



POLISH CHILDREN'S HEARTLINE - An ALL VOLUNTEER non-profit organization sending medical and surgical supplies to hospitals in Poland having Pediatric units. In 2007 over \$150,000 of specialized surgical equipment was sent to the hospitals. Requests for assistance in 2008 are already over \$160,000. Generous donations from Polonia and American supporters make this possible and much is still needed. Contributions may be made in memory of family and friends. Each donation is tax exempt and acknowledged. We thank you for your support and ask for your continued support. For information call 732-680-0680 or 732-341-5044.

Ronald Syslo, President

"What one does for others, Lives forever!"

Aleksandra E. Patras, C.E.O.

POLISH CHILDREN'S HEARTLINE

A non-profit corporation - New Jersey

177 BROADWAY
CLARK, NJ 07066



Polish American Cultural Center
308 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 922-1700

When You're in Philadelphia's Historic District Visit The **Polish American Cultural Center Museum Exhibit Hall**
308 Walnut Street
Featuring Polish History and Culture
Open 10 AM to 4 PM
FREE ADMISSION

January through April
Monday to Friday

May through December
Monday to Saturday

Gift Shop is Open During
Regular Exhibit Hall Hours

Closed on Holidays

Visit the Polish American Cultural Center Museum on the Internet at: www.PolishAmericanCenter.org

Featured on the web site are brief outlines of Great Men and Women of Polish Heritage, information about Polish customs and traditions, and information about organizations and activities in the Polish American Community.

OBAMA (CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age."

Americans have lost their homes, their jobs, their businesses, and health care is too costly, he said. Schools are failing too many, and the American energy policy plays into the hands of the nation's enemies.

"These are the indicators of crisis, subject to data and statistics," he said.

These are disturbing, but more disturbing is a sapping of confidence and the fear that with this decline the next generation must lower its sights, he said.

"Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real," the president said. "They are serious, and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America: They will be met."

While the challenges of this age are new, the values which have seen the country through in the past will best serve the nation, Obama said. "Honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism -- these things are old, but these things are true," he said.

America must return to these truths, he said. "What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility -- a recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task," Obama said.

"This is the price and the promise of citizenship," he said. "This is the source of our confidence, the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny."

If Americans seize this responsibility, then the challenges will be surmounted, he said.

"Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations," Obama said.

CONGRESSMAN

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

expanding SCHIP."

As a member of the Health Subcommittee, Pascrell will also serve as a strong advocate for America's health workforce. Out of concern for an impending shortage of physicians prepared to care for the aging baby boomer generation and the struggles of our nation's teaching hospitals, Pascrell introduced legislation to improve physician training payments under Medicare in 2008, and plans to reintroduce the legislation in the current session of Congress. The measure would promote physician training by bringing fairness to Medicare graduate medical education payments.

"Training a strong corps of health care workers at teaching hospitals like St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center is an easy way to create jobs and the only way to provide a large population of aging Americans with the quality care necessary to live in good health long after retirement."

"Whether the issue is America's health care workforce, hospital infrastructure or insurance accessibility, I am committed to finding new and innovative ways to reduce costs and expand health care accessibility. Congress has the will to move quickly with President-elect Obama away from the broken model set up by the Bush administration and towards a new universal system that will guarantee health care opportunities for every American," concluded Pascrell.

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RESOLUTION

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Fulbright Educational Exchange Program in Poland;

Whereas Poland has overcome a legacy of foreign occupation and period of communist rule to emerge as a free and democratic nation;

Whereas Poland has strongly supported the United States diplomatically and militarily, as well as supporting United States-led efforts in combating global terrorism, and has contributed troops to the coalitions led by the United States in both Afghanistan and Iraq; and

Whereas Poland has cooperated closely with the United States on issues such as democratization, nuclear proliferation, human rights, regional cooperation in Eastern Europe, and reform of the United Nations: Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the Senate-

(1) Celebrates the 90th anniversary of U.S.-Polish diplomatic relations;

(2) Congratulates the Polish people on their great accomplishments as a free democracy; and

(3) Expresses appreciation for Poland's steadfast partnership with the United States.

