

## ŁAZARZ MENES

Warsaw, 21 September 1945. Judge Mikołaj Halfter interviewed the person specified below as a witness, without swearing him in. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

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<b>Forename and surname:</b>	Łazarz Menes
<b>Age:</b>	born on 23 March 1910
<b>Names of parents:</b>	Eliasz and Elstera
<b>Place of residence:</b>	Warsaw, Anielewicza Street 57, flat no. 30
<b>Occupation:</b>	assistant prosecutor of the Prosecutor's Office of Warsaw Regional Court
<b>Religious affiliation:</b>	Roman-Catholic
<b>Criminal record:</b>	none
<b>Relationship to the parties:</b>	aggrieved party

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In July or August 1940, at dusk, a group of uniformed, armed Germans stormed their way into my parents' flat at Natolińska Street 6 in Warsaw; they ordered us to leave the flat within 15 minutes, not allowing us to take anything from our luxury seven-room flat. Consequently, my mother, father and I left our flat even without outer garments or hats. While talking to us, the Germans shot at our family portraits, and their ferocity was so great that even the two "Aryans" who were staying with us, namely Zofia Owsiana (currently my wife) and a man called Leon (I do not know his surname; he was a barber who worked in the "Karol" barber's shop at 6 Sierpnia Street) had to leave the flat with us.

As I learnt later, the Germans sealed our flat. I never returned to it. After I had left, since it was rather late, that is to say about 8 p.m., each of us stayed with one of our neighbours for

the night (and I want to add that back then the curfew started, as far as I can remember, at 9 p.m.); my parents were afraid of going out into the street, especially because as a result of an order issued by the Germans, at that time, we were compelled to wear arm bands showing that we were of Jewish origin.

I want to add that we had been very frequently visited by Germans before, especially Germans from aleja Szucha, who took whatever they liked from our flat; however, we thought that we would still be able to stay in it for some time, since the Ghetto was to be set up later.

On the second day after we had left the flat, we moved into a Sobol's place at Żelazna Street 76, who was our distant cousin, and whose sister was a cashier in the "Plutos" factory, which was co-owned by my father.

I want to emphasize now that simultaneously my father's property at Natolińska Street 6 was taken away from him and handed over to appointed administrators. At the same time, the Nazi commissary of the "Plutos" factory - Oskar Lem[...]old - threw my father out of the factory, just like all the other co-owners and office workers of Jewish origin, not even giving them a penny.

Approximately in October or November 1940, the construction of the boundary walls of the Ghetto came to an end, and the Ghetto was tightly closed.

From the time when the Ghetto was closed until July 1942 the people in the Ghetto led, more or less, a fairly monotonous life. Deprived of any contact with the outside world, they suffered from extreme material deprivation, deluding themselves that the war would soon be over. It was impossible for an average man in the street to walk outside the boundary walls, but if one did and was caught on the other side, it meant death.

In addition to the severe material deprivation, there were also a number of dreadful ordeals, such as the Germans' various atrocities and special orders for Jews, such as wearing arm bands, walking off the pavement and taking off one's hat at the sight of every German soldier, a ban on using hackney-carriages and public transport, a ban on using telephones in order to cut Jews off from the outside world, constant round-ups for forced labor on the spot or in various camps, from where people never returned [or] returned utterly exhausted. Due to the fact that all means of communication with the outside world were cut off and

a simply ludicrously small amount of food was allotted, the [only] way of getting it was by smuggling, which was conducted on a large scale. The reason for this was that the food prices were extremely high and, apart from a small group, the masses of people – who were crowded into [cramp]ed conditions with lack of air – constantly starved. It was absolutely normal for people to come across emaciated corpses in the street, and passers-by went past them as if it was a completely natural thing. Along short parts of the street, from Żelazna Street, where I lived, to Karmelicka Street, I constantly saw a dozen or so corpses lying, either completely emaciated or swollen from starvation. Such corpses were buried together in one pit. It was very often [sa]id that families threw their closest dead relatives out of their flats as they didn't have the money to pay for their funeral.

