

The “Solidarnosc Walczaca” was acting in 1982-1990 as an underground organisation actively struggling against the communist regime in an effort to restore a free and independent Poland.

ALTERNATYWA

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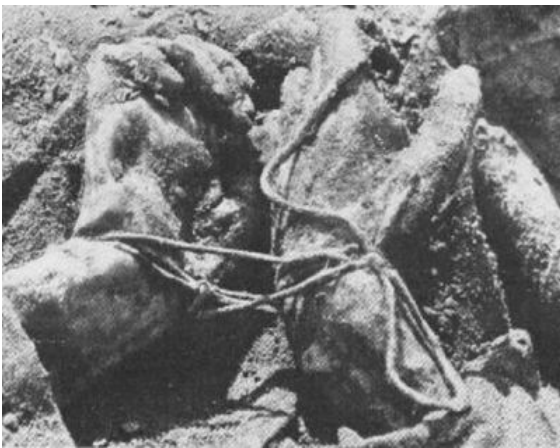


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„ALTERNATYWA” była pismem Solidarności Walczącej Oddział Warszawa- ukazywała się do 1990 r.

The Katyn Massacre – an unresolved genocide in Europe



On the 23rd of August 1939 the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact was signed between Hitler’s Germany and communist Russia. The essence of this pact provided for joint aggression against Poland and division of its territory between the two aggressors. A direct consequence of this agreement was the Soviet invasion of Poland that took place on September 17. The invasion resulted in approximately 250 thousand polish soldiers and officers being captured as prisoners of war in eastern regions of Poland. Instead of treating the prisoners of war in accordance with recognised international conventions, the Soviet army handed the prisoners over to the security forces, the NKVD. Lower ranking soldiers were then transported to labour camps.

Professional soldiers, reservists, officers, border patrol troops and police officers were moved to specially established camps in Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostaszkow. Imprisoned in these camps were also university professors, doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, journalists, authors, the prime representatives of the Polish nation.

Based on the decision taken by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of **March 5, 1940**, Soviet leaders ordered the extermination of more than 26,000 Polish POW’s and political prisoners. The Political Bureau took its decision at the behest of the Soviet Commissar of Internal Affairs, Beria, a criminal who was at the time responsible for internal security of the Soviet Union. Beria wrote that Polish prisoners were “*die-hard, incorrigible enemies of the Soviet power*”. On the basis of this statement, the NKVD deemed it justified to execute thousands of POW’s and other prisoners without any due process such as a trial or right of appeal. Beria’s request was countersigned by the highest leaders of the Soviet Union of the time: Stalin, Marshal Voroshilov, Soviet foreign minister Molotov, and Mikoyan, a member of the Politburo.



The first transport with Polish prisoners arrived at the place of execution on **the 3rd of April 1940**. Victims executed in April and May were buried in mass graves in the Katyn forest near Smolensk (prisoners from Kozielsk), in Miednoje near Tver (prisoners from Ostaszkow) and in Piatikhatki on the outskirts of Kharkov. The exact location of some of these mass graves remains undetermined.

This crime, known as the Katyn massacre (from the name of one of townships in whose surroundings the murdered were buried in mass graves), refers to all victims of the Soviet leadership’s decision of March 5, 1940, and includes not only military officers murdered in the Katyn forest but those buried in other locations as well. It was a crime perpetrated by the Soviet state and its servants on citizens of another country. It was a crime for which today’s Russia, being the successor to the Soviet Union, must assume full responsibility.



It was a crime perpetrated on thousands of innocent people merely because of their political views, because of their loyalty to their country and because of their way of thinking.

This crime was an act of genocide. Genocide is a term in international law first established by the United Nations on the 11th of December 1946 and afterwards in the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. These documents state that genocide consists of acts such as murder, a severe damage to physical or mental integrity of a defined population group, deliberate deterioration of living standards of a defined ethnic group with the view to destroying or limiting population growth of that group. Genocide was recognised to be any attempt at full or partial destruction of population groups based on their "*citizenship, ethnicity, racial background or religious conviction*".

It was accepted that the crime of genocide shall have no statutory limitation. Furthermore, it was agreed that that the punishment of genocide must have a retroactive effect. The Katyn massacre, within the context of the United Nations definition, was without a doubt a crime of genocide. It was directed against a large population group that was singled out on the basis of national identity. It is clear that the murderers were intent on total extermination of this population group. Both of these factors meet the UN definition's requirements for this crime to be recognised as genocide, in reference to the decision of March 5, 1940.



The modern-day Russia, as a legal successor to the Soviet Union, is opposed to qualifying the Katyn massacre as an act of genocide. Russia refuses to recognise the Katyn massacre as an act of mass murder that constituted an act of genocide. Katyn was an act of politically inspired mass murder. No attempts by the Russian authorities to disguise or rebrand the Katyn events can disprove facts, just as the Soviet Union was unable to do this despite having tried hard for half a century.