



## **BERNARD FILIPIUK**

Garwolin, 20 March 1946. Garwolin Municipal Court in the person of Judge Jan Bogucki interviewed the person specified below as a witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the wording of Art. 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the witness testified as follows:

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<b>Name and surname</b>	Bernard Filipuk
<b>Age</b>	46
<b>Names of parents</b>	Julian and Marianna
<b>Place of residence</b>	Miastków Kościelny, Garwolin county
<b>Occupation</b>	parish priest
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Criminal record</b>	none

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I left Miastków for Warsaw on 17 July 1944, as I had a serious medical condition and I was to be admitted to the Wolski Hospital in Płocka Street. On 26 July 1944 I underwent abdominal surgery. When the uprising broke out, I was staying in the hospital as a convalescent after the surgery.

As early as on 2 and 3 August 1944 a great many people from nearby houses in Płocka, Górczewska, Działdowska and Wolska Streets went to the Wolski Hospital, thinking that they would be safer there. They were aware that after the Germans captured a house or a block of flats, they would drag people out of basements and executed women, men and children – no exceptions.

I saw one of these executions myself from the hospital window, on 4 August 1944, when the Germans, having captured the building located on the parcel opposite the hospital, executed all of its residents, from sixty to one hundred people, on the pavement in front of



the house. I also saw from the hospital a woman with a child, who ran, apparently from fear, out of the gate of a burning house into Płocka Street. She was caught by the Germans and thrown into the burning house through a window, together with her child.

I emphasise that from the very first day of the uprising, the Germans were murdering all Poles in the Wola district without exceptions and were torching the houses. After the Wolski Hospital was finally captured on 4 August 1944 at noon, all of the nearby houses in Płocka, Działdowska, Wolska and Górczewska Street had already been burnt down and their inhabitants had been murdered.

Having entered the hospital, the Germans said that they had to burn it down for military reasons, and that the patients should leave immediately. Hearing strong protest from the hospital's director, Doctor Piasecki, they said that if this were the case, they would consult their commander about what to do with the hospital and its residents. The soldiers visited wounded Germans and Ukrainians lying in the hospital, who had been taken captive by the insurgents, and having talked to them, thanked the doctors and nurses for taking such good care of them.

Hospital doctors and Sisters of St Vincent de Paul [siostry szarytki] told me about the director's protest and of the Germans' thanks, supposing that this meant that the Germans would leave the hospital alone.

Then, on 5 August 1944, the Germans entered the Wolski Hospital in a greater number; they filled the hall and corridors. There were Ukrainians and Georgians among them with bands reading "Geergien" on their arms. These were SS front troops, including members of eastern legions in German service. At about 1 p.m., a German officer with two SS-men entered the office of the director of the hospital, Doctor Piasecki; Professor Doctor Zejland and the hospital's chaplain were also there. Having asked who the head doctor was, and who the other two were, this officer personally shot all three of them. A doctor and a nurse told me about it right after it had happened.

The Germans scattered throughout the hospital and started to throw patients out of their beds, threatening them with their guns. Women and men – no exceptions. A German burst into my room as well, he shouted raus! and then he ran to other rooms. I was still quite



unwell then (I had had the clips removed the previous day in the evening), so I did not move and I kept lying in my bed. When that German was coming back and saw that I was still lying there, he burst furiously into the room and pointed a rozpylacz at me. I then lifted myself on the bed, and he hit me with the butt of his rifle, pushed me off the bed and then shoved me into the corridor. I had only my pyjamas on and was barefoot.

In front of the hospital there was already a long column of people standing in fours: patients in shifts and hospital robes, doctors, nurses, paramedics, and the people who had sought shelter in the hospital during the first days of the uprising. At that moment, the German machine guns on the corner of Płocka and Górczewska Street were shooting in the direction of Działdowska and Leszno Streets. Having been brought out of the hospital, we were herded under strict escort through Płocka and then Górczewska Street in the direction of the freight railway flyover.

As we were walking along Górczewska Street, I saw corpses lying in front of every house. Corpses in front of some of the houses were partially burnt: children, women, men, old people. All of the houses had already been burnt down. Directly past the railway flyover, I saw many Polish men and women – even children – lying murdered on an embankment, and suitcases, briefcases and other bundles were scattered among them. On the other side, on an earthwork, there was a machine gun, which apparently had been used to execute people.

