

MASSACRE
IN
VINNITSA

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AN ACCOUNT OF AN ABOMINABLE CRIME
SIMILAR TO THAT OF KATYN

MASSACRE IN VINNITSA

Katyn, a little obscure village in the district of Smolensk in Russia, has become known throughout the world. It went into the records of the Congress of the USA and down in history as a place where some 10,000 Polish officers and soldiers, taken prisoners by the Red Army in 1939, were murdered in cold blood by the Russian Communist security police, NKVD. It has been definitely proven that it was Moscow's job. The special USA Congressional Committee, assigned for the investigation of the Katyn murder, arrived at the same conclusion. It gave the Kremlin a chance to refute the evidence, but they never availed themselves of this chance. They think it is enough to deny their responsibility for Katyn and place it upon the Nazis.

To be sure, the Nazis were not free of such crimes, but the Katyn murder was not one of theirs. They brought to Katyn an international commission and even American prisoners of war as witnesses. They had iron proof evidence that the Russians were the culprits. On the other hand, the Kremlin bitterly opposed any international investigation and broke relations with the Polish Government-in-exile when it insisted in bringing representatives of the International Red Cross to Katyn to discover the truth.

Although the Kremlin's responsibility for Katyn is beyond any doubt, still they deny it, because the Katyn massacre happened during the war in which the area of Katyn changed hands. The Polish prisoners were murdered in February through May 1940 and within a period slightly longer than a year, this area was taken by the advancing Germans. So the Kremlin reckoned that this difference of time was too small to prove anything, and that its story would sound plausible. It did not, however, and evidence was sufficient to the contrary.

In the case of Vinnitsa, where in 1943, more than 12,000 bodies of Ukrainian peasants, workers and intelligentsia were unearched, no Kremlin story would be plausible, even for the most naive people, because the crime had been committed in 1937-1939. Fortunately for the Kremlin, it does not have to account for Vinnitsa, because this fact is almost unknown to the Western World. It is high time to make it known.

The pre-war Vinnitsa was a Ukrainian city of about 85,000, situated some 100 miles east of the old Soviet border line of 1939. It was known for its beautiful orchards and popular resorts in the vicinity. Here, like all over Ukraine, the Soviets kept massed military forces because of the fear of a foreign attack. The NKVD police force was also present in far greater numbers than in any other part of the USSR. Their task was to keep watchful eyes on the spirit of the Ukrainian people and to nip in bud any discontent or movement for freedom among the Ukrainians.

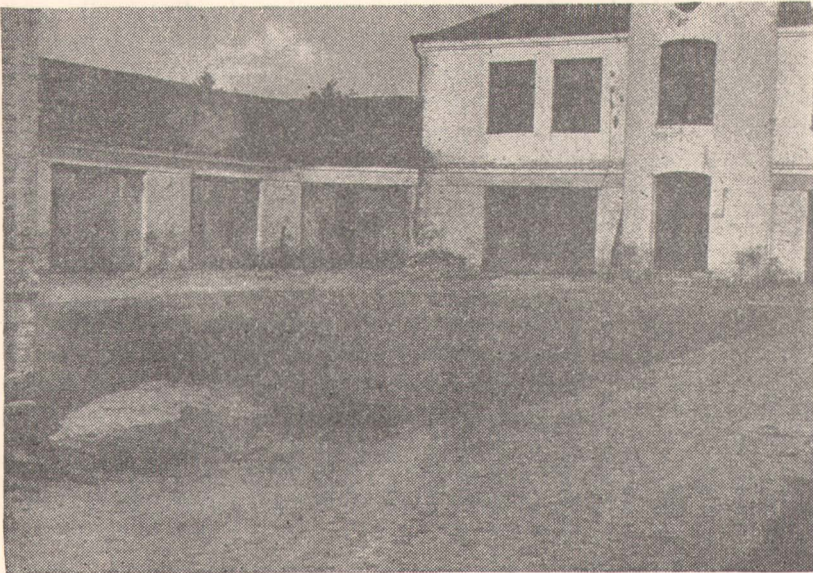
Once a beautiful city, Vinnitsa became a shabby town under Bolshevik rule. People led miserable lives, being never sure of tomorrow. Many had no tomorrow indeed. Year after year thousands disappeared from their homes, never to be seen again. The "vigilant organs of revolutionary justice" worked days and nights to "surpass their own norms in rooting out enemies of the people," the latter being no party to those secret trials except as defendants. Disappearances became so common that nobody was impressed by them, and nobody dared to discuss them with friends or even relatives. Everybody remained silent and hoped it was not his turn next. And if the closest relatives of a prisoner took the courage to inquire about his fate they always received the same answer: The prisoner had been sentenced to ten years corrective labor in Siberia without the right of writing or receiving letters. They waited patiently for termination of the sentence, but years passed and nobody came home. Preoccupied with their present cares and problems people seemed to forget the past. But did they really?

