

# **DEATH AT KATYN**

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*Published by*  
NATIONAL COMMITTEE of AMERICANS of POLISH DESCENT  
105 EAST 22ND STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

PRINTED IN U. S. A.



## MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PRAEVALEBIT

*This booklet is composed of two parts. The first is a resume of all the facts so far available which bear on the massacre of thousands of officers, flower of the Polish Army, whose murdered bodies were found lying in mass graves near Smolensk, in the spring of 1943. The second section is the personal narrative of a Polish officer who by good fortune escaped the fate of his comrades-in-arms.*

*The Publishers.*

THIRD EDITION NOVEMBER, 1944



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## I

### THE GRAVES OF KATYN

The wooded region lying around Kosgory, near Smolensk, is known to the local population as the Katyn Forest. Today this forest-land in one vast cemetery. In mass graves, piled systematically layer on layer, lie the bodies of thousands of Polish officers captured by the Soviet Army in the autumn of 1939. More than 3,000 of these bodies have already been disinterred, and there is reason to believe that the total number may exceed 8,000. These men who, as prisoners of war, were under the protection of the provisions of the Hague Convention and of the enactments of the Geneva agreements, were murdered in cold blood, one by one, by a single shot accurately fired into the base of the skull.

#### Who Murdered The Polish Officers?

For more than a year the question of who is responsible for this mass murder at Katyn has been the subject of controversy in the press of the world. The Germans claim to have found the graves when they took Smolensk and accuse the Russians of the crime. Moscow flatly denies the charge and asserts that the guilt is Germany's. Opinion in England and America is still undecided. In order that the salient facts in the case may be laid before the American public, the details so far available about the massacre—a monument to barbarism unparalleled in history—have here been assembled. Appended also is the personal record of a Polish officer who by chance escaped the fate of thousands of his comrades-in-arms.

#### Prologue To The Drama

In the fall of 1939, when the resistance of Poland, fighting against hopeless odds, was broken, 181,000 soldiers were taken prisoner by the Red Army. Included were 12 generals, 69 colonels, 72 lieutenant-colonels, 5,131 regular army officers and 4,096 reserve officers. Not all of these were taken in the field. The majority of the reserves were seized after war operations had ceased. Soviet authorities simply ordered all officers to



report to a designated place; those who obeyed were arrested and deported.

There followed twenty-one months of German-Soviet friendship and cooperation. But in a totalitarian world devoid of principles, political friendships do not long endure. On Sunday, June 22, 1941, between 2 and 3 A.M., the German Army launched its attack against Russia. In accordance with Hitler's precepts, the blow came suddenly and without warning.

News of the assault hit the hard-pressed Allies like a thunderbolt. It was at once clear that victory or defeat depended on whether and how soon the United Nations could succeed in joining their strength and resources in coordinated action against the common foe. There was at first some anxiety lest Russo-Polish relations might complicate the situation but within forty-eight hours after Germany struck, Poland, waiving her justified resentment of the recent wrongs done her by Russia (as well as of the long years of earlier oppression) took steps towards a rapprochement with Moscow. This move was greeted with unconcealed relief by the other Allies.

Speaking from London over the British BBC on Monday, June 23, Premier Sikorski named the conditions of reconciliation:

1. That the Soviet Government declare null and void the two treaties signed with Germany in 1939, thus restoring boundary lines between Poland and Russia to the status established by the treaty of Riga in 1921;
2. That the Soviet Government agree to the formation of a Polish army in Russia, subject to orders of the Polish Government and of the Polish High Command;
3. That the Soviet Government release all Polish citizens detained on the territories of Soviet Russia.

Ambassador Maisky, on behalf of his government, replied July 30, agreeing to these terms and pledging „aid and support of all kinds to Poland against Hitlerite Germany.” Moscow made but one stipulation: that Polish military forces formed in Russia be subordinated in an operational sense to the Supreme Command of the USSR, upon which the Polish Army should be represent-

ed. „All details as to command, organization and employment of such forces to be settled in subsequent agreements.” On August 12, 1941, the Supreme Council of the USSR issued a decree releasing all Polish citizens detained on Soviet territory „either as prisoners of war or on other sufficient grounds,” and two days later, August 14, Moscow authorized the formation of a Polish Army.

#### A Dismal Riddle

The gates of camps and prisons were opened and Polish soldiers began reporting to the posts where detachments of their army were forming. But within a few weeks a puzzling situation was apparent; among the arrivals were very few officers. Inquiries set on foot immediately brought to light the following facts: The circa 10,000 Polish officers captured by Russia in 1939 had been deported to three large military camps—Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostaszkov—where they were confined till in the spring of 1940 these camps were liquidated. After that time they had, as far as could be learned, utterly vanished. Official records showed that from the 3,920 held at Starobielsk (among whom were 100 colonels, 9 generals and 380 army doctors) 86 had been released. From Kozielsk, where there were 4,500 officers of various ranks, 200 had been set free, while from Ostaszkov (occupied chiefly by members of the six regiments of Frontier Guards and by police forces) 120 had been liberated. Thus from a total of 8,800 officers, only 406 could be accounted for. What had become of the remaining 8,300?

For nearly two years the Polish Government in London and its military officials in Russia carried on a series of conversations with Russian authorities, seeking to ascertain the fate of these missing officers. To all inquiries the Russian General Staff invariably answered: „We have released all officers and soldiers... If some of them have not reported, perhaps they went to German-occupied Poland or escaped to Manchuria.”

In October, 1941, rumors reached General Sikorski that an undetermined number of Polish officers had been sent to the Republic of Yakutsk and to the island of



Novaya Zemla. He at once wrote Ambassador Bogomolov, voicing his concern as to their fate. Bogomolov replied: „All Polish officers in the territory of the USSR have been released. The assumption that a large number of these officers are scattered over the northern regions of Soviet Russia is probably based on inaccurate information.”

On December 3, Sikorski handed Stalin a list containing the names of 4,000 officers definitely known to have been held in the three camps and unaccounted for. Stalin, allegedly, was „very much surprised.” On January 28, 1942, the Polish Government sent a long memorandum to Moscow, protesting that the Soviet Union had not carried out its pledged obligations, particularly with reference to the release of officers imprisoned at Starobielsk, Kozielsk, and Ostaszkov who, it had been established with full certitude, were not now either in German-occupied Poland or in German military camps.

Moscow delayed its reply to this note for seven weeks. On March 15 she replied, assuring the Poles that she had strictly fulfilled the enactments of the agreement as to release of Polish prisoners of war.

Diplomatic interventions were fruitless. The Poles, however, had not confined their efforts to these measures. Soon after the military agreement of August, 1941, was signed, they sent out a circular telegram to the heads of local Soviets all over the USSR. In November, apparently in reply to this message, there came to Polish Army Headquarters a cable from Novaya Zemla signed by the Island Soviet Commander: „All Poles of draft age informed.” New interventions brought a brief answer from Narkomindel: „There were and there are no prisoners of war on Novaya Zemla and the cablegram is simply the result of a misunderstanding. Moreover, we declare once more that... we have released all Polish officers without exception.” Any further communication with Novaya Zemla was, of course, out of question.

But rumors persisted of the presence of Polish officers in the Far North. The last week in May, 1941, two men reporting at the army base told the following story:

They had been members of a labor gang. One day, while unloading boards in the estuary of the White Sea Canal, they saw a tugboat coming in on which, under heavy guard, were a large number of soldiers wearing Polish uniforms. Unable to speak to them directly, the two prisoners began to exchange remarks in a loud voice—urging each other to work faster... to pass the boards, etc., etc. The boat halted for about half an hour and after it had gone on its way, they found an unrolled cigarette tube on the canal bank with the following message written in Polish: „We are Polish prisoners of war; we do not know where we are going.” It was reported also that towards the end of June, at Dubinka, a port on the mouth of the Yenisei River whence once a year a boat sails with food supplies for Novaya Zemla, a number of people saw a convoy of northbound barges filled with men in Polish uniforms. Thus a number of circumstances indicated that some of the war prisoners, at least, had been sent north.

But as to the particular prisoners in the three military camps under discussion, evidence seemed to point in another direction. There were many eye-witnesses who came forward to testify that in the spring of 1940 they had seen transports of prisoners from Starobielsk and Kozielsk being shipped westwards. One of these witnesses was, himself, an officer who had been at the Kozielsk camp and had succeeded in escaping such a transport. Another, an officer from Starobielsk, testified that the first group, evacuated on April 5, were told by two of the camp officials that they were going to distributing centers, prior to being sent home. He said that from April 5 to April 26 inclusive, from 65 to 250 left daily. Transports were then suspended till May 2, when a group of 200 left, followed subsequently by smaller groups on May 8, 11, and 12. He, himself, went out with 16 others on May 12. It is this group of 16, together with 70 sent away earlier, who are the sole survivors of a total 3,920 held at Starobielsk. What became of the rest? And what was the fate of those at Kozielsk and Ostaszkov?



