

Warsaw, 5 December 2025

**OPEN LETTER**  
**ON THE STIGMATISATION OF POLISH VICTIMS OF THE GERMAN NAZI REGIME**  
**AND THE DESECRATION OF THE MEMORY OF JEWISH VICTIMS OF THE**  
**HOLOCAUST**

**We, the undersigned representatives of the Polish academic, historical, and civic community, express our deep concern and strong opposition to the actions of German and Austrian cultural, memorial, and scholarly institutions that promote events and publications which explicitly betray their entrusted mission and propagate a false historical narrative concerning Polish victims of the German Nazi regime.**

The events surrounding the promotion of the book by Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, a scholar at Freie Universität Berlin, are particularly disturbing.

On 29 September 2025, Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe's book, *Polnische Bürgermeister und der Holocaust*, was presented at the Gedenk- und Bildungsstätte Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz, Am Großen Wannsee 56–58 in Berlin.

On 12 November, the book was presented by Central European University in Vienna, in cooperation with the Wiener Wiesenthal Institut and the Institut für Osteuropäische Geschichte.

A meeting devoted to *Polnische Bürgermeister und der Holocaust* was scheduled for 25 November 2025 at the Polish-German House in Berlin. According to media reports, it has been postponed to another, as yet unspecified, date.

The official announcements of these events include a statement that also appears on the website of the Polish-German House. It reads as follows:

*“During World War II, Polish mayors constituted a key group of officials within the administrative apparatus of the ‘General Government.’ Together with German district heads and mayors, they shaped local policy and were significantly involved in the persecution and murder of Polish and European Jews.”*

As members of the Polish academic, historical, and civic community, we firmly reject the main assertion presented at the event as false, contrary to historical fact, scientifically unsound, and harmful to good Polish-German relations.

All the institutions mentioned are entrusted with the mission of preserving and documenting the crimes of genocide and persecution committed by the National Socialist German regime between 1933 and 1945; safeguarding and transmitting historical memory to future generations in a reliable, honest, and objective manner; and honouring the victims.

What is particularly disturbing is that the book, which in a manipulative manner shifts responsibility for the crimes of the National Socialist German regime onto the Polish people, is presented at an institution located in the House of the Wannsee Conference, the infamous gathering of the highest-ranking representatives of the German government and police, chaired by SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, held on 20 January 1942. At that conference, the details of implementing the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question in Europe”— that is, the extermination of all European Jews – were determined. Do the representatives of this museum lack knowledge and awareness of who perpetrated the Shoah, or are they openly betraying the mission entrusted to them?

Equally astonishing is the involvement of the Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien in Vienna – an institution named after Simon Wiesenthal, a Polish Jew (1908–2005) from Lwów who was imprisoned in the German Janowska camp there, and whose 89 family members were murdered in the Bełżec death camp. He himself was imprisoned in the German concentration camps of Płaszów, Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald, and Mauthausen, and miraculously survived. Has the Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien in Vienna, a mere 80 years after the end of the Second World War, already forgotten the fate of its patron, who devoted his life to pursuing Nazi criminals?

We also note that the book has undergone critical scholarly analysis by the Institute of National Remembrance. According to the review by Dr Damian Sitkiewicz, the publication displays characteristics of journalism, including a tendentious selection of facts, conjecture and speculation, and the deliberate omission of essential historical context, such as Germany’s racist policies. By using impersonal formulations, the author minimises the role and agency of the Germans, seeking to falsely equate Polish mayors with the occupiers as supposedly equal partners in perpetrating the crime. The ultimate aim of these efforts is to persuade the reader that local Polish officials in the General Government were co-responsible for the extermination of the Jews.

It should be emphasised that **reversing the roles of perpetrator and victim** – especially in a German public institution whose mission is to foster reconciliation and deepen mutual friendship – **once again stigmatises and retraumatizes the Polish victims of the Second World War and their families**. The trauma and scars of World War II are still deeply felt in Poland. Such actions do not contribute to **building good Polish-German relations**; in our view, they are in fact profoundly damaging. This causes us deep concern and bewilderment.

