

Celebrating

The 100th Anniversary of

POLAND

Regaining Its Independence

November 11, 1918 – November 11, 2018

*Articles published throughout the centennial year of Poland's
regaining its independence and emerging on the
world map after being absent for 123 years.*

By

Mark Pienkos

Polish American Congress

National Vice President for Public Relations

**With grateful appreciation to the Authors
and the support of the Polish American Congress
National Office in Washington, D.C.**



Council of National Directors Meeting
October 18-20, 2018
Chicago, Illinois

**Celebrating
The 100th Anniversary of
POLAND
Regaining Its Independence
November 11, 1918 – November 11, 2018**

Table of Contents

- **Map of The Republic of Poland – 2018** 1
- **Celebrating the Centennial Year of Poland Regaining Its Independence! 1918 – 2018 (Introduction)** 2
- ***A Century After: Celebrating Poland’s Fourth of July***
Dr. Donald E. Pienkos (Published: January 2018) 4
- ***Wilson, Paderewski, and the Re-Birth of Poland***
Dr. John Radzilowski (Published: March 2018) 6
- ***A Too Little Known Story: The Polish Army from America and Poland’s Re-Birth***
Dr. Donald E. Pienkos (Published: May 2018) 8
- ***More than a Footnote – Polish America’s Contribution To Poland’s Independence***
Dr. Donald E. Pienkos (Published: July 2018) 12
- ***Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the “Polish Question”***
Dr. Patrice M. Dabrowski (Published: September 2018) 14
- ***Why Americans should recognize the significance of Poland***
Dr. Mark Pienkos (Published: November 2018) 16
- **Ten Points To Remember (Among Many)** 18



"Jeszcze Polska Nie Zginęła!"
"Poland Has Not Yet Perished!"



The Republic of Poland
2018

Celebrating the Centennial Year of Poland Regaining Its Independence! 1918 – 2018

Recognizing the significance of 2018 in the history of Poland, our Polish American Congress State Divisions have undertaken many activities and held various events to celebrate Poland and its contributions to the world. In conjunction with these efforts, the PAC Vice President for Public Relations assembled a team of eminent historians and political scientists to write bi-monthly articles to be issued as press releases. The purpose of these articles was to alert readers of the many contributions the Republic of Poland, as well as Polish Americans, have made to the world.

The articles published as bi-monthly press releases regarding the centennial of Poland regaining its independence, November 11, 1918 – November 11, 2018, are included in this monograph. I hope you enjoy reading them, as well as distributing this document to your fellow PAC members and the general public. It is one way we can “get the word out” about the importance of Poland and the contributions of Poles throughout the United States.

The authors and I sincerely appreciate the efforts of Klara Wisniewska, PAC Washington, D.C. Office Administrator, for her help in disseminating these statements to various media outlets.

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.

