

EXPERIENCE REPORT OF CONCENTRATION CAMP INHABITANT  
OLGA SCHAUB

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In view of my activities as an actress I have never been active in a political way and was also not national socialistically inclined, though my step-brother, Julius Schaub, was SS-Obergruppenfuehrer and Hitler's adjutant. On the contrary, the fact that I never even joined the NSDAP, he frequently held against me. I could never be in accord with the program of the NSDAP and have always had many acquaintances among Jews, and was in no way willing to give up my relations with my Jewish friends at home and abroad. Among other things, my step-brother was greatly opposed to having me use my real name on the stage (except in films) so that I was finally forced to use the stage name of Jeanette Madlon.

Following an invitation of my Jewish friends, I went to London in the spring of 1939. My friends had fled from Berlin in November, 1938, on account of the persecution of the Jews, and because of their departure in haste, they left a substantial part of their baggage behind. I have helped them in that I took the baggage they had left behind for them to London. I could only do this because of my passport, which was issued to me in my capacity as an actress; otherwise it would have been impossible to take along so much baggage. I was under the impression that at that time already I was always being watched by the SS, while my brother also demonstrated great interest in my travels at all times. After a stay of three weeks in London, I returned to Berlin and until the outbreak of the war I worked in Hamburg, where I performed as a dancer in a revue. Throughout the winter I again was in Berlin, but I always had in mind to go abroad as soon as possible. Finally, in the summer of 1940, I succeeded in getting to Warsaw. This trip abroad I was only able to make possible because of the help given me by Mr. Grodcieckie, the former Polish Minister for Trade and Economy, in that he engaged me as secretary to be

the correspondence for his firm, Stal, Warsaw, Zielna Street 25. I then lived for two years in Warsaw and, during that time, I was able to serve my host considerably. Just a few examples will illucidate this point: As sister of the SS-Obergruppenfuehrer Schaub I was, of course, always admitted to the higher authorities and in this way I could always learn of important things, of which I would at all times promptly inform my host, Mr. von Grodzieckie. Thus I was able to warn him against having the house when I knew that SS raids were scheduled? as he was a member of the intelligence he was always subject to persecution. Furthermore, to have his house confiscated and evacuated, I informed the office charged with accusation of the owner that I was living in the house and an evacuation could not possibly be expected of me. (Of course, personally I did not live in his villa). The statement I made was enough to cancel the evacuation order. Among others there was his friend, the Mexican Consul, Julian Brigeowicz, who also was my friend, and who had been held in the prison of Pawiac, in Warsaw, for the past year. He was arrested because through his signature he had helped three Jews to flee to Mexico, at the outbreak of war. Finally, after one year, we succeeded to bribe the camp doctor (unfortunately I don\_t know the name anymore), who for the sum of 4.000. - Zloty agreed to declare Brigeowicz as ill and unable to endure internment. As a result, he was released immediately. At that time I was already being watched by the SS, which unfortunately I only learned later on. I received several anonymous letters pointing out that my luxurious life in Warsaw would soon come to an end and a bullet would hit me on the street one of these days. I did not pay attention to these letters, until, however, one fine day in August, 1942, three SS-men appeared in my apartment and informed me that they were commissioned to take me to Berlin immediately on order of the adjutant's office of the Reichs leader, SS Himmler,

t Prinz-Albrecht Street. In Berlin, I was received by SS-Obergruppenführer, who informed me that I would have to leave Warsaw immediately. I was then set free again, however, under constant surveillance. With his permission I could go in to Warsaw for three days to wind up my affairs there and to get my baggage. Returning to Berlin, I went to a private clinic on account of my mental and physical condition, where I had occasion to telephone to my Warsaw friends daily and to correspond with them. After three weeks I went to the adjutant of the SS-Obergruppenführer Wolf and asked him to issue me a permit, through Wolf, to take a trip to Luzan for a rest, which he was inclined to think possible. He was even willing to procure the permission for foreign exchange and the passport for me. After about a week, Wolf had me called in. I went to him in the hope of getting the documents necessary for my trip; however, he explained to me that he was to arrest me immediately on order of the Reichs leader SS Himmler, and to send me to the concentration camp for women at Ravensbrueck. Answering my question if my brother knew about this, Wolf told me "no". The reason for my arrest, Wolf said, was the suspicion of espionage and friendly relations with Poles. Among others my telephone conversations to Warsaw had been listened to and my correspondence had been examined. When I asked how long I would have to stay in the camp, I was informed that this would be up to the Reichs leader. Simultaneously it was made known to me, that beginning immediately I was only allowed to use the name of "Schubert" and that I would be shot, if I ever even once mentioned my real name or would talk about it to anyone. He also informed me that Mr. von Gredzieczkie would be sentenced to death. I do not know if the verdict was ever executed. Toward evening I was then transported to Ravensbrueck in a Mercedes car under the supervision of six men. On account of all these happenings, I was utterly worn out and was really sick and feverish. Therefore I was immediately taken to the ward reserved for the sick. The first impressions I had cannot be described in words. All the misery and grief, the unkempt women, the sick, the dead and the women placed in the division for the sick being used for medical experiments, all had such an effect on me that I could no longer think. Yes, I believe I was running around like a dumb animal, only not to see all this or rather to overcome the impression. During my

operated on five times. They were healthy young Polish girls who had to undergo these operations for experimental purposes. Among other things they told me that the anesthesia sometimes was so weak that they could hear the sewing of the experimental operations. These operations were performed only on healthy Polish girls by the SS doctors, Professor Gebhardt and Dr. Fischer, both of the SS hospital at Hohenlychen, both of whom I saw personally. Dr. Obermaier, the camp doctor of the camp, was also mostly present during the operations. After I had recuperated enough so that the camp doctor could declare me able to work, I was detailed as division worker after my request addressed to commandant Surren of the camp SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer. In spite of the fact that all the gruesome things in the division impressed me terribly (it is hardly possible to describe) I did want to assist the sick and weak; among other things I was also helper out at the office. The commandant of the camp informed me at the same time that I would have to undergo flogging at the slightest offense. I was to work during my entire internment in the division, but had to sleep in the barracks in the community camp. The bed consisted only of a pile of straw and straw served as head bolster. It was full of vermin of all kinds. It is natural that a prisoner who has worked in the sick ward has seen and experienced more than one who has been active outside the division.

All the horrible impressions, which affected me so terribly during my detention, would take too long to describe but I would like to enumerate a few things. The hygienic installations in the ward were of the most primitive that can possibly be imagined. Of the 20,000 prisoners only 250 could be accommodated in the ward as a maximum, including the very bad TB cases, which were there constantly. For instance, the fire in the crematory would never go out, day and night, because there were always enough human material to be burnt. Many of the people starved to a mere skeleton, died of hunger, but of course not all of them met a natural death. If any of the women had an incurable disease, they would be put to death by an injection. Women who were otherwise physically healthy, but because of a minor ailment were unable to work, would be set aside for the gas chamber. I myself was once witness, when the camp doctor made up a special transport of about eight hundred women who were sent to the gas chamber in Lublin. They were,

as previously mentioned, incurably sick and insane people, unable to work. Days before that, we had to go through the card indexes and submit them to the doctor. Many prisoners came and on their knees begged the doctor to take them off the list but he refused. It was impossible to treat the thousands of women who were completely covered with lice and open wounds as there was not enough medicine. Jewish women thoroughly bitten by dogs would often be turned into the ward, but mostly they died of the consequences. Many prisoners who were punished by flogging, came for treatment to the ward. The sights were terrible; in most cases they had open wounds. Among others also newborn babies, whose fathers were foreigners, were killed and burnt. In the case of pregnant women, many abortions were undertaken and many of them died as a result of infection. Heartbreaking scenes would take place when Polish women would be called up for shooting. I was myself witness, when mother and daughter (the mother was scheduled to be shot) said goodbye to each other. When a woman supervisor saw this farewell scene, she went over to the daughter and kicked her with hands and feet until she fell and collapsed. As previously said, it would be too exhausting to describe in detail all the smaller cruelties which I have experienced.

At last the long-yearned for day came, in February 1944, when I could leave the camp. Of course I had to sign a slip that I would never mention to anyone, not even by a hint, that I had ever been in a concentration camp, nor of course of what I had seen in a concentration camp. While all other prisoners received a release paper on their departure, this was not possible in my case because nobody was to know and learn that I had ever been in a concentration camp. In order to avoid difficulties in obtaining ration books, I received a paper stating that I am returning from abroad where I was on official duty. This document carried the signature and seal of the adjutant's office of the Reichs leader SS. It also must be mentioned that I had to sign a further document whereby I agreed that after my release I would neither use make up nor smoke, nor take alcoholic drinks. To that extent one dared to interfere in my private life and all that for the sake of a personal "wish" of the Reichs leader. Among other things, the Reichs leader SS ordered that I would have to accept a working position immediately and that of course I would continue to be under constant surveillance.

I must also mention that the commandant of the camp pointed out to me at the time of my release that under no circumstances should I try to contact my Polish friend from Warsaw, otherwise I would immediately be brought back to the camp for the duration of five years and the man would be shot. During the entire sixteen months of my imprisonment I never received word from my brother, though I daily counted on his help to set me free.

As my apartment in the meantime was completely destroyed through bombing, I went to Nurnberg, where I immediately was staying at the home of a couple friends of mine. Through my activities in the camp I had acquired some experience in medical examinations. Therefore I was ordered to report to Dr. Grabhorn, a physician, in Nurnberg, who employed me as a secretary and medical assistant for a trial period of two months. But soon I became sick again so I was only able to work half days. Later on my condition became worse and the doctor, beginning August 1944, finally certified that I was sick and able to give up my position with him. My sickness at that time was substantially caused by the heavy bombing attacks on Nurnberg. From time to time I had to report to the SS authorities in Nurnberg because I was under surveillance.

During the big attack on Nurnberg on 2 January 1945, I suffered most complete damage as a result of bombing. Soon after that I went into a hospital in Regensburg, where I spent three months for a stomach and intestinal ailment. After that I moved to Schliersee in Oberbayern.

I am glad to know that finally my road of suffering under the Nazi regime has been concluded and that I am no longer under the constant surveillance of the SS and I hope that my desire to see my friends and again will soon materialize, thanks to the arrival of the Americans.

I herewith affirm that the depositions made by me are based on complete truth.

Olg. Schaub

7 October 1945