



# SOLIDARITY IN EUROPE: ROMANIA AND POLAND IN SEPTEMBER 1939

*In the end I would like to mention the generous welcome given by Romania to my fellow citizens and to the Polish Government during the Second World War [...]*

Pope John Paul II - Bucharest, 7th of May 1999

## 20TH CENTURY: THE CENTURY OF CLASHES





**On September 1st, 1939 the world watched in shocked silence as the armies of Nazi Germany stormed into Poland unleashing a new and horrifying type of warfare, they called it "BLITZKRIEG" – "THE LIGHTNING WAR"...**



3th of September 1939 Great Britain and France declares war to Germany, but not a single bullet has been fired. It was named **the Phony War** because they didn't intended at all to provoke Hitler.



Le Matin

66<sup>e</sup> ANNÉE - N° 20.252 LUNDI 4 SEPTEMBRE 1939

# L'ANGLETERRE ET LA FRANCE entrent en guerre contre l'Allemagne

## L'ULTIMATUM ANGLAIS EXPIRAIT HIER A 11 HEURES ET L'ULTIMATUM FRANÇAIS A 17 HEURES

### Les deux puissances demandaient au Reich l'évacuation immédiate de la Pologne

Dans un discours radiodiffusé M. Neville Chamberlain annonce la résolution britannique

« Nous faisons la guerre parce qu'on nous l'impose » dit par T. S. F. M. Daladier

La France défend

Une proclamation de Hitler

The Courier-Mail

# BRITAIN DECLARES WAR AGAINST GERMANY OVER POLAND

## FRANCE ALSO ACTS

### Australia With Britain, Says Mr Menzies

#### Hitler Ignores Ultimatum

Britain yesterday declared herself at war with Germany. Last night the Australian Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies), in a national broadcast, declared that Australia also was at war.

### MR. MENZIES' MESSAGE

#### "AUSTRALIA AT WAR"

WAR CRISIS NEWS—Continued

September 17, 1939



Friday, September 1, 1939 - Sunday, September 17, 1939

## THE SOVIET INVASION OF POLAND



*We were completely disoriented, we had no idea about the Ribbentrop-Molotow pact. We did not know if they [the Soviet army] were coming to join us in our fight against the Germans or if this was a new attack. When we started to fight and the Soviet planes started to drop bombs on us, it became clear what was going on [...]*

- Stanislaw Matkowski

Polish Army Officer whose unit was stationed on the Polish-Soviet border in September 1939.

**In fact the Polish, the Romanians and the entire World didn't know that Hitler and Stalin have agreed to divide the Eastern Europe between them!**

**Polonia has been divided by the two Totalitarian powers (Germany and USSR) and it disappeared.**



**The Polish tragedy has not remained unnoticed in Romania.**

**Instead of the German threats, the Romanian Government has decided to open the border for the Polish people.**



Wilhelm Fabricius



Viaceslav Molotov

**The German and the Soviet Union have protested violently. The German Embassy has declared that the help for Poland will be considered as a hostile act against the Third Reich**

# The Governement meeting



*"The Golden Train"*, a Polish – Romanian production, 1986



# Polish officials have been refugees in Romania

During the night of 17 September 1939, after Poland had been entirely conquest, the Polish Government, the president Ignacy Moscicki, the Foreign Minster Beck and other officials have crossed the Romanian border



# Polish officials have been refugees in Romania

The President have been hosted in Bicz, which was the nearest domain of the Romanian Crown, then, on 25 December 1939 he have left to Switzerland.



