

**ANNUAL REPORT OF PIASA'S PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR
June 2009 – June 2010**

INTRODUCTION

After serving as Secretary General of PIASA from 1971 to 1988, Vice President from 1988 to 1991, Executive Director from 1991, and President and Executive Director from 2008, I will be stepping down next year in June 2011. So it is natural that I express the hope that the Transition Committee headed by Dr. Susanne S. Lotarski will find fully committed persons to lead PIASA in the 21st century and assure its future. I am convinced that PIASA's mission to advance knowledge about Poland's intellectual and cultural heritage to America's pluralistic society is still relevant. What is needed is a frank and honest evaluation of what we have been doing over the past several decades and then decide what needs to be changed or what needs to be done better. We have been engaged in activities that are typical of academic organizations. PIASA publishes a quarterly journal, *The Polish Review*, and books under the imprint of PIASA Books; it organizes conferences (Annual Meetings), lectures and arts exhibits; it maintains a library and archives for researchers; it presents awards in history, social sciences, humanities and the natural sciences; it cooperates with major American institutions in the field of Eastern European studies, such as the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, as well as Polish academic and cultural institutions like the Polska Akademia Umiejętności (PAU), the Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych (NDAP), the Biblioteka Narodowa, and others.

Our two major challenges now and in the future will be (a) to overcome the problem of a shrinking and aging membership and (b) to secure sufficient funds to fulfill our mission more effectively. Traditionally, we have drawn most of our members from academia in the field of East European and Slavic studies. However, since the end of the Cold War, these studies are no longer the "growth industry" they once were. So we must now start recruiting members not only from academia but from the professions; from government, corporations, and the creative arts; particularly, but not exclusively, persons of Polish ancestry. Finding and providing sufficient financial resources for the next few years will not be easy in view of the economic downturn that we are experiencing, not only in America, but indeed throughout the world. Still, in spite of this, efforts will have to be made to expand our base of support by gaining more sustaining members, especially from among the ranks of successful Polish American entrepreneurs. Greater support from American Polonia will be crucial as well as support coming from Polish institutions like Semper Polonia. As an example of this latter support I offer the grant of nearly \$15,000 that PIASA

received in June 2010 from the Semper Polonia Foundation, which is funded by the Senate of the Republic of Poland. The grant was given to enable us to purchase equipment and services for the computerization of our library in Manhattan. There is no doubt that PIASA will have to develop a more creative, cooperative partnership with Polonian organizations and communities in order to persuade them that this cooperation can only be mutually beneficial. Our administrative staff, headed by Deputy Director Janina Kedron, is ready and willing for such a cooperation.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

I felt very encouraged and pleased by the fact that the Polish American Congress/Illinois Division decided to give the prestigious “Polish Heritage Award” to PIASA. It was a tangible sign that PIASA’s role in the USA was understood and appreciated in Polonia. I accepted the award during the 40th Annual Polish Heritage Award Gala that took place on October 4, 2009 at the Marriott O’Hare Hotel in Chicago. This was a well-attended affair, at which over five hundred persons were present, among which I might mention the President of the Polish American Congress/Illinois Division, Kazimierz C. Chlebek, the President of the National Polish American Congress, Frank Spula, and Zygmunt Matynia, Consul General of the Polish Republic in Chicago..

Special steps were taken to promote the second 2009 issue of *The Polish Review* that was devoted to the 90th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Poland. This extraordinary issue contained an introduction by Zbigniew Brzezinski, articles by former U.S. Ambassadors to Poland (Daniel Fried and John Davis) and prominent scholars (M.B.B. Biskupski, Piotr S. Wandycz, Anna M. Cienciala, and Andrew A. Michta). Complimentary copies of this issue were sent to the State Department, to heads of Polish political and cultural institutions, including the Polish Foreign Ministry, to the new U.S. Ambassador to Poland, H.E. Lee Feinstein, etc. The U.S. Embassy in Warsaw ordered forty-four copies of this issue for distribution to Polish scholars engaged in the study of US-Polish relations. Doubtlessly, this issue of *The Polish Review* received a tremendous amount of attention and acclaim both here and in Poland. Editor Charles S. Kraszewski and his editorial board deserve accolades.

