

The Katyn Massacre: A Re-examination in the Light of Recent Evidence

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Abstract

In Socialism & Democracy, 27:2 (2013) I published an article about some important new discoveries concerning the events known collectively as the Katyn Massacre. The standard account of these mass murders, which I refer to in this paper as the official version, blames Joseph Stalin and his associates in the leadership of the USSR for them. In the present article I review all of the evidence published since the early 1990s concerning Katyn. In general, there can be two major categories of evidence. First, there is evidence whose genuineness either is not contested by any party or, if it is contested, disappears from subsequent renditions by such contesting parties, indicating a dishonest desire to reinforce an account with which such evidence is incompatible. This category I refer to as “unimpeachable” evidence. And second, there is evidence that is either rejected by one or another party or, if retained by such parties, contradicts other pieces of evidence presented by them, apparently without their realizing it. Such evidence is far weaker, or even demonstrably fabricated, and does not carry the weight that unimpeachable evidence carries in solving the mystery of which party – the Germans or the Soviets – committed the Katyn Massacre. This paper reviews all the evidence and concludes that the “official version” of Katyn is mistaken. All of the unimpeachable evidence excludes Soviet guilt, and therefore points towards German guilt.

The Katyn Massacre: A Re-examination in the Light of Recent Evidence

On April 13, 1943, Germans authorities announced that they had discovered thousands of bodies of Polish POWs near Katyn, in an area of the Western Soviet Union then under German occupation. In their official report of summer-fall 1943, Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn, the Germans claimed the Soviets had shot the Poles. The Polish government in exile in London worked with the Germans at Katyn, accepted the German account, and held the Soviets responsible. The Soviet government responded in the Burdenko Commission report¹, blaming the Germans.

¹ Academician Dr. Nikolai N. Burdenko headed the medico-legal team that disinterred and examined bodies at Katyn.

During the war and for a few years afterwards the Western Allies acknowledged German guilt. But once the Cold War got under way, the Allies quickly adopted the German version, now upheld by anticommunist Polish émigrés. In 1952, the U.S. Congress formed the Madden Commission, which took testimony and issued seven volumes of materials blaming the Soviets.² This situation -- the West and Polish anticommunists blaming the Soviets, the Soviets blaming the Germans -- continued until the last years of the USSR.

On March 22, 1989, in a note to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, Valentin Falin, Director of the International Department of the CPSU, and Vladimir Kriuchkov, Chairman of the KGB, urged the Soviet leadership to admit Soviet – i.e. Stalin’s -- guilt.³

However, as we know today, they possessed no *evidence* of Soviet guilt. The lack of any evidence, other than the documents in “Closed Packet No. 1,” that the Soviets shot the Poles is clear from the “List of Documents with Sources” in Cienciala (2007), 356-363. Gorbachev himself claims that he did not know of the documents from “Closed Packet No. 1” (see below) until “the waning days of the Soviet government” – that is, sometime in 1991.⁴

On April 13, 1990, Soviet President Gorbachev gave to Polish President Jaruzelski the lists of Polish POWs transferred from three camps at Kozel’sk, Ostashkov, and Starobel’sk.⁵ However, none of these documents say anything about the Soviets killing the Polish POWs.

On October 14, 1992, the Russian government made public the contents of “Closed Packet No. 1,”⁶ documents purporting to record decisions by the Soviet Politburo to execute the Polish prisoners. If genuine, these documents would seem to establish Soviet guilt beyond reasonable doubt.⁷ Since that time this, the “Soviets-did-it” version of Katyn -- or, as I will call it, the “official version” -- is the only account that is tolerated in academic and public discourse.

² The Katyn Forest Massacre. Hearings before the Select Committee to Conduct An Investigation of the Facts, Evidence, and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre. Eighty-Second Congress, First Session. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951-1952. 7 Parts. (Madden Commission)

³ Cienciala 247. See footnote 7 for the full reference to this book.

⁴ “Hiding of Stalin’s Files Denied by Gorbachev.” The New York Times October 16, 1992, p. A6.

⁵ Cienciala 252. These lists are published in Jędrzej Tucholski. Mord w Katyniu: Kozielsk, Ostaszów, Starobielsk. Lista ofiar. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1991.

