Dear Directors and Members of the Polish American Congress,

I hope this newsletter finds you healthy in these uncertain times. Every day, we are learning of new developments surrounding COVID-19. I understand that at times the amount of information can be overwhelming. My hope is that you, your family, and friends are safe and feeling well. Our Executive Officers are all well. Ms. Wisniewska of our Washington Office and Mr. Czop are working remotely from their homes. Our primary concern is the safety of our staff and individuals visiting the offices.

Unfortunately, one of our Directors, a longtime member of the Illinois Division, Mr. Andrzej Gedlek, was recently hospitalized on a ventilator and heart machine due to the coronavirus. I am sad to report that Mr. Gedlek passed away. Prayers go out to the Gedlek Family. Peace. Also, let’s keep in our prayers the many individuals that are suffering.

April 1st was 2020 Census Day and here are points YOU can do TODAY to ensure the Polish-American community is fairly — and accurately — counted in the 2020 Census.

Continued on next page...
In your state divisions, you can do the following:

1. Forward this newsletter to all the Polish-Americans within your personal network.
2. Post a statement on social media that you are proud to be a Polish-American and be sure to respond to question number 9, concerning race and ethnicity, by noting "POLISH."
3. Make sure that all children are listed, as well.
4. An information sheet is available in Polish for our Polish and English-speaking community with salient points concerning the Census which can be distributed. Simply request a specific number of information sheets.

Please make sure to reach out to your community. You can make a difference in having our community counted and be represented.

There have been questions addressed concerning the upcoming Council of National Directors Meeting scheduled for September 8th through the 10th, 2020. As of this newsletter, the meeting will take place unless the stay-at-home order is in effect. The Executive Committee will monitor this situation and keep you informed on an ongoing basis.

It saddened me, as well as many of our Directors, to learn of the passing of Fr. Carl Urban who was a priest for over a half century. For many years, Fr. Urban was a National Director of the PAC of the Central Division of New York. He certainly will be missed for not only leading us in prayer, but for his dedication and commitment to the Polish-American community. We send our condolences to his family and extended family.

Wishing you health and safety as we go through this crisis.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Spula

Frank J. Spula, President

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PAC Vice-President Bajdek and the Kościuszko Mound in Kraków

Written by John Czop
PAC Director of Policy Planning

Last Spring, readers of this Newsletter learned that Polish American Congress (PAC) Vice-President for American Affairs, Dean Emeritus Anthony J. Bajdek, was named an Honorary Member of the Kościuszko Mound Committee. Since then, many have asked me: “What is the Kościuszko Mound?”

The answer to this question goes to the longstanding and unwavering democratic credentials of both Poland and the Poles. We need to understand the significance of the Kościuszko Mound because at the present moment, the House Foreign Affairs Committee and an influential segment of public opinion, which finds expression in the mainstream mass media, mistakenly assert that the present Polish Government is “backsliding” on its commitment to democratic values and the rule of law.

This negative point-of-view continues to get traction even after Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki masterfully rebutted these views when he spoke last April to an audience of at least 500 in the auditorium of New York University Law School. The Prime Minister explained that the mission of his Government is to make the Second Revolution to achieve the democratic program of Solidarity. Morawiecki stated that the transformation of 1988-1991 was cosmetic and marked by continuity in both personnel and policy from the communist regime, the Polish People’s Republic. His Government is fulfilling the democratic program of Solidarity by retiring officials who were appointed by the communists, and by enacting legislation that benefit the Polish people rather than the former nomenklatura who continue to cling to power and who receive support and sympathy from influential sections of American public opinion. The side of the auditorium where Poles were sitting vigorously applauded the PM’s explanation of his Government’s goals which promote democracy.

Continued on next page...
The Kościuszko Mound is the most visible sign of the attachment of Poland and the Poles to democratic values which are the foundation of national freedom and independence. In 1794, at the time of Kościuszko’s Insurrection for democracy, approximately 15% of the Polish population were nobles who constituted the political nation. The war to repel the counter-revolutionary Russian invaders required the mass of Poland’s population, who were peasants without political rights, to serve as soldiers in Kościuszko’s Army, this was the Democratic Revolution in arms and the Nation in Arms, created by the war emergency which obliged Poles of all social ranks to unite. The war made the modern Polish political nation.

The Congress of Vienna, 1814-1815, ratified the late 18th century partitions of Poland, and it established Kraków as a Free City. Kraków and its environs was the only small part of pre-partition Poland that remained independent, though it was surrounded on all sides by Austria, one of the three powers that partitioned Poland. Krakow was independent from 1815 until 1846 when Austria conquered the former Royal Capital of Poland.

Two mounds already existed in Kraków; one dedicated to Krak and the other to Wanda. Three years after Kościuszko died, the Senate of the Free City of Kraków enacted a resolution, in July 1820, to commemorate the national hero by building a mound in his honor on Blessed Bronisława Hill just west of the city. Poles from all parts of Poland participated by bringing soil from their areas to erect the mound. Soil from the battlefield of Raclawice, a victory won by Kościuszko’s peasant soldiers against the Russian invaders, was put on the mound.