- Polish American Congress
Washington, D.C.

BYSIEWICZ:

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of Connecticut to know how seriously we take our budgetary situation, and we are already hard at work finding other significant ways to cut costs at the Secretary of the State's Office."

A total of 15 eligible managers and non-union executives in the Secretary of the State's Office elected to take part in the Voluntary Schedule Reduction Program.

Polish Literature

(GAINED, NOT LOST)
IN TRANSLATION

By

Ewa Bronowicz



TADEUSZ KONWICKI

The Polish Complex (Kompleks Polski)

Translated from Polish by Richard Lourie

211pp. Dalkey Archive Press, Illinois. \$12.95

Who's To Blame?

Tadeusz Konwicki's *"The Polish Complex"* is a sometimes bleak, sometimes humorous, and at times bitter reminder of life under Communism, and, in more general terms, an accurate portrait of life in a small country surrounded by greedy and powerful neighbors where history seemed to be siding with the "bad guys" instead. Published in 1977 by the Polish underground press, *"The Polish Complex,"* next to *"Minor Apocalypse,"* is Konwicki's most known book and has been acclaimed as an important post-war Polish novel, even if the narrator and the author's alter ego Konwicki rebels against the notion of being categorized as a Polish writer. He asks, "Who turned me, a European, no, a citizen of the world, an Esperantist, a cosmopolitan, an agent of universalism, who turned me, as in some wicked fairy tale, into a stubborn, ignorant, furious Pole?" The answer seems obvious: aside from Konwicki's nationality, his biggest literary theme is, indeed, Poland.

The background of *"The Polish Complex"* is a jewelry store in Warsaw and a long line of people waiting for a special holiday delivery. The day is Christmas Eve, from morning until nighttime, and it is snowing on and off. Among other people in the line next to Konwicki are Kojran, who, as we soon learn, followed Konwicki in 1951 and was supposed to shoot him; a peasant woman who turns out to be rich and well-dressed underneath her coat; and a French anarchist who loves Poland. The long line in front of the store, reminiscent of the Communist regime, may be symbolic of Poland itself, which, according to the narrator, is always at the mercy of other countries. In fact, one of the much-awaited deliveries turns out to be Russian samovars, which no one wants; and when customers from the Soviet Union arrive, they don't have to wait in line. As the novel progresses, a paradigm emerges. The Polish complex can be divided into three parts: Poland's relationship to Russia, Poland's relationship to the West, and Poland's relationship to itself. While Russia is the aggressor and the evil empire, the West seems to be the source of both hope and resentment. As for Poland, "we're well aware of what happened and why," Konwicki writes, but somehow this knowledge is irrelevant, especially that Russia, unlike Poland, "always had luck." When Kojran's friend asks Konwicki if he is waiting for a miracle, Konwicki says that yes, he is, and the message of the book seems to be that it would take a miracle to change Poland's fate for the better.

As the plot of the novel slowly moves forward, Konwicki's thoughts jump back to 1863 and the failed Polish rebellion for independence. Colonel Borowy is a young leader of the uprising, and Konwicki speaks to him and about him intimately, in the second person, comparing his own experience as a soldier from World War II to that of Borowy. When the Polish woodsmen, smitten by the promise of a reward, turn Borowy in to the Cossacks, the Cossack commander asks the question which is present throughout the book: "Was it worth it?" We find the answer in the last chapter. Borowy's life is in danger because he fights for Poland's independence. When saying goodbye to his wife, he explains, "There's probably no other way, Tonia. There's no other way if we don't want to become abased and stunted, and die held in contempt by other nations." Konwicki the writer and Konwicki the narrator seem to side with this view, and yet the hopelessness, passivity and irony of standing in line for something that will never arrive leaves little, if any, chance for change, just like the narrator's confession in church, which should have been the literary and spiritual climax of the story, turns into yet another disappointment.

Any questions or comments for Ewa.... You can contact her by visiting her website: www.literatka-nyc.com