

German Crimes Committed During the Warsaw Rising

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Introduction

The crimes committed by the Germans at the time of the Warsaw rising in August and September, 1944, occupy a special place among those committed by the in Poland during the recent war. These crimes, the victims of which were thousands of unarmed citizens, men, women and children, were committed by army troops in fulfilment of explicit orders given by the highest German army authorities; they were carried out by the German Army and the German General Staff, institutions independent of the Gestapo.

The whole question is not essentially changed by the fact that the majority of these troops consisted of a police brigade in which criminals and *Volksdeutsche* served and of the Vlassov army composed of Soviet prisoner-of-war (Warsaw population usually called them Ukrainians) for these were parts of the German army, under German Command. They were thrown into action and committed common crimes by order of the German High Command.

German soldiers and members of the Vlassov army in German uniform together committed atrocities on an unarmed civilian population. It is not material that certain of their criminal deeds, such, as the violation of women, were done principally by Vlassov's men; these facts were known to the German officers who allowed them to happen. Vlassov's troops were merely carrying out the crimes; they were pawns in a general criminal scheme. Everything that happened in the tragic days of the Warsaw Rising was known to and approved by the German Command.

Before we begin a detailed account of the German proceedings during the Rising, supported by the testimony of German generals and the texts of military orders, we shall first publish a series of reports of German crimes given by eyewitnesses. These consist of evidence taken from people who were present while the crimes were actually being committed; some of it from persons who were themselves victims of these crimes, but were lucky enough to remain alive.

These reports, which are undoubtedly truthful, cover only certain districts of the town and do not by any means account for all the crimes that were committed. They give, however, sufficient material to enable us to understand the methods employed and the kind of offences perpetrated on the civilian population of Warsaw. Military operations — in the proper meaning of the word — against the insurgents constituted only a small part of the German misdeeds; military operations directed against a tiny group of insurgents, which were justified from the military point of view, should not have brought about the death of tens of thousands of unarmed men, women and children, or the complete destruction and burning of the city. The crimes committed in Warsaw during the Rising were deliberately directed against the inhabitants, who had nothing to do with the activities of the insurgents; they were committed in districts where there were no insurgents, and where no action was dictated by military considerations. The following statements by witnesses and victims of German crimes in Warsaw constitute irrefragable evidence, which is

at the same time an accusation against the German military authorities.

Crimes Committed in the Marie Curie-Sklodowska Radium Institute

Record No 45/II

Between ten and eleven o'clock on the morning of August 5, 1944, numerous military formations were seen approaching from the direction of the houses of Wawelska Street. Soon afterwards about a hundred soldiers in German uniforms, belonging to Vlassov's detachment (R.O.A.), rushed into the building of the Radium Institute, shouting and shooting at random.

That gang of drunken soldiers, having first secured the exits, began searching and plundering. There were at the time about 90 patients and 80 members of the staff with their families in the building. They were robbed by the soldiers of all their jewels, watches, and money and even of such trifles as fountain-pens, automatic lighters, or pocket mirrors. The fact that the institution was a hospital, which was explained to the soldiers and was in any case obvious owing to the presence of the patients and the staff in their white coats, left the soldiers indifferent.

After having been robbed, the whole staff were driven by threat of machine-gun-fire into the hospital garden, where the stage was set for an execution.

Amid insulting and threatening shouts and shots fired in all directions, the victims were lined up in rows of three and forbidden to look round; and

then an order was given to set up machine guns in their rear.

The husband of one of the patients, who slightly transgressed against the above-mentioned order, was killed on the spot by a revolver shot.

The whole party were then led in this order from the hospital garden across the Mokotow field and along streets in which lay dead bodies with skulls split open, to a camp at "Zieleniak". There they were kept for four days and nights in the open air, without food or water. Time and again women were assaulted, dragged out and violated by the drunken soldiers. Some of the Staff of the Institute were then transported via Pruszkow to Germany. Others succeeded in escaping from the transport and stayed in the vicinity of Warsaw.

We must here mention the fact that when the Hospital Staff were taken straight from their work, dressed very lightly, mostly in their white coats, they were not allowed to take anything with them, and if anybody happened to be carrying a parcel or a small suitcase, it was immediately taken from him.

About 90 patients confined to bed remained in the hospital, and 9 members of the staff had hidden in the chimney flues, and thus avoided expulsion.

That same day the plundering and demolishing of the buildings was begun. Doors were broken down, stores, cupboards, safes and suitcases were broken open, and glass was smashed. All the mattresses, pillows, blankets, and linen were ripped up and thrown about in the corridors and wards of the hospital. The ether and spirits were drunk and the store-rooms emptied.

More valuable things (clothing, linen, dresses, or silver) were stolen or thrown out of the windows and destroyed. Female patients were assaulted and violated.

On the next day, August 6, 1944, the barbarity of the drunken soldiers reached its climax. Some of the seriously sick and wounded, lying on the ground floor (about 15 in number), were killed with revolver shots, after which their mattresses were set on fire under their dead bodies. As not all the shots hit their mark, and those that did were not always fatal, some women who were too weak and ill to move were burnt alive. Only one of them, although badly burned and very weak, dragged herself out of bed and crawling on all fours escaped immediate death.

While these atrocities were going on, petrol was poured on the floors and the Institute was set on fire, all the exits having first been covered by machine-guns. In spite of this three women (an X-ray assistant, a nurse and a patient) managed to slip out of the building. Two of them were caught, and after having been violated many times by the soldiers were brutally murdered. Their common grave has been found in the hospital garden, where they were buried by those who were forced to dig trenches.

The remaining patients, on the upper floors, over 70 in number, and seven members of the staff who had managed to hide themselves, remained in the burning building, making desperate efforts to find some place where they could hold out against the suffocating smoke and burning heat of the fire. That day the unfortunate victims saved their lives for the moment, thanks to the fact that the Institute was burning comparatively slowly,

owing to the absence of any great quantity of inflammable material and to the existence of fire-proof parquet floors. But later all the patients and one nurse were killed.

No less terrible were the scenes which took place in the science building of the Institute. It is true that the inmates were taken to the "Zieleniak" camp, but the building was set on fire and the people from the adjacent building (belonging to the Navy) were brought there. The women and children were separated from the men, who were driven into the burning building under the threat of machine-gun-fire. In this way eleven men perished in the presence of their families.

After committing these revolting atrocities, the soldiers left the Institute for a while. The 70 patients and the 7 members of the staff still remained in the building. The nurses stealthily cooked hot food for the patients at night and looked after them. Between August 6 and 9 Vlassov's men returned from time to time to the hospital, and took away girls of 13 or 14, whom they violated and then killed in the garden. They repeatedly carried out executions in the grounds of the Institute, after driving their victims to the spot from the city, and sometimes they set fire to the building again.

Meanwhile the German soldiers also came with cans and carried away all the valuable objects from the hospital, such as X-ray apparatus, laboratory outfits, or furniture. When begged by members of the staff still remaining in the building to transfer them to a safer place, they answered that they could not do so.

On August 19, Vlassov's men came back again and the final destruction of the Hospital began. The few members of the staff were ordered to leave the Institute and to take out all the patients. Among the latter were three women very seriously ill, who could not even walk. One of them was carried out into the garden by a woman member of the staff, who however, did not succeed in saving the other two, for a soldier rushed up and shot them, and then poured petrol over their bodies, which he set on fire. One of them was the woman mentioned above, who on August 8 had crawled from her burning bed and so saved her life — but only for a fortnight.

When everybody had left, the building was set on fire: 2 members of the staff had not obeyed the order and were still hiding in a chimney.

When the soldiers noticed in the procession a very sick woman, staggering and helped along by the others (it was the one who had been carried out by a member of the staff), they ordered her to be laid down near the wall of 19, Wawelska Street, where one of them shot her, and then set fire to the body.

In the "Zieleniak" camp only 4 members of the Staff survived. The remainder, about 70 patients and one nurse, were drawn up three deep, and marched into the Health Centre Building, where an officer was waiting for them and shot them through the head. Their dead bodies, — indeed probably some were still alive — were piled up in the execution room, sprinkled with petrol, and set on fire. In this way, all the patients at the Radium Institute were massacred.

