



"Gender Talk" and European Union Accession in Polish Media



By Agnieszka Graff



Agnieszka Graff

In the period preceding and immediately following Poland's accession into the European Union (05.01.2004), Polish media were overflowing with "gender talk." Almost any event discussed on the evening news could be commented with a "this is what women are like" or "men cannot help but be men." Magazines and newspapers provided an abundance of images featuring manly men and womanly women, as well as departures from such norm (most notably drag queens from gay pride parades in Western Europe).

Before we begin to speculate on what this overflow of gender talk might mean, or how it might be linked to EU accession, let us take a look at the covers of three mainstream political weeklies - *Polityka*, *Wprost*, and the Polish edition of *Newsweek*. They ask an astounding number of worried questions concerning gender roles, sexuality and reproduction: "What does a man want today? To remain themselves, men increasingly take up femininity" (*Newsweek*, 21.04.02); "She works, he does not. How the shock on the labor market destabilized the traditional Polish family" (*Newsweek*, 01.06.2003); "How to raise a child on weekends? Working mothers besieged by good advice" (*Polityka*, 07.02.2004); "Special protection for women. Who needs the government gender equality program?" (*Newsweek*, 07.09.2004); "More freedom - but what about sex? New research on the erotic life of Polish women" (*Wprost*, 30.05.2004). In the spring and summer of 2004, the spotlight was on reproduction: "If we want to be a healthy society - let's make children" (*Polityka*, 14.08.2004); "The last parents. Dramatic decline in Poland's population." (*Wprost*, 11.04.2004). In the summer of 2003, the largely progressive *Polityka* wrote about the intolerance toward sexual minorities ("Homo-condemnation. The debate on homosexuality," 09.08.2003), and a year later it turned its attention specifically to lesbians ("When a woman loves a woman," 04.09.2004). In March 2003, the magazine went so far as to feature a group of feminists

on its cover ("Women's rebellion. Polish feminists take to the streets (...)") *Polityka*, 08.03.2003). *Wprost*, the most conservative of the three magazines, was, on the other hand, concerned about the way sexual minorities and feminists "terrorize" the heterosexual and largely traditional majority of "ordinary" people ("The terror of equality" *Wprost*, 13.06.2004). On a more optimistic note, the magazines were preoccupied with the prospect of Poland's having a female president (*Polityka*, 13.09.2003), and with Polish women's skills in various lines of business - vastly superior, according to the magazine, to those of women in Western countries (*Wprost*, 30.11.2003). Finally - a theme to which we will return - soon after Poland's EU accession, *Wprost* reassured its readers that real masculinity was on the rise ("The return of the real man," *Wprost*, 30.05.2004). Cover stories go with images: In each case, Poles were confronted with photographs of (mostly anonymous) men and women, ultra-masculine and ultra-feminine respectively, displayed on newsstands the week a given magazine came out, and lingering for months afterwards in various waiting rooms. More importantly, the images also occupied public space, especially in urban centers - as billboards and city-lights advertising the weeklies.

What does this deluge of stereotypical gender imagery signify? The easy answer is that the magazines in question compete for mainstream readership, and everyone knows that sex sells. One might also suggest that the magazines are simply providing a representation of social reality: Poland is going through a major shift in gender relations, a "renegotiation of the sexual contract," as one sociologist has called it (Fuszara). But given

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Message from the Director



Professor Vyacheslav Bryukhovetsky, rector of the Ukrainian National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" and Ewa Hauser.



By Ewa Hauser

The essence of what we work to accomplish at the Skalny Center can be found in our expanding scholarly collaborations and the progress for future exchanges during the 2004-05 academic year. Our free public programs benefit the local community while we continue to build on our connections in Poland and Central Europe. This year, we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the ever-stronger Jagiellonian University academic relationship and have started a new partnership with Warsaw University.

The Skalny Center welcomed the rector of the Ukrainian National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy," Vyacheslav Bryukhovetsky,

who gave an insightful talk about the days of the "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine. His talk was well attended by students and faculty, as well as Polish and Ukrainian community members. It was co-sponsored by the Russian Studies Program. In early summer, we will be hosting Professor Eva Fodor, a sociologist from the Central European University from Budapest, Hungary. We hope to be able to expand our collaboration to include students and faculty not only from Krakow and Warsaw, but also from Budapest and Kyiv.

Last year, as a recent recipient of a Fulbright Foundation grant, I received a Fulbright institutional award to start a collaboration between the University of Rochester and Warsaw University. As a part of the Fulbright Foundation sponsorship, Warsaw's American Studies Center (ASC), Rochester's Department of Political Science, Frederick Douglass Institute for African and African-American Studies, and the Center for the

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the intensification of gender-talk in the period of EU accession, these are hardly satisfying answers. Moreover, the articles are only marginally concerned with facts. For the most part, they engage in myth-making, i.e. with uncovering "eternal truths" about men and women. Many (perhaps even most) pieces of "gender news" in the Polish media of 2003 and 2004 are actually repetitions of similar fad-driven stories from Western, mostly American, media of the last three decades. The narratives behind the titles mentioned above will no doubt sound familiar: Women want to have it all, but can't; men are embracing equality, but women really desire to be dominated; women decide to have babies when it is too late; equality is a great thing, but children suffer; motherhood is in fashion again, etc., etc. Why would so much of this "news" end up in print before and after May 2004?

