



ANDRZEJ RABLIN

On 20 August 1947 in Kraków, a member of the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, Municipal Judge Dr. Stanisław Żmuda, upon written request of the first prosecutor of the Supreme National Tribunal, this 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 connection with Art. 254, 107, 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, interviewed the former Auschwitz concentration camp prisoner specified below as a witness, who testified as follows:

Name and surname	Andrzej Rablin
Date and place of birth	1 January 1914, Kraków
Parents' names	Andrzej and Zofia, <i>née</i> Sora
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Citizenship and nationality	Polish
Occupation	trader and restaurant owner
Place of residence	Kraków, Królowej Jadwigi Street 23, flat 5

I was arrested on 30 March 1940 in Kraków, along with my brother Artur, and my father, Andrzej. I was detained in the prison at Montelupich Street in Kraków until 19 July 1940. I was then sent to the concentration camp in Auschwitz with the first direct transport from Kraków, by truck. I stayed at Auschwitz until 24 October 1944. I was then transferred to the camps in Oranienburg, Barth near Rostock, Ravensbrück and Malchow, from where I escaped in the second half of April 1945.

At the camp in Auschwitz I was given number 1410, and during the first two weeks I went through quarantine. I would like to add that upon arrival at Auschwitz, my entire



transport from Kraków, numbering about 80 prisoners, was publicly beaten on a stool that had been prepared earlier. Each prisoner received 25–50 lashes with a thick willow stick which had been soaked in water for three days. Two such sticks broke when I was being beaten. The whole camp command led by Fritzsich was present during our beating. Many SS men, including officers such as *Untersturmführer* Maier, actively participated in the beatings. Many prisoners lost consciousness. After quarantine, I was assigned to work at *Planierungskommando* [planning squad], then to *Ladekommando* [unloading squad], the HWL [*Hauptwirtschaftslager* – Main SS Supply Camp], the prisoners' kitchen, *Gaskammer* [gas chamber], and lastly to electricians' *kommando* (*Bauleitung*).

On the very first day of my stay at the camp, I met Plagge, who at the time held the rank of *Rottenführer* and the post of the chief of quarantine. Prisoners called him *Sport-führer*. In the camp I knew Plagge by name and sight, and recently I recognized him in the photographs displayed at the Main Square. He determined what kind of "sport" the prisoners were subjected to. "Sport" was conducted by Plagge, with the help of *Lagerälteste* [camp elder] Leo Wietschorek, a German criminal prisoner. These exercises lasted from the early morning until the evening with a short dinner break. We soon realized that the point of quarantine was to destroy as quickly as possible those prisoners who were physically weak and consequently unprofitable for the camp. Prisoners gave Plagge the nickname "Fajeczka" [little pipe], because he always smoked a pipe while conducting "sport". Later, they called him the "Tiger". I witnessed Plagge beating prisoners for no reason every day, using his hand or sometimes a stick which he yanked out of Wietschorek's hand. Often, when Wietschorek beat a prisoner, Plagge would get excited and join in, beating the prisoner. Plagge's favorite exercises included: *Rollen* [rolling], *Tanzen* [spinning], *Hüpfen* [jumping], *Laufschritt* [running], *Entegang* [duck-walk], and *Bärengang* [bear-walk]. Plagge often burst into a group of prisoners and beat them with whatever was within reach. During rolling exercises, he often walked behind the prisoners who were rolling on the ground and, with the tip of his boot, he kicked sand into their eyes.

I witnessed prisoner Fischhab, a co-owner of the stamp factory at Grodzka Street in Kraków, being murdered during such exercises. He was an older man who arrived at Auschwitz from the Montelupich prison beaten so hard that his entire body was blue. He could not keep up with the lethal pace of "sport", so Wietschorek kept hitting him with a stick almost constantly. When Fischhab screamed with pain, Plagge ran up to him and kicked him as well. As a result of a brutal beating with a peg, the veins in Fischhab's neck were damaged and his head dropped



to his chest. For failing to keep his head straight while running, Fischhab was beaten again by Wietschorek. When he ran with his head up, supporting it with a finger, Wietschorek beat him for failing to keep his hands down while running. When Fischhab repeatedly fell to the ground and could not get up, Plagge ordered to throw him, nearly unconscious, into a trough filled with water. Plagge and Wietschorek used this method on those who fainted from exhaustion. Wietschorek beat the prisoner who was lying in the trough with a club, and Plagge stood by the wall and watched. When Fischhab was nearly dead, he was pulled out of the trough and thrown into a sewer, where he died. I was among those who carried Fischhab to this sewer.

