

Jan Otrębski Interview – transcription (Part 2)

Document: Jan Otrębski Interview – Translation of Polish Transcript into English (Part 2)

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Additional information:

This is a translation of a verbatim transcript from Polish of a videotaped interview with Jan Otrębski conducted on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies (link: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn508834>.) It consists of two parts. The first part of the interview takes place at a Kingdom Hall. The second part of the interview takes place at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum site.

Translation:

[Jan Otrębski]: I live in Ząbkowice, 98 Związku Orła Białego Street.

[Translator]: Could you please say, that you were a prisoner of this camp.

[Jan Otrębski]: I was a prisoner of this camp from September 15, 1942, until March 13, 1943.

[Robert Buckley]: What's the building over here?

[Jan Otrębski]: Here Höss had a horse, yes, it used to be "*Wäscherei*" (laundry) for the SS. Here are these buildings. Here is the kitchen, the kitchen...

[Translator]: Kitchen.

[Jan Otrębski]: ... for the prisoners.

[Robert Buckley]: Where is the kitchen?

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes.

[Translator]: Straight ahead.

[Translator]: That section that's right there.

[Jan Otrębski]: There was the main guardhouse, where an SS man was on guard, we'll get to that...

[00:57]

[Jan Otrębski]: (...) [the recording starts with this statement] and here we stood in front of this gate; "Hands up", "hands up" until all the *komandos* came. On the right side, the commandos were leaving, and at noon they brought me back, yes, at 12 o'clock.

[Translator]: The letters in here, over the gate, were made by one of the prisoners who was one of the Jehovah's Witnesses working in a sheet-metal workshop.

[Robert Buckley]: And you said something about the „B”?

[Translator]: Yes, the third letter „B” is clearly upside down... You can see this.

[Robert Buckley]: And he walked through this gate?

[Translator]: Yes, he entered the camp through this gate.

[1:59]

[Translator]: All over the fence...

Jan Otrębski Interview – transcription (Part 2)

[Robert Buckley]: These buildings here were for what?

[Jan Otrębski]: I'll explain it in a moment. Look, there was the SS on one side, the SS with rifles on the other side, and here stood the barrack leaders. "*Blockälteste*" (barrack leaders) and ... a *kapo* on one side and on the other side, because you already know you had to march, you know, with this rhythm: "*eins, zwei, drei, vier*", yes ...

[Translator]: There were SS (*unintelligible*) in charge of blocks and things....

[Jan Otrębski]: And the orchestra was here, we're going to go to the orchestra in a moment.

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes, the orchestra was playing to the rhythm of the march ... we'll go there, come on. All these units had to march here to the rhythm of the march: "*eintz*" ..., lift their legs up yes ...

[Robert Buckley]: And who were in these buildings here?

[Jan Otrębski]: There was a "*scripture*" (a writing room), that's the main office of the camp.

[Translator]: Something like a registration of prisoners or something like that.

[Jan Otrębski]: Let's go further.

[Jan Otrębski]: And the orchestra was in this place, in this square here in front of the house.

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes, let's go further ...

[Jan Otrębski]: This is block 15. We don't have that much time, we have to do it very quickly...

[3:43]

[Jan Otrębski]: Here I had to dismantle the whole wall, because here was the women's camp, and here was the men's camp.

[Translator]: All along that street, there was a concrete wall like that over there (*pointing to it*) and the task of the brother (*meaning: Jan*) was to tear it down.

[Jan Otrębski]: Because here was a women's camp... before they built Brzezinka (Birkenau)

[Translator]: That part originally was the women's camp.

[Jan Otrębski]: And me...

[Translator]: Before the other part of the camp was made.

[Jan Otrębski]: Let's go on, and here it was...

[4:19]

[Robert Buckley]: You wanna say it once more?

[Translator]: Could you repeat what was here again...

[Jan Otrębski]: Well, but here are those... I wouldn't want to... (*referring to a group of visitors next to Jan; unclear who the visitors were*)

[Translator]: Please repeat...

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes? This is where we met and here we prayed and here we discussed all, all matters.

