TO: Department of State for EE.

FROM: LONDON 2377 November 17, 1950 2 Enclosures

REF: Embassy despatch 414, January 26, 1950

SUBJECT: Transmitting Katyn Documents.

Reference is made to Embassy Despatch 414 of January 26, 1950 transmitting certain documents compiled by a special commission of the Polish Exile Government in London (1944), and to Embassy telegram 1507 of September 9, 1950 giving certain information in response to the Department's request as to whether the material in these documents could be used.

Transmitted herewith is another copy of "Facts and Documents Concerning Polish Prisoners of War Captured by the U.S.S.R. during the 1939 Campaign", issued February 1946, which is already in the possession of the Department, and a short resume entitled "The Mass Murder of Polish Prisoners of War in Katyn" dated March, 1946 containing maps. The latter document may or may not be already in possession of the Department, but is a handy reference for possible use instead of the rather bulky document first mentioned. The latter document is marked "Most Secret". The authorities did give it that classification at the time, but the degree of secrecy and the conditions under which both of these documents may be used are the same as mentioned in the second paragraph of this Embassy's telegram 1507 of September 9, 1950.

Former Ambassador Lipski, who made these documents available to the Embassy, at present has confirmed to us the statements made in the last mentioned telegram and adds that Mr. Churchill in the fourth volume of his memoirs, which has not yet been published in complete form but which has appeared in summarized form serially, has come out with a definite statement of his opinion that the murders were perpetrated by the Soviet authorities.

Enclosures:
1 copy "Facts & Documents concerning Polish Prisoners of War Captured by the U.S.S.R., etc."
1 copy "The Mass Murder of Polish Prisoners of War in Katyn".

John H. Bruins
Counselor of Embassy

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
SECRET

ACTION COPY - DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.
### CHARGE SLIP

**FILE NUMBER**

| 648. 6134/11-1750 |

**DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENT**

- from London—
- Desp #3377
- w/Two encls.
- Of 1 "Facts & Docs. re Polish Pris of War—
  - Shot by USSR etc/đ
- Copy "The Mass Murder of Pol. Pris of War in Katyn"
- Desp only return on 6-6-51

**CHARGE TO**

| ORS/EER 3 |

**DATE OF CHARGE**

| 26-51 |

**CLERK'S INITIALS**

| ☐ |
FACTS AND DOCUMENTS CONCERNING

POLISH PRISONERS OF WAR

CAPTURED BY THE U.S.S.R.

DURING THE 1939 CAMPAIGN.

PART ONE

POLISH PRISONERS OF WAR IN U.S.S.R. APRIL 1940

CHAPTER I

POLISH PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE SOWETS RECONCILATION FOLLOWING SEPTEMBER 1939

3. How many Polish servicemen were taken prisoners by the Soviets?

6. Types and methods of treating Polish soldiers captured by the Soviets.


CHAPTER II

THE COMMUNIST GULAG

8. Topographical and historical description.

9. HERALD I: (September - October 1941)

CONTENTS

Section. Page.

FOREWORD. XI

INTRODUCTION

1. The Red Army enters Poland. Allies or enemies? 1
2. Soviets question Poland's right to resist aggression. 3
3. Prisoners of War or common "Criminals" or Bandits? 6

PART ONE

POLISH PRISONERS OF WAR IN USSR BEFORE 1941

CHAPTER I.

POLISH PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE MONTHS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SEPTEMBER 1939

4. How many Polish servicemen were taken prisoner by the Soviets? 13
5. Three methods of treating Polish soldiers captured by the Soviets 15
6. The fate of officers and men in Soviet captivity 16
7. Prisoner of War Camps 17

CHAPTER II.

THE KOZIELSK CAMP

8. Topographical and historical description 20
9. KOZIELSK I. (September - October 1939) Polish P.O.W. Camp for non-commissioned ranks 20
### Chapter III

#### The Camp at Kozielsk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Topographical and historical description of the camp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>STAROBIELSK I. (September - October 1939) Camp for P.O.W's from the ranks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>STAROBIELSK II. (November 1939 - May 1940)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>A. Inmates of the camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>B. The camp authorities - Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>C. Prisoners' living conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>D. Camp &quot;self-government&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>E. Food and work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>F. Currency, sale of valuables, shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>G. Prisoners' appreciation of their legal status and discussions with the camp authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>H. Evidence and investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>I. Correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>J. Soviet propaganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>K. Religious, cultural and social life at Kozielsk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>L. Liquidation of the camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>M. A Special Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>N. Final liquidation of the camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>STAROBIELSK III. (June 1940 - June 1941) Transit Prison Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>STAROBIELSK IV. (July 1941 - August 1941) Camp for Polish P.O.W's from the ranks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Kozielsk II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>KOZIELSK II. (November 1939 - May 1940) Officers' Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>A. Inmates of the camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>B. The camp authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>C. Living conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>D. Camp self-government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>E. Food and work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>F. Prisoners' appreciation of their legal status and discussions with the camp authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>G. Investigations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>H. Additional material for investigations prisoners' correspondence with families and people abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I. Communist propaganda and its effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>J. Religious, cultural and social life at Kozielsk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>K. Liquidation of the Officers' Camp at Kozielsk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Table of convoys which left Kozielsk in April and May 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>KOZIELSK III. (July 1940 - June 1941) Camp for former Polish internees from Lithuania and Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>A. General description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>B. Work - Liquidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>KOZIELSK II. Fate of prisoners of war deported from KOZIELSK II (i.e., October 1939 - May 1940, Officers P.O.W. Camp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>A. General observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>B. Experiences of prisoners of war deported from KOZIELSK II before the liquidation of the camp was begun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>C. Convoy of 7th April 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>D. Convoy of 8th April 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>E. Convoy of 26th April 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>F. Convoy of 29th April 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>G. Convoy of 12th May 1940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Kozielsk III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>STAROBIELSK I. (September - October 1939) Camp for P.O.W's from the ranks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>STAROBIELSK II. (November 1939 - May 1940)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>STAROBIELSK III. (July 1940 - June 1941) Transit Prison Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>STAROBIELSK IV. (July 1941 - August 1941) Camp for Polish P.O.W's from the ranks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Chapter IV

#### The Camp at Ostashkov

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>Description of the camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>OSTASHKOV I. (September - October 1939) Camp for prisoners of war from the ranks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td>OSTASHKOV II. (November 1939 - May 1940) Camp for police, Military Frontier Guards, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
iv.

Section 51. O斯塔шков II. A. Inmates, conditions, camp authorities, propaganda and investigations.

52. B. Liquidation of the camp

CHAPTER V.

THE CAMP AT PAVLISHCHEV BOR (JUKNHOV)

53. PAVLISHCHEV BOR I. (September - October 1939)

54. PAVLISHCHEV BOR II. (April - June 1940)

55. PAVLISHCHEV BOR III. (June 1940 - June 1941)

CHAPTER VI

THE CAMP AT GHIAZOVETS

56. Officers' Camp (June 1940 - September 1941)

CHAPTER VII

"THE VILLA OF DELIGHT"

CHAPTER VII a

SUMMARY OF PART ONE

General observations about Prisoner of War Camps

1. Numerical Data

2. Central authorities responsible for Polish P.O.W.'s

PART TWO

AFTER THE POLISH SOVIET TREATY OF 1941

Polish Officers Missing in the U.S.S.R.

CHAPTER VIII

THE POLISH-SOVET AGREEMENT OF 30.7.1941 AND THE QUESTION OF PRISONERS OF WAR

CHAPTER IX

RELEASE OF POLISH SOLDIERS IN THE U.S.S.R.
AWAITING THE RETURN OF THE MISSING PRISONERS

PART THREE

AFTER THE KATYN REVELATIONS

CHAPTER XV
ON THE EVE OF THE REVELATIONS

1. Polish public opinion abroad just before the Katyn discoveries
2. The Polish "delegation" to Katyn
3. Part played by the Polish Red Cross in the exhumations

CHAPTER XVI

THE KATYN REVELATIONS

4. German communiqué on the Katyn "discoveries"
5. Journalists of neutral and German satellite countries in Katyn

CHAPTER XVII

REACTION OF THE ALLIED NATIONS TO THE KATYN REVELATIONS

6. The Katyn revelations and public opinion of Poles outside Poland
7. Reaction of the Allies in the first days after the revelations
   a. First Soviet communiqué
   b. The Polish press in London
8. Referring of the Katyn affair to the International Red Cross
   a. Communiqué of the Polish Minister of National Defence of 17.4.1943
   b. Statement of the Polish Cabinet of 17.4.1943
   c. Polish Note of 20.4.1943
   d. Attitude of the International Red Cross

CHAPTER XVIII

U.S.S.R.'s REACTION TO APPEALS TO THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

9. U.S.S.R.'s reaction to the communiqué of the Polish Minister of National Defence
10. U.S.S.R.'s severe diplomatic relations with Polish Government

CHAPTER XIX

AFTER THE SEVERING OF POLISH-SOVET RELATIONS

11. Effects and purpose of the severing of Polish-Soviet relations
12. Official attempts to solve the Polish-Soviet conflict
13. Further German propaganda action
   a. Reports of "Volksdeutsche" from Kozlowsk
   b. European Medical Commission
   c. Facilities for visiting the Katyn graves
   d. Records of the Smolensk Branch of N.K.V.D.
      1. Who was responsible for Polish officers?
      2. "Preparation" of prisoners
      3. "Transferred to an unknown camp"
14. Publication of lists of identified victims

CHAPTER XX

FINAL GERMAN OFFICIAL VERSION

14. "Amtliches Material zum Massenmord am Katyn"
15. Story of the Katyn "discovery" and preparatory work
16. The place of execution and its surroundings
17. State of excavations at the time when the "discovery" was disclosed
18. Speed and method of exhumation at Katyn
19. Description of the seven Katyn graves
20. How many bodies were contained in the seven Katyn graves
   A. Estimated figure
Section 21.

B. Maximum figures

C. Probable figures

22. The eighth Katyn grave

23. Other data from Professor Buhza's report

A. How long were the bodies buried? Date of the murder

B. Circumstances of the murder

CHAPTER XXI

THE RUSSIAN VERSION - "THE TRUTH ABOUT KATYN"

23. Moscow declaration on the punishment of war criminals

24. The Soviet Special Commission and its work

25. The Katyn wood and Polish prisoners of war in special camps

26. Question of the impossibility of evacuating Polish prisoners of war and their capture by the Germans

27. The execution by the Germans of Polish prisoners of war in the Autumn of 1941

28. History of the German "provocation" in the Spring of 1941

A. German search for false witnesses

B. Removal from Katyn graves of material compromising the Germans

C. The bringing of the bodies to Katyn by the Germans

29. The reaction of the local population to the German "Katyn Provocation"

30. Soviet Medico-Legal Experts' investigation

31. Documents found on the bodies

32. Final conclusions of the Special Soviet Commission

CONCLUSION

WILL THE MYSTERY OF KATYN EVER BE SOLVED?

35. Difficulties in solving the Katyn mystery

36. Number of Polish officers in captivity in April 1940

36a. Diaries of the missing prisoners. Table of convoys.

37. What was the destination of the convoys from the three big camps. Number of P.O.W.'s taken to Gnozdowo

38. Methods by which the prisoners of war were transported after detained at Gnozdovo, and their destination

39. What happened to the prisoners when they left the lorries.

40. The Soviet thesis: the three special camps, and their fate.

41. Who is lying in the Katyn graves.

42. Who is not lying in the Katyn graves.

43. The order of the bodies in the graves

44. The date of the murder. The length of time the bodies were in the graves.

45. The season of the year at which the murders were committed.

46. The method by which the murders were committed.

47. The object of the murder of the Polish officers.

48. Question of documents bearing dates later than April 1940, and the putting in the Katyn graves of bodies from elsewhere.

49. The Soviet declaration on the subject of the missing Polish officers, prisoners of war.
ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Aerial view of Katyn Forest
   Aerial view of the bend of the road and the graves of Polish officers  308

2. Section of one of the bodies
   Photograph of the body of a Polish Major  316

3. Body of Major Gen. Smorawinski
   A layer of flattened out bodies  316

4. Pictures of Katyn graves showing that the excavations were carried right to the bottom of the graves  328

5. Photograph showing body with the arms tied behind the back
   Body with hands tied and a coat tied round the head of the victim  336

6. Interrogation of the witness Kisselev  382

DIAGRAMS, SKETCHES, MAPS

1. Diagram of main camps of Polish P.O.W.s and Internes in U.S.S.R. 1939-1941  136

2. Map of the European part of the U.S.S.R. showing main camps where Polish P.O.W.s were held in 1939-1941  136

3. Map of KATYN-GNEZDOVO Region  308

4. Average temperatures of the air in April and August. in Europe.  446

FOREWORD

In the Spring of this year, three years had lapsed since the whole world had been stirred with the news of the mysterious deaths of thousands of Polish officers and men captured by the Russians in the 1939 Campaign and who since have been kept in captivity on Russian soil.

The disputes concerning the responsibility of the crime arose; but to the unbiased observer, the facts that were exposed by these disputes might not have given a clear picture of the whole situation. Now, however, much new evidence has been gathered and new facts established. These notes presenting the factual circumstances of the KATYN AFFAIR, may be helpful for the reader to establish in his mind the right answer to the question.

These facts, as presented on the following pages, are based on material collected since 1940 when, in the Spring, the sudden interruption of the correspondence with the Polish prisoners of war of the September, 1939 Campaign who were, up to that time, in camps at Kozielak, Sierchialuk and Ostashkov in U.S.S.R. gave rise to great anxiety about their fate, among Poles everywhere. In the Autumn of the same year communication once again became possible but only with a few hundred of them. The vast majority, about fifteen thousand, disappeared leaving absolutely no trace.

The changing circumstances of the war made very difficult the passage to and fro of people and news. This meant that the first information to be received about the Polish prisoners of war in the U.S.S.R. was vague and uncertain, full of unexplained gaps and striking contradictions.

The conclusion of the Polish-Soviet Pact of July 1941 and the consequent liberation of some hundreds of prisoners of war from a camp at Grissovetz and many hundreds of thousands of other Poles from Soviet prisons and camps, greatly increased the amount of information available as also the rumours about this mysterious affair. During many months, the reestablished Polish Embassy in Russia and the Polish Military Command of the Polish troops at that time being organised there, made every possible effort to elucidate the fate of the missing prisoners, in a long series of talks with representatives, among them the very highest, of the Soviet Authorities. These negotiations provided a lot more material, both positive and negative, but failed to solve the mystery.
INTRODUCTION

1. The Red Army enters Poland. Allies or Enemies?

When the Red Army crossed the Polish-Soviet frontier at all points on September 17th, 1939, the general public, surprised by their arrival, was convinced that they had come to help fight the Germans. Polish state authorities too, both civilian and military, in the so-called “Romanian bridgehead” in the South-Eastern area of Poland, were at first unaware of the real character of the Soviet move.

When, therefore, in the early hours of September 17th 1939, the first reports of the crossing of the Polish frontier by the Red Army began to reach the Polish central authorities from various places, the civilian authorities issued instructions to all Polish administrative authorities and police in the frontier regions not only to remain at their posts to maintain peace and order, but to establish contact with the commanders of the advancing Red Army units, placing themselves at their disposal as allies in the fight against Germany.

A similar attitude was shown by the military authorities, who ordered the commanders of Polish detachments in the eastern territories of Poland to establish friendly contact with the Soviet commanders and under no circumstances to allow any Polish-Soviet incidents.

The German Katyn Revelations pulled aside the curtain by a little. Three years after the prisoners were first missing, in April 1947, the Moscow “Pravda” (“Truth”) wrote that at least it had now become perfectly clear that they had been “basically murdered”. The entirely convincing evidence from the Katyn Graves left no doubt about the truth of this statement. But, there was still complete uncertainty as to when the monstrous crime was committed, in what circumstances and by whom. Two official statements, one of 1945 and U.S.S.R., who held in their exclusive possession all the material evidence of the Katyn crime, hurled accusations at one another and lay their respective evidence before the world.

This evidence was not always convincing and who knows if it was assembled in order that the real truth might be revealed and not, on the contrary, more deeply hidden. Sometimes, it fitted in with and supplemented materials already collected about the fate of the Polish prisoners and sometimes it was in flat contradiction to it.

Slowly, however, as a result of the immense amount of work put into collecting information place by place, information of diverse kinds from diverse sources and the unceasing attempt to fit these pieces together, there emerged a picture which, gloomy as was, almost certainly reflected the objective truth. This picture is not, even yet, complete, many pieces are missing, some of them containing important details, and only scattered documents in the Archives of the Soviet K.F.V.D. could completely elucidate the fate of the Polish officers. The main outlines, however, of the picture are now almost clear. These outlines are presented on the following pages, which consist of a description of part of the material collected in connection with the affair. They comprise three PARTS:

PART ONE, the story of the Polish prisoners of war in the three big camps and of those of them who were later found, up till July 1941.

PART TWO, the history of the efforts of the Polish authorities from August 1941 up till the time of the Katyn Revelations to find the missing prisoners.

PART THREE, a critical presentation of both the German and the Soviet version of the story of the Katyn murder.

The picture presented in these notes is not, we repeat, complete. There is still very much more to be made clear. We can only express the hope that, in the interests of Truth, the future will reveal the facts that can fill the gaps and shed light on the obscurities.

If however, because of the powerful political interests that are involved in the affair of the missing prisoners, the number of authentic documents available concerning the Katyn Affair is not increased but on the contrary, lessened, thereby making room for apocryphal ones to be put in their place, the documents described in these notes will at least present the evidence for as much of the true story of the Polish prisoners of war of 1939 missing in the U.S.S.R. as it is possible to tell in the Spring of 1946.
The situation was clarified during the course of the day.

Simultaneously with the Red Army's move into Poland, the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vladimir Potemkin, attempted to hand to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, Wacław Grzybowski, a note in which the Government of the U.S.S.R. adopted a very unfriendly attitude towards Poland, abandoning its neutrality in the Polish-German war and denouncing all international treaties and agreements concluded with Poland among others the Peace Treaty of March 18th, 1921, the Kellog Pact of 1928, the Treaty of Non-aggression of 25th July 1932, binding until 31st December 1945 etc. In justification of Russia's hostile attitude to Poland, he made the fantastic statement that "the Polish State and its Government had in fact ceased to exist" and that as the population had become a defenceless prey to whatever fate might overtake them, it was necessary for the Soviet Government to take it under its protection. For technical reasons the contents of this note, with the information as to the true nature of the Soviet move, only reached the Polish Government at 10 a.m. on September 17th, that is, several hours after the instructions and orders for the adoption of a friendly attitude to the Soviet Army had been issued.

Despite the tragic situation of Poland, attacked from west and east by two powerful neighbours, the Polish Government, trusting in the treaties concluded with the Western Democracies, decided not to lay down arms but to transfer the Centre of Polish resistance against the overwhelming might of both aggressors to the territory of her western allies.

The intensive bombardment by German planes and the double invasion from east and west seriously impaired communications and made it difficult for the instructions of the central authorities to reach their destinations.

The apprehensions of local authorities and individual commanders was confirmed by the behaviour of the Soviet troops, by radio announcements from Kiev, Minsk and Moscow, and by leaflets dropped from Soviet planes, calling upon Polish soldiers to lay down their arms and come over to the Red Army in order to "build up a happy, prosperous life".

In accordance with the first instructions issued by the central authorities, Government and local Government authorities in the province bordering on Soviet Russia approached the Soviet army in a confident and cordial manner and appealed for similar behaviour on the part of the population. (Proclamations calling on the people to receive the Red Army as friends were issued by the Mayors of Stanislavov, Tarnopol, Dubno and other towns. But when the prefects of frontier countries went out to meet the Soviet detachments, in order to put themselves at their disposal, they were immediately arrested (e.g. Kocher, sheriff of Lhorez) or even shot (e.g. Jarcki, sheriff of Sarny). Polish policemen and officers of Polish units who were trying to establish friendly relations with the Soviet Army were disarmed, ill-treated and arrested. Seeing this, all Polish units which were still capable of action decided to defend themselves.

Stubborn fighting by organised Polish units lasted for several weeks after September 17th, proving the falsehood of statements in the Soviet note regarding the "non-existence" of the Polish state organisation, on September 27th. General Kleberg's group, comprising several divisions, fought on Polish territory between Brest Litovsk and Lublin against both aggressors until October 7th, 1939. Smaller units continued to fight considerably longer.

B. Soviets question Poland's right to resist aggression.

The German aggression on Poland resulted in the outbreak of the Second World War. During the war, until the conclusion of the peace treaties, all relations between the belligerent states and their armed forces are regulated by the
appropriate rules of international law. The legal situation created by the Soviet aggression against Poland was extremely complicated. On the night of 17th September, 1939, the U.S.S.R. clearly renounced her neutrality in the Polish-German war and commenced armed hostilities against Poland. But she did not formally declare war and, despite the official treaty of friendship concluded by her with belligerent Germany on 28th September, 1939, she still maintained normal peaceful relations with the other members of the anti-German coalition. The Japanese aggression against China in 1932 had established a precedent in the law of nations for the existence of a state of armed hostilities between two nations without a formal declaration of war. But in the case of Poland the situation was immensely complicated by Russia's denial of the existence of a Polish state after September 17th, 1939.

The Soviet theory of the "collapse" of the Polish state, which was the alleged reason for the intervention of the U.S.S.R. was in glaring contradiction to the facts. The Soviet Army was at first welcomed in Poland, which fact was immediately emphasised in an official communique of the Soviet General Staff on 17th September, 1939. This was due to a tragic misunderstanding and was in accordance with the instructions issued by the Polish central authorities. When the real nature of Soviet intervention was revealed later, the Polish army - again in accordance with the instructions of the Polish central authorities - put up a stubborn resistance to the Red army in which they were supported up by the civilian population. It is significant that none of the later communiques of the Soviet General Staff made any reference to the friendly attitude of the local population towards the invading forces.

The communiques of the General Staff of the U.S.S.R. army, as well as orders issued by the supreme commanders of that army after the termination of the Polish campaign, and official declarations of Soviet statesmen, publicly stated that the Soviet Army in Poland met with serious, organised resistance from the Polish army, which was difficult to overcome.

In spite of this indisputable evidence of the existence of an effective state organisation on Polish territory, with armed forces at its disposal, the Soviet authorities obstinately maintained that the Soviet armies crossed into Poland "at the moment of the complete collapse of the Polish state." Also they consequently denied that the operations of the Soviet Armies in Poland constituted an act of war from the point of view of international law.

1. Marshal Stalin, in a telegram of congratulation on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the 1st Red Cavalry Army ("Pravda", 19.11.39) stated that this army "covered itself with glory in the battles" in Poland. These battles must have been heavy and Polish resistance organised, for it is not possible to "cover oneself with glory" when fighting a non-existent opponent.

2. Quotation from Molotov's speech of 31.10.39.
Moscow's official attitude was described as follows in "The Times" correspondent's despatch from Helsinki on 17-9-39: "The Soviet Union today sent troops across the frontier to stab Poland in the back. The intention apparently is to conquer White Russia and the Ukraine. The invasion is not regarded in Moscow as an act of war, because according to the Soviet thesis the Polish State has ceased to exist". ("The Times", Nr. 48413, September 18th, 1939).

3. Prisoners of War or common "Criminals" and "Bandits"?

Denying the existence of a Polish state organisation and of the Polish Armed Forces, the Soviet army, from the moment of crossing the frontier, did not consider itself bound by any of the international laws of warfare in its actions on Polish territory.

The highest Soviet commanders had not the slightest intention of applying the rules of international law or of Polish law in the territories occupied by them, but substituted the laws of "the great Soviet fatherland". In the first days of occupation General Timoshenko, Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Front, spoke clearly of this "fatherland" in his letter to the Polish citizens in the county of Czortków, published in the Moscow "Izvestia" of 30-9-39. A member of the "Izvestia" staff, Gabrylovitch, agreed entirely with the General's attitude, stating that the fact of the Red Army's entry was sufficient to transfer the allegiance of the population of the occupied territories (from an article entitled "Gorodok" in "Izvestia" 25-9-39).

Creating the inhabitants of the occupied territories as Soviet citizens, the authorities of the U.S.S.R. from the very beginning applied to them the Soviet penal code, threatening them with long terms imprisonment or "the extreme punishment" (the death sentence) for counter-revolutionary activities injurious to the "interests of the world proletariat", "to the working class and the revolutionary movement" or to "the basic achievements of the proletarian revolution".

1. It is characteristic that the Soviet penal code used an extremely vague terminology regarding political "crimes", referring generally to "the socialist state of workers and peasants", "the Soviet regime", "the authorities of the workers and peasants", "interest of the working people", "achievements of the proletarian revolution", "revolutionary agents of the workers' and peasants' organisation", "the working class and the revolutionary movement", etc., thereby allowing of an extremely wide interpretation of these rules. Here are some quotations from the penal code RPSSR of 1926, on which are modelled the penal codes of all other Soviet Republics:

- Article 1 (Section):
  "The purpose of the penal law is to protect the socialist state of workers and peasants and its established legal order from dangerous acts (crimes) by applying to the perpetrators of these acts the measures for social protection contained in this code."

- Article 6:
  "As socially dangerous is considered any act or commission against the Soviet regime or infringement of the legal order established by the workers' and peasants' authorities for the transitional period preceding the setting up of a communist regime."

- Article 58 Para. 1:
  "As counter-revolutionary are regarded all activities aimed at overthrowing, undermining or weakening the authority of the workers and peasants Soviets......or the basic economic, political and national achievements of the proletarian revolution."

In view of the international solidarity of all workers' interests, such activities are also considered counter-revolutionary if they are directed against any other workers state not forming part of the Soviet Union.

- Article 58 Para. 8:
  "Terrorist acts directed against representatives of the Soviet authorities or revolutionary agents of workers' and peasants' organisation......(shooting for imprisonment for a period not less than 3 years)."

- Article 58 Para. 11:
  "Any kind of organised action aimed at preparing or carrying out the crimes set out in this chapter, as well as participation in an organisation formed for the purpose of preparing or committing any of the crimes enumerated in this chapter will be punishable in accordance with the measures for social protection indicated in the respective articles of this chapter."

- Article 58 Para. 15:
  "Any activities or active combat against the working class and the revolutionary movement, committed while occupying an official or secret position under the Tsarist regime or in counter-revolutionary gov-

(Continued on next page).
Only in the light of this "fundamental" attitude of the Soviet authorities is it possible to understand their action in arresting immediately after the Soviet Army crossed into Poland, all officials and civil servants of the Polish State and taking proceedings against them under the articles of the Soviet penal code above-quoted.

From this point of view all members of the Polish armed forces were "criminals", particularly the officers, for whom there were no "extenuating circumstances", as there were in the case of the ranks owing to the existence of compulsory military service and the resulting forced conscription to the army in the "late" (according to Soviet terminology) Polish state. Hence even in those units which at first greeted the Red Army cordially, all regular officers and N.C.O.s. were immediately arrested by the Soviet authorities.

Soviet propaganda openly called on Polish soldiers to revolt against their commanders.1

But as this propaganda did not produce good results for the Soviet authorities, before long the Soviet press began to speak not of the Polish Army but of "armed bands" of officers and "Polish bandits". Here is one of the words during the civil war, are punishable under the measures for social protection indicated in Article 56 Para 2 of this code. (Shooting or imprisonment for a period of not less than three years.)

It should be noted that when in early summer, 1945, 16 Polish citizens, among them the C. in C. of the Underground Home Army and 3 ministers of the Underground Government were brought to trial in Moscow, they were accused and condemned under the articles 56 Para. 8, 58 Para 11 and 58 Para 12a of the Soviet Penal Code quoted above.

1. "Soldiers!" ran the proclamation of 21.9.39 issued in relatively good Polish by General Timoshenko, commander of the Ukrainian front - "Kill your officers and generals. Do not obey the orders of your officers. Drive them from your land. Go confidently to us, to your brothers, to the Red Army."

many examples. Major K. Vriensensky, in an article entitled "Podrobnosti boev za Grodno" (Facts of the fight for Grodno) published in "Pravda" No. 265 of 25.9.39, wrote "...About 3,000 Polish officers and military police were concentrated in the town. By force of arms this band compelled soldiers arriving from East and West to join the battle. Detachments of officers gathered in among buildings, churches, barracks and in the residence of Prince Lubomirski...avoiding open battle these bands of officers used 'terrorist' methods of fighting in ambush. There were cases of officers dressing themselves as soldiers or civilians. Many of them wore civilian clothes under their uniforms in case of emergency."

It should be admitted that in view of the Soviet denial, of the existence of a Polish state organisation, the latter terminology was more logical than the used earlier, when "Polish units" were referred to.

This dual terminology reflected a certain absence of unanimity of the views held by the Soviet authorities. Some of them clung with the greatest obstinacy to the "basic theory" of the non-existence of the Polish State and all the logical consequences of this theory; others regarded more the situation more in the light of life real state of affairs - actual military operations against the organised armed forces of the Polish State.

This divergence of views was apparent afterwards in the treatment of Polish soldiers who fell into the hands of the Soviet authorities in various circumstances and districts. Polish soldiers were "arrested" by the Soviet authorities regardless of whether they were captured on the battlefield in possession of arms or taken prisoner after a general capitulation of forces surrounded by the
They were also arrested:

a) from units which at first cordially greeted the supposed allies as they crossed into Poland;
b) from among those officers and N.C.O.s who voluntarily and loyaly reported for the "registration" ordered by the occupation authorities after the occupation of the country;
c) and from among those who did not report for this registration. The Soviet authorities arrested all officers in uniform (not attached to any unit, or belonging to the reserve pool of officers evacuated to the east etc.), or people in civilian clothes or in uniform of the ranks who were suspected of being officers concealing their rank from the occupation authorities. For a few months after September 1939, the Soviet authorities treated all these categories uniformly. Sometimes all were treated as prisoners of war (the weaker tendency), sometimes all were treated as "criminals" who had violated the laws of the "Soviet legal order" (stronger tendency). In consequence of the second tendency, prisoners of war in the strictest sense of the word, i.e. soldiers captured on the battlefield in possession of arms, were not only deprived of the privileges accorded to prisoners of war, by international convention, but were on the contrary treated as "criminals", twice, for in addition to the "crime" of belonging to a bourgeois army hostile to the proletarian state, they were also "bandits" putting up armed resistance to the Red Army, which was carrying out the orders of the "legal" authorities of the Soviet state - the international fatherland of the proletariat.

Polish soldiers taken prisoner by the Soviets had absolutely no knowledge of these "legal interpretations". Cofident that as prisoners of war they would be accorded the well-known to them international rights and privileges laid down by the Geneva and Hague conventions, it did not occur to them that these would be withheld.1

In order to understand the "legal" position in which Polish soldiers afterwards found themselves in the "N.K.V.D. prisoner of war camps" at Kostielsk, Starobielsk and Ostankov, it is necessary to realise the consequences of the above mentioned "legal interpretation" arising with the "irresistible, iron necessity of 1.

---

1. It should be pointed out that the U.S.S.R. never signed the Geneva Conventions regarding the treatment of prisoners. Strictly speaking therefore, the rules of these conventions were not applicable to persons taken prisoner by the U.S.S.R. or to Soviet prisoners in other states. But a considerable part of the Geneva Conventions may be considered as the generally accepted international standard of all civilized peoples - one therefore as a common law binding also the U.S.S.R.
of logic" from the fundamental thesis of the U.S.S.R. note of 17.9.39 on the "non-existence of the Polish state".

That is why we give this theoretical introduction to the story of the Polish officers who disappeared in the U.S.S.R., an introduction, which may make more intelligible to the Western mind, the fragmentary story which follows.
15 guns in the region of Krupienice and also liquidated scattered groups of Polish troops".

The total number of Polish soldiers taken prisoner during the September campaign was not disclosed in the communiqués issued by the General Staff of the Red Army. According to some estimates worked out on the basis of these communiqués, about 166,000 officers and men fell into Soviet hands between September 17th and September 28th 1939.

On the anniversary of the U.S.R.'s attack on Poland, the official organ of the Red Army, "Krasnaja Zvezda ("Red Star") of 17.9.40 (No.218/4677) gave the following figures: "In the course of 12-15 days the enemy was completely defeated and destroyed. During the same period one Army Group of the Ukrainian Front alone surrounded and took prisoner 10 generals, 52 colonels, 72 lieutenant colonels, 5,131 officers, 4,096 junior officers (?) and 181,828 men of the Polish Army".

In an article by Corps Commissar S. Ksuhevnikov entitled "A Historical March", further figures are given probably additional to those given in the above article. The author states that in the region of Dubno 500 officers and 8,500 men were taken prisoner, and during the liquidation of General Anders' group, 2 generals, 3 colonels, over 60 other officers and 1,000 men were also taken. In the region of Wlodzimierz Wołyński a tank brigade captured 1,500 officers and 12,000 men. Another brigade, commanded by comrade Bogomolov, took 15,000 prisoners in the same region and 3,000 officers and men in the Lublin area. And, finally, in the battle of Grodno 38 officers, 28 junior officers (?) and 1,477 men were stated to have been taken prisoner.

Adding the figures given in the article "Krasnaja Zvezda", it appears that in the period up to the middle of October 1939, 230,670 Polish soldiers, including 12 generals and about 8,000 officers, fell into Soviet hands.

To this number must be added the regular and reserve officers arrested by the Soviet occupation authorities on Polish territory, who after some considerable time were counted as prisoners of war, together with the Polish soldiers interned in Lithuania and Latvia in 1939, who, after the "incorporation" of these states into the Soviet Union in 1940, also fell into Soviet hands.

On the basis of these figures the total number of Polish "prisoners of war" in the U.S.R. may be estimated as being over 260,000, of which more than 20,000 were officers.

5. Three methods of treating Polish soldiers captured by the Soviets.

The Soviet administrative machinery, unprepared for so large a number of prisoners, had considerable difficulty in dealing with them, all the more so because at that time there were three different points of view as to what should be their treatment and status:

A. According to the official communiqués of the General Staff of the Red Army, they were "normal" prisoners of war and as such entitled to be treated in accordance with the rules of international law.

B. According to the "theoretical conception" of the "non-existence" of the Polish State, held by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (official note of 17.9.39) and the declared opinion of the Soviet press, (undoubtedly shared by the N.K.V.D., i.e. Russian Secret Police) these prisoners were "members of armed bands" resisting the armies of the legal Soviet authorities, thereby causing the great
sufferings to the local population. Their treatment from the point of the Soviet law should therefore be that of ordinary "criminals", and "malefactors".

C. According to the proclamation of the commander of the Ukrainian Front, General Timoshenko, they were Soviet sympathisers who had voluntarily come over to the side of the Red Army, and should therefore be treated as friends.

While the first conception applied equally to officers and other ranks and called for more or less equal treatment for all, the second and third conceptions drew a sharp distinction between officers, regular N.C.O.s and volunteers, fighting of their own free will against the Soviet armies on the one hand and on the other men compulsorily "mobilised" for the Polish Army and "compelled by force" to resist the Red Army.

6. The Fate of officers and men in Soviet Captivity.

While the ranks of the police, Military Frontier Guard and military police were treated just as badly as were the officers, in many cases the ranks of the army, after having been disarmed and made to listen to demagogy speeches about their "liberation" by the Red Army from "the Polish landlords' yoke" and from the war started by those landlords, were set free and sent home. There were many exceptions to this rule. The ranks of the infantry were often kept in camps surrounded by barbed wire, exposed to cold and hunger, or deported to the interior of Russia, from where some of them (usually the aged, those belonging to the so-called national minorities or inhabitants of the Eastern territories of Poland) were freed and sent home. Some were dragged from camp to camp and finally sent to forced labour in the coal mines of the Donetz Basin or to the extreme North of Russia to build aerodromes, roads etc.

It is even more difficult to discover any rules governing the treatment of Polish N.C.O.s by the Russian authorities. In general they occupied a middle position between that of men and officers. Some, undoubtedly the minority, were sent home with the men; the majority, together with a minority of the men, shared the fate of officers and were sent to prisoner-of-war or labour camps.

It is noteworthy that Polish officers and N.C.O.s, soon realising that the attitude of the Soviet authorities to prisoners of war was definitely influenced by their military rank, began to take off their insignia and disguise themselves as privates. There is no known case of men giving away officers hiding among them.

Of the many officers who survived Soviet captivity, most of them owe their liberation to the fact that during the whole of their detention the Soviet authorities were never able to discover their real rank. When, therefore, reference is made to privates, N.C.O.s or officers, only those whose rank was known to the Soviet authorities are included.

7. Prisoner of war camps.

The privates, N.C.O.s and officers in Soviet captivity were kept in about a hundred prison camps, some of which were situated on Polish territory (almost exclusively for privates), others in the interior of Russia (containing all officers, most N.C.O.s, and some privates). A number of these camps were only rallying points and were soon liquidated; others existed until the outbreak of the German-Soviet war. After May, 1940, many of the camps inhabited by Polish N.C.O.s and privates were transferred to the far North, to the

---

1. In the camp at Kriwoi Rog there were about 50 officers among the 6,000 Polish prisoners; in the Yelenovka camp in the Donetz Basin about 28 officers among 4,000 prisoners.
Karelia Republic and the Kola peninsula, between the White Sea and the Arctic Ocean (region of the Pomo river). This was the foundation of the widely circulated rumour that Polish officers were sent to the distant northern territories of Russia.

During the first period after September, 1939 many thousands of people were herded in these prison camps, in terribly overcrowded and insanitary conditions, either in half-ruined barracks or in no less ruined buildings, such as churches or monasteries destroyed by the Revolution. They usually slept on the ground without mattresses or blankets. Once every 24 hours, at varying times, food was brought to them, usually consisting of thin lentil soup and a piece of bread.

At first the treatment of officers (and sometimes N.C.Os too) was very bad. They were not separated from the ranks and in camps in the interior of Russia were made to perform particularly heavy and unpleasant tasks (carrying water, peeling potatoes, cleaning latrines etc.) This was done with the object of humiliating them and was a specific method of propaganda and agitation aimed at winning the sympathy of the soldiers.

But in this respect the Soviet authorities met with great disappointment. Most of the Polish soldiers were not impressed by this degradation of their commanders and did their best to help them in carrying out the tasks which the authorities had ordered them to perform. On the other hand, from the Soviet point of view the presence of officers had a bad influence on the morale of the soldiers, keeping up their spirits and giving them courage. It was therefore not long before steps were taken to separate commanders from their men.

During the first period of their captivity (September and October, 1939), when the officers were still with their men, most of the officers were grouped in several camps, mostly in the regions of Sheplovka, Futyyl, Bolota, the Tirotino station near Sumy and in the monasteries of Safarnovsk, Grinsovitz, Yukhnov (Pavlitskoe Bor), Talizma etc. 1

During the end of October and beginning of November 1939, all officers were removed from these camps and sent to two large camps for officers only at Korzelsk (province of Solaensk) and Storchilelsk (province of Voroshilovgrad) in the Ukraine. At approximately the same time, as a result of the general segregation of prisoners being carried out in the camps, officers, N.C.Os and men of the military police, frontier guard, Military Frontier Guard and civil police (militarised in 1939), as well as all officers, N.C.Os and men proved to have been engaged in intelligence work - all of whom were particularly disliked by the Soviet authorities - were sent from various camps to a special camp at Ostashkov (province of Kalinin).

It is with these 3 camps, that we are chiefly concerned in the following pages.

---

1. Among others, the following larger permanent camps should be mentioned: Yelenovka (in the Donets Basin), Jura (province of Ivanov-Vonkosslenec), Barckuk (near Stalino), Korilek (near Smolensk), Korsilekhtyyna (near Poltava), Krasny Luch (province of Voroshilov) Krivoj Rog and Margantetz (near Dnipropetrovsk), Zviahel (Novograd Volynski), Ostashkov, Suzdal, Storchilelsk etc. Altogether Polish prisoners of war were kept in about 51 camps in the territory of the U.S.S.R. and in roughly the same number of camps on Polish territory.
CHAPTER II.

THE KOZIELSK CAMP.

8. Topographical and historical description.

The Kozielsk camp was situated in the grounds of a former Orthodox monastery 8 miles from the Kozielsk railway station on the Smolensk-Briansk line (see the map at the end of PART ONE).

About 600 yards from the Monastery and separated from it by woods was the "Skit" hermitage, where the Eremit monks formerly lived. After the liquidation of monasteries in the post revolutionary period, the main monastery building was converted into "The Gorki Rest Centre for Workers" and the "Skit" into a "House for Mothers and Children". The monastery farm became a "sovkhoz" (collective farm).

The whole monastery camp was so derelict and gloomy that, judging by the descriptions on parapets, windows and walls, Soviet workers frequently expressed their desire to return home from their "rest" spent in darkness, dirt and boredom, alleviated only by bug-hunts.

In September 1939, both rest houses were earmarked for Polish prisoner of war camps. Machine gun nests were installed on the four towers and between the towers stood elevated sentry boxes for the guards. The grounds were surrounded by barbed wire entanglements, carefully guarded by armed guards of the special N.K.V.D. (secret police) army.


At first captured Polish soldiers were sent to Kozielsk as to other prisoner of war camps, without any system. By the end of September about 12,000 prisoners, mostly other ranks, were crowded into the Kozielsk camp. Conditions did not differ basically from those described above. (see page 18).

The population of the camp was constantly changing. From time to time parties of several hundred persons were removed and others arrived in their place. The destinations of those removed are not definitely known. It is possible that some were freed and sent "home" and the others thrown into other camps.

After the middle of October, 1939, there was a noticeable tendency to empty the camp at Kozielsk. Increasingly large parties of privates were taken away and the camp became more or less deserted. During the same period a few new parties were brought to Kozielsk, composed mostly of civilians arrested on Polish territory by the Soviet authorities, among them many priests and 5 women.

In the last days of October and the first weeks of November large groups began to arrive at Kozielsk, consisting of officers and cadet officers, (who were counted as officers) brought there from various camps Shpilotorki, Putyvl, Grianovitz, Yukhnov, Talitza etc.)

At the same time, the evacuation of other ranks continued as well as of the majority of civilians brought there in October. Consequently, after November 1939, Kozielsk became a special camp for Polish officers.

10. Kozielsk II. (November, 1939 - May, 1940)

Officers Camp.

A. Inmates of the Camp.

In the second period the inmates of the Kozielsk camp numbered about 8,000 persons, the great majority of whom were regular officers and reserve officers mobilised in 1939. In addition, there were in the camp a few
hundred cadet officers and about 150 soldiers remaining there from the preceding period, who were made to perform the heavier work of the camp, and approximately 100 civilians. The only remaining women was Lt. (pilot) Lewandowicz or Lewandowska, which name, according to some reports, was a pseudonym for Mrs. Dowbor-Musnicka.

The transfer of people to and from the camp decreased considerably but did not cease altogether. For instance in December, 1939, about 100 prisoners were transferred to Kozielsk from Pavlishnev Bor, including intelligence officers, military police and military judges as well as Polish civil judges and public prosecutors. These prisoners, on whom the Soviets had probably passed long sentences of hard labour in camps of correction, looked terribly ill-treated and were particularly carefully guarded in a separate building, surrounded by barbed wire and strictly isolated from the rest of the camp. Among them were a retired Colonel named Wdzcki, Mayor of Tarnopol, and Colonel Tadeusz Kornilowicz, son-in-law of the famous writer Henry Sienkiewicz. Before three weeks had elapsed the whole of this group was deported from Kozielsk in an unknown direction and all trace of it was lost.

In addition, smaller groups or single officers came and went, probably in connection with the investigations which were in progress in the camp (see above). A certain number of those individually removed from Kozielsk between December 1939 and May 1940 were afterwards found in Soviet prisons, or in correctional labour camps. (Colonel Litkind-Lubodziecki, Captain Makarezsynski etc.).

The day before Christmas Eve 1939, all army chaplains were removed from Kozielsk, including the Polish Army Bishop's deputy and Monsignor Gazelaw Wojtynski. The only exception was a chaplain, Father Jan Zielkowsk, who was ill in the camp hospital and therefore remained in the camp and shared the fate of the officer prisoners. Among the priests removed from Kozielsk in December 1939, was a professor of the Pinsk Seminary, Father Kantak, who was regarded as a citizen of Danzig.

Reckoning on the basis of their Polish rank, there were in the Kozielsk camp:

- 4 generals
- 1 vice admiral
- about 100 Colonels and Lt. Colonels
- about 300 Majors
- about 1,000 Captains
- about 2,500 Lieutenants
- a few hundred Cadets.

Among these were approximately 200 airmen and about 50 naval officers. Approximately 50% were regular officers and the remainder reserve officers called for active service in September 1939. Among the latter were representatives of various civilian professions - the flower of Polish intelligentsia:

- a) 21 professors, lecturers and readers, from Polish universities and colleges
- b) over 300 military and civilian (mobilised) doctors, among them famous Polish specialists
- c) several hundred lawyers - judges, public prosecutors, barristers
- d) a few hundred engineers
- e) a few hundred elementary and secondary school teachers
- f) various writers, journalists, publicists, industrialists, merchants etc.

Among the prisoners at Kozielsk were also officers disabled in the last war, some of whom had lost a leg or an arm. As they were not fit for active service and were not mobilised in 1939, they were arrested by the Soviet
authorities in their homes in Poland and sent to the prisoner of war camp at Koziełsk. Among them were two colonels with artificial arms. Capt. Drugoś, a doctor with an artificial leg and Captain Horoszkiewicz, with a paralysed arm.


While in the first period (September - October) the prisoners of war camps were improvised and of a transitory nature, the officers' camp at Koziełsk (Koziełsk II) appeared in many respects to be organised as a permanent camp.

It is important to note that, in spite of the official use of the term "prisoner of war" in respect of the inmates, this camp was not controlled by the Soviet military authorities, but by the civil and political authorities of the Commissariat for Home Affairs (N.K.V.D.) and was administered by officers of the N.K.V.D.

The official commandant of the Koziełsk camp was N.K.V.D. Commissar Kozalow. But, in fact, from November, till the middle of March 1940, the camp authorities were under the command of an N.K.V.D. general (Konbrig) named Zarubin who, according to rumours circulating among the prisoners, had at one time occupied a post in the Soviet Military Attaché's office in Warsaw. N.K.V.D. Major Elman, an Estonian, was Gen. Zarubin's deputy. He spoke little, suffered from ill-health and was generally polite to the prisoners. After Zarubin's departure in March 1940, Elman succeeded him.


Although, during the first period of captivity in the provisional camps, the possession of senior rank was a distinct disadvantage, the situation was quite the opposite in the Koziełsk camp for officers. Immediately on arrival groups of officers brought to Koziełsk were sorted out according to rank and privileged treatment was given to the higher ranks.

Generals and colonels were housed in the best, newly built block (No. 7) where they lived under reasonably good conditions.

Lt. Colonels and some of the younger colonels were put into block No. 22, where the conditions were nearly as good. As a result of overcrowding, some of the officers had to live in corridors, but each one had a bed and a small amount of bed linen.

Majors occupied a brick building, block No. 14, situated next to block No. 7.

The remaining junior officers lived in varying conditions in other blocks. Those in wooden huts with small rooms were on the whole better off. In the large blocks, containing enormous halls equipped with several tiers of bunks, conditions were worse, owing to the constant movement, noise, dirt, bad lighting and bad air. There were also other factors which made life in the camp unpleasant - dampness, cold, shortage of water, too few and very insanitary latrines. There was a shortage of straw for mattresses, of which there was not a sufficient number to go round, only about 50% of the junior officers being supplied with them. Every prisoner received pillow cases and blankets, but very few were supplied with sheets.

Difficulty in obtaining soap and water caused lice and bed-bugs.

It is noteworthy that in the monastery itself were housed only prisoners from territories occupied by the Germans and Lithuanians; all Polish officers coming from Russian-
occupied territories were put into the "Skit". This separation caused rumors of the immediate release of prisoners whose homes were in Soviet occupied territories of Poland; according to these rumors, prisoners coming from German-occupied territories were to be exchanged for inhabitants of the Eastern Province of Poland, who were prisoners of war in German hands. Such rumors were constantly circulating in the camp, but nevertheless the inmates of the "Skit" received exactly the same treatment as those of the monastery itself. The two groups of prisoners were able to communicate with each other from time to time, when the inmates of the "Skit" came to have a bath.

In attempting to explain the radical change of attitude adopted by the Soviet authorities towards the Polish officers in the Kozielk camp, it is necessary to remember divergence (see para. 5) of views among the Soviet authorities regarding the legal situation of Polish soldiers who had fallen into Soviet hands. It is probable that in the period between November 1939 and April 1940 there was an increasing tendency among the responsible authorities to treat them as "normal" prisoners of war with the result that the generally accepted international cotes were to a certain extent recognised.

13. Kozielk II. D. Camp "Self-Government".

According to international custom, normal military discipline is enforced on prisoners of war in the camp, the lower ranks being subordinated to the higher ranks. In addition to the official camp authorities of the state whose prisoners the inmates are, the prisoners also have some kind of authorities of their own, lead by the senior officer in the camp.

In "normal" Soviet N.K.V.D. forced labour camps a certain type of "camp self-government" is found N.K.V.D. authorities are in sole control outside the camp, but inside there are various "authorities" and "functionaries" chosen by the N.K.V.D. from among the prisoners. Such a method has certain advantages for the Soviet authorities:

a) it destroys harmony among the prisoners;

b) it allows the odium for particularly unpleasant regulations to be transferred to the "self-government" authorities;

c) prisoners wishing to take advantage of the privileges attached to camp duties are thus persuaded to serve the Soviet authorities.

The "authorities" and "functionaries" found in the Kozielk camp were similar to those set up in all normal Soviet forced labour camps which contain only "criminals" sentenced by the Soviets.

In the Kozielk camp the highest ranking officer was General Hinkiewicz, who did not, in fact, become the Polish camp commander. But despite this fact and even though he felt himself to be at a considerable disadvantage because he had no uniform (possessing nothing but the worn-out civilian suit in which he was arrested) and therefore hardly ever left his room - his authority was not the less universally recognised by Polish prisoners, who complied with all instructions and orders unofficially issued by him.

The Soviets appointed as Polish Commander of the Kozielk camp an artillery Major named Czarnecki, who enjoyed the general trust of the prisoners.

The Soviet authorities also appointed "seniors" among the inmates of each block; in the
in the large blocks, the inmates were divided into "companies" with their own "seniors". "Seniors" or "commandants" kept detailed records of their groups and organised the distribution of bread and provisions, tobacco, and clean linen, the allocation of labour, sending the sick to the doctor, etc.

Some of the P.O.W. doctors were allowed to work in the camps' hospitals. From among the other inmates men were also detailed for special functions working in the kitchen and washhouses, acting as barbers, etc.


According to the regulations posted in the camp, each man should have received a daily ration of 600 grammes (about 2 lbs) of bread (500 grammes of black and 300 grammes of white), 20 grammes (less than an ounce) of sugar and a supply of soap for washing and laundry. Sugar and soap should have been issued every ten days. Every month the prisoners were entitled to 5 packets of tobacco, 5 boxes of matches, 5 packets of cigarette paper and a ration of tea. Every day they should have received a hot meal, containing the prescribed amount of particular ingredients per person. In practice these rules were not adhered to.

The food provided for prisoners in the Koszela camp corresponded more or less to the "normal" prisoners' diet in Soviet labour and correction camps before the outbreak of war between the U.S.S.R. and Germany. In one respect the Koszela camp differed considerably from "normal camps" - in that, what not everybody was forced to work.

According to the camp regulations, all officers under 60 years of age should in principle be used inside the camp for manual tasks connected with the upkeep and running of it. These regulations were not always observed, because parties of officers were sometimes sent outside the camp to dig peat, load barley, wheat, salt and cement into trucks, carry coal, etc.

When the officers drew attention to international conventions and to the regulations posted up in the camp, the "regulations" were removed. In order to encourage the prisoners to go willingly to work outside the camp, a special "reward" was promised them in the form of a third helping of soup daily. On an average between 100 and 500 out of 5,000 prisoners went to work outside the camp each day. Conditions were particularly hard in winter on account of the lack of clothing and footwear. Many of the prisoners wore summer uniforms, not even possessing an overcoat. Only a few of the prisoners were supplied with Soviet winter suits lined with cotton wool. Others had been able to buy overcoats and warm clothes from the privates who were released. But this did not increase the numbers willing to work outside the camp as everyone was anxious to preserve their clothes, which were quickly ruined by hard manual labour.

15. Koszela, W. F. Prisoner's appreciation of their legal situation and discussions with the camp authorities.

As mentioned above (see pages 3 - 12) Polish soldiers did not realise that their own situation and legal status were affected by the Soviet "legal interpretations" of the dissolution of the Polish State. Most of them considering themselves to be ordinary prisoners of war, invoked the conventions and standards of international law.
The comparatively large number of distinguished lawyers in the camp supplied their fellow prisoners with arguments to be used in discussions with the camp authorities.

The most far-reaching argument was put forward by the officers of the Pinsk Flotilla, who had been in September 1939 officially negotiating with the Soviet military authorities in Kostopol for permission to evacuate Polish soldiers and their families to neutral countries. They received at that time the assurance of a Soviet Colonel that the life and property of the personnel of the Naval Headquarters of the Pinsk Flotilla and their families would be protected, that officers willing to work would eventually be given employment and that the remainder would be set free. This verbal "agreement" shared the fate of the terms of the Lwow capitulation (see page 20), and 26 officers of the Pinsk Flotilla found themselves in the Koziersk camp. Here they reopened "negotiations", explaining to the camp authorities that, in the absence of a state of war between Poland and the Soviet Union, Polish servicemen could not be kept in captivity and treated as prisoners of war, but should be given their freedom and the right to leave the U.S.S.R. According to one of the officers, the higher Soviet officials' reply to this argument was that, as the Poles were resisting Soviet troops, they would have to take the consequences; lower officials - said the same officer, - "did not conceal the fact that they regarded us as enemies of the people, representatives of a hated caste". (Witness No. 4)².

1. The town in Eastern Poland on Pripe river.
2. For the personal security of the witnesses and their families, their names are not given. The names are known to the author.

Polish doctors, not questioning the general right of the Soviet authorities to retain captured Polish combatants in prisoner of war camps, handed to the camp authorities a special petition, signed by over 300 of them, calling attention to the international conventions and regulations regarding medical personnel and asking to be sent back to Poland in order to help the people there who were deprived of medical attention. This petition had no effect, nor did the protests of several doctors against the heavy physical work and cleaning of latrines which they were forced to carry out in common with the other prisoners. The protesting doctors, having appealed to the generally accepted standards of the civilized world, received from representatives of the camp authorities the laconic reply that bourgeois rules were not observed in the Soviet state.

Mr. Pohorecki, President of the Supreme Court and Chairman of the Polish Codification Commission, pointed out, in a conversation with General Zarynin, that he had no connection with the services or with any military organisation and asked on what legal grounds civilians were detained by the Soviet authorities in prisoner of war camps. From the usually very polite Soviet General he received the harsh reply that Mr. Pohorecki must finally understand that, to the Soviet authorities, the fact that he was President of the Supreme Court of a bourgeois state was quite sufficient ground for keeping him in prison.


It can be seen from the above examples that, although in some respects the inmates of the Koziersk camp were treated as prisoners of war, in reality the Soviet authorities regarded them rather as political criminals (See pages 6-12). As the severity of the "punishment"
depended on the degree of "guilt" and "social danger" of each individual, so both of these factors had to be established during the period of confinement in the Koziełsk camp.

This was in theory the reason for the "interrogation" of Koziełsk prisoners by numerous members of the N.K.V.D., Investigation Branch, over a period of nearly six months. Officers who survived Koziełsk emphasise that to the great astonishment of the prisoners—who were never able to understand their "illegal position"—these interrogations were by no means normal interrogations of prisoners of war, confined to purely military information, but were rather of a political and social character, of the kind usually employed in the case of persons accused of grave political crimes.

Each of the interrogated prisoners were accused of the "crime" of serving in "bourgeois" Forces and taking part in the "world counter-revolution" against the Soviet Union. The interrogations were further used to discover which of the prisoners were "qualified criminals"; these were the people who had taken part in the Polish-Soviet war of 1920, the officers of the Intelligence Service and Military Frontier Guard and people engaged in anti-communist activities, particularly those who, in the opinion of the interrogators, were working for the "separation of the White Russian and Ukrainian Republics from the Soviet Union".

The Soviet authorities held that the degree of "social danger" depended on the social position, standard of living and family conditions of the "criminals", and was affected by their political outlook, which party, if any, they were members of, and their attitude towards, and relations with the communist party and the Soviet regime. The interroga-

tors were therefore interested in all these questions and during the "investigations" tried to provoke discussions on general political and social subjects. In accordance with Soviet policy at that time, the interrogators' attitude was openly pro-German, anti-French and particularly anti-British. They threw blame for the outbreak of war exclusively on Great Britain, who, they alleged, had made Poland the excuse for attacking Germany. Towards Poland the interrogators took a very disparaging attitude, constantly affirming that "there is not and never will be a Poland", and consistently qualifying all references to Poland, her Forces, Government etc. with the word "former".

In accordance with the established methods of "Soviet investigations", the interrogation of prisoners began with a demand for an exact account of the interrogated person's life history. The interrogations usually took place at night and continued for many hours without pause, often dragging on far into the next day. As at all Soviet investigations, the interrogations were often repeated several times and the same questions put in different contexts, with the object of disclosing any divergence in the answers. Not knowing the methods of Soviet investigators, the Koziełsk prisoners were amazed at the repeated interrogations on the same subjects and thought this was due to new orders from Moscow about the form and method of interrogation.

Beating and other physical means of compulsion were not used during the interrogations at Koziełsk to

1. When one of the Koziełsk prisoners was put under arrest for contributing to the paper published in the camp and for organizing discussions, this fact was announced in the camp orders for the information of all prisoners in approximately the following words: "The former Lt. Colonel Chalotinski of the former Polish Army has been sentenced to 10 days arrest for patriotic activity on behalf of the former Poland."
extort "true evidence" from the prisoners. The interrogators confined themselves to shouting and threats. If it was considered that stronger methods would produce the desired results, the persons concerned were removed from Kozielsk to other more isolated spots, which were more suitable for the "highest degree" of interrogation.

The official protocols of the interrogations were given to the prisoners to sign and then put in their "personal dossiers" (a form of records normally kept only in criminal investigations). Added to them were photographs of the prisoners (in profile and full face), taken in the Kozielsk camp, as well as their finger prints.

17. Kozielsk II. K. Additional material for investigations - prisoners' correspondence with families and people abroad.

As the purpose of the "investigations" was to produce the most exact "analysis" from every angle of each individual prisoner, in addition to the official protocol of their evidence, signed in each case by the prisoner concerned, various other material collected during the investigations was also attached to their personal documents, such as:

a) reports of the camp authorities.
b) Soviet officials' records of "private" conversations with prisoners.
c) evidence of fellow prisoners and of "civilian criminals" arrested by the Soviet authorities in Poland.
d) extracts from Polish documents acquired by the occupation authorities, as well as articles and works published in Poland by or about the interrogated person.

c) extracts from biographical data published in Polish or foreign encyclopaedias and publications of the "Who's Who" type.
f) letters from and to relations, friends, etc.

In order to obtain this additional material for the investigations, the camp authorities resorted to special "roundabout methods", one of which was to permit and even encourage the Kozielsk prisoners to correspond with their families and friends in Poland and abroad. The letters to and from the prisoners, which passed through the camp censorship, undoubtedly could and did supply extremely valuable material for the cases against them.

At the end of November 1939, the prisoners were informed that once a month they could send letters through the camp authorities to persons residing in the Soviet Union or abroad. Prisoners were forbidden to write about themselves, the fact that they were prisoners of war and in a prison camp, or of what they saw and heard there; but they were permitted to write about their own health and ask for news of their families and personal affairs (Witness No.3). It should be emphasised that prisoners detained at Kozielsk were not forbidden to mention in letters to their families the names of fellow-prisoners and friends who were with them in the camp.

The prisoners were instructed to give their address as: Kozielsk, Province of Smolensk, Post Box No.12. Some of the letters from the camp were stamped "Gorki Rest House".

In this connection the question arose of payment for stamps. Polish servicemen captured by the Soviets naturally had no Soviet money, and the Soviet authorities did not recognise Polish money, of which some officers had large sums.
Likewise, the foreign currency (dollars, francs, pounds) which a few of the prisoners possessed could not be exchanged, and if it was found when the prisoners were searched it was taken away to be "deposited" or simply confiscated. Since, therefore, none of the prisoners possessed any Soviet currency to pay for stamps, it was impossible for them to send their letters. As every prisoner was anxious to send news of himself to his family and to find out what happened to them, agitation and despair reigned in the camp on account of the lack of roubles. Demands for roubles were made under the international conventions, concerning the payment of P.O.W.s, but these were refused. General Zarubin however informed a special delegation of prisoners that roubles for stamps could be obtained by selling to the Soviet authorities personal possessions of any value which the prisoners had concealed when they were searched. In a short time, representatives of the Soviet Jewelry Trust arrived at the camp to buy, at fixed prices, watches, fountain pens, automatic pencils etc. In this way the prisoners obtained the much desired roubles and were able to send their letters.

Between November 1939 and April 1940, each prisoner at Konielsk sent 2 - 5 letters to his family, thereby facilitating the Soviet authorities' task in formulating a case against himself. In many cases, when sending news to their families, prisoners were compelled to reveal their real names and other personal details to the camp authorities instead of the pseudonyms and false addresses which they had at first given. The authorities also obtained valuable information concerning officers' families, frequently hiding in Soviet-occupied Poland, in order to avoid the common fate of such families - deportation to the East.

The prisoners' families, happy to get their first, and, as they thought, good news of their relations, did not limit themselves in the number of letters they sent to the camp. They wrote often and, in spite of their caution in the actual wording, unconsciously supplied the investigating authorities with valuable information regarding the family and social environment of the prisoners concerned, the moral of members of the family etc. As all correspondence was strictly censored, many prisoners were summoned to special "interviews" on account of the contents of letters they had received.

In general the Soviet authorities regarded the maintenance of any relations with foreign countries with great suspicion, considering it a proof of contact with foreign intelligence services. Another form of provocation must therefore be recognised in the granting of permission (as from January 1940) to write letters abroad. Prisoners were encouraged to do this by vague suggestions, that they may possibly be allowed to leave the Soviet Union for neutral countries.

In addition to official interrogations and the "discussions" on general political and social subjects provoked during these interrogations, during the whole period of their detention in the camp the prisoners were carefully observed by numerous N.K.V.D. personnel and in particular by the so-called "politruks" (political officers). Many of them engaged individual prisoners in "friendly conversations", showed them small marks of favour and assured them of their personal friendship and sympathy, thereby attempting to win their confidence and establish a certain intimacy. Every unguarded word spoken during such conversations was carefully noted and often had far-reaching consequences.

In order to obtain detailed reports of conversations among the prisoners themselves, the camp authorities recruited
Agents from among the inmates. This recruiting took place either during official interrogations or in connection with attempts to organise communist propaganda among the prisoners. The small success of this propaganda in the first months of captivity was to a certain extent connected with the fact that few prisoners were willing to spy upon their comrades. But, from among five thousand people the Bolsheviks were obviously able to recruit several individuals for their secret service.


Attempts to spread communist propaganda among the Kozielsk prisoners were closely connected with the cultural life and social activities organised by the camp authorities.

On arrival at the camp, officers were immediately confronted with a large placard on which several articles of the "Stalin Constitution" were written in Polish. These articles guaranteed to Soviet citizens "civic rights and privileges unknown in bourgeois countries". Amongst others, Article 124 of the Constitution was quoted, which stated that "freedom of worship and freedom to engage in anti-religious propaganda is allowed to every citizen".

In the camp there was a special club building, equipped with a film projector and screen, a library, half-broken piano, a few old billiard tables, chess and draught boards. But, as the club room was not heated during the hard winter of 1939-40, it was not very much frequented by the prisoners. Only the films shown there several times a week attracted a large number of people. They were exclusively Soviet films, spreading communist propaganda, mostly old and worn out. Once during the showing of an anti-religious film a considerable part of the audience, whose religious feelings were outraged, left the room as a demonstration. After that the doors were locked during performances. While the prisoners were at Kozielsk, Soviet entertainers from Smolensk once or twice appeared on the stage of the club.

The camp library was not well stocked. It consisted exclusively of Russian books - political propaganda and fiction. The better works of Soviet literature were few in number, and most of the fiction was didactic propaganda.

Every ten days or so a "travelling bookstall" called at the club. Here, too, political propaganda pamphlets predominated. Current political news was heard from loudspeakers installed in the camp which did not always work properly. A few copies of the Soviet newspapers, "Pravda" and "Izvestia" were available. From time to time the camp authorities provided a communist newspaper in Polish entitled "Glos Radziecki" (The Voice of the Soviet), but it was not popular among the prisoners, if only because of the exorbitantly bad Polish, often difficult to understand.

From time to time the camp "politrucks" (political officers) arranged talks devoted chiefly to the excellence of the Soviet regime, its achievements in the cultural and economic field, and to the rottenness and decadence of bourgeois states, particularly Poland, which was always qualified by the adjective "former", as mentioned above. At first these talks were boycotted by the majority of prisoners, sometimes the audience heckled the speaker and provoked discussions, but in the end they resigned themselves to listening with the thought that the "lecturers" were paid for their work and had to say what they were told.
19. **Kozielsk II. J. Religious, cultural and social life at Kozielsk**

With a few exceptions, the morale of the prisoners at Kozielsk appeared to be good. Firmly believing in the ultimate victory of justice and trusting implicitly in Poland's Western Allies, the prisoners hoped for a quick release from Soviet captivity and the granting of facilities either to return to Poland or to make their way through a neutral state to join the forces fighting in the West.

Regarding their captivity as bitter but temporary necessity, the prisoners did everything in their power to organise their life on the best possible lines, showing great initiative and ingenuity.

Soon after their arrival at the camp, having seen the quotations from the "Stalin Constitution" painted on enormous placards (see page 38) the prisoners began to put crucifixes in the rooms and organised morning and evening prayers. The camp authorities, amazed at this, explained to the people concerned that although Article 126 of the constitution allows "freedom of worship" to all citizens, Article 186 of the Russian penal code forbids "the holding of religious services in any state of social institution or establishment and the placing of any kind of religious statues or effigies in such an institution or establishment".

As in practice the penal code takes precedence over the "Stalin Constitution", prisoners in the camp, which was a "state institution", were denied "freedom of worship". Nevertheless the religious life of the prisoners flourished in secret.

While there were a considerable number of priests in the camp (see pages 22-23) they celebrated Mass in strict secrecy, in the presence of relatively small groups of trusted prisoners, and were generally very active. "The celebrating of Mass by our prisoner priests, who also heard the prisoners' confessions, had to be carried out in secret, as in the catacombs in Rome" (Witness No.6). "Father Wojtylnik, Chancellor of the Polish Council of Bishops, once celebrated Mass with a host given him by a Soviet citizen, also a Catholic priest" (Witness No.9). These activities caused the camp authorities, who had their "eyes and ears" among the prisoners, to take reprisals against the priests and finally led to the removal of all priests from Kozielsk. During their detention at Kozielsk, lasting less than two months, three priests were sentenced to camp arrest for performing religious practices.

In spite of the removal of priests from the camp just before Christmas, the prisoners made every effort to hold the feast in the traditional Polish manner. Dr. Wroczynski, as the head of a "kitchen" commission, officially approached General Zarubin with the request that a Christmas Eve supper be arranged for the prisoners, with courses of fried fish and imitation Christmas cakes in the form of sweet, white bread. Although
according to camp rules prisoners were entitled to sugar and white bread, the "cake" suggestion was rejected by General Zarubin on the grounds that sweet bread was too expensive for the camp. But fried fish was provided for the prisoners on Christmas Eve - for breakfast. They kept it until evening, and ate it rather gloomily and dejectedly when the first star appeared. After supper, Christmas carols were sung in all the living quarters, frequently interrupted by the arrival of representatives of the camp authorities, trying to discover the initiators of this breach of the Soviet penal code. For their speech in one of the largest residential blocks on the meaning of Christmas and the need for endurance, Lt. Colonel Chaladinski was condemned to 14 days close arrest.

A similar punishment was inflicted on the "senior" of hut No.10, Major Skoczyls, who, together with the well-known Polish writer Jim Piker, started a "publication" devoted to camp life and affairs, a literary and informative paper of a satirical nature entitled "The Pavilion X Bulletin". The editors succeeded in bringing out several handwritten numbers of this paper, which was a great success among the prisoners, passing from hand to hand until, after special investigations by the camp authorities, publication ceased with Major Skoczylski's arrest.

It should be emphasised that the Kozielak prisoners were forced by necessity to adopt conspiratorial methods. At first they tried to organise their cultural life with the knowledge and approval of the Soviet camp authorities. During their first months at Kozielak they requested permission to organise amongst themselves, in the camp club, courses in foreign languages and popular lectures and discussions. Although there were among the prisoners a considerable number of people with a good knowledge of Western European languages and even some professional language teachers, the camp authorities, after a great deal of talk about the difficulties of organising well run courses, did not agree to instruction being given by the prisoners themselves. Instead they promised to arrange for courses to be organised by Soviet specialists who would be brought to the camp for this purpose. The final outcome was that no official courses in foreign languages were arranged at Kozielak, so the prisoners were forced to arrange for secret instruction in small groups.

The Soviet authorities attitude to the lectures, which were to have been delivered in the first instance by professors of Polish universities and colleges interned in the camp, was different. In principle they did not refuse their consent to these lectures, but stipulated that the text of every proposed lecture should be previously handed to them in writing, so that they could send it to Moscow and obtain the approval of the central authorities. As in practice this procedure eliminated the possibility of holding lectures officially, negotiations with the camp authorities were discontinued. Instead, unofficial "chats" were held almost daily in different huts. To avoid endangering speakers and audiences, the subjects chosen for discussion were as far as possible non-political.

On the whole the prisoners were optimistic about their future. Not realising their situation nor treating seriously the investigations conducted by the camp authorities and the threats uttered during those investigations, they hoped to leave the camp and the U.S.S.R. before long and go either to the West, to continue the fight against Germany, or home to Poland. Various statements and incidents seemed to indicate
the probability of their departure in the near future. The
camp authorities were said to be drawing up a list of
prisoners according to the provinces in which they lived,
so as to sort them out for the journey; the convoy had
apparently arrived; apparently, too, the railway
carriages were already waiting at the station. When,
therefore, the final decisions as to the fate of the
prisoners had at last been taken, either on the strength
of the particulars collected at the investigations or
of these data, and the camp authorities started the
liquidation of the camp, the prisoners were not
surprised.

20. Koziełsk. K. Liquidation of the officers!
Camp at Koziełsk.

For some time the numbers in the Koziełsk
camp had been slowly diminishing. At the end of
December 1939, a group of priests was taken away
(see pages 22 - 23), and a few weeks later about
twenty Polish officers of Georgian origin were
also removed.

Then, in March 1940 over a hundred other
ranks, who had remained there from the first period,
left, among them about 20-30 cadet officers. At
least some of them were really set free and sent
home. Also officers were taken away singly or in
small groups as a result of the facts brought to light
during the interrogations or revealed in letters and
conversations.

In talking with prisoners, representatives of
the camp authorities emphasised the necessity of evacu-
at ing the camp in view of the overcrowded conditions
and danger of epidemics.

When the official evacuation from Koziełsk was
begun at the beginning of April 1940, all the prisoners
were convinced that they were going to Poland. This
theory was semi-officially confirmed by representatives
of the camp authorities. The Commissar's adjutant
for instance, N.K.V.D. Captain Alexandrowitch, asked
by one of the prisoners where they were being taken, answered:
"To the West, nearer home". To another prisoner (Witness
No.2) the same officer said that, at a specified point on
the "frontier" between Soviet and German "spheres of
interest", his camera, hitherto deposited with the camp
authorities, would be returned to him.

On the strength of these rumours spread by camp
officials, an atmosphere of joyous excitement reigned among
the prisoners. Only a few individuals had disquieting
premonitions. There was further some apprehension among
the prisoners from Soviet-occupied Poland who were
afraid that on leaving the camp and returning home
they would lose the immunity accorded them by
international law as P.O.W.s and that consequently
the local Soviet authorities would "deal with them
in their own way".

The evacuation which began on 3.4.40 was
conducted in the following way. In the morning,
an N.K.V.D. official went through all the huts,
with a list, from which he read out the names of all
those who were to leave that day, instructing them to
report immediately at the club building, taking with
them all their possessions. In the club another list of
departing prisoners was drawn up. Prisoners gave up all
government property issued to them in the camp, and
having been supplied with food for the journey were taken
to a special hut, No.21, for examination of belongings.

After that they were immediately conducted out of the camp
grounds and loaded into lorries, transported to a railway siding near Koziełsk station and transferred into railway trucks.

The departure of the fourth group, which included 3 Generals (Linkiewicz, Behetyrewicz and Smorawinski) and several other senior officers, was marked by a special celebration. The camp authorities held a farewell reception after which officers remaining in the camp formed a guard of honour and cheered the departing officers, saying that they hoped those remaining behind would soon follow them.

