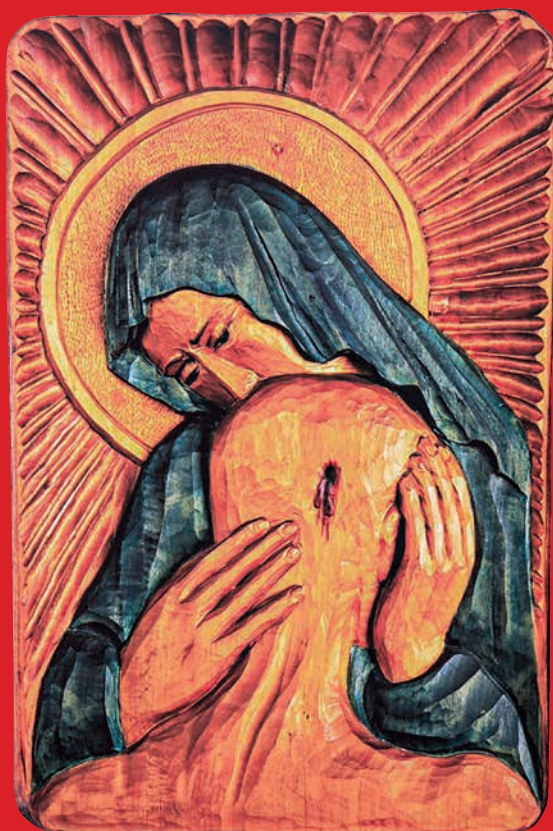


MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE



KATYN MASSACRE 1940

Conspiracy and Treachery
Crime and Untruth



Our Lady of Katyn

KATYN MASSACRE

As a consequence of the Russian aggression against Poland in September 1939, tens of thousands of officers and soldiers of the Polish Army were taken prisoner, and another tens of thousands of civilians, reservists and professional soldiers were imprisoned after the annexation of eastern Polish territories by the Soviet Union. Upon the decision of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist [Bolshevik] Party of the Soviet Union (the Politburo) of March 1940, signed, inter alia, by Joseph Stalin, Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, and Mikhail Kalinin, the nominal leader of the Soviet Union, it was decided to murder at once about

26,000 persons from among Polish prisoners of war and political prisoners who were deemed potential enemies and who constituted the elite of the Polish nation. The mass murder took place in April and May 1940. The bodies of about 4,400 victims, Polish officers from the Kozielsk POW camp located in Western Russia, were discovered in 1943 by the Germans who occupied the area after their aggression against Russia one and a half years earlier. The corpses of the restrained victims, piled up in layers, killed by shots to the back of the head and blows of bayonets, were resting in several mass graves in the vicinity of Katyn near Smolensk.

FOT. JAKUB SZYMCIUK



MARIUSZ BŁASZCZAK,
POLISH MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

KATYN. CRIME AND UNTRUTH

DEAR READERS,

Katyn – this word has been resonating with the heart of every Pole for over 80 years. It is the symbol of genocide, the extermination of Polish elites. It is also a symbol of conspiracy and treachery, crime and untruth. The massacre on Polish officers in Katyn was only possible because it had been preceded by a criminal pact concluded by Germany and Soviet Russia. A consequence of this pact for independent Poland was the invasion of Hitler's Germany on September 1, 1939 and Stalin's Russia on September 17. We remember this today as a "knife stabbed in our back." These dates unravel infinite layers of suffering and destruction experienced by Poland and its citizens. Thousands of officers were killed in Katyn. They were murdered with a shot in the back of their heads, treacherously, and the traces of this crime were concealed. The victims' families were being sent into exile to the faraway lands of Russia. Those fighting for the truth were being punished for years. Although the soil covered the traces of this crime, and the forest grew on the remains of our soldiers' corpses, the truth cannot be buried, and the blame cannot be erased.

We should keep in mind that the power of these crimes' machine had grown under the eye of the world. Afterwards, to stop this machine, many nations suffered tremendous sacrifices, innocent blood was shed, and, years later, the Never Again War spell was being cast on reality. Today, we can see quite clearly that our words only describe reality, while it is our deeds that shape it. Let the Katyn Massacre be a warning to everyone, let the remembrance of it never fade. Just as we should remember the victims of the Smolensk air crash, whose death forever entwined with the tragic history of Katyn.

Rest in Peace, Katyn Officers!
Honor and Glory to the Heroes!

WORLD ORDER



The Moscow Kremlin, 1939. Secretary General of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Joseph Stalin and Foreign Minister of national socialist Germany Joachim von Ribbentrop

In the evening of August 23, 1939 in Moscow, German and Russian foreign ministers: Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav Molotov signed the Soviet-German pact on non-aggression. In the secret annex to the pact, both leaders divided the territories of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Romania.

When Adolf Hitler came to power, the relations between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union were not the best. The breakthrough was on March 10, 1939, when Russian leader Joseph Stalin during the communist party rally declared that he was able to communicate with every country, regardless of its political system. First secret negotiations between the totalitarian regimes started. At the same time, open talks were held between the Soviet Union and the representatives of France and Great Britain.

A close relationship between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union was a practical choice for both parties. Hitler wanted a security guarantee in the East during his aggression on Poland. Stalin was counting on the war in Poland to weaken the West, which would facilitate the Soviets their own invasion on Poland and earn more time to rearm the army before their planned war against the Third Reich.

Conclusion of the pact paved Germany and the Soviet Union the way to joint armed invasion on Poland and to dividing Polish territory. The pact was also a prelude to starting the Second World War, the greatest conflict in world history.

The pact is also called the fourth partition of Poland, because it reminds Poles of their 100-year slavery experience. In the second half of the 18th century, three Polish neighbors, Russia, Prussia and Austria, invaded Poland and partitioned its territory. As a result, an independent Polish state did not exist on the map of Europe for over 100 years. Throughout that time, the Poles would make attempts to fight for their freedom, but they only succeeded after WWI in 1918. Two years later, in 1920, Polish army defeated Soviet army and forced it to withdraw.