[Translator]: There was the place of meeting, prayer and Bible considerations.

[Jan Otrębski]: It was our daily...

[Translator]: Everyday.

Jan Otrębski Interview – transcription (Part 2)

[Jan Otrębski]: ...because everyone...

[4:49]

[Robert Buckley]: This is where he lived?

[Translator]: Yes, number 5.

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes, yes.

[4:55 to 5:15] (*Jan walks in and out of the building 5 where he lived*)

[5:15]

[Jan Otrębski]: (...) and beyond that road, there is a river 'Sola'.

[Translator]: There is a road behind the wall. But it was forbidden for the people to move when the concentration camp existed here. And behind the road, there is a river.

[Jan Otrębski]: (*there is an echo in the room, so it is difficult to recognize the content of the words*) We'll go there later. And here is... only these glass panels were not there, and the whole room is as it was... except there, we will go and see what the beds looked like.

[Robert Buckley]: Jan, did you ever think this was going to be a museum?

[Translator]: Have you ever thought you'd come here with it as a museum?

[Jan Otrębski]: Oh no. I wouldn't have time now, because you know when I'm in the field...

[Translator]: Are you asking about the war time?

[Robert Buckley]: Yes, when he was in.

[Translator]: When you were a prisoner of Auschwitz, did you ever think you would come to ...?

[Jan Otrębski]: No, I never thought.

[Translator]: ... to Auschwitz as a museum one day?

[Jan Otrębski]: Ah, as a museum... I never thought about it...

[Translator]: He never thought of it.

[6:26]

[Robert Buckley]: Okay, Jan?

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes? Here's the stove, it's never been used, it's original.

[Translator]: There is... the original stove that was it here but they never made heat, so was never used.

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes.

[Robert Buckley]: And how come... how is it that the suitcases are all marked? Why are the suitcases...

[Translator]: Why are all the suitcases marked...

[Jan Otrębski]: Marked, as I told you, that they would get back their stuff, but they never...

[Translator]: Everyone was promised that all the things would be returned.

[Jan Otrębski]: But they didn't come back... because they burned them.

[Translator]: Obviously... the people went to gas (*to be gassed*)

[7:10]

[Translator]: Could you please clear up this matter regarding the roll call...

[Jan Otrębski]: Well, roll call. They started with the order, "*mützen*", when everyone grabbed their hats ...

[Translator]: The commands...

[Jan Otrębski]: *Komando*, there, from over there.

[Translator]: ...always were coming from there

[Jan Otrębski]: And we could see it at the crossroads. Because if one grabbed the hat at one end, here one also grabbed the hat, and there... everyone grabbed their hats, because everyone could see it...

[Translator]: Prisoners were standing on all four streets.

[Jan Otrębski]: Oh yes, everyone could see each other, then "*mützen up*" (hats up) and we had to stand to attention, and then "*mützen auch*" we had to take a cap... the '*mycki*'¹ were like this, you know how they look like. So, this was a parade, but since I didn't want to ... explain to him that I didn't want to...

[7:54] (*baby loudly crying in the background, indistinctly audible*)

[Robert Buckley as he films one of the barracks]: One thousand on each of these floors (*meaning: 1000 people lived on each floor of the barracks*)

[Jan Otrębski]: (*voice from a distance*) I had to be at the front... but I didn't want to salute ['heil Hitler'] you know, so when this SS officer was counting from, I was on my toes, so that I would be a little taller and this way I would not have to be involved in this parade... on "*mützen*" I just did this, I took my cap off (*Jan takes his cap off to show it*) ... and prayed...

[Translator]: That's interesting, so maybe I can relate that. So, the salute was expected of those standing in the first row. As a Christian, he didn't want to do that. So, although he was short among the prisoners he preferred to stand in the second row and he was standing on his toes so that he could avoid giving the salute to Hitler or anything like that.

[Jan Otrębski]: I had to tiptoe (*Jan shows the way he would do it*) so that I looked a little taller, when the SS man walked over I could drop, and I was hidden... yes...

[Translator]: He was raising (*himself*) on his toes, so that he was counted, yeah...

