



POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

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THE POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS DOES NOT WANT THE JUST ACT OF 2017 APPLIED TO POLAND

A dangerous United States Congressional Resolution for Poland soon may be enacted. The full title of this resolution is: "Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today (JUST) Act of 2017". This resolution, the JUST ACT OF 2017 has two components: Senate Resolution 447 (S. 447), and House of Representatives Resolution 1226 (H.R. 1226).

The United States Senate voted-up without opposition, on 12 December 2017, S. 447. Now the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives is considering H.R. 1226.

In a general way, the JUST ACT OF 2017 requires the United States Government to observe how 46 countries are fulfilling their obligations to implement numerous agreements on compensation and/or restitution of both private and communal moveable and immovable property, and other commitments, like the maintenance of historic sites and monuments.

The specific purpose of the JUST ACT OF 2017 is: "To require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues, and for other purposes." This would require the United States Government to observe and monitor, pressure is a more honest description, compliance by Poland and other countries that participated in the Prague Holocaust Era Conference's Terezin Declaration (2009).

Poland is the principal target of the JUST ACT OF 2017, because the largest portion of private property formerly owned by Jews (which amounts to 20% of the total of despoiled and nationalized private property), and now claimed by Jewish individuals and organizations, is located in today's Poland. This private property on conquered Polish territory, called World War II era private property, was first despoiled by Nazi Germany and then nationalized by the communists. Compensation payments to redress these crimes against private property should be sent to Berlin and Moscow, not Warsaw.

Moreover, Poland already satisfied, by acceding to a 1960 bilateral treaty, all claims for private property in Poland owned by United States citizens before September 1, 1939. Today, the United States Congress and the Office of Holocaust Issues in the Department of State is pressuring Poland to pay lump-sum compensation on behalf of transnational Jewish organizations like the World Jewish Congress, and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. The World Jewish Congress recently opened an office in Warsaw. This pressure on Poland is unwarranted. The exceptional role of Poland and the Poles in World War II and her armed resistance to the imposition of communist dictatorship by the Soviet Army makes a moral and historical case for NOT applying H.R. 1226 to Poland.

Two members of the House of Representatives introduced H.R. 1226: Congressman Joseph Crowley (D-NY14), and Congressman Christopher Smith (R-NJ4). In 2008 Congressman Crowley introduced a House of Representatives Resolution calling on Poland to pay lump-sum compensation for World War II era Jewish private property. In 1991, Congressman Smith organized the Congressional Caucus on Poland to pressure Poland into paying lump-sum compensation. Moreover, in 2005, Congressman Smith introduced a House of Representatives Resolution calling on Poland to pay lump-sum compensation.

This is why the President of the Polish American Congress (PAC), Mr. Frank J. Spula, wrote a forceful letter, addressed to Chairman Ed Royce, and by extension his 46 colleagues serving on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. This letter strongly encourages these 47 members of the House of Representatives NOT TO APPLY H.R. 1226 to Poland. If they ignore this sound advice from the PAC, then Polish Americans will not vote to re-elect these members of the House of Representatives on 6 November 2018 in Congressional Elections.

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