

LOUIS FITZGIBBON

KATYN  
MASSACRE

A SEARING  
INDICTMENT OF  
THE SHAMEFUL  
CONCEALMENT OF  
MASS MURDER



MASSACHUSETTS  
KATYNS

ja-16-18

Louis FitzGibbon is a political writer who contributes to various national and international journals and publications. He has written several books on Katyn and on the Horn of Africa, the first of which won him the first Airey Neave Memorial Scholarship. For many years he has been involved in work for refugees. Since 1984 he has been Honorary Secretary of the British Horn of Africa Council. His latest book, *When the Killing Has to Stop* (about Ethiopia) is published in 1989. Louis FitzGibbon, who is a Knight of Malta, lives in Brighton.

Dr Zdzisław M. Ruralski.

With gratitude  
for your contact,  
encouragement, and  
material in my new  
1989 Preface.

Daj Boże, we shall  
win.

Louis FitzGibbon



Brighton, UK.  
29 August 1989.

# KATYN MASSACRE

Louis FitzGibbon


Introduction by Constantine FitzGibbon



**CORGI BOOKS**

*Handwritten notes in pencil, including a signature and a red circular stamp.*

to John M. Jones  
with gratitude  
for your constant  
encouragement and  
interest in my  
work.  
1979  
John M. Jones  
Corgi Books  
1979



## KATYN MASSACRE

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*Katyn Massacre* is a compilation, with some additional material especially written for this edition, of two previous books by the author: *Katyn - A Crime Without Parallel*, published by Tom Stacey Ltd., 1971, and *The Katyn Cover-up*, published by Tom Stacey Ltd., 1972

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*The author wants to thank his wife, Madeleine (deceased), for her patience and encouragement throughout all the work involved, especially during those moments when energy and confidence temporarily deserted him.*

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## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of the 14,500  
Polish officers and leading intellectuals who  
disappeared from the prisoner-of-war camps at  
Kozielsk, Starobielsk, and Ostashkov, USSR, in the  
spring of 1940, of whom the remains of 4,254 were  
discovered by the German Army in the Forest of  
Katyn in the spring of 1943, and to the countless  
other Poles who vanished in Soviet Russia during and  
after the war.

R.I.P.

And to their widows and other surviving relatives in  
many lands

'No light, but rather darkness visible served only to  
discover sights of woe'  
(Milton: *Paradise Lost*, Book I)

The author and publishers are grateful to the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Washington Times* for permission to reproduce articles which appear in the Preface.

All photographs, except that of the Katyn Memorial, are reproduced by permission of the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum.

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On August 3 Lord Chelwood also tried to clear up the confusion about just how many were murdered at Katyn in a letter published in *The Times*:

From Lord Chelwood

Sir,

With respect, your report (Parliament, July 28) of my question about the massacre in the Katyn Forest in 1940 is misleading. Some 4,500 Polish officers were murdered at Katyn by the Soviet Union (not 15,000 as you report).

Around 10,000 more Polish prisoners of war were in the camps Ostashkov and Starobielsk. Not a trace of them has ever been found. The reason for this mass slaughter was undoubtedly to kill those middle-class Poles who would have resisted the setting up of a puppet government and Soviet occupation after the war.

There has never been any doubt that these blood-curdling crimes were the work of the Soviet Union.

Yours sincerely,

CHELWOOD, House of Lords.

July 28

On September 2 the Polish News Agency PAP announced that a four-metre-high wooden cross had been erected at Katyn, and a mass was said there by Fr. Lucjan Swieszkowski. Then another strange thing happened. Since January 1984 I have been the Honorary Secretary of The British Horn of Africa Council, of which the President is the Rt. Hon. Julian Amery MP (whom I had first seen in the crowd at the unveiling of the Katyn Memorial on September 18, 1976). His secretary sent me a copy of a journal called *Counterpoint* (Vol. 4 No. 3 issue for August 1988). On the front page there was a lengthy article on Katyn by Mr Zdzislaw Rurarz who was described as the defected Polish ambassador to Japan. In his article he debunked the latest Soviet story that the Katyn massacre was committed by the Germans in 1943 (even more far-fetched than their original lie about 1941). Needless to say I wrote with extra

material to the editor who passed on my letter to Mr Rurarz. On October 25 1988 I heard from Mr Rurarz, and we have been in correspondence since. He lives in Virginia, USA, and has uncovered new material about Katyn which he caused to appear in the Polish-language journal *Kontakt* (issue for July/August 1988). This is so important that the full text is given here in English:

