



ALEKSANDER KISIEL

On 7 October 1946 in Warsaw, acting Investigating Judge Halina Wereńko, delegated to the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, interviewed the person specified below as a witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

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| Name and surname | Aleksander Kisiel |
| Date of birth | 31 December 1913, Wilno |
| Religious affiliation | Roman Catholic |
| Education | divinity school, MA in philosophy |
| Occupation | priest, PhD student at the University of Warsaw |
| Names of parents | Aleksander and Matylda, née Bratkowska |
| Place of residence | Warsaw, Jesuit monastery, Rakowiecka Street 61 |

On 2 August 1944, between 10.00 a.m. and 11 a.m., a group of armed German soldiers, whom I later identified as belonging to the SS, entered the premises of our house at Rakowiecka Street 61. There were around 20 of them and I believe they were under the command of a non-commissioned officer.

Our house was located in the area which, after the Uprising broke out, was not affected by the insurgent attacks, as it was on the German side. There were no weapons in the house, nor were any preparations of insurgent activities being carried out there. There were 25 monks on the premises (16 priests and 9 friars), including Edward Kosibowicz, the Prior. Apart from them, there were around 12 male residents, a few male civilians, a few women and a 10-year-old boy, who took refuge in the monastery when the Uprising broke out. When the SS-men entered, they made totally unfounded accusations, addressing first



myself and then the superior, namely that shots had been fired at a German post from the windows of our house. In order to prove that these accusations were baseless, we demanded that a search be done. After a pat-down and a search of the premises, both done in a very superficial fashion, the commander of the group ordered all of us to move downstairs, to the basements, while Prior Kosibowicz was taken outside the house. On the strength of the testimonies of the city gardens workers, supported by the discovery of the body, we later established that Father Kosibowicz had been executed between Rakowiecka Street and Wawelska Street.

After we moved down to the basements, we were ordered to gather in the central-heating boiler room that had been converted into makeshift shelter, next to which there was a small room where Stanisław Zwan, a carter, lived. An SS-man stood on the threshold of the boiler room and started to call individual people, pointing his finger at them. He called clergymen first and then the civilians. I was the last clergyman called. When I got to the door, I saw that the corridor was empty and there was another German next to the door, who demanded to have my watch. When he took my watch, he told me to go to the carter's room. There I found all the clergymen called previously. Other people kept coming from the boiler room: men, then women and the 10-year-old boy.

The SS-men were not drunk.

When all 50 or so people gathered in the carter's room, the SS-men locked the door and then, after a few minutes, opened them abruptly, throwing two grenades inside. Everyone fell to the ground. People were lying in a multilayered cluster since the room was small. Groans could be heard. The SS-man standing by the door opened fire from an automatic (*rozpylacz*). He was shooting at the people lying on the floor, purposely aiming at the spots where moans could be heard. Silence filled the room and then the SS-man walked away from the door. Then, two residents of the house, Jan Gurba and Bronisław Dynak, got out of the room to escape. They burst into the room opposite, where they were shot dead by an SS-man standing nearby. In the room where the execution had taken place, people started to move and groans could be heard, which drew an SS-man there. He again opened fire from a *rozpylacz*, first hitting the front rows, meaning the women. He continued shooting until all went quiet again. Czesław Świącicki, the brother on gate-keeping duty, who was lying in front of me, and Zbigniew Mikołajczyk, the 10-year-old boy, who was lying next to me, died then. I was shot in both



hands. When the SS-man walked away, people in the room again started to twist and moan, which again attracted the attention of one of the SS-men. I heard footsteps and I realized that someone was standing by the door, watching the bodies and whispering to someone else. At that very moment one of the wounded moved or groaned, and the SS-man standing by the door stepped inside, cursing. He turned the people lying on the floor to see if anyone was still alive. At that time, I was lying by the door, covered with the bodies of a few dead people lying on one another. The SS-man stood on my back and, rocking on his heels, said: "This one is still too fresh" (*der ist noch zu friach*). He then fired a shot from a revolver, probably aiming at my head, but instead hitting the tip of my ear.