[Jan Otrębski]: The younger ones had to go to the front. I was short, so I had to be on up front, and then...

[Translator]: All shorter persons were...

[Jan Otrębski]: I have been exposed to all kinds of...

[Translator]: ...put to the first row

[9:09] Jan Otrębski plays his mandolin

[Translator]: (...) prisoners to play here (*the beginning of the translation is not heard - it is incomplete*)

[Jan Otrębski]: (*plays the mandolin and sings, the translator cannot be heard clearly*)

¹ Mycka – a type of cap worn in camp

Jan Otrębski Interview – transcription (Part 2)

"*Wszyscy śmiało naprzód prą, wszyscy śmiało naprzód prą (...) Pracy, pracy czas, pracy czas (...) Naprzód dqż, naprzód dqż...*" (unclear: "Everyone rushes boldly, everybody rushes boldly (...) Time for work, time for work (...) Move ahead, move ahead...")

There is much more, but let's talk.

[10:39]

[Jan Otrębski]: (...) I told them who I was.

[Translator]: He introduced himself.

[Jan Otrębski]: And I told them Daniel's prophecy, Bible quotes from the Book of Daniel, and then ...

[Translator]: Went on to explain the prophecy of Daniel...

[Jan Otrębski]: ... then one of these brothers, Wróbel, said: "This is our brother."

[Translator]: They recognized him as a fellow believer.

[Jan Otrębski]: And then I prayed and they treated this hand for me ...

[Translator]: They assisted him, so his hand was healed.

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes, and today I have a hand ...

[Translator]: Today both hands work well.

[Jan Otrębski]: And this brother Oremek worked here in these ... We'll go over there.

[Translator]: The brother [who] assisted, offered medical treatment there.

[11:13]

[Jan Otrębski]: "*Kartoffelzelle*", it was on the left side ... because it was built on, we'll go there. In "*Kartoffelzelle*", this Oremek peeled potatoes and carrots and he was giving me carrots so that I would ...

[Translator]: The brother worked in that part of the kitchen so that he could take some vegetables like carrots and give to the brothers, so he (*Jan*) could improve his health

[Robert Buckley]: Would he explain once more what had happened to his hand?

[Translator]: Could you please tell us again what happened to your hand?

[Jan Otrębski]: With my hand ... I came, and then ... maybe we will go ...

[Robert Buckley]: What happened to his hand and what was going to happen to him?

[Jan Otrębski]: I used to go to this brother Oremek, and Oremek treated my hand, he dressed it...

[Translator]: But before that, how this wound came about.

[Jan Otrębski]: Ah, then we will go to the seventh block, where it was at the seventh block, let's go on.

[Translator]: We'll have to go back, walk...

[12:10]

[Jan Otrębski]: (...) and before the roll call it was forbidden to enter the block.

[Translator]: So, before the call of the roll (*meaning: the roll call*) ...

Jan Otrębski Interview – transcription (Part 2)

[Jan Otrębski]: I didn't want to go in, but the other prisoners did.

[Translator]: He was not allowed to enter the building. Other prisoners went inside but he didn't want to go.

[Jan Otrębski]: ...other prisoners went in, but he [*kapo*] hurt me, me, it was open ... and I was standing here under that roof.

[Translator]: He was standing like that, under that little roof.

[Jan Otrębski]: ...under that roof and now they were pushing out all the prisoners...

[Translator]: Those who were inside, were pushed outside.

[Jan Otrębski]: And the *kapo* came from behind, kicked me like that (*Jan shows they way he was kicked*), kicked me in that hand.

[Translator]: And the *kapo* that was behind him, kicked him by the hand, right ... in that bone and that started the problem with his hand.

[Jan Otrębski]: Here I was standing under the roof, I did not go inside.

[Robert Buckley]: And so then, what would've happened to him if they'd amputated?

[Translator]: What would happen to your hand if it was amputated?

[Jan Otrębski]: Well, to the crematorium, they told me.

