

Oton LANGFELDER

JASENOVAC

Minutes

recorded from May 31, 1945 to June 11, 1945 at the District Commission for Establishing the Crimes of the Occupiers and Their Collaborators in Osijek, regarding the hearing of Langfelder Oton from Osijek, a survivor of the Jasenovac concentration camp.

Present:

Dr. Pavle Vinski, legal officer of the district commission

Pavle Brnjevarac, secretary

The summoned Langfelder Oton appears before this commission — born in Đakovo, residing in Osijek, 29 years old, son of Mijo and Jozefina, née Honig, of Jewish faith and Jewish nationality — and after being warned to tell the truth and of the consequences of false testimony, declares:

Without any real reason, I was arrested in Osijek on the night of August 5, 1941, by the Osijek Ustasha student company, which brought me to the Osijek police station. Here all the money I had on me, my watch, and all my documents were immediately taken from me. All of this was confiscated by Osijek police agent Đurić. Together with the other detainees already held there, I was taken by members of the same Osijek Ustasha student company to the garrison prison. On August 7, 1941, we were all driven under heavy guard to the Osijek railway station, where we were loaded into wagons that were immediately sealed. This transport to the camp was the second one from Osijek. The transport to the station was led by the commander of the order police, Dragutin Majer from Osijek, and we were transported at night under very heavy guard. The Ustasha drove us. I know that the entire transport was accompanied by the Ustasha student company from Osijek. Apart from Dragutin Majer, however, I knew no one.

After we were loaded into the wagons of a completely separate transport, the wagons were sealed so that it was impossible to get out. Our train, when it arrived in Zagreb, stopped outside near the Sava bridge, and the Ustasha did not allow anyone to approach the wagons. We received no food, and members of the Red Cross were even forbidden from

approaching the wagons to distribute water or food to us. Naturally, the wagons were not opened even for the performance of bodily functions.

The transport that departed from Osijek on that day consisted mostly of Jews and some Serbs. Where the transport was headed, I had no idea at all.

As far as I can still recall today, the following were also with me in that transport:

Lebl Joško from Osijek, who was killed at the end of 1944 by the camp captain in Jasenovac,

Ilija and Leo Kohn, both from Osijek, who perished — the first was taken away on April 20, 1945 to Lonja, and the second was killed as early as 1941 in camp Jasenovac No. 2,

Horvat Ivan from Osijek, killed by the Ustasha in 1941 in Krapje,

Ritscher Slavko from Osijek, killed in 1941 in Jasenovac by the Štira company,

Ilija Krakauer from Osijek, who was in Lonja until 1945 — whether he is alive, I do not know,

Gomboš Pavle from Osijek, killed in 1942 in Bistrica on Christmas Eve by Captain Filipović-Majstorović,

Grosepajs Josip from Osijek, who returned home,

Güns David from Osijek, who was alive in Jasenovac and worked in the tannery until the last day — his fate is unknown to me,

Kon Vlado from Osijek, who worked in the Jasenovac tannery until the last day — his fate is unknown to me,

Hollstein N. from Osijek, whose wife worked at the theater box office, killed in 1941 by the Osijek Štira company,

Kremen, Eng. N. from Osijek, who was alive until the last day in Jasenovac and worked in the chain factory, group I — his fate is now unknown to me,

Krašo, Eng. Dodik from Osijek, who was also alive until the last day in Jasenovac, working in the chain factory — his fate is also unknown to me,

Beck Marko from Osijek, whom I know was alive on April 22, 1945,

Beck Bajo from Osijek, who died in Jasenovac in 1942 of typhus,

Fischer N., a butcher from Osijek, and his son, whose name I don't know. The first was killed in 1941 in Jasenovac, in camp II — I don't know by whom — and the second was killed in camp I by the Osijek Štira company in 1941,

Heisler N. (the young one) from Osijek, killed by the Ustasha in Krapje in 1941,

Deutsch Vlado from Osijek, killed by the camp captain in Jasenovac, in camp I, in March or April 1943,

Božan N. N. (both of them) from Osijek, executed in 1942 in Jasenovac,

Leitner Milan and his brother from Osijek. The first was killed in Krapje in 1941, and the second also in 1941, but I don't know where,

Lang N. N. from Osijek (one of them was associated with the theater). Both were executed in 1941 in Jasenovac,

Gomboš Lacika from Osijek, who was alive until the last day in Jasenovac and worked in the tailor shop.