We were directed to the left, I believe it was into Magistracka Street, and we were led alongside a railway track into the yard of some factory. They crammed us into two enormous halls and ordered us to sit on the ground. After some time, a large group of people was brought in, it was said that they were the residents of Działdowska Street from Wawelberg houses and from other streets. Soon after that more men and women were brought with several vehicles. The factory was so crowded that there was not even a single free spot where someone could sit.

Between two and three in the afternoon, the Gestapo men came into the factory and right away started to select healthy men. They were brought to the front of the factory, grouped in fours and led away somewhere under strict escort. The Gestapo men said they were



taking them to demolish barricades. This selection of healthy people continued until around four in the afternoon.

At around 4.30–5 p.m., the Gestapo men took the first group of patients from the factory. A while later – they took another, and I was in it. In the factory yard we were lined up in fours, in groups of 12 people. I counted six of such twelves in the group of people I was in. The Gestapo men demanded that we give our watches, rings, fountain pens and other valuables over to them. They put these items on a crate turned upside down. I saw a lot of watches and other small items there. I put my watch and fountain pen into a lower pocket of my cassock and I didn't give them away, thinking that this watch could help my family recognize my body at a later time.

We were already sure that we were going to die, the same as the previous group of people dragged out of the factory. By then I had already changed into my cassock and I had my shoes on, all of which a sister of St Vincent de Paul had brought from my hospital room after I had been taken, and gave to me in the factory. We were led along the same way we had taken previously to the factory: alongside the railway track in the direction of the flyover. The entire route was guarded on both sides by soldiers, standing at intervals of more or less ten meters, with guns pointed in our direction, i.e. toward the inside of road. Moreover, each twelve was guarded by Gestapo men with revolvers in their hands.

We were brought to the other side of Górczewska Street, right beside the railway track – I think that it was the parcel number 35, I was told so a year later in a hospital. This is a place on the right-hand side of Górczewska Street, right beside the railway track, but behind it if one comes from the direction of Płocka Street. There is a memorial cross standing there.

The execution site was a large yard; on the right there was the railway track, on the opposite side there was a burning tenement house; a tenement house on the left was also on fire. When we were brought to the yard, there were still a couple of twelves of people brought from the factory before me – sick and healthy – waiting for their death. I then secretly pulled out my watch from the inner pocket of my cassock and I saw it was half past five. People were being brought forward in twelves and executed, without a break.



The order to shoot was given by a Gestapo man. Three soldiers were standing at the front of the yard on the left with a machine gun – rozpylacz – and it was they that fired in series upon order. I walked past them and I could clearly see that all three of them were in German uniforms. One of them looked like a Mongol.

I do not know whether these were Germans, or if they were of some other nationality.

I stood in that yard for maybe 15–20 minutes and I clearly saw each twelve people before me being executed by shots in the back. I also saw that after each series a Gestapo man killed the wounded with a revolver, aiming for the head. Corpses were lying already in about three quarters of the yard, some of them, located closer to the burning houses, were catching fire.

Waiting for his own death, Father Żychoń, a missionary from Cracow, who stayed in the Wolski Hospital as a patient, granted general absolution to everybody, and I granted it to him, after which, as requested by one of the patients, we recited the Lord's Prayer aloud for the last time. By the last words of the prayer the Gestapo man shouted: "Forward!". One moment later I heard "Fire!" in German. A salvo followed and I collapsed together with Father Żychoń, who was supporting me by the arm all the time because I was still weak from my operation. He also dragged me down with him. I instantly realized that I was alive and that I was not hurt, but I started to play dead, knowing that the Gestapo man was going to kill whoever remained alive. When he approached me, he kicked me in the knee, swore and shot his revolver, aiming for the head. The bullet went by my ear. I was saved.

The Germans continued to execute people in twelves. A woman from one of those twelves fell with the top of her head on my feet. After the execution of several other groups, she started to yell aloud that she was alive and that she was not hurt. Then one of the soldiers came running and shot her with an entire round from a rozpylacz.

I could see this, since I was lying in such a position that looking surreptitiously in the direction of my legs, I was able to observe the cruel executioners the entire time. I was all the time afraid that a stray bullet would hit me, since they were shooting in the direction of the lying corpses.



