

# I Diary from the Warsaw Uprising

## Introduction

Zygmunt Miechowski (1913 Zawichost – 1944 Warsaw) joined the theological seminary in Lublin and afterwards studied art history and classical philology at the Józef Piłsudski University in Warsaw. He passed his master's exam, for which he had prepared under the supervision of Prof. Zygmunt Batowski (clandestine education), on 30 or 31 July 1944. Employed at the National Museum in Warsaw from 1937, he participated in the production of an exhibition of Adam Chmielewski's paintings, a presentation of Jan Matejko's sketches, and the major show *Warsaw Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*.

He co-organized the Museum of Old Warsaw (a division of the National Museum) at 15 Podwale Street. Following the outbreak of the war, he contributed significantly to the saving of historical collections and documentation of wreckage. In September 1939, he helped evacuate collections from the burning Royal Castle. Arrested by the Germans with a photographic camera (in 1940), released after several weeks, he continued underground work. During the Warsaw Uprising, the Museum management put him in charge of the "buildings and collections" of the Museum of Old Warsaw. In August, he "risked his life, evacuating art works from burning churches and the municipality building" in Old Town to the cellars of the Museum. As second lieutenant (nom de guerre "Kustosz") in Old Town, he was assigned to "Dzik" battalion of the Uprising Protection Military Service (Wojskowa Służba Ochrony Powstania, WSOP), later, in Śródmieście, to "Golski" battalion. On 25 August, he received a document from the Home Army "North" Group Command, signed by "Seweryn" and "Szary," officially entitling him to rescue art and cultural property in Old Town. On 1 September 1944, he moved through the sewers to Śródmieście, and in September helped Prof. Jan Zachwatowicz rescue the documentation of the Warsaw University of Technology's Faculty of Architecture. Wounded by shrapnel on 24 September, he died on the following day at the "Sano" Hospital at 13 Lwowska Street and was buried in the courtyard of the Faculty of Architecture, whence his remnants were exhumed in January 1946.

Miechowski was given his job at the Museum by Stanisław Lorentz, who highly appreciated his academic and organizational skills, reliability, and profound commitment to cultural heritage protection. During the war, they were brought closer by living in the same house, the Museum-owned historical Baryczka Townhouse at 32 Old Town Market Square, with the entrance from 7 Krzywe Koło Street. Miechowski lived on the second floor (entrance from the backyard). From 1941, the Lorentz family lived in the rooms downstairs, having been expelled by the Germans from their home at Kredytowa Street. The residence had been set off from the museum complex, which apart from the Baryczka Townhouse also included the house at 15 Podwale Street; the Home Army had a weapons stash in the cellar. During the Uprising, Miechowski took care of Lorentz's mother, who remained in the apartment at Krzywe Koło Street.

Those details were likely contributive to Miechowski's wish for his private papers, if anything happened to him, to be deposited with Lorentz. This was done, in accordance with his wishes and later, in May 1981, the papers were handed over to the State Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw. Its then director, Józef Kazimierski wrote admiringly in a letter that the "documents provide a unique testimony of a struggle to save the cultural heritage of the Polish nation."

The preserved diary records Uprising events that Miechowski personally witnessed. Unique in character, in laconic entries added on a daily basis, they reflected Warsaw's ordeal. Particularly striking is the chasm between the London government-in-exile's assurances of help that can be heard on the radio and the hopeless situation of the civilian population.

And to touch on a personal note, my father, Stanisław Lorentz, always remembered Zygmunt Miechowski with great sympathy and emotion. As for me, an eight-year-old girl at the time, the image remains etched in my mind of a charming gentleman, letting me in with a smile and cutting out a wonderful series of wild and domesticated animals from coloured cardboard right in front of me, without any sketching. I am very happy that (after seventy five years!) Miechowski's Uprising diary is finally published, thus preserving the memory of its author, who throughout his short life remained irrevocably associated with the National Museum.

Alina Kowalczykova

## Diary<sup>1</sup>

1 August – 23 September 1944

### 1 August 44

Around 5 p.m. the uprising breaks out. Violent gunfire from all sides. Fiery lights in the sky. Distant gunshots. The last announcement by the German authorities from the loudspeakers.<sup>2</sup> Mood. Night.

### 2 August

The Old Market Square. Barricades. News from Warsaw. Three-fourths of the city in [Polish] hands.<sup>3</sup> Fighting for the PKO House.<sup>4</sup> Powiśle. Stefan.<sup>5</sup> A lull. A fire at Kanonia Street, “the Cathedral is on fire.” Evening. Preparations for firefighting measures. A relatively quiet night. Distant cannonade. Where are the Bolsheviks? The factory at Mostowa Street on fire. Rain for three days in a row.

### 3 August

Discussion at Company Command. Subject: quarters at the Baryczka House.<sup>6</sup> Artillery shelling. Tanks at Rybaki Street. A detonation (the first windowpanes). [end of page]

Printed news. France, Turkey [two lines crossed out, illegible]. Patrol airplanes. Night fires around the city. Artillery rumbling.

### 4 August

[First word illegible]. The People’s Army wants to quarter troops at the Museum. Stefan. News. The situation is reportedly not bad. (Fighting still going on in many places). The Museum at 3 Maja Avenue seems to have been seized by the G[ermans].<sup>7</sup> Airplanes. Secured museum and

<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from Zygmunt Miechowski’s diary were published in *W Muzeum i gdzie indziej. Walka o dobra kultury*, Stanisław Lorentz, ed., vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1970), pp. 13–108. His personal documents (ancestors’ birth certificates and wartime papers) are in the Archive of the National Museum in Warsaw.

<sup>2</sup> In early August 1940, the Germans launched a system of street loudspeakers (soon dubbed as “barkers”) through which official announcements in Polish were broadcast twice daily.