#### UNKNOWN PHOTOS OF THE KATYN CEMETERY

The Architectural and Cartographic Branch of the National Archives in Alexandria, in the state of Virginia, has photos that had been taken by German airplanes during WWII. The photos are not classified by subjects and are stored in big boxes, about 100 to a box. They are all positives, turned yellow by time, and not always of the best quality. The format of most of them is 20 × 26 cm, but bigger ones can also be found. Each one of them has three numbers in its upper left-hand corner: the first is probably the number of the film reel, the second being that of the frame, while the third informs of the focal distance. Some photos have an additional fourth four-digit number, written in white into a black square. The lower left-hand corner contains the face of a clock with Arabic numerals and the tips of dials. The date at which the photo had been taken is inscribed in the middle of the clock's face. This was always done with a pencil and that is why it is often hardly legible.

Other information has also been noted on the boxes containing the pictures: the flight number (or, professionally speaking, the 'sortie'), the scale, and the type of camera. Some of the photos had been taken with a 'SG' type camera which, when special lenses are used, gives a three-dimensional effect.

On one of the photos, the German officer had drawn, either with a pen or with a humid indelible pencil, an arrow next to which he inscribed 'Katyn'. The arrow points to the Katyn graves, four of which can be seen very well, while two others remain in the shade of trees.

The first photos on which the place of murder is visible were taken on September 26 1943, that is between several and a dozen or so hours after Smolensk and its vicinity had been taken by the Soviet forces. The next ones date from September 30, October 7, 13, 23, and 25, November 5, and December 31 1943, as well as January 7, February 7 and 19, April 28, May 12 and 28, and finally June 2 and 10 1944.

The photos taken on September 26 1943, were taken from high altitude and even their blow-ups do not allow one to remark anything on the territory of the cemetery. The pictures dated October 13 and 23 are also unclear. It is only on the four pictures dated October 27 1943 that one can clearly see the characteristic meander of the Dnieper, the Smolensk-Minsk road, the forest road used to bring the victims from the Gniezdowo station to their place of execution, the places remaining by the burned-down or blown-up NKVD villas and the road leading to them. The graves remind one of a small chessboard composed of five small squares and one rather deformed square, or rather lozenge. According to the description of the cemetery contained in the Congressional Records pertaining to the investigations of the Katyn murders, there were precisely six graves shaped as squares. One of them, whose configuration had been changed, had two additional mounds, one big and one small or, what is still more probable, two small ones. There were paths between the graves at whose heads there were crosses, six big ones and two small. The surfaces of the graves also bore crosses – also six big ones and two small ones, which were most probably made out of stones. The entire area of the cemetery was devoid of trees and bushes.

The photo dated October 27 exactly confirms this description. The only thing not to be seen on it are the crosses – neither the ones lying on the graves' surfaces, nor the ones set vertically and which, given the sunny conditions on the day the picture was taken, would have cast a shadow. During the more than month-long Soviet presence

there, the crosses had most probably been removed.

The next pictures, dated between November 1943 and March 1944, do not point to any human activity at the site of the murder. The area was then covered in snow. And yet, things were happening. On January 24 the Soviet 'Special Commission for Establishing and Investigating the Circumstances of Execution of Polish Officers Invaders', headed by Alexei Tolstoy, published in Smolensk, and only in English, its notorious 'report'. It was on this occasion that a number of Allied personalities and reporters were invited to the cemetery where they were shown the bodies of the victims.

The pictures of March 27 still show the presence of a snow cover and the absence of any activity at the cemetery. At the same time, however, the Smolensk-Minsk road leading to the place of murder shows signs of being used.

The two following pictures of April 28, both of which are very clear and three-dimensional, make a simply shocking impression. Even the naked eye, without the use of special lenses, can see that huge changes had taken place in the Katyn forest. After the work of the commission had ended and the earth thawed, the cemetery was being dug up and destroyed.

