

Chaim Birnholc

Men Killed for a Few Potatoes

In March 1943, among those in the transport to Bliżyn [Concentration Camp] were Helman, Feldman (Lemel), two Ofman brothers, two Perlman brothers, Silnicki, Wolfowicz, Wiewiorowski, Gliklich, Fajersztajn and Abramowicz.

A few months later, a group of tailors from "Częstochowianka" [factory] arrived in Bliżyn, among whom was Pinie Jakubowicz. When he later broke his hand breaking rocks, he was sent to Płaszów [Concentration Camp], from whence he never returned.

The majority worked at breaking rocks and one group of comrades in horticulture. Fajersztajn [once] fell asleep during lunchtime from exhaustion and [SS] *Oberscharführer* [technical sergeant in the SS] Nell found him asleep. At five in the afternoon, the Nazi murderer performed a roll call and announced that, for having slept at lunchtime, Fajersztajn would be shot. By orders of the *Oberscharführer*, the Ukrainians took Fajersztajn into the forest and, there, killed him.

This incident shook the Jews and several men from Częstochowa, including Feldman (Lemel), escaped from the camp. When, a few days later, Lemel asked some Poles for a drink of water, they recognised him as being a Jew and turned him over to the German police. The killers stripped him of his suit, boots and underwear, which they gave to the Poles as a "reward". Feldman was brought [back] into the camp completely naked.

The Nazi murderer Nell, again, called all the prisoners together and announced that Lemel would be shot. As usual, the killing was to be carried out by a Ukrainian bandit, who unsheathed a bayonet and began stabbing Feldman. The poor man fell, awash with blood, but the Ukrainian killer poured water over him and forced him to stand up, after which he continued thrusting at him. The blood gushed and the Ukrainian stabbed. Feldman begged to be shot, but the Ukrainian sadistically tortured his victim for over two hours. Gored and slashed almost to death, Feldman was taken away to the forest and shot.



Chaim Birnholc delivering a tearful address at the unveiling of the tombstone on a mass-grave of Jewish martyrs in [town name פלחשניג (Ploshnig) in original, most likely a misprint] (Germany) in 1947.

Several weeks later, a Częstochowa resident - a certain Abramowicz - fled the barracks. He, too, was caught by Poles in Końskie. They delivered him into the hands of the Germans and he was brought back to the Bliżyn camp. He was shot before the eyes of all the workers, in addition to which the Germans announced that, from that day onwards, every man would be held responsible for any of his roommates who should escape.

Of the two Perlman brothers, one worked with potatoes. Before entering the camp, the Germans conducted a search and found some potatoes on Perlman. By orders of the murderer Nell, he was shot.