Of the 9 members of the staff who remained in the building after August 5, 1944, two nurses were murdered (one of them after having been violated many times), one woman employee escaped from the burning building and was saved, four were taken to the "Zieleniak", and two stayed hidden in the chimney flues for a couple of months. They left as late as October 1944. In this report of indescribable German atrocities, the following two points should be stressed: 1) that the inmates of the Radium Institute had not by their behaviour given any cause whatever for reprisals, 2) that the terrible crimes perpetrated by Vlassov's men were carried out by order of the German authorities to whom they were subordinated, and who knew of their barbarity.

That the action was planned and premeditated by the German commanding is proved also by the following circumstances: 1) that Vlassov's men were purposely given drink before marching on the city, 2) that one of the murderers stated on August 5 in the Institute: "The building won't be burnt to-day, for we haven't any orders yet", and 3) that the German Chief of Hospital and Ambulance Services in the Warsaw sector, Captain Borman, declared to a doctor, who begged him to intervene in the matter of the Radium Institute: "It is of no importance if several old women with cancer perish — the most important thing is to win the war".

Crimes in Other Hospitals

Record No. 80

In the summer of 1944, I was sent as a patient to Wola Hospital, where I was still, suffering from sudative pleurisy, when the Rising began. The Germans came to the Hospital on August 3 at 1

p.m. I was in the cellar with many other sick and wounded. On entering the cellar, the Germans fired a round from a machine-gun and several wounded men who were standing near the entrance fell dead. A few minutes later the order was given to leave the hospital. All the wounded and sick who were able to walk went with the hospital staff, while the more severely wounded were carried on stretchers. Our march was a nightmare. I felt very weak, still having drainage tubes in one side. We were driven to a shed a few metres behind a tunnel in Gorczewska Street. Many people were already there. After examining our documents, they divided us into groups, and then began to drive us out. Soon the group to which I belonged was taken out for execution. We were led towards a large house (already on fire) near the tunnel: were ordered to form rows of twelve people, and were then driven into the yard of this house. At the entrance Ukrainians (six in number) shot from close range at every person who entered, and thus the dead fell into the flames of the burning house. I saw clearly, when waiting my turn in the first group of twelve people, doctors, assistants in white aprons and also (if I am not mistaken) some priests being shot. Among the doctors was Prof. Grzybowski; then the wounded and sick in the other rows were driven to death, and when the turn of those on stretchers came, they were shot first and the stretcher-bearers after them. It was only by a miracle that I escaped death. When I was driven to the entrance in a group of twelve, I turned to one of the officers and told him, falsely, that I myself and my two companions were Volksdeutsche (I speak German well). So the German ordered us to fall back and follow him; he led us to a German first-aid station, situated in the neighbourhood. About 500 persons were shot in

my presence, among them many from the Wola Hospital; others also, driven here from other streets in the Wola suburb, were with us. The volleys lasted till late into the night. At nightfall hand-grenades were thrown on the heaps of corpses and in the morning a tank arrived, and demolished the burnt house, thus covering the corpses of the murdered (already partly burnt) as well as the place of execution.

The frightful smell of burning corpses was unbearable. I saw it all quite well, as I stayed in the German first-aid station (situated quite near), till the following morning.

Record No. 94

On August 5, 1944, at 2 p.m., the Germans broke into Wola Hospital in Plocka Street. Robbing began; the staff and the wounded were searched, and their money, watches and valuables were taken from them. At about 3 p.m. the Germans broke into the Hospital Director's office and shots were heard from there. They shot the Director, Dr. Marian Piasecki, Prof. Zeyland and the Rev. Father Kazimierz Ciecierski, Chaplain of the Hospital (who had been specially summoned to the office). Then the order was given for the Hospital to be evacuated. The staff and all the patients who could walk were ordered to leave the premises. The procession was dreadful: the doctors leading, then the assistants, then the patients, staggering along, supported by those whom were stronger. Some had their arms in splints, others were on crutches; all in their underlinen, often incomplete, moving on with almost super-human effort. We were driven behind the railway subway to a shed or rather a factory hall, called Moczydło, where were already several hundred people; and there with shouts

and threats they divided us into groups. After some time four people were called out, then twenty-five. At the entrance, they were ordered to give up their watches. After a moment we heard shots. As there was no fighting near by we knew that an execution was taking place near us; the well-known sound of machine-gun fire was heard, and later single shots. There was no doubt that those who had been led out had been shot. Being a priest, I told those present the fate that probably awaited us and gave them absolution. After a moment the Germans called out 50 men. The atmosphere of death had already spread in the hall; the men went reluctantly.

Then 70 men were called out and again shots were heard; then the last group; among them the doctors, assistants and male nursing staff. To this group we also belonged, that is to say myself and another priest, Antoni Branszweig (alumn). I succeeded at the last moment in slipping away from the group which was coming out and hid among some nuns. The party of doctors were led out to death before my eyes. I did not see the execution itself, I only heard the volleys. I was told afterwards that the executions took place inside and in the courtyards of burning houses, at several places in Gorczewska Street. In the last group I saw Prof. Grzybowski, Dr. Drozdowski, Dr. Sokolowski, and Dr. Lempicki led out for execution.

Next day, disguised as a nun, I was taken with the remainder of the women in the direction of the Wola fortifications. During that march I escaped.

More than 200 people from Wola Hospital were then shot.

The criminals belonged to SS and Ukrainian detachments.

Record No. 215

On the night of August 5/6, 1944, the St. Lazarus Hospital was taken. Owing to very intense artillery fire and air raids, the staff and the wounded retired to the shelter. The Germans threw grenades and mines and poured petrol into it and set it on fire. About 600 people were burnt. The whole hospital building was also burnt down after they had first removed all the Germans, who had been given the same care by the Poles as the Polish insurgents themselves.

When one of the nuns tried to intervene on behalf of the wounded, a German threw a hand-grenade at her.

Record No. 189

St. Lazarus' Hospital. On Aug. 6, 1944, the stronger patients and the staff (200 persons altogether) were driven out of the hospital. All were shot: among them 28 from the chief staff. Mrs. Dr. Barcz was shot together with her husband (also a doctor). She was only wounded, and fell to the ground, where she was found next day, together with some male nurses, and brought to St. Stanislaus' Hospital. Dr. Barcz was never found: probably he died. One of the nurses who was saved, Mrs. Maciejewska, states that the severely wounded and the old men were taken under her supervision to the shelter, but were murdered there with hand-grenades when the hospital was captured. Not one of them was saved.

How the Civilian Population Was Murdered

Record No. 95

On August 5, 1944, I was sitting in the cellar of No. 4, Staszica Str. with other inhabitants of the house, when suddenly the Germans broke in and drove us out, at the same time grabbing the things we had with us. The women were separated from the men and driven in the direction of Dzialdowska Str.

I was led out with a group of men to the yard of No. 15, Staszica Street. Several hundred men had been driven into this yard. The Germans began to fire machine guns at the crowd. I had withdrawn to the rear, so that before the first rows had fallen, I succeeded in lying down and concealing myself. The shots did not reach me. After some time I crawled out from under a heap of corpses. When, after some time, a German officer arrived, he did not give the order to finish those who were still alive, but allowed us to join the people who were being driven along the street. I thus got to Gorczewska Street and from there to Moczydło. When I was passing No. 26, Staszica Street, I heard shots coming from the yard; an execution was taking place.

Record No. 53

I lived in the suburb of Wola, at No. 45, Gorczewska Street. On August 2, 1944, SS-men ordered us to leave and go to the house opposite; our house and the neighbouring ones were then burnt down. We got news on the 3rd that our position was hopeless, and that we were going to be shot. Several hundreds of people were gathered in the house. At 11 a.m. on August 4 the Germans surrounded the house, and ordered us to get out; dreadful cries from the women and

children were heard. Some shots were fired at the entrance, and many people were killed or wounded. We were driven out into the potato field and ordered to lie down in the furrows. They guarded us closely, so that there was no chance of escape. After some minutes we were ordered to get up. Then they led us under a bridge quite near. There was no doubt about our fate. A woman asked where they were taking us. The answer was: "German women and children are dying owing to you, so you must also die". They regrouped us, separating a group of 70 people, who were sent over the bridge towards a hill. They placed the others (among whom I was) near a wall, amid barbed wire. In different places near us shots were heard: victims of the German persecutors were being executed. We were herded together. I stood on the outskirts of our group, while at a distance of about 5 metres (16 or 17 ft.) from us one of our tormentors quietly made ready to fire a machine-gun, and another took photographs of us, as they wanted to keep a record of the execution. Several were watching us. A volley of shots rang out, followed by cries and groans. I fell wounded and lost consciousness. After a certain time I recovered my senses. I heard them finishing off the wounded I did not move, pretending to be dead. They left one German to keep watch. The murderers set the neighbouring houses, large and small, on fire. The heat scorched me, the smoke choked me, and my dress began to burn, I tried cautiously to put out the flames.

