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Edition 47

# krakow P@ST

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# Fishy **Business**

Problems have arisen at Krakow's proposed aquarium

Anna Spysz

Few visitors to Krakow know that ul. św. Sebastiana 9 is the site of the Museum of Natural History, and even fewer people know of the grand plans for the transformation of two floors of the building into a state of the art aquarium. However, realization of the currently half-finished project has been repeatedly stalled in an unfortunate turn of events that ultimately boils down to a crisis in communication.

American Nathan Gendreau, owner of the Nathan's Villa Hostels chain, is the sole investor behind this project, which was begun almost exactly a year ago. Previously, the publicly-owned Museum of Natural History, owned by the Institute of Systematics and Evolution of Animals (Instytut Systematyki i Ewolucje Zwierząt, ISiEZ) of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Polska Akademia Nauk, PAN), had housed a small, 30,000-litre oceanarium run by a private company in space rented from the institute, in addition to the museum's permanent exhibitions. The private company running the oceanarium had ended their contract, and the director of the chronically-underfunded museum was interested in renting the space, initially hoping to use the funds gained from the rent to open a larger branch of the original museum in another location. In March of this year, it was revealed that the museum would not move to a new location, but the contract to rent the museum space had already been signed.

Nathan Gendreau proposed the idea of building a modern, state of the art aquarium comparable to those in the U.S. or Western Europe. When speaking to the Krakow Post, Mr. Gendreau stressed that the aquarium "could be an excellent addition to Polish tourism. especially in Krakow." In an open letter from the 6th of August, Mr. Gendreau wrote: "the finished museum and aquarium would be a wonderful addition to



Signed shield - but will it deliver?

# **POLAND'S ACHILLES SHIELD?**

# Poland signs controversial missile defense deal

Wojciech Michnik

20th August, after 18 months of negotiations, Poland and the United States signed an agreement to build a U.S. missile defence base on Polish soil. The deal was signed in Warsaw by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski. "Poland is one of America's greatest friends," Secretary Rice declared after the signing. To be legally binding, the agreement must now be ratified by Polish and American parliaments respectively.

According to the agreement, the American base in Poland will contain 10 missile interceptors and more than 100 U.S. military personnel. Combined with a radar placed in the Czech Republic, these instalments will constitute the European part of an American defence system, a project that the Bush administration has been working on for almost two terms. Poland, in return, gained much-desired security guarantees from the United States, along with a commitment by Washington to help improve Polish defence and the armed forces. Both sides signed the Declaration on Strategic Cooperation, which contains a passage about American "substantial assistance to support Poland's military modernization efforts," and "cooperation involving the deployment of a U.S. Army Patriot air and missile defence battery in Poland."

These two above-mentioned conditions seemed to be the most important goals of Tusk's government in the long negotiations with Washington. The signing of the agreement may mark not only the beginning of a new chapter in Polish-American cooperation, but also of a U.S.-Poland bilateral security relationship. Shortly after the deal was signed, prime minister Donald Tusk declared that "we have crossed the Rubicon," in Polish-American relations. He went on to say that "Poland and the Poles do not want to be in alliances in which assistance comes at some point later - it is no good when assistance comes to dead people. Poland wants to be

in alliances where assist-

ance comes in the very first hours of any possible conflict." This firm statement was an obvious reference to Polish experiences during the Second World War and a strong reminder of how security is still perceived by many Poles.

The interceptors that are to be based in Poland might be used to shoot down ballistic missiles launched from the Middle East (at present Iran is most commonly mentioned as a possible perpetrator). Both the Polish and American sides stressed that the missile shield is not directed towards any particular country and has only a defensive purpose. This was a clear message to Russia, which had raised its concerns on several occasions, claiming that the American missile base on Polish soil would be treated as a sign of unfriendly intentions.

This Russian context of the missile shield agreement between Warsaw and Washington has grabbed most of the headlines, especially in the face  $\gg 2$ 

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# **News Krakow**

# Letters To the editor



For

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For those tired of hearing only about Celine Dion and how bad her music is, allow me to present my picks for the best Canadian popular music in the last 45 years. Having lived in Kraków for quite a while and met a lot of people, I think I can state that the great majority of Krakówians have, unfortunately, never heard of any of these top-rate artists and couldn't fail to enjoy their music as soon as they did. Or they might know songs by them, but not know the artist. The list is roughly in order of when the career began, though the first bunch are all about the same time in the 60s:

Ian and Sylvia
Buffy Sainte-Marie
Gordon Lightfoot
The Band, also Rick Danko (later) on his own
Joni Mitchell
Leonard Cohen
Steppenwolf
Neil Young
Bruce Cockburn (pronounced "Co burn")
Kate and Anna McGarrigle
Loreena McKennitt
Rawlins Cross
Jesse Cook
Hawksley Workman

If the Empik on the Rynek is any indication, you'd have to find almost all of these on the Internet. (Or is there a music store with a better selection in Krakow?)

In addition, try to find the great classic concert documentary *The Last Waltz* directed by Martin Scorsese, about the final, farewell concert given by The Band at Winterland, San Francisco, in 1976, featuring performances by The Band, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Ronnie Hawkins, Neil Young, Dr. John, Muddy Waters, Pinetop Perkins, Emmylou Harris, The Staple Singers, Eric Clapton, Paul Butterfield, Van Morrison, Ronnie Wood, Ringo Starr, Michael McClure (poet), Lawrence Ferlinghetti (poet), Neil Diamond (strangely), a big horn section and other backing musicians, interspersed with interviews by Scorsese of members of The Band.

Of course, I have a B-list of artists as well, but maybe some other time. Let's get on the right track first.

Come on, Krakow, it's all out there waiting for you. Real music, made in Canada for the enjoyment of all.

Do zobaczenia, Jim Waite, a Kanadian in Krakow

# Editor's reply:

Jim, since the beginning of Krakow Post 2.0, we have made it no secret that the editorial staff of the Post are no fans of Celine, going as far as comparing her invasion of the Krakow Blonia to the invasion of Poland in 1939. With that in mind, thank you for your response, and just to let you know, we do not hate Canadian music at all, just one Mrs. Dion whose star has now tarnished the Wawel area.

Sincerely, Anna Spysz

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of the war in Georgia. The Kremlin has been using the strategy of threatening its neighbours and "near abroad" for years. This has also been the case in regard to the plans of establishing a missile shield in Central Europe. Even before the deal was signed, Moscow had warned Poland about possible consequences. On August 15th Anatoly Nogovitsyn, deputy chief of Russia's General Staff, said at a news conference in Moscow that "any military installations in one country are of interest to others," and that the "destruction of such facilities is always a priority task. Therefore it can't go unpunished from a military point of view.'

Such a plain threat could be seen by the supporters of the missile shield installation as a precise reason why Poland needs to close the deal with the United States. Moreover, the outbreak of war in Georgia made the missile shield deal look, from some perspectives, like it was indeed aimed at Russia. From the technical point of view, it could be argued that this is nonsense, as it is debatable whether 10 intercepting rockets launched from Poland could cause any damage to Russia (not to mention the political and military costs of such behaviour). The American and Polish sides reject any notions that the shield is directed against Russia. The White House released a statement that the purpose of the shield "is to protect our European allies from any rogue threats such as a missile from Iran," adding that "in no way is the missile defence aimed at Russia." During the press conference in Warsaw on August 14th, Radoslaw Sikorski diplomatically replied that "only people of ill intent should fear this agreement."

Yet the question of war in Georgia and its effect on the Polish-American deal has been raised by a number of commentators. Many have claimed that from a strategic point of view, it is far-fetched to cite the conflict as a primary reason for speeding up the signing of the agreement (which had been

negotiated for so many months). On the other, the way Russia handled the war may have made Warsaw and Washington a bit more decisive in closing the negotiations. According to Marcin Bosacki, Washington correspondent of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, "the war in Georgia played a key role in advancing the pace of the missile shield talks between Poland and the United States."

Shortly after signing the agreement,

the Polish and American sides announced it to be a great success. For the Bush administration it was something of a last call to close the deal before the election frenzy at home. For the Polish side (where both branches of the executive power should be credited for their efforts), it was apposite to show public opinion that in times of crisis (such as the war in Georgia) Poland has gained a bilateral agreement with the most powerful country in the world. According to Wess Mitchell, director of research at the Centre for European Policy Analysis in Washington D.C., the shield agreement is here to stay for at least three factors. Firstly, more and more NATO countries seem to accept the idea and need for the shield (a factor that helps allay fears of another transatlantic rift); secondly, because it may be really the last resort in dealing with Iran (in case diplomatic options ran out); and lastly, as there are almost no other options visible for the West.

For Poland though, the problem of Iran may be seen as a distant one. Much closer to Warsaw's interests is a new chapter in Polish-American relations and the reassurance of Poland's security that comes with the agreement. Therefore, from the Polish standpoint, the missile shield agreement may be perceived as a convenient pretext for a new deal. But an answer to the question who benefits from these cards, and why, may be regarded as premature.

# A Tale of Two Markets

Trustees of London's Borough Market visit Krakow's historic Plac Nowy

### Ewa Spohn

This month sees the start of a project aimed to stimulate Krakow into thinking about how best to make use of its food markets, especially Plac Nowy in Kazimierz. The project, organised by the "Przyjazny Kazimierz" association and Slow Food Wroclaw, will bring experts from London to Krakow to explore how urban food markets can help in regenerating surrounding areas, influence urban development and benefit the local and wider area.

The project begins with a visit by George Nicholson, a trustee of London's Borough Market, and Simone Crofton, its chief executive, who will meet Krakow's councillors and residents and share their experiences of turning London's oldest food market around from near bankruptcy into one of the most popular tourist and gastronomic destinations in the city over a period of only 10 years.

Borough Market is a wholesale and retail market that can trace its history back to Roman times. Today, it is a registered charity run by a board of trustees, all of who live in the vicinity of the market, which serves both locals and visitors; between 20-30,000 people visit every weekend to sample and buy fine produce from the UK and Europe. Borough still operates as a wholesale market at night, one of the last in central London, but a decade ago the increasing popularity of supermarkets forced the trustees to think up new ways to keep it afloat. As a result, Borough is now the UK's highest quality food market and is recognised as one of the world's largest food markets. By providing direct access to the consumers, it allows farmers and small artisan producers to stay in business.

The trustees of Borough Market believe that in order to fulfil their main charitable purpose of holding a market, they have a duty to manage the activities of the market and its investments efficiently



The *Krakow Post* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters for publication should be signed and bear the signatory's email address and city of residence. The *Krakow Post* reserves the right to edit letters.

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# **News Krakow**



The ground floor of the aquarium in its current state

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the children of Krakow," including his own son.

In August 2007, Mr. Gendreau met with Prof. Dr. Wiesław Krzemiński, head of the museum. The professor gave his initial support to the idea, and arranged a meeting with the director of ISiEZ, who also expressed a positive opinion. On the 5th of October, Mr. Gendreau submitted an offer, describing the idea behind the aquarium and its value for education and tourism, as well as details involving the modernizing of the building and installing WiFi, air conditioning, handicap access, and a café. The offer also stated that "the firm [Nathan's Villa Hostels] will undertake the responsibility for the safety of visitors to the exhibition. All expenditures involved with the investment, organization, and promotion [of the aquarium] will be borne by the

The plans for the aquarium include brand-new cement aquariums protected by shatter-proof acrylic as well as smaller terrariums protected by two panes of glass, handicap access throughout the entire building, 28 touch screen "info points," 42-inch HD displays for presentations, and several hands-on exhibitions for children, including a "Discovery Room" where children could touch certain marine animals and crustaceans. The building's 100-person conference room would be modernized with a new sound system and projector, which would be used for presentations intended for visiting school groups. The plans would be realized with the help of a group of over 40 employees, including students, graduates and scientific and engineering professionals.

Work was scheduled to begin on the 7th of January 2008, though according to Prof. Krzemiński, Mr. Gendreau began construction on the aquarium "without a confirmed project plan," and before being authorized to do so, as mentioned in a letter expressing breaches of contract from the 18th of April 2008. According to the original contract, no changes can be made to the building's construction or electrical and water systems, or permanent structures can be installed without the owner's written permission, with the exception of changes stated in the contract, which include only the installation of a lift to the first floor, a glass structure in the garden, air conditioning, a security system, replacing the window at the museum's main entrance with a doorway, and renewing the façade of the building up to the first floor. However, the professor claims that significant changes were made to the original plans without written approval in the following months, including extending the lift to the second floor, and the installation of concrete aquariums as permanent structures.

From January 2008, a new director took over the institute, Doc. Dr hab. Zbigniew Bocheński. He visited the museum and met with Mr. Gendreau in February, after which he submitted a positive written opinion on the project on March 4th, stating "[the proposed aquarium] will be one of the most modern objects of this type in Poland. (...) This type of presentation will certainly quickly become one of our city's attractions most worthy of attention.' On the 17th of March, Dr hab. Jerzy Szczeklik, the director of the Clinic of Toxicology and Communicable Diseases, also expressed a positive opinion on the safety measures being taken with the aquarium's collection of venvalue of the collection.

On the 18th of April Mr. Gendreau received the first letter of criticism from the institute, stating that the original contract had been breached, as changes had been made not mentioned in the contract. It stresses, "The most serious neglect observed in the renovation project was carried out in defiance of [construction laws] without the proper permits. The building of the Museum of Natural History ISiEZ PAN in Krakow lies in a protected zone on the grounds of a former tributary of the Vistula, which should be taken into consideration." The construction of the aquarium was stopped until the proper permits (for changing the weight of the floor) were acquired.

In the following months, the institute continued to claim various contractual violations, including concerns about evacuation paths that had been changed. The institute appealed to the Voivodship Agency of Monument Protection (Wojewódzki Urząd Ochrony Zabytków, WUOZ), which emphasized that all historical elements of the building were to be renovated and pro-

historical ceramic tiles and the reconstruction of a doorway. Nevertheless, on the 25th of July, ISiEZ submitted a list of breaches of the original contract, and stated that the proposed construction is not structurally sound and much heavier than originally agreed upon, and requested that all work on the project stop until another geological survey can be conducted.

Prof. Krzemiński stressed that his main concern is with the building itself. Including water and the concrete aquarium structures, the new aquarium will weigh 500 tonnes, while the building is over a century old and was built on a former island. However, a reply from Nathan's Villa Hostels shows several geological opinions that reveal the ground beneath the building to be able to support the proposed weights involved, and because the aquariums will be located on the ground floor, no additional foundations are needed to reinforce the building.

Mr. Gendreau believes that Prof. Krzemiński does not want to lose his museum, and thus is trying to stop the construction of the aquarium. Howev-







Some displays are nearly finished...

tected during the construction works, and that all changes must be approved by the owners of the building. In a letter replying to the institute's concerns, Nathan's Villa Hostels and engineer Ryszard Walczak stated that all of the appropriate safety and conservation measures had been taken during the current and planned construction.

On the 16th July, WUOZ submitted a written opinion stating that it will allow the construction of the aquarium as originally planned under two conditions, which included preserving

er, as the contract between Nathan's Villa Hostels and ISiEZ is for only seven years, with the option to renew, the professor believes he is justified in enforcing the part of the contract that disallows the renter from building permanent structures in the building. Prof. Krzemiński told the *Post* that at the very least, the renter must provide the money for the removal of the aquariums at the end of the lease term, if such a decision is made by the institute.

omous species, and the educational ditions, which included preserving At the moment, according the Mr.









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# **News Krakow**

# A Vacation With Polish

## Grażyna Zawada

Another Summer School of Polish Language ended successfully, releasing hundreds of Polish-proficient students.

Aged 55, Edwiga Jacquin-Tkaczuk from Toulouse, France, is one of the 550 students who took part in this year's edition of the Summer School of Polish Language which has been held under the auspices of the Jagiellonian University for nearly 40 years. She took a three-week intensive course, as she wanted to be able to discover the country and communicate with her family living in Wielun, north of Krakow.

"I want to learn Polish, because Poland is my country," says Edwiga. "I bought some books about Polish in France and wanted to learn it on my own, but I have no one to talk to and Polish grammar is so difficult. After the course I know all about the aspects and the cases and I can continue to teach myself," she laughs. In the future Edwiga wants to be able to read in Polish and spend her vacations here.

With her Polish roots Edwiga is, however, in the minority. According to Piotr Horbatowski, the director of the School of Polish Language and Culture at the Jagiellonian, the 500-700 participants every year come from 50 different countries on av-



The 2008 inauguration of the summer program

erage, and are simply interested in the language for personal or professional reasons, with Americans being the most numerous group among them. Young people make up the majority of the students, however the age range is vast - from 18 years, the minimum age for the course, up to even 84 years.

"We have a group of elder people, whom we call 'regular customers.' One gentleman even claims to have taken part in the courses 20 times. With some people you can really see the progress of learning, however some of them remain at the same language level for years," says Horbatowski.

The Summer School of Polish Language began in 1969 as an initiative of the Polish language faculty's Prof. Wladyslaw Miodunka, who wanted the teaching of Polish as a foreign language to become a completely independent field. The courses began with enormous help of the Kosciuszko Foundation, who sent the first group of American students with Polish roots to the programme, and have sent a large group of participants - over 100 people every year - ever since. There are also translators from the EU, people who are connected with business in Poland and need the language in their work, students who study Slavic philologies and want to have their summer school credits transferred to their home university, and members of a free Ministry of Education programme called "Polish for the Best" for Polish or Slavic philology

students all over the world.

The course itself starts with a ceremonial lecture given by a celebrity of Polish culture, such as Krzysztof Zanussi, Andrzej Wajda, Ryszard Kapuscinski or Norman Davies. The participants live in the "Piast" student dormitory building, where they find all of the necessary facilities and have their board and keep. A course group has ten or fewer students, chosen according their level, from breakthrough to proficient. Each group is assigned two stewards to take care of them, Polish students who live with the foreign students, help them and are available 24/7.

For Kasia, a student from the International Relations Department, this year is her third summer spent with foreigners in Piast as a stewardess. Her duties are to attend and guide students around Krakow and when on a trip, arrange extra attractions and also help in any potential problems they may have.

"I have to be here all the time, especially when the elder people are around," says Kasia. "But I love this job, you can make so many great friends here. And we keep in touch after the courses end."

uate Edwiga concur that

Both Director Horbatowski and gradthe course's programme

# Gays In, Stags Out

# Krakow courts the pink pound

# Adelina Krupski

The Krakow Festival Office and the marketing and promotion sector of the Town Council have recently announced plans to advertise Krakow specifically to gays and lesbians, a niche market of major interest to local tourism authorities and the first initiative of its kind in Poland.

