

“Contested Killers, Contested Memories: Katyn”

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ABSTRACT

This thesis project examines the collective memory of Katyń from the midst of the Second World War to the late twentieth century. Katyń serves as the collective name for the series of mass executions of over 20,000 Polish soldiers, army officers, policemen, and various members of the Polish intelligentsia by the NKVD that took place throughout remote sites in the Soviet Union during the early months of the Second World War. From the discovery of the mass graves in the Katyń Forest by German forces in 1943, Katyń has been shrouded in contentions, secrecy, and processes of attempts to unveil the historical truth of the perpetrators of the mass executions. For nearly five decades, many scholars of Katyń argue that the “truth” of the mass executions remained hidden. While this claim is not entirely incorrect as the Soviet and Polish states’ sponsored versions of the truth of the crime’s perpetrators appeared “hidden,” this school of thought is disingenuous and problematic in its approach in examining contemporaries’ understanding and perceptions of Katyń throughout the latter portion of the twentieth century. This thesis project argues that to better understand what Katyń was and has been, we must examine the representations of Katyń from the discovery of the mass graves by German forces in the Katyń Forest in 1943 to the release of Katyń documents by the Soviet Union in 1990. This thesis project examines selected representations of Katyń made by the German and Soviet governments during the Second World War, Polish émigrés living within the United States and Great Britain during the post-war period, and Poles living within the Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa (PRL) and present-day Poland. Katyń has represented a myriad of meanings in the collective memories of states and societies throughout time. The understanding, representations, “truth,” and narratives surrounding Katyń have undoubtedly been influenced by the politics of memory at every stage of the Katyń story.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: The “Discovery” of Katyń in 1943	14
Chapter Three: Representations of Katyń by Polish Émigrés	26
Chapter Four: Representations of Katyń by Poles Living within the PRL	48
Chapter Five: Conclusion, What Was Katyń and What Has It Been Since 1990?	70
List of References	78
Appendix	86
Vita	91

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Katyń

In present-day Polish collective memory, the Second World War is regarded as the most traumatic event in modern Polish history.¹ Poland experienced catastrophic loss, devastation, mass death, and suffering as a result of the Second World War. Throughout the near six-year German and Soviet occupations of the country, over six million Poles were killed, either as a direct initiative committed by occupying forces or as a result of warfare. During the Nazi state sponsored genocide known as the Holocaust, approximately three million Jewish Poles, ninety percent of the pre-war Jewish population, were murdered in ghettos, concentration camps, and forced marches throughout the occupied territory and greater Europe. Seven to eight percent of non-Jewish Poles were also murdered during ethnic cleansing initiatives perpetrated by the Nazi state.² The country experienced extensive material destruction to cities: the Polish capital of Warsaw was razed to the ground following the Warsaw Uprising in 1944.³

The First World War ended the century long partition of Poland. Its conclusion enabled the emergence of an independent Polish state. The commencement of the Second World War resulted in the partition of Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union, and the devastating loss of millions of Polish citizens' lives. At the end of the Second World War, the People's Republic of Poland (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa, hereafter the PRL) emerged as an

¹ Andrzej Paczkowski. "The Second World War in Present-Day Polish Memory and Politics," in *The Long Aftermath: Cultural Legacies of Europe at War, 1936-2016*. New York: Berghahn Books. 2016, 277.

² Paczkowski. "The Second World War in Present-Day Polish Memory and Politics," 277.

³ Ibid.

autonomous, non-democratic state aligned with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). While the PRL was under the powerful sway of the USSR throughout the Cold War period, the government of the PRL maintained its own internal affairs and national borders. Following the collapse of the PRL and the USSR in the early 1990s, an independent, democratic Polish state emerged as Rzeczpospolita Polska (the Republic of Poland). The effects of the Second World War still permeate throughout present-day Polish society. Nearly eighty years after the beginning of the Second World War, events from the war remain important attributes of national identity making and politics in the Republic of Poland. Events from the war, like the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, are commemorated in nationwide events of remembrance and commemoration of Polish heroism and martyrdom each year. In present-day Polish collective memory, there remains one word that immediately signifies immense suffering, anxiety, and loss experienced as a result of the Second World War: Katyń.

Referred to as one of the “greatest blank spots,” in Polish and Soviet histories, Katyń serves as the present-day Polish symbol of national suffering, anxiety, and loss experienced during Poland’s unsettling twentieth century.⁴ Katyń serves as the collective name for the series of mass executions of over 20,000 Polish soldiers, army officers, policemen, and various members of the Polish intelligentsia by the Soviet Union’s People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del, the NKVD hereafter) that took place throughout remote sites in the Soviet Union during the early months of the Second World War. The series of mass executions that took place from March to June 1940 are collectively known

⁴ Danielle Drozdowski, “Knowing (or Not) about Katyń: The Silencing and Surfacing of Public Memory,” in *The Politics of Hiding, Invisibility, and Silence: Between Absence and Presence*. New York and Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge. 2015, 47.

under the name of the first discovered site of the executions: the Katyń Forest near Smolensk, Russia.⁵ In April 1943, German forces discovered the mass graves of over four thousand missing Polish soldiers, army officers, policemen, and intelligentsia members. Through a communique issued on Radio Berlin, German forces alerted the world that the mass graves were discovered in the Katyń Forest and those responsible for the executions were Soviet forces. Following the announcement of the discovery of these mass graves near Smolensk, Katyń became much more than the name for the mass executions of thousands of Polish soldiers, police officers, and members of the intelligentsia. From the discovery of the mass graves in the Katyń Forest, Katyń has been shrouded in contentions, secrecy, and processes of attempts to unveil the historical truth of the perpetrators. Often, attempts to unveil the identity of the perpetrators have been influenced by the political and social environments of the historical actors.

Nearly immediately following the Radio Berlin communique, the Soviet government issued their own communique, in which the Soviet government blamed German forces for the crime. The Soviet communique would become the basis for the Soviet state's official narrative surrounding the Katyń crime, maintaining the five decade long account that German forces were behind the mass executions of the Polish officers. The Soviet government's narrative surrounding Katyń would later become collectively referred to as the "Katyń lie (kłamstwo katyńskie)," by Poles living abroad and in the PRL.

What was the "truth" about Katyń? Scholar Andrzej Przewoźnik notes that from the immediate commencement of the mass executions, the crimes were shrouded in deception and

⁵ Allen Paul. *Stalin's Massacre and the Triumph of Truth*. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press. 2010, ix.

secrecy fostering great anxiety throughout segments of Polish society.⁶ For nearly five decades, many scholars of Katyń argue that the “truth” remained hidden.⁷ While this claim is not entirely incorrect as the state sponsored versions of the truth of the crime’s perpetrators appeared “hidden,” this school of thought is disingenuous and problematic in its approach in examining contemporaries’ understanding and perceptions of Katyń throughout the latter portion of the twentieth century. Contemporaries, like Polish Military General Władysław Anders, knew that the mass graves found in the Katyń Forest included the missing officers taken prisoner by Soviet forces from the Kozelsk, Starobelsk, and Ostashkov internment camps in the Soviet Union following the Radio Berlin announcement, in which German forces alerted the world about the discovery of the mass graves in the Katyń Forest in 1943.

Utilizing approaches similar to Holocaust scholar and historian Daniel H. Magilow and Lisa Silverman respectively, I argue that to better understand what Katyń was and has been, we must examine the representations of Katyń from the discovery of the mass graves in the Katyń Forest in 1943 to the release of Katyń documents by the Soviet Union in 1990.⁸ International representations and debates about Katyń have contributed to how present day scholars understand Katyń. Much of what we now know about Katyń has also been from representations

⁶ Andrzej Przewoźnik, “The Process of Revealing the Truth and Commemorating the Victims,” in *White Spots. Black Spots. Difficult Matters in Polish-Russian Relations, 1918-2008*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. 2015, 211.

⁷ For reference, please see works such as Allen Paul’s *Katyń: The Untold Story of Stalin’s Polish Massacre*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991; *Katyń: Stalin’s Massacre and the Triumph of Truth*. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press. 2010; and George Sanford’s *Katyń and the Soviet Massacre of 1940*. New York: Routledge. 2005.

⁸ Daniel H Magilow and Lisa Silverman. *Holocaust Representations in History: An Introduction*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic. 2015, 1.

made by Polish émigrés and Poles living within the PRL. Like many contested, complex historical events, the interpretation of Katyn has never been a “straightforward endeavor.”⁹ By showing the development and process of “truth telling” and memory, we gain invaluable insight into the evolved understandings of Katyn by contemporaries from the midst of the Second World War to the release of the Katyn documents in 1990 and 1992.

Between the German and Soviet governments, Katyn became a political bargaining tool of propaganda against the perceived enemy during the Second World War and the immediate post-war period. Immediately following the discovery of the mass graves near Smolensk, the German and Soviet governments blamed one another for the crime through a series of communique. For the Allied governments of the United States and Great Britain, Katyn became an extremely contentious topic to reckon with (and ultimately avoid) in consideration of the advancing war effort in which continued Soviet involvement was key. For ordinary Poles living in Poland and for Polish émigrés across the globe, Katyn symbolized a myriad of meanings from the Nazi “discovery” of the mass graves in the Katyn Forest in April 1943 to a symbol of protest prior to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s. For nearly five decades, the identity of those who executed the Polish officers and the memory of the mass executions have been hotly contested among governments, scholars, and ordinary citizens alike.

⁹ I use the term “straightforward endeavor” as a borrowed term from Daniel H Magilow and Lisa Silverman’s analysis of contested, complex historical events, like the Holocaust, in their work *Holocaust Representations in History: An Introduction*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic. 2015, 1.

Following that announcement, the Polish government-in-exile would not accept at face value the Soviet government's claim that German forces were the perpetrators of the crime, particularly due to evidence compiled and confirmed by a Soviet representative within the USSR. Requests for an independent investigation by the Polish government-in-exile eventually led to the severing of diplomatic relations between the Soviet government and the Polish government-in-exile by Soviet premiere Josef Stalin in 1943. To understand the processes and remaking of truth in relation to Katyn is to understand the driving question of contemporaries' understanding and perceptions of Katyn: *who* murdered the Polish officers and *when* the mass executions take place? This question remained a dominant inquiry of study by scholars of Katyn until the Solidarity period in the late 1970s to early 1980s. In 1990, Soviet premiere Mikhail Gorbachev released Soviet documents related to Katyn that confirmed what scholars of Katyn had already posited: the perpetrators of the crime were not the German forces, but rather the NKVD. In 1992, Russian president Boris Yeltsin released further documentation to Polish President Lech Wałęsa that showed Josef Stalin ordered the crime himself.

Since the release of the Katyn documents in 1990 and 1992, historical truth and the reconstruction of the mass executions have been the primary objectives of contributions to the English language historiography of Katyn. There have been few contributions to the English language historiography and broader scholarship on Katyn examining the collective memory, representations of the massacres, and contemporaries' emotions surrounding the series of mass executions which took place between March and June 1940.¹⁰ One such contribution,

¹⁰ In the English language historiography on Katyn, there are publications like the subsequently referenced work *Remembering Katyn*. In the broader English language scholarship on Katyn, there are publications, such as Danielle Drozdowski's "Knowing (or Not) about Katyn: The Silencing and Surfacing of Public Memory," in *The Politics of Hiding, Invisibility, and Silence: Between Absence and Presence*. New York and Abingdon, Oxon.:

Remembering Katyn, examines the collective memory of the mass executions of over 20,000 Polish soldiers through an interconnected memory culture throughout Belarus, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltic States.¹¹ The contribution is a collaborative collection of essays by noted Slavic Studies scholars Alexander Etkind, Rory Finnin, Uilleam Blacker, Julie Fedor, Simon Lewis, Maria Mälksoo, and Matilda Mroz.

In the first chapter of that work, the authors examine representations of Katyn in Poland.¹² The authors identify two important categorizations of localities of people in the making of the memory and mourning of Katyn: in “Polonia,” the Polish émigré community across the world, particularly in the United States and Great Britain, and Polish citizens living within the PRL.¹³ The authors argue that Poles, both in the PRL and abroad, shared a common goal: the discovery and disclosure of facts surrounding the Katyn massacre’s perpetrators. There are many strengths to the authors’ chapter examining Katyn in Poland, particularly their examination of the representations of mourning of the Katyn victims in Warsaw’s Powązkowski Military Cemetery. This site became an important and contentious one in the battle for memorialization and

Routledge. 2015; Urszula Jarecka’s examination of rhetorical strategies used in present-day discourses on Katyn in ““Wounded Memory: Rhetorical Strategies Used in Public Discourse on the Katyn Massacre,” in *The Long Aftermath: Cultural Legacies of Europe at War, 1936-2016*. New York: Berghahn Books. 2016.; and Maria Kobielski’s “Endless aftershock. The Katyn Massacre in Contemporary Polish Culture,” in *Traumatic Memories of the Second World War and After*. Cham: Springer International Publishing. pp. 197-219. In the broader Polish language scholarship on collective memory and the Second World War, there are two significant contributions to the scholarship examining the collective memory of the Second World War in Polish. Please see Lech Nijakowski’s *Polskie Polityki pamięci. Esej socjologiczny* (Warszawa: WAiP, 2008) and Adam Ostolski’s *Trauma i pamięci publiczna. Spuścizna II wojny światowej w pamięci zbiorowej współczesnej Polski* (unpublished manuscript of doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Philosophy and Sociology, Uniwersytet Warszawski, 2011).

¹¹ Alexander Etkind, Rory Finnin, et al. *Remembering Katyn*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 2012, 2.

¹² Etkind, Finnin, et al. *Remembering Katyn*, 13.

¹³ Etkind, Finnin, et al. *Remembering Katyn*, 14.

commemoration between the Soviet aligned government and ordinary Polish citizens over the Katyn victims during the near five-decade long existence of the PRL.

Remembering Katyn is an important contribution, but it is not without its shortcomings. Although the authors correctly identify some of the most important contributions made to the re-remembering and representations of Katyn completed by Polish émigrés in “Polonia” and Poles living within the PRL, the work does not successfully incorporate other important attributes and processes of the collective memory making of Katyn in Poland. While the Soviet government and its state aligned governments *did* propagate the “Katyn lie,” the Katyn lie was an important component of the collective memory making processes of Katyn. Furthermore, there remain critical pieces of the Katyn story that are not explored in contributions to the historiography, like *Remembering Katyn*: the influence of various German states on the collective memory making processes of Katyn. Early representations of Katyn and the reactionary push for historical truth surrounding the mass executions was heavily influenced by the propaganda campaign conducted by Nazi Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, and the quest for absolution by the government of the Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal Republic of Germany, FRG hereafter). The memory making processes of Katyn are a significant intersection of German, Polish, and Soviet histories. In a final note on *Remembering Katyn*, the authors examine literary case studies in their section examining representations of Katyn to demonstrate that the struggle to “know” Katyn has led way to an *understanding* of Katyn in Polish literature following the release of the Katyn documents.

As noted, this examination is problematic in its examinations of early representations of Katyn. The representations of Katyn made by contemporaries, primarily Polish émigrés and

ordinary Poles living within the PRL, were symbols of their *understanding* of Katyn. By examining select publications and representations made by Polish émigrés and Poles living within the PRL, we can better understand how contemporaries interpreted and constructed their histories of Katyń within their specific cultural and historical context. This study seeks to expand upon contributions like *Remembering Katyn* in an attempt to provide a better understanding of the process and meaning of truth in relation to Katyń as *understood* by historical actors during their time and the collective memory makings of the event through literary and memorial representations.

