When the Warsaw Uprising broke out, Andrzej Nusbek, a 14-year-old scout of the underground Zawiszacy troop [named after Zawisza Czarny], was staying in Radość, a town near Warsaw. He was in despair when he realized he had been cut off from his fellow scouts who were fighting in the capital, but felt somewhat relieved to have heard that Polish units were approaching from the east.

The boy was convinced he would finally have a chance to meet his long-unseen father.

More, he hoped that the first officer in the four-pointed cap he would see was going to be his father – Lt Edmund Nusbek, an officer of the 44th Infantry Regiment, captured by the Soviets after September 17, 1939 and never heard of since. Unfortunately, Andrzej did not find his father in the ranks of the Polish First Army, whose soldiers arrived in Otwock at that time.

Cut off from his mother, left behind in war-torn Warsaw, he was taken in by the Polish soldiers. As “the son of the Regiment,” he covered the whole combat trail up to Berlin with the 2nd Howitzer Artillery Brigade. He met his mother again only after the end of the war. However, they still had no news from his father.

Andrzej was nevertheless hoping that he had managed to join the ranks of Polish units.

Continuation on the next page

“You are witnesses to a death that must not be forgotten.”

Pope Saint John Paul II, Rome, April 13, 1996
Katyn still calls for the truth

Anna Pakruzwicz, Editor-in-Chief of Polska Zbroja Historia quarterly

But don't tell anyone, just for now—these words ended the first history lesson given to me by my grandfather and my parents. I asked them why they would patiently turn the radio knob every evening and listen to this irritating noise with shrieks and howls, behind which the voice of the speaker was barely audible. Until today, I can still hear in my head the sound of Radio Free Europe, broadcast for Poles from Munich and regularly jammed by Polish communist government (the RFE was founded by the United States government for the Soviet satellite countries; the Polish section was broadcasting from the beginning of 1950 until the collapse of Communism and the withdrawal of the Russian forces from Poland in 1990). That's when I first heard the word "Katyn," and it was my family who told me the story of this atrocity. At the time, I was about nine years old. The Polish authorities — in the name of "friendship" with the Soviet Union — were silent about communist crimes of Stalin. However, at the time, my imagination of a child couldn't contain how our friends could attack us in cooperation with Hitler, then murder our soldiers, and sentence their families to annihilation in the snows of Siberia. I couldn't accept the fact that people who spoke up about it might suddenly disappear without a trace. Nations which have never experienced Soviet occupation will never fully understand our post-war situation, just as I will never understand people, who today, at their own request, even in the times of widely promoted humanism, are asphyxiated with this most dehumanizing "ideology" — Communism.

In April of 1940, in the Katyn forest on the western border of Russia, near Smolensk, the Soviets treacherously killed with a shot in the back of the head 4,400 officers — prisoners of war, about one-fifth of the entire number of prisoners sentenced a month earlier to death by decision of the Soviet Union's leaders. Over 20,000 victims, whose unmarked graves can be found on the territory of Poland, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia, were before the WWII the flower of Polish intelligentsia. Half of them were the officers of the Polish Army, uniformed services and the Police.

In the Katyn Forest Massacre died soldiers who in September 1939 were the first to rise up against Hitler's army. They were killed at the time when Poland — left on its own, without the support of its allies and bleeding to death in its effort to hold back the then most powerful army in the world — was attacked by Russia without prior declaration of war. This stab in the back sealed the fate of Poland and the fate of the officers taken captive. Most of these soldiers were the ones who 20 years earlier, in the Battle of Warsaw, crushed the Bolshevik march towards Europe. Three and a half years later, in April 1944, their graves, hidden in a forest, were discovered by the Germans — and they pointed their finger at those responsible for the atrocity. The Soviets denied, and, in turn, planted their own evidence to shift the blame onto the Germans. Nevertheless, the world turned its eyes away from Katyn. This truth was very inconvenient in the time when Hitler's plague was treated with Stalin's cholera. Until today, this crime has been a burden on the conscience of all the silent now and then. We, the Poles, still remember.

Ten years ago, our president died in an air crash near Smolensk. On the plane, there were 96 passengers including the crew, among them the highest Polish civil and military officials. On board of that plane, there was also the last Poland's president-in-exile who resigned from his symbolic office after the collapse of Communism in Poland. They were all on that flight to pay homage to the murdered soldiers on the 70th anniversary of the Katyn Forest Massacre. And they all died.

Anders' Army, and that he would find them in Cracow where the boy and his mother settled after returning from the frontline. Andrzej truly cherished the last message he had got from Edmund Nusbek — a postcard sent from captivity. Lt Nusbek was a veteran of the Polish-Bolshevik War of 1920, severely wounded in the Battle of Borów, awarded the Cross of Valor for courage, so his loved ones feared the Soviets might have deported him somewhere to Kolyma out of revenge. They could not allow themselves to think about the worst scenario. When in 1943 the Germans began to print lists with names of the Katyn massacre victims, Andrzej and his mother did not find the surname Nusbek on them. There was still hope that the teenage boy would see his father return and bring the present he had promised.