### The German Revelation

All during 1942 reports kept coming in to the Polish military authorities about these transports of officers from Starobielsk, Kozielsk, and Ostaszkov westwards towards the vicinity of Smolensk. But to every inquiry Soviet officials shrugged their shoulders, with the stereotyped reply: „All Polish officers have been released.” So matters stood till on April 13, 1943, at 9:15 P.M., the Berlin radio made a startling announcement:

„From Smolensk comes news that the native population has revealed to German authorities the spot where in secret mass executions the Bolsheviks, at the hands of the GPU, murdered 10,000 Polish officers. German authorities proceeded to Kosgory, a Soviet health resort situated 12 kilometers west of Smolensk, where they made a horrible discovery. They found a pit 28 meters long and 16 meters wide, in which, twelve-deep, lay the bodies of 3,000 Polish officers. In full uniform, in some cases shackled, all had wounds from pistol bullets in the back of the neck. Identification will not prove difficult since, owing to a peculiarity of the soil, the bodies are mummified, and also because the Bolsheviks neglected to remove personal documents from the clothing of the victims. It has already been established that General Smorawiński, from Lublin, is among the murdered. These officers were held first at Kozielsk, near Orlow, whence in February and March, 1940, they were shipped in cattle cars to Smolensk and thence in trucks to Kosgory, where they were murdered. Search and discovery of other pits continue. The total number of executed officers is estimated at 10,000, which corresponds approximately to the number of Polish officers captured by the Bolsheviks. Norwegian press representatives were on the spot and had opportunity to authenticate the crime in person. They have informed their papers in Oslo.”

The Germans explained that a group of Polish workers, conscripted in 1942 for forced labor in the vicinity of Smolensk, had learned from a native peasant that on the ground where they were working there were mass

graves of Polish war prisoners. The Poles had put up two wooden crosses on the spot indicated. This attracted the attention of the German officials, who ordered an investigation. In subsequent broadcasts Berlin announced that medical and investigation commissions from neutral countries had arrived and were exhuming the bodies. By April 16 a second grave had been discovered which contained 1,500 more victims.

„Peasants from the surrounding villages,” said Berlin, „admit to having heard shots and terrifying screams during the nights. Questioned as to why they had kept still about the matter, they replied unanimously that the GPU agents had told them that if they mentioned it to anyone, they would be shot within three hours „just like the Polish officers.” Their fear was so great and so deeply rooted that they could not make up their minds to reveal the mystery to the Germans.”

London circles were inclined to discredit the news from Berlin and on April 15, London BBC made the following announcement: „The Moscow radio officially and categorically denies the German accusation of the shooting of Polish officers by Soviet officials. These German lies reveal the fate of Polish officers whom the Germans employed in construction work in that region. The Moscow broadcast was constantly broken in upon by Berlin interference.”

But within three days press opinions began to come in from neutral countries expressing the belief that the monstrous murder at Katyn was the work of the Russians. This opinion was shared by: *Gazette de Lausanne*, *Courrier de Geneve*, *Tribune de Geneve*, *Uusi Suomi* (Helsingfors), *Zuericher Zeitung*, and by a number of other newspapers—Swedish, Turkish and Swiss.

Tass (Soviet news agency) countered by a bulletin (April 18) to the effect that when the Red Army retreated from the Smolensk area, a certain number of Polish war prisoners fell into Nazi hands. Some of them, according to Moscow, were killed by the Germans at once, others spared „for a special occasion.” The occasion had now come.



This bulletin makes strange reading. If the Russians, on abandoning Smolensk, permitted Polish war prisoners to fall into the hands of the Germans, why had they not said so quite simply in answer to inquiries made by the Poles? Why had they persistently maintained that all war prisoners had been released and that was all they knew about them? Furthermore, does it seem very probably that in the course of a war an army would leave behind on a fortified line any considerable group of military prisoners?

### The Polish Reply

On April 17, 1943, the Polish Cabinet issued the following statement: „There is not a single Pole anywhere who could fail to be deeply shocked by news received of the discovery near Smolensk in a common grave of the bodies of massacred Polish officers, news which is being given the widest publicity by German propaganda. The Polish Government has instructed its representatives at Geneva to request the International Red Cross to send a delegation to investigate on the spot the true state of affairs. It is to be desired that the findings of this organization to which is to be entrusted the task of clarifying the matter and of establishing the responsibility for it, should be issued without delay. At the same time, however, the Polish Government, on behalf of the Polish nation, denies to the Germans the right to draw from a crime which they ascribe to others, arguments in their own defense. The profoundly hypocritical indignation of German propaganda will not succeed in concealing from the world the many-repeated and still-continuing crimes committed against the Polish nation. It is not to enable the Germans to lay impudent claims or to appear in the light of defenders of Christianity and European civilization that Poland is fighting and enduring immeasurable sufferings. The Polish Government denies to whomever may be guilty of this crime the right to exploit it for political maneuvers.”

Simultaneously with this statement of the Polish Cabinet, General Marian Kukiel, Polish Minister for National Defense, issued a resume of the case of the mis-

sing officers. No wide publicity had hitherto been given the matter, in order to avoid embarrassing Moscow. General Kukiel in part, thus outlined the situation:

„On September 17, 1940, **The Red Star**, official organ of the Red Army, reported that among the 181,000 prisoners of war captured in 1939, were about 10,000 Polish officers. These officers were quartered in three large camps set up on Soviet territory: Kozielsk (east of Smolensk), Starobielsk (near Kharkov), and Ostaszkov. At the beginning of 1940 the camp officials told the prisoners that the camps were soon to be closed and that they would be able to return to their families. Lists were made—allegedly for the purpose of learning where they wished to go on their release. The allocation of the prisoners at this time was:

1. At Kozielsk 5,000, of whom 4,500 were officers;
2. At Starobielsk 3,290, all of whom (except for some 100 civilians) were officers—including 400 medical officers;
3. At Ostaszkov 6,570, mainly police forces, both military and civilian.

„On April 5, 1940, Soviet officials began the evacuation of these camps. Groups of from 60 to 300 were removed every few days up to the middle of May. About 400 prisoners were transferred to Gryazovets, Wologda province. Those from Kozielsk were reported being moved in the direction of Smolensk.

„When... in the fall of 1941 the Polish Army in the USSR was being set up, it was expected that the officers from the three camps in question would form its higher and lower cadres. But except for some of those from the group of 400 who had been shifted to Gryazovets, not one of these officers appeared at the army base at Buzuluk.

„Deeply concerned over this state of affairs, repeated and unremitting efforts were made by General Sikorski, General Anders and Ambassador Kct to ascertain the fate of the missing men. The matter was taken up with Stalin himself and with other high dignitaries in the Soviet hierarchy. But to no purpose. On no occasion has the Polish Government in London or the Polish



Embassy at Kuibyshev ever received an answer as to the whereabouts of the officers and other prisoners of war deported from the three camps.

„We have become accustomed to the lies of German propaganda and we understand the purpose of its recent revelations. But in view of detailed information given by the Germans concerning the finding of the bodies of many thousands of Polish officers near Smolensk and their categorical declaration that these officers were murdered by the Soviets in the spring of 1940, the necessity has arisen that the mass graves which have been discovered should be investigated and the facts verified by a suitable neutral body, such as the International Red Cross. The Polish Government is, therefore, approaching that organization with a view to their sending a delegation to the place where the Polish prisoners of war are said to have been massacred.”

On April 19, 1943, the Polish Government in London published a second official statement reiterating its position and again denying to Germany the right to exploit the situation at Smolensk in defense of her own crimes.

Two days later, April 21, 1943, the Moscow radio let loose a blast against the Poles, accusing them of „collaborating with Hitler.” Simultaneously Tass made an attack on General Sikorski, alleging that the Polish appeal to Geneva proved „how influential are the pro-Hitler elements in the Polish Government.”

The very same day there appeared in *Dziennik Polski* („Polish Daily”) published in London, the following statement of an ex-prisoner from the Kozielsk Camp, an officer by the name of W. Jan Firtek:

„I was one of the prisoners at Kozielsk. The first week in April, 1940, the Soviet authorities began to liquidate this camp which, at the time, held about 4,000 officers and soldiers. They were shipped out in groups of 100 to 300. The first to go were mostly officers. Departures were irregular, usually a few days apart. Up to the time when I left, approximately 3,500 had been evacuated.

„Of course there were endless conjectures as to what

it all meant and where we were being taken. For all our mistrust, most of us believed we were going back to Poland. Indeed, that is what we were told by the 'politruk' (political executive) and the minor camp functionaries. They explicitly said that we were to be handed over to the Germans and they even mentioned Brześć (Brest) as the point of transfer. This statement was the more readily accepted by us since the departing transports were made up largely of men from Central and Western Poland.

„I remember that the first name read out in our block was that of a young artillery officer, Captain Bychowiec, who served as block commander. After the first feeling of anxiety had quieted down, there was great joy among those to go. When Generals Minkiewicz, Smorawinsk and Bohatyrewicz were leaving, they were given a real ovation by the camp officials.

„I went out on April 26, 1940, in a group of 170, among whom were from 110 to 120 officers, ensigns, and a few non-coms and privates. We were all carefully searched before leaving. As we were waiting our turn, Camp Commander Dymidowicz came up and looked us over, saying: 'No znachitsia vy harasho popali' which, roughly translated, means 'You sure are lucky!' We couldn't decide whether he was speaking in sarcasm or not. Today I realize that he meant the words in all sincerity and that ours was in truth a 'lucky' group, fated to be spared from slaughter.

„Once outside the camp gate, we were loaded onto trucks and, making a detour through the woods to avoid the village, were taken to the railroad depot in Kozielsk. There we were put into prison cars and the doors were locked. The trains consisted of five to six cars. Our group occupied two. We waited at the depot for about two hours and during that time a second group arrived from camp and was put aboard.