And there were also constant round-ups of people, from which it was difficult to protect oneself. The Jewish executive body was the so-called *Judenrat*, that is a Jewish Council, headed by Chairman Czerniaków, and it was only a blind executor of German orders. This state of affairs deteriorated dramatically in July 1942.

Then, the so-called deportation operation started, which meant transports to Treblinka and death in gas chambers, or alternatively suffocation in a transport. German posters appeared on the Ghetto's walls which permitted, or even encouraged, taking especially jewellery, gold and foreign money with oneself. During the first days of the deportation operation, most Jews were still unaware of their terrible fate, and only a very few people knew what was happening. And so, the Chairman of the *Judenrat* Czerniaków, apparently knowing the truth about the "deportation operation," committed suicide together with his wife. The population that was doomed to death came under the authority of the so-called *Befehlstelle*, located on Żelazna Street between Leszno and Nowolipie streets on the side with odd numbers. So, the butchers of hundreds of thousands of people were those in charge of this institution: the *SS-Gruppenführer* Brandt, Witaszek, and others.

During the extermination operation, individual buildings and blocks were surrounded, with most of their residents having to leave their flats within a few minutes. With only the clothes they were wearing and the things they had on themselves, they were herded, like cattle, into the so-called *Umschlagplatz*, that is the shipment square behind Stawki Street, whence they were deported to Treblinka in already prepared wagons.

I want to add that during the initial stage the Germans recognized the so-called *Arbeitskarten* with a Nazi stamp. They were only issued to people employed in workshops or factories working for the Germans, but the holders of such cards also had to turn up in the building's courtyard together with all the residents of the building; after [that] they were separated from the rest of the people and had the right to return to their flats.

I want to add that the families of such laborers were not protected by the *Arbeitskarten* held by the head of the family, and they were deported.

Those who stayed in the flats, if they were unlucky in choosing the right hiding place and were found, were killed on the spot by the Germans, who kept searching the flats in such cases.

In practice, as a result, many Germans set up real or fake workshops around the Ghetto, with people paying exorbitant amounts of money, which went into German pockets, in order to be assigned to these workshops and to prolong their lives for a few months. This was a deliberate operation aimed at drawing all resources out of the Ghetto before its residents were exterminated.

At that time, as a consequence of a German order, the Ghetto had been limited to one third of its original size, the part of the Ghetto stretching to Leszno Street (the boundary wall) being excluded. Once more, my parents and I had to move, within 15 minutes, from Żelazna Street to Gęsia Street 30, where there was a metallurgical factory run by my friends. The German order specifying that the Ghetto would be reduced in size was issued unexpectedly and only gave people a few hours to arrange new accommodation and move into it. There was absolute pandemonium in the streets: they were crowded [...] with people carrying their bundles or pushing their lousy handcarts, so the few hours left for moving to another place in reality forced one to immediately leave one's flat since if anyone still remained in an uninhabited part of the Ghetto when the time limit was over was shot to death instantly. The boundary of the reduced Ghetto ran along the even side of Leszno Street, along Wolność Street, Okopowa Street, up to Stawki Street, etc., but a workshop there on Prosta Street under the business name of "Szulc" [added: Toebbens] remained outside. In this reduced Ghetto, the extermination operation continued. Every day there were units of Germans, Latvians and Ukrainians leaving the *Befehlstelle* and entering the Ghetto, and they surrounded building after building, street after street, [...]ing all the people into the

*Umschlagplatz*; those who remained in their flats were killed on the spot. At that time, *Arbeitskarten* with a Nazi stamp were no longer recognized by the Germans; those very few people who managed to escape from the moving crowds were lucky to have met a German, Latvian or Ukrainian who agreed to leave [them] where they were for a substantial bribe consisting of jewellery or [...].

