



TERESA LASOCKA-ESTREICHER

Presiding Judge: Please summon the next witness, Teresa Lasocka-Estreicher. Please provide your personal details.

Witness: Teresa Lasocka-Estreicher, 40 years old, religion – Roman Catholic, married, relationship to the accused – none.

Presiding Judge: I hereby instruct the witness, pursuant to the provisions of Article 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, that you are required to speak the truth. The provision of false testimony is punishable by a term of imprisonment of up to five years. Do the parties want to submit any motions as to the procedure according to which the witness is to be interviewed?

Prosecutors: We release the witness from the obligation to take an oath.

Defense attorneys: Ourselves also.

Presiding Judge: What does the witness wish to say regarding the case?

Witness Teresa Lasocka-Estreicher: First of all I would like to explain that I have never been in a camp. I spent the entire War in Kraków, where I was a member of an underground organization that had contacts with the camp resistance movement.

Presiding Judge: Did the witness ever encounter the accused in connection with her activities?

Witness: I do not know the accused personally, I have only seen them on photographs. Whatever I do know, I learned from third-party accounts, or from the reports of persons who escaped from the camp.

I was in touch with the camp from 1942 on. As regards the accused, I know that during Liebehenschel's tenure the treatment of prisoners changed. In 1943 there were a few serious executions. Information that was sent out of the camp and passed on abroad caused the Germans to apply a somewhat more lenient approach. I have proof of this in the documents of the Special Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes. The English communication, which was translated and sent to all of the camps, carried a warning addressed to all those

working in the concentration camp system. Berlin tried to encumber individual camp commands with responsibility for what was going on, and at the same time ordered that the approach be softened. The most obvious sign of this change in policy was the replacement of Höß. Liebehenschel became the new commandant. In actual fact, the change consisted in ensuring stricter adherence to camp regulations and abolishing the death penalty for crimes committed in the camp, i.e. people detained in the bunker were let go, however with the exception of 30 prisoners from Jaworzno, who were executed, although I do not know on what grounds. Next, the Germans liquidated the network of informers in the camp. These developments were positive. But life in the camp continued unaltered. Executions were still carried out, and on New Year's Eve 1945 five prisoners who had tried to escape from the camp were killed. They were hanged near a lit-up tree. The camp authorities – both the command and the political department, for I do not know which of these bodies had supreme power – were responsible for all these acts.

Presiding Judge: Is this everything that the witness wanted to say? Or does the witness have anything else to state?

Witness: As regards the accused Grabner, Aumeier, Mandl and Bogusch, in 1943 a death sentence was passed against them by the camp resistance and smuggled out of Auschwitz to be broadcast on foreign radio networks, together with a description of their activities; the objective was to intimidate them.

Presiding Judge: Does the prosecution have any questions?

Prosecutor Cyprian: Can the witness tell us whether her work (i.e. the broadcasting of various data through foreign radio networks) brought about any tangible change in the treatment of prisoners at the camp?

Witness: Yes, and especially in 1943. But I think that the overall military situation had the biggest influence. News received from the camp was published in the clandestine newspapers, but these fell into the hands of the Gestapo and we were warned by people inside the camp to employ precautionary measures. The specter of defeat was the reason why the Germans changed the camp authorities and applied a somewhat softer approach. Nevertheless, they still carried out the liquidation of the Hungarian Jews. They went to immense lengths, and even towards the end of 1944, when the German armies were in



retreat, transports of Hungarian and Dutch Jews continued to arrive at the camp, where they were systematically gassed.

Prosecutor Cyprian: According to information in her possession, does the witness consider this change of regime and commandant as a show put on to mislead international opinion, or did it have a deeper impact?

Witness: The change was definitely made with international opinion in mind, following the said messages and communications. It was stated that too much was being said about Auschwitz. They became so afraid of this publicity that when a transport of Jews arrived from Theresienstadt, the Germans ordered them to give Neuborn – and not Auschwitz – as their address, and correspondence initially addressed to Auschwitz was received via that camp.

Prosecutor Szewczyk: The witness has testified that following the abolition of the bunker, some 30 prisoners from Jaworzno were still executed there. Is the witness referring to bunker no. 1 in Auschwitz and was this execution actually performed?

Witness: This I cannot say.

Prosecutor Szewczyk: What were the prisoners charged with?

Witness: This I do not know.

Presiding Judge: Does the defense have any questions?

Defense attorneys: No.

Presiding Judge: Can the witness be allowed to step down?

Defense attorneys: Yes.