



POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

DOWNSTATE NEW YORK DIVISION

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To: Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman
Steven Levin, Councilman
Emily Gallagher, Assemblywoman
Kathleen E. Fahey, Captain 94th Precinct
Mitchell J. Silver, Parks Commissioner

From: Andrew Kaminski, President of PAC New York Downstate Division

Date : May 6, 2021

THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS NEW YORK DOWNSTATE DIVISION REGARDING CONSECUTIVE DESECRATION OF FATHER JERZY POPIELUSZKO STATUE

We are outraged and at the same time saddened by the newest desecration of the Father Jerzy Popieluszko statue in the Brooklyn's McCarren Park section of Greenpoint. On May 3, 2021 the day commemorating the Polish Constitution, unknown vandals spray painted anti-Polish slogans on the statue; they drew a Nazi symbol of Hitler's mustache on the face, placed a plastic trash bag over its head and strew garbage around the statue.

This was not the first time this has happened. Similarly in year 1990, only few months after statue was erected, also some unknown vandals spray painted the statue with names of Stalin and Lenin, strew garbage around and removed Father Popieluszko's head. In 1992, the head was replaced at a ceremony attended in excess of 10,000 people.

In 1986, the City of New York reached an agreement with the Polish American Congress to name a section of McCarren Park as the Father Jerzy Popieluszko Square in memory of the Polish priest, who was killed on October 19, 1984 by communist police for his opposition to the communist regime and later beatified in 2010 by the Catholic Church.

We are again asking the Parks Department and the 94th Police Precinct to investigate this newest anti-Polish ethnic hate crime. There have been other similar incidents involving the statue and the Square, where not only vandalism of the statue occurs, but also often people sleep their and much garbage is left behind them without being cleaned.

The Polish American Congress in conjunction with the John Paul II Foundation, headed by President Mieczyslaw Pajak and the Polish Sea League of America annually gather in the Square along many in attendance to observe the commemoration of Father Jerzy Popieluszko, who soon is expected to be declared a saint by the Catholic Church. It is very commendable that the Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union has now pledged to pay for the clean up and for installation of a video monitoring security system in the Square. The Polish American youth from St. Stanislaus Kostka will volunteer to keep an eye on the Square. However, this should not relieve the Parks Department and the 94th Precinct of their responsibilities.

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