



News of Polonia

Serving the Polish Community since 1995

Wiadomości Polonijne

Volume 13, No. 9

February 2008

Free or Home Delivery

Nazis responsible for Katyn massacre, says Russian daily

A message on the Kresy-Siberia Group website, dated Saturday February 9, 2008, tells of the Russian *Niezawisimaja Gazeta* daily claim that the Soviet NKVD secret police could not possibly have been responsible for the mass murder of over 20,000 Polish officers in 1940.

The author of the article Aleksandr Szirokorad claims that the massacre could not have possibly been the doing of the NKVD since the ropes used for tying the victims' wrists and bullets were not those used by the NKVD.

Szirokorad also claims that the shooting technique used was apparently alien to the NKVD.

Contrary to most historians' opinions, the murders, claims Szirokorad, must have been the work of the Nazis.

There has already been a series of four articles in the Russian press questioning the truth about Katyn events recently, the last one being inspired by the Oscar nomination for Andrzej Wajda's film *Katyn*.

Moscow has refused to define the murders in Russia and Ukraine as 'genocide' or regard them as war crimes.

□

A date we should never forget

Zofia Cybulska Adamowicz

February 10 marked the 68th anniversary of the first most tragic evacuation/deportation of Polish the population from the Eastern part of Poland to a distant Siberia. The temperature dropped to 40 below zero as family members were taken from their homes in the middle of night. Elderly grandparents, fathers, mothers – some of them pregnant, frightened crying children... everybody was loaded onto cattle trains and transported without any explanation of where and why.

The second deportation took place on April 13 1940, the third on June 19 and the final deportation on the eve of the German-Soviet war in June 1941.

The exiles were predominantly Polish government employees, military settlers and social activists. Conditions of this very long trip which lasted from 4 to 6 weeks were impossible to bear. Deportees had to deal with freezing temperatures, hunger, exhaustion both physical and psychological, and uncertain futures. Death visited the transport daily. The weak were dying and the dead bodies were dropped off at the next stop, all below any human dignity; nightmare and human tragedy.

The distant Siberian taigas were the final destination. Two hundred people were placed in old barracks in absolutely inhuman conditions. There they were forced to labor for a piece of "half-baked bread", everybody over 14 years of age had to work. Reliable sources report that over 30% of the deportees died in Siberia and it is impossible to count the graves.

God's providence saved some of them so they would be able to tell the truth about the Soviet system to the next generation. The situation was changed after the beginning of the war between the Soviets and Germans in June 1941. On August 17 1941, a treaty by Sikorski – Mayski was signed liberating all exiles in the Soviet Union. Polish General Anders was released from jail and he organized a Polish Army.

Every male Pole released from the labor camps rushed to join Anders' army. They were hungry, ill, festered with lice in their tattered rags but they were dedicated and traveled many miles hoping for a better tomorrow. Whole Polish families with children were moving from Siberia, the Urals, Kazakhstan in search of safety and hope with the Polish Ander's Army.

God's providence changed Stalin's mind and he agreed to let 78 thousand soldiers of the Polish Army leave the Soviet Union together with 39 thousand civilian families, half of them were children and orphans. Many of them were left in this inhumane land.

The army and youthful organizations traveled to the Middle East, mothers with small children and orphanages found shelter in Palestine, Persia (current Iran), Africa (then British colonies), India, New Zealand and Mexico.

Never! No more war! Let it be a call for peace to future generations!

(The Cybulska family was deported to Siberia. Zofia's sister died in Siberia.)

Sikorski-Mayski Agreement

(From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

The Sikorski-Mayski Agreement was a treaty between the Soviet Union and Poland

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The Iranian Soldier-Bear

An article in the Iran Chamber Society which was written by Ryszard Antolak in August 2005 tells about Voytek.

He was born in the mountains of Hamadan, in one of the many caves to be found in that dusty mountainous area. At the age of eight weeks his mother was killed by a group of hunters, but he was rescued by a young Iranian boy who thrust him into a hempen sack and set off with him homeward along a narrow dusty path.