During the first stage of the operation the Germans even used the office workers of the *Judenrat* and the *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* to help them drive people into the *Umschlagplatz*.

Crowds of people, pushed ahead by Ukrainians, accompanied by Germans shouting *schnell, schnell* and forced with whips to run towards the *Umschlagplatz*, were a sight that was downright terrifying. A husband left his wife behind, a mother – her children.

To clarify the picture, I would like to add that at that time one kilogram of wholemeal bread was 100 zlotys, so with the exchange rate for a dollar banknote being 20 zloty 1 kilogram of bread was 5 dollars. Small wonder that when the *Judenrat* announced that anybody who volunteered to be resettled would receive 3 kilograms of bread and half a kilogram of fruit preserve, the starving crowds went to the railway station on their own. Most people said that if there was no way out, they would agree to die having eaten their fill just once.

At that time, there was an exceptional number of suicides; also, [there were] many cases of people killing their closest relatives. It was usually done with poison. A small pill of cyanide, which was enough for two people, cost 15,000 zlotys.

Unfortunately, there was no organized resistance, which only happened occasionally here and there. Those who still had the strength to struggle against fate invested all their efforts in the construction of so-called hiding places. There were “upper” and “lower” hiding places, that is people hid one room in their flats in various ways; one entered such a room through a stove wall that could be opened, through a moveable sink, or last but not least – which was rather crude – through the back wall of a wardrobe that covered the doorway. “Lower” hiding places were entire underground rooms. More often than not, both types were the ultimate in inventiveness, so their discovery was almost impossible. At that time, the Germans still did not burn buildings, so a number of people were able to save their own lives thanks to their hiding places.

With my own eyes I was able constantly to see carts loaded up with corpses hanging inertly, moving along Gęsia Street at the end [...] I called in the direction of the cemetery. For a better description, I want to add that the cart drivers, who were Jews escorted by Germans, were drunk all the time and even gave vodka to their horses.

This state of affairs continued until 5 or 6 September [...]. On that day the Germans announced that all remaining Jews were to assemble within the area delineated by a few streets: Miła, Wołyńska, Zamenhofa and a few others, that is in the so-called "cauldron." That was the place where the ultimate selection was to take place as to who would remain in Warsaw and who would be deported, or, as was already known in the Ghetto – who would be sent to their death.

The Germans warned that anybody who remained outside the cauldron would be killed on the spot. Some people took advantage of the hiding places that they had constructed and did not go to the cauldron. However, most people went to the cauldron.

[...] permit, my family and I had a good hiding place at Gęsia Street 30, which had saved our lives many times in the past; however, my parents decided to go to the cauldron, where, as a matter of fact at Miła Street 64, we also had another hiding place and a good one [at that].

The people's migration to this cauldron lasted a few days and was a downright pitiful sight to behold.

The cauldron was carefully surrounded by the Germans, and they started [...] selection, which lasted about a week. During selections the people who worked in a factory – a so-called workshop – were brought in; a German director of this factory appeared, accompanied by Brandt from the *Befehlstelle* and whole columns of German [gendarmes?], Latvians and Ukrainians. A tiny number of the people who worked in a workshop, usually young men, were sent back to work, while the overwhelming majority, including all the women, children and older people, were escorted by armed bands to the *Umschlagplatz*, and then sent to Treblinka.

Here, due to the lateness of the hour, the interview was stopped. The witness interview report was read out.

## THE WITNESS INTERVIEW REPORT

Warsaw, 7 March 1946. Judge F. Rybiński, delegated to the Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, interviewed the person specified below as a witness, without swearing him in. The witness was advised of being under the obligation to tell the truth and of the criminal liability for making false declarations.