After Poland regained her independence in 1918, a new chapter began in regards to the history of the Kościuszko Mound. On the 150th anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence, on July 4, 1926, an official United States Delegation placed, at the peak of the mound, soil from the battlefields of the War of Independence which Kościuszko helped to win.

This reminds us that the democratic revolution only succeeded in America because the patriots won a decisive military victory. This is what makes America unique. Elsewhere in the western world, during the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth century, the democratic revolution struggled against strong counter-revolutionary forces.

This is why PAC Vice-President Bajdek’s work as founder of the American Friends of Kościuszko at West Point is of such high contemporary importance. This is why his new book entitled THE PATRON SAINT OF WEST POINT: Tadeusz Kościuszko and his Disciples (University of Illinois Press, 2019) well merits a wide readership. Vice-President Bajdek's leadership reminds our fellow Americans that Poland and America are partners in freedom. America enjoyed continuity from the victory in the War of Independence to the present; Poland’s history was marked by discontinuity and several oppressive regimes because the counter-revolutionary forces of Russia crushed Kościuszko’s Uprising. This reminds us, at a time of Kremlin revanchism, that armed force is necessary to protect democratic values.
A call to other State Divisions to support this important initiative.

Submitted by Andrzej Burghardt
PAC New Jersey Division President
ARBurghardt@hotmail.com
201-220-4111

To begin, our New Jersey Division embarked on an initiative to ask the U.S. Senate to issue the attached Resolution in regards to Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the Katyń Forest Massacre.

U.S. Senators Robert Menendez and Cory A. Booker, both of New Jersey, serve on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. We contacted their local offices initially by phone, asking for an appointment, and then we were directed to complete the arrangements with their “schedulers” staff via email. It turned out to be difficult to find a window for us in the Senators’ schedules in a reasonably short timeframe, so, bearing in mind that the best timing for such resolution would be by April 13th, we agreed to meet with the respective Senator’s staff. Both Senators have their local offices in the same building, downtown Newark, NJ, and it was not difficult to arrange our visits in their offices on the same day.

Our four-person delegation, which is composed of our NJ Division President Andrzej Burghardt and three members of the Board: Dr. Stanisław Śliwowski, Tomasz Wojas and Teofil Głębocki met with the Senators’ staff on March 11th. We spent over ½ hour in each office, chatting and explaining to the staffers the background information on Katyń, and requesting that they bring the issue to the Senators’ attention. Most importantly, we delivered to each staff office two paper documents: the proposed language of the Resolution and a one-page choice of arguments in support of our case, accompanied by a cover letter to the respective Senator, all bound in a neat presentation folder. On the following day, we exchanged more email correspondence, thanking them for their time and attention and (importantly) attaching the electronic versions of all these documents.

A few days later they emailed us stating that they forwarded our documents to their respective Washington, DC offices. I understand that at this stage, the matter will be looked at by their Foreign Relations specialists there.

Naturally, the effort has a chance of succeeding only if Polonia in other states joins in it, and we bring more Senators on board. The simple wisdom is that politicians listen only to their own constituents. This is of critical importance, and the time is now, so that as many Senators as possible simultaneously hear about the cause. All the details above are given primarily to illustrate that it does not take lots of effort, once the resolution proposal is put together. All useful details can be obtained from the U.S. Senate portal at senate.gov. It is also important that once our message is out, all Senators receive from us the same resolution language for consideration.

May we count on your help by doing the same with Senators in your respective home State?

Our documents are attached here, to be used without modifications. In any case, I am here if you choose to discuss. Thank you for your action!
1. The Nuremberg Tribunal declined to serve justice to the victims of Katyn and their families due to Soviet interference. Hence, Katyn represents an international genocidal crime covered up with lies and conspiracy of silence, as no other. To this day, Katyn remains the worst unpunished crime of World War II.

2. Due to effective Soviet disinformation and cover up, Katyn functions in the public perception as the 1940 mass murder of 4,421 Polish officers buried in the Katyn forest because this mass murder site was discovered first by the German army back in the spring of 1943. Other mass murder sites of this genocidal operation were discovered after 1990, yet other sites have not been discovered to this day.

3. In the 1990s, the Russians disclosed some archival documents related to Katyn that were subsequently published in English in a book entitled, "Katyn - Crime without Punishment."

4. Among such documents was an order issued by the Soviet Politburo on March 5, 1940 ("Katyn Execution Order") showing that 25,700 Polish nationals, including 14,700 POWs and 11,000 civilians, were summarily sentenced to death and murdered in many different locations throughout the Soviet controlled territories. The Katyn forest represented one of three main murder sites of the Polish officers held as POWs. There are also many mass murder sites of Polish civilians murdered pursuant to the Katyn Execution Order.

5. The disclosed documents also revealed that mass deportations of the families of murdered Poles and other Polish civilians from the Polish territory conquered by the Soviet Union took place in conjunction with the mass extermination conducted pursuant to the Katyn Execution Order.

6. On the 80th anniversary of this mass atrocity, it is necessary to alert the public that the Soviet operation against ethnic Poles during the first phase of World War II consisted of 1) Mass exterminations of Polish Officers POWs buried in Katyn, Piatykhchaty, and Miednoye, 2) Mass extermination of Polish civilians buried in numerous other locations, and 3) Mass deportations of the families of the victims and other Polish civilians from conquered Polish lands to the Soviet Far East.

