

Wisconsin News from 4

and Sciences of America (PIASA) held its 68th annual national meeting in the city of Milwaukee. This was the very first time PIASA, the leading scholarly association in the U.S. devoted to Polish studies, has ever met in the American Midwest. The event was held in cooperation with the Polish Studies Committee of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Approximately 60 scholars and leaders in their fields from around the country attended and gave papers at the conference. Panels dealt with such topics as a retrospective analysis of the Katyń Forest Massacre, Poland in World War II, Polish-Jewish Relations in the U.S., Economics, Politics and Society in Contemporary Poland, a new look at the Heroes of the Solidarity Movement, and the work of recent American Writers on Polish themes. There were several panels on Polonia-related subjects. The plenary session of the conference focused on the life and ideas of Józef Piłsudski in connection with the 75th anniversary of his death. The speaker at the concluding banquet of the conference was Mr. Allen Paul, author of *'Katyń: Stalin's Massacre and the Triumph of Evil.'*

Among the notables participating at the conference were Dr. Thaddeus Gromada, the President and Executive Director of the PIASA, Dr. Patrice Dąbrowski of the University of Massachusetts, Dr. Ewa Plach of Laurier University in Canada, Dr. Anna Cienciala of the University of Kansas, Dr. Robert Szymczak of Penn State University, Rev. John Pawlikowski of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Dr. Thaddeus Radziłowski of the Piast Institute of Michigan, Dr. Richard Hunter of Seton Hall University, Dr. James Pula of Purdue University, Dr. Casmir Kowalski of South Carolina State University, and Dr. Paul Knoll of the University of Southern California. National PAC President Frank J. Spula was present for both days of the conference and spoke at the panel devoted to the subject of "Poland and the Polish Americans: Today and Tomorrow."

Wisconsin PAC Director Neal Pease and Don Pienkos, both of them professors at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM), served as local coordinators for the conference and presented papers as well. UWM Library Director Ewa Barczyk hosted a wonderful gala reception and dinner for all attending and had the support of both the UWM Polish Studies Committee and the special assistance of the Polish Consulate in Chicago for this event. A special guest at the Conference was Illinois Judge Aurelia Puciński, daughter of the late Roman Puciński, longtime PAC leader and U.S. Congressman.

The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America is headquartered in New York. For the past seven decades PIASA has been the key academic organization focused on the study of the Polish experience, in Poland and the world. Distinguished members of the Polish Institute have included the great Historian of Poland, Oskar Halecki, Dr. Zbigniew Brzeziński, Historian of Poland Piotr Wandycz of Yale University, and Nobel Laureate Czesław Miłosz, just to name a few. Its journal, The Polish Review, which is issued four times each year, has long been recognized as a major source of scholarship and research on Poland and Polonia.

For more information on this vital and many-faceted organization, one can start by looking at its website, PIASA.org

Donald Pienkos, Member
Board of Directors - Polish Institute of
Arts and Sciences of America □

Winetcki - Chopin from 4

many accounts of his petulance, coldness and moodiness, but, "Those are usually days of suffering, physical exhaustion or quarrels with Madame Sand."

Perhaps the most difficult task of any biographer is to present an accurate interpretation of a love affair. The tempestuous liaison of Madame Sand and Fryderyk Chopin is plausibly one of the most misunderstood and misrepresented romances of all time. In spite of protestations to the contrary, Madame Sand fell in love with the musician. "I must say that I was confused and amazed at the effect this little creature wrought on me," she wrote to their mutual friend, Grzymala, at the beginning of the relationship. Chopin expressed deep emotions best in his music and produced some of his finest work during their conjugal life at Nohant, Sand's country home. Zamoyski's narration of the couple's intimacy is perspicacious but not presumptuous, compassionate yet not sentimental, and, above all, honest.

According to Zamoyski, there has been considerable study of Chopin's health in recent times. As a child, he undoubtedly contracted tuberculosis, an illness that often has extended periods of remission. "This would explain the disparities in contemporary accounts of his supposed condition - he could appear to be at death's door one moment, and perfectly healthy a few weeks later." The disease affects the behavior of the sufferer who may exhibit a plethora of symptoms including depression, anxiety, fits of rage and alternating bouts of apathy and feverish work. The artist had a weak constitution that made him prone to viral infections, gastro-intestinal problems and the common cold. Previous biographers have ignored the obvious fact that lapses in the composer's health were not always related to tuberculosis.

