



WŁADYSŁAW MAZUREK

The tenth day of the hearing

Witness Władysław Mazurek, 40 years old, veterinarian, major in active service, residing in Pruszków, no relation to the parties involved.

Chairman: - Please tell the Court what you know about this case.

Witness: - I will pare down the range of observations that I made and the experiences that I had during the years of German occupation, to the narrow part concerning my work in the Pruszków camp, designated for exiles from Warsaw. I worked there in a management position for the Central Welfare Council of the Pruszków branch. I served as a board member from 1942 and vice president from February 1944. On 6 August 1944, six days after the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, the president of our board, Fr. Edward Tyszka, was summoned by the commissar of the city of Bock to the palace which he occupied in the Pruszków area. There the Chairman encountered the commissioner of the city of Bock, the *Kreishauptmann* for the Warsaw District, Rupprecht, and the *Arbeitsamt* inspector for the Warsaw district, August Polland, also a *Sturmbannführer* SS. These three men ordered him to collect five thousand dishes along with spoons over the next few hours (this was in the afternoon) and deliver them to the railway workshops, which had already been dismantled at that time, the machines having been transported away to Firchau [Wierzchowo?]. Some of the machines remained in the railway workshops and these were still dismantled.

On the same day, our doctor from the Central Welfare Council, Dr. Kazimierz Lubryczyński, was also summoned by the same three men and ordered to organize medical help for the people who were to leave Warsaw and be locked up in the railway workshops, without giving him any medical supplies whatsoever, no people or equipment for help. The entire preparation of the German administration boiled down to these two dispositions.

On the same day, with no chance to inform the rest of the Pruszków community about what he had been ordered to collect, the priest-president resorted to notifying everyone from the pulpit, because there just so happened to be a mass in the church at the time. Within five



hours, the response from the local community was so sudden and so generous that before the deadline for the collection, we not only had five thousand bowls and spoons, but even a huge surplus. In addition, there were many donations in the form of bread, food, fruit, milk for the children, and other items.

In the railway workshops there was a kitchen which had previously been used by workers and railway men. This kitchen had been designed for the four thousand people who worked in the railway workshops, and had certain equipment that made it easier for us to prepare meals for the expected people from Warsaw. In connection with this, we received from the Germans, that is, from the kitchen, which still had some remnants from the time of the railway workshops, some ersatz coffee and soldier's bread. These things and the donations from the inhabitants of Pruszków allowed us to prepare the first hot meal for the expected people in the form of hot coffee and a portion of bread. But that day we waited for the Varsovians in vain.

Chairman: - Was that 6 August?

Witness: - Yes, it was. Late in the evening we received a message saying that at 10:00 p.m. the transport had left St. Wojciech's church in Wola. However, they didn't arrive until the morning of 7 August—several thousand people. After arriving in Pruszków they were in a state of complete and utter exhaustion, both nervous and physical. They had traveled this road for about seventeen kilometers on foot. If you consider that for six days they had been in Warsaw, seeing their nearest and dearest die, with they themselves a hair's breadth away from death, watching Warsaw burn, then I am sure that the whole Tribunal will understand that we observed numerous incidents of hysteria, especially in the first transports, especially those from Wola, which consisted almost exclusively of women and children. There were hardly any men there, especially ones in their prime. These people were hungry, they had had almost nothing in their stomachs for several days, and none of them had eaten a warm meal, so our coffee was very popular. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough of it for all those in need.

The first transport was placed in hall number 1. The next ones began to arrive at ever-shorter intervals. Everyone was gathered in this hall, which, however enormous it was, couldn't accommodate such a huge crowd. Scorched, wounded, ill, they simply poured through the passages, and despite the brutal treatment by the Germans, they poured out of the hall,



which couldn't fit everyone and besides, they wanted some fresh air, because the conditions in this hall were simply indescribable. The halls were littered, the floor was earth compacted with oil, grease and water, full of human excrement, divided by the rail tracks between which there were ditches for repairing the carriages—these halls didn't provide appropriate conditions for any living creature, let alone people, especially since no one could go anywhere so everyone had to take care of their bodily needs right there and then in front of everyone.

The management of the camp at that time was in the hands of two people—*Oberführer SA* Stephan and *Sturmbannführer SS* August Polland, at the same time the head and inspector of the *Arbeitsamt*. These people, as I noticed, were not prepared to run this camp, because no organizational preparations, either regarding the area itself or manning it, had been made. Thus, the overwhelming crowding, tumult, groaning, crying, beating, kicking and shooting loomed over the entire camp. At that time, regarding the Warsaw population, the Germans had one argument—shooting—and one name—bandits. So every now and then shots were heard and every now and then people were brought to dress the bullet wounds. We also found corpses along the path of the wagons or along the walls, where someone had inadvertently approached them, and in other places too.

