

The Polish Review

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ARMENIAN CATHEDRAL--JEWEL OF LWOW

Funeral of Saint Odilon--Tempera Mural by Jan Henryk Rosen



“...We promise each other on behalf of ourselves and our descendants that we who are dissidentes de religione (non conformists in religion) will keep the peace between ourselves and neither shed blood on account of differences of faith or kinds of churches, nor punish one another by confiscation of goods, deprivation of honour, imprisonment or exile...”

Declaration of Warsaw Confederation in 1573

POLAND SPEAKS . . .

Epilogue to three lectures on "Five Centuries of Polish Learning," at the University of Oxford by Professor Stanislaw Kot

THE destruction of Polish science and learning is far more complete today, than it ever was during the worst years of the Partitions. In the provinces seized by the Germans all higher schools of every kind have been closed, all scientific societies and journals abolished. Not a single book or serious article has been allowed in print. Governor-General Frank himself declared: "The Polish slave - people (Knechtenvolk) has no need of education. The elementary school is more than enough. There will never again be a higher institution of learning in Poland; instead, there will be an intellectual desert." The greater part of the teaching staffs were arrested and sent to concentration camps, an example being the herding together of the whole Cracow professorial body, to the number of 180, and their deportation to Oranienburg in November 1939. Nearly a score died as a result, and their ashes were sent home to their families. Not a few are still in durance, and the news coming from them is pitiable.

Following their principle that the whole of the community is responsible for the actions of every member, the Germans have not hesitated to shoot eminent scientists, though they were innocent. Among them was the eminent zoologist Kopec, notable for his original studies of insect life.

All libraries have been closed, the contents of many have been carried off. Others have been reopened as German institutions and are meant to serve the cause of the Germanization of Poland. All museums, galleries, collections of archives or other treasures, have been subjected to repeated searchings, and whatever seemed to have special value was taken away to the Reich. Even church and cathedral treasures, including *objecta sacra*, have not escaped this ordeal. Some of the work of plundering scien-

tific institutions was done by German professors of distinction, who had been guests not long since in Poland at scientific congresses. In some cases these gentlemen had with them copies of the receipted bill prepared by the German firms which had sold the equipment to Poland, and so knew exactly what there was to be taken away.

Already during two weeks of heavy bombardment Warsaw had lost many of its libraries, museums and other treasures. But it must be said that the systematic plundering carried on after hostilities were concluded brought far worse losses on the Polish nation. Only one meagre example of compromise in this regard has become known. In May a year ago, permission was given to the School of Engineering in Warsaw to open a few rooms in the department of surveying, to serve the needs of industry, and to study the food question. But a written order was given that no sort of teaching or research would be permitted, nor was any student of any kind allowed

entry. The Board of Education is occupied by the Gestapo, the university by the Security Police, the middle schools by the army, etc., etc. The Jewish students' residence in Cracow is now a public brothel.

The only center of higher studies existing for Poles today is the newly-formed Polish School of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh.

More than once in its history, the Polish people has suffered a period of subjection, and survived it. None of us has any doubt that even the present storm will pass; and that Poland will come out of their inferno purified and renewed in strength. When that happens, Polish learning will again take up its task, and go forward with other peoples of the world to greater and better things.

REQUIEM MASS

A REQUIEM MASS for the seventeen Professors of the University of Cracow, who died in the German Concentration Camp at Oranienburg or as a result of their treatment there, will be celebrated in

ST. ALOYSIUS'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
(WOODSTOCK ROAD, NEARLY OPPOSITE ST. GILES'S CHURCH)

at 11.10 A.M. on FRIDAY, 14 FEBRUARY

A short address will be given by

THE VERY REVEREND M. C. D'ARCY, S.J., MASTER OF CAMPION HALL
(it is expected that the Mass will last for 45 minutes)

The names of the seventeen Professors are:

S. BEDNARSKI (<i>Russian</i>)	J. NOWAK (<i>Geology</i>)
I. CHRZANOWSKI (<i>Polish</i>)	F. ROGOZIŃSKI (<i>Physiology</i>)
S. ESTREICHER (<i>W. European Law</i>)	A. RÓZAŃSKI (<i>Agriculture</i>)
A. HOBORSKI (<i>Mathematics</i>)	M. SIEDLECKI (<i>Zoology</i>)
T. GARBOWSKI (<i>Philosophy</i>)	J. SMOLEŃSKI (<i>Geography</i>)
S. KOLACZKOWSKI (<i>Literature</i>)	L. STERNBACH (<i>Classics</i>)
K. KOSTANECKI (<i>Anatomy</i>)	W. TAKLIŃSKI (<i>Mining</i>)
A. MEYER (<i>Law</i>)	J. WŁODEK (<i>Agriculture</i>)
A. WILK (<i>Astronomy</i>)	

The Polish Government will be represented; and some Polish Professors will also attend.

The Vice-Chancellor will be present; and it is hoped that members of the University, and others, who are free to do so, will take this opportunity of expressing their sympathy with the University of Cracow and with the Polish nation.

TRAGEDY OF POLISH LEARNING

IN A lecture delivered in 1518, "*De Laudibus celeberrimae Academiae Cracoviensis*", an English professor and traveller, Leonard Coxe of Thame, bore witness to the quality of studies, and the temper of teaching there. At that time the University of Cracow had already reached the zenith of its fame. The *Alma Mater* of young Nicholas Copernicus was visited in the 15th and 16th centuries by large numbers of students and such eminent scholars as Jan Virding, Erazm Herycz, Stefan Rosslein and Jan Volmar, who later taught at the Universities of Heidelberg, Vienna and Wittenberg.

