



True Voice from **Poland**

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There is no Christmas like Polish Christmas!
Merry Christmas everyone!

Happy New Year 2023



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Unique and special Polish Christmas traditions

AGNIESZKA
MARCZAK



■ Christianity in Poland exists for over one thousand years, since prince Mieszko was baptized in the year of 966. Hundreds of years later, Polish Christmas catholic traditions developed to be unique and beautiful – like nowhere else in Europe and I dare say – nowhere else in the world.

Christmas Eve follows a special protocol – only one substantial meal is allowed on that day, which is dinner, named Wigilia (Wigilia in Polish). During the day, one is allowed to have two small meals, like a sandwich, but not much more. No meat is allowed – only fish. But the dinner menu is impressive – there must be twelve dishes! They represent either twelve apostles, or twelve months of a year.

There is another tradition before dinner – in the afternoon, anyone who has an animal, should go and talk to that special member of the family. Folk traditions say, that animals talk human languages on that day and could have a conversation with their owner. Some people are afraid, what they might hear from them...

Setting up our dinner table we place one additional chair and a plate for a stranger, who could show up. Tradition says, that if anyone knocks on the door, you have to invite

that person to the table, hence an empty setting. Also, under the tablecloth, one is supposed to put a few twigs of hay – for good luck. The dinner can be served only after the first star appears on the sky – cannot be earlier. It is the signal for all family members to gather at the Christmas table.

The dinner begins with everyone saying a prayer, and after we share with each other Christmas Eve Wafer. That tradition is unique – we wish each other all the best and any bad feeling one could have towards another family member or a friend – disappear. Then we all sit down and start Wigilia dinner. First on the menu are starters - a slightly smoked herring made with some onions and herbs; other smoked fish, carp in a jelly (a must!), a Greek salad with herring. Second on the menu is soup – usually a vegetarian borshch, served with small mushroom dumplings, although in some areas of Poland people have mushroom soup.



The main dish is carp – fried or roasted - and served with handmade pierogies (dumplings) with mushrooms and sourcroust. Small croquettes with mushrooms and cabbage also can make it to the table. For dessert – a poppyseed roulade or

a poppyseed cake. Each area of the country has its own traditions, but all Poles share the same rule - no meat and there must be carp.

Santa Clause gives Christmas presents in Poland on Christmas Eve – after that Wi-

gilia dinner, when the table is cleared, usually the youngest person at the table starts looking for the packages from Santa Clause under the Christmas tree.

The day ends with a special mass, celebrated at midnight. The church is completely dark, no lights. Then suddenly the bells ring, and everyone sings very old, traditional song – God is being born (Bóg się rodzi). A procession with priests and altar boys carrying candles, arrive through the main door and the lights start to appear in the church, symbolizing the coming of Christ.

Many countries follow their own special traditions during Christmas. Some are shared across Europe and other continents as they come from a Catholic church custom. But the Polish ones are truly unique.

Wishing everyone Merry Christmas – or as the Polish people say – Zdrowych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia!

Ukraine's mineral resources war

■ At first it all looked like a misunderstanding. What for Russia needs Ukraine's mineral resources, when they have most of them in the world?

Ukraine's resources are not needed for the Russian economy, but are needed for their politics, and that changes their point of view of Ukraine's wealth. Russia always looked grudgingly at Ukraine's efforts to obtain EU membership. The same with regards to NATO membership. According to Moscow, Ukraine's close cooperation with North Atlantic Treaty Organization could have threatened the safety of Russia.

We should all remember a saying, that the first victim of each war is the truth. And the hidden truth is, that the immeasurable riches of Ukraine should not be obtained by Russia's competition. A war to get mineral resources is as old as

the world. Strong, powerful states compete to obtain mineral resources they need, and that competition is continued since the beginning of the XX century: it resulted in two subsequent world wars, followed by new divisions of influence and new accessibility to the most attractive resources in the world.

Many specialists considered, that since the fast-growing modern information technology requires little amounts of minerals for its production, that it would considerably slow down the usage of natural resources.

