



# The Destruction of the Polish Elite Operation AB — Katyn







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# 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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# **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 20<sup>th</sup>-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 Kossak-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 Wacław (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 Księże 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 Poland<sup>2</sup>. 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

<sup>1</sup> Józef Stalin, O Wielkiej Wojnie Narodowej Związku Radzieckiego, Warszawa 1949, pp. 7–9.

<sup>2</sup> 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"<sup>6</sup>. 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". 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 Dachu – "The next treaty Stalin is going to sign is the Anti-Comintern Pact")<sup>10</sup>.

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")<sup>13</sup>.

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

Malaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Vol. 8, Moskva 1939, p. 470.

Agresja na Polskę w świetle dokumentów, Vol. 2, eds. Tadeusz Cyprian and Jerzy Sawicki, Warszawa 1946, p. 139. "Swastyka na tle czerwonej gwiazdy", *Wieczór Warszawski*, Warsaw, 24 August 1939.

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

Wieczór Warszawski, Warsaw, 25 August 1939.

<sup>&</sup>quot;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.

Białe plamy. ZSRR-Niemcy 1939-1941, Vilnius 1990, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> Wróble na Dachu, 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.

<sup>11</sup> Białe plamy. ZSRR-Niemcy 1939-1941, Vilnius 1990, p. 66.

<sup>12</sup> Robotnik, Warsaw, 30 August 1939.

<sup>13</sup> 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 Reich"<sup>14</sup>. 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 Wacław 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"<sup>17</sup>.

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 day<sup>19</sup> – 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 19<sup>th</sup> Armoured Corps) and Kombrig Semyon Krivoshein (commander of the Soviet 29<sup>th</sup> 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 wording<sup>20</sup>, 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"<sup>21</sup>.

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" (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

<sup>14</sup> Biała księga, ed. Wiktor Sukiennicki, Paryż 1964, p. 62.

<sup>15</sup> Pravda, Moscow, 19 September 1939.

<sup>16</sup> Karol Grünberg, Jerzy Serczyk, Czwarty rozbiór Polski, Warszawa 1990, p. 284.

<sup>17</sup> Wacław Lipiński, *Dziennik. Wrześniowa obrona Warszawy 1939 r.*, ed. Jan Maria Kłoczowski, Warszawa 1989, p. 218.

<sup>18</sup> Zeszyty Historyczne, issue 27, Paryż 1974, p. 170.

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

<sup>20 &</sup>quot;Germano-sovietskiy dogovor o druzhbye i granitse", Pravda, Moscow, 29 September 1939.

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

<sup>22</sup> 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"<sup>23</sup>.

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 zone<sup>24</sup>. 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"<sup>25</sup>.

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 POWs<sup>27</sup>.

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"<sup>28</sup>.

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"<sup>29</sup>.

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

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

<sup>24</sup> Nowy Kurier Warszawski, Łódź, 13 October 1939.

<sup>25</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>28</sup> Wiaczesław Mołotow, O polityce zewnętrznej Zwigzku 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 photos<sup>31</sup>. 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 Maslennikov<sup>32</sup>. 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 60<sup>th</sup> 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* newspaper<sup>33</sup>, and a summary – by the collaborationist *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*: "In the telegram sent to Minister Rib-

bentrop, Stalin states that the friendship of peoples of Germany and the Soviet Union, strengthened by blood, will be long and sustained"<sup>34</sup>.

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"<sup>35</sup>. 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 Germanoccupied Warsaw published a translation of *Frankfurter Zeitung* correspondence from Moscow about the completion of the "demarcation of German and Soviet spheres of interest"<sup>36</sup>.

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 1940<sup>37</sup>. "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"<sup>38</sup>.

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.

<sup>29 &</sup>quot;W Ludowym Komisariacie Spraw Zagranicznych", Czerwony Sztandar, Lwów, 22 November 1939.

<sup>30</sup> Nowy Kurier Warszawski, Warsaw, 8 December 1939.

<sup>31</sup> Warschauer Zeitung, Warsaw, 10–11 December 1939.

<sup>32 &</sup>quot;Delegacja sowiecka przybywa do Krakowa", Goniec Krakowski, Cracow, 8 December 1939.

<sup>33</sup> Prawda, Moscow, 25 December 1939, translation from: Biała księga, ed. Wiktor Sukiennicki, Paryż 1964, p. 154.

<sup>34</sup> Nowy Kurier Warszawski, Warsaw, 28 December 1939.

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

<sup>36</sup> Nowy Kurier Warszawski, Warsaw, 10-11 February 1940.

<sup>37 &</sup>quot;Wytknięta granica niemiecko-sowiecka", *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, Warsaw, 6 March 1940.

<sup>38</sup> 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 milieus, 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

# 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 infl uence had failed

3. Восятельно пто-востока Каролы с севетской стороне посчержимается интерес СССР и Бессирабии. С германской стоков ваявляется в ее подной подитической невыхитереговичности ERTORADO ENTE 4. Этох протожел будет сохранаться общин атарин Скірктый допилительной протоков При подписани. договоря о ченалицении весту Тарилия! л. Показан Соретских Попиванствических Ресидание очени поличила неси уполине ченим обова пророн обседили и груста - 15денциальной порядке вопрос и рограничения обер оботаты -тересов в Восточной Европи. Это обсумдания времедо наследущему результоту: 1. В случие территоримацио-индитического персустра ст облестей, входиня в состав Приры тайская государств Санвочдия; Эстоная, Латиня, Литаа), северния приница Литан поч временю валиетов голищей сфер интересов Термании в ССС-При этом интереса Литин по отношении Виденскай области признается обоний сторойными. 2. В случае территориально-политического переустройнты областей, эходини в осстав Польского Госугарства, гранара ојер литересов Германии и СССР судет приблизательно проходить по липии реж Нариви. Висли и Сани. Вопрос, является да в обоющих питересая велятельные потреневие независимого Польского Государство в наковы судут граница втого государства, может бить окончатильно выпонен только в течение дальнойшего политического жизначив. Во всиком случая, оба Правительства будут решить этог вопрос в порядля дружественного обстаного согмасил.

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)

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 infl uence was to run along the Narew, Vistula and San rivers.

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# 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 confi detiality the issue of delimiting their respective spheres of interests in Eastern Europe. This discussion led to the following results:

- 1. I 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 hall be recognized by both parties.
- 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.

(Katyn: A Crime Without Punishment, eds. Anna M. Cienciala, 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 rozdzierają 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 74<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, near Ciepielów in the Lipsko district, committed by soldiers of the 11<sup>th</sup> Company, 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 29<sup>th</sup> Motorized Infantry Division of the Wehrmacht on 8 September 1939. (IPN Archive)

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# 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 Wacław 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)



# Rzołnierze Armii Polskiej!

Pańsko-burżuazjny Rzad Polski, wciągnowszy Was w awanturystyczną wojnę. pozornie przewalito się. Ono okazata się bezsilnym rządzić krajem i zorganizować obronu. Ministrzy I gieneralowie, achwycili nagrabione imi złoto, tchórzliwie wciekli, pozostawieją armię I cały lud Polsti na wole losu.

Armia Polska pocierpiela surową porazkę, od którego ona nie oprawic wstanie się. Wam, waszym żonom, dzieciam, braciam i alostram ugraza glodon śmiere i zniszczenie.

W te ciężkie dni dla Was potężny Związek Radzlecki wyciąga Wam ręce braterskiej pomocy. Nie przeciwcie się Robotniczo-Chłopskiej Armii Czerwonej. Wasze przeciewenie bez kożyści przerzeczono na całą zgubę. My ldziemy do Was nie jako zdobywcy, a jako wasi braci po klasu, jako wasi wyzwolency od ucisku obszarników i kapitalistów.

Wielka i niezwolczona Armia Czerwona niesie na azłandarach procującym, braterstwo i szczęśliwo życie. Rzolnierze Armii Polskieji Nie proliwacie doremnie krwi za cudze Wam interesy obszarników i kapitalistów.

Was przymuszają uciskać bialorusinów, ukrainców. Rządzące kolo Polskie sieją narodową rużność między polakami, bialorusinami I ukraincami.

Pamiętajciel Nie meże być swebodny naród, uciskające drugie naredy, Pracujące biatorusini i ukraincy-Wast procujące, a nie wrogi. Razem z nimi budujcie szczęśliwe dorobkowe zycie.

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... 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 Katyń ska w świetle dokumentów, Londyn 1982, p. 11)

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... 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 offi cers 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 Stryi 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 Katyń ska 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 convoyed 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.

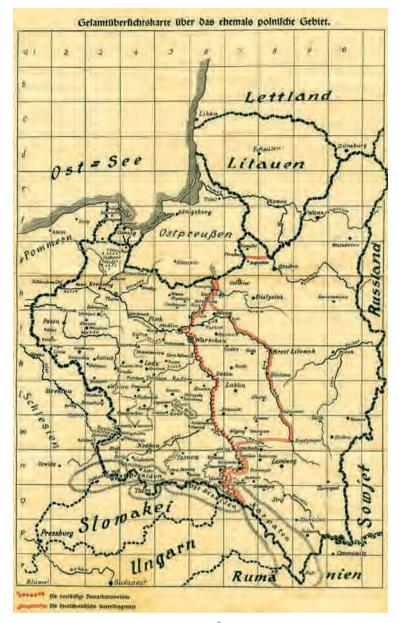
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... The representative companies of both foreign troops were divided (or maybe it would be more appropriate to say, joined) by a high mast on which a red flag with a black cross with broken arms on a white field was flying. The orchestra played "Deutschland, 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 Białostocczyźnie 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 Amts, 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 19<sup>th</sup> Armoured Corps (in the middle) and Kombrig Semyon Krivoshein (the commander of the Soviet 29<sup>th</sup> 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 incorprated 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.



