

Kresy Sybiraki website**Belarus Complicating the Hlybokaye Case**

**Andrzej Poczobut**, Grodno  
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<<http://wyborcza.pl/biznes/0,82242.html>>

\* Based on a preliminary medical examination of the human remnants in the cellar of the Orthodox cathedral in Hlybokaye, there are reasons to believe that the victims died a violent death – writes the official daily Sovetskaya Belorussiya. This could confirm the hypothesis that the murderers were from the NKVD and the victims were Poles.

The article in Sovetskaya Belorussiya marks an unexpected shift in Minsk's position. As recently as Friday the local prosecutor's office abandoned the version that the victims had been killed by the Nazis. It said, though, that there was no evidence to indicate violent death. In other words, that those were not NKVD victims, although it is known from elsewhere that between 1949-1941 in Hlybokaye and thereabouts special NKVD units executed Poles, such as those kept in the major prison in the nearby monastery complex in Berezvech. Among the objects found with the remnants discovered in the vaults of the Birth of the Holiest Mother of God cathedral were, for instance, a cigarette pack from Warsaw's Progress tobacco factory and fragments of a pre-1939 Polish passport.

Sovetskaya Belorussiya invalidates the prosecutor office's version, without settling who is responsible for the death of the Hlybokaye victims. Another government paper, Vecherniy Minsk, published an interview yesterday with father Alexander Ledokhovich, the Orthodox priest who was among the first people to see the remnants. "They were killed with inhuman brutality," said father Ledokhovich, but he doesn't say how the victims were killed.

Jaroslav Bernikovich, leader of the Hlybokaye branch of the opposition For Freedom movement, says that the divergence between the prosecutor's office and the official media suggests that the authorities were to exploit the case for their own purposes.

"This is a message, to Russia in the first place, that it is Minsk that decides what to do with this case. It can state that the NKVD is responsible or that these are bones from the 18th century," Mr Bernikovich told Gazeta.

He also pointed out that president Alexander Lukashenko's relations with Moscow had recently become much cooler, including, for instance, Russia introducing an embargo on Belarussian dairy imports. Mr Bernikovich says it is possible that Minsk wants to put Prime Minister Vladimir Putin in an awkward position ahead of his planned 1 September visit to Warsaw.

Mr Lukashenko, the Belarussian dictator, has long been openly fascinated with Felix Dzerzhinsky, the creator of the Soviet terror apparatus, who was born in what is Belarus today, and with Joseph Stalin. On 17 September, Belarus will hold major celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939, presented by the official propaganda as an act of the country's unification. Some of the major ceremonies are to take place in Brest, where in 1939 the German and Soviet troops held a joint parade to celebrate the victory over Poland.

An ultimate answer to the question of when and how the Hlybokaye victims died is to be provided by Belarussian medical experts on the basis of a detailed examination. Gazeta has learned unofficially that the experts are not expected to issue an official report before end-August.

Translated by Marcin Wawrzyńczyak □

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**News of Polonia**

**Katyn victims in Kharkov were "limed"**

*Secret NKVD documents reveal that thousands of Katyn massacre victims executed in Kharkov were later covered with lime to conceal traces of mass murder.*

An August 8 article in *thenews.pl*, a website of "Polskie Radio dla Zagranicy" reports... A letter, branded 'top secret,' has recently been found by the Ukrainian Security Service in post-Soviet archives. It reads: "In a forest about 100 metres from Kharkov-Bilgorod road, within a 50-metre radius, are many spots of collapsed earth. The holes are rectangular, 3x6 metres. One of the holes has been dug out and human bones and skulls can be seen. Some of the bones are scattered on the ground. There are also the remains of foreign-made military boots."

The letter was written by General Vitaliy Nikitchenko to KGB head Yuri Andropov and to Petro Shelest, leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine, on 7 June 1969.

General Nikitchenko, head of the Committee of State Security of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, further reports that the grave has been dug out by three pupils of fifth and sixth grade from Pyatikhatki. They robbed a gold ring engraved with the initials AK and the date 29 June 1924, gold tooth crowns and military buttons with the image of the Polish eagle.

"It has been established that here in 1940 the NKVD from Kharkov region buried several thousands executed officers and generals of bourgeois Poland, whose remnants have been accidentally discovered by children," writes Nikitchenko.

Pyatikhatki, along with Katyn and Miednoye, is the burial place of over 3,700 Polish war prisoners executed by the NKVD in 1940 as ordered by Stalin and other Soviet leaders.