A moment later he stepped off my back, approached the bed on which three monks were lying and killed Father Jan Pawelski with two shots to the head. He also killed the other two; one of them – as I had noticed earlier – was Brother Adam Głandan. Before he shot at those on the bed, the SS-man threw away a pillow, which landed on me and consequently, nobody paid any attention to me afterwards. I heard a few more instances of two shots being fired in quick succession and then the SS-man left the room. After a while, two people speaking in German came to the execution site, looking for watches on the dead bodies, apparently unaware that these had been removed earlier. I heard revolver shots again and the following remarks in German: "this one is still breathing, feed him two bullets," "nice work" etc. From time to time, I heard the voice of a boy, maybe ten years old, who spoke German and whom I had previously spotted among the SS-men. He would let them know if someone was still alive (*Achtung, der labt noch*). The execution and the acts of finishing people off had lasted a good few hours. It started around noon and lasted until 4.00 or 5.00 p.m., I believe. I did not exactly keep the time, because, as I have already testified, an SS-man had taken my watch. When the final two SS-men left the room and it went quiet, those still alive started to escape, either towards the wood store or the coal room. It turned out that 15 people had survived, from among whom I know the following names: Father Karol Sawicki (currently residing in Gdynia, Tatrzańska Street 35), Father Jan Rosiak (currently residing in Warsaw, Rakowiecka Street 61), Father Hugo Kwas (currently residing in Gdynia, Tatrzańska Street 35), Father Leon Mońko (currently residing in Zakopane, Jesuit prayer house Górka), Father Stanisław Jędrusik (currently residing in Toruń, Piekary Street 24), Father Aleksander Pieńkosz, who died at the end of August 1944 while serving as chaplain to the insurgents in Mokotów, Brother Lucjan Korsak



(currently residing in Lublin in Bobolanum), and Julian Reszka and Witold Rossa, whose whereabouts are unknown to me.

I know that the following persons died in the execution: Father Herman Libiński, Father Jan Pawelski, mentioned earlier, Father Władysław Wiącek, Father Mieczysław Wróblewski, Father Jan Madaliński, Father Henryk Wilczyński, Father Zbigniew Grabowski, Brother Klemens Bobrycki, Brother Antoni Biegański, Brother Bartłomiej Bajan, Brother Stanisław Orzechowski, Brother Józef Fus, Brother Stanisław Tomaszewski, Brothers Czesław Świącicki and Adam Standan, both mentioned before. Also the following residents of the house: Antoni Chrzanowski, a gardener, Jan Gruba and Bronisław Dynak, both mentioned before, and Jan Kręcik, a bricklayer. The following civilians: Włodarkiewicz (I do not know his first name), Dembowska (I do not know her first name), who was responsible for cleaning up the public chapel. Overall, around 35 people died during the execution, including eight women and the boy. After I left the execution site, I hid in a nearby coal room. It was twilight already. After a while, I again heard the footsteps of soldiers (the clatter of metal heeltaps) all over the house and by the room where the execution had taken place. One of the survivors, whose name I do not know, came to the coal room, his elbow injured, and told us that the Germans had poured petrol onto the corpses and set them on fire, and that he had got out when the fire had already been burning.

There were ten people in the coal room. We hid there between Wednesday, 2 August and Saturday, 5 August 1944 and risked being discovered by the Germans. In the meantime, the Germans were plundering the house and setting individual rooms on fire. All the time, we heard the sound of windows being broken, fire crackling and appliances being smashed. On 5 August in the morning, one of the priests managed to get to a neighboring block undetected and notify a first-aid station of our position. Taking advantage of the fact that the Germans were temporarily not on the premises nor in the neighborhood, two female paramedics reached the coal store and within an hour took everybody to the house in Fałata Street/ Akacjowa Street. As I was going out, I saw a heap of charred bodies at the execution site, which were lying as I had previously left them. The house was mostly burnt. Already in August 1944, the Polish Red Cross, with the Germans' permission, moved into our house and took care of the bodies of the murdered. They walled up the window and the door of the room where the execution had taken place and it has remained that way ever since.



I do not know the names of any of the SS-men who carried out the execution nor the name of their unit. Since on the outbreak of the Uprising our section, i.e. Rakowiecka Street – Św. Andrzeja Boboli Street was instantly manned by the Germans, I assume that the unit must have been sent from the nearby barracks. That this was an SS unit became evident to me after I spoke to a teenage boy who tended the monastery's cows in the city gardens and whom the Germans used for auxiliary work, such as digging ditches etc. The boy told me that this was an SS unit. I saw it myself that the Germans who carried out the execution had green uniforms, black facings and black epaulets, as well as skulls on their collars, which I could clearly see on the main perpetrator of the execution. Złotenko, a retired colonel (currently residing at Fałata Street 6), told me that after the execution in the monastery, he asked one German about what had happened to the monastery priests, especially the prior; he received the following reply, in German: "They're all dead, no priest will get away from me".

The report was read out.