In 1941 Hitler betrayed his former friend, Stalin, and attacked the Soviet Union. The "invincible" Red Army surrendered to the Germans in droves. The Nazi leadership, intoxicated by victories, believed it was due to their "supermen." They overlooked the most significant factor, that Stalin's slaves would not fight for their misery because they craved for a change, for a better life. There was a general defeatism, not only among the people but also in the Red Army. This was particularly true with regard to the non-Russian peoples who were anxious to shake off both intolerable social-political conditions and the foreign yoke. From the Baltic down to the Black Sea, people received the news of the outbreak of war enthusiastically, because they saw in it the only hope for fulfillment of their dreams. This defeatism spread also over the members of the Communist Party who believed everything was gone. And the panic stricken NKVD police force fled hurriedly eastward, leaving in prisons thousands of corpses of their murdered victims.

Unfortunately the Nazis did not think of any change on the occupied territories of USSR. They regarded them as their "Lebensraum" i. e. colonies, and treated them accordingly. In Byelorussia



During their occupation of Ukraine, the Nazis continued the Soviet policy of extirpation of the Ukrainian patriots who tried to restore a free Ukraine. This policy brought about strong Ukrainian underground movement which contributed to the Allies' victory over Hitler Germany. This picture shows execution of three Ukrainian patriots by Gestapo in a Ukrainian village. The villagers were ordered to witness the execution to be "discouraged" from giving aid to the Ukrainian guerillas. This is why the Nazis only reluctantly permitted unearthing of the NKVD victims in Vinnitsa.



The NKVD garage in Vinnitsa where the victims were killed amidst the noise of trucks. On the left side, at the corner of a wall, a drainage for blood is visible.

and Ukraine, German colonial administration was set up immediately, and Hitler's commissars continued the Soviet policies of extirpation with regard to the local patriots who tried to restore the national Government destroyed by the Russian Bolsheviks in 1920-1921. Collective farms, so much hated by peasants, and political terror were retained. Nazi commissars openly admitted that the Soviet policies were most suitable for their purposes and that there was no need of changing them. Such policies turned the native people who had cherished hopes for liberation against the Germans. This was one of the most important factors that contributed to Soviet survival. If the Germans had recognized and favored the movements for independence among the non-Russian peoples of the USSR, the Soviet regime would have collapsed before America entered the war.

But let's go back to Vinnitsa. Soon after the German civilian administration had been established, several old timers called on the local Ukrainian municipality authorities and contented there were mass graves of the NKVD victims in the city area. They recalled certain incidents from the past which they said would corroborate their assertions. They were ready to show places where the NKVD victims were supposed to be buried, and urged the local Ukrainian authorities to start digging. The information of these persons was brought to the attention of the local German Commissar. The Nazis however, did not heed these clues for the simple reason that by this time they had committed many crimes in Ukraine themselves. The Ukrainian patriots, who managed to survive the Bolshevik purges and massacres, were being liquidated by the new conquerors who ruthlessly suppressed the Ukrainian liberation movement. In 1943, however, things began to go bad for the Germans. So they decided to resort to propaganda to remind the people of occupied territories what they had to expect from the Russian Bolsheviks if they came back. For the Poles the Katyn massacre was made known, and the Ukrainians were to be alarmed by the Vinnitsa graves. In May 1943 the Ukrainian city authorities of Vinnitsa were given permission to start digging.

While the first corpses were being unearthed, dozens of witnesses paraded before a special investigation committee. Local Ukrainian newspapers were revealing this shocking testimony weekly.

There was a large city orchard along Lityn street. In 1938, this orchard was taken over from the city by NKVD and enclosed by a high fence. The residents of the nearby houses were forced to move. The NKVD guards were placed at the entrance to the orchard and discouraged people to come close.

Nightly activity within the enclosed plot was kept very secretive. Guards spread rumors that the children of the city would soon become recipients of a new athletic stadium.



International medical commission in Vinnitsa examines some of the unearthed bodies.



Moment of tension. — A body was definitely identified from a personal document.

Mr. Hulevich, a collaborator of the local hydro-biological station, got up enough courage to glance through a hole in the fence and spotted mounds of newly dug earth as well as few corpses.

Another person, the caretaker of the city orchard, Mr. Skrepko, was curious to see what was transpiring within. Perched upon a nearby tree, he saw six graves with corpses in each of them. Apparently the graves were not yet filled. Canvas covered trucks were entering the gate of the orchard every dawn. Once Mr. Skrepko noticed traces of blood on the street near the orchard. In the morning a guard covered them with sand. At times he heard shots in the night.

The minutes of the city council found in the archives also gave some hints. The resolution of the first of April, 1939, read that the city council had ceded a large area around the orchard to the NKVD and declared it a "prohibited zone." Structures were forbidden.

Not far away on the same Lityn street, there was an old cemetery whose unused section adjoined the Pirogoff Hospital. Mr. Hulevich testified that in 1937 he had seen strange happenings in this section of the cemetery. He traveled to and from work through the cemetery. On several occasions, in the fall of 1937, he saw men digging graves. He did not pay much attention to the incidents until one day he found a rubber shoe and traces of blood. This made him alert. One night he heard a truck coming into the cemetery. He hid behind a tree and watched the covered vehicle turn to the newly dug graves. A few minutes later he heard something being dropped. He also heard typical Russian curses. The men then filled the graves and left hurriedly.

Mr. Klymenko, a watchman at the Pirogoff Hospital in 1937, testified that he had witnessed the same proceedings described above by Mr. Hulevich. He also testified that prisoners supervised by NKVD were doing the actual labor.

The same observations were also made by several other witnesses. Apparently the two places were not big enough for NKVD to bury all their victims. In looking for more space to hide the proofs of their atrocities they turned to the old park in the heart of the city. They put a fence around it and made it known that a project for cultural purpose was in the making. This project, named 'Park of Culture,' was opened soon in the farthest corner of the park. It had a dancing hall, an outdoor summer theater, shooting grounds and playgrounds. During the summer months, citizens crowded here to forget their sorrows and misery. They did not know that below the surface rested their fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts murdered in cold blood by their "benefactors." How could they know? They were told by their spared relatives that some day their dearest ones would come home from "far away." Nobody would have ever found out the truth if the Bolsheviks had not left Vinnitsa, and if there had not been witnesses who had known the secret.



Women and children are looking among the bodies for their husbands and fathers, who were once arrested by NKVD and never came home.



Some of the naked bodies of the raped women.

Another witness, Mr. Bokhan, told of seeing uniformed men leveling heaps of earth in the vicinity of the playground.

Furnished with this information the investigating committee easily found the mass graves. They were of standard size, 2×3 metres, and contained various numbers of corpses, from 2 to 284 in each of them. Unearthing proceeded rapidly and thoroughly, and brought an enormous yield. In the orchard 34 graves were opened, containing 5,644 corpses including 53 women; in the cemetery 40 graves with 2,405 corpses including 85 women; in the park 13 graves with 1,383 corpses including 31 women. The total find was 9,263 male and 169 female bodies. For sanitary reasons, some graves were left unopened. It was estimated that, including those unopened, the total of the NKVD victims in Vinnitsa was 12,000—15,000, men and women.

Although buried five years ago (1937-1939), the corpses were pretty well preserved, thanks to the fact that while working methodically, the NKVD used each grave space to its full capacity. The bodies were placed in layers, each being sprayed with chloro-calcium. The grave was left open until the new group of the murdered prisoners arrived. After the grave was filled they put clothing and personal belongings of the victims upon the upper layer and levelled the grave. Three of the opened graves contained only personal belongings.

Originally, medical autopsy was conducted by the local Ukrainian physicians. When it became evident that a huge find was to be expected, two German specialists arrived: Professor Dr. Schrader of the University of Halle, and his assistant Dr. Kramer. To forestall any denial on the part of the Soviet Government, an international medical commission was invited and came to Vinnitsa. Its members were:

Dr. Zenen, *Gent, Belgium*
Dr. Mikhailoff, *Sophia, Bulgaria*
Dr. Pesonen, *Helsinki, Finland*
Dr. Duvoir, *Paris, France*
Dr. Cazzaniga, *Milano, Italy*
Dr. Jurak, *Zagreb, Croatia*
Dr. ten Poorten, *Amsterdam, Holland*
Dr. Birkle, *Bukarest, Romania*
Dr. Herquist, *Stockholm, Sweden*
Dr. Kresek, *Presburg, Slovakia*
Dr. Orsoz, *Budapest, Hungary*

They stayed in Vinnitsa for three days, July 13, 14 and 15, and made thorough examination of many bodies, belongings and other details. They concluded their work with the following sworn statement:

1. Judging from the trees planted on the graves and the state of decomposition of the corpses, the victims were killed between 1937 and 1939, mostly in 1938.



All bodies were found with their hands tied in the back.



Mass graves of the Ukrainians murdered by the Russian Communist NKVD are throughout Ukraine. This picture shows another mass grave of the Ukrainians at Zolotchiv by Kharkiv, unearthed during the German occupation. Here the inmates of the known NKVD prison in Kharkiv, Bila Hora (White Hill), were murdered.

2. All victims were killed with small caliber (5,6 mm) revolvers with lead slugs. Powder burns showed that they were shot at from close range in the neck. In many cases, two, three or even four bullet holes were found in the head, which meant that these slugs were too small to kill a person with one shot unless the upper part of the neck was hit. Some skulls were broken with dull objects. In many cases heads were damaged, jaws broken, traces of tortures found on the skin. In some cases earth was found in the intestines which means that the victims were buried alive.

3. All victims, except women, had their hands tied in the back with a cord of Russian production.

4. All men were found clothed, most of them only in underwear, while 49 women (all young or middle aged) were found naked. There were indications that they had been raped before being killed.

5. The average age of the victims was 40-60.

6. With a few exceptions, the victims were Ukrainians, about 60 percent being peasants and the others workers and intelligentsia. This was established by numerous personal documents found on corpses, clothing and footwear.

Further on, the commission established the fact that in the years when the unearthed victims were murdered, there were three prison houses in Vinnitsa (prior to the Revolution there was only one) with approximately 30,000 inmates. To illustrate conditions in them, it is worth while mentioning that the old city jail, which had been built for 2,000 inmates, contained, during the period in question, 18,000 prisoners. During the period, called "Yezhov days" (after the sadist NKVD head) one of the worst purge waves swept through the USSR. What happened to the other prison inmates of that period can only be told by the NKVD. One thing is certain: they never came home.

The victims were being murdered in the garage yard and cellars of the NKVD offices in the very heart of the city. At the garage where the sound of the shooting was muffled by truck motors, a sewage for the split blood was discovered and in the cellars sacks of turf were used for soaking up the blood. Blood stained sacks with turf were found in several graves.

The unearthed bodies were placed in long rows over all three "cemeteries" for medical examination, and identification. The clothes and footwear were hung over ropes so that friends or relatives could identify them.

All other things found in the graves were exhibited in a large store in the centre of the city, which was called the "Museum of Death." Among these exhibits were: official statements of search and arrest, sentences of the NKVD "court of justice," personal identity cards, individual and group photographs, church seals, neck crosses, diaries, family documents and letters. These had been

seized as "evidence" and later thrown in the graves. Among them was a pile of school notebooks with students' homework and teachers' remarks.

Other identification found among personal belongings of the victims and exhibited now for the public were: glasses, wallets, cigarette holders, spoons, kitchen and pocket knives, straps, buttons, handkerchiefs, napkins, etc.

The news of the unearthened Vinnitsa graves spread rapidly and soon thousands of Ukrainians streamed from all parts of German-occupied Ukraine to this city to see if they could find among the bodies their dearest ones. Some walked many miles, for trains were not available for the civilian population then.

