

WANDA KULCZYK

Warsaw, 15 October 1945. Investigating judge Mikołaj Halfter interviewed the person specified below as a witness. Having advised the witness of the criminal liability for making false declarations, of the obligation to tell the truth, and of the significance of the oath, the judge swore in the witness, after which the latter testified as follows:

Name and surname	Wanda Maria Kulczyk <i>née</i> Zalewska
Age	b. 13 May 1922
Names of parents	Józef and Maria
Place of residence	Warszawa, Mokotowska Street 8, flat 15
Occupation	milliner
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none
Relationship to the parties	victim

I was arrested in Warsaw on 22 December 1940 around 8.00 p.m. On that day, when I was walking down Wiejska Street, a man wearing a green Gestapo uniform (with a skull emblem on the cap) came up to me and asked me in German if my name was Kulczyk (I speak a little German). When I answered in the affirmative, he arrested me and took me to a house at Wiejska Street 2. There, I was interrogated in an office and accused of being a member of the Polish underground.

They inspected the contents of my hand muffs and the pockets of my jacket. They did not find any incriminating evidence. I denied being involved in underground activities. They threatened to beat me but did not actually do so. They found a telegram on me from the Auschwitz camp, in which the camp authorities notified me about the death of my husband,

Bronisław Kulczyk. They were very interested in this telegram. Then, I told them that they had killed my husband at Auschwitz and called them murderers.

Around midnight, I was taken to the Pawiak prison. There, I was placed in a separate cell, where I stayed, alone, for six weeks. They did not interrogate me until 9 January 1941. To that end, I was transported with five other prisoners (Janina Bazowska, her husband, and a man and a woman, whose names I do not know). At 7.00 a.m., we all arrived at the Gestapo headquarters on Szucha Avenue. There, me and Mrs. Bazowska were placed in one cell, in a so-called "tram." The men were kept separately, also in a "tram." The woman they brought with us, whom I did not know, was also placed in a separate "tram."

In the "tram" where they had placed me (it was a cell without windows, only lit through a barred hole giving onto the corridor), there were three rows of short benches. Each bench had enough space for two people. In my cell, aside from myself and Mrs. Bazowska (I learned her name later, at the Pawiak prison), there were two men. We were made to sit at different corners, far from each other, with our backs to the entrance. There was a guard at the door. We were taken for interrogation one by one.

Let me add that these men were already in the cell when we arrived. When the guard left his post for a moment, they said they had been brought from the prison on Daniłowiczowska Street.

I was the last one to be taken for interrogation. I was taken to room 113 (I think it was on the third floor). Three people were waiting in this room: two men in uniforms and an interpreter, in civilian clothes.

The men in uniforms spoke German and the interpreter translated it into Polish. I was asked if I was a member of the underground, if I read "pamphlets," and I was accused of hitting a German after I received the telegram informing me about my husband's death (it was true: when a German in a green uniform and the skull emblem on the cap delivered the telegram to me, I read it in his presence, and then, in the heat of the moment, I hit him on the head). This German spoke Polish, though he was not fluent. During the interrogation, I learned that his name was Jabłoński.

Let me say that I hit Jabłoński on a Saturday, and I was arrested on the next day, on Sunday. I only confessed to hitting Jabłoński. During the interrogation I was not beaten, only threatened with the death penalty.

After the interrogation, I was taken to room 115, where I was photographed, and then I was taken back to the basement, to the same "tram" where I had been detained before the interrogation. In the corridor, when they were taking me and the other four to a van, I spotted some man (he was bleeding profusely from the head) led by two guards, who had grabbed him under his arms, because he could not walk himself. I saw him being loaded into another ambulance.

The five of us were taken in an ambulance to the Pawiak prison. Only Mr. Bazowski had been beaten at the Gestapo because he had bruises on his face which he did not have in the morning, when we was being transported to the Gestapo. They were transporting us in a van with canvas canopies, and one Gestapo man sat with us under the canopy toward the front, while another one sat toward the rear. Therefore, we could not speak to each other, and we were not even allowed to exchange looks.

After we arrived at the Pawiak prison, I was initially placed in my old cell (again alone), and then I was moved to another single cell. On 3 February 1941, in the Pawiak chapel, in the male ward, I stood trial. Gathered around the table in this chapel were fifteen people, among whom I spotted the interpreter who was present during my interrogation at the Gestapo. Among this fifteen was a woman, who, as I found out later, was an interpreter. During this trial, I was only asked why I had hit Jabłoński and what my attitude toward the Germans was. I replied that I had hit Jabłoński in the heat of the moment and that I considered the Germans to be enemies. I was also asked if I had hit Jabłoński out of revenge, which I denied. After that, they took me to the corridor. Then, sitting in the prison's corridor, I could see other prisoners be taken to the same room. Overall, some one hundred men and eighteen women were interrogated this way on that occasion. The Gestapo men who took the prisoners waiting in the corridor to the room (one after another, individually) rushed them inside, and the men, even those who were running, were inevitably kicked or smacked on the head with a whip. The women were not physically abused.

I waited in the corridor more or less from 8.00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at which point all the women had been interrogated and we were taken back to the female ward. I noticed that the interrogations in this room were very swift. After the trial, I spent another three days in my single cell, and then I was moved to a collective cell. 22 women were kept there. There were only 12 beds in this cell so the others had to sleep on the floor, on mattresses (of which there were not enough to go round).

