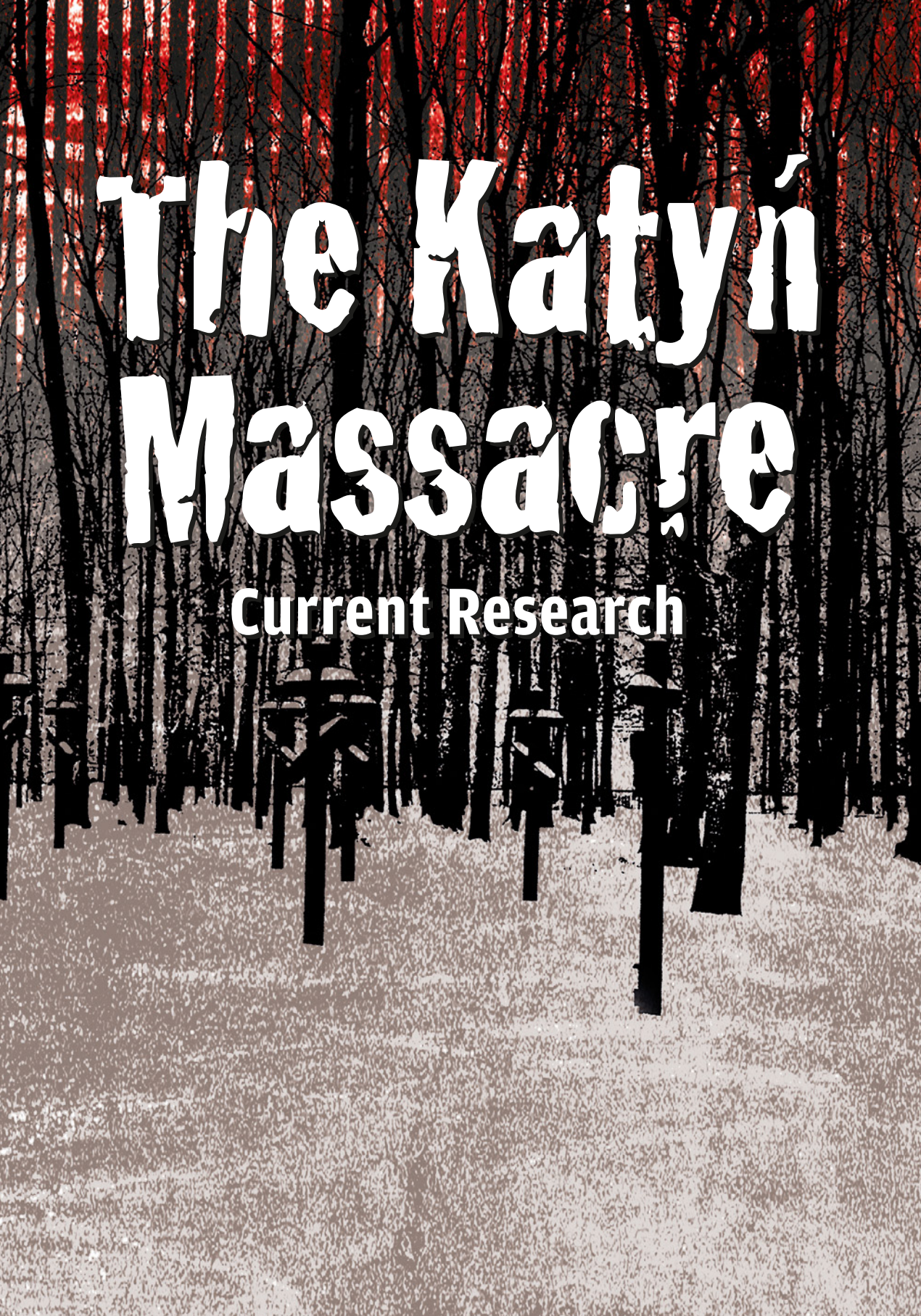
The Katyń Massacre
Current Research

The Katyń Massacre

THE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE
COMMISION FOR THE PROSECUTION OF CRIMES AGAINST THE POLISH NATION

JANUSZ KURTYKA FOUNDATION

The Katyń Massacre

Current Research

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Damian Bębnowski, Filip Musiał

Introduction. The Katyń Massacre. Current Research (up to 2018)

The question of the Katyń massacre is one of the most popular research issues in the recent history of Poland. It has been tackled mainly by historians writing in Polish, but there is an abundant number of papers published in other languages by researchers and publicists of various nationalities. Due to political reasons, Polish research on the Katyń massacre has rapidly increased its volume since the year 1989, which marked the collapse of the communist system in Poland. Papers on this dramatic moment in our national history issued before 1989 were put in print abroad by the Polish political diaspora or at home in underground publications. Research on the Katyń massacre also bore a stamp of Russian influence that altered according to political changes: at first the destabilisation of the Soviet Union and then its later collapse.

In the year 1990, on 13 April, which had symbolical significance as the 50th anniversary of the massacre, the authorities of the Soviet Union (which still existed at that time) officially admitted for the first time that Polish officers were murdered by the NKVD. Two years later, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in October 1992, Russia handed documents over to Poland from a special file on the murders committed in Kharkov, Katyń and Tver. The public started to receive individual protocols that recorded the investigation and interrogation of participants of the massacre, which have been conducted in Russia at Poland's request since 1990.

Literature on the Katyń massacre is extensive and includes hundreds of publications on the subject. It consists of sources such as documents, reports, memoirs, and studies. Among the latter, one may distinguish attempts at a systematic research to the problem, contributive research on issues such as the list of victims, their biographies, propaganda surrounding the Katyń massacre or the significance of the mass murder of Polish officers for foreign affairs as conducted by major powers, etc.

A separate category is constituted by educational materials, for example: brochures or exhibition catalogues.

In the state of current research presented below – owing to limited space – we have left out publications of popularising or of a memoir character that have been published in daily, weekly or monthly newspapers together with articles or biographies that portray individual victims. We have also excluded propaganda materials, most often published in the Russian language, which strove to support the so-called "Katyń lie", i.e. to transfer the responsibility for the Soviet crime to the Germans. The only exception made here is reference to the report of the Soviet committee whose task was to hold the Third Reich responsible for the Katyń massacre.

Sources (documents, reports, memoirs)

Fundamentally important materials are included in the multi-volume edition of sources that forms the series entitled *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni* [Katyń: The Documents of the Massacre]. Its consecutive volumes show the process of internment,[1] anatomy of the massacre,[2] fate of the officers that escaped death[3] and history of the so-called Katyń issue.[4]

The most significant monographic editions of sources also include those selected by Anna M. Cienciała, Natalia S. Lebedeva and Wojciech Materski,[5] Zuzanna Gajowniczek, Grzegorz Jakubowski and Jędrzej Tucholski,[6] Wojciech Materski,[7] Ileana Porycka and Alicja Wancerz-Gluza[8] and, last but not least, Jacek Snopkiewicz and Andrzej Zakrzewski.[9] Earlier editions that should be mentioned are the publication of sources with the introduction by General Władysław Anders,[10] and the sources selected and edited by Jacek Barański,[11] Helena Malanowska and Czesław Szafran,[12] Kazimierz Skarżyński,[13] Marek Tarczyński.[14] Other publications worth recalling are the early edition of documents on Polish prisoners of war[15] and Katyń[16] published in London and the collection of documents put in print in Paris.[17] A supplement of documents accompanied the article on Katyń by General Marian Kukiel.[18]

Published documents on the Katyń massacre also included those coming from Western archives and institutions[19] as well as the first list of the executed, drawn up after the exhumation that took place in 1943.[20]

Moreover, various committees working on the Katyń massacre amassed a wealth of materials that constitute a remarkable historical source. Here, one must mention the investigations completed by American committees,[21] including the report[22] and the critical study on the interrogations[23] conducted by the Select Committee of the US Congress, the report of the Polish Red Cross,[24] Jan Zygmunt Robel's report,[25] excerpts from the work of the Committee of the Party's Historians coming from Poland and the Soviet Union,[26] as well as the O'Malley report.[27] Another source

worth noticing are official German materials from 1943[28] and the brochure prepared in Polish containing information and photographs of the Katyń mass graves.[29] The report by John Huff Van Vliet, Jr.[30] also belongs to this category.

The work of committees investigating the Katyń massacre has resulted in other materials being published, such as elucidating accounts by Józef Mackiewicz and Ferdynand Goetel,[31] or the statement given by Mitrofan Vasilievich Syromiatnikov,[32] who was a guard at the Kharkov prison. Another statement of fundamental significance is the one by Dmitri Tokarev, former head of the NKVD in Tver, made in the course of the Russian investigation.[33]

A particular source depicting the anatomy of the Soviet propaganda on the subject are the documents drawn up by the Soviet committee investigating the Katyń mass graves.[34] Another published document presents the propaganda on Katyń constructed by "Polish" communists.[35]

Single documents or editions of lesser volume have been published by researchers of such rank as Janusz Kurtyka,[36] whose name designates the Foundation issuing this volume, and also Łukasz Bertram,[37] Józef Brynkus,[38] Łukasz Kamiński,[39] Krystyna Kersten,[40] Andrzej Toczewski.[41] Moreover, a modest selection of documents chosen by Sylwia Grochowina[42] was meant to popularise the issue.

A valuable historical source is constituted by editions of notes found on the bodies of the murdered and their letters written to families and close ones.[43] Among these there are notes preserved in the so-called Robel's Archive[44] and the monographic edition entitled *The Diaries Found in Katyń*.[45]

A separate position is held by anthologies of studies devoted to Katyń.[46] Works worth mentioning are the renowned anthology edited by Andrzej Leszek Szcześniak[47] and one by Józef Czmut.[48] One must also bring up here the article on Katyń published in Portugal in May 1943.[49]

Memoirs usually, though not always,[50] refer to facts taking place before the massacre and point out to many intriguing details that allow us to reconstruct its anatomy.[51] A special place among these is held by Józef Czapski's memoirs[52] as well as Ferdynand Goetel's.[53] Valuable reminiscences include those by Kazimierz Czarny, [54] Icek Erlichson,[55] Franciszek Grela,[56] Józef Hlebowicz,[57] Zygmunt Klemensiewicz,[58] Stanisław Krzyżaniak,[59] Justyn Siemienas[60] and Stanisława Grabowska.[61] A certain value may be attributed to Zygmunt Berling's memoirs,[62] though one must remember that he was an officer surviving due to his collaboration with the NKVD and became later one of the leading representatives of the Soviet system in post-war Poland.

Another important category of publications are reminiscences written by members of the committees investigating the Katyń mass graves or observers assisting the exhumation. This category includes works published by Robert Brasillach,[63] Vincenzo Mario Palmieri,[64] Helge Tramsen[65] and John H. Junior[66] (published under a pen name).

Another interesting publication are the memoirs of the General Prosecutor of the Republic of Poland, which are extended to include documents on the Katyń massacre dating from 1992–2000.[67]

A separate category is constituted by reminiscences about those murdered in the USSR. Paweł Ambroziewicz,[68] Tadeusz Łojek,[69] Ryszard Wołągiewicz[70] and Barbara Ziółkowska-Tarkowska[71] and others wrote such recollections that include some reference to the massacre itself. Moreover, a published anthology presents reminiscences of the children of the officers murdered in Katyń.[72]

Slightly different publications include works that go beyond classic accounts or reminiscences in their form, but still do not classify as studies. Such works were written by Józef Mackiewicz[73] and Stanisław Swianiewicz.[74]

Studies

Among researchers who set the standards for further scientific investigation, we must include Czesław Madajczyk,[75] Wojciech Materski[76] and Marek Tarczyński, who has been the editor of the *Zeszyty Katyńskie* series [The Katyń Notebooks] for many years. The most popular among foreign authors is Paul Allen.[77]

Considering attempts at a synthetic study of the Katyń massacre, one may divide them into two groups. The first group comprises studies written before the documents coming from the State Archives of the Russian Federation were made public. Although they often flawlessly reconstruct the anatomy of the Katyń genocide, the lack of access to the essential data from the Russian archives slightly weakens their impact. Such synthetic studies were attempted by many researchers from several countries. Among others, the list includes: Vladimir K. Abarinov,[78] Hendrik Van Bergh,[79] Louis FitzGibbon,[80] Horace Wright Henderson,[81] Stanisław M. Jankowski and Edward Miszczak,[82] Stanisław Karpiński,[83] Bronisław Kuśnierz,[84] Aleksandra Kwiatkowska-Viatteau,[85] Jerzy Łojek,[86] Stefan Melak,[87] Henri de Montfort,[88] Andrzej Piastowski,[89] Zdzisław Stahl,[90] Romuald Świątek,[91] Tadeusz Wittlin[92] and Janusz K. Zawodny.[93]

As a rule, the synthetic studies issued after the release of the Russian documents present a more complete picture. These works of varied character – some following rigorous scientific standards, others popularising the issue – have been written by authors such as Emil J.W. Ashdj and Eugeniusz S. Kruszewski,[94] Stanisław M. Jankowski,[95] Gerd Kaiser,[96] Tadeusz A. Kisielewski,[97] Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert,[98] Teofil Lachowicz,[99] Natalia S. Lebedeva,[100] Eugenia Maresch,[101] Stanisław Mikke,[102] George Sanford,[103] Inessa Seergevna Jazhborovskaia, Anatolij Jablokov and Yuri Zoria,[104] Jerzy Skoczylas,[105] Robert Stiller,[106] Andrzej Leszek Szcześniak,[107] Jacek Trznadel,[108] Witold Wasilewski,[109] Władysław Wawrzonek and Marek Wawrzonek,[110] Cèsar Vidal,[111] Semen Zavorotnov,[112] Oleksandr Zinchenko.[113]

Another category is constituted by collaborative studies, which depict various threads of the Katyń issue. These have been published by editors such as Zdzisław Chmielewski,[114] Sławomir Kalbarczyk,[115] Karol Karski and Maria Szonert-Binienda,[116] two volumes edited by Andrzej Kola and Jan Sziling published in 2001[117] and in 2011,[118] others edited by Wojciech Lis,[119] Piotr Majer and Andrzej Misiuk,[120] Bogusław Polak,[121] and Grażyna Sobecka.[122] Published materials include those from the conference entitled *Dokumentowanie zbrodni NKWD na obywatelach II Rzeczypospolitej w czasie drugiej wojny światowej* [Documenting the NKVD Murder on the Citizens of the Second Republic of Poland during World War II] printed in the special issue of *Archeion*[123] and the special issue of *Sowiniec* was devoted to "The 60th Anniversary of the Massacre: Katyń 1940."[124] Moreover, particular attention should be drawn to special thematic issues of *Zeszyty Katyńskie* [The Katyń Notebooks][125] and *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej* [The Bulletin of the Institute of National Remembrance] published in 2005[126] and 2010.[127] However, it is *Zeszyty Katyńskie* that are of primary importance. They have been published since 1990 and edited by Marek Tarczyński since issue 2. The series includes several issues that address the topic in a more general way, among which the following should be pointed out: issue 5 entitled *II półwiecze zbrodni: Katyń, Twer, Charków* [The Massacre in the Perspective of Over 50 Years: Katyń, Tver, Kharkov],[128] issue 6 – *Zbrodnia nie ukarana. Katyń, Twer, Charków* [The Unpunished Crime: Katyń, Tver, Kharkov],[129] issue 12 – *Zbrodnia katyńska po 60 latach. Polityka, nauka, moralność* [The Katyń Massacre After 60 Years: Politics, Research, Morality],[130] issue 13 – *Zbrodnia katyńska – próba bilansu* [The Katyń Massacre: An Attempt at a Summary].[131]

Certain authors have adopted a "regional" perspective while writing about the Katyń Issue. The editors of these publications are: Władysław Kubiak and Zbigniew Karpus,[132] Joanna Żelazko and Piotr Zawilski.[133]

Several authors wrote less extensive articles that synthesised the history of the massacre, for example: Ewa Cytowska,[134] Stanisław Jaczyński,[135] Dorota Kromp,[136] Natalia S. Lebedeva,[137] Jerzy Łojek,[138] Edmund Nowak,[139] Mateusz Szpytma,[140] Jan Tropiło,[141] Witold Wasilewski,[142] Wojciech Wrzesiński.[143] Krzysztof Jasiewicz wrote an important article about the process leading to the crime.[144] Other publications cover attempts to reveal the truth about the massacre by means of historical investigations and criminal procedures. Among authors who tackled this issue are: Jolanta Adamska and Andrzej Przewoźnik,[145] Józef Bocheński,[146] Edmund Chróścielewski,[147] Delphine Debons, Antoine Fleury, Jean-François Pitteloud,[148] Jerzy Jackl,[149] Andrzej Kola,[150] Jarema Maciszewski,[151] Tim Toftekaer,[152] Robert Szymczak[153] as well as a group of authors who wrote for the 1992 issue of *Zeszyty Katyńskie* edited by Marek Tarczyński.[154] A comparative approach to the problem of revealing the truth about Katyń was developed by Lars I. Andersson.[155]

One of important research themes is the depiction of how the so-called Katyń committees worked and what they determined. Among authors who have taken up this theme are: Tadeusz Borkowski,[156] Stanley Devine,[157] Piotr Łysakowski and Małgorzata Żaryn,[158] Robert Szymczak,[159] Mateusz Zemla.[160] Another research theme is a description of what the witnesses of the crime knew – this topic was undertaken Krystyna Piórkowska.[161] Tadeusz Pieńkowski wrote about Soviet prisoner of war camps.[162]

One of primary issues has been to determine the list of victims on the basis of the information drawn from the so-called deportation lists from individual camps.[163] This theme was analysed by Zuzanna Gajowniczek, Jędrzej Tucholski and Zygmunt Zdrojewski.[164] A vast group of researchers focused on compiling lists of victims of the massacre. Some of them tried to establish the names of the victims according to their place of execution; others formed lists on the basis of their place of birth. Sometimes, more or less extensive biographical information was added. Among authors who followed this path of research are: Jan Banaśkiewicz,[165] Krystian Bedyński,[166] Krzysztof Błaszczyk,[167] Mečislav Borák,[168] Tadeusz Boruta,[169] Andrzej Brygidyn,[170] Marzenna Burczak,[171] Wiesław Charczuk,[172] Krystyna Chowaniec,[173] Marian Chuchrowski,[174] Małgorzata Cichoń and Janina Pańczakowa,[175] Konrad Ciechanowski,[176] Harry Duda,[177] Halina Dudzińska,[178] Wojciech Dyśko,[179] Zuzanna Gajowniczek,[180] Dionizy Garbacz,[181] Włodzimierz Gąsiewski,[182] Jerzy Giza,[183] Grzegorz Grześkowiak,[184] Stanisław Holak,[185] Włodzimierz Jastrzębski, Danuta Rumfeld and Krzysztof Sidorkiewicz,[186] Marek Jończyk,[187] Szczepan Kalinowski,[188] Zbigniew Kiełb,[189] Włodzimierz Kostecki,[190] Zdzisław Kościański,[191] Janusz Paweł Krzywicki and Zbigniew Sławomir Lubaszewski,[192] Władysław Kubiak and Zbigniew Karpus,[193] Krzysztof Lesiakowski,[194] authors whose works are published in the volume edited by Piotr Matusak,[195] Aleksandra Matuszczyk,[196] Ihar Melnikau,[197] Stanisław Mikke,[198] Adam Moszyński,[199] Józef Myjak,[200] Tomasz Mysłek and Zbigniew Ziętala,[201] Andrzej Olewnik,[202] Roman Peska,[203] Regina Piątek and Dominika Siemińska,[204] Michał Siwiec-Cielebon,[205] Krzysztof Skłodkowski and Wojciech Batura,[206] Jerzy Skrzypczak,[207] Jarosław Stulczewski,[208] Andrzej Leszek Szcześniak,[209] Piotr Szopa,[210] Bogusław Szwedo,[211] Wojciech Śmigielski,[212] Marek Tarczyński,[213] Włodzimierz Pawełczyk,[214] Jerzy M. Pilecki,[215] Ewa Rogalewska,[216] Maria Skrzyńska-Pławińska,[217] Wojciech Sobocki,[218] Bolesław Solarski,[219] Włodzimierz Starościak,[220] Józef Szczeklik,[221] Jędrzej Tucholski,[222] Sebastian Tuliński,[223] Andrzej Urbaniak,[224] Czesław Widelski and Andrzej Olewnik,[225] Adam Winiarz,[226] Marek Wójcicki[227] and Stanisław Zając.[228] The issue of *Tarnobrzeskie Zeszyty Historyczne* [Tarnobrzeg Historical Notebooks] from 2007 is yet another publication on Katyń.[229]

Certain authors catalogued the victims according to their occupation or education. This approach is typical for Kazimierz Banaszek, Wanda Krystyna Roman and Zdzisław Sawicki,[230] Grzegorz Barczyński,[231] Maria Magdalena Blombergowa,[232]

Edmund Chróścielewski and Andrzej Śródka,[233] a group under Tadeusz Chrzanowski, Tomasz Skowronek and Piotr Szubarczyk,[234] Marek Dutkiewicz,[235] a group under Cecylia Grygo,[236] Alfred Kabata,[237] Wojciech Stanisław Kobylarz,[238] Ludwik Kowieski,[239] Sławój Kucharski and Jan Majewski,[240] Władysław Lutyński,[241] Dorota Michalak,[242] Zuzanna Gajowniczek,[243] Stanisław Mikke,[244] Jarosław Olbrychowski,[245] Jerzy Pawlak,[246] a group under Jerzy Przybylski,[247] Jan Mirosław Rubas,[248] Andrzej Rybicki,[249] Tadeusz Skarżyński,[250] Mirosław Sobieraj,[251] Barbara Tarkowska,[252] Marian Walczak,[253] Bronisław Wardawy,[254] Piotr Zawilski, Tomasz Walkiewicz, Tomasz Szczepański and Jarosław Olbrychowski.[255]

Frank Fox,[256] Małgorzata Sas-Witusik[257] and Simon Schochet[258] classified the victims according to their nationality.

The above issue was methodologically systemized by Marek Tarczyński and Jędrzej Tucholski[259] as well as Jacek Trznadel.[260] The problem of methodology of the Katyń Massacre studies was tackled by Krzysztof Jasiewicz.[261]

Maciej Wyrwa wrote about missing persons who may have been the victims of the Soviet genocide.[262]

There have been attempts to describe the perpetrators of the crime.[263] This perspective was adopted by Vladimir Abarinov,[264] Jerzy Jackl[265] and Nikita Petrov.[266]

Interesting articles with a thesis about German-Soviet cooperation concerning the Katyń Massacre were written by Natalia Lebedeva, Wojciech Materski[267] and Witold Wasilewski.[268]

A separate and equally important research theme was to show the actions of the NKVD and other communist authorities (Soviet and Polish) toward witnesses of the crime, the families of the murdered officers and those prisoners who survived the massacre. This issue was tackled by Stefania Wanda Cioch,[269] Stanisław Dobrowolski,[270] Stanisław Jaczyński,[271] Teresa Kaczorowska,[272] Maria Reichert,[273] Andrzej Stelmachowski,[274] Tadeusz Wolsza[275] and Oleg Zakirov.[276]

Certain publications have been dedicated to the reactions of the Katyń Massacre and its consequences. This issue was dealt with by Jolanta Chwastyk-Kowalczyk,[277] Nils Heintze,[278] Mario Jareb,[279] Paweł Jaworski,[280] Martin Lacko,[281] Wojciech Materski,[282] Grzegorz Mazur,[283] Sławomir Moćkun,[284] Nikita Petrov,[285] Krzysztof Strzałka,[286] Pavel Suk,[287] Jacek Tebinka,[288] Henryk Tomiczek[289] and Mateusz Zemla.[290]

The following historians have referred to various attitudes toward the massacre: Stanisław M. Jankowski, Ryszard Kotarba,[291] Jolanta Chwastyk-Kowalczyk,[292] Krzysztof Pogorzelski,[293] Bogusław Polak and Michał Polak,[294] Mateusz Szpytma,[295] Tadeusz Wolsza.[296]

Another theme has been the impact of the Katyń issue on international relations. This problem has been analysed by Inessa Sergeevna Jazhborovskaia, Anatoli

Jablokov, Valentina Sergeevna Parsadanova,[297] Crister S. Garret and Stephen A. Garret,[298] and Janusz K. Zawodny.[299]

The propaganda around the Katyń issue has been examined by many authors, i.a.: Adam Basak,[300] Oda Beckman,[301] Daniel Boćkowski,[302] John Fox,[303] Tomasz Głowiński,[304] Franz Kadell,[305] Stanisław Kaniewski,[306] Marcin Kowalski,[307] Witold Kulesza,[308] Janusz Laskowski,[309] Natalia Lebedeva,[310] Piotr Łysakowski,[311] Wojciech Materski,[312] Krzysztof Szczepanik, Janusz Zgudka,[313] Monika Zuchniak.[314] The 23rd issue of *Zeszyty Katyńskie*[315] is largely dedicated to this problem as well as studies by Grzegorz Szopa[316] and Mateusz Zemla.[317]

There are authors who have studied the Katyń issue from a legal perspective: Adam Basak,[318] Andrzej Kostrzewski,[319] Zdzisław Peszkowski and Grzegorz Jędrejek.[320] *Zeszyty Katyńskie* of 2004 also touch upon this theme.[321]

A special issue of *Zeszyty Katyńskie* from 2005 is dedicated to the Katyń Massacre investigation,[322] while the next three issues deal with problems that arose when the Russians obstructed attempts to legally explain the so-called Massacre – no. 21: *The Katyń Massacre: A Message for Future Generations*,[323] *The Katyń Massacre in the Eyes of Contemporary Russians*[324] and *The Katyń Massacre: The Nation, State and Family.*[325]

Aleksei Pamiatnych describes the efforts of independent Russian historians to explain the Katyń genocide[326] and Jarema Maciszewski[327] traces the attempts of the Polish People's Republic's authorities to convince the USSR in the 80s to acknowledge their guilt.

Certain authors consider the issue with regard to ethics and theology.[328] A broad view that includes both a moral and theological perspective is characteristic of Rev. Zdzisław Peszkowski's studies.[329] Zbigniew Werra[330] analyses the problem of identity, whereas Zdzisław Ryn focuses on psychological aspects[331] of the Katyń issue.

New research themes have been introduced by: Erazm Baran,[332] Zbigniew Dąbkowski,[333] Norbert Honka,[334] Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert,[335] Tomasz Mianowicz,[336] Krzysztof Polechoński,[337] Jerzy Przybylski,[338] Zbigniew S. Siemaszko,[339] Andrzej Talar and Wojciech Wdowiak.[340] Most importantly, each issue of *Zeszyty Katyńskie* is dedicated to a broad range of problems concerning the Massacre. *Zeszyty* were put in print for the first time in 1990 as *Katyń: Problems and Mysteries.*[341]

Describing the mass murder locations and their studies has become another research theme. It has been tackled by: Maria Magdalena Blombergowa,[342] Zbigniew Chłap,[343] Marek Dutkiewicz,[344] a group under Marian Głosek,[345] Andrzej Kola and Mieczysław Góra,[346] Bogdan Kolanowski, Piotr Łojek, Zdzisław Sawicki and Jerzy Wiśniowski,[347] Stefan Rodziewicz,[348] Andrzej Przewoźnik,[349] Jędrzej Tucholski.[350] Collective works under Andrzej Kola and Andrzej Przewoźnik[351] are also dedicated to this problem.

Historiographic texts about the Katyń massacre research[352] or Katyń bibliographies[353] have also been published. Several authors scrutinise the depiction of the Katyń issue in schoolbooks: Wojciech Dominiak,[354] Anna Glimos-Nadgórska[355] and Andrzej Prajel.[356]

There have been attempts to systematize a broad scope of texts on the subject.

Over 35 years ago, Zdzisław Jagodziński[357] wrote a bibliography that included separate publications. Other authors also consider this issue: Hanna Bergander,[358] Monika Biedrzycka and Irena Sawicka,[359] Maria Harz,[360] Izabela Kowalska and Elżbieta Pawińska[361] as well as Józef Margules, who analyses Russian literature on the subject.[362]

Tomasz Dziedzic,[363] Hubert Mazur[364] and Mieczysław Motas[365] write about the archival repertory on the Katyń genocide.

Educational materials

Besides those educational materials that are used as tools in the learning process, we may also mention informative brochures and exhibition catalogues. In 2010, the Institute of National Remembrance, Branch in Cracow, prepared an educational folder of primary importance entitled: *Zbrodnia katyńska* [The Katyń Massacre].[366] At the same time, school materials edited by Wojciech Materski[367] were published. Before these two publications, teachers had been able to reach for materials prepared by Wojciech Książek's team[368] and those edited by Radosław Pawlikowski.[369]

Secondary school students also saw their papers in print as the 3rd Historical Competition in Gdynia prepared the publication of its participants' works.[370] A similar initiative accompanied the competition in Myszków.[371]

Brochures or shorter publications on the Katyń massacre have been published by: Ernst R. Borer,[372] Grzegorz Jasiński,[373] the Coordinating Council of Polonia,[374] Tymon Kretschmer and Izabella Sariusz-Skąpska,[375] Jerzy Łojek (under a pen name),[376] Roman Mądro,[377] Tadeusz Pieńkowski,[378] Zdzisław Peszkowski.[379] A booklet devoted to this topic appeared as part of the publishing series: *II wojna światowa. Wydarzenia, ludzie, bojowe szlaki* [World War II: Events, People, Battle Routes].[380]

The list of exhibition catalogues that should be mentioned includes those published by: the General Elżbieta Zawacka Foundation,[381] the Institute of National Remembrance,[382] the Institute of National Remembrance, Branch in Poznań,[383] the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London.[384] Moreover, exhibitions resulted in the publications of their reviews prepared, among others, by Bożena Łojek,[385] who also edited the brochure on the Katyń Museum.[386]

Another category includes papers on the symbols or commemorations of the Katyń massacre. Here, the list comprises the works by: Edward Janowski,[387] Jan

Kiński's team,[388] Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert, Adam Siwek and Zygmunt Walkowski,[389] Andrzej Przewoźnik,[390] Tadeusz Pieńkowski and Marek Tarczyński,[391] Alina Siomkajło,[392] Anna Styrnik,[393] Ryszard Wołągiewicz,[394] and other brochures published by institutions engaged in national remembrance.[395] Two issues (8[396] and 9[397]) of *Zeszyty Katyńskie* are also devoted to this theme.

Another group of publications, partly connected with the commemoration and history of the burial sites, comprises materials referring to the topography of the massacre sites. The problem has attracted researchers such as: Wacław Godziemba-Maliszewski,[398] Piotr Łojek,[399] Małgorzata Mycke-Dominko,[400] Teofil Ryszard Rubasiński[401] or Rajmund Szubański.[402]

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This co-authored monograph constitutes an attempt to follow and summarize the above-mentioned studies, which are complex and multi-faceted, interdisciplinary at times. The idea for this volume is embedded in the establishment of the Janusz Kurtyka Foundation in Warsaw. It was founded on the initiative of the family of Professor Kurtyka, who was the President of the Institute of National Remembrance in 2005–2010 and who died in the plane crash near Smolensk.[403] He put special emphasis on research into the Katyń massacre and the dissemination of its findings. On 6 April 2010, a few days before his tragic death, he personally promoted the latest work on the massacre published by the Institute of National Remembrance. This was the already mentioned co-authored monograph edited by Sławomir Kalbarczyk.[404] Four days later, on 10 April 2010, he was present on board the plane that fatally carried President Lech Kaczyński and other Polish delegates to Russia, where they were to officially commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Katyń massacre.

The Foundation's main aim is to promote Polish history and research abroad. This has been achieved by means of various projects, among which the highlight is the annual Janusz Kurtyka Award granted to Polish authors providing work of the highest standard in the fields of the humanities, social and legal studies. Each year, the competition focuses on a different theme and the Award comprises the translation of the winning book into congress languages, its publication and promotion abroad. Professor Tadeusz Wolsza, the author of the monograph dedicated to Poles visiting Katyń in 1943,[405] became the first recipient of the Award that in 2017 was dedicated to the theme of "The Space Between Two Totalitarian Regimes: The Drama of the Polish State and Society in the 20th Century."

The rewarded work provided inspiration for an international conference entitled: *Dotyk Katynia. Zbrodnia Katyńska w perspektywie międzynarodowej. Polityka, tożsamość, narracje* [The Touch of Katyń – the Katyń Massacre in an International Perspective: Politics, Identity, Narratives]. The conference was held by the Foundation

in cooperation with the Chancellery of Andrzej Duda, the President of the Republic of Poland, and took place in the prestigious Belweder Palace in Warsaw on 23 November 2017. During this academic meeting, Prof. Wolsza received the Award and five papers were presented by eminent researchers in the field of the Katyń massacre from Poland and Russia: Prof. Tadeusz Wolsza (Polish Academy of Sciences, Casimir the Great University in Bydgoszcz, Institute of National Remembrance), Prof. Boris Sokolov (visiting professor in the War Studies Academy in Warsaw and Warsaw University), Prof. Wojciech Materski (Polish Academy of Sciences), Witold Wasilewski, Ph.D. (Institute of National Remembrance) and Aleksandr Gurianov, Ph.D. (Memorial Society in Moscow). Some of these papers are included in this volume.

The *current research* mentioned in the title refer to the content of the monograph as the papers published here pick up various threads of the Katyń massacre as well as summarize up to 2018 and broaden the present scope of research pointing out to some new findings.

The volume opens with the study by a Russian researcher, Boris Sokolov, who reviews recent Russian publications on the Katyń massacre. The paper constitutes a valuable complement to the diagnosis of the current state of research as presented in this introduction. Sokolov describes several intriguing Russian or Soviet interpretations of the 1940 massacre, which often differ in key points. He provides a critical commentary that does not leave out authors protesting against the so-called "anti--Russian lie," who in fact repeat the "Katyń lie." Sokolov observes that their works cannot be perceived as fully academic.

In his paper, Witold Wasilewski attempts to summarise the history of the Katyń massacre and its international repercussions during World War II. Depicting the circumstances of the Soviet crime, he presents the efforts of the Polish government-in--exile to obtain any information on the prisoners of war deported far into the USSR. The subsequent episodes of the dramatic story – the creation of General Władysław Anders' Army in the Soviet Union, its relocation to the Middle East and the German discovery of the Katyń graves – are analysed within the context of the cynical diplomatic game that the superpowers of the USSR, Germany, USA and UK played with the Polish government. For the sake of short-term effect, the Allies suppressed the Polish demands to publically announce, investigate and assess the massacre. Moreover, they were often swayed by Soviet disinformation. Especially intriguing is the author's presentation of the successive stages of the Polish government finding out the actual fate of the missing Poles.

Ewa Kowalska's paper touches upon the problem of narrating the Katyń massacre. The researcher sees the Katyń Museum in Warsaw as a place where memory is preserved. She presents the institution's history and resources, pointing out various dimensions of its activities: commemorating the victims, academic research, edu-

cation and art, and preserving the Katyń memorabilia. Kowalska provides insight into specific parts of the museum exhibition, underscoring the significance of the visitor's personal experience. Writing about the protagonists, she depicts the world of individual hope and suffering of the victims and their families, including the children. Kowalska's narration truly becomes the voice of the institution she describes, which vibrates through the delicate spheres of the psyche, emotions, morality, conscience and inner conflict.

Tadeusz Wolsza's study is devoted to various groups of the Katyń massacre witnesses, who survived and visited the site, and to their later accounts. These took various forms: from testimonies, press publications and memoirs to video materials. The author draws our attention to the credibility of individual witnesses. The paper discusses the significance of the so-called "reptile journalism," i.e., the propaganda press in Polish run by the Nazis in the regions under their occupation, but also the first publications of documents and lists of victims as well as the earliest studies on Katyń. The growing international awareness of the Soviet crime reached wider audiences in spite of the intense efforts on the part of Moscow to falsify evidence and information on Katyń and to persecute the witnesses. Wolsza also presents the vicissitudes of the Katyń issue before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg (1945–1946) and the Madden Committee (1951–1952).

Krzysztof Łagojda also focuses on the fates of the massacre witnesses, bringing us closer to the lives of the victims' families. The researcher achieves an interesting synthesis, sketching the *longue durée* of generations from the outbreak of the war in 1939 to the collapse of communism in Poland in 1989, and even stretching the perspective to include the living descendants of the Katyń families. He depicts the drama of the nation under two occupations and the circumstances of discovering the Katyń graves by the Germans in 1943. He analyses the impact of the German narration of the massacre and its varied reception by the Katyń families. He then characterises several repressions inflicted by the communist authorities onto this group of witnesses and their attempts to commemorate the victims (it must be remembered that other groups also tried to honour the deceased). A separate part of the article is devoted to the analysis of letters and postcards written by the officers kept in Soviet POW camps. By presenting the fate of the Katyń families, the author employs the interdisciplinary method of research as the academic perspective is complemented with references to sociology, psychology, cultural anthropology and law. Another asset of the paper is the presentation of the Katyń research up to the present moment in reference to key thematic areas.

Just like Łagojda's paper and the first part of this introduction, Sławomir Kalbarczyk's study also focuses on the current state of research. The author summarises research on the group of 7,305 Polish civilians murdered in the massacre. He criti-

cally analyses sources and literature, formulating valuable postulates and indicating new directions for further studies. According to Kalbarczyk, the primary importance belongs to the research into the so-called Ukrainian Katyń list as well as the Belarusian list, though the latter is still missing. The author points out problems connected with their analysis, particularly those of identification, verification and classification of victims and the reconstruction of their biographies.

Monika Komaniecka-Łyp also tackles the issue of source analysis and presents a study in the field of archival science on the provenance of items. She analyses the work of the Polish Red Cross Committee in Katyń in 1943. Since some of the members came from Cracow, the outcome of their proceedings – a valuable collection of documents and materials – was brought to this city. The author describes a complicated and difficult history of the Cracow resources. However, her analysis centres on the human protagonists. Komaniecka-Łyp follows the fate of people involved in the research into the Katyń materials and their concealment, which were connected with great risk and continuous repressions from the communist authorities. However, this case study constitutes only one element in the wider scope of research into the state of gathering and preserving the Katyń sources, many of which still await discovery or release from the Russian archives.

The theme of contemporary Russian attitudes to the Katyń Massacre is developed in Wojciech Materski's paper. The author describes the significance of Katyń for the Soviet and, then, Russian politics of history. The starting point for the study is the USSR propaganda and the upholding of the so-called Katyń lie. Materski discusses issues related to the Nikolai Burdenko Committee, the Nuremberg trial, the Madden Committee and the problems of Khatyn (sic!) and so-called anti-Katyń. At the same time, Materski draws our attention to the parallel process of spreading the truth about the massacre in many countries of the world. He depicts the circumstances of the gradual release of the Katyń documents by Moscow and handing them over to Poland. However, it turns out that, in spite of the major breakthroughs, even after 1991 the present Russian policy regarding the Katyń issue resembles to a certain degree the former Soviet strategy. This can be observed especially in the presidency of Vladimir Putin and may be argued to form part of his consistent neo-imperialist policy.

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our thanks to the management: Izabela Matuszewska and Arkadiusz Wingert. We hope this monograph will attract the attention of both specialists and all interested Readers, especially those living abroad. May it inspire new researchers to conduct further studies on Katyń and spread remembrance of the Polish Calvary of the East.

Łódź–Cracow, November 2018
The 100th Anniversary of Poland Regaining Independence

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Boris V. Sokolov

The Katyń Crime in Modern Russian Historiography

Practically all Russian professional historians now recognize that the Katyń massacre was made by the NKVD, under Stalin and the Politburo's order.