In 1833, at the age of twenty-three Fryderyk Chopin was admired as "one of the brightest stars of the Parisian firmament." By 1841 La France Musicale stated he, "should not and cannot be compared to anyone." Claude Debussy (1862-1918) declared, "By the very nature of his genius, Chopin eludes all attempts at classification." Heinrich Heine, a Jew and German émigré, "discovered in Chopin a purer and therefore more universal artist than any other." Music aficionados today claim Chopin, along with Bach and Debussy, never wrote a bad piece of music. Zamoyski affirms, "Chopin was the quintessential national composer." He goes on to explain the difference of the Pole's legacy from that of other native composers like Dvorak and Bartok. His summation of this uniqueness might well disclose to we Polish-Americans the reason why Chopin resonates so deeply with us. "Chopin created a musical idiom that transcended music, an idiom that in many ways actually helped to mould and condition the nation itself. That is why he is so central to the national narrative: along with the poets and artists, he helped compose it." □

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Reflections on Kielce and Communism: The Obstacle of the Kielce Pogrom to Polish-Jewish Reconciliation

By: **Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski**

Putting to Rest World War II's Spirit of Hatred

Part 3

The Sovietization of Poland

It is important to remember that the end of World War II did not mean the liberation of the Polish people or of Poland, in any sense of the word. After World War II, Poland did not have self-determination. Its government, police, and military were under the complete and absolute control of the Soviet Union. Poland was forcibly made to be a communist state that was not formally a part of the Soviet Union, but a "satellite state" that was tightly ruled as part of the Soviet empire. Several months before the July 1946 events took place in Kielce, Winston Churchill eloquently articulated the realities for the Soviet Union's satellite states. On March 5, 1946, Churchill made his famous "Sinews of Peace" speech in which he popularized the term "Iron Curtain" originally coined by a Yugoslav writer:

"From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an Iron Curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Prague, Vienna, Budapest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in the Soviet sphere. I do not believe that Russia desires war [but] the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and their doctrines. There is nothing they admire so much as strength and there is nothing for which they have less respect than weakness, especially military weakness."

The Soviet strategists who were in control of Poland saw significant advantage in fostering an animosity between Jewish and gentile Poles. This animosity was used as a tool to aid in the

subjugation of Poland early in its capture into the Soviet empire in 1944. After World War II, Soviet machinations in this regard succeeded in converting the image of Jewish victims of German-Nazi genocide into the image of Jewish oppressors. (Kersten, op. cit., p. 130.) This was purposely done to put the Polish gentile population between "a rock and a hard place." Polish gentiles were left with two options: either don't respond to the Soviet oppression, or respond to the Soviet oppression and thus appear to be anti-Semitic.

Although the image of Jews as oppressors was spread beyond Poland, this phenomenon was very noticeable in Poland, where there was a steady flow of news and often well-substantiated (if sometimes exaggerated) rumors of executions of anti-communist Poles by Jewish executioners serving in the Soviet-controlled terror apparatus. Kersten describes this unfortunate development when Soviet policies created the impression that Jews played the main role in the subjugation of Poland and other satellite countries to the communist system. At the same time, the communist propaganda machine equated opposition to the "socialist" regimes with anti-Semitism. So, if a Polish person opposed the socialist Sovietization of Poland, that person was branded as an anti-Semite. This smoke screen was used successfully to obscure the reality of the Soviet subjugation of Poland by the Soviet Union.

The Soviet terror apparatus in Poland included the so-called Polish military counterintelligence. It was initially integrated with the Soviet Smersh (Death to Spies) organization directed against German spying and subversion. However, when the front crossed the prewar Polish territory, Smersh was used increasingly against the significant Polish resistance to Soviet domination. In November 1944, the Polish section of Smersh became renamed Informacja, in which Col. Chęciński later served for 10 years. Informacja remained under the close supervision of Smersh and was at first headed by Soviet Maj. Pyotr Kozhushko. Soviet officers assigned to the Polish

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