



POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 6

Your Voice
in America!

2016 PROMISES TO BE AN EXCITING YEAR FOR

THE POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

As we turn the calendar from 2015 to 2016, we are thankful for the efforts of many individuals and organizations throughout the United States who have worked hard to further the mission of the Polish American Congress. Certainly, the Council of National Directors Meeting in Washington, D.C. this past July was a very important undertaking as we re-connected with many legislators in our nation's Capitol to discuss matters of concern to Polish Americans and Poland.



The PAC executive committee is deliberating as to the site of the 2016 Council of National Directors Meeting. An announcement will be made in the very near future. There are many considerations to be weighed in making this decision including ease of flight connections, cost, hotel availability, etc.

Also, as PAC National Office Director Dr. Barbara Anderson has communicated to National Directors, an historic meeting is being planned for Poland in 2016! This is not a Council of National Directors Meeting, as only one official meeting of the body takes place each year, but the meeting in Poland is important as the Polish Government has extended a welcome for our organization to meet in Poland in July. Please refer to previous emails sent by Dr. Anderson for additional information. It is important for those interested in attending to indicate that interest to her ASAP. 2016 will also see a new look to our PAC website! Efforts are in the works to have this important communication vehicle operational sometime in January.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Our PAC Newsletter will be sent out six times this year.

Deadline for submission	Publication date
Friday, February 5, 2016	Friday, February 12, 2016
Friday, April 1, 2016	Friday, April 8, 2016
Friday, June 3, 2016	Friday, June 10, 2016
Friday, August 5, 2016	Friday, August 12, 2016
Friday, October 7, 2016	Friday, October 14, 2016
Friday, December 2, 2016	Friday, December 9, 2016

"Your Voice in America" newsletter is published bimonthly by the Polish American Congress. The purpose of the newsletter is to offer PAC National Directors and PAC Executive Committee members the opportunity to share news and information about their state divisions and offices. The newsletter does not receive funds from any external source. The editor is Dr. Mark Pienkos.

Articles should be between 100 and 400 words. Some editing will be done to match our style guidelines and spatial constraints, as well as correcting grammatical errors. We do not send proofs for approval. When sending photos, please include captions with names, official titles. All submitted materials become the property of the Polish American Congress and may be used to promote the mission of the PAC. Materials will not be returned unless requested.

Articles are due according to the schedule provided. Send your submissions to PAC National VP for Public Relations, Mark Pienkos at markpienkos2012@gmail.com.



President's Message

FRANK SPULA, PRESIDENT OF POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

Dear Council of Directors:

Much has been going on over the last two months, President Duda visited the United States, Poland had its Parliamentary elections, new ministers have been named and the United States is getting ready for the 2016 presidential elections. During the visit of President Duda in New York, the Polish community had the opportunity to meet with him. I also had the pleasure of meeting him in person at the Polish Consulate. At the same time, I had an opportunity to meet with Ambassador Ryszard Schnepf, Consul General Ursula Gacek of New York and Minister Kwiatkowski of the President's Office. We had the chance to discuss the issues surrounding the upcoming parliamentary election, candidates aspiring for office as well as matters involving the Polish community in the United States. During the brief moment with President Duda, I had the opportunity to extend an invitation to him to visit the U.S. and meet with members of the Polish American Congress and Polonia in spring of 2016.

The President addressed a group of approximately 300 individuals at the Polish Consulate of New York. Amongst the audience I saw Honorary Consul, Vice President of the PAC Debbie Majka, as well as our National Directors Andrew Kaminski and Zygmunt Staszewski. I'm certain there were others whom I did not see since this was a very teeming gathering. Polish President's remarks were illuminating to the audience and very well received. To assist in the election process, the offices of the Polish National Alliance were made available for Polish voters on Saturday, October 24th. It's encouraging to see that so many Poles participated in the parliamentary elections of Poland. Hopefully, Polish Americans will also participate in American elections in large numbers. In October, Polish American Heritage Month, many events were held recognizing the successes of the Polish individuals and community in the United States. I had the privilege to represent the Polish American Congress in a number of events and programs.

