



The Destruction of the Polish Elite Operation AB – Katyn







**The Destruction of the Polish Elite.
Operation AB – Katyn**

Institute of National Remembrance
Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes
against the Polish Nation
Public Education Office

The Destruction of the Polish Elite. Operation AB – Katyn



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Exhibition arranged by

Dr Witold Wasilewski
Dr Paweł Kosiński
Dr Grzegorz Motyka
Paweł Rokicki

Cooperation

Dr Łukasz Kamiński
Anna Piekarska
Agnieszka Rudzińska

Scientific consultation

Prof. Tomasz Szarota
Dr Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert
Prof. Bohdan Chrzanowski

Map

Tomasz Ginter
Wojciech Czaplicki

Translation from Polish

LIDEX

Copy-editor

Dr Krzysztof Persak
Anna Piekarska

Typesetting

Katarzyna Dinwibel
Jacek Kotela

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Photographs by:

Stanisław Dąbrowiecki, Eugeniusz Jaworowski, Karol Szczeciński,
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FOREWORD

On 15 March 1940, in German-occupied Poznań, at a meeting of commanders of detention camps, SS Commander Heinrich Himmler said: “All the professionals of Polish descent should be used in our defence industry. Later, all Poles will disappear from the world. ... It is therefore necessary that the great German nation saw its main task in destructing all Poles”.

The Third Reich planned to eliminate the Polish “leadership element” even before the outbreak of war. Proscription lists were drawn up, comprising 80,000 Poles designated for elimination. The list included e.g. political activists, former participants of anti-German risings in Silesia and Greater Poland in 1918–1921, leaders of civic organizations, teachers, Catholic priests, and judges. From the beginning of German occupation, these plans were carried out in two ways. Poles were either killed in mass executions or sent to concentration camps. The killings were carried out primarily by operational groups of the Security Police (Einsatzgruppen der Sipo) which entered into Polish territories closely following the Wehrmacht units. Here they were joined by Selbstschutz units, consisting of local Germans, led by SS officers who arrived from the Reich. As part of “political cleansing” of the territory, the Germans killed about 50,000 people. The mass deportation to concentration camps conducted in April and May 1940 encompassed more than 20,000 Poles.

In 1939–1941, the Soviet authorities conducted very similar operations against Polish citizens in the occupied eastern areas of the Polish Republic. More than 100,000 people were arrested, and more than 300,000 deported to the east into the depths of the USSR. The memory of the Katyn massacre and almost 22,000 Polish Army officers, policemen and political prisoners murdered by decision of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the VKP(b) of 5 March 1940, is still living among Poles.

The occupiers were killing both those members of Polish elites who immediately resisted them, and those who posed even the slightest potential threat. In fact, the extermination attempted to transform the Polish nation into a cultureless society. Given that the annihilation of the Polish elites lasted – with varying intensity and determination – until 1956, it is reasonable to ask once again the questions about the effectiveness of the action symbolized by AB and Katyn operations and their impact on the identity of the Polish nation. Has the extermination of a considerable part of the elite in the period 1939–1956 changed us? Did it help the Communists to create “new elites” after 1944/1945? What was the long-term societal impact of the communist state structures and the “new elites” created by them?

The exhibition “Destruction of the Polish Elite. Operation AB – Katyn”, in addition to presenting horrifying crimes perpetrated by the two biggest 20th-century totalitarian regimes on the Polish society, poses questions about the scope of mutual cooperation of German Nazis and Soviet Communists. It also gives a true picture of the activities of the occupation authorities, whose purpose was – as cynically announced on 18 September 1939 – “to restore peace and order in Poland, destroyed as a result of the collapse of the Polish state, and to help Polish people rebuild the conditions for their political existence”. As demonstrated during the entire period of German and Soviet occupation and of the Polish People’s Republic, a significant part of the society refused to uphold such vision of foreign power in Poland – which allows us today to be a free people living in a sovereign state.

Prof. Janusz Kurtyka
President of the Institute of National Remembrance

THE POLISH GOLGOTHA

In July 1942, a conspiratorial booklet by Zofia Kosak-Szatkowska was published in occupied Warsaw on the martyrdom of Polish society under German occupation, entitled *Golgota* (Golgotha).

Under a similar title, *Golgotha Road*, a small booklet by Melchior Wańkowicz appeared twice in the United States in 1945. It was also published in Polish in the US under the title *Dzieje rodziny Korzeniewskich* already in 1944 (two issues), and in Rome in 1945. Its translation into Italian, *Storia di una Famiglia*, appeared in Rome in 1947, and into French, *La Litanie de la Faim* – in Paris in the same year. In the years 1979–1988 Wańkowicz's book was published in as many as 23 issues in Poland in samizdat, and officially it came out only in 1989.

The book tells a story of the family of Mieczysław Korzeniewski (1884–1942), graduate of the Higher School of Agriculture in Berlin, activist of Polish patriotic organisations – co-founder and director of the Western Borderland Defence Association, co-initiator of the Union of Poles in Germany, member of the Supreme Council of the Polish Western Union.

He was deported to the USSR from Lwów (Lviv) in 1940, together with his closest family: wife Jadwiga (née Alkiewicz), daughter Aleksandra, and son Jerzy. All died in the USSR in 1942.

As he was writing the book, Melchior Wańkowicz did not yet know the tragic fate of Mieczysław Korzeniewski's family members who remained under German occupation.

His brother Waław (1873–1940) – a merchant, civic activist in Grudziądz, went into hiding in the General Government to escape the German persecution at the territory directly incorporated into the Third Reich, and died on 1 March 1940 in Parszów near Skarżysko-Kamienna (his son Witold, second lieutenant of the Polish Army, was killed in action on 1 September 1939).

His second brother, Adam (1891–1939) – a merchant, attorney at the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Gdynia, was executed (along with his wife, Anna, a teacher) by the Germans at Księża Góry near Grudziądz between 11 and 20 September 1939.

His third brother, Kazimierz (1894–1940) – a phthisiologist, participant of Greater Poland Uprising against Germans in 1918–1919, civic activist in Grudziądz, lieutenant of the Polish Army, a participant of the September 1939 Campaign, a prisoner of the German concentration camps in Dachau and Sachsenhausen, was murdered at a camp on 16 August 1940 (his wife Joanna died on 1 May 1945 in the German concentration camp Ravensbrück).

* * *

In his first radio address after the German Reich's attack on the USSR, delivered in Moscow on 3 July 1941, Joseph Stalin tried to convince the listeners that the adjective “insidious” used in the sentence “Nazi Germany's insidious armed invasion of our Motherland” referred only to the German-Soviet non-aggression pact of 23 August 1939. He also attempted to explain the fact of its signing: “You may ask: how could it happen that the Soviet government decided to conclude a non-aggression pact with such traitorous people and monsters like Hitler and Ribbentrop? ... Could the Soviet government reject such a proposal? I believe that no peaceful state can reject a peace pact with a neighbouring power even when that power is led by such monsters and cannibals as Hitler and Ribbentrop. Of course, under one absolute condition – if the peace treaty does not affect, either directly or indirectly, territorial integrity, independence and honour of a peace-minded country. As you know, the non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union is one such pact”¹.

The speaker “forgot” that the German Reich became a “neighbouring power” not until later, formally as a result of the German-Soviet boundary and friendship treaty of 28 September 1939, concluded with the same “monsters and cannibals”, Hitler and Ribbentrop, which actually signified the fourth partition of Poland². In his address, Stalin made no mention of this international agreement, as well as of the secret additional protocol to the non-aggression pact of 23 August 1939 – the protocol providing for a future partition of Poland – the country with which the USSR signed a non-aggression pact much earlier

1 Józef Stalin, *O Wielkiej Wojnie Narodowej Związku Radzieckiego*, Warszawa 1949, pp. 7–9.

2 During the three partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793 and 1795, Austria, Prussia and Russia divided the territory of the First Polish Republic between themselves. Poland regained its independence only in 1918.

(25 July 1932), and then (on 5 May 1934) prolonged its validity until 31 December 1945.

It is worthwhile to remember the sentence of USSR's leader about the "honour of a peace-minded state". For the question of whose integrity and independence was breached by the two successive German-Soviet pacts is a rhetorical question for anyone who is familiar with the course of events during the first two years of World War II. On 17 August 1939 in Moscow the eighth volume of the second edition of *Malaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Little Soviet Encyclopaedia) was finalized. The entry about Poland contained a statement about "foreign and internal policies of Polish fascism"³. On 22 August, Adolf Hitler announced in Obersalzberg to his senior military commanders that, "The destruction of Poland is at the forefront"⁴.

The day after, Joachim von Ribbentrop, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Reich, arrived in Moscow: "he was taken from the airport with an armoured Packard of Prime Minister Molotov, protected by Molotov's bodyguard. The car was decorated with the German swastika flag. It's been the first time when the swastika flag appeared on the streets of Moscow"⁵.

The Soviet-German non-aggression pact, dated 23 August 1939, was signed by Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav Molotov, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (Prime Minister) and the Soviet People's Commissar (Minister) for Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the governments of the Third Reich and USSR. It therefore appears that the expression: Hitler-Stalin pact may be just as justified as the commonly used name: Molotov-Ribbentrop pact.

Polish Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Jan Szembek wrote then in his diary: "The Soviet-German pact is meant by Moscow as a step to encourage Germany to wage war"⁶. *Wieczór Warszawski* daily went even further, for in its commentary under a telling title "Faszintern + Komintern = Totintern" [Nazintern + Comintern = Totintern], it reads, "It seems that the two totalitarian countries established a union, in fact to create a Totintern. This expression will surely be confiscated in Germany, since in German 'Tot' means death"⁷. We should remember that these – and any other – comments applied only to the explicit, official text of the pact.

The existence of a secret additional protocol anticipating the fourth partition of Poland was revealed publicly not until 25 March 1946, during the Nuremberg Trials. One week later in London, the first translation of the document into Polish was published. Its paragraph 2 reads: "In the event of a territorial and political transformation of the territories belonging to the Polish state, the spheres of interest of Germany and the USSR, shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narew, Vistula and San. The question of whether the interests of both parties make the maintenance of an independent Polish state desirable can only be definitely determined in the course of further political developments. In any case both Governments will resolve this question by means of a friendly understanding"⁸. (the USSR authorities admitted the existence of the Secret Additional Protocol only in 1989).

"Stalin will yet join the Anti-Comintern Pact" – such joke circulating in Berlin was quoted by Ribbentrop in his conversation with the USSR leader during the night of 23/24 August 1939 r.⁹ (almost identical was the line under the caricature of Stalin posted in the Cracow satirical weekly *Wróble na Dachy* – "The next treaty Stalin is going to sign is the Anti-Comintern Pact")¹⁰.

Bidding farewell to Ribbentrop, Stalin, on behalf of the USSR government, "gave his word of honour that the Soviet Union would not betray its partner"¹¹. The photo showing Stalin, Ribbentrop and Molotov a moment after the signing of the pact was published by newspapers around the world. Warsaw's *Robotnik*, which reproduced it a week later, entitled it: "A document of Stalinist disgrace"¹².

The non-aggression pact was ratified simultaneously on 31 August 1939 by the German Reichstag and the USSR Supreme Council (Molotov said during the extraordinary session, "Only instigators of pan-European war can be dissatisfied with this situation")¹³.

The next day, the German aggression against Poland started World War II. After the first (false) German communication about taking Warsaw, announced on 8 September 1939, Molotov telephoned to the Reich's ambassador, Friedrich von der Schulenburg: "I have received your message about the entry of German troops to Warsaw. Please accept my congratulations and greetings to

3 *Malaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 2nd edn, Vol. 8, Moskva 1939, p. 470.

4 *Agresja na Polskę w świetle dokumentów*, Vol. 2, eds. Tadeusz Cyprian and Jerzy Sawicki, Warszawa 1946, p. 139.

5 "Swastyka na tle czerwonej gwiazdy", *Wieczór Warszawski*, Warsaw, 24 August 1939.

6 *Diariusz i teki Jana Szembeka (1935–1945)*, Vol. 4, ed. Jan Zaráński, Londyn 1972, p. 691.

7 *Wieczór Warszawski*, Warsaw, 25 August 1939.

8 "Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" (August 23, 1939), in: *United States Department of State, Documents on German Foreign Policy: from the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry*, Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1956, Series D (1937–1945), *The Last Days of Peace*, Vol. 7: August 9 – September 3, 1939 (document nos. 228 and 229), pp. 245–247.

9 *Białe plamy. ZSRR–Niemcy 1939–1941*, Vilnius 1990, p. 65.

10 *Wróble na Dachy*, Cracow, 3 September 1939. This issue came out a few days earlier, therefore it was possible to reprint cartoons already on 2 September 1939 in the Cracow daily *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*.

11 *Białe plamy. ZSRR–Niemcy 1939–1941*, Vilnius 1990, p. 66.

12 *Robotnik*, Warsaw, 30 August 1939.

13 *Agresja sowiecka na Polskę 17 września 1939 w świetle dokumentów*, eds. Czesław Grzelak et al., Vol. 1, Warszawa 1994, p. 101.

the government of the German Reich¹⁴. Soviet aggression against Poland materialized on 17 September 1939.

The next day, on 18 September, Berlin and Moscow issued a joint message on the actions of troops of both countries, which proclaimed that “the task of these troops is to restore order and peace in Poland, which have been affected by the disintegration of the Polish state”¹⁵. In contrast, Adolf Hitler in his notorious speech at the Arthur’s Court in Danzig (Gdańsk) on 19 September 1939, bluntly presented the real intentions of both aggressors: “Poland will never reappear in the shape given by the Treaty of Versailles! In the end, this is guaranteed not only by Germany, but also by Russia”¹⁶. On the same day in his radio speech in the besieged capital of Poland, the head of propaganda of the Warsaw Defence Command Lieutenant Colonel Waclaw Lipiński said: “It’s clear we are dealing with two greedy and voracious imperialisms which, regardless of all the most elementary moral precepts, brutally seek the achievement of their goals”¹⁷.

On 20 September 1939 in Moscow, the USSR People’s Commissar of Defence, Komandarm Boris Shaposhnikov and German military attaché General Ernst Köstring agreed on the text of Soviet-German Protocol on the movements of troops of both countries in order to reach the demarcation line (it was signed in the morning the next day). It announced, among others: “If the German representatives at the command of the Red Army ask for aid in the destruction of Polish troops and gangs found on the way of German troops, the Red Army command (the commanders of columns) will give, if necessary, to [German] disposal the necessary force to destroy nests of resistance on the way of the march”¹⁸.

On 22 September 1939 in Moscow, a joint official German-Soviet communication was announced about setting up a temporary demarcation line along the line of the rivers Narew, Vistula and San (dividing in half – which is clear from the official Soviet map published the next day¹⁹ – Warsaw, which would surrender to the Germans six days later). Still on the same day at Brześć nad Bugiem (Brest-on-the-Bug) – on the occasion of handing over the city by Wehrmacht to the Red Army – a joint ceremonial military parade took place before General Heinz Guderian (commander of the 19th Armoured Corps) and Kombrig Semyon Krivoshein (commander of the Soviet 29th Armoured Brigade).

On 24 September 1939 in Berlin, ratification instruments for the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact were exchanged,

and just four days later (28 September) another Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement was signed in Moscow, bearing a more explicit title of the *German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty* (in the Soviet wording²⁰, and *German-Soviet Boundary and Alliance Treaty* in the German wording). Beginning with these words, “The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the USSR. consider it as exclusively their task, after the collapse of the former Polish state, to re-establish peace and order in these territories”, it says about determining the “boundary of their respective national interests in the territory of the former Polish state”, and recognizes the border to be “definitive”²¹.

The treaty, which was actually the instrument of the fourth partition of Poland that divided our country almost exactly in half, was accompanied by three additional protocols. The first (confidential) provided for a possibility of resettlement of individuals of German descent from the Soviet to the German zone, and people of Ukrainian and Belarusian descent from the German to the Soviet zone. The second (secret one, amending the Additional Secret Protocol of 23 August), replaced the border on the Vistula with the line of the Bug river, transferring Lithuania to the USSR’s sphere of influence, while the Lublin region and a part of the Warsaw region – to the German zone.

The third (secret) Additional Protocol, reads, “Both parties will tolerate in their territories no Polish agitation which affects the territories of the other party. They will suppress in their territories all beginnings of such agitation and inform each other concerning suitable measures for this purpose”²² (the existence of this Additional Protocol has been admitted by the Russian authorities only in 1992).

On the day of signing the fourth partition of Poland (28 September 1939) the Polish-German agreement on the capitulation of Warsaw was also signed, but two fortresses were still resisting the Germans: Modlin (until 29 September) and Hel (until 2 October). Fighting was also ongoing between Soviet and German troops on one side, and the troops of e.g. Independent Operational Group “Polesie” on the other, the last large Polish Army unit, capitulation of which to the Germans on 5 October at Kock signified the end of organized resistance of regular Polish troops in the September 1939 Campaign.

Poland, however, fought on. The day before the document to implement the fourth partition of Poland was

14 *Biała księga*, ed. Wiktor Sukiennicki, Paryż 1964, p. 62.

15 *Pravda*, Moscow, 19 September 1939.

16 Karol Grünberg, Jerzy Serczyk, *Czwarty rozbiór Polski*, Warszawa 1990, p. 284.

17 Waclaw Lipiński, *Dziennik. Wrzesniowa obrona Warszawy 1939 r.*, ed. Jan Maria Kłoczowski, Warszawa 1989, p. 218.

18 *Zeszyty Historyczne*, issue 27, Paryż 1974, p. 170.

19 *Pravda*, Moscow, 23 September 1939, (the map was also republished in several consecutive issues of that newspaper).

20 “Germano-sovietskiy dogovor o druzhbye i granitse”, *Pravda*, Moscow, 29 September 1939.

21 *Prawo Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w układzie rzeczowym z objaśnieniami i szczegółowym skorowidzem*, issue. 3, ed. Albert Weh, Krakau 1941, A. 101.

