

December 3, 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 regrettably finds itself compelled to express once more our dismay and 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 closely since 2016, when we sent a letter to you, dated November 14, 2016, with respect to the possible legal proceedings against our colleague Jan Tomasz Gross. Earlier this year, in a letter dated February 10, 2021, we again expressed concern about the legal proceedings against two distinguished historians, Professor Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, who were accused of “slandering the memory” of Edward Malinowski in their co-edited book, *Night without End*. In that letter, we strongly maintained that a legal procedure is not the place to mediate historical debates.

Unfortunately, the situation for Polish historians, especially those working on World War II and the Holocaust, apparently has not improved and scholars continue to be harassed, threatened with dismissal, or forced to resign. The recent dismissal of Dr. Sławomir Poleszak, a prominent scholar who holds the Knight’s Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, from his position at the Institute of National Remembrance, a major state-supported institution for historical research, is yet another incident in a discouraging trend. Apparently, he was dismissed because his 2020 article on Józef Franczak, in Poleszak’s words, “caused an outcry from the so-called patriotic circles, who [also] demanded that I be dismissed from my work.” His dismissal is particularly distressing because it follows so closely on the forced resignation of Professor Sławomir Lukasiewicz from the Institute.

We therefore ask you and your fellow leaders of the Polish state to protect the rights of historians and other scholars to conduct impartial research into history and to advance the search for historical accuracy in a still controversial, and often painful, past. We call upon you to uphold the rights of historians to investigate freely the past without fear of harassment or reprisals for publishing their scholarship and evidence-based findings.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Jones
President



James Grossman
Executive Director