

Interview with Sławomir Cenckiewicz, PhD. – historian from Poland

Interview with Sławomir Cenckiewicz, PhD. – historian from Poland, a long standing employee of the IPN (Institute of National Remembrance) in Gdańsk. Now independent historian and writer. The interview was originally conducted in Polish by an independent freelance journalist, who licensed the English translation to the www.PoloniaSF.org portal. The Polish original was printed by "Polska Gazeta" in New York on September 24, 2009.

The interview evolves around recent information about Stanley Trojaniak, Secret Informant (in Polish, Tajny Współpracownik, "TW", with the code name of Piotruś).

We have copies of commitments signed by Piotruś, which is not barred (nie ulega przedawnieniu), and a copy of the handwritten denunciations of the local priest and close friends, for which he was paid handsomely. The testimony is signed personally by Piotruś. His signatures are also on money receipts for every (donos) note.

Doctor Sławomir Cenckiewicz, investigative historian of Polonia affairs, the author of books and articles that describe in detail how the communist Polish authorities prepared and implemented a plan to force their ways on the Polish American communities by activities of secret informants, through social and economic influence. Cenckiewicz shows in his publications a subtle plan of the communist Polish authorities, unnoticed by the average Pole in exile, to take over the control of the entire life of the Polish American community. Sławomir Cenckiewicz a long standing employee of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) in Gdańsk, conscientious and inquisitive historian, author of many publications on the recent Polish history. One of his achievements is a dissertation on Tadeusz Katelbach, a prominent political figure of the Polish government in exile and later New York's Polish American community.

Polska Gazeta – New York (PG): Dr. Cenckiewicz, we have information that at the request of one of the members of American Polonia, you wrote a short e-mail on Saturday [Sep. 19, 2009 /transl. note/] confirming the information about Trojaniak. A copy of that e-mail was also sent to the Executive Board of the Polish American Congress (PAC) in Chicago. Is this true and what does this mean for PAC?

Sławomir Cenckiewicz (S.C.): It was a short private e-mail confirming the information of one of the Polonia newspapers that Stanley Trojaniak was in the past registered by the WOP as TW code name "Piotruś". The press article, however, was for me a surprise. Rather positive, because it appeared that the editors conducted an archive research at the Krakow IPN.

PG. How did you check that on Saturday?
S.C. I did not check this on Saturday. I have been researching for nearly 10 years the Polish American community and was always interested in the subject, not only over who during the Cold War helped the communists to split the Polish American community, but how did the past of present Polonia leaders look like in their stay in Poland during the communist times. Hence, I was looking in the national archives for information on the PAC activists, editors of Polonia journals, significant persons of Polonia culture and science, activists in social organizations, credit unions, etc. I checked in this way a lot of people. Among the people whom I was also interested was Stanisław Trojaniak.

PG. The next day (September 20, 2009, Sunday) another Polonia paper in New

York was promoting the assertion that the article by the first paper "contains only lies" and their information is "absolutely not true." Do you know is it possible that that other paper could have checked the Trojaniak IPN files that weekend?

S.C. This is typical behavior of a person suspected of links with the security police. I know it very well from our country where, except 2-3 instances, no one admitted to the secret links with the security police. It is a pity, because I have a great respect for the Solidarity activist from Krakow broken by the SB - Stanisław Filosek, or an actor Tomasz Dedka, who admitted to cooperate and asked those who they have wronged to forgive. This is a great attitude, which should be seen in the perspective of Christian ethics. Unfortunately, those instances were isolated and "killed" by the media. Today, the principle applies to all the agents, reached the anti-lustration movement – "deny, displace and pretend the Greek." The most famous such case is the attitude of Lech Wałęsa - despite evidence of collaboration with the SB, and even that during his presidency his documents "disappeared" from the archives of the Ministry of Interior and the State Protection Office files, "Bolek" still denies it. In terms of cognitive science and historically that is of little significance, but it is of utmost importance to the social climate.