The configuration of the graves had changed, while the area of the old cemetery increased. In the earlier pictures, the forest clearing where the cemetery was located stretched only to the left, or west, of the path leading in the direction of the Smolensk-Minsk road. Now, a second white patch can be seen to the right . . . Would it be that some new graves were uncovered here, or were some new victims being buried?

Dark streaks appeared at the cemetery. The longest and darkest one, of a width of at least 5 metres, runs just next to the forest road, from the northern edge of the clearing almost all the way to the south. It is most probably the shadow cast by a scarp created by the digging up of the place of murder. The intensity of its black colour can also

entail from the fact that the sand which comes out as white on the pictures could have changed its colour because of the decomposing bodies, or that dark-coloured soil had been unearthed. Two shorter, narrower and lighter shadows extend perpendicularly from the scarp and extend to the middle of the cemetery, while a broad stripe comes in from the opposite side. The outlines of two other crisscrossing stripes can be seen in the cemetery's south side. These can be mounds of darkened sand, ditches or the unearthed bodies of Polish officers lying side by side.

A small black dot, which casts its shadow to the west, is visible in the middle of the cemetery.

New devegetated places appeared below the area of the cemetery. There are five small ones immediately by the road and one big one somewhat more to the southwest. Their irregular shapes suggest that some kind of earth-works are also taking place there.

What does all this mean? Would it be that the bodies, or rather their remains mixed up with sand, taken from the cemetery were being reburied there?

In two places along the forest road, namely on the side of the road and below the cemetery, one can see short dark stripes. These are either trenches that had been dug across, or some sort of barriers. This is probably where the NKVD sentries guarding the place of murder were posted.

The photos of May 12 were taken from high altitude and under partial cloud cover, but are interesting in that they do not show any more stripes. This information is confirmed by the pictures dated May 28, which also show that to the right of the forest road opposite the cemetery, there appeared twenty-four additional patches, devegetated and of irregular shapes, while somewhat to the north, closer to the road, there is a bizarre white rectangle.

Barriers along the forest road can be seen on the pictures. The one to the south was moved even further to the south, to the bifurcation of the forest roads.

The photos from June 2 reveal new details: there appeared at the cemetery four small objects, something

like perpendicular posts or turrets casting their shadow, while the chain of the five patches beneath the place of murder is clearly linked by an irregularly shaped path.

The last pictures dated June 10 1944 show that earth-works in the entire area had been ended.

Were the remains of the victims also removed from the Katyn cemetery? Did the murderers cover up the traces of their crime?

*Prepared by the editors based on material found and described by Zdzislaw Rurarz*

(Note: the photographs are available, but due to their age and condition it is not possible to reproduce them in this book.)

Tuesday February 7 1989 saw another article in the *Daily Telegraph* which reported the important point that Poland itself had admitted that the Soviets were responsible for Katyn:

#### BLAME FOR KATYN PINNED ON RUSSIA

by Robin Gedye in Warsaw

Poland yesterday laid to rest an infamous historical mystery by admitting that the Soviet Union and not the Nazis was responsible for the wartime massacre of 4,000 Polish officers in the Forest of Katyn.

By publishing evidence pointing to Soviet culpability, the officially sanctioned weekly *Odrodzenie* pre-empted publication of a report by a Soviet-Polish historical commission which is believed to have been holding back from revealing its finds.

And Poland's government spokesman, Mr Jerzy Urban, insinuated Poland was losing patience with the Soviet Union's insistence that the findings be published simultaneously in Warsaw and Moscow.

*Odrodzenie's* article was based on a report by a Polish Red Cross team which in 1943 exhumed the officers' bodies from mass graves at Katyn Forest near Smolensk



**Over forty years after the end of the Second World War, the Katyn massacre continues to make headlines. It remains foremost among the great unpunished wartime crimes: a mass murder committed by one of the victorious powers.**

In 1943 German soldiers made a ghastly discovery in the forest of Katyn. One third of the 14,500 Polish officers missing since their country had been brutally divided between Hitler and Stalin, lay in a series of mass graves. Some had their hands bound behind their backs – and each had a bullet entry wound in the base of the skull.

In this explosive book, with a new preface for the 1989 edition, Louis FitzGibbon examines, coolly and impartially, the facts of the crime and the conclusions to which they lead. He does not shrink from the attribution of guilt.



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