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February 2018

POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 1

Your Voice
in America!

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Future PAC Newsletters will be sent out:

Deadline for submission	Publication date
Friday, April 6, 2018	Friday, April 13, 2018
Friday, June 1, 2018	Friday, June 8, 2018
Friday, August 3, 2018	Friday, August 10, 2018
Friday, October 5, 2018	Friday, October 12, 2018
Friday, December 7, 2018	Friday, December 14, 2018

President's Message



Frank J. Spula, President

Dear Directors and Members of the Polish American Congress,

I want to take this opportunity to update you on events and projects that will be taking place in 2018. This year, 2018, is very important being it is the Centennial of the Republic of Poland, celebrating its 100th anniversary of independence. Various events will be taking place through the world

commemorating this celebration. Plans are being talked about to host a variety of events throughout the country and I'm certain many divisions are making arrangements to commemorate this historic occasion.

Our staff in Washington has been very busy with various projects; from maintaining the office to attending various meetings on Capitol Hill. I appreciate the fine work Mr. Czop, as Director of Policy Planning, and Ms. Wisniewska, as Administrator, are doing in the Washington office.
(Continued...)

"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 this schedule. Send your submissions to PAC National VP for Public Relations, Mark Pienkos at markpienkos2012@gmail.com.

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www.facebook.com/pages/Polish-American-Congress

In reading the news, we have seen many changes taking place in Poland and in the United States with topics that are dear to us. As ethnic leaders, either as immigrants or descendents of immigrants, we know firsthand the importance of family association and maintaining strength in our communities. We need to pay close attention to the issues concerning immigrants and how our legislators react and vote on those issues.

As an Executive Committee, we are looking forward to the Executive Council Meeting scheduled for March 6th and 7th at Orchard Lake. On March 7th, the honorable Cardinal Dziwisz will address the Directors and share his observations. Various important topics, fund raising, membership expansions, and social media will be addressed during this meeting. A tentative agenda was posted. I hope the division presidents will find the time to attend this brainstorming session.

This past December, Lieutenant General Edward L. Rowny passed away at the age of 100. General Rowny was a Polish American serving almost fifty years in government, military and civilian service, working with five presidents as a hard line arms control advisor. During his career, he was able to write three books describing his experiences in the military and his service working for five presidents. Many of us knew General Edward L. Rowny, especially the members of the Washington Metro Division. Mr. John Czop, Director of Policy Planning of the Washington Office, represented the Polish American Congress and myself at the General's funeral on January 27th.

On January 4th of this year, a letter was written to Mr. Ed Royce, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, regarding H.R.1226, urging him to ask the members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee not to apply to Poland. By having this bill approved, it would be very unjust to Poland. Vice President Anthony Bajdek sent out a news alert urging Division presidents and their members to contact their U.S. Congressman or Senators regarding the Legislative Action Alert H.R. 1226 to not support the act. It is crucial to get involved and have our voices heard by not supporting the bill.

On the 17th of January, I had the opportunity to host Dr. Jaroslaw Szarek, President of the IPN Institute of Remembrance (better known in Polish as "Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej") and several of his staff representatives. There were several leaders of Polish organizations participating with numerous topics addressed on enhancing the relationship between the organization and the Polish American Congress.

Since the formation of the Polish American Congress, it has faced numerous challenges over the years. Individuals within our organization have always had the right to express their own opinions, one of the many benefits of a democracy. In striving to make this organization stronger and more influential, we need to speak in one voice, obtain more finances and make our opinions known with our elected officials. I am certain we can make this organization more influential by working together. The cliché "In Working Together There Is Strength" is so appropriate in these challenging times.



