which I underwent and which I saw others undergo were particularly inhuman. I shall enumerate a few of the methods:

Every imaginable kind of beating, immersion in bathtubs, squeezing of testicles, hanging, crushing of the head in iron bands, and the torturing of entire families in each others' sight. I have, in particular, seen a wife tortured before her husband; and children were tortured before their mothers. For the sake of precision, I will quote one name: Francis Goret of the Rue de Bourgogne in Paris was tortured before his mother. Once in the camp, conditions were the same for everyone.

M. DUBOST: You spoke of racial purging as a social policy. What was the criterion?

DUPONT: At Buchenwald various elements described as "political," "national"-mainly Jews and Gypsies-and "asocial"-especially criminals--were herded together under the same regime. There were criminals of every nation: Germans, Czechs, Frenchmen, et cetera, all living together under the same regime. A purge does

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not necessarily imply extermination, but this purge was achieved by means of the extermination already mentioned. It began for us in certain cases; the decision was taken quite suddenly. I shall give one example. In 1944 a convoy of several hundred Gypsy children arrived at Buchenwald, by what administrative mystery we never knew. They were assembled during the winter of 1944 and were to be sent on to Auschwitz to be gassed. One of the most tragic memories of my deportation is the way in which these children, knowing perfectly well what was in store for them, were driven into the vans, screaming and crying. They went on to Auschwitz the same day.

In other cases the extermination was carried out by progressive stages. It had already begun when the convoy arrived. For instance, in the French convoy which left Compiègne on 24 January 1944 and arrived on 26 January, I saw one van containing 100 persons, of which 12 were dead and 8 insane. During the period of my deportation I saw numerous transports come in. The same thing happened every time; only the numbers varied. In this way the elimination of a certain proportion had already been achieved when the convoy arrived. Then they were put in quarantine and exposed to cold for several hours, while roll call was taken. The weaker died. Then came extermination through work. Some of them were picked out and sent to Kommandos such as Dora, S III, and Laura. I noticed that after those departures, which took place every month, when the contingent was brought up to strength again, truck-loads of dead were brought back to Buchenwald. I even attended the post-mortems on them, and I can tell you the results. The lesions were those of a very advanced stage of cachexy. Those who had stood up to conditions for one, two, or three months very often exhibited the lesions characteristic of acute tuberculosis, mostly of the granular type. In Buchenwald itself prisoners had to work; and there, as everywhere else, the only hope of survival lay in work. Extermination in Buchenwald was carried out in accordance with a principle of selection laid down by the medical officer in charge, Dr. Shiedlauski. These selections

...

M. DUBOST: Excuse me for interrupting. What is the nationality of this medical officer in charge?

DUPONT: He was a German SS doctor.

M. DUBOST: Are you sure of that?

DUPONT: Yes, I am quite sure.

M. DUBOST: Are you testifying as an eyewitness?

DUPONT: I am testifying as an eyewitness.

M. DUBOST: Go on, please.

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DUPONT: Shiedlauski carried out the selection and picked out the sick and invalids. Prior to January 1945 they were sent to Auschwitz; later on they went to Bergen-Belsen. None of them ever returned.

Another case which I witnessed concerns a Jewish labor squad which was sent to Auschwitz and stayed there several months. When they came back, they were unfit for even the lighter work. A similar fate overtook them. They also were sent to Auschwitz again. I myself personally witnessed these things. I was present at the selection and I witnessed their departure.

Later on, the executions in Buchenwald took place in the camp itself. To my own knowledge they began in September 1944 -in room 7, a little room in the Revier. The men were done away with by means of inter-cardiac injections. The output was not great; it did not exceed a few score a day, at the most.

Later on more and more convoys came in, and the number of cachexy cases increased. The executions had to be speeded up. At first they were carried out as soon as the transports arrived; but from January 1945 onwards they were taken care of in a special block, Block 61. At that date all those nicknamed "Mussulmans" on account of their appearance were collected in this block. We never saw them without their blankets over their -shoulders. They were unfit for even the lightest work. They all had to go through Block 61. The death toll varied daily from a minimum of 10 to about 200 in Block 61. The execution was performed by injecting phenol into the heart in the most brutal manner. The bodies were then carted to the crematorium mostly during roll calls or at night. Finally, extermination was also always assured at the end by convoys. The convoys which left Buchenwald while the Allies were advancing were used to assure extermination.

To give an example: At the end of March 1945 elements withdrawn from the S III detachment arrived at Buchenwald. They were in a state of complete exhaustion when

they arrived and quite unfit for any kind of exertion. They were the first to be re-expedited, two days after their arrival. It was only about half a mile from their starting-point in the small camp, that is, at the bark of the Buchenwald Camp, to their point of assembly for roll call; and to give you an idea of the state of weakness in which these people were, I need only say that between this starting point and their assembly point, that is, over a distance of half a mile, we saw 60 of them collapse and die. They could not go on further. Most of them died very soon, in a few hours or in the course of the next day. So much for the systematic extermination which I witnessed in Buchenwald, including ...

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M. DUBOST: What about those who were left?

DUPONT: Those who were left when the last convoy went out? That is a complicated story. We were deeply grieved about them. About the 1st of April, though I cannot guarantee the exact date, the commander of the camp, Pister, assembled a large number of prisoners and addressed them as follows:

"The Allied advance has already reached the immediate neighborhood of Buchenwald. I wish to hand over to the Allies the keys of the camp. I do not want any atrocities. I wish the camp as a whole to be handed over."

As a matter of actual fact, the Allied advance was held up, more than we wanted at least, and evacuation was begun. A delegation of prisoners went to see the commander, reminding him of his word, for he had given his word emphasizing that it was his "word of honor as a soldier." He seemed acutely embarrassed and explained that Sauckel, the Governor of Thuringia, had given orders that no prisoner should remain in Buchenwald, for that constituted a danger to the province.

