

**A COMPLAINT LODGED CONCERNING A CASE  
OF RAPE, AND PAPERS RELATING TO THE  
ENQUIRY WHICH FOLLOWED (SOVIET  
LITHUANIA, 1959)**

Alain Blum, Amandine Regamey

► **To cite this version:**

Alain Blum, Amandine Regamey. A COMPLAINT LODGED CONCERNING A CASE OF RAPE, AND PAPERS RELATING TO THE ENQUIRY WHICH FOLLOWED (SOVIET LITHUANIA, 1959). *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, Belin, 2014, *Gendered Laws of War*, 39, pp.200-215. <hal-01390331>

**HAL Id: hal-01390331**

**<https://hal-auf.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01390331>**

Submitted on 1 Nov 2016

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

## A COMPLAINT LODGED CONCERNING A CASE OF RAPE, AND PAPERS RELATING TO THE ENQUIRY WHICH FOLLOWED (SOVIET LITHUANIA, 1959)

*Translated from the Russian by Ian Appleby*

Belin | « Clio »

2014/1 No. 39 | pages 205 - 218

ISSN 1252-7017

This document is a translation of:

---

and Translated from the Russian by Ian Appleby, « Plainte et enquête autour d'un viol (Lituanie soviétique, 1959)? », *Clio* 2014/1 (No. 39), p. 205-218.

---

Available online at :

---

[http://www.cairn-int.info/article-E\\_CLIO1\\_039\\_0205--a-complaint-lodged-concerning-a-case-of.htm](http://www.cairn-int.info/article-E_CLIO1_039_0205--a-complaint-lodged-concerning-a-case-of.htm)

---

The English version of this issue is published thanks to the support of the CNRS

---

How to cite this article :

---

« Plainte et enquête autour d'un viol (Lituanie soviétique, 1959)? », *Clio* 2014/1 (No. 39), p. 205-218.

---

Electronic distribution by Cairn on behalf of Belin.

© Belin. All rights reserved for all countries.

Reproducing this article (including by photocopying) is only authorized in accordance with the general terms and conditions of use for the website, or with the general terms and conditions of the license held by your institution, where applicable. Any other reproduction, in full or in part, or storage in a database, in any form and by any means whatsoever

is strictly prohibited without the prior written consent of the publisher, except where permitted under French law.

## Documents

### **A complaint lodged concerning a case of rape, and papers relating to the enquiry which followed (Soviet Lithuania, 1959)**

*On 10 June 1959, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union received a communication from a Lithuanian woman, Elena Spirgevičienė, also signed by one of her daughters and her son, protesting against the posthumous award of the title of Hero of the Soviet Union to Alfonsas Čeponis, a Soviet partisan who had died in 1944 during a Gestapo operation. According to Elena Spirgevičienė, this man did not deserve the title: he had belonged to a criminal gang which had raped her, murdered her sister, and attempted to rape, then killed, her daughter, Elena Spirgevičiūtė. These events, still controversial today, demonstrate the complexity of the situation in Lithuania and similar territories occupied by the German army during the Second World War, where Soviet partisans waged a long guerrilla war until the arrival of the Red Army. It also shows the different ways in which both victims and party officials refer to rape, situating it within the whole range of violent acts suffered during the war (looting, murders etc.)*

*The three documents reproduced here approach the question from different angles: for their analysis, see our article in this issue of *Clio*: “The hero and the martyr and the erased rape (Lithuania 1944-2000)”.*

#### **Document 1**

*This document is a copy of the letter sent on 10 June 1959 by Elena Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė, her daughter Sabina Spirgevičiūtė-Šultienė, and her son Česlovas Spirgevičius, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, protesting against the award made to Alfonsas Čeponis. The letter was forwarded to the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party.*

Special file<sup>1</sup> [handwritten]

To the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union  
Moscow

In accordance with an order made by the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in July 1958, a group of Komsomol members from Kaunas have been posthumously awarded with decorations for the bravery and heroism they displayed during the struggle against German occupiers in the Great Patriotic War. Three Young Communists have been posthumously granted the title of “Hero of the Soviet Union”. Among the latter is Alfonsas Čeponis.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, we consider it our duty to report the following:

During the German occupation we lived in the city of Kaunas (and we still live there today). Our family was working-class. My husband had been employed in a printing works from an early age. During the German occupation he did not work anywhere. I am myself poorly-educated. I was a housewife, and had a market-garden of around four thousand square metres, which was what fed us during the trying days of the German occupation. We had three children. Our two daughters were at school, but our boy was still too little. The war was coming to an end, the thunder of Soviet artillery could be heard drawing ever closer, the day of our liberation was approaching.

The year 1944 arrived. The day was January 3, 1944. Late in the evening, around 22:00, a group of armed people appeared at our home, raising everyone from their beds and demanding to be fed. At their demand, I set the table and fed them what I had. They began drinking vodka, which they had brought with them, and they also took from me all that I had. Then they began to paw at the women.

---

<sup>1</sup> Translator’s note: Words in italics indicate handwritten additions to the original typescript. Likewise, underlined words reflect underlining in the original text. Source of documents: LYA, collection 1771, inv. 190, d. 12, ff. 38-39.

<sup>2</sup> Alfonsas Čeponis was killed on 24 January 1944, following an attack by a group of German soldiers on the house in which he had taken refuge [*ibid.* ff.51-53], according to the translation into Lithuanian of an article published in *Komjaunimo tiesa* (=Komsomolskaia Pravda) on 4-5 December 1944. The article reporting that he had been awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union dates from 1 July 1958 (according to the site <http://www.warheroes.ru/>).

My sister Stasė lived in the same courtyard as us, and when she heard the noise, she ran across to us. The “uninvited guests” sat her down at the table and tried to make her drink, but she refused and, seeing what sort of “guests” they were, tried to run to the neighbours for help. But the bandits<sup>3</sup> saw this, and shot her near the neighbour’s gate. At that moment, all the bandits ran outside. One young man stayed in the room to guard us. He was so young and handsome that his face stayed in our memories for a long time. This man was Alfonsas Čeponis.

A short while after shooting my sister Stasė, the bandits came back into the room and told us she had been killed. They demanded sacks from us, and started to steal our property. One of them demanded that we show them where the pork fat and other foodstuffs were kept. I took them to the loft, where it all was. They took everything and raped me. At the same time, the bandits who had remained in the room attempted to rape my elder daughter Elena, who was 18, but she refused to submit, and they shot her in the other room (her bedroom). This was as I was crawling down from the loft. When they saw me, the bandits ordered me to lean against the cupboard, wanting to shoot me point-blank, but one of the bandits who had raped me<sup>4</sup> spoke up for me, and I remained alive. My younger children had crawled under the bed in fear. The bandits shot at them, as well, but missed. Once they had done with us, they drove us all into one corner, and ordered us to stay there and not call for help, otherwise, they threatened, they would shoot us all, and then they made their getaway.

After they had left, we all shut ourselves up in the loft, afraid that they might come back again. An hour later, I rushed over to my daughter, and saw she was already dead. I also found my dead sister. Shortly afterwards the police arrived and began their enquiries, postmortems of the dead etc, and then the burials. The police set off

---

<sup>3</sup> The use of the word “bandits” is particularly significant, since in Soviet discourse in these western regions, it was used on the contrary to describe those who were fighting against the Soviets. In particular the “Lithuanian bandits” were those who called themselves “Brothers of the forest”, *partisanas* fighting against the Soviets. Čeponis on the other hand was described as a Soviet partisan.

<sup>4</sup> The Russian text can be translated either as “*the* bandit who had raped me” or “*a* bandit who had raped me” *i.e.* one of the group.

on their trail, and one day they surrounded the house where Čeponis, an accomplice in this murder, was living, but he shot himself. We were summoned by the police, and we recognised him to be that same Čeponis. He was even wearing a suit belonging to my husband. A statement was taken, and they let us go.

