

JÓZEF GŁUSZAK

The eighth day of the hearing, 19 March 1947.

The witness stated the following personal details: Józef Głuszak, 34 years old, beekeeping instructor, unmarried, Roman Catholic, no relationship to the parties.

President: Do the parties wish to put any motions concerning the procedure of interviewing the witness?

Prosecutor Cyprian: We are exempting the witness from taking the oath.

Defense attorney Umbreit: So are we.

President: With the parties' consent, the Tribunal has decided to exempt the witness from the oath. I advise the witness of the obligation to tell the truth and of the criminal liability for making false declarations.

What were the circumstances under which you ended up in Auschwitz and what do you know concerning the case, and especially defendant Höss?

Witness: I was arrested in 1940 by the Tarnów Gestapo on suspicion of conspiratorial activities in Tarnów and its environs. I was taken to a prison in Toruń, where I spent a few months. On 4 April 1941 I was sent to Auschwitz on a transport of more than 1,000 people. Our journey to Auschwitz was very hard because we were loaded onto roofed cattle wagons. Obviously, when we arrived at Auschwitz, half of my comrades were already dead due to the lack of air. I was in a corner of the wagon, where I could breathe through a tiny crack, so I had survived the journey. When we arrived at Oświęcim, we were transported to the *Bahnhof* [railway station]; we could already hear the SS men shouting and dogs barking, so I knew that this was Auschwitz. Suddenly, the doors of wagons were opened. In the light, I could see my comrades lying on the floor, lifeless. Bodies started to drop in front of the wagon. I quickly jumped outside while the SS men were beating me with rods on my way out. We formed rows and they started to sort us. I was taken to Auschwitz.

I first came across Höss when he was giving orders himself, shouting to the SS men and instructing them to quickly unload the others from the wagon. At the camp, we were stood in rows and counted. Lying next to our group were those comrades who had died from suffocation and were blue. There were around 200 of them. We were taken to block 1. After a few days of quarantine, we were sent for labor. I was assigned to the *Gärtnerei Bauhof* kommando, where I worked as a manual laborer. After a few days of working at a tempo, the pace was ramped up still further by *Scharführer* Moll, who was particularly happy to persecute us and drive us to labor. I remember once a prisoner came to a hothouse and picked some onion leaves. Moll noticed that, summoned the prisoner, took him to a barrel with fermenting human fertilizer, put him there head down, then took him out and told the other prisoners to move him to a water pool located nearby. The prisoner didn't report for work the next day. It was clear that he had died.

Together with this unit, I was seconded to the *Aussenkommando*. We planted cabbage and cauliflower. Moll was eager to tire us down and cracked the whip all the time. I witnessed the following situation: Moll was asking, "Are you cold?" Of course everybody said yes. It was very cold at that time. We wore pants and shirts, without jackets. Cold days gave us a really hard time. Moll ordered a prisoner to run circles around our unit; the SS man guarding us, who stood nearby, fired single shots at the runner. Some ten prisoners were shot dead that way, typically on the spot. I was terrified after this incident and I decided to change the kommando. I got assigned to the *Zimer* kommando, or the carpenters' unit. Later, I also worked as a carpenter for a few weeks. In the meantime, the construction of commandant Höss's house had commenced. I was selected to work on this project. The house was finished and the kommando was no longer needed there, but I stayed and was used for glassmaking works related to hothouses and for tasks connected with arranging the garden.

Höss's house already had everything, including a professional gardener and a professional florist – the only thing missing was a bee yard. When Mrs. Höss found out I was a beekeeper, she ordered me to set up one. There was one swarm, which was very little. Mrs. Höss sent me with *Scharführer* Tamman to the Auschwitz environs, where abandoned households were located, left behind by the people displaced due to the camp's expansion. Swarms of bees had remained there, so I collected them and took them to commandant Höss's garden.

President: During the time when you worked as the beekeeper, were you in touch, in any way, with other prisoners who were members of the resistance?

