



ZOFIA JACKOWSKA

On 18 October 1945, in Warsaw, Investigating Judge Mikołaj Halfter interviewed the person named below as a witness. Having advised the witness of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the significance of the oath, the judge swore the witness, who then testified as follows:

Name and surname	Zofia Jackowska
Age	35 years old
Names of parents	Józef and Anna
Place of residence	Warsaw, Litewska Street 4, flat 29
Occupation	living with husband employed at the City Tramway company
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none

On 1 August 1944, I left our flat on Litewska Street with my husband, Marian, for Rakowiecka Street, where we had an allotment. It was 4:45 p.m. when we were on Puławska Street opposite the aircraft barracks. The first shots resounded. We gathered at the tramway station at Puławska Street 13/15. We stayed there until 12:00 on 2 August, when the Germans came into the station and led us out together with other people hiding in the aircraft barracks at the junction of Puławska and Rakowiecka streets. Initially, we were put in the office of the air regiment command, all in one room. There were around 70 of us, men and women, taken from Mokotów station. On that day, around 9:00 p.m., they led us all out of the office, separated the men from the women and took us into a building (in the barracks grounds) that was used as a military prison. There, I was placed in a cell with five adult women and one five year-old girl. We were given food: black coffee, bread with marmalade.



We spent the night in that cell and the next day, in the morning – because the little girl started crying, complaining that it was stuffy and she was afraid because of the shooting all around – the guard opened the door onto the corridor for us and allowed us to communicate with other women in nearby cells.

From that building they took us, the women, to the Gestapo HQ on aleja Szucha, escorted by soldiers. There, we were led into the courtyard, where there were many Germans and Ukrainians. They started to beat us (only the women who had been arrested were in the courtyard) with the handles of their guns and kick us, shouting: “rebels, where are your husbands.” We stayed in the courtyard for half an hour and were later taken inside the building and put on a staircase with bars. I noticed that my husband was standing on the other side of the bars, facing the wall, leaning with his hands against the wall. I noticed that something was flowing down from him and, being very anxious and supposing that it was blood, I fainted. I was brought back to my senses, but when I looked at the corridor where I had seen my husband just a moment previously, and when I noticed that there was a table there and on it a whip, I lost consciousness again. I do not remember how I got to the other side of the bars to the place where my husband had stood before. He was no longer there. When I looked at the wall and saw my husband’s handprints, I fainted again.

When I woke up, they started interrogating me. An interpreter translated my answers to the questions. I was asked what my husband did for a living, where he worked, where we lived. I explained that we were walking to our allotment to get some potatoes and I showed them the baskets I had with me. I noted that my husband worked in a transportation company, and to the question of why I lived on Litewska Street (from which all Poles had previously been expelled), I explained that I was a tailor and that I sewed privately for the host of the Gestapo casino – Marta Basińska – and for her boss Waldemar Sterk (reportedly a Czech; I learned his surname later). After the interrogation, they took my ID card and put me in a cell where, as I noticed, there was also my husband. The cell didn’t have a window, nor did it have a door; it was separated from the corridor by bars. It was lit only by light coming from the corridor.

(Here the judge showed the witness a photograph of a cell, a so-called tram, at the Gestapo HQ, after which the witness continued). This is exactly the type of cell I was put in. I sat down on a bench like the one in the photograph, with my back to the entrance. Those benches stood in two rows. There was a free space in one of the rows, so I sat there, I saw



that my husband was sitting directly in front of me. In that cell, on one of the benches, I noticed the same five-year-old girl who had been with me in the aircraft barracks. I noticed that the wall next to me was splattered with blood. I saw writing and signatures on it. After around half an hour, the interpreter, who had translated my testimonies, called out my husband's name. When my husband got up, the interpreter asked where he had been born and where he worked. After my husband answered, the interpreter showed him a photograph and asked who was on it. My husband said that it was his wife's photograph. The interpreter announced at that point that we would be released and that they would employ us. At that moment, a Gestapo man came into the cell and said that they would release us because I sewed for Marta Basińska and for her boss Sterk. He spoke in Polish and repeated the name Sterk twice, apparently so that I memorize it (I hadn't known it before). I later learned that his name was Freilich from Bytom. Next, the interpreter asked my husband what had been taken from him and he returned some things, including a watch. Afterwards, my husband and I were led to another cell, where there was nobody else, with one bed with a pallet, a table and a chair. Two blankets were brought for us, one by the interpreter, the other by Freilich. A prisoner, a Cossack – a Ukrainian – brought us black coffee and a piece of bread each. After two hours, the same interpreter came to the cell (I don't remember his surname) and informed us that commander Sterk would arrive shortly. After a couple of minutes, a number of Gestapo men came into the cell and asked us if we were able and willing to work. We said yes. When I indicated that my husband did not have dry clothes, because he had previously been kept in the rain for three and half hours, Sterk sent a soldier with me to our flat on Litewska Street. I brought clothes, my husband got dressed and we were taken to aleja Szucha 16, where the main supply warehouse for the Gestapo was located. We were placed in a basement there with 11 Polish men and women. When we were leaving the cell, I heard the voice of the five-year-old girl I mentioned before, from the neighboring solitary cell. I realized that she wouldn't be executed because only those who were supposed to stay alive were put into solitary cells, as I learned later.