I was hidden by a potato basket, and when the German sentinel was looking in another direction I pushed the basket in front of me and crawled along for a few yards behind it. Suddenly the wind blew a cloud of smoke in our direction so that the

sentinel could not see me. I jumped to my feet and ran into the cellar of a burning house. There I found several people slightly wounded who had succeeded in getting out from under a heap of corpses. We set to work to dig an under-ground passage, a difficult task amid fire and smoke. At last, after several hours of superhuman effort, the passage was finished and brought us out in the courtyard of a neighbouring house, not yet on fire. This was about half past twelve at night. Someone led us out to the fields, away from the fighting and burning. I could hardly keep on my feet. I am still in hospital. The number of persons shot in my presence may be estimated at about 500, only 3 or 4 having been saved. The murderers were SS-men. [The Polish text shows that the author is a woman, this cannot be shown in the English translation save by the one word "dress". Note by the translator].

Record No. 73

On August 5, 1944, between 12 and 2 p.m., I saw from a window on the first floor of Wola Hospital Germans dragging women out of the cellars of No. 28, Plocka Str. They shot them in the courtyard with machine-guns. Almost at the same time, I saw in the courtyard of No. 30, Plocka Str. the hands of more than 20 people raised and visible over the fence (the people themselves could not be seen). After a volley of shots these hands fell down: this was another of the executions in Wola.

Record No. 57

I lived in the Wola district at No. 8, Elekcyjna Street. At 10 a.m. on Aug. 5, 1944 a detachment of SS-men and Vlassov's men entered. They drove us from the cellars and brought us near the Sowinski Park at Ulrychow. They shot at us when

we passed. My wife was killed on the spot: our child was wounded and cried for his mother. Soon a Ukrainian approached and killed my two-year-old child like a dog; then he approached me together with some Germans and stood on my chest to see whether I was alive or not — I shammed dead, lest I should be killed too. One of the murderers took my watch; I heard him reloading his gun. I thought he would finish me off, but he went on further, thinking I was dead. I lay thus from 10 a.m. until 9 p.m. pretending to be dead, and witnessing further atrocities. During that time I saw further groups being driven out and shot near the place where I lay. The huge heap of corpses grew still bigger. Those who gave any sign of life were shot. I was buried under other corpses and nearly suffocated. The executions lasted until 5 p.m. At 9 p.m. a group of Poles came to take the corpses away. I gave them a sign that I was alive. They helped me to get up and I regained sufficient strength to carry with them the body of my wife and child to the Sowinski Park, where they took all the dead. After this sad duty had been performed they took me to St. Laurence's Church at Wola, where I remained till next day. I cannot state the exact number of the victims, but I estimate that those among whom I lay amounted to some 3,000 (three thousand). I met a friend in the church who had gone through the same experience as I, having lost a boy of 8, who had been wounded and died calling for his father. I am still in hospital and the image of death is constantly before my eyes.

Record No. 63

I lived at No. 18, Dzialdowska Street, Wola. The Insurgents had built two barricades near our house, at the corner of Wolska and Gorczevska Streets, with the help of the inhabitants, including

even children. Machine-guns, ammunition and grenades were (placed in the neighbouring house. On August 1 at 3 p.m. heavy fighting broke out in our district. The situation had been difficult from the beginning, all the more because the *Volksdeutsche*, who were numerous here, shot covertly at the Insurgents and betrayed their whereabouts to the Germans. Tiger tanks were brought up, houses were broken into, and many people were killed; our house was hit several times. The tanks attacked from Wolska and Gorczewska Streets. The Germans broke in; they dragged the men out and ordered them to demolish the barricades. They then began to set the houses on fire. I saw Nos. 35 and 8 in our street being set on fire; bottles of petrol were thrown into the flats without warning, and so it was impossible for the inhabitants to escape. I stayed in the cellar of No. 18 until August 5, when, between 11 and 12 noon, the Germans ordered all of us to get out, and marched us to Wolska Street. This march was carried out in dreadful haste and panic. My husband was absent, taking an active part in the Rising, and I was alone with my three children, aged 4, 6 and 12, and in the last month of pregnancy. I delayed my departure, hoping they would allow me to remain, and left the cellar at the very last moment. All the inhabitants of our house had already been escorted to the "Ursus" works in Wolska Street at the corner of Skierniewicka Str., and I too was ordered to go there. I went alone, accompanied only by my three children. It was difficult to pass, the road being full of wire, cable, remains of barricades, corpses, and rubble. Houses were burning on both sides of the street; I reached the "Ursus" work's with great difficulty. Shots, cries, supplications and groans could be heard from the factory yard. We had no doubt

that this was a place for mass executions. The people who stood at the entrance were led, no, pushed in, not all at once but in groups of 20. A boy of twelve, seeing the bodies of his parents and of his little brother through the half-open entrance door, fell in a fit and began to shriek. The Germans and Vlassov's men beat him and pushed him back, while he was endeavouring to get inside. He called for his father and his mother. We all knew what awaited us here; there was no possibility of escape or of buying one's life; there was a crowd of Germans, Ukrainians (Vlassov's men), and cars. I came last and kept in the background, continuing to let the others pass, in the hope that they would not kill a pregnant woman, but I was driven in with the last lot. In the yard I saw heaps of corpses 3 feet high, in several places. The whole right and left side of the big yard (the first yard) was strewn with bodies. (A sketch of the yard was made by the deponent.) We were led through the second. There were about 20 people in our group, mostly children of 10 to 12. There were children without parents, and also a paralysed old woman whose son-in-law had been carrying her all the time on his back. At her side was her daughter with two children of 4 and 7. They were all killed. The old woman was literally killed on her son-in-law's back, and he along with her. We were called out in groups of four and led to the end of the second yard to a pile of bodies. When the four reached this point, the Germans shot them through the backs of their heads with revolvers. The victims fell on the heap, and others came. Seeing what was to be their fate, some attempted to escape; they cried, begged, and prayed for mercy. I was in the last group of four. I begged the Vlassov's men around me to save me and the children, and they asked if I had anything with which to buy my

life. I had a large amount of gold with me and gave it them. They took it all and wanted to lead me away, but the German supervising the execution would not allow them to do so, and when I begged him to let me go he pushed me off, shouting "Quicker!" I fell when he pushed me. He also hit and pushed my elder boy, shouting "hurry up, you Polish bandit". Thus I came to the place of execution, in the last group of four, with my three children. I held my two younger children by one hand, and my elder boy by the other. The children were crying and praying. The elder boy, seeing the mass of bodies, cried out: "they are going to kill, us" and called for his father. The first shot hit him, the second me; the next two killed the two younger children. I fell on my right side. The shot was not fatal. The bullet penetrated the back of my head from the right side and went out through my cheek. I spat out several teeth; I felt the left side of my body growing numb, but I was still conscious and saw everything that was going on around me. I witnessed other executions, lying there among the dead. More groups of men were led in. I heard cries, supplications, moaning, and shots. The bodies of these men fell on me. I was covered by four bodies. Then I again saw a group of women and children; thus it went on with group after group until late in the evening. It was already quite, quite dark when the executions stopped. In the intervals between the shootings the murderers walked on the corpses, kicked them, and turned them over, finishing off those who still gave any sign of life, and stealing valuables. (They took a watch from my wrist, but I did not give any sign of life). They did not touch the bodies with their bare hands, but put rags round them. During these dreadful doings they sang and drank vodka. Near me, there lay a big, tall man of middle age in a brown leather coat. He

