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*From
W.S.C.
Aug. 43
LJP*

*file PSF
Churchill*
10, Downing Street,
Whitehall.

MR. PRESIDENT.

The first of these two papers is a grim, well-written story, but perhaps a little too well-written. Nevertheless if you have time to read it, it would repay the trouble. I should like to have it back when you have finished with it as we are not circulating it officially in any way.

The second, about Yugoslavia, I had prepared for the discussions at Abraham. I am not sure that your people have quite realized all that is going on in the Balkans and the hopes and horrors centred there. You might find it convenient to keep it by you. Much of it is taken from the Boniface sources, and it certainly makes one's blood boil. I must add that I am not in any way making a case for the employment of an Allied Army in the Balkans but only for aiding them with

supplies, agents and Commandos. Once the Adriatic is open we should be able to get into close contact with these people and give them aid sufficient to make it worth their while to follow our guidance.

LM

13. 8. 43

Circulated to the Cabinet by direction of

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POLAND.

May 31, 1943.

SECTION 1.

[C 6160/258/55]

Copy No. 03

Mr. O'Malley to Mr. Eden.—(Received 31st May.)

British Embassy to Poland,
45, Lowndes Square, S.W. 1.

(No. 51.)
Sir,

24th May, 1943.

MY despatch No. 43 of the 30th April dwelt on the probability that no confederation in Eastern Europe could play an effective part in European politics unless it were affiliated to the Soviet Government, and suggested that so long as the policy of this Government was as enigmatic as it now is it would be inconsistent with British interests that Russia should enjoy a sphere of influence extending from Danzig to the Aegean and Adriatic Seas. The suppression of the Comintern on the 20th May may be considered to have brought to an end what was in the past the most objectionable phase of Soviet foreign policy and to entitle the Soviet Government to be regarded less distrustfully than formerly. It is not, then, without hesitation that I address this further despatch to you, which also gives grounds for misgivings about the character and policy of the present rulers in Russia.

2. We do not know for certain who murdered a lot of Polish officers in the forest of Katyn in April and May 1940, but this at least is already clear, that it was the scene of terrible events which will live long in the memory of the Polish nation. Accordingly, I shall try to describe how this affair looks to my Polish friends and acquaintances, of whom many had brothers and sons and lovers among those known to have been taken off just three years ago from the prison camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov to an uncertain destination: how it looks, for instance, to General Sikorski, who there lost Captain Fuhrman, his former A.D.C. and close personal friend; to M. Morawski, who lost a brother-in-law called Zoltowski and a nephew; or to M. Zaleski, who lost a brother and two cousins.

3. The number of Polish prisoners taken by the Russian armies when they invaded Poland, in September 1939, was about 180,000, including police and gendarmerie and a certain number of civilian officials. The total number of army officers was round about 15,000. At the beginning of 1940 there were in the three camps named above round about 9,000 or 10,000 officers and 6,000 other ranks, policemen and civil officials. Less public reference has been made to these 6,000 than to the 10,000 officers, not because the Polish Government are less indignant about the disappearance of other ranks than about the disappearance of officers, or were less insistent in enquiries for them, but because the need of officers to command the Polish troops recruited in Russia was more urgent than the need to increase the total ration strength of the Polish army. There is no reason to suppose that these 6,000 other ranks and the police and the civilians were treated by the Soviet Government differently to the officers, and mystery covers the fate of all. For the sake of simplicity, however, I shall write in this despatch only of the missing officers, without specific reference to other ranks, to police prisoners or to civilians. Of the 10,000 officers, only some 3,000 or 4,000 were regular officers. The remainder were reserve officers who in peace time earned their living, many with distinction, in the professions, in business and so on.