In the context of the event planned in Berlin, we wish to express our concern for **the future of Polish-German reconciliation**. The announcement of the meeting is perceived by the public as an attempt to shift responsibility for the Holocaust from the Germans to the Poles, and thus as a classic effort to invert the roles of victim and perpetrator. **The perpetrators of the Holocaust were Nazi Germans.**

The brutal occupation of Poland by the Third Reich was unprecedented and, in many areas, exterminatory. The list of sites and instances of these crimes is extensive. The public administration was completely controlled by the German occupier, and Polish citizens – including those in administrative roles – were fully subordinated to German orders.

We remind readers that, in the Nazi racial hierarchy, Poles were classified as “subhumans” and were destined partly for extermination, partly for forced labour, and partly for extermination through labour.

According to various estimates, between 5 and 6 million Polish citizens were killed by the German occupiers during the Second World War. Half of them were Polish Jews murdered by the Nazi invaders as part of the Holocaust. Several million more Polish citizens of various ethnic backgrounds were permanently maimed, in addition to the psychological trauma and emotional scars they suffered. Around three million Polish citizens were forced into forced labour, becoming de facto slaves, while Polish territories were transformed into colonies of the Third Reich. Many did not survive the war, dying from exhaustion, disease, bombardment, or mistreatment. Hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens were taken prisoner, and hundreds of thousands were deported to concentration camps. Poles, regardless of their ethnic background, were killed by the Nazis in mass executions. More than one million children were orphaned, and approximately 200,000 were deported to Germany for forced Germanisation.

During the Warsaw Uprising, the Germans razed the Polish capital to the ground and murdered around 200,000 of its inhabitants. The victims were overwhelmingly defenceless civilians, as exemplified by the Wola Massacre – a mass extermination of the residents of an entire district carried out by SS units under the command of SS-Gruppenführer Heinz Reinefarth in early August 1944.

We call for **an ethical approach to academic research and for scholarly integrity**. Shifting responsibility for the Holocaust onto “Polish mayors” is a serious distortion and, above all, desecrates the memory of the Jewish victims. These victims – regardless of their ethnic background or religious

affiliation – were, first and foremost, Polish citizens and residents of Polish towns and cities. Each victim had a name, a family, and a world of their own.

We also draw attention to the fact that the announcement of the meeting displays the cover of the book by Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, featuring a photograph of the eminent Pole, **Julian Spitosław Kulski**. Presenting it as a symbol of the Holocaust is a blatant falsification of history, as is the title of the book *Polish Mayors and the Holocaust* suggesting their perpetration and responsibility. Before the war, Kulski served as deputy mayor of Warsaw under Stefan Starzyński, who, at the beginning of the war, was arrested by the Gestapo and brutally murdered. A similarly tragic fate befell Warsaw's vice-president, Jan Pohoski, who was arrested and murdered by the Germans in the forest at Palmiry in June 1940.

Julian Spitosław Kulski served during the war (1939–1944) as the German-appointed Acting Mayor of Warsaw, **approved by the Polish Underground State and the Polish Government-in-Exile**. In this context, suggesting – on the basis of the event announcement – that Julian Spitosław Kulski was “significantly involved in the persecution and murder of Polish and European Jews,” attributing to him co-responsibility for the Holocaust, and placing him almost on a par with the German occupiers, **blatantly contradicts historical fact**.

It is worth recalling that **Julian Spitosław Kulski was himself of Jewish descent**. His great-grandfather was Dow Ber Meisels, a Polish patriot who served as Chief Rabbi of Warsaw from 1856 until the January Uprising. During the war, Kulski hid Jews in his own apartment. **In 2018, he was posthumously honoured with the From the Depths Mosberg Award**. He saved the lives of tens of thousands of Polish citizens of Jewish origin. Together with employees of the Warsaw City Hall, Kulski issued Jews with false identity papers and certificates attesting to their “employment” in the municipal office. He assisted members of the resistance, fugitives sought by the Germans, and Jewish escapees from the Warsaw Ghetto. **As a person of Jewish origin who cooperated with the Polish Underground State, he risked his life every day**.

We hope our message reaches those individuals and institutions responsible for preserving memory and educating the public about this darkest period in European and world history, and that it prompts reflection. The memory of the crimes committed by the National Socialist German regime should serve as a warning to all. We are obliged to preserve the memory of the victims, who can no longer speak for themselves about their terrible fate, and we – today's generations – are and will remain the guardians of that memory.