These people were dressed in a variety of ways. Their attire indicated that they had had absolutely no time to prepare for leaving Warsaw. Someone here has pointed out—and quite right too—that they were not displaced people, but exiles, for we often saw women especially dressed only in their pajamas, in a nightgown or in night slippers.

I would also like to point out something from this period that may best illustrate to the Supreme Tribunal the relations that prevailed there at the time. You had one of the managers, Stephan – he would get drunk, he had had enough of these conditions, he couldn't manage this crowd in organizational terms, so he beat the Poles, quarreled with the Germans and then he left. Polland was left on his own as the manager.

Or one other fact. At one point I noticed among the displaced people a hysterical woman who, according to what I had been told, had lost her mind after losing her loved ones. Seeing that her behavior was disturbing the delicate balance of the general environment, I wanted to move her away and take her to the hospital in Tworki. I turned to one of the gendarmerie guards to ask him to send her to the hospital. He replied to me: "Why bother? I'll just shoot



her." He pulled out his revolver, put a bullet in the barrel and approached the patient with the intention of shooting her. It was only through persuasion, holding onto his gun arm, desperately signaling to those in the vicinity to take her away that prevented this from actually happening.

In general during this period we never knew what effect our interventions would have. Sometimes they backfired.

As I mentioned, around 10 [August] they began to organize some permanent camp authorities. Until now, the transports from Warsaw came and only departed after some time, because no trains from the west had arrived that would transport the displaced persons. People were taken away without any segregation; everyone was loaded onto the trains—mothers, fathers, children, the elderly, the sick and healthy. All together, regardless of age, gender or health. Sometimes, a few hours after loading it was necessary to unload corpses from the wagons. Of course, there were some cases where Polish doctors were able to reach the transport and in some way or another they managed to get a few individuals passes so that they could leave the camp. There were incidents, especially in the first period, when we were successful.

From 10 August, the Wehrmacht, SS and *Arbeitsamt* began to cooperate. An organized unit arrived that had already manned a camp somewhere, because they were divided according to function, with a stamp bearing the number of some *Dulag*, and with specialists in certain fields, so there were specialists for the entrance gates and specialists for the exit gates. There were three doctors. The assistant of the chief physician, Sieber, was one of two people from the entire German team with whom we could get along—not because he wanted to show the displaced people some pity or compassion, but just in that we encountered some kind of understanding from his side, which I would like to emphasize was a rare case from the period of occupation. He came through for us in terms of provisions, kitchen equipment, and when it came to maintaining order. Anyway, to a very small extent.

The task of the Wehrmacht was to man the gates and to keep the camp in order. There were no written regulations. The exiles found out about them when they got a crack across the head. That meant that whatever they had done wasn't allowed. The commandant was the *Sturmbannführer*. This corresponds to the rank of major in the army. In the Wehrmacht he was a colonel. In practice, however, the commander in charge was Diehl, so that meant the



SS. Diehl had several officers at his disposal. It is difficult to say how many of them there were, because many came and went in mysterious ways, so they were always in flux. They had dozens of SS men at their disposal. Their uniforms were similar to the gendarmerie, but they were called SS men.

The task of the SS was to control the camp, and thus to maintain command over it. One of the most important functions was segregating the people. This was one of the most terrible experiences for the Warsaw exiles. In addition, they escorted transports from Warsaw, and sometimes onwards. They performed these functions both in relation to the displaced people and the Polish staff.

Some of the sick who were unfit for any work, or even transportation, were placed on a list compiled by the Polish medical staff and approved by the German military doctors, but they also had to obtain the acceptance of the "green wagon"—that is, the SS. The SS headquarters were in two green wagons, specially designed for them, adapted for work, with individual and main offices.

