

EDWARD LISZKA

On 23 July 1947 in Kraków, a member of the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, Appellate Investigating Judge Jan Sehn, on the written application of the First Prosecutor of the Supreme National Tribunal dated 25 April 1947 (file no. NTN 719/47), in accordance with the provisions of and procedure provided for under the Decree of 10 November 1945 (Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland No. 51, item 293), in conjunction with articles 254, 107, 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, heard as a witness the below mentioned former prisoner of the Auschwitz concentration camp, who testified as follows:

Name and surname	Edward Liszka
Age	26
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Citizenship and nationality	Polish
Occupation	student of the medical faculty at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków
Place of residence	[...] Kraków

I was arrested in Kraków, at my parents' apartment on the night of 11–12 November 1940. I spent six weeks in Montelupich prison in Kraków, from where I was transported by car to the Auschwitz concentration camp, where I stayed from 19 December 1940 until 18 January 1945. In Auschwitz, I had no. 7771.

In the initial period I worked for several days in Międzybrodzie (the Porąbka *kommando*), where we built a holiday home for the SS men. About 50 prisoners worked with me there. The *Kommandoführer* was *Oberscharführer* Hössler, who later became *Lagerführer* [head of the camp]. Of my colleagues who worked there with me, Artur Rablin is still alive and

lives in Kraków (Wola Justowska, villa Dąbrowa). Then until April 1941 I was employed in the so-called *Industriehof I* [industrial zone], later called *Kontrollstelle* [control department], and finally *Bauhof* [building yard]. Then, until July 1941, I was employed in a kommando working on the construction of a well (*Brunnenbau*), and then until 1 November 1941, as a juvenile, in a carpentry workshop. Then, I worked in the *Abbruch I kommando* [demolition] in Birkenau until January 1942, in the tannery until May 1942, from 3 May 1942 until 15 May 1943 in the prison kitchen, and from that time until 18 January 1945 in the so-called *Fahrbereitschaft Kommandantur* [transportation headquarters].

I came across Hans Aumeier, who then held the rank of *Hauptsturmführer*, sometime in the summer of 1942, when Aumeier took over the position of first *Schutzhaftlagerführer* in Auschwitz after his predecessor Fritzsche. Among themselves, the prisoners called Aumeier "Łokietek" [Elbow-high] because of his small height. He constantly walked around with a gun, which he pulled out at every opportunity, threatening us with it, shooting in the air, and which he also used to pistol-whip the prisoners. He was an excellent gymnast, which enabled him to kick the prisoners all over their body. He kicked his legs like a ballet dancer.

I often came into contact with him during my work in the prison kitchen, where he often ate and where he came for a doggy bag for his private domestic consumption use, most often meat, and where he also came to try the soup prepared for the prisoners. In order for the SS men to try the soup, there was a special 25-liter pot in the prison kitchen, officially called the *Probekessel*. The soup was not cooked in this pot, but just for the purposes of inspection it was filled with the best portions of soup from the general pots, from which the thickest and fattiest soup was selected for the *Probekessel*. Then the soup in this *Probekessel* was especially seasoned to taste. To improve the taste of this sample soup, we added some food that had been prepared in the prison kitchen for dogs to the test pot. A triple portion was used to prepare the dog food when compared with the prison food. Thus, for example, three times as much meat and fat were added to a 100-liter pot in which dog food was cooked compared with the same pot in which the food for prisoners was cooked. It is not surprising then that the SS men liked the test soup prepared in this way, especially since what was officially called *Frischgemüse* hadn't been added to it – which was actually fresh, green chopped nettle. In many cases, [the SS men] made a statement in writing in the control book that the soup for prisoners was better than the *Eintopf* for the SS men. I didn't notice a single incident when Aumeier would try any soup from general pots for prisoners. While carrying out the inspection of the test pot, Aumeier would

hit the prisoners with the mixing paddle without the slightest reason – simply because at the moment he didn't like the face of some prisoner who was close to hand.

During this period, when I was working in the kitchen, that is during the period of Aumeier's rule, the entire Lublin transport was herded into block 11. Aumeier personally led these people to block 11. And there all of them, about 270 in total, were shot. During this massacre, Aumeier was present in the courtyard of block 11, from where he left after the execution with bloodstained boots. They were shot by *Rapportführers* Palitzsch and Stiewitz.

From the summer of 1942, I remember an execution by hanging. It was the first public execution carried out on two gallows, set in front of the prison kitchen, in the area of fencing separating the kitchen from the rest of the camp. A Warsaw prisoner employed in the camp's painting workshop was hanged – a portly, well-built man whose name I don't remember – and a second, thin, tall Pole also unknown to me. After the verdict was read out (it was an attempted escape), two young hooded prisoners from block 11, most likely from the so-called *Erziehungskompanie* [corrective unit], threw a noose around the necks of the condemned. The mechanism of the gallows was operated by SS men – Boger and Palitzsch, as far as I remember. That skinny prisoner hung poorly, the loop didn't tighten, so that – while still conscious – he jumped from the hole of the trapdoor and leaned against the base of the gallows. Then Boger pulled him by the legs into the pit of the trapdoor, and Aumeier spun the body of the hanged man around so that the loop tightened. The prisoners had to march in their block groups in front of the hanged men, and the corpses hung until the next day, until the morning.