Beginning of the XXI century and the fast economic growth of China, which uses almost half of the world's mining resources, contradicted those predic-

tions. Western civilizations were alarmed and realized, that inevitably they would have to catch up with China's development. However, it became obvious, that mineral resources would be indispensable to achieve that goal.

The problem of obtaining strategic resources is observed in the US, which is trying to become independent from Chinese domination. Ukraine made its resources known and available to both USA and the allied EU. Russia could not let that happen, and that is the hidden truth about one of the main reasons of this war's outbreak.

The purpose of this war is to deprive both Europe and the US access to Ukrainian resourc-

es, which Americans consider as the largest in Europe and one of the richest in the world. Western institutes specializing in the field of mineral resources, indicate that Ukraine's energy resources, minerals and metals are worth at least US \$ 12,4 trillion and currently are under Russia's control. That number contains almost half of the 2 209 mineral deposits in Ukraine. Apart from 63% of coal resources, Moscow took over 11 % of oil fields, 20% of the natural gas, 42% of metals and 33% of rare metals, lit and other critical minerals. Russia also took over 41 coal fields, 27 natural gas mines, 14 propane mines, 9 oil fields, 6 iron ore deposits, 2 titanium ores, 2 zirconium ores

and each of strontium, lit, uranium, gold and a substantial limestone quarry, which earlier was used for the steel production in Ukraine. The largest deposits of coal are in the part of Ukraine controlled by Russia. Around 30 billion tons of the coal deposits are worth approximately 11,9 trillion of US dollars. After the Lugansk and Donieck's Republics annexations, Ukraine will lose an access to almost two thirds of its natural resources.

Western experts are warning, that Ukraine's land annexation by Russia is a tactical defeat, and that the Ukraine's territory occupation will have immediate implications for the energy safety of the West.



ADAM MAKSYMOWICZ

What do you know about Wrocław University of Science and Technology?

AGNIESZKA
MARCZAK



- Wrocław University of Science and Technology is known as one of the best universities in Poland and a scientific and research leader in Lower Silesia region. However, few people know about the greatness and, in fact, the power of this institution.



The facts will speak for themselves – there are 23, 817 students currently studying first and second degree in 13 faculties, including three affiliated faculties in Jelenia Gora, Walbrzych and Legnica. Among the students, there are 1,223 from other countries, who can choose from 60 different degrees 35 programs taught in different languages. The lectures are conducted by 2,198 instructors from 13 different scientific disciplines. The level of education is also impressive – Wrocław University of Science and Technology is ranked 4th among all technical schools in Poland and 7th in the general classification, according to Perspective Foundation ranking of schools. The best ranking in the country received Civil Engineering, Chemical Engineering and Processing Departments, with Chemical Technology in the Chemical Department coming on second place. Other departments, also considered as one of the best, are Biotechnology, Mining and Geology, Engineering and Machine Building, as well as Informatics, Biotechnology, Mechatronics and Material Engineering.

It is worth studying and graduating from Wrocław University of Science and Technology, as its graduates are placed second in Poland in the earnings – they are hired either immediately after graduating or within three months.

If a graduate would like to continue studying, he or she can choose from twelve disciplines at the PhD department, where 477 students are currently doing their PhD degrees. Currently there are 307 graduate students who completed their doctoral studies.

Two awards, considered to be a Polish Noble Prize, awarded annually by the Foundation for the Polish Science, were given to scientists from Wrocław University of Science and Technology – Professor Marek Samoc in 2016 and Professor Marcin Drag in 2019.

The School invested a few hundred million in research devices, enabling the scientists to conduct different scientific work. Polish Patent Office considers their research to be innovative,

and regards Wrocław University of Science and Technology to be the leader among all universities, as it applies for around 100 patents annually. Until now, the school obtained 2,690 patents as well as protective rights for their scientific research. All together, they applied for 6036 inventions.