I want to suggest that Poland's EU accession and the media's preoccupation with gender difference are inter-related in a complex way, which requires a reading of cultural myths, not just realities. "The return of the real man" announced in May 2004 by *Wprost* is no more and no less a "reality" than "the masculinity crisis" that troubled *Newsweek* two years earlier. Both stories are symptomatic of a process that is not really, or at least not primarily, about gender. The narrative that emerges from articles I have examined is highly formulaic. It unfolds as follows: (1) Things used to be "normal" and "natural," men and women used to know who they were, but (2) sex roles in Poland (and indeed, worldwide) are in crisis today, so that (3) the future looks bleak. Nonetheless, (4) we are sure that the natural order will be restored. We are dealing here with a collective fantasy that has a lot to do with Poland's encounter with the West, or rather the encounter between our fantasy of the West and the reality of EU integration. In other words: Without denying that "the sexual contract" in Poland is undergoing a real process of re-negotiation, I would argue that the media representations of this shift are primarily an expression of hopes and anxieties concerning Poland as a nation in transition. The consoling narrative about an orderly past, a present crisis and an imminent restoration of order in the realm of gender relations is a displaced narrative about collective identity: an effort to dispel, or contain, collective ambivalence and anxiety concerning European integration and globalization, and the resulting diminution of Poland's autonomy as a nation-state a mere decade and a half after this autonomy was restored.

My argument is inspired by feminist work on gender and nation, most of which was conceived in the context of the post-colonial (rather than post-communist) condition (see for example: Yuval-Davis; McClintock). There are important ways in which the two situations do not match, but my focus here is on promising points of overlap that make insights



1. "The last parents. Dramatic decline in Poland's population." (Cover of *Wprost*, 11.04.2004).
2. "The return of the real man," (Cover of *Wprost*, 30.05.2004).

arrived at in the post-colonial context applicable to post-'89 Poland. Recently, Polish intellectuals have begun to conceptualize our gender mythology in terms provided by post-colonial theory (Janion). The basic idea can be summarized as follows. Nation and gender are both culturally constructed; moreover, they construct each other, via notions of what is "natural" and what is "cultural." The negotiation of gender difference and the advancement of nationalism are parallel processes, because ideologies which "naturalize" gender tend to "naturalize" race and ethnicity, as well. Finally, in a variety of ways, women are positioned as the bearers of culture, while the nation itself is often represented in collective imagination as a woman's body (whether this body is young or old, healthy and fertile or sickly and on the verge of collapse, says a lot about a given ethnic group's self-image). My own observations of Polish media lead me to suspect that often it is not just "woman" that serves as metaphor for nation, but rather woman as half of a couple, where the other half might be present, implied, or conspicuously absent. In this context, it is useful to call up Joan Scott's argument that at the center of French identity resides the idea of complementarity of the sexes, an image of a heterosexual couple in erotic tension, with the woman available and responsive to the desiring male gaze. Scott argues that the French preoccupation about headscarves in schools, and the tendency to call them veils, is in fact a product of such a gendered (and sexualized) construction of French national identity. A similar dynamic is at work in the fantasy about the "Polish gender order" - its orderly past, its present crisis, and its imminent restoration. Polish "gender talk," however, places more emphasis on fertility and reproduction, while the French version is focused on eroticism.

The gender-tales featured in the magazines have a common structure. They take us into the past, to a blissful era of order, make us pause in wonder over the crisis/reversal in the present, and finally offer a promise of a restored gender order thanks to the fortunate choices that Polish men and women will make: the former stepping forward, the latter re-

ceding into the background. Gender is given an aura of newsworthiness in these stories, but the aura of change is undercut by the conclusion that, in the end, men are men and women are women, for gender roles have an eternal, timeless nature. There is a tension between making gender seem dynamic, and insisting that it is not, and cannot be. If we agree that gender and nation are closely related, then this tension can be read as a coded articulation of anxiety or ambivalence about Polish national identity in the period of EU accession: the need to imagine a constant, timeless (national) spirit, while accepting dramatic (political) change. It is important to note the political context in which mainstream (i.e. pro-EU) media operated in this period. Ambivalence about accession was largely unacknowledged, because there was a need to mobilize readers in the face of a rising anti-EU sentiment on the populist and nationalist right. Weeklies such as *Newsweek*, *Polityka* and *Wprost* simply could not afford to endanger the accession process. In effect, in its coverage of EU accession, the mainstream press was carefully self-censored. Before the May 2003 Accession Referendum, newspapers and magazines were simply urging their readers to vote and to say "yes." During the crisis in negotiations that followed the referendum, they insisted that - whatever the glitches - accession will still benefit everyone. Dissent was only heard on the far right. Given this self-imposed censorship of mainstream media, the narrative of "gender crisis" followed by the "return of the real man" seems highly functional - not as a statement on gender, but as an effort to construct a workable notion of national identity in the face of EU accession. It seems to me that this function has, in fact, been fulfilled. All three magazines - even the notoriously conservative and Euro-skeptical *Wprost* - enthusiastically supported Poland's "YES" to EU membership. Whatever reservations they had were displaced onto, and resolved within, the arena of "gender talk."

