



**ZJEDNOCZENIE POLSKIE W WIELKIEJ BRYTANII.  
FEDERATION OF POLES IN GREAT BRITAIN C.I.O.**

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His Excellency Mr Andrei Kelin,  
Russian Ambassador,  
6/7 Kensington Palace Gardens  
London W8 4QP

16 May 2020

Your Excellency,

This week we have seen a film showing the illegal removal of plaques commemorating the mass murder of Polish citizens in the former NKVD headquarters in Tver between 4<sup>th</sup> April and 16<sup>th</sup> May 1940. This follows reports of a grotesque statement by the local mayor in June last year that there is no documentary evidence for this crime, and a subsequent letter from a local prosecutor's office to the Chancellor of Tver State Medical University (current landlord of the former NKVD building) to have the plaques removed.

It has been known since 1942 that 6311 Polish officials had been held in a prisoner of war camp at Ostashkov following the joint invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany and the USSR in 1939. Since 1990 we also know that they had been brought to the black panelled cellars of the NKVD in Tver to be executed at a rate of 250 every day with a single shot in the back of the head and then their bodies were dumped in an unfenced site in Miednoye, 30 kilometres from Tver, where they were buried unceremoniously in long trenches. Their bodies had been discovered in 1990 and initially unearthed by Memorial, a local human rights group. The bodies are now reburied in an official commemorative site visited each year by relatives of the victims, Polish consular authorities and local officials. For a short period, the site of the executions was even open to visitors.

As you are aware, in October 1992, at the request of President Boris Yeltsin, Professor Rudolf Pikhoia, Director of the National Archives of the Russian Federation, presented President Lech Wałęsa with original documents showing, first, a motion by Lavrenty Beria, Commissar for Internal Affairs, arguing for the shooting of 25,700 interned Polish officers and, second, a positive response approving the motion at a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee, signed by Stalin, Voroshilov, Molotov and others. In the meantime, Russian military prosecutor Colonel Anatoly Yablokov, in charge of the Katyn case, concluded a 3-year investigation in 1993 that named Stalin and members of the Politbureau as guilty of the mass execution of Polish officers. This evidence and these findings were entirely consistent with all the evidence on the case held by the wartime Polish government and by the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee in 1952. They were further supported by masses of later evidence from NKVD and other Soviet state institutions gathered by the Polish Institute of National Remembrance. Soviet guilt for the crime of Katyn is now the common conclusion held by every government and every independent historical institute throughout the world.

At the site of the Katyn massacre in 2010, at the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, your Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, now President of the Russian Federation, rightfully acknowledged the Soviet authorship of the Katyn crimes when he stressed the common suffering of Russians, Poles and other ethnic groups under Stalin's rule. He said that "with decades of cynical lies, they tried to blot out the truth about the Katyn shootings." and appealed that all parties "should come to terms with a common historical truth and realise that we cannot go on living in the past alone".

We must protest therefore at the removal of the plaques commemorating the 6311 Polish victims of the Tver massacres. We see this act as an insult to the memory of these victims, to the victims' families and to countless millions of other victims of Stalin's terror, as well as a rejection by the local authorities in Tver of the "common historical truth" which the Russian government had previously acknowledged. We urge that the plaques be restored immediately in a public ceremony as this would be in the interests of good future Russian-Polish relations and an acknowledgement of international concern at such a blatant attempt to revise the truth about Russia's past.

We request that you forward our protest both to the President of the Russian Federation and to the local authorities in Tver.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "W. Mier-Jędrzejowicz". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Włodzimierz Mier-Jędrzejowicz  
Deputy Chairman, Acting Chairman, Federation of Poles in Great Britain