On September 1, German forces attacked Poland, and on September 17, they were joined by the Red Army. A symbol of this cooperation was a joint victory parade of both armies on September 22 in Brest-on-the-Bug. The alliance ended when Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June of 1941.

Anna Dąbrowska

The secret of politics? Make a good treaty with Russia

Otto von Bismarck, Minister President of Kingdom of Prussia and Chancellor of the German Empire (1863)

AFTER 1939

WHEN FORCED
TO FIGHT ON
TWO FRONTS,
POLAND STOOD
NO CHANCE



German generals Mauritz von Wiktorin and Heinz Guderian with Russian kombrig (brigade general) Semyon Krivoshein are celebrating joint victory parade of Wehrmacht and the Red Army in Brest-on-the-Bug in Poland on September 22, 1939. Krivoshein, being of Russian Jewish descent, is wishing Hitler's commander "a quick victory over capitalist England," and invites him to celebrate this in Moscow.



On September 28, a day of Warsaw's capitulation to Germany. The moment of signing in Moscow a new German-Russian treaty on borders and friendship. From left, standing: Ribbentrop's adjutant, Chief of General Staff of the Red Army and Deputy People's Commissar for Defense Boris Shaposhnikov who prepared the plans of Russian aggression on Poland, Ribbentrop, Stalin, First Secretary of Russian Embassy in Berlin, sitting: People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov, leaning over him is the Russian ambassador. On the wall, a portrait of Vladimir Lenin, a creator of communist Russia and a signatory of the first German and Russian alliance in 1918.



Fruit of alliance. Russian train with crude oil is arriving at the station in Premissel border town - German part of the divided between two occupiers Polish town of Przemyśl, June 1940

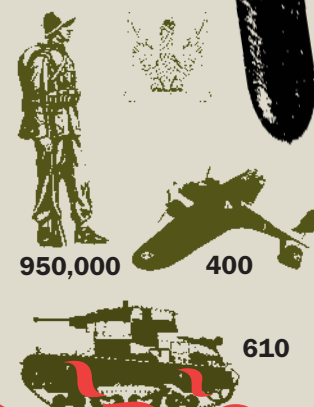


Fruit of alliance. Russian cruiser in German Swinemünde (Polish: Świnoujście) port at the Baltic Sea, January of 1940. A propaganda photograph by Hitler's press publishing house in Poland

GERMAN FORCES IN 09/1939



POLISH FORCES IN 09/1939



SOVIET FORCES IN 09/1939



POLAND

WAS THE FIRST VICTIM IN WORLD WAR II

**On September 1, 1939,
Hitler's Germany invaded Poland**

**GERMAN
NATIONAL
SOCIALISTS WERE
RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE DEATH
OF 6 MILLION
POLISH CITIZENS**



**In extermination camps,
pacifications and
executions – 3.577
million people were killed**



**Thousands of children – mentally ill,
intellectually and physically
disabled and those unborn – were
murdered**



**In prisons,
concentration camps
and other places of
confinement, 1.286
million people died**



**Germany with their Nazi
collaborators murdered 1.8 million
people on occupied eastern
territories of Poland: 95,000
in eastern Lithuania; 500,000
in western Belarus; 1.2 million
in western Ukraine**

Population of Poland



before the war – 35 million



after the war – 24 million

Following the 1944 uprising, the capital of Poland was razed to the ground by the Germans

On September 17, 1939, Stalin's Russia invaded Poland

RUSSIAN COMMUNISTS HAVE LED TO THE DEATHS OF 150,000 POLISH CITIZENS



In April and May of 1940, 14,600 Polish officers – prisoners of Soviet war camps in Kozelsk, Ostashkov and Starobilsk, were murdered by a shot in the back of their heads



In June and July of 1941, after Germany attacked the Soviet Union, in the Soviet prison camps and during death marches thousands of prisoners were murdered



In exile in the far lands of the Soviet Union, 58,000 people died of exhaustion, diseases and drudgery

SEPTEMBER 1, 1939

FIRST WWII VICTIMS

The view of the bombed Wieluń led to the following confession of Claus von Stauffenberg, the future national hero of the new (?) Germany: "The [Wieluń] population is an incredible mob, so many Jews and crossbreeds. It is a people who feel good only under a whip. Thousands of prisoners of war will serve us well in agricultural works" (from a letter to his wife). A Polish journalist described his impressions from his visit to Stuttgart, near which Stauffenberg was born:

"Anyone who takes the trouble to visit the Stauffenberg Memorial Chamber in Stuttgart can see an album with photographs from the 1939 campaign by Klaus Werner Reerink, a friend of Stauffenberg's from the same unit. The Polish viewer must be disturbed by the picture taken in the apartment in the destroyed by bombs Wieluń, with the corpse of a dead Polish victim looking with the blind eyes in camera's lens in the foreground. It is difficult to think calmly about officers who consider such photographs as an interesting souvenir."

Every year on July 20, in memory of the unsuccessful assassination attempt on Hitler, for which Stauffenberg paid with his life, the Bundeswehr recruits take an oath in Berlin. The assassins had a military goal – to end the war in the West after the Führer's death, and to move all their forces to the East. They also clearly set their political goals – maintain power and restore the eastern border of the Reich to what it was in 1914. Independent Poland was not included in their plans.

Józef Gawlina, a Polish military bishop, unable to find understanding in the Roman curia at the beginning of the war, asked the Pope:

"Is it possible to distinguish between a soldier and a woman, between shepherds and the army, at the altitude of 500 meters?"

"Yes, it is."

"Therefore, German pilots who bomb women and shepherds should be punished individually for their crimes."

Our moral theology (...) passes on (...) the responsibility, and thus the consequences to the commanders. Meanwhile, there are too many individual crimes going on, the punishing of which is only just and right."