„Judging from the position of the sun, our train was moving from Kozielsk in a southwesterly direction. After a few hours we came to a junction—probably Suchienniche. From here on we traveled to the north-



east. Lying on one of the top bunks, I saw scribbled on the wall with a match or a pencil: „The second stop after Smolensk we get out and climb into trucks.” There was a date, but it was hard to make out the second figure. It might have been April 12, or perhaps April 17. This inscription roused a great deal of interest among us and we tried to guess what it meant. Lieutenant-Colonel Prokop, who was with me, thought it might have been written by Colonel Kuyba, who had promised to leave clues if he could.”

#### Moscow Breaks With Poland

On April 22, 1943, the Berlin radio announced the discovery of a third grave. It was evident from bayonet wounds on the bodies that the victims had tried to resist or that they had been tortured.

The following day, April 23, a reply from the Red Cross Committee at Geneva was published, acceding „in principle” to the demands of Poland and Germany for the appointment of a commission of neutral experts to look into the circumstances of the Katyn massacre. The Committee pointed out, however, that it could take this step only if so requested „by all parties concerned,” and then only under the terms of its memorandum to the belligerents of September 12, 1939\*. Inasmuch as Russia refused her consent to the investigation, the Polish Government on May 1, 1943, withdrew its request.

It might seem as if this move on the part of the Poles for an impartial judgment would have been welcomed by Moscow as an opportunity to exonerate herself of guilt for the crime and to fix it elsewhere. Instead, alleging as her reason Poland's appeal to Geneva, on April 26, 1943, Russia broke off diplomatic relations with the Polish Government and took steps towards forming in Moscow the „Union of Polish Patriots,” a body made up of Polish Communists. To offers of mediation on the part of England and the United States, Moscow replied that she was willing to renew diplomatic relations with Poland only if the government of that country be reconstituted in such a way that elements in it friendly to

\* *The New York Times*, Apr. 24, 1943

Russia had a „decisive influence.” In other words, Moscow demanded that Poland be bolshevized.

It has been charged that Poland, in her appeal to Geneva, was guilty of a diplomatic blunder. She had no alternative. Silence would have laid her open to the charge of connivance with German propaganda. But more particularly, pressure of opinion from her nationals everywhere constrained her. Inaction on her part at this time would rightly have been construed by them as disregard of the basic laws of humanity and justice for which all over the world they were fighting and dying.

#### The German Commission of Investigation

The Germans now took the initiative. On the invitation of Dr. Conti, Chief of the German State Public Health Department, a commission made up of twelve of the foremost experts from European universities met in Smolensk from April 28 to April 30. This commission consisted of the following members: (1) Dr. Spelcer, Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Ghent, Belgium; (2) Dr. Markoff, Assistant Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Sofia, Bulgaria; (3) Dr. Thramsen, Assistant at the Institute of Forensic Medicine at Copenhagen, Denmark; (4) Dr. Saxen, Professor of Pathological Anatomy at Helsingfors, Finland; (5) Dr. Miroslawich, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Naples, Italy; (6) Dr. Palmieri, also Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Naples; Dr. de Burlet, Professor of Anatomy at Greetingen, Holland; (8) Dr. Hajek, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Prague, Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia; (9) Dr. Birkle, Expert in Forensic Medicine at the Rumanian Ministry of Justice; (10) Dr. Naville, Professor of Forensic Medicine at Geneva; (11) Dr. Subik, Professor of Pathological Anatomy at Bratislava, Slovakia; (12) Dr. Orsos, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Budapest.

Dr. Butz, holding the chair of Forensic Medicine and



Criminology at Breslau, was chosen by the German General Staff to represent Germany, and Dr. Costedcat assisted in behalf of the French Government.

The commission interviewed many local witnesses of Russian nationality. These witnesses all confirmed reports that during March and April, 1940, large transports of Polish officers arrived almost daily at the V. (Great) Gniezdvo station, whence they were carried off in trucks to the Katyn Forest. After that nothing more was seen or heard of them. The commission also reviewed the findings of investigations previously made.

By April 13, seven graves had been opened up. Of the 982 bodies exhumed, 70 per cent were identified. Further identification had to wait till documents found on the bodies could be cleaned. Nine autopsies were performed, chiefly by Dr. Butz and his assistants. The report of the Court Medical Examination may be summarized as follows:

„Cause of death, without exception, a shot in the head, fired at close range from a 9mm. caliber pistol. In each case the bullet penetrated the occipital bone at the opening at the base of the skull and came out in the forehead along the hairline (in a few instances lower down). Path of the bullet almost always the same. This similarity of the wounds is very striking and proves that the shots were fired by an experienced hand. In many cases hands of the victims had been tied—always in the same manner. Underneath the bodies of the Polish officers were found those of a number of Russian civilians, similarly shackled and killed.

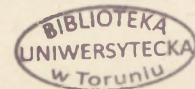
The ditches were located on hilly, sandy glades, evened up and planted to young pine trees. Some of them had been dug to water level. Interment had been carried out carefully and methodically. The bodies, face down, were packed in tightly and regularly along the sides of the graves, less so in the center. In most cases the legs lay stretched out. Buttons, rank marks, decorations on uniforms, nature of underwear and the way belts and braces were attached, showed the wearers to be, for the most part, Polish officers. One was a priest.

Some had on furs, leather wind-breakers, boots and caps such as are worn by Polish officers in winter. No watches or rings were found, though entries made in notebooks during the last hours before death indicated that the officers had been wearing their watches. In a few instances gold and silver trinkets were present, as well as small change and paper money. There were also match boxes, tobacco pouches, Polish cigarettes, and cigarette holders bearing the inscription „Kozielsk.”

The bodies were in various stages of disintegration. Those lying on top and along the sides of the ditches were partially mummified. In the center, where the soil was damp, they were crowded together in a formless decomposed mass, showing that they had not been disturbed after burial. Absence of any sign of insect life indicated that interment took place in winter. Since, according to experiments made by Professor Orsos, the length of time that has expired after death can be determined by changes that have taken place in the consistency of the brain, examination was made of a certain number of skulls. On the assumption that the theory of Professor Orsos is conclusive, victim No. 526, lying on the top of one of the graves, had been dead for at least three years.”

At the close of the investigation, on April 30, 1943, the commission issued a formal report, incorporating the above findings and adding that „it appears from the testimony of witnesses, and from letters, newspapers and documents found on the bodies, that the executions took place in the months of March and April, 1940.” The report was signed by all twelve members, unanimously concurring.

While this probe was still going on, Pravda, on April 29, published a long tirade of abuse against the Polish Government. It was obvious, said Moscow, that any investigation carried on in German-controlled territory could be „merely a farce, resulting in gross deceit and falsification.” It added that the whole campaign of slander against Russia in connection with the Katyn murders was only an excuse of Polish imperialists to





„encroach on the sovereign rights of the Soviet State and its people,” and wrest from it territory that was Russian\*.

#### The Russian Commission of Investigation

Seven months went by during which there was no further mention in the press of the Katyn murders. In the interests of Allied solidarity the Poles dropped the issue and the matter was more or less hushed up. Meanwhile, Smolensk was retaken by the Russians and on January 22, 1944, Soviet authorities issued a communique announcing that a commission called by them „expressly to investigate the graves at Katyn” had established once and for all that the Polish officers were killed by the Germans in the summer of 1941. As irrefutable proof they cited letters found in the uniforms of the murdered Poles „written after the spring of 1940.” The most important piece of evidence adduced was a letter dated June 20, 1941, written by Stanisław Kuchinski to his wife.

The chairman of the commission, Vladimir P. Potemkin, former ambassador to France (at present Commissioner of Education in the USSR) stated that:

„1. In August and September, 1941, the Germans killed the Polish prisoners of war in Goat Hills (another name for the Katyn Forest);

„2. Later, feeling that their position had become untenable, and knowing they would have to leave, the Germans hastened to cover up evidence of their crime. They opened graves and transferred bodies to the Katyn Forest sought out witnesses and fabricated their story.”\*\*

The Russian report on body No. 808 is as follows:

„Body of a male of middle height, good physical condition, with no defect of physique. Member of a Polish unit, but no mark of rank on coat or uniform. Fully dressed. Right foot fallen off. One-half centimeter below base of skull is a large bullet hole 9 mm. in dia-

\*This was the first clear intimation that Russia meant to retain her share of the 1939 spoils—territory that for the previous 18 years had been regarded as uncontestedly Polish.

\*\**The New York Times*, Jan. 27, 1944

meter. No exit hole yet found. Epidermis of a dirty yellowish color. Partially mummified. No documents found in pockets, which have been slit.”

Newspaper men (American correspondents among them) invited by the Russians to meet the commission at Katyn, reported that, judging conservatively, they saw several thousand bodies, and that Soviet officials believed that other graves, soon to be opened, would yield 10,000 more. Noticing that some of the victims had on field overcoats lined with fur, the pressmen asked „why the prisoners were so warmly dressed if they had been shot by the Germans in the summertime?” Mr. Tolstoi replied that the prisoners were wearing the clothing they had on when captured in 1939, and Dr. Potemkin added that in the Smolensk area the nights are very cold in September.\*

Such, in brief, are the most important facts and documents relative to the murders at Katyn. They establish these facts:

1. Polish officers, prisoners of war from the camps of Starobielsk, Kozielsk, and Ostaszkov were murdered;
2. The murder was committed either by the Russians or by the Germans;
3. In accordance with international law, Russia was and is responsible for the lives of these officers;
4. Russia refused her consent to international investigation of this matter;
5. Because of the Russian refusal, the Germans took advantage of the Katyn tragedy and used it as a weapon of propaganda among the European nations;
6. Russia's reply to the request of the Polish Government for international investigation of the Katyn massacre was (a) the severance of diplomatic relations with Poland, (b) the annexation of half of Poland's territory, and (c) a demand for the bolshevization of Poland's government.

