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POLITICS OF THE POLISH NOBILITY: CONFLICTS WITHIN THE NOBILITY



*Polish Magnates,
1697-1795*

The brotherhood and equality of all members of the nobility was supposedly one of the most sacred principals of the Polish Kingdom and Commonwealth. It was vocally and energetically touted throughout Poland's history by members of the nobility and was used to promote or oppose a broad variety of policies. The reality, however, was that the Polish nobility was bitterly divided. While the nobility presented a unified front to other classes, it continuously engaged in fratricidal conflicts which sometimes led to actual warfare. The most important and consistent of these rivalries was between the Magnates, their allies and the gentry.

The earliest of these intra-class conflicts took place in 1383 when civil war broke out between the Grzymala and Nalecz clans. The war was ostensibly fought over the Polish throne. The Grzymala clan supported the candidacy of Ziemowit IV, Prince of Mazovia, while the Nalecz clan supported Sigismund of Luxembourg.¹ As the conflict spread, however, its nature changed to one of class warfare in which the Nalecz clan was seen as promoting the interests of the gentry and drew support from the petty gentry, burghers, and free peasants.² Opposed to them was the Grzymala clan which was perceived as advocates of the Magnates and Middle Aristocracy. This civil war took on a distinctively class conflict when peasants entered the field on the side of the Nalecz clan. In one encounter near Zabaszyń, more than a hundred peasants were killed when they tried to stop mounted knights of the Grzymala clan.³

Shortly after this civil war, an event took place that was to upset the balance of power between the Magnates and the gentry and gave the Magnates a distinct advantage. In 1386, Queen Jadwiga of Poland married Grand Duke Jagiello of Lithuania (who, at his baptism into the Catholic Church, took the name Wladyslaw) and became king. Wladyslaw I, however, was an uneducated foreigner who was forced to rely on native advisers to gain popularity and to administer the Kingdom. These positions of power and influence were quickly filled by unscrupulous and powerful Magnates who took advantage of the situation to secure privileges for themselves,

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I first want to wish all P.N.A.F members a happy and prosperous New Year. As we enter a new decade I believe we all need to take a fresh look at our association with the Polish Nobility Association Foundation. Our foundation belongs to all of its members and it is only as strong as the willingness of its membership to support its goals and objectives, as a part of this is making *The White Eagle* a quality publication which benefits both the members of the P.N.A.F. as well as the general public who might read it.

To promote the quality of *The White Eagle*, it is critical that the membership become more actively involved in the material that appears in its pages. I want to praise all those who have in the past contributed material. Without you it would have been impossible to produce *The White Eagle*. To continue the quality of our publication, however, we need to expand those contributing to its content. I am therefore appealing to all members to please consider submitting material for inclusion in *The White Eagle*. If you don't wish to submit a regular article but have a comment or opinion on anything that might have appeared in any issue of *The White Eagle* or anything related to the history of the Polish nobility or the current situation of the Polish nobility. I encourage you to submit it for inclusion in future issues of *The White Eagle*. I could create a section of the publication entitled "Letters to the Editor." In addition, we need more material on the nobility of the various cultures that once constituted the Polish Commonwealth such as Lithuania, Ruthenia, and Livonia.

Finally, I would like to suggest that if you have friends whom you think might be interested in the content of *The White Eagle*, share your issue with them or contact me and I can arrange for them to receive a complementary copy. Also, if you know of any individual who might not be a P.N.A.F. member but who might have some special knowledge or expertise in matters related to the Polish nobility or the nobility of cultures of the former Polish Commonwealth, contact them and ask if they might be willing to submit an article for inclusion in future issues. Only through your support and assistance can we maintain the quality of this publication. ❀

Dr. Felix von Leski-Holewinski

SOLICITATION OF ARTICLES

All members are encouraged to submit articles for inclusion in the *White Eagle Journal*, especially those that relate to the history and culture of the Polish nobility as a class throughout the history of Poland. This appeal is especially addressed to all those members with an academic background in history or who have some expertise in some aspect of Polish history or culture. All articles should be limited to no more than three typewritten pages. If you have any pictures to enhance your article, please enclose them as well.

