



JERZY POZIMSKI

Presiding Judge: Please summon the next witness, Jerzy Pozimski.

The witness provides his personal details: Jerzy Pozimski, 34 years old, head of the Administrative Department at the State Museum in Oświęcim, resident in Oświęcim, religion – Roman Catholic.

Presiding Judge: I hereby instruct the witness, pursuant to the provisions of Article 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, that you are required to speak the truth. The provision of false testimony is punishable by a term of imprisonment of up to five years. Do the parties want to submit any motions as to the procedure according to which the witness is to be interviewed?

Prosecutors: We release the witness from the obligation to take an oath.

Defense counsel: As do we.

Presiding Judge: When and in what circumstances was the witness deported to Auschwitz, and what information can he provide about life in the camp, in particular with reference to the accused?

Witness: I arrived in the camp on 24 June 1940 and received number 1099. I remained in Auschwitz until the very last day, that is until it was evacuated on 18 January 1945. From the very first day of my incarceration until more or less the second half of 1942, I worked in various *kommandos* in turn, depending on my ability to wriggle out of getting assigned to the worst *kommandos*.

And thus I worked at the carpenter's shop, the joiner's shop, and in numerous other *kommandos*. In 1942 – in the second half of the year, as I have already said – together with a few other prisoners whose stated occupation was "clerk" I was discovered by the *Arbeitsdienst* [junior-level labor coordinator] and presented to *Rapportführer* [report leader] Palitzsch. As it turned out, one of the prisoners working in division III A of the *Arbeitseinsatz* [labor deployment office] was to be freed and I was viewed as a candidate for the vacancy. Since *Rapportführer* Palitzsch selected me from amongst seven or eight possibles, the next

day I was introduced to *Lagerführer* [camp leader] Fritzsche and immediately commenced regular work at the office, which at the time was known as *Arbeitseinsatz – Dienststelle I/5* and headed by *Obersturmführer* Schwarz. Since the *Arbeitseinsatz* division was located in the same barrack in which the *Lagerführers* officiated (Fritzsche, Aumeier, Hoffmann, Hößler and others), during this two-year period I had more than one occasion to observe a number of different goings-on. Since my former superiors at the *Arbeitseinsatz*, Shela and Schwarz, are not sitting in the dock today, I do not consider it appropriate at the moment to give a detailed description of the work performed by *Abteilung IIIA*, unless of course I am so instructed by the Tribunal. I shall now proceed to the core of the matter. As I have already mentioned, I know the accused relatively well. After all, I was in direct contact with them for two years. I am excellently aware of what I shall recount, and I would like to stress that I shall mention only facts of which I was an immediate participant. I shall talk solely of things which I saw with my own eyes, just as I see Aumeier sitting in the courtroom today. However I will begin not with him, but with the accused Mandl.

In November or December 1942 I was sent by my chief, *Unterscharführer* Kaper, to the female camp in Birkenau in order to tidy up the records of the *Arbeitseinsatz*. This could have been in November, or maybe in December, however it was certainly in 1942, and definitely on a Saturday. When I arrived at the female camp in Birkenau in the morning, they were carrying out a "great delousing" – an *Entlausung* in German.

The day was exceptionally frosty. And this is what I saw. Since the female inmates working with me were to undergo delousing that day, I was not really needed, and therefore an SS man – the accused Szczurek – sent me to the *Revier* [hospital]. Looking through the *Revier* window, I saw the following scene unfold at a distance of no more than five or seven meters from me.

In front of the *Revier* was a large square courtyard, fenced in with barbed wire strung on sturdy posts. Duly ordered by the *Lagerführerin*, the accused Mandl, the inmates walked in blocks to the "Sauna" – the bathing house. There they had their hair cut and were shaved bald by prisoners from the male camp, whereafter they undressed and bathed. The final step was delousing, and afterwards they were ordered to stand in the courtyard in front of the *Revier*, in the field, still completely naked. *Lagerführerin* Mandl – I saw her some 20 times during the whole incident – bustled to and fro together with her *Rapportführerin*, Drechsler, and *Arbeitsdienstführerin* [head of the female camp labor service] Hesse. I can see the