Explanation of Methodology

By way of introduction, it is important to note that while the term “collective memory,” appeared in the lexicon of the humanities very early in the twentieth century, the term did not gain its greater, current significance to the historiography until the mid-twentieth century.¹⁴ French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs expanded upon the notion of collective memory within his groundbreaking, systematic study, *On Collective Memory*.¹⁵ Halbwachs identifies memory as a socially informed and constructed notion.¹⁶ The construction of memory does not depend on the individual; rather, the construction of memory depends on the collective, such as society,

¹⁴ Note: Selections of this portion of the thesis project appeared in two unpublished graduate seminar papers by the author: Unpublished seminar paper, Amanda Nicole Alarcon, “Review: On Collective Memory,” History 593, 10 June 2017 and Unpublished seminar paper, Amanda Nicole Alarcon, “The Discourses on National Suffering: the Intersections of Death, Identity, and Collective Memory during the Twentieth Century.” History 532. 04 December 2017.

¹⁵ Alon Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method,” The American Historical Review, Volume 102, Issue 5, 1 December 1997, pp. 1392.

¹⁶ Maurice Halbwachs. *On Collective Memory*. Lewis A. Coser, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1992.

family, and other groups. The importance of collective memory as a category of analysis in historical studies cannot be understated. Following the “memory boom” of the 1990s and 2000s, the examination of collective memory had provided scholars with a greater understanding of the ways in which society and the state represent their collective, national pasts and sought to construct a shared identity from this collective memory.

In addition to paying special attention to collective memory making, this project will also analyze emotions surrounding the event and notable representations of Katyn. The history of emotions has rapidly become a topic for historians. The history of emotions is understood as the historical inquiry of emotions within the broader examination and context of a culture. Though scholars and historians have been interested in the history of emotions across various disciplines, history of emotions as a genre has not been widely employed within the study of Polish history. Throughout the memory making processes and the processes of the events surrounding Katyn, emotions played a significant role. Distinguished modern German historian Alon Confino notes the great utility to studying the history of emotions within historical studies of modern German history. Confino asserts that:

“Emotions, like memories, are absolutely individual; social groups cannot feel or remember, much as they cannot eat or dance. And yet, one’s emotions, like one’s memory and most intimate dreams, originate from the symbols, landscape, practices and language that are shared by a given society.....the history of emotions may be most usefully practiced within a larger history of sensibilities.....such a history of sensibilities would explore emotions such as fear, love and pleasure, but also memory, sacrifice, suicide or killing, which are not emotions but make little historical sense if isolated from them.”¹⁷

¹⁷ Alon Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method,” *The American Historical Review*, Volume 102, Issue 5, 1 December 1997, pp. 1392

In the third and fourth chapters of this project, I will examine the contributions made to the historical understanding of Katyn by Polish émigrés and Poles living within the PRL during the period from the Second World War to the release of the Katyn documents by Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev in 1990 and Russian president Boris Yeltsin in 1992, as representations of Katyn. “Representations” is the umbrella term for literary writings, photographs, documents, memorials, art, testimonies, and “other symbolic usages” of a historical event.¹⁸ They were created either during or following the historical event. In the case of Katyn, representations have been exclusively created following the mass executions that took place from March-June 1940, with the exception of Soviet state documents and materials and possessions found on the Polish victims of the NKVD mass executions. In Jay Winter’s essay “Historical Remembrance in the Twenty-First Century,” Winter notes that: “both the act of producing history and the act of remembrance are gestures toward finding meaning in the past.”¹⁹ Winter encourages historians to examine the creative space between history and memory. He later concludes his essay by stating: “Writing the history of the contemporary world is an act of historical remembrance.”²⁰ In *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice and Memory*, George Sanford notes that historical truth tends to be “narrativized by an author’s subjectivity and the historical context,” thus concluding that there are no ‘real’ or ‘true’ stories.²¹ Throughout the existence of the PRL and “Polonia,” Polish émigrés, writers, historians, and members of Polish society made

¹⁸ Magilow and Silverman. *Holocaust Representations in History: An Introduction*, 1.

¹⁹ Jay Winter. "Foreword: Historical Remembrance in the Twenty-First Century." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617 (2008): 6. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25098009>.

²⁰ Winter. "Foreword: Historical Remembrance in the Twenty-First Century," 12.

²¹ Sanford. *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice and Memory*, 157.

intentional efforts to document their perceptions of the truth and understanding in the history surrounding Katyn. Their contributions served as acts of historical remembrance, thus helping shape the collective memory of what we know “Katyn” to be today.

This project will not examine the mass executions of the murdered 22,000 Polish soldiers, officers, police officers, and members of the intelligentsia themselves. Although the release of the Katyn documents by the Soviet Union in 1990 provided scholars and historians state evidence for the crimes and documentation of the logistics of the mass executions, many contemporary histories still rely on the earlier contributions, primarily made by Polish émigrés, to construct their histories of Katyn. This project will examine selected representations of Katyn and the language implemented to describe the mass executions. At “each stage” of the narrative and representations of Katyn, the politics of memory have played an influential role in the control, contest, and release of information surrounding the mass executions.²²

The following chapter will examine selected representations of Katyn from Reich Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels’s Katyn propaganda campaign, the subsequent response from the Soviet government over the “discovery” of the mass graves in the Katyn Forest, and Goebbels’ propaganda campaign’s effects on the Polish community, both abroad and in Poland. As noted, chapter three will examine selected, significant representations of Katyn made by Polish émigrés. The fourth chapter of this project will examine representations made by Poles living within the PRL. The fifth and concluding chapter will discuss Katyn, its representations, and collective meaning from the early 1990s to 2010 in the present-day Republic of Poland.

²² Drozdowski, “Knowing (or Not) about Katyn: The Silencing and Surfacing of Public Memory,” 49.

A final important note about this study: a study of this magnitude cannot and will not examine every recorded representation of Katyn from the Second World War to present-day. Rather, I will examine selected representations of Katyn that have made a significant impact on the continued understandings of the mass executions. Through this methodology, I hope to elucidate upon the importance of perception, contingency, emotion, representations, and the complexities of memory in the historical makings and understandings of Katyn.

CHAPTER TWO: THE “DISCOVERY” OF KATYŃ IN 1943

In a diary entry dated April 9, 1943, Reich Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels noted the “discovery” of the mass graves of murdered Polish soldiers, civilians, and various members of the intelligentsia by German forces in the Katyń Forest near Smolensk in the Western portion of the Soviet Union:²³

“Polish mass graves have been found near Smolensk. The Bolsheviks simply shot down and then shoveled into mass graves some 10,000 Polish prisoners, among them civilian captives, bishops, intellectuals, artists, et cetera. . . .Gruesome aberrations of the human soul were thus revealed. I saw to it that the Polish mass graves be inspected by neutral journalists from Berlin. I also had Polish intellectuals taken there. They are to see for themselves what is in store for them should their wish that the Germans be defeated by the Bolsheviks actually be fulfilled.”²⁴

To better understand the importance of the discovery of the mass graves in the Katyń Forest in subsequent representations by Polish émigrés and Poles living in the PRL, it is important to problematize the notion of “discovery” and the ensuing propaganda campaign launched by Goebbels. While Goebbels first notes the “discovery” of the graves on April 9, 1943 in his diary entries, several scholars believe that high ranking German officials learned about the mass graves as early as winter 1941 into spring 1942.²⁵ Following the invasion of the

²³ Joseph Goebbels. *The Goebbels Diaries: 1942-1943*. Trans. Louis P. Lochner. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1948, 318.

²⁴ Goebbels. *The Goebbels Diaries: 1942-1943*, 318.

²⁵ See George Sanford and Anna Cienciala, et al.

Soviet Union by Germany during Operation Barbarossa in 1941, the territory surrounding the Katyń Forest was under the occupation and control of German forces by late July 1941.²⁶ In November 1941, Colonel Friedrich Ahrens arrived in Smolensk to command the military regimen.

Following the Colonel's arrival, villagers recounted rumors to the occupying German forces about the Katyń Forest being utilized as an execution site of political opponents by the Bolsheviks.²⁷ During the summer of 1942, Polish workers in a German forced labor battalion were told rumors from villagers that Soviet officials had murdered "their Polish countrymen" in the Katyń forest.²⁸ A villager from the surrounding area, Ivan Kisselev, took the unknown Polish workers to the site where he thought the bodies of the Polish soldiers were buried. Kisselev found the site and the Polish workers commemorated the site with a wooden cross, though they did not report their discoveries to the German occupying forces.²⁹

During the early winter of 1943, Colonel Ahrens tracked a wolf through the woods and came across the wooden cross on top of an excavated mound. Following an investigation and brief excavation, the body of a Polish officer was revealed.³⁰ Colonel Ahrens reported the discovery to the Army Group Center in late February 1943. The Army Group Center dispatched

²⁶ Kenneth F. Ledford, "Mass Murderers Discover Mass Murder: The Germans and Katyn, 1943," *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*. Vol. 44: no. 3 (2012): pp.583.

²⁷ Paul. *Katyn: the Untold Story of Stalin's Polish Massacre*, 203.

²⁸ Paul. *Katyn: the Untold Story of Stalin's Polish Massacre*, 203.

²⁹ Ibid, 204; Ledford, "Mass Murderers Discover Mass Murder: The Germans and Katyn, 1943," pp.583.

³⁰ Paul. *Katyn: the Untold Story of Stalin's Polish Massacre*, 204.

Professor Dr. Gerhard Buhtz, a forensic pathologist affiliated with the University of Breslau and the medical staff of the Army Group, to investigate. The exhumation and autopsy of the remains did not take place until March 29th, due to the hard freeze on the ground.³¹ During the initial excavations, nearly eleven mass graves were exhumed.³² These mass graves contained nearly 3,000 murdered Polish soldiers, officers, and various members of the intelligentsia. In historian Kenneth F. Ledford's essay examining the use of Katyn in Reich propaganda, Ledford notes that Joseph Goebbels had likely first gained knowledge of the mass graves of Polish prisoners near Smolensk on April 1st or 2nd, 1943.³³

The "discovery" of the mass graves came at an opportune time for propaganda purposes as perceived by Goebbels, in relation to the war effort for the Nazi regime. Following the military defeat of Stalingrad by German forces in early 1943, Goebbels saw the mass graves as a prime opportunity to create tensions between Western Allies, like Great Britain and the United States, and the Soviet Union. With the exploitation of the discovery of the mass graves near Smolensk, Goebbels sought to address three audiences through the Katyn propaganda campaign: 1). the Poles living in the General-Government in hopes of mobilizing Poles against the impending Soviet army invasion, 2). the Western Allies in an effort to sow "dissension" between them and the Soviet government, and 3). the German people, to steel them for an "increased defensive effort by instilling in them fear of the consequences of a Soviet victory."³⁴ The

³¹ Ledford, "Mass Murderers Discover Mass Murder: The Germans and Katyn, 1943," pp.583

³² Paul. *Katyn: the Untold Story of Stalin's Polish Massacre*, 205.

³³ Ledford, "Mass Murderers Discover Mass Murder: The Germans and Katyn, 1943," pp.584.

³⁴ Ibid, pp.586.

discovery of the mass graves and the subsequent exhumations presented a problem for Goebbels, as a percentage of the executed officers were found to be Polish Jews. In addition to this issue, German forces committed atrocities against Polish members of the intelligentsia and leaders as the Soviets had done during the invasion of Poland in September 1939.³⁵

Before announcing the discovery of the mass graves to a global audience, Goebbels arranged for a delegation of Polish leaders to fly from Warsaw, Kraków, and Lublin to Smolensk on April 10th.³⁶ On April 11th, the public propaganda campaign began through an address on the German news agency Trans-Ocean, though the effort would not gain global traction until April 13th. On April 13th, 1943, Radio Berlin broadcasted an announcement that reports had reached Berlin from Smolensk, where German forces discovered the mass graves of thousands of Polish officers murdered by Soviet forces:

“It is reported from Smolensk that the local inhabitants have indicated to the German authorities a place in which mass executions had been carried out by the Bolsheviks and where 10,000 Polish officers had been murdered by the GPU....the total number of Polish officers corpses amounts to 10,000, which would correspond more or less to the entire Polish officer corps captured and taken prisoner by the Bolsheviks.”^{37,38}

³⁵ Ledford, “Mass Murderers Discover Mass Murder: The Germans and Katyn, 1943,” pp.579.

³⁶ Ledford, “Mass Murderers Discover Mass Murder: The Germans and Katyn, 1943,” pp.584.

³⁷ “Pierwszy Komunikat Radia Niemieckiego,” (First German Radio Communique) in Anders. *Zbrodnia Katyńska w Świecie Dokumentów*, 85. The selected quote from the document has been translated from Polish to English by the author of this study, Amanda Nicole Alarcon.

³⁸ Note: The GPU is an older name used for the NKVD.

Within the Radio Berlin announcement, German officials correctly posited that the murdered Polish officers were transported from the Kozelsk camp to the Katyn Forest near Smolensk. In following representations by the German Nazi government, the numbers increased to 11,000 to 12,000 murdered Polish officers.³⁹ The fluctuating numbers utilized during the commencement of the propaganda campaign are vitally important in understanding subsequent representations of the mass executions made by the Polish government-in-exile, Polish émigrés, and Polish citizens living within Poland.

Following the Radio Berlin announcement, the Soviet government responded to the accusations put forth by German officials in a communique titled “Vile Acquisitions by the German-Fascist Murders” from Moscow on April 15th, 1943. Within the communique, Radio Moscow broadcasted a counter-attack to the Radio Berlin broadcast:

“In the past two or three days Goebbels’ slanderers have been spreading vile fabrications alleging that the Soviet authorities carried out a mass shooting of Polish officers in the Spring of 1940, in the Smolensk area. In launching this monstrous investigation the German-Fascist scoundrels did not hesitate to spread the most unscrupulous and base lies, in their attempts to cover up the crimes which, as has now become evident, were perpetrated themselves. The German-Fascist report on this subject leave no doubt as to the tragic fate of the former Polish prisoners-of-war in 1941 were engaged in construction work in areas west of the Smolensk region and who fell into the hands of German-Fascist hangmen in the summer of 1941, after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the Smolensk area.....”⁴⁰

³⁹ Sanford. *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940*, 128.

⁴⁰ “Communique Issued by the Sovinformburo Attacking the German ‘Fabrications’ about the Graves of Polish Officers in Katyn Forest, 15 April 1943, Moscow,” Document 102, Translated by Anna M. Cienciala, Natalia S. Lebedeva, and Wojciech Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 306.

The initial reaction to the Radio Berlin announcement was one of diffidence by Poles residing in London.⁴¹ The announcement had a more immense, immediate effect upon the Polish government-in-exile residing in London, as it launched them into a precarious situation between the Western allies and the Soviet government. As noted in the previous chapter, both German and Polish forces had rounded up members of the Polish intelligentsia and military and perpetrated violent atrocities against Polish people during the September campaign in 1939. The Polish government set out on April 15th in search of “what they regarded as the definite facts,” in reports confirmed by sources in the USSR about the missing Polish POWs.⁴² The results of the report presented more difficulties for the Polish government-in-exile in regards to their relations with the Soviet government. While the government could not confirm that 10,000 Polish officers had been murdered by the Soviets in the Katyń Forest as reported by Radio Berlin at the time, the report showed that over 15,000 Polish officers had been held in Kozelsk (approximately 5,000), Starobelsk (3920), and Ostashkov (6,570) as prisoners of war by the Soviets.⁴³ The ones from Kozelsk were transported towards Smolensk by Soviet forces in 1940. While there was no debate that the Polish officers were executed, there was a contest between the German and Soviet governments on who perpetrated the mass executions. The answer lay in finding out the date of the mass executions, which would require forensic investigation and analysis.

⁴¹ “Pierwszy Komunikat Radia Sowieckiego,” (First Soviet Radio Communique) in Anders, *Zbrodnia Katyńska w Świecie Dokumentów*, 86.

⁴² Sanford, *Katyń and the Soviet Massacre of 1940*, 128.

⁴³ Ibid, 128.