## **Signatories of the Open Letter on the Stigmatization of Polish Victims of the Nazi German Regime and the Desecration of the Memory of Jewish Victims of the Holocaust**

1. Grażyna Adamska – anti-communist activist of Independent Students' Association (NZZ) and Fighting Solidarity (1985–1990), art historian, graphic designer
2. Artur Adamski – anti-communist activist of NZZ and Fighting Solidarity (1985–1990), author and columnist
3. Piotr Badyna, PhD (hab.) – associate professor at the Institute of History, University of Wrocław
4. Grzegorz Berendt, PhD (hab.) – associate professor at the University of Gdańsk
5. Czesław Bielecki, PhD – architect
6. Teresa Bochwic, PhD – anti-communist opposition activist during the communist era in Poland, journalist.
7. Małgorzata Bochwic-Ivanovska – former Director of the Polish Institute in Berlin; currently Managing Director of the Polish-German Youth Cooperation Warsaw Office
8. Małgorzata Bogusz – president of the Kulski Foundation
9. Piotr Bogusławski, PhD (hab.) - Institute of Physics, Polish Academy of Sciences
10. Przemysław Bogusławski – anti-communist opposition activist
11. Dariusz Boho – anti-communist NZZ activist (1984–1988), journalist
12. Dariusz Piotr Bonisławski – President of the Polish Community Association
13. Professor Zbigniew Bolecki - retired literary historian, Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences
14. Paweł Brudek, PhD – historian
15. Sławomir Buryła, PhD (hab.) – literary studies expert
16. Robert Chmielarczyk – anti-communist NZZ activist (1985–1991), columnist, journalist, promoter of classical music
17. Adam Chojnacki
18. Marcin Chumiecki – founder and first Director of the Polish Mission at Orchard Lake, Michigan (currently, Polish Institute of Culture & Research)
19. Andrzej Chwalba, PhD (hab.), associate professor at the Institute of History, Jagiellonian University; Vice President of the Polish Historical Society
20. Maria Czarnecka – architect
21. Eugeniusz Dedeszko-Wierciński – anti-communist activist of NZZ and Fighting Solidarity (1983–1990), publisher and columnist
22. Jakub Deka – Chairman of the Board of the Foundation for Polish-German Reconciliation
23. Hanna Dobrowolska – member of the Polish Journalists Association
24. Janusz Dorosiewicz – President of the Polish Ronald Reagan Foundation, Honorary Citizen of the City of Warsaw
25. Halina Drzazgowska – survivor of the Volhynia Massacre
26. Jerzy Dul – anti-communist opposition activist (1981–1989), board member of the Niezlomni (“The Unbroken”) Association
27. Wojciech Fałkowski, PhD (hab.) – Historian, former director of the Royal Castle in Warsaw
28. Piotr Franaszek, PhD (hab.) – associate professor at the Institute of History, Jagiellonian University
29. Justyna Galant – University of Warsaw

