



MICHAŁ SZEWCZAK

Warsaw, 20 October 1949. Irena Skonieczna (MA), acting as a member of the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, interviewed the person named below, who testified as follows:

Name and surname	Michał Szewczak
Date and place of birth	28 September 1888, Zagoździe, Łuków county
Parents' names	Piotr and Antonina, née Proch
Citizenship and nationality	Polish
Religion	Roman Catholic
Education	two classes of elementary school
Occupation	garden caretaker
Place of residence	Chodkiewicza Street 11
Criminal record	none

When the Warsaw Uprising broke out, I was working in the gardens of the Plant Breeding Institute at Chodkiewicza Street 11. On the first day of the Uprising, the Germans – SS-men – locked up all the employees of the Institute, as well as some other people, numbering around 50, in the basement for three days without any food. Thereafter, they released us for work on the garden premises. And so we worked, digging potatoes and gathering vegetables. The SS-men would frequently bring people who were being held as hostages in the trade school at Rakowiecka Street, in the so-called *Stauferkaserne*, to help us. Towards the end of August or at the beginning of September, when the Germans were leading the population of Warsaw towards the Western Railway Station along Rakowiecka Street, I saw how an SS-man shot dead a woman in our garden; she had been unable to walk any longer. We, the employees,



buried her body. I also heard that one of the priests from the Jesuit monastery had been executed in the gardens; they say that he had been going to visit a sick man. His body was also buried in our area.

Towards the end of September or earlier, when there was no longer any water in the city, we would transport water to the *Stauferkaserne* from the allotments or from our garden, which had wells. On 28 October 1944, I and a friend were transporting water, escorted by two SS- men. As we were passing through the gate, I noticed a group of people, men and women, standing there. We had been struck by the sight of a pram, in which there lay a baby, at most one and a half-year old. This group numbered 30 or so people. As we were driving past the Jesuit chapel at Rakowiecka Street, I looked back. The people were no longer there. Then, some time later, we heard a machine gun salvo. When we returned for the second transport of water, the SS-man ordered us to drive around, through Pole Mokotowskie, and enter the gardens through the other gate. Since, however, we were transporting water we proceeded through the first gate. And so I saw, right next to the pavement in the garden, a pile of bodies that had been set on fire using various wooden, chopped up furnishings from our house. These bodies were buried by Wehrmacht soldiers, who took over the garden the next day, because the SS-men – having committed the crime – left in the direction of Babice.

On the second day of November 1944, I and the other Poles who had remained in the Institute walked to the camp near the church in Wolska Street. We and a dozen or so other people from a transport that was being led to Pruszków managed to escape by bribing an SS-man.

At this point the report was brought to a close and read out.