After an analysis of this report, the Polish government-in-exile could not accept at face value the Soviet assertion that the Germans had committed the atrocities in the Katyń Forest.⁴⁴ Calls for an independent, impartial investigation were soon issued by the Polish government. On April 16th, the Polish War Minister Lieutenant Gen. Marian Kukiel requested an impartial investigation by a Red Cross commission “on the spot” to understand who murdered the 15,000 missing POWs and why they appeared to “simply” disappear.⁴⁵ Simultaneously, the German government requested an impartial investigation of the mass graves found in the Katyń Forest near Smolensk. The Polish request for an independent investigation led to the Soviet Minister of Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov arguing that the Poles had used “the slanderous Hitlerite fake” as an attempt to regain the contested Borderlands of Belarus, Ukraine, and Lithuania.⁴⁶ Eventually, the issue would lead to the severing of diplomatic ties by Josef Stalin between the Soviet government and the Polish government-in-exile on April 25, 1943.

Following the Radio Berlin broadcast, Goebbels continued a press campaign to vilify the Soviets and deepen a rhetorical motif of equating Bolshevism and Jews through representations of the mass executions of the Polish officers. Through works published during the press campaign, “Katyń” first entered the lexicon of the crime to symbolize the mass graves found in the Katyń Forest to Poles living within German occupied Poland. In Kraków, lists of the murdered Polish officers were published in the Polish language, Nazi propaganda newspaper

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES. "POLES ASK INQUIRY IN SOVIET 'MURDERS'." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Apr 17, 1943.

⁴⁶ Sanford. *Katyń and the Soviet Massacre of 1940*, 129.

Goniec Krakowski (The Kraków Messenger). On April 15th, 1943, the newspaper first published the “discovery” of the mass graves found near the Katyń Forest in Smolensk.⁴⁷ On April 17, 1943, photographs of the mass graves in the Katyń Forest were published in the newspaper with the headline, “Wrażenia krakowskiego robotnika w lesie pod Katyniem (Impression of a Kraków worker in the forest near Katyń).”⁴⁸ In the April 20, 1943 issue of *Goniec Krakowski*, a “new list of the names of the identified Polish officers’ bodies,” appeared in the paper.⁴⁹ In subsequent issues of the newspaper, names of the executed Polish officers would continue to be published with identifiable information about the deceased officers such as rank or documents found on the bodies.⁵⁰ In addition to the list of names published by the German backed *Goniec Krakowski*, the underground Polish resistance movement, Armia Krajowa (Home Army, AK hereafter), published the growing list of those identified in the Katyń Forest in underground publications during this time. The names of the identified bodies were also announced in the streets of Kraków during the campaign. The news would cause “nationwide indignation and sorrow,” as it was received across occupied Poland.⁵¹ The list of names came to be collectively known as “lista

⁴⁷ Włodzimierz Długoszwecki, *Goniec Krakowski*. 1943, nr 88. 409317 IV. Archive: Biblioteka Jagiellońska. Kraków, Polska. 15 April 1943. Accessed via: <https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/publication/142364/edition/134252/content?ref=desc>

⁴⁸ Włodzimierz Długoszwecki, *Goniec Krakowski*. 1943, nr 90. 409317 IV. Archive: Biblioteka Jagiellońska. Kraków, Polska. 17 April 1943. Accessed via: <https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/publication/142367/edition/134254/content?ref=desc>

⁴⁹ Włodzimierz Długoszwecki “Nowa lista nazwisk zidentyfikowanych zwłok oficerów polskich,” (New list of the names of the identified Polish officers’ bodies) in *Goniec Krakowski*. 1943, nr 92. 409317 IV. Archive: Biblioteka Jagiellońska. Kraków, Polska. 20 April 1943. Accessed via: <https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/publication/142369/edition/134256/content?ref=desc>

⁵⁰ For reference, please see digital copies of *Goniec Krakowski* on the digital archive website of Biblioteka Jagiellońska, with particular emphasis on issues from April 20, 1943 onward.

⁵¹ Sanford, *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice, and Memory*, 133.

katyńska (the Katyn List),” as a result of the lists’ publications in newspapers like *Goniec Krakowski* throughout Poland.

Within Germany, the propaganda campaign took the form of print and documentaries to further capitalize upon growing fears of Bolshevism. In the Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* (Völkischer Observer) articles were published equating the perceived violence and threat of Bolshevism with Jews, such as “The Mass Murder of Katyn: The Work of Jewish Butchers,” and “Judah’s Blood Guilt Grows to Unfathomable.”⁵² Nazi officials extensively documented the exhumation and autopsy of the murdered Polish officers in the Katyn Forest through photographs, newsreels, and video footage throughout the month of April until their investigation was “interrupted by the heat” in June 1943. Scholar George Sanford posits that the approaching Soviet army likely interrupted the conclusion of the investigation.⁵³ This documentary footage was incorporated into the widely received film, *Im Wald von Katyn* (In the Forest of Katyn).⁵⁴ Within the film, the narrator guides the audience through a narrative reconstruction of the mass executions and the exhumation and autopsy processes. Throughout the film, the narrator condemns the Bolsheviks for the murders, switching between footage of selected recovered personal belongings of the murdered officers and the footage of the decomposed bodies of the Polish officers.⁵⁵ In fall 1943, the German Foreign Office published a massive collection of documents, photographs, and the list of the murdered officers’ names

⁵² Ledford, “Mass Murderers Discover Mass Murder: The Germans and Katyn, 1943,” pp.586.

⁵³ Sanford, *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice, and Memory*, 134.

⁵⁴ David Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda*. New York: Routledge, 1993, 113.

⁵⁵ *Im wald von Katyn*. Dokumentarische Bildstreifen. Deutsches Reich. 1943.

under the titles, *Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn* (Official Material on the Mass Murder of Katyn) and *Der Massenmord im Walde von Katyn: Ein Tatsachenbericht auf Grund Amtlicher Unterlagen* (The Mass Murder in the Forest of Katyn: A Factual Account on the Basis of Official Documents).⁵⁶ The Katyn propaganda campaign soon came to an end in September 1943. Goebbels noted in a diary entry dated September 29, 1943:

“Unfortunately we have had to give up Katyn. The Bolsheviks undoubtedly will soon “find” that we shot the 12,000 Polish officers. That episode is one that is going to cause us quite a little trouble in the future. The Soviets are undoubtedly going to make it their business to discover as many mass graves as possible and then blame them on us.”⁵⁷

In the immediate aftermath of the Nazi propaganda campaign, it appeared evident that the campaign failed to achieve all of the objectives put forth by Goebbels. Though the campaign placed the Polish government-in-exile in a precarious situation with the Soviet government and diplomatic ties were severed between the two countries’ governments, the Western Allies (Great Britain and the United States) remained relatively silent about the question of Katyn during the Second World War and throughout the Cold War period. In 1943, the American and British governments came to the conclusion that the Soviet Union was guilty of the mass executions of the Polish officers in the Katyn Forest, however the governments suppressed the “actual truth” of the executions in an effort to maintain their alliance with the Soviet Union for the war effort.⁵⁸ Though the German Nazi propaganda campaign also failed to mobilize Poles into a joint defense

⁵⁶ Ledford, “Mass Murderers Discover Mass Murder: The Germans and Katyn, 1943,” pp.587.

⁵⁷ Goebbels. *The Goebbels Diaries: 1942-1943*, 487.

⁵⁸ Sanford, *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice, and Memory*, 158.

with Nazi Germany in the General Government, the campaign had a lasting legacy on the ways in which Polish émigrés wrote and conceptualized the mass executions of Polish officers and soldiers in the Katyń Forest.

In late 1943, the Soviet Union established a Special Commission under the direction of Nikolai Burdenko, to establish their “truth” about the Katyń crime.⁵⁹ The Commission would come to be known as the Burdenko Commission. As soon as the Soviet army took control of the Smolensk area, the Special Commission and investigation team were ready to begin their forensic analysis campaign of the mass graves located in the Katyń Forest. The “investigation” lasted less than a month, supported by the Soviet state’s forensic-pathological forces, police, and other resources needed to conduct the investigation. The brief of the Special Commission tasked the force to “confirm” the “Circumstances of the Shooting of Polish Officer Prisoners by the German-Fascist Invaders in the Katyn Forest.”⁶⁰ The Soviet medical-forensic team “confirmed” that German forces were the ones that killed the Polish officers “between July and September 1941,” following the German occupation of the Smolensk area in July 1941.⁶¹ Throughout the report, there were several witnesses that were also interviewed in the German report on Katyń that “changed” their testimony surrounding the mass executions of the Polish officers. The witnesses quoted in the Soviet report that their testimony surrounding the Soviet perpetration of the executions in the German report on Katyń was coerced by Gestapo beatings and threats.⁶²

⁵⁹ Ibid, 136.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 137.

⁶¹ Cienciala, Lebedeva, and Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 228.

⁶² Sanford, *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice, and Memory*, 139.

George Sanford posits that this change in testimony is not surprising, as the witnesses were villagers living in the surrounding Smolensk area, which was now under the control of the Soviet government.⁶³ The report was endorsed by Burdenko in early January 1944. The report became the basis for the Soviet state representation of the perpetrators behind the mass executions of the Polish officers and by extension, the state sponsored history that was told to the outside world until 1990.⁶⁴ This representation would be challenged extensively from the end of the Second World War in Europe to the collapse of communism by Polish émigrés living within the United States and Britain and ordinary Poles living within the PRL. The next chapter will explore selected representations from Polish émigrés in light of the International Military Tribunal trials in Nuremberg in the aftermath of the Second World War.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE: REPRESENTATIONS OF KATYŃ BY POLISH ÉMIGRÉS

Introduction: A Note about “Polonia:” Polish Émigrés and the “Polish Diaspora”

Prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, nearly twelve million Poles emigrated to countries across the world. Within these countries, Polish émigrés often created diasporic communities with nationalistic, constructed elements. These diasporic communities would often refer to themselves as “Polonia,” a contested and constructed symbol of Polish émigrés’ collective identity that was intimately tied to their homeland, Poland.⁶⁵ *The Encyclopedia of Diaspora* defines the term “diaspora” to refer to the resettled communities of those forcibly dispersed from their homelands, such as Jews and Armenians, who held a strong identification “with their homelands and distinct groups identities through community boundaries shaped by hostile responses in places of settlement.”⁶⁶ As these diasporic groups created their distinctive community identities in their respective places of settlement, negotiations of character and identity of the community occurred.

The “Polish diaspora,” posited by scholar Jolanta A. Drzewiecka, holds its historic roots in the “struggle” for an independent Polish state throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the post Second World War period.⁶⁷ The contributing factors to the Polish

⁶⁵ Dominic A. Pacyga, “Polish Diaspora.” In: Ember M., Ember C.R., Skoggard I. (eds). *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*. Springer, Boston, MA. 2005.

⁶⁶ Jolanta A. Drzewiecka. “Reinventing and contesting identities in constitutive discourses: Between diaspora and its others.” *Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 50:1. 12 May 2009, 3.

⁶⁷ Drzewiecka. “Reinventing and contesting identities in constitutive discourses: Between diaspora and its others,” 4.

diaspora are varied. Following the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the end of the eighteenth century, the first diasporic communities began to appear across the world. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, revolutions, economic disparities, and war produced Polish diasporic communities throughout Europe, Latin America, and the United States.

As noted, diasporic communities often embark on careful self-negotiations of what constitutes the character and identity of their respective diasporic community. Throughout the existences of the various, Polish diasporic communities across the world, these negotiations have taken place and the character of the community has transformed over time. These negotiations have often encompassed ethnic and religious considerations. Throughout the modern period, many different peoples and ethnic groups have existed in Polish lands, such as non-Jewish Poles, Jewish Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Lithuanians, Germans, and many others.⁶⁸ Within the Polish diaspora, Polish Jews were presented as “an issue” to diasporic consciousness during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁶⁹ Although Polish Jews have lived for centuries in Polish lands and interacted with non-Jewish Poles consistently, most Poles considered Jewish Poles to be a “separate ethnic group,” thus not belonging to the Polish diasporic communities.⁷⁰ Within the United States and other Polish diasporic communities,

⁶⁸ Pacyga, “Polish Diaspora,” in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*.

⁶⁹ Pacyga, “Polish Diaspora,” in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

instances of antisemitism would occur against Jewish Poles throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁷¹ Catholic Poles primarily constituted the Polish diasporic communities.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the largest Polish emigration occurred to the United States.⁷² While the vast majority of Polish émigrés migrated to the United States for economic reasons prior to the Second World War, a diasporic consciousness was evident among the Polish-American community.⁷³ Polish immigrants considered themselves as the “American Polonia.” Polish immigrants considered “American Polonia” as a fourth partition of Poland during the nineteenth century.⁷⁴ Within the United States, Polish émigré communities held deep sentiment of victimization and exile due to “foreign oppression” and political suppression following the partitions of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century.⁷⁵

The Second World War marked a decisive turning point for Poles both living inside and outside of the country. The term “Polonia” came to especially symbolize the Polish émigrés living outside of Poland during the outbreak of the Second World War, the war years, and the post-war period. Nearly 3,000 Polish civilians fled to London alone at the outbreak of the Second World War. Following the defeat of France in 1940, Poles living throughout the United Kingdom organized themselves into military units and communities. In London, the Polish government

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Pacyga, “Polish Diaspora,” in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*.

⁷³ Drzewiecka. “Reinventing and contesting identities in constitutive discourses: Between diaspora and its others,” 4.

⁷⁴ Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann. *The Exile Mission: The Polish Political Diaspora and Polish Americans, 1939-1956*. Athens: Ohio University Press. 2004, 2.

⁷⁵ Drzewiecka. “Reinventing and contesting identities in constitutive discourses: Between diaspora and its others,” 4.

reconstituted itself in exile under General Władysław Sikorski. The Polish government-in-exile primarily employed Polish civilians living in London.⁷⁶ The government-in-exile maintained residence in London throughout the war and the post-war period.

The Second World War left a decisive impact on the character of the Polish diaspora. In 1945, nearly six million Poles remained outside of Polish national borders.⁷⁷ Following the Yalta Conference in February 1945 in which Poland was perceived to have been relegated to the “Soviet sphere of influence,” hundreds of thousands of Poles were faced with the choice to return to Poland or stay abroad.⁷⁸ While many Poles returned to Poland, there were substantial numbers of Poles that stayed in refugee camps, displaced persons camps, or in-exile communities that were established during the war, like the community in London. Many Poles settled in the United States, Britain, and throughout the former British Commonwealth in countries like Canada and Australia.⁷⁹ Poles also settled in countries throughout Europe and Latin America.

Depending upon the respective countries of Polish diasporic communities’ settlement, the character of the Polish diasporic communities decidedly took on an anti-communist viewpoint in many countries across the world. Within these post-war, anti-communist diasporic communities, Polish Jews were largely absent from Polonia organizations and the community. Within the

⁷⁶ Michael Wall. “Poles apart-London’s Little Poland; Polish immigrants who fled during the second world war have established a community in South Kensington, with clubs, shops, a library and a nominal government in exile.” *The Guardian*. London, England. 28 February 1963.

⁷⁷ Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann. "The Polish Post-World War II Diaspora: An Agenda for a New Millenium." *Polish American Studies* 57, no. 2 (2000): 51.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Pacyga, “Polish Diaspora,” in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*.