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NOTE: A longer version of this paper was presented at the conference "Women, Gender and Post-Communism" at Indiana University, Bloomington on 01.04.2005, as "The Return of the Real Man" and is available on the University Web site at <http://www.indiana.edu/~reeiweb/events/2005/graffpaper.pdf>.



Poland: A First Contact Narrative



By Jeffrey Tucker

I was fortunate enough to be invited by Prof. Ewa Hauser to be part of a University of Rochester delegation that traveled to Poland during spring break this March. I joined UR Political Science faculty members Gerald Gamm, Valeria Sinclair-Chapman, Fredrick Harris (director of the Frederick Douglass Institute for African and African-American Studies) and Jacqueline Levine, assistant dean and director of Study Abroad, on a week-long stay during which we visited Warsaw University and Jagiellonian University. It was my first trip to Poland, but I hope it will not be the last.

There was much to see upon arrival in Warsaw, including a Gay and Women's Rights march proceeding down Krakowskie Przedmiescie past numerous onlookers, many of whom seemed supportive with the unfortunate exception of a small gathering of neo-nationalist youths parked in front of the Church of St. Joseph the Guardian. The principle occasion of our visit at the University was to attend "Comparative Perspectives on Race, Nationalism, and the Politics of Memory: Poland and the United States," a conference organized by the Skalny Center, the Center for the Study of African-American Politics (directed by Prof. Harris), and Warsaw University's American Studies Center (ASC). The conference brought together leading American scholars in fields such as political science, history, law, and English, with Polish and German scholars. The topic of memory—as a collective endeavor/phenomenon, its correction of what "official" histories distort or omit, and how it mobilizes groups for political action—connected the two different national contexts; papers on reparations,

lynching photography, and racial segregation in the American South were presented alongside papers on German War Crimes during World War II, representations of pogroms in literature and photography, and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum. The conference provided opportunities for the synthesis of ideas of the highest order.

The day after the conference, each UR faculty member gave a lecture related to his/her own research to Warsaw University undergraduate students in American Studies. My colleagues in political science spoke on the difference that race and ethnicity make to local and national politics: Prof. Gamm spoke on "Boston Ethnicity: Jews and Catholics," Prof. Sinclair-Chapman on "Minority Representation in U.S. Politics," and Prof. Harris on "The Dynamics of African-American Activism since the Civil Rights Movement." As UR's sole representative of the humanities, I wanted to do something "literary," while addressing issues related to the conference and the other lectures. After a number of earlier e-mail conversations with ASC director Zbigniew Lewicki and Professors Krystyna Mazur, Anna Misiak, and Cynthia Dominik, I had decided on the topic of the Harlem Renaissance, which fit the curriculum of some of the ASC courses being taught at the time. Moreover, I regularly teach a course on the topic, to which Professors Mazur, Tomasz Basiuk, and Agnieszka Graff came during their September 2004 visit to UR. At Warsaw, I lectured on three essays from the Harlem Renaissance—George S. Schuyler's "The Negro Art-Hokum," Langston Hughes's "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," and Zora Neale Hurston's "How it Feels to Be Colored Me"—which collectively represent the diversity and intensity with which African-American identity was theorized and debated in the 1920s.

The lively Q&A session that followed showed that the students had both read the essays and were processing my opinions about them. One student in particular rightfully questioned the naive and seemingly incongruous "My country right or wrong" sentiment expressed in Hurston's essay, which may have been crafted with a specific (white) audience in mind. Surprisingly, most of the questions students asked were about science fiction; I had been introduced to them as having taught and researched this genre, and I described Schuyler as the first African-American science fiction writer by virtue of his satirical novel *Black No More* (1931), about a scientific process that makes African Americans look white. There was a great deal of interest in science fiction—cultivated in part, no doubt, by ASC's own scholar in the field, Prof. Konrad Walewski—and I was eager to talk about the genre's African-American voices. It was a perfect case of the need to know meeting the need to tell. The lectures were followed up with a screening of *July '64* on the urban uprising that occurred in Rochester just over 40 years ago. Director Carvin Eison and Producer Chris Christopher made the journey to Warsaw to present the documentary, and found a most attentive and inquisitive audience in Prof. Misiak's film students.