The Illinois Division of the Polish American Congress had its annual Heritage Award Banquet honoring five distinguished individuals for their involvement in the community, under the Presidency of Anna Wierzbicki. The Illinois Chapter of the Kosciuszko Foundation hosted a reception in recognition of Polish American Heritage Month at the Polish Museum of America. I had the privilege to attend this reception and celebrate our Polish American hero, General Kosciuszko, on his name's day. PAC National Director Dr. Lidia Filus, organized the annual celebration of Polish American Heritage Month at Northeastern University, where she is a professor and Chair of the Mathematics. Congratulations to her for arranging this annually in a diversified academic environment.

On Sunday, November 8th, I had the opportunity to attend a celebration of Polish Independence Day in conjunction with Veterans Day sponsored by the Wisconsin Division of the PAC. Congratulations to President Mark Pienkos and his officers for making this annual event a success. During the event, President Pienkos was awarded the Cavalier's Cross of the Order of Merit Award for his leadership within the Polish American community which was presented to him by Vice-Consul Robert Rusiecki. That same day at the Chicago Orchestra Hall, Paderewski Symphony Orchestra honored the legacy of the great Polish pianist, composer and former Prime Minister of Poland Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Under the baton of the orchestra's music director, Mr. Wojciech Niewrzol, two young amazingly talented and accomplished Polish descent musicians, Igor Lipinski and Daniel Szefer, performed for the large audience making us all very proud of our Polish heritage.

Polish American Chamber of Commerce, as well as some prominent representatives of the Polish Community in Chicago, co-hosted with Illinois Governor Mr. Bruce Rauner a celebration of Polish Independence Day at the Governor's Mansion in Springfield. It was a successful event that promoted Poland amongst state level elected officials. A couple of days later, I participated in the Independence Day celebration at the Polish Consulate in Chicago and had an opportunity to congratulate individuals who received awards on behalf of the President of Poland for their accomplishments and involvement in the community. With the Christmas Holidays around the corner, I would like to extend my best wishes to all the Officers, Directors and their families. Thank you for your involvement and leadership in your respective regions.

Frank J. Spula
President

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Stephen Pienkos, Polish American Congress - Wisconsin Division Vice President for Membership, worked with the Wisconsin state legislature to successfully pass a joint resolution recognizing the efforts of Polish Americans in Wisconsin. This was done as part of our overall state division's efforts during October which is designated as "Polish American Heritage Month" throughout the U.S. Stephen works in the office of State Senator Robert Wirch (D-Kenosha), who co-authored the resolution along with State Senator Jerry Petrowski (R-Marathon) and State Representative Ken Skowronski (R-Franklin). The 33 senators and 99 assemblymen all voted in favor of the resolution. The resolution reads:

2015 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 61

Proclaiming October as Polish American Heritage Month

Whereas, many people in Wisconsin proudly trace their roots to Poland, a land whose rich and colorful past is rivaled only by the bright promise of its future; and

Whereas, in October, as we celebrate the many contributions that Americans of Polish heritage have made to our nation's history and culture, we also reaffirm the strong and friendly ties between the United States and Poland; and

Whereas, before America became a nation, Poles came to these shores in search of liberty and opportunity, and their descendants have remained at the forefront of efforts to keep America free, strong, and prosperous; and

Whereas, we celebrate the great Polish heroes Tadeusz Kosciuszko and Casimir Pulaski, who helped secure the independence of our fledgling republic during the Revolutionary War; and

Whereas, since that time, millions of other men and women of Polish descent have invested their hopes in America's bold experiment in self-government and, inspired by faith in God and a devotion to democratic ideals, have worked hard to ensure its success; and

Whereas, many of these Poles have chosen Wisconsin as their state of residence; and

Whereas, the deep cultural and familial ties between the peoples of Wisconsin and Poland have been strengthened by our shared values and aspirations; and

Whereas, for generations, Poles have demonstrated the same reverence for individual rights and dignity that infuses our own system of government; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring. That as we observe Polish American Heritage Month, we join all Wisconsinites in thanking our fellow citizens of Polish descent for their countless contributions to the strength and quality of our national life. Best wishes to all for a memorable celebration.



