

Institute of National Remembrance

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Presentation of the IPN exhibition entitled "The Katyn Massacre of 1940: Extermination of the Polish Elite" – Stratford-upon-Avon, 12 July 2023



















On 12–16 July 2023, in Stratford-upon-Avon (UK) the IPN *Katyn Massacre* exhibition accompanied the staging of *Under Katyn*.

The year 2023 marks the 80th anniversary of the discovery and exhumation of the first mass graves in Katyń. It is a good opportunity to commemorate the tragic story of Katyń and bring it closer to the international community. The city of Stratford, considered the third most popular tourist destination in the UK after London and Oxford is an excellent place for the presentation of this chapter of Polish history.

Representatives of the Institute of National Remembrance – Maciej Korkuć, Ph.D., Head of the Office for Commemorating the Struggle and Martyrdom, IPN Krakow Branch, and Sławomir Bardski from the IPN International Cooperation Office – attended the opening of the IPN's exhibition on Katyń in Stratford and watched the premiere of *Under*

Katyn.

The world needs the truth about Katyń also today. The truth about a crime that cannot be concealed should serve as a warning to all potential desktop criminals and murderers, as it proves that crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, and crimes against peace will sooner or later come to light, said Maciej Korkuć, Ph.D., during the exhibition opening.

Polish voice in UK cultural debate

The Polish community in Warwickshire (the county in which Stratford is located) is the largest ethnic minority, and Polish is the third (after English and Welsh) most widely spoken language in England. However, Polish history is not very well known to the people of the UK. Both the play and the exhibition on Katyń were the perfect opportunity to reflect on Poland's recent history.

By presenting the story of Katyń in the form of a stage play, the Polish-English community was reminded why the British should support Ukraine. Soviet totalitarianism did not end with the death of Stalin but took on the face of imperialism, which has led the Russians to invade Ukraine. *Under Katyn* restores dignity to the victims by evoking historical truth and allows one to look for hope in the post-war world.

The creators of the Under Katyn performance

The play's author is Graham Tyrer - a headmaster, winner of numerous awards, inspector of the Office for Standards in Education and a prominent educator who has developed a curriculum to promote reading in British schools. The play *Under Katyn* is also a tribute to Graham's grandfather, Witold Masewicz, who was executed at Katyń.

The play is co-produced by Copernicana CIC, a Polish association in Stratford, the Polish Cultural Institute in London and the Stratford Town Trust.

See also:

[The Katyn Massacre exhibition available for download.](#)

[Watch the trailer of the play *Under Katyn*](#)

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