All submittals longer than three pages will, if felt appropriate, be included on the Foundation's web journal and a brief preview article will be placed in an issue of the *White Eagle* alluding to its location and content. It would facilitate the editing if articles could be sent as an email attachment or put on a cd-rom using Microsoft word; if this is not possible, then submittals of typed hard copy would be acceptable. Please submit any such articles to: Dr. Felix W. v. L-Holewinski, [felixwholewinski@msn.com] 55 South 6th Street, Hilbert, WI 54129, USA.

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NOBILITY AS A VALUE

By W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz



Ladies and Gentlemen:

Appearing before you today, I am deeply touched. Out of all the different feelings that I am experiencing at this moment, the strongest is certainly a feeling of gratitude to the Krakow Branch of the Confederation of Polish Nobility. Thank you! I am grateful for the invitation to participate in this symposium. To appear before such a noble assembly is probably one of the greatest distinctions that may be bestowed, and this for two reasons.

The greatness of this distinction has, first, its basis in the content itself, which is a lecture. To be invited to give a lecture is a responsibility. It places one who delivers it into a teacher's position, of someone who may serve others as an example. And to be asked to serve as an example is really a great distinction. So now you can see the apparent size of the award.

However, there is yet another reason that a lecture before the nobility is such a huge distinction. For the size of the award also depends on who grants it. And in this case this is given by the nobility.

Whenever I say the word "nobility," I do admit, I feel a certain solemnity. Nobility is a value. Its worth is derived not only from its history and glorious traditions, but has its source in its very idea. The idea behind the noble class is nobility. To be of noble birth indicates the origin of the lineage of nobility, while to be a noble person indicates the actual fidelity to one's nobility. One can, therefore, say:

Where nobility disappears in society, the noble class declines; and there, where it grows anew, the nobility arises again.

What is nobility, and the class that stands behind it?

The history of nobility is long and is, of course, not limited to the history of Polish nobility. In many countries and many cultures, social classes have emerged that we describe with terms such as the aristocracy, the nobility, the patricians and so forth. They were distinguished by their traditions, wealth and education. These nobles would unite in themselves two seemingly opposing characteristics. They were carriers and guardians of tradition, but also cosmopolitan and open to new ideas. The cosmopolitanism of the nobility, undoubtedly, was connected with their education and knowledge of the world. Wealth allowed them to travel and to study. Property and traditions had made them into a class. Property itself was not enough. When money prevailed in Europe, the nobility fell by the wayside. What it was all about was virtue.

The nobility has always been, in all cultures, a knightly class. Although not always possessing all the virtues, it was characterized by courage and honor. Virtue was often considered even more important than noble birth. When, for example, in the ancient Roman Republic, the old patricians lost their positions, they were replaced by a new senatorial aristocracy. The basis for belonging to it were property and virtue. The strict virtues of the Roman nobility included courage, love for the fatherland, tenacity, common sense, frugality and simplicity. This new noble class brought forward distinguished individuals such as Cato and Cicero.

Similarly, in Poland, the ranks of the nobility were always open to virtue and merit. Our nobility was not, as

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PNAF - CZARNEICKI DIVISION AFFILIATION



Eryk Jadaszewski, the leader of the Czarneicki Division has accepted an invitation to affiliate with the PNAF. Jadaszewski wrote in response to the invitation, "... we would be very interested in affiliateg with your association. I think it would be mutually beneficial to both our groups to see what we can do to help each other promote our Polish history and culture here in the U.S."

The Czarneicki Division portrays the cavalry, infantry, nobility and foes of the 17th century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth primarily during the time of 'Potop'. They strive for historical authenticity in their costumes, weaponry and training with period correct-replicas. The Division's goal is to bring the history of the 'Old Commonwealth' to the American public while having a great time in doing so.