⁶ Cienciala 256.

⁷ The documents of “Closed Packet No. 1” themselves: <http://katyn.ru/index.php?go=Pages&in=view&id=6> Also published by Rusarchives, the archival service of the Russian Federation: <http://rusarchives.ru/publication/katyn/spisok.shtml> (04.10.19 – no longer online – use Web Archive: <https://web.archive.org/web/20100501230126/http://rusarchives.ru/publication/katyn/spisok.shtml> See also Celestine Bohlen, “Russian Files Show Stalin Ordered Massacre of 20,000 Poles.” The New York Times October 15, 1992, p. A1.

In this article I will briefly review the developments in Katyn evidence that have appeared since 1992. *All* of this evidence points towards German, not Soviet, guilt.

It is important to note that all of this evidence is circumstantial evidence. No single piece or unit of evidence is unequivocal. When viewed individually, in isolation from the whole concatenation of evidence, any piece of evidence can be accounted for in multiple ways. The explanatory power of circumstantial evidence is revealed when multiple pieces of evidence can all be accounted for by only one hypothesis, one single explanatory narrative.⁸

I begin by noting the publication of the two books that are widely considered the definitive accounts of the “official version”: by Sanford (2005), and Cienciala et al. (2007).⁹

1994, March 24: István Déak’s letter to the *New York Review of Books* titled “Reply to George Thuroczy,” concerning Dr. Ferenc Orsós.¹⁰ Orsós was chosen by the Germans to head the international team of forensic medical experts at Katyn that was designed to lend an air of scientific objectivity to the German account. Déak exposes Orsós as pro-German, a confirmed fascist and anti-Semite.

Sanford acknowledges that Orsós was pro-German and anti-Semitic, but dismisses this as “irrelevant.” (174) Cienciala merely says he “escaped to the West.” (526 n. 298) Orsós testified before the Madden Commission, which took no notice of his pro-Nazi bias.¹¹

2006, December 12: The Russian translation of Frantisek Hájek, *Důkazy Katynské* (“Katyn Evidence”) is published in a dual-language version, thus making Hájek’s book, published in Prague in 1946 in the Czech language and very hard to find, available to a wider audience (there is no English translation).¹² One of the experts brought to Katyn by the Germans, Hájek strongly denounced the German report after the war and insisted that the Germans, not the Soviets, had shot the Poles.

⁸ “A popular misconception is that circumstantial evidence is less valid or less important than direct evidence. . . . In practice, circumstantial evidence can have an advantage over direct evidence in that it can come from multiple sources that check and reinforce each other.” “Circumstantial Evidence,” Wikipedia, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circumstantial_evidence#Validity_of_circumstantial_evidence (Accessed October 16, 2020.)

⁹ George Sanford, *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice and Memory* (BASEES / Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies). London, UK: Routledge, 2009 (2005) Anna M. Cienciala, Natalia Sergeevna Lebedeva, Wojciech Materski. *Katyn: A Crime Without Punishment*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007.

¹⁰ At <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1994/03/24/misjudgment-at-nuremberg-2/>

¹¹ Madden Commission hearings, vol. 5, pages 1597-1615. But there is evidence that even Orsós privately admitted that the Germans killed the Poles. It is cited in Vladimir Abarinov, *Katynskii labirint* (Moscow: Novosti, 1991), 125-6. Abarinov himself believes the Soviets were guilty; see the “Radio Liberty” interview with him of April 8, 2010, at <https://www.svoboda.org/a/2006708.html>

¹² At http://katynbooks.narod.ru/hajek/Hajek_rus_cz.html

Sanford claimed Hájek was “pressurized” (206) into retracting his signature on the German report. But Sanford has no evidence to support this statement. It appears that he made this claim because Hájek rejects the “official version.” Cienčila does not mention Hájek at all.

