



JAKUB KLINGER

Day 13 of the trial, 25 March 1947.

The witness has provided information about himself as follows: Jakub Klinger, 27 years old, Jewish, bachelor, no relationship to the parties.

Chairperson: What are the motions of the parties as to the mode of questioning the witness?

Prosecutor Cyprian: We discharge the witness from the oath.

Attorney/Defender Ostaszewski: We discharge the witness from the oath.

Chairperson: By mutual agreement of the parties, the Tribunal has decided to question the witness without the oath. In what circumstances did you find yourself in the camp, and what can you tell us on the subject of Auschwitz?

Witness: I was arrested in 1941 in Paris. In June 1942 I was transported to Auschwitz. I don't want to talk here about my personal experience, seeing as I worked in the camp bureau and I can tell you more about the sheer hell concerning the transports from the moment of arrival, up until the moment of annihilation.

First of all, I have to explain that there were two types of transports: the first one, RSHA [*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*], from the Reich Main Security Office, and the second, the transports ordered by the Gestapo. The first transports ordered by the RSHA were sent to Auschwitz, where the camp commandant was responsible for these human beings and could decide on the life and death of the women, children, and the elderly who came to that camp. At the time when Höß was commandant of the Auschwitz camp, the largest portion of people were sent to the gas chambers. I myself saw how SS men treated those women, children, and elderly. Höß carried out these selections personally, and Höß gave the appropriate orders to the SS doctors.

The remaining transports were supposed to die a – so to speak – natural death. Berlin forbade gassing these people. But Höß found his own way around it like this: these prisoners were gassed, but on the lists they were marked as having died a natural death; the RSHA



transports, on the other hand, when they were being gassed, were marked on the lists with the letters "SB", *Sonderbehandlung*, special treatment.

I would like to mention here the tattooed numbers of all the transports. The first series of arrivals had numbers up to 200 thousand. I must add that those sent straight to the gas chambers were not tattooed, so these numbers are just the normal prisoners who entered the Auschwitz camp. The second series was series A, which reached 18 thousand. There was then a series B that reached 16 thousand. Then there were the Gypsies, whose numbers reached 18 thousand. And finally, there were Russian prisoners of war, whose numbers reached 20 thousand, although this number isn't accurate because Höß, in order to conceal the murdering of Russian POWs, would give the numbers of the dead to the newly-arrived living. There was yet another category: E, *Erziehungshäftling*, prisoners who were to be reformed.

I cannot give the exact number of the last ones.

These transports that were arriving were a tenth of all incoming transports.

One time, as people were coming back to the camp, they were being tortured.

The rules of the camp were as follows: we got up at 3:30 AM in the summer, 4:30 AM in the winter. Going to bed was at 9:00 PM in the evening.

From 6:00 AM until 7:00 people would work continually without sufficient food. There was no water to drink in the camp. In 1942 there was only one tap for the whole camp. Jews were forbidden from washing under pain of death. From the moment they arrived till the moment of death, they remained without a change of underwear and without washing. People who were unable to work went to block 7. This was a stable, built of fragile brick, the size of a classroom. 1000-1200 were fit in there. Seven people slept in less than two square meters. When selections were being carried out at block 7, the sick were thrown out onto the block's yard and there, summer or winter, they would wait for wagons that would take them to their death. Of course, if these didn't come quickly, then there were many among those sick who would be already dead, but the SS men didn't trouble themselves to separate the living from the dead, and they were all burnt together.

I myself saw terrible scenes on block 7. During summer, I saw sick people who were dying of thirst and pleading with their companions to give them something to drink, even urine. Many



drank. Others, with bodies covered in rashes and lice, being bitten by mosquitoes, didn't have enough strength to drive away those parasites that were devouring them.

I maintain that Höß was informed of everything that went on in the camp, because we made detailed reports twice a month that were later signed by Höß and then sent to Berlin. In those statistics, all newcomers, the number of people who'd allegedly died a natural death, and so-called SBs (*Sonderbehandlung*), were all marked. When Höß received these statistics, he would see if there were openings in the camp, and on account of that, he would bring those new transports in, to fill in these gaps left by the deaths. Whereas when he saw that new transports were coming and thought the camp was too full, then he conducted selections.

When I arrived at the Auschwitz camp, 16 Russian POWs remained from the 16 thousand that passed through the lists I found there. Those Russian prisoners had arrived there towards the end of 1941. I wasn't there yet but my Polish fellow prisoners who were in that bureau told me how these Russian had died. They arrived, as I already mentioned, in December 1941. It was at least 25 degrees below zero. They were ordered to strip naked, and in this state they were lead into the camp. Once in the camp, they had to take an ice-cold shower. After this shower they stayed outdoors for the whole night, completely naked. Naturally, there were many corpses the next day.

March 1943 saw the first attempts at sterilization with the use of X-rays on young people, 18 to 30 years old. Usually, those who had already been in the camp were chosen. After a couple of sperm tests, they were castrated.