[Translator]: He would go straight to gas (*meaning: gas chambers*)

[Jan Otrębski]: To the crematorium. And I told them that if I go to the crematorium, I prefer to go to the crematorium with both hands.

[Translator]: So, he answered that if he is to be burned, so he wants to go with both, both hands.

[Jan Otrębski]: I didn't go there any more, but I prayed fervently.

[Robert Buckley]: He didn't go for any medical help anymore.

[Jan Otrębski]: And then Jehovah God came to my aid ...

[Translator]: He was praying fervently and Jehovah God assisted him...

[Jan Otrębski]: ...to help me find these brothers, because I was looking for them.

[Translator]: So, he met those brothers, for whom he was looking (*for*).

[Jan Otrębski]: Because there were over 16,000 prisoners here.

[Translator]: There were 16,000 prisoners here...

[Jan Otrębski]: ...it was difficult to find in this mass...

[Translator]: It was difficult to find a particular person...

[Jan Otrębski]: yes... and then I met the brothers and thanked the Creator.

[Translator]: ...and right then he met his fellow believers...

[Jan Otrębski]: And my brother treated my hand... I got a bandage...

[Translator]: ...the brother...

[Jan Otrębski]: Oremek... brother Oremek

[Translator]: Dressed the hand and took care of that and he (*Jan*) healed.

[Jan Otrębski]: And today my hand is fully functional.

[Translator]: Today, the hand is perfectly OK.

[Robert Buckley]: And he can play the mandolin.

[Jan Otrębski]: Mandolin, mandolin...

[14:10]

- (Jan starts playing the mandolin and singing) -

[Jan Otrębski]: "(...) *gdy ten czas nadejdzie, odnowiony cały świat... na-na-na...*" (when that time comes, the whole world will be renewed...)

[14:26]

[Robert Buckley]: Can he play that in here?

... "..." *i znużonym*" (...) [unintelligible] "*coraz jaśniej światło świeci, aż osiągnie pełnię swą (...), wiernym niewolnikiem Pana (...), wszyscy śmiało naprzód prą (...), wszyscy śmiało naprzód prą (...)* A zwycięstwo Bóg nam da, a zwycięstwo Bóg nam da."

(... the light shines brighter and brighter until it reaches its full strength ... a faithful slave of the Lord ... they all move ahead, boldly ... And God will give us victory, and God will give us victory...)

[15:43]

[Robert Buckley]: Thank you very much. Now, why was he allowed to have his instrument?

[Translator]: Why were you allowed to have an instrument?

[Jan Otrębski]: It was a special permit, I had submitted [a document that I was] a musician, here...

[Translator]: There was a special permission given...

[Jan Otrębski]: ...I was a musician because I had it as my profession...

[Translator]: He had to apply to the authorities, prison's authorities...

[Jan Otrębski]: Musician, musician, I'm [written down] there, [as] a musician...

[Translator]: ...that he is a musician and he was given that permit and that was the basis on which he could have an instrument.

[16:12]

[Robert Buckley]: And he used the instrument to encourage his brothers?

[Translator]: By playing and singing, did you want to encourage all the brothers?

- (Jan Otrębski nods his head in agreement and starts to play his mandolin again) -

[Translator]: That was the reason, to build them up spiritually.

- (Jan keeps on singing and playing his mandolin) -

[Jan Otrębski]: [singing] "*Przybytek wśród ludzi ma Bóg, On będzie mieszkał pośród sług. Nie będzie... ani leż już (...), i śmierć nam nie zagrozi już... bo wszystko nowe czyni mocą swą... Te słowa prawdziwe są.*" (For God's tent is with men, and he himself resides with them. No more will there be ... crying ... no dying ... because he is making all things new with his power... These words faithful are and true.)

[17:00]

[Jan Otrębski]: ...And he grabbed the fence there, and he stayed on that fence, because they shot him.

[Translator]: We are in the area that is called a “Birch Alley.” All along there were birches and that was meant for the walking purposes, so all the prisoners could freely walk here and they could enter the area as far as those concrete posts. So, no intervention from the guards as far as that place. But then, when somebody crossed, crossed that zone, they (*the guards*) began to shoot. Or else, at night, they were switching on very strong lights. But if anyone got to... managed to... to get as far as the barbed wires, he usually...