22 *Biała księga*, ed. Wiktor Sukiennicki, Paryż 1964, pp. 80–81.

signed in Moscow and Warsaw capitulated, a seed of an underground army was created in the Polish capital (Home Army), and two days after the Moscow decisions the highest authorities of Poland in exile were appointed on 30 September 1939 in Paris. Only seven countries, led by Germany and the USSR, refused to recognize the Government of the Republic of Poland in Paris. One of the first acts signed by the new President of the Republic of Poland Władysław Raczkiewicz was President of the Republic Decree of 30 November 1939 about the invalidity of legal acts of occupying authorities that declared null and void both the acts and orders already issued, and those “which will be issued after the entry into force of this decree”²³.

Meanwhile, cooperation between both aggressors in the territory of occupied Poland continued. On 4 October they signed an Additional Protocol to the Treaty of 28 September, describing in detail a new “definitive” border line between the Reich and the USSR.

Already on 10 October a “joint German-Russian Central Committee for Border Matters” started work in Moscow, which was officially announced e.g. in collaborationist newspapers in the German occupation zone²⁴. It is noteworthy that the demarcation of the new state border started 12 days before the “elections” to the People’s Assemblies of the so-called Western Ukraine and Western Belarus (22 October), three weeks before the annexation of eastern Polish lands into the USSR.

On the same day of 10 October, Lithuanian-Soviet mutual assistance pact agreement was signed in Moscow, under which the USSR “transferred” the district of Wilno (Vilnius) to Lithuania (the city of Wilno and the western part of the Wilno region). Two days later, German troops took over Suwałki from Soviet hands. According to the official communication of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht of 14 October “in the East, with the securing of the last lines on the Bug river, the movement [of troops] towards the border of German-Russian zones of interest has been completed”²⁵.

Also, the exchange of prisoners of war continued. On 13 October the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) [VKP(b)] in Moscow approved the proposal by the People’s Commissar for Internal Affairs Lavrenty Beria and transferred to the German authorities about 33,000 “all prisoners of war, soldiers – inhabitants of the German part of former Poland”²⁶. The group of prisoners of war from the Soviet POW camp at Kozelsk sent back to the Germans included the poet Konstanty Ildefons

Gałczyński. The exchange operation was completed on 23 November. In total, the Soviets sent to Germany over 42,000 Polish POWs, and the Germans transferred more than 13,000 Polish POWs²⁷.

At the same time, in his famous speech at the extraordinary session of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 31 October, the Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars (Prime Minister), Vyacheslav Molotov, summarized the state of Soviet-German relations, “The conclusion of the German-Soviet non-aggression pact of 23 August put an end to abnormal relations that had existed for a number of years between the Soviet Union and Germany. Hostility, fuelled by hook or by crook by some European powers, gave way to rapprochement and friendly relations between the USSR and Germany. Further improvement in these new, good relations has been reflected in the German-Soviet frontier and friendship treaty between the Soviet Union and Germany, signed on 28 September in Moscow. ...

Secondly, one must not overlook such a fact as the defeat of Poland in war and disintegration of the Polish state. Polish ruling quarters have bragged enough about the alleged ‘sustainability’ of their state and the ‘might’ of their army. A short blow by the German army, and subsequently by the Red Army, was enough for nothing to be left of this ugly bastard of the Treaty of Versailles, which had lived through the oppression of non-Polish nationalities. The ‘traditional policy’ of straddling and playing games with Germany and the Soviet Union – has proved to be ridiculous and completely bankrupt.

The ideology of Hitlerism, as well as any other ideological system, may be accepted or denied – it is a matter of taste. But anyone will understand that ideologies can not be killed by force, that they can not be finished with by war. Therefore, the pursuit of such war as a war to ‘annihilate Hitlerism’, justified by false slogans of fight for ‘democracy’, is not only senseless, but also pernicious”²⁸.

Another joint German-Soviet initiative was the exchange of population of German descent from the Soviet zone, and people of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian descent from the German zone. The relevant agreement was signed on 16 November 1939 in Berlin. In its official communication, the Soviet press agency, TASS, informed that “any practical matters concerning the evacuation have been resolved by the Contracting Parties in a spirit of friendship, corresponding to the existing relations between the USSR and Germany”²⁹.

Members of the Soviet resettlement committee came to Cracow to their first brief visit on 7 December.

23 *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, Angers (France), 2 December 1939, no. 102, item 1006, p. 2007.

24 *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, Łódź, 13 October 1939.

25 Szymon Datner, *55 dni Wehrmachtu w Polsce. Zbrodnie dokonane na polskiej ludności cywilnej w okresie 1.IX – 25.X.1939 r.*, Warszawa 1967, p. 537.

26 *Polscy jeńcy wojenni w ZSRR 1939–1941*, ed. and transl. Wojciech Materski, Warszawa 1992, p. 25.

27 Stanisław Jaczyński, *Zagłada oficerów Wojska Polskiego na Wschodzie. Wrzesień 1939 – maj 1940*, Warszawa 2000, p. 119–120.

28 Wjaczesław Molotow, *O polityce zewnętrznej Związku Radzieckiego (31 października 1939 r.)*, Moskwa 1939.

They were portentously welcomed at the Wawel Castle by the Governor-General, Hans Frank, who said: "In the spirit of the friendship pact concluded last summer by the prudent leader of the Soviet Union and our leader Adolf Hitler, we have proceeded to arranging and supporting, in a friendly spirit, the vital interests of our two nations in various fields. This cooperation also encompasses the Russo-German resettlement agreement which is expected to contribute to the organic creation of a national living space with respect to the spheres of interest agreed between our countries ... I wish you a complete success in this job, and I hope for a lasting Russo-German friendship for the benefit of both our peoples". A report of this ceremony, which appeared in the collaborationist *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, had a telling title: "A further step towards cooperation between the Reich and Soviet Russia"³⁰.

The Soviet delegation then entertained (on the same day) at Zakopane, which was also reported by a picture story *Warschauer Zeitung*, including five photos³¹. As revealed by the collaborationist *Goniec Krakowski*, deputy head of the delegation was the Deputy People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR, General Ivan Maslennikov³². Until now, there is no evidence whether it was actually then at "Pan Tadeusz" villa in Zakopane that a conference took place between the Gestapo and the NKVD on a joint fight against the Polish underground.

The operation of resettlement of Germans from Volhynia and Małopolska into the areas incorporated to the Third Reich (Reichsgau Wartheland) started three days later, on 10 December. Over the next few months it affected about 160,000 people. Famous German film "Heimkehr" (Homecoming) from 1941 – featuring Volhynia Germans' pre-war "harassment" in Poland – ended with scenes of their "return to homeland".

On 14 December 1939, in Berlin, instruments of ratification of the German-Soviet boundary and friendship treaty of 28 September were exchanged, and on 24 December Joseph Stalin, in his telegram sent to Ribbentrop with his grateful response to the wishes on the occasion of his 60th birthday wrote: "Thank you, Mr Minister, for your wishes. The blood-sealed friendship between the peoples of Germany and the Soviet Union has every sign of being long-term and strong one". The text of the telegram was published by the Moscow *Pravda* newspaper³³, and a summary – by the collaborationist *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*: "In the telegram sent to Minister Rib-

ben trop, Stalin states that the friendship of peoples of Germany and the Soviet Union, strengthened by blood, will be long and sustained"³⁴.

On 6 February 1940, in his interview for Berlin's *Völkischer Beobachter*, Governor-General Hans Frank spoke telling words: "In Prague, for example, big red posters were put up with a message that seven Czechs had been executed. Then I said to myself, 'If I wanted to spend one poster for every seven Poles shot, all Polish forests would be insufficient to produce that quantity of paper'. ... Indeed, we had to get down to work seriously. But now peace has been largely restored"³⁵. Germany tried to ensure peace in the annexed Polish lands through terror and mass displacement of Polish population to the General Government.

This "restoration of peace" was carried out in much the same way also on the other side of the border. On 10 February 1940, the Soviet authorities carried out the first mass deportation of the Polish population from Poland's eastern lands into the depths of the USSR, covering about 140,000 people.

On the same day, collaborationist press in German-occupied Warsaw published a translation of *Frankfurter Zeitung* correspondence from Moscow about the completion of the "demarcation of German and Soviet spheres of interest"³⁶.

Soviet official message of the completion of the "demarcation of the German-Soviet border", nearly 1,500 km long, was announced in Moscow on 5 March 1940³⁷. "The communication from the Soviet government", wrote New York's *Nowy Świat* in its correspondence from the USSR capital, "is regarded in Russian government quarters as a formal expunction of the Republic of Poland ... from the list of existing countries"³⁸.

On the same day in Moscow a secret decision was signed by the highest authorities of the USSR to execute the prisoners of war – officers of the Polish Army (USSR authorities admitted to committing the Katyn massacre only in 1990).

The first death transport from the Soviet POW camp at Kozelsk bound for Katyn departed on 3 April 1940. Four days earlier (30 March 1940), in the territory of the General Government, German occupiers proceeded with the Operation AB (AB-Aktion – Ausserordentliche Befriedungsaktion; Special Pacification Operation), as a result of which more than 3,500 leading Polish political and civic activists were killed.

29 "W Ludowym Komisarjacie Spraw Zagranicznych", *Czerwony Sztandar*, Lwów, 22 November 1939.

30 *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, Warsaw, 8 December 1939.

31 *Warschauer Zeitung*, Warsaw, 10–11 December 1939.

32 "Delegacja sowiecka przybywa do Krakowa", *Goniec Krakowski*, Cracow, 8 December 1939.

33 *Pravda*, Moscow, 25 December 1939, translation from: *Biała księga*, ed. Wiktor Sukiennicki, Paryż 1964, p. 154.

34 *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, Warsaw, 28 December 1939.

35 *Okupacja i ruch oporu w dzienniku Hansa Franka 1939–1945*, Vol. 1, Warszawa 1970, pp. 147–148.

36 *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, Warsaw, 10–11 February 1940.

37 "Wytknięta granica niemiecko-sowiecka", *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, Warsaw, 6 March 1940.

38 *Nowy Świat*, New York, 6 March 1940.

We must emphasize again: until now, there is no evidence whether it was actually during the official visit by the Soviet resettlement committee on 7 December 1939 at “Pan Tadeusz” villa in Zakopane that a conference took place between the Gestapo and the NKVD on a joint fight against the Polish underground.

We do not know therefore whether the “resolution by friendly agreement” (a quotation from a secret additional protocol to the 23 August 1939 pact) of the “Polish question” referred only to the German-Soviet military cooperation and interaction (not to say – the brotherhood of arms) in the course of the September 1939 Campaign, the joint fourth partition of Poland, and the delineation of a new “final” state border, and finally the exchange of POWs and population.

Maybe that “blood-sealed friendship” (a quote from Stalin’s telegram of 24 December) was also to involve an agreement on a joint physical destruction of the Polish elite, which seemed to be also suggested by the secret additional protocol to the treaty of 28 September, which promised joint combating of the “Polish agitation”?

However, what may be certainly said is that both aggressors in their occupation zones used, at the same time, similar or even identical methods of operation, similar or even identical forms of repression, persecution and extermination.

Both parties also recognized the same most dangerous opponents – the leadership strata of the Polish society, the Polish elite.

Today we also know that on both sides of the new border, not only the same milieu, but even the same Polish families were subjected to repression, persecution and extermination.

That time, tragic for Poland and Poles, is the theme of the Institute of National Remembrance’s exhibition.

In viewing it, remember that this tragedy started with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August 1939, German aggression of 1 September, and Soviet aggression of 17 September, finally, the German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty (the fourth partition of Poland) of 28 September 1939.

Remember also that over the next half-century, talking of the German-Soviet friendship and the German-Soviet alliance of 1939–1941 was forbidden in Poland, and the Russian authorities have admitted the existence of the secret protocols of August and September 1939 and the perpetration of the Katyn massacre only after 50 years.

But mindful of all this, do not forget to appreciate with a moment of reflection the precious words of the Russian PEN Centre members, who wrote in April last year, “Six years of horror in your land, and four years in ours – how strange it is to think that this nightmare was actually started by the hideous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact!”³⁹

Warsaw, August 2006
Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert

³⁹ *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Warsaw, 22 April 2005; *Rzeczpospolita*, Warsaw, 22 April 2005.

The Agreement between Nazi Germany and the USSR

The new political order in Europe, established in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles, was from the very beginning contested by Germany and Bolshevik Russia, which gave impetus to the cooperation between the two countries. After Adolf Hitler's rise to power in 1933, the German-Soviet relations reached an impasse. But the willingness of both totalitarian regimes to destroy the post-World War I order made Hitler offer an alliance to Stalin after attempts to pull Poland into the sphere of Germany's influence had failed

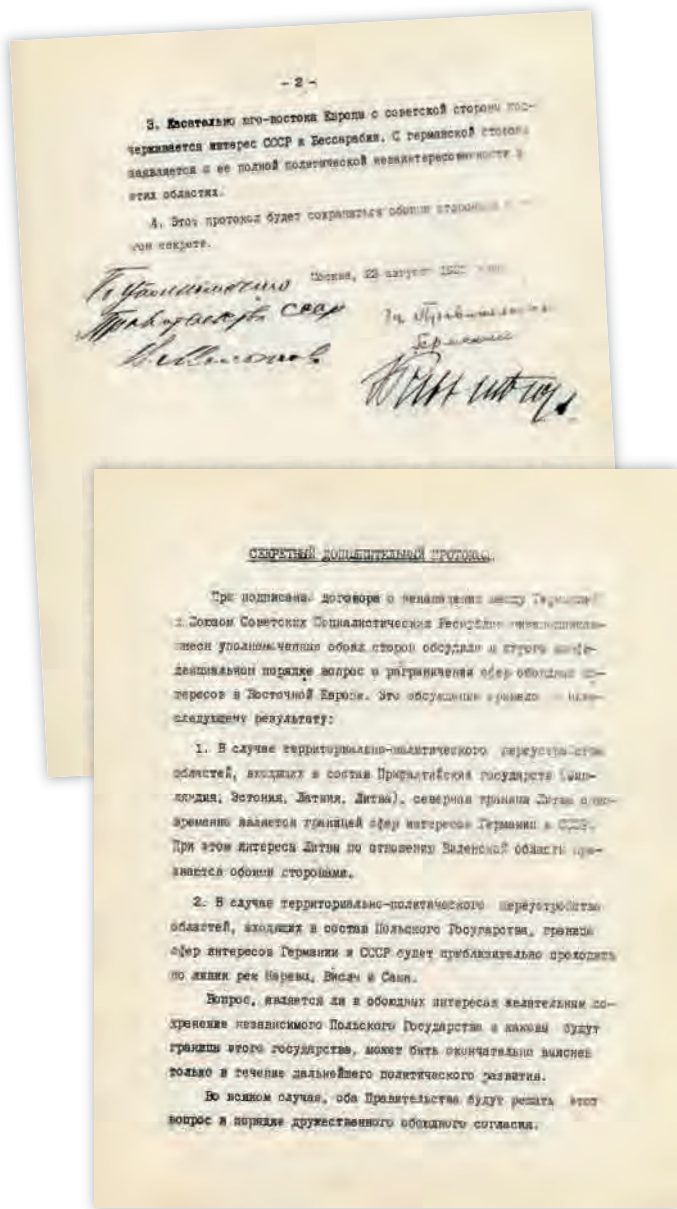
On the night of 23/24 August 1939, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Third Reich Joachim von Ribbentrop and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR Vyacheslav Molotov signed in Moscow a non-aggression pact, accompanied by a secret protocol providing for the partition of Central Europe. In accordance with the provisions of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, Hitler and Stalin were bound to make another partition of Poland, and the border of their respective spheres of influence was to run along the Narew, Vistula and San rivers.



Secret Supplementary Protocol

Upon signing the Non-Aggression Treaty between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the undersigned plenipotentiaries of both parties discussed in strict confidentiality the issue of delimiting their respective spheres of interests in Eastern Europe. This discussion led to the following results:

1. In the event of a territorial and political restructuring of the regions belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern border of Lithuania shall simultaneously be the border between the spheres of interest of Germany and the USSR. In this regard, Lithuania's interests with respect to the Vilna region shall be recognized by both parties.
2. In the event of a territorial and political restructuring of the regions that are part of the Polish state, the border between the spheres of interest of Germany and the USSR shall approximately follow the line of Narew, Vistula, and San rivers.
The question of whether it is desirable in their mutual interests to preserve an independent Polish state, and, if so, what the borders of this state would be, can be definitively clarified only in the course of further political developments.
In any case, both governments will resolve this question by amicable mutual agreement.
3. Regarding south-eastern Europe, the Soviet side emphasizes the USSR's interest in Bessarabia. The German side declares its complete political disinterest in these regions.
4. This protocol will be kept in strict secrecy by both parties.



▲ Secret supplementary protocol to the German-Soviet non-aggression treaty, signed in Moscow during the night of 23/24 August 1939, together with the signatures of the signatories: Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Reich, Joachim von Ribbentrop, and the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov. (Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin)

(Katyn: A Crime Without Punishment, eds. Anna M. Cieniala, Natalia S. Lebedeva, Wojciech Materski, New Haven and London 2007, p. 41)





▲ "Rumors about Hitler's marriage proved to be true"
 – cartoon by Stanisław Dobrzyński. (*Szpilki*, Warsaw, 3 September 1939)



▲ Banquet at the Kremlin, during which toasts are proposed to leaders of both countries and to the successful development of mutual relations. In the photo: German photographer Heinrich Hoffmann (first on the left), Vyacheslav Molotov and Joseph Stalin. (Janusz Piekałkiewicz, *Polski wrzesień. Hitler i Stalin rozdzielają Rzeczpospolitą 1 IX 1939 – 17 IX 1939*, Warszawa 2004, p. 69)

◀ Moscow, 23/24 August 1939. Handshake of Joseph Stalin and Joachim von Ribbentrop seals the signing of the German-Soviet agreement. (*L'Illustration*, Paris, 2 September 1939)

▶ Adolf Hitler greets Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop after his return from Moscow. (Anthony Read, David Fischer, *The Deadly Embrace. Hitler, Stalin and the Nazi-Soviet Pact 1939–1941*, London 1988, p. 336)





▲ Warsaw burning after German air raid. As a result of German air operations, thousands of civilians were killed in September 1939. (Bundesarchiv Koblenz)

The German Attack

Already in early April 1939, the German General Staff proceeded with developing a plan of aggression on Poland. On 1 September 1939, at 4.45 a.m., shelling of the Polish garrison at Westerplatte in the Free City of Danzig started the World War II. The first civilian target bombed by the Luftwaffe at 5.40 was an undefended town of Wieluń in Greater Poland. Breaking fierce Polish resistance, the German army burst deep into the country, reaching Warsaw on 8 September 1939. Despite defeats, the Poles were determined to continue the fight. The last bastion of defence was prepared in south-eastern Poland, in what was called the Romanian Bridgehead. This is where the defence was to continue until France and England launched their offensive.