On Aumeier's order, on 28 August 1942, a general liquidation of typhus was carried out in the camp. Over 800 people suffering from typhus, suspected [of having this disease] and convalescing from typhus, who were about 50% of the total, were taken off to the gas and murdered.

Aumeier ordered surveillance and control to be tightened, and people were shut in the bunker for the slightest offenses. In this respect, the regime introduced by Aumeier was much more severe than his predecessor's, Fritzsch. The system of informers (*kapusie*) was propagated during his time.

From my period of working in the kitchen I remember the then *Rottenführer* Schumacher, whom I now recognize quite accurately on the photographs presented to me. During my

stay in the camp I already knew exactly who he was. Schumacher was then employed in the prisoners' food warehouse, then under the supervision of *Unterscharführer* Schebeck. All the prisoners employed in the kitchen were given food from this warehouse, with the exception of meat and potatoes. Schumacher, on any occasion, used to torment the prisoners, but he treated Jews particularly badly. He beat the prisoners inhumanely with whatever came to hand, harassed them with inspections, and reported them to Schebeck for the slightest misdemeanors. As a result of these reports, Schebeck punished the prisoners cruelly. Schumacher did all this with a smirk, in a cunning, deceitful manner, and in relation to his superiors – he was fawning. [I] myself was reported by Schebeck, who found a few onions on me that I had scooped out of the rubbish, thrown out by my colleagues working in sorting [in] "Canada", and I was inhumanly beaten unconscious by Schebeck, and left in the corridor, from where my colleagues brought me to the *Waschraum* [washroom]. When I regained consciousness, Schumacher came to me and with a sneer on his lips asked me if I was still alive ("Lebst du noch?"). Schumacher also used to take bribes. He would only take the best sirloin, sausage and other products, moreover he chose the best things for himself from the Food "Canada" – where items that had been brought in [along with] the transports [of people] for gassing were gathered – and took them away to his apartment. Further information about Schumacher and his activity in Auschwitz can be provided by the following prisoners: Jan Sarapata (Katowice, "Pokrzep się" restaurant), the brothers Artur and Andrzej Rablin, Jerzy Wołosowicz ([Publishing Cooperative] "Czytelnik", Gliwice or Bytom), and student Bolesław Dutka from Nowy Sącz.

While working in the kitchen, I also saw *Oberaufseherin* [senior overseer] Maria Mandl. She always walked around with a weapon, and she came to the kitchen for a doggy bag. The SS men would issue instructions on the basis of which we, the prisoners, had to issue her meat and margarine from the warehouse. Because of this manipulation – i.e. the SS men robbing the kitchen and prison warehouse – the food that ended up with the prisoners in Auschwitz was so bad that prisoners who were restricted to only official portions experienced a very rapid deterioration of their organism. I also came across Mandl during my work at the *Fahrbereitschaft*. She was assigned a car, a yellow Simca. I was employed in refueling. After refueling Mandl demanded that I wash the car. I replied that it wasn't my job. Then Mandl hit me in the face.

From the period of my stay in the camp, in particular from 1942–1944, I remember Kurt Müller, whom we already knew by name, and whom now I recognized in the photograph.

In particular, during Müller's period of service in the *Arbeitseinsatz* [labor deployment office], I remember him beating prisoners and abusing them while the *kommandos* were setting off.

Rottenführer Christian Pfauth, later promoted to *Unterscharführer*, was the head of the car maintenance division at the Auschwitz concentration camp (*Werkstättenleiter Fahrbereitschaft der Kommandantur*). For the slightest offence, and often without any reasonable reason, he would beat the prisoners inhumanely with whatever came to hand, so often with iron tools. At that time he was one of the cruelest, possibly the cruelest SS man in the *Fahrbereitschaft*. Extensive information about Pfauth's activities can be provided by my fellow-prisoners: Tadeusz Żabiński (Ursus near Warsaw), Józef Osiak (Bochnia), Władysław Seroczyński (Warsaw-Praga), Stanisław Żółciak (Warsaw, Centrala Paliw Płynnych), engineer Władysław Wapiński (Bydgoszcz, 20 stycznia 1920 roku Street 22). All attempts made by the prisoners to help themselves, such as any attempt to warm up food, Pfauth clamped down on ruthlessly, and if he found a prisoner heating up some soup, he would pour it away. Pfauth beat me too after catching me smoking. In 1943, Pfauth was dismissed from active duty in the SS after a motorcycle accident, during which he fractured his skull. Later, he often came to Auschwitz as a civilian.

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