



ZYGMUNT KOZUBSKI

Warsaw, 5 June 1946. Deputy Prosecutor Zofia Rudziewicz interviewed the person specified below as an unsworn witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Zygmunt Kozubski
Date of birth	1 January 1887
Names of parents	Wojciech and Maria
Place of residence	Warszawa, Krakowskie Przedmieście Street 54
Occupation	Professor, University of Warsaw
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none
Education	Faculty of Philosophy and Theology of the University of Innsbruck

During the war, I was the archbishop of Warsaw's plenipotentiary for matters connected with German offices, *Bevollmächtigter des Erzbischofs von Warschau für die Angelegenheiten mit dem öffentlichen Behörden*. The archbishop of Warsaw was Doctor Stanisław Gall, and after he died in 1943, Bishop Szlagowski.

From the very beginning of the occupation, that is, from the moment the Germans entered Warsaw, I observed the particularly hostile attitude of the Germans towards the Church and priests. German propaganda spread words of hatred, claiming that the Catholic Church, and priests in particular, encouraged the Polish-German war during sermons and in occasional speeches, especially on the radio. This was communicated to me right after the Germans' entry by the head of the First Propaganda Office in aleja Szucha. Hatred towards the Church

and the priests continued throughout the occupation, with short remission periods when Germans needed the Church and priests for their military and political purposes. The attitude of German officials towards me as a representative of the clergy was constantly rude, often brutal and accompanied by threats.

During the first days after the Germans had entered, starting from 3 October 1939, any priest who dared to show up on the street was captured by the Gestapo, who had outposts on all the more important streets, established especially for the purpose of catching priests. This was accompanied by robberies. Priests were transported to Pawiak prison, detained there without interrogation, and released only after a few weeks.

In 1940 the Gestapo began systematic arrests of priests. Even ailing and very old priests were not spared. They detained people who had nothing to do with politics, their only fault was that they were priests. In parishes, rectors were thrown out of parish buildings, which were then appropriated for the purposes of German institutions, whereby, to keep the appearance of legality, Germans forced priests to sign very unfavorable lease contracts. If a priest refused, they were sent a compulsory agreement (*Zwangsvertrag*), in which the county authorities unlawfully set the lease rent and lease terms in such a manner that the owner was often even forced to pay the tenant. Such compulsory agreements were sent by the German city captain.

With reference to the arresting operation, I must indicate that priests were detained as they were leaving the church, without even being asked for their name. This was how Father Doctor Franciszek Roślaniec, a University of Warsaw professor, was arrested; later he was transported to a camp, where he died. It happened that a priest who during a sermon expressed hope that everything would change, or mentioned the name of Poland, would be immediately arrested and killed. This happened to the dean, Father Sejna from Góra Kalwaria. It also happened that a priest arrested as a result of a false accusation was beaten so severely that he would yield his spirit during the punishment of flogging. This is how Rector Oszkiel died (in 1943). The diocesan authorities and the family, notified about the death, intervened with the Gestapo in Grójec to have the body released to them, but to no avail. His corpse was found accidentally, buried by Germans in a nearby forest. The martyrdom of Father Oszkiel was witnessed by his assistant priest, who suffered a nervous breakdown as a result of his being tortured.

All of the arrests were carried out by the Gestapo, but the head of the district was responsible for them, which we always emphasized in letters sent by priests to the district or rather to Fischer himself.

When the ghetto was being created, whose area included three churches, right at the very start a military items depot was established in the church of St Augustine [kościół św. Augustyna], and the warehouse of a private German company manufacturing military equipment was established in the church in Leszno Street. Taking this opportunity, Germans pilfered the church property and brutally destroyed the church furnishings. Since the church was damaged as a result of bombardments, and it was necessary to carry out repairs on it, I asked Governor Fischer many times to let us begin the repairs and generally to have the church secured against theft and robbery. The church could have been easily excluded from the ghetto, but my pleadings remained unanswered. When after some time we received a message that the graves behind the church were plundered, corpses were taken out and robbed of [...] fingers, in search of jewelry, I once again wrote a memorandum to Fischer, but again to no avail, and the Gestapo said that this must have been done by Polish or Jewish workers.