accused Mandl with a long whip in her hand as if it was yesterday. And if she touched any of the naked female prisoners, she did so only with her whip. The bathing lasted all day long. There were some eight or nine thousand women in the camp, and so before the last group was bathed it was around 4.00 p.m. But the inmates who had bathed first, at nine o'clock in the morning, had to stand in the square right to the end, for the overriding concern was to have all the prisoners washed. Later, the German *kapos* – obviously women – deloused the buildings, pallets, etc., and only when this whole procedure was completed were the women allowed to leave the square – and I stress this for the third time, they were still naked – and go to their respective blocks. But a large number of prisoners remained in the courtyard, lying on the ground; they had been trampled, one might say, because all the prisoners had been in a hurry to return to their blocks and not stand outside in the cold. Many of these unfortunates, completely exhausted, were half frozen and exhausted, for none of them had been given anything to eat throughout the day. Today, having made a rough calculation, I may state with confidence that at least one quarter of the original number lay on the ground.

In the afternoon *Obersturmführer* Schwarz drove up to the female camp. The accused Mandl led him around the facility, presenting the results of the delousing action, and I do not know whether this was ordered by Schwarz or by someone else, but a quarter of an hour or maybe half an hour after his departure I saw a few large trucks drive up, with trailers, onto which German women prisoners loaded those lying on the ground. I am not telling an untruth when I say that there were 8 to 12 of these vehicles, but I am unsure of the exact number.

Once the women were loaded, the accused Mandl gave the order to open up block 25. I would like to explain that this was the so-called *Leichenhalle* – quarantine – block for women inmates who were to leave the camp, but it was also used by Mandl as an isolation section for prisoners who had received individual punishment. The inmates locked up there, accompanied by rats, were regularly driven to madness.

Presiding Judge: Does the witness have any further testimony?

Witness: As regards the accused Liebehenschel, I must say that I read in the newspapers yesterday that he maintains that he turned Auschwitz into a "boarding house". But the truth is that Liebehenschel issued only one single order that was beneficial to the prisoners, whereby he forbade *kommando* members to take off their caps when leaving for work on

frosty or rainy days. Since, however, Liebehenschel was not necessarily present at the gate on such days, Aumeier ignored his instruction. I would like to remind Liebehenschel of the women's *kommando* in which a grandmother toiled together with her granddaughter. The young girl was dragging the older woman along, for she was growing faint. Liebehenschel saw this and did nothing. He purportedly brought in political prisoners from one of the most dreaded camps, Flossenbürg, to act as *kapos*. He made these *kapos* senior *kapos*. And while the regular *kapos* lived in the various barracks, these *Aufsichts* (senior *kapos*) were quartered in barrack 25 and enjoyed clearly better conditions. Of the 20 or 25 senior *kapos*, two were Austrians, and one of them – Biermeyer – was a doctor of some sort. But they wore upturned green triangles, and this meant that they were hardened criminals.

Concerning the accused Aumeier, I must say that none of his fellow officers – or indeed any of the non-commissioned officers – treated him seriously. The office in which I worked adjoined the officers' mess to which these men would come and talk about how they had spent the night, how many people they had shot, etc. While he was absent, Aumeier's friends, gathered there, would say that he was completely crazy.

During the first winter after his arrival at the camp, Aumeier ordered that when prisoners were given the command "caps off", they should remove them with their bare hands. What purpose this was intended to serve, I do not know. The next year Aumeier made a pompous speech to the prisoners, promising them that all the torments would end, and that the conditions would become idyllic. As it turned out, nothing changed. My personal encounter with him ended in me losing two of my teeth. In 1943, on the first day after Easter or Whit Sunday, two prisoners ran away from the bakery *kommando* at Auschwitz: one was Tomek Serafiński from Warsaw, while I do not remember the other. Aumeier drove up – drunk – from the ramp, and when the duty NCO reported the breakout he flew into a rage and, accompanied by *Oberscharführer* Emmerich, barged into the block from which these men had escaped, shouting: – *Blockälteste* [block elder]! Unfortunately, this was my function. I remember hearing the words *Polake*, *blöde Hunde* [Poles, bloody dogs], etc. The result was such that I woke up on the ground, missing a tooth and a half.