The School cooperates with scientific institutions from all over the world, enabling cooperation in research that resulted in more than 500 joint scientific projects. Several hundred students and scientists use International Student and Scientists Exchange Program annually. The Institute of Scientific Information from Philadelphia, a publisher of an index of scientific works and publications worldwide, showed 20,700 publications from Wrocław. International cooperation is facilitated by the School of Foreign Languages, where English, French, Spanish, Japanese, Russian, as well as Polish for foreigners, are taught.

The Wrocław University of Science and Technology also cooperates with large international companies, among them Volvo, Microsoft, IBM, KGHM, LG, Nokia and Credit Suisse.

The School could be regarded as a city within a city, but there are more statistics that shows that it is practically an agglomeration with its 253 research laboratories, 791 didactic laboratories, 585 lecture halls and lecture studios, all placed in 119 modern and well-equipped research buildings.

The history of the Wrocław University of Science and Technology is also fascinating. As most schools in Lower Silesia, it was established thanks to the commitment of the scientists from Lwów Polytechnic as well as the Lwów University of Jan Kazimierz, when the Polish people took over the buildings of the Upper Technical School from Germans in November 1945. Earlier, on January 20th 1945, the school was closed and the students and professors were evacuated due to approaching Soviet Army and a possible siege. However, the buildings were not destroyed, although on May 6th the buildings were taken over by the Soviet Army.

By a decree of the postwar academic authorities of Wrocław, on August 24th 1945 University of Wrocław and Wrocław University of Science and Technology were established. In September of that year, already 512 students enrolled and the first inaugural lecture was given by professor Kazimierz Idaszewski. The first departments organized in half ruined Wrocław were Electro-Mechanical-Technical, Department of Building and Architecture, and for a short period of time, the Department of Technical Chemistry. The first vice-rectors were Professors Edward Sucharda, Kazimierz Zipser and Dionizy Smoleński, who were able to shape the school before the socialists' powers took over the governance of all universities.

Today, Wrocław University of Science and Technology is administered by Rector Professor PhD. Eng. Arkadiusz Wójcisa, who is associated with the school since his studies – in 1997 he defended his dissertation in the Institute of Physics. That year he was nominated to be an adjunct professor; in 2008 he became the associate professor and finally a professor in 2014. He lectured in Canada, in the USA at the University of Tennessee and in Cambridge, England. He is the author of six books and specializes in theoretical physics research as well as computational studies of the solid state. He is a member of the Polish Academy of Science since 2019 and Academia Europaea since 2017.

Managing an academy of that significance can certainly be a challenge, but equally important must an inspiration of the Rector, all professors and lecturers. Having learned about the past and present of the Wrocław University of Science and Technology, I have no doubts, that successive scientists will follow great examples shown to them at the School. And finally – an interesting piece of information, that distinguishes this school from others – one can get from the Geocenter Complex to the main Campus over Odra River by a cable railway Polinka. Must have been an engineering easy ride for the graduates of the School.

ANDRZEJ
MANASTERSKI



A few words about the Marshall Law

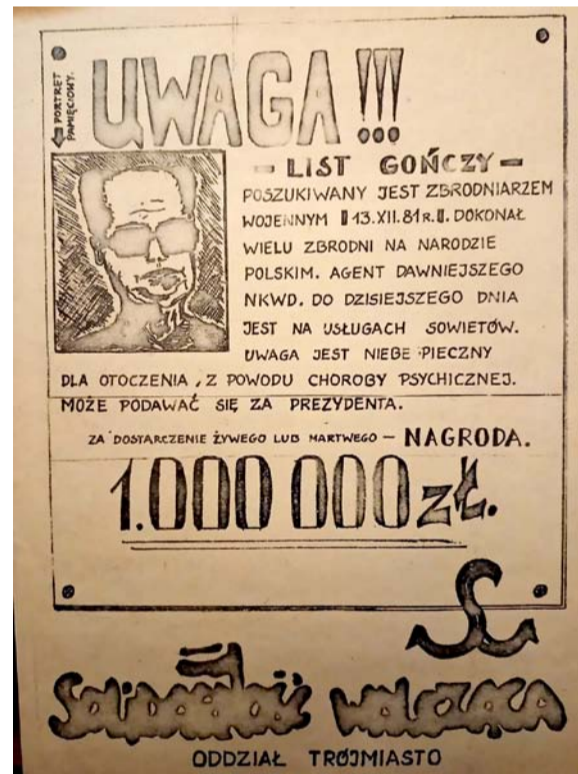
■ When did the Military Council of National Salvation happen? (Polish abbreviation: WRON – Wojskowa Rada Ocalenia Narodowego). Let's rather not treat this as a rhetorical question, as in historical studies known to me, there is no date, when this unconstitutional body was formed.