We know that those – the most common – war crimes did not find their finale after the war before the Nuremberg Tribunal, which tried only selected officials and only for crimes 'against humanity'. The Russians, like their former German accomplices, never had such scruples, as well as the Western allies made the Germans and the Japanese taste their own medicine. For all of them, what counted the most was to end their planned campaigns through the incineration of entire cities and towns, starting from Wieluń full of the Mischlings to Nagasaki, the capital of Japanese Christians. In 1943, Leonia Jabłonkówna, a Polish writer of Jewish origin, published her most Christian poem, The Prayer, in the underground press:

*For the grave that shines like a temptation
For those who get weaker in the martyr's days
Lord, save women and children
From the burning fires of Hamburg.*

*For the cross blasphemed in the chapels
For the wrongs done to the cemetery ashes
Preserve towering Gothic churches
In the enemy's capitals.*

[transl. Barbara Wierczyńska]

However, it was a voice that was both exaggerated ("cut your coat according to your cloth") and – isolated.

Jacek Żurek



The Polish border town of Wieluń bombed by the Germans on September 1, 1939



SEPTEMBER 22, 1939 VICTORY PARADE

Soldiers of the Wehrmacht and the Red Army with the Soviet propaganda poster of Joseph Stalin in the background in the city of Brest on the Bug, Poland, on September 22, 1939. That day, the soldiers of both armies participated in a parade there, which was to celebrate a victorious war campaign in Poland.

The parade was welcomed by two tank commanders – General Heinz Guderian (German army) and General Semyon Krivoshein (Soviet army). Polish commander, who defended Brest against the Germans, General Konstanty Plisowski, was arrested by the Soviet NKVD, and then murdered in 1940 in Katyn.

NIGHT OF DEPORTATIONS

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.

Gestapo and the NKVD tirelessly performed their criminal duties. The Soviets were working particularly hard to prepare for an extensive operation they were to carry out in Kresy (Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic).

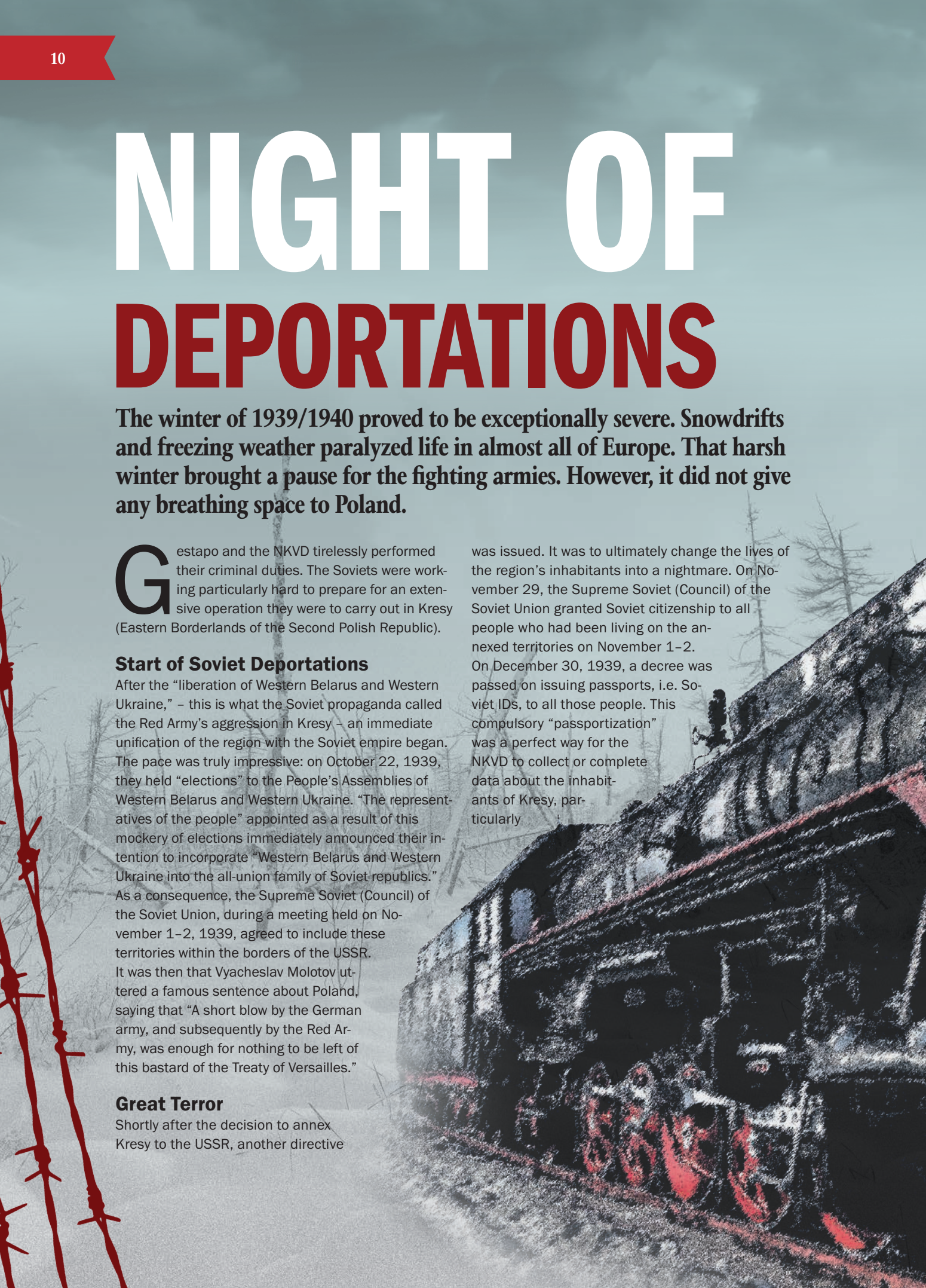
Start of Soviet Deportations

After the “liberation of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine,” – this is what the Soviet propaganda called the Red Army’s aggression in Kresy – an immediate unification of the region with the Soviet empire began. The pace was truly impressive: on October 22, 1939, they held “elections” to the People’s Assemblies of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine. “The representatives of the people” appointed as a result of this mockery of elections immediately announced their intention to incorporate “Western Belarus and Western Ukraine into the all-union family of Soviet republics.” As a consequence, the Supreme Soviet (Council) of the Soviet Union, during a meeting held on November 1–2, 1939, agreed to include these territories within the borders of the USSR. It was then that Vyacheslav Molotov uttered a famous sentence about Poland, saying that “A short blow by the German army, and subsequently by the Red Army, was enough for nothing to be left of this bastard of the Treaty of Versailles.”