Iran at that time was going through one of the unhappier periods of her history. Occupied by the Russians and the British, her relations with the soldiers of those two countries were understandably tense and strained. In April 1942, however, Iran opened its arms to receive hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens (men, women and children) who had been released from the Soviet labour camps of Siberia and Kazakhstan. Having arrived at the port of Pahlevi (now Bandar-e Anzali), they were suffering from various diseases, including malnutrition, and had to be rested in the vast tented city hastily built for them on the shores of the Caspian Sea. When they were well enough to travel, they were taken to more substantial military and civilian resettlement camps all over Iran.

Most of the civilians (women and children) were destined to remain as guests of Iran for up to three years. But the able-bodied men were almost immediately sent westwards to join the Polish forces in Lebanon. A long stream of covered trucks left Anzali daily carrying the future soldiers along the narrow twisted roads via Qazvin, Hamadan and Kermanshah to the borders of Iraq and beyond.

In 1943, while on a narrow mountain road somewhere between Hamadan and Kangavar the trucks were brought to an abrupt halt by the sight of a small Iranian boy carrying a bulky sack. He looked tired and hungry. The men offered him a billy-can of meat. As he ate, they gasped in astonishment as the sack beside him began to move and the head of a honey-coloured bear cub emerged sleepily into the sunlight.

Although none of the men could understand Farsi, the boy was able to indicate by his actions that he had found the bear cub whimpering outside one of the caves, its mother having been shot by a hunter. The orphaned cub was in poor condition and it was almost certain he would not survive the day. One of the men, therefore, offered to buy the orphaned cub for a few toumans. Someone else fumbled for a bar of chocolate and a tin of corned beef to give him. Another took from his pocket an army penknife that opened up like a flower. The boy smiled, pocketed the offerings and disappeared forever from their lives.

A feeding bottle had to be hastily improvised from an empty bottle of vodka into which a handkerchief had been stuffed to serve as a teat. They filled it with condensed milk, diluted it with a little water, and gave it to the little bear to drink. When he had finished it, he crept up close to one of the soldiers for warmth and fell asleep on his chest. The soldier's name was Piotr (Peter) and he became forever afterward, the bear's closest and most enduring friend. Piotr named his new found friend Voytek.

Voytek clung desperately to his substitute mother all through the tortured journey across Persia, Iraq and Jordan, along vast distances that seemed to loose heart and succumb to the despair of barrenness.

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National Conference for the Social Studies



L. - Debbie Majka, Henrietta Nowakowska, Barbara Lemecha

The American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC) played a very active role, led by Co-Chairs Barbara Lemecha and Henrietta Nowakowski, during the 87th annual National Conference for the Social Studies, Nov. 30 – Dec. 2, 2007 in San Diego, CA. A report filed by Lemecha with the ACPC's Publicity Chair, Jo Louise Winters, revealed that as in past years, this energetic and resourceful team, Lemecha & Nowakowski, had spent months in planning, soliciting funding and resource materials, creating posters and a resource CD. After shipping cartons of books, pamphlets, and CDs to the conference site, the team flew to California, set up the booth "Polish Perspectives" and manned it for three days with the able assistance of Director/Past President Debbie Majka and Director Robert Maycan.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), which organizes these national conferences, serves as an umbrella organization for a network of over 110 affiliated state, local, and regional councils and associated groups, representing elementary, secondary, college teachers, faculty, curriculum designers and specialists, supervisors, and leaders in the various disciplines that constitute the social studies.

Barbara Lemecha's full report:

"The theme for this year's 87th National Conference for the Social Studies was 'Crossing Borders – Building Bridges' and I truly believe that by ACPC's continuous and enthusiastic participation in these annual conferences with the strong support of the US Polonia, we are building stronger bridges and an important connection with educators, while providing them with valuable resources at our 'Polish Perspectives' booth about Polish contributions to the world, past and present. It certainly is a pleasure to meet teachers whom we hadn't met in prior conferences, but it is especially gratifying to see the same teachers every year who seek our booth to report on how they used the materials in their classrooms that we provided them in the previous year - and eagerly seek more of the documentary materials that we offer them gratis. The ultimate result of the closer working relationship with educators is better informed and more interested students with regard to Poland's history and culture. It is with great dedication and commitment that we prepare our 'Polish Perspectives' booth, gathering materials and presenting them to the teachers with pride and the conviction that they will be very useful in their work.

For this conference Henrietta and I, once again, put together a CD containing many resources and web site links, highlighting contributions of Polish physicists, engineers,

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Your help is needed

Get involved in Polonia!

Join a

Polish Organization

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