[Jan Otrębski]: But if they didn't shoot him ...

[Translator]: ...remained there.

[Jan Otrębski]: if they didn't shoot him here in this square, the SS man got a punishment. Why? Because, when he was hanging on this fence, because it was 3000V, they had to turn off the whole circuit and it cost a lot, a lot of money, it caused a lot of procedures, so the SS man was punished.

[18:15]

[Translator]: Interestingly, if the SS-man didn't manage to shoot down the prisoner, he (*the SS-man*) was punished because it was very costly if someone managed to hang on the wire (*barbed wire*) because they had to take off (*switch off*) one circuit...

[Jan Otrębski]: ... yes, he had time to kill him here...

[Translator]: ...and the voltage was 3000V.

[Jan Otrębski]: ...he had to kill him here in this zone...

[Translator]: ...within that space, SS-man duty was to shoot down the prisoner and then he was given a reward.

[Jan Otrębski]: ... got an award... Well, we have to go there quickly.

[Translator]: How often has this happened? How many people?

[Jan Otrębski]: It happened often. Morning and evening, morning and evening ...

[Translator]: How often it happened...the brother (*meaning: Jan*) confirms in the morning and in the evening. Time and again, such acts of suicides were committed here.

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes, because when he was hanging on the fence, they had to turn off the electricity for the whole area, because it was connected, everything was connected by electric wires, oh, they were all these ...

[Translator]: If somebody was hanging (*on the barbed wire*) ...so to take him off they had to switch off the circuit and that was costly...

[Robert Buckley]: So, they'd rather shoot them, then...Better to shoot them and give them a reward.

[Translator]: Yeah.

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes.

[19:26]

[Jan Otrębski]: These clothes ...

Jan Otrębski Interview – transcription (Part 2)

[Translator]: How long, for how long?

[Jan Otrębski]: Up to a few days or so. These clothes had to be ...

[Translator]: For a period of a few days.

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes.

[Translator]: The prisoners were staying naked in those buildings.

[Jan Otrębski]: Everything had to be disinfected, every piece of clothing, and *beta's*² (straw mattresses) had to go, that is, these straw mattresses had to go to disinfection, the so-called "Gas-chambers", and I will show this "gas-chamber." Where they disinfected clothes and everything against these plagues and insects.

[Translator]: Because of lice, enormous number of lice, they had to take all...all the pieces of clothing to a special kind of cleaning... yeah.

[Jan Otrębski]: Because the epidemic was spreading to the SS too.

[Translator]: Because also the SS-men were beginning to fall sick.

[Jan Otrębski]: Because, they didn't care about the prisoners, also ... the water was poisoned, and the air, it was in the air, because this is the area, where the climate is very bad, you know? Because there are wetlands, lakes, and this [place] is in between...

[Translator]: Because of marshlands the climate in general is not good here.

[Jan Otrębski]: This area was suitable for destruction, for annihilation of prisoners... This is not a healthy area.

[Translator]: That area – the brother (*meaning: Jan*) says – was perfect for annihilation of life.

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes, let's go...

[20:43]

[Jan Otrębski]: Before...

[Translator]: There is a cellar, when he managed to get into.... Maybe you can explain why you got in there...

[Jan Otrębski]: Well, why did I go down – because I was a *Musulman*³ in the camp and they were looking for such people to catch them, to put them to the gas chamber and the crematorium.

[Translator]: He had to run away when there was a search for the prisoners who were in a very bad health condition. The word used in Polish is: *Musulman*. So that was the word to describe a person...

[Jan Otrębski]: I was running away...

[Robert Buckley]: So, is that when he was sick with the gangrene?

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes, and I escaped here then, knocked on Felix [*'s window*]...

[Translator]: Was that when you had gangrene?

² A slang term for mattress

³ Distorted form of the word Muslim (German *Muselman*) commonly used in Auschwitz and other German concentration camps. In camp jargon, the word meant a prisoner who was extremely exhausted due to hunger.