(Very) early the next morning, we took the train to Krakow to meet with faculty and students at Jagiellonian University. First, however, we had a comprehensive tour of the city. Perhaps the only thing I would have remembered about Krakow was the bone-chilling cold if not for our indefatigable tour guide, Kinga, who showed us many wonderful sights, including Rynek Glowny, St. Mary's Cathedral, and Wawel Castle. That evening we had a lovely dinner with Jagiellonian faculty at a restaurant in Kazimierz, Krakow's old Jewish Quarter. The following day we gave presentations to Jagiellonian students on graduate study at UR. I assumed that most of the students in attendance would be interested in Social Studies-related disciplines, but one student expressed a specific interest in African-American drama, one of my chief teaching areas. The weather may have been chilly, but our meetings with the Jagiellonian University community were most definitely warming.

This day also included a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum. A description of Auschwitz deserves its own dedicated reflection; I'll simply state here that responses to it included stunned silence, tears, and many, many questions. I will never forget being there nor the lesson Auschwitz teaches about the necessity of continuing to confront the history of the Holocaust.

My thanks go to the Skalny Center for including me in these events. I look forward to learning more about the history, culture, and language of Poland and to playing a role in cultivating the University of Rochester's partnerships with Warsaw University and Jagiellonian University.



Participants of the Warsaw Conference "Comparative Perspectives on Race, Nationalism and the Politics of Memory: Poland and United States" at the American Studies Center in Warsaw, Poland. From left: Sandra Richards, Northwestern University; Valerie Smith, Princeton University; Fredrick Harris, University of Rochester; Roy Brooks, University of San Diego; Stephen Haymes, DePaul University; Jacqueline Goldsby, University of Chicago; Raymond Gavins, Duke University; Gerald Gamm, University of Rochester; Jeffrey Tucker, University of Rochester; Carvin Eison, State University of New York-Brockport; Valeria Sinclair-Chapman, University of Rochester; Lawrie Balfour, University of Virginia; Ewa Hauser, University of Rochester; Zbigniew Lewicki, Warsaw University



16 Years After the Round Table

Lessons from Poland's Post-Communist Great Change



By Grzegorz W. Kolodko



Professor G. Kolodko giving a talk at the Skalny Center luncheon.

It is widely assumed that the **post-socialist transformation started in Poland**. This is true, but only in part. Although it was indeed in Poland that various processes contributing to this dramatic change gained momentum in the 1980s, things were not at a standstill in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, either. The winds of change also blew in Hungary or in the former Czechoslovakia. But it is true that Poland acted as a trailblazer and was the first to implement many of these changes, which was not an easy thing to do.

Another widespread assumption is that the **post-socialist transformation was set in motion in 1989**, when - first in Poland and then, through a chain reaction engulfing the entire region - "real socialism collapsed" or, as others would prefer to put it, "communism was defeated." Did then the previous system, prevailing for several decades in this part of Europe and in the vast expanses of Asia, simply collapse through an insufficient capacity to adapt to the changing internal and external conditions - not just economic, cultural and political, but also technological - or was it, rather, **defeated**, and if so, by whom: by internal forces alone, or by an external pressure? This is a separate question that still remains controversial. Maybe history will provide an unambiguous answer, although I doubt it. For real socialism *did* collapse and was defeated at the same time. One does not rule out the other. What is, on the other hand, an unquestionable fact for us is that history sees that very year - **1989** - as a turning point on the path of mankind. Even if it was not the actual beginning of that great change, whose roots went back to earlier reforms - particularly those implemented in Poland, Hungary,

and also the former Yugoslavia - it did mark a major shift. Hence, the Polish Round Table of spring 1989 has been a crucial factor in the great shift toward market economy, democratic polity and civic society in the vast area of the former communist part of the world.

This **great post-communist change** consisted in giving up the earlier efforts to reform the old system. The attempts to increase the international competitiveness of the economy and give real socialism a more "human face" had failed. The foundations of the old system thus became abandoned in a fairly radical manner. Rather than go on "reforming" what had proved to be hardly reformable, the endeavor was made to reject the old system and build a new one in its place. This time it was to take the form of a capitalist market economy. Likewise, to be sure, with a "human face."

It is a process that has been going on for 16 years, during which post-communist countries have gone through many ups and downs, the latter, sadly, prevailing. Excluding China, the greatest economic success story in the modern world, as well as Vietnam, following in China's footsteps, in the majority of the 27 countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, with over 400 million inhabitants, the output and consumption levels in 2005 remain lower than they were 16 years ago. International statistics demonstrate unequivocally that the **proportion of people marginalized by social exclusion in post-communist transforming economies has markedly increased**. The areas of poverty and destitution also have expanded, and in some countries life expectancy has dropped, too. Income disparities have increased everywhere, sometimes sharply, although once again to a varying degree. In the majority of societies of the post-Soviet region and the Balkans, the Human Development Index (HDI), as assessed under the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), is now lower than at the beginning of the transformation.

Quite understandably, the situation differs from country to country and, within each specific country, from region to region. Even in a seemingly homogenous country like Poland, *per capita* GDP in the richest region is about six times higher than in the poorest one. On the international scale, such differences within post-communist countries are even greater. This is a consequence of both the inheritance of the past - including that of the centrally-planned socialist economy - and, especially, the course taken by the system transformation over the past 16 or so years. Some countries did better than others. Poland is quite universally included in the more successful group. Some commentators even speak about a "Polish economic miracle."

