

## MICHAŁ SOCHA

On 17 July 1947 in Staszów, the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes of the District Court with its seat in Radom, Branch Office in Staszów, Judge Albin Walkiewicz, an attorney in Staszów, interviewed the person mentioned hereunder as an unsworn witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations and of the wording of Article 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the witness testified as follows:

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Name and surname	Michał Socha
Age	46 years old
Parents' names	Jan and Maria
Place of residence	Staszów, Rytwiańska Street 2
Occupation	merchant
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none

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Before the Jews were displaced from Staszów, the Germans murdered people from different villages and destroyed their houses, but I only heard about those things. I was a member of the fire department in Staszów. While the Jews were being displaced from Staszów, the fire department was instructed to guard Jewish property and then to remove corpses. Therefore, I was present during the displacement and I saw it happen. The displacement was carried out by the SD from Opatów and the gendarmerie from Staszów, helped by Ukrainians. I saw Germans trip up Jews and when they fell over, the Germans shot them in the head. The Jews who did not immediately leave their apartments were killed on spot. Shots were fired on the way, so the streets of the town and the road leading to Stopnica were covered in corpses, including dead children. In 1943, I saw Germans surround the town of Stopnica and organize

a manhunt – they killed four people at that time, many people were captured, mostly young, reportedly 80 girls, and we heard from many of those people when they were in the Auschwitz camp.

In 1943, the SD from Opatów came to Staszów and, together with the local gendarmerie, carried out arrests. Leutnant Rippert, Janczewski – I think he was a *Wachtmeister* – and gendarme Cichoń came to my house. I knew that they were the worst kind of people. At that time, eight people were arrested and taken to Opatów. On the third day, the same SD arrested our families, a total of 14 people, and sent them to Auschwitz. Seven of those people were murdered there.

After they had arrested me, Rippert, Janczewski and Cichoń came back to my apartment many times. Janczewski was constantly asking my son where his father-bandit was and he hit my son Tadeusz, who was 14 at that time, in the face. Janczewski stole all valuable items from my apartment, despite my nephew pointing out to him that the children were alone, that their parents had been arrested (my wife had been taken to Auschwitz), and that they had to survive somehow. Even Rippert told him to leave half of the things, but Janczewski would not listen – he took it all. Janczewski personally killed a resident of the Koniełoty village, a man called Mas, whom he met by accident when the man was going to his field. Starting from 1943, the murders committed by the Germans in Staszów were very frequent. I remember the names of the following people who were murdered: Stanisław Szeleś, Ćwikło, Nowak, Kozioł, the wife of major Dąbrowski – I heard she had been shot dead by Cichoń; I do not remember more names.

I do not remember anything else. The report was read out. People were frequently captured and sent away for labor – this usually happened at night.

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