

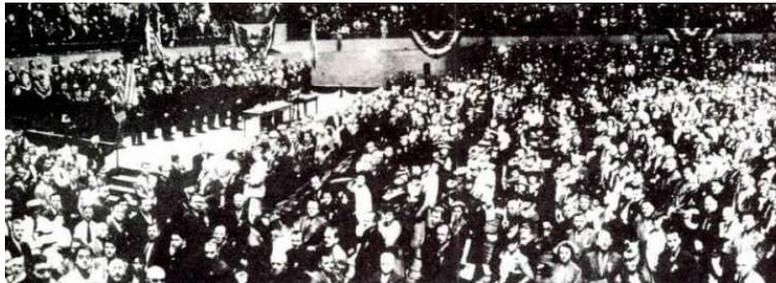


Polish American Congress

History and Chronology

The record of the Polish American Congress (PAC) in its constant support of a free and sovereign Poland, its humanitarian work on behalf of Poland's people, and its key role in bringing about Poland's entry into NATO are signature achievements of this proud organization. Many Polish organizations are active at the national, state, and local level. The PAC is considered the umbrella organization for the nearly ten million Americans of Polish descent – many of whom carry on the proud traditions, culture, language, and history of Poland.

- May 28-June 1, 1944: Over 2,600 people travel to Buffalo, New York to establish the Polish American Congress. The express purpose of the organization is to support a free Poland upon the end of World War II. Mr. Charles Rozmarek of Chicago is elected the first President of the Polish American Congress.



Ten thousand Polish Americans, over 2,600 delegates from 26 states and nearly 7,000 guests, attended the opening session of the first convention of the Polish American Congress in Buffalo, N. Y., in 1944.

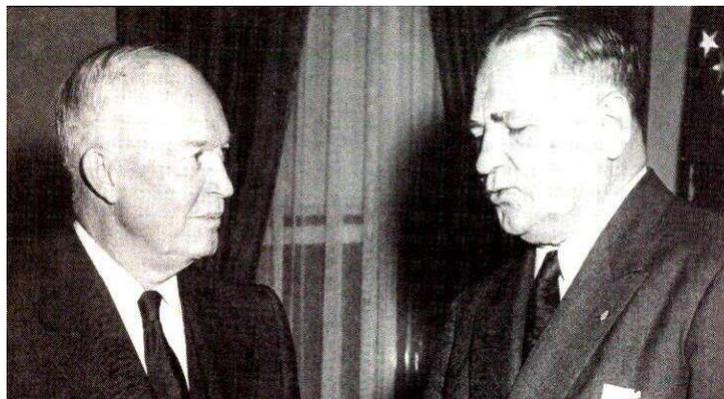
- 1945: Following President Franklin Roosevelt's return from the Yalta Conference at Yalta with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, Charles Rozmarek, President of the PAC, and the other members are among the first in America who publicly denounce the great power agreements on Poland and Eastern Europe as a betrayal of American reasons for participating in World War II.
- 1945: Following the war's end, Poland is subjected to communist rule imposed by the Soviet Union through Polish leaders loyal to the Kremlin.
- 1946: PAC President Rozmarek angrily denounces the handling of thousands of Polish displaced persons throughout Western and Central Europe by UN authorities and calls for immediate changes after observing the conditions in Germany and France. In Paris, Rozmarek calls for free elections in Poland to determine the country's future.
- 1948: The PAC successfully lobbies for special congressional legislation signed by President Harry Truman that leads to the admission of 140,000 Polish displaced persons, war victims and veterans of the Polish armed forces in Western Europe to settle permanently in the US.

- 1949: The PAC backs the creation of Radio Free Europe as a voice of truth to the peoples of communist-enslaved Eastern Europe.



President Harry Truman and members of the Committee investigating the Katyn Massacre in 1951. From left: U.S. Congressmen Foster Furcolo, George Dondero, Thaddeus Machrowicz, Chairman Ray Madden, Alvin D’Konski, Daniel Flood, Committee Counsel John Mitchell, Timothy Sheehan.