I, Łazarz Menes, continue my testimony:

Also at that time, on 1 and 7 September 1942 a selection of laborers was to be conducted in the workshop where my father and I worked (the *Ostdetsche Bautischlerei Werkstatte*); the women and children stayed in their hiding places, while men went out to the streets, deluding themselves that they would perhaps be the lucky ones who would return to the factory. Apart from the selection of laborers at our workshop, there were simultaneous selections at other workshops, so Miła Street was an incredible sight with tens of thousands of people, packed in lines, hungry for many days, and waiting, full of resignation, for a sentence of life or death. The waiting continued from noon until at least 5 p.m.. At that time, the drunk director of our workshop appeared, accompanied by the butcher of the Jewish quarter *SS-Sturmbannführer* Brandt from the *Befehlstelle*, and close-order units of SS-men and Ukrainians. Within a few minutes, pandemonium broke out in the street. Whipping and hitting people with [...], Germans took almost the entire crowd [...] to Zamenhofa Street, rather than to Smocza Street, which meant a march into the *Umschlagplatz* and, in consequence, the furnaces of Treblinka.

A small group of young people, to which I was assigned – miraculously – was put with their faces directed towards Smocza Street. For us, it meant a return to the factory and a few more months of life. Meanwhile, SS-men and Ukrainians drove the ten thousand crowd with their whips and accompanying gunshots towards the *Umschlagplatz*. Some tried to escape, but any attempt ended up with death. All of Miła Street was covered with the corpses of people who had died from Germans' bullets; there was no help or rescue coming from anywhere; accompanied by moaning, swearing, crying, beating and shooting,, the wave of people moved towards the *Umschlagplatz*.

That was the last time I saw my father in that wave; he was doomed to death together with the others. And before that, they had to endure agony, beating, thirst, the hellish

transport with no water or air in sealed wagons until the furnaces of Treblinka put an end to their suffering.

It was about 10 September 1942 when the first stage of the extermination of Jews in Warsaw came to an end. About 400,000 people were deported then (July-August 1942). There were only about 100,000 people who remained in the reduced Warsaw Ghetto, all of them laborers in the workshops working for the Germans. The Ghetto took on a completely different character. There were no people, private flats, families, etc. There were only numbers. Each workshop had its own block of buildings, where people moved in, and from where they went out, in close-order columns, to do forced labor. The return looked the same. Walking in the deserted streets alone, with no column of laborers, meant certain death at the hands of German patrols constantly cruising the streets. But even columns of laborers were not certain of their fate; they were searched and robbed several times by the Germans on the way from the building where they lived to their workshop.

At that time Jews already understood that they were doomed to death; consequently, it was better to die with honor. It was then that combat organization started to intensify its activities. They put announcements on the walls of desolate buildings, collected money, and above all, obtained firearms and ammunition from all possible sources and at any cost.

Although they were completely isolated, constantly searched, threatened with death, firearms (usually small arms) were coming through various channels, frequently purchased from civilian Germans for hefty sums of money. Quite a lot of firearms were delivered through sewers by sewage workers.

This relative and deadly calm continued until the middle of [January 1943]. Those who were in reasonable shape, took advantage of it to escape to the "Aryan" side, which was still possible thanks to German guards if they were bribed. Others, to whom I belonged, [not] being able to leave my old, exhausted mother, prepared various upper and lower hiding places, stored food supplies, still playing for time, hoping that each following day might bring salvation. Instead of salvation, there came annihilation.

In the middle of January, the Germans carried out a [seve]ral day-long purge, which resulted in the deportation of about [...0],000 people to the furnaces of Treblinka. Now, they no longer cared whether a Jew was a skilled laborer working for the Germans or whether or not



a workshop was in operation. Entire columns of laborers who were going to factories were taken and sent, in a normal way, to the *Umschlagplatz*. After five days this operation was temporarily stopped; [ano]ther wave of lucky ones, who had survived, got to the “Aryan” side. There were still 50,000 people who remained in the Ghetto, who had nobody to stay with on the “Aryan” side or who had parents that they were not able to leave (just like me and my old mother). For those 50,000 people, the situation was completely clear; we knew that we were doomed to die; the question was when the sentence would be carried out. The things that were in the greatest demand at that time were: 1) firearms and ammunition, 2) cyanide pills, 3) food supplies.

