



University of Rochester Students accepted to Jagiellonian University's MA program

By Kathleen Parthé



Captioning 1

This year, three University of Rochester Seniors have been accepted into the MA program at Jagiellonian University's Centre for European Studies. The Centre offers two different degrees. The MA in Central & Eastern European Studies provides graduate students with interdisciplinary knowledge, expertise and experience in CEE affairs. The MA in European Studies is an EU-focused post-graduate course. This degree allows the student to concentrate their studies on the key issues facing the European Union, while developing a Central European perspective on the European integration process.

Two of the MA candidates, Melinda Fountain and Marc Weinstein, have received Certificates through the Skalny Center. Melinda and the third candidate, Jenn Hoberer, both are recipients of the Skalny Summer Study Abroad Scholarship for the six week summer study program at JU for this year, which

will prepare them for their upcoming endeavor. Jenn also won a prestigious award from the Phi Beta Kappa honor society to cover full tuition expenses for her MA program in JU.

All three students plan to apply the MA degree to further study in the area of Polish and Central European Studies. Marc's interest in the region can be found in the 2001-2002 Winter issue of the Skalny Center newsletter, while Melinda plans to apply the JU degree toward an international law degree with a focus on Central Europe. Jenn plans to study Christianity, Christian-Jewish relations, and the Holocaust's impact on Poland and other Eastern European countries. She will also use her opportunities at JU to travel to holy sights all over Eastern Europe and will apply the JU degree toward her Ph.D. path. The Skalny Center congratulates all three students on their success.



Do widzenia !

By Kathleen Parthé

This has been quite a year from the hectic few weeks before the grand opening of the new offices and panel discussion on Emerging Democracies October 12, to June 2002 as Mara and I prepare to hand over the running of the Skalny Center to Director Ewa Hauser and our new administrative assistant, Cynthia Ellsmore.

We continued the traditional Skalny Lecture and Artist Series with four luncheon talks (Svetozar Stojanovic, Grzegorz Kolodko, Wieslaw Krajka, and Wojtek Marchwica), and two evening lectures followed by receptions (Adam Urbanski, and M. B. Biskupski). And, with the Rochester Polish Heritage Society, we co-sponsored two musical events, the Penderecki String Quartet and the Polish Youth Concert, and the annual Polish Film Festival with a reception for visiting director Filip Bajon. The name "Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies" has come to mean a high-quality event bringing together University and community in a lively, interesting, and gracious atmosphere.

The annual competition for Skalny Scholarships for summer study at Jagiellonian University's School of Polish Language and Culture resulted in four winners who will have left for Poland by the time you receive this newsletter. What is new and exciting is that two of them, seniors Mindy Fountain and Jenn Hoberer, will stay on for a year-long Master's Program in European Studies at JU, and be joined by a third UR graduate, Mark Weinstein (whose essay on a semester in the Czech Republic was published in the last newsletter). The Skalny scholarship is for summer study, but in these two cases its effect is magnified when it also makes it possible for our students to prepare for graduate study in Poland.

Greg Kolodko offered two Political Science courses in the fall, Wieslaw Krajka taught a course on Conrad for the English Department, and Krzysztof Polakowski taught Polish language both semesters. There were also a number of other courses in the College that include material on Poland and Central Europe and have benefited from Skalny grants in the past.

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Portrait Artist Stanley Gordon Receives Recognition



Captioning 2

On March 17, 2002, the Polish Heritage Society of Rochester held a reception in honor of Stanley Gordon in the Roslyn Cominsky promenade following the performance of the Penderecki String Quartet at the Eastman School of Music, which was sponsored by the Skalny Center at the University of Rochester. During the reception, Virginia Kobylarz presented Gordon with a Proclamation from the City Council. The Proclamation was signed by the City Council President Lois J. Giess, Robert J. Stevenson and Benjamin L. Douglas, and commended Gordon for his "contributions to the world of art and the culture of our city." Gordon also received a plaque from the Polish Heritage Society of Rochester, which was presented by Dr. Frederic Skalny, President of PHSR.



