

Interrogation Josef Pöll, 10.7.1947

This literal extract from the interrogation protocol of the former Schutzpolizist Josef Pöll is reproduced here for several reasons:

1. it is one of the protocols that describe the routinely executed sequence of mass executions, and
2. Pöll confirms here without being asked that one could refuse to take part in shootings without risking one's own life.

The interrogation took place only a few years after these deeds, so that the memories were still vivid and there had been even fewer possibilities of collusion between the perpetrators. In such interrogations, of course, the interviewees usually avoid incriminating themselves: only others have shot. Only when several witnesses identify themselves as the murderer without a doubt do they admit the crime - but nothing more.

"The procedure for such an action was as follows:

At ½ 7 o'clock in the morning we were ordered to the dining room by Captain Wüpper, where we were informed by him that a Jewish action would begin at 7 o'clock. He explained that the rifle company, the cavalcade, the Jewish Council, the Polish criminal police and the Ukrainian police had already been informed by him. The mentioned divisions had to be in the barracks at 7 o'clock with rifle or pistol. Then Wüpper put together the search troops, where the individual groups were assigned the location for the excavations. At the same time he also announced where the Jews were to be taken. Either at the railway station (freight depot) or in the cinema Colloseum. The groups designated for this purpose then excavated the Jews at the designated place and brought them to the aforementioned places, where they were often stopped for several days. There Captain Wüpper sorted the Jews in the presence of the SD, some leading officials from the armaments factory Karpaten-Öl AG, the Judenrat ... and ordered them to be transported away or executed. The Jews who were to be executed were taken by the above-mentioned officers to the emptied oil funnels above the slaughterhouse. There they were first undressed, where they had to lie on their stomachs. Groups of about 10 to 15 persons were then led by the executing officers to the pit, where they were placed at the edge of the pit and killed from behind with pistols by being shot in the back of the head. The Jewish referee of Drohobycz named Gabriel, who was working alone with a machine pistol, made the remark, "if you don't hurry up, I'll shoot you in it", to his Ukrainian loader, because the latter filled the magazines for his machine pistol too slowly. Gabriel was an Austrian who served as a district inspector in Eisenstadt, at that time he was a department officer for Jews at the SD in Drohobycz. Together with the SD and Gabriel, Leopold Mitas also stood at the pit and took part in the shooting. How many Jews were shot by Mitas, I cannot say. In this action about 1,000 Jews were

liquidated. The execution lasted from about 8 o'clock in the morning until noon. I remember that on this occasion the people who carried out the shootings of the Jews drank schnapps brought by the SD. Captain Wüpper, when the execution of the majority of the Jews had been carried out, gave the order to the Jewish Order Service, which consisted of a few men, to shovel earth over the corpses and, after this work, asked them to lie down themselves, they were also shot. By whom these persons, i.e. whether Wüpper, Mitas or SD carried out the shootings, I cannot specify. My role in this operation, together with several policemen, including Neumayer, Guldán, was to lead the Jews from the slaughterhouse up to the pit. I myself did not shoot anyone during this action. If Mitas claims that I was involved in it, this is not true. ...

Those commanded to the executions were ordered to take part in the action, but there was no compulsion to take part in the shooting itself. In any case, I had the certain impression at that time that Captain Wüpper and Mitas did not find it difficult and perhaps even enjoyed the executions."

Source: LASH (Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein) Department 1731, pp. 420-426, Vienna Police Headquarters, Department I, transcript of the interrogation of Pöll, Josef, on 10 July 1947, at 10 a.m.