The *Arbeitsamt* was the third group in charge. Its manager was August Polland. The Inspector of the *Arbeitsamt* was an SS *Sturmführer*. He was a man with a special character – in any case it's difficult to call him by that name. As for his attitude toward the Poles, he got worse with each passing day. He couldn't just quietly pass by any of the displaced, or members of the Polish staff, without kicking or beating, or threatening with his pistol, or even spitting in their direction. He was different from Diehl, the commander of the SS, who was a cold, calculating type with the iron consistency of a man who likes to get what he wants. This man didn't beat anyone, but everything happened in the camp with his knowledge and approval. Polland beat people with his bare hands, with particular satisfaction. While he was managing the segregation of people, woe to those who wanted to go together for better or for worse, and who let this slip within his earshot—they didn't go together, but each one of them went to a different labor camp. If he couldn't do anything to someone himself, he would take away his dog, his canary or any other miserable little item that remained as the only thing he had left. He had a few dozen men at his disposal that loaded the transport to the Reich and various auxiliary transports.

I have the impression that both the SS and the *Arbeitsamt* were in constant contact with the labor distribution camps in Germany, and on their order sent various numbers of people.



The rules of segregation that all displaced persons were subjected to were as follows: people who were unable to work, and therefore were not traveling to work in the Reich, were to be sent on a so-called close journey to one of the GG cities—Częstochowa, Skarżyska Kamienna, Kielce. Unable to work, as it was called. They were women with children under fifteen years, visibly pregnant, or over fifty years old, and men over sixty. That's how it looked in theory, but in practice it turned out to be a crude fiction, because no one checked anyone's age on the basis of even an identification card, no one checked anyone's health on the basis of a doctor's note or medical certificate or x-rays, which many people had with them as evidence – and these were certificates from German commissions, German doctors. The classification was made by an ordinary gendarme, very quickly, just by giving people a quick once-over: able to work—to the left, unable—to the right. There were no appeals against these judgments. This classification took place in an atmosphere of shouting, beating, pushing and shooting. There were no protests, there couldn't be any objections, there was no time for husbands and wives or siblings to say goodbye, there was no time for them to be able to separate the luggage they had packed together, so usually one person or the other took it.

At the same time, when the organization by the German authorities was taking place, it wasn't so much the organization of the authorities themselves but of the Polish staff. It consisted of three sections: the camp section of the Central Welfare Council delegation in Pruszków, the economics department, and the sanitary department. The first two were closely related, because the economics department was organized by the camp section of the Central Welfare Council delegation. These two departments entered the camp area as a kind of organizational whole, because although a set of people had been chosen, we, the Central Welfare Council delegation, formed a part of them. As for the medical and sanitary department, it came about spontaneously: one physician was responsible for the medical care of the entire several tens of thousands of people who passed through Pruszków, but the medical-sanitary department, as its overall operation developed in the camp, numbered about five hundred people. People were recruited from local doctors from Pruszków, who started it, as well as from the Sisters of Mercy and doctors, paramedics, sisters and nurses displaced from Warsaw. Seeing the ever-increasing demand, the growing need to provide help led to an increase in the staff as far as was possible. And almost every displaced person from Warsaw was ill, almost everyone needed help, because if he hadn't actually been wounded or buried, rescued, burned or injured, then he would be in a state of nervous and physical exhaustion to the extent that he needed treatment in



a hospital or sanatorium. Meanwhile, he was sent to a camp where not only the sick but the healthy could lose their health and life. Medical help was very limited, although there were about five hundred people in the medical and sanitary staff, but it was impossible to examine all or even a small proportion of the thousands who arrived in crowds every day at the camp, especially given that everyone was in such a condition that he was neither fit for work nor for further travel or transportation.

The second hall was designated as the so-called the infirmary, not because dressings were applied there, but because whatever was done there was treated as a side-job. There, the most important list of patients who were unable to work or be transported was compiled. From there, it was possible to be set free, be put on the list drafted by the Polish doctors, get tested by the German doctors and be accepted by the "green wagon". To ease the pressure on the sick room, to get the best possible access to these patients, a so-called medical-sanitary team was set up, consisting of a doctor and a few or a dozen or so sisters. This wasn't the Polish Red Cross, as some have claimed. In our province, it had been dissolved by the Germans, so that we, as a delegation of the Central Welfare Council, had taken over some of the centers that had been looked after by the Polish Red Cross. These were sisters who had previously belonged to it, or had come from nursing school, but in any case it wasn't the Polish Red Cross, although by using this name we were able to distinguish the medical section. At one of the organizational meetings, I immediately raised this issue so that the sisters who gave the dressings would wear a red cross band to distinguish them from the economics section, who wore only white aprons, so that the displaced people would know who to go to for meals, and who to go to for wound dressings.

Chairman: - Major, were you in the Pruszków camp, when it was visited by the delegate of the International Red Cross, Dr. Wyss?

Witness: - I don't know what his name was, he was a strong man with dark hair, it was an International Red Cross delegation.

