



MARIA LACHERT

Warsaw, 4 August 1947. The member of the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, Judge Halina Wereńsko, 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	Maria Lachertowa, formerly Diużyńska, <i>née</i> Ceglińska
Names of parents	Kazimierz and Maria <i>née</i> Landsberg
Date of birth	13 October 1909 in Moscow
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
State and national affiliation	Polish
Place of residence	Warsaw, Saska Kępa, aleja Katowicka 9, flat 1
Education	eng. chemist
Occupation	secretary of the Office of the Reconstruction of the Capital

During the Warsaw Uprising, I took part in the action under the pseudonym "Wanda-Mucha", in the line unit of the Home Army, with weapon in hand, in the Ochota area, in the vicinity of my flat located from the side of Uniwersytecka Street in the block [of houses] on Wawelska Street, Uniwersytecka Street, Mianowskiego Street, and Pługa Street. On 1 August 1944, in the basements of our block from the side of Pługa Street, a field hospital of the Home Army was organized under the direction of Dr Lange.

Wounded insurgents, civilians, altogether around 14 people stayed in the hospital. On 11 August, the insurgents retreated through the sewers to Śródmieście. The details of their actions have been provided by a Home Army soldier, Sieroszewski, in his report. After the



departure of the insurgents, the house was under fire from the German artillery and machine guns. I remained in the basement with other residents of the block. We began organizing the removal of the civilian population. A white flag was hung over the hospital.

Two hours after the insurgents' departure, an SS unit, stationed in the School of Political Sciences on the corner of Wawelska Street and Raszyńska Street, burst into the block with a unit of "Ukrainians" subordinate to them, wearing red squares on their epaulettes. An SS officer, whose name I don't know, commanded the unit. The Germans entered the block through a ground floor window from the side of Pługa Street. Because one gate was on fire and the other one was barricaded, there was an order for the residents to come outside over a board through the window on Pługa Street, while it was forbidden to carry the sick and an ill elderly woman, the mother of a resident of the house, outside. Horrible scenes happened during the exit of the civilian population through the window of the raised ground floor. A "Ukrainian" pushed an elderly woman having slightly paralyzed legs from the board into the flames, the mother of Czerwińska, who now lives in Milanówek in her own villa. She was burned alive. The elderly Niewiadomski died in the same way. The "Ukrainians" made a cordon around those led out, robbed their things and beat them when they were exiting the block on Pługa Street, and some people who seemed suspicious to them - either because of appearance, or because of a wound they had - were thrown to the ground and executed. In this way, in front of the block, already on Pługa Street, were murdered: senior rifleman of the Home Army Skrzyński; commander of the anti-aircraft defense of the block, Kazimierz Majewski; a chaplain in the block who was there by chance, Father Salamucha; the son of the chemist from the pharmacy on the corner of Uniwersytecka Street and Mianowskiego Street, Wilamowski; a professor of the University of Warsaw, doctor of chemistry Leśkowicz; Czosnowski with his little son; the caretaker [of the house on] Mianowskiego Street 15, Franciszek, whose surname I do not remember. Around 50-60 people were heavily and lightly injured from the beatings while exiting. I belonged to that group of the civilian population. After our exit from the house, apart from the sick, Lewak remained hidden in the basement with his wounded son, and the caretaker of the house, who was stopped by the Germans, Wyrzykowski (currently residing in Warsaw, on Miodowa Street 24) remained.

The following course of events in the house is known to me from accounts. After the exit of our group, on the order of the SS officer who was in the house or in our group the whole



time, the "Ukrainians" threw grenades into the basements and in this way they murdered the sick. Three insurgents were among them, having the pseudonyms "Książę", "Strzelec", and "Błysk", and other severely ill left behind. Dr Lange can remember the exact number and names of the sick. After committing this murder, the "Ukrainians" set the building on fire, already partly standing in flames, and ordered Wyrzykowski, the caretaker, to throw the corpses of those murdered on Pługa Street into the fire.

In January 1945, after the escape of the Germans, I saw near the basements a row of half charred corpses, later exhumed in the process of the action conducted by the City Board.

While the sick were being murdered in the block, I, in the group of around 200 residents of the house, was driven by the "Ukrainians" to the corner of Uniwersytecka Street and Raszyńska Street. There we were placed in front of a machine gun, and the SS officer checked if the group was in range of the shots. He turned the handle of the gun and hesitated. He gave an order to separate a group of men and watched as the "Ukrainians" robbed people with impunity, taking all the better things, coats, jewelry. The SS men also robbed us. I was inspected by an SS man looking for valuables. During a stop, a "Ukrainian" abducted three young women from the group, who did not return to us.

After hesitating and considering, the SS officer gave an order to lead the group to Zieleniak, where we went, having our hands raised for 20 minutes. In that way nobody could slip through with a suitcase or a bundle.

Behind the gate, at Zieleniak, people who declared their nationality as Russian were separated from us. That group was placed by the gate and left in peace with regards to further looting and the abducting of women. Some "Ukrainian" engaged in conversation with me and advised me to declare myself as a Russian, "otherwise it will be bad". We were placed in the middle of the square, and more groups of "Ukrainians" kept coming, to take our clothes and the remains of our things, beating us when there was nothing to rob, and abducting women. Desperate cries resounded all night, "Vlasovtsy" lighted up their torches, choosing young women whom they raped on the square. One could hear constant shots, I suppose to create fear. I didn't see anyone being executed.

Apart from our group, a few thousand people were in Zieleniak, mostly from Lubecki Housing Estate, Staszic Housing Estate, and some from Mokotów. Some had remained there for



a couple of days. An elderly woman, whose surname I don't know, shouted desperately for them to give her back her two daughters, abducted three days before by the "Ukrainians".

I saw German officers in Zieleniak. The "Ukrainians" had freedom of action. There was a light in the building by the gate and so I suppose the commanders must have been there. On the next morning, a non-commissioned officer of SS appeared and formed a transport to the Warsaw West station and to the transit camp in Pruszków. Only a dozen ill people, unable to move by their own strength, remained in Zieleniak by the wall. We were not allowed to carry them. I don't know what happened to that group.

After a three-day stay in Pruszków, I went free with the help of a Polish doctor.

At this the report was concluded and read out.