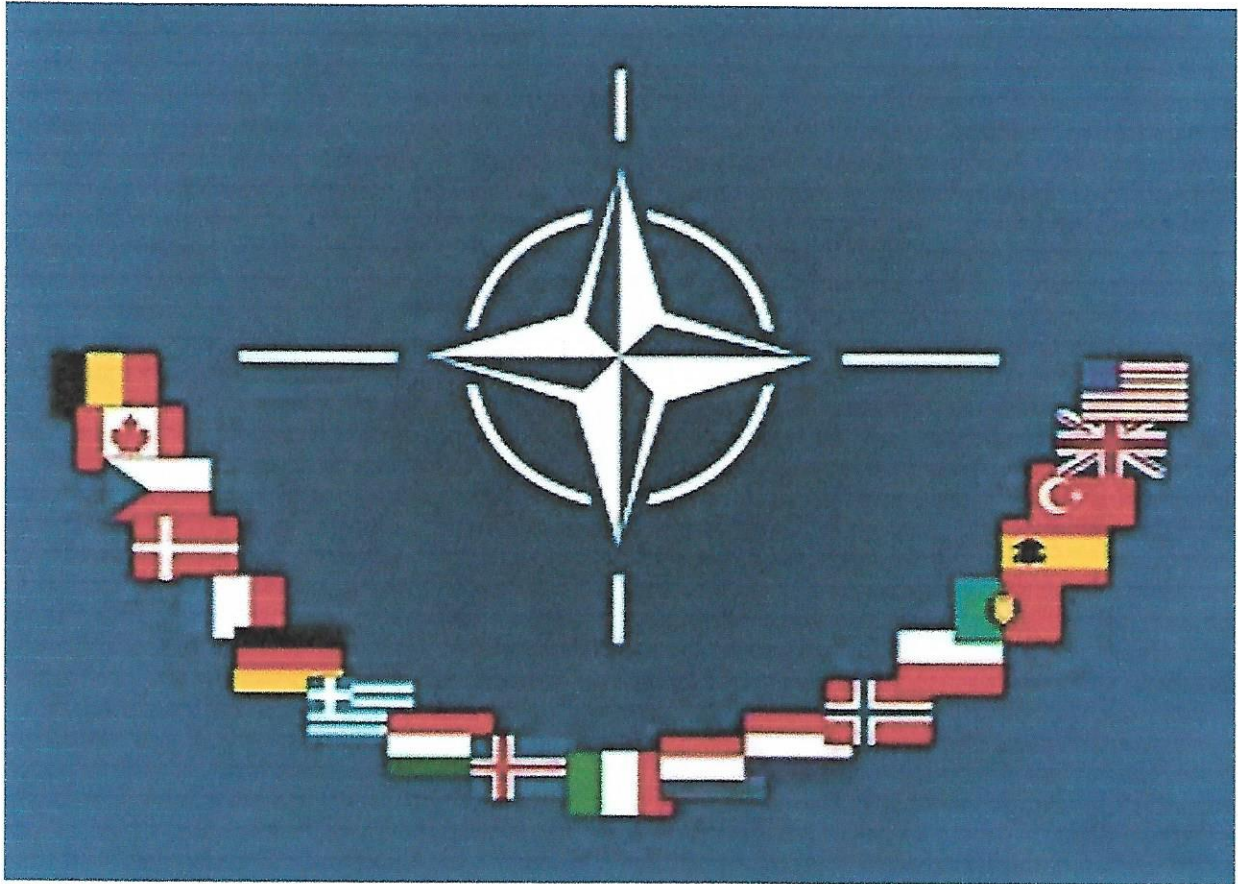
Dr. John Radzilowski is an historian with degrees from Arizona State University specializing in Modern U.S. History, Public History, Russia/East. Currently, Dr. Radzilowski is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Alaska Southeast. Among his many activities, Dr. Radzilowski is a fellow 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.

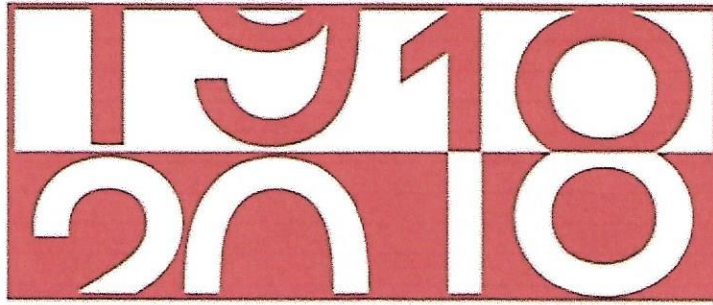
To Members of the Polish American Congress: *Thank you for all the work you do!*

Mark Pienkos
National Vice President for Public Relations
Polish American Congress

North Atlantic Treaty Organization



Poland Admitted Into NATO - 1999



#PL100

A Century After: Celebrating Poland's Fourth of July **By Dr. Donald E. Pienkos**

The Year 2018 is special for 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.

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.

