



JERZY POZIMSKI

Oświęcim, 8 August 1946. Regional Investigative Judge Jan Sehn, acting in accordance with the Decree of 10 November 1945 (Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland No. 51, item 293) on the Main Commission and Regional Commissions for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, as a member of the Main Commission, pursuant to Article 255, in connection with Articles 107 and 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, interviewed the person specified below, who testified as follows:

Name and surname	Jerzy Pozimski
Date and place of birth	5 May 1913, Szarlej
Parents' names	Jan and Gertruda Sekuła
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Citizenship and nationality	Polish
Place of residence	Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum

I was in the Auschwitz concentration camp from 24 June 1940 to 18 January 1945, as prisoner no. 1099. Initially, roughly until November 1940, I worked expanding the camp, then until mid-1941 I worked as a clerk in block 3a, and from mid-1941 in the *Arbeitseinsatz* detail [labor deployment]. Apart from myself, seven prisoners worked in that unit.

There was a special unit in the Auschwitz camp that administered prisoners' work, initially within Department V (*Abteilung V*), called *Kommandantur Abteilung Arbeitseinsatz* and, later on within Department III, known as *Abteilung Arbeitseinsatz* (IIIa). *Arbeitseinsatzführer* Sell was in charge of that institution. The *Arbeitseinsatz* office was divided into two branches. The first was an administrative/secretarial branch, supervised by *Unterscharführer* Geppert and *Unterscharführer* Kapper, the second an external service branch, headed by the

Arbeitsdienstführer. Until the end of 1942, the *Arbeitsdienstführers* were: SS-Scharführer Fries, SS-Unterscharführer Schoppe, and SS-Rottenführer Lewönday [?]. Later on, that position was held by SS-Hauptscharführer Minor, SS-Unterscharführer Emmerich, Jurkowski, Oppelt, Salaban, Kirschner, and others. The position of the assistant, who executed the orders of the *Arbeitsdienstführer*, was held by prisoner no. 2, Otto Kiesel, until 29 December 1942, and afterwards by me, until the end of my stay in the camp. Kiesel and I were called the *Arbeitsdienst*. During Kiesel's term in office, *Arbeitsdienst* helpers were Kalus and Czajor, and later on Januszewski and Tkocz. My assistants were Krummy, Rogowski, Szolorz, and others. The office of Geppert and Kapper employed the following prisoners: Gabiś, Ludwig, Nowakowski, Kuczbara, Kowalski, Cyrankiewicz, Konieczny, and Baraś. This was in the first period. In the second period, when I became the *Arbeitsdienst*, Sall fired all men and replaced them with female prisoners.

Officially, every prisoner began working in the camp after completing a month of quarantine. However, in order to remedy the lack of workers in work units, quarantined prisoners were also quite often assigned to jobs. The prisoners were divided into several dozen work details, the number of which changed depending on the time period. Prisoners were assigned to individual details primarily based on their occupation and professional knowledge. Those data were recorded in all files in the *Arbeitseinsatz* office. Work details were formed based on that information and the needs of the camp management departments.

Each detail was headed by a *Kapo* and in the case of large details, such as the DAW [*Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke*], which consisted of 1,500 prisoners, the entire group of prisoners was led by an *Oberkapo*. The hundreds of *Kapos* had *Unterkapos* and *Vorarbeiter* at their disposal. The *Arbeitsdienstführer* assigned prisoners to those positions upon the approval of the *Arbeitseinsatzführer*, *Lagerführer* and, in the last two years, also after consulting the Political Department. If the Political Department did not approve the choice, the given prisoner could not become a *Kapo*.

Prisoners' work was recorded in very meticulous and detailed files, lists and various registers. Based on those documents, the *Arbeitseinsatz* office prepared registers and diagnoses of employment. Such registers included all prisoners, both those who worked and those who were not employed, as well as prisoners who were unable to work. The working prisoners were divided into separate groups according to the camp management departments for whom they worked. Such registers were sent to the headquarters in Berlin. Prisoners'



working hours were set by the commandant's office. In summer, prisoners worked from 6.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. with a one-hour break for dinner (from 12.00 to 1.00 p.m.). In December and January, from 7.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. without a lunch break – in these months, they received dinner only in the evening in the block. In the transitional period, working hours were shortened, [and sometimes] extended by half an hour in spring.

In the *Arbeitseinsatz* office, we also prepared lists of prisoners employed in private companies working within the camp. Those companies paid the management of the camp for that work. The amount of the remuneration and how it was calculated was determined and administered by the so-called *Verwaltung*. I know that for one day's work by a qualified worker, the camp's management was paid 4.5 RM [*Reichsmarks*], and for a day's work by an unskilled worker – 3 RM. Since a lot of prisoners worked for such companies (at one point, construction companies alone employed about 800 prisoners), the camp's management generated large profits from that source.