Among the Serbian fellow prisoners I knew no one, but I know that almost all of them were tram workers and customs officers.

On August 9, 1941, this transport arrived in Gospić. After unloading, the Serbs were taken to the penitentiary located in Gospić itself, while all the Jews were taken to a farmstead called Ovčara, which had been converted into a camp and was located about 4–5 kilometers from Gospić. We were driven by the same Ustasha from the Osijek student company.

This farmstead was enclosed by a wall, and around it were only stables in which we slept. There I already found fellow men and women from Bosnia, Koprivnica, Križevci, Varaždin, and other places.

I remember finding the following persons there:

From Osijek: Bittel Simon, Hacham Marko, Hacham Izidor, Hacham Abika, Rottmann Otto, Zimmermann Pavle, Director Gomboš, Willcheim Robert, Schorsch Dr. Alfred, Horn Petar (student), Dr. Hann, Hecht, pharmacist Sternberg Gustav.

From Vienna: Placha Leo, whom I know was alive until the last day.

From Bosanski Brod: the Pesah brothers.

From Brod on the Sava: Klein N. (who served as camp elder).

From Križevci: Goldberger, a bookseller.

From Varaždin: Micki Slavko, Blass Marijan and his cousin, also Blass, Wiener Bernard.

From Bjelovar: Pollak Ernest (dye works), Wolf (biscuits).

From Našice: Sonnenschein Hugo and his brother Čerkovski (who later escaped to the partisans), Erlich (the young one).

From Koprivnica: Fuchs Miro.

From Zagreb: Sohr Pavle, Sternberg Oskar, Tolnauer Dr. Nikola.

From Sarajevo: Dr. Gaon (physician), Dr. Perić (physician), Dr. Kunortija (physician).

From Sisak: Deutsch Dr. Lujo.

From Zavidovići: the Musafija brothers.

From Koprivnica: the rabbi and his son.

I can no longer recall the others.

The camp commander was Ustasha First Lieutenant Milan Pudić, reportedly from Herzegovina. Here in the camp there was no beating, and no one was killed. The food was poor. Each meal consisted of two or three potatoes. Younger men volunteered for field work, and I volunteered too. We worked at farms in the countryside and were not particularly guarded, as the farmers with whom we worked were responsible for us. We also slept in the village. I went to work in Lički Osik, where I worked on the harvest. With me there were the Pesah brothers from Bosanski Brod and Santo Montiljo — I cannot recall the others now. I spent just one day in the Ovčara camp; all the rest of the time I was in the countryside.

I worked like this for about ten days, when an order suddenly came that we all had to return to camp Ovčara — supposedly because the camp was to be disbanded and we would be sent home. Under that impression we all returned, even though there were opportunities to escape. The matter was that the Italians were to occupy Gospić.

Around August 20, 1941, at night, at 11 o'clock, we were loaded into wagons. To our greatest astonishment, the wagons were again sealed and we set off in an unknown direction, toward Zagreb. We were escorted by Ustasha whose unit I did not know. Passing through stations, station Ustasha entered our wagons and plundered what little we still had on us. That is how we arrived in Jasenovac.

After me, the following day, another group departed from Gospić, which arrived in Jastrebarsko, and from there, after eight days, was transferred to Jasenovac, but only the men, while the women remained in Jastrebarsko.

The journey from Gospić to Jasenovac lasted two days. During that time we received nothing to eat or drink, nor could we leave the wagons.

Together with me in the wagon were: Bittel, Zimmermann, Rottmann, Lebl Joško, Kohn Ilija, Kohn Leo, the rabbi from Koprivnica with his twelve-year-old son, Deutsch Vlado, Božan, Montiljo Santo, Bröder Milan and others whom I can no longer recall.

We were sent to Jasenovac, to camp No. II. That camp was located 5–6 kilometers from the station, near a forest. It was also about two kilometers from the road, so we were completely cut off from the world. We were brought to the camp by Jasenovac Ustasha and were received there without any list being made of the arrivals.

The camp consisted of three (German-style) barracks, each built for about a thousand people. We immediately had to build the wire fence ourselves. We slept on bunks. There were actually two camps: one Jewish and one Serbian, side by side. I note that after the train with the Jews, a train with Serbs arrived from Gospić right away. In the first Jewish transport there were about 1,500 of us, while I don't know how many Serbs were brought in the first instance. But I know that they loaded about 50 to 75 people into each wagon.

