



## STEFAN WOLNY

Katowice, 15 August 1946, District Judge Jan Sehn, acting on the basis of the Decree of 10 November 1945 (Journal of Laws No. 51, item 293) on the Main Commission and District Commissions for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, as a member of the Main Commission, heard in accordance with art. 255, pursuant to art. 107, 115 of the Criminal Code the person named below, who testified as follows:

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Name and surname	Stefan Wolny
Date and place of birth	30 October 1903 in Kamienskoje (ZSRR)
Parents' names	Walenty and Emilia Wyszynska
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Nationality and national affiliation	Polish
Place of residence	Poraj, Zawiercie County

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I stayed in the Auschwitz camp from 6 December 1941 until 28 October 1944, as prisoner No. 23,818. After being transferred from Auschwitz, I stayed in the Oranienburg, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück and Barth camps until my liberation.

In Auschwitz, first I worked in the building materials warehouse (*Bauhof*), then in the *Bekleidungswerkstätte*, which was at the time located in the tannery, for a short time in the *Kanalbau kommando*, and from August 1942 in the prisoners' warehouse (*Häftlingsmagazin*). I ended up in the clothing warehouse as an upholsterer. I didn't know this profession, but—wanting to save myself from working in winter in an open warehouse for building materials—I offered myself as an upholsterer.

During a short break between working at the *Bekleidungswerkstätte* and in the *Kanalbau Kommando*, I was in the hospital in block 21 for several days because my hands were

frostbitten. At the hospital, the 'frostbitten' mainly lay there without their fingers, ears or noses. At that time my colleague Stanisław Pięta was lying there, without any fingers or toes, nose or ears. The prisoner-doctor Kirschmidt from Tarnów, on the morning of 13 March 1942, advised me that despite my health, which still required hospital treatment, I had to leave the hospital. Without knowing the reason for this recommendation, I left the hospital in the morning. It turned out that I had done the right thing, because on the same day all the injured and sick prisoners who didn't look like they'd be returning to work in a hurry were removed from all the hospital blocks. The number of patients selected at that time ran into the hundreds. These patients were taken to the camp in Birkenau, to the section which was later designated as the women's section of the camp. At that time there were remnants of the Russian prisoners of war. These patients were dumped onto the open squares in piles in front of the blocks by raising up the truck platform. The Russian prisoners were ordered to finish off those lying on the piles. The SS men did the same. I know this from one of my friends from Sosnowiec (I don't know his surname) who survived this transfer and stay in this section of Birkenau. He succeeded because he was lying under the other corpses and thus avoided death.

The corpses of the murdered were then burnt in crematorium I in Auschwitz. The ash remaining after these corpses had been burnt was transported by my colleague Jurek Mysakowski, from Tarnawatka near Lublin, on a wagon, and he then scattered them [onto] a path near the *Führerheim*. Mysakowski was shot in a group of 265 prisoners from Radom and Lublin on 28 October 1942.

I had an interest in the fate of those who had been removed from the hospital on 13 March 1942, because there were many friends of mine from my area among them.

In January 1942, as an upholsterer from the clothing warehouse, I repaired—together with my friend Stefan Kurzynóg—a couch in the private living quarters of Commandant Höß. He didn't take any special interest in us, especially during this work, which we tried to prolong as much as possible because it gave us the opportunity to organize food, which was very important at that time, because there was widespread starvation in the camp. The extent of this can be seen by the fact that we stole food from Höß's dog bowls. This was tripe from the slaughterhouse, or prison soup. Neither of the dogs would touch it, so we ate the food instead. Höß's maid found out and then she would serve us some soup and a piece of bread

at noon, but she warned us that we had to eat like that so that Commandant Höß wouldn't notice. In the spring of 1942, there was such terrible starvation in the camp that I ate grass and earthworms myself. I saw with my own eyes two prisoners engaged in a life or death struggle—they did almost kill each other—for a bone from an SS trash can. If an attempt was made to organize any food, for example if a prisoner was found with a raw potato, the SS men inflicted terrible torture on the perpetrator.

