

From the Testimony of Emil Reed on the Conditions in Plaszow Concentration Camp

The ghetto - when they liquidated the ghetto, everybody had to get out on the place, open place, and whoever didn't get out, you know, whoever didn't stay straight, they were killing a lot of people right there. Because a certain amount they sent to march out from the ghetto some place for transportation and the others, what they killed and they left a certain group to go to Plaszow, to the concentration camp, so we had to clean up all the corpses, what they killed there, and put them on the trucks and go with them up to the cemetery, dig the ditches for them and have them buried there. That's what they assigned people whom they assigned to go to Plaszow.

Q: You, too? You had to do that?

A: I was one of them too, yes. We had to pick up corpses and throw them like cattle on the trucks.

Q: So that's how you were taken to...then you already stayed in Plaszow?

A: In Plaszow they assigned us, you know, a place in the barrack and that's what we were in and then we had to work morning (not clear), counting us. We had to bring stones from one place, put it in the other, you know, just hard work. Picking up heavy stones or they knocked down all the monuments, you know, from this here to make, you know, like...straight way to walk, with the stones. That's what we have to do. We didn't have to work, but they wanted us to work and to punish us.

Q: Did you manage to bring anything along from home? Could you take something along from home?

A: We didn't have much to take. Whatever we took, you know, a few shirts maybe. Nothing else. We didn't have any more. Pots and pans you couldn't take what you had in the ghetto.

Q: And you were right away separated men, women? The men and the women were taken separately to Plaszow?

A: In Plaszow, yes, there were two lagers.

Q: Going from Krakow to Plaszow, were you separated right away?

A: When we came up, they took us together and then up on the hill they separated - the women went to the women's lager, the men went to the men's lager. This was up there.

Q: Could you have contact when you were in Plaszow with your wife?

A: Yes, we could because, let's see, the women were working in the...they were to make sweaters for the army. There was a factory where they were working, and the men could, it wasn't allowed, they could, if you have some extra soup or something, we used to bring in to the wives, or if they had more they used to bring to the men. It wasn't allowed, but you know, since it was in the same working area, was about the same. But in the evening, when the work was over, we were going in one side to this camp enclosure and they went to their side. But we saw each other there.

Q: You would work only in daytime?

A: Daytime, yes. No nighttime, only daytime.

Q: And in the barracks, you had beds, so you had a bed for yourself or there were a few on one "pricher"?

A: No, single. Single. There were one on top of the other, but each one had one single.

Q: Later on they took you for more productive work?

A: Down there, first everybody had a hard time until they organized all this here. We had to work on the outside just to punish us, bringing stones from one side to the other or whatever work there was had to be done. They took people whether they needed them or not, to take from one place and put them to the other. Just hard work. This was for a long time going on and then when it was a little more organized, they used to liquidate a lot of Jewish stores. They had all kinds of metals and building supplies from small stores and all other things, so I was assigned to a warehouse to sort this. Sort this and catalogue it.

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