Bread and herrings were supplied as provisions for the journey, wrapped in clean, white paper, which, in itself caused a considerable sensation. The effect was increased by the fact that officials examining their belongings wore clean white aprons and did not conduct the search very thoroughly. A slightly puzzling phenomenon was the fact that officers supposedly being transported to "freedom" were conducted from the camp by a strong escort (armed and accompanied by dogs); but this was put down to the common tendency to exaggerate everything, found in the U.S.S.R. and the transport commanders' fear of their being responsible if they "lost" one of their charges, for all whom they had had to sign a receipt.

Each convoy was composed of persons individually picked by the Soviet authorities. The prisoners tried in vain to discover the principles governing the choice of people to be removed from the camp. During the six months spent at Koziełsk, all possible particulars had been taken many times; rank, profession, education, knowledge of foreign languages and countries, place of birth, permanent residence etc. But the selection was not based on any of these. "Ranks were just as mixed as were occupations and domiciles," stated Witness 6.

The realization of this fact by the prisoners gave rise to a certain anxiety among them, since they began to doubt the truth of the theory that they were being taken away from Koziełsk to be freed, or exchanged for Polish prisoners in German hands. The camp authorities, when questioned about this, explained that the sorting out of prisoners according to their permanent domiciles would take place later in special transit camps, to which prisoners from Koziełsk would first be taken. The intervals of several days which sometimes occurred between the departure of convoys was explained by the temporary overcrowding of these camps.

The prisoners observing that the same N.K.V.D. men frequently escorted consecutive convoys, came to the conclusion that these "transit camps" could not be very distant from Koziełsk. Anxious for details of the fate awaiting them, those remaining behind in the camp asked departing prisoners to leave some indication as to their destination in the railway trucks for the benefit of the next party.

As the composition of each convoy appeared to be settled at random, some of the prisoners tried to arrange not to be separated from their friends and relations. The camp authorities, however, refused to comply with their requests, saying that they did not influence the composition of the lists, which were drawn up by the central authorities in Moscow. The prisoners did not believe this, and ironically remarked that the lists were more likely to have been "drawn up by a parrot."

Doubts as to whether departure from Koziełsk really meant freedom were increased by rumours circulating in the camp to the effect that later convoys were treated in a less "elegant" manner than the fourth and other early
convoys, that escorts were treating the prisoners very severely, even brutally, and that either during an inspection or whilst being put into a lorry, one of the prisoners had been bayoneted and so on. In spite of these remarks by the end of April the 200 or more prisoners whose names had been consistently omitted from the lists became very dejected. Those left behind were concentrated in one corner of the camp, in block No. 10. Silence and boredom reigned in the camp...

The only staff officer left was Admiral Czernicki, who lived in one room with Major Kopeć, a doctor. We were all depressed because we were still there. But one of the few Soviet officials whispered to a prisoner: "Do not now our complaint. The later you go the more thankful you should be," (Witness 6). This remark at once spread report throughout the block.

After an interval of nearly two weeks, convoys began to leave again. On May 10th about fifty prisoners were taken away, probably one truck-load. On May 11th, Vice-Admiral Czernicki left with a similar batch of officers. On the evening of the same day, but No. 10 was separated by barbed wire from the rest of the camp. About 100 prisoners who remained behind were asked in this batch, thinking that they were specially ill or ill-treated by the Soviet authorities, were "extremely very depressed" (Witness 6).

On the following day, May 12th, 1940, these and nine prisoners were awakened at 7 a.m. and ordered to get ready for a journey. All were to leave but nine prisoners, whose names were read out from a special list. When this convoy had left, the officer's camp at Koziełsk (Koziełsk II) was liquidated. 1.

---

**TABLE OF CONVOYS WHICH LEFT KOZIELSK IN APRIL & MAY 1940**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd April</td>
<td>62 (74) men including J. Koczerzynski, Wojciechowski.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>302 (342) -ditto- Frygi, Błudzinski, Węczerzki, Wołoszyn.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>92 (110) -ditto- W. Krzyżak, Zaleśnik.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>270 -ditto- Col. J. Pawlicki, Bielak.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>290 -ditto- Cz. L. Massow, Capt. S. Projeniowski, Zieminski, Beltman.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th</td>
<td>294 -ditto- J. Fandzka, J. Handay, B. Lechtiger, Rumianka, Domian, Rzewski.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>304 -ditto- L. Kowalewska, Prusak, Szlowski, Prof. Morawski, Podorowski.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th</td>
<td>344 -ditto- Dr. J. Jankowicz, Capt. J. Zdziebinski.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st</td>
<td>240 -ditto- J. Kaczmarski.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22nd</td>
<td>120 -ditto- (All sent to Pawiakibalw Bor and Griszovitz - see below).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th</td>
<td>150 -ditto- Prof. S. Świerniewicz, Dr. M. Kaczmarski, Lt. M. Holiński, Lt. Korczewski.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total approx. 4,300

In May 1940 the last three convoys left Koziełsk.

10th May, approx 90 men.
11th May, approx 50 men.
14th May, approx 90 men.

Total approx. 195.
In the neutral Baltic States Polish soldiers were disarmed and interned in various camps; where they were treated as combatants of a belligerent State. The interned Poles escaped en masse either to join the Polish Army in France, or to return home to Poland. A certain number were officially released from internment on grounds of ill-health, or for other reasons. Consequently the number of Poles interned in the Baltic States was greatly reduced, falling from more than 10,000 in the autumn of 1939 to less than 5,000 at the beginning of 1940.

When in June 1940, the Red Army occupied the Baltic States, the deportation of interned Poles to the interior of Russia began even before the official "incorporation" of Lithuania and Latvia into the U.S.S.R. One of the places to which these deportees were sent was the Kozielsk camp, which had been emptied of Polish prisoners of war in the middle of May.

On 13.7.40 interned officers from Kalwaria Suwalska were brought to Kozielsk. Subsequently, at varying intervals up to the end of August, 1940, more convoys arrived there. They were composed of officers from Latvia, cadet officers, N.C.O.s, a few privates (mostly Military Police) and members of the civil police force (officers and men) interned in Lithuania and Latvia. A certain number of civilian Poles interned in Latvia were also brought there.

After the arrival of these "internes" at Kozielsk, the Soviet authorities immediately set themselves to discover which of them had been officers in the Intelligence Service, senior police officers and "partisans" operating against the Red Army since September 1939. These, together with a dozen or more persons also accused of special "crimes" against the Soviet, were removed from the camp, presumably to prison.

During the autumn and winter months of 1940 a few Polish officers who had been up till this time in Soviet prisons were brought to Kozielsk and the cadet officers, N.C.O.s, and
the majority of privates capable of work were taken away. On October 11th General Przedzieski and 20 officers, apparently chosen at random, were removed from the camp. After all these transfers there were in the camp about 2,500 men, mostly police, about 800 Army officers, few hundred cadet officers and other ranks and some dozen civilians.

When these Polish internees arrived at Kozielsk they found that the previous inmates had left many inscriptions in Polish on the doors, windows and walls; in particular the dates of departure of the various groups of prisoners from Kozielsk were discovered on the walls of the kitchen. This calendar ended on 10.5.40, beside which date a sentence, similar to the following was written: "Today the last group of 100 officers left. Direction unknown."

Some of the N.K.V.D. staff from the preceding period were still there and continued to carry out their duties. The most important role in Kozielsk III was played by 1st Lieutenant Dymidowitch of the N.K.V.D., who was in charge of the so-called "politruks" (political officers).

In the first weeks after their arrival at Kozielsk the internees were summoned to the camp headquarters where the N.K.V.D. political officers made detailed notes of their particulars. These particulars were afterwards "supplemented" in the course of additional interrogations (called in Russian doprosy). In contrast to the "interrogations" of the officers in the preceding period, these interrogations were in the nature of attempts of individual communist propaganda with the object of recruiting adherents and agents by means of a clever combination of discussions and threats, rather than proper investigations.

Simultaneously with the individual propaganda which took place during the "supplementing of evidence", general communist propaganda was carried out in the camp through "cultural and educational" activities.

The internees were supplied with a considerable number of communist newspapers published both in Russian and in Polish. In 1941, there appeared in the camp a large number of copies of "Nowe Widokregi" (New Horizon), a literary and social monthly paper, which Wanda Wasilewska had started to publish in Lwow, as an organ of the Union of Soviet Writers.


Although the Kozielsk internees were not in general forces to work, only staff officers were officially exempt. Junior officers had to look after themselves and keep their living quarters clean and tidy. Internees from the ranks and from the police force were seldom employed outside the precincts of the camp.

In the spring of 1941 the Soviet authorities decided to make use of the internees for public work. At the end of April and the beginning of May all privates and policemen fit for work left Kozielsk in two convoys.

These convoys went North to the White Sea, from whence the men were shipped to the Kola peninsula. There the internees were employed on building roads and aerodromes in the area of the river Ponti. After the outbreak of the Russian-German war, they were brought back to the Central Russia and put into camps at Telitza and Yugov and subsequently...

handed over to the Polish Armed Forces in the U.S.S.R. (see following pages). Reports of these movements of former inmates of Kozielsk reached the Polish Embassy in Kuybyshev, and gave rise to the belief, held for a certain time in Polish circles, that prisoners of war from Kozielsk Starobielsk and Ostashkov had been deported to the far north of Russia. (See PART TWO).

The officers and comparatively small number of other ranks and policemen, considered Soviet authorities as unfit for work, remained at Kozielsk until 29.6.41, when they were loaded into trucks and transferred in one convoy to the N.K.V.D. camp at Griazovietz, near Vologda.

26. Fate of prisoners of war deported from Kozielsk II.
(namely October 1939 - May 1940 Officers' P.O.W. Camp)

A. General Observations:

Owing to the disappearance of 97% of the Polish officers from Kozielsk II, there was a long time no real evidence as to their fate after deportation from Kozielsk.

Only the people from two convoys which left Kozielsk on 26.4.40 and 12.5.40 appeared again as it was previously told. From the remaining convoys very few individuals survived, and these can only give information about the fate of the rest of the people in the convoy up to the moment when they were separated from them. The rest of their report concerns only their own individual experiences. As Polish prisoners of war deported from Kozielsk were treated as prisoners and transported in special prison trucks, with compartments carefully isolated from each other, the information gleaned by anyone individual about his fellow prisoners was necessarily very fragmentary. They knew only what happened in their own compartment up to the time of their leaving the convoy. It is difficult for them to give any information even about what was happening in neighbouring compartments. Moreover, trucks could be detached and sent to a different destination or individuals could be taken out of a compartment without the knowledge of someone in another truck or compartment.

In the absence of detailed information about the greater part of the convoys, a full account will be given below of the experiences of those who were in the convoys of 26.4. and 12.5.40, and fragmentary reports of the fate of other convoys.

These reports will also provide an illustration of the treatment generally accorded to Polish officers by the Soviet authorities. Although these officers reappeared after a couple of years and managed to leave the U.S.S.R. there is every reason for thinking that the treatment and final fate of the other officers was, if anything, worse.

When, in 1943, the Germans revealed the existence of the ill-famous Katyn graves, officials of the Polish Red Cross were permitted to assist at the exhumation of the bodies (See PART THREE). As some of these officials were connected with the Underground Movement the Polish Government in London were able to acquire some of the documents (original or copies) which were found on the corpses. Among these were diaries in which the experiences of the prisoners after leaving Kozielsk had been recorded. The fact that these diaries record detailed descriptions of everyday life, at Kozielsk, which are in complete accord with the descriptions given by surviving officers is an undeniable proof of their authenticity.

25.B. Experiences of prisoners of war deported from Kozielsk II. before the liquidation of the camp was begun.

It has already been mentioned that some officers
were deported from Kozielsk, either singly or in small groups before the liquidation of the camp was begun in April, 1940. The fate of these individuals after leaving Kozielsk varied in detail but was fundamentally the same: prisons and "interrogations", "sentences" and their execution.

A description will be given of the experiences of these officers who were removed from Kozielsk on 8.3.40, without reference to the fate of the officers taken away singly from Kozielsk, or to that of the group of the Army chaplains who left on 23.12.39 or of the group of Polish officers of Georgian origin removed in the middle of January, 1940.

In the evening of 8.3.40 soldiers of the camp guard began to collect officers from various huts, whose names were on a short list. After these people had been identified by "seniors", the N.K.V.D. soldiers ordered them to collect their possessions immediately and pushed them singly and in a brutal manner to the camp administration building. Here the prisoners were first superficially searched and all state property was taken away from them. In groups of two or three, each group escorted by two N.K.V.D. men armed with revolvers, they were conducted to the railway station about 8 miles distant. As the temperature was minus 20 degrees centigrade it was difficult to march laden, along the dark, rough paths, covered with frozen and slippery snow, particularly as the guards were constantly prodding the prisoners on. When an old retired colonel began obviously to lose his strength, the guards shoved him brutally on, abusing the "officer of the White Guard", who "cannot walk now, but was last year able to march with the troops opposing the Red Army", and jeeringly urged the "old warrior" to regain his feet and hurry to his "little wife", whom he would see tomorrow.

On arriving at the station after a very rapid march, the prisoners were locked into a prison truck in the same groups of two or three, each group in a separate compartment. One of the prisoners described the prison truck in these words: "The Bolsheviks' official name for such a truck is "zaka" (abbreviation for "Sekhuchemy", i.e. imprisoned). The truck which is of "Pullman" type has windows, covered by an iron grid on the corridor side only. Doors lead from the corridor to windowless compartments and sub-compartments. In addition to the iron doors, these compartments can also be closed by iron doors, which, when shut, exclude all light. The corridor is constantly patrolled by armed soldiers of an N.K.V.D. escort, young men recently conscripted, all members of the "Komsomol" (Communist Youth Organisation), and political fanatics who often treat the prisoners ruthlessly and cover them with abuse.

The N.K.V.D. lieutenant in charge of the convoy was not unpolite to the prisoners, some of whom were still under the delusion that, they were being liberated and "sent home" in exchange for prisoners in German hands. But to the more realistic ones the journey in prison trucks with a strong escort rather suggested that they were regarded as "important criminals" on their way to jail.

As the loaded truck remained stationary at Kozielsk for the best part of 24 hours, before it was hitched to a goods train, the rapid march to the station was quite unnecessary. After travelling for three days, during which time the train was more often standing in stations than moving, the prisoners having travelled only about 120 miles arrived at Smolensk. Here at some distance from the station they were unloaded from the truck and formed into ranks. One of the guards ordered them to march in formation, without speaking to each other or to any passen-
by, to look straight ahead and not to break ranks, threatening, that if anyone took even half a step sideways this would be regarded as an attempt to escape and the guards would open fire immediately. After crossing the railway yards, the prisoners were halted in front of a closed gate, leading on to a road, and were ordered to kneel down in the deep, dirty snow. After a few minutes a black, closed bus arrived and the prisoners were ordered to stand up in turn and get into the bus.

The bus was specially designed for transporting prisoners. A narrow corridor ran up the centre, on both sides of which were many very low and narrow doors. When a prisoner stepped in to the corridor, he was ordered by an N.K.V.D. standing there, to enter, backwards one of the cabins. These compartments were unlit and so small that the prisoners were forced to adopt a crouching position. This was the prisoners' first experience of the "tashorni voron" (black crow), well-known to Soviet citizens. Some of the prisoners already extremely nervous on account of having been thus apparently especially picked out from the 5,000 other P.O.Ws and very bewildered by the several days journey in what were to them hitherto inconceivable conditions, and the constant abuse hurled at them by the guards, were reluctant to enter the dark, narrow holes, assuming that this was some unknown method of torture or even of execution. The guards, however, pushed them in, and, after shutting the door, called out for the next prisoner.

As the prisoners were taken singly from their huts at Smolensk, conducted to the station and loaded into the train in two and threes, they had no idea who their fellow-travellers were. They did not see them until their arrival at the Smolensk station. Just as during the journey every prisoner had tried in vain to puzzle out the reason for his deportation from Kozielsk by analysing his past life and particularly the period of imprisonment, so now in the bus each one tried to guess what the future held in store for him by analysing the composition of the whole group, in which everyone had one or two acquaintances. The group was, however, so mixed that there seemed to be no logical grounds for its composition.

There were altogether 14 officers in the group, including a retired Colonel named Stanislaw Lipkind-Lubodziecki, a public prosecutor of the Supreme Court; Colonel Starzyński, a cavalry officer and formerly Polish Military Attaché in Belgium; Captain Radziwieszski, an officer formerly attached to the Military Replacements Office and Lieut. Colonel Graniń, a naval officer who had played an important part in the Polish rising against the Germans in Silesia after the last war.

After travelling for less than twenty minutes, the prisoners were unloaded in a small yard, surrounded by buildings with barred windows. Five prisoners were separated from the group and conducted to one of the buildings; the rest were ordered to re-enter the "tashorni voron". After a few minutes they were ordered out again and four more were put into the prison. Then the bus drove off with the remaining five.

Thus in the yard of the Smolensk prison on the afternoon of 13.3.40 the group of prisoners from Kozielsk was broken up.

Of the whole group only one prisoner has been heard of since, having succeeded in escaping from the U.S.S.R. This particular prisoner was one of the second group of four who entered the Smolensk prison.1.

1. His experiences, according to his report were as follows:--

(Continued on next page....)
1. After waiting for about half an hour in the yard, the prisoners were taken to the prison office, from where two were taken to their cells without delay. The remainder had to wait another few hours. When the night was well advanced the latter were taken to the underground cellars and ordered to undress completely. At that time admission, as the Polish forces, the prisoners were subjected to an exceptionally thorough personal search (even to the mouth and ears) and during which articles of value, sharp instruments, papers, brushes, belts, string etc. were confiscated. After another hour of waiting they were conducted to a brightly illuminated cell, containing two beds and two chairs. During the first night the prisoners were awakened several times by guards looking into the cell and instructing them how to sleep in prison (it is forbidden to cover hands or face with the blanket, to lie on the stomach or on the side; the face must be visible through the opening in the door (so-called "Judas").

On the morning of the third day the Koziełsk prisoner was sent out of the cell with his belongings, searched with extreme thoroughness, ordered to leave his possessions in another cell and conducted through internal passages to the N.K.V.D. building. There, the N.K.V.D. "Investigator", Zurych, informed him in the presence of two other members of the N.K.V.D., that the Soviet authorities possessed "incomplete, but concrete and very serious" evidence about himself and his assisting him in thinking the matter over and refresh his memory about the whole of his work for Japan, so that he might have done some service. After giving him a "diagram", he ordered the prisoner to be taken away, and the prisoner put to other interrogations. He gave no further information concerning Koziełsk. On the contrary a very polite manner was adopted and during one of the interrogations the "Investigator" even tried to tempt the prisoner, half-starved on prison fare, to take sugar and coffee with butter and jam. The "Investigator" appealed to the prisoner "not to obstruct the Soviet authorities in important matters of state", urging him to give them a detailed and accurate written account of his life and activities. The iframe of the structure and completeness of Polish courts as well as of the Siberian Association, one of which the prisoner declared himself a member in his life story.

The discussion on the Siberian Association took up several long sessions. The "Investigator" vainly striving to induce the prisoner to write that the object of this Association was to obtain information concerning Siberia for the benefit of the former Polish Government. All the prisoner's explanations that the Siberian Association was one of the associations of former combatants who were in Siberia during the First World War had no effect. During the thirteenth interrogation on 30.5.45, the "Investigator" and his assistant handed the prisoner a "document" bound in an "indictment", charging him in accordance with Article 50 part 13, of the Soviet Penal Code, with serving the former Tsarist ]udicature and the military and civilian judiciary in Poland. The "indictment" did not mention "espionage". The prisoner -

(Continued on next page...)

(Continued from previous page....)
The following conversation arose:

Q.: "Let us imagine," said Smarin, "that the Public Prosecutor
annulled your case. Let us suppose that your request to
return to German-occupied Poland is compiled with, that the
Germans allow you to live at liberty in Warsaw in your own
apartment. What would you do?"

A.: "I would rest after my exhausting experiences."

Q.: "Supposing I turned up at your apartment for one day,
would you give me a cup of tea?"

A.: "I do not know if there would be any tea there."

Q.: "And would you put me up for the night?"

A.: "You have the large Soviet Legation in Warsaw. You
would be better off and more comfortable there."

Q.: "But if I did not want the Soviet Legation to know of my
arrival if considered as a spy, would you take me
in brand report to the Gestapo that a Soviet agent had
arrived?"

A.: "I do not know the regulations in Warsaw about reporting.
I do not know what has happened to my apartment. In these
circumstances I cannot give you an answer."

Smarin's task was to finish the investigation which had been
dragging on for more than six months. During one of the
interrogations a formal record was made of the questioning of
the prisoner on charges relating to:

a) serving in the Russian Tsarist judiciary,

b) service in the military and civilian judiciary in
Poland,

c) participation in the "nationalist and anti-Soviet
Siberian Association."

Subsequently the "record of investigation" was shown to him,
and it contained besides a few formal statements, only
evidence and reports written by the prisoner himself.
The so-called "record" was sent to the Public Prosecutor
and the prisoner was kept in prison. A few days
after the conclusion of the "investigation," the prisoner
was taken to the doctor, who ordered him to take off his
 waiter -protested against the contents of the indictment
and against the detention of
The prisoner already told him in "private conversations" at Kozielisk about his invitation to tea at
the Japanese Embassy in Warsaw. Smarin begged the prisoner
about the possibility of his return to Warsaw and very
dif ferently tried to discover whether the Soviet
authorities could count on him as an agent.

(Continued from previous page....)

(Continued from previous page....)

According to the diary of Major Adam Sobiski (file No. 0460),2 which was found at Katyn, the fate of this convoy (numbering 110-120 officers) after it left Kozielak on 7.4.40 was as follows:

"Sunday morning, 7.4.40. After yesterday when 30 people from the "Skid" (see page 89) were put into one cart where we are today, we have been ordered to pack up our things by 11.40 a.m. in order to go to the Club for a search. Lunch in the Club... (illegible). After the search at 14.50 we left the walls and the wires of the "Kozielak camp (the Goriki Rest House). At 16.55 (2255 p.m. Polish time), at the Kozielak railway siding, we

[Continued on previous page...]

1. (Continued from previous page...)

into the prison office and informed that according to the verdict of the "G.S.O.," (Osoboie Sovietschina, a Special N.K.V.D. Court) he had been described "socially dangerous person" and "consigned to 8 years in a correctional labour camp, situated in the Far North." In December 1930, he then went to this camp, from which he was freed, as a result of persistent requests by the Polish Embassy, on 3.5.42, six months and twenty-two days after the announcement of the so-called "amnesty" for Polish citizens, 19.8.41 and four months after Holowko's declaration that the "amnesty" concerning Polish prisoners of war and other prisoners who had been carried out to the Far North and that no single person of this category was still in captivity on Soviet territory. (See below PART TWO).

2. About the first three convoys to leave Kozielak on April 3rd, 4th and 5th, 1940 we had no information at all. The fourth, which - it will be remembered included, The 3 Generals, and left Kozielak in very high spirits, after a farewell celebration organised in the camp - also disappeared.

The bodies and the objects found with them at Katyn were each listed and given a number (see PART THREE). The Germans gave the bodies of General Smorawinski and General Bobkiewicz found in the same grave as that of Major Biski, the Nos. 1 and 2. The body of General Minkiewicz who was in civilian clothes (see above) was not identified at Katyn.

[Continued on next page...]


On April 8th a convoy of 277 people left Kozielak. None of them were heard of again. At Katyn a diary was found beside the body of an unidentified soldier. (Body No. 424). In this diary there was amongst other things a drawing of a man with a beard, bearing the signature "Kruk Waclaw, Kozielak, 1940." From the diary it was possible to decipher

1. Found at Katyn - body No. 481.
2. Not identified at Katyn.
the following description of the experience of this convoy:

"8.4.40. Up to now I have not written anything, as I thought there was nothing special.

"Recently, i.e., at the end of March and beginning of April, there was a feeling of departure in the air. We took it for the usual gossip. But the gossip turned out to be true. In the first days of April convoys began to leave, at first small ones. From the "Skit" mostly (illegible) of more than a dozen persons. In the end on Saturday the 6th the "Skit" was liquidated and transferred to the main camp. We were temporarily put in the Majors' block. Yesterday a convoy of senior officers left: three Generals, 20-25 Colonels and about the same number of Majors.

"Because of the way they departed we were in the best spirits. Today my turn has come. In the morning I had a bath and washed my socks and handkerchiefs... (illegible) "to the Club with your belongings! After we had given back all Government property another search took place in hut 19, and from there we were conducted through the gates to the bus, in which we drove to a little station, not Kozielak (Kozielak is out by floods). At the station we were loaded into prison trucks under strict guard. In the prison cell (which I am seeing for the first time) we are thirteen. I do not know yet my chance companions in misfortune. Now we are waiting to depart. As much as I was optimistic before, I'm coming now to the conclusion that this journey is not good at all.

"The worst thing is that it is not known whether we shall be able to find out in which direction we shall go.

"We have to wait patiently. We are moving in the direction of Smolensk. It is a sunny day, a lot of snow still on the ground.

"9.4.40. Tuesday. We spent the night worse comfortably than in the former cattle trucks. There was a little more room and not such a frightful shaking. Today is a real winter's day. Snow is whirling around, it is cloudy. In the fields as much snow as in January. It is not possible to find out in which direction we are going.

"During the night we moved very little, now we have just passed the station of Spa-Demianokoic. I have never noticed such a station on the way to Smolensk on the map.

"I am afraid we are going to the North or North-East, judging by the weather. During the days it is just like it used to be. Yesterday morning we were given a portion of bread and some sugar. Cold boiled water was put into the truck. It is now nearly mid-day, but we have not been given anything to eat. Our treatment is also... brutal. They permit us nothing. We are allowed to go to the lavatory only when it pleases the guards; neither asking nor shouting "helps." (There follow a few reminiscences of the "Skit", which are omitted here).

"It is 14.30. We are coming to Smolensk.

"For the time being we are standing in a goods station... We are really at Smolensk. It is almost evening, we have passed Smolensk and are now in Gonizdovo station. It looks as if we are to get out here, for there are a great many soldiers moving about. In any case we have literally had nothing to eat up to now. From breakfast time yesterday we have been living on a piece of bread and a small drink of water." Here the diary breaks off.


Nearly all the people in the 16th convoy, which left Kozielak on 26.4.40, unlike those who were in the first fifteen, afterwards re-appeared quite safe in another P.O.W.'s camp.
Their reports give us direct evidence of the treatment received by the prisoners during these journeys and some idea of the destination of the earlier convoys.

Just as in the case of previous convoys, on the morning of 26.4.40 a soldier of the N.K.V.D. read out in the living quarters the names of all those who were to leave that day. There were altogether 160 people on the list. All of them with the exception of about 40 cadets, were officers. Among these were a great majority of those Polish officers of German descent who have previously declared themselves to the camp authorities to be Volksdeutsche.

They were assembled in the club and were conducted to one of the huts close to the wall which surrounded the camp. In a search they were deprived of all sharp objects, even spoons. They were however allowed to keep their personal documents and letters from families and friends. After they were taken out of the camp, escorted by a strong N.K.V.D. guard, and loaded into heavy lorries, very overcrowded, which took them to the railway siding at Koziełsk, where prison trucks were already waiting.

Fourteen to sixteen persons were pushed into each compartment and the doors locked. In the corridors were armed guards who escorted prisoners to the lavatory twice a day at appointed times. Each group was allowed to stay there three minutes.

After a few hours the train began to move. The prisoners tried to calculate the direction in which they were going, by the sun. Only a few optimists still believed they were going “home”, as had been vaguely suggested by the authorities at Koziełsk. The majority had grown much more pessimistic as a result of the prison trucks and the strong escort. On the walls of the compartments they found messages written up by members of previous convoys who had been transported in the same trucks. From these messages it appeared that they had travelled towards Smolensk, which confirmed the rumours which had been circulating at Koziełsk of the existence of a specially isolated transit camp there.

The following quotations from two reports of members of the convoy of 26.4.40:

"Soldiers who had previously left Koziełsk had promised us to leave messages in the trucks saying where they were going and what was happening to them. I found one such message, written by someone who had gone before us, saying that they were standing in the second station after Smolensk, and that the occupants of the front trucks were being transferred into cars and driven off in an unknown direction. I don’t really remember whether that message said the second station after Smolensk or a station near Smolensk, but in any case, it was either one or the other." (Witness 14).

"In my compartment of the prison truck, I found an inscription in Polish: ‘We are leaving at the second station beyond Smolensk. Cars are waiting for us.’ In other compartments were similar messages." (Witness 13).

"The journey lasted over twenty-four hours. In the afternoon of 27.4.40 the prisoners disembarked at Babinkino station, from whence they were driven in heavy lorries to a camp at Pawlishtchev Bor.

"During the journey by road from Babinkino station to Pawlishtchev Bor, the guards deliberately tormented the prisoners. The locked lorries were incredibly overcrowded and shook terribly on the rough roads. Two officers fainted. Anyone who tried to hold the side of the lorry was hit on the fingers with a bayonet." (Witness 4).
From this convoy only one person was found, having been separated from the convoy at the station of Gniedowo (Gniedowo), near Smolensk, where the convoy was unloaded. Below is a summary, with extracts from it, of the report of the officer concerned.

"...The convoy was composed of 5 (perhaps 6) prison trucks....We calculated that there were about 300 of us. We were put into separate compartments. In my compartment were 14 people...."

"We left Kozielak in the late evening....At sunrise we were at Smolensk. We stood there for a few minutes only, then the train moved on in a North-West direction. It was a bright, sunny day. From the shadows of the telegraph poles we realised that we were travelling North-West. This fact was greeted with joy, as many began to believe they were really taking us to Poland. After travelling for several kilometres the train halted. The rumour spread that we were to be unloaded...."

"...After about half-an-hour's wait a Colonel of the N.K.V.D. entered our truck, called out my name, announced that I was to be separated from the convoy and ordered me to collect my things. He personally conducted me to an empty prison truck, where I was locked into one of the compartments. A special guard stood in the corridor before barred doors. Shortly after I heard some sort of noise in an adjacent truck, the hum of a motor and the cries of the prisoners. Prison trucks are so constructed that the walls of compartments have no windows, except for a small square of glass right under the ceiling. By climbing on the highest shelf (intended for luggage)...

"...The entrance to the bus was at the back; it came right up to the trucks so that the prisoners were able to enter it directly from the trucks. On both sides of the entrance to the bus stood N.K.V.D. men. Two of them had bayonets on their rifles. About 30 people got into the bus. It drove off in the direction of the wood and after a certain time (short half-an-hour), returned to collect the next party. The whole thing was supervised by a colonel of the N.K.V.D., the same one who took me away from the convoy...."

"After the unloading was completed, I was handed over to a Captain of the N.K.V.D., who turned out to be the governor of the Smolensk prison. In a special prison car he took me to the so-called "internal" N.K.V.D. prison, in the cellars of the Smolensk N.K.V.D. office...."

This officer was subsequently taken to the Lubianka prison in Moscow, where six months later he was condemned by the administrative authorities to 8 years hard labour. He was not released until April, 1942."
When the convoy left Kozielsk on 12.5.40 the liquidation of the P.O.W. camp for officers was practically completed. On this occasion a general order to prepare to leave was given to all the prisoners, of which these were about a hundred remaining in the camp. A list was however read out in the morning on which were the names of 9 people who were ordered to stay in the camp.

Impatient and exasperated by the prolonged wait for their departure from Kozielsk, the prisoners hurried over their breakfast and assembled of their own accord in front of the gates of the camp. Here however they were unexpectedly made to wait a long time before the direction of their journey was finally decided, upon, as General Zarubin’s deputy Major Elman was discussing the question with Moscow.

From the report of one of the prisoners it seems that it was at first intended that the destination of the convoy should be the same as that of earlier ones — namely to Smolensk, but that at the last minute another decision was taken in Moscow.

“We were kept standing right in front of the gates. We waited quite a long time. The sun was heating down. I entered into conversation with Commissar Dymidowicz, who was leaning on the gate. “He always forced up the convoys. “Where are we going?” I asked. — “You are going towards Smolensk.” — “Is Smolensk a nice town?” — “Yes, a fine city” — he replied. “But, you will not see it.” “What are we waiting for?” I asked. — “For Elman, who is telephoning to Moscow....” After a time Elman appeared, took Dymidowicz aside and started to talk to him”. (Witness 6).

When Major Elman came up after the prisoners were superficially searched, led out of the camp, loaded into heavy lorries and driven, under strong escort, to a small station near Kozielsk. The prison trucks were already waiting. One of the prisoners noticed that “Babinino” was freshly written in chalk on the trucks. Others saw the half obliterated name of “Gniezdozo”.

After travelling for more than 24 hours “in unbelievably bad conditions”, the train reached Babinino station. During the journey, prisoners in many different compartments discovered messages left there by members of previous convoys. In several of them the name of “Gniezdozo” station was mentioned.

Two witnesses have given the following reports about this:

“...In my compartment was an inscription written by "someone in a previous convoy. We shall be disembarked at "Gniezdozo. We can see the lorries waiting." (Witness 15).

"...In the railway truck which was carrying us to "Pawlischev Bor, I found scratched on the ceiling, "inscriptions bearing dates which corresponded to the dates of departure of other convoys: We are disembarking at "Gniezdozo, not far from Smolensk. We are going somewhere "in lorries." (Witness 16).

After a wait of several hours in Babinino, the prisoners were taken out of the trucks and put into lorries, which carried them to the camp at Pawlischev Bor. Members of the convoy of 12.5.40 give a fairly detailed account of this part of the journey. “So many prisoners were put into the lorries standing with their backs to the engine that there was not an inch to spare. Then at a word of "command, all the prisoners were ordered to sit down, with the result that each person was pinned down by the man in "front, their legs becoming mixed up. Every time the
"prisoners moved in the lorry the Soviet guards prodded them with bayonet points. By the time they had driven over 40 kilometres (about 25 miles), many of the prisoners had fainted," (Witness 17).

"We had to sit all the time and it was forbidden to move. In each lorry were seated three Soviet soldiers with rifles pointing at us. In addition, a machine gun was mounted on a special lorry, in which there were also specially trained police dogs". (Witness 15).

---

CHAPTER III.

THE CAMP AT STAROBIELSK.

31. Topographical and historical description of the Camp.

Starobielsk is a small town in the province of Voroshilovgrad (South-Eastern Ukraine) (see the map). After the revolution large transit camps were established there to accommodate the intelligentsia who had been deported from the large towns. There political prisoners were sorted out before being sent to correctional labour camps in the North. During the years 1939-41 one of these camps was used for Polish prisoners of war, and they were put in numbers far exceeding its capacity. The camp was situated on the outskirts of the town on the site of a former monastery, which was surrounded by a high wall. In an area of a few hectares stood two orthodox churches and various monastery buildings. In the autumn of 1939 the larger church was used for storing wheat which, according to the prisoners, was gradually transported to Germany in compliance with the Soviet-German economic agreement. It was finally emptied in 1940, after which it was used for a time as prisoners' living quarters. The prisoners cleaned it out themselves and built tiers of bunks, from floor to ceiling. The smaller church used by the Polish P.O.W.'s from the beginning as living quarters had been fitted with seven tiers of bunks. The space between the bunks was so small that the prisoners had the impression of living in "small, smelly boxes, placed one on top of the other". Those living at the bottom of this human ant-heap were in perpetual darkness. The other monastery outbuildings, stables etc. were no less crowded. There were not enough bunks for all the prisoners arriving at the camp, so they had to sleep on the ground, in corridors - and in fact, wherever they could find a little space.
Altogether the whole camp was completely neglected, dilapidated and filthy.

At the main entrance was a guard-room and beside it a very narrow gate, through which prisoners leaving the camp had to pass in single file. The headquarters of the Soviet camp administration were situated outside the walls.

In the centre of the camp was the so-called "osoby otdiel" (Special Branch) composed of a team of N.K.V.D. officials whose task was to compile evidence and carry out investigations.

While officer prisoners of war were there, the condition of the Starobielsk camp was very much improved. The officers (to a great extent on their own initiative) repaired existing buildings, built two large huts, kitchens (hitherto there had been only field kitchens), shower baths, laundries and latrines. They sank three artesian wells, drained the ground, put the electric plant in working order and organised for smithy, tailoring, carpentry, boot repairing and tailoring workshops.

There was no "Club" at Starobielsk although these are found in most Soviet camps. Soviet propaganda films were at first shown out in the open and later in the partially empty large church. At the beginning of 1940 a very small reading-room was opened in the camp with accommodation for 10 persons at the most.

32. Starobielsk I. (September - October, 1939)
Camp for prisoners of war from the ranks.

In the period immediately following the Soviet aggression against Poland, Polish prisoners of war were indiscriminately sent to Starobielsk camp. By the beginning of October the camp already contained 8,000 people, mostly privates, who were treated more or less the same as those who were at that time at Kozielisk on account of the overcrowding. The living conditions, quarters and food were extremely bad and made worse by continuous rain, snow and mud. It should be emphasised that barely half the prisoners were housed in the buildings; the rest lived in roofless sheds and a few tents.

During the second half of October there was at Starobielsk, as at Kozielisk, a noticeable tendency to turn the camp into an officer's camp. At the end of October and the beginning of November, N.O.O.'s and privates, numbering altogether over 6,000, were taken away and increasingly large numbers of officer prisoners arrived.

During November the camp was almost emptied of other ranks and Starobielsk was converted into a camp for Polish officers.

33. Starobielsk II. (November, 1939 - May, 1940)
A) Inmates of the Camp.

The officers' camp at Starobielsk contained about 4,000 prisoners of war including about 100 cadet officers and a few dozen civilians (judges, public prosecutors, civil servants and landowners). Senior officers, from Lt. Colonels upwards, were from the outset separated from the other privates and housed outside the main camp. In the "Generals' House", situated about 600 yards from the camp, lived 3 Generals and a few senior Colonels; about 100 Colonels and senior Lt.Colonels lived in the so-called "Colonels' Quarters" about 50 yards from the camp. When the liquidation of the camp was begun an

1. In particular, on 16th November a convoy of approximately 2,000 officers arrived at Starobielsk. Half of them, including General Stanislaw Haler, remained there, the other half being sent on to Kozielisk.
April 1940, the separate "Colonels' Quarters" were abolished and the inhabitants transferred to the main camp.

As at Kozielsk, the movement of prisoners to and from Starobielsk diminished considerably after its conversion into an officers' camp, but did not entirely cease. Throughout the winter small groups continued to come and go. About 100 persons in all were removed mostly in connection with interrogations. These were officers of the Intelligence Service and prisoners suspected of conducting "anti-Soviet" activities among their fellows. Most of those taken away were never seen again; a few, however, after many months in investigation prisons or correctional labour camps, regained their freedom in 1941 as a result of the "amnesty". (See PART TWO).

The day before Christmas Eve, all Army Chaplains of all denominations among whom were the Chief Rabbi of the Polish Army, Major Steinberg and a Protestant Superintendent Potocki were removed from Starobielsk, as also from Kozielsk. According to Czapski (Souvenirs de Starobielsk, Paris (7)1945), some of them, after spending several weeks in a Moscow prison, were brought back to Starobielsk and put in the prison tower, strictly isolated from the other prisoners. Later they were again deported in an unknown direction, after which all traces of most of them were lost. A few subsequently went to the camp at Ostashkov (See below), and shared the lot of its inmates.

Nearly 50% of the inmates of Starobielsk II were officers taken prisoner by the Soviets after the capitulation of Lvov, after having been guaranteed "personal liberty" and the right to travel to neutral countries (see p. 10). Many of the other officers had been arrested in Poland during the registration of Polish officers ordered by the Soviets, and after a few months detention in various prisons, were brought to Starobielsk. For instance on January 10th 1940, 13 people, including 3 civilian "criminals" arrived at Starobielsk from the Stanislavov prison.

In the early spring of 1940 the majority of the cadet officers were liberated from Starobielsk. Some of them succeeded in reaching Poland and informed the prisoners' relations of the conditions in the Starobielsk camp. They suggested that their release meant that the camp was to be gradually liquidated and the prisoners sent home, in order of rank, the lower ranks being liberated first. Many of those cadet officers were subsequently arrested "in the ordinary way" as "criminals" and put into "normal" Soviet correctional labour camps. (Witness 22).

Reckoning on the basis of their ranks in the Polish Forces, there were at Starobielsk at the time when the liquidation of the camp began:

- 8 Generals
- about 150 Colonels and Lt. Colonels
- about 220 Majors
- about 1,000 Captains
- about 2,450 1st and 2nd Lieutenants
- about 50 Cadet officers
- 52 civilians.

making in all a total of about 3,900 persons.

Among these were a few hundred airforce officers, the whole staff of the Military Institute of Chemical Warfare, including the distinguished expert, Major Erazowski and many other well-known military experts.

About 50% of the officers in the camps were officers of the reserve and, as at Kozielsk, among them all civilian professions were represented. There were:

a) about twenty professors, lecturers and readers of Polish Universities and Colleges.

b) about 360 military and civilian doctors...
c) a few hundred lawyers, judges, public
prosecutors and barristers

d) a few hundred engineers

e) numerous secondary and elementary school
teachers

f) some poets, writers and journalists

g) politicians, including Eiger, Vice-President
of the Polish Anti-Hitler League.

As at Kosielak there were at Starobielsk a
few people disabled in the last war and arrested by the
Soviet authorities as officers.

34. Starobielsk II. B. Camp Authorities - Regulations.

A considerable amount of internal autonomy was
allowed from the start of the Starobielsk officers' camp.
This was perhaps due to the personal character of the
first Polish "senior" of the camp, Major Sobieslaw Zalewski,
who was an engineer. This officer was extremely capable,
with an excellent knowledge of the Russian language, and
a very energetic administrator and organiser. From the
time of his arrival at Starobielsk with the first large
party of officers, he worked day and night planning the
building of suitable camp accommodation and persistently
negotiating with the Soviet authorities.

The result of this was that the Soviet authori-
ties left all matters connected with the internal life of
the camp in the hands of the Polish "Headquarters" or
"Administrative Council", confining themselves to super-
vising Polish activities and to carrying on their "proper"
work - i.e. investigations and political work among the
prisoners.

The Soviet Commandant of the camp was Colonel
Berezhkov of the N.K.V.D. He was usually out of the camp
and had very little contact with the prisoners. In

practice four or five young, well-trained N.K.V.D.
officers deputised for the commandant. These officers
took it in turn to carry out the 24 hours a day duty of
the camp commandant, having under them several N.C.O.'s
and messengers.

The camp political commissar, Kirshin, unlike
Berezhkov, was rather hostile to the prisoners. He had at
his disposal a dozen or more "politicals", who de facto
supervised the life of the camp and "looked after" the
residential blocks allotted to them.

At the head of the "osoby odnial" (Special
Branch) was Major Liedeiev of the N.K.V.D. Assisted by a
staff of investigating officers, he organised the investi-
gations and the collection of evidence.

Soviet administrative and technical officials, as
well as doctors, were in practice concerned only with
supervising the work of prisoners with professional
qualifications.

It should be emphasised that at Starobielsk,
contrary to Kosielak, prisoners were not forbidden to
write in their letters that they were in a "prisoner of
war camp". Starobielsk, like all "normal" camps in Russia,
was under the jurisdiction of the N.K.V.D. instead of
under that of the military authorities, as in the general
practice in the case of prisoner of war camps. This fact
was confirmed by the official stamp of the camp, which
bore the inscription: "Upravlenie Starobielskogo Lagerna
N.K.V.D., U.S.S.R. (N.K.V.D. Camp Command, Starobielsk,
U.S.S.R.)

The camp regulations, announced to the prisoners
in the second half of October 1939, by Commissar Kirshin,
strictly prohibited all forms of praying or singing,
meetings, lectures, mutual instruction and even reading
cloud. Prisoners were forbidden to enter any huts except their own or stand in large groups outside the buildings. Walks were to be taken in groups of two or three at the most. The writing of diaries or notes was prohibited. It was strictly forbidden to turn on the light in the huts at night, and to leave the huts after dusk. No card games and all games of chance were permitted.

35. Starobielak, A. Prisoners! Living Conditions

The decrease of over 80% in the number of camp inmates after November, 1939, greatly contributed to the improvement of conditions. The repair of the buildings and the general organisation of the camp, during November and December, improved things still more. After the middle of December every inmate was sheltered from wind and rain. Bidding was gradually supplied. In principle every prisoner received a blanket, a sheet, a pillowcase and a paper pillow-case.

As at Koziel, living conditions varied to a certain extent according to military rank and the particular quarters in which a prisoner lived.

The living quarters of senior officers were relatively comfortable. Generals had their own orderlies, and some of them adjutants as well.

The repairing of old buildings and the erection of new ones lessened the plague of bugs in the camp. The instalation of delousing baths and wash-houses and the energy of the Polish medical personnel did much to reduce the numbers of lice which had hitherto infested the camp.

The liberation of private soldiers from the camp somewhat improved the officers clothing situation. The departing men willingly, often without payment, left for the officers their sweaters, mufflers, shirts, boots etc.-all invaluable in the Soviet Union. Despite the requests

made by the Polish "Headquarters" to the Soviet authorities for warm clothes and boots for the men engaged in rebuilding the camp, they only succeeded in obtaining up to the time of liquidation of the camp a few dozen "tiologrelk" (thick suits).


Immediately on arrival at Starobielak, Major Zalewski, who was appointed "senior" of the camp, proceeded on his own initiative to adapt the camp buildings to suit the needs of the inmates. He organised as team of about 200 qualified men, mostly sepoys, who accomplished this task. The Soviet authorities had promised that members of this team would receive a 25% increase in their rations and an extra three rubles per day. This promise was only partially kept, as members of the team were only once given extra pay.

After the completion of the most important work in the camp, Major Zalewski, who enjoyed the general goodwill and trust of his colleagues, was suddenly called before the Soviet commandant on the night of December 22nd, 1939. From that time he was kept in strict isolation until they started to liquidate the camp in April 1940.

Major Zalewski's successor as Polish "senior" was Major K. Miewierski, who in turn was taken away from Starobielak and was succeeded by Major L. Chrustowski, an artillery officer. The last man to hold that position at Starobielak.

The administration of the camp was organised in

1. "On April 5th, 1940, he appeared once again in the camp, ill and weak looking as though he had risen from the grave. We greeted him warmly. With one of the first parties to leave the camp at the start of its liquidation, Major Zalewski passed through the gates for the second time. He never came back to us". (Witness 23).
such a way that the Polish camp "senior" had subordinate to him seniors of individual units, the inmates of the larger ones being divided into companies. In principle the camp authorities had dealings only with the Polish camp "senior", who passed on their instructions by calling a conference of later "seniors". As the latter generally knew their people well, this method made for administrative efficiency and reduced misunderstandings arising from the officers generally inadequate knowledge of Russian.

Polish camp "Headquarters" also theoretically subordinated to the Soviet administration enjoyed considerable autonomy in the organisation of special services such as the distribution of food, blankets, fuel etc., which was performed by the Polish "Quartermaster".

The keys and control of the camp food stores remained in Soviet hands.

Medical services and the general hygiene of the camp were in the hands of the Polish doctors who organised a first aid, a provisional hospital and a dental clinic.

37. Starobielsk II. Food and work.

The kitchen was well organised and staffed by the prisoners but the "Polish administration" could not prevent Soviet officials from removing tins of fats, the better kinds of fish etc., from the food stores. The food at Starobielsk was practically the same as at Kozielisk, with the one difference that, on consequence of the comparatively large degree of autonomy enjoyed by the Poles at Starobielsk, the Soviet authorities had less opportunity for fraud and the prisoners therefore received better and more tasty meals.

As at Kozielisk, at Starobielsk work was not compulsory for all inmates. Officers of senior rank, living in separate quarters, were entirely exempt. In the main camp, in the morning the Soviet authorities handed to the Polish "senior" a so-called "herald", i.e. a demand for 500-700 persons required for labour on that day. The Polish "senior" in turn called a conference of block commanders, who, fairly and in rotation, for the most part without regard to rank but taking into consideration age and state of health, appointed people for work. While the camp was being rebuilt, groups of officers were employed to unload timber, planks and coal at the railway station. This was very heavy work, which meant being away from the camp all day without food. The 100-200 officers detailed in rotation for this work were conducted under heavy escort along rough, winding paths to the station, in order to avoid any contact with the local population. Work outside the camp was practically discontinued after the middle of January 1940. Within the camp, officers carried out various tasks, such as maintaining general order, clearing away snow and ice, cleaning stores, and latrines, unloading food for the camp, permanently working in the bathrooms and laundries, disinfecting etc.

At Starobielsk prisoners were only used for work connected with the needs of the camp. Officers did not try to avoid work, finding that it relieved the monotony of camp life. But one of the great disadvantages of working was that clothes and footwear, particularly treasured by the prisoners, were worn out very quickly. The repeated efforts of the Polish "Headquarters" to obtain special working clothes for the prisoners were unsuccessful.

38. Starobielsk II. F. Currency, sale of Valuables, Shop.

Despite frequent searches many prisoners managed to hide some money and personal possessions. The majority
However, had only Polish zlotys, which had potentially lost their value, and having no roubles, they were unable to buy anything at the official camp shop or unofficially through Soviet officials and workmen who came to the camp to work. Some of the prisoners had received some pay in roubles, but the majority remained without any Soviet money. In the middle of December the Soviet authorities announced that in the interest of the prisoners they would give them the opportunity of acquiring roubles by selling their watches, fountain pens and other articles of value. Shortly afterwards three Soviet representatives of the State Jewelry Trust arrived at the camp. The prisoners mutually agreed not to sell their rings, crosses or medallions, but they were quite willing to part with watches, fountain pens and other articles. The official prices offered by the Trust struck the prisoners as very curious: wrist watches fetched a fairly good price regardless of make and condition, while the best gold pocket watches were valued at very little. Fountain pens, from expensive Parkers to ordinary Woolworth all fetched the same price — 20 roubles. After the sale the prisoners were given up to 50 roubles on the spot, the balance being paid into their accounts from which they were permitted to draw out 50 roubles every month.

Before this sale, when the prisoners had been without roubles, the travelling shop, which visited the camp about once a fortnight, had usually been fairly well stocked with articles the prisoners would have liked to have been able to buy. After the sale, when there were roubles available in the camp, the number of articles for sale in the shop was greatly reduced. At each visit, therefore, the officers pooled their roubles, and having bought up the stock which was available to them, when the Russians had had their pick, they distributed it fairly between huts and individuals, regardless of whether they had contributed to the pool or not.

30. Starobielsk II. G. Prisoners' conception of their legal status and hopes of liberation.

As the majority of prisoners at Starobielsk found themselves in captivity without having previously taken any part in battles against Soviet troops, they were unable to understand on what pretext they were detained. The legal position of Polish soldiers in Soviet hands was discussed at numerous conferences, attended by eminent Polish lawyers who were among the inmates of the camp. These conferences invariably reached the conclusion that, in view of the fact that a state of war didn't exist between the U.S.S.R. and Poland, there had been absolutely no legal justification for keeping them in captivity, and referring to them, as "prisoners of war". The terms of Lwów capitulation, guaranteeing "personal freedom" and "right to travel to neutral countries" were continually referred to at these conferences (see p. 10.)

Ignorant of the general political situation and unaware of Soviet legal interpretations (see p. 6-12.), most of the prisoners at Starobielsk gladly listened to all kinds of rumours which presaged their speedy release. One of these rumours was to the effect that the United States had consented to represent Polish interests in the U.S.S.R. and that the American Ambassador was expected to visit the camp with a delegation of the International Red Cross. This rumour was fully believed by the prisoners and at a meeting of staff officers the text of a special petition to the American Ambassador was drawn up, requesting him to arrange for the immediate release of all Polish prisoners.
of war so that they could join in the fighting against Germany. Fearing that the Soviet authorities would prevent them from approaching the Ambassador, the prisoners translated the petition into English and hurriedly made several copies, so as to ensure that at least one of them would come into the Ambassador's hands during his forthcoming visit. Although this rumour turned out to be entirely false, most of the prisoners still did not lose hope of being soon liberated. This hope was sustained by various rumours initiated by the Soviet authorities, and by letters from Poland stating that reports of their imminent return from the U.S.S.R. were widely circulating there.

In consequence of the general anticipation of immediate release, the prisoners at Starobielsk, as at Kozielisk, greeted the announcement in April of the liquidation of the camp without surprise and in fact with considerable satisfaction.

40. Starobielsk II. H. Evidence and investigation.

The fact that during the whole of the time spent by the officers, prisoners at Starobielsk the Soviet authorities had been conducting intensive investigations and collecting various kinds of evidence, counteracted to some extent the hopes at early liberation. Prisoners were summoned, usually at night, either to the "osoby oddiel" (Special Branch) or to the Soviet Command outside the camp.

All particulars relating to each prisoner were recorded several times, each individual being required to fill in on a printed form various details concerning his family, financial position, living conditions, occupation, with particular references to the number of workmen employed by him and the vehicles in his possession, journeys abroad, knowledge of foreign languages etc. Apart from these detailed questionnaires, interrogations also took place, "doprosy" as they were called by the prisoners. These lasted for hours on end and took the form of discussions with the interrogator, who tried to take the prisoners unaware with unexpected questions on apparently unrelated subjects. The main themes of discussion were political problems and to a lesser degree military topics. The interrogators were chiefly interested in the prisoner's party affiliations, his political outlook, his attitude to the U.S.S.R. etc. Methods of interrogation varied. Sometimes the prisoner was offered tea and cigarettes, at others the interrogator smoked good tobacco right under his nose. Refined politeness often gave way to shouts and threats, backed up by a revolver on the table. Beating did not take place in the camp, but the more stubborn prisoners were transferred to prison.

Records were usually not kept of "doprosy" and the prisoners were warned that the discussions were strictly confidential and not to be repeated to anyone. Every prisoner without exception was summoned to an interrogation several times, and there were cases of men being interrogated literally every night for 2-3 weeks on end.

The completed evidence and the records of the "doprosy", together with photographs (one full face and two profiles) and finger prints, formed the so-called dossier of each prisoner. No-one ever saw their own dossier, having no means of access to it.

As at Kozielisk, these dossiers probably contained other material concerning the individual prisoners, such as the comments of the camp authorities, particularly of the political agents, information obtained from correspondence with their families etc.
41. Starobielak II. I. Correspondence.

When they first came to the camp, prisoners were not allowed to correspond with Poland. Not until the middle of December 1939, was permission granted to write once a month, provided no mention was made of conditions in the camp and no information of any other kind given except personal news. The address for reply, written in Russian, was given as: "U.S.S.R., Starobielak Prisoner of War Camp, Post Box No.15 ".

The chance to correspond with the outside world raised the morale of the prisoners, who took fresh courage on hearing from their families. The first letters arrived at the camp before Christmas 1939. From the moment of obtaining the addresses of their relations, families in Poland wrote often, thus supplying the Soviet authorities with useful information. In March 1940 at Easter each prisoner was permitted to send one telegram. That was almost the last news that came from Starobielak. No letters left the camp after April 10th 1940, but redistribution of incoming mail continued until April 28th. After that all communication ceased.

In addition to letters, over 100 parcels were sent to the camp, mostly from German-occupied Poland or from the province of Wilno. Packets of food and clothing from Soviet occupied territories never arrived, but some money orders were received, including one for 500 roubles from notorious Wanda Wasilewska for her uncle, a disabled Colonel.

42. Starobielak II. J. Soviet Propaganda.

As at Kozielak, placards bearing Soviet slogans and extracts from the Stalin Constitution were posted in the Starobielak camp. In addition political propaganda was diffused through the radio (numerous loud-speakers being set up in the grounds of the camp and in the living quarters), the Soviet press in Russian and in Polish and also films. The attendance at the films was at the outset considerable, but it decreased from day to day, as the films were of a low standard, always tendentious and often anti-Polish, based on such themes as the Soviet-Polish war of 1920 etc. The Soviet authorities attributed the poor attendance to weather conditions, and consequently transferred the film displays to the main church, after it had been emptied of grain. Nevertheless the attendance continued to fall almost to zero and, after a time the film shows had to be discontinued, which brought a severe reprimand from Commissar Kirskin.

The most popular paper among the prisoners was the Lvov "Red Standard" published in Polish, large numbers of which were sent to the camp from time to time. Verbal propaganda was carried out by political agents in discussions and lectures as well as in conversations with the prisoners on political themes. The Polish "Headquarters" endeavoured to keep the prisoners out of such discussions, but often unsuccessfully.

In general, Soviet propaganda at Starobielak was not much of a success. Only a score or so of prisoners were in the habit of talking to political agents and using the library. The great majority were indifferent or disgusted with Soviet propaganda.

There were also at Starobielak a few dozen prisoners of German descent who had declared themselves "Volkdeutsche". These were rigorously boycotted by most of the prisoners, but were looked upon with some favour by the Soviet authorities.

43. Starobielak II. Religious, cultural and social life at Starobielak

On the first Sunday after their arrival at Starobielak, large crowds of prisoners attended Mass in
their respective huts. Subsequently this sort of "demonstration" was strictly prohibited by the camp authorities. But the army chaplains in the camp continued to celebrate Mass, hear confessions and give Communion in secret. After the removal of all the priests, religious life was somewhat restricted, though clandestine religious services were still held. Besides religious feasts, the prisoners also observed national festivals. On November 11th, the Soviet authorities held a special "roll-call", keeping the prisoners in closed ranks outside the camp grounds all day. Nevertheless, in the evening, discussions and speeches were held in many huts in observance of the anniversary of Polish independence. Christmas was also celebrated. The huts were decorated with Christmas trees and lighted candles, and the prisoners sang carols and broke Christmas wafers.

Many of the officers had books in their haversacks when captured. These books circulated among the prisoners and were much more widely read than books from the official Soviet library. The prisoners also organised lectures, discussions and instruction in foreign languages. As this was strictly forbidden by the Soviet authorities, a few prisoners used to watch and give warning of the approach of guards or political agents, who were in the habit of creeping up quietly and trying to catch the prisoners red-handed. A few of the prisoners sought relaxation and consolation in spiritualist seances. Card games, though forbidden were also popular, but political agents systematically confiscated the cards.

After protracted negotiations with the camp authorities, permission was given for the formation of a camp choir, but the texts of all songs had to be first translated into Russian and censored. In practice, the translations often deviated considerably from the text, which contained various topical illusions.

44. Starobielsk II. L. Liquidation of the Camp.

At 9 a.m., on April 5th 1940, the Soviet Camp commandant, Colonel Berezkov, attended by several Soviet officers, arrived at Polish "Headquarters" and announced that the long expected evacuation of the camp was about to begin, and that about 200 people would leave daily. When questioned by the prisoners as to their future fate, Berezkov answered evasively that as far as he knew they were going home, not directly, but by way of dispersal points somewhere in the neighbourhood of Kharkov, Kiev and Smolensk, from whence large convoys would be sent home. Asked why prisoners, who had arrived at the camp in thousands, were to be taken away, in such small groups, the commandant answered that the war with Finland had caused a shortage of rolling stock. Berezkov also told the prisoners that the Soviet authorities would look after them properly and supply them with all the requirements for their homeward journey.

Later, the names were read out of all those included in the first party, numbering 195 persons. They were ordered to collect their things immediately and report at mid-day in the main church for a search, during the process of which they were relieved of all metal objects, printed and written matter etc. After the search, the prisoners left the church in single file and went directly to the exit gate. Those remaining in the camp gathered
on both sides of the path, but Soviet guards prevented them from making any contact with the departing men.

Subsequent parties left in a similar manner. Nearly every day two Soviet N.C.O.'s came to the room of the commandant of block 20 with a list of prisoners to be included in the next party. The size of the parties varied from about 50 to 240 persons. Up to April 26th groups left almost daily. After that date there was an interval until May 2nd. As the prisoners were all the time convinced that those removed from the camp were being liberated, the delay in the departure of convoys gave rise to great agitation among the few hundred people left behind. After the convoy of May 2nd had left, there followed another interval of several days. Groups of a dozen people being subsequently deported on May 8th, 11th and 12th.

As in Kozielek, the prisoners tried in vain to discover the principles on which the lists were drawn up. Each list seemed to contain the names of a certain proportion of officers of every rank and from each individual hut. Every block gradually emptied from day to day more or less evenly.

A systematic separation of persons of the same name, in many cases relations was also noticeable. When the prisoners protested against this, the camp authorities declared as at Kozielek, that they had no influence on the composition of the lists, which they said were sent from the central office. The prisoners were told, that in any case it was immaterial in which group they departed, since they would "soon all meet again". As more and more prisoners left the camp, those remaining behind grouped in the larger blocks, until on May 2nd all inmates were quartered in one block. The bearing of Soviet officers and N.C.O.'s towards the prisoners obviously changed for the worse, causing considerable anxiety among those remaining, who thought that they were being especially discriminated against.

45. Starobielz III. M. A Special Group.

During the preparations for departure on April 20th 1940, after reading the normal list, comprising about 200 persons, the Soviet N.C.O. announced in a loud voice that he would now read out a special list of 65 names (normally the number in a group was not announced), who would also leave on that day but were not to mix with the ordinary convoy. They were to remain entirely separate while assembling in the church and when marching out of the camp. He also stated that this special group would not be searched in the church, but was to be present when all the departing prisoners were identified. After this announcement he read out the names on the special list. When he had carefully repeated twice each surname, Christian name and rank, it was discovered that the list included one officer who was dangerously ill in the local hospital and another who had already left the camp with a previous convoy. So the special group finally consisted of only 63 people.

As nothing of this kind had ever previously occurred at Starobielz, this event naturally aroused interest and consternation among the prisoners. They were convinced that the normal groups were to be liberated, so what did the formation of this "special group" mean? They tried in vain to find out the reason for this discrimination. The proportion of ranks and of prisoners coming from this or that region of Poland was more or less the same as in previous groups; there were perhaps a few
more cadet officers, of which there were barely 30 in the camp. Some of the prisoners noticed that the group included the majority of Starobielsk "Volksdeutsche" and a comparatively large number of those known as "Reds" by their fellow-prisoners. Among them was notorious Colonel Zygmunt Berling.

The special group was separated from the normal convoy immediately after leaving the camp and arrived at Pavliashchev Bor a few days later.

In the course of the journey by way of Voroshilovgrad and Kharkov, some of the prisoners belonging to this group succeeded in exchanging a few words with a railway worker, who was cleaning the trucks at Kharkov. This worker is said to have told the prisoners to get ready to disembark, as all "your people" were taken off the train at Kharkov and continued their journey in cars.

This information, however, turned out to be wrong in the case of the special group. After standing in the station for a few hours, the train moved out of Kharkov. It is noteworthy that in the church of Starobielsk a member of the special group asked a political agent why, contrary to normal practice, full particulars were being taken of all persons included in that group. The political agent is said to have answered: "I can only tell you that you are the lucky ones."

46. Starobielsk II. N. Final liquidation of the Camp.

The last party, consisting of 18 officers, left the camp on the afternoon of May 12th, 1940, after a very thorough search during which several of the officers were stripped naked. The subsequent fate of the 10 officers who remained in the camp is unknown.

The last group of 18 officers, after passing through the gates of the camp, was surrounded by numerous guards, whose behaviour towards the prisoners was exceedingly brutal. In the yard in front of the Soviet Command building, they were loaded into lorries and quickly driven to the station, where they were put into a prison truck. The guards called individual officers by name, pushed them brutally into the truck and along the corridor into the compartments. When all were inside, the barred doors and windows were covered with blankets so that the compartments were completely blocked out. The truck moved off in the early morning of the following day. While the train was in motion, the blankets were removed, but were hung up again at every halt. During several days of travelling the prisoners lost all idea of direction, but were still convinced that they were returning to Poland and wrongly assumed that they were passing through Smolensk, Minsk etc.

On May 16th the truck halted in a small station. To the surprise of the prisoners the blankets were not hung up and they were able to read the name of the station - Babinino. After a long delay they were transferred to waiting lorries. Having travelled for half an hour, during which time they were subjected to brutal treatment by the guards, they arrived at the camp of Pavliashchev Bor, where they were well received. On arrival they were sent to the baths and then conducted into the camp grounds where, to their surprise, they found all the members of the special group. As one night during the journey in the prison truck, two officers from Wilno, had been taken away, only 16 officers arrived at the camp of Pavliashchev Bor on May 16th. These, with the 65 officers of the special group, made up a total of 79 prisoners who thus escaped the fate of the other prisoners from Starobielsk.

47. Starobielsk III. (June 1940 - June 1941)

Transit Prison Camp.

After the evacuation of all officers from
Starobielsk, the camp was used for a year as a transit camp for Civil prisoners on their way to labour camps in the North-West. Among these prisoners were many arrested by the Soviet authorities in Poland, the majority as a result of attempts to cross the frontier in order to join the Polish Forces in the West. Many of them were Polish officers. All these prisoners remained several weeks or months at Starobielsk, after which they were formed into convoys and deported to labour camps, mostly in the far North (Kolyma).

The numbers and the population of the camp were during this period, constantly changing as many convoys were coming from and going to prisoners and to labour camps. There were on average 8,000 to 10,000 in the camp. It is reported that the total number of prisoners who passed through Starobielsk III in the course of one year amounted to over 100,000, possibly an overestimate. Among them were many Polish officers.

The reappearance of Polish officers among Soviet prisoners in labour camps in the far North of Russia after the Polish-Soviet Agreement gave rise to a false impression among Polish officials that they were on the track of Polish prisoners of war from Starobielsk II.

The last large convoy to Kolyma via Magadan left Starobielsk in June 1941. The camp was then emptied and once again entirely changed its character and purpose.

46. Starobielsk IV. (July 1941 - August 1941).

Camp for Polish prisoners of war from the ranks

Considerable numbers of Polish prisoners of war from the ranks were kept in various camps situated in Soviet-occupied Poland and the neighbouring territories of the U.S.S.R. They were employed in building roads for instance the motor road Kiev-Lvov-Priemysl with its many branches, and airfields. In connection with this work many camps comprising in some cases hundreds and in others thousands of prisoners were transferred from one place to another according to the demand for labour. Some dozen of these camps were in existence until the outbreak of the Soviet-German war in June, 1941, when they were hastily evacuated and the prisoners driven Eastwards by forced marches. They often had to march for several hundred miles before reaching areas in which the railway services were running. In the course of these marches, which lasted on an average about 3 weeks, many of the columns were machine-gunned and bombed by German planes. A great many prisoners, unable to keep up with the speed of the march on the extremely inadequate rations, fell out on the way. Those were usually finished off by the N.K.V.D. escort.

The surviving prisoners were loaded into goods trucks and taken to various camps, including Starobielsk.

1. The following camps are among those which were then transferred: the camp accommodating about 1,400 prisoners engaged on building the Skhlyov aerodrome near Lvov - prisoners were marched to Zolotonosha, from where they were sent by train to Starobielsk; the camp at Podvoloczesyka, containing about 4,000 prisoners, who also marched to Zolotonosha; the camp accommodating about 1,000 persons engaged on building an aerodrome at Tsevolov - prisoners marched for 26 days until they reached Zolotonosha, the camp at Brody, in which were about 1,000 persons who marched for 24 days to Zolotonosha and were bombed by German planes - about 1,400 persons from this camp reached Starobielsk.

The following are the reports of two prisoners of war who were evacuated in this way. On 29,6,41 we started the march via Voloczesyka and Vininica to Zolotonosha. The route is marked by our graves, "those who could go no further were just shot. We marched under appalling conditions. The heat was terrible; dust and sweat formed mud on our faces" (Continued on next page,)}
After their arrival at Starobielsk in the middle of July 1941, these prisoners were grouped in several different camps. After a few weeks rest, they were transferred to the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R., which was just beginning to be organised as a result of the Polish-Soviet agreement of July 30th, 1941.

The head of the Polish recruiting Mission, Lt. Col. Winiowski, on arrival at Starobielsk on 24.8.41 was informed that a total of 11,982 Polish prisoners of war were grouped in three camps.

From this total the recruiting commission took more than 11,000 for the Polish Armed Forces, among them 14 officers who had hitherto concealed their rank from the Soviet authorities.

According to Colonel Winiowski the Soviet authorities stated that there was a fourth camp at Starobielsk for Poles who had voluntarily taken Soviet citizenship and were therefore not eligible for conscription to the Polish Army.

As a result of the handing over of prisoners of war from Starobielsk IV to the Polish recruiting Mission the Polish authorities were at first unaware that the officer prisoners of war from Starobielsk II were not returned to them after the conclusion of the Polish-Soviet agreement.

"and in our mouths. Anyone who tried to get a little water from ditches or holes by the roadside was beaten with rifle butts and prodded with bayonets. The inhabitants of the villages through which we passed were told we were German prisoners... We marched 70-80 kilometres per day." (Witness 24.)

"On 24.8.41, after the outbreak of war, Polish "soldier prisoners were taken from Brody to Tarnopol via Zloczow. We marched for about 24 days... During the march to Zloczow the soldiers were so exhausted that many of them were left behind. These were either shot or killed with the bayonet by the Bolshevik escort... We were attacked on route by German planes... 40 Polish soldiers were killed and 150 wounded. In the middle of July 1941 the surviving prisoners arrived on foot at the town of Belotomash". (Witness 26.)

Inmates of Soviet prison in Poland were evacuated by the Soviet authorities in a similar manner. For instance about 2,000 prisoners from the prison in Vilajka Poviatova went on foot to Borisov in a few days.
CHAPTER IV
THE CAMP AT OSTASHKOV

49. Description of the Camp

The Ostashkov camp, lying about ten miles from the country town of the same name in the province of Kalinin (former Tver), was situated on the site of a famous monastery on one of the islands in the Seliger lake. The dozen or more buildings on this island were in very dilapidated state (see the map at the end of PART ONE).

50. Ostashkov I. (September-October 1939).
Camp for prisoners of war from the banks.

In the first days of October 1939, the Ostashkov camp contained over 12,000 Polish prisoners of war, among which there were only a few hundred officers. The majority of these prisoners had been arrested in the North-Eastern territories of Poland. Besides soldiers, there were in the camp large numbers of civilians - old men, women and children. All these people were crowded together in filthy conditions in the various buildings, which were equipped with many tiers of bunks, on which a space of about 8 inch was allowed to each individual. Most of them were without warm clothes or, indeed, any possession having taken off, in the clothes in which they stood up. The food was so inadequate that they were half starved. Although the camp was situated on an island in a large lake, the prisoners had difficulty in obtaining water, for drinking, not to mention for washing themselves or their clothes. In these conditions the camp was naturally swarming with bugs and lice.

As at Kozielek and Starebielsk, the evacuation of the Ostashkov camp started at the end of October or beginning of November. All civilians - old men, women and children - nearly all the private soldiers and most N.C.O.s left the camp in groups. Some were sent home and others thrown into forced labour camps. During the second half of November a further two convoys of about 600 persons, mostly civilians and soldiers of the reserve, left Ostashkov for Brest Litovsk, where they were exchanged for Polish prisoners in German hands who had applied to return to Soviet-occupied Poland.

51. Ostashkov II. (November 1939 - May, 1940).
Camp for police, Military Frontier Guard, etc.

A. Inmates, conditions, camp authorities, propaganda and investigations.

When only about 500 of the former inmates remained at Ostashkov, convoys began to arrive composed mainly of officers, N.C.O.s and men of the Intelligence Service, Military Police, Military Frontier Guard, police, prison guards and members of ex-servicemen's settlements in the North-Eastern territories of Poland. In the middle of November 1939, there were about 6,600 persons in Ostashkov. This number was more or less maintained until April 1940, with only slight variations resulting from the arrival and departure of individuals and small groups.

There were about 400 officers at Ostashkov of which about 300 were officers of the police, militarised in September 1939. There were also a few dozen civilians, mostly lawyers, landowners and ex-service

1. Among others, Father Kantak (see above page 23) was brought to Ostashkov during the winter of 1939 and after a few weeks moved to Kozielek. About the middle of February a group of lawyers, priests and a few dozen N.C.O.'s and officers of the police arrived at Ostashkov. Among the priests was Protestant Superintendent Potocki, who was accused of working for the Intelligence Service (see p.78 above).
settlers.

At Ostashkov II, as at Konelezk II and Sterobielsk II, the treatment of prisoners varied according to their rank. Senior officers lived in a separate building in better conditions. In the two rooms for staff officers there were even beds with sheets, cupboards, chairs etc. The rest of the officers occupied bunks in not too crowded rooms. The ranks lived in worse conditions in 19 other buildings. Staff officers were officially exempt from work, which was not absolutely compulsory even for junior officers. At the most junior officers were used for clearing away snow from the precincts of their living quarters, mostly, however, they supervised the camp workshops, where they were responsible for the discipline and work of the ranks. Polish Doctors worked in the camp hospital and clinic. The bulk of the prisoners, among whom were many qualified craftsmen, worked in the camp workshops as tailors, shoemakers, bakers, laundry hands, electricians, carpenters, locksmiths and in sawmills and smithies. Prisoners also repaired buildings and constructed dykes and bridges connecting the island with the mainland. Police-men were as a rule treated worse than the soldiers and detailed for heavier work. For work outside the camp only prisoners in uniform were used; no one civilians' clothes was allowed outside the camp for fear they should escape.