These facts present, of course, but the barest synopsis of the events and their international repercussions.

\**The New York Times*, Jan. 27, 1944



Around them heated discussions have raged in the American press... There are many things about Soviet Russia which we find it difficult to understand. It is not alone geographical distance which separates us; the whole character of life in that country is different. The atmosphere of the thirty-year-old Soviet totalitarian state is utterly unlike the atmosphere of freedom which we breathe here in America. We shall never understand the ominous potentialities for the future of the Soviet Colossus unless we acquaint ourselves with a sense of this—to us so baffling—ideological climate.

For this reason we are publishing here the personal story of one of the Polish officers who lived through the experiences of life in the Russian military camps and who escaped the fate that overtook most of his comrades. Simply and unpretentiously written, carrying in every syllable the stamp of authenticity, it affords a typical picture of certain aspects of Russian life.

To avoid possible reprisals on Polish deportees still detained in Soviet territory, we do not make public here the identity of this officer. It is however, known in Washington, both to the War Department and to the Department of State.

## I ESCAPED KATYN

When, on April 5, 1940, it was decided to liquidate the camp at Starobielsk, there were in the camp at that time 3,920 commissioned officers, 30 warrant officers and cadet officers and about 100 civilians. I am one of the seventy-odd men from the whole number who have survived. The rest have all disappeared without trace, despite our persistent efforts to learn what has become of them.

The officers and some of the troops of that part of the Polish Army captured by the Russians in September-October, 1939, were taken to the three camps of Starobielsk, Kozielsk, and Ostaszkov, where they were held until May, 1940. In the three camps altogether, there were over 8,500 commissioned officers, as well as some 7,000 non-commissioned officers and other ranks. Of these a few score were removed to prisons, where they were treated as „ordinary prisoners” and, while the liquidation was taking place, 400 of us were transferred to another camp at Gryazovets. After the signing of the Polish-Soviet agreement in August, 1941, most of the men from these two categories were released.

I wish to make it clear that in speaking of war prisoners confined at Starobielsk and Kozielsk, I am referring only to those held in these respective camps no later than May, 1940. There was another camp known as Kozielsk No. 2, in which Polish officers from Lithuania were held, and a Starobielsk No. 2, where were interned political prisoners arrested by the Soviet authorities on Soviet-occupied territories, with a number of officers and other ranks captured as they were attempting to cross the Hungarian or Rumanian frontiers. It was these officers from Kozielsk No. 2 and Starobielsk No. 2, with others coming from all over Russia—from points as far away as Behring Straits and Kamchatka (some of them released from compulsory labor camps)—who formed the cadres of the Polish forces organized in Russia.



But the bulk of the Polish officers who, arms in hand, were captured by the Red Army in September, 1939, were held as prisoners of war at Starobielsk No. 1, Kozielsk No. 1, and Ostaszkov. All of these, with the exception of the four hundred transferred to Gryazovets, have disappeared, leaving no trace of their whereabouts.

At Starobielsk alone there were nine generals. These included General Stanisław Haller, General Skierski, General Lukowski, General Franciszek Sikorski, Generał Billewicz, General Plisowski, General Kowalewski and General Piotr Skuratowicz. At Kozielsk were General Smorawiński, General Minkiewicz and General Bohatyrów, along with Rear-Admiral Czernicki. Only two were saved, General Jarnuszkiewicz who, in the winter of 1939-40 was transferred to the Lubyanka prison in Moscow, and General Wolkowicki who was with us later at Gryazovets. The three camps also held about three hundred colonels and lieutenant-colonels, five hundred majors, twenty-five hundred captains, and five thousand first and second lieutenants. At Starobielsk no less than five hundred officers of the Air Force were interned. They have all disappeared.

No fewer than eight hundred physicians were among the prisoners. Of those at Kozielsk I may mention Professor Pienkowski, outstanding neurologist; Dr. Stefanowski, personal physician to Marshal Pilsudski; the eminent neurologists, Professor Matthew Zieliński and Professor Jan Nelken; Dr. Wroczyński, former Vice-Minister of Public Health. The latter, a rare type of an intellectualist enlightened by idealism, was in charge of our camp kitchen. Professor Godłowicz, successor to Professor Rose at Wilno in the field of research on the cerebral rind, was also at Kozielsk. At Starobielsk I met Dr. Kołodziejski, prominent Warsaw surgeon. The last time I had seen him previously was in 1920 on the Polish-Soviet front where he was in charge of the Ujazdów Hospital Train. It was then that, among others, he saved the life of my brother by extracting a fragment of shrapnel from his pericardium, thereby removing the danger of a gas phlegmon. Dr. Kołodziejski was seized

by the Bolsheviks at the hospital in Brześć (Brest) in 1939 and herded, along with several hundred other Polish physicians and officers, into a freight train. The trucks were sealed and the „passengers” informed that they were being sent to Warsaw. Instead, after a journey of twenty days under unspeakable sanitary conditions, they found themselves at Starobielsk. Among these victims was still another noted Warsaw physician, Dr. Levittoux.

Some fifty university professors were among us, including Morawski from Warsaw Polytechnic, Tucholski (physio-chemist specializing in explosives) who had formerly been guest-lecturer at Cambridge, and Piotrowicz (Secretary of the Cracow Academy of Science) to whom we were indebted for brilliant lectures on the history of Poland, secretly delivered by him at the camp of Starobielsk. There was also Engineer Eiger, Vice-Chairman of the Anti-Nazi League in Poland, and two editors of the Jewish newspaper, *Nasz Przegląd* („Our Review”) who had succeeded in escaping from German-occupied Poland.

Eighty per cent of the officers who had been employed at the Armament Research Institute have disappeared and an equally large percentage of the students in the Armament Section of the Warsaw Polytechnic who served with the Army.

Not a living soul has returned from the staff of the Army Anti-Gas Institute, all of whom, including Major Brzozowski, were taken prisoner. Only two persons are known to have survived from the Pińsk section of the Navy Headquarters.

I should like here to speak briefly of a number of my fellow-prisoners whom I knew very well and whom I deeply appreciated as men of the highest spiritual standards. One of these was Zygmunt Mitera. Recipient of a Rockefeller scholarship, he had graduated in the United States as a mining engineer—the only Polish expert in that field. His scientific zeal was equalled only by his personal charm. Again and again he used to talk to us with enthusiasm about his sojourn in America, about his



American professors and his American classmates. We called him in fun „Gondolier,” because his job in camp was to „row” for hours at a time with a big ladle in the vat in which our soup was prepared. Mitera displayed unflagging good humor and inexhaustible treasures of spirit; he gave help and comfort to us all. He delivered many lectures on geology and used to sing at our evening gatherings. A bomb had completely destroyed his Lwow flat where he had left the manuscript draft of an important scientific book, the fruit of many years' labor. He had been expecting to start his work as lecturer at the Cracow Academy of Mines in the autumn of 1939. Endowed with unique qualities of mind and heart, he, too, perished along with so many others.

Among the physicians I wish to make special mention of Dr. Dadey, well-known pediatrician from Zakopane, a Polish winter resort. Dr. Dadey had been Director of a great sanatorium for poor consumptive children. Several years before the outbreak of the war, a prominent Soviet professor visiting this institution wrote in the guest-book on leaving: „I wish I could transfer this hospital, with all its personnel, to Soviet Russia.” In 1931 I accompanied Daniel Helevy, one of the most distinguished of modern French historians, on a trip to Zakopane. While there we visited the sanatorium and Helevy remarked to me: „If a hospital like that existed in Soviet Russia, the whole world would know about it. How is it that we have heard so little about your achievements?” Dr. Dadey was the very soul of this institution. He joined the colors as a physician, later serving in the same capacity at Tarnopol after its occupation by the Red Army in October, 1939. One day he and his colleagues, ordered to attend a special meeting with a view—so they were told—to turning over their exact personal data, were arrested, taken to the railway station and sent to Starobielsk. All have since perished.

I recall a touching episode related by Dr. Dadey at Starobielsk: After the 1939 catastrophe he was in a state of acute mental depression. One day a stranger, a very old Jew, stopped him on the street and said to him: „Doctor, why are you so full of sorrow? A country that

has given birth to Mickiewicz and Chopin cannot perish.” As he walked among us, dejected and lonely, this man who had always been so indefatigably active in Poland as scientist, physician and humanitarian, would often call to mind with deep emotion those few words by which a stranger had tried to comfort him.

I remember also Captain Hofman, a soldier by profession. He had graduated from Polytechnic School in Belgium, had worked for several years in Sweden, and was one of our Anti-Aircraft Artillery specialists. Several months before the war an English general purchasing AA guns for the British Army, said to him while on a visit to the Polish gun factory, that he had been in Poland in 1920 and at that time could never have believed that nineteen years later he would be buying excellent war equipment from that country—so utterly devastated had Poland been during the course of the first World War. Hofman was one of those who endured captivity with incomparable fortitude. He never doubted that it was merely a temporary condition, but he felt that in any case it behooved a soldier to endure hardship without murmuring.

