

Daniel Pagan (Chicago)

Konieczpol

Konieczpol lies on the Pilica River and was [originally] designed as a suburb of Częstochowa. Konieczpol flour was a familiar commodity at the Częstochowa flour-market and Częstochowa supplied Konieczpol with all the products it required.

The population numbered about one-thousand families, half of whom were Jews who worked as craftsmen - tailors, cobblers - and also as traders.

Particularly well-known was the great copper factory, which belonged to Jewish owners Bonsztajn, Behm & Rotbard. This firm conducted business on a very large scale. It imported raw materials and produced copper sheets for the largest companies in Poland.

When the antisemitic threat spread throughout Poland, it was also very tangible in Konieczpol. However, incidents of brutality did not occur, as the Jewish youth had the awareness to organise a resistance.

In the *Kehilla* [Council] comprised a representation from the Zionist parties, *Aguda*, the Radomsko *Chassidim* and the craftsmen. Following the death of the town's rabbi, Rabbi A. Klajnplac z''l, he was replaced by Rabbi Uszer Borensztajn z''l. Among the [most] respected representatives were Reb Szaja Rozencwajg z''l, Reb Chaim Najfeld z''l, Reb Chaim Szlojme Sztal and Reb Józef Rubinsztajn. Of the Aleksander *Chassidim*, Reb Alter Szlojme Staszewski was very well-known. He and his wife were among the first victims of the Germans. From the Zionist Movement, the activity of the "Zionist Youth" was [the most] prominent. Oderberg, Horowicz, and Dudek Kartuz from Częstochowa often visited Konieczpol. The "Zionist Youth" Organisation also created a Jewish library.

Zionist activists, Dr Bram and Dr Mering, also visited often. The Revisionist Organisation, which was very active, was led by Mr Mordka Bulwik (now in Israel). The "TOZ" conducted was strongly active, with Mr Rozental z''l at its head, a respectable man with a warm Jewish heart.

The Jewish population was represented on the City Council with 50% of the delegates. The town's deputy mayor was a Jew - Reb Józef Rubinsztajn.

The delegates were divided thus - Zionist Organisation: Ojzer Wajngarten z''l, Anszel Fajgenblat (now in the United States) and Aron Dikman z''l as Councillors; *Aguda*: Nechemie Jachnowski and unaffiliated to any party was Abram Gruszka (now in Israel).

During the War, as soon as they had marched in on 2nd September 1939, the Germans began their horrors and murders against Jews. All the Jews of the town Płock were also herded into Konieczpol.

When in 1943 [sic], voices began to spread (from the testimony of non-Jews) regarding the transports and the mass-killings, the Jews could not believe this. They were unable to grasp that innocent people – men, women and children – could be taken and annihilated.

On 19th October 1942, the Germans encircled the town with machine-guns positions and, on the following day, all the Jews were led to the railway station, loaded onto carriages and sent away to Treblinka, where they were killed.

Only ten people survived the Holocaust. One of them, Dawid Gruszka, was murdered after the War by the Kielce *pogromszczyki*.

The remaining nine are Izrael Rozencwajg with two sisters, Chana and Rachel (living in Israel); Abram Dikman (in Israel); Don Fajgenblat with his wife Bronia (now in the United States); Abram Gruszka (in Israel) [and] two are unknown.

Thus, an entire Jewish community was annihilated and not even a *minyan*¹ has remained to say *Kaddish*. May these lines serve as a tombstone on the graves of the martyrs. *Woe over those who are gone and are no longer found [Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 111a]*.

¹ [TN: 10 Jewish males over 13 years of age which are required in order to hold public prayers.]