

Institute of National Remembrance

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PRESS RELEASE: The IPN's Deputy President honoured the victims of German crimes in Palmiry











On 21 June 2021, Deputy President of the Institute of National

Remembrance Mateusz Szpytma laid flowers on the graves of the Poles murdered in German Operation AB in Palmiry, and buried at the War Cemetery there. These society leaders – among them former Speaker of the Parliament Maciej Rataj, Chairman of the Parliamentary Association of Polish Socialists Mieczysław Niedziałkowski, and 1932 Olympics golden medalist Janusz Kusociński – perished in the 21 June 1940 execution.

Palmiry is where over 2,000 Polish citizens, most of them members of intelligentsia and Warsaw residents, were killed and buried. The victims were artists, political and social activists, athletes, public servants, and later on, also clergy and teachers. On 20 and 21 June 1940, the site saw the biggest of dozens of massacres that took place there.

Maciej Rataj – an activist and MP of the Polish People's Party "Liberation" and "Piast", the People's Party, one of the creators of the March Constitution of 1921, the Speaker of the Parliament from 1922, in 1931–1939 a member of the General Executive Committee of the People's Party and editor of the "Zielony Sztandar". In the years 1935–1939, during Witos' absence he served as the President of the People's Party, and in October 1939 became one of the co-founders of the Central Political Council of the Union of Armed Struggle. He was arrested by the Gestapo and shot in Palmiry on 21 June 1940.

Mieczysław Niedziałkowski – a politician, outstanding Polish Socialist

Party activist, MP, and editor-in-chief of the daily “Robotnik”. His career began in partitioned Poland, when as a junior high school student, he was involved in the activities of socialist independence groups. He remained very active during the war, devoting his energy and journalistic talent to the defense of Warsaw in 1939. He is considered one of the main organizers of the capital's civil defense. He was arrested by the Germans in December 1939 and shot in Palmiry on 21 June 1940.

Janusz Kusociński was born on 15 January 1907 in Warsaw. He was a graduate of the Central Institute of Physical Education. After the fall of Warsaw and the Polish state, he worked as a teacher and a physical education instructor, and quickly got involved in underground activities under the codename of "Prawdźic". Arrested on 28 March 1940 at the gate of the house where he lived, he endured three months of brutal interrogation in Aleja Szucha and Pawiak prisons, to be shot in 21 June 1940 mass execution in Palmiry. His remains were found in the course of post-war exhumations.

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