

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE POLISH-BRAZILIAN SOCIETY,
MR. STANISŁAW PAWLISZEWSKI, AT THE FIRST SYMPOSIUM
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW “POLISH COMMUNITY
ABROAD: BRAZIL” (WARSAW, THE 25TH OCTOBER 2016)

*Discurso del Presidente de la Sociedad Polaco-Brasileña,
Sr. Stanisław Pawliszewski, durante el I Simposio de la Universidad
de Varsovia “Comunidad polaca en el extranjero: Brasil”
(Varsovia, 25 de Octubre 2016)*

Professor Mariusz Malinowski
Director of the Center for Latin American Studies of the University of Warsaw
Your Excellency, Mr. Alfredo Leoni
Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Brazil
Dear Guests from Brazil
Ladies and Gentlemen
Friends

I wish to apologize that I will speak English and not Portuguese because my knowledge of Portuguese is too poor.

I would like to thank the organizers for the invitation to the First Symposium on Polish Communities in Brazil organized by the University of Warsaw.

I wish to say a few words about the activities of the Polish-Brazilian Society with regard to the popularization among various sections of Polish people of knowledge about the history of Polish emigration to Brazil, of Brazilians of Polish origin and of their contribution to the development of various fields of life of their country.

The Polish-Brazilian Society was established in 1929 by the then Marshal of the Senate of the Republic of Poland, Prof. Julian Szymański and its first inaugural session was held in the Senate. Its initial name was the Brazilian-Polish Society of Rui Barbosa in Warsaw. In its inauguration session many outstanding writers, officials and the Diplomatic Representative of Brazil in Warsaw took part in it.

It observed its 87th anniversary in November 2017. As a social, voluntary organization it has continuously conducted its activities except for the period during the Second World War. The founder of the Polish-Brazilian Society, Prof. Julian Szymański spent several years in Brazil as a professor of ophthalmology at the Federal University of Paraná and he conducted an ophthalmological clinic at Araucaria near Curitiba.

The main aim of the founders of the Polish-Brazilian Society was to maintain and strengthen contacts between Poland and hundreds of thousands of Polish immigrants in Brazil.

In 2020, we will observe 100 years of diplomatic relations between Poland and Brazil, but the contacts among the Polish and Brazilian people pre-date these official relations by some 50 years.

The first diplomatic representative of the Republic of Poland, Count Ksawery Orłowski, while presenting his credentials to the President of the United States of Brazil, Eptacio Pessoa, on May 27th 1920, said among others:

(...) By accrediting me as the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland, the Government wanted to show how much it was interested in establishing official relations as soon as possible between the two countries, which in fact have existed between our two nations already for over half a century. Over 52 years ago from when Poland was crossed out of the political map of Europe, its children moved for the first time to Brazil to seek better skies and a better life from that which was prepared for them by their oppressors (...). The Poles found bread and a new motherland there... Tolerance and respect shown by noble Brazil for their Polish spirit, have won their hearts, and not only their hearts, but also the hearts of all 25 million Poles whose hearts beat a common rhythm for your beautiful country.

It is estimated that there are about 1.5 to 2 million of Brazilians of Polish origin in Brazil.

Brazil was the first country in Latin America to recognize independent Poland in 1918.

Relations between Poland and Brazil have always been good.

We are also happy that at present there are solid political contacts at the highest levels, strong economic cooperation and trade relations, and healthy cultural contacts between our peoples.

I would like to mention the official visit of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso to Poland in February 2002 at the invitation of President Aleksander Kwasniewski. The visit of President Cardoso was the first official visit of the Brazilian president to Poland in the history of Polish-Brazilian relations.

During that visit, at the official dinner given by President Aleksander Kwasniewski in honour of President Cardoso, the Brazilian president said the following about Brazilians of Polish origin:

I have admired a brotherly and sincere spirit of Poles. During my trips to the South of Brazil, and especially to the states of Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul I was impressed by the dignity of Poles and their descendants who live there. The Polish community numbers about one and a half million people which makes Brazil second only to the United States of America where the largest community of Polish immigrants live. I frequently mention this number because Brazilians are very proud of the special contribution brought in by the friendly people to the building of the Brazilian society. The contribution of the Polish community to the life of Brazil has been significant: from theater to the fine arts, agriculture to industry, not to mention education and science.

The Polish-Brazilian Society is very happy to promote that knowledge among various sections of Polish society.