Important historical events in Polish history:

- **966** - Baptism of Mieszko I, the first Polish ruler
- **1025** - Coronation of the first Polish king Boleslaw the Brave
- **15 July 1410** - The Battle of Grunwald against the Teutonic Knights won by the joined armies: Lithuanian and Polish. It was the greatest battle in the Middle Ages.
- **1772** - The first partition of Poland
- **3 May 1791** - The adoption of the Constitution, the first European constitution
- **1793** - The second partition of Poland
- **1795** - The third partition of Poland
- **1918** - Poland regains its independence
- **August 1920** - The Battle of Warsaw called The Miracle at the Vistula
- **1 September 1939** - Germany invades Poland, the beginning of the World War II
- **1 August 1944** - The beginning of the Warsaw Rising
- **February 1945** - Yalta Conference
- **1956** - Poznań Protests against the communist government
- **1980** - the formation of the Independent Self-governing Trade Union Solidarity
- **1989** - The Round Table Talks
- **1999** - Poland joins NATO
- **2004** - Poland enters the European Union
- **2015** - Andrzej Duda assumes Presidency as 6th elected President



2018 – POLAND CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL OF INDEPENDENCE!

Submitted by Dr. Mark Pienkos,
PAC National Vice President for Public Relations
262-325-8039

Throughout this year, the Polish American Congress throughout the United States will all be working on events and activities to celebrate Poland's 100th Anniversary of its Independence – November 11, 1918.

As you plan and successfully complete your events, please share with others through this PAC "Your Voice in America!" newsletter. Please send articles, including photos and captions, to me. I will be more than happy to publish your activities.

What a fantastic way to highlight your organization's efforts, as well as sharing your successes with readers of the PAC newsletter.

Submissions deadlines for articles – regarding Polish Independence events or any other activities you are planning this year – can be found listed in this newsletter. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Let's make 2018 a year to remember as we celebrate the Centennial of Poland's Independence! Best wishes!



Piotr Janicki, Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago (center), accepts a copy of the recently published baseball book by Mark Pienkos, PAC National Vice President for Public Relations. Steve Pienkos, Vice President for Membership for the PAC - Wisconsin Division (L), was also in attendance this past November at the Polish Independence Day/Veterans Day Luncheon. Over 150 guests attended. This annual event is held at the beautiful Polish Center of Wisconsin located in Franklin, WI.



From the Bookshelf

At its annual meeting in January the Polish American Historical Association recognized Joanna Wojdon of the University of Wroclaw for her 2017 book, *White and Red Umbrella: The Polish American Congress in the Cold War Era, 1944-1988* (Helena History Press).

This work follows on previous and notable histories of the Polish American Congress, *For Your Freedom Through Ours*, by Donald Pienkos, and other pieces by eminent scholars, Z. Anthony Kruszewski (a national PAC Vice President in the 1990s), Richard Lukas, and Piotr Wandycz.

"From the Bookshelf" will become a regular PAC Newsletter feature.





FROM THE DESK OF PAC PRESIDENT, FRANK SPULA

The POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS represents the interests of Americans of Polish heritage who are convinced that their ancestral country, Poland, as a key NATO ally, protects United States national security interests in Central and Eastern Europe and promotes the values of freedom and limited government in that dangerous part of the world.

S. Res. 447, known as the JUST ACT OF 2017, includes Poland among countries, which were Axis allies during World War II, such as Romania and Hungary. A parallel resolution H.R. 1226 is under consideration by your committee. It also appears to ignore, or evade, moral and historical principles of high importance, with the result that H.R. conflates victims with villains.

Poland's unique circumstances, as a victim nation of German and Soviet aggression in September 1939, which started World War II by virtue of the mutually-planned and executed Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, need to be recognized by Congress in these matters. The language of HR 1226 proposes that claims (under Terezin Declaration definitions) could be made against today's Polish State for crimes today's Poles did not commit. Stunningly, this completely ignores that the monstrous crimes perpetrated on Polish territory by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union were followed by massive property transfers carried out directly by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

Indeed, Poland's history from 1795 to 1918 found her wiped from the map of Europe by way of the infamous three Partitions of 1772, 1793, and 1795 that had been engineered by her contiguous imperial neighbors, Russia, Austria, and Prussia (the latter nation being an integral progenitor of Nazi Germany).

