



FRANCISZEK GULBA

On 14 October 1947 in Tarnowskie Góry, the Municipal Court in Tarnowskie Góry, Fifth Branch, with Judge J. Dobkiewicz presiding and with the participation of a reporter, registrar H. Gojna, heard the person named below as an unsworn witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

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| Name and surname | Franciszek Gulba |
| Age | 48 |
| Parents' names | Jan and Anna |
| Place of residence | Żyglin, Tarnowskie Góry district, Główna Street 19 |
| Occupation | road engineer |
| Relationship to the parties | none |

I was in the Auschwitz camp from February 1941 until the beginning of May 1942. I was then transferred to Birkenau, where I stayed until the end of 1944, from where I was evacuated to Buchenwald.

I met Hans Aumeier in Auschwitz. As far as I remember, he came to the camp in early 1942. There was still snow on the ground. He served as the *Lagerführer* [camp leader]. He was a member of the SS. I didn't see him personally mistreat a prisoner but whenever he came to the camp, if he saw some lapse, he would shout loudly and swear at the prisoners.

From the list of members of the former Auschwitz crew, I know the following:

15) Fritz Buntrock. I met him in Birkenau, section B, and he served as *Rapportführer* [report leader]. It could have been 1943. He always walked around with a bullwhip, and I often saw him beat the prisoners; moreover, he used to kick them and punch them in the face.



28) Max Grabner. I don't know much about him, but I heard from the prisoners that he was the head of the Political Department in the Auschwitz camp. I rarely saw him.

72) Ludwik Plagge. What function he served, I don't remember exactly, but I think he was a *Blockführer* [block leader], as well as a deputy *Rapportführer*. He usually dealt with block 11. Initially, the executions at block 11 were carried out by a special SS squad. Later, this practice was abandoned and the executions were carried out by single SS men. Such shootings were conducted, among others, by Ludwik Plagge. I saw him enter block 11 with his rifle slung over his shoulder. You could hear shots coming from that block, as if from an airgun, and you could see the paramedics going from another block with stretchers to block 11. After the shots, a cart was loaded up with corpses and pulled away by the prisoners. You could see the blood leaking out.

In the spring of 1942 (in February or March, I don't remember exactly), there was an inspection of our block. During the search, a second cap was found in my bed. The SS man who conducted the inspection wrote down my number and left. About two weeks later, I was summoned to the office along with some other prisoners. The *Rapportführer* was supposed to be present there and tell us what punishments would be imposed on us. However, he wasn't there, so someone – I don't remember exactly who it was – led us off to block 11, telling us that the next day we would be told what our punishment would be. There were 45 of us. Because we couldn't fit in the bunkers, we were ordered to enter a cell two and a half by three meters in size. The door was closed behind us. It was completely dark, without any window or electricity. We took it in turns to stand or crouch in order to make it through the night somehow. I was at the door. After some time, it started to get hot. There was no air, so we started to undress, and it was so hot that we stripped off completely. It was getting stuffier and stuffier. The prisoners started to shout, took off their shoes and banged on the door, but nobody came. The prisoners began to choke. There were two buckets in the cell for dealing with physiological needs, so initially the prisoners filled the buckets, but due to the thirst caused by the stuffiness, they drank the contents of the buckets. In the end, you could just hear the choking of suffocating people. In the end, we all lost consciousness and in the morning someone from the crew of this block opened our cell door. After pulling me into the corridor, I regained consciousness. Then I saw the pile of naked bodies lying on top of each other. We were all pulled out from there and, as I found out later, about 12 of us had died of asphyxiation, 18 were taken to the infirmary, and the rest regained consciousness there and



then. I went to a free block, and in the evening the next day we were called back to block 11, where the survivors were locked in a room where we were isolated for about 10 to 12 days. Later, I was transferred to a penal company. Who ordered us to be put in this cell, where we suffocated, I don't know, nor do I recall the names of this cell's crew.

In the first days of September 1941, we observed that block 11 – after evacuating all the prisoners –was covered with window paper throughout the entire building. Two days later at night, some Soviet prisoners were brought to this building, and it was said that there were about 500 of them there. I saw the door of the building being opened the next morning and SS men were entering with masks on. The deceased prisoners were taken from there out to the courtyard and piled up. For some time the corpses lay there and you could smell the stench of the decaying bodies, then they were taken away. I suppose that these were the first attempts to gas prisoners.

Another incident happened in Birkenau in 1942. During work time, some of the prisoners decided to escape. At some point there was a commotion and some of them began to run into the forest. The sentries ordered the prisoners to lie on the ground, and some ran off in pursuit of the fugitives. The next day, we didn't go to work, but about five SS men came and called out individual prisoners from the block. Shots were heard, so we guessed that they were being shot. Later, the order was given that all prisoners with red circles should enter the courtyard. I saw them lining up through the window. Among the prisoners, between their ranks, the SS men walked and shot individual prisoners in the back of the head with their pistols. Later a new section of SS men arrived with prisoners who were ordered to tie the survivors' hands behind their backs with wire. The tied up prisoners with red circles were taken to the gas chambers. I don't know the names of the SS men who carried out these executions.

The report was read out.