

BULLETIN OF THE

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



Meets Every Fourth Friday at Polish Veterans Home, 6005 W. Irving Pk., Chicago

Issue No. 389

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Nov.-Dec. 1981

POLPEX 82 GETS GOING!

To get things going, our honorary member Richard Estka donated the sum of \$100.00 as the first patron of POLPEX 82 to be held February 27-28 at the Polish Veterans Building in Chicago. Listed as Polpex Patrons in our Souvenir Program-Catalog will be

those who donate \$5.00 or more. Well Wishers are \$2.00. For your convenience we enclose a self-addressed remittance envelope. Just fill it out, enclose your check or money order, affix a 20 cent stamp and send it on its way.

As we approach the end of the year, the treasurer reminds us that 1982 membership dues are now payable. To save the Society and yourself additional mailing charges, you may include your \$10.00 annual dues payment in this same remittance envelope.

Entry applications for POLPEX 82 are available by writing to Entries Chairman, Thomas J. Gobby, 5713 W. Warwick Ave., Chicago, IL 60634.

Because of the religious theme of our exhibition, we are negotiating to have an exhibit from the famous Cardinal Spellman collection. We welcome entries of religious themes. This year we are having an open show. This means that an exhibit other than Poland material may win the grand award. The Polonus Trophy will be given for the Best Polish Exhibit. And to round out the exhibition we ask for other than religious material be shown, both Poland and foreign.

Polpex is our most important event of the year. Let's get behind the Exhibition Committee and put on a good show!



Polonus honors the 600th Anniversary of Our Lady of Czestachowa at POLPEX 82. This was the subject of the 20 f. value in the Polish Madonna set of 3 issued in the Polish POW Woldenberg Camp in 1942. The design was a woodcut by Puchalski. The same design was also used in a miniature sheet.

THE FIRST POLISH BALLOON POST – THE II WANKOWICZ RACE OF 1926

By JAMES MAZEPA

During the First World War, free flying balloons were used by all the major powers as observational units in their armed forces. In 1919 Colonel A. Wankowicz organized Balloon units in the Polish army and from this beginning the sport of ballooning began in Poland. After the war, ballooning grew in popularity both as a military and civilian sport. In June of 1921 the first balloon competition in Poland took place at Jablonna. No mail was carried during this event nor were any special cachets made to commemorate it.

In 1923 the Officer's Corps of the Army Balloon Units founded the "Wankowicz Cup." Like the famed Gordon Bennett Cup, the Wankowicz Cup was to become the property of a pilot after three successive victories. Unlike the Gordon Bennett Cup, the Wankowicz Cup Races were solely for national competition and no foreign entries were permitted. Each year the Organizing Committee had to decide

what the specific character of the race was to be, namely, would the winner be decided on the basis of distance, duration or direction. Because of the desire to keep the Wankowicz Cup Race a national event, the crossing of the borders of the nation was forbidden with disqualification as the penalty. The race was open to both military and civilian participants.

Financial difficulties prevented the competition from being organized until 1925. The First Wankowicz Cup Race took place at the Mokotow airfield in Warsaw on June 22, 1925. As far as is known, no philatelic souvenirs were made.

In 1926, the Second Wankowicz Cup Race was scheduled to take place during the Third Air Propaganda Week in Warsaw. The race was to be held on October 17th, but stormy conditions delayed the race until the 19th. It was during this race that the first Polish Balloon Post occurred.

(Continued on page 389-9)



Semi-Official Balloon stamp issued for the Second Wankowicz Cup Competition — perforated and imperforated blocks.

Pictorial cancels manage to put Poznan on philatelic map

Reprinted from Linn's Stamp News

By Stephen G. Esrati

Reading the daily paper or watching the television news gives the impression of thousands of Poles demonstrating and marching, making demands on the Polish government.

The impression given is always that it is the people against the government, with the people organized into the Solidarity labor union.

Things aren't always what they seem. This was proven in June when the Polish Post Office apparently joined the demonstrations against the government.

Since the post office is part of the government, the conclusion to be drawn is that all of Poland, including the government, is participating in a gradual, evenly paced revolution against the system.

