



BOGDAN GLIŃSKI

On 19 September 1947 in Kraków, a member of the Kraków District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, Magistrate Dr Henryk Gawacki, 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:

Name and surname	Bogdan Gliński
Age	26
Citizenship and nationality	Polish
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Education	medical student at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków
Place of residence	I Student House, Jabłonowskich Street 10/12
The witness testifies without hindrance.	

In February 1941 I was arrested in Miechów, then imprisoned in the prison at Montelupich Street in Kraków and then on 5 April 1941, I was sent to the Auschwitz camp as a political prisoner with prison number 11958. On 4 or 5 March 1943 – I don't remember exactly because for over four months until that time I had been in the bunker – I was transported to the Buchenwald camp in a penal transport, where I stayed until the end.

I was sent to Auschwitz from Kraków in a group of about a thousand men. We were transported in French tin railway wagons, packed in tight, without any ventilation, and as



a result of the fierce heat and lack of air in the vehicles many prisoners died on the way or went mad. In the Auschwitz camp, first of all I worked in the so-called *Neubau*. In June 1941 I fell ill with pneumonia, and I had a phlegmon on my right thigh. I stayed in blocks 28, 21 and 19 in the prisoners' hospital, and after the disease had cleared up after August 1941 I started working in these blocks as a cleaner. Then in the winter I fell ill with typhus and then after my recuperation I was employed as a nurse's assistant. At the beginning of 1942, I was transferred along with the first transport of prisoners who had recovered from typhus and dysentery (over 1,000 people) to Birkenau and there, thanks to the help of other prisoners and doctors, I was initially in block 12, then 7, where I was employed as a nurse. On 3 November 1942, I was arrested there by the Political Department and put in the bunker of block 11 in the parent camp.

When I worked in *Neubau*, I came across Plagge, whom I recognize in the photograph I have been shown. All the prisoners feared him greatly and they warned each other when he was approaching. He used to beat and kick the prisoners, and liked to hide and watch whether the prisoners were working, as he himself admitted, and then he would take aside a sluggish prisoner and mete out 25 lashes with a piece of timber or a stick.

Another *Unterscharführer*, Kurt Müller, whom I know well, also came to *Neubau*. He also beat and kicked the prisoners for what he considered to be sluggish work, hitting them with the bullwhip he constantly wore. He often kept a dog on a leash. Following the beatings meted out by Plagge and Müller, the prisoners would often end up in the camp hospital with a phlegmon.

At the evening roll calls, I met *Lagerführer* [head of the camp] Aumeier, famous for beating and kicking the prisoners, and always shouting and bellowing for no reason. To avoid his blows and kicks, the prisoners would fall to the ground after the first blow. Aumeier would then kick the prisoner when he was lying, and – as long as he didn't get up – walked away with obvious satisfaction or pride that he could strike down a prisoner with one blow. At the roll calls, when the detainees reported in sick to the doctor, Aumeier used to kick them back into the ranks, considering that the prisoner in question wasn't sick enough to be sent to hospital.

In 1941, I witnessed two major selections carried out in the roll call square in the presence of Aumeier by the SS men accompanying him. During the review, Aumeier personally set the



prisoners to one side, and then they were transported to Birkenau, from where they never came back. I remember how one day, in the summer of 1941, all the people in quarantine from the top of block 20 who had just recovered from typhus – around 800 people – were driven over to Birkenau. Aumeier was present and herded the prisoners, shouting and beating them. These prisoners were completely healthy and fit for work, but were still quarantined just in case their typhus was incubating.

When I was in the bunker in block 11, I often saw Aumeier there. He used to make – if not once, then usually twice a week – a selection for the *rozwałka* [shoot-out] at the “death wall” in the courtyard of block 11. He would arrive accompanied by Grabner, Lachmann, Boger, Wosnitza and others and carried out the selection in the following way. He would address each of the prisoners with the question: “Wegen was sind Sie hier?” [Why are you here?]. After [receiving] answers to this purely rhetorical question, he then waited for an eye signal or a nod of the head from Grabner or others from the Political Department (when it came to a prisoner who was at the disposal of the Political Department), and then he shouted: “Raus!” [out!] and kicked the prisoner from the cell into the corridor.

