



ANNA CZUPERSKA

Wrocław, 9 July 1946. The members of the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, Jerzy Majewski, Judge, and Rudolf Szura, Deputy Prosecutor, heard as a witness the person specified below. The witness testified as follows:

My name is Anna Czuperska.

I was born on 10 July 1908 in Bielcza, Brzesko district

Daughter of Paweł and Hermina *née* Niedojadło

Religious affiliation: Roman Catholic

Nationality: Polish

Occupation: physician

Currently employed in the Social Insurance Institution in Wrocław and in the 1st City Health Centre.

Place of residence: Wrocław, Jarosława Dąbrowskiego Street 62, flat 5

I was incarcerated in Pawiak prison from 24 November 1940 to 31 July 1944. Before being detained I had worked as a physician in the Social Insurance Institution in Warsaw in the 4th Quarter at Jagiellońska Street 34.

I was arrested at night in my private flat at Nowogrodzka Street 31, flat 19, along with my husband Henryk Czuperski, MD. Nine Gestapo men in plain clothes came to our flat under the command of one Gestapo man in a uniform. We were in our beds, and we were told to get dressed immediately. We dressed in their presence. They asked us one by one whether we knew a tall blonde man and his whereabouts. When I answered in the negative I was struck in the face, and my husband was punched several times in the head and other parts of his body. That night, after a meticulous body search and a search of our flat, we were



taken to the Gestapo headquarters at aleja Szucha 25. When they led us out of the flat, the Gestapo men took me, my husband and our servant to their cars parked on the junction of Marszałkowska Street and Nowogrodzka Street. My husband was separated from the two of us and transported to the police office in another car.

When we arrived at aleja Szucha, I was taken, along with my servant and other people who were gathered on the junction of Marszałkowska Street and Nowogrodzka Street, to a corridor on the second floor and I was told to stand with my back to the wall. After ten minutes I was led to a room, where my husband already was.

In that room I was questioned further about the blonde man whom I did not know. During that interrogation I was being punched in the head and face, and my husband was being beaten with an armchair and bunches of umbrella wires. During that beating an armchair leg broke off. My husband lost consciousness several times; then they would douse him with water and when he came round they would beat him again.

In the adjacent rooms, the other arrestees were being interrogated and I heard the sounds of blows and screams, but they were being drowned out by music from a radio. During my interrogation that night a man was killed in one of the further rooms, and I saw for myself his corpse being carried out of the room.

In the morning, along with some 30 people, we were transported to Pawiak prison. In the administrative office of Pawiak my husband lost consciousness and as a result he was taken to the prison hospital of the aforementioned prison, and I was taken to the female ward.

During three or four months, with intervals of several weeks, I was three times brought from my cell to the administrative office for interrogation. At the same time my sick husband was being brought on a stretcher for the same purpose. They were questioning us whether we were members of the organisation and what was the name of that blonde man whom I have already mentioned.

Although my husband was lying ill on a stretcher, the Gestapo men would beat and kick him during the interrogation, and I was being beaten about the face.

On 18 August 1942, my husband, although he was still unwell and could not walk due to a balance disorder, was deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp by a special decree of the deputy prison commander Hiersemann.



The same Hiersemann notified me later that my husband had died of heart disease in Auschwitz on 25 September 1942. After the return of some prisoners from Auschwitz, that is, Włodzimierz Ławkowicz from Warsaw (a physician in the Wolski hospital) and another physician, Dim, from Warsaw, I learned that my husband had been executed on 25 September 1942.