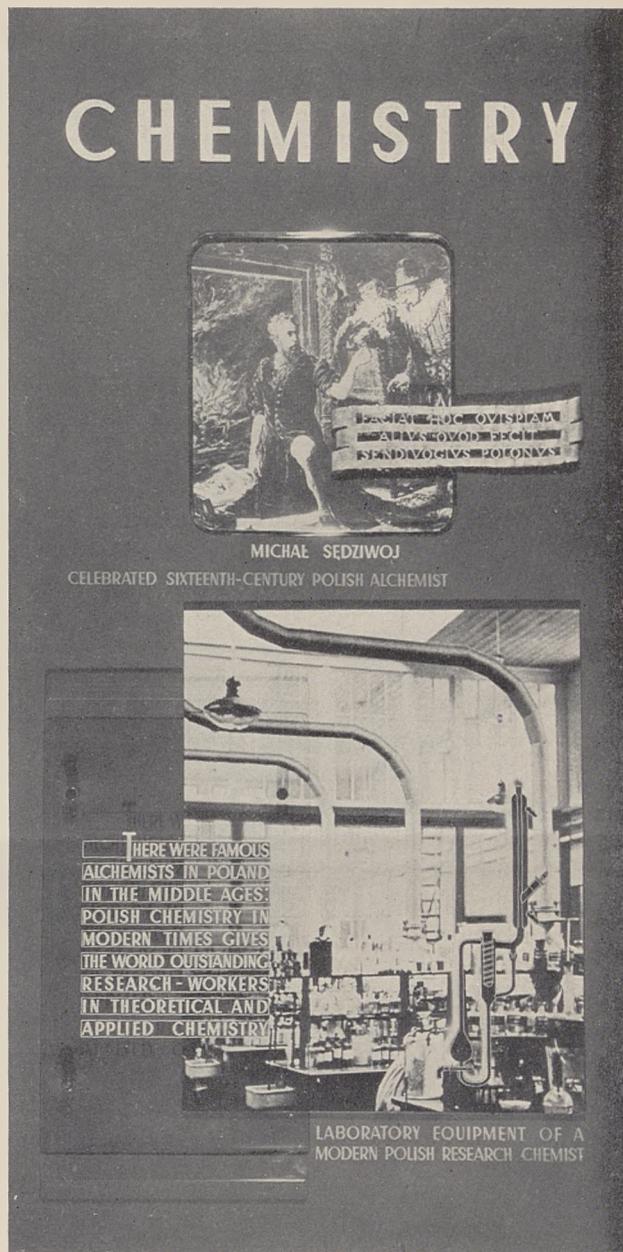
But the chief glory of the Cracow University were its chairs of mathematics and astronomy — the only ones then existing in Central Europe. Around them gathered the school of Cracow astronomers — men like Martin Krol, Martin Bylica and Albert of Brudzew. Back in the 13th century the famous Witelo (Ciolek) had written eight treatises on mathematics and allied sciences; the best known on optics, which for centuries was generally accepted as the basis of the optical theory. At the end of the fifteenth century his works were still read at Cambridge.

Since the earliest foundations of Polish learning were laid at Cracow, Polish scholars have done much for the advancement of learning in all branches of science. Michael Bylina of Olkusz became professor of medicine at Bologna in the 15th century; Professor J. Stanko of Cracow in his treatise on Polish flora, used Polish names that prevail today for herbs and flowers. Famous in medicine was Joseph Strus, who studied the then mysterious human pulse.

At a time when alchemy was paving the way for chemical research, the Pole, Michal Sedziwoj, won wide fame as an alchemist. His many treatises were translated into English, French and German and his "*Novum Lumine Chemicum*," "The New Chemical Light," ran into thirty editions.

Poland's cultural needs were constantly growing, and three new universities were founded in the course of the next hundred years at Wilno in 1578, Zamosc in 1593, and Lwow in 1661. All played a notable part in the development of Polish culture.

When at the end of the 18th century the old Republic of Poland fell before the attacks of its powerful neighbors and was partitioned, the nation turned to education as a means to defend its liberties. In 1773 the Educational Commission was set up — the first Ministry of Education in the world. Neither the foreign yoke and suppression of Polish thought, nor material and moral obstacles to the development of Polish learning, could lessen the enthusiasm for it.



Chemistry Tablet, Polish Pavilion, N. Y. World's Fair 1939-40

Its cult was fostered. Everywhere Poles aspired to participate in the progress of learning, and so to prove the existence of Poland.

In Poland itself learning as well as literature was ruthlessly suppressed and thrown into the abyss of catacombs. Even when, later under Austrian occupation, Polish learning and literature were set free and allowed to play their part in fostering Polish cultural life, in Russian and Prussian occupied Poland, literature and learning were forced into secret schools and underground centers, where true devotees of science taught and lectured to the youth and people of Poland.

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TRAGEDY OF POLISH LEARNING

(Continued from page 3)

In such a cult of learning, thirst for discovery and invention that would bring fame to Poland and relief to her suffering people was reared Maria Sklodowska-Curie, a Varsovian, whose whole life was spent in the service of ideals that have always animated underground learning in Poland.