Although the number of prisoners in the camp was 50% less than in October, 1939, the inmates complained of overcrowding and dirt. About New Year some of the prisoners were issued with palliasses and blankets. The food was the same as in other camps and the prisoners found it insufficient.

At the time when representatives of the Soviet Jewel Trust came to Ostashkov, as to Konelezk and Starobielsk, in order to buy watches and other articles of value from the prisoners, the camp shop was comparatively well stocked with foodstuffs, which were sold for very high prices. Very soon all goods were sold out, but the shop was not restocked.

As at Konelezk and Starobielsk, propaganda was carried out through films which were fairly popular. There was also a radio, Soviet papers and propaganda literature. Propaganda talks were held but without much success. Political agents often visited prisoners in their living quarters, started friendly conversations and discussions, played chess with them and so on. Such scenes of "fraternisation" between members of the N.K.V.D. and prisoners were sometimes photographed and even filmed.

With the consent of the Soviet commandant a choir and orchestra was organised. But as the musicians were compelled to restrict themselves to Russian songs and music, these cultural activities ceased after two performances. Although this camp contained few intelligentsia, religious and cultural work was carried out without the knowledge of the camp authorities just as in the other camps.

Officers, who were for the most part isolated from the ranks, tried to maintain contact with them, but met with strong opposition from the Soviet authorities.

The Soviet camp commandant, Borisovitz, was a 1st Lieutenant or Captain of the N.K.V.D.; he seldom came into contact with the prisoners. The person most closely concerned with the prisoners was the political director of the camp, who was also head of the group of Soviet N.K.V.D. officials responsible for the investigations. These investigations were similar in character.
to those in other camps. Exact biographical details of each prisoner were required by the authorities, who also tried to find out which individuals had been working for the Intelligence Service. They were particularly interested in any political activities carried out by the prisoners and in their party affiliations.

Interrogations, which were repeated several times, lasted whole days or, more frequently, nights. There were cases of individuals being taken away from the camp for further interrogation. Many prisoners were sent to camp arrest immediately after interrogation, usually for refusing too emphatically to cooperate with the N.K.V.D. The prisoners complained particularly about the last interrogations before the liquidation of the camp, for which several dozen pupils from the N.K.V.D. school were specially brought to the camp for practice. They were exceptionally brutal towards the prisoners, abused them excessively and even beat them.

In addition, innumerable records were made concerning the prisoners' nationality, social position, the social status of their family, date of capture, knowledge of languages and foreign countries, relations or friends in Russia, etc. Photographs and fingerprints were taken of every prisoner. All these details were collected in individual files, containing each prisoner's dossier.

In December 1939, permission was granted for everyone to send one letter or telegram a month to his family.

52. Chtashkov VI. B. Liquidation of the camp

In the spring of 1940, rumours began to circulate among the prisoners that the camp was shortly to be liquidated and the inmates freed and "sent home". These rumours probably originated with the camp authorities. Yet another "record" was taken, concerning the prisoners' former place of employment and the nature of it and they were asked how and where they wished to settle. Enquiries were also made about lost possessions and a special medical commission arrived to test each individual's fitness for work. Then in March 1940, Polish decorations and money, "deposited" at the time of earlier searches, were in part returned to the prisoners. All this completely convinced the inmates that they were soon to return home, particularly the police, who did not consider themselves soldiers and therefore saw no reason why they should be kept in a prisoner of war camp for the duration of the war.

In the first days of April 1940, the liquidation of the camp began. From 3.4.40 onwards, names of those to leave were read out almost daily, occasionally with a few days interval. Prior to their departure, prisoners had to go to the cinema with all their possessions for search.

After they had been searched, the prisoners were immediately taken out of the camp and either driven in lorries or marched on foot to the nearest railway station. From the moment of leaving the cinema, all contact was out between those departing and those remaining in the camp. Hence the latter knew nothing of the method of search in the cinema or of what happened to the convoys.

In order to give a more festive air to the departure, the camp authorities organised a band to play as the convoys left. This produced an excellent effect on the prisoners. According to rumours
originating from Soviet officials, the convoys travelled to Brest Litovsk in passenger coaches, were well fed and could establish contact with the local population. One of the prisoners, having heard from a Soviet official that convoys were escorted by a strong guard with machine guns and police dogs, suggested to his fellows that those leaving Ostashkov were not sent home, but were rather taken to labour camps in the North of Russia. He was decried as a scare-monger.

The daily convoys were composed of between 60 and 300 people. Prisoners remaining in the camp tried in vain to discover by what system the lists were drawn up. In each convoy there was a preponderance of policemen, who were in the majority at Ostashkov, together with soldiers, Military Frontier Guards, civil frontier guards and a few officers.

About 20 of the first convoys disappeared without trace and nothing is known of the fate of the prisoners. From the convoy of 28.4.40 alone a few dozen people were found, and it is on their reports that the fragmentary description of that convoy's fate is based.

This was one of the largest convoys, containing about 300 people. On arrival at the cinema the prisoners concerned were divided into groups of 60, according to lists, and were then searched. Articles issued to them in the camp were taken away, as well as any sharp instruments, notes and papers. After the search, each group in turn was taken over to the mainland, where they were met by a very strong guard, consisting of about 30 armed soldiers with two machine guns and a few specially trained police dogs. At the Ostashkov railway station each group was loaded separately into a prison truck. When all the groups were on board the train moved off and after a few days arrived at Viazma station. Here it stood for several days, during which time some of the trucks were taken off, with the prisoners still inside, and were sent further in an unknown direction.

The last truck arrived on 4.5.40 at Babinnino station, where the prisoners were disembarked and driven by road to the camp at Pavlishchev Bor.

In the group transferred to Pavlishchev Bor were two officers of the Military Frontier Guard, a few police officers and a dozen or more privates. All the rest of this group of 60 were policemen. On account of the strict isolation of individual groups, prisoners taken to Pavlishchev Bor knew nothing of the composition or subsequent fate of other groups of the convoy of 28.4.40.

Two further groups were transferred from Ostashkov to Pavlishchev Bor. One, which left Ostashkov on 13.5.40, contained about 60 persons including 5 officers. But during the journey some ten or twenty sick people were separated from this group and taken to hospital under the care of an Army doctor, Captain Trzeciak. A few days later the last group of 19 prisoners left Ostashkov. In one of these groups were, besides soldiers and policemen, a few prisoners who had been evacuated by the Polish authorities in 1939 from the Holy Cross Prison in which the worst types of criminals normally were imprisoned.

-----------------------------

1. According to other reports these trucks went to Bologoi station. (Witness 26.)
CHAPTER V

THE CAMP AT PAVLISHCHEV BOR (JUKHOV)

33. Pavlishchev Bor I, (September - October 1939)

Camp for prisoners from the ranks (see map at the end of PART ONE)

The camp at Pavlishchev Bor, also known as the Jukhov camp, was one of the larger camps several times used for accommodating Polish prisoners of war in 1939-41. It was situated on the former estate of a Russian landowner. There at the end of September 1939 about 8,500 prisoners including 400 officers were held in an area of about 11 acres surrounded by barbed wire.

At that time the Pavlishchev Bor camp was not at all adopted for accommodating large numbers of people. The inmates lived in the stables, often sleeping on the manure. There were no bunks, pillows or blankets. The food consisted of thin soup and 600 grammes of half-baked pleck bread once a day. There was not sufficient water even to drink, and certainly not for washing and laundry; consequently the prisoners were infested with lice. There were so few latrines, that the whole camp was fouled by excrement, infecting the water cisterns and the food, which was left lying on the ground.

Fearing an outbreak of epidemics if the prisoners were kept any longer under these conditions, the Soviet authorities began to evacuate the camp. At the end of October 1939, officers were transferred to Kozielsk and the ranks deported in groups with the assurance that they were going home. This, however, was not entirely true, for at least some of the groups from Pavlishchev Bor were sent to the Donetz Basin, where they were compelled to work in the mines.

54. Pavlishchev Bor II, (April - June 1940)

Camp for officers transferred from Kozielsk, Starobiel and Ostashkov.

When the first two convoys of officer prisoners from Kozielsk and Starobiel arrived at Pavlishchev Bor at the end of April 1940, the camp was empty. After the arrival, in the first half of May, of additional groups from the three camps mentioned above, the inmates of the camp at Pavlishchev Bor numbered about 450 persons (compared to 8,500 in the preceding period). The pleasant country surrounding the camp was particularly beautiful in the spring. Prisoners arriving there for the first time were delighted; those who had known the camp in the autumn of 1939, could not believe they were in the same place, as the life of the camp was not organised quite satisfactorily.

Always convinced that they would be liberated and sent either home or to neutral countries, the prisoners did not expect to stay long at Pavlishchev Bor. They firmly believed that they themselves and the prisoners deported from the main camps in other groups would leave the U.S.S.R. after a certain period of "psychological quarantine" and feeding up. But a few days after the arrival of the last party from Kozielsk, most of the political agents from there arrived at Pavlishchev Bor and started "interrogations" on similar lines to those at that former camp. At first the prisoners were told that only a few additional details were required and that they, like their fellow prisoners in other groups would in fact be liberated. The political agents attributed their own presence at Pavlishchev Bor in such large numbers to the fact that the rest of

1. See Diagram at the end of PART ONE.
the prisoners had already been handed over to the German authorities.

But by the end of May the excitement which had prevailed among the prisoners of the prospect of their release began to die down with the realization that they would have to remain at Pavlishtohev Bor for some time, perhaps even until the end of the war. Cessing to believe in the assurances of the political agents that they would be shortly returning home, they also began to doubt whether their fellow prisoners had been liberated and inclined rather to the opinion that the others, like themselves, had been sent to camps similar to Pavlishtohev Bor.

As there were in all only about 450 people in the camp, the group of officers and men who had previously declared themselves to be "Volksdeutsch" became rather noticeable, especially as they ostentatiously spoke in German and did everything they could to get themselves recalled to Germany.

There were also there some people who in the other camps had listened willingly to Soviet propaganda among them Colonel Berling. They had been careful not to reveal their Soviet sympathies while at Kozielsk and Starobilisk, but now began to let their opinions be known at Pavlishtohev Bor. The great majority of the prisoners were not in any way influenced by them.

As the "interrogations" continued, new "cases" were brought against some of the prisoners. During the short time spent at Pavlishtohev Bor, several officers were taken away, most of them to prisons in Moscow. A few of these, after some months of special interrogations rejoined their fellow prisoners, who were by that time at Grizovietz.

In the first days of June 1940, a large quantity of planks arrived at the camp and the prisoners, who had not hitherto been obliged to work, were ordered to build tiers of bunks for dormitories. This indicated that the population of the camp was to be considerably increased in the near future. Some of the prisoners, sceptical about reports that the rest of the prisoners from Kozielsk Starobilisk and Ostashkov had been "sent home" regarded this as a confirmation of their doubts and expected the arrival of at least some of their former fellow-prisoners. This expectation, however, was not fulfilled, for on the morning of 13.6.40 the prisoners were ordered to prepare themselves for departure. They travelled for several days via Moscow to the camp at Grizovietz near Vologda (see the map – also a diagram).

**TABLE OF CONVOYS FROM THE MAIN CAMPS TO PAVLISHTOHEV BOR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Convoy</th>
<th>Date of Arrival</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26.4.40</td>
<td>Kozielsk</td>
<td>26.4.40 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.4.40</td>
<td>Ostashkov</td>
<td>4.5.40 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5.40</td>
<td>Kozielsk</td>
<td>14.5.40 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5.40</td>
<td>Starobilisk</td>
<td>17.5.40 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5.40</td>
<td>Ostashkov</td>
<td>18.5.40 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5.40</td>
<td>Starobilisk</td>
<td>20.5.40 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.6.40</td>
<td>Approximate number of prisoners at Pavlish to hev Bor</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

55. Pavlish to hev Bor III (June 1940 – June 1941). P.O.W. camp for former internees from Lithuania and Latvia.

After the camp at Pavlish to hev Bor had been emptied of all the prisoners a few convoys of P.O.W.
and men, who had been interned in Lithuania and Latvia, were brought there in the second half of June and in July and August 1940. The total number of prisoners at Pavlishtohev Bor at this period was about 5,600 persons.

As in the camp for internees at Kozielak (Lozielsk III, see p.49), detailed "evidence" was taken regarding all those interned at Pavlishtohev Bor. Communist propaganda was also disseminated, but with very little success.

In spite of their transfer to Soviet territory the official legal status of the internees remained unaltered. The camp authorities were constantly emphasizing their strict adherence to the appropriate regulations of international law. In accordance with these regulations, during the first few months internees were used exclusively for work inside the camp. It was not until the spring of 1941 that they were sent to work outside. When this occurred the internees invoked "international regulations" and a dispute arose, which probably hastened the decision of the Soviet authorities to deport all internees capable of work, to the far North of Russia for hard labour, like ordinary criminals.

In May 1941, convoys began to leave Pavlishtohev Bor (and simultaneously Kozielak) for Murmansk. By June 1941, the camp at Pavlishtohev Bor was already quite empty.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CAMP AT GRIZAOVIETZ

56. (June - September, 1941.) Officers' Camp

The camp at Grizaovietz (see the map), was first used to accommodate Polish prisoners of war, both officers and men, in September 1939, when there were about 3,000 inmates. At the end of 1939 the Poles were taken away and replaced by the Finnish P.O.W.'s; the camp being used again for Poles in June 1940 (see the diagram). The camp itself was an ancient castle around which one storied buildings had been erected after the Revolution. It was situated about 8 miles from the railway station of Grizaovietz, in Vologda province.

Prisoners brought to Grizaovietz from Pavlishtohev Bor on 18.6.40 lived on the whole in worse conditions than in the latter camp, but were much better off than they had been in the three large camps. Relations with the authorities were reasonably good until the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, when they considerably deteriorated.

As it was a "show camp" for Polish prisoners of war in the U.S.S.R., Grizaovietz enjoyed various privileges and a certain amount of autonomy. Particularly important from the prisoners' point of view was the fact that after a certain time they were allowed to run the camp kitchen themselves and were also permitted to grow vegetables in the camp grounds.

The "investigations" begun in the large camps and continued at Pavlishtohev Bor were still carried out at Grizaovietz by the same groups of political agents, who had been transferred there along with the prisoners. In the first months at Grizaovietz the political agents, as
before assured the prisoners that they were to be sent home "like your friends". After a time, however, they ceased to talk in this way and the prisoners were told that they would remain in the camp until the end of the war.

Either in connection with the investigations or for some other reason, individual prisoners were from time to time taken from Griazovietz to prison for special interrogations and a few others who had been removed, at one time or another, from three large camps were brought in. During the winter a dozen or more of the 30 declared Volksdeutsche were released at the request of the German ambassador. The total number of prisoners remained at about the 350-400 throughout this period.

The majority of prisoners stayed at Griazovietz for about one year, themselves organising the life of the camp; the Soviet authorities giving them a fairly free hand. A "club" and library were opened in the camp; permission was given for books to be obtained from outside the camp and for the holding of organised instruction in various subjects; a special official, a woman was put in charge of cultural and educational activities by the Soviets.

The prisoners were not forced to work, although in principle work was compulsory for the ranks and junior officers. Prisoners were employed mostly for tasks inside the camp, particularly for clearing up the ruins of a church previously demolished. When attempts were made to use prisoners for work outside the camp disputes arose.

The prisoners, appealing to international conventions and to the regulations at Kosielsk and other camps, protested against being thus employed, but the camp authorities replied that "bourgeois" rules and conventions were not binding on Soviet officials, and from time to time sent groups of them to work outside the camp.

The rather better treatment of prisoners at Griazovietz was due to the fact that it was a "show" camp and that the Soviet authorities planned to use the prisoners for political ends. In the autumn of 1940 the formation of a red Polish Army in Russia with the help of captive officers was mooted. "Just a year ago", said Stalin in a conversation with the Polish ambassador on November 14th 1941, "I remember that it was exactly a year ago, that I spoke to Wanda Wasilewska and asked her to try to find Polish officers who would undertake the formation of a Polish Army in the U.S.S.R., I emphasise that it was a year ago, that is at the time when the non-aggression pact with the Germans was still in force. Wasilewska did not find any such officers."

At the same time as these plans of the highest state authorities of the U.S.S.R. were having a good influence on the treatment of prisoners at Griazovietz the political agents in conversation with the prisoners began to hint delicately that the latter should not forget that they were soldiers and that they, therefore, ought to try to keep themselves in training as they might be needed in the future. Rumours of the formation of a Polish army in the U.S.S.R. were deliberately circulated in the camp.

Systematic propaganda and political action among the prisoners increased. The woman in charge of cultural and educational activities as well as numerous political agents organised frequent discussions and lectures and engaged the prisoners in "private conversations", endeavouring to convert them to the Soviet ideology and to the idea of "Polish-Soviet co-operation".
These activities slowly began to produce positive results, but on a much smaller scale than the Soviet authorities had expected. This cooperative success of the persistent official propaganda at Griazovietz, in contrast to its complete failure at Kozielak, Starobialsk and Osmaleshkov was quite natural. The "pro-Soviet" group recruited mainly from officers transferred from Kozielak and Starobialsk, comprised about 50 persons, representing about 1% of the population of the large camps (8,500 persons). After the liquidation of the three large camps, all these individuals came to Griazovietz, where the number of inmates varied from 350 to 400 persons. Here, therefore, the group of 50 persons represented not 1%, but more than 12% of the total population. This was a small minority, but a minority which was no longer a "quantité négligeable", particularly in view of the support given to them by the camp authorities. This group felt itself to be in a stronger position at Griazovietz began to come out into the open.

While the majority of the prisoners assumed a negative attitude towards communist propaganda and boycotted the meetings and lectures, a certain number of people refused to participate in this boycott and not only ostentationally took part in meetings arranged by the camp authorities, but openly maintained close contact with the political agents and expressed pro-Soviet sentiments in public. This led to a disturbance among the prisoners which the authorities tried to represent as anti-Semitic activity, attributing it to an "anti-Soviet organisation". With the object of exposing this "organisation", the authorities arrested some of the prisoners and sent a few of them to Moscow for "intensified investigations".

The pro-Soviet group later formed itself into the so-called "Red Corner" and started to work on the Soviet political educational pattern, studying the history of the Communist Party, the Soviet Constitution celebrating the anniversaries of the Revolution etc.

After the "Corner" had been functioning for a few weeks, the attitude taken towards it by individual prisoners became more or less apparent. On 10.10.40 the authorities withdrew from the camp 7 high ranking officers who, it is believed, were willing - in the opinion of the Soviets, - to cooperate with them in carrying out their plans for the formation of a red Polish Army. In mid-November more officers were taken away, most of whom had taken an active part in the work of the "Corner".

These two groups of prisoners travelled by passenger train to Moscow, where in the Butyrki prison conversations took place which will be recorded in the following Chapter. During these conversations, some of the prisoners were "disqualified" on account of their too stubborn attitude, and were transferred to a special camp at Putyvl. Here they were kept under very good conditions until June 1941. They were then sent back to Griazovietz where they remained isolated from the other prisoners until 1.8.41, that is until after the signing of the Polish-Soviet agreement.

The fate of the officers who "qualified" for further discussions will be also described in the next Chapter. They, and the great majority of the prisoners realising that they were to stay at Griazovietz for some considerable time, demanded the return of the right to correspond with their families, which had been suspended since April 1940, when the evacuation of the three large camps had begun. After some delay, the authorities finally gave permission for the resumption
of correspondence in October 1940, but imposed additional restrictions on the contents of letters to those imposed before in the three large camps. Prisoners were forbidden to mention the name of Grzazovietz and ordered to give their address as: Moscow, General Post Office, Post Box No. 11/12. They were also forbidden to refer to other persons in the camp or to give any information concerning their fellow-prisoners. (Witness 5).

This last restriction was all the more embarrassing because, after the long interruption in correspondence with Poland, a shower of letters arrived from people there enquiring about the fate of fellow-prisoners and friends who had been in the Grzazovietz prisoners in the large camps. It should be mentioned that from April - May 1940, letters from Poland addressed to the large camps at Kozielak, Starobielak and Ostareshkov were returned by the Soviet postal service stamped "Retour - Parti". At first the families in Poland did not realize the meaning of this, attributing it to the probable transfer of the addressees to another camp. So when after an interval of six months some of them received letters from their relations bearing a Moscow address, the news immediately spread to others, who continued to wait vainly for news of their relations. Disturbed by the prolonged silence, many families in Poland begged their friends to ask the Grzazovietz inmates for any information they could give about the prisoners from whom no letters had been received. Although it was forbidden by the camp authorities to give even negative replies, some of the prisoners nevertheless managed to make their relations understand that the persons concerned were not with them and that they knew nothing of their fate.

These letters from Poland confirmed the belief among the Grzazovietz prisoners that, in spite of the statements of the political agents, their fellow-prisoners who had left the large camps with other convoys had not been released. Assuming that they had been sent to other camps similar to Grzazovietz, and desiring to clarify the matter, they raised the question several times in conversation with representatives of the camp authorities. The answers given by the N.K.V.D. men varied. "During the time I spent at Grzazovietz", writes one of the prisoners, "the inmates often asked about the fate of their comrades from Kozielak, Starobielak and Ostareshkov. They always received confused and evasive answers. Major Elman was the most honest, simply stating that he could say nothing. Alexeyrovitch betrayed a certain embarrassment, but, it was said, that he accepted letters addressed to the vanished people. No answers were received to these letters either in the camp or in Poland. (Witness 4.) The prisoners left no stones unturned in their efforts to clear up this question.

Another prisoner writes: "When special delegate of the N.K.V.D. arrived at the camp from Moscow, we asked him where our comrades were. He answered that there were no officers except us in prisoner of war camps and that ours was the only camp containing officers. We asked him what had happened to them, and he answered that they had gone home." (Witness 15).

From the autumn of 1940 to the late spring of 1941 the relatively tolerable life at Grzazovietz continued without any important events or changes occurring.

---

1. One of the prisoners was asked in a letter about the fate of "Milo, Tonio and Morion" who had been with him in one of the large camps. In his next letter he asked the same question of his correspondent in Poland thereby making it plain that he himself did not know the answer.
From June 1941 onwards, and particularly after the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, the conditions in the camp completely changed. First of all the number of inmates increased fourfold.

On July 2nd over a thousand internees arrived from Kozielek, as this camp had been evacuated on account of the German advance. This naturally affected the general living conditions for the worse. Political reasons were also to a large extent responsible for the deterioration.

As a result of the general military and political situation, the Soviet authorities decided to intensify the hitherto more discreet propaganda aimed at gaining the sympathy of the prisoners to the idea of joining the Red Army and, particularly, at persuading them to act as diversionary parachutists to be dropped behind the German lines. Counting on the violently anti-German sentiments prevalent among the Poles, and hoping that the activities of the specially trained agitators and of the pro-Soviet nests at Kozielek had done something to break down the general unwillingness to co-operate with the Soviet authorities, the latter started an energetic campaign for the immediate participation of Poles in the fight against Germany. But they met with disappointment. With the exception of a few dozen individual who, for one reason or another, had already decided to join the Red Army, the vast majority of Polish prisoners and internees firmly adhered to the viewpoint that, as Polish soldiers, they were subordinate to the orders of the Polish Government and Commander-in-Chief, whose commands they would obey without reserve, and that without orders they could take no decisions.

In vain the political agents tried to argue the illegality of the passing on of the presidency from

Mussolini to Raszkiwicz and the illegal status of the Polish Government in London, formed by a "self-appointed president". The attitude of the prisoners remained unchanged.

This attitude of the overwhelming majority of prisoners and internees at Grisssovits maintained not only towards the camp authorities but also towards a special commission which arrived from Moscow, caused the Soviets to decide - in accordance with their general pattern of thought - that it was the result of the activities of a secret anti-Soviet organisation in the camp. After recruiting all officers as "Fascists" and "Germany-philes", on 21.7.41 the Soviet authorities arrested about ten prisoners on charges of favouring the Germans and conducting pro-German activities in the camp. Those who remained were subjected to various repressive measures aimed at breaking their resistance.

One of these measures was a considerable reduction in food rations. Hunger reigned in the camp and the prisoners started catching crows and sparrows. Despite this state of affairs they still refused to make any concessions. On the contrary, their attitude became increasingly intransitory and disputes with the camp authorities were more frequent. The situation was so tense that the senior Polish officer in the camp

1. Those arrested on 21.7.41 were transferred from the camp to the prison at Velogda, where they were specially interrogated in connection with the alleged pro-German conspiracy. When the representatives of the Polish civil and military authorities arrived in the middle of August 1941 in Russia and hearing of these arrests they intervened on behalf of the arrested officers. In consequence, the matter was cleared up and the groundless accusations, based on false information, had been
General Wolkowicki, appealed to the camp commandant, in all the name of the officers, saying that if the former rations were not restored a hunger strike would be proclaimed and rioting might well follow.

These feverish efforts to induce the prisoners to put themselves at the disposal of the Soviet authorities, thereby providing the letter with a political trump card, were made at the time when the Sikorski-Nalsky conversations had been in progress in London for about a fortnight. These efforts completely failed. On 30.7.41 the Soviet Government concluded an agreement with the "self-appointed and illegal" Polish Government in London. That agreement regularised Polish-Soviet relations and announced the formation of Polish Armed Forces in the U.S.S.R. After its conclusion the former normal rations were restored in the camp and the harassing of prisoners ceased. Nevertheless they were confined in the camp for almost another month, as it was not until 21.8.41 that they were officially informed of the "amnesty" and the first five people were released, the Polish ambassador in Moscow having specially asked for them. On 24.8.41 representatives of the Polish Military Authorities - General Anders and General Bohus-Zmysko, preceded by Colonel Patrokoniski arrived at Grzazoviez and the recruiting of the prisoners to the "Polish Armed Forces in the U.S.S.R." began. They nearly all reported and were accepted, with the exception of the 10-20 remaining Volksdeutsche and a not much larger number of Red Army enthusiasts.

On 1.9.41 the Soviet guards were withdrawn and for a few days the Grzazoviez camp became the first camp of the Polish Armed Forces in the U.S.S.R.

---

1. Exposed. On 19.9.41 the officers concerned were released from the Vologda prison and sent back to Grzazoviez. On 9.10.41 they left Grzazoviez to join the Polish Armed Forces then in the process of formation in the U.S.S.R.

---

CHAPTER VII

"VILLA OF DELIGHT."

The tripartite German-Italian-Japanese Pact, concluded on 27.8.40 and the occupation of Rumania on 7.10.40 must have warned the Soviet Government of the approaching conflict with Germany; it was then that the highest political authorities of the U.S.S.R. began to consider the possibility of playing the Polish card.

The idea occurred to them of forming a "Polish National Army" to co-operate with the Soviets and of using for this purpose the officers and men of the Polish Army who were still in the Soviet Union. They immediately set about putting this plan into action. By order of the central authorities 7 senior officers from among the approximately 400 prisoners at Grzazoviez were sent to Moscow on 10.10.1940 and the next day 21 more Polish officers from among the 2,500 internees at Kozielisk brought there from the Baltic States in the summer of 1940, were also sent there.

In Moscow both groups completely separated from one another were kept in the Butyrki prison but they were not treated as prisoners, but rather as "guests of the N.K.V.D.". It is not possible to establish from the information available whether the individuals composing the two groups were selected by the central authorities in Moscow or whether the choice was left to the discretion of the camp authorities. In any case the results of "interrogations" and "investigations" were undoubtedly taken into consideration when forming these groups, members of which were selected on the basis of two criteria: the first - rank, popularity and general ability and the second - willingness to co-operate with the Soviet authorities. These diverse criteria were
unknown to the other prisoners, who were under the impression that the personnel for these groups were chosen at random.

Even the officers taken to Moscow did not realise the purpose of their journey and were therefore surprised by their reception. "At Butyrki", writes one of the members of the Grisoviez group, "we were not searched on arrival, as I expected....The Butyrki commandant, a General of the N.K.V.D., told us that we were in the Butyrki prison. Another surprise was that we were given excellent bread, real butter, 6 lumps of sugar each and ten. Afterwards we had a bath and were taken to our cells. They told us that we were not prisoners." (Witness 20).

The same evening the highest officials of the N.K.V.D. had a long conversation with the prisoners, wishing to ascertain personally to what extent the people sent to Moscow would answer the purpose for which they were required. According to the account of some of the officers, they were interviewed on that day by: the Deputy Chief People's Commissar for Home Affairs (N.K.V.D.), Mierkolov; General Raykhman, number four in the N.K.V.D. hierarchy, and Colonel Jegorov.

An officer who was disqualified by the Soviet officials on the grounds of being unwilling to cooperate gives the following account of the proceedings: "Our hosts showed a certain courtesy towards us, but immediately began to talk about our attitude towards the Germans and Soviets. They wanted to find out to what extent we were prepared to fight the Germans and were interested in our outlook on the political situation in Europe as a whole - particularly with regard to Poland. They firmly denied the existence of a "Polish Government in London, attempting to prove the "illegality of Raczkiiewicz's assumption of the office of "President of Poland, and consequently the illegality of the whole Government, formed by the "self-appointed" "president. (Witness 18). Because he questioned these views, this officer was separated from his fellows and put into a cell by himself. The remaining six officers were considered eligible for further discussions and the same day were transferred from Butyrki prison to Lubianka, the internal prison of the N.K.V.D. Here for a period of nearly three weeks the heads of the People's Commissariat for Home Affairs kept them under their personal observation and influence.

After numerous conversations between the highest officials of the N.K.V.D. and individual prisoners had taken place, at the end of October several collective interviews were held, first with Mierkolov and then with Beria himself. In these last discussions a concrete proposal was put forward for the formation of "national" Polish units in the Red Army, which would co-operate with the latter and receive its help and support.

The representatives of the Soviet authorities emphasised that they were concerned with quality rather than quantity and proposed to start with one well organised and well equipped armoured division, "as strong as an armoured fist" in the words of Beria, who hoped by this description to inspire his listeners. The Polish officers present at these conversations agreed in principle to the Soviet proposal, but doubted whether it

1. People's Commissar for Home Affairs.
would be possible to recruit sufficient officers for the formation of a division from among their fellow-prisoners at Griazovietz. Lt.Col.Berling pointed out that at Griazovietz there was only a very small minority of prisoners-of-war from the three large camps and expressed the hope that it would be possible to find among the whole mass of other prisoners sufficient volunteers for the organisation of a division. To this Beria is said to have replied that the Soviet authorities had made a "great mistake" about the other Polish officers and that they could not be counted on for the proposed organisation of a "Polish" division. 1.

After the agreement to the Soviet proposals had thus been obtained, the group of six Polish officers was transferred from the Lubianka prison to a luxurious villa, later generally known as the "Villa of Delight", situated about 30 M. from Moscow in the neighbourhood of Malakhovka.

Here the future organisers of the Polish red army were to go through special ideological and political training. Though nominally prisoners and guarded by the N.K.V.D., they enjoyed conditions luxurious by Soviet standards: well-furnished rooms, numerous servants, good food, a well-stocked political and military library, and a wireless. Their correspondence, though censored, was in practice unrestricted and they could obtain passes for Moscow. In return for this they were obliged with the help of two Soviet political officers attached to them to read what they were given, listen to the wireless and "think".

After a few days at Malakhovka, one of the six officers began to doubt whether he was doing the right thing and having communicated these doubts to Soviet officers, he was sent back to the Butyrki prison and put into the cell occupied by the officer who had previously been disqualified. In the middle of November there arrived from Griazovietz a further six officers, whom Lt. Col. Berling had mentioned in previous conversations as suitable persons to be used for the carrying out of the Soviet plan. Lt. Col. Berling in spite of his low rank, was clearly assuming the leadership of the whole group, and shortly afterwards the N.K.V.D. appointed him "president of the Malekhnova community".

While the group chosen by the Soviet authorities at Griazovietz expanded as a result of Colonel Berling's initiative and energy, the group of internees from Kosieleck (III), designated for the same task, diminished considerably during the combing out process in Moscow. As already mentioned (page 125) from among the 2,500 internees at Kosieleck only 21 were sent to Moscow. Here like the Griazovietz prisoners, they were first confined in the Butyrki prison, where they were kept under close observation and afterwards classified. This went on for considerably longer than in the case of the Griazovietz group. After several weeks of "observation" at Butyrki 11 officers were sent to the Lubianka prison, where further observation and discussions lasted several

1. During October and November 1940, the Russians tried to draw Polish soldiers into their service. To this end conversations took place with out officers. During these discussions Lt. Col. Berling suggested that it would be possible to recruit volunteers from Kosieleck. In the presence of Lt. Col. Berling, Colonel Gorczyński, Lt. Col. Bukojenski andLt. Col. Tyszynski, Beria replied "I a nimi zdalni bolshiu oshibku! (We have made with them a great mistake). This meant that prisoners from Kosieleck were not to be considered. At about the same time Mierkow, discussing the same subject with me, said "u nas wyszla kaaka to oshibka! (with them some mistake has occurred for us) so evidently prisoners from Kosieleck were out of question." (Witness 20.)
weeks more. Five junior officers were finally chosen as "candidates" for the "Villa of Delight" and the remaining six were sent back to Butyrki.

This selection having been made, the five "chosen" junior officers were visited in their cells on Christmas Eve 1940, by Colonel Gorczynski and Colonel Berling. The former was dressed in the full uniform of a Colonel of the Polish Army, the latter in civilian clothes. The purpose of their visit was to dine with their brother officers on a day so depressing for those separated from their families in Poland. The officers were thunderstruck by this visit. When after dinner both Colonels began to speak of the formation of a Polish Army in the U.S.S.R, and of close collaboration with the Soviets, one of the younger ones firmly opposed them and expressed his indignation at such an attitude being taken by high-ranking officers. He was consequently sent back to Butyrki where he shared a cell with the two disqualified officers from Griazovietz. The four remaining officers were transported to Malakhovka. One of them gives the following description of his first impression of the "Villa of Delight": "On alighting (from the car), we were met by a group of people all speaking in Polish but in various costumes - half military and half civilian. The inhabitants of the villa "received us cordially, assuring us that we would have "every convenience at our disposal, even a car to take "us to the cinema in Moscow. After an elaborate evening meal, served by a good-looking and well-dressed "maid, we were immediately invited to Colonel Berling's "room. He informed us that he was head of the group "and that a great task awaited us. When I asked him "whether it was possible to leave the villa he answered "that I might do so at any time, but that I should "be put somewhere where I would not be able to see "the light of day". (Witness No. 21).

The arrival of four internees completed the formation of the "collective", which for nearly six months intensively studied the communist doctrine. Besides instruction by means of reading, listening to the radio and discussions with Soviet political officers, each member of the "collective" was required to deliver a lecture from time to time in accordance with the programme laid down. In this lecture he had to demonstrate the progress he had made in mastering the communist theory. One of the members of the "source" describes the programme and its execution as follows:

a. Education in the communist spirit of a cadre of future commanders of Polish red units.
b. Preparation of a specially trained "nest" for future propaganda activities and political action among the Poles.
c. The basic slogan "Red Poland, the 17th Soviet Republic".

In accordance with this political programme, lectures were arranged, during which the pupils read out essays on revolutionary and communist subjects both political and military. The purpose of these essays was to convert us to the socialist regime and convince us that the capitalist regime was already on its last legs. (Witness 21).

After four months a further two "pupils" failed: the writer of the above report and another (the third) officer from the group of seven from Griazovietz. On 26.3.41 they were sent back to the Butyrki prison, where they shared a cell with the three previously "disqualified"
officers. The remaining thirteen officers finished the "course" and were considered as an entirely pro-Soviet "collective".

On 1.5.31 the "pupils", dressed in civilian clothes, watched the military parade on the Red Square in Moscow.

On 25.6.41, after the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, the inhabitants of the villa were taken to Moscow and quartered in apartment 16, 11/22, Neapolitan Street. Here they were guarded by armed N.K.V.D. units and were forbidden to leave the apartment even during German air raids. In Moscow it was suggested to members of the "course" that they should take part in Soviet diversionary activities in Poland. No-one volunteered but they were not subjected to much pressure from the Soviet authorities who still counted on forming Polish units, of which the "pupils" were to form the political cadre. When the intransigent attitude of the majority of Grinzoviet prisoners destroyed all hope of forming Polish units (see pp.118 above) Berling informed the "pupils" in the middle of July 1941, that there would be no Polish army in the U.S.S.R. and tried to induce them to join the Red Army.

At the same time the "pupils" are said to have received Soviet passports, a grant of 1000 rubles each and permission to move about freely in Moscow. But the political situation again changed and on 30.7.41 the Polish-Soviet agreement was signed. In consequence of this the "pupils" did not go to the Red Army but reported, as Polish prisoners of war freed by the Soviet authorities, to the Polish Military Mission which arrived in Moscow on 14.8.41. They were accepted and, numbering 13 in all, were sent to organisation centres of the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY OF PART ONE.

General Observations about P.O.W. Camps.

1. Numerical Data.

The above description of the life of Polish prisoners of war in the three large camps - Kosiolak, Starobialsk and Ostashkov - was devoted mainly to the period during which those camps were used as officers' camps (Kosiolak II, Starobialsk II) or as special camps for police, Military Police and Frontier Guards (Ostashkov II).

That period extends from November 1939 to May 1940, when all three camps were evacuated as described above.

The total numbers of inmates who passed through the three camps during that time were approximately as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kosiolak</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starobialsk</td>
<td>3,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostashkov</td>
<td>6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14,920</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Included in this total were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>8,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ranks - police</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Police, military Frontier Guard (Ostashkov II)</td>
<td>6,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of this total less than 400 persons were found alive those having either arrived at Grinzovietz via Pavlishitchez Boc or as in the case of a certain number having been taken individually to prisons for further "interrogation" before the liquidation of the camps and subsequently released under the "amnesty" resulting
from the Polish-Soviet agreement of 30.7.41.

The rest, that is about 14,500 persons, including about 8,200 officers, were not found alive.

Found alive - 3%
Disappeared - 97%

2. Central authorities responsible for Polish prisoners of war.

This description of the life of the prisoners in the camps at Kozielisk, Starobielsk of Ostashkov is based on reports, diaries and notes of prisoners who subsequently left the U.S.S.R.

In the nature of things the prisoners in the camps were isolated from the outside world. They did not know what was happening outside the barbed wire of the camp, and much that went on inside the camp was concealed from them. They had no knowledge of the details of the administration and organisation of the camp, the names and functions of Soviet officials, the aims and purposes of the orders issued etc. It is therefore impossible to point a clear and accurate picture of the life of the prisoners and this fact should always be borne in mind.

But there is one striking feature namely that in the three camps, situated several hundred miles apart, the conditions of life were very similar differing only in the small details.

In all three camps:
- in November 1939, officers of the Polish Armed Forces, officers and ranks of the police, frontier and prison guards were grouped as particularly suspicious elements,
- at the same time there was a general change in the attitude taken towards the officers and a marked favouring of the higher ranks, while labour regulations applicable to camp inmates in practice were not strictly enforced;
- many and similar questionaires had to be answered by the prisoners;
- interrogations of prisoners were conducted along similar lines. They were political and social rather than military in character, and were of the type employed in investigations of criminal cases - a dossier was made up for each prisoner, containing the notes on his "case", photographs and fingerprints;
- just before Christmas 1939, chaplains of all denominations were removed;
- in December 1939, prisoners were given permission to write letters and encouraged to disclose their contacts with foreign countries;
- almost simultaneously the "evacuation" of all three camps was begun, the prisoners being given the same explanation - namely that they were being sent home;
- the method of "evacuation", size of parties removed and dates of departure were the same;
- groups leaving on about 25.4.40 and 12.5.40 went to Pavlishchev Bor and later to Griaznowitz, all groups being treated in a similar manner during the journey;
- final liquidation of the camps took place at approximately the same time.

All this goes to suggest that the Soviet commandants were subordinated to a central authority, which regulated by detailed instructions the life of the camps.

At the time of the liquidation of the three camps, Soviet officials openly attributed their inability to change the composition of particular groups to the fact that their orders were issued by the central authorities in Moscow. (see pp. 47, 96).

The question naturally arises: what was this authority which decided every detail of the life of the camps, and decided on their liquidation and on the fate of all the convoys, both those which finally arrived at Grossraets and those which disappeared?

All three camps were supervised by officers of the N.K.V.D., which organized and administered them. (Starobilsk II even bore the official title: N.K.V.D. Prisoner of War Camp). On the other hand it is known that the department of the N.K.V.D. which controls all camps in the U.S.S.R. is the so-called GULAG - (Glavnoye Upravlenye Lagerey - Camps Chief Command). But it appears that the three camps concerned were not controlled by the department, judging by the assurances given by General Nasiedkin, chief of the "GULAG", to a plan-potentially sent by General Anders to investigate the case of the missing officers (see below Chapter XIII). If this declaration of General Nasiedkin is accepted, then it must be assumed that the three camps concerned were controlled by some other branch of the central N.K.V.D. authorities, one which may well have been specially created for this purpose. Whether the fate of the camps
appears that the three camps concerned were not controlled by the department, judging by the assurances given by General Nasiedkin, chief of the "GULAG", to a plenipotentiary sent by General Anders to investigate the case of the missing officers (see below Chapter XIII). If this declaration of General Nasiedkin is accepted, then it must be assumed that the three camps concerned were controlled by some other branch of the central N.K.V.D. authorities, one which may well have been especially created for this purpose. Whether the fate of the camps...
and their inmates was decided by some such unknown brand of N.K.V.D., or by some other, higher authority, it has not been possible to ascertain.
AFTER THE POLISH-SOViet TREATY of 1921.

CHAPTER VIII

THE POLISH-SOVIET AGREEMENT OF 30.7.41 AND THE QUESTION OF PRISONERS OF WAR.

When on 22.6.41 the Germans launched an attack on the U.S.S.R., the Polish Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, General Sikorski, in a broadcast on 23.7.41, expressed the hope that in view of the rupture of Soviet-German relations and the cancellation of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, the U.S.S.R. would go back to the position established by the Treaty of Riga, this would lead to the return of normal Polish-Soviet relations and consequently to the liberation of a quarter of a million Polish prisoners of war, then rotting through inactivity in Soviet camps, who could be used to fight in the allied cause.

After this speech, which was understood by world public opinion to be a gesture of reconciliation by Poland towards her recent aggressor, further demarches were made through the medium of the British Government with the object of restoring normal Polish-Soviet relations. In the course of Anglo-Soviet discussions, Ambassador Maisky, accepting in principle the idea of the formation of national armed forces in the U.S.S.R. - Polish, Czechoslovak and Yugoslav - which would cooperate with the Soviet armies in the fight against the

After a long discussion, during which Maisky emphasised the complications which this would introduce, he ultimately agreed to refer the matter to his Government for final decision.

In a note addressed by the Polish Foreign Minister to Mr. Eden on 8.7.41 the immediate release of Polish prisoners of war held in captivity in camps in the U.S.S.R. was laid down as one of the fundamental conditions of a Polish-Soviet agreement. And article 4 of the Polish draft of the Polish-Soviet agreement, dated 12.7.41, stated that "the Government of the U.S.S.R. pledges itself to release immediately and treat as citizens of a friendly State all persons who were Polish citizens on 16.9.39 and are at present on Soviet territory, namely:... those interned in concentration camps as prisoners of war".

On 17.7.41 the Soviet Government proposed that "all practical questions concerning the release of Polish citizens now held captive on the territory of the U.S.S.R. shall be solved in a constructive spirit after the resumption of diplomatic relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R.," but finally agreed to the addition of the following Additional Protocol to the Polish-Soviet agreement signed on 30.7.41:

"1. As soon as diplomatic relations are re-established, the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will grant and amnesty to all Polish citizens who are at present deprived of their freedom on the territory of the U.S.S.R., either as prisoners of war or on other adequate grounds.

2. This Protocol becomes effective simultaneously with the agreement of 30th July, 1941."

General Sikorski, broadcasting to Poland on the occasion of the signing of the Polish-Soviet agreement, pointed out the practical value of the treaty saying: "it enables us to form Polish military units from prisoners of war now languishing somewhere in Russia and longing to fight for Poland....it restores freedom to all Polish citizens, whatever the pretext for their detention on the territory of the U.S.S.R. may be...."

But a considerable part of Polish public opinion was very critical of the text of the agreement. In particular, the wording of the Additional Protocol gave rise to very great objections and many Polish politicians and publicists questioned the use of the term "amnesty" with regard to prisoners of war. Doubts were also expressed as to whether, in view of the wording of the Additional Protocol ("dostatocnye osnowanka - adequate grounds"), all Polish citizens held in the U.S.S.R., on whatever pretext, would in fact regain their liberty. Dissatisfaction with the text of the July agreement was in fact so wide-spread that some ministers resigned from the Government.

After the arrival of Mr. Retinger in Moscow on 11.8.41 as Polish Chargé d'Affaires, the whole Soviet press announced on 12.8.41 that the President of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. had issued a "ukaz" (decree) granting an amnesty to Polish citizens in captivity on the territory of the U.S.S.R. But the text of the decree was not published in the official "Sobranie zakonony" (Statute Book). When the Polish Embassy in the U.S.S.R. approached the N.K.F.D. (Foreign Office) with a request for the authentic text of the decree of 12.8.41, they were presented with a document which read as follows: -
"To grant an amnesty to all Polish citizens who are
"at present deprived of their freedom on the territory
"of the U.S.S.R., either as prisoners of war or on other
"adequate grounds."

"President of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R.
"(signed) M. KALININ

"Secretary of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R.
"(signed) A. GORKIN

"Moscow, Kremlin, 12th August, 1941."

It will be seen that this document repeats word for
word the last part of article I of the Additional Protocol to
the Agreement of 30.7.41., without giving either def-
isitions of the terms used, or any details of the execu-
tion of the general principle proclaimed in the
Additional Protocol and in the Decree. Practical instruc-
tions were undoubtedly given to the Soviet
authorities in secret orders, but they were not made
available to the Polish authorities, who were thus de-
prived of any control over the actual interpretation and
execution of the general principle expressed in the
Decree.

------------------------------

CHAPTER X:

RELEASE OF POLISH SOLDIERS IN THE U.S.S.R.

The first steps in the formation of a Polish armed
Army in U.S.S.R. which made it practically possible for
the Polish servicemen to be released from P.O.W. 's camps followed immediately on the conclusion of the
Military Agreement made in Moscow on 14.8.1941 by Marshal
General Boleslaw-Brzesko who had travelled from London
for that purpose.

General Anders who, after being several times
wounded, fell into the Russian hands in October 1939 and
had been held in Soviet prisons in strict isolation since
that time, was appointed C. in C. of the Polish Armed
Forces in U.S.S.R., by General Sikorski with the approval
of the Soviet authorities, at the first meeting of the
Joint Polish-Soviet committee for the organisation of the
Polish army on the territory of the U.S.S.R., on 16.8.1941,
he demanded to know how many Polish servicemen in Soviet
captivity would be counted on for the formation of the
Polish Army. The Soviet representative, General Panfilov replied
that, according to figures in his possession, servicemen of the former Polish Forces were concentrated mainly
in three centres:

1. in the camp at Grizasovietz – about 1,000 officers

2. in the camps at Jaza and Sundal – about 10,000 other ranks.

3. in the camp at Starkiblaz – about 10,000 other ranks.

General Panfilow added that there were a certain number of Polish citizens in Siberia and in the
Urals, and that the exact figures would be announced later.
Although the figures quoted by General Panfilov which corresponded exactly to those given by M. Maisky on 4.7.41 (see p. 134) were at complete variance with those in possession of the Polish authorities and given by General Sikorski in his conversation with Maisky, the Polish members of the joint commission did not draw attention to this but merely noted it.

A few days later, representatives of the Polish Headquarters in the U.S.S.R. visited the camps specified by the Soviet authorities with the object of recruiting the Polish officers and men held there.

At the Griasovicei officers' camp their reception was particularly ceremonious. On 25.8.41 General Anders and General Szyssko-Bogusz arrived by air, accompanied by a Soviet Liaison Officer, N.K.V.D., General Zhukov. After the generals had been enthusiastically welcomed and speeches had been made, the recruiting commission began its work on the basis of a formal list of prisoners provided by the camp authorities, according to which there were at Griasovicei about 250 prisoners from the camps at Starobielak, Konieplane and Ostashevo and 1,250 internees from Lithuania and Latvia.

On 24-25.8.41 Colonel N. Sulik took over the Polish prisoners in the Suzdal camp, from where the Polish recruiting commission drew, 1,962 soldiers for the Polish Armed Forces, including 19 officers who had hitherto concealed their rank from the Soviet authorities.

On 26.8.41, Colonel Sulik began to take over the prisoners of the camp at Talitza, where there were about 10,000 of them, among whom a few dozen officers were also found.

Both these camps were formed by the Soviet authorities in July, 1941, for other ranks and officers who had been transferred from Konieplane III (see pp. 84-85 above) to the Far North, some to the Komi Soviet Socialist Republic and some to the Kola peninsula, from where they were withdrawn after the outbreak of the Soviet-German war.

Lt. Col. Wisniowski went to Starobielak, where he found in three different camps about 12,000 Polish prisoners, withdrawn from numerous labour camps in South-Eastern Poland after the outbreak of the Soviet-German war (Starobielak IV., see pp. 98-99).

On 30.8.41 General Anders, in a broadcast from Moscow, told the world of the formation of the Polish Armed Forces in the U.S.S.R. On 7.9.41 he sent from Buzuluk, where the Headquarters of the Polish Armed Forces had been established, a report to General Sikorski in London informing him that the Polish prisoner of war camps at Griasovicei, Suzdal, Jura and Starobielak had been liquidated by the Soviet authorities and that Polish soldiers from these camps, numbering 1,300 officers, 27,000 other ranks, were already on their way to Polish military camps in the Volga region. The numbers given in this report were too optimistic as in fact barely 1,400 officers left those camps and these mostly had been former internees in the Baltic States in 1939.

General Anders and his staff hoped to receive a much larger number of officers from prisoners of war camps, and opened discussions on this subject with General Panfilov. He was assured that the rest
of the Polish officers had long ago been released from the P.O.W. camps and had returned home, or in some instances had voluntarily joined the Red Army.

Later on General Anders and the officers who had arrived from London gradually learnt from prisoners liberated from Grzisovitz, details of the liquidation of the officers' camps at Kozialsk, Starobialsk and Ostaschkov in April and May, 1940. The Grzisovitz prisoners told of the convoys which left the three camps, of the first report that these convoys were to be sent to Poland and of the later conjectures that the deported Polish prisoners had not been released, but probably kept in camps similar to Grzisovitz. As the Soviet authorities had on several occasions used the Starobialsk and Kozialsk camps for accommodating various categories of Polish prisoners of war and other prisoners, it was at first difficult to grasp the details of the history of the prisoner of war camps for officers, Kozialsk II and Starobialsk II, especially in view of the fact that after the agreement of 1941 the Soviet authorities handed over to Poland the nearly 12,000 Polish soldiers from the liquidated camp at Starobialsk (Starobialsk IV).

Officers at Polish Army Headquarters in the U.S.S.R. soon realised that many officers who were personally known to them and who they knew for certain had been taken prisoner by the Soviets in September 1939, were still missing. Among these were nearly all those of General Anders' 1939 group, including his chief of staff, Major Soltan; nor was there any sign of Major Fuhran, for many years General Sikorski's adjutant; many other Generals and Colonels were also missing. From the very beginning Polish officers drew the attention of the Soviet liaison officers to these facts. The latter intimated that they were not in a position to supply any positive information about individuals and reverted to the old theory, semi-officially put forward in the large camps at Pavlishchev Bor and Grzisovitz, that a considerable number of Polish prisoners had been released and sent back to Poland in 1940.

The Polish authorities let this explanation pass, but they knew from letters received by the Grzisovitz prisoners from their relatives in Poland that the missing officers had not returned home. The Polish authorities therefore instructed the Polish Underground Movement to find out whether these officers, after being handed over to the Germans, had not been held in German prisoner of war camps.

Simultaneously a special section was formed at the Polish Headquarters in the U.S.S.R. with the task of drawing up lists of the names of the missing officers and collecting all available information about them. With this object all prisoners from Kozialsk II, Starobialsk II and Ostaschkov II, who had passed through Grzisovitz or prisons before being released, were requested to supply all possible personal details of their fellow-prisoners who had been with them in these camps and had subsequently disappeared. In this way a list of names of missing officers from Starobialsk, Kozialsk and Ostaschkov was gradually drawn up.

1. "The Soviet authorities have declared to me on more than one occasion that considerable number of the "above (missing) officers were released and sent "back to Poland in the autumn of 1940," wrote General Anders in a letter dated 1941 to the Polish Ambassador in the U.S.S.R.
joined the Polish Army after being liberated as a result of the "amnesty" from prisons and labour camps in the most distant parts of Russia were being asked if they had any information to give about the missing prisoners from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov. This resulted in a misunderstanding owing to the fact that the Soviet authorities had used these camps on several occasions for other categories of Polish prisoners and prisoners of war, including a large number of officers. Many former prisoners, particularly those returning from distant northern camps (e.g. at Kolyma and in Iakuta) stated in good faith that a large number of Poles, including many from Kozielsk and Starobielsk, still remained in the extreme North, and even on islands in the Arctic Ocean. Some gave the names of officers who had, for instance, been at Starobielsk and were now in the most distant and hardest labour camps. After checking this information it was generally found that the officers named in these reports had actually spent a certain time in one of the big camps (mostly in Starobielsk III), but not at the period when these were being used as officers' camps.

In spite of the disappointments resulting from a more thorough analysis of the reports concerned, the "optimists" still continued to have hope and at that time (October - November 1941) maintained that the destinations to which the missing convoys had been transported in 1940 were so distant that for technical reasons it was impossible for the people to return at that time of year. Supporters of this theory generally assumed that the missing officers would return in the summer of 1942, when climatic and technical conditions would make it possible to travel.

The divergence between this theory and the statement of representatives of the Soviet authorities was put down to Soviet unwillingness to admit to their new allies that they had deported prisoners of war under exceptionally hard conditions to the extreme North.

This theory was further supported by the fact that it had recently become known that, in spite of the Soviet authorities' categorical statements to the effect that all Poles had been released, a very large number of Polish citizens were still detained in prisons and labour camps. Noting the inaccuracy of Soviet declarations regarding ordinary prisoners, Polish circles became increasingly convinced that the declarations concerning the missing prisoners of war from the three large camps also deviated from the truth. In consequence, the Polish authorities, while persistently trying to persuade the Soviet authorities to disclose the whereabouts of the missing prisoners of war, confidently expected them to reappear in the summer of 1942, when climatic conditions would permit them to cross the northern seas.

\------------------

\-----------------
CHAPTER X.

THE AMNESTY FOR POLISH PRISONERS AND DEPORTEES

IN THE U.S.S.R. AND ITS EXECUTION.

On the basis of information received from Poland, the Polish Government in London estimated the total number of Polish citizens deported by the Soviet authorities in the years 1939-1941 at 1.5-2 millions. Owing to the "iron curtain" isolating the Soviet state from the rest of the world the Polish Government possessed no detailed information as to the whereabouts of the deportees in particular provinces of the U.S.S.R., nor as to their living conditions and legal status. After the conclusion of the agreement of 30.7.41 it was assumed that as a result of the Additional Protocol, these masses of human beings would automatically regain their freedom and civic rights and would be in great need of help from Polish diplomatic representatives appointed to the U.S.S.R.

The Polish diplomatic representatives fully realized the technical difficulties of immediately releasing hundreds of thousands of people dispersed throughout the immense territory of the U.S.S.R. and of changing their legal status.

The first diplomatic note sent by the Polish Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow, M. J.H. Rattinger, on 22.8.41, requested the "immediate release from prisons and forced labour camps of all Polish citizens and their despatch to provisional assembly points, where they could be sorted out according to sex, age and physical and professional qualifications and directed to military camps or to industrial or agricultural work". At the same time the note pointed out that the burdening of local administrations with countless additional military tasks might in many cases obstruct the "efficient and speedy" fulfilment of the obligations contracted by the U.S.S.R. In this connection the note put forward various "proposals" concerning "provisional instructions for the purpose of expediting the realization of the clauses of the amnesty" by means of active cooperation between administrative sections of the Embassy and the Polish citizens in question". Finally the note expressed the conviction that "in the present harmonious relations between the Polish and the Soviet Governments it will be easy to work out the details and bring about the speedy release of Polish citizens, if only general instructions are issued". Replying to this note, the N.K.I.D. (Peoples' Commissariat for Foreign Affairs) in a "Pro Memoria" of 26.8.41, informed the Embassy that, in accordance with the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. dated 12.8.41, the release of all Polish citizens from prisons had already begun.

The memorandum also described the procedure governing the release of prisoners. While raising no objection to the "appointment of trustees of the Polish Embassy in regions inhabited by large numbers of Polish citizens" or to the "formation of one or several joint commissions, composed of Soviet delegates and representatives of the Polish Embassy, for the purpose of drawing up a register of Polish citizens, resettling them and providing them with a means of livelihood", the memorandum deferred all the other propositions contained in the Polish note for consideration "during subsequent work".
The procedure mentioned in the memorandum was as follows: released prisoners were to receive special amnesty certificates (udostowionyno) in which they were clearly described as Polish citizens. These certificates would be valid for three months, after which they were to be exchanged for a passport. In addition, the liberated prisoners were to receive free railway tickets to a place theoretically chosen by the prisoners but in practice dictated by the authorities - as well as a travelling allowance of 15 roubles a day. The memorandum mentioned no general principles governing release; on the contrary, the phrase "the release has begun" indicated rather that Polish citizens were not automatically set free. Later it became clear that prisoners were freed under a number of special orders issued by the Soviet central authorities. It should be pointed out that in the first period (August-October) the Soviet authorities never questioned the Polish citizenship of non-Polish persons at the time of release of prisoners. On the contrary it even seemed that they gave special privileges to some of the so-called national minorities and, in fact, released Jews, while detaining Poles.

On 9.9.41, five days after the arrival of M. Kot as Polish Ambassador in Moscow, the first meeting of the Joint Polish-Soviet Commission took place and was devoted to "the question of further arrangements concerning liberated Polish citizens". At the beginning of the meeting, at the request of the Polish delegates, the Soviet representatives supplied information as to the total number of Polish citizens detained in the U.S.S.R. and the progress so far made in releasing them. With the reservation that the exact numbers could only be submitted after checking, the following approximate figures were given: the number of Polish citizens imprisoned in prisons and camps "can be more or less calculated at 42,000, of which 35,991 were freed up to 6.8.41. The total number of deported and resettled Polish citizens may be estimated at 300-350 thousand persons, of whom up to 8.9.41, 107,933 have been supplied with documents entitling them to move freely on Soviet territory". 1

In the course of discussion the Soviet representatives admitted that not all Polish citizens had been freed but stated that those detained were "only a few Poles, who are accused of espionage for Germany". The Polish request for the production of material collected during investigations of these cases raised fundamental objections from the Soviets; the difference in the points of views taken by both sides became obvious when the Poles asked whether the figures given by the Soviets included all the Polish citizens living in the territory of the U.S.S.R. The Soviet delegates immediately raised the question of the citizenship of "former Polish citizens who inhabited the Western Ukraine and Western White Russia and who after the incorporation of these territories into the Soviet Union received Soviet citizenship". Discussion of this question was postponed since it obviously did not fall within the competence of the Commission.

On 10.9.41 Ambassador Kot had his first conference with the Deputy Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Vyshinsky, in the course of which the Ambassador stated that many Polish citizens deported to the U.S.S.R., and in whom he was particularly interested, had so far not reappeared, and asked to whom 1

---

1. Extract from the Soviet protocol of the meeting.
he should refer to this matter. Vyshinsky replied: "We will deal with that, if you will supply a list of persons with whom you are concerned; we shall settle that question "as favourably and as quickly as possible". The Embassy consequently handed the N.K.I.D. (U.S.S.R. Foreign Office) a "list of persons to be released in the first instance" comprising a few hundred names among them those of some prisoners of war, mostly university professors, who had been at Kozielsk or Starobielsk. In the course of some months the N.K.I.D. (Foreign Office) informed the Embassy of the release of 54 persons whose names had figured on the list, but there was no one from Kozielsk or Starobielsk among them.

On 17.9.41 the second and last meeting of the Joint Commission took place, during which the Soviets gave the number of Polish citizens released from prisons and camps up to 14.9.41 as 46,196 that is 7,000 more than the total number of Polish citizens who were imprisoned in the U.S.S.R. according to the figures they had given at the first meeting.

Having established the fact that many prominent Polish citizens known to have been in Soviet prisons and camps were not among the liberated prisoners, Ambassador Kot again raised this matter on 20.9.41 in a conversation with Vyshinsky, who promised to investigate the whole question of releases and to produce detailed information in the immediate future concerning Polish scholars, artists, publicists, doctors, lawyers etc. then in the U.S.S.R. A week later as a result of the flood of complaints reaching the Embassy about Polish citizens still kept in detention, on 27.9.41 the Ambassador handed to the N.K.I.D. Foreign Office a first note which pointed out that:

- Many Polish citizens were detained, individually and in groups, in forced labour camps and prisons;
- They were prevented from establishing contact with the Polish Embassy;
- Many other Polish citizens were denied the right to choose or change their place of residence;
- They were compelled to work as prisoners;
- Certificates of amnesty were refused to them.

During the next conversation with the Polish Ambassador on 6.10.41 Vyshinsky repeated his promise to look into the whole question of releases and to supply a list of members of the Polish intelligentsia deported to the U.S.S.R. This promise, however, was never fulfilled, but in a conversation with the Polish Ambassador on 14.10.41 he gave the following general figures concerning the fulfillment of the Additional Protocol granting an amnesty to Polish citizens:

- The 387,962 former Polish citizens deprived of liberty in the U.S.S.R. fall under the following categories:
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cat. I. (condemned or under investigation in prison)</td>
<td>71,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. II. (deported to places of compulsory settlement)</td>
<td>291,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. III. (prisoners of war)</td>
<td>25,514</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  Of the above categories up to 1.10.41 345,651 were released.

Persons still detained: 42,461"
Although the figures given by Vyshinsky were considerably higher than those submitted to the Poles at the meetings of the Joint Commission, they were firmly questioned by Ambassador Kot as being too low. In the course of a heated discussion on this subject, Vyshinsky, admitting that the Soviet authorities had deported limited groups from Poland "but not the entire population", stated that "he could only give the Ambassador the figures "which were in his possession" and finally asked him to send to the N.K.I.D. Foreign Office in writing, details of cases where local authorities were neglecting to carry out the amnesty.

The above figures were the last to be supplied by the Soviet authorities concerning the deportation from Poland. Poles were convinced that they represented about 25-30% of the actual numbers.

It should be pointed out that - as was revealed in the course of discussion with Soviet representatives - the figures given by Vyshinsky did not include so-called former Polish citizens" who allegedly became "Soviet citizens" on the strength of the Soviet decree of 1.11.39, i.e., members of Poland's national minorities - Ukrainians, White Russians, Jews etc.

Nor did Vyshinsky's figures include deportees and prisoners of war who had died in the meantime, the mortality rate being of course extremely high among people deported and living under such hard conditions.

If these two statements are taken into consideration it will be seen, that the original Polish estimation, that the Soviets had deported about 10 million people from Poland was not far from the truth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total No. Released</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.8.41</td>
<td>107,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.9.41</td>
<td>71,481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Comparison of Soviet Statements Concerning Numbers of Poles Detained in the U.S.S.R. and Freed After the Amnesty.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Info</th>
<th>Total Released</th>
<th>Total Released</th>
<th>Total Released</th>
<th>Total Released</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,288</td>
<td>181,283</td>
<td>4,096</td>
<td>191,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,096</td>
<td>181,283</td>
<td>4,096</td>
<td>191,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deportees</td>
<td>42,000</td>
<td>350,900</td>
<td>42,000</td>
<td>350,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deportees</td>
<td>46,195</td>
<td>159,512</td>
<td>46,195</td>
<td>159,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deportees</td>
<td>9,941</td>
<td>17,941</td>
<td>9,941</td>
<td>17,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deportees</td>
<td>28,137</td>
<td>25,314</td>
<td>28,137</td>
<td>25,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-deportees</td>
<td>4,096</td>
<td>181,283</td>
<td>4,096</td>
<td>191,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-deportees</td>
<td>4,096</td>
<td>181,283</td>
<td>4,096</td>
<td>191,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28,137</td>
<td>25,314</td>
<td>28,137</td>
<td>25,314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately 20,000 people were deported from Poland between 1939 and 1941.

The above figures do not include individuals who were released by the Soviet authorities after the amnesty.
CHAPTER XI
-------------------

POLISH DIPLOMATIC INTERVENTIONS CONCERNING
 THE FILFILMENT OF THE "ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL"
 AND IN THE QUESTION OF THE MISSING POLISH
 OFFICERS.

The Kot-Vyshinsky conversation of 10.9.41 and
the Polish Ambassador's note of 27.9.41 (see p.153 above)
opened a long series of discussions and diplomatic notes
concerning the fulfilment of the clauses of the
Additional Protocol to the Agreement of 30.7.41. The
Polish authorities never failed to insist on the strict
application of the clauses of the Protocol and the
release of all Polish citizens without exception. The
Soviet replies varied. They either said that all Polish
citizens were being liberated or, after 8.11.41, that
they all had been liberated, or, that a certain number
of persons reclaimed by the Poles were detained as
criminals or German spies, or that the amnesty did not
apply to those still in captivity as they were not
Polish citizens.

In this connection discussions took place on:
 a. the citizenship of persons of various domiciles
and nationalities who were in the Eastern territo-
ries of Poland on 1 - 2.11.39, i.e., when those
territories were "incorporated" into the Soviet
Union by the decisions of the Supreme Council of
the U.S.S.R.;

b. the right of the Polish authorities to have access
to the evidence on the basis of which individuals
were detained as common criminals or German spies.

The fact that the Soviet replies admitted the
detention of some Polish citizens confirmed the opinion
current in Polish circles that a considerably larger
number of Polish citizens than that admitted by the
Soviet authorities had not regained their freedom,
despite the clauses of the Additional Protocol.

Still not questioning the good will of the
Soviet central authorities, Polish representatives
presumed that the reason for the continued detention
of numerous Polish citizens was either the unscrupu-
loseness of local prison and camp authorities or the
insurmountable technical difficulties of transporting
them from the extreme North of Russia.

It will be remembered that both the Polish Army
Headquarters in the U.S.S.R. and the Polish Embassy had
for a long time been aware that a considerable number
of Poles, including prisoners of war from Kovel, Starevialsk
and Ostaszkov, had been deported to the
Far North in the summer of 1940. Recognising the
technical difficulties making their return before the
summer of 1942 impossible, the Polish representatives
tried to obtain official confirmation from the Soviets
of the detention of Polish prisoners in camps in the
Far North. But they received only negative and often
vague replies.

The various stages of the diplomatic negoti-
ations on this subject are given below.

1. 6.10.41 - Kot-Vyshinsky Conversation.

During this conversation the Polish Ambassador
for the first time raised officially the question of the
missing officers. Unfortunately however, the facts he
presented were not correct and by going into too great
detail he missed an important opportunity to obtain from the Soviet Authorities a direct answer to the dramatic question — What has happened to 7,500 people? This will be seen from the notes of the conversation which follows:

Ambassador: ...besides this category of persons to be individually released and the search for well known scholars and politicians in whom, as individuals, public opinion takes a great interest, there are other questions in this sphere which are very distressing for us. These concern whole groups of people and I venture to give you some facts about them which may not be known to you.

Vyshinsky: "The lack of information about the prisoners sometimes results from the fact that when the Germans occupied part of the territory of the U.S.S.R. the prisons and the archives were evacuated separately."

(Ambassador and Vyshinsky are interrupted by Novikov, who gives examples of cases where this has occurred.)

Ambassador: "Apart from the fact that I can’t carry out my orders from London to send there some 10,000 well known people to complete the membership of the National Council, I would like to quote to you the following figures. In all there were 8,500 officers arrested in Poland and deported to the U.S.S.R. and we now have in the army in U.S.S.R. only 2,000 officers. What has happened to the other 7,500 people?"

Vyshinsky and Novikov try to maintain that this is not possible, but cannot find any arguments to support their case.

Ambassador: "We have made every effort to find these people. We thought they were handed over to the Germans, we looked for them in German P.O.W. camps, in occupied Poland, everywhere where they could possibly be. I could understand it if it were a matter of a few dozen or even a few hundred people missing but not thousands.

Vyshinsky and Novikov disconcerted, themselves put the question "What has happened to them?"

Ambassador: "In the Autumn of 1940 a shipload of about 1500 of our officers was sent from Archangel to the North."

Vyshinsky: "Surely they are among the more than 300,000 Polish citizens who have now been released."

Ambassador: "From those camps there is no one in the Army and what about the doctors and university professors?"

The Ambassador's assertions about the shipload from Archangel and the officers camp on the Sosva etc.
were based on reports of prisoners who had been liberated from Soviet labour camps and joined the Polish Armed Forces. But these reports were themselves based on a misunderstanding, as was pointed out above (p.148) for they concerned the officers from Starobielsk III. Formulated categorically by the Ambassador, these assertions laid the "burden of proof" on the Polish side and enabled the Soviets to evade the question "what had happened to 7,600 people" and to limit themselves to a denial of particular Polish statements.

2. 15.10.41. Polish Embassy's Note to N.K.I.d.

In the note of 15.10.41 the Embassy did not refer expressly to the disappearance of officer P.O.W.'s but treated the matter in general terms.

This note stating that "the Embassy possesses information that in various prisons and camps there still remain thousands of Polish citizens who either know nothing of the Agreement concluded on July 30th, 1941, or have been informed that the clauses of that Agreement and the Decree of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. of September 12th do not apply to them". The note went on to hope that the actual situation of Polish citizens in U.S.S.R. would correspond to that proclaimed by the official communiques of PAT (official Polish Telegraph Agency) in London and New York which were giving an assurance, in accordance with the policy of Soviet-Polish friendship and co-operation, that all Polish citizens in U.S.S.R. were now released. Emphasizing in this way the genuine good will of the Polish Government in the sphere of propaganda, the note did nevertheless draw the attention of the Soviet Government to those communiques of PAT which in no way corresponded to the facts as set out in it or to the real situation.

3. 16.10.41. Kot-Vyshinsky Conversation

In the course of this conversation the Polish Ambassador, referring to General Sikorski's proposed visit to Moscow, stressed the need for bringing the actual situation of Polish citizens in the U.S.S.R. into line with the Polish Telegraph Agency's communiqués. He ended with the words: "At the moment of General Sikorski's arrival, not one Polish citizen ought to be in detention."

Vyshinsky then raised the whole question of the release of Polish citizens and supplied the figures (quoted at the end of the preceding chapter) and a sharp exchange of views took place as to the numbers deported from Poland (see p.159). The Ambassador referring again to the missing officer prisoners of war, stated that "according to Soviet data there were 9,800 officers in prisoner of war camps". The Ambassador was doubtless thinking of the article in "Krasnaya Zvezda" ("Red Star") which have the number of prisoners of war as : 5,268 officers and 4,096 N.C.O's - more than 9,000 in all (see p.14). Towards the end of the discussion the tone became more friendly.

Ambassador: "I hope that when General Sikorski arrives he will find all his officers."

Vyshinsky: "We shall give up to you all the people we have, but we cannot give up those who are not with us. The English, for instance, give us the names of their people who are supposed to be in the U.S.S.R., but who have in fact never been here."
4. 15.10.41. Personal note from General Sikorski to Ambassador Bogomolov.

The Polish Embassy's difficulties in the U.S.S.R. connected with the fulfilment by the Soviet authorities of the Additional Protocol had their repercussions in London. The Polish Government in London was kept informed by the Embassy and by the Polish Military Authorities in the U.S.S.R. of the progress made in releasing Polish citizens from Soviet camps and prisons. The information at first supplied by Soviet liaison officers, to the effect that prisoners of war from Kozielak, Starobelsk and Ostashkov had been freed and sent home in 1940, was sent via London to Poland to be verified. The Polish Underground Movement reported that the missing officers were neither in their homes under German occupation nor in German prisoner of war camps and that their families had lost all contact with them since April and May, 1940. Disturbing reports and rumours also came from the U.S.S.R. to the effect that a considerable number of Polish citizens had not been released from captivity but had been transferred to the extreme North of Russia. In consequence, General Sikorski, before his projected visit to Moscow, wrote a personal note to the Soviet Ambassador accredited to the Polish Government, requesting him to inform his Government that the Polish Government "appreciates the good will shown by the Soviet Government in putting into effect the Polish-Soviet Agreement of July 30th", and simultaneously drawing attention to "certain obstacles which had arisen and could not be attributed to difficulties resulting from military operations."

Emphasising the necessity for the immediate release of Polish citizens in view of the approaching winter and the need for providing them with a means of livelihood, the note contained a few additional sentences on the subject of the missing officers, expressing the supposition that they were detained in the Far North. "Il sort de quelques milliers des officiers polonais, qui ne sont pas rentrés en Pologne et qui n'ont pas été retrouvé dans les camps militaires soviétiques continues à être incertains. Ils sont probablement dispersés dans les régions du nord de l'U.S.S.R. Leur présence dans les camps de l'Armée Polonaise est indispensable."