These plans were made obsolete by the USSR strike on 17 September 1939. On 28 September 1939 the besieged Warsaw surrendered. In early October, the last major groupings of Polish troops on the Hel peninsula and at Kock gave up combat.

During warfare, the German committed many war crimes against Polish prisoners of war and civilian population.

German attack on the Polish Post Office in the Free City of Danzig (Gdańsk), 1 September 1939. (IPN Archive)





▲ Murder of more than 200 Polish POWs, soldiers of 74th Infantry Regiment, near Ciepielów in the Lipsko district, committed by soldiers of the 11th Company, 15th Regiment of the 29th Motorized Infantry Division of the Wehrmacht on 8 September 1939. (IPN Archive)

18 September [1939]

... together with my colleague Złobicki and several hundred other poor fellows we were taken ... and rushed on the Vistula. ... they lined us right [on] the banks of the Vistula, together with us all the seriously injured soldiers. ... Some soldiers who hid in shrubbery started to go out and the Germans did not take them prisoner, but killed on the spot. (I'm stressing that the soldiers went out with their hands up). Seeing such scenes all the detainees began to cry for mercy, but the Germans started to laugh and cried: "Polish dogs". They arranged us in two lines, on the right about 150 Polish soldiers, and on the left about 150 civilians aged 15 to 75. There was also a man who had a small son with him, about four years old. ... As they separated them, the child began to weep and cry out to his daddy. The Germans got angry with the kid, and drove him to his father. The execution began ... When they started to shoot, soldiers were jumping to the Vistula. I did the same thing, only with the difference that I immediately pressed to the bank The soldiers were swimming, and the Germans were shooting them, like wild ducks, so that none escaped their death.

(Account by Stanisław Klejnowski of the execution in Tułowice, district Sochaczew, quoted from: Szymon Datner, *Zbrodnie Wehrmachtu na jeńcach wojennych w II wojnie światowej*, Warszawa 1961, pp. 54–55)

▼ A column of German infantry, September 1939. (IPN Archive)



The Soviet Attack

During the night on 16/17 September 1939, Poland's ambassador in Moscow Waclaw Grzybowski received a note from the Soviet government announcing the entrance of the Red Army into the territory of the Polish Republic. The aggression was justified by the need to "take under protection" Ukrainians and Belarusians because Poland had collapsed.

At dawn on 17 September, the Soviet attack followed. After breaking the resistance of the Border Protection Corps outposts, the Red Army intruded deep into the

country. On news of the Soviet invasion, the Polish government and commander-in-chief Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły decided to evacuate to Romania. Polish units received orders to avoid clashes with the Soviets and break into Hungary or Romania. Despite this, there were a number of armed clashes – in defence of Wilno, Grodno, at Szack, and in many other places.

In course of hostilities, the Soviets committed numerous war crimes against Polish prisoners of war and civilian population.



▲ A Soviet tank during the fight in the Eastern Borderland in September 1939. (Karta Centre)

Red Army moving into Poland, September 1939. (Karta Centre)



▲ Red Army troops after entering Wilno, 19 September 1939. (Anthony Read, David Fischer, *The Deadly Embrace. Hitler, Stalin and the Nazi-Soviet Pact 1939–1941*, London 1988, p. 336)



Soviet propaganda poster from the autumn of 1939.
(Wojciech Śleszyński *Okupacja sowiecka na Białostocczyźnie w latach 1939–1941. Propaganda i indoktrynacja*, Białystok 2001, picture 42)



Rzoinierze Armii Polskiej!

Pańsko-burżuazjny Rząd Polski, wciągnowszy Was w awanturystyczną wojnę, pozornie przewalilo się. Ono okazało się bezsilnym rządzić krajem i zorganizować obronę. Ministrzy i generałowie, schwycili nagrabione imi złoto, tchórzliwie uciekli, pozostawiają armię i cały lud Polski na wolę losu.

Armia Polska pocierpieła surową porażkę, od którego ona nie oprawić wstanie się. Wam, waszym żonom, dzieciom, braciom i siostram ugraża głodna śmierć i zniszczenie.

W te ciężkie dni dla Was potężny Związek Radziecki wyciąga Wam ręce braterskiej pomocy. Nie przeciwie się Robotniczo-Chłopskiej Armii Czerwonej. Wasze przeciwienie bez korzyści i przerzeczono na całą zgubę. My idziemy do Was nie jako zdobywcy, a jako wasi bracia po klasie, jako wasi wyzwolenicy od ucisku obszarników i kapitalistów.

Wielka i niezwołczona Armia Czerwona niesie na swoich sztandarach procującym, braterstwo i szczęśliwe życie.

Rzoinierze Armii Polskiej! Nie proliwacie daremnie krwi za cudze Wam interesy obszarników i kapitalistów.

Was przymuszają uciskać białorusinów, ukrainców. Rządzące koło Polskie sieją narodową różność między polakami, białorusinami i ukraińcami.

Pamiętajcie! Nie może być swobodny naród, uciskające drugie narody. Pracujące białorusini i ukraińcy—Was! procujące, a nie wrogł. Razem z nimi budujcie szczęśliwe dorobkowe życie.

Rzuczajcie broń! Przechodźcie na stronę Armii Czerwonej. Wam zabezpieczona swoboda i szczęśliwe życie.

Naczelnny Dowódca Białoruskiego frontu.
Komandarm Drugiej Rangi Michuł KOWALOW.
17 września 1939 roku.

.....

... The Soviet troops entered about 16.00 and immediately began an extreme carnage and monstrous abuse of the victims, which lasted throughout the day. Not only the police and military were murdered, but also the so-called bourgeoisie, including women and children. ...

(Testimony of a Polish witness describing the events at Rohatyn (Stanisławów province) in September 1939, quote from: *Zbrodnia Katyńska w świetle dokumentów*, Londyn 1982, p. 11)

.....

.....

... It should be pointed out that the Red Army stretched an entire network of ambushes to trap the fragmented Polish army, trapping small squads or individual officers and soldiers, who were stripped of their clothes, beaten and shot. For example, one of the soldiers was tied to a horse, and dragged on the rocky shores of the Strzyż river so long as only shreds of him were left. ...

(Account by a witness describing the situation in the Eastern Borderland after the entry of the Red Army, quote from: *Zbrodnia Katyńska w świetle dokumentów*, Londyn 1982, p. 11)

.....

◀ Proclamation by the commander of the Belarusian Front, Komandarm Mikhail Kovalov to Polish soldiers in September 1939. (*Orzeł Biały*, Rome, 27 May 1945)

Polish POWs conveyed to Soviet camps. (IPN Archive)

▼



Brotherhood of Arms

20 September 1939 saw the first meeting of Wehrmacht troops and the Red Army in Brześć nad Bugiem. On 21 September 1939 the German army, in accordance with the concluded agreements, started to withdraw to the demarcation line. The Soviets were ceremonially handed over, inter alia, Przemyśl, Białystok and Brześć nad Bugiem.

.....

... The representative companies of both foreign troops were divided (or maybe it would be more appropriate to say, joined) by a high mast on which a red flag with a black cross with broken arms on a white field was flying. The orchestra played "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles". Both companies presented arms and the flag with the swastika started to be lowered.

A Soviet officer approached the mast and placed another, red flag with hammer and sickle. Both allied companies presented arms, the anthem of the Soviet Union was played. When the flag was flying at the top of the mast, officers of both armies approached each other. They saluted with their slid swords, inserted them again to their scabbards, and shook hands. Finally, they gave friendly slaps on the back to one another ... In a moment, commands were given on both sides, the companies once again presented arms.

After a while they marched away in their respective directions, and black limousines started to leave the courtyard. Following them drove motorcycles with Wehrmacht soldiers at regular intervals. ...

(Transfer of Białystok into the Soviet hands at the courtyard of the Branicki Palace, as reported by M. Czajkowski, *Kurier Podlaski*, Białystok, 23–25 November 1990 [in:] Wojciech Śleszyński, *Okupacja sowiecka na Białostoczczyźnie w latach 1939–1941. Propaganda i indoktrynacja*, Białystok 2001, p. 24)

.....



German map of Poland with marked USSR's and Third Reich's respective spheres of influence, in accordance with the agreements of 23/24 August and 28 September 1939. (Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin)

German and Soviet field commanders discussing the transfer of Białystok to the Red Army troops, 20 September 1939. (Sławomir F. Wucyna, *Fall Weiss. Wrzesień 1939 w niemieckiej fotografii*, Warszawa 1997, photo 272)



▲ Soviet and German soldiers in occupied Lwów, about 22 September 1939. (Sławomir F. Wucyna, *Fall Weiss. Wrzesień 1939 w niemieckiej fotografii*, Warszawa 1997, photo 312)

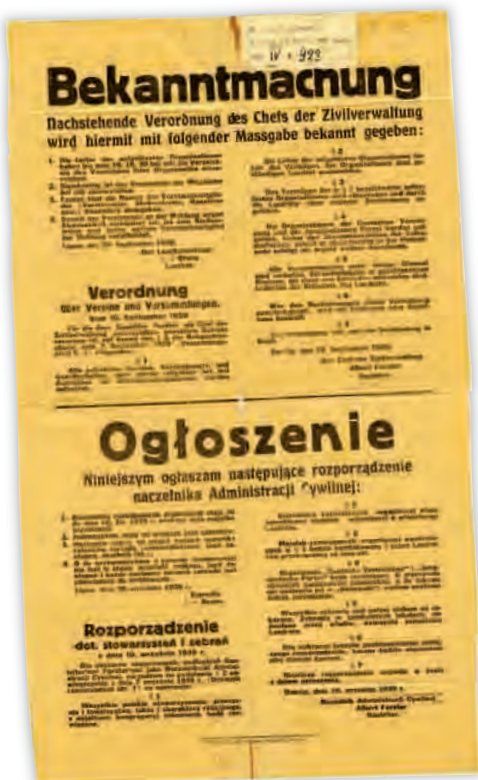
Meeting of Wehrmacht and Red Army soldiers near Stryj, about 23 September 1939. (IPN Archive)



▲ General Heinz Guderian, the commander of the German 19th Armoured Corps (in the middle) and Kombrig Semyon Krivoshein (the commander of the Soviet 29th Armoured Brigade (on the right) receive a joint military parade in Brześć nad Bugiem, 22 September 1939. (Mario Appelius, *Una guerra di 30 giorni. La tragedia della Polonia*, 2nd edn, Milano 1941, p. 96)

German-Soviet military parade before the Provincial Office building in Brześć nad Bugiem, 22 September 1939. (IPN Archive)





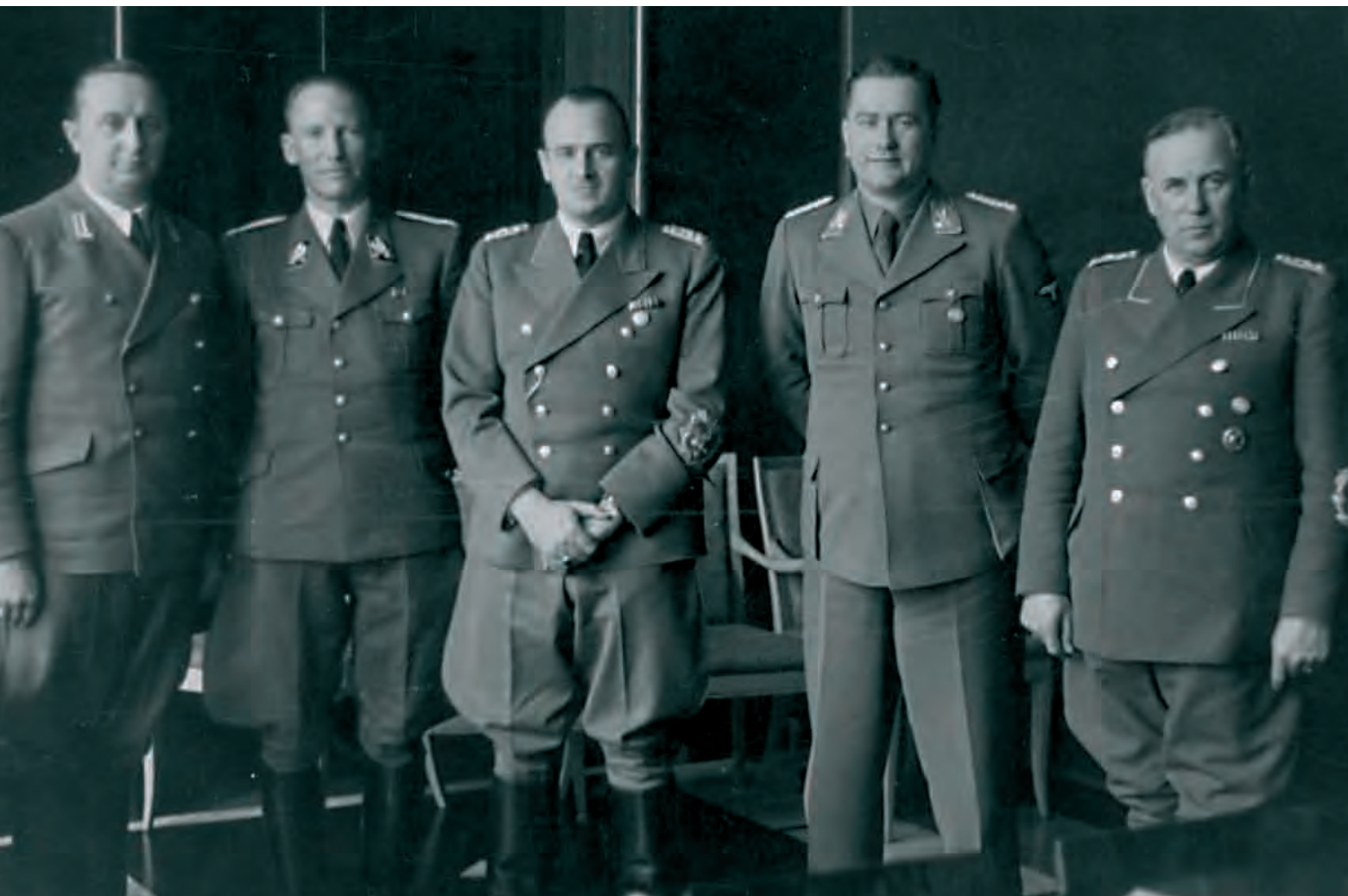
Decree by the head of the Civil Administration of Danzig, Gauleiter Albert Forster of 10 September 1939, to dissolve the Polish associations. (IPN Archive)

Governor-General Dr Hans Frank (in the middle) and heads of districts, from left to right: Dr Karl Lasch (Radom district), Dr Otto Wächter (Cracow), Dr Ludwig Fischer (Warsaw) and Dr Ernst Zörner (Lublin). (NAC)

The German Occupation

German occupation encompassed 48 percent of the area of the pre-war Polish state, with 22 million of Polish citizens. Some territories (Pomerania, northern Mazovia, Greater Poland, Łódź province and Silesia) were incorporated directly to the Reich, the other formed a General Government (GG); a small area was occupied by Slovakia.

In the incorporated areas, from the start, the Germans pursued a policy of Germanization. In the years 1939–1940 around 460,000 Poles were driven from these lands. Conversely, the General Government was treated by the Germans as a reservoir of cheap labour. These areas were planned to be Germanized at a later stage. The plans were that some part of the Polish population was to be annihilated, some resettled, and other Poles used as slaves. From the very beginning, a policy of extermination of the Polish intelligentsia was pursued. The Polish administration, political parties, the majority of civic organizations and socio-cultural institutions were disbanded. At the same time, the Polish education was drastically restricted. In order to facilitate their control of the Polish community, Germany embarked on a policy of fuelling any disparateness in ethnic identities. Jews were subject to special restrictions. They were gathered in ghettos and subjected to various forms of harassment.



.....
The task of administration is not to make Poland an exemplary province or a state modelled on Germany, nor an economic and financial reform the country.

It is necessary to prevent Polish intelligentsia from becoming the leading stratum. Living standards in this country have to be kept on a low level; we only want to draw labour from there. The administration should also recruit Poles. However, development of cells of national life must be prevented.

(Berlin, 20 October 1939, the Protocol of Adolf Hitler's conference with Wehrmacht's head of the supreme command, Colonel General Wilhelm Keitel of 17 October 1939 on the Third Reich's policy towards the General Government, and the dissolution of military administration and transfer of power to civilian authorities, quoted from: *Okupacja i ruch oporu w dzienniku Hansa Franka 1939–1945*, Vol. 1: 1939–1942, Warszawa 1970, p. 119)

.....
 First decrees of the German occupation authorities in 1939. (IPN Archive)

The scrap yard in the former Ammunition Factory No. 1 at Fort Bema in Warsaw. (*Warszawa 1940–1941 w fotografii dr. Hansa-Joachima Gerke*, selected and edited by Danuta Jackiewicz and Eugeniusz Cezary Król, Warszawa 1997, photo 203)

A plate at the gate of Brühl's palace, the seat of the head of the Warsaw district of the General Government, Dr Ludwig Fischer. (*Warszawa 1940–1941 w fotografii dr. Hansa-Joachima Gerke*, selected and edited by Danuta Jackiewicz and Eugeniusz Cezary Król, Warszawa 1997, photo 60)



.....
... Within a few years – I imagine, within 4 to 5 years – the notion of Kashubians, for example, must become unknown, because by then the Kashubian people will not exist anymore (this applies especially to the West Prussia). I believe that thanks to a great migration of Jews to Africa or to some other colony I will see that concept of the Jews ceased to exist. It must also be possible, in a slightly longer period, to cause the disappearance from our areas of the national concepts of Ukrainians, the Górale, and Lemkos. What has been said about these national particles refers to a larger extent also to the Poles. ...