"We plan to broaden the current offer in existing guidebooks to the gay target group. In the autumn a travel website will be launched, with a special section relating to gay tourism. However, no concrete strategy has been formulated at this time," said Krakow Festival Office director Magdalena Sroka during an interview with Innastrona.pl, the "first Polish web portal for gays and lesbians."

A guidebook aimed at homosexuals is also soon to be issued by the Town Council. However, Sroka maintains that there is no sense in financing an outdoor campaign of billboards and advertisements directed at a minority audience. "Our task is not to promote tolerance, but the city," stated

The central issue is, of course, money. As stated by European Ambassador for the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA), Carlos Kytka: "Gay and lesbian tourism is a very lucrative niche market. In the USA alone the value of gay spending is estimated to be over \$610 billion and in the UK it is thought to be more than \$140 billion. Gav couples, most without children, tend to have higher incomes and spend more on holidays than their straight counterparts. Many cities throughout the world have realised that it makes good economic sense to target this very defined market."

In addition, unlike the swarms of British and Irish stag parties arriving on cheap flights, gay tourists are better behaved and more likely to enjoy the cultural aspects of the city. Rather than scaring away customers with obnoxious drinking games, initiating fights, harassing bar staff, going to brothels and vomiting kebab on the way back to the hostel, as stag parties are known to do, gays are more likely to spend their holiday visiting museums and galleries, having a few drinks in a modern nightclub, sitting down for meals in nice restaurants and staying in upscale hotels.

According to Culture for Tolerance Foundation director Samuel Nowak. if Krakow wants to make its mark as a European city, its residents and tourism agents ought to realise that they already have many homosexual guests. "Heading some specific offer

for this group seems a bit ridiculous. The city interests only those gavs or lesbians who belong to a well established middle class: they choose better hotels, pricier restaurants, more extravagant drinks." Nowak adds that it would be in the interest of the city to support initiatives or social stances that would make it clear to see that Krakow is an open city in which there is no room for homophobia.

Aleksandra Sowa, coordinator for the Campaign Against Homophobia in Krakow, states that the proposal to encourage gays and lesbians to visit Krakow is a complete fantasy, as the city currently does not have much to offer for homosexuals. "It can merely supply adrenaline to, for instance, gavs and lesbians holding hands in the street - because they are susceptible to verbal abuse and physical violence."

According to Sowa, the city should first invest in promoting tolerance and counteracting discrimination on account of sexual orientation. Only later can it promote Kra- >> 8

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and also to bring about the regeneration and refurbishment of the market and its surrounding shops, flats and offices. As a result, the area around the market has seen new businesses move in and has become a trendy neighbourhood to live and go out in. It was these associated benefits that particularly intrigued the "Przyjazny Kazimierz" association. "We were interested in how they had taken something that was on its knees and turned it [around] to become not only a worldclass market it its own right, but also a catalyst for the revitalisation of the whole area, and all in such a short period of time," says Marcin Lassota, a Krakow lawyer and spokesman for the association. "We wanted to show how Plac Nowy could fulfil its traditional function and bring economic and social benefits to the city, so we decided to invite them to come and share their story. To our delight, they agreed."

The association was formed in January 2008 to fight for the reversal of the changes to local regulations that were introduced by Krakow's councillors in August 2007. The changes allowed the sale of alcohol on all of Krakow's market places up until midnight, and to 2 a.m. on Plac Nowy in particular. This caused outrage among Kazimierz residents, who already suffer from the noise and debris that comes hand in hand with night-time partying. Since then, research carried out by the association has uncovered a number of concerning facts about the privately held company that leases Plac Nowy. For example, its original 10-year lease was extended by a further 30 years in 2002 without a public tender. Furthermore, its owners, who are also traders on the market, enjoy preferential rates for their stalls, their costs covered by the company and a share in the substantial profits that the market generates. The company has stated that they have future plans to open a café serving coffee, cakes, beer and wine on the Plac as the market is doing so

The open meeting with Borough Market will be held at the Jewish Community Centre, next door to the Tempel Synagogue, on ul. Miodowa at 6 pm on Thursday 25 September, Subsequent events are planned for December 2008 with architect Carolyn Steel, author of The Hungry City, a new book that outlines how cities' need for food has shaped architecture and urban design, and April 2009 with Cheryl Cohen, a director of London Farmers' Markets Ltd., which runs 16 certified farmers' markets in and around London.

# Debate

# Property Restitution: Should Poland Pay?

# Harry Templeton says Poland should foot the bill, Jonathan Czapski disagrees.

The issue of compensation for those who lost property during the war and its aftermath remains a Pandora's Box for Poland. Some 89,000 ownership claims are unresolved and it has been suggested that Poland would need in the region of 40 billion dollars to reimburse claimants at today's market prices. Thousands of properties were seized by the Nazis and Communists, including city mansions, factories and country estates. Numerous bills have been drafted and redrafted over the last 18 years. Most have been thrown out as unworkable. This Summer, a US Congress Committee, acting on behalf of American Jews of Polish background, passed a resolution appealing for Poland to act. The committee suggested that 20% of current property values should be provided for those who are due compensation. Prime Minister Donald Tusk has said that a 'transparent' bill will be drawn up this September.

63 years ago, Poland was supposedly on the winning side in a World War.

Yet after having fought doggedly against the Nazis for six years, she suddenly found herself being divided up by her allies. Churchill, just four weeks after signing the infamous Yalta Agreement of '45, and realising that perhaps he had exaggerated in kowtowing to Stalin's every last wish, wrote to the ailing President Roosevelt: "If we do not get things right now," he stressed, "it will soon be seen by the world that you and I, by putting our signatures to the Crimea settlement, have underwritten a fraudulent prospectus."

But things weren't put right. And two years later, Churchill was making his famous "Iron Curtain" speech. Stalin prevented Poland from receiving post-war American funds to help rebuild the ruined country. And when Gierek became Prime Minister in 1970 (one more Soviet puppet whilst the legitimate Polish government remained in exile in London, pestered by Soviet spies), he borrowed colossal sums of money from the West to help fund flawed industrial projects, employing thousands of workers in factories that ultimately made a titanic loss. When Poland finally became independent again in 1990, she was immediately obliged to cough up billions of pounds to pay for ill-conceived communist schemes.

Poland is now just about pulling herself out of the Soviet swamp, although unsurprisingly, the average wage remains pitiful compared to both those of former wartime allies (the British, the French) and adversaries (for example Austria, which miraculously evaded Soviet domination). Tens of thousands of Polish citizens have had to flee their country just to find a job. And now, Poland is being told that she must pay out more billions, this time for crimes that were committed not by an independent Polish state, but by the invading regimes of Hitler and Stalin.

In a nutshell, yes, there should be compensation for those who lost property due to two foreign dictators. But why should Poles have to pay?

To this day, Polish survivors of Auschwitz, both Catholic and Jewish, are paid a small annual dispensation by the German government (it's often forgotten that Auschwitz was originally set up by the Nazis as a holding camp for the Polish intelligentsia). Logically, Russia and Germany should pay for the damage that was caused to Polish private property. Whole cities were destroyed. Thousands of manor houses were either burnt or allowed to fall into ruin. Land was confiscated, businesses were nationalized. The eastern provinces were simply lopped off.

Realistically, Germany and Russia won't pay. But what about the EU? Surely it was set up – at least in part - to champion noble causes, not to pay French farmers to sit around drinking ratafia. Reflecting on the desertion of Poland in '45, the distinguished British scribe and war hero Patrick Leigh Fermor concluded that the West "had failed to see justice done". Surely, an EU project to reimburse the dispossessed would be a fine way, if not to right the wrongs, then at least to provide some measure of closure to the victims of the Nazi-Soviet tornado.

Quite simply, Poland has to pay. In fact, it's amazing that Poland was even allowed to join the European Union given that it had failed to meet all of the necessary pre-requisites. The restitution of possessions confiscated by the Nazis or communists was a condition of Polish entry according to resolutions published by the European Commission in July 1997.

All EU member states from the "New Europe" have already carried out the necessary reforms, barring Poland and Lithuania. The Czechs pushed through measures almost immediately after the Iron Curtain fell.

The fact that the issue has been brought back to the table by Jewish groups lobbying through the U.S. Congress does not help the Polish cause. Indeed, it creates the impression that Poles are biased against their former Jewish citizens (20 percent of the claims are from Jewish families).

"Consecutive Polish cabinets told us not to rush them," a U.S Congressman on the committee told *Gazeta Wyborcza*. "And so we've been waiting for almost twenty years. We took a lot of pressure from our voters to remind the Polish government about this issue. And let me assure you that this resolution could have been much firmer. No one is expecting you to pay 100 or even 50 percent of the property value. If you had done it ten years ago, the cost would have been much lower."

Many properties and businesses in Poland were simply taken over by the state after the Second World War. When the Iron Curtain fell, there could have been a fair settlement. But in fact, the newly democratic Polish state chose to sell countless properties. Of course, the new owners of these estates or businesses cannot simply be turfed out now. But some kind of compensation has to be paid to the genuine, pre-war owners. Many of these old ladies and gentlemen, who survived unspeakable horrors during the war, are still alive today, now well into their eighties or nineties. Poland has to act swiftly in order to see justice done.

Whilst it is true that some properties have actually been successfully reclaimed as a result of highly protracted individual legal cases. But so far, there has been no consistency. Some families won back property only to lose it again in the appeals courts. Others found a legal stumbling block in the fact that they had lost their full Polish citizenship, for the simple reason that they had had to escape from the Nazis or Soviets.

As far as the EU goes, Poland has proved one of the most quarrelsome member states thus far, getting into scrapes over issues such as same sex partnerships, abortion and other sensitive issues. However, Poland is a sworn member of the union, and her MEPs must learn to live with the policies that their country has agreed to uphold by joining the EU. Besides the above mentioned human rights, this also applies to the reimbursement of those who lost property in the war and its aftermath. At long last, this issue must be brought to a head.







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# **News Poland**

# Special Report: Georgia Unity and Friction

# The battle for Poland's foreign policy

### Peter Gentle

he Russian-Georgian conflict has provided another opportunity for the government and president to see who controls Poland's foreign policy. "Let's be clear," said Prime Minister Donald Tusk at the outbreak of war in South Ossetia: "Russia is the aggressor. All the evidence shows that Georgia's [territorial] integrity has been violated." Meanwhile, President Lech Kaczyński announced that the Kremlin was to blame for the violence: "Russia has shown its true face," he said.

Those few words in the early days of the conflict between Moscow and Tbilisi embodied a remarkable development in the path of the Civic Platform-led government since it took power: namely, a consensus on foreign policy between Donald Tusk and Lech Kaczyński.

That the consensus was over a matter involving Russia was even more remarkable. One of the first statements made by PM Tusk after he took office - much to the annoyance of the Presidential Palace - was to announce that his government would try to thaw out the decidedly frosty relations between Moscow and Warsaw that had developed during the previous Law and Justice government, led by President Kaczyński's twin brother, Jarosław. Tusk believed then that the Kaczyńskis had been overly provocative in disputes over the planned gas pipeline from Russia to western Europe by-passing Poland; the anti-missile shield negotiations with the US; a Russian ban of Polish meat, to name only a few.

But since the early days of the war in the Caucasus, a divergence in tone, if not substance, has emerged from the president and government. When Kaczyński said that he and the presidents and PMs of the Baltic States and



An anti-war protest in Tbilisi, Georgia/ photo Dominik Cagara

Ukraine would be going to Tbilisi to show solidarity with the Georgian people, he did not bother to inform the government beforehand. Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said he found out via the media. After heated discussions, Sikorski decided to accompany Kaczyński to Tbilisi, where the President made an aggressive speech in front of an enthusiastic crowd.

The consensus began to crumble further over who would be attending the meeting on the 1st September in Brussels of EU members to discuss the Russia-Georgia conflict. President Kaczyński insisted that he should be involved in the talks: PM Tusk said that it was highly irregular for Polish presidents to attend such EU meetings - the president usually attended NATO summits, not meetings of the Council of Europe.

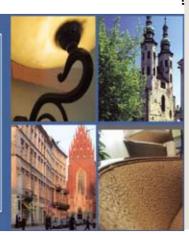
At the heart of the matter is a constitutional conflict over who controls Poland's foreign policy. The Tusk government has insisted that the government merely has a duty to consult the president over foreign policy, but the ultimate decisions have to be taken by Donald Tusk's cabinet.

The situation has been exacerbated

by the embittered personal relations between President Kaczyński and Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski. The latter had been very much the rising star of Kaczyński's party, serving as Minster of Defense from 2005. But Sikorski resigned suddenly in February 2007, purportedly over a feud with the president's brother. On the eve of the subsequent general election that Autumn, Sikorski jumped ship and crossed over to Tusk's Civic Platform party, which duly swept into power. Much to Kaczyński's annoyance, Sikorski was immediately granted a top job in Tusk's cabinet.

to keep Kaczyński away from the EU meeting, fearing that the aggressive posturing of the president regarding Russia might frighten off Germany and France, who have been eager not to provoke Moscow, something that was plain in the Bucharest NATO summit in April when Berlin and Paris opposed an immediate invitation to Tbilisi to begin the process of Georgia's membership of NATO. It seems that even when the conflict is external to Poland, government and president will find a reason to internalise it.

Tusk, no doubt, was equally anxious



# "We are Here to Fight for Your Freedom, and Ours"

Polish media coverage of Georgian conflict shows bias

Chris Żukowski

he rallying cry of Polish President Lech Kaczyński, concluding his speech in front of an exuberant crowd in Tbilisi on the 12th August, was no doubt music to Georgians' ears. However, whilst there is no real surprise that Polish public opinion is against Russia in this instance, the media has been equally partisan in its stance over the crisis in the Caucasus.

This trend follows much of the Western press, with the Americans presenting the crisis as a battle for "freedom" as if it were a packet lunch (an imagination running wild conjures up a poor Georgian, office clerk ordering a "freedom sandwich" to go in a New York-style deli in downtown Tbilisi). And, of course, Poland is no different: successive Polish governments since the collapse of Soviet control at the end of the 1980s have been markedly USA-friendly, one of the results of which is the part of the missile shield being constructed on Polish soil.

The printed press in Poland has been unanimous in its outrage at Russia not respecting Georgia's territorial integrity; and consequently not always taking the integrity of its readers into account.

Countless columns in Poland's leading quality newspaper want to beat Russia with a stick. "Russia is a different and dangerous world," Rzeczpospolita warns the West on Russia's decision to acknowledge Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent from Georgia. Even in the left-leaning liberal daily Gazeta Wyborcza, Moscow doesn't get off lightly, although it looks rather inwards towards Poland and her society. Its columns have deliberated that any terse proclamations from Lech Kaczyński, mounting to "come and have a go if you think you're hard enough," are neither constructive for Poland's relations with Russia, nor do they harbour any safer prospects for Geor-

There has been one hint of another line on this, however, and, maybe not too surprisingly, it comes from the pages of *Trybuna*, or what was once called *Trybuna Ludu* (People's

Tribune), the Communist Party news

A column penned by Poland's former left-wing Prime Minister Leszek Miller, takes a different line, blaming Saakashvili for all the trouble he has supposedly inflicted on his own country. Quite a breath of fresh air for argument's sake, even though Miller was admittedly a high-ranking communist himself during the eighties

The broadcast press do not have that much to offer in terms of balanced news either. The public broadcaster TVP takes every opportunity to wave the Georgian flag in its transmissions, mostly during the news. There seems to be a lack of desire for debate about the Georgian crisis, hence Russia's demands and wants are swept to one side: Russia invaded Georgia, they are the aggressor. Period. Why argue with that? Everyone seems to be in consensus, even the public radio broadcasters: Polish Radio is making a point in all its services (domestic and foreign) that it is all for solidarity with Georgia. Polish Radio drove this home with an exclusive interview with Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili, available in Polish as well as in the original English.

Perhaps the bias in the press merely reflects Polish public opinion; that is, public opinion on Russia. Opinion polls have shown that Poles fear Russia, so it may be safely assumed that Poland wants to have good relations with its rather large neighbour: a point which, up until the Georgia crisis, was almost constantly being made by the present government, to the extent that even in the case of the missile shield deal Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski stated boldly that he would allow the Russians access for viewing purposes at regular intervals.

Yet the flipside to the coin is that for many Poles, Russia has indeed been the "dangerous" neighbour described in *Rzeczpopolita*'s columns. The Poles have had to contend with this for hundreds of years, and the sense of distrust isn't likely to change anytime soon.

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# Brzeziński and the Bear

Former U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzeziński has been one of the most vocal, and oftquoted critics of Russia's invasion of Georgia. Here, in the first of a three-part essay, Professor Patrick Vaughan reflects on the statesman's lifelong engagement with the Soviet Union.

bigniew Brzeziński was nine years old when his first conscious thoughts on the Soviet Union began to crystallize. It was 1937, and his father, a Polish diplomat, would come home from his posting in Soviet Ukraine and enlighten his son, as much as he could, about the ghoulish purges and show trials then taking place in the Soviet Union. Brzeziński's views, even then, contrasted with Western intellectuals who tended to lace their editorials with references to Stalin and his heroic role as a "bulwark against fascism."

In 1938 Tadeusz Brzeziński was assigned to a more tranquil posting as consul general in Canada. Zbigniew Brzeziński, together with his brothers, boarded the Stefan Batory and sailed for New York. The trip was exciting, and the New World had much to offer, but the young Pole was already looking forward to returning home the next summer for the holidays. Zbigniew Brzeziński was asleep on September 1, 1939 when the phone rang at his house, gravely informing his father that the Nazi forces had crashed through the Polish border and were headed for Warsaw. Zbigniew Brzeziński, who had grown up proudly admiring the impressive Polish military parades in the streets of Warsaw, was certain the Germans had no idea what they were in for. A few weeks later, the family heard the additional news that Stalin had several Red Army divisions invade from the east, to complete the last, and most grisly, partition of Poland.

Brzeziński settled into life in Canada and followed the rest of the war with interest—especially the heroism of the Polish wartime resistance. He was thus especially disturbed by the family dinner conversations when he heard echoes that the West was preparing to concede Poland for the greater good of the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union. Brzeziński was especially angered by Franklin Roosevelt's obsequious attempts to ingratiate himself with "Uncle Joe" at Tehran and Yalta. Brzeziński was disturbed enough after Tehran that he went down to the local post office and mailed a map of Poland to 10 Downing Street—reminding Winston Churchill of the location of its eastern border.

