



FRANCISZEK ZIELIŃSKI

On 28 February 1946 Associate Judge Antoni Krzętowski, delegated to the Warszawa-Miasto Branch of the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, interviewed the person named below as a witness, without taking an oath. The witness was advised of the obligation to speak the truth and of the criminal liability for making false declarations, and testified as follows:

Name and surname	Franciszek Zieliński
Date of birth	15 March 1897
Parents' names	Aleksander and Marianna
Place of residence	Warsaw, Polna Street 44, flat 27
Occupation	gardening instructor
Education	Russian vocational school
Religion	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none

I know Stanisław Buchler, for he was my (temporary) assistant when I worked as a gardener for the German police at aleja Szucha 23. Having captured Warsaw in 1939, the Germans found me working as a gardener, for I had already been working as such for a considerable time on the basis of a contract concluded with the manager of the administration of the premises of the Ministry of Military Affairs. At the time I was the head of the gardens located on the premises of the former Ministry of Military Affairs at Nowowiejska Street and Marszałkowska Street 20. When Warsaw was occupied by the Germans, they kept me in my former position, however adding to my care – in addition to the gardens that I previously managed – the garden located at the rear of the building at aleja Szucha 23.

Aleja Szucha 23 and 25 constitute a single complex, however the courtyards are separated by a wall with a height of up to four metres. The 22nd *Schutzpolizei* Regiment was stationed at aleja Szucha 23. Of the Germans serving in this Regiment, I recollect the surnames of *Schutzpolizei* inspectors Schaliński, Kobra, *Leutnant* Krohn, and major Rekling. As regards Schaliński, Kobra, and Krohn, I did not see anything that would allow me to make specific charges against them. No interrogations were performed at our facility, and no arrestees kept there, with the exception of persons sent in by the Gestapo to work in the garden or perform special types of work, such as erecting a wall dividing our courtyard from that of the Gestapo building. Now as concerns Rekling, who until 1940, that is, until he came to our facility, had been the commander of a *Schutzpolizei* battalion stationed on the premises of the Parliament, I do have specific charges. As battalion commander, he had held the rank of captain. He was transferred to us as a major. Rekling made the lives of Poles who worked with me a misery. He would beat us up regularly and threaten that we would be handed over to the Gestapo. He would kick us and hit us on the face, usually for no reason. In all, there were 11 of us employed at aleja Szucha 23, and we all had families. Apart from working in the garden, Poles also held certain positions with the police, for example as caretakers, stokers, etc. In return for our labour we were entitled to receive food allowances in addition to meagre sums of money. These, however, were not properly issued by the Germans, while all complaints made by us to Rekling resulted in him threatening that we would be handed over to the Gestapo, who would take the appropriate measures. Rekling had some judicial functions in the police. He was a man of average height, with blue eyes and blond hair, and large protruding teeth; he had a gold crown on one of his upper left molars. At the time, in 1940, he could have been 42 years old.

We had no contact with the Gestapo building, and for this reason I cannot provide any detailed information as to what went on there. As I have already mentioned, our courtyard was separated from the Gestapo courtyard with a wall that was approximately four metres high. Up to a height of more or less a metre and half, this wall was made of brick, while the remaining part consisted of iron rails to which wooden boards had been fixed in a crosswise arrangement, so as to block the view to the Gestapo courtyard. In addition, the Germans erected a massive wall, maybe taller than four metres, which separated the area of my gardens from the police and Gestapo courtyard. This wall was more than one hundred metres long and the bricks used in its construction had been brought in using twine and



stakes by the Poles who were detained at the forced labour camp at Gęsia Street. They also brought these bricks in from the Ghetto. Each of them carried four bricks at a time. They wore clogs, and these hurt their feet so much that I frequently saw some of the clogs filled with blood. I got to know one of these labourers-prisoners. His name was Franciszek Ziółkowski from Wilno, where he used to be the manager of a dormitory for male and female students, which was administered by some monastery or convent. Ziółkowski had wounds all over his legs. I gave him bandages myself. He was sent to the forced labour camp from Pawiak, where he had spent three months.

Construction work on the wall lasted some six weeks. Subsequently the Germans carried out a selection of labourers and deported the stronger ones to Germany for labour.

I don't know what became of the physically weaker men.

Stanisław Buchler worked with me nearly from the beginning, that is, from 1939. For a considerable length of time he helped me in the garden, while towards the end of the occupation (before the uprising) he was employed as a central heating stoker in the police building. During the uprising Buchler, along with the other employed Poles, was arrested and placed in the cellar (boiler room) of the building at aleja Szucha 23. They were kept there for two weeks, after which the Germans began to use them for various work around the city. Buchler told me that during this period he worked for some time as a labourer in the German kitchen located in the former building of the Polish Gendarmerie on the premises of the Chief Inspectorate of the Armed Forces. While walking around this facility, Buchler was able to witness the crimes perpetrated by the Germans. He talked about the mass murder of Poles. He told me that Poles were killed naked, and were stripped before being executed by Poles from the working teams quartered at Litewska Street 14. Later on, these Poles were also to be executed. I don't know Buchler's present address, but I do know that he is living in Warsaw. I will try to find him and send his address to the citizen judge, or to ensure that he appears before the Commission in person as soon as possible.

About two weeks before the uprising I moved from aleja Szucha, and therefore avoided arrest.