At that time, there also appeared a new hiding place concept, that is so-called permanent hiding places. The difference between them and the previous ones was that there was no hidden entrance; these hiding places were most frequently under the ground; they were well-equipped, had ventilation and food supplies for a year or more; after the users of such a hiding place entered it, the entrance was bricked in permanently by trusted individuals. Water was obtained with a pump. Those people were hoping that after the supplies had run out [...] they would destroy a wall or the ceiling on their own and get out – to, perhaps, an already free world. I did not follow that, since I thought that [...] people would not be able to bear it for a year and those who were hidden like that would go mad. Together with the laborers of our workshop, we prepared two lower hiding places and two higher hiding places; we stored food for many months, deluding ourselves that when the ultimate operation started, being young and moderately armed, we would be able to get over the wall to the “Aryan” side.

We deluded ourselves like that until 19 April 1943, when the time arrived for the ultimate extermination of the surviving Warsaw Jews and wiping off the face of the earth any traces that about 500,000 people, the largest Jewish population in Europe, had once lived and worked here.

[19 April] 1943 was the Eve of Passover and that time had been chosen by the Germans to liquidate the remains of the Ghetto; it is characteristic that for such operations the Germans evil-mindedly chose dates of some solemn Jewish festivals. On the evening [of the previous] day we had been informed with a phone call made from the “Aryan” side that the ultimate [...]on would start. Some were still able to hide, others simply escaped over the walls or [...]

[...]. However, it was only possible until 2 a.m.. At that time, all the walls of the Ghetto were cordoned off tightly by SS-men and "Ukrainians" equipped with heavy machine guns, grenades, etc.

During the night all the people entered their hiding places, so in the morning the streets and the buildings were completely deserted. Together with several dozen other residents I hid in the underground hiding place at Gęsia Street 30. I suppose that the remains of this hiding place are still there. Inside our hiding place we could hear regular salvos and shots all day. The Ghetto was dying, but it was dying with honor. That night, one of the laborers from our workshop reached our hiding place; he had spent the day in the hiding place in Miła Street. Gęsia Street was outside the area of the so-called "small ghetto" and that was why he thought that he was more likely to save his own life. He told us that there was absolute pandemonium in the Ghetto, which, as a matter of fact, I had been able to see personally [...]. This time, the Germans did not content themselves with careful searches of people's flats, but in a precise and consistent manner, burnt down building after building, block after block, not leaving until the building had been burnt to the ground. It goes without saying that in that manner everybody who was in so-called "upper" hiding places (hidden rooms) was killed. Nobody had expected that the Germans would completely destroy the entire, [huge] part of the city [together with] its people. When people came up to the windows, as a result of heat and fire, they were shot by Germans like ducks. [...], in fact, more often than not they jumped out of the windows to at least die quickly.

The resistance put up by the combat organization was fierce but ineffective. Everybody knew that he or she was dying; they had come to terms with that, but they were at least able to kill a German [...]. The longest resistance was put up by the workshop on Świętojerska Street and our workshop's block on Miła Street. Here, one of the young women, the daughter of one of the workshop's directors, threw herself out of a window with a bundle of grenades into a crowd of Germans.

