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STATEMENT

OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION FOR
THE ESTABLISHMENT AND INVESTI-
GATION OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF
THE SHOOTING OF POLISH OFFICERS,
PRISONERS OF WAR, IN THE KATYN
FOREST BY THE GERMAN FASCIST
INVADERS



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE
MOSCOW 1944

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*Russia (1923- U.S.S.R.) Spetsial'naiā
komissia po ustanovleniū i rassledo-
vaniū obstoiatel'stv rasstrela
nemetsko-fashistskimi zakhvatchikami
v Katynskom lesu voenno-plennykh
pol'skikh ofitserov.*



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MOSCOW, 1944

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STATEMENT

of the Special Commission for the Establishment and Investigation of the Circumstances of the Shooting of Polish Officers, Prisoners of War, in the Katyn Forest by the German Fascist Invaders

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By order of the Extraordinary State Commission for the Establishment and Investigation of the Atrocities Committed by the German Fascist Invaders and Their Accomplices there was set up a Special Commission for the Establishment and Investigation of the Circumstances of the Shooting of Polish Officers, Prisoners of War, in the Katyn Forest (near Smolensk) by the German Fascist Invaders.

The Commission was composed of Academician *N.N. Burdenko*, member of the Extraordinary State Commission, who acted as Chairman; Academician *Alexei Tolstoy*, member of the Extraordinary State Commission; Metropolitan *Nikolai*, member of the Extraordinary State Commission; Lieutenant-General *A.S. Gundorov*, Chairman of the All-Slav Committee; *S.A. Kolesnikov*, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Union of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; Academician *V.P. Potemkin*, People's Commissar of Education of the R.S.F.S.R.; Colonel-General *E.I. Smirnov*, Chief of the Main Medical Service Administration of the Red Army; and *R.E. Melnikov*, Chairman of the Smolensk Regional Executive Committee.

In the fulfilment of the tasks entrusted to it the Commission enlisted the assistance of the following medical experts: *V.I. Prozorovsky*, Chief Medical Expert of the People's Commissariat of Public Health of the U.S.S.R. and Director of the Institute of Medical Jurisprudence; Doctor of Medical Sciences, *V.M. Smolyaninov*, Professor of Medical Jurisprudence at the Second Moscow Medical Institute; *P.S. Semenovskiy*, Senior Research Worker at the Institute of Medical Jurisprudence of the People's Commissariat of Public Health of the U.S.S.R.; Docent *M.D. Shvaikova*, Senior Research Worker at the Institute of Medical Jurisprudence of the People's Commissariat of Public Health of the U.S.S.R.; and Major of Medical Service Professor *D.N. Vyropayev*, Senior Pathologist of the Front.

The Special Commission had at its disposal a vast quantity of material submitted to it by Academician *N.N. Burdenko*, member of the Extraordinary State Commission, his assistants and the medical experts,

who arrived at the city of Smolensk on September 26, 1943, immediately upon its liberation, and conducted a preliminary study and investigation of the circumstances of all the atrocities committed by the Germans.

The Special Commission verified and established at the site of the crimes that 15 kilometres from the city of Smolensk, along the Vitebsk highway, in the section of the Katyn Forest named Kozyi Gori, 200 metres southwest from the highway in the direction of the Dnieper, there are located certain graves in which Polish prisoners of war shot by the German invaders were interred.

By order of the Special Commission and in the presence of all the members of the Special Commission and of the medical experts the graves were opened. Within these graves a great number of corpses in Polish military uniforms were discovered. The total number of these corpses was estimated by the medical experts to be 11,000.

The medical experts made a thorough examination of the exhumed corpses and of the documents and material evidence discovered upon the corpses and in the graves.

Simultaneously with the opening of the graves and the examination of the corpses the Special Commission interrogated numerous witnesses from among the local population whose testimony establishes the exact time and circumstances of the commission of these crimes by the German invaders.

The testimony of the witnesses establishes the following facts:

The Katyn Forest

From time immemorial the Katyn Forest was the favourite spot to which the Smolensk population would repair on Sundays and holidays. The neighbouring population pastured its cattle in the Katyn Forest and secured timber from it for its fuel requirements. There were no restrictions or prohibitions against entering the Katyn Forest.

Such was the situation in reference to the Katyn Forest until the commencement of the war. Even in the summer of 1941 a Young Pioneers' Camp still functioned in this forest under the auspices of the Industrial Insurance Office, camp actually being broken only in July 1941.

When the German invaders captured Smolensk an entirely different regime was set up in the Katyn Forest. It began to be guarded by reinforced patrols; in many localities notices were posted containing the warning that people entering the forest without special permits were liable to be summarily shot.

A particularly strict guard was kept over that part of the Katyn Forest which was known as Kozyi Gori, as well as over the territory along the bank of the Dnieper where, at a distance of 700 metres from the discovered graves of Polish war prisoners, a country-house was situated which

had served as a rest home for the Smolensk Administration of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. When the Germans came a German institution bearing the name of "Headquarters of the 537th Construction Battalion" took up its quarters in this country-house.

Polish Prisoners of War in the District of Smolensk

The Special Commission established that prior to the capture of Smolensk by the German invaders Polish officers and soldiers who were war prisoners were employed in the western districts of the region on the building and repairing of highways. These Polish prisoners of war were quartered in three camps of special destination named as follows: Camp No. 1-SD, No. 2-SD and No. 3-SD, located from 25 to 45 kilometres west of Smolensk.

It was established by the testimony of witnesses and documentary material that after the commencement of hostilities these camps could not under the circumstances be evacuated in time, and all the Polish war prisoners as well as part of the guards and of the camp personnel fell into German captivity.

Major of State Security *V.M. Vetoshnikov*, former Superintendent of Camp No. 1-SD when questioned by the Special Commission testified as follows:

"... I was expecting an order to liquidate the camp but communication with Smolensk was cut. I then left for Smolensk myself together with a few assistants to be enlightened on the situation. I found that the atmosphere at Smolensk was tense. I requested Comrade *Ivanov*, Traffic Superintendent of the Smolensk Sector of the Western Railway, to supply cars for the evacuation of the Polish war prisoners from the camp. But Comrade *Ivanov* replied that I could not count on getting any cars. I also tried to get in touch with Moscow for permission to set out on foot, but did not succeed in this either.

"By then Smolensk had already been cut off from the camp and I do not know what became of the Polish war prisoners and the rest of the camp guard."

Engineer *S.V. Ivanov*, who in July 1941 was Acting Traffic Superintendent of the Smolensk Sector of the Western Railway, testified as follows before the Special Commission:

"The administration of the Polish war prisoners' camps applied to me for cars to evacuate the Poles but we had no available cars. Moreover, we could not have delivered the cars to the Gusino track where most of the Polish war prisoners were, as that line was already under fire. Consequently, we could not comply with the requests of the camps' administration. That is how the Polish war prisoners happened to remain in Smolensk Region."

The presence of Polish war prisoners in the Smolensk Region camps is corroborated by the testimony of numerous witnesses, who saw these Poles near Smolensk during the first months of occupation, up to and including September 1941.

Witness *Maria Alexandrovna Sashneva*, an elementary school teacher of the village of Zenkovo, told the Special Commission that in August 1941 she had given shelter at her house in the village of Zenkovo to a Polish prisoner of war who had escaped from a camp.

"... The Pole wore a Polish army uniform which I immediately recognized since I had seen groups of Polish war prisoners during 1940 and 1941 while they were employed on some job or other on the highway under guard. . . . I became interested in the Pole as I found out that before he had been called up to military service he had been an elementary school teacher in Poland. Since I myself had graduated from a teachers' school and intended to become a teacher, I entered into conversation with him. He told me that he had graduated from a teachers' college in Poland and had then attended a military school and was a Junior Lieutenant in the Reserve. At the outbreak of hostilities between Poland and Germany he was called to active service and was stationed at Brest-Litovsk where he was taken prisoner by the Red Army. . . . He spent more than a year in a camp near Smolensk.

"When the Germans came they took possession of the Polish camp and set up a rigorous regime. The Germans looked down on the Poles and persecuted them in every way possible. There were cases of Poles being shot for no reason whatever. He then decided to make his escape. Speaking of himself he told me that his wife was also a teacher, that he had two brothers and two sisters. . . ."

When he left the next day the Pole told *Sashneva* his name which she wrote down in a book. The book submitted by *Sashneva* to the Special Commission, entitled *Practical Lessons in Natural Science* by Jagodowski, contains the following inscription on the last page:

"*Lojek, Jozef* and *Zofja*. City of Zamość, Ogrodowa 25."

In the lists published by the Germans, No. 3796, *Lojek, Jozef*, Lieutenant, is indicated as having been shot at Kozyi Gori in the Katyn Forest in the spring of 1940.

Thus, according to the Germans *Jozef Lojek* was shot a year before the witness *Sashneva* spoke to him.

Witness *N.V. Danilenkov*, a member of the Krasnaya Zarya Collective Farm, Katyn Village Soviet, testified:

"In 1941, in August and September, when the Germans came, I met Poles who were working on the highway in batches of 15 to 20 men."

Testimony to the same effect was given by the following witnesses: *Soldatenkov*, former elder of the village of Borok; *A.S. Kolachev*, a Smolensk physician; *A.P. Ogloblin*, a clergyman; *T.I. Sergeyev*, railway

section foreman; *P.A. Smiryagin*, an engineer; *A.M. Moskovskaya*, a resident of Smolensk; *A.M. Alexeyev*, chairman of the collective farm of the village of Borok; *I.V. Kutsev*, master-plumber; *V.P. Gorodetsky*, a clergyman; *A.T. Bazekina*, a bookkeeper; *E.N. Vetrova*, a teacher; *I.V. Savvateyev*, assistant station master of the Gnezdovo Railway Station, and others.