Chairman: - Were you not asked for any kind of declaration or statement?

Witness: - I remember [only] too well, how we got embroiled in that. I wanted to get to this later, but I will answer it now. Just as the arrival of the delegation of the International Red Cross was announced, quite large preparations were made in the camp, so regarding the



order of things, the delousing wagon that the previous witness mentioned was brought in for the visit of the commission, then off it went back. Special preparations were made, Pullman wagons arrived, the displaced people rode in Pullman carriages and not in open wagons as before. Among other things, these preparations affected us in the sense that on 5 September, Fr. Tyszka and I were summoned by Diehl to the "green wagon". We were not allowed to bring our interpreter, a member of the Central Welfare Council, just the two of us, and there, after a brief initial speech from Diehl, we were required to sign a declaration in German. The translator was a certain sister, whom neither the president nor I trusted. I have the content of this declaration: "We, the undersigned managers of the Polish Central Welfare Council committee, co-workers, state with our signature that, as far as conditions allow, food and medical care are provided for the civilian population of Warsaw, now free from terror and now in Pruszków, in the camp for displaced persons from Warsaw. We also state that there have been no cases of abuse or lawlessness and that the Polish Central Welfare Council Committee has not suffered any difficulties on the part of the German authorities in providing material and spiritual assistance. We, the undersigned, declare that the above explanation is submitted without coercion, at the request of the German authorities."

Well, this is the statement, in German, that we were told to sign. Both the parish priest and I were categorically opposed to it. We argued that it wasn't true, without even mentioning the bestiality involved in classifying people, separating families, preventing us from offering the help we wanted to give; nothing was in harmony with the tone and content of this declaration.

Diehl presented arguments of this kind: "In the packets delivered by the Central Welfare Council delegation," – in fact, we were just intermediaries – "I intercepted an incendiary bomb. I consider this an attack on the whole camp." Indeed, this bomb had been shown to me once, but it was in a package that didn't resemble those packages which we had passed on. For me it was nonsense. "Besides, I have ascertained through means of intelligence that you, the Polish staff, are escorting people from the camp using your passes. As I didn't demand any consequences for these crimes, as I haven't behaved inhumanely towards you, I think that you should sign this declaration."

We, however, feeling that the content of the declaration was too far from the essence of how things stood, resisted and refused to submit our signatures.



He then stated briefly that there would be consequences and that he would replace the Polish personnel immediately with Germans, and that this German staff was already prepared and able to take up their positions immediately. Indeed, we saw some German sisters and some strangers.

Making a decision in the conditions in which we found ourselves wasn't easy. We didn't care about our own safety. During this period we worked regardless of danger, because there had been an uprising in Pruszków too and it had failed. All those who took part in it, as well as those who hadn't, wanted to give everything to help those displaced persons who were in Warsaw. The issue of personal safety never played a role. But given the difficult situation in the camp in which the displaced found themselves, it was impossible not to consider it. Anyway, we didn't have much time, just a few minutes. Nevertheless, the president and I agreed to submit our names, knowing that we would expose our names to compromise.

The Polish staff then numbered a thousand people: five hundred sanitary and medical and five hundred in the kitchen. It was difficult to turn him down. After all, our most important task was to lead people out of the camp. We didn't know that they were going to Germany, to work. Initially we supposed that the men's transports went to the camps.

We signed this declaration while the Polish content was still being prepared. In the turmoil of Bach's visit, we were given the Polish version for signing, but we didn't have the opportunity to read it. We signed.

There were more signatures under the Polish text: Dr. Jadwiga Kiełbasińska, Fr. Edward Tyszka, Władysław Mazurek (that's me), Tyszkiewicz (the sisters' superior), Maria Bogucka (the head chef of the kitchen), Maria Dreszerowa (a sister). Six people signed this declaration.

The content of the declaration appeared in various submissions with a completely different meaning, because it stated that we were declaring under oath that the evacuated people had good accommodation in the camp, adequate food and adequate medical care, that in terms of physical and spiritual assistance, the Central Welfare Council's work was not encountering any difficulties from the German side and that the above statement was submitted by us voluntarily and at our own request. The content was so distorted that it stretched the essence of this declaration in favor of the Germans. Never mind, we signed it, knowing full well that it wasn't true.



At first glance, there was medical care, food and pastoral assistance, but none of it was what is usually understood by these terms. None of it was sufficient; nor did it fulfill its role in any way.

Chairman: - I think that these testimonies are sufficient. Are there questions? Thank you, Major.