<sup>3</sup> In the first days of the Uprising, there was widespread euphoria, resonating with the tone of foreign radio news and hopes for swift and decisive Allied help. The tone of Miechowski’s entries shows how quickly those illusions were dashed.

<sup>4</sup> The PKO House at 9 Ludna Street in the Powiśle borough, named after Polska Kasa Oszczędności, a state-owned bank, was a residential building for the bank’s employees. Completely destroyed during the Uprising, it was rebuilt in its original shape; the reconstruction was completed only in December 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Stefan Kozakiewicz was an art historian, National Museum staffer, and Zygmunt Miechowski’s friend. Both contributed greatly to the saving of art collections from the Royal Castle in 1939 and to subsequent heritage-saving activities.

<sup>6</sup> Baryczka House – the entrance to the Museum of Old Warsaw was at 15 Podwale Street, where ethnographic collections were held.

<sup>7</sup> The National Museum was occupied by the Germans throughout the Uprising.

library items. Still no news from the front near Warsaw. Shelling of Kanonia Street.<sup>8</sup> Brzozowa Street. Evening, very low moods. [end of page]

### 5 August

A cold night. No larger fires glowing in the sky. Looking out in vain for signs of “immediate help.”<sup>9</sup> (Morning) news. The ~~woman~~ from Krochmalna Street. Bombed out houses. Soviet leaflets (just generalities). The SOP<sup>10</sup> takes over the Baryczka House. Three gentlemen from the City Council. Prof. Batowski and his wife.<sup>11</sup>

### 6 August

Diversion gunfire. [end of page]

### 7 August

Depression. Fire at the National Museum (the press). [end of page]

### 8 August, Sunday

St Hyacinth Church on fire.<sup>12</sup> The spire. Radio. [end of page]

### 9 August

The morning relatively quiet. At the Batowskis. Paintings from the City Hall (19 items). Captain Nałęcz.<sup>13</sup> Evening news about the negative result. [Stanisław] Mikołajczyk – the NKW.<sup>14</sup> Old Town under artillery fire. Nowomiejska Street. Stary Dunaj Street. Piekarska Street. Night under fire. At night, the ultimatum (leaflets).<sup>15</sup> Soviet offensive (from Siedlce). [end of page]

<sup>8</sup> Failing to capture the barricade at Świętokrzyska Street, the Germans launched repeated assaults on Kanonia Street one in a bid to force their way to the Cathedral. Moreover, Kanonia Street offered a good vantage point towards the Praga side.

<sup>9</sup> Varsovians' diminishing hopes for help from the Western Allies were met with the Polish government-in-exile's promises of “immediate help,” broadcast by the BBC Polish Section (“London Radio,” as it was called in occupied Poland).

<sup>10</sup> SOP – Służba Ochrony Powstania (Uprising Protection Service); in fact: WSOP – Wojskowa Służba Ochrony Powstania (Uprising Protection Military Service)].

<sup>11</sup> Prof. Zygmunt Batowski (1876 – 1 September 1944) was an eminent art historian and supervisor of Miechowski's master's thesis. Batowski lived with his wife in one of the so called “professors' houses” at 10 Brzozowa Street; on 1 September the residents were taken out on the street; he died in the vicinity of Saski Garden.

<sup>12</sup> Miechowski personally witnessed the fire of St Hyacinth Church and its spire, as mentioned in the 8 August entry. The church caught fire several more times, e.g., on 17 August “[...] artillery shells damaged the roof and started a fire in the spire”; *Wielka ilustrowana encyklopedia Powstania Warszawskiego*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 2005), p. 226.

<sup>13</sup> Captain “Nałęcz” – Stefan Kaniewski (1914–72), graduate of a pre-war Officer Cadet School. In 1940, imprisoned for three months at Auschwitz; after his release, active in the Union of Armed Struggle (ZWZ – Związek Walki Zbrojnej) and the assault squad of Security Corps (Korpus Bezpieczeństwa); promoted to captain during the Uprising; in POW camps in Germany after the surrender.

<sup>14</sup> Stanisław Mikołajczyk (1901–66) was the Prime Minister of the Polish government-in-exile in 1943–44. NKW – Naczelny Komitet Wykonawczy (Supreme Executive Committee).

<sup>15</sup> Ultimatum – on 9–10 August, German airplanes dropped leaflets titled “Ultimatum for the Population of Warsaw,” urging residents to leave the city.

**10 August**

Night. My room (-||-). Morning, rain, the partly shattered roof of the Baryczka House leaking. News. Kwapiński's declaration<sup>16</sup> about help for Warsaw. Old Town shelled from Praga. Arciszewski<sup>17</sup> – vice-successor of the President. The OKW<sup>18</sup> reports fighting in the south-west. Warka.<sup>19</sup>

**11 August**

1.45 repeated news. Fires in Praga. Artillery. [end of page]

Old Town shelled around 3. Mood in the shelter. News from the front (the Castle, assault on barricades at Świętojańska Street and Piwna Street). Help?? – SOS.<sup>20</sup> A fire somewhere at Piwna Street. The morning relatively quiet again, but everyone's aware of the gravity of the situation. It's bad. The Market Square's suffered much damage. Eleventh day, it's high time. Sometimes, with involuntary curiosity, I wonder theoretically how it can all end. An air raid. The house at 11 Market Square is gone. Janka. Marysia.<sup>21</sup> A mood of panic in the evening. The HQ<sup>22</sup> moving to quarters elsewhere. Keeping vigil all night.

**12 August**

The Castle seized yesterday. Fighting for barricades at Świętojańska Street and Piwna Street. Nowomiejska Street already threatened and dangerous. The Market Square badly damaged, but still in one piece. The Cathedral on fire.<sup>23</sup> The Dukes of Masovia Townhouse [end of page] damaged. Under artillery fire all day. Mine throwers. The troops have returned and the day went pretty much like yesterday. We can only stay at the shelter, with shrapnel flying all around. While in the shelter, I'm talking to Janka and Marysia (but all subjects from the outside world are strangely depressing). Want of weapons and ammunition. The twelfth day of the uprising. London assuming responsibility, shielding the fighters with theoretical international law, and promising "imminent and effective" help.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Jan Kwapiński (1885–1964) was a member of the Polish Socialist Party and a minister in the Polish government-in-exile. Charged with the task of organizing support for the Uprising, he declared on Polish Radio London: "I can confidently state that help for the fighters in Warsaw has already begun and that it will be big enough to be effective."

