

KATYN: AN OPEN LETTER TO SOVIET INTELLECTUALS¹

The following Open Letter from Polish intellectuals (amongst them academics, writers, opposition and Solidarity figures, actors, film-makers, physicians, journalists, artists, and priests) is addressed to a wide cross-section of the Soviet liberal intelligentsia.

Apart from Sabharov and Okudzhava and other personalities known for their liberal if not opposition stance, the addressees include a member of the Central Committee and the Editor-in-Chief of Moscow News (an English-language Moscow paper) who are at the forefront of the glasnost policy.

We address ourselves to you, outstanding creators of Russian culture and learning, with words of esteem and greeting. We hope this year will bring you greater joy, freedom and peace. We are convinced that changes are under way in your country, which have a bearing on the whole world. We in Poland receive the news from your country with attention and hope. We are happy at each event that promises a re-birth of Russian culture and the cultures of the other Soviet nations: at the rescue from oblivion of outstanding works, produced at home and in the emigration, and at the democratisation of public life. These events also give rise to a cautious hope that a breakthrough can occur in relations between our nations. We believe the time has come to undertake a public dialogue: a dialogue of free and independent people, not hampered by official guidelines and the decisions of diplomats. We are ready to undertake such a dialogue with all the nations of the Soviet Union.

This time however, we address ourselves to you, the Russians. A problem which has particularly affected Polish-Russian relations, was and continues to be the murder of Polish officers at Katyn in 1940. This murder, committed by the henchmen of Stalin and Beria, as well as subsequent lies about this crime, have poisoned our mutual relations. With all the more gratitude, therefore, we recall today the voices of those Russians who for years have demanded the truth on the subject. Today, when we find in the columns of Soviet newspapers the names of the victims of Stalinist crimes — scientists and writers, soldiers and politicians — we appeal to you publicly to speak out about the Katyn murders. The truth must be told out loud. We are constrained to utter these words by our debt of remembrance to those murdered, and the conviction that this is a necessary condition for a radical change in relations between our nations. We desire relations based on friendship: of free people with free people, of equals with equals. We desire relations removed of all servility, lies and threats of force. We know that such things cannot be decreed from day to day. We believe, however, that our nations must enter on this road, in the name of truth, international good sense, and a better future. We would like our letter to be read as a friendly voice in the Polish-Russian dialogue. For, if we do not do it, then who? If not now, then when?

Addressees:

Sergey Avelintsev, Yuri Koryakin, Abel Aganbegyan, Aleksander Kushner, Anatoly Ananyev,

Vladimir Lashin, Sergey Antonov, Gennady Lisin-Aygi, Yuri Afanasyev, Dmitry Likhachov, Grigory Baklanov, Andrey Mikhailov-Konchalorsky, Aleksey Batalov, Andrey Bitov, Bulat Okudzhava, Aleksander Bonn, Gleb Panfilov, Yelena Bonner, Vasily Polikarpov, Pavel Bunich, Gennady Popov, Fyodor Burlatsky, Anatoly Pristavkin, Yuri Burkin, Valentin Rasputin, Igor Vinograd, Anatoly Ribakov, Andrey Voznesensky, Andrey Sakharov, Aleksander Gelman, Anatoly Strelaneg, Danil Granin, Arkady Struittatsky, Sergey Grigoryants, Boris Strugatsky, Vitaly Goldansky, Mikhail Ulianov, Vladimir Dudintsev, Yuri Chernichenki, Yevgeny Yevushenko, Lidya Chukovskaja, Viktor Yeryofeyev, Oleg Chukhontsev, Oleg Yefremov, Mikhail Shatrov, Sergey Zalygin, Nikolai Shmyelov, Tatiana Zaslavskaya, Konstanty Shcherbakov, Benjamin Karerim, Natan Eydelman, Elem Klimov, Aleksander M. Yakovlev, Igor Kon, Yegor Yakovlev.

Signatures:

Jacek Kuroń, Father Wiesław Lauer, Jacek Bocheński, Tadeusz Łepkowski, Andrzej Bogusławski, Tadeusz Łomnicki, Marian Brandys, Stanisław Lorenc, Zbigniew Bujak, Andrzej Mandalian, Andrzej Drawicz, Adam Michnik, Kazimierz Dziewanowski, Artur Międzyrzecki, Marek Edelman, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Jacek Fedorowicz, Daniel Olbrychski, Władysław Frasyniuk, Father Stanisław Opiela, SJ Bogdan Galster, Edmund Jan Osmańczyk, Irena Galster, Jarosław Marek, Rymkiewicz Waclaw Gajewski, Henryk Samsonowicz, Bronisław Geremek, Andrzej Stelmachowski, Julia Hartwig, Julian Strykowski, Jerzy Holzer, Jerzy Szacki, Witold Karcewski, Kiemens Szaniawski, Krystyna Kersten, Andrzej Szczekli, Jan Kielanowski, Jan Józef Szczepański, Stefan Kieniewicz, Joanna Szczepkowska, Jan Andrzej Kloczowski, OP, Andrzej Szczepkowski, Jan Kofman, Father Józef Tischner, Włodzimierz Kolos, Jerzy Turowicz, Tadeusz Konwicki, Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Kozłowski, Lech Wałęsa, Andrzej Krasiński, Zbigniew Wójcik, Marcin Król, Wiktor Woroszyński, Ryszard Krynicki, Jacek Woźniakowski, Władysław Kunicki-Goldfinger, Krystyna Zachwatowicz, Zofia Kuratowska.