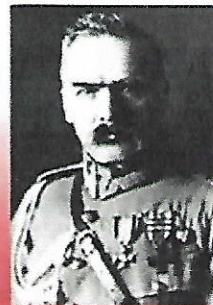


John Smulski
American Politician and Businessman

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. For 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!***

- 11th November (National independence Day)
on this day in 1918 Poland regained
independence after 123 years of partitions



Wilson, Paderewski, and the Re-Birth of Poland

By Dr. John Radzilowski

The re-birth of a free Poland after 123 years of foreign partition and colonial subjection was one of the most improbable yet important events of modern history. While the Poles themselves should get most of the credit, the United States played a key role in Poland's rebirth and it was the first country to establish diplomatic relations with the new Poland. Few countries strongly supported Polish independence and those that did had some ulterior motive. America, though, had no strong or abiding interest in east-central Europe or in Poland. Her involvement was based on idealism, not realpolitik.

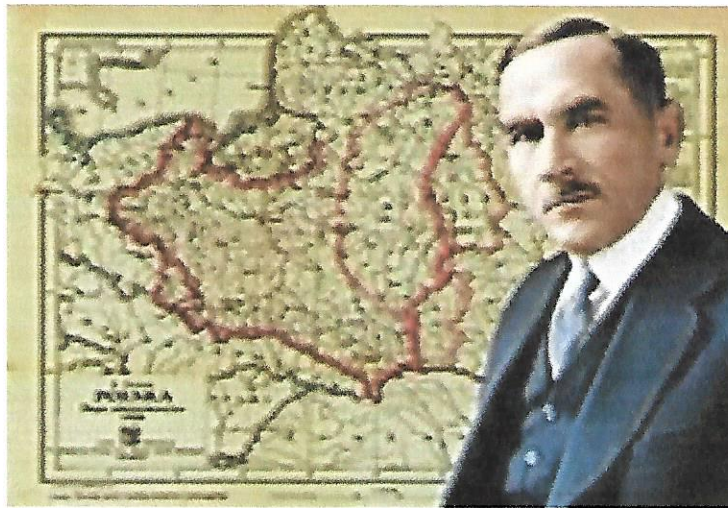
During the First World War, Poland first emerged in American politics as a humanitarian issue. The war had already caused massive destruction in Poland as Russian, German, and Austro-Hungarian armies marched across the land, destroying villages, farms and industry. Hundreds of thousands were made homeless or left destitute. In America, Polish Americans mobilized as never before to raise funds for Polish relief. A key player in this effort was pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski who by 1914 was the single most famous musical celebrity of his day. Already in 1915, Paderewski was able to meet U.S. President Woodrow Wilson through the offices of the president's friend and advisor, Edward House. Thanks to Paderewski, the Polish relief effort drew in more than just immigrant workers, but caught the attention (and the wallets) of many wealthy and well connected Americans.

However, by 1916, it was clear that aid for Poland was going nowhere due to the war situation. Yet, ironically the humanitarian failure opened the door to political action. President Wilson was finding himself increasingly hard pressed to keep America out of the war. And once the United States did enter the war on the side of Britain and France in France, he became an advocate about how America could use her financial, political and military clout to bring the war to an end. But his aim went beyond victory on the battlefield. Indeed, by 1918, thanks to Europe's self-inflicted wounds, Wilson had emerged as the most powerful and influential politician in the world. Ever the idealist, Wilson's vision was that victory should not only bring a just and lasting peace. It should lead the victorious powers to address the underlying causes of Europe's deep crisis. As Wilson was trying to think through the problems of what such a peace would look like that he again met Paderewski. The two men took a liking to each other.