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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 *bezhentsy* (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).

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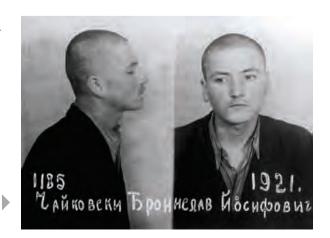
... The next night I am again investigated. There are two investigators, one from yesterday and a new one. They won't let me sit down. I'm standing 10 hours upright. Drunk with anger, they hail down cries and violent insults on me, they spit again and again in my face, and finally beat my head and neck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



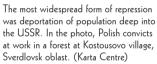
Soviet street propaganda in front of St. Roch Church in Białystok. (From Tomasz Wiśniewski's collection, "In Search of Poland" Society)

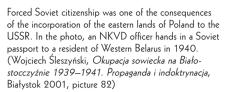


Prison photograph of Bronisław Czajkowski, arrested by the NKVD for his participation in the anti-Soviet uprising in Czortków in January 1940, sentenced to death and executed after 4 February 1941. (Karta Centre)



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









# 

... 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)

# The Fourth Partition of PolandCooperation between the Occupiers

The new partition of Poland was formalized by the Boundary and Friendship Treaty signed in Moscow on 28 September 1939. It adjusted – compared to the August agreement – the boundaries of the spheres of interest. In exchange for the Lublin province and the eastern part of Warsaw province, the Soviets received the right to annex Lithuania. It was also agreed that the two occupiers would combat any instances of Polish "agitation" in the occupied areas.

Between October 1939 and March 1940 a series of German-Soviet conferences took place (including in Lwów, Cracow and Zakopane), during which the issue of population exchange was formally discussed. They have become a symbol of close cooperation between the Third Reich and the USSR, particularly apparent in the economic fi eld. The USSR delivered to Germany strategic supplies of raw materials, including oil, in exchange for modern industrial products.

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR Vyacheslav Molotov signs the German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty of 28 September 1939. In the background, among others, the People's Commissar of Defence, Komandarm Boris Shaposhnikov, Reich's Minister for Foreign Affairs Joachim von Ribbentrop, and Joseph Stalin. (National Archives and Records Administration)

The official text of the German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty of 28 September 1939, published in Polish.

(Prawo Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w układzie rzeczowym z objaśnieniami i szczegołowym skorowidzem, ed. Albert Weh, Krakau 1941, annex, p. 101)

# Niemiecko-sowiecki Układ graniczny i sprzymierzeńczy. Rząd Rzeszy Niemieckiej i Rząd Z. S. R. R. po upadku bylego Państwa olskiego uważają za swe wyłączne zadanie przywrócić na tych obszach spokój i porządek oraz zabezpieczyć narodom tam żyjącym spokojny yt, odpowiadający ich właściwościom narodowym. W tym celu zgodzili e oni jak następuje: Artykul I. Rząd Rzeszy Niemieckiej i Rząd Z. S. R. R. ustalują jako granicę obustronnych interesów państwowych na obszarze byłego Państwa Pol-skiego linię, wrysowaną na dołączonej mapie, która ma być bliżej opi-sana w protokole uzupełniającym. Artykuł II. Obie strony uznają ustaloną w artykule I granicę obustronnych inte-resow państwowych za ostateczną i odrzucą wszelkie mieszanie się państw trzecich w sprawą tego uregulowania. Artykul III. trzebną reorganizację państwową na obszarach położonyc od podanej w artykule I linii przeprowadza Rząd Rzeszy na obszarach na wschód od tej linii Rząd Z. S. R. R. Artykuł IV. Rząd Rzeszy Niemieckiej i Rząd Z. S. R. R. uważają powyżs rulowanie za trwałe podwaliny dla postępującego naprzód rozwoj acielskich stosunków pomiędzy swoimi narodami. Artykuł V. Układ niniejszy będzie ratyfikowany, a noty ratyfikacyjne zostaną ożliwie jak najprędzej wymienione w Berlin. Układ wchodzi w życie chwilą podpisania. Wygotowany w dwóch oryginalach w języku niemieckim i rosyjskim Moskwa, dnia 28 września 1939 r. Za Rząd Rzeszy Niemieckiej von Ribbentrop Z upoważnienia Rządu Z. S. R. R. W. Molotow

## 

# Secret Supplementary Protocol

In concluding the Soviet-German Border and Friendship Treaty, the undersigned plenipotentiaries stated their agreement to the following:

Neither party will allow on its territory any Polish agitation that affects the territory of the other country. Both shall liquidate such agitation on their territories in embryo and shall inform each other about expedient measures to accomplish this.

By authorisation of the Government of the USSR: V[yacheslav] Molotov

For the Government of Germany: J[oachim] Ribbentrop

(Katyn: A Crime Without Punishment, eds. Anna M. Cienciala, Natalia S. Lebedeva, Wojciech Materski, New Haven and London 2007, p. 61–62)





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)



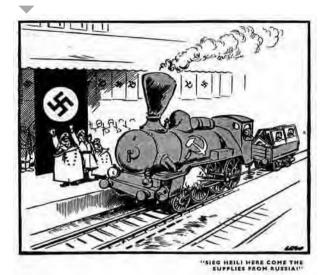
Railway station in Zakopane decorated with German and Soviet flags during the visit of the Soviet delegation in December 1939. (Krakauer Zeitung, 10/11 December 1939)

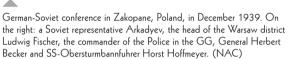
The head of the Cracow district, Otto Wächter, and the chairman of the Soviet delegation, Maxim Litvinov, on the Gubalówka hill. Zakopane, December 1939. (NAC)



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)





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. (*Biale plamy. ZSRR–Niemcy 1939–1941*, Vilnius 1990)







# **Poles in Soviet Camps and Prisons**

In September 1939, around 250,000 Polish soldiers were held in Soviet captivity, including over ten thousand offi cers. On 19 September 1939 decrees were issued on how to deal with the prisoners of war. Administration for Prisoners of War was dedicated in the NKVD structure, managed by Pyotr Soprunenko. In accordance with the adopted directives, a plan was launched, the aim of which was to transfer the prisoners under the management of the NKVD, group them in transitional camps, and separate soldiers from offi cers

Most of the Polish Army offi cers were jailed in Nevember 1939 in special camps at Kozelsk and Starobelsk. In the third camp, Ostashkov, several thousand police offi cers, military police, prison and border guards, sodiers of Border Protection Corps, and several hundred civilians were interned.

At Kozelsk, as of 1 December 1939, there were 4727 prisoners, mostly army officers. In Starobelsk, as of 4 December 1939, 3907 people were held, of which only 26 were not officers. In Ostashkov, as of 1 December 1939, 5963 people were held (by the end of the year the number rose to 6364); police offi cers formed the larges group in the camp.

In the area of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine, the Soviets also arrested persons deemed to be "class enemies", including political and civic activists of various nationalities, and former military. In early March 1940, mainly in oblast NKVD prisons in Lwów, Równe, Łuck, Tarnopol, Drohobycz, Stanisławów, Brześć na Bugiem, Piń sk and Baranowicze, more than 18,000 prisoners were held, including more than 10,000 Poles.

#### 

### Kozelsk, November 1940

# Monday 6 [November]

Breakfast at 12.00. Pearl barley. Dinner 18.00, two dishes as usual: cabbage soup and thick pearl barley.

# Tue 7 [November]

Feast in the USSR. 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the revolution ... Hopes for sausages and some better stuff have failed.

# Wed 8 [November]

Second public holiday in the USSR. Fare has become worse. In the evening, a children performance and cinema.

# Thu 9 [November]

Third public holiday in the USSR. News of an attempt to assassinate Hitler in Munich.

## Fri 10 [November]

Nothing new except for latrine news. Registration throughout the day.

# Sat 11 [November]

Short service, there were "God Save Poland" and "Poland Is Not Yet Lost" [songs]. Cinema in the evening – Pushkin.