Raids on Polish War Prisoners

The presence of Polish war prisoners during the autumn of 1941 in the Smolensk districts is also corroborated by the fact that the Germans conducted numerous raids for the purpose of rounding up war prisoners who had escaped from these camps.

Witness *I.M. Kartoshkin*, a carpenter, testified:

"In the autumn of 1941 the Germans not only looked for Polish war prisoners in the forests but they even enlisted the services of the police to conduct night raids in the villages."

M.D. Zakharov, the former elder of the village of Noviye Bateki, testified that in the autumn of 1941 the Germans carefully "combed" the villages and forests in search of Polish prisoners of war.

Witness *N.V. Danilenkov*, a member of the Krasnaya Zarya Collective Farm, testified:

"Special raids were conducted in our place to round up Polish war prisoners who had made their escape. Two or three such searches were made at my house. After one of these searches I asked the elder, *Konstantin Sergeyev*, whom they were looking for in our village. *Sergeyev* said that an order has been received from the German Commandant's Office according to which a house-to-house search was to be made as Polish war prisoners who had escaped from the camp were hiding in our village. After a while the searches stopped."

Witness *T.E. Fatkov*, collective farmer, testified:

"Raids in search of Polish war prisoners were conducted several times. This was in August and September of 1941. After September 1941 these raids stopped and no one ever saw Polish war prisoners any more."

The Shooting of Polish War Prisoners

The "Headquarters of the 537th Construction Battalion" mentioned above, which were billeted in the country-house in Kozyi Gori, did not engage in any construction work whatever. Their activity was kept a careful secret.

What these "Headquarters" actually did engage in was testified to by many witnesses, including the following: *A.M. Alexeyeva*, *O.A. Mikhailova* and *Z.P. Konakhovskaya*, residents of the village of Borok, Katyn Village Soviet.

By order of the German Commandant of the village of Katyn they were sent by the elder of the village of Borok, *V.I. Soldatenkov*, to service the "Headquarters" personnel at the said country-house.

When they arrived at Kozyi Gori they were informed through an interpreter that a number of restrictions were imposed upon them: they were absolutely forbidden to leave the house and go to the forest, to enter the rooms of the house without being called for and without being accompanied by German soldiers, or to remain on the grounds of the country-house at night. They had to follow an exactly mapped out route when coming to work and on leaving, and always had to be accompanied by soldiers.

Alexeyeva, *Mikhailova* and *Konakhovskaya* were informed of this through an interpreter by the chief of the German institution personally, Lt. Colonel *Arnes*, who had summoned them singly for that purpose.

On the question of the "Headquarters" personnel *A.M. Alexeyeva* testified:

"There were always about 30 Germans at the country-house in Kozyi Gori; the senior officer among them was Lt. Colonel *Arnes*, his adjutant was Oberleutnant *Rext*. Others there were Lieutenant *Hott*, Sergeant *Lümert*, Quartermaster Sergeant *Rose*, his assistant *Isicke*, *Oberfeldwebel Grenewski*, in charge of the electric station, a senior corporal who was a photographer and whose name I do not remember, a Volga German interpreter whose name I believe was *Johann* but whom we called *Ivan*, a German cook named *Gustav* and a number of others whose first names and surnames I do not know."

Soon after they started to work *Alexeyeva*, *Mikhailova* and *Konakhovskaya* began to notice that "something fishy" was going on at the country-house.

A.M. Alexeyeva testified:

"... *Johann*, the interpreter, warned us several times in the name of *Arnes* that we should 'keep mum' and not gossip about what we saw and heard at the country-house.

"Besides, I as much as guessed from a number of circumstances that there was "something fishy" about what the Germans were doing at that country-house. . . .

"At the end of August and during the greater part of September 1941 several trucks arrived almost daily at the country-house in Kozyi Gori.

"At first I paid no attention to this but then I noticed that every time these machines arrived on the grounds of the country-house they first stopped for half an hour or a whole hour somewhere on the by-road leading from the highway to the country-house.

"I drew this conclusion because the noise of the trucks ceased some time after they had entered the grounds of the country-house. As soon as the noise of the trucks ceased solitary shots were heard. The reports came at short, approximately even intervals of time. Then the shooting stopped and the machines drove right up to the country-house.

"German soldiers and non-coms used to alight from the machines. They would talk noisily among themselves as they walked off to the bath to wash themselves, after which they would get drunk. The bath house was always functioning those days.

"On the days when trucks arrived additional soldiers also came to the country-house from some German military unit. Cots were specially placed for them in the soldiers' casino which had been fixed up in one of the rooms of the house. On those days the kitchen had to prepare a great number of dinners and the liquor ration dealt out at table was doubled.

"A short time before the machines arrived at the country-house these soldiers left for the forest fully armed, most likely going to the place where the trucks had stopped, as they returned half an hour or an hour later on these machines together with the soldiers who lived permanently at the country-house.

"I very likely would not have been watching and would not have noticed how the noise of the trucks arriving at the country-house stopped and started again if we (*I*, *Konakhovskaya* and *Mikhailova*) had not been packed into the kitchen each time the machines arrived if we happened to be at that time in the yard of the country-house, or if they had not kept us from leaving the kitchen if we happened to be there.

"This circumstance and also the fact that several times I noticed traces of fresh blood on the clothes of two corporals induced me to pay close attention to what was going on at the country-house. It was then that I noticed those strange intervals in the movement of the trucks, the stops they were making in the forest. I likewise noticed that the blood stains always were on the clothing of the same people, the two corporals. One of them was tall and red-haired, the other of medium build and blond.

"From all this I concluded that the Germans were bringing people on the trucks to the country-house and were shooting them. I also guessed about where this was taking place for in coming and going from the country-house I noticed several places not far from the road where earth had been freshly dug up. The stretch of freshly dug up earth kept increasing in length every day. In time the earth at these spots resumed its usual appearance."

In reply to the question of the Special Commission, what people were being shot in the forest near the country-house, *Alexeyeva* replied

that it was Polish war prisoners that were being shot and in confirmation related the following:

"There were days when no trucks showed up at the country-house but all the same soldiers left the country-house for the forest from where frequent individual shots were heard. On their return the soldiers without fail went to the bath house and afterwards got drunk.

"Once the following happened: for some reason or other I was detained at the country-house somewhat later than usual. *Mikhailova* and *Konakhovskaya* had already left. I had not yet finished the work that had detained me when a soldier unexpectedly came to tell me that I could leave. He said he got orders to that effect from *Rose*. He accompanied me to the highway.

"I had walked along the highway for a distance of about 150 to 200 metres away from the turn towards the country-house when I saw a batch of about 30 Polish war prisoners walking along the highway under a strong German escort.

"I knew that they were Poles because both before the beginning of the war and also for some time after the Germans had come I had met Polish war prisoners on the highway dressed in the same uniforms and wearing their characteristic four-cornered caps.

"I stopped at the edge of the road as I wanted to see where they were being taken to, and saw them turn into the road leading to our country-house at *Kozyi Gori*.

"As by that time I was already taking careful note of all that was going on at the country-house I became interested in this circumstance, went back a little along the highway and waited, hiding among the bushes along the edge of the road. In about 20 or 30 minutes I heard the characteristic individual shots with which I was already acquainted.

"Then everything became clear to me and I quickly went home.

"From this fact I also concluded that the Germans shot Poles obviously not only in daytime when we were busy at the country-house but also at night during our absence. I thought as much also for the reason that I recalled a case when all the officers and soldiers at the country-house except the sentinels got up late, about 12 o'clock noon.

"On several occasions we guessed that Poles had arrived at *Kozyi Gori* from the tenseness of the atmosphere at the country-house at the moment. . . .

"All the officers would leave the country-house and only a few guards would remain inside while the sergeant would constantly check up on the posts by telephone. . . ."

O.A. Mikhailova testified:

"In September of 1941 sounds of shooting frequently came from the forest of *Kozyi Gori*. At first I paid no attention to the trucks

that drove up to our country-house. Their sides and tops were covered. They were painted green and always accompanied by non-coms. Then I noticed that these machines never parked at our garage and were also never unloaded. These trucks arrived very frequently, particularly in September 1941.

"Among the non-coms, who always sat alongside of the drivers, I began to take note of a lanky fellow with a pale complexion and reddish hair. When these machines drove up to the country-house all the non-coms left as if by command for the bath house and stayed a long time there washing themselves, after which they drank heavily at the country-house.

"Once this tall, red-haired German on leaving the machine went to the kitchen and asked for water. While he was drinking a glassful I saw blood on the cuff of the right sleeve of his uniform."

O.A. Mikhailova and *Z.P. Konakhovskaya* on one occasion saw personally how two Polish prisoners of war, who had evidently fled from the Germans and had been recaptured, were led off to be shot.

Mikhailova testified as follows about this:

"Once *Konakhovskaya* and I were working as usual in the kitchen and we heard a noise not far from the country-house. On going out we saw two Polish war prisoners surrounded by German soldiers who were explaining something to Unteroffizier *Rose*; then Lt. Colonel *Arnes* walked up to *Rose* and said something to him. We slipped away to hide ourselves as we were afraid that *Rose* would beat us up for being so curious. We were noticed all the same and mechanic *Glinewski* at a sign from *Rose* chased us into the kitchen and took the Poles a short distance away from the country-house. In a few minutes we heard shots. The German soldiers and Unteroffizier *Rose* soon returned and engaged in lively conversation. *Konakhovskaya* and I, anxious to find out what the Germans had done with the arrested Poles, again went outside. *Arnes'* adjutant, who simultaneously with us had walked out of the country-house through the main entrance, asked *Rose* something in German to which the latter replied, likewise in German: 'Everything is in order.' I understood these words as the Germans used them often when talking among themselves. From all that happened I concluded that these two Poles had been shot."

