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Polish history

Jewish ghettos in Poland during WWII

By: *Ewa Kurek, Ph.D.* Historian,
Edited by Andrew Ettinger

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.

For more than twenty years with brief interruptions, I have been engaged in research regarding Polish-Jewish relations and trying to understand the puzzles of WWII and the Holocaust in Poland.

It is not an easy task. As the years pass, I have found, again and again, new aspects of the puzzles... while new areas of the Polish-Jewish *terra incognita* surface. The task has become more and more difficult. It is partly caused by the fact that Polish-Jewish relations during WWII is a subject in which each Jew and each Pole seems to be an expert. That is why there are now more emotions on the subject than concrete facts. More than forty years ago, the first woman professor at Columbia University, Philosopher Hannah Arendt, a Jew, wrote, "these emotions are very often used to hide a real truth".¹

This led me to ask myself:

- What is it in WWII that the Poles would like to hide?
- What is it that Polish Jews would like to hide?

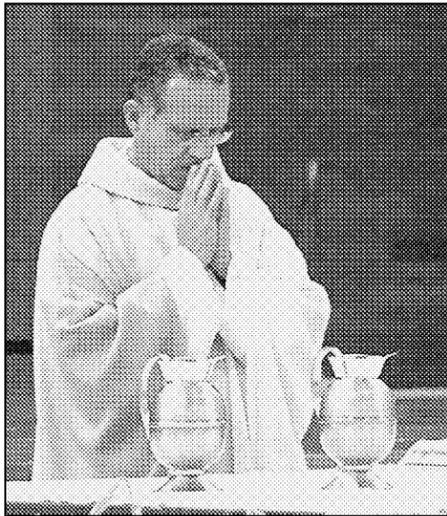
Regarding the Poles we know the truth. For 60 years we have tried to explain why we were not able to rescue Polish Jews from the Holocaust. What is the truth as Polish Jews see it?

Professor Arendt, one of the first to research the problem of Jewish participation in the Holocaust has written: "The issue I am working over was the issue of the Jewish administration's cooperation with the

Polish History to page 16

Mass to Honor Pope John Paul II Held in Los Angeles

By *Betsy Cepielik*



Wincenty Przybylski

Monsignor Kevin Kostelnik

On April 15 a mass was held to honor the virtues and life of the late Pope John Paul II at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles. This is the third year that the Polish American Congress (PAC) has been instrumental in organizing a Polish sponsored mass at the Cathedral.

In addition to the PAC, others who helped in the planning and organizing of this event were the Consulate of the Republic of Poland, Marek Żebrowski (Director of the USC Polish Music Center), the Krakusy Dance Ensemble, the Polish Scouts, Kazimierz Cybulski and the Friends of Pope John Paul, Teresa Kumor (floral arrangements), and the artists and lecturers who participated. Marek Żebrowski was responsible for the outstanding quartet of Anna Kwiatkowska, Christina Whitten, Matt Thomas, and Maciej Bujnowicz.

The celebrant of the Mass was Monsignor Kevin Kostelnik, Pastor of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. The opening prelude of Ave Maria was beautifully sung by Yolanta Tensor, accompanied by the very talented Szymon Grab on the organ. Szymon then played the processional Prelude in c-minor by Bach. In the processional were members of the Polish World War II Veterans, Krakusy dancers, Polish Scouts, and readers Kazimierz Cybulski and Teresa Dudzik. Michael Dutkowski and Kasia Akrami also participated.

Monsignor Kostelnik delivered a moving homily on the life and virtues of Pope John Paul II. He started by saying that he had met the Pope nine times, among them in Rome, Denver, the Philippines, and on the eastern seaboard. In 1990 he accompanied Archbishop Mahoney to celebrate mass in Rome. When personally meeting the Pope, he asked them: "How is Hollywood? Do you like Hollywood?" This showed how well-rounded John Paul was. He liked sports and was a great athlete. He enjoyed young people. We were reminded of the time he went to the Turkish prison to meet with his assassin. He faced death so very bravely, as shown when he came to the open window shortly before he died.