Leaving miracles where they belong, it is

nevertheless a legitimate question to ask **whether Poland is an economically successful country**. It all depends on the metric of success. After 16 years of transformation, *per capita* GDP is about 40 percent higher. This is not much progress, not only in comparison with China, but also *vis-à-vis* Western Europe or the United States, that is, the richest countries, which have, on average, developed faster in those years, leaving Poland and other post-communist countries even further behind. At the same time, it has experienced the greatest increase among all transforming economies. In this respect, Poland has achieved more than any other country in the region - at least for the time being, as it will only be possible to speak of a true success (or lack thereof) after a longer period than a decade and a half. A final judgment can only be passed from the perspective of generations.

There is no doubt, however, that in many - but, sure enough, not all - respects, **Poland has handled the challenges of the great transformation better than other countries**. This merits reflection and scrutiny and invites comparisons across time and space. Much has been said about it thus far, while many other things remain to be uncovered. But even a cursory analysis of the special case of Poland shows that its better macroeconomic indicators result from two factors.

The first was the **shortest duration of the transformational recession among all countries**. It lasted only for three years - from mid-1989 till mid-1992 - whereas in the extreme case of Ukraine, it evolved into a **great transformational depression**, which went on for a whole 10 years! This was a consequence not so much of a sound strategy at the outset of the Polish transformation, which was missing as a result of the ill-advised idea of a "shock therapy" (or rather, as it did happen, shock **without** therapy), as of the positive effects of the market reforms implemented already in the days of late socialism. Yet the most important was the shift to new policies, based not on the naïve neoliberal orthodoxy, as it was the case in 1989-1993, known as the "Strategy for Poland," which was successfully implemented in 1994-7. Unfortunately, later - again due to the wrong set of policies based on neoliberal thinking - the economy was brought to a standstill as a result of overcooling (or even overkilling). The rate of growth of GDP *per capita* was brought from as high as 7.5 percent in the second quarter of 1997 to a meager 0.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2001. Fortunately, one more time the policy had been changed and fast growth was resumed (see chart).

Consequently, Poland has joined the Eu-

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Fulbright Student Experiences Post-Revolution Ukraine



By Sara Korol



Sara Korol, Independence Square, Kyiv, Ukraine

As an American Fulbright scholar studying Ukrainian immigration to Poland, I felt less than comfortable conducting research without first experiencing Ukraine. The timing of my two-week foray into the romantically wild east (as Poles often perceive this neighbor) coincided with the inauguration of Viktor Yushchenko, the winner in last year's highly contested presidential election and the champion of the so-called "Orange Revolution." The novelty of the country and culture, combined with an anxious atmosphere of post-revolution malaise, made for an unforgettable, and utterly exhilarating experience.

Lviv, a city that for centuries was part of the Polish Kingdom, was my first stop. Naturally, language is a major point of controversy in a city known officially as Lviv, Lwów, Lemberg, or Lvov at various points all within the last century. Before the ethnic purges of the 20th century, the city even had a sizable conglomeration of Jewish, German, Armenian, Turkish, Romanian, and Hungarian cultures, to name a few, in addition to the historically salient tension between Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian cultures. Today, Lviv is Ukrainian-speaking. As a native English speaker who is fluent in Polish, Ukrainian's "brother Slavic language," a few phrases in Ukrainian were enough to ensure that I was greeted warmly.

Just as the last vestiges of a multi-ethnic past are fading, so, too, are the visual remnants of the Orange Revolution. What once must have been a welcomed and invigorating splash of color is no more. The millions of faded ribbons on bare trees, peeling stickers on bumpers, pins on collars, and spray paint on crumbling walls are what is left of the recent social earthquake that rocked the city.

My friend Lev, a supporter of Yushchenko, is still trying to digest the outcome of a revolution which, in his mind, succeeded against all odds. In his lifetime, he has witnessed cataclysmic changes. Ukraine, once the productive, industrial heart of the Soviet Union, achieved national autonomy through the dissolution of the country

in which Lev was born in 1984. Independence was accompanied by a decade of egregious political corruption, the rise of opportunistic and power-abusing oligarchs, and a whopping nine straight years of negative economic growth. Discontent simmered while western Ukrainians compared their exceptionally painful transition to a free-market democracy to that of its neighbors.

The tides have shifted in the blink of an eye. Just a year ago, Lev's monthly student stipend from the government was doubled from 50 hryvnas to 100, or from about \$10 to \$20 U.S. This fall, Lev's parents helped him buy a laptop computer, which was produced for *Ukrainian* speakers. Then in November, a presidential candidate who supported integration with the European Union was poisoned, deprived of media coverage, muscled by unseen powers in both Ukraine and Russia, and evidently even unlawfully denied his first victory at the polls. Yet he persisted and triumphed. For Lev, as for many of his fellow western Ukrainians, it was truly a miracle that warranted a thorough re-evaluation of what it means to be Ukrainian.