Captioning 3

Stanley Gordon is of Polish heritage and is an internationally known portrait painter. His portraits of several US presidents have attracted high visibility, including a portrait of Jimmy Carter which hangs in former President Carter's Atlanta, Ga. Library, and President George H.W. Bush's portrait which was officially unveiled in the White House in 1991. Locally, Gordon has painted Howard Hanson, RIT President Albert Simone, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, Frederick Douglass, Gordon Howe, Lucien Morin, James Gleason, Paul Miller and Edwin Strassenburgh, while several of Gordon's portraits hang in St. Stanislaus Church, Rochester Institute of Technology, Eastman School of Music and University of Rochester.



Captioning 4



Captioning 5

Penderecki Quartet in Rochester



Captioning 6

Whoever missed this great musical event in March 2002 lost a rare opportunity to listen to the Penderecki quartet, which has become one of the most celebrated chamber ensembles in the music world. Penderecki Quartet began in Poland in 1968 by the group of talented music students, who won a prize founded by the well-known Polish composer and philanthropist, Krzysztof Penderecki. With his support, influence, and encouragement these young musicians formed an ensemble under his name. They have performed throughout the world since 1970. The ensemble has collaborated with many eminent groups such as: The Borden Trio, the Fine Arts Quartet as well as with artists like: Janna Fialkowska, James Campbell, Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, Randolph Peters and many others.

Most of the original members and founders of the Penderecki Quartet left the ensemble over the years and were replaced by other fine musicians. At present there is only one native Polish violinist, Jerzy Kaplanek, who spoke with me at length about the quartet's history. Currently Jerzy Kaplanek performs with Jeremy Bell (violin), Christine Vlajk (viola) and Paul Pulford (cello). All of them have settled in Canada. In addition to their frequent international performances and recordings they are highly involved in music instruction and education.

They just entered their tenth year as Quartet-in Residence at Wilfried Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. Under the quartet's direction, the string program has become one of Canada's most prestigious. The Quartet offers chamber music and studio instruction to students from all over the world. Their most



Captioning 7



Captioning 8Captioning 1

prominent recordings include Brahms Piano Quintet with pianist Lev Natochenny and authoritative interpretation of Penderecki's String Quartet. Last spring the ensemble recorded six Bartok quartets under the auspices of the Napa Valley Chamber Music Society.

On March 17th the Quartet played in Eastman School of Music Kilbourn Hall works by Haydn, Beethoven and Szymanowski; all of them ended with standing ovation. As

an encore they presented the audience with an interesting, but difficult-to-absorb composition of their patron - Krzysztof Penderecki. After the concert, the quartet attended the post-performance reception in honor of Stanley Gordon.

Rochester's performance was possible thanks to a generous grant from the Louis Skalny Foundation.

Joseph Conrad's Polishness



Wieslaw Krajka is a professor of English at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Lublin Poland and University of Wrocław Poland. He was a Kosciuszko Foundation Senior Teaching Fellow at the English Department in the University of Rochester. This is a summary of the talk he gave for the luncheon lecture series, "Joseph Conrad's Polishness: A Curse or a Blessing," on Wednesday, February 6th.

Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) was one of the greatest writers in the history of English and world literature. Having spent his childhood and early youth in Poland, he emigrated in 1874 (at the age of seventeen) to Marseilles, France. The four years which he spent there (1874-78) were a period of his initiation into seaman-ship, politics and love. Between 1878 and 1894 he served in the British Merchant Marine: as a regular seaman, a first mate and a captain. In 1894-96 he terminated his sea career, married, settled in Kent, England and started his writing career. He created many literary masterpieces, includ-

ing Lord Jim, "Heart of Darkness," Nostromo, The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes. However, it was only with the publication of Chance in America in 1914 that he gained financial success and became very popular in this country. He died in 1924 in Canterbury.

Many of Conrad students, readers and admirers are surprised to learn that he was Polish. His Polishness is one of the most intriguing issues considered by literary critics. What was its actual impact upon the author's personality and writings? Was Polishness a blessing or a curse for him?

