

## ZYGMUNT URBAŃSKI

Warsaw, 5 April 1945

Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, Warsaw.

Testimony of Zygmunt Urbański, b. 1 January 1909, correspondence can be sent to Mr. Depczyk, the Spiess factory, Piekiełko, near Warsaw. Recorded by Anna Juzwa.

Regarding: internment at the Stutthof camp near Gdańsk

On 25 March 1944, I was arrested on Zakroczańska Street, in front of the shop at number 15, where arrests had just been made. I had nothing to do with this case, I was just a passer-by. Together with me, six other passers-by and seven people inside the shop were arrested. Altogether, 13 people were taken. We were transported to the Pawiak prison.

I was kept in Wards VII and VI. Usually, every Tuesday and Friday, prisoners – both those whose guilt had been proven and those who were innocent – were removed from their cells according to a list from the prison's office and taken to Ward VIII, to the so-called bakery, where they were blindfolded and had their arms tied behind their backs. Then, these poor men were ordered to undress and given white shirts. Next, they were taken to vans (which we could see through the windows) and taken beyond the Pawiak's walls, where they were executed. We heard several salvos, which helped us estimate the number of the executed. They shot up to 270 people at a time.

I noticed the greatest intensification of executions took place during the Holy Week of 1944, when in the space of three days some 600 or 700 people were murdered. Next, the "Pawiak purge" was carried out before sending a transport to the Stutthof camp: on 21, 22, and 23 May, 700 people were executed in the ghetto.

Five and a half weeks after I was arrested, I was transferred to Szucha Avenue in order to extract a testimony from me. I was interrogated at department 4aI. They did not beat me. I was surprised because these four men who were arrested in the shop were beaten so severely that one of them died.

On 25 May, I was ferried off on a transport of 860 people, divided into three groups according to the nature of their offenses. I was in the second group, that is, medium-severity

offenses. At the camp, death penalties were carried out based on these groups. We were taken to the Stutthof camp.

The camp was located 30 kilometers from Gdańsk. When I arrived there, there were around 35,000 prisoners (my number was 36,018), and after three months this number had already reached 102,000 (both men and women).

A few hundred people were executed daily, in the following ways: 1) by public hanging, with the whole camp watching, 2) executions by shooting, 3) intravenous injections, which killed the patient immediately – this procedure was performed in the camp hospital, 4) by gassing in gas chambers. All bodies were immediately incinerated in the crematoria. During my time at the camp, around 700,000 people perished, women included.

Prisoners were used for various kinds of work, including shoemaking and carpentry. The hardest labor was clearing the forest, melioration works, etc. Tasked with taking prisoners to the labor site were *kapos*, who were enlisted from among the German criminals. They had clear orders to liquidate prisoners, indiscriminately. They also killed up to 30 prisoners daily with rods, and their corpses had to be brought back to the camp for the roll call.

Alimentation: 25 dag of bread and one liter of watery soup. Hygienic conditions were acceptable. Those severely sick were sent to the hospital, where instead of being taken care of they were exterminated. Jews were isolated from the rest. They lived in extremely hard conditions, especially the Jewesses, who were considered to be unnecessary. When a Jew weakened, he was ferried in a cart to a crematorium and burned alive.

On 25 January 1945, the evacuation of the camp was ordered. Everybody was driven on foot in the direction of Lauenburg. Whoever passed out on the way was killed. In this way a few thousand men and women were terminated. At the Stutthof camp, 3,000 sick prisoners were executed in the eleventh hour, and all the buildings were blown up.

The prisoners from blocks 12 and 15 stopped in the village of Riben. The sick, including myself, stayed there, while the rest was driven on. On 9 March 1945, we were liberated by Red Army troops.

I have testified truthfully. I have read the testimony before signing it.