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A Victory in Defeat: Historical Memory, Metanarratives, and the Fate of Poland in World War Two

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Oral Presentation O8.1

**A VICTORY IN DEFEAT: HISTORICAL MEMORY,
METANARRATIVES, AND THE FATE OF POLAND
IN WORLD WAR TWO**

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This paper explores the fate of Poland during and immediately after the Second World War. The paper examines the question of Western betrayal of Poland. Why some Poles felt, and continue to feel, a sense of betrayal by their allies during the war is examined. How the Poles came to understand their fate and position in the world during and after World War Two is examined. The Warsaw Uprising is taken as a case study for the Polish experience of World War Two. The degree of Allied support and intervention is discussed, along with the failures of the Polish Government-in-Exile and the Polish Home Army. The culpability of all Allied parties for the failure of the Warsaw Uprising is determined. The metanarratives of victimhood, martyrdom, and betrayal in Polish history are discussed. The Partitions of Poland, Poland's occupation during the 19th century, and Poland's experience in World War Two are examined in regard to their creation of a national Polish narrative. This narrative is defined as glorious victimhood.