Life in prison was governed by the schedule. Wake up was at 6.00 a.m. Then a moment to go to the toilet, then washing. All those activities, including getting dressed and cleaning the cell, had to be over by 7.00 a.m. Then we would get breakfast of unsweetened black coffee and a daily ration of bread, 120–300 grams in weight. Dinner was at noon. Dinner was one course only, and it was either a soup of rutabaga or old beetroots, or the so-called *berlej*, that is, water with the addition of some thick black flour. For supper, which was at 4.00 p.m., we would get either the same soup as for dinner, or black coffee, but this time without bread. At noon and in the afternoon we were allowed to go to the toilet. There was a time when we were allowed go to the toilet only twice a day. Until the middle of 1943, medical certificates issued by Polish physicians which allowed the prisoner to go to the toilet one more time were being honoured, but later such certificates were no longer accepted. This situation often led to severe digestive tract diseases. Until the second half of 1941, food packages were prohibited. From then on one could receive one 3kg package per week. After the appointment of Hiersemann, the weight was cut down to 2kg, and only once a month at that. From 1942, physical exercise became the torment of the female prisoners. On Oberscharführer Bürkl's decree those exercises consisted of *żabki* [frog jumps] and squats, and the prisoners often fainted from exhaustion. Even the oldest ladies were not exempt from exercise.

From the end of December 1940 to 31 July 1944, I was a physician-prisoner in the female hospital of Pawiak. In order to force statements, various torture techniques were used. The prisoners, including older people, were being beaten and kicked. Large quantities of water would be poured into the nose of the interrogated prisoner. Such a person would choke on water, as he or she was also gagged. The prisoners were being burnt with cigarettes, had dogs set on them, women had alcohol forced down their throats. The interrogated and tortured women used to stay for a long time in the hospital afterwards. Gestapo men did not spare older ladies. Maria Biedrzycka, who was 70 at the time, was beaten and kicked during interrogation. Pregnant women were also being tortured, for instance Maria Żórawska when



in fifth month of pregnancy. Natalia Hiszpańska was beaten and had water poured into her nose. Izabela Łopuska, MD, and docent Bieniek underwent the pillar torture [the prisoner was hung from a pole]. Ziba Jaguczyńska was being burnt. Priest Chruścicki and Sława Przybyszewska had dogs set on them. Janina Sokop and Hanna Drozdowska were brought to the hospital beaten and drunk. All these events took place in the years 1942–1944.

I remember that around the middle of 1941, a woman whom I did not know by name was brought to the hospital after interrogation; she had been beaten so cruelly that she died half an hour later.

Moreover, the following people were severely tortured during interrogation: Anna Grzelińska in 1941, Ludwika Plater 1941, Jadwiga Szymborska 1941, Anna Malinowska 1941, Mieczysława Korompaj 1943, Wanda Lewandowska 1943, Ludwika Woźnicka 1943, Adela Stadnicka 1943, Maria Zawadzka 1943, Irena Krupowicz 1943, Jadwiga Kubiak 1943, Elżbieta Krajewska 1943, Janina Śledziwska 1944.

Apart from being tortured, in order to force statements the prisoners were being locked in a dark cell with a reduced food ration. Heavily beaten during interrogation, Adela Stadnicka, a nurse, was put in a dark cell for 18 days with only half of the daily food ration. In the dark cell there was only a bed and a bucket, but no blanket or mattress. As a result of the heavy beating (swellings, haematomas), Stadnicka had a very high fever. Later she was moved to a solitary cell and her condition was critical. She was denied admission to the hospital. It was either at the end of 1943 or at the beginning of 1944. Stadnicka was deported to Auschwitz in January 1945, but being considered unfit for transport she was shot on the way.

From 1943 to 1944 the prisoners were being sent to the concentration camps in Auschwitz, Ravensbrück, and Majdanek, with their hands tied. They could take only a towel, toiletries, and some food.

During my stay in Pawiak there were around 13 thousand female prisoners. Around 9 thousand of them were deported to the concentration camps. From 1941 to 1942, they were most often sent to Ravensbrück. Some women were also deported to Ravensbrück in 1944. At the end of 1942 and at the beginning of 1943, there were group transports to Majdanek. I remember that in January 1942, after a bigger round-up, some 3 thousand people were sent to Majdanek from Pawiak, including prisoners from the there. Women who

had been chosen for that transport were taken away straight from their cells in dresses only, without any outer garments. Prisoners were being deported to Auschwitz throughout the whole of 1943. Sometimes seriously ill prisoners were also included, and they were leaving the hospital on stretchers. For instance, in September 1941, in the group of 270 women deported to Ravensbrück, there were Maria Terlecka, a 70 years old woman with a severe heart condition (cardiomyopathy), and Irena Jaworska, a woman of about 36 years old suffering from laryngophthisis and uterine cancer. Jaworska died within few weeks of her arrival at Ravensbrück. Despite the efforts of the Polish physician-prisoners the German physician Scherbel did not agree to let Jaworska and Terlecka stay at the hospital.