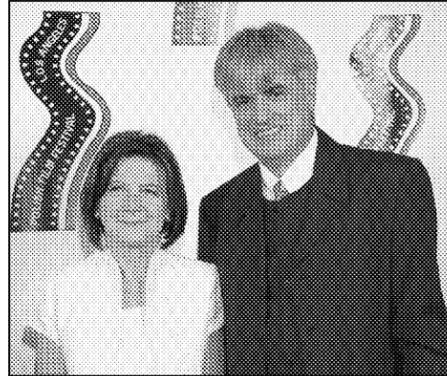
Pope John Paul was a man of virtue and endowed with the Holy Spirit, as can be evidenced in his book, *Culture of Life*. He was known for his expression, "Be not afraid."

The Pope believed in miracles. Kostelnik

Pope John Paul II Mass to page 6

First Lady of Poland, Maria Kaczyńska opens the 8th Polish Film Festival in Los Angeles

By: *Jadwiga Inglis*



Jacek Nowaczyński

Poland's First Lady Maria Kaczyńska and Wlodek Juszczewicz, Founder and Director of the Polish Film Festival

This year the 8th Polish Film Festival in Los Angeles was held under the auspices of Poland's First Lady Maria Kaczyńska. The annual Opening Night Gala of the Festival took place on April 26, 2007 at the Guild of Directors on Sunset Blvd. The President's wife of the Republic of Poland, Maria Kaczyńska, Ambassador of Poland Janusz Reiter, Consul General Krystyna Tokarska-Biernacik and Culture Consul Paulina Kapuścińska came to the Opening Night Gala.

During the very elegant reception, rich in Polish traditional dishes hosted by Mrs. Turek, Żubrówka Vodka and Król Vodka owned by Philip Kołodziej, Consul General Krystyna Tokarska Biernacik and Festival Representative from Poland Łukasz Będkowski introduced filmmakers, directors, producers, actors and many guests of the festival to the First Lady of Poland in the center of the VIP Room.

The H.B. Barnum Life Choir sang the Polish and American National Anthems.

The ceremony was opened by Zbigniew Banaś from Chicago.

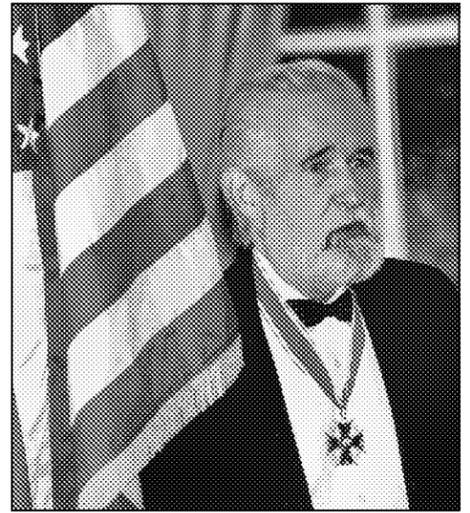
The Founder and Director of the Polish Film Festival in Los Angeles Władysław Juszczewicz welcomed all the guests and thanked the First Lady, the Ambassador of Poland in US, the Consulate General in Los Angeles and all the supporters, sponsors and volunteers for all the help they provided, making this great film event possible. Juszczewicz and the Board of Directors this year selected a variety of multi-cultural films portraying various topics in Poland and within our community.

The Kodak Award for best etude from Polish Film Schools was received by Cinematographer Paweł Dyllus for his film "Wild Duck Season" by Julia Ruszkiewicz and the Mini Arts Award was received by Piotr Kajstura for the film "When They Could Fly." The Hollywood Eagle Documentary Award was received by Bożena Garus Hockuba, for the film "The Lilpop Sisters and Their Passion." The Hollywood Eagle Award for best future film was received by Dorota Kędzierzawska for "I Am." The film had an outstanding children performance, starring Piotr Jagielski as Kundel and Agnieszka Nagorzyczka as Kuleczka. "I Am" is the story of Mongrel, a runaway from a children's home, who is rejected by his mother that he had hoped to live with and was left alone surviving independently on the streets.