Similar testimony was given on this question also by *Z.P. Konakhovskaya*.

Frightened by what was going on at the country-house, *Alexeyeva*, *Mikhailova* and *Konakhovskaya* decided to quit work at the country-house on some convenient pretext. They took advantage of the reduction in their "pay" from 9 marks to 3 marks a month at the beginning of January 1942, and, at the suggestion of *Mikhailova*, did not report for work. On the evening of the same day a car came for them and took them

to the country-house where they were kept in a cold shed under lock and key—*Mikhailova* for eight days, and *Alexeyeva* and *Konakhovskaya* for three days each as a punishment.

When their time was up they were all discharged.

While they were working at the country-house *Alexeyeva*, *Mikhailova* and *Konakhovskaya* were afraid to discuss among themselves the happenings at the country-house which they had observed. Only after they had been arrested and were serving their time in the cold shed did they exchange impressions, and then only during the night.

Mikhailova testified as follows during her examination on December 24, 1943:

"Here we for the first time spoke frankly about what was going on at the country-house. I told all I knew but it turned out that both *Konakhovskaya* and *Alexeyeva* also knew all these facts but, like me, were afraid to talk about them among ourselves. At this time I also learned that it was Polish war prisoners that the Germans were shooting at Kozyi Gori, since *Alexeyeva* told us that once, in the autumn of 1941, when she was returning from work she had personally seen how the Germans were driving a large group of Polish war prisoners into the Kozyi Gori forest and afterwards heard shooting at this spot."

Similar testimony on this score was also given by *Alexeyeva* and *Konakhovskaya*.

On comparing their observations *Alexeyeva*, *Mikhailova* and *Konakhovskaya* became firmly convinced that in August and September 1941 the Germans carried out mass shootings of Polish war prisoners at the country-house in Kozyi Gori.

The testimony of *Alexeyeva* is corroborated by that of her father, *Mikhail Alexeyev*, to whom she had told about her observations concerning the doings of the Germans at the country-house in the autumn of 1941, at the time when she was still working there.

"For a long time she did not tell me anything," testified *Mikhail Alexeyev*, she only complained when she got home that it was terrible to work at the country-house and that she did not know how to get out of it. When I asked her why she was scared she said that she very often heard shooting in the forest. Once when she came home she told me in confidence that the Germans were shooting Poles in the Kozyi Gori forest. After hearing my daughter out to the end I strictly warned her not to say anything about this to anyone else or the Germans would find it out and our whole family would suffer for it."

Other witnesses questioned by the Special Commission also testified to the fact that Polish war prisoners were brought to Kozyi Gori in batches of 20 to 30 under guard of five to seven German soldiers, namely: *P.G. Kisselev*, a farmer from a homestead in Kozyi Gori; *M.G. Krivozertsev*, a carpenter of the Krasny Bor Station in the Katyn Forest;

S.V. Ivanov, former station master at Gnezdovo in the Katyn Forest region; *I.V. Savvateyev*, assistant station master at the same station; *M.A. Alexeyev*, chairman of the collective farm of the village of Borok; *A.P. Ogloblin*, clergyman of the Kuprino church, and others.

These witnesses also heard firing in the Kozyi Gori forest.

Of particular importance in ascertaining what was going on at the country-house in Kozyi Gori during the autumn of 1941 is the testimony of *B.V. Bazilevsky*, Professor of Astronomy and Director of the Observatory at Smolensk.

Professor *Bazilevsky* was appointed against his will Assistant Burgo-master of the city of Smolensk by the Germans during the first days that they occupied the city. *B.G. Menshagin*, a lawyer, was appointed Burgo-master of the city by the Germans. This traitor, who subsequently left with them, enjoyed the particular confidence of the German Command, especially that of *von Schwetz*, the Commandant of Smolensk.

At the beginning of September 1941 *Bazilevsky* requested *Menshagin* to petition the Commandant *von Schwetz* for the release of pedagogue *Zhiglinsky* from War Prisoners' Camp No. 126. Complying with this request, *Menshagin* took the matter up with *von Schwetz* but subsequently informed *Bazilevsky* that his application could not be granted as, according to *von Schwetz*, "instructions had been received from Berlin to carry out unflinchingly the rigorous regime instituted for war prisoners, and to permit of no mitigation in this regard."

"I involuntarily rejoined," the witness *Bazilevsky* testified, "Is it possible for anything to be more rigorous than the regime existing at the camp?' *Menshagin* gave me a strange look and, bending over towards me, replied in an undertone: 'Yes, it is possible! The Russians at least will die themselves, but the Polish war prisoners it is proposed simply to exterminate.'

"What do you mean? How am I to take that?' I exclaimed.

"That is to be taken literally. Such are the instructions from Berlin," replied *Menshagin* asking me at the same time 'for the sake of all that is holy' not to mention a word about this to anyone. . . .

"About two weeks after the above-mentioned conversation with *Menshagin*, when I had another interview with him, I could not refrain from asking him: 'Anything new about the Poles?' *Menshagin* hesitated but finally replied: 'They are done for. *Von Schwetz* told me that they had been shot somewhere near Smolensk.'

"On seeing how upset I was *Menshagin* once more warned me that this matter must be kept a strict secret and then began to 'explain' to me the line which the Germans were following on this question. He said that the shooting of the Poles was a link in the general anti-Polish policy prosecuted by Germany, a policy which had entered a particularly acute stage with the signing of the Russian-Polish Agreement."

Bazilevsky likewise told the Special Commission about his talk with *Hirschfeld*, a Baltic German who spoke Russian well and was the *Sonderführer* of the 7th Department of the German Commandant's Office.

"*Hirschfeld* stated to me with cynical frankness that the noxiousness and inferiority of the Poles had been historically proved and that therefore a diminution of the population of Poland would serve to fertilize the soil and make it possible to enlarge Germany's living space. In this connection *Hirschfeld* boastfully related that in Poland there was no intelligentsia left at all as it had been hanged, shot or incarcerated in camps."

Bazilevsky's testimony is corroborated by that of witness *I.E. Yefimov*, a professor of physics, who was interrogated by the Special Commission and whom *Bazilevsky* had informed at once, in the autumn of 1941, of his conversation with *Menshagin*.

As documentary confirmation of the testimony of *Bazilevsky* and *Yefimov* there are the notes jotted down by *Menshagin* himself in his memorandum book.

This memorandum book, which contains 17 incomplete pages, was discovered in the files of the City Administration of Smolensk after the latter was freed by the Red Army.

The fact that the said memorandum book belonged to *Menshagin* and that the notes in it were in his handwriting is authenticated both by the testimony of *Bazilevsky*, who is well acquainted with *Menshagin's* handwriting, and by handwriting experts.

Judging by the dates contained in the memorandum book its contents refer to the period between the beginning of August 1941 and November of the same year.

Among various notes dealing with economic questions (fuel, electricity, trade, etc.) there are a number of entries which *Menshagin* obviously made to have a record of instructions received from the German Commandant's Office at Smolensk.

These notes illustrate with sufficient clarity the scope of questions dealt with by the City Administration as the body that was carrying out all the instructions of the German Commandant's Office.

The first three pages of the memorandum book contain a detailed description of the manner in which the Jewish "ghetto" was to be organized and of the systematic repressions to which the Jews were to be subjected.

Page 10, dated August 15, 1941, states:

"All fugitive Polish prisoners of war are to be detained and delivered to the Commandant's Office."

Page 15 (undated) contains the question:

"Are there any rumours circulating among the population about Polish war prisoners being shot in Koz. Gor. (for *Umnov*)."

From the first note it is clear, in the first place, that in August 15, 1941, the Polish prisoners of war were still in the region of Smolensk

and, in the second place, that they were being arrested by the German authorities.

The second note is evidence of the fact that the German Command, disconcerted by the possibility of rumours concerning the crime committed by it spreading to the civilian population, issued special instructions to check up on this supposition.

Umnov mentioned in the note was chief of the Russian police at Smolensk during the first months of its occupation.

The Origin of the German Trumped-up Charge

During the winter of 1942-43 the general military situation changed radically to the disadvantage of the Germans. The military might of the Soviet Union steadily increased, the unity between the U.S.S.R. and her Allies steadily gained in strength. The Germans decided to stage a frame-up—to lay the atrocities committed by them in the Katyn Forest at the door of the Soviet authorities. They calculated that thereby the Russians and Poles would be set at loggerheads and every trace of their heinous offense would be lost.

A.P. Ogloblin, clergyman of the village of Kuprino, Smolensk Region, testified:

"... After the Stalingrad events, when the Germans felt shaky, they got up this thing. There was talk among the population that 'the Germans are trying to patch up their affairs.'"

As part of the preparations for the engineering of the Katyn provocation, the Germans in the first place conducted a search for "witnesses" that would be amenable to persuasion and bribery or who under duress would deliver the evidence required by the Germans.

The attention of the Germans fell on *Parfen Gavrilovich Kisselev*, a peasant, born in 1870, who was living on his own homestead which was the nearest to the country-house in *Kozyi Gori*.

As early as the end of 1942 *Kisselev* was summoned to appear at the Gestapo where on threat of reprisals they demanded of him that he give fictitious evidence to the effect that he knew that in the spring of 1940 the Bolsheviks had shot Polish prisoners of war at the country-house of the Administration of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs in *Kozyi Gori*.

In this regard *Kisselev* testified:

"In the autumn of 1942 two policemen came to my house and told me to report at the Gestapo at the Gnezdovo Station. On the same day I went to the Gestapo which was located in a two-story building next door to the railway station. A German officer and an interpreter were in the room into which I was shown. The German officer began to interrogate me through the interpreter, asking me whether

I had been living a long time in these parts, what my occupation was and how I was materially situated.