I would now like to say a few words about the accused Grabner. If anyone thinks that Höß or Aumeier were the masters of the camp, then they are severely mistaken. The real masters of Auschwitz were the men from the political department, and specifically Grabner and his

collaborators. None of the officers from the other departments could enter the camp during the day without a pass signed by Höß. But the employees of the political department could walk around the facility as they pleased at any time of day or night, and they could also lock up and arrest prisoners and send them to block 11 without notifying the commandant.

Nor did commandant Höß determine who was to be detained – such decisions were taken by Grabner. *Unterscharführer* Grabner once stumbled upon an excellent idea, namely to place a box with a narrow slot in block 15. As the *Rapportführer* explained, if anyone wished to make a complaint or had a request to the camp command, but found it difficult to submit it in person, he could write a note – even in Polish – and slip it into the box, whereupon everything would be taken care of. The result was such that people from the political department started visiting individual blocks, both in the night and day, and detaining certain prisoners, who were then locked up in block 11; nobody saw them ever again. And it was the idea of the political department no less for two of Grabner's subordinates, Boger and Lachmann, to dress up as inmates and go around the camp at night, listening in on what people were saying.

As regards the accused Bogusch, I heard that he was a *Blockführer* [block leader]. I cannot confirm this. But I know for sure that he worked in block 2 at the office serving the camp command, that is Aumeier and Höß. It was said that he had come to department III from department II, where he had been employed as a clerk. I also know for certain that he was moved from department III to department IIIA. While there, I had many opportunities to observe him, and I must say that he appeared very conscientious. But I would like to remind him about what went on in the office that was staffed by 14 female inmates, where he sat at the table and did nothing, only looking at the women to make sure that they did not pause even for a moment. I will give a specific example: when one of them asked for permission to go to the toilet, he would refuse her request categorically. These women had boyfriends among the male camp population, and they would come round to the office and ask me to give the women certain foodstuffs. I passed these goods on by placing them – pieces of sausage, bread, etc. – in desk drawers; as a matter of fact, this was also a way to catch Bogusch red-handed, for he frequently stole the food thus placed. Many of the items that I left in the drawers disappeared. Kaper – unfortunately not present here – behaved in the same way. Since he worked in Aumeier's office, Bogusch was tasked, among others, with bringing watches in for repair to the camp watch-maker's workshop. This I did not see myself, but the watch-makers – of whom quite a few are still alive today – told me that



they had to look carefully at his hands, for he would hand in one watch and try to take back another, while it was their responsibility to ensure that nothing got misplaced.

I will now proceed to two of my former chiefs – *Oberscharführer* Müller and Kirschner. In June 1940, *Oberscharführer* Plagge and Kirschner conducted the so-called "sports", which were obligatory for prisoners and lasted from 6.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., with a one-hour break for dinner. These consisted solely in running, crawling and jumping. My friend Henryk Mazur, who collapsed from exhaustion, had to crawl around while Plagge stood to one side of him and Leon Wieczorek to the other, beating him with sticks. He was later carried off to the cellar, where he rested, but when he returned he did only two laps before losing consciousness.

Although Kirschner was not as bad as Plagge, the prisoners knew that he had a heavy hand, however I must add that I did not see him kill anyone. I encountered Kirschner and Müller once more towards the end of 1943; by then, both had been promoted to the position of *Arbeitsdienstführer*. I remember a bit more about Müller from this period. He was always scared and suffering from an inferiority complex, thinking that everyone was after his job, which actually consisted in sitting in the office all day doing nothing, for the prisoners took care of the work. We knew that Müller could easily be bribed with some bread, sausage or cigarettes; initially, he would be satisfied with even a small quantity of these goods, however over time his demands increased. Müller, Kirschner and all the others whom I have mentioned are fully aware that I did not look onto these happenings from outside, as a casual observer, for I met them not once, but thousands of times.

Presiding Judge: Does the witness wish to provide any further testimony concerning the accused?

Witness: No.

Presiding Judge: Are there any questions to the witness?

Prosecutor Szewczyk: I would like to avail myself of the fact that Mr. Pozimski is the sole available witness who worked in department III and ask him to shed more light on issues concerning the employment of prisoners, and also their working conditions and wages, in order to gain a better understanding of how the inmates labor was exploited.