I do not know or remember the names of the prisoners beaten by Plagge, firstly because we did not know the prisoners' names at that time, and secondly because a dozen or so prisoners fainted and collapsed every day. One of the prisoners from my transport, whose name I don't remember, had scabies and his whole body was covered with sores. He was lying on a blanket and did not participate in "sport". Wietschorek once called out a few prisoners and ordered some of them to pour water over the sick prisoner. Others were told to scrub him hard with brushes, so that blood streamed from the victim. Plagge approved of such methods. The identification number of the prisoner was 1419 – the last number from my transport. During "sport", prisoners fainted and collapsed on the ground often several times a day, but water was then poured over them and they were forced to keep exercising. Plagge made them exercise at a lethal pace that was bound to lead the underfed prisoners to complete exhaustion or even death. I was hit in the head by Plagge only once, when he was enraged and burst into a throng of prisoners, giving out random blows.

Later, I saw Plagge when he held the post of *Blockführer* [block leader] at several blocks. At that time, Plagge was strangely apathetic, lumbering, and frequently drunk. Lastly, I saw him when he held the post of *Lagerführer* [camp leader] at the camp for Gypsies. At that time, he frequently exhibited fits of anger and beat prisoners. Plagge was a sadist and a degenerate who terrorized prisoners at Auschwitz. The following prisoners could provide information about Plagge's conduct: Michał Piękoś, residing in Kraków, Jan Śliwiński, Edward Kaczmarczyk, Józef Dyntar, all residing in Kraków. The exact addresses can be provided by the Association of Former Political Prisoners.

From the time when I worked in the prisoners' kitchen I remember Hans Schumacher, *Unterscharführer*, whom I knew by name and by sight, and whom I recognized in the photograph displayed at the Main Square. At that time, Schumacher worked at the



warehouse with food for prisoners. Prisoners called it "Canada". Food from the transports of the prisoners who had been gassed was stored there and distributed to the kitchen. The head of the warehouse, *Unterscharführer* Schebeck, nicknamed "Schweik" by prisoners, and his assistant Schumacher, managed this food, distributing it between the prisoners' kitchen and the SS kitchen, while securing the best articles for themselves. Hidden in this food that previously belonged to the prisoners who were gassed were valuables which made the two men immensely rich. While working in the kitchen, I had the opportunity to observe Schumacher's conduct. He caught me once on the stairs in the block and searched me thoroughly, but found nothing.

Schumacher also escorted to the camp the carts from the HWL storages and potato sheds which were often located several kilometers away. In the process, he often ordered that the carts be filled completely, and he pushed 18 prisoners who were harnessed to the carts to run several kilometers through bumpy roads, often beating them on the way. Prisoners were exhausted by this work. If not for the opportunity to steal food from the warehouse or from the cart on the way, they would undoubtedly die from exhaustion and hunger very quickly. But Schumacher watched carefully so that none of the starving prisoners could steal a piece of bread on the way. He even forbade them from picking up the crumbs. He would take out his revolver and threaten prisoners. He also often hit them with the butt and kicked them. Even though this was outside the scope of his duties, he often searched the blocks, even confiscating prisoners' shirts, which had no connection with the food warehouse. He abused prisoners by reporting them to Schebeck. These reports resulted in two crews from the *Rollwagenkommando* [cart squad] being placed in the penal transport. The following people can provide information about Schumacher's conduct: Adolf Maciejowski, *kapo* at the food warehouse, residing in Chorzów, "Zagłoba" restaurant, and Mieczysław Kotlarski, residing in Silesia – I do not know the exact address.

On the premises of the FKL [*Frauenkonzentrationslager* – concentration camp for women] I also often encountered *Oberaufseherin* Maria Mandl, who held the post of *Lagerführerin* [camp leader]. She always walked around with a weapon. I frequently saw a dozen or so female prisoners kneeling with their bare knees on gravel, with their hands stretched forward, holding bricks or stones on Mandl's orders. In the spring of 1943, when I was assigned to work in the electricians' *kommando* in the camp for women, I witnessed Mandl order a prisoner who drove a cart transporting waste outside the camp to step out of the cart. She repeatedly



hit him in the face with her hands. Mandl frequently searched *Blockstube* [block guardhouse] in person, confiscating everything that my prisoner colleagues tried to smuggle in for the female prisoners they knew or for their own relatives – regardless whether it was medicine, food, or clothing. In the process, she hit the prisoners in the face and reported them, which usually resulted in them being sent to the penal company.

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