



ALEKSANDRA SOKOŁOWSKA

Warsaw, 15 October 1949. Acting as a member of the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, Irena Skonieczna (MA) interviewed the person named below as a witness. The witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Aleksandra Olga Sokołowska
Date and place of birth	12 September 1914, Warsaw
Names of parents	Andrzej and Katarzyna, <i>née</i> Brum
Occupation of father	retired member of the armed forces
State affiliation and nationality	Polish
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Education	MA in philosophy, graduate of Professor Kwimiński's painting course
Occupation	office worker, translator at the French embassy
Place of residence	Warsaw, Walecznych Street 44, flat 4
Criminal record	none

Before the Warsaw Uprising I had lived with my family at 6 Sierpnia Street 2. I was in that house when the Uprising broke out. On 2 August 1944 the Germans threw grenades into the Hardwig cake shop, situated at the corner of our house. The house began to burn. The SS-men prevented us from putting out the fire, shooting at everyone who appeared in the courtyard. Then they threw grenades into the flats in the basement and to the gate. However, there were no casualties.

On the evening of 3 August, at about 8.00 p.m., the SS-men and the "Ukrainians" set fire to a whole block of houses within Natolińska, Koszykowa and 6 Sierpnia streets. When the



people in the basements began to choke on the smoke, yells of "raus!" could be heard, and the residents began to leave. There were few young people in our house, that is the house at 6 Sierpnia Street 2. The majority of residents were older people or small children; there were many babies. In spite of that, from the very beginning the Germans treated us as bandits. It struck me that they began to call us names in idiomatic Polish. A large crowd of people was gathered by the wall of the officers' mess, with our faces to the burning houses. The Germans surrounded us with machine guns and forced us to watch our houses burn. When the fire spread to the roofs, the Germans marched the entire crowd as hostages to the Gestapo at aleja Szucha, showering us with abuse on the way. One of the SS officers began to call out, in German and Polish, all the foreigners, Volksdeutsche and Reichsdeutsche. These people were separated from the Poles. Then women were separated from the men. The Germans qualified even 7 year old boys as men. I knew one of them; little Stanisław Jenzach was a son of the caretaker from our house. The men were led from the courtyard further into the Gestapo headquarters. At the time I bade a farewell to my father, Andrzej Henryk Sokołowski, an 81 year-old man, and my brother, Konstanty Teodor, a 37 year-old doctor of law. The women were marched to the building of the fire service at Unii Square. On the way, shooting broke out and many women were wounded. In the fire station, the women were guarded by SS-men and "Ukrainians", who right away began to rob us of valuables. On the following day, on the morning of 4 August 1944, a few Gestapo men entered the room in which I had been put. They separated the women who were alone from those who were with some loved ones. The Germans released the former and ordered them to tell the insurgents that should the Uprising not end within three days, all the men who had been taken as hostages would be executed. As for the rest of the women, the younger were separated from the older. When mothers were inquiring what the Germans wanted to do with the young girls, the SS-men told them that they needed young women for obvious reasons. After some time, however, they told us to stand in twos and formed two groups. One was told to go to the corner of Marszałkowska and Złota streets, while the other to the corner of Piusa Street and Aleje Ujazdowskie, but first the Germans had specified along which streets both groups were to go. We were given three hours, between 10.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m., to bring German corpses from there. We were warned that should we not complete the task, our mothers, who were kept as hostages, would be executed. I was in the group which was to go to Aleje Ujazdowskie. On Litewska Street we were attacked by armed "Ukrainians" under the German command. They began to threaten us with death. However, the German who led the column saved us, saying that we were on



a mission to bring back corpses of Germans. We reached first insurgent lines on Mokotowska Street, where I stayed until the end of the Uprising, that is until 7 October, as it was impossible to come back to the fire station. The insurgents explained to us that the Germans would use us for intelligence purposes. None of the mothers from our group survived.

The women from other rooms were used as human shields for tanks. I learned about this from an old lady named Richter (her address can be provided by her daughter, citizen Chacińska, an instructor in the Polish Red Cross in Sopot), who managed to escape during a German tank attack on a barricade at the corner of Piusa Street and Aleje Ujazdowskie.

I would like to add that despite false declarations of help for Warsawians, the survivors of the Uprising were caught and arrested in other cities, for instance in Kraków. In this way, citizen Zofia Mierzyńska and her husband Tomasz Mierzyński ended up in penal camps. Similarly, despite promises that old people would be released, the old were deported to camps, among others to Auschwitz.

At this point, the report was concluded and read out.