



## ZDZISŁAW MICHALAK

Eleventh day of trial, 5 December 1947.

**President:** Please call the next witness, Michalak.

**Witness Zdzisław Michalak, 27 years old, student, Roman Catholic, no relationship to the accused parties.**

**President:** I remind the witness of the obligation to speak the truth. Making false declarations is punishable by imprisonment of up to five years. Do the parties wish to make any representations concerning the procedure of interviewing the witness?

**Prosecutors and defense attorneys:** We want to release the witness from an oath.

**President:** The witness will testify without an oath. Since he is your witness, Messrs. Prosecutors, please proceed with the questions.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Did the defendant Grabner help or want to help you leave the camp?

**Witness:** By no means.

**Prosecutor:** He named a witness to that event. I have a question to the defendant Grabner.

**President:** Please go on.

**Prosecutor:** The defendant mentioned at one time that you tried to help some Michalak leave the camp. Did you mean that man?

**Defendant Grabner:** No, I didn't.

**Prosecutor:** I have no more questions to the defendant or the witness.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Did the witness suffer any harm at the hands of the defendant Aumeier?

**Witness:** I received 45 whips from Aumeier. It happened after a search in the "Canada" *kommando* in which I worked. It was discovered – probably by Aumeier



and an *Arbeitsdienstführer* [head of work details] who carried out the search – that we secretly provided our fellow inmates in the camp with food. A search was conducted and a lot of foodstuffs, which we were to transport to the camp, were discovered. We were all taken to the camp. It happened at about 3.00 p.m., and at 5.00 p.m., before the roll call, all those from the *kommando* received 35 whips each. I was whipped again after the roll call, so in total I received some 45 blows.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Did it happen on the same day, without any communication with Berlin?

**Witness:** Yes, it happened on the same day, on Aumeier's orders.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Was a doctor present during the whipping?

**Witness:** No, there were a few SS men, but no doctor. Afterward the defendant Aumeier dealt me an additional blow on the head with a rifle butt.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Does the witness know anything as to how the defendant Plagge was disposed toward priests and Jews?

**Witness:** During the first days of my stay in the camp, Plagge selected all Jews and a priest from Nisko by the name of Węgrzynowicz or Węgrzynowski, and they had to sing. When Plagge was in a bad mood and resting after kicking prisoners, he would order them to sing cynical songs. One of them began with the following words: *Gott gib uns Mozes wieder* [God give us Moses once again], and later it was said that he would lead them into the Red Sea when the waves would part.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** I don't mean the lyrics, I want to know whether that priest conducted the choir of Jews.

**Witness:** Yes, he did.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Now as regards the defendant Buntrock, mentioned in connection with Pestka. Did Buntrock take part in it?

**Witness:** He organized the whole thing.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Does the witness know anything about the defendant Götze?



**Witness:** I used to meet Götze when he was a *Blockführer* in Birkenau. I saw him loading “Muslims” onto a car leaving for the gas chambers. He helped them in his usual way, with a stick and kicking.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Is the witness able to provide any information pertaining to the defendant Ludwig?

**Witness:** I remember him as a *Blockführer* in Auschwitz. I saw him several times on the railway ramp.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** In what circumstances did the witness see him on the ramp?

**Witness:** When they were driving away the Jews and ordering them to leave all their luggage.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Does the witness recollect chauffeur Dinges and could the witness provide some information regarding his person and activities?

**Witness:** I know that he was one of those chauffeurs who transported things from the ramp to “Canada” and brought things that were left in the crematorium.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Dinges claims that he couldn’t have been there because he had worked as a chauffeur for *Bauleitung* [construction management] and their cars were never used for other purposes.

**Witness:** When the transports came, all cars were used for transporting Jews from the ramp or objects from the crematorium.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** In which *kommando* did the witness work?

**Witness:** In various *kommandos*. In 1941 I was assigned to the *Entwesungakammer* [delousing chamber]. This *kommando* was later transformed into the famous “Canada”.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Who was in charge of it?

**Witness:** Breitwieser.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** What was his role there?

**Witness:** He carried out the gassing of the underwear, and was also in charge of controlling the usage of gas. There was a basement with boxes of gas in the main building of the



commandant's office. The defendant knew about every instance when that gas was used. We kept a record of how much was sent to the *Entwesungskammer* and how much was used during the so-called *Sonderaktion* [special action].

**Prosecutor Brandys:** So a separate record was kept in the *Entwesungskammer* for the quantities used for disinfection and for *Sonderbehandlung* [lit. special treatment]?

**Witness:** That is correct.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Does the witness know the defendant Seufert?

**Witness:** I know him only by sight, but I know the defendant Koch. The defendant Koch took part in gassing.

**President:** I adjourn the session for a few minutes.

(After the adjournment).

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Does the witness know whether Koch took part in gassing?

**Witness:** The defendant ran the *Entwesungskammer*, and all heads took part in gassing. In response to my question how he could bear to throw gas and poison people, he said, "They are Jews, it has to be so".

**Attorney Kossek:** The witness mentioned the defendant Götze. Where did he serve as a *Blockführer*?

**Witness:** In the men's camp.

**Attorney Kossek:** Is the witness aware that there were two men by the surname of Götze? Is the witness sure that he is not mistaken?

**Witness:** I am positive that it was this Götze.

**Defendant Koch:** Your Honor, I ask permission to ask the witness whether he saw me gassing people.

**Witness:** I didn't see for myself, but I know that he was present at the gassing.

**Defendant Dinges:** The witness said that I drove a truck to "Canada". I ask permission to make a correction and declare that I served as a chauffeur from May 1941 to October 1941.



Next, I passed a chauffeur's exam in Vienna and returned to Auschwitz through Berlin in June 1942.

From June 1942 onwards I worked in the *Bauleitung*, where I was responsible for the delivery and procurement of materials and for making repairs to trucks and motorcycles which were used outside the camp for transporting bricks from Zator, Gliwice, Bytom and other Silesian towns.

**President:** The witness may step down.