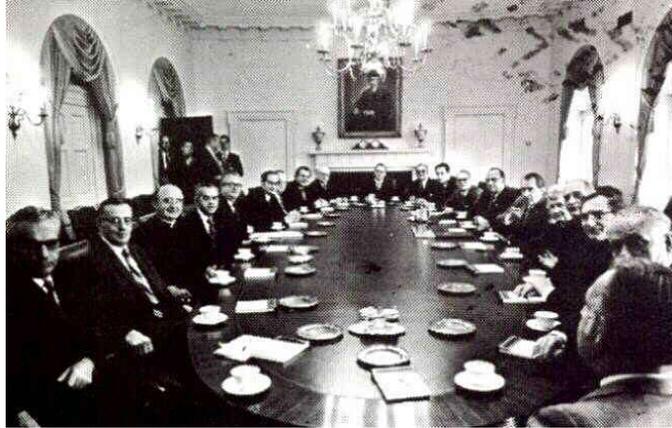
- 1952: A special committee of the US Congress, strongly endorsed by the PAC, investigates the murder of more than 14,000 Polish Army officers at the beginning of World War II by the Soviet Union.



President Dwight Eisenhower discusses the rapidly changing situation in Eastern Europe with Rozmarek on September 28, 1956. Within weeks, Poland’s Stalinist regime will be displaced by one both committed to limited change and accepted in Moscow. In Hungary, reform efforts end in tragedy due to a bloody Soviet intervention.

- 1960s: The PAC organizes humanitarian efforts throughout post-war Poland. Hundreds of millions of dollars in medical supplies, non-perishable food items, clothing, and currency was provided directly to the Polish people through massive donations sponsored by the PAC and its members throughout Polonia.
- 1960s: The PAC continues to lobby the White House and Congress to seek an independent and free Poland from the bonds of communism.
- 1960: Eisenhower is the first US President to speak at a meeting of the Polish American Congress when he addresses its fifth convention in Chicago. Senator John Kennedy, the Democratic Party’s presidential nominee, also speaks to the assembly. In later years, Presidents Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, Obama, and Trump will all address the Polish American Congress or its leaders on issues pertaining to its concerns.

- 1964: The PAC endorses President Lyndon Johnson's policy of "Building Bridges" to "peacefully engage" the peoples of Eastern Europe and to encourage the democratization and independence of the entire region from Soviet domination.
- 1968: Mr. Aloysius Mazewski of Chicago is elected President of the PAC in 1968 following the death of Charles Rozmarek.
- 1969: The first formal dialogues between the PAC and leaders of the American Jewish community begin in an effort to create new understanding and communication between two peoples who lived together in Poland for seven centuries until the Nazi occupation, devastation of Poland, and ruthless annihilation of the Jewish people.

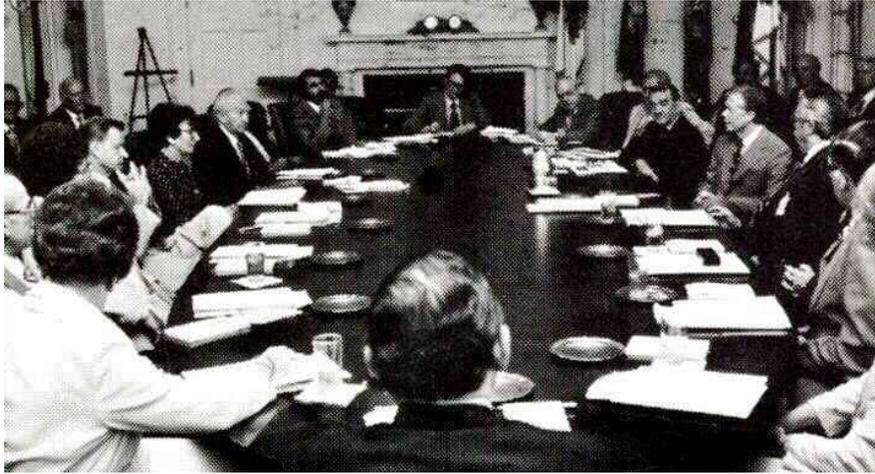


1972: Leaders of the Polish American Congress during the "roundtable" meeting in the White House with President Richard Nixon.