# Polish officials have been refugees in Romania

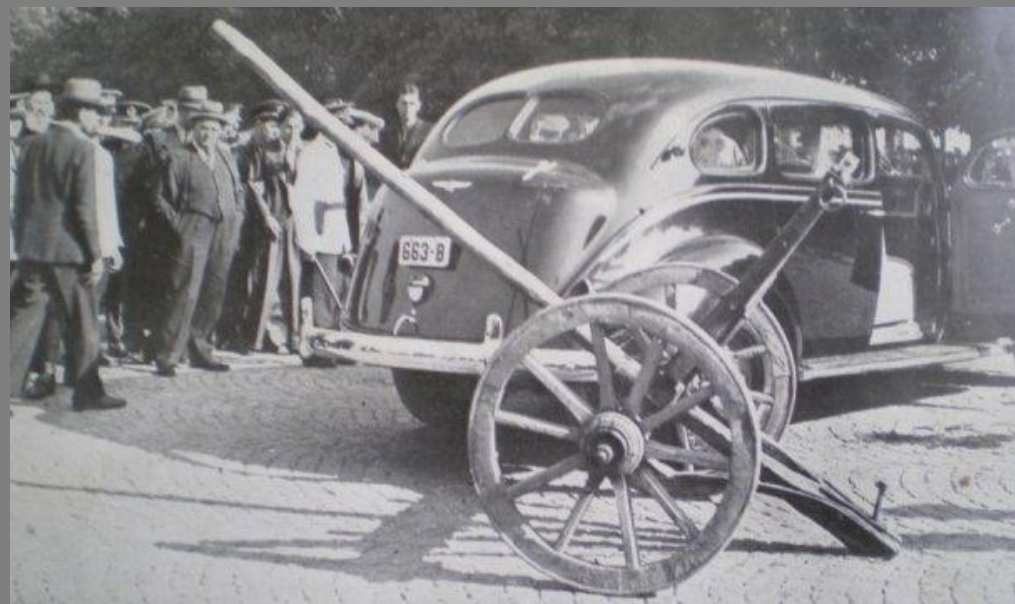
The Foreign Minister, **Jozef Beck**, has been accommodated by the authorities at a luxurious hotel in Brasov. There he wrote a volume of memoirs, *Ostatni raport (Final Report)*.



He died in Romania, on 5 June 1944. In May 1991, Beck's remains were repatriated to Poland and interred at Warsaw's Powazki Military Cemetery.

# România in a great danger

Romania was practically the only European state which took this risk. Two days after the Polish President arrived at Bicz, the Prime minister, Armand Călinescu, has been assassinated by a comando trained and sent from Germany.



21 septembrie 1939

# "The Golden Train"

The entire Gold thesaurus of the National Bank of Poland has been sent to Romania in order to transit to the West! A part of it remained in Bucharest. On 10 October 1939, the Bank Polski delegation has been given to the National Bank of Romania 51 wooden boxes, containing **2.734 kg pure Gold**.



In September 1947 the Gold were returned to Warsaw

# „The Neptun Operation“

In June 1944, the authorities took the decision to transport the entire gold (including the Polish one) to Tismana Monastery.



**Only in February 1947 it was possible to return the Gold to Bucharest!**

# Wawel Castle Thesaurus

On 17 September 1939, the Wawel Castle Thesaurus has been also transferred to Romania.

It contained priceless items, like:

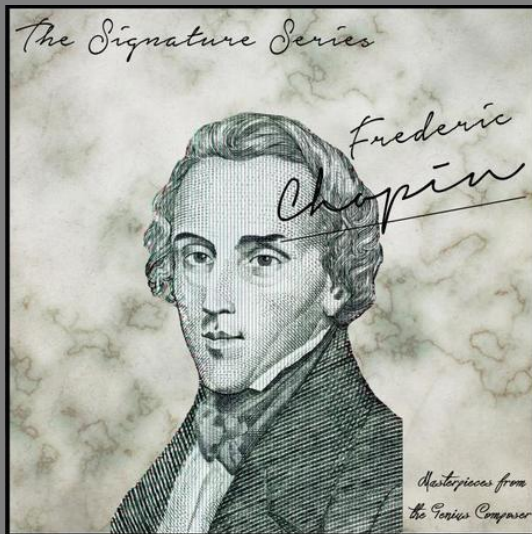
- the Incoronation of the Polish kings sword;
- the Knight of the Order of the Holy Spirit cape, gift from Louis XIV after the siege of Vienna;
- a Crown since 1792;
- the tapistery collection of Sigismund al II-lea August.



# Wawel Castle Thesaurus

The thesaurus remained in Bucharest until November 1939, then sent to France from Constanta. Here it has been completed with the most precious manuscripts of the Polish National Library. :

- The Gutenberg Bible (1453-1455), one of the 45 known existing pieces;
- 49 of the Chopin.'s manuscripts





**More than 100.000 Polish refugees came to Romania, being accommodated here and helped to continue their journey to the Western countries.**





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