Brzeziński was 18 years old when Churchill came to Fulton, Missouri and declared an "Iron Curtain" had descended across the middle of Europe. That same year the young idealist entered McGill University in Montreal where he began his long and distinguished career as an expert on the Soviet Union. Brzeziński told his father, not entirely in jest, that his life's ambition was now to liberate Poland from Soviet occupation.

Brzeziński's M.A. thesis at McGill focused on the Soviet nationality question. The Soviet Union, argued Brzezinski, should not be considered a singular entity. It was in reality a cauldron of resentful nationalities that, like his native Poland, had been conquered as a result of centuries of Russian expansionism. In 1950 Brzeziński was accepted into Harvard University's new Russian Research Center. Because he had applied very late he was told that Harvard was an expensive school, and there was no guarantee of funding, but he was welcome to take his chances if he could prove his mettle. The 22-year-old graduate student boarded an overnight bus for Harvard, with \$250 in his pocket, a pair

of suitcases, and the vague promise of a scholarship deliverable upon superior academic performance. As he attended his first day of classes the young Brzeziński attended a class taught by another bright young European émigré named Henry Kissinger. Brzeziński, after listening to his instructor give the reading list in what one day would become the world's most famous Bavarian monotone, decided it was not for him. It was likely that he was also harbouring grander ambitions that most of his classmates milling around Harvard Yard that autumn. "Already at McGill," Brzeziński recalled some years later, "I reached the conviction that the weakness of the Soviet Union, its Achilles' heel, was its multinational character. Once I grasped that in my M.A. thesis at McGill. I began to work on formulating a strategy, which in a piecemeal fashion would expose the weaknesses of the Soviet system, detach the countries of the Soviet bloc from the Soviet Union, after detaching them transform them—or maybe combine the two processes—and then eventually accomplish the dismantling of the Soviet Union itself." Yes, large goals for a 22-year old still wondering if he could make the grade to earn his scholarship

Part II of "Brzezinski and the Bear" can be read in the October edition of the Krakow Post. Patrick Vaughan is a professor of history at the Jagiellonian University, Krakow. His forthcoming biography, Brzezinski: A Life On the Grand Chessboard of Power, is due to be published in English and Polish editions later in the year. Parts of "Brzezinski and the Bear" were published in the Polish Review.

# Train Crash Kills Seven in Czech Republic

### **Robin Das**

Two men have been arrested over last month's train crash that killed a Polish woman and six other people in the Czech Republic, after it crashed into a bridge that had collapsed onto the track moments before.

The accident involved a train from Krakow bound for Prague on 8 August, as it passed through Studenka in the Czech Republic, a town just over the northeast border of Poland.

The metal bridge, which was undergoing structural repair work by the Ostrava construction company, collapsed ahead of the train leaving the driver only seconds to brake, from a speed of 140 kmph, before hitting the debris. The force threw the locomotive and the three front carriages off the track. Incredibly, the driver survived the impact.

Czech police have since arrested two of the company's employees in connection with the crash. According to the police investigation team, the bridge collapsed because of negligence by the workers. Allegedly, they did not use a sufficient number of cradles to secure it in place.

Work on the bridge had begun some months before the accident, but trains were continuing to run at normal speed. Whenever a road contractor decides to carry out work on a bridge crossing a line, it is obliged by Czech law to inform the railways authority so they can instruct all drivers to decrease speeds when approaching to the bridge. According to the Czech train authorities, they had not been informed of the works by Ostrava.

The police confirmed they would release more information once they had filed charges. Those charged could face up to 10 years imprisonment, if convicted.

Around 400 passengers had been travelling on board. Those killed were all in the first carriage and included a 23-year-old Polish student from Jagiellonian University, five Czech citizens and one Ukrainan man. Around 70 people were injured and several of these are still reported to be in critical condition in hospitals.

The fact that the majority of victims were Czech and not Polish was partly due to the three front carriages being coupled to the train when it stopped at the border. Carriages carrying the departing passengers from Krakow then became the rear three carriages.

In a tragic twist, had the train not been delayed for ten minutes on the Polish side, it would have already passed the bridge before it fell.

The Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek and his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk immediately travelled to the railway disaster site. Mr. Topolanek was reported as saying that his priority was to "help those that who have suffered. Only then we will have time to thoroughly investigate the incident to find the culprit and to eventually compensate [the victims]."

According to the Reuters news website, Czech railways have announced that they will pay up to 240,000 crowns - about 33,000 zloty - to family members of the victims.

Among the passengers were many young people travelling to an Iron Maiden rock concert in Prague that evening, which the band dedicated to those killed and injured.

The crash was the worst in the Czech Republic since June 1995, when 19 people died after a train derailed at Kruna.



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# **News Poland**

# First Same-Sex Humanistic Marriage Performed in Poland

Wojciech Załuski

n the second of August the first humanistic marriage ceremony of two people of the same sex was held in Poland. Under the auspices of the Polish Association of Rationalists, two women living together as long-time partners, with the company of family and friends, succeeded in showing their devotion and love to the public. The two women also had a second ceremony which took place in the Reformed Catholic Church, which does not require partners to be of different sexes. During the humanistic ceremony one of the partners, Katarzyna Formela, stated: "Since the beginning of our relationship we were seeking to formalise our relations, to show through marriage that we are a family. Through the marriage, we wanted to underline a change that happened when we decided to be together. It is a very important change in our lives, and we would like to show this to others, so we are perceived as a family and not only - like earlier - as separate persons. The humanistic marriage, preceding the religious one, gave us such an opportunity today. Our will is that we are treated as a regular married couple."

The first humanistic marriage was taken in 2007. Mariusz Agnosiewicz, the president of the Polish Association of Rationalists, states that the idea was to bring the possibility of a marriage ceremony to atheists and non-religious people who feel the need for it. In his opinion, "the strength of Catholicism lies amongst other things, but people need ceremonies, not Catholic beliefs." The candidates first meet with the representatives of the association so they can figure it out what values and ideas are at stake. The Humanist Manifesto 2000, available on the website of the association, among many things, stresses the importance of individual ethical growth based on tolerance and respect. Asked about the feelings that he had leading his first marriage ceremony, Agnosiewicz said: "It was beautiful, some people had tears in their eyes. Even sceptics where charmed. From later ceremonies, I especially recall the 'bicycle marriage' in the university gardens. The young couple came to know each other while biking, and their marriage ceremony was preceded by a bicycle trip around Warsaw to places important to them. Instead of a traditional suit, the bridegroom wore a bicycle outfit, and the bribe was gliding on her bike in a wedding gown."

According to article eighteen of the Polish constitution, marriage is defined as a relationship between a man and a woman, which is under the protection of the Polish state. In addition, the Civil Code of Family and Care also defines marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman. Samuel Nowak, the Culture for Tolerance Foundation president and organiser of the Krakow Gay and Lesbian Culture Festival, supports the idea of legalisation of homosexual relationships: "We don't see the reason why same-sex relationships can't have the same rights as heterosexual relationships. It is in the Polish state's interest to raise the quality of life of its citizens, but it is not the job of the administration to say with whom adults should unite. The state is obliged to take care of heterosexual as well as homosexual couples. Otherwise we have the privilege of the former, although there is no justification for such."

The point that Nowak makes about the administration not interfering with the private affairs of its citizens finds a bitter conclusion in recent news from *Gazeta Wyborcza*. On the 25th of August the newspaper wrote about the Polish Registry Office, which lost a court case with Marzena K., who asked to receive a certificate stating that she is single, and which the office workers refused to provide.

In order to get married in Poland, a person has to present a document stating that he or she is single, which can be acquired in the Polish Registry Office. Such documents can be provided if a person intends to get married to a person of the opposite sex, in accordance with : Polish law. But if a person from Poland wants to enter a civil partnership, not marriage, with a German citizen of the same sex in Germany, where such partnerships are allowed, that person is also obliged to present a document stating that he or she is single, based on a German law from 2001.

That is why Marzena K. applied for the certificate form the Polish

Registry Office, which she needed in order to conclude her civil relationship with another woman in Germany. But because it was a partnership and not a marriage, the office workers refused to issue such a certificate, claiming that it is only for people who want to marry.

Gazeta Wyborcza informs that in reference to the law in Germany from 2001, in 2002 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland gave a special disposition that in mentioned cases the Polish Registry Office should give a certificate which states that a person is single, not adding that the certificate is for marriage purposes.

For unknown reasons the office workers would not do so. *Wyborcza* quotes Robert Biedroń, chief of the Campaign Against Homophobia, who speculates about the hypothetical reasons why the office workers kept refusing: "They are afraid that someone may lay a claim against them. Or maybe they don't accept such relationships personally and try not to allow them."

Surely the case shows that the debate and struggle between different attitudes to homosexual relationships will continue in Poland.

### LOT in a Lot of Trouble

In August Douglas McNeill, a transport analyst at Blue Oar Securities (consultancy company based in London, UK) alarmed in his report "Into Thin Air" that fifty European airlines will face their biggest crisis at the end of 2008.

The aviation expert predicts that high oil prices and the economic situation may lead Polish national carrier LOT, along with five other European airlines, to bankruptcy this winter. LOT as well as Scandinavian SAS, Italian Alitalia, Hungarian Malev and Greek Olympic will have to reduce or even cut some services if they want to stay in the business. Only large airlines may survive as the situation on the aviation market is critical.

The supervisory board of LOT Polish Airlines is aware of all the problems (bad airlink network, expensive tickets and old fleet), and approved a special repair program for the carrier. Its implementation commenced on August 20th and its elements shall be gradually introduced by the end

of 2010. In September and October LOT shall launch a new service - mobile booking and ticket purchase. The first noticeable results of the repair programme are to be observed still in

The programme is based on six basic pillars: improving customer service quality, optimisation of the network and fleet, revenue stimulation, better cost efficiency, restructuring of the capital group and redefining the strategy of partnership with other Alliance members.

"We expect that the repair programme (...), together with actions performed in recent weeks, shall reduce our losses by 20 million Polish zloty (9 million USD) by the end of this year," said Konrad Tyrajski, Deputy President of LOT Managing Board for Finance.

Established in 1929, Polish LOT is one of the oldest airlines in the world. The airline is owned by the State Treasury (67.97%), SAirLines B.V. (a member of SAirGroup) (25.1%) and employees (6.93%).

# Poland in Brief

Danuta Filipowicz

### Wine Production Rising in Poland

The Polish Parliament approved changes in legislation which will allow farmers in Poland to produce, distribute and sell local wines. Grape growers may sell wine from this year's harvest, and the first bottles of Polish wine should appear on tables in November 2008.

After Poland's entry into the European Union in May 2004, very strict laws made wine production by small family-owned vineyards unprofitable. Now this adverse situation will change. By September 12th, farmers who want to produce Polish wine will have to declare to the Agricultural Agency what kind of wine they will produce and the size of their vineyard. For the next five years Polish wine will be sold as a table wine or regional wine, during which time testing will be done before it gets a definite brand.

Vineyards exist mainly in southern and south-western Poland, but can be found in the north of the country as well. Poland can cultivate 39 varieties of white grapevines, 32 red varieties and five pink grapevines. According to European Union dispositions, the country can produce 2.5 million litres of wines a year, which is around three million bottles. The news is good for consumers too, as wine consumption in Poland has grown in comparison to other European countries, according to *Rynki Alkoholowe* magazine.

# << A Vacation with Polish continued from 4</p>

makes for an intense introduction to the language.

"We always said that lessons, then afternoon lectures and a lot of homework was too much for us, but now I see that it is all useful and I'm grateful that they made us learn a lot. We are tired, but happy," says Edwiga, praising the course teachers for being able to skillfully unite a group made up of different nationalities and ages.

A new and popular course entitled "Four Seasons with Polish" has also attracted many people who are in Krakow for shorter periods, as the sessions are open and last two weeks, four times a year, independent of the summer school. The centre's current plans include opening summer courses for teenagers over 16, which they hope to launch next year.

# << Gays In, Stags Out continued from 4</p>

kow as allegedly friendly towards homosexual people.

At this early stage, it is difficult to see why homosexual tourists would choose Krakow over a more tolerant European hotspot, such as Amsterdam, Barcelona or Berlin. The medieval city has one gay and lesbian discotheque, a few gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) friendly nightclubs and one GLBT festival during the year, organised by the Culture for Tolerance Foundation. This is not to mention the minimal level of equal rights and acceptance of GLBT present among Polish Catholic fundamentalists, who forget that homosexuals make up a portion of Krakow residents, often denying them their rights to religion and public space.

Coincidentally, Warsaw is to host EuroPride 2010, an international GLBT festivity, and the first such occasion in Eastern Europe. Piotr Wojcik, IGLTA Polish Ambassador responsible for organising the event, affirms that among the million participants, a significant proportion will make a trip to Krakow, by which time the local strategy should be well under way

# **Opinion**

# The Elephant Won't Bear It

# by Thymn Chase

ike the majority of Western viewers who watched the events in Georgia unfold on television screens, in newspapers and on Internet portals, I was outraged by what I saw and anxious to follow each development. These feelings quickly turned to dread as I watched the West stumble in its fragmented reaction after being clearly outmanoeuvred by Putin at almost every turn. In Poland, a slight undercurrent of fear and foreboding hung in the air as though most could already read the writing on the wall. It came as no big surprise when on August 14th Polish and US negotiators announced that after over a year of negotiations they had finally reached a deal concerning the missile defense shield.

The final plan will see 10 American interceptor missiles installed at a U.S. military site in Poland and staffed by hundreds of U.S. military personnel by 2011-2013 (a more flexible timeline than initially projected). Furthermore, the U.S. has agreed to install Patriot missiles to help bolster Poland's defenses, which had been a sticking point in the negotiations for months. Finally, according to Polish PM Donald Tusk, the deal also includes a "mutual commitment" between the two nations to come to each other's assistance "in case of trouble." Considering the timing of the deal - a week almost to the hour after Russian tanks crossed the South Ossetian border into Georgia - one can easily assume that the potential trouble mentioned refers to none other than Bad Vlad and his Russian bear. Right? Wrong... Haven't you been listening? Russia has nothing to do with it!

Over the past 15 months both the U.S. and Poland have maintained, with mantra-like repetition, that the shield is being built exclusively to protect the US and its European allies from rogue states such as Iran (nudge, nudge). Russia, in turn, has criticized the plan at every step and insisted that it threatens Russia's strategic defenses. Without giving credence to Russia's claims, it is duly noted that the planned military base will be built a mere 115 km from Kaliningrad (oh yeah remember that place), where Russia is said to have stores of nuclear weaponry. "Given the timing of the deal and the fact that prior to the Georgian conflict US-Polish negotiations had all but reached a stale-



/ cartoon Dominik Nawrocki

mate, it is no surprise that the elephant in the room (or rather the bear in the elephant suit) decided to speak up."

"The deal absolutely, clearly demonstrates what we had said earlier: the deployment (of the system) has the Russian Federation as its target," said President Dmitry Medvedev in a speech on August 16th. That same day, General Anatoly Nogovitsyn, the deputy chief of staff of Russia's armed forces, went one step further by saying, "Poland, by deploying (the system) is exposing itself to a strike; 100 percent." He went on to say that Russia's military doctrine sanctions the use of nuclear weapons "against the allies of countries having nuclear weapons, if they in some way help them." And the elephant growled.

So what should Poland make of this supposed nuclear threat? Many Western leaders and the NATO leadership in turn were quick to dismiss the threats as empty rhetoric and mere sabre-rattling. On August 19th, a day before Condoleezza Rice and Radek Sikorski officially inked the deal, Polish President Lech Kaczynski responded to Russia's threat in a nationally televised broadcast, stating: "No one can dictate to Poland what it should do. That's in the

past... our neighbors should now understand that our nation will never give in, nor allow itself to be intimidated."

The words may have sounded strong but the rhetoric falls short, as it appears that Poland is playing exactly into Russia's hands. The fact that Poland only negotiated her way under the US military umbrella after the Georgian invasion was under way, strongly suggests that Poland was indeed intimidated by Russia's actions. One of Putin's clear strategic goals was to send a message to all former Soviet and communist satellite states that a similar fate awaits them if they provoke an empowered Russia - and apparently the message got through. Furthermore, whether Kaczynski realizes it or not, by building a U.S. base on Polish territory the U.S. will very much be able to dictate what Poland does; that is to say, Poland will be directly responsible politically and militarily for the acts of the U.S. on Polish soil and abroad. It is because of this fact primarily that Russia levied and will certainly continue to levy such grave threats towards Poland.

Timing is everything, which is why I was so dismayed and even embarrassed by the U.S. and Poland's rush to sign the missile defense deal in the midst of Russia's war in Georgia. They exposed to the world, and not least of all to Russia, what most people assumed anyway, but they had both refused to admit: the missile defense shield is indeed being built as a check to Russian aggression. In the countless press conferences held after the signing of the deal, Polish and U.S. diplomats looked almost foolish as they scrambled to keep the moral high ground as they condemned Russia on the one hand but tried to convince the world (and even themselves at times) that the missile shield actually had nothing to do with Russia.

After the war in Georgia most Poles now agree that the missile shield is indeed in Poland's national interest. The only thing that remains now is for the Polish Parliament to ratify the deal. In the interest of good faith I hope every Polish MP, before they cast their vote, is able to look the elephant in the face and say the missile defense shield has nothing to do with Russia. That or they live with the fact that the fundamental premise for installing U.S. missiles in Poland is based on a lie.

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# **Feature**

# Special Report

# **BACK FROM IRAQ**

Robert Szmigielski investigates the lives of Polish soldiers who have returned from Iraq



Army HH-60 Blackhawk helicopters fly past the setting sun April 2, 2003 at a forward-deployed location in southern Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom /

 $\mbox{U.S.}$  Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Shane A. Cuomo

y life is divided into two parts: there's before Iraq...and after." As he pauses and reflects, his dog trots over and licks his hand. He smiles, and his eyes briefly spring to life. But, like a candle blown out by a light breeze, the flame flickers and goes out. The smile fades. His eyes gaze off into the distance.

"Those were difficult times. I regretted ever having survived." He ponders his statement for a few seconds. "Maybe it would have been better if had had all ended then. There."

