

## CZESŁAW JASZCZYŃSKI

On 9 September 1947 in Kraków, a member of the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, Magistrate Dr Stanisław Żmuda, on the written application of the First Prosecutor of the Supreme National Tribunal dated 25 April 1947 (file 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 conjunction with article 254, 107, 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, heard as a witness the below mentioned former prisoner of the Auschwitz concentration camp, who testified as follows:

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Name and surname	Czesław Jaszczyński
Date and place of birth	12 July 1913 in Bochnia
Parents' names	Michał and Rozalia, née Kopacz
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Marital status	unmarried
Occupation	merchant
Citizenship and nationality	Polish
Place of residence	Wałbrzych, [...]
Criminal record	none

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I was arrested on 3 August 1940 by the Gestapo together with my brother Roman in our family home in Bochnia, Czackiego Street. Until 8 October 1940 we were kept in the Tarnów prison, and then transported by train on 8 October 1940 to the Auschwitz concentration camp. I was Polish political prisoner no. 5696. I stayed in Auschwitz until 30 October 1944, and then I was taken to the Sachsenhausen camp.

During my entire stay in the Auschwitz camp, I served as a gateman on the main gate of the Auschwitz I camp, and my function involved opening and closing this gate, and strictly obeying all the orders given by the *Lagerführer* [head of the camp], as well as every SS man, as *Lagerführer* Fritzsich himself told me emphatically and clearly when I was given this function. On his behest I was dressed in a cap with the inscription: "Bumbo" KL Auschwitz. Fritzsich gave me this nickname. *Lagerälteste* [camp elder] Bruno Brodniewicz additionally told me to sew red stripes on my trousers and he ordered me to wear a band on my left arm with the inscription "Pförtner" [gateman]. As the gateman, I had the opportunity to observe various SS men entering and leaving the camp, and, moreover, the activities of some of them in the camp itself, where I was free to move while carrying out various orders. I served as gateman from 5.00 in the morning to 7.00 in the evening, standing, and then went back to the block for the night. From the time of my stay in the Auschwitz camp I recognize by name and by sight as well as on the photographs presented to me today (the witness was shown a number of photographs of SS staff members from Auschwitz) the following SS men:

1. Aumeier, *Obersturmführer*, and later *Hauptsturmführer*, the first *Schutzhaftlagerführer* [head of the camp] in Auschwitz for a period of about one year, from the spring of 1942 to 1943. He took over the post from his predecessor Fritzsich. The camp regime didn't improve on Aumeier's watch, but rather got even harsher, with Aumeier introducing a system of ad hoc punishments for prisoners, in particular a punishment that involved flogging prisoners across a vaulting horse next to the prisoners' kitchen, and he saw to it that the SS men executed this punishment with gusto. The system of informers also developed during his rule. Aumeier himself used to beat or kick the prisoners, he inspected them and instructed the *Blockführer*, or the *Rapportführer* to make an emergency report on the prisoner, and finally ordered the prisoners to be shut in the bunker in block 11 for minor offenses, which often ended in the death of the prisoner in order to clear some room in the overcrowded bunkers – "purges" as they were known in the camp.

Aumeier played an active role in all the public executions, whether by hanging or by flogging. I remember one of the public executions when three prisoners were hanged – Poles whose names I didn't know. Afterwards, Aumeier gave a speech to the prisoners, in which he stressed that what is demanded is not the prisoner's death, but his work. The execution took place during the general delousing operation involving the whole camp.

I often saw Aumeier in the company of Grabner, Palitzsch, Lachmann, Kirschner and Boger entering block 11 when there were executions there, and leaving block 11 after the execution. After the entire entourage of SS men had departed from block 11, a *rollwagen* would be wheeled there by the prisoners who then removed the dead bodies from block 11, which took less than half an hour, and the whole road was stained by the streams of blood. The most blood was always at the gate, where the *rollwagen* had to stop and the number of prisoners on board was checked. These corpses were transported to the crematorium of the main camp. On Aumeier's watch, the executions at block 11 took place very often. Aumeier himself carried a revolver, which he sometimes threatened the prisoners with. I got it in the face myself a few times from Aumeier, for no apparent reason. Aumeier had the habit – like almost all the SS men – of referring to a prisoner as “dog” or “Arschloch” [asshole]. I also often saw Aumeier interrogating prisoners in his office and, on such occasions, he would beat and insult them.

2. Grabner, known to me as the head of the Political Department with the rank of *Untersturmführer*, and moreover *Kriminalsekretär*, served from the establishment of the camp until autumn 1943. He was the master of life and death for the Auschwitz prisoners, as well as the civilians brought in from outside the camp. Grabner participated in all the selections, but his was the deciding voice, because there were cases – as I know from my fellow prisoners – when, for example, Aumeier sentenced a prisoner to death, but Grabner objected and vice versa. Grabner assisted in all the executions, especially at block 11, where I saw him entering and leaving with the SS men entourage. I remember one of the selections carried out personally by Grabner in front of block 24 sometime in the autumn of 1942 or 1941, I don't remember which exactly. Grabner instructed the entire crew of prisoners working in the *Effektenkammer*, *Bekleidungskammer* [storerooms], in the hospital, in the potato room and the hosiery section. He asked them about their education and occupation, and all those chosen belonging to the intelligentsia were put to one side and then sent to block 11, which few of the prisoners survived. The selection involved about 60 people. I didn't notice if Grabner beat any of the prisoners in the camp.

3. [Erich] Muhsfeldt, shown to me today, I know from his first stay in the Auschwitz camp, when he served as *Blockführer* in 1940 and 1941. He was then known for his zealotry in reporting prisoners who ended up being flogged, sent to the bunker or hung on the post. He struck terror into the prisoners, whom he often beat or kicked, and in recognition of

his services he was promoted to a higher position in the Majdanek camp. When Muhsfeldt returned to Auschwitz in the spring of 1944, he brought with him large supplies of food, in particular livestock in crates. He looked great then; he was stout and ruddy. Some prisoners were brought along with him from Lublin, from whom we learned that in Lublin Muhsfeldt was the master of life and death and enjoyed the worst reputation among the prisoners. In Auschwitz he became the head of the crematorium. I don't know his activities from this period.

4. I knew Kurt Müller as a *Blockführer*, who worked very diligently and conscientiously for the camp authorities, and served to the detriment of prisoners, writing criminal reports, and in recognition of his authority he was appointed *Arbeitsdienstführer* [work manager], a position which he held until the end. I don't know his activity outside the camp.

I also knew of some SS men during my stay in the camp: Ludwig, Plagge, Szczurek, Schumacher, Kollmer, Gehring, Stegmann, Götze, Bogusch, Lissner and others, but I didn't have any dealings with them directly in the camp. SS man Lissner as *Blockführer* in comparison with other SS men had a good reputation, because not only did he not hurt the prisoners, but on the contrary, he even tried to help them, and the camp authorities were unfavorably disposed toward him and gave him the worst duties.

I would like to mention that almost all SS men from the Auschwitz camp staff know me as a gateman, and many of them used my services, in particular forcing me to "organize" food for them on occasions.

At this the hearing and the report were concluded, read out and signed.