And so I was lying, constantly fearing death, until 11.30 in the evening of 5 August 1944. At that time they ceased the execution, and the three executioners, having lit up cigarettes, went away to Górczewska Street and stood on the bank before the entrance to the tunnel. I then started crawling over the corpses towards the house in front of which we were executed. There was no other way for me. I noticed that someone else was crawling as well. He later told me that his father had been executed, but he was alive. His name is Mieczysław Krzysztoforski (presently residing in Warsaw, in Praga, Lubelska Street 23, flat 6). He wrote to me that six persons had survived this execution. I only met one man in the house into which I crawled. He was a hairdresser from Działdowska Street, so he told me. His arm was shattered. The bullets reached him in the corridor of the burning house, in front of which the execution took place. He entered the house even before the salvo. That had been around 3, maybe 3.30 p.m., he told me.

Where he now lives or what his name is, I do not know.

A student called Napiórkowski, who worked in the Wolski Hospital, also saved himself by jumping to the side and running away when he was being led across the yard. He comes from Grójec, where his mother lives. The Wolski Hospital probably knows his address.

Allegedly one of the Wolski Hospital caretakers, who was executed in another yard, is also alive. In August 1945 he was working in Wolski Hospital. I do not know where he is now.

I believe that the exact details of the survivors of the massacre of Wolski Hospital patients can be provided by the hospital authorities.

I need to stress that not only men were executed with me in Górczewska Street. Women were also there, although generally the Gestapo men were taking only men from the factory. I believe that these were the wives, mothers or daughters, who joined their loved ones, their dearest ones, who were being taken to their death. They apparently wanted to die with those they loved. There was a woman in my twelve. She had a baby in her arms, who could have been one year old. She was executed with that child. She pleaded with the Gestapo men to first kill the child and then her. He just smiled and said nothing. The child was crying for a long time after the execution, and his whimpering froze the blood in my veins. I am sure that the Nazi executioners must have heard that too.



As to the names of the executed, apart from Father Żychoń, I don't know any. I was in the hospital for a relatively short time, I stayed in bed and didn't know other patients. I know that the doctors from the Wolski Hospital were executed, since I saw them being executed. I only knew them by sight from the hospital. Our surgeons were taken before the execution to a German hospital. All of them are alive.

Nor am I in a position to indicate the number of people executed in the Górczewska Street yard. According to my calculations, and I saw from the house I crawled into that the entire yard was covered with corpses, about two thousand people were executed. This figure seems to me to be more than probable, taking into account the duration of the execution, during which people kept being brought in and executed, as well as taking into consideration the enormous crowd of people crammed into the factory.

I don't know the names of the executioners. It seemed to me that there were Gestapo men and infantry soldiers among them. All of them were very nervous, furious. Cruelty and desire for some revenge were emanating from them. They were full of sadism. I saw a Gestapo man caress the face of a man standing in a group of twelve with his hand, say something to that man, then put a revolver below his chin and shoot him, laughing. This is the way only a Nazi bandit, devoid of any conscience, moral principles, and humanity, could kill someone.

As I have said before, the execution was still in progress when the corpses were catching fire from beams and boards falling from the burning houses. I did not see the Germans burn the executed people, but some man told me a couple of days after the execution, when I was outside of Warsaw, that on 6 August 1944 they took him with some others to Warsaw and in that very same Górczewska Street yard they ordered them to pour gasoline and burn the corpses.

I don't know this man's name, I don't know where he is from either. That the corpses had been burnt on the execution site is demonstrated by the fact that only ashes and hospital splints used by patients were found on the site of this crime.

I must add that none of the executed Poles asked the Gestapo men for anything – apart from that woman with her child – they did not beg for mercy or for their lives to be spared. In total peace and with contempt for death and for their slaughterers, determined, full of



resolute heroism and conscious of the gravity of their bloody sacrifice, they walked on courageously to meet their death, with the thought – and, as with my twelve, even with a shout – that they were giving their life for Poland. This drove the Gestapo men mad.

I am deeply convinced that not only the commanders who had given the orders, but also each and every single German who carried out these orders are responsible for the German crime committed on the Wolski Hospital patients, because apart from carrying out the orders, they acted outside of these orders, committing particular crimes on their own, each of them individually. I have made the above testimony being aware of all the facts and circumstances, and I am ready, should the need arise, to confirm my testimony under oath.