

## MICHALINA SZELAĞOWSKA

Warsaw, 17 March 1945. Judge Alicja Germasz, delegated to the Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, interviewed the person specified below as a witness. Having advised the witness of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the gravity of the oath, the judge swore the witness in accordance with Art. 109 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The witness testified as follows:

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Name and surname	Michalina Szelağowska
Date of birth	24 October 1903
Names of parents	Jan and Stanisława
Occupation	nurse
Education	nursing school
Place of residence	Warsaw [...]
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none

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I have worked as a nurse in St Lazarus Hospital since 1934. During the uprising I was in the hospital, as usual. During the first days after the outbreak of the uprising, we had no fighting or insurgent posts on the hospital grounds. Only occasionally individual insurgents would come by and they would throw grenades or shoot machine guns at Germans in the direction of Wolska Street. Apart from that, heavy bombardment from airplanes and tanks could be heard throughout our entire district. Some of the projectiles fell on hospital buildings and in the garden.

In the building marked on the drawing with a number 1, there was as shelter with around two hundred people in it. This number included eighty patients brought down by the staff

from the upper floors of the building – from the male dermatology and venereal diseases ward and from the female internal medicine ward – around forty members of the hospital staff with their families, as well as a considerable number of people from nearby houses, who sought shelter there. In building number 2 there were around one hundred hospital patients (male and female venereal diseases ward) and the wounded. In building number 4 there were around three hundred people: hospital patients, wounded Poles and Germans, as well as a number of hospital staff members with their families and random people from the neighbouring houses – all of them in the basements of the building.

On 5 August 1944 in the evening, we were warned by courier girls from the uprising that the Germans were coming, and that whoever wanted to could retreat to Karol and Maria Hospital.

At that time I was in building number 4 from the side of Leszno Street.

At the same time, two patients from building number 1 came running to us saying that Germans had entered building number 1, had looted watches and jewellery, and then had killed everyone gathered there, shooting at them with machine guns and throwing grenades.

They gave the name of an orderly, Adela Szulc, who had been one of the first to die there. They were not able to indicate any other names.

At that time a number of people from our building went to Karol and Maria Hospital. However, a few doctors and all of the nurses stayed with the patients. Right after that, Germans armed with grenades and automatic machine guns burst into our building, all of them drunk. They were from the SS, as we were told by the wounded German soldiers staying in the hospital. They started to throw grenades into the basements that we were in. But on the intervention of the wounded German soldiers they stopped. They ordered everyone to put their hands up; the wounded Germans soldiers began asking them not to kill us, because both the doctors and the nurses had taken good care of them. At that the SS men ordered the nurses and doctors to gather together, and all the rest separately. Then they took everyone apart from the doctors, nurses, and those patients who were unable to walk, out to the hospital garden.

I don't know what happened to them later.

We, the nurses, doctors, and a few individuals that had joined us, were taken to the kitchens located in the basement. We spent an hour under guard there, and then we were escorted to the garden. On the way, a few people were detached from us: the wife and two cousins of the hospital pharmacist Ignacy Giedroyć, the hospital porter, 65-year-old Piotr Chmielewski, and a hospital clerk (I don't remember his name). All of them disappeared without a trace.

We were then herded past hospital building number 2. Passing by, through the windows of the well-lit basements I saw that many of the wounded and many patients had been killed. They lay inertly in beds, on the ground, and moreover there were numerous corpses of hospital patients in front of the building – women, men, children (I am unable to indicate a number).

We were then herded past building number 1, which was on fire, to Wolska Street and then to St Stanislaus Hospital. There were forty-eight of us from the St Lazarus Hospital staff. A week later we were given permission by a German commanding officer stationed in St Stanislaus Hospital to go back to St Lazarus Hospital to get our belongings. A few of us went there, escorted by SS men. When I entered the hospital grounds, I saw that the buildings had been burnt down; throughout the entire garden there were very many corpses, often with signs of burning. From the basement of building number 4, where I went to get my belongings, the patients we had left there had already been taken away, there were only a few corpses on the ground.

Then I went back to St Stanislaus Hospital, from where on 16 September 1944 I managed to get outside of Warsaw.

As far as I know, to date there has been no news of the patients who had stayed in the hospital or of the people who had been in the hospital. I was told by Nurse Maria Szylm (I don't know her address), who had come back with me to the hospital for our belongings, that she had recognised Dr Lucyna Szymańska among the victims.

The following people left St Lazarus Hospital with me: Dr Piotr Zalewski (Pruszków, health-care centre); Stefania Maciejewska, nurse (Warsaw, Marshal Piłsudski Hospital); Kazimiera Kidzin, nurse (the same hospital); Kalinowska (I don't remember her first name), residing in St Lazarus Hospital; and other people whom I cannot remember at the moment.

The report was read out.