Auntier himself decided on the imprisonment of prisoners in the bunker for offenses committed regarding the camp. In cell 20, a prisoner from a Warsaw, whose name I have already forgotten but whose number was seventy thousand and something, stayed with me for about two weeks. He told me that Aumeier had sent him to the bunker for not doffing his hat quickly enough when they met on a camp street. Aumeier picked out this prisoner to be shot. He selected prisoners detained in the bunker for escaping or stealing food to be shot.

After arresting me, Grabner, who came to Birkenau for this purpose with Lachmann, commanded Lachmann to interrogate me and, in order to force me to give him the testimony he needed, he ordered me to be hung on a post: four times for half an hour, then twice for an hour and the last time [again] for half an hour. The post involved hanging the poor soul on a chain from his hands bound behind him.

In the bunker, right next door in the adjoining cell 19, Zdzisław Wróblewski, an active second lieutenant in the 1st Light Cavalry Regiment from Warsaw, stayed there alone for a long time and was later shot. Through a peephole in my cell I once spied Grabner and Lachmann escorting Wróblewski battered and handcuffed back to his cell. He was bound for two weeks in this way, and in this position he ate his food, licking a bowl which we heard in our cell

screeching against his bunk. Wróblewski complained that what troubled him the most were the bugs, which these cells with wooden floors were teeming with, and he, not being able to move his hands, couldn't brush them off, and moreover he ended up getting severe sores under his armpits.

When I was sick in block 21 of the prisoners' hospital, one night I saw them moving a group of Russian prisoners of war, several hundred people – as I found out there were about 600 of them – into the courtyard of block 11, which was across the street, opposite block 21. When these prisoners arrived, there was some shouting as the SS men escorting them herded them forward, thrashing them with bullwhips and kicking them. I noticed clearly – not only myself, but other fellow prisoners too – that the escorting SS men were equipped with gas masks, which intrigued us greatly. Among the escorts, I noticed Grabner, Plagge and Lachmann. I also got a good view of them beating these people and their conduct, as well as the fact that they were shouting at the same time, led me to the conclusion that they had been drinking and were acting under the influence of alcohol – never previously had I seen Grabner and Lachmann beating anyone in the camp. After the roll call in the evening before that night, all the hospital blocks were cleared of any sick and recovering prisoners after being selected by an SS doctor, and then transferred, or rather brought to block 11, and any patients who were unable to move were carried down to the cells. I know this from the stories of my fellow prisoners who carried these patients down. The convalescents were also led down to the cells. Two days before [this night], block 11 was completely emptied, and the prisoners from this block were transferred to another block. No one knew the purpose of all this. Three days after that night, during which the Russian prisoners were brought there, *Rapportführer* Palitzsch gathered a group of prisoners – nurses and doctors, over 20 people – from the hospital block. I was in this group myself. We went down to the bunker and brought out the corpses of these Russian prisoners of war along with the sick and convalescent prisoners who had been selected from the hospital; the first corpses were in uniforms, while the sick and convalescents were only in their underwear, because that's how they'd been transferred, which had caught our attention at the time. There were stacks of corpses in the cells, and from the choking and astringent odor in the basement and the corpses (twisted bodies and open and staring eyeballs), we inferred that all these people had been gassed. Although the bunker had been ventilated for three days, the gas vapors lingered. There were photographs and various documents written in Russian as well as Russian banknotes

and coins scattered on the floor. This was at the time when the *Lagerführer* was Fritzsche, Aumeier's predecessor.

The following incident is stuck not only in my memory but other prisoners' too: a few weeks after the outbreak of the German-Russian war, Auschwitz took in the first major transport of Russian prisoners of war numbering several hundred people. The prisoners stayed in block 11 and went out to work every day, digging out the sand in a large pit (*Kiesgrube*), which was located behind the camp kitchen, behind the wires. Within a few consecutive days, the entire group was murdered in the cruelest and most shameful manner. During their work, almost the entire elite of the camp crew, headed by Fritzsche, including Grabner, Kurt Müller, Plagge, Lachmann and others from the Political Department, whom I can't find on the list of names I have been shown. The [above] mentioned and the *kapo* of this *kommando* – mostly all Germans – shot the prisoners of war with low-caliber firearms, or hacked them to death with spades, picks and other objects. The guards watching this group of war prisoners were firing at them like ducks, when some prisoner, oblivious, chased after his cap after some guard had run off with it and thrown it somewhere and, in doing so, crossed the line of the guard chain or ran after a shovel that had been thrown or left intentionally outside the guard chain. One prisoner of war, who stood out in terms of height and build, was slowly murdered over a consecutive period of three days, abused and not only beaten, but also choked with a pole pressed against his larynx. All this happened in front of almost the entire camp, and I, recovering from pneumonia at the time, was lying at the top of block 28 and, through a window overlooking where this group of prisoners was working, I observed this gradual liquidation. The *Leichenträger* [corpse bearers] *kommando* and the nurses from the hospital blocks, who had been enlisted to help them, were kept busy carting off all the corpses of the murdered men to crematorium I. I also saw Grabner shoot one of the prisoners, who was lying on his back and giving weak signs of life, with his pistol.