Furthermore, we knew that all who knew the secrets of the administration of Buchenwald Camp would be put out of the way.

A few days before we were liberated 43 of our comrades belonging to different nationalities were called out to be done away with, and an unusual phenomenon occurred. The camp revolted; the men were hidden and never given up. We also knew that under no circumstances would anyone who had been employed, either in the experimental block or in the infirmary, be allowed to leave the camp. That is all I have to say about the last few days.

M. DUBOST: This officer in command of the camp, whom you have just said gave his word of honor as a soldier, was he a soldier?

DUPONT: His attitude towards the prisoners was ruthless; but he had his orders. Frankly, he was a particular type of soldier; but he was not acting on his own initiative in treating the prisoners in this way.

M. DUBOST: To what branch of the service did he belong?

DUPONT: He belonged to the SS Totenkopf Division.

M. DUBOST: Was he an SS man?

DUPONT: Yes, he was an SS man.

M. DUBOST: He was acting on orders, you say?

DUPONT: He was certainly acting on orders.

M. DUBOST: For what purposes were the prisoners used?

DUPONT: The prisoners were used in such a way that no attention was paid to the fact that they were human beings. They were

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used for experimental purposes. At Buchenwald the experiments were made in Block 46. The men who were to be employed there were always selected by means of a medical examination. On those occasions when I was present it was performed by Dr. Shiedlauski, of whom I have already spoken.

M. DUBOST: Was he a doctor?

DUPONT: Yes, he was a doctor. The internees were used for the hardest labor; in the Laura mines, working in the salt mines as, for instance, in the Mansleben-am-See Kommando, clearing up bomb debris. It must be remembered that the more difficult the labor conditions were, the harsher was the supervision by the guards.

The internees were used in Buchenwald for any kind of labor; in earth works, in quarries, and in factories. To cite a particular case: There were two factories attached to Buchenwald, the Gustloff works and the Muhlbach works. They were munition

factories under technical and non-military management. In this particular case there was some sort of rivalry between the SS and the technical management of the factory. The technical management, concerned with its output, took the part of the prisoners to the extent of occasionally obtaining supplementary rations for them. Internee labor had certain advantages. The cost was negligible, and from a security point of view the maximum of secrecy was ensured; as the internees had no contact with the outside world and therefore no leakage was possible.

M. DUBOST: You mean leakage of military information?

DUPONT: I mean leakage of military information.

M. DUBOST: Could outsiders see that the internees were illtreated and wretched?

DUPONT: That is another question, certainly.

M. DUBOST: Will you answer it later?

DUPONT: I shall answer it later. I have omitted one detail. The internees were also used to a certain extent after death. The ashes resulting from the cremations were thrown into the excrement pit and served to fertilize the fields around Buchenwald. I add this detail because it struck me vividly at the time.

Finally, as I said, work, whatever it might be, was the internees' only chance of survival. As soon as they were no longer of any possible use, they were done for.

M. DUBOST: Were not internees used as "blood donors," involuntary of course?

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DUPONT: I forgot that point. Prisoners assigned to light work, whose output was poor, were used as blood donors. Members of the Wehrmacht came several times. I saw them twice at Buchenwald, taking blood from these men. The blood was taken in a ward known as CP-2, that is, Operation Ward 2.

M. DUBOST: This was done on orders from higher quarters?

DUPONT: I do not see how it could have been done otherwise.

M. DUBOST: On their own initiative?

DUPONT: Not on the initiative of anyone in the camp. These elements had nothing to do with the camp administration or the guards. I must make it clear that those whom I saw belonged to the Wehrmacht, whereas we were guarded by SS, all of them from the Totenkopf Division. Towards the end, a special use was made of them.

In the early months of 1945, members of the Gestapo came to Buchenwald and took away all the papers of those who had died, in order to A-establish their identity and to make out forged papers. One Jew was specially employed to touch up photographs and to adapt the papers which had belonged to the dead for the use of persons whom, of course, we did not know. The Jew disappeared, and I do not know what became of him. We never saw him again.

But this utilization of identification papers was not confined to the dead. Several hundred French internees were summoned to the "Fliegerverwaltung" and there subjected to a very precise interrogation on their person, their connections, their convictions, and their background. They were then told that they would on no account be allowed to receive any correspondence, or even parcels those of them who ever received any. From an administrative point of view all traces of them were effaced and contact with the outside world was rendered even more impossible for them than it had been under ordinary circumstances. We were deeply concerned about the fate of these comrades. We were liberated very soon after that, and I can only say that prisoners were used in this way, that their identification papers were used for manufacturing forged documents.

M. DUBOST: What was the effect of this kind of life?

DUPONT: The effect of this kind of life on the human organism?

M. DUBOST: On the human organism.

DUPONT: As to the human organism, there was only one effect: the degradation of the human being. The living conditions which I- have just described were enough in themselves to produce such degradation. It was done systematically. An unrelenting will seemed

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to be at work to reduce those men to the same level, the lowest possible level of human degradation.

To begin with, the first degrading factor was the way in which they were mixed. It was permissible, to mix nationalities, but not to mix indiscriminately every possible type of prisoner: political, military-for the members of the French resistance movement were soldiers-racial elements, and common-law criminals.

Criminals of all nationalities were herded together with their compatriots, and every nationality lived side by side, so conditions of living were distressing. In addition, there was overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and compulsory labor. I shall give a few examples to show that prisoners were mixed quite indiscriminately.

In March 1944, I saw the French General Duval die. He had been working on the "terrace" with me all day. When we came back, he was covered with mud and completely exhausted. He died a few hours later.

The French General Vernaud died on a straw mattress, filthy with excrement, in room Number 6, where those on the verge of death were taken, surrounded by dying men.

I saw M. De Tesson die ...

M. DUBOST: Will you explain to the Tribunal who M. De Tesson was?

DUPONT: M. De Tesson was a former French minister, married to an American. He also died on a straw mattress, covered with pus, from a disease known as septicopyohemia.

