



KAZIMIERZ SOWA

Eighth day of the proceedings.

Presiding Judge: Next witness, please: Kazimierz Sowa.

(Witness Kazimierz Sowa takes the stand.)

Presiding Judge: Please identify yourself.

Witness: Kazimierz Sowa, 24 years old, student at the Jagiellonian University, residing in Kraków at Starowiślna Street 68, Roman Catholic, no relation to the defendants.

Presiding Judge: I advise the witness as per Art. 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure that he is obliged to speak the truth. False testimony is punishable by incarceration for up to five years. Do the parties offer any motions regarding the manner of questioning?

Prosecution: No.

Defense: No.

Presiding Judge: Therefore the witness will testify without an oath. Please tell us what the witness knows about the case and the defendants in particular.

Witness: I wanted to add one fact I know well to the general description of the Auschwitz camp. In 1943, under orders from my boss Stuler, I was to use the duplicator to make 46 copies of the minutes from a secret meeting between Poll, Bischoff, and Höß; of particular importance was the description of the design of the crematorium and the gas chambers. Namely, as regards the design of the gas chambers, they were to be camouflaged by covering their roofs with grass, so as not to attract attention with their appearance. As for the design of the chambers themselves, they were to be built like baths, so that the prisoners would not know where they were. The crematoria were designed for a million dead bodies. At the time they were accounting for the arrival of a larger number of Jews, particularly Hungarian Jews. As for the defendants on the bench, I know well Aumeier, Josten, Götze, Schumacher. As for defendant Aumeier, I state that he was present for every public execution on camp



grounds. I saw him personally check after a flogging if the pants of a prisoner to be beaten were properly stretched tight, and, having noticed that one of the block elders did not strike hard enough, he had him replaced with another, who would flog better. Moreover I recall a characteristic phrase Aumeier often said to the prisoners: "In my camp a good prisoner is a dead prisoner". At a time when numerous transports of Jews were arriving, many of whom died after the transport came to the ramp, defendant Aumeier was actively involved in receiving the prisoners, shooting those Jews with two revolvers.

As for defendant Josten, I state that because of him block 4 had to endure over an hour of "sports": on orders from camp management we were told to hand in our caps, and since block 4 was quite far away from the *Rapportführer's* [report leader] table, the prisoners started to throw the caps. Josten noticed this while standing near block 15 and started calling out to Aumeier, telling him what they were doing. In response to this we were given "sports", Müller was also present for that. Many prisoners paid dearly for those "sports", it sent many to the *Krankenhaus* [hospital], as it lasted for over an hour and was very harsh. Josten was always present when working *kommandos* left in the morning and came back in the evening. If he did not abuse prisoners personally, then he did it indirectly by pointing out that a prisoner was not walking right, or that his scarf was sticking out, or something of the sort. The *Blockführers* [block leaders] present would take appropriate "care" of such a prisoner.

As for Götze, I remember, I worked in the *Bahnhof kommando* at the time. It was one of the hardest *kommandos*. Working there involved mostly unloading train cars. On many occasions the prisoners failed to unload the cars in the time they were given. A few *Blockführers* would then come, including Götze, and help the prisoners unload faster by beating and mistreating them.

As for Schumacher, I encountered him personally and I suffered for it. In the autumn of 1943, when, due to my work at the *Bahnhof kommando*, I was reviewing all the cars on the tracks, I noticed that prisoners were unloading potatoes on track two. It was a large shipment. I was moving along, checking those cars, I stopped by the *Kartofelbunker* [potato bunker] and was unexpectedly hit with strong blows by Schumacher, who always carried a stick and would beat people with it left and right. Aside from that I often saw Schumacher beat prisoners unconscious for taking not a few potatoes, but literally just one.



Presiding Judge: Are there questions?

Prosecutor Pęchalski: The witness has stated that when Josten drew Aumeier's attention to how the prisoners were not returning their caps in a correct way, Aumeier ordered punitive exercise and Müller took part in it. What kind of exercise was that?