Moreover, the issue of wartime compensation to be paid to Poland as a victim (as identified by the International Military Tribunal - Nuremberg Proceedings) is entirely unresolved. These two factors make Poland's case unique, and materially different from other East Central European countries, like Hungary and Romania, both having been loyal allies of Nazi Germany.

Today, claims for private property compensation in Poland are decided case by case.. This fact alone should give pause to anyone considering imposing on today's Poland a one-size-fits-all general law on compensation for private property despoiled by Nazi Germany and then nationalized by the communists.

Poland already has compensated all United States citizens who owned private property in Poland before September 1, 1939 when Nazi Germany invaded our kin country. This was done in compliance with the 1960 Bilateral Treaty signed by Poland and the United States. Moreover, in Poland, all claims submitted for compensation by children and grand children (as real persons) of people who lost property have been adjudicated and have been paid.

Clearly, the purpose of H.R.1226 appears to be the extension of this to other entities or persons as well, an approach that suggests it being an unreasonable and arbitrary overreach by the United States Congress.

The House version of the JUST Act of 2017, H.R. 1226, unjustly conflates the role of Poland and the Poles in World War II with countries that were Axis allies. By contrast, in North Africa, and in Western Europe, and in occupied Poland, from start to finish in World War II, Polish armed forces fought Nazi Germany as a full state ally of our own United States of America. There was no collaborationist Nazi German satellite state on Polish territory.

The claimants' bill for their despoiled and nationalized private property on conquered Polish territory during the World War II era should be presented not to the victim nation -- Poland -- but to the perpetrators, Germany and the Russian Federation, the latter as successor of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Informed readers recall that the Soviet Union, as an ally of Nazi Germany, invaded Poland on September 17, 1939, two weeks following Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland. Both invasions were not accidental, but rather, mutually orchestrated aspects of the infamous Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact.

It is unjust to lay the groundwork, political or otherwise, to require today's Polish society to pay extravagant sums to legacy organizations related to victims of loss of private property or that despoiled by Nazi Germany and then nationalized by a regime indisputably established by Soviet communists.

This amounts to a perverse collective punishment of today's Poles for crimes of private property expropriation perpetrated by Nazi Germany and the communists on conquered Polish territory. Again, Poland has already undertaken a good faith effort, under strict rule of law, to address these matters.

Clearly, further investigation of facts, or hearings, should occur before action is taken. This is why I encourage you to ask the members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee not to apply H.R.1226 to Poland.

The POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS, which represents Polish American organizations and communities, wants the House Foreign Affairs Committee thoughtfully to address our concern that our ancestral country Poland receives just and equitable treatment from the United States Government. Our sincere wish is to prevent this issue from becoming one that Polish Americans would come to feel has to be redressed at the 'ballot box.' Those who vote for the application of the JUST ACT OF 2017 to Poland, which is most UNJUST to our ancestral country, run that risk.

Your gracious consideration, and hopefully, support, will be appreciated greatly by our nation's Polish American Community.

Sincerely yours, Frank J. Spula, President



Center in Texas to Tell Story of Polish Immigration

Submitted by Maureen Brown / momo4design@yahoo.com
Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria, Texas

In early December, 1854, nearly 100 Polish families sailed into Galveston on the Texas gulf coast, from there sailed to Indianola, and then trekked inland more than 200 miles to acreage secured for them by their kinsman, a Polish priest named Father Leopold Moczygemba. They finally arrived on December 24 and celebrated Midnight Mass under the sheltering branches of a great oak tree. They named their new home Panna Maria (Polish for Virgin Mary), which is now honored as the oldest permanent Polish settlement in America. It would be the first of several Polish communities that settled mostly south and east of San Antonio, but also as far away as the Texas Panhandle, as more immigrants joined their friends and countrymen in this new land.