Chief Master Corporal Janusz Raczy was a member of Poland's second tour of duty in Iraq during 2004, based at Camp Lima, near Karbala. On that day, Janusz was part of a unit that was required to set up a checkpoint monitoring traffic on a road between Baghdad and Karbala.

"I remember everything, even the smallest details - as if it was today." He takes a deep breath before continuing. "After many hours at the checkpoint, we were nearing the end of our shift. We were about to hand over to another unit, but we were unlucky."

A vehicle coming towards them failed to stop, and ploughed straight through the checkpoint. Janusz didn't have a chance to react. "It was a bus, one of many that went through that day, so it didn't arouse much suspicion. It was dark, and it was difficult to see that there were no passengers aboard, only

a driver," he recollects.

"I remember it all; the policeman who bounced off the bus like a rag doll, the impact, and a noise - like something cracking. Only later I realised they were my bones snapping."

The rest of the unit opened fire and the bus stopped, but his body had taken a battering. Not only was he hit, he was practically crushed. The injuries he suffered were horrific. He lists them, as if reciting a stanza from a poem of the macabre:

"Shattered shoulder, broken collar bone, broken shoulder blades, two broken ribs, punctured lungs, shattered pelvis, severed nerve in one arm, two broken fingers, severed nerve in my left leg, and a double fracture of my right leg - which was nearly torn off. It was hanging on by a piece of flesh, where thankfully the artery was still intact," he says matter-of-factly. Amazingly, his right leg wasn't amputated, and given the severity of his injuries even the doctors were astonished he was able to walk again. But the journey he took to get back on his feet was agonizingly difficult.

Following the attack, he was transported by helicopter to a hospital in Baghdad and when his condition was stable enough, he was flown to Germany. After three weeks in intensive care, he regained consciousness. Two months passed before he returned home to Poland.

"I spent six months lying down on a

bed, then six in a wheelchair. Then it was time to learn how to walk again." He stops momentarily, gathering his thoughts. "The first year was difficult. I seemed to be taking two steps forward, and one step back; whenever the doctors managed to solve a problem, they would find another."

Back in Poland, the help that Janusz received put him on the road to recovery but, as with most Polish roads, it was rocky and full of potholes.

"When I returned to Poland, well... put it this way: no one is interested in a dog with a dud leg. But that was the beginning," he says. "I was one of the first, and as everything in the army, there are regulations. Although that changed when they opened the centre for injured soldiers in Warsaw. Since them, everything has been working better," he says optimistically.

Janusz is careful with his words when discussing the army. He hesitates when he feels the conversation is heading towards criticism aimed at his former employers, and is quick to praise the level of care he received from the army.

"Later they did take an interest in my welfare," he says assuredly. "They organised transport to the centre in Warsaw, which was 500 km away from my house. The care was very good. Professional."

Throughout his service he received a monthly wage, which the army continued to pay during his recovery, and when doctors decided that he was no

longer capable of active duty, they released him, issuing him with a monthly military pension. Janusz admits the sum is fine for a healthy man, able to find extra work if needed, but for him it's not as straight-forward.

"The situation has changed now," he points out. "Now that I receive a pension I lose certain privileges. I have to pay for my rehabilitation and medicine, whereas before it didn't." A sad smile appears. "Now, with the help of my wife, rehabilitation is restricted to my own exercises. Private care is very expensive. My injuries are not something you come across daily, so the appropriate medicine is also bloody expensive."

Married and with a child, Janusz must also find a way to provide for his family. Like any husband and father, he wants to be able to care for his loved ones, but given his wounds, it is difficult - finding a job is not an option.

"It's not possible because of my condition; at any moment something can happen that would require having to spend time in a hospital, or mean me going thorough another operation." He takes a moment to contemplate his next remark. "If I was an employer, I wouldn't hire someone like me."

Spending his days indoors has made him feel frustrated and useless; even the simplest of D.I.Y jobs are just too taxing and risky to attempt. "I want to find work, if not only to have something to do, instead of sitting at home all day," he says. ariusz Heyny's injuries, although not as debilitating as Janusz's, have also proved disabling. Another member of the Polish army's second tour of Iraq, Mariusz saw military service as an opportunity to make ends meet. "The beginning of 2000 was a tough time in Poland, so I thought that enlisting in the army would be a good idea; a long-term and stable job." he says

Unlike Janusz, however, Mariusz was not a professional soldier; he signed up for contractual military service, and it wasn't long before he found himself on a plane bound for the Middle East. He had reservations at first, but was aware of the consequences that withdrawal from duty in Iraq would bring.

"Any soldier who had committed to two years of contractual military service had a duty to appear before a military verification panel in Bydgoszcz," he remembers.

It was clear to Mariusz that these talks were regarding the situation in Iraq. But while he and others were waiting to be summoned, an unknown senior officer made an announcement. "It's hard to explain, but you could tell he was angry," he recalls. "He told us that the situation was clear; the army will not want to keep in touch with anybody unwilling to go."

The message was not difficult to understand, he points out. Go one way, or the other; either he goes to Iraq, or he is discharged from the army. The www.krakowpost.com Krakow Post SEPTEMBER 2008 11

# **Feature**



Chief Master Corporal Janusz Raczy

choice was obvious. "I had a wife and child to support at that time also, so I couldn't just resign and not go."

When Mariusz finally did arrive at Camp Babylon in 2004, he discovered an alien world he had seen only on television, and met people from a culture he had never experienced. He was under no illusions; it would be a difficult transition.

"Before my deployment, I couldn't imagine how it would be. Of course, I watched what was happening on the news, and we took part in courses before we went to Iraq, but there was a big difference between what we experienced in Iraq, and what we trained for," he says. "The climate is also hotter, and we trained during winter."

"Unorthodox" is the only way to describe Mariusz's accident. Coalition casualties in Iraq are usually a result of attacks by roaming militias, random assaults, or suicide bombings. But even though the incident was not typical, the ordeal still brings back unwanted memories for Mariusz.

"My accident is a little strange when you consider that we went to Iraq as soldiers. We were armed, and vulnerable to explosions or people shooting at us – but we had a car accident," he says. "We were driving fast, about 110 km per hour, but it was a safe speed. A good shooter would have been able to hit us if we went any slower."

Mariusz's armoured car was escorting an American convoy during a reconnaissance mission in the region, when it suddenly started skidding from one side to the next. Then came the screech that haunts him still to this day.

"I don't remember the precise moment I was thrown from the car, but when it started flipping it threw out everyone sitting in the back. I hit the ground, and saw a spark as I saw glass flying toward me. I thought it would crush me, so I had to drag myself out of the way."

After being helped by a U.S officer from their convoy, and regaining his composure, Mariusz went to check on his colleagues, where he was given an I.V. drip to hold for one of his critically

injured friends. "A moment I'll never forget," he says.

Soon he began to feel weak. Realising his burnt clothes were fused to his back, he reached over his shoulder, and discovered a mixture of blood and gravel. Next thing he knew, he was whisked away by a chopper to the Polish military hospital in Karbala, where he spent a month in a wheelchair. Two months later they transferred him to a hospital in Wrocław.

"After five days I was discharged from hospital by a doctor who said nothing was wrong with me. I took a vacation then returned to the army, but I was constantly in pain, and frequently had to take leave to see a doctor," he remembers. "Then the case for my compensation was opened by the army's medical tribunal, where I was told that my health was impaired by only six percent. I appealed, but they upheld the decision," he says.

Mariusz was shocked. "I suffered spinal injuries, and I took a serious blow to the head. I get excruciating headaches constantly, and can't stay in the same position for long. My legs and toes frequently go numb, and when I touch my skin," he pauses to run his hands over his body, "...it feels like I'm wrapped in paper."

During his military service Mariusz received a monthly wage of 1000 złoty, which, including himself, had to provide for a wife and child. However, since being discharged from his contractual duty he is not eligible for an army pension, and the money he earned during the mission in Iraq has run dry. Today he has two children, and looks after his younger sister; his mother is seriously ill and unable to care for her.

His only option was to go to ZUS, Poland's Social Insurance Institution – a public institution servicing the social security system, through which the Ministry of Defence insures its troops. Injured soldiers are eligible to receive compensatory allowances and rehabilitation benefits in the form of a monthly pension, but they can only claim such payments following a medical assessment by ZUS' own doctors.

# "Those were difficult times. I regretted ever having survived"

# -Chief Master Corporal Janusz Raczy

Mariusz decided to go through the process, and four months later a decision had been reached; he was to receive a monthly allowance. "I was happy. There was an apology for the delay, and I was told that I'd receive an allowance for an initial six months – I thought they might even pay for my physiotherapy," he says.

Three days later, however, Mariusz received more news. "I got a letter by registered post. My verdict had been overruled by ZUS' head doctor, who decided that 'no - he's young, he's educated and nothing's wrong with him.' I couldn't understand it."

Mariusz didn't give up, and returned for another assessment at ZUS, but he found the decision was upheld. He decided to take the matter to court, even with his request for legal representation turned down. "So I wait," he says. "A year has passed. That's how things work in Poland."

But even in his difficult situation, he still praises the army for what they provided for him after the accident. "We used to live in a tiny apartment; one room and a kitchen, for eight people - my whole family. Then after the accident a man came from Warsaw, who asked if we needed any help from the army. I'm very grateful to them," he emphasizes. Now with the help of his friends and family he just manages to pay off his new apartment, be it at a discounted rate. "But an apartment is not everything," he adds. "Where is my health, and how am I to live with no money?'

anusz and Mariusz are not the only ones struggling when returning from missions overseas. Polish involvement in Iraq and Alghanistan has resulted in over 300 wounded soldiers returning home, many of who face the same obstacles but slowly support is appearing.

Servi Pacis, an independent foundation with the aim of helping injured soldiers and their families, was created



Polish military vehicle / photo Tech. Sgt. Dawn M. Price

in Warsaw in June 2003. Colonel Jerzy Bielecki, head of the foundation, believes that since Poland entered Iraq, plenty has been done to assist the injured, but more is needed - especially efforts to level the discrepancy between professional soldiers, and those on a contractual service basis.

"Even now when a [contractual] soldier is injured and returns to the country, a military commission discharges him and the army wash their hands of the matter. Of course, if he is a professional soldier he has certain privileges and a military pension, but for a civilian, the army can do no more," he states.

Servi Pacis not only presses the Polish government to change current legislation. Col. Bielecki has a vision; together with his colleagues he has created an organisation that offers advice and direction to injured and disabled soldiers, and a network that provides important support - financial and emotional - to those in crisis.

Since its five years of existence, the organisation has, among other things, refurbished flats to make them accessible to the disabled, donated expensive prosthetics, sent out Christmas packages with gifts such as books for injured soldiers' children, and even provided money for groceries. Col. Bielecki however, believes that it's not only material and financial support that helps the veterans get by.

"We try our best. I'd like to think that our help makes a difference." He pauses, then with disarming frankness says, "But the simple fact that somebody remembers these people, especially when it's friends who understand the pain, have lived through the same problems..." He trails off. "It's important not to forget."

The subject changes back to what seems to be the most pressing issue. Since Servi Pacis' inception, Col. Bielecki and fellow board members have been calling for the gulf between professional and contractual soldiers to be eliminated. They believe that as a peacekeeping force deployed abroad, every soldier should be considered equal, and feel that a change is imminent.

"The Ministry [of Defence] is doing a lot right now, and all the elements are in place. There are many other praise-worthy proposals, for example a bursary for injured veterans' children. Of course there is a difference between planning and actual realization. By the time these plans are implemented-," He interrupts himself, seemingly frustrated. "Well, life goes on, doesn't it?"

Despite all their hard work, Col. Bielecki admits that the funds they work with are not enough to help all those who need it. They receive nothing from the Polish government, and rely on donations from various benefactors, both corporate and private individuals. Nevertheless, they do what they can, and both Mariusz and Janusz have benefited from the foundation's generosity. Both men agree their struggle would be much harder without organisations like Col. Bielecki's.

"Servi Pacis has helped me a lot, both as a soldier and as a civilian. I can count on them. They give me support that enables me to bounce back up off the bottom," Mariusz says earnestly.

Janusz agrees. "It's a foundation that as an injured veteran I can rely on. As their funds are small, the financial amounts are not substantial, but what they give is very helpful." He goes silent for a moment. "Sometimes lifesaving."

To find more information on the Servi Pacis organization or to make a donation, please visit www.servipacis.pl .

Janusz Raczy and his friends have recently set up an veteran's association for those injured and disabled during missions overseas. The association was created to address the rights of ex-soldiers and their goal is to press the Polish government into making crucial changes to help those hurt during duty. To make a donation, or for more information, please visit www.stowarzyszenierannych.y0.pl, or write to stowarzyszenierannych@wp.pl

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# Health & Technology

# I Queue Therefore iPhone?

### Mark Bradshaw

n scenes reminiscent of the iPhone launch in other countries, Poles queued for hours on the 22nd of August to get their hands on Apple's eagerly-awaited hit mobile - or did they? Images of hordes of eager purchasers snaking out from stores countrywide, widely published in the Polish media, turned out to be paid actors. Outside at least 20 Orange stores selling the cult phone, the actors jostled in the line and even offered passers-by the chance to "buy" their place in the queue. The marketing ploy, while dismissed by an Orange spokesman as simply a bit of fun "to drum up interest in the iPhone," betrays deeper concerns about the natural attraction of the product in Poland.

Unlike most mobile phones, Apple's iPhone is sold exclusively with a monthly contract, an undisclosed portion of the recurring revenue going directly to Apple itself. The phone has been a huge hit in the United States, where the latest 3G model cost just 199 US dollars on a two-year contract. The same models are now available in Poland - but at a hefty cost.

In Poland, two of the country's main mobile network operators, Orange and Era, have signed the rights to sell the phone, leaving the third largest network, Plus, at least for the moment, out in the cold. "We're not ruling out including the iPhone 3G in due course," Plus spokesman Adam Suchenek confirmed to the Krakow Post. "The most important thing is to be sure that it would be available to customers under attractive terms in the market."

Currently Orange and Era offer contracts of at least two years, which involve a monthly subscription fee varying from 95 PLN to a whopping 345 PLN, depending on the amount of free minutes, SMS messages and data transfer. Worryingly for consumers, the new 3G model automatically updates

its software and applications, meaning customers may face potentially large bills for extra data transfers over the network if they find themselves outside the range of a free wireless network. Customers currently do not have the option to specify if and when such updates are applied.

Already on Orange's own website, reaction from customers has been largely negative - on the day of the launch, one customer advised other potential clients that it was "essential to have access to the internet to activate the iPhone as you need to first install iTunes and other software of around 250 MB." For clients who have chosen the cheapest option available, this already uses up half of their monthly free data transfer quota. The same customer also highlights the fears about the amount of control that Apple retains directly to the handset, adding that "Apple has control of the equipment and can, for example, at any time, and remotely, re-



No queues at this store

move applications." Gadget fans, fashion-conscious youth and programmers - traditionally Apple's strongest market sectors - have also raised concerns on the same website. One forum poster, a young web programmer, who describes himself as "the ideal Apple target consumer," claims that "after several days engrossed in investigating, canvassing opinions and weeding the facts from the marketing hype - I came to the conclusion that having the iPhone's revolutionary design is not worth it for me to let someone else decide what I want to use my phone for, and what I am not allowed to do."

A further mitigating fact against the runaway success of the iPhone in Poland is that the country's mobile market is dominated by the pre-paid sector. Orange and Era are already promising a pre-paid option, with the former reputedly about to offer an 8GB model at 1799 PLN and the 16GB version at 2099 PLN. For Orange customers, either way, the network operator has made it 150 PLN more expensive for a customer to get their hands on an iPhone at an Orange store than online through Orange's own website. Someone, after all, has to pick up the tab for all those actors outside the door.

# Blogosphere

# ...Georgia Russia War...

Information from people inside of Georgia

# Martial Law in Georgia, the 3rd Day of Russian Invasion

Today morning all citizens of Poland were evacuated by a special plane sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland... I decided to stay in Tbilisi. Those of you who know me long and good enough will understand my decision without any doubt.

The army's airport in Tbilisi was attacked yesterday night. The Russian navy entered Georgian waters and stays close to Batumi, the capital of Achara and the second largest harbour in Georgia. Russian navy arrived to the shore of Black Sea to cut off weapon supplies. Numerous civil targets were bombed including apartments and hospitals. Gori has been heavily bombed for the second time. Latest news claims that Georgian forces are leaving South Ossetia.

The second front has been opened in Zemo Apkhazeti, which is the upper part of Abkhazia in the area of Kodori Valley controlled by Georgian government. The Abkhaz want to restore their/Russian control on this region. Russians are taking active part in the conflict on Abkhaz side.

Life in Tbilisi is peaceful and without watching the news it would be very hard to guess what's happening in the rest of Georgia. The martial law, ordered for 15 days starting yesterday evening, has not any direct influence on everyday life — I could notice

just more patrols on streets and random controls of marshrutkas (Georgian bus-taxis). All rumors about direct bombing of Tbilisi itself are not true. On the other hand, the communication between different cities is not possible at the moment. Many refugees from Gori arrived to their families in Tbilisi today — I met my friend's aunt and cousins yesterday and they were saying that the men are also considering leaving the city. Poti was rumored to be attacked yesterday as well, although it turned out to be a peaceful night. The mayor of Poti asked for turning off all the lights; the city must have looked like a ghost town.

All Georgians I've talked to underlined that they're still not against Russia as the nation, but against their politics. I've heard this many times before, last year and now. Of course I haven't asked all the Georgians in Georgia what they think about Russia, but what I hear from people I meet is impressive and for an inside person like me proves that "the aggressive Georgian nationalism" is just another tool of Russian propaganda. I have also my own opinion about the Russian nationalism and the officials' silence considering the strongest extreme right-wing organizations in modern Europe, but this time I'll leave it without a further comment...

To read more, visit >> crisisingeorgia.wordpress.com



# **Business**

# Buying a Flat in Krakow

### John Marshall

In the July issue of the Krakow Post, I set out my personal reasons for choosing to buy a flat in Krakow. What follows here are the experiences of a first-time property buyer in Poland.