(Berlin, 15 May 1940, Heinrich Himmler, *A few thoughts about the treatment of alien tribes in the East*, quoted from: *Okupacja i ruch oporu w dzienniku Hansa Franka 1939–1945*, Vol. 1: 1939–1942, Warszawa 1970, p. 289)



▲ The expulsion of Poles from Włocławek.
(IPN Archive)

Jews during the involuntary sweeping of the town square in Rzeszów.
(From Tomasz Wiśniewski collection, "In Search of Poland" Society)



The Soviet Occupation

The Soviet occupation encompassed 52 percent of the area of the pre-war Polish state, with 13 million of Polish citizens. These areas, after unlawful and undemocratic elections to the People's Assemblies of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus of 22 October 1939, were incorporated into the USSR. The Wilno province was temporarily (until June 1940) ceded to Lithuania. Large industrial establishments, trade, banks and forests were nationalized, agricultural reform was carried out by distributing the landed estates formerly belonging to the Church and landed gentry among small and middle-sized peasant holdings. At the same time, any independent self-government, economic, cultural and educational institutions were dissolved. The Polish language was removed from schools and government agencies, and replaced with Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian and Yiddish.

In order to stabilize the systemic change, a campaign against "class-hostile elements" started. Already in September 1939, the troops were followed by special NKVD groups, whose task was to arrest selected political activists, government workers, and Polish Army officers. Only in 1939 more than 19,000 people were arrested.

In February, April and June 1940 and in May–June 1941, four great deportations into the depths of the USSR took place, including military settlers, foresters, the so-called *bezidentsy* (refugees from Nazi occupation) and the families of persons deemed to be hostile to communism. According to Soviet estimates, a total of about 325,000 Polish citizens were deported (210,000 Poles, 70,000 Jews, 25,000 Ukrainians, and 20,000 Belarusians).

.....

... The next night I am again investigated. There are two investigators, one from yesterday and a new one. They won't let me sit down. I'm standing 10 hours upright. Drunk with anger, they hail down cries and violent insults on me, they spit again and again in my face, and finally beat my head and neck with a long wooden ruler.

... Particularly infamous for torturing political prisoners in the Grodno and Nowogródek regions were the inquiry offices of Mołodeczno, Stara Wilejka, Lida and Wołkowysk. Their cruelty and sadism fully matched the Gestapo butchery in the German offices of inquiry. ...

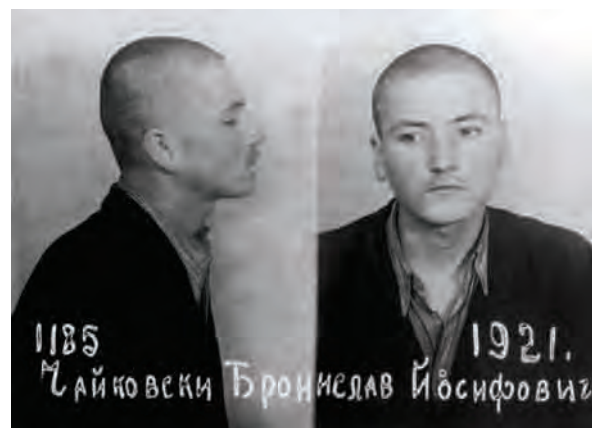
(Grażyna Lipińska, *Jeśli zapomnę o nich...*, Paryż 1988, pp. 70–71)

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Prison photograph of Bronisław Czajkowski, arrested by the NKVD for his participation in the anti-Soviet uprising in Czortków in January 1940, sentenced to death and executed after 4 February 1941. (Karta Centre)



▲ Soviet street propaganda in front of St. Roch Church in Białystok. (From Tomasz Wiśniewski's collection, "In Search of Poland" Society)





▲ A mass meeting in the lands under Soviet occupation in 1939. The participants carry a portrait of Joseph Stalin and a poster by V. Koresky showing a "liberated" peasant kissing a Red Army soldier. (Karta Centre)

The most widespread form of repression was deportation of population deep into the USSR. In the photo, Polish convicts at work in a forest at Kostousovo village, Sverdlovsk oblast. (Karta Centre)

Forced Soviet citizenship was one of the consequences of the incorporation of the eastern lands of Poland to the USSR. In the photo, an NKVD officer hands in a Soviet passport to a resident of Western Belarus in 1940. (Wojciech Śleszyński, *Okupacja sowiecka na Białostoczczyźnie 1939–1941. Propaganda i indoktrynacja*, Białystok 2001, picture 82)



.....
... Grodno is more and more dreary and miserable. Shops, cleared from the last scraps of goods, stand there empty and locked up. New administrators and NKVD officers flow endlessly from the east. Their numbers grow bigger and bigger. Shots heard fired at night from the wood called the "Sekret" would not cease. Executions are still going on, the only difference is that they are now performed by NKVD troops instead of regular troops, as it was at the beginning of the Soviet aggression. The place of slaying is guarded, the names of the victims are kept secret. Even the close family know nothing about them. Those condemned to death are brought at night from prisons overcrowded with captives. Many of those unsafe flee through the Bug. Both the Soviets guard the border of their occupation zone more conscientiously than the Germans. ...

(Grażyna Lipińska, *Jeśli zapomnę o nich...*, Paryż 1988, p. 50)

.....



▲ Governor-General Dr Hans Frank (in the middle) plays host to the Soviet delegation at the Wawel Castle. Beside are standing: the head of the delegation – People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR, Maxim Litvinov (on the right) and Deputy People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR for NKVD troops, General Ivan Maslennikov, December 1939. (*Krakauer Zeitung*, 9 December 1939)

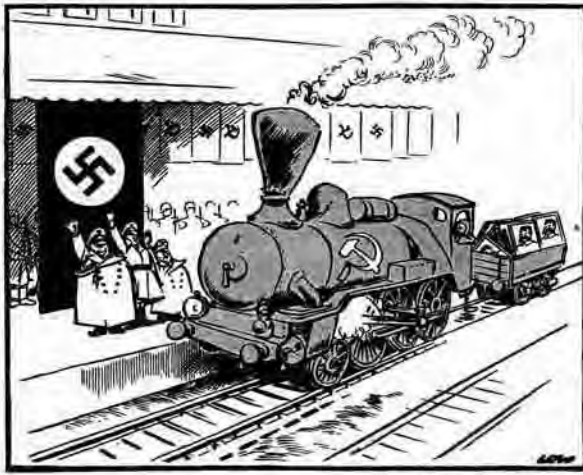


▲ Railway station in Zakopane decorated with German and Soviet flags during the visit of the Soviet delegation in December 1939. (*Krakauer Zeitung*, 10/11 December 1939)

▼ The head of the Cracow district, Otto Wächter, and the chairman of the Soviet delegation, Maxim Litvinov, on the Gubałówka hill. Zakopane, December 1939. (NAC)



Cartoon by David Low, 25 January 1940
 – "Sieg Heil! Here come the supplies from Russia!"
 (David Low, *Years of Wrath: A Cartoon History: 1931–1945*, London 1949, p. 99)



"SIEG HEIL! HERE COME THE SUPPLIES FROM RUSSIA!"



German-Soviet conference in Zakopane, Poland, in December 1939. On the right: a Soviet representative Arkadyev, the head of the Warsaw district Ludwig Fischer, the commander of the Police in the GG, General Herbert Becker and SS-Obersturmbannführer Horst Hoffmeyer. (NAC)

Map of the fourth partition of Poland between the USSR and Third Reich, signed by Joseph Stalin and Joachim von Ribbentrop in Moscow on 28 September 1939. (*Białe plamy. ZSRR–Niemcy 1939–1941*, Vilnius 1990)





Portrait of Reserve Second Lieutenant Henryk Leopold Andrzejowski, headmaster of the Public School in Białogóra, made on 4 January 1940 at the Kozielec POW camp. (Katyn Museum)



Portrait of a 16-year old volunteer Boguslaw Sobol (released in December 1939), made by Second Lieutenant Eugeniusz Maj on 4 November 1939 at the Starobelsk POW camp. (Katyn Museum)



A small camp altar carved in wood with painted image of Virgin Mary of Częstochowa, found during exhumation in Pyatykhatky near Kharkov. (Photo Aleksander Załęski)

Wooden chess.
(Photo Aleksander Załęski)

Prisoners' spoons made of wood.
(Photo Aleksander Załęski)



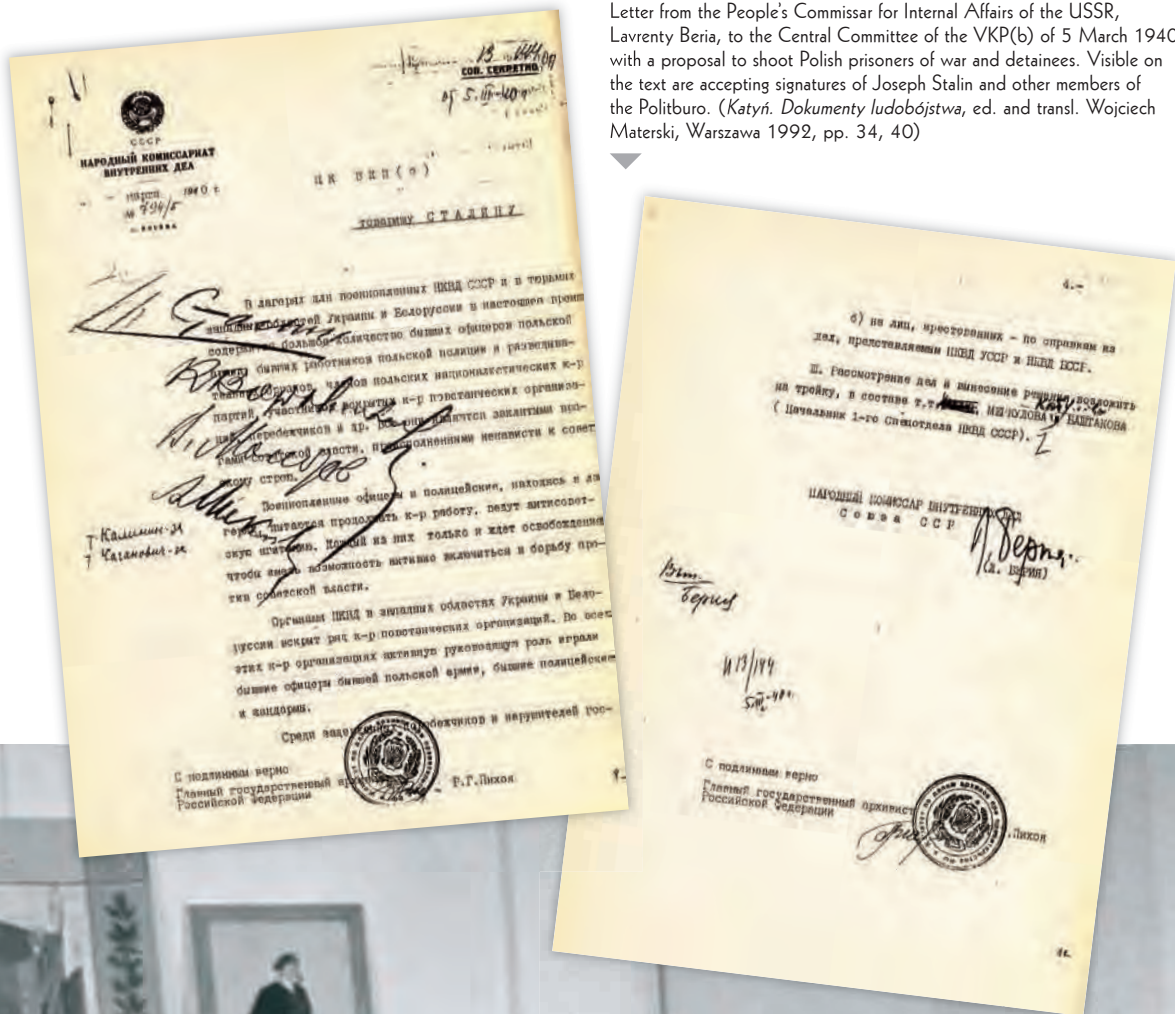
The Murderous Decision – 5 March 1940

The decision to murder Polish officers was taken by Soviet highest authorities; the main role in making it was played by Joseph Stalin and Lavrenty Beria.

On 5 March 1940, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs submitted to Stalin a draft of a decision to execute Polish citizens – 14,700 prisoners of war detained in camps at Kozelsk, Starobelsk and Ostashkov, and 11,000 prisoners incarcerated in Western Belarus and Western Ukraine. Beria's proposal was approved by the

Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the VKB(b) on 5 March 1940. Thus the members of the Politburo, acting on behalf of the USSR, sentenced 25,700 Polish citizens to death. The NKVD was charged with the implementation of the decision, and the so-called *Troika* composed of NKVD high officers, Vsevolod Merkulov Bakhcho Kobulov and Leonid Bashtakov, were responsible for selecting the prisoners to be entered into the death lists.

Letter from the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR, Lavrenty Beria, to the Central Committee of the VKP(b) of 5 March 1940 with a proposal to shoot Polish prisoners of war and detainees. Visible on the text are accepting signatures of Joseph Stalin and other members of the Politburo. (*Katyń. Dokumenty ludobójstwa*, ed. and transl. Wojciech Materski, Warszawa 1992, pp. 34, 40)



▲ The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the VKB(b) in March 1939. From left to right: Mikhail Kalinin, Lavrenty Beria, Anastas Mikoyan, Andrei Zhdanov, Vyacheslav Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich, Kliment Voroshilov and Joseph Stalin. (East News / RIA Novosti)

The Main Culprits

- Joseph Vissarionovich **STALIN** — member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the VKP(b).
 Kliment Yefremovich **VOROSHILOV** — member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the VKP(b).
 Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich **MOLOTOV** — member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the VKP(b).
 Anastas Ivanovich **MIKOYAN** — member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the VKP(b).
 Mikhail Ivanovich **KALININ** — member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the VKP(b).
 Lazar Moiseyevich **KAGANOVICH** — member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the VKP(b).
 Lavrenty Pavlovich **BERIA** — People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR.
 Vsevolod Nikolayevich **MERKULOV** — First Deputy People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR, member of the so-called Troika.
 Bakhcho Zakharovich **KOBULOV** — First Deputy People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR, member of the so-called Troika.
 Leonid Fokeevich **BASHTAKOV** — State Security Major, head of the First Special Section of the NKVD, member of the so-called Troika.
 Vasily Vasilevich **CHERNYSHOV** — Deputy People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR, head of the GULag.
 Ivan Ivanovich **MASLENNIKOV** — Deputy People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR for NKVD troops.
 Lavrenty Fomich **TSANAVA** (Dzhandzhgava) — People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the Belarusian SSR.
 Ivan Aleksandrovich **SEROV** — People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR.
 Solomon Rafalovich **MILSHTEIN** — State Security Commissar 3rd Rank, head of the Main Transport Administration of the NKVD.
 Pyotr Karpovich **SOPRUNENKO** — State Security Captain, head of the Administration for Prisoners of War of the NKVD.
 Ivan **KHOKHLOV** — State Security Lieutenant, deputy head for operations of the Administration for Prisoners of War of the NKVD.

None of the principals, organizers and direct executors of the



▲ The decoration "Meritorious Officer of the NKVD" established on 31 December 1940 for the officers who excelled in, among other things, the execution of "special tasks". (Maciej Poręba's collection)

▶ Parade of NKVD troops on Red Square in Moscow, 1 May 1937. (Valery N. Kulikov's collection)



- Ivan Borisovich **MAKLIARSKY** — State Security Senior Lieutenant; head of the Registration Department of the Administration for Prisoners of War of the NKVD.
- Arkady Yakovlevich **GERCOVSKY** — State Security Captain, deputy head of the First Special Section of the NKVD.
- Ivan **STEPANOV** — Colonel, deputy head of operations of Convoy Troops of the NKVD.
- Mikhail Spiridorovich **KRIVENKO** — Kombrig; Chief of Staff of Convoy Troops of the NKVD.
- Aleksei Aleksandrovich **RYBAKOV** — Colonel; head of the Special Department of the Main Administration of Convoy Troops of the NKVD.
- Pyotr Vasilievich **FEDOTOV** — State Security Senior Major; head of the 2nd Department of the GUGB, NKVD (counterintelligence).
- Piotr **KOŻUSZKO** — officer of the 2nd Department of the GUGB, NKVD (counterintelligence); dealt with intelligence in the POW camps. Since 1943 Colonel in the 1st Tadeusz Kościuszko Division, thereafter head of the Department of Information of the Polish Army in the USSR.
- Vasily Mikhailovich **ZARUBIN** — State Security Major, senior operative, 5th Department of the GUGB, NKVD (foreign intelligence).
- Nikolai Nikolaevich **SMIRNOV** — state security lieutenant, deputy head of the First Special Section of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR.
- SUDAKOV** — State Security Senior Lieutenant, head of the Prison Administration of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR.
- Pyotr Sergeevich **SAFONOV** — State Security Major; head of NKVD Administration, Kharkov oblast.
- Yemelyan Ivanovich **KUPRIYANOV** — State Security Captain; head of the NKVD Administration, Smolensk oblast.
- Dmitry Stepanovich **TOKAREV** — State Security Major; head of the NKVD Administration, Kalinin oblast.