One of my „cot-mates” was Lieutenant Skwarczyński, member of the editorial boards both of *Polityka* („Politics”) and of *Bunt Młodych* („The Revolt of Youth”) a most interesting newspaper for young people. He was a brilliant economist, seething with energy. He organized in the camp a Section of Economists, the members of which, though lacking books, undernourished, and living crowded together in lice-infested quarters, carried on their work and their political discussions. Skwarczyński, like all the rest, has disappeared. Later I received a letter from his wife, written from Semipalatsinsk in northwestern Kazakhstan. Together with her husband's parents, she had been deported from Lwow far into Russia, in the worst of conditions when frosts were severe. Two weeks after her arrival at the settlement of the expatriated Poles she gave life to a child who died shortly afterwards. Skwarczyński's father also died.

In the camp at Starobielsk was Major Soltan, General



Anders' Chief-of-Staff during the 1939 campaign. Anders had a deep affection for this man. I had known him since 1920, when he received the *Virtuti Militari* Cross for gallantry displayed in the battle of Zoltance. For many years he had been a teacher at the Cavalry School of Grudziadz. Under the Tsarist regime both his grandfathers had been deported to Siberia and his mother was born near Baikal Lake. He was one of the men of whom I used to think when casting about among my acquaintances for a natural-born leader. Ataturk once remarked that a leader should have a heart of marble and a quality of decision quick as lightning. Soltan, even in matters of small importance, was characterized by just this lightning decisiveness. Always ready to shoulder responsibility, he was conspicuous for his spirit of self-denial and for his intense devotion to the cause—not merely because it was demanded, but because his whole nature was utterly and solely absorbed by his sense of duty. When, ignorant of the fate of our country, having no idea what had become of our loved ones, we were sunk in utter despair, Soltan stood out from all the rest by his tranquillity of mind, by his equanimity, and by virtue of his modest, simple character. He was an inexhaustible source of strength for all his comrades. With no ambitions whatever to be a „Fuehrer,” he inevitably became our teacher and leader. He started in the very first day giving lectures on the history of wars, he discussed the errors and mistakes we had made, and advised us how to avoid them in the future. He spoke of all these things without bitterness or personal rancor. He was not given to pathetic utterances, but I have never forgotten what he said to me one day in speaking about a mutual acquaintance who had left Poland forever: „I don't understand him,” he protested. „If I only could, I would return to Poland on my knees!”

Soltan had left a wife and two little daughters in Poland. While I was at Gryazovets I received from them frantic inquiries about the fate of their husband and father. At that time I had no idea that he, too, was lost to us forever—this man who, in my opinion, was truly

representative of the noblest Polish tradition.

Alongside Soltan I should like to set Tomasz Chęcinski. As personalities the two men differed in every respect. There was something about Chęcinski suggestive of a Lwow urchin, something extremely agile and passionate. He had score of friends and followers in camp from all varieties of circles and parties. He was an ardent proponent of the idea of federalism, with the conception of a federation of nations stretching all the way from Scandinavia to Greece. It was by no means a purely speculative notion with him; he was convinced that after the war this system would prevail and that he would be its apostle. He was interested not only in Polish affairs, but followed with sympathy and close attention what was going on in other countries—a flood in Bulgaria, political dissensions in the Balkans, the progress of social movements in the Scandinavian countries. . . . He had the ability to inspire others and to find support for his ideas in men who previously had had no interest whatever in the concept of federalism.

No other inmate of Starobielsk was endowed with his gift for fellowship and there was always a crowd around his cot. He was a brilliant chess player, a gay companion, an ideal comrade, ready always to share his last piece of bread, his last crumb of sugar. He spoke about Poland's foreign policies out of deep and exhaustive knowledge and it was my opinion at the time that, characterized as he was by exceptional dynamics of mind, impartial reasoning and fiery enthusiasm, Tomasz Chęcinski would play an outstanding role in post-war Poland.

He was determined to escape and carry on the fight against the Germans from France. With this plan in mind, he bartered his uniform for a ragged suit. When the camp was being liquidated, he felt sure he would be able to escape from the prisoners' van and reach the Polish forces. Once I heard him complaining that we were too well-off at Starobielsk: „No one beats us; we don't have to push wheelbarrows; we are not compelled to work in mines. This is not good. It is a shame to



live in such a manner!" I thought of these words of Checinski's more than once later on as I talked with hundreds of men coming in from the mines of Vorkuta or Karaganda, from the snowy deserts of Magadan or Norylsk. Today we can only hope that some of these lost Starobielsk prisoners may still be alive pushing wheelbarrows, perhaps, in one of those far-off mines . . . .

Among the many members of the clergy with us at Starobielsk was Chaplain Aleksandrowicz, known in Poland as an outstanding preacher. He had survived the September campaign in which he served as Army Chaplain, but limped from a wound received in the leg. He was Soltan's room-mate. During the period of our worst distress many of us were deeply indebted to this man for the kindness and brotherly love, the spiritual aid and the wealth of comfort which he gave us. I remember the first Divine Service, organized spontaneously on the 11th of November. I recall the tears of all attending that service, as Chaplain Aleksandrowicz, translating from his Latin breviary, read to us the Gospel story of the maiden restored to life by the Christ. „She is not dead, but sleepeth." To us who in four short weeks had lost our all, broken hearted, sunk in despair, those immortal words brought to consciousness and kindled anew the light of faith and hope. But Aleksandrowicz was not forgiven the role he played among us during the first three months. One night, shortly before Christmas Eve, he was suddenly deported, along with Superintendent Potocki (Lutheran bishop) and Rabbi Sternberg. All three perished. We know that they were kept for several weeks in a Moscow prison, that later they were confined in an isolated tower at Kozielsk, and eventually deported to an unknown destination. All three had displayed genuine religious toleration. They did not see in us adherents of different faiths; they saw only unhappy human beings in need of help and consolation. Soltan told me afterwards that Aleksandrowicz was frightened when they took him. The NKVD-men had ordered him to take his belongings and leave with them at once. He lingered a little, as if he knew he would never see again the comrades with whom he had

been living for the last three months and whom he had come to love as brothers.

Now I want to say a few words about Professor Ralski (specialist in the science of meadows) former lecturer at Cracow University and Professor at the University of Poznan. He was a reserve officer in the Eighth Lancers, the regiment with which I, too, did my service during the September campaign of 1939. Ralski had a wife and little daughter from whom no news came until March, 1940. Then he learned that the Germans had driven his wife from her flat, allowing her to take with her only one suitcase, and that all his scientific papers had been destroyed. He, too, was notable for the fortitude of spirit which he showed and which won him high regard among the soldiers during the tragic events of September.

When as a prisoner, hungry, frost-bitten, he was being transported across the snow-covered Ukrainian steppes—he knew not whither—he understood how to detach himself from the gruesome reality of circumstance. All during those ten terrible days, with the objective passion of a scientist he observed the steppes and the grass stems protruding from the snow. I remember that while in camp, he began to write a book about meadows. In April, before his deportation to still another unknown destination, he showed me excitedly a few poor grasses growing in our camp and explained their properties. He was a true scientist, one for whom science was not merely a field of work, but life itself. If he has been murdered, I am sure that he maintained to the very last moment the serenity and goodness which never left him during that severe winter of 1939-40.

My first impression of Starobielsk was very depressing. Only after the lapse of several weeks did the camp begin to take on a more military aspect and it was a long time before any semblance of order was established. The bath eventually was made to function, we built ourselves new barracks, and life gradually became organized. At first, however, there was only hunger, cold, lice. . . . We were weighed down by a sense of deep moral



dejection against which we had constantly to struggle. Our nervousness was aggravated by the lack of news about our families, by the conditions under which we were living, by the absence of any sense of security, and especially by the ordeal of continuous interrogations to which we were subjected by the NKVD authorities. As for myself I, personally, was never beaten nor humiliated as were some of the others who had to undergo these incessant cross-examinations, lasting not infrequently for three consecutive days and nights.

Sometimes these sessions were characterized by humorous incidents. On one occasion I was being questioned by three officers—one a stout, perfumed NKVD man, the other two Army officers of very primitive mentality. They learned that I had worked for eight years in Paris as an artist, a fact which seemed to them extremely suspicious. „What instructions were given you by your Foreign Minister when you were leaving for Paris?” demanded my inquisitor, the NKVD man. I replied that the Minister didn't even know I was going to Paris. „Well then,” he continued, „what did the Vice-Minister tell you?” He didn't know about it either,” I said. „I went to Paris as a painter, not as a spy.” „Do you think,” he persisted „that we do not understand that you, as a painter, could have prepared a plan of Paris and sent it to your Minister in Warsaw?” I was absolutely unable to convince him that a plan of Paris could be bought for fifty centimes on my street corner in Paris and that Polish artists going to Paris were not spies drawing secret plans. Not one of them could be persuaded that anyone was ever allowed to go abroad except on an errand of espionage.

There has been a lot said about the electrification carried out in Russia. It was perhaps this very „electrification” which made us most unhappy in our camps. Wherever we came—whether it was the two cow-sheds in Szepietovka where four thousand of us were hived, or the church buildings in which we housed at Starobielsk—there were only the same poor, reddish glowing-bulbs giving too little light for reading. So much for the boasted „electrification!”

I used to go out at midnight and listen to the radio. I shall never forget those broadcasts, to which we listened in the light of twinkling red bulbs reflected in muddy pools, while the icy October wind cut through our chilled bodies. We heard disgusting invectives against everything Polish, broadcast for the purpose of making the naive Soviet radio listeners believe that the population of Poland consisted solely of lords who had been torturing the plain people and plain people who had been starving. We could see with our own eyes at Starobielsk that even our poor prison fare was excellent in comparison with what the people of the neighborhood had to eat. In fact they tried by every possible means to obtain from us anything edible.