Inessa Jazhborovskaia, Anatoli Jablokov and Valentina Parsadanova in their book "Katyń's syndrome in Soviet-Polish and in Russian-Polish relations" cover the history of the investigation of the Katyń massacre and conclude that it has been a crime against humanity made by Stalin and the Politburo.[1]

The main documents devoted to the Katyń massacre and detention of Polish prisoners of war, as well as to the history of their destiny after 1940 and to the history of the investigation of the crime, were published in the joint Russian-Polish publication "Katyń".[2] As we can understand from some published documents and from Natalia Lebedeva's introduction to the first volume, before 26 February 1940 Lavrenti Beria and other leading officers of the NKVD had an idea to sentence practically all Polish army officers and policemen to imprisonment from three till eight years and to send them to the Eastern regions of the Soviet Union. Then Stalin decided to execute the prisoners.[3] By the way, Beria was against the execution of Polish prisoners and said to the few Polish officers that had survived, that a great mistake had been made towards their comrades.[4]

The monograph of the Polish historian Eugeniusz Duraczyński *Stalin* was translated into Russian and published in 2015. He also highlights here the Katyń crime and criticizes Russian publicists who repeat the Soviet version of Katyń as a Nazi crime.[5]

The Russian liberal historian, Pavel Polian, correctly recognizes the massacre of the Polish officers and civilians in the spring of 1940 as a crime committed by the NKVD. But he makes a mistake when he states that one of the places of execution of the Polish officers was Starobelsk. In reality, there was only a prisoners' camp for Polish officers in Starobelsk. The Poles from the Starobelsk camp were executed

in the forest zone of Kharkov. Polian is formally right when he states that all three places of the Poles' executions were occupied by the Germans in 1941.[6] But Mednoye, where more than 6,000 Polish officers were buried (they were executed in Kalinin), was occupied by units of the German 1st Tank Division and 900th Training Motorized Brigade only for a very short period from 17–20 October 1941. During all those four days, the Germans had fierce and intensive fighting with numerous Soviet tank and infantry units[7] and had no physical ability to execute more than 6,000 Polish officers. So, the German bullets, which were found in the bodies of the Poles in Mednoye, as well as in Katyń and Kharkov, cannot be considered as proof that the Poles in Mednoye were executed by the Germans.

There are a lot of publications of such anti-Polish and anti-Western folk-history in modern Russian historiography. Yuri Mukhin's book, "The main anti-Russian villainy", Vladislav Shved's book, "Katyń's Secret", Grigori Goriachenkov's 'documentary novel', "Katyń: Speculations on the tragedy", Elena Prudnikova and Ivan Chigirin's book, "Katyń: the lie which became the history" and the Yuri Slobodkin article, "Katyń. How and why Hitlerites executed the Polish officers"[8] are striking examples of such kind of falsification of the history of the Katyń tragedy. Of course, these works have no connection with historical science. Their authors try to revive the old Soviet version about Katyń as a Nazi crime and to prove that all documents about Katyń, published at the beginning of 90s, including the materials of investigation of the Soviet and Russian Prosecutor General's office and the text of Politburo's decision of 5 March 1940, are fakes. And the version of the executing of Polish officers by the NKVD is treated by such authors as an invention of Western, mainly American, propaganda in the information war against the Soviet Union in the Cold War period. They state that this 'anti-Russian lie' is now also used as an information weapon against modern Russia. These authors are not real historians, but publicists. Some of them call themselves political analysts or, as late Yuri Slobodkin, politicians. For these writers their version of the Katyń crime is not the object of knowledge, but only the object of faith. It is quite useless to analyze such works. It is much more interesting to understand why Russian public opinion accepts positively such fake versions. As I think, the main cause of the acceptance by a large part of the Russian people of such folk-history as concerns Katyń, contrary to proven facts, is for the sake of maintenance of the imperial and the Soviet consciousness. For many Russian people, it is still impossible to recognize that the Soviet Union and Russia could commit crimes against humanity.

It should be also mentioned that some Russian historians, recognizing that the Polish officers were executed in Katyń by the NKVD, treat this crime as vengeance for the murdering of Soviet prisoners by the Poles in 1920. So, Alexei Toptygin from Saint-Petersburg considers that the Katyń crime was both vengeance for murder-

ing the Soviet prisoners and the necessary measure for providing Soviet security under the conditions of the coming of the Soviet-German war. He states: "Katyń is definitely not the best page in Polish-Soviet history, but when you consider who was killed in the Katyń tragedy and wonder, whether there was any sense of holding on Soviet territory 25,000 Poles, who were strongly anti-Soviet, I think the answer will be unambiguous. We should not forget that the Soviet Union was on the verge of the greatest of wars, and to keep the enemy in the rear of the belligerent country was not suitable. From this point of view, the elimination of a part of the Polish officer corps (only part, but not the whole one) […] may be considered by Beria as if not a justified, but a necessary measure. And in this case, Beria fulfilled his official duties, i.e. provided for state security".[9] This cynical statement is dictated by the intention to justify the Soviet crime against humanity.

In our opinion, the fate of Polish officers, who were held captive by the Soviets, attests in favor of the assumption that peace with Finland was dictated by an attempt to free up the Soviet forces in Finland for operations against Germany. On 5 March 1940, just before the Moscow Peace, the Politburo decided to execute 14,700 Polish officers and 11,000 Polish civilians. These people were shot in April and the first part of May 1940.[10] It seems to us that this execution was a result of Stalin's reckoning of an imminent war against Germany. The Polish officers and civilians, who represented the intelligentsia and propertied classes, in a large majority did not sympathize with either communism or the USSR. In case of a war against Germany, Poland would have been a Soviet ally and it would have been necessary to free the Poles from prison. In this case, these ex-prisoners would have played a major role in forming a new Polish army, which would not, in fact, have been subject to strict Soviet control. The experience of a two-army Polish Army, consisting to a considerable degree of Soviet citizens allied with Poland in name only, or Polish émigré communists, shows that Stalin attached great importance to the control over Polish military formations in the matter of turning Poland into his satellite. The only way to keep Polish officers out of the new Polish army was to kill them before the start of a Soviet-German armed conflict. This was obviously done by the Soviet leadership.

It also should be mentioned that there is no convincing explanation of the causes of the Katyń crime. Natalia Lebedeva supposes that it was caused both by Stalin's desire to revenge for the Soviet defeat in the Soviet-Polish War of 1920 and due to the anti-Soviet sentiments of the Polish officers.[11] Inessa Jazhborovskaia, Anatoli Jablokov and Valentina Parsadanova consider that the Katyń massacre was a coordinated action with Germany, and this action coincided with the German "A–B" action (*Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion* – Extraordinary Operation of Pacification) against the Polish intelligentsia in the spring and summer of 1940. Both

actions were aimed at preventing the re-building of an independent Polish State.[12] But there is no proof that in 1939–1940 Stalin had remembered of the Soviet-Polish War of 1920 and the fate of the prisoners of that war. And there is no proof that the German authorities were informed in 1940 about the Katyń massacre. It should be stressed that the vast majority of Polish officers in German POW camps, as well as most of the Polish intellectuals in the General Government successfully survived the war. About 30,000 Poles were arrested during the "A–B" action, but only 1,757 and other Poles were executed in the period from December 1939 to July 1941.[13] It is obvious that the aims and speed of the Soviet and German actions were different. And if the Germans had official Soviet information about the Katyń massacre yet in 1940, they certainly used it already in 1941 to Stalin's discredit and deterioration of Soviet relations both with the Polish government-in-exile and with the Western allies.

My view is that the Katyń massacre was really caused by Stalin's intention to invade Germany and Poland yet in 1940. There are two indirect proofs that he was planning to attack Hitler in the summer of 1940. At the end of February 1940, at the height of the Soviet-Finnish war, when the USSR was threatened with intervention on the Finnish side by an Anglo-French coalition, according to the testimony of the former commander of the Baltic Fleet, Vladimir F. Tributs, the Peoples' Commissar for the Soviet Navy, Nikolai G. Kuznetsov, "issued a special directive indicating the possibility of simultaneous action against the USSR by a coalition led by Germany, including Italy, Hungary, and Finland."[14] It is unlikely that such a directive, which did not reflect existing Soviet enemies at the end of the Soviet-Finnish war, could have been issued without Stalin's knowledge.

The second proof is that, taking into account the possibility of a quick war against Germany, it was decided to delay the demobilization of 686,000 servicemen, who after the war against Finland were "surplus" in the Red Army (the composition of which was established at 3,200,000 as of 1 May), until 1 July 1940.[15]

Stalin hoped that Germany would get bogged down on the Maginot Line. But the French Army was crushed in three weeks, so the Soviet dictator decided to postpone the attack till 1941. It is interesting that the Polish officers who survived were used for preparation of the Soviet attack against Germany, which should have occurred in July 1941.

On 4 June 1941, the Politburo decided to form the 238th Rifle Division (Central Asian Military District) as part of the Red Army by 1 July 1941, "manned by Polish personnel and those knowing the Polish language", numbering 10,298 men. Evidently, despite all the conspiratorial work conducted from October 1940 by the NKVD and the surviving officers from those who fled Katyń, and by "stoolies" and "politically correct thinkers", there were not enough volunteers among the Polish prisoners for a whole division, so it was decided to form the division by manning

it not only with Poles, but also "with persons who know Polish who are serving in Red Army Units."[16] But after the German attack on 22 June 1941 the formation of the 238th Polish division became irrelevant.

General Ivan A. Serov, former head of the NKVD of Ukraine in 1940, in his memoirs develops the version that the Poles in Katyń and other places were executed due to the initiative and command by Bogdan Kobulov, who in 1940 was the chief of the Main Economic Department of the NKVD and member of the NKVD "trojka", which sentenced the Poles to death, and was executed in December 1953 under the case of Beria. Serov states in his notes, stylized as a diary, dated May 1944: "I've forgotten to write yet in January 1944 of the information by our Commission on the Katyń case. There were the academician Burdenko, the Metropolitan Nikolai, the writer A. Tolstoj, the People's Commissar of Education Potemkin, etc. The fatty Kobulov got rid of a slight fright". On the other page of his memoirs, which is dated as August–October 1941, Serov writes that "I knew from the chief of the prison, Mironov, that Kobulov managed 'the operation Katyń', where the special activities with the Poles were carried out in 1940".[17]

It should be mentioned, that in none of the published NKVD documents the execution of the Poles in April–May 1940 was called "the operation Katyń". And it is very strange, if we really have Serov's diary, that Serov calls this execution as "the operation Katyń". He has never organized the execution of the Poles in Katyń, because he has organized such an execution in Ukraine. And the name "Katyń" became commonly known only in April 1943, when the Germans found the Polish tombs here. And it was quite unusual for Serov to call the Polish execution as "the operation Katyń" in the fall of 1941. And it is impossible to imagine that Serov could really think that Stalin might have serious intentions to proclaim that the Katyń massacre was a crime, committed by some NKVD officers, like Bogdan Kobulov, without his, i.e. Stalin's, knowledge. And even if such Stalin's intention was real, Serov should have been scared not less than Kobulov, because he would be liquidated together with Kobulov. As Nikita Khrushchev's son Sergei testifies in connection, Serov was the organizer of the Polish executions in Ukraine in the spring of 1940: "Under the presence of my father he (Serov – *B.S.*) did not touch the taboo subject, but once he went to us in father's absence, with some questions. Then Katyń was a subject of excitment for all. Adjubej (Nikita Khrushchev's son-in-law. – *B.S.*) asked the General, I don't remember now in what connection, why he and his people were overlooked. Ivan Alexandrovich reacted angrily and, I would say, even painfully. He began to talk caustically about Belarusian chekists, who made an unforgivable, from his point of view, puncture. "They could not cope with such small a quantity", – Serov blurted crossly, – "I had much more of them (Polish officers and civilians to kill. – *B.S.*) in Ukraine. It was neat and slick, no trace could be found …".[18]

It should be stressed that during the investigating of manuscripts and typescripts of Serov's memoirs I've surely found out that Serov's texts, compiled by Alexander Khinshtein, are not diaries, but memoirs, which was mainly written after Serov's resignation. And the cited texts about Bogdan Kobulov's connection with the Katyń case were found neither among the manuscripts nor among the typescripts of Serov's memoirs. So we have serious ground for the suggestion that these texts about Kobulov and the Katyń case are fakes.

It is interesting that till today, unlike the situation with the documents about the transportation and execution of the Poles, buried in Katyń and Mednoye, there were no analogical documents found about the Poles from the Starobelsk camp and from the prisons of Western Ukraine. It is very possible that such documents were eliminated in the 1950s by Serov and Khrushchev, who played an important role in the execution of Poles in Ukraine in the spring of 1940 and controlled the archives' after Stalin's death.

Endnotes

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[10] *'Katynskoe delo'*, in: *Voennye archivy Rossii*, part 1, Moscow 1993, pp. 124–127, 160–161.

[11] N.S. Lebedeva, *Vvedenie*, pp. 36–37.

[12] I.S. Jazhborovskaia, A.J. Jablokov, V.S. Parsadanova, *Katynskij sindrom*, p. 136.

[13] Palmiry National Memorial Museum, http://www.warsawtour.pl/en/tourist-attractions/palmiry--national-memorial-museum-miejsce-pami-ci-palmiry-4021.html.

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Witold Wasilewski

The Katyń Issue: International Aspects during World War II

The Hitler–Stalin pact, concluded on 23 August 1939, paved the way for Central Europe's partition between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union. As a result of the German and Soviet invasions of Poland (on 1 and 17 September 1939, respectively), over half of the Polish territory and over ten million of its citizens came under Soviet rule. Close to 250,000 soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces were interned for ideological or national reasons. Some of the enlisted men and non-commissioned officers were released. Those who came from territories occupied by the Third Reich were handed over to the German ally. The rest of them were sent to labour camps.

Officers were placed under the jurisdiction of the Directorate for Prisoners of War and Internees under the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, or NKVD, and most of them were sent to three special camps in Kozelsk, Starobelsk and Ostashkov. Also imprisoned in the Ostashkov camp were several thousand Polish policemen, border and prison guards. In each of the three camps there were also small groups of the Polish civilian elite. Those of the military who escaped internment in the camps were sent, together with thousands of Polish civilians, to prisons in western Ukraine and western Belarus, then parts of the Soviet-occupied eastern Poland. Some of Polish higher-ranking officers (among them General Władysław Anders) were incarcerated still in 1939, in Lubianka and Butyrki prisons in Moscow.

Katyń 1940: Communist Genocide

Relatively few of the officers died during the first months of their imprisonment, and only a few individuals were put on trial and sentenced to hard labour in the depths of the USSR.

In March 1940, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, Lavrenti Beria, sent an official motion to the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in which he suggested the extermination of 25,700 Polish prisoners. In the motion, personally addressed to Joseph Stalin, Beria proposed to "order the NKVD of the USSR to review under special procedures and with application of the highest penalty – execution by firing squad – the cases of (1) 14,700 persons, former Polish officers, officials, landowners, policemen, security agents, settlers and prison personnel incarcerated in prisoner of war camps, and: (2) 11,000 detainees (…) incarcerated in prisons in the western districts of Ukraine and Belarus."[1] Beria's motion was accepted by the Soviet Political Bureau on 5 March 1940 and signed by Stalin, Kliment Voroshilov, Viacheslav Molotov and Anastas Mikoyan. Next to the signatures was a written remark that the motion had also been accepted by Mikhail Kalinin and Lazar Kaganovich. This heinous decision was filed as the *Resolution of March 5, 1940/144. Case NKVD USSR* in Protocol no. 13 from sittings of the Soviet Political Bureau. By this very decision, the Bureau condemned 25,700 Poles to death, imprisoned in camps in Kozelsk, Starobelsk and Ostashkov and in prisons in western Ukraine and western Belarus.[2] The Political Bureau and NKVD documentation on the Katyń massacre remained confidential until the early 1990s.

The NKVD carried out the executions in April and May 1940, and Kozelsk, Starobelsk and Ostashkov camps gradually emptied. When the executions began at the turn of March and April, Kozelsk numbered 4,599 prisoners, Starobelsk 3,895 and Ostashkov 6,346. Ninety-seven percent of them died, the only survivors were 395 prisoners whom the Soviets planned to use later for their own political ends. Unfortunately, Soviet indoctrination proved quite successful with some people from this group, as witnessed by the case of Zygmunt Berling.

As for the remaining majority of prisoners, the Kozelsk inmates were executed near the village of Katyń, and their bodies were buried in the Katyń Forest. The Starobelsk prisoners were killed and buried in Kharkov and those from Ostashkov were shot in Tver and buried in Mednoye. Simultaneously, the Polish prisoners in western Ukraine and Belarus were executed. According to a note, prepared by KGB head Alexandr Shelepin in 1959, and sent to the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, NKVD squads — based on the Resolution of 5 March, which was implemented by the NKVD, "*special three-man teams*" — executed 21,857 persons including 4,421 in the Katyń Forest (Smolensk District), 3,820 in the Starobelsk camp near Kharkov and 6,311 in the Ostashkov camp (Kalinin District); 7,305 persons were executed in other camps and prisons in western Ukraine and western Belarus.[3]

Professional and reserve officers made up the majority of the Katyń victims. The brutal and swift extermination – on the strength of a single order – of about eight

thousand officers resulted in the greatest rank shortage the Polish army had ever experienced – incomparable with even the most enormous combat losses. The Katyń killings took the lives of almost all Polish officers incarcerated on Soviet territory till March 1940. The sudden disappearance of thousands of people could not be made up by the survival of about 400 inmates of the Kozelsk, Starobelsk and Ostashkov camps and some officers in secluded parts of the Soviet Union not covered by the Political Bureau's execution order. Survivors were incomparably less numerous than victims and even when the Soviets brought several thousand Polish POWs from Lithuania and Latvia to the special camps (in the summer of 1940), their number together with the Katyń survivors was lower than the number of executed victims.

The Soviets succeeded in concealing the Katyń murder in the months following the hecatomb. Letters to prisoners, including those sent via the Geneva Red Cross, were confiscated or returned as mistakenly addressed. Taking advantage of the fact that they had practically no relations with the Polish authorities, the Soviets staunchly avoided any official mention of POWs.

Hitler's Invasion of the USSR and the Soviet-Polish Treaty of 30 July 1941

The situation changed when the Third Reich attacked the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941.

The incarceration of Poles on Soviet territory was taken up by the Polish Government following the German invasion of the USSR. Shortly after the attack, Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski sent a short note on the matter to underground centres in occupied Poland and his own diplomatic representatives, and on the following day, 23 June, he mentioned it in a radio speech.[4] In his radio message, Sikorski mentioned the prisoner issue right after postulating the restoration of the pre-September 1939 *status quo*. He did it in the form of the following rhetorical question: "Still today, thousands of Polish men and women are suffering in Russian prisons for love of their nation, freedom and honour. Hundreds of thousands are sentenced to a slow death from emaciation and hunger. A quarter of a million prisoners of war are perishing in camps. Would it not be just and necessary to give these people back their freedom?"[5] With these words, Sikorski implied that freeing the Poles was a pre-condition of re-establishing Polish-Soviet relations. Interestingly, Sikorski's statement took its final form only 90 minutes before Sikorski actually said the words – owing to interventions from the British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, on whose request Sikorski toned down the original version, which he had read out earlier to his ministers: "and hundreds of thousands, including three hundred thousand [the figure was changed – *W.W.*] prisoners of war, are sentenced to a slow death from emaciation and hunger in forced labour camps under the most horrendous conditions, being modern-day slaves doomed for annihilation."[6] Eden's request, in

which he referred to an opinion of Winston Churchill, was a clear sign that British policy at the time was mainly focused on not irritating the Russians. And it was something Polish politicians seeking to normalize relations with the USSR had to take into account when dealing with their British allies.

Polish-Soviet negotiations started under British mediation at the turn of June and July 1941. The greatest bone of contention were guarantees for Poland's eastern borders. On 3 July 1941, Władysław Sikorski informed Anthony Eden in writing about the Polish position in the negotiations, underscoring the necessity to return to "pre-September 1939 conditions". In his note to Eden, Sikorski also "demanded that Polish war prisoners and the many hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens deported to Central Russia should be released by Russia."[7] On the same day, the Soviet Government decided to enter into talks with Sikorski. A telegram announcing this to the Soviet Ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky, contained the following statement concerning the prisoners: "For your own information, I declare that there neither have been nor are now three hundred thousand Polish prisoners in the USSR. Their number is only twenty thousand (…)."[8] These words, which questioned figures on the prisoners provided by the Polish side, heralded a recurring theme during the talks: the Soviets staunchly refused to accept any figures, high or low, on Poles imprisoned in their country provided by Poland.

On 4 July 1941, Maisky delivered the Soviet position on the issue to Eden,[9] and personally advised Eden against treating Polish data on the prisoners as reliable.[10] Eden immediately passed the information on to the British envoy in Moscow, Stafford Cripps, and the U.S. Ambassador in London, John Winant; this is how he commented on the Polish prisoner issue in his account of his conversation with Maisky: "In fact, there are not as many of them as General Sikorski told me, they only number twenty thousand."[11] The British Foreign Secretary, the main architect of the Polish-Soviet agreement, accepted the Soviet figures concerning prisoners with surprising ease, considering there was no convincing evidence to support it. In reality, the figure of 20,000 Polish prisoners presented by the Soviets would have roughly covered only the number of Polish officers imprisoned in the Soviet Union – and this provided that there had been no Katyń and including officers taken over from the 1940 Soviet-annexed Baltic states after the massacre. The number of Polish POWs on Soviet territory was in fact much higher. On the other hand the Poles, who declared figures between 200 and 300 thousand, were unaware of certain facts: the handing over to the Germans of tens of thousands of enlisted men and (…) the slaughter of thousands of Polish officers. The confusion resulting from the Polish ignorance of these facts deliberately concealed by the Soviets obviously only served the latter's interests.

Still, on 4 July 1941 Sikorski, invited for talks with Eden following the latter's conversation with Maisky, outlined the Polish main demands from the Soviets. Among

others, he asked for "the release of prisoners of war, other prisoners and deportees to the Russian hinterland. Military personnel and regular troops may be formed into a sovereign Polish military force to fight the Germans." Sikorski also questioned the figures concerning prisoners that Eden received from Maisky. Quoting a 1939 release in the Moscow communist daily *Pravda*, he stated that the number of soldiers detained in "concentration camps" amounted to 190,000, including over 10,000 officers.[12]

The prisoner issue came up during the 5 July 1941 talks between Maisky and Sikorski in the presence of the Polish Foreign Minister, August Zaleski, and the Secretary of State in the British Foreign Office, Alexander Cadogan, who took the minutes of the meeting. Maisky asked Sikorski what he meant by "Polish war prisoners in the Soviet Union". Sikorski replied that recent Soviet statistics gave their number at around 191,000, including about 9,000 officers, the majority of whom were held in military concentration camps east of the Volga, and who – as he suggested – should be used to organize an independent Polish army on Soviet territory. Maisky did not question the figures concerning prisoners and the conversation moved on to methods of commanding Polish armed forces to be formed in the USSR. During the Sikorski–Maisky meeting, the Polish side presented several demands as a condition for further talks with the Soviets. One of them was the release of Polish military and political prisoners. In response, Maisky asked if the Polish government was ready to sign an agreement with the Soviets, to which Sikorski answered affirmatively, adding that the accord would have to include regulations on the Polish armed forces and on the release of Polish prisoners.[13]

During the meeting, no more mention was made on the numbers of prisoners, both sides retained their original positions – which postponed the resolution of the issue of Polish prisoners held by the Soviets until later. It must be noted, that the talks concerned not only POWs, who featured one of many groups of Poles held in captivity in the Soviet Union. In addition, neither the Poles nor anyone else was able to verify the numbers of Polish POWs in the USSR as – contrary to standards observed in, e.g. German POW camps – the Russians allowed no one (not even the Red Cross) to contact their prisoners.

After 10 July 1941, Polish and Soviet positions in the negotiations were conveyed between both governments by British diplomats. Battles over the prisoners and deportees took place in the final phase of the talks.

Contrary to their previous adherence to the 5 July decisions, in an 11 July proposal, the Soviet side surprisingly failed to include clauses on releasing the Polish prisoners,[14] which was very badly received by the Polish side. In their reply of 12 July, the Poles demanded the inclusion in the agreement of clauses on releasing Poles imprisoned in the Soviet Union, enumerationg four categories of detainees: political prisoners, deportees, Red Army recruits, and those who "sont internées dans des

camps de concentration comme prisonniers de guerre," in other words prisoners of war interned in concentration camps.[15] Using the term *camps de concentration* the Polish side wanted to leave no doubt in their message to the Soviets that they meant the camps in Kozelsk, Starobelsk and Ostashkov, and others similar camps.

The result was a stalemate: the Soviets insisting on exclusion of the prisoner issue from the agreement and the Poles on its inclusion as a major point of the pact.

Finally, after lengthy negotiations entailing Polish and Soviet diplomatic exchanges and British-Soviet talks in Moscow (including a 26 July meeting between Stafford Cripps, Molotov and Stalin), the text of the Polish-Soviet agreement was accepted by both sides. Provisions on Polish POWs and other Poles in the Soviet Union were included in a draft protocol attached to the agreement, which read: "With the restoration of diplomatic relations, the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics will grant amnesty to all Polish citizens currently incarcerated on the territory of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics either as prisoners of war or for other pertinent reasons."[16]

On 30 July 1941, Polish Prime Minister Sikorski and Soviet Ambassador Maisky signed the agreement in the presence of Churchill and Eden, which meant that according to the draft protocol attached to it, Polish officers interned by the Soviets regained their freedom.

Poland Asks About Its Officers

The Polish-Soviet Agreement of 30 July 1941, known as the Sikorski–Maisky Treaty, restored relations between both countries, brought amnesty to all Soviet-interned Poles and enabled the formation of a "Polish military force in the USSR." A Polish Embassy was opened first in Moscow, and later moved to Kuibyshev. General Władysław Anders, recently freed from Lubianka prison in Moscow, became commander-in-chief of the Polish forces in place of the murdered Stanisław Haller.

The legal basis for the release of Poles from Soviet camps and other places of detention was the 12 August 1941 *Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR on Granting Amnesty to Polish Citizens Interned on Soviet territory*. Signed in the Kremlin by Mikhail Kalinin, one of the authors of the Katyń massacre, it provided for "granting amnesty to all Polish citizens currently deprived of freedom on Soviet territory as prisoners of war, or for other pertinent reasons."[17] The term *other pertinent reasons* left room for arbitrary interpretations of release criteria with regard to some of the detainees. The one category where the treaty left no space for interpretation were prisoners of war – in the Soviet terminology *voiennoplennye* – in this case, Polish soldiers and other uniformed functionaries.

Despite some infringements of the agreement by the Soviets, starting from September 1941 thousands of Polish soldiers and civilians exhausted by internment in

this "inhuman land" reported for service in the Polish armed forces, whose command and auxiliary command were located in Buzuluk in Asia.

But the officers taken from the Kozelsk, Starobelsk and Ostashkov camps in the spring of 1940 were not among them.

The Soviet officers detailed to help in the formation of the Polish army brushed off queries about the missing men from the head of the Polish military mission in the USSR, General Zygmunt Bohusz, and the commander of the Polish forces, General Władysław Anders, claiming the matter lay beyond their jurisdiction.[18]

In the situation, the Polish government decided to seek information about the whereabouts of the missing officers via diplomatic channels, first through *chargé d'affaires* Józef Retinger, and later through the Polish Ambassador in the USSR, Stanisław Kot. Władysław Sikorski, at the time Polish Prime Minister and Chief Military Commander, personally asked the Soviet authorities for explanations on the matter.

Already on 22 August 1941 Retinger sent a note to Molotov demanding "the immediate release from imprisonment and labour sites of all Polish citizens."[19]

On 28 August, in a conversation with the Soviet Deputy Commissioner for Foreign Affairs Andrei Vyshinsky, Retinger voiced doubts whether the amnesty decree really covered all Poles detained in Soviet territory, he also gave Vyshinsky a short list of persons, including military, whom the Polish authorities had been unable to find.[20] At no time during the conversation did Retinger actually mention POWs (among whom were not only officers but also policemen and border guards) or NKVD camps for war prisoners.

The Soviet written reply of 28 August 1941 communicated progress in the matter and promised review of other issues mentioned by Retinger *in further proceedings*.[21] The Soviet side saw no need to refer directly to the missing prisoners, as in earlier talks Retinger had approached the matter with utmost reserve and avoided to mention it at all in his note.

On 28 August 1941, Stanisław Kot, nominated by Prime Minister Sikorski for the post of Polish Ambassador in the USSR, received an *Instruction for the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in the USSR* in which the government directed him to take steps to obtain prompt release of all Poles interned in Soviet prisons and camps. To this end, Kot was to establish close relations with the Soviet authorities and hold regular bilateral consultations.[22] At this stage, the Polish side presented the official number of Polish officers imprisoned on Soviet territory at over 9,000, which was less than about 15,000 interned between 1939 and 1941 but more than the numbers given by Maisky. The claim from an English historian George Sanford that the Polish side accepted the "Soviet" figures is an exaggeration, because first, the Soviets never gave one exact prisoner figure, but constantly changed the statis-

tics and, second, the figures they did provide were far too low; nonetheless, the fact remains that the Polish side rather surprisingly accepted a compromise between the true prisoner count and the figures suggested by the USSR.[23] This seemingly strange move is explained by the Polish reluctance to annoy the Russians at that point – it was hoped that the "disappearance" of some of the prisoners would make it easier for the Soviets to settle the problem. On the other hand, the Polish side knew that some of the prisoners may have not survived their Soviet internment.

After his accreditation in Moscow on 9 September 1941, Stanisław Kot raised the subject of the Sikorski–Maisky treaty and its amnesty provisions during the 20 September talks with the Soviet commissar Vyshinsky. On 27 September, Kot discussed the matter further in a note to the Soviet foreign ministry.[24] Like Retinger, Kot – a staunch supporter of the Sikorski–Maisky agreement and rapprochement with the USSR – pursued the matter in a plaintive rather than demanding tone and without direct reference to the imprisoned officers. In all, until October 1941, Polish diplomatic efforts in the matter were limited to restrained queries directed to the Soviets, with no intention of putting the matter on a razor's edge and general reluctance to speak up or act more decisively.

In 1941, the Polish caution regarding the Sikorski–Maisky accord was dictated by the policy of the Western Allies towards the Soviets. When in August 1941 Britain and the U.S. outlined their basic political strategies in the Atlantic Charter, they were not very keen to monitor Soviet adherence to the principles on which they planned to found post-war reality. After 22 June 1941, as political, economic and military allies, Britain and America decided to concentrate on building an alliance with Stalin and supporting the USSR in its war effort against the Germans. Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Winston Churchill decided not to burden Stalin with additional demands, especially those concerning third countries. For Britain, the "third country" whose demands were ignored was Poland – an earlier (albeit weaker) British ally than the USSR. The best example of this policy were talks on the Lend-Lease project, especially a meeting that took place in late September 1941 in Moscow between the envoy of the U.S. President, William Averell Harriman, the British Minister of Supply, Lord Max Beaverbrook, and Stalin. During the meeting, all sides agreed on the details of an aid programme for the USSR but – unlike in discussions on aid for Russia during World War One – failed to specify the conditions on which the aid was to be provided. Thus, Britain and the U.S. initiated a policy of unconditional aid for Russia to which Stalin responded with a "take and run" approach. Despite Polish efforts, at the conference U.S. armament supplies for Polish forces in the Soviet Union were not discussed, leaving the matter entirely up to the Soviets.[25] Harriman recounted later that this was largely due to Beaverbrook's position during the talks.[26] As a result of the lack of strong British support for

Sikorski, the Polish bargaining position deteriorated in the eyes of the Soviet leadership.[27] In the situation, any pressure from Washington or London to free Polish POWs imprisoned on Soviet territory was unthinkable. It must also be noted that in 1941, official Polish authorities failed to properly emphasize their demands in this respect before their Western Allies. In a statement of 24 September 1941, issued in connection with the British-U.S. conference and the signing of the Atlantic Charter, the Polish government, in addition to expressing contentment over the solidarity displayed by the world's great democracies and staunch assurances that the Poles will fight the Third Reich until its end, asked about the aims of the war. The Polish side underscored the need to ensure law and order in post-war Europe and safe borders for Poland – but failed to mention the Polish prisoners in the USSR,[28] which was due not only to a very general character of the statement, but also to the belief on the Polish side that it was pointless to address the case. The 1941-sealed alliance between Britain, the U.S. and the Soviet Union left no room for inquiries into the fate of the officially missing (and in reality slaughtered) Polish officers, and in effect the matter was marginalized in the international political debate. In the latter half of 1941, the 'Big Three' character of the British-American-Soviet alliance was not favourable to any pursuit of Polish interests in relations with the Soviets and hampered Polish efforts to resolve the POW issue.

However, from October 1941, the Polish side began to undertake more energetic steps in the matter.

On 13 October, Ambassador Kot sent a note to the Soviet deputy foreign affairs commissioner Vyshinsky presenting several justified objections regarding the failure to adhere to their treaty obligations by the Soviets. In the note, Kot also said that the USSR failed to fulfil amnesty promises, indicating as an example groups of Poles still incarcerated in Soviet camps. However, he again made no mention of the officers.[29] Kot's clearly sharper tone was a sign that the Poles were getting fed up with their repeated failure to achieve anything in the matter. The prisoner issue came up again during a meeting between Kot and Vyshinsky on the next day (14 October). The Soviet commissioner presented figures concerning Poles interned on Soviet territory, which again failed to include the officers. Kot questioned the figures and stuck by the Polish count – 9,400. Kot had again lowered the official number of prisoners, but could not accept the omission of the missing officers in Soviet statistics. As a result, as sources say, the talks continued in a "highly nervous" atmosphere.[30] Kot's note and the later conversation with Vyshinsky signaled a turning point in the Polish approach to the prisoner problem.

A real change, however, came with the letter of 15 October 1941 from the Polish Prime Minister to the Soviet Ambassador accredited to the Polish government in London Andrei Bogomolov. In the letter, Władysław Sikorski wrote: "The fate of sev-

eral thousand Polish officers who have not returned to Poland nor have been located in Soviet POW camps remains unexplained. Most probably they were dispersed in the northern regions of the USSR. Their presence in Polish military camps is an absolute necessity." Sending the letter, Sikorski showed that he was vitally interested in the fate of the officers. Its effect was strengthened by its short form – it consisted of a single page. This was the first time when the officer issue was stressed in official Polish-Soviet relations and Sikorski began his letter in a rather mild tone: "I hereby request you to transmit to the Soviet government our assurances of the Polish government's appreciation of the good will showed by the Soviet government in the execution of the Polish-Soviet agreement of 30 July 1941. However, we are currently faced with difficulties which are rather unrelated to any difficulties caused by warfare."[31]

The phrase "rather unrelated" carried a note of determination and pointed to the Soviet responsibility for the fate of the prisoners, suggesting ill will as the only conceivable reason of their reluctance to free them. From the Polish point of view, totally inexplicable were the suggestions as to what might have happened with the imprisoned Poles ("dispersed in the northern regions of the USSR"), which only showed that the Polish authorities knew little or nothing about their fate and made it easier for the Soviets to deceive them.

Regardless of the deficiencies of the message from Sikorski to Bogomolov, it certainly opened a new phase in inquiries about the missing POWs – a phase marked by repeated Polish queries and interventions – and relevant responses from the Soviet side (of which some could doubtless be of great interest not only to historians but also politologists, culture anthropologists and even psychologists).

On 14 October 1941, a meeting in the Kremlin between Ambassador Kot and Stalin took place, during which Stalin gave a display of his renowned political theatrics. Following an initial exchange of courtesies and a review of international affairs and Polish-Soviet relations (mainly the formation of the Polish forces in the Soviet Union), Kot signaled that he wanted to touch upon another topic: "Mr. President [Stalin was not the Soviet President – *W.W.*], I have used so much of your precious time, but there is one more thing I'd like to bring you. May I?" The matter Kot had in mind were the missing Polish officers. Kot went on: "We have names and lists. For instance General Stanisław Haller hasn't been located yet, we are also lacking officers from Starobelsk, Kozelsk and Ostashkov, who were taken away from these camps in April and May of 1940."[32]

During the exchange that followed Stalin got up and began pacing around a table smoking a cigarette, but continued to listen attentively and replied to questions. Then he approached a telephone on Molotov's desk and began to dial.

Seeing this, Molotov rose, went up to the telephone, threw a switch with the words *that's how you connect*, and sat down again at the conference table.

After connecting, Stalin asked into the telephone: "NKVD? Stalin here. Have all the Poles been freed?" Following a short silence during which he appeared to listen to a reply, he added: "because I've got the Polish ambassador here who tells me that not all were freed." Then he again listened to a reply, and finally hung up.

After a further exchange, during which Kot replied to Stalin's rather impatient queries as to where and when the Poles intended to fight the Germans, the Soviet leader (according to a Polish stenogram) "got up at the sound of the telephone and most probably listened to the reply to his question about the Poles asked several minutes ago. Then he put the receiver down and returned without a word."

In his memoirs, Kot wrote that Stalin also "added softly, as if to himself: they say they've all been freed."[33]

Kot had to content himself with Stalin's silence and above-quoted mumbled commentary. The Soviet leader showed a personal interest in the fate of the Polish officers whom he had earlier sentenced to death; today it is difficult to tell if he really telephoned NKVD or whether he and Molotov, the co-architect of the Katyń massacre, were just playing games.

The most spectacular example of the Soviet falsehood and evasiveness in the matter was a Kremlin meeting of 3 December 1941 between Stalin, Sikorski, Kot and General Anders, when Stalin, asked point-blank about the Poles, suggested that they had probably fled to… Manchuria.[34]

Of course the Soviet blunt denials in the matter stemmed from their wish to conceal their responsibility for the killings. The Soviet evasiveness and barefaced lies, when put against information from survivors, had to make the Poles realize that the prisoners from Kozelsk, Starobelsk and Ostashkov were irretrievably lost. Not everyone, however, suspected mass killings. Some (like Anders) believed the officers had been moved to special detention centres in the Russian far north (Kolyma, Novaia Ziemla) and left there to perish.[35] For sure, suspicions of mass murder arose in the minds of those who had survived the Soviet hell, but such thoughts were easier to harbour than articulate, neither was it easy to express any accusations against those responsible. Moreover, nobody possessed any conclusive evidence for the case and the Polish side lacked the will to pursue it.

1942: Armed Forces Evacuated to the Middle East, The Poles Are Losing Hope

Over late 1941 and the first half of 1942, the Polish side repeatedly queried the Soviets about the Polish POWs, and even provided them with lists of names of some of the missing officers.[36] In a conversation of 18 March 1942, on the subject with Anders, Stalin declared rather foggily that he had ordered all the Poles to be released, that

he was not aware of their whereabouts, that there were no reasons why they should be kept on in detention, suggesting finally that "perhaps they were scattered on the territories invaded by the Germans…" Countered by the Polish Chief of Staff Colonel Leopold Okulicki, who accompanied Anders during the meeting, and who assured that "this was impossible, we would have known about that," Stalin changed the subject.[37] The Soviet authorities dismissed other queries about the officers in a similar manner – either with silence or absurd and self-contradictory assurances that they knew nothing about their fate, that they became scattered somewhere and that all Poles detained on Soviet territory had been released.

A simultaneous search for the prisoners in the USSR, ordered by General Anders and conducted by Captain Józef Czapski (himself a survivor from the Starobelsk camp), where Czapski repeatedly asked Soviet functionaries at various levels about the Poles, also met with a wall of silence. However, the search operation helped gather data which distinctly pointed to the tragic fate of the prisoners.[38]

The situation changed between March and August 1942. Constantly hampered in its recruitment activities and harassed in many other ways, the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR, now counting about 80,000 people (including numerous civilians), finally evacuated to Iran in the Middle East. As a consequence, the Soviets banned further recruitment to the Polish Army connected with the London government and began to form a marionette Polish army under Zygmunt Berling. After the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR (now to be known as the Polish Army in the East) had left their Soviet prison, Polish-Soviet relations deteriorated from cool to icy and Soviet policy acquired a distinctly anti-Polish tone.