Hájek’s book was published in Czechoslovakia before communists controlled the government. Hájek confirmed this account at Nuremberg, from where he could easily have defected to the West, but did not. Instead, he wrote yet another article denouncing the German report in *Pravda* on March 12, 1952.¹³

2010, May 27: Valentin Sakharov, “German documents about exhumation and identification of the victims of Katyn (1943).”¹⁴ A professor at Moscow State University, Sakharov quotes an archival document, a July 1943 account by Soviet partisans in the Smolensk area stating that the Germans were fabricating evidence at Katyn. The partisan report, written before the German Report, when no one knew that Katyn would become a famous event, mentions the German fabrications only in passing. A photographic reproduction of this Soviet partisan account, obtained from GANISO, the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History of the Smolensk Oblast’, is in Chapter 9 of my 2018 book.

Sakharov also publishes captured documents revealing that German and Polish authorities admitted that the victims were not identifiable and that documents found nearby were simply distributed randomly among the various corpses.

2010, October: Duma member Viktor Iliukhin announces that documents purporting to be draft forgeries of the documents in “Closed Packet No. 1,” together with official stamps and stationery blanks, had been given to him by one of the alleged forgers. These materials inevitably cast doubt on the genuineness of the “Closed Packet No. 1” documents.¹⁵

Iliukhin’s revelations are ignored by mainstream scholars. It is easy to understand why that is. If the “Closed Packet No. 1” documents are *assumed* to be genuine, then Soviet guilt at Katyn could hardly be doubted. Likewise, if they are *assumed* to be forgeries, then *no* evidence of Soviet guilt exists. Therefore, any honest attempt to investigate the Katyn massacre must set them aside, and determine the guilty party by evidence whose *bona fides* are not in doubt.

¹³ I examine Hájek’s testimony in detail, as well as the testimony of two members of a Polish delegation who went to Katyn at German invitation, in *The Mystery of the Katyn Massacre: The Evidence, the Solution* (Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press & Media, LLC, 2018), Chapter 11.

¹⁴ At https://kprf.ru/rus_law/79589.html

¹⁵ See the Appendix for much information, in both Russian and English, on the “draft forgery” documents presented by Iliukhin.

2011, June 06: Sergei Romanov, “Katyn documents. Documents from the GDA SBU¹⁶ concerning the victims from the Ukrainian list.”¹⁷ Romanov presents high-quality scans of these documents, with a bare minimum of his own analysis. In effect, analysis is left to the interested reader.

These 121 documents provide proof that many of these men were in fact alive long after spring, 1940, when – according to the “official version” of Katyn -- they should have been shot. Many of these men were not Poles but Ukrainians.¹⁸ It is remarkable that Romanov published them at all, for they refute the claim that these men were “victims of Katyn.” Romanov is a firm supporter of the “official version” of Katyn.

2007 – 2011: Aleksei Pamiatnykh, “From the unpublished materials of the Burdenko Commission.”¹⁹ Pamiatnykh too is a strong supporter of the “official version” of Katyn. He has published online the inventory notes of Burdenko Commission investigators on which they recorded what they found on the corpses of Katyn victims in late 1943 and January, 1944. Like Romanov, Pamiatnykh provides no analysis of these documents.

These documents confirm the existence of Camp ON-1, one of three camps where, according to the Soviet account, the Polish POWs were sent to do road work. Sanford claims these camps were “a wholly fictitious NKVD invention.” (138) Cienciala claims these documents were planted on the corpses by the Soviets, but cites no evidence to support this statement. (319-320)

In fact we have evidence that they were *not* planted. The last name on one piece of paper found by Soviet investigators on a Katyn corpse is mostly unreadable, and was not used in the Burdenko Report. I have identified this name as Przemyslaw, son of Boleslaw, Koziatulski, an Ostashkov prisoner.²⁰

The fact that the Soviet investigators could not decipher the name on this paper and did not use it is strong evidence that they did not “plant” – i.e., fabricate – it. For more evidence that the Soviets did not plant these papers see the discussion below concerning Kathleen Harriman’s letter and report.

Therefore, Koziatulski was transferred to Kalinin, along with the other prisoners of the Ostashkov camp. But his body ended up at Katyn. This in itself contradicts the “official version,”

¹⁶ Archives from the Branch State Archive of the SBU, Ukraine Security Service, equivalent to Russian FSU, successor to the KGB – MGB/ MVD – NKVD.

