



Polish Deportees ('Sybiraks') in the Winter of 1940.



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This year not only marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the ending of the Second World War and the ending of the Holocaust; but did you know there were two Holocausts: one perpetrated against the Jews by Hitler and his Nazi henchmen and one perpetrated against ethnic Poles by Stalin and his communist Soviet Comrades?

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the deportation of 2,636,000 Polish people to the inhospitable wastelands of the Siberian Tundra to be enslaved, starved, repressed and murdered in 'special settlements' and 'forced labour camps' by the communist regime of the Soviet Union.

The United Nations will not recognise the event, nor World leaders condemn; there will be no marches, no memorials or other events across the globe remembering this Forgotten Holocaust - the silence of the media will be deafening. Of the unspeakable suffering and loss: No one recalls! No one mourns! No one acknowledges! No one commemorates!

Not one person who ordered, organised, aided and abetted, or condoned the actions of the Soviet terror machine and the actions (and inactions) of the Allies has ever been outed, apprehended, charged, indicted, tried, or convicted of any wrong doing against the Polish peoples.

10 February 1940 was one of the coldest winter nights on record (about -30C); families were woken in the middle of the night and given no more than 15 minutes to pack. Their property seized, evicted from their homes and marched at gunpoint to waiting trains, 50 to 60 men, women and children at a time were herded and crammed into box cars to be transported in their thousands to Siberia.

So began the 'Forgotten Holocaust'.

Many succumbed to starvation, frostbite, mental derangement; some even resorted to eating their own extremities and cannibalism.

Mothers smothered their babies and infants because there was no food. Children were sometimes murdered because they wouldn't stop crying.

The only view of the outside world many had was through small openings under the roof top, or in the floor which were used for passing out excreta and corpses.

After a most incomprehensible journey lasting for some over two or three weeks, families and communities were dumped in the middle of nowhere, in the deep snow, with no shelter and wearing inappropriate clothing, no food; they endured unimaginable hardship and suffering.

Their destination was the northern and central regions of the Soviet Union - the area between the Arctic Circle in the north and the Mongolian border in the south - to Siberia, Kazakhstan, Arkhangelsk, Kolyma and Uzbekistan.

The rations provided by the guards en route were meagre and infrequent - black sour bread, fish soup with heads and entrails in it, or simply hot water. Sometimes the deportees would find a bone now and then, but rarely any meat. In many cases the doors were not opened until the transport was safely on Soviet territory.

Arriving in camps and settlements, the Poles were told by their captors to forget about Poland, that they would not see their homeland again, Poland was no more and they had to resign themselves to new lives as Soviet citizens.

A complete cross-section of Polish society had been deported and no matter how bad the circumstances they had to adapt, and to survive they had to work. That meant working each day, no matter the weather, even in temperatures of -50°C below zero.

In the Camps and Settlements red-colored placards with white letters read: "HE WHO DOES NOT WORK, DOES NOT EAT."

Children too were forced to work.

Working twelve to fourteen hours a day with no rest in the week many suffered from exhaustion and after a very short period succumbed to disease - typhoid, malaria and cholera - which ultimately led to their deaths.

Of those eight members of my father's family deported on 10 February 1940 to a 'special settlement' in Mucznaja, Arkhangelsk, only 4 survived. My mother's family fared not much better in their deportation to Ujma in Arkhangelsk; only 6 out of 10 members of her family survived.

But on 22 June 1941, when Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, made a radio broadcast in which he held out the hand of friendship to the Russians.

Through Churchill, the Polish General Wladyslaw Sikorski initiated negotiations with Stalin for the release of all Poles, which included thousands of soldiers and officers kept in captivity through the vast expanses of the Soviet empire. The Polish-Soviet (Sikorski-Maisky) agreement brokered on 30 July 1941 - with the blessing of the Allies (Britain and the United States) - only allowed for an 'Amnesty'.

But the term 'Amnesty', applied to the many hundreds of thousands of civilians carried off by the NKVD, was regarded by most Poles as being both insulting and compromising. It begged the question of the deportees' guilt, since, after all, only those who had been convicted of a crime can be given an 'Amnesty'. Wherein lay the guilt of the many thousands of mothers and children, the sick and elderly, who had been swept up in the NKVD's maw?

Of the 2.636 million Poles condemned and sentenced in absentia to an arduous life in exile, only 115,000 (or 4.36%) made it out alive and were accounted for! Where are the other 2,521,000 lost souls?

After the 'Amnesty', those who made it out of Siberia journeyed through Persia (now Iran) with the remnants of their families to displaced persons' camps in Africa; later to join Anders' Polish Army under British command to distinguish themselves at Monte Cassino and in other theatres of war fighting for the Allies, for a free Poland!

Stalin's evil Soviet empire committed this Holocaust with the full knowledge of the Western Allies and the silence, secrecy and concealment surrounding the inhumane treatment, execution, extermination, and suffering of the Poles still continues to be perpetuated. One of history's greatest cover-ups!

Stalin was grateful to the Western Allies for their conspiracy of silence, for preserving his good name. He was even more grateful after the Yalta Conference (4-11 February 1945), when the Western Allies granted him the right to enslave all of Eastern, and half of Central Europe under the yoke of communism. Poles were not even allowed to march in V.E. commemorative parades until a few years ago!

It is time that the silence, secrecy and concealment surrounding the ruthless genocide and inhumane treatment and suffering of the Poles was acknowledged, remembered and recognized - it happened!

And to this very day there are destitute descendants of those Polish citizens abandoned by the Allies still stranded and helpless in former Soviet satellite states!

The United States and Britain - supposedly the upholders of democracy and freedom - were then, and are still reluctant to acknowledge that they aided and abetted the Soviet communist regime at the expense of Poland and the freedom of her peoples as promised by the Allies.

It is time that those who were complicit and conspired to commit genocide and ethnic cleansing, those who aided and abetted in crimes against humanity, and those who abused, mistreated and murdered ethnic Poles are brought to account.

This is one of history's greatest cover-ups for which no one has been held responsible or accountable for.

So who am I?

Born Wieslaw George Helon in Bridgnorth, England I am the son, grandson and great-grandson of Polish Sybiraks; I live

in exile here in Toowoomba and stand as one of the last witnesses of three generations of Poles among millions deported to Siberia.

It has been said by quite a few survivors that the woman pictured in the photo is in fact my late grandmother Genowefa Helon, nee Zielinska.

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