With the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR evacuated to the Middle East, by the end of 1942, the chances of finding the officers were practically nonexistent. However, awareness of what had happened to them became more and more clear. On 15 January 1943, the Polish government received a Soviet note which stated that the Sikorski–Maisky treaty meant Polish recognition of the Soviet annexation of eastern Poland in 1939. The mood among soldiers of General Anders' army rock-bottomed. "Sorrow and despair was what Polish soldiers felt when the Soviet government issued the note which proclaimed that all inhabitants of the eastern Polish territories taken over by the Red Army after 17 September 1939 had now automatically become Soviet citizens. The soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces in the East, most of whom came from the eastern territories, realized that they had lost their country. Even more tragic was the fate of those Poles who remained in Soviet Russia."[39] The note meant open denial from the Soviets of Polish state frontiers, their rejection of all cooperation with the Polish government, and a definitive break in the evacuation of Poles from the USSR – not to mention clarifying the problem of missing officers, which the Soviets now considered closed.

The crisis in Polish-Soviet relations whose culmination was the January 1943 note, did not lead the Polish authorities to a propaganda campaign on unjust treatment of Poles by the Soviets – and especially on the annihilation of thousands of POWs who could have been used to fight the Germans. The Polish government not only failed to consider gathering data on the fate of Poles interned on Soviet territory as a priority, but it hampered the disclosure of the truth about what had happened to them. Polish evacuees from the USSR were made to vow not to talk about their Soviet experiences while in the Middle East. No London-based centre was set up to sift and analyse information about Poles in the Soviet Union although what was known was enough to support claims that the Soviets had committed a major crime. The negligence of the Polish authorities in the matter probably stemmed from the fear that a more decisive approach or sudden disclosure of the truth at a "wrong moment" could result in a breakdown of Polish-Soviet relations. From the present perspective, it may seem naïve, but Sikorski considered this the right policy in view of a possible Soviet invasion of Poland and unstable support for Polish interests in general from the Western Allies. The alternative would have been to take up – still during the wartime – the matter of the Bolshevik threat to Europe and staunchly refuse to sweep even the most uncomfortable truths under the carpet. The fact is that at the turn of 1942 and 1943 the fate of the missing Polish officers was still an unresolved issue about which all interested sides seemed to want to forget – despite evident signs and suggestions that the Poles had been murdered.

1943: the Truth is Revealed by the Germans

A document in the possession of the London-based Polish Institute and the Władysław Sikorski Museum, today included in a collection devoted to Colonel Wincenty Bąkiewicz, head of Section II in the Supreme Command of the Polish Armed Forces in the East (General Anders intelligence and counter-intelligence service), confirms that a belief that the Polish officers imprisoned in the Soviet Union had been murdered was widespread among Polish troops stationed in the Middle East already in early 1943. Suggestions to this effect also came from Henryk Malhomme, *chargé d'affaires* of the Polish Mission in Baghdad. In an early-February telegram to the Polish Foreign Ministry in London, Malhomme stated bluntly that "thousands of officers and policemen are considered to have been murdered."[40] It must be noted here that Malhomme's opinion concerned not the fate of Poles still living in the USSR, but a past event which had taken place in its time and day. Many among the soldiers stationed in the Middle East feared for the lives of those they had left behind in the USSR, but no longer so much for the POWs, whom they already believed dead. The fact that Malhomme's words related to a very specific group of

Polish officers interned in NKVD camps until the spring of 1940 is proved by his use of the words "thousands of officers and policemen" – which aptly described the populations of the camps in Kozelsk, Starobelsk and Ostashkov. In effect, the Poles in the Middle East were convinced that their colleagues in the three camps had been executed.

In London, the report from Malhomme was seen as an expression of political moods among Polish forces stationed in the Middle East rather than an information about the fate of the officers – which was quite understandable under the general political circumstances of the day. In its negotiations about the officers with the Soviets, the Sikorski government, intent on a rapprochement with the USSR, consistently claimed the Poles were missing and refused to acknowledge that they had been killed. Such acknowledgment and disclosure of the truth would have quite certainly ruined Sikorski's eastern policy.

The truth surfaced quite suddenly – and from totally unexpected quarters.

Basing on local information and their own inquiries, in the early spring of 1943, the Germans decided to start a search in Katyń Forest and, as a result, found the bodies of the Polish officers – the final evidence of their 1940 execution by the NKVD. Joseph Goebbels, who wanted badly to discredit the Soviets after the German defeat in Stalingrad, promptly launched a propaganda campaign on the issue. On 13 April 1943, Radio Berlin announced that the bodies of Polish officers had been found in the Katyń Forest. The news met with a broad response worldwide.[41] Soon, delegations and individual persons from German-occupied and independent countries began to arrive on the crime scene – among them journalists, Allied officers and forensic experts. The latter soon confirmed the terrible truth about what had happened.[42]

The reactions of Soviets, Poles and Western Allies to the Katyń case after April 13, 1943

In a reply of 15 April, Radio Moscow issued a statement by the Soviet Information Bureau expressing indignation at Goebbels accusations and blaming *German fascist henchmen*[43] for the killings.

The German announcement that the graves of the Polish officers murdered by the Soviets had been discovered left the Polish authorities with no choice but to accept this as the most probable truth and initiate steps to clarify the matter both through international institutions and their own channels. On 17 April 1943, the Polish government issued a statement on the Katyń killings (in which they still avoided any direct accusations) and asked the International Red Cross in Bern to investigate the matter. But even then, more emphasis was put on the propaganda

advantages Germany might get from the Katyń case than on the Soviet responsibility for the crime.[44]

On 19 April 1943, the Soviet national daily *Pravda* in an editorial attacked Poland for approaching the Red Cross and "collaborating with German provocateurs and Goebbels".[45] On 21 April, in a long cablegram to Churchill and Roosevelt, Stalin reitareted the accusations, adding also a false statement that "the Sikorski government, to the satisfaction of the Hitlerite tyranny, strikes a treacherous blow to the Soviet Union".[46] In conclusion of the message, Stalin informed Great Britain and the United States on his intention to break diplomatic relations with the Polish government. In fact, the Polish stance in the matter was more than restrained. Under pressure from the British, backed by the Americans, the Polish government even went as far as to withdraw its motion to the Red Cross.[47]

On 23 April, the International Red Cross communicated, reiterating its stance presented to the German Red Cross on 16, 20 and 22 April, that an investigation could not be undertaken without agreement from all interested parties, which in view of the Soviet objections, meant that the project had to be abandoned.

On 24 April, in his cablegram to Stalin, Churchill assured him that on the same day Eden would urge Poles to abandon their efforts to organise an international investigation and presented his belief that the decision to break diplomatic relations with the Polish Government is only temporary and would not be announced publicly.[48] On 25 April, Churchill sent a cablegram stating that Sikorski agreed to withdraw the motion to the Red Cross, and thus Britain saw the issue of breaking Soviet-Polish relations as no longer pertinent. A reply sent on the same day by Stalin stated that the decision on breaking the relations was irrevocable.[49] Around midnight on the same day, the Polish Ambassador in Moscow was handed a diplomatic note, dated 25 April 1943, whereby the Soviet Government broke diplomatic relations with the Polish Government.[50]

Stalin failed to comply with Churchill's request not to break diplomatic relations with the Polish Government, or even with the demand not to make the decision public should it be upheld. He did it in spite of the fact that the British Prime Minister in his request referred to American interests. Churchill was entitled to mention American support. During the crisis in mid-April 1943, it was the British Prime Minister who communicated with Stalin, but only because of the division of tasks between the Western Allies and Roosevelt's engagement in other matters, for beyond any doubt both Washington and London desired Polish-Soviet relations to be maintained, at the cost – as the Western allies decided – of abandoning by the Poles any investigation on the Katyń case. But ironically, even though they paid the price, Stalin broke relations with the Polish Government anyway and started open preparations to install a Soviet-dependent regime in Poland after the war. And in spite of

this kind of treatment received from the Soviet Union, that was hard to explain in terms of diplomatic rules or the real strength of the interested powers. After 25 April 1943, the United States and Great Britain did not abandon their policy of concealing the truth about the crime committed on Polish prisoners of war in 1940.

This was indicative of how the Katyń case was to be handled by the Anglo-Saxon allies till the end of the World War II and in the post-war period: the matter was sidelined and the truth about it kept silenced.

Unlike the Polish and Anglo-Saxon reactions, however, the Soviet response was determined and ruthless. On 25 April 1943, they broke off all relations with the Polish government, arguing that the Poles had taken part in a German provocation, and never restored them in spite of signs of good will from the Poles and efforts undertaken by the Western allies. Simultaneously, the Soviets began to construct a falsified version of the Katyń events, known today as the *Katyń Lie*, according to which the Germans committed the massacre in 1941.[51] Between October 1943 and January 1944 a joint committee of NKGB and NKVD, led by Vsevolod Merkulov and Sergei Kruglov, prepared details of the mendacious version of events and falsified evidence to prove it.[52]

On 24 January 1944, a Communique was signed in Moscow of the Special Commission to investigate the circimstances of the Katyń forest massacre led by Nikolai Burdenko, announcing German responsibility for the crime based on false evidence.[53] The Soviet version was also presented to English-speaking journalists in Moscow.[54] The United States and Great Britain failed to respond to the spectacular falsification, again – this time silently – condoning the Soviet Katyń lie.

American and British policies remained the same towards the matter and just after the end of the war.

The American Government remained silent on the Katyń affair till the end of the 1940s – a change in the policy was brought about by the Katyń investigation in the American House of Representatives, led by the Madden Committee in 1951–1952. The British, with a few exceptions, relegated the Katyń case from the public sphere till the end of the 1970s. On both sides of the Atlantic, the policy was also revived later. The same applied to the majority of other Western countries.

The "Katyń Lie" was upheld until the fall of the USSR and abandoned only in 1990, when the Russian news agency TASS announced that Beria and his accomplices from the NKVD had been responsible for the killings in the Katyń forest. In 1992, the Russian President released the key documentation of the Soviet Politburo on the massacre. Modern Russia's refusal to recognize Katyń as an act of genocide or other legally qualified mass crime as well as repeated attempts from many Russians to present the matter in a false light are still a burden to Polish-Russian relations.

Conclusion

In summary, during World War II, the 1940 Soviet mass murder of Polish prisoners of war was subject to international political manoeuving. The fate of the Katyń case depended on policies of the following powers: the Soviet Union, the German Reich, the United States and the Great Britain. The approach to the Katyń crime, investigating its circumstances and publicising the truth about it hinged on current political interests. The Soviets, as the perpetrators of the crime, made every effort to hide the truth, and the Germans, already as their war enemies, contributed to its exposure in 1943. Roosevelt and Churchill, guided by the political interests of their countries, as they understood them at the time, in order to maintain good relations with Stalin, sacrificed the truth about the Katyń crime and the fate of their Polish allies.

Endnotes

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[2] *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, vol. 1, doc. 217, pp. 476–477; edited by W. Materski, nos. 1, 3, Warsaw 1993, pp. 11–13, 15–16.

[3] Ibidem, no. 5, pp. 27–31.

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[5] Ibidem, no. 68B, p. 8.

[6] Instytut Polski i Muzeum Sikorskiego w Londynie [Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London, IPMS], PRM 63II, doc. no. 24, ff. 373–379.

[7] *Stosunki polsko-sowieckie od września 1939 r. do kwietnia 1943. Zbiór dokumentów* [Polish-Soviet Relations – September 1939 to April 1943], Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London 1943, doc. 21, pp. 22–23.

[8] *Dokumenty i materialy po istorii sovetsko-polskikh otnoshenii*, vol. 7, Moscow 1973, pp. 198–199. Polish translation in: *Układ Sikorski–Majski. Wybór dokumentów* [The Sikorski–Maisky Agreement. Selected Documentation], edited by E. Duraczyński, Warsaw 1990, doc. 6, p. 95.

[9] IPMS, A. 48.2/C2, doc. no. 3, ff. 10–11.

[10] *Sovetsko-anglijskie otnoshenia vo vremia Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny 1941–1945*, vol. 1: *1941–1943*, Moscow 1983, pp. 64–65; *Układ Sikorski–Majski* [The Sikorski-Maisky Agreement], doc. 8, pp. 97–98.

[11] *Foreign Relation of the United States. Diplomatic Papers 1941*, vol. 1: *General. The Soviet Union*, Washington 1950, pp. 239–240 (Ambassador J. Winant to Washington, 4 July 1941, London and A. Eden's Telegram to S. Cripps, 4 July 1941, London); *Układ Sikorski–Majski*, doc. 7, pp. 96–97.

[12] *Stosunki polsko-sowieckie od września 1939 r. do kwietnia 1943* [Polish-Soviet relations from September 1939–April 1943], doc. 22, p. 24.

[13] Ibidem, doc. 23, pp. 25–27. During the talks, Sikorski did not specify which recent Soviet statistics he was referring to.

[14] Ibidem, doc. 26 (Proposal of an agreement between the Polish government and the government of the USSR sent by Mr. Olivier Harvey on 11 July 1941 [Soviet draft], Foreign Office), pp. 36–37.

[15] Ibidem, doc. 27 (Polish proposal sent to Minister Eden on 12 July 1941, in connection with the Soviet proposal of 11 July 1941), pp. 37–38.

[16] Ibidem, doc. 30, p. 44.

[17] *Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations 1939–1945*, vol. 1: *1939–1943*, no. 110, London–Melbourne–Toronto 1961, p. 145.

[18] Rossiiskii Gossudarstvennyi Archiv Socialno-Politicheskoi Istorii in Moscow (RGASPI), unit 82, inv. 2, vol. 1286, ff. 7–154.

[19] *Stosunki polsko-sowieckie od września 1939 r. do kwietnia 1943* [Polish-Soviet Relations from Sepember 1939–April 1943], doc. 35, pp. 47–49.

[20] *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni* [Katyń. Documents of the Crime], vol. 3: *Losy ocalałych: lipiec 1940 – marzec 1943* [The Survivors. July, 1940–March, 1943], Warsaw 2001, p. 31.

[21] *Stosunki polsko-sowieckie od września 1939 r. do kwietnia 1943* [Polish-Soviet Relations from Sepember 1939–April 1943], doc. 36, p. 50.

[22] *Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations 1939–1945*, no. 119, p. 158–161 (General Instructions for the Polish Ambassador in the USSR, 28 August 1941). Original at the IPMS and the Hoover Institute.

[23] G. Sanford, *The Katyń Massacre and Polish-Soviet Relations 1941–1943*, in: *Journal of Contemporary History*, issue 41/2006, p. 100.
[24] *Stosunki polsko-sowieckie od września 1939 r. do kwietnia 1943* [Polish-Soviet Relations from Sepember 1939–April 1943], doc. 37, p. 51.
[25] W. Materski, *Na Widecie. II Rzeczpospolita wobec Sowietów 1918–1943* [On Guard. The Second Republic of Poland and the Soviets 1918–1943], Warsaw 2005, p. 637.
[26] W.A. Harriman, E. Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin 1941–1946*, New York 1975, pp. 45–47.
[27] S. Kot, *Rozmowy z Kremlem* [Talks With the Kremlin], London 1959, p. 22.
[28] *Sprawa polska w czasie drugiej wojny światowej* [The Polish case during WW2], no. 13 (chapter 2), pp. 235–236.
[29] *Stosunki polsko-sowieckie od września 1939 r. do kwietnia 1943* [Polish-Soviet Relations from September 1939–April 1943], doc. 37, pp. 51–53.
[30] *Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations 1939–1945*, no. 130, pp. 178–182.
[31] The letter was in French, cf.: *Stosunki polsko-sowieckie od września 1939 r. do kwietnia 1943* [Polish-Soviet Relations from Sepember 1939–April 1943], doc. 38, p. 54. Polish translation: *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, vol. 3, doc. 209, p. 470 (facsimile pp. 471–472).
[32] *Sprawa polska w czasie drugiej wojny światowej* [The Polish case during WW2], no. 17 (chapter 2), pp. 241–249.
[33] S. Kot, *Listy z Rosji do Gen. Sikorskiego* [Letter From Russia to General Sikorski], London 1955, pp. 169–180.
[34] W. Anders, *Bez ostatniego rozdziału* [Without a Final Chapter], London 1959, p. 89.
[35] Ibidem, pp. 77–78, 89, 119, 137–138.
[36] Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (CAW), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, HI/I/ Reel 63 and 68. Microfilms of Polish Foreign Ministry documentation from the Hoover Institute.
[37] *Zbrodnia katyńska w świetle dokumentów (z przedmową Władysława Andersa)* [The Katyń Crime in Documents with Foreword by Władysław Anders], London 1982, pp. 77–78.
[38] J. Czapski, *Wspomnienia starobielskie* [Memories of Starobelsk], Rome 1945, pp. 48–60.
[39] G. Jonkajtys-Luba, *Opowieść o 2 Korpusie Polskim Generała Władysława Andersa* [The Story of the 2nd Polish Corps Under General Władysław Anders], Warsaw (no date), p. 29. On 10 June 1943 General Anders was appointed commander of the 2nd Polish Corps formed from all East-stationed Polish units. Earlier Anders commanded the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR and the Polish Armed Forces in the East.
[40] IPMS, Col. 138/81, f. 833. See: W. Wasilewski, Żołnierze, których zabrakło… [The Missing Soldiers…], in: *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, issue 10–11/2007, pp. 55–60.
[41] *Katyń. Dokumenty Zbrodni*, vol. 4: *Echa Katynia: kwiecień 1943 – marzec 2005* [Katyń Echos: April 1943–March 2005], doc. 1, Warsaw 2006, p. 43.
[42] *The Katyń Forest Massacre. Final Report of the Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation and Study of the Facts, Evidence, and Circumstances of the Katyń Massacre. Appendix. Excerpts from the interim report*, July 2, 1952, United States Goverment Printing Office, Washington 1952.
[43] *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni* [Katyń. Documents of the crime], vol. 4, doc. 3, pp. 44–45; *Katyń: A Crime without punishment*, pp. 306–307.
[44] *Zbrodnia katyńska w świetle dokumentów* [The Katyń crime in the light of documents], pp. 88–89.
[45] *Katyń. Dokumenty Zbrodni* [Katyń. Documents of the crime], vol. 4, doc. 7, pp. 49–52.
[46] *Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations 1939–1945*, no. 310, pp. 530–531; *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni* [Katyń. Documents of the crime], vol. 4, doc. 9, pp. 54–59 (facsimile pp. 56–58).
[47] *Sprawa polska w czasie drugiej wojny światowej* [The Polish case during WW2], nos. 74, 75, 76 (chapter 2), pp. 347–348.
[48] *Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations 1939–1945*, vol. 1, no. 312, pp. 532–533.
[49] Ibidem, no. 314, p. 534.
[50] *Vneshnaia politika Sovetskogo Soiuza v period Otechestvennoi Voiny*, vol. 1, Moscow 1946, pp. 346–347. English translation: E. Rożek, *Allied Wartime Diplomacy. A Pattern in Poland*, New York 1958, pp. 127–128.

[51] G. Sanford, *Katyń and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice and Memory*, London 2005, pp. 137–139.

[52] Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federacii in Moscow (GARF), unit 7021, inv. 114, vol. 6, ff. 1–53 and vol. 7, ff. 1–9; *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, vol. 4, doc. 42, pp. 129–163 and doc. 53, pp. 205–210. See: *Katyń: A Crime without punishment*, pp. 226–227.

[53] GARF, unit 7445, inv. 114, vol. 8, ff. 317–348. See: N. Lebedeva, *Komisja Specjalna i jej przewodniczący Burdenko* [The Special Committee and Its Chairman Nikolai Burdenko], in: *Zbrodnia katyńska – między prawdą i kłamstwem*, edited by M. Tarczyński, pp. 56–10; W. Materski, *Z początków wojny propagandowej wokół zbrodni katyńskiej. Sowiecka Komisja Specjalna (tzw. Komisja Burdenki)* [From the Beginning of a Propaganda War About the Katyń Massacre: Soviet Special Commission. The Burdenko Commission], in: *Represje sowieckie wobec Narodów Europy 1944–1956* [Soviet repressions against the nations of Europe 1944–1956], edited by D. Rogut, A. Adamczyk, Zelów 2005, pp. 20–28.

[54] GARF, unit 7445, inv. 114, vol. 8, ff. 227–235, 237–257. See: W. Wasilewski, *The Birth and Persistence of the Katyń Lie*, in: *Case: Western Reserve. Journal of International Law*, issue 3/2013, vol. 45, pp. 687–688.

Ewa Kowalska

The Katyń Museum as a Memorial

Decades have passed since the NKVD massacre perpetrated on the order by the highest Soviet authorities was issued on 5 March 1940. But although many years have passed, the book of the 1940 atrocities remains open. Many documents regarding the captured or arrested officers, policemen and representatives of other uniformed services and Polish intelligentsia still have not been released; families are still waiting for execution lists to at last experience closure on the fate of their loved ones, who disappeared after their arrest in the so-called Western Belarus. Katyń, where mass graves of Polish officers were first found in 1943, remains as a symbol of the atrocities committed on citizens of the Second Polish Republic of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds: a symbol of personal and national tragedy. The defenders of Poland captured in September 1939 were held by the NKVD in special camps in Kozelsk, Starobelsk, Ostashkov and prisons of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus. The 22,000 prisoners were executed between April and mid-May 1940, after the order of 5 March had condemned them to death as "staunch enemies of Soviet rule who are beyond reform."

From a historical perspective, Katyń is a symbol of inconceivable cruelty on one hand, and of suffering and uncompromising devotion to the soldier's oath on the other; it is identified with decades of deception and silence and the ultimate triumph of truth. But in remembering the Victims, we tend to forget that the Katyń Massacre is closely linked to the forced resettlement of their families into the Soviet interior. The almost simultaneous implementation of the plan to eliminate "the nation's spiritual fathers" and the deportation of their loved ones guaranteed that Polish intelligentsia and groups of people opposed to the new system would disappear from the map of the former Second Polish Republic. As part of that massive operation, the massacre was to be hidden from the world and the memory of the

Victims – carried predominantly by their families – was to be entirely erased. When speaking of the fate of the victims of the deportations and murders, we must also be aware of the fact that in a final stroke, their properties were confiscated by the Soviet state. This was "the Stalin way" to not only solve the housing problem in the captured territories, but most of all, to create a *fait accompli* when it came to property and settlement. The deportees, with ten and twenty year sentences designed for their complete extortion in slave labour, were never to return to their homes. In addition, the distribution of their property secured a moral bond between the Soviet authorities and those who benefitted. As a result of that great operation of prevention, reprisals, administration and the transformation of the ethnic structure of the seized territories and their depolonisation – were complete.

In areas of Poland liberated from German occupation, the Victims' families who had survived the two occupations would not be able to grieve their loved ones for decades to come. The truth could not be spoken out in public until a wave of changes swept through the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. In post-transformation Poland, efforts of associations of the Victims' families received the support of the Polish government and the Ministry of National Defence (MND), which in late 1992 led to the establishment of the Katyń Museum as a division of the Polish Army Museum. Its first home was in the casemates of the Czerniaków Fort in Warsaw's district of Sadyba. In 2009, because of the deteriorating conditions in the walls of the old fort, the exhibition was closed to visitors. The artefacts were displayed at a temporary exhibition entitled *Memory Would Not Be Erased*, opened at the Polish Army Museum in 2011. Meanwhile, the year 2010 had marked the beginning of a massive project to adapt the caponier of the Warsaw Citadel to house the Museum and provide a proper place for the expanding collection of documents donated by the Victims' families and artefacts unearthed in the process of exhumation and presented to the Museum by the Council for the Protection of the Struggle and Martyrdom Sites (CPSMS). The Museum's new location was officially opened on 17 September 2015.

The Katyń Museum, as a museum and an institution dedicated to research, is a memorial to the Victims of the Soviet policy of oppression against the Polish people. The symbolic message of the place is communicated by Jerzy Kalina's indoor and outdoor artistic installations. As they cross the front yard, visitors to the Katyń Museum pass through the "forest sentry", a reference to the woods covering the Katyń war cemeteries and the burial places of Poles brutally murdered in the East. This is a time to calm one's thoughts before entering the walls of the Museum and walking into the sphere of the sacrum. It is crucial to remember that the Museum is not a strictly historical institution, but a space created to meet the personal need for closure expressed by many witnesses of Katyń. It offers a deep message, a memento, and carries a warning for future generations. A path leads through the

forest – the "scar of memory", symbolising the historical truth. The Polish nation was for decades forced into silence when Katyń was a subject banned from public discourse. What began as a personal wound of the victims' families, grew to affect the whole nation. With time, it began to close and formed a scar. The scar did not heal over well, however, but remained coarse. Hence, the path leading to the Katyń Museum is not straight, smooth or comfortable.

Inside the gate, a march of shadows accompanies visitors on their way towards the exhibition. Down a slanting hallway, the Heroes walk with them arm in arm, as they descend into the dark history of the NKVD's crimes against the Polish nation. A combination of classic narrative methods and state-of-the-art multimedia tools, the exhibition is arranged in a way that supports the message of the Museum. In each hall, various means of communication are carefully balanced to reach all visitors, regardless of age, according to the motto "remember together". Here, everyone will find something to relate to. Young people are given the opportunity to learn the truth of Katyń through the artefacts and multimedia images, while the elderly often come for the sense of closeness with the objects their loved ones had with them until the end.

As they walk down the historical path of the permanent exhibition, visitors learn of the many atrocities committed by the NKVD on the Polish people throughout history. To show the progression of reprisals, the exhibition mentions the massacre of Polish POWs in 1920, as well as the operation implemented in the late 1930s against Poles who remained on the Soviet side of the border after the Treaty of Riga. According to NKVD archives, more than 110,000 Poles were murdered in the "Polish Operation" between August 1937 and November 1938. While the men were executed and their bodies buried in deep pits, their wives and teenage children were deported, usually to Kazakhstan. Their small children were placed in orphanages to be raised as Soviet citizens and family property was confiscated. The Polish community in Kazakhstan today mostly comprises of the descendants of these 1930s deportees. They have never been given an opportunity for mass repatriation.

Another key element of the narrative refers to the fate of the families of the prisoners of special camps and NKVD prisons. Most of those families were deported in April 1940, others – in smaller numbers – were included in every Soviet deportation. The first mass deportation in February 1940 affected the families of veterans of the War of 1920. Remaining families, who for various reasons had been bypassed by the February and April deportations, were dislocated in May and June 1940 and in June 1941. Traces of the displacement of Katyń Victims' families may also be found in smaller resettlement operations within the republics of Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. All attempted estimations of the number of people removed from the Polish Eastern Borderlands during that time, whether quoting the number of 320,000 – after

NKVD records – or 980,000 – according to Włodzimierz Wielhorski, who based his calculations on the records of the Polish Embassy in the USSR – must be regarded purely as approximate figures. While handling these numbers, one must remember that it is not absolute accuracy that is important here, but the fate of these human lives. It is impossible to find the exact numerical data to demonstrate the tragedy of thousands. Figures provided by commanders of the Convoy Troops or commandants of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD – Narodnii Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del) must be considered as output data, since they can only increase with research. Afraid of punishment for high mortality during transport, commanders may have falsified the information. According to existing documents, echelons or trainsets should have by law been equipped with medical staff, medical service cars and shop cars, which in reality were not provided. The only adjustment made to the cattle cars to adapt them for the transport of people was a hole in the floor. Those who survived the journey remembered later that the dead had been left by the side of the railroad, and replacements randomly rounded up from station platforms along the way, to ensure that the number of passengers at the destination matched the number at the point of departure. Those individual memories are but a sample of the experiences and the witness of thousands of deportees.

Families of the Victims, as they entered the world of high security camps and "special settlements", were introduced to a surreal territory in which they were now forced to live.[1] Time served in the Soviet interior, with its unfamiliar laws, customs, habits and reflexes, was not a punishment, since it was inflicted on the innocent: women, children and the elderly. It was a preventive measure and a calculated economical manoeuvre, as it carried specific benefits to the government and the development of communism. It was a form of extermination which additionally served to benefit state institutions. For the specialised police and administrative apparatus, the fate of the persecuted human mass was only a matter of fulfilling quotas towards a general goal. In the process, death was "bureaucratised". By this mathematical approach, deaths were stripped of the dimension of human tragedy and dehumanised. As they performed routine actions, the executive personnel lost any sense of humanity and became but a cog in the administrative machine of the police state. The various reports and statistics they prepared became likewise morally neutral, like any production or trade index. But the bureaucratic bookkeeping of deaths, by sanitising them and trivialising the evil done from behind the clerk's desk, only intensified its horror.[2]

For those who were thrown into that hellish reality of the deportations, where one dreams of nothing but to escape, but where escape is beyond one's reach, life was reduced to tears, prayers, hunger, pain, death and fear. If the destination offered any space to manoeuvre, intelligence was the decisive factor of active adaptation.

One had to quickly understand the enforced conditions, take advantage of the experiences of those who had arrived before, give up his or her habits and acquire new ones, which best fit the primitive new reality, master the local language and the rules that guided the life of the local community. Anything that could be done to prevent a breakdown or physical and moral degradation, was put into action. Adaptation to the new living conditions and daily struggle for survival was a matter of individual predisposition and cannot be generalised. Survival required one to balance between a constant threat of physical death and the danger of death to one's humanity, between death and moral degradation.[3] Clearly, it would be easiest to present that brutal reality in solid dark colours. But the reality of the "other world" was incredibly diverse. Methods of dealing with its challenges depended on the place of deportation, the local community, time and personal endurance. The desire to live demanded maximum effort and a search for methods to survive. To apply oneself to the inhuman work requirements, was to die of exhaustion, so one had to find ways to minimize effort. Resistance to the cruelty of supervisors and the daily humiliations only provoked further reprisals. One of the essentials of survival was a sense of humour which could be used in response to offensive actions to at least partially release the tension. With time, deportees began to experience closeness, show empathy and even occasionally admire the way the locals handled difficult situations. Years later, those who survived remembered those moments of empathy. Jerzy Mazurkiewicz, remembering the plight of his family, said, "My mother Helena almost perished there. As she and her companion in distress carried mortar in a special yoke, a wooden gangplank broke under their weight and she fell from the height of one story onto concrete steps. This dangerous accident thankfully ended only in a minor spinal injury and general bruising, which gave her an opportunity to rest. But she happened upon a person seldom found in those circumstances (and perhaps a true human being), a doctor, whose name should be remembered, as the names of all generous people, regardless of their affiliations, especially of their nationality – Maria Naumanova Medvedenko. She not only restored my mother to health, not only fed her, but took care of the rest of her family to the best of her ability."[4]

Under the constant shadow of death, however, there were few gestures of kindness from strangers, and little joy. One such moment that all remembered well, was the news of the reversal in the international situation, when the mass of imprisoned Polish enemies became allies to the Soviet Union. It was under the Sikorski-Mayski Agreement of 30 July 1941, that some of the Victims' relatives were able to leave the Soviet Union. Those who failed to reach the army formed by Władysław Anders, had to wait to return via the combat trail of Zygmunt Berling's army.

It is difficult – impossible even – to relate the feelings of those who lived through those events, especially the children. Those relatively fortunate ones, who reached

in time the life-saving ship from Krasnovodsk, and who were destined to the quarantine and care in Pahlevi, Tehran, Pahiatua or Santa Rosa, and those who missed that opportunity and remained in the Soviet Union. The latter were not able to cry out their pain in the "new" post-war Poland. Their ordeal did not end with the end of the war.

Various works have been written on the trauma of Holocaust survivors.[5] But those who survived German camps were never forced to hide their experiences. They could speak about them out loud.

But all those returning from the Soviet Union, especially relatives of the victims of the Katyń Massacre, were forced to silence. The women, "those proud Polish women", as they were called, particularly those who had been caught in the Gulags by the urkas (thugs), those who lived in the "special settlements" and – determined to fight for their children's lives – intentionally offered services to such men as stock keepers for a handful of grain for their starving children, kept silent, unable and often unwilling to speak. For what could they expect of others who knew nothing of that world? Not until their deathbed would they admit the truth they had kept to themselves for fear of being misunderstood, fear of moral condemnation, shame that they had survived while their loved ones perished. For years, they could not deal with the guilt, feeling that they should have given their own rations to their loved ones to keep them alive. They believed themselves stained by sin, because fate had dealt with them so graciously, that perhaps they had survived at the expense of the lives of others. They did not have to speak of it with each other – they knew.[6] The survivors, themselves deeply wounded, struggling with the lies, for years fought to commemorate their loved ones, whose traces were lost in the spring of 1940.

Our tour guides also mention the families who for various reasons escaped deportation or who lived in the German-occupied areas. Many fell victim to the "red nights" in Volhynia and Podolia, German reprisals and brutal massacres at the hands of Ukrainian nationalists.

To show the progression of Soviet reprisals, they also speak of later murders on the witnesses of Katyń and mass atrocities, such as the Augustów roundup. In July 1945, the Red Army, with the support of the Soviet Public Security Agency, carried out a large-scale pacification operation in the Augustów Forest and its vicinity. Soviet troops searched the forests and villages, arresting anyone suspected of contacts with the Polish independence movement. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact dates when the operation began and ended – it is usually placed between July 12 and 28. Several thousand suspects were arrested, many were imprisoned and brutally tortured, 600 never returned to their homes.

This important evidence of the Soviet Union's position towards Poland provides the background to the exhibition which focuses on the NKVD atrocity of 1940. On

the first of the Museum's two levels, archival documents and publications are presented; some of the display cases contain information on individual Victims and the fate of their families. Besides the biographical information, the exhibition presents private photographs and other objects related to the individual. This is the informative section which relates the story of the disappearance of the Polish officers, the search for them, lies created to cover up the crime and the period of discovering the truth. It is here that temporary exhibitions are organised. It is also here that visitors can find multimedia touch screens containing information on the Katyń Massacre and its Victims. The everywhere present broken dog tag reminds the visitors of those who have gone on to keep the eternal watch.

The centrepiece of the Katyń Museum is unequivocally the physical evidence of the crime, artefacts excavated during the exhumation work done between 1991 and 2011 in Katyń, Kharkov, Mednoye and Bykivnia. Those relics, placed in urns and arranged in walls of reliquaries, form the display of the lower storey. Hidden in clay urns, individual dog tags, Polish eagle badges, buttons, are silent witnesses of the crime committed on thousands of Victims. Here we can see the nearly sacred value of such objects found in the death pits. It is a temple, a museum – according to Latin etymology, a *museion* in Greek, where national relics are held. The displayed artefacts directly lead the visitors down the path of death. It enables them to personally touch the tragedy of the individual officers and their families. This is a very personal moment.

From the sphere of the sacrum, the visitors are led to the outdoor part of the exhibition. The avenue of the representatives of 44 professions absent from post-war Poland, whose names are etched on granite columns, leads the visitors to the Epitaph. As they open the glass doors bearing symbols of religious persuasions represented by the Victims, visitors find names engraved on steel plates emerging from the graves. Embossed by hand with a letter punch, in the same font as that used on soldiers' dog tags, these graves are arranged by places of burial. From here, climb the stairs to return to the "world of the living." The structure of the stairwell walls resembles the impression of planks which protect the death pits from caving in, to make sure the truth is never obscured again.

Families' Donations

The Katyń Museum is called the home of national and family relics, the home of families of the Victims of special NKVD camps and Ukrainian and Belarusian prisons. As a house, the Museum is alive, and its collection is continually expanding. It comprises exhumation artefacts deposited by the Council for the Protection of the Struggle and Martyrdom Sites (CPSMS) and family memorabilia. The Museum

is a place visited by the elderly who co-create it by bringing in their most precious keepsakes, like letters received from loved ones during their internment in the special camps. One might say that the Museum is in part a family archive, a custodian of the families' heritage of moral and patriotic values. For instance, by the kindness of Mr. Jan Kot, the Museum collection received a postcard sent from the Ostashkov camp by police constable Jan Burak, later murdered in Tver and buried in Mednoye, and three photographs of him from the interwar period. The constable was a young man, born in 1911, who had only served in the police force for four years. But that was enough for the Soviet invader to consider Jan Burak a threat to Soviet rule, to place him in a camp and condemn him to death.

The Mazurkiewicz family from Kolbuszowa donated the entire legacy of Jan and Staś Ozimek to the Museum, mementos of father and son buried in Mednoye, and documents detailing the fate of the family. Their gift proves that young boys as well as adults, were buried in the death pits of Katyń. Staś Ozimek, arrested with his father, Jan, was 17 years old at the moment of their execution. The Museum has also received other valuable gifts, such as an old map where one of the survivors drew the way to the camp in Ostashkov. According to family history, a coincidence and good command of the Russian language allowed its original owner to escape from the camp with two friends. Interestingly, Soviet documents deny any cases of successful escapes from the special camps. But inmate lists confirm their imprisonment, while their names are missing from execution lists. Their names are found on the lists of prisoners released in November, during the Soviet-German prisoner exchange. But one of the survivors' marriage certificate, the needed travel time, their capture by the Germans, escape and final reunion with their loved ones, indicate that they could not have been released in late November. The story seems to suggest that the oppressors may have been afraid to show a record of their failure to stop the escape – an incriminating fact, which would seal their own fates. If additional research confirms the family story, this will mean that those who managed to escape before the end of November 1939, were included in prisoner exchange release lists.

This is not the only story of this kind found in the archives. We learn of others from letters the victims kept with them until the end. The contents of the letters suggest that the prisoners knew about the deportations. Some of the families had managed to write to them from Siberia. The story of the Sowa family might serve as an example. The elderly constable, Jan Sowa, while at the camp, received a letter from his family saying, "We have gone on a long journey. Write to us at Krasnoyarskaya Oblast…" He guessed they had been deported and told his friends to warn their families of the imminent danger. We find a warning in another soldier's letter, "… don't wait for me with leaving on the journey." Research shows that prisoners were used by the NKVD to create proscription lists for further reprisals. The NKVD

acquired the addresses of "enemies of the State" as soon as they entered the gates of the camp. One of the first questions the inmates were asked in prisoner questionnaires was, "Where will you go after you are released?" Most answered, "Home." Next, they were asked to provide their home addresses – and that they did. Beginning in November, when they were again allowed to write home, each one tried to send home one letter each month, as they were allowed, to let their loved ones know they were alive and waiting to hear from home. Each postcard and letter was censored and so the NKVD confirmed the validity of the home addresses provided in the questionnaires. When the inmates discovered the NKVD's ploy, their tragedy was complete; they became aware that they themselves had unwittingly informed on their loved ones.

The archived letters and postcards sent by the prisoners to the families as well as those sent to them by their loved ones and found among the victims' remains in the process of exhumation, are not only the prosecution's evidence, but also road signs of moral values. They speak of a great love for the homeland and faithfulness to the oath, as well as a human love for the family, hope for survival and reunion, and of mutual respect. The Museum's mission is also to pass on those timeless values.

Education

To quote Professor Barbara Szacka, "We know who we are, because we know who we used to be." Inspired by those words, the Museum functions as a bridge between generations, serves the memory of the past, a road sign and a warning. This is where the Victims' families can meet with young people – usually as groups visiting the Museum – and speak with them not only of the past, but most of all of timeless values. Through this kind of education, the Museum moves towards the future from the starting point of the past.