Besides fencing with wire, the first need was to build a kitchen. At the same time we immediately built a well so we could have water. I note that the food in this camp was dreadful. We received a little cabbage leaf boiled in water, without salt, without fat, and we received no bread at all.

The commander of this camp No. 2 was Ustasha Lieutenant Ljubo Miloš.

Until October 1941, no slaughtering or killing was carried out in that camp. The Jews then elected a camp leadership on their own, which included: Dr. Büchler from Zagreb as camp elder, then Reich from Zagreb, Rotter from Križevci, Dr. Tolnauer from Zagreb, and later Diamantstein, who eventually had authority over all the camps. There was no direct contact with the Ustasha authorities — only through this leadership.

I was in camp No. 2 for about three weeks, until it was fully built. As more and more prisoners kept arriving in Jasenovac and it became too small, construction of a new camp began, and I was assigned to work on building that new camp.

The need for a new camp became especially apparent after the arrival of prisoners from Slana (on the island of Pag), who were mostly from Zagreb.

The new camp was called Jasenovac II, and was built near Krapje, about 20–25 kilometers from Jasenovac. People were crammed into the still-unbuilt camp and slept until it was finished — under the open sky or in small improvised huts.

Shortly after that, as the number of prisoners kept increasing, construction of a third camp began, later named Krapje. There were three large barracks, but without roofs. About 1,500 people were transferred from camp Jasenovac II to Krapje for construction of the new camp, which lasted about eight days. The food there was also terrifyingly bad. Only two meals a day were given — three potatoes at noon and cabbage soup in the evening.

After camp Krapje was built, work on forest duties began. The forest was about seven kilometers away and there oak trees were dug up with their roots. The treatment of prisoners here was horrifying. The work mainly consisted of draining the Lonjsko Polje. Here the killing and beating of innocent prisoners began. We were beaten dreadfully and six to seven comrades died from beatings daily. Supervision over us was carried out by the 13th and 17th Ustasha Herzegovinian companies, and the overseers of the work and persecution were Luburić, Ljubo Miloš, Matijević and Matković.

As far as I recall, the following people from Osijek were killed at that work site: Horvat Ivan, Gomboš the stove-maker, and Gomboš Andrija. All of them were killed out of pure cruelty. There was a case — as with the Levy brothers, tailors from Sarajevo — where they were both killed by a single bullet: one was shot in the head, the other in the lungs, and the latter was buried alive.

Work in the forest began at five o'clock in the morning and ended at seven o'clock in the evening. It lasted for almost two months, until the younger ones were sent back to camp Jasenovac II, while the older ones almost all lost their lives at that work.

I recall that on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, the Jewish religious community of Zagreb sent the prisoners 400 kg of meat. The Ustasha took offense at this and placed a heavy machine gun on the embankment, driving the prisoners at work in a running pace across the heavy, slippery, muddy terrain. Anyone who fell at that point was immediately killed.

As far as I still remember, the two Mahler brothers from Osijek were beaten to death at that work, as was Willheim Robert.

When, due to heavy rains, we stopped working in the forest, I was returned to Jasenovac I, where thorough construction of the camp began, along with mass killings. This camp was built on the grounds of the company Bačić and partner, where a brick factory and a chain factory were already located. This complex was immediately fenced with wire. The camp was separated from Bosnia by the Sava River. The Sava used to flood this complex every year, and to prevent this, construction of an embankment began. That work started in October 1941, and all those from Jasenovac II who were capable went to it. As there was a threat of flooding, work was forced both day and night. Since the Ustasha considered this

work to be going too slowly, mass killings began for the purpose of intimidation, and it can be said that this embankment was built from the bones of Jews and Serbs.

The embankment was built by driving stakes into the ground, which were then woven with branches. Since people worked here in mud, prisoners constantly slipped and were beaten and killed with rifle butts, stakes, knifed, and shot with rifles. It was enough for a prisoner to be considered undesirable — he was immediately liquidated. This slaughter was directed by: Ljubo Miloš, Matković, Matijević, Zrinišić, Alaga, the Osijek Štira company, and various companies of Herzegovinians and men from Lika, whose designations I don't know.

The embankment was finished in November, in approximately two months. During that time I estimate that 500,000 people perished here.

I know that among those from Osijek who perished here were Ritscher Slavko and the son of the butcher Fischer. I don't remember the others.

