



JULIAN CHROŚCICKI

Warsaw, 29 May 1946. Deputy Prosecutor Zofia Rudziewicz interviewed the person named below as a witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Julian Chrościcki
Names of parents	Władysław and Marianna
Place of residence	Włochy, Mickiewicza Street 29
Place of birth	Szymany, Mińsk Mazowiecki County
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Occupation	parish priest, rector
Criminal record	none
Education	doctor of theology, University of Warsaw

Before the war, I was the parson of the parish in Włochy near Warsaw. During the war I kept this post. On 18 September 1942, I was arrested by the Germans and, having spent four months in Pawiak prison, was transported to the Majdanek concentration camp, and then taken to the prison in Lublin Castle, from which I came back on 15 May 1944.

The Germans maintained a hostile attitude towards the Catholic Church in Poland. Right after they entered Warsaw, they arrested all the priests they managed to capture in the streets. They would also come to parsonages to detain priests, using deceit to accomplish this, claiming that they wanted to take the priest to a sick person. I was in Warsaw at that time, but I stayed in a private flat, which allowed me to avoid arrest. I heard stories about the Germans' deceitful conduct directly from my colleagues. The detainees were not presented with any particular charges. They were kept for some time in Pawiak prison and then they were released. Soon,

the Germans started to issue regulations against Catholic Church practices. As a parson, I received such regulations directly from the metropolitan curia in Warsaw, which was forced to communicate the regulations of the Warsaw district to priests; or those regulations were sent by the German county authorities (Kreishauptmann) to the district. They pertained to the following issues: 1) The use of church bells was prohibited, by which the Germans sought to diminish the prestige of the Catholic Church. Sometime later, in the autumn of 1941, they started to confiscate bells. 2) The organization of religious processions was prohibited, by which the Germans [also] sought to diminish the prestige of the Catholic Church; for the same reasons they prohibited the organization of religious funerals. 3) Religious holidays were abolished and moved to Sundays – something that can only be done by the Pope. 4) Polish priests were prohibited from baptizing *Volksdeutschen* and Germans. This is in total breach of the rules of the universal Catholic Church. 5) It was prohibited to baptize persons of Jewish descent. 6) It was prohibited to accept Protestants into the Catholic Church; breach of this prohibition risked one a fine or imprisonment. 7) It was not allowed to sing some religious songs, for example *Serdeczna Matko, Królowo Korony Polski* (Good Mother, Queen of the Polish Crown). 8) In Pawiak prison, persons with a death sentence were deprived of religious consolation; no priest had access to them. Celebrating Holy Mass in prisons was not allowed. Chapels [?], on the other hand, were turned into transitory prisons. 9) Upon the order of the German authorities, during a service for German soldiers who were Catholic, even if there were only a few of them, it was necessary to remove all Poles [from the church]. In the winter of 1941, the Germans came to my church in Włochy three times to attend the service on Sunday at 11 a.m. (solemn mass). I refused to have the Poles removed, so the SS men came into the church and removed the Poles from the church by force.

The Germans wanted to spread propaganda through priests. I was several times approached by representatives of the Todt organization, demanding that I call upon people to participate in trench-digging works. Having consulted my colleagues, I replied that I needed permission from the bishop. The Germans would make a fuss, but wishing to keep up the appearance of respecting the concordat, they left me alone and addressed the curia. Representatives of the German propaganda office approached me several times demanding that I organize anti-Bolshevik rallies, to which I replied that I would not get involved in politics. In 1942, SS men entered the courtyard of the church in Włochy three times during service and organized round-ups.

On 18 September 1942, I was arrested in Włochy by three officers of the Warsaw Gestapo. I was called away from the church, where I was getting ready to hold a service, and was taken to my flat, which was searched. I was accused of being an enemy of the German nation. When I asked them to present more specific charges, I was told that this was sufficient. I believe that my arrest was connected with my charitable and social work in Warsaw County; together with Maurycy Potocki, we established 52 branch offices of the Main Welfare Council [Rada Główna Opiekuńcza], thanks to which we saved thirty thousand children and fifty thousand elderly people from starvation. These centers were liquidated before my arrest by the Kreishauptmann of Warsaw County. Despite the praise we had received, I realized that the charity work had not exactly impressed them and indeed I was arrested soon afterwards. From Włochy I was transported to Pawiak prison. I waited four weeks to be interrogated, staying in a one-person cell (1 meter wide, 2.3 meters long) with eight fellow inmates. Through the cell's small window I saw police dogs being trained in the prison courtyard: an SS man ordered them to attack prisoners – two Poles and two Jews – and the dogs were praised only when they had mauled the prisoners to death, and other prisoners were ordered to carry the corpses to the morgue. In the cell we could hear the crying and moans of victims who were being mauled by the dogs and dying. Every day one of the cells would undergo penal exercises in the hall. I myself was once taken with twenty-four fellow inmates to a hall that was eighty meters long. We were ordered to crawl on our knees and elbows; an SS man from the Polizei, Zander, was in command, he then set a dog on us, which would catch our legs, necks, and arms, it would hurt and bite us. The dog was already tired, Zander would urge him with a whip. He himself would torture the prisoners by beating them with a whip while they were crawling. The corridor was covered with blood. I got bitten by the dog so badly that I am still not well. As a result of the biting I became gravely ill, since I got gangrene in my wounds. I stayed in the prison hospital. I was interrogated during my illness. I was examined by the same Gestapo men who had detained me. I was again accused of being an enemy of the German nation, and still being ill, I was transported to Majdanek in January 1943. Only in March 1943 did the prison doctor take away the dressings from my leg wounds. I was already in the Castle at that point. During the interrogation, I realized that the entire evidence proceeding was a hoax. The Gestapo examined the detainees in accordance with five formulas. A detained person would be accused of a crime without evidence, *a priori*, and on this basis, a penalty would be adjudicated. My observations are consistent with the conclusions of my fellow inmates. On 15 May 1944, as a result of great efforts by my friends,



I was released from prison. I returned to Włochy; I was ill due to exhaustion. On Christmas Eve I returned to my post. I was kept under surveillance by the Germans ever since. They would send *Volksdeutschen* to the church to hear the sermon, they examined who entered my flat and who left it; several times I received numerous threats from *Volksdeutschen* and SS men (which of the Pawiak escapees were hiding in Włochy) that I would be executed or deported. I however managed to get through this period right up to liberation.