was alive, I heard his death-rattle; they fired 5 shots at him before they killed him. During this shooting some shots wounded my feet. I lay quite numb for a long time in a pool of blood, the dead weighing on me. I was, however, conscious all the time and fully realized what was happening to me. Towards evening I succeeded in pushing away the corpses which lay over me. It is impossible to imagine how much blood there was all round. Next day the executions ceased. The Germans broke in 2 or 3 times during the day. Now they had dogs with them. They walked and jumped on the corpses to see if any of the supposed dead were still alive. On the third day I felt the child move in my womb. The thought that I dare not kill *this* child made me look round to examine the situation and the possibilities of escape. Several times, when I tried to get up, I became sick and dizzy. At last I succeeded in crawling on all fours over the bodies of the dead towards the wall and looked round for a way of escape. I saw that the passage through the first yard which was there when we were being led to death was now blocked by a pile of corpses. German voices were heard from the street; I had to look for another way. I crawled into the third yard and found a hiding-place there in a hall where I got through an open window with the help of a ladder. I hid here, fearing the Germans might come to control the place, and spent the whole night here. That night was dreadful. A Tiger tank stood in the street firing continuously, and planes did not cease bombing. All the walls shook. I feared the factory with all the dead would take fire any moment. In the morning all was quiet. I climbed up to look through the window to see if there were any living people about and saw a woman. (As stated later it was another victim who had escaped death by some miracle. She also

was an inhabitant of our house.) Then a man about 60 years old came crawling through the yard; he had also escaped death, but had lost one eye. They had both spent these two days in some hiding-place. We began to search the whole yard for some way out. After a long search and many attempts to get free, we at last found a hole on Skierniewicka Street and made our way out through it. The man, however, hearing the voices of Ukrainians did not follow us. They were standing at the corner of Wolska Street and did not see us. We went through the debris and rubble into the middle of the street. Then they saw us and surrounded us, though we begged them to allow us to get to a hospital, as we were wounded, which was obvious. We were soaked in blood. We were driven in the direction of Wola in a group with other passers-by, picking up still more on the way. At a certain spot the younger and older people in the group were separated. Young men and women were put on one side and then marched towards a house of execution. This was past Plocka Street in the direction of St. Stanislaus' Church. The remaining group (including myself and my companion) were driven to St. Stanislaus' Church. I saw heaps of corpses on the road and parts of bodies, and Poles carrying the bodies away under escort. German officers standing in front of the church laughed at us, and kicked and beat us. The church was overcrowded. People were being taken in and out. I was then so exhausted that they laid me with the other sick persons before the High Altar. There was no help. I only got a drop of water. After two days I was taken on a peasant's cart with the other sick and wounded to Pruszkow, and from there to Komorow, and then still further to Podkowa Lesna. It was only there — on August 11 — that I got medical attention and

help. On August 20 I gave birth to a little boy. I suppose I have lost, not only my three children, but also my husband, for he told me that he was going to stay in Warsaw to the end. I have no hope that he is still alive after all the dreadful things that happened.

The Germans were setting houses on fire; throwing people out; hunting and beating them. In the yard of the "Ursus" works people were shot by Vlassov's men under the command of a German; they say he was from the SS. As far as I can judge, there must have been 5-7 thousand dead in the yard of this factory. About 200 people were driven there from our block alone, which had over 40 flats (with about 4 people in each), and all were killed.

Record No. 58

When I was endeavouring to get outside the town from Wola, I passed through Gorczewska Street. This was on August 7, 1944. When we passed No. 9, Gorczewska Street (a house which belonged to nuns), we were called into the house and ordered to carry out and bury the corpses which were there. The courtyard was a dreadful sight. It was an execution place. Heaps of corpses were lying there; I think they must have been collecting there for some days, for some were already swollen and others quite freshly killed. There were bodies of men, women and children, all shot through the backs of their heads. It is difficult to state exactly how many there were. There must have been several layers carelessly heaped up. The men were ordered to carry away the bodies — we women to bury them. We put them in anti-tank trenches and then filled these up. In this way we filled up a number of such trenches in Gorczewska Street. I took the

impression that during the first days of the Rising everybody was killed. Later on women and children were sometimes left alive, but the killing of men still went on. I watched all this until August 7, when I succeeded some-how in getting away out of this hell, having been saved by a miracle.

Record No. 59

On August 5, 1944, at Warsaw at about 4 or 5 p.m., the houses Nos. 105,107, 109, Wolska Street immediately behind the railway bridge, the so-called Hankiewicz-houses, were suddenly surrounded from all sides by Germans, who threw hand-grenades and set them on fire by means of some white powder, which they carried in bags. There were many inhabitants there and lots of people had come here from town. No order to leave the houses was given. After the Germans had surrounded them no one left them: everyone was burnt alive or else killed by hand-grenades. No one could escape. Only those were saved who had left the houses at some earlier hour. It was said that the Germans burnt all the houses in which insurgents had stayed. In the Hankiewicz houses some 2,000 people or perhaps even more found their death.

Record No. 60

On August 7, 1944, about 9 p.m., at No. 15, Gorzewska Street, the three and four-storeyed Wawelberg blocks were surrounded by Germans (SS-men). They threw hand-grenades inside, surrounded the houses with machine-guns, and set them on fire from all sides. Any persons who tried to get out were killed. People in flames ran to the windows. Nobody could escape from the fire; they were all burnt alive. It was a miracle if someone escaped. I know of one woman who jumped from the second storey and thus

succeeded in saving her life. The front entrance was full of the bodies of those who had tried to escape from the flames. I saw among them women with babies at the breast. The houses were completely surrounded, and I suppose there must have been about 2,000 people living in them. No one came out alive unless by miracle, as in the case of the woman I have mentioned above.

Evacuation of the Inhabitants

Record No. 1

[Editors' note : Evacuation from Elektoralna Street, August 7, 1944, through the Wola suburb. Fragment concerning Wola.]

Walking through Elektoralna Street was difficult, as it was strewn with debris, and pieces of burning wood. From Chlodna Street onwards we were awe-struck by the incredible destruction. To the right every house had been burnt; to the left they were burning like gigantic torches. It sometimes seemed as though it was one great wall of fire. Our personal experiences, driven as we were like cattle, haunted by fear, facing endless danger from the continuous shooting among the ruins, and the huge fires — took on terrible unearthly dimensions. The Germans did not for a moment give a thought to the marching columns of defenceless people. They did not stop the fight. Sometimes, when it was too difficult to proceed, we stopped and then the Germans approached and robbed us of our valuables. I lost my watch in this way. The officers and soldiers selected from among us people whose looks they did not like, and proceeded to make a thorough search in the most brutal way, very often kicking

and abusing us. At some places they stood in rows on both sides — Germans to right of us, Germans to left of us — abusing us and calling us thieves and bandits.

The procession, marching slowly from St. Charles Borromeo's Church to Zelazna Street, suffered terrible maltreatment and even torture. I dragged myself through these streets helping to carry bundles and bags. For a time I carried a little girl, Basia, two years old, in my arms. The child had lost both father and mother. The attitude of the women was deeply touching. Grave and obstinate, only paying attention to their children and bundles, they marched on like soldiers, taking care not to expose the little ones to danger. During the whole time, that is, until we reached Zelazna Street, where the women were separated from us, I heard not a single complaint, no bitter weeping, no begging for help. The women were bent under the weight of their bundles and traveling bags, and some also carried babies or small children in their arms. There were moments when the heat from the burning houses made our progress quite impossible. The wind blew up clouds of biting smoke which hid everything. Suddenly when we were at a very difficult point and in immediate danger of fire and shots, an air raid began. Panic and chaos spread among the raging Germans, and there was an awful tumult, everyone being in fear of immediate death.

We left behind us in the streets all the sick, aged and crippled. I repeatedly saw trembling old women, decrepit old men and sick people, quite stony in their indifference and exhaustion, who, being literally pushed out of our ranks, remained sitting on the heaps of stone and rubble. No one

heeded them. The sight of these people, amid all the unspeakable horrors, remains in my memory as a picture of the uttermost misery.

I also saw in several places in Zelazna Street corpses of murdered people, lying in the streets. They could not have been victims of bombing or of stray shots, for they lay in groups.

In Zelazna Street the women and the children were separated from the men. The women took nearly all the baggage with them. It was a most painful sight, firstly because of the terrible exhaustion of the women who, notwithstanding, undertook to carry the baggage, and secondly because of their uncertainty about the fate of their dearest ones, fathers, husbands, brothers, or sons.