4. In March of 1940 word went round the camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov that, under orders from Moscow, the prisoners were to be moved to camps where conditions would be more agreeable, and that they might look forward to eventual release. All were cheered by the prospect of a change from the rigours which prisoners must endure to the hazards and vicissitudes of relative freedom in Soviet or German territory. Even their captors seemed to wish the prisoners well, who were now daily entrained in parties of 50 to 350 for the place at which, so they hoped, the formalities of their discharge would be completed. As each prisoner was listed for transfer, all the usual particulars about him were rechecked and reregistered. Fresh finger-prints were taken. The prisoners were inoculated afresh and certificates of inoculation furnished to

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them. Sometimes the prisoners' Polish documents were taken away, but in many such cases these were returned before departure. All were furnished with rations for the journey, and, as a mark of special regard, the sandwiches furnished to senior officers were wrapped in clean white paper—a commodity seldom available in Russia. Anticipations of a better future were clouded only by the fact that 400 or 500 Poles had been listed for further detention, first at Pavlishchev Bor and eventually at Griazovetz. These were, as it turned out later, to be the only known survivors of the lost legion, and some of them are in England now; but at the time, although no principle could be discovered on which they had been selected, they supposed that they had been condemned to a further period of captivity; and some even feared that they had been chosen out for execution.

5. Our information about these events is derived for the most part from those routed to Griazovetz, all of whom were released in 1941, and some of whom—notably M. Komarnicki, the Polish Minister for Justice—are now in England.

6. Entrainment of the 10,000 officers from the three camps went on all through April and the first half of May, and the lorries, lined with cheerful faces, which took them from camp to station, were, in fact, the last that was ever seen of them alive by any witness to whom we have access. Until the revelations made by the German broadcast of the 12th April, 1943, and apart from a few words let drop at the time by the prison guards, only the testimony of scribbblings on the railway wagons in which they were transported affords any indication of their destination. The same wagons seem to have done a shuttle service between Kozielsk and the detraining station; and on these some of the first parties to be transported had scratched the words: "Don't believe that we are going home," and the news that their destination had turned out to be a small station near Smolensk. These messages were noticed when the vans returned to Smolensk station, and have been reported to us by prisoners at Kozielsk, who were later sent to Griazovetz.

7. But though of positive indications as to what subsequently happened to the 10,000 officers there was none until the grave at Katyn was opened, there is now available a good deal of negative evidence, the cumulative effect of which is to throw serious doubt on Russian disclaimers of responsibility for the massacre.

8. In the first place there is the evidence to be derived from the prisoners' correspondence, in respect to which information has been furnished by officers' families in Poland, by officers now with the Polish army in the Middle East, and by the Polish Red Cross Society. Up till the end of March 1940 large numbers of letters had been despatched, which were later received by their relatives, from the officers confined at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov; whereas no letters from any of them (excepting from the 400 moved to Griazovetz) have been received by anybody which had been despatched subsequent to that date. The Germans overran Smolensk in July 1941, and there is no easy answer to the question why, if any of the 10,000 had been alive between the end of May 1940 and July 1941, none of them ever succeeded in getting any word through to their families.

9. In the second place there is the evidence of the correspondence between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government. The first request for information about the 10,000 was made by M. Kot of M. Wyshinsky on the 6th October, 1941. On the 3rd December, 1941, General Sikorski backed up his enquiry with a list of 3,845 names of officers included among them. General Anders furnished the Soviet Government with a further list of 800 names on the 18th March, 1942. Enquiries about the fate of the 10,000 were made again and again to the Russian Government verbally and in writing by General Sikorski, M. Kot, M. Romer, Count Raczynski and General Anders between October 1941 and April 1943: The Polish Red Cross between August and October 1940 sent no less than 500 *questionnaires* about individual officers to the Russian Government. To none of all these enquiries extending over a period of two and a half years was a single positive answer of any kind ever returned. The enquirers were told either that the officers had been released, or that "perhaps they are already in Germany," or that "no information" of their whereabouts was available, or (M. Molotov to M. Kot, October 1941) that complete lists of the prisoners were available and that they would all be delivered to the Polish authorities "dead or alive." But it is incredible that if any of the 10,000 were released, not one of them has ever appeared again anywhere, and it is almost equally incredible, if they were not released, that not one of them should have escaped subsequent to May 1940 and reported himself to the Polish authorities in Russia

or Persia. That the Russian authorities should have said of any Polish officer in Soviet jurisdiction that they had "no information" also provokes incredulity; for it is notorious that the N.K.V.D. collect and record the movements of individuals with the most meticulous care.