¹⁷ At <http://katynfiles.com/content/gdasbu-1.html>

¹⁸ See Grover Furr, *The Mystery of the Katyn Massacre: The Evidence, the Solution* (Erythrós Press, 2018), Chapter 13: “The ‘Ukrainian Trail of Katyn.’” (Furr 2018)

¹⁹ At <http://katynfiles.com/content/pamiatnykh-burdenko-materials.html>

²⁰ Furr (2018) Chapter 3, 62-65.

according to which all the Polish prisoners were shot at or near the cities to which they were transferred from their POW camps.

2011, May 25: Announcement of the discovery of the badge of Polish policeman Josef Kuligowski at a German mass murder site in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy, Ukraine.²¹

Kuligowski was a prisoner at Ostashkov. On April 13, 1940, he was transferred to Kalinin, along with other Polish POWs.²² Kuligowski's memorial plaque is at the Mednoe memorial site, near Tver' (formerly Kalinin), and his name is in the "Mednoe Cemetery Book" published by the Polish government.²³ But Kuligowski's badge – and, presumably, his body – was buried at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy, at least 1200 km from Kalinin (Tver'), and in a mass grave of victims of the Nazis.

2011, September 5: Announcement of the discovery at the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy site of the badge of Polish policeman Ludwig Małowiejski.²⁴ Małowiejski too was an Ostashkov prisoner, transferred to Kalinin in April, 1940.²⁵ His memorial plaque is also at Mednoe. He is also in the "Mednoe Cemetery Book."²⁶

The central assumption of the "official version" of Katyn is that the Polish prisoners were transferred in the spring of 1940 from their POW camps – Kozel'sk, Ostashkov, and Starobel'sk – to the NKVD at the nearest city – Smolensk, Kalinin (Tver') and Kharkiv – shot there, and buried at Katyn, Mednoe, and Piatykhatky respectively. The discoveries of the badges of Ostashkov prisoners Kuligowski and Małowiejski at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy, in a mass grave of victims of German murder in 1941, strongly suggests that this assumption is false.

Thus these discoveries strongly challenge the "official" -- "the Russians-did-it" -- version of Katyn. There is no other version of the Katyn massacres that alleges Soviet guilt.

²¹ "Osoby z Listy Katyńskiej mordowano we Włodzimierzu Wołyńskim?!"
<https://web.archive.org/web/20110922233230/http://www.itvl.pl/news/osoby-z-listy-katynskiej-mordowano-we-wlodzimierzu-woylenskim>—

²² Jędrzej Tucholski. *Mord w Katyniu: Kozielsk, Ostaszków, Starobielsk. Lista ofiar*. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1991, p. 810. No. 15: NKVD list No. 026/1 of 13 April 1940, position 15.

²³ *Miednoje. Księga Cmentarna Polskiego Cmentarza Wojennego*. Warsaw: Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa 2005. Tom 1, 465.

²⁴ "Kolejny policjant z Listy Katyńskiej odnaleziony we Włodzimierzu Wołyńskim"
<https://web.archive.org/web/20111016084252/http://www.itvl.pl/news/kolejny-policjant-z-listy-katynskiej-odnaleziony-we-wlodzimierzu-woylenskim>—

²⁵ Tucholski p. 887 No. 76. Małowiejski was in a transport of 100 Polish prisoners sent to the Kalinin NKVD on April 27, 1940.

²⁶ *Miednoje. Księga Cmentarna Polskiego Cmentarza Wojennego*. Tom 2, 541.

2012, October – November: Publication of the report on the excavation of mass graves at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy.²⁷

In this report, signed by Polish archeologist Dr. Dominika Siemińska, only Kuligowski and his badge are mentioned. The report is silent about Małowiejski's badge, discovery of which had been reported by the Polish media.

In the report Dr. Siemińska states that 96%+ of the shell casings found in the mass grave are German and dated 1941. She also affirms that these mass murders must have taken place no earlier than 1941:

Z pewnością stwierdzono, że zbrodnia została dokonana nie wcześniej niż w 1941 roku. (p.4)

It is confirmed with certainty that the crime did not take place earlier than 1941.