5. 22.10.41. - Kot - Molotov Conversation

The subject of this conversation was the visit of General Sikorski to the U.S.S.R. The Polish Ambassador again pointed out the necessity for completely putting the "amnesty" clauses into full effect: "First the question of the amnesty. The instructions of the central authorities clearly did not reach several regions. They must be carried out 100%, so that General Sikorski can see that our agreement is a real one."

At Molotov's request for a complete account of the whole question, the Ambassador recalled his conversations with Vyshinsky. "I gave Mr. Vyshinsky several examples of places where the amnesty has not been carried out, and of which categories of our citizens, such as officers, judges, public prosecutors and police have not been released. Mr. Vyshinsky promised to give the matter his attention, but he did not fulfil his promise. I am afraid that the approaching winter will make impossible their return from distant territories such as Kolyma."

Molotov replied that in principle all Polish citizens had been set free as a result of the amnesty but admitted that on account of "great difficulties of
"transport and administration... in several districts... they undoubtedly still remained in places where up till now this time they have been living."

These general remarks of Molotov, which in so far reality conveyed nothing, were understood by the Poles to be a more or less official confirmation by a member of the Soviet Government of the Polish thesis, that these missing officers were in the Far North and had for some reason no possibility of returning at that time. Thanking Molotov for his promise to extend to the Polish Government all the assistance in our power towards solving this matter, the Ambassador asked for a list of the places in which Polish citizens who had been released were living. "We understand the difficulties of the Soviet Government", he added, commenting on his request, "but if we knew something about places our citizens were living we could wait quietly for the possibility of transport."

Promising to do everything to enable the Polish Government to acquire this information, Molotov proposed that Kot should hand him a list of names of "the people with whom you are particularly concerned" and expressed the hope that after the issuing of "instructions on this matter, there will be no difficulty provided they are in the U.S.S.R. under the same names as they bore in Poland."

The fact that the Ambassador had in mind all the time the question of the missing officers from Kosielak, Starobiełsk and Ostashkov - though he did not speak openly of them - is shown by the further course of the conversation. Referring to the difficulties of tracing individuals, he mentioned exclusively the names of the missing officers. The conversation ran thus:

Ambassador: "It would be a very good thing if I could get into close contact with representatives of the N.K.V.D. concerning various matters which do not really come into the sphere of foreign affairs and are not an additional burden to you. Actually they are not difficult to solve, but they are involved. As an example let me cite the impossibility of finding General Sikorski's adjutant, to whom the latter is very attached."

Molotov: "Is he with us?"

Ambassador: "He was in a prisoner of war camp in the U.S.S.R. and was afterwards deported into the interior of Russia."

Molotov: "What is his name?"

Ambassador: "Major Jan Führman."

Molotov: "Everything will be done to find him."

(Molotov ordered the interpreter to write down Führman's exact name.)

Ambassador: "If by any chance he is unfortunately dead, we should like to be informed of this, for there is nothing worse than uncertainty." 1.

6. 1.11.41. M. Kot's secret note to Molotov.

With the object of finally persuading the Soviet Government to settle the question of releases and other matters connected with the organisation of the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R., this note aimed at making General Sikorski's announced visit to the U.S.S.R. dependant on

1. Despite Molotov's solemn promises, the Polish authorities never received any official information concerning the fate of Major Führman.
the previous "fundamental agreement" of the Soviet Government to the Polish Government's demands.

"Appreciating the serious importance which personal contact with Premier Stalin, your Excellency and the Headquarters of the Soviet Army will have in tightening the bonds of friendship and co-operation between both Governments and in the conduct of the war against the common enemy, General Sikorski would wish for the conversations to take place in an atmosphere free from the many fundamental questions which up till now have remained unsolved and unsettled and the actual state of which would make the visit of the Prime Minister of the Polish Government and the C. in C. of the Polish Army particularly embarrassing where the Polish people in the U.S.S.R. are concerned as also are the problems of the settlement of which is imposed by the force of events."

"As the aims and programme of his journey have been agreed with the Government of Great Britain and with the Governments of the other Allied States General Sikorski is of the opinion that, unless a suitable atmosphere for discussion is created, his visit at the present moment would not give results satisfactory either to the interests of the two Governments or to the common war effort of the Countries fighting against Germany. Before finally deciding the date of his arrival, General Sikorski will therefore wait for the Soviet Government's expression of fundamental agreement of the following questions of primary importance to the Polish Government and People.

1. The acceleration of the complete fulfilment of the clauses of the Additional Protocol to the Polish-Soviet Agreement of July 30th, 1941 end of the Decree of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. of August 18th 1941, concerning an amnesty for all Polish citizens who are at present deprived of their freedom on the territory of the U.S.S.R., either as prisoners of war or on other adequate grounds, and the guarantee of suitable work or means of livelihood to Polish citizens not incorporated into the Polish Army...."

7. 2.11.41. Kot - Vyshinsky conversations.

The day after the foregoing note had been sent, the Polish Ambassador had another conversation with Vyshinsky, which was particularly dramatic and stormy where the question of release was concerned. In this conversation, a relatively longer time was devoted to the question of the missing officers. When the Ambassador recalled the promise given him during previous conversations in Moscow to the effect that the Soviet authorities "would find a way to transport people from the North even during a hard winter, by using special methods of transport", Vyshinsky referred to the changed situation from the course of military operations.

The Ambassador, taking this argument into consideration, asked that he should at any rate be supplied with details as to "where those people are and the granting of facilities to establish at least telegraphic communication with them."

Vyshinsky answered without hesitation "of course, I will do that," but in the next, somewhat ambiguous sentence qualified this promise. "Your Excellency can count on us for every assistance in this matter. As
"Soon as I have found out where these people are I will inform your Excellency accurately and conscientiously."

When the Ambassador quoted the addresses of camps in various parts of the Soviet Union where Polish citizens were still held in captivity, Vyshinsky continued to insist that all Poles had already been released. He then raised the question of the missing officers, hitherto not referred to in the conversations. Taking advantage of the Ambassador's mistake on 14.10.41 in referring to 9,500 Polish officers who, according to Soviet data, were said to be in the U.S.S.R. (see page 165 above), Vyshinsky took the offensive. The following is a fragment of the conversation:

Vyshinsky: "The alleged number of 9,500 Polish officers in the U.S.S.R. has not been confirmed anywhere. Such a number has never appeared in the N.K.V.D. records, and the People's Commissariat for Defence also denies its accuracy. I am trying, however, to obtain the data which Mr. Ambassador required."

Ambassador: "Mr. Commissioner promised to look personally into the matter of lawyers, judges, public prosecutors and police. Many generals, prominent soldiers, even many of my personal friends are missing."

Vyshinsky: "Unfortunately the fact of being public prosecutors, judges or police does not appear in the N.K.V.D. records. We simply are not in possession of these particulars."

Ambassador: "Such a long time has elapsed since the signing of the agreement, and so many of our people have not regained the freedom to which they are legally entitled. We have not even received letters or telegrams from them. We do not even know their addresses. Despite the fact that during our conversation on October 14th you promised to supply me on the following day with the information I required."

Vyshinsky: "It is true that I said that, but on October 15th Moscow was evacuated, with the result that contact between the different departments was interrupted. That is the reason for the delay in obtaining the information... The N.K.V.D. central office states that there never were that number of Polish officers in the U.S.S.R."
Ambassador: "There is Kolyma, the Bering Straits. It was stated that whole convoys of our people were sent to those regions. They are even in Franz Josef Land. I myself spoke to a lad who had returned from Novaya Zemlya."

Vyshinsky: "From your approach of the problem it would appear that it is necessary for authorities to be controlled by delegates from the Embassy. We have records of everyone, alive or dead. I have promised the details and I will produce them...."

Ambassador: "If any of the people with whom I am concerned really had been released, they would have immediately given a sign of life. It is not a question of nameless people. There are among them hundreds of distinguished men, for instance Generals Stanislaw Haller, Skierski, Skuratowicz, Lukowski. They are not children and could not be hidden. If any of them have died, please inform us. I cannot believe that they are not."

Vyshinsky: "Please let me have the names and it will be easier to find them. The name of General Haller, for instance, you have mentioned for the first time. People are not trees, they must be somewhere, but sometimes they did not say that they were Generals, perhaps they are registered under other professions. I cannot myself search for them throughout the whole Soviet Union."

Ambassador: "The data I possess come from the reports and accounts of eye-witnesses. They have seen at this or that time so many of our officers being deported in an unknown direction. If I obtained the exact data from you, I would use them. People are not like steam, they cannot evaporate...."

Vyshinsky: "If I had a list of the people with whom Mr. Ambassador is particularly concerned, it would help me in my task."

Ambassador: "I have given such lists but until now I have not had an answer. The most important thing for me is to be able to bring help and protection to these people. I understand that you Mr. Commissar, cannot personally occupy yourself with such questions as you are concerned with foreign not home affairs, But we have had promises of co-operation in this matter from you as well as from the Soviet Government."

Vyshinsky: "Some people on the lists given by Mr. Ambassador have now been found. We are looking for the others. When I shall have the rest of the names I shall be able to contact the competent authorities and say to them for example - 'Please report to me on the question of General Haller'. If anything wrong is revealed I shall be able to punish who it is necessary. But you are wrong Mr. Ambassador in thinking that these things do not concern me. In the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs we have three Vice Commissars. I am the first of them and I am concerned with Polish matters."

E. 31.11.41. Cripps-Vyshinsky conversation. Cripps' Aide-Memoire.

Unable, despite strenuous attempts, to bring about the complete fulfilment by the Soviet authorities of the obligations contracted in the July Agreement and the release of all captive Polish citizens, the Polish authorities requested the mediation of the British authorities, whose good services played such an important role in the
conclusion of that agreement. On 3.11.41 the British Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Sir Stafford Cripps, handed the Soviet Government an aide-memoire and had a conversation with Vyshinsky. Both the British aide-memoire and the conversation dealt with the general execution of the "amnesty" and the release of all captive Poles, particularly those fit for military service. In accordance with the Polish thesis, the aide-memoire emphasised that thousands of Polish citizens had not so far been freed but were still in prisons, concentration camps and correctional labour camps, particularly in the extreme North of the Soviet Union. The aide-memoire did not expressly refer to the question of the vanished officers. Neither were they mentioned in the conversation during which the Ambassador stated that according to British information considerable numbers of Poles were still detained. Vyshinsky answered that he was not in possession of any such information and asked for concrete data - names and whereabouts. When the Ambassador pointed out that the details had already been submitted to him by the Polish Ambassador, Vyshinsky merely stated that only a negligible number of Polish citizens were still in detention, but that possibly in the case of people very far away news of their release had not yet arrived.

9. 8.11.41. Molotov's note to the Polish Ambassador.

The Polish Ambassador's note to Molotov of 1.11.41 attempting to make General Sikorski's visit dependent on the release of all Polish citizens did not achieve its aim. But it is highly probable that this note and British intervention on 2.11.41 hastened the Soviet Government's official declaration of the "complete" execution of the amnesty decree concerning Poles. The Soviet Government was unfortunately supported by the official

Prisoners of war, declared that "all Polish citizens who are entitled to be released on the basis of the Decree of the President of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R., of August 12th, have been released, and the prescribed categories of those released have been afforded material help by the Soviet authorities." Further, the note merely stated that "all Polish officers on the territory of the U.S.S.R., have also been released. The supposition expressed by the Prime Minister that large numbers of Polish officers are dispersed in the Northern regions of the U.S.S.R. appears to be based on inaccurate information."

11. 10.11.41. - Kot-Vyshinsky conversation.

Before travelling to Moscow for conversations with Stalin and Molotov in connection with General Sikorski's visit, the Polish Ambassador had yet another conversation with Vyshinsky on 12.11.41, in the course of which Vyshinsky himself raised the question of the missing officer prisoners of war in the following way:

Vyshinsky: "Returning to the question of the officers, concerning whom General Sikorski consulted Mr. Ambassador, has the N.K.I.D. (Foreign Office) a list of names in its possession?"

Ambassador: "Two lists of politicians and important people are in the possession of the N.K.I.D. One I handed to your Excellency personally, the other I had sent. As to the officers, General Anders handed a list to the N.K.V.D., but concerning only Starobielsk. The lists from Kozielk, Ostashkov and other camps are still being drawn up by the military authorities."
Vyshinsky: "I ask you again about this matter, because I am convinced that those people have already been released. It is only a question of confirming their whereabouts. If any one of them is still not at liberty, he will, of course be freed. For me that problem does not exist."

Ambassador: "The question is very simple. The camp commands at Starobielsk, Kozielsk, Ostashkov and other camps possessed accurate lists of names of Polish servicemen detained there. It is only necessary to give instructions that those servicemen be released according to the lists."

Vyshinsky: "Certainly, if they were there."


On 14.11.41 Ambassador Kot had a conversation with Premier Stalin, lasting for more than four hours. As this was the Polish Ambassador's first conversation with the highest Soviet authority, various subjects were raised. At the end of the discussion the Ambassador brought up the question of the lost officers from the three large camps.

The following are relevant extracts from the conversation, according to notes taken down directly after the discussion:

Ambassador: "I have already taken up a great deal of your time, Mr. President, when you have such important matters to attend to. But there is still one more important question: may I raise it?"

Stalin: (politely): "Certainly, Mr. Ambassador."

Ambassador: "You are the author of the amnesty for Polish citizens in the U.S.S.R. You made that gesture, I would be extremely grateful to you if you would like to use your influence to have it put into full effect."

Stalin: "Are there still some Poles in captivity?"

Ambassador: "From the camp at Starobielsk, which was dissolved in the spring of 1940, we have not yet regained a single officer."

Stalin: "I will look into the matter. But after release many things may happen. What was the name of the commander of the defence of Lwow? Langer, if I am not mistaken."

Ambassador: "General Langer, Mr. President."

Stalin: "Exactly, General Langer. We released him last year, we had him brought to Moscow and talked with him. Then he escaped abroad, probably to Rumania."

('Molotov, who was present at the conversation confirms this.)

Stalin: "There are no exceptions to our amnesty, but with certain servicemen the same thing may have happened as with General Langer."

Ambassador: "We have the names and lists. For example, General Stanislaw Heller has still not been found; officers from Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov, who were removed from those camps in April and May, 1940, are missing."

Stalin: "We have released everyone, even people who were sent to us by General Sikorski to blow up bridges and kill Soviet people; we have set free even those people. Actually it was not General Sikorski who sent them, but his Chief of Staff, General Sosnkowski."

1. General Sosnkowski was a minister in General Sikorski's Government from 1939-1941, not Chief of Staff.
Ambassador: "So my request to you, Mr. President, is that you will give instructions for the officers, whom we need for the organisation of the army, to be released. We possess records of when they were removed from the camps."

Stalin: "Are there any accurate lists?"

Ambassador: "All names are recorded by the Russian camp commanders who held a roll-call of all prisoners every day. In addition the N.K.V.D. carried out an investigation of every person. Not one officer of the Staff of General Anders' Army, which he commanded in Poland, has been handed over."

(Molotov, who stood up a few minutes before and was slowly pacing round the table, smoking a cigarette, but listening carefully and answering questions, walks quickly to the telephone on Molotov's desk and puts himself through to the N.K.V.D.)

Molotov: (also gets up and goes to the telephone) - "It does not connect like that" (he turns the switch and sits down again at the conference table.)

Stalin: (telephoning) "Stalin here. Have all Poles been released from prison?" (Silence for a moment, while he listens to the reply) "I have with me here the Polish Ambassador, who tells me not all (He again listens to the reply, then puts down the receiver and returns to the conference table) "I also would like to put a question to Mr. Ambassador. When and where does the Polish Army want to operate against the Germans...."
were not affected by Molotov's note of 8.11.41. The tremendous numbers of complaints and other information reaching the Embassy concerning the detention of Polish citizens formed the basis of 55 notes handed to the N.K.I.D. in the course of 9 months (October 1941 - June 1942), giving the names and particulars of about 6,000 Polish citizens and the addresses of the places where they were detained. But those notes did not include the names of the missing officers, since their whereabouts were unknown.

16. 4.11.41. - General Anders' letter to the N.K.I.D. and action of Polish Army Headquarters in the U.S.S.R.

Besides the efforts of the Embassy, intervention on behalf of the missing officers was made by General Anders and Polish Army Headquarters in the U.S.S.R. The Ambassador, as a diplomatic representative, could approach the N.K.I.D. (Foreign Office) only, but General Anders decided that, not being restricted by diplomatic protocols, he would go directly to the N.K.I.D., who had all Polish prisoners and prisoners of war under their control and were responsible for their fate.

In a letter to the N.K.I.D. dated 4.11.41 "in connection with the release of Polish prisoners of war and Polish citizens at present in prisons and labour camps in the U.S.S.R." General Anders gave "certain data concerning the places of detention of Polish citizens together with a list of names" - stressing simultaneously that those data were an insignificant part of the information in the possession of the Polish Army Staff and promising to send the rest of the data later on. In this letter the number of missing officers was given as 8,772, with the comment that this number did not include all who were missing. At the conclusion of the letter it was stated that: "According to verified information received from London, not one of the prisoners of war for whom we are looking, and who were on U.S.S.R. territory in the years 1940-1941, are at present on Polish territory, neither have their families received any news from them. According to verified information, none of them are in a 'prisoner of war camps in Germany'."

The Polish military authorities received no reply to this letter, but during a diplomatic conversation a representative of the N.K.I.D. (Foreign Office) drew the Polish Ambassador's attention to the fact that it was incorrect for General Anders to approach the Soviet Civil authorities.

All this time, a special department of the Polish General Staff in the U.S.S.R. worked strenuously on the problem of the missing officers (see p. 187 above), keeping the Ambassador informed of their progress. When sending the Ambassador a copy of certain reports on this question from officers found at Grisovitches, General Anders wrote: "In the camps at Starobelsk, Kosilek and Ostashkov there were at the same time 8,732 officers, not counting cadet officers, State administration officials, judges, public prosecutors, Frontier Guards, prison guards, police etc. The Soviet authorities have declared several times that a considerable number of the above officers were released and sent home in the autumn of 1940. But that does not conform to the truth, since:

1. There was not a single case of the families of the above mentioned prisoners knowing anything of their fate.
2. Searches carried out in German camps for officers gave "negative results.
3. Our own Intelligence Service in Poland says that these officers are not on Polish territory.
second time from October, 1940, to May, 1941, were consistently enquiring about the fate of their fathers, husbands and brothers, who were with us in the camps of Starobielsk, Kozieisk and Ostashkov until May, 1940.

Assuming the Soviet authorities have no other intention but that of loyally carrying out the agreement concluded with the Polish Government, it must be supposed that the continued detention of Polish prisoners of war is caused only by technical and administrative difficulties.

If that is so, let the Soviet authorities help us by disclosing without delay the whereabouts of former Polish prisoners of war, so that immediate steps can be taken to rescue them with the help of the Governments and Peoples of Great Britain and the United States.

It can be seen from the document quoted above that the Polish military and civilian authorities were in complete agreement as to the probable fate of the missing prisoners of war. They did not believe in the assurances that the prisoners had been released in 1940; they assumed that they had been condemned to live under very hard conditions; but the thought did not enter their heads that of more than 8,000 prisoners of war not one remained alive.

"We already possess the most accurate information to the effect that many convoys of Polish officers were sent via Magadan to Kolyma. There are among us officers who were included in those convoys and have "returned". (This last sentence was based on a misunderstanding, for the information he mentions refers to officers from Starobielsk III - (see p184 above)."

General Anders' foregoing remarks were sent with the report of one of the officers, who concluded with the following remarks: "It is already possible to draw two conclusions from the many hypothesis and enquiries and from the fact of the hitherto complete silence on that part of more than 8,000 officers and several thousand other ranks, - all prisoners of war: firstly, the "special" camp at Griasovets was the only camp for Polish prisoners of war after June, 1940, and was obviously formed so that, should the need arise, it would be possible to prove the existence of a certain number of officers and other ranks of the Army and police, doctors, judges and various civilians, ranging in age from youths of school age to, old men (forming more or less a cross-section of the Polish community); secondly, the fact that up to the present moment the mass of missing prisoners have not given a single sign of life, not one S.O.S., confirms irrefutably the conclusion that they have been systematically condemned to extermination and deported to the most distant and inaccessible parts of Russia, from where there is no means of communicating with the rest of the world, from where there is no return.

The declaration that they were transferred to German occupied territories...bears absolutely no examination. It is sufficient that our relatives in Poland and abroad, with whom we were able to establish contact for the
CHAPTER XII.

The Question of the Missing Officers During General Sikorski's Visit to the U.S.S.R.

The difficulties encountered in the U.S.S.R. by Polish diplomatic representatives and by the Polish military authorities in their dealings with the Soviet authorities impelled General Sikorski to attempt a radical solution of these problems by personal discussions with the highest Soviet officials.

One of the main purposes of General Sikorski's visit was to bring about the complete fulfilment of the Polish-Soviet agreement, concluded some months previously; in his first conversations with Stalin, General Sikorski therefore emphasised his opinion that "it depends on the "loyal carrying out in full of the (July) agreement whether we now stand at a turning-point of history" and expressed his fear that the "slow execution of the agreement" would weaken the policy of close and friendly co-operation between the two States.

From the Polish point of view, one of the essential advantages of the July agreement was the freeing of all Polish citizens who had been taken prisoner and deported to the U.S.S.R. and the formation of a strong Polish Army to fight the Germans. When General Sikorski mentioned the "slow realisation" of the agreement he was referring to both these points and by implication to the missing officers, who were indispensable to the organisation of the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R. and who, according to the belief of the Polish civil and military authorities, were still in Soviet prisons or camps.

For General Sikorski's use in his conversation with Stalin the Embassy prepared a "Note on the question of interned (!) soldiers of the Polish Army from the camps at Starobielsk, Koniezk and Ostashkov, deported to forced labour camps in the Far East and not released by 11.2.41," stated 1.12.41. As the "note" contained all the information in the possession of the Polish authorities and reflected the Polish political views, no mention was made of their opinions on the whole question at that time, a certain amount of attention must be devoted to it.

In the introduction to the "Note", the "irrefutable fact" was stated that "over 95% of all servicemen from the above-mentioned three camps were removed and all trace of them was lost".

The "state of the three camps at the commencement of their liquidation" was then given:

- STAROBIELSK: 3,920 officers (including several dozen judges and public prosecutors, 30 cadet officers, 50% regular officers. 8 Generals, 100 Colonels and Lt.-Colonels, 250 Majors, 1,000 Captains, 2,500 1st and 2nd Lieutenants, 380 Doctors, including about 20 mobilised university professors and some famous doctors). Between 8.4.40 and 12.5.40 the camp was evacuated in small groups until its final liquidation. 10 officers remained in the hospital. The formation of "Starobielsk II" began in July 1940.

- KONIEZK: - 5,000, including 4,500 officers. Final liquidation - 2.5.40. New camp formed under the same name.

- OSTASHKOV: - about 8,000 persons, including 5,000 policemen, 1,000 military and civil frontier guards. No officers (false information - see Chapter IV above). Liquidated May, 1940.
Continuing with short description of the camps at Pavliatakov Bor and Grisovitsz, the "Note" formulated the following conclusions and postulates:

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The camp at Grisovitsz was specially formed from inmates of various camps and from heterogeneous elements, possibly in an attempt to create a cross-section of the Polish community.

2. The complete isolation of the rest of the officers, numbering over 8,000, and several thousand other ranks - valuable elements - would appear to testify to a desire to destroy them according to a fixed plan by sending them to places from where there is no return.

3. a. Ill-will is proved by the fact of not supplying the Embassy with lists of prisoners of war in spite of numerous demands and despite Soviet affirmations of their possession of such lists. On the contrary, they themselves demand lists from us, in order to ascertain what and how much we know about the prisoners;

b. in notes and verbal statements they obstinately repeated that "all have been freed", in spite of 10 notes handed to them by the Ambassador containing about two thousand names and in many cases exact addresses, even to the numbers of prison cells;

c. Stalin's general promise of 14.11.41 that "he will look into the matter" was the only answer to the Polish Ambassador's attempt to traverse the wall separating these many thousands of Poles from the rest of the Polish community in the U.S.S.R.

OUR POSTULATES:

The Army Staff submitted a list of officers from the camps at Starobielsk, Kuzielak and Ostaahkov, containing nearly 4,000 names. The extracts included in this note from the reports officers who have returned from camps in the Far East may indicate the whereabouts of our imprisoned officers. The Soviets must change their attitude regarding these prisoners by:

a. immediately releasing all our citizens from camps in the Far East, at Kolyma, in the region of the river Yenisei, at Norylak, in Franz Joseph Land and Novaya Zemlya;

b. immediately establishing radio contact with them and enabling them to return as soon as climatic conditions permit.

The additional verbal information supplied to General Sikorski by Ambassador Kot and General Anders, with whom he arrived in Moscow and who were present at his conversation with Stalin followed the same lines. During this conversation, which lasted two hours and a half, General Sikorski handed Stalin the list of missing officers which had been drawn up by the Army General Staff, containing 3,845 names.

The following account of the conversation at the Kremlin on 3.12.41 concerning the question of releases, and in particular that of the missing officers, is taken from Polish notes written directly after the meeting:

Sikorski: (after greeting "one of the real creators of modern history") -

"I shall begin by saying that I have had nothing to do with and shall never agree with the policy directed against Soviet Missin for the last twenty years. I therefore had a moral right to sign the agreement, which
may be the crowning of the theories which I have held for so long... I do not want the slow realisation of the terms of the agreement to weaken the policy of close co-operation between our two countries. on the loyal fulfilment of the agreement depends whether we now stand at the cross-roads of history. That depends on yourself whose decisions are final in this country. Our agreement must be put into effect, so that our people will cease to be harassed and driven. I am well aware of the difficulties in which Russia finds herself..." (next few sentences are devoted to the necessity of a second front and the technical difficulties of its execution).

"But I must return to our affairs. I declare to you, Mr. President, that your announcement of an amnesty has not been fulfilled. A great many, and indeed most valuable, of our people are still in labour camps and prisons."

Stalin: (makes a note)

"That is impossible, for the amnesty applied to everyone and all Poles have been released" (the last words are directed at Molotov, who nods).

Anders: (at the request of General Sikorski gives details).

"That does not correspond to the real state of affairs: we have absolutely accurate data showing that first Jews were released from the camps, then Ukrainians and finally the physically weaker Polish labour material. The stronger ones were detained, or only a small proportion of them having been released, I have people in the army who were freed only a few weeks ago from such camps and who affirm that in certain camps there still remain hundreds, even thousands, of our compatriots. The Government's orders are not put into effect there, because the commandants of the particular camps, having an obligation to carry out the production plan, do not want to lose their best labour, without which the execution of the plan would sometimes become impossible."

(Molotov smiles, nods his head.)

Anders: "Those people completely fail to understand the whole importance of our common cause, which is thus suffering a severe set-back."

Stalin: "Those people ought to be brought up for trial."

Anders: "That is so."

Sikorski: "It is not our business to provide the Soviet Government with exact lists of our people, but the camp commandants have complete lists. I have with me a list of about 4,000 officers, who were forcibly deported and who are at present still in prisons and labour camps; but even this list is not complete, containing only names supplied from memory. I ordered an investigation to be made to ascertain whether they are not in our country, with which we are always in contact. It has turned out that none of them are there, nor in camps for Polish prisoners of war in Germany. These people are here; not one of them has returned."

Stalin: "That is not possible. They escaped."

Anders: "Where could they have escaped to."

Stalin: "Well, to Manchuria."
Anders: "It is not possible that they could all have escaped, especially since from the moment of their transfer from prisoner of war camps to labour camps and prisons correspondence with their families ceased entirely. I know definitely from officers who have already returned even from Kolyma that many of our officers, whose names they mentioned, are still there. I know that there were even convoys of Poles already prepared for release and departure, who at the last moment were detained. I am informed that our people are to be found even in Novaya Zemlya. A great many of the officers named on this list are personally known to me. Among them are my staff officers and commanders. Those people are perishing and dying there under the most terrible conditions."

Stalin: "They have certainly been freed, but have not yet arrived."

Sikorski: "Russia is large and the difficulties are also great. Perhaps the local authorities have not carried out their orders. Those who have been released and arrived say that the others are vegetating and working. If anyone had crossed the frontiers of Russia, he would certainly have reported to me."

Stalin: "You must know that the Soviet Government has not the least reason for detaining a single Pole; I have even released Scenkowski's agents, who attacked us and murdered our people."

Anders: "But reports are pouring in about people who are well-known to us, giving the names of prisons and masters of cells in which they are confined. I know the names of a great many camps, in which a tremendous number of Poles are detained and must go on working."

Molotov: "We have only detained people who committed crimes, carried out diversionary activities, set up radio stations etc., after the outbreak of war. You are surely not concerned with them."

(The conversation then turned on the living conditions of Poles in the U.S.S.R. after their release from captivity. In the course of the discussion General Sikorski said amongst other things:)

Sikorski: "It is in the interest of the common war effort to make proper use of our people. You naturally understand, Mr. President, that a specialist in building tanks who is cutting trees in the forest is not being made full use of, nor is an eminent chemist, who is doing manual labour in the fields...

Everyone should be immediately freed from the camps, leaving only those who have settled in tolerable conditions. The unco-ordinated transfer of people here and there only creates bad morale, for they find themselves in very bad conditions and so it appears to them that in making an agreement with you I have done a bad thing for them. People are dying as a result of the terrible conditions. Those corpses will be a drag on our future relations."

(General Sikorski then raises the question of social welfare for Polish citizens and of sending delegates of the Embassy to the places concerned.)

Stalin: "I agree to the delegates, and in Vladivostok too."
Molotov: "I do not think it is possible that your people are still in the camps."

Anders: "Nevertheless I state most definitely that they are; I repeat that the strongest are retained there because workmen are needed. By not freeing our people they are doing a bad service to the common cause."

Stalin: "That will be arranged. Special instructions will be issued to the executive authorities, but it must be remembered that we are waging war."

General Sikorski's conversation with Stalin again confirmed the conviction of the Poles that the missing officers were alive and were detained in labour camps in the Far North. This belief was strengthened in particular by Stalin's assurance that the missing officers "have certainly been freed, but have not yet arrived", and by his promise that "special instructions will be issued to the executive authorities."

The above quoted conversations of the Polish Prime Minister at the Kremlin, and similarly all the Ambassador's previous conversations, show how far the Polish representatives were from the supposition that of several thousand officer prisoners of war not one remained alive. The thought did not even occur to them that the Soviet authorities could entirely disregard international conventions and customs accepted by the whole world in respect of prisoners of war, that they could treat them as "bourgeois prejudices". Judging their partners, in spite of everything, according to the standards of the civilised world, the Poles never gave up hope that the missing officers, though perhaps decimated by the hard conditions under which they were kept, would nevertheless be returned to the Polish Armed Forces in the U.S.S.R., which were being organised for the purpose of fighting the common foe.

CHAPTER XIII.

EFFECTS OF THE MILITARY PLENIPOTENTIARY ON BEHALF OF FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE U.S.S.R.

The fruitless diplomatic negotiations which had been going on for several months on the subject of the missing officers and the general declarations and promises made by the Soviet authorities, but never fulfilled, gave rise to anxiety and consternation among the several hundred liberated prisoners of war and among the missing prisoners' numerous relatives and friends who had been deported to the U.S.S.R. They all knew from personal experience of the hard conditions of life in Soviet prisons and camps and were well aware that each additional day of captivity meant more deaths and more invalids. Like the Polish authorities, they were convinced that the missing officers were detained in the worst camps somewhere in the vast area of the U.S.S.R. and severely criticised the Polish authorities for failing to intervene effectively with the Soviet authorities. The approaching winter, with its frightful Siberian frosts, caused complete despair. Many officers offered to search personally for their missing fellow-prisoners and friends. Although only recently freed from prisons and camps, they were willing to sacrifice themselves in order to give their fellow-prisoners a word of encouragement, in order to assure them that every thing possible was being done to help and liberate them. They also believed that, if they could discover the whereabouts of the missing officers, the Soviet authorities would no longer be able to give evasive answers to Polish representatives and would be compelled to free the prisoners hitherto detained.

The responsible Polish authorities, realising the
impossibility of "private searches" in Soviet conditions, appealed for calm and patience. But as time passed and the fates drew nearer, it became more difficult to be patient.

The announcement of General Sikorski’s visit to the U.S.S.R., and his personal intervention with Stalin himself in the case of the missing officers, gave rise to fresh hopes. The results of this intervention were received optimistically by the highest Polish authorities, but more pessimistically by public opinion.

December had now passed and none of the missing prisoners had reappeared nor shown any sign of life. Volunteers constantly joining Polish units after having been released from camps and prisons also brought no information as to the whereabouts of the missing officers.

The fact that the position remained unchanged as a result of the “special instructions”, announced by Stalin at the beginning of December, caused a fresh wave of despair among the Polish Armed Forces in the U.S.S.R.

And when Ostarozhst’s officers discovered that the "GULAG" (Camps Chief Command, see page 136) responsible for all Soviet forced labour camps, had been evacuated from Moscow to Chkalov (Orenburg), they began to urge that official intervention with the Soviet central authorities was not sufficient and that the case of the missing officers should be taken up with the authorities directly responsible for their fate.

General Anders, sharing this opinion and being to a certain extent subject to the general feeling prevalent among his officers, agreed to send as a delegate to Chkalov an officer who, having been a prisoner of war at Starobialsk and possessing many friends among the missing officers, guaranteed to do everything possible in the matter. Invested by General Anders with special plenipotentiary powers and carrying with him a letter in the latter’s handwriting recalling the declarations made by Stalin in his presence concerning the detention of Polish citizens, Captain Joseph Gaspaki went to Chkalov at the beginning of January, 1942, as a special plenipotentiary of the Headquarters of the Polish Armed Forces in the U.S.S.R., to investigate the question of former Polish prisoners of war.

After his arrival at Chkalov the plenipotentiary had great difficulty in finding the "GULAG", which had been evacuated from Moscow; at first he was assured that there was no institution of this kind at Chkalov, but when he mentioned the name of the Commandant of the "GULAG", General of the N.K.V.D. Nasiedkin, and showed the letter from General Anders, who had personally discussed “this very question” with Stalin a month previously, he was received on the same day by General Nasiedkin and by Egyrov, chief of the N.K.V.D. in the province of Chkalov.

Nasiedkin received Captain Gaspaki in his office, on the wall of which hung an immense map of the U.S.S.R. indicating the offices of the lower "GULAG” authorities and the camps under their control. Most of these camps were concentrated on the Kolo peninsula, at Kolyma and in the neighbourhood of Yerbkowansk in Siberia. Captain Gaspaki was particularly interested in the last-mentioned place, as no-one had so far arrived from that area to join the Polish Armed Forces. This seemed to confirm the "optimistic" theory that the missing officers were hidden
in some special camp unknown to the Polish authorities.

When Captain Czapski referred to the three camps and to Stalin's definite order concerning Polish prisoners of war, issued in the presence of General Anders, Nasiedkin declared that he knew absolutely nothing about the matter, as at the time of the evacuation of the said camps — in the spring of 1940 — he was not yet head of the "GULAG". He added that in any case the "GULAG" controlled only "correctional labour camps" containing prisoners condemned by courts, and had nothing to do with prisoner of war camps. In principle he did not exclude the possibility that Polish servicemen might be detained in "correctional labour camps" and promised to clarify the matter and supply full particulars on the following day. Commenting on the rumours that the missing officers had been sent to islands in the Arctic Ocean — Novaya Zemlya and Franz Josef Land — General Nasiedkin assured Captain Czapski that the "GULAG" had no camps on those islands and had not sent anyone there; that if any prisoner of war camps existed there, they were not controlled by the "GULAG". The General's words were borne out by the map hanging behind him, on which no camps were marked on the above-mentioned islands. In the presence of Captain Czapski the General telephoned orders for the detailed preparation of a report for the following day concerning the prisoner of war camps at Kozilesk, Starobialsk and Ostashkov, quoting from General Anders' letter the words: "on the orders of Comrade Stalin." In general the intervention seemed to be progressing satisfactorily and Captain Czapski was full of hope when he took leave of General Nasiedkin.

In the late evening of the same day Captain Czapski was received by Bayrov. The conversation was conducted in the presence of two other N.K.V.D. officers. Treating General Anders' plenipotentiary with great courtesy and assuring him of his desire to do everything possible to assist him, Bayrov advised him to refer the matter only to the highest central authorities, who alone could supply him with positive and concrete information. During the conversation the names of Markulov and Fiedotov, the Deputy People's Commissioners for Home Affairs, were mentioned as being the only people who could throw any light on the problem. Reports to the effect that the missing officers were on islands in the Arctic Ocean by no means surprised Bayrov; on the contrary, he himself pointed out on the map the port of Dudinka, situated at the mouth of the river Yenisei, telling Captain Czapski that the largest convoys of workers were sent North from there. Thus without expressly confirming these reports, Bayrov seemed to support them by putting Captain Czapski on that track.

During Captain Czapski's next visit to Nasiedkin, the conversation followed exactly the line taken by Bayrov. The General received him most courteously, but there was a marked change in his manner. He informed Captain Czapski that he had communicated with Kuybyshev and could tell him nothing, as only the central authorities could elucidate this question. Czapski's attempts to discuss further the theoretical possibility of the prisoners being on the islands of Novaya Zemlya and Franz Josef Land were dismissed by General Nasiedkin with a few remarks, showing the fundamental change which had taken place in his attitude. He said that it was possible that Northern sections of the "GULAG" had sent a few groups of workers to those islands, but the several thousand people for whom the Captain was searching were certainly not there. The General agreed to accept the list of 3,845 names submitted by the plenipotentiary and to forward it to the central authorities at Kuybyshev.
who alone were competent to deal with the question.

Direct approach to the "GULAG" therefore gave no results. The plenipotentiary obtained the impression that the Commandant of the "GULAG" was surprised by his first visit and was subsequently rebuked by his superiors for speaking to a foreign representative without special authorisation and without proper instructions. That would explain General Nasiadkin's changed attitude during the second conversation. This theory was fully confirmed a few days later by a representative of the N.K.V.D. attached to the Polish Forces in the U.S.S.R., who remarked that journeys such as that made to Chkalov are not undertaken in Soviet Russia and requested that such a thing should not occur again. General Anders answered that he would take cognisance of the remark and the request and would send the same plenipotentiary to the central authorities in Moscow, as he desired at all costs to solve the problem of the missing officers, without whom he was unable to build up the Polish Forces in the U.S.S.R.

In the middle of January 1942 the plenipotentiary went to Moscow via Kuybyshev, taking with his new and no less definite instructions and letters from General Anders and determined to approach the central N.K.V.D. authorities. At the head of the Commissariat for Home Affairs was People's Commissar Beria, with Merkulov and Fiedotov as his deputies; next in the N.K.V.D. hierarchy came Generals Raykhman and Zhukov, both of whom were taking part in the organisation of the Polish Forces in the U.S.S.R. General Anders therefore knew them personally and it was to them that he sent letters through Captain Czapski.

Czapski arrived in Moscow on 29.1.42 and began making attempts to obtain a pass for the N.K.V.D. office and to arrange audiances with Generals Raykhman and Zhukov. Both turned out to be far from easy. General Zhukov was apparently not in Moscow, and it was only after trying for several days that Czapski was received by Raykhman on 3.2.42.

Czapski had prepared a short memorandum setting out the whole question of the missing officers and an account of previous Polish intervention with the Soviet authorities. On 3.2.42 this memorandum was taken as the basis for conversation with General Raykhman. Its most essential points were as follows:

"Note on the question of missing Polish prisoners of war from the camps at Starobielsk, Kozielek and Ostashkov"

"Prisoners of war who were at Starobielsk, Kozielek and Ostashkov from 1939 to April, 1940 (numbering over 18,000 of which 8,700 were officers) have not returned from the localities to which they were deported and their places of imprisonment are unknown to us; only 400-500 people, i.e. about 3% of the total number of prisoners of war in the camps at Kozielek, Starobielsk and Ostashkov, have been released after spending a year at Grisovets, near Vologda, or in other prisons."

The note then gave the exact position in the camp at Starobielsk (3,920 inmates, including Generals and Colonels in separate quarters), the camp at Kozielek (about 8,000 prisoners, including 4,500 officers), and the camp at Ostashkov (about 6,370 people, including 380 officers) at the time of the commencement of their liquidation in April, 1940. The note stated further that after the deportation of the first group from Starobielsk on 3.4.40:

"The Soviet commandant, Colonel Borisov, and Commissar Kirshin officially assured the prisoners of war that "they were to be taken to a dispersal point, from where "they would be sent to their homes in Poland - whether on "the German or Soviet side."
but that -

"from letters received in large quantities from Poland in the winter of 1940/41 we know for certain that no-one was sent back to Poland from Starobielsk, Kozielask or Ostashkov at that time."

After giving a short account of the convoys sent from the three large camps to Pavlishchev Bor and afterwards to Griasovitz, the note stated that: the camp at Griasovitz was known to us as the only camp in the U.S.S.R. for prisoners of war, mostly officers of the Polish Army, from June 1940 to September, 1941. From this camp nearly all prisoners were liberated and joined the ranks of the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R. Nearly 6 months have elapsed since the announcement of an amnesty for all prisoners of war and other prisoners on 12th August, 1941. Polish officers and soldiers, who were captured when trying to cross the frontiers after September, 1939, or arrested in the places they were living at the time, having now been released are arriving singly or in groups to join the Polish Army. In spite of the amnesty, however, and despite the categorical promises given to the Polish Ambassador in November, 1941, by Stalin himself, President of the Council of People's Commissars, to the effect that prisoners of war would be returned to us, in spite of the definite orders regarding the finding and release of prisoners of war from Starobielsk, Kozielask and Ostashkov issued by Stalin on 4th December, 1941, in the presence of the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces - General Sikorski and General Anders - except for the above-mentioned group from Griasovitz and a group of a few dozen people who were transported singly and released in September, not one prisoner has returned from Starobielsk, Kozielask and Ostashkov, not one request for help has reached us from the prisoners of war who were in the above-mentioned camps...

"We are aware of the accuracy with which each prisoner was registered; we know that a dossier of each one of us, containing the record of investigations, was kept in a personal file with identification papers and photographs; we know how diligently and accurately the N.K.V.D. performed that task, so none of us prisoners of war can imagine for a second that the whereabouts of 15,000 prisoners of war, including more than 8,000 officers, could be unknown to the highest N.K.V.D. authorities.

"In view of the solemn promises of the President of the Council of People's Commissars, Stalin himself, and his categorical orders for the elucidation of the fate of former Polish prisoners of war, have we not the right to hope that we may at least be informed as to the whereabouts of our brothers in arms, or that if they have perished we may at least know how and where it happened."

After quoting once again the approximate numerical data, with the comment that it was impossible for the Polish authorities to state with absolute accuracy the total number of prisoners of war who have not returned, the note put the number of officers who had not returned from Starobielsk, Kozielask and Ostashkov with relative accuracy at 8,300 and emphasised the noticeable lack of officers for the organization of the Polish Forces in the U.S.S.R. The note concluded with a paragraph on the influence of the case of the missing officers on the morale of the Polish Forces in the U.S.S.R. and their relation..."
Although, according to Polish information, General Raykhman took part in all the more important investigations conducted by the N.K.V.D., although the Polish section of the N.K.V.D. was part of his department, although Captain Czapski, finally entering the General’s office after a wait of some fifteen minutes, met his former commandant from the Grizasovitz camp, Colonel Khodas of the N.K.V.D., leaving the same office - in spite of all this General Raykhman, after gravely and attentively reading the memorandum handed to him by Czapski and underlining certain paragraphs, declared that the whole affair was entirely foreign and unknown to him, that it did not concern his department and that only out of politeness to General Anders would he try to collect all possible information, which would however take some considerable time.

To Czapski’s request to be put in direct contact with a representative of the central N.K.V.D. authorities competent to deal with the case of the missing officer prisoners of war, General Raykhman replied that Markulov was unfortunately not at present in Moscow and that he could not suggest anyone else. In the course of further conversation General Raykhman expressed the opinion that the missing officers had simply been sent to German occupied territory and that they should be searched for there as well. When Captain Czapski pointed out that careful and thorough searches in German occupied territory and in German prisoner of war camps had yielded no results, and that the missing officers’ families in Poland had received no news of them since the spring of 1940, General Raykhman did not support his casually stated opinion but only repeated his promise to collect the information and communicate it to Czapski, perhaps on the following day.

Thus Captain Czapski’s further attempts in Moscow produced no results. He did not succeed in reaching any official N.K.V.D. representatives or any other departments, although he made every possible effort in this direction.

General Zhukov was also absent from Moscow, with the result that Czapski was unable even to hand him General Anders’ letter. Neither did he succeed in obtaining another audience with General Raykhman, who despite his promise did not produce the required information. Then Czapski’s short-dated military permit for Moscow expired and the police began to press him to leave. His attempts to prolong his permit were without result, although he referred to General Anders’ definite order instructing him to await General Raykhman’s promised reply. As Czapski refused to leave Moscow without the reply, after a week of waiting he was awakened after midnight on February 10th, 1940, by a telephone call from General Raykhman himself, who most politely expressed his deep regret that, as he was suddenly leaving Moscow, he would be unable to see Czapski again concerning the matter for which Czapski had come there.

In any case, added the General courteously, he could not give Czapski any important information because as far as he knew all material concerning the case in question had been sent by the N.K.V.D. to Kuybyshev and was now in the hands of the N.K.I.D. (Foreign Office) namely of Vyshinsky and Novikov, whom he advised Czapski to approach. Czapski pointed out that the Polish ambassador had several times approached Vyshinsky and that it was only because the N.K.I.D. had given no definite or concrete replies that General Anders had turned to General Raykhman, whose friendly attitude to the Polish Army was known, with the request for assistance and personal intervention in this matter, so vitally concerning every Polish soldier.

General Raykhman replied with a few polite phrases, from which however it was perfectly obvious that he would not receive Czapski again.
After the telephone conversation with General Raykhman and the reply received from him there was no further reason for prolonging his visit to Moscow, and Captain Czapski returned to Polish Army Headquarters in the middle of February, 1942, where he reported to General Anders on the complete failure of his mission.

After General Sikorski's visit to Moscow there was a pause in the diplomatic intervention of the Polish Ambassador in the case of the missing prisoners. Captain Czapski, returning via Kuybyshev, informed the Ambassador of the failure of his mission to the central N.K.V.D. authorities and of General Raykhman's "advice" to approach Vyshinsky and Novikov for information on this question, since they possessed all the relevant information and therefore the only people able to give the Poles the explanation they were seeking. But in the light of previous experience, the Ambassador was not interested in this "advice". Soviet diplomats, having given repeated assurances that all Poles deprived of liberty in the U.S.S.R., together with all prisoners of war, had already been released, could not - or did not wish to - give the Polish authorities an explanation, which would have to stand up to detailed investigation as to why despite the alleged release, not one out of over ten thousand prisoners of war from Kozielsk, Starobialsk and Ostashkov had so far established contact either with Polish diplomatic representatives or with the Polish military authorities in the U.S.S.R. It is true that Soviet diplomats expressed the opinion that after being released from the camps all those prisoners had illegally crossed the Soviet frontiers, but they themselves did not appear to treat this supposition seriously. They almost seemed to agree with the Polish theory that the missing prisoners, had been detained by local authorities possibly in defiance of the instructions of the central authorities, in distant labour camps either...
as prisoners or as "amnestied" prisoners lacking the facilities to travel to more civilised places on account of climatic conditions. But as Soviet diplomats in the course of conversations categorically denied that the missing prisoners were kept in detention with the knowledge and approval of the central authorities, renewed requests for information as to the whereabouts of the missing prisoners were pointless. Under these circumstances the Ambassador decided that there was no other alternative but to wait patiently for the summer, when transport conditions would improve, and meanwhile to carry on the search throughout the U.S.S.R.

After long and exhaustive negotiations the Soviet authorities finally agreed to the formation of 20 Delegations of the Embassy, who "in close collaboration with the Soviet authorities" were to take care of Polish citizens and compile a register of them. As Delegations were to be established in Archangel and Vladivostok, the Embassy was very hopeful that they would find some traces of the missing prisoners.

All the people who took part in these Delegations were arrested in July and August, 1942, after a few months' work. They were accused by the Soviet authorities of performing intelligence work hostile to the U.S.S.R. The first Delegates to be arrested were those in Archangel and Vladivostok.

At the same time the Polish Government in London again made official representations on this question. In a note dated 28th January, 1942, London, the head of the Polish Foreign Office, Count Raczyński, pointed out to the Russian Ambassador, Bogomolov, that according to Poli’s information the release of Polish citizens from labour camps and "d’autres lieux de détention" in the U.S.S.R. "n’a pas été exécuté d’une façon intégrale", since "dans un nombre de cas les autorités locales administratives de l’Union n’appliquent pas, dans toute leur étendue, les dispositions du Décret soviétique en date du Août 1941."

After this general introduction, repeating the basic Polish thesis, the note laid particular stress on "le fait douloureux" that of the total number of officers and men "amnistiers dans les camps de prisonniers de guerre de Kozialsk, Starobialsk et Ostashkov" 12 Generals, 94 Colonels, 263 Majors and about 7,800 officers of lower rank had so far not been released.

Emphasizing that the searches conducted on the instructions of the Polish government "on permis d’établir avec certitude que les militaires dont il s’agit ne se trouvent actuellement ni en Pologne occupée ni dans des camps de prisonniers de guerre en Allemagne", the note pointed out that according to fragmentary information reaching London "une partie des prisonniers se trouverait dans les conditions d’existence très dures dans les îles Französ-Joseph, Nouvelle Zélande et sur le territoire de la république de Jakoitse sur les bords de la rivière Kolyma."

After thus repeating once again the Polish theory of the detention of the "missing" officers in the extreme North, the note recalled "plusieurs interventions successives de l’Ambassade de Pologne a Kuybyshew" and stated that another list of names of missing prisoners would be handed to the Soviet Government by the Embassy. Recalling that this same question was the subject of General Sikorski’s conversation with the President of the Council of People’s Commissioners of the U.S.S.R. and that during that conversation General Sikorski "avait été heureux d’obtenir des assurances que les instructions nécessaires seraient..."
The reply of the Soviet Ambassador accredited to the Polish Government, Bogomolov, dated 13th of March, 1942 (Ref. No. 57) confirmed completely the righteousness of the views of the Polish Embassy in the U.S.S.R., that further diplomatic moves in regard to the missing P.O.W. 's are unnecessary and would not be successful.

Referring to Molotov's note of 8.11.1941., and to the aide-memoir of the N.K.I.D. (U.S.R. Foreign Office) of 19.11.1941., concerning the strict execution of the "amnesty" in regard to the Polish subjects in the U.S.S.R., - Bogomolov's reply stated that:


"et indiqué..."

and in addition, not mentioning the names of Koziełsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov:

"Étant donné que les officiers et les soldats polonais étaient mis en liberté au même titre que les autres ressortissans polonais en vertu de l'ukase du 23 Août 1941, tout ce qu'il a été dit ci-dessus se rapporte également aux officiers et soldats polonais."

As regards the declarations of the Polish Note that the Polish officers are still not released and that a number of such officers are on the Franz Josef and Novaya Zemlya Islands, and along the borders of the River Kolyma, - the Soviet reply declared that:

"ces déclarations sont sans fondement et se basent, évidemment, sur l'information incertaine."

The following is the relevant part of the conversation:

"Anders; Moreover, many of our people are in prisons and labour camps. Recently prisoners are reporting all the time. So far not one officer removed from Koziełsk, Starobielsk or Ostashkov has reappeared. You certainly must have them. We have collected additional information about them" "(he hands over the lists of names which is taken by Molotov). "Where can they be? We have traces of their whereabouts on the Kolyma river."

1. It may be recalled that on November 2nd, 1941, Wyshinski declared to the Polish Ambassador: "We have records of everyone, alive or dead, I have promised the details and I will produce them...." (see p.172 above).
"indiqué..."

and in addition, not mentioning the names of Kozielsk, Starobilsk and Ostashkov:

"Etant donné que les officiers et les soldats polonais étaient mis en liberté au même titre que les autres ressortissants polonais en vertu de l'Oka du 12 août, 1941, tout ce qu'il a été dit ci-dessus se rapporte également aux officiers et soldats polonais."

As regards the declarations of the Polish Note that the Polish officers are still not released and that a number of such officers are on the Franz Josef and Novaya Zemlya Islands, and along the borders of the River Kolyma, the Soviet reply declared that:

"ces déclarations sont sans fondement et se basent, évidemment, sur l'information incertaine."

In the meantime the Polish Army Staff in the U.S.S.R., was carrying out the tedious task of completing and checking the lists of names of missing prisoners. At the beginning of March, 1942, the list contained 4,616 names, representing 30% of the prisoners deported from the three large camps in April and May, 1940. The Polish authorities fully realised that this task, involving so much energy and work, was entirely unnecessary, since, in view of the accuracy of the evidence compiled by the N.K.V.D. in the camps, the Soviet authorities undoubtedly possessed complete and detailed records.

Nevertheless, General Anders handed that list to Stalin himself on March 18th, 1942, repeating once again the essential facts concerning the missing officers.

There were present at that conversation Stalin, with Molotov and a Soviet stenographer, and General Anders accompanied by his Chief of Staff, Colonel L. Okoliiski.

The following is the relevant part of the conversation:

Anders: "Moreover, many of our people are in prisons and labour camps. Recently prisoners are reporting all the time. So far not one officer removed from Kozielsk, Starobilsk or Ostashkov has reappeared. You certainly must have them. We have collected additional information about them" (the hands over the lists of names which is taken by Molotov).

"Where can they be? We have traces of their whereabouts on the Kolyma river."

1. It may be recalled that on November 2nd, 1941, Vyshinsky declared to the Polish Ambassador: "We have records of everyone, alive or dead, I have promised the details and I will produce them..." (see p.172 above).
Stalin: "I have already given orders that they are to be freed. They say they are in Prinz Josef Land, but there is no one there. I do not know where they are. Why should we keep them? It may be that they were in camps in territories which have been taken by the Germans and were dispersed."

Okolicki: "Impossible - we should have known of it."

Stalin: "We have detained only those Poles who are spying for the Germans."

(The subject of conversation then changes and a discussion follows on Polish-German relations at the time when Beck was Foreign Minister.)

Only the future was to reveal the importance of the sentence which the Soviet dictator let fall "en passant".

Among the Polish citizens deported to the U.S.S. R., were a large number of relations, friends and acquaintances of the "missing" officers. These friends and relations, on being released from their prisons, labour camps and places of deportation, began to search for the missing prisoners, as a rule applying to the Polish military authorities and to the Embassy for information. These letters caused a great deal of trouble, for the anxious families, dissatisfied with the Polish authorities' replies, showered them with further letters demanding more detailed explanations. In consequence of the ever increasing anxiety among Polish circles with regard to the case of the "missing" prisoners the question of publishing, an official communiqué in "Polska", the official journal of the Embassy, appearing in Kuybyshev, was mooted.

This communiqué, couched in exceptionally careful terms, recalled the promises given by representatives of the Soviet authorities on many occasions in answer to Polish requests and, on the strength of these promises, appealed to people to wait patiently for the probably imminent return of the prisoners in summer. This communiqué was approved by the Ambassador on March 8th, 1942, but never appeared in "Polska" having failed to pass by the Soviet censorship. Soon afterwards the censorship prohibited the families of people missing all over the vast territories of the U.S.S.R. from publishing their names in "Polska".

As a result of the wide-spread conviction in Polish circles that the missing prisoners were somewhere in the extreme North, hopes of their return rose as spring approached. These hopes were sustained by rumours, that some of the prisoners had been found in this or that region, that the Soviet authorities were preparing to receive convoys of Polish prisoners who were expected to arrive from the Far North. Such rumours noticeably gained strength in and after March, 1942; people repeating them in many cases quoted more or less official Soviet representatives as the source of their information. This later gave rise to the assumption that the rumours were deliberately spread by the Soviets, probably with the object of calming the increasing impatience of the Polish public, to prevent further diplomatic intervention and to postpone the disclosures to the world of the fact about the missing Polish prisoners of war.

1. In the "History of the 6th Lwow Infantry Division" (Polish Armed Forces in the U.S.S.R.), we find on page 33 of the manuscript the following paragraph: "At the end of March 1942 a rumour suddenly began to circulate to the effect that some of them (the missing prisoners) were returning to us from the Far North."
As a result of the wave of rumours, many members of the embassy were of the opinion that the best thing to do was to wait patiently for the missing prisoners, who

"That rumour gathered strength in April, May and June. By July no one believed that they would come. Then suddenly, at the end of July, Army Headquarters were officially informed that a group of 50 persons working to our Army... It turned out that they did in fact come from the North, the majority from the Kolyma river, others collected from all over the Northern regions (from Archangel to the river Kolyma); there were few officers of the reserves, but not one of them had been at Ostashkov, at Kuzielak or at Starobielsk. Thus ended the tale of the return of some of the officers from these camps. Persistently supported by someone, that tale was kept alive in our ranks for several months."

On 29.5.42 Witness 27 produced a written report of his conversation with an officer of the Red Army, who had apparently returned from an island in the Far North, where his unit was defending a base. Asked how it was possible to establish a base under such severe climatic conditions, the Soviet officer answered that there was no lack of workers, since many thousands of condemned prisoners were working on the island, among them "your officer prisoners of war from 1939, to whom he had spoken personally. They had been transferred there from camps in the South of Russia. He remarked that if he had known that he would meet Poles he would have made a note of the prisoners' names, as he spoke to them on many occasions. Their living conditions were appalling, they worked in two shifts; they had no warm clothes or boots, and the mortality rate was very high. That officer was withdrawn from coastal defense and transferred to Chkalov.

Witness 28 was released from the hospital of the M.V.D. "OKLAG" (Omsk correct Labour camp) at Omsk on 8.2.42. After his arrival at a recruiting centre of the Polish Forces on 8.4.42 he stated that the head of the hospital at Agano, when handing him his certificate of release, said "You see, at the place where you were working our people are now already building the road along which your officers will return from Franz Josef Land." Asked during interrogation for a more detailed description of the place where he was previously working Witness 28 pointed on the map to the region of the mouth of the river Ob. On his way from Omsk to the Polish Forces in the South, the same witness met a man who declared that he was a Polish policeman returning from Franz Josef Land, where the release of policemen had already begun and the release of officers would soon be started.

Witness 29, who was Polish registration officer in February-March 1942, proved to be a woman "plenipotentiary" of the People's Commissariat of Justice, who was responsible for checking the indictments of Polish citizens detained after the "amnesty". In her work this Soviet official showed great sympathy for the Poles and during a private conversation with the坡es 29 she told him that prisoners of war from Witness 28 had told her that prisoners of war from Starobielsk, Kuzielak and Ostashkov had been sent to Starobielsk, Kuzielak and Ostashkov had been sent to

Polish citizens detainted after the "amnesty". In her work this Soviet official showed great sympathy for the Poles and during a private conversation with the
The Soviet authorities are in possession of accurate lists of their former prisoners of war, who, for reasons unknown to the Poles, have up to date been unable to rejoin their own native standards. Nevertheless, at the request of the Soviet authorities and in order to facilitate their search for the missing Polish officers, comprehensive lists were handed over by the Polish Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, General Sikorski, on 5.12.41 and by the Commander of the Polish Forces in the U.S.S.R., General Anders, on 18.3.42.

The above lists were drawn up from memory with great difficulty by a few former prisoners from Kozielak, Starobielsk and Ostaszkow, who for various reasons had managed to escape the fate of the officers deported in groups from those camps by the Soviet authorities in May and June 1940. The lists are constantly augmented on the basis of information received from the Polish Government in London and of complaints and letters from despairing families, who until about that time corresponded by letter or telegram with their relations in the above-mentioned camps, but whose correspondence, sent to the same addresses which had been until now the correct ones, was, after June 1940, returned by the Soviet postal authorities bearing the stamp "return part!"

The above-mentioned lists are still not complete, since of over 15,000 Polish prisoners of war, including 9,000 officers, formerly in the prisoner of war camps at Kozielak, Starobielsk and Ostaszkow, they contain no more than 4,000 names, including 12 Generals, 94 Colonels and Lieutenant-Colonels, 263 Majors and about 3,500 junior officers. None of these commanders, so necessary to the common cause of the Allied Powers in the present bitter war, have so far returned to the Forces, nor have they given a sign of life; those of them who remain alive continue to be deprived of liberty, contrary to the obligations contracted by the Government of the U.S.S.R. in the Agreement of 30.7, 41, contrary to the decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. of 12.6, 41, and contrary to the statements that all Polish citizens, who were deprived of their freedom as prisoners of war or on other adequate grounds, had already been released.

On 13.6, 42, as a result of precise information received by the Embassy concerning the detention by the Soviet authorities in Northern forced labour camps of two former prisoners of war, deported individually before the liquidation of the three large camps in April and May, 1940, the Embassy once again raised the question of the missing prisoners in a note to the N.K.I.D:

"In various conversations with the highest representatives of the authorities of the U.S.S.R. the question has been raised of restoring liberty to the servicemen of the Polish army, predominantly officers, who were in the prisoner of war camps at Kozielak, Starobielsk and Ostaszkow. These camps were liquidated in 1940, and the prisoners were removed in groups in April and May of the same year in a direction unknown to the Embassy. Since then all trace of them has been lost. Hitherto the N.K.I.D. has given the Embassy no explanation of this matter. The Embassy has pleasure in informing the N.K.I.D. that it has obtained the following particulars concerning the case of two people, who were formerly in the prisoner of war camp at Starobielsk, were removed..."
from there during the afore-mentioned period and subsequently found themselves in forced labour camps: Maximilian Hoffman in the Kargopol camp, Yelets station, province of Archangel; Wlodzimierz Pawłukiewicz in the Ostrinskiy camp in the Komi Republic. The above facts prove the truth of statements made by Polish representatives in conversations with the highest representatives of the Soviet authorities and with representatives of the N.K.I.D., asserting that those officers of the Polish Army and police from the prisoner of war camps at Starobielsk, Kozlisk and Ostaszkow who were deported to forced labour camps are still in those camps, in spite of the clauses of the Agreement of 30.7.41 and of the Decree of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. of 12.8.41...

The Polish Embassy would be very grateful to the N.K.I.D. for the earliest possible reply both in the case of the two Polish citizens mentioned above and on the general question raised in this note of former prisoners of war from the camps of Starobielsk, Kozlisk and Ostaszkow - particularly in view of the fact that 10 months have already elapsed since the conclusion of the Agreement of 30.8.41 and the issuing of the Decree of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. on 12.8.41.

The Embassy received no reply to that note, but the Soviet reply to the Memorandum of 19.1.42 was received on 10.7.42 in the form of an Aide-memoire. In it the N.K.I.D. stated:

"The People’s Commissariat has already on several occasions met with statements of the Polish Foreign Office and Embassy alleging that a considerable proportion of Polish prisoners of war have not yet been released. In this connection it should be recalled that the question of the full execution of the Decree of Amnesty for Polish citizens, including the question of the officers of the Polish Army, has already been explained (see M.Vysinsky’s conferences with M.Kot on 14.10.41 and 2.11.41 (pp.163 and 169) and also the promemoria of M. Bogomolov, Ambassador of the Soviet Union to the Polish Government in London.” (p. 210).

"With regard to the lists of Polish officers, referred to in point three of the Embassy’s Memorandum - as the Memorandum itself stated, they were compiled on the basis of doubtful and untrustworthy sources such as the memory of a small number of prisoners; in the opinion of the People’s Commissariat, it cannot therefore be concluded, on the basis of such data, that the Decree of 12.8.41 has not been applied to a considerable proportion of Polish servicemen.

The People’s Commissariat rejects as entirely without foundation the Embassy’s statement that over ten thousand Polish officers are still in detention, contrary to the Amnesty Decree."

The Aide-memoire further stated that in general all “information received by the Embassy concerning Polish citizens allegedly in detention, in no way corresponds to the truth.”

The final paragraph discussed the Embassy’s view that the absence of news (“sign of life”) from numerous Polish citizens who were previously in Soviet prisons and camps was a proof of their continued detention. The Soviet argument on this point ran as follows:"
"It is known that many Polish citizens, who were released before the issuing of the Amnesty Decree, left the U.S.S.R. for their own country. It should also be pointed out that many of the Polish citizens who were released on the basis of the amnesty Decree escaped abroad, some of them had succeeded in reaching either the Union, or died on the way and were left behind at various railway stations. Consequently, as the Ambassador himself stated in his note of 15.3.42, some of them died on the way. All these circumstances may well mean that a certain number of Polish citizens have not given a sign of life, but this is no foundation for the conclusions reached by the Polish Embassy in the Memorandum of 19.5.42."

The Embassy was by no means convinced by the foregoing "explanations" of the Soviet authorities, suggesting that over 10,000 "missing" prisoners of war, having been released from captivity, had either "left the U.S.S.R. for their own country", or illegally escaped from the Soviet Union, or died on the way "as a result of unorganised migrations" from the North to the South, so that not one of them had succeeded in reaching either the Embassy or the Headquarters of the Polish Forces. However, as a result of the sudden deterioration in Polish-Soviet relations at that time, the Embassy was never able to reply to the Soviet Aide-memoire of July 16th, 1942.

The case of the "missing" prisoners of war/for the last time- before the "Katyn revelations" on 8.7.42

when Ambassador Kot accompanied by the Polish Charge d'Affaires - Sokolnicki paid a farewell visit to Vyshinsky. It was the latter who brought up the subject:-

Vyshinsky: "As to the detention of Poles in prisons or camps and the driving of them to hard labour, I must assure you, Mr. Ambassador, that I have looked into the matter and ascertained that they really are not there. I notice a tendency to regard our replies as mere formalities, but I thought the situation was actually different. But your allegation does not correspond to reality. Except for a few groups detained as Hitlerite agents, there are none. There are no officers in the Far North, now in the near North, or anywhere else. Perhaps they are outside the U.S.S.R., or perhaps some of them have died. Not long ago, for instance, the Embassy itself in one of its notes cancelled a previous request for the release of someone, on the grounds that they had found the person in Poland. Perhaps the same thing has happened with the others. All have been freed. Some were released before our war with Germany, some afterwards."

Kot: "...As for the officers, I must say that it is just from Poland that I receive the largest number of enquiries from their families, who are extremely worried about their fate because they are not there. Not one of them is there.

Sokolnicki: "The case cited by Mr. Chairman of the discovery of one of the people proves the opposite - that we know what is happening in our country and that if such a large number of missing people were there we should certainly have heard of them. If
If our prisoners have been liberated, then please let me have a list of those freed and the date and place of their release. The Soviet authorities made several lists of prisoners in the camps and the production of the lists cannot present any difficulties.

Vyshinsky: “Unfortunately we have no such lists”.

The attitude taken by both sides remained unaltered during this discussion, just as in the first diplomatic conversation on the question of the missing prisoners on 6.10.41 (see p.169 above). The Soviets limited themselves to stubbornly insisting that the “missing” prisoners were not in Soviet camps and prisons, having been released; but they refused to give any concrete information or explanations regarding the details of their release (date, place, list of released prisoners) or as to their subsequent fate. The Polish side rejected the easily refuted Soviet contention about the alleged fate of the missing prisoners (escape to Manchuria, dispersal, death during the “unorganised migrations from North to South, etc.”) and did not believe the Soviet statements concerning their release. Nine months of diplomatic conversations had in no way solved the problem of the missing prisoners.

The question of the prisoners was raised for the last time in diplomatic correspondence – before the “Katyn revelations” – in a note of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London, dated 27.8.42, concerning the refusal of the Soviet authorities to allow further recruiting for the Polish Forces on the territory of the U.S.S.R.: "The negative attitude of the Soviet Government towards the further development of the Polish..."
the Polish officers were not on Soviet territory, suddenly broke off the conversation, "disturbingly helpless". This behaviour on the part of the Soviet Ambassador alarmed the Polish Minister of Defence, who wrote in his notes directly after the conversation: "It seems to me, unfortunately, that the question of the 8,000 officers must be considered hopeless and that Bogomolov knows they have perished."

Besides these rumours, others began to reach London, namely, of Berling's and Merkulov's remarks about the "great mistake" made to Berling and his friends in Lubianka, (see p. 128 above). This information, and the eighteen months of waiting for the return of the missing prisoners, caused growing pessimism in Polish circles which was even reflected in the Polish press.

In the weekly "Polisna Wałczak" - "Zolnier Polski Abroad" (Fighting Poland - "The Polish Soldier Abroad") No. 4 of January 30th, 1943, an article by S.W. entitled "Visit to the Soviet Union", appeared. In this article the Polish war correspondent sharing his impressions of his visit to U.S.S.R. with his readers, clearly implied that the Soviet authorities had made a "great mistake" with regard to the missing Polish prisoners, as a result of which "those people are lost for ever". The following is an extract from the article: "...Our elementary demands for the rescue of our people are: protection for the large number of Poles still remaining alive. The whereabouts of the 12,000 - not yet recovered - prisoners of war should be disclosed to us. If we receive the reply that those people are lost for ever, then we shall demand that for that price the remaining Poles shall be properly cared for and that we shall be given every possibility of helping them. We have still hundreds of thousands of human lives to save. Rescue must be
"very rapid. From the mouths of several high
Soviet officials the timid confession has now been
uttered that a bolsheya oszhitka" ("great mistake") was
made about our prisoners. A great mistake, bloody
perhaps as well as great? How we wish that this mis-
take will not be repeated, that the Soviet State will
make amends for it as far as may be possible — by
"saving the rest from extermination."

So, by the early spring of 1943, Polish official
circles as well as Polish public opinion, still knowing
nothing definite about the fate of 12,000 prisoners of
war missing in the U.S.S.R., were convinced that they
had met a tragic fate.

2. The Polish "Delegation" to Katyn.

At the beginning of April, 1943, the German
Propaganda Chief for the Warsaw district quite unex-
pectedly invited a number of Poles to a conference
without announcing the subject and without giving
the persons concerned a chance for discussion before-
hand. Those invited were representatives of the town
(Mr. M. Kaliski, the Mayor), of the Central Welfare
Council (Mr. M. Neschmiak, the president), of the
judiciary (Mr. K. Rudniski), of the clergy (Prelate
Trzechit), of writers and journalists (Mr. P. Koetzl,
Mr. Skiwski, and Mr. Zylski), of Polish women's
organizations, artisans etc.

The meeting was addressed by a delegate of
the Ministry of Propaganda from Berlin. He began by
describing the problems of the war against the Soviets
from the point of view of official German policy,
making, however, no special political allusions to the
Polish nation. He then announced that mass graves of
Polish victims of the communist terror had been discovered
near Smolensk, and gave a general invitation to those
present to visit the spot. The main emphasis of the
speech was on the "bestiality" of the Bolshevik regime
and on the misfortunes of the victims of the communist
terror. No details were given concerning the number
of victims, their identity etc. Similar conferences
were held in Cracow and possibly in Lublin. As a result,
on 10.4.43 a group of Poles flew to Smolensk, comprising
the following people chosen by the Germans:

- Mr. Edmund Seyfried — representative of the Cracow
  Central Welfare Council.
- Dr. K. Orzechowski, from the Warsaw Town Hospital.
- Dr. E. Grodzki of the Polish Welfare Committee, Warsaw.
- Mr. F. Goetzl — writer.
- Mr. J. Z. Skiwski — writer.
- Mr. K. Prochownik — foreman of the "Zieloniewski"
  factory in Cracow.
- Mr. W. Kawecki — director of the German sponsored
  "Pol-Press" Agency in Cracow.
- Mr. K. Didur — press-photographer of the "Kraeuer
  Zeitung".
- Mr. Widra — photographer and correspondent of the
  German sponsored newspaper "Glos Lubelski"
  ("Voice of Lublin").

At Smolensk the "Polish delegation" was
received with exaggerated courtesy by the German
military authorities and its members were treated
as "representatives of the Polish people". According
to the explanations given to the "delegation"
immediately after its arrival, a group of Polish labourers
working, at Kosie Gory by Shenidovo, heard from the local
population in October, 1942, that there were there
mass graves of Polish officers. The German authorities
were said not to have been informed of this until February, 1943, when trial excavations were carried out in the woods near the K.K.V.D. Rest House. One mass grave, measuring 28 by 14 metres (31 by 16 yards) and 6 metres (19 ft) in depth was then opened and a whole cemetery was plotted out nearby. At a distance of 300 and 500 metres (330 and 560 yards) respectively from the officers' grave, were graves of civilians, buried there at least ten years before.

The "delegation" then went from Smolensk to the place in question and confirmed the existence of two opened pits, from which about 280 corpses had already been exhumed, including the bodies of General Smorawski and General Bohatyrowicz, wearing Generals' uniforms and all their insignia. The other corpses were similarly in Polish uniforms, officers' boots, military belts and badges. The papers and notes found on the bodies had already been removed and put into special show-cases.

After looking closely at the grave, the representative of the Central Welfare Council, with the official permission of the Germans, made the following speech in Polish: "I invite you, gentlemen, to honour in silence, with uncovered and bowed heads, those heroes, who have given their lives that Poland may still live."