From the time when I worked in the clothing warehouse, I recall the public punishment of five or six colleagues employed there for the fact that the machine for tearing the rags where they were employed had caught fire. They were given 25 lashes each. Commandant Höß and Aumeier, at that time *Lagerführer*, were both present. Höß often came to the clothing warehouses. During his stay, the *kapos* and SS men accompanying Höß would beat the prisoners and goad them to work harder. When a prisoner ran out of real work at any moment, he had to pretend to be working. Höß didn't react to the beating of the prisoner, but just pretended not to see it. He often smiled and turned in a different direction.

In August 1942, thanks to the help of my friend Mysakowski, I ended up in the prisoners' food warehouse (*Häftlingsmagazin*), where Mysakowski was working at that time. This warehouse was built onto the prison kitchen. Among the prisoners, it was known as Canada. Among those employed there, I remember Zygmunt Renikas from the city of Łódź, Mieczysław Wiatra from Warsaw, and Mieczysław Kotlarski, a teacher from Chorzów, Powstańców Street 51. The *kapo* of the *kommando* was Adolf Maciejowski [from] Chorzów. The head was SS-*Unterscharführer* Franz Schebeck from Vienna. He was close friend of Grabner and he was on good terms with Höß.

This *kommando* worked on bringing all food products to the warehouse from transports arriving in Birkenau and distributing food between the *kommandos*. Jews arriving at the unloading ramp in Birkenau had to leave all the luggage they had brought with them in the wagons, and put what they had taken from the wagons onto the ramp. We selected food from among these items and transported it to the warehouse. In connection with this activity I was frequently at the unloading ramp in Birekenau. Initially, this ramp was located just behind the station, but it was moved from here to the Birkenau camp in order to keep the scenes that took place at the arrival of such transports secret. The arrival of each transport was announced by the presence of SS men armed with automatic weapons, sticks



and guard dogs surrounding the entire ramp before the transport train arrived. After the train had rolled up to the ramp, the SS surrounded it, the wagons were opened and the arrivals were told to get out.

These people behaved in very different ways. Some were scared, others were laughing and smiling and didn't seem to realize [where] they had arrived, while others, especially the Polish Jews, behaved with dignity and defiantly resisted the SS men. Such resistance was broken by beating them ruthlessly and setting the dogs on them, and if that didn't help, they were shot. After the living had left the wagons, the corpses were removed along with those who were on the verge of death or had been shot. Transports of Jews from Sosnowiec and Będzin came in wagons that were riddled with bullet holes.

At the arrival of all these Jewish transports, Höß, the *Lagerführers* from Auschwitz and Birkenau, the *Arbeitsdienstführer*, the officer of the Political Department (most often Grabner, or Woźnica [Wosnitza]) and an SS doctor were always present on the ramp. From such transports, children, the elderly and the sick were separated into one group, and a small minority of men were selected for work in a second group. This small group was escorted to the camp on foot, while the old, the children and the sick were loaded onto cars and taken to the Birkenau crematoria. I remember Höß once ordering us [employees] of the food warehouse, Canada, to load the sick and the children remaining in the carriages onto wagons after the healthy people had been taken away. We took the sick and the children and carted them on wagons to the cars. There we were going to lift the sick off the wagons. Höß ran over to us screaming and told us to tip the wagons up and dump their contents on the ground, which we did. I saw Höß beat resistant women who didn't want to part from their children, or those who didn't want to enter the car. Another time, with gallantry and with an ironic smile on his lips, he offered his hand to a woman, helping her enter the car that would take her off to the crematorium.

In 1944, when Höß returned to Auschwitz as a special assistant to carry out the campaign of extermination against the Hungarian Jews, I was told by an SS man, with whom I was on good terms, that due to the overwhelming number of the transports arriving at that time, the SS men got pulled into helping out with the unloading and extermination. The corpses of the gassed were also burnt in pits. Höß, seeing the sluggishness of the SS men, grabbed a small child by the leg and threw it onto the fire. He said that as SS men, they should be

doing it like that, without him having to goad them into working. Following Höß's example, other SS men also threw children onto the fire alive. I don't recall the name of this SS man, but I suppose that Kotlarski will remember it well.