United States, many Polonia organizations largely identified themselves as Catholic organizations and they were often anti-Jewish in practice.⁸⁰ It is important to note that this exclusion did not occur due to the population size of Polish Jews living within the United States, as many Polish Jews had immigrated to the United States following the Holocaust and anti-Semitic purges of Jews by the Polish Communist government in the 1950s and 1960s.⁸¹ Outside of the “Polonia” communities of the United States, these anti-Jewish sentiments occurred in communities in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Austria, Denmark, and many other countries.⁸²

Although members of the diasporic communities no longer remained in Polish national borders, issues pertinent to Poland, like Katyn, remained an integral part of the Polish émigré community. Cited as one of the few issues in which the wider Polish émigré community could unite over, significant contributions were made to establishing the “truth” and history surrounding Katyn by Polish émigrés following the end of the Second World War. These contributions were made by émigrés living in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and many other countries throughout the world. Throughout this chapter, I will be examining select contributions made to the understanding of Katyn by Polish émigré in the United States and Great Britain. As noted, the greatest emigration of Poles occurred to the United States. Following the end of the Second World War, the “American Polonia” persisted as the leading,

⁸⁰ Drzewiecka. “Reinventing and contesting identities in constitutive discourses: Between diaspora and its others,” 5.

⁸¹ Drzewiecka. “Reinventing and contesting identities in constitutive discourses: Between diaspora and its others,” 5.

⁸² Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann. “The Polish Post-World War II Diaspora: An Agenda for a New Millenium.” 53.

diasporic community.⁸³ Throughout the Second World War and the post-war period, the “epicenter” of émigré political activity was London.⁸⁴ Although the British government ceased to recognize the Polish government-in-exile as a legitimate, political entity following the Yalta Conference, the Polish government-in-exile existed in London until 1990. Each year, the Polish émigré community in London organized memorial events for the Katyń dead.⁸⁵ In the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives established a commission to investigate the “truth” about Katyń in the early 1950s. While the commission was established during the onset of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, this commission was also made possible by efforts and protests made within the Polish American community over the issue of Katyń.⁸⁶ Polish émigrés’ contributions to the continued understanding of Katyń made an inconsequential impact to the memory of the crime in Poland, particularly during the creation and existence of the Soviet aligned government in the PRL:

“Because the people in Poland were forbidden from knowing about these subjects, the memory of them survived to a great degree because of efforts of the émigré community....These voices were raised in the West for forty-five years, but after a while the issue became a great bore. People were horrified when the Russian tanks crushed the Hungarians in 1956 and rolled into Czechoslovakia in 1968. There were many demonstrations and it was all heroic, but it soon failed. The West sort of, in a sense, wrote Eastern Europe off. In that situation, you have to learn to

⁸³ Pacyga, “Polish Diaspora,” in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*.

⁸⁴ Etkind, Finnin, et al. *Remembering Katyn*, 22.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ George Sanford. *Katyń and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice and Memory*. New York: Routledge. 2005, 142.

tailor protest to the environment you are living in, to keep the embers aglow without becoming a nuisance. We did that pretty well.”⁸⁷

Throughout the existence of the PRL, representations, commemorations, and activism surrounding Katyn was made possible by earlier contributions made by Polish émigré within Great Britain and the United States.

The International Military Tribunal and the Polish Émigré Community

Following the end of the Second World War in Europe, the Allies settled on establishing the International Military Tribunal to try German war criminals in Nuremberg. The series of prosecutions would come to be collectively known as the Nuremberg Trials. The Tribunal was established to conduct trials and punishments of “the major war criminals of the Axis countries” and to “have the power to try and punish persons, who acting in the interests of the European Axis countries, whether as individuals or members of organizations” that committed crimes against peace.⁸⁸ The Tribunal was also tasked with prosecuting individuals for a new category of crime, “crimes against humanity.”⁸⁹ This category included assassination, extermination, enslavement, deportation, ill treatment of prisoners of war, and any other inhuman action committed against civilians before or after the war, as well as persecution on political, racial, or religious grounds.

⁸⁷ This quote was selected from an interview conducted between the author and “Ewa” in Allen Paul’s *Katyn: The Untold Story of Stalin’s Polish Massacre*, 334-335.

⁸⁸ Cienciala, Lebedeva, and Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 229.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 229.

At the outset of the trial, the Tribunal accepted a proposal from the Allied powers, requesting that the alleged crimes committed by the Allied Powers not be prosecutable during the series of trials. The acceptance of the proposal protected attacks on the Soviets over the issue of Katyn from the commencement of the trials. The charges against German Nazi leaders included the mass execution of the Polish officers found at Katyn. This charge was added against the advice of British Attorney General Sir Hartley Shawcross.⁹⁰ On July 1, 1946, the Tribunal heard its first “evidence” against the German Nazi officials for the mass executions of the Polish officers found in the Katyn Forest.⁹¹ The indictment read: “In September 1941, 11,000 Polish officers, prisoners of war, were killed in the Katyn woods near Smolensk.”⁹² The only supporting document that was submitted for consideration for the Tribunal was the Burdenko Commission Report, in which the Soviet state found German forces responsible for the crime.⁹³

During the trials, former Nazi officials sought to clear themselves of the Katyn crime. Following extensive witness interviews, the Katyn case was not listed in the International Military Tribunal’s final verdicts. In private, the Tribunal decided that the war crimes of Katyn were not perpetrated by the Germans. Thus, their responsibility for prosecuting Katyn ended, as the former Nazi government officials were on trial, not the Soviets.⁹⁴ Following the end of the

⁹⁰ Ibid, 230.

⁹¹ Paul, *Katyn: The Untold Story of Stalin’s Polish Massacre*, 335.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ “The Burdenko Commission Report (Excerpts), 24 January 1944, Moscow.” Documented 106. Translated by Anna M. Cienciala, Natalia S. Lebedeva, and Wojciech Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 319.

⁹⁴ Paul, *Katyn: The Untold Story of Stalin’s Polish Massacre*, 337.

International Military Tribunal, the crime of Katyń was officially recognized as a Nazi crime by the Soviet government, though in the late 1940s, the event was not to “be recognized at all.”⁹⁵ As part of the agreement reached by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, Poland became incorporated into the Soviet Union in the reconstruction of Europe following the Second World War. The state would become the Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa (the People’s Republic of Poland, PRL hereafter), politically aligned with the Soviet government. Thus, representations of Katyń made in the PRL by ordinary Poles were a particularly dangerous and even fatal endeavor. The consequences ranged from legal punishment and imprisonment to even death.⁹⁶ This did not stop ordinary Poles from representing the event, however. This chapter will examine significant Polish émigrés’ contributions to the understanding and memory making processes of Katyń throughout the various Polish diasporic communities, some of which were eventually smuggled into the PRL. By doing so, we can better understand how Polish émigrés’ contributions served as a dual project of history and memory: “writing the history of the contemporary world is an act of historical remembrance.”⁹⁷

Selected Representations of Katyń from Polish Émigrés during the Early Cold War Period

Zbrodnia Katyńska a Świetle Dokumentów, 1948

⁹⁵ Etkind, Finnin, Blacker, et al. *Remembering Katyn*, 17.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 15.

⁹⁷ Winter. "Foreword: Historical Remembrance in the Twenty-First Century," 12.

Throughout the International Military Tribunal, Poles living in London made several attempts to present their information to the Tribunal but were denied the opportunity.⁹⁸ While the London Poles were denied the opportunity to present their information and evidence to the International Military Tribunal, this denial did not prevent future attempts made by Polish émigrés living in the United States and Great Britain from theorizing *who* the executioners of the Katyń victims were and *when* they were murdered. Following the conclusion of the International Military Tribunal trials in Nuremberg, significant efforts to posit who the perpetrators were and when the Polish officers had been executed would be made by Polish émigrés living within the United States and Great Britain. Polish émigrés—particularly those forcibly exiled from Poland—had already begun conducting research and compiling documentation to understand the circumstances in which the Polish officers were murdered to posit *who* murdered the thousands of officers, soldiers, and other Polish members of the intelligentsia in the Katyń Forest and *when* they were executed during the Second World War.

In 1948, one of the most significant émigré contributions to the evolving understanding of Katyń was published in the Polish language work *Zbrodnia Katyńska w Świetle Dokumentów* (The Katyń Crime in Light of the Documents). The work holds a further special significance to this study, as the work first introduced the commonly used present-day Polish phrase “zbrodnia katyńska (the crime of Katyń)” to the Polish lexicon of words and phrases used to signify and describe the mass executions of the thousands of Polish officers in the Katyń Forest. It is important to note that the work did not invent the term. The term “Katyń crime” was first introduced by the Soviet government in official responses to deny their culpability in the mass

⁹⁸ Cienicala, Lebedeva, and Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 232.

executions. *Zbrodnia Katyńska w Świetle Dokumentów* was published in London, the “epicenter” of émigré activity.

At the time of publication, *Zbrodnia Katyńska w Świetle Dokumentów* was published without any identifiable author information, with the exception of General Władysław Anders’ foreword and his work on the volume being credited at the time of publication in 1948. Several people worked on the compilation and analysis of documents in *Zbrodnia Katyńska* under the work of one editor.⁹⁹ In present-day understandings and interpretations of *Zbrodnia Katyńska*, we now know the identities of some of the contributors to the work, most importantly the identity of the editor of the volume: Józef Mackiewicz. Mackiewicz’ report on the Katyn mass graves in 1943 caused his involuntary flight from Poland to the West and his name was “cleansed” from the public sphere as a result.¹⁰⁰ One of the few survivors of the NKVD executions, Stanisław Świaniewicz, also anonymously contributed to the volume.

There is no one figure more well-known in this research perhaps than Polish Military General Władysław Anders. Born in former Russian Poland, Władysław Anders had a longstanding military career dating back to the First World War. Anders served in the Russian Army from 1914 to 1917, the Polish Army from 1918-1925—notably during the Polish-Soviet War—and was the commander of the Cavalry Operational Group in the Polish army during the September 1939 campaign. Anders was captured by the Soviet Army in Lwów (Lviv). Anders was deported to the Soviet Union, where he was imprisoned in the Lubyanka Prison in Moscow

⁹⁹ Anders. *Zbrodnia Katyńska w Świetle Dokumentów*, vi

¹⁰⁰ Etkind, Finnin, Blacker, et al. *Remembering Katyn*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 2012, 17.

until August 1941.¹⁰¹ On August 4th, 1941, the Soviets released Anders as part of the newly formed alliance between the Soviet and Polish governments following the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941.¹⁰² The Polish government-in-exile appointed Anders as the commander in chief of the military forces in the USSR and the Soviet forces had already approved the appointment. Anders was tasked with forming military units out of the population of formerly imprisoned, Polish officers and other military members captured by the Soviets.

Long before the appointment, Anders had learned about the internment camps of Kozelsk, Starobelsk, and Ostashkov from his cellmate during his imprisonment at Lubyanka.¹⁰³ In the prison, rumors about thousands of missing Polish officers, soldiers, and others last seen at these internment camps circulated throughout the prison. Following Anders' release, the issue of the missing men became a constant force that informed each of his "endeavors and efforts" throughout his appointment as commander of the Polish forces in the USSR.¹⁰⁴ In a December 3rd meeting between Josef Stalin, Vyacheslav Molotov, Polish military leader Władysław Sikorski, and Anders, the issue of the missing Polish soldiers arose as an immediate topic of inquiry and concern for the Polish representatives at the meeting. At the beginning of the encounter, Sikorski declared that important terms of the alliance were not being fulfilled, particularly the release of the thousands of men held at Kozelsk, Starobelsk, and Ostashkov.

¹⁰¹ Cieniala, Lebedeva, and Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 383.

¹⁰² Paul, *Katyń: The Untold Story of Stalin's Polish Massacre*, 162.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 169.

¹⁰⁴ Anders. *Zbrodnia Katyńska w Świetle Dokumentów*, v.

Arguing that the prisoners were still unaccounted for, Stalin told Sikorski and Anders that the prisoners simply escaped. Anders immediately asked Stalin:

“Where could they have escaped to?”

“Well, to Manchuria,” Stalin replied.¹⁰⁵

Following the reply, Sikorski and Anders argued that it would be impossible for the thousands of men from the three camps to make it thousands of miles undetected across the vast expanse of the Soviet Union. Eventually, Stalin told them that the prisoners were freed, but had not yet arrived to the assembly location for Anders’ army at Buzuluk. Unknown to Sikorski and Anders at the time of the exchange, the men would never arrive. In subsequent recollections on the period, Anders would recount the frustration that accompanied his attempts to locate the men and to find out what had happened to the thousands of men formerly interned in the Kozelsk, Starobelsk, and Ostashkov camps. More than 8,000 commissioned and thousands of non-commissioned officers were still unaccounted for by Anders throughout his time in the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶ When Radio Berlin announced the “discovery” of the mass graves to the world and accompanied a list of the names of the Katyn victims that matched the missing officers from the camps, Anders could “not have doubts” about what happened to the missing men.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Paul, *Katyn: The Untold Story of Stalin’s Polish Massacre*, 172.

¹⁰⁶ Anders, *Zbrodnia Katyńska w Świetle Dokumentów*, v.

¹⁰⁷ Anders, *Zbrodnia Katyńska w Świetle Dokumentów*, vi

In the foreword of *Zbrodnia Katyńska*, Anders identifies several factors as the motivation for the study. Of the utmost significance to the work, Anders classifies the compilation and publication of the study as a reaction to the omission of Katyń in the Nuremberg Trial verdicts.¹⁰⁸ The work seeks to act as an intervention into government representations of the crime, by giving a “true” account of the affair, which had been shrouded in misinformation and silence.¹⁰⁹ Throughout the work, the *Zbrodnia Katyńska* contributors provide a historical background to the capture of the Polish officers, the deportations and mass executions of these officers, a reconstruction of the events leading up to the discovery of the mass graves in Katyń, *Zbrodnia Katyńska* is divided into four sections: before the “disclosure” of the mass graves, the disclosure of the crime and published documents, additional Polish documentation, and concluding analysis of *who* perpetrated the mass executions of the Polish officers found in the Katyń Forest.¹¹⁰ The work utilizes documents from the German and Soviet governments, photographs of the mass graves, diaries and other personal documents from the murdered Polish prisoners, Soviet newspapers from 1940 found on the bodies of the prisoners, and other documentary evidence on the mass executions. The work concludes with the argument that the Soviet NKVD was responsible for the crimes committed in the Katyń Forest.

Following the publication of *Zbrodnia Katyńska* in London, the work was “widely and repeatedly” circulated in the Polish underground.¹¹¹ The work became known as the seminal

¹⁰⁸ Anders. *Zbrodnia Katyńska w Świetle Dokumentów*, vi-vii.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, vii.

¹¹⁰ Anders. *Zbrodnia Katyńska w Świetle Dokumentów*, vii-xvi.

¹¹¹ Etkind, Finnin, Blacker, et al. *Remembering Katyn*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 2012, 17.

bridge between the Polish émigrés outside of the PRL and activists living within the PRL. In the following chapter of this project, the Powązkowski Cemetery and representations of the Katyń in the PRL will be explored. In addition to the impact that the publication had on representations of Katyń in the PRL, the publication had lasting effects on subsequent publications and studies on Katyń by Polish émigrés across the world, notably in the United States and Great Britain. The work would be published in an English language edition of the work in 1965 on the twentieth anniversary of the Nuremberg Trials.¹¹² In 1989, a fifth edition of the work would be published, just one year before the release of the Katyń documents by Soviet premiere Mikhail Gorbachev.

The Cold War, American Media, and Death in the Forest: The Story of the Katyn Forest Massacre, 1962

Until the publication of *Death in the Forest: The Story of the Katyn Massacre* by J.K. Zawodny in 1962, Anna Cienciala, Natalia S. Lebedeva, and Wojciech Materski argue that the American media was relatively silent about Katyń.¹¹³ Upon further investigation, this claim does not withstand scrutiny. Between the “discovery” of the mass graves in 1943 and the publication of *Death in the Forest* in 1962, hundreds of articles and letters to the editor were published in the *New York Times* on the issue of Katyń alone within the United States. In 1952, over 80 articles and letters to the editor were published in the wake of the House of Representatives’ investigation on the issue of Katyń in the *New York Times*.

¹¹² Władysław Anders. *The Crime of Katyn: Facts & Documents*. London: Polish Cultural Foundation. 1965.

