

## KAZIMIERZ WILANOWSKI

On 26 September 1947 in Kraków, Edward Pęchalski, Deputy Prosecutor of the Court of Appeal, member of the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, acting in accordance with the provisions of the Decree of 10 November 1945 (Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland No. 51, item 293), with the participation of reporter Krystyna Turowicz, pursuant to art. 20 of the provisions enacting the Code of Criminal Procedure, and in connection with art. 106, 107, and 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, interviewed the person specified below, who testified as follows:

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Name and surname	Kazimierz Wilanowski
Date and place of birth	27 December 1914, Kraków
Parents' names	Kazimierz and Agnieszka
Citizenship and nationality	Polish
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Occupation	tradesman
Marital status	bachelor
Criminal record	none
Place of residence	Kraków, [...]

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On 24 October 1940, I was arrested in Kraków by the Gestapo for suspected membership of the Polish underground and interned at the local prison on Montelupich Street. From this prison, on 27 November, I was deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp, where I remained until 10 March 1943, and then I was transferred to the Buchenwald concentration camp.

At the Auschwitz camp, I stayed at the *Stammlager* [main camp] only. I was assigned to different *kommandos* [work details], respectively. In particular, I worked with the kommandos tasked with carting away gravel from the camp's vicinity (*Kiesgrube*), maintaining the camp's sewage system, bricklaying jobs, dismantling houses, and also at the potato room, DAW (Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke) [armament factories], and delousing facility (*Entwesungskammer*). In connection with these activities, I had an opportunity to come across many SS men from the camp personnel. I very clearly remember, among others, *Lagerführer* [camp leader] Aumeier, *Blockführer* Hermann Kirschner, *Blockführer* Kurt Müller, *Rapportführer* [report leader] Ludwig Plagge, and *Kommandoführer* [work detail leader] Hans Koch. I recognized all five of them yesterday, at the Kraków Central Prison, in the course of the presentation, supervised by the prosecutor of Kraków District Court, of German war criminals extradited to Poland to former Auschwitz prisoners.

1. Aumeier, as *Lagerführer*, stood out with particular cruelty and sadism toward camp prisoners. Typically, he would not go past a prisoner he came across on the camp grounds without beating and kicking him first. He was usually drunk when he participated in executions carried out at the camp premises, and he tortured prisoners in that state. My fellow inmates, who saw it themselves, told me that Aumeier, assisting at executions, would very often take injured convicts, who were not killed on the spot, and entertain himself by shooting at them as if this was target practice, that is by aiming at body parts on which he decided in advance. The prisoners from the block 11 bunker also told me that Aumeier would often come to the bunker and randomly pick a prisoner, or a few prisoners, whom he would then have executed by the death wall. This is how he murdered, among others, one of the young Polish prisoners, who was serving a sentence of seven days at the bunker, having been caught in possession of a few potatoes.

Additionally, Aumeier would go into frenzy, administering regulatory punishments for any random violation of the camp order. I remember one case, whereby in August 1942, when I was with the delousing *kommando*, various "rustled up" items were revealed in the course of a surprise search ordered while the *kommando* was working. Following this, our entire *kommando* was issued 25 lashes each on the buttocks. Aumeier was not only present on that occasion, but he also personally beat a few of us.

2. Hermann Kirschner, whom the camp prisoners called the "Duck", was *Blockführer* at one of the main camp blocks. He stood out with cruelty and he beat prisoners or otherwise tortured them. Prisoners tried to get out of his way, fearing his mad exploits.

3. Everything that I have testified about Kirchner applies to Kurt Müller, also a *Blockführer*.

4. Ludwig Plagge was *Rapportführer*. On his orders, evening roll-calls would often drag on, reaching the few-hour mark, as a result of which prisoners frequently fell to the ground from exhaustion. Often, he stood at the main camp gate, beating and kicking for no particular reason prisoners who were returning from labor. He was present at all mass camp executions, and on many occasions, he personally took charge of flogging the prisoners if such a sentence was handed down. When after the evening roll-call some of the prisoners reported to the doctor, Plagge beat and kicked many of them, accusing them of malingering, though it was apparent at first glance that these were sick people, who had broken arms or open wounds on their legs or other body parts.

5. I came across Hans Koch at the beginning of summer 1942, when I was assigned to the delousing facility (*Entwesungskammer*), where Koch was one of the *Kommandoführers*. I had worked with this kommando until late fall of that year. It had upward of 20 prisoners, most of them Poles. The kommando was tasked with disinfecting the items taken off the prisoners arriving at the Auschwitz camp, who were already properly segregated. This segregation was carried out by the *Aufräumungskommando* [order kommando], and then we would take the clothes, shoes, and underwear to the gas chamber located on the premises of "Canada" that had been built precisely to that end, and there, we would disinfect them. We disinfect these items with some poisonous agent, which was contained in round tin cans. Their contents were bluish crystals or round plates of the same color. We commonly referred to this agent as gas. I cannot tell if this was the cyclone. In any case, I do not recall this name from my time at Auschwitz. Likewise, I do not remember, though I am not ruling it out, if this agent was referred to as *Blausäure* [hydrocyanic]. Koch often collected a few cans of this gas and headed in the direction of the Birkenau crematorium in a sanitation truck. I do not know where exactly and in what way he would utilize this gas. However, it was commonly said at the camp that this gas was being used for killing people in the Birkenau gas chambers. Also, Birkenau prisoners, or rather people working there, on meeting us, often told us that a new transport of prisoners must have been gassed in the Birkenau crematoria, because they had

seen our boss, that is Koch, driving toward the crematorium in a sanitation truck. I cannot tell whether Koch actually gassed people in the Auschwitz gas chambers or merely transported the gas there. The supplies of this gas were stored at the theater building, just next to the main camp. They were stored in wooden crates and arrived from Hamburg.

As regards Koch, I also know that he had been outside Auschwitz for some three weeks, and another *Kommandoführer* of this *kommando* told me that Koch had been in Germany at that time, for training which concerned the utilization of the gas which we used for delousing. The issue of gassing of Auschwitz prisoners and of new incoming transports in the Birkenau gas chambers was so commonly known and so widely discussed that it is absolutely impossible that a prisoner or an SS man from the camp could be found who would know nothing about it.

As regards Koch's attitude toward prisoners, I must say, on the basis of my own observations, that he was relatively bearable and did not stand out with particular cruelty or exceptional sadism. I do not remember if during my time at the *Entwesungskammer* prisoners Wiktor Zawik from Warsaw and Orzewski from Poznań also worked there.

At this point the report was concluded and it was signed after it was read out.