- 1975: The PAC endorses President Gerald Ford's signing of the international treaty on security and cooperation in Europe in Helsinki, Finland. The Helsinki Accords legitimize a set of human rights for the people living under communist rule in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

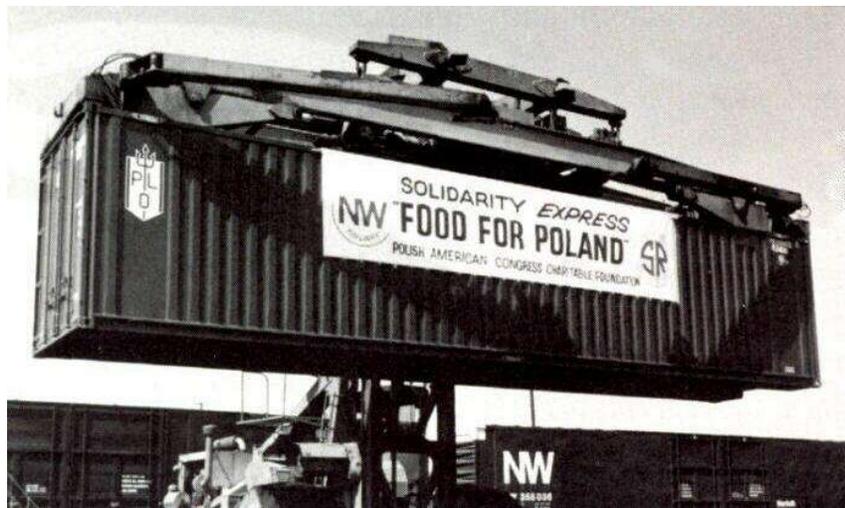


President Ford signs the Pulaski Day Proclamation. In the presence of Polonia's representatives, the President signs a proclamation designating October 11 as Pulaski Day. Surrounding the presidential desk are from let to right: Mitchell Kobelinski, Boleslaw Wierzbianski, Dennis Voss, Lillian Miciak, Aloysius A. Mazewski, Zbigniew Konikowski, Helen Wojcik, Robert Lewandowski, Henry Dende, John Krawiec, Kazimierz Olejarczyk, Daniel Kij, Joseph Bialasiewicz, Stanley Krajewski and Leonard Walentyowicz.



President Jimmy Carter hosts the Polish American Congress Delegation in the White House

- 1981: The PAC sponsors efforts to raise money and materials to meet the needs of Poles suffering in an economy that has nearly collapsed. The PAC Charitable Foundation initiates work by delivering medical goods in short supply to Poland.
- 1981: The Polish American Congress urges the support of the Solidarity Movement in Poland in the early 1980s. Following the imposition of Martial Law in Poland in December 1981, the PAC backs American sanctions against the Soviet Union and Poland.
- 1981: President Ronald Reagan in his Christmas Message in 1981, strongly urges all Americans to light candles to show support for the Polish people due to Martial Law being declared in Poland on December 13, 1981.



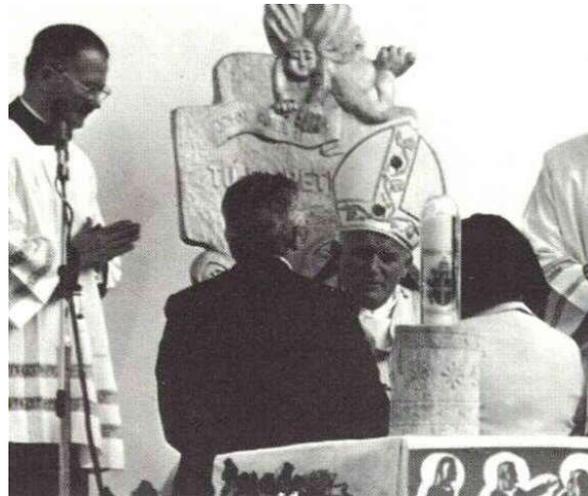
A container ready for Poland, part of the "Solidarity Express" train effort sponsored by the PAC, in August 1982. In all, 427 tons of goods are shipped to Poland in this effort.