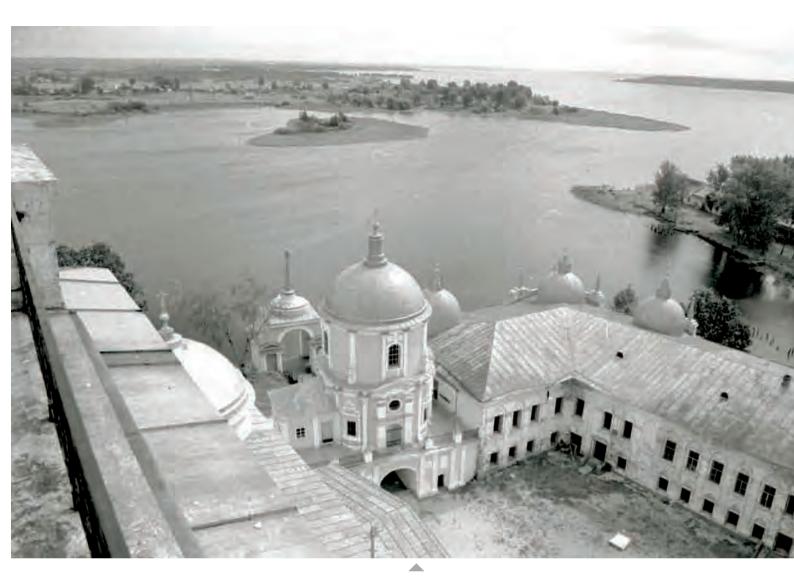
(Notes found in a death pit in a notebook of a Kozelsk prisoner Bronisław Wajs [in:] Pamię tniki znalezione w Katyniu, Paris–Warszawa 1990, p. 176)



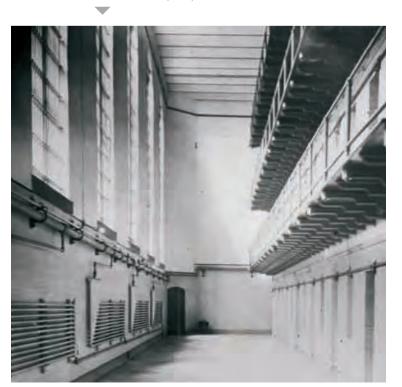


The system of two-tier bunk beds in the Starobelsk POW camp. (*Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, Vol. 1, eds. Wojciech Materski, Bolesław Woszczyński *et al.*, Warszawa 1995, p. 122)

A postcard sent on 8 March 1940 by Wacław Plewako from the POW camp in Starobelsk to his wife Kamila who lived in Kowel. (From Stanisław Plewako's collection)



A corridor of a prison in Lwów in the inter-war period. In 1939–1941 it was one of the many places where Polish citizens arrested by the NKVD were incarcerated. (NAC)



Site of the former POW camp of the NKVD in Ostashkov, located in Nilova Pustyn monastery on Stolbny islet on the lake Seliger. (Photo Aleksander Załęski)

# 

On 8 October [1939] we came to the camp called "Boloto". They put us, [in] the number of 220 people, in the barracks. It was an extremely cramped place, sleeping on the floor, almost one on another. ...

On 20 October – one month of captivity. (It is snowing throughout the whole day.) Today we also got pallets and head rests, and for the first time will sleep on finished bunk beds. Until 20 October we slept on the floor. ... On 1 November (All Saints' Day), after three weeks of stay in the "Boloto", we, 1500 officers, left with a narrow-gauge railroad for Tolkino, and then with standard-guage railroad for Bransk. ... During the night of 2/3 November at 21.00 they discharged us at Kozelsk station, from where we walked 8 km, and went to the central camp "Kozelsk".

(Notes found in a death pit in a notebook of a Kozelsk prisoner Maksymilian Trzepałka [in:] Pamiętniki znalezione w Katyniu, Paris–Warszawa 1990, pp. 140–141)





## The Murderous Decision – 5 March 1940

The decision to murder Polish offi cers 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 offi cers, 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) представляемым повд усор и нада вост. гройку, в состава т.т. OMERI HOLINGAP BUYE к-р работу, пезут антисолотна имх только и ждет осробождения витивно включиться и борьбу про-Организм ШКИД и замадних областях Украины и Бело-Ажесин вектит рыт и-р полотанических оргонизаций. Во ос эляк к-b объявизациях якканнах Ідководиная bone вывачи бышие офицоры быншей польской азыке, бышше полицейск

## 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.

 $Vsevolod\ Nikolayevich\ \textbf{MERKULOV} - \quad First\ Deputy\ People's\ Commissar\ for\ Internal\ Affairs\ of\ the\ USSR,$ 

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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

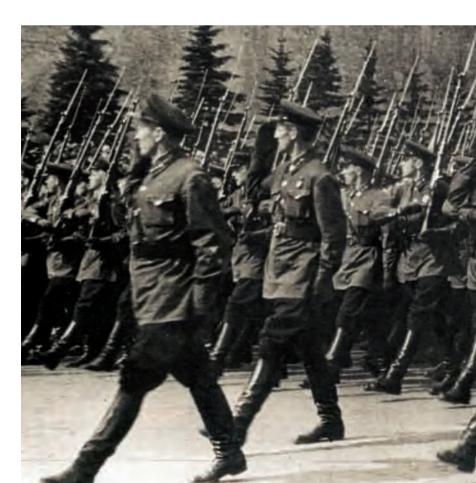
of the Administration for Prisoners of War of the NKVD.

# 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Department of the GUGB,

NKVD (counterintelligence).

Piotr KOŻUSZKO — officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, 5<sup>th</sup> Department of the GUGB,

NKVD (foreign intelligence).

 ${\it Nikolai\ Nikolaevich\ SMIRNOV} \ -- \ \ {\it state\ security\ lieutenant,\ deputy\ head\ of\ the\ First\ Special\ Section}$ 

of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR.

 ${\bf SUDAKOV} \ - \ \ {\bf State\ Security\ Senior\ Lieutenant,\ head\ of\ the\ Prison\ Administration}$ 

of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR.

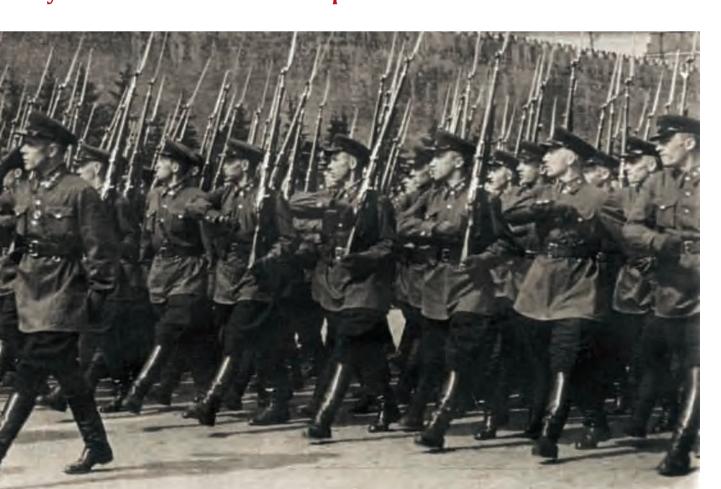
Pyotr Sergeevich SAFONOV — State Security Major; head of NKVD Administration, Kharkov oblast.

Yemelyan Ivanovich KUPRIYANOV — State Security Captain; head of the NKWD 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



## Katyn

On 2 April 1940, the head of the Administration for Prisoners of War of the NKVD ordered the Kozelsk camp commander to prepare the first death transport which departed on 3 April 1940.

At the Gnezdovo railway station, located west of Smolensk, prisoners were transferred to prison vans and carried to the execution spot several miles away, located in a wooded, hilly area of Katyn forest. The execution zone was not accessible to civilians, since it was part of the NKVD recreation area. The NKVD officers were killing the victims with a shot in the rear of the head from a close distance. One version says that prisoners were killed in a barbed-wire fenced zone, standing directly over the pits. According to another version, the murder took place in an NKVD villa. The bodies of the murdered were thrown into the pits. Then trees were planted there.

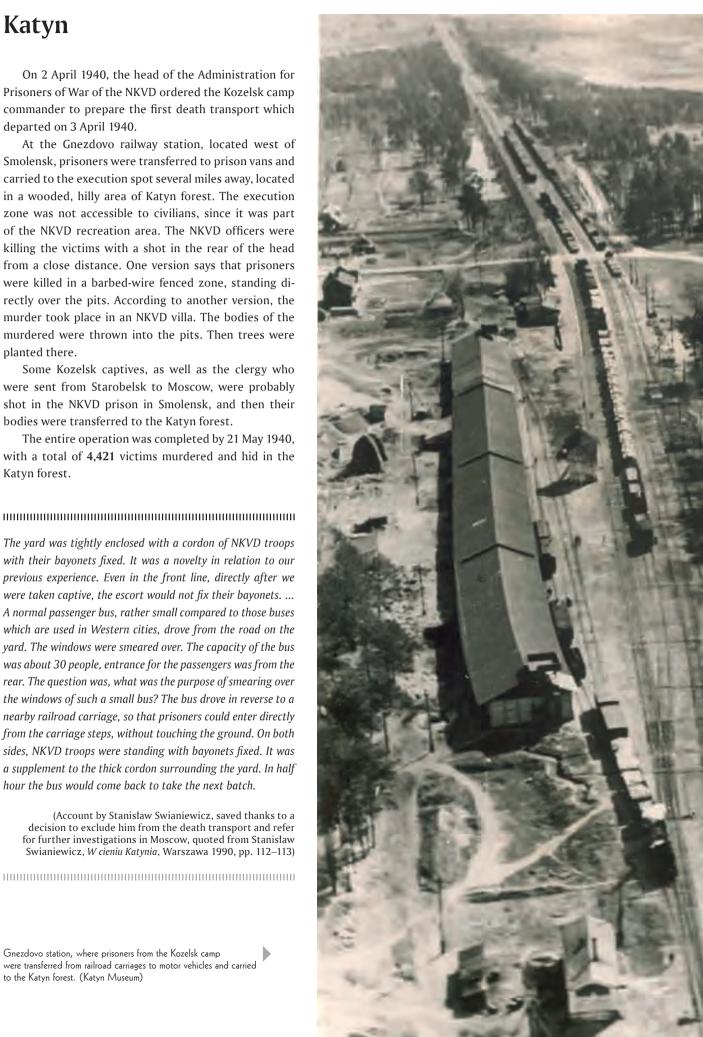
Some Kozelsk captives, as well as the clergy who were sent from Starobelsk to Moscow, were probably shot in the NKVD prison in Smolensk, and then their bodies were transferred to the Katyn forest.

The entire operation was completed by 21 May 1940, with a total of 4,421 victims murdered and hid in the Katyn forest.