Film Festival to page 7

Constitution Ball

By: *Julia Wąchala*



Andrew Ettinger

Author and Narrator of the Presentation

It was an evening to remember... in and of itself, and for the history that came alive for all who attended... in great ideas, memorable words, beautiful people and outstanding music.

It was The Constitution Ball, sponsored and produced by Southern California's Polish American Congress, to celebrate the 216th Anniversary of the Polish Constitution, signed in Warsaw on May 3, 1791. It was a gala dinner dance held on April 28th at the Pasadena Elks Lodge. The evening was a successful blending of our Polish and American heritage, socially, historically and musically.

Arriving guests were soon swept into the colorful past of the 18th Century by the music of Tom Axworthy's orchestra, The Philadelphia Academy of Musicke, and Irenka Ujda's Yesteryears Dancers. These were splendidly costumed women in grand ballroom gowns, and their male partners attired in authentic military uniforms of the period. The beautifully decorated ballroom was transformed into a vision of romantic elegance and genteel grandeur... welcoming modern guests who responded eagerly by dancing into the past for a while.

The Ball was opened with a group circle Minuet in honor of King Poniatowski. This was followed by a lovely Kujawiak mixer choreographed by Edek Sentowski, and a Shakespeare-inspired Manor Dance in honor of actress Helena Modrzejewska. Karen Wideryński was resplendent in a 1770's silver and grey tapestry and brocade ballgown, and an elegant complement to Richard's Jeffersonian costume, looking very much like a Founding Father. Heather Ettinger wore a dramatic handmade formal ballgown of forest green velvet with matching bolero vest, trimmed in gold, green and red piping. She made it to wear with a 100-year-old lace blouse from Poland, a treasured heirloom from her husband's grandmother.

It was a beautiful sight to behold as gentlemen bowed to kiss the hand of their lovely ladies, who then curtsied in respect to their partners. The scene was like a museum masterpiece brought to life, graceful ladies in flowing gowns and sparkling jewels were swiftly whirling about the floor, led by elegant gentlemen in be-medaled finery that dazzled the eye.

The audience was enthusiastic in the dancing throughout the evening, especially the Varsoviana Mixer in honor of the 1831 Uprising. Dance Mistress Irenka Ujda and Dance Master Ed Sentowski were dressed in fur-trimmed 17th Century Polish Court attire

Constitution Ball to page 9

Wiadomości Polonijne

Adamowicz - Wiosna 1942	19
Apel do Polaków	21
Ks. Dziewicki - Kryzys Wychowania	21
Ks. Kamiński - ZNP Grupa 700	19
Siostr. Faustynek	20
Kerosky - Prawa Nabożeństwa	21
Nowak - Polski Paszport	19
Dr. Skonka—Lustracja	20
Petryka - Święcone	19
Pogonowski	19, 21, 23
Przystawa - Falszywy Konflikt	20
Smyrgala - List Marcinkiewicz	21
Tatol - Program Repolonizacji	20
ACPC in DC	8
ACPC Board Meeting	8
Ball, Justyna - Alles Gute	2
Bauman and Polish Secret Service	10
Calendar of SoCal	2
Conservative Groups meet	7
Holocaust Survivor helped by Poles	11
Identifying collaborators	14
Investments	3
Janek's Corner - Graduation	4
Jews back in Poland	10
Laguna Woods Polish Club	6
Legal	3
Music News - Paderewski	3
Northern California	13
Orange County News	13
PAPA Meeting	12
Polish American Congress	5
Polish Profiles - Irena Sandler	2
Sports Hall of Fame	10
St. Stanislaus Investiture - Rik Fox	4
Taxes	3