



WŁADYSŁAW SKOCZEK

Warsaw, 29 March 1946. Investigative Judge Halina Wereńko, delegated to the Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, interviewed the person specified below as a witness. The witness has been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the gravity of the oath. The judge swore the witness; thereafter the witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Władysław Skoczek
Names of parents	Adam and Bronisława <i>née</i> Kruszyńska
Date of birth	1 June 1899 in Warsaw
Occupation	director general of the Social Construction Enterprise in Warsaw [Społeczne Przedsiębiorstwo Budowlane – SPB]
Education	civil engineer
Place of residence	Warsaw, Okólnik Street 3, flat 2
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none

Before the war, I worked at the municipal board, in the Technical Department, in the position of deputy head of the Architecture Department. From 1 September 1939 throughout the occupation I acted as the head of the Architecture Department.

I don't remember exactly when, I believe that it was at the beginning of 1940, Leist came to Warsaw and initially assumed the function of one of the deputies of the head of German supervision over the Polish self-government in Warsaw, and from around mid-1940 he was the head of this supervision with the title of plenipotentiary of the head of the Warsaw district, and subsequently with the title of city captain for the city of Warsaw. Acting as a liaison between the technical agendas of the municipal board and the German supervision

was the so-called liaison office of the municipal construction offices, created specially for this purpose, headed by Paweł Branny M.Eng., who at the same time, until spring 1943, was the deputy director of the Technical Department. After this, the head of the liaison office was Franciszek Przewirski M.Eng., presently residing in Wrocław (Ogrodowa Street 72), where he is the head of the Communication and Construction Department of the Province Office.

I came in personal contact with Leist only a few times, in an official capacity. Based on my personal observations and the opinions heard from other co-workers at the municipal board, I have an impression that Leist somehow wanted to play up his personal popularity, in the sense that he wanted to be perceived as a German who did Poles no harm or was even benignly disposed towards them. Since he headed a very important German office in Warsaw, I find him to be complicit in German operations carried out in Warsaw at that time. I can list the following German operations that in my opinion can be traced back to the office of the city captain:

I. Theft and destruction of cultural property

- a) removal of furniture and works of art from the Royal Castle [Zamek Królewski], the Belweder Palace, the Łazienki Park; I recall for example that the Warsaw office of General Governor Frank was established in the building of the Czechoslovakian Legation in Koszykowa Street; a desk from the Belweder Palace (allegedly the personal desk of Marshal Piłsudski) stood in the aide-de-camp's office;
- b) removal of the collections of the National Museum [Muzeum Narodowe]; I received this information from the director of the National Museum, Professor Lorentz, and from many other museum employees;
- c) burning of the book collections of the Public Library [Biblioteka Publiczna]; I received this information from its director, Dr Przelaskowski, Director Bykowski, and many other employees; as it follows from the information supplied, books in French, English and forbidden literature in Polish were destroyed; in this way a considerable percentage of book collections was destroyed;
- d) closing of libraries and reading rooms (information as above);
- e) destruction of the Royal Castle; after the military operations in September 1939, only some wings of the Castle and the upper floor were partially burnt, mainly the roof on other

wings; directly after the Germans entered, the municipal board started securing the Castle by covering it with a makeshift roof; the order to stop the works came and the Germans began to purposefully destroy the entire Castle by means of complete disassembly of the building; then they bored holes in all the walls to install explosives and blow up the walls; this did not happen (rumor had it that the demolition did not take place thanks to a diplomatic intervention from Italy); more detailed information could be provided by Professor Skurewicz M.Eng., M.Arch. (I don't know his address) and the director of the National Museum – Professor Lorentz;