Sadly, on August 29, 1949, they received a letter from the Municipal Court in Warsaw with woeful news — it said that the court decided to consider Edmund Nusbek, the son of Józef and Władysława Kuczyński, born on January 2, 1896 in Czerniowiec, last domiciled in Warsaw at Śniadeckich 9, deceased. The date of death was established as May 9, 1946.

After many years, it turned out the given date was falsified in order to erase the proper one, which would make everything clear.

Here is what Andrzej found out about his father's fate already in 1970: "We received the first piece of news on October 2 or 3, from my father's subordinates: 2nd Lt Goldfelder and a platoon leader, who came to our ruined apartment in Warsaw at Śniadeckich 9, with my father's file. There was 1,500 zlotys inside. Due to my mother's serious illness, for us this amount of money was worth its weight in gold. They told us a highly improbable story (next to general praises on his courage and such, and information that he walked with his back straight and a whip in his hand under artillery fire), which I more or less remember like this: my father, during a military operation, saved some personnel (from his unit) and

Continuation on the next page
Katyn: Truth Wins

Katyn negationism is not only vile, but also shortsighted. The truth about Katyn cannot be murdered. The whole Polish nation remembers it. The term “Katyn” has even become one of the symbols of Soviet crimes.

A few days ago was the 88th anniversary of the Katyn criminal decision. On March 3, 1940, the political bureau (Politburo) of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party, that is the Bolshevik party, decided to consider in a special procedure the issue of 14,700 people in prisoner-of-war camps in Kozelsk, Starobilsk and Ostashkov, as well as 11,000 people arrested in the easternvoids of the Second Polish Republic, occupied by the Soviet Union, “without summoning the detainees and without presenting charges, verdicts on terminating the investigation or indictment, sentencing them to the highest punishment – shooting.”

The basis for the political office’s decision was a note written for Joseph Stalin by Lavrentiy Beria – People’s Commissar for Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union. It bears four handwritten signatures “in favour” by the members of the Politburo: Joseph Stalin, Kliment Voroshilov, Yakovlev Molotov and Anastas Mikoyan, as well as a remark on Mikhail Kalinin and Lazar Kaganovich voting in the same way.

Soldiers and policemen taken prisoner on Polish territory as they fought to defend their homeland were shot to death. Officials and intelligentsia, whose only fault was that of being Polish citizens, were shot to death.

The Soviet Union for 50 consecutive years lied to the public about the perpetration of the massacre. It confessed to the crime less than two years before its collapse. In turn, the Russian Federation – the legal successor and unfortunately, increasingly the ideological continuator – the Russian state – has not decided to (even symbolically) punish those responsible for the Katyn massacre. On September 23, 2004, the Supreme Military Prosecutor’s Office of Russia discontinued the investigation in this case “due to the death of the perpetrators.” Their names were not officially published, and the decision to discontinue the investigation, as well as a lot of its documentation, were kept secret. The Russian authorities have recognized (and continue to do so) that for the sake of Russia’s raison d’État, it is better to keep the names of the perpetrators secured with the Seven Seals. Moreover, the criminals in the Bolshevik Poland responsible not only for the Katyn massacre, but also for millions of victims among Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and other nations of the Soviet empire, are still patrons of Russian streets or even cities – such as Kaliningrad neighboring with Poland. A dozen kilometers from the Katyn forest, at the railway station in Smolensk, there is a plaque dedicated to Kalinin, an “outstanding Soviet Party and State activist.”

This is not the only reason for our sorrow. So far, the victims of the Soviet murder have not been rehabilitated, and in recent years we have been observing increasingly intense attempts to relativize this crime, and thus to, indirectly, justify it. In the media controlled by the Kremlin, voices questioning Soviet perpetration are becoming more and more frequent. Attempts are being made to remove a commemorative plaque from a former NKVD Building in Tver, reminding that Polish prisoners of war were executed there.

In 2017, an open-air exhibition dedicated to the Polish-Bolshevik War of 1920, and in 2018 – a permanent museum exhibition on Polish-Russian and Polish-Polish relations in the 20th century, were opened at the memorial complex in Katyn. The exhibition parallels the deaths of [Soviet] prisoners of the 1920 war who died due to an epidemic or as a result of poor sanitation in POW camps, with the coldblooded decision of the highest state authorities of the USSR to execute nearly 26,000 innocent people and citizens of another state, most of whom were in fact murdered. It is not reported though, that Polish POWs in Bolshevik captivity were also dying of similar reasons. This analytically false and simply filthy equation aims to create false symmetry between the two events.