The next day Lev and I went in search of a television on which to watch the inauguration unfold in Kiev. The hour-long hunt brought us to a small restaurant, empty except for the waiters, who did not intend to serve anyone that afternoon. We explained desperately that we just wanted to watch the inauguration. As if having uttered a secret password, they ushered us in. We all watched in silence as Ukraine, for the first time since the tsunami-devastated South Asia in December, again became the center of global attention.

Full of exuberance, I left on the night train and traveled eight hours and then another five hours by bus to reach Kremenchuk, a small, highly industrialized city where another friend lives. Kremenchuk is a "border" city, in both its physical location in the geographic center of Ukraine between the Russian-speaking east and the Ukrainian-speaking west, and also in its mentality. Its 250,000 residents are native Russian speakers but most are fluent in Ukrainian as well. Yushchenko just narrowly won the region's votes from Viktor Yanukovich.

It was here that I met some of the opposition, students who were supporters of Yanukovich. They may have represented an extreme viewpoint in that they did not consider themselves, nor anyone who spoke Russian, to be "true Ukrainians." In their mind, the Ukrainian "nation" was determined first and foremost by language, and therefore exclusive. Given this broadly accepted criteria, the issue of national identity was perplexing for them. They had not supported Yushchenko. In fact, they not only supported closer ties with Russia, but wanted to join Russia again! Furthermore, they considered the borders with Ukraine, Belarus and Russia to be artificial and thought all three countries would be better off as one.

The western press would surely characterize such individuals as naïve, disillusioned, eccentric, or misinformed at best. But the fact remains that 49 percent of the country voted against

Yushchenko because they truly believed he did not represent their interests. What are the interests of that 49 percent? If they seek closer ties with Russia, then they were absolutely correct in not voting for Yushchenko. Are they afraid that the Ukraine that Yushchenko and his supporters envision does not include them? Only time will tell.

Korol, a native of Herkimer, N.Y., is a 2004 graduate of the University of Rochester. She is based in Warsaw, Poland, during her year as a Fulbright scholar.

Message from the Director

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Study of African-American Politics launched an official exchange and collaboration. In September 2004, the director of ASC, Professor Zbigniew Lewicki, and three other faculty members (Agnieszka Graff, Tomek Basiuk and Krystyna Mazur) came to the University of Rochester.

During their stay, they participated in a symposium titled "Teaching Diversity" moderated by UR English professor John Michael, himself a former Fulbright grantee in Warsaw. The UR participants included professors Stanley Engerman from the Department of Economics; Jeffrey Tucker and Frank Shuffelton from the Department of English; Greta Niu and Andres Nader from the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures; and Valeria Sinclair-Chapman and Fredrick Harris from the Department of Political Science. "Teaching Diversity" offered the possibility for the UR professors and the Warsaw guests to give formal presentations and engage in informal discussion on topics such as women, race, and the culture of intolerance in both societies. Our guests also took part in a seminar on satellite technology and co-teaching possibilities. Because Tomek Basiuk and Agnieszka Graff are in New York supported by their individual Fulbright grants, they were able to return to Rochester in February and give a public presentation about media representation of gender in Poland (see Agnieszka's article in this issue).

In March 2005, Fredrick Harris, Gerald Gamm, and Valeria Sinclair-Chapman from the Department of Political Science, Jeffrey Tucker from the Department of English, and Jacqueline Levine from the College Deans' Office and director of Study Abroad, traveled to Warsaw to meet with the American Studies Center's students and faculty and to attend the conference on "Comparative Perspectives on Race, Nationalism, and the Politics of Memory: Poland and United States" organized by Professor Harris. The two-day conference was opened by the rector of War-

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New Faces Join Young Performers at Annual Polish Concert



By **Bozena Sobolewska**

On Sunday, May 1, a cool but sunny afternoon, the Polish community of Rochester gathered again to listen to music played by Polish youth. Now in its 12th year, the concert is thriving.

Initially held at St. John Fisher College, the concert was later moved to the University of Rochester River Campus, then to the Memorial Art Gallery, and now is back at the River Campus. The beginnings, in the early 1990s, were hard. There were few young people who wanted to perform, and the level

of playing was not spectacular. However, it has gradually changed: Now there are many young musicians who consider the concert a great opportunity to show their talents in public, and the level of their performances is excellent. This annual showcase of young musicians of Polish descent is organized by the Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies in cooperation with the University of Rochester Department of Music and the Polish Heritage Society of Rochester.

The concert was opened by Professor Ewa Hauser, director of the Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies. Next, Ms. Sabina Slepecki, first violinist with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and a faculty member at the Hochstein School of Music, took over as the artistic director of the concert. Thirteen young people of Polish descent, from preschoolers to high-school seniors, played on piano, violin, cello, guitar, alto saxophone, French horn, baritone saxophone, and even the bagpipes! A variety of pieces were performed, written by such composers as Chopin, Oginski, Bacewicz, Albeniz, Vivaldi, Mendellsohn, Seitz, and Viotti.