Liberation came. From the very first days, my husband began working in the local anti-aircraft HQ, under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and he died in 1945 while carrying out his duties. While the children were growing up, I received a military family pension. Everything was past and forgotten. The children grew up, and the pension stopped. My daughter got married, my son is a student at the Polytechnical Institute. But when I found out from the radio and newspapers that they had awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union to the Kaunas Young Communists, and Čeponis among them, I was aghast at such a misunderstanding. I turned to the Kaunas City Party Committee, where they heard what I had to say and then, to be blunt, made fun of me. They did not even make any response to my statement, simply coming to us and saying that they did not believe us, and that there were no witnesses to prove the incident had taken place. What witnesses did they need? After all, we were living witnesses, and what's more the whole town has known that Alfonsas Čeponis was the murderer of my daughter and sister ever since that time (1944).

There are many facts here that provide evidence for the criminal acts of A. Čeponis, and if necessary we can prove it, as can other witnesses.

We are simple working people, we have always lived quietly, we never did anyone any harm and we wouldn't like to slander anyone, but we do demand justice. We couldn't stand it if a murderer remained unpunished, even posthumously, let alone if he became a hero. He wouldn't deserve that description, no matter how great his deeds, and in fact there were no deeds.

We know, through certain information, that another perpetrator of this crime is still alive, he can be found in Vilnius. There's a person who knows about him. If need be, we will tell you who.

Given the above, we request you to investigate the facts in our letter thoroughly, and to bring about justice. Don't let people like Čeponis be dubbed heroes.

Signed: Elena Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė  
Sabina Spirgevičiūtė-Šultienė  
Česlovas Spirgevičius

10 June 1959

Address: 127 Tvirtovės Lane, Kaunas

Elena Spirgevičienė

(Passed to the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party for investigation of the letter's contents and of the facts set out within it; the CPSU Central Committee to be informed of the results.)

Letter number 242300.

Delivered by: Burmistrov

Received by: Kazakevich

Received 18 June 1959, at 12.10.

Dp. 6

\*  
\* \*

## Document 2

*This document reproduces the minutes of the meeting of the bureau of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party in reaction to the letter above. It followed the order from the Central Committee of the CPSU to deal with the affair. This record combines the interventions by bureau members with extracts from testimony by witnesses who were questioned during the inquiry following receipt of the letter.*

A short note of proceedings at the meeting of the Central Committee Bureau of the Lithuanian CP on 23 October 1959, under the rubric



“Results of the investigation into the statement made by Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė”.<sup>5</sup>

**K.F. Liaudis:**<sup>6</sup> Set out the contents of the statement made by Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė according to a note from the commission dated 19 October 1959. In conclusion, he said that Kilčiauskienė had perhaps wanted to use her statement to gain revenge over Čėponė, [mother of Čėponis] who was receiving a pension as the mother of a son who had died during the German occupation, namely the Soviet partisan and Hero of the Soviet Union Alfonsas Čėponis, and to besmirch the memory of Čėponis.

Kilčiauskienė was of the opinion that if the mother of Čėponis was receiving a pension, then she, too, had the right to a pension for her murdered daughter. The murder did indeed take place; her daughter was killed in order to stop her betraying our people to the Gestapo. Both the daughter and her mother, the complainant, were on the German side. Kilčiauskienė-Spirgevičienė’s daughter had been under the influence of the Catholic priesthood (she had links with a priest from a church in Šančiai) and of the German occupiers.

**G.O. Zimas:**<sup>7</sup> Čėponis and the others were in the brigade, they formed up and operated in Kaunas as a separate group. It is true that there were complaints that they were drinking, and might bring the police down on Murava [a district of Kaunas]. I spoke to Rodionov about this, telling him that we would need to dissociate ourselves from them if they continued to behave improperly. The Spirgevičius family assisted the Germans and were collaborators.

---

<sup>5</sup> LYA collection 1771, inv. 190, d. 12, ff. 54-59. Names in bold are those of Committee members, names in italic are those of a witness, not present at the meeting but quoted by a participant.