### AGENT / OFFER

So, you've spent the usual weeks and months trekking around and now you've actually found that special house or flat. Assuming the property, like most, is being sold through an estate agent (nierochumości), the first thing you need to do is to agree their commission. Now, in Poland, estate agents charge both the seller and the buyer. The typical fee is 3% (plus tax). However, they are open to negotiation, especially in a quiet market. This done, you put in your offer for the property. This is done formally, with a document being prepared by you and the estate agent (this is not a verbal process, as it is in, say, the UK). Detailed in the offer document are the dates and amounts of the part-payments that, if your offer is accepted, you must legally adhere to as part of the buying process, together with a final hand-over date. All this is regardless of whether the owner accepts your initial offer or not. If not (as in my case), you and the estate agent then tear up the old offer and prepare a new, similar document, with details of the new, higher offer.

So, after several phone calls between all three parties, the owner accepts

your offer and you, the owner and the estate agent sign to show acceptance of the offer. Now it's time to arrange the mortgage. Note that, unlike in some Western countries, you must have an offer accepted on a particular property before being offered a mortgage. It is not possible to get a mortgage offer in principle, allowing you from the offset to confidently scour the streets for the property of your dreams. This is important for the unwary foreigner to note, as in Poland it is common practice to pay a non-refundable deposit (zalicki), typically 10% of the agreed price, from your own funds to secure the property, often before receiving confirmation that you will be given a mortgage. Buyer beware.

### REGISTRATION

One thing you will definitely need before seeking a Polish mortgage is to be registered (zameldowany) at a Polish address. To be registered is a legal requirement for any foreigner living in Poland longer than three months. Whilst failing to register is quite common and does not usually cause any day-to-day problems, it is very handy to be registered and essential when seeking a mortgage. To register, you need to go to the appropriate local government office (urzad miasta) with, if necessary, a Polish-speaking friend to translate. You must present either the tenancy agreement for the property in which you live or take with you the owner of the property who will then present their proof of ownership and state that you are living there (as, for example, in the case of a foreigner living in his/her Polish partner's flat).

Similarly, if you happen to be in possession of a NIP (tax) or PESEL (social insurance) number, so much the better

### CREDIT

In my case, the process of applying for and being granted a mortgage was a long and tedious one. Not, in fairness, because of any particular problem with the bank (although the usual Polish bureaucracy and inflexibility were much in evidence), but mainly because of my personal circumstances. Although I had been banking with a major Polish bank for three years, my major stumbling block was that I didn't have a work contract. Now, proof of future earnings is a standard and reasonable requirement for any bank, of course, but not something that every aspiring property-owning ex-pat may have. I needed advice, and so began my association with an independent financial adviser (doradca finansowy).

### ADVISERS

Polish financial advisers take their commission from the lender, not from the borrower. As such, using their services you are safe in the knowledge that, should you, for any reason, pull out of the process, you will not be charged even 1 złoty. But check and be clear on this point from the start.

### FRANC VS. ZŁOTY

Now, ideally, reader, you do have a work contract (or your own business) and a long Polish banking history

> PODNIEBNY, D**arek**

(twelve months minimum is the norm). But if, like me, you don't, you will be severely limited in your options. At the beginning, I wanted to buy a 25-year mortgage, payable in Swiss francs. Perhaps a trifle exotic for this homeboy, but quite common in Poland and, due to low and stable Swiss interest rates, much cheaper than a similar mortgage based on złoty. However, in my case, my financial adviser could find only one bank willing to offer me any kind of mortgage (with each separate application seemingly necessitating reams of documents to sign, email and fax - all in Polish, of course): a 30-year term, payable in złoty. We filled out the necessary documents, including the crucial estate agent's "offer document" and, in due course, I received the loan, complete, of course, with a four-figure bank commission charge, which I was able to add to the term of the loan. Note that, should you wish to switch from a złoty to a Swiss franc mortgage, you are typically free to do

### SELF-DECLARATION

so after twelve months.

Perhaps I should say that, lacking a work contract, it was probably only the fact that I had a 40% cash deposit that secured me the remaining 60% from the bank. Without such a contribution, I may not have been deemed so creditworthy. Of course, some Polish banks allow you to make a "self-declaration." Self-declarations dispense with the need for proof of earnings providing you can provide something like a minimum of 40% cash. However, such documents have, in the West at least, received bad press over the years, encouraging buyers to over-extend themselves (remember the term "credit

crunch?"). If offered credit in this way, be realistic with your ability to repay.

I was also required, by the bank, to have the flat valued. Again, this is not, as far as I am aware, standard practice for many Polish properties, but your bank may require it, at your own cost (around 600 to 800 zloty), so be prepared.

### SOLICITORS

If all goes well, you now have your mortgage offer and a hand-over date. The estate agent takes details of both parties' bank accounts and arranges a three-way meeting with a local solicitor. If your Polish is poor, you will need to arrange a sworn translator to be in attendance (this cost, a few hundred złoty, is borne by you, although the estate agent will no doubt help you to locate one). All parties meet at the solicitor's office - cost to you, several hundred złoty - and you take legal ownership of the property on an agreed future date. Take great care with the document (Akt Notarialny) you receive as you walk out of the office: this is your title deed and it will need to be shown to utilities, banks and government offices on many occasions.

When, finally, the bank transfers the money shortly after, you may allow yourself a smug grin and a house-warming party (*parapetowka*). But with the post-party hangover, the real fun begins: dealing with the block's administration department, sorting out utilities, discovering problems with the flat that, somehow, the previous owner forgot to tell you about and, possibly, a disruptive and costly process of renovation. I wish you luck.





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# **Sporting Post**

# Ten of the Best for Poland

A recap of the Beijing 2008 Olympics, where China ruled as Poland harvested in second week only

### Daniël van Hoven

Polish athletes witnessed a rusty start during the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, but a surprise performance by the male fencing team earned Poland their first medal, one week into the Olympic event. In the end splendid performances by Poland on the water helped secure a 20th place in the overall medal standings, with three gold, six silver and a bronze: a slight improvement compared with the Athens 2004 Olympics - although the total amount of medals for Poland remained the same at ten.

### China fooling the world

The 2008 Beijing Olympics was packed full of incident before the first tracksuit was stripped off. There were Chinese cover-ups aplenty: over Tibet, over limited access to the internet, over a child lip-syncing at the opening ceremony as the real singer wasn't deemed pretty enough - even the pride of China wasn't real: the fireworks. People watching the ceremony on TV saw a different version than the people that were actually in Beijing. Animated fireworks were added in the broadcast to make it look extra spectacular.

After the illusions were over (well, apart from the one involving He Kexin's birth certificate), China began to demonstrate some real magic. To the surprise of the entire world, China dethroned the United States of America as number one in the overall medal classifications. China was expected to perform well, but not to this extent. American swimmer Michael Phelps collected eight gold medals alone, becoming the most successful Olympic athlete ever (fourteen gold and two bronze in his career) and during one single Olympic tournament (eight gold in Beijing). As a one man country, the hypothetical 'Phelps-land' would have ended in tenth place in the overall medal standings. Nevertheless the USA, even with their star swimmer, could not compete with China, who ended an emphatic first in with 51 gold, 21 silver and 28 bronze medals. However, USA did manage to collect the most amount of medals: their count of 110 appeared being 10 higher than the host nation. This was the first time since the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona (when the Commonwealth of ex-Soviet states secured first place), that the Americans didn't top the medal standings.

### Multiple and memorable

Other memorable moments of these Olympics were brought to the world by Jamaica's Usain Bolt, who dug up three golden medals with three world records, celebrating all his victories before crossing the finish at the 100, 200 and 400 (relay) metres track sprint. Australian female swimmers Lisbeth Trickett (four medals) and Stephane Rice (three golden medals) dominated in the swimming pool and what about Natalie du Toit of South-Africa, who finished sixteenth in an open water race? It doesn't sound so special at first, but she did it with a prosthetic leg. Meanwhile Polish table tennis player Natalia Partyka gave her Chinese opponent some serious hard work, even though the Polish 19-yearold was born with only a single arm. Finally, Maarten van der Weijden of The Netherlands captured gold on the 10 km swimming marathon in open water; a remarkable achievement since he successfully battled cancer in the six months before the games.

### **Emotional achievements**

Personal victories can not always make up personal loss: German Matthias Steiner cried out after winning gold in weightlifting, holding a picture of his late wife who had died a year before. Neither was Georgian wrestler Revazi Mendorashvihli able to hold back some tears when he dedicated his victory to his countrymen, having defeated Georgiy Ketoyev of Russia in the semi-finals. The political tensions between these two countries came to the fore again, when two female Georgian beach volleyball players went head to a head with a Russian pair. Surprisingly, the four women hugged after the game (which the Georgian team won) and it later became apparent why: the women representing Georgia were actually Brazilian. Nonetheless the Brazilian-born Georgians, dedicated their victory to their warravaged countrymen.

And what about little Iceland reaching the finals in the men's handball tournament, losing only to France? A remarkable achievement. Meanwhile fans of American sports saw the USA reclaiming their Olympic title in basketball, but they were kept out of the last ever baseball Olympic final in which South Korea beat Cuba (baseball will not return on the Olympic calendar at the 2012 games in London).



Men's quadruple sculls: Konrad Wasielewski, Marek Kolbowicz, Michał Jeliński, Adam Korol

Argentina were simply brilliant in the men's football tournament with a comprehensive 3-0 win over neighbours and arch-rivals Brazil in the semi-finals. Rafael Nadal confirmed that he is currently the world's best tennis player, whilst the British dominated on the cycling track, and the Spanish ruled the roads on their racing bikes. Togo won their first ever medal, with Benjamin Boukpeti ending third in the K1 kayak and the Chinese government must have turned away when Taiwan seized four bronze medals in weight lifting and taekwondo; it all happened in those two weeks in Beijing.

### "And on the seventh day..."

The dearth of medals in the first week made the absence of Olympic medalists Robert Korzeniowski (racewalking) and Agata Wróbel (weight lifting) keenly felt. For seven days Poland remained empty-handed and, with ace swimmers Jedrzejczak and Paweł Korzeniowski already preparing for the trip home, the Poles wondered if they would ever reach gold in China. But it was a self-proclaimed beer drinker that put pride back in Polish hearts. Tomasz Majewski won the men's shot put contest in the athletic stadium that was called 'the bird's nest'. After the celebrations had ended, Majewski told the press that his particular discipline was great because it allowed him to enjoy the occasional alcoholic

Majewski's golden triumph was preceded earlier that day by a magnificent performance from the men's epee team in fencing. They secured themselves a medal in the semi-finals, beating hosts China by one decisive point. However in the final the Poles had to take a bow for France; nonetheless the performance was a first ever for Poland in fencing.

# Success in a "boat shell"

Poland biggest success however was still waiting in the water. Especially the men with the 'lightweight four' rowing team reaching silver and the 'quadruple sculls' sealing victory. The women's 'kayak double' secured a second silver spot in the flat water final. Poland's peddling in the water was the most prosperous happening for the red and whites, with three medals. It remained for Leszek Blanik to add a final golden medal at the men's vault in artistic gymnastics.

Completing the ten medal winners from Poland were Piotr Małachowski (silver, men's discuss throw), Maja Włoszczowska (silver, women's mountain bike cross country), Szymon Kolecki (silver, men's weight lifting -94 kg) and Agnieszka Wieszczek (bronze, women's freestyle wrestling -72 kg). Apart from the disappointing swimmers, other Polish athletes failing to meet expectations were the men's handball team and of both men's and women's volleyball teams. Nevertheless, overall Poland can look back on successful games drawing their medals from a wide range of disciplines.

# Wisła Historic Win Not Enough

Daniël van Hoven

They may have become the first Polish team ever to defeat Barcelona with a 1-0 win victory at home, but the first leg defeat of 4-0 at the Nou Camp crushed Wisła's dream of qualifying for the UEFA Champions League. Much hope was drawn from the 5-0 home win over Beitar Jerusalem in the previous round, which saw them come back from a 2-1 loss to win 6-2 on aggregate. But after the four goal pounding in Barcelona, the historic home win wasn't enough for Wisła, who now continue their European adventure in the UEFA Cup tournament.

The Polish side was humiliated on August 14th when they suffered a huge defeat against 2006 Champions League winners FC Barcelona. The final score of 4-0 did not represent the match. Barcelona were many times stronger and could have taken the goal tally into double digits with more clinical finishing. Although the return match was never more than academic, Wisła still had their honour to defend at home as any self-respecting football club will tell you. Again, Barcelona dominated large parts of the game but failed to convert chances into goals. And then suddenly, early in the second half, Cleber headed in the 1-0 for Wisła. It would be the only goal of the game, as Barcelona wasted their remaining chances. Despite crashing out of the Champions League, Wisła will be satisfied with the result, a handy confidence boost before heading into the first round of the UEFA Cup. To this day, Legia Warsaw remain the only team from Poland to have qualified for the UEFA Champions League. In the 1995/96 season they reached the quarterfinals of the tournament.

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# **Culture**

# **Highlanders for Tibet**

# An exhibition by Polish photographers links two cultures

# Ewa Spohn



Photo / Bartek Solik (Vis A Vis photo agency), www.goraledlatybetu.pl

or much of August, Plac Wolnica in Kazimierz acted as an open-air gallery for a series of haunting photographs from the "Górale dla Tybetu" (Highlanders for Tibet) initiative. The initiative is championed by two young Polish journalists who decided to document the lives of Tibetan refugees in the months before the start of the Olympic games in Beijing. In May and June 2008, Bartek Solik (who was born and brought up in Zakopane, in the Tatra Mountains) and Bartek Dobroch travelled to rarely visited corners of the Himalayas, places where tradition and Buddhism coexist and always seem to have done. Their moving photographs document the lives and stories of the refugees and show their struggles to free themselves from Chinese occupation and the resulting restrictions on their freedom of expression.

In India, the reporters also visited Dharamsala, the home of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile, where they met Lobsang Choeden, a witness to the tragic events that

took place at the Nagpa La pass in the Himalayas where Chinese soldiers killed two unarmed Tibetans. They also met with Kusang Sonama, one of the only refugees who reached Dharamsala after the March riots in Lhasa, and 17-year-old Dhartso Kyi, who fled across the Himalayas for 30 days, together with his seven siblings. The reporters visited homes for elderly Tibetans, as well as a preschool in an orphanage, itself part funded by a Polish charity, which Bartek Solik said reminded him of the school in Zakopane attended by his 3-year-old son.

The second part of the reporters' trip took them to Nepal, where they reached Dorpathan, a remote village to the west of Dhaulagiri, the seventh highest mountain in the world. Its inhabitants spoke of how they had fled Tibet together with the Dalai Lama in 1959 in fear of the growing Chinese repression.

Since their return to Poland, the two reporters have been telling their story in the national media and their photographs were displayed on Plac Wolnica in Krakow until 22nd August, when they moved to Krupówki Street in Zakopane. As part of the ceremony to welcome the project back to where it started out from, the Zakopane *górale* (Highlanders) handed over a Tibetan flag to the Tatra mountain rescue team (TOPR). The flag was then picked up by the

The "Górale dla Tybetu" exhibition can be seen on Krupówki Street in Zakopane until 15th September.

flies to this day.

TOPR rescue helicopter and

flown to the mountain centre

belonging to the Polish Scout-

ing Association on Glodowka in

Bukowina Tatrzanska, where it



Photo / Bartek Solik

# **CULTURE IN BRIEF**

### Museum May Split

Krakow's Czartoryski Museum, famed for its coveted *Lady with An Ermine* by Leonardo da Vinci, may divide its collections in two if the current president realises his plans.

Count Adam Zamoyski, who became president of the Foundation in 2004, has revealed a bold concept to reinvigorate the original seat of the museum, which was at Pulawy, near the town of Kazimierz Dolny.

Zamoyski's forebear, Princess Izabela Czartoryska, launched the museum from her Pulawy residence in 1796. Two specially built follies housed the collections, which were intended to act as an inspiration to the besieged nation. After the uprising against Russia in 1830, the collection moved, first to Paris, and then to Krakow in 1878.

Nevertheless, Zamoyski's project may prove an uphill struggle. The Pulawy estate has not hosted the collections for several generations, and the palace no longer belongs to the Czartoryski family. Cracovian conservators have reflected that whilst the temples in Pulawy Park are technically vacant, they would need colossal investment to raise them to museum standards. The count is currently mulling over means of raising funds.

# **Underground Force Returns**

One of the crack forces of Poland's WWII underground has blasted into the country's cinemas. <i>My Cichociemni</i>meets some of the last survivors of the famed unit, seven of whom are interviewed in the film.

Soldiers of Cichociemni (The Silent Dark Ones) were parachuted into Nazi-occupied Poland from the UK as of February 1941. The top secret force gained its name owing to the fact that volunteers, mainly young officers from the Polish army-inexile, had to slip away from their units by night when the call came. Training was tough, and only 605 of the original 2400 candidates made the grade. Besides rigorous courses in topography and cryptology, recruits were tutored in all aspects of partisan warfare, complemented by martial arts such as jujutsu.

"Once in, you were a member for life," recalls one of the gentlemen from Pawel Kedzierski's film: "They were truly great lads."

Of the 344 members successfully transported to Poland, 112 were killed in action against the Nazis. Several more were persecuted by the Communists in the war's aftermath.

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# **Culture**

# Veni, Vidi, Deus Vinxit

# Krakow awaits 325th anniversary of Vienna victory

nly solace of my heart and soul, my fairest, most beloved Marysienka!" wrote King Jan Sobieski to his queen on the night of the 13th of September, 1683. All around him lay the scattered remnants of the Sultan's camp at Vienna:

"Our Lord and God, Blessed of all Ages, has brought unheard of victory and glory to our nation," he continued, before launching into a dizzy description of the Turkish treasures (which included a parrot "that kept flying around so that we could not catch it"). For Sobieski, as supreme commander of the Catholic Alliance, had staved off a catastrophe for Central Europe. Namely, he had prevented the Ottoman sceptre from being planted at the heart of the Holy Roman Empire - Vienna. "Veni, Vidi, Deus Vinxit" the King declared, ("I came, I saw, God conquered"), making a modest twist on Caesar's boast.

After a three-month siege, the Turks had come within a whisker of taking Vienna. But at the last hour, the Poles had ridden in and repulsed the invaders. The key

moment came when the Polish Husaria charged down from the forests of Kahlenberg. These fabled warriors, known as the "winged horsemen," were the flower of Poland's nobility. Each rider boasted wings built from eagles' feathers, and their gleaming breastplates were draped with tiger or leopard skins. Every horseman carried a lance emblazoned with the Polish colours.