Witness: Running, falling down and getting up, etc.

Prosecutor Pęchalski: And it went on for an hour?

Witness: Yes, indeed.

Prosecutor Pęchalski: What was the end result?

Witness: More than a dozen of the weaker prisoners had to be sent to the *Krankenhaus*.

Prosecutor Pęchalski: The witness has said that due to Josten's remarks towards the SS men whenever the witness did something wrong, they would turn their attention to the witness. What did that involve?

Witness: They would beat me and kick me, and trip prisoners, supposedly to teach them to walk right.

Prosecutor Pęchalski: Has the witness ever seen Josten at a flogging?

Witness: He was present for the floggings.

Prosecutor Pęchalski: Did Aumeier oversee prisoner work and what kind of orders did he issue?

Witness: He would more typically issue only general orders to work faster.

Defense Attorney Rappaport: The witness was in the camp for an extended period, has he ever encountered defendant Dinges?

Witness: As for defendant Dinges, I was in the same *kommando* as him for more than two years. He was a driver with the *Fahrbereitschaft* [motor pool].

Defense Attorney Rappaport: Did he beat or abuse prisoners, did he file punitive reports?



Witness: I do not know for sure, but I do not think he did. We thought of him as the only creditable SS man, meaning that if he had us make something for him – a table, a nightstand – he would pay for it with foodstuffs: sausage, margarine, even medication.

Defense Attorney Rappaport: Did he bring in medication, *grypsy* [clandestine prisoner messages], letters?

Witness: As for *grypsy* and letters, I do not know. But as for his attitude towards prisoners, he was rather friendly, I noted that myself when he, being a driver, would often go to the Auschwitz *Bahnhof* [train station]. I must point out that he would look the other way when I talked to the civilians.

Defense Attorney Rappaport: Did he bring food or fats for the prisoners?

Witness: Indeed, sometimes even plenty of it.

Defense Attorney Rappaport: Did he scam prisoners out of their money, was he looking to enrich himself?

Witness: It cannot be said he was doing it out of charity.

Defense Attorney Rappaport: But did he draw excessive profits from it?

Witness: No, he cannot be accused of that.

Defense Attorney Minasowicz: Did you, by chance, meet Lechner?

Witness: If I saw him, maybe I would recognize him, but I do not know the name.

Presiding Judge: Defendant will rise.

Defense Attorney Rappaport: Is the witness aware what would happen if defendant Dinges's superiors learned he was bringing food and medication for the prisoners?

Witness: It was a grave offense for an SS man, as the civilians were harshly punished for the same thing, even by death.

Defense Attorney Kruh: You have testified that Müller was also present for the "sports". Please tell us what was his part in it? Was he only a spectator?



Witness: He was not a spectator, he was actively involved, like all the other *Blockführers* during "sports". Müller never shied from such affairs and you would see him issue orders: *hin legen* [lie down], "rise", "run", etc.

Defense Attorney: So in that specific case he was the man issuing orders, not Aumeier?

Witness: As for the "sport", in that case it was not done for five or ten prisoners, but for the entire block, and thus the orders were given not by a single *Blockführer*, but several at once.

Presiding Judge: Are there any further questions?

Defendant Josten: Your Honor! May I ask when was the "sport" held in response to my remark?

Witness: In 1943. I was in the Auschwitz camp from mid-1941 until 5 January 1945 and I can remember that period very well.

Defendant: I know nothing about that incident.

Witness: Pity, I cannot help the defendant with that.

Defendant: Where was the witness standing such that he could hear me calling to Aumeier?

Witness: I was at block 4, my colleagues were at 17 and from there we heard Josten calling to Aumeier, and "sport" was then held based on his request.

Defendant: There is no way this is possible, I am puzzled by this, I know nothing about that at all.

Presiding Judge: The witness is excused.