Camp commandant Rudolf Höß inspected the work of the prisoners. Following such inspections, the *Arbeitsdienstführer* was instructed by the *Arbeitseinsatzführer* to organize work in the detail, to decrease or increase its size and to ensure the workflow. All such orders were aimed at increasing the prisoners' productivity, which meant maximum exploitation of the prisoner workforce. On the basis of my own observations, I declare that Höß kept the SS Auschwitz personnel disciplined. He treated the SS officers under his command in a professional manner and, I would say, even with some reserve. I repeatedly witnessed that having completed the formalities related to the morning roll call and having sent commandos to work, the SS men would go to the *Führerheim* to have a second breakfast. They did this only when Höß was not there. If Höß was present at the time the details left for work, the SS men went to the *Führerheim* only after the commandant had left. I do not remember Höß ever going to the *Führerheim* with his subordinates.

Based on my own observations, I am convinced that all general orders by Höß's subordinates were issued either with his consent or by his orders. None of Höß's subordinates would dare to perform general operations on their own. Höß was always present during all executions by firing squad and by hanging. To illustrate how much Höß cared for the reputation of the camp, I will mention the following two facts that I personally observed. In September or October 1940, Himmler came to the camp. Before his arrival, prisoners were thrown out

from block 14, where they slept on mattresses lying on the ground, without beds. Then, beds were brought there from the SS barracks and covered with white sheets. In block 24, a canteen was built, stocked with cigarettes, chocolate, rolls, and other products. Höß personally showed Himmler around the two blocks. After Himmler's departure, the beds were removed from block 14, and the canteen was closed down. The prisoners continued to sleep on straw mattresses on the ground.

Later on, two rooms in block 6 were arranged for the purpose of display. Prisoners did not live in those rooms. The rooms were opened and vacuumed before the visits of people from outside the camp. They were presented as normal prison rooms and after the guests' departure, they were closed until the next visit. In the spring of 1941, Höß showed a committee around block 3, where I lived at the time. Shortly before that visit, washrooms and flush toilets were installed there. While presenting those devices to the members of the commission, Höß told them that Polish prisoners ran away with fear when they pressed the button and water started flowing from the tap, and that they drank the water from the toilet, convinced that this device was meant to be used this way. I heard those words myself, because I was around at that moment. Of course, Höß wanted to present Poles as savages.

In the summer of 1942 (July or August), a group of French journalists came to the camp to examine the working conditions of French prisoners, several thousands of whom had arrived at the camp. It was an announced visit. Camp commandant Höß gave an order to find several healthy French prisoners from those transports who looked well enough to show to the visitors. During a search in all the details, only two French prisoners were found who could be presented. They were both placed in the square in block 24, where Höß arrived accompanied by the journalists and several SS officers. The journalists asked the prisoners questions in German. Those questions were then translated into French. Both prisoners answered that they were doing well in the camp. Their faces, however, revealed otherwise. In the evening of the same day, in the presence of Höß, both prisoners received 25 lashes. *Lagerältester* Bruno Brodniewicz told me in private that the commandant had not liked the faces of the two prisoners when they were being presented to the journalists.

In December 1941, I witnessed the following scene: Russian prisoners in block 14, who in the morning always left for work earlier than all other details, did not leave the block. I do not know why it happened. After all the other details had left, Höß and his retinue went towards



block 14, while the block seniors from the Russian camp rushed the Russian prisoners naked into the street between blocks 14 and 15. The block seniors surrounded the naked prisoners and beat them with bars until the prisoners collapsed. I estimate that there were over a hundred prisoners. They were beaten until every one of them collapsed over each other. Then, the camp fire brigade with fire hoses was called. They attached the hoses to a hydrant and drenched the pile of lying prisoners with water. Höß was present during the whole operation and watched. I would like to add that it was particularly cold that day. My friends told me that a few hours later, the frozen pile of corpses was broken up with axes and the bodies were taken away.

In the autumn of 1941, over 10,000 Russian prisoners of war were brought to the camp. They were placed in blocks 1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 22, 23, and 24, which were separated by barbed wire from the rest of the camp. Those blocks then formed a separate Russian camp. The *Rapportfuhrer* and *Arbeitsdienstführer* of that camp was SS-Unterscharführer Stiewitz. Due to poor clothing, terrible housing conditions and starvation, the majority of the prisoners were killed within a few months between 1941 and 1942. They worked at the construction of a road leading from the railway crossing to the Birkenau camp. Only those who went to work received clothes, and the rest stayed naked in cold blocks. At that time, evening roll calls lasted over an hour, because we had to wait for carts with the corpses of all Russian prisoners who had died at work to get to the camp.

The report was read out. At this point, the interview and the present report were concluded.