



MARIA PRZYBOROWSKA

Warsaw, 25 April 1946. Investigating Judge Halina Wereńko, delegated to the Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, interviewed the person named below as a witness. Having advised the witness of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the significance of the oath, the Judge took an oath therefrom, following which the witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Maria Przyborowska, pseudonym "Kulesza", née Owczarska
Marital status	widow
Parents' names	Wojciech and Michalina, née Wodziwodzka
Date of birth	29 July 1898 in Warsaw
Occupation	office worker
Education	secondary school leaving exam
Place of residence	Warsaw, Żoliborz, Sierpecka Street 6, flat 12
Religion	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none

Before the War my husband, Edmund Przyborowski (born on 14 May 1894), held the position of Deputy Director of the Revisory Association of the Workers' Unions Cooperative in Warsaw. At the time I lived with my husband and our son, Witold Wincenty (born on 17 January 1917), who subsequently graduated from the Wawelberg Technical School and completed a period of traineeship at the [Walwe?] mill. In 1938/39 he graduated from officer cadet school (engineers) in Modlin.

During the German occupation my husband retained his position. In October 1939 my husband, son and I committed ourselves to an underground organization that had as its



objective fighting the Germans; as regards political leanings, my husband opted for the PPS [Polish Socialist Party], while my son and I were members of the Home Army. My son's pseudonym was "Tadeusz Kulesza", and he also had a false surname, "Bieńkowski", while my pseudonym was "Kulesza". My husband worked in the resistance under his own surname.

My son was the editor of two magazines, "Partyzant" and "Czyn Młodych", and also served in the sabotage group, from [illegible], of General Bułak-Bałachowicz, who perished in Saska Kępa in May 1940, and whose staff was arrested on 18 April 1941 in the "Janusz" bar at Poznańska Street, having been betrayed by one of its members; eighteen of the arrestees were executed in June 1941 in Palmiry. My son was the only one to survive, and later worked on the staff of Colonel "Radosław". My son's immediate superior was Captain Niebora, Colonel "Radosław's" own brother. In the night of 23 April 1941, our flat was visited by the Gestapo: an officer, two Gestapo men with automatic weapons, four soldiers, and a translator, accompanied by the caretaker. They asked who lived here, and also inquired after our son, who was not present in the flat at the time, for after the arrest of his eighteen friends he had gone into hiding. There was no "compromising" evidence in our flat; indeed, there were German magazines and a portrait of Hitler on the desk. During the search, therefore, the Gestapo men did not find anything of interest, however they did take everything of value: a Leica camera, Retina, an enlarger, two gold men's watches, wedding bands, rings, a silver sugar bowl, three kilograms of leather, and some 3,000 zlotys in cash. Having completed the search, the Gestapo men took my husband, saying that he would not return. My husband was taken to the Gestapo building at aleja Szucha 25. There, his personal details were written down and he was questioned; but he was not beaten during the interrogation – only asked about our son. Thereafter my husband was transferred to Pawiak prison, from where he would be taken twice more for questioning to the Gestapo building – in both instances he was heavily beaten. During the second interrogation, he suffered damage to his right lung. He was taken to the prison hospital, where he lay on a bed made from strips of linen. I monitored the situation in Pawiak through bribed guards. With the help of one Sabkowski, a Volksdeutscher, I secured the release of my husband from Pawiak for the sum of 50,000 zlotys. Eight months later, however, on 7 February 1942, he died at home.

I would like to add that when I was taking my husband home, the translator told me that my husband would be released if my son turned himself in to room 118. I would like to stress that during the interrogations it did not come to light that my husband worked in



the resistance; he was tortured only in connection with our son. My husband told me that while he was being questioned in the Gestapo building, he would hear the groans of people beaten and interrogated in neighboring rooms. As regards his period of detention in Pawiak, he said that he witnessed the torture of a 72-year old priest from the Child Jesus Hospital; Polish guards, acting on instructions given by the Germans, ordered the elderly cleric to leap a meter high in the air. But he was unable to comply and so was beaten on his legs with a rubber baton, causing him to fall, whereupon he would again be ordered to jump and, being unable to leap one meter in the air, would be beaten again. These "exercises" lasted at least an hour at a stretch. On 29 May 1941, this priest was put on a transport to Oświęcim.