



ANIELA BLINSTRUB

On 16 January 1946 in Radom, Judge Kazimierz Borys of the II District of the Regional Court in Radom with its seat in Radom interviewed the person mentioned hereunder as a witness, without taking an oath. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Aniela Blinstrub
Age	52 years old
Parents' names	Jan and Marianna
Place of residence	Zyła, commune of Wielogóra
Profession	teacher
Religion	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none
Relationship to the parties	none

Throughout the German occupation I lived in my house located opposite the execution site in Firlej, just a few hundred meters from the sands where the killings took place. During this time I worked in the school in Firlej, which is located by the road used by the Germans to convey their victims. I was therefore able to observe what went on in the sands.

The first mass execution took place on 4 April 1940. At 5.00 a.m. that day, a detachment of soldiers arrived at the sands and started digging pits behind the hillock. At around 11.00 a.m. some of the soldiers left for Radom. Finally, at around 12.00 p.m., guard posts were set up near the houses and the highway. Taxi cabs and covered trucks plied the road between Radom and Firlej. A multitude of people continued to mill about the sands. Only at dusk did it quieten down. At the time, I didn't hear any shots, for I was observing events from the



school, which is located a considerable distance away. The next day I saw five enormous, yellowish graves in the sands and a great many pools of blood, as well as human bone and body fragments. My son, who observed the execution from our home, counted 144 victims.

From that time on, the shootings would be repeated once or more nearly every week. Initially, the Germans dug the pits themselves, either on the day preceding an execution or in the morning. Later, the pits were dug only after the killing had been carried out. The victims were usually accompanied by a detachment of 20 to 30 soldiers armed with rifles. The prisoners would be led out of the trucks in groups of 12 to 15. They had their hands tied behind their backs. The groups walked to pits would be smaller, while sometimes they would be arranged in a line. Each victim was accompanied by one or two Germans, who walked by his or her side. Before one of the executions I noticed that the blindfolds were put over the people's eyes at a distance of some 200 – 300 meters from the pits. I didn't see this happen again. Once the victims had been taken to the edge of the hole, the Germans would fire a rifle salvo, whereafter you could hear individual revolver shots.

As I have testified above, in later years the prisoners would first be dispatched with a revolver shot to the nape of the neck (immediately after exiting the truck), and only then would the holes be dug and their bodies buried. Traces of blood were visible in the sand after each such execution.

Later, however, this system too was modified. After arriving in Firlej with their cargo, the Germans would first dig the pits, then throw five or six people into each, and finally shoot them dead using sub-machine guns or revolvers (I know this because both types of shots could be heard). These executions left no traces of blood, only a freshly covered grave and a pile of cartridge cases.

In July 1940 I saw how the Germans led two women – each separately – in the direction of the hillock behind which the executions took place; they were followed by four or five groups of men, each numbering 10 to 12 prisoners. I observed all this from my house and heard the rifle salvos. After the execution, I noticed that three fresh graves had appeared in the sands. The Germans leveled these mounds, however they were still discernible, for the sand that covered them was more intensely yellow.

One day in October 1942 while I was walking to the school, I saw men from a construction detachment digging a hole. In the afternoon that day, at around 3.00 or 4.00 p.m., I saw



a truck drive up to the pit. Bodies were then removed from it and thrown into the hollow. I also noticed that someone who was standing in the pit was throwing out items of clothing. This incident took place during the time when people in Radom were being executed by hanging. I have no doubt that the corpses transported to Firlej for burial were those of the victims murdered in Radom.

One day in the winter of 1942/1943, a single truck with prisoners drove up. It stopped closer than usual, whereafter a few people were taken from it, led up to a hole that had been created by the excavation of sand, thrown into it and then shot. One of the victims halted just by the hollow. The German who was walking behind pushed and kicked him, and the man fell into the pit, where he was then shot. In the first half of October 1943, the Germans evicted all local residents whose houses were situated near the sands, and also put up warning signs forbidding entry to the evacuated area and screened some locations in the sands with mats, whereafter they commenced the burning of bodies. I don't know the technicalities of the method they used, however we could all see a column of fire and smoke from afar, and also smell the stench of burning human flesh. While preparing for the incinerations, the Germans brought in a large quantity of buildings materials – posts, bricks, sheet metal – to the sands. I don't know what these articles were for. After some time, the fire was moved to another location in the sands. When the incinerations were brought to a close, in the spring of 1944, but before we had been allowed to return, I noticed that a small building-like structure stood on the very spot where the fire once was. The object was fitted with feet, and one man even walked under it. I saw it from some distance, however, and am unable to give its exact dimensions or inform of its purpose.

I walked up to the spot in April 1944, after the incinerations had been finished. There were no traces left. The place itself had been carefully sifted and raked. A few weeks later, when the wind had blown away the sand covering the location where the bodies had been burned, we found a great number of buttons, buckles and beads, and even teeth, while here and there oily pools – petroleum maybe – sprung up.

The German trucks had forged a new track between the sands and the river that flowed by our house. This roadway had not been there before our eviction in October 1943. We became interested why the Germans had been driving up to the river bank. It soon became evident that they had used the track to remove ashes, which they then dumped into the



waterway. I am convinced of this, since near the bank you could find teeth and charred fragments of bone.

I didn't hear any shots during the incinerations, because we were living quite a distance away. But immediately upon returning home I started hearing them again, coming from the direction of the sands. Fresh graves appeared too. In the summer of 1944, further mass executions took place. The murdered victims were dispersed over a larger area. A German by the surname of Seklecht, who lived in Józefów, was an active participant in these final killings. Individual shootings were also carried out. Sometimes, the graves were very shallow, although the majority were deep. Bodies of people killed outside Firlej were also brought to the sands. This is what they did, for example, with the corpses of twenty Poles executed in Radom in the summer of 1944. Their bodies were exhumed in the spring of 1945 and reinterred in Radom.

The final execution took place on 13 January 1945.

The report was read out.