Historian Andrzej Paczkowski wrote about the beginnings of WRON that it "disappears in the darkness of the ages". A note from 12th of December 1981, stating "under the leadership of the army general Wojciech Jaruzelski, Ministry of National Defence officer's unit of the Polish People's Army decided to form itself as Military Council of National Salvation". That information in itself is not credible, as general Tadeusz Tuczapski, one of the members of WRON, mentioned, that the decision about forming WRON was made by four generals – Jaruzelski and his close coworkers: Czeslaw Kiszczak, Florian Siwicki and Michal Janiszewski. According to Jaruzelski's biographer, Lech Kowalski, it was general Kiszczak, who named the council "WRON", but the decision about forming it was made by Jaruzelski on December 13th, when the Marshall Law was already imposed. Members of WRON were informed about it by phone. General Mirosław Hermaszewski (Polish Air Force officer, who was the first Pole in space aboard Soyuz Spacecraft), stated that he was listed in WRON without his knowledge, as at that time he was studying in Moscow. However, on December 13th he received an order to come to Warsaw and after

a couple of days he went back to Moscow. The PPR's propaganda used Hermaszewski as the cover up for the real wrongdoing of WRON, as the 'first Pole in cosmos' and 'Copernicus' successor'. However, Hermaszewski could have refused to participate in WRON, but he did not. He agreed to be that 'fig's leaf', a puppet in the hands of Jaruzelski. On the other hand, what would his refusal achieve?

It is unquestionable today, that WRON was an illegally formed unconstitutional body.

The perpetrator was Jaruzelski, who on January 9th of 1982, made a decision about the right to issue legal acts and decrees in a form of proclamations, resolutions and decisions by WRON. The proclaimed legal acts were supposed to appear in the Polish Monitor. That in itself was breaking the constitution. The actual perpetrator and initiator of all WRON's activities was Jaruzelski.



but quietly dealing with his opponents. Jaruzelski was more of a security guard to the first secretaries of the communist party, than their executioner of power. Having good contacts with Moscow, he gained more freedom than the rest of them. His personal contacts with the Soviet security apparatus since the war gave Moscow an impression, that he was 'their man', whom they trusted without any boundaries. Marshall Law, which delayed Polish aspirations towards independence, in reality was an act of desperation of the falling communism. Moscow's decision makers decided afterwards, that only a 'soft landing' would save their positions. Hence their idea for Gorbachev, and in Polish People's Republic a 'round table'.



Paczkowski, the historian, wrote: "he (Jaruzelski) formed a reality of an almost absolute power. Unquestionably, it was more independent, more than Bierut's, as whatever one could say about Soviet politics, the Breznev's Kreml was different than that of Stalin or even early Chruszczow. It is rather unlikely, that Bierut would not have consulted with Moscow members of WRON, or the

date to impose Marshall Law. But Jaruzelski could, without any fear of repercussions". It contradicts the thesis, that imposing marshall law "saved Poland from the fate of Afghanistan".

Jaruzelski's position in Poland was exceptional in comparison to other prominent people. He kept himself in the shade of other known communist leaders like Gomulka, Gierek or Kania. He slowly built his position in the Polish People's Army, as a person not pushing to get into power,

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