

From the Testimony of Mr. Brukarz on His Arrest in Vienna, May 1938

I will begin with my arrest in Vienna on 28th May 1938. This was in the early morning, when a man in plain clothes sought me out in my parents home and summoned me in a friendly tone to accompany him, telling me it was a question of supplying a little information, and I should return home in about half an hour. He brought me to the police station, where I was only asked if I were a Jew, and on saying 'yes' was thrown into prison, where there were already several hundreds who knew no more than I. But we had no longer to wait, the first transport was soon sent off... There were about 700 of us, driven in armored cars to the otherwise peaceful West Station.... We were crowded in the cars like animals, and placed round the station were SS men armed with machine guns, who now set about us with their weapons until they had established a blood bath. When more than half experienced wounding - and several were dead - the death train left the station. This found me with a broken finger and four teeth missing. As yet, however, the worst was to come, when later the beasts started on us in the train itself... How we got to Munich is still a puzzle to me.... As we alighted we were treated much about the same as we were when in the station in Vienna. From Munich to Dachau we were dispatched in cattle trucks.... It was almost like a funeral, for as we marched to the gates of Dachau Camp, we carried the dead bodies of those who had suffered at the murderers' hands at the head of the procession. After a short roll call of the murdered, the camp commander addressed us, wherein he intimated that the guns of the beasts on guard go off quite easily. We were shorn bald and brought into barracks. We then received a rough convict uniform, and at last, after more than 40 hours torture, were given food and drink and the opportunity to lie down on straw. A short sleep and then off to work. "Work" is a fine word. Off on a torture trip. We each carried a stone block of 30-40 Kg. Weight, which we had to carry the whole day long on dusty roads... Numbers fell unconscious together. They were roughly brought round with water and had to continue to walk... One day we marched out to the parade ground in which a block or post was set up. The guards in full

equipment arrived at this place and we saw a terrible picture - a public whipping. With animal strength they thrashed helpless men, whose groans were heart-rending. After this devilish game, the Death's Head SS (guards) were grinning like devils. Such an unhappy experience as this torture happened to me, when after grueling work I fell unconscious. I was brought before the dog Grunwald (commandant) and asked why I had refused to work. To this nonsensical question I could give no answer, and so he pronounced sentence - Tree-hanging. My hands were bound with chains and I was placed backwards on a tree trunk and bound so high that my feet could not reach the ground. I held this out for roughly 20 minutes and then cried out. This was a bad move, for I was whipped and placed higher on the tree, and not released until 12 ½ hours on the torture stake.... When I think of the punishment exercises, I still cry out - hopping, jumping, running, knee bends, creeping on the floor until we were exhausted. Yet the foregoing account is nothing compared to the unbelievable brutalities of 11 November 1938 and the following weeks. The bloodhounds arrested men, cripples and even children of 11 and 12 years and brought them to the camp. How they attacked them is unbelievable. There was not one of the more than 10,000 in the camp who did not have at least a hole in his scalp. The roll-call place where they mustered resembled a veritable blood bath. They were placed in provisional barracks, where 200 had previously been, with 200 more packed in. No taking off clothes, no washing, the food was thrown to them to be eaten with the hands, picked from the filthy floor. In these conditions they lived for weeks. There was no lavatory accommodation for them and one just let nature take its course. An epidemic was unavoidable and it came in truth.... Hundreds became insane and we had later to carry as corpses from the washrooms where we had put them...

Source: Yad Vashem Archive O.2/438