Soon after my arrival at Starobielsk I fell ill. Something was wrong with my lungs. With a temperature of 104°F., and bloody expectorations I went to the Sick Room. Now there was a legend about this room: „It had a bath-tub in which one could bathe!” And, in fact, I was conducted to a bathroom. Alas! The tub leaked; on its bottom stood a basin of lukewarm water. That was all. Nevertheless, when I had received a clean shirt and had been assigned a berth in a small room along with five consumptives, it seemed to me that I was in Heaven itself. My extremely narrow cot was close to that of a man who was suffering from the last stage of pulmonary tuberculosis and who for a long time had been running a temperature of about 102°F. I was his neighbor for several weeks.

His name was Major Kłopotowski. During the first World War he had served with the Polish Siberian forces, returning home via Japan and all the seven seas. He knew well practically all of Siberia. In 1920 he had won the *Virtuti Militari* Cross. Few men could talk as interestingly about their life as did he.

It seemed to me that this emancipated man who heard already the steps of approaching death had some deep inner urge to talk about his experiences that would not be denied. The charm of his narration lay in the fact that he never stressed his own merit, never invested



himself with the halo of a hero. Nevertheless, every detail of his plain, forthright story showed the nobility of his character, the energy and the richness of his mind. Each anecdote had an authentic „pointe.” With a few words he could depict the character of his acquaintances—of whom he had a great many. I was at that time seriously ill and needed rest and solitude rather than conversation, so I was unable to listen all day long to his reminiscences. I slept a lot; sometimes I feigned sleep in order to avoid having to talk or even to listen. He would lie there waiting for me to wake up and then he would start in again. At home he had a wife and little son. „Look here,” he would begin, „my son’s eyes are like two gems.” Once started on the subject of his son, there was no stopping him. His condition was getting worse, no news came from his family, and a deep melancholy settled down upon him. His emaciated, triangular face which, with its beautiful black eyes, reminded me of a bird, was consumed by fever and sorrow. All unexpectedly in March came the news that both his wife and his boy were living somewhere in the country, looking forward to his return.

And now something strange happened; contrary to all the expectations of the doctors, this man, seemingly at death’s door, began to recover. His temperature fell; he „decided” to get well. When the April sun shone warmer, he was allowed to join the others who walked outdoors. He was filled with optimism, a smile was on his lips. Like Checinski, he began to plan how he could go on serving his country. . . . he would get well. . . . he would work. . . . When his name appeared in a list of those chosen to be deported, he busied himself throughout the day with the packing of his modest belongings. He somehow managed to give the impression of being in fair health. It was only when we saw him standing outside the door of the cold, deserted church, waiting there two long hours before they took him in to be searched, that we realized how ill he really was. I remember how he looked on leaving camp: his face was white as chalk, he seemed incredibly exhausted, and we feared he would not be able to take even a few

steps. We know what the conditions of transportation were like—more than a dozen men crowded into a small half-compartment of a prisoners’ truck; for food only herrings and water. There is no hope that this desperately ill man could have survived even a few days of travel under such circumstances.

I wish also to speak of Captain Kuczynski. From the first he was one of the most active organizers among us and one of the best of companions. A young cavalry officer who had graduated as an architect, he had a very young wife in Warsaw. During the 1939 campaign he served under the command of General Anders, distinguishing himself as a brilliant fighting officer. He was the first to go, in the autumn of 1939.

We hoped he was being sent to Turkey. He was the grandson of one of the prominent organizers of the Turkish Army, his full name was both Polish and Turkish, he even had a high Turkish title. For this reason he kept on writing petition after petition, asking to be sent to that country. No one has heard of him since November, 1939.

Very different was the fate of Lieutenant Kwolek who was taken away shortly after November 11. He was in charge of the largest of the barracks at Starobielsk, a former church in which sleeping bunks, five stories deep, had been constructed from boards. The prisoners lived there as if in small cages, in the midst of incredible stench and squalor. We called it the „circus.” Now Lieutenant Kwolek, „manager” of this „circus,” committed a „crime;” he organized a patriotic celebration on November Day which included among its other features the recitation of „A Letter from Siberia,” by the Polish poet, Or-Ot. Because of the striking analogy, this poem made a tremendous impression. In addition to this offense, he was guilty on the same day of another misdemeanor: he adorned the hall with a cross. This double „crime” was too much for the Bolsheviks. Lieutenant Kwolek, a quiet but resolute man, a consumptive with a kind, gentle face and a black beard, was deported within a few days. It is only here in Iran that we have



since learned of his death, in 1940, in one of the mines of the Far North. He left with his colleagues a letter for his wife.

We passed the whole winter at Starobielsk. We had to endure numerous cross-examinations, differing in form and intensity. All of us were photographed several times and our personal data was taken down repeatedly. Despite the fact that it was prohibited, we used to hold our morning prayers and we listened to a great many lectures on various topics. After sunset we lived mostly in darkness because once the electric bulbs burned out, they were never replaced. It was quite impossible to read in the evenings and there were no books anyway, except for the few we had brought with us in our knapsacks and a very small Soviet library. What we had were literally „read to pieces.”

One diversion we did have. Stray dogs used to come to us and, though it was strictly forbidden, each camp had at least one dog for a pet. These dogs hated the NKVD men and would bark furiously whenever they came to our barracks. At Gryazovets we had a big black dog, our great and gentle friend. One day, as he lay sleeping under a tier of board beds, the Camp Commander paid us a visit. The dog jumped at him and began to bark. We tried to hide him, but they took him away. Three days later, on our way to work, we saw our dog lying dead in a pool of blood. He had been clubbed to death. This crime roused among us seething indignation, though we really had already seen and experienced a great deal of cruelty.

In February rumors spread that we were to leave our camp. I understood from postcards that reached us through the Red Cross that many of our friends (including Dr. Kolodziejski's wife and two of my sisters) in expectation of our return to Nazi-occupied Poland or, at least, to German war prisoners' camps there, were waiting for us near the German-Soviet line of demarcation with quantities of packages. On the other hand, camp officials circulated the report that the Soviets were going to hand us over to the Allies... that we

would be able to go to France and join the fighting forces! We even found an apparently „lost” official document showing the proposed route of our journey via Bender. One night they aroused us from sleep and asked who there was among us that knew the Greek and Rumanian languages. All these things conspired to create an atmosphere of hope.

When in April, 1940, we started leaving Starobielsk—twenty, thirty, fifty at a time—many of us firmly believed we would soon be released. It was quite impossible to determine what criteria the Bolsheviks used in their selection of those to go; all our theories were disproved by the facts. Any one group might contain individuals of all different ages, ranks, civilian professions, social origins and political creeds. However, we all had but one wish and we waited with excitement the announcement of new lists of those scheduled to go. We spoke of these occasions as the „parrot's hour,” because the seemingly random choice of names reminded us of the haphazard way parrots carried around by fortune tellers and hurdy-gurdy men in Poland used to pick up bits of colored paper with their beaks. I was one of the last to leave Starobielsk.

Once we reached the station our disillusionment began. We were crowded into prisoners' vans—about fifteen to each half-compartment. These vans were practically windowless, the doors provided with gratings. The service staff in our car were brutes. Access to the W. C. was granted, as a rule, only twice a day. Our food consisted of small herrings and water. The weather was extremely hot and many fainted, but our escort were completely oblivious to our suffering; obviously they had become hardened to it.

We passed Kharkov, where many of our comrades left us, then Tula. Finally we arrived at a small railway station near Smolensk. There, brutally driven along at the end of rifle butts, we were herded into big lorries and started traveling across a very poor and miserable countryside. We passed through devastated villages, the like of which we had never seen in Poland. Our dreams of France faded away; we expected the worst. The



group I was with was taken to the camp of Pavlishev Bor, where we found several hundreds of our colleagues from Kozielsk, Ostaszkov and Starobielsk. We were about four hundred altogether. A few weeks later we were transferred to Gryazovets, near Wologda, and there we remained till August, 1941.

We were housed in one of the buildings of an ancient monastery, the church of which had been blown up with dynamite. Living conditions were slightly better than at Starobielsk and we hoped that our other comrades had met with similar good fortune. We assumed they had been sent to small camps all over Russia. We were now permitted to write our families and to receive letters in reply.

Before long these letters from home began to contain anxious inquiries about colleagues who were not with us; finally we realized the truth—that we were the only prisoners of war from the three original camps who were sending news. After the Polish-Soviet agreement of July, 1941, after the so-called „amnesty,” we were informed that the Polish forces in the USSR would be reorganized and we hastened to join up. Our minds filled with sad forebodings as to the fate of the rest of our colleagues, we set to work to compile from memory, as best we could, a list of their names. It was in this way that the first lists of the former Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostaszkov prisoners were drafted. These lists, which eventually contained no less than 7,500 names, were presented to Army Headquarters.

The formation of the Polish Army in Russia began in September, 1941, in Tatishev near Saratov, and in Totsk, on the Kuibyshev-Chkalov railway line. Hundreds of men poured in every day at the summer camps of Totsk. I remember a group of more than 1,500 who came from the Far North; clad in ragged „fufaikas” (padded jackets) they arrived after a journey of many weeks.