After the embankment was completed, since hundreds of prisoners were arriving daily, construction of camp C-3 began — the so-called death camp. That camp had no housing. It was fenced with wire; the people who came here were shackled and left without food or water, and they became so feral that they could hardly wait for someone to die so they could roast and eat them. This camp was run by Ustasha Lieutenant Maričić. The camp was built in November–December 1941. Those who came here were usually all who were not craftsmen. I was not in the new camp, but I know that Eng. Rosenberg regularly saved all the craftsmen from this camp — I remember, for instance, that he saved Luka Vlatković from Sarajevo.

This "death camp" existed for six months and was abolished by the decision of Ustasha Captain Brkljačić.

Having worked for some time in the camp at Jasenovac in the clothing and food warehouse, I know that all reserve clothing and food was taken from every prisoner. Thousands of newcomers, however, never even saw the camp — they were immediately directed by ferry across the Sava to Gradina, where mass liquidation was carried out. Here people were killed with a blacksmith's hammer and throats were cut. When Gradina is dug up, thousands of bones would be found, as the martyrs were buried en masse.

The administrator of the liquidations in Gradina was First Lieutenant Milan Pudić.

After Jasenovac I was built, I went in November to help build camp IV, which was located in the town of Jasenovac itself. There a large shoemaking workshop and tailor shop were organized for military needs. Later, in 1942, a tannery, brush factory, and broom factory

were built on the most modern basis, after the tailor shop and shoemaking workshop had moved to Stara Gradiška.

In camp IV, where I also came to work in the shoemaking workshop, in 1941 the camp elder was a certain Klein from Brod on the Sava, the supervisor of the shoemaking workshop was Sado Koen from Sarajevo, in the tailor shop Papo from Sarajevo, and Vilim Rotter from Križevci as work commander. Among the Ustasha there was a certain Zagorac, whose first name I don't know. There was no slaughter or killing here. The rations were better and we had our own kitchen, and we received bread.

Working here, from my recollection, were Güns David, Grosepajs Josip, Lichtental Šmule and Rottmann Otto, all from Osijek. As I already mentioned earlier, Otto was killed by the Osijek company, in their building, in December 1941.

Also working here were: Salamon David, Lebl Joško, Hacham Abika, Kohn Ilija, Bittel Simon (later), Auferber Miro (later), Deutsch Vlado (later), all from Osijek; then Altarac Avram from Sarajevo; Held Jakob from Osijek, who died at the end of 1944; Silberber Šimo and Lebl Tibor, both from Đakovo; Deutsch from Osijek; Perera from Vinkovci, killed in 1944; Brückner father and son from Slatina as cooks; the Pesah brothers from Bosanski Brod; Graber, Hollender, Hajoš and Fuchs from Zagreb; Weiss Rudolf and Glied Vilko, both from Đakovo, who attempted escape but were killed at Jasenovac station in 1941. I no longer remember the others.

I was in this camp (No. IV) until January 4, 1942, when I was sent to Stara Gradiška, because the entire shoemaking workshop had been moved there.

About 400 of us went. In Stara Gradiška, in the penitentiary, was a camp. There we encountered female prisoners from Bosnia for the first time. There were women who had come from Gospić and Jastrebarsko. I recall some who were from Zavidovići, Bijeljina, Tuzla — we saw them, but could not speak with them. They were all Jewish women.

The camp commander at that time was First Lieutenant Orešković. The section of the camp for women was administered by Captain Vrban and Corporal Bevanda.

When the great offensive on Kozara began, peasants from surrounding villages that had been emptied were brought to the camp. A number of women and men were sent to work in Germany, others remained in Gradiška, while some were transferred to Jasenovac. The infamous tower served as a camp for women and children in Gradiška. During the Kozara offensive there were about 9,000 souls in the camp, which led to a mass liquidation. The women were taken to the Jablanac forest, where many of them were first raped and then slaughtered. These atrocities were directed by Corporal Bevanda, Corporal Gagro, and Ensign Vrban. At the same time — that is, when Serbs were being brought in from villages

around Kozara — there were also many Croats in the camp, those sentenced to three years, the so-called "three-year-men." They wanted to exploit the chaos caused by the arrival of the Serbs and attempted to escape, but were attacked with machine guns at the exit. The massacre that then took place in the camp was horrifying. At that time the camp commander was Ustasha Lieutenant Gačić. After this escape attempt, he issued an order that all surviving "three-year-men" be thrown into solitary confinement cells without food and water, where they went mad and died. All of them were Communists from Zagreb, mostly intellectuals.

