



Polish Profiles

The King of Steel

By: **Kaya Mirecka Ploss**, Ph.D., Executive Director
Jan Karski Institute, Baltimore, MD

Tadeusz Sendzimir was the world foremost expert on steel. He knew how to bend it, to straighten it or to make it indestructible to all kinds of elements. He was asked to supervise the steel and the making of the first American space craft. Sendzimir was the holder of over 200 patents throughout the world, 73 alone in the United States.

Some who knew Sendzimir well said, "his heart too was made of steel - hard and cold," mostly towards his own family. He was often estranged from his children. At some point he forbade them to visit the family home. His daughter, Wanda once said, "Father's real children were his inventions, we were just the biological ones."

The Sendzimir family name goes back to the 8th century. It was first known as Sędzivoj. Tadeusz grew up with grand and noble stories of Poland's heydays of the 16th and 17th centuries. It was the time when King Władysław IV expanded Poland's borders east of Kiev.

Tadeusz Sendzimir was born in the city of Lwów, now in the Western Ukraine, but then it had been part of Poland for six centuries. While he was studying, Tad, as he was called, worked in a neighboring repair shop. Every tool and every gadget was of interest to him. Tad studied for three years at the Lwów Politechnik when his formal education was brought to an end. Later on, Sendzimir was fond of saying that the repair shop was the beginning of his education and the rest he learned from his uncle on his Mother's side, Stanisław Tolleczko, who was a professor of Chemistry at the Lwów University. Uncle Tolleczko took a liking to Tad and saw the potentials in this thin, energetic relative of his. He invited Tad to spend time in his laboratory. The Lab was filled with strangely twisted pipes, funnels, vases, distilling flasks and metal receptacles. Jet blue flames sprouted from pipes and there Tad was taught how to heat glass, bend it and blow it to the desired shape.

In 1914 when the First World War broke out, Tad's parents and his younger siblings moved to Vienna, Austria and Tad himself left for Kiev. He lived there for 4 years, and made his living working in an Auto Repair shop. Four years later in 1918, Tad boarded a steamer that brought him to Shanghai. He remained in China for 11 years. With a Russian friend he met in China, Kola Alferief, they opened an automobile repair shop. It was called the Sendzimir Repair Shop.

In 1923, Tad Sendzimir married the sister of his partner, Barbara Alferief. All the time he tried to get a visa to the United States. The country of Edison, Ford and the Wright Brothers was a dream of his. A year after his marriage, a son was born to the Sendzimirs. They named him Michael. Barbara's family hoped that the marriage and the child would change their daughter for the better, who has been pampered and spoiled always bored and acting irresponsible. Regrettably that didn't happen. The marriage of Tadeusz and Barbara fell apart. Later they reconciled but only for the outside world. They lived under the same roof, but led separate lives.

In 1930, Tad's dream came true. He received a Visa and left with Barbara for the United States. Their son Michael was left behind with Barbara's parents in Russia. The marriage was never patched up, but she and Tad couldn't agree on a divorce.

They arrived in San Francisco, stayed a few weeks in New York and settled in Chicago. However, during the depression, the US was not a country to welcome innovators and entrepreneurs, so Tadeusz and Barbara left for Poland.

Tadeusz thought that his new way to galvanize steel will make him wealthy. To his disappointment, Poland's industry was barely breathing, but with the help of Joseph Beck, then Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, things started to look up. Beck and Tad knew each other from Lwów where they had been schoolmates. Beck steered him to a man in a small Silesian town, Kostuchna and there together with his new partner, Zygmunt Inwald, Sendzimir started to work on his new steel galvanizing process.

Word was making its way across Europe in 1934 that a revolutionary product invented by a man called Sendzimir is coming from a little town in upper Silesia. In the meantime, while in Paris, an industrialist by the name Bob Solborg, the General Manager of Armco Steel in Ohio got interested in that product and traveled to Poland to speak with Sendzimir.

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KAIZEN

(The American Way)

By: *Justyna Ball*

Our writers share their own opinions on the upcoming presidential election. The following article is the opinion of Justyna Ball. The News of Polonia does not offer an endorsement of any of the candidates.

Rain turned into snow when we finally found the end of the line. It went around Hartford's Civic Center several times. Some precautions ones held umbrellas. Most, as told, came without any bags. Some, predicting long wait, grabbed coffee at a nearby DD. We just said good-bye to Francis, our son who that day, was flying to Warsaw to study. We were late as the doors opened an hour ago. The weather was getting worse, but our spirit was surprisingly good.

Holding onto each other, we gasped for air while practically running the several blocks circling the building. You cannot cut people off and pretend that they aren't there. They all want to enter. How are we all going to fit? Let there be a miracle...

As we walked, faces passed as images in a photoplastikon.

I have never seen such diversity in one place.

There were young and old people, men and women, black and white, single and families, rich and poor... Some who I found out later, traveled all the way from Vermont, soccer moms and hockey dads. Judging from their clothing, office workers who just left their workplace, and factory workers who finished their shift, fancy and not so fancy looking people in all shapes and colors.

It was quite an array of our society.

A white grandma was holding hands with her multiracial grandchildren, making sure their hats and mittens stayed on. Entire families all came to listen to this man speak. White mamas and black mamas all came to cheer.