10. In the third place there is the evidence of those who have visited the grave: first, a Polish commission including, among others, doctors, journalists and members of the Polish Assistance Committee, a former president of the Polish Academy of Literature and a representative of the Mayor of Warsaw; secondly, another Polish commission which included priests, doctors and representatives of the Polish Red Cross Society; thirdly, an international commission of criminologists and pathologists, of which the personnel is given in Annex I. The report of this commission forms Annex II to this despatch, and the reports of the two Polish commissions add little to it. It is deposed by all that several hundred identifications have been established. All this evidence would normally be highly suspect since the inspections took place under German auspices and the results reached us through German broadcasts. There are fair grounds for presuming that the German broadcasts accurately represented the findings of the commissions, that the commissions' findings were at any rate in some respects well founded, and that the grounds were sound on which at any rate some of the identifications were made.

11. In the fourth place there is the fact that a mass execution of officer prisoners would be inconsistent with what we know of the German army. The German army has committed innumerable brutalities, but the murder by them of prisoners of war, even of Poles, is rare. Had the German authorities ever had these 10,000 Polish officers in their hands we can be sure that they would have placed some or all of them in the camps in Germany already allotted to Polish prisoners, while the 6,000 other ranks, policemen and civil officials would have been put to forced labour. In such case the Polish authorities would in the course of two years certainly have got into touch with some of the prisoners; but, in fact, none of the men from Kozielsk, Starobielsk or Ostashkov have ever been heard of from Germany.

12. Finally there is the evidence to be derived from the confusion which characterises explanations elicited from or volunteered by the Soviet Government. Between August 1941 and the 12th April, 1943, when the Germans announced the discovery of the grave at Katyn, the Russian Government had, among other excuses, maintained that all Polish officers taken prisoner in 1939 had been released. On the other hand, in conversation with the Polish Ambassador, a Russian official who had drunk more than was good for him, once referred to the disposal of these officers as "a tragic error." On the 16th April, immediately after the German announcement, the Soviet Information Bureau in Moscow suggested that the Germans were misrepresenting as victims of Russian barbarity skeletons dug up by archaeologists at Gniezdowo, which lies next door to Katyn. On the 26th April M. Molotov, in a note to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, said that the bodies at Katyn were those of Poles who had at one time been prisoners of the Russians but had subsequently been captured by the Germans in their advance at Smolensk in July 1941 and had been murdered then by them. On a later occasion, and when the German broadcasts gave reason to think that some bodies were sufficiently well preserved to be identifiable, the Russian Government put forward a statement that the Polish officers had been captured by the Germans in July 1941, had been employed upon construction work, and had only been murdered shortly before the German "discovery" was announced. This confusion cannot easily be understood except on the assumption that the Russian Government had something to hide.

13. The cumulative effect of this evidence is, as I said earlier, to throw serious doubt on Russian disclaimers of responsibility for a massacre. Such doubts are not diminished by rumours which have been current during the last two and a half years that some of the inmates of Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov had been transported towards Kolyma, Franz Joseph Land or Novaya Zemlya, some or all of these being killed *en route*. It may be that this was so, and it may be that some less number than ten thousand odd were destroyed and buried at Katyn; but whether the massacre occurred (if it did occur) in one place or two places or three places naturally makes no difference to Polish sentiments. These will accordingly be described without reference to the uncertainty which exists as to the exact number of victims buried near Smolensk.

14. With all that precedes in mind it is comprehensible that the relatives and fellow-officers of the men who disappeared should have concluded that these had in fact been murdered by their Russian captors and should picture their

last hours—somewhat as follows—with bitter distress. The picture is a composite one to which knowledge of the district, the German broadcasts, experience of Russian methods and the reports of visitors to the grave have all contributed, but it is not so much an evidentially established description of events as a reconstruction in the light of the evidence—sometimes partial and obviously defective—of what may have happened. But it—or something like it—is what most Poles believe to have happened, and what I myself, in the light of all the evidence, such as it is, incline to think happened. Many months or years may elapse before the truth is known, but because in the meantime curiosity is unsatisfied and judgment in suspense, we cannot, even if we would—and much less can Poles—make our thoughts and feelings unresponsive to the dreadful probabilities of the case.