The presence of their badges in the mass grave of victims of the Germans is evidence that Kuligowski and Malowiejski were alive and in the Ukraine until at least late June 1941. They were indeed shipped from Ostashkov to Kalinin – we have the Soviet transit lists -- but were not killed there. This fact refutes the “official version.”

2012, December: Publication of Ivan Katchanovski's article “Katyn in Reverse in Ukraine: Nazi-led Massacres turned into Soviet Massacres.”²⁸ Dr. Katchanovski, a historian of Ukrainian background at the University of Ottawa, Canada, exposed the Polish-Ukrainian claim that the victims killed at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy were NKVD victims to be a cover-up of the fact that it was the Nazis and their Ukrainian Nationalist allies who committed the murders.

2013, February 20: Ukrainian archeologist Oleksei Zlatohorsky expresses with alarm the political problem raised by the Polish archeologist's identification of the Germans as the murderers:

Incautious statements by Polish archeologists about the belongings of the remains found on the land of the castle of Kazimir Velikii in Vladimir-Volynskii **could cast**

²⁷ Sprawozdanie z Nadzoru Nad Badaniami Archeologiczno-Ekshumacyjnymi na Terenie Rezerwatu Historyczno-Kulturowego Miasta Włodzimierza Wołyńskiego (Ukraina). Opracowanie zespołowe pod kierunkiem dr Dominiki Siemińskiej. Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa. (Report of the Supervision on the Archaeological-Exhumation Investigation in the Area of the Reservation of the Historical-Cultural Town of Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy (Ukraine). A Team Description under the Direction of Dr. Dominika Siemińska. Council for the Commemoration of Struggle and Martyrdom). Toruń, 2012, Originally at <http://www.kresykedzierzynkozle.home.pl/attachments/File/Rap.pdf> Now on the Internet Archive at <https://web.archive.org/web/20131219001802/http://www.kresykedzierzynkozle.home.pl/attachments/File/Rap.pdf>

²⁸ At <http://www.opednews.com/articles/Katyn-in-Reverse-in-Ukrain-by-Ivan-Katchanovski-121212-435.html>

doubt upon the already known crimes of the NKVD in relation to Polish officers ...²⁹

The only “already known crimes of the NKVD in relation to Polish officers” is the “official version” of the Katyn Massacre. Zlatohorskyy recognized that the “official version” of Katyn appears to be disproven by the finds at Volodymyr-Volyns’kiy, and suggested that the Polish report should not have revealed what really was found there.

The *Ukrainian* archeological report on the excavations at Volodymyr-Volyns’kiy fails to mention either the discovery of Kuligowski’s badge or the fact that more than 96% of the shell casings found were German and dated 1941.³⁰ Both findings are cited in the Polish report.

2013: Valentin Sakharov’s article “Secrets of Katyn.” *Svobodnaia mysl’* 1 (2013).³¹ Here Sakharov proves that some documents listed in the German report as taken from corpses at Katyn can be dated, from internal evidence, as later than spring, 1940. Sakharov also shows that the Germans possessed the list of POWs transferred from Kozel’sk to Smolensk. In my 2018 book, I show that the Germans used that list to assign false identities to at least some corpses.

2013, September – 2015 January-February: Poland withdraws the November, 2012, report on the Volodymyr-Volyns’kiy excavations, and now claims that the Soviet NKVD shot the victims.

By September, 2013 Dr. Siemińska begins to shift the blame onto the NKVD for some killings. But she still refers to “the identification of persons on the Mednoe list” and repeats that “most shell cases are also of German production.”³²

By October 13, 2013, Dr. Siemińska no longer mentions the German shells dated 1941, and no longer mentions Kuligowski and Małowiejski, the supposed Katyn victims whose badges had been found at Volodymyr-Volyns’kiy.³³

²⁹ Скороход, Ольга. “Польские археологи нагнетают ситуацию вокруг жертв, расстрелянных в 1941-м.” (Ol’ga Skorokhod. Polish archeologists stir up the situation around the victims shot in 1941). At http://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/history/_polskie-arheologi-nagnetayut-situaciyu-vokrug-zhertv-rasstrelyannyh-v-1941-m/483525 All boldfacing in this article is by the author.

