



## MIECZYŚLAW WIATR

Ninth day of the proceedings.

**Presiding Judge:** Next witness: Mieczysław Wiatr.

**Presiding Judge:** I advise the witness that per Art. 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 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?

**Prosecutors:** We do not require the witness to swear an oath.

**Defense:** Nor do we.

**Witness: Mieczysław Wiatr, 30 years old, PCH employee; religion: Roman Catholic; no relation to the defendants.**

**Presiding Judge:** Please outline if and in what circumstances the witness encountered the defendants, or which defendants did the witness encounter and what could the witness say specifically about them.

**Witness:** I was the first to arrive at the camp, on 14 June 1940, and I left it, in a bizarre coincidence, on 19 January 1945. I stayed in the camp for four years, five months, and ten days. I want to note here that I was quarantined in the old state monopoly buildings, where "Fajeczka" ["Little Pipe"] – defendant Plagge – was *Rapportführer* [report leader]. I remember it as if it were today: for four weeks there was nothing but lie down, get up. His assistant was Wieczorek, a German. He gave us cruel abuse. Plagge had similar *Reichsdeutschers* [ethnic Germans] to help him, bandits who faced no responsibility for what they did to people. Plagge would single out priests for abuse.

**Presiding Judge:** Please discuss the facts that relate to yourself.

**Witness:** It was during the second week of "sports", I felt tired and ran away from the square, and I ran into the block, to hide and rest. Plagge noticed me and ran after me into the block. He caught me on the stairs and started beating me with a broom. He then took me out into



the field and had me squat in the so-called three quarters position for about two and a half hours. There was a clock opposite me, so I could see exactly for how long I had to do that. Every now and again he would come up to me, kick me and beat me. Moreover I must give the example of a colleague, who is dead now, a student from Tarnów. He reacted to those "sports" so badly that he simply went crazy. They locked him up in the block, in a basement two or three meters large. Plagge had an *Unterscharführer* who spoke good Polish helping him. Together they went to that boy, poured water on him, beat him, tied him with ropes, dragged him around and played with the poor man like that. That is all for Plagge.

**Presiding Judge:** What can the witness say of other defendants and where did the witness work?

**Witness:** I worked at various *kommandos*, e.g. demolishing a house, digging potatoes, working on the sewer system. Later I got into the kitchen, I cleaned for the kitchen bosses. I would always get something to eat for my work and that made it easier for me to survive the camp. In 1941 I got into the meat warehouse, then to the food warehouse. It was there that I encountered Grabner, since my boss, Schebeck, was also Viennese. So Grabner knew him very well and he would come to see him very often. I also learned that he was the chief of the political department and that the entire camp trembled in his presence. Grabner would look at prisoners with a strange, sadistic eye. In 1941, after the war with Russia broke out, we saw a group of around 40 Russians in the morning roll call, the first victims of the war. They stood in front of the kitchen, just as we did. The roll call ended, the *kommandos* left for work, the SS men came to look at them, just as they had come to look at us on the first day. They cut off their buttons as souvenirs, I know this because my boss cut off two dozen of them. Half an hour later it was revealed what was going to happen to them. They were stripped of their coats and rucksacks, and they were given work in the *Kiesgrube* [gravel pits], behind the kitchen, just beyond the wires. All the SS men, the entire officers' world of Auschwitz, were looking at them. Poles from the *Sonderkommando* [special squad] were also working there. I watched it all from a window in the kitchen that was stacked with potatoes. One of the Russians was a strong, burly man, supposedly a wrestler. They beat him mercilessly, they broke his nose, cracked his head, cut off his ear, finally slashed open his stomach. However, he was not the only one to die, many others died as well, the corpses were buried in the pits outside the lager, while the rest were driven back to camp. Shivering with cold, they were sorted and then shoved into the block. They were to have a special diet,



I know that from a colleague who was a clerk. But they were given very little to eat so as to kill them off as quickly as possible. So they died very quickly, and the corpses were buried in a pit, as there was no crematorium in Birkenau yet.