I also witnessed the death of Count de Lipkowski, who had done brilliant military service in this war. He had been granted the honors of war by the German Army and had, for one thing, been invited to Paris by Rommel, who desired to show the admiration he felt for his military brilliance. He died miserably in the winter of 1944.

One further instance: The Belgian Minister Janson was in the camp living under the conditions which I have already described, and of which you must have already heard very often. He died miserably, a physical and mental wreck. His intellect had gone and he had partially lost his reason.

I cite only extreme cases and especially those of generals, as they were said to be granted special conditions. I saw no sign of that.

The last stage in this process of the degradation of human beings was the setting of internee against internee.

M. DUBOST: Before dealing with this point, will you describe the conditions in which you found your former professor, Leon Kindberg, professor of medicine?

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DUPONT: I studied medicine under Professor Maurice Leon Kindberg at the Beaujon Hospital.

M. DUBOST: In Paris?

DUPONT: Yes, in Paris. A very highly cultured and brilliantly intelligent man. In January 1945 I learned that he had just arrived from Monovitz. I found him in Block 58, a block which in n

ormal circumstances would hold 300 men, and into which 1,200 had been crowded- Hungarians, Poles, Russians, Czechs, with a large proportion of Jews in an extraordinary state of misery. I did not recognize Leon Kindberg because there was nothing to distinguish him from the usual type to be found in these blocks. There was no longer any sign of intellect in him and it was hard to find anything of the man that I had formerly known. We managed to get him out of that block but his health was unfortunately too much impaired and he died shortly after his liberation.

M. DUBOST: Can you tell the Tribunal, as far as you know, the "crimes" committed by this man?

DUPONT: After the armistice Leon Kindberg settled in Toulouse to practice the treatment of pulmonary consumption. I know from an absolutely reliable source that he had taken no part whatsoever in activities directed against the German occupation authorities in France. They found out that he was a Jew and as such he was arrested and deported. He drifted into Buchenwald by way of Auschwitz and Monovitz.

M. DUBOST: What crime had General Duval committed that he should be imprisoned along with pimps, moral degenerates, and murderers? What had General Vernaud done?

DUPONT: I know nothing about the activities of General Duval and General Vernaud during the occupation. All I can say is that they were certainly not asocial.

M. DUBOST: What about Count de Lipkowski and M. De Tesson?

DUPONT: Nor has the Count de Lipkowski or M. De Tesson committed any of the faults usually attributed to asocial elements or common-law criminals.

M. DUBOST: You may proceed.

DUPONT: The means used to achieve the final degradation of the internees -as a whole was the torture of them by their fellow prisoners. Let me give a particularly brutal instance. In Kommando A. S. 6, which was situated at Mansleben-am-See, 70 kilometers from Buchenwald, there were prisoners of every nationality, including a large portion of Frenchmen., I had two friends there: Antoine d'Aimery, a son of General d'Aimery, and Thibaut, who was studying to become a missionary.

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M. DUBOST: Catholic?

DUPONT: Catholic. At Mansleben-am-See hangings took place in public in the hall of a factory connected with the salt mine. The SS were present at these hangings in full dress uniform, wearing their decorations.

The prisoners were forced to be present at these hangings under threats of the most cruel beatings. When they hanged the poor wretches, the prisoners had to give the Hitler salute. Worse still, one prisoner was chosen to pull away the stool on which the victim stood. He could not evade the order, as the consequences to himself would have been too grave. When the execution had been carried out, the prisoners had to file off in front of the victim between two SS men. They were made to touch the body and, gruesome detail, look the dead man in the eyes. I believe that men who had been forced to go through such rites must inevitably lose the sense of their dignity, as human beings.

In Buchenwald itself all the executive work was entrusted to the internees, that is, the hangings were carried out by a German prisoner assisted by other prisoners. The camp was policed by prisoners. When someone in the camp was- sentenced to death, it was their duty to find him and take him to the place of execution.

Selection for the labor squads, with which we were well acquainted, especially for Dora, Laura, and S III-extermination detachments-was carried out by prisoners, who decided which of us were to go there. In this way the internees were forced down to the worst possible level of degradation, inasmuch as every man was forced to become the executioner of his fellow.

I have already referred to Block 61, where the extermination of the physically unfit and those otherwise unsuited for labor was carried out. These executions were also carried out by prisoners under SS supervision and control. From the point of view of humanity in general, this was perhaps the worst crime of all, for these men who were constrained to torture their fellow-beings have now been restored to life, but profoundly changed. What is to become of them? What are they going to do?

M. DUBOST: Who was responsible for these crimes as far as your personal knowledge goes?

DUPONT: One thing which strikes me as being particularly significant is that the methods which I observed in Buchenwald now appear to have been the same, or almost the same, as those prevailing in all the other camps. The degree of uniformity in the way in which the camps were run is clear evidence of orders from higher quarters. In the case of Buchenwald, in particular, the personnel, no matter how rough it might be, would not have done such things

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on their own initiative. Moreover, the camp chief and the SS doctor, himself, always pleaded superior orders, often in a vague manner. The name most frequently invoked was that of Himmler. Other names also were given. The chief medical officer for all the camps, Lolling, was mentioned on numerous occasions in connection with the extermination block, especially by an SS doctor in the camp, named Bender. In regard to the selection of invalids or Jews to be sent to Auschwitz or Bergen-Belsen to be gassed, I heard the name of Pohl mentioned.

M. DUBOST: What were the functions of Pohl?

DUPONT: He was chief of the SS administration in Berlin, Division D 2.

M. DUBOST: Could the German people as a whole have been in ignorance of these atrocities, or were they bound to know of them?