"I told him that I had been living on a homestead in the vicinity of Kozyi Gori since 1907 and was working my own farm. As to my material situation I said I was having a hard time of it since I myself was greatly advanced in years and my sons were at the front.

"After a brief conversation on this subject the officer declared that according to information in the possession of the Gestapo, NKVD [Russian initials for the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs] officials had shot Polish officers in 1940 in the Kozyi Gori section of the Katyn Forest and asked me what evidence I could furnish on this question. I answered him that this was the first I had heard of the NKVD having shot anybody in Kozyi Gori and explained to the officer that this was scarcely possible as Kozyi Gori had been an absolutely open and much frequented locality and if anybody had been shot there the whole population of the neighbouring villages would have known about it.

"The officer replied that all the same I would have to give such testimony, insisting that what he had said had actually happened. I was promised a handsome reward for giving such testimony.

"I once more declared to the officer that I knew nothing about such shootings and that such a thing could not have happened before the war in our locality. The officer nevertheless stubbornly insisted that I give this false testimony.

"After my first conversation, about which I have already testified, I was not called again to the Gestapo until February 1943. I had since found out that other inhabitants of the neighbouring villages had also been called to the Gestapo and that a demand had likewise been made upon them to give similar testimony.

"At the Gestapo the same officer and interpreter that had questioned me the first time again demanded that I testify that I had witnessed the shooting of Polish officers by the NKVD in 1940. I once more told the Gestapo officer that this was a lie, since before the war I had heard nothing about any shootings, and that I would not give false testimony. But the interpreter would not listen to me, took a hand-written document from the table and read it to me. It said that I, *Kisselev*, living at a homestead in the district of Kozyi Gori, had personally seen how in 1940 NKVD people shot Polish officers. After reading this document the interpreter told me to sign it. I refused to do so. Then the interpreter coerced me to do so by heaping abuse and threats upon me. In the end he stated: 'Either you sign at once or I'll blow your brains out. Make your choice!'

"Intimidated by these threats I signed that document, thinking that the matter would rest at that.

"As a matter of fact, it turned out otherwise."

Subsequently, after the Germans had organized visits to the Katyn graves by various "delegations," *Kisselev* was compelled to speak before a "Polish delegation" that had arrived.

Kisselev, who had forgotten the contents of the protocol which he had signed at the Gestapo, became confused and refused to say anything.

The Gestapo then arrested *Kisselev* and beat him mercilessly for a month and a half until they secured a new promise from him "to speak in public."

On this score *Kisselev* testified:

"In the spring of 1943 the Germans announced that in the Kozyi Gori district of the Katyn Forest they had discovered the graves of Polish officers who, they claimed, had been shot by NKVD authorities in 1940.

"Soon after this the Gestapo interpreter came to my house and took me to the Kozyi Gori forest district.

"When we left the house and were alone the interpreter informed me that I was to tell the people in the forest everything exactly as it had been set forth in the document I had signed at the Gestapo.

"When we reached the forest I saw opened graves and a group of people I did not know. The interpreter told me that these were 'Polish delegates' who had come to inspect the graves.

"When we neared the graves the 'delegates' plied me with various questions in Russian relating to the shooting of the Poles. But as more than a month had elapsed since I had been called to the Gestapo I had forgotten everything that the document signed by me contained. I got mixed up and in the end said that I knew nothing about the shooting of Polish officers.

"The German officer became very angry and the interpreter roughly shoved me away from the 'delegation' and chased me off.

"The next morning, a car drove up to my house. There was a Gestapo officer in it who looked for me in the barnyard and told me that I was under arrest. He put me into the car and took me to the Smolensk prison. . . .

"After my arrest I was called out many times for examination but I was beaten more than questioned. The first time they summoned me I was badly beaten and abused and told that I had let them down. I was then sent back to my cell.

"When I was next called out they told me that I must publicly declare that I was an eye-witness of the shooting of the Polish officers by the Bolsheviks and that I would not be released from prison until the Gestapo was convinced that I would carry out my promise in good faith. I told the officer that I preferred to stay in jail to telling lies right to people's faces. After saying this I received a sound beating.

"There were several of these examinations accompanied by beat-

ings as a result of which I became very weak, my hearing became bad and I was unable to move my right hand.

"About a month after my arrest the German officer sent for me and told me: 'Now you see, *Kisselev*, what your obstinacy has led to. We have decided to execute you. Tomorrow morning we shall take you to the Katyn Forest and hang you.' I begged the officer to spare me, and argued with him that I was not fit for the part of an 'eye-witness' of the shooting, as I was not good at lying and would therefore again make a mess of it. But the officer insisted. In a few minutes soldiers came into the office and began beating me with rubber clubs.

"I could not stand this torture and so consented to tell in public a faked story of Poles having been shot by Bolsheviks. I was then released from prison on condition that I would speak before 'delegations' in the Katyn Forest whenever the Germans would require me to. . . .

"In every instance before I was taken to where the graves had been dug up in the forest, the interpreter would come to my house, call me into the yard, take me aside so that nobody could overhear us and for half an hour make me memorize whatever I was supposed to say about the alleged shooting of Polish officers in 1940 by the NKVD.

"I remember the interpreter telling me to say somewhat the following: 'I live on a homestead in the Kozyi Gori district not far from the NKVD country-house. In the spring of 1940 I saw how they were taking Poles into the forest where they were shot at night.' And I had to state without fail that 'this was the handiwork of the NKVD.'

"After I had committed to memory what the interpreter had told me he took me to the forest to the opened graves and compelled me to repeat all that in the presence of the 'delegations' that had arrived. My stories were strictly checked and the drift of them directed by the Gestapo interpreter.

"Once while addressing a 'delegation,' I was asked whether I had seen these Poles personally before they were shot by the Bolsheviks. I was not prepared for such a question and replied, as really was the case, that I had seen Polish war prisoners only up to the beginning of the war as they were working on the roads. The interpreter then pulled me roughly aside and ordered me home.

"I ask you to believe me that my conscience was torturing me all the time since I knew that in reality the Polish officers were shot by the Germans in 1941 but I had no other way out as I was constantly under the threat of a new arrest and of being tortured."

P. G. Kisselev's testimony concerning his being summoned by the Gestapo, his subsequent arrest and the beatings he received is corroborated by his wife *Axinya Kisseleva*, born 1870, who lives together

with him; by his son *Vassily Kisselev*, born 1911; and by his daughter-in-law *Maria Kisseleva*, born 1918, as well as by *Timofei Ivanovich Sergeyev*, born 1901, a railway foreman, who rented a room from *Kisselev* in his homestead.

The injuries received by *Kisselev* at the Gestapo (injury to the shoulder, and a considerable loss of hearing), are substantiated by a Medical Inspection certificate.

In their search for "witnesses" the Germans subsequently interested themselves in the personnel of the Gnezdovo Railway Station situated some two and a half kilometres from Kozyi Gori.

In the spring of 1940 Polish war prisoners were arriving at this station and the Germans evidently wanted to secure suitable evidence from the railway people. To that end the Germans in the spring of 1943 summoned to the Gestapo the former Gnezdovo station master, *S.V. Ivanov*, his assistant *I.V. Savvateyev*, and others.

S.V. Ivanov, born 1882, testified as follows concerning the circumstances under which he was summoned to the Gestapo:

". . . It was in March 1943. I was questioned by a German officer in the presence of an interpreter. After questioning me through the interpreter as to who I was and what my position was at Gnezdovo Station before the Germans occupied the district, the officer asked me whether I knew that in the spring of 1940 captive Polish officers arrived in big batches on several trains at Gnezdovo Station.

"I said that I knew of this.

"The officer then inquired whether I knew that in the same spring, soon after the arrival of the Polish officers, the Bolsheviks shot all of them in the Katyn Forest.

"I replied that I knew nothing about this and that this was impossible since all throughout 1940 and 1941, right down to the capture of Smolensk by the Germans, I came across these Polish officers who had arrived at Gnezdovo Station in the spring of 1940, having seen them at work on road construction.

"The officer then told me that if a German officer asserts that the Poles were shot by Bolsheviks that means that such was the case. 'Therefore,' continued the officer, 'you have nothing to fear and you need have no qualms of conscience about signing the protocol stating that the captive Polish officers were shot by Bolsheviks and that you were an eye-witness of it.'

"I replied that I was an old man, already 61 years of age, and did not want in my declining years to have such a sin on my conscience; that I could only testify that the Polish war prisoners had actually arrived at Gnezdovo Station in the spring of 1940.

"The German officer then tried to persuade me to give the evidence wanted, promising me that if I consented to do so he would promote me from watchman at a crossing to Gnezdovo station master,

the position I had held under the Soviet Government, and to see that I was materially well off.

"The interpreter emphasized that my testimony, as that of a former railway employee at the Gnezdovo Station, the nearest to the Katyn Forest, was of tremendous importance to the German Command and that I would have no cause for regret if I should so testify.

"I realized that I was in a very precarious situation and that a sad fate was in store for me. Nevertheless, I again refused to give the German officer false testimony.

"The officer then began to yell at me, threatening to beat me and have me shot, and stating that I did not know what was good for me. But I stuck to my decision.

"The interpreter then drew up a short protocol in German on one side of a sheet of paper and told me its contents in his own words.

"According to what the interpreter told me, this protocol merely stated that Polish war prisoners had arrived at Gnezdovo Station. When I asked that my testimony be recorded not only in German but also in Russian, the officer lost his temper, beat me with a rubber cane and drove me out of the room. . . ."

I. V. Savvateyev, born 1880, testified:

" . . . At the Gestapo I testified that in the spring of 1940 Polish war prisoners actually arrived at the Gnezdovo Station on several trains and that they continued their journey on trucks but that I did not know where they were going to. I likewise added that I met these Poles later on several times on the Moscow-Minsk highway engaged in repair work in small groups.

