

Facts on Copernicus inconvenient to German propaganda

By: *Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski*
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Was Copernicus a German?

Mikołaj Kopernik Sr. was registered as a copper wholesaler in Kraków for the trade with Gdańsk. He befriended the first Cardinal to have been born in Poland, Bishop Zbigniew Oleśnicki (1389-1455), who as the Primate of Poland acted also as chancellor and chief of diplomacy. Oleśnicki nominated Mikołaj Kopernik Sr. to be the envoy of Poland for negotiations with the Prussian estates for the unification of Prussia with Poland. For this purpose Mikołaj Kopernik Sr. moved from Kraków to Toruń in 1458, where fourteen years later was born Mikołaj Kopernik Jr., the father of modern astronomy.

It is worth mentioning that in 1525 the Polish parliament, known as the Sejm, accepted the secularization of the Monastic State of the Teutonic Order, committing a political blunder by not evicting from Prussia the remnants of the Teutonic Order. The year of 1525 started one hundred and sixteen years long series of homage's to Poland (1525-1641) paid out of the Polish fief of Prussia by the Hohenzollerns who delivered their payment kneeling before the Polish throne (among the homage payers were ancestors of the future emperors of Germany in 1871-1918). Thus, Albrecht von Hohenzollern (1490-1568) paid the first act of homage to Poland in the market of Kraków and recognized the suzerainty of the Polish king over Prussia; it was the first pact in Europe, torn by religious conflicts between a Catholic king and a Protestant vassal duke.

Copernican revolution:

Mikołaj Kopernik Jr. was among the Polish native leaders of that period. Known as Nicolas Copernicus (1472-1543), in Polish Mikołaj Kopernik (mee-ko-why ko-per-neeek), he was the father of modern astronomy. His alma mater, the University of Kraków, Poland, had an excellent college of astronomy, then the best in Europe. Forty-four percent of its students were foreigners. At that time Poland was the most tolerant and free country on the European continent. There, Copernicus discovered the structure of the solar system. Nicolaus Copernicus conceived his heliocentric astronomical theory about 1504. The Copernican calendar was proven to be accurate within two minutes of the correct year's length - an amazing accuracy considering the condition of European science in the early 16th century. [Wojciech of Brudzewo (1445-1497), Copernicus' professor of astronomy at the University of Kraków was the first to question Earth's central location in the solar system.]

Copernican heliocentric theory was circulated in his *Commentariolus* in 1510 and published in 1543 in *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* stating that the earth rotates daily on its axis and that planets revolve in orbits around the sun. [In 1613, seventy years later, Galileo (1564-1642) repeated and confirmed the Copernican theory.]

Copernicus ordered the world's first epidemiological survey and initiated the buttering of bread. During the German siege of the Mazurian fortress of Olsztyn (1519-1521), while serving as a commanding officer, Copernicus successfully combated an epidemic by designing the world's first epidemiological study which found that bread was the vector. He ordered that all loaves of bread be coated with butter at bakeries so that foreign matter accumulated during delivery could be readily detected and discarded. The

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Book Review

Reviewed by: *Joanne Winetcki*

CHOPIN: Prince of Romantics

By Adam Zamoyski

Adam Zamoyski's new biography of Chopin is not so much about the composer as of him. The author has an exceptional ability to narrate the story as though he were actually within it, observing the events firsthand. Joseph Conrad (Józef Korzeniowski) possessed this special ability in his novels, and F. Scott Fitzgerald embedded the narrator as a character in *The Great Gatsby*. All three writers bring an immediacy and liveliness not only to the narrative but imbue the protagonist with a flesh and blood presence and credibility. The reader comes away with more than a chronological account of an individual's life. She gains an awareness of the myriad circumstances influencing the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of the subject's life. The aim of Zamoyski's current biography of Chopin is, "to cut through the myths and legends, to delve into everyday reality in order to tell the story of his life and to reveal all that can be discovered of Chopin as a person." He included considerable new material that has appeared since the publication of his first Chopin biography in 1979. Readers will encounter a more complex explanation of the composer's health as it ebbed and flowed throughout his brief life. By vicariously experiencing Chopin's physical pain and delicate constitution, we become acutely aware of the man's fortitude and determination to accomplish his work. The image of the effete dilettante frittering away evenings at the piano to amuse aristocratic ladies finally is put to rest. In contrast, Zamoyski relates how in 1848, the year before Chopin's death, "An English pianist who was present at the concert was astonished to find the emaciated Chopin capable of playing with force."

Chapter one begins with a moving description of the composer's funeral at the church of La Madeleine in Paris. In anticipation of the throngs of people who would want to attend, invitation cards had to be sent. The funeral took place some two weeks after Chopin's death and already he was being immortalized. Hundreds of carriages stood empty as the mourners trooped on foot to Pere Lachaise cemetery for the burial. Led by Prince Adam Czartoryski whom many regarded as Poland's uncrowned king, the assembly was comprised of all levels of society from the grandest ladies to the humblest artists. Even today his monument is strewn with flowers and has become a place of pilgrimage for admirers of both the man and his music. Since his earliest public performances, people all over the world have been curious to learn more about this reticent and very private person.

Zamoyski obviously has great admiration for the subject of his book, but doesn't mince words when it comes to elaborating on Chopin's weaknesses. He possessed a streak of laziness and an exasperating extravagance with money in spite of his father's repeated admonitions to put something away for the future. Generous to a fault, Chopin lavished gifts on friends and acquaintances. The procurement of all these articles fell on his devoted friend, Julian Fontana, a schoolmate from his days at the Warsaw Lycee. The composer took merciless advantage of Fontana's good nature, writing lengthy instructions to, "pay the rent, pay the postman for my letters, the flower woman who wants six." In addition, Fontana had to negotiate payment for Chopin's compositions after painstakingly copying them from his almost illegible scribbling. There are

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News from Wisconsin

Polish American Congress

The Wisconsin State Division of the Polish American Congress played a proactive role in connection with Wisconsin's response to the tragic April 10 airplane crash that cost Poland the lives of President Lech Kaczyński, his wife, and 94 leading figures in Polish government and society, all of whom were on their way to memorial services marking the 70th anniversary of the Katyn Forest Massacre. The Wisconsin PAC supported two major memorial liturgies in solidarity with the People of Poland, one at the great St. Josaphat Basilica, the other at Milwaukee's parish for Polish immigrants, St. Maximilian Kolbe Church. At the latter church, Pastor Andrzej Galant invited Wisconsin PAC President Waldemar Biniecki to address the large assembly from the pulpit. His remarks, in Polish and English, were very well received. Attending this Mass was the vice consul of the Republic of Poland in Chicago.

PAC National Director Donald Pienkos and State Division PAC Director Neal Pease, both professors at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, were interviewed at length on two Wisconsin Public Radio programs on the tragic April 10 air crash and its significance.

Everyone in Wisconsin's Polonia much appreciated the immense and unprecedented attention given to the truth about monstrous Katyń Massacre of 1940, where over 22,000 Polish military officers, public officials, and civic leaders were executed on the orders of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

In May, National Director Donald Pienkos attended the regular meeting of the PAC Council of National Directors in Chicago. There his proposed restatement of the PAC mission was overwhelmingly supported as was his motion to re-establish a quarterly PAC national newsletter.

Throughout the Summer of 2010, the officers and members of the Wisconsin State Division were active in every aspect of Polish American community life in the state, including the annual Polish Festival on the city's beautiful Lakefront.

In late May, Wisconsin PAC Biniecki was in Poland where he arranged a number of highly productive meetings with the leaders of the City of Bydgoszcz, his home town, and Milwaukee. There is great interest in Bydgoszcz for this kind of relationship.

On June 4-5, the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America held its 68th annual national meeting in Milwaukee. The Wisconsin PAC strongly supported this excellent conference, and many of its officers and members were present for the event. National PAC President Frank J. Spula honored the conference by his presence on both days of the meeting.

In October Milwaukee's new Archbishop, the Rev. Jerome Listeki, will officiate at a Mass in honor of the martyred Rev. Jerzy Popieluszko. The Wisconsin PAC strongly supports this event and its members will be present in large numbers at St. Maximilian Kolbe Church for the occasion.

The Wisconsin PAC is now already at work planning its 13th annual observance of Poland's Independence Day and Veterans Day. This event, which is scheduled for November 7 (the actual anniversary is November 11) also features a ceremony honoring several of Wisconsin's most dedicated Polonia activists.

Don Pienkos, National Director
Polish American Congress

Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

On June 4-5, the Polish Institute of Arts

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Zofia Korbońska ✚



Zofia Korbońska, Polish Underground resistance heroine and participant in the Warsaw Rising of 1944, passed away on the morning of August 16 in her home in Washington DC. More details to follow.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish on Friday, September 10 2010 at 6:00 PM. 9700 Rosensteel Ave. - Silver Spring MD

Interment will be at the Cemetery at the Shrine of Our Lady of Częstochowa in Doylestown Pennsylvania, Saturday September 11 at 10:00 AM.

In lieu of flowers, tax-deductible donations may be sent to the Stefan Korboński Foundation, promoter of publications about the recent history of Poland:

Stefan Korboński Foundation
c/o Ted Mirecki, Treasurer
4041 41st St. N.
McLean VA 22101 ✚

A response to the many articles printed in major newspapers about the so-called "Polish Ghettos."

Polish history

Jewish Ghettos in Poland during WWII

By: *Ewa Kurek*, Ph.D., Historian
Dr. Kurek received her doctorate in history from the Catholic University of Lublin in Poland. She is the author of four books and numerous articles devoted to the history of World War II.

Part II

The key element for understanding what had happened to Poles and Polish Jews during WWII is the result of one thousand years of parallel co-existence.

The truth about the specifics of the one-thousand-year co-existence on Polish land of the Poles and the Jews is with great difficulty coming to the consciousness of both peoples. Maybe, in the most pitiful way this truth was described recently by Dawid Warszawski, a modern Orthodox Polish Jew, who wrote, "Only the assimilated Jews can write about a "Polish-Jewish marriage," where there are better and worse days. The Poles and the Jews know that there was no marriage at all. This was only caused by the historical existence under the same roof."¹³

On September 1, 1939, WWII started. The Germans had attacked Poland. Nothing had yet changed in Polish-Jewish relations. In the political sense the Poles had chosen their own road, the Polish Jews their own.

The Poles started to act efficiently and had worked out a civil mechanism against their oppressors. The Poles created a Polish Underground State which was ruled by the Polish Government in Exile. The structure of the Underground State was formed by a coalition of government, military, parliament, administration and the courts. It was built during the first three years of the occupation. The historians of WWII in Poland agreed to this chronology: the years 1939-1942 - as a period of the Polish Underground State construction, the years 1943-1944 - a period of State development.

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