As it was, Sobieski returned to Poland a hero (with plenty of booty for his beloved queen). And lo, this September, the portly monarch will be coming back to Krakow, where he will to be greeted by the grovelling townsfolk, and, not least, his spirited wife.

The victory at Vienna in 1683 holds a mythical place in the Polish imagination, much like Waterloo and Agincourt to the British. It was also one of the last triumphs of the independent Polish state before it was gobbled up a century later by Prussia, Russia and, believe it or not, Austria, (that's *realpolitik* for you).

Poland is preparing a royal celebration for the 325th anniversary bash. September's events are being divided between Warsaw, Krakow and Vienna, and as luck would have it, Cracovians are getting the lion's share of the revelry.

The highlights of the celebrations will be between the 11th and 14th of September, including the triumphal return of Sobieski's army to Błonia Common on Saturday 13th, replete with a troop of winged horsemen (from noon). Later that evening, there will be a firework display and more horsing around. The following day, the king himself (played by legendary actor Daniel Olbrychski) will make a royal progress from Wawel Castle to the Market Square. And throughout the weekend, there will be plenty of activity on the Mały Rynek, beginning with a competition for "the most splendid moustache in the kingdom." All comers are welcome - you may just win by a whisker.

For a full programme, see www.victoriawiedenska.krakow.pl



The 250th anniversary in 1933

# **GOLDEN OLDIE**

### Dekalog (Decalogue) directed by Krzysztof Kieślowski (1988)

Notes to self

Make ten 60 minute films loosely based on the Ten Commandments.

"If you exclude politics as a motive for any kind of activity, the characters are no longer Poles."

"Turn every commandment into a challenge for a person." Result: Decalogue.

Kieślowski prided himself in the universality of the themes in this film cycle, asking himself "what is happiness, love, despair?" And in counterpoint to his previous film *No End*, references to politics and martial law were purposely dumped.

The director begins his creative ascent to legendary film-auteur status here, and hiding in the swing of his magus' cape are collaborators Piesiewicz (co-scriptwriter inspired by some 15th century illustrations of the Commandments) and Preisner (composer of the meditative, melancholic scores). The balanced, claustrophobic, humanistic style perfected in the cycle would be used for the next four feature films, up until Kieślowki's untimely death.

Short scenes brilliantly construct character and build intrigue, as for instance when in *Decalogue 4 (Honour Thy Father and Thy Mother)* Anka is having a sight test. The optician's apparent random choice of letters is all a ruse. Anka's bad eyes guess the last letter in the sequence - the 'r' of f-a-t-h-e-r in English, and inquires why those letters. And the reply - "I test for intelligence at the same time." The strange woman obviously has a whole agenda we will never know about. And in *Dekalog 6*, the old woman who tells the 19-year-old what girls like and encourages him to invite them home seems momentarily just as dubious as Tomek in his passing voyeuristic phase.

There are many moments like this in the films, when often some dilemma crystalises the moral flaws and weaknesses of the characters, but rarely do we feel manipulated by directorial choices. On the contrary, we seem to be almost neutrally observing scenes of murder, incest, betrayal, obsession, voyeurism, revenge, impotence etc., which in less sensitive hands would perhaps have been used as lessons in morality.

For better distribution abroad two of the films were remade into features, and illustrate the quandary of watching these films knowing the title of the commandment; A Short Film About Love was originally Dekalog 6 - Thou Shalt not Commit Adultery. The result is two possible readings of the same film.

Throughout the films, the commandments are always treated ambiguously, maybe ironically. The enigmatic recurrence of the same shady actor in each film at key moments has often been interpreted as God - surely purely a surface reading, as Kieślowski would never be so clumsy.

The cycle has been described as a masterpiece; to get a flavour, A Short Film About Love and A Short Film About Killing are showing at Kino Pod Baranami (see POSTED in CITY LIFE).

Also by Kieślowski - Camera Buff (Amator) (1979), Talking Heads (Gadające glowy) (Documentary 1980), The Double Life of Véronique (1991), the trilogy Three Colours (Blue, White, Red) (1993/4)

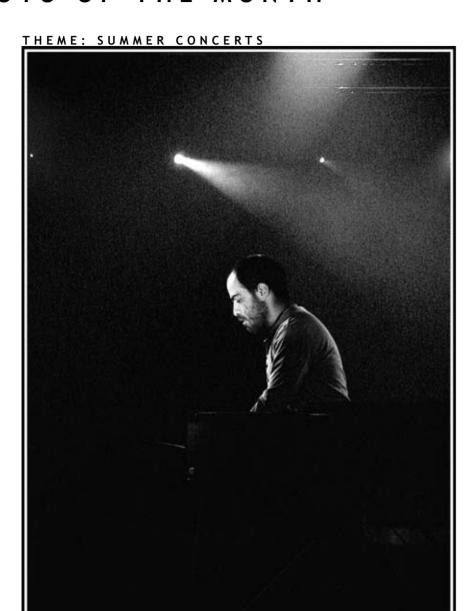
Stuart Wilson



 ${f Film\ Poster}$  Courtesy of The Museum of Cinematography, Łódź

# Culture

# PHOTO OF THE MONTH



September's Photo of the Month was taken by Mateusz Majewski

"Max Tundra amazed fans at OFF Festival 2008"

In October Krakow Post will publish the best "xxxxxx" photo. The winner will receive a free Krakow Post t-shirt.

All entries welcome. Send entries to editor@krakowpost.com by September 25th.

# REEL LIFE

### The Dark Knight

Back In Black

Batman first swooped onto our screens courtesy of Adam West and the famously camp sixties sitcom. Fight scenes were peppered with huge banners that flew across the frame - Biff! Splat! Kerpow! It was cracking stuff. In Christopher Nolan's nervous new film, there's hardly a hint of that light-heartedness (Christian Bale's gravelly voice strikes the only goofy note in the entire picture). Even the Joker, previously something of a pantomime villain, has been reinvented as a razor-blade slashing psychopath. But this is not to say that the new version is not good. On the contrary, The Dark Knight is the strongest Batman film since Burton's 1989 début. Nolan has blended elements of Bond, The Matrix and Michael Mann's Heat to create a fast-paced thriller that may have none of the wry, knowing tone of previous incarnations, but still packs a helluva punch. Less flamboyantly Gothic than Burton's pair, the film does however retain the gadgets, and fans will relish one of the fattest motorcycles to have zoomed onto our screens in recent years. Slick editing and ice cool cinematography keep things fluid, and there are fine turns from Michael Caine, Morgan Freeman, Gary Oldman and Bale himself. Much has been made of the late Heath Ledger's searing performance, with plenty of column space devoted to comparisons with Nicholson. But such debates are pointless, as the films are entirely different in tone. All the same, it's hard to avoid the conclusion that Ledger buried himself so deeply in the persona of psychopath that he was unable to recover in time for his next film. The wisdom of Daniel Day Lewis's approach (that is, unwinding in a remote location post shoot) becomes painfully clear in the light of Mr. Ledger's sad demise. Nick Hodge

# SHELF IMPROVEMENT

### **Solidarity's Secret** by Shana Penn

The women who defeated communism in Poland

According to Shana Penn, one of the best-kept secrets of the Solidarity movement that eventually brought about the collapse of communism in Poland - and started the domino effect throughout the entire Eastern Bloc - was that it was run by women. Or specifically, once the movement went underground after the declaration of martial law in 1981, it was a group of women who kept the movement going by running the underground press, hiding male oppositionists, and keeping the communications networks active, and with them the hopes of the imprisoned nation. It would have been easy for Penn to write this book from an entirely Western, feminist perspective, but luckily in her research Penn dived into the underlying and very Polish reasons that these women not only did what they did (and felt they had to), but why they almost always refused to claim credit and downplayed their roles. Penn explores other times in Poland's history in which women took up the cause of independence, and raises the topics of the Matka Polska myth, women's education and emancipation in the 19th century, and the home as the place for underground activity - all factors that explain the role of women in Solidarity before and during martial law, and their nearabsence from politics after 1990. Penn's captivating writing style makes the book an interesting read for the layperson, though Solidarity's Secret is really an essential read for any scholar of Polish history. Because as Penn writes, "Without women, the underground would simply not have existed" - and Solidarity would have met its end prematurely. Anna Spysz

# Language

# Trips off the Tongue

Grażyna Zawada

Q: Can you please explain the uses of dwa, dwie, etc., and generally when each type of "two" should be used?

A: Among Polish numerals only three ('trzy' [tshe]) and four ('cztery' [tshteary]) form a different group, apart from one ('jeden' [yea-den]) and two ('dwa' [dva]), discussed previously. When it

comes to three and four, the most difficult case is the nominative (answering 'who?'/'what?' 'trzej', 'trzy' /3/, 'czterej', 'cztery' /4/) and the accusative ('whom?'/'what?' e.g. whom/ what do I see? - 'trzech', 'trzy', // 'czterech', 'cztery'), as these forms differentiate between masculine personal and non-masculine personal genders. The rest

of the cases do not differentiate the above said genders and use one form, with the ending '-ech' being characteristic (e.g. Nie widze trzech chłopców/trzech dziewcząt [I don't see three boys/girls]). Numbers from five ('pieć' [pheentsh]) to nine hundred ('dziewięćset' [zhe-feenset]) remain one big group bearing similar ending '-u' (pięciu

language, as prepared by a native Polish linguist and teacher.

Is Polish really that difficult? Or is that just a myth, an over-used excuse touted by lazy language students?

Let's find out... Krakow Post introduces a series of brief lessons, which should prove useful when learning this beautiful

/5/, 'dwudziestu sześciu' /26/, 'dziewięćdziesięciu dziewięciu' /99/). Again, the nominative and accusative consider gender (as above: 'pięciu' [boys], 'pięć' [girls, objects]), and the rest is simple ('nie ma dwudziestu pięciu koni' [25 horses are not present] genitive case).

NEXT MONTH: other types of numerals Confused by Polish grammar? Send your query to editor@krakowpost. com, and our Polish linguist may answer your question in the next edition of "Trips off the Tongue!"

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# **Culture**

# Music

# London Recalling Polish Dance

# **Anna Spysz**



ast month, as part of the "Ukraine and Poland - Two Neighbours" festival, a group of Polish folk dancers performed on stage on the Market Square. While that alone is far from out of the ordinary for Krakow, the extraordinary thing about these performers is that they came all the way from London in order to dance traditional Polish dances (and occasionally sing some Polish tunes from days of olde) to an audience of locals and tourists.

The Mazury group, a folk dance company that calls the Polish YMCA in West London their home, stopped for a performance in Krakow on their way to the biggest festival of traditional Polish folk music, or Mazurek music, in Beskidy.

The over 120-member group is composed of first and second generation Poles living in London and dates back to 1949, when it was founded as the official dance group of the Polish YMCA. As such, it became the longest established and largest Polish dance group in the UK, featur-

ing children and grandchildren of the post-war Polish immigrants who first strove to preserve this part of their homeland's culture abroad.

However, according to the group's artistic director Wlodek Lesiecki, the group does not see itself as *polonia* (the Polish word for Polish expatriates), but rather as "Poles who happen to live in London." When performing in the UK and abroad, the Mazury group is "representing Poland, not London."

Lesiecki took over the direction of the group in 1972, extending the original repertoire of the group's dances to include regional variety. Lesiecki also established a junior group for dancers between the ages of 9 and 12 and a middle group for ages 12-15, in addition to the senior group that performed in Krakow and includes all dancers above the age of 15. For the past few decades, touring has also been a regular part of the Mazury heritage, and the group participates in several festivals in the UK and abroad.

In addition to the talented dancers on stage, the performance on the Market Square was accompanied by a string quartet, led by musical director Maryla Kolendo. As much care is given to the historical accuracy of the music as the dances themselves, and Kolendo trains the members of the group who also sing during the performance.

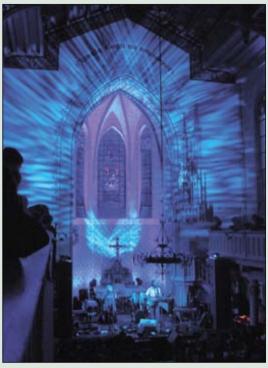
In keeping with the idea of preserving Polish traditions, each one of the intricate folk costumes is handmade by members of the group. Lesiecki, who choreographs the group's performances based on traditional dances, also performs with the group, as does his daughter. In fact, during the group's performance it was not difficult to spot the comfort and familial trust between the members, as dancers of age groups varying from teenagers to middle-aged cooperate to bring near-forgotten Polish traditions to life for audiences around Europe.

For more info, visit >> www.mazury.org.uk

# Live Review:

OFF Festival really impresses in 2008

Anna Spysz



The magical Iron & Wine performance

I must start my review of the 2008 OFF Festival in Myslowice with a big thumbs up to the organisers. Rarely in Poland do you find things going so smoothly at such large musical events as this year's OFF. But not only did the organisers manage to pull off the festival with no complications (other than the weather), they managed to uphold a standard of quality usually only experienced at festivals in the West. Even compared to last year's edition, the quality of the sound from each stage, the thought put into the visualisations, and the entire organisational aspect of the festival had improved tenfold.

But on to the music. While more kudos is due to the organisers for pulling in such big acts as Mogwai, British Sea Power, Of Montreal, Caribou, and Clinic amongst many others, it was of course the bands and performers themselves that were the stars of this show. Particularly notable was Canadian Dan Snaith's solo project, Caribou, which when backed by a full band on stage completely transformed his original low-fi recordings into energetic, exploding rhythms and melodies that often needed two drummers to execute. While the big acts on the Main and Forest stages predictably delivered the goods, most of the surprises happened inside on the Experimental and Offensywa stages, where groups like the ambient Kammerflimmer Kollektief or Jacaszek created unforgettable atmospheres, while Max Tundra made a whole tent dance into the wee hours.

However, the most memorable moment of the festival was unfortunately one only experienced by a small portion of the thousands that spent the weekend in Myslowice. On Sunday, a separate concert organised by the festival took place in a small neo-Gothic 19th century Evangelical church, a perfect atmosphere for the of ten quiet and subtle melodies played by Iron & Wine, a.k.a. Florida native Samuel Beam. At times alone with a guitar, at times backed up by a full band, Iron & Wine played a nearly two hour set of old and newer tracks, often completely rearranged for double the instruments as the original version. The combination of Iron & Wine's breathtaking music, the perfect acoustics of the old cathedral, and the amazingly well thought out and beautiful lighting was enough to bring tears of joy to any true music fan.

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Marc Minkowski / photograph courtesy of Sacrum Profanum

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# Nightlife & Dining

# notes from the underground

Conceived under the silvery light of a full moon party in Ko Pha Ngan, raised by lotus-eating hippies in Ibiza and suckled on the milk of Eric Morillo's mixing nipple, Krakow Post proudly presents their nightlife correspondent... the smooth, and ever-so-slightly-slippery, Slinky.

If you read the last edition of the Krakow Post, you could be forgiven for thinking that I wouldn't be attending any more festivals this year. There's only so much mud, sweat and tears a metrosexual can handle and the unavoidable tedium of queuing for tickets, entry, coupons, beers, food, toilets - not to mention travelling time - rarely compensate for the one or two gigs that you genuinely enjoy. That was my stance and I stuck to it, for about two weeks, after which I inexplicably turned up at the OFF Festival in Mysłowice.

Before we'd even set foot in the festival grounds, I and my fellow masochists had to sit out a deluge of Biblical proportions in the car - a promising start to proceedings. After the worst of it was over we rushed through the drizzle and mud to catch the freak show that was Of Montreal. Just one of many hip indie bands that it turned out I wasn't cool enough to appreciate. Still, the skies cleared and a glass of Lech was only 4 PLN. If I hadn't been so busy complaining that you couldn't take your *piwo* out of the designated catering zone I might even have been having a good time.

Bolting down beers at belch-inducing pace between concerts, we rounded off the main programme with some Caribou, Kammerflimmer Kollektief and Mogwai. At this point I could have taken a lift home, but I was determined to stay on for the Hungry Hungry Models, whose scintillating set at Heineken had persuaded me to buy a ticket for OFF in the first place. As the crowd went wild to the punky vocals and electro synth of the penultimate act, DAT Politics. I sensed a mad finale was in the making. But in the seemingly endless ten minutes it took for the Models to set up, a tired crowd looked at their watches - it was 3:30 a.m. - and what with the beer tent closing at 2 a.m. (I wasn't impressed!), anyone not pilled up to their eyeballs did the sensible thing and went home. The tracks rained down but after about 45 minutes of going through the motions, I had to concede that a) I was absolutely exhausted, b) this was shit, and that a) + b) equalled time to go home. Needless to say I hadn't furnished myself with a particularly concrete knowledge

of the train timetable back to Krakow... something I had about an hour and a half to rue on the platform of Mysłowice train station. So endeth OFF.

After all that, anyone crediting me with more than a crustacean's intellectual prowess would • biscuits at Klub Epsilon (ironically), nu-raving surely suppose that I'd learnt my lesson. But having managed to blag a press pass to Coke Live, it seemed a waste not to at least drop • ute bands in the Sudety mountains and even by and check it out. Cue more festive frolics. Apparently there were some directions somewhere on their website, but neither they, nor • nighters, escapades and romantic liaisons, the way to the festival, were at all well signposted, and so it was that I started my Coke odvssey by arriving at the wrong entrance. • all that low, but even the most raucous rave As a gruff security guard barked at me in Polish I had the sinking feeling I was about to be told to circumnavigate the vast grounds just . London... to get to the media accreditation tent - but thankfully a lad with an iota of initiative (and presumably nothing better to do) escorted me through. At the accreditation point I was given a media pack, wristband and a ridiculous purple pass complete with mugshot of myself. Confident that this pass would grant me access to anywhere in the festival. I marched off to do some lines with Keith and Liam backstage and reminisce about the good old days of rave. However it soon transpired that being one of Krakow's most prestigious journalists (ahem) conferred no special privileges other • than a couple of soft drinks at the geek-filled media tent. So much for shagging Sean Paul's entire female entourage. "Oh well, a free ticket is a free ticket." I supposed, and I duly spent the złoty I'd saved on several pints of liquid refreshment whilst waiting for The Prodigy • to start. Having lost all my friends within five minutes of the gig, I was left to jump up and down in the rain with various bare-chested lunatics to "Poison," "Outta Space," and "Smack • My Bitch Up." It was like being sixteen all over

Now it's time to heave a huge sigh and tell you the real nightlife news, that you didn't want to hear. From next month Notes From The Underground will be decidedly (some would say "tragically") less Slinky. Regrettably a recent

phone call from Her Majesty has urged me to return home immediately. It turns out that whilst I've been away Britain has spiralled into crisis. Apparently alcohol sales are dangerously low and people are spending less and less time in pubs, instead wasting their evenings at the theatre etc.; whilst in the capital's clubland there have been reports of party-goers requesting Enva. Crowded House and The Beautiful South and leaving venues at sensible times. Worst of all no one can do a decent Justin Timberlake impression. Clearly my country needs me.

