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The First Victims

The day following the occupation of Częstochowa, the Germans began capturing Jews on the streets for labour. As they were, as yet, unable to recognise a Jewish face well, they soon found Gentiles to help them with this. The Poles spoke no German, but they very soon knew the word "*Jude*".

The first work which the Germans forced the Jews to do was to take beams on which thick boards were stacked and carry them outside. To carry such a beam outside, the Germans "gave" four people. Once it was out, they ordered only two men to continue carrying it. And finally, two men raised the beam and just one person was made to take it on his shoulders and continue carrying it by himself. The first victim was the son of the tailor Granek, from ul. Ogrodowa. Taking the beam upon his shoulders, he immediately collapsed under the immense weight and fell down in such a manner that the beam crushed him.

The tragic ending was that we went back home with one Jew less.

The First Mass Murder

On the morrow, the Germans brought upon us the tearfully, renowned "Bloody Monday". At one in the afternoon, dozens of aeroplanes began circling the city, as if preparing for a great offensive. But suddenly, we heard wild shouting, "All men outside!" The German soldiers began savagely gathering together all the men on the street. The detainees were put in rows of five and were sent to different points.

The group, of which I was, was conducted to the foremost gardens by the municipal offices. At first, we did not know what the Germans were looking for, so we all threw away anything we had on our persons.

Behind the municipal offices, where the gaol once stood, deep pits had been dug. Machine-guns were positioned on the rooftops and, along the entire length of the Aleja, troops stood in full battle-array, with helmets on their heads and armed with short rifles with fixed bayonets. The fingers were on the triggers, in readiness to shoot upon command. It seemed not like a city but - a battlefield.

Every 5-10 minutes, a vehicle arrived, packed full of people, and a bloody massacre ensued. Only a few were spared. All the others were shot on the spot.