

A former German guard from the Belzec concentration camp to be tried by court

The number three on the current list of most wanted war criminals of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, Samuel Kunz (aged 88), was a guard at the Nazi concentration camp in Belzec (Bełżec) in 1942–1943. This former SS member would probably not have been accused had he not participated as a witness at a trial of another camp guard, John Demjanjuk.

Samuel Kunz, who has lived close to Bonn since the war, was a guard at the Belzec camp between January 1942 and July 1943. He was transferred there, like Demjanjuk, from the SS training camp in Trawniki. They had both previously served in the Soviet Army and were taken prisoners by the Nazis. In Belzec, Kunz reportedly took part in killing 430,000 people and shot dead ten by himself. Since the war, although he had not been concealing his identity and had been wanted by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, he has lived near Bonn and was working for one of the ministries. He has taken part as a witness several times at the trials of 'more significant' Nazi criminals.

The indictment against Kunz was brought only as a result of pressure from public opinion and the media, who noticed that his story was almost identical to that of Demjanjuk. With one difference: Demjanjuk is an ethnic Ukrainian, and Kunz is an ethnic German from the Volga region. Any use of double standards would confirm the argumentation raised by Demjanjuk's family, who claim that the trial is a propaganda show intended to lift part of the responsibility for war crimes from Germans. <ciechan>