After his emigration from Poland in 1874, Conrad avoided discussing Polish issues. He lost his hopes for a possibility of Poland's regaining her independent statehood. He changed his view after his visit to Poland in 1914, when old memories revived, and as a result of the political-military developments in the course of World War I. He became much more hopeful about Poland's future and much less critical about Western aggressive imperialism. He came to perceive a moral backbone in the politics of Western powers during World War I.¹

During this time he wrote his two important political essays - "A Note on the Polish Problem" (1916) and "The Crime of Partition" (December 1918-1919) - in which, as well as in his earlier essay "Autocracy and War" (1905),² he strongly pledged for the Polish cause, demanding restoration of Poland's independent statehood in the interest of both Poland



and the West. He claimed the partitions of Poland "were a mistake, an aberration, even a crime of history.... [and] regard[ed] a moral foundation, content and significance as a criterion for evaluating all political actions of individuals, communities and states. From this perspective, he commend[ed] Western states and Poland but condemn[ed] Germany and Russia.... emphasize[ed] the essential moral, mental and spiritual resemblances and kinship of Poland to the West, consisting in fundamental moral values of ideology and politics."³ He interpreted the partitions of Poland in Messianic terms and argued that they were "an aberration of history, a triumph of immoral politics over moral ones.... [and that] this erroneous course of history should be and will be rectified, as moral politics always prevails in the long run."⁴

Conrad's penetrating political insights largely resulted from his Polish legacy, from the influence of his father, Apollo Korzeniowski, a Messianist and a romantic political thinker, a leader of Polish national-patriotic underground movement in 1861-62. The boy Jozef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski must have absorbed the patriotic-conspiratorial ideology of his parents and their fellow-conspirators as well as the traumatic experiences of his parents' exile to Vologda and Chernikhov. But it was also his maternal uncle's realistic-pragmatic mindset (opposite to that of his father's) which was later strongly imprinted upon the future writer.

Conrad's Polish legacy was moribund in other ways, too. Some biographers held that his emigration to Marseilles France resulted from the death of his parents and other familial tragedies as well as the unbearable atmosphere of tragedy prevailing in Krakow during his stay there and caused by the failed insurrections for Polish national independence. His Polish origin was largely responsible for developing his extremely pessimistic and catastrophic vision of the humanity and the world (as absurd, deprived of any ethical aim and hostile

to people) which were strongly expressed in his letters or "Heart of Darkness." Such ideological position led him to viewing all human actions as either corrupt and unethical, or impractical and quixotic. All his life this writer struggled with his sense of guilt and his complex about betraying Poland. "Thus, a syndrome of catastrophic feelings and attitudes constituted Polish nightmarish heritage in Conrad's personality and works: an acute sense of isolation, dramatic internal conflicts, split personality, and permanent lack of distinct identity."⁵

However, paradoxically, Joseph Conrad's Polish legacy was both moribund and beneficial as these sufferings and catastrophic feelings largely created the complex and subtle psychology of many characters in his literary works. They also led to interesting presentation of intricate ethical and philosophical issues - another mark of Conrad's great literary art. The writer's Polish experiences made him particularly sensitive to pathologies and aberrations of poli-

Notes

For more, please read: Wieslaw Krajka: "The Past Moribund Legacy of Polishness? The Case of Joseph Conrad," in *East-Central European Traumas and a Millennial Condition*, eds. Zbigniew Bialas, Wieslaw Krajka (Boulder - Lublin - New York: East European Monographs - Maria Curie-Sklodowska University - Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 19-40.

1. See Eloise Knapp Hay: "Reconstructing 'East' and 'West' in Conrad's Eyes," in *Contexts for Conrad*, eds. Keith Carabine, Owen Knowles, Wieslaw Krajka (Boulder - Lublin - New York: East European Monographs - Maria Curie-Sklodowska University - Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 21-40.

2. All these essays are included in *Joseph Conrad, Notes on Life and Letters*, vol. 18 in *The Works of Joseph Conrad*. The Uniform Edition, vols. 1-22 (London, Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1923-28).