- 1984: President Reagan meets with PAC leaders at the White House on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising. He reaffirms his administration's support for the policy known as the National Endowment for Democracy and endorses the creation of a Polish agricultural foundation proposed by the Catholic Church.

- 1987: The PAC, in accord with Pope John Paul II and Solidarity Leader Lech Walesa, wins the Reagan Administration's termination of economic sanctions against Poland.



President Ronald Reagan and a PAC delegation headed by President Mazewski at the White House as the U.S. announces an end to economic sanctions against Poland, February 19, 1987. Also visible: Congressman Daniel Rostenkowski (to Reagan's right) and Chief U. S. Strategic Arms negotiator, Gen. Edward Rowny (looking on behind Reagan).



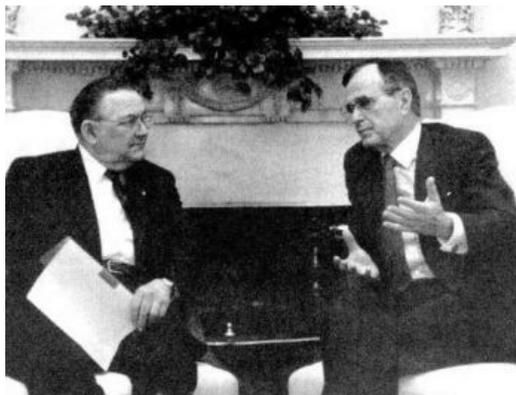
John Paul II during his visit to the United States met with the leaders of the Polish American Congress in Chicago

- 1988: Mr. Edward Moskal is elected President of the Polish American Congress following the death of Aloysius Mazewski.
- 1989: The first free elections in Poland are held.
- 1989: In November, the PAC greets Lech Walesa in Chicago, where he receives a hero's welcome. The PAC goes on record in lobbying for economic assistance proposals to Poland advanced by President Bush and the US Congress. The first result of these efforts is passage of the Support East European Democracy Act of 1989, which commits more than \$800 million to help Poland in its transformation into a democratically governed society with a free market economy.



Lech Walesa and President Moskal in Chicago, November 1989

- 1990: The PAC successfully lobbies President Bush for full US support to international confirmation of the permanence of Poland's western border with the reunited Germany, which is crucial to the future stability of Central Europe.



President Bush meets for a White House working session with PAC President Moskal, March 1990

- 1991: Poland, the vast Solidarity movement, and the Roman Catholic Church all played major roles in helping bring about those incredible international development of the disintegration of the Soviet Union.
- 1992: The PAC plays a leading role in the activities of an historic congress of Poles from more than 50 countries, including from the former Soviet Union, that takes place in Krakow, Poland, under the auspices of the Wspolnota Polska association. An "American Agenda" is unanimously approved by the delegates to the eleventh national PAC convention in Washington in October. The Polish American Congress commits itself to giving renewed and vigorous attention to building broad knowledge and respect for Poland's history and culture in this country and the advancement of worthy Polish-American nominees to every level of government responsibility in America.
- 1994: President Moskal, a delegation of Polish American Congress leaders, and other ethnic organizational leaders play key roles in two meetings of Americans of Polish, Czech, Hungarian, and Slovak heritage that with the top leaders of the US government, including President Clinton and Vice President Gore. The meetings held in Milwaukee and Washington, DC, are the direct result of a massive and unprecedented PAC campaign aimed at mobilizing Polish Americans and their friends to pressure the Administration to back NATO membership for Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. More than 100,000 letters,

postcards and thousands of telephone calls & telegrams deluge the White House in an unprecedented display of PAC strength and resolve.