DUPONT: As these camps had been in existence for years, it is impossible for them not to have known. Our transport stopped at Treves on its way in. The prisoners in some vans were completely naked while in others they were clothed. There was a crowd of people around the station and they all saw the transport. Some of them excited the SS men patrolling the platform,, But there were other channels through which information could reach the population. To begin with, there were squads working outside the camps. Labor squads went out from Buchenwald to Weimar, Erfurt, and Jena. They left in the morning and came back at night, and during the day they were among the civilian population. In the factories, too, the technical crew were not members of the armed forces. The "Meister" were not SS men. They went home every night after supervising the work of the prisoners all day. Certain factories even employed civilian labor-the Gustloff works in Weimar, for instance. During the work, the internees and civilians were together.

The civil authorities were responsible for victualling the camps and were allowed to enter them, and I have seen civilian trucks coming into the camp.

The railway authorities were necessarily informed on those matters. Numerous trains carried prisoners daily from one camp to another; or from France to Germany; and these trains were driven by railway men. Moreover, there was a regular daily train to Buchenwald as a terminal station. The railway administrative authorities must, therefore, have been well informed.

Orders were also given in the factories, and industrialists could not fail to be informed regarding the personnel they employed in their factories. I may add that visits took place; the German prisoners were sometimes visited. I knew certain German internees, and I know that on the occasion of those visits they talked to their

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relatives, which they could hardly do without informing their home circle of what was going on. It would appear that it is impossible to deny that the German people knew of the camps.

M. DUBOST: The Army?

DUPONT: The Army knew of the camps. At least, this is what I could observe. Every week so-called commissions came to Buchenwald, a group of officers who came to visit the camp. There were SS among these officers; but I very often saw members of the Wehrmacht, the Luftwaffe, who came on those visits. Sometimes we were able to identify the personalities who visited the camp, rarely so far as I was concerned. On 22 March 1945 General Mrugowski came to visit the camp. In particular, he spent a long time in Block 61. He was accompanied on this visit by an SS general and the chief medical officer of the camp, Dr. Shiedlauski.

Another point, during the last few months, -the Buchenwald guard, plus SS-men...

M. DUBOST: Excuse me for interrupting you. Could you tell us about Block 61?

DUPONT: Block 61' was the extermination block for those suffering from cachexy- in other words, those arrived in such a state of exhaustion that they were totally unfit for work.

M. DUBOST: Is it direct testimony you are giving about this visit to Block 61?

DUPONT: This is from my own personal observation.

M. DUBOST: Whom does it concern?

DUPONT: General Mrugowski.

M. DUBOST: In the Army?

DUPONT: A doctor and an SS general whom I cannot identify.

M. DUBOST: Were university circles unaware of the work done in the camps?

DUPONT: At the Pathological Institute in Buchenwald, pathological preparations were made; and naturally some of them were out of the ordinary, since-and I am speaking as a doctor-we encountered cases that can no longer be observed, cases such as have been described in the books of the last century. Some excellent pieces of work were prepared and sent to universities, especially the University of Jena. On the other hand there were also some exhibits which could not properly be described as anatomical.

Some prepared tattoo marks were sent to universities.

M. DUBOST: Did you personally see that?

DUPONT: I saw these tattoo marks prepared.

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M. DUBOST: Then how did they obtain the anatomic exhibits, how did they get these tattoo marks? They waited for a natural death, of course.

DUPONT: The cases I observed were natural deaths or executions. Before our arrival-and I can name witnesses who can testify to this-they killed a man to get these tattoo marks. It happened, I must emphasize, when I was not at Buchenwald. I am repeating what was told me by witnesses whose names I will give. During the period when the camp was commanded by Koch, people who had particularly artistic tattoo marks were killed. The witness I can refer to is a Luxembourger called Nicolas Simon who lives in Luxembourg. He spent 6 years in Buchenwald in exceptional conditions where he had unprecedented opportunities of observation.

M. DUBOST: But I am told that Koch was sentenced to death and executed because of these excesses.

DUPONT: As far as I know, Koch was mixed up with some sort of swindling affair. He quarrelled with the SS administration. He was undoubtedly arrested and imprisoned.

THE PRESIDENT: We had better have an adjournment now.

[A recess was taken.]

M. DUBOST: We stopped at the end of the Koch story and the witness was telling the Tribunal that Koch had been executed not for the crimes that he had committed with regard to the internees in his charge, but because of the numerous dishonest acts of which he had been guilty during his period of service.

Did I understand the witness' explanation correctly?

DUPONT: I said explicitly that he had been accused of dishonesty. I cannot give precise details of all the charges. I cannot say that he was accused exclusively of dishonest acts by his administration; I know that such charges were made against him, but I have no further information.

M. DUBOST: Have you nothing to add?

DUPONT: I can say that this information came from Dr. Owen, who had been arrested at the same time and released again and who returned to Buchenwald towards the end, that is, early in 1945.

M. DUBOST: What was the nationality of this doctor?

DUPONT: German. He was in detention. He was an SS man and Koch and he were arrested at the same time. Owen was released and came back to Buchenwald restored to his rank and his functions at the beginning of 1945. He was quite willing to talk to the prisoners and the information that I have given comes from him.

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M. DUBOST: I have no further questions to ask the witness, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Does any member of the Defense Counsel wish to ask any questions?

DR. MERKEL: I am the Defense Counsel for the Gestapo.

Witness, you previously stated that the methods of treatment in Buchenwald were not peculiar to the Buchenwald Camp but must be ascribed to a general order. The reasons you gave for 'this statement were that you had seen those customs and methods in all the other camps too. How am I to understand this expression "in all the other camps"?

DUPONT: I am speaking of concentration camps; to be precise, a certain number of them, Mauthausen, Dachau, Sachsenhausen; labor squads such as Dora, Laura, S III, Mansleben, Ebensee, to mention these only.

DR. MERKEL: Were you yourself in those camps?

DUPONT: I myself went to Buchenwald. I collected exact testimony about the other camps from friends who were there. In any case, the number of friends of mine who died is a sufficiently eloquent proof that extermination was carried out in the same way in all the camps.

