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To Whom It May Concern

By way of introduction, I am a Fellow of the British Academy, and author both of the Oxford History of Poland, <God's Playground>(1981) and of the Oxford <Europe: a history> (1996). At present, I hold positions at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, and at Peterhouse, Cambridge.

I am familiar with the work and objectives of the Kresy-Siberia Foundation, and with their plans to organise a virtual museum. I know that this project has been in the making for some time, having met its spiritus movens, Mr. Stefan Wisniowski, during one of my visits to Australia.

I have no doubt whatsoever that the Foundation's initiative deserves the fullest support possible. The forcible deportation of Polish citizens following the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland in 1939 is one of the largest historical tragedies ever to escape the attention of the western world. It involved people of all ages, of all classes, and of several nationalities: Polish, Jewish, and Ukrainian. And the victims were entirely innocent of any misconduct. They were repressed simply for belonging to ethnic or political groups, which the Soviet Union regarded with suspicion. And the mortality rate among them was horrendous. Since Britain and France had declared war in 1939 in defence of Poland's independence, they were members of an Allied nation. Yet the Western allies failed to mitigate their fate.

When I was a professor at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, I chose this subject as the focus of my own research team. (See publications under the name of Dr.Keith Sword) And I am delighted that the Kresy-Siberia Foundation is taking up the same baton using more modern technological and globalised methods. As a leading author in the field, I am always being asked either to write a foreword to volumes of memoirs by survivors, or to help find a publisher. The sons, and especially the daughters of these *Siberiacs* or 'Siberians' are understandably anxious to preserve and to strengthen the memory of their forebears. And in recent years, my advice has usually been to circulate the material on the internet.

It is with the greatest enthusiasm, therefore, that I commend the project. We all know that "the competition of memory" operates in an uncomfortable world of finite resources, limited knowledge, and entrenched interests. And in my view, the Kresy-Siberia Foundation eminently deserves to be given the priority which up to now has been directed elsewhere.

Yours sincerely,



Norman Davies

(Professor I.N.R.Davies, FBA, CMG)