



JÓZEF ZDRZALIK

On 10 January 1946 in Radom, the investigating judge from the 2nd Region of the District Court in Radom, Judge Kazimierz Borys, heard 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	Józef Zdrzalik
Age	35 years old
Parents' names	Stanisław and Katarzyna
Place of residence	Firlej, Wielogóra commune
Occupation	bricklayer
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none
Relationship to the parties	none

In January or February 1940, I saw the Germans bring some young man in a student's cap in a car from Radom to Firlej, whom they led to the sands and killed with two revolver shots. In the summer of 1940 – I don't remember the exact date – I saw German covered trucks going from Radom to Firlej and back for half a day. I watched from afar how people were led out of these trucks, marched to pits that had previously been prepared by the Germans and executed there, as I could hear bursts of gunfire. One truck could hold approximately 15 people, and there were some 30 trucks. The day after the execution I went to the site and found pieces of human body – a few fragments of skull with hair – on freshly disturbed soil.

It was said that the people murdered in this mass execution were from the commune of Chlewiska. I don't know whether this was really the case.

Such executions were carried out almost daily. We constantly saw the Germans digging pits in the sands and trucks going between Radom and Firlej. One day, I no longer remember the exact date, two Gestapo men brought a little boy, about 10–12 years old, to the Firlej sands; the boy was told to collect acacia flowers, and when he was thus occupied, one of the Gestapo men shot him. Then he pulled the boy by a leg or an arm, I don't remember exactly, to a freshly dug pit and buried him there. Next the Gestapo man flung the flowers collected by the boy at his grave.

In autumn of 1943, the Germans expelled the residents of Firlej and Wincentów who lived near the sands and also occupied the school in Firlej. They shielded the sands where the executions were carried out with straw mats, and then apparently proceeded to burn the dug-up corpses of the murdered people. We could see smoke curling over the sands and smell the whiff of burning bodies that were already decomposing. One night we could see flames over the sands. I don't know how the corpses were burned, whether in a crematorium erected specially for the purpose or on a pile. The burning continued throughout the winter and ended in the spring of 1944. The Germans burned both the corpses from Firlej and those brought from other locations. At the time we could see tightly sealed trucks going to Firlej, and then bodies would be taken out of them on stretchers.

The executions were still being conducted during the burning of the corpses. In June or July 1944, I was ordered by a German gendarme to bury the corpses of people who had been murdered in Firlej that day. The gendarmes told us to dig as deep as possible, so that a pit would be at least 1.2 meters deep. We buried the murdered in these pits, on average two bodies to one. One pit contained six [bodies]. The graves were scattered all over the sands. About 100 people might have been executed then. The majority of them were villagers in plain underwear.

From then on, I would run far away as soon as I noticed that an execution was to be carried out. I couldn't watch it. The executions were conducted until the last days of the Germans' stay in Radom.

According to my observation, the Germans murdered twelve or so thousand people in Firlej.

The bodies of the people executed after the spring of 1944 were not burned.

The report was read out.