Still in 1942, instead of Gačić, the notorious Majstorović (a priest) from Jasenovac became camp commander. He personally shot 50 Serbs in the camp. Individual liquidations were also very frequent, almost routine. I know that a certain Fried from Bosanska Gradiška was individually liquidated in this way, along with eight other intellectuals.

In Bistrica, near Gradiška, in the forest, there were Jews working. On Christmas Eve 1942, Majstorović slaughtered 63 Jews, among them: Gomboš Pavle, Osijek; Lendavi, Osijek; Klopfer, Vinkovci; Fuchs Aron, Vinkovci; Schener, middle brother, Sarajevo; Gaon (mute), Sarajevo; Gaon (shoemaker), Sarajevo. I don't know the names of the others. That same day, also at the estate in Stara Gradiška, in front of the entire assembled formation, he slaughtered Alkalaj Moric and Montiljo Nisim, both from Sarajevo.

In July 1942, a commission came to inspect the camp. For that occasion, infants one year old were placed in the Ustasha hospital. As soon as the commission left, the children were immediately slaughtered. The perpetrators of this crime were Bevanda and Gagro, Vrban, and the other camp captains.

In November 1942 I was transferred to work on the estate, where I remained until August 18, 1943.

In May–June 1943, a group of women from Osijek arrived at the camp; they were all taken to the Jablanac forest and liquidated there. I know that among them was Bittel Lilly, née Löbl. The others I don't know.

All prisoners in this camp wore a number on a band around their arm, and instead of their name they had to state their number. Until 1943, people lived in the penitentiary and slept on the floor; after that in cubicles. The food was poor but varied. There was never any meat. Craftsmen had better food and also had bread. Hunger in the camp was enormous, and the severity horrifying. For stealing a single ear of corn, Dr. Freund, a lawyer from Zagreb, was shot — and there were many such cases. For alleged spreading of propaganda, many people were killed in prison, among them Milan Freund, owner of a paper factory in Zagreb; Brückner from R. Slatina; Albahari, a tailor from Sarajevo; and others whom I don't know.

In the shoemaking workshop where I worked, work was from 7 in the morning until 7 in the evening, and even longer; on the estate from 4 in the morning until 9 in the evening, with a break of an hour and a half at noon. There was constant beating at work. The hardest work was pulling a barge up the Strug river, and the beatings there were terrible.

While I was in camp Gradiška, the 13th and 17th Herzegovinian companies, the 1st Bosnian company, and the 4th or 7th company of Zagorci Ustasha were stationed there.

On August 18, 1943 I was sent back to Jasenovac, together with the Jews and Serbs employed on the estate, and in exchange for our 250, an unknown number of Croats and Muslims arrived.

When I arrived at camp Jasenovac I, I immediately saw that all prisoners were shackled. The reason was that some prisoners from the estate had attempted to escape. Everyone was shackled for three days. At that time the camp commander was Captain Brkljačić, and the work commander was Lieutenant Colonel Picilli. After three days the chains were removed from the prisoners, but then as punishment a ban on sending letters and receiving packages followed. As a result, an indescribable hunger gripped the camp, because in the morning a broth without salt or fat was given, and at noon and in the evening only 150 grams of cornmeal without salt or fat. Even during that period a ban on "extra portions" at meals was imposed. People were dying en masse. As far as I was able to learn, Picilli received orders for torture and killing from Luburić and Pavlović.

Upon my return to the chain factory, where I was assigned to work, among my acquaintances I found: Eng. Krašo Dodik, Eng. Kremen, Vlado Kohn, Münz and Palfi.

In the aforementioned chain factory, Eng. Salamon was in command; the foreman was Bela Grünberger, and Rosenberg, who was a free worker. There were Serbs, Croats, and Jews here. Eng. Salamon enjoyed the trust of the Ustasha, because the designs for the "anchor chain" supposedly originated from him. He treated the workers, however, very well and saved the lives of many, especially Serbs and Croats. He thus also saved the life of Laza Jankar, a typographer from Zemun, who is now at home. I know that he saved a group of the best craftsmen, among whom were Daus from Brod (a Communist), Radaš (a four-year prisoner), Braco Müller (Jew), Jakica Altarac (Jew), Maestro (Jew), Leo Blacha (emigrant from Vienna), Zlatko Kohn from Požega, and others. As punishment, however, they had to walk in chains for two months.