In the 19th century knowledge radiating from occupied Poland was reflected in many important contributions by Poles to almost every science. In Wilno, the exact sciences stood highest, thanks largely to the brothers Sniadecki. Jan Sniadecki published a notable work on algebra and analytical plane geometry, while the philosopher and mathematician J. Hoene-Wronski introduced the signs known and still used in differential calculus as "wronskian". In the field of low temperatures, results of enduring value were achieved by K. Olszewski and Z. Wroblewski. These two professors at Cracow University were the first to liquefy oxygen and later nitrogen and carbon monoxide, at the same time producing record low temperatures. In the field of industrial chemistry Poland can boast of I. Lukaszewicz's invention of the naphtha lamp in 1853.

With the restoration of Polish independence there came a remarkable expansion of university life and scientific work. In each province, the desire arose to have its own center of higher education. German occupied Poland set about creating an university at Poznan, this was followed by the establishment of a Catholic University at Lublin. In the capital city of Warsaw, special schools of Rural Economy and Business administration were organized. More specialized fields were served by new institutions of geology, meteorology, mineralogy, oriental languages, etc.

Polish learning continued to make constructive contributions to science.

In physics M. Smoluchowski was the first to show that the movements of small particles in suspension in fluid are a direct result of the existence and movements of molecules. He thus prepared the ground for the atomic theory. In the field of astro-physics

important theoretical investigations were carried out by C. Bialobrzewski into the significance of radio-active pressure for the interior structure of stars and into the problems of their temperature.

S. Pienkowski's research work in Warsaw University's Institute of Physics is well known. His work was mainly concerned with molecular optics and structural research with the aid of X-rays, and to problems concerning the atomic nucleus. A notable contribution to the science of radio-activity, inseparable from the name of Marie Sklodowska-Curie, was K. Fajans' discovery of the existence of isotopes and the so-called law of dislocation, that forms the basis for the classification of radio-active elements.

Polish universities and institutions of similar rank had thirty-three chairs of mathematics, and more than 120 scientists engaged in mathematical periodicals and in many others abroad.

The Warsaw School headed by W. Sierpinski, S. Mazurkiewicz, and K. Kuratowski, published the "*Fundamenta Mathematicae*", devoted mainly to the theory of numbers, and their applications.

Today the destruction of Polish science and learning is far more complete

than it ever was during the worst years of the Partition. Every effort is being made by the Germans to exterminate Polish culture. Polish men of learning are being ruthlessly exposed to every form of hardship in concentration camps, to torture, to death.

But the flame of Polish scientific culture cannot be extinguished. Immediately after the defeat of Poland in 1939, Polish scholars established the University of Poland in Paris with Prof. O. Halecki as rector. It functioned until the occupation of Paris by Germans. The Polish Medical Institute in Edinburgh with its director Prof. A. Jurasz, and now the Polish Institute of Art and Science opened in New York, are eloquent proofs of the strong faith that all Polish scientists have in the rebirth of Polish culture and of a free and independent Poland.



"COPERNICUS" by S. Szukalski

DANZIG -- AN ABORTIVE EXPERIMENT

IN HIS fourteen points President Wilson asked that Poland be granted free and secure access to the sea. The Peace Conference decided to create a Free City, separated from German territory, politically independent of both Germany and Poland, but linked to Poland economically.

The political structure of the Free City, built up by the Allies and the League of Nations, was intended to ensure harmonious cooperation between Danzig and Poland, and to guarantee Poland economic access to the sea. Unfortunately, neither in the political nor in the economic sphere were these expectations realized. All the Free City's political structure, both international and internal, underwent gradual disintegration, and its economy moved more and more in the direction of autarchy and independence of Polish economy. When war broke out, the Free City's liberal and democratic system had long been replaced by the dictatorship of "Gauleiter" Forster, appointed by Hitler. Its international status, especially its connection with the League, had become a pure fiction.

Danzig was included in the Polish customs area. This was of great importance to Poland. Unfortunately, Polish control of the customs was undermined by a provision that the customs service was to be staffed by officials of the Free City, responsible solely to the Danzig authorities. This circumstance was the starting point and cause of innumerable Polish-Danzig conflicts.

Danzig's separate currency system, the treatment of Polish firms and the anti-Polish political atmosphere made it impossible for Poland to rely exclusively on Danzig for the forwarding of its foreign trade. That is how the great port of Gdynia came to be built, ten miles from Danzig.

Thirty-one per cent. of Poland's foreign trade passed through Danzig, and 46 per cent. through Gdynia. Gdynia took over the major part of the task of handling the foreign trade which formerly had

been conducted by land routes. Both ports developed economically and technically, thanks to the redirection of Polish trade from the land routes to the sea.

The leading political circles of Danzig, irrespective of their party affiliations, from the very inception of the Free City set themselves one chief objective: to advance the cause of the revision of the German frontiers on the East.

To achieve this, the political leaders of Danzig worked to bring about the most far-reaching political, administrative and economic cleavage between the Free City and Poland, while doing everything possible to preserve their links with the German Reich.

