

February  Luty

Gdy w Gromnicę z dachów ciecze,  
zima jeszcze się przewlecze.  
Melting roofs on Candlemas,  
Winter's time has yet to pass.

- 1 1733. Death of **August II the Strong**.
- 2 **CANDLEMAS**  
Today, candles blessed in church are taken home as a symbol of the Blessed Mother.
- 3 1974. Birth in Kraków of **Konrad Galka**, former Olympic butterfly swimmer.
- 4 1746. Birth of Polish and American patriot, freedom fighter and military engineer **Thaddeus Kościuszko**.
- 5 1909. Birth of **Grazyna Bacewicz**, Polish composer and violinist.
- 6 **ST. DOROTHY**  
1633. Coronation of **Władysław IV Vasa**.
- 7 1810. Birth of **Marcin Odlanicki Poczobutt**, Polish-Lithuanian Jesuit astronomer and mathematician. The Poczobutt crater on the Moon is named after him.
- 8 1807. At Iława, Poland, Napoleon attacks Russian forces in a snowstorm. The French ran low on supplies and ate their horses.
- 9 **1940**. Birth of **Bohdan Paczynski** (d. 2007), Polish-born American astrophysicist.
- 10 1866. Birth in Detroit of **John Temke**, first American priest of Polish descent.
- 11 1945. **Yalta Conference**. Soviets receive Poland's Eastern lands.
- 12 **TLUSTY CZWARTEK**  
In Poland, "Fat Thursday" marks the start of the six-day celebration leading up to the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday.
- 13 1416. A delegation of Lithuanians and Poles read their grievances against the Teutonic Knights at the **Church Council at Constance**.
- 14 **ST. VALENTINE**  
*Dzień Świętego Walentego*  
1918. Warsaw demonstrators protest the transfer of Polish territory to the Ukraine.
- 15 1903. Death of **Fr. Józef Dąbrowski**, founder of the Orchard Lake Schools. (b. 1842).
- 16 1919. **Greater Poland Uprising** ends.
- 17 **PAŃCZKI DAY**. In America, Pańczi Day is celebrated beside Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras. However, in Poland, pańczi are made and purchased the most on the Thursday before Ash Wednesday.
- 18 **ASH WEDNESDAY**  
Once called Introductory Wednesday (*Wstępna Środa*), Poles would celebrate and enjoy themselves all day, then go to church at night, where ashes would be sprinkled on their heads and the 40-day fast would begin.
- 19 1473. Birth of **Mikolaj Kopernik**, (Nicholas Copernicus), in of Torun, Poland.
- 20 1922. **Vilnius, Lithuania**, agreed to separate from Poland.
- 21 1574. Coronation of **Henry Valois**, King of France, as well as King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania from 1573 to 1575.
- 22 1810. Recorded birth of **Fryderyk Chopin**, Polish composer, pianist, in Zelazowa Wola, Poland († 1849).
- 23 1884. Birth of **Casimir Funk**, father of the vitamin. († 1967).
- 24 1947. **Arthur Bliss Lane** resigns as U.S. Ambassador to Poland in protest of Communist puppet regime.
- 25 1926. Poland demands a permanent seat on the League of Nations Council. It was given a semi-permanent seat.
- 26 1832. **Poland's Constitution** abolished by Czar Nicholas I.
- 27 1945. **Winston Churchill** addresses the British House of Commons regarding the "Polish question" and the post-World War II fate of the country.
- 28 1944. **Huta Pieniacka Massacre**. An estimated 600-800 Polish men, women and children are murdered by Ukrainian soldiers of the 4th SS Police Regiment under German command. Historians disagree over responsibility for the crime.

## The Ball in Europe's Court

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," said Spanish-American philosopher George Santayana in his 1905 work *The Life of Reason*. The line has been borrowed and paraphrased by many great thinkers, including Winston Churchill.

It is being cycled again, this time by a Polish foreign policy analyst who said Europe must restore its power or risk becoming a subordinate area of influence.

Małgorzata Bonikowska, director of the Center for International Relations Foundation (CSM), a think tank located in Warsaw, contends the world is already entering "an era of brutal rivalry" among great countries for areas of influence, resources, and technical supremacy.

Bonikowska stated that the U.S. military operation in Venezuela, culminating in President Nicolás Maduro's detention by the United States, ought to serve as a clarion call for the European Union.

