



## EDMUND CICHOCKI

12th day of the hearing, 6 December 1947

**Chief judge:** The next witness, Edmund Cichocki.

I must warn the witness of the necessity to speak the truth pursuant to article 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The submission of false testimony is punishable by imprisonment of up to five years. Do the parties submit any requests regarding how the witnesses should be interviewed?

**Prosecutors:** The witness should testify without oath.

**The defense:** Agreed.

**The witness Edmund Cichocki, aged 32, bookkeeper, religious affiliation – Roman Catholic, relationship to the accused – none.**

**Chief judge:** Please look around the room, which of the accused does the witness know? Please provide the Tribunal with the facts and circumstances and anything specific that the witness can say.

(The witness was summoned to testify about the defendant Müller.)

**The witness:** As far as Müller is concerned, as *Blockführer* in the parent camp, he behaved very brutally towards all the prisoners, kicking and beating them at every opportunity, especially while the *kommandos* were marching out to work. That would be all about the defendant Müller.

At the same time, I ask the Supreme National Tribunal for permission to give a brief testimony by revealing individual facts from my life in the camp.

**Chief judge:** The Tribunal is familiar with this state of affairs and I ask for specific facts about more of the accused.

**The witness:** So the block manager was Aumeier, while Grabner and Schumacher headed the political department.



**Chief judge:** I ask for specific facts about Aumeier.

**The witness:** On 26 June 1942, I came to the camp and at first I was directed to block 11, where in the basement there was a bunker. Within four days on block 11, of our transport, which contained 14 Jewish nationals, eight were beaten and tortured to death in the courtyard. Among the SS men who did the beating was the defendant Müller.

On the fifth day after the roll call we were not allowed to return to the block. We didn't know why. Then it was explained that there had been an execution there. On 1 July or 3 July 1942, fifty-odd prisoners were shot at block 11. After being executed, they were taken out on rollwagons pulled by prisoners.

When we wanted to honor the victims by taking off our caps, we got harassed, beaten and kicked.

As for the defendant Breitwieser, up until the point where we still didn't know where he came from, he was as nice to us as a normal German. When we learned that he was born in Lwów and had been a student of one of the Lwów universities, he started talking to us in Polish. But when the second SS man, Grossman, was present, this guy who had been nice when it was just the two of us turned into an animal.

**Chief judge:** Did the witness see this?

**The witness:** I saw this personally.

I wouldn't like to say anything more in my testimony, but I would like to say that, although Grossmann isn't here, in his presence one of the *kapos* beat me senseless so that I ended up with two broken ribs.

I went to town with the defendant Breitwieser to buy some parts for the SS men's blinds. Breitwieser would not allow us prisoners to take the slices of bread that the people of Oświęcim wanted to give us. He beat us when we wanted to take some bread from people, and he even wanted to shoot those people.

During my work, the defendant Nebbe was the company's chief of staff. He often came to the barracks and checked if everything was in order. I was working among the cleaners. So, when he noticed a mess, he beat us and threatened us with a punitive *kommando*.



**Chief judge:** Was the witness beaten by him?

**The witness:** Yes, I was. One day I refused to clean *Sturmmann* Kaufman's shoes. The thing is, we weren't allowed to clean the shoes of any SS men lower than an *Unterscharführer*. I stuck to this command and refused. This man reported me to the defendant Nebbe, who summoned me, gave me a lot of trouble and threatened that I would be sent to a punitive *kommando*, the so-called *Faulgas*.

I often saw the defendant Nebbe beat prisoners who didn't doff their cap to him. We were supposed to honor all SS-men in this way until November 1943. None of the prisoners was allowed to walk on the sidewalk, only in the middle of the road. When Nebbe came across such a prisoner, he beat him unconscious. In the summer of 1943, a dozen or so prisoners escaped from the *Landwirtschaft* [agricultural] *kommando*. The SS command sent a military company in pursuit. At that time, eight prisoners, some of whom were Russian, were shot. Because of the bloodshed and the fact that their stomachs were shot through, the prisoners' numbers were blurred, and the order was given to set up tables and to lay the corpses on them so that the *kommando* marching back from work, on the command "look left" could observe and recognize the dead prisoners. Since then, tattoos were made on the arms, as was already done in Birkenau. Only from June 1943 did tattooing take place in Auschwitz.

The defendant Aumeier often went to block 11, where the bunkers were. People were doing time there for various things, often for things they hadn't done. The defendant Aumeier chose those whom he didn't like from among the individual prisoners and whom he considered more dangerous. The execution would take place on the next day, and the prisoners whose numbers were announced during the morning roll call would also be executed. On our way back from the *kommando* to the camp, we often saw traces of blood on the streets. We knew then that there had been a massacre in the camp. I remember that on 28 October 1942, 270 Poles died as a result of some act of sabotage in the General Government. Most of them were members of the intelligentsia and officers from the Kraków, Radom, Warsaw and Lublin areas. The defendant Aumeier was always present at the executions. Many times I saw it myself, or heard stories, that he played an active role in the execution. There were cases when he took a gun from the hand of the chief executioner of Auschwitz, Palitzsch, and shot the prisoners himself.