And yes, after some 20 minutes in line, a miracle indeed happened! The several doors next to us opened, and we were separated from them only by two lines across, of chilled to the bone people, yet everybody stood still. It was funny. People were looking at each other as if they were waiting for somebody else to do the first move and

cut off the line. Some looked around before slowly moving toward the door. People, in general, are nice as they do not want to cut in front of you, but you want to make sure you're going to be IN for the moment, so you let your worries of what others may think go. Maybe we all just accepted the idea that such a coincidence was meant to be. So I looked at Jacek, Jacek looked at me and we abandoned our post.

And the crowd poured in...

There was a mother with a girl in wheelchair before me. I was nervous about what would happen if the crowd got too excited and too pushy. In my mind, I saw headlines: "People injured, stomped at the presidential candidate rally!" But no, nothing like this happened. People walked slowly, leaving enough room for each other to breath. Although after a while, security gave up checking.

The human wave gushed and completely filled the corridors.

Seated, I sighed with disbelief, such a great view and we have no camera! Francis has it! Not me the family photographer! It better be good.

I asked several people to e-mail their pictures, and one turned out to be a teacher who was... Polish.

As other candidates departed, at this point, in these presidential elections, we have a woman running, a black man and one born in Panama.

And here we are for Barack Obama.

The son of a Kenyan father and a Kansas mother came to my attention as a keynote speaker at the last democratic convention in 2004. "My presence on this stage is pretty unlikely," he said back then. "My father was a foreign student, born and raised in a small village in Kenya. He grew up herding goats, went to school in a tin-roof shack. His father - my grandfather - was a cook, a domestic servant to the British. But my grandfather had larger dreams for his son. Through hard work and perseverance my father got a scholarship to study in a magical place, America, that shone as a beacon of freedom and an opportunity to so many who had come before.

While studying here, my father met my mother. She was born in a town on the other side of the world, in Kansas. Her father worked on oil rigs and farms through most of the Depression. The day after Pearl Harbor, my grandfather joined the military;

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NEWS OF POLONIA

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION

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Disclaimer Notice:

The Views of our columnists and letter writers do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff of the News of Polonia.

Calendar of Events

Feb 23, Sat 8:00 p.m., Los Angeles Kabaret Mru Mru - concert, parish hall of Our Lady of the Bright Mount Church at 3424 W. Adams Blvd. Information and reservations at (310) 396-2165.

24, Sun 2:00 p.m. - Los Angeles Polish Scouting Organization in Los Angeles. Recital and exhibit "To w nas kwi" (What we hold within). Classical performances and a showcase of photography and art by the talented youth of the Polish Scouts in Los Angeles. Special guest: Ryszard Urbaniak, Scoutmaster and poet from Northern California. Our Lady of the Bright Mount church hall 3424 W. Adams Blvd. Admission - \$10.00 adults, \$5.00 children.

Mar 2, Sun. - 7:00 pm, Concert spectacle Magdy Umar and Andrzej Poniedzielski at the Contemporary Club in Redlands; Information: Halina Brodzik (909) 307-1097.

15, Saturday at noon, Traditional Polish Easter Celebration and the Eighth Anniversary of the Polish Club of Laguna Woods at Clubhouse Two, 24112 Moulton Pkwy, Laguna Woods. Reservations and information at (949) 206-9122.

Apr. 1 - 4, International Championship in Alpine Skiing of Polonia I Winter Park, CO, Information: <http://www.tatrskiiclub.com>.

12 - 19, 7-Day Mexican Riviera Cruise, The Polish Club of Laguna Woods, information: (949) 206-9122.

13, Sun, 3:30 p.m. Commemoration of the Third Anniversary of the Death of Pope John Paul II, Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Edward Clark at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, 555 W. Temple St., Los Angeles, CA. Information: Richard Wideryński, Polish American Congress (562)426-9830.

Apr 24 - May 4, 2008, The Ninth Polish Film Festival Los Angeles, information: ajanda@earthlink.net

May 27 - Jun 8, China and the Yangtze River, 13 day excursion. Info: (949) 206-9122.

May 31 Sat. Pasadena Elks Lodge - Commemorating the Anniversary of the Polish Constitution of Mary 3 - "Poland Forever" - Depictions of famous Poles in history presentation followed by dinner and dancing to the music of the Dave Miron Orchestra. Pasadena Elks Lodge - 400 W. Colorado Blvd. \$55.00 per person donation to the Polish American Congress of Southern California.

Jun 8, 10:30 am -5:00pm, 9th Proud to be Polish Festival - Pope John Paul Center - 3999 Rose Drive - Yorba Linda.

Jul 13 - 1:30 p.m. Our Lady of the Bright Mount Parish Hall - Dzień Braterstwa - Helping Poles who live in the former USSR. Information and Reservations (323) 857-0208.

Aug 9 - 23, Summer Camp with Polish Language instruction in Gdansk, Poland. Information: http://polonica.edu.pl/polski_oboz_jezykowy.html.

Aug 24, 10:30 am - Polish Patriotic Anniversaries of 20th Century in Yorba Linda

Oct 1, Celebration of 400th Anniversary of Arrival of First Poles to Jamestown
19, 10:30 am - 30th Anniversary of John Paul II Election & 24th Anniversary of Fr. Jerzy Popieluszko Martyrdom Pope John Paul II Church - 3999 Rose Drive - Yorba Linda. ☐

Please send information for the calendar to Bish Petryka - e-mail: zbyskoopet@aol.com ★