15. Smolensk lies some 20 kilom. from the spot where the common graves were discovered. It has two stations and in or near the town the main lines from Moscow to Warsaw and from Riga to Orel cross and recross each other. Some 15 kilom. to the west of Smolensk stands the unimportant station of Gniezdowo, and it is but a short mile from Gniezdowo to a place known locally as Kozlinaya Gora or "The Hill of Goats." The district of Katyn, in which this little hill stands, is covered with primeval forest which has been allowed to go to rack and ruin. The forest is mostly coniferous, but the pine trees are interspersed here and there with hardwoods and scrub. The month of April normally brings spring to this part of the country, and by early May the trees are green; but the winter of 1939-40 had been the hardest on record, and when the first parties from Kozielsk arrived on the 8th April there would still have been occasional patches of snow in deep shade and, of course, much mud on the rough road from the station to the Hill of Goats. At Gniezdowo the prison vans from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov discharged their passengers into a barbed-wire cage surrounded by a strong force of Russian soldiers, and the preparations made here for their reception must have filled most of the Polish officers with dismay, and some indeed with dismay who remembered that the forest of Katyn had been used by the Bolsheviks in 1919 as a convenient place for the killing of many Czarist officers. For such was the case, and a Pole now in London, Janusz Laskowski, tells me that when he was eleven years old he had to listen every evening to an account of his day's work from one of the executioners, Afanaziev, who was billeted in his mother's house. From the cage the prisoners were taken in lorries along a country road to the Hill of Goats, and it must have been when they were unloaded from the lorries that their hands were bound and that dismay gave way to despair. If a man struggled, it seems that the executioner threw his coat over his head, tying it round his neck and leading him hooded to the pit's edge, for in many cases a body was found to be thus hooded and the coat to have been pierced by a bullet where it covered the base of the skull. But those who went quietly to their death must have seen a monstrous sight. In the broad deep pit their comrades lay, packed closely round the edge, head to feet, like sardines in a tin, but in the middle of the grave disposed less orderly. Up and down on the bodies the executioners tramped, hauling the dead bodies about and treading in the blood like butchers in a stockyard. When it was all over and the last shot had been fired and the last Polish head been punctured, the butchers—perhaps trained in youth to husbandry—seem to have turned their hands to one of the most innocent of occupations: smoothing the clods and planting little conifers all over what had been a shambles. It was, of course, rather late in the year for transplanting young trees, but not too late; for the sap was beginning to run in the young Scots pines when, three years later, the Polish representatives visited the site.

16. The climate and the conifers are not without significance. The climate of Smolensk accounts for the fact that, though the Germans first got wind of the existence of the mass graves in the autumn of 1942, it was only in April of 1943 that they published to the world an account of what had been unearthed. The explanation is surely this: not that the German propagandists had chosen a politically opportune moment for their revelations, but that during the winter the ground at Smolensk is frozen so hard that it would have been impossible to uncover corpses without dynamite or such other violent means as would have destroyed the possibility of identifying dead bodies. The winter of 1942-43 was exceptionally mild and the German authorities probably got to work as soon as the soil was sufficiently soft. The little conifers also deserve more attention than they have received. In the first place they are presumptive evidence of Russian guilt; for, considering the conditions under which the German army advanced through Smolensk in July 1941 in full expectation of early and complete

victory, it is most unlikely, if the Polish officers had been murdered by Germans and not Russians, that the Germans would have bothered to cover up their victims' graves with young trees. In the second place, one of these young trees under examination by a competent botanist would reveal beyond any possibility of doubt whether it had last been transplanted in May 1940 or some time subsequent to July 1941. Perhaps this test of Russian veracity will presently be made.

