



POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

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The New Yorker
Attn: Editorial Department
1 World Trade Center
22nd Floor
New York, NY 10007

March 30, 2021

Dear Editorial Staff,

We are immeasurably proud of the Poles who have risked their lives to resist the depraved Nazi Germany Occupation and save their Jewish brothers and sisters during World War II. They are some of the bravest people to have ever lived, and it is our honor to be their descendants. We condemn in the strongest possible terms, and are disgusted by, all acts of collaboration by Poles with the Nazi German Forces. These traitors do not represent the values of the Polish people, and comprised an extremely small minority of the Polish population at the time. We stand in solidarity with the worldwide Jewish community against acts and attitudes of Anti-Semitism that still continue today.

I am writing to you as National President of the Polish American Congress (PAC), an umbrella advocacy organization which represents approximately 10 million Polish Americans. The PAC was established in 1944 to persuade the United States Government that it was in America's interest to ensure that a free Poland must emerge after World War II. The PAC's statement *The Polish American Congress Statement on Poland and the Poles during World War II* is available to read on our website (pac1944.org).

In order to comprehend the horrific crimes against humanity during World War II, we must deal in truth, and discontinue the perpetuation of falsehoods. Masha Gessen's article, *The Historians Under Attack for Exploring Poland's Role in the Holocaust*, in the March 26, 2021 issue of *The New Yorker* shocked and dismayed Poles across the world because it failed to do both. The article is devoid of critical detachment, and overlooks the historical context of occupied Poland during World War II.

On behalf of the PAC and its members, I strongly condemn the article by Masha Gessen. The article's allegation that the Polish Nation and Government played a significant role in helping Nazi Germany mass murder Polish and European Jews on conquered Polish territory is absolutely false.

The Polish Resistance Movement in World War II was the largest underground resistance movement in Nazi German-Occupied Europe. Despite being at a massive disadvantage in terms of resources as compared to their Occupiers, the Polish Resistance carried out countless operations to thwart Nazi operations within their homeland. Polish armed forces formed the fourth largest contingent of Allied troops fighting the Axis in Europe and North Africa. The Polish Resistance was responsible for The Warsaw Uprising, the single largest

military effort taken by any European resistance movement during World War II. Polish Citizens make up more than a quarter of Yad Vashem's Righteous Among The Nations - a higher amount than any other nation in the world. The aforementioned examples are just a fraction of the total scope of Polish heroism during this horrific time.

Nazi Germany did NOT want to set up a collaborationist State in Poland; this made Poland an exception in occupied Europe. From the surrender in October 1939, Poles could not exercise sovereignty over Poland. Every state-sanctioned action during this time was carried out by the occupying state: Nazi Germany. Hence, the mass murder of Polish and European Jewry on conquered Polish territory was the work of Nazi Germany.

The PAC strongly agrees with Mr. David Harris's observation on behalf of the American Jewish Committee: *Germany-- and Germany alone--was responsible for the Nazi death camps from Auschwitz to Treblinka.*

The PAC appreciates the change made to the subhead of the article on its website and clarification concerning Mr. Gross. However, the print edition cannot be changed. We request that *The New Yorker* allow another article to be printed expressing an opposing viewpoint.

As requested on your website, my daytime phone number is 773-286-0500 x318, and my postal address is 1612 K Street NW, Suite 1200 Washington, DC 20006. I am open to further discussion with you regarding this matter, and look forward to seeing it resolved soon.

Sincerely,


Frank J. Spula
President, Polish American Congress