I am somewhat familiar with your organization and I think the wealth of both our group's knowledge and devotion to our ancestral motherland will be a great asset in our goals of promoting Polish heritage. 🇵🇱



Eryk Jadaszewski

POLITICS OF THE POLISH NOBILITY *(continued from page 1)*

their relatives, friends and the Magnate class. Hence, the power of the Magnate faction grew throughout the reign of King Wladyslaw I until they had control of most state functions.⁴

In 1440, the balance of power between the gentry and Magnates was upset when civil war again broke out over the Polish and Hungarian Crown. Wladyslaw III was crowned King of Poland and King of Hungary. His right to the throne was challenged by Elisabeth of Hungary, widow of Albrecht Hapsburg, who promoted her own son, Wladyslaw the Posthumous, for the throne. Many Polish knights signed on as mercenaries to fight against Elisabeth's claim and were paid by Wladyslaw III in cash or promissory notes. These notes used the extensive royal lands as security. Hence, most of the royal estates passed into the hands of members of the knightly class who were rising into the ranks of the nobility.⁵ The primary winners of this transfer of wealth, however, were the ecclesiastical Magnates who, in providing their resources to the king, grew in wealth and power.⁶

The shift in power to ecclesiastical Magnates changed the power dynamics between the gentry and Magnates. The ecclesiastical Magnates threw their considerable resources on the side of the gentry who, in turn, supported the ecclesiastical Magnates in their conflicts with the king and the rest of the Magnate class.

The power of the Ecclesiastical Oligarchy abruptly came to an end when King Wladyslaw III was killed in the Battle of Varnia in 1444. Wladyslaw

was succeeded by his brother Kazimir Jagiellonian who quickly established a policy to curb the power of the Church and the Magnates and reassert royal prerogatives.⁷ To achieve this end Kazimir relied exclusively on the gentry to oppose the power and position of the Magnates.⁸ They dramatically increased their prerogatives and rights, and enacted the famous "Statutes of Nieszawa" which served as the bases of the so called "Golden Freedoms" which established the independence and dominance of the gentry class.⁹



In 1492, John I Obrachta was elected king and continued the policy of his predecessor by siding with the gentry. His support of their interests made King John I their idol and reinforced the royal-gentry alliance against the Magnates and church hierarchy.

Throughout the reign of John I the power and privileges of the gentry increased. The Diets in 1493 and 1496 at Piotokow not only expanded the Statutes of Nieszawa but also struck out at the power and privileges of the Magnates.¹⁰ The gentry-controlled Diet of 1496 reduced the power of the Magnates within the government by relegating the Upper Chamber of the Parliament to a position of secondary importance. This Upper House, called the Senate, was solidly controlled by the Magnates. It had been used by them to exert pressure on the king and promote their own interests within the Parliament.

Faced with this attack on their prerogatives and power, the Magnates launched their own campaign to improve their position within the government. In 1501, Alexander Jagiello was elected king. The Magnates in the Senate, under the leadership of Chancellor Krzeslaw Kurozwecki, made various demands before the election could be confirmed.¹¹ These demands, known as the "Mielnik Privileges," would have stripped the king of all



Wladyslaw III

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elsewhere, a thin layer of supremacy, but constituted a huge offshoot of the nation. It never closed itself into an inaccessible caste, but kept renewing itself. As a sign of recognition, knighthood would often be given to scholars and professors, or to officials of major cities. It was also granted to some more distinguished foreigners and was even given to the peasants of whole villages in reward for brave deeds during wars. Since a road to it was open, everyone who could tried to earn nobility.

What is then specific to the Polish nobility?

Nobility comes from liberty and contributes to building it up. Compared to neighboring countries, Poland has for many centuries been the seat of freedom. The members of the Polish nobility class were its guardians. They have produced the libertarian political system of the ancient republic, known as *Rzeczpospolita*. A Polish nobleman, who could be elected the king, differed certainly in amount of liberty he could enjoy from a German baron, blindly obedient to the Prussian state authority, or from a Russian aristocrat, subjected to the arbitrary will of the czar.