She informed Poland's PAP news agency the incident indicates a wider transition away from a rules-based international order.

"The epoch of a multilateral world, with the United States as the custodian of a global order founded on international law and institutions, has concluded," she stated.

Her words echoed those of Salzburg Global Fellow Marco Overhaus, who in an op-ed piece in the *Salzburg Global*, said the era of



**BONIKOWSKA:** Situated between Germany and Russia, Poland understands the danger it is, now that "the United States as the custodian of a global order founded on international law and institutions, has concluded."

PHOTO: WYBORCZA.PL

American power is just about over.

Overhaus, the author of *Big Brother Gone: Europe and the End of Pax Americana*, (Frankfurter Allgemeine Buch, 2025) said the pillars of Pax Americana — military credibility, economic openness, and democratic values — are weakening and may not endure.

He also said growing U.S. unpredictability and global power shifts are undermining America's role as Europe's reliable security guarantor.

Thirdly, which is where Bonikowska comes in, Overhaus said Europe must reduce its dependence

on the United States and prepare for greater strategic and security autonomy.

Bonikowska says Washington has delineated its own territory. She stated that the Venezuela operation aimed to expel Russia and China from the nation and convey that the United States "will employ any means" it considers essential to uphold its dominance in its zone of influence.

In that, Europe's risks are being marginalized, she said.

"They consider China and Russia, yet they neglect Europe," said Bonikowska, contending the continent must now determine if it can assert itself as an independent power.

**TWO SCENARIOS.** She presented two scenarios. Initially, Europe restructures itself around the European Union to form what she termed a "Europe of Power," emphasizing strength in four critical domains: the economy, technology, control of vital resources, and military might.

In the second scenario, Europe transforms into a sphere of influence for an alternative power, as she characterizes it as a revitalized "concert of powers," making neutrality increasingly difficult to maintain.

Bonikowska said Poland comprehends the peril due to its historical position situated between Germany and Russia.

She said for Western Europe, the situation is more psychologically challenging to comprehend, contending that it has not been within anyone's area of control "for 400 years."

To mitigate strategic dependency, Bonikowska asserted Europe must continue supporting Ukraine, enhance weapons production, recalibrate expenditure priorities, and strengthen collaboration in sectors that influence power, particularly defense, technology, and access to raw resources.

She contended that this did not need transforming the European Union into a singular superstate, but may instead result in a more flexible "confederation," characterized by enhanced collective governance in essential domains and reduced external reliance.

Bonikowska criticized what she termed Europe's diminished capability for strategic governance, advocating for reforms to reinstate the ability to make long-term decisions.

She proposed that Europe contemplate options inspired by ancient Greece, where a wartime strategos was designated with exceptional authority, noting that this "does not necessarily have to be a single individual."

If this all sounds familiar, it should. Maybe this time Europe — and hopefully Washington — will pay attention before it is too late.

## The Last Chapter

This month, we begin the closure of the PAJ's Bookstore.

Born from urging of Cleveland's late Thad Cooke, the Bookstore was established with the mission to educate Polish Americans about its history and culture. Over the past 40 years, tens of thousands of books and Polish heritage items made their way into the homes of our readers.

And while the idea is still relevant, economic realities have made the operation cost ineffective. When it started, the internet for home use was just an idea. Today, Polish Americans have access to thousands of titles in print and digital format. Many publishers and authors who once depended on Polonia's media to get the word out now have their own websites. Most offer

their books directly through Amazon, which has an astronomical advantage over the PAJ's website. Ditto for direct sales through Etsy, Facebook, and other platforms.

The nail in the Bookstore's coffin was our inability to obtain 2026 calendars from Poland, once the cash cow of the undertaking. Because of tariffs, an acceptable profit margin on the calendars would

have doubled the price to our readers.

Because of limited stock, orders for the remaining inventory will be taken by telephone only, first-come, first-serve. Please call Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. EST.

The PAJ will continue to offer Christmas wafers (*oplatki*) for Christmas, as well as butter and chocolate lamb molds for Easter.

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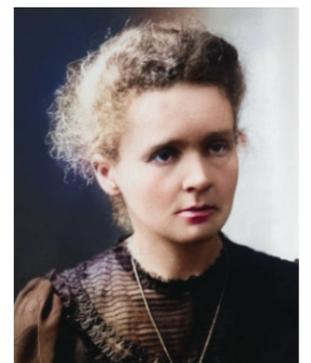
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