The story of the Polish immigration to Texas, full of toil, tribulation and triumph, is the central focus of the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria as envisioned by its founder, Bishop Emeritus John W. Yanta, a native son of the area who wants to preserve the “sacred memories of generations.” “Let’s memorialize our ancestors,” said Bishop Yanta. “We have to preserve our inherited values, share them with new generations of our families, and with pride and thanksgiving, share them with the whole world.”

Located in Panna Maria, facing the historic Immaculate Conception Church and the iconic oak tree, the 16,500 square foot Polish Heritage Center will celebrate all of the original settlements, including Panna Maria, Bandera, St. Hedwig, Yorktown, Cestohowa, Kosciusko, Falls City, McCook, White Deer, Inez, Las Gallinas and St. Michael’s in San Antonio. Their collective story is one of faith, family and community. The mission of the Polish Heritage Center is to “keep vibrant and relevant the history, values, beliefs, customs and traditions of the Polish settlers and their descendants....and to inspire, engage, and educate our visitors.”

Construction on the 16,500-square foot Center commenced on April 11, 2016 and will see completion of the building shell in early 2018. This follows years of planning and an ongoing \$14 million fundraising campaign that to date has reached more than half of its goal. The next phase of the project will focus on developing the building interior where more than 3000 square feet of exhibit space will provide high-tech interactive and immersive experiences from early Polish history to the present. This will include self-guided tours in English, Polish and Spanish. An Archive and Collections area will house and preserve artifacts and documents, while the Genealogy Room and Oral History Collection will offer opportunities for visitors to access family records and photos. In addition, books in Polish and English on a variety of subjects will be available for reading and research, while an auditorium/meeting space will accommodate lectures, tours and workshops.

The Polish Heritage Center Campaign Steering Committee invites descendants of the original settlers to get involved with the project and preserve their family history by sharing family photos (from their ancestors to present generations), documents, favorite family stories, traditions, songs and recipes.

The Campaign Steering Committee also invites you to visit our website at www.polishheritagecenterpannamaria.org, visit our PHC Facebook page or visit Panna Maria to witness the work in progress. As a 501(c)3 tax exempt non-profit foundation, your support would be greatly appreciated. Our Tax ID# is 46-0561240. You can reach us at the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria, PO Box 28125, San Antonio, TX 78228 or by phone at 210-263-7270 or 210-387-7472.

MEETING WITH A CONGRESSMAN

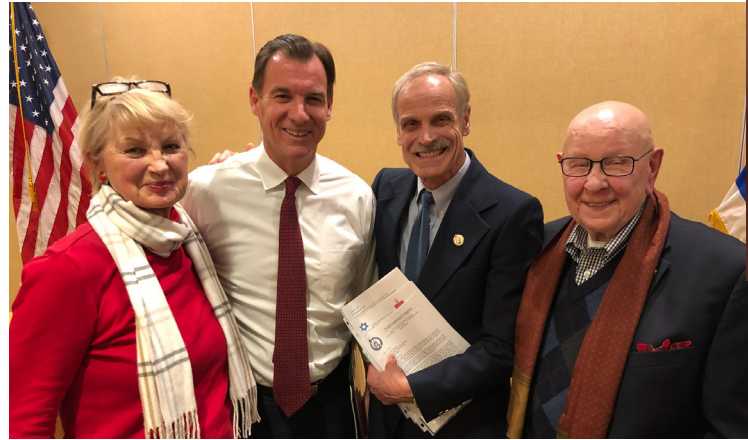
Submitted by Zbyszek Koralewski, 718-343-4316
Polish Singers Alliance of America - PAC National Director

Whenever I can, I participate in Town Hall Meetings of my congressman, Tom Suozzi. These are good occasions to learn firsthand what the Congress is working on and during the question-answer sessions learn what kind of issues, people are interested in. On January 24, 2018, I drove PAC-LI Honorary President, Richard Brzozowski and my wife, Halina, to Dix Hills on Long Island. The meeting took place at the impressive Jewish Cultural Center. Most of the 200 attendees were of Jewish heritage. This is important to mention because when my wife arranged the Town Hall Meeting for Tom in the Glen Cove Polish National Home, an area where many Polish Americans live, 200 attended - but only 4 were of Polish Heritage.