Once, I came in direct contact with Höß. This was on the second day after my coming to the Auschwitz camp. Höß was standing at the exit gate. A *kommando* was leaving, a *kapo* [a prisoner assigned to supervise other prisoners] was reporting the number of prisoners who were leaving for work. There were 255 of them. Höß called out to the *kapo* and asked him 'How many living are you going to come back to the camp with?' The *kapo* answered 'With a hundred.' Höß gave him a slap across the face, 'You'll come back with fifty,' he said.

All orders concerning extermination were signed by Höß and by the Political Department. That is all.

Chairperson: Does the prosecution have any questions? (No). Does the defense have any questions? (Yes).



Defender Ostaszewski: You said that all that was happening in the camp was a result of Höß's orders.

Witness: Yes.

Defender Ostaszewski: Did you see or hear Höß's orders?

Witness: I saw signed orders.

Defender Ostaszewski: You talk about reports that the department you worked in sent to Höß.

Witness: Yes, those reports were sent to Höß.

Defender Ostaszewski: Did you also see Höß's reports to Berlin?

Witness: No, but when Höß gave us statistics to prepare, he would tell us it's for Berlin, so we would be careful not to make mistakes.

Defender Ostaszewski: This means that, whatever the political department gave him, Höß would forward it to his superior authority.

Witness: That's right.

Defender Ostaszewski: You said there was a moment at the gate when Höß slapped a *kapo* across the face.

Witness: The slap is not the important thing, but the fact that Höß thought a hundred people coming back from work is too many, that he said only 50 should return, which means that all the others were supposed to die.

Defender Ostaszewski: What I want to know is, in which row of the 225 people did you stand?

Witness: I was outside the camp; we were stood there to go to the political bureau for inventory.

Defender Ostaszewski: So you weren't in the *kommando*, but were standing to the side?

Witness: I was standing near the door and saw the *kommandos* pass.

Defender Ostaszewski: How far from Höß were you?



Witness: Maybe a hundred meters.

Defender Ostaszewski: So the prisoners could just wander around the camp like that?

Witness: I wasn't wandering, I was in a group that was about to go to the political department and be tattooed.

Defender Ostaszewski: What you are saying, you heard directly from Höß's mouth?

Witness: That's right.

Defender Ostaszewski: Do you know German well?

Witness: Very well.

Defender Ostaszewski: I have no more questions.

Defender Umbreit: You were talking about this incident. Do you recall who else, apart from the accused, was standing there at the moment of the conversation?

Witness: There were a few SS men there.

Defender Umbreit: Was it his entourage?

Witness: They were *Kommandoführers*.

Defender Umbreit: Just SS men from the units that were going to work?

Witness: From other columns that were to go after that column.

Defender Umbreit: How do you explain the fact the he was alone, when countless witnesses testified here that when the accused moved around the camp, he was on horseback, in a car, or surrounded by a whole entourage?

Witness: I saw him both on horseback and in a car, but that time he was alone, surrounded by people who were leading those columns.

Defender Umbreit: You testify that the extermination orders all came from Höß, this marking with the letters SB. Do you know that written orders were received from Berlin, and by what means they came from there?



Witness: I didn't see the orders from Berlin.

Defender Umbreit: So you didn't have access to, and didn't see, the orders that came straight from Berlin?

Witness: All of us in the camp knew that the RSHA transport from Terezín [*Theresienstadt*] was at the mercy of the accused.

Defender Umbreit: I'm interested in the orders from Berlin.

Witness: I saw orders signed by Höß, but I didn't see any orders signed by anyone superior.

Defender Umbreit: If you didn't see these confidential orders that came from Berlin, how can you claim that these orders for the extermination of individuals or whole transports were ideas coming from the accused only?

Witness: Working in the bureau, we were in contact with many SS men, and we learned from their own lips all sorts of things that Höß thought were shrouded in mystery.

Defender Umbreit: Does this mean one must believe that SS men discussed such confidential matters with witnesses and other prisoners?

Witness: They spoke a lot to one another, and because I know German very well, I could learn a lot. I received circular letters signed by Höß.

Defender Ostaszewski: Because the witness categorically establishes, at the end of the trial, a fact that is sensational with regard to the conversation at the gate, I ask for permission to ask the accused whether he remembers that fact.

Chairperson: Proceed.

Defender Ostaszewski: You heard what the witness said about that moment at the gate and about your saying that not 100 but 50 people were to come back. Is it possible for such a moment to arise, or has there been a mistake here?

The Accused: There is no way this could ever have happened. Even if I was the brute I am presented here to be, I could never have given such an order, for reasons of prestige and discipline.



Defender Ostaszewski: The witness has declared he can speak German well. Would you ask my question in German, and repeat the answer of the accused?

(The witness repeats in German).

Defender: Thank you.

Chairperson: The witness is free to go.