Of course it's with a heavy heart that I bid farewellski to Krakow, a city that's been good to me over the years, and delivered more than a few nocturnal adventures; dancing 'til dawn in Krzysztofory's courtyard, bantering with LTI Bukem at Prozak, shooting the breeze with Smokin' Jo. flirting with Hito, chewing disco to the Fluowankaz at the legendary Domevki garden parties, rockin' with Elvis Preslev tribgetting drunk with Scandinavian royalty in Kazimierz - on top of a thousand other allthe details of which are distinctly blurry. Yes the highs were high, and the lows really not has to end at some point - and it seems, dear friends, that the afterparty is happening in

Now before you go stampeding down to the city council's door demanding that a Slinky statue be erected on the Rynek, you should know one or two things. Firstly I have already sold the rights to my image to a high profile American marketing company for a lucrative seven figure sum, and secondly there's really no need. Even without an effigy, I'd like to believe I've made a stamp on the city every bit as indelible as the one the city made on me. It's true that the numerous efforts I made to "mark my territory" in the Planty late at night will be absorbed into the soil in time, that the hilarious graffiti I drew in the toilets of Piekny Pies will eventually be etched away, and that those love bites lovingly lavished on ladies' thighs will slowly heal... but, much like Obi Wan Kenobi in Star Wars, my spirit will live on, wear a silly frock, and be ready to chime in with some handy nightlife advice in times of need. In fact if you step down to Prozak on a Saturday night and look carefully in the corner you might just see a sensationally Slinky ghost gliding over the dancefloor, trying it on with your girlfriend, and all the while claiming that he is "bringing sexy back." Yeah.

As a very final note the smarter amongst you will have deduced that the KP is now a nightlife correspondent short of a damn fine read... if you think you can bravely report from Krakow's underground on a monthly basis maybe you should send us your CV? The job requires a healthy addiction to alcohol and other intoxicants, a predatory bordering-on-immoral sexual appetite, and the ability to string a sentence together. However I've been told that two out of three of the above will probably suffice.



by night photo of the month

"That's when he called me the leader of the pack" DJ Line @ Frantic

Supplied by mynight.pl, the top website for clubbing photos.



# **DROP IN**



# Apartament 14

# ul. Bożego Ciało 14, +48 (0) 600232419

Observant followers of Krakow's nightlife trends will have noticed the abundance of spangly new bars that have opened up in the last couple of years, all desperate to attract Poland's rich and beautiful into their respective folds. Some have effortlessly woven themselves into the city's nocturnal fabric, others have been deemed surplus to requirements. The ones that have thrived have tended to ride on the reputation of their predecessors, such as Piano Rouge (sister of the now slightly tatty Stalowe Magnolie), Baroque (pre-club bar belonging to Cien) and Scandale Royal (a gaudier version of Le Scandale in Kazimierz); whilst equally fancy ventures such as Inblanco, Enzo, Enso and M Club all seem to be struggling. As for the ill-fated Et Cetera and Cinnamon - they've already closed their doors. The bad news for the owners of this new venture in Kazimierz, dubbed Apartament 14, is that I saw little to suggest that they can come from nowhere and reverse the trend. Admittedly there are some nice shrubs flanking the entrance, a few decent track selections, and the staff (hijacked from Paparazzi) are attentive and professional; but two huge LCD screens playing... wait for it... Fashion TV, underlined the fact that this was just another copycat bar lacking in any imagination. Still, my date liked it, and if you're looking for a secluded spot to sip a Screwdriver then you won't find anything terribly wrong with Apartament.

**Duncan Rhodes** 

# **DROP IN**

# Lokator

# ul. Krakowska 27, www.lokator.pointblue.com.pl

Having been tipped off by a supposedly reliable source about a hip new haunt that had opened on Krakowska street, I diligently packed my notebook and pen and set off to make my report. However, after pacing the relevant stretch of pavement a number of times, it soon became evident that my source had fed me a fat slice of czerwony śledź - with more than a dollop of wild goose pâté on top. And so, thirsty - and more than a little pissed off - I resolved to stop for a drink at the nearest bar I could find, which thankfully enough was the laudable Klub Lokator. What I particularly like about Lokator is that, unlike most bars in Kazimierz, it is bigger than your average rat-hole - and, what's more, the action takes place at street level, so you don't have to travel to the bowels of the earth to access its greater portion. However, its size is also its weakness. With its shadowy interior, art-bedecked walls and absurd touches (like the huge black cat guarding the toilets) you sense that if only Lokator was a fraction smaller it would be constantly buzzing with Bohemian boozers. But the place needs at least fifty customers to feel at all lively, and as such the atmosphere rarely gets to simmering, let alone boiling, point. Still, on a fine night such as the one that heralded my accidental visit, drinkers can skip the interior altogether and enjoy instead the relaxed atmosphere of one of Krakow's great undiscovered gardens.

**Duncan Rhodes** 

# **GET SERVED**

After experimenting with men last month, the *Krakow Post*'s "Bar Person of the Month" jury returned to the charms of the fairer sex for September's Get Served. Ania Słabczyk claimed the crown, thanks to her attentive and cheerful service - which includes listening to your stories as well as your drinks orders. Duncan Rhodes caught up with her at Paparazzi, armed with a bottle of bubbly and the usual questions...

O: What do you do when you're not waiting tables?

A: I like to spend time with my family and friends, and I also study business and marketing.

Q: What's the best thing about your work?

A: Meeting people - I like speaking with new people, and hearing stories from London and abroad.

Q: Who leaves the biggest tips?

A: Polish people. Maybe because foreigners think that service is included.

Q: And the smallest?

A: I think Italian! Yes, for sure Italian.

Q: What's your dream job?

A: Now I'm satisfied with my job here. In the future maybe I'd like to manage my own pub.

Q: Did you go to the Coke Festival?

A: No. I was working.

Q: What's your favourite place for an autumn stroll in Krakow?

A: The Planty - or walking by the Wisła.

Q: What cocktail do you recommend from Paparazzi if you want to impress your date? A: Here is the best mojito in town, so I recommend that. However if you're a girl and you want something less strong the watermelon martini is very good.



Ania Słabczyk, September's bar person of the month



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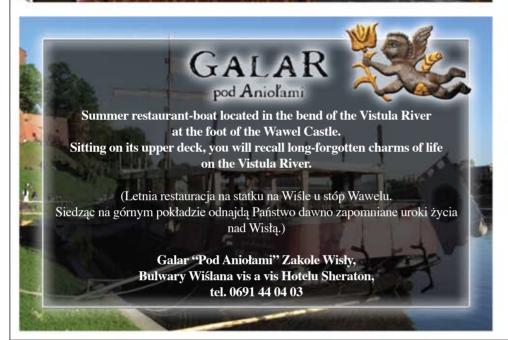


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# **FORK OUT**



Manzana Restaurant & Bar ul. Miodowa 11, (0) 12 422 22 77

By now you must have noticed that hearty Polish meals are what Krakow is all about, with plenty of cheap eats to be found. It's obvious that Krakow is no thriving culinary hot spot, but then again the city is rarely associated with anything but tradition throughout the cultural arena - at least that's what those know-it-alls in Warsaw say. In the realm of modern culinary ideas this is the unfortunate truth, and Krakow has been constantly playing catch up. Because of this, being opinionated about food in Krakow has so far been a piece of cake (lucky me). It doesn't exactly take a genius to notice food here is usually at least one of three things: bland, overcooked, or uninspired. Luckily, over the last few years the situation has begun to change. You can now get a good meal that is truly worth the price, and I'm not talking pork cutlets and cabbage anymore.

Manzana restaurant, in the district of Kazimerz, is one of these new additions to Krakow, and I'm sure it will do nothing but give Cracovians a breath of fresh air. As a restaurant specialising in Mexican and South American food, Manzana does not disappoint. Here chef Des Davies (who just recently took over the menu at Manzana) serves up the usual suspects including tacos, burritos, and fajitas, but Manzana is certainly no cantina. This modern restaurant is blazing forward, serving international classics along with Latin flavours such as lime and coriander. A variety of salsas and chilies on hand make a customisable meal and allows all types of pallets, from wimpy to suicidal, to leave the restaurant satisfied.

Manzana's large area is divided into the main restaurant section, a cocktail bar, and an elegant out-door patio. I started my meal with black bean soup with chorizo sausage, which was both filling and delicious. This was followed a chimichanga (deep fried burrito) which was filled with plenty of chicken, bell peppers and chili peppers, and was served with Mexican rice, re-fried beans, a refreshing tomato salsa and slices of lime. With so much food on my plate it was encouraging to see that while Manzana may be a bit pricier than usual, you certainly get plenty of chow. Another nice surprise was the service, which was fast and friendly. I must be too used to that classic milk bar shrug of indifference and haven't given the more expensive restaurants a chance. Perhaps I've wrongly assumed they are full of servers looking for any excuse to practice their well-honed scoff and hidden sommeliers waiting to pounce if I've spent too long looking at the wrong page of the wine menu.

To tempt some newbies inside for a try, perhaps those with the same sommelier-style fears as I, Manzana has created some mouthwatering and affordable specials. For example, on Wednesdays Manzana hosts Ladies' Night, with girls getting cocktails for just 10 złoty and nachos for 10 as well - and if you get both there's a free cocktail in the deal! Personally I'm looking forward to trying these nachos as currently, and very pathetically, Pizza Hut is now winning my nachos war in Krakow. Yes, I actually prefer cheese whiz on my nachos rather than the usual thin layer of Swiss cheese on some sort of Cheetos-like "tortilla" chip blasted in a microwave for that salty soggy cardboard effect.

Admittedly Manzana may not be a wonder for everyone (especially foreigners, and probably still those snarky Varsovians), but for Krakow it's a tasty foray into the world of modern ethnic food. It's rare to find a chef as dedicated to serving such interesting dishes in this city, and with these incredible specials to tempt them, I think the locals will be flooding this place in a heartbeat.



Wierzynek ul. Rynek Główny 17, (0) 12 424 96 00

I vowed I'd never come back to Wierzynek after a particularly uncomfortable evening back in 2002, where my partner and I were the only two people in the place, horribly outnumbered by stiff and unsmiling waiters. However after such a long passage of time, I was persuaded to go back and see how things had changed now that this Krakow institution had achieved the highest ranking of all 16 of the city's restaurants that made it into this year's Michelin Guide. I'm glad I did. My companion and I took a while to choose from the menu of Polish classics and rarities (sturgeon anyone?), but in the end had a delicious meal of herrings, beautifully cooked roe deer with pierogi and roast duck with a lovely apple and rose sauce. The dessert menu included a combination so weird we had to try it: a chocolate and blue cheese mousse with mint sauce. Overall the meal was a resounding success. Ok, so the vegetables were overcooked (a frequent gripe of mine in Poland), and, given the availability of great bread in this city, the bread basket was a little disappointing. But those were our only minor quibbles. Yes, it's not cheap, but there's a more affordable grill in the basement (winter) or courtyard (summer) and also outside tables that serve dishes from the main restaurant. I'd recommend this as a great place for those important dates with people you want to impress and show off your adopted home town to.

Anna Wajda



# Dynia Cafe Bar

Krupnicza 20, (0) 12 430 08 38, www.dynia.krakow.pl

Dynia is a chic bistro-style eatery on a busy student street, which I suppose is one of the reasons it has those great prices. At Dynia (meaning "Pumpkin"), sophisticated yet simple dishes are served in a surprisingly timely manner in a modern open concept space. Seeing the exposed brick and red leather couches was a nice change from the usual antique bohemia of Krakow. Not that I have any problem with all the Alchemias out there, but I do appreciate actually being able to see my coffee. The impressive menu at Dynia ranges from breakfast, salads, paninis, pastas, smoothies, and something that always signals a great restaurant - a seasonal menu. Dynia's selection also includes plenty of more traditional Polish choices, including the inevitable kotlet schabowy (pork cutlet). For you health freaks out there, the cafe also features a Fitness menu with such tasty sounding choices as grilled chicken alongside a salad dressed with lemon and olive oil for only 12.50 zi - a rare exception to the rule that healthy eating means expensive eating. The final touch is the enormous outdoor patio, making Dynia the ideal place to escape to in the summer season.

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# Sacrum Profanum 2008 - Sensations 14th - 21st September

Sacrum Profanum has proved it's no flash in the pan and the sixth edition promises to be the most evocative yet. The tilt from "classic classical" to more experimental modernism is being taken even further this year. Indeed, the focus of the 2008 edition will be on musical trends within Germany during the 20th century, taking in key composers such as Hans Henze and Karlheinz Stockhausen, and rounding off with a concert by none other than electro legends Kraftwerk.

mill, including the actual socialist realist steel mills of Nowa Huta. These gargantuan Soviet relics are nigh on impossible to visit on a normal day, so seeing them *mit* Kraftwerk is sure to be a mind-boggling experience. Think *Charlie & the Chocolate Factory* crossed with *The Terminator* and you're along the right lines. Also pencilled in on the location front are the Oskar Schindler Factory and the Museum of Engineering, both highly evocative venues.

Of course, Kraftwerk have been stealing most of the head-

### Kraftwerk / photograph courtesy of Sacrum Profanum

lines, but let's not forget that there's an entire array of 24-carat talent to savour. The London Sinfonietta will be performing works by Hans Henze and Karlheinz Stockhausen, whilst celebrated chanteuse Ute Lemper will be singing Kurt Weil's Seven Deadly Sins, backed up by the Sinfonietta Cracovia. The Cologne based ensemble musikFabrik will also be zipping into town, and you can catch them playing Wolfgang Rihm's Seraphim on the 18th September down in Kazimierz. All in all a feast for music aficionados.

 $^{\star}$  For more info and directions, see the official festival website: www.sacrumprofanum.pl

# The Month in Events

provided by Cracow-life.com

# SPECIAL EVENTS

**EUROPEAN DAY OF JEWISH CULTURE** 



Yale Strom - Galicia Jewish Museum

Technically, the European Day of Jewish Culture falls on Sunday 7th September. However, the Galicia Museum has prepared a four-day programme with an array of events, all in key with this year's musical theme. Things kick off on Saturday evening (7 p.m.), when there will be a Jewish Dance Workshop, with backing from the Jaffer Band (Entry 20 zl). The following day the museum opens its doors for free, giving guests a chance to enjoy a range of excellent exhibitions (see 'Traces of Memory' overleaf). At 7 p.m. there will a concert by lively Klezmer group Nazzar (20 zl). On Monday at 6 pm, a one-off film screening will bring to life the



Ute Lemper - Sacrum Profanum

world of **Leopold Kozłowski**, one of the last living musicians from the pre-war Klezmer world. Tuesday afternoon sees a Klezmer workshop for all the family (4 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.), and the day will be wrapped up with a concert by **Yale Strom** and **Elizabeth Schwartz** (7 pm), who will sing old and new Jewish songs. Well worth investigating.

when - 6th to 9th September where - Galicia Jewish Museum, ul. Dajwór 18

### **DACHSHUND PARADE**

One of the dottiest days of the year returns. That's right, a little before midday on Sunday 7th of September, hundreds of dachshunds from across Poland (and beyond) will descend on Krakow's Old Town for a fancy dress bash. The madcap march begins at the Barbican, heading down Florianska Street to the Town Hall Tower. As usual, there will be prizes for best-dressed doggy, and this year, there's even an award for the wittiest epigram about our four-legged friends.

when - 7th September where - Barbican, Old Town

# 325TH ANNIVERSARY OF VICTORY AT VIENNA

Like Waterloo to the British, the Relief of Vienna endures as one of Poland's most fabled victories. Pitted against each other in this cataclysmic clash were the Ottoman forces under Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa and the Catholic Alliance under King Jan Sobieski of Poland. Taking the Habsburgs by surprise, the Turks stormed Austria, laying a dogged siege to the imperial capital in July 1683. After two nail-biting months, the Poles rode in to the rescue and beat back the invaders from the gates of Vienna. Historians cite the battle as a turning-point for Central Europe. Krakow will be laying on a royal roster of entertainment to mark the 325th anniversary. On Saturday 13th, there will be a reenactment of the battle on Błonia Common. The following day there will be a procession from Wawel to the Market Square where the King will be welcomed by his beloved Queen (both played by legendary Polish actors). Plenty more is planned (including a prize for best moustache). All in all, should be a glorious weekend.

when - 11th to 14th where - Various

# **FESTIVALS**

### **6TH SACRUM PROFANUM FESTIVAL**

See spotlight on CL 6. when - 14th until 21st September where - Various



Polish Jewish writers provided some of the most dazzling works on the pre-war literary scene, and names like Schulz, Tuwim and Lesmian are firmly ensconced in the national pantheon. That said, painters don't seem to get quite so big a press. Did they fail to shine in the latter sphere? Well, this exhibition shows that there was plenty of

action in the plastic arts. Over 150
works can be savoured, including
superb pieces by established
names such as Leopold
Gottlieb and Zygmunt
Menkes, as well as intriguing
works by lesser known greats.
Evocative venue.

when - Until 31st October where - Old Synagogue Museum, ul. Szeroka 24



Dachshund Parade - Barbican

# FIRST STEP...

EXHIBITIONS

A must if you're smitten by contemporary art, "First Step" is one of the most intriguing collections to have touched down in the city of Prince Krak. Hero of the hour is Rafael Jablonka, who has loaned a mighty array of modern marvels. American and European artists provide much of the catalogue, but Japanese photographer Nobuyoshi Araki also gets a look-in. Works by Andy Warhol (born just over the mountains in Slovakia), Philip Taafe, Miquel Barcelo and Mike Kelley are all lined up. A standout is David LaChapelle, whose lurid photographs are full of humour and panache.