The Germans pushed us (the men) to the right side of Chlodna Street and led us through Wolska Street under the walls of burnt houses, treating us all as if we were murderers, bandits and incendiaries. They ordered us first of all to keep our hands up. Every moment, Germans with guns at the ready jumped at us with insults, blows and shouts, without any reason whatsoever. The most dreadful thing was that we expected to be shot at any moment. Machine guns were aimed at us every few minutes to make us hurry or when we were ordered to reform the procession. When we saw before us the barrels of guns, revolvers or machine-guns, we hesitated, turned our backs on the soldiers, and huddled closer to the walls as if death could thus be avoided. We were close to it. There were so many moments of immediate danger during our march that I do not even remember passing many parts of Wolska Street to St. Stanislaus Church.

From Zelazna Street onwards the Germans began to rob us completely, as a rule when we had stopped, or were near barricades. They took everything from us. Not to speak of my watch, I lost all the small objects I had in my pockets, including my scissors, electric torch and even a box of matches. I saw the Germans taking purses and money from the group nearest to me, and as for documents and papers, they ostentatiously threw them away in the street. Persons who specially displeased the Germans were ordered to hold up their hands very high; they were forced to throw away even the smallest baggage. The Germans snatched off our hats or caps.

I tried several times to get in touch with the furious Germans in order to know what fate was awaiting us. I also tried a few times to save my things, but I do not remember any other answer but "Waaa?" "Loos" and so on. Inarticulate, animal roars.

The attitude of our men was wonderful. A uniform, massive group, like one body, flowing like a stream of lava through the street, in stony silence, stubborn, obstinate, without any begging, any cries, or any manifestation of fear or anxiety.

Our group of several hundred men was pushed on to a spot situated between St. Stanislaus' Church and an unplastered house. It was, as we afterwards found, a police station. Here the last robbery took place. We were forced to drop everything we had in our hands. Before my eyes they tore a coat from the shoulders of an old man; and the two soldiers busy at this task casually remarked "So and so, he won't need this any more". A heap of suit-cases, bundles, and things

of all sorts lay near the place into which they pushed us.

They drove us through the entrance door and up to the first floor. It was probably an unfinished Polish school-building.

I found myself with about 100 men in an empty room about 5 metres (16 feet) square. It was somewhere about 3 p.m. My companions in misfortune proudly displayed the small objects they had succeeded in keeping. Somebody drew a watch from his boot, another had succeeded in hiding his penknife. An old man pulled out a piece of bread from his breast pocket. We divided this into tiny pieces, and these again into crumbs and shared them among us. When I got a bit, I shared it with my nearest companions and felt strangely touched. It was a sort of collective Communion, and the association and feeling were so strong that we all felt it the same.

We suffered very much from lack of water. Someone found a fire-bucket in the passage, but it was empty; the water had probably been already drunk.

We were forbidden to leave the room. Every few minutes new groups were brought in. We saw that in the adjoining rooms, in the passage and on the staircase, still more people were packed. We were still very strongly under the impression of the experiences we had undergone and full of fear as to our fate. When they drove us to this empty room we were sure that our end had come; that they would barricade the house and throw hand-grenades into it, or shoot us all and then set fire to the building.

Our depression increased as every few minutes a drunken gendarme came to us and made such speeches as: "You are all Communists; you will be all shot to-morrow". After having threatened and insulted us, cursed us, and called us names, such as "revolutionaries" or "insurgents", he would leave the room. This man terrified us absolutely. He would then stagger down the stairs, but we had had hardly time to breathe when up he climbed again and began the same sort of talk.

One of the gendarmes at last allowed us to bring in some water. Evening came. Houses were burning in our neighbourhood. The heat of the fire and the smoke reached our room, making it hardly possible to breathe. The sound of explosions and shots coming from the town and the monstrous red glow of the flames completed the horror of our situation. We spent the night lying down one on top of another. Some slept.

In the morning of August 8 they drove us out of the house again like cattle, with our hands up. We learned after some time that they were taking us to the Western Station and were going to send us from there to the Reich to work.

Living Barricades of Poles

Record No. 117

On August 7, at 9 p.m., they hunted us out of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry building, No. 2, Elektoralna Street. There were several hundreds of us, driven here from various burning houses. They drove us through the cellars of the Ministry. In the passage, a German dragged me aside and tried to violate me, but after a moment he chose a new victim from another group.

Wanting to get rid of me, he took out his revolver and aimed it at my forehead. At this moment someone else passed, and he ran after that person, shooting. I took advantage of this and ran up to the Ministry of Finance, and then through the burning streets to No. 5, Solna Street, where they kept us the whole night until 11 the next morning. They then robbed us of all our watches and valuables, and drove us on through Mirowski Square and Elektoralna Street towards the suburb of Wola. In the Square I saw huge bomb-craters, and also burning corpses. The streets all round were on fire. At the intersection of Chlodna and Wolska Streets, and Towarowa Street, and Kercelli Place we stopped. From Kercelli Place the Insurgents were firing towards Towarowa Street. The Germans who were going into the fighting stopped us and made of us a living barricade, under threats of being shot, they ordering us to lie down across the street from one side to the other. With our backs turned to the Insurgents, we knelt or crouched and the Germans placed themselves on the ground behind us, or knelt on one knee, firing over our heads towards Kercelli Place. There were 23 of us including (two children), mostly young women. It is difficult to describe what we felt during the two hours the fighting lasted. We were all prepared to die and said the Rosary aloud. Bullets whistled over our heads, or past our ears. The noise of the German guns nearly deafened us. As if by some miracle, the bullets only hit the Germans. When the first German fell we were paralysed with fear. My mother told me: "If I am shot remember not to shed one tear; do not complain, preserve the dignity of a Polish woman Show no weakness in their presence". Only the children wept bitterly and were greatly afraid.

The Germans were bewildered by the fact that only they were falling. They ordered the men to drag the bodies aside. We thought they would take their revenge on us. Stupefied and astonished they looked towards the Insurgent posts, and then at our quiet, resigned attitude; and the children clinging to their mothers.

At last, they let us go.

Record No. 247

On August 7, 1944, by order of the SS people from the entire town district were compelled to leave their houses, which were at once set on fire. We went in crowds of several thousands, driven and pushed by SS-men. When anyone fell, struck by a rifle-butt, those who wanted to help were struck likewise. We went through Bednarska Street and Krakowskie Przedmiescie, towards Trebacka Street. On Marshal Square the men were separated from the women; people wept and despaired. In the Saxon Garden shots were heard from the Market Place. The insurgents were firing. The SS-men began to make living barricades of us. They ordered us to lie down, beat and pushed us. Soon a rampart of living bodies was formed. People wept and cursed, but the SS-men began to fire from behind it.

The firing stopped. We went forward again under an escort of SS-men. The Ukrainians robbed us of our watches and valuables, and tore our paper money into pieces. On the Zelazna Brama Place we saw near the Market Hall a pile of suit-cases and trunks. Whoever had a good suit-case had to give it up, and it was added to the heap. We saw motor-trucks coming to take away our belongings.

We continued our march. A car stopped and some SS-officers got out. They looked attentively

at the passers-by, took from our ranks three pretty young girls, the two sisters R. and an unknown girl, and drove off. The girls cried and tried to escape from their caresses. An old woman fell. An SS-officer shot her through the back of the head. Again curses were heard; the spirit of revolt and thirst for revenge surged in the hearts of thousands of people.

In the church at Wola they stole our remaining belongings. All young girls were detained, even those of not more than 12 or 13. We older women were taken on with the children in the direction of the Western Station and then by train to Pruszkow, where they shut us up in a huge, dark, damp factory hall ankle-deep in mud. Moaning was heard in the darkness; a woman gave birth to a child without any help, and without a drop of water. A woman-doctor was among us, but what could she do without instruments, water, or light. She had only matches. The child was born dead.

At the other end of the hall an old woman lay dying. Several people recited prayers for the dying, while others sat listlessly, absolutely broken, and others again thought of how to escape.

At daybreak they let us out of the hall. We went on. There were several thousands of us, men, women and children. The SS-men fired over our heads. They took us to the station. We started hungry and thirsty, on our journey to an unknown destination. At wayside stations Polish people gave us coffee, bread and tomatoes.