"The officer stated to me that I was mixing things up, that I could not possibly have met Poles on the highway as they had been shot by the Bolsheviki and he demanded that I testify to this effect. I flatly refused.

"After threatening and cajoling me for a long time the officer consulted with the interpreter in German on some point, after which the interpreter wrote a short protocol and gave it to me to sign, explaining that it set forth the gist of my depositions. I asked the interpreter to let me read the protocol myself but the latter cut me short with a curse and ordered me to sign at once and get out. I hesitated a moment, whereupon the interpreter seized a rubber club hanging on the wall and swung it over my head. After this I signed the protocol that he forced on me. The interpreter told me to get out and not to mention a word to anyone, as otherwise they would shoot me. . . ."

The search for "witnesses" was not confined to the persons named. The Germans made persistent efforts to locate former NKVD employees and compel them to give the false testimony they needed.

By chance they arrested *E.L. Ignatyuk*, who formerly worked at

a garage of the NKVD Administration of Smolensk Region. By means of threats and beatings the Germans tried to elicit from him statements to the effect that he was not a garage worker but a chauffeur and personally used to drive Polish war prisoners to the place of their execution.

On this question *E.L. Ignatyuk*, born 1903, testified:

"When I was questioned for the first time by Chief of Police *Alfertschik* he accused me of agitating against the German authorities and asked me what I was doing at the NKVD. I told him that I was a worker in the garage of the NKVD Administration of Smolensk Region. At this same examination *Alfertschik* tried to get a statement from me that I had not been a garage worker but a chauffeur of the NKVD Administration.

"Having failed to receive the testimony he wanted, *Alfertschik* became greatly exasperated. He and his adjutant, whom he called George, tied a rag round my head and mouth, took off my trousers, laid me on the table and began to beat me with rubber canes.

"I was then again called out for examination and *Alfertschik* now demanded that I should give false testimony to the effect that it was NKVD authorities that shot the Polish officers in the Katyn Forest in 1940. I was to claim that I knew about this because I was one of the chauffeurs who used to drive Polish officers to the Katyn Forest and was present when they were shot. Should I agree to give such testimony *Alfertschik* promised to release me from prison and give me a job on the police force where I would make a fine living, otherwise they would have me shot. . . ."

"My last examination at the police was conducted by Investigator *Alexandrov* who demanded the same false testimony from me concerning the shooting of the Polish officers as *Alfertschik* but at this examination I likewise refused to give such cooked-up testimony.

"After this examination I was again beaten up and taken to the Gestapo. . . ."

" . . . At the Gestapo, just as at the police, they demanded that I give false testimony about the supposed shooting of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest in 1940 by Soviet authorities of which I, as a chauffeur, was supposed to have knowledge."

The book published by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which the "Katyn Case" evidence manufactured by the Germans appeared, mentioned in addition to the above-named *P.G. Kisselev*, also the following "witnesses": *Godzov* (alias *Godunov*), born 1877; *Grigori Silverstov*, born 1891; *Ivan Andreyev*, born 1917; *Mikhail Zhigulev*, born 1915; *Ivan Krivozertsev*, born 1915; and *Matvei Zakharov*, born 1893.

A verification established that the first two of the above-named (*Godzov* and *Silverstov*) died in 1943 before Smolensk Region was liberated by the Red Army; the next three (*Andreyev*, *Zhigulev* and *Krivo-*

zertsev) left with the Germans or, probably, were forced to go with them, while the last-named, *Matvei Zakharov*, a former coupler at the Smolensk Railway Station, who under the Germans was an elder of the village of *Noviye Bateki*, was located and interrogated by the Special Commission.

Zakharov stated by what means the Germans obtained from him the false testimony concerning the "Katyn Case" that they were in need of.

"In the beginning of March 1943," *Zakharov* testified, "an employee of the Gnezdovo Gestapo whose name I do not know came to my apartment and told me that an officer had sent for me.

"When I arrived at the Gestapo the German officer said to me through an interpreter: 'We are aware that you were working as a coupler at the Central Smolensk Railway Station and you must testify that in 1940 cars carrying Polish war prisoners bound for Gnezdovo Station were passing through Smolensk, after which the Poles were shot in the forest at *Kozyi Gori*.'

"I stated in reply that cars with Poles did pass through Smolensk in 1940 on their way west but that I did not know what their destination was. . . .

"The officer told me that if I did not give such testimony willingly he would force me to do so. With this he took a rubber club and started to beat me with it. He then put me on a bench and the officer as well as the interpreter hit me. I do not remember how many blows they struck as I soon lost consciousness.

"When I came to the officer demanded that I sign a protocol of the examination, and I, breaking down as a result of the beatings and the repeated threat of being shot, gave false testimony and signed the protocol. After signing the protocol I was let out of the Gestapo. . . .

"A few days after my being summoned to the Gestapo, about the middle of March 1943, the interpreter came to my apartment to tell me that I was to go to the German general to confirm my testimony.

"When we came to the general he asked me whether I confirmed my testimony. I said I did, as I had been warned on the way by the interpreter that if I refused to confirm my testimony I would be given a taste of something worse than I had experienced the first time at the Gestapo.

"Afraid that the torture would be repeated I replied that I confirmed my testimony. Then the interpreter ordered me to raise my right hand and told me that I had now sworn to it and could go home."

It has been established that the Germans tried, by resorting to persuasion, threats and torture, to secure the testimony they were in need of also from other persons, viz., from *N.S. Kaverznev*, the former assistant superintendent of the Smolensk prison, *V.G. Kovalev*, a former employee of the same prison, and others.

Inasmuch as the witness hunt did not yield the necessary number, the Germans put up posters in Smolensk and the neighbouring villages, one of which, duly authenticated, is included among the materials of the Special Commission. These posters read as follows:

NOTICE
TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Who can supply any information on the massacre of captive Polish officers and clergymen by the Bolsheviks in 1940 in the *Kozyi Gori* Forest near the Gnezdovo-Katyn highway?

Who noticed auto-transport going from Gnezdovo to *Kozyi Gori*, or

who saw or heard the shootings?

Who knows inhabitants that can tell about this?

A reward will be given for any information.

Send all replies to the German police at Smolensk, 6 *Muzeinaya* Street, or to Gnezdovo to the German police, House No. 105, near the railway station.

Voss,

Lieutenant of Field Police

May 3, 1943.

The same notice was printed in the newspaper *Novy Put* (No. 35 [157], May 6, 1943), which the Germans published in Smolensk.

That the Germans promised a reward for the evidence they wanted concerning the "Katyn Case" was also testified to by the following witnesses who reside in the city of Smolensk and were questioned by the Special Commission: *O.E. Sokolova*, *E.A. Pushchina*, *I.I. Bychkov*, *G.T. Bondarev*, *E.P. Ustinov*, and many others.

Tampering with the Katyn Graves

While searching for "witnesses" the Germans at the same time proceeded to fix up the graves in the Katyn Forest in a manner that would answer their purpose: to remove from the clothing of the Polish war prisoners they had killed all documents bearing dates subsequent to April 1940, i.e., the time when, according to the fabricated German version, the Poles were shot by the Bolsheviks; to remove all other material evidence that might disprove this trumped-up version.

The investigation conducted by the Special Commission established that for this purpose the Germans employed about 500 Russian prisoners of war specially selected from War Prisoners' Camp No. 126.

The Special Commission is in possession of the testimony of numerous witnesses on this question.

The testimony of the physicians at the above camp is particularly noteworthy.

Dr. *A. T. Chizhov*, who worked in Camp No. 126 during the German occupation of Smolensk, testified:

"... Approximately in the beginning of March 1943 several groups, totalling 500 persons, were selected from the physically stronger prisoners at Smolensk War Prisoners' Camp No. 126 and were sent off, ostensibly to dig trenches. None of these prisoners ever returned to the camp."

Dr. *V. A. Khmyrov*, who also worked at that camp under the Germans, testified:

"I know that approximately during the second half of February or the beginning of March 1943 about 500 captive Red Army men were sent out of our camp but I do not know where. They were ostensibly sent to dig trenches, for which reason physically strong persons were picked. . . ."

Similar evidence was given by Medical Nurse *O. G. Lenkovskaya*, Medical Nurse *A. I. Timofeyeva*, and Witnesses *P. M. Orlova*, *E. G. Dobroserdova* and *V. S. Kochetkov*.

Where these 500 Soviet war prisoners from Camp No. 126 were actually sent to appears from the testimony of witness *A. M. Moskovskaya*.

Alexandra Mikhailovna Moskovskaya, who lived on the outskirts of the city of Smolensk and who during the occupation worked in the kitchen of one of the German military units, submitted a statement on October 5, 1943 to the Extraordinary Commission for the Investigation of the Atrocities of the German Invaders in which she set forth that she has some important testimony to give and requested that she be called for that purpose.

On being called she told the Special Commission that in March 1943, before leaving for work, she went to get some wood in her woodshed which was located in the yard near the bank of the Dnieper. On entering the shed she found an unknown person inside who proved to be a Russian war prisoner.

A. M. Moskovskaya, born 1922, testified:

"... From my conversation with him I learned the following:

"His surname was *Yegorov*, his first name *Nikolai*, and he was from Leningrad. He had been at German War Prisoners' Camp No. 126 ever since the end of 1941. At the beginning of March 1943 he was sent from the camp to the Katyn Forest together with a column of war prisoners consisting of several hundred men. There they, including *Yegorov*, were made to dig up graves which contained corpses in the uniforms of Polish officers. They had to drag these corpses out of pits and take documents, letters and photographs and all other things

out of their pockets. The Germans had given strict orders not to leave anything in the pockets of the dead bodies. Two war prisoners were shot because after they had searched certain corpses a German officer still found some papers on them.