3. Wieslaw Krajka, op. cit., p. 22-23.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

tics (mainly autocracy, coup d'etat, revolution, anarchism, and terrorism) and his presentation of these issues was particularly insightful and prophetic about what has happened during his life time and after his death. The romantic-realistic outlook of many Conradian characters also originated in the writer's Polish heritage.

"Thus, Joseph Conrad was indirectly a product of Polish history, of the aberration of partitions of Poland. His Polish heritage consisted in suffering, and in depressing insights and reflections; it was morbid, gloomy and nightmarish. Yet, paradoxically, this historical and cultural condition of pathology turned to be beneficial, as it lay at the basis of all major aspects of greatness of Conrad's artistic and ideological creations."⁶



By Kathleen Parthé

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This year two faculty members, Professors Celia Applegate and Lynn Gordon, received course development funds for a new course they will co-teach called "Refugees, Emigrants, and Displaced Persons: Eastern Europe and the United States, 1776-2001."

The pioneering efforts of Dean William Scott Green and Professor Ewa Hauser have meant that the generosity of the Skalny and Klimasewski families has the maximum impact. The new office suite, and increased student interest in pursuing graduate study at JU are just two developments that show that the Skalny Center is poised to grow in its interest and value to students and faculty, and in what it offers the wider Rochester community. The support that Deans Green and LeBlanc have given my own Russian Studies Program made me more than happy to take on the duties of Acting Director of the Skalny Center when Ewa received a Fulbright to spend the year in Warsaw. Through Ewa's activities in Warsaw and Krakow, the University of Rochester connection to Poland will gain even greater publicity and respect.

After ending my year as Acting Director, I will be exploring three of Poland's closest neighbors - Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania - in July. I look forward to seeing you all at Skalny Events during the coming year. Sto lat!



By Sara Korol
sophomore
U of R

During the brief three weeks I spent at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow this summer I purposefully did not wear a watch, nor did I pay much heed to time in general. I woke up every morning feeling so completely blessed to be there that I literally wanted time to come to a complete halt. And yet, in spite of my efforts to slow its march, time flew and here I sit reminiscing.

In deciding where to begin in relating my tale of 'girl fascinated with romantic foreign metropolis,' I realized that my stay could be neatly divided into 3 aspects, which were each, in their own way, rewarding and memorable. My academic endeavors constituted the central and by far most integral aspect of my life in Krakow. After all, was I not there to learn the language? First and foremost I wanted to regain the command I once had on Polish while I was a foreign exchange student to Poland in high school. To hear myself speak again in Polish this summer- as much as I stumbled- was surprising to say the least. What was even more astonishing, was that after those 3 short weeks of intensive language training, I actually surpassed my speaking ability from 2 years before, proving what I had suspected all along: to properly acquire a foreign language, it is not sufficient to learn just from books and worksheets. Similarly, it is not possible to fully comprehend a second language by passively being exposed. I was in need of both formal training in Polish grammar and syntax, as well as the surroundings in which I could properly develop my practical use of the language. I enjoyed both approaches... to the extent that I was placed in a class in which all of my foreign-born colleagues had the *luxury* of growing up with a Polish-speaking parent. When they had 10-minute detailed monologues on their views concerning politics, religion, and the like, I consoled myself with the knowledge that I could read and write far better than they could. My day began with 5 hours in a classroom among 12 amazing people from all walks of life and from all four corners of the globe who were on my level or above in speaking- ability. I would be lying to say we spoke to each other exclusively in Polish since most of us either knew English as a first language or a solid second. However, we shared the desire to learn- why else would we be there? Our conversations were constructed with an amusing mix of Polish and some English terms used intermittently. It was a constant source of laughter for us when someone would be speaking in Polish and would make a direct trans-

For The Happy, Time Doesn't Count

Captioning 10

lation from English or German, which was obviously wrong but at the same time, which we all perfectly understood.