In Poland's case, the system is the one that was carried into the country by the liberating Red Army in 1945.

On June 28, 1956, the workers of Poznan began a three-day armed rebellion. It was a time of worldwide communist turmoil.

Stalin was dead. Khrushchev had made an uncertain peace with Tito, and as part of Tito's conditions, Khrushchev had dissolved the Communist International, the Comintern.

There were stirrings throughout the communist world that there might be a move back from the excesses of Stalinism.



Poznan, a city then of 327,000 people, had been the scene of an international fair every year since 1922, a bit of Polish nose-thumbing that intended to show the defeated Germans that Poznan was no longer the German city of Posen but part and parcel of Poland reborn.

After the liberation from the Germans following World War II, the fair was started anew. In 1956, people from around the world had come to Poznan for the 25th fair. Thus, the rebellion was seen and recorded by dozens of western observers.

It began with the workers of the Zispo Engineering Plant which had been called the Stalin Works until a few months before the rebellion.

It began as a peaceful protest. Then, as an afterthought, they marched on the headquarters of the secret police, its jail, the headquarters of the United Workers Party (Poland's name for the Communist Party), and the jammer that blocked out broadcasts from the west.

Some of the demonstrators drew arms from the plant guard rooms at the Zispo plant. The Polish army was sent into town to restore order.

Western observers said the first military units to come into town openly fraternized with the demonstrators.

One tank crew joined the strike and opened fire on the secret police headquarters. Then the fighting started. The city was surrounded and sealed off.

By June 30, Warsaw Radio had announced that 48 persons had been killed in Poznan. A later report said more than 400 people had been wounded. Western newsmen at the fair estimated more than 200 dead.

Then came the repression. Berlin's Radion in the American Sector (RIAS) said more than 1,000 people had been arrested. The Polish news agency, PAP, blamed the west, especially Voice of America and the Central Intelligence Agency but also Radio Free Europe (RFE).

RFE got a particularly telling attack July 1 when Radio Warsaw said that leaflets from the station had been found on some of the rebels who had, it charged, come from all over Poland.

It said this demonstrated that the Poznan outbreak was an action led by the Polish underground, and it was organized from outside Poland.

The United States issued a quick denial, saying the revolt, which eventually lasted through three days of street fighting, was spontaneous, caused by a "surge of pent-up bitterness on the part of an oppressed and exploited people."

It said all reports implicating the U.S. were totally false. It warned the Polish state that the whole world was watching its treatment of the rebels.

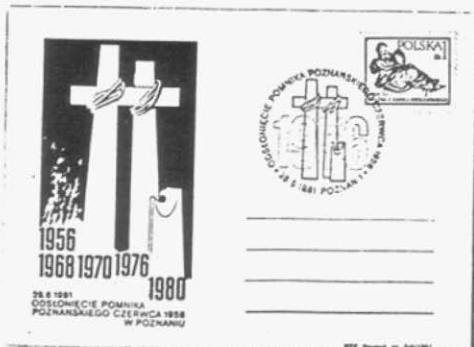


Figure 1

The U.S. Senate resolved on July 2 to praise the rebels for "courage in resisting . . . tyranny." The House asked President Eisenhower to bring the situation to the attention of the United Nations.

The Poles also blasted yet another group, the then mysterious Gehlen Organization, which the U.S. press, in those days, described as a private intelligence agency commanded by former Nazi Gen. Reinhard Gehlen.

In the intervening 25 years, it has become known that the Gehlen Organization was almost entirely funded by the CIA, as was RFE.

The charges against RFE were to be repeated six months later, after the rebellion in Budapest. While the world clearly remembers the Budapest uprising, hardly anyone recalls Poznan.

Hardly anyone — except the Polish Post Office and the Solidarity trade union.

On the 25th anniversary of the Poznan rebellion in 1981, two special commemorative cancels were issued in Poznan, along with special cacheted post cards.

Figure 1 shows the post card

commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Poznan Spring of 1956. The cancel salutes those who "stood up for the first time for the people's dignity."

It is not quite accurate, for one prior rebellion had taken place on June 17, 1953, when East Berlin youths battled Soviet tanks with their fists.