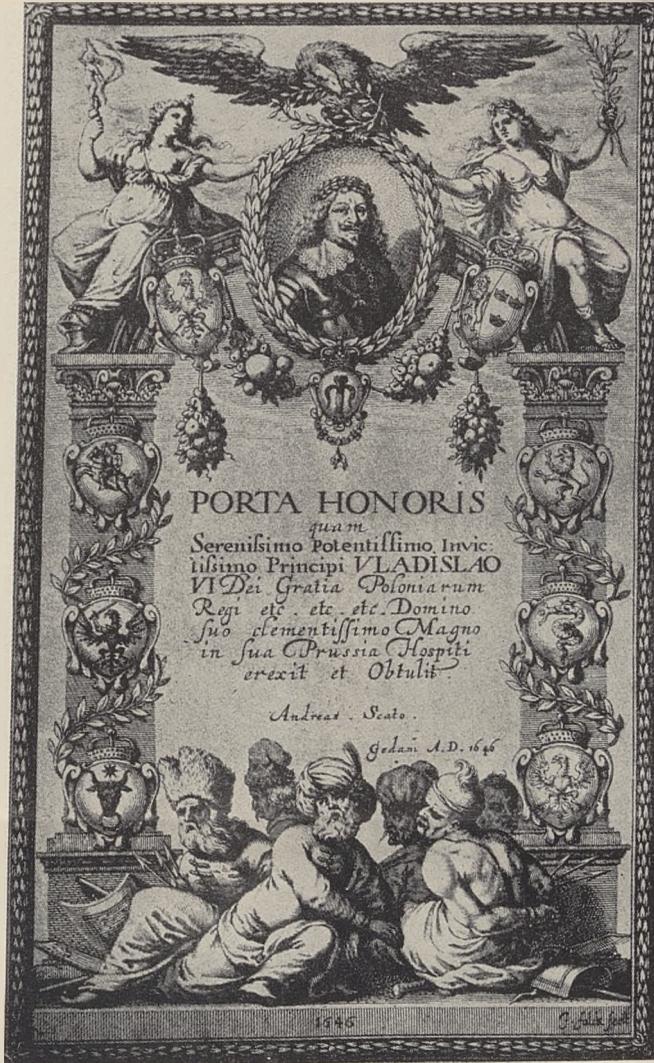
League arbitration offered an opportunity for German propaganda. The one question of the spot where Polish ammunition could be trans-shipped in Danzig, the famous Westerplatte, was brought before the League Council no less than 23 times!

Meanwhile Danzig's links with the Reich were maintained by coordination of policy and a common pool of administrative personnel. All the political

parties of the Free City, all the economic associations and trades unions were members of the corresponding organizations in the German Reich. So far as the movement of officials was concerned, Danzig and the Reich constituted an administrative unit. When the President of the Free City, Dr. Sahm, resigned, he was appointed mayor of Berlin.

Danzig could have become a bridge for Polish-German understanding. It preferred to be an instrument of German politics. The demand for the return of Danzig and the Polish corridor was merely a pretext for the present war.

Nowhere did Hitler have such a magnificent strategic position as Germany occupied on the German-Polish frontier. A simultaneous German offensive from the West and from East Prussia, forming a gigantic pair of pincers, rendered any prolonged resistance impossible on the part of Poland.



King Ladislaus Vasa visited Danzig and His Prussian Domain in 1646, when a Triumphal Arch was inscribed in His honor.

ARMENIAN CATHEDRAL -- JEWEL OF LWOW

LWOW, City of the Lion, is near to the heart of every Pole and has a long and proud history. Founded in the 13th century at the juncture of great trade routes, from east to west and north to south, it quickly prospered and became a flourishing commercial center.

The wealth of many nations poured through its busy customs stations, to which merchants brought rich caravans. These caravans had to

West, rich in tradition and Polish to the core.

This was especially true of the Armenian migration that came to Lwow in the 13th century. Armenian business ability and intelligence united with Polish tolerance and hospitality to make them one of the most thriving groups in Lwow. Not only were they first-class merchants, but they managed to serve as intermediaries in every business transaction by monopolizing the position of official interpreters, whose services were compulsory. Like the other minority groups in Lwow, the descendants of these ancient Armenians are now completely Polish in speech and feelings, differing from the rest of the population only in creed and racial type.

One of the landmarks of Armenian tradition in modern Lwow is the Armenian Cathedral, constructed when they first arrived. Frescoed in recent years by a young artist from Warsaw, Jan Henryk Rosen, now professor at the Catholic University in Washington, D.C., it ranks among the most beautiful examples of Polish plastic art.

Armenian ritual demands that the church be polychromed from floor to ceiling. Undeterred by the poor lighting, Rosen carried out the polychromy of the entire Cathedral single-handed, gilded the pilasters himself, using fine old patterns for his decoration when he could find them and introducing his own when necessary. His murals are most striking in technique and composition. One of their features is that the figures depicted are portraits on well-known moderns. Thus, in the strong and simple "Funeral of Saint Odilon" the Saint is the late Cardinal Mercier of Belgium, who defied the Germans during the last

and dogs of the King of France, is charming and fresh, bespeaking mature craftsmanship and a fine sense of color.

The "Annunciation" painted in blue, red and gold, reveals the Archangel Gabriel in Byzantine vestments, with Christ carrying the Cross in the background.

The fresco depicting Saint Adalbert presents the 9th century Slav martyr in a boat, christening pagans. St. Adalbert was killed by pagan Prussians in 999, and King Boleslas the Valiant paid for his body by its weight in gold. For many centuries the martyr's remains rested in the Cathedral of Gniezno in a silver coffin, part of the German loot in 1939.

Lwow, the lion-hearted, has time and again served to blunt foreign invasion and is proud of the many strains that have built its unconquerable spirit, proud of its age-old tradition of tolerance, reflected in the glowing colors of the Armenian Cathedral.

