Over the past several years, Poles from across the country have taken to the streets in unprecedented numbers, contesting and supporting a widening array of political and social issues. They have marched for (and against) refugee asylum, gender equality, LGBTQ rights, school reform, access to reproductive services, agricultural vs. animal rights, censorship, Sunday closings, and the packing of the Constitutional Tribunal, to name a few. National and religious holidays, historical anniversaries such as the 2010 Smolensk plane crash, and election results have become moments of spontaneous or orchestrated demonstrations, often pitting opposing sides against one another in urban spaces. Echoes of these public spectacles have brought Polonia into the streets in simultaneous events across the globe.

Social protest and politically tinged parades or celebrations are, of course, time honored strategies that have been employed strategically throughout Polish history and that were instrumental in bringing down the communist regime in 1989. What is it about public assembly that makes it such a dominant form of political engagement in Poland? How has this medium evolved during its long history and what strategies or techniques have remained consistent? This jointly sponsored UIC and Polish Studies Association conference will focus on the rhetorical tools and language that marchers have used in their demonstrations and on the ways social memory, symbolic forms, and spaces have influenced the ways Poles gather. What does the nature of social protest tell us about Poland and Poles in the modern period? And how can we understand the current moment in Polish social protest within the context of the country's own history of resistance, and in comparison to similar global movements?

Polish Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Polish Studies Association plan a two-day virtual conference highlighting resistance as a persistent medium in Polish political interactions. We seek presentations examining:

- historical continuities and discontinuities between protest movements
• variations in leadership structure, demographics of participation, and dynamics of gender and sexuality
• uses of language, rhetoric, and graphic or visual representation
• changing spatial dimensions, including the uses of urban space and the geographical or urban/rural distribution of protest mobilization
• organizational strategies, uses of social media, and interactions with news media
• regime efforts to suppress or manipulate public protest actions
• comparisons between social unrest in Poland and other global movements such as Black Lives Matter or right-wing nationalist movements

The conference is scheduled for March 4-5, 2021 and will be held via Zoom through the University of Illinois at Chicago. **Participation is limited to current members of the Polish Studies Association.*** We invite abstracts of approximately 250 words by December 14 and will inform finalists of their acceptance by January 8. Presentations should be approximately 20 minutes in length. **Please submit proposals to Michał Wilczewski (mwilcz5@uic.edu) by December 14, 2020.**

* To join the PSA please visit https://polishstudiesassociation.org/membership/

**Kontakt**

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