<sup>17</sup> Tomasz Arciszewski (1877–1955) was Prime Minister of the Polish government-in-exile from November 1944 to 1947. On 7 August 1944, he was named by the President of the government-in-exile, Władysław Raczkiewicz, as his successor.

<sup>18</sup> OKW – Ober Kommando der Wehrmacht, the German Armed Forces' High Command.

<sup>19</sup> Probably a reference to fighting at the Warka-Magnuszew Bridgehead, which was formed by Red Army units in early August 1944.

<sup>20</sup> S.O.S – either a distress signal or, perhaps, a reference to the Community Self-Help Organization (Społeczna Organizacja Samopomocy), active 1942–44.

<sup>21</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>22</sup> HQ – the Home Army's High Command moved quarters from Barokowa Street to 7 Długa Street.

<sup>23</sup> Under the same date: "the church burning, fire barely extinguished"; see *Wielka ilustrowana encyklopedia...*, op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>24</sup> "Imminent and effective help" – Miechowski sarcastically quotes Polish Radio London's news bulletins, just as he cited Kwapiński before.

**Sunday. 13 August**

The troops are gone. A gloomy and noisy day. About 1 o'clock I made an escapade to Podwale Street.<sup>25</sup> I saw everybody. The situation on the ground unchanged. The barricades still hold. I returned with a group of people who basically took "everything." We're trying to tidy up the mess on our own. [end of page]

Working girls visiting on the 1<sup>st</sup>. The tankette at Kilińskiego Street.<sup>26</sup> Allied aircraft at night.

**14 August**

A mostly quiet day.

**15 August**

The Feast of the Assumption of Mary. The Miracle of the Vistula.<sup>27</sup> Invasion of southern France. Mood in the shelter made this a bad day from early morning. Our "ladies." Civilians from Bugaj<sup>28</sup> quartered. A relatively quiet night. No airplanes, no artillery. [end of page]

**16 August**

At dawn, we're under mortar fire (seven rounds, with a dud in the attic of the Baryczka House). People from the 1<sup>st</sup> floor running down to the shelter. A small hell. It's going somehow. At 1 o'clock I'm at Podwale Street. News ("east of Praga, in the suburbs of Warsaw"). Traces of the tankette on the way. Shelling from time to time ("wardrobes"<sup>29</sup>). During my absence, the gendarmerie, searching for saboteurs; then the captain about new recruits. Stefan (Germ. commun.) drops by in the evening. Prof. Batowski and his wife. I don't know how much truth there is to it, but they're talking of panic retreat. My advice is to wait. The shelter gets a new look. I change the bunk with Mr. Polak.<sup>30</sup> [end of page]

[entries from 17–22 August added on loose sheets of photographic paper; afterwards in the notebook again]

**17 August 44**

Awoken at 3 a.m., I go out on duty. There was reportedly fighting all night on the Vistula. Gun-fire can still be heard. Besides that, it's quiet. No airdrops. Nor can any artillery rumble from the east be heard. More fires from the direction of the Castle Square. A rather cold night. In the morning, a quarrel in the shelter.

<sup>25</sup> I.e., to the Museum of Old Warsaw building.

<sup>26</sup> On 13 August, in the area of Zamkowy Square, Polish fighters captured a German remote-controlled demolition vehicle (explosives carrier), which was then driven through Old Town to Kilińskiego Street where it exploded unexpectedly, killing hundreds of people, both fighters and civilians.

<sup>27</sup> Miracle of the Vistula – a reference to the 1920 Battle of Warsaw, where a strategic breakthrough occurred on 15 August.

<sup>28</sup> Probably Bugaj Street.

<sup>29</sup> "Wardrobes" – Old-Town nickname for German Nebelwerfer rocket launchers; in Śródmieście, they were known as "cows" due to the loud, shrill howl of the incoming rockets; Allied soldiers called them "Screaming Mimis" or "Moaning Minnies."

<sup>30</sup> Unidentified.

(Social digressions). Harassing fire (“wardrobes,” mortars). An excursion to Brzozowa Street.<sup>31</sup> The spire of the Jesuit Church on fire. The mood in the shelter, rather gloomy at first, improves. New residents at #36 in the vaulted chamber (Bugaj). Reports of the front east of Warsaw suburbs. A generally quiet night. Barricade fighting.

#### 18 August 44

In the morning, a harassing air raid. Mr. Radziwiłł<sup>32</sup> in the role of an observer and panic-monger. Air raids every hour. Single bombs. New residents. “Wardrobes.” A lull. Conflicting reports about the PKO House.<sup>33</sup> Stefan in the evening. He’s been to Brzozowa Street. Before that, Marysia and Jagódka.<sup>34</sup> Assigning duties. My first duty (10–12 o’clock). Fighting around Mostowa Street. [end of page]

#### 20 August

Shelling of the houses in the Market Square. I move museum items, paintings etc. to the cellars. Pyrotechnicians. At night (around 1 a.m.), the tenement at the corner of Celna Street and Old Town starts burning. [end of page]

#### 21 August

Quarters ~~moved~~ taken at the Baryczka House. I move the Jabłonna box to the cellar. The Dukes of Masovia and Fukier houses on fire, the cellars flooded. A crowd in the shelter. [end of page]

#### 22 August

At dawn, a fire at no. 38. Our roof on fire. No. 36.<sup>35</sup> Warsaw from the top floor (St Kazimierz Church, Praga, the Castle). Brave Dee.<sup>36</sup> Airplanes, “wardrobes,”<sup>37</sup> fires burning at 5 and 3 Krzywe Koło Street. A fire at 36 Old Town. A lull in the afternoon. (Dinner). In the evening, an assault on Bolesć Street.