I recall one more execution on a larger scale, carried out outside the camp, in one of the sand pits. This took place at the end of May or at the beginning of June 1941. On one day, about 130 Poles were executed, mostly from the Kraków transport (arrested on the premises of the National Insurance Office). The execution also took place in front of the prisoners present in the camp. The Poles were dressed in old, ragged clothes taken from the *Bekleidungskammer* [clothing storeroom], and they were shot immediately, 29 people at a time. The prisoners assigned to carry bodies, including myself, had to run and very quickly



drag away the murdered men, put them on *rollwagens* and take them to the crematorium. The perpetrators, among whom I remember Grabner and Plagge ("Little Pipe"), drunk, were screaming and beating us with their pistols to make us work as quickly as possible, [so that] we were lifting the corpses virtually under a hail of bullets. This execution was watched by the family of the camp elite, their wives and small children.

When I was incarcerated in the dark cell (cell 20) of the bunker in block 11, I also came across *Oberscharführer* Wilhelm Gehring, who together with *Rottenführer* (then *Unterscharführer*) Brinkmann and Kurt Müller held the position of *Blockführer*. In connection with this function, I saw Gehring very often open up particular cells, because according to the rules of the prison he had to be present when the food was handed out. He treated the prisoners brutally, refusing all their requests whether it be for an additional portion of food, or even water for washing themselves. For lack of water, the prisoners didn't wash for weeks and were forced to sacrifice some coffee, to the detriment of their health. Gehring beat the prisoners as well. When in New Year 1943 I dared to ask for some *Nachschlag* [second helping] on behalf of our cell, he punched me in the face, shouting: "Bist du verrückt geworden?!" ["Are you crazy?"] and closed the cell.

Gehring caught us smoking cigarettes in our cell twice. The first time he asked a bunker *kapo* to give us a demonstration of his boxing skills; I don't know his name but he was a burly Jew, thick-set and very strong. The word around the camp was that he was supposed to have been the coach of the famous boxer Schmeling. Everyone from the cell was covered with blood. The second time Gehring gave us a starvation punishment for three days, and with obvious satisfaction, as we could tell not only by his words, but his fingers too.

During Christmas, Gehring brought a package sent to me from home, containing a sweater, socks and handkerchiefs. He showed it to me but didn't let me keep anything from it.

I remember Gehring also from the period before the bunker, he carried out a flogging punishment during the roll calls and he was known for cutting skin with his lashes.

Our cell was just next to the "death wall", and an opening known as the little window, which was in fact a ventilation channel, came out just below this "death wall". We heard the shots and sounds of the falling bodies of the wretched souls and the screams and singing of the executed. We could also overhear, by putting our ear to the hole, the conversations between



Höß, Fritzscher, Aumeier, Grabner and others. Gehring always carried a Luger P08 and, apart from the quiet shots from a low-caliber, we often heard loud shots and Gehring's voice from which we concluded that he must have finished the executed off with his service Luger P08.

Now I just remembered one more event involving Aumeier told to me by my dear camp friend Jan Szewczyk, a student at the Mining Academy in Kraków, a former prisoner from the first transport to Auschwitz. Aumeier ordered a group of about 40 prisoners to stand in the so-called *Stehbunker* due to insufficient space in special cells, in the darkness, in cell 20, which I described earlier. This was in the winter of 1941 and the snow, as one might suppose, had covered the hole of the ventilation shaft that lead out onto the courtyard of block 11. The cell door was very tight and the next morning after it was opened, it turned out that only seven of the men gave weak signs of life, while the rest had suffocated through lack of air.

At this the report was concluded, read out and signed.