HERR BABEL: I should like to know to what block you belonged. Perhaps you can tell the Tribunal-you have already mentioned the point-how the prisoners were distributed? Did they not also bear certain external markings, red patches on the clothing of some and green on that of others?

DUPONT: There were in fact a number of badges, all of which were found in the same Kommandos. To give an example, where I was-in the "terrasse-kommando" known as "Entwässerung" (drainage)-I worked along side of German "common-laws" wearing the green badge. Regarding the nationalities in this Kommando, there were Russians, Czechs, Belgians, and French. Our badges were different; our treatment was identical, and in this particular case we were even commanded by "common-laws."

HERR BABEL: I did not quite hear the beginning of your answer. I asked whether the internees were divided into specific categories identifiable externally by means of stars or some kind of distinguishing mark: green, blue, et cetera?

DUPONT: I said that there were various badges in the camp, triangular badges which applied in principle to different categories, but all the men were mixed up together, and subjected to the same treatment.

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HERR BABEL: I did not ask you about their treatment, but about the distinctive badges.

DUPONT: For the French it was a badge in the form of a shield.

HERR BABEL: For all the prisoners, not only the French.

DUPONT: I am answering you. In the case of the French, who were those I knew best, the red, political badge was given to everyone without discrimination, including the prisoners brought over from Fort Barraut, who were common-law criminals. I saw the same thing among the Czechs and the Russians. It is true that the use of different badges had been intended, but that was never put into practice in any reasonable way.

To come back to what I have already stated, even if there were different badges, the people were all mixed up together, nevertheless, and subjected exactly to the same treatment and the same conditions.

HERR BABEL: We have already heard several times that prisoners of various nationalities were mixed up together. That is not what I asked you. You were in the camp for a sufficiently long period to be able to answer my question. How were these prisoners divided? As far as I know, they were divided into criminal, political, and other groups, and each group distinguished by a special sign worn on the clothing—green, blue, red, or some other color.

DUPONT: The use of different badges for different categories had been planned. These categories were mixed up together. "Criminals" were side by side with prisoners classed as "political." There were, however, blocks in which one or another of those elements predominated; but they were not divided up into specific groups distinguished by the particular badge they wore.

HERR BABEL: I have been told, for instance, that political prisoners wore blue badges and the criminals wore red ones. We have already had a witness who confirmed this to a certain extent by stating that criminals wore a green badge and asocial offenders a different badge and that the category to which they belonged could be seen at a glance.

DUPONT: It is true that different badges existed. It is true that the use of these badges for different categories was foreseen; but if I am to confine myself to the truth, I must emphasize the fact that the full use was not made of these badges. For the French, in particular, there were only political badges; and this increased the confusion still more since notorious criminals from the ordinary 'civil prisons were regarded everywhere as political prisoners. The badges were intended to identify the different existing categories, but they were not employed systematically. They were not employed at all for the French prisoners.

HERR BABEL: If I understand you correctly, you say that all French prisoners were classified as political prisoners?

DUPONT: That is correct.

HERR BABEL: Now, among these French prisoners, as you said yourself, is it not true to say that there were not only political prisoners but also a large proportion of criminals?

DUPONT: There were some among...

HERR BABEL: At least, I took your previous statement to mean that. You said that quite definitely.

DUPONT: I did say so. I said that there were criminals from special prisons who were not -given the green badge with an F, which they should have received, but the political badge.

HERR BABEL: What was your employment in the camp? You are a doctor, are you not?

DUPONT: I arrived in January. For 3 months I was assigned first to the quarry and then to the "terrasse." After that I was assigned to the Revier, that is to say the camp infirmary.

HERR BABEL: What were your duties there?

DUPONT: I was assigned to the ambulance service for internal diseases.

HERR BABEL: Were you able to act on your own initiative? What sort of instructions did you receive regarding the treatment of patients?

DUPONT: We acted under the control of an SS doctor. We had a certain number of beds for certain patients, in the proportion of one bed to 20 patients. We had practically no medical supplies. I worked in the infirmary up to the liberation.

HERR BABEL: Did you receive instructions regarding the treatment of patients? Were you told to look after them properly or were you given instructions to administer treatment which would cause death?

DUPONT: As regards that, I was ordered to select the incurables for extermination. I never carried out this order.

HERR BABEL: Were you told to select them for extermination? I did not quite hear your reply. Will you please repeat it?

DUPONT: I was ordered to select those who were dangerously ill so that they might be sent to Block 61 where they were to be exterminated. That was the only order I received concerning the patients.

HERR BABEL: "Where were they to be exterminated?" I asked if you were told that they were to be selected for extermination.

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Were you told-"They will be sent to Block 61?" Were you also told what was to happen to them in Block 61?

DUPONT: Block 61 was in charge of a noncommissioned officer called Wilhelm, who personally supervised the executions; and it was he who ordered what patients should be selected to be sent to that block. I think the situation is sufficiently clear.

HERR BABEL: I beg your pardon. You were given no specific details?

DUPONT: The order to send the incurables.. .

HERR BABEL: Witness, it strikes me that you are not giving a straightforward answer of "yes" or "no," but that you persist in evading the question.

DUPONT: It was said that these patients were to be sent to Block 61. Nothing more was added but every patient sent to Block 61 was executed.

HERR BABEL: That is not first-hand observation. You found out or you heard that those who were sent there did not come back.

DUPONT: That is not correct. I could see for myself, for I was the only doctor who could enter Block 61, which was under the command of an internee called Louis Cunish (or Remisch). I was able to get a few of the patients out; the others died.

HERR BABEL: If such a thing was said to you, why did you not say that you would not do it?

DUPONT: If I understand the question correctly, I am being asked why, when I was told to send the most serious cases...

HERR BABEL: When you received instructions to select patients for Block 61 why did you not say, "I know what will happen to those people, and therefore I will not do it."

DUPONT: Because it would have meant death.

HERR BABEL: And what would it have meant if Germans had refused to carry out such an order?