Then the "delegation" was taken to a special building, where they examined the papers found on the bodies: letters, diaries, crucifixes, religious medals, identification papers, visiting cards, etc., by which 47 bodies had already been identified.

In the course of conversation with the Germans, the "delegation" asked why the Poles had only now been informed of the discovery of the mass graves, when the Germans had known of their existence for the last few months. The Germans replied that it was the fault of the military commanders, who during vital front-line operations minimised the value and importance of this frightful discovery.

Although the German authorities at first published no news about the sending of a Polish "delegation" to Katyn, the Polish Underground Movement informed London of their departure as early as 15.4.43, and subsequently reported on the statements made by the people who had been there. These reports confirmed that the graves actually contained the bodies of Polish officers, but in considerably smaller numbers than those suggested by the Germans, who gave the number of victims as about 12,000.

Attempts made by the Germans to draw from the members of the Katyn "delegation" political pronouncements for propaganda purposes were practically fruitless. Only Kowalski, who had for a long time been collaborating with the German press, and the Cracow workman Prochownik, wrote or spoke in such a way that their words could be used as German propaganda.

The other members of the "delegation" exercised greater restraint in their descriptions.

3. Part played by the Polish Red Cross in the excavations.

A few days after the first "delegation", representing, according to the Germans, the Polish community, a second "delegation" was sent to Katyn, this time of a more professional nature. Except for the Canon of Cracow, Father Stanislaw Jasinski (a trusted friend of Archbishop Sapieha) and a journalist, Marian Martens, this delegation consisted exclusively of
representatives of the Polish Red Cross - administrative officials and doctors from Warsaw and Cracow.

From Cracow - Dr. A. Szobota, Dr. T. Susz-Pragowski, Mr. S. Kiepior.

From Warsaw - the Secretary-General of the Polish Red Cross, Mr. K. J. Skarżyński, Mr. L. Rożkiewicz, Mr. J. Wodzimierski, Dr. H. Bartoszewski, Mr. S. Kołodziejski, Mr. Z. Bobrowski, Mr. R. Bannik.

Some of the members of this delegation remained at Katyn in order to take part in the exhumation and identification of the bodies and to be present at the burials.

The Polish doctors and medical personnel, whose number was subsequently increased to twelve, owing to the tremendous amount of work, also served as witnesses before the world of the truth of the regularly and widely published reports of the numbers and identity of the exhumed bodies of Polish officers. The Germans also needed people with a knowledge of Polish social relations and the Polish language to identify the bodies, read the documents found on them etc. From the Polish point of view, the participation of Polish medical personnel in the work of exhumation had the advantage of ensuring first hand information about the documents found on the bodies. Copies of a certain number of these documents were subsequently sent by the Polish Underground Movement to the Polish Government in London, and helped to throw new light on the fate of the prisoners of war from the Korziczk camp.

On 16.4.43 the Secretary General of the Polish Red Cross, Skarżyński, handed to the Executive Council of the Polish Red Cross a report on his visit to Katyn, in which he stated that:

A. At Katyn, near Smolensk, there were some partly excavated graves of Polish officers;

B. On the basis of post-mortem on corpses already recovered, it could be stated that these officers had been murdered by shooting through the back of the head, which showed that the killing had undoubtedly been carried out in an expert manner;

C. The murder had not been connected with looting since the corpses were in uniform, wearing decorations and boots, and on some of the bodies had been found a considerable number of Polish coins and bank notes;

D. Judging by papers found on the corpses, the murders had taken place in March - April, 1940;

E. So far the identity of only a comparatively few of the murdered officers had been established (about 150).

The Germans requested that the Executive Council of the Polish Red Cross, now convinced of the authenticity of the Katyn discoveries by the report of its "delegates", should send representatives to Ciechocinek in Germany to inform the Polish officers there. To this the Executive Council sent a written reply on 16.4.43 in very restrained and almost provocative terms. Affirming that the Polish Red Cross was ready to cooperate with the German authorities within the limits laid down by international conventions, the letter requested that should the Polish Red Cross accede to this request, the part of its representatives would be purely limited to the statement of facts and that in this event the Polish Red Cross, must be allowed to resume its proper activities, which had been drastically curtailed by the occupying power. The letter demanded in particular:

a. That the activities of the Polish Red Cross be

1. Officers' prisoner of war camps.
permitted by the occupying power in all territories from which the Polish army was recruited, including the Western territories officially "incorporated" into the German Reich as well as the Eastern territories not forming part of the General Government (This condition was of course not acceptable to the German authorities);

b. that prisoners of war, when released from camps, should be permitted to return to the territory of the General Government, which had been forbidden since 1941;

c. that prisoners of war should not be removed from prisoner of war camps and handed over to the police for crimes supposed to have been committed by them before the war and that the few officers who were in concentration camps instead of prisoner of war camps should be immediately released.

Those demands were not complied with and the Polish Red Cross sent no "delegates" to the Orlags. Consequently the German authorities were obliged to organise a "delegation" to Katyn composed of Polish officers from German prisoner-of-war camps.

As far as is known, delegations were flown to Katyn from two camps, Oflag II-C (Woldenburg) and III-B (Neubrandenburg). On their return the "delegates" imparted their impressions to their fellow-prisoners, who had hitherto refused to believe the German radio reports, dismissing them as yet another lie of Goebbels' propaganda. The only effect of the verification of the facts by the "delegates" was general depression among the prisoners. According to a report of a Polish
CHAPTER XVI.

THE KATYN REVELATIONS

1. German communiqué on the Katyn "discoveries".

At first the Katyn "discoveries" were kept strictly secret by the German authorities, the visit of the Polish "delegation" to Katyn was therefore also not disclosed: But from 15.4.43 the Berlin radio, followed by all other German-controlled radio stations in Europe, began to announce news of the discovery near Smolensk of the mass graves of "thousands of officers of the former Polish Army, "interned in the U.S.S.R. in 1939 and bestially murdered "by the Bolsheviks".

The contents of the first German communiqué were briefly as follows:

A few days before, as a result of hints (Hinweise) given by the local population, the German military authorities had discovered the mass graves of murdered Polish officers. These graves are situated 20 km. (12 miles) west of Smolensk, not far from the Smolensk-Vitebsk road, in a clearing in the Katyn wood on the hill of Kozia Gora (in Wald von Katyn am Kose-Gory Hugel), 500 metres (550 yards) from the Rest House for "senior K.K.V.D.officials".

The communiqué described in detail only one mass tomb measuring 28 by 16 metres (31 by 18 yards) in which in 9-12 layers, were about 4000 bodies of murdered officers. Giving no details, it spoke of a second mass tomb with 5-6,000 bodies, and of "at least" two more mass graves. The communiqué estimated the number of victims at "over 10,000", representing that as the minimum and suggesting that in reality there had been a far greater number of victims "of Jewish-Bolshevik bestiality".

The communiqué further stated, on the basis of testimony supplied by local inhabitants, that the officers arrived at the nearby station of "Sniadovoje" in the spring of 1940, in another place, however, it mentioned "April-May 1940". It tried to establish the date of the murders, saying that spruce trees "now three years old" ("Drei jetzt drei Jahre alt sind"). were growing on the graves. It stated that the bodies were mostly bound up and in each case there were indications that the victims were murdered by a shot in the base of the skull ("durch Genickschuss").

The communiqué finally stated that the bodies and the uniforms were well preserved and that indentification had been facilitated by papers, documents, indentifications of the tragedy of the Polish prisoners of war in the U.S.S.R. Nevertheless it was treated on closer analysis with great reservation as being Goebbels propaganda. This was inevitable in view of its familiar crudity of tone, its frequently conflicting statements and its general vagueness and inaccuracy.

The immediate question that arose in everybody's mind was why the German authorities had only found the graves in the spring of 1943, when Katyn had been in their hands since 1941 - this question the communiqué made no attempt to answer.

The communiqué's obvious exaggeration of the numbers of corpses involved, also caused distrust, which was sustained in Polish official circles by information supplied to the Polish Government by the Polish Underground Movement, giving the number of corpses as being about 4,000.
Attempts to establish the date of the murder by giving the age of spruces planted on the graves also failed. It was pointed out in the press (see article by G.W.S. entitled "more about the Katyn graves" in the Swedish "Nu" nr 27) that spruce trees are not usually planted until they are two years old. Spruces three years old in 1943 would therefore indicate that the murder took place in April, 1942, and not in the spring of 1940. The Germans themselves found they had made a mistake, and in later reports from Katyn the information about the age of the spruce trees growing on the graves was corrected (see below).

The German information about the absence of any articles of value or watches on the bodies were also only partly true. In general, watches were not found, and this corresponded with the note in the diary found at Katyn describing the inspection carried out before leaving Gniezdo station (see p. 65 above). But on many bodies money and articles of value were in fact found hidden in clothes or boots.

Finally, various inaccuracies aroused the suspicion of the Poles in particular. For instance, on the epaulettes of some of the uniforms were the letters "S.P." (Szkoła Podchorążych - Cadet Officers' School); the communiqué gave the letters as "J.P.", explaining that it was the emblem "des Traditions-Regimentes Pilsudski".

5. Journalists of neutral and German satellite countries in Katyn.

Simultaneously with the first Polish "delegation", the German authorities arranged for accredited foreign journalists from Berlin to visit Katyn. The group consisted of:

Jaederlund - correspondent of "Stockholms Tidningen", Sweden
Schnetzler - correspondent of "Der Bund", Switzerland
Sanchez - correspondent of "Informaciones", Spain
Myklebust - correspondent of "The Norwegian Telegraph Agency",
Stoffels - correspondent of "Do Telegraph", Holland,
van der Meele - correspondent of "Nouveau Journal", Belgium,
Szabolcs - correspondent of "Esti Ujsag", Hungary
Mikasinovitsch - correspondent of "Novo Vreme", Serbia.

The expedition was accompanied by a representative of the press department of the Reich Chancellery, Schipper, and by a secretary of the Foreign Office, Lassler. At Katyn itself it was conducted by Captain Freudeman.

According to explanations given to the foreign journalists by Colonel von Gersdorff at Katyn, the attention of the German authorities had been drawn to the graves by two wooden crosses erected in the Katyn wood by Polish workmen employed on building roads in the district, who had themselves been informed by the local population of the execution there of many Poles. The Polish workmen had started searching on their own and having found the corpses, which they had recognised as being the bodies of Polish officers, they had pointed them again and had erected two crosses to mark the place. The German military authorities had at first ignored this information - continued Colonel von Gersdorff - but, about 10 or 14 days before, superior authorities had ordered excavations to be carried out, which had revealed the secret of the mass murder of Polish officers.

So far three pits (Gruben) had been opened, measuring 28 by 16 metres (21 by 18 yards) and about 5 - 8 metres (16 - 24 feet deep, containing 9 - 12 layers of bodies, almost exclusively of Polish officers. Among them, the bodies of a few army chaplains and of one woman had been found.
The number of bodies in the graves had been estimated at 10 - 12 thousand, which figures had been arrived at by multiplying the number of layers by the number of bodies in each layer.

When the journalists arrived, 150-200 bodies had already been recovered from the graves; the speed of the work was said to have been impeded by the inadequacy of the professional personnel, consisting of Professor Bothe of Breslau university (Director of the Institute of Forensic Medicine and Pathology), assisted by only two soldiers of the Medical Corps and two Russian civilians. The primary concern of the Professor was to establish the time and causes of death and to identify the bodies.

It was confirmed that the bodies in the top layer had been killed in April, 1940, as on many of the dead people were found diaries and notes, as well as letters, and from Poland, the latest of which were dated March, 1940.

The stage of decomposition of the bodies, preserved in the sandy soil had also indicated that they had been buried for three years. The cause of death had in every case been found to be a shot right through the head from the back to the forehead or temple "in Stirm order Schleifen." The hands of a certain number of officers had been tied behind them; other bodies had had tunics thrown over their heads and had then been bound and shot. The mouths of some of the officers had been gagged, most probably to prevent them shouting when being killed. The bodies had been laid in the graves in full uniform "packed like sardines;" only caps and flasks seemed to have been scattered at random.

---

1. According to a dispatch quoted by the "Hamburger Fremdenblatt" of 22.4.43 (No.112) and published in the Swiss daily "Basler Torbliess," the first layer of the opened grave contained 250 bodies.
in the daily "El Pampero" (Buenos Aires).

"Dear General Sikorski, I can assure you as the
"Head of the Polish Government in emigration, that
"you are waiting in vain for the return of 900,000
"Polish soldiers, who went to Soviet territory
"after the defeat of Poland and about whose fate
"there is already a serious difference of opinion
"between yourself and Moscow.

"I have just returned from the "pit - the common
"grave of Polish officers", situated in a wood near
"the former rest house for the G.P.U. at Kosogory
"(Koszegore), near Krasnybor, 20 kilometres West
"of Smolensk. According to detailed investigations
"carried out by the German Army, the G.P.U. murdered
"and buried there between February and March, 1940,
"10,000 Polish officers, that is nearly all the
"officers who fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

"The moments spent near the bodies are among the
"most terrible in my life and nothing will efface
"them. Even today, writing these words many
"kilometres from the scene of the crime, I still
"seem to smell the disgusting odour of rotting
"corpses. I saw hundred of decomposing bodies.

"The identification of some of them, which I watched,
"proves without doubt that those people, who were
"murdered by a shot in the base of the skull, were
"Polish officers.

"Behind Krasny Bor, close to the Smolensk - Minsk
"road, between the road and the Dnieper, is a pine wood
"2 kilometres wide and 1 kilometre long, surrounded
"by undulating hills. The car, in which I was
"driving with a group of foreign journalists from

"Berlin drew up in a big yard of a G.P.U. holiday
"resort. Local inhabitants state that the place
"was used from May to September by G.P.U. officials,
"and that during the spring and autumn the sound
"of shots were heard.

"Until the German Army arrived, even the local
"population was strictly forbidden to approach
"the place. Bolshevik petrol, armed to the
"teeth and accompanied by dogs, were on guard and
"allowed no-one to enter. Anyone who went there
"could not expect mercy. Even today it is
"difficult to persuade any of the local inhabitants
"to cross the border into that place.

"200 metres from the road is a sandy mound 1.5 - 2
"metres high. On arrival at this mound one sees
"hundreds of corpses in a pit 28 metres long and
"15 metres wide. The bodies are placed on top of
"one another in 12 layers, like sardines in a box.

"They have become ingrained with earth and disfigured
"as a result of three years underground. The skulls
"are what hits the eye. Some of the corpses have
"their hands tied behind the back and all are in
"uniform and are wearing boots. In amongst the
"bodies are camp utensils and other objects. I
"see also vodka bottles, which were probably used
"to encourage the shooting parties.

"The whole picture arouses feelings of disgust
"and fear. Fortunately it rained during the night
"and a strong wind is blowing the smell in the
"opposite direction, making it possible for us to
"stand close to the bodies. In this woody grove
"I see other heaps of sand.
"The well-known doctor and professor from Breslau, the world famous E. Buhtz, to whom the 'task of exhuming and examining the bodies of the Poles has been allotted, told me that in his opinion there are grave-pits in other parts of the wood; this has been confirmed meanwhile by the five experimental excavations. In the first pit are 3,000 bodies, in the second there must be at least 5,000 and there are possibly a further 2,000.

Professor Buhtz says that the identification of bodies is relatively easy. The dead are mostly officers. Only 1-2% of them are not in officers' uniforms. The German authorities learnt during last winter of this mass murder of Polish officers. But no exhumations took place until the beginning of April.

After ten days of work it appears that "the 'task of clearing Krasyi Bor of Poles" was nothing but the elimination of the whole intelligentsia of the former Polish Army on Soviet territory."

The above report was widely used by the Axis radio stations.

---

CHAPTER XVII.

REACTION OF THE ALLIED NATIONS TO THE KATYN REVELATIONS.

5. The Katyn revelations and public opinion of Poles outside Poland.

As was mentioned previously (see p. 228), at the beginning of 1943, Polish circles became more and more convinced that the return of the "missing prisoners could not be counted on and this conviction was expressed in the article in "Polaka Walezaca" quoted above. But nevertheless the German disclosures made a tremendous impression. Grief for those who were dead was mingled with fear for those still alive. Only a small percentage of Poles deported from Poland by the Soviet authorities in the years 1939-41 succeeded in leaving the U.S.S.R. with General Anders' Army. Hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens still remained there, among them many families of Polish soldiers fighting in the West and the fate of all those still in the Soviet Union appeared tragically uncertain in the light of the Katyn revelations.

These revelations gave rise to anxiety and dismay particularly in General Anders' Army, then in the Middle East. That army was composed almost exclusively of people who had passed through Soviet prisons and camps, and whose families for the most part had remained in the U.S.S.R. The mere presence in that army of several hundred officers who were formerly prisoners in the three large Soviet camps and had returned via Grissovists, brought the tragedy of Katyn very close.

In a wireless message sent at 7 p.m. on 15.4.43 to the Polish Minister of National Defense in London,
General Anders made the following statement on his attempts to find the missing prisoners in the U.S.S.R. and on the moral of the troops under his command after the Katyn revelations:

"From the moment of my release from prison I tried to find our soldiers from Starobielsk, Kozielek, and Ostankov. I always received evasive replies from the Soviet authorities. The Commander-In-Chief, during his visit to Moscow, made a personal appeal to Stalin, and received the answer that they had probably escaped. For my part, during the whole time I was in the U.S.S.R., I made prodigious efforts to discover something about their fate from the Soviet authorities and from Stalin himself.

I sent people in all directions to search for them...

In private conversations some of the high Soviet officials mentioned, declared that a "Yekovyya oshibka" (fateful mistake) had been made in this matter. News reached us that some of our officers had been deliberately drowned in the Arctic Ocean. But it is quite possible that those moved from Kozielek were murdered near Smolensk. A number of the names given by the German radio are in our card index. It is a fact that not one of the 8,300 officers from the camps at Kozielek and Starobielsk, nor of the 4,000 N.C.O.'s of the military and civil police from the Ostankov camp, have joined the army. In spite of tremendous efforts on our side we have received absolutely no news of any of them. We have long held the deep conviction that none of them are alive but that they were deliberately murdered. Despite this, the announcement of the German discoveries made a tremendous impression and caused deep dismay. I consider it necessary for the Government to intervene in this affair with the object of obtaining official explanations from the Soviets, especially as our soldiers are convinced that the rest of our people in the U.S.S.R. will also be exterminated."

Almost simultaneously with the German disclosures a message was received from the Underground Movement in Poland concerning the Polish "delegation" which was conducted by the Germans to Smolensk (see p. 229 above). This telegram left no doubt as to the genuineness of the "discovery". As the Germans had decided to "invite" Poles to Katyn, the bodies of the officers were undoubtedly there.

The piles of bodies at Katyn were also a convincing proof of the truth of statements so often repeated by representatives of the Soviet Government that no Polish prisoners were still in detention on Soviet territory. The contents of notes and protocols of Polish-Soviet conversations on the question of missing prisoners studied once again in the light of the Katyn revelations became painfully intelligible.

Statements and facts, hitherto variously interpreted by the Poles, only now became clear, as for instance:

a) Vyshinsky's embarrassment when the question of the "missing" prisoners was taken up with him for the first time during the conversation of 6.10.41 (see p. 159 - 161 above);

b) His irritation during the conversation of 14.10.41 and his promise to hand over "all the people we have" emphasizing that "we cannot give those who are not with us". (see p. 163 above);

c) the fact that the categorical promises made by Vyshinsky in the conversation of 2.11.41 were not fulfilled: "We have records of everyone, alive or dead.}
"I have promised the details and I will produce them." (see p. 212 above).

d) Stalin's silence after receiving information by telephone concerning the "missing" prisoners during the conversation of 14.11.41. (see p. 180 above);

e) his improbable and very strange statement during the conversation of 3.12.41 that thousands of the "missing" prisoners had escaped to Manchuria after being released from camps. (see p. 191);

f) the strange experiences of General Anders' plenipotentiary at Chkalov and in Moscow (see Chapter XIII);

g) Stalin's words during the conversation of 18.3.42: "I do not know where they are. Why should we keep "them? It may be that they were in camps in "territories which have been taken by the Germans and "were dispersed." (see p. 213);

h) the statement in the Soviet aide-memoire of 10.7.42 that "many Polish citizens, who were released before "the issuing of the Amnesty Decree, left the U.S.S.R. "for their own country," (see p. 220);

i) Vyshinsky's exceptionally frank declaration during the conversation of 8.7.42 that "...I have looked into "the matter and ascertained that they really are not "there. I notice a tendency to regard our replies as "mere formalities, but I thought the situation was "actually different. There are no officers either in "the Far North, or in the Near North, or anywhere else. "Perhaps they are outside the U.S.S.R. perhaps some of "them have died," (see p. 221);

7. Reaction of the Allies in the first days after the revelations.

a) First Soviet communiqué.

The first Soviet communiqué, which was broadcast by the Soviet Information Bureau on 18.4.43, broke a silence that had lasted for many hours during which Goebbels had been pouring forth a torrent of propaganda.

This communiqué ran as follows:

"In the past two or three days Goebbels' slanders

"have been spreading vile fabrications alleging that "Soviet authorities effected a mass shooting of Polish "officers in the spring of 1940 in the Smolensk area.

"In launching this monstrous invention the German- "Fascist scoundrels did not hesitate at the most "unscrupulous and base lies, in their attempts to "cover up crimes which, as has now become evident, "were perpetrated by themselves.

"The German-Fascist reports on this subject leave no "doubt as to the tragic fate of the former Polish "prisoners of war who in 1941 were engaged in "construction work in areas West of Smolensk region, "fell into the hands of the German-Fascist hangmen in the "summer of 1941, after the withdrawal of the Soviet "troops from the Smolensk area.

"Beyond doubt Goebbels' slanders are now trying by "lies and calumnies to cover up the bloody crimes of "the Hitlerite gangsters. In their clumsily "concocted fabrication about the numerous graves which "the Germans allegedly discovered near Smolensk, the "Hitlerite liars mention the village of "Gnesdovaya. But, like the swindlers they are, they "are silent about the fact that it was near the village "Gnesdovaya that the archeological excavations of the "historic Gnesdovaya burial place" were made.
Fast-masters of such affairs, the Hitlerites stoop to the slandering forgeries and misrepresentation of facts in spreading slanderous fabrications about some sort of Soviet atrocities allegedly perpetrated in the spring of 1940, and in this way try to shake off their own responsibility for the brutal crimes they have committed.

These arrant German-Fascist murderers, whose hands are stained with the blood of hundreds of thousands of innocent victims, who methodically exterminate the population of countries they have occupied without sparing children, women or old people, who exterminated many hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens in Poland itself, will deceive no one by their base lies and slander.

The Hitlerite murderers will not escape a just and inevitable retribution for their bloody crimes. 1

This communiqué, though couched in strong language, had one weak point which struck everybody, even those who were entirely ignorant of the case of the "missing" prisoners of war.

If, as the Soviet communiqué stated, "the German-Fascist reports on this subject leave no doubt as to the tragic fate of the former Polish prisoners of war", then their bodies must have been in the Katyn graves allegedly "discovered" by the Germans. In that case what was the point of mentioning the "archaeological excavations, of the historic Gnedovsk burial place"? But, if the Katyn graves advertised by the Germans were in reality merely archeological excavations, why did the Soviet communiqué speak with such certainty of the tragic fate which befell the Polish officers at the hands of the "arrant German-Fascist murderers?"

1. "Soviet War News" No. 541 of 17.4.43.

Moreover, those people who were better informed inevitably asked themselves if the "former Polish prisoners of war, who in 1941 were engaged in construction work in areas West of Smolensk... fell into the hands of the German-Fascist hangmen in the summer of 1941", why did the Soviet authorities withhold this, as far as they were concerned, quite uncompromising and very relevant information throughout the 29 months of Polish-Soviet conversations, during the whole period of which they stated, untruthfully, that those prisoners had been released? To that question also the Soviet communiqué gave no answer.

b) The Polish press in London

On the same day as the communiqué of the Soviet Information Bureau, i.e. on 15.4.43 the German revelations were first mentioned in very restrained terms in the Polish press in Great Britain.

The following is an extract from an article in the London "Polskii Polski" ("Polish Daily") No. 849 of 15.4.43:

"The Germans have published news of the discovery near Smolensk of the mass graves of several thousand Polish officers, allegedly murdered by the Soviet authorities in February and March, 1940.

This terrible accusation may be yet another lie of "German propaganda, aimed at impairing Polish-Soviet relations, mobilising Europe against Russia and effecting the impression made on world opinion by the "disclosure of the latest German brutalities, inflicted on the population of many Russian towns."

(The article then gave a summary of the information broadcast by the German radio, after which it concluded)
"That is the German information. It contains many
incompatibilities... We need not add that there is not
a Pole who does not pray fervently that this terrible
news taken up by German propaganda will turn out -
as has so often been the case in the past - to be
lies".

6. Referring to the Katyn affair to the International
Red Cross.

a) Communiqué of the Polish Minister of National Defence
of 17.4.43.

The first step taken by the Polish Government
in London in connection with the Katyn revelations was
the issuance of a communiqué by the Minister of National
Defence, General Bukieli, and relayed in the afternoon
programme of the Polish Radio in London on 17.4.43. After
giving a summary of the story of the missing Polish
officers in the U.S.S.R. and of the Polish Government's
efforts to extract from the Soviet authorities information
concerning their fate, General Bukieli's communiqué stated
that - "neither the Polish Government, nor the Polish
Ambassador in Moscow, has ever received an answer
as to the whereabouts of the missing officers and other
prisoners of war moved from the three camps."

The communiqué concluded with the following
paragraph:

We have become accustomed to the lies of German
propaganda and we understand the purpose behind its
latest revelations. In view, however, of the
abundant and detailed German information concerning
the discovery of the bodies of many thousands of Polish
officers near Smolensk, and the categorical statement
that they were murdered by the Soviet authorities in
the spring of 1940, the necessity has arisen that the
mass graves discovered should be investigated and the
facts alleged verified by a competent international
body such as the International Red Cross.

The Polish Government has therefore approached this
institution with a view to securing a
delegation to the place where the massacre
of the Polish prisoners of war is said to have taken
place."

The announcement of the Polish Government's
intention to request the International Red Cross to
investigate the question of the massacre of prisoners
of war was completely legal and fully justified step.

The only institution entitled, under International
Law, to investigate on enemy territory, is the
International Red Cross. It was only natural to approach
this institution. A similar investigation was requested
by Great Britain in regard to Shanghai and Hong-Kong."
(H.W. Henderson - "The... Polish Conspiracy, Glasgow 1944.

b) Statement of the Polish Cabinet of 17.4.43.

At a meeting of the Polish Cabinet in London on
17.4.43, after the Ministers had "acquainted themselves
with all information concerning the Polish Officers
whose bodies have recently been discovered near Smolensk
and with the reports from Poland on this matter" 1 and
after the question had been widely discussed, the
following decisions were taken:

1) to declare that "there is not one Pole who has not been
deeply shocked by the news now given the widest publicity
by the Germans of the discovery of the bodies of the Polish
officers missing in the U.S.S.R. in a common grave near
Smolensk and of a mass execution of which they were victims;"

1. It should be emphasised that after receiving a report
from their Secretary General, Mr. Skarzynski, on his
visit to Katyn, the Polish Red Cross in Poland
independently approached the International Red Cross
with a request for intervention. (See p.259 above).
2) to accept the decision to approach the International Red Cross with the request that they "send a delegation "to investigate the true state of affairs on the spot. "It is to be desired that the findings of this protective "institution, which is to be entrusted with the task of "clarifying the matter and of establishing responsibility, "should be issued without delay."

3) to emphasise the anti-German attitude of the Polish Government and Nation by issuing a special declaration: "At the same time, however, the Polish Government, on "behalf of the Polish Nation, denies to the Germans any "right to base on a crime, they ascribe to others, argu- "ments in their own defence. The profoundly hypocritical "indignation of German propaganda will not succeed in "concealing from the world the many cruel and "reiterated crimes still being perpetrated against the "Polish people.

"The Polish Government recalls such facts as:
- the removal of Polish officers from prisoner of war "camps in the Reich and subsequent shooting of them "for political offences alleged to have been committed "before the war;
- mass arrests of officers of the reserve subsequently "deported to concentration camps to die a slow death; "From Cracow and the neighbouring district alone 6,000 "were deported in June, 1942;
- the compulsory enlistment in the Wehrmacht of "Polish prisoners of war from territories illegally "incorporated in the Reich;
- the forcible conscription of about 300,000 Poles from "the same territories and the execution of the families "of those who managed to escape;
- the massacre of a million and a half people by executions "and in concentration camps;
- the recent imprisonment of 80,000 people of military "age, officers and men and their torture and murder in "the camps of Maidanek and Treblinka.

"It is not to enable Germans to make impudent "claims and pose as the defenders of Christianity and European civilisation that Poland is making immense "sacrifices fighting and enduring sufferings. The blood of "Polish soldiers and Polish citizens, wherever it was shed, "cries of atonement before the conscience of the free peoples "of the world. The Polish Government condemn all the "crimes committed against Polish citizens and refuses the "right of making political capital of such sacrifices to "all who are themselves guilty of such crimes."

4) to approach the Soviet Government once again by "hanging them a special note requesting detailed information "concerning the fate which befell the 'missing' prisoners "of war after their removal from the three large camps.

c) Polish note of 20.4.43

This approach was made in a note, addressed to "the Soviet Ambassador by the Polish Government in London, "which was for technical reasons not handed to the "Ambassador until Tuesday 20.4.43, although the decision "to send it was taken on Saturday 17.4.43. In it the "Polish Foreign Minister, after quoting the report of the "German military authorities published by 'a foreign "telegmark agency', concerning the discovery of a mass "grave containing the bodies of Polish officers allegedly "killed in 1940, stated that:

"This report, although emanating from enemy sources, "has produced profound anxiety in Polish and world "public opinion. In a public statement on 17.4.43, "the Polish Government categorically condemned "Germany's attempt to exploit the tragedy of Polish
Hitlerite propaganda, must be fully elucidated."

After recalling the fact that the question of the missing prisoners of war had been raised many times in conversations and correspondence with the Soviet authorities, the Polish Foreign Minister regretted "The necessity of calling your attention, Mr. Ambassador, to the fact that the Polish Government in "spite of reiterated requests has never received either a "list of prisoners, or definite information as to the "whereabouts of the missing officers and of "other prisoners, deported from the three camps "mentioned above. Official, verbal and written "statements of the representatives of the U.S.S.R. "have been confined to mere assurances that in "accordance with a Decree of the Presidium "of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. dated "August 12th, 1941, the Amnesty had general and universal "character as it included both military and civilian "prisoners, and that the Government of the U.S.S.R. "had released all the Polish officers from "prisoners of war camps.

"I should like to emphasize", continued the Polish note, "that the Polish Government, as can be seen "from their many representations quoted above, "entirely independently of recent German revelations, "has never regarded the question of the missing "officers as closed. If however, as shown by the "communique of the Soviet Information Bureau of "15.4.43, the Government of the U.S.S.R. would seem "to be in possession of more ample information on this

matter than was communicated to the representatives of "the Polish Government some time ago. I beg once more "to request you, Mr. Ambassador, to communicate to the "Polish Government detailed and precise information as to the "status of the prisoners of war and civilians previously detain- "ed in the camps at Konoski, Starobielsk and Ostashkov.

"Public opinion in Poland and throughout the world "has rightly been so deeply shocked that only "irrefutable facts can outweigh the numerous and "detailed German statements concerning the discovery "of the bodies of many thousands of Polish officers "murdered near Smolensk in the spring of 1940."

No reply to this note was received from the Soviets.

a) Attitude of the International Red Cross.

At 4.30 p.m. on 17.4.43, in accordance with "the instructions of the Polish Government in London, the "deputy of the Polish Red Cross Delegate in Switzerland, "M. Radziwill, handed a note from the Polish Government "to M. Rupger, a representative of the International Red "Cross, requesting the International Red Cross to investi- "gate the massacre of Polish prisoners of war at Katyn by "means of a delegation of neutral representatives.

It turned out that a similar proposal had been submitted "by a German representative less than an hour before.

This was not a mere coincidence. The Polish "Government in London had already decided on 15.4.43 in "principle to approach the International Red Cross in "connection with the Katyn revelations. This decision "was reported by the "Daily Telegraph" diplomatic "correspondent on 16.4.43. The Polish Government's "decision was also clearly stated in the communiqué "issued by the Polish Minister of National Defence, "published by Rector on the evening of 16.4.43 and broadcast
by the Polish radio in London at noon of 27.4.43. Obviously the Germans, on learning from Reuters and the Polish Radio of the intention of the Polish Government, decided to take similar action, considering that inspection of the graves and bodies by a neutral international institution would in no way compromise them.

In view of the fact that similar proposals had been put forward by two parties, between which a state of war existed - as required by the rules laid down by the International Red Cross at the beginning of the second World War in respect of participation in international investigations - the International Red Cross representative told M. Radziwill that the proposals would most probably be considered by the Executive Council of the International Red Cross and announced that a meeting of a special committee of the International Red Cross would be held on 20.4.43 to appoint a neutral delegation.

This meeting, however, did not take place, and the attitude of the International Red Cross changed as a result of Russian opposition.

On 20.4.43 the International Red Cross sent a written acknowledgement of the Polish note, enclosing a short memorandum. This stated that:

1) the Polish proposal had been studied with the greatest care and that decisions as to the further course of action to be taken would be communicated as soon as possible;

2) International Red Cross was already prepared to supply families with information concerning the identification of officers as this information became available;

3) pointing out that the spirit of the memorandum of 12.9.39 did not permit it to consider sending experts to take part in the technical procedure of identification except with the agreement of all interested parties.

The whole question was even more clearly set out in a letter of the President of the International Red Cross, Professor Max Huber, addressed to the Polish Foreign Minister and handed to M. Radziwill on 22.4.43.

After courteous thanks "for the new proof of "esteem accorded us by the Polish Government in approaching "our institution", the letter stated that the International Red Cross was prepared to appoint neutral experts on condition that all interested parties requested that this should be done and that agreement existed between the appointed Committee and the parties in respect of the "modalités" of the proposed mandate.

It was emphasised that "these conditions are in "accordance with the principles governing this question "enunciated in the memorandum directed to the belligerent "states on 12.9.39 and published in the "Red Cross "International Review" of September, 1939, concerning the "possibility of the Committee taking part in an enquiry."

The letter then made "a request to the Polish Government "to inform us what steps will be taken to obtain the "agreement of the Soviet Government or to make suggestions "in this respect. In conclusion the letter stated that "in anticipation of the possibility that agreement is reached "between the interested parties, we are already endeavouring "to find neutral persons who possess the necessary "qualifications."

According to private information supplied to M. Radziwill, the International Red Cross intended to send to Katyn an investigatory commission composed of Swedish, Portuguese and Swiss experts, under the leadership of a Swiss. But, as was clear from the foregoing letter, everything depended on the agreement of Russia.
The International Red Cross therefore suggested that the Polish Government should approach the U.S.S.R., either directly or through the medium of the Anglo-Saxon Allies.

A similar letter dated 22.4.43, was sent by the International Red Cross to the German authorities, suggesting that they endeavour to obtain the consent of the Soviet Government to an investigatory commission through the medium of the "puissance protector".

In view of the wide interest aroused throughout the world by the Katyn affair, the International Red Cross published the following communiqué on 23.4.43:

"The German Red Cross and the Polish Government in London have approached the International Red Cross with a request for its participation in the identification of bodies which, according to German reports, have been discovered near Smolensk.

"In both cases the International Red Cross replied that in principle it is prepared to afford assistance by selecting neutral experts, on condition that similar appeals are received from all parties interested in this question. This is in accordance with the memorandum sent by the International Red Cross in December, 1939, to all belligerent nations, defining the principles on the basis of which the International Red Cross may participate in this kind of investigation."

CHAPTER XVIII.

U.S.S.R.'S REACTION TO APPEALS TO THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS.


The first communiqué of the Soviet Information Bureau on 15.4.43 (see p. 247) was followed by a second published on 17.4.43.

This communiqué transmitted by Reuters stated that the German accusations were wholly improbable and that the hand of the Gestapo was clearly to be seen in them. The bodies of the murdered people would have had to have been completely mummified in order to be recognisable after several years. Similarly the documents found of the bodies would have had to have been chemically treated to be decipherable.

But the Germans had mentioned nothing of this. The whole affair was explained, according to the Soviet communiqué, by the fact that when the Soviet Army withdrew from the region of Smolensk, a certain number of former Polish prisoners had fallen into the hands of the Hitlerites. Some of them had been murdered immediately, the remainder had been kept alive for a special purpose. The latter had been murdered by the Gestapo quite recently, which explained why their bodies had not decomposed. The personal documents allegedly found on the bodies had been taken, according to the Soviet communiqué, from the Gestapo archives, and that explained why they were so easy to read.

The Hitlerites, concluded the Soviet communiqué, who had destroyed the whole of the Polish intelligentsia, were now trying to play the role of defenders of Poland, and by hurling calumnies at the Soviet Union they intended to make the world forget the crimes perpetrated by themselves.
The press devoted relatively little attention to this Soviet communique, it was completely collapsed by a sensational editorial published in "Pravda" on 19.4.43 entitled "Hitler's Polish Collaborators."

The following are extracts from that article, which was the Soviet reply to the communique issued by the Polish Minister of National Defence on 17.4.43:

"Slander spreads rapidly. Before the ink has dried on the pen of the German-Fascist scribblers, the vile inventions of Goebbels and Co. springing from the alleged "mass shooting of Polish officers by the Soviet authorities in 1940, are taken up not only by faithful "Hitlerite lackeys, but, Oh wonder, by General Sikorski's ministerial circles."

"One would think that the Polish Ministry was well aware of the vile reputation enjoyed by German propaganda, which long ago beat all records in "prodigious monstrous, provocative lies."

"Nevertheless, contrary to common sense, the Polish Ministry has found nothing better to do than to "support in its communique the vile provocation of the "Hitlerites, and approach the International Red Cross "with a request for an "investigation" of something "which never happened, or, strictly speaking, of that "which has been done by the Berlin torture specialists "and thereafter vilificously attributed to the Soviet "authorities. The Polish leaders have in an "inexcusable manner fallen prey to the wily provocations "of Goebbels and thus in reality are supporting the "villainous tricks and slanderous inventions of the "executioners of the Polish nation."

"After this it is hardly surprising that Hitler also "has approached the International Red Cross with a prop-

"osal for an "investigation" of the scene prepared by "the hands of his masters of the science of crime."

"Thus the ways of the German provocators and of their "Polish assistants act."

The article then denied accusations made by the Germans in 1941 that during the Soviet Army's withdrawal from Lwow mass butcheries had been carried out there, stating that Soviet witnesses had testified that the Lwow murders had not been committed by the withdrawing Soviet army, but by the advancing Germans. "Pravda" continued:

"The same base Hitlerite provocation has taken place "this time too. As had now become perfectly clear "the Germans seized the former Polish prisoners of war "who were in 1941 engaged in construction work in the "regions West of Smolensk and who, together with many "Soviet inhabitants of the province of Smolensk, fell "into the hands of the German-Fascist executioners in "the summer of 1941 after the withdrawal of the Soviet "armies from the region of Smolensk."

"The Germans bestially killed the former Polish "prisoners of war and many Soviet people. How they "wish to obliterate all traces of their crimes and, in "the hope that they will find credulous people to believe "them, are attempting to cover up their monstrous "crimes with a new series of vile insinuations. The "Hitlerite sadists, with astonishing knowledge of the "affair, describe the details and particulars of the "murder of Polish officers. But the more of these "details" they give - even to such particulars as "visiting cards and identification papers, which they "themselves had the foresight to put into the pockets "of the bestially tortured officers - the more obvious "does it become that the Hitlerite executioners, who
"graduated in Himmler's school of torture, are describing "their own rich experiences."

The article conjectured that the aim of "the base "devices of the Hitlerite torturers" was to "obliterate the "traces of their own monstrous crimes, to wipe out their "own bloody murders, for which they will have to take a "heavy responsibility. Their bestial fear of the "inevitable atonement for their bloody crimes causes these "licensed torturers of the Samovian nations, and of other "Freedom loving nations, to discover new villainous methods of carrying out further provocations in their search for "salvation. Feeding the tremendous anger of the whole of "progressive mankind against the massacre of peaceful and "defenceless populations, particularly of the Jews, the "Hitlerites try with all their strength to incite credulous "and naive people against the Jews."

"Pravda" went on to state that the "Jewish commissars" named by the Germans as the executioners of Katyn were never in the Smolensk section of the G.P.U. "they were not, nor never had been in the N.K.V.D. organisation" end that "it is not difficult for experienced masters of "provocation to invent a few names of non-existing people. "In the light of these facts", continued "Pravda", "the Polish Minister of National Defence's request to the "International Red Cross cannot be considered as anything "but direct and obvious help to the Hitlerite "provocators in their task of fabricating base false-hoods. In all healthy-minded people, particularly "in those who themselves experience the nightmare of "the Hitlerite tyranny, falsehood of the kind can arouse "only disgust."

From this last assumption "Pravda" concluded, in the name of the Polish nation that: "It (the Polish nation) rejects the Hitlerite slander "against its brother, the Soviet nation, which has "shown to the world a miracle of heroism, courage and "noble suffering. Those Poles who willingly take up and support Hitlerite falsehood, are ready to co-operate "with the Hitlerite executioners of the Polish nation, "will go down to history as the henchmen of Carnal "Hitler. The Polish nation turns away from them, as "from people who are giving aid to the sworn enemy of "Poland, Hitler."

This article in "Pravda", by its form no less than by its contents, caused a great international sensation which was reflected in the press of the whole world. The American "New York Times" published a cable from Moscow under the headings: ""Pravda" says "Poles have been cheated by Hitlerites - Sikorski regime "accused of helping Hitlerite torturers by repeating "accusations about massacre." The New York Times foresaw from the article in "Pravda" that "this affair has "led us to a critical turn in Polish-Soviet relations, "whose course has been so stormy since the beginning of "the war."

On the following day, 20.4.45, the official "Isviestia" reprinted the "Pravda" article, as an editorial, while "TASS", the official Soviet news agency, published the following communique: "On the basis of information received, TASS is able "to state that the leading article "Hitler's Polish "Collaborators", which appeared in "Pravda" on 19.4.45 "as a result of the well-known provocative communique of
"the Polish Minister of National Defence, completely corresponds with the attitude taken in Soviet leading circles towards this affair. The declaration issued by M. Sikorski's Government on the same subject on 18th April does not improve the matter, but makes it worse since it "line with the aforementioned provocative communiqué of the Polish Ministry of National Defence and thereby helps the German occupiers to cover up their crimes against the Russian and Polish nations. The fact that the anti-Soviet campaign started simultaneously in the German and Polish press and follows one and the same plan, that astonishing fact permits the assumption that this anti-Soviet campaign is carried out on the basis of a previous understanding between the German occupiers and the pro-Hitler elements in M. Sikorski's ministerial circles. The declaration of the Polish Government proves that the pro-Hitler elements have a strong influence in the Polish Government and that they are taking fresh steps to bring about a deterioration in the relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R."

When the "Katyn revelations" were made public, Anglo-Saxon opinion completely ignorant of the affair of the "missing" Polish prisoners of war, was inclined to consider them as one more piece of lying Goebbels' propaganda. That 10,000 defenceless prisoners of war should have been murdered by a non-belligerent state seemed too horrible to fall within the bounds of possibility.

The thesis enunciated in "Pravda's" sensational article was no less improbable. Poland, known throughout the world as a "country without a Quisling", was accused of having a Government dominated by pro-Hitler elements which...were in direct contact with Goebbels, coming to agreement with him as to details "or receiving directions from him" for a joint campaign of propaganda directed against one of the big Allies.

This thesis was nevertheless fully accepted by the Soviet Government, which treated it not only as an argument of propaganda for the masses, but as a proved fact on which to base drastic action.


In the note of 27.9.39 the Soviet Government put forward the thesis that Poland had ceased to exist as an independent, sovereign state to which the law of nations applied and that in consequence all treaties concluded between the U.S.S.R. and Poland were no longer binding.

That thesis was subsequently repeated in the German-Soviet Agreement signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov in Moscow on 28.9.39, defining the boundary between the "spheres of interest" of the two aggressor states on Polish territory. From this time this thesis had never been completely abandoned by the Soviet Union.

Even after Hitler's attack on Russia, at the time of...the Anglo-Soviet negotiations in London, the representative of the Soviet Government proposed to form a Polish "National Committee" in Moscow (see p. 139), hoping thereby to avoid giving formal recognition to the Polish Government.

The military situation of the Soviet Union in the first stage of the war compelled the Soviet Government to abandon, under strong diplomatic pressure from the West,
this idea of a "Committee", and to conclude a formal agreement with the Polish Government. But, as soon as the situation changed, the Soviet Government reverted more and more openly to its former attitude and to the plans put forward in London in June, 1941, for the formation of a "Committee."

The stages of this development, which began with the first Soviet military successes were as follows:

A) In December, 1941, when the G-- offensive was held, the Soviet Government, at the time of General Sikorski's visit to the U.S.S.R., in an official note, refused from then on to recognise as Polish citizens persons belonging to the "Polish national minorities" - Jews, White Russians, Ukrainians etc. - and simultaneously attempted to organise in Saratoff a group of Polish communists to form the nucleus of a Red Polish Committee.

B) In March, 1942, the Soviet Government curtailed the numbers of the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R. on the protest that the Western Allies had not supplied the agreed quantities of foodstuffs. This necessitated a partial evacuation of the Polish Army from the U.S.S.R.

C) In May, 1942, "New Horizon", a periodical published in Polish, which had been suspended since the July 1941 Fact, was revived in Kuybyshov. This publication, as the organ of the Union of Soviet Writers of the U.S.S.R., had earlier on appealed to "the people of the valorous Polish nation" to take their place in the ranks of the Red Army and to join "the fight for the integrity of our (Soviet) frontiers" (No. 5/6, 1941, p.5-7).

D) In May, 1942, the Soviet Government, in a note dated 14.5.42, prohibited further recruiting for the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R.

E) At the end of June, 1942, the Soviet Government approached the British Embassy, with a request for the complete evacuation of the Polish Army from the U.S.S.R. After this had been carried out, unscrupulous propaganda was spread to the effect that the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R. did not wish to fight the Germans.

F) From July, 1942, members of the Polish Embassy were being arrested under the charge of "espionage activities hostile to the U.S.S.R." and the whole organisation for bringing relief to the Polish community in the U.S.S.R. was liquidated. Simultaneously all stores of food and equipment as well as all welfare institutions were placed under Soviet administration.

After the turn of the tide at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942/3 the tempo of Soviet activities leading to a resumption of the policy of the formation of a Polish "Red Committee" increased.

- B) In January, 1943, the Soviet Government unilaterally proclaimed as Soviet citizens all persons who on 1-2, 11.39 were on territories occupied by the Red Army, which meant in practice nearly 100% of the total Polish population deported to the U.S.S.R.

E) In February, 1943, the formation of voluntary Polish detachments within the Red Army was mooted.

I) In March, 1943, the "Union of Polish Patriots" was formed in Moscow under the leadership of Wanda Wasilowska, a Soviet citizen, member of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. and wife of a Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs. The publication of the periodical "Free Poland" was also commenced. The Union of Polish Patriots was obviously the nucleus of the "Red National Committee" and the basis for the future organisation of the so-called "Dublin Committee".
J) In March 1943, Commissioner Molotov openly warned representatives of the Polish Government in the U.S.S.R. that "no good will come" of their insistence on the existence of the pre-war Polish state with frontiers as defined by the Treaty of Riga.

Consequently, 20 months after the conclusion of the Polish-Soviet Agreement in 1941 nothing of it remained except the formal existence of diplomatic relations. The decision to sever these relations, announced in Stalin's letter of 23rd April, 1943 was therefore the direct outcome of the previous course of events. The Katyn affair, although embarrassing for the Soviets, made a convenient pretext for taking this step.

On the night of Easter Sunday, 26th April to Monday, 27th April, 1943, at 12.15 a.m., 24 hours after General Sikorski had refused to announce that the whole Katyn affair was only a trick of German propaganda, the Polish Ambassador in the U.S.S.R. was summoned to the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, where Molotov attempted to hand him a note, which he had previously read aloud. The contents of the note were as follows:

Moscow, April 26, 1943.

"Mr. Ambassador,

"On behalf of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, I have the honour to notify the Polish Government of the following:

"The Soviet Government consider the recent behaviour of the Polish Government with regard to the U.S.S.R. as entirely abnormal, and violating all regulations and standards of relations between two Allied States. The slanderous campaign hostile to

the Soviet Union launched by the German Fascists in connection with the murder of the Polish officers, which they themselves committed in the Smolensk area on territory occupied by German troops, was at once taken up by the Polish Government and is being fanned in every way by the Polish official press.

"Far from offering a rebuff to the vile Fascist slander of the U.S.S.R., the Polish Government did not even find it necessary to address to the Soviet Government any inquiry or request for an explanation on this subject.

"Having committed a monstrous crime against the Polish officers, the Hitlerite authorities are now staging a farcical investigation, and for this they have made use of certain Polish pro-Fascist elements which they themselves selected in occupied Poland where everything is under Hitler's heel, and where no honest Pole can openly have his say.

"For the "investigation", both the Polish Government and the Hitlerite Government invited the International Red Cross, which is compelled, in conditions of a terrorist regime, with its gallows and mass extermination of the peaceful population, to take part in this investigation force, staged by Hitler. Clearly such an "investigation", conducted behind the back of the Soviet Government, cannot evoke the confidence of people possessing any degree of honesty.

"The fact that the hostile campaign against the Soviet Union commenced simultaneously in the German and Polish press, and was conducted along the same
The Ambassador declined to accept the note and emphatically refused to be a party to the motives and conditions set forth in it, remarking that it attributed to the Polish Government "in an inadmissable form...conduct and intentions entirely inconsistent with the facts."

Apart from evading the basic question of the murder of Polish officers, the Soviet note contained the following untrue statements:

a) That the "Katyn campaign" was "at once taken up by the Polish Government and is being named in every way by the Polish official press."

The first mention of the Katyn discovery appeared in the Polish Government press in London on the same day as the first Soviet communiqué, namely on 15.4.43, and was couched in very cautious and moderate terms. (see above p.249).

b) That the Polish Government "did not even find it necessary to address to the Soviet Government any inquiry or request for an explanation on this subject."

PART TWO of those notes is devoted to the history of the Polish Government's attempts over a period of nearly two years to extract replies and explanations from the Soviet Government concerning the missing prisoners. In addition, the Polish note of 20.4.43, after the "Katyn revelations", again addressed the same question to the Soviet Government and again asked for an explanation.

c) That in staging "the farcical investigation" the Hitlerite authorities made use of Polish "pro-Fascist elements" selected by themselves. It has already been mentioned that the representatives of the Central Welfare Council, the members of the Town Council nominated by the occupation authorities and the Polish Red Cross...
exercised very great restraint, confining themselves almost exclusively to informing the Polish community of the facts as seen by them. (see p. 226-229).

d) That the Polish Government and the Hitlerite Government involved in the "investigation" (the word being put in inverted commas in the note) the International Red Cross, "which is compelled, in conditions of a terroristic regime, with its gallow and mass extermination of the peaceful population, to take part in this investigation falsely staged "by Hitler". The international Red Cross was not involved in the "investigation" and took no part in the Katyn affair; its representatives were not compelled to go to territories under the rule of a terroristic regime.

e) That the response of the German and Polish press commenced simultaneously and was conducted along the same lines. The conclusion that "it leaves no doubt as to the existence of contact and accord .... "between the enemy of the Allies - Hitler - and the Polish Government" was therefore a calumny.

f) That the Polish Government's persistent efforts over a period of nearly two years to elucidate the fate of thousands of Polish officers "missing" in the U.S.S.R. constituted a "treacherous blow to the Soviet Union", executed in order to please Hitler's tyranny. This completely unfounded Soviet statement was not only untrue but also slanderous.

g) That this campaign, allegedly hostile to the U.S.S.R. and undertaken by the Polish Government "in order to exert pressure upon the Soviet Government, by making use of the slanderous Hitlerite fake for the purpose of wresting from it territorial concessions at the expense of the interests of the Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Byelorussia and Soviet Lithuania", had never conceived the idea of and had absolutely no desire for the smallest territorial concessions from its Eastern and Northern neighbours whereas the Soviet Government had exerted very heavy pressure on the Polish Government in an effort to extort the cession to the Soviets of the Eastern half of the Polish state.

h) Finally, that the Polish Government "having slid along the path of accord with Hitler's Government, has actually discontinued allied relations with the U.S.S.R. and has adopted a hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union". The Polish Government's main desire was to maintain normal allied relations with the U.S.S.R. and this has been made clear in many official statements.

All these false statements were repeated shortly afterwards in an article entitled "The U.S.S.R's Answer to Hitler's Polish Assistants", which appeared in "Izvestia" on 27.4.43. The following are extracts from that article:

"For two weeks the German-Fascist press and radio have been raging, disseminating monstrous calumnies against the Soviet Union, striving by all means and methods to cover up the new crime committed by the Hitlerite against the Polish nation, attempting to shift from themselves the responsibility for their crimes. For two weeks the Hitlerites slanderers have exhausted themselves in raging incitement against the Soviet Union, describing with methodical scandal the "Bolshevik bestiality" devised by themselves. They have not recollected before direct manipulation of facts, before obvious falsity and knavery, relying on over-credulous people and on those who are easily misguided by the vast accumulation of cheap lies, calumnies and provocations disseminated by the Hitlerites".
After this characterisation of the "Katyn campaign" and after recalling the German brutality and murders in Poland, "Izvestia" insisted that the Polish Government had immediately taken up the Hitlerite slander and had instructed its official press to support the campaign of provocation. The Polish Government, continued the article:

"declaring hypocritically in its official communiqué that it is accustomed to the lies of German propaganda and understands the purpose of its "revolution", in reality follows the line of supporting these "revolution" and, as soon as the German-Fascist liars have vomited their shameful lies, the Polish Government joins the slanderous Fascist campaign. The Polish Government... has acted behind the back of the Soviet Government. The Polish Government pushed the Ministry of National Defence on to the scene and on 16.4.43, that is on the third day after the Germans first published their inventions about Polish officers, that Ministry published a communiqué conforming in the spirit of the information of the Hitlerites. On April 17th the Polish Government made a similar declaration, thus setting in full motion the slanderous campaign hostile to the Soviet Union.

After recalling that the Hitlerite authorities had involved "Polish pro-Fascists from occupied Poland" in the "farcical investigation, unexampled in impudence and falsity", and that they had attempted to give the "investigation" a more serious appearance by disguising it under the authority of the International Red Cross, "Izvestia" stated that:

"by its concord with the Hitlerite Government in these matters, the Polish Government has proved the existence of a certain understanding between the Polish and German Fascist Governments."

After describing the situation in Poland under the rule of the German occupiers, "Izvestia" stated further that:

"similarly perfidious behaviour of the Polish Government can be explained. For a long time the official Polish press has been openly stating the claims of Polish imperialist circles to the territories of the Soviet Union. Soviet Byelorussia and Soviet Lithuania. The Polish Government's aggressive lust has lead it to agreement with the Hitlerite Government, which is tearing apart the Polish nation.

"Here are the roots of the hostile and slanderous campaign against the Soviet Union which was launched simultaneously by the Polish Government and Hitler."

"The Polish Government took the treacherous path of understanding with Hitler - foe of the Polish and Russian peoples, foe of all peace loving peoples".

"Izvestia" went on to express no doubt that the Polish people fight, for their freedom and independence will condemn the faith-breaking behaviour of the Sikorski Government which has struck a treacherous blow to the common cause of the fight against Hitler, the executioner of peoples."

In conclusion "Izvestia" seemed to underline rather significantly the strength of the military power of the Soviet Union which it maintained, could be sure not only of the lightness of its cause but also of the strength of its forces. It openly stated that the decision of the Soviet Government signified that "the interests of the Soviet Union and the immunity of the holy rights of its peoples are under powerful and vigilant protection".
AFTER THE SEVERING OF POLISH-SOVIET RELATIONS

11. Effects and purpose of the severing of Polish-Soviet relations.

Moscow radio's communiqué announcing the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Poland by the Soviets surprised public opinion in the West, where the possibility of such drastic action had not been envisaged.

This action on the part of the Soviet Government shifted the Katyn affair from a moral to a political plain. Up to this time the history of the many thousand missing officer P.O.'s and the finding of their corpses in the Katyn graves had been one of human tragedy. From this moment it became an incident in the development of inter-allied political relations.

The breach which resulted from the Soviet reaction to the Katyn revelations was the aspect of the affair seized upon by the Anglo-Saxon press which was chiefly concerned lest this breach should grow and lead to a definite split in the Allied ranks.

The fear that the U.S.S.R. would conclude a separate peace with Germany, never wholly extinguished in the West, was naturally revived. Consequently the Anglo-Saxon press made great efforts to calm the atmosphere, appealing to both sides, not to fall into a "Goebbels trap" and urging upon them restraint and mutual concessions. As to the merits of the Katyn affair itself, most of the press refrained from passing judgment, with the exception of a few of the more pro-Soviet papers, led by the "Daily Worker," which accepted the Soviet thesis without reserve and announced the severing of Polish-

---

1. As one of many examples, Raymond Clapper in a dispatch in "New York World's Telegram" expressed the fear that Russia was making preparations for a separate peace.

---

Soviet relations as having been the "result of catching the "Polish Government in London-red-handed in conspiracy with the "Nazis".

Therefore, while the British press in general took an optimistic line, presuming the possibility of the renewal of the Katyn relations, the "Daily Worker" (notably in the issue of 28.4.43) derided this attitude as naïve and expressed its assurance that there could not be any resumption of diplomatic relations with the "guilty Polish Government".

The real political purpose of the Soviet accusation that the Polish Government was "collaborating with Hitler" was two-fold:

1. If this could be proved the Polish Governments appeal to the Int. Red Cross would no longer give rise to the widely expressed doubts as to whether the German accusations were in fact of a wholly "slanderous and "fantastic character", as the Soviets insisted;

2. This would completely disqualify the "London Government" from being legally entitled to champion the "Polish cause", thus leaving the field clear for the long planned, Soviet sponsored "National Committee" which was after its formation to represent a "New" pro-soviet Poland.

This unproveable and fantastic accusation was therefore lodged by the Soviet Government in deadly earnest, not withstanding the firmly protesting attitude of the Anglo-

---

1. "No Pole to-day can contemplate deliberate co-operation with Germany and if the charge of such co-operation in M. Molotov's note was seriously intended, the "implication will be justly and indignantly repudiated". (The Times", 28.4.45.)
The thesis that the Polish Government was guilty of collaboration with Hitler was most fully elaborated by papers published in Polish in the Soviet Union under the aegis of the "Union of Polish Patriots", which had been formed in March, 1943, and was to constitute the nucleus of the future "Polish Committee of National Liberation" finally created in July, 1944. Their object was, of course, to compromise the Polish Government in the eyes of several hundred thousand deported Polish citizens in the Soviet Union from among whom was announced in an official Soviet communique at the beginning of May, 1943, a "Tadeusz Kosciusko Polish Division" would be formed "for the purpose of fighting side by side with the Red Army against the German invaders."

12. Official attempts to solve the Polish-Soviet conflict.

In British and American Government circles the decision of the Soviet Government to break off relations with the Polish Government caused great concern and considerable efforts were made to solve the conflict.

On April 27th and 28th, 1943, General Sikorski had conferences with Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden as well as with the United States Ambassador, Mr. Drexel Biddle.

On April 27th a meeting of the Polish Cabinet was also held, at which the President of the Polish Republic was present. At this meeting the text of declaration which was published on April 28th was decided upon. This declaration firmly declared that a "policy aiming at a mutual friendly understanding between Poland and Soviet Russia on the basis of the integrity and full sovereignty of the Republic of Poland was and continues to be fully supported by the Polish Nation... Having settled their relations with Soviet..."
April 29th reported that an exchange of views on the Polish-Russian question had taken place between London and Washington on the one hand, and Moscow on the other "on the highest level."

Furthermore Poland's National Day on May 3rd gave the British Government an opportunity of indicating its attitude. Thus in a written message to the Polish Nation, Mr. Churchill explained that "Poles, both in Poland and abroad, are united in their determination to carry out the fight against the German oppressors of their Fatherland," and Sir John Anderson, officially representing the British Government at the 3rd May celebration pointed out that "Poland has been to us a loyal and faithful Ally..." and throughout the length and breadth of Poland not "even one quisling has been found."

These official statements being in the nature of an indirect answer to the Soviet accusations, the Soviet Government probably realized that a pro-Polish gesture was called for in view of Anglo-Saxon opinion. On May 4th, 1943, replying to a question put to him by the correspondents of the London Times and the New York Times, Stalin publicly proclaimed that the Government of the U.S.S.R. "unquestionably desired" that after the defeat of Hitlerite Germany "strong and independent Poland" would arise, with which he would like to be able to establish post-war relations "upon the fundamentals of good neighbourly relations and mutual respect, or, should the Polish people so desire, upon the fundamentals of alliance providing for mutual assistance against the Germans, the chief enemies of the Soviet Union and Poland."

The effect of this declaration was a sudden growth of optimism in Anglo-Saxon circles which caused the press to cease writing about the Polish-Soviet conflict, since it was considered to be practically speaking, solved.

But the Soviet Government very soon found it necessary to disillusion the Western Allies on this point and Vice Commissar Vyshinsky summoned representatives of the British and American press in Moscow on May 5th, 1943, in order to make a long statement on the Polish question.

In this statement Vyshinsky said among other things that "the present Polish Government, under the influence of pro-Hitlerite elements within it and in the Polish press, provoked the well-known decision of the Soviet Government to suspend relations with the Polish Government, while Polish officials, Polish press and Polish radio organs circulate numerous false statements concerning Soviet-Polish relations."

"In so doing they very often take advantage of the circumstance that wide public circles are not informed of the real facts bearing on these relations."

Dwelling on the Soviet version of Polish-Soviet relations, Vyshinsky accused General Anders' army evacuated to the Middle East, of being unwilling to fight the Germans and the Polish Embassy in the U.S.S.R. of carrying on espionage activities hostile to the U.S.S.R. instead of promoting the welfare of Polish citizens. Having evidently forgotten that he himself, on 14th of April, had given the number of such citizens released from confinement on Soviet territory as 343,611 (see above p.167), on this occasion he remarked that this number was "in fact not great."

In answer to Vyshinsky's statement, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a short explanation on May 7th, "Fearing that M. Vyshinsky's statement would not contribute to the establishment of the much desired harmony..."
"in Polish-Soviet relations and in the whole allied camp", he confined himself to "denying a few facts", treating the accusation implied in the declaration concerning espionage work for Germany as "an insinuation so fantastic as not to call for a denial or an answer.

13. Further German propaganda action.

a) Reports of "Volksgutacht" from Kozielak.

It has already been mentioned (see p. 118) that a dozen or more Polish citizens of German descent were released from the Griazovietz camp in November, 1940, as a result of intervention by the German Ambassador. After the Katyn revelations they drew up reports of the conditions of life in the Soviet prisoner of war camps at Kozielak, Pavlishchyn, Bor and Grivasievtsy, which were afterwards widely used as German propaganda.

b) European medical commission.

The attitude of the International Red Cross in making its participation in the commission to identify the bodies dependent on the agreement of "all interested parties" gave rise to great dissatisfaction on the part of the Germans. German and Italian radio commentators expressed their indignation that this neutral humanitarian organisation should shirk its proper duties for purely political reasons.

As the attitude of the International Red Cross, in view of the U.S.S.R.'s behaviour, constituted a virtual refusal to participate in the Katyn investigations, the Germans proceeded on their own to organise a "neutral" European commission of experts to investigate the Katyn discovery. At the request of Dr. Conti, Director of the Reich Health Services (Reichsgesundheitsamt), 12 doctors went to Katyn, mostly professors of Forensic Medicine and Criminology. Their object, according to the official protocol, was "to examine the scene of the crime at Katyn in order to contribute to an explanation of this event, which is unique of its kind."

The following countries were represented on the Commission:

1. neutral country (Switzerland);
2. 4 occupied countries (Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Czechoslovakia);
3. 6 satellite countries (Bulgaria, Finland, Croatia, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary),
4. and Italy.

Their names were as follows:

1. Belgium - Dr. Spalenwe, Professor of Ophthalmology at Ghent University,
2. Bulgaria - Dr. Markov, Lecturer in Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Sofia University,
3. Denmark - Dr. Tramsen, Professor at the Institute of Forensic Medicine, Copenhagen,
4. Finland - Dr. Saxen, Professor of Anatomy and Pathology at Helsinki University,
5. Italy - Dr. Palmeri, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology, Naples University,
6. Croatia - Dr. Mikolavich, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology, Zagreb University,
7. Holland - Dr. de Burlet, Professor of Anatomy, Groningen University,
8. Czechoslovakia - Dr. Hajecek, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology, Prague University,
9. Romania - Dr. Birkle, Forensic Medicine Doctor to the Romanian Ministry of Justice and Senior Assistant at the Institute of Forensic Medicine and Criminology, Bucharest,
10. Switzerland - Dr. Neves, Professor of Forensic Medicine at Genova University,
11. Slovakia - Dr. Stibik, Professor of Anatomy and Pathology at Bratislava University, Head of the State Health Service in Slovakia.
16. Hungary - Dr. Orade, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology, Budapest University.

Also present at the work and the meetings of the Commission were:

1. Dr. Buhtz, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Freising University, who was put in charge of the exhumations at Katyn by the Commander-in-Chief of the German Armed Forces.

2. Medical Inspector Dr. Coste, who was instructed by the Head of the French Government to assist at the work of the commission.

In the course of three days spent at Katyn (28th - 30th April, 1943), this Commission of experts:

1. Interviewed several witnesses from among the local Russian population;

2. acquainted themselves with the work of exhumation and post-mortem examinations which had already been carried out;

3. performed post-mortem examinations on several bodies selected as special cases;

4. members of the Commission personally carried out post-mortem examinations on untouched bodies;

5. members of the Commission signed a protocol of their visit and gave a forensic medical opinion.

Below are quoted the title and introduction as well as extracts from the document, which was signed by the 12 European professors:

bodies had already been examined and on most of them post-mortems had been carried out by Professor Buhtz and his assistants.

The Protocol in describing the results of the medical examinations and research stated that all the bodies so far exhumed showed that individuals had been killed by a shot in the back of the head, at the base of the skull, which passed through the occipital bone and emerged, usually, near the edge of the scalp on the forehead, or in very rare cases lower down. All shots were fired in the opinion of the Commission from a pistol of less than 8 mm. calibre; in the majority of cases only one shot was fired, more rarely two, and in one instance as many as three.

"From the crushing of the skull and marks of gun-powder on the occipital bone near the hole made by the entrance of the bullet, as well as from the fact that in almost every case the bullet entered the head at the same place", the Commission concluded that the shots were fired from pistols pressed to the head or at very close range. This was also corroborated by the fact that the bullet had in every case, taken practically the same course with only a few small variations. The fact that all wounds were absolutely identical and that all the shots had been localised in a small area of the occipital bone lead the Commission to the conclusion that the shooting had been done by "experienced hands". The Commission further stated that on many of the bodies the arms were tied together in exactly the same manner and in some cases the clothes and skin showed signs of being pierced by a four-edged bayonet.

This latter statement which though not directly referring to the perpetrators of the murders, was of special significance since, unlike all other armies, which used flat, single-edged bayonets, the Russian army alone used and still uses four-edged bayonets.

Further paragraphs of the Protocol gave additional indirect clues as to the perpetrators of the murders, stating that the officers' arms were in each case bound in exactly the same way as those of Russian civilians, also dug up in the Katyn wood but buried at a much earlier date. Those had been murdered in exactly the same manner as had the Polish officers.

On the skull of one of the dead officers the Commission observed traces of another shot which had not pierced the skull, but only dented the outside of the bone. From this fact the Commission concluded that, to avoid transporting the bodies, the murder had been perpetrated right on the edge of the graves or in the grave itself, presuming that this second shot had killed another victim, emerged from the skull, hit the head of a body already lying in the pit but, having lost its velocity had not pierced the bone.

The Protocol then proceeded to a description of the graves. These were situated in a clearing in the wood which was thoroughly levelled and planted with young spruce trees. In the opinion of members of the Commission and of the expert forester, von Herff, whose opinion was sought, those spruces were at least five years old and had been planted in that place three years before, but had not grown well on account of the shade of big trees. The Protocol thus corrected the statement previously made in the D.N.B. (Deutsches Nachrichten Bureau) communiqué and in the German press (see p. 236) to the effect that the spruces planted on the graves were exactly "drei Jahre alt"
(three years old). 1.

The Protocol described the mass graves as lying adjacent to one another on the sides of small hills, of clean sand. Only part of the graves reached the water just below the surface of the earth.

The bodies were nearly all lying face downwards, closely wedged side by side and piled one on top of another, they were mostly arranged near the sides of the grave, but not so neatly the centre, the legs were in nearly every case straightened and all the facts led the commission to conclude that they had been systematically packed in the graves.

The Commission had no doubts that the uniforms on the bodies possessed all the characteristic features of Polish uniforms: buttons, distinctions, decorations, shape of coats, marks on linen etc. The clothes were winter ones there being many fur, leather jerkins, pullovers, scarves and Polish officers' caps. Only very few of the dead were not in officers uniforms, and of these one was a priest. 2.

1. In an interview with a representative of the Deutsche Zeitung in Croatia, (No. 108 of 11.5.43), Professor Edward Mikolajchik, a member of the Commission, gave further details concerning the age of the spruce trees. "On closer inspection of areas sections of these spruces it was seen that of their five annual rings the middle one was undeveloped, while others were transplanted in the third year of growth, that is in the spring of 1940."

2. It appeared from the report in the Berliner Morgenzeitung (Nr. 197 of 29.4.43) and from later German publications on Khatyn that this was the body of an Army chaplain, Major Jan Zdzilowski of Jaroslaw, who was not removed from Kozelsk with the other chaplains on 23.12.39 but shared the fate of the rest of the officers from that camp when it was liquidated in April and May 1940 (see p. 22). The bodies of the other chaplains removed from Kozelsk at Christmas, 1939, were not found at Katyn. It is strange that the Protocol of the commission does not mention that the body of one woman was found there, as was stated in the report of the journalists who visited Katyn, (see p. 22) as this would have tallied with the fact that there was one woman among the officers at Kozelsk. (see p. 22).

As the uniforms exactly fitted the bodies, and the underlinter was close up, and belt buckles were properly fastened, the Commission concluded that the victims had been buried in the uniforms which they were wearing at the time of their death.

The Protocol affirmed that no watch or rings were found on the bodies, although the victims must have possessed the former up to the last moment, since exact times were stated in notes found on the bodies (compare Major Solski's note on the convoy of 7.4.40, see p. 64). Precious metal objects were only found carefully hidden on a very few bodies. A large number of them, however, had gold teeth. A considerable number of Polish bank notes and coins were also found as well as Polish cigarette boxes and matches, and in some cases cigarettes and holders bearing the inscription "Kozelsk". Documents found on the bodies (diaries, correspondence, newspapers etc.) referred to the period from the autumn of 1939 to March and April, 1940. Up to the end of the commission's visit, the latest date appearing in these documents was that of a Russian newspaper of 22.4.40 which was found on one of the bodies.

The Protocol went on to state that the bodies were in varying states of decomposition, depending on their position in the grave and their relation to other bodies. While those lying in the upper layers and near the edges of the grave were comparatively dry, in some cases even mummified, those in the centre formed one humid mass. In view of the fact that neighbouring bodies were stuck together by thick cadaveric fluid, and in particular, that they bore marks corresponding to those on the bodies against which they were pressed, the commission concluded that the bodies had not been previously touched in the grave and were lying
in their original position.

No insects were found on the bodies, nor any traces of them which lead the Commission to the conclusion that the murder and burial of the bodies must have taken place in winter, at a time when there are no insects.

The last paragraph of the Protocol referred to examinations of the cerebral matter performed on a large number of skulls by Professor Orssen method (these examinations were supposed to establish the time of death and burial), and stated that the skull of one of the bodies (no. 526) found in an upper layer of a large mass grave showed "very distinct" signs indicating that death had occurred at least three years ago.

At the conclusion of the Protocol the verdict of the Commission was given in the following words:

"The commission investigated in the Katyn wood the mass graves of Polish officers, seven of which have already been opened. The 982 bodies so far recovered from these graves have been examined, on some of them post-mortem have been held and 70% have been identified.

"In every case the cause of death was shown to be shooting in the back of the head. From the testimony of witnesses and from diaries, newspapers etc. found on the bodies it is apparent that the shooting took place during the months of March and April, 1940. The detailed results described in this protocol of the examination of mass graves and of autopsies performed on individual bodies of Polish officers, entirely agree on this point."

The whole text of the protocol was published in many German newspapers (e.g. Volksischer Beobachter of 4.5.43) and provided new material for German propaganda throughout the whole of Europe.

Despite the efforts of the German authorities to give the commission of experts an international, neutral and unbiased character, independent opinion did not regard its report as constituting the final word on the question. The most serious objection to the commission was that however distinguished were the experts that composed it, too many of them represented countries dominated by Germany and too few came from neutral states.

