

WACŁAW KOSIŃSKI

On this day, 2 March 1949, in Radom, T. Badowski, the Assistant Public Prosecutor of the Prosecutor's Office of the District Court in Radom, with the participation of reporter N. Rentflejsz, based on Article 20 of the provisions introducing the Code of Criminal Procedure, interviewed the person named below as an unsworn witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Father Wacław Kosiński, PhD
Age	66
Parents' names	Józef and Janina
Place of residence	Radom, 10 Grodzka Street
Occupation	Parish Priest of St. John in Radom
Criminal record	none
Relationship to the parties	none

I live at 10 Grodzka Street, but the front of the house where I live faces Wałowa Street. After the opening of the Jewish ghetto in 1941, German authorities left me in my current apartment, but they put up a fence, extending from the Church to the presbytery, in such a way that only a passage for me remained. Grodzka Street was actually cut by a tunnel, about four meters wide, that was created by the fence. At the same time, the German authorities took the parish hall, located on the Church cemetery premises, to use as the *Arbeitsamt* (Jewish division). The famous Janik, with his staff, had his office there.

I do not remember the exact dates – but it was before the deportations of the Jews – that I saw on two occasions, about two weeks apart, a car loaded with the corpses of about 30 adult males. These were the corpses of murdered Jews suspected of having sympathy with

the Bolsheviks and communism. The reason for these murders was the discovery of a court case in the judicial archives – I think it was the case of Silberstein of Szydłowiec who was tried for communism. Upon receiving those files, the Germans went from house to house, looking for those with the name of Silberstein, and those they encountered they shot dead on the spot, without any court proceedings or any explanation, regardless of age and gender. I do not know what troops committed these murders; I only heard the shots and cries, but not the shooting [itself]. I learned from the stories told by my tenant, the Jew Rosenbaum, about the reasons for this incident.

In late July or early August 1942, an officer of the Radom Gestapo came to me – as far as I remember he was the assistant or Deputy of Fuchs – who told me to show him the whole presbytery, from the attic and cellars to the outbuildings. He wanted to check whether there were any connections with the ghetto. He also told me that I could stay here, but that no Jew could hide here. And if a Jew were hiding at my place, I could be sentenced to death. I remember that even earlier, on 28 September 1941 (which is on my name day), I had several priests come to visit me, and that time a few armed Gestapo turned up to conduct a search for some Jews. In the night, when the deportations of Jews [from the ghetto] in the borough of Glinice took place on Perec Street, I was able to hear the shots but I did not see the deportations.

However, I observed the process of the so-called huge deportations [of the Jews from the ghetto] at Wałowa and the adjacent streets.

A day before the deportations, electricians came to install headlamps in the ghetto, and in the evening, you could see a lot of police there – I think they were *Schupo*. Between 10:00 AM and 11:00 AM, large groups of the gendarmerie, Gestapo, and the SS entered the territory of the ghetto. I heard then the shouts, the crying, the pleas, and the characteristic "Raus!" telling Jews to leave the apartment. The Jews were put in rows – [among them] I saw the elderly, children, and people in their primes of life – then they carried out the selection. All displacements took place accompanied by shouts, beatings, cries, and shots. That night I heard several thousand single shots, as well as shots from machine guns. What happened in the ghetto is difficult to describe and recreate: these were hair-raising scenes. The deportations lasted the whole night, but the next day I saw columns of Jews herded by German troops.

After all the Jews were displaced, the police – I think *Schupo* – began to loot the Jewish property. The carts and cars arrived in the ghetto [which] took away property from Jewish apartments and broken stores. It lasted more than a week.

After the full liquidation of the ghetto and the relocation of the Polish population in its territory, the parish hall was taken over by the Germans as a place to gather Poles captured in various round-ups who were intended for deportation to the Reich. *Schupo* worked there all the time and made decisions regarding deportation or release. I want to say that *Schupo* had worked in the German *Arbeitsamt* before the Jewish deportations. The most important person there was a gendarme – I think he was a volksdeutsch originally from Brelich [?] – who particularly harassed people intended for deportation to Germany; even officials of the *Arbeitsamt* were afraid of him.

In the parish hall, where people who were destined for work in the Reich stayed, terrible sanitary and impossible to bear conditions prevailed. Men and women were crammed together; there was no sink, no toilet, but in the end the Germans put in one toilet to share between men and women. Among the crowded people diseases such as influenza and typhus spread. These people were guarded by gendarmes with specially trained dogs. There was an incident when a dog badly bit a woman. This woman died, but I do not know whether it was because of the dog bite or heart disease.

At the distribution point, the captured people stayed for approximately a week. They received food from the Polish Red Cross and Central Welfare Council. I don't remember whether Germans ever gave those people something to eat. Apart from this distribution point, there were two others in the synagogue and in the former museum building at Grodzka Street. The conditions were [all] the same. From the points of distribution, people were taken away in cars, under the escort of gendarmes, to the railway station. I know of a case when a priest was also taken away. They promised him he would become a chaplain for the people deported to work, but he was sent back from Berlin. Round-ups and deportations to Germany continued throughout the duration of the German occupation till their escape.

I can recollect that during 1942–1944, public executions – three by hanging and two by firing squad – took place in Radom. The corpses of the murdered were not buried in the cemetery. I can't remember if I got any notice to produce death certificates. I recall, however,

that I received several notices of death from the Director of the Police so that I could issue death certificates for these people. The cause of death was given only occasionally, most often as pneumonia.

The Catholic cemetery in Radom is under the care of the parish of St. John. In some cases, naked bodies were brought from the prison, or from Kościuszki Street, to the cemetery to be buried. They did not give the names of the people then.

At the time of the entry of the Germans, the persecution of the Church and harassment towards the clergy began.

In 1939, they prohibited the procession to the cemetery on All Saints Day. Also, that year, several priests were arrested, including Grerycz and Koźmicki [?]. They were detained in the basement and underwent various harassments, [such] as cleaning shoes, sweeping the streets, etc. They carried out the arrest of priests in Radom on several occasions.

The report was read out.