



PIOTR JELEŃ

Presiding Judge: Next witness, Piotr Jeleń.

Presiding Judge: I am advising the witness in accordance with art. 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the obligation to speak the truth. Making false declarations is punishable by a conviction with a maximum penalty of 5-year imprisonment. Do the parties wish to file motions as regards the procedure of interviewing the witness?

Prosecution: We are exempting the witness from taking the oath.

Defense: As are we.

Witness: Piotr Jeleń, 27 years of age, fitter, Roman Catholic, no relationship to the parties.

Presiding Judge: What can you say about the conditions at the Auschwitz camp and about the defendants?

Witness: In May 1942, I met defendant Aumeier. I was a *Bademeister* [washroom keeper] and I worked in the bathroom. I was close to all incoming and outgoing transports. In 1942, I was beaten by Aumeier and I witnessed his atrocities. Any SS man at the camp could decide if a prisoner would live or die. After selections, prisoners were taken to the *Blockstube* and then to the gas chambers. Defendant Aumeier ordered that all *Blockführers* [block leaders] give the numbers of the "Muslims". People waited for the transport outdoors, even for 24 hours, with nothing to eat or drink.

As for the head of the political department, Grabner, he beat and kicked people, and one particular incident I can recall is when one woman, who was on a transport from Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, fainted. These were families who had provided shelter to Jews.

In 1943, in late fall, Liebehenschel took over as camp commandant. He came to the camp and ordered a general selection, both at the hospital and at the camp. He promised that the people selected would go on vacation and then to work, that they would be issued with new clothes, shoes and utility items. He came to the camp himself and asked people if they had everything, since they would not get anything where they were going.

They were taken to crematorium III, where they were incinerated, and two weeks later the uniforms they had been issued with prior to their departure arrived. Next to the bathroom was the *Gaskammer*, i.e. so-called delousing room, where clothes were cleaned. The facility's head was Paul, who was later transferred to Rajsko, where he worked together with Mussfeldt. In February 1944, I was moved to Rajsko, where I worked as an overseer of various labor sections. Consequently, I witnessed all the atrocities that happened. Often, I saw Mussfeldt there, often accompanied by the head of the women's camp. Mussfeldt would come to the "sauna", where I worked. Transports of Hungarians came in at that time, 15 or 16 trains. Some of them were taken to the gas chambers straight away, and only a small number was sent to the camp. I was often at the crematorium, where I saw gassed people. At that time I worked as an assembler, welding baskets, through which the cyclone was thrown into the crematorium [actually a gas chamber]. I saw that these people were not gassed but ground to death. When the crematoria were full, some people were taken to pits behind crematorium IV, where they were to be incinerated. They were taken to the forest, to these pits. Children under the age of one were not gassed. They were loaded onto *rollwagens* [rolling carts] and then thrown straight into the fire, alive. In 1942, when I was at the main camp after the bathroom was built, it turned out that the furnaces were malfunctioning because the water in the boiler was hot at the bottom and cold on the surface. Aumeier, through *kapo* Bruno, then gave the order to bring human bones from the crematorium and insulate the boiler. These were bones of people from the Lublin transport. I was told this by Morawa, a fellow prisoner of mine. This is all I can say.

Presiding Judge: Are there any questions?

Prosecutor Szewczyk: You mentioned that the officers were accompanied by a *Lagerführerin*. Who was she?

Witness: She was defendant Mandl. She sorted prisoners from a given transport herself, sending them to the left or to the right. I also need to add that defendant Mandl also took an active part in executions at the Czech camp, the so-called family camp.

Prosecutor Pęchalski: You claim that defendant Mussfeldt used to hang around the crematorium. Where and when exactly did you see him?

Witness: Defendant Mussfeldt was present at crematoria II and III.



Prosecutor Pęchalski: So he was head of the *kommando* serving at the crematorium?

Witness: Yes, he was head. He was assisted by numerous *kapos*, one of whom was a Jew. This Jew tried to persuade Mussfeldt to have me gassed, too, because I was not doing my job of welding the baskets well.

Prosecutor Pęchalski: What happened when the crematorium was idle after the chimney malfunctioned and gassing or incinerating was not possible?

Witness: Bodies were transported to the pit and incinerated there. It often happened that Mussfeldt did not have enough people to gas and would then go to the "sauna" and pick people so he would have an even number.

Prosecutor Pęchalski: Did he select these people himself?

Witness: Yes, he selected these people himself.

Prosecutor Brandys: Do you know anything about sending working *kommandos* to work at "Buna"? Who ordered it and how many people did such a *kommando* comprise?

Witness: The transports of prisoners who went to work at "Buna" reached several thousand people. Mostly healthy and strong people who were fit for work were selected, but they returned to the camp within three months as "Muslims". Then, they would undergo a selection and be taken to be gassed. The list of these "Muslims" was passed to a *Blockführer*, who then gave it to the *Lagerführer* to sign.