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 30, 1939, a decree was passed on issuing passports, i.e. Soviet IDs, to all those people. This 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 this way, 150,000 Poles were conscripted at once to its labor battalions. Moreover, in December 1939, the NKVD increased the number of arrests. At that time, mainly 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 only 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 can turn Poles into “Soviet people.” Besides, they had clear grounds to think that – for example, on January 21, 1940, in 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 Odesa, and the rest were imprisoned, but the whole

THE NKVD OFFICERS WERE WELL AWARE THAT NO KIND OF PROPAGANDA OR INDOCTRINATION CAN TURN POLES INTO “SOVIET PEOPLE.”

situation proved that Molotov had been too rash to announce the definite end of Poland. The NKVD then reached for proven methods of repressing not only single people, but entire communities and social groups. 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 proscription lists, the houses of families selected for deportation were first surrounded. The residents, brutally woken from sleep, were then allowed 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 Lipowiec near Drohobycz remembered that moment: "Soviet soldiers who surrounded our house gave us a moment to pack the most important things, and then put everyone in a sleigh. We were taken to the train station in Zborów, where a very long train of cattle wagons was waiting for us under steam. About fifty people were 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 NUMBER MENTIONED MOST OFTEN OSCILLATES BETWEEN 400,000-500,000.

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

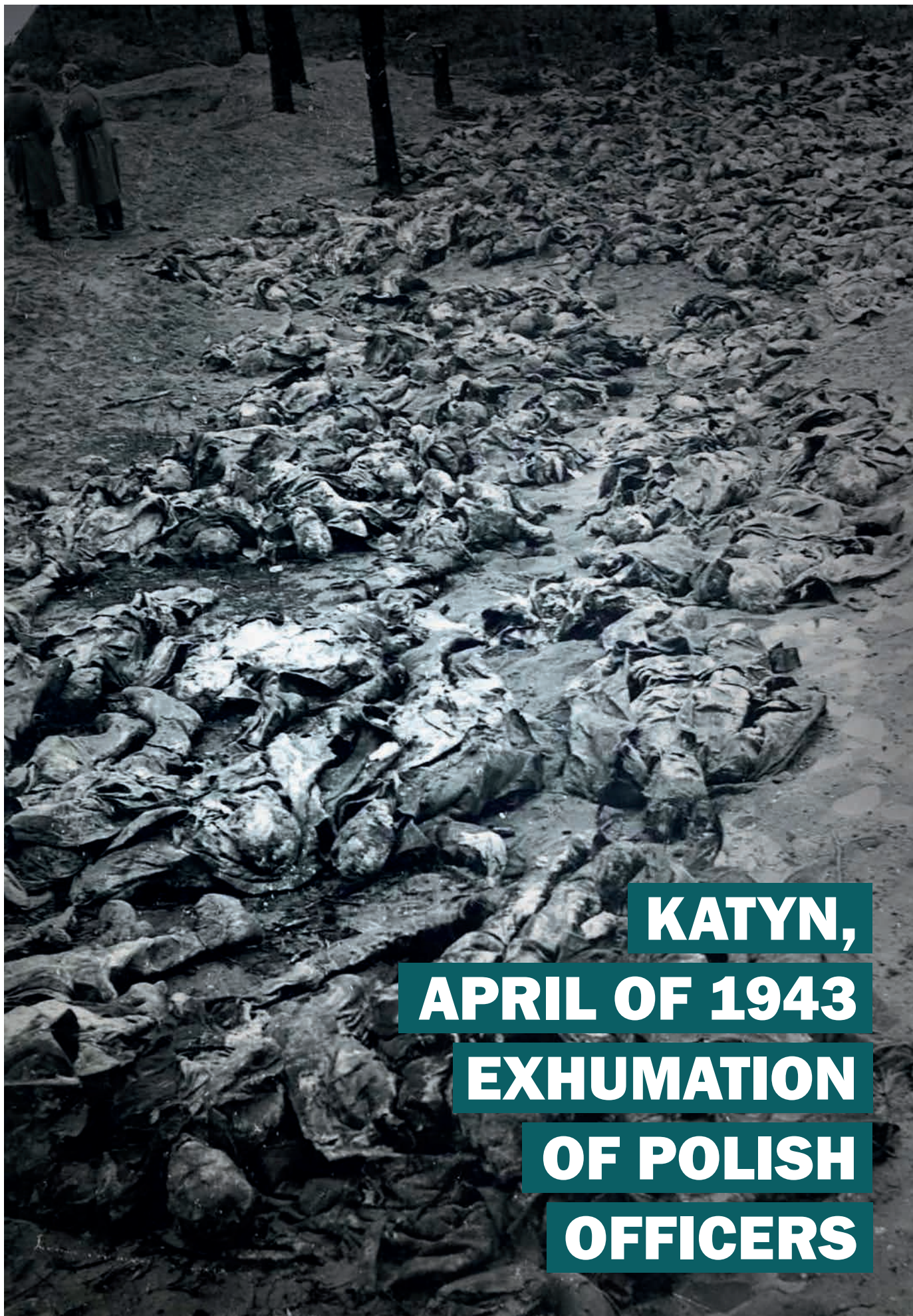
were among people transported to Kazakhstan. In June, deportations covered fugitives from central and western Poland. Contrary to what the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, claims, among the Polish citizens deported at that time were thousands of Jewish people who had escaped from the re-

pressions 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. 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 400,000-500,000.