17. The political background against which the events described in paragraph 15 are viewed by Poles is by contrast a matter of undisputed history, including as it does all the long story of partitions, rebellions and repressions, the Russo-Polish war of 1919-20, the mutual suspicions which this left behind it, the unannounced invasion of Poland by Russia in September 1939, the subsequent occupation of half Poland by Russia and the carrying into captivity of some million and a half of its inhabitants. More recently comes the virtual annexation of the occupied eastern parts of Poland, the refusal of the Russian Government to recognise as Polish citizens the inhabitants of the occupied districts, the suppression of relief organisations for Poles in Russia and the persecution of Poles refusing to change their own for Russian nationality. When Poles learned that, in addition to all these misfortunes, round about 10,000 men of the best breeding stock in Poland had (according to Russian accounts) been either dispersed and "lost" somewhere in the Soviet Union or else abandoned to the advancing German armies, or had (according to German accounts) been found to have been murdered by the Russians, many of them naturally concluded (though I do not here give it as my own conclusion) that the Soviet Government's intention had been to destroy the very foundations upon which their own Poland could be rebuilt. This sinister political intention imputed by Poles to Russia poisoned the wound and enhanced the sufferings of a nation already outraged and dismayed by the conduct of the Soviet Government. Some Poles, remembering Lenin's attitude to the holocausts of 1917 and subsequent years, and probing the dark recesses of Stalin's mind when he took (if take he did) the dreadful decision, compare disciple with master. Lenin would have broken apart the heads of ten thousand Polish officers with the insouciance of a monkey cracking walnuts. Did corpses pitching into a common grave with the precision of machines coming off a production-belt similarly satisfy a nature habituated to manipulate blood and lives with uncompassionate detachment? Some at any rate so interpret Stalin's mind. "These men are no use to us," they imagine him as saying; "in fact they are a nuisance and a danger. Here is an *élite* of talent, here is valour and a hostile purpose. These stallions must not live to sire a whole herd of hostile Christian thoroughbreds. Many of the brood-mares have already been sold to Siberian peasants and the camel-pullers of Kazakstan. Their foals and yearlings can be broken to Communist harness. Rid me of this stud farm altogether and send all this turbulent bloodstock to the knackers."

18. The men who were taken to Katyn are dead, and their death is a very serious loss to Poland. Nevertheless, unless the Russians are cleared of the presumption of guilt, the moral repercussions in Poland, in the other occupied countries and in England of the massacre of Polish officers may well have more enduring results than the massacre itself; and this aspect of things, therefore, deserves attention. As I have as yet seen no reliable reports on public feeling in Poland and German-occupied Europe, my comments will relate only to our own reaction to the uncovering of the graves.

19. This despatch is not primarily concerned with the reaction of the British public, press or Parliament, who are not in such a good position as His Majesty's Government to form an opinion as to what actually happened. We ourselves, on the other hand, who have access to all the available information, though we can draw no final conclusions on vital matters of fact, have a considerable body of circumstantial evidence at our disposal, and I think most of us are more than half convinced that a large number of Polish officers were indeed murdered by the Russian authorities, and that it is indeed their bodies (as well, maybe, as other bodies) which have now been unearthed. This being so, I am impelled to examine the effect on myself of the facts and allegations, and to adjust my mind to the shocking probabilities of the case. Since the Polish Government is in London and since the affair has been handled directly by yourself and the Prime Minister with General Sikorski and Count Raczyński, it may seem redundant for me to comment on it, as I should naturally do were the Polish Government and I both abroad; but, though all important conversations have been between Ministers and the leaders of the Polish Government, my contacts have doubtless been more numerous than yours during the last few weeks

with Poles of all kinds, and they have possibly spoken to me with less reserve than to yourself. I hope therefore I may, without impertinence, submit to you the reflections which follow.

20. In handling the publicity side of the Katyn affair we have been constrained by the urgent need for cordial relations with the Soviet Government to appear to appraise the evidence with more hesitation and lenience than we should do in forming a common-sense judgment on events occurring in normal times or in the ordinary course of our private lives; we have been obliged to appear to distort the normal and healthy operation of our intellectual and moral judgments; we have been obliged to give undue prominence to the tactlessness or impulsiveness of Poles, to restrain the Poles from putting their case clearly before the public, to discourage any attempt by the public and the press to probe the ugly story to the bottom. In general we have been obliged to deflect attention from possibilities which in the ordinary affairs of life would cry to high heaven for elucidation, and to withhold the full measure of solicitude which, in other circumstances, would be shown to acquaintances situated as a large number of Poles now are. We have in fact perforce used the good name of England like the murderers used the little conifers to cover up a massacre; and, in view of the immense importance of an appearance of Allied unity and of the heroic resistance of Russia to Germany, few will think that any other course would have been wise or right.

21. This dislocation between our public attitude and our private feelings we may know to be deliberate and inevitable; but at the same time we may perhaps wonder whether, by representing to others something less than the whole truth so far as we know it, and something less than the probabilities so far as they seem to us probable, we are not incurring a risk of what—not to put a fine point on it—might darken our vision and take the edge off our moral sensibility. If so, how is this risk to be avoided?