Here is the summary as to what I learned at the last town hall meeting and from the direct discussion with Tom after that meeting (we always chat with Tom after meetings):

- 1) Congressman Suozzi never heard about JUST ACT. (H.R.1226).
- 2) Meetings with the Foreign Affairs Committee are possible, but they are very difficult to arrange.
- 3) Congressman Suozzi has over a thousand meeting requests sent by organizations and individuals. Obviously, he cannot meet with everybody and has to make choices.
- 4) Congressman Suozzi receives thousands of emails, hundreds of letters and many telephone calls every month. It is impossible for his staff to read them all or submit them to him on time, especially those which are most urgent.
- 5) Which bill goes on the floor is controlled by those who are in power (nowadays, Republicans).
- 6) Congressmen like lobbyists because lobbyists prepare or modify bills in a professional way, and that means less work for congressmen.

I also spoke with the staffer, a gatekeeper of information, who obviously did not know about the bill. He asked me, to say in one word, why I oppose this bill. I said it DISCRIMINATES against Polish Christian victims.



(Above: Left to right) Halina Koralewski, Congressman Tom Suozzi, Zbyszek Koralewski, and PAC - Long Island Division Honorary President, Richard Brzozowski.



CONCLUSION:

A. If we want to be effective, we have to develop PERSONAL CONTACTS with our representatives and keep in touch with them. For example, by attending town hall meetings regularly.

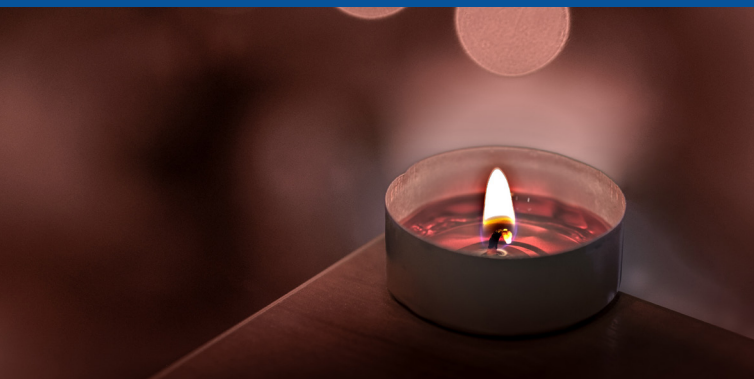
B. To stop the bill, H.R. 1226, we have TO TALK to Republicans in the Committee and persuade them not to send this bill to the floor for a vote.

C. When talking to a congressman (or congresswoman) you should prepare yourself to say in one short sentence why this bill should not go to the floor.

D. Personally submit letters spelling out why Polonia opposes this bill.

P.S. I handed to Tom 4 letters in transparent sleeves from:

- a. PAC President, Frank Spula
- b. PJDC Co-Chair, Zygmunt Staszewski
- c. Zbyszek Koralewski, his constituent (me)
- d. Two questions, also from me



Our Deepest Condolences



Polish American Activist, Charles Komosa, Dies at Age 50

Charles Komosa, a life-long resident of Chicago, IL, died unexpectedly on December 29, 2017 at the age of 50 while at his home. Charles is survived by his wife, Agata, his children, Charles Alexander II and Alexander Anthony, his sisters Catherine Komosa, Marilyn Komosa (Chris Sayan), niece and goddaughter, Alexandra Rogalski, nephew Andrew Rogalski, and cousins Wendy, Michelle, and Jonathan. Charles was born on March 10, 1967 to Edward and Marilyn Komosa. He was the grandson of the late Charles and Wanda Rozmarek. Charles had a zest for life and will be deeply missed by his friends, family, and all who knew him.

