



MARIA KOWALSKA

17 January 1946, Warsaw. Acting as investigative judge, Halina Wereńko, appointed to serve on the Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, interviewed the person named below as a witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false statements and of the significance of the oath, the witness was sworn and testified as follows:

Name and surname	Maria Kowalska, <i>née</i> Bończak
Date of birth	2 September 1905
Occupation	housewife
Education	elementary school
Religious affiliation	Catholic
Place of residence	Bema Street 56, flat 11, Warsaw

During the Uprising I lived in Warsaw at Prądyńskiego Street 23, and through the slits in the shutters I could see the railway track and the house at Bema Street. On 4 or 5 August, groups of the civilian population were marched to the Western Railway Station. In some groups men had white handkerchiefs in their mouths and kept their hands up as a sign of surrender. Beginning on 8 August, I noticed a few German gendarmes pick the elderly, disabled, and the pregnant women out of the groups of civilians heading for the Western Railway Station. Those whom the Germans had separated were now led into the house at Bema Street 52. It was in front of this house that the segregation took place. Next to the house there was a booth where soda water had once been sold. For a few days I could see those whom the Germans stopped gathered in the courtyard and before the booth. I couldn't see if there was anyone inside. I noticed an older man on crutches.



On 11 August, after 5 p.m. (I don't remember the exact hour), I heard desperate screams. I looked out through the slit in the shutter. In the courtyard of the house at Bema Street 54, near the fence at the end of the courtyard, next to the property at Bema Street 52 (between Kosakiewicz's house at no. 54 and the fence), I saw a number of people standing in a row. A machine gun was set up near the well, in the courtyard of Kosakiewicz's house. I heard shots and screams. People fell down. A young boy (about 18 years old) broke away from his group and started running along the railway tracks, but he was shot and fell.

After some time Kosakiewicz's house was set on fire. I saw it burn in the evening. A German railwayman working at the railway blocks told me that about 60 people were shot at the time, including many pregnant women. I saw human bones (skulls, tibias) and human remains lying in the rubble of the burnt house. I don't know what German unit was involved in carrying out the execution. I am unable to distinguish different military units. German troops were all the time stationed opposite house no. 54. I noticed that they wore yellow shirts. They fired from the Lilpol factory whenever someone went out into the street. There was a *Volksdeutscher*, Bekier, who would signal to the Germans that someone had just appeared in the street.

At this the report was concluded and read out.