¹¹³ Cienciala, Lebedeva, and Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 242.

Following the “Sovietization” of Eastern Europe and the onset of hostile relations between the United States and the Soviet Union in the late 1940s, a renewed and distinctly politicized interest in the “truth” about the ‘Katyn Forest Massacre’ was undertaken by members of the United States government. On September 18th, 1951, the House of Representatives voted unanimously to “conduct an investigation of the facts, evidence, and circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre.”¹¹⁴ Through this announcement and subsequent explanations, the introduction of the terms “the Katyn Forest massacre” and “Katyn massacre” appeared in the English language lexicon to describe the mass executions in the Katyń Forest.

The Select Committee tasked with conducting the investigation were members of the United States House of Representative that hailed from districts with high numbers of Polish émigrés and Polish-Americans in their constituencies. The Committee held hearings during the height of the Korean War, interviewing American and Polish émigrés, members of the Nuremberg prosecution team, three German officers questioned at Nuremberg such as Colonel Friedrich Ahrens (the German Colonel who discovered the mass graves in the Katyń Forest), and Polish figures such as General Władysław Anders.¹¹⁵

In American media outlets like the *New York Times*, the hearings were extensively covered throughout the early months of 1952. The coverage of the hearings produced many visceral reactions among members of American “Polonia,” as well as the Polish Embassy within the United States. One such editorial “Repercussions of Katyn,” detailed the contention between

¹¹⁴ Sanford. *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940*, 142.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 143.

the Polish Embassy and the Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, as well as the repercussions of the congressional hearings.¹¹⁶ In early March 1952, the Polish Embassy published a press release that accused the United States of using “poisoned weapons inherited from Goebbels” in its investigation of Katyn, such as the German documents on the crime.¹¹⁷ In response, Secretary of State Acheson barred the Polish Embassy from producing further publications on the Katyn investigation. The editorial’s anonymous author highlights perceptions of Katyn in the political memory landscape of the war in the United States at the time, as the author notes that Katyn was the “most grisly incident” of the Second World War.¹¹⁸

Following the editorial’s publication, a series of editorial letters were received in response to the contents and claims of the March 23rd editorial. In one such editorial titled, “To Make Katyn Possible,” Nathaniel Kleitman argued that through the “heat of the argument over which side did the brutal killings—and both regimes were equally mendacious and equally capable of committing mass murder—one overlooks the original crime perpetrated by the Soviet Government....slave labor.”¹¹⁹ Within the editorial letter, Kleitman notes that Katyn was only made possible due to the detainment and forced labor of the Polish prisoners of war by the Soviet Union. In response to Kleitman’s editorial, former United States Ambassador to Poland, Arthur Bliss Lane, refuted many of the points made by Kleitman as “errors of fact,” with particular

¹¹⁶ "REPERCUSSIONS OF KATYN." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Mar 23, 1952.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Nathaniel Kleitman, "To make Katyn Possible." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Apr 02, 1952.

emphasis on Kleitman's argument on forced labor.¹²⁰ Lane notes that the Polish officers that were executed were not "detained as slave laborers in the guise of prisoners of war," but rather "prisoners even though no declaration of war against Poland had been by the Soviet Union" until the deportation of the Polish officers by the Soviet Union between the months of "March to May 1940."¹²¹ Lane admonishes the *New York Times* for publishing such a letter as Kleitman's editorial and states "...it is obviously highly important that the American public should not accept the distorted and completely false information given out by Pravda [the Soviet state media outlet] after the graves of those murdered men were found in 1943."¹²² Lane's editorial was met with response from Kleitman, who stated that the dates utilized by Kleitman in his letter to disprove Kleitman's forced labor claims, "proved to himself [Lane] that the extermination of the officers in question was done by the Soviet authorities."¹²³ Within the editorial, Kleitman notes that "the public at large does not seem convinced that this occurred...hence the appointment of a Congressional committee to look into the matter [of Katyn]."¹²⁴ The exchange of letters between Arthur Bliss Lane and Nathaniel Kleitman provide an important glimpse into the many debates that political figures and members of American society had about the issue of Katyn during the House of Representatives' investigation. As noted in the previous chapter, Katyn remained a source of contention between the German and Soviet governments. Within the United States, the

¹²⁰ Arthur Bliss Lane. "Katyn's Polish Officers." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Apr 11, 1952.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Nathaniel Kleitman. "Probing the Katyn Massacre." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Apr 30, 1952.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

issue of Katyń also remained a source of contention between the Polish embassy, American political officials, and American society.

Following the series of investigations, the House of Representatives' report concluded that the Soviet NKVD was responsible for the "Katyn massacre." The findings of the report brought along more concerns than intended political usages of the Katyn massacre for the United States House of Representatives. In the conclusion of the investigation, the committee became gravely anxious over the discovery of the State and War Department's cover-up of the truth, the acceptance of the Soviet narrative of "truth" about the massacre, and the perceived abandonment of the London Poles by the United States following the Yalta Conference.¹²⁵ In the end, these discoveries would be utilized as a political strategy by the Republicans in an attempt to gain East European voters away from Democrats in the 1952 election.¹²⁶ Though the investigation has been viewed as a rather anticlimactic event in the tensions between the United States and Soviet Union, the investigation led way to a hospitable environment in which Polish émigré in the United States could produce publications, like *Death in the Forest: The Story of the Katyn Massacre*.

At the height of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, the groundbreaking study, *Death in the Forest: The Story of the Katyn Massacre* by J.K. Zawodny, was published by the University of Notre Dame Press in 1962. Scholar George Sanford refers to the work as "the best public examination of the Katyn evidence," until the Soviet documentation

¹²⁵Sanford. *Katyń and the Soviet Massacre of 1940*, 144.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

of Katyn became available in 1990 and subsequent analyses of these materials by Russian scholars, Natalia S. Lebedeva and Vladimir Abarinov were produced.¹²⁷ While several scholars have praised the work for its merit and for its objective focus on the Polish, Soviet, and German government evidence, testimonies, and other supporting documents, there has not been substantial discussion on Zawodny as a historical actor in the process of memory making of Katyn in the Polish émigré community.¹²⁸

Born in Poland, Janusz Kazimierz Zawodny was a Polish historian and political scientist. During the outbreak of the Second World War, Zawodny was a soldier in the Polish army. On September 24, 1939, Zawodny was captured by the Soviet army. He was set to be deported by the NKVD following his capture by Soviet forces. Zawodny escaped through the Soviet-German border and returned to Warsaw. During the German occupation of Poland, he fought in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. Following the capitulation of Warsaw on October 5th, 1944, he was taken prisoner and interned in a German prison camp. After the liberation of the camp, Zawodny joined the Second Polish Army corps, in the military unit led by General Władysław Anders in Italy. Following the end of the Second World War and the institution of the Soviet aligned government in the PRL, he emigrated to the United States. He received his academic training and Ph.D. from Stanford University in 1955.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Please see George Sanford in *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940*. New York: Routledge. 2005, 144 and 149; Anna M. Cieniala, Natalia S. Lebedeva, and Wojciech Materski. *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007, 242.

¹²⁹ Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (Institute of National Remembrance) "Janusz Kazimierz Zawodny (1921–2012)." Instytut Pamięci Narodowej. Accessed March 09, 2018. <https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/konkursy-i-nagrody/nagroda-kustosz-pamieci/2003/24231,Janusz-Kazimierz-Zawodny-19212012.html>.

Zawodny's first major publication, *Death in the Forest: The Story of the Katyn Forest Massacre*, attempts to reconstruct the "fate" of the thousands of Polish officers murdered in the Katyn Forest near Smolensk.¹³⁰ The author sought to answer the questions:

- 1). Who killed these men?
- 2). How were they killed?
- 3). Why were they killed? ¹³¹

The work is divided into nine chapters, examining the immediate historical context of the captured Polish officers grounded in the preconditions to the commencement of the Second World War to "problems caused by Katyn" in the 1950s.¹³² Throughout the monograph, Zawodny utilizes and analyzes government documents in an attempt to answer the questions put forth by the study. Within the third chapter of the work titled "The Inconvenient Allies — Alive and Dead," Zawodny provides invaluable insight into some of the perceptions that ordinary Poles had prior to the "discovery" of the mass graves by German forces and the publications of the Katyn lists:

"When the discovery of the graves in Katyn was announced, I was in Warsaw. It was generally believed by the Poles that this was a hoax to drive a wedge between the Soviet Union and the other Allies and that Goebbels was wielding the hammer. Then the first list of names and the pictures appeared in the daily (German-controlled) paper. The name-lists were read in radio broadcasts. The Polish delegations returned from Katyn spreading their observations. It was true! The Underground community had its own sources at the science for verification—

¹³⁰ J.K. Zawodny, *Death in the Forest: The Story of the Katyn Forest Massacre*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. 1962, x.

¹³¹ Zawodny, *Death in the Forest: The Story of the Katyn Forest Massacre*, x.

¹³² Ibid, xi-xii.

they confirmed. The crescendo of German propaganda might as well not have existed. The Underground knew for certain that the Polish prisoners-of-war had been killed on Soviet territory. **But by whom?**”¹³³

The selected quote from Zawodny’s *Death in the Forest* further elucidates upon the effect of the German Nazi propaganda campaign on ordinary Poles living in German occupied Poland that was previously examined in the last chapter of this thesis project. Within the final chapter of the work, Zawodny examines present problems created by the legacy of Katyn in the contemporary PRL. Zawodny analyzes the suppression of the Katyn massacre by the PRL government through assassinations, propaganda publications, and relative government suppression of the “truth” about the Katyn crime. The work utilizes a wide breath of available documentation in the German, Polish, Russian, and English languages that provides significant insight into the understandings of Katyn by contemporaries. In addition to the elucidation upon the perceptions held by Poles in response to the discovery of the Katyn, the work also highlights an important attribute of the Katyn story that scholars have overlooked: the role of the FRG (West Germany). Throughout the study, Zawodny utilized German documentation and archival materials from the FRG. In the concluding chapter of the work, Zawodny asserts that the West German press does not consider the Katyn case closed. In the FRG, German public opinion “does not wish Germany to be blamed for this murder.”¹³⁴

As evidenced through a brief examination of the work, the politics of memory played a significant role in the publication of *Death in the Forest*, particularly due to the author’s access

¹³³ Ibid, 111.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 176.

to the West German documentary materials. The legacy of *Death in the Forest* is resounding. In present-day studies of the mass executions of the Polish officers, police officers, and members of the intelligentsia, Zawodny's contribution is still heavily utilized. Zawodny's contribution to the historiography demonstrates a dual project of the history and memory makings of Katyń.

Did the work influence ordinary Poles living within the PRL? While the work left an inconsequential impact on the English language speaking communities in the United States and Great Britain, it is difficult to postulate whether *Death in the Forest* made quite the impact as *Zbrodnia Katyńska* did in the PRL. *Zbrodnia Katyńska* made an invaluable impact on the founding memorialization culture of the Powązkowski Cemetery in Warsaw. We will briefly analyze the processes and representation of memorialization in the following chapter in locations within the PRL, like the Powązkowski Military Cemetery in Warsaw.

CHAPTER FOUR: REPRESENTATIONS OF KATYŃ BY POLES LIVING WITHIN THE PRL

Introduction

Representations of Katyń by ordinary Poles living within the PRL was a dangerous endeavor to undertake following the institution of a Soviet aligned government in the PRL. In official state memory, the perpetrators of the crime were German forces and the crime was committed during the German occupation of Smolensk in 1941. Throughout the existence of the PRL, there was only one written work legally published on the issue of Katyń. Published in 1952, Bolesław Wójcicki's *Prawda o Katyniu* (The Truth About Katyń) posited that Katyń was the work of German forces during the German occupation of Smolensk in 1941.¹³⁵ Within *Prawda o Katyniu*, Wójcicki argues against the ongoing United States House of Representatives' investigation on the Katyń as a "violation of the sovereignty of Poland."¹³⁶ In its essence, *Prawda o Katyniu* represented the official state's representation and official memory of Katyń. In private and collective memories of ordinary Poles, the official state memory was rejected in many cases.¹³⁷

Powązkowski Military Cemetery, Warsaw

Despite the legal and potentially fatal risks, acts of commemoration and representation did occur behind the gates of cemeteries and churches. Until the *Solidarność* period, public

¹³⁵ Sławomir Kalbarczyk. *Zbrodnia Katyńska: W Kręgu Prawdy I Kłamstwa*. Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2002, 85.

¹³⁶ Piotr H Kosicki and Tolczyk, Dariusz. "Forests, Families, and Films." *East European Politics & Societies and Cultures* 29, no. 4 (2015): 738.

¹³⁷ Piotr Madajczyk, "Experience and Memory: The Second World War in Poland," in *Experience and Memory: The Second World War in Europe*. New York: Berghahn Books. 2010, 76.

memorialization of Katyn took the form of the sacralization and memorialization of the dead in spaces like cemeteries. One of the most well-known locations of the contested memorialization of Katyn between the government and ordinary Poles in the PRL is the Powązkowski Military Cemetery in Warsaw. The cemetery holds a cultural and political significance to Poles. The cemetery holds the graves of many fallen Poles during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. The main site of memorialization to the Katyn victims is the space adjacent to the monument to the wartime forces of the Polish underground, Armia Krajowa (AK, hereafter).¹³⁸ The monument was built in 1946, containing a black obelisk crowned by a Polish eagle and inscribed with the date 1939-1945 and the phrase “Gloria Victis” (“Glory to the Vanquished”).¹³⁹ The circulation of *Zbrodnia Katynska* by the Polish underground in the PRL would make an inconsequential impact on the commemoration of the Katyn dead in Warsaw’s Powązkowski Military Cemetery.¹⁴⁰ The monument in the Powązkowski Cemetery would soon become a place of pilgrimage and commemoration to the executed Polish prisoners of war in Katyn and those who were killed during the Warsaw Uprising in the late 1940s.¹⁴¹ In the contemporaries’ understanding, Katyn would be equated with the loss and mourning experienced in the wake of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. The Warsaw Uprising represented an event of significant loss to Poles in the early years of the PRL.

It is critical to note that throughout the early representations and commemorations of Katyn in the Powązkowski Military Cemetery, the focal point of the commemoration was on the

¹³⁸ Etkind, Finnin, Blacker, et al. *Remembering Katyn*, 18.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 19.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 18.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 19.

memory of the dead, rather than asserting *who* killed the Polish officers and *when* through these representations. Nevertheless, the commemorations posed a real threat to the government of the PRL.¹⁴² In 1959 on All Souls' Day, a wooden cross was placed in the cemetery with the inscription: "Symbolic grave of the 12,000 Polish officers murdered in Katyn'. They were Poles, and they died on foreign soil at the hands of a brutal enemy. They deserve to be remembered and to be honored."¹⁴³ The wooden cross was removed, and an immediate government backed investigation took place. Although the PRL government first suspected the involvement of the AK, the identity of the person that erected the cross was soon revealed: Ludwika Dymecka, the wife of executed Polish officer Wojciech Dymecki, whose name was mentioned on the Katyn' List.¹⁴⁴ Prior to the confession, Dymecka had been caught distributing pamphlets and leaflets on the site.¹⁴⁵ The investigative team decided not to pursue charges against Dymecka, due to the "mental illness" that she was allegedly suffering from, as determined by PRL officials.¹⁴⁶ Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, other Poles would erect crosses and flowers on the site, building upon Dymecka's initial project. The continued, clandestine memorialization was spread by word of mouth among Warsaw's residents.

¹⁴² Ibid, 18.

¹⁴³ Jacek Sawicki. "Zanim powstała Dolinka Katyn'ska." Tygodnik Powszechny. September 22, 2007. Accessed March 09, 2018. <https://www.tygodnikpowszechny.pl/zanim-powstala-dolinka-katynska-137723>.

