

KAZIMIERZ SZELEST

The witness interview report compiled in Kraków on 10 June 1947 by Municipal Judge Dr. Henryk Gawadzki, acting deputy prosecutor of the District Court, with the participation of reporter Władysław Streba, secretary at the Prosecutor's Office of the District Court in Kraków, pursuant to art. 20 of the provisions introducing the Code of Criminal Procedure and art. 107 and 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

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| Name and surname | Kazimierz Szelest |
| Date and place of birth | 25 marca 1917, Kraków |
| Parents' names | Jan and Wanda, née Piątek |
| Religious affiliation | Roman Catholic |
| Citizenship and nationality | Polish |
| Place of residence | Kraków, [...] |
| Currently at | Montelupich Prison, Kraków |

I recognize, beyond all doubt, the suspect Franz Kraus, who was presented to me yesterday, as the same person I came across at the Auschwitz camp. I was interned at that camp from August 1940 until 21 or 22 January 1945. From 1942 until the end I worked at the prisoners' kitchen as a butcher and specialized in cutting portions of meat.

Kraus came to the camp sometime in the second half or in the final months of 1942. He was said to have come to the camp from Berlin and his task was to control and supervise the entire camp. In general, Kraus was seen very negatively. Prisoners, whose names I cannot presently recall, all said that he beat prisoners and was also very harsh toward the camp crew. He carried out constant inspections and would burst into the barracks at night and (as the witness puts it) "raided everyone". His behavior was characterized by arrogance and

harshness. I met him on other occasions because he would burst into our storerooms to hold inspections.

Towards the end of 1944, on a night between a Saturday and a Sunday, I called upon Erwin Olszówka, an acquaintance of mine, who now probably lives in Chorzów, and who was a *Rapportschreiber* [report writer] back then and worked at the office at block 24 in camp I. That night, Kraus barged in, accused me of being drunk, ordered everybody outside the block, and made us stand by the gate, squatting, with our arms stretched forward. Then he sent me to the camp hospital to check if I was drunk. There, they determined that I was not and Kraus had me locked at block 11, from where I was moved out on the Sunday morning and sent back to my kitchen duties. At around noon, I was ordered to report to the office of *Lagerführer* [camp leader] Hössler. There, standing by the door, I could hear as Kraus demanded from Hössler that I be sent on the next transport to Mauthausen, and *Unterscharführer* Karl Egersdörfer, my immediate superior, who, by the way, liked me, was against it, and he finally defended me as being irreplaceable.

During the evacuation of the camp, which took place over the end of the second and the beginning of the third decade of January 1945, prisoners Mieczysław Wiatr, today probably employed at the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, and Ferdynand Wilk from Łódź (their addresses can be provided by Czesław Soból, who works at the garages of the Central Executive Committee of Polish Socialist Party in Warsaw, Wiejska Street, the parliamentary buildings), told me that Kraus had burst in the empty storerooms, personally shot dead a couple of "Muslims" who were hanging around, and, searching the storerooms with a gun in his hand, asked about my whereabouts.