"The articles, documents and letters removed from the clothing in which the corpses were dressed were examined by German officers who afterwards made the prisoners put some of the papers back into the pockets of the corpses while the rest were thrown on the heap of other articles and documents that had been taken out and these were afterwards burned.

"Besides, the Germans made them put certain papers into the pockets of the dead Polish officers, which papers the Germans took from boxes or trunks (I do not remember exactly which) that they had brought with them.

"All the war prisoners lived under terrible conditions in the Katyn Forest. They lived in the open and were heavily guarded. . . .

"At the beginning of April 1943 all the work contemplated by the Germans was apparently finished as for three days none of the war prisoners were put to work. . . .

"Suddenly one night all of them without exception were ordered to get up and were taken somewhere. The guard was increased. *Yegorov* suspected foul play and began to pay close attention to all that was going on. They marched on for three or four hours in an unknown direction. They stopped at a clearing in the forest, near a pit. He saw how a batch of war prisoners was being detached from the main body of the men and driven toward the pit, after which they were shot.

"The war prisoners became highly agitated, yelled and a general commotion ensued. Not far from *Yegorov* some of the war prisoners hurled themselves on some of the guards and other guards ran up to that spot. *Yegorov* took advantage of the momentary confusion and made a dash into the dark forest where he still heard cries and shooting behind him.

"After this terrible account, which left an indelible impression on my mind, I took great pity on *Yegorov* and asked him to come into my room to warm up and hide at my house until he felt stronger. But *Yegorov* did not consent. . . . He said that he would leave that very night no matter what happened and would try to make his way through the line of the front and get back to the Red Army.

"But that night *Yegorov* did not leave. In the morning when I went to find out he was in the shed. He explained that during the night he tried to leave but after making about 50 steps he felt so weak that he was obliged to return. He was feeling the effects of the long exhaustion in the camp and his going without food for the last few days. We decided that he should stay with me another day or two to pick up a bit. I gave *Yegorov* something to eat and left for my job.

"When I returned home in the evening my neighbours—*Maria Ivanovna Baranova* and *Ekaterina Viktorovna Kabanovskaya*—informed me that during the day German policemen had made a raid and found a captive Red Army man in my shed whom they took along with them."

As a result of the discovery of the prisoner of war *Yegorov* in *Moskovskaya's* shed she was summoned to the Gestapo where she was charged with sheltering a war prisoner.

When examined at the Gestapo *Moskovskaya* stubbornly denied that she had had anything to do with this war prisoner and asserted that she had had no knowledge of his having been in the shed belonging to her. As they obtained no confession from *Moskovskaya* and evidently because the war prisoner *Yegorov* did not betray her, she was released by the Gestapo.

Yegorov likewise told *Moskovskaya* that some of the war prisoners who were working in the Katyn Forest were not only exhuming corpses but also bringing corpses to the Katyn Forest from other places. The dead bodies which they brought were thrown into the pits together with the corpses which they had dug out before.

The fact that the dead bodies of people who had been shot by the Germans elsewhere were brought to the Katyn graves in great numbers is likewise confirmed by the testimony of Mechanical Engineer *P.F. Sukhachev*.

P.F. Sukhachev, born 1912, a mechanical engineer employed by the Chief Russian Grain Administration, who under the Germans was working as a mechanic at the Smolensk City Mill, handed in a request on October 8, 1943, to be summoned by the Special Commission.

On being summoned by the latter he testified:

"... Once during the second half of March 1943, while at the mill, I fell to talking with a German chauffeur who knew a bit of Russian. On learning from him that he was taking flour to the village of *Savenki* for a military unit and would return next day to Smolensk, I asked him to take me along with him to enable me to buy some butter in the village. In doing so I took into account that if I went in a German car I took no risk of being detained at the pass control. The German chauffeur agreed to do so for pay. The same day, after 9 p.m., we took the Smolensk-Vitebsk highway. There were two of us in the car—I and the German chauffeur. It was a bright moonlit night. However, a fog that hung over the road lowered the visibility somewhat. At approximately 22 or 23 kilometres from Smolensk when we came to that part of the road where a small bridge had been destroyed, we found a detour the grade of which was rather steep. We were already making the descent from the highway to the detour when a truck driving in the opposite direction suddenly came in sight out of the fog. Either because our brakes were

out of commission or because our chauffeur was inexperienced, we were unable to slow our car down and, since the detour was rather narrow, we collided with the approaching truck. The collision was only a slight one as the chauffeur of the oncoming truck managed to swerve to one side as a result of which both trucks were side-swiped. However, the right wheel of the oncoming truck ran into a ditch and it tilted over, its side resting against the incline. Our machine remained on its wheels. The chauffeur and I immediately jumped out and ran up to the overturned truck. I was struck by the strong odour of corpses which evidently was coming from the truck. On approaching more closely I saw that the truck was carrying a full load covered by a canvas cloth made fast by ropes. The ropes had snapped from the collision and part of the load had spilt out on the incline. It was a frightful load—dead bodies dressed in military uniforms.

"As much as I remember, about six or seven people were standing near the truck. One of them was a German chauffeur and then there were two Germans armed with tommy guns. The rest were Russian war prisoners, as they spoke Russian and were dressed accordingly.

"The Germans heaped abuse on my chauffeur and then made attempts to set their machine on its wheels again. In about two minutes two more trucks drove up to the scene of the accident and stopped. From these machines a group of Germans and of Russian war prisoners, altogether about 10 men, came toward us. By a joint effort we all began to raise the truck. Taking advantage of a favourable opportunity I asked one of the Russian war prisoners on the quiet: 'What's going on?' The latter replied, also quietly: 'I don't know how many nights already we've been taking corpses to the Katyn Forest.'

"Before the upset machine had been righted a German non-com came up to me and my chauffeur and ordered us to drive on immediately. As our machine had not suffered any serious damage, the chauffeur backed her up sideways a bit, got onto the highway and we drove off.

"As we passed the two machines that had come up later on and which also were covered with canvas, I again smelt that terrible odour of corpses."

Sukhachev's testimony is substantiated by that of *Vladimir Afanasievich Yegorov* who during the occupation was serving as a policeman.

Yegorov testified that it was part of his duty to guard the bridge at the intersection of the Moscow-Minsk and Smolensk-Vitebsk highways and that several times at night, at the end of March and very early in April 1943, he noticed big canvas-covered trucks passing in the direction of Smolensk and that a strong odour of corpses came from these trucks. Several people were sitting alongside the driver and others in the back of the cars, on top of the canvas. Some of these were armed and undoubtedly were Germans.

Yegorov reported his observations to the superintendent of the Police

Station of the village of Arkhipovka, *Kuzma Demyanovich Golovnev*, who advised him "to keep his mouth shut" and added: "That is no concern of ours, let's not butt into the business of the Germans."

Evidence that the Germans were transporting corpses on trucks to the Katyn Forest was also given by *Flor Maximovich Yakovlev-Sokolov*, born 1896, who had been a supply agent of the Smolensk Restaurant Trust, and under the Germans was superintendent of the Katyn Police Station.

He testified that on one occasion, in the beginning of April 1943, he had seen himself four canvas-covered trucks enter the Katyn Forest from the highway and that several men armed with tommy guns and rifles were inside. A pungent odour of dead bodies came from these machines.

It may clearly be inferred from the testimony cited above that the Germans shot Poles also in other localities. In bringing their dead bodies to the Katyn Forest they pursued a triple purpose: first, to wipe out the traces of their atrocities; second, to place the blame for their crimes at the door of the Soviet Government; third, to increase the number of "victims of the Bolsheviks" in the Katyn Forest graves.

"Excursions" to the Katyn Graves

In April 1943, when all the preparatory work on the graves in the Katyn Forest had been finished, the German occupants launched a big agitational campaign in the press and over the radio in which they attempted to ascribe to the Soviet Government the atrocities which they themselves had committed against the Polish war prisoners. As one of the features of this provocative agitation, the Germans organized visits of inhabitants of Smolensk and its vicinity and of "delegations" from German-occupied and German-vassal countries to the Katyn graves.

The Special Commission interrogated a number of witnesses who took part in these "excursions" to the Katyn graves.

Witness Dr. *K. P. Zubkov*, a specialist in morbid anatomy, who had served as a forensic medical expert in Smolensk, testified before the Special Commission:

"... The clothing of the corpses, particularly their greatcoats, boots and straps, were rather well preserved. There was no pronounced rust on the metal parts of their accoutrement—belt buckles, buttons, hooks and eyes, hob nails on their boots and other items, and in some instances the metallic lustre had remained here and there. The colour of the bodily tissues of the corpses open to inspection—those of the face, the neck, and the hands—was mostly a dirty green and in some cases a dirty brown, but there was no complete destruction of tissue, no complete putrefaction. In individual cases

bared tendons whitish in colour and parts of muscles were visible. While I was at the site of the exhumations, people were working at the bottom of a big pit, sorting and taking out the corpses. For this purpose they used shovels and other tools and also took hold of the dead bodies with their hands, dragging them along by their hands, feet and clothing from one place to another. Nowhere did I notice any corpses falling to pieces or parts of them coming off.

"Taking all the above into account I reached the conclusion that the period during which the dead bodies had been interred in the ground was not three years, as the Germans asserted, but considerably less. Knowing that in mass graves putrefaction proceeds faster than in individual graves, particularly when there are no coffins, I concluded that the mass shooting of the Poles took place about a year and a half ago, in the autumn of 1941 or possibly in the spring of 1942. As a result of my visit to the place of exhumation I am thoroughly convinced that this monstrous deed was perpetrated by the Germans."

