

history of ancestors and their colleagues and friends who disappeared during the German Nazi occupation of Poland. The histories in *East West Street* extend in many directions, all of which are linked to Sands's central concerns that lie in the areas of Poland devastated by war and the Holocaust. Here he searches for any records of his ancestors and for any ancestors of Hersch Lauterpacht and Rafael Lemkin. Lauterpacht worked tirelessly to ensure that the phrase "crimes against humanity" became enshrined in international law during the Nuremberg trials. Lemkin also tried diligently, but failed to ensure that the term "genocide" was also enshrined at Nuremberg. Since then, however, "genocide" has come to describe the horror of the indescribable in places such as Rwanda, Cambodia, and Gulag archipelago of the Soviets.

In a generous gesture toward his readers, Sands has incorporated something not seen often enough in the writing of history—good maps. These are not one or two contemporary maps, which are often of limited use for a country such as Poland where borders shifted repeatedly during the period covered by *East West Street*. Instead, Sands has provided accurate and often detailed historical maps of LWÓW 1911, LWÓW & ŻÓŁKIEW 1930, ŻÓŁKIEW East-West Street 1854, GENERAL GOVERNMENT-NAZI-OCCUPIED POLAND 1943, LVIV 2016, and CENTRAL EUROPE 1920. Much of the sweep of history in this book is clarified with reference to these maps. Some of them also provide the locations of the former residences of a number of the central figures in *East West Street*.

Sands has also provided photographs of a number of Polish Christian figures, German Nazi *Gauleiters*, the residences of relatives, and other figures in *East West Street*. He has reproduced photographs of sessions of the Nuremberg trial, some of which do not appear in the official collections of Nuremberg photographs and were previously unpublished. Most moving are the photographs of relatives who disappeared during the war, and of the German Nazi crimes against humanity and genocide. Most damning are the photographs of the major participants in the Nazi enterprise,

those vile and amoral figures who always seem to be among us. Such a major participant is Hans Frank, the governor general of that part of occupied Poland that was *not* directly annexed to the Reich. Frank warmly befriended high-ranking Nazi officers, and in a photograph on page 219 he is pictured hosting a luxurious banquet for laughing Nazis while Polish Christians are executed in the streets, and Jews are transported to Nazi death camps. *East West Street* is occasionally a difficult book to read but it is a necessary book, with a deeply thoughtful and often tender heart.

*East West Street* is deeply committed to recovering more of Poland's lost history of betrayal by Western powers, as well as genocide and crimes against humanity committed by her occupiers. This is a book that clarifies the nature and devastation of Nazism in ways that are seldom encountered. Δ

My deep thanks to my colleague Kasia Seydegart,  
who read an early version of this essay  
while I recovered from a concussion.

## November 11, 2016

### Polish Independence Day in Washington's Polish Embassy

On November 16, 2016, Polish Ambassador to the United States Piotr Wilczek held a reception at the Embassy on the occasion of the 98<sup>th</sup> anniversary of regaining sovereignty by Poland after World War 1. Below is his speech to the assembled guests. Printed by permission.



President Andrzej Duda and Ambassador Piotr Wilczek.  
Photo: Krzysztof Sikorski/KPRP

**L**adies and Gentlemen, Welcome! Thank you for being here, and thank you for joining me as we celebrate Poland's Independence Day.

Having recently arrived in Washington, I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself to all of you as Poland's New Ambassador and express how much I look forward to working with all of you during my tenure to strengthen U.S.-Polish relations. I am excited about this new adventure and hope the next few years will further enhance our strong collaboration. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of so many friends of Poland, but especially Members of the United States Congress, including the Co-Chairs of the House Poland Caucus (Congressman Tim Murphy and Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur. Congratulations on your reelection and thank you for all of you do for Poland on Capitol Hill. I also want to welcome all of the high ranking officials from the Administration and Government Agencies in addition to members of the Diplomatic Corps. Most of all, I want to welcome members of the Polish American community. It is your sacrifice and commitment over the past decades that allowed Poland to be free. On this important day, I want to say thank you and assure you are always welcomed in this home.

It must be a testament to the optimism of us Poles that we call this the 98<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence, even though fully 50 of those 98 years were spent under partial or total Soviet occupation and six under German... Well, in the end, the optimists among us were proven right to keep open for us a symbolic bridge of memory connecting the past with the present, creating a sense of continuity with Poland whose freedom was won by our forefathers in 1918. Ironically, the occupiers did their best to keep the memory of our nation's freedom alive by celebrating not November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, which marked the birth of free Poland after 123 years of captivity, but November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1917, the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, which was being imposed on us from abroad. And so every year, we were inadvertently forced to remember the symbolic difference those four days made—keeping the anniversary of independence alive became an act of defiance.

This is probably why it is difficult for us to celebrate our Independence without also celebrating our freedom. But while we can number the years of Independent Poland and calculate the anniversaries, quantifying or even

defining the principle of freedom is much more difficult. It is not, however, impossible – and there is even a number for it.