PG. Given that it was Sunday we suspect that the other paper (Nowy Dziennik) could not verify the information at the IPN before their publication. So either they checked once before and they should know that [at the IPN /transl. note/] there are two volumes of documents on Stanisław Trojaniak, TW Piotruś, or they just took their information from the air. Anyhow, we have evidence that that newspaper (Nowy Dziennik) promotes lies. Based on your years of research, can you express an opinion on the possible motives of that newspaper (Nowy Dziennik)?

S.C. "Nowy Dziennik" is a newspaper which smacks doctrine wise "Gazeta Wyborcza". There is even a personal relationship of the two, lets refer to the example of editor Stasiński. Therefore it creates a climate that is anti-lustration, similar to that in Poland creates the "Wyborcza". Moreover, the attitude of "Nowy Dziennik" from the 70's has raised controversy in an anticommunist immigrant circles, and in general Polonia, as I wrote a lot on this in my book about Tadeusz Katelbach. Therefore we should not be surprised at this attitude today.

PG. Trojaniak paints a dark picture of the great damage to the Polish community that information about him strikes "in such a well-deserved authority, which is the Pułaski Parade." Do you share this opinion?

S.C. It is difficult for me to comment on these words, I am not an activist of Polonia. I know Stanley Trojaniak, I appeared several times on his radio. I am sorry now that he cannot stand fair to the truth. Everything he says today about the Polonia is not of greater importance in light of the disclosed materials, even though he could be saying the most sacred truth of the situation in the ranks of the Polish community. By denying and condemning those who revealed such information, he loses the mandate for a truthful discussion within the Polish community. It is very sad, but in Poland I am accustomed to the similar attitudes.

PG. Do you think Polonia should cleanse itself and finally start to prosper and would enable the Polish-American organizations to rebuild their act as a powerful lobby in the U.S.? Do you think Polonia needs lustration? Is lustration possible?

S.C. I have not believed in such a process for some time now. I talked with leaders of various Polish organizations and associations, including President Spula of



Orange County News

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Stanisław Czarnota, działacz "Solidarności" odznaczony krzyżem "Polonia Restituta"

Podróż do Polski we wrześniu br. była dużym przeżyciem i miała szczególne znaczenie dla Stanisława Czarnoty, członka Ośrodka Polonijnego im. Jana Pawła II w Yorba Linda, Kalifornia. Nietylko brał on udział w Obchodach Święta - tak bliskiej jego sercu - Jaworzniczej Solidarności, lecz również spotkało go tam specjalne wyróżnienie i uhonorowanie.

W Jastrzębiu, podczas obchodów 29 rocznicy podpisania Porozumień Jastrzębskich - które przypieczętowały proces przemian politycznych w Polsce w roku 1980 - Stanisław Czarnota, pierwszy przewodniczący Solidarności w kopalni Jaworzno w latach 1980 - 81, otrzymał z rąk Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej Lecha Kaczyńskiego wysokie odznaczenie państwowe: Krzyż Kawalerski Odrodzenia Polski / Polonia Restituta.

Członkowie jaworzniczej Solidarności, z którymi p.Czarnota utrzymuje stały kontakt, honorując go, podkreślali jego zasługi, dawną, chlubną działalność oraz dalsze patriotyczne zaangażowanie w Polsce i wśród Polonii w USA. "Jest on dla nas wzorem i przykładem" - powiedział Waldemar Sopata, przewodniczący Solidarności w ZG Sobieski. Teresa Smyl, przewodnicząca Solidarności Pracowników Oświaty wspominała wsparcie moralne i duchowe oraz inspirację, jakimi darzył swe otoczenie w trudnych latach 1980-tych. Podczas stanu wojennego p.Czarnota był internowany i wraz z rodziną zmuszony do emigracji.

