

JAN ZACHWATOWICZ

Warsaw, 12 June 1946. Deputy Prosecutor of the Special Criminal Court Zofia Rudziewicz interviewed the person named below as a witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the content of Art. 106 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Jan Zachwatowicz
Date of birth	21 February 1900
Names of parents	Wincenty and Jadwiga
Place of residence	Warsaw, Lwowska Street 7
Place of birth	Gatchina near Leningrad
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Occupation	professor at the Warsaw Polytechnic architect, General Conservator of the Republic of Poland
Relationship to the parties	none
Criminal record	none
Education	Warsaw Polytechnic, doctor of technical sciences

Before the war, I was an assistant professor at the Warsaw Polytechnic, working in the field of conservation of Poland's architectural heritage. During the war, I was officially a teacher at the technical school, and unofficially a Polytechnic professor and head of the Department of Polish Architecture. In the resistance, I headed the architectural and historical heritage section, and for this reason I carried out observations and collected information concerning German operations in the area of urban planning, architecture, and historical buildings.

The Germans were trying to destroy monuments of Polish cultural heritage. They began with the Castle, which was deprived of its interior furnishings in a planned manner, dismantled by means of sawing off the ceilings, and prepared to be blown up at the beginning of 1940. All of this took place with the knowledge and under the auspices of the Warsaw district governor, Fischer.

The Germans wanted to demolish Warsaw and create a new German city there. The plan of the new city to replace Warsaw, as far as I know, was developed by the German architect Gross, a Warsaw district official, as early as December 1939. I got this information from the Polish municipal administration and I was able to see the plan and a model thereof at the county administration office on Daniłowiczowska Street.

The mere fact that the plan and model were in the said building proves that Fischer knew about everything and agreed to it.

The plan foresaw a city of 200,000 inhabitants, with a network of streets different from that of Warsaw, which meant that the whole city would have to be demolished with the exception of the Old Town district, which the Germans had recognized as demonstrating the city's German roots. The street system was to be concentric, at variance with the rectangular street system in Warsaw, but consistent with the town planning ideas which expressed the Hitlerite construction principle set forth in Feder's work, which was considered binding in Hitlerite town planning. At the center of the new city there was to be a square, which would have been left empty after the demolition of buildings located in Saski and Teatralny squares. The densely built-up districts in the northern, western and southern parts of the city were to be turned into villa neighborhoods. Thus, the total demolition of the ghetto could be considered part of the implementation of this plan. A new building was planned at the site of the Royal Castle, with a completely different layout, represented on the model by a square block. Later, in 1943–1944, German architects developed a plan for a big party building on a triangular floor plan, with a dome, which was to replace the Castle. I saw this plan, kept at the municipal administration office, with my own eyes. I know that all matters concerning the district were discussed with Fischer, who would express his opinion about the plans.

In view of [these] far-reaching plans to redevelop the city, the district did not agree to a series of projects and reconstruction works on buildings destroyed in the course of military operations.

During the occupation, the Germans removed numerous works of art and book collections from Warsaw.

After the defeat of the Warsaw Uprising, the surrender agreement contained a clause under which the Polish side was to have an opportunity to evacuate from Warsaw (which was going to be destroyed, according to von dem Bach's declarations) works of art and cultural property from public, church, and private collections. Doctor Lorentz negotiated the implementation of this clause with Fischer and Geibel, but the negotiations were not recognized by them. Fischer and Geibel agreed to the evacuation of cultural property from Warsaw in limited numbers and only from three institutions: the National Museum, the National Library (100,000 out of the 800,000 volumes stored there) and from the university library (again, 100,000 out of 800,000 volumes).

From the beginning of November 1944 until mid-January 1945, I took part in evacuation missions to Warsaw. Despite permissions, the evacuation of works of art was illegal. The Räumungskommando was actually of the opinion that our work should be limited to assisting with the evacuation of listed collections to German territory. I know this from Director Lorentz. Meanwhile, we were evacuating items from Warsaw into the suburbs illegally in order to save them.

The Germans are guilty of the destruction of an enormous number of works of Polish culture, both from public and private collections, which we were unable to rescue as part of our illegal operation. The Krasiński Collection, the Public Library on Koszykowa Street, the Archive of New Records and so on, were burned down on purpose.

During my missions to Warsaw, I witnessed the course of the systematic destruction of the city. Blocks of houses were being burned down, quarter by quarter, in accordance with red paint markings on walls. Irrespective of the above, buildings of particular value were prepared to be blown up with a large amount of work done in the form of drilling countless holes for explosives. The following constructions in the order specified below were destroyed in such a way: the Royal Castle, churches in the Old Town, the Ossoliński and Saski palace complexes (the Military Headquarters), the monuments to Poniatowski, Mickiewicz, and the Sapper monument; the Grand Theatre, the Łazienki Park complex (having been burned first), and the Belweder. The operation of destroying monuments also consisted in the dismantling and removal of the Copernicus monument, the statue of Christ from in front of the Church of

the Holy Cross, not counting the following monuments that were destroyed and removed during the occupation: the monuments to Chopin, Kiliński, the soldiers of the Polish Military Organisation, and to Curie-Skłodowska. All of this destruction was carried out systematically by the Räumungskommando which reported to Fischer.