



SIMON GUTMAN

Day 13 of the trial, 25 March 1947.

The witness has provided information about himself as follows: Simon Gutman, 23 years old, tailor, bachelor, nonbeliever, no relationship to the parties.

Chairperson: What are the motions of the parties as to the mode of the questioning of the witness?

Prosecutor Cyprian: We discharge the witness from the oath.

Defender Umbreit: We discharge the witness from the oath.

Chairperson: By mutual agreement of the parties, the Tribunal has decided to question the witness without an oath. Would you describe in what circumstances you found yourself in Auschwitz and what you can say about the case?

Witness: I was sent from France to the camp in Auschwitz on 27 March 1942. The camp was in a boggy place, with no blocks, no water and no hygiene. My transport consisted of 1139 people, of a young age, healthy. After a month, just half remained alive. At the time the way of annihilating people was very clever. Because then there were no gas chambers yet, people were told to strip naked and to die out in the cold by a small "fire".

Waking up in the morning, we would see our companions lying dead on the ground. Only one of my companions managed to escape. This was Maurice Arbizere. Taking advantage of the inattention of the person on duty, he managed to get back to the block and to come to me in my box – the place where I was sleeping.

He told me that all he had seen made him want to take his own life.

Because there were no gas chambers at the time, there was yet another very convenient way of destroying people. This method consisted of giving a certain dose of phenol in the area of the heart to people who were running a fever. I could list a number of cases here.

In June 1942 I came down with typhus. Against my will, I was transported to the famous block 7. I must explain here what the famous block 7 means. It was an isolated block. Once you entered it, you never came out. Whether you lived or died there, in the end everyone was



sent to Birkenau and gassed. While in that block, I would take part in selections carried out by the accused Höß. Selections took place three times a week in this block. During my stay in this block, which lasted six weeks, I saw many companions who, the next day, I would see no more. Among them I recall a few acquaintances from France: Attorney Cremieux from the Paris Court of Appeals; Attorney Peirre Mass; Paul Leon, a professor of law in Paris; René Blum, Leon Blum's brother; Müller.

I would also like to stress here that in 1942 Höß ordered the so-called *Sonderkommando* to be killed. I don't know whether I should explain what *Sonderkommando* means? It was a group of people who burned those who had been gassed.

There were 700-750 people in the *Sonderkommando*. Höß himself was present at the execution of one of these groups, with a whole entourage of SS men. The people from the *Sonderkommando* were taken to the first section of the Auschwitz camp.

In the winter, this was in November and December, all these people had to strip naked, supposedly to undergo spray showers. This little comedy took place every evening after assembly. This was happening only to destroy people who were not of the chosen race.

I would also like to tell the Tribunal about the famous Christmas of 1942, that here meant a mass destruction of the human race. 350-400 people died in this way that night.

After the morning gong, an order was given for everybody to gather. The people were ordered to turn their jackets inside out. Along the whole route that these people were to take, SS men and *kapos* were placed to kill them. An orchestra played along and this took place by a Christmas tree.

Also experiments were conducted on a number of our companions, concerning sterilization and castration.

During the time when the camp remained under command of the accused Rudolf Höß, life – if you can call that a life – was unbearable. He was the butcher of the Auschwitz camp and is responsible for everything.

As a consequence, he ordered the destruction of millions of human beings. As an example, when it comes to France, from 150 thousand prisoners who had been sent to Auschwitz, only 2600 survived.



Chairperson: Are there any questions for the witness?

Prosecutor Cyprian: No.

Defender Umbreit: Did you yourself encounter the atrocities the accused allegedly committed?

Witness: No.

Chairperson: I order a short recess.