The Museum is often said to be difficult to access. Potential visitors must find it, take specific actions to organise the visit, and pay a price to reach it. In Poland, as opposed to Western states, and especially Israel, these visits are not subsidised. The Museum is also frequently criticised for inappropriate display of artefacts by those who believe it to be an institution which merely presents objects. But the Katyń Museum is not only a collection of items displayed to satisfy curiosity. Its value is in the way it enables direct contact with our cultural heritage. By relating personally to an object and connecting with conclusive legal evidence, visitors remember and understand the past. The multisensory experience turns them into an active audience.

The Museum offers a vast spectrum of stimuli of didactic and educational potential. It provides information and allows visitors to experience it, releasing reflections, stimulating critical and creative thinking and personal development. This kind of

perception places it among institutions oriented towards creative thinking, debate, controversy and discussion. The relevance of this perception of the role of museum institutions proves itself by the activity of visitors of other nationalities, often representing different cultures and world views. For instance, some believe that the Polish defenders captured by the Red Army "went like sheep to the slaughter." By presenting facts supported by historical sources, the Museum's educators speak of the active attitudes of the prisoners, who maintained honour and dignity in conditions for which they had not been prepared. The narrative includes letters written by the inmates to the authorities, clandestine lessons, the educational campaign in the camps and even escape stories. Stories of both unsuccessful escape attempts, recorded by camp authorities and those which one will not find in Soviet records – the successful escapes – of which we learn from the families, and which were not recorded by camp authorities, because of the consequences of disobeying orders.

The Katyń Museum also talks about the Holocaust of the Jewish intelligentsia. Visitors from Israel learn that the Holocaust of the Jewish nation did not only take place under German occupation. Reservists called to arms in defence of their country comprised more than 50% of the officers held in the special camps. They were the *crème de la crème* of Polish intelligentsia and represented more than 44 professions. Many Polish lawyers and doctors were Jews. To them, Poland was not only a place to live, but their beloved Country for which they fought and gave their lives.

Lively discussions are also sparked by visitors from the East, who stress that our difficult history is not unique, but that their nations had suffered much more under the Stalinist system. Of course, we agree with them, but add that we were not citizens of the USSR, that ours was a separate state. The genocide on the Polish nation was never prosecuted. But the Museum's mission is not to spread hatred towards the Russian people. By the kindness and help of simple people, the oppressed families of the prisoners, families exiled to the "inhuman land" had a chance to survive. It was by their advice that many of the deportees were eventually able to return to Poland. At the Museum, we emphasize the fact that our history does not divide, but unties. We plead for unity in remembrance. We point out the ever-timely words Professor Zbigniew Brzeziński uttered 20 years ago, "It must not be forgotten that Katyń still casts a shadow on Polish-Russian relations. To disregard this fact is unpardonable for either side … It must be remembered that the crime committed on Polish citizens is a link in a chain of crimes perpetrated also on the Russian nation … a clear statement of accountability is the necessary condition for a genuine Polish-Russian reconciliation."[7] This statement forces a reflection – not new, but always valid: on the place of history and remembrance in the development of international relations, and especially Polish-Russian dialogue and reconciliation; should the remembrance of atrocities be minimized to avoid confrontation? Does truth lie in the way of nor-

malizing relations and peaceful development… or whether facts, even the most painful, should be brought up when new relations are formed? We say that only by knowing the past can we intentionally build the future.

When speaking of museum education, it must be mentioned that due to limitations imposed by the school history curriculum, rather than to complete or complement classroom education, the Katyń Museum often serves to introduce visitors to the most basic facts. These challenges impose additional tasks and responsibilities on museum educators. Today's tour guides must become teachers and must be able to adjust each tour to the age and level of the group. In order to communicate knowledge at a level appropriate to the visitors' expectations, to help them see and understand, the Museum staff always asks about the size and nature of the group at the time of booking. This is a crucial question, as the Museum personnel believe in the benefits of active participation on the part of visitors. They make sure that the young people are not only passive recipients of information, but that they become co-creators of this special history lesson, while the tour guide acts as "cultural mentor." For this reason, each tour of the Museum by a school group is preceded by a lesson tailored to the interests of the students. For instance, chemistry-oriented high school classes attend lessons taught by the staff of the Central Forensic Laboratory of the Police, where they learn about chemical reagents and non-destructive methods used by the laboratory personnel to decipher writing which can no longer be read by the naked eye. The Museum also offers special lessons for young people interested in medicine. Through the legacy of doctors who fell victim to the Katyń Massacre, we conduct lessons on the medical achievements of the interwar period. Based on their letters to their loved ones, we discuss such processes as the treatment of typhus among Polish soldiers between 1919 and 1921 and Russian prisoners-of-war. This is how we reveal the truth of "anti-Katyń" – the claim that the Poles murdered their prisoners-of-war. According to personal correspondence, in spite of treatment, Russian prisoners died much more often than Poles did of the same condition, due to emaciation and exhaustion after the long march from the East. They were passing away, too weak to handle the harsh conditions of the camps Poland had "inherited" from the partitioning states after World War I. We also offer lessons of interest to athletics-oriented and humanities-centred classes. The former learn of the achievements of Polish Olympians (victims of the Katyń Massacre), of their training conditions and incredible fortitude. The latter, by reading such pieces as the poems of Władysław Sebyła and Lech Piwowar, which are said to have been likely to join the list of Nobel Prize winners had they lived, expand their knowledge of Polish interwar literature. Many more special lessons like these can be organised based on the biographies of the Victims, representatives, as has been said, of 44 professions.

Classes of military and police schools are offered lessons on the duties of soldiers or policemen (respectively) and timeless patriotic values. Aware of their role in shaping attitudes, educators emphasize the difference between patriotism and racism. Patriotism, a concept derived from the Latin word *patria*, compels one to honour and love his or her country and to defend it when needed. By quoting the honour code, using the ethic of the uniformed services of the interwar period as an example, educators point to the road signs, speaking of the sense of calling and conscious choice, discipline, loyalty and sacrifice. By showing the life stories of the Victims, Museum personnel show that personal dignity was to those men the same as self-respect. They served their country with pride, as proudly wearing the uniform. Honour was understood as the attitude and actions of an honest and righteous man. The uniform, which was always kept impeccable, conditioned their behaviour. Respect for the uniform forbade unbecoming actions, drunkenness and brawling and commanded accountability for one's decisions and conduct. It enforced the awareness that one represented the State and obliged to maintain propriety in relations with others, propriety based on respect for one another and his or her dignity. Actions which contradicted service, damaging a soldier or policeman's honour, such as pursuing one's own ambitions above the demands of service or vain careerism, were considered reprehensible. Soldiers and policemen were additionally required to manage well both the demands of their service and the duties of family life, which was to be exemplary. Referring to examples from the past, educators strive to impart principles of integrity and self-discipline, thus reinforcing the educational potential of the school. They teach the history of formations, presenting values of professional ethics; national symbols and the respect they are due, and lessons on ceremony, organised in cooperation with the National Police Headquarters. In reference to the Katyń Massacre, the Museum offers lessons on the fate of officers and policemen under the Soviet invasion of Poland, with the use of copies of postcards unearthed from the death pits and those donated to the Museum by the Victims' families. The young people work in groups, reading the letters and postcards and later present their conclusions. Some responses are quite surprising. Students learn about the difficulties the officers faced in fulfilling their soldierly duty in the conditions to which they had been condemned, and learn of various forms of human behaviour. The postcards mention conflicts, theft, denunciations, and various scams and malversations. They realise the multitude of problems and the heroism of those who overcame them. In another group work setting, students learn about the symbols of Katyń through a card game. The players are given cards with digitalised images of objects excavated from the death pits, such as Silesian and State Police eagle badges, medals, shoulder straps with rank insignia, etc., on one side, and their descriptions on the other. They study the contents and pass their set of cards to another group.

At the end, the moderator tests their knowledge. Correct answers are rewarded with praise. Information learned this way is satisfying and motivating to further study.

The Katyń Museum's educational mission is realised also through participation in the organisation of school competitions, including a national-level competition organised by the National Remembrance Institute, entitled *Buckles, Buttons with Eagles of Rust*. Contestants are encouraged to get involved in learning about the Victims and their stories. Thus history, at first unfamiliar and anonymous, becomes more personal; as the contestants research the Victims' biographies, textbook knowledge becomes their own.

The Katyń Museum also organises "open door" days. On the last Wednesday of the month, the public of Warsaw and surrounding areas, as well as anyone interested, are invited to attend meetings entitled *Come When You Think Katyń*, where Katyń witnesses, journalists and scholars discuss film and theatre. At the meeting on 27 April 2016 – with the showing of the film *Katyń*, the audience had an opportunity to meet Andrzej Wajda. It was one of the great Director's last public appearances. All those who attended, remember the special bond and closeness that could be sensed at the meeting. After the meeting, we spoke to the Victims' families, making plans for the future. The Museum also co-operates with theatres, e.g. the Oratorium, which shows the educational play *Łagry, Wywózki, Katyń* [High-security camps, Deportations, Katyń]. The Museum organises patriotic concerts, and during the "Night of the Museums", invites visitors to the "cinema under the stars" set up in the Parade Ground. The Parade Ground is also used for oath swearing ceremonies where the same values are honoured as were upheld by the Victims in the special NKVD camps and prisons of Ukraine and Belarus. This is a testimony to the respect for the history of the Motherland and the values for which the officers, policemen, representatives of other uniform services and the Polish intelligentsia gave their lives in 1940. This memory of the past lies at the foundation of modern patriotism which says that we are a community of citizens rather than merely a group of people living in the same territory.

Museum employees travel to teach in schools and organisations, participate in "Oak of Remembrance" planting ceremonies, as well as many meetings and conferences in Poland and abroad. Their educational and academic work often involves other people and institutions, such as The National Remembrance Institute, the National Centre for Culture, the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, historical re-enactment groups, the National Police Headquarters and Warsaw City Police Headquarters, the Prison Service, a number of bureaux of the Ministry of National Defence, museums and universities in Poland and abroad. Through this cooperation, academic work and research, exhibitions organised in Poland and abroad, and many other initiatives, the Katyń Museum division of the Polish Army Museum is an active institution on the Warsaw map of museums.

Endnotes

[1] Fyodor Dostoyevsky's famous *Notes From a Dead House* seems to be a prelude to the experiences of Poles deported to the Gulags of Soviet Russia.

[2] See: H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, New York 1963.

[3] Survival literature is quite extensive, e.g. K. Obuchowski, *Człowiek intencjonalny* [The intentional man], Warsaw 1993.

[4] Jerzy Mazurkiewicz's account given during the *Heroes and Silent Heroines* conference at the Katyń Museum in September 2017 (publication in print).

[5] Trauma, as a psychological term, is a physical or spiritual wound which may be the result of a violent emotional experience (emotion) leaving a permanent mark on the psyche.

[6] Reflections based on witness accounts given during the *Heroes and Silent Heroines* conference at the Katyń Museum in September 2017 (publication in print).

[7] Z. Brzeziński, foreword to the first edition of S. Mikke, *"Śpij, mężny" w Katyniu, Charkowie i Miednoje* ["Rest in peace, oh brave one", at Katyń, Kharkov and Mednoye], Warsaw 2010.

Tadeusz Wolsza

Katyń 1940. Witnesses and Testimonies from the Place of the Crime

On the Katyń crime, the countries interested in the matter (among others, Germany, the Soviet Union, and Poland), were able to find from several to a few hundred witnesses, of various rank and importance. Some were reliable, and some confabulated. And, what is worthy of notice, some of them, depending on their situation and their war and post-war circumstances, testified for competing parties in this one of the most important, twentieth-century political disputes that led to events with far-reaching consequences, especially tragic and ruthless for the compatriots of the victims of this cruel massacre of 1940. The knowledge obtained from witnesses, more or less trustworthy, is not the only source of information of the circumstances of the Katyń crime. Further data and information were gained from testimonies about the events of the spring of 1940. These testimonies also were of various rank and importance. Most valuable are, undoubtedly, accounts and memories of eyewitnesses, i.e. those, who almost miraculously saved their lives shortly before the execution, singled out for various reasons by the Soviets (approx. four hundred people from three camps: Kozelsk, Ostashkov, and Starobelsk). There is no doubt that they were first-hand witnesses. Next, I would point to the commentaries of observers, who were accidentally thrown in April and May 1943 to the place of the massacre perpetrated by the Soviets. They were personally able to take cognizance of the documentation brought out from the anonymous burial pits, or even illegally obtained some of the documents. They were members of the medical commissions: German, international, and the technical one of the Polish Red Cross, working under the leadership of Dr. Marian Wodziński, the future author of a priceless account of his stay at Katyń – a key document for the process of establishing the circumstances of death of these Polish officers. Another group was made up of representatives of different circles of occupied Europe, brought in by the Germans confident that they

were not responsible for the crimes at Katyń. From among those, the most important seem to be journalists and radio reporters, as well as men of letters. It was them who, upon their return to their countries, did what the Germans wanted them to. Through various media, they propagated the Katyń crime throughout the whole of German-dominated Europe, discussed the inside story of the crime, indicated the perpetrators, and convincingly substantiated the Soviet responsibility for the death of Polish officers on the basis of preserved evidence (for example, documents found on the victims), and the findings of surgeons (what I have in mind here is, first and foremost, pioneer studies by the outstanding Hungarian professor Ferenc Orsós, dating the crime to the spring of 1940). It is hard not to mention the fact that all commissions and delegations at Katyń were accompanied by film cameras, which resulted in a documentary film and comprehensive accounts in war chronicles.

It is understandable that press publications on the Katyń massacre dominated the so-called "reptile" papers in the General Government; it was a purposeful means of German propaganda. Those publications were addressed to relatives of the victims identified at Katyń, and to all Polish people. Also, the press throughout the Third Reich published articles on the subject on the front page of all daily papers, presenting a detailed description of the crime's date and its scale. From among other countries and cities, most "Katyń-ised" was Paris and the local press.[1] It was not by chance, as Paris was closest to London. And the English did not believe in the findings made by the Germans. In a nutshell, in 1943, publications on the Katyń massacre were common throughout the whole of Europe, from Vilnius and Lviv, through Helsinki, Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Warsaw, Cracow, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Katowice, Prague, Bratislava, Budapest, Bucharest, Sofia, Belgrade, Zagreb, Vienna, Brussels, Amsterdam, Zurich, Rome, Madrid, finally to Lisbon. Some of the publications were interviews and specialised articles, by the way, reliable, prepared by members of the International Medical Commission. In different countries, pieces of evidence and accounts were provided by those who visited the site of the crime on excursions organised by the Germans. It should be emphasised that the documents pertaining to the matter were successively collected by the Polish Government in London, which was getting reports and accounts from cells of the Polish Underground State, and information from the German "reptile" press, in this case very detailed and trustworthy (for example, texts by Władysław Kawecki, or Jan Emil Skiwski's interviews). An important part was played by those witnesses who left Soviet camps and as free people, for example, within the structures of the Polish Army, were searching for their companions in arms of 1939. Józef Czapski's mission brought a number of significant findings on the matter. Soon, new memoirs, accounts, and documents concerning the camps at Kozelsk, Ostashkov, and Starobelsk began to flow to "Polish London". While in 1941, or even in 1942, they did not

know the final fate of those officers who, after the Sikorski–Majski agreement, did not show up to begin their service "in Polish uniforms". There were various hypotheses set forth. Yet, few people allowed for the most tragic possibility – that the officers had been executed by the Soviets. The events of the spring of 1943 changed the situation. On the Polish authorities' inspiration, first studies were presented with documents concerning the fate of the Polish soldiers in Soviet captivity. One of the most important was undoubtedly *Fakty i dokumenty dotyczące polskich jeńców pojmanych w ZSRS podczas kampanii 1939 roku* [Facts and Documents Concerning Polish POWs Captured in the USSR during the 1939 Campaign]. A team of researchers was supervised by Dr. Wiktor Sukiennicki, a pre-war lecturer of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius. Another work, published in London in 1946 under the title of *Masowe morderstwo polskich jeńców wojennych w Katyniu* [Mass Murder of Polish Prisoners of War at Katyń], was about the victims from Kozelsk, techniques of the execution itself, the scale of the phenomenon, and – what was most important – the date of the murder: the spring of 1940. The study was also published in English.[2]

The books and pamphlets were accompanied by important press publications, including memoirs, for example on the camp at Kozelsk (among their authors were: Władysław Jan Furtek, Tadeusz Felsztyn, Stanisław Lubodziecki, Jerzy Grobicki, Witold Ogniewicz, and Jerzy Lebiedziewski – it was Stanisław Swianiewicz who wrote under this fictitious name, as his family at that time was in Poland). Special units of the Second Corps conducted a survey on the fate of Polish citizens in the Soviet Union (including soldiers), and began collecting documents about the Katyń crime. The matter was treated with special commitment by Stanisław Starzewski and Kazimierz Zamorski, who published their *Sprawiedliwość sowiecka* [The Soviet justice] pseudonymously as Piotr Zwierniak and Sylwester Mora. It was for the Second Corps that Ferdynand Goetel wrote down an account of Ivan Krivozercov after the war, a first-hand witness, who in the spring of 1940 was at the scene of the crime. The crowning achievements of this publishing activity was a publication in London in 1948 of the book *Zbrodnia katyńska w świetle dokumentów. Z przedmową Władysława Andersa* [The Katyń Crime in the Light of Documents. With an Introduction by Władysław Anders]. It first edition was claimed by: Józef Mackiewicz and Dr. Zdzisław Stahl. Finally, Józef Mackiewicz was eliminated from its second edition, and he soon published his own book on Katyń, in the German language, in Switzerland.

Gradually, the knowledge about the Katyń crime was becoming increasingly universal, reliable, and – in consequence – irrefutable. Despite the fact, the communists in the Soviet Union questioned all findings established by the Germans on the matter. The English and Americans were cautious in spreading knowledge of Katyń for political reasons, and because of their alliance with Joseph Stalin, they took sides with the Soviet Union, at the expense of Poland.

There were also representatives of other professions as members of various delegations in 1943. What I have in mind here are workers from the General Government and Polish territory incorporated into the Third Reich (e.g. *Reichsgau Wartheland*). They testified in the provinces, among local people. The site of the crime and excavated victims were personally seen by colleagues of those killed, that is, the Polish soldiers in German captivity. Also, some American and English POWs were brought to Katyń. A large group of witnesses to the place of the massacre and the victims was made up of Wehrmacht soldiers, as there were over thirty thousand of them. I would add several hundred Spanish and French soldiers. The German command wanted to use the shocking sight of the massacre to, firstly, frighten their troops and allies; secondly, to strengthen their courage in the face of the approaching Red Army and the NKVD. It was a German idea to use the Polish officers killed in 1940 as a clear warning in what capitulation could end with.

In my reflections, I deliberately omit the witnesses of January 1944, that is those, who were brought to Katyń by the Soviets to distort and cover up the truth about their crime. However, it is impossible not to mention the event, as several of those witnesses had testified in favour of the Germans (inhabitants of the Katyń and Smolensk neighbourhoods, those, who had not managed to escape before the entry of the Red Army and the NKVD – for example a caretaker at a resort home of the NKVD Parfen G. Kiselev, two workers at the Gniezdowo railway station Ivan Savvoteev and Sergei Ivanov, or those who did not expect that the crime would be investigated again in the future. In 1944, forced by the NKVD under threat of death, they changed their mind and indicated the Germans as responsible for the Katyń crime, of course, with a changed date of the event to autumn 1941. After their visit to Katyń, several English and American journalists made public the Soviet knowledge about Katyń in the British and American press. They were joined by communist journalists. Also one Polish communist, journalist Jerzy Borejsza, was among the members of a delegation, and upon his return from the scene of the crime, already in the Soviet Union, began to actively propagate the Katyń lies.[3] His falsehoods and the Kremlin instructions that had been prepared by the NKVD were next repeated by communists in occupied Poland. In a special propaganda campaign, false information was spread among the Polish Army organised in the Soviet Union by Polish communists on Stalin's approval. Those who did not manage, or did not want to join Gen. Władysław Anders, were given the Soviet version of the event. And it was under threat of death to question it.

The problems of Katyń witnesses and testimonies returned in Poland after the war, in 1945. The reason was clear. In line with the Kremlin's directions, communists began their preparations for a Katyń trial. The Soviets gave detailed instructions as to the use of witnesses and findings made by a special commission headed by Niko-

lai Burdenko, the president of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences and the chief surgeon of the Red Army. Of course, the commission's final verdict was obvious and in fact, it was a mere formality. All decisions on the matter had already been made a long time ago, and not at all in 1944, after the Red Army captured the Smolensk area. The Soviet stand on the incident had been widely known from the spring of 1943. It was reflected by the course of Polish-Soviet political relations, including Stalin's decision to sever diplomatic relations with the Polish government of Gen. Władysław Sikorski, who officially demanded that the circumstances of the Katyń crime should be urgently clarified by, among others, the International Red Cross. Communist prosecutors in Sovietised Poland, including Dr. Roman Martini with his team, collected the available documents and decided to find out the witnesses who visited Katyń in 1943. Their tactic was simple: to force all those, who had been captured by the communist security services, to withdraw their earlier statements on the crime in order to present from its second edition, the lie to the version of German responsibility for the crime. This objective was accomplished only in part. A few of the witnesses who in 1943 publicly indicated the Soviets as perpetrators, in 1945 changed their mind. Similarly, under the pressure of the Ministry of Security, two doctors from Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, already under Soviet control, changed their testimonies. Those were professors František Hájek and Marko Markov. In Poland, the special services broke and forced to give new statements on the matter, by such doctors as: Hieronim Bartoszewski, Edward Grodzki, and Adam Szebesta, and Gen. Stefan Mossor (one of his forced texts was published in the periodical *Polska Zbrojna* under the title of *Palmiry – Katyń*, in 1946). They put the blame for the Katyń crime on the Germans in the autumn of 1941. Dr. Marian Wodziński, on the other hand, was sought by the security services with an arrest warrant, without success. In the eyes of the Ministry of Public Security, prosecutor Roman Martini, and communist propagandists, he was the main key witness – probably the most important possible. His involvement in the propaganda campaign of 1945 and the prepared Katyń trial would be a crowning achievement for both the Soviets and the communist Polish authorities.[4] It is impossible to say whether they would be able to cow him into changing his statement of 1943. What is sure is that his escape to the West, to Great Britain, preserved him from participating in the Katyń lie. Similarly, Kazimierz Skarżyński, fearing after initial examinations that he could be detained, decided to illegally leave Poland. While abroad, he prepared a detailed account of his visit to Katyń in 1943. Three other members of the delegations to Katyń of 1943, were detained by the Soviets in NKVD camps in Poland (for example at Rembertów). Dr. Konrad Orzechowski, Stanisław Kłosowicz (Amsterdam Olympian of 1928), and Bolesław Smektała were taken to the Soviet Union for several months. The members of a workers' delegation to Katyń from the General Government and the Reichs-

gau Wartheland, Mikołaj Marczyk and Hieronim Majewski, paid for their visit to the crime site with imprisonment in the Polish People's Republic. A worker from Cracow, Franciszek Prochownik, for several years was systematically kept under surveillance and intimidated.

Another time the witnesses played an important role was in the Nuremberg trials in 1946, in the part of the trial that, on the initiative of prosecutors from Moscow, was to absolve the Soviet Union from responsibility for the Katyń crime. Col. Yuri Pokrovski saw to it that the Nurnberg indictment included the following point: "Mass shootings of eleven thousand Polish prisoners of war in September of 1941 in the Katyń Forest". The intent was obvious. The Soviets, in this short sentence, indicated the Germans as perpetrators of the crime by giving the precise date of September 1941. The number of victims was verified as eleven thousand persons (instructions as to the number of killed officers were sent to all interested countries in the Soviet zone of influence). The prosecutor called the crime genocide.

Great importance to this matter, not accidentally of course, was attached by the defence lawyers of the accused Germans, who talked to the witnesses in every possible way and collected the evidence material. Considering the complexity of the problem and the certitude of the Germans of the course of action in the spring of 1940, they indicated as the main witness the officer of the 537th communications regiment, Col. Friedrich Ahrens, who had been accused by the Soviets of commanding the executions at Katyń. The trickery was clearly legible, as the Wehrmacht officer did not command the regiment in the given period of time, and was in a completely different place. The Soviets called upon Boris Bazilevski, Marko Markov, and Victor Prozorovski to testify before the court. Their selection could be regarded as logical. The first of them had talked to the members of the International Medical Commission at the site of the crime in 1943 and could emphasise the extortion of testimony. The second was a member of this Commission and upon the entering of the Red Army in Bulgaria, he retracted his signature on the Commission's final report. The third – a consultant of the People's Commissariat for the Protection of Health of the Soviet Union – was armed with the knowledge prepared by the Burdenko Commission. But the Soviet witnesses were unconvincing and confused in their statements. In addition, they were reading their falsified testimonies out of notes prepared beforehand.[5] As to the prosecutors from England and America, they had at their disposal the knowledge and documents handed to them by the Polish authorities in exile. An intermediary was the American officer of Polish origins, Henry Szymanski, who had dealt with the Katyń incident already during the war, when he was at a diplomatic post in Moscow. He had, therefore, a good grasp of the matter. The Polish authorities carefully observed the course of the trial and attached great importance to it. This could explain, in my opinion, the fact that they unoffi-

cially handed over materials to Nuremberg, not only to the British and Americans, but also to German defenders.

All things considered, however, the Katyń case in Nuremberg had been prejudged. On the basis of six hearings, the prosecutors, especially American and Soviet ones, decided not to include the problem in the indictment. The Americans sought to make the Katyń problem as short as possible. Just like the British. It was a continuation of the earlier policy of omitting the Katyń incident in the international discourse. The Soviets, on the other hand, realized that their witnesses compromised themselves and that their Katyń position was untenable. After that, the Katyń issue vanished from the proceedings at Nuremberg, and all reference to the Katyń crime were omitted from the final verdict of the International Military Tribunal on 30 September 1946. This omission, however, had its significance, for who was responsible for the crime if not the Germans? It was evident for all: the massacre was done by the Soviets.

The problem of the Katyń crime returned in the early 1950s due to a committee chaired by Ray Madden. In the face of events of the Korean War, the House of Representatives decided to conduct a public investigation into the Katyń forest massacre to show the Americans that communist crimes of 1950–1951 had their origins in the Soviet Union at the time of the Second World War. Circles of Polish immigrants regarded the committee as a response to their demand put forward soon after the war. In the words of Gen. Władysław Anders: "The establishment by the American Congress of the Committee for the Investigation of the Katyń Forest Massacre would be a fulfilment of the demand for justice I had the honour to formulate as an expression of the desire of all Polish people standing on the side of the world of freedom, and especially of Polish soldiers". The committee made a colossal work. During several sessions held in the United States, Great Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany, and in Italy, over 280 witnesses were examined, including several dozens of Poles (for example Gen. Jerzy Wołkowicki, Lt. Władysław Furtek, Władysław Cichy, Col. Stanisław Lubodziecki, Stanisław Swianiewicz, Lt. Col. Jan Lachowicz, Józef Romanowski, Maj. Adam Moszyński, Lt. Col. Dr. Tadeusz Felsztyn, Dr. Jan Kaczkowski, Capt. Eugeniusz Lubomirski, Capt. Roman Voit, Lt. Col. Zbigniew Rowiński, Ferdynand Goetel, Kazimierz Skarżyński, Stanisław Zamoyski, Józef Garliński, Józef Mackiewicz, Józef Czapski, Dr. Zdzisław Stahl, Gen. Władysław Anders, Gen. Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski). Władysław Kawecki, editor of the "reptile" daily *Goniec Krakowski* and radio station "Wanda", the author of the first list of names of the Katyń victims, came to Frankfurt am Main. Other important witnesses were the members of the International Medical Commission: Ferenc Orsós, Helge Tramsen and François Naville. There was also one American officer, who testified before the committee, during the war German POW, John van Vliet – the author of a report from the Katyń Forest.[6]

In the period when the Madden Committee operated, communist propaganda in Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union tried to discredit the American efforts, and presented – on a massive scale – their own witnesses, broken by functionaries of the Ministry of Public Security or the Soviet special services, who decided to testify in line with the Soviet version in return for freedom. In order to strengthen the message, František Hájek's and Adam Szebesta's statements and interviews were published together, side by side. Communists also had at their disposal documents so extremely unreliable, as, for example Wacław Pych's account, that finally they decided not to make them public. According to Pych's fantastic tale, after the execution he dug himself up from the pit and was miraculously saved. In addition, the Soviets asked publicly the question why it was not until 1951–1952 that the Americans decided to deal with Katyń issue. As they rightly pointed out, there was a time for protests and explanations after the report of the Burdenko Commission was presented. Those of the early fifties they regarded as valueless and unreliable. This fact was broadly discussed by the press in the Soviet Union and in Poland.

Endnotes

[1] A. Bobkowski, *Szkice piórkiem* [Pen sketches], Warsaw 2010, p. 405.

[2] More on the subject see: T. Wolsza, *Katyń to już na zawsze katy i katowani. W „polskim Londynie" o sowieckiej zbrodni w Katyniu (1940–1956)* [Katyń will now and forever be a place of executioners and victims. In "Polish London" about the Soviet crime in Katyń (1940–1956)], Warsaw 2008; E. Maresch, *Katyń 1940*, Warsaw 2014.

[3] W. Materski, *Mord katyński. Siedemdziesiąt lat drogi do prawdy* [The Katyń Massacre. A seventy years' journey towards the truth], Warsaw 2010, pp. 34–37.

[4] More broadly see: T. Wolsza, *„To co widziałem przekracza swą grozą najśmielsze fantazje". Wojenne i powojenne losy Polaków wizytujących Katyń w 1943 r.* ['What I have seen is too horrific to be even imaginable"…], Warsaw 2015. Cf.: idem, *Encounter with Katyń: The Wartime and Postwar Story of Poles Who Saw the Katyń Site in 1943*, Durham 2018.

[5] More on the subject see: A. Basak, *Historia pewnej mistyfikacji. Zbrodnia katyńska przed Trybunałem Norymberskim* [A history of a certain mistification. The Katyń crime before the Nuernberg Tribunal], Wrocław 1993.

[6] W. Wasilewski, *Ludobójstwo. Kłamstwo i walka o prawdę. Sprawa Katynia 1940–2014* [Genocide. The lie and the fight for the truth. The Katyń case 1940–2014], Łomianki 2014, pp. 143–176.

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In the shadow of Katyń. Everyday life of Katyń Families in the Years 1939–1989

Introduction

In the constantly growing literature on the Soviet genocide of nearly 22,000 Polish citizens in Katyń, Kharkov, Tver and other places in the former Soviet Union, the life of the victims' families was generally not studied by historians.[1] In their latest publications on the Katyń Massacre, the researchers focused mainly on such issues as: the agential work of the NKVD,[2] correspondence between prisoners of war (POWs) their families in the occupied country,[3] the decision-making process for murdering officers, police officers and public officials,[4] the process of executions,[5] portraits of NKVD murderers,[6] the fate of 395 survivors from extermination,[7] Soviet rules on the exclusion of this group of people from death transports,[8] the fate of the people visiting Katyń in 1943 during the German exhumations,[9] communist repression of people questioning the Soviet version of the Katyń Massacre in the Polish People's Republic,[10] Władysław Gomułka's approach to the Katyń Massacre[11] and many other issues.[12] Polish historiography also has published collections of documents on the Katyń Massacre[13] or an attempt to take a monographic view of Katyń's history.[14] Despite extensive literature, many aspects of this Soviet genocide have still not been fully clarified due to the lack of key Soviet documents.[15]

Although the fate of the Katyń families was not the most important point of research in the history of the Katyń Massacre, it does not mean that no one had been interested in their lives before.[16] The purpose of this text is to present a synthetic history of the fate of the Katyń families in the years 1939–1989. I based my general remarks on interviews conducted with the sons and daughters of the victims and on published memoirs. In this article, I decided not to present the political history of the Katyń Massacre, because it is well known. For sure it is going to be outlined

by experts on the subject in this volume. Due to the limited space in the volume, it is even impossible to present the fate of families under German and Soviet occupation (e.g. life in exile).[17] That is why, when analysing the years 1939–1945, I will focus on selected aspects: the last farewell to father and the reaction of families to the announcement of the discovery of the graves in Katyń.

The last farewell – letters and postcards from the special NKVD camps

The outbreak of World War II ended the carefree and happy childhood of many children in Poland, especially those brought up in the patriotic spirit of the family of a Polish Army officer and a policeman. Some of them stood at the threshold of adult life at that time and made important choices, such as their field of study. In many of the memoirs of the children of the Katyń victims, the interwar period appears to be a time of idyll, play, watching the military parades and a carefree life. In August 1939, the children returning from their holidays saw intensive preparations for the war. When the war broke out, the last farewell to father took place, who was called to the front.

It was also an intensive time of preparing whole military families for the trips and evacuations from the Wehrmacht troops approaching from the west: "We were packed on a large ladder wagon with two strong towing horses. Loaded with different pieces of luggage (…) we set off on the road".[18] However, some families decided to stay in their family homes and wait for the warfare to end. Most of the officers' wives did not have to work before the war, and often they did not have a profession. At the moment of leaving the house by her husband, who set off for the front, the duty to support his family, sometimes consisting of many people, fell on his wife. Not only did the extremely difficult time of surviving the war begin, but also of everyday existence without money, which was usually provided by her husband. Due to the extremely difficult material situation, some families moved to their husband's parents, where they were waiting for further developments. However, most of the families in Poland were convinced that the war would not last long and would end in the defeat of the German army. Great hopes were placed in Poland's Western Allies. On 3 September 1939, when Britain and France declared war on the Third Reich, there was general joy and certainty that the war would soon end and that life would return to normal: "After the war was declared by England and France, there was a great joy. We believed that the war would last a few weeks and the Germans would be defeated".[19]

With every successive day, the passivity of the Western Allies and the defeats of the Polish Army, hopes for a quick end to the war were diminishing. The first days of the war, the wandering and the desperate search for a safe place brought

many traumatic experiences. The endless nightmare of the war was accompanied by tiredness, lack of sleep, hunger and fear for one's own life and those of loved ones.

On 17 September, another unexpected hit came from the east. The Red Army, without declaring an open war, entered the territory of Poland. Running as far east as possible, the officer families were trapped. Without flats (if they still existed), which were on the German side and without the possibility of a quick return. Some families tried to cross the border between the two totalitarian powers, which was settled permanently on 28 September 1939, when the Third Reich and the USSR signed the The German-Soviet Frontier Treaty. Already on 30 September 1939, the Red Army received the regulation on "closing the border with a strong padlock" and strict protection.[20] Special committees were set up to approve or reject applications to relocate and move to another occupation zone. Every day, there was also an increasing anxiety about the fate of loved ones, husbands, fathers and brothers who did not give any sign of life.

After the Red Army's aggression against Poland, about 240–250,000 prisoners of war were taken captive. On 19 September, the People's Commissioner of Defence of the USSR, Kliment Voroshilov (one of the signatories of the decision of 5 March 1940) ordered that the captives will be handed over to the NKVD (secret police). This was a clear violation of war laws and customs. Unfortunately, the Soviet Union had no intention of honouring international agreements (Hague Conventions of 1907 and Geneva Conventions of 1929), which contained principles for the treatment of POWs. On September 19, on the orders of the head of the NKVD Lavrenti Beria, POWs were sent deep into the Soviet Union to eight camps in Ostashkov, Starobelsk, Kozelsk, Juchnov, Putivel, Kozielshchyn, Juzhy and Oranki.[21] About 125,000 prisoners of war found themselves in these places. Some took advantage of the inattention of the Soviets and the war turmoil and fled. From the remaining group, high ranking officers of the Polish Army, service officers and state officials were selected and sent to three special prisoner of war camps administered by the NKVD.[22]

From the moment of being taken captive by the Soviets, Polish prisoners of war had no information about the fate of their families, their condition or the situation in the occupied country. They were also not allowed to send correspondence to families. However, there were cases where the prisoners tried to send "secret messages" to their loved ones in various ways.[23] On 15 October 1939, the officers in Starobelsk demanded the possibility of establishing contacts with their families.[24] This happened a month later. On 20 November 1939, the camp authorities gave their consent to send a message to families – in the amount of one piece of correspondence per month. In the first news, the prisoners calmed their families, by writing that they had survived and were in the Soviet Union. The prisoners of war wrote briefly about themselves

and their situation, most often in one sentence.[25] First of all, the POWs were interested in the fate of their families. This was also partly due to the fact that correspondence sent from the camps was censored by political officers of the NKVD, which is why they (knowing about the censorship) avoided dangerous topics such as everyday life, moods, treatment by camp authorities or the attitude of prisoners to the USSR.

In the postcards we can find information about the anxiety about the fate of families, the care for their material existence, the roof over one's head, as well as the education of children.[26] In the first news that came to the occupied country, we can read about the unwavering hope of the prisoners to quickly end their captivity and meet with their loved ones. There was also content that reflected the religiousness of the prisoners. In many letters, the officers entrusted their fates and families to the care of the Mother of God. At the end of the letters they gave an address for correspondence, waiting for their family's reply.[27]

The correspondence was the only form of contact with the families for the POWs, so they were eagerly awaiting any feedback. The day when correspondence arrived at the camps was a time of great joy. Due to the fact that the families of POWs often lost their former homes or changed them under pressure, communication was significantly hindered. The lack of information about the fate of loved ones had a devastating impact on the moods of officers and policemen.[28] This is how the Captain of the Polish Army wrote to his wife in one of his postcards: "Dearest! I no longer know who or what to blame, but so far I have had no news of you. I wrote to you a month ago and tried to get in touch with you (…) and nothing. And I was sure that by this day I would receive something, because others have received letters. Please, only give me a sign of yourselves".[29]

Delays in correspondence were significant. Due to the vast areas of the Soviet Union, the letters and postcards reached their addressees after a month or two. The delay was also caused by the fact that the news was held by the camp censors.[30] The first news to families from POWs came around Christmas.[31] Answers to postcards and letters came to the camps at the end of January. From 20 November 1939 until mid-March 1940, prisoners of special camps could exchange up to 3–4 messages with their families. Most often, however, families who have managed to keep their postcards and letters for many years have two or three messages.[32] Each of these cards and letters became a kind of relic for the families: "Mum from these cards was learning the text by heart and reciting it to us. In the evenings, instead of fairy tales, we heard what dad wrote and how he would be when he came back. The last card that came from Starobelsk was dated in March. There were no messages later".[33] It was the last voice of their loved ones that reached their homeland.

Since mid-March, the camp authorities have stopped sending correspondence without, of course, informing the POWs. Despite the lack of a general order for all

the special camps, we know that the dispatch of the letters was stopped in mid-March. In the case of Starobelsk, it took place on 16 March 1940.[34] This was due to the preparation of all three camps for "unloading". Such a hidden euphemism in the documents of the NKVD was the murder of Polish citizens. Families lost contact with their loved ones, not knowing their future fate. From August 1940, correspondence from the families living in the occupied areas of the USSR, which had been sent to the camps, was sent to the appropriate NKVD offices in order to track down the families who had escaped deportation in April 1940. Letters and postcards sent from the areas under German occupation were most often destroyed. Sometimes the recommended letters or packages would return with the annotation "addressee unknown".[35]

Despite their fears, the families believed that their loved ones will come home soon. Still, during the occupation they started searching in all available ways. Of course, it was common to write to the Polish and International Red Cross. However, with the passing of months and the lack of a sign of life from the POWs, the anxiety of families has increased. The breakthrough came in 1943.