Record No. 71

When I was wounded and in hospital, about the middle of August (I do not remember the exact

date), a group of 20 or 30 men and women were driven in. They were dreadfully burnt.

They had been evacuated from the shelters under some houses in Wolska Street. When they had been in the streets, Vlassov's men threw inflammable liquid over them and drove them among the burning houses. Their clothes at once caught fire, especially the women's light dresses, and several of them could go no further. The others struggled on terribly burnt. As they could not walk any further, they were taken to the hospital. Their sufferings were awful; the eyes of some were burnt out, faces were burnt, others had open wounds on the whole body. Only one-third of these victims survived; the others died after inhuman suffering.

Burning Corpses

Record No. 506

I was taken from Dlugosz Street (as a civilian) at 6 a.m. on August 6, 1944, and led to Sokolowska Street to the so-called *Arbeitskommando* headquarters. Next day I volunteered for work with 50 other thinking that in this way I should be better off. We were sent to a house opposite St. Adalbert's Church in Wolska Street, where about six hundred bodies of men, women and children were lying in heaps. Near by were a few dozen more, which we added to the heap. Then we went to No. 60, Wolska Street, where, on both sides of the courtyard lay the bodies of more than 100 men, as far as we could judge, victims of a mass execution. In the garden of this same house we found in a thicket the bodies of more than a dozen women, children, and babies, shot through the back of the head. We carried out from the house at the corner of Plocka and Wolska Street

(a large yellow house) several dozens of bodies of men, women and children, partly burnt, who had been shot through the back of the head. From a house in Plocka Street, between Wolska and Gorczewska Streets, we carried out about 100 bodies. In one of the houses we found the half-burnt body of a man holding two children in the arms. When we returned to No. 60, Wolska Street, we made a wooden platform on which we laid the dead; and then we cleared the ground of all traces of the German crimes, such as documents, clothes, or linen, which we placed on the pile of dead, sprinkled with petrol, and set alight. While we were thus burning the bodies, a drunken SD officer arrived in a car. He picked out three men of about 20 or 30 from a group of refugees passing by. He shot them through the back of the head in the course of a "friendly" conversation. After having murdered the first man he ordered us to throw him on the burning pyre before the eyes of the remaining two.

On Aug. 8, 1944, they led us to the yard of the "Ursus" works in Wolska Street. The whole courtyard, about 50 metres (55 yards) square was strewn with dead bodies so thickly that it was impossible to pass without treading on them. Half of them were of women with children, often with infants. All the bodies bore traces of robbery. Their position showed that they had each been murdered separately and in an especially bestial way. The number of bodies burnt there amounted, as far as I could estimate, to more than six hundred. Their clothes and suit-cases showed them to be refugees. When we were transporting bodies from neighbouring houses I found a great number of corpses in a flooded cellar in a house at the corner of Skierniewicka Street. We could not get out more than a few

dozen of them, as the water was too high. I suppose they had been thrown in here after having been murdered in the courtyard, where we still found more than a dozen bodies. Then they took us to the "Franaszek" works in Wolska Street, where we burnt in the same way as before about the same number of bodies as in the "Ursus" works, mostly of women and children. On one of the following days they took us to work in Sowinski Park, where again the bodies were mostly those of women and children; I found even pregnant women. The position of these bodies lying in a row seemed to be proof of a mass execution. We then burnt more than a thousand on two pyres. They made us search the bodies and give all valuables to the SD-men. As to paper money, we were ordered to burn it, together with all other evidence of the crime. We worked there one whole day. Next day they took us to No. 24, Wolska Street (the "Wenecja" playground), where we brought bodies from the sector of Wolska Street between Mlynarska and Karolkowa and burnt over two hundred. On the same day we burnt about 200 corpses at No. 4, Wolska Street. In a house at the corner of Wronia and Chlodna streets we burnt about fifty bodies which were there lying half-burnt. I then saw a non-commissioned SD-officer murder an old woman off about 80 who was passing along Chlodna Street, and whose body we added to the burning pyre. In the Machlejd factory building we threw bodies brought from neighbouring houses into the burning cellars. All next day we worked on the burning of bodies in the grounds of St. Lazarus's Hospital in Wolska Street. We found the bodies of the murdered patients and of the staff in the hospital wards in beds, on the staircases, in the passages and in the cellars. From what I saw there, I suppose that all the

patients and the whole of the staff were murdered. In most cases their bodies had been burnt in the cellars. After having partly burnt the bodies in St. Lazarus's Hospital, we also burnt many in houses the addresses of which I do not remember. After returning to the hospital grounds, we found there the bodies of forty newly murdered men. On one of the next days we burnt about one hundred corpses in the sector of Mlynarska Street between Wolska and Gorczevska Street; about one hundred also in the courtyard of the Michler works and about the same number in Ptasia Street. Towards evening we removed all traces of crime from the grounds of St. Lazarus's Hospital. Then I fell ill and ceased working on the burning of bodies.

From the reports of my companions in other working parties I conclude that this work of wiping out all traces of mass murder lasted until the middle of September, 1944. The work was organised as follows. A gang for the burning of bodies contained one hundred men, divided into two lots of fifty, strictly segregated from the remainder of the *Arbeitskommando*. The work was done under the supervision of fifteen SD-men under the command of an SD-officer. Part of the men prepared and arranged the pyre, and the others brought the bodies from the neighbouring houses. I was informed at this time that an order to stop the executions had been given on the morning of Aug. 6, 1944. During this period (I cannot give the exact date) I saw the bodies of about 20 priests. At various times I saw individual old men and priests being murdered. For instance, in Zelazna Street an SD-man shot down two sick old women.

After the pyres on the "Wenecja" play-ground had burnt out, the ashes were thrown into the air-raid-protection trenches there. Our party of 50 men worked from Aug. 6 to 15 at the intersection of Chlodna and Wolska Streets. The second party worked in the sector of Gorczewska Street with cross-roads where there is an intersection, but I have no precise information about their work.

I cannot guarantee the accuracy of the dates I have given above, and the number of burnt bodies is only approximate, but it must certainly have been not less but rather more than I have said.

Crimes at Marymont

Record No. 189

At the time of the Rising I was in my own house, No. 29, Maria Kazimiera Street, Marymont. On Sep. 14, 1944, the bombing of Marymont greatly increased, and at about 2 o'clock the adjoining houses began to burn. The Insurgents retreated from our part of the city, and only the civilian population was left.

I, with my husband and my parents-in-law and other inhabitants of our house, about 30 of us altogether, were in the shelter in the garden. From there I saw German soldiers and soldiers from the army of General Vlassov knocking at a house at the back of ours — No. 2/4 Dembinski Street. When the door opened, the inhabitants began to file out slowly (men, women and children); a German soldier, standing a few steps from the front door, shot them through the back of the head. In this way about a hundred people were killed. The rest were driven into the field. Shortly after we heard shots coming from the

direction in which they had been taken. (Among them was one priest). From the owner of this house I learnt afterwards that in this group the men had been separated from the women and all shot. Later I saw Vlassov's men rush into a school building at No. 21, Maria Kazimiera Street, and order all those who were there (many people) to go out into the yard. Meanwhile our house began to burn; we came out of our shelter and went into the adjoining school, from the windows of which we saw further incidents. The Germans ordered people who were in the school yard to go out into Maria Kazimiera Street, where they were joined by others from No. 21. Some refused to go and began to turn back; then the soldiers fired at them from all sides, killing them all. Among those who had been previously driven from the school was a woman with a child in a perambulator. She was killed with the others in Maria Kazimiera Street. A few moments afterwards I saw a soldier come over to the perambulator and shoot the child.

We stayed in this school till the next day. On Sep. 15, 1944, a tank drove up to it and opened fire, destroying the upper floors. We, with the exception of my husband, who went I do not know where, then returned to the shelter at No. 21. For three consecutive nights I tried to find my husband. While looking for him I saw the corpses of the people who had been killed in front of No. 2/4, Dembinski Street. About a hundred lay in disorder: men, women and children. Among them I recognised my brother-in-law, his son, and many acquaintances, former occupants of Number 2/4, Dembinski Street.