The historical policy of Putin’s Russia – based on manipulations, the cult of criminals, and, increasingly, also on evident lies, offends not only Poles, but all other nations – victims of communist totalitarianism, including Russians themselves. Fortunately, many professional Russian historians or representatives of the Russian intelligentsia, distance themselves from it, while some – including our friends from “Memorial” (a Russian NGO) – openly criticize it. Meanwhile, Katyn negationism is not only vile, but also shortsighted. The truth about Katyn cannot be murdered. The whole Polish nation remembers it, especially the relatives and friends of the victims of the crime. It is remembered by many persons and important circles abroad. The term “Katyn” has even become one of the symbols of Soviet crimes. It is certainly also remembered by the Polish State. Ten years ago, the late President Lech Kaczyński was planning to say the following words during a ceremony at the Katyn cemetery: “Truth – this ultimate weapon against violence – wins. Just as the Katyn war was the foundation of the People’s Republic [Communist State] of Poland, the truth about Katyn is the foundation of the free Poland.” These are very wise words, applicable not only to the truth about Katyn.

On the 70th anniversary of the massacre, our delegates wished to pay tribute to the murdered, and, as representatives of a free nation, express their opposition to totalitarianism. The Commander-in-Chief and the Commanders of the Polish Armed Forces were going there to bow over the officers’ graves. The memory of their tragic flight is still painful. This heavy loss is an obligation for us. It is an obligation to act and continue their work for Poland and for Polish security and defense.

Let us pay tribute to the Polish officers murdered in Katyn.

Mariusz Blaszczak
Prime Minister of National Defense

Piotr Gliński
First Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Culture and National Heritage

Dear Readers,
Our national memory is focused around important Polish anniversaries. The anniversary of the massacre committed on Polish officers in Katyn is, however, a particularly significant date. It reminds us not only of that inhumane crime, but also of the subsequent hard and lonesome struggle for the truth about who was responsible for it. In the postwar communist reality, people paid the highest price for speaking that truth. The truth about Katyn was nevertheless saved from falling into oblivion by steadfast witnesses. For that, we owe them gratitude, respect and memory. The foundations of a lie always crumble over time. Therefore, we should base and build our identity and relations with other nations on truth. It always wins and always liberates.

Today, it is us who are the guardians of the truth, since the officers killed in Katyn belong to our community. The tragic flight that took place ten years ago was organized out of respect to their sacrifice.

Andrzej Duda
President of the Republic of Poland

Katyn and Smolensk are still open wounds

Message of President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda on the occasion of the 88th anniversary of the Katyn Forest Massacre and the 70th anniversary of the Smolensk tragedy

In tribute to the victims of the Katyn crime – prisoners of war and political prisoners who were genocidally killed by the NKVD: generals and officers of the Polish Army, soldiers of the Border Protection Corps, officers of the State Police, officials and other members of the elite of the redem sovereign state who sacrificed their own lives for allegiance to their Fatherland,

in the very special time of the National Celebration of the Hundredth Anniversary of Regaining Independence by the Republic of Poland and the centenary of the victory over the Bolsheviks in the 1920 war.

In the highest recognition and profound gratitude to all those who in time of the communist regime guarded the truth and cherished the memory of the ones killed in Katyn, Kharkov, Tver, Kiev, Minsk and other places of murder;

in appreciation to all who revere our national heroes and pass on the next generations their heritage, ethos and patriotism;

respectfully remembering those who 10 years ago died tragically in an air crash in Smolensk while on their way to celebrate the Katyn crime anniversary;

deeply convinced that memory and historical truth are the foundation of our national identity and contribute to building the spirit and power of Poland that is free, independent and sovereign.

Honor and Glory to the Heroes!

External Memory to Those Who Died for Independent Poland!

Andrzej Duda
President of the Republic of Poland

Special edition 80th Anniversary of the Katyn Forest Massacre

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The last letter written by Lt Edmund Nusbek to have reached his wife and son, dated November 28, 1939

"November 28, 1939. Dearly beloved! I am now in perfect health, just terribly worried about your lot, that’s why I’m asking all of you to write to me as often as possible, and in a very detailed manner, as I can receive mail without any limitations. I am very sorry I can’t be with Jędrek on his name day, I am sending him the best of wishes, and I shall bring the present later, in person... ."

Some supply trains, but he himself was taken captive by the Russians. Before that happened, he had set an appointment with the two men telling us this story at a certain place within the next 24 hours. He arrived at the spot lightly wounded, let off for 24 hours by the Russians to whom he had given an officer’s word of honor. My father handed them the money, the file and our address, asked them to give these things to us, and tell us that he was alive and had to return to Russian captivity. 7

Andrzej Nusbek learned the truth about his father’s fate much later, in the 1970s, when a friend returning from France smuggled a book for him. The book included a list of Polish officers murdered on the strength of the Katyn order, and his father’s name, Edmund Nusbek, was on it. At that moment everything fell into place, and Andrzej finally understood why he could not get a name day gift from his father. Fragmented memories, hopes, feelings started surfacing from the depths of his mind, forming the shape of his father’s shadow. Years later, he also learned that Edmund Nusbek had been murdered by the NKVD in Kharkov on the night of May 2/3, 1940.