Paderewski for his part was a genuine Polish patriot, like Jozef Pilsudski and Roman Dmowski, but unlike them he was no professional politician. He led no political party and had little grasp of policy. His jealousy and status consciousness - not unknown among celebrities - made it hard for him to work with others. His vision of Poland's future was vague and somewhat Romantic. Yet, this is precisely what appealed to an idealist like Wilson. The president was uninterested in determining the exact future of Poland, how it might become independent, or what its borders might be. Thus, Paderewski's eloquence and idealism were what got him Wilson's ear. Because of this, Poland became Wilson's best example of what he felt had gone wrong in Europe and what needed to be corrected if peace was to be achieved. In January 1917—a year before the famous Fourteen Points – Wilson gave his “Peace without Victory” speech which laid out his vision for

the future of Europe. In it, he mentions only one country by name - Poland. Although Poland wasn't the only trouble spot in Europe Wilson wanted to address, it was the one he highlighted most clearly and consistently.

Thanks to Wilson (and Paderewski) Poland became more than just a pawn on the chessboard of European politics. Although Wilson left aside the details of how Poland would be re-formed, which contributed to a long series of post-war disputes, his intervention on behalf of a Poland restored to independence set the stage for the re-creation of a country that had disappeared from the map for over a century.



Roman Dmowski, President of National Democracy



Józef Piłsudski, Statesman

A Too Little Known Story: The Polish Army from America and Poland's Rebirth

By Donald E. Pienkos

On November 11, 1918, the very day World War I ended on the Western Front, General Jozef Pilsudski proclaimed Poland's independence in Warsaw. Countless thousands of patriotic men and women played a part in Poland's rebirth.

Among them were the young men who volunteered to join a unique army from the United States serving under Polish colors - in France and then in Poland itself from 1918. Their story goes back to the early 1900s.

It was a time when enthusiasm for a partitioned Poland restored to independence was rising within the rapidly growing Polish immigrant community in America, four million strong in 1914, when the World War began. One of the ideas that generated enthusiasm was the creation of trained military units whose members would actually be prepared to return to Poland when the day for independence came. Leading this initiative were members of the Polish Falcons Alliance, which had originated with a focus on promoting both patriotic feeling and physical fitness among its mainly young members.

But when the War broke out, the United States' decision to remain neutral prevented any such organized action. However, by 1916, the situation had changed. The Falcons began sending young men to train in Canada as officers in a future Polish Army once America did enter the conflict. Then on April 3, 1917 Ignacy Paderewski electrified the Falcons with his speech at their extraordinary convention in Pittsburgh. There he called for the creation of a Falcons' led "Kosciuszko Army" of 100,000 men - fighting under Polish colors.

Just three days later the U.S. Congress declared War on Germany and Austria-Hungary. This decision had an enormous impact on the Polish community. First of all, the U.S. War Department immediately focused on raising an American army to fight in Europe, a decision that made it extremely reluctant to allow Polish Americans to join a separate fighting force under independent, although allied command. (Indeed, over 200,000 Polish Americans did enlist in the U.S. army).

The rules it established for a "Kosciuszko Army" placed severe limitations on who the Falcons and their allies could recruitment and how they could operate. Most significant, only young men who were not then U.S. citizens could join. Despite these many limitations, the Polish organizations had already set up 11 recruitment offices by September 1918 and established a training center at Fort Niagara on the Lake, Canada for the recruits. By December 1917 39 recruitment offices in 11 states were in operation. That same month the first 600 soldiers were on their way to France.

In all, 38,108 young men volunteered for duty in the United States; 22,395 were accepted. And 20, 721 were eventually dispatched for service in France. (Health considerations and family obligations were the main reasons for rejection.)

There they became part of a much larger force established by the French government in concert with Roman Dmowski's Polish National Committee in Paris. This Polish Army, which eventually numbered nearly 100,000 men, was composed of Poles from France and Belgium, volunteers from the prisoner of war camps who had been soldiers required to fight under Germany and Austria, along with other contingents from Canada and Brazil. Some units saw action already in Spring 1918.

In October, the Army gained its very own commander in chief, General Jozef Haller, who had arrived in France just months before. At War's end the Polish Army joined in celebration with the forces of the other victorious allies by marching through the Arch of Triumph. This was another sign of international recognition of Poland's restoration to independence.



