

# Institute of National Remembrance

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## 10th Cursed Soldiers National Remembrance Day, 1 March 2020



The end of World War II did not bring Poles freedom. There were a great number of those who could not come to terms with this fact, choosing further unequal struggle and remaining in the underground. The soldiers of the anti-communist independence underground came from various environments: the Home Army, National Armed Forces or Peasants' Battalions. They had different visions of a future Poland, but they shared a common fate. They knew that if they were arrested, they would face death or years of imprisonment, that perhaps they would

never see their loved ones again ...

Those who were sentenced to death in the show "trials" were to be deprived also of the right to their own grave and human remembrance. The murdered were secretly buried in nameless graves, and the families searched for any news about their fate with no avail.

The memory of the Cursed Soldiers was restored only after several dozen years, thanks to the efforts taken by many people: families, former comrades-in-arms, journalists, scientists and social activists. Given the growing interest in the history of the independence underground, there is a need to commemorate thousands of those who paid a high – and sometimes ultimate – price for their stance.

On 9 February 2011, President of Poland Bronisław Komorowski signed the act establishing a new public holiday: Cursed Soldiers National Remembrance Day, celebrated on 1 March. The date proposed by the late Janusz Kurtyka, President of the Institute of National Remembrance, was not accidental. It is an anniversary of the execution of seven members of the 4th General Board of Freedom and Independence: Łukasz Ciepliński, Mieczysław Kawalec, Józef Batory, Adam Lazarowicz, Franciszek Błazej, Karol Chmiel and Józef Rzepka. Every year on 1 March there lectures, discussions, concerts, memorial meetings and patriotic celebrations dedicated to the Cursed Soldiers are held.

The Cursed Soldiers were members of the armed pro-independence underground who, beginning with 1944, fought against Soviet

occupation and the communist regime imposed by Moscow. The communists called them 'bandits' and 'fascists', contorting their history and distorting the objective they were fighting for. The regime was trying to erase the Cursed soldiers from the collective consciousness.

The implementation of Stalin's actual plans regarding Poland sparked armed resistance, which was a continuation of the struggle for independence which had begun in 1939. The combat trail of most Cursed Soldiers began during the war and continued in the post-war reality, although some of them began their pro-independence fight after the end of the German occupation due to their young age.

After the war 120,000 - 180,000 people were active in the pro-independence underground. Almost half of them recruited from the Home Army (AK), 30,000 - 40,000 were associated with the nationalist circles, and another 30,000 - 40,000 fought in local underground groups.

In connection with the Polish Cursed Soldiers National Remembrance Day the Institute of National Remembrance has opened a new educational institution " 8 Strzelecka Street" - a Memorial Chamber dedicated to prisoners of this former communist detention centre.

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