

President's Report, 2012-2013: Draft

This has been a year of considerable change for the Institute and a number of auguries for a bright future. A number of matters should draw our attention.

The Polish Review

After the resignation of the editor, James Pula and Richard Hunter voluntarily served as interim editors of the *Review*. A search committee was appointed consisting of both these gentlemen with me as well. After considerable efforts, the search concluded successfully when the Board appointed Timothy Kearney of Misericordia University as the new editor. Neal Pease generously agreed to act as Associate Editor. Hence, the unsteadiness at the *Review* has been successfully addressed.

The Institute undertook discussions with the Polish Academy of Learning (PAU) over future collaboration with the *Polish Review*. These negotiations were conducted, for our side, by Mr. Kearney, the editor, and Executive Director Leven. Both will obviously discuss this issue at greater length in their separate remarks.

Also concerning TPR, the Institute signed a contract with the University of Illinois Press to act as publisher and distributor of the journal. There were initially some confusion over the new arrangements, but the situation will be soon resolved. I have scheduled a meeting between representatives of the University of Illinois Press and members of the Board for late September, 2013 to discuss our future relationship. I placed the matter of relations with the Press in the hands of the editor, Mr. Kearney. I should like to note, in passing, that since our association with the Press began, the number of institutional members in the *Review* has increased by 27% - from 176-240.

Poland House

The Polish government directed overtures to the Institute, and other Polish institutions in the United States, to cooperate in the creation of a shared center someplace in New York City, the project to be funded by Warsaw. The proposal was made by [Undersecretary of State Janusz Cisek](#) and the former [Consul General in New York Krzysztof Kasprzyk](#). The Institute conducted an intensive investigation of many issues surrounding this possibility, including questions of financing, cooperation with fellow organizations, and relations with the Polish government. Unfortunately, this fascinating project proved abortive and discussions with the Polish government ceased rather abruptly. The project, referred to as the creating of a "Poland House" has not resurfaced.

The PIASA Website

There have been continuing discussions of shortcomings with the current website, including, most significant, the basic text. Unfortunately substantial revision of the site is prohibitively costly, and thus will require us to await sufficient funds to undertake major revisions.

Fundraising Plans

Acting on the suggestion of Mr. Kearney, the Executive Committee had a series of exchanges with Robert Williams, a fundraising specialist associated with Misericordia University. These meetings consisted of two conference calls and an in-person meeting. These meetings created the circumstances for a beneficial discussion of financial and organizational issues affecting the Institute. Mr. Williams' contributions to the discussion were insightful - including perhaps centrally – the need for further assistance to the Executive Director.

Nominations and Elections Committee

I appointed a nominations' committee of Neal Pease (chair), Hanna Kelker, and Grazyna Kozaczka to serve as a Nominations Committee. A list of candidates was duly assembled and a ballot was circulated. The results will be announced at the banquet on Saturday.

Board Issues

A new position on the Board was opened due to the resignation of Zbigniew Darzynkiewicz whose term had two remaining years. Mr. Darzynkiewicz shall be missed.

The 2013 Washington Annual Meeting of the Institute

Paul Knoll volunteered to chair the 2013 conference, a very generous offer which involves a considerable commitment of time and energy. At this year's meeting the Institute will bestow, for the first time in several years, the Casimir Funk Award in the Natural Sciences to Dr. Maria Siemionow. Dr. Siemionow, a distinguished physician and scientist, will also serve as the Keynote speaker at the annual banquet associated with the Meeting. She will be the first speaker in many years, and perhaps the first person ever, representing the sciences to serve as the keynote speaker.

Susanne Lotarski has dedicated Herculean efforts regarding local arrangement for the Washington meeting. This matter is best discussed by the Conference Chair, Mr. Knoll.

2014 PIASA World Congress

Plans for a World Congress in Poland developed favorably in the past several months. After correspondence with Robert Kostro, Director of the Museum of Polish History in Warsaw – whose organization agreed to sponsor a Congress in Warsaw - I met with the Vice Rector of the University of Warsaw and three professors of History in March. On the basis of these discussions, and a number of earlier and subsequent efforts, the following issues have been determined:

1. PIASA will hold its first World Congress in many years in Warsaw on June 20, 21, and 22 (Friday-Sunday). This marks only the second time the Institute has held its conference in Poland, and, indeed, is the first “congress” in many years. 2014 marks the anniversary of a number of punctuations marks in Polish history. It is the 75th anniversary of the invasion of Poland and the outbreak of the Second World War; it is the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Rising of 1944; it is the 25th anniversary of the Fall of Communism in 1989 among several others. The title of the Congress will be “Crossing Borders” and this theme, with its variegated meaning, will serve as the point of reference for the separate sessions. The Plenary session will be devoted to “Jan Karski,” the centenary of whose birth we mark in 2014. The Congress will take place on the campus of the University of Warsaw, with the historic main library acting as Conference headquarters. A preliminary draft of the program is to be completed by the end of June, 2013. The final program must be completed by October. The University will aid in providing Polish participants for the Congress. The day before the formal; inauguration of the Congress, on Thursday the 19th, there will be informal gatherings at the newly opened Museum of Polish Jewry and the Museum of the Warsaw Rising. All aspects of the Humanities will be represented as well as attention to science and technology and economics and business.
2. The University will assume the function of honorary co-Sponsor of the Congress. Additional sponsors are: the Kosciuszko Foundation, the Polish American Historical Association, the aforementioned Museum of Polish History and others to be named later. The University has promised financial aid to the Congress and to cooperate with the Institute to arranged funding from other sources.
3. The conference will consist of a series of two-hour sessions. Each session will consist of four speakers (a few have only three), a chair and a discussant. The strongest efforts have been made to include at least one Polish scholar in every panel.
4. Only an initial call for papers was issued, as well as specifically directed invitations to selected scholars. The results have been excellent and there is little doubt that there will be a plethora of sessions. Initial plans call for 18 separate sessions, two at any one time. However, the response for invitations to participate has been so vigorous that the possibility is being considered of “tripling” the sessions, with three panes in each time slot. This is a difficult issue and the advice of the Institute membership is sincerely sought.
5. Currently, there are, in various states of organization, twelve panels. Others are in the works. Five potential sessions have been submitted in the ten days.

The Institute is still troubled by financial difficulties and avidly seeks new members. I urge you to consider supporting the Institute with your contributions. It is my intention that the Warsaw Congress, almost exactly one year from today, will see the emergence of a revitalized and dynamic Institute. Steps in this direction have already been taken. I should like to thank all the members of the Board whose enterprise and dedication have allowed the Institute to thrive, and who will be the nucleus for its future success. There is no better place for this realization than in Poland's capital.