Witness: That is correct. When I was the beekeeper, I was in touch with other prisoners. The hives used double insulation, and I partly removed the insulating material, filled with sawdust, from between the inner and outer wall, and this space was used for hiding civilian clothes, which had been prepared for those prisoners who planned to escape. A prisoner wanting to escape would bring such clothes from the *Effektenkammer* and entrusted them to me, and I stashed them away. When the moment came when the prisoner had everything arranged, he changed in the garden, where he enjoyed much freedom since the area was off-limits to the SS men, and we took advantage of the times when Höss was out on an inspection. Then, we rehearsed, tried the clothes on, etc.

President: Could you do it freely?

Witness: We would take every precaution. When neither Höss nor Mrs. Höss were home – when nobody was home – the risk was not that serious.

President: You said, "...when the prisoner had everything arranged..." What do you mean by that?

Witness: A prisoner needed a fitting wig – we were all shaved so he had to have one. He had to look like a regular civilian. He had to look well and be fit.

President: Was it that easy to exit the camp?

Witness: You needed an *Ausweis*. Each civilian worker working on the Auschwitz premises had an *Ausweis*, which was issued to him by the authorities of a special department.

President: Who supplied these forms? Was it your fellow prisoners?

Witness: Such forms were supplied by prisoners. These forms were in circulation at the camp. They were expert forgeries resembling the originals, almost identical to them. For an *Ausweis*, a photo was needed. I took the photos myself, initially using the camera belonging to commandant Höss. Because of that, I sometimes needed to remove the entire photographic film taken by Höss, and then put it back. This could have given me away, so I later built my own camera.

President: Did you have enough expertise to build a camera yourself?

Witness: That is correct.

President: And where did you have an opportunity to take these photos and develop the negatives?

Witness: In a shed. There were a few sheds in Höss's garden, and I would lock myself up there to cut the X-ray film, because it was difficult to obtain another type of film and the camera that I built used cassettes, which I also made. I put such X-ray films into a few such cassettes and...

President (interrupting): During the period of your work in Höss's garden in this capacity, how many prisoners got out this way, give or take?

Witness: If we are talking about the garden alone, then some 50 people escaped via the commandant's garden.

President: Was it easy to leave through the commandant's garden?

Witness: It was possible at first, but leaving without an *Ausweis* was a huge risk. You just needed to have civilian clothes and you had to track the movements of the person on guard duty at that moment. You could climb the fence of the commandant's garden and get to the road quite freely.

President: But was it possible not to go past the camp headquarters?

Witness: The camp headquarters were inside the camp. The commandant's house was located at the junction of two roads.

President: Meaning it was directly next to the road?

Witness: Yes.

President: I have one more question. You mentioned during the investigation that Höss was friends with former Governor Frank. Was that the case? Or maybe you meant Himmler?

Witness: Höss paid frequent visits to Governor Frank. He saw him often. I had this information because we knew about everything that was going on in Höss's house from a maidservant.

President: Did the maidservants know about the items hidden in the garden?

Witness: No.

President: And how did you get a hold of Höss's camera?

Witness: Höss's camera hung in his office or bedroom.

President: So you could move around the entire house?

Witness: That is correct.

President: Concerning Governor Frank again, did he visit Auschwitz?

Witness: Regarding Governor Frank, I cannot tell if this was actually him.

President: So Höss's acquaintance with Frank was just something that people around would talk about, is that correct?

Witness: Yes, that is correct.

President: Do the parties have any questions to the witness?

Prosecutor Cyprian: We do not.

Defense attorney Ostaszewski: I have a question. Was this camera used to take the pictures which were later smuggled to London?

Witness: I cannot tell. I took a dozen or so photos.

Defense attorney Ostaszewski: How long, more or less, were you under this direct supervision of Höss or Mrs. Höss in the garden? Was it years or rather months?

Witness: It was in 1942, 1943, and 1944.

Defense attorney Ostaszewski: So it was more or less three years, is that correct?

Witness: That is correct.

Defense attorney Ostaszewski: Did Höss ever physically abuse you during this period?

Witness: I never saw Höss hit or kick anybody. I never witnessed anything like that.

Defense attorney Ostaszewski: I have no further questions.

President: The witness is excused.

Since there are no more items on today's agenda, I am ordering a recess until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

Session ends at 7.40 p.m.