#### 

The yard was tightly enclosed with a cordon of NKVD troops with their bayonets fixed. It was a novelty in relation to our previous experience. Even in the front line, directly after we were taken captive, the escort would not fix their bayonets. ... A normal passenger bus, rather small compared to those buses which are used in Western cities, drove from the road on the yard. The windows were smeared over. The capacity of the bus was about 30 people, entrance for the passengers was from the rear. The question was, what was the purpose of smearing over the windows of such a small bus? The bus drove in reverse to a nearby railroad carriage, so that prisoners could enter directly from the carriage steps, without touching the ground. On both sides, NKVD troops were standing with bayonets fixed. It was a supplement to the thick cordon surrounding the yard. In half hour the bus would come back to take the next batch.

(Account by Stanisław Swianiewicz, saved thanks to a decision to exclude him from the death transport and refer for further investigations in Moscow, quoted from Stanisław Swianiewicz, W cieniu Katynia, Warszawa 1990, pp. 112–113)





NKVD villa in the Katyn forest. Some prisoners were probably shot in its cellars. (Katyn Museum)



## ......

7 April [1940] Sunday morning. ... Pack! ...

After body search, at 16.55 (our Polish time 14.55) we left behind the walls and barbed wire of the Kozelsk camp. We were put into prison vans. ... With me is Józek Kutyba, Capt. Paweł Szyfter and one m[ajor], c[olonel] and several captains – twelve in total. Place for a maximum of seven.

8 April [1940], 3.30 o'clock. Departure from Kozelsk station towards the west. 9.45 o'clock – Elnia station.

9 April [1940], a dozen or so minutes before 5.00 in the morning – reveille in prison wagons and preparing to leave. We are to go somewhere in vans. What's next?

9 April [1940], 5.00 in the morning. The day started extraordinarily from the very dawn. Departure in a prison van in cells (awful!). We were taken somewhere to the forest, to a sort of summer resort. A detailed search there. They took my watch, which showed 6.30 (8.30). They asked me for my wedding ring, which [illegible]. They took roubles, the main belt, pocket knife [illegible].

[A few dozen minutes later Adam Solski was shot.]

(Notes found in the death pit in Adam Solski's notebook [in:] Pamiętniki znalezione w Katyniu, Paris-Warszawa 1990, pp. 104–105)



Major Adam Solski, a POW in the Kozelsk camp, the author of notes from Katyn, Knight of the Order of Virtuti Militari. Murdered in Katyn, together with his brother, Kazimierz, captain of the Polish Army. (Katyn Museum)



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)

## **Kharkov**

On 1 April 1940, the head of the Administration for Prisoners of War ordered the Starobelsk camp commander to send the first batch of prisoners to death. The order was carried out on 5 April 1940.

Prisoners were sent to Kharkov by train. From the Railway Station South in Kharkov they were transported in prison vans to the local NKVD internal prison in Feliks Dzerzhinsky Street. The prisoners were kept in the cells for several hours to two days, and brought in small groups to specially sound-proofed basement of the prison, where NKVD officers were shooting Poles one by one in the neck from a close distance. Executions were carried out at night, and the bodies were taken right away from the building, loaded onto lorries and transported to a forest park located in the NKVD sanatorium on the road to Belogrod, near the village of Pyatykhatky. There, they were thrown into prepared pits and covered with earth. These actions were carried out by NKVD officers. These pits were left unmarked. The hiding of the bodies was an element of crime concealment, rather than burial.

In April and May 1940, **3,820** prisoners were killed in Kharkov.

98 prisoners from Ostashkov, 78 from Starobelsk, and 205 from Kozelsk who were transferred to the Yukhnov camp, and subsequently detained in the Grazovets camp, represented the only group of rescued Poles. There were several reasons why they were not executed:

international interventions, especially by the German embassy (e.g. Józef Czapski), recognition of a prisoner as a source of important information (for example, Stanisław Swianiewicz was sent directly to Moscow), susceptibility to communist indoctrination, or recognition of any person as candidate to be used for the purposes of Soviet policies. A few of the survivors, such as Lieutenant Colonel Zygmunt Berling, falsified later the terrible truth about the fate of several thousand fellow prisoners. The vast majority remained faithful to Poland, cultivating the memory of the murdered colleagues.

#### 

As early as February 1940 rumours began circulating that they were going to take us from this camp. ... our authorities were spreading rumours that the Soviets would transfer us to the Allies. There was one thing we all had in common: each of us waited in anticipation for this hour when they will publish a new list of those leaving, maybe they will be finally on that list ... Standing on the steps of large church stairs, the commandant said farewell to the groups with a smile full of promise. You're going to a place – he said to one of us – where I would very much like to go ...

(Józef Czapski, *Wspomnienia starobielskie*, Rzym 1945, pp. 44–45)

## 

Syromyatnikov: They were undressing, when they were taking them there, to the basement, to the prosecutor. They were

undressing, removing their greatcoats, and [military] jackets or shirts. Hats were also taken away. Also a roofing was made, such temporarily fixed over the entrance to the basement in which they were shot. From the top they've done such a roofing, under which the car was driving in. That during the loading nothing

could be seen from the window upstairs. You know.

[investigator] Yershik: And when they were already loaded, when they were taken for burial. And those things: greatcoats, hats,

did you cover the car with anything?

**Syromyatnikov:** Well, yes. Of course. We took greatcoats, hats. There was a need to cover them, to wrap their heads with

something. You know. So that in wouldn't bleed.

[prosecutor] Śnieżko: And where did you wrap them, already in the car, or ...?

Syromyatnikov: Of course. We were wrapping them up immediately after shooting. Two were putting them on a stretcher,

two were standing in the car, and two were taking out the stretcher. We were taking them from there and laying in the car, alternately, one head one way, and the other opposite. And so gradually to the edge,

about 25 to 30 people were loaded.

*Śnieżko*: With their heads wrapped?

Syromyatnikov: Well, yes. And later we covered them with those greatcoats which were left. And then we were throwing

them into the pit. The belts remained at the depository. ...

(Records of the hearing of a former NKVD officer in Kharkov Mitrofan V. Syromyatnikov from 30 July 1991, quotation from: *Katyń*.

\*\*Dokumenty zbrodni\*, Vol. 2, ed. Wojciech Materski, Bolesław Woszczyński et al., Warszawa 1995, pp. 481–497)



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 caried 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 min-

utes 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.

Yablokow: 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 ...

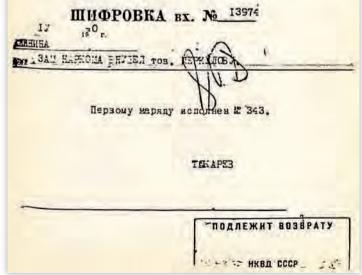
(Testimony by Dmitry Tokarev, the head of the NKVD Administration in Kalinin, 20 March 1991, quotation from: Zeszyty Katyńskie 1994, No. 3, pp. 19–71)



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 Zalęski) Stairs leading to the basement. (Photo Aleksander Zalęski)





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 Zalęski)

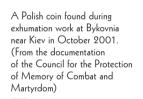
Exhumed remains of the victims, in the 1990s. (Photo Aleksander Zalęski)

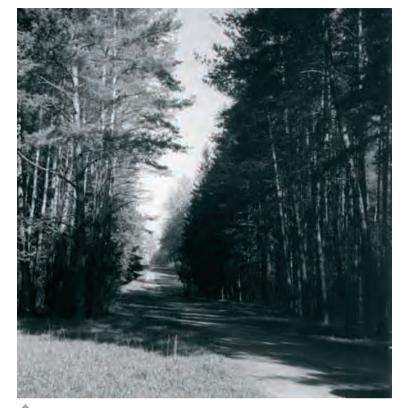
## The Murder of Prisoners

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 tranported to Kiev, Kharkov and Kherson. Another three thousand were to be transferred from prisons in Pińsk, Brześć n. Bugiem, Baranowicze and Wilejka to Minsk.

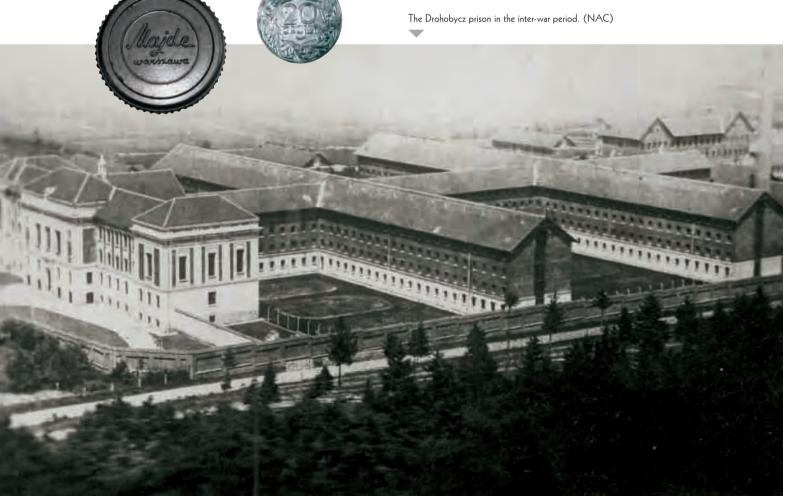
These prisoners (not less than 7,305 in total) were executies. The places where corpses of the victims of this least-known part of the Katyn massacre were buried (the so-called Belarusian and Ukrainian lists), remain unknown. Archaeological work carried out at Bykovnia near Kiev point out, however, that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





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)





