



D5 Medicolegal Aspects of Forensic Investigations of Mass Graves in Katyn (1940) and Tuskulenu (1947)

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After attending this presentation, attendees will learn about medicolegal means used in the investigations of the Katyn and Tuskulenu massacres. This presentation will compare medicolegal methods used in these investigations.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by addressing medicolegal means used in the investigations methods used in Katyn and Tuskulenu massacre investigations.

The Katyn massacre, known as the Katyn Forest massacre, refers to mass execution of Polish officers carried out by the Soviet secret police NKVD (The People Commissariat for Internal Affairs) in April – May 1940. The decision was made by the Politburo and signed by Joseph Stalin. The number of victims was estimated at about 22,000, the most commonly cited number being 21,768.¹⁻⁴

The executions in Vilnius discovered at Tuskulėnų were carried out by a special group of NKGB/MGB staff (The People's Commissariat for State Security/The Ministry of State Security). According to gender, 762 men and five women were executed and their ethnic origins were documented. In this study, two medicolegal reports were analyzed.^{5,6}

The goal of the study was to analyze by medicolegal means the Katyn and Tuskulėnų massacres and to compare two medicolegal reports of the Katyn massacre, the Germans and Burdenkos Special Commission reports in Katyn. In addition, the German reports consisted of three independent examinations. In Tuskulėnų, all of these medicolegal findings and reports are convergent and the exhumation at Tuskulėnų was conducted in 1994.

The study includes historical documents and references to the Katyn massacre.¹⁻⁴ Based on the literature, the author compares both of Katyn's medicolegal reports. The Tuskulėnų massacre was analyzed by medicolegal aspects based also on literature which includes historical documents and references, and the author measurements of the skull injuries.⁵ The study analyzed medicolegal methods which had been used in Katyn and the modern medicolegal method which had been used in Tuskulėnų massacre investigation.

The Katyn massacre had been well organized and had taken a longer time than the Tuskulėnų massacre, which had been done intensively and very fast. Killing processes had been done almost similarly on both mass graves. In Katyn, there had been bullets used of calibers less than 8mm, i.e., 7.65mm or less; in a few cases, there was a caliber of more than 8mm, i.e., 9mm in the Katyn massacre.¹ The caliber of bullets were from 6.0 to 9.0 cases, with quadrangular 3 × 3cm entrance and 0.5 × 0.5cm in Tuskulėnų.

Medicolegal examination had been used in both massacres, including modern computerized methods in Tuskulėnų report and manual methods in Katyn. Medicolegal investigation of Katyns was conducted during the Second World War.^{1,2,5,6} In Tuskulėnų, investigations were carried out during the independence time of the Lithuanians without any political pressure.

In conclusion, both the Germans and Burdenkos reports were well organized and professionally conducted; however, they reflect strict political views including propaganda speculation.

References:

1. BBC International Reports (Former Soviet Union): Russia and the Katyn Forest Massacre 13, 2005.
2. Benedict Humphrey Sumner (1893-1951) Historian, scholar of modern diplomacy and international relations, took part in the Paris Peace Conference as Assistant Secretary. Appointed to the International Labor Office, toured Poland and the Baltic States in 1921. Drawn to Russian history and literature, became an authority on the subject. Fellow and Tutor in Modern History, Balliol College, Oxford 1925-44, engaged in the Foreign Research and Press Department (Russian Section) of the Royal Institute of International affairs of All Souls College, Oxford 1945-51. Published: Russia and the Balkans 1870-1880 in 1937; War and History in 1945; Peter the Great and the Ottoman Empire in 1949.
3. Fischer B: "The Katyn Controversy: Stalin's Killing Field." "Studies in Intelligence," Winter 1999–2000. Retrieved on 2005.
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Katyn, Tuskulenu, Massacre