

Ask Our "Man in Warsaw"

Kindly airmail all queries to:
Robert Strybel
ul. Kaniowska 24
01-529 Warsaw, Poland
or e-mail to: research6

Q: I have a couple of vests with great detail and hand sewn silk embroidery. They have been dated by a museum in the USA as 16th century or earlier. My grandfather brought them home in 1933 from Kraków. I am wondering if a museum in Poland would be interested in these items for their historical value. Would you be able to provide some guidance in this area?

BOB LA FLECHE,
waistntym2@gmail.com

A: I was informed by the National Museum in Warsaw that it accepts gifts of historic attire and at times is able to purchase new exhibit items. You would have to submit a detailed description and a clear photograph of the vest in question. Contact the museum's textile expert Ms Janowska at: mjanowski@mnw.art.pl or phone: 4822 621 1031, wewnetrzny (ext.) 304 or 338. Don't expect an English speaker to answer the phone, however. If you're not fluent in Polish you'll need a native Pole to help you.

Q: I am writing about a Polish/European bakery that just moved into a hip, young Chicago urban neighborhood. So my piece will be a bit of a primer about what makes Polish/European baked goods so unique and different. What are the biggest

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e-mail: Jackie Ahlen@yahoo.com

e-mail: gjahlen@aol.com

Czop - Soviet Empire from 4

Communist times has proven to be stronger than change. This is dangerous in the present context—Russia's return to "realpolitik", which is the subject of the second component of the Kościuszko Chair Lectures.

This year, for the first time, a guest speaker delivered a lecture at the Annual Kościuszko Chair Lectures. Dr. John Lenczkowski, who founded The Institute of World Politics (IWP) 20 years ago and who now serves as IWP's president, introduced Dr. Sebastian Von Gorka, who was born in Great Britain of Hungarian parents. The family returned to Hungary soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and Dr. Von Gorka, who is an expert on national security affairs and counter-terrorism, joined the Hungarian Government Service. Dr. Von Gorka has been a Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and he has held teaching positions at the Marshall Center in Germany. Since the autumn of 2008, Von Gorka has been living in the Washington, DC area where he teaches at the National Defense University.

At this point, Professor Chodakiewicz added a footnote. Gorka is a well known Polish historic family whose members have been active in Poland's affairs since early modern times. Dr. Von Gorka's branch of the family went to Hungary in 1848, along with Generals Dembiński, Bem and other Polish soldiers of the democratic revolution, to fight for Hungarian independence. At the age of 20, Dr. Von Gorka's father, who was active in the Catholic resistance, was arrested by the Hungarian Communist Police and sentenced to life in prison. He was freed by Hungarian freedom fighters in 1956 and fought the Soviet invaders until forced to retreat to Austria. The elder Von Gorka then went into exile in Great Britain.

Dr. Von Gorka began his lecture by remarking that though he presents himself as a Hungarian, if you scratch him deeply enough he is Polish. He went on to observe that over the 15 years during which he worked for the Hungarian Government, he tried in vain to do something positive with that "crumpled piece of paper", or Communism transformed. He tried in vain to start a political party during his years in Hungary. Although many privately supported his political program to rid Hungary of Communists in positions of public trust, none were willing to do so openly because they feared for their jobs, or for their children's scholarships at university. In short, according to Dr. Von Gorka, average Hungarian's today are intimidated by the transformed Communists who run Hungary.

Dr. Von Gorka sees America as the last best hope for those who value true freedom, but he is concerned that American and British policymakers are planning for the global challenges of the

21st century, while the thugs who run the Kremlin are engaged in a ruthless 19th century game of "Realpolitik."

Readers recall that "real" in German means "thing." Therefore, "Realpolitik" is the politics of things; the deliberate subtraction of morality based on Christian principles from politics. This deviates from the dominant Anglo-American tradition, and from the Polish and Hungarian traditions, of politics based on ideas, or on principles, rather than on things. In these countries power is put in the service of society to achieve Christian and democratic goals. By contrast, "Realpolitik" uses State power to acquire things for the benefit and aggrandizement of those who rule the State.

The leaders of today's Russia, as Professor Von Gorka observes, are in charge of a country where the average life expectancy of males is 53, the eastern portion of the country is being peopled by Chinese who cross the Amur River to find land and to marry Russian women, and the Russian population suffers from poor health and widespread alcoholism. These poor demographic conditions discourage the elite in the Kremlin from trying to rebuild Russia to increase their power and wealth. Instead, the Russian leadership decided to increase its power by using their only assets -- natural gas and oil -- to divide and to intimidate not only their neighbors in the former Soviet sphere, but countries in Western Europe too.