Consequently the protocol of the "European Commission of Experts" was used only for a comparatively short time as German propaganda. Similarly reports, articles and lectures by members of the Commission after their return from Katyn did not have very much effect.

a) Facilities for visiting the Katyn graves.

In order to give the Katyn affair the widest possible publicity, the German authorities accorded extensive facilities to anyone wishing to see for himself the place of the murder and its victims. For several months, therefore, Smolensk became a specific "tourist" centre for the whole of Europe. Excursions for journalists, politicians, writers, doctors, prisoners of war, etc., were officially organised by the Germans and often even transported by air to Smolensk, and special arrangements were made for the visit of large numbers of officers and soldiers of the German and satellite armies to Katyn. Placards announcing the discovery of the graves and promising pecuniary awards to anyone able to supply additional information about the murders to the German authorities were posted up all over Smolensk and a special section of the German Command in Smolensk was detailed to give every possible assistance to visitors to Katyn, arranging transport and accommodation, supplying guides etc. The German authorities made no
objections to visitors establishing contact with the local population, and they were also encouraged to send letters describing their impressions of the spot.

The following is an extract from the account of a Polish citizen, written after his arrival on Swiss territory:

"In May, 1943, I went with a whole convoy of cars to Smolensk, where the Katyn sensation was the talk of the day. At every turn enormous placards proclaimed the Bolshhevik crime. A special section of the Smolensk Command had been formed to explain the details of the Katyn affair and a Polish Red Cross delegation was already working there. Officers were taken in organized groups to the scene of death - willingly or unwillingly they had to go. On the second day after my arrival at Smolensk I reported to the German Command and asked to be shown Katyn. I was very cordially received and when the commanding officer, a Major, learnt that I was from Silesia, his friendliness increased 100%.

"You certainly know many Poles in the General Government. Tell them, when you return, how the Bolshheviks treated "Polish officers", were his first words on learning that I was from Silesia. At 4.30 a.m. we started, and with five German officers I drove 88 kilometers (about 16 miles) to Katyn." After describing the appearance of the graves and their contents, the report continues:

"While the officers conducted a rather long conversation with the doctor, I went out of the hut. I still cannot believe that the Bolshheviks were capable of such a monstrous crime. I was always inclined to be sceptical about the German communiqués about Katyn. But here one can have no doubts; the naked, ghastly truth speaks for itself. Even a stranger must realize that the Katyn affair was not an artificial trick of propaganda, but true. I followed a path leading to the wood and met an old man of 85 years carrying wood. I entered into conversation with the old man, who was at first suspicious, but later, when I said I was a Pole, he told me quite openly the story of Katyn. He told me how for three months lorries had arrived, from which Polish officers had embarked under G.P.U. escort; he told of the shots which echoed on the Katyn hills, of how the population was forbidden to approach the place of death. That man was not lying, that could be seen at once. So that was indeed the truth, the ghastly truth..."

And here are extracts from a report based on the accounts of two Frenchmen who were deported from France to the East in the Todt organisation and employed at Katyn during May and June, 1943:

"One of the boys, who spoke broken Russian, conversed with two peasants, one old and the other younger, about forty, with a wife. The story of these peasants is as follows: Polish prisoners were unloaded at Smolensk and the proposal was put to them that they should join the Soviet Army with the promise of promotion to one rank higher. The proposal was made to each one in turn, starting with the lowest rank, and if they refused they were told that they would go back to Poland, but on foot, and were sent along the road towards Poland. Several kilometres from Smolensk was the Katyn wood, two or three kilometres from the village of Katyn. Here they were ordered to dig trenches and were told there was to be a camp (the second peasant said they had been told a hospital would be erected there). Then the first group was shot, and so for two weeks shots were constantly heard..."

"According to those same peasants a riot broke out when
"The last group were shot, and for that reason the fourth grave looks entirely different from the others. They were apparently thrown into a deep pit, many of them lying on their backs, others face downwards, some on their knees, others with their legs stretched out in positions as though they had been thrown in from above. "All had many shots in their bodies...."

The boys reported further that very many German generals visited the graves and that everyone was sent through Katyn on the way to the front. The boys said also that though they were normally allowed to send only one card a month to their families, when they wanted to write about Katyn they could write as much as they wished, were provided with all the paper they needed and their letters were sent by "Luftpost."

d) Records of the Smolensk Branch of the N.K.V.D.

From June, 1943, material from the records of the Smolensk N.K.V.D. Branch was used by the Germans for propaganda purposes. According to the Germans these records were removed to the rear when Smolensk was taken by them in 1941 and were only remembered on the discovery of the Katyn murders.

From information said to have been found in these records published in the German press during the first half of June, the following interesting facts emerge.

1. Who was responsible for Polish officers?

The Smolensk N.K.V.D. Branch remained from the Autumn of 1939 in constant touch with the State Security Central Office in Moscow on all matters connected with Polish prisoners of war, sending there lists of prisoners; officers, doctors, army chaplains etc., and detailed reports and acting only on its instructions. In particular the central office in Moscow instructed Detachment III of the Smolensk N.K.V.D., commanded by Colonel Kuprianov of the State Security with 1st Lieutenant Leibkind and 2nd Lieutenant Starykovitch, both State Security officers, to find Polish prisoners of war who knew good English and French with a view to their being sent to the West as agents of the Soviet Intelligence Service.

2. "Preparation" of prisoners.

Interesting facts were published concerning the "detailed procedure" for obtaining the consent of individual prisoners to collaborate with the N.K.V.D. But most of the material published in the German press about the activity of Soviet agents among the Poles and the results of investigations did not refer to Kozielak II (the missing prisoners) but to Kozielak III (internees). The German press was however entirely unaware of this.

3. "Transferred to an unknown camp."

On the basis of these records the "Ostdeutscher Beobachter" of 6.6.43 described the interesting case of a Polish citizen, Alexandra Urbanska, who was deported with her family from Poland to Novobolkow, province of Aktrybinsk, Kazakhstan. When she requested the N.K.V.D. to inform her of the whereabouts of her husband, Lieutenant Richard Urbanski, who had been at Kozielak but from whom she had received no news since March, 1940, an official of the Smolensk N.K.V.D., Filippovitch was alleged to have made the following note:

"Inform her that he has been transferred to an unknown "camp 6.6.40."

(This date should probably be 1941). The body of Urbanski, added the Ostdeutscher Beobachter, was found in the Katyn graves.)
It is interesting to note that one of the Polish volunteers who arrived in Great Britain from Russia in 1942, reported a similar case to his authorities. He said that his father, a policeman in Zdolbunov (Poland), had been arrested there by the Soviet authorities and was subsequently sent to the camp for Polish prisoners of war at Ostashkov, from where he communicated by letter with his family in Poland.

On April 13th, 1940, his family (wife, son and daughter) were deported by the Soviet authorities from Zdolbunov to Southern Kazakhstan, from whence they still tried to correspond with their father. Not receiving any reply from him, the deported family approached various local and central Soviet authorities - the N.K.V.D., public prosecutors etc., even to Stalin himself - with a request for information about the fate of the prisoner and his whereabouts. After a long delay, in the spring of 1941 they received the following answer, signed by the public prosecutor of the Ostashkov district: "The camp in which your father was living was liquidated in the spring of 1940. The present whereabouts of your father are unknown." (Witness 36).

e) Publication of lists of identified victims.

Besides publishing facts of this kind as propaganda, the Germans, with the view to sustaining public interest in Katyn, published over a period of several months new lists of identified victims.

These lists were not completely accurate. The identification of bodies was certainly not easy. Many of the documents found on the bodies could only be read with great difficulty and not always accurately. Many names, after being translated several times (from Polish into Russian, Russian into German, and from German back to Polish) were changed. Consequently, in several instances families were officially informed by the Germans that bodies of people who were in reality still alive, or had been arrested during the German occupation, had been found at Katyn. Those cases in particular gave rise to doubts about the truth of the German revelations.

Without excluding the possibility that the Germans in some instances acted in bad faith and tried "to put into the "Katyn graves" victims of crimes committed by them elsewhere, it must be stated that these were only isolated cases, while most of the several thousand names published were of people who had really been taken prisoner by the Soviets in 1939 deported to the U.S.S.R., and had subsequently vanished.

The publication of lists of identified Katyn victims had special significance in Poland, where many of the families, friends and acquaintances of the vanished Polish prisoners of war were still living. These people who up till then had boycotted the German-sponsored Polish press and were eagerly awaited for the publication of the lists, but all the evidence goes to show that the Katyn propaganda in no way diminished their hostility to the Germans.
CHAPTER XX

FINAL GERMAN OFFICIAL VERSION


All who had inspected the Katyn graves emphasised the intolerable stench of thousands of exhumed bodies. As the weather grew warmer the stench necessarily became stronger and working conditions deteriorated. The Germans were, therefore, able to explain the "temporary" suspension of exhumations on 3.6.43 as being necessary under sanitary regulations, on account of the "summer heat and great plague of flies" (Amtliches Material p. 40). For some reason, however, they did not announce for a whole month, and lists of identified bodies continued to be published and propaganda put out. It was only on July 3rd that the "Volkischer Beobachter" reported the suspension of work during the summer heat and gave a general report on the work already completed.

In mid-September, 1943, on the instructions of the German Foreign Office, the Deutsche Informationsstelle (German Information Centre) in Berlin published a comprehensive volume of 350 pages entitled "Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn" (Official Material Concerning the Mass Murder at Katyn).

Since the course of military operations prevented the Germans from resuming work at Katyn in the following Autumn, as they had allegedly intended, the "Amtliches Material" is in fact the final summary of the work accomplished by the Germans and constitute the most complete presentation of the German evidence concerning the Katyn murder. This chapter is, therefore devoted to analysis of this evidence.

Apart from an introduction of a few pages, a list of 4,143 exhumed and partly identified bodies and one section containing numerous illustrations, the Amtliches Material was made up of a collection of documents, some printed in full and others summarised, divided into three Parts:

I. Factual situation

II. Appeal to the International Red Cross

III. The diplomatic handling of this case by the Allies

Part I which is the most interesting, is devoted to the German version of the facts about the Katyn murder. It is divided into 5 chapters and contains the following documents:

A. Discovery of the mass graves.

1. Final evidence of the Secretary of the German Secret Field Police (Geheime Feldpolizei), Voss, regarding the excavation of bodies of Poli sh officers, dated 26.4.43.

2. Report of the Field Police on the commencement of exhumations, dated 27.3.43.

B. Kose Gory (Gate Hills) - a former place of execution of the Tseka. 1.

3. Police record of the examination of witness Kuzma Godunov dated 5.4.43.

4. Police record of examination of witness Ivan Kryvosartsyv dated 4.4.43.

5. Police record of examination of witness Michael Zigulev, dated 6.4.43.

6. Extract from report of the Field Police, dated 10.4.43.

---------------------

1. Secret Police in Russia, predecessor of present N.K.V.D.
C. Transportation and liquidation of victims in the Spring of 1940.

7. Police records of examinations of local witnesses concerning the arrival of prisoners:
   A. Ivan Krivosertsev on 27.2.43,
   B. Matvi Zakharov on 2.4.43,
   C. Grigori Silvestrov on 1.4.43,
   D. Ivan Andreyev on 28.2.43.

8. Police record of the examination of witness Parfen Kisselev concerning the discovery of the mass grave by Polish workers in 1942, dated 27.2.43.

9. Police record of the swearing in of witnesses Kisselev, Krivosertsev, Andreyev, Silvestrov, Zakharov and Zigulev on 18.4.43.

10. Extract from the report of a former prisoner at Kosialsk, a Volksdeutscher named Glasser.

11. Extract from Major Solski's diary, found at Katyn (see p. 54).

D. Identification of victims.

12. Extract from report of Field Police dated 10.4.43.


14. Report on the visit of the Polish delegation to Katyn, dated 13.4.43.

15. Records and results of post-mortem examinations performed by German police, sergeant, and the International Medical Commission.


17. Protocol of the International Medical Commission, dated 30.4.43.

18. Results of post-mortem performed by members of the International Medical Commission.

19. Story of the Katyn "discovery" and preparatory work.

According to Kisselev's evidence given on 27.2.43, in the Summer of 1942, 10 Poles, working in labor gangs at Gniesdovo, asked him to show them the burial place of their compatriots who had been shot by the N.K.V.D. Kisselev said that he had conducted them to the Katyn wood, showed them the artificial mounds of sand and even supplied them with tools for excavating them, and that the Poles had later come to him and told him that they had actually found Polish bodies and had marked the place with two birch crosses.

For reasons and circumstances not explained in the Amtliches Material, the German Field Police (Group 570 - Aussenkommando bei der Herresgruppe Mitte) apparently did not learn of this discovery until the beginning of February, 1943, when despite the frost they immediately began experimental excavations, in the course of which they came across bodies in Polish uniforms at a depth of 2 metres (2 yds 8 ins). Only then did the German Field Police make their first records of the evidence of witnesses, a summary of which is given here.

On 27.2.43 Ivan Krivosertsev of Novo Bateki, aged 28, employed in the German civil guard, testified that in 1940 he was working at the Gniesdovo kolkhoz, near the railway, and noticed that during March and April, 3 or 4 trains with 3 or 4 prison trucks arrived at Gniesdovo station every day from Smolensk. His sister, Deria, who had since been evacuated by the Russians, told him that she had herself seen Polish soldiers, civilians and a few priests disembarked from these trucks and loaded into closed lorries. Although he had...
never seen it himself or heard it from his sister, yet, it was said everywhere in the district that, the lorries took these people to the N.K.V.D. at Kose Gory, where they were shot.

On 27.2.43 Farfen Kisselov, aged 72, who had lived in Kose Gory since 1907, in addition to his evidence about the showing of the graves to the Poles told how for about 10 years the little castle on the Dnieper has been used as a sanatorium for N.K.V.D. officials, and consequently the local inhabitants had been forbidden to enter that part of the wood which was surrounded by wire and guarded by armed sentries. In the spring of 1940, for a period of 4 or 5 weeks 3 or 4 closed lorries had arrived there daily, loaded with people, who had apparently been shot there. Once when he had been at Gniezdovo station he had seen men being transferred from railway trucks to lorries. Although he had never dared to approach the wood, he had heard from his house the sound of shots and human cries. He said that it seemed very probable that they had been shot there and that the local population were of the opinion that about 10,000 Poles had been shot.

He said that after the district had been taken by the Germans, he went to the wood to see if it was true, but he had been disappointed in not finding the bodies, but only mounds, which he had subsequently showed to the Polish workmen.

On 28.2.43 Ivan Andreyev, aged 26, a locksmith from Novo Bateki, also stated that from mid-March to mid-April, 1940, 3 or 4 trains with 2 or 3 prison trucks had arrived daily at Gniezdovo station. The inmates of those trucks had been transferred to closed lorries. They had mostly been Polish soldiers, whom he had recognised by their caps, but there had also been civilians. The lorries had driven off in the direction of Katyn and after having gone 2½ kilometres (1½ miles) had turned off the Kose Gory, where - he had been told, though he himself had not seen it - these people had been shot by the N.K.V.D.

After making records of this evidence, the Field Police sent its first report to the Headquarters of the Central Army Group and on 1.3.43 the report was shown to the Chief police surgeon, Professor Buhtz, who was attached to the Headquarters of the Central Army Group. After visiting the spot to satisfy himself as to the truth of the police report, Professor Buhtz started the preparatory work of excavation. During March a large wooden house was brought to the Katyn wood from the neighbouring village and used for post mortem work. Preparations for excavations, transportation of bodies, post mortem examinations, marking the bodies and preserving the articles found on them etc., were made and the field laboratory of forensic medicine at Smolensk was also suitably adapted for the large amount of work awaiting it.

When preparations had been completed for medico-legal work and the Field Police had organised a labour gang composed of 36 inhabitants of Katyn village, and 7 Russian civil guards to act as night watchmen and to protect the bodies from looters, excavations of the graves already thawed were commenced on 29.3.43., on the official orders of the Central Army Group Command.

At the same time the intensive examination of witnesses began.

The following witnesses were examined:

On 1.4.43 Grigory Silvestrov, aged 45, a workman living at Novo Bateki, said in his evidence that he lived near Gniezdovo station and had seen in the evenings people being transferred from prison trucks to three prison lorries, so-called "tchorny voron" (black crow - see p. 56) during April and May, 1940. When the lorries were full and prisoners
luggage had been loaded on to a separate lorry, the convoy left the station and drove in the direction of Katyn. In 20 or 25 minutes the same lorries returned for the next party. The reloading usually took place in the evening but sometimes went on during the night. In twenty-four hours the convoy of lorries made ten journeys to and fro. This went on for about four weeks. The prisoners were all men, mostly in foreign officers' uniforms, but there were also people in civilian clothes, some of them old, a few even walking on crutches. He had not known to which country the uniforms belonged and various rumours had circulated among the local inhabitants some saying they were Poles, others maintaining they were Finns. There had also been rumours that they were taken to the resthouse some distance from Smolensk station and shot. Silvestrov said that he thought that was true because the local population, who had hitherto been permitted to look for mushrooms in that region had been forbidden to go there during the period when convoys were arriving. His evidence also referred to the "Jewish type" of N.K.V.D. men escorting the prisoners. This statement was afterwards widely used by Nazi propaganda.

On 2.4.43 Matvei Zakharov, aged 50, the headman of the village of Novo Bateki, testified that he had lived all his life at Novo Bateki, where he had been employed as a groom from 1918 onwards. In 1921 he had seen 10-15 people being taken to Kose Gory by the Tcheka (secret police) to be shot. Among them he had recognised and spoke to two of his cousins. He had also heard from acquainances that their son, who had been condemned to death in Smolensk by the "Tcheka" (Secret Police Committee of 3) as an anti-communist, had also been shot at Kose Gory in 1921. Thereafter until 1931 the Kose Gory wood had not been used for executions and had been open to everyone. Children gathering mushrooms there had often told him that they had come across the graves.

On 5.4.43 Kuzma Godunov, aged 67, an agricultural labourer living at Novo Bateki, testified that he had lived at Novo Bateki, where he had been employed as a groom from 1918 onwards. In 1921 he had seen 10-15 people being taken to Kose Gory by the Tcheka (secret police) to be shot. Among them he had recognised and spoke to two of his cousins. He had also heard from acquaintances that their son, who had been condemned to death in Smolensk by the "Tcheka" (Secret Police Committee of 3) as an anti-communist, had also been shot at Kose Gory in 1921. Thereafter until 1931 the Kose Gory wood had not been used for executions and had been open to everyone. Children gathering mushrooms there had often told him that they had come across the graves.

On 5.4.43 Arvostatsev, employed in the German civil guard (see p.301) was again interrogated on the question of the former use of Kose Gory as a place of execution.

Amongst other things he said that he had heard from his parents that after 1918 Kose Gory was used by the Tcheka as a place of execution and subsequently by the C.P.U., the C.G.P.U.
and finally by the NKVD. But until 1931 the local population had been allowed to gather mushrooms and berries there; the witness himself had done so in his boyhood.

At that time he had heard from grown-up people that there were fresh graves there. From 1931 onwards it had been forbidden to enter Kose Gory. In 1934 a large Rest House for NKVD officials had been built there. From 1940 Kose Gory had been guarded from the outside by sentries and dogs. In March and April of that year many prison trucks had arrived at Gniezdovo station and the prisoners had been taken in "choomy voron" in the direction of Katyn. The witness himself had heard no shots from the region of Kose Gory.

On 4.4.43 the last witness named in the Antiliches Material, Michael Zigulev, was interrogated. He was 28 years old, lived at Novo Bateki and from 1942 had also been employed in the German civil guard. He testified that as a child he had heard that Smolensk prisoners were shot at Kose Gory and had himself often seen open lorries driving in that direction full of prisoners, surrounded by armed guards. In 1927, when grazing horses nearby, he and other children had seen 11 persons being unloaded from a lorry which had arrived from the direction of Smolensk and then escorted to Kose Gory. Afterwards he had heard shots. When the escort had returned and the lorry departed the children had decided to look at the place of execution. He said that he alone had lost courage at the last moment and had remained behind but that his friends had reported that they had found traces of blood beside the graves, which were so shallow that the arms and legs of the victims were protruding from them.

As the evidence taken by the Field Police was not considered from the legal point of view to have sufficient validity the Central Army Group Command ordered the witnesses already examined by the police to appear before a Military Court at the Central Army Group to give evidence again under oath. They were accordingly sworn in before a judge on 18.4.43. On this occasion attempts were apparently made to extract from them further details more suitable for propaganda purposes but the majority of witnesses confined themselves to confirming their previous testimony before the court and only a few of them enlarged upon it. Among these was the coupler Zakharov, who after he had been sworn in additionally testified that, although he had not seen all the prison trucks, those which he had seen had always contained two or three priests, wearing long robes and he had been told that they were Polish priests.

It should be stressed that, although this additional evidence was in glaring contradiction to his first testimony, in which he stated that he had seen the inside of empty prison trucks only (see above), this did not deter the German judge, Dr. Conrad, from stating at the end of the protocol of the court proceedings that all the witnesses had made on him an impression of complete reliability and that he was convinced they had told all they knew.

16. The place of execution and its surroundings.

From the sketch attached to Antiliches Material (p. 274) it appears that the graves of the Polish officers were situated near the Smolensk-Vitebsk main road between Sofievka and Katyn (see map attached). At a distance of about 8 miles (13 kilometres) from Smolensk this road crosses the Smolensk-Orsha railway, at the point where it bridges the river Olsha near a place called Sofievka. Less than 3/4 of a mile East of this bridge is the station of Gniezdovaia (Gniezdovo). Along the Smolensk-Vitebsk road, about 2
kilometres (1½ miles) West of the bridge and roughly 2½ or 3 kilometres (3½ to 2 miles) from the Gulelowskaja railway station, a woody lane branches off the main road Southwards, leading to the "Little Castle on the Dnieper" - the N.K.V.D. rest house situated on the Northern bank of the river Dnieper less than a mile from the main road.

About halfway along (coming outwards from the "Little Castle") this lane forks, the right branch leading Southwards towards some farm buildings (probably Kose Gorod, where the witness Kisselev lived). About 160 metres South of the main road the two branches are connected by another lane on that a rough triangle is formed, the sides of which are three woody lanes. Within this triangle lie the mass graves of Russians from the time of the Revolution.

Approximately halfway down the longest side of the triangle - the Western, crooked side, (formed by the woody lane leading from the main road to the Rest House,) lay the mass graves of Polish officers a few yards from the lane. They were situated in a clearing in the wood some hundred yards from the valley of the Dnieper, which sloped towards a marsh lying to the South-West. Between the uppermost grave and the marsh the ground dropped 4 feet (see Ambibias Material p. 60).

Katyn - which is the name of a railway station on the Smolensk-Orsha line and of a small town lying on the opposite, left bank of the Dnieper lies a few miles West of the place of execution.

From Smolensk to Katyn the whole valley of the Dnieper and its tributary the Oisha is woody and was apparently commonly known as the Katyn Forest. Different parts of this forest were named Tshorny Bor (Black Forest), Krasnyj Bor (Red Forest), Kose Gorod (West Hill), etc.
Aerial view of Katyn Forest.
Arrow indicates position of the K.V.D. Rest House. In the centre of the photograph near the bend of the road the graves of Polish officers are visible.

Aerial view of the bend of the road and the graves of Polish Officers.
IV. State of the excavations at the time when the "discovery" was disclosed.

From the time when the work began on 29.3.43 until 10.4.43 exploratory excavations were made all over the woody ground between the main road and the "Little Castle". From the report of the Field Police (documents 6 and 12) included in Antîches Material, it appears that in the course of these excavations altogether eleven mass graves were found, of which Nos. 1 - 7, in the Western part of the wood, contained the bodies of Polish officers, while Nos. 8 - 11, in the Eastern triangle, contained the bodies of Russians buried there at least 10 years before.

Some of the Polish graves had by this time already been more thoroughly examined, others only opened. In particular the grave designated as No. 1 by the Germans was dug right out at one end, and was found to contain 18 layers of bodies. It was reckoned that there were 250 bodies in the top layer. The Field Police report therefore concluded that the grave contained at least 3,000 bodies, perhaps more. But since, as the report pointed out, the bodies in grave No. 1 were lying "mostly in disorder", while those in the remaining six graves were "in places tightly packed against one another", there seemed to be grounds for estimating the total number of bodies at "10, 12 thousand at least" (see p. 234).

By 10.4.43 100 bodies in all had been recovered from the Polish graves, of which 65 had been identified on the basis of documents found on them. In the case of 39, the exact rank in the Polish Forces had been established, namely 2 Generals, 3 Colonels, 1 Medical Colonel, 4 Lt. Colonels, 7 Majors, 2 Medical Colonels, 6 Captains, 1 Medical Major, 4 lst Lieutenants and 10 2nd Lieutenants. (Antîches Material p. 32).
With the exception of documents and personal possessions everything found on the bodies was burnt by the German police.

It is most probable that some of the bodies were also recovered from the Russian graves at the same time, as the report of the Field Police speaks of the clothes found on them and refers to the fact that some of them had their hands tied behind them and in some cases the heads were covered with coats filled with sawdust. The report did not attempt to estimate even roughly the number of bodies in the Russian graves. (Amtliches Material p. 21).

Although the excavation of the Polish graves had progressed according to the report of the Field Police published in Amtliches Material, thus far at the time when their existence was disclosed to the world, excursions visiting Katyn were usually shown only the largest grave, (No. 1), which also chiefly figured in the descriptions given in the first days after the revelations. The size of this grave was exaggerated in these descriptions, because although the measurements were given as being 26 metres in length and 16 metres in breadth as it was in the form of an "L" (see below p. 318) its area was in reality only 282 sq. metres and not 416.

The existence of other graves was also mentioned and in exceptional cases others were shown, particularly the second largest, known as No. 2 (for a detailed description of this grave see p. 318 below), but the already established fact that Polish officers were buried in altogether seven mass graves (five of which were comparatively small) was still kept secret. The first mention of the discovery of seven graves at Katyn was made only in the report of the European Medical Commission of 30.4.45.

---


Just before the arrival at Katyn of the European Medical Commission, the Secretary of the Katyn Field Police, Voss, was sworn in and interrogated as a witness. In his testimony of 26.4.45 he told the story of the "discovery" described above and gave a summary of the evidence of a few witnesses (Amtliches Material p. 16). Describing the excavated graves, Voss pointed out that in one of them, which was "found later and now only partly "exhumed," all the bodies were tied up. From grave No.1, in which Voss estimated there were 3,000 bodies, only the top layer had been taken out up to 24.4.43, and a total of 500 bodies had according to him been exhumed by that time.

If this last figure is correct, the speed of exhumation must have already been very great at that time, since the report of the Medical Commission gives the number exhumed up to 30.4.43, as 982. This may have been connected with the arrival of a technical team of the Polish Red Cross at Katyn in the second half of April.

In the further course of his testimony of 26.4.45 Voss estimated the number of bodies in the "weiteren gleichgrosses Gräber" (other equally large graves) situated near grave No.1 as "round about" 5 - 6 thousand. Apart from the fact that this description was inaccurate as No.1 grave was much the largest, Voss, having given the total estimated number of bodies as being about 2 - 3,000 less than the "10 - 12 thousand" originally mentioned, characteristically pointed out, that it was doubtful whether all the 8 - 9,000 bodies could be exhumed in view of the wetness of the ground in the Western part of the clearing.

There was nothing in the Amtliches Material about the speed of subsequent exhumations. But in the first period of
the excavations when they were still searching for the graves in the mounds, the actual exhumations were certainly slower than in the later period, when the position of all Polish graves was already known and the mounds had been levelled.

According to Antliches Material the excavation of the Katyn graves was in progress from 29.3.43 to 3.6.43 — 68 days in all, of which 10 were holidays. Easter Saturday, March 24th, was the 97th day of work; Friday, April 30th, the 33rd day. From the figures of 600 and 482 given above it appears that in four days of work (omitting the two days holiday at Easter), 302 bodies were recovered, a daily average of approximately 100 bodies.

In the period from 1.5.43 to 3.6.43 (when "excavations were interrupted") there were 30 working days and 5 holidays. As, according to Antliches Material, the total number of bodies recovered at Katyn was 4143 bodies, that is 3,061 in that last period of 30 days (4,143 minus 982), the daily average of about 100 bodies remains the same. This figure tallies with a report sent from Katyn by a special correspondent of the Telegraph Agency and published in "Gazeta Krakowska" ("Cracow Messenger") No. 123 of 28.5.43, in which it was stated that "thanks to their unexemplified self-sacrifice the members of the (Polish Red Cross) team are in a position to examine and identify about 100 bodies daily."

According to Professor Buhtz's report, the bodies were lifted from the grave by Russian civilian workmen under the supervision of professional medical personnel, at first Germans but later — from the second half of April — Poles, namely the Polish Red Cross team. That team, under the direction of the senior assistant of the Institute of Forensic Medicine at Cracow, Dr. Marian Woźniński, consisted of three officials of that institute and the Institute of Pathological Anatomy at Cracow and 5 members of the Polish Red Cross from Warsaw.

The exhumation of the bodies which were lying in orderly layers did not present much difficulty. But in those graves into which they had been thrown in at random the limbs of the corpses were often pinned down by other bodies. This, owing to the considerable degree of decomposition, meant that great care had to be taken not to damage them during exhumation. Particularly difficult was the exhumation of corpses in the lower layers and at the centre of the graves, where the bodies were stuck together in one mass. The water which had flooded some of the graves was the cause of further difficulties.

Bodies on which post mortem examinations were to be performed after exhumation, were lifted from the grave with special care, the medical personnel themselves often assisting.

After being separated from the mass, each body was lifted from the grave on a stretcher and laid in the clearing. Here each in turn was given an identity number and preliminary identification work, consisting of inspection of clothes, distinctions and any documents found on the body was carried out. The contents of pockets and any decorations, rings, religious medals etc., were at once removed from the bodies and after superficial inspection were put into bags marked with the same number as had been given to the corpse. Afterwards the bodies were subjected to detailed medical examinations and were transferred into fresh communal graves for reburial. Owing to the large number of bodies, post mortems — partial (the head only) or complete — were performed in special cases only, that is on bodies bearing several bullet or bayonet wounds or signs of blows from rifle butts, and on those which were tied up or
gagged.

The contents of the packets and the documents were then submitted to detailed inspection and where necessary to laboratory treatment. The documents were frequently illegible owing to having been soaked in and stuck together by cadaveric fluid, and had therefore to be washed in xylol or chloroform, etc. or treated with ultra red rays etc. (A.M.p.44).

Amtliches Material does not give very much information concerning the communal graves in which the already examined bodies were reburied after examination. It was only stated that two unidentified Generals - Bochatyrowicz and Smorawinski were buried in separate graves and the rest of the bodies, regardless of rank, in the communal graves. Professor Buhtz's report states that these fresh communal graves lay to the North-West of the old ones (A.M. p.42). The report of the Field Police dated 10.6.43 says that the crosses erected on the graves were marked with the numbers 1 - 6 and that the burial of exhumed bodies took place in the presence of members of the Polish Red Cross. (A.M.p.34). It is known from information given in "Gonice Krakowskie" of 28.5.43 that a member of the Polish Red Cross from Warsaw, Jerzy Wodzinowski, was in charge of the fresh graves, which were dug by Soviet prisoners of war and that the bodies placed in them were marked with consecutive identity numbers with the object of facilitating identification in the event of the bodies being taken to Poland. There is no information as to the exact position of these graves, the number of bodies contained in each grave etc.

19. Description of the seven Katyn graves.

A comparatively accurate description of the seven Katyn graves is found in the report of Professor Buhtz, and references to them are also included in other documents contained in Amtliches Material. On the basis of this information a description of the graves is given below.

There is no number giving the German numbering being used. These numbers appear to have been given purely for convenience and they bore relation to the order in which the graves were discovered by the Gormans.

All seven graves were concentrated in a fairly small clearing in a wood planted with young spruces and sloping towards the South West (see map and sketch attached to p.190).

Grave No. 1 was the largest 1. It was in the form of the letter "l", the longer arm being 26 metres in length, and 6 metres in width, the shorter arm being 18 metres in length and 5.5 metres in width. According to Professor Buhtz's calculations, the total area of the grave was about 258 sq. metres.

This grave was probably discovered first, and in any case was the first to be excavated to the bottom.

It's depth at the centre part of the longest side was 3.5 metres (about 11 ft.), but it gradually became shallower towards both ends.

According to Professor Buhtz's report, the layer of earth covering the bodies in the graves was as a rule 1.5 metres

1. All the measurements in the Amtliches Material are based on the metric system. For the sake of accuracy the calculations on the following pages are also given likewise.

For the readers' convenience, here is a short table of comparative measurements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 metre (m)</td>
<td>3 feet 3½ inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 decimetre (dm)</td>
<td>3.94 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 kilometre (km)</td>
<td>0.62336 yds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 sq. metre</td>
<td>1.1960 sq. yd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cubic metre</td>
<td>35 cubic ft. 547 cubic ins.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(5 feet) thick. As a result the bodies in the centre part of the "L" grave occupied 3.3 metres minus 1.5 metres = 1.8 metres. (about 6 ft.) As 12 layers of bodies were found there, it follows that each layer occupied 0.15 metres. This, it should be noted, is a very small space, even if the flattening and compression of the bodies resulting from partial decomposition and from the weight of five feet (1.5 metres) of earth is taken into consideration. In the shallower parts of this grave there were fewer layers of bodies. Thus in the North-Western part there were only 7 - 9 layers, whose total depth amounted to 0.7 metres (about 2 ft. 4 ins); it follows, therefore, that each layer occupied less than 0.1 metre (about 4 inches). This shows that the bodies were exceptionally strongly compressed and flattened. (See photograph opposite).

The fact that there were fewer layers of bodies in the shallower parts of the "L" grave explained why its contents, at first estimated at 3,000 bodies, fell to 8,500 in the Medical Commission's report of 30.4.45.

The top layer of grave No.1 was said to contain "about 250 bodies"; as the area of this grave was about 262 sq. metres, this gives to each body one sq. metre (112 sq. yds.) of the area of the grave. If this number is multiplied by 12 layers, we get a total of 3,000. But in the shallower parts of the grave the number of layers was less, descending to 7 and the further question arises, whether all layers of the grave contained equal numbers of bodies. The first reports from Katyn stated the bodies were packed in the graves "like sardines" (see p. 238 and 241 above). No such description is given in Ambroise Material; on the contrary this document definitely mentions that the bodies in the graves were not always arranged in an orderly way and also that they were more closely packed near the edges of the grave.
Body of major-general Smorawiński, another example of the flattening out of the bodies in the Katyn graves.

A layer of flattened-out bodies.
As regards grave No. 1, Professor Buhtz's report says that in the Northern part of it the bodies were packed tightly together, even compressed, and that in the centre the heads in each layer were lying on the legs of the layer below, while in the South-Western part the number of layers of bodies became less in proportion to the decrease in the depth of the grave on the falling ground. (See A.M. p.48).

The description included in the reports of the Field Police differs slightly from that in Professor Buhtz's report. In the report of 10.6.43 it is said that the bodies in grave No.1 "are for the most part lying in disorder" (A.M.p.32), the report of 10.6.43 uses the phrase "...in...Massengräbern "geworfen und verscharrt (...thrown into...mass graves and "buried) and "...die Leichen...wahlos hineingeworfen wurden. "Sie lagen völlig ineinandervorliegen, nur in den Gräbern "I,II und IV waren sie zum Teil nebeneinander - und auch "zusammengepackt" ("...the bodies...were thrown in "at random. They were all mixed up with each other, only "in graves I, II and IV were they in partly packed together "and also on top of each other"). (Amtliches Material p.35).

It is apparent, therefore, that not all layers of bodies in grave...were in such good order as the top layer; which would reduce still further the total number of the bodies found in it.

Amtliches Material does not mention how many bodies were recovered from each grave, and it is comparatively seldom mentioned (mainly in the report of Professor Buhtz), which bodies were taken from which grave. From an analysis on the numbers allocated to bodies recovered - according toAmtliches Material - from grave No. 1 it appears that those given the numbers 2,743 - 3,930 were taken from that grave, which gives a total of about 1,200 bodies. Adding to this number the 250 bodies
recovered from the top layer during the first period of work (before 24.4.43) and a few dozen others taken during the same period from the lower layers in the course of digging to the bottom of the deepest parts of the grave (see p. 316 above), the number of 1,600 bodies is arrived at. But taking into consideration that the numbers of the bodies referred to in Amtliches Material do not necessarily represent all the numbers allocated to bodies recovered from the "L" grave, and in view of the compression of bodies described in Professor Buhtz's report, it is possible to put the probable contents at 2,250 bodies.

From other references to grave No. 1 in Amtliches Material it is learnt that about 6% of the bodies found in it had their arms tied behind them and that the grave was probably sprinkled with calcium and chloride (Brannt- und Chlorkalky, Amtliches Material p. 52 and 53).

Grave No. 2 was the second largest. It lies about 18 yds. to the South-East of grave No. 1 and measured 80 metres by 5 metres = 100 sq. metres. (120 sq. yds.). Amtliches Material does not give its depth. Professor Buhtz's report states that in the North-Western part of grave No. 2 the bodies were lying in very good order, face downwards and lengthways, but in the centre acrosswise, and that there were in some places as many as 12 layers. From the structure of this grave Professor Buhtz concluded that it was dug and filled in three successive phases "offenbar dem laufenden Bedarfens entsprechen" - "...clearly according to current needs" (Amtliches Material p. 40).

Taking Professor Buhtz's already mentioned average of one body to every 1 sq. metre (1.2 sq. yds.) the total contents on an average of 10 layers may be estimated at about 1,000. But if depth of the grave No. 2 was 2.3 metres, (about 7½ ft.) which was given by Professor Buhtz, as average depth of all the graves (Amtliches Material p. 49), then the average space taken up by the bodies was barely 0.8 metres (3½ ins.) which, even reckoning on 0.1 metres (3.94 ins.) to a layer, would only allow for 8 layers at the most, giving a maximum of 640 bodies.

From the numbers quoted in Amtliches Material in respect of bodies taken from grave No. 2, it appears that those bodies were numbered 2,599 to 2,856. But this does not mean that the 157 bodies with those numbers were the only ones taken from this grave. Taking into consideration the above calculation of the contents of the grave and the probability that a certain number of bodies recovered from it in the first period of work were given lower numbers, it may be assumed that grave No. 2 contained a maximum of 900 bodies.

According to Professor Buhtz the number of bodies with hands tied behind the back in grave No. 2 was negligible.

Grave No. 3 was situated to the South-West of grave No. 2, measuring 6 metres (about 6 yds. 2 ft.) in length and 3.5 metres (about 3 yds. 3 ft.) in width. Amtliches Material does not give its depth.

Taking an average depth of 2.3 metres (about 7½ ft.) and allowing 1.5 metres (5 ft.) for the top layer of earth, the cubic area of the grave would be 16.8 cubic metres (6 by 3.5 by 0.8). An average of one body to 1 sq. metre and 0.1 metre, to each layer of bodies, gives the contents of the grave as 160 bodies.

Amtliches Material does not state how many bodies were recovered from grave No. 3, nor does it mention a single identity number relating to those bodies. In all probability the number of bodies found there did not exceed 200.

According to Professor Buhtz's report none of them had hands tied.
Grave No. 4 lay on the South-Western side of grave No. 3 and had the same measurements as the latter. All bodies found in it were bound and were lying in confusion. (Amtliches Material p. 47). It is therefore probable that the group buried there strongly resisted the death awaiting them. (See above the report of French boys. p. 233).

In view of the fact that the bodies were lying in disorder, the number in grave No. 4 must have been less than that in grave No. 3 and it therefore probably contained approximately 150-170 bodies.

Grave No. 5 also lay on the South-Western side of grave No. 3, but as the ground fell in that direction this grave was the lowest and nearest to the marshy ground. After the grave had been opened therefore, water flowed into it more quickly, rising to 0.6 metres (3½ in.) from the top. In Professor Buhtz's opinion, at the time when the grave was filled with bodies the level of subsoil water must have been lower. It may be concluded, therefore, that grave No. 5 was originally dug at a period when surface water was low (in the early Spring) and that the Germans excavated it at Spring, when subsoil water was at a higher level.

Grave No. 5 was the smallest, measuring 4.5 metres by 3 metres. = 13.5 sq. metres (16.2 sq. yds). Amtliches Material does not give its depth. Professor Buhtz states (Amtliches Material p. 47) that this grave contained only three layers of bodies, considerably less than the other graves. Only a few bodies had their arms tied. Amtliches Material only mentions the identity number of one body recovered from grave No. 5, i.e., No. 2094 (p. 73).

If Professor Buhtz's average data and his special remarks about grave No. 5 are accepted, the number of bodies in this grave would have been 14 by 3 = 42, (50 - 60 at the most). Graves Nos. 6 and 7 lay to the South-East of grave No. 4 and ran with the falling ground from North-East to South-West.

Grave No. 6 measured 12 metres by 4 metres = 48 sq. metres. (57.6 sq. yds). This was the shallowest of the Katyn graves; Professor Buhtz gave its depth in the North Eastern part as 2.1 metres and in the South-Western part 1.74 metres. (Amtliches Material p. 40).

In this grave, as in grave No. 4, all bodies had their arms bound. Amtliches Material mentions the number of only one body from grave No. 6, i.e., No. 2094. Taking Professor Buhtz's average data (1 body to 1 sq. metre and the depth of one layer of bodies as 0.1 metre), it could have contained a maximum of 6 layers of 48 bodies each, that is about 280 bodies.

Grave No. 7 measured 9 metres by 3.6 metres = 31.5 sq. metres (37.0 sq. yds). (Amtliches Material on p. 39 gives its area as 22.6 sq. metres, which is obviously a numerical error). Amtliches Material does not give the depth of grave No. 7.

According to Professor Buhtz's report, on the North-Eastern side of grave No. 7 the bodies were "quergeschichtet in 'Bauklage gestapelt" ("lying cross-ways face downwards on top of each other") while on the South-Western side they were "planken durcheinander geworfen und in diesem Zustand verscharrt worden waren" - "thrown in at random one after the other and buried in this state". (Amtliches Material p. 49).

Taking again the average depth of the graves (2.3 metres) and other average data supplied by Professor Buhtz (1 sq. metre to each body, depth of layers 0.1 metre) the maximum number of bodies contained in this grave would be 288.
As Professor Buhtz stated in his report, the bodies in all seven graves were mostly dressed in Polish uniforms, with winter coats, sheepskins, sweaters and scarves. The majority of letters and newspapers (Russian and Soviet-Polish) were dated before the middle of April, 1940. Belts, suits and underlinen properly buckled and buttoned, corresponded to the measurement of the bodies and in many cases were marked with a personal monogram. With a few exceptions, (where wounds had been for instance inflicted by a bayonet point) they did not show any traces of fighting. Professor Buhtz was convinced that the bodies had not been moved in the graves and that they were in the clothes they were wearing at the moment of death. The suggestions put forward "von Förndscit" (by the enemy) that they had been put into the uniforms of Polish officers he considered as being technically impossible (Antluehes Material p.43). In the further course of his report Professor Buhtz once again stated that the bodies bore no traces of insects, that watches and rings had been removed (or were found only in exceptional cases, well hidden -- such as, for example, a valuable emerald ring), but that gold teeth and religious medals were found on the bodies, as well as golden crosses and sometimes chains, often small sums of Polish and Soviet money and sometimes foreign currency, purses, cigarette cases and holdires bearing the inscription "Koziclsak" and dated 1939 or 1940, personal documents, notes, photographs etc.

20. How many bodies were contained in the seven Katyn graves?

The numerical data given in Antluehes Material is quoted here in an attempt to establish the real number of bodies at Katyn.

A. Estimated Figures.

These figures were obtained in the testimony submitted by the Secretary of the Field Police, Voss, on 26.4.43.

At that time only the top layer of grave No.1, containing 280 bodies, had been opened and it was stated (probable on the basis of excavations made on one side of the centre part of the grave), that it contained 12 layers of bodies. Otherwise it was simply stated that other graves existed, without giving their exact measurements.

In these circumstances Voss estimated the contents of grave No.1 at 3,000 and the contents of the other graves very freely at 5,000 - 6,000 making a total of 8,000 - 9,000 victims, instead of the figure originally given by the Germans as 10 - 12,000.

B. Maximum Figures.

The European Medical Commission's protocol of 30.4.43 (see p. 284 above) may be taken here as a basis for establishing the maximum figures. On the one hand it may be taken for granted that the Commission did not estimate the contents of the graves too low, since their figures were accepted by the German authorities, while on the other hand it was more cautious in its estimate than Voss. For while Voss calculated the number of bodies in grave No.1 as 3,000, the protocol of the Medical Commission estimated the number of bodies in that grave at 3,500. As the area of the grave amounted to 252 sq. metres, it appears that the Medical Commission accepted the general average of 10 bodies to an area of 1 metre (about 1.2 yds) of grave.

It should be pointed out that this is in fact the highest figure than can be taken as an average since:

1. grave No.1 was, at least in some parts, the deepest of all the Katyn graves.

2, in parts of that grave the bodies were particularly
tightly compressed and put in in an orderly way, while in other graves they were often much less tightly packed and in greater confusion.

If, despite these reservations, the average figures accepted by the European Medical Commission are applied to all the graves the following table is obtained:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of grave</th>
<th>Area of grave</th>
<th>Maximum number of bodies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 487 sq. metres

4,850 would therefore be the maximum number of bodies which could be contained in the seven Katyn graves.

C. Probable figures.

An attempt will now be made to establish the probable number of bodies in the seven Katyn graves.

For this purpose the following corrections must be made in respect of the above statements:

1. as the layers of bodies in grave No.1 amounted to 12 only in the deepest parts and decreased to 7 in shallower parts, a conservative estimate of the average number of layers of bodies should be taken as 9, not 10 as was done by the Medical Commission;

2. a further correction must be made in respect of grave No.4 where the bodies were in great disorder, and the number

3. for grave No.5 an average of 9 layers of bodies cannot be accepted, as in the description of that grave in Professor Buhre's report it was distinctly stated that the number of layers of bodies was exceptionally low there - let us therefore accept for that grave the higher number given below in the detailed description, namely 60.

4. Finally, in calculating the contents of grave No.5 it must be taken into consideration that this was the shallowest grave, its depth varying between 2.10 metres and 1.74 metres, which gives an average depth of 1.92 metres, that is about 1/3 less than the depth of grave No.1, (3.3 metres).

Consequently the average number of layers of bodies should be decreased by 1/3 for grave No.5, which gives us 6 layers.

Bearing these corrections in mind the following table is obtained:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of grave</th>
<th>Area of grave in sq. metres</th>
<th>Number of layers of bodies</th>
<th>Probable number of bodies in grave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 487 sq. metres: 4,140
Hence the probable number of bodies in the seven Katyn graves amounted to 4,149.

The estimated number of bodies in the Katyn graves can also be calculated in another way still using the data found in the Ambitches Material as a basis.

The total area of the seven Katyn graves amounted to 487 sq. metres.

The average depth of the graves was 2.3 metres, of which 1.5 metres must be allowed for the layers of earth covering the bodies; the part of the grave filled with bodies would thus be only 0.8 metres in depth.

The total space filled with bodies in the seven Katyn graves would therefore be 487 by 0.8 - 389.6 cubic metres.

The question now arises, how many bodies would be contained in that space?

In the most compressed part of grave No.1 the thickness of one layer of bodies was 0.07 - 0.09 metres, but Ambitches Material (p.48) emphasizes that this is exceptional. If, therefore, 0.1 metre, is taken as the average thickness of one layer of bodies, that would not be excessive average.

As was stated above (see p.316) the top layer of grave No.1, which was arranged in a particularly orderly manner, contained about 250 bodies, and as the area of that grave was 282 sq. metres it follows that each body occupied 1 sq. metre.

The average space occupied by one body would therefore equal: 1 X 0.1 metres = 0.1 cubic metres.

Dividing the total area occupied by all the bodies, by the average space occupied by one body, the probable number of bodies in the seven Katyn graves is arrived at: 389.6 cubic metres / 0.1 cubic metres = 3,896.

This number is comparatively near to 4,149, the figure previously arrived at by the other method of calculation.

It should be stressed that both calculations, giving the probable number of bodies in the seven graves as about 4,000, were based on data derived from Ambitches Material. And as this same source states that 4,143 bodies had been recovered from the graves and partly identified by 3,643, the implication is that the work of excavating the seven Katyn graves was not interrupted on June 3rd, 1943, owing to the summer heat and threatening plague of flies, but was already completed. All seven graves had been entirely emptied of bodies and probably filled in.

The Germans hid this fact from the world because it stood in glaring contradiction to the widely proclaimed original statement of German propaganda that the Katyn graves contained at least 10 - 12 thousand bodies.

The following facts and circumstances confirm this thesis:

1) in the days immediately after their arrival at Katyn, i.e. 10 - 12th April, 1943, the Polish "delegation" had

1) From among 4,143 exhumed bodies 67.9% were personally identified reckoning on the basis of their ranks in the Polish Forces. There were among the Katyn victims:

- Major-General 2
- Colonels 12
- Lt. Colonels 50
- Majors 150
- Captains 440
- 1st Lieutenants 548
- 2nd Lieutenants 983
- Paymasters 2
- Warrant officers 8
- N.C.O.'s 2
- Identified only as officers 1,241
- Identified only as servicemen 1,440
- Doctors 146
- Veterinary surgeons 10
- Priest 1
- Civilians 291
- Identified only by names 21
- Unidentified 55

already gained the impression that the German statement that there were 12,000 Katyn victims was a gross exaggeration. This information was immediately communicated by the Polish Underground Movement to the Polish Government in London (see p. 229 and 244).

2) The figure originally widely proclaimed by the Germans of "at least 10,000 - 12,000 victims" is only found once in Amtliches Material and this in an anonymous introduction to the documents obviously written with a view to propaganda. (A.M.p.10).

3) Testifying on oath on 26.4.43, the Secretary of the Secret Field Police, Voss, already estimated the contents of the Katyn graves as low as 6,000 - 8,000, cautiously adding that he feared that for technical reasons (the marshes) it would not be possible to exhume all those bodies (see p. 311 above).

4) "Express Agency" correspondent reported in "Gazeta Krakowska" of 28.5.43 that the two first graves, which, it will be remembered, were the largest ones, had been by that time completely emptied of bodies and subsequently filled up.

5) As the work of exhumation progressed, it became increasingly clear that the number of bodies exhumed from the Katyn graves would barely exceed 4,000. The Germans, therefore, fearing that their propaganda would be "compromised", had to look for some means of saving themselves. Amongst other things they again searched the Katyn wood in the hope of finding more Polish graves. This probably explains the sudden discovery of an eighth grave containing bodies of Polish officers on 1.6.43 (see below). Apparently, however, the small number of bodies in this new grave did not really "save" the situation, with the result that the Germans decided on a sudden "interruption" of exhumation work on 3.6.43.
having in the discovery of a "new grave" an argument in support of their original propaganda thesis concerning the number of Katyn victims.

6) It is characteristic that while Professor Buhtz's statement gives 3.6.43 as the date of the "interruption" of exhumation work (A.M.p.40) the Introduction to Anti-thesis Material altered the date of "interruption" of work at Katyn to July: "Bis im Juli die Sommerhitze eine "Unterbrechung der Ausgrabungsarbeiten notwendig machte, "konnten 4.143Opfer geborgen und bestattet worden" - "Until July, when the Summer heat necessitated the interruption "of exhumation work, it had been possible to recover and bury "4,143 victims." (A.M. p.10).

It was probably realised that to make the heat at the beginning of June the reason for interrupting work was not very convincing. It should, however, be pointed out that even in July the "heat" referred to in the Introduction is rather rare in the region of Smolensk. The Short Soviet Encyclopaedia (published in 1941, vol. IX p.906) gives the average temperature for July as 17.6°C (about 63°F).

21. The eighth Katyn grave.

Professor Buhtz wrote rather generally of the discovery of the eighth Katyn grave, simply stating that experimental excavations had established the existence of large numbers of Russian graves in the Eastern part of the wood and in the region of grave No.6.

On the basis of previous calculations as to the probable numbers of bodies in the Katyn graves, it may be assumed that when the German authorities realised that the number of bodies in the seven Polish graves was much less than 10,000 - 12,000, the figures originally given by German
propaganda, they started to look for new graves. In the course of this search many Russian graves were found and finally one more Polish grave was discovered on 1.6.43.

The eighth Katyn grave was found about 100 yds. South-West of the first seven graves, on the other side of the marsh. (A.M. p.40). It must have been fairly deep, since it was said that the first body was found at a depth of 2 metres (about 7 ft.) Although for various reasons this grave seemed to be of great interest, the Germans said that they had confined themselves to opening only part of it (5.5 X 2.5 metres) and stated that trial excavations showed that it stretched further (the report does not say how far) from North-West to South-East.

Professor Buhltz's report does not even estimate the number of victims contained in the newly discovered grave. It only mentions that the bodies were lying in disorder (A.M. p.48) and that the 16 bodies of Polish officers recovered from it, partly identified and then reburied in the same grave, were dressed differently to those in other graves in that they were wearing Summer instead of Winter uniforms. The bodies of two officers only were in coats and the rest in tunics, without warm underclothes, sweaters or scarves. Documents found on the bodies were also said to relate to a later period than those found in previous graves.

While the latest date of documents found in previous graves was said to be about the middle of April, 1940, in grave No.6, were found amongst other things, issues of the Kiev "Glos Radziecki" ("Voice of the Soviet"), dated 26th and 28th April, 1940, containing slogans for the 1st May festival and Russian newspapers, the Smolensk "Rabotny Put" ("Way of the Workers") dated 1st and 6th May, 1940.

It should be stressed that in the paragraph which concerns the eighth grave the German report does not sound convincing. How can one reconcile the dimensions of the grave (5.5 X 2.5 metres) with the statement that the "grave stretches further"? In our opinion this last statement was made, in the same way as the communiqué announcing the "interruption of the exhumation (see p. 329), in order to uphold German propaganda which was working on the figure of 11,000 Katyn victims. This supposition is further borne out by the following arguments:

If we accept the dimensions of the 8th grave as given in A.M. and the average figures on the basis of which we calculated the probable number of bodies in the seven graves (see pp.324-5) we can calculate the probable number of bodies in the 8th grave.

If we use the first method (see p.326-6) we obtain:

\[
5.5 \times 2.5 = 13.75 \text{ sq. metres} \times 9 = 123.75 \text{ i.e. Approximately 124 bodies.}
\]

In applying the second method (see page 326)

we obtain (5.5 metres X 2.5 metres) = 13.75 sq. metres.

\[
X 0.8 = 11 \text{ cuba. metres} \times 10 = 110 \text{ bodies.}
\]

Therefore we obtain as the probable contents of the grave the figure 124, or, respectively, 110 bodies.

Since it is emphasized in professor Buhltz's report that in the 8th grave the bodies were not arranged in an orderly fashion, and, therefore, they occupied more room, it appears that the latter figure, i.e. 110 bodies is the more likely.

It should be borne in mind that this figure corresponds almost exactly with the number of officers deported from Kosielsk in two transports, on the 10th and 11th May (see pp. 48 and 49) - a fact which leads us to suppose that these two transports deported from Kosielsk separately, with an interval of ten days, lie in a separate grave No. 8.
This supposition is confirmed by the fact, mentioned above, that, in this grave newspapers dated 1st and 6th May were found and also by the fact that the bodies in this grave were not wearing winter clothing (see p. 330). It is known from statements of prisoners who left on the 12th of May by the last transport for Pavliashchev Bor, that the weather suddenly grew warmer during the first days of May and that on the 12th May "the sun was scorching" (See page 72).

Moreover, assuming grave No.8. to have contained approximately 110 bodies, we find all the "missing" prisoners from the Kosciolek camp.

It should be remembered that at the moment when its liquidation was started, the camp numbered approximately 4,500 prisoners. Out of this number two transports totalling 246 people were deported to Pavliashchev Bor and subsequently to Grassoflitz, where they were found. Approximately 2,250 prisoners were missing. (See diagram, page 136). If to the total of 4,143 bodies in the seven Katyn graves we add the figure established for grave No.8, i.e. 110 bodies, we obtain the figure 4,143 + 110 = 4,253 bodies.

22. Other data from Professor Buhtz's report.

The section of Professor Buhtz's report devoted to the medico-legal aspects of the Katyn murders was a considerable elaboration and enlargement of the report of the European Medical Commission. Without giving all the medico-legal deductions, a summary of some of the most interesting facts connected with the Katyn murders will be given here.

A. How long were the bodies buried? Date of the murder.

Judging by the state of advance in the formation of adipocere on the Katyn bodies (A.M. p.48 and fol.), and the results of examination of the cerebral matter by Professor Gräde's method, (see p. 290 above), Professor Buhtz came to the conclusion that "...pure scientific deductions show that the bodies had been lying in the graves...at least "three years", (A.M. p.59).

But an examination of the changes which had taken place in the bodies did not make it possible to establish precisely the date of death, it was necessary to search for supplementary evidence to fix the time of the murder more accurately. In this respect the most concrete and convincing data were supplied, in Professor Buhtz's opinion, by written documents and newspapers found on the bodies, indicating that the murder took place in the spring of 1940.

Attempts to establish the length of time the bodies had been buried on the basis of the degree and the manner of corrosion ("aus dem Grad und der Art der "Korrosionen") of metal objects found on them did not, in Professor Buhtz's opinion, give very reliable or convincing results. In his report he gave the example of two aluminium objects (a flask and an identity disk) found on the same bodies and showing entirely different marks of corrosion, probably due to the effect of the immediate surroundings.

In this respect the spruces planted on the graves, in the opinion of Professor Buhtz, provided far more reliable supplementary evidence. As microscopical examination of cross-sections of the trunks of the trees showed equal growth in the same rings, while between these and the heart of the tree (Kern) a dark border line (dunkle Abgrenzungslinie), he drew the conclusion that the trees had been transplanted three years before (i.e. in 1940). As the Russian graves discovered at Katyn were also planted with young trees of the same age as the graves themselves, in Professor Buhtz's opinion, the method of planting the Polish officers' graves
proved the time as well as the perpetrators of the crime (see reference 1 on p. 288).

B. Cireumstances of the murder.

In all cases the cause of death, established by post mortem examinations of the bodies, was a shot in the back of the head. The shot was fired - as was described in detail by Professor Buhtz (A.M. p. 76) - at very close range or even with the pistol pressed to the head of the victim. In many cases the shot was fired through the raised collar of the greatcoat or through the tunic or coat tied round the head of the victim. Only in a few cases, owing to the decomposition of the body after death, the bullet hole was not at first visible during post mortem examination. Normally it was situated at the base of occipital bone (A.M. p. 86). As the hole where the bullet had emerged was normally in the victim's forehead, between the top of the nose and the edge of the scalp, the bullet must have passed through the most vital part of the brain, causing instantaneous death.

On the basis of an analysis of the wounds, the bullets found in a few skulls and of the cartridge cases lying near the graves, Professor Buhtz stated that as a rule 7.65 calibre and in rare cases 6.35 calibre pistols had been used, (A.M. p.75).

The ammunition was of German origin, from the factory of "Gustav Gebrüder & Co. in Durlach bei Karlsruhe" (Baden), and bore the trade mark "Geco". Among the bodies in grave No. 2 was found one uncharged cartridge of the same make, an examination which made it possible to state that the ammunition was produced in the years 1923-31. As German "Geco" 7.65 pistol ammunition was exported in large quantities from Germany to countries including Poland, the Baltic States and - in very large quantities up to 1928 and thereafter in smaller quantities -

the U.S.S.R., Professor Buhtz was not surprised to find them in the bodies of the Katyn victims. But he left open the question of whether the ammunition was part of that exported from Germany direct to the U.S.S.R. or whether it came from stores seized by the Soviet authorities when they occupied the Eastern territories of Poland (A.M.p.75).

In certain cases there were two bullet holes close to each other in the victim's skull; in two cases three (or even four) shots had been fired (the record of post mortem examination of body No.633, A.M.p.94 and foll.); in one case there was a shot wound on the temple as well as in the back of the head. (A.M.p.57).

From this it may be concluded that many people took part in the execution and were standing directly behind the backs of their victims. In certain cases they fired twice into the same head. The uniform localisation of thousands of shots in a small area of the occipital bone bore witness to the great skill of the murderers, (A.M.p.85).

In the opinion of Professor Buhtz, the execution took place near or at the edge of the graves. He rejected, after close analysis, the suggestion that the Polish officers were murdered right inside the pits, either standing or lying on the bodies of previous groups.

In Professor Buhtz's opinion the shots were fired exclusively from ordinary pistols - not, as some people thought, from automatic rifles or even machine-guns - into the heads of the victims, who were in a normal standing position (not kneeling for execution) and probably not expecting death, or were held by both arms at the moment of death. This conclusion obviously relates only to those whose bodies were not found tied up.

A certain number of bodies (all in graves Nos. 4 and 6,
about 5½ in grave No. 1, and none in graves Nos. 3, 7 and 8) had
their hands tied behind them in a most effective manner
with strong, uncoloured cord, 3-4 mm. (1½/3 ins. - 1⅛/3 ins)
thick, which was apparently previously prepared for this
purpose and was similar to that manufactured for curtains.
The hands were tied in such a way that any attempt to free
them would have caused the knot to tighten and increased the
pain. The uniform method of binding, in which more or
less similar lengths of string were used (1.75 metres to
1.95 metres, 2 yds. - 2 yds. 6 ins.) showed great profi-
ciency on the part of the executioners. In many instances
the victims, besides having their hands bound, also had
their heads completely enveloped in their own tunics or
greatcoats, in those cases the tunics or greatcoats were
tied tightly round the neck and over the head of the victims
with the same cord as was used for tying the hands.
This cord was connected with the piece tying the arms in
such a way that every strong movement of the hands or
head would have tightened the knots and increased the pain
suffered by the victim. In a few cases the coats bound
round the heads were full of sawdust, which had also filled
the mouths of the victims. Apparently those who resisted
the death awaiting them, mostly young and seemingly energetic
people, were bound in this way. Prof. Buhtz concluded that
from the medical-legal point of view this method of binding
the victims, which to a great extent hindered their breathing,
constituted a particularly refined form of torture before
death, (A.M.p.90).

Professor Buhtz also considered the bayonet wounds
inflicted (by four-edged Russian bayonets) on the victims before
death to be a form of torture, and was of the same opinion with

Photograph showing body with arms tied behind the back.

Body with hands tied and a coat tied round the head of the victim.
In regard to the blows of rifle butts or fists which broke, in a very expert manner, the lower jaws of victims who seemingly expired out in the face of death. (A.M.p.53, 90 and fol).
CHAPTER XXI

THE RUSSIAN VERSION - "THE TRUTH ABOUT KATYN"

23. Moscow Declaration on the punishment of war criminals.

Very soon after the publication of Amtliches Material, the German army was driven from the Smolensk region. After unusually heavy fighting the attacks launched by General Sokolowski's Army on Jertsevo and by General Jeremicko's Army on Duchovahtchizna on 15.9.43 led to the capture of Smolensk by the Soviet armies on 25.9.43. Soon afterwards they also retook the region of the Katyn graves, with the result that the "resumption" of the exhumations which the Germans had declared would take place in the Autumn became impossible.

The publication of the A.M. was therefore the "swan song" of German propaganda about the Katyn affair. For some months the Germans had used it to shock public opinion in Europe and the world but now they allowed it to fade out and by October 1943 almost nothing was heard of it. Neither was it taken up by the Soviets who, having now got possession of the material evidence of the world-famous crime, were probably entirely preoccupied with the more fundamental problems arising out of the liberation of the vast Soviet territories.

It appears however, that this matter had not been entirely forgotten at that time. Moreover it is quite possible that diplomatic circles were much preoccupied with it. The fact that the public conscience was deeply impressed by the Katyn affair is shown by a characteristic incident which in November 1943 intrigued world public opinion. In the last fortnight of October 1943 the first of the conferences of the Foreign Ministers of the Allied Powers at this time Cordell Hull Eden and Molotov - was held in Moscow. A special Declaration giving full warning to the German war criminals and signed by Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin was issued on 1.11.43 together with the communiqué on the results of the conference which was simultaneously published in Moscow, London and Washington. When the text of this Declaration was cabled from Moscow, it was stated that the Allied Powers had proclaimed that all war criminals would be pursued "to the uttermost ends of the earth" and that they would be delivered to "their accusers in order that justice may be done". Among these war criminals were included "Germans who took part in the mass shooting of Polish officers".

About 3 weeks after wards the British Foreign Office announced (on 19.11.43) that the text published in London contained 2 errors on account of mutilation in transmission, and thus differed from the correct text issued in Moscow.

One of these errors was the use of the word "Polish" instead of "Italian" in the sentence referring to the mass shooting of officers (quoted above).

It is quite possible that an official coding or decoding of the text of the Declaration, or the telegraphist who dispatched it, was so preoccupied with the mass shooting of Polish officers at Katyn, which had a month before held the attention of the whole world, that he automatically wrote "Polish" instead of "Italian" - nothing having been heard of the mass shooting of Italian officers. But the possibility cannot be excluded that it was really in the interests of the U.S.S.R., representatives to introduce into the official declaration of heads of the government of the three Great Powers a sentence establishing in advance, though not explicitly, the German responsibility for the Katyn murder.

But as the previous Soviet statements on this matter did not contain sufficiently convincing proofs of German guilt,
the final official text of the Declaration on war criminals referred neither directly nor indirectly to the murder of Polish officers at Katyn. It stated that war criminals would:

"be sent back to the countries in which their abominable deeds were done in order that they may be judged and punished according to the laws of these liberated countries. . . . thus Germans, who take part in wholesale shootings of Italian officers or in the execution of French, Dutch, Belgian or Norwegian hostages, or of Cretan peasants, or who have shared in the slaughters inflicted on the people of Poland or in the territories of the Soviet Union which are now being swept clear of the enemy will know that they will be brought back to the scene of their crimes and judged on the spot by the people whom they have outraged."

The fact that the communiqué issued after the Moscow conference did not refer to the Polish problem did not mean that the question was not discussed there. Since the severing of diplomatic relations with the Polish Government by the Government of the U.S.S.R. in April 1943, Anglo-Saxon diplomacy had made many efforts to settle this problem which was proving extremely embarrassing for the Allies. In January 1944, when the Soviet Army crossed the Polish-Soviet frontier established by the Treaty of Riga, the Polish question flared up once again. Yet another exchange of official declarations of the Polish and Soviet Governments ended with the

1. It is essential to note that many Anglo-Saxon writers when referring to the Moscow Declaration overlooked the official correction of the text and that there exist, therefore, published references to punishment of "Germans who took part in the mass shooting of Polish officers." See, among others, George Creel, War criminals and Punishment, Hutchinson, New York and London 1944 and 1945, p.68.

declaration by the Soviet TASS Agency on 17.1.44 that the Soviet Government could not enter into diplomatic negotiations with a Government with which it had broken off diplomatic relations "because of its active participation in the hostile, anti-Soviet, slanderous campaign of the German invaders in connection with the alleged murders of Katyn."

At the same time it was announced in Moscow that an official Soviet Commission "formed by a decision of the "Extraordinary State Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating Crimes Committed by the Germans" had investigated the circumstances of the shooting of Polish officers in the Katyn forest and that its findings would be announced shortly.

As the Katyn affair had been the formal reason for the severing of Polish-Soviet relations, Anglo-Saxon diplomats who were striving to close the breach in the Allied camp, probably found themselves continually confronted with it. It is possible, therefore, that the Soviet Government suddenly became aware of the necessity of being able to produce official and formal proofs that the Katyn murder was perpetrated by the Germans.

A session of the "Special Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating the Circumstances of the Shooting of Polish Officer Prisoners by the German-Fascist Invaders in the Katyn Forest" was therefore called in Smolensk and in order that the necessary medical-legal evidence might be obtained, instructions were issued for the re-exhumation of the Katyn victims despite the fact that, as it was the coldest month in the year, the earth was completely
frozen and deep in snow.

The Report of this Commission, dated 24.1.44, and entitled "The Truth about Katyn," furnished the necessary proofs. The Soviet version of the Katyn murder based on this report and on additional material supplied by journalists who were present during the session of the Special Commission is given in this Chapter.

24. The Soviet Special Commission and its work.

By a Decree of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R., dated 2.11.43, an "Extraordinary State Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating the Crimes committed by the German Fascist Invaders and their Associates," was set up. The Extraordinary Commission was composed of:

Chairman:
N. M. Shvernik - well-known Trade Union Leader, President of the Soviet of Nationalities of U.S.S.R., Member of the Polit-bureau of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R.

Members:
M. N. Burdenko - Academician, Surveyor;
B. R. Wedeneyev - Academician;
W. S. Gryshchubova -

1. That the calling of this session of the Special Commission at Smolensk was entirely unexpected and sudden, was borne out by Jerry Borjeaza, the special correspondent of "Wolne Polaka," the official organ of the Union of Polish Patriots in Moscow. This reporter having been sent to Smolensk in a great hurry by special car, wrote in his article as follows: "Late at night on January 13th, 1944, we received in Moscow news that on the following day the Special Commission for Investigating the circumstances of the murder of Polish Officers and soldiers in the Katyn wood was to interrogate at Smolensk witnesses of the thousand-fold murder, "Gładszym strodni" ("On the Tracks of the Crime") - "Wolne Polaka" No.4/44, dated 1.2.44.

2. In the following pages we are referring to the English text of the Report published in London as a Supplement to the Soviet War News Weekly."
Ch1o

It appears from the Report of the Special Commission that a member of the Extraordinary State Commission, N. N. Burdenko, together with his collaborators and medico-legal experts, (none of whom are named in the Report), proceeded to Smolensk on 26.9.43, that is on the day following the capture of that city by the Red Army, and for a period of nearly four months "carried out preliminary study and investigation of the circumstances of all the crimes perpetrated by the Germans."

The vast amount of material collected in those four months defined as "study and investigation" in the Report, was then put at the disposal of the Special Commission, operating under the Chairmanship of the same Burdenko.

The Special Commission started work on an undisclosed date, and in order to accomplish the task assigned to it summoned, on a date also not disclosed in the Report, the following medico-legal experts to participate in its work:

W. Prozorovsky - Chief Medico-Legal Expert of the Peoples' Commissariat of Health Protection of the U.S.S.R., Director of the State Scientific Research Institute of Forensic Medicine under the Peoples' Commissariat of Health in the U.S.S.R.;

Dr. of Medicine

W. Smolyaninov - Professor of Forensic Medicine at the Second Moscow Medical Institute;

Dr. Semenevsky - Senior Staff Scientist at the Thematology Department of the State Scientific Research Institute of Forensic Medicine under the Peoples' Commissariat of Health Protection of the U.S.S.R.;

Dr. W. Shvaikova - Assistant Professor Senior Staff Scientist of the Chemico-Legal Department of the State Scientific Research Institute of Forensic Medicine under the Peoples' Commissariat of Health Protection of the U.S.S.R.;

Prof. D. Voropayev - Chief Pathologist of the Front, Major in the Medical Service.

According to the Special Commissions Report "it was verified and ascertained on the spot that 15 kilometres from Smolensk, along the Vitebsk highway, in the section of the Katyn Forest named "Kose Gory", 200 metres to the South-West of the highway in the direction of the Dnieper, there are graves in which Polish war prisoners shot by the German occupationists were buried. On the order of the Special Commission, and in the presence of all its members and of the medico-legal experts, the graves were excavated."

All this took place, according to the "Protocol of the Medico-Legal Experts investigation" included in the Report of the Special Commission, on Sunday, 16th January, 1944. During the next week, between Sunday, 16th January and Sunday, 23rd January, 1944, the Commission of Medico-Legal Experts with the aid of the following medical personnel:

Major Nikolsky, of the Medical Service, Chief Medico-Legal Expert of the Western Front;

Captain Bussayadov, of the Medical Service, Medico-Legal Expert of the X. Army;

Major Subbotin, of the Medical Service, Chief of Pathological Anatomy Laboratory No. 92;
Major Ogoblin, of the Medical Service;

1st Lieut. Pushkarova, of the Medical Service;
carried out the examination and medico-legal examination
of 925 bodies from "a communal grave" measuring, according
to the report of the experts "about 60 x 60 x 3 metres" and
also from "another grave about 7 x 6 x 3½ metres."

From the medico-legal experts' conclusion it appears
that these were not original graves only now discovered,
but were the so-called communal graves in which the bodies
of the Katyn victims had been buried after their exhumation
by the Germans in 1943 as paragraph (o) of the experts
conclusion read: "slits in the pockets, pockets turned
inside out, and tears in them discovered during examinations
of the clothing, show that as a rule all the clothes on each
body (greatcoats, trousers etc.) bear traces of searches
afflicted of the dead bodies."

