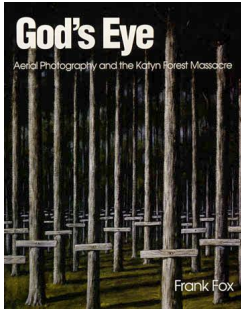


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**God's Eye: Aerial Photography and the Katyń Massacre** By Frank Fox (1999), 135 pages plus 26 photo plates.



This short review needs to be considered on two levels: the Polish readers of the older generation, will be primarily interested in any supplementary facts presented by this well researched book. The young generation is likely to benefit from the extensive information. This will be also true for English speaking readers who may know nothing about this horrifying event. Dr. Frank Fox has excellent linguistic skills as evidenced by some 150 bibliographic entries and highly informative footnotes in several languages, and he uses extensively aerial photo material collected and minutely analyzed by his close collaborator, Waclaw Maliszewski, whose conclusions are the backbone of this work.

Actually the book deals with three crime sites: the Polish POW's from the Kozielsk camp were brought to Katyń to be summarily shot; those from Ostashkov met a similar fate in Miednoje, west of Tver, and the Starobielsk group was executed in Kharkov. The estimated number of victims is 24,000 with a vast majority being reserve officers called to duty before the outbreak of World War II. Hence, just about every profession is represented: teachers, lawyers, physicians, farmers, small businessmen, There were generals as well as some women! In effect, this was a massacre of the intellectual elite. The psychological wounds were never healed in the Polish society.

The book introduces evidence obtained from aerial photos made by the German air force, which were subsequently obtained by the U.S. Army and deposited in the National Archives in Washington D.C. They were taken to check on the movement of advancing Russian troops, which in early 1944 were steadily regaining lost territories, including such areas as Smoleńsk. Accidentally, these photos also recorded the execution sites and showed plainly the frantic efforts of the Soviet authorities to cover up any evidence of their involvement in the 1940 activities that were discovered (also by accident) by the German army in early 1943. Obviously, the orders had come down from above that all traces of past crimes must be quickly eliminated. The author's conclusions as well as the title of his work coincide: God's Eye will always watch these mistreated graves.

How was the story handled by the West? It will be recalled that the Katyń discovery caused a break between the Soviets and the Polish Government in Exile based in London. However, to the Western Powers the Katyń tragedy came at a most inconvenient time. Churchill suspected the truth (that the Soviets and not the Nazis were responsible), but he diplomatically ignored it; President Roosevelt was actually annoyed at the Poles for even raising the question. After the war ended, the Nuremberg trials did not deal with Katyń at all, and the Warsaw government chose to ignore this touchy subject for decades. It is a sad story indeed.

On occasion the book overwhelms the reader with details. If this will be the reader's concern, we suggest to read the excellent introduction and the epilogue, as well as the crucial Chapters 1,11 and 12 of this important work. Also, in the copy of our Library, we inserted for your convenience detailed maps of the places discussed.

*George Suboczewski*