Life of the Katyń families during two occupations – general remarks

Everyday life under German occupation for the Katyń families looked the same as for any Pole. Police hours, round-ups, street executions, displacements, deportations to Germany – all this was part of the "ordinary" occupation everyday life for every Polish citizen, not only for the Katyń families. The German occupier did not use any special forms of repression for the families of officers detained either in Soviet special camps or in German oflags. It should be noted, however, that the Katyń families could have become indirect victims of German terror, not directed strictly at them, but at Polish society as a whole. Since its entry into Poland, the German invader has systematically and deliberately implemented a programme to liquidate the managerial and educated segments of Polish society (*Intelligenzaktion* in Pomerania and *Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion* in the General Government).

The life of those families who found themselves in the areas annexed by the Soviet Union was completely different. Due to their relationship with the Poles detained in special camps and NKVD prisons, these families were deported to distant regions of Kazakhstan in February and especially in April 1940. The principle of collective responsibility prevailed in the Soviet Union. Since the officers, police officers and state officials detained in the NKVD special camps were regarded as an element hostile to the Soviet authorities, their families were also considered enemies of the authorities. On 2 March 1940, the Political Bureau of the Central

Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of Soviet People's Commissioners decided to deport this group of people.[36] On the night of the 12–13 April 1940, NKVD units entered the apartments of, among others, the families of Polish Army officers, prison guards, police officers, gendarmes and state officials. About 60,000 people, mainly women and children, were deported to Kazakhstan and other remote Soviet locations.[37] The day after the decision to deport the families of prisoners of war and those detained in prisons of the so-called Western Ukraine and Belarus, on 3 March 1940, Beria submitted a note to Stalin with a proposal to shoot Polish prisoners of war at three NKVD special camps and Poles detained in prisons in the so-called Western Ukraine and Western Belarus.[38] At the same time as the families were being deported, executions were already under way.[39]

German discovery of the graves in Katyń

The first official announcement of the murder by the NKVD was made in English late in the evening of 11 April 1943 by the German Information Agency "Transocean" and was addressed to listeners outside the Reich and the occupied countries. It was not until two days later, on 13 April, that Radio Berlin broadcast a message to the people of the Third Reich and the occupied countries.[40] It seems that the main source of information for Polish society was not the radio broadcasts, but the German press published in Polish in the occupied areas.[41]

Initially, the Polish public approached the news very mistrustfully. German reports were unbelievable. Janusz Zawodny, as a witness of the reaction of Poles to the German propaganda, noted: "When it was announced that graves had been discovered in Katyń, I lived in Warsaw. The Polish general public assumed that it was a Goebbels fraud aimed at breaking relations between the Soviet Union and other Allies".[42] This attitude was influenced by more than 3 years of the totalitarian propaganda's impact on Polish society, which rejected all sensational messages given by the Germans.[43] Another factor affecting public opinion may have been the scale of the crime and its unprecedented nature at the time. Never before has there been such a large-scale murder of prisoners of war. In a civilised society, a crime of this size was unimaginable. In their messages about the crime in Katyń, Poles did not see any sign of mercy or sympathy from the occupier, but rather a cold and sophisticated calculation, which was supposed to arouse public dislike of the eastern neighbour and thus whitewash the image of the Germans.

In the case of the Katyń families, the reactions to information about Katyń are very complex. And when they are presented, generalizations should be avoided. Of course, the first reaction to the news about Katyń was pain, sadness, and crying.

Families could not accept the loss of the closest person, husband, father, brother. There have been reported cases of fainting of women who have heard or read the names of their relatives from loudspeakers and newspapers.[44] Such a reaction could suggest that families initially believed in the reports. Very quickly, however, suspicions were found in German communications. The Katyń families, just like Polish society, did not believe that the murder in Katyń took place. The Germans were accused of inventing the whole story. The mood of Polish society also influenced the families of the victims. One of the daughters of the murdered officers said: "Everyone said not to believe in this information, because it is only German propaganda. And we did not believe it. We thought that all of this was not true. We couldn't imagine it".[45] Over time, it became clear to Polish society that the murder in Katyń was true. The political turmoil around the murder, the deteriorating relations between the Polish government in London and the Soviet Union, and finally the break in mutual relations were all eagerly reported by German propaganda to Polish society, which came to accept the fact that this time the Germans were telling the truth. While Polish society accepted the German discovery; the process of accepting the news heard by the Katyń families was different.

Despite the reluctance to receive messages, newspapers informing about Katyń have become a common reading. First of all, "death lists" were followed, where the names of the exhumed victims were published. Additional confusion was caused by mistakes in the names of the victims, which were successively published in newspapers, despite numerous protests from the Polish Red Cross. A "twisted" military rank or other letter in the name was enough for the family to believe that their loved one was alive.[46]

A part of the Katyń family members immediately believed in the German news.[47] The information received began to form a logical whole: correspondence coming from the camps in the USSR, its interruption, the unsuccessful search conducted also by the Polish government in exile in London and the publication of the first information about the discovery along with photos of the exhumation. For some families, it has become clear that there can be no question of mistake or manipulation. The question of those guilty of the murder and its scale remained to be clarified. Undoubtedly, the published memoirs and interviews are dominated by the view of Soviet guilt. There are also accounts that suggest that families believed in German responsibility for the murder or did not rule out such a possibility.[48] Such views are hardly surprising. Polish society knew perfectly well what the Germans were capable of. Street executions, round-ups, concentration camps, all of which could have caused justified doubts. It seems, however, that this type of assessment was rare among Katyń families. However, a fact still needs to be taken into account. Published memoirs and interviews took place after 1990 and the Soviet side con-

fessed to the murder. Therefore, we do not know how many families in 1943 actually believed that the murder was carried out by the Germans. We cannot exclude that some of them have changed their opinion.

The situation of families whose relatives were in other special camps: Starobelsk and Ostashkov, was slightly different. The lack of prisoners on the "death lists" of Starobelsk and Ostashkov aroused great hopes among these families. The families believed that Katyń and the prisoners of war buried there were isolated cases. It was believed that their relatives had entered the General Anders Polish Armed Forces in the USSR, and will return to Poland after the war.[49] However, there were concerns about the published news of 10,000–12,000 victims, i.e. the murder of the entire officer corps. Such information was provided already on 16 April.[50] Indeed, at the beginning, the Germans believed that they had discovered a cemetery of the whole Polish officer corps taken captive by the Soviets in September 1939. Families whose relatives sent letters from Starobelsk and Ostashkov followed the numbers in German newspapers on a regular basis. Every day's passing and the lack of a beloved one on the lists aroused more and more hopes. In one of the accounts we read: "I remember that feeling of relief: 'He is not on the list'. Mum, uncle, aunt, they were bending over a map, a military map, a German map: 'Where was this Starobelsk? And where is Katyń?' They said that he had been saved, too far. All this was just false hopes".[51] Fear, relief and eternal hope were the most common feelings accompanying families who did not find their loved ones' data on the "death lists" published by the Germans.

Naturally, there were families who guessed that since Kozelsk prisoners were murdered, the fate of Poles from Starobelsk and Ostashkov had to be the same.[52]

We should also not forget the families whose relatives were imprisoned in NKVD prisons in the so-called Western Ukraine and Western Belarus. These people did not associate the "disappearance" of a close person during the war with the Soviet murder. The newspapers informed about the extermination of Polish Army officers from special camps in the USSR.

The attitude to the events of 1943 of those families who were deported to the USSR is also worth noting. It seems that in the vast majority of cases they did not know about the German discovery. Due to the huge area and nature of the deportations, these people were practically deprived of access to any information. Some of them learned about the outbreak of the German-Soviet war only after the end of World War II. There were, however, some exceptions. Families who were lucky enough to live or work in larger cities could read about the German discovery in newspapers posted in display cases or from radio receivers.[53] However, on the basis of the accounts and interviews, it seems that most of the deported Poles did not know anything about it.

Life in the Polish People's Republic

After the end of World War II, great migrations of the population began. Poles who were sent to forced labour in the Third Reich or deported to the Soviet Union returned to Poland. The life of the Katyń families after the war in a communist-governed Poland was not easy. Throughout the Soviet Bloc, the version in force was the one established by the Commission of Nikolai Burdenko, who stated that the murder in Katyń had been committed by the Germans in 1941. The years 1945–1956 were a period when people who opposed the Katyń lie in the Polish People's Republic were most frequently and severely punished. People were sentenced to prison or to a labour camp. These were not the only forms of repression. They were repeatedly called upon to appear at the people's militia offices, subjected to long interrogations, intimidated, threatened and beaten, and even disseminated information about their mental illness to local communities.[54] The authorities thus showed that they had no intention of tolerating any form of fight against the official and only version of the Katyń massacre. The families whose loved ones were killed in Katyń lived in fear. Mothers instructed their children not to talk about their father under any circumstances, especially as he died in Katyń. During admissions to university or work, standard questions about the father often appeared in various questionnaires. The education system during the communist period was to prepare a person with a new type of consciousness and value system, who accepted a new ideology and supported a new social order.[55] Therefore, there was no room at the universities for a "foreign class element" who spoke inappropriately about Katyń. It is worth mentioning that the very origin of the family of a pre-war Polish Army officer or policeman caused serious problems.[56] These families were considered as "class enemies" and doomed to social degradation. It is worth mentioning the situation of families whose relatives were imprisoned in the camps in Starobelsk and Ostashkov, because their fate was not entirely clear. These people most often wrote in various questionnaires that "the father was missing during the war", which was true given the state of knowledge at that time.[57]

There have been cases of Katyń families, who were against the Katyń lie. In 1951, Zofia Dwornik, a student, was sentenced to one year in prison in Łódź. During classes, she openly accused the Soviet Union of committing the murder in Katyń. Her father, Major Stefan Dwornik, was murdered in Kharkiv, while her uncle, Captain Kazimierz Dwornik, was murdered in Katyń.[58] Taking into account the communist repression, there were few families who decided to admit that their loved ones were murdered in Katyń in 1940 or were imprisoned in other POWs camps. Such an attitude is hardly surprising. In other cases, a simple denunciation of a person's father or husband being killed in Katyń was enough.

A moment later the surveillance would begin.[59] Katyń in the times of the Polish People's Republic was like a stigma.

Very often, hostile speeches about the Katyń case were treated as "anti-state" activities. The security apparatus closely monitored various groups or individuals who rejected the Soviet version of the Katyń massacre. People who were telling the truth about Katyń were most often sentenced under Article 22 of the Decree of 13 June 1946 "on particularly dangerous crimes during the period of the reconstruction of the State" – the so-called small penal code.[60] For committing an offence under this article, it was possible to be imprisoned for 5 years. The Special Committee to Combat Economic Abuse and Damage was another organ that pursued "false" information about the Katyń massacre right after the war. The purpose of the authority was to detect and prosecute persons "harming the interests of the economic or social life of the State". These included insulting government officials, insulting state leaders and spreading false information. Operating until 23 December 1954, the Special Committee sentenced people telling the truth about Katyń to two years in labour camps.[61] Although immediately after the war the repression of people who opposed Katyń's lie began, it was not until March 1952 that the Ministry of Public Security issued the special instruction No. 6/52, which ordered the local security apparatus structures to supervise these people and arrest them.[62] The development of this instruction was related to the activity of the Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation and Study of the Facts, Evidence, and Circumstances of the Katyń Forest Massacre in the United States.

The authorities of the Soviet Union and the Polish People's Republic wanted to erase the word "Katyń" from the consciousness of the Poles. Throughout the entire period of the Polish People's Republic, it was impossible to explain the murder of officers, and any attempts to do so led to persecution by the Communist security forces. Paradoxically, however, the actions taken by the communists in Poland contributed to greater cultivation of the memory of the victims. There was also no shortage of independence groups, whose name referred to the place of murder of Polish POWs. In the years 1948–1950, the youth organization "Katyń" operated in Łódź and Sieradz. Its members believed that such a name perfectly reflected the organization's goals, i.e. the fight against the communist system.[63] Already at the end of the 1940s, Polish society expressed its disapproval of the official policy of the authorities concerning Katyń. The daily bulletins of the Ministry of Public Security recorded many such signals, in the form of inscriptions on the walls. "Death of the Reds for Katyń", "Katyń – We remember", "A Russian is the murderer of our brothers in Katyń".[64] These are just some of the inscriptions that have appeared since the Stalinist period. There were many more actions against the authorities and official historical policy.[65] They were visible not only in large cities, but also at the local level in small towns.

After the war, Katyń families wanted to normalise their status, and the important questions were: were the officers' wives widows and children orphans? Widows and orphans could apply for a pension, and children could also apply for a social scholarship, starting their studies.[66] Therefore, right after the war, Polish society as a whole applied to the courts for recognition as dead of a person who had disappeared without any news during the war. In court decisions concerning the recognition of the death of the victims of the Katyń crime, there were various dates: 9 May and 31 December 1946 or 1947, April–June 1943, autumn 1941 or even the correct year 1940, however, most often the first two dates appeared. Those families who decided to challenge the court decisions, demanding that 1940 be designated as the time of death, had to take into account the consequences of their own actions.[67] Such activities aroused the interest of the security apparatus and led to surveillance. In the court documents (deposited in the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance or the Katyń Museum) I found at least a few cases where families questioned court rulings, but without information what the consequences were.

After the war, families who did not believe in the death of their loved ones started searching almost immediately. People deported during the occupation continued to return from the Soviet Union. Later, during the second repatriation in the years 1955–1959, about 250,000 Poles returned to Poland. During the return of Poles to their homeland, mothers with children ran to the station looking around for passengers to see if their father or husband was there. The belief in finding one's husband or father was very strong among these families, especially in the first years after the war.[68] Families wrote to the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Repatriation of Poles from the USSR, asking for any information. It is hardly surprising that families, especially those whose relatives "disappeared" in Starobelsk and Ostashkov, lived long years with the hope for their return. Even those families whose loved ones were murdered in Katyń and whose death was confirmed by the Polish Red Cross did not stop searching. Long years after the war, through various organizations, such as the Polish Red Cross, the International Red Cross, the Polish Red Cross in London, transformed into the Relief Society for Poles, or the American Polish War Relief, they tried to explain the fate of their relatives. Every doorbell, every letter, every parcel aroused hope that the addressee would be a father, husband, son or brother. The process of searching for family members lasted for many years, even in the 1970s. By sending dozens of questions to various organizations for many years, families believed that this time they would receive a positive answer. I personally met several families, who had many of these documents. It can be said that the search for relatives was one of the most important aspects of the life of these families for many years after the war.

Of course, not all families were full of optimism about the fate of their relatives. As time went on, it became clear to some people that a family member is dead. After

the war, mothers most often stayed with their children, even when the adult children had already started their own families.[69] Mothers helped in running the house and raising grandchildren. The widows, however, believed for many years that their husbands will come back. It seems that widows have never married again in the vast majority of cases. In the countless accounts we can find a statement that the widows waited for their husbands' return until their death. Children who entered adult life and started their own families were able to accept their father's loss more quickly.

In the life of the Katyń families, holidays of all kinds were also very important. During the Christmas Eve dinner, the traditional empty plate, where a photograph of a loved one was placed, became a symbol. The holidays also aroused fervent hopes that on that very day their closest would return home. However, instead of joy, the holidays usually brought sadness and depression when it turned out that this time, their loved one did not come back:

"I always remember the sad moment when we were sitting together the three of us: only mom, my brother and I, and there was a photograph of daddy on the table. It has always been a sad holiday".[70] In turn, in another account of a judge's daughter, who was murdered in Kiev, we read: "Holidays have always been sad. I had hoped that he might come back that day. Mother tried to rebuild the old atmosphere. She dressed up a Christmas tree and saved neither time nor money to diversify these holidays as much as possible in order to preserve the tradition. We always left a plate for father".[71]

Local graveyards played a special role in the life of the Katyń families. Even during the period of communist censorship, symbolic tombstones, epitaphs and crosses began to appear, commemorating the murdered and missing Poles. The children of the murdered officers usually decided to commemorate their father at the time of their mother's death. It was often the moment when, together with mother, the last hope of father's return was dying. In the case of families whose relative was murdered in Katyń, even in the 1970s or 1980s, it was a risk to mention the date of 1940 on the tombstone. Therefore, the families decided to enter the false date of 1941, hoping that the time would come when it would be possible to tell the truth about this crime and change the inscription: "The tombstone designer was full of fear and wrote: 'He died in Katyń' instead of 'He was murdered in Katyń', and the date: 1941 instead 1940".[72] It was less important to give the correct date, it was more important to erect a tombstone that would commemorate a family member. Such memorials were simply meant to serve as a symbolic grave to which families could come, light a candle and pray during Christmas, Easter, All Saints' Day. In the case of the families of prisoners from Starobelsk and Ostashkov, the situation was slightly different. Due to the lack of detailed knowledge, in the inscriptions the families listed the places of the camps, from where the last news came in 1940 or "place of eternal rest unknown". Interestingly, these families gave the date of death in 1940, which may

suggest that after many years they were convinced that the death of their loved ones is linked to the crime in Katyń. During a conversation with Ludmiła Seredyńska, the daughter of a prisoner of war in Starobelsk, she said that when her mother died in 1977, an epitaph was placed on her grave: "Dr Michał Seredyński 1904–1940, the place of eternal rest unknown".[73]

Already in the second half of the 1970s, the opposition fought very hard against the Katyń lie. The main activities were based on violating censorship and the information monopoly. The turn of the 1970s and 1980s was a time when independent publishing houses published known and valued, but prohibited by censorship, works about the Katyń Massacre.[74] In 1979, the Katyń Institute was established in Cracow. Its purpose was, among other things, to publish the *Katyń Bulletin* and disseminate it underground to the public. The Coordinating Council of the Polish Community of the Free World at the Congress in Rome in November 1979 decided to make 1980 the "Year of Katyń" due to the 40th anniversary of the murder.[75] The help of priests in organizing the anniversary of the crime was also priceless. Throughout Poland, special masses were held in various parishes on behalf of the fallen, most often on 13 April. The families of the murdered took part in these services in large numbers.[76] Another dramatic evidence of opposition to the falsification of the history of the Katyń Massacre was the suicide of Walenty Badylak in Cracow. On 21 March 1980, the 76-year-old Badylak tied himself to a water hand pump on the Cracow market, poured petrol on himself and set himself on fire. Different types of opposition circles in the country, such as the Student Committee of Solidarity and the Confederation of Independent Poland, commemorated the act of Badylak. Despite the efforts of the Security Service to convince Polish society that the victim was mentally ill, the Poles did not believe in it and by laying candles and flowers at the hand pump, manifested their solidarity with Badylak.[77]

No political crises in the Polish People's Republic (1956, 1968, 1970 or 1976) aroused such hopes in Polish society and the group of Katyń families as the events of the early 1980s and the emergence of "Solidarity". The establishment of the Independent Self-Governing Labour Union "Solidarity" aroused hopes among Poles for regaining freedom and the final settlement of the Katyń Massacre case: "Everyone joined the Solidarity movement with great enthusiasm and great hope that this freedom would finally come. We expected freedom, because freedom is tantamount to truth".[78] For several months, people openly spoke about Katyń, and about issues related to it.[79] Even before the events connected with the creation of "Solidarity", events took place which testified to the fact that the issue of Katyń had been raised anew in public awareness. The so-called "Katyń Valley" in the Powązki Military Cemetery became a symbol for the Warsaw population and all Poles. In 1974, for the first time, ceremonies were organised to commemorate the murdered in 1940.[80]

In May 1981, the Committee for the Construction of the Monument to the Victims of Katyń Crimes was established in Warsaw. Its most important task was to collect money for the construction of a monument. Thanks to the commitment of the Melak brothers, especially Andrzej and Stefan, and the support of the public, the goal was achieved. On 31 July 1981, at the Old Powązki Military Cemetery in Warsaw, in the so-called "Katyń Valley", a four and a half-metre-high stone cross with the inscription "Katyń 1940" was unveiled. Immediately after the ceremony, which was observed by the Security Service, during the night the monument was dismantled and transported in an unknown direction.[81] The "Katyń Valley" became a symbolic place where, on the occasion of various anniversaries concerning the martyrdom of the Polish nation, the families of the murdered and ordinary citizens who fought against communist censorship and those close to the cause, gathered together. Despite the manifestations of freedom, which lasted very shortly (until the delegalisation of "Solidarity" and the introduction of martial law in Poland), censorship of Katyń continued in Poland. All kinds of insubordination have had consequences. Work places, public meeting places such as schools, universities and churches were monitored by the Security Service: "Before 1980, during a lecture organised for the work place, the speaker talked about the camps and my husband broke away asking about Katyń and its perpetrators. The speaker answered that there were some signs, but the next day my husband had been dismissed from work".[82]

In the second half of the 1980s, the changes resulting from the USSR in connection with Mikhail Gorbachev's introduction of the policy of *glasnost* and *perestroika* began to affect Poland. The upcoming changes were marked by the signing of the "Declaration on Polish-Soviet Cooperation in the Field of Ideology, Science and Culture" by M. Gorbachev and Wojciech Jaruzelski in Moscow on 21 April 1987. The report referred, among other things, to the issue of the "white spots" in the history of both countries. On 15 October 1987, the Voivodeship Office of Internal Affairs in Wrocław informed about the situation in the region: "It is also noted that the best climate in Polish-Soviet relations since the establishment of the Polish People's Republic has been generated at present. This is also manifested by the public talk about taboos such as Katyń, which was recently mentioned on the occasion of the Polish Army holiday".[83] In 1988, the first (still illegal) associations of Katyń families were established in Konin and Warsaw. In 1989, several important events took place which pointed to slow changes in the Katyń case. First, at the beginning of March 1989, Jerzy Urban, the government spokesman for the Polish People's Republic, during the weekly conference, stated that there were many indications that the murder in Katyń had been committed by the NKVD. This was the first public statement of its kind by a member of the communist government. There were also opportunities to go to Katyń, which were used, among others, by the families of the murdered

Poles.[84] After the elections in June 1989, hopes for the final disclosure of the truth about Katyń were renewed in Polish society. On 30 September 1989, a representative of the opposition, Andrzej Łapicki, submitted an interpellation to the Sejm concerning the Katyń Massacre. A letter from the Katyń families was attached in which the families demanded that the government of the Polish People's Republic "take an official stand on the recognition of the Katyń Massacre as the work of Stalin and the Soviet state". In addition, a special committee was required to be set up "to prosecute this genocide as a crime which is not time-barred".[85] The petition of the Katyń families was received, among others, by W. Jaruzelski, Mieczysław Rakowski and Czesław Kiszczak. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Polish People's Republic, which received the document from the Chancellery of the Sejm, recommended presenting at the meeting of the Sejm, the factual information about the efforts of the government of the Polish People's Republic so far in terms of a detailed explanation of the fate of officers from special camps.[86]

The families of the victims began to organise meetings in the larger cities. During the meetings people recognized their neighbours, friends from work or even friends. At that time, they learned that their loved ones were also victims of the crime. Katyń families literally started to recognize themselves on the streets of the cities. This shows how much the Katyń families were afraid to talk about their husbands and fathers. Even among friends, this topic has been raised reluctantly and rarely. After the liberation of Poland from the grip of communism, Katyń families, forced to live in lies for too long, very willingly attended meetings. Many people with similar experiences have found real friends, people almost as close as family. Meetings of the families of those murdered also served as public forums where the latest information on the Katyń Massacre could be presented. A serious blow to the Katyń families was the death of Father Stefan Niedzielak. In January 1989, he was brutally murdered in his parish. The priest, especially strongly associated with the milieu of the Katyń families, was the originator and co-founder of the sanctuary "For those fallen in the East". This murder was supposed to intimidate not only the Katyń community, but also all those who openly criticized the crimes in the Soviet Union and the Polish People's Republic. Of course, the evidence in the case disappeared in strange circumstances, and the perpetrators were never managed to be found.[87]

An important day for the Katyń families, but also for all of Polish society, turned out to be 13 April 1990, when the Soviets officially informed that the murder of Polish officers was committed by the NKVD. This first step on the way to knowing the truth about the Katyń Massacre was far from satisfactory. The Soviet side did not apologize to the Polish nation for the murder and for half a century of lying. An important day for further declassifying the history of the Katyń Massacre was 14 October 1992, when Poland received copies of key Soviet documents concern-

ing the crime (there is no need to describe them, they are well known: Beria's proposal, the Politburo decision from 5 March 1940, the note by Alexandr Shelepin to Khrushchev of 3 March 1959). However, the Katyń crime still conceals many secrets.

Conclusions

The Katyń families, which were established throughout Poland after 1989, are losing their members every day. To this day, most of the widows of the victims have already died. Daughters and sons who are responsible for the activities of the associations are people who are 80 years old or older. For many years, they were active in building memorials, setting up remembrance plaques and monuments. They educated young people. They participated in anniversary celebrations. They did everything so that in a free Poland, society would not forget even for a moment the history of the Katyń Massacre and the Katyń lie.

The stigma of origin of the victim's family passed away with the fall of the communist system in Poland, but the pain after years of hypocrisy and lack of a definitive explanation of the crime continues to this day. It is worth remembering that the Katyń Massacre is not only a political murder, but also a tragedy of many thousands of families who lost their loved ones. To this day, there are families in Poland who do not know where their relatives were murdered or buried. They cannot light candles on the grave or lay flowers. Until every victim of this Soviet murder is known by name, historians should continue their research. Unfortunately, much depends today on Polish-Russian politics and mutual relations, which have been disastrous for a long time.[88]

Endnotes

[1] A scientific publication describing the fate of Katyń families from the beginning of World War II to the confession of the Soviet Union to the murder is the following work: K. Łagojda, *Życie w cieniu śmierci. Losy rodzin katyńskich w latach 1939–1989 w świetle wywiadów z członkami Dolnośląskiej Rodziny Katyńskiej. Wybrane aspekty* [Living in the shadow of death. The fate of Katyń families in the years 1939–1989 in the light of interviews with members of the Lower Silesian 'Katyń Family'. Selected aspects], Wrocław 2016. The information in this article is based on the findings presented in my book.

[2] S. Jaczyński, *Rozpracowanie operacyjne oficerów Wojska Polskiego w obozach specjalnych NKWD (jesień 1939 – wiosna 1940)* [Operational work of Polish Army officers in NKVD special camps (Autumn 1939 – Spring 1940)], in: *Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy*, issue 4/2003, pp. 79–98.

[3] Idem, *Zagłada oficerów Wojska Polskiego na Wschodzie. Wrzesień 1939 – maj 1940* [The extermination of Polish Army officers in the East. September 1939 – May 1940], Warsaw 2006, pp. 187–192; *Słowa tęsknoty. Zachowane listy jeńców Kozielska, Ostaszkowa i Starobielska* [Words of longing. Preserved letters of camp prisoners of Kozelsk, Ostashkov and Starobelsk], edited by E. Gruner-Żarnoch, M.D. Wołągiewicz, Szczecin 1996; K. Łagojda, *Nim zamilkli na zawsze* [Before they went silent forever], in: *Pamięć.pl – Biuletyn IPN*, issue 4/2015, pp. 32–36.

[4] N. Lebedeva, *Proces podejmowania decyzji katyńskiej*, in: *Europa nieprowincjonalna. Przemiany na ziemiach wschodnich dawnej Rzeczpospolitej (Białoruś, Litwa, Łotwa, Ukraina, wschodnie pogranicze III Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej) w latach 1772–1999* [The decision-making process in Katyń, in: Non-provincial Europe. Transformations in the eastern territories of the former Republic of Poland (Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, the eastern borderland of the Third Republic of Poland) in the years 1772–1999], Warsaw 1999, pp. 1555–1174; K. Jasiewicz, *Mechanizm podejmowania decyzji katyńskiej* [The mechanism of making the Katyń decision], in: *Dzieje Najnowsze*, issue 3/2013, pp. 49–62.

[5] N. Lebedeva, *Katyń. Zbrodnia przeciwko ludzkości* [Katyń. Crime Against Humanity], transl. K. Bidakowski, Warsaw 1998, pp. 138–228.

[6] N. Petrov, *Poczet katów katyńskich* [List of Katyń murderers], transl. J. Prus-Wojciechowska, Warsaw 2015.

[7] S. Jaczyński, *Ocaleni od zagłady. Losy oficerów polskich ocalałych z masakry katyńskiej* [The fate of Polish officers who survived the Katyn massacre], Warsaw 2012.

[8] K. Jasiewicz, *Kogo zabić, a kogo wykorzystać? Rekonstrukcja zasad sowieckiej selekcji w Zbrodni Katyńskiej* [Whom to kill and whom to use? A reconstruction of the Soviet selection process in the Katyń Crime], in: *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, issue 26/2017, pp. 103–139.

[9] T. Wolsza, *„To co widziałem przekracza swą grozą najśmielsze fantazje". Wojenne i powojenne losy Polaków wizytujących Katyń w 1943 roku* [„What I have seen is too horrific to be even imaginable". The wartime and post-war fate of Poles visiting Katyń in 1943], Warsaw 2015; K. Piórkowska, *Anglojęzyczni świadkowie Katynia. Najnowsze badania* [English speaking witnesses to the Katyń crime. Newest research], Warsaw 2012.

[10] P. Gasztold-Seń, *Siła przeciw prawdzie. Represje aparatu bezpieczeństwa PRL wobec osób kwestionujących oficjalną wersję Zbrodni Katyńskiej* [Power against the truth. Repressions of the security apparatus of the People's Republic of Poland against persons questioning the official version of the Katyń Massacre], in: *Zbrodnia Katyńska. W kręgu prawdy i kłamstwa* [The Katyń Crime. In the circle of truth and lies], edited by S. Kalbarczyk, Warsaw 2010, pp. 132–153; M. Golon, *Kary za prawdę o zbrodni Stalina. Represje polskich organów bezpieczeństwa w okresie stalinowskim (1944–1956) wobec osób ujawniających władze ZSRR jako sprawców zbrodni katyńskiej w świetle inwentarza dokumentacji przechowywanej w zasobie archiwalnym Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, in: *Charków – Katyń – Twer – Bykownia. W 70. rocznicę zbrodni katyńskiej* [Punishment for the truth about Stalin's crime. Repressions of Polish security authorities during the Stalinist period (1944–1956) against persons revealing the authorities of the USSR as perpetrators of the Katyń crime in the light of the inventory of documentation stored in the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, in: Kharkov – Katyń – Tver – Bykovnya. On the 70th anniversary of the Katyń crime], edited by A. Kola, J. Sziling, Toruń 2011, pp. 225–240; K. Łagojda, *Przeciwni-*

cy sowieckiej wykładni o zbrodni w Katyniu: ofiary i świadkowie represji stalinowskich w Polsce (1945–1954) [Opponents of the Soviet interpretation of the crime in Katyń: victims and witnesses of Stalinist repression in Poland (1945–1954)], in: *Świadkowie: między ofiarą a sprawcą zbrodni* [Witnesses: between the victim and perpetrator of the crime], edited by A. Bartuś, Oświęcim 2017, pp. 209–223.

[11] W. Wasilewski, *Władysław Gomułka a sprawa Katynia* [Władysław Gomułka and the Katyń Case], in: *Komunizm: System – ludzie – dokumentacja*, vol. 5, 2016, pp. 51–86.

[12] See also: W. Materski, *Zbrodnia katyńska w literaturze naukowej* [The Katyń crime in scientific literature], in: *Łambinowicki Rocznik Muzealny*, issue 20/1997, pp. 89–102; S. Jaczyński, *Stan badań nad zbrodnią katyńską z perspektywy 65 lat* [The state of research on the Katyń crime from the perspective of 65 years], in: *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, issue 20/2005, pp. 69–94; S. Kalbarczyk, *Zbrodnia katyńska po 70 latach: krótki przegląd ustaleń historiografii* [The Katyń Massacre after 70 years: a brief overview of the findings of historiography], in: *Zbrodnia Katyńska. W kręgu*, pp. 3–20; *Zbrodnia katyńska. Bibliografia 1940–2010* [The Katyń Massacre. Bibliography 1940–2010], edited by I. Kowalska, E. Pawińska, Warsaw 2010.

[13] *Katyń. Dokumenty ludobójstwa. Dokumenty i materiały archiwalne przekazane Polsce 14 października 1992 r.*, transl. W. Materski, Warsaw 1992. The most important documents from this collection were also published in English: *Katyń. Documents of Genocide. Documents and materials from the Soviet archives turned over to Poland on 14 October 1992*, selected and edited by W. Materski, introduction by J.K. Zawodny, Warsaw 1993; *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, vol. 1: *Jeńcy niewypowiedzianej wojny. Sierpień 1939 – marzec* 1940 [The POWs of an undeclared war. August 1939–March 1940], ed. W. Materski and others, Warsaw 1995. *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni,* vol. 2: *Zagłada. Marzec–czerwiec 1940* [Annihilation. March–June1940], edited by W. Materski et al., Warsaw 1998; *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, vol. 3: *Losy ocalałych. Lipiec 1940 – marzec 1943* [The fate of those who survived. July 1940–March 1943], edited by W. Materski et al., Warsaw 2001; *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, vol. 4: *Echa Katynia. Kwiecień 1943 – marzec 2005* [The Echos of Katyń. April 1943–March 2005], edited by W. Materski et al., Warsaw 2006. Key Soviet documents from four volumes were published in 2007 by Yale University Press – *Katyń. A Crime Without Punishment*, edited by A.M. Cienciala, N.S. Lebedeva, W. Materski, New Haven–London 2007; *Zbrodnia katyńska 1940. Poszukiwanie prawdy 1941–1946* [The Katyń crime 1940. In search of the truth 1941–1946], edited by B. Polak, M. Polak, Koszalin 2010; *Zbrodnia katyńska 1940. Polacy w Wielkiej Brytanii wobec ludobójstwa katyńskiego 1943–1989* [The Katyń crime 1940. The Poles in Great Britain and the Katyń genocide 1943–1989], edited by B. Polak, M. Polak, Koszalin 2013; J. Platajs, *Zbrodnia katyńska. Zeznania świadków przed polskimi sądami wojskowymi (1943–1946)* [The Katyń crime. Witness testimonies before Polish military courts (1943–1946)], Gdańsk 2016; *Mord w Lesie Katyńskim. Przesłuchania przed amerykańską komisją Maddena w latach 1951–1952* [The murder in the Katyń Forest. Hearings before the American Madden Commission between 1951 and 1952], vol. 1–2, edited by W. Wasilewski, transl. W.J. Popowski, Warsaw 2017–2018.

[14] A. Przewoźnik, J. Adamska, *Katyń. Zbrodnia, prawda, pamięć* [Katyń. The massacre, the truth, the remembrance], Warsaw 2010.

[15] Among the most important aspects of the Katyń Massacre that have been covered by the mystery so far are: the motives behind Beria's criminal proposal to execute Polish prisoners of war and prisoners, a burial place for some of the victims from the so-called Ukrainian Katyń List (besides Bykownia near Kiev), names and burial places of the victims from the so-called Belarusian Katyń List (It is believed that they could be buried near Minsk); the existence of personnel files of the victims of the Katyń Massacre (note by Alexandr Shelepin, Head of the KGB, of 3 March 1959, to Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in which he suggests the destruction of 21,857 personal files of the victims of the Katyń Massacre). See: W. Materski, *Katyń – motywy i przebieg zbrodni (pytania, wątpliwości)* [Katyń – motives and course of the crime (questions, doubts)], in: *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, issue 12/2000, pp. 6–40; S. Kalbarczyk, *„Ukraińska lista katyńska" – czego jeszcze nie wiemy, postulaty badawcze* ["The Ukrainian Katyń list" – what we don't know yet, research proposals], in: *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, issue 26/2017, pp. 321–346; M. Wyrwa, *Nieodnalezione ofiary Katynia? Lista osób zaginionych na*

obszarze północno-wschodnich województw II RP od 17 września 1939 do czerwca 1940 [Unclaimed victims of Katyń? List of missing persons in the north-eastern provinces of the Second Republic of Poland from 17 September 1939 to June 1940], Warsaw 2015; S. Kalbarczyk, *Białoruska lista katyńska – brakujący element prawdy o zbrodni katyńskiej* [The Belarusian Katyń list – the missing piece of truth about the Katyń crime], in: *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, issue 23/2008, pp. 135–145; W. Wasilewski, *Zagadka notatki Szelepina* [Shelepin's mystery note], in: idem, *Ludobójstwo. Kłamstwo i walka o prawdę. Sprawa Katynia 1940–2014* [Genocide. Lies and fighting for the truth. The Katyń case 1940–2014], Łomianki 2014, pp. 177–186.

[16] T. Kaczorowska, *„Kiedy jesteście, mniej boli…". Losy dzieci katyńskich* ["I'm in pain when you are not here..." The plight of the children of Katyń], Gdynia 2003; eadem, *Dzieci Katynia* [The children of Katyń], Warsaw 2010. Six short reports can be found in the collective work edited by Sławomir Kalbarczyk, see: *Aneks. Relacje strażników pamięci o Zbrodni Katyńskiej* [Annex. Coverage of the guards of memory about the Katyń Massacre], in: *Zbrodnia Katyńska. W kręgu*, pp. 187–222. See also: A. Mularczyk, *Katyń. Post mortem: opowieść filmowa* [Katyń. Post mortem. A film story], Warsaw 2007. It was the basis for the film "Katyń" by Andrzej Wajda. Thanks to the efforts of the Gdynia Katyń Family, numerous memoirs of family members were published in a 3-volume publication: *Pisane miłością. Losy wdów katyńskich* [Written with love. The plight of the Katyń widows], edited by A. Spanily et al., vol. 1–3, Gdynia 2000–2003. To this must be added the countless memoirs of those deported in February and April 1940. Recent works of this kind can be mentioned: A.R. Gąsowska-Dadlez, *Katyń. Dokumenty i refleksje* [Katyń. Documents and thoughts], part 2: *Wspomnienia* [Memories], Poznań 2018, pp. 79–104.

[17] I devoted a separate chapter in my book to the everyday life of Katyń families under German and Soviet occupation: K. Łagojda, *Życie w cieniu śmierci* [Life in the shadow of death], pp. 42–81.

[18] *Pisane miłością* [Written with love], vol. 1, p. 24.

[19] Accounts by Barbara Dworzak, daughter of Edward Sztark – an economist, official, lieutenant of the Polish Army reserve, prisoner of war of the camp in Kozelsk, murdered by the NKVD in Katyń in the spring of 1940. (The account can be found in the author's collection).

[20] A. Głowacki, *Sowieci wobec Polaków na ziemiach wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej 1939–1941* [The Soviets towards Poles in the eastern territories of the Second Polish Republic 1939–1941], Łódź 1997, p. 37.

[21] *Doc. no. 11*, in: *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni* [Katyń. Documents of the crime], vol. 1, p. 80.

[22] A. Głowacki, *Jeńcy września w niewoli sowieckiej w 1939 r. przed zagładą* [September POWs in Soviet captivity in 1939, before the massacre], in: *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, issue 10/1999, pp. 24–68.

[23] S. Jaczyński, *Zagłada oficerów* [The annihilation of the officers], p. 187.

[24] *Doc. no. 62*, in: *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni* [Katyń. Documents of the crime], vol. 1, p. 191.

[25] S.M. Jankowski, *Czterdziestu co godzinę* [Forty men every hour], Warsaw 2001, p. 113.

[26] S. Jaczyński, *Zagłada oficerów* [The annihilation of the officers], pp. 188–189.

[27] This was the pattern of the camp addresses to which the families sent letters and postcards: Kozelsk: Союз Советских Социалистических Республик *C.C.C.* [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics], Смоленскам областъ [Smolensk region], город Козельск [the city of Kozelsk], почтовый ящик Нр. 12 [a post box no. 12]. Starobelsk: Союз Советских Социалистических Республик *C.C.C.*, Харьковская область [Kharkiv region], город Старобельск [the city of Starobelsk], почтовый ящик Нр. 15 [a post box no. 15]. Ostashkov: Союз Советских Социалистических Республик *C.C.C.*, Калининская область [Kalininsk region], город Осташков [the city of Ostashkov], почтовый ящик Нр. 37 [a post box no. 37].

