



JAN PASZYNA

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

Name and surname	Jan Paszyna
Date of birth	19 April 1881
Names of parents	Andrzej and Katarzyna
Place of residence	Krakowskie Przedmieście Street 1 (Sewerynów Street 8)
Occupation	school prefect, rector of the Holy Cross Church [Kościół Świętego Krzyża] parish
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none
Education	Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University [Uniwersytet Jagielloński]

I belonged to the Congregation of the Mission. The Germans entered Warsaw on 2 October 1939. Already on 3 October 1939 they arrested almost all the priests in Warsaw. I too was among the detained. Priests numbering around fifteen hundred were put into Pawiak prison. Apart from that, a few were detained in Mokotów prison and on Daniłowiczowska Street. We were not accused of anything in particular. I think that the arrest was connected with Hitler's visit. The Germans wanted to remove people they found dangerous. Priests were arrested in a treacherous way, for example under the pretext of being called to a sick person or delivery of a certificate protecting them against detention.

The Gestapo men in uniforms and with skull-and-crossbones [badges] on their caps came to the house of the congregation at Krakowskie Przedmieście Street, and there they ordered all priests to come to one room, where they recorded our personal details and then transported us by car to Pawiak prison. They told us that we were being taken to the magistrate, to receive certificates that would allow us to move around the city freely. But we were taken to Pawiak prison, where we were detained until 15 October 1939. Before we were released, we were forced to make a promise in speech that we would behave loyally towards the occupation authorities.

I came back home and I continued work as the prefect of public secondary and elementary schools. The Germans did not limit teaching religion at school. They presented a hostile attitude towards the Catholic Church. Apart from general regulations, which were harmful to the Church, special regulations were issued as well, aimed at the persecution of religious congregations:

1. It was prohibited to admit new members to monastic orders. This way, the orders were doomed to extinction. This was a violation of the concordat, which had not been terminated by the Germans. Also, the prohibition to admit new members to theological seminaries was in breach of the rules in force. 2. It often happened that Germans used friars as forced laborers, which was in breach of the monastic rules. This was common in Niepokalanów near Szymanowo by Sochaczew. 3. All sodalities of Our Lady and religious congregations were abolished. All congregations were prohibited, it was even forbidden to wear distinctions.

All these regulations came from the Warsaw district. I don't remember who signed them.

On 7 February 1944, the streets adjacent to the house of the Congregation of the Mission were surrounded by the Gestapo and SS-Polizei, who burst into the house at 5 in the morning, ordered all of us to gather in a room, and started to check documents. They treated us very brutally, shoving, cursing, and abusing us. They also detained everyone who was going to the church to attend the Prime. All friars and priests, numbering twenty-two, were arrested. We were transported to Pawiak prison and there, having been disinfected and having had our heads shaved, we were put in a very small cell. There were ten of us in a cell three meters long and a meter and a half wide. Four days later we were interrogated. We were asked whether we read bulletins, listened to the radio, whether we belonged to the resistance organization.



I wish to add that all friars and priests from the Salesian Society in Lipowa Street were arrested with us as well; they were interrogated at the same time we were. After the second interrogation on 21 February 1944, six members of the Congregation of the Mission and six members of the Salesian Society were released. I was among them. The rest remained in Pawiak prison until the end of March and then they were transported to Gross-Rosen, from which only two priests have come back so far.

Orders that were particularly persecuted included the order of Capuchins in Miodowa Street; all of these were arrested, in 1943 as far as I can remember, and sent to camps. Supposedly two brothers ran away during the arrest carried out by the Gestapo. Some thirteen Jesuit priests were executed during a public execution, among them Father Kosibowicz; twenty-five Redemptorists were executed in Wola.

I wish to add that on the third day after our arrest, the students of the Salesian facility were hanged in Leszno Street by the Germans.