



## **ALEKSANDER TYDOR**

**The tenth day of the trial, 4 December 1947**

**The Chairman:** Please send the next witness, Aleksander Tydor, in.

I am instructing the witness that pursuant to Article 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure the witness is required to speak the truth. Making false declarations is punishable by a custodial sentence of up to five years. Do the parties wish to submit any proposals regarding the way in which to hear the witness?

**Prosecutors:** We absolve the witness from swearing an oath.

**Defense attorneys:** As do we.

**Witness: Aleksander Tydor, hairdresser, Roman Catholic, no relationship to the parties.**

**The Chairman:** Please tell us which of the defendants you recognize and then provide us with information regarding their behavior.

**The witness:** In the first row I recognize Aumeier, Grabner, and Gehring.

I first got in touch with the camp reality in June 1942. We were put near the gate and they kept us standing there from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Carriages drawn by prisoners began to come out at 4.00 p.m. The whole street was covered with blood. It came as a shock to us who had just arrived at the camp. We didn't know what it was, who they were and whom they were carrying. The carriages were covered with blankets. In the fifth or sixth carriage, the blanket drew itself aside and I saw a smashed human skull. Aumeier was walking behind the carriages, urging the rest to hurry up because labor units were about to return to the camp. I heard him declare: "Them today, you tomorrow".

Later, on the same day, we were placed in what was known as *Effektenkammer* [clothing storeroom] where we were kept the whole night without food. Then we were sent to block 11.

**The Chairman:** Does what you are saying concern Aumeier?



**The witness:** Now, it concerns the defendant Gehring. We went to block 11. It was a horrible sight to behold, millions of insects. On the second day, at 4.00 a.m., before the gong, they woke us up and we were made to go to the courtyard. They gave us wooden clogs in which no one could walk. Professional criminals known as *zielone winkle* (prisoners marked by green badges) ran us around. We were kicked and pushed around by the defendant Grabner. I saw an old priest with a broken hand.

Although the roll-call was at 6.00 a.m., we were woken up two hours earlier and beaten. In this way, Gehring wanted to ensure we lined up in an orderly fashion. He specialized in kicking prisoners in the stomach. Those who tried to lift themselves up were kicked again.

Then Gehring walked away to report the number of prisoners in the block. Upon his return, he ordered "sports" which continued until 12.00 p.m. or 1.00 p.m. There was a few-minute break during dinner. In the afternoon we were again subjected to kicking and beating. At that time, I was transferred as a barber to block 24 and because of the transfer I lost touch with Gehring.

During the first days in block 24, there was no one I was acquainted with, and I didn't know anything about Aumeier. It was only on the second day that I learned who he was.

In block 24, I was appointed a barrack orderly and for this reason I didn't have much time to keep things in order; transports came in day and night, and I had to work around the clock to stay alive.

Every block consisted of two parts, for example 24 and 24 a. Aumeier stormed into block 24 a where I worked, ran into my *Stube* and began to check if everything was in order. He found dust under the table and started beating me. I stood to attention and said that I was busy dealing with transports, and I didn't have time to set *Stube* in order.

I swore to mend my ways before his next visit. In response, he started beating me again and knocked my two teeth out.

I remember that my friend fell ill with typhus fever. Afraid to go to the hospital, he got through it without lying down. Those who went to the hospital never returned, being immediately gassed to death. During one of the roll calls my friend was lying on the ground and forgot to get up. Aumeier saw this and began to rain kicks and blows on him. However, this beating turned out to be the only punishment he meted out.



For some time I worked clamping up potatoes which came in train cars, 35–40 train cars a day. Aumeier selected about 1,000 people whom he entrusted with the performance of this task. We went to the railway ramp where we were given stretchers to be carried by two prisoners or sacks to be carried individually. All the prisoners had to run, covering a distance of about 300 meters. People fell down from exhaustion. There were some very young and very old men among those who were assigned to this task. The work was supervised by Palitzsch and prisoner no. 1, a German called Bruno. The number of those who returned from the work was only 920. 80 people were killed. This is what happened on a daily basis.

I remember one more incident which I saw from the window of the block in which I was working. Aumeier was sitting in the window and shooting at crows. He had already shot a few when he saw a “Muslim” enter our block (the one of high-ranking prisoners) begging for something to eat. Aumeier fired at him. The “Muslim” was killed on the spot.

As far as the defendant Grabner is concerned I met him in block 2. In 1943 large transports of men and women arrived at this block from Mysłowice. Those brought in these transports were lying on the ground in three rows. SS men were walking between them. After a few weeks, we barbers were summoned to shave these prisoners (they were still under investigation). In the course of the shaving, one of them was begging me to get him a piece of soap. As I wasn’t allowed to give him the soap which I had in my pocket, I made a hole in the pocket and let the soap slip through my trousers’ leg. One of the SS men saw this and took me to Grabner. Grabner asked me where I met them. I denied knowing them at all, saying that I just gave the man a piece of soap which I had found. After two weeks the new prisoners were taken to the camp political department for interrogation. None of those whom the Germans interrogated, whether it be man or woman, returned on his or her own. They were so tortured that they had to be dragged to block 2 a.