[28] *Pisane miłością* [Written with love], vol. 2, p. 453.

[29] A fragment of a postcard by Captain Henryk Zakrzewski to the family from Starobelsk. No date. (A copy of the postcard in the author's collection.)

[30] The prisoners did not know whether their messages had left the camp.

[31] *Pisane miłością* [Written with love], vol. 3, p. 86.

[32] K. Łagojda, *Nim zamilkli na zawsze* [Before they were silenced forever], in: *Pamięć.pl – Biuletyn IPN*, issue 4/2015, p. 35. The need to write to families was so great, that in January 1940 the officers from Starobelsk turned to the camp commander demanding the lifting of the restrictions on the

exchange of correspondence with families. Unfortunately, the requests have not been fulfilled. See: *Doc. no. 160*, in: *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, vol. 1, p. 365.

[33] Relation of Ludmiła Seredyńska, daughter of Michał Seredyński, history teacher, second lieutenant of the Polish Army reserve, prisoner of war of the Starobelsk camp, murdered by the NKVD in Kharkiv in the spring of 1940. (The account in the author's collection).

[34] *Doc. no. 234*, in: *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni* [Katyń. Documents of the crime], vol. 2, pp. 384–385.

[35] S. Jaczyński, *Zagłada oficerów* [The annihilation of the officers], p. 191; W. Wasilewski, *Starobielsk 1940. Niesubordynacja Daniły Czecholskiego* [Starobelsk 1940. The insubordination of Danila Czecholski], in: *Dzieje Najnowsze*, issue 3/2007, pp. 43–56.

[36] *Doc. no. 172*, in: *Deportacje obywateli polskich z Zachodniej Ukrainy i Zachodniej Białorusi w 1940 roku* [Deportations of Polish citizens from Western Ukraine and Western Belarus in 1940], edited by V. Komogorov et al., Warsaw–Moscow 2003, pp. 717, 719.

[37] See: S. Ciesielski, *Polacy w Kazachstanie w latach 1940–1946. Zesłańcy lat wojny* [Poles in Kazakhstan between 1940 and 1946. Exiles of the war years], Wrocław 1996.

[38] N. Lebedeva, *Proces podejmowania* [The proces of undertaking], p. 1170.

[39] See: A. Przewoźnik, J. Adamska, *Katyń*, pp. 168–196.

[40] See: A.K. Kunert, *„Żołnierze naszej wolności…". Ujawnienie zbrodni katyńskiej 11–15 IV 1943*, in: *Charków – Katyń – Twer – Bykownia. W 70. rocznicę zbrodni katyńskiej* ["Soldiers of our freedom..." Revealing the Katyń crime 11–15 April 1943, in: Kharkiv – Katyn – Tver – Bykivnia. On the 70th anniversary of the Katyń massacre], edited by A. Kola, J. Sziling, Toruń 2011, pp. 11–32.

[41] T. Szarota, *Okupowanej Warszawy dzień powszedni* [A weekday in occupied Warsaw], Warsaw 2010, p. 415.

[42] J.K. Zawodny, *Katyń*, Lublin–Paris 1989, p. 35.

[43] E.C. Król, *Trzecia Rzesza wobec zbrodni katyńskiej* [The Third Reich and the Katyń crime], in: *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, issue 2/2017, pp. 178–182.

[44] K. Skarżyński, *Katyń*, Paris 1990, p. 26.

[45] An account by Barbara Dworzak.

[46] *Pisane miłością* [Written with love], vol. 2, pp. 388, 434.

[47] Ibidem, vol. 3, p. 102.

[48] O. Zinchenko, *Katyń. Śladami polskich oficerów* [Katyń. In the footsteps of Polish officers], transl. O. Hnatiuk, Olszanica 2015, p. 23.

[49] *Pisane miłością* [Written with love], vol. 3, p. 154.

[50] *Goniec Krakowski*, 16 April 1943, no. 89, p. 1.

[51] An account by Alina Głowacka-Szłapowa, daughter of Stanisław Głowacki – captain of the Polish Army in active service, prisoner of war of the Starobelsk camp, murdered by the NKVD in Kharkiv in the spring of 1940. (The account in the author's collections).

[52] A.R. Gąsowska-Dadlez, *Katyń*, p. 95.

[53] K. Łagojda, Życie w cieniu śmierci [Life in the shadow of death], p. 97.

[54] P. Gasztold-Seń, *Siła przeciw prawdzie* [Force against the truth], p. 133.

[55] M. Niezgoda, *Oświata i procesy rozwoju społecznego: przypadek Polski. Studium socjologiczne socjologiczne* [Education and social development processes: the case of Poland. Sociological study], Cracow 1993, p. 95.

[56] *Pisane miłością* [Written with love], vol. 1, p. 24.

[57] T. Kaczorowska, *Dzieci Katynia* [The children of Katyń], p. 44.

[58] J. Trznadel, *Orwellowskie Ministerstwo Prawdy* [The Orwellian Ministry of Truth], in: *Biuletyn Katyński*, issue 39/1994, pp. 146–156. See: *Katyń. Księga Cmentarna Polskiego Cmentarza Wojennego* [Katyń. The Cemetery Book of the Polish War Cemetery], edited by J. Kiński et al., Warsaw 2000, p. 123; *Charków. Księga Cmentarna Polskiego Cmentarza Wojennego* [Kharkov. The Cemetery Book of the Polish War Cemetery], edited by J. Ciesielski et al., Warsaw 2003, p. 101.

[59] T. Kaczorowska, *Dzieci Katynia* [The children of Katyń], p. 30.

[60] P. Gasztold-Seń, *Siła przeciwko prawdzie* [Force against the truth], p. 133.

[61] *Szeptane procesy z działalności Komisji Specjalnej 1945–1954* [Whispered trials from the activities of the Special Commission 1945–1954], edited by M. Chłopek, Warsaw 2005, pp. 111–112, 157, 228;

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[63] J. Żelazko, *Pamięć i propaganda. Sprawa Katynia po 1945 r.* [Memory and propaganda. The Katyń case], in: *Represje sowieckie wobec narodów Europy 1944–1956* [Soviet repressions against the nations of Europe 1944–1956], edited by D. Rogut, A. Adamczyk, Zelów 2005, pp. 405–406. See also: J. Bednarek, *Oddział Franciszka Olszówki „Otta". Z dziejów powojennej konspiracji antykomunistycznej* [The detachment of Franciszek Olszówka "Otto". From the history of the post-war anti-communist conspiracy], in: *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, issue 1/2004, pp. 197–219; K. Szwagrzyk, *Działania Wojsk Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego województwa wrocławskiego przeciwko oddziałowi Franciszka Olszówki „Otta" (23 grudnia 1945 r. – 23 lutego 1946 r.)* [The actions of the Internal Security Forces of Wrocław Province against Franciszek Olszówka's "Otto detachment (23 December 1945 – 23 February 1946), in: *Aparat Represji w Polsce Ludowej 1944–1989* [The system of repression in People's Poland 1944–1989] , issue 1/2007, pp. 103–135.

[64] The Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, Wroclaw Branch (hereinafter: AIPN Wr), 032/355, k. 3.

[65] *Biuletyny dzienne Ministerstwa Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego 1949–1950* [Daily Bulletin of the Ministry of Public Security 1949–1959], edited by Ł. Kamiński, Warsaw 2004, pp. 89, 116, 200, 221, 222, 227, 383, 584, 733, 734, 802; *Biuletyny Komitetu do spraw Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego grudzień 1954 – listopad 1956* [Bulletin of the committee of the Ministry of Public Security's affairs], edited by W. Chudzik, M. Filipiak, J. Gołębiewski, Warsaw 2009, pp. 102, 170, 631, 636, 641, 695.

[66] See: K. Łagojda, *Sądy komunistyczne wobec ofiar Zbrodni Katyńskiej w postępowaniu o uznanie za zmarłego/stwierdzenie zgonu. Analiza historycznoprawna* [Communist courts and the victims of the Katyń Massacre in proceedings to declare someone as being deceased/death. Historical and legal analysis], in: *Wrocławskie Studia Wschodnie*, issue 21/2017, pp. 131–154.

[67] T. Kaczorowska, *Dzieci Katynia*, p. 135.

[68] *Pisane miłością* [Written with love], vol. 2, pp. 459–460.

[69] Ibidem, vol. 1, p. 184.

[70] An account by Alina Głowacka-Szłapowa.

[71] An account by Wanda Milczanowska, daughter of Stanisław Milczanowski, vice-president of the Regional Court in Rowne (Volhynia), murdered by the NKVD in Kiev in the spring of 1940. (The account found in the author's collection).

[72] *Pisane miłością* [Written with love], vol. 2, p. 565. See: J. Łojek, *Dzieje sprawy Katynia* [History of the Katyń case], Białystok 1989, p. 1.

[73] An account by Ludmiła Seredyńska.

[74] W. Wasilewski, *Pamięć Katynia. Działania opozycji* [In memory of Katyń. The oppositions' actions], in: idem, *Ludobójstwo* [Genocide], p. 226.

[75] AIPN, 0296/62, vol. 5, Kampania propagandowa w sprawie Katynia [The propaganda campaign concerning Katyń], n.d., p. 1. See also: ibidem, vol. 4.

[76] AIPN, 0713/270, Nabożeństwa i wystąpienia kleru w 40. rocznicę Katynia [Religious masses and priests' sermons during the 40th anniversary of the Katyń massacre].

[77] The Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, Cracow Branch (hereinafter: AIPN Kr), 573/86, Notatka urzędowa, 21 March 1980, p. 74.

[78] An account by Anna Budzińska, daughter of Jan Budziński – vet, second lieutenant of the Polish Army reserve, prisoner of war of the Starobelsk camp, murdered by the NKVD in Kharkiv in the spring of 1940. (The account found in the author's collection).

[79] W. Materski, *Mord katyński. Siedemdziesiąt lat drogi do prawdy* [The Katyń massacre. Seventy years in the search for the truth], Warsaw 2010, p. 69.

[80] W. Wasilewski, *Pamięć Katynia. Działania opozycji* [In memory of Katyń. The oppositions' actions], p. 233.

[81] Cf. http://pamiec.pl/pa/ipn-notacje-ipn-tv/z-filmoteki-bezpieki/15126,IPN-TV-Z-filmotekibezpiekiquot-odc-40 Dolinka-Katyńska.html.

[82] An account by Ludmiła Seredyńska.

[83] AIPN Wr, 053/2522, vol. 2, Informacja dzienna dotycząca sytuacji na terenie województwa wrocławskiego [Daily bulletin concerning the situation in the Wrocław voivodeship], 15 October 1987, p. 211.

[84] A. Przewoźnik, J. Adamska, *Katyń*, p. 437.

[85] AIPN, 0296/202, vol. 6, Pismo rodzin katyńskich do Andrzeja Łapickiego [Katyń Families' letter to Andrzej Łapicki], July 1989, pp. 3–4.

[86] Ibidem, Pilna notatka dotycząca przewidywanej interpelacji przedstawiciela opozycji w sprawie zbrodni katyńskiej [Urgent note on the expected appeal of the opposition representative on the Katyń crime], 29 July 1989, pp. 1–2.

[87] AIPN, 2202/1, Kopie orzeczeń i ekspertyz pozytywnych do spraw karnych i operacyjnych mających znaczenie identyfikacyjne dotyczące konkretnych osób (ks. Stefan Niedzielak i ks. Stanisław Suchowolec) [Copies of judgments and expert opinions on criminal and operational matters of identificational significance concerning specific individuals (Fr. Stefan Niedzielak and Fr. Stanisław Suchowolec)], 1989. See also: P. Pleskot, *Ksiądz Stefan Niedzielak: Ostatnia ofiara Katynia?* [Father Stefan Niedzielak: The last victim of Katyń?], in: *Pamięć.pl – Biuletyn IPN*, issue 4/2016, pp. 37–42.

[88] See: I. Jazhborovskaia, A. Jablokov, *Sprawa katyńska w Rosji – w ujęciu historycznym i obecnie* [The Katyń case in Russia – in historical and current terms], in: *Jak patrzeć na Polskę, Niemcy i świat? Księga jubileuszowa profesora Eugeniusza Cezarego Króla* [How to look at Poland, Germany and the world? The Jubilee Book of Professor Eugeniusz Cezary Król], edited by J. Szymoniczek, Warsaw 2017, pp. 1001–1033.

Sławomir Kalbarczyk

The Murder of 7,305 Prisoners as Part of the Katyń Massacre in Light of Polish Historical Research. State of the Research. Research Postulates

In 1940, the functionaries of the the Soviet political police, the NKVD, executed 7,305 citizens of the Polish state, who were arrested after the USSR invaded Poland on 17 September 1939. Initially, they were detained in prisons in the Soviet-occupied territories of eastern Poland, but in the spring of 1940, most of them were transferred to several prisons in Ukraine and Belarus to be murdered there.

The massacre of the prisoners could be called a virtually perfect crime, because it had been veiled in such a profound mystery for over fifty years and no one knew anything about it. Even the families of those who had been arrested by the Soviets, and disappeared without a trace, did not even surmise their tragic fate. For a number of years after the war, they cherished the delusion that the NKVD prisoners would return. Naturally, their hopes faded with time, but still, none of families thought that their close ones had been murdered. Nevertheless, the question what had happened to them after their arrest, simply remained unanswered. No one associated their disappearance with the Katyń massacre.[1]

The grim truth did not transpire until 1992, which was in a way accidental. That very year, the government of the Russian Federation gave Poland copies of crucial documents concerning the Katyń massacre. Until that moment, the Katyń massacre was understood only as a murder of Polish prisoners of war. Those documents, surprisingly, demonstrated that the Katyń massacre had a broader scope and encompassed not only prisoners of war (POWs), but also some 7,000 civilians. Three documents shed the most light on this previously unknown fact. The first is a file note of the NKVD chief, Lavrenti Beria, of 5 March 1940, for the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, which proposed shooting 14,700 Polish prisoners of war, but his murderous

proposals went even further. He envisaged executing 11,000 Polish citizens detained in NKVD prisons on Soviet-occupied Polish territories. The document is three and a half pages long, and contains not only the justification for the proposal, but also a general characteristic of the detainees. The second and even more laconic document is the decision of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, the VCP(b), that endorsed Beria's proposal. And the last one a KGB note, from Alexandr Shelepin, to Nikita Khrushchev dated 9 March 1959, stating to the effect that the figures in Beria's proposal and in the Political Bureau's decision had been adjusted in the meantime, and as a result, not 11,000, but a total 7,305 prisoners were killed.

The documents released in 1992 contained priceless information about the Soviet crime that had been kept secret for decades and which cost several thousand lives of Polish citizens. Those documents, however, had one major defect – there were no names or personal information of any of the murdered. So there arose the question: who were the victims by name? The answer, albeit incomplete, came two years later. It was only in 1994 that the Ukrainian authorities informed the Polish government that their research in Kiev revealed an NKVD list of 3,435 Polish prisoners executed as part of the Katyń massacre in Ukrainian prisons. The list was called 'the Ukrainian Katyń List' (UKL).

The appearance of those documents made Polish historians face the solemn task of explaining all the circumstances of the crime against the prisoners, and of identifying the victims more accurately than before. Let us emphasise that the Ukrainian list of murdered prisoners was largely a puzzle. Their data was limited to a name and surname, year of birth, and father's name. Their occupation, status, address, biographical information, circumstances of arrest, etc. were not provided with a few exceptions of well-known people (such as several generals) and the gaps needed filling in.

As it turned out, another much more serious research problem was the 3,870 prisoners murdered in Belarus,[2] where no analogous list of murdered prisoners had been found (later: the 'Belarusian Katyń List', BKL). Now, historiography faced another fundamental question: is there a method to identify the names of those murdered, given that there is no 'official' list? Let us add that the murders of prisoners as part of the Katyń massacre did not interest many researchers. Nevertheless, historians should not be criticised too harshly for this omission. After all, at the same time they were dealing with other important issues of Polish-Soviet relations, which after the fall of communism and the abolition of censorship had to be studied and described practically from scratch. Namely, such issues as the mass deportations of Polish civilians into the Soviet heartland, or the fate of Polish citizens deported to Soviet forced labour camps. The Katyń massacre remains to be fully studied and described in terms of the tragic fate of the POWs. Despite the need to painstakingly remove the

'blank spots' in the history of 20th century Polish-Russian relations, a task which is far from complete itself, Polish historians cannot boast major achievements in their research into the murder of 7,305 as part of the Katyń massacre. And such efforts were not a sure success, because Katyń was studied not only by Polish historians, but by their Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, British or American colleagues as well.

Let us begin our presentation by discussing the reasons behind the Soviet assault on the prisoners. They were stated explicitly in Beria's proposal of 5 March 1940: "In the NKVD POW camps and in the prisons of the western regions (*oblasts*) of Ukraine and Belarus, there is currently a large number of former officers of the Polish army, former Polish police officers and employees of intelligence agencies, members of Polish nationalist c-r [counterrevolutionary] parties, participants in underground c-r rebel organizations, defectors [from the German occupation zone – *S.K.*] and so on. All of them are implacable enemies of Soviet power and full of hatred towards the Soviet system. (…) The NKVD organs in the western *oblasts* of Ukraine and Belarus have exposed several c-r insurgent organizations. (…) Among the detained refugees and those who have violated the state border, a significant number of individuals who are participants in c-r espionage and insurgent organizations have also been uncovered."[3]

Thus, it seems clear that the prisons held implacable enemies of the Soviet regime, who should be shot. But some researchers were not satisfied with the paradoxical obviousness of Beria's justification: after all, those who were detained were deemed enemies of the Soviet regime. They began to wonder whether the proposal to execute the prisoners was a result of conclusions which the NKVD chief drew after some time, or whether the proposal was triggered by a specific event, which pushed him toward a radical solution. It was pointed out that those marked for a swift execution posed no immediate threat for the Soviet regime: they were detained in prisons under the NKVD's watchful gaze, and had criminal investigations launched against them, which in a matter of several months would have landed them in the infamous Soviet forced labour camps. It is hard to believe that several thousand Polish citizens detained in high-security camps scattered all over Stalinist Russia, where they were tortured with labour, could be any kind of real threat for the Soviet regime or Soviet rule over eastern Poland. Several years later many would have died of overwork, starvation or disease, others would have died of exposure, would have been killed by guards or by fellow prisoners. Yet, suddenly, the already advanced criminal procedure was dropped, and an extreme measure was adapted – summary execution. Why?[4]

There are no sources that could give an answer to this question. So, if this question still haunts Polish historians, they cannot go beyond suppositions and hypotheses. A recently formulated hypothesis says that Beria's initiative could have been

associated with the so-called 'Czortków Uprising'. On 21 January 1940, members of the Polish underground in the district town of Czortków in the Tarnopol province put up armed resistance against the Soviet regime. They were planning not only to disarm the local garrison, but also to break into the local prison and free the prisoners. Their intention went even further: to start an uprising in the entire Soviet occupation zone. The planned revolt proceeded on an important consideration: weakened Soviet occupation forces. The insurgents were aware that the Red Army garrisons were depleted, because some soldiers were deployed to the Finnish front, where Soviet troops suffered defeat after defeat. One part of the insurgents' plan was to liberate all prisoners from Soviet prisons in occupied Poland. The uprising was suppressed and never reached beyond Czortków. It would seem that this was an abortive local incident, which failed to spark off anything major. Nevertheless, Moscow treated the Czortków events with grave seriousness. Beria himself sent down his first deputy, Vsevolod Merkulov, and the Ukrainian NKVD chief, Ivan Serov. He immediately notified the national leaders about everything: Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov. Six weeks later, Beria proposed the execution of 11,000 detained in the Soviet occupation zone. Was it an accident or a 'lesson' learned from the Czortków uprising? It was indeed suppressed, but was there any guarantee that similar revolts would not erupt elsewhere? Perhaps agitated by the armed revolt, which took place during a time of the State's weakness due to the war with Finland, the NKVD chief decided that it would be extremely dangerous to keep the prisoners detained in former eastern Polish provinces, given that many of them had been arrested for their involvement in anti-Soviet organisations, and therefore could constitute a basis for further revolts. Thus, he proposed a swift and radical preventive measure against a possible Polish uprising in occupied eastern Poland in the form of mass executions of the potential rebels.[5]

Naturally, this is only a hypothesis regarding the decision of 5 March 1940. We put it forward not only due to the quite enigmatic explanation for it. But also the fact that during the almost two-year long occupation of Polish territories (September 1939 – June 1941) never before or after, no similar initiative was put forth. After all, at that time Soviet prisons were never empty; they were constantly filled with thousands of real or imagined opponents of the Soviet regime. Why had no similar measures been taken prior to that proposed by Beria on 5 March 1940?

As far as a comprehensive identification of the 3,435 murdered in Ukraine is concerned, the 'classical' and still up-to-date study remains by the author, Zuzanna Gajowniczek in: *Śladem Zbrodni Katyńskiej* of 1998.[6] The reservation that Gajowniczek's findings are still valid is usually put down to the fact that a new approach is being developed, and if completed, it will replace Gajowniczek's study. But before we characterise the new initiative and its results, let us take a closer look at *Śladem*

Zbrodni Katyńskiej, as it still defines our state of knowledge about those shot in Ukraine.

At the time of publication, the study was certainly a milestone ahead in the research on the prisoners killed in Ukraine. The author found primary-source data for about 60% of them, which should be treated as an impressive achievement, given the difficulties she had to face in her search for information about people whose names contained no clue as to where their biographical information is to be found (had their profession or address been known, it would have been much easier). There were similar problems with identical spelling of names and surnames: these were first transliterated from Polish into Russian and in that form they appear on the ULK, and then they were transliterated into Polish again. It goes without saying that even one instance of transliteration is charged with the risk of error, not to mention two. The risk of error was amplified by the different alphabets of the two languages.[7] Gajowniczek's book, despite all kinds of numerous inconsistencies in the spelling of names and surnames, many of which have not been correctly transliterated from Russian into Polish,[8] or even as regards the identity of some people,[9] made it possible to analyse closer the population of those murdered in Ukraine. Unfortunately, Polish historians took only a partial advantage of this possibility.

Neither were the prisoners identified by the place where they were arrested. Although Gajowniczek's book does not always identify them, in many cases such information is provided. As a result, we do not even have a draft 'map' of the arrests, and we do not know precisely in which provinces, districts, cities and towns they took place and what their scale was.

Another shortcoming is the identification of the prisoners in occupational terms: the possibilities afforded by Gajowniczek's book, have been utilised only on a very limited scale. The first such analysis was carried out by Ryszard Szawłowski, who claimed that the ULK contains the names of 450 Polish Army officers (professional, enlisted and deactivated), over 500 policemen, 100 judges and public prosecutors, 35 attorneys and 50 landowners. No figures were given for other occupational categories. The author just stated that the ULK encompasses people of various occupations: teachers, railway workers, prison guards, postmen, game keepers, etc.[10] Naturally, an analysis that takes into precise (i.e. numerical) consideration only a handful of professional categories is highly inadequate; let us add that if we put professional and reserve officers in the same category, we have no idea how many of each category there were, and we have no indication as to the occupation of the reserve officers.

Far more precise information on the occupations of those murdered in Ukraine can be found in Andrzej Przewoźnik's study. It shows that the ULK contains 726 professional, reserve and deactivated officers, 746 policemen, and 28 prison guards.[11]

These figures are necessarily not very exact because – as in Szawłowski's analysis above – the 'officers' category encompassed both professional and reserve soldiers.

We have described the consequences of such an approach above. What Przewoźnik writes about the occupational structure of those murdered in Ukraine is interesting on the one hand, while on the other, causes a kind conceptual confusion. "Among 377 Polish civilians", Przewoźnik wrote, "and reserve and deactivated officers, there were (among others): 74 landowners, 46 teachers, 70 engineers, 15 physicians, 174 lawyers (…) 19 district governors and their deputies, 10 mayors and deputy mayors, the Volhynia province governor (Ignacy Strzemiński), 6 senators, 6 members of parliament, 91 officials."[12]

If the identification of certain occupational categories appears valuable, the division of those on the ULK into 'civilians' and 'reserve and deactivated officers' seems hard to comprehend. Reserve and deactivated officers were also civilians – they were not professional officers or prisoners of war, which would have set them apart from 'civilians'.

In terms of the nationality of the victims on the ULK, we have only very general information about it. Ryszard Szawłowski merely said that 'an overwhelming majority' were Polish, and several per cent were Jews and Ukrainians. This is hardly precise. Furthermore, the inexact 'several per cent' (i.e. from 2 to 9 per cent) encompasses both Ukrainians and Jews, and as result we do not know what their ratio was.

Andrzej Przewoźnik put it in a similar way, when he claimed that the ULK contains 'several hundred' Polish citizens of Jewish and Ukrainian origin ('several hundred' means from 200 to 900).

Neither mentioned the criteria applied to separate Jews. As we know, there is no simple and unequivocal answer to "Who is a Jew?" Meanwhile the Ukrainian Katyń List offers (at least in my opinion) only one possibility to identify a Jew (by father's name, as mother's name is not provided). This is not a universally accepted criterion sufficient to regard somebody as a Jew. This is even more a reason why those researchers should explain how they formulated their criteria of identification.

The above mentioned charge of failure to carry out a more detailed analysis of the population of those murdered in Ukraine, based on Zuzanna Gajowniczek's study is only a historical one. This study is now only up-to-date in principle, and is becoming part of historiography, given that a new ULK edition is being elaborated. One volume has already been published, and it includes the names that begin with the first two letters of the alphabet.[13] Therefore, it is quite obvious that the new study will comprise a number of volumes.

A closer look at this volume shows that we are dealing here with a more thorough approach that Gajowniczek's study. It is also more rigidly scientific, which we cannot say about Gajowniczek's book. Why? Because the author decided not

to identify the sources when she provided biographical information about a given person. As a result, we have to take the information on faith, which is unacceptable in an academic publication. The new edition eliminated those shortcomings. Each biographical entry has a 'bibliography', so we know exactly where the information comes from. This does not mean that these entries are free from error. They have been developed to include biographical information from before the war. This is primarily a result of including pre-war sources, mainly personal files of Polish Army officers (kept in the Central Military Archives in Warsaw-Rembertów). Thus, instead of brief, 'encyclopaedic' biographical notes (as per Gajowniczek's study), we have quite detailed biographical entries, with information on the person's education, professional career or even family life. One could be tempted to say that the victims turned into human beings. This did not succeed in every case, as the preserved sources sometimes turned out to be insufficient to expand on the description. In some cases – and there were not many of those – the process of identifying those included in the first volume failed, because it turned out to be impossible to identify the executed prisoner, and in the new study, Gajowniczek's entry was copied, and it contained the same information as the ULK. In some cases, it was impossible to find any new information about a victim described in Gajowniczek's book. Let us also bear in mind that the identification process is very difficult and does not have to be ultimately successful. It is further complicated by archival losses in World War II and later, compounded by the different nationalities of the victims. Polish historians find relatively the least difficulty to identify people of Polish nationality, while those of other nationalities are more difficult: among them Jews, Ukrainians or Belarusians, be it only due to the language barrier that makes it more difficult to use sources in the respective languages. Another important element of the new edition is the correction of errors in Gajowniczek's study.[14]

Undoubtedly, the greatest weakness of the new biographical entries is the description of the repressions against a given person by the Soviet regime: the time, place and circumstances of arrest by the NKVD, the place of detention and the prison life are often missing. But this type of information is often more important than the person's pre-war biographical details. Moreover, there is no doubt that the above described situation is not always objective in its character and results from the lack of information in the sources. On the other hand, a comprehensive research into the matter would be a large-scale endeavour. We are talking about hundreds if not thousands of accounts and memoirs of prisoners, who could have been detained in the same prisons as the prisoners murdered according to the Politburo decision of 5 March 1940, and might have said something about them. There is a large volume of such sources and they are scattered between different archives. Another sizeable category of sources that should be taken into consideration in preparation of a revised list of

victims murdered in Ukraine, are recollections of their families. The arrest often took place in one's home, with the family members present. Their recollections therefore contain such important information as the date and the circumstances of arrest. Not only that; in a number of cases, the families were interested in the fate of their closest one arrested by the NKVD, they would bring parcels to the prisons and tried to follow their further fate. There are far more recollections and accounts of family members than those of former prisoners, with both types being equally scattered. If we take into consideration the above discussed category of sources, this would allow us – at least in part – to go beyond Gajowniczek's findings, something that the new study did not always do. Let us cite a specific example: Leon Burczyński, a merchant from the town of Tłumacz in the Stanisławów province. Zuzanna Gajowniczek sums up his fate after arrest with a general comment: "Deported in 1939" (383). The revised information on the same subject is equally vague: "Deported in an unknown direction" (309). If we look up the accounts of those who landed in Soviet prisons after 17 September 1939, the description of Burczyński's fate can be taken much further. One of them[15] demonstrates that after arrest Burczyński was detained in a Stanisławów prison, and on 21 December 1939, he was transferred to a Kherson prison. He must have enjoyed a fair degree of respect among his fellow prisoners, because he was elected the cell's senior prisoner. As the Kherson prison account shows, Burczyński remained there at least until March 1940. His later fate is not mentioned anywhere else in this source.

The two works, one completed, and the other *in statu nascendi* supposedly offer a comprehensive, biographical description of the several thousand prisoners murdered in Ukraine. Let us bear in mind that in various historical publications, one can find biographical entries or biographical information regarding those listed in the ULK. For example, volume 2 of the periodical *Z Dziejów Walk o Niepodległość* published 21 excellently documented extensive biographical entries of those executed in Ukraine.[16]

As we said, the lists of prisoners executed in Belarus has never been found. Thus, the historians' milieu began to propose 'reconstruction' of the BKL (we use quotation marks, because, strictly speaking, one cannot reconstruct something that one did not know previously). Historians began to ponder what kind of 'reconstruction' method to adopt. It was no at all simple, as after the Soviet invasion, many people were arrested and disappeared without a trace. It was hard to make a 'mechanical' assumption that all of them were murdered in Belarus, as part of the Katyń massacre. They could have met a different fate: they could have been executed after conviction by courts or military tribunals, they could have died in forced labour camps or in other, unknown circumstances. How does one then identify those who should be placed on a thus 'reconstructed' list? In 2008, I have proposed a method, which envisaged a multi-stage 'sifting' of those who were known to have been shot as part

of the Katyń massacre in Belarus (they were summarily shot in Ukraine, etc.) from the general population of those arrested. As a result, we would have isolated the group in question.[17] This proposal – let us add that it was meant to be so – was an ideal model. Its basic flaw was (and still is) the need to have an unrestricted access to NKVD archives and records, in Russia, Belarus, and even in Kazakhstan.

Ultimately, Maciej Wyrwa (from The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding) undertook the effort to reconstruct the list of prisoners murdered in Belarus, with the results published in 2015.[18]

The publication contains a total of 908 biographical entries. We could immediately conclude that the 'reconstruction' is definitely fragmentary, since the complete list of the executed contains 3,870 names (the 908 biographical entries accounts for 23% of the total number of those executed). The biographical entries were divided into three discrete groups, with a different degree of probability that the people in each category were victims of the Katyń massacre. The first group of 231 people consists of people who were arrested and detained in Minsk, and after mid 1940 their fate remains unknown. The criteria of place and time are correct, because the prisoners of the so-called Belarusian Katyń List were killed in the Minsk prison in the spring of 1940. Naturally, the very fact that a given prisoner was detained in a Minsk prison in the first half of 1940 and disappeared without a trace is by no means absolute proof that he had been shot as part of the Katyń massacre. He could have met a different fate: he could have been tortured to death during interrogation, he could have died in prison, or could have been transferred to a forced labour camp and died there, etc. Nevertheless, it is quite likely that he might have fallen victim to the Katyń massacre, given the time and the place of his disappearance. Another group identified in the study comprises 564 prisoners, indicating a less marked connection with the Katyń massacre. What we know about those people is that although they had been arrested by the NKVD and detained until the spring of 1940 in various prisons in Western Belarus, no sources confirm that they were detained in the Minsk prison, where the prisoners were murdered as part of the Katyń massacre. "Those people", says Maciej Wyrwa, "could have been transferred to the Mińsk prison and murdered there as per the decision of 5 March 1940."[19] This is undeniable, indeed they could. But this is only a theoretical possibility, nothing more. It is equally likely that they never got to Minsk. If that is the case, then the likelihood that the group was murdered as part of the Katyń massacre is far lower than in the case of the previous group. The third and the last of the isolated groups consisted of 113 people who disappeared in Western Belarus after the Soviet invasion of Poland in September 1939. About those people we know nothing, not even that they had been arrested by the NKVD, so their connection with the Katyń massacre should be considered very loosely.

Clearly, the 'reconstruction' of the BKL is far from uniform, and we cannot even say that it includes names of prisoners who were 'most likely' murdered as part of the Katyń massacre in Belarus – in any case, we cannot say it about an overwhelming majority of them (group two and three). Strictly speaking, those are the persons missing in 'Western Belarus' at one time or another. They all – one could say – could have been victims of the Katyń massacre, but that none were, definitely was one. In other words, what we have here is a kind of research hypothesis.

Could Polish historians achieve more than that? It seems that given the current access to sources, the work done by Maciej Wyrwa still remains, in principle, all what Polish historians could do. For the time being, we cannot conduct free research in the Eastern archives (Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan), and only then would we be able to go further with the 'reconstruction', i.e. move from a hypothesis to certainty. Let us stress that only Polish historians undertook the effort to reconstruct the BKL. And even if Wyrwa's work could be criticised for various shortcomings, this does not change the fact that given the existing possibilities, the first and thus the most difficult step toward the reconstruction of the list of prisoners murdered in Belarus as part of the Katyń massacre, had been made.

These reservations do not concern the utilisation of all the possibilities to 'reconstruct' the BKL that were afforded by sources and literature. Let us quote several examples.

In Part I, the author published a note on Jan Maciej Orzechowski, the commandant of the State Police in Radziłów, where he writes about his fate: "(…) arrested in December 1939 in Rajgród, detained in Łomża and Minsk; missing."[20] Now this 'missing' person status raises some serious doubts. One Polish woman detained in a Minsk prison (Wyrwa did not cite this document) recollects: "Another person tortured to death was Jan Orzechowski, the former Radziłów police commandant."[21] Although the Polish woman did not give the date or any detailed circumstances of Orzechowski's demise, in the light of her account, it would be difficult to deny the fact of his death and treat him as a missing person. The biographical entry of another prisoner, Władysław Malski, former member of parliament and senator, fails to mention one important piece of information, namely that before his arrest by the NKVD, he headed an anti-Soviet organization, a fact previously established by researchers. Apparently, this fact sealed his fate. This study does contain other errors. Thus, one of those listed is Chief Commissioner of State Police, 'Czarnożyński, ' This is incorrect in part, because Chief Commissioner Czarnożyński had two names, but neither began with the letter 'P' – Adam Marian.[22] Another notation, 'Sikora – Sikorski' should be complemented by two names: Stefan Ignacy.[23] Similar additions need to be made with respect to the Poznań Appellate Court Judge, 'Stasiński'; according to sources, his name was 'Stanisław'.[24] A more serious objection concerns the

omission of names of those who definitely should have been included in Wyrwa's study, because they all meet the criteria specified. In the first place, one should mention the former Polish prime minister (1919–1920), Leopold Skulski, who had been arrested in Pińsk in October 1939, detained in a Brest Litovsk prison, and all traces end there.[25] Among other people missing in the study, one should also mention Rev. Fabian Szczerbicki, also arrested in Pińsk, in January 1940. All traces of him also end in the Brest prison.[26] We could quote more such omissions.

When we begin to present the findings of Polish historians regarding the course of the murder of prisoners as part of the Katyń massacre, one should start by saying that it was not made easy by the extremely scarce Soviet sources. Of paramount importance here is Beria's order of 22 March 1940. In it, the NKVD chief ordered the transfer of 3,000 prisoners from 6 prisons in Western Ukraine to prisons in Kiev, Kharkov and Kherson, and the same number from 4 prisons in Western Belarus to the Minsk prisons in Belarus. The reason for the transfer was not specified, but clearly the point was to move the prisoners who were marked for execution as part of the Katyń massacre to selected killing sites. Evidently, the order was clear only with respect to Belarus: all the prisoners transferred there were to be delivered only to one prison, in Minsk. As regards Ukraine, Beria merely marked three prisons, but did not specify how many prisoners were to be delivered to each of the facilities. Thus, historians would be rather helpless if they were to try to establish the proportions, given the scarcity of Soviet documents, were it not for exhumations which had been carried out in the Bykovnya forest outside Kiev at one time or another (namely, during 1971–2012). From 1937, this site was used for secret burials of victims executed in the Kiev NKVD prison, as part of various kinds of repressions. The exhumations revealed around 2,000 corpses, which certainly were bodies of prisoners murdered in Ukraine as part of the Katyń massacre. Apart from those bodies, all kinds of objects manufactured by Polish and European companies were unearthed. Most frequent finds included: galoshes and combs bearing the following trademarks: 'Gentleman', 'Rygawar' (galoshes), 'Durabit Garantie', 'Rubonit Prima', 'Matador Garantie' (combs). Polish historians realised the information potential of these valuable items of evidence, and conducted research aimed at identifying the manufacturers. It turned out that 'Gentleman' and 'Rygawar' were Polish, Warsaw-based companies. On the other hand, 'Durabit' and 'Rubonit' turned out to be Austrian firms, while 'Matador' was a Czechoslovak establishment. Those firms' products had been mass-imported to Poland before the war. The next step was to analyse the trade relations between Poland, Europe and the Soviet Union to find out whether the items dug out at Bykovnya could have been imported to the Soviet Union. Such a possibility was dismissed outright, because the Soviet Union never imported any consumer goods from Poland or from any other European countries.

Ultimately, it was decided the only way that the items dug out at Bykovnya could have found their way to the Soviet Union was only as personal belongings of their owners, i.e. Polish citizens arrested and deported by the Soviet political police after the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939.[27]

Recently, Polish historiography scored another success in research concerning the items dug out from the graves at Bykovnya. In 2007, a plastic toothbrush was found in one of the pits, with a mysterious inscription in Polish: "Keepsake from a Kherson prison, 26 XII [December] 1939". The inscription aroused astonishment and doubts: why would an unidentified Polish prisoner have called a toothbrush his 'keepsake'? Did he receive it from someone else? But from whom? It did not seem possible that he should have received it from the prison authorities, as research into the fate of Polish citizens arrested by the NKVD showed that in terms of personal hygiene, the prisoners were only given showers and haircuts. Also, there is no evidence that prisoners could purchase toothbrushes in Soviet prisons. There was another possibility – that the toothbrush was a gift from a Soviet fellow prisoner – which is highly unlikely in the light of the catastrophic shortages of consumer goods in Stalinist Russia (bread shortages notwithstanding). The answer was found, quite surprisingly, in 2016 in a Soviet prisoner's account kept in one of Warsaw archives. The author wrote that after his arrest by the NKVD, he was detained in a Stanisławów prison, where on 21 December 1939 he was put on a prison transport headed precisely to Kherson. He arrived at the destination on 26 December, i.e. on the same day that appeared on the toothbrush. What happened next? The prisoners from occupied Poland were led to a large hall, where several boxes were brought in. Soon the prison's chief physician arrived, and from one of the boxes took out a toothbrush and tooth powder and proceeded to instruct the prisoners how to take care of dental hygiene. Then, each prisoner received a toothbrush and a box with powder – as a gift from the Soviet regime.[28] So we know how toothbrushes found their way to Polish prisoners in Kherson. But we also know something else – that this particular prisoner who carved this 'keepsake' inscription on one of the toothbrushes and who was ultimately murdered in Kiev and buried at Bykovnya, was brought in from a Kherson prison. This case, and by no means an isolated one, that can be found in this source and in similar ones, demonstrates why on 22 March 1940 Beria ordered the transfer of 'only' 6,000 prisoners to Ukrainian and Belarusian prisons and not 7,305, because that many were murdered, as we have written above. A smaller number of prisoners marked for transfer was a result of the fact that some of the prisoners who were to be shot, were already detained in prisons in the Soviet heartland, in Kherson, Kiev and others.

