

## STEFAN WYGLĄDAŁA

Warsaw, 30 March 1945

Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes

Warsaw

Testimony of Stefan Wyglądała, b. 25 October 1910, residing at Jagiellońska Street 11, flat 25. Recorded by Anna Juzwa.

Regarding: the witness's detention and internment in the Pawiak prison and the Auschwitz, Majdanek, Flossenbürg, and Gross Rosen camps.

At the end of January 1940, I was arrested at my flat (I lived at the above address), following a denunciation. During the search, a radio and illegal underground publications were discovered. I was taken to the Pawiak prison. After three weeks, I was sent to Szucha Avenue for a forced interrogation. I was interrogated in torture room 257, which was arranged in the following way: a rather big room, it had three large tables with iron legs, with some sort of iron shackles into which the prisoner had to put his legs so that they would not move. Two Gestapo men held the victim by the back of his head, and two others pulled and twisted his arms back. The immobilized prisoner was beaten by a butcher with leather whips with leaden caps. These whips hung all over the room, on special hooks. During the beating, a Gestapo man was leaning over the victim, extracting statements and all the time asking questions. When I was testifying, a Gestapo man knocked out three of my teeth with the butt of his revolver. I was interrogated three times.

After ten months, I was transported to Auschwitz, where I remained for about a year, working at the workshops as a locksmith.

Then, I was transported to the Pawiak prison again (on that occasion, I was with Trojanowski, a Polish Army lieutenant from Brześć). After a week, I was put on a transport to Majdanek. I was employed at digging canals. During my time at Majdanek, mass executions took place all the time. Many people were executed at night at the blocks on the strength of individual warrants from Szucha Avenue. The executees were burned in crematoria. People were also exterminated in a treacherous manner, for instance in the morning, a senior worker (usually

a Jew) would come to draw up a list of prisoners who wanted to see a doctor. They never saw a doctor: instead, they were sent to a gas chamber, where they were murdered. Judge Tadeusz Dyzmański and Łomnicki from Warsaw, friends of mine, died this way.

On 27 March 1941, I was put on a transport of 1,100 men and moved to the Flossenbürg camp. The journey took five days, under the heavy escort of the SS. Our daily alimentionation was 30 dag of bread, 5 dag of sausage, 3 dag of margarine, and some water once a day.

The Flossenbürg camp was located in the mountains, at an altitude of around 1,200 meters, in the middle of a huge forest, away from any residential areas. It comprised 22 blocks, the first four of which were the so-called quarantine (this also included the hospital block, where the severely sick were sent; the number of the hospital block was 22).

After we arrived at Flossenbürg, we were told to strip naked and, through the snow and in the freezing cold, we were driven 100 meters to the showers. We were locked in the bathhouse, which was so crammed that we could not even sit. The room was heated. They kept us in such conditions for six days (without clothes), pouring cold water on us from time to time. We were only given a portion of soup and some bread after two days. During all this time, we did not receive any water at all. Over the first two days, 50 people died, and the final toll at the end of this quarantine was 500. It needs to be emphasized that every morning we were visited by a German major, a doctor, who, however, did not provide any medical assistance to us. We placed the corpses in a heap by a wall. After six days, we were seen by a medical commission, which sent the well-built men to the working blocks, while the weak were left to die.

I was sent to a working block, which housed two hundred people. We had three-story bunks. The camp was isolated, meaning that the prisoners of one block had no idea whatsoever as to what was going on at another. Prisoners did forestry works or worked at the quarry. I was sent to the quarry. It was located 300 meters outside the camp's perimeter. It was a hill, which we blew up with dynamite, then we did the sorting, and, running, we had to carry blocks of rock to the grinding room 100 meters away. As we carried the material, we were all the time beaten by *kapos*, recruited from among German criminals.

Each day there were several casualties, because murdering prisoners was one of the basic responsibilities of the *kapos*, for which they were rewarded with extra portions of bread.

We had to carry the dead to the camp so the numbers at the roll call would add up. The workday lasted 12 hours, to be survived on starvation rations. The camp was exemplary in its cleanliness. There were no bugs.

For an attempted escape, I was assigned to the penal company. There, the conditions were as follows: we worked 16 hours a day and were not allowed to send letters or receive packages.

In May 1943, I was transported to Gross Rosen. It was a lighter camp. I worked at ripping basalt brick. Although they did not torture us, prisoners died on a massive scale due to difficult working conditions and bad nutrition. Very often, they committed suicide, jumping off the rock into the abyss.

In April 1944, I was transported back to the Pawiak prison, where at first I was in the hospital and later I worked as a locksmith at the detention facility. This was the period of mass executions of prisoners. When I was there, 700 people were executed in Teatralny Square.

On 22 May, 270 men (myself included) and 40 women were taken out of their cells and stood in the Pawiak's corridor in rows of four. Then, a Gestapo man would take people in groups of twenty behind the bar, ordering them to strip naked. They were executed at the ghetto's walls (the shots could be heard). The remaining prisoners had to put the clothes of the dead into bags, which were sent to the social care in Germany. When our group was down to 12 men and 8 women, a Gestapo man from the prison's office came and told us that we were free. We were transported to Szucha Avenue and, after we signed a pledge never to disclose what we had witnessed, we were released.

Now it is clear to me that each concentration camp had almost identical features: 1) crematoria, 2) gas chambers, 3) mass executions on orders from higher authorities, 4) starvation rations, 5) no medical assistance, 6) murderous treatment of prisoners, 7) attempts to render the prisoner utterly deprived.

The uprising caught me in Praga. I had just completed my treatment. On 12 August, I was loaded onto a German armored van – as were all the other former prisoners, for that matter – and I was transported to the barracks of the 36th regiment on 11 Listopada Street. Then, together with the population of Praga, I was evacuated to the Kąkolew camp, where I remained until the January offensive. During a commotion caused by the

Germans' panic, I managed to escape and thus avoid the camp's evacuation. On 28 February, I returned home.

I have testified truthfully. I have read the report before signing it.

### Appendix to the testimony of Stefan Wyglądała

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During my internment at the Pawiak prison, I came across the following butchers:

- 1) Müller – he let dogs into the cells and laughed when they bit prisoners.
- 2) Bothke – while prisoners were being rushed to the toilet, he ordered that bathtubs filled with water be put into the cells and switched the lights off, as a result of which the returning prisoners fell into water. Then, they were given 5 minutes to wipe the water up.
- 3) Piecyk – (a *volksdeutsch*), probably residing in Okęcie, he worked out of the hospital, torturing the patients.
- 4) Ukrainians: Kowalenko and Kawieniew – specialized in hanging and killing prisoners in the so-called death cell. Aside from that, he beat and tortured the prisoners and robbed them.

At night, names were read out from the list and these prisoners stepped from the cell into the corridor, where they were shot straight away.

At ward VIII of the Pawiak, I saw as Jews were administered experimental injections. They were watched for four hours. Then, a doctor came to observe the outcome of the experiment. Many of the Jews died (I could see all this because I worked in the corridor of this ward).

I confirm the veracity of this statement with my signature: Stefan Wyglądała

Recorded by A. Juzwa