Although the Germans outnumbered and outgunned the defenders, even using tanks and a scout plane that constantly circled above the Ghetto, the Germans suffered relatively heavy losses. However, [what] could have been done [compared with] such a terrible German superiority by a handful of Jews armed with guns and a few bullets at most, or at best with a machine gun that got jammed (the brush makers' workshop). There was no help, with

the exception of a few cases. During the first several days of fighting, so-called sewerers (sewerage workers) came, bringing weapons, food, taking groups of people through the sewers to the “Aryan” side. However, after a few days, the Germans, [...] informed, blew up the sewers with grenades at the places where the sewers entered the “Aryan” side, so we were left u[tterly] alone. After some five or seven days, the Jewish resistance was suppressed; the Ghetto was all ablaze. [In the morning], our “upper” hiding place, located in the same property at Gęsia Street 30, was burnt down. About 100 people were burnt alive there; about at least [fi]ve people saved themselves by jumping into the basement, where we had been digging to get to water, but the basement had filled up with mud and we had left it like this. [They] stayed for the whole day in the mud, immersed up to the neck, while in the meantime, the building, surrounded by the Germans, was burnt out completely. During the night, being certain that everything had been burnt, the Germans left the area, and these survivors came to our hiding place.

I stayed in this hiding place with my mother and a few other people who were close to me for about two weeks. The stay there was totally gruesome; the hiding place was supposed to hold fifteen people, while there were 70 people inside; the temperature, stuffiness and lack of fresh air were excruciating; we were almost naked but even this was of no avail. In addition to this, we suffered from a profound lack of food; our food, as had usually been the case, due to lack of room, had been stored in the upper hiding place and had burnt together with it. The price of a drop of water was equal to the price of a drop of blood, since in order to get some water, we were forced to go outside in the night. After more or less two weeks, in the night, my mother, my close relatives and I moved into one of the hiding places at Gęsia Street 79. There were four hiding places [in there] altogether; one had been wonderfully bricked in with a large [elect]rical transformer inside. Unfortunately, only a single “lower” hiding place remained, since, not being able to endure the temperature of the burning building and due to lack of air, the people simply left the other hiding places and walked out towards the Germans. The lucky ones took cyanide, those who had firearms shot into a crowd of Germans and then died from their own or a German bullet, and the remaining ones were driven by the Germans into various courtyards (Zamenhofa Street – the military prison, Nowolipie Street), and executed there, and their [bodies] were doused with petrol and set on fire.

I stayed in the hiding place at Gęsia Street 79 for about three weeks. The conditions were no less horrible than previously. There were about one hundred people there, including a large

number of older women and children. [Day and] night, people lay on the cold damp ground; they had a plateful of groats in the night (one could cook only in the night because the smoke from the chimney betrayed the hiding place during the day). One had to struggle for every swallow of water; water was brought in the night [...] in cans. Women and children [did not] even have enough strength to get out, crawling through various dug corridors, in order to get water; so, they were doomed to die of thirst unless somebody brought them some water.

After three weeks, I realized that a hiding place that was so overcrowded, full of thirsty and starving people would be detected by the Germans sooner or later, especially because of the clatter that was [made] while bringing water for so many people, in pitch darkness and accompanied by crying, moaning and swearing. So, I joined a group of seven young people who had made a hiding place between [...], though in fact they stayed in the rubble of the burnt buildings in some nooks and corners on the higher floors. One got out with a string ladder, fair to middling and patched together, or with a long wooden ladder that was moved from one landing to another, and moved further upstairs so that we could climb the sixth floor of a building that had been completely burnt out and had no stairs at all. It was only possible for young and energetic people who were prepared to go to any lengths.

Our sad predictions would also come true: the people from the "lower" hiding place in Gęsia Street, in pursuit of water and remaining food, walked out into the street having completely given up, without taking any precautions, and were caught one by one; then, in the first half of June 1943 a disaster struck. The Germans came in a few vehicles, threw some grenades into that hiding place, and then people started coming out of it, resembling more corpses than living humans. This was how my mother died. In the entire [...] part of the Ghetto (Gęsia, Smocza, Miła Street) only eight people remained alive: four men and four women; there was also a man called Romek [Zejtman?] in this group with me, who currently lives in Radom, at Tramwajowa Street 51, flat no. 3, who ultimately survived together with me. The eight of us simply had to perform miracles in order to stay alive somehow. We had a number of hiding places on the top floors of the burnt out buildings where we climbed in the way described above (with a ladder or string ladder). One went out to get water in the night and it was transported upstairs with ropes; we dug rotten potatoes out of old storage clamps in Nowolipie Street (the Szultz workshop), we picked the remaining apples from a deserted garden (Smocza Street), we climbed the balconies of burnt out buildings, hoping to find some remaining supplies left for Passover, and indeed, in one place we found 10 kilograms of