While at the Pawiak prison, I received 40 decagrams of bread daily, some bitter “coffee” in the morning and in the evening, and soup (at first palatable, but later it was simply water with bran, sometimes with cabbage leaves, not greased). Once a week, we (only those of us who were kept in the general cell) were delivered parcels with food and clothes. Sometimes, when the parcels were being checked, some of the items were stolen. Once a month, we were allowed to write a letter to our families and receive a reply, also once a month. I heard that sometimes secret messages were smuggled from the outside, but it was difficult to send out any, unless with the help of the ward’s guard. I know that some prisoners would send out secret messages through her. They reached the addressees. The guards were Polish. Guard Stanisława Pawlak did not demand any payment for smuggling messages to the families and she always passed them on. Others charged 50–100 zlotys per a delivery. The guards secretly did the shopping on behalf of those prisoners who had money (the money, sent from the outside, was delivered to prisoners through the guards).

I had remained at the Pawiak prison until 22 September 1941. Over that period, there were two outgoing transports: first of six, and then of fourteen women. I do not know where they took them. One of them had a sister whom they kept at the Pawiak prison and she told me that her family had notified her that they had been told this woman was dead.

I remember the following names of the prisoners kept at the Pawiak prison with me: Regina and Eugenia Nowogórska, Janina Kęszycka, Maria Kęsicka, Maria Ćwiek, Zofia Goldfeder, Helena Gbyl, Maria Litwinowicz, Halina Ernest, Franciszka Meca, Franciszka Smętkowska, Maria Grzymała, Czesława Sierputowska, Janina Brandt, Wanda Kalinowska, and Maria Wojciechowska. There was also a deaf-mute woman with us (whose name I do not know). She indicated to us that she was 42 years old.

During my time at the collective cell, I was hired in the potato room. When I was taking out the peelings, three times I saw solitary men being taken to the basement under the Pawiak’s male ward. Returning to the female ward after disposing of the peelings (the garbage was behind the male ward), I heard some single shots coming from this basement. Also other prisoners told me that men were being executed in this basement.

I also heard that they were executing men somewhere off the prison’s grounds. I do not know how many people were executed at the Pawiak during the period of my incarceration.

I was taken to Ravensbrück on 23 September 1941. On that occasion, they ferried off 275 women from Warsaw (from the Pawiak).

The report was read out.

MEDICO-LEGAL REPORT

Warsaw, 12 October 1945. Investigating judge Mikołaj Halfter, acting on the motion of the prosecutor and through the agency of an appointed expert witness, Prof. Dr. Wiktor Grzywo-Dąbrowski, head of the Forensic Medicine Department of the University of Warsaw (resident of Warsaw, Grochowska Street 24b), conducted a medico-legal examination of Wanda Kulczyk, aged 23, daughter of Józef and Maria, resident of Mokotowska Street 8, flat 15, a milliner by trade.

Anamnesis: the patient states that on 28 July 1942, when she was interned at the Ravensbrück camp, she was injected with morphine, and then received two injections in her right thigh, after which she was sent from the hospital back to the block. After two days, she was brought back to the hospital, received an intravenous injection in an arm, and passed out. When she came to, her right leg was encased in a plaster cast up to the knee. On the first day after the surgery, she was barely conscious. For a week, she had a fever of up to 40 degrees Celsius.

The leg remained in the cast for ten days. After the cast was removed, the patient found a suppurating wound on the crus. She spent two and a half weeks at the hospital with low-grade fever. Then, she returned to the block and would go back to the hospital to have her dressing changed for another five weeks. On 15 September, she was summoned to the hospital, where she had gauze drenched in boric acid applied on the wound. The gauze had not been wrung out. After one day, she was anesthetized again through an intravenous injection and it later turned out that an incision had been made on the same scar.

After three days, when the patient was under anesthesia, a dressing was put on her leg. For four days, she had a fever of up to 40 degrees, and then it gradually dropped, the patient experiencing low-grade fever for another ten days. After five days, the sutures were removed. She spent four weeks at the hospital. She started to walk normally five and a half months after the first surgery.

The patient states that presently, whenever she walks for an extended period, she feels pain in the right leg. Before the aforementioned surgery, she had never experienced any ailments, and in particular such that would affect her right leg. She is married, without children, and she has not suffered from gynecological conditions.

Present condition: on the right thigh, in the lower outer part, there is an elongated radial vertical scar, 7 cm long, up to 1.5 cm wide, concave, pale brown in color. The scar is moveable upon the palpation of the area around it. A tissue defect has been found inside around this area.

The muscles in both cruses very well developed and strong, the circumference of both cruses at symmetrical points more or less identical. The right leg found to be in no way dysfunctional and its strength is normal.

The patient walks well, does not limp, and squats fast and easily.

No objective changes found in the nervous system.

At that the examination report was concluded. The report was read out.

The expert witness has declared that he will file an opinion in writing once he has seen the radiograms.

W. Grzywo-Dąbrowski

OPINION

1. On the basis of the examination of W. Kulczyk and the anamnesis, I conclude that the patient underwent a surgical procedure which consisted in cutting through the tissue in the right crus, without medical indications.

Due to the infection of the wound, the patient's temperature rose significantly, which constituted a short-term life-threatening condition.

As a result of the procedure and the wound's suppuration, the patient's health deteriorated and her right leg became dysfunctional for a period of more than twenty days.

The radiogram of the right crus has revealed no changes to the bones but minor periosteal thickening has been found on the outer edge of the fibula, in its middle section, following a supracutaneous inflammation.

2. In the absence of data, it is impossible to determine the nature and goal of the procedure, but considering other cases under investigation it may be surmised that after the tissue of the right crus was cut through some objects or microorganisms were introduced into the wound to cause an infection, for reasons difficult to determine.

W. Grzywo-Dąbrowski