Throughout his life, Mr. Komosa was a strong advocate for Polonia. He was involved in several Polish American organizations, both as a member or vibrant leader. At the time of his death, Mr. Komosa was the National Secretary for the Polish National Alliance, headquartered in Chicago,

(Published in a Chicago Tribune Media Group Publication on Dec. 31, 2017.)



General Edward Rowny Dies at 100

From the New York Times
December 21, 2017

Edward L. Rowny, a lieutenant general who advised presidents of both parties during arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union, repeatedly raising warnings about the Russians and arguing that American proposals were too soft, died on Dec. 17 in Washington. He was 100.

After serving in World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam, General Rowny was named a negotiator in the talks that resulted in the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty signed in 1972 by President Richard M. Nixon and the Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev.

Edward Leon Rowny was born on April 3, 1917, in Baltimore. His father, Gracyan, an immigrant from Poland, was a carpenter and contractor. His mother, the former Mary Radziszewski, was in poor health for much of his childhood, and he was raised largely by a grandmother. By the time he graduated in 1941 as a second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers, World War II was underway in Europe, and soon the United States was drawn in. His war service included assignments in Africa and Italy.

After the war he worked in strategic planning — examining, among other things, what the postwar Army should look like. He also found time to attend Yale, receiving master's degrees in 1949 in international relations and civil engineering. He was assigned to the Far East as a planning officer. When the Korean War started, he helped plan the Inchon landing in 1950 and then played a number of other roles in that conflict, including commanding an infantry regiment. He was promoted to brigadier general in 1961.

General Rowny had some ideas on how the Army might better use helicopters, and in 1962 he was sent to South Vietnam, where American involvement was increasing, to test them out. But he was not there long. In 1963 he was recalled to the United States and began a series of postings that led to his role in the arms-control talks.

An unwavering advocate of the “peace through strength” concept, General Rowny was regarded, in various quarters, as either an obstacle to compromise or a vital line of defense against Soviet manipulation. Whatever the reality, presidents kept making use of his services. General Rowny retired in 1990. He went on to write several books about his experiences, even after he lost his eyesight some 20 years earlier.

PAC First Vice President Rick Pierchalski Talks With Top Republican Officials

Submitted by by John Czop,
PAC Director of Policy Planning

Thanks to Polish American Congress (PAC) National First Vice-President Rick Pierchalski, the Polish political presence is palpable in Western Pennsylvania. Vice-President Pierchalski recently attended two fund raisers for Congressman Rick Saccone, now serving in Pennsylvania's State Legislature, and a candidate in this March's Special Election for the United States House of Representatives, 18th Congressional District. Congressman Rick Saccone, who earned a Ph.D. in international relations, is a conservative and pro-Polish Republican who has the full support of President Trump. Very soon, President Trump will come to Pittsburgh to campaign for Candidate Saccone. Rick probably will talk with President Trump in Pittsburgh.

First Vice-President Pierchalski, the founder and Chairman of the Board of Medallion Wealth Management, Inc., which works with many of our Polish American fraternal insurance societies and credit unions, is a major contributor to Republican election campaigns. This is why Republican elected officials give their full attention to Rick, who talked with Vice-President Pence at the Bethel Community Center fund raiser for Congressman Saccone.

Rick let Vice-President Pence know that the PAC strongly opposes H. Res. 1226 and handed him a copy of President Spula's letter to Congressman Ed Royce, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Our First Vice-President also encouraged two members of the House of Representatives, who represent Congressional Districts in Pennsylvania, Mike Kelly (R-PA3) and Keith Rothfus (R-PA12) to oppose the inclusion of Poland in H. Res. 1226, and handed them President Spula's letter to Chairman Ed Royce. If the House follows the advice of the PAC, then the Senate will need to reconsider its inclusion of Poland in their version of the Just Act of 2017, S. Res. 447, which it voted-up on December 12, 2017.

