

● On 8 April 2010, the National Bank of Poland is putting into circulation coins commemorating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Katyn massacre, of the following face values:

**2 zł** – struck in standard finish, in Nordic Gold alloy,

**10 zł** – struck in standard finish, in silver (oxidized),

## The National Bank of Poland

holds the exclusive right to issue the currency  
in the Republic of Poland.

In addition to coins and notes for general circulation,  
the NBP issues collector coins and notes.

Issuing collector items is an occasion to commemorate  
important historic figures and anniversaries, as well  
as to develop the interest of the public in Polish culture,  
science and tradition.

Since 1996, the NBP has also been issuing occasional 2 złoty  
coins, struck in Nordic Gold, for general circulation.

All coins and notes issued  
by the NBP are legal tender in Poland.

NBP

National Bank of Poland

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COINS ISSUED IN 2010 COINS ISSUED IN 2010



Information on the issue schedule  
can be found at the  
[www.nbp.pl/monety](http://www.nbp.pl/monety)  
website.

Collector coins issued by the National Bank of Poland  
are sold exclusively at the Internet auctions held  
in the Kolekcjoner service at the following website:

[www.kolekcjoner.nbp.pl](http://www.kolekcjoner.nbp.pl)

 | KOLEKCJONER

The coins were struck at the Mint of Poland in Warsaw.  
Edited and printed: NBP Printing Office

70<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
of the Katyn massacre



# 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Katyn massacre

- As a result of the Soviet Union's invasion of Poland on 17 September 1939, around 250 thousand soldiers of the Polish Army were taken prisoners. Some of them were considered particularly dangerous and were placed in special NKVD camps. Regular and reserve officers were taken to Kozelsk near Smolensk and Starobilsk near Kharkiv, whereas policemen, prison guards, gendarmes, and intelligence and counter-intelligence officers were placed in Ostashkov near Kalinin. The conditions in the camps were harsh: prisoners were crowded in cramped buildings and were badly nourished. Moreover, they were overcome by depression because of the defeat they suffered. However, the shock caused by the disaster in their country passed quickly. The prisoners integrated, patriotic moods intensified and the belief in the victory of Poland returned.
- At the same time, NKVD officers conducted a propaganda campaign among the captured. They tried to make them loathe the Polish State and convince them it had disappeared from the map of Europe forever. They tried to win the prisoners over to the communist ideology, presenting the Soviet Union as a prosperous and socially just country. The officers and policemen, except for a handful of dissenters, turned out to be absolutely unaffected by the attempt to re-educate them.
- At the end of 1939, the policemen from the Ostashkov camp, as the ones guilty of anticommunist activity because of their service before the war, were sentenced and sent to labour camps on the Kamchatka

Peninsula. The plan was to cleanse out the officers' camps from "counter revolutionary" element, meaning for example, intelligence officers or members of political parties deemed anti-Soviet.

- By the end of February 1940, the first 600 sentences were passed on the prisoners of Ostashkov. At that time, however, the sentencing procedure was stopped by the head of the NKVD himself — Lavrentiy Beria, who decided to present a radically different way of treating all the prisoners of special camps to the members of the Central Committee Political Bureau of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks). The plan was to execute them in extrajudicial procedure – basing on the decisions taken by three high-ranking NKVD officials, specifically appointed for the purpose.
- What triggered such a sudden change and the use of methods from the time of the Great Purge, when thousands of people had been shot on the basis of similar decisions taken by three-person groups? Regrettably, we do not know. In his proposal, Beria wrote that the prisoners were inveterate enemies of the Soviet rule, holding no promise for changing; just waiting for the moment they were released from the camps to take up arms against it.
- It is hardly possible that it was not until the end of February that the head of the NKVD had reached such conclusions. The prisoners could have been rendered harmless if they had been transported to the Kamchatka Peninsula. There is a convincing hypothesis that the Soviets feared riots that could break out in connection with

the planned Polish and Allied troops aid to Finland that was fighting against the Soviets. Such a presumption would explain why the head of the NKVD — alarmed by the course of war with the Finns — presented his proposal so suddenly and at that very moment.

- On 5 March 1940, the Political Bureau approved the proposal to kill the prisoners put in the camps of Kozelsk, Starobilsk and Ostashkov, and to shoot 11 thousand Polish citizens, kept in NKVD prisons in the Eastern borderlands occupied by the Soviet Union.
- The extermination campaign began on 3 April 1940, when a rail transport left the camp in Kozelsk, taking the first group of prisoners to the Gnezdovo station near Smolensk. In the nearby Katyn forest, graves had already been dug. The executioners — NKVD officers armed with guns — were waiting. The prisoners were killed by shots in the back of the head; the corpses were piled in stacks. In this manner, 4410 prisoners of Kozelsk were killed. In the NKVD facility in Kharkiv, 3739 prisoners of Starobilsk were shot, and a further 6314 policemen of Ostashkov were murdered in the NKVD complex in Kalinin. In the prisons of Kiev, Kharkiv, Kherson and Minsk the number of prisoners shot amounted to 7305 and not 11 thousand, as stipulated by the March decision of the Politburo.
- Almost 22 thousand people fell victim to the Katyn massacre. The murdered were the cream of the Polish intelligentsia – not only well-educated but also exhibiting patriotic attitude.

**Śławomir Kalbarczyk, PhD**

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FACE VALUE **10** ZŁ

metal **Ag 925/1000 (oxidized)** ■ finish **standard** ■ diameter **32.0 mm**  
weight **14.14 g** ■ mintage (volume) **80,000 pcs**

**OBVERSE:** At the top, an image of the Eagle, established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland. On the sides of the Eagle's legs, an inscription: 10-ZŁ. Below, against the background of the Polish military Eagle outline, inscriptions: KATYŃ/KALININ/ CHARKÓW/ MIŃSK/ CHERSON/ KLJÓW. On the left-hand side, a semi-circular inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA (Republic), on the right-hand side a semi-circular inscription: POLSKA (of Poland) 2010. The mint's mark: M/W, under the Eagle's left leg.

**REVERSE:** At the bottom, stylized images of tree trunks, the upper parts of which represent images of crosses. Above them, an inscription: 70. (70th). At the top, a semi-circular inscription: ROCZNICA ZBRODNI KATYŃSKIEJ (anniversary of the Katyn massacre).

Coin designer: **URSZULA WALERZAK**



FACE VALUE **2** ZŁ

metal **CuAl15Zn5Sn1 alloy** ■ finish **standard** ■ diameter **27.0 mm**  
weight **8.15 g** ■ mintage (volume) **1,000,000 pcs**

**OBVERSE:** An image of the Eagle established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland. On the sides of the Eagle, the notation of the year of issue: 20-10. Below the Eagle, an inscription: ZŁ 2 ZŁ; in the rim, an inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA (Republic of Poland), preceded and followed by six pearls. The Mint's mark: M/W, under the Eagle's left leg.

**REVERSE:** Centrally, an inscription: KATYŃ. Below, a stylized image of the military forage cap with the Polish military Eagle. At the top, a semi-circular inscription: 70. ROCZNICA ZBRODNI/KATYŃSKIEJ (70th anniversary of the Katyn massacre).

**ON THE EDGE:** The inscription, NBP, repeated eight times, every second one inverted by 180 degrees, separated by stars.

Obverse designer: **EWA TYC-KARPIŃSKA**  
Reverse designer: **URSZULA WALERZAK**