For example, Von Gorka pointed out that Putin's Russia is in bed with Merkel's Germany. This bodes ill for Poland and the other countries that lie between Germany and Russia. France and Italy happily buy Russian oil and gas and overlook, or minimize, Russia's increasingly belligerent posture toward countries in the former Soviet space. They consider Russia's August 2008 invasion of Georgia to be an unfortunate lapse in Russia's progress toward democracy and responsible international citizenship. This wishful thinking is counterfactual, but as long as Russian gas and oil at reasonable prices helps the economies of these countries, the leaders of these nations overlook Russian bellicosity.

Moreover, this kind of wishful thinking is also present in some influential American circles. It is an unfortunate consequence of "the propaganda of success". Some American policy makers actually believe that Putin's Russia is on the path to democracy, albeit with a few detours and unfortunate lapses, like the invasion of Georgia.

Professor Von Gorka judges that Putin's Russia will project its power more by the use of "pipelines and banks" than by "tanks and warplanes". Economic and psychological warfare are more likely to divide the Western and NATO countries; conventional military attack might unite them and thwart Russia.

Moreover, Von Gorka sees today's Russia as the key power in an anti-Western and reactionary alliance that is hostile to America as the key country in the West. So far American policymakers have not developed a grand strategy to meet this novel challenge - a Russian led coalition that includes the Venezuela of Caesar Chavez and Al Qaeda. To date nothing has been done to counter Russia's division of the NATO countries.

The lack of de-Communization, or lustration, in the former Soviet sphere and division among the NATO allies augurs well for the present leadership of the Kremlin to re-create the former Soviet Empire without recourse to armed force.

Professor Von Gorka concluded his lecture on an optimistic note. The mission of IWP is to develop a grand strategy for America as key country in the West. Upper level civil servants, who are paid by taxpayers to do so, simply do not do grand strategy anymore. They have become brainwashed by the "propaganda of success". They are developing high-minded plans for what they see as a 21st

century that will usher in a truly global society without sufficiently taking into account that the thugs of this world, led by the masters of the Kremlin, are playing by 19th century rules of "Realpolitik." The mission of IWP provides a much needed correction to this trend by putting forward the need to face the present moment with lucidity un-blinkered by the "propaganda of success." America is the last best hope for our Western civilization and IWP's focus on grand strategy is the best hope to train a national security elite to defend America. This is why Professor Von Gorka encourages us to visit the IWP web site and support this fine institution which hosts the Kościuszko Chair.

The elaboration of a grand strategy, which only goes on at IWP, requires a clear definition of what values must be defended. Far too often in the recent past Western European policymakers in Germany, France, and Italy have been excessively concerned with things (like the price of Russian gas and oil, for example) rather than with the defense of Western values. This makes them susceptible to manipulation by the Kremlin's pursuit of "Realpolitik." Far too many American policymakers are victims of the "propaganda of success" and actually believe the Kremlin is leading Russia toward a democratic republic. They do not comprehend that the Kremlin is leading an anti-American and anti-Western coalition

The histories of the United States, the Polish - Lithuanian Commonwealth, and historic Hungary (or the Lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen) are the stories of how these multi-ethnic policies have established a system of ordered liberty based on the values of Western Christendom, and then defended that system rooted in the values of our civilization from attack by countries run by tyrants. This is why the Kościuszko Chair is such a perfect fit for the mission of IWP and why IWP merits our support. □

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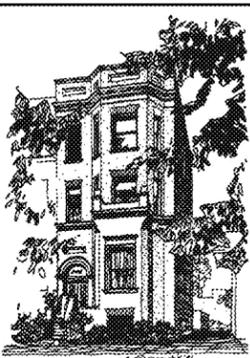
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What's Your Legacy

Many people talk about leaving their will to worthy causes, but don't have a will, and do not realize it requires a will to do so. The laws of most states make it clear that personal property goes automatically, by law, to your nearest relative, even if they are quite distant ones, unless you have a legal will that says otherwise. If you have no relative, it goes to the state. More than half of all adult Americans die without having made their wills. Most of them undoubtedly planned to do so, but never got around to it. Some had wills but didn't keep them current. When you have a will, you should update it every few years as conditions change. Also, always name an executor who will carry out your wishes. Besides money, non-cash possessions can also be used as

contributions and various donation plans can be carried out. Be a philanthropist: leave your stocks, bonds, real estate, art, valuable collection or insurance to continue the Polish - American traditions. Your will is the most important way of giving. When you're gone, it is a legacy that is not forgotten. In your will, you can specify what you would like your donation to be used for. For help in making your will, contact a competent lawyer. The Kościuszko Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that needs your help and legacy.

Kosciuszko Foundation, Washington Office

The American Center of Polish Culture

2025 "O" Street, NW • Washington, DC 20036

Tel: 202-785-2320 • Fax: 202-785-2159 • www.theckf.org