Katyn massacre has ever been punished for the murder of Poles





◀ Belongings of the murdered Polish officers, extracted by the Germans in 1943. (Katyn Museum)



▲ Bodies of the victims recovered from the pits during exhumation in 1943. (Katyn Museum)

▶ The skull of one of the victims of massacre with a bullet visible, extracted during exhumation in 1943. (Katyn Museum)





▲ Captain Józef Berezowski, commander of the battalion of National Defence "Lwów I", murdered in Kharkov. (Katyn Museum)



◀ Polish Army officers during exercises before 1939. Among them Reserve Captain Wiktor Nowak, murdered in Kharkov. (Katyn Museum)



▲ A box made in the Starobelsk camp, found during exhumation at Pyatykhatky in 1991. (Photo Aleksander Załęski)

◀ Captain Wilhelm Wittlin, murdered in Kharkov, with his wife and daughter, in the background Border Protection Corps station in Volhynia. (Katyn Museum)



▲ Military eagle found during exhumation of the victims of the Katyn massacre. (Photo Aleksander Załęski)

◀ Identity discs and military badges of the murdered Polish Army officers. (Photo Aleksander Załęski)



Kalinin (Tver)

On 1 April 1940, the head of the NKVD Administration for Prisoners of War ordered the commander of the Ostashkov camp to start shipping prisoners to Kalinin (Tver). The first group of 343 prisoners were sent on 5 April 1940.

From the train station Kalinin they were transported in cars to the NKVD internal prison in Soviet Street.

The prisoners were shot at night, in the basement, in a felt-muted death cell. Bodies were transported in the morning in lorries to Mednoye, a place more than 30 km away, and buried at the NKVD recreation centre. Overall, within a few weeks, 6,311 Poles were murdered in this way in Kalinin.

[Prosecutor] Yablokov: *Dmitry Stepanovich, the shooting of over six thousand people also means a large number of those who participated in it. It's a large mass of people ...*

Tokarev: *A total of about thirty people participated in the shooting ...*

Tokarev: *I didn't enter the cell where the shooting was carried out. Up there, the technology was developed by [Vasily] Blokhin, yes, and the commandant of our Administration [Andrei] Rubanov. They had padded the doors opening onto the corridor, so that the shots were not heard in the cells. Then they would take those convicts – let's so call them – through the corridor, turn left, where the red common room was In the red common room they would check by the list: if the information, personal details are correct, if there was any mistake, so ... and then, when they were sure that this was the man to be shot, they would immediately cuff his hands and take to the cell, where he was shot. The cell walls were also padded with acoustic material. That's all.*

Yablokov: *And how did the shooting look like? Did you see?*

Tokarev: *I did not see, honestly speaking, it was awfully unpleasant. ...*

Tokarev: *It was already on the first day. So we went. And then I saw all this dread. We came there. After a few minutes Blokhin put his special wear: brown leather hat, long brown leather apron, brown leather gauntlet gloves reaching above elbow. It made a huge impression on me – I saw the executioner! ...*

Tokarev: *... I didn't ask anyone, I only spoke to one boy, "How old are you?" He said – 18. "Where did you serve?" In the border guards. What did you deal with? He was switchboard operator. ...*

Tokarev: *... He smiled as he came in, yes, a boy, he was only a boy, 18 years old, and how long he worked? He started to count in Polish – 6 months.*

Yablokov: *And where were they kept before the interrogation?*

Tokarev: *In the internal prison.*

Yablokov: *Where exactly? In the basement, isn't it?*

Tokarev: *In the basement, in the basement. This was the basement. ...*

Yablokov: *And the death cell – how was it arranged? ...*

Tokarev: *... Well, the small room, no larger than this, maybe even less. That's all. That cell was opening to the courtyard.*

Yablokov: *A second exit?*

Tokarev: *Yes, a second exit to the courtyard. It was there that they would pull out the dead bodies, load them on the car and go. ...*

Yablokov: *Finally ... Our evidence shows that your subordinates: drivers, command office workers, guards and some investigating officers took part in the operation of shooting Polish prisoners of war. In addition, you told about rescuing one of the drivers whom you ordered to participate in the operation. Didn't you also order your subordinates to participate in this operation?*

Tokarev: *I definitely didn't give any order.*

Yablokov: *This begs the question: these were your subordinates, weren't they?*

Tokarev: *My subordinates, but my first deputy worked there – [Vasily] Pavlov.*

Yablokov: *Pavlov? Yes?*

Tokarev: *He organized everything. He, with the help of Borisov, the second alternate.*

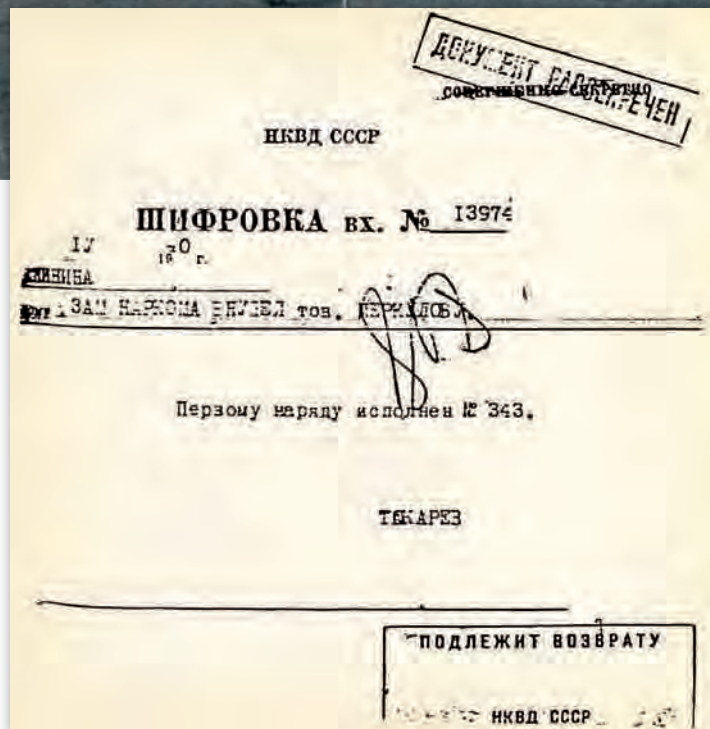
Yablokov: *Everything is clear. I have no more questions ...*



▲ The courtyard of the former office of the NKVD Administration in Kalinin. In the basement of the building, in the cells of the NKVD internal prison, Polish prisoners of war from the Ostashkov camp were executed in spring 1940. (Photo Aleksander Załęski)



▲ Dmitry Tokarev, the former head of the NKVD Administration in Kalinin, testifying on 20 March 1991. (IPN Archive)



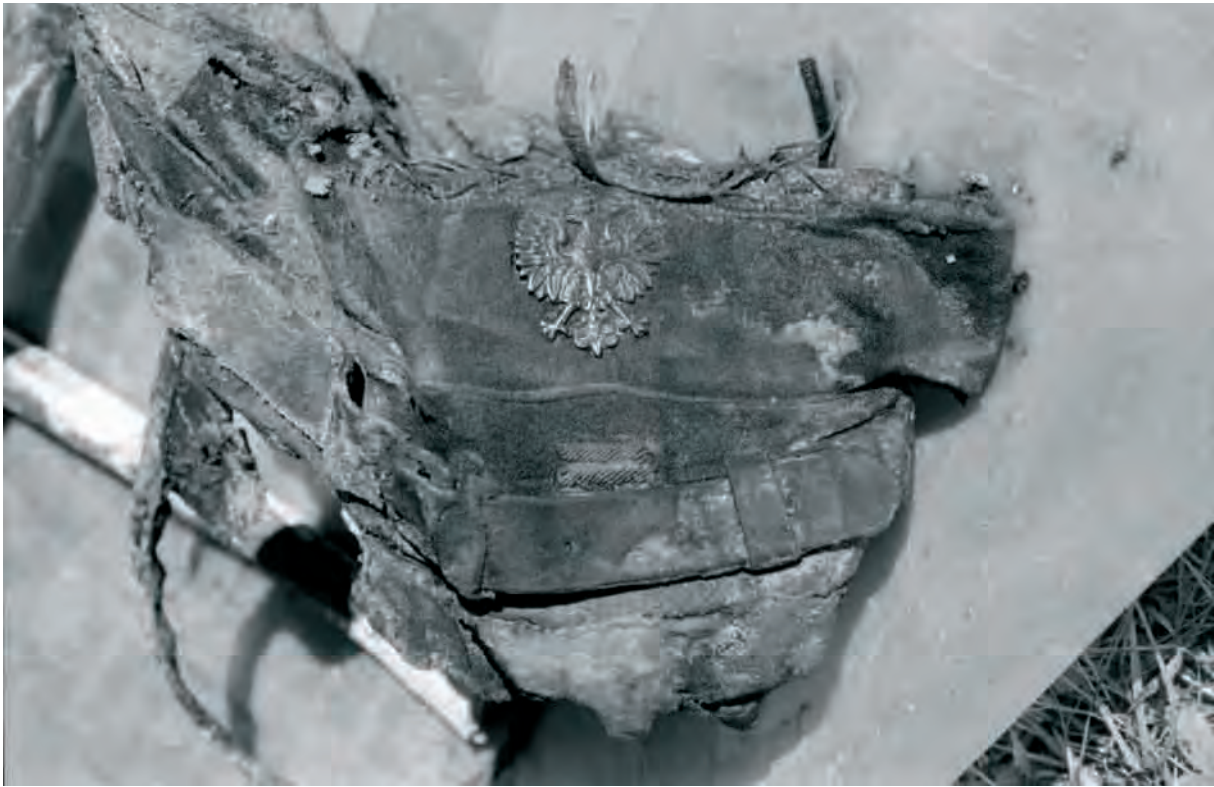
▲ Cryptogram by the head of the NKVD Administration in Kalinin, Dmitry Tokarev, to the USSR Deputy People's Commissar for Internal Affairs Vsevolod Merkulov of 5 April 1940, with information about the murder of the first transport of 343 prisoners of war from the Ostashkov camp. This fact was worded in laconic form: "The first order was carried out no. 343". (*Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, Vol. 2, eds. Wojciech Materski, Bolesław Woszczyński et al., Warszawa 1998, p. 129)



▲ Basement corridor. (Photo Aleksander Załęski)

Stairs leading to the basement. (Photo Aleksander Załęski)





▲ A police-officer hat found in Mednoye. (Photo Aleksander Załęski)



▲ The excavated objects included many badges with service numbers. Such badges were worn by State Police officers. (Photo Aleksander Załęski)

◀ Exhumed remains of the victims, in the 1990s. (Photo Aleksander Załęski)

The Murder of Prisoners

Apart from the murder of prisoners of war, the Soviets also decided to shoot some people detained in prisons. On 22 March 1940 Lavrenty Beria issued order no. 000350 to “discharge” prisons. Three thousand people who were detained in prisons in Lwów, Równe, Łuck, Tarnopol, Stanisławów and Drohobycz were to be transported to Kiev, Kharkov and Kherson. Another three thousand were to be transferred from prisons in Pińsk, Brześć n. Bugiem, Baranowicze and Wilejka to Minsk.

These prisoners (not less than 7,305 in total) were executed. The places where corpses of the victims of this least-known part of the Katyn massacre were buried (the so-called Belarusian and Ukrainian lists), remain unknown. Archaeological work carried out at Bykovnia near Kiev point out, however, that some of the bodies were hidden there.

Polish-made ebonite container for shaving cream found during exhumation work at Bykovnia near Kiev in October 2001. (From the documentation of the Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom)



A Polish coin found during exhumation work at Bykovnia near Kiev in October 2001. (From the documentation of the Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom)



Kuropaty forest complex, in which NKVD victims from Minsk were buried, the presumptive place to hide corpses of Polish prisoners from the western oblasts of the BSSR murdered in spring 1940. (From the documentation of the Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom)

The Drohobycz prison in the inter-war period. (NAC)



... On 13 April 1940, very early in the morning, when all slept, the NKVD came to our family home.

... In Baranowicze, we were loaded onto freight carriages, several families each, and the exile began. These were ordinary cattle wagons, high under the roof they had two small windows locked from the outside. The doors were locked, so it was dark inside, and very cold, though it was April. Muffled, we cuddled up together to warm up with the heat of each other's bodies. We bolstered up by prayer and singing patriotic and religious songs. More often, however, weeping and quiet conversation about our future fate was heard.

... In our train, more and more sick people and small children were dying. Unavoidably, people had to travel with dead bodies of their relatives. These bodies, on rare stops, were taken by the guards, and then buried in the snow. ...

(Account by Bernarda Chilimończyk, quote from: *By czas nie zatarł pamięci*, Dębno 2006)

Julia Hryszkiewicz with daughter Janina, deported on 13 April 1940 from Świąciany district to Kazakhstan. (Karta Centre)



▲ Soldiers of the 132nd Battalion of NKVD Convoy Troops from Brześć nad Bugiem. The Battalion was used, inter alia, to escort trains during the deportation of the Polish population from the Brześć oblast. (From Jan Rutkiewicz's collection)

To Comrade [Joseph] Stalin in Moscow

Our good loved father Stalin!

Now I am sick and very miss my daddy whom I haven't seen for nearly nine months. And I thought to myself that only you, the Great Stalin, can return him. He was an engineer and during the war he was called to the military service and got prisoner of war. He is now in Kozelsk in the Smolensk oblast. We were resettled to the Kazakh Republic, to the Arykbalyksky region, to Imantav kolkhoz. We have no relatives here. My mum is tiny and weak. Please, from the bottom of my heart, send us back our father.

Krzysia Mikucka, student of class III, and Staś Mikucki

(Letter by deported children of Second Lieutenant Eugeniusz Mikucki of 28 May 1940, to Joseph Stalin with request for releasing the father from the camp, quote from: *Katyn. Dokumenty zbrodni*, Vol. 2, ed. Wojciech Materski, Bolesław Woszczyński et al., Warszawa 1998, p. 357)



▲ A group of Poles deported in April 1940 from Drohobycz to Kamenki in the Kustanay oblast in Kazakhstan. (Karta Centre)



▲ In exile in Uyska Farm of the Molotovskiy Sovkhoz in Kazakhstan. From the left: Maria Wierzba (wife of a policeman from the Stanisławów province), her son Mieczysław, Andrzej Wandurski, Leopoldyna Urbanowska and Maria Wandurska. In the background, a hut in which the exiles lived, May 1940. (Karta Centre)

The Victims of the Katyn Massacre



(Katyn Museum)

Lieutenant General Stanisław Haller (1872–1940)

Stanisław Haller was born in the Polanka Hallerowska estate, in the Cracow district. From 1894 to 1918, he served in the Austrian army. Participant of World War I, since autumn 1918 in the Polish Army. In the Polish-Bolshevik War 1920 commanded the 13th Infantry Division. In the years 1920–1923 inspector of the 6th Army based in Lwów. In 1923–1924 Head of General Staff of the Polish Army. In May 1926, during Józef Piłsudski's coup d'état, he took sides of the government, and subsequently retired. Decorated with the Virtuti Militari Cross, III and V class, and the Cross of Valour.

In September 1939, he remained off-duty, at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief. Taken prisoner by the Soviets, after the transitional camps, was at the end of 1939 imprisoned at the NKVD camp in Starobelsk, where he was the most senior Polish officer. Murdered in spring 1940 in the basement of the oblast NKVD prison in Kharkov.



(Katyn Museum)

Rear Admiral Ksawery Czernicki (1882–1940)

Ksawery Stanisław Czernicki was born in Giedejki in the Oszmiana district. During the Polish-Bolshevik War 1919–1921 he co-organized Polish river fleet fighting in Pripyat and Dnieper rivers, and was the commander of the Modlin port; later served in the Administration of the (Sea) Navy, where he oversaw, among other things, the construction of destroyers *Wicher* and *Burza*. Decorated with, inter alia, the Cross of Valour. He was married to Serafina Margoli.

Arrested in September 1939, initially imprisoned at Ostashkov, then, not later than in November, moved to Kozelsk. In the Kozelsk camp, he, together with other officers with the rank of general, played the role of the senior of the prison community, i.e. the person setting behavior standards of officers and representing them towards the camp authorities. Executed by the NKVD in Smolensk or in the Katyn forest, he is lying in an anonymous pit in Katyn. Currently, the warship *Kontradmiral Xawery Czernicki* sails under the Polish flag.



(Katyn Museum)

Reserve Second Lieutenant Zygmunt Łotocki (1904–1940)

Zygmunt Marian Łotocki was born in Włodawa in the Lublin province. Reserve Second Lieutenant, a writer and columnist, graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Warsaw, in the period 1937–1939 he worked as a Polish literature teacher at the gymnasium in Piotrków Trybunalski.

An outstanding sportsman, co-founder of the Polish school of archery. In 1934, playing for „ZS Warszawa”, he became Polish champion, also won a medal at the world championships. The author of classic books *Łuczniństwo* (Archery; 1934). As the coach of the Polish national team in archery in the period 1930–1934, he led the women’s team to great achievements in the international arena.

Married to Maria (née Pankow), he had one son.

In 1939 he was taken into Soviet captivity. In November 1939, imprisoned in Kozelsk camp, murdered at Katyn.



Major Baruch Steinberg (1897–1940)

Baruch Steinberg was born in Przemyślany, Galicia. During the World War I, member of the underground Polish Military Organization. Since 1928 he served as Head of Pastoral Care of the Jewish Faith, District Corps Command III and I, working as religious minister for Polish citizens of Jewish origin serving in the army. In 1936, he was appointed the Chief Rabbi of the Polish Army.

Imprisoned by the Soviets after the end of hostilities in September 1939, he was initially detained at the Starobelsk camp. In December 1939, together with other clergy isolated from the rest of prisoners, in March 1940 he was moved to Moscow. In spring 1940, he was murdered in the Katyn forest or in Smolensk, and his body hidden in Katyn.



(Katyn Museum)

Reserve Captain Jan Stach (1891–1940)

Jan Antoni Stach was born in Ujanowice in Beskid Wyspowsy mountain range. PhD in law, he worked as Judge at the Magistrate’s Court in Drohobycz.

Arrested after the entry of Soviet troops, and imprisoned at the “police” camp of Ostashkov. He was murdered by the NKVD in April or in May 1940 in Kalinin (Tver). Jan Stach’s remains extracted from the mass death pit during exhumation in 1994–1995 were buried in 1995 at the Mednoye cemetery.