*Piotr Korczyński,
a historian, a journalist, and Deputy Editor-in-Chief
for the Polska Zbrojna. Historia quarterly*





**KATYN,
APRIL OF 1943
EXHUMATION
OF POLISH
OFFICERS**

1940 KATYN MASSACRE

In 1939, the Russians during their war with Poland imprisoned 125,000 prisoners of war. Among them, there were 40,000 who were held in special POW camps of the Soviet political police (NKVD). Three largest, collective NKVD POW camps, where selected prisoners were imprisoned, were located in **KOZELSK** and **OSTASHKOV** in western Russia and in **STAROBILSK** in eastern Ukraine.

Moreover, under the Russian occupation in the period of 1939–1941, 109,200 Polish citizens were arrested for ‘counter-revolutionary crimes’ – two-fifth of them were Poles, and the rest of prisoners were the representatives of numerous minorities living in the eastern parts of Poland – Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Belarusians and Jews.

The fate of over 20,000 people, who were to be executed by shooting for having been ‘fierce enemies of Soviet authority,’ on March 5, 1940 was decided on by means of the decision signed by six members of the Political Bureau of the Russian communist party: Joseph Stalin (Georgian), Kliment Voroshilov (Ukrainian), Vyacheslav Molotov (Russian), Anastas Mikoyan (Armenian), Mikhail Kalinin (Russian), and Lazar Kaganovich (Jewish).

According to the decision in April and May, 1940, the NKVD officers murdered secretly 14,600 Polish POWs in such places as **KATYN** near Smolensk and Tver in western Russia and in **KHARKIV** in Ukraine. The victims were buried in mass graves in **KATYN, MEDNOYE** near Tver and **PIATYKHATKY** near Kharkiv, today the locations of Polish War Cemeteries. By force of the same decision, 7,000 Polish citizens from prisons located on the territory of eastern Poland and today’s Belarus and Ukraine were also shot. The prisoners from the northern parts of occupied territories (Vilnius and Grodno region, Polesia) were buried in mass graves in **KURAPATY** on the outskirts of **MINSK**



BERLIN

GERMAN REICH



WARSAW

POLAND

ESTONIA

LATVIA

LITHUANIA

VILNIUS REGION

GRODNO REGION

BYEL

POLESIA

WOLHYNIA

UKR

EASTERN LESSER POLAND

in Belarus, while the prisoners from southern regions (Volhynia and Eastern Lesser Poland) in **BYKIVNIA** near **KYIV** (today, the location of the Polish War Cemetery), and in **PIATYKHATKY** near **KHARKIV** and **KHERSON** in Ukraine.

The largest of these mass graves was discovered in 1943 by the Germans,

who at the time conducted the exhumation and identification of bodies, at the same time exploiting this discovery in propaganda operation against Soviet Russia, with which they were at war. It was in **KATYN** near Smolensk – hence, the symbolic name of the **KATYN MASSACRE**.

Joseph Stalin

★ KOZELSK

4,594 POWs

2,900	lieutenants and 2nd lieutenants
700	captains and rotamasters
500	officer cadets
258	majors
79	lieutenant colonels
24	colonels
4	generals
1	rear-admiral

★ OSTASHKOV

6,364 POWs

4,924	policemen of lower ranks
775	police warrant officers
240	police and military police officers
198	Prison Guard officers
72	army warrant officers and privates
48	army officers
9	intelligence service officers



MOSCOW ●

SOVIET UNION



★ STAROBILSK

3,893 POWs

2,450	lieutenants and 2nd lieutenants
1,000	captains and rotamasters
230	majors
127	lieutenant colonels
55	colonels
9	generals



RUSSIAN SSR

UKRAINIAN SSR

BYKIVNIA

KYIV

PIATYKHATKY

KHARKIV

STAROBILSK

KHERSON

MAP LEGEND



main NKVD POW camps for Polish officers, 1939-1940



main locations of mass executions, 1940



locations of mass graves



transport routes to the locations of mass murders and graves



state borders in October, 1938



German-Soviet border on Polish territory, 1939-1941



countries conquered by the Soviet Union, 1940

SSR Soviet Socialist Republic

LITHUANIA countries formed in place of the Soviet Union, 1990-1991

EASTERN EUROPE TODAY



I HAVE FOUGHT

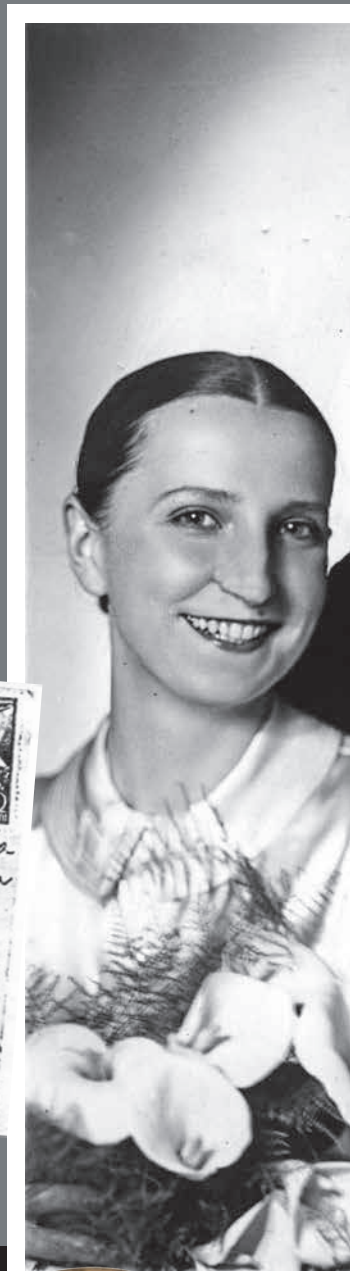
Józef Baran (Bilewski) was identified during exhumation in Katyn as the corpse no. 1586. With the corpse, vaccination certificates, business cards and photographs were found