The sense of personal and political liberty that the nobility in Poland enjoyed has contributed to the development of the strong Polish national character. Although members of the nobility had different material status, some of them being extremely rich, others quite poor, the equality and brotherhood of all of them was emphasized. This resulted in some important societal values, especially in solidarity, and in some traditional characteristics of the Polish people, such as warmth, good humor, and hospitality. “Guest in the house, God in the house!”—this what the people of ancient Poland would say, opening widely their doors and hearts to the strangers.

The most striking expression of the liberty which was the foundation of the political system of ancient Poland was perhaps the *liberum veto*. The abuse of this principle, which allowed to stop a legislation by just one member of the parliament, has finally led to a parliamentary crisis and contributed to the

collapse of the state. However, even in the darkest days of occupation by the foreign powers, the Poles did not forget about liberty. They had never become a mass of enslaved people. The loss of political independence, economic exploitation, the attempts made at the destruction of their national culture did not deprive them of their spirit. It manifested itself in their patriotism and in continued attempts to regain freedom.

The education of the Polish nobility.

A sense of patriotism and responsibility for the fate of the country was emphasized in the Polish educational system. Efforts at educating a patriotic individual intensified in the face of danger caused by the growing powers of Russia and Prussia in the eighteenth century. A good example could be Czartoryski’s catechism, which was the foundation of education in the famous Warsaw Knights’ School. Generally speaking, education of the Polish nobility at that time consisted of:

- physical education, combined with military training;
- liberal arts education, based on general knowledge in sciences and the humanities;
- moral education—shaping certain virtues and moral qualities.

It stressed the noble sense of duty to the motherland, love of their native country and its freedoms, and willingness to defend it.

Over time, this moral patriotic education sought a broader philosophical base. For example, Hugo Kollataj, one of the intellectuals who shaped Poland’s Constitution of 3rd May 1791, thought that people of Poland could defend themselves against foreign aggressors not only through a military but also through moral superiority. His ideal was a person who “should love his homeland and promote its interests above all else.”

Let us reflect upon this for a moment.

A man full of virtue is a flower of the nation;

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executive powers, forced him to relinquish his hereditary rights in Lithuania, and even authorized the subjects of the Commonwealth to disobey the king if he, in their opinion, stepped outside the law or engaged in “tyrannical behavior.” They referred to the minor gentry with contempt, and forced the king to completely submit to the control of the Magnates. Faced with this pressure, the king submitted to their demands.

The gentry, however, refused to permit this power grab. In 1504, they achieved passage of a law called the *incompalibilita* which defined the power and duties of various Crown offices and stipulated which ones could not be held by the same person at the same time.¹² This statute sought to prevent individual Magnates from accumulating power by collecting offices. This was followed by the Radom Parliament of 1505, which annulled the statutes included in the “Mielnik Privileges.” This Parliament reconfirmed the secondary status of the Senate and adopted the famous clause, *nihil novi*, (nothing new). That clause stipulated that, “henceforth nothing new shall be decreed by us (the king) and our successors unless jointly agreed to by the Council and the Deputies.” This provision, while appearing to be reactionary in nature and seemingly aimed at royal power, was actually intended to prevent the Magnates from enacting new legislation to curtail the powers and prerogatives of both the gentry and the Crown.¹³

A significant shift in the balance of power in favor of the Magnates occurred during the reign of King Zygmunt I (1507-1548). During this period the members of the royal court were drawn mainly from among Magnate families who formed an informal social club referred to as the association of “brothers and sisters.” This court clique was imbued with humanist thought and became mainly concerned with the pursuit of worldly pleasures. It was led by two powerful members of the Magnate faction, Chancellor Christopher Szydlowiecki and Vice-Chancellor Peter Tomicki. The influence of these two men was opposed by the leader of the gentry, Jan Laski, Archbishop of Gniezno. The problem for the gentry, however, was that the new

king, Zygmunt I, was on the side of the Magnates. His support of their privileged position was so pervasive that he was called “the Senator King.”¹⁴ Because of the king’s support of the Magnates the gentry was confronted with the dilemma of having the king use whatever powers he possessed against them and in favor of the Magnates. Zygmunt I was a weak and passive monarch. The gentry was, therefore, placed in a situation of supporting the powers and prerogatives of the king while, at the same time attempting to restrain Zygmunt from actually using his powers to benefit the Magnates. The result was the gradual erosion of the power of both the gentry and the monarchy and, in turn the strengthening of the position of the Magnates.