(Katyn Museum)



Reserve Lieutenant Tadeusz Tucholski (1898–1940)

Tadeusz Tucholski was born in Rogów near Pruszków. Reserve lieutenant, in 1920 he took part in the Polish-Bolshevik War. In 1930 granted a PhD degree, in 1936 became associate professor at the Department of Chemistry, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. He worked at the Institute of Armament Technology, was also a consultant to the Ministry of Military Affairs. Author of dozens of scientific papers. Since 1939, Professor at the Warsaw Technical University. Married to Zofia Osuchowska, had two children: son Jędrzej and daughter Hanna.

Mobilized in September 1939, was taken into Soviet captivity. In November 1939, imprisoned at Kozelsk. In April 1940, sent with the death transport to the Gnezdovo station. Stanisław Swianiewicz, the only prisoner excluded from the death transport, reported: „On the opposite side, diagonally, was sitting professor Tucholski. I didn't know him well, but I it did know from my colleagues that shortly before the war he returned from England, where he conducted a research project at the University of Cambridge”. Shot in April 1940 in the Katyn forest. His body has been exhumed and identified in 1943; an employee ID, business cards, a medallion and elephant-shaped talisman were found with him.

(Katyn Museum)





▲
The arrest of professors of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow by the Germans, 6 November 1939. Oil painting by Mieczysław Wątorski from 1963. (Historical Museum of Cracow)

Execution of teachers in the "Death Valley" at Fordon out of Bydgoszcz, October 1939 (IPN Archive)





▲ In the woods out of Rudzki Most near Tuchola, in October and November 1939, the Germans shot more than 300 Poles in a number of mass executions. In the photo, Fr. Piotr Sosnowski, the parish priest at Bysław and dean of the Tuchola deanery, shot on 27 October 1939 by a squad of Selbstschutz. (IPN Archive)

► Notice of 7 December 1939 about the execution of 20 Polish hostages from Nowe Miasto and Lubawa. (IPN Archive)

▼ Execution of 51 individuals in Bochnia in retaliation for an attack on a local station of German police, 18 December 1939. (IPN Archive)



Bekanntmachung.

In letzter Zeit sind im Kreise Löbau verschiedene Gehöfte vorsätzlich in Brand gesetzt worden. Es ist erwiesen, dass die Täter polnischen chauvinistischen Kreisen angehören. Als Vergeltungsmassnahme wurden daher heute

je 10 Geiseln in Neumark und Löbau öffentlich standrechtlich erschossen.

Eine grössere Anzahl Geiseln wird noch in Haft gehalten, mit denen bei dem geringsten Sabotageversuch in der gleichen Weise verfahren wird.
Die Bevölkerung wird ersucht, bei der Vorbeugung derartiger Verbrechen mitzuwirken.

Graudenz, den 7. Dezember 1939.

Geheime Staatspolizei.

Obwieszczenie.

W ostatnim czasie kilkakrotnie zdarzyły się w powiecie lubawskim umyślnie podpalenia zabudowań wiejskich. Ponad wszelkie wątpliwości ustalono, że sprawcami tych podpalen są polscy szowiniści.
W związku z tym w dniu dzisiejszym zostali

po 10 zakładników z Nowego Miasta i Lubawy, według prawa wojennego publicznie rozstrzelani.

Większa ilość zakładników znajduje się jeszcze w nreszcie i w razie najmniejszego ustowanego sabotażu, postąpi się w ten sam sposób.
Publiczność winna zapobiegawczo współdziałać w zwalczaniu tych zbrodni.

Graudenz, dnia 7. grudnia 1939 r.

Tajna Policja Państwowa.

Fritz **KATZMANN** (1906–1957) — SS-Oberführer, the SS and police commander in the Radom district (November 1939 – August 1941), went into hiding after the war under the name of Bruno Albrecht.

Paul **MODER** (1896–1942) — SS-Gruppenführer, the SS and police commander in the Warsaw district (November 1939 – August 1941), died on the Eastern Front.

Bruno **STRECKENBACH** (1902–1977) — SS-Brigadeführer and police Major-General, the commander of the police and security services in the General Government (October 1939 – January 1941), sentenced to long imprisonment by a Soviet court, in 1955 transferred to the authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany to serve the remaining penalty time.

Dr Ludwig **HAHN** (1908–1986) — SS-Sturmbannführer and senior government official, chief of police and security services in the Cracow district (January 1940 – August 1941), after the war in West Germany, imprisoned in the years 1960–1961 and 1965–1967, on 4 July 1975 sentenced to life imprisonment.

Walter **HUPPENKOTHEN** (1907–1979) — SS-Sturmbannführer and senior government official, chief of police and security services in the Lublin district (February 1940 – July 1941), after the war in West Germany, in 1945–1949 interned, 1949–1952 in custody, 15 October 1955 sentenced to 6 years of hard imprisonment by the Land Court in Augsburg, 19 June 1956 released.

Dr Fritz Wilhelm **LIPHARDT** (1905–1947) — SS-Obersturmbannführer and senior government official, chief of police and security services in the Radom district (November 1939 – October 1943), committed suicide.

Josef **MEISINGER** (1899–1947) — SS-Standartenführer and police colonel, chief of police and security services in the Warsaw district (October 1939 – March 1941), arrested by the Americans in Japan, sentenced to death by a ruling of the Supreme National Tribunal, hanged in the Mokotów prison in Warsaw.

SS evening meeting at the headquarters of the General Government in Cracow, 8 March 1940. (NAC)



“The day of German police in the General Government of Poland” – a notelet of 1940. (NAC)

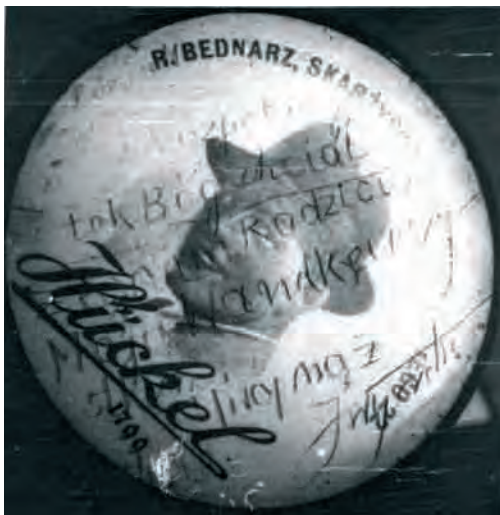
SS and Police Commander in the GG, SS-Obergruppenführer Friedrich Krüger, SS-Reichsführer and head of the German police Heinrich Himmler, Governor-General Hans Frank, and Government Chief of the GG Josef Bühler. (NAC)





Victims of the German operation against the unit of Major "Hubal". On 4 April 1940 the police shot in Koprus, township Stąporków, the family of guerilla Marian Gut. They killed his parents, Józef and Władysława, and siblings – twelve-year-old Bogusław and a three-years-old Zofia. Their bodies were burnt along with the buildings. Marian Gut, wounded the day before, had been captured. He was deceived by the Germans into disclosing the address of his family. They promised him a meeting with his close relatives before transporting him to a hospital. After hearing, the guerrilla was killed. (IPN Archive)

A letter from the prison in Radom by Józef Wyczółkowski (killed at Firlej on 4 July 1940) to his wife, engraved on the back of a mirror: "Dear Marysia, Goodbye and don't despair. This was God's wish. Bye, Parents. My Wandka and all. Your husband J. Wyczółkowski". (White Eagle Museum in Skarżysko-Kamienna)



German police handcuff used by the Sipo and SD facility in Częstochowa. (IPN Archive)





▲
 Graduates of air defence course in front of the magistrate at Skarżysko-Kamienna, 27 February 1938. Two years later, in the first half of 1940, in mass executions in the city more than a thousand people were killed, including some of those visible in the photo. In the municipal building there was a Gestapo facility where the detainees were interrogated before the execution. (From Andrzej Kielczewski's collection)

▼
 The identification of remains by families during the post-war exhumation of victims of execution at Firlej near Radom. (IPN Archive)





▲ Exhumation of the victims of mass executions at Fort Krzeslawice in Cracow in 1945. (IPN Archive)

▼ One of the mass graves of victims of execution at Fort Krzeslawice in Cracow, uncovered during the exhumation in 1945. (IPN Archive)



▲ The prison in Nowy Wiśnicz, 1940. The German officer shows a board with the words: "Warning! Talking to prisoners will be punished with death". (IPN Archive)

▼ German police finds hidden weapons and military equipment. A postcard from the winter of 1939/1940. (NAC)



Operation AB in the Warsaw District

Like in other areas, the Operation AB in the Warsaw district began with mass arrests carried out on 30 March 1940. Some prisoners were soon shot. The largest mass executions took place at Palmiry – the main place out of Warsaw to execute from December 1939 to July 1941. The largest number of victims claimed the executions of 20 and 21 June 1940. 358 individuals were shot then, among them national activists (Halina Jaroszewiczowa, Mieczysław Niedziałkowski and Maciej Rataj) and local-government activists (Jan Pohoski), people of culture (Alicja Bełcikowska, Jan Bełcikowski, Tadeusz Grabowski and Grzegorz Krzeczkowski) and famous sportsmen (Janusz Kusociński, Tomasz Stankiewicz and Feliks Żubr).

The detainees represent different parties: National-Democrats, National Radical Camp, peasants' activists, the Sanation camp, probably the least from the Polish Socialist Party. ... The representative of Sanation in this group [Jan] Pohoski was arrested at 6 a.m., taken from his apartment in underwear, and his wife wishing to say her farewells was pushed away with the words "polnisches Schwein".

(Ludwig Landau, *Kronika lat wojny i okupacji*, Vol. 1, Warszawa 1962, p. 382)

On 14 June [1940] ... twenty people were taken "in transport". There was – it was claimed – twice as much in the German escort, armed to the teeth. Pawiak chroniclers do not record this transport, they include it in the next big transport. I met my mother, we were in despair, we were making wild guesses, where the two dreadful wagons went. The Pawiak didn't yet know the name Palmiry. It was not until foresters drew attention to the regularity of shots which were coming from the Palmiry clearing that the notoriety of Palmiry came to the Pawiak through clandestine news-sheets. ... Since early morning on 20 June all hell was let loose for two days. The bars were rattling, lists of names were called in cells; from more than a dozen prisoners of our cell perhaps three were left. On 21 June they also reached the cell of Mieczysław Niedziałkowski. ... The "transport" included then all those enrolled in a long list, about 400 people. [Maciej] Rataj was supported under his arms, the battered, the sick, the unfit to get into the lorry themselves were pulled from the cells. The wagons were densely planted with SS-men and alternated with German cars bristled with arms, turned from the Pawiak gate to the right. The Pawiak people theorized in length about the direction of departure. The prison was thinned out, but – as always – not for long.

(Tadeusz Drewnowski, *Więzienie rodzinne (3 IV – 13 IX 1940)* [in:] *Wspomnienia więźniów Pawiaka*, Warszawa 1978, pp. 149–150)

The day of German culture in Warsaw, celebration in "Roma" Theatre. (IPN Archive)





▲ The area of mass executions of Poles at Palmiry where exhumation work was ongoing in 1946. (Photo Stanisław Dąbrowiecki, IPN Archive)

◀ Exhumed remains of the leader of the National Radical Organization, Andrzej Świątlicki, who was arrested on 8 May 1940 in Warsaw and executed at Palmiry on 20 or 21 June 1940. (Photo Stanisław Dąbrowiecki, IPN Archive)

▼ Signpost to the place of execution at Palmiry, 1946 (Photo Stanisław Dąbrowiecki, CAF)



▲ Personal effects found at the body of MP Mieczysław Niedziałkowski. (Photo Karol Szczeciński, CAF)

Operation AB in the Lublin District

The Operation AB in the Lublin district began with the imprisonment in the Zamość Rotunda of about 200 representatives of the local intelligentsia on 20–22 June 1940. On 24 June 1940, between 17.30–20.00, 814 men were arrested in Lublin who were imprisoned at the Castle. On the same day in Biała Podlaska the Germans arrested 40 teachers of local secondary schools, who had previously been called to appear at the district office. On 26 June a similar operation took place in Lubartów, where 400 people were arrested. In Chełm, the first arrests took place already on 10 and 11 June and during the night of 3/4 July 1940. Similar operations were also carried out in Puławy, Janów Lubelski, Kraśnik and other towns.

Some imprisoned stood before ad hoc courts. In accordance with the recommendation of the head of the Lublin district, Ernst Emil Zörner, courts ruled only death sentences. Mass executions of the prisoners of the Lublin Castle took place at Rury Jezuickie out of Lublin (in the vicinity of the so-called Doły (pits)). Four mass executions took place there (29 June, 3 and 4 July and 15 August 1940). The exact number of people shot there is unknown. According to estimates made during the exhumation, 450–500 people were killed. All executions took place at night in the light of headlamps.

Most paralyzing to thoughts and the will of man was the atmosphere full of horror and fear, the yelling of infuriated Germans, the cries of battered prisoners and the uncertainty of what tomorrow would bring. Almost every night new prisoners were brought from investigation. Often, after calling the names from the list in the cells, people were chased off to the courtyard, where they were transported to the camp or shot.

Executions initially took place at Czechów Górny beside the shooting range in the ravines, then at the cemetery in Unicka St., in Rury Świętoduskie and at the Jewish cemetery. Those who were to be executed were also transported to the woods around the villages of Niemce and Konopnica. Jews were shot in the Krępiecki forest. These news were coming mainly from the prisoners from the working cell 19, who were digging execution pits and burying the bodies of the murdered.

The lists of prisoners designed to be executed or deported to concentration camps were drawn up at the Gestapo office under the supervision of Cramer, and authorized by the Gestapo chief [Johannes] Müller. Complete lists came to the Lublin Castle, where the transports were organized. A group of Gestapo officers would take the prisoners (if prisoners were to be executed – this was usually at night), while the killing was also carried out by Gestapo officers from the prison crew.

(Jan Potyrański, *Wspomnienia [in:] Wspomnienia więźniów Zamku Lubelskiego 1939–1944*, selected by Jadwiga Chmielak, Jolanta Gajowniczek et al., Warszawa 1984, pp. 80–81)



▲ The Lublin Castle, from which in the summer of 1940 prisoners were transported to concentration camps and for mass executions at Rury Jezuickie. (IPN Archive)

On 29 June 1940, at 23.00 they started to chase away the prisoners to the court. Tables were standing there, on them – light machine guns. They checked the lists, and drew up new lists. This lasted until three in the morning. Our guess was that the Gestapo would prepare a transport to a concentration camp, but no one knew more details.

(Paweł Adamiec, *Droga do Zamku Lubelskiego* [in:] *Wspomnienia więźniów Zamku Lubelskiego 1939–1944*, selected by Jadwiga Chmielak, Jolanta Gajowniczek et al., Warszawa 1984, p. 109)



The arrested in Lublin. (The Lublin Province Museum – Museum of the History of City of Lublin “Krakowska Gate”)

A mass grave at Rury Jezuickie in Lublin, the place of mass executions of Poles in the summer of 1940. (The Lublin Province Museum – Museum of the History of City of Lublin “Krakowska Gate”)



The Zamość Rotunda, where Poles were imprisoned and murdered in 1940. In the photo, post-war exhumation of mass graves. (IPN Archive)



Exhumation of victims of execution at Rury Jezuickie in Lublin in 1945. (The Lublin Province Museum – Museum of the History of City of Lublin “Krakowska Gate”)



A drawing made by Zygmunt Kielasiński in a cell of the Lublin prison on 4 May 1940. (The Lublin Province Museum – Museum of the History of City of Lublin “Krakowska Gate”)



Formation of transport to KL Sachsenhausen in the courtyard of the prison in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, 17 July 1940. (IPN Archive)



Stanisław Ryński, the first Polish political prisoner, brought to KL Auschwitz from Tarnów on 14 June 1940, registered with the camp number 31. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)



An assembly in KL Auschwitz, drawing by Mieczysław Kościelniak. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)



Auschwitz prisoners at work, drawing by Mieczysław Kościelniak. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)



Loading the first transport of Polish political prisoners to KL Auschwitz, Tarnów, 14 June 1940. (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)



Victims of the Operation AB

Maciej Rataj (1884–1940)

Born in Chłopy, Rudki district. Classical philologist, teacher, member of the Council of National Defense (1920), Speaker of the Sejm (1922–1927), twice (1922 and 1926) acting as the Polish President, the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment (1920–1921), Minister of Culture (1921), activist of peasant parties PSL “Wyzwolenie” and PSL “Piast”, the president of SL. Member of Parliament (1919–1935).

During the German occupation, co-founder of underground military organisation Service for Poland's Victory and underground peasant party SL “Roch”, member of the Central Political Council and the Central Management of the Peasants' Movement. Arrested in November 1939 by the Gestapo, released at the end of February 1940. Re-arrested on 24 March 1940, imprisoned at Pawiak prison in Warsaw. Shot in the mass execution of 21 June 1940 at Palmiry .



(NAC)

Halina Jaroszewiczowa (1892–1940)

She was born in Dziwnów, Rypin district, before 1918 belonged to Polish patriotic organisations – the Riflemen's Association and the Polish Military Organization; for her activities imprisoned by the tsarist authorities. Soldier of Polish Legions during the World War I, co-founder of the Civic Association of Women's Work, a member of the Polish White Cross, activist of Soldiers' Family association, the Association for the Protection of Women's Labour, Trade Union of Agricultural Workers, Polish Socialist Party. Member of the Sejm (1930–1935), senator (1935–1938). Since autumn 1939 in the Union of Armed Struggle, on 15 April 1940 arrested by the Gestapo, imprisoned at Pawiak. Shot in a mass execution at Palmiry on 20 or 21 June 1940.