Immediately following the tragic death of President Lech Kaczyński and ninety-five prominent Poles in Smolensk on April 10, 2010, I prepared statement on behalf of PIASA’s Board expressing sorrow and condolences. This statement was e-mailed and faxed to the media, to the Polish Foreign Ministry, the Polish Embassy in Washington, the Polish Consulate General in New York City, and to the heads of PAU, PAN, the Biblioteka Narodowa, the Polish National Archives, and the Polish Foundation of Science. On April 12, I personally visited the Polish Consulate General in New York City

and signed the book of condolences. PIASA in turn received condolences from its non-Polish friends, such as the Ukrainian Shevchenko Scientific Society of America.

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

The fiscal year 2009 was a very challenging period impacted by the serious economic downturn in the U.S. Both our donations and membership dues were seriously lowered. Our expense budget for 2009 was \$168,000, but only \$128,000 was expended. However, since only \$96,000 income and revenue was generated, the result was a \$32,000 deficit. Luckily this deficit was made up with income from our investment portfolio. In September 2009 we transferred our portfolio from Smith Barney to UBS Financial Services. Our financial advisor still remains John Di Blasi and his Fourth Avenue Group. Our treasurer, Dr. John Wasacz, reported that our portfolio account has recovered from earlier losses and that, as of December 31, 2009, had a value of \$441,472. The active support of both the Board and the Council in fund raising is needed in order to improve PIASA's financial position.

PIASA'S LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

One of PIASA's most important assets is its library and archives that attract researchers from both our country and from Europe — especially from Poland. As a result of our efforts we have been able to develop a close cooperation with Poland's National Archives (Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych) and the Biblioteka Narodowa (the National Library) in Warsaw. These two institutions have provided our Institute with Visiting Research Archivists and Visiting Research Librarians since 2001 with the help of scholarships from the Kościuszko Foundation. This past academic year, from October 2009 to April 2010, PIASA's Visiting Research Archivist was Katarzyna Kowalik from the Archives of the City of Warsaw. She did an admirable job in organizing newly acquired collections and assisted scholars and students in their research projects. She responded also to many e-mail inquiries and participated in PIASA events. All the new archival information has been placed on SEZAM and IZA, the data bases of Poland's National Archives, as well as on PIASA's own website.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to arrange for a Visiting Research Librarian. Hopefully, we will be more successful next year with the help and cooperation of the Kościuszko Foundation and Warsaw's Biblioteka Narodowa. This is more important than ever, since our longtime librarian, Krystyna Baron, passed away in January 2010, and the library is in the middle of an electronic cataloguing of its collections. Volunteer help in the library is provided by Krystyna Swierbutowicz and Krystyna Olszer, as well as a new part-time librarian, Malgorzata Dąbrowska — a graduate of Jagiellonian University, who will arrive in the fall of 2010. Our Institute will have a Visiting Research Archivist, from October 2010 to April 2011, in the person Bartosz Nowozycki, from the Archiwum Akt Nowych in Warsaw.

Again, this was possible with the help and cooperation of the Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych and the Kościuszko Foundation. The grant of \$14, 296.83 which PIASA received in early June, 2010 from the Semper Polonia Foundation, with funds provided by Senate of the Republic of Poland, will greatly help in the computerization of our library, making it more efficient and accessible.

Thanks to the generosity of Szwede Slavic Books of Redwood, CA, which recently went out of business, and the help of our member Dr. Wojciech Zalewski, more than six hundred new scholarly books on Polish topics were gifted to PIASA's library, thus enriching its collection. Our library continues to receive books and periodicals from Polish institutions *gratis*. The most generous of these institutions has been the Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (IPN), which has sent us hundreds of its publications, including its monthly periodical, the *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*.

PUBLICATIONS

Our academic quarterly journal *The Polish Review*, published uninterruptedly by PIASA since 1956, continues to appear under the able editorship of Dr. Charles S. Kraszewski. His three year term as Editor-in-Chief will end in December 2010, but it is good to know that he is willing to continue for another three year term. Dr. Neal Pease will not be able to continue as Book Reviews Editor after December 2010; at that time, Dr. Paul Milliman, from the University of Arizona, will succeed him. Electronic versions of *The Polish Review* are now available on line for instant purchase and delivery to Amazon's popular Kindle reader at a price of \$7.50 an issue. Also available at the Kindle site is the Polish Review anthology *Fifty Years of Polish Scholarship*. Dr. Kraszewski is in the process of creating a Polish Review Library of Polish Classics series which will make available new English translations of important Polish literary texts in the above mentioned electronic format.