According to the historian and journalist Piotr Korczyński of the Military Publishing Institute (WIW) in Warsaw, "It is also possible that the NKVD soldier pierced her body with a bayonet."

It is an extraordinary story. The fate of Lt Edmund Nusbek could have gone in an entirely different direction. As many other Polish officers, he could have survived, if not for the officer’s word of honor which did not allow him to even consider escape. The knightly ethos stood no chance against the totalitarian machine, whose triumph – we know this today – was in fact superficial and short-lived.

There is a woman aviator here in the camp – a brave girl, for four months now she’s been enduring all hardships and discomforts of captivity, and she’s been nothing but strong” – recalled in his diary Maj Kazimierz Szczekowski, a prisoner of the Soviet camp in Kozielsk. Another imprisoned officer, Capt Wacław Mucho, added: "There have been rumors that she is a cousin or a daughter of general N.N., and that she comes from Poznań." 2ndLt Janina Lewandowska certainly drew attention. She was the only woman among thousands of prisoners imprisoned by the Soviets in September 1939. Nevertheless, she ended up like most of them – an executioner shot her in the back of the head with a Walther P38 gun.

It is also possible that the NKVD soldier pierced her body with a bayonet. She liked to walk her own paths, often against the will of her father, who was one of the most respected people in pre-war Poland. She dreamed of becoming a singer, and later of flying aircraft with the white and red checkerboard on the wings. It was this dream that led her into one of the mass graves in Katyn. 2ndLt Janina Lewandowska was murdered 78 years ago.

Yes, she was a general’s daughter. She was born in 1908 as one of the four children of Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki, later the commander of the Greater Poland Uprising, and his wife Agnieszka. She spent her childhood and younger years in Łusowo near Poznań, where her family owned a small property. She graduated from high school in Poznań and began studies at the Poznań Music Conservatory. She wanted to become an opera singer. When it turned out her voice was not good enough, she decided to try performing in comedy shows. This decision led to a big family argument, and cooled Janina’s re-
The Polish state should engage in offensive and active politics of memory. We must persist in the conviction that every institution and each of us personally is obliged to cultivate memory and base it on historical truth and strengthening the Polish national community. Let us not forget that between 1939–1941, the Soviet Union collaborated with Nazi Germany. On the day of the 80th anniversary of the Katyn massacre, let us remember all the Polish people murdered by the Soviets in the death pits of Katyn, Mednoye, Kharkiv and Bykivnia. The Soviets murdered Polish elites to destroy our national identity, deport Poles to the territories of European Russia, Siberia and Kazakhstan. We must not forget that the USSR did not liberate Warsaw in 1944. The Red Army observed the slow agony of the Polish capital. Referring to the message arising from the article written by Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki for Polityko magazine, we need to remember that “the two uprisings in the city – the first one in the Jewish Ghetto in 1943, and the other one in the entire city in 1944 – were proof of cruel German crimes. While the citizens of Warsaw were waiting and hoping for help, Josef Stalin never gave an order for the Red Army to intervene.”

The Polish National Foundation wants to preserve the memory of past generations and actively participates in educational projects and national historical movie productions that aim at showing the historical truth and strengthening the Polish raison d’état. The PNF intensively executes a wide spectrum of activities according to its statutory objectives and its overarching mission to cultivate and foster Polish cultural and social phenomenon which is a victim of rivalry between two criminal echelons. The bodies of General Dowbor-Muśnicki and his wife, Bolesław Popielski, were sent to Wrocław, where it underwent a secret, sharing it only on his dying bed. The body of General Dowbor-Muśnicki’s daughter was exhumed by the Germans in April 1944. It caused some confusion among them, as the presence of a woman in such a place did not fit the general picture of the crime. That is why they decided not to spread this information. "Lewandowska’s skull was nevertheless sent to Wrocław, where it underwent detailed examination,” says Krzyżaniak. According to them, the transplant dexterity of the Katyn crime was severely punised, the doctor kept the skull a secret, sharing it only on his dying bed. His friends managed to confirm that the skull belonged to Janina Lewandowska. In 2005, it was buried at the cemetery in Lusowo in the General’s family vault.

There are only few memorabilia left after Lewandowska and her family. “Throughout the occupation period, their family property was left unattended. The General and his wife were already dead, one of their sons committed suicide, the other one left for France and was never heard of again. Janina’s sister engaged in underground activity and was shot to death by the Germans in Palmarz,” reports the historian. “Today, we only have a few photos of Janina, a diary with an entry written by her, and a small metal plane – a toy that used to stand on her shelf.” Łukasz Zaleźniak, journalist at the Military Publishing Institute (WIW) in Warsaw.
I HAVE FOUGHT THE

Letter to Józef Baran (Bilewski) from his wife Halina sent to the address of the POW camp in Kozelsk, 1940

Rosary, field altar and host box dug out during exhumation

Wedding photograph of Mr. and Mrs. Bilewski

Józef Baran (Bilewski) during track and field competitions

Special edition 80th Anniversary of the Katyn Forest Massacre
I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

Capt. Józef Baran (Bilewski), 1899–1940

Certificate of appreciation from the Polish Athletic Association "for defending Polish colors in national representations and for victorious: 11 out of 27 meetings"
Cold War Over Katyn

On December 22, 1952, a committee of inquiry established by the US Congress, with Ray John Madden as chairman, published a report on the Katyn massacre. The authors did not have any doubt – the NKVD was guilty of the crime. The report was the first official Western document that confirmed Soviet responsibility for killing Polish officers.

