



## TADEUSZ KOLIŃSKI

Warsaw, 11 August 1947. A member of the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Warsaw, Acting Judge Halina Wereńko, interviewed the person named below as a witness. The witness was advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, of the obligation to speak the truth, and the significance of the oath. The judge took an oath from the witness, who then testified as follows:

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**My name is Tadeusz Koliński, son of Józef and Maria, née Górczewska; born on 15 March 1925 in Warsaw, Roman Catholic, secondary education, inspector of Lot Polish Airlines by profession, residing in Warsaw at Mokotowska Street 65, flat 29.**

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On 7 February 1944, I was arrested by the Gestapo on charges of sabotage in my place of employment, that is, at Derinberg's drill and precision tools factory at Podskarbińska Street in Warsaw.

The Germans, in fact, had some evidence that I was a member of the People's Guard. However, I was not proven guilty of anything and thanks to this, in March 1944 (I don't remember the exact date), I was transported, along with about a thousand men, from the Pawiak prison to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. After a week in Gross-Rosen, almost the entire transport that had arrived with me from Warsaw was sent to a *kommando* of the Gross-Rosen camp in Fünfteichen, located about 25 km from Wrocław. This camp was surrounded by wires and consisted of about twenty blocks. The personnel consisted of SS men, *Volksdeutsche* from Romania and Hungary.

I don't remember the name of the *Lagerführer* or anyone of the camp's personnel. The prisoners, just like in Gross-Rosen, wore striped uniforms and wooden shoes, and had a strip of hair in the middle of the head shaven. The unit consisted of 8,000 prisoners, mostly Poles.



Later on, there were also large groups of Jews, Russian prisoners of war, and civilians, and smaller groups of Frenchmen and people of other nationalities.

Three or four kilometers from the Fünfteichen camp, in the Markstadt district, there was the Krupp factory, which produced medium-caliber field guns. Prisoners from the Fünfteichen *kommando* worked in factory halls III, IV and V.

The people who worked in halls I and II were mostly foreigners from the Czech Republic and France; also, smaller groups from other countries, sent in by the local *Arbeitsamt* [labor office], worked there. At the end of 1944, a group of Polish fitters came to the factory from the Chorzów locomotive factory, forced to do this work by the *Arbeitsamt*.

The two above-mentioned groups of workers sent by the *Arbeitsamt* lived in labor camps, but were free to move around and received remuneration for their work. The only thing they could not do was to quit.

I don't remember the names of any workers from those groups.

Another group of workers consisted of Italians, but I don't know how big that group was. They were prisoners of war captured in Greece during the fighting against Germany. The whole camp was sent to Markstadt, the prisoners were employed in the Krupp factory and assigned to different halls. In 1944 (I don't remember the exact date), the German authorities forced the prisoners of war – under the threat of being sent to concentration camps – to sign a declaration that they voluntarily agreed to work in the Krupp factory. From then on, the Italian POW camp became a labor camp and the Italian workers were given the same conditions as foreign workers sent to the factory by the *Arbeitsamt*.

I don't know what the work conditions of that category of workers were.

As for the expansion of the factory, construction works were done by Jews. Initially, there was a labor camp for Jews from Upper Silesia (Katowice and Zagłębie Dąbrowskie) in Markstadt. In 1943, the Jewish labor camp was turned into a *kommando* of the Gross-Rosen camp; the barracks were expanded, some prisoners from Gross-Rosen were brought there, while the Jews were given jobs at the expansion site of the Krupp factory.

I don't know exactly when the halls of the Krupp factory were built. I heard that the Essen branch of the Krupp factory was transferred to Silesia due to the bombing of Essen by the



Allies, which happened in 1942 at the earliest. The halls were built in a way that made it easier to supervise the workers at work, as if they were specifically meant for employing prisoners. There were no partitions and individual rows of machines (*Schiff*) were separated by pillars supporting the ceiling. In such conditions, it could be seen from a distance if a worker moved or stopped working. What is more, the hall was surrounded by guard posts.

The director of the factory was a German whose name I don't know. He was a tall, well-built blonde with wavy hair combed up; he was over thirty and wore civilian clothes. The foremen were mainly Germans, previously employed in Essen, and Silesians. I don't remember their names.

Each *Schiff*, that is, row of machines, was supervised by a *Schiffskapo*, appointed from among the prisoners. His role was to make sure that the number was correct. In the event of a prisoner's escape, the *Schiffskapo* and the two individuals who worked the closest to the escapee were held responsible before the company. It was an unpleasant post and a new *Schiffskapo* was appointed every now and then. In the hall, there was also a *kapo*, appointed from among the prisoners, who counted the prisoners working in the hall, escorted them to work and to the roll-call square, where he counted the prisoners again and reported their number to the *Rapportführer*.