Józef Haller von Hallenburg was a Lieutenant General of the Polish Army, a legionary in the Polish Legions, harcmistrz, the President of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association, and a political and social activist.

In April 1919 General Haller's army, by then some 68,000 well provisioned and well-trained troops, was at last allowed to travel to Poland. There its members were welcomed with great fervor by Marshall Jozef Pilsudski as soldierly brothers in arms. They were soon integrated into the Polish army, which was fighting on all fronts to establish its borders to the north, south, east, and west.

In these engagements the Poles from America played a valued role.

By mid-1920, the Poles from America began making their way back to the United States, aided by U.S. Congressman John Kleczka of Milwaukee who won his colleagues' approval to have U.S. transport ships bring them home. By 1921, some 12,546 men had returned to the United States.

In all, 42 officers and 1,792 enlisted men gave their lives to the cause of Poland's independence, with many others wounded and incapacitated. They served in France, in Ukraine, on the Baltic coast and elsewhere. Back in the United States their leaders organized the Polish Army Veterans Association in America (Stowarzyszenie Weteranow Armii Polskiej w Ameryce) to provide fellowship and financial assistance to comrades who were in need. This organization has played

a vital role in the Polish American community, with new members from World War II entering its ranks after 1945.

In 1957 it published a great volume on its story, *Czyn Zbrojny Wychodztwa Polskiego w Ameryce*. This work has been translated and reissued in 2017, the centennial anniversary of Ignacy Paderewski's great speech. It is *Sons of in One Nation: The War Effort of the Polish Emigration in America, 1914-1920*.

The beautiful medal of the Polish Army Veterans Association says it all about its members' patriotic courage. On one side are the battles they fought - Champagne, Wolyn, Lwow, Pomorze. On the obverse side is the face of Paderewski.





Andrzej Duda
6th President of Poland

The five-year term of Andrzej Duda began on August 6, 2015.

***More than a Footnote -
Polish America's Contribution to Poland's Independence***

**By
Dr. Donald E. Pienkos**

President John F. Kennedy put things so well when he famously said, "Victory has a hundred fathers but defeat is an orphan." So, it is with the rebirth of an independent Polish state at the end of the First World War.

Countless thousands of patriotic Poles were active in their homeland's successful liberation from 123 years of partition and oppression under the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian empires. Figures like Jozef Pilsudski (1867-1935), Roman Dmowski (1864-1939), Ignacy J. Paderewski (1860-1941) and Josef Haller (1874-1960) played deservedly recognized roles in this effort. Several foreign leaders, most importantly Woodrow Wilson, President of the U.S., were also instrumental in the achievement. But we should not forget the part played by the largely immigrant-led Polish community and its organizations in Poland's restoration.

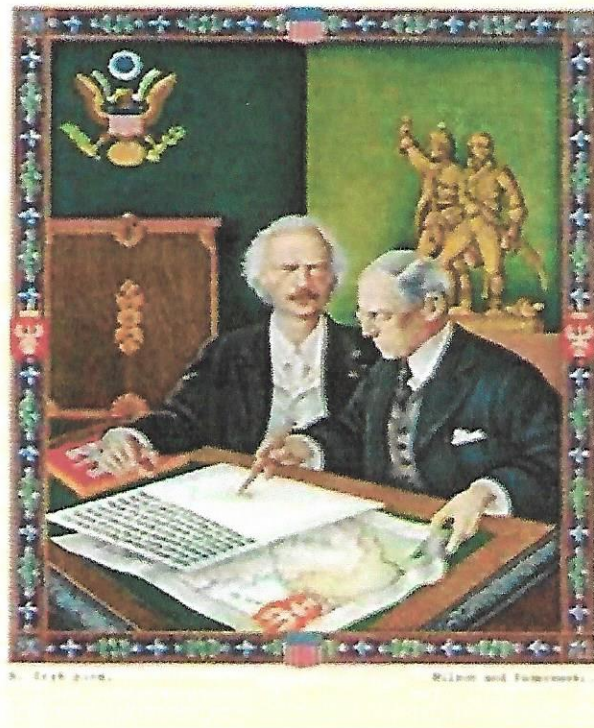
Indeed by 1914, over four million men and women of Polish birth and parentage resided in a United States of 100 million. Moreover, this was a true community of culture led by a host of dedicated men and women who were active in a number of mass organizations, secular and religious. These dedicated individuals were committed first and foremost to assisting their countrymen in both achieving a better life as loyal Americans and helping them preserve and share their spiritual and ethnic traditions. Many among them were convinced that the vast Polish community - then called *wychodztwo* ("the emigration") and later known as "Polonia" - was indeed a true and significant "fourth segment" of Poland. Indeed, the members in this segment were in an excellent position to play a real role in supporting the independence cause because they resided in a free country which protected their patriotic activities. Significantly, political activists in partitioned Poland took them seriously on this score. Indeed, a number of its representatives made trips to the United States to address the immigrant community and to raise funds for their work back in the homeland.