At the turn of 1943–1944, mass transports of people deported from Zamość and Hrubieszów arrived in Auschwitz. Soon after, a transport of 400 or maybe 600 Polish policemen from Lublin arrived, who had refused to take part in the struggle against the partisans. Everyone who arrived in these transports was gassed. In this case, Kotlarski and Stanisław Wilk, who currently live in Jelenia Góra, could provide information.

At the end of 1943, Poles were also gassed in Auschwitz—elderly people from areas annexed to the Reich. Once, hidden in some sugar, I found a 'palcówka' [an identity card including a fingerprint] of an old woman from Auschwitz, whose daughter worked at the Landsmann bakery in Auschwitz.

From the ramp, we—that is, the *kommando* where I and 12 other colleagues worked—carted away all sorts of food that had been left on the ramp and in the wagons to the warehouse known as Canada. In the warehouse, we sorted these things according to type and kind. All the better, high-value or expensive products were set aside for the SS kitchen, or issued on the orders of our superior Schebeck to the *Führerheim*, where these products were consumed at receptions for SS dignitaries—Himmler, Pohl and others who were frequent visitors to Auschwitz. In addition, on Schebeck's orders a lot of these items were issued to Höß, Grabner and even the officer of the camp SD (I don't remember the surname). Schebeck would avail himself of these things with gay abandon. Before each holiday, he would bring Höß presents such as wine, sardines, chocolate, coffee, tea and other valuable products of this kind. A large proportion of these luxury items went to Porąbka, where a special holiday home had been set up for SS men employed in taking in the Jewish transports. For their work on these transports, they received special extras (*Sonderzulage*) in the form of wine, sardines, marmalade, chocolate, etc.

Every week on Saturday, we brought two bottles of wine, coffee, tea, rice, sardines, chocolate and other products to Höß's house. These *Sonderzulages* would be made up of the contents of parcels sent to individual prisoners, mostly Jews who had long since died, that were ordered from the Swiss Red Cross by Portuguese companies. A Jew who was kept in the parcel service collection especially for this purpose would receive these parcels. From the

parcel collection they went to the Canada warehouses, and from there they were divided up between the SS men. Most went to the *Führerheim*. The products brought to the warehouse contained many valuables – expensive gem stones, precious items, jewelry, valuable currency and gold coins. I remember that in one bag of flour from a Będzin transport I found 300 gold Russian coins in rolls. We also found about half a million German marks in products from this transport. I can't even begin to determine the value of these valuables. In any case, it was a huge fortune. *Unterescharführer* Schebeck took all the valuables and money that we found from us. I am convinced that he kept most of these possessions for himself, and divided up the rest between Höß, Grabner and other leading officers. He sorted through all the things he was given in the warehouse and I remember him once rejecting the less valuable things, saying that they were suitable for official donation. The Gestapo camp later conducted an investigation against Schebeck. The *kapo* Maciejowski, under his instructions, told us while the investigations were underway to testify during interrogation that no valuables were found while searching through the items left behind by the Jews.

During my stay in the camp, I saw many executions carried out publicly during roll calls. Höß was present at all these executions. I deliberately watched the expression on his face, and therefore I can conclude on this basis that he was always pleased by what he saw.

These executions were usually carried out for trying to escape. I remember the hanging of a Dutch Jew, a journalist of some sort. Immediately prior to the execution, he was joined by the *Lagerführer* at that time, Hessler [Hößler], who asked the condemned if he was afraid of death. The condemned man replied, 'No,' and then he was hanged. But the rope snapped and the condemned man landed on his feet and said to Hößler: 'You see, I said that there is nothing to be afraid of. Let's see if you can have a go.' This was also in the presence of Höß, who was enraged and ordered him to be taken away to block 11. The next day, the condemned man was taken to the gas chamber.

The report was read out and thus concluded.