2015 - Poland's Big Election Year

One Observer's View

On October 25, 2015 Poland held a truly historic parliamentary election. For the first time in the 26 years of its democratic Third Republic, one political party, Law and Justice, won an absolute majority, 235 out of 460 deputies, to the Sejm, Poland's dominant legislative body. As a result, Poland's new Prime Minister will be Beata Szydlo, 52. She succeeds Ewa Kopacz of the Civic Platform party, which had headed Poland's governing coalition since 2007.

Earlier in May the Law and Justice party's presidential nominee, the previously little known Andrzej Duda, 42, defeated the seemingly safe incumbent, Bronislaw Komorowski. His win came as a first big shock to the Civic Platform, whose free market policies had been credited as helping make Poland's economy one of the fastest growing in Europe. In September Poland also held a national referendum, where the voters rejected a proposal to radically alter its method of electing deputies to the Sejm. Poland's latest vote on October 25 has left western commentators at a loss in figuring out what happened and why. Neither have they demonstrated much appreciation about the impressive vitality of Polish representative democracy since 1989 nor shown they fully grasp the nature of the political party divisions in Poland.

In fact the Civic Platform has the basic features of a moderate conservative free enterprise party. It is internationalist in its embrace of the European Union. At home it has supported the principle of the separation of church and state while respecting the enormous role of the Catholic Church in Polish life. Law and Justice, which has invariably been described in the west as 'Euroskeptic' and 'rightwing', does stand for morally 'conservative' views held by the Church. But its economic posture is populist and commits it to action programs aimed at improving the conditions of Polish working people. This is understandable, given the existence of fairly widespread dissatisfaction over low wages and frustration over the lack of good jobs for younger people, many of them college graduates. These complaints have long been sore points among critics of the Civic Platform, despite its overall success in managing Poland's economy.

Politically, the release of illegal taped private conversations among government officials in 2014 did some damage to the image of the Civic Platform. Worse was the departure, last September, of the party's skillful leader Donald Tusk. A highly effective Prime Minister since 2007, Tusk relocated to Brussels to become the EU's president - itself a sign of Poland's stature in that vast, multistate organization. October's election also resulted in the failure of the post-communist Alliance of the Democratic Left to win a single seat in parliament. Whether this party is 'history' cannot be known yet. But its defeat offers Law and Justice with a golden opportunity to further enhance its standing by winning over at least some of its disaffected voters in putting together constructive economic policies to gain their support. The same possibilities of course hold true for the Civic Platform.

A real opportunity for closer cooperation between Poland's new government and the United States also exists, if Prime Minister Szydlo and President Duda move systematically in this direction. A closer U.S.-Poland strategic relationship may also mean a greater role for Polish Americans in working to enhance the ties between the two NATO allies and to promote a greater appreciation of Poland and the values Poland's extraordinarily pro-American citizens share with the people of the United States.



Donald Pienkos
The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee



Northeastern Regional Conference

Albany - Oct.10, 2015 – 10 AM – 6 PM / Moderator Zbyszek Koralewski PAC-LI



Participating Divisions: Central NY, Long Island, E. Massachusetts, New Jersey, Western NY + guests

Attendees were seated behind tables arranged in a circle, so they could face each other. Teresa Bunk, the host, welcomed participants and Father Urban delivered an inspiring invocation. Participants introduced themselves and spoke about projects their organizations were supporting. The following agenda topics were discussed:

Wish list of important issues that PAC should get involved in was presented by Z. Koralewski:

Education of Polonia and Americans, access to media, anti-Polonism, restitution for financial losses during WWII, status of double taxation agreement, use of Medicare in Poland, cooperation with other ethnic organizations and legislation on Immigration Reform, preparing a study guide for the movie "Ida", increasing PAC's membership by finding what is important for Polonia, organizing teams to work on specific issues at the Executive PAC Board level and coordination of activities with Division VPs.