Józef Baran (Bilewski) during track and field competitions



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



GOOD FIGHT



Capt Józef Baran
(Bilewski),
1899–1940



Wedding photograph
of Mr. and Mrs.
Bilewski



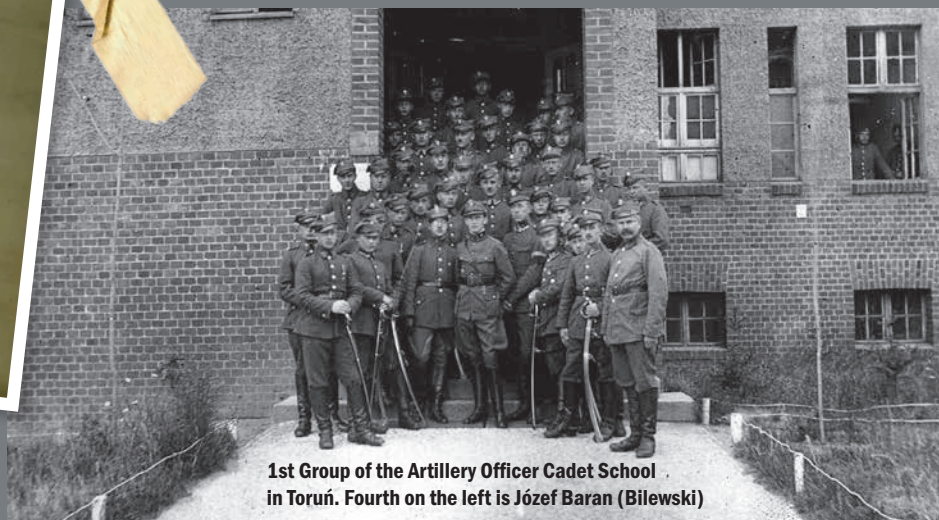
With artillerymen. Second on the
right is Józef Baran (Bilewski)



With friends. Sitting second
on the right is Józef Baran
(Bilewski)



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



1st Group of the Artillery Officer Cadet School
in Toruń. Fourth on the left is Józef Baran (Bilewski)

METAL PLANE

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 Polish aircraft. It was this dream that led her into one of the mass graves in Katyn. 2ndLt Janina Lewandowska was murdered 78 years ago.

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 Kozłowski. 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 (Pilot) Janina Lewandowska certainly drew attention. She was the only woman among thousands of prisoners imprisoned by the Soviets in September 1939. Nevertheless,



Janina Lewandowska (née Dowbor-Muśnicka)

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.

Sky-High Dream

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 Lusowo near Poznań, where her family owned a small property. She graduated from high school in Poznań and

JANINA LEWANDOWSKA WAS THE ONLY WOMAN WHOSE CORPSE WAS IDENTIFIED DURING EXHUMATION IN KATYN IN 1943

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 relationship with her father. At that time, however, Janina’s heart was already set on a new passion – she got interested in gliding and parachuting, and at the age of 22 she became the first woman in Europe to parachute-jump from 5,000 meters. In 1936, Janina finished Higher School of Pilots in Poznań-Ławica and became a member of the local aeroclub. She also got married to Mieczysław Lewandowski, a gliding instructor.

"At that time, Janina's ties with the military were limited to a radiotelegraphy course she had completed" says Michał Krzyżaniak, PhD, the director of the Museum of Greater Poland Insurgents in Lusowo. "Before the war, women had not been allowed to serve in the Polish army. The law provided only for the possibility to conscript women to the auxiliary corps," he adds. However, when the war broke out, Lewandowska, following a patriotic impulse, volunteered for the 3rd Aviation Regiment, stationed in Poznań-Ławica.

"Ultimately, there were no fights in Greater Poland, and the Poznań Army had already been withdrawing towards Warsaw. Janina joined the so-called ground echelon of Air Force Base No. 3," explains Krzyżaniak. It is still not clear what happened to her in the next few weeks. We know that Lewandowska and her unit reached the territories seized by the Red Army in the second half of September. She was definitely taken captive, most probably near Husiatyn in today's Ukraine. "Henryka Wolna-Van Das, the author of a fictionalized biography

most probably accommodated in a separate room. "We don't know how she was treated by the guards. We can only learn from preserved memoirs that she was searched several times, most likely because her task in captivity was to bake communion bread," explains the historian. Lewandowska's name can be found on the lists of people transported out of the camp. According to them, the transport of prisoners set off on April 20, 1940. Lewandowska was probably killed two days later. Exactly on her 32nd birthday.

The Mystery of a Certain Skull

The body of General Dowbor-Muśnicki's daughter was exhumed by the Germans in April 1943. 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. After the war, it somehow found its way to Bolesław Popielski, a Polish forensic medicine specialist and a professor at the University of Wrocław. Since any mention of the Katyn crime was severely punished, 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 Palmiry," 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."

of Lewandowska, refers to the memories of Stanisław Krzyżaniak, then officer cadet, who was held at one of the local schools with Lewandowska," says a historian from the museum in Lusowo. "Krzyżaniak was my grandfather's uncle. He was among the few people who survived the camp. He only died a couple of years ago. However, he never mentioned Lewandowska," he adds. Janina was ultimately imprisoned at the POW camp in Ostashkov, from where she was transported to Starobilsk. "We know she was there from the accounts of other inmates. There are mentions of that fact in the work entitled *Zbrodnia katyńska w świetle dokumentów* [The Crime of Katyn: Facts and Documents], which was published in London and has been reprinted several times," informs Krzyżaniak.

Lewandowska gave the Soviet administration a fake date of her birth and father's name. While in the camp, she wore a man's flight uniform. She was

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 Palmiry," 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 Zalesiński

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.

After the graves of Polish officers had been discovered in Katyn in the spring of 1943, German authorities would organize delegations that visited the site. What was their purpose?