7. Based on today’s knowledge, the crime of Katyn consists of state-sponsored mass extermination of at least 22,000 Polish nationals and mass deportations of about 1 million of Polish citizens from conquered Polish lands. As such, this genocidal operation of World War II should be finally considered in its entirety by the US Congress, and on its 80th anniversary proclaimed as the crime of genocide known as the Katyn Operation.

Resolution: Commemorating The 80th Anniversary of The Katyn Massacre

Whereas, following the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939 with the secret protocol to divide Poland between themselves, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Russia invaded Poland;

Whereas, upon defeating Poland, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Russia partitioned Poland and signed Treaty on Friendship and the Border with a secret supplemental protocol to inform each other and closely collaborate in ‘liquidating’ any Polish resistance “in embryo”;

Whereas, the Soviet Russia and the Third Reich cooperated closely in the aftermath of the invasion of Poland. At a conference in Brest-Litovsk on November 27, 1939, representatives of NKVD and SS discussed the methods of cooperation in liquidating Polish people and destroying Poland. The NKVD and SS continued this cooperation at subsequent conferences held in Lwów, Zakopane and Kraków. In March 1940 both aggressors implemented parallel genocidal operations against the Poles: Katyn Operation on the Soviet side of the partition line and Special Pacification Operation known as Action AB on the German side;

Whereas, on March 5, 1940 the Soviet Politburo issued an order that directed the NKVD to carry out a mass killing of 14,736 officers “more than 97% Polish by nationality” who were held as prisoners of war, and 11,000 Polish civilians arrested on the territory conquered by the Soviet Union;

Whereas, in April and May 1940 the Soviet Russia carried out systematic mass murders of Polish officers held as POWs and patriotic elements of the Polish society in numerous locations throughout the Soviet Union. Only one such location was discovered soon after the crime and became known to the world as the Katyn Massacre. Those murdered in other locations were identified only after the demise of the Soviet Union, some have not been identified to this day;

Whereas, in April 1940 the NKVD deported families of the murdered Poles to Kazakhstan pursuant to March 2, 1940 Resolution of the Soviet Political Bureau of the VKP(b). This was just one of four mass deportations of Polish people from the conquered Polish territory into the depths of the Soviet Union conducted between February 1940 and June 1941, impacting about one million people according to the Polish sources. Mass deportations of the Polish people constituted an integral part of the Soviet 1939-1941 genocidal actions undertaken against ethnic Poles, hereinafter called “Katyn Operation”;

Whereas, the Katyn Operation was one of several mass extermination operations conducted against ethnic Poles by the Soviet Russia during the Stalinist era. In the 1937 Polish Operation, the Soviets sentenced 139,835 Soviet citizens of Polish descent, summarily executed 111,091 Poles, and resettled thousands of them pursuant to NKVD Order No. 00485 of August 9, 1937. It was the largest ethnic murder and deportation operation during the Great Purge, and the largest extermination of ethnic Poles in history outside of an armed conflict;

Whereas, the Soviet Union continued the genocidal policy towards ethnic Poles after World War II. In July of 1945, Soviet forces conducted the Augustów Operation in north-east Poland, rounding up 2,000 people. About 600 of them disappeared without a trace. They are presumed to have been murdered and buried in an unknown location in present-day Russia or Belarus. Their remains have not been located to this day;

Whereas, the manifest pattern of similar conduct aimed at destroying the Polish national group, as such, is evident in the Polish Operation of 1937, Katyn Operation of 1940, and Augustów Operation of 1945;

Whereas, in December 1949 Raphael Lemkin, who formulated the crime of genocide, invoked the Katyn crime as an example of the crime of genocide. In 1950, Judge Gunther testifying at a hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide submitted a statement from the President of the Polish American Congress that described the Katyn forest massacre as “one of the most heinous genocides of modern times.” Hon. Gunther also reported that “millions of Poles throughout the world are still mourning the losses of those who were victims of Nazi (Germany) genocide in Auschwitz and of Soviet genocide in Katyn”;

Whereas, in the 1951 Written Statement on the Reservations to the Convention on Prevention and Punishment of Crime of Genocide, the United States declared that “the Roman persecution of the Christians, the Turkish massacres of Armenians, the extermination of millions of Jews and Poles by the Nazis are outstanding examples of the crime of genocide”;

Whereas, on September 18, 1951, the United States Congress established the Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation and Study of the Facts, Evidence, and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre. In its July 2, 1952 Report, the Committee recognized the Katyn massacre as one of the most barbarous international crimes in world history and recommended that the Soviets be tried before the World Court of Justice for the crime of “Katynism” that is a definite and diabolical totalitarian plan for world conquest;

Whereas, in 1993 the Committee of Experts of the Main Military Prosecutor’s Offices of the Russian Federation concluded that the Katyn crime was an act of genocide under international law. The August 2, 1993 statement signed by all members of the Committee read: “The murder . . . of Poles has all the characteristics of genocide, the responsibility for which lies with Stalin, Beria, Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoyan, Kalinin, Kaganovich, Merkulov, Kobulov, Bashitakov and other individuals who committed the murder in practice”;

