

Ehri Online Course in Holocaust Studies

Yad Vashem Archives M 1 E 1232

Small and Lesser-Known Camps

F7 Testimony of Issac Waserstein (extract concerning Bobrojsk)

[...; starts at page 3 of the scanned document] In this way we travelled in the closed wagons for 3 days and nights until finally we came to a stop at the Bobrojsk train station in Russia.

Like thunder resounded the command "Out!" and immediately, tired and hungry, we left the wagons one over the other, while rifle butts rained down on our heads and sides, finally we were lined up in rows of 5 and started marching in an unknown direction.

With nightfall we were driven into a square which was surrounded by a barbed wire fence and on one side stood two big stables, an indication there had been animals here before.

Immediately we were all driven into the 2 stables, and heavy bars were brought down behind us. From outside we heard the conversations of our guards, inside we could still feel the stench of the former inhabitants the animals, despite this tired and hungry we fell asleep on the dirty floor.

Our sleep was bad, for every moment crying was to be heard from all sides people were lamenting their fate, in great despairing desolation, heads and pained hearts could no longer find any comfort.

At 5 o'clock in the morning everyone was already awake and waiting for the unknown which must come, straight away the armored posts drove everyone out into the large yard where we remained standing the entire day without food, in this way also passed the next 5 days, and we felt extremely weak and exhausted from hunger, many were almost brought to their end, and some died from hunger.

On the seventh day, straight after driving out the unfortunate despairing mass of people from the stables, 3 vehicles arrived with officers, who looked at the half dead masses, from among which they chose 120 people assuring them that they would be travelling home. With joy the already totally weak chosen ones were jammed into the two trucks, with which they were driven away.

Not much time passed before from the nearby forest machine gun fire was heard and it was immediately clear that there our brothers and friends in misery had left us

forever. There they had found their eternal rest, some were greatly envious of them and hoped to leave behind the sorrows as quickly as possible.

That same day we finally received something to eat and began to work. Slowly we grew used to this slave-life, although every day some of us died, and we saw that we were waiting in line for the last day.

The SS men behaved savagely towards us the weak victims, and made merry of us.

After 7 weeks of suffering from 960 people only 170 remained, through the wire we saw free people going past, over the ripe fields, but it did not entice us, we had become so dejected.

One dismal day we saw a transport of people approaching, as they came closer we recognized Jews from the Warsaw ghetto, around 500 people. On 28 July 1942 the 500 came to us and increased the number of unfortunate. The camp had now become even worse, every day Jews were driven into the forest to be shot and right away the forest was turned into a cemetery.

Winter arrived and in spite of the terrible frost we had to go to work in the light canvas clothes, under the open, freezing skies. After the winter only 91 people remained.

Finally on 15/9/1943 in the afternoon we left the camp, from the truck I took my last look at the forest where our brothers were left lying, we were taken to Lublin where I received the sad news about the Warsaw ghetto and lost any hope of seeing my dear parents and my home.