



## JANINA ŻELAZOWSKA

Warsaw, 17 August 1945. Investigating judge Mikołaj Halfter interviewed the person named below as a witness. Having advised the witness of the criminal liability for giving false testimony and of the significance of the oath, the judge swore the witness, who then testified as follows:

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Name and surname	Janina Czesława Żelazowska <i>née</i> Szymańska
Age	b. 26 October 1908
Names of parents	Jan and Emilia <i>née</i> Krajczyńska
Place of residence	Warsaw, Bolecka Street 88
Occupation	Polish Red Cross employee
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none

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Following the orders of the head of the exhumation team of the Warsaw Municipal Board Department of Health, Dr. Wiesław Rott (at that time residing at Bolecka Street 66), I went to the grounds of the former military prison at the junction of Zamenhofa and Gęsia streets in Warsaw, where the exhumation of corpses remaining at the site commenced on 10 May 1945. Upon arrival, I reported to Sergeant Mazurek (I do not know his first name), who resided on the premises and served as chair of the local tenants' committee. He currently works at the Central Labor Camp on Gęsia Street, as far as I know. I joined Mr. Mazurek, who showed me around the premises and explained things to me. I believe that he was a laborer during the German occupation and had been involved in the dismantling of the ghetto as an employee of the company Zarzycki Zygmunt i S-ka.

I have found a note I made back then and based on it, I can say that Mazurek's first name is Stanisław and that he was born in 1904 in Lublin.



(At this point, according to witness Żelazowska's instructions, a site plan of the former military prison was drawn up. This plan is enclosed to the present report).

At the location marked 6 on the plan, Mazurek showed me a building which, according to him, was a fully finished crematory. It was a one-story brick building that could be entered directly from courtyard 5. The dimensions of the chamber were more or less 3 by 4 meters. Mazurek claimed that the door leading in from the courtyard had been metal. This door was no longer there when I inspected the area.

I cannot remember now how many openings the furnace had: there were either two or four. These openings were some 0.75 m [sic] above the floor level. I saw neither hatches that would cover the openings nor metal frames around them to which such hatches could be attached. I also saw no traces indicating that such doors had been removed.

I cannot give the dimensions of the openings, but I remember they were big enough to easily accommodate a corpse. I did not measure the depth of the openings.

I cannot remember what kind of "floor" there was inside the openings. I did not see any grates there. Behind the furnaces, below the floor level of the room, there was a narrow corridor; the exits of the openings gave onto this corridor.

Mazurek explained that this was supposed to be an electric crematory. It was finished in 1944, before the uprising. The Germans had not had time to use it. On the walls, I saw electrical wires and traces of power points. I saw nothing to indicate that this crematory had been operational.

In the courtyard, in the pavilion marked 9 and 8, there was a basement or a foundation, partly covered with cement slabs, adjacent to which was the rubble of some concrete building (8). Mazurek said that there used to be an electric crematory at the location marked 8 during the German occupation, connected by wire to a pylon located between the buildings marked 10 and 11 on the plan. According to Mazurek, both of the adjacent foundations had been constructed to expand crematory 8. Building 8 was blown up by the Germans. According to Mazurek, building 10 was a crematory under construction. I also inspected the remains of the building at number 7. There, I saw remains of a fire pit: on the brick underpinning was a grate measuring 70 by 30 cm. Below, under the grate, was an ash pit in which I saw remains of burnt bones measuring 2 cm by 0.5 cm and smaller.

I noticed a partly dug-up pit in courtyard 3, at the location marked 12. The workers who were there that day informed me that this pit had contained lime, since the walls and bottom of the pit were fossilized and white. Let me mention that in the cells located near the pit, I saw seven corpses. I figured that these bodies had apparently been removed from the pit and moved there by looters to be despoiled. I noticed then that the corpses had parts of their clothes missing and fragments of clothes were lying next to them on the floor. The bodies were in an advanced stage of decomposition; in fact, they were remains of corpses.

After digging up pit 12, we found 66 preserved bodies there and the remains of around 11 persons. These bodies were decidedly well preserved; they may have been previously covered with lime. The bodies were clothed. The face of one person only was well preserved: it was the face of a red-haired woman, very attractive, with Semitic facial features; around her neck, she wore a cross, which was taken to the Polish Red Cross repository (no. 9525). In the pit, there were bodies of men, women and children, to be exact: 36 men, 17 women and 3 children; the remaining 10 corpses were in such an advanced stage of decomposition that it was impossible to ascertain whether they were the bodies of men or women; they were corpses of adults. With regard to the children, we were able to more or less establish the age of a girl, around 13, and of a boy, around 7, while we were unable to estimate the age of the third child; this corpse wore a pair of boy's shorts.