22. At first sight it seems that nothing less appropriate to a political despatch than a discourse upon morals can be imagined; but yet, as we look at the changing nature of the international world of to-day, it seems that morals and international politics are becoming more and more closely involved with each other. This proposition has important consequences; but since it is not universally accepted I hope the following remarks in support of it are not out of place.

23. Nobody doubts that morals now enter into the domestic politics of the United Kingdom, but it was not always so. There was a time when the acts of the Government in London were less often the fruit of consultation and compromise in the general interests of all than of the ascendancy of one class or group of citizens who had been temporarily successful in the domestic arena. It was realisation of the interdependence of all classes and groups of the population of England, Scotland and Wales which discouraged the play of intestine power-politics and set the welfare of all above the advantage of the strong. Similar causes are producing similar results in the relations of States to each other. "During the last four centuries of our modern era," writes Professor Pollard, "the last word in political organisation has been the nation; but now that the world is being unified by science and culture" the conception of the nation state as the largest group in which human beings are organically associated with each other is being superseded by the conception of a larger, it may be of a European, or indeed of a world-wide unity; and "the nation is taking its place as the bridge, the half-way house, between the individual and the human family." Europe, and indeed the world, are in process of integrating themselves, and "the men and women of Britain," as you said at Maryland, "are alive to the fact that they live in one world with their neighbours." This being so, it would be strange if the same movement towards the coalescence of smaller into larger groups which brought about the infiltration of morals into domestic politics were not also now bringing about the infiltration of morals into international politics. This, in fact, it seems to many of us is exactly what is happening, and is why, as the late Mr. Headlam Morley said, "what in the international sphere is morally indefensible generally turns out in the long run to have been politically inept." It is surely the case that many of the political troubles of neighbouring countries and some of our own have in the past arisen because they and we were incapable of seeing this or unwilling to admit it.

24. If, then, morals have become involved with international politics, if it be the case that a monstrous crime has been committed by a foreign Government—albeit a friendly one—and that we, for however valid reasons, have been obliged to behave as if the deed was not theirs, may it not be that we now stand in danger

of bemusing not only others but ourselves : of falling, as Mr. Winant said recently at Birmingham, under St. Paul's curse on those who can see cruelty "and burn not"? If so, and since no remedy can be found in an early alteration of our public attitude towards the Katyn affair, we ought, maybe, to ask ourselves how, consistently with the necessities of our relations with the Soviet Government, the voice of our political conscience is to be kept up to concert pitch. It may be that the answer lies, for the moment, only in something to be done inside our own hearts and minds where we are masters. Here at any rate we can make a compensatory contribution—a reaffirmation of our allegiance to truth and justice and compassion. If we do this we shall at least be predisposing ourselves to the exercise of a right judgment on all those half political, half moral, questions (such as the fate of Polish deportees now in Russia) which will confront us both elsewhere and more particularly in respect to Polish-Russian relations as the war pursues its course and draws to its end; and so, if the facts about the Katyn massacre turn out to be as most of us incline to think, shall we vindicate the spirit of these brave unlucky men and justify the living to the dead.

I have, &c.

OWEN O'MALLEY.

Annex 1.

List of Personnel composing the Commission of Criminologists and Pathologists.

- Dr. Spoleers, Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Ghent.
- Dr. Markow, Instructor in Forensic Medicine and Criminology at the University of Sofia.
- Dr. Tramsen, Assistant Professor of Anatomy at the Institute for Forensic Medicine in Copenhagen.
- Dr. Saxen, Professor of Pathological Anatomy at the University in Copenhagen.
- Dr. Palmieri, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at the University of Naples.
- Dr. Miloslawich, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at the University of Agram.
- Dr. de Burret, Professor of Anatomy at the University of Troningen.
- Dr. Hajek, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology in Prague.
- Dr. Birkle, Coroner of the Roumanian Ministry of Justice and First Assistant at the Institute of Forensic Medicine and Criminology in Bucharest.
- Dr. Naville, Professor of Forensic Medicine at the University of Geneva.
- Dr. Subik, Professor of Pathological Anatomy at the University of Bratislava and head of the Public Health Service of Slovakia.
- Dr. Orsos, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at the University of Budapest.
- Dr. Buhtz, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at the University of Breslau.
- Dr. Costedoat, Medical Inspector.