Germans issued regulations limiting the Church's freedom:

1. Prohibition against organizing processions outside of church grounds, prohibition against using bells, which by the way were confiscated in 1942; prohibition against public funerals; prohibition against singing the song *Serdeczna Matko* [Good Mother] just because the melody was similar to the one in *Boże, coś Polskę* [God, Thou Who Protects Poland]; prohibition against holidays with a patriotic character; an order to tear out pages referring to Polish patrons, and generally everything that mentioned the former Poland (*was an das ehemalige Polen erinnert*), from songbooks, missals and other church books. We received all of these regulations from the district.
2. All religious associations were liquidated if they were of a religious-social character, and their assets were confiscated. After a while, however, we managed to save the assets of a few associations, since we managed to prove that they had religious objectives, and as such had been canonically established by the Church. This regulation was in violation of the concordat.
3. Theological academic faculties received strict orders not to admit anyone to the first year of studies, which of course meant stoppage of any influx of clergy.

4. Prohibition against religious convents to admit any new members. Both of these regulations were in violation of the concordat.
5. Prohibition against providing any religious services to Germans or to *Volksdeutschen*.
I saw with my own eyes a regulation from the district, from which I remember the words "*so ist unter der Würde eines Deutschen sich von einem polnischen Geistlichen betreuen zu lassen*".
6. Prohibition against ruling on any cases in the archbishopric matrimonial court, in which at least one party was a *Volksdeutsch* or a German.
7. Prohibition against accepting any applications or complaints from our diocesans residing in the so-called territories incorporated into the Reich. This was a violation of the rules of the concordat.
8. Prohibition against celebrating holidays [on working days] and the transfer thereof by civil authorities to Sundays. This was in breach of the rules of the freedom of the Church and the concordat.
9. Prohibition against admitting Jews into the Catholic Church, which was a violation of the natural rights of the Church. After some time churches in the ghetto were closed, and the priests together with servers were tossed out of the ghetto, despite the fact that a certain number of Catholics remained in the ghetto, in particular blue collar workers, who were left without any pastoral care.

We received all of these regulations from the district authorities or from the police.

The Germans, from the very beginning, were most strict in prohibiting priests from getting involved in politics, and they punished disobedience with death, but when their military situation deteriorated considerably, they tried to win the Church over for their own purposes. Fischer organized a conference in 1943, inviting Bishop Szlagowski and me on behalf of the Church. He proposed then that we issue a pastoral letter against Bolshevism, instruct in sermons about the detrimental nature of Communism, and at the same time encourage Poles to cooperate with the Germans, in particular to go voluntarily to Germany to work. Fischer falsely informed us of the conditions of Polish laborers in Germany, claiming that they had the same food rations as Germans and that they had Polish priests. All of this was

proved false right during the very same conference, when an officer summoned by Fischer, not prepared to provide the right answers and not aware of what Fischer had told us, said that Germans had the so-called *Sonderzuteilungen*, which Poles did not have, and that there were no Polish priests, although the government was considering it. Fischer insisted also that we give a public speech against the murders of Germans, claiming that he could understand an uprising, although the German Reich would have enough strength to immediately crush it; [but] they could not tolerate the insidious murders of German soldiers and civilians. We then appealed to Fischer with respect to public executions, claiming that they increased the irritation of the Polish population. Fischer replied that it was up to Poles whether there would be executions or not; if the Poles ceased to murder Germans, the executions would stop. This statement was not true, since masses of Poles were murdered, irrespective of the murders committed on Germans. The conference brought about no effects. All of our further requests and pleading submitted from then on to the district remained ineffective; the district claimed that we were pursuing – as Archbishop Sapieha was – a dilatory strategy with respect to the wishes of the German authorities. I have described the course of the conference in an article in "Tygodnik Warszawski" ["Warsaw Weekly"] entitled *Z dziejów jednej konferencji* [*The History of A Conference*].

After the uprising, all the churches in Warsaw were destroyed by *Räumungskommando*.