



## FRANCISZEK SOBIECH

Warsaw, 4 June 1948. Judge Halina Wereńko, a member of the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, interviewed the person named below as an unsworn witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

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Name and surname	Franciszek Stanisław Sobiech
Names of parents	Michał and Aniela <i>née</i> Dadasz
Date of birth	21 July 1895, Wilczyska, Garwolin district
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Nationality and citizenship	Polish
Education	Five grades of common school
Occupation	Caretaker at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences
Place of residence	Warsaw, Sienna Street 88, flat 105

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When the Warsaw Uprising broke out, I was working as a caretaker at a branch of the Puławy Institute, which was located in the building of the Warsaw School of Life Sciences at Rakowiecka Street 8.

On 1 August 1944 at 5 p.m., I was at the smith's on Olesińska Street, having brought a horse there from the Institute. I had to stay there for two days. On 3 August in the morning, around 6 a.m., I tried to get to the Institute. Then, in Rakowiecka Street, near Puławska Street, I was captured by SS-men from the unit stationed at the *Stauferkaserne* and taken to their barracks. When I arrived, the courtyard was empty. After I was frisked and without my documents being checked, I was taken to the barrack wing located to the left of the



entrance, to a big room that used to be a canteen. I found around 300 male civilians there, who, as I later learned, had been brought in in groups from the neighboring houses. Later that day, I saw the SS-men bring in small groups of 5-6 men, whom they frisked and then directed to our room or other rooms.

Maybe an hour after my arrival at the barracks, a few SS-men entered the room I was in, one of them demanded 12 men for labor. We were taken to the rear of the barracks where there was an exercise yard behind the garages. We were ordered to dig six graves, each 1.5 meters deep. Then, we were told to move to a little shed located in the exercise yard, where we found the bodies of six men dressed in civilian clothes. All the corpses bore traces of shots to the head. We buried them in the graves that we had previously dug. I did not recognize any of the executed.

On 4 or 5 August (I do not remember the exact date), I saw through a window of the room where I was staying which looked out onto the courtyard of the barracks, how the SS-men took nine male civilians to the wall of the building located to the right of the entrance. Some five meters from them, there was a machine gun fixed to a base, from which the SS-men shot the men standing by the wall. Then I saw how an SS-man with a revolver finished off the men who were lying or kneeling. The people in our room said that this was a group of residents from the house at the junction of aleja Niepodległości and Rakowiecka Street, from where the insurgents had allegedly thrown a grenade at the Germans. On the same day around noon, I saw through a window of the room where I was being kept, how six men were brought into the courtyard. Five of them were taken to our room and one was taken away to Rakowiecka Street and into the courtyard of Mokotów Prison. I saw this through the window of our room which looked out onto Rakowiecka Street. After some time, the SS-men returned to the barracks alone. The men who had joined us said that the man who had been detained and executed was Professor Bojemski from the Warsaw Polytechnic. The next day, that is on 5 or 6 August, around 4 p.m. (I do not remember the exact date), a couple of SS-men (I do not know their names) came to our room and picked out a group of around 20 men, among whom was an Orthodox priest (I do not know his name). This group – as I could see through a window – was escorted by guards armed with guns to the courtyard of Mokotów Prison. After a while, the guards returned to the barracks.

The shots from the prison could not be heard where we were.



An SS-man in a rank equivalent to sergeant came to our room. He was florid, stout (I do not know his name) and he told us through an interpreter that the men who had been taken away from the room moments before had been executed in retaliation for the killings of a few Germans. Still before lunch, the same SS-men as previously selected from among the people in the room another group of around 20 men and took them to Mokotów Prison, just like before.

I do not know the names of any of those taken away.

Then the sergeant arrived and announced to us through an interpreter that in retaliation for the fact that Polish women had thrown a grenade at German soldiers, the group that had been removed from our room had been executed. Already after lunch, another two groups, of 20 men each, were selected from among the people in our room and like the previous ones, taken to the grounds of Mokotów Prison.

I do not remember the date, but around 9 August, I heard that the Gestapo from aleja Szucha had picked out a group of men from the rear part of the barracks wing and that these men had disappeared without a trace. Later, the Gestapo would pick groups of men from the barracks and take them to sites of forced labor.

Between 16 and 18 August (I do not remember the exact date), a few SS-men and Gestapo men wearing civilian clothes came from aleja Szucha 25 and picked out me and a group of around 20 men from among the people in our room. However, it turned out that the Gestapo men had not sought permission for our removal with the command of the barracks. Consequently, we were released. On the next day, an agreement was reached and the Gestapo took away a group of around 20 men – not from our room but from the rooms located behind it (in the inner part of the building but in the same wing). I do not know the names of the Germans who had command over the barracks.

I saw that the person talking to the Gestapo men was a fat German, dressed partly in civilian clothes and always with a German shepherd dog by his side. He was not with the military, but he was very bossy and everybody obeyed him. I do not remember the names of any of the Germans from the barracks.

On 28 August, we were all taken to the yard and segregated. We were divided into two groups: people aged 38 or less and those over 38. The younger group (38 years of age



or less) was kept in the barracks for labor. As part of the older group, I was transported from the Western Train Station [Dworzec Zachodni] to Pruszków transit camp. Another segregation was made and I was earmarked for forced labor in Germany. Through the Arbeitsamt, I was hired by an iron foundry, Thishen [Theissen] in Duisburg-Hamburg [sic]. After the factory was bombed by Allied planes in January 1945, myself and other forced laborers were marched to Saxony. We walked, starving, for ten days. Again, the Arbeitsamt found me employment with a farmer in the country, where I remained for a month until I was liberated by English troops on 12 April 1945.

At that the report was concluded and read out.