

Institute of National Remembrance

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Commemoration of the 76th anniversary of the Volhynian Massacre in Janowa Dolina (the Ukraine) – 14 July 2019

„Their silence is calling us...they are calling out for truth, calling out for prayer they didn't hear when they were dying,” said the Deputy President of the IPN, Professor Krzysztof Szwagrzyk during the commemoration of the victims of the massacre in Janowa Dolina.









On 14 July 2019, in what used to be Janowa Dolina in today's Ukraine, commemoration of the 76th anniversary of the Volhynian Genocide organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland took place. The Institute of National Remembrance was represented by Prof. Krzysztof Szwaagrzyk, the Deputy President.

A Holy Mass in the Cathedral of Saint Apostles Peter and Paul, celebrated by diocese bishop Witalis Skomarowski, opened the event. Deputy President of the IPN, Prof. Krzysztof Szwaagrzyk, Deputy Speaker of the Sejm Małgorzata Gosiewska, Minister Andrzej Dera, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marcin Przydacz, Ambassador of Poland to Ukraine, Bartosz Cichocki attended the mass. At 2 p.m it was followed by celebrations at the cross commemorating Poles from Janowa Dolina

Janowa Dolina in Volhynia was a model settlement of the 2nd Polish Republic, created to meet the needs of a working community. Located near a basalt mine, it boasted a spacious layout and offered its inhabitants all the facilities that labourers might require – a school, hospital, hotel and chapel.

During World War II Janowa Dolina became a shelter for terror-stricken Polish inhabitants of neighbouring settlements, fleeing from the pursuing Ukrainians. A few-man self-defence and a unit of Lithuanian or German soldiers stationed in the village gave hope of repelling any attack.

The worst happened on the night of 22 April 1943; UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) units commanded by Iwan Łytwyńczuk "Dubowy" (one of most notorious perpetrators of the Volhynia massacres), supported by local peasant mobs armed with axes, pitchforks and knives, surrounded the settlement and lashed out a vicious attack. The armed collaborator unit locked itself in the brick hotel building and only when faced with imminent personal danger did they commence firing at the attacking crowds. Meanwhile, the Poles were mercilessly shot, murdered with farming tools or burned alive in their wooden houses. The Ukrainians broke into the hospital and slaughtered its medical personnel and patients with axes. Very few Janowa Dolina inhabitants managed to defend themselves against overwhelming masses of assailants. The killing did not stop until the early hours of 23 April, when a German reconnaissance plane flew over the smouldering ruins.

In all, around 600 men, women and children of all ages were murdered in the night attack, whereas Ukrainian losses were 8 dead and a few wounded. The village of Janowa Dolina was for the most part razed to the ground.

The attack turned out to be the bloodiest episode of the Holy Week *Anno Domini* 1943. Today, in place of Janowa Dolina there is a poor village of Bazaltowe, which hardly resembles the big and modern workers' settlement of the pre-war period. Where the parish church once stood, a basalt cross has been erected to commemorate murdered inhabitants.

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