

February 10, 2021

President Andrzej Duda  
Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland  
ul. Wiejska 10  
00-902 Warszawa  
Poland


Dear President Duda:

The American Historical Association respectfully expresses its continued concern about events taking place in Poland related to the study of history and especially regarding historical research on World War II and the Holocaust. We have been following events in Poland carefully since 2016. We sent a letter to you, dated November 14, 2016, with respect to the possibility of legal proceedings against our colleague Jan Tomasz Gross. We are now especially concerned about recent legal proceedings against two distinguished historians, Professors Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, who have been accused of “slandering the memory” of Edward Malinowski in their co-edited book, *Night Without End*. We strongly maintain that a legal procedure is not the place to mediate historical debates.

Professors Engelking and Grabowski have long and distinguished careers as scholars of the 20th century. Professor Engelking is a historical sociologist and associate professor in the internationally respected Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and possesses an international reputation as the author or editor of numerous works on 20th-century history. Professor Grabowski, professor of history at the University of Ottawa, is an equally respected and distinguished scholar, with an impressive global reputation. He is, moreover, the co-founder of the Polish Center for Holocaust Research at the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The right of historians to conduct impartial research is imperative to the discipline of history and to the ability of all of us to understand and learn from our past. This includes work that reveals uncomfortable facts about a nation’s history. No nation is free of such blemishes, but the search for historical accuracy is important both for the historical record and for achieving the healing of still-smarting wounds. We urge you to uphold the rights of historians to investigate the past without legal harassment and with no fear of reprisals for making public their historical- and evidence-based findings.

Sincerely,



James Grossman  
Executive Director

CC: Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, Deputy Prime Minister Jarosław Gowin, Deputy Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński