**Sources: *Sonderkommando* testimony, “It was hell, real hell”. Read each excerpt carefully. Match it with the correct author & description. Write on a separate sheet of paper [10 points]. Several quotes may appear again on Exam Two.**

1. If often happened that Jews from the *Sonderkommando* discovered close relatives among the bodies and even those who went into the gas chambers. Although they were visibly affected there never was any kind of incident. This incident I witnessed myself: As the bodies were being pulled out of one of the gas chambers, one member of the *Sonderkommando* suddenly stopped and stood for a moment as if thunderstruck. He then pulled the body along, helping his comrades. I asked the Kapo what was wrong with him. He found out that the startled Jew had discovered his wife among the bodies.
2. We had a gut feeling that would couldn’t identify. We didn’t know a thing. On the one hand, I saw the bodies down there; on the other hand, the Kapo and the SS men were beating me and cursing at me all that time, to the accompaniment of barking dogs. It was hell on earth. If there’s a hell after death, I think it must look like that. It was hell, real hell. There it wasn’t any question of whether to believe or not.
3. After the room filled up with people, the doors were closed. Next, an SS man came over with the Zyklon gas in his hand. He put on a gas mask, opened the canister of gas, and threw the contents in. Shortly after the gas was thrown in, the people began to smell it and then we heard the shout “*Sh’ma Yisrael*…[Hear, O Israel]” from the interior of the gas chamber. The German called out to his comrades scornfully, “They’re calling ‘*schmeiss rein, schmeiss rein’*—‘throw it in, throw it in….’”
4. The whole concept seemed quite inconceivable: a drain channel to catch human fat which in turn was to be used as fuel in order to obliterate as fast as possible all traces of these murderous deeds… When he [Otto Moll] realized that something was wrong with the fall of the channel he grabbed the empty bucket and brought it down to the heads of any prisoners unfortunate enough to be standing within reach…
5. We were sitting with the Germans round one table in the crematoria building. We were talking about several topics, including the work we were doing. An especially good mood prevailed when only one German was sitting with us. He himself did not murder Jews. He did not pour the gas inside the chambers. As long as he was alone—he was even friendly. The minute a second German came—he changed his attitude immediately. Being alone he spoke totally differently.
6. Once they brought a girl from Hungary who had a two-day-old baby. She knew she was about to be murdered. We had nothing to do that night. We sat around idly and offered her a chair to sit down, some food, and cigarettes. She told us that she was a singer and talked for about half an hour. We sat in front of the furnaces. Next to us sat a Dutch SS man, a rather nice, likeable guy. He also listened in. When the story was over, he stood up and said, “Very well, we can’t sit here like this forever; now it’s death’s turn.” She was asked what she preferred, that we kill the baby first or her. She said, “Me first. I don’t want to see my child dead.” Then the Dutchman stood up, brought over the rifle, shot her, and threw her into the furnace. Then he picked up the baby, bang-bang, and that was that.
7. During that time we had no emotions. We were totally drained. We blocked up our hearts; we were dehumanized. We worked like machines. We were human being devoid of human emotion. We were really animals, not people. We’d become robots.
8. I took the elderly woman in my hands and I was walking and crying, and I throw her into the bunker there and I didn’t go out… I felt that I’m carrying my own mother in there. I just didn’t want to go on with something like it. I wanted to go together with them and finish. Before they locked the gas chamber door, they count the prisoners, and they count and they see one is missing, so they pulled me out.
9. I lost my faith right there because when I saw—you know, when I saw people die, it bothered me, but that wasn’t too bad. When I saw innocent children, babies being thrown in the fire just like kindling wood, then I kept hollering, “Why did you have those children born if you wanted to dispose of them in this kind of way? What have those innocent souls done to you? Why do they have to suffer an agonizing death?” This is what broke me away from it. I didn’t see any explanation. I didn’t see any miracles. I didn’t see anything.
10. Some Jewish workers on the far side opened the wooden doors…. Inside, the people were still standing erect, like pillars of basalt, since there had not been an inch of space for them to fall in or even lean. Families could still be seen holding hands, even in death. It was a tough job to separate them as the chambers were emptied to make way for the next batch. The bodies were tossed out, blue, wet with sweat and urine, the legs soiled with feces and menstrual blood. A couple of dozen workers checked the mouths of the dead, which they tore open with iron hooks. “Gold to the left, other objects to the right!”

**Match the correct primary source quotations above with the descriptions and writers below.**

1. **Yaakhov Gabai** remember the terrible fate of a young Hungarian Jewish woman and her newborn baby at the hands of an SS man.
2. **Sam Itzkowitz** recalls his loss of faith when he witnessed innocent children suffering and dying agonizing deaths.
3. **Shaul Chazan** describes the hellish atmosphere he and other *Sonderkommando* lived through in the death camps.
4. **Lemke Plisko** discusses the “normal” almost friendly environment while talking to one German guard which quickly disappeared when more guards were present.
5. **Rudolf Höss**, commandant of Auschwitz, describes the horrible plight of one *Sonderkommando* member who found his wife among the dead.
6. **Filip Müller** explains the actions of the obsessive crematorium manager, Otto Moll, who attempted to use human fat to make the disposal process more efficient.
7. **David Nencel** recalls his failed attempt to commit suicide by staying with the other victims in the gas chamber, only to be thwarted by a count of the prisoners.
8. **Eliezer Eisenschmidt** describes an incident in the gas chambers and the cruel joke & loss of humanity of a German guard working in the death camp.
9. **Kurt Gerstein**, an SS officer in charge of the Disinfections Department, vividly recalls the horrific sites he saw during his visit to Belzec, including the murdered standing up in the gas chamber.
10. **Leon Cohen** explains the complete loss of humanity that often accompanied the jobs the *Sonderkommando* did in the extermination centers.

Eight of the ten sources quoted above were from surviving members of the **Jewish *Sonderkommando***. If you don’t remember who they were, see **pp. 183-184** in *War & Genocide*.