Miecio.<sup>38</sup> I move large-format paintings. Night spent at the Baryczka House. *Varsoviennne*<sup>39</sup> in the evening (report about wreckage in Old Town). Hammering a hole in the WC. [end of page]. [end of loose sheets; entries back in notebook].

<sup>31</sup> To Brzozowa Street, i.e., to the Warsaw University “professors’ house” at 10 Brzozowa Street, where Prof. Batowski lived with his family.

<sup>32</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>33</sup> See n. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>35</sup> No. 36 – one of the three townhouses in Old Town Market Square owned by the Museum of Old Warsaw.

<sup>36</sup> Brave Dee – probably a reference to British air crews flying supplies for the Uprising.

<sup>37</sup> See n. 29.

<sup>38</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>39</sup> From 8 August, Karol Kurpiński’s melody for the *Varsoviennne*, a song written by Jean-François Casimir Delavigne in support of the 1831 November Uprising, was the “jingle” of the Home Army’s “Błyskawica” radio station.

**25 August 44**

2{ At the County Office in the morning – “Szary.”<sup>40</sup> Certificate for four persons. Conservators.<sup>41</sup> [This fragment marked by a bracket on the left side with the number 2].

1{ All night, and from 2 a.m. especially, frontline artillery. As a result, rumours, gossip, hopes. [This fragment marked by a bracket on the left side with the number 1 – probably indicating reversed sequence]. At noon, an air raid, artillery etc. as usual. Serious situation at Rybaki Street.<sup>42</sup> Messengers back at noon with news about St Mary’s Church, Franciscan Church, St Kazimierz Church. Tomorrow we are supposed to get down to work. A hot evening on the Vistula. Germans at 4–6 Piwna Street. Things getting more and more hopeless. [end of page]

**26 August 44**

At 6 I was at the Dominican Church at Freta Street. Then at St Kazimierz at New Town. Freta Street, New Town Market Square. We removed a painting – *Manna in the Desert*.<sup>43</sup> Technical difficulties removing and rolling it up. Mother Superior may be right. It’s hard to store such a great canvas, not even possible to secure it, and a conservation procedure can only harm it. Place the stretcher by the wall, remove the smaller paintings. Artillery shelling from 2 o’clock. An expedition to the near-front area (Świętojańska Street – Kanonia Street) is back. Report<sup>44</sup> from the Cathedral and the Jesuit Church. Ewa,<sup>45</sup> Leszek,<sup>46</sup> Krystyna.<sup>47</sup> [end of page]

**27 August**

Rybaki Street vacated. Air raids – shelling – fires. In the evening, a huge fire in the Market Square. A grisly “Christmas tree” through a visor at the Baryczka House. We took down a part of the library and the remaining paintings and engravings. [end of page]

**28 August**

A dream. Air raids. The Baryczka House on fire. Extinguished. Moving the library. Leszek, his wife,<sup>48</sup> Ewa. A grenade at Nowomiejska Street. Ewa and the Świderskis heavily wounded. Ewa

<sup>40</sup> “Szary” – probably Tadeusz Kruszewski, signed on behalf of the County Executive (see fig. 3).

<sup>41</sup> Conservators – a reference to the Museum conservation team; term also present in the 1943 Christmas card (see fig. 2).

<sup>42</sup> A reinforced Home Army outpost at Mostowa Street, from Rybaki Street to Szara Street, guarded the access to Old Town; it fell on 27 August.

<sup>43</sup> *Manna in the Desert* – actually *Israelites Collecting Manna*, a canvas painting in the presbytery of St Kazimierz Church. All of the church’s canvas and wall paintings were destroyed during the Uprising.

<sup>44</sup> Probably a report in his capacity as the man in charge of heritage protection.

<sup>45</sup> Ewa Faryaszewska was a student in Prof. Kowarski’s class at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw; together with Leszek Świdorski and his wife, Kazimiera, she helped Miechowski in the tasks assigned to him.

<sup>46</sup> Leszek Świdorski.

<sup>47</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>48</sup> Leszek Świdorski’s wife, Kazimiera, was executed by the Germans following the capture of Old Town on 2 September.



at the bandaging room. Leszek dead. I am to bury him tomorrow with Krystyna. [underneath the entry, in the middle of the page, a sign of the cross]. [end of page]

### 29 August

Leszek and Ewa buried at the foot of the defence wall. I'm exhausted. The Professor<sup>49</sup> in bad shape. Air raids. News from Śródmieście. Captain Konrad.<sup>50</sup> Lack of water.

### 30 August

A light breeze since the evening. The morning relatively quiet. Putting the cross on the grave. Escorting the Professor and his wife to Brzozowa Street. A relatively quiet until noon. Rumours (City Command – Saski Garden etc.).<sup>51</sup> Night. "Polonaise macabre."

### 31 August

Back. (The shelter looted). Day. *Quid porro?*

### 1 September

Last moments in Old Town. Exiting through the sewers. Warecka Street, 15 Kopernika Street. Marconi.<sup>52</sup> [end of page]

### 2 September

Finding each other. 46 Tamka Street, 4 Ordynacka Street (at the sisters').<sup>53</sup> Walking around Warsaw. Koszykowa Street, 50 Marszałkowska Street, 42 Krucza Street. 11a Okólnik Street. (The Ciołeks<sup>54</sup>). The Krasiński Library. Aleksandra Square and the church shelled.

### 3 September

I am to report to Mr. Borodzicz.<sup>55</sup> Fires in the vicinity of Napoleona Square. Shelling – the "Adria"<sup>56</sup> burnt down. The evening at 6 Radna Street (Jagódka).