Continued on next page...
Whereas, the government of the Russian Federation refused to declassify and disclose all of its official records pertaining to the Katyn crime and release complete lists of the victims and perpetrators. Instead, the policy of minimizing, distorting and justifying the Katyn crime was implemented;

Whereas, in 2011 Hon. Dennis Kucinich, member of US House of Representatives, stated that Katyn was aimed at eliminating “the very idea of Poland … to exterminate the people and the memory of the people…” Hon. Kucinich reminded us that “Katyn presents a moral crisis to this day” because the moral calculus with respect to Katyn has not been worked out. “We look back at Katyn as a marker in human history that has not yet been fully inscribed”, he said;

Whereas, the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–441) establishes that atrocities prevention represents a United States national interest, and affirms that it is the policy of the United States to pursue a United States Government-wide strategy to identify, prevent, and respond to the risk of atrocities by “strengthening diplomatic response and the effective use of foreign assistance to support appropriate transitional justice measures, including criminal accountability, for past atrocities”;

Whereas, to this day Katyn remains the crime without punishment. Impunity encourages the killers and poses risk of new massacres occurring once the killers realize that the outside world does not care;

Whereas, Poland and her people were the faithful allies of the United States during World War II;

Whereas, thousands of families of the Katyn victims have since made their homes in this country. Approximately 10 million of US citizens are of Polish ancestry, millions of our citizens have close ties with the families of the victims, and Katyn monuments accentuate the landscape of several American cities.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Senate of the United States (the House of Representatives concurring):

1. honors the lives and legacies of the approximately 22,000 Polish prisoners-of-war and civilians brutally murdered by the Soviet NKVD, and thousands of their family members and other Polish civilians deported in the most inhumane conditions to the depths of the Soviet Union in the Katyn Operation 80 years ago;

2. recognizes that Katynism poses enormous danger to the world community because it represents a template for annihilation of a people and annihilation of the historical truth. If ignored, Katynism poses danger that such grave atrocity may occur again;

3. recognizes that the systematic mass murders of the Polish people, conducted pursuant to the order of March 5, 1940 issued by the Soviet Politburo and implemented in conjunction with 1940-1941 mass deportations of the Polish people from lands conquered by the Soviet Union, raise to the level of the crime of genocide that requires appropriate transitional justice measures under the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018;

4. urges the Government of the Russian Federation to fully declassify and disclose all official records pertaining to the Katyn genocide and stop denying, distorting and justifying this grave international crime;

5. recognizes that it is in the national interest of the United States to assure proper international recognition of the Katyn genocide, to support disclosure of the full truth and the establishment of a comprehensive historical record of this grave atrocity;

6. calls on the Government of the United States to analyze political and moral ramifications of the denial of justice to the Katyn victims, including the impact of impunity for the Katyn genocide on the modern-day international peace and security, and implement appropriate measures in order to protect the truth, seek justice, and prevent the crime of Katynism from reoccurring;

7. encourages education and public understanding of the facts and circumstances of the Katyn genocide, including the Katyn crime, Katyn lie, cover up, and conspiracy of silence;

8. calls for protection of memorials and monuments honoring the memory of the Katyn victims.

Sources used to support the Resolution:

1 Secret Additional Protocol to Treaty of Nonaggression Between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of August 23, 1939. avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/adsepro.asp
3 Piotr Szubarczyk, Czerwona Apokalipsa, AA s.c., 2014, s. 229-230.
7 The Committee of Experts included lawyers, Boris Topornin (member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, director of its Institute of Law and the State) and Aleksandr Yakovlev (head of the Department of Criminal Law and Criminology at the Institute), as well as representatives of other disciplines, Inessa Yazhborovska (historian), Valentina Parsadanova (historian), Yuriy Zoria (military sciences) and Lev Belayev (medical sciences). The text of this decision is available in Anna Dziennikiewicz ed. “Rosja a Katyn,” Karta, (2010), pp. 48–108. See also: Karol Karski, “The Crime of Genocide Committed Against the Poles by the USSR Before and During World War II: An International Legal Study,” Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law, Vol. 45, 2013, p. 719; scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1078&context=jil.
Reported by Mark Pienkos
PAC Newsletter Editor


For insight and background as to the book’s message, Amazon Books website states: “Jack Fairweather has written an amazing account of the life of Witold Pilecki, and many others who bravely fought Nazi oppression and retained their humanity despite experiencing tremendous depravity. This book is a “page turner” that totally engrosses the reader into a large number of memorable heroes.”

Pienkos was amazed at the number of people who attended the event. He gave high praise to Wojtek Sawa, President of the Polish-American Friends of the Arts and Sciences – Venice Chapter, for Sawa’s work in gaining much publicity for the event. Many of the people expressed their appreciation for Fairweather’s book and presentation indicating he shed light on the horrible cruelty and unimaginative destruction Poles faced during World War II. “Fairweather is to be commended for his effort to bring to light the stories of previously unknown heroes of the horrors of WWII to his many readers,” Pienkos said. He also presented a copy of the June 2019 PAC Newsletter letting Mr. Fairweather know that his book had been highlighted in the “From The Bookshelf” section. In return, author Fairweather expressed his appreciation.