THE ANNUNCIATION by Jan H. Rosen



SAINT GILES by Jan H. Rosen

war. Saint Odilon, Abbot of Cluny in the 11th century, was the founder of All Souls. He is being borne to his grave, upon the necks of black monks, accompanied by departed souls carrying lighted candles.

The mural showing Saint Giles, the patron of forests and wild animals, in the act of protecting a doe from the knights



SAINT ADALBERT by Jan H. Rosen

spend two weeks in the city for their goods to be examined, and this compulsory "transient" trade added not a little to the prosperity of this colorful tower of Babel humming with activity.

Persian, Italian, Greek, German, Armenian, Turk, Tartar and Jew sold their precious wares to native Polish and Ruthenian buyers. As the frontier city grew in affluence, these foreign elements became permanent settlers. So powerful was the Polish assimilating force, that it made of this melting pot an interesting city, uniting East and

GERMANS SING OF EASTERN LANDS

DRANG NACH OSTEN

LET us speed to Eastern lands,
To the East, Fate beckons us
We shall gird the trenchant blade
To carve us a Fatherland
Where myriad flowers bloom.

LET us speed to Eastern lands
The West was far too narrow
The distant spaces tempt us
Eastern stars shine brighter far
Happiness awaits us there!
Pastures green in Eastern lands
Stretch as far as eye can see
Forests too! We shall fell them,
German grain and oats we'll grow.
In our hearts there is no fear.
Hail, all hail, the Eastern lands
Lands of hope for Germans all!

We shall fish, by streams that flood,
We shall shoot, for game abounds!
Hare and Deer, our heart's desire
No wine grows in Eastern lands!
Herrenvolk, our German race
There will breed and multiply
Good strong German peasant stock!
God forbid the flow of blood!
All the world may call us mad,
Mock at us! What matters it?
We are not defeated yet
German might will rise again
In the sun of Eastern lands.
At a trot our horses run
Needing neither whip nor spur.
Heil Hitler! In God we trust
He will not now refuse us
Eastern lands, for which we crave!

THAT is how the Germans sing their *Drang nach Osten*. What it is like in practice, the world knows only too well. Yet some of the lines simply beg for comparison with reality.

"Let us speed to Eastern lands," the very first words, tell of Mr. Rosenberg's difficulty in getting the Germans to go East, — either at a gallop, a trot or a pace. Mr. Rosenberg tries to encourage them by numerous decrees granting privileges to Germans, and now he enlists the aid of verse.

But the German soul can be reached only by a specific appeal as we learn in the first stanza, that boasts of the trenchant blade, all *Kultur* carriers should gird. Yes, — this is the "poetry" of violence, of fire, sword, plunder and crime.

"The West was far too narrow." Of course: only the *Herrenvolk* need space. To create it, let the Poles stifle in the dense overcrowding of the Government General; let the Jews die behind Ghetto walls. Their sufferings do not move the Germans.

"The distant spaces tempt them," spaces cleared by execution and deportation, misery and hunger. All this is sweet music to the German ear, — it is poetry that Germans understand!

The "poem" continues on a more matter-of-fact note:

"Forests too! We shall fell them." It is no secret that they cut down Polish forests "Without regard to the future."

"German grain and oats we'll grow." It is no secret that they sow what is not theirs, on land that belongs to others.

"We shall shoot, for game abounds." It is no secret that the "game" of least value to the invaders, for which there is no closed season, is that featherless biped, man!

"In our hearts there is no fear." Nor in their conscience.

"German might will rise again

"In the sun of Eastern lands." There are, to be sure, spots on this sun:

"No wine grows in Eastern lands" — but Polish beer was not so bad.

"Our German race there will breed and multiply."

"God forbid the flow of blood!" These words bring us in rhymed form the echoes of German moves to improving and maintaining the purity of race . . .

This entire poem is a rhymed version of the German program of extermination now being put into practice in Poland. Fire and sword, exploitation and crime, premeditation and madness.

With this in mind, who can fail to see something akin to fear in the final lines. "We are not defeated yet," and in the increasingly frequent mention of God's name.

"At a trot our horses run, Needing neither whip nor spur."

"Heil Hitler! In God we trust."

Justice too is trotting behind the criminals, and the clatter of hoofs can already be heard in the distance . . .

We trust in God, we trust that His scourge will not spare the criminals.

A HUNDRED TO ONE

By ANNA MACLAREN

WHEN the Polish destroyer "Piorun" opened fire on the German battleship "Bismarck", her chances of survival were small. In size and strength she was an acorn to an oak, compared to the "Bismarck" — one-fifth of the German fleet, pride of the German Navy and one of the most modern and powerful battleships in the world.

When Drake's small fleet accepted the challenge of the Armada, when Nelson met the French at Trafalgar, and when the Polish nation stood up to the German attack on her land in September 1939, the odds were a hundred to one against them. So it was with the

"Piorun" versus the "Bismarck." David threw his pebble at Goliath.

Sailing on the left wing of the 1st Division of the 4th flotilla of the British Navy, the "Piorun" with four British destroyers — the "Cossack," "Zulu" "Sikh" and "Maori"— had the task of holding the enemy battleship until the main force could come up with her. Among this force was the "Rodney."

At 10 a.m. on May 26th the officer of the watch of the "Piorun" sighted the "Bismarck." First of the flotilla to discover her after a hunt lasting over a week on the high seas, the "Piorun's" Captain, Commander Eugene Plawski, signalled the flotilla. Sailing Full Speed Ahead, he soon outdistanced the accompanying destroyers.