³⁰ “ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ВИЯВЛЕНИХ РЕШТОК ЛЮДЕЙ, РОЗСТРІЛЯНИХ В 1941 РОЦІ НА ГОРОДИЩІ “ВАЛИ” У ВОЛОДИМИРІ-ВОЛИНСЬКОМУ .ЕКСГУМАЦІЙНІ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ 2012 РОКУ.” (Investigation of discovered remains of persons shot in 1941 at the ‘Shafts’ site at Volodymyr-Volyns’kiy. Investigation of exhumations of 2012.) (Doslizhdennia) At <http://volodymyrmuseum.com/publications/32-publications/naukovi-statti/170-doslidzhennya-vyyavlenykh-reshtok-lyudey-rozstrilyanykh-v-1941-rotsi-na-horodyshchi-valy-u-volodymyri-volynskom-ekshumatsiyni-doslidzhennya-2012-roku>

³¹ Online at <http://svom.info/entry/319-tajny-katyni/>

³² “Kim są ofiary z Włodzimierza?” <https://naszdzienik.pl/polska-kraj/54675>

³³ Interview on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPGFcvETG1Q> (accessed 04.06.19)

However, she reveals that *two more* badges of Polish policemen have been found.³⁴ But the policemen who owned *these* badges are not identified. This raises the suspicion that these men too may be on the “Katyn” list – otherwise, why not name them? That would constitute yet more evidence that the Soviets did not kill the Polish POWs.

By January-February 2015 Dr. Siemińska is blaming the NKVD alone.³⁵

2015, August: Aleksandr Gur’ianov of the Moscow “Memorial Society” publishes *Ubity v Katyni* – “The men killed at Katyn.” Gur’ianov *assumes* that the Soviets were the killers at Katyn, but admits that there is no evidence of this, aside from “Closed Packet No. 1.”

... if we restrict ourselves to only the Soviet sources listed, from a formal point of view it is impossible to establish any connection between the decision of the Politburo of March 5, 1940³⁶ on the shooting of Polish prisoners of war and the NKVD proscription lists. (66-7)

The need to refer to the absence of signs of life after the spring of 1940 and the commonality of the fate of the identified and the unidentified by the results of the exhumation, in order to consider the NKVD prescription lists as lists of dispatching for execution by shooting – this is the weakest link in our formal legal evidence chain. (67)

In fact, we do have “signs of life after the spring of 1940” for many of the Polish POWs listed in the Soviet *transit* lists (not “proscription” lists, as Gur’ianov claims) and in the German report. Gur’ianov simply ignores this evidence – as he must, if he is to remain loyal to the “official version.”

Gur’ianov admits that he must *assume* that all the corpses unearthed by the Germans and listed in their 1943 report are bodies of prisoners from the Kozel’sk camp.

We proceed from the premise that all the remains exhumed in 1943 in the Katyn forest, including those listed in the list of “outsiders” in the Appendix³⁷, are the

34 Photos of these badges here: - <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/vv/ppbadge01.jpg> - <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/vv/ppbadge02r.jpg> - <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/vv/ppbadge02o.jpg>

³⁵ Dzennik Kijowski January-Februray, 2015, p. 5 - http://kresy24.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Dziennik_Kijowski_2_2015.pdf

³⁶ This is one of the documents in “Closed Packet No. 1.” It may be viewed at <http://katyn.ru/index.php?go=Pages&in=view&id=26>

³⁷ Gur’ianov is referring to the Appendix to his own book.

remains of prisoners of war from the Kozel'sk camp mentioned in the documents of the NKVD. (77)

If Gur'ianov had been interested in an objective study of Katyn, he would not have made this assumption. He makes it because this assumption is essential to the “official version,” according to which all the Polish POWs were shot at or near the cities to which they had been transferred out of the POW camps.

