



## PIOTR PERKOWSKI

On 15 March 1946 in Warsaw, Deputy Prosecutor Zofia Rudziewicz interviewed the person specified below as a witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

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<b>Name and surname</b>	Piotr Perkowski
<b>Date of birth</b>	17 March 1901
<b>Names of parents</b>	Antoni and Maria
<b>Place of residence</b>	Warsaw, Obrońców Street 45
<b>Place of residence</b>	Oweczacze, near Kiev
<b>Religious affiliation</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Occupation</b>	musician, composer, professor of the Warsaw Conservatory
<b>Relationship to the parties</b>	none
<b>Criminal record</b>	none

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Before the war I was the director of the conservatory in Toruń. During the war I lived in Warsaw and I was the president of the supervisory board of the artists cooperative in Zachęta, and apart from that I worked in the Polish "Kerntopf" grand piano factory. Being in touch with the artistic world, I was able to observe the attitude of Germans towards the cultural life in Poland.

The administrative authorities of the Warsaw district issued a general prohibition against assemblies, also those held for cultural and artistic purposes. At the same time it was announced that in order to obtain a permit to hold a concert, one had to report to the district, to the propaganda department (*Abteilung Propaganda*) in Brühl Palace



[Pałac Brühla]. None of the Polish artists ever received a permit to organize a concert of either classical or popular music. Only artistic productions of an extremely light character held in cafés and restaurants were permitted. Concerts of classical music were played only in Professor Wójtowicz's café, but the room was very small, and this was possible in any case only thanks to the intervention of German army doctors, who wanted to listen to music. Still, Professor Wójtowicz encountered nothing but continuous trouble and harassment from German authorities in connection with his organizing these concerts. The professor was even arrested by the Germans, but was released as a result of great efforts on the part of various groups from society. From 1942, if I remember correctly, governor Fischer permitted the organization of concerts for the purposes of the Main Welfare Council [Rada Główna Opiekuńcza] in the conservatory hall. As far as I know this happened as a result of the pressure exercised by the International Red Cross and Cardinal Sapieha. It was prohibited to play Chopin; apart from this, it was prohibited to play compositions written by Jewish authors, and from time to time the Propaganda Department would remove from the programs the names of famous German composers, justifying this by saying that Poles were not worthy to play great German musicians. I myself witnessed such a conversation in the Propaganda Department.

The Germans organized their own artistic events, often containing elements of propaganda. Polish musicians were forced to participate in these concerts under the threat of severe repressions (arrests and camps). For example, a famous Polish violin player, Eugenia Umińska, was summoned by the Propaganda Office in the district to participate in a concert organized by that office, under the pain of being sent to a camp. Umińska did not appear and from then on she was forced to hide under an assumed name, since she was wanted. Professor Drzewiecki was forced to play at a concert in the theater, despite his pleadings and delivery of medical certificates confirming his poor health condition.

All actions of the district authorities indicate that the Germans believed that classical music and art should exist only for them, and Poles should be satisfied with entertainment of a lesser value. They pursued this policy with respect to the theater as well. The Polish Theater [Teatr Polski] was transformed into a German theater, for Germans; it rarely played shows in Polish for Poles. Only musical comedies would be played then. Apart from that, the Germans agreed to the opening of a few Polish theaters of a conspicuously comic and revue nature, of very poor artistic level. Typically, the Germans favored plays with an erotic tinge.



In their aspiration to destroy cultural life in Poland, the Germans closed down all musical schools. This regulation was issued by the district authorities during the initial period of the occupation. After some time (I don't remember the exact date) they agreed to open the State Musical School [Państwowa Szkoła Muzyczna] (*Staatliche Musikschule*), which could educate only orchestral musicians; it had no permission to teach higher instrumental courses, it was also prohibited from teaching composition. Its German director, Hoesl, more than once said to the school professors that Poles can only be orchestra musicians under the direction of Germans.

The Germans persecuted not only composers and distinguished performers, but even teachers, not allowing them to open private schools or give private lessons. As a result of this, musicians suffered extreme poverty. Poverty killed Professor Tadeusz Maiz [...] and Director Dzimiński.

Gadomski, the composer, was arrested by Germans in an accidental round-up. He died in a camp. A violin player and the founder of a quartet, Tadeusz Trzonek, was killed in a public execution; Fischer did not react to the pleadings of the family for a pardon. Bender, along with his entire family, was murdered during the uprising, as were many others.

For some time concerts were organized in the ghetto, in cafés and concert halls. It was categorically prohibited to play pieces of German composers. Almost all Jewish musicians were murdered.