Pienkos also had the opportunity to talk with Wojtek Sawa, organizer of the event. Sawa explained that, “Author Jack Fairweather’s talk is part of ‘The Other Europe — Today’ series organized by the Polish-American Friends of the Arts and Sciences.” Mr. Sawa is a local activist and current President of the Venice Chapter of the Polish-American Friends of the Arts and Sciences.

See next page for photos from the event...
A unique and creative Powerpoint presentation added to the lively discussion that took place following Fairweather’s hour-long presentation.

Author Jack Fairweather (left) and PAC National Vice President for Public Relations, Mark Pienkos, exchange greetings prior to Fairweather’s presentation on March 3rd in Venice, Florida.

Małgorzata Gosiewska at the awards ceremony
(Photo: PAP/Wojciech Olkaźnik)

Polkie Radio/PL
February 27, 2020

Ten Righteous Among the Nations medals have been awarded to the families of Poles who helped save Jews during World War II. The awards were presented during a ceremony at the Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw in February 2020.

Małgorzata Gosiewska, a deputy Speaker of Poland’s lower house of parliament, took part in the event. She said the Poles who received the medals had risked their own lives and the lives of their families to help Jews persecuted by the Nazi Germans during the Holocaust. She also added that around 27,000 Righteous Among the Nations medals have been awarded internationally so far, including about 7,000 to Poles.

The Righteous Among the Nations award is the highest Israeli civilian distinction. Recipients receive a medal with a quote from the Talmud saying: “Whoever saves one life, saves the world entire.”
In December, President Spula appointed Mark Pienkos to spearhead the effort to create a new PAC Mission Statement. Pienkos immediately got to work putting together a dynamic committee, holding discussions, gathering & sharing information, and formulating a Mission Statement that would gain unanimous agreement within the committee. This was accomplished!

As reported in the February PAC Newsletter, the task of the Mission Statement Committee was to create a brief, but meaningful statement, that all PAC members can embrace — especially when asked: “What is the Polish American Congress and What does it do?”

Members of the PAC Mission Statement Committee are:

- Debbie Majka (PAC Vice President for Cultural Affairs and Honorary Polish Consul in Philadelphia)
- Stella Szcesny (State Director, PAC - Michigan Division)
- Klara Wisniewska (PAC Washington, D.C. Office Administrator)
- John Cebrowski (PAC Member and Vice President & Director of Development for the Polish Heritage Center in Panna Maria, Texas)
- Zbyszek Koralowski (PAC - Long Island Division Vice President for American Affairs, Board Member of the Polish-Jewish Dialogue Committee, and Past Vice President of the Polish Singers Alliance)
- Andzrej Prokopchuk (President, PAC - Northern California Division and National Director)
- Mark Pienkos, Chair (PAC Vice President for Public Relations)

Following seven conference call meetings, each lasting approximately one hour at least, the committee arrived at a final proposed PAC Mission Statement. The statement was presented to the PAC Executive Committee in March and was approved.

The next step is to present the proposed Mission Statement for approval at the 2020 PAC Council of National Directors Meeting scheduled for September in Washington, D.C.

Committee Chair Mark Pienkos wishes to thank all members of the committee for their dedication to work together to formulate a new PAC Mission Statement that not only was embraced by all committee members, but also will be welcomed by the Council of National Directors when they meet later this year.
On March 1, Our Lady Queen of Poland Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych celebrated Holy Mass to commemorate National Remembrance Day in Poland and the Polish Diaspora. The Mass intention, requested by the Washington Metropolitan Area Division of the Polish American Congress (PACWmad), was to remember and pray for the Cursed Indomitable Soldiers (“Wykletych-Niezlomnych Zolnierzy”). The Honor Guard was provided by the St. Maksymilian Kolbe Council of the Knights of Columbus. Representatives from organizations included the PACWmad, Polish Legion of American Veterans (PLAV), and Polish Scouting Organization ZHP.

The end of World War II did not bring independence to Poland. Poland continued to be occupied by Soviet Russian forces which imposed Communism on the people. The Indomitable Soldiers fought for freedom and independence. They defied the atheistic Communists and were brutally tortured and imprisoned. Many were murdered by the Communist authorities and buried in unmarked graves to obliterate their memory from the collective consciousness.

Since the fall of Communism, the memory of these soldiers is being restored in an independent Poland through the efforts of families, associates, journalists, scientists, and others. This year marked the 10th anniversary of this remembrance.

President Andrzej Duda of the Republic of Poland wrote in his letter for this occasion that, “I am convinced that memory and historical truth are the foundations of our nation’s identity and contribute to building the spirit and strength of a free, independent and sovereign Poland - honor and glory to the heroes, and the eternal memory to those who died for Independent Poland.” As St. John Paul II noted, “There is no freedom without truth.”

OLQP Pastor Fr. Jerzy Frydrych alongside visiting priest Fr. Adam gave out Holy Communion at the Commemorative Remembrance Mass on March 1st.