The *kapo* did not interfere once he had escorted people to the hall. Only professionals had a voice then. The foremen and other supervisors from the Krupp factory board abused the prisoners. The supervisors reported the slightest transgressions to the *kapo* who, after he heard the report, administered punishments in the form of a beating on the spot or sending the prisoner back to the *Strafkompanie* [punitive unit] in Gross-Rosen. There was a bunker in the Fünfteihen camp, but I don't know if prisoners were locked in there. In the autumn of 1944, I believe it was after the Warsaw Uprising, during a night shift, when I fell asleep standing, slightly leaning against a machine, the director saw it and reported me to the *kapo*. The *kapo* beat me with an iron rod, injuring my back and elbow. The beating left me with a damaged ulnar cartilage and I spent three or four weeks in the hospital. I still have scars. (The witness shows a 1 by 2 cm pink and purple scar on his right elbow.)

We worked without a break, in two shifts, night and day, twelve hours each, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. There was no day shift on Sundays. The prisoners did not receive any remuneration. There were work quotas, and if they were not met, the supervisor



from the Krupp factory reported it to the *kapo* who administered corporal punishment or sent the worker to the SK in the main camp in Gross-Rosen.

Work quotas were different in different departments, but they were too high everywhere, considering the capabilities of prisoners who were constantly hungry and forced to work 12 hours, and sometimes even longer. The most exhausting jobs consisted in assembling finished structures and painting, using guns, with paint diluted with acetone. Such paint gave off lethal fumes.

Initially I worked in hall IV, where I assembled gun carriages, and the quota was two gun carriages per shift.

I don't remember how many people worked during a shift.

Later on (I don't remember the exact date) I was assigned to hall V, where I handled individual parts of cannons. I operated a metal planer. We produced about 2m-long rails which, I believe, were cannon bearings. The quota was to make eight rails per shift.

I cannot say how many workers worked during a shift.

It was serial production, and each worker had his section. For good work, when reported by the foremen, the prisoners received bonuses in the form of canteen vouchers, which could be exchanged for salted rutabaga, rutabaga from barrels, or snails. It had as little value as all the rest of the camp food. I never received a bonus. We had two 15-minute breaks at work and one 20-minute break in the middle of the shift. Unfortunately, since this included the gathering and counting of workers, we had even less time to rest.

Prisoners started their day at 5 a.m. We were given food for the whole day in the form of 300 grams of bread (one loaf for four people), margarine cubes, and a slice of horsemeat sausage once or twice a week. In the morning we received half a liter of *mehl* soup, that is, made of overcooked flour. There was no dinner, but when we returned from work, we got a liter of overcooked rutabaga or so-called spinach. I heard a rumor that the management board of the Krupp factory paid a mark per day to the Gross-Rosen camp authorities for every prisoner employed in Marksstadt.

In the barracks, we slept in bunks, that is, bunk beds. At the beginning, everyone had his own bunk, but after the Warsaw Uprising, there were two men per bunk. Since the prisoners



wore the same clothes all day and while working with grease, everything was dirty, and due to exhaustion and apathy, there was an outbreak of lice. We had running water and light in the barracks, and we had to abide by normal camp rules. The block leaders were Poles and Germans. A roll call system was in place. After returning from the night shift at 7 a.m., we were often assigned work in the camp, for example, we were ordered to clean stools from the dining room – we had to clean them using special paper until they shined beautifully. In this way, we often worked fifteen hours a day. Prisoners tried to escape from the factory at night, despite the guard posts. During my stay in Fünfteihen, there were two cases of successful escape (two Russians escaped, I do not know their names), and a vast number of unsuccessful ones.

In the summer of 1944, a Russian prisoner was shot for attempting an escape; then his corpse was presented to us at the roll-call square to scare us. During a roll call in the autumn of 1944, we were shown two Russians who had been caught trying to escape – they were harassed, beaten, and sent to the *Strafkompanie* in the Gross-Rosen camp. In the summer of 1944 at the roll-call square, following the successful escape of a prisoner, the *Schiffskapto* received fifty lashes, while the two prisoners who worked closest to the escapee received 25 lashes each. After the flogging, they were all taken to hospital. Most of the doctors in the Fünfteichen hospital were Jews.

All seriously ill prisoners were sent to the Gross-Rosen camp, from where an appropriate number of healthy prisoners was immediately sent to our camp. The *kommando* consisted of about 8,000 healthy prisoners. Although seriously ill prisoners were sent to the main camp, the mortality rate in the *kommando* was high. Almost every day, from each hall, prisoners carried several dead or seriously ill people who were not able to endure the terrible work and starvation.

I cannot provide mortality figures. I only know that from the transport that arrived with me from the Pawiak prison, consisting of about a thousand people, I now only meet a few men.

Around 19 January 1945, we were locked in the camp and no one was allowed to go to work. On 21 January (I am not sure of the date), we were evacuated to the Gross-Rosen camp. We walked 80 km, four days and five nights. Weak prisoners at the back of the column were finished off. On the way, we were herded into peasants' barns for the night. The German population did not give us any water. One third of the transport died during



the march. SS men escorted us to Gross-Rosen together with Jews, who were then sent to Sachsenhausen, while we were sent to Mauthausen.

I don't know what happened to the management board and the employees of the Krupp factory, and the factory officials.

At this point, the report was concluded and read out.