The chain factory had greater privileges than the rest of the camp, as it was valued. The food was admittedly the same, but supplemented with meat and bread. Working hours were 10 to 11 hours per day. Liquidations from the chain factory were rare, because Salamon had great influence on Picilli. However, in the camp — especially in Gradina and

in the "bell tower" — mass liquidations were carried out. The "bell tower" was a dungeon from which no one returned alive. There people were tortured and killed in the most horrific ways. Commanding there were Corporal Frković, Corporal Sudar, Lieutenant Prpić, Zrinišić, and Alaga. People in the "bell tower" were often torn to pieces while still alive and killed in the most gruesome agony.

On February 1, 1944, I was transferred to the forest group, which was commanded by Ensign Mihajlović and Corporal Frković. The hardest work was transporting wood from Krapje and Drenov Bok to Jasenovac. Work was performed in the heaviest snow and rain. Prisoners were beaten dreadfully. Corporal Frković beat people with the eye of an axe. I was at that work for one month, then as a woodcutter I was transferred to the forest near Gradina and Koštanica. Each of us had to cut one and a half meters of firewood. This forest group was never liquidated during the year, but only in autumn, when mass liquidation took place.

I worked here until October 1944, and then I was again transferred to the chain factory. In the forest, Serbs, Croats, and Jews all worked. I recall that those beaten most severely there were: Zoli Laufer from Vinkovci, Gamo Weiss from Brod, and Zlatko Kohn from Vinkovci. As far as I can remember, only Jews were beaten, while Serbs and Croats were not beaten. A total of 100 to 150 people worked here.

As I already said earlier, the camp bordered the Sava on one side, and on all other sides was encircled with strong barbed wire. Behind the wire was a wall four meters high, which was also laced with wire. Every 150 meters there were watchtowers about ten meters high. No one had the right to enter the camp except those Ustasha who had a special permit from the camp guard. The camp guard commander was Captain Prpić (who in 1941 had been a corporal); Lieutenant Ante Zrinčić, Lieutenant Mihajlović, Lieutenant Marko Perković, Ensign Alaga, Ensign Silvester Primorac, Corporal Frković, Corporal Mate Horvat, Corporal Mile Sudar, Ensign Lisac, and Corporal Mandić — who was later killed — and Lieutenant Šakić, who was directly responsible for the decimation and mass killing of Jews.

The year 1944 was as bloody as 1942. Liquidations followed one after another. Jews were decimated and shot in front of the entire assembled formation.

That same year, a secret Communist Party was founded within the camp, composed mostly of intellectuals and connected with the partisans. I know that in that party were Dr. Bošković (physician), Eng. Bošković, Nikola Peinović, Živković, veterinarian Lacika (whose last name I don't know but who I know was from Brod), a clerk from the brick factory whose name I don't know, an electricians' group leader whose name I don't know — altogether about 25 of the best comrades from the camp. Also there was Ustasha Captain Dr. Marin

and his wife, a physician at the Ustasha hospital, and the free worker Rukavina. All of these worked on organizing the camp. But the matter was discovered in August 1944, after which all participants were hanged, among them Dr. Marin and his wife, then Rukavina, one electrician, and 25 intellectuals.

Photograph

Jasenovac victims pulled from the Sava. Photograph taken from the book "Crimes of the Fascist Occupiers and Their Collaborators Against Jews in Yugoslavia," published by the Federation of Jewish Communities of the FPRY, Belgrade, 1952)

At the end of 1944 the number of prisoners increased to about 10,000, as the Ustasha stopped all trains going to and from Zagreb and sent all Home Guard soldiers and civilians to the camp for liquidation. Only about 700 Croats were sent to work in Germany.

At the moment of the fall of Belgrade and Zemun, the numerical strength of the camp decreased from 10,000 to 3,500, not counting those who had never been entered into the camp's numerical register.

I worked in the chain factory until the very end.

I know that after April 15, 1945, a group of people from Osijek and Đakovo arrived at the camp — about 50 people — whom none of us could see. They spent only one night in the camp and early in the morning went toward the exit. Where they went, I don't know. I saw only silhouettes moving toward the exit. However, it was later heard that among these detainees were Tasovac, Golac, and Dr. Glavaš from Đakovo, and Pešutić and Dr. Bešlić from Osijek. Of the others I know nothing, nor is the fate of these people known to me at all.