<sup>49</sup> The Professor – Zygmunt Batowski. The entry suggests that he was losing strength already a few days before the forced evacuation of the Old Town.

<sup>50</sup> Captain "Konrad" – Juliusz Szawdyn (1908–87), reserve captain before 1939, Home Army officer, during the Uprising a deputy commander of the Home Army's "Śródmieście" District, commander of "Konrad" Group, which fought in Powiśle, then in "Róg" Group in Śródmieście.

<sup>51</sup> The rumours may have been about the Home Army's High Command and the Government Delegation for Poland leaving their headquarters in Old Town on the night of 26/27 August.

<sup>52</sup> Bohdan Marconi (1894–1975) was a painting conservator, long-time National Museum staffer, witness to the looting and destruction of Museum facilities.

<sup>53</sup> The Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent De Paul (the "Grey Sisters") ran a convent at Tamka Street.

<sup>54</sup> Dr (then Prof.) Gerard Ciołek (1909–66), an art historian and architect, an outstanding researcher of landscape architecture, and his wife, Regina, née Najder.

<sup>55</sup> "Borodzicz" was an alias of Aleksander Gieysztor (1916–99) historian, Home Army member, during the Uprising head of the Information Department of the Home Army's Information and Propaganda Bureau; director of the Royal Castle in Warsaw, 1970–99.

<sup>56</sup> The Adria was a trendy and elegant restaurant at 8 Moniuszki Street, designated "for Germans only" during the occupation. It was ruined on 18 August; Miechowski records here the date when it was consumed by flames.

#### 4 September

Old Town from the sixth floor. An air raid on the power plant and Powiśle area. Szpitalna Street and thereabouts shelled. At Siudecki's.<sup>57</sup> Waiting for Aleksander.<sup>58</sup> (2 o'clock). IDs, quarters at the WSOP. In the evening, we start securing the collections of the former Przeździecki Library. (3/5 Szczygła Street). The Archive. Paintings tomorrow. Shelter at Pierackiego Street.<sup>59</sup>

#### 5 September

At Szczygła Street in the morning. The Krasieński Library shelled. A fire. Saving. Serious situation. High alert. Leaving Powiśle. [end of page]

#### 6 September

Leaving Okólnik Street at ca. 6 a.m. Borodnicz. Walking the route Pierackiego Street – Aleje [Jerozolimskie] – 42 Krucza Street. 50 Marszałkowska Street. My dream. Danuta<sup>60</sup> and Sławek are dead. Mrs. Krzeszewska.<sup>61</sup>

#### 7 September

At the ZAP<sup>62</sup> around 11, then at the Professor's.<sup>63</sup> A party from Okólnik Street. News and cues. Dinner. Mrs. Barbara Tyszkiewiczowa.<sup>64</sup> Moving the Department's<sup>65</sup> collections to the cellar. A lull in the afternoon (no air raids). "Wonderful" and less wonderful news. Returning to 50 Marszałkowska Street for the night. Kulesza's<sup>66</sup> proclamation. Red Cross negotiations reportedly under way. Reportedly.

#### 8 September 44

An ominous silence hanging in the air since yesterday afternoon. Airplanes approaching now. 42 Krucza Street. Mokotowska Street at Mrs. Cywińska's.<sup>67</sup> Maria<sup>68</sup> and her parents leaving.

<sup>57</sup> Jan Siudecki (1921–86) fought in the 102 Engineer Company during the Uprising. Alternatively, the mention may be of a man of the same name, owner of a garage around Lwowska Street, who is distantly remembered by Katarzyna Zachwatowicz-Jasińska.

<sup>58</sup> Perhaps Aleksander Gieysztor.

<sup>59</sup> Pierackiego Street – today Foksal Street (renamed several times after 1945 as the political situation changed).

<sup>60</sup> Perhaps Danuta Krzeszewska (1919–44), a nurse.

<sup>61</sup> Perhaps Florentyna Józefa, Danuta's mother.

<sup>62</sup> Department of Polish Architecture (Zakład Architektury Polskiej, ZAP) of the Polish University of Technology's Faculty of Architecture, founded in 1929 by Prof. Oskar Sosnowski (1880–1939).

<sup>63</sup> Professor – Jan Zachwatowicz (1900–83), architect, head of the Department of Polish Architecture during the occupation.

<sup>64</sup> Wife of Count Krzysztof Tyszkiewicz, who, evacuated after the Uprising, didn't return to Poland. During the war, she lived with her children, Beata and Krzysztof, in Wilanów; she also spent time at her Warsaw apartment at 4 Krzywe Koło Street, where she happened to be when the Uprising broke out.

<sup>65</sup> See n. 62.

<sup>66</sup> Perhaps Erazm Kulesza, editor of the Polish Socialist Party's clandestine news bulletin, the *Warszawianka*.

<sup>67</sup> Perhaps Irena Cywińska (1902–74), a dentist, nurse during the Uprising, promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the Home Army's medical corps as of 1 October 1944, recipient of the Silver Cross of Merit with Swords.

<sup>68</sup> Probably Maria Kociatkiewiczówna-Twarowska – an art historian, assistant to Prof. Zygmunt Batowski and, after the war, to Stanisław Lorentz.

At the aunts'<sup>69</sup> at Koszykowa Street. Working at the Department in the afternoon. Back at 50 Marszałkowska Street for the night. In the evening, flak fire [illegible] and during the night reportedly air combat over Praga.