The Representatives gathered at the Remembrance Day Mass for the Indomitable Soldiers on March 1, 2020, at Our Lady Queen of Poland & St. Maksymilian Kolbe Parish in Silver Spring, MD. They included the St. Maksymilian Kolbe Council of the Knights of Columbus, who provided the honor guard, and members of the Polish Legion of American Veterans (PLAV), Polish Scouting Organization ZHP, and the Polish American Congress Washington Metropolitan Area Division (PACWMD), who requested the Mass.’ [GK David Birely, SK Slawomir Korzan, SK Andy Michaels, SK Maksymilian Korzan, Dhna Bozenna Buda, SK Tomasz Kolodziej, SK Piotr Ciecierze, Dr. Edwarda Buda-Okreglak, SK Richard Z. Okreglak, SK Karol Klonowski, SK Jacek Marcynska.]

The St. Maksymilian Kolbe Knights of Columbus provided the Honor Guard at Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish, Silver Spring, during Remembrance Mass which took place on March 1, 2020.
Attached is the letter from President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda (written in Polish) to commemorate the March 1st anniversary of the National Remembrance Day for the "Cursed/Accursed/Doomed (Wykłetych /Niezlomnych Żołnierzy)" Soldiers who continued fighting for Polish independence in the anti-Communist underground during the years 1944-1963.

Excerpts from the letter were read to the congregation just before the start of the commemorative noon Mass on March 1, 2020 at Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish, Silver Spring, Maryland.

The Color Guard was provided by the St. Maximilian Kolbe Council of the Knights of Columbus with representation from the Polish Legion of American Veterans (PLAV) and Polish Scouting Organization ZHP.

The Remembrance Mass on March 1st for the "Wykłetych-Niezlomnych Żołnierzy" Soldiers was requested by the PAC – Washington Metropolitan Area Division. Several members of the Polish American Congress Division were in attendance.

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**PREZYDENT RZECZPOSPOLITEJ POLSKIEJ**

Andrzej Duda

Warszawa, 1 marca 2020 roku

Organizatorzy i Uczestnicy
uroczyściści ku czci
bohaterów powstania antykomunistycznego
Żołnierzy Wykłetych-Niezlomnych
w kraju i za granicą

Szanowni Państwo!

Już po raz dziesiąty obchodzimy Narodowy Dzień Pamięci „Żołnierzy Wykłetych” jako święto państwowo, z inicjatywą ustanowienia którego wystąpił przed dekadą Prezydent Profesor Lech Kaczyński. Tegoroczne uroczystości w szczególny sposób współbrzmią z trwającymi Narodowymi Obchodami Sejmu Rocznicą Odzyskania Niepodległości Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, w ramach których świętować będziemy stulecie naszego największego zwycięstwa militarnego w XX wieku: wojny polsko-bolszewickiej, o której losach zdecydowała wiekopomna wiktoria warszawska.


**Continued on next page...**
Agresja 17 września 1939 roku i okupacja ziem wschodnich, zbrodnia katyńska i masowe wywózki były pierwszym etapem zemsty bolszewików za klęskę i upokorzenie z 1920 roku. Etap drugi nadszedł wraz z ponownym wkroczeniem Sowietów na przedwojenne terytorium Rzeczypospolitej w styczniu 1944 roku. Represje objęły już nie tylko kadrę oficerską i elitę, lecz cały naród. Ze sprzeciwu wobec tego nowego zniewolenia zrodziło się powstanie antykomunistyczne, którego uczestnikom składamy dzisiaj hołd jako bohaterom naszej wolnej, niepodległej, suwerenej Polski.

Reżim komunistyczny bezwzględnie zdławił ten opór. Zniszczył siły podziemia za pomocą intryg i zdrady, inwizacji i szantażu, przeciwnie oddziałom partyzanckim wysyłając czołgi i lotnictwo. Skrytość i cichota wywołał, skazał na kary śmierci i długoterminowe stanowienia tysiace polskich patriotów. Czciał też wymagać pamięć o nich, podobnie jak niższył pamięć o triumfie 1920 roku.

Z bibliotek planowo usunięto książki poświęcone wojnie polsko-bolszewickiej, a konspiracyjne archiwiały były dostępne tylko dla zaufanych partyjnych badaczy. Prawdu zastąpiła propaganda, szkalującą technik, którzy ośmieliły się przeciwwstawienie woli Stalina. Zemsta za pokonanie najeźdźców i kara za zryw niepodległościowy miały być takie same: śmierć, niesłowa i zapomnienie.

My, Polacy, przechowaliśmy jednak wiedzę o tym, kto w naszych dziejach najnowszych zasłużył na chwałę, a kto na potępienie, kto był patriotką i patriota, kto się jej sprzeciwiał i oświadczył. A kiedy ponownie odzyskaliśmy wolność, pamięć i prawda — ocalone w rodzinach i środowiskach kombatantkich — stały się wspaniałąantwortą całego narodu. Dziś znów, tak jak w latach międzywojny, bohaterowie wojny 1920 roku mają swoje pomniki i pocięsne miejsce w historii ojczyzny.

I także ich następcy — niezłomni żołnierze antykomunistycznego powstania — mają dziś swoje miejsce w panteonie bohaterów niepodległej Rzeczypospolitej.