Visibility was bad, and the Captain was not certain whether the distant outline was actually that of the "Bismarck." Whatever ship she was, she was making over 30 knots. Even with her engines at Full Speed, the "Piorun" would have a job to catch up with her.

German planes passed overhead. They, too, were searching for the "Bismarck."

"The silhouette is that of a British cruiser," came the signals report ten minutes later.

"Increase speed," a British cruiser to their starboard signalled to them. It was the "Bismarck."

The "Piorun's" slim prow cleft the grey waters in a mighty effort. Heavy seas swept her deck. The stakes were desperately high, but she had a debt to pay. For one thing the loss of her namesake, the

"Grom" (both "Piorun" and "Grom" signify "thunderbolt" in Polish). The "Piorun" had been taken over by the Polish Navy to replace the "Grom" sunk by German bombs in Norwegian waters. Many of her crew had been on that fine ship when she went down in flames in the cold depths of that Norwegian fjord. Her crew, as they were being rescued, had been machine-gunned by German planes . . .

Straining in every rivet, the "Piorun" gradually closed in on the "Bismarck."

"Action Stations" . . .

The challenge signal was sent out. A courteous

gesture from one fighter to another, like the duellists' "En garde" . . .

The "Bismarck" replied with a salvo from her six-inch guns, the "Piorun" answered with her 40 mm. four-barrelled guns. For over an hour she countered the full fury of the cornered "Bismarck", alone. The "Bismarck" let her feel the full weight of her

mighty armament. Finding her six-inch shells failed to shake off the little destroyer she fired her fifteen-inch guns.

Monstrous spouts of water rose on each side of the "Piorun" as the "Bismarck's" gigantic shells struck the ocean. Sending out a smoke screen the "Piorun" tacked and zig-zagged towards and away from the "Bismarck," closing in on her at times to within 8,000 yards. She had commenced her attack at 13,500 yards.

In her battle with the "Bismarck," the "Piorun" had been proudly conscious of the fact that in the eyes of the world she epitomized the Polish nation that refused to be crushed and would do battle with any aggressor, of whatever strength, who should attempt to take from her her liberty.

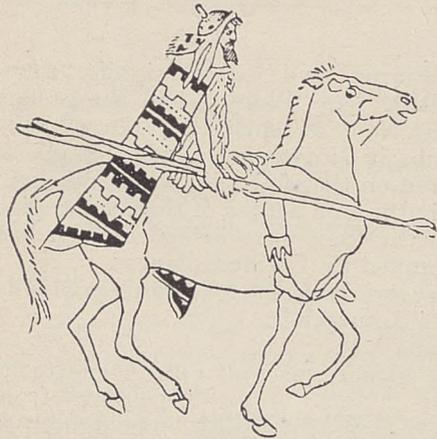
The whole day the "Piorun" continued to harry and harrass the great mass of the German battleship. Indeed, the torpedoes from the planes of the "Ark

(Please turn to page 12)



COMMANDER EUGENE PLAWSKI, CAPTAIN OF THE POLISH DESTROYER "PIORUN"

THE POLISH "KILIM"



KILIM ON THE BACK OF A THRACIAN RIDER (from an ancient Greek vase)

WHEN Tadeusz Kosciuszko was leaving Poland for the New World to take part in the American struggle for independence, he was presented with a beautiful kilim, woven expressly for him in the workshop of a Polish estate. He became so

attached to this symbol of Polish folk art that he never parted with it, habitually hanging it on the wall near his bed.

The kilim is a woven fabric that is neither carpet nor tapestry, but something between the two. Kilim-weaving, one of the oldest handicrafts known to man, was popular among the Egyptians, the ancient Greeks, the Persians of old and the American Indians.

In Europe, the kilim is virtually confined to Scandinavia, the Ukraine, Roumania, part of the Balkans and Southeastern Poland. Polish kilims have long been considered among the most beautiful, and in recent years have taken many awards at international art exhibits. They have always been an important feature of a Polish home. They serve as hangings for walls, as coverings for tables, benches, beds; they were used in religious ceremonies and in olden times were placed over coffins during the burial rites.

Polish kilim weaving is a native process the origin of which is lost in antiquity. It consists in interlacing woolen woof-threads among warp-threads so compactly that the warp does not show. The effect produced is that of an exquisitely soft but grainy surface. Woven into a rectangular space is a design consisting of rows of colored ornamental motifs arranged on a monochrome field and framed by a decorative border.

Old Polish kilims were mostly the work of peasant craftsmen who, weaving in their cottages on simple wooden hand-loom or in workshops of the nobility, produced without benefit of formal tuition, masterpieces of color, texture and composition. A true artist, the Polish peasant is incapable of repeating himself, so each kilim is an unique work of art.

The peasant draws on traditions handed down to him by generations of master craftsmen. Instinctively he chooses the best colors and motifs and in-

fallibly works them into a fresh and forceful whole. In the course of centuries, however, there have crept into the native art style of the Polish kilim, elements that enhance its beauty, without destroying any of its original appeal. To the simplicity and grace of the native ornamentation, the somewhat archaic rigidity and geometric symmetry, were added the sensuous and fiery imagination of the Orient and subtle refinement of French decorative art. At their best, then, these kilims are an harmonious blend of three very different factors: Polish folk, the Asiatic and the Western European.