when - Throughout September where - National Museum, Al. 3 Maja 1

## HENRYK STAŻEWSKI (1894-1988)

A larger than life character who led Poland's avant-garde charge, Henryk Stażewski saw his home city of Warsaw change from Tsarist to Polish to Nazi to Communist rule. In the 1920s he was an indefatigable champion of Abstact Art, hosting Malevich's first Polish exhibition, and painting some classic Mondrianesque canvases to boot. Stażewski continued to paint throughout his long life, and at this exhibition, art aficionados can explore picks from several decades work. Love it or loathe it, there's a serene purity about his style that marks him as one of the most uncompromising trailblazers of his day. when - Until September 21st

where - National Museum, Al. 3 Maja 1

# ANDRZEJ WAJDA - ETHNOGRAPHIC INVENTORY

Best-known as the grand old man of Polish cinema, with an Oscar, a Golden Palm and a Golden Bear under his belt, Andrzej Wajda



Manhattan Short Film Festival - Kino Pod Baranami

www.krakowpost.com

is still going strong aged 83, winning his fourth Oscar nomination earlier this year. This exhibition reveals a lesser known string to the director's bow. Indeed, for many years, Wajda has been an amateur ethnographer, and this show presents gems from his collection, as well as original documentary film footage.

when - Until 31st October where - Ethnographic Museum (Esterka Branch), ul. Krakowska 46

### **CONTEMPORARY BELGIAN ART**

Now in its final month, this exhibition draws back the curtain on three Belgian aces, Janke, Luc Ledene and Guy Vandenbranden. These artists, stars of painting, sculpture and photography respectively, provide an engaging encounter with Belgian art today. The ICC is one of Krakow's most congenial exhibition spaces, so don't miss the chance to drop by.

when - Until September 28th where - International Cultural Centre, Rynek Główny 25

### TRACES OF MEMORY

Chris Schwarz's paean to the lost world of Polish Jewry provides a highlight to any tour of the Kazimierz district. However, whilst his photographs offer a devastating insight into what has disappeared, surprisingly, the show ends on a decidedly optimistic note. Visitors to the Galicia Museum, which was indeed founded by the late Mr. Schwarz, will also find a fine bookshop and cafe attached. when - Throughout September where - Galicia Jewish Museum, ul. Dajwór 18

### **CRACOVIAN ART AFTER 1945**

Hurry over to the Historical Museum to catch this show before it winds up. In focus are a number of Cracovian artists who attempted to forge new paths post World War II. A key figure - now an international icon - is **Tadeusz Kantor**, who launched the legendary "Grupa Krakowska II" in this very building back in the 50s. Kantor's cohorts exhibited in the palace's cellar gallery for many years. Besides the avant garde aces on show, visitors will also find Socialist Realist cuts. These come with earnest titles such as "Table of An Activist," by Jan Świderski. when - Until 14th September

# where - Krzysztofory Palace, Rynek Główny 35

### NIHON

Professional shutterbug Tomek Niewiadomski has been toing and froing from Japan for several years now, and this exhibition shows the fruits of those sojourns. Niewiadomski collaborated with Japanese fashion designer Yohji Yamamoto, but "Nihon" also draws on his more personal encounters with the people he met.

when - From 6th September where - Pauza Gallery, ul. Floriańska 18/5

# **ECUADOR - CULTURE ON THE EQUATOR**

Ecuador, a land of tropical forests, barren mountains, and mangrove riddled coastlines, comes under the spotlight at this one-off show at the Ethnographic Museum. His Excellency the Ambassador of Ecuador, Fernando Flores Macias - himself an ardent collector has provided many of the gems in this exhibition. Archaeological relics, and more recent hand-crafted treasures, are complemented

by films from the archive of Borys Malkin. when - From 6th September where - Ethnographic Museum (Esterka Branch), ul. Krakowska 46

# **OPERA, THEATRE**

### & DANCE

### CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND MORE

Groteska is one of Krakow's hidden treasures - and by funny coincidence, it lies on none other than ul. Skarbowa; literally "Treasures Street". Long-established as a beacon of children's theatre, Groteska is a champion of the art of puppetry. Many of the plays this September are based on classics: Little Red Riding Hood (Czerwony Kapturek), The Ugly Duckling (Brzydkie Kaczątko), and the like, so it doesn't matter if you don't speak the language. All in all, fantastic family enter-

when - Throughout September where - Groteska, ul. Skarbowa 2

### **PAN MARIMBA**

Krakow's brand new opera house is on the brink of its grand opening, but opera aficionados can have a sneak preview this September with new production Pan Marimba. Master Marimba is an opera for children, about children, and only two adults will perform. It's a magical tale about two siblings who search the world for "the enchanted song", together with magician Mr. Marimba. Viewers will be introduced to the rich folkore and musical traditions of exotic lands such as Africa, China, Japan, Mexico and Indonesia.

### Polish Films in English

Film pundits love to wax lyrical about the golden names in Polish cinema: Wajda, Munk, Has, Różewicz, Kieślowski, Polanski, the list goes on.... That said, finding versions with English subtitles can be devilishly difficult, let alone actually watching a classic on a proper-sized screen.

But don't get despondent, as Kino Pod Baranami has come to the rescue. The cult cinema on the Market Square has twisted some arms, tickled some tummies and administered some scorching Chinese burns, all so that you can have a chance to watch these movies on a bona fide silver screen.

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Now that the prints have been prised from the long-locked vaults, all you have to do is park your posterior in Pod Baranami's palatial halls. There's quite a programme for autumn, kicking off with Jerzy Stuhr's comedy "Love Stories" on 2nd of September, and ending with Kieślowski's most lacerating film on October 14th.

\* All films with English subtitles \*

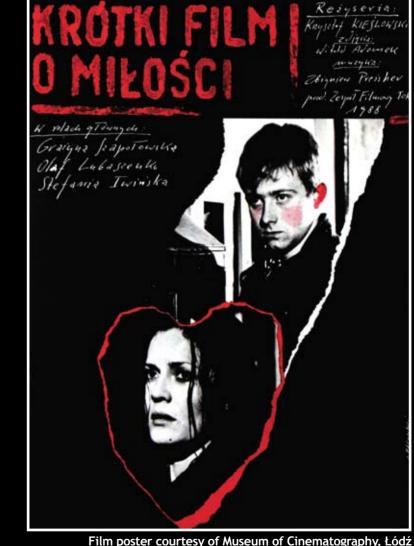
www.kinopodbaranami.com



Manhattan Short Film Festival - Kino Pod Baranami



Ecuador - Ethnographic Museum



Film poster courtesy of Museum of Cinematography, Łódź

2nd September Love Stories (Historie Miłosne)

16th September Day of the Wacko (Dzień Świra) Koterski

30th September A Short Film About Love (Krótki Film o Miłości) Kieślowski

14th October A Short Film About Killing (Krótki Film o Zabijaniu) Kieślowski

The premiere is on Friday 19th, but there will also be performances on 20th, 21st, 26th and 27th.

when - From 19th September where - Opera House (Small Stage), ul. Lubicz 48

### THE LITTLE LADY FROM THE BOX

A spot of theatre could be a refreshing way to spend a Saturday evening, especially when it's being performed in a lovely old manor house on the fringe of Krakow. "Panieneczka z Pudeleczka" (The Little Lady from the Box) is based on a classic work by legendary poet and children's author Jan Brzechwa (1898-1966). The premiere is on Saturday 27th at 5 p.m., and there will be a second performance the following day at noon. when - 27th & 28th September where - Dworek Białoprądnicki, ul.

# Papiernicza 1

### MANHATTAN SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

On Sunday 28th September, Krakow will be connected with 114 cities around the world. Some 429 films from 42 countries have been whittled down to a final dozen. Cinemagoers will have the chance to vote one of these top dog for 2008. The Polish leg of the event is being hosted by the quirky Kino Pod Baranami, and the results will be whisked through cyberspace to New York post screening. The worldwide winner will be announced at 10 p.m. New York time. A fantastic event for all film lovers.

when - 28th September where - Kino Pod Baranami, Rynek Główny 27



Traces of Memory - Galicia Jewish Museum

# 1ST INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CHILDREN'S FILMS - GALICIA 2008

Inviting children from Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine, Galicia 2008 offers a banquet for little monsters. Hosted in three cities, the festival comes to Krakow on Sunday September 28th, when there will be interactive games on an epic 180 square metre screen. The following day, youngsters can take part in a fantastical costume ball, whilst on the final day, a supreme selection of children's classics can be enjoyed. The celluloid revelry is being divided between Kino Kijów and the smaller Kino Mikro.

when - 28th - 30th September where - Kino Kijów, al. Krasińskiego 3

# LIVE MUSIC

### **COTTON FEROX**

Swedish duet **Cotton Ferox** will be touching down in Krakow on the 7th. Their mix of dark ambient, trip hop and electro makes for an intriguing brew. The pair will be performing at hip bar Caryca, a suitably atmospheric haunt. Tickets are a very reasonable 5 złoty. when - 7th September

where - Caryca, ul. Wielopole 15

## **ELUKTRICK & NEW CENTURY CLASSICS**

First off, if you aren't familiar with this cult music venue tucked away in a sheep barn at the edge of Poland - then this is a golden opportunity for you to go and check it out.

Located just an hour and a half south of Krakow in the village of Jaworki (just past Szczawnica), Muzyczna Owczarnia is a truly magical place with a flair for the eccentric. In keeping with the creative spirit of the place, they often host up and coming young Polish bands - hence this evening's concert which features Krakow's New Century Classics and Eluktrick. Instrumental NCC have collaborated with the more indie rocking Eluktrick in the past, so expect an evening filled with surprises (and amps cranked loud enough for the sheep to hear). If you are curious how to get to the gig, contact eluktrick@gmail.com (a bus is being chartered from Krakow).

when - 13th September

where - Muzyczna Owczarnia, Jaworki



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### **NEW CENTURY CLASSICS**

Poland's young instrumental post-rock group New Century Classics will be playing in their home city again after a long hiatus, which included a tour around the rest of Poland. Together since mid-2006, the band will be playing new material which they have been writing throughout the summer, in preparation for recording their first full-length studio album in October. Expect an evening of beautiful, emotional music and visuals. The concert will be held at the legendary Pod Jaszczurami student club, located right on the Market Square, and will begin at 8 pm - and best of all, it's free!

when - 17th September where - Klub Pod Jaszczurami, Rynek Główny 8

# CLUB MUSIC

### **MIDWEEK PARTIES**

Another month and another exciting round of Where2b parties. If you can't wait for the weekend check out Mixer with Mehow on Mondays at Prozak, Today on Tuesdays at Ministerstwo, Black Cherry on Wednesdays at Midgard and Sex on Wax on Thursdays at Cien Club. Hangover guaranteed!

when - Throughout September where - Various Clubs

### **GRAND OPENING @ CIRKUS**

Finally a new club is opening in Krakow, that isn't a watered down version of a trendy Varsovian joint that we don't want. Cirkus is rough, raw and on September the 12th it will be ready for business. Conceived by the same minds that brought us Kitsch and Plastic, music aficionados are unlikely to be in for a treat, but for clowning about a ticket to Cirkus might be just what the doctor ordered!

when - 12th September where - Cirkus, ul. Starowiślna 16



Nobuyoshi Arak - at First Step...

# **MEDIA PATRONS**



# kino pod baranami







INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE



kijów - - - centrum



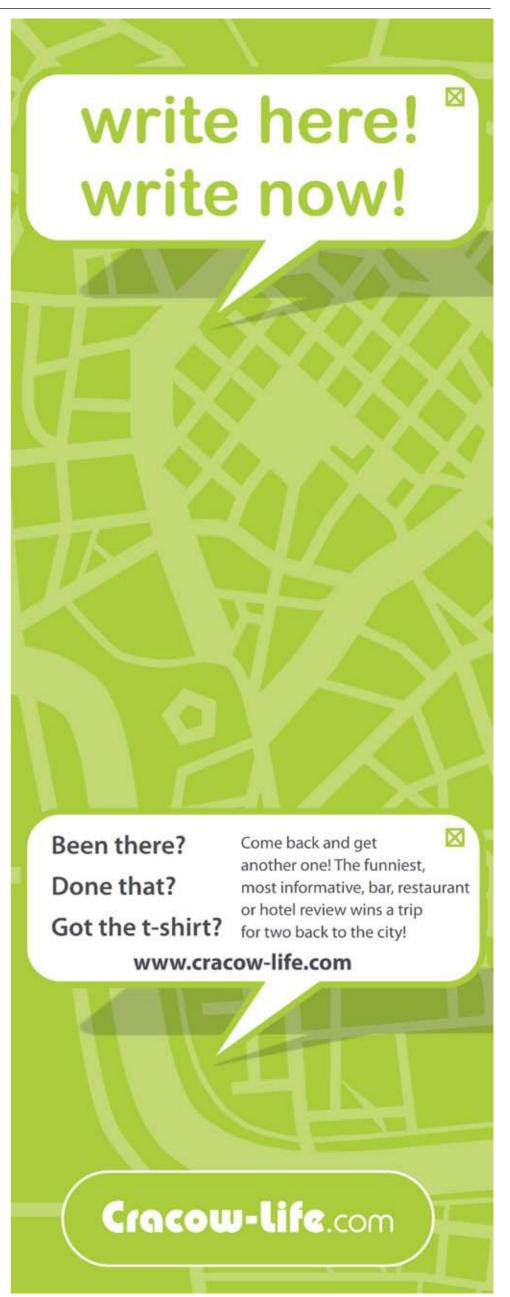








Krakowa



# Stars & Puzzles

# **ASTRO SELTZER**





LIBRA (Sep 23 - Oct 22) The fear you have of never doing enough is groundless. And, no, you have not become suddenly stupid, lazy or selfish! The fact is that you

have had no time to examine, analyse and evaluate your life. Old ways of thinking, feeling and doing things have to be tossed out the window. You need time to sit back and allow inspiration to wash over your tired body and soul. (Sun-sign twin: Polish-American actress Jane Krakowski)

# SCORPIO (Oct 23 - Nov 21)

You may be a mind-reader, but chances are that most people in your life are not. Countless impressions, anxieties and emotions are stored in your full-to-capacity brain. You absolutely have to start



sharing what you think with more people. Loneliness will be the only thing in store for you if you expect the remarkable treasures in your head to be excavated by anyone else. (Sun-sign twin: Polish-Danish-American actress Scarlett Johansson)

### SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - Dec 20)



You attract (but not necessarily keep!) people with your boundless enthusiasm and open-minded approach to life. And, with a deep aversion to any sort of routine, you are definitely

not the most organised flea in the circus. This month, your biggest challenge will be to convince people that you can walk your talk and that you will not drop into the pitfall of boredom if asked to follow the most basic of plans. (Sun-sign twin: Polish-American actress Jane Kaczmarek)

### CAPRICORN (Dec 21 - Jan 19)

Hard on others and even harder on yourself, you allow displeasure to slither off your tongue a tad too freely. This behaviour is at odds with your innately brilliant sense of strategy. This month, you will have to work like the devil to keep critical

tendencies at bay. Otherwise, you will



but you will probably lose out! Down the road, however, you will thank your lucky you are free to pursue other adventures. (Sun-sign twin: Polish-American Mamma unconsciously block the development of a

VIRGO (Aug 23 - Sep 22)

Consistency (matched with a good brain) is your ultimate turn-on. The highs and lows of dramatic relationships are, in your book, best left to thrill-seekers with no sense of the future. That said, you could be called to task this month by your significant other, who is beginning to equate predictability with complacency. In other words, jump-start your romantic life or watch it go from sizzle to drizzle. (Sun-sign twin: Polish-Russian-American actor Peter Falk)

wonderful project. (Sun-sign twin: Polish actress Joanna Pacula)

### AQUARIUS (Jan 20 - Feb 18)

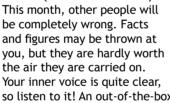
Lost in feverish speculation, you flip-flop back-and-forth between extreme opti-



mism and cold fear. This lack of balance comes from self-imposed perfectionism that has nothing to do with reality. If you are honest with yourself, you will have to admit that even your big-

gest blunders have taught you something about yourself and the world. (Sun-sign twin: Polish singer Doda Elektroda)

### PISCES (Feb 19 - March 19)



so listen to it! An out-of-the-box sort of person, you must remember that common sense is for common people. (Sun-sign twin: Polish composer Frédéric Chopin)

# ARIES (Mar 20 - Apr 19)



Fast and furious responses to you and your ideas will give you a shot of adrenaline this month. Nevertheless, you find yourself in a strangely indecisive place, anxiously weighing the pros and cons of

each and every offer. You can act your way out of this conundrum by telling people how incredibly important they are and that you need more time to consider what would be best for them. (Sun-sign twin: Polish-Lithuanian-British star of the stage Sir John Gielgud)

### TAURUS (Apr 20 - May 20)

This month, a ruthless type could beat you to the punch through the sort of backroom negotiating that turns your stomach. Sorry, stars that things did not work out and that Mia star Christine Baranski)

GEMINI (May 21 - Jun 20)

Listless colleagues get you down this month with their gloomy attitude and



drippy world-view. Furthermore, they obviously do not appreciate your amazing 🚧 problem-solving skills and reliably dynamic approach to work. Well, that is their problem and not yours! You are

actually sorrier for them than for yourself. (Sun-sign twin: Polish actress and Bond girl Izabella Scorupco)

### CANCER (Jun 21 - Jul 22) So many people, so many

criticisms and judgements. The mask of unperturbed cool that you wear has been attracting an unfair amount



of resentment lately. If others only knew how shaken up you can get on the inside! It is time you told people that your life is not easier than anyone else's: you simply try harder. (Sun-sign twin: Polish-American White Stripes singer Jack White)

### LEO (Jul 23 - Aug 22)

An ace charmer, you could talk your way



out of a high-security prison in no time. This month, however, you will be asked to make solid, long-term commitments that do not jive with the wide streak of independence that runs

down your back. No fan of signing on the dotted line, panic could cause a crack in your sunny façade when you are cajoled into making grown-up financial decisions. (Sun-sign twin: Polish-American actor Eric Szmanda)

Krakow Post's astrology column is for entertainment purposes only, and the Post is not responsible for any consequences incurred as a result of this column. Written by Kerwin McLeister sedibusincertis@yahoo.co.uk

# SUDOKU

To play: Complete the grid so that every row, column and every 3 x 3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. There is no guessing or maths involved, just use logic to solve.

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@ Puzzles provided by sudokusolver.com

# SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

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Star-Signs drawn by Dominik Nawrocki

theatre-gallery-music club open everyday16:00-05:00 from 29th August





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