- f) suspension of the reconstruction of the municipal board's meeting hall; this hall was destroyed in September 1939; the municipal board commenced reconstruction thereof in 1940 or 1941 based on the design prepared by an architect, Dr Zachwatowicz, selected in an organized contest; Leist supported the idea of the reconstruction, he also approved of Dr Zachwatowicz's design; after a part of the construction works had been completed and after a life-size model had been prepared, Germans from the district ordered an onsite inspection with the participation of officials from the Department of Propaganda, who decided that the works had to be suspended immediately and the design had to be modified to give the building a German character; the design was entrusted by the district to a German architect named Buchner, for which the Polish municipal board was ordered to pay the amount of two hundred and forty thousand zlotys; as far as I remember, this amount was never paid in full, since a general prohibition on construction investments was introduced within the entire territory of the General Government [Generalne Gubernatorstwo];
- g) destruction of the Copernicus monument; with respect to this matter, more detailed explanations can be provided by Ludwik Growiński M.Eng., M.Arch. (residing in Warsaw, working for the State Automobile Office [Państwowy Urząd Samochodowy – PUS], Narutowicza Square), who was several times summoned by the Germans with respect to the changing of the plaque on the monument to a plaque in German; all regulations of the district delivered to the municipal board passed through offices subordinated to Leist; Growiński was summoned to report to Leist's officials, but it has not been determined who – the district or Leist – ordered the removal of the Polish plaque from the Copernicus monument;
- h) destruction of the monuments of Chopin, the monument of soldiers of the Polish Military Organization [Pomnik Peowiaka], removal of Kiliński's monument; the latter was ordered

to be removed from Krasiński Square on the basis of a regulation issued by the head of the construction department in Leist's office named Hanika, a German who [later] was reported to have died on the Russian front; Leist agreed to having the removed monument put in the National Museum building; as to the removal of the monuments of Chopin and of the soldiers of the Polish Military Organization, the municipal board was unable to determine what had happened to these monuments or who had ordered their removal;

- i) a written order addressed to the municipal board concerning the destruction of most monuments and the removal of Poniatowski's monument from the Saxon Palace [Pałac Saski], which in the end was not executed; as far as I remember, only the monuments of King Sigismund, Adam Mickiewicz, and Nicolaus Copernicus were exempted from destruction; this regulation was signed by Dürrfeld (one of Leist's deputies and the supervisor of the public utility enterprises); it ordered the removal of monuments, dismantling of pedestals and use of material thus acquired for construction purposes; it also contained a clause that the monuments were to be recycled into scrap metal; Dürrfeld was notorious for his hostile attitude towards Poles and was considered particularly harmful; in pursuit of the sentence issued by the Underground Polish State [Polska Podziemna] several attacks were launched, but he was not harmed in any of them; after one such attack, a public execution was carried out in retaliation (I don't remember the date); in late 1943 – early 1944 Dürrfeld had the title of Lord Mayor and held the same function which he had previously held in the Rhineland.

II. Destruction of the city

- a) Germanization of names of streets and squares, begun already in 1939;
- b) removal of Polish state emblems (spring of 1940);
- c) removal of memorial plaques at the same time;
- d) removal of Polish signs in the so-called German quarter; even the bilingual plates indicating directions and orientation, which had been imposed by Germans, had to be replaced.

III. Expulsion of Poles

- a) confiscation of public utility buildings for German purposes;

- b) expulsion of hospitals and long-term care facilities; for example Hospital of the Holy Spirit [Szpital św. Ducha] was moved at least four or five times; Saint Lazarus Hospital [Szpital św. Łazarza]; children's institutions in Klarysew and Powsin were joined to the Boduen facility and the facility in Góra Kalwaria;
- c) division of the city into the following quarters: Polish, German and Jewish, whereby the boundaries of these quarters were modified many times, which forced people to constantly resettle (as an example: in 1942 the Augsburg Protestant hospital was ordered to move within 24 hours);
- d) destruction of the ghetto: the municipal board was ordered to set the boundaries of the ghetto by Leist's officials; whether it was his own order, I do not know.

IV. Operation of collecting metals in the form of:

- a) removal of the iron fences of the Saxon Garden [Ogród Saski], Krasiński Garden [Ogród Krasińskich], and a series of properties;
- b) collection of brass cables and wires.

V. Profanation of cemeteries

- a) The military cemetery in Powązki was divided into a Polish and German part, whereby exhumation of over sixty Polish graves was ordered to increase the German area; among others, the late Sulkiewicz, a soldier of the Polish Legions who died in 1915, was exhumed after his gravestone had been removed.

VI. Extermination of the population in the form of creating especially poor working conditions for public services workers

- a) Increase of the number of working hours from seven to ten;
- b) food rations on a starvation level;
- c) wages below stagnation level;
- d) reduction and then annulment of holiday leaves;
- e) sending employees to concentration camps (the labor camp in Treblinka) on charges of



sabotage; I remember that an employee of the municipal gasworks, Bohdan Nowacki, who was the gas works personnel manager, was sent to the camp on charges of insubordination and failure to perform orders. He came back a few months later, but was not allowed to return to work in the municipal board.

All orders concerning public services workers were issued by Leist's office.

The report was read out.