

OXFORD – POLAND



Paulina Kewes

Paulina Kewes, born in Gdynia, grew up in Sopot, studied and taught English and American literature at the University of Gdansk (1983-91), meanwhile freelancing as a translator and interpreter, among others at the 2nd National Solidarity Congress in 1990. Awarded a Soros Visiting Scholarship to Oxford in 1991, she subsequently won a Graduate Scholarship at Jesus College (1992-95) and a Junior Research Fellowship at University College Oxford (1995-97). With a Gdansk MA thesis on late C20 black American women writers, in 1996 she completed an Oxford D.Phil. on dramatic authorship and literary property in England, 1660-1710. She developed these themes in a monograph, as well as publishing extensively on plagiarism and appropriation, translation, *histoire du livre*, Dryden, Rochester, and Shakespearian adaptation and biography in the Long Eighteenth Century. Since then, her central academic interest has shifted to Elizabethan and early Stuart drama, principally Shakespeare, classical reception, historiography, as well as British and European history, politics, and religion.

Paulina is a Tutorial Fellow of Jesus College and Professor of English Literature at the University of Oxford ([Jesus College faculty page](#); [University of Oxford faculty page](#)). She is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and serves on the Oxford English Monographs Committee and the editorial boards of *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, *Postgraduate English* and *Critical Survey*. She is the author or editor of numerous scholarly works, including *Authorship and Appropriation: Writing for the Stage in England, 1660-1710* (Oxford, 1998); *Plagiarism in Early Modern England* (2003), *The Uses of History in Early Modern England* (2006), *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles*



(2013), *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England* (2014), *Stuart Succession Literature: Moments and Transformations* (Oxford, 2019); and *Ancient Rome in English Political Culture, c. 1570-1660* (2020).

Paulina led the [Holinshed Project](#), and was a Co-Investigator on the AHRC-funded [Stuart Successions Project](#), which explored succession literature from James I to Queen Anne and led to the development of [Stuarts Online](#), a resource bringing scholarship on the Stuart era to a wider audience.

She is writing a monograph entitled *Contesting the Royal Succession in Reformation England: Latimer to Shakespeare* for Oxford University Press, for which she has been awarded a Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellowship (2021-24), as well as leading an international, interdisciplinary project ‘Recovering Europe’s Parliamentary Culture, 1500-1700: A New Approach to Representative Institutions’ (<https://earlymodern.web.ox.ac.uk/recovering-europes-parliamentary-culture-1500-1700-new-approach-representative-institutions>). Supported by Oxford’s John Fell Fund and the Europaeum (<https://europaeum.org/>), this project brings together scholars and institutions from Oxford and the wider world, to carry out a pilot study centring on the English Parliament, the Polish Sejm, and the Dutch States General.

Paulina is currently coordinating the celebrations of the 450th anniversary of Jesus College (<https://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/450th-anniversary/12-objects-digital-exhibition>), co-curating a digital exhibition ‘Oxford Re-Formed’ which will be launched in September on the Museum of Oxford’s City Stories website, and co-leading the commemorations of the 150th anniversary of the Universities Tests Act of 1871 which finally opened the University of Oxford – and Cambridge and Durham – to students and staff of all faiths and none.

Paulina is the Senior Member of Oxford University Polish Society (<https://www.oxpolsoc.pl/>), the first woman to hold this position.





Prof. Leszek Kolakowski

Leszek Kolakowski, (born Oct. 23, 1927, [Radom](#), Pol.—died July 17, 2009, Oxford, Eng.), Polish [philosopher](#) and [historian of philosophy](#) who became one of [Marxism](#)'s greatest [intellectual](#) critics.

Kolakowski was educated privately and in the underground school system during the German occupation of [Poland](#) in [World War II](#). In 1950 he received an M.A. in philosophy from the University of Łódź, and in 1953 he received a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Warsaw, where he taught and served as chair of the department of the [history](#) of philosophy until 1968. Kolakowski began his scholarly career as an orthodox Marxist. He was a member of the [communist](#) youth organization and joined the Polish [United Workers' Party](#) (PUWP; the communist party) in 1945. When he was sent to Moscow for a course for promising [intellectuals](#), however, he began to become disenchanted with the Soviet Marxist system.

Upon his return to Poland, he became part of the movement for democratization that led to the Polish workers' uprising of 1956. His revisionist [critique](#) of [Joseph Stalin](#), *What Is Socialism?* (1957), was officially banned in Poland but was widely circulated nonetheless. His 1959 essay "The Priest and the Jester," in which Kolakowski explored the roles of [dogmatism](#) and [skepticism](#) in intellectual history, brought him to national prominence in Poland. In the 1950s and '60s he published a series of books on the history of [Western philosophy](#) and a study of religious [consciousness](#) and institutional religion, at the same time attempting to define a [humanistic](#) Marxism; the latter effort resulted in *Towards a Marxist Humanism* (1967).