¹⁴⁴ Sawicki. "Zanim powstała Dolinka Katyn'ska." <https://www.tygodnikpowszechny.pl/zanim-powstala-dolinka-katynska-137723>

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Etkind, Finnin, Blacker, et al. *Remembering Katyn*, 19.

In addition to the clandestine memorialization and commemoration at the Powązkowski Military Cemetery, the memory of the Katyń dead was also constructed and maintained within the Katyń families (*Rodziny Katyńskie*). “Rodziny Katyńskie” refers to the families that lost a family member in the series of mass executions that came to be collectively known as “Katyń.” Because the Katyń families could not publicly discuss the loss of their family members without fear of legal retribution, the memories of their executed family members were often told through stories told in the privacy of their homes:

“Someone recently asked me how old I was when my father decided to tell me about my grandfather, who was killed at Katyń. In Communist Poland, people were afraid of this knowledge, as a child could show off such a story on the playground or at school—and the family would be in real trouble! I didn’t understand the question, because there was one thing Dad did not tolerate: fear. I always knew that my grandfather was killed by the “Russians” in Katyń—and I also always knew that what was said at home with family was not discussed outside the house. But in hearing such a question, I understood that beneath it lies the greatest drama of contemporary Polish history, a drama of remembrance: that there were such homes in which fear did not allow children to be taught the truth. Perhaps this is why we, Katyń Families, are able to exist for so many years. We simply tell our stories.”¹⁴⁷

Ludwika Dymecka, a member of the Katyń families, inspired further clandestine efforts at the memorialization site in the Powązkowski Military Cemetery. The representations of remembrance and mourning at the Powązkowski Military Cemetery would often coincide with significant dates to Poles: the anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising on August 1st, the anniversary of the Crime of Katyń, the anniversary of the invasion of Poland by the Soviet Union on September

¹⁴⁷ Izabella Sariusz-Skapska, “The Katyń Families: A Polish Lesson in Contemporary History,” *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*. Vol.29, No. 4. pp.769.

17th, and All Saints Day on November 1st.¹⁴⁸ Government officials would soon remove the crosses, flowers, and other relics to the memory of the Katyń dead. The site would become known as “Dolinka Katyńska—Katyń’s Hollow.” Throughout the existence of the PRL, the commemoration of Katyń in the Powązkowski Military Cemetery would become “a war of monuments” between the government and ordinary Polish citizens.¹⁴⁹ This war of monuments would reach a height during the Solidarność period in the early 1980s.

Solidarność

During the mid-1970s, Poland’s economy began to dramatically deteriorate.¹⁵⁰ In response to the worsening economic conditions and the perceived inefficiency of the government, tensions and unrest arose among Polish workers across the country. On June 25th, 1976, the first notable widespread strikes erupted across Poland. Workers from at least 130 factories went on strike and took to the streets to protest the unexpected, steep price increases of food items across Poland. This announced was given by the Polish Sejm the day prior to the strikes.¹⁵¹ Soon, the call for action in workers’ protests transitioned from economic concerns to demands for human rights and autonomy among Poles living within the PRL. In August 1980, approximately one million workers

¹⁴⁸ Sawicki. "Zanim powstała Dolinka Katyńska." <https://www.tygodnikpowszechny.pl/zanim-powstala-dolinka-katynska-137723>

¹⁴⁹ Lech Wałęsa. *The Struggle and the Triumph*. New York: Arcade Publishing. 1991, 112.

¹⁵⁰ Jan Kubik, *The Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power: the Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Communism in Poland*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press. 1994, 17.

¹⁵¹ Kubik, *The Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power: the Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Communism in Poland*, 18.

assembled in factory halls and shipyards demanding human rights and autonomy across the PRL.¹⁵²

Amid these protests and strikes, one of the most significant movements in modern Polish history was born. Following a series of workers' strikes in response to the termination of Anna Walentynowicz at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk, the independent trade union Solidarność (Solidarity) was formed out of a series of negotiations between PRL officials and trade union workers in 1980.¹⁵³ The negotiations came in the aftermath of strikes across the country over Walentynowicz's termination, due to her support of trade unions. The termination came just fifty days before her scheduled retirement.¹⁵⁴ The termination shocked the nation, as Walentynowicz represented the many trials that the nation had experienced within the tumultuous twentieth century. Walentynowicz was an orphan of the Second World War, a single parent, and a skilled crane operator of thirty years in the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk. Walentynowicz's termination was based on her political opposition to the PRL government, through her support of trade unions. Another unemployed worker at the Lenin Shipyard, Lech Wałęsa, inspired Walentynowicz's coworkers at the Shipyard to strike.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Shana Penn. *Solidarity's Secret: the Women who Defeated Communism in Poland*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 2005, 3.

¹⁵³ Anna Walentynowicz. *Cień przyszłości*. Kraków: Arcana. 2005, 194.

¹⁵⁴ Magdalena Kubow, "The Solidarity Movement in Poland: Its History and Meaning in Collective Memory," *The Polish Review*. 18 December 2013, Vol.58(2), pp.10.

¹⁵⁵ Kubow, "The Solidarity Movement in Poland: Its History and Meaning in Collective Memory," pp.10

From its inception, Solidarność had “sought to limit itself” to trade union specific issues and not partake in national politics.¹⁵⁶ Solidarność was the first and only free trade union movement formed in the “Soviet bloc.”¹⁵⁷ Solidarność was also the only movement to be legally recognized by a communist, Soviet aligned government until the declaration of martial law and the subsequent legal dissolution of Solidarność was implemented on December 12, 1981. The trade union movement soon began to concern itself with more than just trade union specific issues. After one year, over ten million people belonged to Solidarność from across the PRL. Solidarność was the largest and “most successful display” of political activism to emerge in Soviet aligned countries during the post-war period.¹⁵⁸ Solidarność members had created an independent press, adult education courses, political clubs, and more in the PRL.¹⁵⁹ Even before the declaration of martial law, Solidarność became a symbol of anticommunist protest to ordinary Poles throughout the country. Thus, it is within this political-economic context that the “symbolic war” between the PRL’s government, the Catholic Church, and opposition movements like Solidarność occurred.¹⁶⁰ One of the most pressing issues and symbols utilized in this “war” was Katyn. For Poles living within the PRL, the issue of the Katyn crime transitioned

¹⁵⁶ Thomas Ekman Jørgensen, "Solidarity, Poland." In *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*: Oxford University Press, 2010.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/view/10.1093/acref/9780195334685.001.0001/acref-9780195334685-e-668>.

¹⁵⁷ Penn. *Solidarity's Secret: the Women who Defeated Communism in Poland*, 3

¹⁵⁸ Penn. *Solidarity's Secret: the Women who Defeated Communism in Poland*, 3

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Kubik, *The Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power: the Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Communism in Poland*, 17.

from a war of commemoration and remembrance to a war of protest and symbols used against communist government officials during the Solidarność period.

Katyń in Solidarność Speeches, Publications, and Protests at the Powązkowski Military Cemetery

Throughout the August 1980 strikes at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk, shipyard workers were cognizant of the “larger” issues at hand for ordinary Poles living within the PRL.¹⁶¹ Even before the trade union movement was legally formed in September 1980, the issue of Katyń appeared as a concern to workers on strike in the Lenin Shipyard. The workers behind the August 1980 strikes demanded for the reinstatement of Anna Walentynowicz and Lech Wałęsa at the shipyard, the director’s guarantees of no future reprisals against workers on strike, a pay raise of two thousand złoty, and a memorial to the murdered workers who were killed in the December 1970 protests.¹⁶² Amidst a disagreement between the shipyard director and workers over the placement and possibility of the memorial, an angry worker responded:

“We are haggling over dead bodies like blind beggars under the lamp post. You’re talking about planning problems....people have been waiting for a monument to fifteen thousand Polish soldiers murdered by the Soviet government in Katyń thirty years,,,I beg your pardon forty years....how much longer...”¹⁶³

As the strikes evolved, so did the “symbolic dimension” of the strikes. Through symbols, ceremonies, and writings, workers were able to express their feelings, emotions, and thoughts

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 185.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Timothy Garton Ash. *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity*. New York: Charles Schibner’s Sons. 1983, 40.

surrounding a multitude of political, economic, social, and “existential” issues like Katyn.¹⁶⁴ During the Solidarność period, the crime of Katyn was frequently mentioned throughout Solidarność’s publications. In doing so, Solidarność built upon the efforts made by the clandestine “Katyn Institute,” by publishing its own editions and translations of Katyn documentation previously published outside Poland.¹⁶⁵ At Solidarność’s First Congress in Gdańsk-Oliwa in September-October 1981, the trade union movement’s “feelings” over Katyn emerged on the political, public stage. The First Congress’ building had Katyn memorial posters decorating the walls, and materials on the subject for sale.¹⁶⁶ The issue was also frequently raised in government negotiations and debates between Solidarność and government officials prior to the institution of martial law in 1981.¹⁶⁷

At the height of the Solidarność period, commemorations for the Katyn dead continued at the Powązkowski Military Cemetery in Warsaw. On July 31, 1981, Solidarność member Stefan Melak led a group of thirty-seven people to Dolinka Katynska—the contested memorial site for the Katyn dead—in the Powązkowski Military Cemetery. Melak had been participating in the clandestine memorialization of the Katyn dead at the cemetery for many years. Melak and his fellows erected a memorial that would be rather difficult for government officials to remove. The memorial was a massive stone cross, weighing nearly four tons and measuring at four meters

¹⁶⁴ Kubik, *The Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power: the Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Communism in Poland*, 186.

¹⁶⁵ Piotr H. Kosicki, “Forests, Families, and Films: Polish Memory of Katyn, 1943-2015,” *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*. Vol. 29 (4). November 2015. pp.738.

¹⁶⁶ Sanford, *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice, and Memory*, 214.

¹⁶⁷ Sanford, *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice, and Memory*, 214.

tall.¹⁶⁸ With his brother Arkadiusz, Father Wacław Karłowicz, and many others, Melak began the construction of the memorial in 1979. The memorial read: “Katyń, Ostaszków, Kozielsk, Starobielsk, 1940.”¹⁶⁹ The date on the memorial was a radical break from previous memorialization of the Katyń dead at the Powązkowski Cemetery. Prior to the erection of this memorial, the issue of *when* the mass executions of the Polish soldiers did not appear in memorialization and representations within the cemetery. During the Solidarność period, the memorial was erected as a political, protest symbol of remembrance—the date was a severe formal accusation of the Soviet culpability of the crime.¹⁷⁰ PRL government officials quickly dismantled the memorial the following night.

Four years after the dismantlement and disappearance of the Melak memorial, PRL government officials erected their own memorial to the Katyń dead in the Powązkowski Cemetery.¹⁷¹ The memorial bore the year “1941” and attributed the deaths of 4,321 Polish officers to “Hitlerite fascism.”¹⁷² The inscription read: “To the Polish soldiers-victims of the Hitlerite fascism that arose on the soil of Katyn.”¹⁷³ News of the government backed memorial spread by word of mouth in Warsaw. The memorial outraged many Warsaw residents over the

¹⁶⁸ Etkind, Finnin, Blacker, et al. *Remembering Katyn*, 20.

¹⁶⁹ Note: The memorial uses the Polish words for the names of the sites where the mass executions of Polish officers either took place or the camps in which the Polish officers had been deported from prior to their executions: Ostaszków=Ostashkov, Kozielsk=Kozelsk, Starobielsk=Starobelsk.

¹⁷⁰ Etkind, Finnin, Blacker, et al. *Remembering Katyn*, 20.

¹⁷¹ Michael T. Kaufman, “Poland Erects Ambiguous Memorial to Victims of Katyn Massacre.” *The New York Times*. (Warsaw, Poland) 10 April 1985.

¹⁷² Kaufman, “Poland Erects Ambiguous Memorial to Victims of Katyn Massacre.”

¹⁷³ Ibid.

inscriptions on the memorial, stating that the officers murdered at Katyn were executed by German forces. In a *New York Times* article, one “young engineer” stated that, “It is simply shocking to blame Katyn on the Germans when everyone knows who was responsible.”¹⁷⁴ The “war of monuments” would continue. Immediately following the erection of the government backed memorial, Warsaw residents scratched “1940-N.K.V.D.” into the memorial. Alongside the memorial, thirty memorial candles flickered. Many Poles held the view that the Katyn dead and the rest of the 15,000 Polish officers were murdered by the NKVD. In 1987, protestors installed a plaque directly citing the Soviets as responsible for the murders at Katyn. Following the collapse of communism within the country in 1989, the Melak memorial was “found” and reinstalled at the site in 1995.¹⁷⁵

Katyn as the Test of Glasnost: Representation in Government Debates and the Role of Contingency in the Release of the Documents

On December 12, 1981, General Jaruzelski declared martial law in the PRL. Following the institution of martial law, Solidarność was outlawed. Thousands of members of the trade union movement, like Lech Wałęsa, were arrested. While Solidarność was illegal within the PRL, the trade union movement did not cease its political efforts. The organization simply went underground. In the aftermath of the declaration of martial law, seven Solidarność members—notably all women—helped form the vital, clandestine networks for the trade union movement to continue its efforts.¹⁷⁶ Following the declaration of martial law and the suppression of

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Etkind, Finnin, Blacker, et al. *Remembering Katyn*, 20.

¹⁷⁶ Penn. *Solidarity's Secret: the Women who Defeated Communism in Poland*, 100.

Solidarność, homemade banners with the words “Katyń” and “Solidarność” appeared throughout Polish cemeteries accompanying candles and memorials.¹⁷⁷

Two years after the declaration was given, martial law would come to an end in Poland. Solidarność members, like Wałęsa, were free to return to work.¹⁷⁸ Solidarność would largely continue to operate underground until *glasnost* reached Poland in the late 1980s. In 1985, the new head of the Soviet communist party, Mikhail Gorbachev, instituted a series of policies (perestroika and glasnost) that would have profound effects on the Katyń issue in the PRL. Perestroika refers to the policy of restructuring the economic structure of the USSR. Glasnost refers to the policy of ‘openness,’ restructuring the political system of the USSR as a more democratized apparatus.¹⁷⁹ Because of glasnost, media was allowed more literary freedoms. This would have profound effects on the release of the Katyń documents and the announcement of the Soviet responsibility for the crime of Katyń by Gorbachev in 1990. In addition to the institution of glasnost, Gorbachev and General Jaruzelski of the PRL established a joint historical commission to investigate “blank spots” in the two countries shared histories, namely over the issue of Katyń in 1987.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Joanna Niżyńska. “The Politics of Mourning and the Crisis Symbolic Language after April 10,” *East European Politics and Societies*. Vol. 24, Number 4. Fall 2010, pp.471.

¹⁷⁸ Wałęsa. *The Struggle and the Triumph*., 64.

¹⁷⁹ Sergey Arsenteyevich Vodovozov and Geoffrey Alan Hosking. "Russia." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. March 10, 2018. Accessed March 12, 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia/The-Gorbachev-era-perestroika-and-glasnost>.

¹⁸⁰ Jackson Diehl, “Exhuming a Massacre,” *The Washington Post*. (Washington D.C.) 17 February 1989.

In Poland, perestroika and glasnost's effects reached the country slowly. In *Struggle and Triumph*, Lech Wałęsa notes that in 1987, while “perestroika had not yet reached Poland...its effects were beginning to be felt, and one of those effects was to offer us a new alternative.”¹⁸¹ Following the government of the PRL's announcements of price increases in early 1988, strikes broke out across Poland. Throughout the majority of 1988, strikes occurred across the country in shipyards, factories, steel yards, and mines. Among the back drop of the strikes in the early spring of 1988, Poles learned that Gorbachev was set to visit Poland on July 11, 1988.¹⁸² The visit would highlight the continued significance of Katyń among Poles. In a United Press International newspaper article dated July 10th, 1988, Katyń was listed as the “biggest test of glasnost” ahead of Gorbachev's scheduled visit to Poland in summer 1988.¹⁸³ Within the article, Polish Cardinal Josef Glemp stated that the “most important problem is Katyń.”¹⁸⁴ While Gorbachev did not discuss Katyń during his visit to Poland in July 1988, Katyń would soon become the test of glasnost for an unlikely adversary against the Soviet Union—the communist government of the PRL.