About a year ago, Pew Research Center set out to find a global yardstick with which to measure not exactly freedom itself, but an idea closely related to it: support for the principle of free expression around the world – and tolerance for seeing it suppressed. To explore how countries compare on attitudes about freedom of speech, Pew turned to statistics and developed a *free expression index*. The idea of reducing a philosophical principle to a mathematical formula may sound unconvincing, even preposterous, but it does offer an objective measure of something that is inherently nebulous. The *free expression index* combines responses to questions about whether certain types of speech and press should be allowed, or whether they should be censored. To the extent that numbers can capture convictions and approximate preferences of entire societies, the survey does what it promises: It tells the story of global attitudes towards freedom on all continents with mathematical precision.

Two countries in particular emerge at the top of the list as home to the most unequivocal supporters of free expression, no matter how imprudent or offensive that expression may seem. They are – and I promise I did not doctor the data just for this occasion -- the United States of America and Poland. The rest of the world follows in more or less predictable succession.

The numbers actually show that Americans and Poles have at least this one thing in common: they cherish freedom of expression, the right to tell their governments – and each other – exactly what they think.

Somehow, this finding does not seem surprising. And it is not new. After all, we know that the cause of freedom is what brought two Polish patriots, Kościuszko and Pułaski, to America to fight in the New World for the country they lost on the Old Continent—even then, the just war for the independence of the United States promised to keep alive the idea of a nation of free men, claiming their right to dignity and self-determination. The cause of freedom is what inspired young American fighters more than a century later to form the Kościuszko Squadron

in order to “repay the debt” of gratitude to the eponymous general by defending his country’s newly-regained independence in the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1920. Finally, it is the cause of freedom and the desire for independence that drove three generations of Poles to oppose two of the twentieth century most brutal totalitarian regimes, no matter the cost, until they had their country back—a nation of free men, claiming their right to dignity and self-determination.

Incidentally, Pew Research Center published its *free expression index* shortly after Poland’s last presidential and parliamentary elections. For the first time since the fall of communism in Poland, one party won the presidency and scored an unprecedented landslide victory that gave it a parliamentary majority along with the mandate to form the government alone. Those elections mark a shift: the coming to power of the political class with roots in anti-Nazi and anti-communist underground, Solidarity movement, and student organizations committed, above all, to ending the occupation of Poland by the Soviet army and winning back Poland’s independence.

Few outside of Poland realize that it is this commitment to the country’s independence, rather than the notions of political left and right, that is the true demarcation line in Polish politics.

Independent Poland is a steadfast ally of the United States, unequivocally committed to the Trans-Atlantic Alliance and cooperation between our two countries. Acutely aware of national security and energy security demands in Europe and around the world, Poland is not only a proud NATO ally, ready to do its part, but also a loyal EU member, a true partner committed to Europe’s security, energy independence, and compassionate treatment of those who come to our borders in need of help—more than one million Ukrainians fleeing Russian aggression found refuge in Poland.

Our strength and security are in our independence. Our generosity comes from our freedom.

Europe’s forgotten refugees—our next-door neighbors whose plight no longer makes the news—remind us how fortunate we are to have our freedoms and opportunities. As we celebrate our independence, let us never take them for granted.

I would now like to introduce Dr. Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, whom I asked to say a few words about Poland’s independence in the broader historical context. Dr. Chodakiewicz is a historian who authored numerous articles and monographs published in English and Polish, most recently the magisterial *Intermarium: The Lands Between the Black and the Baltic Seas*. He is Professor of History at the Institute of World Politics in Washington, D.C., a graduate school of statecraft, where he holds the Kościuszko Chair in Polish Studies. His unmatched expertise in modern European history earned him a presidential appointment to the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Council. Dr. Chodakiewicz will share with us his encyclopedic knowledge of history and an unmatched command of facts born of a lifetime spent in archives and in the field. He never lets his audiences forget that the past is not a lofty idea or a theory frozen in a book, but that it was once lived, imbued with all the imperfections and surprises of human nature. Filled with joys, grudges, fears, toothaches, and random acts of cruelty or kindness, the only way the past differs from the present is that it had already happened. Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome Professor Marek Jan Chodakiewicz. Happy Independence Day!

## MORE BOOKS

**Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro, *Kwestia wojskowa, czyli o prawidłach wojny i pokoju dwie księgi (wraz z pewnymi pomniejszych pismami tegoż autora)*** [Militaria, or the rules of war and peace in two books, with the addition of shorter works by the same author]. Translated from Latin into Polish by Jagoda Chmielewska and Bartłomiej Bednarek. Introduction by Marek Tracz-Tryniecki. Polish Political Thought - Military Library Series, vol. 2. Warsaw: Narodowe Centrum Kultury (<http://nck.pl>), 2016. 839 pages. Notes, index. ISBN 978-83-7982-160-0. Hardcover. Illustrations. In Polish and Latin.

This handsomely produced and carefully edited bilingual edition of Fredro’s writings on military issues is long overdue. Fredro’s works were virtually forgotten as the Polish