Patrząc wstecz na minione dekady, doceniamy wielką pracę historyków, pisarzy, filmowców, muzyków, dzięki którym dzieje powojennego podziemia stały się powszechnie znane. Jesteśmy głęboko wdzięczni badaczom, którzy wiedzieli i zidentyfikowali szczątki tak wielu bohaterów drugiej konspiracji. Wreszcie, dziękujemy tym wszystkim, dzięki którym żołnierze wyklęci są obecnie nie tylko postaciami znanim z pomników wojennych i pośmiutów, ale również w naszej codzienności jako bohaterowie kultury popularnej i symbole żywej tradycji, ważnej dla nas, współczesnych, patrującego ulicom i placom, ale też wymagających masową, takim jak bieg Trojch Wilczym i inne zawody sportowe, konkursy lub rajdy piłkarskie w poszczególnych zgrupowań.

Uważamy to za wielką zasługę dla naszej narodowej pamięci i umacniania patriotyzmu Polaków, że dzięki Państwa pracy dobro, wielkość, odwaga, wierność, szlachetność okazywały się wartościami nie tylko wzniosłymi, ale też atrakcyjnymi i po prostu modnymi. Jestem przekonany, że te pozytywne zjawiska społeczne będą trwać i rozwijać się przez następne lata. Niech świętowanie uroczystości ku czci bohaterów powstania antykomunistycznego przyczynia się do budowania ducha i siły Polski wolnej, niepodlegiej w wiernej swojemu dziedzictwu.

Cześć i chwała bohaterom! Wieczna pamięć poległym za Niepodległą!

Z uacr. [Podpisanie]
THE MUSIC OF CHOPIN – 16TH ANNUAL CONCERT
Sponsored by the Polish-American Association of Sarasota

Cultivating Polish language and customs through music, literature, dance, and other activities.

Submitted by Sue Wardynski
Corresponding Secretary

The 16th Annual Concert of the Polish-American Association of Sarasota took place on Sunday, March 15, 2020 at Holley Hall in Sarasota. Our featured performer this year was Avery Gagliano winner of the 2020 National Chopin Competition.

Held in Miami once every five years and sponsored by the Chopin Foundation of the United States, young American artists compete for cash prizes, concert arrangements, and the opportunity to compete in the International Chopin Competition. Avery was the fourth winner the Polish-American Association of Sarasota has hosted since the inception of the competition.

Despite growing concerns of the COVID-19 virus, an enthusiastic audience attended the event. Avery did not disappoint those present. This 18-year old stunned the crowd with her virtuosity at the keyboard. Her fingers literally flew as she performed the music of our beloved Chopin. From the Ballade to the somber notes of the Sonata to the sprightly Mazurkas, her well-chosen program left the audience waiting for more.

Avery goes on to Warsaw in October representing the United States in the International Chopin Competition. Our best wishes for much success go with her. It is our hope that sometime in the near future, Avery may once again return to Sarasota to perform for us here.

The Polish-American Association of Sarasota wishes to thank all who purchased tickets, as well as those who attended the concert.

Mitch Panek, President of the Polish-American Association of Sarasota, commented following Ms. Gagliano’s performance, “We were fortunate to present the 16th Annual Classical Music Concert to a very appreciative audience. This time an all Chopin Music Recital by the super talented Laureate of the Miami National Chopin Music Competition.”

Avery Gagliano, Featured Artist

All photos courtesy of Arthur Okula

Editor’s Note:

The Polish-American Association of Sarasota was founded 40 years ago by a group of Polish-American residents of the Sarasota area, many of whom did not speak Polish. However eager to promote the culture of Poland and its heritage, it continues to this day as a thriving association in the greater Sarasota area. Meetings are held September through May on the third Sunday of the month at 2:30 pm in the Church Hall of the Incarnation Church located at 2929 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, Florida.

Call (941) 924-0899 for additional information.
Poles praised for their timely anti-Coronavirus measures.

Submitted by Robert Strybel
Warsaw Correspondent

WARSAW– Poland’s first Coronavirus case was officially confirmed on March 4th, but within 10 days that figure had grown to over 100 including three related fatalities. Within a few days, the infection level had exceeded 150 and appeared likely to continue growing. But that data was still relatively modest compared to other European countries.

As Poland topped the 100-case mark, Europe’s coronavirus front-runner Italy had chalked up nearly 24,000 cases and second-ranked Spain was treating over 7,700 patients. Their governments had been slow to introduce emergency measures and their easy-going people initially adhered to them with reluctance. Schools kept operating in Britain, and spectator-attended soccer games took place in Germany long after Poland had restricted such activities.

In an attempt to minimize the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, the Polish government in due time had banned public events and ordered the closure of schools, museums, cinemas, clubs, libraries, bars and restaurants. The latter were only allowed to provide take-aways and home delivery. Shopping centers were also closed, and only food stores, pharmacies, laundries, and banks were permitted to operate. Following an emergency meeting of European Union government chiefs, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki indicated that Poland’s swift reaction to the crisis had evoked the interest and respect of other countries.

As the pandemic spread, Poland declared an epidemic emergency and closed its borders to non-citizens. LOT Airline provided special, cut-rate charter flights to bring home Poles stranded abroad.

When they arrived they were immediately placed under two-week quarantine. Tiny Denmark also ordered a border lockdown at the same time but waited until over 800 cases had accumulated, Poland already acted when it still had only 86 infected patients.