In 1910, just four years before World War I broke out, the Poles in America organized a great national congress in Washington, DC whose elected delegates approved a resolution calling for Poland's rebirth. Two years later, in Pittsburgh, Polonia's organizations united to create an organization for this purpose, the Polish National Defense Committee (Komitet Obrony Narodowej, KON). Following the outbreak of the War, most of KON's organizations, led by the Polish National Alliance, Polish Roman Catholic Union, Polish Women's Alliance, and Polish Falcons, joined to form the Polish Central Relief Committee (PCKR) in Chicago. This federation's initial aim was to collect goods and donations for their suffering countrymen in their war ravaged homeland. In 1916 the PCKR's political action committee, the National Department (Wydział Narodowy) headed by Chicago's John Smulski (1867-1928), took the lead in pushing for independence - to the Polish community, the American public, and the leaders of the U.S. government, in league with Paderewski. The National Department supported Paderewski in his meetings with President Wilson and strongly backed his work with the president of the Polish Falcons, Dr Teofil Starzynski (1878-1952) to create a Polish Army in America fighting under Polish colors in France. In September 1918 Smulski and the religious and fraternal leaders of the Polish

community convened an extraordinary Congress in Detroit. There its 1,000 delegates heard from Paderewski and Dmowski and enthusiastically backed a fund drive to raise \$200 million for a Poland reborn to independence.

The Polish community's services to Poland did not end with Poland's independence, although with independence there came a surprise. In Poland it was Pilsudski, the champion of independence for the leaders of KON (a federation long eclipsed in America by Smulski's National Department), who dominated the newly proclaimed Polish republic. Neither Paderewski nor Dmowski, the long-established spokesmen for Polish independence in America's Polish community, would play significant leadership roles in Poland's politics after 1920.

But here what should be remembered is the Polish emigration's dedication to a cause that for generations had been but a dream. Indeed, Polish America possessed thousands of "fathers" and "mothers" who could legitimately take their share of credit for making that dream come true.



Ignacy Paderewski and President Woodrow Wilson



Woodrow Wilson
28th President of the United States (1913-1921)

Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and the "Polish Question"

By
Dr. Patrice M. Dabrowski

On January 8, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson went before Congress to elucidate the United States' war aims. The so-called "Great War" (later to be known as World War I) had been raging for three and a half years. The United States had entered the war only the previous spring, joining the Allies who were fighting the Central Powers. Wilson thought it high time the Allies declared their war aims; but Britain and France were not keen on doing so. Thus, the president laid out his own vision of a peaceful and just world, a vision he hoped to make reality.

