

*The Ambassador
of the Republic of Poland
Canberra*

Canberra, 15 May 2009

Mr Mark Scott
The Managing Director ABC
GPO Box 9994
ACT 2601

Dear Sir,

During the edition of Lateline on 12 May 2009, reporter Lisa Millar in her story titled "Alleged Nazi Extradited to Germany" presented a serious distortion of historical facts regarding Nazi-German concentration camps. The reporter described the story of an alleged Nazi-German war criminal suspected of murdering thousands of people in what she said was "a Polish concentration camp".

We must protest against a presentation of history that falsifies the well-documented facts. The term "Polish concentration camp" bears the implication that these camps were created and maintained by Polish people. This implication is completely incorrect and unjust, as well as heart-wrenching for those Polish people whose families, or they themselves, were subjected to torture, hunger and other cruel practices in the hands of the Nazi-German occupation forces.

During World War II Poland was brutally invaded and occupied, first by Nazi-Germany and then by the Soviet Union. The concentration camps, which the story was referring to, were established and operated by German Nazis. The most notorious of them, the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, was built initially as a concentration camp for Poles and later used for Soviet prisoners of war. This fact is also emphasized in the official UNESCO definition of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The definition also explains that it soon became the prison for many other nationalities. "Between the years 1942-1944 it became the main mass extermination camp where Jews were tortured and killed for their so-called racial origins. In addition to the mass murder of well over a million Jewish men, women and children, and tens of thousands of Polish victims, Auschwitz also served as a camp for the racial murder of thousands of Roma and Sinti and prisoners of several European nationalities."

I say most emphatically that Poland was never an ally of Nazi Germany and never had a collaborationist regime. On the contrary, Polish people created and

developed the largest resistance movement during the war, which actively opposed the cruel reign of the Nazi occupiers.

I would be very grateful if you would make an announcement on one of next week's Lateline programs that the phrase "Nazi German concentration camp" should have been used instead of "Polish concentration camp". This would put straight the account of historical events in World War II and of the history of the Holocaust itself. The correction should of course also be made to the transcript on Lateline's website.

As this error was highly insulting to Polish people, any steps you can take to prevent an error of this nature in future would be greatly appreciated, both in relation to Lateline's own reports and throughout the ABC.

Yours sincerely,



Andrzej Jaroszyński
Ambassador

Attention:
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