<sup>6</sup> President of the Lithuanian KGB, member of the bureau of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian CP.

<sup>7</sup> Journalist and member of the bureau of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian CP; he had commanded a partisan group during the war.

**Mikalauškas:**<sup>8</sup> I spoke to the mother of Čeponis on two occasions. She could say nothing. His leg was injured (he had dislocated it) and he was recovering at home. [...]

During the German occupation they never said that the daughter had been raped. Čeponis conducted himself suitably and not even so much as an attempt to rape her was made.

**Liaudis:** There were two further such incidents. And all the members of this group were there. They identified Čeponis through police photographs.

**Sniečkus:**<sup>9</sup> She made her complaint immediately after the news about Čeponis was published in the press. What did this group do? Why was Čeponis part of this group? [...]

**Miknevičius:**<sup>10</sup> This group of people were Soviet partisans. There are no doubts about it. Čeponis was sent out with comrade Juozapavičius, Čeponis being the latter's radio operator. Čeponis was a calm, modest and brave partisan. They were supposed to be operating in Kaunas. They established contact with comrade Štaras, and joined in with the activity of the Komsomol in Šančai, Žaliasis, Kaunas and Murava. In Murava, everyone knew these partisans. These people were strong-willed. Čeponis was subordinate to Iurka. It must be presumed that he made contact with this group through the Murava Komsomol.

*Sarulienė:* She [Sarulienė] had been imprisoned by the Germans, her sons were partisans. Iurka told Sarulienė's daughter that Spirgevičienė had become upset during a discussion about an article in the newspaper dealing with her daughter's death. Iurka told Sarulienė's daughter that she should not believe it, as they had not raped her. But they had killed her, for spying on the partisans. She had got what she deserved.

---

<sup>8</sup> Secretary of the Committee of the CP in the town of Kaunas, member of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian CP.

<sup>9</sup> First secretary of the Lithuanian CP.

<sup>10</sup> One of the KGB investigators: the name is differently spelled elsewhere.

Mishka and Iurka killed Spirgevičienė's daughter.

The mother of Čeponis said that Čeponis started off in black trousers, but then he wore grey trousers.

Čeponis was part of this group, he acted with civility. On 2 January 1944 they came to Kundrotensė, who lived on Gėlių Rato street. Čeponis only stood guard, however he did not become violent and he did not kill anyone.

*Gulbinas*: From the village of Muniškis in Babtai district. He said that they came and demanded weapons. He refused to give them any, following which he was badly beaten and robbed. Then the group went to Račkauskas, who gave them a ring, some money and some food. When Račkauskas told the police, he, too, was badly beaten.

*Spirgevičius*: He had nationalist and anti-Soviet leanings. He was a looter: after citizens were shot he would take their clothing and sell it. None of the family worked in any capacity under the German occupation.<sup>11</sup>

*Spirgevičienė*: This was not the first time she had spoken of this. In August 1949, when she was being questioned about the priest Račiūnas, she was already saying that Čeponis had been implicated in robbery and rape.<sup>12</sup>

In the report of her interrogation in August 1949, Spirgevičienė claimed that her daughter had been killed because she had wanted to inform the police about a group of Soviet partisans operating in Kaunas.

**Sniečkus**: The priest Račiūnas should be questioned again.<sup>13</sup> Even the most insignificant detail might bring a great deal to light.

**Ferensas**:<sup>14</sup> Spirgevičiūtė was a believer, she went to church everyday. Her funeral was organised by the priests, they put up a gravestone that cost 15 000 marks. No-one back then was claiming that the young women had been raped. Žukaitė was killed 100 metres from her home. Spirgaitė [*sic*] made the sign of the cross over her parents,

---

<sup>11</sup> This corresponds to what the mother had said in her letter: according to her, none of the family had worked under the Germans.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. LYA, collection K-1, inv. 58, dossier 45424/3.

<sup>13</sup> At the time, the priest was in a camp in the Vorkuta region.

