

Nowinski, Waclaw

Alexander Bronowski, a Jew who passed in Warsaw as a Christian, was arrested on April 9, 1943 by the German police, who intended to turn him over to the Gestapo. All of his efforts to persuade them that they had made a mistake were in vain. The extraordinary manner in which events subsequently unfolded were related by Bronowski himself:

“Due to the late hour, I was led to the national Commissariat of the police. In the protocol, they registered that I had been arrested in order to hand me over to the Gestapo, since I was a Jew. They took my suit, my coat, and all of my belongings, including my cigarettes. I was later locked in a solitary police cell, and a guard was placed by the door. The agents informed the officer on duty that I was to be taken to the Gestapo the following morning at 7 a.m.

I began to converse with the man guarding me, and during the conversation, I learned that the on duty sergeant had been replaced by another. I asked the guard to get me permission to keep a few of the cigarettes from the pack that had been taken from me. He fulfilled my request. I turned to the guard and asked him to permit me to speak with the new on duty sergeant, and to allow me to leave the cold cell and go into the hall to warm up. He returned after a moment and took me from the cell into the hall, where the new sergeant, Waclaw Nowinski, was sitting, along with a number of other policemen. I began to speak with Nowinski, and our conversation continued unabated until 2:00 a.m. He then informed me that “I must save you! I will end my duty and go to the supervisor.” He returned at 6:00 a.m. and informed me that my problem had been solved, and that agents would be arriving in an hour, and I was to give them a sum of 5,000 zloty. Waclaw Nowinski gave me the money, and declared that I need not return it to him. At 7:00 am two German security service agents appeared and declared that a mistake had indeed occurred and that I was Aryan. I was led outside, where I acted in accordance with Nowinski’s instructions, and gave them the money. The following day I returned to the jail, appeared before Nowinski and attempted to return the money to him, along with 2,000 additional zloty for his efforts. He became very angry at my suggestion, and it was only with great difficulty that I was able to

persuade him to accept the 5,000 zloty, hoping that the money might serve to save another Jew. From this point on, a friendship developed between me and Nowinski, who continued to take care of me. At any moment I could obtain help and assistance from him. He did his best to keep me informed of impending searches, and helped me find places to hide. I know that he hid many other Jewish families, thus risking himself and his family. He did this all without receiving any payment or reward.”