February 20, 1950
Notes from Conversation with General Chmurowicz

Citation:
“Notes from Conversation with General Chmurowicz,” February 20, 1950, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Central Military Archives
https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110260

Summary:
Col. J. Burgin remembers General Chmurowicz describing his refusal to comply with German officers concerning the Katyn affair while imprisoned as a POW at Woldenburg. Chmurowicz also spoke of Stefan Mossor’s compliance with the Germans.

Original Language:
Polish

Contents:
- English Translation
The Open House Collection

Reel W-76. Classification mark 606/92 t27. The following document illustrates the collection of evidence for sham trials in which high-ranking military officials were purged during the Bierut regime. Stefan Mossor had been a general in the Polish Legions in World War I, commander of the Borderlands Cavalry Brigade in 1939, a prisoner of war from 1939 to 1945, the chief of staff of the State Security Committee in 1947, and the commander of the Vistula Operation. Despite this record of accomplishment, he was arrested, tried, and sentenced to life imprisonment. In 1956, however, he was rehabilitated.

Notes from Conversation with General Chmurowicz

On February 20, 1950, Brigadier General (retired) Chmurowicz testified in his case. During the conversation, he touched on his experiences as a prisoner of war. Among other things, he told us the following:

At the time of the Katyn affair, he was in the Woldenburg POW camp. He was the only general there, and at the command of the London government, he exercised the highest authority. One day a representative of the German authorities informed him that he would be traveling to Berlin. No reason was given. He was transported to Berlin first class with all the trimmings. In Berlin he was taken to a private apartment building, where he was installed in a specially arranged flat. A German captain from the General Staff appeared and informed Chmurowicz that he would be traveling with nine other Polish officers to Katyn for the purpose of verifying the atrocity by the Bolsheviks. Chmurowicz reportedly answered that he would not go to Katyn for three reasons: 1) he was a captured Polish officer, and as such he could not participate in the initiatives of the enemy government; 2) the entire matter should have been handled by the International Red Cross; 3) he had a serious heart problem and would not be able to endure the 1000-km flight. In another room, the German captain conferred with someone by telephone and then left, giving Chmurowicz no reply. Two hours later, at about 10 p.m., nine Polish officers were led into the room. Among them was then Colonel (now General) Mossor. After supper Chmurowicz spoke with Mossor on the side and let him know the position he had taken, and he called on Mossor to join him the next day and object once again to the trip to Katyn. Mossor assured him that he would take that position.

The next day at 7 a.m., the German officers came into the apartment. One of them informed Chmurowicz that he would not be going but would regret it. The other officers were ordered to get dressed for the trip. Mossor obeyed the German officer’s order and did not even try to utter a word of protest.
On that same day, General Chmurowicz was taken back to the camp, but this time under much worse circumstances. Chmurowicz learned that German propaganda already before the fact had been proclaiming that he, General Chmurowicz, would be leading a group of Polish officers to Katyn. Of course after Chmurowicz’s refusal, the German newspapers stopped mentioning his name.

Ten days later the German authorities disseminated in the Woldenburg camp a printed report, which had been signed by Mossor and which presented the Katyn affair in a very favorable light for the Germans. Chmurowicz read the report and felt that the Germans could not have wished for anything better.

Chmurowicz stated that after the trip to Katyn, Mossor was moved from his previous camp to a much better and more comfortable camp near Berlin.

Recorded from memory following my conversation with Chmurowicz

Col. J. Burgin

20 February 1950
copy 1 to Mossor’s documents
copy 2 to General Ochab