On the occasions of important anniversaries in the history of Polish Brazilian relations or in the history of Polish emigration to Brazil, the Polish-Brazilian Society prepares exhibitions dedicated to those anniversaries or organizes other events.

I am going to say a few words about just some of those exhibitions.

On the occasion of the 85th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2005 the Polish-Brazilian Society prepared the exhibition "Poles in Brazil". It was a Polish version of the exhibition "Poloneses no Brasil" prepared by a group of Polish Brazilians and Poles living in Brazil. The author of the exhibition, professor Henryk Siewierski of the University of Brasilia takes part in the Symposium. He also is an outstanding translator of works of Polish writers into Portuguese and an outstanding writer.

On the occasion of the 140th anniversary of Polish immigration to Brazil in 2009, the Polish-Brazilian Society presented this exhibition in many institutions in Warsaw and in other cities.

It is also presented today during the second part of the symposium at the Museum of the History of the Polish Peasants' Movement.

I will name the titles of just some of its panels: "Krzysztof Arciszewski", "Destination Brazil", "Emigrants", "Brazilians of Polish descent", "In the eye of the camera of João Urban", "Paulo Leminski", "Fayga Ostrower", "Frans Krajcberg", "Andre Bukowinski", "The Priests and Missionaries", "Poles in

Brazilian Literature, Arts and Science”, and “Polish Language and Literature in Brazil”.

To commemorate the 140th anniversary of the Polish emigration to Brazil, a session of the Committee for Emigration and Contacts with Poles Abroad of the Polish Senate was also held. It was organized on the initiative of the Polish-Brazilian Society. The meeting was presided over by the President of the Commission Senator Andrzej Person. The session was attended by senators, Ambassador of Brazil Mr. Carlos Alberto Simas Magalhães, a group of Polish Brazilians from the state of Rio Grande do Sul visiting Poland and a number of other guests.

The exhibitions prepared to celebrate important anniversaries in the relations between the two countries always have a large part devoted to the history of Polish emigration to Brazil, and to the Brazilians of Polish origin and their role in the life of their motherland.

During the presentation of the exhibition “Poland and Brazil are closer than it seems” dedicated to 90 years of relations, which took place in the Library of the University of Łódź, we stressed that the important Brazilian artist, Fayga Ostrower was born in Łódź. We also said that many Polish weavers from the Łódź region emigrated to Santa Catarina in the middle of the 19th century and contributed to the development of the textile industry in Santa Catarina.

The Polish-Brazilian Society also tries to contribute to the popularization of works by Brazilian poets of Polish origin. Owing to the cooperation of the Center for Latin American Studies of the University of Warsaw and the Polish-Brazilian Society, a collection of poems entitled “Graniczne progi”/“The Threshold” by Tomasz Lychowski from Rio de Janeiro was published in Poland.

The Polish-Brazilian Society takes efforts to popularize poems by Paulo Leminski (1944-1989), an outstanding Brazilian poet of Polish origin. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of his birth celebrated in 20014 in Brazil, the collection of his poems “Powróciło moje polskie serce”/“Meu coração de polaco voltou” was published in Katowice in 2014. An exhibition with the same title was prepared in Curitiba in 2015. The curators of this exhibition are Ms. Aurea Leminski and Ms. Estrela Ruiz Leminski, the daughters of the poet. Due to the efforts of the Polish-Brazilian Society and the Museum of the History of the Polish Peasants’ Movement, the exhibition will be presented in Poland. We hope that its Polish version will be presented in Poland in the near future.

In realizing various projects, the Polish-Brazilian Society cooperates closely with the Embassy of Brazil, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Rui Barbosa

Secondary School in Warsaw, the Museum of the History of the Polish Peasants' Movement, the Center for Latin American Studies in Warsaw and with many other institutions and museums. It also maintains contacts with the Polish Embassy in Brasilia and the Consulate General in Curitiba as well as with some organizations of Polish Brazilians. The Polish-Brazilian Society very much appreciates the support and cooperation of Dr. Zdzisław Malczewski of The Society of Christ, Rector of the Polish Catholic Mission in Brazil and the editor of the periodical "POLONICUS" published in Portuguese in Curitiba.

I would like to take this occasion to express our thanks and gratitude for their support for the projects implemented by the Polish-Brazilian Society.

Thank you all for your attention.