One day Grabner and Palitzsch came to see my boss. Schebeck was just a *Rottenführer* at the time. He would give me various nicknames, like "*Naftalina*" ["Naphthalene"], "Churchill", and others. Grabner called: "*Naftalina*, come over here". I see Grabner sitting. "Pour me some sugar!" I poured it [into a bag], wrapped it up – for Grabner, of course, but it was the prisoners' sugar. They had an abundance of everything, but would come and take sugar from the prisoners. At that moment he told me to clean his boots. I had to clean them. The boots were bloodied, because he had just offed some 120 Russians in block 11. That was in the morning. But it would be like that every day, because I ran to the blocks every day calling for people to come pick up bread. I would often arrive at block 11 when they were "at work". Blood was just dripping from people. Grabner, Palitzsch, and others would go on rampages there. They would destroy Poles in "shoot-outs".

In 1942, in July, I do not know for what reason, some twenty-odd colleagues were taken away before twelve o'clock, including one who was part of a military organization. I saw him brought to block 11 and smashed up, Grabner was there as well. That colleague's name: Znamierowski.

At the end of 1942, going into 1943, the camp lived in great fear. No one knew who was a friend, a colleague, and who was a snitch. It turned out there were very many snitches among the prisoners, for example Ołpiński.

**Presiding Judge:** Could the witness tell us about defendants other than Grabner?

**Witness:** High Tribunal! I wanted to say more about Grabner. In 1943 I saw Grabner sorting people with Dachman and set half of them aside, then he told the other half they would become a special work detail, *kommando-Palitzsch*. After two weeks, around 14 January 1943, they were all shot.

The job of workers at the food warehouse where I worked also included bringing in the possessions of people who died right after arriving with a transport. They were civilians – Dutchmen, Frenchmen, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians. When a transport arrived, Grabner would be present. He would be polite, never hit anybody, he would say "Please disembark,



please put your things down, we will seat you, nothing will be lost!" I heard it myself. After a while he would run in armed with a cane and start beating everyone, whether a mother, a child, or a sick man.

**Presiding Judge:** What does the witness know about Kraus and Schumacher?

**Witness:** Kraus arrived in the camp in 1943, I do not recall if it was spring or summer. He was everywhere, he would go everywhere and keep track of what we were doing, even at night. He did not stay with us long, he was transferred to Birkenau. In January of 1945, on the crucial 17th or 18th of the month, the Auschwitz crew ran away for a few hours. For two-three hours they were nowhere to be seen in the camp. But they came back. I saw Kraus coming with a revolver in his hand. I was in the kitchen with a few prisoners. He told us to cook, but there was no water. We had to cook [in water] taken from pools where prisoners used to bathe. When I saw Kraus with a revolver, I ran to block 20 and hid. They were running all around the lager, dragging out hidden prisoners.

**Presiding Judge:** I call for a recess.

(After the recess.)

**Presiding Judge:** Please call the witness. (Witness reports.) Can the witness say anything about defendant Kraus? In what circumstances did the witness meet him?

**Witness:** I had already met him earlier in the lager, and later in late January of 1945, it was on 18 or 17 January.

**Presiding Judge:** Can the witness note any cruel acts the defendant performed against the prisoners?

**Witness:** The defendant was very bad for the prisoners – he would beat them, kick them.

**Presiding Judge:** Did the witness see it?

**Witness:** In 1945 I saw him run into the kitchen with his riding crop and start throwing people out and shooting at the same time. When they left, I went back into the kitchen and saw one – a Dutch kike. He was lying down by the desk where my boss Schebeck had his office.

**Presiding Judge:** What can the witness testify regarding defendant Schumacher?



**Witness:** Schumacher was my boss for a long time, starting in 1942. He was very harsh towards the prisoners, he would punish them for the slightest offense, beat them and kick them. When the evacuation started, I spoke to a few Jews. When he heard me say something about the crematorium, how it was going to be over now, he called me to the kitchen and said: "You are a communist, I will shoot you". He was interrupted by *Unterscharführer* Boczar, who was Romanian, and then I ran away to the women's lager, to Birkenau, and waited there until the arrival of the Red Army.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** The witness said that he watched a group of SS men led by Kraus chasing and shooting during the evacuation. Did the witness note any fatalities in the kitchen? Did he conclude who killed that Belgian or Dutch man?

**Witness:** There was some lame cripple in the kitchen, I find it hard to recall his name now. He was sitting behind a barrel, and when I came to the kitchen, he told me: "Kraus was here".