Figure 2 shows the monument dedicated on June 28, 1981, in Poznan, to the memory of the Poznan Spring. The cancel features the same monument.

The two together indicate that the Polish Post Office has joined the protest movement first sparked by Solidarity at the Gdansk shipyards.

However, a little needs to be said about the aftermath of the Poznan Spring. There were trials. There were also a few courts-martial of soldiers who had been part of the rebellion.

Most of the sentences were extremely light, less than five years in prison. What was more remarkable was that several party officials were also put on trial and stripped of their party office.

Also remarkable was some of the reaction to the happenings in Poznan. The Yugoslav party newspaper, *Borba*, blamed Stalinists for the rebellion.

The left-wing Italian paper, *Avanti*, denounced the repression saying that one cannot deal with "provocateurs" by machine-gunning the people of Poznan.

Events in Poland in the past year would seem to indicate that Poland took the criticism of *Avanti* to heart.



Figure 2

The Poznan Fair has been on a few stamps, starting with one in 1929. The 30th fair in 1961 was saluted by two singles and a souvenir sheet.

Whether any stamps marked the 50th fair in 1981 is not yet certain, but the cancels certainly managed to put the events at the time of the 25th fair in 1956 on the philatelic map.



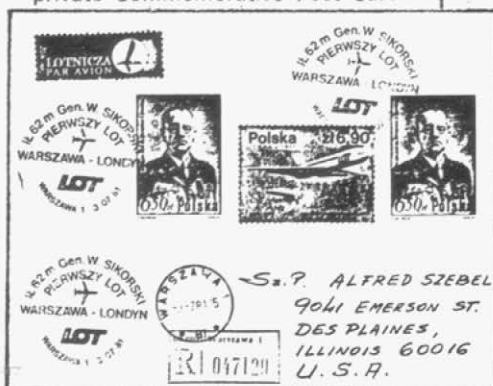
WŁADYSŁAW SIKORSKI — politician, statesman, general, hydro-construction engineer, born 20 May 1881 in Tuszów Narodowy, near Mielec. Active member of Progressive — Democratic Party, cofounder of Polish independence paramilitary organizations in 1908—1914. Chief of Staff in 1921—22; in 1922—23 Prime Minister and Minister of International Affairs; in 1924—25 the Minister for Military Matters. Since 1939 in emigration, acted as Prime Minister of Government in exile, Minister for Military Matters and Commander-in-Chief. Died in air crash near Gibraltar on 4th July 1943.



Official Polish P.O. First Day Cover of Gen. W. Sikorski issue.



First Day General W. Sikorski on private Commemorative Post Card



First Flight Warsaw-London of Airliner IL-62 named after Gen. Sikorski.



Gen. Władysław Sikorski stamp designed by A. Balcerzak.



Gen. Sikorski 100th Anniversary Postmark in Rzeszów.



P.Z.F. Official Card for 100th Anniversary in Tuszów Narodowy, Gen. W. Sikorski birthplace.



Honorary Doctor Degree of KUL to Nobel Prize Winner C. Miłosz.



41st Anniversary of Last Great Battle of World War II at Kock.



Opening Performance of Wajda Movie critical of Government.



Congress of Democratic Party in 1981 in Warsaw.



Opening of K. Wojtyła (John Paul II) Play in Kraków.



Unveiling of Pope John Paul II Monument in Tarnów.