In order to conceal the discovery and truth about the mass murder, Nikitchenko proposed announcing that it was Germans who executed deserters from their own army and the allied armies. The General suggested that people be warned that victims who were buried here died of cholera, typhus, syphilis and other infectious diseases. Andropov decided that that kind of disinformation campaign will not be enough, and, in a letter to General Petro Feshchenko from the Kharkov branch of the NKVD, ordered the site destroyed. The burial place in Pyatikhatki was to be surrounded by barbed-wire fence and guarded by 21 men. The remnants of Polish officers were to be destroyed by being covered with lime and the graves were to be filled in. Andropov gave his subordinates four years and 10,000 rubles (220 euro) to do that. (mg/mmj)

(This article was sent to us by a member of the Kresy Sybiraki group.) □

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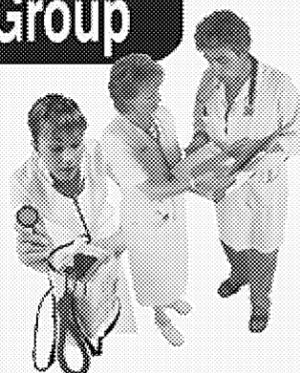
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Kresy Sybiraki website**Mass grave to give clues on Katyn?**

According to reporters from the daily Rzeczpospolita and Lublin Radio, the mass graves discovered twelve years ago in Volodymyr-Volynskiy, northwestern Ukraine, can help in tracing the fate of the victims of the Katyn massacre. Rzeczpospolita writes that the facts regarding over three and a half thousand people detained by the NKVD Stalinist police between the years 1939-1941 could be revealed.

Research of the grounds in Volodymyr-Volynskiy resulted in the discovery of the remains of some 100 people. According to the head of the local historical museum, the place may have been the mass grave of thousands of victims. Rzeczpospolita writes that the suspicions that the victims were Polish officers stem from the fact that the digs turned up fragments of Polish military uniforms. The victims were killed the same way as those in Katyn, with a shot in the back of the head, their hands had been bound with wire in an identical manner.

Rzeczpospolita reports that the identity of the victims is not the only mystery in the case. The paper wonders why no one bothered to investigate the findings 12 years ago, or why no symbolic grave had been built to commemorate the victims.

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**US pressures Poland to compensate Jews**

By: **Robert Strybel**,  
Our Warsaw Correspondent

WARSAW—Poland's authorities are coming under increased pressure to compensate Jewish groups for property stolen or destroyed by the Nazis and/or nationalized by the Soviet-backed communist regime. Guy Billauer, one of the leaders of the American Jewish Committee recently accused free Poland of doing nothing to solve that problem.

"We want Poland to finally do something. You are the only country of Central East Europe that has done nothing for nearly 20 years since regaining your independence. And the private owners, all over 80, are waiting and waiting," Billauer said in an interview. He admitted that a Polish law had been enacted in 1997 to return surviving religious facilities such as synagogues, schools and ritual bath houses to local Jewish congregations, but so far private property owners have been bypassed.

The government of Donald Tusk has been working on a reprivatization bill but so far little headway has been reported. Ever since Poland rid itself of communism in 1989, successive cabinets have grappled with the problem to no avail. The current global economic crisis makes it all the more difficult to come up with compensation. That is why Jewish groups claim they must use their influence with the US authorities to put pressure on Poland.

"If work on the restitution law were nearing completion, there would be nothing to talk about, but that is not the case," Billauer said. In his view a US Congressional resolution addressed to Poland was not confrontational but "calmly called the attention of a friend and ally to his 20-year passivity. (...) I hope the Poland government does not regard this as pressure but rather as an opportunity to resolve the matter."

Billauer's words echoed charges leveled against Poland by last June's restitution conference held in the Czech capital of Prague. According to Władysław Bartoszewski, the Polish government official in charge of Polish-Jewish relations, the Prague conference was dominated by a group of American lawyers, hired by Jewish organizations. It's not surprising that Jewish leaders have declared plans to keep putting pressure on Poland and even want compensation for property to which there are no living heirs. They argue that such money would go into a fund to aid Holocaust survivors and their families.

But Bartoszewski, a Christian survivor of Auschwitz, explained that under Polish law the property of someone who dies heirless and does not leave a will becomes the possession of the state, no matter what his or her nationality. "If we would treat Jews as special cases, it would be discrimination against the rest of Polish citizens," he declared.

Many Poles believe that their country is not the one who should be paying for property confiscated or destroyed by the invading Germans and Russians. A typical view was voiced by Maciej Skiba who told an Internet forum: "Why should Poland have to lose more money when they were just as much the victim as the Jewish population? We lost a great deal in the war, and we cannot afford to lose much more. Especially since the country that started it all is now the richest country in the European Union." □

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