#### 9 September 44

At the Department. Moving the library. The same in the afternoon. Spending the night at the aunts' at Koszykowa Street. Artillery on the Praga side can be heard clearly during the night.<sup>70</sup>

#### 10 September 44

Moving family to the cellar. A few air raids in the morning. Working at the Department from noon. Wiktor.<sup>71</sup>

Strange things happening in the sky. Different airplanes chasing each other away amid the clouds. Experts seeking to discern shapes and sounds. Sitting at the Department, strangely calm. The engine whirr in the sky not abating. Around 3 o'clock. A lull. Appropriately rich rumours. (Saski Garden, City Command, patrols also at Siekierki etc.). At night [illegible] and air combat. [end of page]

#### 11 September 44

Bombs dropped on Czerniaków and Powiśle in the morning. YMCA, the Pniewski Villa<sup>72</sup> at Frascati Street. Artillery. With a group at 19 Śniadeckich Street. Re: paintings. 51/53 Mokotowska Street. Meeting Marysia and Mysia.<sup>73</sup> Dzik's<sup>74</sup> quarters. (10 Wspólna Street). A dud. Situation in Aleje [Jerozolimskie].

On my way back I call on Koszykowa Street and then on the Zachwatowicz's. Night spent at 50 Marszałkowska Street. The night reportedly very unquiet. Fighting. Tank fire. Same in the morning. And still no help.

#### 12 September

"Wawer" radio message.<sup>75</sup> Air combat. [end of page]

<sup>69</sup> Aunts – Zofia and Helena Miechowski, sisters of Miechowski's father.

<sup>70</sup> On 10 September, the Red Army launched an offensive to capture Praga, the central part of right-bank Warsaw. On the same day, the Soviet fighter aircraft started battling German airplanes for control of airspace over the city.

<sup>71</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>72</sup> Pniewski Villa – originally designed by Szymon Bogumił Zug in the late 18<sup>th</sup> c. as a garden building for Prince Kazimierz Poniatowski, in the 1930s rebuilt by architect Bohdan Pniewski for his home and studio. The building saw intense fighting during the Uprising. Pniewski moved back in after the war and lived at the villa until his death in 1965, when it was acquired by the Polish Academy of Sciences for the Museum of the Earth, which it houses to this day.

<sup>73</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>74</sup> "Dzik" – Captain Tadeusz Okolski (1902–83), commander of the WSOP "Dzik" Battalion.

<sup>75</sup> The "Wawer" radio station communicated with underground groups lacking specialist equipment by using prearranged code words in public broadcasts.

### 13 September

“Coffers”<sup>76</sup> in the morning. Violent cannonade about 9 o’clock. Air and ground. A meeting at the Professor’s – objects and people (two lists). Visiting Stefan at 33 Wspólna Street. “Iskra,”<sup>77</sup> then Dzik’s quarters. The news of the Poniatowski Bridge having been blown up confirmed. Returning to Lwowska Street. Meeting Krystyna from Old Town on my way. At Dr. Grudzińska’s.<sup>78</sup> Magnificent artillery play in the afternoon. Bombs falling on Marszałkowska Street, Śniadeckich Street, and Krucza Street. Back to Marszałkowska Street. Stefan. The appeal from Lublin.<sup>79</sup> The night likely to be nervous.

### 14 September

It was quiet after all. Only some activity from our air force. Air drops? In the morning, bombs alternating with air combat. Specifying the remainder of the list until noon. Visiting the aunts. At the Professor’s around 4. Air raids. And again air fighting, cannonade, and it’s really enough. Waiting for facts that don’t materialize. Gossip, rumours, news. The days getting longer. [end of page]

The heaviest fighting in Czerniaków. 58 Koszykowa Street, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Mrs. Jasińska<sup>80</sup> → for Wł. Żywicki.<sup>81</sup>

Jaworzyńska.

### 15 September

During the night, sounds of fierce fighting. In the morning, news that the whole of Praga has been captured. A special supplement. Waiting for the Professor at Marszałkowska Street at 1 o’clock. Air combat. Bombardment. Around 1 o’clock I go to 42 Krucza Street and 10 Wspólna Street. (They were hit by a bomb in the morning). Wspólna Street, Hoża Street between Krucza Street and the square [ruined] like Old Town. Air raids, airplanes passing overhead. At the Professor’s around 4 o’clock. A sudden air raid. Bombs on the Department of Architecture and the house opposite as well as on 48 Piusa<sup>82</sup> Street.

### 16 September

Strong cannonade throughout the night. In the morning, distinct shelling of a nearby area (reportedly Trzech Krzyży Square and thereabouts). An expedition to the Archite- [end of page] cture building to fetch water. Met Stefan. Morning rumours (Kierbedź Bridge captured, Bolsheviks on this side of the river etc.). In the morning we were supposed to secure items at the American Embassy, but it didn’t happen. We go to Koszykowa Street and, with the rest of the

<sup>76</sup> Perhaps a reference to the moving of museum items.

<sup>77</sup> Probably Zofia Gordon, alias “Iskra” (b. 1927), a nurse at a field hospital at 55 Mokotowska Street. Compare the entry from 17 September.

<sup>78</sup> Anna Grudzińska, doctor and nurse.

<sup>79</sup> On 13 August, the Lublin-based Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) issued a proclamation *To the Fighting Warsaw*, which said, among other things: “The moment of liberation is near. Your torments and suffering are coming to an end [...]. The Tadeusz Kościuszko 1<sup>st</sup> Division has broken into Praga [...]. Keep fighting!”.

<sup>80</sup> Perhaps the wife of the house janitor at 58 Koszykowa Street.

<sup>81</sup> Perhaps the prominent lawyer Władysław Żywicki.

<sup>82</sup> Today Piękna Street.

party, carry the remaining plates and photographs from the Foto-Plata studio at Wilcza Street over to the Professor's. Around 2 o'clock, I return with Dr. Szablowski<sup>83</sup> to Marszałkowska Street. Dinner. "Norwid."<sup>84</sup> In the afternoon, our area comes under heavy artillery fire. We go down to the shelter. [by the left edge of the page, a schematic plan of the shelter with an exit out to Marszałkowska Street].