30. Magdalena Gawlik – President of the Idea Artis Poloniae Foundation
31. Tomasz Głowiński, PhD (hab.) – associate professor at the Institute of History, University of Wrocław; Vice President of the Polish Community Association
32. Wiesława Ignacy Goryczka – anti-communist opposition activist (1980–1989)
33. August Grabski, PhD (hab.) – historian, University of Warsaw
34. Piotr Gulczyński – member of the Council of the Kulski Foundation; President of the Lech Wałęsa Institute Foundation (2000–2014)
35. Robert Gwiazdowski, PhD (hab.) – associate professor at the Faculty of Law and Administration, Łazarski University
36. Marek Hackemer – anti-communist NZS activist (1980–1982), IT specialist
37. Professor Mikołaj Iwanow, PhD (hab.) – University of Opole; Chairman of the Board of the “For Your and Our Freedom” Foundation
38. Tadeusz Janicki, PhD (hab.) – associate professor of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań; President of the Polish Association of Economic History
39. Janina Jankowska (nom de guerre “Jasia”) – medic in the Home Army, Warsaw Uprising fighter with the “Żywiciel” Combat Group
40. Łukasz Jasina, PhD – historian and journalist
41. Mirosław Jasiński, MD, PhD – pediatrician and pediatric neurologist
42. Anetta Jaworska-Rutkowska, Caritas, former director Historical Department Warsaw Uprising Museum
43. Bogusław Kamola (nom de guerre “Hipek”) – Home Army soldier, “Żyrafa” Combat Group, 227th Platoon
44. Zofia Antonina Kawalek, née Kulski – great-granddaughter of Julian Spitosław Kulski
45. Jolanta Kessler-Chojecka – journalist, documentary filmmaker
46. Jacek Kornacki, PhD (hab.) – retired Institute of Computer Science, Polish Academy of Sciences
47. Professor Marek Kornat, PhD (hab.) – Professor at the Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences – Soviet history expert
48. Roman Kowalczyk – former Lower Silesian Superintendent of Education, historian
49. Mariusz Kowalski — Director of the Museum of the “Cursed Soldiers” in Ostrołęka
50. Andrzej Krajewski, PhD – historian
51. Professor Zdzisław Krasnodębski – sociologist, social philosopher
52. Bernadeta Kruk-Manasterska – anti-communist NZS activist (1985–1989), historian
53. Julian S. Kulski II
54. Stefan Kulski
55. Edward Leszczyński – author of books on German war crimes against children: Sonderbehandlung, Dzieci z Litzmannstadt, Z jakiej paki
56. Professor Marcin Naęcz-Niesiołowski, PhD (hab.), Director of the Grand Theatre in Łódź
57. Jerzy Malinowski – anti-communist opposition activist (1980–1989)
58. Professor Gościwit Malinowski, PhD (hab.) – University of Wrocław
59. Andrzej Manasterski – anti-communist NZS activist (1985–1990), historian
60. Wojciech Markert – head of the Historical Department, Warsaw Rising Museum
61. Paweł “Naval” Mateńczuk – member of the Council of the Kulski Foundation, Plenipotentiary of the Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Poland
62. Piotr Mazurek – Vice-Chair of the Culture Committee, Warsaw City Council
63. Witold Mędykowski, PhD (hab.) – Historian
64. Tomasz Michałowski – Vice-President of the Association of Home Army “Żywiciel” Group Soldiers and Guardians of Their Tradition, Warsaw City Councilor

65. Marcin Miszczuk – Vice-President of the Association of Home Army “Żywiciel” Group Soldiers and Guardians of Their Tradition
66. Marta Morawiecka – editor of the biweekly Prawda jest ciekawa (Truth is Interesting)
67. Paweł Musiał – city Councilor of Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki
68. Małgorzata Naimska – former director of the Polish PEN Club Office and of the Warsaw City Cultural Bureau; currently member of the Warsaw Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage
69. Marcin Nałęcz-Niesiołowski – conductor, Director of the Grand Theatre in Łódź
70. Professor Andrzej Nowak, PhD (hab.) – Institute of History, Jagiellonian University; Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences
71. Małgorzata Nowak, MD – Physician
72. LtCol (ret.) Jakub Nowakowski, nom de guerre “Tomek” – Warsaw Uprising veteran, soldier of “Zośka” Battalion and “Żniwiarz” Combat Group of the Home Army;
73. Fr. Adam Nyk, SDB, PhD – director of the Polish School at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Valletta
74. Iwona Nyk – member of the Council of the Kulski Foundation
75. Monika Odrobińska – journalist, author of the book Dzieci Wynnane (“Exiled Children”)
76. Łukasz Osiecki – member of the Council of the Kulski Foundation
77. Marcin Ozdarski MD – physician
78. Dariusz Pawłoś – former Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Germany
79. Maria Piasecka
80. Maria Dorota Pieńkowska – poet and writer
81. Robert Pieńkowski – anti-communist NZS activist (1985–1991), historian, Wrocław history educator
82. Genowefa Pleskot – Holocaust witness
83. Arkadiusz Postek – advocate and volunteer for Warsaw Uprising veterans and military veterans
84. Radosław Potrac – president of the Warsaw Friends Association, Teacher of the Year 2023
85. Ryszard Praszquier, PhD – retired, Institute of Social Studies, University of Warsaw
86. Krzysztof Przybył – President of the Board of the Polish Promotional Emblem Foundation (Fundacja Polskiego Godła Promocyjnego) [terazpolska.pl](http://terazpolska.pl)
87. Professor Andrzej Przyłębski, PhD (hab.) – former Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Germany
88. Łukasz Przybysz, PhD - University of Warsaw
89. Dariusz Przybytek, PhD – University of Wrocław; member of the National Council of the Polish Community Association
90. Dr Krzysztof Rak
91. Bożena Ratter – retired employee of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences
92. Wojciech Reszczyński – radio and television journalist
93. Jadwiga Rogala, MD – physician
94. Rafał Rogulski – Director of the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity
95. Professor Jan Rydel, PhD (hab.) – historian at the Jagiellonian University
96. Piotr Sałek – Vice-President of the Association of Home Army “Żywiciel” Group Soldiers and Guardians of Their Tradition
97. Justyna Schulz, PhD – Chief Analyst, Western Institute
98. Piotr Skwieciński – former Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Armenia
99. Sebastian Sosiński – Mayor of Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki
100. Alex Storzynski – Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Kosciuszko Foundation, author of Spies in My Blood: Secrets of a Polish Family’s Fight Against Nazis and Communists
101. Professor Zbigniew Stawrowski – philosopher, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University

