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Embassy  
of the Republic of Poland  
in Washington

Washington, April 10, 2013

**Mr. Ed Arentz**, Managing Director  
Music Box Films  
173 N. Morgan, Chicago, IL 60607

Dear Mr. Arentz,

I have received information that Music Box Films plans to screen and distribute the German film *Unsere Mütter, unsere Väter* (Our mothers, our fathers) in movie theatres and on broadcast channels across the United States, as well as make the film available on DVD.

The film garnered much commentary after its screening in Germany – much of it critical – due to its negative and false portrayal of Polish Home Army soldiers as “anti-Semites,” strictly motivated by greed. This portrayal is based on stereotypes and incomplete information, and is deeply hurtful to the soldiers who fought heroically against the German occupant, often paying the ultimate price – their lives.

Poland’s Home Army was the largest resistance movement in German-occupied Europe, numbering almost 400,000 members – among whom were also many Polish Jews. The Home Army’s mission focused on fighting the occupant forces to regain freedom for all Poles, regardless of ethnicity or religion, and so also those of Jewish descent.

It is worth noting that Jan Karski was a Home Army soldier. He was posthumously decorated in 2012 by President Barack Obama with the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor. During the medal ceremony, the President spoke highly of the “courier for the Polish resistance during the darkest days of World War II,” who brought among the first eyewitness accounts of the genocide being committed against Jews by German Nazis to Allied leaders – including President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Captain Witold Pilecki was also a Home Army soldier. He voluntarily allowed himself to be imprisoned in Auschwitz, where he spent three years gathering intelligence and forming a resistance movement within the camp. After a heroic escape, he delivered reports of Hitler’s death industry to the Allies.

During the war, thousands of Poles risked their – and their families’ – lives to save Jews. Many had assistance from Poland’s Resistance movement – including from *Żegota*, the Home Army’s affiliate and the only organization in war-torn Europe set up for the sole

purpose of helping prosecuted Jews. Today, thousands of trees with their names grow in Yad Vashem's Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations.


The vision presented in the film about Poland's Home Army is not truthful. Highlighting anti-Semitism and omitting crucial facts can lead to a denial of the Polish Resistance movement's important contribution to the Allied victory against Germany, and also blurs the boundary between the perpetrators and the victims of their crimes, especially for uninformed and impressionable viewers, who may be left confused about who was responsible for the Holocaust.

As Poland's Ambassador, as a historian, and finally as the son of individuals engaged in rescuing Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto, I strongly protest against this false presentation of the history of my country and my people.

War by its nature is incredibly complex. In wartime, individuals undergo trials that we today cannot comprehend and have never experienced. That is why it is so crucial that when telling stories of war or passing judgments on people implicated in such stories, the utmost attention be paid to historical fact with special respect to the struggle of the victims.

I am appealing to you to take my words into account regarding the film, and request that you refrain from emitting and distributing the film. I am sure that I write not just on Poland's behalf and my own, but also on behalf of the millions of Americans of Polish descent – among whom are veterans of World War II.

Sincerely,



Ryszard Schnepf  
Ambassador