**Prosecutor:** Did he say who did the shooting?

**Witness:** He said Kraus shot both men.

**Prosecutor:** Why did he shoot that man?

**Witness:** Because he enjoyed it. Because it was a prisoner.

**Prosecutor:** Was this related to the evacuation?

**Witness:** I do not know, he would go along with the searches, he was an unpleasant type.

**Prosecutor:** Did the witness frequent the ramp and did he see Kraus there?

**Witness:** I did, as well as Grabner, Aumeier, Josten, Schumacher, Müller, and that driver, whom I knew, because he would carry people to be gassed in his car.

**Prosecutor:** I am interested in Kraus specifically. How did he behave, what did he do on the ramp?

**Witness:** He sorted people.

**Prosecutor:** Were those inbound transports?



**Witness:** Inbound and outbound.

**Prosecutor:** What kind of sorting was it, for what?

**Witness:** It was on the ramp and the arrivals were sent in three directions. If Kraus did not like something, he would kick them, even women or children.

**Prosecutor:** Were the people sorted to go to the gas as well?

**Witness:** Yes.

**Prosecutor:** Did Kraus beat anybody on the ramp?

**Witness:** I do not know, but you could expect anything of him.

**Prosecutor:** I know that, but did the witness notice him beat anyone, outside of that selection?

**Witness:** He beat people, Aumeier would also beat them with his cane sometimes.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Did the witness ever receive a beating from Schumacher?

**Witness:** I got hit in the face a couple times.

**Prosecutor:** Did the witness maybe see, aside from that, prisoners who were beaten or injured by Schumacher, I mean beaten to the point of wounding?

**Witness:** I never saw wounds, but I saw people who had been beaten up.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** I would only request the High Tribunal to note that the witness – when listing Kraus, Josten, Müller – also pointed to Lorenz. He did not name him, so I just want it to be on the record.

**Defense Attorney Rymar:** The witness has testified he saw Aumeier and Kraus during the selections. Did the witness see them together?

**Witness:** No.

**Defense Attorney:** They were never together?

**Witness:** I said it in general, because I saw them all, I would go to that ramp for two years. First it was Aumeier, later Kraus.



**Defense Attorney:** When would Kraus come to the ramp?

**Witness:** During 1944–45.

**Defense Attorney:** And he would also do the picking during a selection?

**Witness:** That is interesting, Supreme Tribunal, it will be hard for me to answer, but I will say this, because I know. There were cases where transports of women were loaded onto cars, given two or three days' worth of food, and when one would go for the next transport, to the women's lager, one would find the train all filthy. There was an SS man who liked telling the truth, and he would tell me that the transports were taken to Schwarzwald, that they were gassed there.

**Defense Attorney Minasowicz:** You were in Auschwitz until the evacuation of the camp?

**Witness:** Yes.

**Defense Attorney:** Did you know Bogusch?

**Witness:** I am deeply sorry, but we did not operate using names so much.

**Presiding Judge:** Defendant Bogusch, please rise. (Defendant rises.)

**Witness:** I remember him.

**Defense Attorney:** What was his function?

**Witness:** If I am not mistaken, he worked in the *Verwaltung*.

**Defense Attorney:** You mean the camp administrative office? Can you say something negative or positive about him?

**Witness:** I cannot say anything about him.

**Defense Attorney:** Did the witness see him during the evacuation of the camp?

**Witness:** I do not remember.

**Defense Attorney Ostrowski:** The witness has said he had seen defendant Lorenz on the ramp, but can the witness say anything specific about him?



**Witness:** I said I know him as a driver, because he delivered food to us, and when the transports came, he would take them to the gas chambers.

**Defense Attorney:** But the witness is not saying Lorenz took part in the selections?

**Witness:** I am deeply sorry, I only said he drove a car.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Did Lorenz arrive at the ramp when the transports came in?

**Witness:** Yes.

**Prosecutor:** And he would take people from there to the gas chamber?

**Witness:** Not always.

**Prosecutor:** I understand it was not every time, because he was not always on duty, but the witness saw him on the ramp in any case?

**Witness:** I saw him a few times, I also saw him take the so-called "Muslims" to the gas.

**Presiding Judge:** The witness is excused.