I stayed with my husband in the house at number 16 until 1 September. During that time we were given different tasks. On 1 September 1944, we – six Poles – were taken to Kompina in the Łowicz region, where we worked in a center for Gestapo men.

During my stay at aleja Szucha 16, on 4 August, I was told to tidy up the Gestapo officers' casino in the house number 14 or 12 on aleja Szucha. When I was tidying up, a waitress,

Maria from Poznań, arrived (I don't remember her surname). I had met her through Marta Basińska two weeks before the uprising, and she was also my customer. She showed me people through the window (there were 300 of them, of different ages, old people, small boys, apparently the blind were walking as well because there were people holding white canes. I also saw a paralytic, because he was in a wheelchair), being led from the direction of the Gestapo HQ into the ruins of the house between the one I was in and Bagatela Street. The waitress began crying, saying that her brothers had also been arrested and that they would probably also be executed. She led me into a room whose windows looked out towards Bagatela Street and we watched the events from that window. I saw that the arrested were led in a group into the ruins, they undressed quickly (they were some 60-80 meters away, it was daytime between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., I saw everything well), they were then arranged in rows and shot, apparently with machine guns, because I heard gunshots; the shots were serial. I saw that – after the shots sounded – the people arranged in rows, naked, fell. I saw that other people stood to the side with stretchers (I later learned that they were Polish prisoners from Litewska Street 14; I later talked to them), who carried the bodies of those killed to one spot after each group had been executed, placing them on a pyre in the ruined house. After the execution of the whole group, 300 people, the heap of bodies – I saw this – was doused with something and set on fire.

That day, I worked in the casino from morning until 1:00 p.m. and from 2:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. I saw them take six such parties into the ruins and shoot them. I suppose that around 2000 people were executed there that day. There were only men. I worked in the casino the next day and again I saw arrestees from the Gestapo HQ led into the same ruins. Around three or four such parties were executed then. In total, maybe 400 people were executed that day, again they were exclusively men, also of different ages. Like the previous day, the executed were burned.

After more or less a week, my husband and I were assigned to distribute products for Gestapo men in the shop at aleja Szucha 16. Polish prisoners from Litewska Street came there to get bread and sugar and told us that their documents had been taken from them and that they were not fed, were constantly hungry, didn't know what was going to happen to them, and had to be present at the executions and to burn the corpses. They said that [the Germans] executed people with a shot to the back of the head. They told us that women were executed in the same way in those ruins.



I have to add that when on 1 September when we were being deported to Kompina, I saw six people – three men and three women – being led into the ruins. I suppose that they were executed there.

On 1 September, one of the women working with me at aleja Szucha 16 told me that she had heard from Gestapo men (she spoke German, so she could communicate with them) that everybody from Litewska Street 14 had been executed on 1 September in the ruins. As I heard, around a hundred Poles had stayed in that prison (Litewska Street 14).

On 1 September, only one Gestapo platoon remained on aleja Szucha, the rest left Warsaw for Łowicz, Sochaczew, Kompina, Skierniewice, Żyrardów, Błonie etc.

I have to note that two prisoners from Litewska Street 14 stayed with us in Kompina. I don't know their surnames. They were bricklayers. We did not talk with them out of fear, not knowing if they would report on us to the Germans.

On 19 or 20 August, when we were working distributing products, at around 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. a crowd of people was brought into Aleje Ujazdowskie. They filled the entire street. There were maybe 5000. I talked with them, they said they were from Czerniaków. There were men of different ages, children, old people, women. I then saw that the men were told to go into the Gestapo courtyard, the women and children were led in the direction of Puławska Street.

I don't know what happened to those men.

I heard from Poles working with me that executions took place every day in the ruins of the house at number 12 or 14 aleja Szucha. I myself saw fire and smoke in those ruins every day during all of August. I had no doubts that they were burning corpses. The smoke was such as from burning bones and bodies. There was nothing to breathe with.

I cannot even estimate how many people the Germans could have murdered in the ruins of the house at aleja Szucha 12/14.

I don't remember anything else.

Read out.