Prosecutor Brandys: As regards children burned alive, where were they from?

Witness: They were Hungarian children.

Prosecutor Brandys: What did the incineration procedure look like?

Witness: When the parents went to the "sauna" to clean up, the children in diapers were left in the field and the parents were told they would be able to collect them when they left the "sauna". In the meantime, these children were loaded onto a *rollwagen* and thrown into the fire alive.

Presiding judge: Are there any questions for the witness?



Defense attorney Kossek: Which block were you in?

Witness: Block 22.

Defense attorney Kossek: Until when?

Witness: Until the general delousing of the main camp, that is approximately until August 1942.

Defense attorney Kossek: And then?

Witness: In block 15.

Defense attorney Kossek: Could you move around freely during the day?

Witness: Yes, even at night.

Defense attorney Kossek: On what grounds?

Witness: Because I worked at the bathroom, where people cleaned up during the day and at night.

Defense attorney Kossek: Where did selections take place?

Witness: Depending on whether it was summer or winter, by the kitchen or at the bathroom.

Defense attorney Kossek: Where did the selections attended by Liebehenschel take place?

Witness: At the bathroom.

Defense attorney Kossek: Did you see him personally?

Witness: That is correct.

Defense attorney Kossek: At what time of the year and day?

Witness: In October 1943. For the entire day and night. They were moved off in the morning.

Defense attorney Kossek: What prisoners underwent the selection? Were they males? Were they adult or young? Old or sick?

Witness: All those that we called "Muslims" were set aside.



Defense attorney Kossek: Did you see them transported to Rajsko?

Witness: That is correct. I knew they were going to Rajsko because vans arrived from the crematorium.

Defense attorney Kossek: How did you tell that these vans had arrived from the crematorium?

Witness: Because they were special vans.

Defense attorney Kossek: How soon were the clothes supposed to return?

Witness: Within a week.

Defense attorney Kossek: Did you see these clothes?

Witness: Yes, because they were disinfected in the bathroom.

Defense attorney Kossek: Was this in October? Was it earlier or later?

Witness: It could not have been earlier. Later, if anything.

Defense attorney Kossek: Did you know Liebehenschel well? When did he start serving on the camp?

Witness: In the fall of 1943.

Defense attorney Kossek: Did you have any previous contact with Liebehenschel?

Witness: I did not.

Defense attorney Kossek: And did you see him regularly?

Witness: I did.

Defense attorney Kossek: In what situations?

Witness: I saw him walking around the camp.

Defense attorney Rappaport: You worked at the bathroom. Would defendant Dinges come there on multiple occasions?



Witness: He did not, because he fulfilled a duty at the *Bahnhof* [train station].

Defense attorney Rappaport: Do you know him?

Witness: More or less.

Defense attorney Rappaport: Did he file penal reports against prisoners or did he torture them?

Witness: I cannot tell exactly. I only heard that he was good at rustling things up.

Presiding judge: Does the defense have any questions?

Defense: No.

Presiding Judge gives defendant Aumeier permission to speak.

Defendant Aumeier: Your Honors, I am asking for permission to ask the witness some questions, because I did not understand parts of his statement. If I heard correctly, you made a mention of the bones of dead people at the crematorium. May I ask for more details concerning this issue?

Witness: In 1942, people could not clean up because the water was freezing. Bruno took this issue to Aumeier, and in response Aumeier ordered the bones to be transported and used for insulating the boiler. These bones are at that boiler at Auschwitz to this day.

Defendant Aumeier: What was supposed to be fixed with these bones?

Witness: The bathroom furnace was very tall and had the capacity of two boilers. The bathroom was essentially a shed with a one-layer roof and the furnace was just below the roof tiles. Because of that, when it was fall, the water would cool off. Consequently, Aumeier ordered that the furnace be insulated at the top, below the roof, with ash, so to prevent the water from cooling off.

Defendant Aumeier: Responding to the witness's statement, I would like to state that in such a case I would have given the order to use the ash from the kitchen for insulating the furnace. There was a lot of ash in the kitchen and it was located considerably closer to the bathroom than the crematorium was. I never gave such an order to the *Lagerältester*



[camp elder] because it would have been against my conscience to use the ashes of the dead to insulate the furnace.

As regards the showers, I also wanted to say that on my arrival at the camp there was no washing facility there at all, and it was only on my initiative, and in cooperation with the prisoners from the constructions division and camp elders, that a boiler started to be used which had the capacity of more or less 5,000 liters. It was also myself that ordered the prisoners to put this boiler in the yard – without consulting the construction foreman – at night and install a furnace at the shed which connected blocks 1 and 2. I ordered a sign to be affixed which read, “Keep out. Danger of infection”. This was done to prevent the construction foreman from entering this building. I just wanted to say that I personally made every effort to create any opportunity at all for prisoners to be able to wash themselves.

Presiding Judge: Are there any further questions? (Nobody has further questions.)

The witness is excused.