



TADEUSZ CHRÓŚCICKI

On 13 September 1947 in Warsaw, Appellate Investigative Judge Jan Sehn, member of the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, acting at the written request of the First Prosecutor of the Supreme National Tribunal, this dated 25 April 1947 (Ref. no. NTN 719/47), in accordance with the provisions of and procedure provided for under the Decree of 10 November 1945 (Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland No. 51, item 293), in relation to art. 254, 107, and 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, interviewed as a witness the person specified below, a former prisoner of the Auschwitz concentration camp, who testified as follows:

Name and surname	Tadeusz Chróścicki
Age	28
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Citizenship and nationality	Polish
Occupation	student at Warsaw Agricultural University
Place of residence	Gołębki, [...]

I was interned at the Auschwitz concentration camp on 27 May 1941 and I remained there until 8 June 1942, when I escaped. My prison number was 16655. My father, Tadeusz Julian Chróścicki, was deported to Auschwitz on 4 April 1941. I worked with different *kommandos* [work details], including at the stables, attending to horses. I worked at stable 2 and my father at stable 4. From the period of my work at the stables, and also from the period preceding it, when I was with the hay-driers (*Heuwander*) *kommando*, I remember SS man Ludwig Herbert. I knew his name already at that time. Presently, I have recognized him in the photographs on public display. Already when dealing with hay, prisoners were afraid to work under him because he beat and tortured them every step of the way. He became even worse after he was promoted to

stableman (*Stallmeister*) at the main camp. When he carried out this function, he beat prisoners for no reason, always finding a pretext, typically about the horses being mistreated. In particular, he victimized my father, who was 55 at that time. He beat him and verbally abused him, saying that he was old, that he was a "Muslim" [exhausted and thus incapable prisoner], and his attitude and behavior indicated that his intention was to see my father dead.

On 27 May 1942, my father and I were transferred to the penal company. It was located at the main camp, in block 11. At that time, when I was inducted, a separate unit of the penal company was formed, which did not go through block 11 at all, but was transferred directly to the Birkenau camp, where it was sent to a dedicated block.

This first group of prisoners sent to the Birkenau penal company was about 400 strong. Myself and my father were assigned to it on the orders of the Warsaw Gestapo, which had sent us to Auschwitz. Ninety percent of this group's personnel were native Varsovians. We were tasked with working on the grounds; digging a drain channel from Birkenau to the Vistula River. It was a very hard work, which we had to do at high speed all the time, being continuously beaten, so that working conditions alone saw considerable human casualties. Each day after work, we carried a few dead comrades back to the camp. Additionally, Moll, who supervised our company, killed prisoners personally. Also *kapos* did it. I witnessed myself as a prisoner lying in the mud had his head pressed personally by Moll with a shovel, into this mud and the *kapos* poured dirt on the victim's head. Each day, several of our comrades were taken to the Political Department, from where, as far as I remember, only one returned. All those who did not return were executed because from the Political Department they were taken to block 11. The prisoner who had returned told us about it.

Since we learned about further lists at the Political Department, we knew that we were facing extermination; the *kapos* made no secret of it, anyway, and even SS man Spanner, a carter from the stables, who knew us from our time there and would come to comfort us, told us clearly that he did not want to rob us of our hope, but ours was a hopeless case. I asked him how much longer we would remain here, whether we would live two more weeks, to which he replied with a look of doubt on his face, that maybe we would live for two more weeks. Thus, together with other comrades, we decided to attempt to escape.

There were around 50 of us who were in on the plan. We agreed on the date, but having learned that a new list from the Political Department had come in, with 50 names on it, we

decided to flee on 8 June. The signal to escape was supposed to be the whistle that ended work in the evening. Due to rain and incoming clouds, the work had finished earlier. This confused my comrades, so that only some of us broke into run when the whistle sounded. I was running in a group of six. One of our comrades drowned already when he was traversing the channel. In one village on the way, two of our comrades split off. When we were near Mysłowice, near the two bridges on the Przemsza River, we were surrounded and pushed into the swamps. I made it through, but I do not know what happened to the rest. I do not remember the names of my comrades who escaped with me. On that day, Edward Rogaliński also escaped, and he was later reportedly shot dead in Warsaw during a chase.

I do not know what happened to the penal company at Birkenau after we escaped. During my time with the penal company, I did not see the Auschwitz *Schutzhaftlagerführer* [camp leader] there. I knew him from my time at the main camp. He came to Auschwitz to replace Fritsch. Unlike him, he did not run things from behind his desk, but he governed directly at the camp, as he beat prisoners and punished them straight away, on the spot. I witnessed myself as Aumeier, driving his motorbike behind a transport of Jews, beat them and kicked them. I remember particularly well as he beat up an elderly, obese Jewish woman, who was walking at the rear of the transport and could not keep up. If I am not mistaken, it was a Belgian or Dutch transport. Aumeier dashed toward this Jewish woman and hit her on her face and kicked her. I was watching from a stable window. This transport was walking from the direction of the ramp of the Auschwitz railway siding, probably heading for the crematory. I have remembered this situation because I was puzzled by the fact that a man wearing an officer's uniform should treat a woman that way. I discussed this issue with my comrades at that time.

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