

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/1129,The-position-of-the-President-of-the-Institute-of-National-Remembrance-in-the-ma.html>

23.04.2024, 18:02

01.05.2018

The position of the President of the Institute of National Remembrance in the matter of the Katyn Monument in Jersey City

The Institute of National Remembrance is deeply troubled by the recent tweet sent out by the Mayor of Jersey City, Steven Fulop, informing the community of his plans to remove the Katyn Memorial and to put it into storage, without giving a definite date for its return to the spot it has occupied since 1991. This unusual form of communication, without involving stakeholders or open meetings is disconcerting.

This Katyn Memorial, which was erected through the efforts of the Polish immigrant community, many of whom had spent the wartime years in conditions that the world has only recently begun to see again, was erected to commemorate not only their suffering but that of the victims of the Katyn Massacre. These victims were not solely Polish citizens, but were also members of various ethnic, national and religious groups, who were killed simply for being Polish. The world stood in silence during the war and did not acknowledge Soviet responsibility for the Katyn Massacre. It also did not recognize the

suffering of hundreds of thousands of Polish civilians sent into the depths of Siberia – guilty only of being Polish.

The WWII immigrants, who had finally reached the Land of Freedom, wished to honor the sacrifice of these men as well as those people who were sent into exile, and they erected this monument with the approval and permission of the then Jersey City Mayor.

The sculpture itself, standing on Exchange Place, became intertwined with the attacks on the Twin Towers, since this was the spot where myriad ferries disembarked people evacuating Manhattan, and people gathered to watch the aftereffects of the attack.

Thus, the memorial serves not only as a permanent marker of the presence of the Polish community in Jersey City, where it resided for decades, but also the truth about the Soviet crime of Katyn, as well as a commemoration of the painful days after 09/11. Therefore, the image selected by Andrzej Pityński, of a soldier stabbed from behind with a bayonet, serves not only to recall the victims in 1940, but also the stealth attacks on the WTC as well the soldiers in Afghanistan and elsewhere, who are currently dealing with IEDs and other forms of attack.

Among the plaques surrounding the base of the statue is one commemorating the victims of 09/11. It seems improbable that the Mayor would consider removing a memorial to American victims of the attacks – and one which honors soldiers and civilian victims of oppression, especially given that he is a veteran himself. It further

seems improbable that a memorial to Prisoners of War, executed in the largest single mass execution of POWs would also fall victim to a planned park.

Dr. Jarosław Szarek

President of the Institute of National Remembrance

Opcje strony

- [Print this page](#)
- [Generate PDF of this page](#)
- [Notify about this page](#)

• Share this article

[Share on Facebook](#)

[Share on Twitter](#)