Witness: I would like to correct an error; the department at which I worked was IIIA, not III. Initially, the head of this department was Schwarz, and later Selb, whereas the head of

[department] III was Aumeier. As regards matters of prisoner employment and transferral, department IIIA received instructions directly from Berlin, not from the commandant. My activities consisted among others in standing by the gate in the morning with a special book containing a list of all the *kommandos*, and their *kapos* would report the numerical strength of details leaving for work on a given day. Once the *kommandos* had left, I would draw up the so-called Arbeitseinsatz lists, with a breakdown into departments, professional laborers and unskilled workers. If I remember correctly, one part concerned the *kommandos* that worked for the camp and in the camp, and these were included in the *Verwaltung* [administrative] column. They were paid by the camp administration. Construction work management and the private companies that were employed on the grounds of the camp and officially hired prisoners from the camp administration, paying cash in return, were included under separate headings. I think that the charge was three marks for an unskilled worker and four for a qualified worker. One of my friends drew up lists of all occupations engaged in performing work of such or such a type, while another elaborated breakdowns for individual companies that were obligated to transfer specific amounts to the administration or to a bank account in Berlin in the following month.

As regards the issue of labor, I may also add that there were frequent quarrels between Aumeier and Selb, for both wanted to have the final word in certain matters. Aumeier would then make disparaging remarks about Selb, even in the presence of inmates, and Selb would do likewise.

Presiding Judge: Are there any further questions?

Prosecutor Szewczyk: How large was the group of enterprises that made use of the labor provided by prisoners?

Witness: These were Weichsel-Union, Krupp, Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke, which were divided into Kriegswichtige Zweige, etc. As concerns private companies, there were quite a few, maybe even 15: Lens, Kutta, Riedel, etc.

Prosecutor: And the mines?

Witness: This is a different matter altogether, for the mines belonged to *Obersturmführer* Schwarz, who was the commandant. Nevertheless, since there was one Zentral-Arbeitseinsatz, these issues were taken care of by *Unterscharführer* Kaper, who



received daily reports from the mines and every day wrote down the numbers of those who worked, those who were sick and had not gone to work, etc.

Prosecutor: Who drew up the so-called *Forderungsnachweise* [proof of claims documents]?

Witness: This was done by my colleagues, and specifically by the one who worked in department IIIA. He has been summoned by the Tribunal as a witness.

Prosecutor: What was the daily maintenance cost of a prisoner?

Witness: I knew this as well, however right now my memory eludes me as to the exact figure. Nevertheless, these were paltry sums, ranging from 30 to 40 groszy.

Prosecutor: And were different sums paid for the labor provided by different prisoner categories?

Witness: As I have said, the Germans differentiated between skilled and unskilled workers, and their remuneration was different.

Prosecutor: I am more concerned with the enterprises ... was there a difference between the remuneration paid by private companies and those run by the SS?

Witness: Yes, obviously there was. I am not aware of the difference, but there definitely was one.

Prosecutor Pęchalski: Does the witness recollect the first test gassing of Soviet POWs in the autumn of 1941?

Witness: No. Although I was at the camp at the time, I do not remember this specific incident.

Prosecutor: Does the witness remember Karol Herman Jeschke?

Witness: Since I know practically all of the accused present here today, but I do not know their surnames, I think I could identify him if I saw him.

Prosecutor: Perhaps the Supreme Tribunal can present the accused?

Presiding Judge: The accused Jeschke, please arise.



Witness: He looks completely different to when I saw him in the camp, however I think that it is him.

Prosecutor Brandys: The witness has testified that the accused Liebehenschel forbade prisoners to take off their caps when exiting the camp, while the accused Aumeier made sure that they did remove them. The files indicate that Aumeier was transferred from Auschwitz in August 1943, while Liebehenschel arrived only in November 1943. Did the witness perhaps cite Aumeier's surname in error?

Witness: All of the *Lagerführers* boycotted Liebehenschel's order (if only to a certain extent), for they could not accept the fact that after four years of the camp's existence the prisoners would be released from the requirement to take off their caps. But I do rescind my statement in which I mentioned Aumeier, for I should have referred to his successors.

Presiding Judge: Are there any further questions?

Prosecutors and defense attorneys: No.

The Presiding Judge hereby orders a recess.