<sup>14</sup> Secretary of the LKSM (*komsomols* = Communist youth movement) in Lithuania.

and then told them that “you will all survive, but they are going to kill me”. She was killed.

**Menkevičius:** The police might have put the mother up to saying they had been raped.

**Štaras:**<sup>15</sup> I have known Čėponis since 1938. In 1939 we gave him some communist literature so that he could distribute leaflets. He carried out this task. In September 1943 he arrived from Moscow. He said that he was supposed to rejoin his brigade, but he could not find Juozapavičius anywhere. I knew that Čėponis had been working with the group in Šančiai. Čėponis said that they had done a great deal. Krugliakov said that there was something they had not done properly. I don't know how he worked in that group. The last time I met him was in November 1943. We knew that he had been wounded or had dislocated his leg during a mission. His leg was already injured on 25 December 1943. He was unwell at the time when those young women were shot, but he could not have shot them.

**Kisminas:**<sup>16</sup> The priest has described everything that the mother said. The mother did not say that her daughter had been raped.

**Sniečkus:** This is an important matter, it concerns a Hero of the Soviet Union. Is he guilty or not? We must know. If the shadow continues to hang over him, it will be difficult for us. Either there is a grain of truth, or our enemies are making the whole thing up. We must uncover their lies and provide proof. Otherwise, they will continue to spread this falsehood still further. We must bring up our young people on the story of Čėponis. One cannot, of course, fight and keep one's hands perfectly clean, it is possible there were lapses. But they were fighting for Soviet power, that is clear. If they took things, it was because they needed them. They had no political guidance. But we must take this matter to its conclusion. The task before us is to discover whether or not she is lying. We must

---

<sup>15</sup> An official at the Party's Historical Institute.

<sup>16</sup> A KGB investigator.

confront her. Whereas we can explain her slander to people. She, herself, is confused. Earlier she was saying that they had been raped, but then she recanted.

We should inform the CPUS Central Committee that work must continue on exposing her. We need to prove that her daughter was killed as a political enemy.

**Zimanas:** It seems to me that Čeponis did not necessarily always go with them. Perhaps there were times when he did. But anything can happen when it comes to describing an individual. It seems to me that if the Germans were certain that Čeponis was a rapist, they would have written about it, that she was killed by Bolshevik agents, like they did about Vilimas and Baronas. We must look into where Čeponis went with them, he did not go everywhere with them.

**Sniečkus:** We are certain, given the information we have, that Čeponis was an honourable fighter, but she was linked to the priests. Work must continue.

Have Juozapavičius, Salominas, and Barauskas brought before the commission.

**Kairialis:**<sup>17</sup> Military action predominated within this group, that is clear from the evidence. But they lacked discipline.

**Sharkov:**<sup>18</sup> A statement has been sent to the CPSU Central Committee which accuses Čeponis of killing the daughter. The killing was done on political grounds. Everything was done properly. Čeponis is clean. Two tasks remain: 1) To order that the reasons why she decided to write to the CPSU Central Committee and besmirch the name of a Hero of the Soviet Union should be discovered. Perhaps someone put her up to it? 2) To order the commission to continue its investigation.

---

<sup>17</sup> Head of the department of administrative, financial and commercial organs of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian CP.

<sup>18</sup> Member of the bureau of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian CP.

**Šniečkus:** I have said that we do not have any evidence that compromises Čeponis as a Hero of the Soviet Union. We are certain, based on the information we have obtained from our inquiries, that Čeponis was an honest individual. It seems to us that Spirgevičienė is lying. She has connections to the priesthood. We must tear the mask this woman. If we conduct a further inquiry, that means that we do not yet have complete certainty. We must spend as much as a year on this, if that is what it takes, but we must find the truth.

**Šumauskas:** When Čeponis was decorated as a partisan in 1945, she had already begun to damage his reputation.

**Galinaitis:** I do not believe her testimony. There was a man who made inquiries during the German occupation, but he has disappeared. He worked in the department of state. The entire murder case was headed by Katilius at that time. He still comes to Spirgevičienė now. He is the instigator behind it all. Maybe we could also find the doctor who examined the corpses, the priest and the school headmaster, as well. We must question them all again, and have complete clarity.