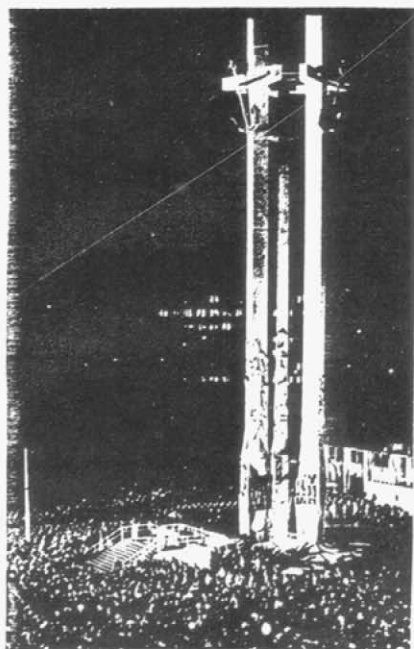
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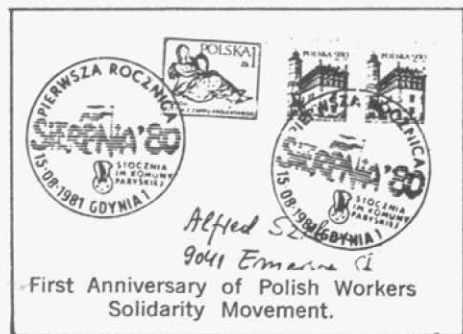
Monument to Fallen Polish Workers in Gdańsk, 1970.



Unveiling of Historical Plaque in Gdynia to Fallen Polish Shipyard Workers.



Unveiling of Fallen Workers Monument in Gdańsk.



THE MOST POWERFUL revolution in the world today has yet to break a single windowpane. The Polish Solidarity movement is shaking the very foundations of totalitarianism in the Soviet bloc, unafraid of Russian tanks and affirming the freedom and dignity of the human spirit. This movement is a classic demonstration of non-violent action. Their unity is a victory for the power of human aspirations in the face of the possibility of military force. It is a triumph of reason over the frustration and despair of the authoritarian state.

The Russians will invade Poland only at their own peril. This is not Hungary or Czechoslovakia. This is a truly mass movement of national proportions.

FOR THREE DECADES, the heroic leadership of Cardinals Stefan Wyszyński and Karol Wojtyła, now Pope John Paul II, nurtured the religious and cultural heritage of the Polish nation into a vibrant community of faith through acts of worship.

With this combination of factors, reform of the relationship between the Polish people and the Communist state is inevitable. The spread of this powerful human will from factory workers to farmers, students and housewives ensures a new day in Poland.



Card flown on the balloon "Kraków" which also shows the special LOPP cachet and Warsaw 19 airport office postmark.



Cover flown on balloon "Poznań" with a block of the special balloon stamp.



View card flown on balloon "Poznań" with the ordinary mail stamp pen cancelled.

In conjunction with this event, the National Air Defense League (LOPP) in cooperation with the organizing committee and the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs, issued a special semi-official stamp with a value of 1 zloty. It is important to note that this stamp was required on all mail carried on the balloons. The proceeds from the sale of the stamps were to further the growth of aviation in Poland by contributing to the building of airfields, aircraft, and hangars. The stamp was sold exclusively at the headquarters of the L.O.P.P. in Warsaw. The design of the stamp shows a balloon flying over Warsaw and is black and pink in color and printed on gummed white paper. They were printed in sheets of 66 (11 x 6) without marginal inscriptions. Of the total of 46 sheets printed, 41 sheets (2706 stamps) were line perforated $10\frac{1}{2}$ and can be found with both smooth, clean perfs and rough, coarse perfs. Examples exist with perforations doubled either horizontally or vertically, but such examples are scarce. The remaining five sheets (320 stamps) were left imperforate.

A special circular red 38 mm. ca-

chet was used to cancel the stamps and it is inscribed "Zawody Balonow Wolnych 17. X. 1926" (Free Balloon Competition October 17, 1926). Letters posted on the balloons were also franked with ordinary postage stamps which were to be cancelled at the post office nearest to the landing of the balloon for return dispatch. Also, the violet dispatch mark of the "Warszawa 19 Port Lotnicza 19. X. 26. 11" was applied at the airfield prior to take-off. Each letter received a two-line cachet with the name of the balloon which was to carry it: the Warszawa, Lwow, Poznan or the Krakow. These four were the only balloons to take part in the race.

The race began at 11:00 a.m. and the winner was to be determined by the total distance flown. The balloons finished in the following order:

1). The Poznan. This balloon flew 234 km. and landed in the Bialowieza forest. It was piloted by Lieutenants Brenk and Kowalski. Letters from the balloon are postmarked "Swislocz 21. X. 26. - a." 420 pieces of mail were carried.

