

LUDWIK GUTMACHER

The fifteenth day of the trial, 25 January 1947.

Presiding judge: Would witness Gutmacher please come forward. (The witness is instructed).

Witness Ludwik Gutmacher, aged 47, resident of Warsaw, Wileńska Street 19, attorney, no relationship to the parties.

Presiding judge: Witness Gutmacher is a witness for the prosecution. The prosecution may now ask questions.

Prosecutor Siewierski: What can you tell us concerning the everyday life in the ghetto?

Witness: Your Honors, in the ghetto, I worked as a caretaker, first on Ogrodowa Street and then at Żelazna Street 103, where the *Vernichtungskommando* [destruction unit] was billeted on 22 July 1942. If memory serves me right, they arrived at 11:00 a.m. on 22 July 1942 and ordered that the premises be vacated within half an hour, and this is what happened.

As regards the period over which I discharged my duties on the premises, I can recall that I had to put quite a significant effort into cleaning the garbage area after the visits of some hungry Jewish children. It was one of the "wealthiest" houses in the Jewish district. The garbage often included potato peels and the poor Jewish children would come there and pick them.

Your Honors, between Ogrodowa and Żelazna Street, there was an opening leading to the corner of Leszno Street and Żelazna Street. At this junction, often working in his capacity as a policeman was a man named Frankenstein. I remember this name perfectly well, because

Mr. Frankenstein boasted to a Jewish policeman, who was also assigned to that location, that he felt bad if he did not kill a couple of Jews every day. Indeed, I had an opportunity to see whenever someone attempted to get through this opening. Then, Mr. Frankenstein would discharge this somber duty: killing.

Prosecutor: Was this the only such German policeman, or were there many of them?

Witness: To the best of my knowledge, his colleagues behaved in the same vein. I know about Frankenstein in particular because – as I have stated – I lived nearby so I could see these things. I recall one incident near that opening whereby a poor woman, a Jewess – mother of a five-year-old girl, as I later learned – made it to the Aryan side to buy some fat at a low price. When she returned, Frankenstein was on duty. He killed her, and the child, who was waiting for her mother, ran toward her and embraced the corpse. On Frankenstein's orders, the Jewish policeman dragged the child away, and after a few minutes the body was ferried off. The Judenrat was phoned and the woman was collected.

Your Honors, I wanted to say a few words about Ludwig Fischer's "contribution" to the ghetto. I believe that one significant "contribution" of his was the creation of a peculiar psychological atmosphere in the city of Warsaw. From November 1939, Fischer achieved this effect through his attempts to trample down the dignity of a human being, a citizen, a Jew, and thus to plant in the public, or rather, and in the first place, in the Germans the notion that Jews were outside the law. Obviously, this was achieved by Fischer's orders about wearing the armbands because then the Germans saw it as their duty to beat and maltreat each Jew they came across and to take away whatever he possessed – this is because a Jew was not allowed to have more than 2,000 zlotys. Finally, as regards the circumstances in the cloistered ghetto, at that time, the looting was already in full swing: they would come to flats, take whatever they wanted, beat people and murder them.

Your Honors, with regard to the establishment of the ghetto on 15 November 1940, I personally did not see fit to serve in the Judenrat in any capacity. It was my understanding that this ostensibly Jewish self-government, this quasi-self-government which Fischer offered to the Jewish society, was yet another plague to befall the Jews. Thus, I did not want to have a hand – indirectly, through carrying out the occupier's orders – in tormenting my kinsmen. I will refrain from detailing the life in the ghetto because – as I have learned from court reports – the Jewish witnesses appearing earlier gave a rather extensive account of the

experiences of the Polish Jews. Let me just say that such words as “bestiality”, “barbarity”, or “vandalism” are too mild to describe what was happening in the ghetto and fail to reflect the reality of that place. Neither the beautiful Polish language nor any other in the world are capable of recreating it because we still do not have terms that would recapture it, for no such thing had happened before, and this is because the actions of these people combined bestiality with a scientific method of exterminating the Jews. They thought about it day and night, and all scientific disciplines came together to create a system that would efficiently crush the Jewish nation.

Presiding judge: Are there any questions? No questions. The witness is excused. Please summon the experts.