



WŁADYSŁAW ORZESZEK

On 18 June 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:

Name and surname	Władysław Orzeszek
Date of birth	11 April 1897
Names of parents	Hieronim and Władysława
Place of residence	Warsaw, Szwedzka Street 7
Place of birth	Studno near Nowe Miasto
Religious affiliation	none
Occupation	President of the Board of the Main Leather Association [Zarząd Głównego Związku Skórzanego]
Education	elementary school
Criminal record	none

During the war I worked as a craftsman in my own shoemaker's workshop. Since before the war I had been the president of the Trade Union of Workers and Employees of the Leather Industry [Związek Zawodowy Robotników i Pracowników Przemysłu Skórzanego], during the occupation I was interested in the trade union movement and belonged to it in secret.

After the Germans entered Poland, trade unions ceased to exist. I don't recall the details of their dissolution.

Matters of workers' labor and of the work of all employees in general were handled by the *Arbeitsamt*, which was subordinated to the district, thus Fischer, as the district governor, is indirectly responsible for the deeds of the German officials.



According to the *Arbeitsamt*'s regulations, a worker did not have the right to change the establishment in which he worked on his own. If a worker voluntarily stopped working in an enterprise, he was punished for this by being sent to a camp.

The *Arbeitsamt* on its own, without asking the worker for his consent, could transfer a worker from one establishment to another. In many enterprises, workers did not get holiday leaves. In the leather industry, an eight-hour working day was kept. What the situation was in other industry sectors, I do not know.

The wages of workers were very low; they were set in accordance with the rates determined by the Germans, which could not be raised. The earnings were incompatible with the costs of living, all the more so that one didn't get a sufficient supply in return for food tickets.

The Germans allowed the employment of workers from the age of fourteen up. There was no labor protection or labor hygiene. The entire social legislation was annulled by Germans, and workers were deprived of any possibility to defend themselves, since strikes were illegal.

I remember that in a shoemaking/tailoring enterprise in Kowelska Street, which was run by Germans, workers who dared to demand a greater food supply were beaten up.

The Germans prosecuted former members of trade unions. Arrests were very frequent. From the Leather Trade Union alone, Germans arrested and murdered more than fifteen distinguished activists.