Many other witnesses who took part in the "excursions" to the Katyn graves testified before the Special Commission that the clothing of the dead bodies, the metallic parts and the footwear as well as the corpses themselves were well preserved. Among them were the following witnesses: *I. Z. Kutsev*, superintendent of the Smolensk water works; *E. N. Vetрова*, a Katyn school teacher; *N. G. Shchedrova*, a telephone operator at the Smolensk exchange; *M. A. Alexeyev*, a resident of the village of Borok; *N. G. Krivozertsev*, a resident of the village of Noviye Bateki; *I. V. Savvateyev*, assistant station master at the Gnezdovo Railway Station; *E. A. Pushchina*, from Smolensk; Dr. *T. A. Sidoruk*, of the 2nd Smolensk hospital and Dr. *P. M. Kesarev*, of the same hospital.

Attempts of the Germans to Wipe out the Traces of Their Misdeeds

The "excursions" organized by the Germans did not achieve their purpose. All those who visited the graves became convinced that what they beheld was the crudest of frame-ups, an obvious act of provocation on the part of the German fascists. The German authorities therefore took measures to compel all doubters to maintain silence.

The Special Commission is in possession of the testimony of a number of witnesses who related how the German authorities persecuted those who doubted or did not believe this trumped-up charge. They were dismissed from their jobs, arrested and threatened with the firing squad. The Commission established two cases of persons shot because of their inability "to hold their tongues." This punishment was inflicted on the former German policeman *Zagainov* and upon *A. M. Yegorov*, both of whom had worked at the exhumation of the graves in the Katyn Forest.

The following persons, among others, testified to persecution by the Germans of persons who had expressed their doubts after visiting the graves in the Katyn Forest: *M.S. Zubareva*, charwoman of Pharmacy No. 1 in Smolensk; *V.F. Kozlova*, assistant public health officer of the Stalin District Public Health Department of Smolensk.

F.M. Yakovlev-Sokolov, former superintendent of the Katyn Police Station, testified:

"A situation arose which caused serious alarm in the German Commandant's Office, so that the local police authorities were urgently instructed to put a stop at any price to all harmful talk and to arrest all persons who expressed disbelief in the 'Katyn Case.'

"I, as the superintendent of a police station, was given such instructions at the end of May 1943 by the German Commandant of the village of Katyn, Oberleutnant *Braung*, and, at the beginning of June, by *Kamenetsky*, the superintendent of the Smolensk district police.

"I called a conference of the police officers of my precinct to give them the necessary instructions. At this conference I issued orders to apprehend and bring in everyone who should express doubt about and question the likeliness of the Polish war prisoners having been shot by the Bolsheviks, which was what the Germans claimed.

"In carrying out these instructions of the German authorities I actually did violence to my own conscience as I was convinced myself that the 'Katyn Case' had been engineered by the Germans for the purpose of provocation. I became fully convinced of this when I personally attended one of the 'excursions' to the Katyn Forest."

Realizing that the "excursions" of the local population to the Katyn graves did not have the desired effect, the German authorities of occupation, in the summer of 1943, ordered these graves to be shovelled in.

Before they retreated from Smolensk the German occupation authorities made hasty attempts to obliterate the traces of their crimes. The country-house that had been occupied by the "Headquarters of the 537th Construction Battalion" was burnt down to the ground. The Germans tried to locate the three girls—*Alexeyeva*, *Mikhailova* and *Konakhovskaya*—in the village of Borok to take them away with them or perhaps even to put them to death. The Germans also made a search for their main "witness," *P.G. Kisselev*, but the latter managed to hide together with his family. The Germans burnt his house.

The Germans also tried to seize other "witnesses"—*S. V. Ivanov*, the former Gnezdovo station master, and *I. V. Savvateyev*, his former assistant; also *M.D. Zakharov*, the former coupler at the Smolensk Station.

The last few days before their retreat from Smolensk the German fascist invaders conducted a search for Professors *Bazilevsky* and *Yefi-*

mov. Both managed to escape deportation or death solely because they promptly went into hiding.

However, the German fascist invaders did not succeed in concealing all traces of their crimes.

The examination, by the medical experts, of the exhumed bodies proves irrefutably that the Polish war prisoners were shot by the Germans themselves.

The following is the text of the Report of the medical experts.

Report of the Medical Experts

By direction of the Special Commission for the Establishment and Investigation of the Circumstances of the Shooting of the Polish Officers, Prisoners of War, in the Katyn Forest by the German Fascist Invaders, the Commission of Medical Experts, composed of:

V.I. Prozorovsky, Chief Medical Expert of the People's Commissariat of Public Health of the U.S.S.R., and Director of the State Institute of Medical Jurisprudence of the People's Commissariat of Public Health of the U.S.S.R.;

V.M. Smolyaninov, Doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor of Medical Jurisprudence at the Second Moscow State Medical Institute;

D.N. Vyropayev, Doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor of Morbid Anatomy;

P.S. Semenovskiy, Doctor of Medicine, Senior Research Worker, Thanatological Department of the State Institute of Medical Jurisprudence of the People's Commissariat of Public Health of the U.S.S.R.;

M.D. Shvaikova, Docent, Senior Research Worker, Chemical Department of the State Institute of Medical Jurisprudence of the People's Commissariat of Public Health of the U.S.S.R.;

with the participation of:

Major of Medical Service *Nikolsky*, Chief Medical Expert of the Western Front;

Captain of Medical Service *Busoyedov*, Medical Expert of the X Army;

Major of Medical Service *Subbotin*, Head of Laboratory 92 of Morbid Anatomy;

Major of Medical Service *Ogloblin*;

Senior Lieutenant of Medical Service *Sadykov*, medical specialist; and Senior Lieutenant of Medical Service *Pushkareva*—

during the period of January 16 to January 23, 1944 conducted an exhumation and medical examination of the corpses of the Polish prisoners of war buried in the graves on the territory of Kozyi Gori in the Katyn Forest, about 15 kilometres from the city of Smolensk. The corpses of the Polish prisoners of war had been buried in a common grave the dimensions of which were approximately 60×60×3 metres

and also in a separate grave the dimensions of which were approximately 7×6×3.5 metres. Nine hundred and twenty-five corpses were exhumed from the graves and examined.

The exhumation and medical examination of the corpses was conducted for the purpose of establishing:

- a) the identity of the deceased;
- b) the cause of death;
- c) the duration of interment.

Particulars of the case: see materials of the Special Commission.

Findings of fact: see Record of the medical examinations of the corpses.

Findings

On the basis of the results of the medical examinations of the corpses, the Commission of Medical Experts arrived at the following conclusion:

On opening the graves and removing the corpses from them the following was established:

a) among the mass of corpses of Polish war prisoners some were in civilian dress, but their number is insignificant in comparison with the total number of corpses examined (2 out of a total of 925); the boots on the corpses were of a military pattern;

b) the clothing of the corpses of the war prisoners evidenced that they were officers, and, in part, privates of the Polish army;

c) the cuts in the pockets and boots and the fact that the pockets were turned inside out and were torn, as disclosed by the inspection of the clothing, prove that practically every piece of clothing on every corpse (greatcoat, trousers, etc.) bears indications that the dead bodies were searched;

d) in some instances the inspection of the clothing revealed that the pockets were whole. In these pockets, as well as in the cut and torn pockets, under the uniform lining, in the belts of the trousers, in the foot wrappings and in socks there were found pieces of newspapers, pamphlets, prayer books, postal stamps, postal cards, letters, receipts, notes and other documentary material as well as valuables (a gold bar, American gold coins), pipes, penknives, cigarette paper, handkerchiefs, etc.;

e) some of these documentary materials disclosed, even upon simple inspection, dates ranging from November 12, 1940 to June 20, 1941;

f) the fabric of the clothing, especially of the greatcoats, tunics, trousers and top shirts, has been well preserved and can be torn with the hands only with great difficulty;

g) a very small number of the corpses (20 out of 925) had their hands tied behind their backs with white twisted cord.

The state of the clothing on the corpses, *viz.*, the fact that the tunics, shirts, belts, trousers and drawers were buttoned, and that they had top boots or shoes on, that they had scarves and neckties around their necks, that the suspenders were buttoned on and that the shirts put inside the trousers, is evidence that no previous external inspection of the trunks and extremities of the corpses had been made.

The integrity of the integuments of the head and the absence therein, as well as in the integuments of the chest and abdomen (with the exception of 3 cases out of 925) of any cuts, incisions or other signs of experts having worked on them, point to the fact that no medical examination of the corpses had been made, to judge by the corpses exhumed by the Commission of Medical Experts.

The external and internal examination of 925 corpses warrants the assertion that they had firearm wounds in the head and neck and, in four cases, in addition, injuries to the bones of the cranial vault inflicted by a blunt, hard, heavy object. Besides, in a small number of cases the abdomen was found to have been injured and the head wounded at the same time.

The apertures of entry of the firearm wounds as a rule were single, in rare cases double, and located in the occipital region near the occipital protuberance, the foramen magnum or on its margin. In a small number of cases firearm apertures of entry were found on the posterior surface of the neck, corresponding to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd cervical vertebrae.

Apertures of exit were discovered most frequently in the frontal region, more rarely in the parietal and temporal regions, and also in the face and neck. In 27 cases the firearm wounds had no exit apertures, and at the end of the bullet tract, under the soft parts of the skull, in its bones, in the meninges and in the matter of the brain there were found deformed, slightly deformed and wholly undeformed bullets used in firing from sub-machine guns, mostly calibre 7.65 mm.

The sizes of the apertures of entry in the occipital bone warrant the conclusion that firearms of two calibres were used in the executions: in the vast majority of cases less than 8 mm., or, more exactly, 7.65 mm. or less; in the minority of cases more than 8 mm., or, more exactly, 9 mm.

The type of cranial bone fissures and the discovery in several cases of traces of powder at the apertures of entry denote that the shots were fired point-blank or almost point-blank.