Record No. 17/II

On Aug. 1, 1944, I went to Zoliborz to buy some food, but owing to the outbreak of the Rising could not return to Praga where I lived. For several weeks I stayed with casual acquaintances. On Aug. 2, I went to Marymont, where I stayed at No. 29, Maria Kazimiera Street, which at that moment was in the hands of the Insurgents. On September 14 the Germans began to put down the Rising in that section in the following way: About 20 tanks came from the direction of Bielany and opened fire on various houses. The Insurgents retreated from the territory of Zoliborz without fighting.

Thus the tanks came without difficulty to No. 29, Maria Kazimiera Street. Several SS-men rushed into the courtyard throwing hand grenades into the cellars and in this way forced the frightened civilians to come out.

Then we all were told to leave. I was in the uniform of a railway worker. One of the Germans pulled off my cap and beat me for no reason. We were ordered to cross the street to a house which had previously been burnt. There were 32 of us in all, including men, women, small children and even an infant 6 months old. Here we were taken into a burnt-out flat, and ordered to kneel down with our hands up facing our persecutors. A machine gun was placed before us.

The execution began at 2 p.m. Several series of shots were fired into our group. I got a superficial wound in my skull. I fell; the corpses of two young men immediately fell on me. While lying I still got shots in my left arm, hand, fingers and feet. When the execution was over SS-men came back three times, killing the wounded and throwing two

grenades each time. Owing to this I got (pieces of shrapnel in my fingers.

So I lay for four hours, till 6 p.m. Then a WH soldier came in, probably to loot the place of execution, and seeing that I moved, helped me to free myself from the corpses, comforting me and telling me not to be frightened any more. He also pulled out two women who had been saved by a miracle, though their hands were shattered, and two children who had been saved because their parents had protected them with their own bodies. The soldier who had helped us put us under the care of a wounded soldier, also from the WH, who conducted us to an evacuation point at Zoliborz (in CIWF). Here I parted from my companions in misfortune.

Executions in the Market Halls

Record No. 23/II

During the Rising, on leaving the house where I lived, No. 30 Ogródowa Street, I found myself in a shelter of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, No. 2 Elektoralna Street. This was on August 7, 1944. In the shelter there were several hundred people, mostly women and children. In the afternoon of this day, after the Insurgents had retreated from Elektoralna Street, a German outpost was set in front of the gateway of the Ministry. About 9 o'clock in the evening 2 gendarmes entered the shelter and ordered all the men to go out. The soldier who stood on guard assured us that we were only going to work. We were led out three by three (we were about 150 men) to Mirowski Square, among the buildings of the two Market Halls. Here we were ordered to remove the corpses, scores of which were lying on the ground, and after that, rubble

from the gutters and the roadway. There were about a hundred Poles on the square when we came, all busy cleaning it up, and some hundreds of German gendarmes, who behaved very brutally: beating the Poles, kicking them, and calling them Polnische Banditen. At a certain moment they stopped our work and ordered those who were not Poles to step forward. One man who had White-Russian documents did so, and was immediately released. After an hour and a half's work, the gendarmes ordered us to form threes. I found myself in the second rank. We were all made to stand with our hands up. An old man in the front rank, who could not hold his hands up any longer, was cruelly struck in the face by a gendarme. After 10 minutes five rows of three were marched off under the escort of five gendarmes armed with tommy guns to the Market Hall in Chlodna Street. By chance I heard the names of two of the gendarmes who shouted to each other, Lipinski and Walter. When we entered the building after passing two gates I saw, almost in the centre of the Hall, a deep hole in which a fire was burning; it must have been sprinkled with petrol because of the dense black smoke. We were put under a wall on the left side of the entrance near a lavatory. We stood separately with faces turned to the wall and hands up.

After a few minutes I heard a series of shots and I fell. Lying on the ground I heard the moans and groans of people lying close to me and also more shots. When the firing ceased I heard the gendarmes counting those who lay on the ground; they only counted up to thirteen. Then they began to look for two more who were missing. They found a father and son hiding in the adjoining lavatory. They brought them out,

and I heard the voice of the boy shouting "Long live Poland", and then shots and moans. Some time later I heard the voices of approaching Poles; cautiously I lifted my head and saw the gendarmes standing beside the hole filled with fire and Poles carrying the corpses and throwing them into it. Their work brought them nearer to me. I then crept into the lavatory and concealed myself behind a partition which formed the roof of the lavatory. Sitting there I heard firing near by and the shouts of Germans from the direction of the hole. At a certain moment another Pole who had escaped from below through the lavatory found himself beside me. He was doctor Jerzy Łakota, who worked in the Child Jesus Hospital.

We sat up there for many hours. The whole time we heard the crackling of the burning corpses in the hole and of the fire itself. Besides, we heard series of shots coming from the other side (nearer to Zimna Street). Dr. Lakota told me that after a volley he had fallen along with the others. The gendarmes came over to see if he was still alive, and beat him brutally; but he pretended to be dead. I might add that when I fell after the volley, I saw a gendarme examining those lying on the ground; those who were still alive he shot with his revolver. I had succeeded in escaping before this. At about 2 o'clock in the night we descended and went out into the street through the already empty Hall, in which the fire was still burning, and succeeded in getting to Krochmalna Street.

Record No. 33/II

On August 7, 1944, I was in the cellar of a house in Elektoralna Street in Warsaw. This day, at dusk, some German soldiers arrived on the premises and ordered all men to get out of the cellar, and to dismantle the barricades within two

hours. I obeyed and went out of the cellar with about fifty other men. The soldiers took us under escort to Zelazna Brama Square, and then to the place near Mirowska Street which is opposite the small square between the two Market Halls. On the pavement of Mirowska Street there lay about 20 dead.

We were ordered to carry these corpses from the pavement of Mirowska Street to the little square between the Halls. With other men I carried the corpses and noticed while doing so that all of them were of more or less middle-aged men. After carrying these corpses we were ordered to remove the barricade which was across the tram line from Zelazna Brama Square to Zelazna Street. Having removed part of this barricade and thus enabled tanks to pass, we were brought in the direction of Zelazna Street, where we were halted, and ordered to put up our hands. We were asked several times if there were no *Volks-* or *Reichsdeutsche* among us. Next we were searched; everything of value, such as rings, watches and cigarettes, was taken from us. After being searched we were left standing on the same spot for about an hour and a half. Not far from us were groups of soldiers, in all about 200 men; our prayers for release were answered by the soldiers with laughter and derision. They spoke German, Russian and Ukrainian. One of them told us repeatedly that we should be killed at any moment. Then (we were standing in rows of three) the first three rows were driven into the Market Hall which is nearer to Zelazna Street. Shortly afterwards I heard a series of shots. Then followed the next three rows. I was in the second, or perhaps in the centre of the third. At the moment when we were directly in front of the entrance, one of the soldiers who was escorting

us fired, and instantly my neighbour on the left fell to the ground before me, blocking my way; I stumbled and fell, but got up immediately and rejoined my companions. I did not notice what happened to the body over which I had stumbled. After rising, when I reached my companions, who were then entering the hall by the second inside gate, I saw a door leading to the right and immediately ran through it. I saw a hall, entered it, and noticed stairs leading upwards. It was already dark, but the darkness was lighted up by the reflection of the fires all round me. I thought my escape had been observed, as I heard a shout behind me, but no shots were fired. I ran to a gallery where some of the wooden structure was burning and there I stayed. During that time I heard separate shots from the interior of the hall. After some time, I looked down from the gallery into the Hall and saw a big round hole, about 6-7 metres (22 feet) across, in the floor of the Hall. In this hole a big fire was burning; its flames rose several metres above the level of the floor. I also noticed that the soldiers were leading a man to the edge of the hole. I saw this man making the sign of the Cross, and then I heard a shot, and saw him fall into the fire. I might add that this shot was fired in such a way that the soldier put his gun to the man's neck and fired. Later I saw many such scenes. I noticed that when the shot was fired the man did not fall at once, but only after a few seconds. Having watched several murders of this kind I could not look any more, but heard many more shots and moans, which grew weaker and weaker, or even human howls. I supposed that they came from those who had fallen into the fire and were still alive. From the number of shots I took the impression that all those who had been brought with me from the cellar of No. 2, Elektoralna Street were shot. I

stayed up in the gallery for some time longer (at least an hour), till the moment the shooting and voices stopped. Then, unnoticed, I ran through the Small Ghetto in the direction of Grzybowska Street, and afterwards came to Zlota Street, where I stayed for a month.

