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## FSB declassifies testimony Nazis forged forensic examination in Katyn case

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MOSCOW, April 12. /TASS/. Nazi Germany's notorious forensic examiner, Professor Gerhard Butz, appointed to lead a group that exhumed the mass grave of Polish soldiers and officers in the Katyn forest in March 1943, at least twice forged the results of on-site examination, as follows from testimonies by his laboratory assistant, the German army's Senior Ensign Ludwig Schneider, contained in the Federal Security Service's declassified archival materials, seen by TASS.

The documents were handed over by the Smolensk Region FSB's office to the State Archive of Contemporary History of the Smolensk Region under the project No Statute of Limitations. The archive includes certificates, intelligence and special reports by the counterintelligence service Smersh (Death to Spies), dated 1944-1945.

"Butz edited the results of the examinations. <...> He instructed me to assist a French delegate, whose last name I do not recall. That professor handed me a knife found in a grave for examination and asked me to determine analytically the percentage of iron oxide. I performed the analysis very carefully

and found that the iron oxide rate in the sample given to me was 23.3%, which I stated in a corresponding report. I handed the report over to Butz for reading and signing. Having studied the results of the analysis, he looked very dissatisfied. He began yelling at me, saying that I was unable to my job well enough and instead of the rate 23.2% he wrote 68.2% and then ordered me to rewrite the act, which I did," Schneider testified.

He explained that such a percentage of iron oxide was to certify that the knife had remained in the grave for much longer than the true results of the analysis indicated.

"After this forgery committed by Butz it became quite clear to me that the Poles had been shot by the Germans after they occupied Smolensk," said Schneider, who was a student at the Berlin Chemical Institute before being drafted into the Wehrmacht.

Also, Butz, according to the witness, falsified the results of examination of the military uniform cloth retrieved from the mass grave, which was carried out by another laboratory technician, Lieutenant Karl Schmitz. "Schmitz said he was certain the shootings of the Poles were carried out by the Germans in 1941," Schneider testified.

The laboratory assistant also noted that even before the commission got down to work, Butz was instructed by a Gestapo officer named Hilbers, who "became the actual head of our laboratory's work on the 'Katyn case,' and it was noticeable that Professor Butz obeyed him unconditionally in everything."

"Butz himself performed autopsies on only 2-3 corpses, while the rest of the time he went from one member of the commission to another and kept telling them that there was indisputable evidence that the shooting of Polish officers was

carried out by the Bolsheviks in 1940," the witness added.

## **Katyn case commission chief**

Butz was a member of the National Socialist Workers' Party (NSDAP) and a member of the SS starting from 1933, and from 1935 he was head of the Reichsfuehrer SS (SD) security force branch in Jena, where he was described as a "fanatical" party functionary. In 1938, he found himself at the very center of a scandal when after performing an autopsy on the body of 22-year-old SS Rottenfuehrer Albert Kallweit, who had been killed by a blow to the head by two prisoners of Buchenwald during an escape from the death camp, cut off the dead soldier's head and took it with him to Jena. This act angered even Butz's SS superiors, and he was forced to resign. After Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Butz served on the Eastern Front.

In 1944, upon completion of the investigation of the "Katyn case" he died under mysterious circumstances in Minsk. According to one version, he was killed during a bombing raid, while according to another, he was put to death by fellow Nazis.