One of the most powerful and influential allies of the gentry was Queen Bona who attempted to counter-act the pressure of the Magnates in court upon her husband and who also encouraged the gentry in Parliament to continue in their resistance to the pretensions of the Magnates. The Magnates were incensed by the opposition of the Queen and the anti-Magnate policies that she and the gentry promoted. As a consequence, they engaged in secret meetings and plots which aimed at ending the solidarity of the gentry opposition.¹⁵ They resorted to demagoguery to convince members of the lesser gentry to challenge royal authority on the pretext that Queen Bona and supporters threatened the “Golden Freedoms” of the gentry and were ultimately successful in splitting the gentry.¹⁶



By the time Zygmunt August was crowned king in 1556, the conflict between the gentry and Magnates had escalated. The Magnates, exploiting the animosity of Zygmunt August towards his mother, Queen Bona, garnered favor with the king by

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UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT VINDICATES HELON FAMILY

By George, Marquis de Helon, RCST, GCDA, PNA, JP (Qual.)

More than six decades after the dreaded Soviet NKVD Secret Police deported three generations of the Helon family at gunpoint from its estates and holdings in Radziechow County, Ukraine (then part of Poland), the country's Ministry of Internal Affairs (YMBC), Ternopil Regional Authority, recently decreed the noble dynasty 'vindicated' and victims of political repression, marking the official 'rehabilitation' of the most noble and ancient House of Helon, similarly as the Presidium of the Supreme Court of Russia did grant judicial rehabilitation to Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and his immediate family on Wednesday 1 October 2008.

Spokesperson for surviving members of the Helon family living in exile - and now domiciled in Australia among other countries - George, Marquis de Helon of Toowoomba in Queensland, said that:

"On Friday, 30 October 2009, I received from Ukrainian State Authorities documentation confirming that on Thursday, 24 September 2009 - by virtue of the Provisions of Article 3 of the Ukrainian Law 'On the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression' (passed on Wednesday 17 April 1991) - the Helon family (deported in the early hours of Saturday morning 10 February 1940 to the unforgiving wastelands of Siberia in the USSR) had been 'exonerated' by their 'rehabilitation' and the Certificate attesting that decision was issued by the Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (YMBC) of Ukraine on Friday 2 October 2009 in Ternopil."

The act of 'Judicial Rehabilitation' in the context of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and the post-Soviet States including the Ukraine, is the restoration of a person who was criminally prosecuted without due basis, to the state of exoneration; idyllically the restoration of one's former: status, titles, military rank, Degrees privileges, State and other awards, honorary titles, property, pensions, and other rights.

"In essence, 'rehabilitation' is the idea of going back and calling something different than what it was."

Both the modern Russian Federation and the Ukraine have enacted laws 'On the Rehabilitation of the Victims of Political Repressions', which provide the basis for the continued post-Stalinist rehabilitation of victims.

Three generations [7 members] of a family carted away in the early hours of one of the coldest nights on record. The men - bayonets thrust into their faces, powerless; the women - distraught with only 15 minutes to dress the panicked children; all removed at gunpoint with nothing but the clothes on their back and a small sack containing a meagre supply of food. No personal possessions, stripped of all dignity, criminals because we were Poles. Locked and squashed in a cattle truck with almost 60 poor souls to endure an arduous three week rail journey to hell, only to be dumped in the wastelands of Siberia. A family that lost everything: 3 of its own from starvation and sickness; its country and home; the comfort of family; all property, assets and personal possessions seized, confiscated or destroyed. Forced to labor felling trees in the harshest of unbearable and trying conditions where a blade of grass was fought over like it was a nugget of gold. Death, separation - exile!

