



MARIA RYDZ

Warsaw, 9 May 1949. A member of the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, Norbert Szuman (MA), interviewed the person named below as an unsworn witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Maria Rydz, <i>née</i> Bryzek
Date and place of birth	8 September 1906 in Trojanów, county of Warsaw
Parents' names	Mikołaj and Petronela, <i>née</i> Wojtaś
Father's occupation	laborer
Citizenship and nationality	Polish
Religion	Roman Catholic
Education	5 classes of elementary school
Occupation	housewife, caretaker
Place of residence	Warsaw, aleja Niepodległości 132/6, flat 42
Criminal record	none

When the Warsaw Uprising broke out, I was in my flat at aleja Niepodległości 132/6. On the first day our house was occupied by the insurgents. During the night from 1 to 2 August 1944 they were forced to leave our house due to a lack of ammunition. On the next day, 2 August, at around 6.00 p.m. Germans from the *Stauferkaserne* burst into our house and took all of the residents to the barracks. They separated the women from the men, and an hour or so later allowed us to return home. They had previously warned us that if even one shot was fired from our house, the men would be executed and the building burnt down.



We did not let the insurgents in until 10 August.

From the very first days the women from our house carried lunches to the *Stauferkaserne* between noon and 2.00 p.m., during which time the Germans did not shoot at them.

After a few days, around 5 August (I don't remember the exact date), the men aged sixty and over were released from the *Stauferkaserne*. They returned to our house, however they had to report to the barracks every day during lunchtime. Some men were released for a ransom.

Before 10 August (I don't remember the exact date) the insurgents set up a barricade in aleja Niepodległości at Szustra Street. When the women went to the *Stauferkaserne* with their lunches, the Germans told them to go and take down the barricade, otherwise they would starve our men to death. A delegation of women went to the insurgents. However, the barricade was not taken down, while the Germans, having received a letter from the insurgents with a response to their threat, allowed us to continue bringing the meals.

On 10 August 1944 I went to the *Stauferkaserne* in order to ransom my husband. After the incident with the barricade, however, the Germans were not letting anyone in. When I was returning from the *Stauferkaserne* with the women and men (the latter had gone there to report), Germans standing in the gateway at aleja Niepodległości 142 shouted *raus*, and then fired a machine gun burst at us. Three women, myself included, were wounded; I was hit in the back. I fell together with the other women, who had not been wounded. When they all got up to run, I stood up too and, seeing that I was able to walk, even though blood was pouring from my back, I somehow dragged myself to my gate. For the rest of the day (10 August) and 11 August until noon I lay in bed, being cared for by a nurse. The keys to my gate had been taken by ladies from our house. When the insurgents started hammering on the gate in Ligocka Street, asking for help for a wounded comrade, the ladies opened the gate, placed the wounded man in the stairwell in Ligocka Street (stairwell no. 8), and started providing him with medical attention on the spot. The rest of the insurgents exited into Ligocka Street. While walking out of our gate, one of them fired a shot. Immediately after this shot, a great many Germans burst into our house, with "Ukrainians" amongst them. They rounded up all of the people in the courtyard and stood them against the wall. They started searching through bags, looking for weapons, at the same time robbing people of all the valuables they found. They finished off the wounded insurgent with their boot heels.

They pushed four young girls (one of whom could have been 14 at most), who had just left the basement at Ligocka Street, through the gate into Ligocka Street, and shot them there (from the gate). They also dragged three men from the crowd standing next to the wall and shot them in the gateway opening onto Ligocka Street. In this way they killed Nina and Nadzieja Tomkowid, and Jarzębowska, while the fourth girl managed to escape; of the men, Franciszek Janowski, Stanisław Moryl – a professor – and the well sinker, whose surname I did not know, perished. Apart from the well sinker, all of those executed were residents of the house at aleja Niepodległości 132/6.

After this execution the Germans set fire to the house, using grenades and bottles filled with some kind of liquid – most probably petrol. Jan Rzewnicki lay paralyzed in the basement at Ligocka Street. His wife asked the Germans to allow her to carry him out. Instead of answering, one of the Germans hit her in the face. (I did not see this, for in the meantime I had escaped to the house at aleja Niepodległości 145, where I was taken care of by friends). In addition, I heard from ladies who continued to stand in the courtyard that the Germans had set fire to the flat of three sick, elderly women on the ground floor.

I don't know whether these ladies were burned alive in their beds, or whether the Germans killed them beforehand. In any case, I saw their bones after the Uprising.

On that day, i.e. 11 August 1944, all of the women were thrown out of the house at aleja Niepodległości 132/6 – some were taken to Pruszków, while others managed to get through to Kazimierzowska Street. From there they continued to take lunches to the *Stauferkaserne*. On the afternoon of 16 August I went from aleja Niepodległości to Kazimierzowska Street (to no. 80, I think), where I was taken care of by the Red Cross.

I remained there until 22 August, when I left in a Red Cross motorcar for Włochy near Warsaw. I did not pass through Pruszków.

At this point the report was brought to a close and read out.