DUPONT: What Germans are you talking about? German internees?

HERR BABEL: A German doctor, if you like, or anyone else employed in the hospital. What would have happened to him if he had received such an order and refused to carry it out?

DUPONT: If an internee refused point-blank to execute such an order, it meant death. In point of fact, we sometimes could evade such orders. I emphasize the fact that I never sent anyone to- Block 61.

HERR BABEL: I have one more general question to ask about conditions in the camp. For those who have never seen a camp it is difficult to imagine what conditions were actually like. Perhaps

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you could give the Tribunal a short description of how the camp was arranged.

DUPONT: I think I have already spoken at sufficient length on the organization of the camp. I should like to ask the President whether it will serve any useful purpose to return to this subject.

THE PRESIDENT: I believe it is not necessary. [To Herr Babel] If you want to put any particular cross-examination to him to show he is not telling the truth, you can, but not to ask him for a general description.

HERR BABEL: The camp consists of an inner site surrounded and secured by barbed wire. The barracks in which the prisoners were housed were inside this camp. How was this inner camp guarded?

THE PRESIDENT: Will you kindly put one question at a time? The question you just put involves three or four different matters.

HERR BABEL: How was the part of -the camp in which the living quarters are situated, separated from the rest? What security, measures were taken?

DUPONT: The camp was a unified whole, cut off from the rest of the world by an electrified barbed wire network.

HERR BABEL: Where were the guards?

DUPONT: The guards of the camp were in towers situated all around the camp; they were stationed at the gate and they patrolled inside the camp itself.

HERR BABEL: Inside the camp? Inside the barbed wire enclosure?

DUPONT: Obviously, inside the camp and inside the barracks, of course. They had the right to go everywhere.

HERR BABEL: I have been informed that each separate barrack was under the supervision of only one man, a German SS man or a member of some other organization, that there were no other guards, that these guards were not intended to act as guards but only to keep order, and that the so-called Kapos, who were chosen from the ranks of the prisoners, had the same authority as the guards and performed the duties of the guards. It may have been different in Buchenwald. My information comes from Dachau.

DUPONT: I have already answered all these questions in my statement by saying that the camps were run by the SS in a manner which is common knowledge and that in addition the SS employed the internees as intermediaries in many instances. This was the case in Buchenwald and, I suppose, in all the other concentration camps.

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HERR BABEL: The answer to the question has again been highly evasive. I shall not, however, pursue the matter any further, as in any case I shall not receive a definite answer.

But I should like to put one further question: You stated in connection with the facts you described that a professor, whose name I could not understand through the earphones and who was, I believe, a professor of your own, was housed in Block 53. You stated in connection with the question of degradation that at first 300 people, I think, were housed there and later on 1,200. Is that correct?

DUPONT: There were 1,200 men in Block 58 when I found Dr. Kindberg there.

HERR BABEL: Yes. And if I understood you correctly, you

said that in this block there were not only Frenchmen, but also Russians, Poles, Czechs, and Jews and that a state of degradation was caused not only through the herding together of 1,200 people but also through the intermingling of so many different nationalities.

DUPONT: I want to make it clear that the intermingling of elements speaking a different language, men who are unable to understand each other, is not a crime; but it was a pre-disposing factor which furthered all the other measures employed to bring about a state of human degradation among the prisoners.

HERR BABEL: So you consider that the intermingling of Frenchmen, Russians, Poles, Czechs, and Jews is a degradation?

DUPONT: I do not see the point of this question. The fact of intermingling ...

HERR BABEL: There is no need for you to see the point; I know why I am asking the question.

DUPONT: The fact of putting men who speak different languages together is not degrading. I did not either think or say such a thing; but the herding together of elements which differ from each other in every respect and especially in that of language, in itself made living conditions more difficult, and paved the way for the application of other measures which I have already described at length and whose final aim was the degradation of the human being.

HERR BABEL: I cannot understand why the necessity of associating with people whose language one does not understand should be degrading.

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Babel, he has given his answer, that he considers it tended to degradation. It does not matter whether you understand it or not.

HERR BABEL: Mr. President, the transmission through the earphones is sometimes so imperfect that I, at least, often cannot

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hear exactly what the witness says and for that reason I have unfortunately been compelled to have an answer repeated from time to time.

M. DUBOST: I should not Eke the Tribunal to mistake this interpolation for an interruption of the cross-examination; but I think I must say that some confusion was undoubtedly created in the mind of the Defense Counsel just now in consequence of an interpreter's error which has been brought to my notice.

He asked my witness an insidious question, namely, whether the French deportees were criminals for the most part, and the question was interpreted as follows: whether the French deportees were criminals. The witness answered the question as translated into French and not as asked in German. I therefore request that the question be put once more by the Defense Counsel and correctly translated.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you understand what Mr. Dubost said, Dr. Babel?

HERR BABEL: I think I understand the substance. I think I understand that there was a mistake in the translation. I am not in a position to judge; I cannot follow both the French and German text.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the best course is to continue your cross-examination, if you have any more questions to ask, and Mr. Dubost can clear up the difficulty in re-examination.

HERR BABEL: Mr. President, the Defense Counsel for Kaltenbrunner has already explained today that it is very difficult for the Defense to cross-examine a witness without being informed at least one day before as to the subjects on which the witness is to be heard. The testimony given by today's witnesses was so voluminous that it is impossible for me to follow it without previous preparation and to prepare and conduct from brief notes the extensive cross-examinations which are necessary.

To my knowledge, the President has already informed Defense Counsel for the organizations that we shall have an opportunity of re-examining the witnesses later or of calling them on our own behalf.

THE PRESIDENT: I have already said what I have to say on behalf of the Tribunal on that point, but as Counsel for the Defense must have anticipated that witnesses would be called as to the conditions in the concentration camps, I should have thought they could have prepared their cross-examination during the 40 or more days during which the Trial has taken place.

