

Authorized English version of the letter from the Polish Ambassador to Lithuania published in *Veidas* on 26 November 2010; at:
<http://www.veidas.lt/komentatoriai/atviras-lenkijos-ambasadoriaus-laiskas>

The following English text was provided to DefendingHistory.com by the Polish Embassy in Vilnius on 20 December 2010.

From: Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Vilnius
To: Editor-in-Chief of the weekly magazine “Veidas”

For the attention of: Mr. Raimundas Palaitis, Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania

Concerns: Article of Petras Stankeras dated November 14th, 2010: “The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg – the biggest legal farce in history”

Dear Mr. Editor-in-Chief,

With regard to the issue of the weekly magazine “Veidas” dated November 14th I would like to express my deep indignation over certain statements contained in the article of Petras Stankeras, “*The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg – the biggest legal farce in history*”.

The International Military Tribunal’s work took place in a unique legal situation — this fact is not subject to a reasonable dispute. Therefore the Nuremberg Tribunal was made to implement legal categories which had not been *explicitly* formulated before World War II, though the imperative to punish such crimes was, so to speak, intuitively assumed in every civilized legal system. As it is widely known, The Nuremberg Tribunal acted on the basis of the London Charter, signed on August 8th 1945.

It is also true that although the Tribunal investigated the case of the murder of Polish officers in Katyn in 1940, the truth that the crime was committed by the Soviet Political Police (NKVD) was revealed many years later.

It is also worth noting that none of the criminals that were tried in Nuremberg was accused of participation in the extermination of the Jewish people. The charges formulated by the Tribunal concerned four categories: involvement in

the plot; with the aim of committing crimes against peace; accomplishment of the armed aggression; war crimes or genocide. Only the latter one had not been part of the international legal system before World War II. The international community at that time neither would use the term “the Holocaust”, nor could it rely on the provisions of the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* which was adopted by the UN only in 1948.

However, the above mentioned does not in the least undermine the fact that the genocide of Jews was committed by Nazi Germany with the participation of citizens and/or institutions originating from other countries. The statements of P. Stankeras contained in the article, which undermine the fact of the extermination of Jews during World War II and raise doubts about the historic importance of the Nuremberg trials, should be met with the highest condemnation. Also, the Polish government in London and, in particular, Jan Karski — courier of the Polish Underground State and a pre-war diplomat — took part in transmitting reliable evidence on the Holocaust to the free world.

I find it particularly painful that such statements which deny the historical nature of the Holocaust are being formulated in our part of Europe, which was a witness to this tragedy. The responsibility for the truthfulness of the historic legacy which we pass to subsequent generations demands greater caution in undertaking discussions in the press.

While expressing my surprise that such a widely-read weekly magazine as “Veidas” would publish such content which is clearly contradictory to historical facts, I wish to underline that the country and the society which I have the honour to represent will always uphold the truth about the crimes of the genocide. The proof of that is e.g. Poland’s activity on the *Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research* forum, of which the government of the Republic of Lithuania is also a member.

Janusz Skolimowski

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Vilnius