I shall not try to describe the Gehenna of those journeys from all over Russia during that summer of 1941 when hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Ukraine and from White Ruthenia streamed along all

the railway lines, eastwards to Siberia. They bivouacked at railway stations; infectious diseases broke out among them. I witnessed grim pictures of hunger and want. In the winter of that same year I saw in Kuibyshev piles of corpses of frozen passengers which were being transported in lorries. These men who came to us in crowds after epic feats of courage and skill were mostly without footwear. The autumn was very cold, with snow and rain, and the summer camp had neither houses nor tents sufficient to shelter them.

We set up something like a Bureau of Inquiry. My task was to interrogate all the new arrivals. Each one, from whatever part he came—from Vorkuta, Magadan, Kamchatka or Kataganda—had one question to ask, one answer to give. The question concerned their families deported from Poland to Russia; the answer was any possible information he could furnish regarding companions and colleagues not yet released.

From the first day I began querying every newcomer about our lost friends. Had he seen them? Had he heard their names? At that time we still believed they would appear some day, that their coming was delayed only because of the vast distances to be traveled. The Soviet authorities were releasing even those Polish prisoners who had been condemned to capital punishment and Poles were arriving from all points in Russia—even from far-distant Kolyma. Was it conceivable that the Soviet Government would detain in prison the closest companions and the best friends of the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish forces in the USSR.

But none of them came and we had no news of them except for some contradictory reports indirectly received. The most plausible among these reports was that (1) a very large group of Starobielsk prisoners had been sent to Franz Joseph Land, and (2) a group of 630 prisoners from Kozielsk were working in a gold mine at Kolyma. When General Anders started his organization work he insisted on the release of the missing officers. He received friendly but vague promises. The reports we



had received were sent to the Commander-in-Chief and to the Polish Embassy in Kuibyshev.

In the course of an interview with Stalin, in November, 1941, Ambassador Kot asked officially what had happened to the lost men and when they might be expected. Stalin was astonished and indignant—or he pretended to be. „Have they not yet been released?” he asked. He rang up the NKVD in the presence of the Ambassador and asked why the war prisoners from Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostaszkov had not been set free. „The amnesty applies to all Poles,” he said, „so they too, should be released.” This was the reply Ambassador Kot brought from Moscow.

Day by day we waited for our friends to appear, calling to mind in the meantime yet more names. A month passed. None of them put in an appearance. When the Commander-in-Chief, General Sikorski, came to Moscow early in December our list held more than 4,500 names.

Information had been received indicating that our colleagues were probably imprisoned on the islands of the Far North. For one thing, several members of the Polish Fifth Infantry were told by a Soviet official that while on a visit to Franz Joseph Land as a NKVD courier, he had seen there more than five thousand of their fellow-officers. Then there was the matter of the cable from Novya Zemla. Shortly after the proclamation of the amnesty our Military Attache in Kuibyshev had sent out a letter to local Soviets all over Russia, requesting immediate release of any Polish war prisoners held in their respective areas. Quite unexpectedly at this time, he received a reply signed „Moyzerov, Chairman, Island Soviet,” stating that all Polish prisoners on the island had been informed and that he would try to send them back. This cable was for us irrefutable proof that our comrades were actually in the Far North.

On December 4, 1941, Stalin received General Sikorski and General Anders. The latter insisted upon the immediate release of all former Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostaszkov war prisoners and presented the list which we had compiled. Stalin's attitude was now quite different from what it had been towards Ambassador

Kot. He made no show of astonishment or indignation, but replied evasively that these officers, perhaps, had fled to Manchuria. General Sikorski pointed out that should Polish officers have crossed the Manchurian frontier or should they have found themselves under German occupation, detailed information would certainly have reached London. General Anders added that he knew too well the organization of the NKVD to believe that so large a number of officers could have been able to escape. He gave it as his opinion that these officers were being detained by commanders of labor camps as necessary man-power; that in spite of strict orders, the respective commanders simply refused to let them go. Stalin replied: „If they have not released any such prisoners, we will compel them to do so.” In the presence of General Sikorski and General Anders he issued orders to General Pamfilov to release at once all former prisoners of war who had been held in the camps of Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostaszkov.

Another month passed, and still not one of our missing colleagues returned to the Army. During the last days of December I learned, through the „indiscretion” of a „Bolshie,” that the Gulag (Central Management of Camps) had been transferred from Moscow to Chkalov, and early in January I was sent thither by General Anders as plenipotentiary. It was my intention to discuss the matter with General Nasyedkin, Chief of Gulag. At Chkalov I learned that the address of this organization was secret and it was only due to another „indiscretion” that I was able to find Nasyedkin. Even then I would not have secured an interview had it not been for strong letters from General Anders addressed both to him and to Mr. Bzyrov, Chief of the NKVD authorities in the Chkalov „oblast” (district) in which he referred to Stalin's order.

I had two talks with General Nasyedkin and one with Mr. Bzyrov. In our first interview Nasyedkin was affable, though he seemed somewhat disconcerted. He sat with his back to a very large map of the USSR on which all the labor camps under his management were clearly designated by stars, circles and other like symbols.



There were a great many of these symbols on the territory of the Komi ASSR, on the Kola Peninsula and in the district of Kolyma. I observed that Verkhoyansk known as the Earth's „pole of cold”) was a big camp center. It was fully as large as Magadan, transit port through which pass all sea transports of prisoners (5,000-10,000 each) from Nahodka Bay, near Vladivostok.\* As far as I know, no Polish prisoner or war prisoner came back from Verkhoyansk.

I gave General Nasyedkin a detailed story of the three camps of Polish war prisoners. Unless he was feigning complete ignorance, this was the first he had heard about the matter. He told me that he had not been Chief of Gulag in the spring of 1940, at the time when these camps were liquidated, and that he had nothing to do with war prisoners—only with labor camps in which were kept political and criminal prisoners. It was possible, he admitted, that among these there were some Polish militaries, but he could not say definitely if such were the case. He would do his best to elucidate the whole question and would let me know the following day what he learned. I asked him if there were any truth in the report that he had sent prisoners to Franz Joseph Land or to Novya Zemla. He declared that he had not sent anybody to those islands, and that any camps of prisoners which might exist on them were not under his supervision. As a matter of fact, I did not see on the map any stars, circles or other signs in that particular area. The General now, in my presence, gave orders over the phone to investigate thoroughly the question of the Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostoszkov camps, quoting from General Anders' letter the words: „By order of Comrade Stalin.” My first interview thus came to an end.

On the same day, at 11 P. M., I was received by Bzyrov. As was customary, I was ushered in with a certain „ceremonial.” From a nice parlor, furnished with pictures and leather-covered easy chairs, I was conducted

\*(In the neighborhood of Magadan there is a town of about fifteen thousand inhabitants, all of them cripples with frost-bitten or amputated limbs, noses, ears, etc.)

into Bzyrov's study not through a single door, but through the central panel of a wardrobe having in its back another door which led directly into the presence of the „Almighty.” Bzyrov received me in friendly fashion and seemed sincerely desirous to be of help. He told me first of all that I could receive reliable information only from central and highest authorities. (It goes without saying that the conversation was carried on in the presence of two other NKVD men.) He intimated that Merkulov or Fedotov might be of assistance in the matter. (Chief of the NKVD is Beria, Deputy-Chief Merkulov, and the next in rank are Fedotov and Reichman.) When I spoke to him about Novya Zemla and Franz Joseph Land, he evinced no surprise and even showed me on a map the port of Budinka at the mouth of the Yenisei, whence the larger transports of workmen set forth for the islands. It was his opinion that the war prisoners in question were in the Far North. Needless to say, he affirmed that there were no longer any Polish prisoners in his district.

The following day I was again received by General Nasyedkin. He reported that he had been in communication with Kuibyshev and that he could tell me nothing, as only the central authorities were authorized to give information. If I had any lists of names (I had with me the 4,500 names) he would send them on to Kuibyshev. It was evident that he had been severely reprimanded by Kuibyshev for having talked with me. (Several days later a representative of the NKVD spoke to General Anders, told him that trips such as mine to Chkalov were not permitted in the USSR, and asked him not to authorize further errands of like nature. General Anders replied that he planned to send me on the same mission to the central authorities.)

I should like to point out another detail: In this second interview with Nasyedkin, following my conversation with Bzyrov, I brought up again the subject of Novya Zemla, telling him that I had heard prisoners were being held there; that, in fact, the day before sensational news to what effect had been received. Two White Ruthenian peasants claimed that they were re-



turning from a far-off island in the Arctic Ocean where they had worked in the mines, and where thousands of Polish officers were living in barracks. Nasyedkin gave me quite a different reply from that of the previous day. „It is not impossible,”—such were his words—„that camp units in the Far North under my command sent small groups of men to those islands, but it could not have been thousands, as you say.”

In mid-January I was sent by General Anders to Kuibyshev on the same mission, with letters of introduction to Generals Reichman and Zukov in Moscow. General Anders explained that lack of officers was making it very difficult to organize the Polish Army and was seriously hampering his work and that of his collaborators. He added that being unable to attend to the matter himself, he was sending me in his stead and bespoke for me the same assistance they would have given him. Both these generals held high positions in the NKVD hierarchy and it was their task to cooperate closely with us in the formation of the Polish Army. Moreover, General Reichman had personally interrogated many of our colleagues in the course of the past two years. For these reasons I hoped that, familiar as they undoubtedly were with the whole situation, they would be willing to help me and would wish to do so; that they would, perhaps, obtain for me an interview with Merkulov or with the omnipotent Beria.