In the pocket of one of the pieces of clothing on one of the corpses (male), we found an ID card, issued by Obmann, the elder of the Judenrat, in the name of Goldszlak Wolf, an officer of the order service subordinated to the chairman of the Judenrat in Warsaw. The service ID card no. 320 was in Polish and German, the place of residence was specified as Warsaw, Chłodna Street 15, flat 6. The ID card was issued on 15 December 1941. Its expiration date as stated in the German text was 31 December 1942 and 31 March 1942 in the Polish text. In addition, an ID card of a regular member of the Polish Red Cross, issued in the name of Goldszlak Wolf, resident at Tłomackie Street 2, flat 13, was found on the body. The ID card was valid for 1941 (these documents are enclosed under no. 9537).

In addition to these documents, we found a certificate issued by the PKU (military [draft] organization), no. 2215, reference code no. 313/4. The information [...] indicates that Goldszlak Wolf was born on 26 July 1908 in Warsaw, was of Jewish faith and Jewish nationality; he had completed five grades of secondary school. Apart from that, we found

a pass issued for the night of 1 November 1942. Additionally, lying in the grave was a copy of a typewritten application. This application, dated 29 October 1940, was in the name of Leon Jerzy Gotfryd and was addressed to Post[...]*amt* in Warsaw, requesting admission into the service. The applicant's address was given as Wilanowska Street 12a, flat 4. In the same grave, I found a bill from the company H. Rudzeń stating that glasses or a pince-nez had been taken for repair, dated 17 May 1943, enclosure no. 1573. The remaining part of the bill is illegible. I found no other documents or items in the grave.

After the examination, the bodies were placed back in the same grave. Let me state that the examination was performed in the presence of Dr. Rott and with his active participation. Almost all the corpses bore traces of bullet wounds to the posterior part of the head: the back part of the skull was shattered. Due to decomposition, I could not tell if there were any entrance wounds in the faces of the corpses whose skulls were so damaged. I also saw some corpses whose skulls were intact. I did not see a single skull that would not have a more or less bullet-sized hole in it. Because we did not rinse the corpses, I cannot tell if the bullets were stuck inside the skulls or had only punctured them. Let me emphasize that the bodies we had taken out were so entangled that oftentimes we were not able to take out an individual body and had to take out several at a time. We arranged the bodies back in the pit and buried them. Casual onlookers said that these were the corpses of people killed in the first execution of Jews from the Warsaw ghetto. I emphasize that such a claim was made, among others by Marian Bielewicz (b. 20 August 1911 in Warsaw, residing at Długosza Street 27, flat 18), a laborer with the Department of Health exhumation team, a former employee of the company Smith and Listerman which operated in the ghetto during the German occupation.

In courtyard 3, we found traces of a fire pit in the middle. At that location, our team had dug up a rectangular pit and into this pit (where we had not found any bodies or bones) we had put the human remains from the courtyard at Dzika Street 17, where around 200 people had been executed by shooting during the uprising, according to information provided to us by the local residents. These residents claimed that during the Warsaw uprising, after the Germans had thrown the victims into the pit (the one in the courtyard of Dzika Street 17), they also threw down grenades. We had moved those remains to the rectangular pit between 10 and 14 May 1945. Let me state that the remains were so mangled that they had to be collected with shovels. After placing them in the rectangular pit, we buried them under a significant portion of soil.

In courtyard 4, in the sewer, we found ashes in which we detected traces of human bones. Ashes were also partly removed from this drain. We did not find any other pits in the courtyards of the former prison apart from the one described above. Let me state that our work on the premises had been discontinued because it was to be taken over by the prosecutor's office.

Let me add that in courtyard 3, I saw a paper canvas stretched over a wooden frame measuring 3 by 1.5 meters. The canvas was riddled with holes which looked like bullet holes. According to both Mr. Mazurek and Mr. Bielewicz, as well as casual onlookers, this canvas had been attached to a board, and this "beating rack," as they called it, had been used as a shield placed behind those executed by shooting. These boards were supposed to stop the bullets.

According to these same people, hunts for Jews sentenced to death had allegedly taken place in the courtyard marked 4. This was the so-called "circus." Allegedly, a couple of persons would be put in the courtyard at a time, and the Germans, who had reputedly set up a buffet serving alcoholic beverages in this courtyard, would hunt the victims down, to the accompaniment of music. I did not establish the names of the casual onlookers who recounted this, apart from Mr. Bielewicz and Mr. Mazurek.

According to information provided by the aforementioned, courtyards 3 and 4 were execution sites of Jews. Courtyard 2, in turn, was used for executing Poles. In this courtyard, I saw a lot of rifle cartridges. In the middle of the courtyard were traces of a large fire pit. In the corner of this courtyard I also saw ashes and remains of burnt bones. In the opposite corner, a distinct smell of corpses lingered, so I assume that there were probably shallowly buried corpses there.

During our work at the site, photographs were taken by Mr. Świderski. The negatives are in his custody.

I have nothing more to add.

The report was read out.

[The enclosure to witness Janina Czesława Żelazowska's interview report – a site plan]