At the end of 1988 and early 1989, Solidarność leaders engaged in several round table talks with PRL government officials. Amidst these round table talks, the PRL's official state newspaper *Odrodzenie* published documentary evidence on the Katyń crime in February 1989. Within the publication, the Polish communist authorities declared that Soviet forces were the

¹⁸¹ Wałęsa. *The Struggle and the Triumph*, 113.

¹⁸² Ibid., 148-149.

¹⁸³ Bogdan Turek, “Katyn is a test of glasnost.” *United Press International*. (Warsaw). 10 July 1988.

¹⁸⁴ Turek, “Katyn is a test of glasnost.” 10 July 1988.

perpetrators of the Katyn crime. The report also cited the murders of at least 4,200 Polish officers at the hands of Soviet forces.¹⁸⁵ The report was the first official state account published throughout the entire existence of the PRL that posited Soviet forces were the perpetrators of the Katyn crime. The report's publishing was the true test of glasnost for Poles and the Polish government over the issue of Katyn. There was no military, legal, or punitive action taken against the Polish government by the Soviet government in response to the report's publishing.

The round table discussions between Solidarność and PRL government officials ended with an agreement calling for unrestricted elections to 35% of the Polish Sejm, with the rest reserved for Soviet aligned Polish communist party members and all of the available seats in the Senat. On April 17, 1989, Solidarność was legally reinstated and registered in the PRL.¹⁸⁶ In June 1989, Solidarność won 99 of the 100 of Senat seats and every available seat in the Sejm.¹⁸⁷ Following the elections, the Polish media increased their pressure for the truth surrounding Katyn.¹⁸⁸ In the August 19th, 1989 edition of *Polityka*, Polish historians recounted the known history of the Katyn crime and concluded that the NKVD were the perpetrators of the series of mass executions of Polish officers. On October 12th, the Polish press reported that the Polish prosecutor general "had requested his Soviet opposite number to conduct an investigation."¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Diehl, "Exhuming a Massacre," 17 February 1989.

¹⁸⁶ Wałęsa. *The Struggle and the Triumph*, 186.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 318.

¹⁸⁸ Cienciala, Lebedeva, and Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 248.

¹⁸⁹ Cienciala, Lebedeva, and Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 249.

Throughout government negotiations and conversations between the Polish and Soviet governments in late 1989 and early 1990, Katyń remained a central issue.

The events of November 1989 marked the symbolic end of communism in Eastern Europe. In political contemporaries' minds, however, the end of the Soviet Union was not yet a reality. In the early months of 1990, negotiations took place between Polish officials and Soviet officials over shared diplomatic concerns between the two states. On January 18th, 1990, Soviet Ambassador Vladimir Brokikov visited with Lech Wałęsa in Gdańsk. In a conversation between the two, Wałęsa noted that the "Communist system, maintained by military might, was slowly but surely receding into the past."¹⁹⁰ According to Wałęsa, the key to establishing new relations between the governments was to first:

"fill in the blank pages of Polish-Soviet history: those involving the USSR's attack on Poland on September 17, 1939; the massacres at Katyn Forest and elsewhere of fifteen thousands Poles, mostly officers and intellectuals; and the deportation of hundreds of thousand of Poles to Siberia for forced labor."¹⁹¹

On the forty-seventh anniversary of the Radio Berlin's announcement of the discovery of the mass graves at Katyń, the Soviet government announced its responsibility for the mass executions of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest on April 13th, 1990. The Soviet government officially accepted the blame for murdering over 15,000 Polish officers, who were interned in the Kozelsk, Starobelsk, and Ostashkov camps in the Soviet Union between March and June 1940. On April 14th, Gorbachev released selected documents to President Jaruzelski, to aid the Polish

¹⁹⁰ Wałęsa. *The Struggle and the Triumph*, 253.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

president, whose position was being challenged by “more liberal forces.”¹⁹² Even with the release of the “truth,” the announcement still produced great anxiety among Poles, like Wałęsa.¹⁹³ The issue of Katyn was not resolved in the minds of Poles.

In Polish collective memory and subsequent publications detailing the events of 1990, the successful efforts to gain the “truth” about Katyn from Soviet officials are often depicted and remembered as a result of the efforts of Solidarność and its leaders, like Lech Wałęsa.¹⁹⁴ While Solidarność played an inconsequential role in the events of 1989 and the “fall” of communism in Poland, it was the collective efforts of Solidarność, Polish officials, and contemporaries living within the Soviet Union that led to the release of the documents in 1990. In the Soviet Union, historians, scholars, and writers took a strong interest in the issue of Katyn in light of glasnost and the establishment of the joint commission to investigate shared “blank spots” in Polish-Soviet histories. On May 11, 1988, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* correspondent Vladimir Abarinov published an article positing that the NKVD was responsible for the crime, “Blank Spots: From Emotions to Fact.”¹⁹⁵ The reception of the article was critical; hundreds of editorial replies were submitted to the magazine refuting Abarinov’s claims. Throughout the various letter submissions, Abarinov received a letter of critical importance: from Alexei Lukin, a member of the 136th battalion that was stationed at Kozelsk in 1940. During a search through available

¹⁹² Esther B. Fein “Upheaval in the East; Gorbachev Hands Over Katyn Papers.” *The New York Times*. April 14, 1990.

¹⁹³ Wałęsa. *The Struggle and the Triumph*, 265.

¹⁹⁴ See Lech Wałęsa’s *Droga do wolności: 1985-1990, decydujące lata*. Warszawa: Editions Spotkania. 1991; *The Struggle and the Triumph*. New York: Arcade Publishing. 1991; and *Wszystko co robię, robię dla Polski: przemówienia, posłania, listy, 1990-1995*. Warszawa: Kanceleria Prezydenta RP: 1995.

¹⁹⁵ Satter. *It was a long time ago, and it never happened anyway: Russia and the communist past*, 240.

records on the 136th battalion, Abarinov found evidence that thousands of Polish officers who were held at Kozelsk were sent to Smolensk and never returned.¹⁹⁶

Following the Polish government's publication on documentation surrounding Katyn in February 1989, Soviet officials wrote in a note to the party Central Committee that the time was optimal to tell the truth about Katyn. In late March 1989, Russian historians Natalia Lebedeva, Yuri Zoria, and Valentina Parsadanova found documents in Soviet archives containing the names of Polish officers sent to the internment camps, like Kozelsk, Starobelsk, and Ostashkov.¹⁹⁷ Several Soviet officials advised Gorbachev to release the truth about Katyn to Polish President Jaruzelski. Gorbachev remained adamant that he would not do so. Two key factors finally pressed Gorbachev and the Politburo to admit Soviet culpability in Katyn in April 1990. In the early months of 1990, Polish President Jaruzelski sent an official memorandum stating that if Gorbachev would not release the truth surrounding Katyn, he would not proceed with his planned presidential visit to Moscow in April.¹⁹⁸ The second factor was more pressing and ultimately forced Gorbachev's hand.¹⁹⁹ On March 25, 1990, *Moskovskie Novosti* published documents on the 136th battalion compiled by Abarinov, an interview with Lebedeva, and the documents found by Lebedeva. The article was titled "The Katyn Tragedy" and it was published

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 241.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Cienciala, Lebedeva, and Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 252.

¹⁹⁹ Satter. *It was a long time ago, and it never happened anyway: Russia and the communist past*, 241.

without the government's permission.^{200,201} Lebedeva recalls the aftermath of the release of the documents as having the effect of a "bomb explosion."²⁰² On April 13th, the Soviet news agency TASS declared Soviet responsibility for the disappearances of over 14,000 Polish officers in 1940. The announcement declared that nearly 15,000 prisoners from the Kozelsk, Ostashkov, and Starobelsk prisoner camps had been transferred to the NKVD administrations in Smolensk, Voroshilovgrad, and Kalinin oblasts. They would not appear again in any subsequent NKVD records. The news agency reported that the documents were given to Polish authorities.²⁰³ The "truth" surrounding Katyń emerged as a process and the moment was contingent—the pressure placed upon Gorbachev by Soviet writers, journalists, and scholars led to the release of the documents in April 1990. It is vital to note that some elements of the "truth" surrounding Katyń were still shrouded in secrecy at the time of the documents' release in 1990.

Following the release of the documents to Jaruzelski and the announcement of Soviet responsibility of the crime, there still remained many unanswered questions surrounding the crime of Katyń. While the *who* and *when* had been answered by Soviet state officials surrounding the Katyń crime, there were several documents missing from the collection to answer the question: *why* were the Polish officers murdered? For many ordinary Poles, the questions surrounding *who* killed the Polish officers and *when* they had been murdered had already been answered in the memory making processes of Katyń. In the aftermath of the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 241.

²⁰¹ Cienciala, Lebedeva, and Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 252.

²⁰² Ibid. 252.

²⁰³ Ibid., 253.

documents' release, Poles continued to pressure Gorbachev for more information surrounding the mass executions.²⁰⁴ In response, Gorbachev ordered further investigation on Katyń in late 1990.

The collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 did not negatively affect the Katyń investigation. Rather, the collapse of the USSR provided the political conditions that made it possible for the release of the most damning document in the possession of the Soviet state over Katyń: the March 1940 Politburo order to execute the 21,000+ Polish officers.²⁰⁵ In December 1991, Gorbachev gave Russian President Boris Yeltsin the documents about Katyń, including the 1940 Politburo order in a final meeting of the Soviet state.²⁰⁶ Gorbachev encouraged Yeltsin to seriously consider the implications of the release of the documents, because "I am afraid they can lead to international complications. However, it is up to you to decide."²⁰⁷ After reading the documents, Yeltsin would not provide the documents to Polish officials for over ten months. In January 1992, Polish President Lech Wałęsa wrote to Yeltsin, requesting Polish officials' access to the archives surrounding 1939 and the invasion of Poland by the Soviet Union.²⁰⁸ This request would not be granted until the Russian state's release of the documents ten months later. On October 14th, 1992, Chief Russian Archivist Pikhoia delivered the documents, including the

²⁰⁴ Satter. *It was a long time ago, and it never happened anyway: Russia and the communist past*, 242.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 246.

²⁰⁶ Cienciala, Lebedeva, and Materski in *Katyń: A Crime without Punishment*, 256.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 254.

²⁰⁸ Lech Wałęsa, "Pan Borys Jelcyn, Prezydent Federacji Rosyjskiej, 12 stycznia 1992 (Letter to Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, January 12, 1992)" in *Wszystko co robię, robię dla Polski: przemówienia, posłania, listy, 1990-1995*. Warszawa: Kancelaria Prezydenta RP: 1995, 268.

March 1940 Politburo execution order, to President Wałęsa in Warsaw under the orders of Yeltsin. At the same time, the order was broadcasted on the Russian state news agency ITAR-TASS.²⁰⁹ The historical “truth” surrounding Katyń as we know it today was learned on October 14th, 1992.

In early March 1940, the fate of 21,000+ Polish military and police officers, and various members of the intelligentsia was sealed. In a review of the cases of over 21,000+ Polish prisoners of war, Josef Stalin ordered the execution of these persons, as “committed and incorrigible enemies of Soviet power.”²¹⁰ High ranking officials of the Soviet state, like Josef Stalin and Vyacheslav Molotov, signed the order.²¹¹ The order set the mass executions in motion. Many of the thousands of murdered Polish officers were not always shot at the site of the mass graves in places like the Katyń Forest as first believed during the initial exhumations of the site. Many officers were shot in an execution room in NKVD dachas and headquarters. About twenty percent of the victims had their hands tied behind their back and a rope binding tied from their necks to their hands. If the prisoners attempted to move, they would suffocate. Scholars like David Satter believe that the prisoners found with their hands tied behind their backs were likely shot at the burial sites, particularly marking them as prisoners that had attempted to resist before

²⁰⁹ Cienciala, Lebedeva, and Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 256.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ “Beria Memorandum to Joseph Stalin Proposing the Execution of the Polish Officers, Gendarmes, Police, Military Settlers, and Others in the Three Special POW Camps, Along with Those Held in the Prisons of the Western Regions of Ukraine and Belorussia, Accepted by the Politburo 5 March 1940, Moscow,” Document 47. Translated by Anna M. Cienciala, Natalia S. Lebedeva, and Wojciech Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 118-119.

their execution.²¹² The prisoners were executed in sites such as the Katyn Forest, the Kalinin and Kharkov prisons, and remote sites throughout present-day Ukraine and Belarus.

Why did Stalin order the mass execution of over 21,000+ Polish prisoners? Since the release of the Katyn documents in the early 1990s, the question has been a popular topic of inquiry in scholarship produced on Katyn. The answer to this question is not straightforward and, in many cases, relies on scholars' understandings of the perceptions of the Borderlands, Poles, and the Polish-Soviet war that Soviet leadership held at the outset of the Second World War. Scholar Natalia Lebedeva believes that the decision to shoot these prisoners was a result of the Soviet leadership's initiatives to maintain the security of the Borderlands, the perceived "failure" to re-educate the Polish officers on the issue of Polish independence, and the "bitter memory" that Stalin held over his suffering in Poland during the Polish-Soviet war.²¹³

The release of the 1992 documents did not end the continued memory making processes of Katyn. Russian and Polish historians came to realize that documentation was *still* missing surrounding Katyn. Blank spots remained in the history of the mass executions of the Polish military and members of the intelligentsia. Scholars could not, and still cannot, locate the documentation on the death sentences and the execution sites in parts of present day Belarus and Ukraine.²¹⁴ In present-day Poland, Katyn is an integral attribute to national identity making and

²¹² Satter. *It was a long time ago, and it never happened anyway: Russia and the communist past*, 235.

²¹³ Cienciala, Lebedeva, and Materski, *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 142.

²¹⁴ Cienciala, Lebedeva, and Materski in *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment*, 257.

understandings of suffering in the country. In the concluding portion of this project, I will briefly examine representations of Katyn since 1990.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION, WHAT WAS KATYŃ AND WHAT HAS IT BEEN SINCE 1990?

What was Katyń? As noted throughout this project, Katyń has come to symbolize a myriad of meanings dependent upon the historical actors representing Katyń over time. Since the release of the Katyń documents in 1990 and 1992, the memory making processes and tensions surrounding Katyń have not ceased. In the aftermath of the documents' releases in 1990 and 1992, official reconciliations of memory surrounding Katyń began to take place in public spaces throughout the Republic of Poland. The release of the documents and the acknowledgement of Soviet culpability allowed public discourse about Katyń to occur in Poland, thus enabling the erection of public memorials and an end to the "war of monuments." Public memorials began to mark the memory landscape in cities across Poland. Through these memorials, one can see that Katyń has become an integral symbol in the state's efforts to create national identity from their contentious and tumultuous twentieth century past. Following decades of state enforced silence surrounding Katyń, Katyń has now become synonymous with national suffering in present-day Poland.

Katyń Memorials: Kraków (1990) and Wadowice (2010)

Fifty years following the mass executions of Polish officers by the NKVD, a Katyń memorial was erected in Kraków, one of Poland's largest cities, in 1990. The memorial is located on ulica Grodzka (Grodzka Street) adjacent to the Wawel Castle.²¹⁵ The location of the

²¹⁵ Please see Appendix: Figure 1. Note: this photograph was taken by the author of this study, Amanda Nicole Alarcon. Kraków, Polska. July 2017.

memorial holds significance, as the Wawel Castle is a site of important cultural significance to Poles, as well as a major tourist attraction in one of the country's largest cities.²¹⁶ The memorial is a large cross, with the word "Katyń" between the dates "1940" and "1990," accompanied by a commemorative plaque. The plaque reads: "Kozielsk, Ostashków, Starobielsk," among other Polish cities of cultural and historical significance, such as Poznań, Gdańsk, and Nowa Huta, where significant trade union strikes took place during the 1970s and 1980s.²¹⁷ While the location of the memorial is in close proximity to Wawel, the commemoration is primarily intended for a Polish audience, as the plaque's inscription is in the Polish language.