(NAC)

Janusz Kusociński (1907–1940)

Born in Warsaw, footballer, athlete, Olympic gold medal winner in the 10,000 m race (Los Angeles, 1932), the world champion in 3,000 m race (Antwerp, 1932) and the Polish champion at distances 1,500, 5,000 and 10,000 m. Graduated from the Central Institute of Physical Education in Warsaw, in 1939 voluntarily joined the army, took part in the defence of Warsaw, twice wounded, decorated with the Cross of Valour. Involved in conspiratorial activities – he joined the military organization “Wolves” (nom de guerre “Prawdźic”). Arrested in Warsaw on 28 March 1940, imprisoned at Mokotów and Pawiak prisons, tortured, shot in a mass execution on 20 or 21 June 1940 at Palmiry.



(NAC)



(NAC)



(From the collection of the Monastery of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate at Święty Krzyż)



(NAC)

Lieutenant Colonel Piotr Sosialuk (1892–1940)

Born in Suchodoły, Brody district. He studied law in Lwów. During World War I officer in the Austro-Hungarian army, thereafter in the Polish army commanded by General Józef Haller. Participant of the Polish-Bolshevik war, career officer of the Polish Army. In September 1939, he commanded the 73rd infantry regiment from Katowice, distinguished himself with outstanding fortitude and determination. Member of Service for Poland's Victory and the Union of Armed Struggle (ZWZ). Since March 1940, commander of the Cieszyn-Zaolzie Subdistrict of the ZWZ. On 26 April 1940 arrested in Cracow in a contact facility and jailed at Montelupi St. prison. After brutal investigation, in which he was beaten and tortured, on 7 June 1940 he was sentenced to death. On 2 July 1940 shot in a mass execution at the Krzesławice Fort. Posthumously promoted to colonel (1 July 1945) and awarded the Military Order Virtuti Militari V Class (11 November 1948). He left his wife Janina and daughter Stefania.

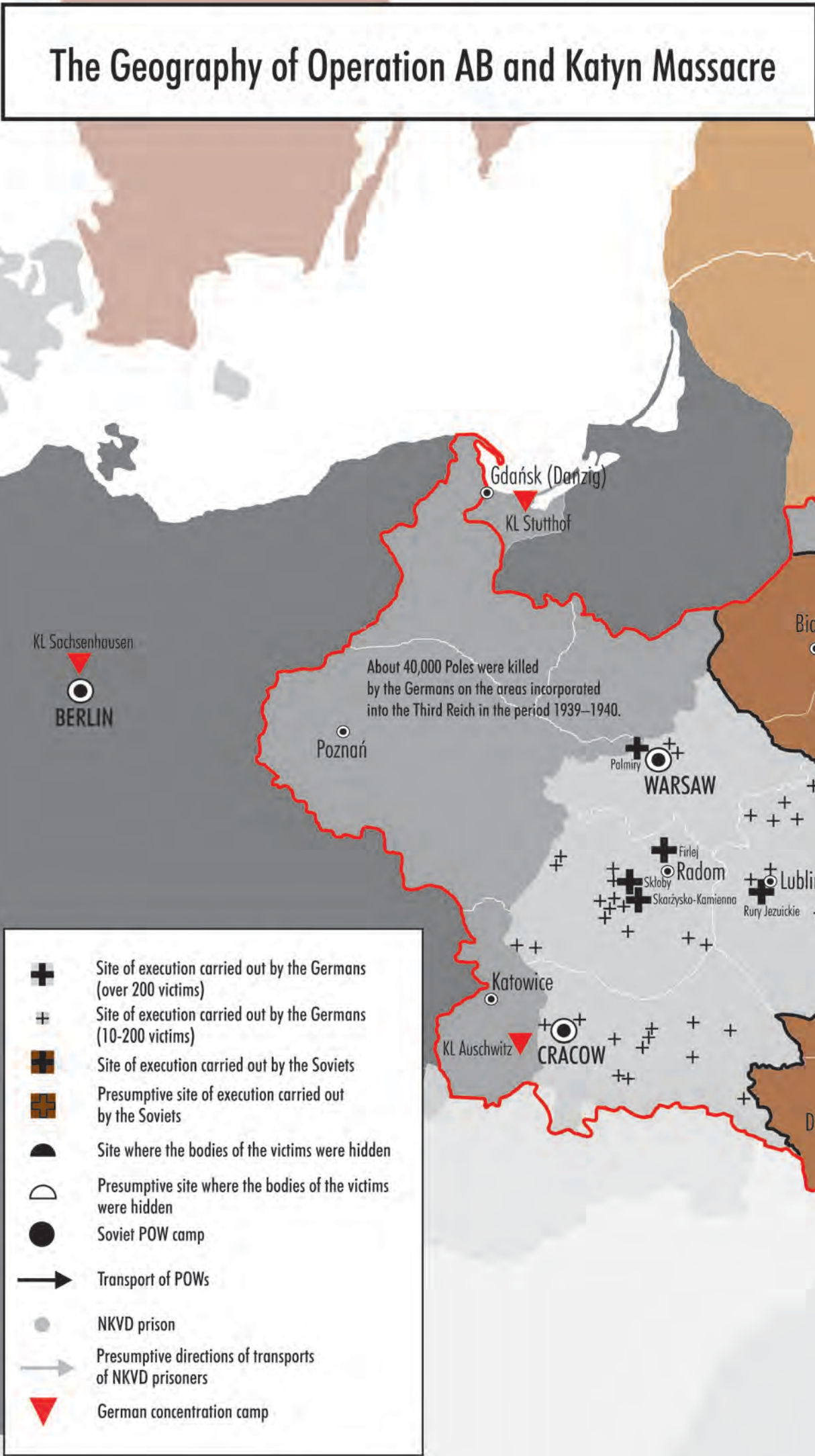
Jan Finc (1910–1940)

Priest of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, was born in Siemoń, Toruń district, took his vows in 1928 (or 1931), ordained a priest in 1934; for 5 years, he was a professor of Polish literature in the Lower Seminary of the Oblates in Lubliniec in Silesia; in June 1939 he was appointed the Świętokrzyskie Superior and Pastor, he came to the monastery at Święty Krzyż from Lubliniec on the second day of the war. After a violent review and robbery in the monastery perpetrated by the Germans on 3 April 1940, he was arrested for close contacts with the Polish resistance movement and transferred to a prison in Kielce. Kept in a dark cell he was bolstering his fellow prisoners with his devotion and unswerving spirit. He was murdered in a forest at Stadion at the slope of Pierścienica hill out of Kielce on 12 June 1940.

Dominik Jerzy Zbierski (1890–1940)

Born in Częstochowa, Polish Army officer, teacher, pro-independence activist. In 1914 joined the 1st Brigade of the Polish Legions, severely wounded in the battle of Łowczówko on 25 December 1914, he got to the Russian captivity, from which he fled after 2 years. In 1920, he voluntarily joined the Polish Army. Since 1 August 1929 Director of Romuald Traugutt Gymnasium in Częstochowa, in the years 1929–1931 Chairman of the Riflemen's Association in Częstochowa, since 1933 Chairman of the district BBWR council in Częstochowa, in 1934, elected to the local city council, a senator of the Republic of Poland. Arrested in Częstochowa, was shot on 3 July 1940 at Apolonka out of Częstochowa.

The Geography of Operation AB and Katyn Massacre





Crime on the Families

Janina and Agnieszka Dowbor-Muśnicki – sisters

The parents of the sisters were Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki (1867–1937) and Agnieszka née Korsuński. The father, a famous general, first served in the Russian army, and in 1919 led the Polish army in the Greater Poland Uprising.

The older of the sisters, Janina, was born in 1908 in Kharkov. First, she graduated from the Generalowa Zamajska State Gymnasium for Girls in Poznań, then studied at the Conservatory of Music in Poznań. An independent woman, she worked, among others, at the post office as telegraphist. At the gymnasium, she got interested in gliding and parachuting. She signed up to the Poznań Aeroclub and obtained her glider pilot's licence at Bezmiechowa near Lesko. In 1930, as the first woman in Europe, she has jumped from a height of 5 km. Admitted to the Higher School of Pilotage at Ławica in 1936, she received a motor pilot diploma. On 10 June 1939, she married Colonel Mieczysław Lewandowski, an instructor pilot.

Her younger sister, Agnieszka, was born in 1919 at Lusowo, before the war she attended a school in Poznań, where she lived in lodgings.

In September 1939, Janina, together with a group of civilian pilots went to the East, joining the 3rd Air Regiment from Ławica. On 22 September, with the majority of the regiment, she got to the Soviet captivity. Held first in the Ostashkov camp, on 6 December 1939 she was transported with a group of 80 officers to Kozelsk and murdered in Katyn on 21 or 22 April 1940. In September 1939, Agnieszka Dowbor-Muśnicka left for Warsaw, where she joined the Military Organization "Wolves". After the uncovering of the organization by the Germans, she was arrested and imprisoned at the Pawiak prison. On 21 June 1940 she was executed at Palmiry out of Warsaw.

The body of Janina Lewandowska was found by the Germans during the first Katyn exhumation in 1943. Head of the exhumation team, Prof. Gerhard Buhtz took her skull to the Department of Forensic Medicine at the University of Breslau (Wrocław). In May 2005, Janina Lewandowska's skull was identified, and buried with military honours in the Muśnicki family tomb at the Lusowo cemetery.



▲ Janina Dowbor-Muśnicka in the garden of the family estate at Lusowo. (General Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki Memorial Association at Lusowo)

◀ Agnieszka Dowbor-Muśnicka. (General Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki Memorial Association at Lusowo)



▲ Janina Dowbor-Muśnicka in a flying suit. (General Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki Memorial Association at Lusowo)



▲ Janina Dowbor-Muśnicka with her future husband Mieczysław Lewandowski in Tęgorz. (General Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki Memorial Association at Lusowo)



▲ Janina and Mieczysław Lewandowski on their wedding day, June 1939. (General Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki Memorial Association at Lusowo)

Ignacy and Bogdan Chrzanowski – father and son

Ignacy Chrzanowski was born in 1866 in Stok Lacki in Podlasie region. He studied classical philology at the University of Warsaw, and also in Breslau (Wrocław), Berlin and Paris; in 1910 he became a professor of the history of Polish literature at the Jagiellonian University, permanently binding his life with Cracow. A positivist and national-democrat. The author of, inter alia, *Kazania Sejmowe Skargi* (Skarga's Sejm sermons) and a very popular *Historia literatury niepodległej Polski* (History of Literature of Independent Poland, 1906). His son – Bogdan Karol Chrzanowski was born in 1900 in Warsaw. He took part in the fight for independence, including in the Polish-Bolshevik War, in the period

1919–1921. In the interwar period he graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University, got his PhD degree, and then taught at a gymnasium in Ostrów Wielkopolski.

Ignacy Chrzanowski was arrested by the Germans as part of the Sonderaktion Krakau in November 1939, at the age of 73, together with other Cracow professors. He was first imprisoned in Breslau (Wrocław), then in the concentration camp Sachsenhausen, where he died on 20 January 1940. In September 1939 Bogdan Chrzanowski was taken prisoner by the Soviets. Held at Kozelsk, he was murdered in April or May 1940 in Katyn.



▲ Reserve Lieutenant Bogdan Chrzanowski. (Katyn Museum)



▲ Prof. Ignacy Chrzanowski at the Jagiellonian University in 1930. (NAC)



▲ Portrait of Prof. Ignacy Chrzanowski drawn in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp by Prof. Adam Heydel. (Jan Zaborowski, Stanisław Poznański, *Sonderaktion Krakau*, Warszawa 1964, p. 108)



▲ Prof. Ignacy Chrzanowski during celebrations to award him the title of Doctor Honoris Causa, University of Poznań, October 1938. (NAC)





▲ Brothers Bolesław and Jakub Wnuk, 23 May 1925.
(Rafał Wnuk's collection)

Bolesław and Jakub Wnuk

Bolesław and Jakub Wnuk, the sons of Piotr and Katarzyna, originated from a peasant family living out of Zamość. Elder brother, Bolesław, was born in 1893 at Wysokie near Zamość. Before World War I he associated himself with the peasants' movement. Organized cells of the Polish Military Organization in Wysokie township. He took part in the Polish-Bolshevik War. Between 1926 and 1938 he served as mayor of Wysokie township. Until 1928, a member of PSL "Wyzwolenie", belonged to the pro-government political alliance BBWR, and then to the Camp of National Unity. In 1938, he became a member of Parliament of the Republic of Poland.

His younger brother Jakub was born in 1904 at Wiselka out of Zamość. He graduated from the Public Secondary School in Zamość, and later the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Warsaw. After graduation and military service, he worked at the Military Anti-Gas Institute. Both brothers got married in 1932, Bolesław with Natalia Tor (they had three children – Izabela, Urszula, and Grzegorz), and Jakub with Józefa Klukowska, with which he had twin sons – Andrzej and Bogdan.

Bolesław Wnuk was arrested by the Germans in October 1939. In January 1940, he was brought to the prison at the Lublin Castle and executed on 29 June 1940 in a mass execution at Rury Jezuickie in Lublin. Jakub, along with other employees of the Military Anti-Gas Institute, was taken into captivity by the Soviets and imprisoned in the Kozelsk camp. He was killed in Katyn in April 1940.



▲ Bolesław Wnuk (in the centre), among the members of the Polish Military Organization in Wysokie, Zamość district, in 1937.
(Rafał Wnuk's collection)



Bolesław Wnuk welcomes Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły on behalf of the residents of the Lublin region during the harvest festival on 17 August 1938. (Rafał Wnuk's collection)



Portrait of Jakub Wnuk with a dedication to his brother Bolesław: "To the sole and beloved brother for eternal memory". (Rafał Wnuk's collection)

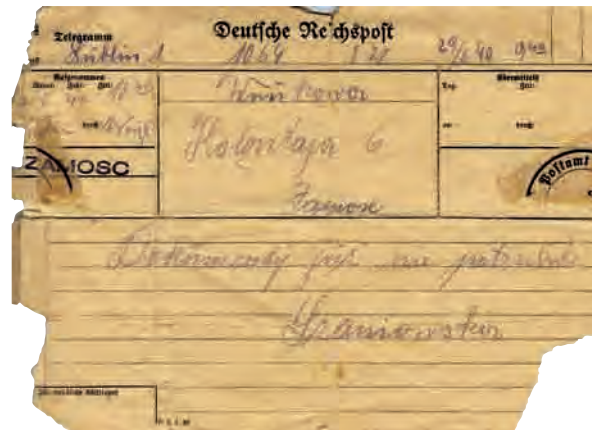


Bolesław Wnuk with his son Grzegorz, 1939. (Rafał Wnuk's collection)



The last picture of Jakub Wnuk (first from the right, in uniform) among the staff of the Military Anti-Gas Institute in Warsaw. (Rafał Wnuk's collection)

Bolesław Wnuk's farewell letter from the prison written on a handkerchief: "My dear Wife, Sweete, Poppet, Iwiesia, mother, sisters, brothers-in-law, relatives, friends, today I'll be shot by the German authorities. I'm dying for my homeland with a smile on my lips, but I'm dying innocent. For the blood they spilt, let God put an eternal curse on these wicked villains, your Bolek". (Rafał Wnuk's collection)



A telegram from a Polish guard from the Lublin Castle prison, informing indirectly about Bolesław Wnuk's death, reads: "Documents no longer needed". The word "documents" means money, which the family had to pay to free the prisoner. (Rafał Wnuk's collection)



Zbigniew Wiktor and Witold Xawery Czarnek – brothers

Their father Władysław worked as engineer in the Austrian state railways. He married Anna Prus-Niewiadomska. Zbigniew Wiktor was born in 1887 in Jarosław. In 1912 he received a medical diploma at the Jagiellonian University. As a medical officer, he participated in World War I. In 1918, he volunteered for the Polish Army, took part in the defence of Lwów and the Polish-Bolshevik War. Also after the war he served as a doctor in the Polish Army, and was promoted to lieutenant colonel. Retired in 1935, since 1936 he became a doctor of the State Aid and specialist in inter-



◀ Lieutenant Colonel Zbigniew Czarnek, MD PhD.
(Katyn Museum)

nal medicine at the Helcel Facility (Zakład Helclów) in Cracow. He was social worker in the dispensary for the poor at Daughters of Charity. Married, had a son, Stanisław, and three daughters: Maria, Agnieszka and Magdalena.

Witold Xawery was born in Jarosław in 1888. He studied law at the Jagiellonian University, achieving a doctorate in law. He participated in World War I. In the interwar period he led a renown law firm in Rzeszów, active in the Catholic Action, was also vice-president of the National Party in Rzeszów. Married to Janina Łobos, he had two sons, Lesław and Janusz.

Zbigniew Wiktor was mobilized in September 1939, and then was taken prisoner by the Soviets. He was held at Kozelsk, on 7 April 1940 he was transported to Katyn, where he was killed.

Witold Xawery was first arrested by the Germans in November 1939 and released after one week. He was re-arrested in May 1940 and transported to the concentration camp at Sachsenhausen, where he died on 24 July 1942.

Zbigniew's son, Stanisław Czarnek, was arrested in 1941 by the Germans, imprisoned at KL Auschwitz, and died in KL Dora on 6 May 1945.

