

No. 1 News From Poland 1937

Series V

(For Bulletin Boards and Private Persons)

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A Great Polish Picture "Barbara Radziwill"

Polish film producers have been working for many years to turn out a really great film judged by American and English standards and now they have succeeded. It is called "Barbara Radziwill", and is the story of the romance of the Polish King, Zygmunt August, and Barbara, his young and beautiful bride who died six months after their marriage, supposedly, then, poisoned by Zygmunt's mother, Queen Bona, of the Italian family of Sforza. This theory is no longer held by historians, but it forms the basis for a most interesting 16th century romance, full of elegantly clothed nobles and splendidly gowned ladies, fine castles, and beautiful gardens.

The plot is good, the photography excellent, the action and the acting up to the best international levels. The film should receive a showing and a welcome in the States and in England. Miss Jadwiga Smosarska, a great Polish star these last five years, plays Barbara, Mrs. Leokadja Pancewicz makes a perfect Queen Bona, and the part of young King Zygmunt is played by Witold Zacharewicz with such skill and understanding as to itself be worth the price of admission. Incidentally, Mr. Zacharewicz is an active and interested participant in the work of the Warsaw YMCA. The 16th century, in which the scene is laid, was Poland's Golden Age. The incidents which make up the story are full of action and color.

Thank You.

We wish to thank the many friends who sent us cards and letters of greeting during the Holiday Season. For several years "News From Poland" has served us as our holiday greetings to our friends.

"Events and Personalities In Polish History"

Those who wish a short and not over-dry account of what has gone on in Poland during the past 1000 years will find it in my 115 page booklet with 30 illustrations which has just been published by The Baltic Institute and is being distributed in America by Association Press, 347 Madison Avenue, New York, and in England by J. S. Bergson, 4 Vernon Place, London W. C. 1. It is a handy-sized cloth-bound booklet. The price is 50 cents or 2 shillings.

One reader says "It gives a very good idea as to the most important events and personalities in Polish history, and introduces the reader into an understanding of this country". Which is just what the author set out to accomplish. Association Press is also now handling my "Elements of Polish Culture" which sells for 25 cents.



Zygmunt and Barbara at the wedding ball.

The Work of Polska YMCA Increases 73% In One Year Our Membership

In the figures below there are included three classifications of persons who use the buildings of the Polish YMCA. In the first column are reported men and boys who are ordinarily classified as members. In the second column we report women in our educational and physical department classes. In the third column, under "special", appear men and women and children regularly enrolled in gymnasium and swimming classes conducted in our buildings but less closely connected with the Association than are the other groups.

The upper figures in each pair are for December 31, 1936. The lower ones, thus—169—are for a year ago. The present total of users is, as shown below, 15,589.

City	Members	Women	Special	Total
Gdynia	416	64	—	480
	— 169 —	— 34 —	—	— 203 —
Krakow	1420	263	2478	4161
	— 852 —	— 224 —	— 2538 —	— 3614 —
Lodz	1935	535	3816	6286
	— 925 —	— 181 —	— 1368 —	— 2474 —
Poznan	157	1	—	158
	— 114 —	—	—	— 114 —
Warsaw	2254	648	1602	4504
	— 1829 —	— 422 —	— 341 —	— 2592 —
Totals	6182	1511	7896	15,589
	— 3889 —	— 851 —	— 4247 —	— 8997 —

Boys' Work

Among the more interesting advances of 1936 was the growth in work for boys. The Boys' Divisions of the three large Associations grew as follows:

Krakow	From 292	To 583 boys
Lodz	" 303	" 589 "
Warsaw	" 722	" 1001 "
Totals	From 1317	To 2173 boys

Attendance

With these increases in membership and available rooms there has naturally been a corresponding increase in the daily attendance at the buildings. In Warsaw it runs from 1400 to 1600 a day, not by guess but by actual count at the doors four times a month from 9 a. m. to 10 p. m., using as sample days a Monday, a Tuesday, a Thursday, and a Friday, with occasional sampling of other days. Even our very limited "lokal" in Gdynia draws 80 men a day into its small but pleasant rooms.

Good Work, Lodz.

Lodz, great mill town of 600,000 inhabitants, is essentially a working man's city; its YMCA is geared to serve men who work with their hands as well as those whose work is with pen and pencil. The general secretary, though he holds a diploma from Geneva, is a man whose own roots are in the so-called working class and who both knows and likes working people.

On my recent visit to Lodz he and I sat in a class-room with 44 carpenters, bricklayers, and stone-masons, who are taking a course for master builders, and then took supper with thirty odd men who finished a similar course last year and have formed a permanent club in the YMCA.

After supper, as we sat in the general secretary's office, we spoke of this fine work for working men and he told me the following story. One day a working man's wife, shawl over head, called at the YMCA and asked for "the man in charge here" to seek an understanding of what had happened to her husband. He had joined something or other at "Imka", and now, instead of drinking up his wages and spending his evenings no one knew where, he went to "Imka", brought home books and lessons, worked evenings at home with pencil and paper, and had become a different man.

The children, formerly indifferent to school, now, seeing their father study, had begun to study also and become good boys. The whole home was changed. So she had come to ask just what was this "Imka" and to know what it was her husband was doing there.

It seemed to me that in this group of incidents and experiences I had had no small reward for the years I have given to cooperation with the people in Lodz to help them develop this "Imka", now having a membership of over 2500, but with over 5000 men, women, and children regularly using the building. A man joins a technical class, and a whole home is changed. Good work, Lodz.

New Year's Party

For a number of years the New Year's Eve Party of the Warsaw YMCA has been an event of growing importance. This year 1300 guests, almost 100% young people, came and paid from fifty to ninety cents admission. The whole first floor and swimming pool of this the largest YMCA building in Europe was used, beautifully decorated, two orchestras playing, supper served à la carte in the smaller gymnasium and in the restaurant, a committee of 25 young men in charge of the whole entertainment. It is an inspiring sight to see over a thousand young people having a wonderfully good time at a New Year's Eve Party and without alcohol.



From left: Bona Zygmunt, Barbara, Prince Radziwill.