Wilson's idealistic program, which has gone down in history as the Fourteen Points, was comprised of basic principles that he believed should govern the postwar world. The American president sought an end to secret covenants and behind-the-scenes diplomacy, which he believed had caused the war in the first place. He advocated the freedom of the seas, free trade, a reduction of armaments, and an adjustment of colonial claims that would take into consideration the wishes of the colonized. Wilson's vision importantly included a "general association of nations" (the future—if short-lived--League of Nations) that would guarantee the territorial integrity and political independence of states great and small.

A number of Wilson's points invoked the principle of nationality, which the president rather optimistically hoped would prevail in ethnically heterogeneous Europe. The Central Powers were to evacuate Russian territory as well as occupied Belgium, Montenegro, Serbia, and Romania. France should regain Alsace-Lorraine, which Prussia/Germany had annexed in 1871, while the Italian-Austrian frontier was to be adjusted along national lines. The numerous peoples of Austria-Hungary as well as the non-Turks living under Turkish rule were to be assured autonomous development. Landlocked Serbia should gain access to the Adriatic Sea, while at the same time any disagreements between the Balkan states were to be settled amicably.

Of all of Wilson's points, the thirteenth was of a different magnitude, in that it postulated the restoration of a country that had not existed for over a century. That was Poland. The Thirteenth Point reads as follows: "An independent Polish state should be erected that should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant." Wilson had been sensitized to Polish needs and

concerns by the world-renowned Polish pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski, who had the ear of the president's adviser, Colonel Edward M. House, the man who helped Wilson prepare to write the Fourteen Points.

While Wilson's support for Polish independence was much appreciated, some of the details of the Thirteenth Point nonetheless proved problematic. After over a century of Russian, German, and Austrian rule, "territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations" were hardly easy to determine; even the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that had been partitioned at the end of the eighteenth century had a heterogeneous population. Furthermore, assuring Poland free access to the Baltic Sea (in the form of what later would be termed the "Polish Corridor") would require Germany to give up even more territory, something it was loath to do. Indeed, all three beneficiaries of the eighteenth-century partitions – Russia and Austria-Hungary as well as Germany – would have to cede territory to the new Polish state for it to be established. These issues notwithstanding, Woodrow Wilson's support for an independent Poland undeniably helped to ensure the creation of such a state in 1918. For this Poles, who are celebrating the centennial of that event this year, are grateful.





The Tidal Wave of Polish Emigrants, 1870-1914

Why Americans should recognize the significance of Poland

By Dr. Mark Pienkos

During the past several months, the Polish American Congress has issued a series of press releases to help readers understand the significance of 2018 in the history of Poland.

One hundred years ago, “The War to End All Wars,” “The Great War,” or the war we more commonly refer to as World War I, ended on November 11, 1918. Armistice Day. In America, Veterans Day. Significantly, November 11, 1918 is a very important day in the history of Poland. For on this day, one hundred years ago, Poland re-emerged on the world map after being absent for 123 years following its partitioning by Austria, Prussia, and Russia.

On November 11, 2018, the Republic of Poland will celebrate the centennial of her re-gaining its independence. This is a very special day and its importance has been commemorated not only in Poland, but also in America by proud Polish Americans throughout this calendar year.

The Polish American Congress itself was founded in May 1944, when 2,500 Americans of Polish descent travelled to Buffalo, N.Y. to found this great organization. Initially established to fight for a free Poland that had been invaded and brutally subjugated by Nazi Germany, the PAC continued its fight for a free Poland during the communist occupation. The PAC oversaw hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of medical supplies, food, and other non-perishables that were sent to Poland by loving Poles and friends of Polonia following the end of World War II in 1945 until the fall of communism in 1989. Once democracy was restored in 1989, the PAC continued its support for Poland, most notably resulting in Poland’s admittance into NATO in 1999.

Polish Americans can be rightfully proud of their native land. In return, Poland can be rightfully proud of its many millions of sons and daughters who emigrated to America to build their own lives, as well as build a great America. Three major waves of immigration brought Poles to America: 1870-1914, 1945-1980, and 1989-present. Millions brought their dreams, their work-ethic, their heritage, strong family values, and their thirst for a better life and in the process, help build America. My four grandparents came to America in the early 1900s, while my wife and her family emigrated to America in 1959. Like their countrymen and women before them, as well as after, they strived to make their lives, families, and communities better.

