



SWIATOWA RADA BADAŃ NAD POLONIA

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Please join us at the INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ORGANIZED IN THE USA - ORCHARD LAKE SCHOOLS - POLISH MISSION on 9-11 OCTOBER 2020

"THE PARTICIPATION AND ROLE OF THE AMERICAN POLONIA IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE USA AND POLAND IN THE XX CENTURY AND PRESENT"

The Conference is ORGANIZED by:

**THE WORLD RESEARCH COUNCIL ON POLES ABROAD,
INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL SCIENCES OF THE CARDINAL STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI UNIVERSITY
POLISH MISSION IN ORCHARD LAKE SCHOOLS
COALITION of AMERICAN POLONIA
POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS FLORIDA WESTERN DIVISION**

Conference objectives:

Polish-American relations have always been of special importance in the history of both countries, in particular for Polish independence and its consolidation in the twentieth century and until today. The significance of this relationship has been of strategic nature. Lowering this level of strategic relation was associated with serious threats to sovereignty and the very existence of the Polish state.

In the era of geopolitical transformations, this finding is of particular importance and gives Polish politics essential vectors. The future of Poland and the entire Central European region depends not only on the direction it will take. It is even safe to say – direction of Europe as a civilization and political community. This situation requires in-depth reflection of the scientific community, politicians, social and Polish community activists. Responding to this need, the World Council for Research on the Polish Diaspora together with institutions representing the Polish Diaspora and the academic community of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, launched an initiative to organize and conduct an international academic conference entitled "The participation and role of the American Polonia in shaping political and social relations between the USA and Poland in the 20th and 21st centuries." In the intention of the organizers, the conference will aspire to play the role of a think tank for the bodies responsible for decisions at various levels of their making. It will also be part of the activities undertaken in the field of public diplomacy.

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The aim of the conference is to create a broad historical, sociological and political logical perspective showing the role of the Polish minority in the USA against the background of other ethnic and national groups in their political aspirations, with particular emphasis on Polish independence aspirations. We would like not only to recall the importance of the activity in the US and outstanding representatives of Polish emigration in the person of Ignacy Paderewski or Roman Dmowski, but also the activity of Teofil Starzyński, Józef Sierociński and the role of the Polish Falconry Association in the USA in promoting the idea of the Kościuszko Army, as well as in creating the Blue Army and contribution in this regard to the American Polonia, as well as its attitude to Polish formations in France and to the Polish Legions in response to the appeal of Bishop Władysław Bandurski. Important historical aspects were also the activity of such Polish institutions as the Polish National Union, the Polish Roman Catholic Union, the Union of Polish Women in America and others.

The position of the Washington administration on the Polish matter announced in the address of President Thomas Woodrow Wilson to the Congress of January 8, 1918, was of paramount importance for Polish independence aspirations.

For obvious reasons, Polish-American cooperation developed more intensively after the outbreak of World War II. In the United States, Julian Bryan's reports on the fate of Warsaw during the 1939 Defense War received wide recognition, and his album on this subject was received with great interest. Under the pressure of the Polish cause, the Neutrality Act was also changed in October 1939.

During the conference, efforts of General Władysław Sikorski to recruit volunteers to the Polish army in the USA will be presented. Their effect was the establishment of the Polish Military Mission in Windsor, Canada, Ontario, which enlisted many recruits, including American citizens of Polish origin.

It is the intention of the conference organizers to include also difficult threads in Polish-American relations, sometimes not fully explained by historians, such as the mysterious and temporary disappearance of a report by the US ambassador in Moscow, William H. Standley, submitted to the State Department, and containing information obtained from Józef Czapski about the unknown fate of Polish officers staying on the territory of the Soviet Union. We would also like to present the use of the Katyn question by certain diplomatic and intelligence circles to lower the rank of Polish-American relations, which clearly took place in the second half of 1942, and the culmination of which was the rejection by President Roosevelt in March 1945 of Captain George's report Earle.

The most recent threads in the history of Polish-American relations and the contribution of the Polish community in shaping these relations will take a significant part of the conference. We would like to address the participation of Polish soldiers in the US Army in the wars conducted by the USA (the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Iraq War). A separate panel will deal with the role played by Polish American institutions and organizations: Polish American Congress, Józef Piłsudski Institute, Association of Polish Army Veterans in America, Polish Scientific Institute in New York, museums and other institutions, the press and Polish media. We would like to show the importance and place among the Polish community of the Roman Catholic Church and its pastoral works and forms, with particular emphasis on the Polish Mission in Orchard Lake Schools, the National Shrine of Our Lady of

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Częstochowa in Doylestown and its role in maintaining Polishness. We will also recall the creation and activity of the Polish National Catholic Church.

A separate attention will be given to the last half-century of Polish-American relations, including the presidency of Jimmy Carter and his contribution to the promotion of the idea of human rights, which was of great importance to the activities understood in this area by the Polish democratic opposition. The role of Ronald Reagan's presidency in the implementation of Polish independence aspirations and his relations with John Paul II in the context of Polish affairs will be presented, the help provided to the "Solidarity" movement, the vision of the world order and the place of Poland in Zbigniew Brzeziński's geopolitical concepts, the activity of General Ryszard Kukliński, but also the ambiguous role of Polish companies abroad and the penetration of communist agents into Polish communities in the USA. The promotional activity of Americans of Polish origin and the position of the official US authorities in the field of Poland's accession to the structures of the North Atlantic Pact, as well as Polish-American cooperation within NATO will be presented. We will present the assessment of the Polish presidential and parliamentary elections in the US in the opinions of government factors, as well as among the Polish diaspora in the US.

One of the most important goals set forth by the conference organizers is to conduct a professional panel discussion on the place and role of Poland and the USA in the implementation of the Three Seas initiative, and its geopolitical consequences. In the intention of the organizers, both Polish and American experts will take part in this discussion.

Individual presentations and papers, as well as the record of the panel discussion will be presented in a separate, post-conference bilingual Polish-English publication.

Walter Wiesław Gołębiowski - President of the World Research Council on Poles Abroad, Vice President for Polish Affairs of the Coalition of American Polonia.

Ks. prof. UKSW, Waldemar Gliński - Vice President for Scientific Affairs of the World Research Council on Poles Abroad.