This committee unanimously finds, beyond any question of reasonable doubt, that the Soviet NKVD [...] committed the mass murders of the Polish officers and intellectuals in the Katyn Forest near Smolensk, Russia. The evidence, testimony, records, and exhibits recorded by this committee through its investigations and hearings during the last 9 months, overwhelmingly will show the people of the world that Russia is directly responsible for the Katyn massacre." – this is the conclusion of the report, published for the first time at the end of 1952. The document was prepared by members of a select committee of inquiry established by the US Congress [full name: The Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation and Study of the Facts, Evidence, and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre]. It was made up of Congressmen, and its chairman was Ray John Madden. “The Committee’s work did not lead to sentencing the guilty. It was, however, clearly unfeasible from the very beginning,” admits Witold Wasilewski, PhD, a historian of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). “The report itself, though, was of great significance. It was the first time that representatives of a Western power officially stated who was behind the Katyn massacre,” he adds. For eight years, there had been a conspiracy of silence on that subject among the allies.

**Executioners Cover Up Tracks**

The mass graves in Katyn were discovered during the German occupation of the USSR. They were actually found by Polish – forced laborers of Organization Todt (OT), a German organization which executed military engineering projects. The news quickly reached the Germans, who decided to use it for propaganda purposes, and so they started exhuming the graves in April 1944. They would bring international observers to the site, organize press conferences for foreign journalists. All evidence suggested that several thousand Polish officers were killed in the spring of 1940. That in turn meant the crime must have been committed by the Soviets.

Meanwhile, the truth was very inconvenient for the allies, as in June 1944, the USSR had become one of the pillars of the anti-Hitler coalition. The issue of Soviet responsibility for the massacre was therefore successfully swept under the rug in the West. Also, Moscow very quickly started to accuse the USSR of having conducted their own investigation. In January 1944, a group of specialists from NKVD and SMERSH (an umbrella organization for military counter-intelligence agencies) came to the site to “collect evidence.” The agents dug up the graves in order to plant falsified evidence, they prepared false witnesses and removed the inconvenient ones. Soon after that operation, the site of the massacre was made accessible to a national commission headed by a Russian doctor, Nikolay Burdenko. The result of the “investigation” could not be any different – “Germans are the ones responsible for the murder,” concluded Burdenko.

The Russians tried to seal their version of events during the Nuremberg Trial. Ultimately, though, they did not succeed in sentencing the indicated Nazis. The Soviet version was full of inaccuracies that were easy to disprove. However, the Western governments still refused to openly accuse the USSR. “The situation changed only at the beginning of the 1950s. Most likely, the reason for that was the growing tensions caused by the Cold War,” explains Wasilewski.

**Travelling Investigators**

The first cracks on the anti-Hitler alliance appeared as early as almost a year after the collapse of the Third Reich. In March 1946, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill uttered his famous words about the iron curtain that had split Europe apart. Three years later, the West was disturbed to observe that China had joined the Communist side. However, the paths of the former allies ultimately went separate ways with the outbreak of the Korean War (1950–1953). At the same time, also the Katyn issue resurfaced. “The US authorities wanted to publicize the crime, and reveal the true face of the Soviet system. Particularly that the American soldiers fighting in Korea were afraid they would share the fate of the Polish soldiers if they were caught by the Communists,” emphasizes Wasilewski. The so-called Madden’s Committee was made up of seven Congressmen from the House of Representatives, both Republican and Democrat. Some of them had Polish roots. The committee began work on October 11, 1951, by hearing a testimony of Donald B. Stewart. During WWII, he was taken captive by the Germans, and after the discovery of mass graves he was sent to Katyn as a member of the allied POWs delegation to witness the exhumation. In the next nine months, Madden’s Committee heard 81 witnesses, whose testimonies were considered by the Congressmen as crucial to determine the final verdict. Another 300 people provided clarifications and written testimonies. Witnesses heard by the Committee also included Poles, such as Stanisław Mikołajczyk, the former Prime Minister of the Polish Government-in-Exile, or Ferdynand Goetel, a writer and a member of an international commission appointed by the Germans to examine graves in Katyn. There were also anonymous witnesses. The most famous one, called Joe Doe by the press, stood before the Committee in a hood. He introduced himself as a Polish soldier and a former Soviet prisoner. He explained that he had escaped from the Pavlishchev Bor camp with two other prisoners, and later observed the execution of the captives from a hiding place in a tree. His testimony, however, raised a lot of doubt.