It is exhilarating to be on one's own at such a young age and in a strange place. Despite having been to Poland before, Krakow's mystique is unparalleled. I suppose not many would understand the adventure of riding the tram (trolley car) to and from the Old Town so I will concentrate on a more traditional perception of "adventure." Try imagining what it would be like to climb down 400 ft under the surface of the earth into a salt mine that has been around longer than your country. This was one of the specific excursions organized by the Summer School to the Wieliczka salt mines. Forever embedded in my memory is the huge chapel we entered which had a ceiling at least 4 stories high and unbelievably beautiful bas-relief on the walls. After hearing the incredible sounds reverberating from the group ahead of us that spontaneously broke out into song, I exclaimed to the tour guide that this was where I would get married someday. Amazingly enough, she took the question seriously and responded that it would only cost 300 USD. In retrospect, even though the price is reasonable, I don't know how much my wedding party would appreciate having to wear winter clothes to the ceremony. The mine was quite cold. Other culture-building experiences that left their mark in my mind include climbing a peak in the Polish Tatra Mountains, rafting down the Dunajec River with Poland on my immediate right and Slovakia on my left, sitting in Zakopane eating some goat cheese, and impulsively buying a sheep skin from the locals.

At the risk of sounding callous, I will mention that we also were privileged enough to be taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau, the former site of the infamous Nazi death camps. No one who visits this museum would contend that the experience was a pleasant one, nor one that should be shared

around the campfire so-to-speak. The day merits mentioning because it was then that I truly realized to what extent I have been blessed in my life. Such atrocities are beyond my full comprehension but not beyond my compassion.

The final significant part of my stay in Poland directly surrounds my past as a foreign exchange student. I was not only able to see my best friends from high school with whom I enjoy a bond unique from many of my American friendships, but I was reunited with 2 of my former host-mothers. These people enveloped and embodied my existence while I lived in the city of Olsztyn (a 6 hour drive north of Krakow) so one can imagine my elation upon seeing them again.

One thing is for sure: whether in the classroom, or on a mountain trail, or sitting in an outdoor café leisurely conversing in Polish with my friends and "family," the time was always well spent. One of my teachers was forever trying to expose my class to Polish idioms and expressions day in and day out. My personal favorite: *For the happy, time doesn't count*. She would smugly tell this to whoever was caught checking his or her watch during the lesson. The truth in this statement reaches deeper than its American counterpart: *time flies when you're having fun*. For when I'm only having fun, and the fun abruptly ends, I regret having let time pass. On the other hand, when I'm drawing fulfillment from every experience; when I'm excited about every activity I'm involved in, everyone I'm in contact with, and everything I experience- absorbing the bad along with the good for the sake of open-mindedness, then time becomes inconsequential. Of course I would have liked to prolong my enrollment at the summer school. However, the benefit gained from such a truly rewarding and extraordinary opportunity that added color to my life and depth to my perception of it, by far compensates for what it may have lacked in length.



By Emily Calvett
Summer School
JU, 2001

I was very fortunate to visit Krakow, Poland this summer for a three-week intensive course in the Polish language. This was made possible by the grant from the Skalny Center. By studying Polish, I learned the intricacies and complex nature of the language, as well as the beauty of the words. I found that the language is very advanced, using many sounds, cases, tenses and genders. My teachers spoke almost exclusively in Polish during class, so we had to figure out the meanings of phrases from context, as well as search our limited vocabularies for the words to answer questions. This experience, along with that of fending for myself in the real-world, dynamic city of Krakow, forced me to listen carefully and to take risks in order to accomplish tasks. The daily challenge gave me a new way of using my mind in real time.

In addition to half-day classes in Polish grammar and conversation, I was able to attend a series of classes on Polish film, as well as a series entitled "Introduction to Poland." These courses also helped me to develop a deep appreciation of Polish culture. I grew to find the history to be even more amazing than I had imagined. A people who have preserved a complex language, a strong national religion, a strong cultural tradition, and most of all, a national identity, even though they have not been free for most of their recent history, is more than impressive. It reflects a hope and pride passed down through generations.

