

## EDWARD OSIŃSKI

Warsaw, 13 March 1946. Judge Halina Wereńko, member of the Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, interviewed the person named below as a witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, of the contents of art. 107 and art. 115 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the witness testified as follows:

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| <b>Name</b>                  | Edward Osiński                    |
| <b>Names of parents</b>      | Michał and Aniela                 |
| <b>Date of birth</b>         | 1 October 1898 in Warsaw          |
| <b>Occupation</b>            | bricklayer                        |
| <b>Education</b>             | three grades of elementary school |
| <b>Place of residence</b>    | [...]                             |
| <b>Religious affiliation</b> | Roman Catholic                    |
| <b>Criminal record</b>       | none                              |

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At the moment of the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, I was in my flat at Wolska Street 124 with my family. The properties number 124 and 126 on Wolska Street are only separated by a fence. The house at number 124 stands away from the street; closer to the street is a forge adjacent to the property number 126.

On 5 August, I was in the basement of Wolska Street 124 with my wife, child and the Bytow family – a total of about 13 people. At around 10 a.m. we heard desperate cries, I could recognize such words as: "Gentlemen, please, spare our lives," then I heard shots and grenade explosions. At first I thought that those were sounds of fighting between the insurgents and the Germans.

I went with Feliks Bytow to the first floor, to their flat, where the windows faced Wolska Street. I could see from those windows that soldiers in German uniform were driving out the inhabitants of the house at number 123. They were a group of men, women and children, up to 150 people, they all had their hands raised, some carrying, with difficulty, bundles strapped to their clothes. There were corpses of men, women and children in front of the forge, scattered irregularly, lying on top of one another.

We went down to the basement with Bytow and asked the family to keep quiet so as not to draw the attention of the soldiers to our group. While in the basement, I heard single shots and grenade explosions. I suppose that the soldiers, having ordered the civilians to leave the house, threw grenades into the flats to kill those who had stayed. They had also set fire to the houses.

As I found out later from the residents of nearby houses, there had been a mass execution in front of the forge between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., the executed being civilians from houses 114, 115, 120, 121, 123 and 128 on Wolska Street and Grabowskiego Street.

The houses at numbers 114, 115 and 123 Wolska Street were large; as for the house at number 120, it only had eight apartments. Only one family, by the name of Maczek, lived in the house at number 121 (they were all killed at the forge). Only a single family – that of Feliks Jaroń – lived in the house at number 126. Jaroń's wife, mother-in-law and child aged one all suffocated in the basement from smoke when the soldiers set fire to the house.

The house at Wolska 124, where I stayed, is small; this may be the reason the soldiers did not come after us. They only shot four people called forth from the Pruszkowskis' flat where [illegible] someone from the family looked out through the casement window. They were all shot near the first staircase.

While in the basement, around noon I noticed that our house was burning on the opposite side. Around 5 p.m., I left the basement with the group of 12 people; we went out on Wolska Street. In the street I saw a car with two German soldiers of superior rank; I think that one of them was a general. An officer was standing to attention in front of the car, there was also a group of soldiers turned in that direction. Having walked about ten meters, we were spotted.

The car drove away and the officer approached us, walking among the corpses lying next to the forge, and led us onto the tram track on Wolska Street. He told us, through the interpreter, that we were lucky because if we had left the apartment five minutes earlier, we would have been shot.

But now we would live. He asked whether there were still people hiding in basements, walked along the windows and shouted to them to come out. About six people came out on his call.

At that point, the officer let us take some belongings from the apartment. Then, once a group of about 20 people had gathered, men were separated from women with children and set on the tram track. After a while, four men were called forth, including Stanisław Szymczak (who went mad and died two weeks later in Germany), Feliks Bytow (who still has not returned from Germany) and Jan Sobkowicz (whose address I do not know).

Our group was led to the lot in front of the forge, where the corpses were lying, and we were told to carry them to the lot at Wolska Street 122. At the time of my arrival there were already 30 civilian men carrying those corpses. We carried them until 7 p.m. There were more than 700 bodies in the lot at the forge; some of them burned in the lot at the forge, having caught fire from the fence of the house at number 126.

I saw German soldiers shooting two boys, aged about 14, who were stealing valuables from the corpses (they were ripping off earrings and rings).

At around 5 p.m. the soldiers led our group to the Sowiński Park, where earlier that same day there had been a mass execution of local people. I heard that the residents of the following houses were shot there: Wolska Street 129 (Hankiewicz's house), numbers 6, 8, 10, 15 Elekcyjna Street and Wolska Street 132 (the magistrate's house).

At the time of my arrival, the sidewalk on Wolska Street adjacent to the Sowiński Park fence, from the statue of the Virgin Mary all the way to the entrance gate, was littered with corpses lying on top of one another to a height of one meter. We could only walk on the road. There were also corpses in the park.

There could have been approximately 1500 corpses. Our group was told to carry the corpses and stack them into two piles in the Sowiński Park. Having completed the task, our group of four men – myself and three others, from the house at Wolska Street 124 – was sent to the police station.

Near the Orthodox cemetery, we were told to take a woman's body lying there and throw it onto a pile of stacked corpses of men in "blue police" uniforms. There were about 17 corpses lying in that pile.

Later, I learned that those police officers had put up resistance at the police station and were shot by a German unit.

We were taken to St. Lawrence's church. In the sacristy were the corpses of the sacristan in his surplice and of a woman. The corpse of Father Krygier was lying on the altar steps and there were six more corpses of men inside the church. We were told to put the corpses by the bell tower.

When we entered the church and later, while we were carrying the corpses, I could see three priests (whose names I do not know) and about 10 other men standing against the wall of the vicarage, all with their faces turned to the wall.

When we had carried all the bodies, a group of women arrived, including our women. They told us that they had been held in the square in front of the Orthodox cemetery. The church filled up.

On 5 August, at around 9 p.m., all the healthy people were told to leave; we were then told, including my family and myself, to walk to the transit camp in Pruszków. The elderly and the wounded were ordered to remain in the church. They vanished without a trace.

On 12 February 1945, when I returned to Warsaw from Germany, I found out that a grave had been dug up next to the bell tower of St. Lawrence's church, from which 40 bodies were exhumed. I suppose that those could have been the corpses of the elderly and the wounded who had stayed in the church.

Elżbieta Wituska and Helena Seliga survived the execution at the forge. Several people from the house at Elekcyjna Street 8 survived the execution in Sowiński Park. As far as I know, all the residents of the house at Elekcyjna Street 10 were killed.

At that the report was concluded and read out.