Fragment of a diary with advertisement of District Trade Cooperative at Lesko 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 total of 18,632 arrested people are held in prisons of western oblasts of Ukraine and Belarus (among them 10,685 Poles), including:

– Former military officers	<i>— 1,207</i>
– Former police officers, intelligence agents	
and military police	— <i>5,141</i>
<ul><li>Spies and saboteurs</li></ul>	<i>— 347</i>
– Former landowners, factory owners, and officials	<i>— 465</i>
<ul><li>Members of various c[ounter]-r[evolution]</li></ul>	
and insurgent organizations and various	
c[ounter]-r[evolutionary] elements	<i>— 5,345</i>
<ul><li>defectors</li></ul>	<i>— 6,127</i>

(Excerpts from Lavrenty Beria's note of 5 March 1940, to Joseph Stalin with the "proposal" to murder 14,700 prisoners of war from camps, and 11,000 prisoners "from the western oblasts of Ukraine and Belarus", Moscow, 5 March 1940, quote from: *Katyń. Dokumenty ludobójstwa*, ed. Wojciech Materski, Warszawa 1992, pp. 36–37)

Bykovnia near Kiev, a place to hide corpses of some of Polish prisoners from the western oblasts of the USSR, shot in Kiev in spring 1940. In the photo, collective graves in which items of Polish origin were found during exhumation in October 2001. (From the documentation of the Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom)

Polish military officers' shoes, found in Bykovnia near Kiev during the exhumation work in October 2001. (From the documentation of the Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom)



# Deportation of the Families of the Victims of the Katyn Massacre

Concurrently with the operation of "discharging" special camps and prisons, the NKVD started the persecution of the families of Polish prisoners and POWs designated for annihilation. Repression was part of a plan to destroy Polishness in the Eastern Borderland. First targeted were the best educated, the wealthiest Poles, and those most closely associated with pre-war institutions of Polish national life, as well as the most patriotic Poles, who could pose the biggest threat to Sovietization plans. Somewhat "naturally", this category also included the families of the Katyn victims, who were to be deported into the depths of the USSR. On 2 March 1940, a resolution on this issue was taken by the Political Bureau of the VKP(b).

During the night 12/13 April 1940 the NKVD deported about 61,000 Poles to the northern oblasts of Kazakhstan. The deported were allowed to take only personal belongings with them. On the site, they were ordered to work in collective farms, settled in extremely difficult conditions, often in the open steppe. For many, exile meant the death sentence.

The NKVD of the USSR orders to deport, by 15 April [1940], to the regions of the Kazakh SSR, for a period of ten years, all family members of former Polish army officers, policemen, prison guards, military police, intelligence officers, former land and factory owners, and senior officials of the former Polish national state apparatus, detained in camps for prisoners of war and in prisons of western oblasts of Ukraine and Belarus. ...

Important: Family members are taken to mean the wife, children and parents, brothers and sisters in case they live with the family of the prisoner or prisoner of war.

(Directive by Lavrenty Beria for Ivan Serov and Lawrenty Tsanava of 7 March 1940, quote from: *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, Vol. 2, ed. Wojciech Materski, Bolesław Woszczyński *et al.*, Warszawa 1998, p. 43)

The railroad to exile. (Photo Aleksander Załęski)



#### 

... 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 Święciany district to Kazakhstan. (Karta Centre)



Soldiers of the 132<sup>nd</sup> 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: Katyń. 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 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. In the years 1920–1923 inspector of the 6<sup>th</sup> 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.



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 *Łucznictwo* (Archery; 1934). As the coach of the Polish national team in archery in the period 1930–1934, he led the womens' 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 Wyspowy 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 Cambrige". 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 Start of Genocide

Immediately after the outbreak of the war, the Germans proceeded with a ruthless strike against the most active stratum of the Polish intelligentsia (priests, teachers, lawyers, doctors, military officers, landed gentry, and government workers). Repression of particular intensity lasted until January 1940, and mainly included the areas incorporated into the Third Reich.

Crimes were perpetrated in many places, however, exceptionally tragic reputation had Piaśnica out of Wejherowo – a site of mass executions, where from mid-October 1939 to April 1940 about 10–12 thousand inhabitants of Danzig (Gdańsk), Gdynia, Wejherowo and Kartuzy, as well as the sick from psychiatric facilities in the Third Reich were killed. The number of Poles executed in Pomerania in 1939 was about 40,000. In the



Bydgoszcz gymnasium teachers, from the left: Antoni Olejnik (Nicolaus Copernicus Gymnasium) and M. Męczykowski before the execution at Fordon, October 1939. (IPN Archive)



A Polish citizen in the dock of the German police ad hoc court. (IPN Archive)

Chełmno diocese, 323 of the overall number of 701 priests were executed or died in concentration camps during World War II.

In Poznań and the surrounding area, around 2,000 people were killed in autumn 1939. Executions took place, inter alia, in the forts of Poznań. In Łódź, 1,500 people were arrested on 9 and 10 November 1939. Some of them were executed, while the rest were sent to concentration camps. In Silesia, in spring 1940, around 2,000 people were exterminated.

In Ostrołęka about 500 people were killed, and a few hundred in Giełczyn near Łomża and in Wyszków. About 2,000 were executed in Wysokie Mazowieckie, and 3,000 in the vicinity of Ciechanów.

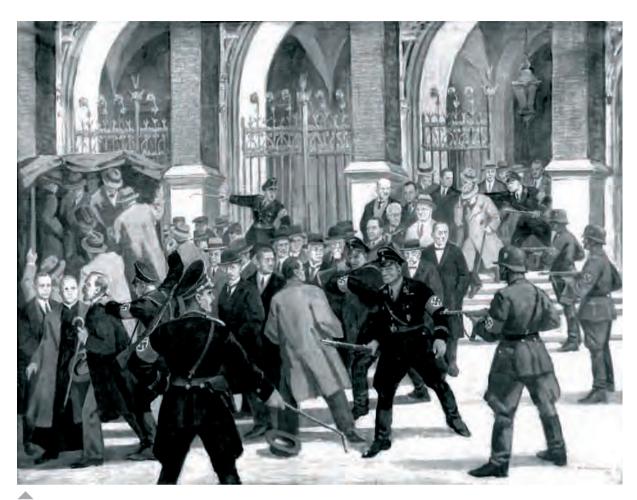
The campaign against the Polish intelligentsia was also launched in the General Government. In Cracow, on 6 November 1939, 183 professors of the Jagiellonian University and the Academy of Mining were arrested and deported to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. In Lublin repression affected about 2,000 people. Among them, 50 priests were arrested in November 1939, including two bishops and 14 professors of the Catholic University of Lublin. The November wave of arrests claimed 150 lives in Radom, and the participants of the Rzeszów province convention of teachers in Nisko. A high number of people were imprisoned in Warsaw, e.g. on 8 October 1939, 354 priests and teachers were arrested. Mayor of Warsaw Stefan Starzyński was also among those arrested and killed. In December 1939, Germans started mass executions at Palmiry out of Warsaw.

## 

In April 1940, they arrested us both with my husband. My husband was forced with battering to confess that he belonged to a Polish secret organization. ... Shortly afterwards, the Gestapo was visited by [Albert] Forster [the regional governor of Danzig-West Prussia] to whom [Paul] Witt [Bydgoszcz Gestapo Criminal Secretary] introduced the severely battered Poles as major bandits. After the departure of Forster, thirty Poles from Bydgoszcz were removed and executed. I was called to Witt, who literally said: "I must inform you that at the behest of Forster your man was shot on an ad hoc basis".

Despite the assurance that I would be released, I was sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp, where I spent four years. ... My husband had not belonged to any secret organization and was sure he would be released. In general I believe there was no underground organization in Bydgoszcz at that time.

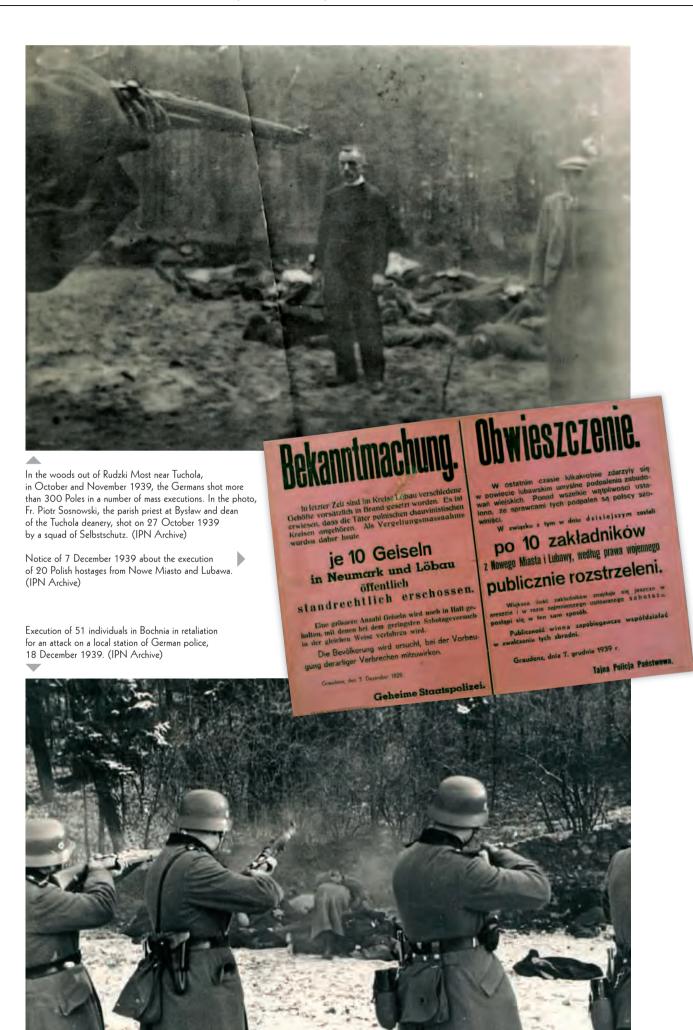
(Elżbieta Mellerowa, From the testimony made before the Supreme National Tribunal in Gdańsk during the trial of Albert Forster in 1948, [in:] Józef Kolicz, Czas grozy. Wspomnienia o tzw. krwawej niedzieli bydgoskiej, Gdynia 1959, pp. 174–175)



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)





# **Operation AB: The Plan and the Perpetrators**

At the beginning of 1940 Germany began preparing the Ausserordentliche Befriedungsaktion (Special Pacification Operation; Operation AB). In connection with the planned activities in the west of Europe, a decision was made to arrest and murder all those suspected of any links to Polish conspiracy. At the same time, the operation was to lead to disabling common criminals. The Operation AB began on 30 March 1940, and the exermination action was at its highest intensity from May to July 1940. It was carried out in all districts of the General Government.