"Whilst members of my family were deported, suffered, and died as a result of what happened, receiving this documentation, even after so many decades, is both acknowledgment and proof that the unrecorded events of 1940 really happened to us Poles, whether or not they are written about in traditional history books which largely ignore the suffering, plight, and fate of those 2.636 million Poles deported from Poland to the Soviet Union between 1941-1942; particularly the 2.521 million persons unaccounted for. With acknowledgement comes recognition, understanding, remembrance, forgiveness and healing." 🌹

POLITICS OF THE POLISH NOBILITY *(continued from page 7)*

supporting him in disputes with his mother.¹⁷ The Queen and the gentry vigorously opposed the king's marriage to Elisabeth Hapsburg, but the Magnates who supported the marriage were victorious.¹⁸ When Elisabeth died in 1545, the Magnates supported the king's marriage to Barbara Radziwill. This marriage was aimed at cementing the union between the royal house and one of the most powerful Magnate families in Lithuania. This union, however, was opposed by the gentry. Again they were outmanoeuvred and the marriage took place, further strengthening the position of the Magnates.

The gentry had hoped that the king would exhibit forceful leadership to reform the political system and restore order in a political climate they viewed as being lax, reckless and frivolous. The king, however, had fallen completely under the influence of the Magnate families. He viewed Parliament as "inferior to the Crown Councils which were dominated by Magnates."¹⁹

King Zygmunt August died in 1572 ending the Jagiellonian dynasty. At his death, his courtiers stripped his body, leaving him naked on this own death bed, a sad commentary on how low respect for the monarchy had declined.

Future monarchs through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries attempted to reestablish royal powers and resurrect the prestige of the monarchy but all such attempts met the unified opposition of both the gentry and Magnate classes. In the past the gentry viewed the monarch as a potential ally against the pretensions of the Magnates, but by the end of the sixteenth century, large elements of the gentry had been co-opted by the Magnates who used them in a united front against the king.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the struggle for power between the gentry and Magnates was over. The economic and political position of the gentry had collapsed and the Magnates emerged dominant. Their economic power and political influence in the Commonwealth was unchallenged. The cause of the decline of the position of the

gentry and the victory of the Magnates can be attributed to the occurrence of several events and developments in the mid-seventeenth century which, coming together at the same time, destroyed the economic status of the gentry. First, the Chmielnicki Cossack Revolt from 1648 to 1653, devastated the Commonwealth's eastern territories and while this revolt adversely affected all nobles, its negative impact on the gentry was the most severe and longest lasting.²⁰ Second, peasants, crushed by manorial taxes and abuse, rose in revolt in 1651 and 1672. These revolts disrupted agricultural production and had a particularly adverse impact on the gentry.²¹ Finally the prosperous grain trade, which provided the nobility with much of their wealth, collapsed during the last half of the seventeenth century. The deteriorating economic situation which resulted from these events

was especially devastating to the petty and middle gentry. They lacked the financial resources to sustain their losses and were forced to liquidate their properties to neighboring magnate estates. The result was a rapid expansion of the massive latifundias of the Magnates and a dramatic expansion of their political power.²² As their



Zygmunt August

power increased their agents broke up sessions of the Sejm, they gained control of local diets and royal tribunals and bribed courts to obtain favorable policies and decisions. Their victory over the gentry was complete and they held on to their privileged position in the Commonwealth right up to and after the Partitions.

Volumes have been written about the failures of the Polish Commonwealth and why it eventually met its end through its partition by its more power-

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NOBILITY AS A VALUE *(continued from page 6)*

there is probably no greater loss when he dies in his youth In wars and uprisings countless Polish noblemen, filled with love for their country, were killed. Although they were taught patriotism, they were rarely taught realism. They would often interpret honor as fighting when there was no real chance for success.

From the nobility of the past to that of today.

What was lacking in the former Polish schools, and what I think is still missing in Poland today, are lessons of true political realism. Political realism is not only the theory and practice. It is also a set of some positive personal characteristics. They include: the ability to predict the future effects of actions, knowledge of their costs forcing a realistic assessment of the situation, and above all, a good common sense.

Today's nobility, richer for the experience of past generations, must understand that the nobility itself is a value, and as such it is worthy of defense. Without this value—without nobility—societies undergo a process of moral degradation and the state cannot be well-governed.