The odor laden air, the long rows of the mutilated and mummified bodies, the thousands of people drooping over them, handkerchiefs at their mouths and noses—all this produced an undescrivable scene. Time and again a scream was heard and a woman would faint. Heart breaking sobbing and lamentations were heard throughout the field.

All together 679 bodies were identified by clothes, documents, and belongings. A complete list of these was made, containing names and other personal data. The persons who had recognized their relatives were interviewed by the investigating committee and newspaper correspondents who were anxious to find out more about the victims. Here are only a few of the several hundred stories:

Kassian Hodovanetz of Mikhailivka was arrested in 1938, because he refused to work on a church holiday and "had too many saints on the wall," as they told him during the search. His wife wrote to Mr. Vishinsky, then the Chief Prosecutor of USSR, and now its Foreign Minister, asking him to have her husband released as innocent. Mr. Vishinsky notified her that her husband was being released. He never came home, however. Now she identified his shirt and boots.

Vasyl Yavnych, a collective farmer of Voznivtsi, was arrested for writing letters to his relatives in Poland. His wife identified his coat.

Nicholas Usof, a collective farm laborer of Chulyn, had been arrested along with 7 other peasants in 1938. A thorough search of his home produced nothing. His wife was told that her husband was "an enemy of the people." A few months later the NKVD came to seize his clothes. She, however, had anticipated this visit and hid them. Once she went to the NKVD office at Vinnitsa to inquire into her husband's fate, but was thrown out. She had believed he was in Siberia until she recognized in Vinnitsa a few of her husband's belongings.

Dmytro Horlevsky, a railroad engineer in Zhmerynka, had been summoned one day in 1938 to the NKVD offices and never came

home again. His wife was told that he was "an enemy of the people." Some time later when she brought a food package for him, she was told that he had been transferred to Kiev. She went there only to get an answer that her husband had never been in Kiev. He must have been sent to Siberia, they told her. Now in Vinnitsa she identified her husband's shirt and coat collar. In 1937, more than 60 Ukrainian railroad workers had been arrested in Zhmerynka, she declared. None were ever seen again.

Mrs. Solovieva of Zytktivtsi testified that her husband, a teacher and later a bank employee, had been arrested in his office, because one of the local party members was anxious to take his apartment. Now she identified his handkerchief from initials she had sewn on it.

Rev. Leonid Biletzky had been a priest in Peleva until 1935, when the church was closed. He then moved to another village and took a wood cutter's job. He was arrested because he "had lived too long." His wife was told that he had been sent to Siberia without the right of correspondence. Now she identified his suit in Vinnitsa.

There is no need to quote from other statements. They all follow the same pattern: arrested without warrant, on charges which were never proven, or for something which in the civilized world is no crime at all but a guaranteed right.

In the dreadful "Yezhov Days" of '37-'38, women searched for their loved ones in vain. Many petitioned Vishinsky, Kalinin, Yezhov and even Stalin, for information or clemency. Few letters were answered, and these contained evasions and lies. Still the women believed that their husbands and sons had been really deported to Siberia and that after termination of their sentence (minimum 10 years!) they would come home.

The last hope was now vanishing. Like in 1937-39, Vinnitsa was again the scene of immense human tragedy, even greater than before. It was called "the city of tears" which it was indeed.

The bodies were being reburied according to the Christian customs. There were more than twelve mass funerals conducted by the Ukrainian Orthodox clergy and attended by tens of thousands from all parts of Ukraine. Of course, those participating had to leave the country when the Russian Communist armies approached Vinnitsa in the first days of 1944. By participation in the funerals they made themselves "enemies of the people" and "German collaborators."

There were plans to erect in Vinnitsa a big monument reminding the future generations of Ukrainians and all civilized nations of the Russian Communist atrocities. These plans, of course, have had to be postponed until this criminal Kremlin regime has been rooted out.

When the Red Army reoccupied Vinnitsa, the NKVD removed their victims and levelled the graves. Those who had any connection with the discovery of the NKVD crimes and for some reason did not

leave the country were killed. Contrary to their habit, the NKVD did not dare to blame the Germans for their own crimes. They preferred to keep quiet.