Explosion, noise. The cellar caves in. Starting to dig up a collapsed corridor. A mother with child. Prof. Lutostański's wife.<sup>85</sup> Blocked. A fire! Saving the building (the attic, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> floors). A rescue team (great boys). The volunteer brigade of a less sympathetic sort. Looting.

### 17 September

Around 3 a.m., the situation is under control. We go to sleep around 4. Wake up around 7. The apartments heavily damaged. Dr. Szablowski's room basically [end of page] intact. Making some order. Again heavy shelling nearby. Panic. "Must run." Wounded woman. We put her on a stretcher, me and Dr. Szablowski, and carry her to [a field hospital] at 55 Mokotowska Street. (Mr. Massalski and Basia<sup>86</sup>). There we part ways. I go to Mrs. Cywińska. Lala is sick. Then to Stefan's ↗ (he's not there). ⊕ "Iskra" from [illegible]. ⊗ Views of the streets between Krucza Street and Trzech Krzyży Square. 10 Wspólna Street. Lt. Tranzyt<sup>87</sup> heavily wounded, in hospital. Making a wide detour, I reach the Zachwatowicz. Koszykowa Street. 44 Koszykowa Street. "Cows"<sup>88</sup> after dinner. A fire at Poznańska Street, staying in the shelter. The Professor is back. No news. At the aunts'. Back to Marszałkowska Street through Śniadeckich Street. [end of page]

Evening. In the cellar until midnight. Then we lie down on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Despite rumours of a "promised general offensive," a cannonade throughout the night. Ours reportedly Szucha Avenue.

### 18 September, Monday

An expedition to the Architecture building to fetch water. Marszałkowska Street and Koszykowa Street heavily damaged. Things quiet in the air. On the ground, a shootout. An "expedition" to 58 Koszykowa Street with Mrs. Jasińska. I shed my black skin. About 2 o'clock, an emotional moment – a parachute cargo airdrop.<sup>89</sup> Enthusiasm and disappointment. We're irritated as poor calculations cause the wind to carry much of the payload into German hands or over the Vistula. News of a Soviet bridgehead in Siekierki reportedly confirmed. No Stukas.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Jerzy Szablowski (1906–89) was a Krakow-born art historian and museologist who in 1935 moved to Warsaw to take over as curator of the Łazienki Królewskie park-and-palace complex. He was with Miechowski when the latter was fatally wounded; himself with a hand wound, he remained at hospital.

<sup>84</sup> Probably Captain Adam Bandurski, alias "Norwid" (1919–2017), member of the Home Army's "Baszta" Regiment, recipient of the Virtuti Militari, the Warsaw Uprising Cross, and other decorations.

<sup>85</sup> Karol Lutostański (1880–1939), a lawyer and attorney-at-law, professor of Warsaw University, member of the Warsaw Scientific Society.

<sup>86</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>87</sup> Lt. Andrzej Plachciński, alias "Tranzyt," an information officer of the Home Army's 3<sup>rd</sup> District "Wola."

<sup>88</sup> "Cows" – see n. 29.

<sup>89</sup> On 18 September, US Air Force carried out the single largest airdrop as part of the "Warsaw airlift."

<sup>90</sup> Stuka was the popular name of the German Junkers Ju 87 dive bomber.

Just artillery rattle. In the afternoon, I go through deserted streets, down Śniadeckich Street, back to Marszałkowska Street. The night very unquiet. In the shattered house. A grave at the edge of a “Berta”<sup>91</sup> shell crater. A new life at the Regulskis’. On my own.

### 19 September

For water as usual to the Architecture building. Starting to tidy up and renovate the apartment. Three houses. Prof. Lutostański’s wife. The maid and water. Soviet air raids between 2 and 6 p.m. News about Rozbrat Street, 48 hours etc. View from the balcony at 50 Marszałkowska Street. Ruins, smoke, dust. Fires. Guessing the directions: Szucha Avenue, the Telecommunications Office, the Train Station. The evening relatively quiet. Single shots nearby. The night quiet.

### 20 September

4–6 o’clock, on duty by the gate. Making a trip for water. Tanks firing somewhere. The fire at the corner of Marszałkowska Street and Nowogrodzka Street continues. The same somewhere in Ujazdowskie Avenue at the exit of Koszykowa Street (Szucha Avenue?). [end of page]

Around 8 o’clock, violent shelling. Shells zipping past, flak guns rattling. The press. Going out to Mokotowska Street, Mr. Honowski.<sup>92</sup> At the Garczyńskis’<sup>93</sup> nobody’s home. Borodnicz. A birthday party at the Zachwatowicz’s.<sup>94</sup> At the aunts’. Koszykowa Street. Violent artillery shelling in the evening. The question – whose fire is it? What’s this airplane? We go down to the “shelter” for an hour to invariably return upstairs.

### 21 September

An unsuccessful expedition to fetch water. At the Honowskis’. 3 Krucza Street. Back with a massive headache. Sleeping till evening. Fires burning on the barricades. Gunfire around. A mysterious airplane regularly flying over town. During the day, things were rather quiet in the air. Only before noon did Soviet airplanes fly over at a very low altitude. [end of page]

### 22 September

Meeting Comdt “Dzik,” Basia, and Leliwa<sup>95</sup> at Krucza Street. Their quarters (16 Wilcza Street). At the Zachwatowicz’s in the afternoon. Generally quiet. *In publicis* “the military authorities exposed” – Gen. Komorowski,<sup>96</sup> Chruściel,<sup>97</sup> Wachnowski.<sup>98</sup> A lull in the air. Rumours of

<sup>91</sup> “Big Bertha” was the nickname a Krupp-made German 420mm siege howitzer used in the First World War. The actual super-heavy howitzer used by the German during the Warsaw Uprising was the 35.5 cm Haubitze M1.

<sup>92</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>93</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>94</sup> Living in the Zachwatowicz’s apartment during the Uprising was the Professor’s brother, Eugeniusz Zachwatowicz, with his wife, Ludmiła, née Mechłów; on 20 September she gave birth to a son, Wojciech.