HERR BABEL: Mr. President, I do not think that this is the proper time for me to argue the matter with the Tribunal, but I

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may perhaps be given the opportunity of doing so later in a closed session. I consider this necessary in the interests of the rapid and unhampered progress of the Trial.

I have no desire whatsoever to delay the proceedings. I have the greatest interest in expediting them as far as possible, but I am anxious not to do so at the cost of prejudicing, the defense of the organizations.

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Babel, I have already pointed out to you that you must have anticipated that the witnesses might be called to state the conditions in concentration camps. You must therefore have had full opportunity during the days the Trial has taken place for making up your mind on what points you would cross-examine, and I see no reason to discuss the matter with you.

HERR BABEL: Thank you for this information. But naturally I cannot know in advance exactly what the witness is going to say, and I cannot cross-examine him until I have heard him. I know, of course, that a witness is going to make a statement about concentration camps but I cannot know in advance which particular points he will discuss.

M. DUBOST: I would ask the Tribunal to note that in questioning the French witness the Defense used certain words the literal translation of which is "for the most part." This applied to the character of the French deportees. The question was, "Were they criminals for the most part?" The witness understood it to be as I did: "Did you say that they were criminals?" and not "that the convoys were for the most part composed of criminals." His reply was the natural one. The Tribunal will allow me to ask the witness to give details. What was the proportion of common-law criminals and patriots respectively among the deportees? Was he himself a common-law criminal or a patriot? Were the generals and other personalities whose names he has given us common-law criminals or patriots, speaking generally?

DUPONT: The proportion of French common-law criminals was very small. The common-law criminals came from Fort Barraut in a convoy. I cannot give the exact figures, but there were only a few hundred out of all the internees. In other incoming convoys the proportion of common-law criminals included was only 2 or 3 per thousand.

M. DUBOST: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: The witness can retire.

[The witness left the stand.]

THE PRESIDENT: M. Dubost, are you proposing or asking to call other witnesses upon concentration camps? Because, as I have already pointed out to you, the evidence, with the exception of

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Dr. Babel's recent cross-examination, has practically not been cross-examine; and it is supported by other film evidence. We are instructed by [Article 18 of the Charter](#) to conduct the Trial in as expeditious a way as possible; and I will point out to you, as ordered under [24e of the Charter](#), you have the opportunity of calling rebutting evidence, if it were necessary and, therefore, if the evidence which has been so fully gone into as to the condition in concentration camps...

M. DUBOST: The witness whom I propose to ask the Tribunal to hear will elucidate a point which has been pending for several weeks. The Tribunal will remember that when my American colleagues were presenting their evidence, the question of ascertaining whether Kaltenbrunner had been in Mauthausen arose. In evidence of this, I am going to call M. Boix, who will prove to the Tribunal that Kaltenbrunner had been in Mauthausen. He has photographs of that visit and the Tribunal will see them, as the witness brought them with him.

THE PRESIDENT: Very well.

[The witness, Boix, took the stand.]

THE PRESIDENT: What is your name?

M. FRANCOIS BOIX (Witness): Francois Boix.

THE PRESIDENT: Are you French?

BOIX: I am a Spanish refugee.

THE PRESIDENT: Will you repeat this oath after me. I swear to speak without hate or fear, to say the truth, all the truth, only the truth.

[The witness repeated the oath in French.]

THE PRESIDENT: Raise your right hand and say, "I swear."

BOIX: I swear.

THE PRESIDENT: You may sit down.

M. Dubost, will you spell the name.

M. DUBOST: B-O-I-X. [Turning -to the witness.] You were born on 14 August 1920 in Barcelona?

BOIX: Yes.

M. DUBOST: You are a news photographer, and you were interned in the camp of Mauthausen, since...

BOIX: Since 27 January 1941.

M. DUBOST: You handed over to the commission of *inquiry a certain number of photographs?

BOIX: Yes.

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M. DUBOST: They are going to be projected on the screen and you will state under oath under what circumstances and where these pictures were taken?

BOIX: Yes.

M. DUBOST: How did you obtain these pictures?

BOIX: Owing to my professional knowledge, I was sent to Mauthausen to work in the identification branch of the camp. There was a photographic branch, and pictures of everything happening in the camp could be taken and sent to the High Command in Berlin.

[Pictures were then projected on the screen.]

M. DUBOST: This is the general view of the quarry. Is this where the internees worked?

BOIX: Most of them.

M. DUBOST: Where is the stairway?

BOIX: In the rear.

M. DUBOST: How many steps were there?

BOIX: 160 steps at first; later on there were 186.

M. DUBOST: We can proceed to the next picture.

BOIX: This was -taken in the quarry during a visit from Reichsfuehrer Himmler, Kaltenbrunner, the Governor of Linz, and some other leaders whose names I do not know. What you see below is the dead body of a man who had fallen from the top of the quarry (70 meters), as happened every day.

M. DUBOST: We can proceed to the next picture.

BOIX: This was taken in April 1941. My Spanish comrades who had sought refuge in France are pulling a wagon loaded with earth. That was the work we had to do.

M. DUBOST: By whom was this picture taken?

BOIX: At that time by Paul Bicken a professor from Essen.

M. DUBOST: We may proceed to the next one.

BOIX: This staged the scene of an Austrian who had escaped. He was a carpenter in the garage and he managed to make a box, a box in which he could hide and so get out of the camp. But after a while he was recaptured. They put him on the wheelbarrow in which corpses were carried to the crematorium. There were some placards saying in German, "Alle Vogel sind schon da," meaning "All the birds are back again." He was sentenced and then paraded in front of 10,000 deportees to the music of a gypsy band playing a song "J'attendrai." When he was hanged, his body swung to and fro in the wind while they played the very well known song, "Bill Black Polka."

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M. DUBOST: The next one.