The Polish peasant has always shown deep feeling for form and color. The kilim affords him a magnificent opportunity to display his wealth of decorative motifs and his manner of distributing them to form a pattern. These motifs range from simple stripes of various colors through geometric patterns to stylized flowers and naturalistic fleurettes.

The striped motif is doubtless the oldest of all. Symbolic of the rainbow colors of the Polish fields, it recurs constantly in Polish folk art and it still forms the basis for the famed striped costumes of the Lowicz peasantry.

The composition of the kilim may be summed up as the harmonious marriage of vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines. It is easy to see how the simple motif of the colorful stripes of various widths, repeated at suitable intervals, would lead to the geo-



POLISH KILIM (1760) An example of manor house art.

By HALINA CHYBOWSKA

metric arrangement of zigzags, rhombs, stars and other ornamental motifs.

In the 17th century, however, when Persian and Turkish influences began to make themselves felt, the geometric designs turned into conventional massive floral patterns similar to the palmetto motif of Persian and Caucasian rugs. Soon, the peasant began to transform the rather abstract palmetto into the flowers of his fields and meadows, and the arabesques and lancets into leaves and stems. Hence, the so-called "tree of life" motif, symbolic of rural

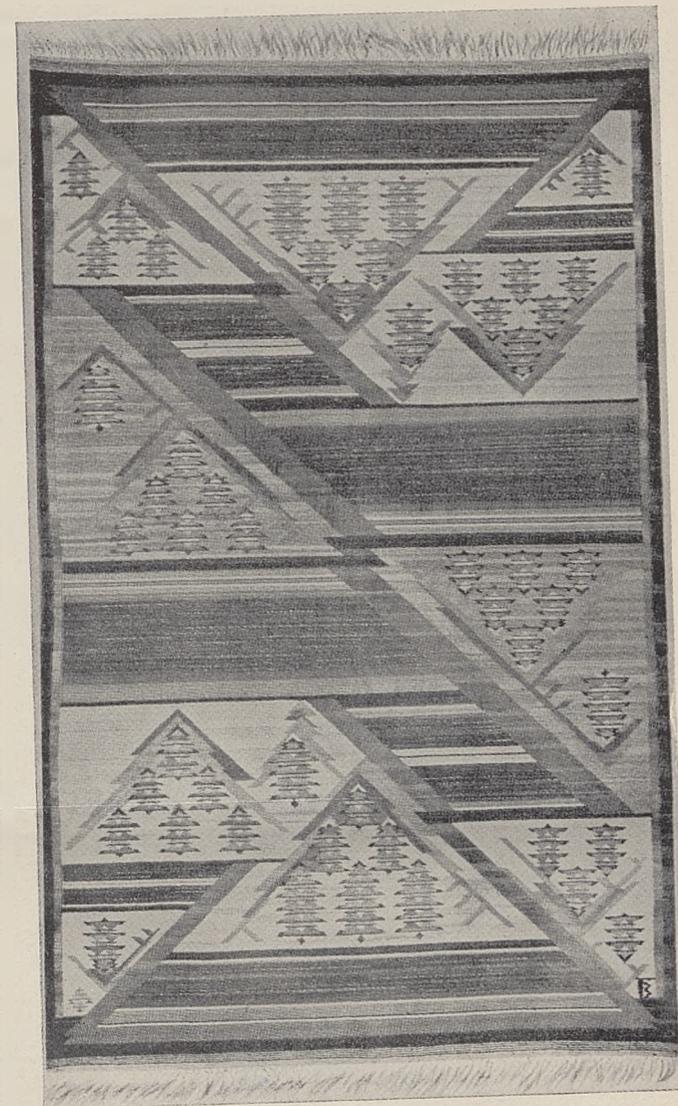


KILIM SHOWING AN OLD STAR MOTIF

culture and common to all European folk art, was introduced. The design consisted of a stylized branched plant, growing out of a pitcher or vase, repeated in a definite geometric arrangement.

Kilims manufactured at the seats of the nobility during this period differ from folk kilims in that the clusters of flowers are more resplendent and drawn in perspective and that they are set in rich vases or baskets.