We were very pleased to welcome for the first time several very talented students: Anna Weldy, Paris Sorci, Kaia Megiel, Tamara Labanowski, and Jacob Kwiatkowski. We hope to see them at future concerts. We also wish to thank Alexandra Yurchenko, who provided an excellent piano accompaniment to all players who needed it.

It was the last concert for Adam Sobolewski, a cello player, who participated in a record number of 10 concerts and won two Polish Heritage Society Awards. Adam is a Pittsford-Mendon High School senior, and in the fall he will start his undergraduate studies in physics at the University of Chicago. For his farewell performance, he prepared two pieces of Polish music - "Polonaise" by Kleofas Oginski and "Mazovian Dance" by Grazyna Bacewicz. We will miss his enthusiasm and love for music.

For the fourth year, performers at the concert competed for the Polish Heritage Society of Rochester Award for Musically Talented Youth of Polish Descent. The Polish Heritage Society of Rochester presented two awards of \$500 each for the best young musicians of Polish descent. This year the winners were: Stefan Styk, piano, and Jacob Kwiatkowski, bagpipe and baritone saxophone.

Ten-year-old Stefan has already performed at the Polish youth concerts and participated in other community events for many years, and we have been very pleased to watch his progress. He was a first-place winner in the 2004 Junior All-Star Competition and was awarded an honorable mention at the PHSR 2003 competition. Jacob, a ninth-grade student at Spencerport High School, performed

at this venue for the first time. Wearing a kilt, he played on the baritone saxophone and the bagpipes a selection of Scottish gigs and short jazzy pieces with amazing precision and maturity. He is a member of the Hochstein School of Music and Dance Jazz Ensemble, a founding member of the Feadan Or Pipe Band, and has recently been invited to join the world-renowned 78th Fraser Highlanders Pipe Band from Toronto, Canada.

In addition to the main awards, the Polish Heritage Society funded three honorable mentions of \$50 each. They went to Dyzio Guzierowicz (French horn), Kaia Megiel (violin), and Hannah Watrobski (violin).



Adam Sobolewski



Hannah Watrobski



Dyzio Guzierowicz and Oleksandra Yurchenko



Paris Sorci and Sabina Slepecki



Jacob Kwiatkowski



Stefan Styk



Message from the Director

Continued from page 2

saw University, Professor Piotr Weglenski, and the first speaker was the new U.S. Ambassador to Poland, Victor Ashe, who spoke about the tradition of Polish and American friendship and camaraderie in arms going back to the example set by General Tadeusz Kosciuszko, who liberated the slaves donated to him together with an estate by President George Washington as a reward for his valiant contribution to the American Revolution. The conference brought together Polish and American scholars as well as Warsaw students and faculty (see Jeffrey Tucker's piece). The work has begun on gathering material for an edited volume on the conference.

This year, the Skalny Center hosted again our great friend from the Polish diplomatic core, the Consul General of the Republic of Poland in New York, Agnieszka Magdziak-Miszewska. This time she did not decorate anyone with Polish medals, but instead delivered a brilliant lecture on the theme of collective memory as a decisive factor in international relations. Consul Miszewska focused on the collective memory of the wounds suffered and the tendency to collectively forget the trespasses committed against others. She ended her presentation quoting a passage from *Gazeta Wyborcza's* article in which a 20-year-old Pole wrote a manifesto against the collective memory of injuries:

"I desire something more. We need to forget about the logic of national suffering. We want one history. Less Polish and Ukrainian and more European, based on the mutual understanding of the past evil."

Consul Miszewska and I met again at a symposium organized by her in the elegant mansion on Madison Avenue where the Consulate is located. The symposium was devoted to the new project of the Museum of Polish Jews, which is being erected in the heart of Warsaw in the empty square around the monument of the Ghetto Uprising. This promotion of the project to celebrate the century-old presence of the Jewish civilization within Poland's culture testifies to the idea of reconciliation which Consul Miszewska outlined in her speech on our campus. During our tour of Warsaw, I showed my colleagues the place donated by the mayor of Warsaw for the foundations of a museum that will be celebrating the 1,000-years-old Jewish civilization in Poland.

During the fall semester, Professor Grzegorz Kolodko from Warsaw, former minister of finance of Poland and first deputy prime minister in two cabinets after 1989, taught two political science courses. He also participated in an exciting student-organized panel reported in the *Campus Times*: "About 150 students, faculty and community members gathered for "World Trade: Free or Fair," a panel organized by the UR Make Trade Fair campaign. The five panelists, moderated by history department chair Theodore Brown, tried to distinguish rhetoric from reality." Other panelists included professors of anthro-



Jacqueline Levine giving a UR campus tour to Warsaw University guests. From left: T. Basiuk, K. Mazur, J. Levine, Z. Lewicki, A. Graff.

pology Tom Gibson and Robert Foster, and an attorney and UR alumnus Carl Angeloff, as well as a Xerox Professor of Economics Ronald Jones. The Polish former finance minister defended the idea of free trade, arguing that policy makers are to be blamed for inequalities resulting from free trade, not the global exchange itself.