Apart from hearing witnesses, Madden’s Committee also studied all available documents, analyzed and investigated the infamous Burdenko Report, and... travelled a lot. The Congressmen collected materials not only in the USA, but also in London, Naples, Frankfurt and Berlin. They invited Polish governments – the one in Warsaw and the one in exile – as well as the authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany and the USSR to cooperate. Only the representatives of the Polish government-in-exile and the Germans agreed. “The Communists refused. Next, they launched a propaganda attack on a scale never seen before. At least as far as the Katyn issue is concerned,” emphasizes Wasilewski.
“In Katyn, my father and other allied POWs saw the execution pits filled with the bodies of murdered Polish officers. The Germans wanted them to witness the exhumation and confirm that the Poles had been killed by the Soviets. My father would later send from the POW camp coded messages to the USA which confirmed the Soviet guilt for this massacre,” tells us Dave Stewart, son of Capt Donald B. Stewart.

“How come that Capt Donald B. Stewart was in Katyn Forest in May 1945? Dave Stewart: He was a West Point graduate deployed to the 177th Artillery Regiment of the US Army. In 1944, he was sent as a battery commander to North Africa, where the Allies opened the front against the Germans. He was taken captive in February 1945 during the Battle of Cassino Pass in Tunnica, which was one of the first encounters of the US forces with Wehrmacht. At that time, about 90% of his unit was taken captive. My father was in Oflag IX A/Z in Rottgen in Germany. In May 1945, the Germans demanded that a group of English-speaking prisoners go to Smolensk to witness the exhumation of the mass graves of Polish officers discovered by the Germans. The Nazis wanted to take advantage of this discovery, and use it to divide the Allies and the Soviets. My father and another American soldier, Lt Col John H. Van Vliet Jr., were to be some of those prisoners.

What was your father’s reaction to this order? He refused, as he didn’t want to participate in Nazi propaganda. My father and LtCol Van Vliet were convinced that it was the Germans who were guilty of this massacre, and this entire action was just a manipulation to take the Katyn crime off Nazi hands. A group of eight POWs from the USA, Great Britain and its dominions was however taken to Katyn, despite their protest and refusal to sign a paper which obliged them not to make any attempts of escape on their way to and from Katyn. The prisoners, on their way to the crime site, decided they would not cooperate with the Germans, and while there, they would not say much, show no emotions or in any way express their opinions, so the Germans could not anything for their own purposes.

What did your father remember from Katyn? The odor of decomposing bodies. The prisoners arrived at the Katyn Forest on May 15. My father said they could smell the fetor at the distance of three kilometers away from the forest. While on site, they would almost continuously smoke cigarettes to cover this terrible smell. However, it was in their clothes and they could smell it long after they left the site of the massacre. In Katyn, they saw execution pits full of dead bodies. They had to point to one body, which was then taken out and examined. Personal belongings of the victims were also excavated. After this, my father and LtCol Van Vliet realized that the Germans were telling the truth, and it was the Soviets who had murdered the Polish officers.

How did they know that? From the documents found in the pits? Partially so, yes. None of the letters, newspapers clipping found with the bodies were dated later than the spring of 1945. The Soviets claimed that the massacre was conducted by the Germans in late summer and fall of 1941, and not the spring of 1942. However, these documents could have been falsely falsified. What convinced my father was the shoes. Their own jackboots – his and his fellow officers’ who had been in captivity for almost two years then – were seriously worn out, while the jackboots of the murdered Polish POWs as well as their uniforms were in a very good state. That meant they couldn’t have been using them for two and a half years. Also, the corpses were in a state of advanced decay, which meant that Polish officers couldn’t have been shot in 1941, but much earlier. At the end of the prisoners’ stay, the German gave them packages with copies of documents on exhumation as well as photographs taken during their visit.

Did the soldiers talk to each other about their conclusions from this visit? They didn’t, and decided to say nothing in the presence of the Germans who were filming and taking photographs during the visit. They were aware that every gesture or word could be used by German propaganda, and this in turn could be considered by the US Army Command as collaboration with Germany. Soon after, in June 1945, my father and LtCol Van Vliet were sent to Oflag 64 in Szubin near Bydgoszcz. There, they didn’t talk anybody about what they had seen in Katyn either.

However, they kept sending coded messages to the USA.

That’s true, they both knew military intelligence codes, which let them encode the information, e.g. about the situation in the Oflag. They also would send to the USA coded messages about the Katyn Forest Massacre, confirming that the Soviets were to be blamed. For the gist of one of my father’s coded messages was: “German claims regarding Katyn are substantially correct in the opinion of Van Vliet and myself.” My father also decided to save as evidence the materials and photographs he had received from the Germans. In January 1945, when the Red Army was approaching and the Germans ordered evacuation of the Szubin camp, my father hid the documents in-between the newspaper layers he used for insulating his clothes. During the march, he would also send to the Pentagon’s consent to testify in 1971 before the US Congress Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation and Study of the Facts, Evidence and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre with Dr. Henry Kissinger as chairman. He was the first witness to be cross-examined. He confirmed the information he sent in coded letters about the Soviet guilt for the crime. Following the order, he never talked about Katyn afterwards, even after he retired in 1968.