Confirmation of this fact is found in the following
paragraphs of the same conclusion:
1. "After the opening of the graves and exhumation of the
bodies and their exposure to the air, the corpses
were subject to the action of warmth and moisture in
the late summer season of 1943. This could have
resulted in a vigorous progress of decay."
2. "The commission of medico-legal experts...regards the
fact of the discovery by the commission of medico-
legal experts, in the clothes on the bodies, of
valuables and documents dated 1941, as proof that the
German Fascist authorities who undertook a search of
the bodies in the Spring-Summer season of 1943 did
not do it thoroughly....."
3. "The Commission of medico-legal experts notes that in
1943 the Germans had made an extremely small number of

"post mortem examinations of the bodies of the
"shot Polish war prisoners."

The fact that there is no accurate description
of the fresh communal graves in the German documents (see
above) makes it impossible to check whether the measurements
of 60 x 60 x 3 metres, given in the "Protocol of the medico-
legal Experts' investigation" corresponds to the measurements
of all six communal graves dug in the spring of 1943
or only to one of those graves. It may however, be
assumed that these measurements are those of the complete
new cemetery comprising the 6 communal graves in which the
Katyn bodies had been buried by the Germans - of which
only one was re-opened by the Russians.

"Simultaneously with the excavation of the graves and
"examination of the bodies", continued the Report of
the Commission, "the Special Commission examined numerous
"witnesses among local residents, whose testimony
"establishes with precision the time and circumstances
"of the crime committed by the German occupationists."

It appears from an analysis of the report that it is based
primarily on the testimony of witnesses.

According to Borejsza's report previously quoted
from "Wolna Polska", the Special Commission began the
examination of witnesses on January 22nd or even 23rd 1944,
as his report contains the following sentence:
"We now return to the session of the Commission, where
"Academician Burdenko is just calling the first witness."

Apparently, however, not all of the over 100
witnesses mentioned in the final general "Conclusions of
"the Special Commission" were examined during its public
sessions as the final report on its work was already
drawn by 24,1,44 and as the examination of such a large
number of witnesses in 2 or 3 days would have been completely impossible.

Jozef Borczenska reported that about 20 foreign journalists and observers were present at the public sessions of the Special Commission and inspected the excavated Katyn graves. Among them were:

- Miss Harriman, daughter of the United States Ambassador to the U.S.S.R.;
- Mr. Al. Worth of London B.B.C.;
- Mr. Cassidy, of the Associated Press Agency;
- Mr. Lawrence of the New York Times;
- Mr. Duncan-Hooper of Reuters;
- Prof. Davies of the Toronto Star;
- Correspondents of the United Press, News Chronicle etc.

25. The Katyn wood and Polish prisoners of war in special camps.

The Report of the Special Commission opened with the statement that "the Katyn forest had for long been the "favourite resort of Smolensk people, where they used to "rest on holidays. The population of the neighbourhood "grazed cattle and gathered fuel in the Katyn forest. "Access to the Katyn Forest was not banned or restricted "in any way".

The Special Commission recalled as a proof of this statement the fact that "even in the summer of 1941 there was a Young Pioneers Camp of the "Industrial Insurance Board in "this forest, and it was not liquidated until July, 1941." But the Report said nothing of the site of that Pioneers Camp in the Katyn wood and as it extended over a fairly large area and consisted of different parts, some of them hearing separate names (see p. 308 above), the mere fact of a Pioneers camp having existed in one part of the wood and not having been liquidated "until July, 1941" did not exclude the possibility of other parts having been used for different purposes. The fact that the various parts of the Katyn wood were called by different names was confirmed in the last paragraph of Chapter I of the Report, which said that "the part of the Katyn Forest named Kose Gory was guarded "particularly strictly" by the Germans. The Report of the Special Commission definitely failed to mention how far that Pioneers camp lay from the "Rest House of the "Smolensk Administration of the Peoples' Commissariat "of Internal Affairs". (N.K.V.D.)"

The Report went on to refer to the Polish prisoners who were alleged to have been in the Smolensk area when it was taken by the Germans in 1941. Except however for a vague reference in the testimony of one of the witnesses (Savatieiev - see below) to the fact that those prisoners were brought to the region of Smolensk in the spring of 1940 and were disembarked at the Gniezdovo station, it confined itself to stating that "Polish war prisoners, "officers and men, worked in the Western district of "the Region, building and repairing roads" and that they were "quartered in three special camps named: Camp No. 1. "G.N., Camp No. 2, G.N. and Camp No. 3 G.N. These "camps were located 25 - 45 kilometres (about 15½ - 25 "miles) West of Smolensk".

Unfortunately the Report made no mention of much important and essential points as:
1. the general number of Polish prisoners who were supposed to have been in that region in 1941;
2. the number of prisoners in each of the three camps;
3. the Polish military ranks of the prisoners, which should have presented no difficulty to the Soviet authorities in view of the detailed records made in the camps;
4. the actual site of each of those camps, which could have been named after the geographical names of the places in which they were supposed to have been situated instead of being referred to only by numbers.

The Report also did not explain why those particular P.O.W. camps for Polish officers and soldiers near Smolensk were called "special" camps, nor did it give any indication of specialised features that might have distinguished them from other "ordinary" P.O.W. camps.

In general there was no answer to be found in the Report to the many questions which naturally arose if, as the Soviets maintained, the Polish P.O.W.'s from Kozielak, Starobielsk and Ostashkov had been moved to "special camps" in the Smolensk area:

1. Why, in 1940 and 1941, 97% of Polish officers captured by the Soviets were detained in the special camps Nos. 1 O.N., 2 O.N. and 3 O.N., and engaged in "building and repairing roads", while the remaining 3% at that time in the camp at Pavlishchev Bor and subsequently at Grizsovietz, were exempt from all forced labour?

2. Why - as appears from an article by Warrent Officer Marian Klimczak entitled "I was a prisoner in the Katyn Forest", published in No. 7/48 of the Moscow "Wolna Polska" of 24.2.44 - were the prisoners in camp No. 2 O.N. (in which the author of the article is supposed to have passed "a certain time" in 1941 with "a group of 300 persons" (kept on normal rations for Soviet correctional labour camps, which depended on the results of their work, while those in the camps of Pavlishchev Bor and Grizsovietz were receiving full rations regardless of the fact that they did no work?

3. Why did families in Poland receive no news for eighteen months from Polish prisoners of war in special camps Nos. 1 O.N., 2 O.N., and 3 O.N., while they were able to correspond comparatively freely with the prisoners of war at Grizsovietz?

4. Why, in camps Nos. 1 O.N., 2 O.N. and 3 O.N., did Generals and staff officers have to work at "building and repairing roads" while in other camps such officers were not only exempt from all work but had batten and even adjutants assigned to them.

5. Why and for what purpose were even invalids and people with artificial arms and legs transferred from Kozielak to these 'special' camps? And why were prisoners sent to these special camps for building roads without regard to their age or state of health, among them people over 60 years of age, while from the camp for internees at Kozielak (Kozielak III) only those pronounced fit for work by the medical commission were sent to labour camp. (see pp. 33-34.)

6. Why, if, in the period from October, 1940, when in the P.O.W. camp of Grizsovietz and the camp for internees at Kozielak the Soviet authorities were taking steps to find people to organise the already planned "Polish Division" or Army (see Ch. VII above) were similar steps not taken in "special camps Nos. 1 O.N., 2 O.N., and 3 O.N." which contained 97% of Polish officer prisoners of war?

7. Why, finally, were such large numbers (over 10,000) of Polish prisoners of war, particularly officers, concentrated for the work of "building and repairing roads" in the Western district of the Smolensk region, when - as is stated in the Short Soviet Encyclopaedia, pub. 1941,
vol. IX p. 810 - the lines of communication in the region of Smolensk were as fully developed as in any place in the whole Soviet Union.


The Report of the Special Commission went on to explain why Polish prisoners of war from the three "special" camps in the Western areas of the Smolensk region had not been evacuated before the German advance. It stated that:

"Testimony of witnesses and documentary evidence establish that after the outbreak of hostilities, in view of the situation that arose, the camps could not be evacuated in time and all the Polish war prisoners, as well as some members of the guard and staff of the camps fell prisoner to the Germans".

The "documentary evidence" mentioned in the foregoing paragraph was neither quoted in the Report of the Special Commission, nor discussed in any detail, so that we know nothing about it. As far as statements of witnesses in this matter are concerned, the Report quoted two of the depositions:

"The former Chief of Camp No. 10, Mrs. Major of State Security Vetoshnikov interrogated by the Special Commission testified:

"I was waiting for the order on the removal of the camp, but communication with Smolensk was cut.

"Then I myself with several staff members went to Smolensk to clarify the situation. In Smolensk I found a tense situation. I applied to the chief

"of traffic of the Smolensk section of the Western Railway, Ivanov, asking him to provide the camp with railway cars for evacuation of the Polish war prisoners. But Ivanov answered that I could not count on receiving cars. I also tried to get in touch with Moscow, to obtain permission to act out on foot, but I failed. By this time Smolensk was already cut off from the camp by the Germans, and I did not know what happened to the Polish war prisoners and guards who remained in the camp."

"Engineer Ivanov, who in July 1941 was acting Chief of Traffic of the Smolensk Section of the Western Railway, testified before the Special Commission:

"The Administration of the Polish War Prisoners in the Smolensk region."

Camps applied to my office for cars for evacuation of the Poles, but we had none to spare. Besides, we could not send cars to the Gussino line, where the majority of the Polish war prisoners were, since that line was already under fire. Therefore, we could not comply with the request of the camps Administration. None the Polish war prisoners remained in the Smolensk region."

The report did not mention if both these witnesses were interrogated during the public session of the Special Commission. Jerzy Borejza, special correspondent of the Wolna Polska! mentioned in his report "On the trail of the crime" only Ivanov's depositions and he quoted from it extremely important and essential factual details, which were entirely omitted in the report of the Special Commission.

"The former stationmaster of Smolensk!" (the Report of the Special Commission referred to Ivanov as the acting Chief of Traffic of the Smolensk Station)
"Ivanov, a precise, neat old man, recalled the circumstances
of the evacuation of Smolensk. On 15th July 1941 he
was asked by the Chief of one of the Polish war
prisoner camps to extend to him facilities to evacuate
the prisoners. But the German offensive was so
rapid that it was impossible even to evacuate certain
factories and some of the workers. "How many wagons were
"you asked to provide for the prisoners" - I asked.
"I was asked for at least 40 wagons" - replied Ivanov...

This quotation shows, that the Soviet journalist
succeeded in recording a very important detail from the
testimony of the witness Ivanov - a detail completely
ignored in the report of the Special Commission - namely
the date on which he was supposed to have been approached by
the chief of the War Prisoner Camp with the request for
wagons.

The synthetic German communiqué of the 7th
August 1941 states that "on 11th July we captured Vitebsk.
"On the next day flying columns attacked on a far-flung
"front East of the Orsha-Smolensk road."

This attack cannot have been very successful and
could not have advanced very rapidly, since it was not until
the 15th of July that the German communiqué stated that
"the last fort on the Easternmost point of the Stalin
"line in the Vitebsk region has been captured."

This is also borne out by Soviet communiqué of the 15th,
14th and 16th July, which spoke of stubborn fighting "in the
"direction of" or "in the sector of" Vitebsk and the Soviet
communiqué of the 16th July stated that "near Vitebsk enemy
"attempts to penetrate this region have failed completely."

In the light of the communiqués of both combatants
the situation on the 15th July 1941 appeared to have been as
follows: stubborn fighting was going on in the region of
Vitebsk and Orsha, while pressure of the German forces to the
East was - according to the Soviet communiqué of the 16th
July - being successfully held or, at least, delayed.

If at the same time we bear in mind the fact
that according to the Soviet version the three "special"
Polish war prisoner camps were supposed to have been
situated at a distance of 16-28 miles West of Smolensk,
16-20 miles East of Vitebsk, we cannot but conclude
that it would have been possible to evacuate these camps
as late as the 15th July 1941.

The German communiqué of the 17th July speaks of
the capture of Smolensk but the Soviet communiqué of the
23rd July states that "Smolensk continues to be held,
"German formations which had reached it several days
previously, have been rejected." It may be assumed,
therefore, that the German communiqué of the 17th July
was not quite accurate and that on the 15th July only
some light German units had reached Smolensk and had
possibly entered the outskirts of the city - a fact which
supplied the Germans with a foundation for the communiqué
about the capture of the city. This hypothesis is
confirmed by the historians W.E.D. Allen and P. Muratov,
who say that German units were in the region of Smolensk
as early as the 17th July, but remark that "it was not
"the end but only the beginning of the battle of Smolensk."

The battle of Smolensk, during which there were
no major moves by either army, continued for two weeks.
As late as the 26th July, the German communiqué states:

"The Battle of Smolensk is nearing a favourable
"conclusion" but it was not until 6th August that the
Germans published a special communiqué announcing the
completion of this operation and describing its course.

This short summary of the military operations in
the sector of Smolensk suggests without any doubt that, not
only on the 12th July, but even on the 13th, 14th and probably also on the 15th July the "special" camps might have been evacuated on foot, without any difficulty. These camps could easily have been transferred in one day to the city of Smolensk, some 167 - 28 miles distant, after which there would have been two weeks in which to evacuate them further, no matter how slowly, under cover of the armistice fighting in the battle of Smolensk. During that fortnight they might have easily marched to some railway station which was still functioning, or even gone on foot to Moscow, which was only about 187 miles away. In any case such a march would have been much shorter and less exhausting than the long marches, lasting many weeks and covering distances of several hundred miles, done by other Polish prisoners-of-war, such as e.g. the march from Brody to Zolotonoshë (see reference at pp. 99 - 100).

The question arises, therefore, why the commandant of the Special Camp No. 1 O.N., major of the N.K.V.D. Vetoshnikov, who on an unspecified date left "together with several staff members" the camp entrusted to his care and made attempts in Smolensk on the 12th July to secure wagons, did not return during the period of three, four or more days between the 12th July and the capture of Smolensk by the Germans. The assertions of Vetoshnikov that he had unsuccessfully tried to get in touch with Moscow in order to receive from the Central Authorities "permission to start on foot" are not convincing. In the face of the enemy and in direct danger one would expect a senior officer to show initiative and not to wait passively for orders or "permission" from his superiors, especially in this case since the railway network in the Smolensk region was particularly well developed.

It is extremely odd that such ill luck should have haunted the three "special" camps of the Polish officer P.O.W.s. Situated on the most important sector from an operational point of view, distant only by 200 miles from the chief dispositional centre, Moscow, and by more than 360 miles miles from the boundary of "Soviet-German interests" in a region which was captured by the enemy at the earliest of the 24th day of the war - it was still not possible to evacuate them. The senior authorities, of whom very many were stationed in this important sector, forgot all about them, and their immediate superiors proved criminally negligent. Silently, entirely without publicity, all of them apparently fell into German hands and no trace was ever found of them until the discovery of the bodies in the Katyn graves.

This particular misfortune becomes even more amazing when we recall the fate of other Polish prisoners of war camps (see pages 99 - 100). The Smilkow Camp near Lwów, 40 miles from the Soviet-German frontier, situated in a region which the Germans captured a few days after the outbreak of the war, was successfully evacuated on foot to Zolotonoshë on the Dniester and thence by rail; it was not forgotten by the superior authorities in spite of the fact that it was some 300 miles distant from Moscow. The Brody Camp, in a region which the Germans reached on the 3rd of July (and distant by 65 miles from the Soviet-German frontier) also was successfully evacuated to Zolotonoshë, although it was situated right off the beaten track, far from any large town or the G.H.Q. of senior authorities.

More such examples, could be given but taking these two alone into consideration the fate of the three "special"
camps near Smolensk becomes so unintelligible, that the question whether these camps really existed spontaneously arises, especially since, up to the time of the publication of the Soviet communiqué of the 16th April 1943 no one was aware of the presence of special officers' camps in these regions.

The Special Commission evidently realised that such a doubt must of necessity arise in the minds of critical observers, and, therefore, after quoting the statements of the two witnesses, given above to the effect that it was not possible to evacuate the Polish P.O.W.'s from the Smolensk region in the period around the 12th July 1941 - it made a special effort to prove that some Polish prisoners of war had actually been living in the neighbourhood of Smolensk after it was captured by the Germans. They interrogated as many as fourteen witnesses on this subject.

"The presence of the Polish war prisoners in the 'camps in the Smolensk Region is confirmed by the testimony of numerous witnesses who saw these Poles near Smolensk in the early months of the 'occupation up to September 1941 inclusive."

The Report gave first place to the statement by Maria Sashneva, an elementary school teacher in the village of Zenkovo, probably regarding her testimony as the most important since it is supported by a specific "documentary evidence".

Sashneva told the Commission that in August 1941, she sheltered for one night a war prisoner whom she immediately identified by his uniform to be a Pole, as during 1940 and 1941 she used to see groups of Polish prisoners of war working on the road under guard. As Sashneva was a teacher, she took an interest in this Pole, who told her that he had been an elementary school teacher in Poland. From a conversation

Sashneva learned that he was a Lieutenant of the reserve, taken prisoner by the Soviet at Brest-Zitovsk and that "he had spent over a year in the camp at Smolensk." Evidently the Pole did not tell her the name of the locality where his camp was situated, since Sashneva did not mention it. She heard however, from him many particulars and in particular told the Special Commission that "when the Germans arrived they seized the Polish camp and instituted a strict regime in it. The Germans did not regard the Poles as human beings. They oppressed and outraged them in every way. On some occasions Poles were shot without any reason at all. He decided to escape. Speaking of himself, he said that his wife, "too, was a teacher and that he had two brothers and two sisters..."

After quoting this statement the Report of the Special Commission added that "On leaving the next day the Pole gave his name" which Sashneva wrote down. She showed the book where she had noted it to the Special Commission which quoted in its Report "that in the book "entitled "Practical Studies in Natural History" by Yagodovsky, there was a note on the last page saying "Joseph and Sofia Lock, House 25, Ogorodnaya St., town "Zamostye".

Since among the several thousands of names published by the Germans in A.M. the name "Joseph Loek" was also found under the file number 3796, the Special Commission, convinced by Sashneva's statement, which now proved to be "supported by written evidence", concluded that "thus, from the German report, it would appear that Joseph Lock had been shot one year before the witness Sashneva saw him."
The next witness quoted in the Report was Danilenkov, a peasant from the collective farm of the Katyn Rural Soviet. His statement was much shorter; it simply said "In August and September, 1941, when the Germans arrived, I used to meet Poles working on the roads in groups of 15-20".

No further statements on the subject of the sojourn of Polish prisoners of war in these regions after their capture by the Germans were quoted and the Report merely noted "that similar statements were made before the Commission by twelve further witnesses whose names were 'listed, as well as 'by others'."

It is at this point of the Report of the Special Commission we come to a critical analysis; we find that the Soviet thesis that the "special" camps with Polish war prisoners officers and men totalling approximately 18,000 - 18,000 persons were captured in July 1941 by the Germans - is far from being satisfactorily proved. The proofs are limited to the statement made by Sashnova who sheltered one of the prisoners for one night, and to the statement of Danilenkov who "in August and September 1941 saw groups of Poles of 15 - 20 men working on the roads", a fact confirmed by a further twelve witnesses who made "similar statements". It is not surprising, therefore, that the Special Commission decided that it would be useful to strengthen this thesis by the depositions of four further witnesses, to establish the fact that in the Autumn of 1941 (the witness had said "in August - September 1941") the Germans had carried out a round-up of Polish war prisoners both in the villages and in the towns.

Judging by this part of the Report of the Special Commission, the fate of the three "special" Polish POW's camps in July, August and September 1931 seems to have been as follows:

According to the testimony of Major Vetoshnikov and engineer Ivanov it was impossible to evacuate these camps by rail, and since permission had not come from Moscow for their evacuation on foot, they fell into German hands; the Germans introduced in them "a strict regime" (of witness Sashnova). Probably at the time of seizing these camps, and in any case after their capture, prisoners escaped from them (e.g. Joseph Lock); these escapes must have been fairly numerous and by no means sporadic, since "in August and September" (witness Patkov) the Germans instituted round-ups in the forests and villages for escaping prisoners of war. These round-ups were wholly successful, all escaped war prisoners were caught and thus did not avoid re-incarceration and, ultimately, death at the hands of Hitlerites murderers in Katyn forest.

Joseph Lock was also killed in spite of Sashnova's help. Notwithstanding the nearness of the Polish frontier, the knowledge of the local language, and help offered by the local population, and in spite of the favourable season - not one of the eight thousand odd Polish officers, who were supposed to have been transferred to the three "special" camps from Starobialsk, Kosielisk and Chasakow, succeeded in escaping. Nor, up to the present day, has even one of them been found.

If we consider that this occurred in August - September, 1941, at a distance of approximately 30 miles from the front, while stubborn fighting was going on in the neighborhood of Smolensk, which broke out in connection with Marshal Rokossovsky's counter-offensive in the direction of Dukhovshyna and that of General Boldin in the direction of Jelnya (Cf. Allen and Muratoff, page 47) it would be difficult indeed to magnify the unintentional
- homage paid to the efficiency of the Wehrmacht by the report of the Special Commission.

It is on the other hand impossible to disregard the fact that this very large group of Polish prisoners of war - numbering more than 10,000, officers and men, for the most part, young and healthy, appear to have been in the matter of escaping exceptionally inefficient and indolent.

During the second world war, Poles have achieved a certain measure of renown for their skill in slipping across frontiers, for moving about in enemy-occupied territory, and for escaping from prisons and camps. Those abilities of the Poles in this respect have even been confirmed by Stalin, who in his conversation with General Sikorski on 3.12.1941 expressed his supposition that several thousand of the Polish officers searched for in the Northernmost parts of the U.S.S.R. had probably succeeded, after their release from Soviet camps, in escaping to Manchuria without the knowledge of the local authorities (see page 191).

Therefore the fact that out of several thousand Polish prisoners of war not a single one managed to make his way to Poland, neither during work on road constructions under Soviet or German supervision, nor in the chaos caused by the capture of the camps by the Germans, coupled with the fact that those who escaped did not succeed, in spite of the most favourable conditions, present such an improbable picture as to be wholly unbelievable. Inevitably the critical inquirer is led to doubt whether the three "special" camps from which no sign of life was given and about the existence of which the world was wholly unaware until the publication of the Soviet communique of the 15th April 1943 - had ever really existed at all.

This very justifiable doubt, however, presupposes that all the witnesses that were brought before the Special Commission gave consistently false evidence but that in itself would be improbable and in actual fact was almost certainly not the case. It must be remembered that none of them had admitted to having seen more than 15 - 20 Polish prisoners at one time and there had been no mention of officers.

If we cast our minds back to the fate that befell the Polish P.O.W's of other ranks in Russian hands (see p. 96 above), we recollect that very many of them were sent to build roads and airfields in Soviet Occupied Poland and neighbouring territories and were organised for this purpose into camps which were moved about according to where the labour was most needed at any one time. On the face of it therefore it is quite probable that some of these camps were situated at some time in the Smolensk area, and strong evidence exists which points to the fact that this was the case.

This evidence comes from the testimony of a Polish P.O.W. (Witness 38) who after being liberated from a German camp, by the Americans in June 1944 joined the Polish Army in the West. He was taken prisoner on Sept. 17th; 1939 by the Russians and put in the Transit Camp for P.O.W's at Kremenchug from where he was sent on, together with 9,000 other ranks, to work in the "Rosa Luxemburg" iron-ore mine at Krivel Rog. In April 1940, some 1500 Polish P.O.W's, working in the mine were sent to the neighbourhood of Smolensk. He said that "the journey had lasted two to three weeks and I remember "that somewhere about the middle of April we were unloaded "from the train in a wood which I later realised was 5 - 7 "kilometres (3 - 5 miles) from Smolensk. I know the distance "because we were sent to work in the city". The camp had been
to the East of Smolensk, far from any habitation and had had no special name. He thought that it had been previously occupied but he hadn't known by whom. The prisoners were taken nearly every day to Smolensk and on the way there passed through at kolkhoz called Popovka, about 4 Kil, from the camp. "We worked on road repairs on the outskirts of the city, and sometimes we repaired the streets of the city itself and also the bridges". Going to and from work they had met other Polish prisoners with some of whom he had had a chance to talk and had learnt that there were in that area two other camps for Polish prisoners, one like his own guarded by N.K.V.D., and the other containing men who were allowed more freedom being able to go about unescorted and some even being used to drive Soviet lorries.

One of those drivers had told him that he, on one occasion had been sent to transport the belongings of Polish officers from a building in a wood.

In the late Autumn of 1940 this witness together with most of his fellow prisoners was removed from the Smolensk camp Westwards to Gródek Jagiellonski, and put into the camp at Ozerlany where they worked on aerodrome construction until the outbreak of the Soviet-German War. Most of the prisoners had then been evacuated to the East, but he with some others was taken by the Germans and worked subsequently in the Todt Organisation on the East Front and afterwards in Cherbourg.

The evidence of this Polish N.C.O. is interestingly confirmed by Warrant Officer Marjan Klimezak in an article in the Moscow "Wolna Polska"7(48) dated Feb. 24th, 1944, entitled "I was a prisoner in Katyn Forest".

He wrote that, as a Polish N.C.O. he had been taken prisoner

1. West of Lewow in Eastern Russian occupied Poland.

by the Russians in 1939 and that from February to March 1941 "I was for some time in the camp No. 2 O.M. near Smolensk "in the same Katyn Forest."

The prisoners had been sawing wood in the forest and repairing roads. In his group "there were about 300 "Polish officers and non. I know that they were not "ill treated. I didn't see any beating and we heard nothing "at all about shooting", wrote this soldier from Berlin's Army. He emphasised that "none of my fellow prisoners "perished and there were officers among them." Klimezak did not say whether these officers had disclosed their rank to the Soviets or whether they had cautiously concealed them. He gave the names of three of them and said that up till the time he himself had been removed to Archangel (March 1941)(page 83 above) they had been alive and treated like the others.

From this evidence, both Polish and Russian, which is not found in the Report of the Special Commission, we may conclude that there were in fact three camps for Polish prisoners in the Smolensk area, either West or East of the city, but that they were not "special" camps for officers and the total population of them was far from being 10 - 15,000. Most of the prisoners were removed from that area before the outbreak of the Soviet-German War either to the West or to the Far North. But some of these prisoners are quite likely to have been left in the neighbourhood of Smolensk and it is therefore highly probable that the Soviet witness Danilenkov had in fact seen in the first months of the German occupation "Poles "working on the roads in groups of 15 - 20."
27. The execution by the Germans of Polish prisoners of war in the Autumn of 1941.

According to the findings of the Soviet Special Commission, the Polish officers whose bodies were discovered in the Katyn graves had been shot by the staff of the "Headquarters of the 537th Engineering Battalion" billeted in the Rest House of the N.K.V.D. at "Kose Gory". There were usually about 30 people at the Headquarters among them Lt. Colonel Arnès, his aide Lt. Rokat, Sub. Lt. Hott, Sergeant-Major Lémont and N.C.O.'s Rose, Isikos, Gronowski and others.

From the Report it appears that the Special Commission reached this conclusion from the following sets of proofs:

A. statements of witnesses Alexeyova, Mikhailova and Konakhoverkaya who had been employed for a time in the Rest House as domestics to the German Headquarters staff, resident there;

B. statements made by six witnesses, domiciled in the neighbourhood of Kose Gory, whose names were mentioned in the Report of the Special Commission;

C. statement of witness B. Bazilevsky, a Professor of Astronomy, who for a time acted as assistant Burgomaster of Smolensk, under the Germans, and notes made by the Burgomaster of Smolensk, lawyer B. Monshagin, a traitor who subsequently made his escape with the retreating Germans.

The following is an analysis of these proofs:

A. The first group of proofs consisted of statements of three witnesses whose ages and professions were not divulged in the Report which were quoted at great length.

These witnesses were three young peasant girls

from the village of Borok of the Katyn Rural Soviet, who had been appointed, at the request of the German Commandant of the Katyn settlement, by the headman of the village of Borok to do domestic work in the country house where the Germans were quartered. The Report did not specify the precise nature of their work; it was probably connected with the kitchen, the latter being frequently mentioned in their statements. The Report stated that shortly after starting work - Alexeyova, Mikhailova and Konakhoverkaya began to notice that the Germans were up to "something shady" in the country house.

It seems from the Report that they had been particularly surprised by the fact that, after reporting for work for the first time, the commanding officer Lt. Colonel Arnès, had wished to see them himself and had given them instructions as to the way they just behave while working at German Headquarters.

The Report of the Special Commission describes this incident as follows:

"On arrival in Kose Gory" they were told through an "interpreter about a number of restrictions: they "were absolutely forbidden to go far from the country "house or to go to the forest, to enter rooms without "being called and without being escorted by German "soldiers, to remain in the grounds of the country "house at night. They were allowed to come to work "and leave after work only by a definite route and "only escorted by soldiers. This warning was given "to Alexeyova, Mikhailova, and Konakhoverkaya, through "an interpreter, personally by the Chief of the German "Institution Oberst Leutnant Arnès, who for this "purpose summoned them one at a time."
The most comprehensive statement on the "shady work" which went on in the country house was made by Alexeyeva. After stressing that the interpreter Johann had warned the Russian domestic servants several times to hold their tongues and not to chatter in the village about what they saw and heard in the country house occupied then by the Germans, Alexeyeva emphasized that she had guessed from "a number of signs" that "the Germans were engaged in some shady 'doings'. She said that "at the close of August and during most of September 1941 several trucks used to come practically every day to the Kose Gory' country house and from listening to the engines she had come to the conclusion that they had stopped in the wood for some 30-60 minutes before driving up to the country house. 'Simultaneously with the noise of the engines ceasing, single shots would be heard' one after another' at approximately even intervals'. The shooting would die down and the trucks would drive up right to the country house. German N.C.O.'s and soldiers came out of the trucks. Talking noisely they went to wash in the bath-house after which they engaged in drunken orgies. On these days fire was always kept burning in the bath-house stove'.

She went on to describe how on the days when the trucks had arrived, more German soldiers had come to the country house for whom extra beds had been put up in the soldiers' canteen and additional meals cooked in the kitchen. Shortly before the trucks reached the country house armed soldiers went to the forest, evidently to the spot where the trucks stopped, because in half an hour they returned in these trucks, together with the soldiers who lived permanently in the country house. Alexeyeva explained that she would probably not have noticed all these happenings had it not been for the fact that whenever many new soldiers arrived at the country house, the Russian girls had been "driven to the kitchen if we happened to be in the courtyard near the house; or they would not let us out of the kitchen if we happened to be in it."

This fact had made Alexeyeva "pay close attention to what was going on at the country house". She had noted these "shady doings", and had "inferred that the Germans brought people in the trucks to the country house and shot them". She had even "guessed approximately where this took place as, when coming to and leaving the country house, I noticed freshly thrown-up earth in several places near the road. The area of this freshly thrown-up earth increased every day. In the course of time the earth in these spots began to look normal."

In answer to a question put by the Special Commission as to what kind of people had been shot in the forest near the country house, Alexeyeva had replied that Polish war prisoners had been shot and in confirmation of her words stated "there were days when no trucks arrived at the country house, but even so, soldiers left the house for the forest whence came frequent single shots". On returning the soldiers "always took a bath and then drank."

Alexeyeva said that she had on one occasion stayed behind rather later than usual; although she had not finished the work for which she had remained behind, she had been ordered by a German N.C.O. to leave and as usual had been escorted back to the highway by a German soldier. After she had walked along the highway some 150-200 metres (165-220 yds) from the place where the road branched off to the country house, she had seen a group of about 30 Polish war prisoners "marching along the highway under heavy German escort". She explained to the Commission that she had known
that they were Poles because "even before the war and for
some time after the Germans came I used to meet on the
highway Polish war prisoners wearing the same uniform
with their characteristic four-cornered hats."

The girl went on to describe how she had hidden in
the bushes near the roadside and having seen the group
turn towards the road leading to the country house had
waited to see what would happen. When some 20 - 30 minutes
later she had heard the familiar single shots "everything
became clear to me and I hurried home".

"I also concluded that evidently the Germans were
shooting Poles not only in the daytime, when we were
working at the country house, but also at night, in our
absence. I understood this also from recalling the
occasions when all the officers and men who lived in the
country house, with the exception of the sentries, woke up
late, about noon. On several occasions we guessed about
the arrival of the Poles in Kose Gory from the tense at-
mosphere that descended on the country house. All the
officers left the country house and only a few sentries
remained in it, while the Sergeant Major kept checking up
on the sentries over the telephone....."

The statement made by Mikhailova, quoted in the
report of the Special Commission, was identical in its context
and although it was shorter, it contained details not sub-
mitted by Alexseyeva. Mikhailova too at first when "in
September, 1941, shooting was heard very often in the Kose
Gory forest", had not taken any notice of the trucks,"closed
"at the sides and on top and painted green", which used to
drive up to the country house and which were always escorted
by German N.C.O.'s. Then she had noticed that these trucks
never entered the garage and also that they were never un-
loaded. "They used to come very often, especially in
September 1941. Among the N.C.O.'s who always sat with the
"drivers, I began to notice one tall one with a pale face
"and red hair. When these trucks drove up to the country house,
"all the Germans, as if at a command, went to the bathhouse
"and bathed for a very long time after which they drank
"heavily in the country house. Once this tall red-headed
"German got down from the drum, went to the kitchen and
"asked for water. When he was drinking the water out of a
"glass I noticed blood on the cuff of the right sleeve on
"his uniform."

According to the Report on one occasion Mikhallova
and Konakhovskaya witnessed "the shooting of two Polish war
prisoners who had evidently escaped from the Germans and
had subsequently been caught".

The passage from Mikhailova's statement, on which the
Special Commission based this conclusion was as follows:-
"Once Konakhovskaya and I were at our usual work in the
kitchen when we heard a noise near the country house. On
coming out we saw two Polish war prisoners surrounded by
"German soldiers who were explaining something to N.C.O. Rose.
"The Oberst Leutnant Arnes came over to them and told Rose
"something. We hid some distance away, as we were afraid
"that Rose would beat us up for being inquisitive."

"We were discovered, however, and at a signal from
"Rose the mechanic Grenowski drove us into the kitchen and the
Poles away from the country house. A few minutes later we
"heard shots. The German soldiers and N.C.O. Rose, who soon
"returned, were engaged in animated conversation. Wanting to
"find out what the Germans had done to the detained Poles,
"Konakhovskaya and I came out again. Arnes' aide, who came out
"simultaneously with us from the main entrance of the country
"house, asked Rose something in German, to which the latter
"replied, also in German: "Everything is in order." We
"understood these words because the Germans often used them "in their conversation. From all that took place I concluded "that these two Poles had been shot."

The Report added that Mikhailova's story about the shooting of the two Poles, which can hardly be described as an eye-witness account, was supported by similar testimony on Konakhovskaya's part.

As was stressed in the Report, each girl had kept her observations on the subject of the "shady doings" in August and September in the country house strictly to herself and had not discussed them with her companions, yet without previously communicating with each other, all three of them "frightened by the happenings at the country house decided to "quit work on some convenient pretext". It evidently took the girls three months to find a suitable excuse for leaving their work during which time life at the country house seems to have been free from "shady doings" as the Report makes no mention of any untoward happenings during October, November and December. It merely described how "taking advantage of the "reduction of their 'wages' from nine to three marks a month "at the beginning of January, 1942, on Mikhailova's suggestion they did not report for work" and how on the evening of the same day "a car came to fetch them, they were brought to the "country house and locked up by way of punishment".

Apparently it was not until they were sitting in the cell at night that the girls had shared their impressions as was proved by Mikhailova's statement made at the interrogation on 24.12.1943. (At this point the Report recorded for the first time the actual date when the testimony was given, such dates seldom vouchsafed in the Report as a whole):

"Here for the first time we talked frankly about the 'happenings at the country house. I told all I knew. It turned out that Konakhovskaya and Alexeyeva also knew these facts "but, like myself, had been afraid to discuss them. I learned "from them that it was Polish war prisoners the Germans used "to shoot at Kose Gory. Alexeyeva said that once in the "autumn of 1941, when she was going home after work, she saw "the Germans driving a large group of Polish war prisoners "into Kose Gory Forest and then she heard shooting." (In making this statement Mikhailova had evidently forgotten that she had according to the Report "herself" witnessed the shooting of two Polish war prisoners and had therefore no need to learn from Alexeyeva that Polish prisoners were shot.)

The Report further stated "that similar testimony was "given by Alexeyeva and Konakhovskaya."

After comparing notes, Alexeyeva, Mikhailova and Konakhovskaya arrived at "the firm conviction - that in August "and September, 1941, the Germans had engaged in mass shooting "of Polish war prisoners at the country house in Kose Gory."

In confirmation of Alexeyeva's testimony, the Report quoted a statement made by her father, Mikhail Alexeyev, who said that "as far back as in the Autumn of 1941, during her "work at the country house" she had told him of her observations complaining "that she was afraid to work at the country house" and that "she did not know how to get away". Once she had told him that "in Kose Gory forest the Germans were shooting Poles" and he had warned her very strongly "that she should not tell "anyone else about it, as otherwise the Germans would learn and "then the whole family would suffer."

Accepting, as it did, the evidence of Alexeyeva, Mikhailova, and Konakhovskaya, the Report failed to explain certain facts that inevitably followed from it. This evidence pointed to a set of circumstances that did not in themselves allow of Polish prisoners of War having been shot in any very great number. It would clearly have been impossible
for many prisoners to have been taken to the place of execution if they had had to have been brought there, as the Report maintained was the case, "practically every day" in "several trucks" sometimes driven on foot in "large groups" of thirty men, for a period of barely one month, namely "the end of August and most of September".

Moreover the number of German soldiers who could have been accommodated in the canteen on the beds specially put up for the purpose could scarcely have been sufficient to accomplish the shooting of hundreds of prisoners daily and the digging of pits for and the burial of the corpses within the "half an hour or whole hour" during which they were reported as having been away in the forest.

It should be remembered, in this connection, that the Report spoke several times of single shots having been heard which rule out the possibility of the prisoners having been murdered with any weapon more expeditious than a pistol.

**B.** The second group of proofs supposedly proving that Polish prisoners of war were shot in Kose Gory by the Germans in the autumn of 1941, consisted of testimonies obtained from inhabitants of nearby villages. From these the Report of the Special Commission did not give any verbatim quotations but listed six names (adding "and others") and stated that these people had said that "Polish war prisoners used to be brought to Kose Gory in small groups of 20-30 men escorted by "five to seven German soldiers" and that "these witnesses also heard shots in the forest at Kose Gory". These general statements made incidentally, in two cases, by witnesses whose testimonies had already appeared in the German Amtliches Material (see above), namely, Kisselew and Krivosertsev did not specify the date on which these small groups of Polish war prisoners had been brought to Kose Gory, nor from where they had come and in what numbers - and can hardly be said to have proved that the Germans executed more than 10,000 Polish officers and men in the Autumn of 1941.

**C.** The Report escribed especially "great importance in ascertaining what took place at Kose Gory country house in the Autumn of 1941", to the proofs of the third group, and in particular to the statement made by B. Bazilevsky, Professor of Astronomy and Director of the Observatory in Smolensk.

As to Bazilevsky, Jerzy Szapiro, in the article of the Moscow-Inspired "Volna Polska" (Free Poland) already referred to, wrote that this "former deputy of the "Burgomaster Menshagin...who was forced by the Germans to accept this position, subsequently went into hiding in order not to participate in the horrible crime of the "occupiers."

He referred to him as a "typical representative of the Russian intelligentsia, who at first believed that "he would succeed in saving the innocent victims" and said that he had exposed the "ideology of the executioners of Kose Gory and explained in detail in what manner Commandant "von Schwetz and his assistants had committed this crime."

Here is a summary of the evidence given by him found in the Report:

Early in September 1941 he was said to have addressed to Burgomaster Menshagin "who enjoyed the special "confidence of the German Command and in particular of "the Smolensk Kommandant von Schwetz," a request to solicit the Kommandant von Schwetz for the liberation of the teacher Zhigilinsky from a war prisoner camp". The Report said that in connection with this request, conversations had taken place between Bazilevsky and Menshagin, during which the latter
"Betrayed" to the Astronomer the "secret of Katyn."

This, according to the Report of the Special Commission, took place in the following way:

Menshagin had informed Bazilevsky that his intervention had failed because Schwetz had told him, "instructions had been received from Berlin prescribing that the strictest regime be maintained undeviatingly in regard to war prisoners without any slackening."

"I involuntarily retorted" Bazilevsky had testified, "can anything be stricter than the regime existing in the camp? Menshagin looked at me in a strange way and bending to my ear, answered in a low voice: 'Yes, there can be!' The Russians can at least be left to die off, but as to the Polish war prisoners, the orders say that they are to be simply exterminated.' How is that? How should it be understood? I explained: 'This should be understood literally. There is such a directive from Berlin, answered Menshagin, and asked me 'for the sake of all that is Holy, not to tell anyone about this.

'About a fortnight after this conversation with Menshagin, when I was again received by him, I could not keep from asking: 'What news about the Poles?'

'Menschagin hesitated for a little, but then answered: 'Everything is over with them. von Schwetz told me that they had been shot somewhere near Smolensk. ' Seeing my bewilderment Menshagin warned me again about the necessity of keeping this affair in the strictest secrecy and then started explaining to me the German policy in this matter. He told me that the shooting of the Poles was one link in the general chain of anti-Polish policy pursued by Germany, which became especially marked in connection with the conclusion of the Russo-Polish Treaty."

Bazilevsky is supposed to have had a similar conversation (on a date not specified in the Report of the Special Commission) with the Sonderfuehrer of the 7th Department of the German Kommandantur in Smolensk, a Baltic German named Hirschfeld. Since Hirschfeld - "spoke good Russian" there is no doubt, that his "political" arguments had been properly understood by the Russian Astronomer and accurately put before the Soviet Special Commission.

"With cynical frankness Hirschfeld told me that the harmfulness and inferiority of the Poles had been proved by history and therefore reduction of Poland's population would fertilise the soil and make possible an extension of Germany's living space. In this connection Hirschfeld boasted that absolutely no intellectuals had been left in Poland, as they had all been hanged, shot or confined in camps."

Quite amazed by these revelations concerning the German policy in Poland, the Professor of Astronomy had immediately communicated them to his colleague, I. Yefimov, a Professor of Physics, who - on being examined by the Special Commission - had confirmed the fact that he had talked with Bazilevsky in the Autumn of 1941.

Bazilevsky's statements, which - in the opinion of the Special Commission - were of particular importance for the elucidation of the Katyn mystery were additionally confirmed by the documentary evidence of Menshagin's notebook "containing 17 incomplete pages" found by the Red Army in the files of the Smolensk Municipal Board and in which there were various notes in his handwriting. The authenticity of this handwriting had been confirmed not only by the testimony of Bazilevsky "who knew Menshagin's hand well," but also by expert graphologists. The Report of
the Special Commission went on to state that "among the various notes on economic matters (on firewood, electric power, trade, etc.)" had been a plan for the organisation of a Jewish ghetto in Smolensk and following two entries:

"Page 10, dated 18th August, 1941, contains the following note: "All fugitive Polish war prisoners are to be detained and delivered to the Commandant's Office."

"Page 15 (undated) contains the entry: 'Are there any rumours among the population concerning the shooting of Polish war prisoners in Kose Gory (for Uman)'."

It transpired - in the opinion of the Special Commission - that "from the first entry, finally that on August 15, 1941, Polish war prisoners were still in the Smolensk area and secondly, that they were being arrested by the German authorities."

"The second entry was held to prove that the German Command worried by the possibility of rumours about the crime it had committed circulating among the civilian population, issued special instructions for the purpose of checking this surmise". The Report explained that Uman, mentioned at the end of the last entry was "the Chief of the Russian police in Smolensk during the early months of its occupation."


A. German search for false witnesses.

After proving that the Katyn victims had been murdered by the Germans in the autumn of 1941, the Report of the Soviet Special Commission proceeded to a discussion of the "German provocations in the spring of 1943."

The report gave the following reasons for this provocation: "In the winter of 1942 - 43 the general military situation changed sharply to the disadvantage of the Germans. The military power of the Soviet Union was continually growing stronger. The unity between the U.S.S.R. and her Allies was growing stronger. The Germans resolved to launch a provocation, using for this purpose the crimes they had committed in the Katyn forest, and assigning them to the organs of the Soviet authorities. In this way they intended to set the Russians and Poles at loggerheads and to cover up the traces of their own crimes."

A priest, Ogloblin, of the village of Kaprino in the Smolensk district, stated:

"After the events at Stalingrad, when the Germans began to feel uncertain, they launched this business. The people started to say that the Germans are trying to mend their affairs."

With regard to the methods of provocation, the Report stated that "having embarked on the preparation of the Katyn provocation, the Germans first set about looking for witnesses who would, under the influence of persuasion, bribes or threats, give the testimony which the Germans needed. The attention of the Germans was attracted to the peasant Parfen Gurilovitch Kisseliev, born in 1870, who lived in the hamlet nearest to the house in Kose Gory."

The Report went on to quote a very full statement made by this old man of 74, who frequently explained that when making his depositions to the Germans (see above page 309) he had been forced to lie, but that now he was telling the whole truth. A concise summary of his arguments as given in the Report follows:

In the Autumn of 1941 he was said to have been summoned
to report to the Gestapo at the station of Smazdovo, where the officer who spoke to him through an interpreter had insisted on his giving false evidence on the subject of the shooting of Polish officers in Kose Gory. "I answered" - Kisselev told the Special Commission: "I had never heard of the N.K.V.D. shooting people at Kose Gory......since Kose Gory is an absolutely open and much frequented place and if shootings had gone on there, the entire population of the neighbouring villages would have known."

In spite of a promise of a "big reward" and, the officer "having obstinately insisted" that he should give false evidence, Kisselev is said to have refused the Germans without, on this occasion on incurring any evil consequences.

In February 1943, however, matters had been different. Summoned once again to appear before the Gestapo to give evidence of the shooting of Polish officers by the N.K.V.D. he had refused, whereas the interpreter had picked up a handwritten document from the table, read it out to him and ordered him to sign it. Kisselev said that at first he had refused, but when the interpreter had begun to force him "by abuse and threats " and had finally shouted "either you sign it or once or we shall destroy you. Make your choice" - he, very frightened has signed the document thinking, "that this would be the end of the matter." 1

This had in fact, not been so, because the Gestapo, he said, had forced him subsequently to give evidence before the various delegations which had arrived in Katyn, and especially before the "Polish delegation."

1. The document signed by Kisselev in the German Commandant's Office was worded - according to his testimony before the Special Commission, as follows: "I, Kisselev, resident of a hamlet in the Kose Gory area, personally witnessed the shooting of Polish officers by staff members of the N.K.V.D. in 1940." The text of this deposition however was couched in quite different terms from the one published by the Germans above his signature. (See p. 382).

When brought by the Gestapo interpreter, before the "Polish Delegation" he was alleged to have forgotten the contents of the protocol he had signed for the Gestapo, to have got mixed up in his answers and to have finally refused to speak, saying "I know nothing about the shooting of Polish officers."

"The German officer got very angry" - Kisselev stated before the Special Commission: "and the interpreter roughly dragged me away from the 'delegation' and chased me off." In consequence, he had been arrested and taken by car to the Smolensk prison, where, for six weeks he had been "beaten more than questioned". He is reported to have said that as a result of this treatment - "I lost all my strength, my hearing became poor, and I could not move my right arm. Nevertheless as he had persisted in refusing to bear false witness in favour of the Germans, the German officer had summoned him and told him: "You see the consequences of your obstinacy, Kisselev. We have decided to execute you. In the morning we shall take you to Katyn "Forest and hang you."

The old man as a consequence of this threat and further beatings with rubber clubs by soldiers broke down and "agreed to appear publicly with a false and false tale about "shooting of Poles by Bolsheviks."

"He said that on each occasion before being taken to the graves his Gestapo interpreter used to come to my house, "call me out into the yard, take me aside to make sure that no-one would hear, and for half and hour make me memorize by heart everything he would have to say about the alleged shooting of the Polish officers by the N.K.V.D., in 1940." At the end of his deposition Kisselev told how on one occasion he had been taken by surprise by an unexpected question, and
forgetting to lie, had given a "true" answer. Finally he begged the Special Commission to believe him that "all the "time I felt pangs of conscience as I knew that in reality "the Polish officers had been shot by the Germans in 1941. I "had no other choice, as I was constantly threatened with the "repetition of my arrest and torture."

Kisselev's testimony, quoted above, was confirmed before the Special Commission by his wife, his son and a tenant and was supported by the protocol of a medical examination which had established "injury to shoulder and considerable impairment of hearing."

After having secured the "testimony" of Kisselev, the Germans in their search for further "witnesses" had according to the Soviet Report turned their attention to railway workers at the Gnezdovo station.

The Report of the Special Commission admitted that it was the station at which Polish war prisoners had arrived in the spring of 1940. The Germans had evidently wanted to obtain corresponding testimony from the railwaymen. For this purpose "in spring 1943, the Germans summoned to the Gestapo the ex-stationmaster of Gnezdovo station, Ivanov, the station-master on duty, Savvatayev and others."

Ivanov, born in 1882, had told the Soviet authorities that he had been interrogated in March 1943 by a German officer in the presence of an interpreter. When he had pointed out that the shooting by the N.K.V.D. in 1940 of Polish officers, who had arrived at the Gnezdovo station in the spring of that year, could not have taken place, as he had himself come across them, working on road construction in 1940 - 41, up to the time of the capture of Smolensk by the Germans, the German officer at first tried to persuade him to give false evidence promising "to provide for his material needs" and

According to the Soviet Report witness Kisselev was forced by torture and beating to make false depositions. It is alleged that owing to these tortures he lost all power in his right hand. Without throwing any doubts on the possibility that the same witness, when recanting in January 1944 before the Soviet Special Commission all the statements he had previously made to the Germans, might still have borne on his body traces of beating and incapacity to use his right hand, one should assume, on the basis of the photograph above, that Kisselev portrayed therein is evidently in full possession of the use of his right hand, since he is holding the microphone in it. Had his hand been powerless or had he had any difficulty in wielding it - he would surely be using his left hand.
had then threatened him with torture and shooting. In view, however, of his steadfast bearing the Germans had given up the idea of making use of him and had limited themselves to forcing him to sign a protocol in German which had not contained any false testimony. When he had insisted that a Russian translation should be appended to the German original the officer finally went beside himself with "fury," seized a rubber club and drove me off the "premises." Savvat'yev, born in 1890, is alleged to have had a similar difference of opinion with a German officer on the subject of a "short protocol" which he had not understood. At first he had refused to sign it, but when the interpreter "seized a rubber club hanging on the wall and made to strike me," he had signed the protocol shoved at him and, on leaving, had been told by the interpreter not to divulge anything to anyone, otherwise he would be shot.

The Report of the Special Commission stated further that the search for "witnesses" had not been limited to the above-mentioned persons. The Germans had driven "persistently to locate former employees of the N.K.V.D. and extract from them the false testimony which the Germans needed."

"Having chanced to arrest Ignatyuk, formerly a "labourer in the garage of the Smolensk Regional Administration of the N.K.V.D., the Germans stubbornly, by threats and beatings, tried to extort from him testimony that he had been "a car driver and not merely a labourer in the garage, and had himself driven Polish war prisoners to the shooting site."

In the statement subsequently made to the Soviet authorities Ignatyuk, born in 1903, had said that during his first examination "by the Chief of the German police, "Alferchik," he had refused to testify that he had been employed in the garage of the N.K.V.D. not only as labourer
but also as driver. "Aliferchik was greatly irritated... and
he and his side, whom he called George, tied up my head and
mouth with some rag, removed my trousers, laid me on a table
and began to beat me with rubber clubs."

In return for giving false evidence to the effect
that he had been present as a driver during the shooting of
Polish officers in 1940, Aliferchik had promised Ignatyuk
to liberate him from prison and get him a job with the police
where he would be given good living conditions - threatening
otherwise to shoot him. As the witness again refused, he
had been beaten up once more and sent to the Gestapo which
had also demanded that he should give false evidence about
the shooting of the Polish officers. The Report of the
Special Commission did not say however how Ignatyuk's
encounter with the Gestapo ended.

The search instituted by the Soviet authorities for
other witnesses examined by the Germans in the Katyn affair
did not yield any positive results, because - according to
the report of the Special Commission - Godunov (alias Godowsky)
and Silversky had died in 1943 before the liberation of the
Smolensk region by the Red Army and Andreyev, Zhigulev
and Efremovetsky had "left with the Germans or perhaps were
forcibly abducted by them". (The report of the Commission
did not mention the fact that the two last mentioned men
were members of the German Ordnungswacht).

Only Matvey Sakharov, the coupler at Smolensk
station "was located and examined by the Special Commission."

He related that when at the beginning of 1943 he had been
summoned to the Gestapo he had told them that he had not known
the destination of the cars loaded with Polish war prisoners
which had passed through Smolensk and that the officer of the
Gestapo had taken "a rubber club and began to beat me up."

Then the same officer, assisted by the interpreter, had laid
him on a bench and had beaten him until he had fainted.

His testimony continued:

"When I came to, the officer demanded that I sign a
"protocol of the examination. I had lost courage as a
"result of the beating and threats of shooting, so I gave
"false evidence and signed the protocol". He had then
been released by the Gestapo.

Several days afterwards he had again been summoned
to the Gestapo in order to confirm his testimony in the
presence of a German General. The interpreter had warned
him en route that if he refused to confirm his testimony he
would have a much worse experience than he had had on his
first visit to the Gestapo, so fearing a repetition of the
torture, he had, when asked confirmed it. Then the
interpreter had ordered him to raise his right hand and told
him that he had "taken an oath and could go home."

(See page 304, German data concerning Sakharov's
depositions).

At the end of the chapter dealing with the German
search for false witnesses the Report of the Special
Commission stated that: "The Germans used persuasion,
"threats and torture in trying to obtain the testimony
"they needed, for example, from Kaverznev, former deputy
"Chief of the Smolensk prison, and Kovalov, former staff
"member of the same prison. Since the search for the
"required number of witnesses failed to yield any success
"the Germans posted up in Smolensk city and the neighboring
"villages a handbill summoning the population to come for-
"ward as witnesses in the case of the Katyn murders and
"promising rewards for any information supplied in the
"matter."
The Report quoted the text of this handbill and attached great importance to it as a proof that the Germans had paid for false evidence.

B. Removal From the Katyn Graves of material compromising the Germans.

After thus describing the German methods of securing false witnesses, the Report of the Special Commission passed on to show just how the Germans succeeded in removing from the Katyn graves the greater part of any material evidence which might have destroyed their case. The investigations of the Soviet Special Commission had established that before the official disclosure in April 1943 of the existence of the graves of Polish officers in Katyn, the Germans, in March of that year, had secretly opened these graves and had searched the bodies, removing from them all documents dated later than April 1940, i.e., "the time when according to the German pro-vocational version, the Poles were shot by the Bolsheviks". In order to carry out in one month this huge task of exhuming some 11,000 bodies (this figure was mentioned en passant once only in the Report), making a detailed search, re-burying them and restoring the graves to their original state and appearance - the Special Commission affirmed that the Germans had employed 500 specially selected Russian prisoners of war, who had been shot after the completion of their task.

Stating that "the Special Commission disposes of numerous depositions of witnesses in the matter" the Report quoted the testimonies of seven persons from among the medical personnel of the former Smolensk prisoner of war camp No.126 and of a certain Alexandra Moskovskaya, who on 5 March 1943 "filed an application to the Extraordinary Committee for the investigation of Atrocities perpetrated by the German invaders requesting them to summon her to give important evidence."

The fragments of statements made by two doctors, Chizhov and Khumurov, quoted in the Report of the Special Commission, established that "just about the beginning of March 1943 several groups of the physically stronger war prisoners, totalling about 500, were sent from the Smolensk "Camp No.126, ostensibly for trench work. None of these "prisoners ever returned to the camp."

Identical evidence was alleged to have been submitted by two nurses and three other witnesses, whose names are mentioned in the Report, but whose statements were not quoted.

Those depositions concerning the removal of 500 Russians P.O.W. s would not of themselves have been of any significance in the Katyn affair, were it not for the additional light thrown upon them by the statement of the witness Moskovskaya. Strange though it may seem, it appears from her statements given in the official Report of the Soviet Special Commission that she had learned in some unspecified manner in MARCH 1943 of events which took place in APRIL of that same year - but nevertheless the Special Commission held that her testimony "made it clear where the 500 war prisoners from camp 126 were actually sent."

Moskovskaya, born in 1922, was said to have been living during the German occupation "on the outskirts of Smolensk" and to have been working "in the kitchen of a German military unit". Having been summoned, as a result of her own application, "she told the Special Commission that "before leaving for work in March 1943, when she went to "fetch firewood from her shed in the yard on the banks of "the Dnieper, she discovered there an unknown person who proved "to be a Russian prisoner of war."

The following paragraphs are taken verbatim from the Report: "From conversation with him I learned that his
name was Nikolai Yegorov, a native of Leningrad. Since
the end of 1941 he had been in the German camp no.126
for war prisoners in the town of Smolensk. At the
beginning of March 1943, he was sent with a column of
several hundred war prisoners from the camp to Katyn
forest. There they, including Yegorov, were compelled
to dig up graves containing bodies in the uniforms of
Polish officers, drag these bodies out of the graves
and take out of their pockets documents, letters,
photographs, and all other articles.

The Germans gave the strictest orders that nothing
be left in the pockets on the bodies. Two war prisoners
were shot because after they had searched some of the
bodies, a German officer discovered some papers on
these bodies.

Articles, documents and letters extracted from
the clothing on the bodies were examined by the German
officers, who then compelled the prisoners to put part
of the papers back into the pockets on the bodies,
while the rest was flung on a heap of articles and
documents they had extracted and later burned.

Besides this, the Germans made the prisoners put
into the pockets of the Polish officers some papers, which
took from the cases or suitcases (I don't
remember exactly) which they had brought along. All
the war prisoners lived in Katyn forest in dreadful
conditions under the open sky and were extremely strongly
guarded. At the beginning of April 1943, all the
work planned by the Germans was apparently completed,
as for three days not one of the war prisoners had to do
any work.

Moskovskaya went on to say that when suddenly at
night all of these prisoners had been awakened and led some-
where under strengthened guard, Yegorov, sensing something
was wrong, had begun to watch very closely everything that
was happening. His fears had proved well founded. They
had been marched for three or four hours in an unknown
direction, stopped in the forest at a pit in a clearing and
the Germans had begun to shoot them. The war prisoners
grew agitated and restless and noisy. Yegorov had taken
advantage of the confusion and had run away "into the dark
forest, hearing shouts and firing."

"After hearing this terrible story, which is
'engraved in my memory for the rest of my life'!—continued
Moskovskaya's testimony. "I became very sorry for Yegorov, and
told him to come to my room, get warm and hide at my place
until he had regained his strength." Yegorov, however,
refused. In spite of the exhaustion caused by long imprison-
ment at the camp and the starvation of the last days,
he said that "no matter what happened he was going away
that very night, and intended to try to get through the
front line to the Red Army."

Unable for the time being to carry out his pat-
riotic plan owing to lack of strength, Yegorov had remained
in the shed, until the day when he is alleged to have been
found and taken away by the German police. In connection
with the finding of an escaped Soviet prisoner of war in her
shed, Moskovskaya had been summoned to the Gestapo but had
stoutly denied knowing anything about him. Since, "prisoner
Yegorov evidently had not incriminated Moskovskaya, she was
"let out by the Gestapo" and this made it possible for her
to make her sensational statements before the Soviet Special
Commission several months later.

C. The bringing of the bodies to Katyn by the Germans.

Thanks to Moskovskaya's testimony it became clear
why, during the period of the German "Katyn provocation", no one among the neutral doctors and journalists present at the place of exhumation or in the professional team of the Polish Red Cross which had obviously been most active in the exhumation work, had succeeded in finding any traces of a document dated later than the first days of May 1940. The Special Commission owed it to the same witness that other possible doubts could also be removed.

As has already been noted (see page 367-73) the way in which murder of the Polish prisoners of war in the Katyn forest in August and September 1941, as established by the Special Commission on the basis of statements made by witnesses Alexeyeva, Mikhailova and Konakhovskaya were carried out, gave rise to serious doubts as to the possibility of the Germans being able to murder such a large number of people in so short a time. These doubts were removed by the Special Commission having established "that at the time of the German provocation" the graves at Katyn contained not only bodies of persons murdered in the Katyn forest in August and September 1941 but, in addition, other bodies which had been brought in large numbers to these graves in March 1943.

Proof of this fact was given to the Special Commission in the statement made by Moskovskaya. The Report of the Special Commission, told how the escaped prisoner Yegorov, before being recaptured by the German police, had had time to tell Moskovskaya not only his personal history but also to inform her "that as well as excavating bodies in Katyn Forest the war prisoners were used to bring bodies to the Katyn Forest from other places. The bodies so brought were dug into pits along with the bodies that had been dug up earlier.

This part of Moskovskaya's statement was confirmed also by the testimony of engineer mechanic K.S. Sukhachev, born in 1912, who, like Moskovskaya, had filed a request to be allowed to testify before the Special Commission. It appeared from his statement that when working in the municipal mill in Smolensk during the German occupation he had gone into the country one night in the second half of March 1943 to fetch foodstuffs. On the Smolensk - Vitebsk highway his truck had collided with another lorry, which, as a result of the collision "had landed in a ditch". When Sukhachev, with his own driver, had run to the overturned truck, they had been met by "heavy stench of putrifying flesh coming evidently from the truck."

"On coming nearer" - said Sukhachev - "I saw that the truck was carrying a load covered with tarpaulin and tied up with ropes. The ropes had snapped with the impact, and part of the load had fallen out on the slope. This was a horrible load - human bodies dressed in military uniforms. As far as I can remember there were some six or seven men near the truck: one German driver, two Germans armed with Tommy-guns - the rest were Russian war prisoners, as they spoke Russian and were dressed accordingly."

"The Germans began to abuse my driver and then made some attempts to right the truck. In about two minutes time two more trucks drove up to the place of the accident and pulled up. A groups of Germans and Russian war prisoners, about ten men in all, came up to us from these trucks... By joint efforts we began to raise the truck. Taking advantage of an opportune moment I asked one of the Russian war prisoners in a low voice: "What is it?" He answered very quickly: "For many
"Mights already we have been carrying bodies to Katyn Forest."

"Before the overturned truck had been raised a German N.C.O. came up to me and my driver and ordered us to proceed immediately. As no serious damage had been done to our truck, the driver steered it a little to one side and got on to the highway, and we went on.

When we were passing the two covered trucks which had come up later I again smelled the horrible stench of dead bodies."

Submachiev's testimony was confirmed by those of Vladimir Yegorov and Frol Maximovitch Yakovlev-Sokolov, both of whom had been serving in the police during the German occupation, the first as a policeman the second as chief of the Police of Katyn.

According to the statements of Yegorov, which the report of the Special Commission summarises, he had, while guarding a bridge at the crossing of the Moscow-Minsk and Smolensk-Vitebsk highways at the end of March and the beginning of April 1943, seen on several occasions at night large trucks covered with tarpaulings, from which rose a heavy stench of dead flesh. When he had reported his observations to his chief, he had been advised "to hold his tongue" and told: "This does not concern us. We have no business to be mixing in German affairs."

Yakovlev-Sokolov, born in 1896, also said that he had seen early in April 1943 "four tarpaulin-covered trucks passing along the highway to Katyn Forest. Several men armed with tommy guns and rifles rode in them. An acrid stench of flesh came from these trucks."

"From the above testimony" said the report of the Special Commission "it can be concluded with all clarity that the Germans shot Poles in other places too. In bringing the bodies to the Katyn Forest they pursued a triple object:

1. to destroy the traces of their own crimes;
2. to ascribe their own crimes to the Soviet Government;
3. to increase the number of 'victims of Bolshevism' in the Katyn Forest graves."

29. The reaction of the local population to the German Katyn provocation.

The Report stated that after completing all the preparatory work on the Katyn graves the Germans had launched "a wide campaign in the Press and over the radio in an attempt to ascribe to the Soviet Power atrocities they themselves had committed against Polish war prisoners."

"As one method of provocative agitation, the Germans arranged visits to the Katyn graves by residents of Smolensk and its suburbs as well as 'delegations' from countries occupied by the German invaders of their vessels."

The Special Commission did not fail to interrogate a number of persons who had taken part in the 'excursions' to the Katyn Graves. All of them had agreed, allegedly, that the clothing of the bodies, the metal parts of the clothing, the footwear, as well as the bodies themselves had been in a good state of preservation.

"From the above testimony" said the report of the Special Commission "it can be concluded with all clarity that the Germans shot Poles in other places too. In bringing the bodies to the Katyn Forest they pursued a triple object:

1. to destroy the traces of their own crimes;
2. to ascribe their own crimes to the Soviet Government;
3. to increase the number of 'victims of Bolshevism' in the Katyn Forest graves."
"by seen - faces, necks, arms - were chiefly a dirty green
"colour, and in some cases dirty brown, but there was no
"complete disintegration of the tissues, no putrefaction.
"In some cases bared tendons of whitish colour and parts
"of muscles could be seen."

"While I was at the excavations people were at
"work working and extracting bodies at the bottom of a
"big pit. For this purpose they used spades and other
"tools, and also took hold of bodies with their hands and
"dragged them from place to place by the arms, the legs,
"or the clothing. I did not see a single case of bodies
"falling apart or of any member being torn off."

Taking into consideration all these direct
observations the expert Soviet doctor visiting the Katyn graves
had reached the conclusion that "the mass shooting of the
"Poles had taken place about a year and a half ago, and could
"have occurred in the Autumn of 1941 or in the Spring of
"1942. As a result of my visit to the excavation site I
"became firmly convinced that a monstrous crime had been
"committed by the Germans."

While not doubting this expert opinion, one may
be allowed to express astonishment that he made no mention
of those bodies in the Katyn graves which had been added later,
"in fact barely a few weeks prior to their "official" discovery,
"when - according to the Report of the Soviet Commission, they
"had been brought by trucks from other places.

Being present when the graves were opened"in
"April 1943," a pathologist and medico-legal expert could hardly
"have failed to notice that they contained bodies which had
"not been originally buried in them, but had been added at a
"later date. Neither could he have passed this observation
"over in silence when making his deposition to the Special
Commission.
"The "excursions", - said the last chapter of the
Report of the Special Commission - "organised by the
"Germans failed to achieve their aim. All who visited the
"graves saw for themselves that they were confronted with
"the crudest and most obvious German-Fascist frame-up.
"The Germans authorities accordingly took steps to make
"the doubters keep quiet. The Special Commission
"heard the testimony of a great number of witnesses who
"related how the German authorities persecuted those
"who doubted or disbelieved the provocation. These
"doubters were discharged from work, arrested, threatened
"with shooting.
"
"The Commission established that in two cases
"people were shot for failure to "hold their tongues".
"Such reprisals were taken against the former German
"policeman Zagainev and against Yegorov, who worked
"on the excavation of the graves in Katyn Forest."

After mentioning two names of witnesses who had
made statements concerning the German persecution of people
who expressed their doubts after visiting the graves in the
Katyn Forest, the Report quoted an excerpt from a statement
made by Yakovlev-Sokolov, former Chief of the Katyn Police
during the German occupation. This man testified that
"owing to the reaction of the local population after visiting
the graves "a situation arose which caused serious alarm in
"the German Commandant's Office, and the police organs in
"the periphery were given urgent instruction to nip in the
"bud all harmful talk at any price, and arrest all persons
"who expressed disbelief in the "Katyn Affair."

The witness said that he had himself, as Chief
of the police in the execution of these German instructions
"ordered the police to detain and bring to the police station anyone who expressed disbelief" or doubted the truth of "German reports about the shooting of Polish war prisoners by "the Bolsheviks." Now, however, Soviet authority, having been restored, he was able to confess sincerely that "in fulfilling these instructions of the German authorities I "clearly acted against my conscience, as I myself was "certain that the "Katyn Affair" was a German frame-up. I "became finally convinced of that when I myself made an "excursion" to Katyn Forest."

The Report continued:

"Seeing that the rumor of 1943 "excursions" of the "local population to the Katyn graves did not achieve their "purpose, the German - Russian authorities ordered the "graves to be filled in. Before their retreat from "Smolensk they began hastily to cover up the traces of their "crimes. The country house occupied by the "Headquarters of the "537th "Building Battalion" was burned to the ground."

It said that the Germans had searched for other witnesses - who had subsequently testified to the Soviet Special Commission - but that they had failed to catch them. "The German-Fascist invaders did not succeed in covering up "the traces of or concealing their crime" - concludes the Report of the Special Commission. The genuine depositions of "witnesses who escaped the Germans, the medico-legal experts' investigation, the fresh exhumation of the bodies and other "proofs accumulated by the Soviet Special Commission, permitted the Russians to establish the Soviet "truth about Katyn."

They "proved irrefutably that the Polish war prisoners were "shot by the Germans themselves."


The protocol of the Soviet Medico-Legal Experts' Investigation, attached to the report of the Special Commission, established that the exhumation and medico-legal examination of the Katyn bodies carried out by the above-mentioned experts (see page 345-6) took place in the Katyn forest in the period of 18th - 23rd January, 1944, with the aim of discovering:

a. the identity of the dead,

b. causes of death,

c. time of burial.

On the basis of the results of the medico-legal examination of the bodies the Commission of medico-legal experts arrived at the following conclusions:

1. that victims were mostly Polish war prisoners; the number of bodies in civilian clothing, in relation to the total number of bodies examined, was insignificant, in all two out of 925 exhumed bodies;

2. that the clothing on the bodies of the war prisoners showed that they were officers, and included some privates of the Polish Forces. The ratio of officers' bodies to the bodies of privates was not given;

3. that the fabric of the clothes, especially of greatcoats, uniforms, trousers and tunics, was in a good state of preservation and could "be torn off with the hands only with great difficulty."

4. that the condition of the clothes on the bodies - namely the fact that uniform jackets, shirts, belts, trousers and underwear were buttoned up, boots or shoes were on the feet,

1. This statement of the Soviet Experts' Commission is interesting if we remember that, according to the Russian version, Polish officers were taken to three 'special' camps near Smolensk in April 1940 where they were supposed to have been working on road construction until September 1941. As a result of heavy manual labour, their uniforms must have undergone extensive wear and the fabric would not therefore have been well preserved.
and ties tied round the necks, suspenders attached, shirts tucked in testified that no external examination of the bodies and extremities of the bodies had been effected previously.

5. that although on the whole the clothing on the bodies bore traces of them having been searched, (slit pockets, turned and torn pockets, etc.) yet "in some cases whole "pockets were found during examination of the clothing, scraps of newspapers, prayer books, pocket books, postage stamps, "postcards and letters, receipts, notes and other documents, as "well as articles of value (a gold nugget, dollars). Pipes, "pocket knives, cigarette papers, handkerchiefs and other "articles were found in these pockets as well as in the turned-"out and torn pockets, under the lining in the belts of the "coats, in footwear and socks.

The Soviet Commission of Experts found that the fact that valuable articles and documents were found on the bodies proves "that the German-Fascist authorities who undertook "a search of the bodies in the Spring - Summer season of "1943, did not do it thoroughly."

It should be emphasised that the Soviet medico-legal expert did not take into consideration the fact that according to the Report - the Katyn bodies had been searched, prior to their exhumation in January 1944, not once, but twice; the first time in March 1943 and the second time in April and May 1943.

The first search was supposed to have been carried out by Soviet prisoners of war under the supervision of German officers. We have no data concerning this search. From the report of the Soviet Special Commission we only learn that it took about a month, that it was carried out by 600 specially selected diggers, who had been given very strict instructions to search thoroughly the bodies.

The second search - as described in German "Antiches "Material" - was at first carried out by Russian civilian workers under the supervision of German authorities, and subsequently under the supervision of the professional team of the Polish Red Cross. It was carried out systematically, as testified to by the comparatively slow rate of exhumation and inspection of the seven Katyn graves. The inspection lasted for 68 days with a maximum daily exhumation and inspection of 100 - 120 bodies and a daily average of 81 bodies (see above, page 312).

The articles found during the second search had been carefully listed and placed in special bags provided with the file numbers of the bodies. The articles found during the exhumation of the bodies in April - May 1943 were inspected by thousands of people and photographs of many of them circulated all over the world. The German Antiches Material, which published lists of the bodies found in Katyn, some 70 per cent of which were identified, appended lists of articles found on each body.

The exhumation carried out by the Soviet authorities in January 1944, and the search and medico-legal examinations of the bodies lasted for eight days. 928 bodies were exhumed - i.e. the daily average was 116. Considering that the Soviet exhumation took place in conditions far less favourable than those of the German exhumation (prison ground, much shorter days, wintry weather) it must be agreed that the daily average achieved by them (116) which equals, or even exceeds the German daily maximum (100 - 120) was very high indeed. The speed with which the bodies were inspected must have been much greater then in April - May 1945. Obviously the technique of exhumation is far from easy and requires extensive experience and skill. In principle failure to detect small articles, especially when deeply hidden in the clothing of the bodies was quite possible and even likely, especially during the first stages of exhumation, before the personnel engaged in this task had acquired experience and practice.

Yet it appears from the official and unofficial data that during the Soviet inspection and examination not only numerous small articles but very many things including easily detectable articles, such as gold nuggets, gold dollars, pencillines, pipes, prayer books and oven - as described by the special correspondent of the Moscow-inspired "Wolna Polska" - medals and regimental colours were found on the bodies.