Crimes at Praga

Record No. 23/II

On Aug. 24, 1944, a gray-green car came to the corner of the Jewish Cemetery at Praga from the direction of Nowe Brodno, opposite Goledzinow. Four Gestapo men got out of it and began to dig a hole. The car drove away leaving behind two of the Gestapo-men. After 10 minutes it returned bringing our people, who were led to the recently dug grave and murdered by revolver shots through the back of the head. Among them were a very tall priest, a girl of about 12, a woman and a man dressed in black, who may have been a priest.

After they had been buried the car drove away, but in a short time returned with the same number of people as before: three men and one woman, who met the same fate. After they too had been buried in this grave the car drove away. This was at 1.30 p.m.

On Aug. 25 at the same hour the same car returned bringing four young men, who dug their own grave. Then they were ordered to lie in the hole, and in this position they were shot. This grave is about 400 metres (450 yards) from the first one.

On Aug. 26 — it was a Saturday — about 10 o'clock in the morning they again came and dug a

larger number of graves and this time ordered passers-by to help. At 12 o'clock they drove off, returning at three with four men who had to dig graves. Then they went away, taking these men with them. There was no execution that day. On Sunday, Aug. 27, a big dark-red lorry brought 15 people; they were led out in groups of five. In the first group were three men and two women.

When they came to the graves I heard a cry and two men began to run away. One of them was killed on the spot; the other succeeded in running about 50 metres (55 yards) when a revolver-bullet struck him; they were both thrown into the hole. The rest of the people having heard their cries, did not want to get out of the car, but they were driven out by force and shot immediately at the gate. While one party of Germans was burying the dead the other went away and brought about 13 more people, who met the same fate. There were among them old men, women and young boys. This day about 30 persons were shot.

Crimes in the Centre of the City

Record No. 8/II

At the moment of the outbreak of the Rising I was at No. 62, Marszalkowska Street. I tried to return home to No. 3, Staroscinska Street, and went from one shelter to another in different houses in the vicinity of the Redeemer Square (Plac Zbawiciela). This part of the city was then in Polish hands. On the evening of Aug. 4 I found myself together with my brother-in-law in the Parish House of the Church of the Redeemer, 37 Marszalkowska Street. On Aug. 5 some Gestapo-men entered the court-yard of this house: before the house (in the street) they set up a machine gun. They ordered all of us to leave. In the Parish

House and in the cellars were about 50 people — priests, church staff, inhabitants of adjoining houses, and casual passers by. They were mostly elderly men and women. There were no Insurgents among us. We all went into the courtyard. The Germans drove us to the opposite side of Marszalkowska Street, where they separated the men from the women and ordered us all to lie down on the pavement; men first, but some of the women too. When we reached the spot, about 80 men and a large number of women were already on the ground. Fighting was in progress.

The Insurgents were firing from Mokotowska Street and August 6 Street. After 10 minutes a WH soldier came to me with a revolver and ordered me in Polish to "come to work"; he said the same to my brother-in-law and to another young man who was lying near us. He ordered us to follow him in the direction of Litewska Street. Another Ukrainian soldier with his gun at the ready walked behind us. At the corner of Litewska Street they ordered us to cross Marszalkowska Street. Here under the wall of S. Anc's chemist's shop I saw about a dozen corpses lying. They were all of men, and had machine-gun-shot wounds. The soldier told us to throw them into the cellar. We began to do so through a window in Marszalkowska Street facing Oleander Street. When we had finished, we stopped, not knowing what to do next. Then the Ukrainian ordered me to push in a corpse, which had not quite fallen down into the cellar. When I approached the window I heard a shot behind me; I turned and saw our third companion fall on the ground, and the Ukrainian standing with his revolver pointed at my brother-in-law. I then jumped into the cellar, holding the corpse of the murdered man, and fell on a heap of corpses lying under the window.

I then heard many shots fired in the direction of the cellar and German and Ukrainian voices. I thought that they were shooting at me. I hid under the window among the corpses; there were about 30 of them. I lay there for several hours. At twilight I heard steps approaching under the window and the sound as of running water. Some drops fell on my head and I recognised the smell of petrol. After a moment I heard the hissing sound of fire; the heap of corpses among-which I was began to burn. I heard a Ukrainian say Timov, I have started the fire.

Then I crept from the window to the centre of the cellar. By the light of the burning fire I saw under the window in the direction of Oleander Street a pile of burnt human bones, and ashes. I went into the adjoining smaller cellar. There, under the window which looked on to Marszalkowska Street, I saw about 20 corpses of men only. I then retreated to a cellar on one side of the courtyard. There, in the darkness, I saw a man, Władysław Tymitiski. He told me that the Germans had taken him from No. 19, Marszalkowska Street, and had brought him to Anc's shop from Oleander Street and there ordered him to jump on to the burning staircase. When he did so they had fired at him, but missed. This had happened one or two days before I found myself in the cellar of the chemist's shop. We spent the night in one of the cellars. Next morning, Aug. 6, we met another man, Antoni Dudek, in the courtyard; he told us that a Ukrainian had fired at him in Oleander Street in front of the chemist's shop. Dudek fell unconscious; after a while he felt the Ukrainian dragging him in the direction of the chemist's shop. When he moved the Ukrainian threw him through the window into the burning cellar in

Oleander Street. This was on August 2 or 3, 1934. [should be 1944]

We three went together to the sixth floor. All the flats, with the exception of two, were burnt out. From these two we collected food, and then hid ourselves on the sixth floor. There we met a fourth companion, Jan Latwinski. We stayed in this flat till Nov. 13, 1944. All this time we heard sounds of the fighting which was going on, and of various executions. Several times we heard voices of Poles shouting "long live Poland", then separate gun shots followed. One day we heard steps on the stairs and German voices; after a while we saw fire coming out of a flat which had not yet been burnt. After the Capitulation the house in which we were was twice mined by the Germans. I saw mines being laid on the site of the chemist's shop in Oleander Street; we then hid ourselves under the staircase. The explosion destroyed the ceilings of the lower floors of the house; but the upper floors remained intact. We left this house on Nov. 13, 1944, creeping through the city by night.

Executions in the Opera-House

Record No. 19/II

On Aug. 9, 1944, at ten o'clock in the morning, about twenty SS-men with revolvers rushed shouting into the courtyard of our house in Trebacka Street and ordered all the people in the flats and cellars to go out into the yard. Our street had been completely in German hands since the beginning of the Rising and there had been no military activity in it whatever. The inhabitants had stayed quietly in their flats or cellars. We came down men, women and children. In one of the flats a paralysed old woman of about 70 named

Ropelewska was left behind. Several SS-men rushed into her flat after all the inhabitants had left and set fire to her mattress; seeing this her son carried her into the yard. When we were in the yard SS-men rushed into the flats and set them on fire one after the other. Then they took us into the, next yard, at No. 2, Marshall Foch Street. As Mrs. Ropelewska could not walk one of the armed SS-men shot her before our eyes.

At No. 2, Foch Street, the men were separated from the women. Then we went from one house to another (Nos. 2, 4, 5, 7, Foch Str.). We were brought through cellars and court-yards into the Opera House; women and children into the cellars and men to the first floor. Among the men were my father, 69, and my husband, a student, 26 years old. What happened to the men I was told later by a schoolboy, Jerzy Szajkowski, who had escaped death. The men were led upstairs to the first floor of the Opera House, their *Kennkarten* were taken from them, and they were divided into groups: 1) Those who had been working in German institutions, 2) foreigners, 3) the remainder. Later this third group was brought out through the doors of the boxes and killed by shots through the back of the head. The corpses fell on the stage. Thus my father and husband were murdered. The number of people killed then amounted to 500. The women, of whom there were several hundred, were divided into groups: 1) above 60, 2) women with children, 3) the rest. I succeeded, with 30 other women, in escaping from the last group. We came to the church at Wola, from where we were taken to Pruszkow. I was recently in the ruins of the Opera House. The remains of the burnt corpses are still lying there. They were murdered on August 9. I saw bones, hair, teeth, and the remains of clothing, shoes

and documents. I think some women were also shot there, because there were also remains of women's dresses, and I fear that this was not the only execution there.