

POLAND FIRST TO FIGHT



„Kill without mercy men, women and children of the Polish origin and language. This way we obtain the lebensraum (Lebensraum) we need. Poland will be deserted and settled by Germans”

Adolf Hitler to Wehrmacht commanders on 22 August 1939

INTERNATIONAL HISTORICAL CONFERENCE

80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II

November 18-20, 2019 Washington, D.C.



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INTRODUCTION

The “Poland First to Fight” conference is designed to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II by gathering international scholars, historians, writers, journalists, filmmakers, and museum curators with expertise in specific areas of history to analyze the current state of knowledge and to expand the conversation in academia, the media, and the arts.



The conference program aims to broaden the World War II narrative by promoting and examining certain aspects of the war against Poland, and crimes committed by Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, generally unknown or ignored in the West. Although Poland was a loyal and active wartime ally, the country was betrayed and handed over to Stalin through the Yalta agreement. For decades afterwards, Poland remained behind the iron curtain and the history of war crimes committed in occupied Poland remained unknown to the outside world. The conference will address the gaps and the persistent falsehoods that developed during the Cold War.

The forum offers an opportunity for distinguished scholars to present their research on aspects of the war insufficiently examined or neglected in current scholarship. They will analyze the consequences of the brutal occupations, the

policies of terror and lawlessness, the enslavement and exploitation of the general population in the service of Nazi military industrial complex, and the violence created by the Soviet invasions. The conference will also focus on Poland's valuable contributions as an ally, such as the Kosciuszko Squadron and the Enigma machine, and the tragic lack of responses from the Allies to the Polish Underground's ongoing efforts to inform them of the genocidal war.

The conference will also celebrate the resistance and determination of the Polish people during the war, and their persistent postwar struggle for freedom against the Soviet-imposed communist regime. With the support of Polish American organizations, other émigré communities, war veterans and their descendants, and scholars from Poland and other countries, we hope to promote productive exchanges to dispel the existing misinformation and deliberate distortions about Poland, as well as its history in academia, the media, and popular culture.

CONFERENCE VENUES

One of the venues will be the National Press Club in Washington, DC. Other venues and more details will be announced soon. The conference will last two days and consist of several thematic blocks and panel discussions, including:

- Poland between Munich Conference and outbreak of World War II



- Poland between September 1, 1939 and December 7, 1941 (attack on Pearl Harbor)
- Poland's contributions to the victory of the Allied forces over the Third Reich
- Panel discussions with journalists and historians on:
 - Distorting the history of World War II
 - Historical narrative in computer games, films and social media

The Program Committee will decide on the final conference content and format of the panels.

On November 19, 2019 there will be a networking reception at the residence of Poland's Ambassador to the United States for all participants, hosted by Ambassador Piotr Wilczek.

PARTICIPANTS

The conference aims to engage members of Congress and their staff, historians, scholars and educators, diplomats, politicians, publishers, museum workers, members of the media, filmmakers, and representatives of



organizations dealing with genocide and ethnic discrimination.

CONFERENCE GOALS

- Expanding knowledge and correcting assumptions and falsehoods developed outside of Poland during the Cold War regarding the history of World War II and its aftermath
- Creating and supporting networking efforts among scholars, politicians, members of the media, and the arts
- Preparing a publication of conference proceedings of Polish history during World War II. It will include what has been left out or ignored in research and public discourse.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair

- Dr. Marek Błażej, iPoland, Hamburg

Members

- Dr. Stanisław Śliwowski, President of the Coalition of Polish Americans, New York
- Edward Wojciech Jeśman, President of the Polish American Congress of Southern California, Co-founder of the Polish American Strategic Initiative, Los Angeles
- Krystyna Zamorska, Ph.D., independent scholar and historical consultant, New York
- Artur D. Zyśk, iPoland, London

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Chair

- Prof. Marek Kornat, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw; Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw

Members

- Prof. Andrzej Nowak, Jagiellonian University, Cracow; Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw; member of the Board of the Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw
- Prof. Tadeusz Wolsza, University of Kazimierz Wielki, Bydgoszcz; Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences; member of the Board of the Institute of National Remembrance; chairman of the Scientific Council of the Museum of the Second World War, Gdańsk
- Prof. Włodzimierz Suleja, Artur University of Wrocław, director of the Historical Research Office at the Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw
- Prof. Wojciech Roszkowski, Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw
- Robert Kostro, Ph.D. Director of the Museum of Polish History, Warsaw
- Wojciech Kozłowski, Ph.D. Director of the Pilecki Institute, Warsaw



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PARTNERS

- Polish Media Issues
- Coalition of Polish Americans
- Polish American Strategic Initiative
- Polish American Congress of Southern California
- British Poles
- Polish American Congress



"If you do not claim your own history, someone else will write it for you"

Sandra Cisneros

Location


National Press Club
529 14th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20045


Visit our website and join the conference speakers and guests



80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II

Conference Office "Poland First to Fight"
c/o Polish American Congress of Southern California
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