Dr. Kathleen Cioffi, series editor of PIASA Books has announced that Barbara Tępa Lupack's translation of her father's play *Fraulein Doctor* has been reprinted and is available for purchase through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Baker and Taylor and Ingram publishers. *His Holiness John Paul II: A Commemorative Volumes of Essays* by members of PIASA is presently in the process of reprinting. PIASA Books plans to publish a book in the field of Polish literary studies entitled *New Perspectives on Polish Culture*, edited by Dr. Tamara Trojanowska, as well as a book on Polish science fiction entitled *A Polish Book of Monsters*, written by Dr. Michael Kandel.

68TH ANNUAL MEETING, JUNE 4-5, 2010 IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

For the first time in its history, PIASA decided to hold its Annual Meeting in the Midwest — specifically in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, one of the important centers of Polish American life and culture. There was some risk involved in this decision since most PIASA members are concentrated in the

Northeast along the Atlantic seaboard. President Gromada appointed Dr. M.B.B. Biskupski Chairman of the Annual Meeting, who together with his committee, made up of Dr. Paul W. Knoll, Dr. Hanna Kelker, and Dr. James S. Pula, organized the multi-disciplinary conference consisting of fifteen sessions/panels in various disciplines. Dr. Biskupski received valuable support from Dr. Donald Pienkos and Dr. Neal Pease, members of the local arrangements committee. Dr. Paul W. Knoll presided over the two day annual meeting which was co-sponsored by the Polish Studies Committee of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. A splendid reception and exhibit were held at the University Library on Friday evening, June 4. The reception was partially funded by H.E. Zygmunt Matynia, the Polish Consul General in Chicago. A gala banquet brought the two-day conference to an end on Saturday evening, June 5. President Gromada spoke briefly on the future of PIASA. The main speaker of the evening was Allen Paul, author of the book *Katyn: Stalin's Massacre and the Triumph of Truth*. His address was entitled "Katyn: Prospects of Reconciliation between Russia and Poland."

During the Annual Meeting, President Gromada presented PIASA's Dissertation Award (a cash award totaling \$1000) to Dr. Lenny A Urena Valerio, for her Ph.D. dissertation *The Stakes of Empire: Colonial Fantasies, Civilizing Agenda, and Biopolitics in Prussian-Polish Provinces, 1840-1914*. Dr. Urena Valerio, a scholar of Puerto Rican descent, studied at the University of Michigan under the mentorship of Dr. Brian Porter-Szucs. This year's dissertation award was funded by past PIASA Board member Dr. Harold Segel, Professor Emeritus of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Columbia University.

At the end of the banquet the results of the elections held by mail ballot were announced. The following were elected to the PIASA Board for a term of 3 years ending in June 2013: Dr. Anne Hermanowski-Vosatka, Dr. Hanna Chroboczek Kelker, Dr. Paul W. Knoll, Dr. Charles S. Kraszewski, Dr. Susanne S. Lotarski, and Dr. James S. Pula.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

In addition to the Annual Meeting, which consumes a great deal of time and energy, PIASA also organizes other programs which are generally open to the public. During the past year the following events were organized:

—Lecture on Polish Cinema delivered by Prof. Maria Kornatowska, The School of Film and Theatre in Łódź, October 18, 2009.

—Opening of Photographic Exhibition by Jan A. Hausbrandt, December 11, 2009. The exhibit continued to the end of February 2010.

—PIASA's Traditional Christmas party (December 15, 2009).

—Screening of Richard Adams' documentary *Citizens* based on the Solidarity movement, followed by a discussion led by Dr. Elzbieta Matynia, New School University, March 5, 2010.

—Memorial Program celebrating the life of Krystyna Baron, longtime devoted librarian of PIASA's Library (March 13, 2010).

—Special program on "Polish Easter and Spring Traditions" for thirty-five members of the Krakus Senior Group from Brooklyn. Presenting were the folklorist, Dr. Anna Brzozowska-Krajka (Maria Skłodowska Curie University in Lublin) and Janina Kedron, co-editor of *The Tatra Eagle*.