Annex 2.

Katyn Wood : Text of Protocol, Berlin.

The report of the international commission of scientists on the examination of the mass graves at Katyn Wood in the main section reads as follows : From the 28th April to the 30th April, 1943, a commission composed of leading representatives of forensic medicine at European Universities and other prominent University professors of medicine have conducted a thorough scientific examination of the mass graves of Polish officers in Katyn Wood. The discovery of those mass graves, which was recently brought to the attention of the German authorities, prompted Reich's Chief Health Officer, Dr. Conti, to invite experts from various European countries to inspect the Katyn site in order thus to contribute to the clarification of this unique case. Members of the commission personally heard the testimonies of several Russian native witnesses who, among others, confirmed that during the months of March and April, 1940, almost daily big railway transports with Polish officers arrived at the station of Gniesdovo, near

Katyn, where the Polish officers alighted and were then transported in a prisoners' motor van to Katyn Wood and were not seen again; the commission further took cognisance of the discoveries and facts thus far established and inspected objects of circumstantial evidence. Accordingly, up to the 30th April, 1943, 982 bodies were exhumed, of which approximately 70 per cent. have been identified, while papers found on others must first be subjected to careful preliminary treatment before they can be used for identification. Bodies exhumed prior to the commission's arrival were all inspected, and a considerable number of bodies were dissected by Professor Buhty and his assistants. Up to to-day seven mass graves have been opened, the biggest of which is estimated to contain the bodies of 2,000 Polish officers. Members of the commission personally dissected nine corpses and submitted numerous specially selected cases to post-mortem. It was confirmed that all those so far exhumed died from bullets in their heads. In all cases, bullets entered the nape. In the majority of cases only one bullet was fired. Two bullets were fired only rarely and only one case was found where three bullets had been fired into the nape. All the bullets were fired from pistols of less than eight mm. calibre. The spot where the bullets penetrated leads to the assumption that the shot was fired with the muzzle pressed against the nape or from the closest range. The surprising regularity of the wounds . . . permits the assumption that the shots were fired by experienced hands. Numerous bodies revealed a similar method of tying the hands, and in some cases stabs from four-edged bayonets were found on bodies and clothes. The method of tying is similar to that found on the bodies of Russian civilians that were earlier exhumed in Katyn Forest. The assumption is justified that a ricocheted bullet first killed one officer, then went into the body of one already dead in the pit—the shootings apparently being made in ditches to avoid having the bodies transported to graves. The mass graves are situated in clearings in the forest, the ground being completely levelled off and planted with young pines. The mass graves were dug in undulating terrain which consists of pure sand in terraces, the lowest going down as far as the ground water. Bodies lay, practically without exception, face down, closely side by side and in layers one above the other, clearly ledged methodically at the sides of pits and more irregularly in the centre. The uniforms of the exhumed bodies, according to the unanimous opinion of the commission, were, especially with regard to buttons, rank insignia, decorations, form of boots, etc., undoubtedly Polish. They had winter wear. Frequently furs, leather coats, knitted vests and typical Polish officers' caps have been found. Only a few bodies were those of other ranks. One body was that of a priest. The measurements of the clothes correspond with the measurements of the wearer. No watches or rings were found on the bodies, although from the exact date and time found in entries in several diaries, the owners must have had these objects up to their last days, even hours. Comments found on bodies—diaries, correspondence, newspapers—are from the period of the autumn of 1939 to March and April 1940. The latest hitherto established date is that of a Russian newspaper of the 22nd April, 1940. There were varying degrees of decomposition of the bodies, differing according to the position of the bodies within the grave and their juxtaposition to each other. A large number of skulls were examined for changes which, according to the experiences of Professor Orsoa, are of great importance for the determination of the time of death. These changes consist of various layers of calcareous tuft-like incrustation on the surface of the already loamy brain matter. Such changes are not to be observed on bodies that have been interred for less than three years. But this change was observed to a marked degree on the skull of the body No. 526, which was found with a surface layer in one big mass grave.