**Miknevičius:** Kalita could have told us everything, but during a three-hour conversation he said nothing, and afterwards he disappeared.

**Šniečkus:** Comrade Liaudis can direct this work. Salominas is to be made a member of the Commission. Bring in Katilius, Žilinskas, the doctor, and the others involved in this case.

Notes taken by:  
[signature]

\*  
\* \*

### **Document 3**

*This third document reports back to the Central Committee of the CPSU the conclusions of the Lithuanian Party's Central Committee. This clearly rejects the complaint*

Secret<sup>19</sup>

Copy: No. 2

To the CPSU Central Committee

On 10 June 1959 Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė, along with her daughter Sabina Spirgevičiūtė-[Šultienė] and her son Česlovas Spirgevičius, sent a statement to the CPSU Central Committee regarding the posthumous award of the title “Hero of the Soviet Union” to Alfonsas Čeponis. [...]

In her statement, Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė and the members of her family raise the following accusation against A. Čeponis: that, allegedly, on 3 January 1944, at No. 91 Tvirtovės Lane (now renamed to No. 127 Jaunjosios Gvardijos street) he and other armed individuals did murder the complainant's sister, Stasė Žukaite, rape Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė, and attempt to rape her daughter Elena Spirgevičiūtė. As the latter struggled to resist, she, too, was killed.

Furthermore, the same complaint maintains that as these individuals came back into the room, they then shot at her other children, who had hidden under the bed, and stole property as they left.

In her complaint, Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė also indicates that she knows people who could identify one of the accomplices in this murder, who at the present time is apparently living in Vilnius, and that they also know more about the criminal activities of A. Čeponis.

On 19 June 1959, the Bureau of the Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee decided to appoint a commission to investigate the statement made by Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė et al. The commission consisted of: Comrade Major-General K.F. Liaudis, KGB Chairman in the Lithuanian SSR Council of Ministers; Comrade V.V. Galinaitis, State Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR; Comrade Iu.V. Mikalauskas, First Secretary of the Kaunas City

---

<sup>19</sup> LYA, collection 1771, inv. 190, d. 12, ff.40-45.

Committee of the Lithuanian CP; and Comrade A.A. Ferensas, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Lenin Communist Youth Union.

For a more in-depth investigation of the allegations set out in the complaint made by Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė, the KGB investigative department of the Lithuanian Council of Ministers was brought in: the employees involved were Comrades V.A. Mivnevičius<sup>20</sup> and S.N. Maslauskas.

The commission familiarized itself with material from the partisan movement that had been preserved in the Party archive of the Lithuanian CP Central Committee, and with captured wartime material found in the State Archive of the Lithuanian SSR Interior Ministry. It held detailed talks with the complainants; 130 people connected to the affair were questioned.

The investigation established that Elena Spirgevičiūtė (born 1924), of no fixed occupation, and Stasė Žukaite, 28 years of age, a senior operative in the privately-owned Nering factory, were indeed killed by four armed individuals in Kaunas on 3 January 1944.

The commission took steps to identify the perpetrators and to establish the motives for the murders of Spirgevičiūtė and Žukaite, obtaining as a result evidence which allowed the conclusion to be drawn that the murders in question were committed by a group of Soviet partisans from the “Death to the Occupiers” brigade.

It was established that in November 1943, the “Death to the Occupiers” partisan brigade sent the partisans Fedor Semenovich Tsabizov (pseudonym “Iurka”), Mikhail Nikolaevich Luk’ianov (“Mishka”), and Aleksandr Vasil’evich Beliaikov (“Lesh”) to Kaunas on a mission to make contact with the underground organisation operating in the Kaunas “ghetto” and prisoner-of-war camp, and to bring detainees and POWs from there to join the partisan brigade.