The Solidarity of August 1980, whose persistent struggle against communism had led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the great effort and solidarity of those generations that contributed to the restoration of Poland's independence in 1918 — this is nobility.

There is no freedom without solidarity;
There is no solidarity without nobility!

A nation that loses its nobility becomes divided and turns into a passive, lifeless crowd, that can be easily manipulated and enslaved.

Therefore:

There is today in Poland a place for nobility—the nobility which is a living value. Today, with there being so much materialism, corruption and incapacity, we need:

- nobility—but without the arrogance;
- idealism—but without the naiveté;

- virtue—but without weakness;
- realism—but without cynicism;
- patriotism—but without chauvinism.

There is also a need for good taste, refined culture, politeness and good manners ... In short, we need the nobility as an elite.

Just as professor Czeslaw Znamierowski once wrote, "In every society there must be an elite, and each society, in fact, produces it naturally."

The nobility is both a value and an elite. An elite is a distinguished group of people.

When the distinction is based on birth or genealogy we see an elite of birth; when it is based on money, there arises a financial or business elite; when it is based on some noble human qualities, there is an elite of honor and merit. Among the underlying characteristic of all elites are always some values that constitute the criteria for selecting their members. A group becomes an elite group due to the values it represents.

So, what should be the value by which an elite is distinguished? Let us say this clearly:

- No society can be happy without nobility.

Without virtue, without nobility, there emerges a group selfishness that is the basis of a parasitic elite. Based on anti-values, such an elite contradicts its own nature.

Hence:

Patriotic, but also cosmopolitan; steeped in tradition, but also modern; entrepreneurial, but noble; open, not closed—this is the elite that we today need!

Based on birth, or new - Poland needs the living nobility, proud of its origin, and of the traditions and the values it represents.

To conclude, I have dedicated this lecture to history, genealogy, and nobility, and designed it for

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ful neighbors. What is frequently overlooked or minimized is the significance of the internal conflicts within the noble class. The reality of history is that not only was brotherhood and equality within the szlachta class a myth but conflict between the gentry and Magnates was a primary characteristic of the szlachta class throughout most of Poland's history. This intra-class conflict contributed to the fatal weakening of the monarchy, made it difficult for Poland and the Commonwealth to face foreign threats and ultimately was an important factor in the eventual destruction of the Commonwealth. ❀

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NOBILITY AS A VALUE *(continued from page 10)*

the young people. So what should I say to the youth?

Genealogy and history are important things, but the most important is the living nobility!

To revive the nobility in Poland, to give it youth, to increase its ranks is a great task indeed because nobility is a value. ❀

W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz, Professor at the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy of the Anglo-American University of Prague. This is an English translation of an address that he have presented at a meeting of the Confederation of the Polish Nobility in Krakow.

"PAN ZAGLOBA" FOUND ALIVE AND WELL IN SIERPC

By Richard P. Poremski

Who could have possibly imagined that while visiting the Museum of the Mazovian Countryside on July 30, 2008, we would encounter the very personification of one of Nobel Laureate Henryk Sienkiewicz's most beloved, entertaining, shrewd and patriotic fictional characters – Pan Jan Onufry Zagloba, who appears to the delight of the reader in the seventeenth century Polish epics, *With Fire and Sword*, *The Deluge*, and other celebrated books by the author.



After touring the many authentic and unique buildings in this amazing Mazovian skansen, located 75 miles northwest of Warsaw, our foursome (three Polish friends and I) retreated from the hot

summer sun to the eighteenth century log-constructed *karczma* (inn/tavern), well protected by its heavily thatched roof, for necessary refreshments.

We were immediately welcomed by the affable proprietor, Tomasz Stelmanski (dubbed 'Pan Zagloba'). Excellent ice cold Kasztelan beer was served up forthwith, followed by much engaging conversation and many interesting anecdotes narrated by host Stelmanski, even as more invited guests arrived to our joined wood-hewn tables set outside in the breezy shade of the tall oak trees. 🌿



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