Improving ND meetings. The following suggestions were made concerning resolutions:

- Requiring them to be submitted 30 days prior to a National Director meeting is not enough.
- A Resolution Committee must be appointed, no less than twenty days prior to the ND meeting.
- To the proposal, consult with authors, prepare them for a vote and send them to National Directors one week prior to the meeting. Proposed resolutions should be limited to one page, if possible.
- The advisory role of Directors at Large is not apparent except when voting.
- Electronic voting should be evaluated to improve transparency and efficiency.



A Polish style lunch was served in the afternoon between 1:30 and 2:30 PM.

Availability of PAC publications: The Newsletter, Current Polish News and From Poland about Poland reaches a small audience. The attendees proposed that all PAC publications should be placed on PAC's websites so that they can be easily found. Comments: there is not enough information about PAC activities in Polish and US media. This problem needs to be addressed by the VP for Public Relations in cooperation with state divisions. For example: the recent very important comment on Russia and invitation to participate in Polish parliamentary elections, sent to NDs, should also have been distributed to American and Polish media.

Committees/teams. It was agreed that the existing Anti Bigotry Committee, presently headed by Frank Milewski and Chet Szarejko should be enlarged. Candidates were suggested. It was also suggested that our Jewish friends should be invited to participate as well. Zygmunt Staszewski proposed that a Social Issues Team, dealing with double taxation of retirement and other related issues should be reactivated. All agreed that it is important to be proactive, compared to the Anti Bigotry Committee which is reactive. A continuing education initiative is necessary. Peter Suchcicki briefed attendees on his committee's slow progress in negotiating with the PACCF.

Nomination of Candidates to run in the 2016 PAC election were considered. At the end of the meeting, one of our unexpected guests, professor Binienda, was asked to present an update on his research of the Smolensk catastrophe. It was informative and most appreciated. Conference organizers, Teresa Bunk, President Central New York Division and Zbyszek Koralewski, Long Island Division thanked all participants for their constructive contributions. The meeting's success will be measured by its results.



“The Strange Story of the July 6, 1960 Agreement of the United States and Poland in the Matter of Expropriated American Property by the Communist Government of Poland.”

Dean Anthony Bajdek
VP for American Affairs

On October 26, 2015, I sent the Council of National Directors two attachments related to the USA - Poland Agreement of July 16, 1960. One of them had been the 1963 Foreign Affairs Committee publication of the U. S. House of Representatives in the 1st Session of the 88th Congress that was titled, “Expropriation of American-Owned Property by Foreign Governments in the Twentieth Century,” which included a section concerning the Agreement noted above. The other attachment had been the full text and annex of that Agreement duly signed in Washington, DC by the Assistant Secretary of State Foy D. Kohler on behalf of the United States and by the Minister Plenipotentiary and Financial Counselor Stanislaw Raczkowski on behalf of the Embassy of the Polish People’s Republic.

No one disputes that the USA - Poland Agreement of July 16, 1960 had been a successful fait accompli for the United States and Poland, which in effect had been designed to end claims for compensation/restitution of American nationals for properties expropriated by the communist regime by way of a “lump sum” payment of \$40,000,000 -- to have been spread over a period of twenty years at the rate of \$2,000,000 annually -- by the government of Poland to the United States of America.

Clearly, once the agreed-upon \$40,000,000 was paid, Poland would have no other related financial obligations to the United States in the matter. Accordingly, the first question any informed person must ask is whether Poland met its obligation based on that agreement? I, for one, hope that it did, as all of you do as well. Thus, if the United States actually collected the \$40,000,000 from Poland over the 20-year period, all current claims originating from American sources at least, reflected in the accusations of some members of the House of Representatives who claimed the contrary in their letter to Secretary of State John Kerry this past summer, would appear have no merit whatsoever.

In all of this, however, there is one peculiar and inescapable fact, that being, if the \$40,000,000 payment was duly received by the United States, why the silence about it, especially on the part of Poland, in the face of contemporary domestic and foreign critics who propose that Poland hasn’t paid anything at all? And that the record of that payment being received would be available, for example, in the archives of the Library of Congress, the Department of State, and/or the Treasury Department, among others.