That is a very brief story of Polish Americans. Readers are encouraged to learn more.

Yet, why do many Americans either misunderstand or lack the knowledge of today's Poland – one of the great allies to the United States throughout our history, as well as one of the strongest economies in Europe? Not an easy question to answer. However, one should look back seventy-plus years to gain a glimpse as to why this is the case.

During World War II, Poland lost disproportionately more people than any other country. Over six million of its 35 million people were killed. Poland was also devastated economically; many towns and businesses were destroyed. And when the war ended in 1945, what happened to this war-ravaged nation? The communist government under the umbrella of the Soviet Union occupied it for another 45 years! Can you believe Poland has only been free for 30 years? Yet, during those three decades, Poland has been on a fast pace. It is an extremely modern country!

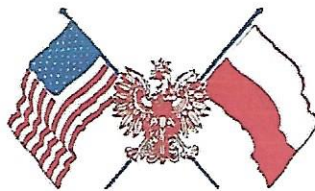
I urge readers to learn more about Poland. Better yet, visit Poland. You will find a country filled with people who love Americans. And, by the way, many speak English! (And, the food is fantastic!)



Modern Day Poland.

About the Author:

Elected in 2014, Dr. Mark Pienkos serves as the Polish American Congress National Vice President for Public Relations. Born in Chicago, Pienkos lived in Wisconsin where he had a very successful 45-year career in public education serving at all levels, including school superintendent. Pienkos currently resides in Sarasota, Florida with his wife Ann (Lesniewski) who emigrated to America from Piastów, Poland with her parents in 1959. He and his wife have been very active in several Polish and civic organizations. Pienkos earned his B.S.Ed. and M.S.Ed. degrees from Northern Illinois University, second Masters in Administrative Leadership from the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, and his Doctor of Education Degree from the University of Southern California. In 2014, Pienkos was awarded the Cavalier's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland for his efforts to bring greater understanding between the U.S. and Poland. For more information, readers are invited to visit his website: markpienkos.com.



Ten Points To Remember (Among Many):

1. Poland was attacked and conquered by two ruthless enemies – Hitler's Germany and Stalin's USSR – in September 1939.
2. Poland was the first country to be invaded that fought back. When the war started on September 1, 1939 Poles joined together – whether they were Polish gentile citizens of Poland, citizens of Poland who were Jewish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, whatever – to fight and die for Poland.
3. Poles were fighting for their country against Hitler's Germany till the very last day of the War in 1945. And on all fronts – the east, the middle east, France, Italy, Germany; in the air, at sea, in Poland itself. Poland provided the largest armed force against Hitler after the United States, Soviet Russia, and Britain.
4. No Polish puppet government ever became an ally of Nazi Germany – unlike France, Hungary, Norway, Romania, Austria, Finland, and Croatia. Absolutely no organized collaboration.
5. No Polish military units were ever formed to fight under the Germans – unlike in Ukraine, Russia, and the Baltics.
6. Poland suffered the greatest human losses proportionally of any country in World War II – over six million killed – not to mention another one million who died in Soviet controlled Central Asia and Siberia at the mercy of the Soviets. The proportion of Poles killed among the clergy, military, and political and government leadership, and among educators were even greater.
7. The Polish underground not only tried to save the lives of Jews. It also punished Poles who were guilty of the deaths of Jews with execution.
8. After all this, Poland was consigned from 1945 until 1989 to Soviet occupation and domination.
9. After all of this – Poland led the way to end communist rule in Poland, East Central Europe, and states in the USSR.
10. Thanks to the heroes of Solidarity, the Cold War came to an end.

“The people of Poland were the victims of the most cruel and merciless totalitarian aggression in WW II. Let no one ever forget this.”