

Institute of National Remembrance

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Information on the Investigation in the Case of Crime Committed in Koniuchy

Legal proceeding initiated on March 3, 2001 in the case of pacification and murder of several dozens of residents of Koniuchy community (near Bieniakonie in Lida district, Novogrod voivodship) by soviet partisans in January 1944.

Koniuchy was a big Polish village with some 60 buildings and over 300 inhabitants. Koniuchy was close to the Rudnicka Forest where numerous soviet partisans had their bases. The partisans notoriously attacked and plundered the village. For that reason the Koniuchy community decided to form a self-defense group. In the night of 28/29 January 1944 a group of partisans surrounded the village and at 5 a.m. launched a 1,5-2 hours attack. The partisans put on fire the straw roofs of houses and shot those who run out. As a result 38 persons were killed and more then a dozen wounded. Some of the victims were burnt in their houses and others were gunshot. The victims were men, women and small children. Most of the buildings were burnt, only a few houses remained in the village. The attack was carried out by 120-150 soviet partisans from several groups e.g.: „Śmierć Okupantowi”, „Śmierć faszystomowi”, „Piorun”, „Margirio”, and a group bearing name of Adam Mickiewicz. The group “Śmierć Okupantowi” was part of the Kaunas Brigade of Lithuanian Headquarters of Partisan Movement and the other four groups belonged to Vilnius Brigade. The groups were multinational with Jewish refugees from ghettos in Kaunas and Vilnius. In the encoded message of January 31, 1944 to Anatas Śnieckus, Head of the Lithuanian Headquarters of Partisan Movement in Moscow, Genrikas Zimanas (Henocho Ziman), I Secretary of the South Branch of the Lithuanian Communist Party and Head of the South Partisan Brigade, writes: on January 29 the joint group of Vilnius partisans, „Śmierć Okupantowi” and „Margiris” groups and the special group of General Headquarters burnt down the most ardent and self-defensive village of the Ejszysk region, Koniuchy (...).

The investigation witnesses who live in Poland have been already interrogated. Query for documents in Polish archival resources has been finished. Request for legal assistance was sent to prosecutors' offices in the Republic of Byelorussia, in the Republic of Lithuania (twice), and in the Russian Federation. Evidence in the form of testimonies of the inhabitants who witnessed the crimes as well as archival documents (Lithuanian Police reports, encoded messages of the soviet partisans, copies of the personal files of soviet partisans (in which files it is mentioned that they participated in the attacks), copies of military diaries of the partisan groups) had been gathered. Recently a request for legal assistance was sent to prosecutor's offices in Israel.