**“Round table” of the East and Central European organizations in the U.S.,
Milwaukee, WI, January 1994**

- 1995: The PAC and the Polish-American community responds to a tragic fire in Gdansk, Poland, by sending special supplies to the many burn victims.
- 1996: During the presidential campaign, the PAC strongly urges the candidates to support Poland’s entry into NATO and immigration reform and to affirm the US commitment to the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.
- 1997: President Clinton moves forward Poland's admission to NATO.
- 1997: The PAC acts effectively on behalf of Polish flood victims and on immigration reform.
- 1998: The national ancestry question is retained for the 2000 census after PAC efforts.
- 1999: The admission of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to NATO is approved by all 16 of its members. PAC members take part in the celebrations in Washington.



May 21, 1998: President Clinton signs the NATO Enlargement Pact admitting Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. At left are Ambassadors of Poland (Jerzy Kozminski), Hungary and the Czech Republic, next to them Secretary of State Madeleine Albright; at right is Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland.

- 1999: A US Congressional Caucus on Central and Eastern Europe is created through PAC efforts.
- 2000: The PAC effectively fights for justice against policemen involved in the shakedowns of Polish immigrants in Chicago.

- 2001: The PAC Charitable Foundation raises \$125,000 on behalf of the victims of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11.
- 2002: The PAC defends thousands of Polish students who are victims of errors in the management of the J-1 visa work/travel program to the US.
- 2002: The PAC is invited to participate in the Polonia Advisory Council and also takes a lead role in the Council of World Polonia.
- 2003: The City of Chicago settles a lawsuit brought by the PAC over the unfair gerrymandering of the city's Polish-American community.
- 2005: Mr. Frank Spula is elected President of the Polish American Congress following the death of Edward Moskal. Mr. Spula remains President of PAC.
- 2006: The Washington, DC, office offers a number of programs in the capital to present the Polish-American contribution to the country.
- 2007: The PAC inaugurates its Medal of Freedom and honors Casimir Lenard as its first recipient. Senators Barbara Mikulski of Maryland in 2008 and George Voinovich of Ohio in 2009 are recipients of the PAC's highest recognition.
- 2008: Annual Polish American Congress Days begin to be held in Washington, DC, and state capitals across the country. President Spula travels to Poland to reaffirm the PAC's close ties with the Polish government.
- 2009: PAC remains active in working closely with the US administration and legislators on several legislative initiatives to include resolutions celebrating 90 years of diplomatic relations, commemorating 20 years since the round table talks and first free elections in Poland, urging the Postal Services to issue a stamp honoring Matt Urban, recognizing 6,135 Poles recognized by Yad Vashem as "Righteous Among the Nations" for helping their Jewish neighbors during World War II; recognizing 70th anniversary of the beginning of World War II as well as Soviet invasion of Poland; proclaiming Casimir Pulaski to be a posthumous honorary US citizen, to name a few.
- 2009: The PAC holds in Chicago its first National Conference, "The Polish American Community in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities," which is designed to bring together representatives of the Polish-American community nationwide and to initiate a discussion about its future.
- 2014: An electronic newsletter, "*Your Voice in America*" is published bi-monthly.
- 2016: The PAC holds its first-ever national meeting outside the US in Rzeszów, Poland, attending the prestigious "2016 Forum Polonii Amerykańskiej" (Forum of American Polonia) held July 25–30, in Rzeszów, Podkarpacie Region. The meeting helps Polish-Americans who traveled to Poland the opportunity to see firsthand all that Poland is doing to continue its efforts to be a strong business and tourist center in Europe.





PAC President Spula leads the discussion with then Presidential Candidate Donald Trump at the Polish National Alliance Headquarters in Chicago. October 2016. Also present were leaders from the PAC and other Polish organizations.

