



## ZBIGNIEW NOWAK

On 30 September 1947 in Kraków, a member of the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, Municipal Court Judge Dr Stanisław Żmuda, acting upon written request of the First Prosecutor of the Supreme National Tribunal, this dated 25 April 1947 (Ref. No. NTN 719/47), in accordance with the provisions of and procedure provided for under the Decree of 10 November 1945 (Journal of Laws No. 51, item 293), in relation to Articles 254, 107 and 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, interviewed the person mentioned hereunder, former prisoner of the Auschwitz concentration camp, as a witness who testified as follows:

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Name and surname	Zbigniew Nowak
Date and place of birth	14 June 1920, Kraków
Parents' names	Stefan and Eleonora, <i>née</i> Szelağ
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Marital status	married
Occupation	chauffeur-mechanic
Citizenship and nationality	Polish
Place of residence	Kraków, [...]
Testifies freely	

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As a Polish prisoner no. 123121, I was brought to the Auschwitz concentration camp under the suspicion of espionage and subversion. I stayed there from 20 May 1943 until the total liquidation of the camp. Before I was sent to the Auschwitz camp, I was imprisoned in Vienna for a year.

In the Auschwitz camp, I was assigned to work as a chauffeur-mechanic in the *Fahrbereitsschaftskommandantur*, where I worked during my whole stay in the camp,

supervising the entire motorcycle department as the main mechanic. During my stay in the Auschwitz camp, I knew the following SS men, members of the Auschwitz camp personnel, by name and sight, and I recognized them very clearly upon confronting them on 25 September 1947 in the Central Prison in Kraków:

*SS-Obersturmführer* Heinrich Josten – He was the commander of one of the guard companies, and at the same time he supervised the guard stations. He was the *Luftschutzleiter* [air-raid protection chief] and the head of the fire brigade. He could be seen every day in any part of the camp. I also saw him every day in the motorcycle garage where I worked. He rode an Ardie 125 cm<sup>3</sup> motorcycle which was constantly in my care, and which I had to repair many times. Josten wore pince-nez glasses and a green leather coat. I saw him many times beat prisoners marching off from the camp to work and during searches. I also heard him talk, or rather quarrel, with camp commandant Liebehenschel about prisoners taking off their hats while marching off – Josten demanded that the old tradition be maintained. Josten would also come to the camp very early, about 5.00 a.m. already, and would walk around the whole area, controlling the prisoners and *Blockführers*, looking for prey. I also saw him assisting in public executions by hanging. Josten beat me badly in the face and on the nose with a universal spanner, leaving marks visible to this day, because the kick-start gear broke off when he was riding his bike. On that day, Jewish prisoners in Rajska rose up in revolt. Josten was furious when he ran into the car garage where I worked, and he beat me – as I mentioned above – accusing me of sabotage, calling me a Polish pig and threatening me, and the entire car garage personnel, with death. Josten attacked me so fiercely that the pince-nez glasses fell off his nose. Already a few days after the evacuation of the Auschwitz camp, there were only two Polish prisoners left in the *Fahrbereitsschaftskommandantur*: Władysław Serczyński from Warsaw and I. During a night Soviet air raid, I jumped into the concrete shelter near the car garage exit where Josten was hiding. Although it was dark, he recognized my prisoner's clothes, grabbed his gun, asked me what I was doing there, and started shooting. Fortunately, I managed to jump out of the bunker and escape to the garage.

Hermann Kirschner – recently with the rank of *SS-Oberscharführer*, known among the prisoners as "Frog" or "Duck" because of his screeching voice and waddling walk. He would beat prisoners on any occasion. Kirschner was a steady customer of the car garage. I took care of his Jawa 98 cm<sup>3</sup> with pedals, which he rode in the camp, monitoring the prisoners' work. He made the prisoners' blood run cold, because he would beat them and report them

for punishment. I was also reported by him and set to receive 25 blows, because I had not repaired his motorcycle on time, but I avoided the punishment thanks to my superior. Another time in the car garage, Kirschner kicked me without any reason and beat me on the head as a reward for my work on his motorcycle, which had been done impeccably.