At the same time, that is, in mid-April 1945, the Ustasha withdrawal began, and the prisoners, shackled in chains, were sent across to Gradina to excavate the victims from 1941. The aim was to dig up and burn the bones of those killed, so that the crimes would leave no trace. At that time prisoners from Sarajevo were also brought to the camp and immediately sent to Gradina for liquidation. There were about 450 of them, men and women. After the Ustasha withdrew from Osijek and Đakovo, they again sent a group of Osijek and Đakovo people to liquidation. The liquidations were managed by Luburić, Picilli, Joja Sudar, Milan Pudić, Ljubo Miloš, Majstorović, Maričić, and the entire camp guard. Gradina burned for twenty days from the bones they were burning. After the burning of the bones, those from the reduced numerical roster came next. The first group of about 100 persons went, supposedly, to work in Lonja, but never returned from there. The second group of about 500 prisoners was taken, supposedly, to work in Uštice, but it also did not return. On April 20, 1945, 1,300 women and children were taken to wooden barracks —

there were six of them, and locked inside. Then those barracks were doused with oil, set on fire, and blown up with mines. The remaining men — about 1,300 of us — were locked in a two-story building on April 21, 1945, with the intention of destroying us too. Finally, on the night of the 21st to the 22nd of April, they took away the work leadership and killed them all.

On April 22, having seen what awaited us, we agreed that we would carry out an assault and would not let the executioners simply slaughter us. I was on the ground floor of the building in which we were locked, and I know that the decision for the assault was made by comrades from the chain factory, the machine shop, the carpentry, the shoemaking workshop, and the tailor shop. I know that among the leaders of the assault were: Leker (Jew) from Tuzla; Pfeffermann (Jew) from Osijek; Oskar Bruker (Jew) from Zagreb; Milivoj Popović (Serb) from Zemun; Kurjaković Šerif (Bosnian); Dr. Lujo Deutsch (Jew) from Sisak; Daus (Communist) from Brod; Radoš (Croat) from Zagreb; Braco Müller (Jew) from Nova Gradiška. I don't remember the names of the others, but I again emphasize that I was on the ground floor of the building, so those from the upper floors were not known to me. I know that the main organizer of the assault was Oskar Bruker.

The attack was scheduled for nine-thirty, and in secret, because we feared spies and traitors. With the cry "Forward, comrades!" we broke out of the building and immediately killed two guards who were in front of the building, as well as the guard on the road who was operating a machine gun. The watchtower at the gate fired bombs at us, while the watchtowers on the left side and those across the Sava fired at us with machine gun fire. From a bunker on the road in the direction of the village of Košutarica, they fired mortars and a machine gun at us. The gunfire was terrible. A terrifying flight in all directions ensued. I, together with a group of comrades, circled around the watchtower at the gate and fled toward the embankment near the Sava, even though fire was coming from that side too. I fled with Miro Trautmann from Varaždin, who also survived; Jovo Jagoda from Sremska Mitrovica; Mamula Stevan from Osijek; Benčić Ivan from Zagreb (who was killed); a small courier from the command headquarters; a student from the dairy; and others. I crossed the embankment because I was not in condition to swim across the Sava, and with a few comrades fled in the direction of the Košutarica forest. There we fell into a series of bunkers and fought our way through cross-fire. We ran about 20 kilometers until we forded the Strug river, and only then were we saved. Beyond the Košutarica forest I took command of eight comrades. We advanced toward the village of Okučani. Before Vrbovljani we parted, and I continued with comrade Mamula, trying to break through to Vrbovljani. But we learned that Germans were stationed there, so we went around even Okučani, and at night, around two o'clock, we crossed over the railway line. Near the village of Bogičevići it was necessary to again fight our way through Ustasha lines, as they were withdrawing from Nova Gradiška

toward Novska. There we fell among Circassian troops, who caught us, but whom we managed to convince that we were refugees from Brod heading toward Novska. So they let us go.

On April 25, 1945, I reported to the command post in Okučani, and so, finally, after almost four years of imprisonment, I came to Osijek.

For better orientation, I am attaching to this my statement a sketch of the Jasenovac camp.

Completed.

Vinski

Secretary (seal) Langfelder Oton