



NATALIA RAPACZ

Warsaw, 26 February 1948. Judge Halina Wereńko, a member of the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, interviewed the person named below as a witness, without taking an oath. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Natalia Rapacz
Parents' names	Stanisław and Zofia
Date of birth	6 September 1904
Education	secondary
Religion	Roman Catholic
Occupation	office worker
Place of residence	Warsaw, Focha Street 5/7, flat 62
Citizenship and nationality	Polish
Criminal record	none

When the Warsaw Uprising broke out, I was in my apartment at Focha Street 5/7. For the safety's sake, I moved from my apartment to a bunker beneath the main building of the opera, where a considerable number of nearby residents had gathered.

On 8 August 1944 at 5.00 German units ran into the bunker, their guns at the ready. I heard that they only spoke German, and everyone was saying that they were SS men. I didn't see their unit patches, for they wore protective sheets. The Germans led first the men, and then the women to Teatralny Square (near the statue of Bogusławski), and lined them up according to height against the wall of the Theatre. After a while they formed us into a kind of human barricade, and under our cover commenced an attack on the town hall



building, the Blank Palace, and the barricade at Daniłowiczowska Street. The attack was repulsed, and many Germans and Poles were wounded and killed. I was saved because I fell on the ground. For a certain time after the attack I lay on the ground. After a while, from the pillars of the Theatre (between Focha Street and the main entrance to the Theatre), where the Germans were hiding, I heard a command given in Polish ordering those who were still alive and lying in the square to move under the pillars. They threatened that those who failed to comply would be shot. Together with a few other people I went under the pillars, where the Germans ordered us to carry their dead, lying in the square, to the gate at Alberta Street 2, and the wounded to the Brühl Palace. I made a few trips with the dead and wounded Germans. Then I returned to Teatralny Square, hoping to find my belongings, which I had lost (there were no Germans in the square itself, so the insurrectionists who occupied the town hall, the Blank Palace, Daniłowiczowska Street and the house at Focha Street 10 did not shoot at us). There were more people like me in the square. Suddenly, from behind the pillars of the Theatre (the side wing between Focha Street and the main entrance to the opera) an order was given for people who were in the square to move under the pillars. More than 20 people, myself included, did so.

Through the entrance (near Focha Street) we were driven to the attic, where the German soldiers began a systematic plunder. If anyone hid their valuables or had a larger sum of money on their person, they were shot. The first to be shot was some elderly man, for a very thorough search – to which we were all subjected – of his person led to the disclosure of a rifle bullet. At this moment I lost my bearings, but I knew that the shootings were continuing. I voluntarily surrendered all of my valuables. After some time we were led downstairs. Some six persons came down with me, I did not know any of them, while the others lay bloodied in the attic. Having been led downstairs, we were ordered to collect the weapons of dead Germans in the square. I then found an 8-year old girl, wounded, propped against the wall of the Theatre; I place her on my back and proceeded to the bunker. After a while the Germans summoned women with children from the bunker, and so I exited with the rescued girl. They directed us to Fredry Street. From there, the steadily increasing group of people – comprising almost only women, children and the elderly – was led through the Saski Garden, Elektoralna Street and Wolska Street to the Western Railway Station. Along the way young men were pulled out of the group, while younger women were abducted; the Ukrainians plundered us along the way. From the Western Railway Station we were transported to the transit camp in Pruszków.



On 21 January 1945 I returned to Warsaw. I went to the location of the execution which I had observed, but it turned out that the fire had caused the roof of the Theatre wing to collapse. On the premises of the opera I saw human remains in the house, and in one of the shops in front of the National Theatre. In the courtyard of the house at Focha Street 5/7, the Polish Red Cross was exhuming human remains.

Large numbers of documents were strewn throughout the whole Theatre, and particularly so in the house; they belonged to the people who had been shot in the opera.

The report was read out.