Located just fifty kilometers from Kraków, there is another significant Katyń memorial in Wadowice. Wadowice holds a cultural and religious significance to Poles, as it is the birth place of Pope John Paul II. The city is a large tourist attraction in present-day Poland. The memorial to the Katyń dead is located in Plac Solidarności (Solidarity Square), located very close to the main train station.²¹⁸ The memorial was erected on April 22, 2010. Similar to the Katyń memorial in Kraków, the Wadowice Katyń memorial has the word "Katyń" on the cross. At the base of the memorial, there are two hands bound together, lifting up from the ground, symbolizing the murdered Polish officers in the Katyń Forest. Behind the cross, there is a list of the names of the murdered officers from Wadowice, with a commemorative quote from Pope John Paul II. While the audience of the memorial is primarily intended for a Polish audience, the

²¹⁶ Drozdowski, "Knowing (or Not) about Katyń: The Silencing and Surfacing of Public Memory," 57.

²¹⁷ Please see Appendix: Figure 2. Note: this photograph was taken by the author of this study, Amanda Nicole Alarcon. Kraków, Polska. July 2017.

²¹⁸ Please see Appendix: Figure 3. Note: this photograph was taken by the author of this study, Amanda Nicole Alarcon. Wadowice, Polska. July 2017.

memorial is situated on the path to the city center, making the memorial rather difficult to miss by tourists and residents of Wadowice alike.

It is important to problematize the symbols within the memorials to the Katyń dead in places like Kraków and Wadowice, particularly due to the utilization of the cross in the memorials. Associated with Christianity and the notion of suffering, the cross holds a myriad of significances for Poles. As Jan Kubik argues, the cross in Poland holds a political connotation of resistance, a “metaphor of national martyrdom,” and Poland as the “Messiah of nations.”²¹⁹ The memorial represents Katyń as a symbol of national suffering, as “Katyń” appears to be crucified on the cross in places like Kraków and Wadowice. The memorial is not wholly inclusive of the entirety of the Katyń dead: eight percent of those executed by the NKVD were Jewish, Ukrainian, and Belorussian.²²⁰

There also remains differences in the Katyń memorials that show a shift in the representation of Katyń in present-day Poland. In the 1990 Kraków memorial, the plaque contains an inscription of the names of cultural and historical significant sites of “Soviet aggression,” towards ordinary Poles during and following the Second World War.²²¹ As noted by Danielle Drozdowski, the memorial is “intended to reference the years of silence and acknowledgement and reinforce the on-going strength of private memory.”²²² In the 2010

²¹⁹ Kubik, *The Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power: the Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Communism in Poland*, 189.

²²⁰ Drozdowski, “Knowing (or Not) about Katyń: The Silencing and Surfacing of Public Memory,” 58.

²²¹ Drozdowski, “Knowing (or Not) about Katyń: The Silencing and Surfacing of Public Memory,” 57.

²²² *Ibid.*, 57.

Wadowice memorial, the names of the murdered Wadowice officers are listed behind the cross with a commemorative quote by Pope John Paul II. In stark contrast from the Kraków memorial, the Wadowice memorial highlights the individuals executed in the Katyn Forest.

Representations, like the Kraków memorial and the Wadowice memorial to the Katyn dead, continue to contribute to the memory making processes of Katyn and the making of the national narrative of suffering in present-day Poland.²²³

Andrzej Wajda's Katyn and Its Meaning In The 2010 Plane Crash Near Smolensk, Russia: A Second Katyn?

In 2007, Polish film director Andrzej Wajda released the film *Katyn* in Poland. Prior to the release of the film, there remained no feature length film on Katyn in Poland.²²⁴ The project held personal significance to Wajda, as his father, Jakub Wajda, was murdered in the Kharkiv prison in the series of mass executions that came to be known as Katyn. The film follows a series of characters, alternating between narrative focuses on the Katyn families struggling to commemorate their dead throughout the early days of the PRL, and the Polish officers in the Kozelsk internment camps prior to their executions. The film does not show the mass executions of Polish officers until the very end of the film, representing the “blank spot” that Katyn represented in Polish collective memory.²²⁵ As the Polish officers are being executed, each one recites a line of the Lord's Prayer. The symbolism is significant, as Wajda invokes the idea of Polish martyrdom throughout the closing portion of the film. The film was widely and

²²³ Ibid., 56.

²²⁴ Etkind, Finnin, Blacker, et al. *Remembering Katyn*, 35.

²²⁵ Andrzej Wajda. *Katyn*. Film. 2009. 1:47:50.

successfully received in Poland. The debut of the film represented an important point in the public representation of Katyń in present-day Poland.

The film's debut also had reverberating effects in Polish-Russian relations. For the seventieth anniversary of the Katyń massacre, a symbolic memorial ceremony was set to occur between Polish and Russian officials at the Katyń Forest site in April 2010. Although Wajda's *Katyń* had been previously banned in Russia, the film was set to be debuted on both minor and major public television channels around the commemorations of the anniversary of the Katyń crime. The Russian minor television channel, Kul'tura, broadcasted Wajda's *Katyń* ahead of the joint commemoration on April 2, 2010.²²⁶ The President of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, was set to lead the ceremony with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. One day following the scheduled ceremony, Wajda's *Katyń* was set to be broadcasted on one of Russia's major public television channels.

On April 10, 2010, new ground emerged within the Katyń memory landscape. In route to the joint Katyń memorial between the Russian and Polish governments, Polish President Kaczyński's plane crashed near Smolensk, Russia. Kaczyński and the other occupants on board, such as Solidarność member Anna Walentynowicz, were killed instantly in the crash. The invocation of Katyń to describe the national tragedy in the aftermath of the plane crash was immediate. Former Polish President and Solidarność leader Lech Wałęsa famously referred to the crash as the second Katyń.²²⁷ The site of the plane crash held deep symbolic meaning to

²²⁶ Etkind, Finnin, Blacker, et al. *Remembering Katyn*, 108.

²²⁷ Lech Wałęsa. "To Katyń Nr 2. Jestem Zdruzgotany." *Wyborcza.pl*. April 10, 2010. Accessed March 20, 2018. http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,7753298,To_Katyn_nr_2__Jestem_zdruzgotany.html.

Poles, as the crash happened near the site where the mass graves were first discovered in the Katyń Forest.²²⁸ Now, Katyń held another meaning to Poles: the site of two national tragedies that occurred just seventy years apart from one another. In the aftermath of the crash, Wajda's *Katyń* was broadcasted on numerous major Russian television channels. Russian President Dmitrii Medvedev declared a national day of mourning in Russia to commemorate the plane crash—and by extension, the crime of Katyń.²²⁹

Conclusion: Katyń

The invocation of Katyń in the aftermath of the 2010 Kaczyński plane crash demonstrates the central importance that Katyń still holds in the politics of memory in present-day Poland. More than seventy years following the mass executions of over twenty thousand Polish officers and members of the intelligentsia occurred, the symbolic meaning of Katyń continues as a process in the political, memory landscape of present-day Poland. From the commencement of the mass executions throughout remote sites in the Soviet Union, Katyń has represented a myriad of meanings in the collective memories of states and society throughout time. The understanding, representations, “truth,” and narratives surrounding Katyń have undoubtedly been influenced by the politics of memory at every stage of the Katyń story.

In 1943, the “discovery” of the mass graves in the Katyń Forest commenced a period of contention between the German, Soviet, and the exiled Polish governments over the identity of the forces that executed the 21,000+ Polish military, police officer, and members of the

²²⁸ Niżyńska, “The Politics of Mourning and the Crisis Symbolic Language after April 10,” 471.

²²⁹ Patrice Dabrowski. “Why the Polish Plane Crash Is Called ‘Katyń 2’.” Public Radio International. April 20, 2010. Accessed March 20, 2018. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2010-04-14/why-polish-plane-crash-called-katyn-2>.

intelligentsia. Between the German and Soviet governments, Katyń became a political bargaining tool of propaganda against the enemy during the Second World War and the immediate post-war period throughout the Nuremberg Trials. The German and Soviet governments blamed one another for the crime through a series of communiques issued throughout the early part of 1943. For nearly five decades, the identity of the perpetrators of the execution of the Polish officers was a contested issue between the official state memory and narrative of the crime, and the collective memories of Polish émigrés and Poles living within the PRL.

For ordinary Poles living within the PRL and for the Polish émigrés living within the United States and Great Britain, Katyń came to symbolize a myriad meanings from the Nazi “discovery” of the mass graves in the Katyń Forest in April 1943 to a symbol of protest prior to the fall of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Though the aims of Goebbels’ Katyń propaganda campaign of a united Polish-German front against the Soviet Union were not effective in Poland, the propaganda campaign’s language, documentation, and representations of Katyń made a lasting impact on the memory making processes of Katyń throughout Polish diasporic communities and Poland. Within contributions made to the historical understanding of Katyń by Polish émigrés, like Władysław Anders and J.K. Zawodny, we see that the act of writing history is a dual project of history and memory making. Émigrés’ contributions, like *Zbrodnia Katyńska*, were smuggled into the PRL by the Polish underground in a clandestine effort to expose the “truth” of Katyń in Polish society. In locations, like the Powązkowski Military Cemetery in Warsaw, a “war of monuments” occurred between Poles and the government over the Katyń dead. During the Solidarność period, Katyń became a symbol of

protest utilized by movements like Solidarność against the communist backed government of the PRL.

Following the release of the Katyń documents in 1990 and 1992, Katyń has continued to be a significant symbol in the memory landscape of present-day Poland. Memorials to the Katyń dead were erected in cities across Poland, like Wadowice and Kraków. Katyń has been the subject of many works of literature, art, and films in Poland, like Andrzej Wajda's *Katyń*. In the aftermath of the 2010 plane crash near Smolensk, Katyń came to symbolize two national tragedies to the Polish nation. Over seventy years following the mass executions of the 21,000+ Polish military and members of the intelligentsia throughout the Soviet Union, Katyń continues to serve as a representation of national suffering, loss, and anxiety in Polish collective memories.

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APPENDIX



Figure 1: Katyn Memorial, Kraków, Polska. Photograph taken by Amanda Nicole Alarcon, July 2017.

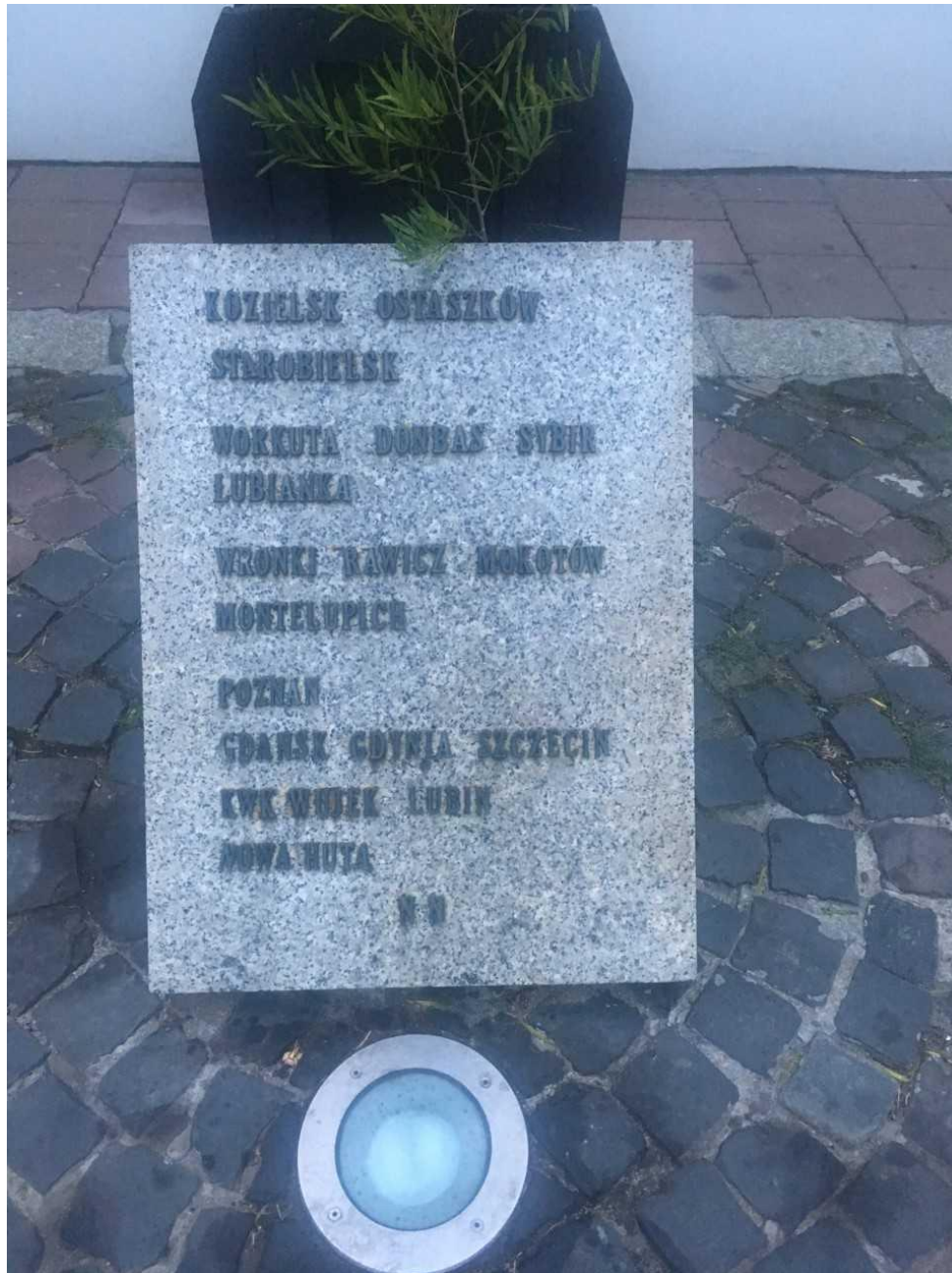


Figure 2: Katyn Memorial, Kraków, Polska. Photograph taken by Amanda Nicole Alarcon, July 2017.



Figure 3: Katyn Memorial, Wadowice, Polska. Photograph taken by Amanda Nicole Alarcon, July 2017.

VITA

Amanda Nicole Alarcon spent most of her life in East Tennessee. At a young age, Amanda met a Holocaust survivor, Mrs. Mira Ryczke Kimmelman, who inspired her to pursue a career in history and education. Her undergraduate mentors and training inspired her to become an historian of modern Europe. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in History with a concentration in Honors in History and a minor in Judaic Studies from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in May 2016. Immediately following her undergraduate studies, she enrolled in the Master of Arts program in History at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Working under the direction of Professor Monica Black, she developed stronger research interests into the intersections of German, Polish, and Soviet histories during the twentieth century. Thematically, she is interested in collective memory, gender and sexuality, and cultural history. During Amanda's graduate training, she added French and Polish to her research languages in addition to continued work on German reading comprehension. Throughout her graduate career, her Polish language studies were generously funded through the University of Pittsburgh's Slavic, East European, and Near Eastern Summer Language Institute and the European Union. She graduated with her Master of Arts degree in History in May 2018. Following the completion of her Master of Arts degree, Amanda spent the summer continuing her Polish language studies at the University of Pittsburgh's Slavic, East European, and Near Eastern Summer Language Institute in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the Prolog Language School in Kraków, Poland.