Gur'ianov lists a number of names in the German Report that he cannot identify as Kozel'sk prisoners. Given his premise, it is not surprising that he did not check the prisoner lists from the other two POW camps, Ostashkov and Starobel'sk. In my 2018 book I have identified a number of them as Ostashkov and Starobel'sk prisoners. Discovery of bodies of prisoners from these camps at Katyn dismantles the “official version” and supports the Soviet account, according to which the prisoners were not shot, but were transferred on to labor camps to do road work.³⁸

2015, Winter: Publication of Kathleen Harriman's letter of January 28, 1943, to her sister Mary and to Pamela Churchill, wife of Randolph, son of Winston Churchill.³⁹ Kathleen Harriman visited Katyn in January 1944 with her father, US ambassador to the USSR Averill Harriman. At Katyn she observed Soviet investigators searching some corpses. She wrote:

While I was watching, they found one letter dated the summer of '41, which is damned good evidence.

She repeated this in the formal report she made after visiting Katyn, and gave the precise date on the letter— June 20, 1941.⁴⁰ This confirms Pamiatnykh's discovery that all the names of Polish POWs mentioned in the Burdenko Report except that of Stanislaw Kuczynski are also mentioned on the documents found on the corpses by Soviet investigators.

Pamiatnykh writes:

It should be noted that 21 names are mentioned in the aforesaid inventory. In addition, another Polish surname, not mentioned in the inventory, is in the published Report of the Burdenko Commission (Stanislav Kuchinski).

This is an important point. If the Burdenko investigators' materials had included the document from Kuczynski, that would have suggested the possibility that it had been “planted” in order to be “discovered” when Kathleen Harriman was observing. That would, in turn, cast doubt

³⁸ Gur'ianov also acknowledges that no “shooting lists” have been discovered, though he insists that they must have existed – if the Soviets really did shoot the Poles. (80)

³⁹ Harriman Magazine, Winter, 2015, 12-23. Letter at p. 18. At http://www.columbia.edu/cu/creative/epub/harriman/2015/winter/kathleen_harriman.pdf

⁴⁰ Madden Commission, Part 7, p. 2138.

on the bona fides of this document and, by extension, the other documents presented by the Burdenko investigators. Thanks to the documents published by Pamiatnykh, to Kathleen Harriman's letter, and to the Koziatulski document discussed previously, we can be certain that these materials were *not* planted by the Soviets.

Conclusion: The Germans shot the Polish prisoners.

The *only* evidence that points towards Soviet guilt are: (a) the documents in "Closed Packet No.1," the genuineness of which has been credibly challenged by the alleged forgery documents produced by Viktor Iliukhin in 2010; (b) testimony of Katyn area residents published in the German report and supporting the German version; (c) testimony by retired NKVD men to Soviet officials in 1990 in support of the Gorbachev "official version."

However,

- the genuineness of the "Closed Packet No.1" documents are called into question by the draft forgery documents made public by Iliukhin;
- the testimony of residents in the German report is contradicted by other testimony from residents in the Soviet Burdenko Report;
- the 1990 testimony of the former NKVD men is also contradicted by the Soviet residents' testimony in the Burdenko Report. In addition, it is full of contradictions, shows signs of intimidation and falsification, and does not mention Katyn at all. Eyewitnesses are vulnerable to intimidation, and eyewitness testimony is one of the least reliable types of evidence.⁴¹

Therefore, any objective study of the Katyn massacre mystery must set the evidence in categories (a) through (c) aside, and proceed on the basis of evidence that cannot have been fabricated. I call this the "unimpeachable" evidence.

All of the "unimpeachable" evidence – the evidence that cannot have been faked -- supports the conclusion that the Germans, not the Soviets, are guilty of the mass murders of Polish POWS collectively known as the Katyn massacre. It necessarily follows that the "Closed Packet No. 1" documents are indeed forgeries, since they contradict the evidence that we know is genuine.

Why did Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and their men claim Soviet guilt without any evidence? We can, perhaps, hazard a guess.

One of the documents in "Closed Packet No. 1," titled "Excerpt from Protocol No.13 of the Politburo Session of March 5, 1940, titled 'A Question of the NKVD of the USSR,'" is a

⁴¹ See, for example, the many publications by cognitive psychologist Elizabeth Loftus, including *Eyewitness Testimony* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979; revised edition 1996).

duplicate, the second version of which is clearly a forgery produced during Nikita Khrushchev's time. The name of Aleksandr Shelepin has been written in where Lavrentii Beria's name should be, and the date has been changed from 1940 to 1959. The stamps on this document are from the Khrushchev era.⁴² Stalin's name is typed at the bottom.

