

John M. Steiner collection  
Interviews with former members of the SS, other Nazi officials, and witnesses to Nazi Germany  
RG-50.593

The following is a draft English-language summary of an interview in German from the John M. Steiner collection. The translation has been not been verified for accuracy, and therefore, may contain errors. Nothing should be quoted or used from this summary without first checking it against the taped interview. Moreover, the description of events in the summary may not match the sequence, time-code, or track number of the audio files.

Interview with Gottlieb Muzikant

He describes the terrible conditions in the camp he worked in. He got 15 years in jail at the Nuremberg trial. He had to prove that he was not involved in the killings. He says that the weak inmates were sent to Mauthausen. He was supposed to accompany them but refused because he knew of the plan to kill them. He went with the rest of the men to Ebensee.

When the Americans came he went to a village near Steiner (?) where the British were. Later the Police took him and he was sent to jail.

Continues to describe the bad condition in the camps (?) also for the workers. In Melken he worked as a medical assistant. He got a 14 day course and was sent to work. There were no doctors. Doctors worked only with the troops. There was a Jewish doctor who kept records.

Describes the case of an SS [officer] who objected to the abuse of inmates and was killed as a result.

In 1993 he took people to Buchenwald and then returned to Neustadt. He later learned that all 300 Frenchmen were killed on the transport. Talks about his trial.

CD 1-22-1

00:05        *voice starts mid-sentence; same asthmatic breathy voice.*

Rambling story about if he had some money or not and needing a lawyer.

He didn't have money to hire one so one was appointed to him who was very young and didn't seem to say much. He was instructed to say nothing more than "yes" or "no" to questions. (*Not clear what proceedings these are but seem to be after the war.*) Eventually he got a new lawyer but didn't seem to like the new one much better and was again told to be very quiet at the hearings.

07:02        *break in recording to silence*

07:17        Answering new question about his health. A lot of health discussion follows. Interviewer addresses him as "Herr Musikant". Discusses hospitalizations,

getting new glasses and visitors to his present facility (a nursing home?). He is 74 at the time of the interview.

13:30            Talks about his childhood and school days and breaking bones and medical care back then. His legs were almost amputated as a child and the impact on his childhood and education.

19:00            Talks about the functioning of his body and mind and about visitors which seem to be few and rare. Talks about his two daughters.

20:49            *Interviewer asks question to redirect him back to war memories, but responses are very faint. A lot of rambling with little point.*

25:00            Talks about catching the “little guys” but the big ones weren’t caught after the war. Implies that the underlings were brought to trial but not the top generals. Ludwig von Daumwitz (?) got away with it all and was never tried. *Long pause while Musikant seems to use inhaler or oxygen for his asthma.*

27:54            Question about his asthma and long discourse about his health.

35:00            What did you think was the most important about what happened? Asks about Auschwitz, but he wasn’t there but in another camp outside of Auschwitz. He only says he would have done things differently.

38:00            Long silence or pause again; starts again at 39:00.

40:00            Talks about bedding and sleeping arrangements; not clear where but seemingly in the camps. Very rambling faint voice. He does claim he never used force or violence. Declined to accompany the transports at the end because he was very thin and undernourished.

45:30            Talks about someone who was a witness against him about the transports. He was taken for rehabilitation where he met old acquaintances and got good food. Talks about his physical rehabilitation.

51:00            Later he was arrested and brought to jail for his war crimes and then he heard from his brother what had happened to his wife and daughters, who were living together in one room in what was now East Germany. He was incarcerated for two years.

54:30            Talks about conditions in the concentration camp, which were very poor. There were very poor conditions especially in the smaller camps. He complains about not having a doctor who did anything.

58:30            Not clear which concentration camp he was in but seems to have been in a number of smaller ones including Malthausen.

60:30 Starts a different memory about someone who died. His voice suddenly gets very strong as he gets angry about this person. He seemed not to know that people were being killed in the camp. Claims total ignorance.

64:16 Silence; ends mid-sentence.

CD 1-22-2

00:05 *voice starts mid-sentence; same asthmatic voice as 1-21.*

Talks about people - mostly Polish, few Germans -standing outside and not allowed in (to???). These people were sent off to Buchenwald and none of these survived. Talks more about transports in fall,1943. He was of a lower rank, but did get some promotion in Nov. 1944, when things were winding down.

4:50 Starts a story about someone trying to get beer and cigarettes and someone taking a chain with a cross from someone who was dead or dying. Rather rambling without much point.

09:30 Talks about a Dr. Schilowsky and what he was to do for people, including civilians. *Very rambling, long pauses and not much point.*

11:50 Starts a new rambling about old times and witnesses who lied on the stand against him at trial.

13:00 Interviewer tries to get him to talk about his thoughts about the people incarcerated in the camps. Musikant insists times were different back then and he couldn't have done much differently and that he tried to give some of his personal medical tablets to one or two people or gave aspirin to others.

15:55 Did he have sympathy for the prisoners? Sort of, but there was no changing things, they were as they were.

20:00 Talks about finding Russians praying and he translated because he spoke a bit of Slavic languages; they were taken. Talks about his brother and paying 20 DM to the SS every month. *Break from 22:07 to 22:48; seems to have trouble breathing.*

22:50 Starts talking about being unemployed for 2 years, 1938-1939, and needing a job.

25:00 Is doing these interviews because he cannot really do much else, read, or visit with anyone and is very alone. These interviews are difficult for him, both to remember things and to talk. He gets packages for his birthday in December, his name day in June and now at Easter but doesn't get many visits from his family.

32:10      Ends abruptly.