This was tangible when I met Polish people and asked them questions about their lives and country. They were always willing to help me with my Polish, in a way that showed how they loved and respected their language. Many times eyes would light up and questions would be asked immediately: How long can you stay? When will you come back? Where do you learn Polish? They also spoke with excitement about the city of Krakow as they told me where I should go, and what I should see. Even in some cases where the conversation took place only in my limited Polish, I still felt that people were reaching out to me and making a connection. People always gave me a chance to speak Polish to them, even though it took extra time. I have never seen people so happy to see that a foreigner had come to learn their language.

By walking the streets of Krakow, I could see the deep impacts made by the Catholic Church, World War II, communism, and

capitalism. It was apparent from the architecture; it was not uncommon to see a building with no windows or paint on the upper floors, but with a modern internet cafe on the ground floor. Communist relics such as statues of workers and rows of public housing were everywhere. On the other hand, the beautiful city center brings one back to much earlier times. A closer look showed me that the Polish people are ready to change with the times; most of the old, beautiful buildings contained modern shops and restaurants. A tour of the churches in town was another feast for the eyes. The splendor inside, as well as the huge numbers of people attending and looking reverent, were reminders that the Polish people have held their religion in highest regard for centuries as something which has saved them, and which they can call their own.

The summer school program also provided many excursions for tourism and cultural enrichment. Our outings ranged from delightful to informative to deeply stirring and unforgettable. The trip that remains the most important to me was the one to Oswiecim, or Auschwitz. It would be futile to try to describe the feelings I had when I visited that haunted place. But I would say that after three hours of no speaking and no smiling with any of my new-found friends in the program, I think I began to understand something of the European experience. Are behaviors different because of what they've gone through? I realized that as an American, I have a very naïve view of war and of the Holocaust, even though we have learned about it so many times in school. I couldn't comprehend what I saw. I had so many more questions, and was drawn back to the little, forsaken site when I had a my last, free day in Poland. I returned by myself on a train through the countryside. This time I was alone, and looked in every barrack, searching for people and stories and reasons. I left again, realizing that no visit would be complete. The memory will never leave me.

I continue to think about my time in Poland every day. I think about the new experiences I had, the people I met, and what I needed to do to visit and learn from another country. Next semester, I will be in Budapest, Hungary, and I am very grateful for the experience in Poland, which has been a bit of a dress rehearsal for me. I had practice in learning a new language, traveling, meeting people from other countries, and I learned something of the post-communist experience. I can't wait to see Budapest and compare the cities. I also plan to visit Krakow again and speak some Polish!



By Jennifer Lipiew
Summer School
JU, 2001

My first real memory of Poland would be the moment I walked into my room. It felt so much like a long lost home. I had been beamed back at my grandmother's in the mid 1980s. The thick, dark brown paint on the cupboards and the lace on the tables and the lace on the curtains were all too familiar. When I took my shoes off and walked across the wood patterned linoleum it felt bumpy from all the layers of flooring underneath. Then, I looked at the bed. Everything that I always thought was just my grandparents "being weird" now made sense.

Two hours later I was on efficient, environmental public transportation and seeing some of the most beautiful buildings I had ever seen in my life. I was drinking the best coffee I had ever tasted for the least amount of money I had ever paid for good coffee. My jaw was dropped and I thought I was dreaming when I came upon the center of the city. I felt like I was living in a fairy tale. Everyday coming back from class I would walk home by the little stone trails that passed by garden after garden after bird feeder. Aesthetics mattered there. Even the ugly, old communist towers had flower boxes. The laundry hanging from the balconies added color to the sun setting skies and life was beautiful the whole time I was in Krakow.

Not only was living there a pleasure for the eyes, but the taste buds as well. Breakfast was cheese, cold cuts and black bread. Lunch consisted of the same with very advanced coleslaw and about thirteen or fourteen extra plates for everything. The waiters were very accommodating and brought more fats and sugars for the starchy desserts they called dinner. It was all delicious. I know I was eating out most of the time, but even when I ate at home with my cousin, I was amazed at the quality of preservative-free and totally natural foods. I wish I could bring the grocery stores home with me.



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