

Josef Pöll: descriptions of some crimes

„It was not until November 1941 that a Schutzpolizei (Schupo) unit was deployed in Boryslaw. For this purpose - as in most other places - Viennese policemen under the leadership of the German officer Wüpper were transferred to Eastern Galicia. But first they were sent to Zaleszycki in the Czortkow district, where on 14 November a kind of "initiation" for their tasks in Eastern Galicia took place: the cordoning off of a mass shooting of Jews by the Czortkow Gestapo... After this crime the unit arrived in Boryslaw from Zaleszycki on 18 November 1941, where a week later it participated in the next mass murder. In Boryslaw, old and sick Jews were selected, and from 27 to 29 November Gestapo and Schupo shot 800 of them near Boryslaw.“ (Pohl, p. 149)

Pöll „very often visited private apartments, which he looted heavily, including mine, where he dragged away the most beautiful and precious things. He did this in the following manner, ordering all cupboards and suitcases etc. to be opened and threatening that if he was not shown everything and he found something hidden during the search, he would shoot the person concerned on the spot. He also often came to the collection site, where the people who were to be taken away for destruction were, and demanded valuables from them, and on this occasion made a promise to release the people. Of course, the people gave him everything they had, and he took it, but without keeping his promise of liberation.“ (affidavit Izak Lipowicz, 31.7.1947. In: Friedmann, p. 32. Lipowicz was a worker in the electrical department of the forced labor camp (ZAL) Boryslaw)

On 6.8.1942 thousands of Jews from the ghetto Boryslaw were rounded up for transport to the extermination camp Bełżec „The Boryslaw police officers in particular excelled with their extreme cruelty. For example, a squad of the Schupo carried out the eviction of the Jewish orphanage. The small children were simply thrown through the windows onto the open street ... Many Schutzpolizisten also used the action for extensive looting in the ghetto, for example Mitas, Josef Pöll, Rudolf Guldan, Ferdinand Neumayer or Nemec.“ (Geldmacher, p. 104)

„The main executors of the actions were Mitas and Pöll... Pöll once beat my sister so badly that she lay dead, covered in blood. It was in the fourth action at the train station near Boryslaw.“ (affidavit Gina Wieser, 28.7.1947. In: Friedmann, p.37. Mrs. Wieser was a tailor at the Schupo)

Between 21 and 24 October 1942, thousands of Jews were to be transported in wagons to the extermination camp Bełżec "There were scenes as gruesome as those during the August deportations. The Schutzpolizei and the Ukrainian militia combed the ghetto, arbitrarily arrested Jews and made practically no mention of valid work permits or A-armbands. ... Josef Pöll shot the bedridden mother of the former mine owner Josef Oberländer while searching for valuables. (Geldmacher, p. 109f.)

"In the winter of 1943, I saw how a bunker was discovered in the destroyed power station where people were hiding. The people were taken to the Schupo, where they were undressed and loaded onto a car and shot at the municipal slaughterhouse on Wippert's [meant: Wüpper] order by Pöll." (affidavit Irene Lewi, geb. Zeiler. In:Friedmann, p. 29. Irene Lewi was a maid and interpreter for the Schupo)

Schupo Pöll "is well known to me. On 15.II.1943, during the 6th action, he picked up my two children 12 and 13 years old from my apartment. The children were shot two days later near the slaughterhouse." (afficavit Hermann Schubert, 6.8.1947. In: Friedmann, p. 43)

Pöll, chief constable of the Schupo, "tall, medium height, red hair, red face with the nickname 'Red Pöll', about 36 years old, Austrian, was seen in 1946 in St. Pölten ... During the action from August 4 to 7, 1942, in which 5,500 people were killed, he discovered a hiding place under the municipal electric power plant and shot 20 people, among them Aron Storch, whom I knew personally, with his mother, and engineer's wife Klarmann with her six-year-old daughter...In front of my eyes he shot two older women, including the mother of engineer Krantz, in the IX Naphtha mine. He systematically raided the station..." (afficavit Raoul Harmelin, from Polish, 18.1.1947.In: Friedmann, p. 44)

In February 1943, many smaller work squads were liquidated, selections were made in the labor camps, and the clearing of the ghettos began. *"As in November 1942, the Colosseum cinema served as a collection site for those arrested. ... Most of the young children were already murdered in the Colosseum. Schutzpolizist Josef Pöll is said to have bashed in the skulls of some of the children with a wooden club. The murder weapon was handed over to the Red Army in 1944. ... Even during the course of the February massacre there were repeated murders out of obvious greed. Thus Mitas and Pöll shot - apparently on Wüpper's orders - the former refinery owners Hermann and Max Stern, which they had still protected during the deportation in August after receiving a bribe, and ordered the Jewish police to remove the bodies. (Geldmacher, pp. 117-119)*

"The policeman Pell [meant: Pöll] was one of the greatest murderers. His specialty was killing women and children in various ingenious ways. During the Judenaktion in August 1942, I disguised myself as a Ukrainian farmer and saw him throw a small child from a moving car onto another car driving in the opposite direction. The child was, of course, immediately dead. This happened on Hitlerstrasse [formerly: ul. Panska] opposite the city administration. - Pell was one of the three members of the Schutzpolizei who carried out the mass execution of the Jews on 15 February 1943. Pell's favorite specialty was the killing of small children. He did this with the help of a 30 cm long piece of wood with which he smashed the skull of each child he held with one hand at the back of his neck. Then he threw the child into a mass grave. In this way he killed 200-250 children by himself. I stood not far from the execution site, about 100 meters away, where I worked at the central workshops, and I could observe everything closely. The bloody piece of wood that served as a murder weapon I later found at the execution site and kept it until I joined the Russian army... !943 Pell learned that my sister was living with a Christian. He took her to the Ukrainian police, where he himself shot her and bloodily smashed her child." (afficavit Bernard Habermanm, 6.8.1947. In: Friedmann, p. 49f.)

"Pöll and Neumayer, the first was Hauptwachtmeister, the second Oberwachtmeister, carried out all actions together. The two of them had a dog which, on their command, attacked people and bit pieces of meat out of their bodies. In May, June and July 1943 they carried out segregations in the camp and shot the people. They took part in all the actions in which the people were sent to Belzec in the gas chamber. At the end of 1943 they discovered a bunker with three men, namely Dr. Riegelhaupt, Goldmann and Oberländer. The three were shot on

the spot. I notice that Pöll and Neumayer ordered different clothes made from stolen fabrics." (afficavit Alexander Rybak, 23.7.1947. In: Friedman, p. 30f. Alexander Rybak was the head of the tailor workshops in the forced labour camp Boryslaw)

In summer 1943 the intensified hunt for hidden Jews began. In the process, *"the Schutzpolizisten Josef Pöll and Ferdinand Neumayer shot two Jewish women, who had been hiding with a Polish family, at Horodyszcze near Boryslaw. After the murder Pöll sat down and ate his snack."* (Geldmacher, p. 130)

Sources: Tuvia Friedmann, Schupo-Kriegsverbrecher vor dem Wiener Volksgericht. Schutzpolizei-Dienstabteilung in Boryslaw. Haifa 1995; Thomas Geldmacher, „Wir als Wiener waren ja bei der Bevölkerung beliebt“. Wien 2002. Dieter Pohl, Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941-1944. München 1996