As far as the defendant Gehring is concerned, I met him in 1944 in Monowitz where I was transported from Auschwitz. I don’t remember exactly what position he held, whether he was *Rapportführer* or *Arbeitsdienstführer* [head of labor deployment office]. The methods used in Monowitz were the same as those used in Auschwitz, that is, beating. One day, during the air raid alarm, the first alarm in Auschwitz which was accompanied by a real bombardment, 130 prisoners were killed. It was around 10.00 a.m. on Sunday. In the meantime, two 16-year-old Russian boys escaped. However, they were caught and brought



back to block 4, to the bunker. As they were being led by Gehring, I heard him ask them how they had managed to escape. They answered that they had escaped under the barbed wires, through a pit dug up especially for this purpose. Gehring said to them, "Show me how you did it". There was a big pool beside the block and the clay road was muddy. These young boys were made to crawl to and fro and then they were put into the bunker. There were gallows near our block (4). Upon my return from work, I asked my friends whom the Germans were going to hang. It turned out that the gallows had been prepared for these two Ukrainian boys. After the roll-call the whole camp was stood to attention. There were about 200 SS men lined up in the front, guns in their hands. Before Gehring put a noose around the neck of one of the boys, the boy said in Russian "O Mother, why did you give birth to me?". At the same time Gehring put a noose around the neck of the other boy and began to turn the crank of the trapdoor. The boy who didn't say anything immediately lost his consciousness, but the other one started to struggle. Gehring jumped to him with fury and hung up on the legs of the hanged boy.

The next incident took place because of the intrigues of an *oberkapo* – a professional offender and the political department's informer. A fifteen-year old boy, a Jew from Białystok, was sentenced to death by hanging. An officer of the Dutch Navy was also among those who were sentenced, but it turned out later that the officer was innocent and, consequently, he was released from the bunker while *kapos* were punished. I don't know who sentenced the boy, but I know that the sentence was carried out by Gehring.

The third incident concerned two Poles and one Jew. One of the three bore number 3000 and was an old prisoner. He was also hanged by Gehring. When the crank was turned, he leaned his legs against the trapdoor and wasn't hanged. Then Gehring jumped, cut the legs from under him and hung from him for about a minute. *Lagerführer* [head of the camp] Schöttl was watching this from afar and said: "the camp isn't a theatre". Gehring walked away visibly furious, since this remark was compromising to him.

As far as Gehring is concerned, I am simply lost for words to describe his behavior.

**The Chairman:** Are there any questions?

**Prosecutor Pechalski:** Gehring testified that he had been so mild towards the prisoners that they were crying when he was leaving Auschwitz for Monowitz.



**The witness:** They were crying because they were so happy about his departure.

**The Chairman:** Does Gehring have questions?

**The defendant Gehring:** Yes. Please ask the witness to explain how and when I broke a prisoner's hand. The witness said that upon his arrival in the camp he had been locked, imprisoned in *Effektenkammer*. If this was the case, then how did he get to block 11? According to his testimony, prisoners in block 11 were woken up at 4.00 a.m., which was immediately followed by "sport". I want to ask the witness if I carried out a sport at 4 or 4.30 a.m. with his participation?

**The witness:** Regarding how I got to block 11, I can say that we were sent to block 11 where we were temporarily placed because of the delousing. As far as the sport is concerned, I don't claim that Gehring carried it out at 4.30 a.m. He must have been busy doing something else. I also didn't claim that he had broken the prisoner's hand himself. I said that the old and weak man had been brutally pushed around and, trying to avoid blows from Gehring's boots, had fallen down and broken his hand.

**The defendant Gehring:** In the indictment I am accused of having broken a hand of a priest. According to what the witness has testified, I only pushed the priest around.

**The witness:** He pushed us all around. The priest wasn't an exception. We were so afraid of him that, in trying to dodge his blows, we leapt over each other.

**The defendant Gehring:** In relation to the witness' testimony, I want to say that there was no priest in block 11. Those with whom I worked would have known that there was a priest in block 11. You can ask the defendant Müller about it.

**The Chairman:** Does the defendant have any other questions?

**The defendant:** The witness says that I hanged the prisoner in Monowitz. To this I can reply that I didn't carry out this execution. It was carried out by *Hauptscharführer* Taube. I was standing along with *Obersturmführer* Schöttl at a distance of about 20 meters. I wasn't pulling the prisoner by the legs either. It was *Lagerkapo*, if the witness saw it clearly. *Obersturmführer* Schöttl told *Hauptscharführer* Taube to stop, but he didn't say anything about "theatrical performances". And I don't remember that anyone was hanged in



Monowitz at a later date because I was no longer there. If the witness knows me that well, then he should know that on 18 July I was transferred from Monowitz to somewhere else.

**The Chairman:** Does the witness stand by his testimony?

**The witness:** Yes, your Honor. I uphold everything I have said.

**The Chairman:** That is all I need. Thank you.

**The defendant Grabner:** In connection with the witness' statement that there were prisoners in block 2 a, I would like to ask him to tell me what clothes they wore.

**The witness:** They wore civilian clothes.

**The defendant Grabner:** Let me declare in this context that I recall that the state police in Katowice placed there a larger transport of civilians, about 45 in number, to be held there until further steps were taken. They were in the block for a longer period and were interrogated by the state police functionaries. As far as I can remember it was about some clandestine organization. I would like to ask the witness again if he really remembers that it was I who beat him. I have never met the witness, nor have I ever beaten him.

**The witness:** Your Honor! It is very convenient for the defendant to suffer from memory loss. And this is how I returned from the camp your Honor! (the witness is taking a patch off his left eye. It turns out that the eye came out of the socket and there is only a deep eye socket left).

**The chairman:** Thank you. The witness is free to go.