In view of the immense financial setback caused by the shutdown, President Andrzej Duda announced special government subsidies for businessmen to help defray their losses. Debtors were given the opportunity to defer credit repayment.

Nobody knows when the pandemic will peak, begin leveling off and eventually go into decline, but one thing is certain. The 2020 coronavirus crisis is expected to have dire, far-reaching consequences for the economy, political scene and many other areas of human endeavor worldwide.

Polish News Bytes Update
(March 17, 2020)

Scientists Believe Coronavirus Cure May Be in Sight

Professor Maciej Drąg, who is head of a research team at Poland’s Wroclaw Technological University, believes that the retrovirus code has been cracked and a cure may be in sight. Working with colleagues from Germany’s Lubeck University, the researchers say they have found an enzyme inhibitor which could destroy the virus. “The enzyme itself was previously known, but there were millions of combinations of ‘keys,'” Drąg, a chemistry professor, said. Metaphorically calling the enzyme a “lock," he explained: “We have found the one ‘key’ that matches this enzyme” The results are still under review, but the researchers have not patented their discovery to make it available free of charge to scientists worldwide.

No Plans to Postpone May 10 Presidential Election – Prime Minister

“Currently there are no plans to postpone the presidential election set for May 10th because of the coronavirus epidemic,” Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki told a mid-March press conference. He noted that local elections went ahead in France when the country had 5,400 infected patients. But Poland’s opposition was quick to point out that the conclusive second round of France’s council elections did get postponed due to the virus scare that caused a low turnout in the first round. The epidemic has brought Poland’s election campaign to a standstill, and the opposition wants the election postponed. Incumbent Andrzej Duda is on national TV daily during the epidemic and has an unfair advantage over other candidates, his rivals complain.

Continued on next page...
Poland Goes Online in Response to Coronavirus

When Italy, which leads Europe in coronavirus cases and deaths, let out school classes, students felt they were on vacation, started partying and meeting up at cafés and other youth hangouts. Profiting from that example, before all Polish schools were shut down, teachers gave their pupils assignments to work on at home and conducted lessons online. Wherever possible, the employees of many corporations and other businesses are also working from home. Though theaters, museums and art galleries were closed as part of a national clampdown on the pandemic, some are now providing virtual visits and tours.

Individualistic Poles Highly Disciplined Amid Pandemic

The current coronations pandemic has reaffirmed the widespread belief that normally individualistic Poles, known to have a mind of their own, can come together and become highly disciplined when cornered with a major threat. Unlike Italy, where over 25,000 were fined for leaving their quarantined homes, the overwhelming majority Poles are closely adhering to the restrictions ordered by their government to curb the spread of the deadly disease.

Poland’s World-Class Composer

Penderecki Passes Away at 86

Submitted by Robert Strybel
Warsaw Correspondent

Polish and world culture sustained an irreparable loss recently with the death of music giant Krzysztof Penderecki at the age of 86.

A prolific composer, dynamic conductor, and charismatic professor, who had educated several generations of music students, Penderecki died in his adopted hometown of Kraków at the age of 86. Up until his death, Penderecki was widely regarded as one of the world’s greatest living composers. A master of large, often monumental musical forms, his specialty were oratorios, symphonies and operas.

The oratorio entitled “Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Luke” (1966), his greatest religious-themed work, was followed by compositions honoring the victims of Hiroshima, Auschwitz and Katyn. He also produced numerous smaller sacred and secular works including choral pieces, concertos, and chamber music. His music was also featured in such Hollywood movies as The Exorcist, Twister, Wild at Heart and Shining.

Penderecki, whose creativity defined the Polish music scene of the latter half of the 20th century on into the 21st, without a doubt ranks among such Polish musical greats as Chopin, Moniuszko, Paderewski, Szymanowski, Lutosławski, Górecki and Kilar.
A full understanding of the historical process must include studies of the social and economic conditions of societies as well as biographies of the people on which a clear understanding of history is based—but not just the “great” people. Biographies of “average” individuals, who exist in a society, have their own experiences and are acted upon by their surrounding environments, are essential to a clear and complete understanding of the past and its influence on the present. In this respect, Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm has made a major contribution to furthering the understanding of World War II, and especially the part played by Poland and Poles, with her compilation of individual biographies of people who participated in many of its formative events.

Ziolkowska-Boehm’s protagonists include a variety of people and experiences that enhance the usefulness of the volume. There are: Tadeusz Brzeziński, a member of the Polish diplomatic corps; the hero who escaped the Lwów ghetto to fight in the Warsaw Uprising and later founded a theatre group in Montréal; a pilot who escaped from the Soviet Union to fly fighters over Great Britain; a photographer of the Warsaw Uprising; a nurse during the Warsaw Uprising; a personal memories of the post-war era move to the United States; a person who was forcefully deported with her family to the Soviet Urals, later escaping to the Middle East and eventually Mexico; the boy who, though only eight when the war began, but survived Pawiak Prison, traveled to Brazil, and became an internationally-known poet and artist.

Untold Stories of Polish Heroes from World War II
By Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm
James S. Pula (Foreword)
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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