Stanisław Czarnota, w wywiadzie z prasą powiedział: "to specjalne wyróżnienie ma dla mnie głębszy wymiar, bo przyjmuję je również w imieniu tych wszystkich z którymi łączyła mnie działalność w Solidarności, wspólnota ludzkich serc, wspólna idea walki o wolność i dobro Ojczyzny i człowieka. Tych mam zawsze w pamięci i w sercu".

Podczas wyżej wymienionych uroczystości w Jastrzębiu udekorowani podobnymi Krzyżami zostali również znani Polonii kalifornijskiej: Ryszard Nikodem, z Komisji Interwencyjnej Zarządu Solidarności Śląsko Dąbrowskiej i Leszek Witelusz, z Zarządu Regionu do Spraw Górnictwa, którzy po wielu latach pobytu w USA powrócili do Polski.

Stanisławowi Czarnocie składamy serdeczne gratulacje i życzymy dalszej owocnej pracy na niwie polonijnej i w Ojczyźnie!

(Editor's note: This article will be translated into English for the November issue.) □

the PNA / PAC. There is no organization with a real will to address the past. There was no single organization which was able to prevail upon their members to pressure them to submit applications to the IPN for access to their files. Neither organization has not established a representative for the lustration of their own ranks, which could undertake research similar to those in Poland, for example, as the episcopate and religious orders of superiors who want to know the entanglement of their fellows in cooperation with the security police. There is also no desire to endow research fellowships to researchers so that independent historians would reveal the truth. I believe that the method which is now transforming Polonia is the worst possible way. Different names will be thrown [by the media /transl. note/] with information about their co-operation but usually during the communist years, but it really will not give Polonia the systematic knowledge on the scale of surveillance of the Polish American community. It's a big mistake and on the other hand will squash the Polish community even more, and it will fatigue and discourage many of the people in Polonia. That is why, though I have a great knowledge on this subject, I do not throw the names from time to time, I try to write about this, and only in this form to inform the Polish-American opinion.

PG. Do you continue your research on secret agents of the Polish American community and if we can soon expect some publication?

S.C. Yes, I collected thousands of documents to queries conducted in the Institute of National Remembrance, the Foreign Ministry and many other archives. Because of my book about Wałęsa, the work of the executive position at the IPN, my Polonia project shifted over time. But I hope that after I finish my professorship I will finally finish the research work on how communists were fighting the American Polonia in the years 1945-1990. This will be something to read, I assure you.

PG. Thank you for your time. □

AFI FEST 2009

(<http://www.afi.com/onscreen/afifest/2009/films/sweet.aspx>)

Sweet Rush (Tatarak) by Andrzej Wajda (in Polish with English subtitles)
<http://www.polishfilmla.org/wocms.php?siteID=12&ID=406>

Saturday, October 31, 2009, 1:00PM
Grauman's Chinese Theatre (Theater seats 1000. Please come, bring friends.) [http://www.manntheatres.com/chinese/6925 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, Ca. 90028](http://www.manntheatres.com/chinese/6925%20Hollywood%20Blvd.,%20Hollywood,%20Ca.%2090028)

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Now 83, Polish master Andrzej Wajda (KANAL, ASHES AND DIAMONDS, DANTON) has created a sublime work about love and mortality. Teaming up again with actress Krystyna Janda (MAN OF STEEL), he adapts a poignant short story by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz—the source of three previous Wajda films—about a dying woman's last erotic encounter. But Wajda adds a crucial, startling layer: the real-life account of Janda's last days with her husband (and frequent Wajda collaborator), the cinematographer Edward Klosinski, who became fatally ill prior to filming. Incorporating Janda's staggeringly intense monologues about her husband's last days, SWEET RUSH becomes a celebration of the beauty and fragility of life, and the arbitrary nature of death. Achieving some of the heightened reality of a Shakespearean romance, SWEET RUSH offers a valedictory testament of almost magical purity and lucidity.

Screening sponsored by POLAM (www.polam.org), Polish Film Institute and Polish Film Festival Los Angeles. □