Research on the extermination of prisoners detained in Ukraine could use Zuzanna Gajowniczek's study *Śladem Zbrodni Katyńskiej*. In quite many cases,

Gajowniczek's book contains information about the prison to which a given person was deported. Grouping prisoners according to the place of deportation would make it possible to determine the smallest possible number of prisoners shot in the prisons at Kiev, Kharkov, and Kherson. Unfortunately, historians failed to carry out this simple, albeit time-consuming task. Such classification would be extremely useful for determining (at least preliminarily) how many people were killed at Kharkov and Kherson. The exhumations carried out at Kharkov in order to find the remains of the prisoners murdered there yielded no results, but none were conducted in Kherson. So what we know is based only on what we learned from the exhumations at Bykovnya, i.e. that around 2,000 prisoners were shot in Kiev; therefore the remaining killing sites (that is, prisons in Kharkov and Kherson) account only for the remaining 1,435 prisoners. This knowledge is far from precise, because historians should at least try to determine how many prisoners were killed in either of the prisons.

Unfortunately, none of the Ukrainian prisons were examined more closely. Therefore, the historiography of Katyń is missing – even papers on the prisons in Kiev, Kharkov, and Kherson. This is radically different from what we know of the situation of prisoners of war murdered as part of the Katyń massacre: the camps where they were detained and the method of execution of the POWs already have their monographs.[29] Despite appearances, historians are not helpless, although sources that contain information about those prisons are not easy to find (except for Kharkov, to a certain degree, which is better known as the execution site of officers detained in the Starobelsk camp in Ukraine). Let us add that the shortcomings of research concerning prisons where prisoners were murdered as part of the Katyń massacre in Ukraine, is not only the case in Polish historiography. No such research was conducted by Ukrainian or Russian historians.

It is hard to talk about the murder of prisoners in Belarus, because there is no list of names of the victims, called the Belarusian Katyń List. Nevertheless, Polish historiography could credit itself with a highly probable hypothesis that the bodies of prisoners murdered as part of the Katyń massacre in the Minsk prison had been transported to the nearby wild range of Kuropaty and buried there. This hypothesis was based on the fact that Kuropaty were the main burial site for corpses of NKVD victims near Minsk.[30] Polish researchers conducted examinations of items dug out from the graves in Kuropaty as they previously did in the case of Bykovnya. This led them to the conclusion that most of those items (footwear, combs) had been manufactured by the same Polish and European firms as those found at Bykovnya. Some items found at Kuropaty had been manufactured by firms that were not identified in the burial pits at Bykovnya, such as the Polish company 'Pepege' of Grudziądz, which produced galoshes or the Czech shoe factory 'Bata' (whose products had been mass imported to Poland before the war).

Several words of summary. Despite the mentioned shortcomings of Polish historiography with respect to the research into the murder of the 7,305 prisoners as part of the Katyń massacre, one should regard its achievements as significant. Most victims known by name and surname have been identified, as they are listed on the Ukrainian Katyń List; they are in the process of revision, correction and expanding of information on those people. Those listed on the UKL are subject to closer identification, namely those about whom we know only what the document contains. A hypothetical list of names is being compiled to include those who had not been identified but could have been murdered in Belarus.

Biographical findings seem to be the strongest suit of Polish historiography, when we speak of the murder of the 7,305 prisoners as part of the Katyń massacre. No historians in other countries have come up with such findings.[31] Once the work on the improved UKL edition is completed, the researchers would need to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the population of prisoners executed in Ukraine. At present, it is difficult to say when this work could begin. Not soon, it appears. The first volume of the new edition was published in 2015, and volume two has not been published. This seems to show that the space between the consecutive volumes would be longer than two years. If we multiply the two years by several if not more than a dozen years (that many volumes are planned), we conclude that the work on the new ULK edition would finish not earlier than in 20 years' time. Only then would we be able to start thinking about analytical work regarding the victims of murder in Ukraine.

Far lesser are the results of research on sites of the massacre, i.e. the four main NKVD prisons in Belarus and Ukraine: in Kiev, Kharkov, Kherson and Minsk. Small 'comfort' could be offered by the fact that no such research had been conducted by historians from other countries.[32] To be sure, one should try to change this state of affairs, be it only by preparing papers on any of those prisons. Much more detailed research would be in order with respect to the thousands of items that definitely belonged to Polish victims, dug out during exhumation work in Bykovnya and Kuropaty.

All the action would allow – let us hope – to alter the situation where the murder of prisoners remains a secondary or completely unknown thread in the Katyń massacre. After all, the murdered prisoners accounted for no more, no less than one-third of the total number of victims of the Katyń massacre.

Endnotes

[1] K. Łagojda, *Pamięć o ojcu. Refleksje z rozmów z rodzinami katyńskimi. Rekonesans badawczy* [The memory of father. Reflections from conversations with the Katyń families. Research survey], in: *Wrocławski Rocznik Historii Mówionej*, issue 4/2014, p. 105ff.

[2] This number was a result of subtracting the 3,435 of those murdered in Ukraine from the total of 7,305 murdered prisoners.

[3] Quoted in: *Katyń. A Crime without Punishment*, edited by W. Materski et al., New Haven 2007, pp. 118–119.

[4] S. Kalbarczyk, *„Ukraińska lista katyńska" – czego jeszcze nie wiemy, postulaty badawcze* [„The Ukrainian Katyń list" – what we don't know yet, research proposals], in: *Zbrodnia katyńska. Polska a Rosja. Wyjście z kryzysu prawdy 1940–2016* [The Katyń crime. Poland and Russia. Emerging from the crisis of what's true], Warsaw 2017, p. 328ff.

[5] Ibidem, p. 329f.

[6] *Śladem Zbrodni Katyńskiej* [On the trail of the Katyń massacre], edited by Z. Gajowniczek, Warsaw 1998.

[7] For example there is no letter 'v' in the Russian alphabet, which can be found in Polish. On the other hand, the letter 'u' only has one form in Russian, whereas in Polish there is also another one: 'ó'.

[8] For instance, the surname of a Lvov judge Alfred Laniewski appears in a distorted form: 'Łaniewski'.

[9] Also, the author says that Mikołaj Masłow was perhaps a "member of the 'Charnomore' fraternity in Warsaw." In fact Masłow was an active politician, and virtually throughout the 1930s, he was a member of the upper house of the parliament, the Senate.

[10] R. Szawłowski ('Karol Liszewski'), *Wojna polsko-sowiecka 1939* [The Polish-Soviet War 1939], vol. 1, Warsaw 1996, p. 433.

[11] A. Przewoźnik, J. Adamska, *Katyń. Zbrodnia, prawda, pamięć* [Katyń. The crime, the truth and memory], Warsaw 2010, p. 340.

[12] Ibidem, pp. 340–341.

[13] *Polski Cmentarz Wojenny Kijów-Bykownia. Księga Cmentarna* [Polish Military Cemetery Kyiv-Bykivnia], vol. 1: *A–B*, edited by A.K. Kunert, Warsaw 2015.

[14] For example the erreoneous spelling of the surname 'Biedeczuk' was corrected to 'Biedeniuk'; Biedeniuk's father's name was also corrected (from 'Matwiej' to 'Maciej'). *Polski Cmentarz Wojenny Kijów-Bykownia* [Polish Military Cemetery Kyiv-Bykivnia], p. 215.

[15] Archiwum Wschodnie (Warsaw), Andrzej Jakubowicz's account, II/1840.

[16] *Z Dziejów Walk o Niepodległość* [From the annals for the fight for freedom], issue 2/2013, p. 433f. The 19 biographical entries were written by Marek Gałęzowski, and the remaining 2 by Daniel Koreś. Naturally, this is just an example, and there is a *Lubelska lista katyńska* [Lublin Katyń list], edited by Adam Winiarz (Lublin 1997), with 6 biographical entries of those included in the ULK (p. 361f.).

[17] For details see: S. Kalbarczyk, *„Białoruska lista katyńska" – brakujący element prawdy o zbrodni katyńskiej* [The "Belarusian Katyń list" – the missing piece of truth about the Katyń crime], in: *Zeszyty Katyńskie. Zbrodnia katyńska między prawdą i kłamstwem*, issue 23/2008, p. 135.

[18] M. Wyrwa, *Nieodnalezione ofiary Katynia? Lista osób zaginionych na obszarze północno-wschodnich województw II RP od 17 września 1939 do czerwca 1940* [Unclaimed victims of Katyń? List of missing persons in the north-eastern provinces of the Second Republic of Poland from 17 September 1939 to June 1940], Warsaw 2015.

[19] Ibidem, p. 29.

[20] Ibidem, p. 74.

[21] K. Chylińska, *Pamiętam* [I remember], in: J. Stankiewicz-Januszczak, *Marsz śmierci. Ewakuacja więźniów z Mińska do Czerwieni 24–27 czerwca 1941 r.* [Death march. Evacuation of prisoners from Minsk to Czerwień 24–27 June 1941], Warsaw 1999, p. 190.

[22] Cf. M. Mączyński, *Policja Państwowa w II Rzeczypospolitej. Organizacyjno-prawne aspekty funkcjonowania* [The State Police in the Second Republic of Poland. Organizational and legal aspects of its functioning], Cracow 1997, p. 53.

[23] *Rocznik Oficerski Rezerw 1934* [Reserve officers' annual publication], Warsaw 2003 (reprint), p. 127.

[24] See: *Kalendarz Informator Sądowy na 1939 rok* [Court Information Calendar for 1939], Warsaw (no date), p. 188.

[25] S. Kalbarczyk, *Sowieckie więzienie w Brześciu nad Bugiem w latach 1939–1941* [Soviet prison in Brest-on-the-Bug in the years 1939–1941], in: *Między historią polityczną a historią społeczną. Księga jubileuszowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Andrzejowi Skrzypkowi w siedemdziesięciolecie urodzin* [Between political history and social history. A jubilee book given to Professor Andrzej Skrzypek on his 70th birthday],, edited by J. Gołota, Pułtusk–Olsztyn–Ostrołęka–Warsaw 2014, p. 363.

[26] R. Dzwonkowski, *Leksykon duchowieństwa polskiego represjonowanego w ZSRS 1939–1988* [Lexicon of Polish clergy repressed in the USSR 1939-1988], Lublin 2003, p. 216.

[27] For more see: S. Kalbarczyk, *Przedmioty odnalezione w Bykowni i Kuropatach świadczą o polskości ofiar* [Items found in Bykovnya and Kuropaty prove the victims were Polish], in: *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, issue 10–11/2007.

[28] S. Kalbarczyk, *„Ukraińska lista katyńska"* ["The Ukrainian Katyń List"], p. 345.

[29] M. Fałdowska, *Obóz polskich jeńców wojennych w Kozielsku (wrzesień 1939 – maj 1940)* [Polish POW Camp in Kozelsk (September 1939 – May 1940)], Siedlce 2013; B. Gałek, *Starobielsk. Obóz jeniecki NKWD wrzesień 1939 – maj 1940* [Starobelsk. NKVD POW Camp September 1939 – May 1940], Warsaw 2014; M. Fałdowski, *Zagłada polskich policjantów więzionych w obozie specjalnym NKWD w Ostaszkowie (wrzesień 1939 – maj 1940)* [Extermination of Polish Policemen Imprisoned in the NKVD Special Camp in Ostashkov (September 1939 – May 1940)], Szczytno 2016.

[30] D. Boćkowski, *Kuropaty – Białoruski Katyń?* [Kuropaty – the Belarusian Katyń?], in: *Zbrodnia Katyńska. Pytania pozostałe bez odpowiedzi*, *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, issue 15/2002, p. 62f.

[31] It would be in order to add that information concerning several prionsers who could have been killed in Belarus as part of the Katyń massacre, could be found in publications by Belarusian historians. Cf.: I. Melnikau, *Białoruska tajemnica Katynia* [The Belarusian Katyń Secret], in: *Niepodległość*, issue 3–4/2014, p. 266f.; idem, *Zachodnebelaruskaia Atlantida 1921–1941 gg. Pamizh Varshavoi i Maskvoi*, Minsk 2016, p. 291f. On the other hand, some publications by Ukrainian historians contain data regarding some 20 people listed on the ULK, but they largely repeat the information provided previously by Zuzanna Gajowniczek. Cf. V. Krivosheia, L. Onishko, *Ukrainskii katinskii spisok – za i proti*, in: *Bikiwnia w sistemi politichnikh represii URSR u 1937–1941 rokach: doslidnicki refleksii ta interpretacii*, Kiev 2014, p. 140f.

[32] As far as English and American historiography is concerned, the description of the massacre of the prisoners is based on the results of Polish historians' research: Zuzanna Gajowniczek, Daniel Boćkowski and others. See for example: G. Sanford, *Katyń and the Soviet Massacre of 1940. Truth, Justice and Memory*, London–New York 2005, p. 109f.

Monika Komaniecka-Łyp

The Cracow plots in the so-called Katyń case. History of records and evidence brought from Katyń in 1943

Cracow is by no means an accidental place in history of the so-called Katyń case. Several people participating in the exhumation of Polish officers in Katyń in the spring of 1943 came from Cracow. In this city, the team under the direction of Dr Jan Robel carried out the examination and elaboration of materials brought from Katyń. And it was in Cracow where attempts were made to hide a part of the Katyń legacy, the saving of which involved so many people.

The Technical Committee of Polish Red Cross (PCK)

The discovery of the Polish officers' death pits in Katyń in the spring of 1943 was exploited by the Germans as part of the propaganda aimed at conflicting the Allies and stirring up anti-Soviet sentiments in Polish society. At the beginning of April, a German exhumation team headed by professor Gerard Buhtz, a forensic expert from the University of Wrocław, visited Katyń. The Germans also arranged group trips to the Smolensk area enabling the visitors to take a look at the exhumation works. At Hitler's instruction, the first trip to Katyń, made by a Polish group from areas occupied by the Germans, took place on 10 April. Among participants were writers Ferdynand Goetel and Jan Emil Skiwski, Chief Executive of the Central Welfare Council Edmund Seyfried, two Warsaw doctors from the Polish Welfare Committee: Dr. Edward Grodzki and Dr. Konrad Orzechowski, and a doctor from Cracow: Dr. Tadeusz Pragłowski. Upon his return, Goetel, at his own initiative, submitted written reports to the Executive Board of the Polish Red Cross and to the Government Delegation for Poland.

As a result of the pressure exerted by the Germans on the Polish Red Cross and Goetel's report, the Polish Red Cross Executive Board had sent a technical commis-

sion to Katyń. Having arrived at the site on 16 April, Kazimierz Skarżyński, the secretary general of the Polish Red Cross Executive Board, decided that exhumation works are to be carried out. The committee consisted of participants from Warsaw: a physician, Dr. Hieronim Bartoszewski, Jerzy Wodzinowski (the third manager), Ludwik Rojkiewicz (the first manager), Stefan Kołodziejski, and also from Cracow: a plenipotentiary of the Polish Red Cross Executive Board in Cracow, Stanisław Plappert, his deputy, Dr. Adam Szebesta and a representative of the Cracow archbishop, Rev. Stanisław Jasiński.[1] In order to speed up the work, several people left for Katyń: Hugon Kassur (second manager), Gracjan Jaworowski, Adam Godzik, Stefan Cupryjak, Jan Mikołajczyk, Dr. Marian Wodziński, Franciszek Król, Władysław Buczak, and Ferdynand Płonka. The Commission worked from 17 April to 9 June 1943. As a result of the arrangements with the Germans, the work of the commission was under their strict supervision and consisted in identifying corpses on the basis of documents and objects found with the remains, on the basis of which exhumation lists of Polish officers were prepared (initially in the German language, and from the end of April, lists were created with the same numbers in both German and Polish). The Commission left Katyń on 9 June 1943 after an exhumation of over 4,233 corpses, and the obtained documents and items allowing for the identification of victims were brought to Cracow. After the end of exhumation works, the Polish Red Cross produced a "Confidential report" which in June 1943 was sent to the Polish Government in London.[2]

Katyń records of the exhumation

The result of the exhumation works in Katyń was, among others, the collection of 11 crates containing approximately 3,000 envelopes with the materials of Polish officers (the first chest arrived in May 1943, and on 9 June, further boxes and a small one containing diaries were brought back). The Katyń boxes were made of one inch thick pine planks made of unpainted wood, 2 m long, having a width and heigth of approximately 0.75 m, without a lid.

The Katyń materials were sent to the team of Dr. Jan Zygmunt Robel, head of the former Department of Medical Chemistry, Jagiellonian University, Kopernika Street no. 7, which in 1943 was the Chemical Department of the German State Institute of Forensic Medicine and Forensic Science, managed by Dr. Werner Beck, a forensic doctor from Wrocław.[3] The team consisted of: Dr. Aleksandra Seńkowska, Dr. Władysław Szwed, Jan Cholewiński, Prof. Ludwik Kamykowski, Irma Fortner, Dr. Jadwiga Ackerman, Dr. Maria Paszkowska. The diaries of Polish officers were the first items to be processed, as the Germans wanted to use them for a traveling exhibition in the General Government. Objects and documents from the chests were first cleaned, then they were inventoried and their contents was read and written

down. At the end, research reports were made in the Polish language and sent to PCK (PRC). At that time, the objects were also examined by the families of the victims, which facilitated identification. The work lasted from 25 May 1943 to 1 August 1944.[4] From the "List of Research Results" in the so-called "Robel Archive" it is known that a total of 266 "cover envelopes" containing 1,846 documents were examined. According to Urszula Olech, the preserved collection contained 269 envelopes with 1,088 cards.[5] Still in 1943, Dr. Szebesta forwarded to Warsaw copies of 22 diaries, which he then transported to London on the night of 29–30 May 1944 as part of the air operation "Bridge No. 2" by Colonel Roman Rudkowski.[6]

At the end of July 1944, acting upon Beck's decision, the chests were moved from the Chemical Department from Kopernika Street to the headquarters of the Institute at Grzegórzecka Street No. 16, which was protected by several guards. On 4 August 1944, the Germans removed the Katyń chests along with the original research protocols and transported them west. Their further fate is known from the interrogation reports of Werner Beck and Karl Herrmann before a special commission of the US Congress in 1952. According to Beck's testimonies, he received an order to destroy the Katyń materials from the General Government chief police officer in Cracow. As a result of his personal efforts at the appropriate German authorities and the intervention of the President of the Central Welfare Council, Prince Adam Ronikier, they were transported to Wrocław and placed at the Anatomical Institute of the University of Wrocław. Beck then transported them to Dresden, and from there, by trucks, to the town of Radebeul, where they were placed in a railway warehouse.[7] Karl Hermann[8] supervised the transport of the crates by train from Wrocław to Dresden. In the testimony, Beck reported that he wanted to hand over the chests to the Branch Office of the International Red Cross in Prague, but when he got there, he failed to contact the Office. Beck issued an order to burn the Katyń documentation in the event of a Russian incursion. This order was performed by a railroad shipping agent in the spring (around April/May) 1945, before the city was taken over by the Russians.

The Katyń lie and Soviet persecution

After the Germans publicized the discovery of the collective graves of the Polish officers, the Russians immediately began their propaganda action, placing responsibility for the killing of the Polish officers on the Germans. The Polish government in London undertook actions to clarify the truth.[9] In response to this, on 25 April 1943, the Soviet Union broke off mutual relations by terminating the Sikorski–Maisky agreement concluded in 1941. As a result of military operations, the front line situation changed in the autumn of 1943. In September 1943, the Germans withdrew from the

Smolensk area, while NKVD and NKGB officers from the headquarters in Moscow and the NKVD Board of the Smolensk Province started to arrive. They started digging up the area and fabricating the "evidence" of the guilt of the Germans, which was confirmed by aerial photos of German intelligence. The whole work was supervised from Moscow by the deputy of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, Sergei Kruglov and the People's Commissar of State Security, Vsevolod Merkulov. Considerable attention was paid to the witnesses, who were urged to change their testimonies with various methods, including accusations of collaboration with the Germans or detention in individual cells. In the end, about 100 people were interrogated, several of whom were chosen to testify "live".

"The Commission" of Kruglov and Merkulov prepared the basics of the intricately constructed Katyń lie. On 13 January 1944, an official state Special Commission, headed by the chief surgeon of the Red Army, Nikolai Burdenko, came to Katyń from Moscow. For a few days in January 1944, they carried out exhumations of the Polish officers and interrogated witnesses selected by the NKVD. On 24 January 1944, based on material prepared by the NKVD and their own material, at a conference for foreign journalists in Smolensk, the commission announced its communique, recognizing the Germans as guilty of the crime. A documentary film and an exhibition of objects excavated from the graves were also prepared. The committee's work was aimed at creating official propaganda material on the subject of Katyń.[10] The Polish communists loyally supported Stalin and took part in propagating the Katyń lie. On 28 April 1943, the chairwoman of the Union of Polish Patriots (ZPP), Wanda Wasilewska, accused the Germans of committing the crime in a speech which later appeared in *Izvestia*, a few days later the PPR (Polish Worker's Party) leadership did the same. In January 1944, Wanda Wasilewska made sure that Jerzy Borejsza would join the group of foreign journalists participating in the press conference of the Burdenko Special Commission. In February 1944, he published in the journal of the Union of Polish Patriots *Wolna Polska* ("Free Poland") a reportage entitled "Tracing a crime," and the members of the ZPP disseminated the Burdenko version in the Soviet press. Propaganda was also undertaken in the 1st Polish Army of General Zygmunt Berling indoctrinating soldiers in the spirit of the Soviet version of events.[11]

When the Germans left Cracow, withdrawing from the Red Army advance, the NKVD began searching for people taking part in the exhumation in Katyń. In March 1945, Dr. Jan Robel was arrested, as well as his associates. In June of that year, the prosecutor's office in Cracow started an investigation accusing some of the visitors to Katyń in 1943 of collaboration with the Germans: writers Ferdynand Goetel and Jan Emil Skiwski and a member of the Technical Committee, Dr. Marian Wodziński and a worker of the Zieleniewski Factory in Cracow, Franciszek Prochownik. The

investigation was directed by the prosecutor Roman Martini and supervised by the prosecutor Jerzy Sawicki. Warrants of arrest were sent after the accused who initially hid and then fled abroad. Goetel left Poland in December 1945, Jan Emil Skiwski at the end of 1944, together with the fleeing Germans. Marian Wodziński managed to go to England in the middle of 1945. Mr. Prochownik was arrested in June 1945 and released in October 1946. The actual purpose of the investigation was to find "evidence" of the Soviet version of events in Katyń. The Russians interrogated the writers, most of whom lived in Cracow at Krupnicza Street No. 22. Writers in their testimonies regarded Goetel's activity positively, while Skiwski was considered a collaborator. After the tragic death of prosecutor Roman Martini on 30 March 1946, the investigation stagnated. Ultimately, only the main accused, Emil Skiwski, was ajudged in absentia and condemned to a life sentence.

On 4 September 1956, the Provincial Prosecutor's Office in Cracow officially discontinued the proceedings against the remaining suspects.[12]

The Archive of Dr. Robel

The term "Robel's archive" first appeared in the media after a press conference, which took place on 22 April 1991, a few days after finding it in the renovated building of the Institute of Forensic Studies at Westerplatte Street No. 9 in Cracow. It was one of at least four versions (copies) of protocols from the study of the Katyń dossier, developed by the team of Dr. Robel. This is the documentation created as a result of research and inventory of items from the Katyń chests brought to Cracow in May and June 1943 by the PCK (PRC) Technical Commission. The actual objects from the exhumation of 1943 and the original protocols from their research, with some small exceptions, were taken away by the Germans in 1944 and destroyed in the spring of 1945.[13]

One copy of the research protocols was sent to the Executive Board of the Polish Red Cross at Smolna Street No. 17 in Warsaw and was burned during the Warsaw Uprising. The second one, which was in Cracow's PCK, was taken by Robel in August 1944 for fear it would be taken away by the Germans. Already after the crates had been transported, he handed it over to his friend, the head of Department V (covert communications' department) of the Home Army's Kraków District Command, AK Lt. Col. Antoni Hniłko. Antoni Hniłko lived at Zygmunt Wroblewski Street No. 4 in Kraków.[14] Lt. Col. Hniłko, who was known under the pseudonym "the Bomb" in June–July 1944, even before the so-called Katyń chests were taken away by the Germans, together with Dr. Robel and Dr. Szebesta took action to retake the chests from German hands, but failed.[15] According to the account of his brother, engineer Józef Hniłko, 4 chests were taken over and were then hidden in various

places in Cracow.[16] For those reasons, the Germans accelerated the export of the Katyń materials to Wrocław. After the Russians entered Cracow at the beginning of 1945, the search for people related to the Katyń issue was made. On 11 March 1945, Lt. Col. Hniłko was arrested by the NKVD, and was never seen or heard of since. A copy of the Katyń archive he stored also fell in the hands of the NKVD. Stanisław Piwowarski, author of a study on Lt. Col. Hniłko, suggested that his disappearance might have been due to the fact that he knew the date of the crime, which was crucial because it clearly indicated the perpetrators of the crime.[17] At the same time (on 17 March), Dr. Robel and his colleagues, Jan Cholewiński, Irma Fortner and Jan Pater were arrested by the Russians. Robel was placed in an apartment at Krasiński Avenue in Cracow. They were released from prison probably in April or May 1945 thanks to the intervention of Jagiellonian University authorities. During interrogations, Robel did not disclose to the NKVD that he had at least two copies of the archives in his possession.[18]

In 1952, the Institute of Forensic Expertise (IFE) at Kopernik Street (the former Chemical Department) was moved to a new building at Weasterplatte Street No. 9. Shortly before the transfer, Dr. Robel asked Maria Kozłowska *née* Grygiel, an IFE employee, for help in segregating the Katyń documentation, which was hidden in various files. The only people aware of the work were Robel himself, Dr. Jan Sehn, the director of the Institute, and a janitor Grygiel, who was supposed to hide the documents in the attic. Maria Kozłowska found out about the place where these documents were hidden before her father's death in December 1957. In 1985, Kozłowska gave information about the documents hidden by her father to a IFE director, prof. Jan Markiewicz.[19] On 18 April 1991, during the renovation of the building, a construction team managed to find a package with documents in the attic. These were orange files packed into an office ring binder cover, wrapped in paper and felt. The case was forwarded to the Provincial Prosecutor's Office and publicized during a press conference on 22 April. A few days later (on 25 April), Stanisław Sobolewski, the grandson of prof. Franciszek Bielak, a school friend of Dr. Robel, visited the prosecutor's office. It was he who received from Robel the fourth copy of the Katyń archive for safekeeping. It was established that both manuscripts were created simultaneously and constitute a copy of the same original.[20] Robel's archive was comprised of reports on the Katyń envelopes research and photographs from the inspection, i.e. photographs of items belonging to a given officer. The second group were copies of all entries and notes found in notebooks and calendars and loose pages in the form of diaries and journals related to the situation in the camp in Kozelsk and the September campaign. The third group were the protocols for the examination of objects by close relatives of the Katyń massacre victims and reports drawn up on this basis, which allowed for an almost

complete identification of the exhumed officers.[21] At present, the Katyń documentation from the Robel archive is kept in the archives of the Institute of Forensic Research of prof. Jan Sehn in Cracow.

The search for the Katyń boxes

The story of the Katyń boxes and the Katyń records appears to be very confusing. Many people who had come across the records quoted different numbers of boxes. There is no doubt about the number of boxes brought from Katyń (eleven), however, the information given in 1952 by Werner Beck before the Madden Commission, who mentioned fourteen boxes, is puzzling. The assumption of Andrzej Przewoźnik is that the records must have been transferred to the boxes of Dr. Robel and Dr. Szebesta.[22]

For years, there has been a prevailing belief in Cracow that a part of the Katyń records was not taken away by the Germans, but hidden in the city and its neighbourhood. In the spring of 1978, the Katyń Institute was established in Cracow, founded by Adam Macedoński, Stanisław Tor, and Andrzej Kostrzewski, who were later in the summer of that year joined by Kazimierz Godłowski and Leszek Martini. Initially, the operations were kept secret, and consisted of translating foreign language publications on Katyń and issuing the *Katyń Bulletin*. The following year, the Institute publicly revealed its presence by announcing an appeal to Polish society for help in collecting Katyń massacre information. The address of Adam Macedoński was then made available to the public.[23] Macedoński gathered many accounts of people who might have been knowledgeable about the hidden Katyń boxes.

On 30 November 2004, the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Warsaw undertook the so-called Katyń investigation proceedings, which are currently being continued. The investigation was launched at the request of the Katyń Committee, Stefan Melak, and relatives of victims killed in Katyń, Kharkov, and Mednoye. The director of the then Central Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, Prof. Witold Kulesza, by way of Order no. 5/04, established an Inter-Branch Investigative Team, whose task was to run the investigation proceedings into the Katyń Massacre. The first step was to establish who were the aggrieved people – not only the victims of the crime, but also their closest relatives, i.e. legal successors. The next objective of the investigation was to give account for all the circumstances of the massacre, hence all records which could possibly contribute to the case were being collected from many archives in various countries, including Russia, Ukraine and Germany.[24] During the investigation proceedings, all lines of enquiry which could render information on the missing Katyń records were examined.

One of them concerned Cracow. On 7 October 2015, Adam Macedoński came to the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Warsaw to offer information on the hidden Katyń documents from 1943. In March 1991, Prof. Jan Sentek from the AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow handed over to Macedoński information from his late father-in-law, Colonel Stefan Trzebiński, who in 1943 held the role of an inspector of the Polish Red Cross Executive Board in Cracow. Colonel Trzebiński was to say that following his return from the Polish Red Cross trip to Katyń, a decision had been made to hide some of the Katyń records.

A special wooden box covered with metal sheets had been constructed for placing articles removed from the Katyń graves in it and then the box was buried in the vicinity of the building at Studencka Street no. 19, in the tenement house which was the seat of the Polish Red Cross. Among participants of the undertaking were the employees of the Cracow branch of the Polish Red Cross: a member of the Technical Commission, Dr. Adam Szebesta, representative of the Polish Red Cross Executive Board for the Cracow district, Lieutenant Colonel Stanisław Plappert, and Colonel Stefan Trzebiński. The box, along with the stolen articles, was most probably still buried in 1943 by a porter named Flonte (Fonde) in an undetermined place on this property.[25] In the spring of 1991, the Katyń Institute undertook a search of the courtyard of the tenement house at Studencka Street employing a device allowing to examine the soil in the area to a depth of 75 cm, but nothing was found.

The prosecutors of the Institute of National Remembrance set about verifying the story version. A permission was obtained for conducting a survey of the property located at Studencka Street no. 19 in Cracow, which for years has been owned by the Cracow branch of the Polish Red Cross (currently the Małopolska District Branch of the Polish Red Cross). A team of specialists from the Faculty of Geology, Geophysics, and Environmental Protection of the AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow under the direction of Dr. Eng. Jerzy Ziętek was appointed. In October 2016, they performed a preliminary geological survey of the yard (georadar surveys) at Studencka Street No. 19.[26] Examination showed that there was no possibility for the boxes to be hidden in this area.

The second line of enquiry to be investigated by the prosecutors of the Institute of National Remembrance was to verify the information that the "Katyń archive" might have been hidden by Mieczysław Gorączko-Zemak. His written account would have it that after the boxes had been moved from the headquarters of the Institute of Forensic Medicine at Grzegórzecka Street no. 16, the documents and items were packed by the Germans into 9 metal boxes measuring 30×40×30 cm. The operation of taking over the boxes was prepared by Home Army Colonel Stanisław Lewicki pseudonym "Szymon". He was to establish a liaison with the Austrian archivist supervising the records on behalf of the German authorities. Colonel Lewicki was arrested in August

1944, hence the person supervising the attempt of intercepting the records on the night of 2–3 September 1944 was his deputy, pseudonym "Lekarz" (the "Doctor" – no surname on record). The boxes were taken over from the Cracow branch of the Home Army code-named "Żelbet" by the special unit of the Home Army code-named "Czekolada" commanded by Mieczysław Gorączko, pseudonym "Tadeusz Kora", who was supposed to hide the boxes on the property of Jan Walczak, the unit's sergeant. The boxes were then buried in the ground at a depth of 1.2 m between two railway tracks.[27] This was the information which reached the Ministry of the Interior while investigating the "Solidarity" printing equipment trafficking channel from Sweden to Poland. An employee of the Polish Ocean Lines, detained on 30 September 1987, Krzysztof Szymański, while interrogated, disclosed information about the burial of the boxes, which he first obtained from Marian Kaleta, an activist of the Polish emigration diaspora in Sweden. Szymański served as an intermediary between Bogdan Borusewicz and Kaleta, and his role consisted in smuggling electronic and printing equipment for the opposition structures in Poland, hidden in ship freezer walls.[28] In July 1987, on the basis of this information, equipped with a metal detector Szymański came to Kocmyrzów, however, failed to find the property of Jan Walczak (he would only learn that the plot owner had been dead). In the years 1988–1989, the Ministry of the Interior undertook "unofficial verification activities" under the so-called "K" (Katyń) case. In March 1988, Major General Zbigniew Pudysz presented the then Minister of the Interior, Lieutenant General Czesław Kiszczak, with a memorandum drawn up by the Investigative Office of the Ministry of the Interior on the concealment of the "Katyń archive".[29] The minister agreed to launch the proceedings. Later in March of that year, a group of officers from the Ministry of the Interior and Provincial Office of Internal Affairs in Cracow set off to the area of Proszowice, Kocmyrzów, and Luborzyca and undertook a search for the people involved in fights with the Germans. Based on information gathered in interviews, the group learned about a belief prevailing among the local populace that there was a weapons cache buried in the area of Luborzyca, which was primarily bought by the Home Army from the Germans.

The officers of the Investigation Department of the Provincial Office of Internal Affairs in Cracow reconstructed the boundaries of Walczak's property, now divided among four heirs. In the second half of September 1988, Military Unit no. 1541 stationed in Pychowice, performed a search of the entire area using a metal detecting probe to a depth of 6 m. In mid-January 1989, the area around the chapel in Wola Luborzycka was examined using sapper equipment because of new information that the boxes might have been moved. The search was unsuccessful, and the possibility the boxes being hidden in this area was rejected altogether.[30]

In the process of investigation, the prosecutors of the Institute of National Remembrance attempted to verify the war past of Mieczysław Gorączko-Zemak. In the archives

of the Security Service, he would appear as an impostor giving false information about his past. The Security Service was unable to confirm whether Gorączko-Zemak was the commander of the guerrilla unit of the Home Army code-named "Czekolada" during the occupation. In the years 1945–1947 he was working in the Municipal Housing Committee in Katowice, where he committed abuse and was facing arrest. In November 1947, he fled with his wife and daughter to Sweden. His fake stories about his role in the conspiracy helped Gorączko-Zemak gain great popularity in the emigrant milieu. At that time, he was working as an assistant at the University of Lund and was greatly involved in the activity of the Association of Polish Veterans in Malmö. In 1949, he left Sweden for Argentina facing the threat of a lawsuit due to the frauds committed while dealing with the private affairs of Poles in Sweden. He then moved to Brazil. Following the death of his wife, in 1959, along with his daughter, Gorączko-Zemak settled in Vienna, and later in the German Federal Republic. In 1965, he contacted an employee of the "Orbis" Polish Travel Agency in Brussels and offered his services to the Polish intelligence. In December 1966, he was arrested by the Belgian police under the suspicion of being involved in arms trade. Released from prison two months later, he made for Paris and established a liaison with the president of the Association of Participants of the Polish Resistance Movement in France, Antoni Zdrojewski. Thanks to his support, he obtained a consular passport at the Polish consulate. In the seventies, he claimed to have been a Major General of the Home Army.

In 1977, Gorączko-Zemak committed suicide.[31] His revelations about the interception of the "Katyń archives" by the Home Army unit code-named "Chocolate" were subsequently undermined and overthrown by Stanisław Maria Jankowski in the 2004 publication, where they were deemed a confabulation.[32] In the investigation conducted by prosecutors of the Institute of National Remembrance, on the basis of the Security Service's file analysis and witnesses' testimonies (among them, Cracow historians Stanisław Dąbrowa-Kostka, Stanisław Maria Jankowski, and Dorota Strojnowska), Mieczysław Gorączko-Zemak was found an unreliable witness. The prosecutors were unable to find the letter excavated during the exhumation in 1943, written by an officer killed in Katyń and addressed to his relatives in Sweden, the letter which Gorączko-Zemak would show to the Polish opposition in Sweden to prove his identity. It was determined that the letter had been handed over in the eighties by the Polish Institute of Source Research in Lund custodian, Marian Kaleta, to the then Government in Exile Prime Minister, Kazimierz Sabbat.

On the basis of the investigation, prosecutors of the Institute of National Remembrance established that it would be unlikely for the original documents and articles found in Katyń during the exhumation works carried out by the German authorities and the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross in 1943 to be hidden in Cracow or its neighbourhood.

The Katyń archive in the Cracow Curia

A part of the original Katyń records is kept in the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow. It constituted only a small fragment of the Katyń legacy brought in 1943 in the boxes from Katyń to Cracow. Probably in July 1944, while the boxes were being moved from Kopernika Street to Grzegórzecka Street, someone from the team of Dr. Robel must have managed to take out a dozen envelopes from the boxes. What happened later with the envolopes was disclosed in 1990 by Krystyna Jelonek-Litewka, the curator of the State Archive in Cracow. The envelopes were hidden in a warehouse of the Cracow Central Archives of Historical Records at Sienna Street, by an employee of the archive, Freedom and Independence organisation activist, Dr. Henryk Münch. When in August 1946 he was arrested by the Secret Service, the director of the archive, Prof. Marian Friedberg, performed a secret search of the archive rooms. Having found the Katyń files, he took them to his home at Retoryka Street, where his wife, Maria, would repack them into new envelopes because of their odour, but kept the existing numbering. These materials were then transferred by the professor to the Archive of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow.[33]

During the Stalinist period, the Cracow security services took action against the Catholic Church. The Cracow Curia was subject to repression, and some priests were arrested.[34] On 24 November 1952, during one of the searches carried out in the Curia by the Secret Service, the so-called Katyń legacy was found in the Archbishop's Palace in Cracow. Only after many years it turned out that the documentation was transferred to the Ministry of Public Security and then the Ministry of the Interior in Warsaw. Thanks to the efforts of the then deputy interior minister, Krzysztof Kozłowski, it returned to the Curia in April 1990. The records were handed over to Cardinal Franciszek Macharski by Colonel Kazimierz Piotrowski, director of the Interior Ministry's "C" Office.[35]

The documents were placed in 15 envelopes, grouped in 8 ribbon-bound folders making up one package. They include the original records of 31 officers brought in 1943 from Katyń (including service cards, health records, photographs, official letters, personal notes, etc.) The documents were published as "The Inventory of Katyń documents stored in the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow".[36]

The Katyń archive of Jadwiga Majchrzycka

Another of the Cracow collections of the Katyń documents consisted of exhumation letters drawn up by the Technical Committee in Katyń and sent to the Executive Board of the Polish Red Cross in Warsaw. The records were kept by Jadwiga Majchrzycka, who from October 1944 was working as the head of the Information Office

Branch of the Polish Red Cross in Cracow, and then from March 1945 moved on to manage the same Office in Warsaw. Before the war, Jadwiga Majchrzycka had worked in the Military Archive in Warsaw. Engaged in activities of the underground during the war, she was a Home Army soldier who took part in the Warsaw Uprising. On 30 September 1947, her employment with the Polish Red Cross was terminated. For two years, she would not have permanent employment and supported herself with proofreading and editorial work. In January 1949, Jadwiga Majchrzycka commenced employment with the Central Statistical Office in Warsaw. In 1951, she began her pursuits to gain a job in the state archive service in Warsaw, but was not offered one despite having positive recommendations. In February 1952, she commenced work at the "Centrala Jubilerska" (State Jewellery Company), in 1953 became the head of office of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences, and subsequently a librarian. She continued her employment there until retirement. She died on 28 November 1977.[37]

Following her dismissal from the Polish Red Cross, Jadwiga Majchrzycka concealed the documentation in her apartment. It remains unclear whether she would keep the Katyń documents in connection with her official duties, or whether she would knowingly take the documents to her apartment for fear of their destruction. In 1977, already a patient in the hospital, she told about a safe-deposit box in her apartment at Filtrowa Street to a vicar and a university chaplain in the parish of St. Jakub in Warsaw, Rev. Stefan Wysocki. He took the documents for safekeeping, and in 2011 handed them over to the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw. The collection of exhumation lists rescued by Majchrzycka is made up of copies of original schedules drawn up during the Katyń exhumation, authenticated with stamps of the Information Office of the Polish Red Cross and initialed by employees and members of the Executive Board of the Polish Red Cross, among them Kazimierz Skarżyński and Jadwiga Majchrzycka. The lists were published in the work entitled "Katyń. Exhumation letters and documents of the Executive Board of the Polish Red Cross 1943–1944".[38]

One should also bear in mind the records located in Lublin, hidden in the building's attic by unidentified employees of the Regional Board of the Polish Red Cross. Those are copies of the extracts of Katyń exhumation lists drawn up in Lublin and sent from 20 April to 12 July 1943 from the Executive Board in Warsaw to the local representatives of the Polish Red Cross. The collection contains 11 lists, which were found in April 1989, and published in 2010 on the website of the State Archive in Lublin.[39]

Summary

All these collections, hidden during the years of communist totalitarianism, contribute to our knowledge about Polish officers exhumed in Katyń. The records sur-

vived thanks to the generosity and commitment of many people who, at the risk of their lives, sought to save the legacy of Katyń from destruction.