#### 

### The Governor-General, Reich Minister Dr [Hans] Frank:

Gentlemen! ... I discussed with [Bruno] Streckenbach, in the presence of SS-Obergruppenführer [Friedrich-Wilhelm] Krüger, this extraordinary pacification programme, purpose of which has been to accelerate the liquidation of the majority of the resistance--pushing politicians held by us, and other politically suspected individuals, as well as ending the traditional Polish crime, I openly admit that the result will be the loss of life by several thousand Poles, mainly from the ideological spheres of Polish leadership. The order of the day for us, the National Socialists, is to undertake that we make every effort to ensure that no resistance among the Polish people solidifi es. ..

(From the minutes of a police meeting on the general questions related to the security situation in the GG, 30 May 1940, quote from: Okupacja i ruch oporu w dzienniku Hansa Franka 1939-1945, Vol. 1: 1939-1942, Warszawa 1970, pp. 189-220)

# The Main Culprits

Adolf HITLER (1889–1945) — leader and Chancellor of the Third Reich, NSDAP leader, committed suicide in embattled Berlin.

Heinrich HIMMLER (1900–1945) — SS-Reichsführer and head of the German police, committed suicide in British captivity.

Reinhard HEYDRICH (1904–1942) — SS-Obergruppenführer and police General, head of the Reich's Security Main Offi ce, died of wounds sustained during assassination attempt

Hans FRANK (1900–1946) — Governor-General of the GG (October 1939 – January 1945), by the ruling of the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal sentenced to death and hanged.

Josef BÜHLER (1904–1948) — head of government (State Secretary) of the GG and the Deputy Governor-General, sentenced by the Supreme National Tribunal to death and executed in Poland.

Dr Otto Gustav WÄCHTER (1901–1949) — Head of the Cracow district (October 1939 – January 1942), SS-Brigadeführer, died under a false name in Rome.

Dr Ernst ZÖRNER (1908–1986) — head of the Lublin district (February 1940 – April 1943). Dr Karl LASCH (1904–1942) — head of the Radom district (December 1939 – August 1941), executed on the basis of a Nazi court sentence for corruption.

Dr Ludwig FISCHER (1905–1947) — SA-Gruppenführer, the head of the Warsaw district (October

1939 – January 1945), Member of the Reichstag, sentenced to death by a ruling of the Supreme National Tribunal.

Friedrich-Wilhelm KRÜGER (1894–1945) — SS-Obergruppenführer, senior commander of the SS and police "East" (October 1939 – November 1943), committed suicide in Austria.

> Karl ZECH (1892–1944) — SS-Gruppenführer, the SS and police commander in the Cracow district (November 1939 – October 1940), brought before the Nazi court, expelled from the SS, committed suicide.

Odilo Lotario GLOBOCNIK, "Globus" (1904–1945) — qualified engineer, SS-Brigadeführer, the SS and police commander in the Lublin district (November 1939 – August 1943), committed suicide in Austria.

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

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)

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)



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



# **Operation AB in the Radom District**

In the Radom district the pretext for massive repression was the activity by the Special Unit of the Polish Army, the first Polish partisan group after 1939, commanded by Major Henryk "Hubal" Dobrzań ski. During the mopping-up operation to capture the unit in March/April 1940, about 700 Polish civilians were killed and about 600 homes were burnt down.

The Germans also conducted typical operations to liquidate Polish intelligentsia. In Kielce, on 12 June 1940, the Gestapo deported 63 people to Stadion Leś ny and shot them. Probably on 14 June and 16 July other executions followed, of inmates at the Kielce prison. In Sandomierz, on 17 June in the morning, 117 prisoners were selected, loaded on lorries, taken to the woods near the village of Góry Wysokie, and executed. From 16 May to 10 July in a dozen executions in Firlej near Radom about 250 people were killed. On 29 June in the woods of Brzask near Skarżysko-Kamienna around 760 individuals were executed. The inmates from Czę stochowa were executed near Olsztyn (28 and 29 June, and 1 July), and then near Apolonka (3 and 4 July, and 13 August). The preserved personal fi les show that executions were caried out without formal criminal convictions.

## 

15 listed persons were sentenced to death by the SD [Sicherheitsdienst, or Security Service] ad hoc court. The permit for the execution was granted pursuant to the order of the Security Police and Security Service Commander of the Radom district, and the execution will be conducted by the Commando on 28 June 1940 in the evening.

(Letter from Lieutenant Schneider, Adjutant of the 7<sup>th</sup> battalion of the Schutzpolizei, to Walther Lenzen, head of the prison in Czę stochowa of 27 June 1940, quoted from *Ausserordentliche Befriedungsaktion 1940 – akcja AB na ziemiach polskich*, introduction and scientifi c edition Zygmunt Mań kowsk Warszawa 1992, p. 112)

## 

Let no one cry after me, because I think that I'm dying — although not in the fi eld, in the battle, as a soldier, after all — a Pole for Poland and with Her name on my lips, and that's no mean honour, indeed. The blood spilt in the Polish land will fertilize it and breed avengers in a Free, Great Poland.

(Last words of a diary-letter by Mieczysław Habrowski, executed on 29 June 1940 at Olsztyn near Czę stochowa, quotec from: Ausserordentliche Befriedungsaktion 1940 – akcja AB na ziemiach polskich, the introduction and the scientifi c editior Zygmunt Mań kowski, Warszawa 1992, p. 118



Soldiers of the 372<sup>nd</sup> division of the Wehrmacht standing by the body of Major Henryk Dobrzański "Hubal" killed in a battle, Anielin, 30 April 1940. (Henryk Sobierajski, Andrzej Dyszyński, *Hubal*, Warszawa 2005, photo 166)

## 

On 4 April 1940, I saw about 10 German covered lorries arriving by road from Firlej in the barren. I then was leaving home with my cart and returned after some three hours. When I returned I learned that my family and neighbours had heard shots coming from the barren, that the barren was enclosed with a chain of posts, and at the entrance to each yard sentry also stood, who would not allow to leave home. When I came back, I didn't hear any shots or see the posts. Shortly afterwards, I saw that the same German lorries departed in the direction of Radom. I then went to the barren. The previous day I noticed that at some point of the barren a couple of freshly dug pits appeared. I went to the place where I previously had seen these pits. I saw that the pits were buried and treaded down. You could see clear traces of metal-tipped shoes. Some pieces of bone were lying nearby. After that, stories circulated that the Nazis shot a large group of people from around Chlewiska.

(Account by Jan Makowski, quoted from: Andrzej Jankowski, Pacyfi kacje i miejsca masowych straceń na Ziemi Radomskie w latach 1939–1945, Radom 1978, pp. 18–19)



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)





German sentry on the walls of the Wawel Castle. (IPN Archive)

The Prison in Montelupi Street in Cracow. (IPN Archive)



# Operation AB in the Cracow District

In the area of the Cracow district, as part of the Operation AB, executions were carried out in secluded forest areas, not too distant from prisons: on 27 June 1940 in the forests near Rzeszów 36 prisoners were executed; on 28 June, near Nowy Sącz, in the Trzetrzewina forest, 93 individuals were shot and killed with grenades; on 5 July, 111 prisoners were executed at Gruszka Hill near Tarnawa Dolna, close to the border with the Soviet occupation zone on the river San, and the "suicide" heading was filled in for all the names in the records; on 6 July in the woods between the villages Sieklówka and Warzyce (6 km from Jasło) approx. 90 people were executed; on 29 June and 2 and 4 July about 150 prisoners were executed at Krzesławice, near Cracow, and more than a dozen at Przegorzały.

Executions were also carried out at other places.

#### 

In Bochnia, a secret Polish organization was found. The detection occurred as a result of betrayal by one of its participants. 55 people were arrested. Among them is a former Polish minister and a Polish lieutenant in active service. During executions, the town governor recommends making public the steps taken at the scene and in the vicinity.