The relative position of the apertures of entry and exit shows that the shots were fired from behind while the head was bent forward. Thus the bullet tract passed through vital parts of the brain or near them and death was caused by a destruction of brain tissue.

The injuries discovered on the cranial vault bones and inflicted by a blunt, hard and heavy object, which were coincident with the firearm wounds in the head, did not cause death in themselves.

The medical examination of the corpses, made on January 16 to 23,

1944, evidences the fact that none of the corpses are in a state of putrescence or disintegration and all the 925 corpses are still in some state of preservation—in the initial stage of dehydration, (which most frequently and clearly was evident in the region of the chest and abdomen, and sometimes also in the extremities; in the initial stage of adipocere formation; in an advanced stage of adipocere formation in the case of corpses taken from the bottom of the graves); in a combined state of tissue dehydration and adipocere formation.

It is particularly noteworthy that the muscles of the trunk and the extremities completely retained their macroscopic structure and their almost normal colour; the thoracic and abdominal viscera have preserved their configuration, quite in a number of cases the cardiac muscle, on section, had a clearly defined structure and its characteristic colour while the brain showed its characteristic structural details with a sharp boundary between the grey and the white matter. In addition to the macroscopic examination of the tissues and the viscera, the medical experts removed the material required for the subsequent microscopic and chemical research work in the laboratory.

The properties of the soil at the place of exhumation affected to a certain extent the preservation of the tissues and organs of the corpses.

As the graves were dug up and the corpses taken out and they remained in the open air, they were acted upon by the warmth and moisture of the spring and summer of 1943. This might have accelerated the process of decomposition.

However, the degree of dehydration of the corpses and of adipocere formation, and the state of particularly good preservation of the muscles and viscera as well as of the clothing warrant the assertion that the corpses had not been in the soil for a long time.

On comparing the state of the corpses in the graves on the Kozyi Gori territory with the state of the corpses in other places of burial in the city of Smolensk and its immediate vicinity—in Gedeonovka, Magalenshchina, Readovka, Camp No. 126, Krasny Bor, etc. (see report of the medical experts dated October 22, 1943), it must be admitted that the corpses of the Polish prisoners of war were buried on the Kozyi Gori territory about two years ago. This is fully substantiated by the discovery, in the clothing of the corpses, of documents which preclude any earlier date of burial (see clause (d) of Article 36 and the list of documents).

On the basis of the results of the examinations and the data they supplied the Commission of Medical Experts

considers it an established fact that the officers and, in part, privates of the Polish army who had been taken prisoner of war were put to death by shooting;

it finds that these executions took place about two years ago, *i.e.*, between September and December of 1941;

it views the circumstance that the Commission of Medical Experts discovered in the clothing of the corpses valuable and documentary material dated 1941 as proof of the fact that the German fascist authorities which searched these corpses in the spring and summer of 1943 did not conduct this search carefully, and regards the discovered documentary materials as evidence of the fact that the executions took place after June 1941;

it establishes the fact that in 1943 the Germans performed autopsies on an extremely small number of dead bodies of executed Polish war prisoners;

it notes the complete identity of method in the shooting of the Polish war prisoners and in the shooting of Soviet civilians and Soviet war prisoners so widely practiced by the German fascist authorities on the temporarily occupied territory of the U.S.S.R., including the cities of Smolensk, Orel, Kharkov, Krasnodar and Voronezh.

V. I. PROZOROVSKY

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City of Smolensk, January 24, 1944

Documentary Material Found on the Corpses

The time of the shooting by the Germans of the captive Polish officers (autumn of 1941 and not spring of 1940, as the Germans claim) is established not only by the data specified in the Report of the medical experts but also by the documentary material discovered on the opening of the graves which refers not only to the second half of 1940 but also to the spring and summer (March to June) of 1941.

Of the documentary materials discovered by the medical experts the following are particularly noteworthy:

1. On corpse No. 92:

A letter from Warsaw addressed to the Red Cross, Central Bureau of War Prisoners, 12 Kuibyshev Street, Moscow. The letter was written in Russian. In this letter *Zofja Zigon* asked to be informed of the whereabouts of her husband *Tomasz Zigon*. The letter is dated Sept. 12, '40. The envelope bears the German post-mark "Warschau, IX-40," and the post-mark "Moskva, post office, 9th delivery department, 28.IX-40" and the following decision in red ink in Russian: "Locate the camp and forward for delivery. Nov. 15, '40." (Signature illegible.)

2. On corpse No. 4:

Postal card from Tarnopol bearing registry No. 0112 and post-marked "Tarnopol, Nov. 12, '40."

The handwritten text and address are discoloured.

3. On corpse No. 101:

Receipt No. 10293 dated Dec. 19, 1939, issued by the Kozelsk Camp and stating that a gold watch has been received of *Edward Adamovich Lewandowski*. The reverse side of the receipt contains a notation dated March 14, 1941, to the effect that this watch had been sold to the Yuvelirtorg [Jewelry Stores Trust].

4. On corpse No. 46:

Receipt (number illegible) issued on Dec. 16, 1939, by the Starobelsk Camp and stating that a gold watch has been received of *Vladimir Rudolfovich Araszkievich*. On the reverse side of the receipt there is a notation dated March 25, 1941, to the effect that the watch had been sold to the Yuvelirtorg.

5. On corpse No. 71:

A paper icon representing Christ, found in a Catholic prayer book between pages 144 and 145. On the reverse side of the icon there is

an inscription of which the signature, "Jadwinia," and the date, "April 4, 1941," are legible.

6. On corpse No. 46:

Receipt dated April 6, 1941, issued by Camp No. 1-SD stating that the sum of 225 rubles had been received of *Araszkievich*.

7. On the same corpse:

Receipt dated May 5, 1941, issued by Camp No. 1-SD to the effect that 102 rubles had been received of *Araszkievich*.

8. On corpse No. 101:

Receipt dated May 18, 1941, issued by Camp No. 1-SD stating that 175 rubles were received of *E. Lewandowski*.

9. On corpse No. 53:

A postal card in Polish not sent off and bearing the following address: *Irena Kuczinska, Bagatela 15, apt. 47, Warsaw*. It was dated June 20, 1941, Sender: *Stanislaw Kuczinski*.

General Conclusions

From all the materials at the disposal of the Special Commission, viz., the testimony of over 100 witnesses questioned by it, the data furnished by the medical experts and the documentary and other material proof taken from the graves in the Katyn Forest, the following incontrovertible conclusions must be drawn:

1. The Polish war prisoners in the three camps west of Smolensk, who had engaged in road construction up to the outbreak of the war, remained there, after the German invaders broke into Smolensk, up to and including September 1941;

2. The Polish war prisoners from the above-mentioned camps were shot in masses by the German occupation authorities in the Katyn Forest in the autumn of 1941;

3. The mass shootings of the Polish prisoners of war in the Katyn Forest were carried out by a German military institution which concealed its identity under the assumed name of "Headquarters of the 537th Construction Battalion," and was headed by Lt. Colonel *Arnes*, and by Oberleutnant *Rext* and Lieutenant *Hott*, his assistants;

4. Due to the fact that in the beginning of 1943 the general military and political situation was taking a turn for the worse for Germany, the German occupation authorities, for provocation purposes, took measures calculated to ascribe the atrocities which they themselves had committed to the Soviet authorities, on the assumption that they would cause strife between the Russians and the Poles;

5. For this purpose

a) the German fascist invaders tried, by means of persuasion, attempts at bribery, intimidation and barbarous tortures, to find "witnesses" among the Soviet citizenry from whom they sought to obtain false testimony to the effect that the Polish prisoners of war had been shot by the Soviet authorities in the spring of 1940;

b) in the spring of 1943 the German occupation authorities brought corpses of Polish war prisoners who had been shot by them from other localities to the Katyn Forest where they placed them in opened graves with the idea of hiding the traces of their own misdeeds and of increasing the number of "victims of the Bolsheviks" in the Katyn Forest;

c) in the preparations for their act of provocation the German occupation authorities employed about 500 Russian prisoners of war to dig up the graves in the Katyn Forest and extract from them incriminating documents and other material evidence, after the performance of which work these Russian war prisoners were shot by the Germans.

6. The data furnished by the medical experts establish beyond all doubt:

a) that the shooting took place in the autumn of 1941;

b) that in shooting the Polish war prisoners the German hangmen used the same method of firing from sub-machine guns into the back part of the head as was used in their massacres of Soviet citizens elsewhere, particularly in the cities of Orel, Voronezh, Krasnodar and Smolensk itself;

7. The conclusions drawn from the testimony of the witnesses and medical experts concerning the shooting of Polish war prisoners by the Germans in the autumn of 1941 are fully corroborated by the material evidence and the documents taken from the Katyn graves;

8. In shooting the Polish war prisoners in the Katyn Forest the German fascist invaders were consistently carrying out their policy of the physical destruction of the Slav peoples.

Academician N. N. BURDENKO
Chairman of the Special Commission and Member of the
Extraordinary State Commission;

MEMBERS:

Academician ALEXEI TOLSTOY
Member of the Extraordinary State Commission;
Metropolitan NIKOLAI
Member of the Extraordinary State Commission;

Lieutenant-General A. S. GUNDOROV
Chairman of the All-Slav Committee;

S. A. KOLESNIKOV
Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Union of
Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies;

Academician V. P. POTEKIN
People's Commissar of Education of the R.S.F.S.R.;

Colonel-General E. I. SMIRNOV
Chief of the Main Medical Service Administration of the
Red Army;

R. E. MELNIKOV
Chairman of the Smolensk Regional Executive Committee.

City of Smolensk,
January 24, 1944.

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13

С О О Б Щ Е Н И Е

Специальной комиссии по установлению и расследованию обстоятельств расстрела немецко-фашистскими захватчиками в Катынском лесу военнопленных польских офицеров.

На английском языке.

Цена 75 коп.