**Chief judge:** Did the witness see this himself?



**The witness:** I didn't see it, but my fellow inmates told me, because at that time I was employed on a *kommando* outside the camp. Aumeier was also involved in the mass executions by hanging; I can tell you that because I witnessed how, when three prisoners were hanged on one gallows, Aumeier himself made sure the rope was hung so that they would suffer as long as possible. When 12 prisoners escaped from the *Bauleitung* [construction] *kommando* but were later caught and hanged, the defendant Aumeier himself kicked the stool out from beneath the feet of a prisoner who shouted, "Long live Poland!"

As for the accused Grabner, I encountered him while working at the commandant's office, cleaning the rooms of the judicial department. Since I was in contact with those who worked in the locksmiths' workshops, I made myself some keys to the desk drawer of the manager of the judicial department. I worked there from 5.00 to 6.30 a.m., so I was able to see what was among the papers. I found some photos that illustrate some of the incidents that happened in the camp. One photograph showed a woman hanging from a high voltage wire. The second depicted the moment when a woman ran onto a wire and a soldier shot her with his rifle from a watchtower. This is proof that real massacres were being made of the unfortunate victims, in the sense that the prisoner ended her life with a double death.

Schumacher was present at the time when potatoes were being unloaded from the wagons; I also know him from the commandant's office and as the manager of one of the warehouses. When the bread was being unloaded he beat and kicked the prisoners. He was a sadist, he could make demands on prisoners, but he never was a human being, almost always a brute.

Grabner served in the commandant's office on the ground floor, in one of the offices. No one was allowed to enter his room, even to bring in coal for the stove because he would beat and kick anyone. We were scared of him like we were afraid of fire. He was the master of life and death. He was often involved in executions with Aumeier.

I recall one fact from my stay in the hospital on block 21, where I had just had a hernia operation. It was at the end of January 1944. At 2.30 a.m. a partisan from Bielsko who had been arrested in the camp was brought in; I don't recall his name. I remember Grabner was there. The camp doctor Dehring was summoned to perform an operation but it turned out that the detainee had been seriously wounded and that his guts had been shot to pieces. Grabner gave Dehring the order to save the man. After a four-hour operation, a 76 cm



section of his bowels was chopped off but it saved him. Through two weeks of recovery, he started to come back to himself, eat normally, come back to life. In the third week he was called to the political department. There he was interrogated several times, and in the meantime he stayed in the bunker. Two weeks after his stay in the bunker, he was taken again to the political department to extract the final testimony needed to liquidate these partisans, after which Grabner personally shot him.

**Chief judge:** Did the witness see this?

**The witness:** I saw the detainee in the hospital, how he suffered, and as for the very fact of killing, there were other prisoners present whose names I can't recall at the moment, first of all, because it was a long time ago. Furthermore, I didn't know them all by name, but they told me that.

**Chief judge:** Are there any questions?

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** The witness testified that he worked at the *Unterkunftkammer*. What function did this facility have?

**The witness:** Accommodation of the SS service in the camp, it was the accommodation section.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** Where did the witness meet the defendant Breitwieser?

**The witness:** In the *Unterkunftkammer kommando*.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** What was Breitwieser's role there?

**The witness:** Initially he was the section commander, then the deputy of the *Kommandoführer*.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** That means that he was the manager of the warehouse?

**The witness:** Yes.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** What was kept in this warehouse of Breitwieser's?

**The witness:** Various things, but in particular toiletries, woolen and flannel blankets.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** Where was the cyclone stored?



**The witness:** I can't answer that because I don't know.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** Does the witness know *Entwesungskammer* [disinfection chamber]?

**The witness:** I do.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** Was the cyclone not stored there?

**The witness:** I don't know, there were all the things left after the Jewish transports.

**Prosecutor Szewczyk:** Did Breitwieser work there?

**The witness:** During my work at the *Unterkunftkammer* he only drove the rollwagon to the *Entwesungskammer* and from there he chose the various things he needed for the *Unterkunftkammer*.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** The witness talked about this case involving the operation and later execution of a prisoner in the political department. Did the witness not mistake the date? Grabner departed from the Auschwitz camp in November 1943. Is the witness certain that it was in January 1944?

**The witness:** As for the date I am sure. Defendant Grabner, although he was indeed transferred, was often seen in Auschwitz nevertheless.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Grabner showed up there sporadically?

**The witness:** Yes.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Does the witness recall Josten? Did you see him at the gate and how did he behave towards the prisoners?

**The witness:** He was very violent; he used to beat and kick us.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** What for?

**The witness:** For example, not holding rank properly.

**Defense attorney Kossek:** The witness testified that the prisoners had to remove their caps in front of the SS men, and whoever didn't take his off was beaten.



**The witness:** Yes.

**Defense attorney Kossek:** And in November 1943 the prisoners didn't have to take off their caps. Was that on Liebehenschel's order?

**The witness:** I heard that Liebehenschel ordered the caps to be taken off only in front of the officers, and when the whole *kommando* marched, only the leader, the kapo, doffed his cap.