BOIX: This is the scene; in this picture we see on the right and left all the deportees in a row; on the left are the Spaniards, they are smaller. The man in the front with the beret, is a criminal from Berlin by the name of Schultz, who was employed on these occasions. In the background you can see the man who is about to be hanged.

M. DUBOST: Next one. Who took these pictures?

BOIX: By the SS OberscharFuehrer Fritz Kornatz. He was killed by American troops in Holland in 1944. This man, a Russian prisoner of war, got a bullet in the head. They hanged him to make us think he was a suicide and had tried to hurl himself against the barbed wire.

The other picture shows some Dutch Jews. That was taken at Barracks C, the so-called quarantine barracks. The Jews were driven to hurl themselves against the barbed wire on the very day of their arrival because they realized that there was no hope to escape for them.

M. DUBOST: By whom were these pictures taken?

BOIX: At this time by the SS OberscharFuehrer Paul Ricken, a professor from Essen.

M. DUBOST: Next one.

BOIX: These are 2 Dutch Jews. You can see, the red star they wore. That was an alleged attempt to escape (Fluchtversuch).

M. DUBOST: What, was it in reality?

BOIX: The SS sent them to pick up stones near the barbed wires, and the SS guards at the second barbed wire fence fired on them, because they received a reward for every man they shot down.

The other picture shows a Jew in 1941 during the construction of the so-called Russian camp, which later became the sanitary camp, hanged with the cord which he used to keep up his trousers.

M. DUBOST: Was it suicide?

BOIX: It was alleged to be. It was a man who no longer had any hope of escape. He was driven to desperation by forced labor and torture.

M. DUBOST: What is this picture?

BOIX: A Jew whose nationality I do not know. He was put in a barrel of water until he could not stand it any longer. He was beaten to the point of death and then given 10 minutes in which to hang himself. He used his own belt to do it, for he knew what would happen to him otherwise.

M. DUBOST: Who took that picture?

BOIX: The SS OberscharFuehrer Paul Ricken.

M. DUBOST: And what is this picture?

BOIX: Here you see the Viennese police visiting the quarry. This was in June or July 1941. The two deportees whom you see here are two of my Spanish comrades.

M. DUBOST: What are they doing?

BOIX: They are showing the police how they had to raise the stones, because there were no other appliances for doing so.

M. DUBOST: Did you know any of the policemen who came?

BOIX: No, because they came only once. We had just time to have a look at them.

The date of this picture is September 1943, on the birthday of ObersturmbannFuehrer Franz Ziereis. He is surrounded by the whole staff of Mauthausen Camp. I can give you the names of all the people in the picture.

M. DUBOST: Pass the next photo.

BOIX: This is a picture taken on the same day as ObersturmbanniFuehrer Franz Ziereis's birthday. The other man was his adjutant. I forgot his name. It must be remembered that this adjutant was a member of the Wehrmacht and put on an SS uniform as soon as he came to the camp.

M. DUBOST: Who is that?

BOIX: That is the same visit to Mauthausen by police officials in June or July 1941. This is the kitchen door. The prisoners standing there had been sent to the disciplinary company. They used that little appliance on their backs for carrying stones up to a weight of 80 kilos, until they were exhausted. Very few men ever came back from the disciplinary company.

This picture shows Himmler's visit to the Fuehrerheim. at Camp Mauthausen in April 1941. It shows Himmler with the Governor of Linz in the background and OBERSTURMBANNFuehrer Ziereis, the commanding officer of Camp Mauthausen, on his left.

This picture was taken in the quarry. In the rear, to the left, you see a group of deportees at work. In the foreground are Franz Ziereis, Himmler, and ObergruppenFuehrer Kaltenbrunner. He is wearing the gold Party emblem.

M. DUBOST: This picture was taken in the quarry? By whom?

BOIX: By the SS OberscharFuehrer Paul Ricken. This was between April and May 1941. This gentleman frequently visited the camp at that period to see how similar camps could be organized throughout Germany and in the occupied countries.

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M. DUBOST: I have finished. You give us your assurance that it is really Kaltenbrunner.

BOIX: I give you my assurance.

M. DUBOST: And that this picture was taken in the camp?

BOIX: I give you my assurance.

M. DUBOST: Were you taken to Mauthausen as a prisoner of war or as a political prisoner?

BOIX: As a prisoner of war.

M. DUBOST: You had fought as a volunteer in the French Army?

BOIX: Either in infantry battalions or in the Foreign Legion, or in the pioneer regiments attached to the Army to which I belonged. I was in the Vosges with the 5th Army. We were taken prisoners. We retreated as far as Belfort where I was taken prisoner in the night of 20-21 June 1940. I was put with some fellow Spaniards and transferred to Mulhouse. Knowing us to be former Spanish Republicans and anti-fascists, they put us in among the Jews as members of a lower order of humanity (Untermensch). We were prisoners of war for 6 months and then we learned that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had had an interview with Hitler to discuss the question of foreigners and other matters. We knew that our status had been among the questions raised. We heard that the Germans had asked what was to be done with Spanish prisoners of war who had served in the French Army, those of them who were Republicans and ex-members of the Republican Army. The answer...

M. DUBOST: Never mind that. So although you were a prisoner of war you were sent to a camp not under Army control?

BOIX: Exactly. We were prisoners of war. We were told that we were being transferred to a subordinate Kommando, like all the other Frenchmen. Then we were transferred to Mauthausen where, for the first time, we saw that there were no Wehrmacht soldiers and we realized that we were in an extermination camp.

M. DUBOST: How many of you arrived there?

BOIX: At the end we were 1,500; altogether 8,000 Spaniards at the time of our arrival.

M. DUBOST: How many of you were liberated?

BOIX: Approximately 1,600.

M. DUBOST: I have no more questions to ask.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you want to ask any questions?

GEN. RUDENKO: I shall have some questions. If the President will permit me I shall present them in tomorrow's session.

THE PRESIDENT: We will adjourn now.

[The Tribunal adjourned until 29 January 1946 at 1000 hours.]