



*Polonia Institute, Inc.*  
**2785 Pacific Coast Highway, #295**  
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US Congress Representatives

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Peter Roskan, R-IL  
Marc Veasey, D-TX

February 2, 2018

Dear Members of the Taskforce on Combating Anti-Semitism:

As US citizens of Polish descent, we are alarmed by your protest against the Polish law that would punish those who contrary to the facts, i.e. falsely ascribe to Poland the responsibility for crimes committed by the German Third Reich (“IPN Law”). We are shocked by your attempt to accuse Poland of “complicity” in war crimes committed by Germany against the Jews. We consider any attempt to charge Poland with complicity in Jewish Holocaust as an attempt to diminish the German responsibility, hence as a serious distortion of the truth about the Holocaust. We also view your action as a denial of German genocide committed on ethnic Poles in WWII. In light of the legislation on Jewish Holocaust-era restitution claims pending in the US Congress, we consider the “complicity” allegations against Poland as a politically motivated tool to extort large amounts of restitution payments from Poland.

The Polish bill is neither Holocaust denial nor a threat to academic freedom. Academic research and expressions of art are explicitly exempted by the IPN Law. The bill has been consulted with representatives of the Jewish community for over a year and all issues raised have been addressed. Your statement that this legislation could have “a chilling effect on dialogue, scholarship, and accountability in Poland about the Holocaust,” is baseless and counterproductive.

Free Speech

Rest assured that we greatly value free speech and open debate. But we also value historical truth and are keenly aware of the fact that Poland, the nation that suffered the greatest losses in WWII, remains uncompensated for her losses to this day! The purpose of the IPN Law is to defend the truth about the German occupation of Poland because the “admirable” Holocaust scholarship, education and dialog that you advocate so strongly has failed miserably. Thus, your allegation that the IPN Law prohibits seeking the truth about the Holocaust constitutes a material misrepresentation of facts.

We are deeply disappointed that for decades you have failed to react to appalling falsehoods systematically promoted in the West about the “Polish concentration camps.” In fact, such camps were built first and foremost to exterminate the Polish resistance to Nazi Germany’s occupation of Poland. According to the Judgment of the Nuremberg Tribunal “one of the most notorious means of terrorizing the people in occupied territories was the use of concentration camps... In the administration of the occupied territories the concentration camps were used to destroy all opposition groups. The murder and ill-treatment of civilian populations reached its height in the treatment of the citizens of the Soviet Union and Poland.”<sup>1</sup> Since the resistance to German occupation was the strongest in Poland, ethnic Poles were



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the primary victims of the German concentration camps in the first phase of the war. About 2 million Poles were killed in the camps alongside the Jews, including over 100 thousand murdered in Auschwitz.

Furthermore, you have not questioned or objected to the replacement of the term “Germans” with the term “Nazis” by the Holocaust scholars. The use of the term “Nazis” effectively eliminates Germany from the Holocaust vocabulary, thereby diminishes the guilt of Germans - the true authors and perpetrators of the Holocaust. This terminology is intentionally used to divert the blame for the Holocaust crimes from Germans to “others,” for example Poles. Such insulting distortion of truth demonstrates yet another despicable manipulation of WWII history.

Please be informed that we consider attempts to ascribe to Poland crimes committed by her German oppressors as an immoral attempt to blur and diminish the responsibility for the establishment of concentration and death camps devised and operated by Nazi Germany and shift the blame for such crimes to other nations or ethnic groups, including the first victims of these concentration camps. The above referenced acts and inactions on your part constitute Holocaust denial and Holocaust distortion in its pure form in accordance with Article 5 of the working definition of Holocaust Denial adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.<sup>2</sup>

#### Complicity

Your statement that “We must acknowledge the numerous documented instances of Poles aiding the Nazis in the murder of innocent Jews,” is not only deeply offensive to the primary victim country of Nazi Germany but is viewed by Polish Americans as a political tool to pressure Poland to pay an exorbitant amount of money to the Jewish organizations as moral compensation for “heirless property,” a brand-new concept contrary to the Western legal tradition and the laws of the US and all European countries. According to the Israeli War Crimes Commission less than 0.1% of Poles (many of them Polish Germans) collaborated with Nazi Germany. 99.9% didn’t!

Before you “acknowledge” instances of Poles aiding the Nazis, first acknowledge and fully disclose all instances of Jews like Abraham Gancwajch aiding the Nazis in murdering innocent Jews, and open up the totally suppressed research, scholarship and dialog about all instances of Jews murdering innocent Poles.

Second, please pay attention to the well-established law of war, which clearly states that the occupying power is responsible for assuring safety of the civilian population on the conquered territory.<sup>3</sup>

Third, use not “admirable” but unbiased scholarship to study all rules, regulations, orders and practices that the German occupying power put in place in occupied Poland to control and exploit the conquered population. Only after drawing conclusions from such unbiased comparative analysis of the mechanisms put in place by Nazi Germany in various occupying countries you could have the moral right to talk about the “complicity” of the Polish people in murder of innocent Jews.

Fourth, use the “admirable” Holocaust scholarship talent to show to the world in a professional unbiased manner the scale and forms of Polish resistance to the German occupation, the Polish contributions to saving the Jews, and the price they paid for it, the Polish international efforts to help the Jews, the American response to the Polish call for such help, the Polish contribution to the Allied war efforts, and the payback Poland has been receiving for all those heroic deeds.



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Inherent Bias

In your letter you present “admirable” scholarship of the Jewish History Museum by grossly underestimating the Polish losses while overestimating the Jewish losses by stating that “murder of almost 2 million non-Jews and 3 million of Jewish Poles.” Such statement totally ignores the findings of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance that estimates the losses for ethnic Poles at minimum 2.7 million people and Polish Jews at 2.7-2.9 million.<sup>4</sup> It is also contrary to “less admirable” scholarship presented by the California Model Curriculum for Human Rights and Genocide that provides the losses in German WWII genocide on ethnic Poles at 3 million people.<sup>5</sup>

We are alarmed at obvious bias presented in your January 31, 2018 letter to Polish President Andrzej Duda, and dismayed at the ease with which the Taskforce on Combating Anti-Semitism in the US Congress uses its power to blackmail Poland on her effort to stop the flagrant and morally repugnant falsification of the history of WWII.

Your unjustified attack on Poland, the closest ally of the United States in the European Union, is detrimental to the interests of the United States.

Sincerely yours,

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Leszek Pawlik  
President & CEO  
Polonia Institute, Inc

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Chris M. Zawitkowski  
Chairman of the Board  
Polonia Institute, Inc.

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<sup>1</sup> Judgment, International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity, Avalon.law.yale.edu.

<sup>2</sup> IHRA’s 31 member countries adopted the “Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion” at IHRA’s Plenary meeting in Toronto on 10 October 2013. See the definition here:

<https://chrissmith.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=400888>

<sup>3</sup> Laws of War: Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague IV); October 18, 1907;

[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/hague04.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hague04.asp)

<sup>4</sup> IPN: Polska poniosła największe straty osobowe w II wojnie światowej, <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/ipn-polska-poniosla-najwieksze-straty-osobowe-w-ii-wojnie-swiatowej/n3193>

<sup>5</sup> The California Model Curriculum for Human Rights and Genocide approved by the State Board of Education is available here: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/hs/im/documents/modelcurrichrgenoc.pdf>