Kurt Hugo Müller – *SS-Unterscharführer*; I knew him as a *Blockführer* in different blocks and as an officer who escorted prisoners to and from block 11. He was known in the camp as a sadist who would abuse, beat and kick the prisoners. He also visited the car garage several times. Once, when I was the room elder in block 22, he jumped into the room and beat four or five prisoners whose bunks were situated near the windows, because the windows were closed. I managed to escape that time.

Detlef Nebbe – *SS-Hauptscharführer*; despite his young age, he was quickly promoted. In the camp, he occupied the post of *Stabsscharführer*. He was a trusted officer of the camp commandant and he spread terror among the prisoners, as well as the SS men, members of the Auschwitz personnel, because his task was to supervise their activities, while the opinion he gave to the camp commandant was decisive. I noticed several times that when SS men saw him approaching they would start performing their duties more zealously and severely, so as to ingratiate themselves with him and not to fall into disfavor. For both the SS men and the prisoners, he was a person who reported to the commandant on what was happening in and outside the camp. He would also often visit the car garage and he had a four-stroke NSU 200 cm<sup>3</sup> motorcycle at his disposal. His motorcycle and the car he used had to always be maintained in the best possible state. I remember when Nebbe came to the garage and left the motorcycle he had just ridden for repairs, because its cylinder had lost a pin. He accused me of sabotage and gave me 2.5 hours for the repair, threatening that he would shoot me dead if I didn't do it on time. I had the same deadline for the repair of another motorcycle, which belonged to my supervisor, Küpper. Küpper was also very afraid of Nebbe. Since I was not able to repair Nebbe's motorcycle in such a short time, I took the necessary parts from a different motorcycle and installed them in his bike. Another time when he was present in the garage, Nebbe knocked off a pot with food and scolded my superior Küpper for allowing the prisoners to prepare food. He said it was a workplace, not a sanatorium.

Franz Kraus, *SS-Sturmbannführer* – member of the camp administration (*Verwaltung*). He had a separate car at his disposal. I met him on the last night of my stay in the Auschwitz

camp, right before I left. He ordered me to repair a car, which had previously been used by Liebehenschel, in half an hour, although such a repair would take half a day. He grabbed his gun and threatened he would shoot me if I didn't do it on time. Kraus was drunk then.

Maria Mandl – *SS-Oberaufseherin* [senior overseer] and *Lagerführerin* [head of the camp] in the women's camp in Birkenau. I know her from the camp and from my fellow inmates' stories as a sadist, who would abuse female prisoners, beat them and administer severe punishments. I met her personally in the car garage when I was helping my colleagues repair Mandl's car, which was a Simca. It was Sunday and the car was being repaired by a special *kommando*. I was lying on the ground under the car when Mandl came, wearing heavy boots. She asked sharply why the car was not ready yet and kicked me in the shin, although I was not to be blamed in that case. Mandl waited until we finished the work, which we did in 10 minutes, and she gave each of us two cigarettes as a reward.

Wentzel Ehm – *SS-Oberscharführer*; I know him well as a *Buchführer* [accountant] from the administration office, the *Truppenverpflegung* [military rations] department. He would often visit the garage, because he was a friend of my superior Küpper. Every time he came over, he would bring food from his private apartment for the garage workers. I also heard from a number of prisoners that Ehm would help them in various ways without expecting anything in return. He granted me many favors in the Reich when the Auschwitz camp was being evacuated. He drove me in his car and hosted me in his apartment for a few days, granting me full freedom of movement, much to the displeasure of his superiors, especially due to the fact that I was still wearing camp clothes at that time.

Helmuth Schippel – *SS-Obersturmführer*. I know him well from my stay in the camp as the head of the department of general supply for the personnel, prisoners and military formations (*Verpflegungsführer*). While he was holding this position, he did many favors for prisoners and some of the SS men in the camp, without expecting anything in return, supplying them with food. He would not only allow the prisoners to "organize" food, but also helped prisoners who asked him for it. He never reported a prisoner and he never demanded that prisoners take off their hats when they saw him. During my stay in the camp, I saw him very often and he helped me a number of times. When the camp was being evacuated, I was assigned to him with a car. During the journey, Schippel strove to provide the whole evacuation transport with food. He would give us double rations and would spend a number



of nights trying to get us food. I was granted full freedom of movement and allowed to walk around the city whenever I wanted.

At that the hearing and the report were concluded. The report was read out and signed.