Is this all of the Katyń records? In this article I have focused on the fate of the records brought in 1943 from Katyń to Cracow, which is the result of the exhumation works conducted there in the spring of that year. One must bear in mind individual articles and documents obtained during the war by the families of the victims. Also, the people visiting Katyń in 1943 would often take for themselves souvenirs treated as evidence of the crime. The destruction by the Germans of the original articles and documents from the Katyń boxes in the spring of 1945 constitutes a devastating loss to the Poles. Apart from the Cracow Curia collection, there is no confirmation whatsoever that the materials might have been hidden or might have survived in any way. The versions circulating in the Cracow environment about stealing boxes from the Germans were verified in 2016 in the Katyń investigation conducted by the Regional Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation in Warsaw, but the research did not end in finding them. There seems to be little chance of finding the records if they have indeed been hidden under some circumstances. However, the example of Robel's archive, two copies of which had been hidden for over 40 years and found in 1991, shows that one may hope that one day we will come across documents which will then indicate the location of the Katyń materials' storage.

In the 1990s, subsequent exhumations were carried out in Katyń and the two newly-discovered crime scenes – in Kharkiv and Mednoye. The results of the research constitute a separate collection of records, which has been described in numerous publications.[40]

Endnotes

[1] K. Skarżyński, *Katyń*, Paris 1990, pp. 11–12.

[2] *Sprawozdanie poufne Polskiego Czerwonego Krzyża. O udziale PCK w pracach ekshumacyjnych w Katyniu pod Smoleńskiem za okres kwiecień–czerwiec 1943* [A secret report of the Polish Red Cross. On participation of the Polish Red Cross in the exhumation works in Katyń near to Smolensk within the period April–June 1943], in: K. Skarżyński, *Katyń*, pp. 10–48; *Przesłuchanie Kazimierza Skarżyńskiego* [Interrogation of Kazimierz Skarżyński], in: *Mord w Lesie Katyńskim. Przesłuchania przed amerykańską komisją Maddena w latach 1951–1952* [The killings in the Katyń Forest. Interrogations before the American Madden Commission in the years 1951–1952], vol. 1, edited by W. Wasilewski, transl. W.J. Popowski, Warsaw 2017, pp. 543–548; T. Wolsza, *„To co widziałem przekracza swą grozą najśmielsze fantazje". Wojenne i powojenne losy Polaków wizytujących Katyń w 1943 r.* ["What I have seen is too horrific to be even imaginable." The war and post-war fate of the Poles visiting Katyń in 1943], Warsaw 2015, pp. 23; A. Przewoźnik, J. Adamska, *Katyń. Zbrodnia. Prawda. Pamięć* [Katyń. The Massacre. The truth. The Remembrance], Warsaw 2010, pp. 241–279.

[3] T. Dziedzic, *Akta katyńskie doktora Robla. Powstanie i losy tak zwanego Archiwum Robla oraz sylwetka jego twórcy* [The Katyń archive of Dr. Robel. The Creation and Fate of the so-called Robel Archive and its Author], in: *Jagiellonian University Scientific Notebooks. History Works*, issue 139/2012, pp. 135–136.

[4] The Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, Cracow Branch, 303/1, Files in the case against Ferdynand Goetel and others (hereinafter: AIPN Kr, 303/1), Testimony of Dr. Jan Robel, Cracow, 21 June 1945, f. 24–25; A. Przewoźnik, J. Adamska, *Katyń*, pp. 280–320.

[5] A. Przewoźnik, J. Adamska, *Katyń*, p. 309; U. Olech, *Indeks osobowy do Archiwum Robla* [The Personal Index for the Robel Archive], in: *Ku cmentarzom polskim w Katyniu, Miednoje, Charkowie* [On the Polish cemeteries in Katyń, Mednoye, Kharkiv], Warsaw 1997 (*The Katyń Working Papers*, no. 8), pp. 62–63.

[6] J. Tucholski, *Mord w Katyniu. Kozielsk – Ostaszków – Starobielsk: lista ofiar* [The Katyń massacre. Kozelsk, Ostashkov, Starobelsk: a list of victims], Warsaw 1991, p. 28.

[7] *Zeznanie Wernera Becka* [Testimony of Werner Beck], in: *Mord w Lesie Katyńskim. Przesłuchania przed amerykańską komisją Maddena w latach 1951–1952* [The killings in the Katyń Forest. Interrogations before the American Madden Commission in the years 1951–1952], vol. 2, edited by W. Wasilewski, transl. W.J. Popowski, Warsaw 2017, pp. 741–750.

[8] In 1944 and 1945, he was an officer of the security apparatus of the Third Reich. In 1945, he took part in overseeing the transport of the Katyń records into the interior of Germany. See: Testimony of Karl Herrmann, in: ibidem, pp. 738–741.

[9] T. Wolsza, *„Katyń to już na zawsze katy i katowani". W „polskim Londynie" o sowieckiej zbrodni w Katyniu (1940–1956)* ["Katyń is forever the executioners and the executed". In "Polish London" on the Soviet crime in Katyń (1940–1956)], Warsaw 2008.

[10] N. Lebedeva, *Komisja Specjalna i jej przewodniczący Burdenko* [The Special Committee and Its Chairman Nikolai Burdenko], in: *Zbrodnia Katyńska – między prawdą a kłamstwem* [The Katyń Massacre – between the lie and the truth], Warsaw 2008 (*The Katyń Working Papers*, no. 23); W. Wasilewski, *Kłamstwo katyńskie – narodziny i trwanie* [The Lie of Katyń – its birth and continuance], in: *Zbrodnia Katyńska. W kręgu prawdy i kłamstwa* [The Katyń Massacre. The truth and the lie], edited by S. Kalbarczyk, Warsaw 2010, pp. 68–88.

[11] P. Łysakowski, *Kłamstwo katyńskie* [The Katyń Lie], in: *The Bulletin of the Institute of National Remembrance*, issue 5–6/2005, pp. 85–94; W. Wasilewski, *Kłamstwo katyńskie*, pp. 82–83.

[12] R. Kotarba, Śledztwo czy mistyfikacja? [Investigation or mystification?], in: S.M. Jankowski, R. Kotarba, *Literaci a sprawa katyńska* [Men of Letters and the Katyń Issue], Cracow 2003, pp. 84–130.

[13] T. Dziedzic, *Akta katyńskie doktora Robla* [The Katyń files of Dr. Robel], pp. 125, 140.

[14] AIPN Kr, 303/1, Testimony of Dr. Robel, Cracow, 21 June 1945, p. 25.

[15] According to the accounts of Kazimierz Skarżyński, Dr Robel along with Dr. Szebesta prepared 9 zinc-plated boxes which were to be sunk in the pond. They were brought to the Institute of Forensic Medicine, but during the transfer of Katyń materials to the new boxes, as a result of indiscretion of one of the Institute's employees, the Germans found out about the entire operation and decided to move the materials to Grzegórzecka Street and had the area watched by SS guards. See: K. Skarżyński, *Katyń*, p. 53.

[16] S. Dąbrowa-Kostka, *Tajemnica katyńskich skrzyń* [The secret of the Katyń boxes], in: *Dziennik Polski*, issue 102/1991.

[17] S. Piwowarski, *Antoni Hniłko i sprawa Katynia (1940/1941, 1943–1945)* [Antoni Hniłko and the Katyń case (1940/1941, 1943–1945)], in: D. Strojnowska, K. Klocek, *Bracia Hniłkowie* [The Hniłko Brothers], Cracow 2008, pp. 135, 141–149.

[18] T. Dziedzic, *Akta katyńskie doktora Robla*, p. 141; T. Wolsza, *„To co widziałem*, pp. 46–48.

[19] AIPN Kr, 287/1, vol. 1–2, The case regarding the concealment of Katyń documentation at the Institute of Forensic Expertise, 1991 (hereinafter: AIPN Kr, 287/1), vol. 1, Minutes from the interrogation of Maria Kozłowska, Cracow, 7 May 1991, ff. 99–102 (pdf).

[20] R. Kotarba, Śledztwo czy mistyfikacja? [An investigation or a mystification?], pp. 105–109; AIPN Kr, 287/1, vol. 1, The decision to discontinue the investigation, Cracow, 11 May 1991, ff. 134–141 (pdf).

[21] T. Dziedzic, *Akta katyńskie doktora Robla* [The Katyń files of Dr. Robel], pp. 143–146.

[22] A. Przewoźnik, J. Adamska, *Katyń*, p. 318.

[23] *Zapamiętane. Z Adamem Macedońskim rozmawia Anna Zechenter* [Remembered. A interview of Anna Zechenter with Adam Macedoński], Cracow 2011, pp. 90–99.

[24] M. Kuźniar-Plota, *Śledztwo katyńskie – stan postępowania i zadania na przyszłość* [The Katyń investigation – the status of the proceedings and tasks for the future], in: https://Katyn.ipn.gov.pl/kat/o-zbrodni-Katynskiej/sledztwo-Katynskie/3657,Sledztwo-Katynskie-stan-postepowania-i-zadania-na-przyszlosc.html.

[25] File ref. S 38.2014.Zk, Investigation of the Katyń Massacre (hereinafter: File ref. S 38.2014.Zk), A memorandum from a digital recording (digital copy) of a TDK D60 tape cassette no AAFE316 with handwritten notes on the sheet and the cover in: *The Katyń boxes. An account of Prof. Sentek*, Warsaw, 14 January 2016.

[26] File ref. S 38.2014.Zk, Records of non-invasive georadar tests in the yard of the Polish Red Cross building in Cracow, Studencka Street no. 19, Cracow, 20 October 2016.

[27] File ref. S 38.2014.Zk, Katyń documents case, prepared by M. Gorączko-Zemak. The story of Zemak was related to the Fundacja Centrum Dokumentacji Czynu Niepodległościowego (Independence Act Documentation Foundation) by Marian Kaleta in the early 2000s. He received it in the eighties from the custodian of the Polish Institute of Source Research in Lund, Sweden, Mr Andrzej Koraszewski.

[28] The Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Warsaw (hereinafter: AIPN), 003273/524, vol. 2, Inspection files of an investigation conducted against Kornel Andrzej Morawiecki, Andrzej Roman Kołodziej, Krzysztof Szymański, The minutes from the interrogation of the suspect Krzysztof Szymański, 23 October 1987, ff. 100–104.

[29] AIPN Kr, 050/57, vol. 1, Files of the discovery procedure in the "K" case (hereinafter: AIPN Kr, 050/57, vol. 1), A memorandum drawn up in the Investigative Office, Warsaw, 19 March 1988, ff. 6–8.

[30] AIPN Kr, 050/57, vol. 1, A memorandum drawn up in the Investigative Office of the Ministry of the Interior, Warsaw, 2 November 1988, ff. 89–90; ibidem, Letter from the head of the Provincial Office of Internal Affairs, Investigation Department in Cracow major Maciej Wójcik to the head of the Department and Investigation Bureau of the Ministry of the Interior, Cracow, 14 January 1989, f. 92.

[31] AIPN, 01940/45, Files of Mieczysław Gorączko-Zemak, A memorandum, Warsaw, June 1967, ff. 67–69 (the reference AIPN, 02778/679 relates to the same documents); AIPN, 1268/9474, Foreigner's personal files of M. Gorączko-Zemak.

[32] S.M. Jankowski, *Historia jednego kłamstwa* [The story of one lie], in: *Zbrodnia katyńska. Wina i oskarżenie* [The Katyń massacre. The guilt and the accusation], Warsaw 2004 (*The Katyń Working Papers*, no. 19), pp. 79–113.

[33] K. Jelonek-Litewka, *Tak ratowano akta katyńskie* [On saving the Katyń files], in: *Czas Krakowski*, 22/23 May 1990.

[34] M. Lasota, F. Musiał, *Kościół zraniony. Proces księdza Lelity i sprawa kurii krakowskiej* [The wounded Church. The trial of Father Lelita and the case of the Cracow Curia], Cracow 2003.

[35] *Inwentarz dokumentów katyńskich przechowywanych w Archiwum Kurii Metropolitalnej w Krakowie* [The Inventory of Katyń documents stored in the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow], edited by S.M. Jankowski, A. Roliński, Cracow 2002, pp. 23–29.

[36] Ibidem, pp. 75–150; an electronic copy of the inventory see: the Archive of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow https://katyn.ipn.gov.pl/kat/multimedia-1/archiwum-kurii-metropo.

[37] M. Olczak, *Jadwiga Majchrzycka i jej zbiór dokumentów* [Jadwiga Majchrzycka and her collection of records], in: *Katyń. Listy ekshumacyjne i dokumenty Zarządu Głównego Polskiego Czerwonego Krzyża 1943–1944* [Katyń. The exhumation lists and documents of the Executive Board of the Polish Red Cross 1943–1944], edited by J. Adamska, T. Krawczak, M. Olczak, Warsaw 2012.

[38] *Katyń. Listy ekshumacyjne i dokumenty* [Katyń. Exhumation letters and documents]

[39] J. Adamska, *Dokumentacja wydobyta w 1943 r. z dołów śmierci w Katyniu. Listy ekshumacyjne PCK* [Records excavated from the death pits in Katyń 1943. The exhumation lists of the Polish Red Cross], in: *Katyń. Listy ekshumacyjne i dokumenty*, pp. 39–40. See also: *The Katyń lists in the State Archive in Lublin*, in: http://lublin.agov.pl/listy-Katynskie-w-zasobie-archiwum-panstwowego-w-lublinie/.

[40] See inter alia: A. Karolak, *Badania ekshumacyjne przeprowadzone w Miednoje latem 1991 r.* [The exhumation examinations carried out in Mednoye in the summer of 1991], in: *Review of historical sciences*, issue 7, no. 2/2008, pp. 143–168; *Katyń w świetle badań terenowych 1994–1995* [Katyń in the light of field research 1994–1995], collective work edited by M. Głosek, Toruń 2004; K. Persak, *Ekshumacje katyńskie. Prace archeologiczno-ekshumacyjne w Charkowie, Katyniu i Miednoje w latach 1991–1996 i ich wyniki* [The Katyń exhumations. Archaeological and Exhumation Works in Kharkiv, Katyń and Mednoye in 1991–1996 and their results], in: *Bulletin of the Institute of National Remembrance*, issue 4/2010, pp. 32–51.

Wojciech Materski

Katyń in Russian Historical Policy

Russian historical policy which is founded on the myth of the Soviet Union as the great victor of the Second World War, has always had serious problems with the first phase of the war, the years 1939–1941. The greatest problem is the Katyń massacre which for decades was not discussed at all, or lied about.

Historical policy of the Soviet state-party after 1945 tried to erase from memory everything which would remind its people that at the beginning of the Second World War Hitler and Stalin where allies. Similarly, many other controversial issues were erased: the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the treaty of friendship and borders, the violation of the independence of the Baltic Republics and their inclusion to the Soviet Union, the petty crimes committed by the Red Army soldiers at the end of war, and the Western military and economic help received under the Lend-Lease Act. Thus, the only subjects to discuss were the military genius of Stalin, the heroism of the Red Army and the heroism of civilians working behind the front lines.

At that time, the Katyń massacre was sometimes mentioned in Soviet journalism and in official propaganda, but it was only given as an example of German genocide together with the Babi Yar and Vinnica massacres. The Soviet authorities gave permission to investigate that massacre in the Soviet-dependent Republic of Poland.[1] The official document confirming German guilt, the so-called Burdenko Report, was published in millions of copies. This report written by the so-called Burdenko Committee was based on false leads prepared by the NKVD (Soviet Secret Police). This first stage of the Russian historical policy dealing with Katyń was abruptly stopped by the Nuremberg Trials.

In their list of accusations in the indictment prepared for the trial of German war criminals in Nuremberg (November 1945 – October 1946), the Soviets enlisted among other issues, the Katyń massacre which they blamed on the Third Reich. The foundation of the accusations was the already-mentioned Burdenko report.

Western judges did not agree to include these accusations in the indictment and they commenced their own investigation. During the hearings of the witnesses of the massacre, the reliability of the report was questioned and in consequence the Katyń massacre was removed from the list of accusations. Such a decision must have made everybody wonder who was to blame, if the Germans did not commit this war crime. Yet the judges did not dare to ask this question.

In consequence, when the Nuremberg Trials ended, the subject of the Katyń massacre disappears altogether from Soviet propaganda. Referring to Katyń was officially forbidden by censorship and even when Katyń was mentioned (for example in response to Western voices demanding to investigate the massacre), the Soviet officials did nothing but repeat what was already stated in the Burdenko report. This is especially important in their context of the investigation conducted by the American Congress.[2] This silence lasted for many years, although probably after the 20th Congress of the CPSU, Moscow did think about changing their strategy concerning Katyń.

To support this last thesis one can mention the indisputable fact that at the end of the 1960s, the subject of the Katyń massacre was discussed at the Kremlin. During this period, the Katyń documents were forged which probably means that the Soviets undertook preparations to announce the truth about Katyń holding Stalin to blame.[3]

Similar innuendoes are found in an interview with Władysław Gomułka which was made public in 1973. In this interview, we read among other things about an offer made by Nikita Khrushchev to Gomułka. Allegedly Khrushchev offered to make the truth about the Katyń massacre public.[4] Gomułka denies that such an offer was made, and yet it most probably was.[5]

In the following period, when the leader of the party was Brezhnev, Soviet historical policy had to face Western investigations concerning the Katyń massacre. At the end of the 1960s, a number of texts devoted to the massacre were published in the West. Also, the popular press especially in Anglophone countries and Scandinavia were publishing features about Katyń. Moreover, in Great Britain the so-called "Katyń lobby" announced that the British archives are soon going to make public the classified Katyń documents.[6] Spontaneously, in many British towns, local committees were created in order to erect Katyń memorials.[7]

In order to counterbalance this offensive, the Soviets created the Khatyn affair. Khatyn is a small village in Belarus which, like very many other villages, was burnt by the Nazis who murdered its inhabitants. The name of the village in English is very easily confused with Katyń. This was a pretext to launch a disinformation campaign whose goal was to make the murder of the Polish prisoners of war committed by the Soviets undistinguishable from the murder of the little village population

committed by the Germans. In the turn of the 1970s, in Khatyn, an exhibit of the museum of war in Minsk was opened. It had the form of an enormous memorial topped by a gigantic statue of the Khatyn survivors – an old man carrying an infant. Khatyn found its way to history textbooks, encyclopedias and dictionaries, and an album devoted to it was published and translated into many languages. A visit to the Khatyn site became an obligatory item for foreign package tours sightseeing Belarus. Among the foreigners taken to see it was the American President Richard Nixon and the President of India Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Khatyn manipulation did create a lot of confusion especially among the citizens of the Soviet Union – but only at the beginning, because very soon the cynical attitudes of the authorities who did despise both the killed villagers and the murdered Polish officers became all too obvious.

The Khatyn manipulation should be considered one of many attempts in the Soviet campaign aimed to deny that in the years 1941–1945 the Soviet army did commit many crimes: from genocide to plundering. Such a denial was the single most important goal of Soviet historical policy. In order to achieve this aim, the Soviets financed their own historical "research", built numerous memorials and created an idealized very positive image of the Red Army as the saviors of the people. A very spectacular propaganda stunt in this campaign was the great celebration of the 30th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The celebration consisted of numerous propaganda events in all the countries of the Soviet bloc: commemorating conferences and artistic exhibitions, film festivals, and international historical workshops.

It is only in April 1980 when Mikhail Gorbachev became the new General Secretary of the CPSU that one could hope that some of the controversial historical issues were going to enter the public sphere. The Katyń massacre was one of such issues and, when Gorbachev announced *perestroika* and *glasnost*, the censorship was to lessen. In April 1987, as a part of *perestroika,* the CPSU and the PZPR (Polish United Workers' Party) signed a joint declaration claiming that they were going to cooperate to discuss controversies of an ideological, scientific and cultural nature. One of its main items on the agenda was the declaration that Polish and Russian historians should work together in order to fill in the blank spaces of their shared difficult past.[8] Yet the bilateral commission elected to fulfill this goal immediately faced the unsurpassable obstacle – the Polish historians were mostly concerned with exposing the truth about Katyń, which the Soviet side was not prepared to tackle. Thus, the works of the commission lost any sense.

In the meantime under *perestroika* and *glasnost,* a number of controversial issues could no longer be suppressed by the Soviet party. Among these the Katyń massacre was the most prominent. The Soviet authorities were aware that their historical policy concerning Katyń was criticized all over the world and some bold decisions

had to be made. In April 1989, a group of the Central Committee members prepared a memo suggesting that the Prosecutor's Office of the USSR and the Committee on the State Security of the USSR should research very scrupulously all the evidence of the Katyń massacre.[9]

Yet Gorbachev preferred to play for time. In the meantime, in February 1999, a group of Russian historians – Yuri Zoria, Natalia Lebedeva, Valentina Parsadanova – who had been analyzing the documents concerning the Army Convoys of the NKVD found out that the Katyń massacre was undoubtedly committed by the Soviet Union. Some popular magazines among them *Moskovskie Novosti* announced that they are going to publish texts on Katyń. The situation was critical and only then Gorbachev understood that he can no longer avoid discussing Katyń. The question was how to present this catastrophic information to reduce the shock, especially of citizens of the Soviet Union.

The authorities thought that the right moment was the visit of General Wojciech Jaruzelski in Moscow in April 1990. On 13 April, the day which is commemorated as the World Day of Victims of Katyń in the Polish Embassy in Moscow, Gorbachev handed to General Jaruzelski two huge files filled with copies of Party and NKVD documents concerning the liquidation in the spring of 1940 of three POW camps for Polish prisoners-of-war. These documents were selected in such a way as to reduce the Soviet responsibility for the massacre. It seemed that the only people to blame were the few leaders of the NKVD.

On the same day, the Polish press published the announcement of TASS according to which the bosses of the NKVD Lavrenti Beria and Vsevolod Merkulov[10] were personally responsible for the Katyń massacre. In this way, the traditional thesis of Russian historical policy that the Katyń massacre had never taken place was destroyed. Instead, the new goal of reducing the damage was established.

Before the decision of making these documents public was made, on 3 November 1990, Gorbachev issued a secret order according to which: "The Academy of Sciences of the USSR, the Prosecutor's Office of the USSR, the Committee on State Security of the USSR, in cooperation with other institutions and organizations by 1 April 1991, shall conduct research in order to reveal archival materials relating to the events and incidents of Soviet-Polish bilateral relations, resulting in the losses to the Soviet Side".[11] The President of the Russian Federation thus decided that the burning need of the moment was to find some kind of counterbalance to Katyń, thus reducing Soviet responsibility for it.

The consequence of Gorbachev's order was the strikingly immoral affair of the so-called anti-Katyń. Immediately some Soviet "historians" created the counterbalance Gorbachev needed – the Polish crime dating from the 1919–1920 War when some Russian POWs lost their lives. In fact, some 18,000 Russian Soviet soldiers died

in Polish POWs camps because of undernourishment and ill-treatment.[12] The very weak Polish state at the time was unable to care for them sufficiently and the camp commanders were often ill-chosen.

Significantly and characteristically, before Gorbachev's secret order, the question of Soviet prisoners of war in the War of 1920 was never mentioned, and Poland was never accused of ill-treating the POWs – neither in the period of the Second Republic of Poland when Polish-Soviet relationships were very strained nor in the days of the People's Republic of Poland. The few publications about this massacre did appear, but they provoked no response at all. Thus, it is not the issue that was sensational, but the way it was manipulated for political reasons.[13]

The aggressive media campaign was to create the image of Poland as a state guilty of genocide which had killed POWs during an earlier war. In such a context, the genocide in the Katyń Forest became a kind of just vengeance. This thesis was disseminated not only by the propaganda writers, but also by professional historians, politicians, and military leaders who all tried to defend their interpretation according to which the Katyń massacre was a crime committed in an understandable attempt to revenge the old Polish crimes. Therefore, such a massacre was at least partly pardonable – especially if the number of Polish victims was drastically reduced. This media campaign made the Polish side look morally and legally guilty.

As far as the number of victims goes, very many forgeries were made. The scale of the Katyń massacre was growing significantly smaller while the Soviet specialists researching the Polish "crimes" on the prisoners of the 1920–1921 war announced they had found evidence that more and more Red Army soldiers had been murdered by Polish authorities. Every next 'researcher' claimed to have found more Soviet victims: 60,000, 80,000, 100,000 and over 100,000. All the above estimates were groundless, if not purely absurd.[14]

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union when the president of the Russian Federation was Boris Yeltsin, the official historical policy underwent some dramatic changes and yet the interpretation of the Katyń massacre created in response to Mikhail Gorbachev's secret order was left intact. This interpretation is still lingering on despite very many attempts to prove it wrong. It does not disappear and on the contrary, more and more people believe in it which probably results from the fact that it has found its way into history school books, the media and mass culture.[15] For the contemporary Russian authorities, this is the most important and most attractive victory of Gorbachev's historical policy and, at the same time, a striking example of how history is being used for immoral political reasons.

President Yeltsin referred to the Katyń documentation in his trial against the Communist Party. It was used to prove that the Communist Party was a criminal organization. The court did not dare to maintain such a radical thesis, but the most

secret documents about the Katyń massacre from the so-called Closed Package No. 1 were made public during the trial and now are generally available. It does not mean that everybody considers these documents trustworthy; immediately after the trial, Russian historians started to prove that the documents were prepared just to be used against the Communist Party in a Goebbels-like manner.[16] The authorities did not do anything to prove such voices wrong. In the later period after Vladimir Putin became president, similar publications were tolerated or even encouraged. Polish interventions proving these pieces wrong were considered to be in violation of the democratic right – the freedom of speech.

This obvious regression resulted from the changes in Russian historical policy which are best illustrated by the story of the Katyń investigation. Commenced in the autumn of 1990, it started to slow down and finally stopped altogether when the Russian authorities decided to wait it out in order not to ruin the image of the Soviet Union and to avoid having to pay retribution to the 20,000 families of the Katyń victims.

The failure of the Katyń investigation helped to maintain in both the Russian press and other publications that the Katyń massacre had been committed by the Germans. The Polish protests against such claims and against the anti-Katyń affair did not help at all. The anti-Katyń affair campaign went on, not only in journalism or pseudoscience, but also in official propaganda texts. In November 1990, during the celebrations of the October Revolution, Boris Shardakov, the Russian Consul in Cracow, said that: "Józef Piłsudski created numerous POWs concentration camps in 1920 for soldiers and officers of the Red Army who were murdered without a trial. Altogether, 60,000 prisoners were killed there, shot by Polish execution squads. Józef Piłsudski was a criminal just like Joseph Stalin".[17] The Consul lost his job immediately, yet he was not aware what his crime was. In fact, what he said was the official version of the anti-Katyń murders, which could be found in very many sources.[18]

In the short period when the president of the Russian Federation was Dmitri Medvedev, one could hope that Russian historical policy will get de-Stalinized.[19] The political atmosphere in the country was generally better: open political discussions took place and human rights activists were allowed to participate in political and social life. Yet the aggressive propaganda campaign of the years 2004–2005, which maintained that the Soviet Union before the Second World War had been a perfectly peaceful country and that the Red Army had liberated half of Europe in the last days of the Second World War, was never criticized by Medvedev. The campaign was targeted against Poland and in the second part of the year 2004 in the Russian press alone, about 130 anti-Polish publications appeared.[20]

In an attempt to create its favorable image in the world, Russia has created an English-language round-the-clock television channel *Russia Today* whose mission

is to produce and show programs about historical stereotypes about Russia. This television channel reinforces Russian historical policy and subjects such as Katyń are not to be discussed there.

President Putin himself maintains that today's Russia cannot be held responsible for the crimes of the Soviet State and of the Bolshevik Party as they were crimes of the system.[21] When he refers to the Katyń massacre, he calls it a communist crime and not a Russian crime. For Putin, the communist system was faceless and anonymous and cannot be identified neither with Stalin nor with the Party. Generally, the system was most harmful to everybody, the Russian people included.[22]

After numerous Polish appeals, the Katyń investigation was "de-frozen" by the Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation. In March 2005, after the 14 year investigation, the attorneys announced that the investigation was closed because all the culprits were dead.[23] It was not the very closing of the investigation that provoked consternation, but the fact that the decision of the Politbiuro All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) of 5 March 1940 was classified – in accordance to the Criminal Code RSFSR of 1926 – to be "the abuse of power" resulting in "the premeditated murder", which expires when the guilty party dies. Thus, the Katyń massacre was found to be not a matter of genocide but "an abuse of power" with "very serious consequences". The reasons for this judgment are explained in the trial documents which are still classified. The closure and conclusion of the investigation was found scandalous by numerous observers – and one cannot help but agree.

Such a way of closing the Katyń investigation froze bilateral relationships making any dialogue no longer possible. Only after the political situation in Poland changed and the Civil Platform and the Polish People's Party coalition was formed, one could hope that the dialog would be resumed. In February 2008, Prime Minister Donald Tusk went to Moscow and during his visit, both Polish and Russian sides decided that the instrumental use of history in the political discourse was very harmful. A joint expert body called the Polish-Russian Group on Difficult Matters was created under the auspices of the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

The group met quite regularly in Poland and Russia, in turns, until 2013. Among their achievements one should mention developing the shared stance on the subject of the Katyń massacre though it is very difficult to show its influence on Russian historical policy. Soon, when the general atmosphere in Russian-Polish relationships got very tense because of Russian aggression on Ukraine, the group practically ceased to exist. Theoretically, it still functions, but its role is naught.

Under President Putin, Russian historical policy does not mention Katyń at all. This silence should be connected to the slowly changing image of Stalin created by Putin's propaganda. Even at the beginning of his first term in office, Putin commenced the process of the rehabilitation of Stalin in the public discourse. Similar

attempts had already been undertaken by Leonid Brezhnev and Yuri Andropov, but Putin is far more radical. He senses the social nostalgia for Stalin who is generally considered to have been an executioner, but also a great leader. The Russians remember that because of Stalin, the Soviet Union achieved the position of a global power after the Second World War. Stalin resorted to criminal methods, but he did achieve his goal, namely he managed to make Russia an international empire, which even the tsars hadn't been able to do. The Katyń massacre destroys this image, the historians are not forbidden to mention Katyń, but they are not encouraged either.

Just after the Smolensk catastrophe, some hopes for reassuming the Russian--Polish historical dialogue and resuming the subject of the Katyń massacre appeared. Yet soon it became obvious that the dialogue is not going to be resumed and that the Russian authorities still back up the anti-Katyń lie.[24]

The aggressive Russian historical policy – the policy of making enemies and encouraging jingoistic sentiments in order to make the Russians support their very strong leader in the Kremlin – is a very important part of today's Russian politics. The Kremlin's attempts to restore the imperial status of Russia have to be taken into consideration in the context of Moscow's historical policy. The truth about the Katyń massacre is still being sacrificed in order to achieve other goals and in the years to come, nothing will probably change.

Endnotes

[1] The so-called Attorney Roman Martini Investigation. For details: W. Materski, *Katyń. Od kłamstwa ku prawdzie* [Katyń. From lies to the truth], Warsaw 2012, pp. 123–130.

[2] Compare: *Mord w Lesie Katyńskim. Przesłuchania przed amerykańską komisją Maddena w latach 1951–1952* [The murder in the Katyń Forest. Hearings before the American Madden Commission between 1951 and 1952], vol. 1, edited by W. Wasilewski, Warsaw 2017.

[3] Which can be deduced from the documents from the so-called Closed Package no. 1 which were declassified in 1992. Compare: *Katyń. Dokumenty ludobójstwa. Dokumenty i materiały archiwalne przekazane Polsce 14 października 1992 r.* [Katyn. Genocide records. Documents and archival materials donated to Poland on 14 October 1992], edited by W. Materski, Warsaw 1992.

[4] *Moich czternaście lat. Zwierzenia Władysława Gomułki* [My fourteen years. The confessions of Władysław Gomułka], Wydawnictwo im. Legionów Polskich, (no place of issue) 1981.

[5] In 1992 the Press Secretary of the President of the Russian Federation Vyacheslav Kostikov claimed that the conversation of Khrushchev and Gomułka was authentic – compare: J. Maciszewski, *Wydrzeć prawdę*, Warsaw 1993, pp. 18–19.

[6] W. Materski, *Mord katyński. Siedemdziesiąt lat drogi do prawdy*, Warsaw 2010, p. 61.

[7] See: A. Siomkajło, *Katyń w pomnikach świata* [Katyń monuments around the world], Warsaw 2002.

[8] *Polska w stosunkach międzynarodowych 1945–1989. Wybór dokumentów* [Poland in international relations 1945–1989. A selection of documents], edited by J. Zając, Warsaw 2005, p. 118. See also: A. Stępień-Kuczyńska, *Michaił Gorbaczow a idea i praktyka pieriestrojki pieriestrojki* [Mikhail Gorbachev and the concept and practical aspects of perestroika], Łódź 2016, pp. 337–339.

[9] *Katyń. Documents of Genocide*, selected and edited by W. Materski, introduction by J.K. Zawodny, doc. 21, Warsaw 1993, pp. 74–75.

[10] *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni* [Katyń. Documents of the crime], vol. 4: *Echa Katynia. Kwiecień 1943 – marzec 2005* [The Echos o Katyń. April 1943–March 2005], Warsaw 2006, file 121, pp. 504–505, Appendix, file 24.

[11] *Katyń. Documents of Genocide*, file 24, pp. 90–91.

[12] For details: *Krasnoarmeitsy w polskom plenu w 1919–1922 gg. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, edited by N.Y. Eliseeva et al., Moscow 2004; Z. Karpus, *Jeńcy i internowani rosyjscy i ukraińscy na terenie Polski w latach 1918–1924* [Russian and Ukrainian prisoners of war and internment in Poland between 1918 and 1924], Toruń 1997.

[13] During the presidency of Gorbachev, the archives were not only searched, but also purged. V. Bukovski, *Moskiewski proces. Dysydent w archiwach Kremla* [Dissident in the Kremlin archives], (transl. from English), Warsaw 1998, p. 610.

[14] For details: K. Komorowski, W. Rawski, *Anty-Katyń. Jeńcy sowieccy w niewoli polskiej. Fakty i mity* [Anti-Katyń. Soviet prisoners of war in Polish captivity. Facts and myths], Warsaw 2006, pp. 15–17; W. Materski, *Katyń. Od kłamstwa ku prawdzie* [Katyń. From the lie to the truth], pp. 197–202.

[15] Compare: W. Materski, *Od cara do „cara". Studium rosyjskiej polityki historycznej* [From the tsar to the "tsar". A study of Russian political history], Warsaw 2017, pp. 223–224.

[16] Compare: A. Przewoźnik, J. Adamska, *Katyń. Zbrodnia. Prawda. Pamięć* [Katyń. The massacre. The truth. The Remembrance], Warsaw 2010, pp. 573–574.

[17] Quoted after: K. Komorowski, W. Rawski, *Anty-Katyń. Jeńcy sowieccy w niewoli polskiej* [Anti-Katyń. Soviet POWs in Polish captivity], pp. 13–14.

[18] J.L. Sobolewski, *Szardakow wyklęty* [Shardakov accursed], in: http://www.report.republika.pl/strona13.html.

[19] Compare: J. Rogoża, *W cieniu Putina. Prezydentura Dmitrija Miedwiediewa* [In the shadow of Putin. The presidency of Dimitri Medvedev], Warsaw 2011, pp. 13–14.

[20] Compare: *Propaganda historyczna Rosji w latach 2004–2009* [Russian historical propaganda in the years 2004–2009], edited by L. Pietrzak, B. Cichocki, Warsaw 2009, pp. 10–15; Z. Chyra-Rolicz, *Refleksje o polityce historycznej – naszej i sąsiadów* [Reflections on political history – ours and our neighbours], in: *Jak patrzeć na Polskę, Niemcy i Świat?* [How to view Poland, Germany, the world?], edited by J. Szymoniczek, Warsaw 2017, pp. 890–891.

[21] Compare: N.F. Bugai, *Problemy repressii i reabilitacyi grazhdan: istoria i istoriografia (XX w. – nachalo XXI v.)*, Moscow 2012, pp. 458, 464.

[22] He said so in his speech in the Katyń Forest on 7 April 2010 – the author of this paper was there.

[23] See: PAP, 12 March 2005; *Zbrodnia katyńska. Polskie śledztwo*, *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, issue 20/2005, pp. 182–185.

[24] On 9 April 2017 at the Katyń Memorial, inscriptions appeared commemorating Red Army soldiers killed in Polish POWs camps in the years 1919–1920.

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This co-authored monograph constitutes an attempt to follow and summarize the studies on the Katyń massacre, which are complex and multi-faceted, interdisciplinary at times. The idea for this volume is embedded in the establishment of the Janusz Kurtyka Foundation in Warsaw. It was founded on the initiative of the family of Professor Kurtyka, who was the President of the Institute of National Remembrance in 2005–2010 and who died in the plane crash near Smolensk. He put special emphasis on research into the Katyń massacre and the dissemination of its findings. On 6 April 2010, a few days before his tragic death, he personally promoted the latest work on the massacre published by the Institute of National Remembrance. Four days later, on 10 April 2010, he was present on board the plane that fatally carried President Lech Kaczyński and other Polish delegates to Russia, where they were to officially commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Katyń massacre. The *current research* mentioned in the title refer to the content of the monograph as the papers published here pick up various threads of the Katyń massacre as well as summarize up to 2018 and broaden the present scope of research pointing out to some new findings.

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