lard [...] with one hundred eggs. When we combined it with the potatoes that we brought we had a veritable feast of Lucullus.

Nevertheless, we were aware that [this was] only prolonged death throes, and that sooner or later we would be caught. This was especially so given the Germans – in pursuit of survivors or money left by them – constantly patrolled the streets usually in large numbers in the night, wearing felt boots so that it was impossible to hear them, whereas we made a lot of noise while carrying water or potatoes despite exercising great caution.

We tried numerous ways of getting out of the Ghetto, such as digging a tunnel [under] Pawia Street (the boundary wall was in the middle of the street and the other side was “Aryan”), or under Leszno Street (as above). During the evening of the day of a Russian air raid on Warsaw we tried to force our way over the wall in Pawia Street, [but] we kept failing. The Ghetto was hermetically closed and carefully guarded. Meanwhile, on the first days of August 1943, vehicles with laborers started to enter the area of the Ghetto in order to conduct demolition and to carry away scrap metal.

We were able to get in touch with one of these people with imploring letters requesting help, food and firearms. We attached some valuable pieces of jewellery to our letters; the people picked them up but in general ignored them. Eventually, one of the cart drivers (this man is still alive) took pity on us and for several weeks, in a prearranged manner (leaving packages in the places specified, which were picked up by us in the night), gave us food, medicines (we were all ill, suffering from terrible [...], which had not been treated for four months), ammunition, etc. The very same man brought my first letter to my wife, who was “Aryan” and was staying in Otwock at that time, being certain that I was dead. My wife started feverishly to organize a rescue operation on the other side, but the cart drivers were still [afraid] to take us outside.

In the meantime, a disaster [occurred]. We were staying in one of the hiding places on the sixth floor in Nowolip[...] Street, and not having water there, we started dismantling the bath furnaces in the bathrooms to obtain at least a little water. However, the noises were heard by the Germans. The building was surrounded and the hiding place was discovered. The Germans smashed some adjacent walls and stormed into the room. Only two people survived out of the eight of us [...] fit Roman Z.[...], climbed onto the roof of the burnt out building and stayed on the edge of the precipice for two hours; the other one was me; with

no hope, following my own instincts, I stood behind the kitchen door so that the Germans did not notice me – which I cannot understand – it clearly must have been an act of divine grace, since they walked around the place for almost an hour. I was holding a gun [...] five bullets. A few of our [...] stayed in the courtyard; some others, tied on to each other, were taken to their death. I survived [...] and so did Romek, who [eventually] climbed down from the roof and was about to kill me when, hearing my footsteps from downstairs he thought I was a German that had stayed behind. On the very same night, we returned to Gęsia Street; however, it was almost impossible for Romek to walk as he had been shot through a leg before. [...] in the morning, when the cart with our [...] stopped at our building, as usual, under the pretence of collecting scrap [...]al. As had been agreed, both of us came out into the courtyard and started throwing scrap into the cart, and eventually [...], partly covered with pieces of metal, we [set off]. A moment later, the Ghetto gate opened in front of us (on the corner of Gęsia and Okopowa streets, near the cemetery), and after a few minutes we were among my friends on the “Aryan” side. There were still dreadful ordeals that awaited us, such as year-long hiding out, the Warsaw Uprising and its fall, the departure of the insurgents to Pruszków; but they were all nothing compared to the hell I went through in my own lifetime in the Warsaw Ghetto [during] the German occupation.