

ZOFIA STAWORZYŃSKA

Warsaw, 20 December 1945. Judge Halina Wereńko interviewed the person specified below as a witness. Having advised the witness of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the gravity of the oath, the judge swore the witness in accordance with Art. 109 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The witness testified as follows:

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|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Name and surname | Zofia Staworzyńska |
| Age | 37 |
| Names of parents | Walery and Stefania |
| Place of residence | [...] |
| Religious affiliation | Roman Catholic |
| Criminal record | none |

Since 1941 I have lived in Warsaw, at Wawelberga Street 18, flat 20. During the Warsaw Uprising the insurgents constructed two barricades with the help of civilians, even children, near our house at the corner of Wolska and Górczewska Street. The neighbouring house contained machine guns, ammunition and grenades.

On 1 August 1944, at three in the afternoon, heavy fighting broke out at our point. The situation was difficult from the very beginning, numerous volksdeutsche were shooting at the insurgents from hiding, thereby revealing where the insurgent posts were located. Germans brought "tiger" tanks into action, they were demolishing houses, which caused the deaths of a large number of civilians.

Our house was hit several times, tanks were attacking from the direction of Górczewska and Wolska streets. Germans burst into our area, dragging the men to demolish barricades, and began setting flats on fire.

The Germans set the houses at Działdowska Street 3, 5 and 8 on fire by throwing bottles filled with petrol into the flats, without having first called upon the civilians to leave the building, so the people were unable to get out to the street.

On 5 August 1944, at around 1 p.m., SS men and "Ukrainians" entered our yard demanding that the residents get out of the house immediately. We were in terrible hurry and panic. People leaving the house, children included, had to walk with their hands in the air. Together with my 11-year-old daughter Alina, I left the house in a group of around one hundred and forty-eight people.

The Germans drove us down Działdowska Street in the direction of Wolska Street. Houses on both sides of the street had already been burnt down, and their residents had been evacuated. The Germans halted us on Wolska Street in front of the gate of the "Ursus" factory, which was a branch of the factory located in Ursus.

Apart from our group I saw no other Poles in front of the factory, but there were a lot of SS men, "Ukrainians", and cars there. They grouped us by families in front of the gate. The gate was open, and when I reached it I saw that in the factory yard there were piles of corpses, some groups of civilians, and the "Ukrainians". I heard shots and moans. I realized that the same fate awaited us.

In the meantime, the Germans were driving groups of Poles inside the factory grounds, and soon, after an hour of waiting, it was my turn as well. I entered with my daughter and two other children who had joined me (Krystyna Karczmarek, whose parents had not been at home, and Zygmunt Urlich, whose parents and a three-month-old brother had been shot right in front of the gate).

In the yard, already at the gate, we were stumbling on corpses lying densely about, and alongside the wall on the left and in front of the factory building fence before us there were piles of corpses, one on top of the other, in various positions.

Each person herded into the yard was followed by an SS man and a "Ukrainian" who shot them with a pistol in the back of their head. I pleaded with a "Ukrainian" who was stroking my daughter's ringlets to let us go. At this the "Ukrainian" turned to his colleague, repeating my entreaty in Polish. But his colleague did not agree, and answering him, he pointed at us

saying: polnische banditen. My daughter then took my hand and we walked in the direction of the wall. When we reached the wall, we were shot at several times. The first shot hit me in the neck. I fell to the ground and was hit three times more: once in my arm and twice near my heart. My daughter collapsed next to me, I soon heard one more shot, and after that my daughter stopped moving.

In the meantime, new groups of Poles were being brought.

I am unable to say how many times.

I heard terrible screaming, begging, moaning and shooting.

I don't know for how long this continued, since I was completely numb.

At intervals between executions and during the evening the SS men and "Ukrainians" were walking on the people on the ground, killing the wounded (in this way they killed my daughter and a person lying in front of me), as well as looting jewellery. Trampling upon me with their boots, they broke my left arm (the one I had been shot in) and my left collarbone; moreover they took a ring from my finger.

In the evening everything went quiet. On the following day (Sunday) I got up and looking in all directions I went around the area. I counted the corpses lying in the yard.

There were around six thousand of them.

There were no Germans and no "Ukrainians" in the yard that day. But I met one woman and one man – Poles, who were still alive despite the wounds they had suffered.

I don't know their names, I have not met them since.

This woman, on the same day (i.e. on Sunday), left the factory climbing over a fence.

Two days later, on Tuesday 8 August 1944, at around 4 in the morning, I met one more woman who was still alive, despite her wounds, namely Wanda Lurie. Together we started to roam around the factory, searching for an exit. After a long search and many failed attempts, we found a side exit to Skierniewicka Street, and we used this exit to leave.

The man – hearing the voices of "Ukrainians" – stayed.

We got to St Adalbert church, from where two days later we were taken to the hospital in Pruszków, and then we were transferred to the hospital in Podkowa Leśna.

After the liberation of Warsaw, as early as on 17 January 1945, I came back to the city, and on the same day went to the "Ursus" factory. The yard was empty, in front of the wall where I had been shot at there was rubble. I saw scattered traces of ashes mixed with pieces of iron in the yard from the side of the gate. A member of the factory board told me that he had only seen traces of blood when he had been in the factory on 11 August 1944.

At that the report was concluded and read out.