



ADAM CIECHANOWIECKI

On 16 May 1945 in Oświęcim, Regional Investigating Judge Jan Sehn, member of the Commission for the Investigation of German Nazi Crimes in Oświęcim, on the motion, in the presence, and with the participation of Dr. Wincenty Jarosiński, deputy prosecutor of the Regional Court, in accordance with art. 254 and 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, interviewed as a witness Adam Ciechanowiecki, a former prisoner of the Auschwitz concentration camp, prisoner number 102 160, who testified as follows:

Name and surname	Adam Ciechanowiecki
Date and place of birth	18 May 1900 in Warsaw
Names of parents	Icek Lejb and Chera née Bornstein
Religious affiliation	Jewish
Marital status	single
Nationality	Jewish
Citizenship	Polish
Occupation	gas fitter
Place of residence before the war	Paris, Avenue de la Republique 44 Warsaw, Towarowa Street 42
Current place of residence	Auschwitz camp

I was arrested by the Gestapo in Paris as a person of Jewish nationality in March 1942. After the arrest, I was detained in a prison in Paris, and then, after six months, I was transferred to the Drance camp near Paris. I spent another 6 months there, and on 9 March 1943, in a group of 1,200 people, I was transported to Auchwitz-Birkenau.



At Birkenau, as soon as our transport arrived, we were surrounded by SS men and prisoners in striped uniforms. Both groups beat us with rods and kicked us. After intercepting our parcels, the SS men carried out a selection, in the course of which they chose 140 people for camp labor. The others, 1,060 people, were sent away, but at that time we did not know where. Only later did I learn that all of them had been gassed and incinerated in the crematorium, and that the prisoners who processed us at the ramp were members of the Canada detail. I was in the group of the 140 people to be sent to the camp. The SS men drove this group to the bathhouse, beating and kicking them. In front of the bathhouse, even though it was very cold, because it was March, we were ordered to strip naked and then take a freezing-cold shower. After that, we did not receive any towels, underwear, or clothes, and we were driven to the block naked. There we were ordered to lie on the so-called bunks, six people on each. There were no mattresses or blankets, and we lay completely naked. Next day, at 4 a.m., we were rushed out of the blocks and issued underwear and camp uniforms, and then they started to drill us in taking our caps off and putting them back on and in forming rows. In the process, SS men, together with the block senior and room seniors, beat us and kicked us for the slightest mistake.

After one day, we were moved to Auschwitz I, to block 9, which was the quarantine block, where we had remained for two weeks. After the quarantine, during which we did not work, we were taken back to Birkenau. One day earlier, one of the older duty prisoners, for no reason at all, killed a man who had arrived with me, stabbing him with a knife in the heart. He got off completely scot-free. On the day of our departure we were run down with exercises, early morning through noon. Then, we were marched to Birkenau, and were ordered, allegedly as punishment for improper marching, to stay out in the cold and rain in the yard in front of the block, in a squatting position. After the evening roll call, we were assigned to particular blocks and then, on the next day, to particular work details.

I was assigned to the detail tasked with digging drainage ditches. This was a hard labor for me and as a result I developed a hernia already after three days. As a sick person, I was taken to block 7, where they gathered people designated for gassing. By lucky coincidence, I came across a Paris acquaintance of mine, who made a deal with the block senior and got me transferred to block 16, to work with the Canada detail. This man's name was Katz and he was a night watchman at block 7. The Canada detail comprised a number of groups and worked day and night shifts. I always worked the day shift, in storeroom 1, sorting clothes



and tying them up in packages. Although the Canada detail was one of the less demanding ones, because there it was easier to scrape up something to eat, SS men and Kapos still beat the prisoners for the slightest violations and unleashed dogs on them. A merciless beating was given especially to those prisoners on whom any items or food taken from the packages were found. I personally saw an SS man shoot dead a female prisoner on whom he had found some item.