Finally, a piano recital by South Korean pianist Yoonjung Han has been scheduled in connection with the bicentennial of Chopin's birth. It will be held at the prestigious National Arts Club of New York City on October 8, 2010. Hopefully, this will also prove to be a good fund raising event.

CONTACTS AND COOPERATION WITH INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

I have always encouraged our Institute to be open for collaboration and cooperation with organizations and institutions of a similar character, with similar goals.

The Piłsudski Institute of America placed me on the Honorary Committee of its Annual Awards Gala, which took place on November 7, 2009 at the Polish Consulate General in New York City. This event honored, among others, PIASA member, Dr. Anna Jaroszynska Kirchman by presenting her with the Waclaw Jędrzejewicz History Medal.

I participated in a symposium on the "Collapse of the Berlin Wall: Lessons to be Learned" sponsored by the Ukrainian Institute of America on November 9, 2009 in New York City. Other participants included Professor Taras Hunczak and Professor Alexander Motyl, as well as Ambassadors to the United Nations from Poland, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Albania.

PIASA was represented at the 41st National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS), which was held in Boston between November 12-15, by Board members Drs. Paul W. Knoll and M.B.B. Biskupski. During the convention our Board members were able to consult with the officers of the Polish Studies Association. Our Institute is an institutional member of the AAASS and has been visible at its conventions since the mid 1970s.

Dr. Donald Pienkos and I served as judges for an essay contest sponsored by the Kościuszko Foundation and the Polish Veterans Association on the occasion of the "70th anniversary of the Outbreak of World War II." On September 17, 2009, three college students won prizes totaling \$3,500.

On the invitation of Dr. Janusz Kurtyka, President of the Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (IPN) I served as a *recenzent* of a recent book authored by Dr. Janusz Cisek and published by the IPN. The book dealt with Prof. Oskar Halecki, first Executive Director of PIASA and one of the greatest Polish historians of the 20th century.

In response to a request from Polska Akademia Umiejętności (PAU) in Krakow, I have submitted a revised version of my remarks made last year at the "II Congress of Polish Learned Societies Abroad" for publication in a book. The title of my presentation is "PIN na rozdrożu: Przyszłość PIN'u w Ameryce" ["PIASA at the Crossroads: The Future of PIASA in America"].

The Gdańsk chapter of the IPN invited me to a two-day conference on "Emigracja a środowiska kultury niezależnej w kraju" scheduled for March 25-26, 2010. I was unable to participate in person, but my paper entitled "Rola i działalność PIN'u w okresie zimnej wojny" ["The Role and Activities of PIASA During the Cold War"] was read at the conference by Stanisław Flis who had served as PIASA's Visiting Research Archivist from 1999 to 2000. The paper will be published.

PIASA and the Shevchenko Scientific Society of America will sponsor a session on "Polish-Ukrainian Relations: World War II and Its Aftermath" at the 42nd National Convention of the AAASS in November 2010. Participants are to include Professors Taras Hunczak, Rutgers University, Yuri Shapoval, National Academy of Ukraine in Kyiv, Piotr Wrobel, University of Toronto, and myself.

The International Society for Orthomolecular Medicine inducted our famous charter member, Kazimierz Funk, the discover of vitamins, into its Hall of Fame during a conference that was held in Canada between April 30 and May 3, 2010. A certificate of Kazimierz Funk's induction was sent to PIASA by the Director of the Society, Steven Carter.

VISITORS TO PIASA

The Institute is always pleased to welcome visitors from all over our country and from Europe, particularly from Poland. Many of these visitors are doing important research in our archives and library. In addition PIASA receives many inquiries by e-mail to which we respond as quickly as possible.

Some of the visitors who have done research at PIASA this past year are: Thomas Anessi, Doctoral Candidate, Dept. of Slavic Languages, Columbia University, Dr. Beata Dorosz, IBL PAN, Warsaw, Dr. Anna Brzozowska-Krajka, University of Marie Curie Skłodowska, Lublin, Dr. Czesław Karkowski, former Editor-in-Chief, *Nowy Dziennik*, Prof. Rafał Stobiecki, University of Łódź, Ewa Maliga, Queens College, Anna Ciepiela Ioannides, Queens College, and Justyna Kanczukowska, Doctoral Candidate, University of Wrocław.