

C. Who Gave the Order?

Zygmusz was saved. His mother and the chosen unfortunates, were locked in the basements of the houses of the "Colony". The running about still continued. Who was saved? Who was taken prisoner? Who could still be saved?

The happiest were the plumbers, they all passed. Henia cried with joy in Norbert's arms and Josef took a bottle of vodka from the hiding place to celebrate their success.¹ Kromołowski, who had been chosen for death by his foreman, was saved at the last moment by Director Lütt, thanks to the intervention of Bernard Kurland. Alfred hid on his bed and was tormented, where is Stela? He was not the only one who was tormented. Jadzia Abramzon was losing her mind. What about Iziol? He was sick, they left him in the infirmary for two days. And where is he now?

Meanwhile, Degenhardt held a census at the ul. Garibaldi warehouses and announced that anyone, who wanted to come to HASAG-Apparatebau, had to stand by the truck. About a hundred people gathered, including the last of the policemen, with Henryk Parasol at the head. But, when the group reached the factory gate, the truck headed straight for the "Colony", where the *Werkschutz* crammed everyone into the basements.

At the same time, two Schupo men were sent to arrest Bernard Kurland, but Lütt resisted his arrest. According to Jurek Einhorn, two days later, Degenhardt's emissaries appeared again, this time with an order from the higher authorities, according to which it was forbidden to leave a Jew on the factory premises, who had previously been in the police or a member of the *Judenrat*, and Kurland was accused of collaborating with the underground in the ghetto.

According to the stories of several *Werkschutz*, who were present at the event, Kurland refused Lütt's help, and to Degenhardt's complaints about disloyalty he replied, "Your time is coming. You can kill me and other Jews, but you cannot stop time. Your fate has already been decided. You and all the others will have to bear responsibility for all the crimes you have committed so far and will commit in the future!"

Even the German guards were impressed by Kurland's proud stance and fearless words.²

"For a long time, we mourned Bernard Kurland in the camp", wrote Jurek Einhorn. "Perhaps the greatest hero of the Częstochowa ghetto. He was a brave man, always helping others, and despite the terror and our miserable situation, he knew how to maintain self-respect and boundless devotion to other prisoners."³

¹ Lustiger, *The Ups and Downs of Life*, p. 396.

² Einhorn, *Wybrany aby żyć*, p.142

³ There, p.143

The final chapter of the tragedy occurred when the *Werkschutz* began to take the people out of the cellars and into trucks.

When it was the turn of the police, Degenhardt gave them a speech about disloyalty. The police, young and strong, did not want to get into the trucks and returned blows to the *Werkschutz*, who could not control them. The policeman Kornbrod, who fought like a lion until he was subdued by a bullet, did the most.

Finally, when the *Werkschutz* had tied the hands of all the policemen, the manager Opper[n] appeared and hit them all on the head with his heavy hammer. Their clothes were torn off and their bodies were naked and bleeding. They were brought to a cemetery and shot. Some were buried alive.⁴

The echoes of July's selection had not yet died down.

After the victims were dragged to the trucks taking them to their deaths, they left behind several farewell inscriptions, scratched with fingernails on the walls of the basement. And the next day, Jadzia, who had not found her husband Izio, approached the German ward supervisor, "You are a woman like me and will help me! Can you bring me information about what happened to my husband?"

The next day, the supervisor approached Jadzia and quietly told her, "Your husband is not alive." The bitter news also reached Alfred - Stela was with Helenka Tenenbaum and her younger brother, when two Schupo men arrived and murdered all three of them.⁵ For Alfred, his world collapsed.

So, who gave the order to murder Jews, who were already in HASAG-Apparatebau, who were seeking refuge there, a place of safety? Was it really Degenhardt?

But, on the factory grounds, all the powers of government were in the hands of the two directors, Director Lütt and Brettschneider, and the *Werkschutz* was directly subordinate to them. Degenhardt did not have permission to conduct a selection amongst the workers on the factory grounds without the permission of the management. The selection was conducted by German foremen, under the supervision of the *Werkschutz* and with the full consent of the two chief directors.

And the evidence - in the trial, held in Leipzig in 1949, the heaviest accusation against the German foremen at the HASAG factories in Częstochowa was their active participation in the July selection.

⁴ Testimony of Szmul Pelta, YVA, M.1./E/862.

⁵ Kromołowski, Wspomnienia, p.723; Klein, Not now, not ever, p.20

H. Abart, b. d. F-a HASAG Leim. Ver. tag Eigenschaft Tschenstochau Eingang 23 II 1943 Br. R. Nr. Tschenstochau

Mitteilung an alle

Ab 1. März 1943 wird unsere Firma unter der neuen Firmenbezeichnung

Hasag Eisen- und Metallwerke G.m.b.H.
Apparatebau Tschenstochau

Tschenstochau

aufzutreten.

Die postalisch notwendigen Änderungen sind in die Wege geleitet. Bitte teilen Sie allen mit Ihnen Korrespondierenden mit, daß unsere Anschrift sich - wie oben angegeben - geändert hat. Die neue Adresse soll in erster Linie allen Firmen, die mit dem Einkauf in Verbindung stehen bekanntgemacht werden.

Für die Büros sind Unterschriftenstempel im Sekretariat erhältlich.

Prokuristen in dem neuen Hasag Eisen- und Metallwerk sind nach wie vor die Herren:

Dir. Dr. Bretschneider und
Dir. Lüth.

Handlungsbevollmächtigter ist:

Herr Thierbach.

Neue Briefbogen usw. werden in Leipzig gedruckt und über das Sekretariat zur Verfügung gestellt.

Tschenstochau, am 23. 2. 1943
Lth./Bo.

Verteiler: (bitte abzeichnen!)

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