It is unlikely anyone would have forged such an important document unless Khrushchev had ordered it. But for some reason, Khrushchev decided not to go through with the plan to blame Stalin for Katyn. Perhaps this was because, as a Politburo member himself in March 1940, Khrushchev would have implicated himself.

We know that Shelepin, Khrushchev's head of the KGB between December 25, 1958, and November 13, 1961, was convinced by these documents that the Soviets were guilty. Shelepin's friend Valerii I. Kharazov said that Shelepin had told him the Soviets had shot the Poles. Shelepin had been told this, evidently by other KGB workers, and believed it.⁴³ Other senior Soviet officials were probably also told this.

So when, in March, 1989, Shevardnadze, Falin, and Kriuchkov advised Gorbachev to confess that the Soviets were guilty of the Katyn massacres, they may have believed it. But they had no documentary evidence. Hence, the forgery uncovered by Iliukhin.

Appendix

The "Draft Forgery Documents" Published by Viktor Iliukhin

* Drafts of the forgery of the "Beria letter" read into the Russian Duma record by Duma member Viktor Iliukhin: <http://www.katyn.ru/index.php?go=News&in=view&id=205>

* English –language article from a Swedish blog with the same draft forgery documents: At: <https://mythcracker.wordpress.com/2010/11/27/katyn-sensational-new-documents-and-ilyukhins-letter-to-gryzlov-about-the-katyn-resolution-in-the-russian-state-duma/>

* The stamps, facsimiles, and blanks allegedly used in the forgery: <http://www.katyn.ru/index.php?go=News&in=view&id=196>

⁴² At <http://katyn.ru/images/pages/f17op166d6211135.jpg> I discuss this document in Furr 2018, Chapter Four, 68-71. Both versions of this document may be viewed at <http://katyn.ru/index.php?go=Pages&in=view&id=26> The obviously forged duplicate is at the bottom.

⁴³ V.N. Shved, "Information about the testimony of V.I. Kharazov concerning A.N. Shelepin's note to Khrushchev" At <http://www.katyn.ru/index.php?go=Pages&in=view&id=231>

* Viktor Iliukhin interview with documents, stamps, facsimile of Beria signature on a stamp, etc. <http://www.katyn.ru/index.php?go=News&in=view&id=198>

The Swedish blog “Katynmassakern” has also published these documents for readers of English.

* Katyn: Mysterious "discoveries" of the Katyn documents.
<http://katynmassakern.blogspot.com/>

* Katyn: Lazar Kaganovich’s testimony -
<http://katynmassakern.blogspot.com/2010/07/katyn-lazar-kaganovichs-testimony.html>

* Katyn: “Beria’s letter” was written on two different typewriters -
<http://katynmassakern.blogspot.com/2010/07/katyn-berias-letter-was-written-on-two.html>

* Katyn: 49 signs of falsification of ‘Closed package no. 1’ -
<http://katynmassakern.blogspot.com/2010/07/katyn-49-signs-of-falsification-of.html>

* Katyn: Dionis Kaptar’s interview with Viktor Ilyukhin regarding the forgeries -
<http://katynmassakern.blogspot.com/2010/07/katyn-dionis-kaptars-interview-with.html>

* Katyn: KPRF press conference regarding the falsification of archival documents -
<http://katynmassakern.blogspot.com/2010/07/kprf-press-conference-regarding.html>

* Katyn: Ilyukhin’s appearance in the Duma regarding the forgeries -
<http://katynmassakern.blogspot.com/2010/07/katyn-ilyukhins-appearance-in-duma.html>

* Katyn: Ilyukhin’s video on Katyn forgeries -
<http://katynmassakern.blogspot.com/2010/07/katyn-ilyukhins-video-on-katyn.html>

* Katyn: “Closed package no.1” was forged -
<http://katynmassakern.blogspot.com/2010/07/katyn-closed-package-no1-was-forged.html>

Author

Grover Furr has written many books on Soviet history of the 1930s. His book *The Mystery of the Katyn Massacre: The Evidence, the Solution* (Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press) was published in July, 2018.