

Institute of National Remembrance

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The opening of the 'Emigration Polonica - from the collections of member institutions of the Conference of Polish Museums, Archives and Libraries in the West' exhibition – Lublin, 5 March 2020

The 'Emigration Polonica - from the collections of member institutions of the Conference of Polish Museums, Archives and Libraries in the West' exhibition was opened on 5 March 2020 at the John Paul II Catholic University in Lublin.

The event was attended by the President of the Institute of National Remembrance, Dr Jarosław Szarek, who began his speech by recalling that 80 years ago, on 5 March 1940, Stalin signed the decision to murder thousands of Poles detained in Soviet camps and prisons, which led to the Katyń Massacre.

Dr Szarek emphasized the significant role of those who emigrated in preserving Polish achievements and collecting memorabilia on Polish history. The head of the Institute of National Remembrance also referred to the importance of Polish emigration centers, as well as the role they fulfilled while Poland was under Soviet influence.

- *Numerous great works of art, which were a form of self expression*

which could not have taken place in Poland, were created in exile said President Szarek.

He further emphasized how important the exhibits in the care of Polish institutions operating abroad really are. - *These are priceless things, which are often illustrated in history textbooks, hardly anyone realizes, however, that the originals are far beyond the borders of Poland* - explained the President of the Institute of National Remembrance. He also added that the exhibition itself is a tribute to the work and involvement of Polish emigration centers in preserving Polish history and heritage.



Paweł Zielony representing the IPN Archive also took the floor. He said that it was impossible to present all of the exhibits collected by the 25 Polish institutions abroad. Each of them had to choose particular documents, which was quite a challenge due to their extensive collections.

The Rector of the Catholic University of Lublin, Fr. Prof. Antoni Dębiński and Marek Skulimowski, the President of the Kościuszko Foundation also took part in the discussion.



The exhibition will be presented until 27 March 2020.

The exhibits presented on the boards come from the collections of institutions particularly important for the Polish nation. These centres, located in 9 countries on 4 continents, are a mainstay of Polish culture and Polish diaspora fostering the traditions and history of the Polish

nation.

The organization associating these institutions is the Conference of Polish Museums, Archives and Libraries in the West (MABPZ), which has been in operation since 1979. Since then it has been treated as a loose association, without general authorities and no formal structure. The idea of its creation as a conference of Polish cultural institutions in the West appeared as early as in 1977. Currently, the organization gathers 25 institutions.

For many years, at the annual meetings the representatives of the Conference of Museums, Archives and Polish Libraries in the West have documented the work of emigration institutions. The goal of these meetings is also to discuss problems and to search for solutions together, as well as initiate projects connected with the maintaining of Polish national heritage abroad.

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