Pittsburgh's prestigious Duquesne Club was the venue of the second major fund raiser for Congressman Saccone. Powerful House of Representatives Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy was guest of honor at this event, which took place after the State Department issued a press release criticizing Poland for passing a law outlawing the locution "Polish Death Camps" and statements and hypotheses that: Poland and the Poles were co-responsible for the mass murder of European Jewry during World War II. First Vice-President Pierchalski handed Majority Leader McCarthy President Spula's letter to Chairman Ed Royce and let him know that: Polish Americans will not allow controversy over H. Res. 1226 and Poland's new law to harm the core of United States relations with Poland -- a strong commitment to bolstering NATO to deter Kremlin revanchism and to implementing the Three Seas Initiative.





A Century After: Celebrating Poland's Fourth of July

This is the first in a series of monthly statements issued by the Polish American Congress regarding the centennial year of Poland's Independence, November 11, 1917 – November 11, 2018.

Dr. Mark Pienkos, National Vice President for Public Relations, has assembled a team of eminent Polish American Political Scientists and Historians to alert readers as to the importance of Poland's contributions to the United States and the World.

Contributing Authors:

Dr. Patrice M. Dabrowski is an historian with degrees from Harvard University (A.B., A.M. and PhD) and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (M.A.L.D.). She has taught at Harvard, Brown, and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and recently completed a three-year stint at the Doktoratskolleg Galizien at the University of Vienna. Dabrowski is currently an Associate of the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and editor of H-Poland. Dabrowski is the author of two books: Poland: The First Thousand Years and Commemorations and The Shaping of Modern Poland. In 2014, she was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland.

Dr. John Radzilowski is an historian with degrees from Arizona State University specializing in Modern U.S. History, Public History, Russia/East. Currently, Dr. Radzilowski is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Alaska Southeast. Among his many activities, Dr. Radzilowski is a fellow at the Piast Institute: A National Center for Polish and Polish-American Affairs and past president of the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota. He is also a contributing editor for the Encyclopedia of American Immigration (second edition), plus the author or co-author of 13 books.

Dr. Donald Pienkos is Professor Emeritus (Political Science) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He earned his Doctorate (in Russian and East European politics) from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. His many publications include the histories of the Polish National Alliance (1984, 2007), the Polish Falcons (1987, 2012) and the Polish American Congress (1991). He is an associate editor of The Polish American Encyclopedia (2012). In 2010, he was awarded the Officers Cross of service by the President of Poland.

The Year 2018 is special for the Poland's people and for people of Polish heritage everywhere. It marks the one hundredth anniversary of Poland's rebirth as an independent state.

On November 11, 1918 General Jozef Pilsudski declared Poland's independence in Warsaw on the very day the German empire agreed to an armistice, or truce, with France, Britain and the United States. That truce was permanent and ending a Great War (today known as World War I) that had begun in 1914.

In assuming authority, Pilsudski acted quickly to bring about the exit of the German forces in the country and to reunite the lands of Poland that for 123 years had been divided and ruled by the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and German empires and which had suffered greatly as a battleground in the fighting between the three empires.

But proclaiming independence was only the start. It would require more than two years of fighting for Poland to secure stable borders that would embrace nearly all of the Polish population into a state that became the Second Polish Republic.

Countless thousands of heroic individuals played a part in bringing about Poland's liberation from foreign domination. Five individuals deserve special mention here for their leadership in achieving a goal that seemed beyond reach before 1914. First was Pilsudski, a charismatic political activist of great foresight who realized that Poland's chances for freedom depended on the defeat of all three of Poland's occupiers in the conflict - which in fact is what happened. A self-taught military leader as well, it was Pilsudski who organized a highly disciplined legion to lead the fight for freedom when the time came.

Then there was Roman Dmowski, leader of the nationalist movement, who from 1914 was in France as head of a Polish national committee working to persuade the British and French governments to support an independent Poland. Dmowski's ally here was the renowned concert pianist Ignacy Paderewski who devoted himself to persuading President Woodrow Wilson to support Polish independence, an effort that was realized when Wilson - after 1917 the leader of America's entry into the war as an ally of Britain and France - made Polish independence one of this country's war aims in his celebrated "Fourteen Points" message to Congress on January 8, 1918.

It was also Paderewski who proposed that the Polish community in America organize a "Kosciuszko Army" to fight under Polish colors for Polish independence alongside the allies. Such a force, known as the "Blue Army" was indeed organized and took part in the fighting in France in 1918 and later in Poland under General Jozef Haller. (Of the thousands from America who served, more than 1,500 came from Milwaukee.)

Paderewski also worked with the leaders of the Polish organizations in America to rally the 4 million member Polonia in voicing its support for the independence cause to our country's leaders. With John Smulski of Chicago, his effort was highlighted by the calling together of a national congress of Poles in America in September 1918 in Detroit. This congress, a forerunner of the Polish American Congress, pledged its commitment to an independent Poland and its people's well-being once the war was over.

On November 11, 1918, just weeks after the Congress adjourned, Pilsudski proclaimed an independent Poland. The dream of generations of patriots who had fought for a free Poland in 1794, during the time of Napoleon, in 1830, and 1863 - was realized. The Poland of today, the Third Polish Republic is a true successor to what the patriots of 1918 and their predecessors had worked for.

In short, there is much to celebrate in November 2018!
Happy Birthday Poland!



EXEMPLARY PAC LEADERS

Submitted by John Czop

Too many Polish American Congress (PAC) members avoid expressing their views to their member of the House of Representatives on legislation under consideration in Congress which affects Poland. During recent legislative alerts, far too few let their Division Presidents, or this writer, know they telephoned their member of the House of Representatives and registered their support, or opposition, as PAC members to a bill.

No wonder Division Presidents report an under-count of telephone calls to the PAC National Office in Washington, DC. Congressional staffers count constituents' telephone calls which express support, or opposition to an issue. So does the PAC National Office. The minimal commitment of a PAC member is to make telephone calls in response to Vice-President Bajdek's Legislative Alerts. The next step is to let Division Presidents know that you telephoned your member of Congress and give the date and time of your call

The maximal commitment is exemplified by the wife and husband team of Halina and Zbigniew (Zbyszek) Koralewski, members of the PAC Long Island Division. Mr. Koralewski serves as PAC National Director of one of our member organizations, the Polish Singers Alliance of America.

The Koralewskis served as volunteer campaign workers for Congressman Thomas Suozzi (D-NY3), and they made a leadership level contribution to help re-elect him. Most importantly, they developed a strong personal relationship with the Congressman and his Polish wife. Recently, at a Town Hall Meeting, Mr. Koralewski handed President Spula's strong letter of opposition to applying to Poland H.Res. 1226.

If the PAC had more exemplary activist leaders like the Koralewskis, Polish Americans would have far more influence on the American scene.

WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL COMMISSION - PAC INVOLVEMENT

Submitted by Stephen Flor, PAC - WWI Centennial Committee

As chairperson for the Polish American Congress WWI Centennial Committee, I request your continued support for this worthy cause.

World War I holds special meaning to Americans of Polish decent. As a result of President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Point Peace Plan, this year's Armistice Day, November 11, also marks the rebirth of Poland's Independence. The events of WW I, and the triumphant conclusion of the Great War, will be hailed and commemorated in celebrations by Americans of Polish decent in major cities across our great nation!

For additional information, please visit the World War I Centennial Commission's website: www.worldwar1centennial.org

In advance, thank you for your continued support and consideration for this worthy endeavor.



THE UNITED STATES WORLD WAR ONE CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

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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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