Furthermore, if Poland fulfilled the \$40,000,000 obligation to the United States, why hasn’t it corrected the misassumption on the part of the House signers of the 2015 letter to Secretary of State Kerry?

As such, I have continued my search for evidence that Poland, in keeping with its bilateral agreement of July 16, 1960, actually paid the requisite sum of \$40,000,000 to the United States in full settlement of claims for compensation/restitution of private properties seized by Poland’s communist regime.

In the process of searching, I have found additional evidence of the agreement and the economic milieu of U.S. relations with Bulgaria, Poland, and Romania for the period in question pursuant to that agreement in a highly interesting article, “Economic Observations on Lump Sum Settlement Agreements” by Professor Norman Mintz of Syracuse University that appeared in the Summer 1968 issue of the Indiana Law Journal. I urge you to read his article at your earliest convenience. It is available online.

Finally, in consideration of one of his statistical tables -- specifically Table V, “United States Aid to Poland” -- Professor Mintz documents that our nation’s aid to Poland spiked from \$66,000,000 in 1959 to \$127,000,000 in 1960, the year of the Agreement. Talk about “sweetening the deal” as the expression goes.



It is very unlikely that the spike had been accidental on the part of the United States. In all likelihood it had been extended by the United States to close the deal. In other words, in exchange for settling the compensation claims by paying the United States a lump sum of \$40,000,000 over a tightly-defined twenty year period for the relief of United States citizens who lost their properties to the Polish People's Republic, Poland received \$127,000,000 in aid from the United States in 1960 alone, thereby rendering for Poland in 1960 a profit of \$87,000,000.

Once again, I urge all interested in the story of the Agreement to read the full article written by Professor Mintz rather than simply the excerpts I have provided.

In closing, the second question an informed person may raise is whether the Agreement either had been ratified by the United States Senate or had been pursued by the Eisenhower Administration as an "executive agreement" that "entered into force" when the terms for entry into force as the Agreement specified had been met. Regardless of the path selected by the United States in 1960, Professor Mintz appears to have believed at the least that the latter approach had occurred. If not, one may ask why, in the first place, he decided to write the article -- some eight years after the Agreement was signed -- with so much attention devoted to Poland in particular which, to say the least, had been tendered a highly benevolent settlement by the United States.

If anything, what appears above should at least be considered as part one of the full story yet to be developed, one that I will continue to pursue.



Dean Anthony Bajdek

Forgotten Treasures of the Lost Pavilion

Debbie Majka, VP for Cultural Affairs

As the year 1939 approached the Polish Second Republic was ready to celebrate its twentieth anniversary. It wanted to present itself as a country with a long history, striving toward modernity and a people who had a place within the fraternity of nations. An ideal way to do this would be participation in the World's Fair in New York City scheduled to open that year. Chosen as Commissioner General to manage the exhibit was Stephen de Ropp, who already had extensive experience from his directorship of the annual Poznan Trade Fair.

Poland's pavilion, built on Flushing Meadows, was a very fine example of early twentieth century modern architecture. There was also a separate building housing a Polish-cuisine restaurant, where waitresses in folk costume served customers. In front was a spectacular 50 meter (142 foot) lattice tower covered with shield-like crests, suggesting a medieval fortress. This imposing facade served as a backdrop to an equestrian statue of Poland's warrior-king Władysław Jagiełło. The fact that under Jagiełło's leadership, Polish and Lithuanian forces dealt a decisive blow to the encroaching power of the Teutonic Knights in 1410 was not lost on German visitors to the fair. Within, the latest and brightest of Poland's technological achievement was displayed to fit into the fair's World of Tomorrow theme. No effort was spared in providing the best examples from among Poland's industrial products and inventions. Notable among these were two scale models of steam locomotives that reflected contemporary Polish production. They were meticulously crafted and each was a tour-de-force of the model-maker's art with every rivet, valve and gear faithfully rendered.