Professor Tadeusz Wolsza: The Germans wanted to take advantage of the fact that the Soviets murdered Polish officers to play the western states against their eastern ally. To that end, they had to convince the world that the Soviets were the ones to blame for the crime, even more so that the USSR authorities immediately accused the Third Reich of the massacre. The Germans needed an independent and trustworthy institution to examine the bodies, set the date of the murders and point to the perpetrators, so they turned to the International Committee of the Red Cross. It nevertheless refused to send a delegation to Katyn.

Why?

Such examination would require the consent of all parties concerned, and one of them was the Soviet Union, which, surely enough, did not want to give such consent. Therefore, the Germans formed the International Katyn Commission, made up of over a dozen world-class pathologists and forensic scientists from countries occupied by Nazi Germany, such as Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, Italy, and also from neutral Switzerland. Doctors from Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Turkey, who had also been invited, did not make it to Katyn. Between

April 28-30, the members of the Commission worked in Katyn to determine the date of the crime on the basis of, inter alia, tests conducted on the residue found on the bodies. Other evidence proving that the executions were carried out in the spring of 1940, which in turn confirmed

the Soviets' responsibility for the murders, were letters, photos, newspapers, notes and diaries found together with the bodies – their dates did not go beyond March 1940. Having finished the work, the Commission prepared a report, concluding that the Soviet Union had been responsible for the massacre. A bit earlier, Katyn had been visited by a few journalist delegations, the first of which had been sent from several neutral states, such as Spain, Switzerland and Sweden. In total, about 31,000 people came through Katyn in the spring of 1943, including over 30,000 Wehrmacht soldiers. The sight of the bodies of Poles murdered by the NKVD was to motivate them to show more courage and dedication in fighting the Red Army.



The corps of Polish officer exhumated by the Germans in Katyn in 1943. On the left, an arm of a person supporting the corps for picture taking

Was the report of the International Katyn Commission signed by all the doctors?

Yes, and without any pressure from the Third Reich. The Germans generated a massive amount of publicity for

this document, even making it into a book published in Germany and France. Moreover, all Commission members spread the news of the crime in their own countries by giving interviews, writing articles, or taking part in scientific conferences.

The researchers took from Katyn things like, for example, pieces of rope with which the hands of the officers had been tied, shoulder-straps, buttons, and Helge Tramsen, PhD, a Danish surgeon, even brought back the skull of one of the murdered men...

Tramsen of the Department of Forensic Medicine at the University of Copenhagen had been given consent by the Danish resistance movement to go to Katyn, and on his return to Denmark he had smuggled the skull of one of the victims, Maj Ludwik Szymański. The skull had remained at the institute until the officer's son, Jerzy Szymański, was found in Australia 60 years later. Upon his request, the remains of his father were placed in the Katyn chapel at the Field Cathedral of the Polish Army.

Since the USSR was proven guilty of the crime by the specialists, what was the purpose of sending to Katyn in May 1943 a delegation of allied prisoners of war remaining in German captivity?

Most of the doctors and journalists came from occupied European countries, so they could have been somewhat unreliable for the USA or Great Britain. In order to confirm that the Polish officers were murdered by the Soviets, the Germans forced a group of English-speaking prisoners to witness the exhumation. The eight-person group included officers from Great Britain and the Commonwealth countries, as well as two Americans: LtCol John Van Vliet Jr. and Capt Donald B. Stewart. 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 Szubin near Bydgoszcz, from where they sent ciphered communications on the Katyn massacre, confirming the Soviet crime, to US military intelligence. After the liberation of the camp, in May 1945 LtCol Vliet 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 sentenced to death by the underground court.

He had been accused of collaboration – he had allegedly written several anti-communist articles in 1941 to

a German-controlled propaganda newspaper published in Vilnius, *Goniec Codzienny*. However, the head of the cell executing the sentences, Sergiusz Piasecki, refused to carry out the punishment, since he doubted Mackiewicz's fault. Later, LtCol 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 1943, 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 *Goniec Codzienny*, entitled "I Saw It with My Own Eyes." Ferdynand Goetel, 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.

The graves of Polish officers were also visited by Robert Brasillach, a French poet and writer.

During the occupation, Brasillach wrote for the Parisian collaborationist weekly *Je suis partout*. The Germans invited him to Katyn, because they counted on him to spread the news of the Soviet responsibility for the crime. He did not fail them, publishing many articles on the subject in French papers after his return. Besides, he wasn't the only one. We might say that in 1943 Katyn was "the hit of the Parisian spring season." After the liberation of Paris, Brasillach was arrested, and in January 1945 sentenced to death by shooting for collaboration with the Third Reich. The sentence was carried out on February 6. There are opinions, not entirely accurate I assume, that his death was the Communist revenge for disseminating the truth about Katyn. I guess his entire conduct during the war may be considered blameworthy. He was a supporter of fascism, fascinated with Hitler, he believed that only Nazi Germany can save Europe from bolshevism.

After the war, the people who had visited Katyn became inconvenient witnesses for the Soviets.

Helge Tramsen was persecuted in Denmark and accused of collaborating with the Germans. Nevertheless, he didn't revoke his statements. He wrote articles on the subject, made appearances in the Polish Section of Radio Free Europe. He also gave testimony before the US Congress Committee. However, he was constantly afraid of Soviet revenge and, truth be told, he might have been

right. His daughter came to Warsaw in 1970 for the Chopin Festival and died in a car crash. Tramsen claimed she had been murdered by Soviet agents, which actually seems very probable. A similar, but much less dramatic, fate awaited Vincenzo Palmieri and François Naville, among others. Their scientific careers in Italy and Switzerland were hindered for some time due to Communist interventions.

Did other members of the Katyn Commission also suffer repressions for having participated in it?

Almost all of them to some extent. After the war, some found themselves in countries occupied by the Soviets, for example František Hájek from the Czech Republic, and Marko Markov from Bulgaria. Both were accused of collaboration and faced death penalty, so they withdrew their signatures from the report and declared that the massacre had been committed by the Germans. On the other hand, František Šubík from Slovakia, despite spending two years in prison, refused to change his statement, and after being released in 1952, he fled the country. Ferenc Orsós from Hungary also left his country, gave up his career as a doctor and became a painter, and used Katyn as a theme of some of his works.