The system of assembling transports of prisoners who were to be executed was quite different: the prisoners who were to be deported to concentration camps would be given a bath, and women who were to be executed would be hastily called out of their cells, yelled at and taken to special separate cells. When ill women were being carried out on stretchers to join such transports they could not be helped. The following severely ill women were taken on stretchers from the hospital to be executed: Iwa Krugłowska in 1944, Anna Krajewska 1944, Kotarbińska, the daughter of professor Kotarbiński, Kardej-Zamajska (after serious surgery), Janina Górska (parametritis), Błońska (after breast removal surgery). Women in the last month of pregnancy were also being executed (Penszyńska, whose first name I don't remember, was executed in 1943). Also in 1943, a woman who was four months pregnant was taken from a solitary cell and executed.

Among the group of 21 women executed in May 1942, probably in Palmiry, there were: Helena Dąbrowska, Anna Derecka, and Halina Danielewicz. In the group of 40 women executed on 29 May 1943 there were: Wojciechowska (a commissar of the prison guard in Mokotów), Jaxe-Bykowska (with her husband and their daughter Hanna, cousins of general Władysław Sikorski). This group was executed in the ruins of the Ghetto. Among those executed in the summer of 1943 there were: solicitor Jadwiga Kocan, her sister Wanda Zieleńczyk, engineer Jadwiga Bobińska, journalist Jadwiga Włodarkiewicz, journalist Helena Jaworska, Gera Sumińska, Grott-Gizgies (taken from the hospital), journalist Irena Grabowska (also taken from the hospital), Różycka with two grown-up daughters, Halina Skierska, Ewa Pohoska, the daughter of the vice president Pohoski, Anna Czaki with her mother, Maria Ike-Duninowska, Mężyńska, the wife of a physician, and many other women whose names I don't remember.



In total, some 3300 women were executed while I remained in Pawiak, from 24 November 1940 to 31 July 1944. Apart from these, many Jewish women, who came to Pawiak but were not registered, were also executed. From 1943 on the executions were taking place almost exclusively in the ruins of the Ghetto.

I know from the prison guards – the Ukrainians – but also from the fact that both dresses and underwear of prisoners who were to be executed were later being washed in the prison laundry, that female prisoners were being executed in the ruins of the Ghetto without clothes or underwear.

Apart from mass executions, some women were murdered in their cells or in the corridor. For instance in 1943, Szczukówna, a master of pharmacy, was shot by Bürkl after interrogation in the administrative office of Pawiak. Bürkl shot her because she could not stand up, as she had broken ribs and a broken arm. In 1943, the same Bürkl hung a prisoner named Błaszkiwicz in a dark cell. In the female ward, Wachmeister Podhorodecka (now deceased) was a torturer of the prisoners. She would beat prisoners without any reason, organise punitive exercise sessions including squats, frog jumps (also for pregnant women), and forbid ill women who were not in the hospital due to lack of beds to lie down in their cells. Wachmeister Janina Stalski, who spoke excellent Polish, was equally cruel. She was especially cruel to newcomers, she used to carry out gynaecological examinations in search of valuables. She used to beat and curse women.

On 31 July 1944, Friedrich, a prison physician, murdered 10 men with injections.

From among those prisoners whom I have mentioned in my testimony as victims of torture, the following are still alive: Anna Grzeleńska, Gdynia (I don't know her full address), Wanda Lewandowska (residing in Anin near Warsaw), Janina Śledziecka (residing in Warsaw).

At this the report was closed, read out and signed.