



Ponary Diary, 1941-1943: A Bystander's Account of a Mass Murder

Kazimierz Sakowicz

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
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About sixty thousand Jews from Wilno (Vilnius, Jewish Vilna) and surrounding townships in present-day Lithuania were murdered by the Nazis and their Lithuanian collaborators in huge pits on the outskirts of Ponary. Over a period of several years, Kazimierz Sakowicz, a Polish journalist who lived in the village of Ponary, was an eyewitness to the murder of these Jews as well as to the murders of thousands of non-Jews on an almost daily basis. He chronicled these events in a diary that he kept at great personal risk.

Written as a simple account of what Sakowicz witnessed, the diary is devoid of personal involvement or identification with the victims. It is thus a unique document: testimony from a bystander, an "objective" observer without an emotional or a political agenda, to the extermination of the Jews of the city known as "the Jerusalem of Lithuania."

Sakowicz did not survive the war, but much of his diary did. Painstakingly pieced together by Rahel Margolis from scraps of paper hidden in various locations, the diary was published in Polish in 1999. It is here published in English for the first time, extensively annotated by Yitzhak Arad to guide readers through the events at Ponary.

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