2). The Lwow. The distance flown was 172 km. and letters are post-

marked "Kleszczele 20. X. 26. - b". In all 598 pieces of mail were flown on this balloon.

3). The Krakow. The distance was 128 km. and letters are postmarked "Śmiemajtyce 20. X. 26 - b." 419 pieces of mail carried here.

4). The Warszawa. Immediately after take-off the pilot tripped the safety valve causing the gas to escape and the balloon to fall back to the ground. The balloon was disqualified and the mail pouch of 450 pieces was dispatched through the Warsaw 19 Airport office. The postmark is dated "19. X. 26. - 15."

Both the stamps and the flown souvenirs of the Second Wankowicz Cup race are difficult to find today. Many collectors were content, it seems, to have a souvenir flown on only one of the balloons. This may be due in part to the fact that the cost of 1 zloty (about 22c US) was too high to try to collect all four flights. Today, sets of all four balloons are very difficult to find, especially on matching covers or cards.

Also, many view postcards were used and these often have the ordinary postage stamp applied on the view side pen cancelled. Perforated pairs on flown covers are scarce, imperforate stamps and perforated blocks of four on flown covers are rarities. Some very few covers also bear additional L.O.P.P. issues and are rarities. The stamps in blocks of four are rare.

Unflown souvenirs were also made. These have the balloon stamp and special cachet as well as the Warsaw 19 Airport cancel, but not the regular postage stamp and cancellation from the distant town near the landings. I have seen several such envelopes addressed to the "Grodno L.O.P.P."

References:

- Dunski, Marion, "The Polish Balloon Post 1926-27," Polish Philatelic Review, September 1956, No. 2, p. 92-95, London.
Kawecki, Wiesława, Myśliński, Andrzej, **Katalog Specjalizowany Znaków Poczтовых Polskich**, Tom 2, 1981, KAW Warsaw.
Łaskiewicz, Antoni, **Polskie Znaki Pocztowe**, Tom IV, Ruch, Warsaw 1966.



Card flown on the "Lwów" with additional Kraków LOPP issue stamps.

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be held Friday, December 18th, 1981 at the Polish Veterans Hall, 6005 W. Irving Park Rd. in Chicago, starting at 8:00 P.M. Latest Polpex developments to be gone over.

WINNERS' CIRCLE

CHICAGOPEX/CPS Held October 2-4, 1981:

Dr. Jozef Kuderevich, CPS Gold and GPS Gold for "Disinfected Mail - Germany 1805-1833."

James Mazepa, CPS Vermeil and GPS Vermeil for "Prussian Administration of Poland - Period of the Partitions to 1875."

CORRECTIONS

We made two mistakes in the description concerning Dr. Jozef Kuderevich's wins at WIPA in Bulletin #388.

PRZEMYSL was, is, and let's hope will be forever in Poland, and the years of the collection ran 1914-15.

We apologize.

—Editor

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— Annual Dues are \$10.00 —

(Please remit in U.S. Currency)

Stanley Rusin, Treasurer

P.O. Box 56148, Chicago, IL 60656

NEW MEMBER

Eugene Kuzminski

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

"Stow. Filatelistów Polskich w Zjednoczonym Królestwie"

The Polish Philatelists Association in the United Kingdom, formed in February 1979, will stage a philatelic exhibition on July 23-24, 1982 at Westminster Cathedral Hall, London SW1, entitled: "Papal Visits In Philately", commemorating the pilgrimages and pastoral visits of His Holiness Pope John Paul II since 1978 to Mexico, Poland, Ireland, U.S.A., Africa, France, Brazil, Germany, Japan, and other countries. The exhibition committee is already preparing exhibition publications to mark this event — specially designed postcards, to be franked with definitive stamps perforated with the association's initials "S.F.P." and cancelled with a commemorative handstamp. An exhibition catalogue is also planned.

If you would like to be a Patron of the Exhibition, donations of \$10.00 or more would be greatly appreciated. Advertisements in their exhibition catalog will cost \$50. for a full page, \$25. for a half, and \$15. for a quarter page ad.

Applications are available from W. Z.J. Nowicki, Secretary, 40 Ansell Rd. London SW17-7LS, England.