

## TADEUSZ KARPIŃSKI

On 7 October 1980 in Białystok Halina Nowakowska, judge of the District Court in Białystok, delegated to the District Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes, proceeding in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 of the decree of 10 November 1945 (Journal of Laws No. 57, item 293) and Article 129 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, interviewed the person named below as a witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false statements, the witness confirmed with his own signature that he had been informed of this liability (Article 172 of the Code of Criminal Procedure). The witness then testified as follows:

---

Name and surname	Tadeusz Karpiński
Parents' names	Stanisław and Rozalia
Date and place of birth	4 February 1928, the village of Świerże-Kończany
Place of residence	Kietlanka, commune of Zaręby Kościelne
Occupation	farmer
Education	elementary
Criminal record for perjury	none
Relationship to the parties	none

---

During the Hitlerite occupation I was living with my parents in the village of Świerże-Kończany. Our village was administratively subordinate to the *Amtskommissariat* in Jasienica and the gendarmerie station in Zaręby Kościelne. It bordered with the village of Skłody-Piotrowice, in the settlement outside of which there lived the family of Hieronim Skłodowski.

[I] don't recall the exact date, but I suppose it was autumn of 1943 when the head of the village council came to our home and told us that on the orders of German authorities

someone from our family must go to the Skłodowskis' property. That same order was issued to several other farmers in our village. Together, we went to the designated site. I remember this taking place in the early morning.

When we arrived at Heronim [Hieronim] Skłodowski's property, we found many uniformed Germans there. Present were German gendarmes, not only from the station in Zaręby Kościelne, but also from Jasienica and Andrzejewo. I know this because I had seen some of these gendarmes before. With them was the *Amtskommissar* from Jasienica together with another German, known as "Zębuś". I didn't know the name of the *Amtskommissar*. Of the persons who accompanied me to Skłodowski's property, I only recall Piotr Dłuski, now deceased.

The Germans ordered all of us inside Heronim [Hieronim] Skłodowski's barn to bring out grain from the grain bins. We were hauling the grain outside and depositing it in the farmyard, all the while supervised by the gendarmes. Meanwhile, several gendarmes were guarding the members of Skłodowski's family, who were standing against the wall of the house this whole time.

After we carried out a portion of the grain from the bins we saw a hideout in the corner of that area. It was separated from the grain with boards and large enough to fit several people. [I] also recall that there was an axe inside the hideout. It was possible to move the boards and leave the hideout.

Once the hideout was discovered, one of the gendarmes alerted the *Amtskommissar*, who immediately entered the barn and thoroughly examined the hideout, even lifting the board which provided an exit, and then ordered Skłodowski to be led inside the barn. When the gendarmes walked Skłodowski in, the *Amtskommissar* pointed out the hideout to him and then led him out of the barn. All the while I was moving grain. A few minutes later I heard the sound of a gunshot coming from behind Skłodowski's farm buildings. I did not see who the shooter was or who was being shot. Meanwhile, the gendarmes were again carefully examining the hideout, suspecting another cellar or a trench. Once they made sure neither was there, they ordered us to move the grain back into the cellar.

While we were bringing the grain into the cellar, the gendarmes ordered Hieronim Skłodowski's family to exit the house again – in the meantime, after Skłodowski was taken, they had them enter the house. I saw Skłodowski's wife, Amelia, come out with four minor

children and Hieronim Skłodowski's sister, Apolonia Skłodowska. Only Skłodowski's elderly, bedridden mother was left in the house. On the orders of the gendarmes, all members of Skłodowski's family got on the horse wagon and left together with the gendarmes. Once they left I saw the *Amtskommissar* enter the Skłodowskis' house and a moment later I heard a shot. Soon after the shot was fired the *Amtskommissar* stepped out into the yard. After a while all the Germans left Skłodowski's buildings and drove away.

After they left, we entered the house to see what had happened. Inside, Hieronim Skłodowski's mother lay dead in her bed, around which there formed a large pool of blood. I don't recall the location of [Skłodowski's mother's] gunshot wounds. Shaken by this sight, I soon left the house.

Next, with a few of the people who had been moving the grain before, I went behind the farm buildings, in the direction from where I had heard the shots. Close to the wall of the pigpen lay the body of Hieronim Skłodowski. I do not recall the position of the body or of the gunshot wounds. A lot of time has passed since then; as a young boy I could not bear looking at all this. Then, together with other farmers, I dug a pit in a birch grove on the other side of Skłodowski's property; we proceeded to move the bodies of the murdered and buried them there. Skłodowski was around 40 years old when he died, and his mother was over 70. After the liberation their bodies were exhumed and moved to the cemetery in Zaręby Kościelne.

I know that soon after their arrest, Hieronim Skłodowski's family was taken to Jasienica and released after some time. The Skłodowskis were quiet people. The reason for their arrest and the shooting of Hieronim Skłodowski and his mother was the fact that for a period of time Jews were probably being sheltered in their barn. How many Jews there were and where they came from, I do not know. This was being discussed by the residents of our village. On the day of Skłodowski's murder there were no Jews on their property.