Returning to the River Campus for the second time this spring, Professor Krzysztof Zamorski from Jagiellonian University taught a popular course in Polish history, gave a number of talks in the community and for the Skalny Luncheon series, and spent a lot of time discussing issues of history with the students.

During the fall and spring, the center continued with the tradition of Skalny Luncheons and evening lectures. Additionally, the fall was marked by the annual Polish Film Festival and in the spring we celebrated Polish Constitution Day with music at the annual Polish Youth Concert on Sunday, May 1. Skalny Luncheons this past academic year included presentations by Skalny Visiting Professor Krzysztof Zamorski, John C. Evans Visiting Professor in Polish Studies Grzegorz Kolodko (see his article in this issue), and Mary Jane Curry, assistant professor at the Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development. Both Professors Zamorski and

Kolodko taught popular "core" courses in the Skalny Center fathered by the history and political science departments, respectively. Joanna Wiszniewicz, a Kosciuszko Foundation fellow, came to give a reading of her recent book *And Yet I Still Have Dreams*. A piano recital by Stephen Beus also was sponsored by the Kosciuszko Foundation because Stephen received the first prize in the 2004 Kosciuszko Foundation Chopin competition (see Krzysztof Polakowski's entry).

Joseph Skalny donated additional funds enabling four UR students to attend the Jagiellonian University Summer School of Polish Language and Culture. This year, five students will attend the school. UR senior Michael Newmark has won the essay contest for a travel grant in addition to the Skalny summer grant.

Sara Korol, the "Polish girl" from the last issue of this newsletter, spent a year in Warsaw as a Fulbright grantee, traveling in Western and Eastern Europe, while studying Polish-Ukrainian relations and migration through the eastern border of the European Union. She became fascinated with Poland's eastern neighbor and the exciting process of the democratic miracle in this former Soviet republic. Her article about her experience is included in this issue.



Professor Zamorski at the Study Abroad Fair, talking to students Michael Newmark and Colin Brown.



16 Years After the Round Table

Continued from page 4

ropean Union and actually has become a performing market economy. The next challenge is to sustain for a long period of time the highest possible rate of growth and catch up with the developed countries.

From Shock without Therapy to Therapy without shocks...
 Rate of GDP growth and rate of unemployment (1990-2005)



Kolodko, who is the John C. Evans Visiting Professor in Polish and European Studies at the University of Rochester, was a key architect of Poland's economic reforms in the mid-1990s and returned to the cabinet in 2002 and 2003.

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies
 Department of Political Science
 University of Rochester
 P.O. Box 270147
 Rochester, NY 14627-0147

Recital by Promising Young Artist in Skalny Series



By Krzysztof Polakowski

The first musical event in 2005 sponsored by the Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies drew piano enthusiasts on Sunday, April 17. Stephen Beus, a 23-year-old graduate student at Julliard School of Music in New York City, performed at the University of Rochester's lower Strong Auditorium.

Stephen is the fourth of eight children born and raised in Othello (5,000 inhabitants) in Washington State. Since the age of eight, Stephen has been a popular recitalist and an orchestral soloist, performing concerti by Bach, Mozart, Chopin, Grieg, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff and Prokofiev in the United States and Europe. Equally active as a competitor, Stephen was the first prize winner of the 1996 Junior Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition and in 2000 he was named the national winner of the MTNA Competition. After graduation from college, he continued his study of the piano with Leonard Richter.

After his June 2003 performance with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, critics compared his play to that of the young Van Cliburn.

In 2004 Stephen won the Kosciuszko Foundation Chopin Competition. Most Recently, he was selected to be one of the 35 pianists worldwide to compete in the 2005 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in late May. This competition is considered by many as the most prestigious piano contest in the world. Interestingly, Van Cliburn, who is well-known for his generous support for the arts, did not establish the competition, which bears his name.

Stephen Beus presented himself here at the auditorium as a charming musical prodigy. He played, among others, Haydn's "Sonata in C," "Sonata in B-minor" by Chopin and, at the very end, he gave a ravishing performance of Rachmaninoff's "Sonata No.2 in B-flat," extremely virtuosic, requiring pounding motions on the keyboard, unusual dexterity and physical endurance.

We wish him all the best at the Van Cliburn Competition. His recital was sponsored by the Kosciuszko Foundation, the Skalny Center, and the University of Rochester Department of Music.

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Ewa Hauser, Director
 ewa.hauser@rochester.edu

Contact Information:
 Bozena Sobolewska,
 Administrative Assistant
 (585) 275-9898
skalnycpes@mail.rochester.edu

Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies
 101 Harkness Hall
 Box 270147
 University of Rochester
 Rochester, NY 14627-0147
 Fax: (585) 276-1952

AtJarek Design Studio
 254 West Ridge Road
 Rochester, NY 14615
 (585) 254-5315
info@jarek.com