How long did he have to keep it secret? Until 1975, when one of the journalists was given a green light from Pentagon to interview him and LtCol Van Vliet about Katyn. From then on, my father would willingly give interviews and meet with the Polish community in Chicago. He wanted to spread information about what the Soviets had done, and how the US administration had been hiding the truth not to annoy Russia. Unfortunately, despite his great desire to visit Poland, he never went there.

Why? He was afraid of what the Russians could do to him if they caught him. He also warned me against visiting Communist countries. Unfortunately, my father died in 1984, before LtCol Van Vliet about Katyn. That’s why me and my siblings often visit Poland now in order to remember people about the Katyn crime and about the role of our father in revealing the truth about it. I have collected the Katyn documents. I have the copies of documents on the massacre, including my father’s coded message where he confirmed the Soviet guilt for Katyn.”
They Bore Witness to the Soviet Crime

The participants of the delegations organized by the Germans in 1943, who were to confirm the Soviet responsibility for the murder of Polish officers in Katyn, became inconvenient witnesses for the USSR. After the war, they were accused of collaborating with Germans, wanted on arrest warrants, put in prison. Some of them even disappeared in unexplained circumstances – says Professor Tadeusz Wolsza.

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The winter of 1939/1940 proved to be exceptionally severe. Snowdrifts and freezing weather paralyzed life in almost all of Europe. That harsh winter brought a pause for the fighting armies. However, it did not give any breathing space to Poland.

Great Terror
Shortly after the decision to annex Kresy to the USSR, another directive was issued. It was to ultimately change the lives of the region’s inhabitants into a nightmare. On November 29, the Supreme Soviet (Council) of the Soviet Union granted Soviet citizenship to all people who had been living on the annexed territories on November 1–2. On December 10, 1919, a decree was passed on issuing passports, i.e. Soviet IDs, to all those people. That compulsory “passportization” was a perfect way for the NKVD to collect or complete data about the inhabitants of Kresy, particularly Poles, who were the biggest problem for the Soviet security service at the time. The people forced into Soviet citizenship were immediately subject to conscription to the Red Army. In that way, 95,000 Poles were conscripted at once to its labor battalions. Moreover, in December 1939, the NKVD increased the number of arrests. At that time, Namely in the cities located in Kresy, many former employees of the Polish administration, judiciary, social and economic activists, and reserve officers were arrested. They were taken to labor camps on the strength of sentences given by open or secret tribunals. As it turned out, this was already the beginning – the launch of a great machine of terror created by the NKVD to subdue Kresy.

The NKVD officers were well aware that no kind of propaganda or indoctrination
Going to Smolensk, both of them were deeply convinced that it was the Germans who had been responsible for the massacre.

**What convinced them that the Germans were telling the truth?**
Documents found in the graves, as well as shoes and uniforms which were in good condition. That, and of course the findings of the doctors and talks with the delegates of the Polish Red Cross. Soon after, the American officers were put in Oflag 64 in Stabn in Bydgoszcz, from where they sent ciphers to communications on the Katyn outrage, to the Polish garrison in Odessa, to MSU military intelligence. After the liberation of the camp, in May 1945, the US Col. Vret submitted a report to the Pentagon, confirming again that the USSR was responsible for the massacre in Katyn. Unfortunately, the document was classified.

The Germans also organized visits to Katyn for journalists and writers from occupied Europe. They were to later spread the information on the crime in their countries. One of such people was Józef Mackiewicz, a writer and a publicist who had earlier been interned to death by the underground court. He had been accused of collaboration with the enemy and several anti-communist articles in 1941 in a German-controlled propaganda newspaper published in Vilnuis, Gronie Codzienny. However, the head of the cell executing the sentences, Sergiur Pareszki, refused to carry out the punishment, since he doubted Mackiewicz’s fault. Later, the Col. Aleksander Krzyżanowski, the commander of the Vilnius District of the Home Army, looked into the case and decided to revoke the sentence. In the spring of 1947, Mackiewicz, upon the consent of Polish underground authorities, went to Katyn. At that time, also the Technical Commission of the Polish Red Cross, led by Marian Wodziński, PhD, was working at the site of the massacre. The task of the Commission was to exhume and identify the victims. After Mackiewicz returned, he gave an interview that was published in Gronie Codzienny, entitled “I Saw It with My Own Eyes.” Fernand Goetz also a well-known writer, participated in another delegation with the knowledge and consent of the Government Delegation for Poland. He too prepared a report after his return. It is worth emphasizing here that reports from the site of the Soviet crime reached the Polish Government in London quite quickly, due to the effort undertaken by the authorities of the Polish Underground State.