The Vinnitsa massacre reveals to the civilized world the most callous technique and methods of killing innocent people ever known. They can be favorably compared only with Nazis. As already mentioned here, to kill their victims, they used small caliber lead slugs which usually make deep wounds without causing death immediately. And even if such a bullet hits the brain, it causes hemorrhage and slow death. Roughly, two thirds of the bodies had two, three, even four bullets in their necks. At times even this was not sufficient to kill a prisoner, so the NKVD broke the skull with a rifle butt in many cases. Still living, persons were buried and they died from suffocation. Traces of tortures, especially on sex organs, were discovered in many cases. It is beyond human imagination what they had to suffer before they died.

Having murdered them in this barbaric manner, the NKVD used a cemetery, an orchard, and a city park to conceal their crimes. And on the graves they planted fruit trees, or made dancing grounds so the living people should eat fruit from these trees and dance on the victim's bodies. Something inconceivable for a civilized man.

Beside the Yezhov period, there were several other waves of such massacres in Vinnitsa: in 1921-1922, 1926, and 1929-1931. While the early ones were connected with the liquidation of the supporters of the short-lived Ukrainian National Republic, the latter aimed at doing away with any potential enemies of the Soviet Government. The politically instigated famine of 1932-1933 must be mentioned, too, for this was a planned murder of the Ukrainian farmers who resisted the collectivization. Altogether, the district of Vinnitsa alone lost during those waves of terror and famine roughly, 150,000 Ukrainians.

But Vinnitsa was not an isolated case. These waves rolled all over Ukraine and took millions of Ukrainians. The famine of 1931 and 1932, instigated by Kremlin, alone cost Ukraine about 6,000,000.

The mass graves like those in Vinnitsa were throughout Ukraine in every city where the NKVD had their offices. The war period was too short to discover the old mass graves because people were concerned with the piles of corpses found in the NKVD prisons after the retreat of the Red Army in 1941. Then there was German occupation which did not favor such discoveries. Probably these graves will never be discovered. After the war, the NKVD took into account the Vinnitsa case and certainly removed all the mass graves. Given a good lesson that bodies may be discovered and speak even after death, they probably imitate now the Nazis who burned their victims to remove all traces of their crimes.

And how many Ukrainian mass graves there must be in Siberia, where the Ukrainians, according to the witnesses, have always made

more than 50 percent of the concentration camps inmates. God alone knows this, because even the NKVD could not keep their records!

Vinnitsa is one of the most eloquent proofs that the Russian Communist regime is based on terror. A power hungry oligarchy has been using it generously to perpetuate itself at the helm of the state and to keep the oppressed people obedient. Terror was proclaimed by the founder of this regime, Lenin, as an official doctrine. Let's quote a few sentences from Lenin's works to substantiate this statement:

"We don't have to be sorry for it (terror) or to give it up" (Vol. XXIII, Page 314).

"In October you challenged us for the bitterest fight; we accepted the challenge and applied terror; if necessary, we will apply it again (Vol. XXVII, Page 174).

"To give up power, to give up terror would mean to turn into a pitiable citizen." (Vol. XXV, Page 38).

"In spite of all hypocrites and talkers, terror is unavoidable" — (Vol. XXVI, Page 343).

Lenin was only an initiator of terror. Stalin perfected it. The difference between the two is that under Lenin the Cheka killed only open and active enemies of the Bolsheviks. Stalin applied it to all potential enemies who make an overwhelming majority of the population. Further on, during Lenin, terror was used mainly against the "class enemies," regardless of their nationality. During the time of Stalin it shifted to the conquered non-Russian peoples of USSR who are deemed the most vulnerable element of the Bolshevik empire.

The Vinnitsa, Katyn and other cases of the Soviet genocide must arouse general moral indignation in the West. Instead of diplomatic courtesies extended to the criminals and negotiations with them, the Soviet regime must be condemned for its innumerable crimes openly in the UN, regardless of what is Kremlin's reaction. If it chooses to slam the door of UN, let them go! Their presence here only hampers the work of this organization and brings disgrace upon its noble ideals. This regime should be given such treatment as it deserves; if it is suffered to live and grow even stronger the free world may get some day thousands of Vinnitsas.