An article in the New York Times from May 19, 1939 waxed poetic in describing some of the industrial, cultural and historical displays of the pavilion. The reporter described some of the exhibits: synthetic rubber tires made from potatoes, a light bulb that worked without a vacuum, and an electric samovar. Participation of Kosciuszko and Pulaski in the American Revolutionary War was mentioned, as well as the statistic that some 5 million Americans were of Polish background.

Chief among the historically themed exhibits in the Hall of Honor within the pavilion were seven paintings that portrayed pivotal scenes from Polish history. These were 120 by 200 cm tempera paintings on wood, executed in a pre-Raphaelite style that is reminiscent of medieval painting. This was a group project commissioned by the Polish government from the Brotherhood of St. Luke, a group of artists assembled by Tadeusz Pruszkowski in Kazimierz on the Vistula.

The pavilion opened on May 3 of 1939, in September Poland was invaded by German and Russian armies. Under these circumstances Commissioner de Ropp was cut off from his funding but managed to keep the exhibit going using income from the restaurant, donations and good will.

To meet expenses, he sold some of the fixtures, objects d'art, and furnishings. Many items were placed at the Polish Museum of America in Chicago, others at Polish-American institutions and diplomatic outposts. The Kosciuszko Foundation has an exquisite wall hanging; and at the Philadelphia's Polish Cultural Center one can admire several of the exhibit tables that used beautifully carved eagles for legs. The statue of King Jagiełło was relocated to New York's Central Park thanks to Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, while Pulaski's statue was placed in Wyandotte, Michigan. A finely cast bell, decorated with figures of Polish saints and heroes, found a home in the steeple of Holy Name Church in Stamford, Connecticut. The Pilsudski Institute in New York acquired the bronze figure of its namesake.





The World's Fair closed in 1940 and the pavilion was demolished. Finding himself unemployed, de Ropp accepted a position as lecturer at Le Moyne College, a Jesuit institution located in Syracuse, NY. He would later donate the seven paintings to the college, where in 1981, then college president Fr. Frank Haig SJ, placed them on display in the newly completed library. They remain there to this day and are available for public viewing.

In Poland there is a lot of interest in the society and cultural scene of the Second Republic. Polish Television made a documentary about the Brotherhood of St. Luke painters. A well illustrated, bi-lingual, award-winning book about Poland's participation in the 1939 World's Fair *Pawilon Polski na nowojorskiej wystawie światowej (1939-1940) i jego dalsze dzieje* [The Polish pavilion at the New York World's Fair (1939-1940) and its subsequent fate] by Krystyna Nowakowska (Ted Mirecki produced the English language text) has been published.

Fortunately, under the recently installed president Dr. Linda LeMura, Le Moyne College is starting a review of its policy, seeking to expand exposure given to the seven Polish historical paintings. A traveling exhibit has been suggested. This would bring welcome publicity not only to the paintings and Polish history but also to LeMoyne College which has faithfully stewarded them for over 50 years.



POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

Founded in May, 1944, the Polish American Congress is a National Umbrella Organization, representing at least 10 million Americans of Polish descent and origin. Its membership is comprised of fraternal, educational, veteran, religious, cultural, social, business, political organizations and individual membership. The Polish American community prides itself on its deeply rooted commitment to the values of family, faith, democracy, hard work and fulfillment of the American dream. We are present in every state and virtually every community in America, on various social, business and economic levels.

The Polish American Congress, an “umbrella” organization, is a federation of over 3000 Polish American organizations and clubs, ranging from national fraternal benefit societies, such as the Polish National Alliance, Polish Women’s Alliance, Polish Roman Catholic Union, Polish Falcons and others, including veteran, cultural, professional, religious and social associations, with aggregate membership of over one million. The PAC by-laws also provide for individual membership, as well as associate membership.

The PAC promotes civic, educational and cultural programs designed to further not only the knowledge of Polish history, language and culture, but to stimulate Polish American involvement and accomplishments.

The governing body of the PAC is the Council of National Directors, consisting of directors elected by their respective State Divisions or National Organizations and up to 10 at-large directors elected by the Council. Day-to-day operations are conducted by the Executive Committee elected by the Council of National Directors for a two year term.

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