Later, this group was joined by Nikolai Aleksandrovich Nesterov (“Kolia”) and a partisan known as “Grishka” (whose surname has not been precisely identified).

---

20 Translator’s note: It is likely that this is a misprint in the original, and the individual in question has the surname Miknevičius; see also note 5.



Some time around November, 1943, this group of partisans was joined by the partisan Alfonsas Čeponis, a radio-operator and scout who had arrived in Kaunas on a special mission.

While fulfilling the mission assigned by brigade command, this partisan group, in the short time they spent in Kaunas between 6 November 1943 and 18 February 1944, managed to liberate 76 people from the POW camp and “ghetto”, of whom 36 were equipped with weaponry taken from the occupiers.

Furthermore, during this same period, 4 police officers and 3 police agents were killed. On their return to the brigade from Kaunas, the members of this group were assigned as leaders of other groups, which carried out a series of military operations in various districts of the republic, as a result of which nine enemy troop and supply trains were derailed, two German garrisons were destroyed, and many other operations were carried out.

According to brigade reports and the comments of former partisans and their messengers, all the members of this group were noted for being markedly brave and courageous partisans. However, during their operations, they took ~~unjustified risks~~<sup>21</sup> and tolerated occasional breaches of partisan discipline.

The investigation discovered that, at 10 o'clock in the evening of 3 January 1944, the partisans F.S. Tsabizov, M.N. Luk'ianov, “Grishka” and A. Čeponis arrived at the home of Spirgevičius and demanded food.

Whilst the partisans were at the home of Spirgevičius, Žukaite, his wife's sister, tried to escape from the house and inform the police, but she was caught and killed by the partisan “Grishka”.

Following a prolonged conversation with the daughter of Spirgevičius, Elena Spirgevičiūtė, which took place between the partisans and Spirgevičiūtė in a separate room, she was also killed. As the investigation documents show, the murder of Spirgevičiūtė was also committed by “Grishka”.

As the partisans left the home of Spirgevičius, they took food and some items of clothing away with them.

---

<sup>21</sup> Translator's note: these two words are struck through in the original.

That part of Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė's statement alleging that the partisans killed Spirgevičiūtė and Žukaite due to their resisting attempted rape was not upheld by the investigation.

Moreover, during the investigation, the commission received information from former partisan messengers to the effect that Spirgevičiūtė and Žukaite were killed by Soviet partisans due to their links with the police.

The allegations that the partisans shot at the other children of Spirgevičius and that the complainants knew of other crimes committed by Čeponis were likewise not upheld by the investigation.

No information relating to the rape of the complainant herself, other than her own statement, was obtained during the course of the investigation.

All those who participated in this operation were killed during the war

On 23 October this year,<sup>22</sup> at a meeting of the Central Committee Bureau of the Lithuanian CP, the results of the investigation into Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė's statement were discussed. On the basis of the information obtained by the commission and the investigation that was carried out, the Central Committee Bureau of the Lithuanian CP came to the conclusion that the murders of Spirgevičiūtė and Žukaite were committed by a group of Soviet partisans from the "Death to the Occupiers" brigade as an act of self-defence, and not with the aim of rape and burglary as alleged in the statement.

However, arising out of the investigation into this matter and subsequent discussions, it was discovered that Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė had close links to a Catholic priest, Račiūnas (convicted of counter-revolutionary activity). This Račiūnas attempted to use the murders of Spirgevičiūtė and Žukaite for his own dark ends. The Central Committee Bureau of the Lithuanian CP thus assigned the commission under Comrade Liaudis to fully investigate all these links, and to establish their aim and motives.

This decision was additionally motivated by the fact that several inconsistencies in the testimony of Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė were identified as a result of the investigation. It is possible that

---

<sup>22</sup> Translator's note: *i.e.* 1959.

Spirgevičienė-Kilčiauskienė had deliberately distorted the true motives behind the murders of Spirgevičiūtė and Žukaite.

[*signature*] Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian CP.  
29 October 1959  
No 5?  
Nb 3

*Translated from the Russian by Ian APPLEBY*