What happened to Mackiewicz and Goetel?

They both fled to Italy. The peer disciplinary court of the Polish Journalists Association cleaned Mackiewicz of the collaboration charge. In 1948, the writer took part in editing the publication entitled "The Katyn Crime in the Light of Documents with a 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 works played an important role in spreading the truth about the Soviet responsibility for the crime. Also Goetel wrote many articles on the subject and conducted a priceless interview with Ivan Krivoziercev, 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 writers also testified before a specially appointed committee of inquiry, created in 1951 in the USA for the purpose of explaining the Katyn crime. In total, Ray Madden's Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation of the Facts, Evidence and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre heard several hundred witnesses, including both US officers and several doctors: Tramsen, Orsós, Naville, Palmieri. In 1952, it published a final report summarizing their work, finding the Soviet Union guilty of the Katyn massacre.

Interview by Anna Dąbrowska



Group of allied prisoners of war examining items taken out of the mass graves in the Katyn Forest. Third on the right (profile) is Capt Donald B. Stewart

MY FATHER SAW EXECUTION PITS IN KATYN

"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 the Katyn Forest in May 1943?

Dave Stewart: He was a West Point graduate deployed to the 17th Artillery Regiment of the US Army. In 1942, 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 1943 during the Battle of Kasserine Pass in Tunisia, 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 Rotenberg in Germany. In May 1943, 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 one other American soldier, LtCol 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 no 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 13. 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 all 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, notes, newspaper clippings found with the bodies were dated later than the spring of 1940. The Soviets claimed that the massacre was conducted by the Germans in late summer and fall of 1941, and not the spring of 1940. However, these documents could have been fairly easy 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 Germans 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 1943, my father and LtCol Van Vliet were sent to Oflag 64 in Szubin near Bydgoszcz. There, they didn't tell 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, in their letters to families. They would also send to the USA coded messages about the Katyn Forest Massacre, confirming that the Soviets were to be blamed for it. 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 was however thoroughly searched, and a German soldier found and took the Katyn documents. Fortunately, he didn't find the photographs. ▶

My father was sent to the camp in Hammelburg, where he stayed until liberation.

When he came back home, did he tell your family about what he saw in Katyn?

No, he didn't, he had been obliged to keep military secret. He was only given Pentagon's consent to testify in 1951 before the US Congress Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation and Study of the Facts, Evidence and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre with Ray Madden 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 1970, when one of the journalists was given a green light from Pentagon to interview him and Lt-Col 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 1983, before Poland regained freedom. That's why me and my siblings often visit Poland now in order to remind people about the Katyn crime and about the role of our father in revealing the truth about it. I have handed over to the Katyn Museum the copies of documents on the massacre, including my father's coded message where he confirmed the Soviet guilt for Katyn.

Interview by Anna Dąbrowska



Dave Stewart,
son of Capt
Donald B. Stewart

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 intellectual leaders 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



Witness testifying before the Madden Committee. To hide his identity, the witness testified with a covered head, 1952

actually found by Poles – 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 1943. 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 1941, 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 their propaganda counter-offensive. After the Katyn region had been liberated from the German occupation, the Soviets 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 led 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

THE COMMITTEE BEGAN WORK ON OCTOBER 11, 1951, BY HEARING A TESTIMONY OF DONALD B. STEWART.

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 Ferdinand Goettel, 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



Congressman Ray Madden

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.

Racism, Plague, Wehrmacht

"Clouds of smoke from cities, settlements, villages burnt by American bombs, hang over the tormented Korean land – along with swarms of insects infected with bacteria of plague and cholera disseminated by American aircraft. In West Germany, American politicians and American generals, preparing a new world inferno, assemble together with Nazi criminals, Nazi gun and Zyklon producers, a neo-Nazi Wehrmacht: against the USSR, against Poland. And in the same February of the same year 1952, the US Congress revives an old Nazi provocation: Katyn. Nothing ever happens by accident." This is a fragment of Bolesław Wójcicki's book entitled *Prawda o Katyniu* (The Truth About Katyn), which fully reflects the mood of publications of that time.

"The propaganda offensive against Madden's Committee

started in March 1952, and spread virtually across the entire Eastern bloc. There were hundreds of press articles attacking Americans and reminding people of the Soviet version of the Katyn truth. There were many references to the Burdenko Report," explains the historian. The Communists also used other tools, such as the cover of the satirical *Szpilki* [Pins] magazine with a drawing by Szymon Kobyliński. The author's objective was for the drawing to expose the

incognito witness standing before Madden's Committee. It shows a man in a white Ku Klux Klan robe, under which we can see the cross worn by the Nazis on their uniforms. The inscription under the picture says: "I am an eyewitness of Katyn!"

Meanwhile, the Committee completed their work in the late fall of 1952. On December 22, they published a report in which they found the Soviets responsible for the Katyn massacre. They also advised the Congress to turn to the UN for appointing an international commission, as a step towards sentencing the perpetrators. Unfortunately, the project fell through. It was blocked by the Communists and countries that did not want to escalate the conflict between the two superpowers.

Łukasz Zalesiński

THE PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE AGAINST MADDEN'S COMMITTEE STARTED IN MARCH 1952



KATYN

POLISH OFFICER

KILLED BY NKVD

Major Adam Solski wrote a very detailed diary while in the NKVD POW camp in Kozelsk. The diary was discovered with his body during 1943 exhumation. The last entry dated on April 9, 1940: "Five in the morning. The day started at dawn in a very specific way. Departure – in a prison

car (horrible!). Arrival – somewhere in the forest; something like summer resort. Then, a detailed body search. They took my watch, it was 6:30 a.m. (8:30). I was asked about my wedding ring, which (...). They took my rubles, my officer's belt, my penknife."



**POLSKA
ZBROJNA**

**HISTORIA
POLSKA
ZBROJNA**

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