They began to prepare a large number of railway sets and mark out deportation routes to take people away into the furthest regions of the vast Soviet empire.

**Freezing Nightmare**
On the night of February 9/10, 1940, together with another wave of frost and blizzards, the NKVD began their deportations. The course of that horrible night was similar in thousands of Polish towns, settlements and hamlets – it was planned by the NKVD to the smallest detail. According to the prescription lists, the houses of families selected for deportation were first surrounded. The residents, brutality took ten minutes to remove there to take their personal items, cookware and food reserves for several weeks. After that, they were put into sleighs or taken on foot to the nearest train station, where cattle wagons had already been waiting for them on the side track. This is how the then teenage Adela Żurawska from Czortków (at the time already a part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), a group of 120–150 Polish secondary school teenagers started an uprising. Partly armed, they seized a train station with a view to taking control of a transport route to Romania, from where it was possible to get to France, and join the Polish Army there. After the initial panic among the soldiers of the Soviet garrison, the riot was quickly suppressed. Eight mutineers were executed in Odessa, and the rest were imprisoned, but the whole situation proved that Molotov had been too rash to risk a war.

**One of the first questions they were asked on entering the camp was: “Where do you want to go when you are released?”** They usually answered: “To my family,” and gave the address. In this simple way, the NKVD collected addresses to later deport the prisoners’ families to the east. A total of about 120,000 Polish citizens (and even close to a million of some of his works.

**Double Tragedy**

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Foreword by Gen Władysław Anders," and a year later he published his own book, in German, on the Katyn massacre. He also tried to publish it in the USA, but without success. Both writers, from then on, took an important role in spreading the truth about the Soviet responsibility for the crime. Also Goetz wrote many articles on the subject and conducted a priceless interview with Ivan Krovitskys, a peasant living near Katyn, who in the spring of 1940 witnessed the NKVD bringing Polish officers in trucks. He had heard from the locals about digging holes in the woods. Both Goetz and Mackiewicz finally appointed committee of inquiry, created in 1931 in the USA for the purpose of explaining the Katyn crime. In total, Ray Maddens’s Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation of the Fact, Evidence and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre heard several hundred witnesses, including both US officers and several doctors: Tramsen, Orsós, Naville, Palmie- ri. In 1941, it published a final report summarizing their findings in a book: The Soviet Union guilty of the Katyn massacre. **Interwiews by Anna Dąbrowska**

Professor Tadeusz Waldman is a historian and a political scientist, Deputy Chairman at the College of the Institute of National Remem- brance, Chairman of the Museum Committee at the Museum of the Second World War, and a Member of the Scientific Council at the History Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He deals with the problem of Stalin’s crimes in post-war Poland and the history of the Katyn massacre. His book entitled Dzity Katynia, awarded in a competition organized by Janusz Kuryka Founda- tion, was published in the USA under the title Encounter with Katyn in 1959 (due to the efforts of Carolina Academic Press).
Squeezed into our wagon. After four or five days we headed east. [...] One big cry of despair was then heard – people started wailing and praying. This February deportation concerned mainly military settlers, foresters and other civil servants, and railroaders. All of them with their families, of course. If heads of families had been proven to be officers, businessmen or landowners, they were directed to gulags on the strength of sentences given by emergency courts. The rest of the people deported in February 1940 – mainly women, children and old people – were taken to the Urals and Siberia, where they had to “start a new life” in extremely severe conditions. Many of them had not lived to experience that hell – they had died of cold and hunger during the transport.

The operation of February 9/10, 1940 was the first of a whole series of deportations planned by the NKVD to once and for all cleanse the annexed territories of all Poles. In April, the families of the imprisoned, sentenced and arrested became victims of mass deportations. That way, the closest families of Polish officers who were being murdered in Katyn at the same time were among people transported to Kazakhstan. In June, deportations covered fugitives from central and western Poland. Contrary to what the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, claims, among the Polish citizens deported at that time were thousands of Jewish people who had escaped from the repressions of Stalin’s ally – Hitler. Many of them did not survive the transport in cattle wagons or died later at the place of their exile – Arkhangelsk or Krasnoyarsk.

Finally, the last wave of deportations, executed soon before the outbreak of the German-Soviet War in May and June 1941, concerned fugitives from the Vilnius Region. They were being transported to Kazakhstan and Siberia practically until the very last days of peace between the Third Reich and the USSR. Many trains with deportees were in fact taken over by Wehrmacht on entering Kresy on June 22, 1941. It is very hard to estimate how many Polish citizens were deported in total during the four waves of deportations. The number mentioned most often oscillates between 400-500 thousand. One thing is certain – all of them faced hell on earth in the “Soviet paradise.” Those who were lucky enough to survive, joined General Władysław Anders’ army after the “amnesty” of July 1944 and later took part in the mass exodus to the West. Those who “did not make it to Anders” returned to Poland in the ranks of General Zygmunt Berling’s army. This was also the fate of the above-quoted Adela Żurawska.