<sup>95</sup> Henryk Leliwa-Roycewicz (1898–1990), a mayor in the Polish Army; during the Uprising, commander of “Kiliński” Battalion.

<sup>96</sup> Tadeusz Komorowski, alias “Bór” (1895–1966), the Home Army’s commander from July 1943.

<sup>97</sup> Antoni Chruściel (1895–1960), a brigadier general in the Polish Army; during the occupation, commander of the ZWZ Warsaw District; from 20 September 1944, commander of the Home Army’s Warsaw Corps.

<sup>98</sup> “Wachnowski” was the alias of Lieutenant Colonel Karol Ziemski, from 22 August commander of the Home Army’s “North” Group.

bridgeheads on our side of the river. Artillery shelling. News about Old Town. It's probably going to get protracted again. During the night, heavy artillery fire reportedly overhead.

### 23 September

A cloudy morning. A drizzle begins. The thought of rain makes one concerned enough. We spend the forenoon doing small home repairs. The water expedition went relatively smoothly today. [end of page]

[end of Zygmunt Miechowski's diary]

[further entries in pencil, in different handwriting]

### 24 September

Heavily wounded when fetching water. [Z.M.]

12 Lwowska Street, Dr. Szablowski wounded in the hand. [end of page]

### 25 September, 9 p.m.

Died at "Sano" Hospital.<sup>99</sup> 13 Lwowska Street. [Z.M.]

### 26 September, 6.30 p.m.

Buried in the courtyard of the Faculty of Architecture at 12 Lwowska Street in the presence of Father Dobrzeniecki,<sup>100</sup> Prof. J. Zachwatowicz,<sup>101</sup> and a group of friends from Okólnik Street and Lwowska Street.

\*

16 Wilcza Street apt. # 21, Dr. Wł. Rogowski,<sup>102</sup> former inspector, professor.

Library – biology [illegible] for life. Wspólna Street, building a barricade – boxes of Sèvres and Meissen porcelain. [end of page]

St. Gałęzowski,<sup>103</sup> 16B Piusa Street, apt. # 12. [schematic street plan] [end of page]

50 Marszałkowska Street apt. # 4 ([illegible]), 7 Emilii Plater Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Mrs. Twarowska.<sup>104</sup> (Paszkowicz) Śniadeckich Street, 11 6 Sierpnia Street apt. # 16, Borodzicz.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>99</sup> "Sano" Hospital was located in the basement of the building at 13 Lwowska Street; it could be reached by an underground passage from Koszykowa Street.

<sup>100</sup> Tadeusz Dobrzeniecki (1914–99) was a vicar in Warsaw during the occupation. A National Museum staff member from 1945, he and Prof. Michał Walicki oversaw the reception, securing, and conservation of museum items reclaimed from German areas. Following Walicki's arrest (on charges related to his participation in the Home Army), he took over as head of the Museum's Department of Medieval Art, in which capacity he made outstanding contributions as exhibition curator and author.

<sup>101</sup> Jan Zachwatowicz fashioned a coffin for Miechowski out of an oak wardrobe.

<sup>102</sup> Probably Prof. Władysław Rogowski (1886–1945), former school inspector, member of the resistance movement.

<sup>103</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>104</sup> Probably Maria Kociatkiewiczówna-Twarowska – see n. 68.

<sup>105</sup> See n. 55.



[in different handwriting]

Mrs. Jelnicka.<sup>106</sup> 69 Wilcza Street. Mr[s]. Tranzyt. 3 Krucza Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Precinct Command [?], Waliców Street. [end of page]

Andruszkiewicz.<sup>107</sup> [...]

33 Wspólna Street.

Marcin around 11-13 o'clock. [end of page] [...]<sup>108</sup>

17 Pierackiego Street, Café Bodo,<sup>109</sup> Marsz[ałkowska Street], 59 Koszyk[owa Street], Wiaz [?] 10 Wspólna Street. Dr. Grudzińska, 11 Wilcza Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor [illegible]. [end of page]

Janina Koperowa, messenger at Main HQ, from the Tax Office, brother in the military, from Strzelecka Street, 4 Ord[ynacka Street], "frog," 6 Radna Street apt. # 6, [illegible], 53/54 Dobra Street [illegible] [schematic drawing of a street, house (?); an arrow from "Cicha Street" to the word "Dobra"], 11 Okólnik Street apt. #28, Mr[s]. Jelen. [end of page]

Gomulicki<sup>110</sup> [illegible symbol] 62 Falk [?]. Passes on the other side 60 Mokot[owska Street]. [end of page]

[notes on reverse of cover]

Prof. Zachwatowicz | 58 Koszykowska Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor | Mrs. Rząśnicka<sup>111</sup> | 50 Marszałkowska Street apt. # 4 | Mother's apartment:<sup>112</sup> Zawichost | on the Vistula | Sandomierz County. [end of page]

[notes on reverse of back cover – still another handwriting]

habeant sua fata consules<sup>113</sup> | Bridge count | Balance as of 13 February 1934 – 7,834.40 zlotys.

Edited by Alina Kowalczykowa and Anna Szczepańska

Translated by Marcin Wawrzyńczak

<sup>106</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>107</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>108</sup> Further entries on this page (and three consecutive ones) have been left out due to their lack of connection with the overall contents (numbers, calculations, crossed-out words).

<sup>109</sup> Café Bodo, opened in March 1939 by actor Eugeniusz Bodo, at 17 Pierackiego Street (today 17 Foksal Street).

<sup>110</sup> Perhaps Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki (1909–2006), editor, essayist, historian of Warsaw; member of the Home Army and participant in the Warsaw Uprising.

<sup>111</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>112</sup> Zygmunt Miechowski's mother lived in Zawichost.

<sup>113</sup> Perhaps a paraphrase of the Latin expression *Habent sua fata libelli*, 'Books have their own destinies.'