- 2016: The PAC invites Presidential Candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton's surrogate, Madeleine Albright, to Chicago to listen to their campaign initiatives, as well as answer questions regarding support of NATO and the Visa Waiver Program.
- 2017: The PAC develops a robust internship program giving Polish-American students an opportunity to advance their knowledge about issues on Polonia, Poland, and Central and Eastern Europe, helping to advocate for the interests of Polish Americans on Capitol Hill. It attracts undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students from across the United States and is popular among Polish Americans studying in Poland.
- 2018: The PAC launches a new website at www.PAC1944.org, and additional social media platforms.
- 2018: The PAC successfully leads in organizing a coalition of groups opposed to moving Andrzej Pitynski's Katyń Monument from Exchange Place in Jersey City.
- 2018: The PAC is a major partner with the United States sponsored World War I Centennial Commission.
- 2018: Press releases are sent to media outlets to inform all Americans in celebrating and commemorate the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence - November 11, 1918.
- 2019: The PAC National Office persuades member organizations of the Central and East European Coalition to organize in congressional district visits by CEEC delegations of constituents to show members of Congress that the CEEC is not just an inside the Beltway talking shop but has political power and the votes of numerous constituents in the country.
- 2021: The PAC National Office builds a more effective and efficient communication system with legislators and staff on Capitol Hill of both parties for advocacy purposes.



PAC President Frank Spula addresses the annual Polish American Congress Council of National Directors (CoND) Meeting in Chicago, 2019. The meeting also celebrates the 75th Anniversary of the PAC. The CoND is the legislative body of the organization.

- 2021: Polish American Congress President Frank Spula sends a letter to President Biden urging a strong stance in support of Poland and its neighbors, Ukraine, and Belarus, from Russian military activities in that region.
- 2022: The PAC Executive Committee, along with representatives of ten other Polish American organizations, participated in a meeting via WebEx with newly confirmed U.S. Ambassador to Poland Mark Brzezinski.
- 2022: Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Polish American Congress held a “Polonia for Ukraine” effort to raise funds for humanitarian causes for both Ukraine and Poland. Nearly \$300,000 was raised during the March 11-13, 2022 Radiothon based in Chicago. Half of the funds raised were donated to Ukrainian leaders, while the other half were donated to the Red Cross based in Poland.
- 2023: Polish American Congress President, Frank Spula, spoke at the VI Worldwide Polonia Council Conference in Warsaw, Poland July 2, 2023.
- 2023: The Polish American Congress held its annual Council of National Directors meeting in Chicago, Illinois, October 20 & 21, 2023. Elected to serve two-year terms on the PAC Executive Committee were: Frank J. Spula (President), Dr. Mark Pienkos (First Vice President), Micheline Jaminski (Treasurer), Stephen Flor (Secretary), Bozena Kaminski (Vice president for Polish Affairs), Timothy Kuzma (Vice President for American Affairs), Deborah Majka (Vice President for Cultural Affairs), Mary Anselmo (Vice President for Education), Malgorzata Schulz (Vice President for Public Relations), Michael Niedzinski (Vice President for Membership), Andzrej Niemyjski (Vice President for Financial Development).
- 2024: Acting on behalf of the Polish American Congress Executive Committee, President Frank Spula sent a letter to U.S. Congressional leaders urging support for the aid package to Ukraine.



- 2024: The PAC participated in ceremonies commemorating the 25th Anniversary of Poland's admission into NATO. Polish American Congress President, Frank Spula, represented the PAC at the Truman Presidential Library and Museum in Independence, Missouri. The historic event was held March 12, 2024.
- 2024: Meeting in Chicago, Illinois, the Polish American Congress celebrates its 80th Anniversary during the annual Council of National Directors Meeting, October 12 & 13, 2024.

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**The Polish American Congress consists of
17 State Divisions and 6 National Organizations.**

**The Polish American Congress Executive Committee expresses
its gratitude and appreciation to all members who work tirelessly
at the state and local level to promote our rich Polish
heritage, culture, and traditions.**

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**PAC Mission Statement
(Approved by the PAC Executive Committee in 2021):**

***We are dedicated to unify Americans of Polish descent,
fight for their interests, promote respect for Polish heritage and
history, and advocate for Poland!***

**Polish American Congress
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2023-2025**

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Please visit our website:

pac1944.org



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Updated by Dr. Mark Pienkos, First Vice President, Polish American Congress

(From the PAC website)