102. Urszula Stępień-Stopa
103. Professor Grzegorz Strauchold, PhD (hab.) – Institute of History, University of Wrocław
104. Anna Stupnicka-Bando (nom de guerre “Anka”) – medic in the Home Army “Żywiciel” Combat Group, President of the Polish Association of the Righteous Among the Nations
105. Dariusz Subocz, PhD – director of the Museum of Writing and Printing in Grębobcin, lecturer at the University of the Arts in Poznań
106. Barbara Sułek-Kowalska – journalist
107. Professor Mirosław Szumiło, PhD (hab.) – Department of Social History and Education, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin
108. Michał Świokło – city councilor of Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki
109. Konrad Tarnopolski – President of the Association of Home Army “Żywiciel” Group Soldiers and Guardians of Their Tradition
110. Jacek Taylor, attorney-at-law – Chairman of the Board of the Polish Underground State Foundation
111. Ewa Tomaszewska – anti-communist democratic opposition activist, member of Solidarity trade union
112. Małgorzata Łukasiewicz-Traczyńska, MSc, Eng., architect – president of the Dobry Grunt Foundation
113. Krzysztof Tranda – architect, grandson of Julian Spitosław Kulski
114. Wanda Trandowa, née Kulska – daughter of Julian Spitosław Kulski
115. Hubert Trammer – participant in the New European Bauhaus Round Table, a European Commission’s initiative (2021–2024)
116. Michał Urbańczyk, PhD (hab.) – associate professor of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, President of the Harlan Foundation
117. Jolanta Wajda
118. Marcin Wawrzyniak – attorney-at-law, judge of the Tribunal of State
119. Małgorzata Wichowska – curator at the Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw
120. Waław Wierzbieniec, PhD (hab.) – associate professor of the University of Rzeszów, head of the Jewish History and Culture Department
121. Professor Piotr Wilczek, PhD (hab.) – former Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the United States (2016–2021) and to the United Kingdom (2022–2025)
122. Bronisław Wildstein - writer, publicist
123. Michał Wilski
124. Professor Zdzisław Julian Winnicki, PhD (hab.) – founder and long-time President of the Society for the Preservation of Polish Graves in the East
125. Professor Michał Wojciechowski, PhD (hab.) – professor emeritus, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn
126. Tomasz Wróblewski – President of the Warsaw Enterprise Institute
127. Stefan Zadrożny (nom de guerre “Witek”) – Home Army soldier, “Żyrafa” Combat Group, 227th Platoon
128. Professor Waław Maria Zawadowski, nom de guerre “Gacek” – member of the “Gray Ranks” WWII Scouts Resistance Organisation
129. Professor Zofia Zielińska, PhD (hab.) – professor emerita, Faculty of History, University of Warsaw



130. Jacek Zieliński, PhD (hab.) – associate professor at the Institute of Philosophy, University of Wrocław
131. Wanda Zwinogrodzka – theatre and literary critic, columnist
132. Professor Andrzej Zybertowicz, PhD (hab.) – advisor to Presidents of the Republic of Poland Lech Kaczyński and Andrzej Duda