The failure to detect such articles during two examinations which lasted at least 68 days and (if we count the "official examination" disclosed by the Soviet Report) possibly three months, would show inexcusable and, with regard to the professional team of the Polish Red Cross, most improbable carelessness on the part of the persons engaged in the exhumation. The material and documentary value of the articles found during the eight days of the Soviet exhumation would prove on the contrary, not only the extraordinary scrupulousness of the persons carrying out the search, but also their personal skill in this type of work - or possibly - their extraordinary luck. It should be emphasised that all the written documents listed in the appendix to the report of the Soviet Special Commission which proved "irrefutably" that the Katyn murders took place after June 1941, were found on the first hundred bodies.

1. "One of them, wearing a Colonel's uniform with Polish "medals on another his regimental standard - that "of an artillery regiment - was found hidden in his "breast." (See Wolna Polska No.5/45 dated 1.2.1944).
bodies exhumed by Soviet officials. No. 101 is the highest file number of the bodies mentioned in this list.

Neither the Report of the Special Commission nor the Protocol of the Medico-legal Experts' examination disclosed what method the Soviet authorities had used in the exhumation and search of the bodies. We do not know, either, whether and to what extent the bodies were identified. Nor do we know to what the file numbers of the bodies mentioned above referred.

The Soviet authorities did not publish either a list of the exhumed bodies, or a complete inventory of all documents and articles found on them, during the Soviet examination, nor indeed the name of a single exhumed and identified body. The fact that they gave several file numbers of the bodies, on which especially important documents were found, does not permit us to identify these bodies or to relate in any way whatever the documents found on them by the Russians to the articles and written documents which had been removed from them by the Germans during the search.

5. That very small proportion of the bodies (20 out of 925) had the hands tied behind the back with woven cords.

6. That detailed examination of the bodies proves the existence of bullet wounds on the head and neck, combined in four cases with injury to the bones of the cranium caused by a blunt, hard, heavy object; the entry orifices of the bullets led the Commission to conclude that the victims had been shot with fire arms, mostly of the 7,65 calibre, and to a smaller extent, with 9 mm. calibre; "the shots were fired from behind with the head bent forward... The injuries inflicted by a blunt, hard, heavy object found on the parietal bones of the cranium were concurrent with the bullet wounds of the head, and were not in themselves the cause of death."

These last three conclusions of the Soviet Expert Commission agreed in general with the facts as presented in the German Amtilliches Material.

9. That a medico-legal examination of the bodies showed that they were not in a condition of decomposition but in the initial phase of desiccation and of formation of adipocere. Formation of adipocere was in an advanced phase in the bodies at the bottom of the graves. The limbs, trunks and internal organs had preserved their structure and almost normal colour and the brain its characteristic structural peculiarities.

10. That the properties of the soil in the place of discovery were of significance in the preservation of the bodies. As a result of the opening of the graves and the exposure of the bodies to the action of the warmth and moisture in the late Summer of 1943, a vigorous process of decay could have resulted. But the good state of preservation of the muscles and internal organs as well as of the clothes gave grounds for affirming that the bodies had not remained in the earth for long.

Since it was believed that many of the bodies had been brought from elsewhere and put into the graves only nine months before to be subsequently exhumed and reburied by the Germans, the significance of the properties of the soil in the place of discovery can not have been so great as at first believed. Moreover the medico-legal experts gave no explanation of why the action on them of warmth and moisture should have been so unusually mild.

11. That a comparison of the condition of the bodies in the grave on the territory of "Kose Gory" with the conditions of the bodies in the burial places in Smolensk and its environs proves

1. These bodies having already been in a sufficiently advanced state of decay to give forth "a heavy stench of putrifying flesh", in March. (See above).
admitted of the conclusion that the bodies of the Polish war prisoners had been buried at Koso Gory two years before, and that this was completely corroborated by the documents found in the clothes on the bodies. "Some of the documents found contain data referring to the period between November 12th, 1940 and June 20th, 1941." These documents which had not apparently had to be specially treated before becoming decipherable, proved to the satisfaction of the Commission that the victims had been alive at the outbreak of the Soviet-German war.

In their summation of all this evidence the Commission of medico-legal experts concluded that the Polish war prisoners had been killed by shooting "about two years ago, i.e. between September and December of 1941."

It is rather surprising that the medico-legal experts made no mention either in the Protocol of their investigation or in the conclusion, based on the results of their expert examination of the bodies, of the total number of bodies found at "Koso Gory", especially in view of the fact that the Introduction to the Report as a whole indicated, that, the number as "calculated by the medico-legal experts is 11,000."

XII. Documents found on the bodies.

In the Report the signatures of the medico-legal experts were placed at the end of their Conclusions and after them the Report listed the documents found by them on the bodies, which it considered were deserving of "special attention".

Of these there were nine in all, found on six bodies which were not identified by the Commission but only numbered.

By a strange coincidence although in all 925 bodies had been exhumed, according to the Report, the body bearing the highest number on which such documents had been found was No. 101.

It may of course have been the case that all the important documents from the Commission's point of view had been found in the hundred or so bodies lying in the upper layers of the graves.

These revealing documents were not listed in the Report in any particular order nor were they given as one might have expected, in the order of the numbers of the bodies on which they were found. These body numbers were not listed in numerical order and, where more than one document had been found in the same body, it was listed as a separate item and not grouped with the other documents from the body, so that the same body number appeared several times in the list. This arrangement naturally makes the analysis of the documents unnecessarily difficult.

The analysis however, of the contents of the documents as given in the Report is very interesting. They fall into three groups:

1. Letters,
2. Receipts,
3. An icon.

1. Three letters were said to have been found:

a. A postcard stamped at Tarnopol on November 12th, 1940, bearing no text or address ("written text and address are discoloured."). Found on body No. 4.

b. A letter from Warsaw dated September 12th, 1940, addressed to the Central War Prisoners Bureau of the Red Cross, Moscow, and written by the wife of one Tomasz Zigon, enquiring after his whereabouts. This letter bore the stamp of Central Post Office, Moscow and an anonymous inscription in Russian: "Ascertain and forward for delivery, November 12th. "1940." Found on body No. 92.
c. An unmailed post card addressed to Warsaw by one Stanislaw Kuczinski and dated June 20th, 1941.

Found on body No. 53.

2. Five receipts were found made out to two people and given by the Soviet Authority.

a. Three were made out to one Artemievski. The first dated 26th December, 1939 for a gold watch and been issued at Starobielsk camp. On the back it bore a note dated 25th March, 1941, stating that the watch had been sold to the Jewellery Trading Trust. It was not said whether this note had been signed.

The second was dated 8th April, 1941, issued at Camp 1, O.R., for an unknown sum of roubles. (In the Edition of the Report published in Polish the sum is given as 226 roubles).

The third was dated May 5th, 1941, issued at camp, 1 O.R., for 102 roubles.

All three documents said to have been found on the same body, No. 46, were numbered on the list given in the Report as 4, 6 & 7.

b. Two receipts said to have been found on body No. 101 were made out to one Lewandowski. The first dated 19th December, 1939, issued at Kozlisk camp, was for a gold watch and bore a similar inscription on the back about the watch, having been sold to the Jewellery Trading Trust dated 14th March, 1941.

The second issued at camp, 1 O.R., on 15th May, 1941, was made out for 175 roubles. On the list these documents were numbered 3 and 8.

3. The paper "ikon".

The paper "ikon", with the image of Christ was said to have been found on body No. 71. This body was not identified in the Report, although care was taken to point out that the picture was found "between pages 144 and 145 of a Catholic prayer "book." This "ikon" was said to have borne the inscription "Jadwiga" and the date 4th April, 1941. This date found on the paper "ikon" unrelated to anything except a woman's name and therefore establishing nothing as to the date of death of the owner, hardly seems to have deserved the "special attention" accorded it by the Commission.

It should perhaps be pointed out that not one of the names mentioned in these "documents" is found in the lists of names of identified victims given in Antilles Material. In the Polish lists of officers missing in the U.S.S.R. only one of these names appears, that of Kuczinski.

Since this is a fairly common Polish name there are about ten Kuczinski's in these lists, and one of them is followed by the christian name Stanislaw. This officer had been at the Starobielsk camp.

In considering the list of documents as a whole, the following reflections spring to mind. The Soviet reaction to the Katyn Revelations was much concerned from first to last with the documents found on the bodies in the graves. Very early on they asserted that the documents which the Germans declared had been found in the graves had, in reality, been taken from the archives of the Gestapo and placed on the bodies by the Germans themselves.

The same accusation was brought against the Germans in the Report of the Special Commission, namely in the testimony of Moskovskaya when she related how Yegorev had told her that "the Germans made the prisoners put into
"the pockets of the Polish officers some papers which they "took from cases and suitcases. (I don't remember exactly) "which they had brought along."

By giving so much prominence to the whole question of the documents found with the bodies, and stressing their belief that they had been planted by the Germans, the Russians to some extent, laid themselves open to the possibility of similar accusations being brought against themselves. In this connection it might well be pointed out that the documents found in the Spring of 1943 and inspected by the Polish professional team, the "International Commission" and many journalists and visitors, were mostly personal papers, photographs of which were published throughout the world. Those described by the Russian medical-legal experts were in no case personal documents and all but one (the "ikon") had either been issued by the Russian authorities themselves or had passed through their hands. They were moreover only made known to the public by the vague description of them found in the Report itself.

32. Final conclusions of Special Soviet Commission.

At the end of the Report of the Special Commission were put the conclusions which it considered, on the basis of the evidence presented to it, emerged "with irrefutable "clarity." These conclusions were as follows:

1. The Polish prisoners of war who were in the three camps West of Smolensk, and employed on road building before the outbreak of war, remained there after the German invaders reached Smolensk, until September 1941, inclusive.

2. In the Katyn Forest, in the Autumn of 1941, the German occupation authorities carried out mass shootings of Polish prisoners of war from the above-named camps.

3. The mass shootings of Polish prisoners of war in the Katyn Forest was carried out by a German military organisation hiding behind the conventional name "H.Q. of the 537th Engineering "Battalion", which consisted of Oberst Lieutenant Arnies, his assistant Oberst Lieutenant Rekát, and Lieutenant Bott.

4. In connection with the deterioration of the general military and political situation for Germany at the beginning of the year 1943, the German occupation authorities, with provocational aims, took a number of steps in order to ascribe their own crimes to the organs of the Soviet Power, calculating on setting Russians and Poles at loggerheads.

5. With this aim, (a) the German-Fascist invaders, using persuasion, attempts at bribery, threats and barbarous torture, tried to find witnesses among Soviet citizens, from whom they tried to extract false evidence alleging that the Polish prisoners of war had been shot by the organs of Soviet Power in the spring of 1940; (b) the German occupation authorities in the Spring of 1943 brought in from other districts bodies of Polish war prisoners whom they had shot and put them into the open graves in the Katyn Forest, calculating on covering up the traces of their own crimes, and on increasing the number of "victims of Bolshevik "atrocities" in the Katyn Forest; (c) preparing for their provocation, the German occupation authorities started opening the graves in the Katyn Forest in order to take out documents and material evidence which exposed them, using for this work about 800 Russian prisoners of war who were shot by the Germans after the work was completed.

6. It has been established beyond doubt from the evidence of the medical-legal experts, that (a) the time of the shooting was the Autumn of 1941; (b) in shooting the Polish war prisoners the German hangmen applied the same method of pistol shots in the back of the head as they applied in the
mass execution of Soviet citizens, in other towns, e.g., Orel, Voronezh, Krasnodar and Smolensk itself.

7. The conclusions drawn from the evidence given by witnesses, and from the shooting of Polish war prisoners by the Germans in the Autumn of 1941, are completely confirmed by the material evidence and documents excavated from the Katyn graves.

8. In shooting the Polish war prisoners in the Katyn Forest, the German-Fascist invaders consistently carried out their policy of physical extermination of the Slav peoples.

---

CONCLUSION.

Will the Mystery of Katyn Ever be Solved?

35. Katyn Affair used for Russian propaganda.

The conclusions set out in the final chapter of the Report of the Special Commission were regarded throughout the length and breadth of Soviet controlled territory as having cleared up the whole question of the Katyn murders. The Report of 24.1.44, was considered to have solved all the mysteries and dispelled any doubts there may have been as to the fate of the 'missing' Polish prisoners of war.

All the Polish P.O.W.'s, both officers and men "missing in the U.S.S.R." were held, to have been without doubt, murdered by the Germans in the Autumn of 1941 and their bodies to be lying in the Katyn graves.

These convenient conclusions went unchallenged by the whole Soviet and pro-Soviet press and were also used for Soviet propaganda to encourage the soldiers fighting for Russia to fight yet harder against the Germans in order to take their "Revenge for Katyn". This propaganda was naturally directed particularly at the Red Polish Army organised by Berling on the Soviet side (see p. 278).

Side by side with the Report of the Special Commission, "Wolna Polska" the Moscow organ of the Union of Polish Patriots published a pathetic article by Wanda Wasilewska in which this Member of the Supreme Council of
the U.S.S.R. wrote: "For the third time the Katyn graves have been opened. This time to reveal to all the world a terrible truth. To hear witness to one more German crime committed against the Polish people. The prisoners, helpless men, were murdered in cold blood, quietly, systematically shot by a revolver in the back of the head.

Filmed into a common grave were regular officers, engineers, doctors, more than 10,000 Polish intelligentsia who "because of war had donned military uniform..........

"But our dead were once more touched by filthy German paws. The Germans dragged out of their graves the corpses of their victims and uttered throughout the whole world a base lie. By beating, torturing, and briting their "confused up witnesses.....The Germans, their servants and accomplices, started to prey upon the corpses of the "Polish officers. Out of one of the greatest tragedies of Poland they made a dirty, ignominious game; they "transformed the blood of Katyn into a foul stream....

"The blood of Katyn Forest implores us to revenge it, inexorably, mercilessly. Listen to that voice, Soldiers, "of our Corps! Not for one moment may you be allowed to "forget the horrible death of our brothers, brother soldiers, who were murdered as by brigands, who were "driven helpless into the pits that were to be their "graves, who were shoved into a common ditch who were "afterwards dragged out of the grave in the same way as dead bodies are dragged about by jackals and "hyenas and preyed upon the same way as hyenas and "jackals prey upon corpses. When you go to the West, "when you strike the enemy in the chest, don't forget to "add "For Katyn."

On 30.1.1944, shortly after the publication of the Report of the Special Commission, a religious service and a great parade of the Red Polish troops were held at the Katyn cemetery. The priest, one Kubsz, who celebrated the Mass declared in his sermon that the immediate cause of the murders was the conclusion in July 1941 of the Polish-Soviet Pact which proclaimed the rebirth of the Polish Army. He besought the Lord to "fill our hearts with unifying hatred of the enemy, "unlimited courage, and daring in the fight for the liberation of our beloved Fatherland."

The Commander of Corps, the former Polish Lt.Col.

Berling, in his speech at the parade declared:

"Our inexorable foe-the German, - wishes to destroy our "whole nation because he desires to smite our land. The "earth on which we Poles have, for centuries, lived. "That is why the Germans destroy and murder our brothers in "Poland ... That is why they murdered here in Katyn forest "the Polish officers and men. The blood of our brothers "which was spilled in this forest, cries out for revenge. - "Now we have arms in our hands, arms given to us by a "friendly neighbour - ally, by the Soviet Union. We must "use these arms to liberate our oppressed Fatherland and to "revenge the unheard of crime committed here by the Germans. "Remember men and officers, remember the voices of our "murdered brothers which call to us. We must answer this "call."

The Deputy Commander of the Corps, Major A. Sawadski, a Soviet citizen and for many years an officer of K.W.D. troops, proclaimed:

"Here in a vast common grave lie 11,000 of our countrymen, "officers and men of the Polish Army. Here was murdered by "the Hitlerites the flower of our nation. They were murdered

1. Sawadski now in Poland is a General and Governor of Silesia.
"because they were Poles.... We are grateful to the Soviet Union for investigating this whole affair, for elucidating this truth about which we were not in doubt but which is now irrefutably proved. With ears in our hands we will return home and we will return proclaiming the truth of the awful Hitlerite crime."

"Let the blood of our murdered brothers kindle in our hearts, hatred of the enemy, the German. We will be, in the fight, unyielding, fearless and we shall not rest until the ashes of the victims of this murder will be taken to their fatherland with full honours. Let the crime committed here enforce once more our wish and decision to fight a deadly fight with the enemy. To go and be victorious."

Speeches of this kind were repeated at meetings over and over again during a campaign which was organised throughout the whole Soviet Union and during the course of which money was collected for the formation of a column of tanks to be called "Revenger of Katyn". This propaganda was not limited to Poles deported some years before to Russia, but was also directed at Soviet citizens in general and the Red Army in particular.

According to the Wolna Polska No. 7/44, a large hoarding was put up by the road side of the much frequented Suelsk-Vilebsk road leading to the front, just at the point where the path to the "tragic forest" branched off, which said, in Russian:

"Here in Katyn Forest in the Autumn of 1941 the Hitlerite scoundrels have shot 11,000 Polish prisoners of war, men and officers. Warriors of the Red Army revenge them."

37. Attitude of Western public opinion to the conclusions of the Soviet Report.

The conclusions of the Report of the Special Commission which were accepted as being the whole truth about Katyn in Soviet Russia and the countries in her sphere of influence, were received with much more reserve by the Western Powers. The results of the Soviet investigations were published in nearly all the British and American papers as early as 25.1.44. The papers, however, carrying at the same time, the news that the Soviets had rejected the American offer of mediation to bring about the renewal of the Polish-Soviet talks and Mr. Eden declaration that His Majesty's Government would not recognize any territorial changes made during the course of the war, mostly confined themselves to describing the Report and its conclusions without accepting or rejecting them.

Apart from the Communist papers which adopted the Soviet attitude towards the Report, the "News Chronicle" was the only one of the London dailies which, in an editorial 28.1.44 assuring the Polish Government that by accepting the conclusions of the Report they would make the solution of the Soviet-Polish conflict more possible can be said to have taken a definite line. This liberal paper did not at that time know of the creation by the Communists in Warsaw, on the night of January 1st, 1944, of the so-called Home National Council which intended to become a rival political centre to the legal Polish Government,1 and therefore took the Tass communique of 17.1.44 quite seriously when it said that only the position taken by the Polish Government over the Katyn affair prevented the resumption of normal friendly relations by the two Governments (See above page 341).

Independent and detached, opinion in Britain found expression in the Spectator which wrote in the number published 5 January 26th, 1944, that the conclusions of the Report of the Soviet Commission could be neither accepted nor rejected without careful and cool examination of all the proofs on which they rests.

1. H.R.O. was afterwards joined by the Union of Polish Patriots and still exists in place of the Polish Parliament, the President being Mr. Bierut.
Based. As such careful and impartial examination of the proofs was clearly impossible, the British Press in general forbore to comment on it and maintained a reserved silence.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the efforts of the Soviet censorship, the few reports written by the Anglo-Saxon journalists who had visited Katyn did not make a strong impression. They mostly confined themselves to accounts of the facts and conclusions set out in the Soviet Report and they betrayed a certain amount of insincerity in content and clumsiness in construction, unexpected in articles by journalists of that standing.

The silence that followed the initial reactions to the publication of the Soviet explanation lasted unbroken until in January 1948, W. L. White published in the U.S.A. his book "Report on the Russians". In this book he dared publicly to raise the question of the murder of the Polish officers and he did this significantly enough in connection with his remarks about the working of the Soviet censorship.

After stating that -

"Russia has the most rigid political censorship in the civilized world", he referred to talks he had had with the foreign correspondents in Moscow, the same correspondents who had visited Katyn.

He quoted their opinion -

"the most severe political censorship was imposed on their stories of the Katyn Forest Massacre" and emphasizing that "these correspondents trained observers - believed even before they went (to Katyn) that the Germans had done the killing" added:

"even so, Moscow censorship struck out all the qualifying phrases". He gave the following examples of such censorship:

"If a reporter would write "I am not a medical expert" but doctors say the condition of these bodies proves they were murdered by the Germans", the censorship would strike out the qualifying phrase...leaving only the bare charge.

"Also struck out were all phrases indicating any doubt in "the correspondents minds - such as words 'in my opinion' 'probably' or 'evidence we were shown would tend to prove' with the result that the stories as received in America were "as firmly damning of the Germans as Pravda's editorials." (Page 134).

Probably White talked over the Katyn Affair at some length with the foreign correspondents but whether he did so or not, in his opinion the conclusions put forward in the Soviet Report were not completely convincing. It was nearly a year after the publication of this Report when he wrote in his book that "the Katyn Forest Massacre, which......subject is one of the most delicate of the war strung around a plot as exciting as any detective "who-done-it"." (Page 127).

"Katyn Forest is near Smolensk and it is the grave of some 10,000 Poles, mostly officers, who were shot in the "back of the head. On these facts everyone agrees. But on whether this slaughter of helpless war prisoners was "done by Russians or Germans there is violent disagreement and some evidence both ways." (Page 128).


d25. Difficulties of solving the Katyn mystery.

Mr. White, it may be said, somewhat underestimated the situation when he said that the "violent disagreement" over the Katyn Affair was limited to the question of "who "done it", Russians or Germans. Undoubtedly the question of who did it is the most important one but there are other disputable questions more or less connected with it.

These are firstly, the question of the date of the murder, secondly the question of the method of the murder, thirdly the question of the object of the murder, fourthly the
question of the number of victims involved in the murder, etc. On the question of numbers of victims, in spite of White's assertion to the contrary, there is no common agreement.

It is true that the Soviets after many contradictory declarations and denials in the end accepted the thesis put forward from the very beginning by the German propaganda that there were in the Katyn graves more than 10,000 bodies but, as is shown above, PART THREE, (pages 322-329), these figures cannot be correct as the graves themselves could not, in fact, have held such a large number of bodies.

Assuming therefore that in the Katyn Affair only one fact can be taken as certain, namely, that of the finding in the Katyn Forest, of a number of the bodies of the Polish officers who were missing in the U.S.S.R., let us now try on the basis of the material presented in these notes to make our contribution to the unravelling of the whole Katyn mystery. The question of who was responsible for the massacre will undoubtedly remain the most fundamental one but, in order to reach a definite decision on this point, it may be helpful to elucidate some of the other obscure problems connected with it.

In our attempt to solve the problem of who committed the murders, we must from the start, realise that it is not possible to identify individual murderers. There were certainly many of them acting on orders issued to them from above and originating with the competent state authorities, either Russian or German. That these orders were issued by one or other of these two state authorities is indisputable, all the possibilities are excluded.

The possibility that such orders could have been given by the Russian authorities was accepted at the time of the Katyn Revelations in many quarters. G. Westin Silverstolpe published in 1943 a series of articles in the Swedish journal "Ny" in which he adopted a particularly critical attitude to the German thesis about the discovery of the graves but nevertheless, in replying in one of these articles to a letter of the distinguished Finnish historian Dr. Hornborg, he did not, theoretically, exclude the possibility of Russian guilt as he wrote "In my opinion it (Russian guilt) is quite possible. I have no doubt that the Russians are quite capable of murder on a massive scale with the object of exterminating the upper classes of the nation which they desire to subject and render defenseless."

Further the President of the executive Committee of the British Labour Party, Professor Harold Laski, did not at that time exclude the possibility of Russian responsibility for the massacre. He wrote in Reynolds News of 2.5.43.

"The Russians are capable of ghastly blunders as the "executions of Alter and Erlich show, but I should "want better evidence than a Nazi statement before I "accepted the possibility that they could be guilty of so "grim a horror, so certain to leave ineffaceable memories."

Leaving aside all irrelevant factors, in particular the fact that the two accused Powers were fighting on opposite sides, we shall start by assuming that it was equally possible for the murders to have been committed either by the Germans or by the Russian authorities. There is however one further preliminary observation to be made, namely, that the material evidence of the crime - Katyn Forest, the graves, the corpses of the victims, and the objects and documents found with them, etc. - have always been and still are in the exclusive possession of the
authors of the States accused of the crime. Because of the attitude taken by the Russians to the proposed investigation of the International Red Cross, the material evidence was never made accessible to a completely impartial and independent body with the result that we are dealing only with written descriptions of the actual evidence which themselves emanate from either one or other of the accused Powers. These descriptions, if not directly published by the German or Russian authorities, have come from the reports of neutral observers or Anglo-Saxon journalists and have therefore been submitted to the censorship control or influence of one of the Great Powers concerned.

This means that in attempting to solve the Katyn mystery we must treat the evidence with great caution and considerable scepticism. Having based our enquiry on the supposition that there is an equal probability of the murders having been committed either by the Germans or by the Russians, it is necessary to realize that the evidence emanating from either side will be only such as to exonerate the one and exculpate the other. Moreover as the evidence was used by both sides for propaganda purposes, the documents concerned were naturally adapted to this end. Therefore, only a very thorough analysis of them involving a careful comparison and a critical attention to detail, can reveal the gaps in evidence and make it possible to fill them, while setting aside the more or less evident falsehoods incorporated to establish for propaganda purposes the innocence of the interested party and the guilt of the other.

The evidence produced by both sides will therefore be subject to the same measure of distrust and consideration will not be given to the fact that the German censorship was or appears to have been less severe than the Russian, that the Germans made it possible for a much greater number of people to inspect the graves and their contents than did the Russians, that the Germans organised an investigation by at least a quasi neutral "European" Commission etc. etc. A propos of this last point, W. L. White remarked that "if the German Commission was a 90% "Axis party, the Russian Commission was a 100% Soviet picnic" and in doing so he probably rather overestimated the German influence over the Commission.

It is furthermore imperative, in attempting to discover the real truth, to work only on the basis of the material evidence, and to resist the suggestive effects of the distinguished names, used by both sides, to establish the genuineness of the evidence presented by them. G. W. Silverstolpe in an article in "Nu" (No. 31) severely criticising the Protocol of the so called "European Committee of Experts", signed by a dozen Professors of Medicine of European universities, wrote: "In these days the title of Doctor and Professor is "a poor guarantee of scientific objectivity and resistance "to influence". Accepting this statement as true we must adopt a similar attitude with regard to academicians, world famous authors, and bishops. The authority of their names must not be allowed, by itself, to give authenticity to the facts or support to the arguments set out in documents bearing their signatures.

36. Number of Polish officers in Soviet captivity in April 1940.

Up till the time of the commencement of the liquidation by the Soviets of the three O.W. camps at Kominek, Starobielsk and Ostashkov in April 1940, we have cooperatively detailed information about the fate of the officers confined in them. This information comes from letters written to their families, notes and diaries kept by them and evidence supplied by about 400 of their fellow prisoners who were not
"missing" but "found" in August 1941 in the camp at Griasovitz. (see Chapter VI),. From this evidence it is apparent that the number of people afterwards found was barely 3% of the whole population of the three camps, it therefore follows that more than 97% of the total number of prisoners in the camd were "missing". It was however, very difficult to establish the exact number of "missing" prisoners, officers and men, and even more difficult to draw up detailed lists of their names. Despite the fact that detailed records of every prisoner in each camp were made by the Soviet authorities and that their names were many times listed for different purposes as is known from the evidence given by all those who were later "found", and in spite also of the repeated requests, made by the representatives of the Polish Government from May 1941, to April 1945, the Soviet authorities at no time, either before or after the Katyn Revelations, published a list of the names of Polish officers in Soviet captivity or divulged the total numbers or indicated the exact number held in each camp.

Although on 17.4.40 Red Star published two articles from which it appeared that the total number of Polish officers captured by the Soviets was more than 20,000 (see page 14) - not counting those people afterwards arrested by the occupying Authorities as being officers, - in August 1941 the Soviet representatives gave the total number as being about 1000, (see page 145) without in any way attempting to explain the great divergence in the totals. During the prolonged negotiations, described in FACT TWO of these notes, they confined themselves to querying the numbers quoted by the Polish representatives (see pages 170 and 171) but did not themselves give any definite number, nor did they keep the promises given by them many times to the Polish Authorities of handing over a list of names of the officers still in captivity. On the contrary they several times demanded such lists from the Poles. (See pages 172 and 178.)

Lists containing about 5,000 names were in fact, put into Stalin's hands on 3.12.41 and 18.3.42 (See pages 191 and 211), but this action produced no statement about the numbers involved from the Soviet side. During the final conversation on the subject of the "missing" prisoners, held on 3.7.42, Vyshinsky categorically denied that the Soviets had in their possession any list of names of prisoners from the respective camps in spite of the fact that there is plenty of evidence to prove that such lists were many times compiled. (See page 222).

When the Germans issued their first communiqué about the Katyn discoveries on 15.4.43 they gave the total number of Katyn victims as more than 10,000, this number being obviously based on the figures published in the articles in Red Star. The Soviets at first denied the truth of those figures declaring, in accordance with Vyshinsky's remarks in his conversation with Kot, that that number of Polish officers had never been in Soviet captivity. A very characteristic example of the position taken by Soviet representatives at that time is found in the remarks made by Major Paul Baraev, Deputy Soviet Military Attaché in Washington on 23.4.43, when he referred en passant to the recent Katyn Revelations and expressed the opinion that the arguments put forth by German propaganda that 10,000 officers had been murdered in one month were so improbable that no intelligent man could believe in statements of that kind. He also said that the number of 10,000 was probably a gross exagerration and that in his opinion there had been no more than 2,000 Polish officers in Soviet captivity and that all those had been in due course released.
The first Soviet Communiqué of 15.4.43 made no mention of the number of Polish prisoners of war which it was said had fallen into German hands. (See page 247). The second one, of 18.4.43, referred generally to "some" and "a certain number" and no figures were given in the Soviet Press at that time. But, when the Report of the Special Soviet Commission of 24.1.44 mentioned en passant, that "the total number of bodies, accumulated by the medical experts, is 11,000," that number was officially accepted by the Soviet authorities and used by them in their propaganda as the total number of Polish prisoners of war both officers and men, without any reference to the relative numbers of each, who had fallen into German hands and had afterwards been killed by them.

Since the Soviet authorities who alone were in possession of the exact number and categories of Polish prisoners who were in Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov in the spring of 1940 refined, for one: each or another from publishing this information but instead finally accepted the figure of 11,000 as the total number of Polish P.O.W.'s, both officers and men, who were supposed to have been "missing" since the spring of 1940 somewhere in the territory of the U.S.S.R., we can accept as correct the relatively precise figures calculated on the basis of the evidence given by those prisoners who were afterwards "found".

In early April, 1940, there were in -
Kozielsk Camp 4,500 P.O.W.'s, of that number 4,225 were "missing."
Starobielsk Camp - 3,920 P.O.W.'s, of that number 3,841 were "missing."

There is no mention in the Protocol or in the Conclusions of the Medical-Legal experts of the basis or of the manner in which this calculation was made by them, neither does the actual figure of 11,000 appear in these documents.

Ostashkov Camp - 6,500 P.O.W.'s of which about 400 were officers, of that number 6,276 were "missing."
The total number was therefore 14,920 P.O.W.'s (about 8,700 officers) of which 14,972 were "missing."

In addition to these total figures a relatively accurate list of names was drawn up from the evidence given by the "found" prisoners, and the depositions of relatives of the prisoners in the camps who were corresponding with them until April, 1940. This list contains up to the present time more than 8,000 names of people, mostly officers, who in early April, 1940, had been in these camps and subsequently "missing." As this material comes from a source independent of the influence of either of the Powers accused of the murders, we need not dread it with the reservation that we spoke of in page 55, above. Further, this material - the evidence of the witnesses and the list of the missing prisoners from each of the camps compiled from it - may be used to test the authenticity of the other material originating from more suspect sources.

36. Diaries of the missing prisoners. Table of Convoy.
This test was applied in the first instance to the diaries of the missing prisoners. The German documents mentioned that such diaries and notes were found on the bodies and in fact, copies of some of them reached London through the Polish Underground Movement.

These documents as well as all the others produced by the Germans in connection with the Katyn Affair, were at first regarded with considerable scepticism as it was realised that they might very well have been faked for use as political propaganda. But close analysis of their contents and a comparison of the facts given in them with the evidence of living witnesses from Kozielsk camp dispelled all suspicions as to their genuineness. The entries in the diaries, made mostly day by day, contained
too many descriptions of the small details of everyday life in the camp for them to have been faked, more especially as events were mentioned about which no-one who had not been in the camp at the time they took place could have had any knowledge. As one of many such samples can be given the entry of 20.11.39, in the diary of a Major Soski (see page 64 - 65) which said "In the morning we decided to buy stamps and send a letter for Capt. Dr. Kosinski from Zakharow who had sent to Prisaky a letter to Fraulein Dorota Fyzalok Prisaky, Deutschland, Posner Provinz., "Posner Strasse 7. " The reason for putting an entry of this kind in his diary is not readily apparent but from the evidence of Witness No. 39, we learnt that there was among the prisoners at Kosielak a Dr. Kosinski who declared himself publicly to be an enthusiastic believer in Hitler and Germans in general and who was also very amenable to Russian authority. His behaviour so exasperated his fellow prisoners that he was made the object of various forms of hostile attention. The reason for Soski mentioning the letter in his diary only becomes plain when in the light of the evidence provided by people who had first hand knowledge of the circumstances that provoked it. When we are aware of these circumstances the use of the word "Fraulein" as well as of the German geographical names for Polish places and of the fathers name in the Russian fashion, become easy to understand.

These written documents, giving in many instances data more precise than those that living witnesses were able to supply from memory threw more light on the history of events at Kosielak camp and in particular made it possible to draw up a comparatively accurate table of the convoys which left Kosielak when it was liquidated with dates of departure, numbers of people in each convoy and some names of individuals that left in them.

As the Soviet authorities had in their possession precise details of all these matters did not, in fact, publish them and as the Report of the Special Commission gave no particulars about when, how and under what circumstances the Polish prisoners of war who were removed from the three camps found themselves in the Smolensk area, we are bound to accept as approximately correct the table of convoys which departed from Kosielak given above. (see page 49).

Some of the evidence given by witnesses interrogated by the Germans and published in the Antlithos Material indicated that the convoys from Kosielak began to arrive at Gnozdovo station in March 1940, namely that of Krivosortssev (page 301), Andreyev (page 302), and Zakharov (page 304). As this data is in contradiction to the verbal evidence given by the Polish witnesses and of the written diaries, we must discard it as being untrue. However it is necessary to note that in the evidence given by Silverovtsrov (page 303) the correct data were given namely, April and May 1940 and that most of the witnesses as quoted in Antlithos Material, gave evidence that was in general accordance with the table of convoys in that the period during which the prisoners were said to have arrived at Gnozdovo lasted for four to five weeks. (Kisselov, p. 302, Silverovtsrov, p. 304, Zakharov, p. 305). We must however regard the statements of two of them, i.e. Krivosortssev - a member of the German Civil Guard (p. 301), and Andreyev (p. 302) about the alleged arrival at Gnozdovo of three or four convoys of Polish prisoners of war every day, as being untrue and made in order to give grounds for the German assertions about the enormous number of Katyn victims. The absence of similar data with regard to the camps of Starohielak and Ostaszkov makes it unfortunately impossible to obtain such accurate information about
the departure of convoys from those two camps.

37. What was the destination of the convoys from the three big camps - number of P.W.'s taken to Gnezdovo.

The German evidence nowhere referred to the arrival at Gnezdovo of prisoners from Starobielsk or Ostashkov but mentioned Koziełsk many times. (The first communique of 15.4.43., evidence of Zscherow pages 204, 209, 295 etc).

The fact that the prisoners who were unloaded at Gnezdovo came from Koziełsk was also confirmed by the contents of the written documents (see pages 64-67) and the evidence of witnesses (see pages 69, 70, 71, 73) and it is therefore possible to accept as an established fact that all the 19 convoys that left Koziełsk with the exception of the two that left on 26.4.40 and 12.5.40 which were directed to Pavlischtobei Bor, were sent to Gnezdovo and were unloaded there. There was absolutely no mention of the convoys from Starobielsk or Ostashkov being directed to Gnezdovo, either in statements of witnesses or in any written document. The former prisoners from Starobielsk afterwards found at Crismovitz mentioned, while giving evidence, that Kharkov had possibly been the place where the convoys from that camp were unloaded (page 99). Former prisoners from Ostashkov gave evidence to the effect that they had lost touch with the rest of their convoy at Vinama or Bologoe (page 109).

The Soviet documents also contained no definite statements about the direction taken by any or all of the transports from the three big camps or if some of them having gone through Smolensk to Gnezdovo station. It is true that the Report of the Special Commission quoted the evidence of witnesses Ivanov and Savvatoyev to the effect that in the spring of 1940 "several" train loads of Polish prisoners arrived at Gnezdovo station (see pages 386-388) and that the text of the Report referred to Gnezdovo as

"the station at which Polish prisoners arrived in spring "1940" but it gave neither the exact date of the arrival of these convoys nor mentioned the place they had come from nor the numbers involved.

From the fact that the Soviet authorities finally accepted the total of 11,000 of Polish prisoners of war both officers and men as allegedly lying in the Katyn graves and from the fact that the Report maintained that there existed a similar number, namely, three, special camps in the Smolensk area it would perhaps be possible to arrive at the conclusion in a very roundabout way, that all the convoys from the three big camps, with the exception of those that went direct to Pavlischtobei Bor, were sent through Smolensk and were actually unloaded at Gnezdovo. There does not however seem to be sufficient evidence in support of this conclusion in the material made available by either side.

We are therefore brought to the conclusion on the basis of the evidence so far made available that:-

1. All the convoys (except two) that left Koziełsk camp in April and May 1940 were sent to Gnezdovo and there unloaded.

2. The convoys that left the camps at Starobielsk and Ostashkov at the same time were not sent to Gnezdovo and that no information about their destination and the place where they were unloaded was published by either side.

These conclusions settle the question of the numbers of Polish prisoners of war taken in the spring of 1940 to Gnezdovo station and unloaded there. If we accept the total number of prisoners in Koziełsk camp as having been 4,500 and exclude the 245 people sent to Pavlischtobei Bor we can be fairly certain that at various dates during April and May 1940 there were unloaded at Gnezdovo altogether about 4255 Polish prisoners of war.
38. Methods by which the Prisoners of War were transported after detainment at Gnezdovo and their destination.

The witnesses Krivosortsev (pp. 301, 306) Andreyev (p. 301) and Silvestrov (pp. 303-304) whose depositions are quoted in the German Amt. Material described how the Polish prisoners of war were unloaded from prison trucks at Gnezdovo and put into lorries of the kind commonly known in the U.S.S.R. as "Tchorny voron" and were then driven off in the direction of the place called Kose Gory. This evidence was partially confirmed by one of the former prisoners from Kozielisk, subsequently found in the U.S.S.R., who himself confined in a prison truck at Gnezdovo station, saw his fellow prisoners being unloaded into a "bus with its windows smeared with cement". This bus held about thirty people and drove off, to return after about half an hour for the next batch (see page 71). We can therefore assume that the place to which the prisoners were driven was not very far from Gnezdovo station. The place called Kose Gory, mentioned in Antilches Material, l½ - 2 miles (from Gnezdovo station), see page 308.

The Soviet Report says nothing about the method of transport or the destination of the prisoners after leaving Gnezdovo but three special camps are mentioned in which prisoners of war working on the roads were put which were said to have been lying 15-25 miles west of Smolensk.

Gnezdovo station is about 8 miles and Kose Gory about 9 - 10 miles West of Smolensk so that if we take the facts stated in the Soviet Report as being correct, the camp nearest to Smolensk would have been about 7½ miles from Gnezdovo and it could not therefore have been at the place called Kose Gory. To transport a party of prisoners to a place 7½ miles from Gnezdovo and return for the next batch in thirty minutes would not be impossible but it would entail very rapid driving. It would however have been quite easy to get to Kose Gory and back in that time.

The German and the Russian material therefore differs as to the destination of the prisoners who left Gnezdovo and the statement of the Polish witness gives no definite clue to it. The written evidence of Major Solski's diary described how the prisoners had been taken under very unpleasant conditions in a "prison coach in cells", somewhere into a wood, something like a country house. This very short description of the place to which the prisoners were driven corresponds topographically to the place called Kose Gory but the absence of a more detailed description of the place and also of any information as to the distances driven and the speed of the bus makes it impossible to determine the destination of the prisoners exactly. Form the entries in Major Solski's diary we only know that the prisoners were awakened in the prison trucks some minutes before 5 a.m. and that at 6.30 a.m. they were already in a wood and relieved of their watches. We do not know if he was in the first batch of prisoners to leave the station.

There is one further fact that should be taken into consideration, namely, that two railway lines run West of Smolensk, one to Vitebsk and the other to Orsha (Gussino) along which there are many small stations and the question, therefore arises of why the prisoners destined for special camps 15-25 miles West of Smolensk were unloaded at Gnezdovo instead of somewhere further down the line e.g. Katyn, Kuprino etc. The Report of the Soviet Commission gives no answer to this question.
30. What happened to the prisoners when they left the lorries.

From the rather vague and not very convincing evidence of the witnesses reported in the German Amtliches Material, Andreyev, Kriwosartzev, Kisselev and Silvestrov (see pages 302 - 304) it would seem that the prisoners were shot after leaving the lorries in Kose Gory wood.

From the Report of the Special Commission one would infer that the prisoners had been taken by bus to the "special" camps, at places not actually mentioned, in order that they might be used for work on the roads.

Major Solski's diary tells us that after arrival at the wood they were subjected to a special search at which their watches, rings, roubles, belts and pocket knives were removed. It was at that point that the diary broke off.

The German material made a point of the fact that watches and rings were not, as a rule, found on the bodies but that money, was found. (See pages 235, 239, 289, etc).

In general, the material published by the Germans does not give much support to the thesis put forward by them and it is therefore necessary to analyse the statements made by both sides about the fate of the prisoners after they left Kozelovo.

40. The Soviet thesis: the three special camps and their fate.

According to the Soviets the Polish prisoners of war were from April - May 1940, in special camps, somewhere west of Smolensk and engaged on building roads. When in July 1941, these camps were over-run by the Germans the Polish prisoners fell into their hands and in August and September 1941 were murdered by them.

The Report of the Soviet Special Commission while asserting that an undefined number of Polish prisoners of war worked for about fifteen months building and repairing roads somewhere in the western districts of the Smolensk region left unanswered many questions that naturally arise. (See pages 350-352). The Report did not definitely establish the fact that the Polish prisoners working on the roads were themselves the Polish officers, formerly in the camp at Komlak, let alone in those at Sterobielsk and Ostashkov. At most it allowed of that conclusion being drawn indirectly, in this connection it is especially important to note that it was established by the evidence of a Polish witness (and confirmed by an article in the Soviet "Wolne Polska", see page 364) that there were in fact, in the Smolensk area three camps for Polish prisoners of war working on the roads, but that they were camps for prisoners of other ranks and not for the officers removed from the three big camps. (See page 363 and following pages).

The fragmentary, inconsistent and improbable story of the over-running of these camps by the Germans in July 1941 and of the capture by them of every single Polish prisoner was told in pages 352 - 365. This story, as presented in the Report, gives no concrete evidence to prove that all the people taken into the Smolensk area from the Komlak camp fell into German hands and even less concerning the prisoners from Sterobielsk, and Ostashkov, who were taken from these camps in April and May 1940, and sent in an unknown direction.

Moreover, the evidence of the witnesses Alexeyeva, Mikhailova and Konakhovskaya about the "shady doings" in the country house at Kose Gory, found in the Report of the
Special Commission (see pages 297 - 372), apart altogether from
the doubts to which this evidence gives rise from a juridical
point of view, made no mention of the shooting by the Germans
of the Polish officer prisoners of war formerly in the
Kozielak camp nor of those from Starobielsk and Ostashkov.
There was nothing concerning these officers in the evidence
given to the Commission by Alexeyev and the other "six
witnesses domiciled in the neighbourhood of Koze Gory" nor
in that of Bazilovsky or Yefimov nor in the written evidence
quoted in the Report i.e. the notebook of Menshagin. If
therefore, setting aside all the many doubts to which this
evidence gives rise, we presume that all the evidence was
given entirely in accordance with fact, the only conclusion
to be drawn in that in August and September 1941 the Germans
shot, at Koze Gory, some Polish P.O.W.s, the total number of
whom was far less than the total number of prisoners taken
to Gnedzove station from Kozielak, to say nothing of those
from Starobielsk and Ostashkov about whose transfer to the
Smolensk area there was no mention by any of the witnesses.
Nor, in fact, was Kozielak specifically mentioned, nor was
it stated anywhere that the prisoners shot by the Germans
were officers.

It is therefore necessary to conclude that the
only evidence, which could prove the Soviet thesis that in
August and September 1941 the Germans shot, at Koze Gory,
the Polish officer prisoners of war removed from the three
big camps in April and May 1940 and from that time thought
of as "missing" in the U.S.S.R. - would be the corpses lying
in the Katyn graves and identified by the Germans as being
those of the "missing" Polish officers.

The material published by the Soviets gives no
additional evidence that the Germans committed the crime in
question.

A point has been reached at which it appears that
no direct evidence as to who, in fact, was responsible for the
crime was made available either by the Germans or by the
Russians and it therefore becomes necessary to look closely
at the circumstantial evidence available to see if it will
reveal what authority was responsible for the murder.

41. Who is lying in the Katyn graves?

Just after the publication of the first communiqué
about the finding near Katyn of a grave containing the bodies
of "more than 10,000 Polish officers," the Soviet Information
Bureau issued a communiqué stating that the German
revealing, "left no doubt as to the tragic fate of the
"former Polish prisoners of war" and in the same breath referred
to the "allegedly concocted fabrication about the numerous
"graves... allegedly discovered near Smolensk" and recalled
the existence in the Smolensk area of the "historic Gnedzovskaya
"burial place"." (See page 247).

The communiqué broadcast by Moscow Radio on 18.4.43,
spoke about the shooting of the Polish prisoners of war by
instalments, the placing with the bodies of "touched-up"
documents which came from the "Gestapo archives" and the use
"for this purpose of the archeological excavations of the
"Gnedzovskaya burial mound" (see page 268. Text published in

On 19.4.43. "Pravda" wrote that "as had now become
"perfectly clear" the Germans "basically killed the former
"Polish prisoners of war and many Soviet people" and afterwards
themselves put in their pockets "visiting cards and
"identification papers" (see page 266-261).

The Report of the Soviet Special Commission quoted
the evidence of the witness Moskovskaya about her conversation
with one Yegorov on the subject of the alleged search by Russian prisoners in March 1943, of the bodies in the Katyn graves and the removal from their clothes of some documents and their replacement by others. (see page 397-398).

The Germans published in Amtliches Material a list of the 4143 corpses examined by them of which they had been able to identify and name 67.9%. This list included a description of the objects found with each body among which were many personal papers, and possessions, such as engraved cigarette cases, diaries etc. Most of these objects found, or said to have been found on the bodies, were publicly exhibited by the Germans and seen by the many "tourists" who visited Katyn. Photographs were also taken of some of them and distributed all over Europe.

Despite the fact that from April 1943, the Soviets raised frequent objections until the publication of the Report of the Special Commission, on the grounds that the Germans had put faked documents into the graves, they themselves made no attempt to prove that any particular document published as having been found on the Katyn bodies, was not, in fact, genuine. Nor did they refer in the Report of the Special Commission to the archeological significance of the Gnezdovo region.

The list of names of identified Katyn bodies published in Amtliches Material was submitted to the test referred to on page 425, that is, it was compared with the lists in the possession of the Polish authorities of the names of the missing officers and the particulars about them. The result of this comparison was that of the 2143 bodies listed in Amtliches Material as having been identified by name, 100% identity of names and personal data the German and the Polish lists was found in 855 cases and a 66% identity in 590 cases.

In considering these comparisons of the two lists, the German and the Polish, the following points must be borne in mind:

1. The lists drawn up by the Polish authorities were based on the evidence of prisoners afterwards "found", who were not always sure of the particulars relating to their fellow prisoners and in some cases were not even certain of the correct spelling of their names.

2. The German lists were based on data taken from documents that were not always easily deciphered, some of which dated from the time when the individuals concerned were in Soviet captivity and were consequently written in Russian characters.

3. Polish spelling makes it in some cases impossible to spell Polish names correctly if the Latin alphabet is used, without the special Polish letters. Thus the name "Zaleski", when written in the Latin characters only becomes the quite different name of Zaleski. This difficulty was increased when, as sometimes happened, the Polish names were written in Russian characters.

4. The spelling of the Polish names on the German list, had in many cases, undergone translation from Polish to Russian, Russian to German, and back to Polish phonetically. This resulted in many of the names becoming completely altered, as for instance:--

Radkowski - Yakoobskii - Szolkowski - Szulkowski or Sulkowski. The complete correlation of 50% of the personal data of about 60% of the identified Katyn victims with those of the missing Polish officers, thus removes all suspicion that the Germans may have used archeological diggings at Gnezdovo with "provocational" intent. There can therefore be no further doubt but that the bodies were those of the missing officers, particularly in view of the fact that in the other 50% of the cases many personal data were partly identical or quite similar in both lists.

It would have been, in point of fact, quite impossible for the German Gestapo to have in their possession
the personal papers of Polish officers who from September 1939 were in Soviet captivity so that the theory put forward by the Soviets that the "visiting cards and identification papers" were taken from the "Gestapo archives" and put into the pockets of the Katyn victims was baseless.

More than 90% of the cases in which the names and particulars of the missing officers were the same on both, the Polish and the German lists, were those of individuals who were found to have been prisoners of war in the Kozielsk camp. Only a few of them were marked on the Polish list as having been at Starhilsiek and a very few at Ostashkov. This can be explained by the fact that the camps were in existence for more than half a year during which time individuals and small groups were transferred from one to the other and the possibility of the Polish lists not having been completely accurate with regard to every individual in all these camps.

Taking all these facts into consideration there can be no doubt at all but that the bodies found by the Germans in the Katyn graves, were those of the missing Polish officer prisoners of war from the camp at Kozielsk, liquidated in April - May 1940.

This conclusion gains further support from the comparison of the total number of bodies found in the graves and that of the officers in the Kozielsk camp. The number of bodies given by Amtliches Material as having been exhumed in the first period up till June was 4143 which coincides almost exactly with the number of prisoners removed from Kozielsk in 17 conveyons during April 1940, 4309 less 160 in convoy of 26-4-40, sent direct to Pavlishchev Bor a 4169.

Furthermore, the probable number of bodies in the eighth grave, calculated according to the measurements in Amtliches Material, coincides almost exactly with the number in the two conveyons removed from Kozielsk on 10th and 11th May, 1940. (See pages 46, 331, 332).

Finally an interesting comparison can be made between the lists of bodies given in Amtliches Material, about 70% of which were identified on the basis of rank and the Polish lists made on the same basis. These figures are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polish</th>
<th>Rank.</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colonels &amp; Lt. Col.</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about 100</td>
<td>Majors.</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about 300</td>
<td>Captains</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about 1000</td>
<td>Lieuts.</td>
<td>1472</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All these facts lead us to the conclusion that there are lying in the Katyn graves, the bodies of all the officers who were taken to Onezdovo station after their removal from Kozielsk in the spring of 1940 and were afterwards held to be missing.

42. Who is not lying in the Katyn graves?

The Germans launched the Katyn campaign with the statement made for propaganda purposes that the graves contained more than 10,000 bodies. For some time they held to that figure, but as the exhumations progressed and lists of identified victims were published, they referred less and less to the number of bodies found. Finally, after 4143 bodies had been removed from the seven graves, the exhumations were stopped on account, it was said, of the

1. See pages 23 and 327. Of the Generals, one was in civilian clothes, (see page 27), and another was taken to Pavlishchev Bor. The Germans included doctors, vets, etc. in separate groups, whereas in the Polish lists they are shown mostly as captains.
summer heat. In the document of Amtliches Material the number 10,000 is not mentioned at all nor do they contain any evidence that the Katyn graves held the corpses of officers removed in Spring 1940 from the Starobielsk and Ostashkov camps.

The first report about the impressions of the first "Polish Delegation" to Katyn, sent to the Polish Government in London through the Polish Underground Movement, stated that the number of bodies in the graves was much smaller than that announced by German propaganda and probably did not much exceed 4,000 (see page 229).

The detailed analysis made in Part III pp. 322-329 of these notes showed that the 7 graves discovered by the Germans could not, in actual fact, have held more than 4850 bodies (see p. 324) and it follows from this that in all probability the exhumations were not interrupted but came to an end in the beginning of June 1943, all the corpses being transferred to the new communal graves. Therefore, the list published in Amtliches Material totalling 4143 bodies gave the whole contents of the seven graves.

The original statements of German propaganda that the graves contained more than 10,000 bodies were to all appearances given some support by the cessation of the exhumations on account of the heat in early June and the discovery of the eighth grave. From this grave only a few of the bodies were exhumed and these were replaced without any explanation being given. The measurements of this grave as given in Amtliches Material showed that it could not have contained more than 124 bodies (see p. 331) which number did not very much increase the total number of bodies exhumed from the graves but brought it almost exactly to the total of the missing prisoners from Kozielsk.

The Soviet attitude to the question of the numbers of bodies in the Katyn graves was exactly the opposite to that taken by the Germans. They started by denying that the bodies were those of Polish officers (cf. their remarks about the archeological burial mounds at Gnezdovo) asserting at the same time that there had never been more than "some thousand" or two thousand" officers in Soviet captivity. (cf. Vysinsky and Barayev).

From January 1944, however, they accept the original German statement that the graves contained more than 10,000 bodies saying that there might be 11,000 or even 15,000 bodies of Polish prisoners of war both officers and men. This number corresponded more or less with the total number of prisoners of war who, in April 1940, had been in the three big camps and were afterwards missing.

As it was clearly evident from the Report of the Soviet Special Commission and of that of the medico-legal experts that the exhumations made at the time of the Russian investigations were carried out on the new cemetery into which the Germans, with the participation of the representatives of the Polish Red Cross, had put the 4143 bodies taken from the original graves (see pp. 346-347) the method by which the Soviet experts, after the exhumation of only 925 corpses from the cemetery, were able to establish the total number of murdered prisoners lying in the original graves as having been 11,000, is completely incomprehensible.

This analysis of both, the German and the Russian material shows that though the Katyn graves contained the bodies of all the missing people from Kozielsk, they did not contain those of the people from Starobielsk and Ostashkov who, more than 10,000 in number, were removed from those camps in the Spring of 1940 and were subsequently missing.

43. The order of the bodies in the graves.

The study of the diaries found on the bodies at Katyn brings to light a very significant fact namely that the bodies of prisoners who left the Kozielsk camp in the same convoys were
found lying close to one another in the Katyn graves.

When the camp was being liquidated the authors of the diaries waited anxiously for their turn to be, as they thought, released and sent home, particularly noted the names of those of their friends who had been "happy enough" to leave the camp in earlier convoys. These entries, therefore, make it possible to include in the table of convoys the names of a few people who left the camp in each one.

As the Germans exhumed the bodies they numbered them successively and, what is very significant, the bodies of the prisoners who left Kozielsk in the same convoys have in many instances been given numbers near together. One such instance is given on pp. 64-65 above where it was described how Major Solski's body was given the number 490 while that of one of his twelve companions in the same compartment in the prison truck, Lt. Col. Kutyba, was 491.

Several examples of this occurrence follow:

(a) From the notebook of Wais and the dairy of Wajda it is known that both these men left Kozielsk on 11.4.40 with a convoy of about 500 prisoners. Wais mentioned in his notebook that in this convoy were included also his friends Ulrichs and Skupien. Capt. Trepiaek noted in his diary that there were also in that convoy BOGUSIAWSKI, PIETROWSKI IWANUSZKA and PRZYBORSZINSKI.

The list in Amtliches Material reads as follows:-

1. From two diaries, Solski's and another and from evidence of "found" prisoners from Kozielsk it is known that the fourth convoy which left Kozielsk on 7.4.40 included two Generals and many senior officers. On the German list of the identified bodies there is a relatively greater incidence of high ranking officers in the groups of numbers below and above the 480-490 group.
on the list in Amtliches material there are:

3884 Dr. TUCHOLSKI Tadeusz
3892 2/Lt. KOROWAJCYK Leonard

The fact that the bodies of men who left Kozielsk on the same day were found lying in close proximity to one another in the Katyn graves, makes it virtually impossible to accept the Soviet thesis that these officers were for sixteen months living in special camps. For, during the time when they were supposed to have been working on the roads, especially in view of the German advance, supposed capture of the camps and the resulting confusion the individual officers would almost inevitably have got separated from their original travelling companions and, that many of them should come together once again on the eve of their death, points to a coincidence so highly improbable as to render the Soviet thesis quite unacceptable.

The date of the murder. The length of time the bodies were in the graves.

Both the Powers accused of the crime, during the period when they were in control of the territory on which the graves were situated, arranged for medico-legal experts to inspect the bodies and to give a decision as to the date of the murders based on the medico-legal data.

The Germans employed for this purpose, the Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology of Breslau University, Prof. Buhtz, who worked at Katyn from March to June 1943, and the so-called "European Medical Commission" consisting of twelve representatives of different countries, mostly professors of Forensic Medicine, Anatomy, Pathology etc., who worked on the bodies from 28th - 30th April 1943. The conclusions of these German and foreign experts set out in their reports and protocols, which are referred to on pages 299-301 and 338-337 above, were that "pure scientific deductions show that the bodies had been lying in the graves....at least three years". These conclusions were based on facts the significance of which can only be appreciated by other experts in the same field, namely the state of decomposition of the bodies and their various organs, in particular the cerebral matter subjected to Professor Orads test, the degree of formation of adipocere.

Affirming that mass murder on such a scale created unprecedented conditions, the German experts looked for confirmation of their "pure scientific deductions" to additional evidence such as the degree and type of corrosion of the metal objects found in the graves, the age of the spruces planted on them, the evidence of witnesses, dates of the documents found on the bodies etc.

The Soviet experts, mostly Red Army doctors (see page 345) undertook their investigation, which lasted a week, without the assistance of anyone from outside the Soviet Union. On the basis of the same data as were used by the German experts, i.e., degree of decomposition, formation of adipocere etc., (see page 401), and of additional evidence provided by the comparison of the state of the bodies from the Katyn graves with those of the other victims of German bestiality, and the dates of documents hitherto undiscovered in the graves, these experts came to the conclusion that the Katyn victims were murdered by shooting "about two years ago i.e., between September and December 1941" (see page 402).

Such a very wide divergence in the opinions given by these learned experts as to the date of the murder and the lengths of time the bodies had been lying in the graves, gives the layman rather to wonder and arouses in him no little scepticism as to the value of medico-legal conclusions. Clearly only another specialist would be in a position to evaluate the conclusions of both parties of experts and to attempt to find a scientific reason for the divergence in their view.

As the bodies were not examined under the auspices of
any neutral and impartial institution we can only point out the fundamental divergence in the opinions of the experts called by both interested parties.

It will be remembered in this connection that a request was made to the International Red Cross by the Polish Government for a neutral Commission to be sent to Katyn to report on the evidence and that this request which gained the immediate approval of the Germans was not accepted, on account of the Russians' categorical refusal from the first instant to contemplate the creation of such a Commission. The argument expressed in the Soviet note on this subject that "such an 'investigation' conducted behind the back of the Soviet Government, cannot evoke the confidence of people possessing any degree of honesty" was made rather prematurely.

It would have been perhaps more politic to have agreed in principle to the idea of such a Commission, but to have insisted on certain conditions. The Soviet Government could have asked for suitable guarantees as to the composition of the Commission and its freedom to work, as also for passes for its own observers etc. If these guarantees had been refused or in practice not adhered to, it could with reason, have withheld its consent to the creation of such a Commission or have interrupted the investigation while in progress.

It is moreover difficult to understand why the Soviet Government, when organizing its own investigation in January 1944, did not invite any neutral or Allied representatives to be present, since "conditions of a terrorist regime, with its gallowa and mass extermination of the peaceful population" no longer existed and the Commission was able to work under perfectly free conditions. Had the Soviet Government done so, no objections could have been raised to the findings of such an investigation.

45. The season of the year at which the murders were committed.

The Germans maintained that the murders took place in the Spring, April and May of 1940, the Russians, in the Autumn of 1941.

The German experts emphasised that the bodies were free from traces of insects as a proof of the fact that the murders had been committed in a cool, insect free season, (see p. 289) and they made a point of the fact the bodies were dressed in winter clothes. (see pp. 283-282). The report of Prof. Buhtz shows that he was surprised to find that the bodies in the eighth grave were, on the contrary, dressed as in summer (see p. 330).

From the Katyn diaries, however, we know that when the first convoys left Kozielak it was real winter weather, "Snow is whirling around, it is cloudy, in the fields as much snow as in January", was written in one of the diaries.(see p. 67). As is usual in the continental climate of Russia, the weather had completely changed by the following month and, as the prisoners from the last convoy that left Kozielak on 12.5.40 for Pavlotskoye Barr reported, the weather was at that time quite summery and "the sun was beating down". These independent written descriptions of the weather may perhaps, explain the difference in the type of clothing worn by the greater number of prisoners removed from Kozielak during April and those in the two convoys that left the camp after an interval of about two weeks on May 10th and 11th. (see p. 48).

The descriptions of the graves in Amtliches Material emphasised the fact that grave No.5., which lay lowest and nearest to the marshy ground, when it was opened in 1943, quickly filled with subsoil water. This fact can possibly be explained on the assumption that this grave was originally dug when the earth was still frozen as it probably would have been in early spring.
Whit who, it will be remembered, had many talks with the English speaking journalists in Moscow who had been present at the re-exhumations in Katyn, in January 1944, tells in his book of how... an observant reporter noticed that one Polish body was clad in long, heavy underwear, and mentioned "it to the Soviet doctor in charge. The doctor remarked that "most of the bodies were either heavy underwear, or overcoats, "or both...When this point was raised with the Soviet conducting officers, there was considerable confusion and the "Russians finally argued that the climate of Poland is uncertain "so that fur overcoats and long underwear might be worn in "September". (see pp. 133-134).

It should be noted, however, that the official conclusion of the Soviet experts moved the date of the murders forward to the period September-December 1941, despite the fact that the Soviet witnesses had declared that the Polish P.O.W.s were shot at the close of August and during most of September of that year (p. 368).

The attached isotherm maps show that in the Smolensk area the average temperature of the air in April is 40° Fahrenheit which is the same temperature as is found in the Faroe islands at that season; while in August the average temperature there is about 60° Fahrenheit and this corresponds to the average temperature found at that time in resorts on the channel coast where, in August, the bathing season is at its height.

Passing to quite another aspect of the problem, it may be noted that in the Autumn of 1941 a Russian offensive which was launched on the Smolensk sector of the Eastern Front met with some success, and it is, therefore, doubtful whether the Germans would have occupied themselves at such a time shooting thousands of Poles in small batches.
46. The method by which the murders were committed.

From the time of the Russian Revolution it has been popularly supposed that a shot in the back of the head is the accepted method of execution in Soviet Russia. The report of the Soviet medico-Legal experts stated, however, that the method used in the Katyn murders was completely identical with that used by the Germans in the mass shooting of the Soviet population and Soviet prisoners of war in many places among others Smolensk, Kharkev, Krasnodar and Voronezh. Soviet reports about German bestialities published later, referred to the shot in the base of the skull as the "typical German method" of the conclusions of the Soviet medico-legal expert Commission's report on the so-called "Valley of Death" in Janow camp near Iwczyn, in "Pravda" of 25.12.44 and separate pamphlet. Nevertheless it is generally known that the typical German methods of mass murder were the "factory of death", the gas chamber, machine gun shooting etc. and not the more "primitive" method of individual revolver shots.

All the documents agreed that the prisoners were driven in small batches of about thirty people to the place of execution so that it would have been quite possible to have killed them by this "primitive" method and, it seems that 4250 men could have been easily exterminated in this way in the period from the beginning of April to the middle of May. While it is improbable that 11,000, or more, could have been killed in this way in the short time embracing "the close of August and during most of September" (see p. 368). It is interesting to note that the Russian report makes no mention of bayonet wounds found on some of the bodies. It will be remembered that the Germans had reported that these wounds had been made by four edged bayonets, which are exclusively used by the Russian Army.
The German material allotted considerable space to the question of the spruces planted on the original Katyn graves. The age of the trees was supposed to have proved the date of the murder, the method of planting the trees on the fresh graves was held to be typical of the Soviets, as evidenced by those planted on old Russian graves in the Katyn area. (see p. 333). The Soviet documents didn't mention the spruces nor did they refer to the origin of the ammunition used by the murderers. As Professor Buhtz report stated, this ammunition was of German origin (see pp. 334-5). This circumstance, speaking apparently in favour of the Russian allegations, and against the Germans, was not exploited at all by the Russians, whereas the Germans, openly admitting the fact, had explained it on the grounds that great quantities of this ammunition had been exported to Russia, Poland and the Baltic States.

Neither side went into the question of the origin of the cord, used to tie up some of the victims, very carefully. The "European Commission" only pointed out that the Polish officers were tied up in the same way as some of the bodies lying in the old Russian graves (see p. 287). Some lengths of this cord found their way as "souvenirs" to Poland where, it was examined by competent experts and found to have been of Russian origin.

47. The object of the murder of the Polish officers.

In the last paragraph (no.8) of the Final Conclusions of the Soviet Special Commission it was stated that the shooting by Germans of the Polish prisoners of war in Katyn "consistently carried out their policy of the physical extermination of the Slav peoples" (see p. 408).

The German policy of the extermination of the Poles in occupied Poland was certainly quite well known to all the world and, in view of this, the conclusions of the Soviet Commission may seem to be, at least apparently, right. It should, however, be remembered that, in general, the Germans did not hide the fact of their policy of the "iron fist" in Poland and, on the contrary, tended to emphasise it, in order to terrorise the civil population. They frequently conducted public mass executions and made information about executions generally known. It is therefore, difficult to see why, as was stated in the Report of the Soviet Commission, the Germans should have kept the fact of the murder of the Polish officers in 1941 secret and displayed so much anxiety lest the event should become generally known. (Evidence of witness Alexeyev p. 343, Bazilevsky p. 378 and 376).

It is also incomprehensible why, the Germans, if they were consistently carrying out their policy of exterminating the Poles, should have murdered only those Polish prisoners of war who fell into their hands in 1941 and left alive throughout the war many more Polish P.O.W.'s, among them many officers, who fell into captivity in 1939 and to whom they, in general, applied the principles of International Law. In fact, when, as happened, they shot prisoners of war for crimes supposed to have been committed by them, they made no special secret of it.

The Soviet Report, in paragraph 4 of its final conclusions, maintained that the Germans murdered the Polish prisoners of war in the Autumn of 1941 with the object of being able to use the evidence "with provocational aims"—"in connection with the deterioration of the general military and political situation for Germany at the beginning of 1943" when they calculated "on setting Russians and Poles at "loggargeade" and thereby making trouble in the Allied camp."
This assertion can in no way stand up to serious criticism, since it implies a most improbable ability to foresee the future on the part of the Germans.

It would, perhaps, also be possible to look for some special aim and purpose in the murder of Polish officers by the Russians.

Lenin, in his world famous work "State and Revolution" completely accepted the thesis of Marx and Engels and among them the following:

(a) That the victorious proletariat should completely destroy the whole apparatus of the bourgeois state, leaving not one stone upon another". (Marx. 18th Brumaire: Louis Napoleon).

(b) That one of the most characteristic features of the state is the existence of a group of armed men, set aside from the rest of society, namely regular troops commanded by officers, police, gendarmerie etc. (Engels. "Origin of the Family, private Property and the State").

If we take into account this dogmatic basis of Soviet policy, it becomes clear that, from the Communist point of view, it is quite reasonable to exterminate systematically the leaders of the armed forces of the State which it was intended should be destroyed.

49. Question of the documents bearing dates later than April 1940, and the putting in the Katyn graves of bodies from elsewhere.

In the opinion of the Soviet experts, the most decisive and absolute convincing argument that the Katyn murders were not committed by the Russians, in the Spring of 1940, was the finding in the graves of documents bearing dates subsequent to that time. (see p. 402).

As was stated on pp. 402-406, the nine documents described in the Soviet Report were, as evidence, not convincing. All of them had either been issued by the Soviet or had passed through their hands and they concerned either completely unknown people or individuals who were not known to have been in the Kostielsk camp. (see p. 408).

The Soviets gave the following explanation of the fact that the documents at a later date than April 1940, had not been found when the graves were officially opened up by the Germans:

(1) That the Germans had, a month before the official discovery of the Katyn graves made an unofficial exhumation of the bodies, more than 11,000 in all.

(2) That during that exhumation they had removed from them all the documents bearing dates later than April 1940.

(3) That 500 Russian prisoners of war had been used for this purpose who, having accomplished this arduous task in one month, were, in their turn killed.

This explanation was itself based, in the first place on the evidence of the witness Moskovskaya. This witness, however, it will be remembered (p. 387) was supposed to have been told by one Yegorov, in March, of events which had supposedly occurred in the following April. The evidence of the Soviet witnesses on the subject of the putting in the graves of the bodies, said to have been dug up elsewhere and brought to Katyn in lorries, in March 1943, was equally questionable. The corpses put into the graves in this way, only a month before the official exhumations were begun, must inevitably have been noticed by neutral professors and journalists who some one of the many people visiting the graves during the exhumation period. Even the Soviet witnesses, however, who
told the Special Commission that they had taken part in these excursions and some of whom would have been especially qualified to observe facts of this kind, as, for instance, the pathologist Zhukov, did not tell the Commission about these extraneous bodies or, if they did, the Commission did not bother to mention the fact in their Report.

66. The Soviet declarations on the subject of the missing Polish officer prisoners of war.

In analysing the circumstantial evidence in the Katyn Affair, it is necessary to take into account the declarations of the official Soviet Representatives on the general subject of the Polish prisoners of war.

Before the signing of the Polish Soviet Pact in July 1939, no official enquiry about these prisoners could be addressed to the Soviet authorities but individual requests for information were made by relatives and fellow prisoners. When correspondence which had up till April 1940 been arriving safely, began to be returned to the senders, marked "Retour... Parti", some of the prisoners' relatives addressed enquiries to the Soviet authorities. They received the reply that the individuals they were enquiring about had been transferred, on the liquidation of the big camps, to places unknown to the Soviet authorities. (see pp. 295-6).

A small party of prisoners who were in camps at Pavlishchev Bor and Griasovetz, when asking the whereabouts of their former fellow prisoners, were put off with evasive answers and when special delegate of the N.K.V.D. came to Griasovetz from Moscow, he assured the officers that Griasovetz was the only camp in Soviet Russia containing officers, as all the other Polish officers had been released or had returned home. (see p. 121).

In the Autumn of 1940 some Polish officers, thought to be in sympathy with Soviet ideas, were told by very high N.K.V.D. officials that a "great mistake" had been made about the Polish officers and that it would not be possible to take them into account, when planning the organisation of a Red Polish Division. (See p. 128).

When the Germans launched their attack on Russia, on July 4th 1941, the Soviet Ambassador in London, Malinsky, informed representatives of the British Government that there were not more than 20,000 Polish prisoners of war in the U.S.S.R., at the most. (see p. 139). Practically the same figure was given by a Soviet General when asked about Polish prisoners of war, in the middle of August 1941. (see p. 143).

In fact, about 28,000 Polish prisoners of war were afterwards found in camps named by this Soviet General. It is incomprehensible, however, why Malinsky in London gave a smaller figure on July 4th, when the three special camps in the Smolensk area containing about 11-15,000 Polish prisoners of war (among them about 8,000 officers) had not yet been over-run by the Germans and all those people should have been at the disposition of the Allied forces. If these camps were, in fact, in existence could the Soviet authorities really not have known of them?

During the nine months official Polish Soviet negotiations on the subject of the missing officers, which were conducted with the highest Soviet officials, various declarations about their fate were made on the Soviet side. It was said that the Polish officers had been released in 1940 and sent back to Poland, (it was known that that was not so from the fact that the Polish Underground Movement had been unable to trace a single one) that they had been released after the
"amnesty" and would turn up in due course, that they had, perhaps, escaped to Manchuria etc., etc. At no point, however, were the "special camps" in the Smolensk area mentioned. Even when Stalin in his talk with General Anders on 18.3.42., i.e., after the negotiations had been going on for seven months, expressed, very vaguely, the possibility that the missing Polish officers "were in camps in territories which had been taken by the "Germans and were dispersed" (see p.212), he said nothing about Smolensk. Only after the German revelations about Katyn did it become "perfectly clear" that the 11,000 or more Polish prisoners of war from these camps had been engaged in construction work east of Smolensk and had been seized by the Germans. (see p. 261).

Could it be that these special camps were so secret that they were known neither to the local Soviet authorities, nor to Neisky in London nor to the Soviet military authorities, nor, indeed, to the highest Soviet officials in Moscow?

Why, moreover, did not Vyshinsky, having assured the Polish ambassador on 2.11.41, that the Soviet authorities had "records of everyone alive or dead, I have promised the details and I will produce them", keep his promise?

Until the real answers to these and many other questions that naturally arise in connection with the Soviet explanations on the subject of the "missing" officers are given, the Katyn mystery itself will not be completely solved. These answers are only to be found in the Archives of the N.K.V.D.