

“Bloody Monday”

On Sunday, 3rd September 1939, at nine o'clock in the morning, the first German outriders arrived in the city. Bit by bit, whole motorised units arrived, which cast fear amongst the population.

Before noon, the German military had moved into the Craft School at ul. Garncarska 8/10. This fact caused a justified uneasiness, because the neighbourhood was inhabited exclusively by Jews and the school was not suitable for military installations. In the afternoon, the Germans rounded up 3,000 Poles in Zawodzie, a suburb of Częstochowa, and sent them away to Germany. Of that number, eighty never returned.

The following morning, the Germans ordered two [of their] soldiers to lie down in the schoolyard and, on those grounds, they spread “news” that Jews had shot two Germans. Under that pretext, they opened fire on the Jewish population and herded several thousand Jews into the schoolyard and led them away to the town prison. Once the jail was overflowing, they took detained Jews to the cathedral and, when the cathedral was also overflowing, they took out several hundred Jews and sent them away to Germany for propaganda purposes. They were paraded barefoot and naked across different cities and the Nazi authorities deluded the German population to the effect that these Jews had wished to seize Germany. Some of those, who were taken away, returned. They were unrecognisable. Totally, physically spent, they resembled old people even though they were still young.

On the second day - Monday, 4th September - they spread a fabrication that Poles were slaughtering Germans. That day, all established [local] inhabitants were considered Poles - and particularly those Jewish and Polish¹. With this excuse, the Germans ran about amongst the dwellings and drove the entire population out into the street, robbing all kinds of valuables from the houses. The Germans paid no heed to whether they were women, men, children, Christians, Jews, rabbis, priests or clergymen of other religions. Everyone was taken away to the New Market [*Nowy Rynek*]. The huge New Market square, where commerce had always been conducted, was now transformed into a place for a random spectacle.

Those, who had fled their homes on 1st and 2nd September, in order to avoid the forthcoming German peril, were arrested on the roads and highways. The detainees were Jews and Poles. They were herded into the Town Hall square, from where they were to be taken to the prison in Zawodzie. The several hundred people were led through the streets - I Aleja, II Aleja, Nowy Rynek [*New Market*], Orlicz-Dreszera and Katedralna - with their hands raised, by a few dozen uniformed Germans with loaded rifles.

On the corner of Katedralna and Narutowicza, someone yelled out in Polish, “*Niech żyje Polska!*” (Long live Poland!) - this was the cue for machine-gun fire. The Germans fired into the masses. Many dead and wounded fell, thus marking the beginning of Hitler’s bloody and tyrannical reign in Częstochowa.

¹ [TN: Excluding “*Volksdeutsche*”, or Polish citizens of ethnic German descent.]

The first victim was Naftuli Tenenbaum, the owner of a button factory at ul. Piłsudskiego 7. By chance, he was standing at the gate of ul. Narutowicza 19/23, at half past seven in the morning, in conversation with a Catholic clergyman (*galech*²). An ambulance drove by, from which the Germans shot him with a machine-gun, hitting him with three bullets - one in his left side and two in his left leg.

The second victim was Luzer Proport, who was known by the nickname "Po Pięć" (five each³), a seventy-year-old Jew, who was walking on the road towards Mstów - the Germans invented a story that he was shooting at German aeroplanes. He was shot and [then] buried at ul. Warszawska 93. Eight days later, he was exhumed and interred in the cemetery, next to the victim Kac.

The first victim in the large *Nowy Rynek* square was the Jew Kac, a carpenter by trade, fifty-odd years of age, who was the leader of the craftsmen's guild. He suffered a heart attack and died in just minutes.

The Germans ordered everyone to lie down on the ground [in the New Market square]. Whoever did not lie down would be immediately shot. After a few minutes, aeroplanes arrived, dropped down low over the people and shot them with machine-guns. That was the first mass-murder in Częstochowa. People could not believe that the tragic images, which their eyes were seeing, were a reality. The human mind could not comprehend that such bestiality could happen to unarmed, defenceless civilians.

After the shooting, the Germans gave the order to rise. Those, who were still alive, stood up and those, who had been shot to death, were left lying in puddles of blood. They received the impression that the world had become a bloodied slaughterhouse. The people, who were still alive, were once again taken to the cathedral on ul. Katedralna. German military were positioned all around. When the rounded-up people were still on the steps, the Germans opened fire on the people in the cathedral. Many victims then fell.

At the same time, similar tragic events took place, namely, at the municipal offices on the II Aleja and at the barracks of the 27th regiment on ul. Dąbrowskiego.

A couple of thousand people - Jews and Poles - were taken by the Germans to the municipal offices. Those, who did not run quickly, were beaten with rifle butts. First, the command came for the certified intellectuals and industrialists to come forth. Some of them were put into a separate group and taken away to the 27th infantry regiment. There, they were held as hostages. They were released a few weeks later and emerged physically ruined, sick and broken. This was the first prelude to the torments and pain to come. The others were forced to dig pits. After digging the pits, they were shot and buried in those same pits.

People were also taken to the barracks of the 27th regiment, where they were shot and buried. Others were tortured for several days with arduous labour and were given nothing to eat, after which they were set free.

² [TN: Heb., "to shave" or "shaven"; term used in Yiddish to denote a Christian minister or priest, in reference to the fact that while rabbis traditionally wear beards, most Christian clergymen are clean-shaven.]

³ [TN: According to *Sefer Częstochowa*, Vol. I, in the article "The Old Market in the Daytime", he was given this nickname because he went about wearing a wine merchant's apron and sold "a bite to eat" for five groszy.]

The bloody terror lasted three days. Amongst the numerous Jewish victims, at that time, was the son of the dean [*Rosh Yeshiva*] of the *yeshiva*, [Reb Lajzer] Jakubowicz.