(Situation reports by district and town governors from July 1940, quoted from: *Okupacja i ruch oporu w dzienniku Hansa Franka 1939–1945*, Vol. 1: 1939–1942, Warszawa 1970, p. 300)

## ......

At about 21.00 in the prison corridor loud commands and orders are heard, after a while the door opens in cell no. 43 in which I'm kept and I hear a loud cry ACHTUNG! (Attention!). Everyone, and we were 37 prisoners, stood in two rows at attention. They read off names and called to the corridor, putting the prisoners with their faces turned to the wall (here the names of those called are listed), we who remained in the cell were standing pale, nervous and puzzled about what would be next. In a moment there is a short sentence in German (translation): For your hostile activities against the Germans you are sentenced to death by shooting. After reading the sentence, the men were placed in cell 48, and women in the cell on the second floor. Throughout the entire night, the national anthem, military and religious songs were heard coming from the death cell.

(Memoirs by Stanisław Piwiński about the execution of prisoners of Rzeszów, shot on 27 June 1940 in a forest Lubzina near Dębica, quoted from: Krzysztof Świętoń, *Walka o wolność*– Lubzina 1940 [in:] Dębica City Magazine, 2001, no. 8)



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

One of the mass graves of victims of execution at Fort Krzesławice 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 localgovernment 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' activits, 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)













## 

They called the names of women and men from the list. Each of them, mostly awfully distorted by the German who read them, would be immediately ticked off. Those called, followed with SS-man's eyes up to the car, had to dash — otherwise were helped earnestly with hard kicks. When the "number" found itself under the "folding hood" of the car, he ceased to exist on the list, and was already eliminated, as it were. More than 250 people were loaded up to 6 vehicles. Then, each of them was tightly covered with tarpaulin and laced with cord.

(Barbara Wiśniewska-Sokołowska, *W więzieniu mokotowskim i na Pawiaku (30 III – 22 XI 1940)* [in:] *Wspomnienia więźniów Pawiaka*, Warszawa 1978, pp. 176–177)

- The lorries which transported prisoners to Palmiry for execution. (IPN Archive)
- After unloading, the victims were blindfolded. (IPN Archive)
- Those shot at Palmiry included many women.
  (IPN Archive)
- From the place of unloading, the victims with blindfolds were taken through the forest to the place of execution.

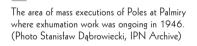
  (IPN Archive)



The local Sipo and SD commander, SS-Standartenführer and police colonel Josef Meisinger, who carried out the Operation AB in the Warsaw district, decorating his particularly deserved subordinates in 1940. (IPN Archive)







Exhumed remains of the leader of the National Radical Organization, Andrzej Świetlicki, 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.

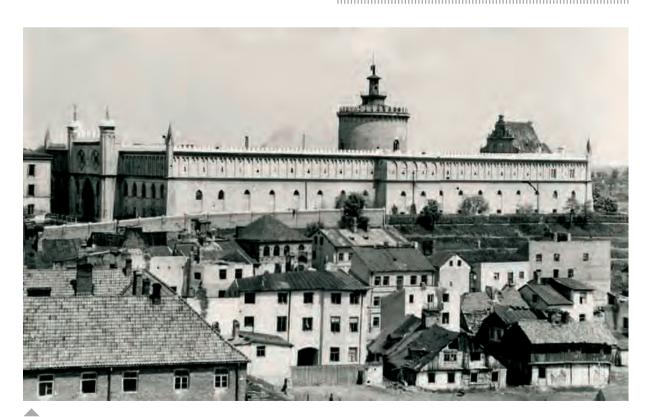
#### 

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:] *Wspom-nienia więźniów Zamku Lubelskiego* 1939–1944, selected by Jadwiga Chmielak, Jolanta Gajowniczek *et al.*, Warszawa 1984, p. 109)

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)





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



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")

# **Transports to Camps**

The Operation AB coincided with the decree of the German police commander, SS-Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, on the deportation to concentration camps of a quota of 20,000 Poles. Even before the outbreak of war, German concentration camps held 2,000 Poles, the Polish minority activists in Germany. In early September 1939, 1,500 Poles from the Free City of Danzig were taken to the Stutthof concentration camp. By 1941, the camp had more than 11,000 prisoners, mostly Poles from Pomerania.

After the first wave of arrests, as part of the Operation AB, thousands more people were imprisoned in May, June and July 1940. Some of them were arrested during so-called mass operations, i.e. street round-ups during which all men aged 16 to 40 were kidnapped from the street, premises and means of transport. In Warsaw, the first round-ups took place on 8 May, 12 August and 19 September 1940.

The first transport of prisoners from Warsaw was sent to the camp at Sachsenhausen on 2 May 1940. Around one thousand people were taken to that camp from the Lublin district in June–July 1940. On 14 June 1940 the first transport of 728 prisoners went from Tarnów to the newly built, specially for the Poles, concentration camp at Oświęcim (KL Auschwitz). On 15 August a transport of 1,666 people arrested in Warsaw reached the camp (1,153 of them kidnapped in a round-up). On 22 September, another batch of 1,705 people arrived from Warsaw. In total, over ten thousand people were taken to camps over several months.

#### 

In those hot days of 1940 rumours began to circulate in Cracow that they do some extensive preparations at the border of Silesia, as if they were building large barracks or blocks — all surrounded with barbed wire and kept top secret. Even if all this were made public … none of us would be able to understand what was going on, because the Germans were building AUSCHWITZ.

(Karolina Lanckorońska, Wspomnienia wojenne, Kraków 2001, p. 68)

#### 

Around 15.00 we arrived in Oświęcim. ... Using sticks, SS officers and kapos chased [us] to the courtyard. ... We had to come close to the tables: they written down our personal details, asked about occupations and issued subsequent camp numbers inscribed, I think, on cardboard. ... Then they began to teach us how to arrange for calls. ... Kapos would hit us blindly with clubs. We ran around the courtyard completely confused, intimidated, unable to grasp what was happening with us and what we were expected to do.

(Account by Bogumił Antonowicz who arrived in the Auschwitz camp with the first transport from Tarnów, Archival Collections of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)

The first prisoners of KL Stutthof during a break in the construction of barracks, autumn 1939. (Stutthof State Museum)



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

Stanisław Ryniak, 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 Denominatons and Public Enlightment (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 .



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 Wrold 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 Womens' 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.

## 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 "Prawdzic"). 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)





(NAC)



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



### 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 73<sup>rd</sup> 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, proindependence 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 0 Gdańsk (Danzig) WILNO (VILNIL KL Stutthof Białystok KL Sachsenhausen About 40,000 Poles were killed Barano by the Germans on the areas incorporated into the Third Reich in the period 1939-1940. BERLIN Poznań Brześć nad Bugie WARSAW (Brest-on-the-Bu Radom Łuck Site of execution carried out by the Germans Katowice (over 200 victims) Site of execution carried out by the Germans Lwów (Lviv) (10-200 victims) KL Auschwitz Site of execution carried out by the Soviets Presumptive site of execution carried out by the Soviets Drohobycz Site where the bodies of the victims were hidden Presumptive site where the bodies of the victims Stanisławów were hidden Soviet POW camp Transport of POWs NKVD prison Presumptive directions of transports of NKVD prisoners German concentration camp



# 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 Zamojska 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

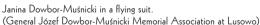




Janina Dowbor-Muśnicka in the garden of the family estate at Lusowo. (General Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki Memorial Association at Lusowo)

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







Janina Dowbor-Muśnicka with her future husband Mieczysław Lewandowski in Tęgoborze. (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**

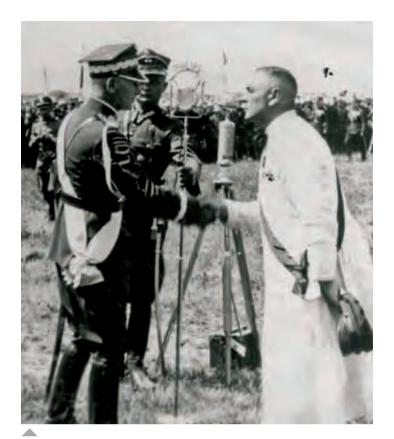
Bolesław and Jakub Wnuk, the sons of Piotr and Katarzyna, originated from a peasant family living out of Zamość. Elder brother, Bolesław, was born in 1893 at Wysokie near Zamość. Before World War I he associated himself with the peasants' movement. Organized cells of the Polish Military Organization 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 Wisełka 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)



Bolesław Wnuk with his son Grzegorz, 1939. (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 l'll be shot by the German authorities. I'm dying for my homeland with a smile on my lips, but l'm dying innocent. For the blood they spilt, let God put an eternal curse on these wicked villains, your Bolek". (Rafał Wnuk's collection)

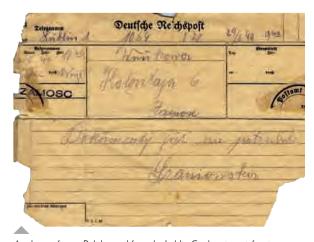




Portrait of Jakub Wnuk with a dedication to his brother Bolesław: "To the sole and beloved brother for eternal memory". (Rafal Wnuk's collection)



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)



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)

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### 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-



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 rearrested 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.