From Kuibyshev I was sent to Moscow where, after many difficulties—including a short, apparently erroneous arrest—on February 3, I succeeded in obtaining an interview with Reichman in the Lubyanka prison. It is probable that it is less difficult to obtain an interview with Mr. Churchill or Mr. Roosevelt than with a third-class NKVD dignitary. I could not even hand over my letters personally. I was obliged to go several times, pending the decision on the interview, to another building where a crowd of poor people were waiting for news of their imprisoned relatives. But finally, after a number of telephone calls at night, a special NKVD official was sent, who led me through all the guards of the prison into Reichman's study.

On leaving for Moscow I had naively supposed I would be able to obtain reliable information through private channels. To this end I visited the well-known author, Ilya Erenburg, whom I had met when I was with General Sikorski at Buzuluk. He is without question, next after Alexei Tolstoy, the author whom the Bolsheviks most esteem. I laid before him the tragic nature of my mission and asked his advice about how best to begin my work in Moscow. Erenburg replied frankly that he didn't think I could accomplish anything because my rank was too low. A mere telephone call from the general would have been more effective than all my attempts and exertions. I believe that he was right.

While sitting in General Reichman's waiting-room I saw with surprise that he received first the Soviet commander of Gryazovets, with whom he talked for fifteen minutes. Then I was ushered in. The conversation was conducted in the presence of two witnesses. I set forth the purpose of my visit and asked Reichman to help me in obtaining an interview with Beria or Merkulov. He politely refused. Then I handed him a detailed memorandum which he read carefully in my presence, underlining each line with a pencil. The memorandum contained, first of all, the history of the three camps in question up to May, 1940, the date of their liquidation. Following the preface I had written as below:

„It is now almost six months since, on August 12, 1941, an amnesty was proclaimed for all Polish prisoners. Officers and privates, set free from prisons and camps, are joining the Polish forces daily. Among them there are officers and men who were seized when trying to cross the frontiers, there are those who were arrested in towns and villages. But in spite of the amnesty, in spite of the solemn promise given Ambassador Kot in October by Stalin, himself, and his strict order given on December 4 in the presence of General Sikorski and General Anders for the release of all war prisoners—in spite of all these things not one of the former war prisoners from the camps of Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostaszkov (save the Gryazovets group, and a few score imprisoned separately who were released in September)



has returned, nor have we received an appeal for help from any former inmates of those camps. We have interrogated thousands of our colleagues returning from various prisons and camps, but we have received no reliable news—only the following unverified reports:

1. That in 1940 from 6,000 to 12,000 officers and men were sent through the Nakhodka Bay to Kolyma;
2. That about 8,000 officers have been concentrated in the mines of Franz Joseph Land;
3. That officers were deported to Novya Zemla, to Kamchatka, and to the Chukchee Peninsula;
4. That 630 officers, formerly war prisoners at Kozielsk, were working in the summer of 1941 some 110 miles from Piostra Dresva (Kolyma);
5. That 150 men in officers' uniforms were seen north of the Sosva River, not far from Gari (east of the Urals);
6. That Polish officers were seen being transported on big towing barges (1,700—2,000 men each) to northern islands, and that three such barges were sunk in the Barents Sea.

None of these reports has been adequately checked, but there seems reason to think those referring to Kolyma and the northern islands are probably true.

„We know with what precision and exactness every prisoner was interrogated and registered; we know that the dossier of each of us, along with many drafts of questionnaires, was kept in special boxes, with photographs and documents attached. We know with what care and accuracy this work was done by the NKVD and—knowing all this—none of us can for a moment believe that the highest authorities of the NKVD could be at a loss to indicate the whereabouts of 15,000 war prisoners, including 8,000 officers. The solemn promises of Stalin, himself, and his strict order to elucidate the fate of the Polish war prisoners, authorize us to hope that we shall, at least, know where our brothers-in-arms are or, if they have perished, how and where it happened.” The memorandum ended with the following words:

„On the basis of what has been previously said, the number of officers who have not returned from Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostoszkov amounts to 8,300 men. The total number of officers in the newly formed Polish forces in the USSR, as of January 1, 1942, is 2,300. These men had been interned in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, but—with the exception of the above-mentioned four hundred from Gryazovets—they had never been prisoners of war. We are unable to state with complete accuracy the total number of all war prisoners not yet accounted for, so we give only the number missing from those formerly held at Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostoszkov (mostly officers) since we could establish this number with approximate certitude.

„Now that we are reorganizing our forces in the southern provinces of the USSR, in accordance with Stalin's and Sikorski's decision, we are in great need of these men, who were excellent military specialists and first-class commanders. It is not necessary to remind you that the disappearance of thousands of our colleagues renders it difficult to create in our forces a feeling of confidence towards the Soviet Union, a feeling indispensable for the development of healthy mutual relations between two allied armies preparing to fight the common foe.”

General Reichman's face was a study in impassivity as he read this memorandum. When he had finished, he replied that he knew nothing about the fate of these men, that this was not his job; however, for the sake of General Anders, he would attempt to elucidate the question and would let me know. He asked me to remain in Moscow and await his telephone call. His manner was icy as I took leave of him.

I waited ten days. Finally someone rang me up at night: General Reichman informed me with the utmost politeness that unfortunately he was obliged to leave for Moscow the next day. He advised me to return to Kuibyshev, since all relevant material had been sent to Comrade Vyshinski, Peoples' Deuty Commissar for Foreign Affairs. I had only time to reply that I knew



Vyshinski would not tell me anything, that Ambassador Kot had already interviewed him in vain no less than eight times. Such was the end of my visit to Moscow.

There remained still a forlorn hope, skillfully fostered by the NKVD men assigned to our forces, namely, that our comrades had been deported to the far-off northern islands and that they would arrive in summer when the seas became navigable. We were told more than once in the greatest secrecy: „Be patient; your colleagues will return sometime in July or August.”

Midsummer came—but our colleagues did not return. Our anxiety was increased by a fact, the authenticity of which I, myself, have checked. Several months before the outbreak of the German-Soviet conflict, the Bolsheviks transferred a number of Polish staff-officers, including Colonel Berling, to a new camp and suggested to them that they organize a Polish Army to fight against the Germans. Berling was willing, in principle, to accept the proposal. However, he set one condition: such an army was to include all officers and men, irrespective of their political creed. A conference was held with Beria and Merkulov. „Of course,” they agreed; „Poles of all political parties will be able to join the army.” „Well,” said Berling, „we have excellent army cadres in the camps of Starobielsk and Kozielsk.” Whereupon Merkulov replied with some constraint: „**No, not these men; we have made a great blunder in connection with them.**” Three witnesses have testified to hearing this remark of Merkulov.

In the course of the winter and the following spring we heard many rumors about the fate of the lost officers and men. We could not be sure, however, that these reports referred specifically to the prisoners of war at Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostoszkov. We must remember that according to official Soviet figures (*The Red Star*, October, 1939) the total number of Polish war prisoners in Russia amounted to 190,584—officers and other ranks. It was impossible to establish with certainty just which prisoners these rumors concerned. Eventually we received a communication deserving of special

attention. A certain Mrs. K... G... made the following deposition:

„It was June, 1941. I had been arrested and was being transported to a compulsory labor camp in Komi ASSR. At Arkhangelsk we were crammed (four thousand men and women) into a barge towed by steamer. We sailed through the White Sea to the north of the Pechora River. While we were still on the White Sea, I sat on deck, weeping. A young Russian soldier on the barge asked me why I was so distressed. I explained that my case was hopeless and that my husband, a captain in the reserves, had also been deported. He told me in reply that our officers were no longer alive; that they had been drowned here in the White Sea. I learned that he had accompanied a transport of our army and police officers (two barges with 7,000 men) and that somewhere in the icy waters of the Arctic the barges were disconnected from the towing steamer and deliberately sunk. Later, an old Russian who had listened to our conversation, confirmed the truth of this story. The old man expressed to me his sympathy and wept as he talked. He said that he had witnessed the drowning. The Soviet staff had pierced the bottom of the barges to let the water in and then gone on board the steamer, leaving the barges to sink. I asked him if anyone at all had been saved. He replied, ‘No one.’”

In addition to the above report, we received information from some of our colleagues who were taken away from the camps in prisoners' trucks in 1940. They all tell of seeing written on the walls and ceilings of their compartments the words: „We arrived and left the train two stations west of Smoleńsk.” Lieutenant S... who left Kozielsk in the spring of 1940, reported that at a railroad station near Smolensk he saw several hundred Polish officers being carried off in buses.

The German radio announced horrible news about finding the bodies of thousands of murdered Polish officers buried in mass graves near Smolensk. From lists and card-indexes of our Army we ascertained the identity of sixteen out of twenty-five names published by



Berlin. In some instances even the names of their wives and their correct addresses were found with them.

My own opinion is that a part of the Kozielsk prisoners were murdered in 1940. It is quite possible that the remaining war prisoners were drowned in the Arctic seas. We have been receiving reports about these drownings for the last two years, and the statement made by Mrs. K... G... appears to be quite reliable. Everything seems to indicate that in April, 1940, Moscow decided to liquidate the Polish war prisoners. In the first phase of the Soviet revolution, during the campaign against the Whites, a great many Russian White officers were drowned in the Black Sea. In the light of (1) Merkulov's above-quoted remark to Colonel Berling, (2) the report of Mrs. K... G..., (3) the discovery of the mass graves near Smolensk, and (4) various other as yet unsubstantiated reports, the thesis of the „liquidation” of all Polish war prisoners from Starobielsk No. 1, from Kozielsk, No. 1, and from Ostaszkov, is not only highly probable, but seems almost certain.

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