Jan Otrębski Interview – transcription (Part 2)

[Jan Otrębski]: well, well... it was another time...

[Translator]: No, that was another story.

[Jan Otrębski]: ...but while I was in the camp.

[Translator]: But simply, it was his health was so devastated.

[Jan Otrębski]: I knew that Brother Oremek was here.

[Translator]: He was that kind of person

[Jan Otrębski]: I knocked and said the password and ...

[Translator]: He knew that...

[Jan Otrębski]: ...and he hid me here, look.

[Translator]: ...a fellow believer, fellow prisoner, was working here in potato storage area down there.

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes, yes, yes.

[Robert Buckley]: And so, he hid in there?

[Translator]: He managed to hide, yeah...

[Jan Otrębski]: Let's go. Let's move on... It's like now, as you know everyone here... yes.

[Translator]: All those people of that kind (*most likely referring to Musclemans*) were obviously gathered together and went straight into the gas chambers.

[Robert Buckley]: Now, where is the gas chamber? Right down there, down the street?

[Translator]: Are the gas chambers right here?

[Jan Otrębski]: Then let's go, let's go, let's go, let's go...

[Translator]: But are they right here?

[Jan Otrębski]: No, no, no, these aren't gas chambers...

[Robert Buckley]: Where?

[Jan Otrębski]: ... right there is the *Wäscherei* we were building, a laundry for the SS.

[Robert Buckley]: That is a gas chamber down at the end?

[Jan Otrębski]: There's a laundry S... over there.

[Translator]: No, no, no...washing...

[Robert Buckley]: That's for washing down there...

[Jan Otrębski]: A little further there, but here the blocks were still there... Let's go there quickly, so we could...

[22:26]

[Jan Otrębski]: This... this... how do they call it.... Well, that woman could not give birth...

[Translator]: Sterilization

[Jan Otrębski]: Sterilization, sterilization.

[Robert Buckley]: Now, in these two buildings they did what?

[Jan Otrębski]: 19, 19 – let's go that side.

Jan Otrębski Interview – transcription (Part 2)

[Translator]: There were experiments carried out on people.... (*speaking to Jan*): What was the name of this one (*unintelligible*)

[Jan Otrębski]: Clauberg, Doctor Clauberg.

[Translator]: Doctor Clauberg was carrying on experiments in order to find out a way to sterilize women.

[Jan Otrębski]: And here is the infamous block 11 ... (...)

- (Jan and the translator walk towards Block 11) -

[23:16]

[Jan Otrębski]: ... [where] they held prisoners

[Translator]: Wall... death (*meaning: death wall*) where the prisoners were shot.

[Jan Otrębski]: The Wall of Death, when our brothers were shot, they didn't put anything on their eyes; they stood facing the soldiers. They were shooting.

[Translator]: When our brothers were shot down (*meaning: shot*) they didn't take any blinds to their eyes but just standing front to those shooting (*meaning: they were not blindfolded and were facing their executioners*)

[Jan Otrębski]: Höss wrote in his autobiography that for the first time there was an incident that this firing squad refused to shoot, seeing that Jehovah's Witnesses boldly... went boldly [*to their deaths*]!

[Translator]: That's mentioned in a diary... This autobiography.

[Jan Otrębski]: Yes, the writer in his autobiography. Well, that's how God acted on... [*unintelligible*]

[Translator]: ...that the soldiers refused, the SS-men refused to shoot down (*meaning: shoot*) the prisoners. That was the effect, the impact of them standing right straight against the...

[Robert Buckley]: And so, it was the easier to shoot them with the blindfold on, or with their backs to them?

[Translator]: Were they normally facing backwards?

[Jan Otrębski]: Well, not backwards, but forward. Prisoners normally [*were blindfolded*], but Jehovah's Witnesses stood facing forward without covering their eyes, yes.

[Translator]: And the prisoners? ... the prisoners backwards?

[Jan Otrębski]: Well, the prisoners did not turn their backs either, but they were blindfolded.