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

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)

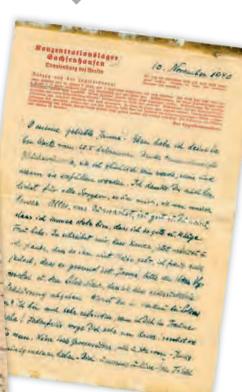




Stanisław Czarnek, son of Zbigniew, in KL Auschwitz. (Agnieszka de Barbaro's collection)

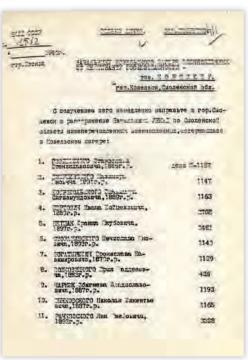


Witold Czarnek's letter from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp to his family, 10 November 1939. (Janusz Czarnek's collection)



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

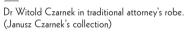




Departure list no. 015/2 from Kozelsk, including Lieutenant Colonel Zbigniew Czarnek (No 9). On its basis, on 7 April 1940 he was transported from the camp to the execution. (Agnieszka de Barbaro's collection)

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







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 Toll of Genocide

The Operation AB and the Katyn massacre were the most explicit examples of repression carried out during 1939–1941 in the Polish territories under German and Soviet occupation. During "Operation Katyn" about 22,000 people were killed. It is estimated that during the Operation AB the Germans shot about 6,500 Poles. Together with the Poles murdered in 1939 in similar operations in the territories incorporated into the Third Reich, namely Pomerania, Silesia, Greater Poland and Mazovia, this figure is about 50,000 people. The vast majority of the victims of both crimes may be regarded as the Polish intellectual elite.

Both repressive operations were preludes to Poland's Germanization on the one hand, and Sovietization on the other. There is no doubt today that the crime of genocide was committed in their course. Whereas the Katyn massacre may be regarded as a concealed genocide, the Operation AB has been a forgotten genocide.

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21,857 people were shot, of which: 4,421 people in the Katyn forest (Smolensk oblast); 3,820 people in the Starobelsk camp near Kharkov; 6,311 in the Ostashkov camp (Kalinin oblast); and 7,305 persons were shot in other camps and prisons in Western Ukraine and Western Belarus.

(Memorandum by the head of the USSR's KGB, Alexandr Shelepin, from 1959 to the Secretary General of the CPSU, Nikita Khrushchev, concerning the fulfillment of the Politburo decision of 5 March 1940, quotation from: *Katyń. Dokumenty ludobójstwa*, Warszawa 1992, ed. Wojciech Materski, pp. 42–43)

German air photograph of the exhumation in the Katyn forest in 1943. (Katyn Museum)

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In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.

(Excerpt from Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1948)



The remains of those murdered at Rury Jezuickie in Lublin. Visible are blindfolds put on the victims before the execution. (IPN Archive)



# The Punishing of German War Criminals

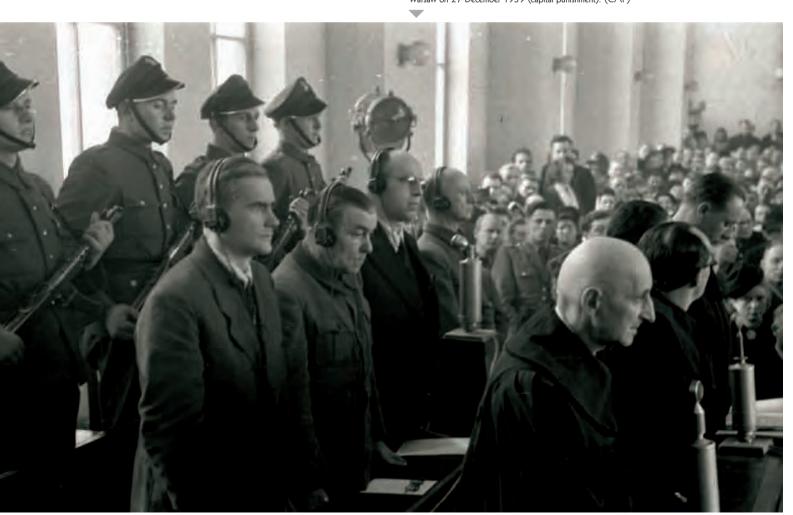
Only some of those responsible for the Operation AB have been tried and convicted in post-war trials. The International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, established on 20 November 1945, convicted Hans Frank. As one of the major war criminals he was sentenced to death. The Supreme National Tribunal, established in Poland on 22 January 1946, tried: Josef Meisinger (captured in Japan, transferred by the US authorities) – sentenced to death on 7 March 1947; Ludwig Fischer – sentenced to death on 3 March 1947; and Fritz Wilhelm Liphardt, who died during the trial. Dr Karl Lasch was sentenced to death for corruption already during the war by the Nazi Special Court in Cracow. Dr Ludwig Hahn was sentenced to life imprisonment by a court in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Bruno Streckenbach was sentenced to long-term imprisonment by a Soviet court, and in 1955 transferred to FRG authorities to serve the remaining penalty time. Walter Huppenkothen was sentenced by the Land Court in Augsburg to 6 years of hard imprisonment, whereas the time of his internment and detention was included to his penalty time.

Most of those responsible for genocide of the Polish population have never been held accountable.

We aren't murderers, gentlemen. For police and SS officers who, in connection with this step, will be compelled, by official duties, to carry out executions, this will be a terrible burden. The signing of hundreds of death sentences is easy; however, by contracting their implementation to decent Germans, to good soldiers and our fellows, by this we put an enormous burden on their shoulders. So I am very grateful to our party comerade Siebert for a regulation, in which he requires police authorities to have regard for the physical condition of the people charged with carrying out such executions.

(From a speech by Hans Frank on 30 May 1940 in Cracow, quoted from: *Okupacja i ruch oporu w dzienniku Hansa Franka* 1939–1945, Vol. 1: 1939–1942, Warszawa 1970, pp. 189–220)

Warsaw, 3 March 1947. The Supreme National Tribunal announces the ruling in a case against Ludwig Fischer and others. In the dock, the defendants, from left to right: Ludwig Fischer – a former head of the Warsaw district (capital punishment), Ludwig Leist – a former city prefect of Warsaw (8 years in prison), Josef Meisinger – a former chief of police and security services in the Warsaw district (capital punishment), Max Daume – commander of the Ordnungspolizei, who was responsible for the summary execution of 107 civilians in Wawer near Warsaw on 27 December 1939 (capital punishment). (CAF)







Gdańsk, April 1948. The crowd listens to the radio broadcast from the first day of the trial before the Supreme National Tribunal against Albert Forster, the former governor (gauleiter) of the Reichsgau Danzig-West Prussia. The trial concluded with the death penalty, which was carried out on 28 February 1952. (CAF)

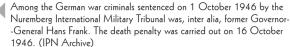
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Question: ... Are you responsible for the Operation AB?

Answer: I can only repeat what I've said. If the government is understood as the person of Governor-General, your point of view, Mr Prosecutor, is valid. As for me, I'm linked to this operation only insofar as I tried to alleviate it, by limiting it to only punishing the guilty and insisting on the use of legal procedures. During the Operation AB I didn't make any orders, didn't convey any orders, and didn't participate in any direction. I can tell the same for civil servants, who were subordinated to me, working at the department which I managed. In other words, the Operation AB was administered by the police, in which however the Governor-General was involved.

(Fragment of a testimony by Josef Bühler, given at Nuremberg on 16 February 1946, before the prosecutor, Jerzy Sawicki, a member of the Polish delegation at the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal, a quotation from: Zburzenie Warszawy.

Zeznania generałów niemieckich przed polskim prokuratorem, członkiem polskiej delegacji przy Międzynarodowym Trybunale Wojennym w Norymberdze, Katowice 1946, pp. 214–215)



Ludwig Hahn – a former chief of police and security services and coordinator of the Operation AB in the Cracow district, with his wife after the war.

On 4 July 1975 he was convicted in Germany for life imprisonment.

(IPN Archive)





Josef Meisinger in a prison cell in Warsaw. In 1940, he was carrying out the Operation AB in the district. By ruling of the Supreme National Tribunal, he was sentenced to capital punishment, carried out on 7 March 1947. (CAF)

# 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, anticommunist 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  $20^{\text{th}}$  century has not ended with this.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> 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)

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 Stalinorganised 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.

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- ... When assessing the material about the death of Polish offi cers 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 offi cers 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 offi cers 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 księ ga 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

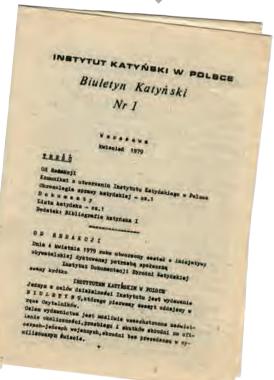


In May 1981, the Katyn Victim's Memorial Building Committee was established. Its work resulted in the unveiling on 31 July 1981 of a monument at the Powązki cemetery in Warsaw. Already the first night after setting up the monument, the communist Security Service has removed it, and successfully concealed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

The first issue of the Biuletyn 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)





TRAGICZNY - PROTEST

"Uszanujmy to émier 6

21.III.1980 roku krakowski Rynek Główny stał nie widownia wstrząsającego wydarzenia. Około godziny 8.oc rano popeżnił taw samobójstwo przez samospalenie 76-letni Walenty Badylak. Przykuwszy się żelaznym żańcuchem do znajdującej się opodal Delikatesów ulicznej pompy oblał się benzyną i podpalił; w obwile później eksplodowały butelki z benzyną ukryte przez niego w kieszeniach. Natychmiastowa dostawczych stojących przed Delikatesami nie daża razultatu. Któś zdążyż jeszcze tylko sprowadzić z Kościoła Mariackiego księdzy, który udzielik straszliwie poparzonemu Badylakowi ostatnich sekramentów. Włody też wszyscy mimowolni świadkowie tego tragicznego wypadku dostrzegli wiezaca na pierci konajacego metalową z bezpośrednich świadków świerci Badylako mie otrafił dokłażnie odtworzyć jej powtarzą się informacje, iż napis na tabliczce brzmiał: "Ja natyń.... Ze Syna..."

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)