I only worked with the Canada detail for two months because I was a skilled worker, and as such I was assigned to the installers detail. I enjoyed rather favorable conditions with this detail because the work was lighter and, being in contact with civilian workers, you could find out about what was going on outside the camp. After four months with this detail, I was assigned to the *Bauhof* [building yard] detail, where I worked up until the arrival of the Soviet troops. The work with this detail was some of the hardest. We worked outdoors and we had to carry objects of huge weight, regardless of whether it was snowing or raining, whether it was cold or hot, whether our clothes were dry or wet.

The Kapos of this detail were bad people, who beat us for the slightest infractions. Some of the worst were Nowak and Theo from Silesia. Working with the *Bauhof* detail, I was already at Auschwitz I, first at block 17a, and then at 9a.

One day (I don't remember the exact date), I came across Jakub Korzelczyk, an acquaintance of mine, who was a Polish emigrant I had met in 1928 during my stay in Cuba. When I met him at the camp, he worked as a *kalefaktör* [cleaner] in block 11, where the *Strafkompanie* [penal company] was located. He told me about the everyday routine of the SK prisoners, about how the block 11 SS men and duty prisoners treated the prisoners in the bunkers, about the executions taking place in the yard of block 11. I would sometimes go to block 11 myself, but I did not see any executions. Korzelczyk told me that new groups of prisoners sentenced to time with the penal company were passing through block 11 all the time. I do not know if these prisoners knew how long they were going to spend with the SK. In any case, their treatment was such that they perished already after a few days. The SK prisoners were beaten for no reason and mercilessly tortured. They were beaten both by the SS men and block seniors, but mostly by the SS men. The prisoners had to constantly do so-called exercises, during which a dozen or so were killed. Sometimes, roll calls were held at night and the prisoners were driven naked into the field. There were cases where the

SK prisoners were not given any food for a few days. Consequently, they died of starvation, while others received considerably reduced food rations. They were rushed while relieving themselves, as they were during all their activities. The bunkers, essentially designed to accommodate a person or two, saw a dozen or so, so that these people could only stand and would suffocate for lack of fresh air. Two or three times a week, the SK was inspected by *Lagerführer* [camp leader] *Obmeyer* [Aumeier], *Rapportführer* [report leader] Palitzch, and *Arbeitsdienstführer* [work detail leader] Emmerich; they randomly selected some prisoners from block 11, who were then taken to the so-called death wall and executed. Executions were carried out by Palitzch and Emmerich. I myself witnessed as Palitsch, who was then incarcerated in the bunker for sexual relations with a Jewess, was telling other prisoners that he had personally “smashed” (that is executed) 25,000 prisoners. He affected remorse for that and said that if he were to get out, he would know how to conduct himself.

Korzelczyk had ended up with the SK completely by chance. Before his assignment to SK, he had been chosen to be gassed. He was a professional athlete and had reportedly trained with Schmeling, a famous German boxer. After he was loaded onto the van which was supposed to take him to the gas chamber, he began raising a ruckus. *Lagerführer* Aumeier, who was just driving by, asked why Korzelczyk was kicking up a fuss and who he was by trade. When Korzelczyk replied that he was a boxer and that he had trained with Schmeling, Aumeier, seeing his athletic build, ordered that he be assigned to the bunker’s staff. Korzelczyk was friendly toward the SK prisoners and always tried to help them. Korzelczyk was put on a transport to Germany.

On 12 January 1945, after work, during the evening roll call, Kaduk, the other *Rapportführer*, came to us and, having noticed that someone had failed to form the row properly, ordered exercises for the entire block in the yard. When I failed to get down in time after he gave the order, he dashed toward me and proceeded to kick me in my right leg and stomp on it with full force. As a result, I suffered a fractured shin and I still cannot walk, and my leg is in plaster. Kaduk was a very bad person, even worse than Palitsch. He was drunk all the time and every prisoner in the camp dreaded him, since he would indiscriminately beat up random people, not caring about the consequences of his blows. Kaduk was from Silesia.

At this the report was concluded and after being read out was signed as a faithful record of witness Adam Ciechanowiecki’s testimony.