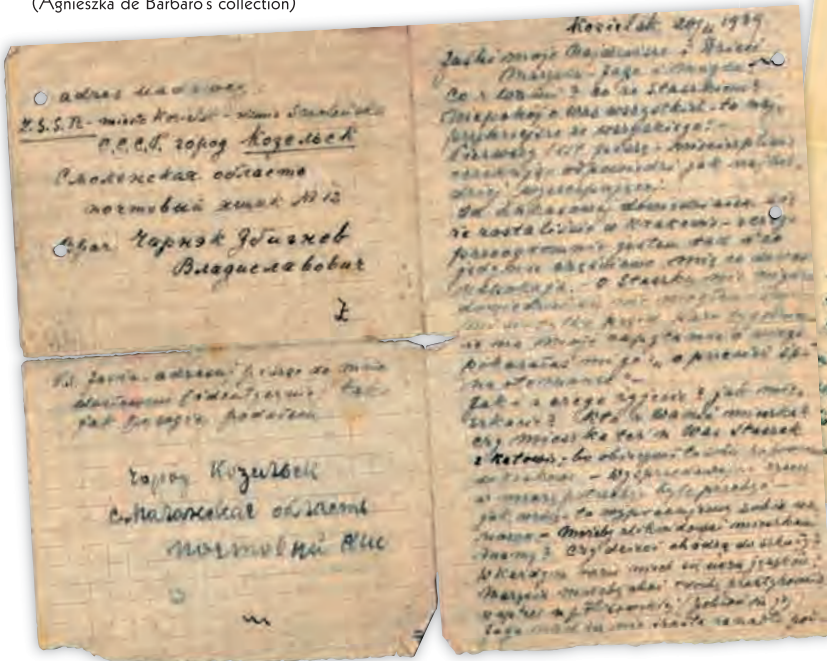
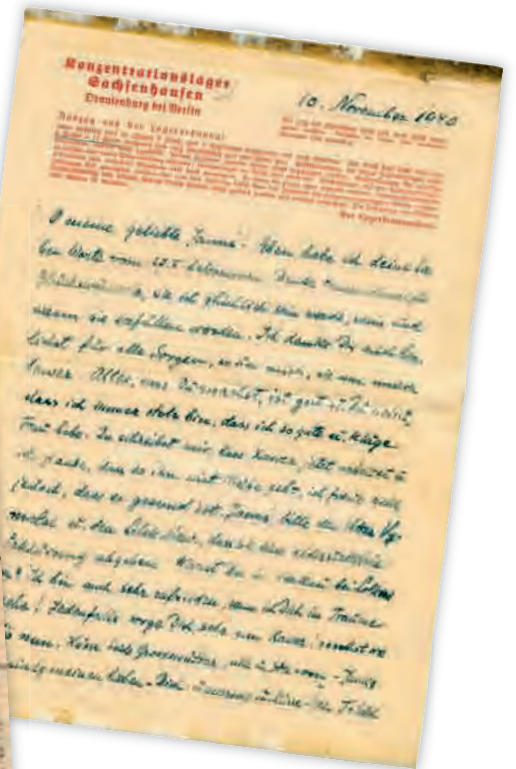
▼ The Czarnek family at Inowrocław, 20 August 1927. From the left: Witold, Irena (sister), Anna (mother), Janina (Zbigniew's wife) with daughter Magdalena, Aldona (sister), Zbigniew and Grażyna (sister).
(Janusz Czarnek's collection)





Stanislaw Czarnek, son of Zbigniew, in KL Auschwitz. (Agnieszka de Barbaro's collection)

Witold Czarnek's letter from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp to his family, 10 November 1939. (Janusz Czarnek's collection)



A letter by Lieutenant Colonel Zbigniew Czarnek of 20 November 1939 from the Kozelsk camp to the family. (Agnieszka de Barbaro's collection)

015/2

Список выходящих из Козельского лагеря военнопленных в направлении г. Белостока

г. КОЗЕЛЬСК, Смоленской обл.

С получением здесь немедленно направьте в гор. Смоленск в районные районы Белостокского района по Смоленской области выходящих военнопленных, освобожденных в Козельском лагере:

1. ПОДПОЛКОВНИК Станислав Владимирович, 1887 г.р.	дело 2-1187
2. ПОДПОЛКОВНИК Владимир Иванович, 1877 г.р.	1147
3. ПОДПОЛКОВНИК Владимир Иванович, 1887 г.р.	1163
4. ПОДПОЛКОВНИК Иван Коллекционер, 1887 г.р.	2708
5. ПОЛКОВНИК Сергей Степанович, 1877 г.р.	3421
6. ПОДПОЛКОВНИК Николай Иванович, 1897 г.р.	1147
7. ПОДПОЛКОВНИК Николай Иванович Владимирович, 1877 г.р.	1139
8. ПОДПОЛКОВНИК Иван Владимирович, 1887 г.р.	436
9. ПОДПОЛКОВНИК Владимир Владимирович, 1887 г.р.	1193
10. ПОДПОЛКОВНИК Николай Иванович, 1897 г.р.	1165
11. ПОДПОЛКОВНИК Иван Владимирович, 1897 г.р.	3088

Departure list no. 015/2 from Kozelsk, including Lieutenant Colonel Zbigniew Czarnek (No 9). On its basis, on 7 April 1940 he was transported from the camp to the execution. (Agnieszka de Barbaro's collection)



Lieutenant Colonel Zbigniew Czarnek with his son Stanislaw and dog Bryś at a walk in the Cracow market square. (Katyn Museum)



▲ Dr Witold Czarnek in traditional attorney's robe.
(Janusz Czarnek's collection)



▲ Witold Czarnek in Krynica spa.
(Janusz Czarnek's collection)

▼ Witold Czarnek with his son Janusz, wife Janina and son Leslaw at the end of the 1930s. (Janusz Czarnek's collection)



The Katyn Lie

On 11 April 1943 the Berlin Radio broadcast a message about the discovery of mass graves of Polish officers murdered by the Bolsheviks in the USSR in 1940.

Four days later the Soviet Information Agency denied the German revelation and informed that the officers were captured in 1941 by the Germans.

On 23 January 1944 the Soviet forgery was backed by the Communication from the Special Commission to identify and investigate the circumstances of execution by the German fascist invaders of Polish prisoners of war in the Katyn forest. According to the Soviet version of events, the mass murder was carried out by Germany in 1941.

Thus the Katyn Lie has emerged.

During the Nuremberg Trials (1945–1946) the Soviet prosecutor attempted unsuccessfully to charge Germany with the crime.

The lie was reiterated for a half century by Russian and Polish Communists. In Poland, the truth about Katyn was concealed until the collapse of the communist system in 1989.

A deceitful plaque in Russian and very bad Polish, placed by the Soviet authorities on the graves of those murdered in Katyn read: "Here are buried Polish POWs officers, savagely tortured to death by Nazi-German occupiers in autumn 1941". (Photo Eugeniusz Jaworowski)



The perpetrators of the Katyn massacre have never been punished. In the photo, Soviet leaders: Joseph Stalin, Georgy Malenkov, Lavrenty Beria and Anastas Mikoyan receive a parade on 25 July 1950. (East News / RIA Novosti)

Since the discovery of the massacre, the struggle to uncover the truth has continued. From the very beginning it was carried out by the Polish Government in exile and Poles abroad, where Katyn research papers and the Katyn list of victims were published. Between 1951 and 1952 the Commission of the House of Representatives of the US Congress has confirmed "beyond any doubt" the Soviet responsibility for the Katyn massacre. In the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s the Poles scattered around the world donated to build a number of Katyn memorials – in Europe, America, Africa and Australia. In Poland, the truth about the Katyn massacre was disseminated by, among others, underground publications, anti-communist opposition, and the memory of the victims was invariably cultivated by Katyn families.

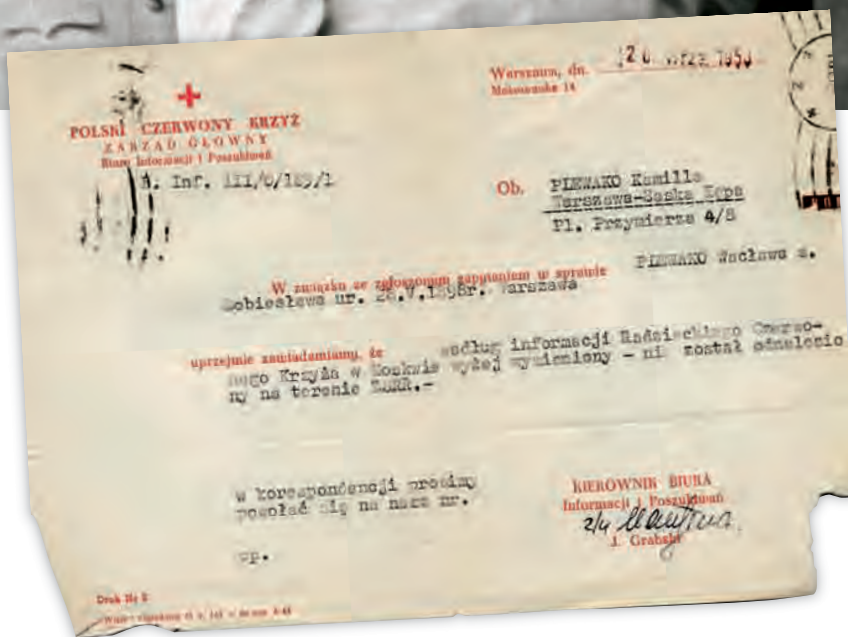
On 13 April 1990 TASS agency issued a message about the responsibility of USSR's NKVD for the Katyn massacre. The USSR withdrew from its lie one year before its breakdown.

On 14 October 1992 Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin transferred to Poland the documents confirming the direct responsibility of the highest party and state authorities for the Katyn massacre.

However, the biggest lie of the 20th century has not ended with this.

In the 21st century there are still some quarters in Russia which promote the Katyn Lie, and the Russian prosecutor's office discontinued its investigation into the crime, because it found no elements of genocide in it.

Investigation into the Katyn massacre is carried out by the Institute of National Remembrance.



▲
The Soviet authorities consistently concealed the truth about the massacre and its victims. Any inquiries sent to the Red Cross were unsuccessful, among others the above one, concerning Wacław Plewako murdered in Kharkov. (Stanisław Plewako's collection)

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For entire decades, the official canon in the Katyn publishing in Poland was the booklet *Prawda o Katyniu* (The Truth about Katyn), published in Moscow in 1944 by the Stalin-organised Union of Polish Patriots in the USSR. The lies contained therein were based on the findings of the Soviet Special State Commission to investigate the Katyn massacre headed by the Chief Surgeon of the Red Army Academician Nikolai Burdenko.



- ... When assessing the material about the death of Polish officers in Katyn one should be guided by the following criteria
- 1) Do not allow any attempts to burden the Soviet Union with responsibility for the death of Polish officers in the Katyn forest
 - 2) In scientific studies, diaries, biographical papers released may be the wording such as “shot by the Nazis in Katyn”, “died in Katyn”, “was killed in Katyn”. When phrases such as “killed in Katyn” are used, and the date of death is given, it may be only after July 1941.
 - 3) It is necessary to eliminate the term “prisoners of war” in relation to the Polish officers and soldiers interned by the Red Army in September 1939. The appropriate term is “the interned”. It is admissible to release the names of the camps, Kozelsk, Starobelsk, Ostashkov, where Polish officers were interned, later executed by the Nazis in the Katyn forest.
 - 4) Obituaries, notices of religious services to pray for the victims of Katyn, as well as information about other forms of celebrating their memory may be released only with the consent of the GUKPPIW [communist censorship institution] management. ...

(Instruction for the Polish communist censorship from January 1975, quoted from: *Czarna księga cenzury PRL*, Vol. 1, Londyn 1977, p. 63)





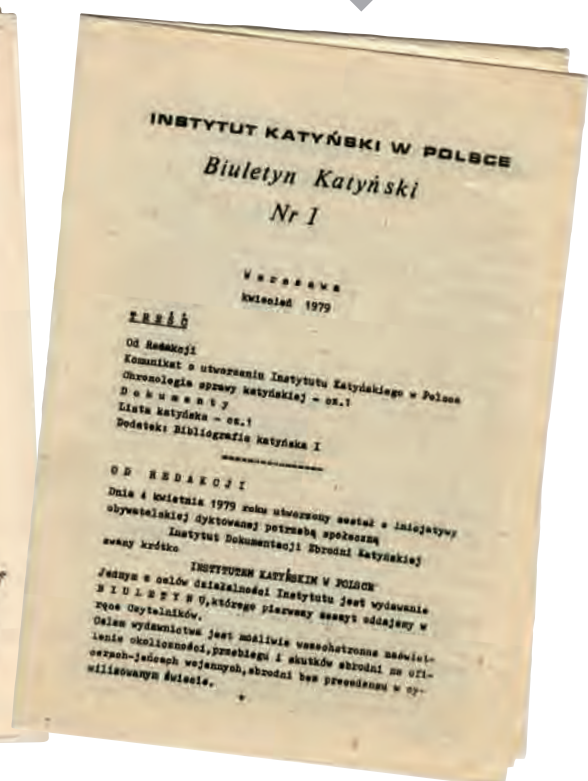
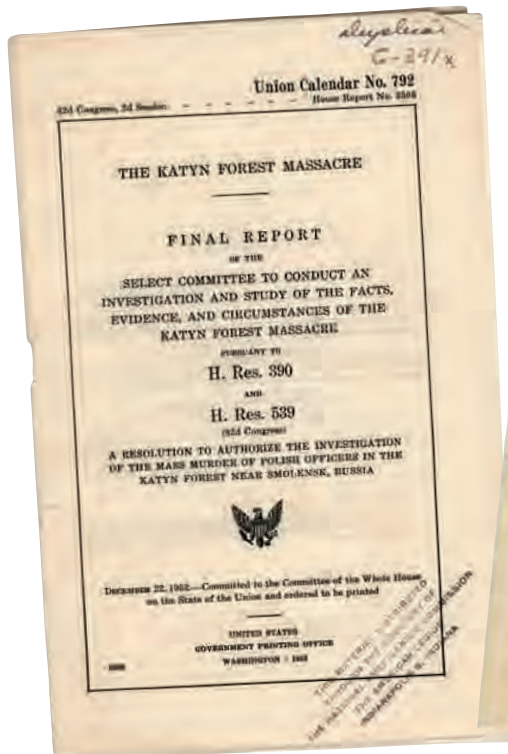
Soviet lies about the Katyn massacre have had their follow-on even today. An example is the book by Yuri Mukhin, *Antirossiyskaya podlost*, which was published in Moscow in 2003. In his perverted interpretation, the history of the Katyn massacre is as follows: Hitler decided to conflict the USSR with the rest of the coalition countries. To this end, in 1943 he ordered to uncover the graves of Polish officers murdered by the Nazis in 1941 out of Smolensk and announce that the Soviets had made it in 1940. The German provocation was picked up by the Polish government in London, which hindered the conduct of further hostilities and caused unnecessary deaths of millions of Soviet, British, American and German soldiers. In the 1980s, traitors from the Central Committee of the CPSU, the General Prosecutor's Office of the USSR (thereafter of Russia) and the Russian Academy of Sciences picked up this provocation again in order to deprive Russia of its allies and push Eastern European countries into NATO.

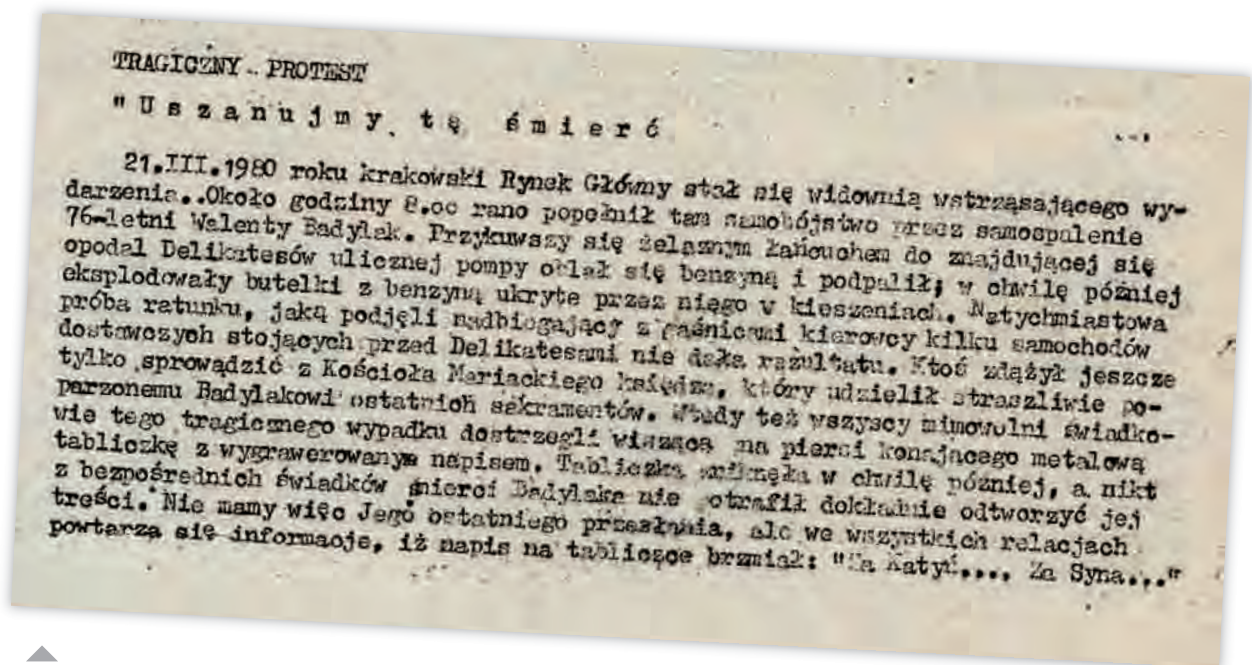


In May 1981, the Katyn Victim's Memorial Building Committee was established. Its work resulted in the unveiling on 31 July 1981 of a monument at the Powązki cemetery in Warsaw. Already the first night after setting up the monument, the communist Security Service has removed it, and successfully concealed it until 1989. (IPN Archive)

The first issue of the *Buletyn Katyński* (Katyn Bulletin), published by the independent Katyn Institute in Poland, in April 1979. (Karta Centre)

Final report of the Committee of the House of Representatives of the US Congress from 1952. The Commission unanimously concluded that the Soviet NKVD carried out the mass murder of Polish officers and intellectual leaders at Katyn. At the same time, they recommended to forward the matter to the United Nations and to seek action before the International Court of Justice in The Hague against the USSR. (A copy from private collection)





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The Information Bulletin of the Committee for Social Self-Defence (KSS KOR) from April 1980 with information about the death of Walenty Badylak, who on 21 March 1980, in protest against "the concealment by the authorities of the Katyn massacre, demoralization of youth, and destruction of crafts" has committed an act of self-immolation at the Cracow market square. (Karta Centre)

An independent demonstration in the Old Town of Warsaw on 1 May 1989, a banner appears that says "The truth is immortal. Katyn 1940". (Photo Jolanta Wilkońska, Karta Centre)