In the 18th century, the French influence is evi-



SPRUCE MOTIF IN A MODERN KILIM

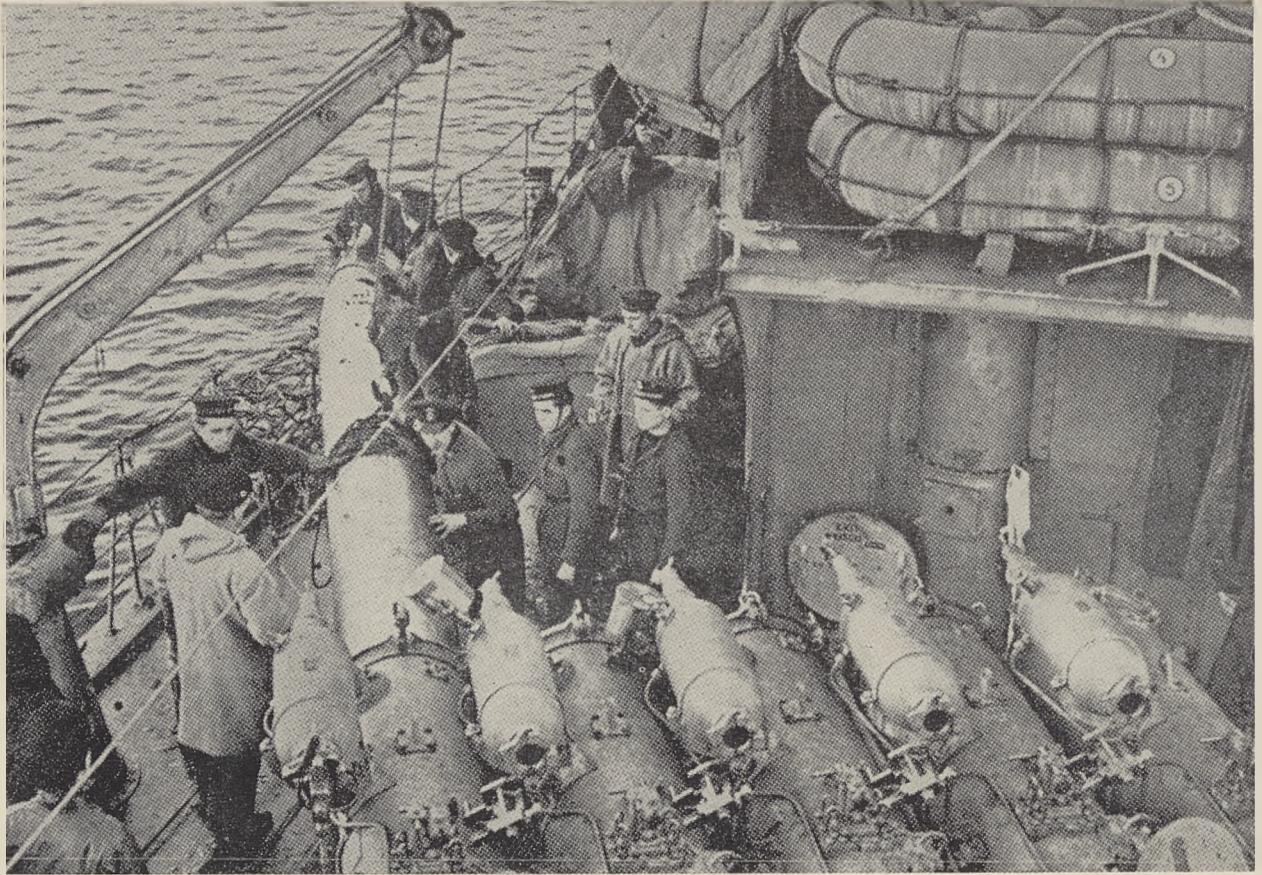
dent in the small naturalistic fleurette design, which finds its way even into folk kilims.

A characteristic of the Polish textile folk industry is the virtual disregard of the human figure as a motif. There are, however, a number of kilims in existence with designs showing figures of animals and people.

Old Polish kilims existing in museums and art collections are very difficult to duplicate. Not because modern craftsmen are less talented than the artisans of old, but rather because of the unhappy result of scientific progress in our lifetime. The Polish weaver of long ago was able to achieve such a play of colors and texture, to make a kilim of such loveliness, partly because he spun his yarn by hand. As it was not cleaned chemically, bits of grease from the spinner's fingers remained on it, rendering each thread

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The author is indebted for much of the above information to Stefan Szuman's authoritative work on the subject, "Dawne Kilimy w Polsce i na Ukrainie."



TORPEDOES BEING PLACED ON BOARD O.R.P. "PIORUN"

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Royal" had already done their work. But the "Piorun" had struck her blow and had received her baptism.

The Admiralty congratulated her Captain, Com-

mander Plawski, on the brilliance of his seamanship which had brought his ship safely to port after such a momentous encounter. Paderewski, too wrote to the Captain, the letter arriving after the great Pole's death . . . "Once again Poland has reaped for herself and for her Navy, new wreaths of Glory . . ."

POLISH "KILIM" By

HALINA CHYBOWSKA

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elastic and compact without a tendency to felt after the weaving. Thus, the minute grooves in the woven cloth reflected the light and imparted a certain shadowy lustre to the wool. This accounts for the impalpable charm of the material itself.

But this is not all. The ancient weaver also dyed his own wool. Aniline dyes were unknown, and he had to rely on vegetal dyes and other home decoctions. He was more limited in his colors and his shades did not always turn out exactly as he wished, but this only served to heighten the beauty of his work by eliminating the danger of standardization. Like a painter choosing his colors from a palette, he was able to select the precise shades he needed and weave them into a pattern of unsurpassed loveliness. Moreover, the yarn had a life-like quality, due to the inevitable shadings of tone.

The Polish peasant exercised his ingenuity in obtaining the proper colorings for his works of art.

Dyeing has long ago been regarded as an art in Poland. It is so old a skill that the patina of age has settled over it with a multitude of secret formulae, superstitions and customs. Thus, some time in the distant past, the Polish artist discovered that shades of red may be obtained from an insect, the "*coccus polonicus*," and from the inner bark of the birch; green from a mixture of reseda and indigo, and from brews of barks and berries; black and brown from the bark and shell of the chestnut. He also learned that unripe berries yield yellow, ripe berries green, and overripe berries scarlet hues.

But above all, he realized that colors must be perfectly blended if they were to do justice to the originality of his kilim motifs and the harmonious composition and rhythmic waves of the geometric, floral or figure patterns arranged within the framework of his esthetic woolen rug-tapestry. His kilim need not be flawless, but it must be perfect in its imperfection. It must bear the stamp of the human hand, but more than that it must reflect its author's inspired soul.