[Translator]: They were standing... front but with blinded, blinded eyes (*meaning with blindfolds on*)

[Jan Otrębski]: Jehovah's Witnesses without covering their eyes...

[Robert Buckley]: And what were those poles for, there?

[Jan Otrębski]: A little dry there (*translation unclear*).

[Translator]: Two poles.

[Jan Otrębski]: Here... Here were the gallows, and here were other gallows.

[Translator]: Yeah, that was just... gallows, the prisoners were hanged here.

Jan Otrębski Interview – transcription (Part 2)

[Jan Otrębski]: ...but there were also gallows with a trapdoor.

[Translator]: There was a ...sort of a regular gallows.

[Jan Otrębski]: And here they covered the windows so that no one could see. Because the prisoners were there too, they covered them so tightly that they didn't know what... what was going on here.

[Translator]: Since the prisoners lived also in that block, those windows were blinded.

[25:07]

[Jan Otrębski]: In this room...

[Translator]: Coming here... (*probably alluding to what they had been discussing earlier*)

[Jan Otrębski]: In this room they tried prisoners [*cameraman focuses on block 11*]

[Translator]: In that room right behind that wall, there were proceedings...

[Jan Otrębski]: And here was the room of those, SS men... let's go over there.

- (*Jan and the translator go inside Block 11*) -

[25:25 echo in the room]

[26:23]

[Jan Otrębski]: The gallows were made especially for Höss... he was to be hanged here.

[Translator]: This... the gallows were prepared especially for the camp head, Höss.

[Jan Otrębski]: He was going to be hanged here on these gallows and they did hang him.

[Translator]: And he was hanged here.

[Jan Otrębski]: We can go further from here... and it was here in the place of this barrack, because here – where these bricks go – it was a barrack here. This barrack was so long...

[Jan Otrębski]: Not on the square... there was a barrack there,

[Translator]: And in this barrack ...

[Jan Otrębski]: In this barrack, in this barrack...

[Translator]: Political [*prisoners*] lived here?

[Jan Otrębski]: Political [*prisoners*] did not live [*here*].

[Translator]: were interrogated?

[27:07]

[Jan Otrębski]: They didn't see anything here, right? Nobody saw them here, they came in here....

[27:26]

[Jan Otrębski]: I planted lilies of the valley and flowers here. That's all...

[Translator]: His work here (*Jan is showing the wall*) his job was to plant the flowers all over here...

[Jan Otrębski]: And those flowers were on this ... Yeah, there were kennels under the chimney, those dogs were barking there.

[Translator]: Dogs' huts were close to the chimney...

Jan Otrębski Interview – transcription (Part 2)

[Jan Otrębski]: ... when the screams were heard, dogs barking would overcome the screams...

[Translator]: When the cries. of those gassed...so dogs were shouting (*meaning: barking*) so others couldn't hear. The noises would mix.

[Jan Otrębski]: Well ... the area was isolated here, and we ...

[Translator]: All that area was isolated. No one could enter that area while the gas was used.

[Jan Otrębski]: Let's go on, because we won't make it in time ...

[28:10]

[Translator]: What was his name ... Robert has asked.

[Jan Otrębski]: Well ... they made this inscription in the metalwork and among others...

[Translator]: The camp metalwork.

[Jan Otrębski]: ... in the camp metalwork and there, among others, was our brother who worked there – Konrad Wróbel. He was number 3000... 3000... 3000...

[Translator]: The letters...(*unintelligible*) were made by a prisoner by the name Konrad Wróbel

[Jan Otrębski]: Konrad Wróbel

[Translator]: One of those who work in that workshop.

[Robert Buckley]: And he was one of Jehovah's Witnesses?

[Translator]: Yeah, he was one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

[Robert Buckley]: with the Zyclon B gas.... that's the gas chamber below. Gas went to the bottom, as people fell, others would stand on top of their bodies, so that they wouldn't....so that they'd be able to breathe the fresh air at the top.

[Jan Otrębski]: They took me this way, there was a barrier, by the street, as you can see there, there was a barrier and they led me this way, they led me this way. And here we turned.

[Translator]: Over there... marched all that way...and...