A speech given by Kolakowski on the 10th anniversary of the 1956 uprising led to his expulsion from the PUWP in 1966. In 1968 he was dismissed from his professorship and soon afterward left Poland.



He was elected in 1970 to a senior research fellowship at All Souls College in the [University of Oxford](#), where he remained until his retirement in 1995. He also taught at many prestigious American and Canadian schools, including [McGill University](#), [Yale University](#), and the [University of Chicago](#).

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Kolakowski eventually abandoned Marxism, which he described as “the greatest fantasy of our century.” In his most influential work, the three-volume *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth, and Dissolution* (1976), he described the principal currents of Marxist thought and chronicled the origins, rise, and decline of Marxist [communism](#). As an adviser and supporter of the [Solidarity trade union](#), which challenged the communist regime in Poland, Kolakowski played a practical as well as theoretical part in the collapse of the Soviet empire in the late 1980s.

Kolakowski also wrote much on religion and the spiritual basis of [culture](#) and was the author of three plays and three volumes of stories. He was the recipient of the German Booksellers Peace Prize in 1977, the Erasmus Prize in 1980, a MacArthur fellowship in 1983, the Jefferson Award of the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) in 1986, and the Order of the White Eagle (Poland’s highest honour) in 1998. In 2003 the U.S. [Library of Congress](#) awarded him the first John W. Kluge Prize in the Human Sciences.

Link: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Leszek-Kolakowski>





Prof. Zbigniew Pelczynski –
picture from <https://alchetron.com/Zbigniew-Pe>

Zbigniew Pełczyński, OBE (born 29 December 1925) is a Polish-born British political philosopher and academic. He is an Emeritus Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford, where he taught politics from 1957 to 1992. He has been instrumental in providing opportunities for qualified scholars from Poland and other post-communist countries to study at British universities, especially at Oxford and Cambridge.

Pełczyński was born in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, Poland. He fought in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising and was taken prisoner by the Germans. After the war Pełczyński settled in Britain, where he attended St. Andrews University in Scotland. In 1956, he completed his D.Phil. thesis at Oxford University on Hegel's minor political works.

After 1956, Pełczyński made regular visits to Poland and was instrumental in developing several programmes for the education of students from communist Europe at Oxford. In 1982, he was instrumental in establishing a scholarship program for Polish students at Oxford. Then in 1986, through collaboration with the Hungarian-American philanthropist George Soros, who had earlier established the Open Society Foundation, scholarships became available for Hungarian students at Oxford and the Stefan Batory Foundation was established in Poland. The programme widened with participation from Cambridge University, Manchester University, and other British universities. In the United States, Pełczyński became well known for having been the politics tutor at Oxford University for the Rhodes Scholar and future President Bill Clinton. Other famous students include prime minister of Hungary Viktor Orbán, former Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Radek Sikorski and journalist and biographer Walter Isaacson.

Pełczyński is an honorary member of the Polish academic society *Collegium Invisibile*, a prestigious institution that offers tuition for outstanding Polish students.



In 1990s Pełczyński was advising the Constitutional Committee of the Polish Sejm (lower chamber of the parliament), which was working on the new Constitution of the Republic of Poland. He was an advisor to the Chief of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland on government institutional reforms and was a member of Prime Minister's Council on the education of civil servants. He was consulting the European Economic Union and the OECD on government reforms and public administration in Poland.

In 1994 Pełczyński founded the School for Young Social and Political Leaders in Warsaw. The organization, which subsequently changed its name to the School for Leaders Society, states as one of its goals "creating social capital based on leadership".

A biography of Pełczyński by his former student David McAvoy was published in 2012.

Link:<https://alchetron.com/Zbigniew-Pe>





Prof. Norman Davies – 2009

Norman Davies, born in 1939 in Bolton (Lancashire) was educated at Bolton School, Magdalen College, Oxford, the University of Sussex and at several continental universities including Grenoble, Perugia and Kraków. His formative years created a lifelong European outlook. He was for many years Professor of History at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, and has also taught as a visitor to Columbia, McGill, Hokkaido, Stanford, Harvard, Adelaide, and Australian National, Canberra.

He is the author of *White Eagle, Red Star: the Polish-Soviet War, 1919-20* (1972); *God's Playground: A History of Poland* (1981); the No.1 bestseller *Europe: A History* (1996); *The Isles: A History* (1998); *Microcosm: Portrait of a Central European City* (with Roger Moorhouse, 2002); *Rising '44, the Battle for Warsaw* (2003); *Europe at War, 1939-45* (2006); and *Vanished Kingdoms* (2011). His books have been translated into more than twenty languages, and he is a regular broadcaster.

From 1997 to 2006 he was a Supernumerary Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford, and is now an Honorary Fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford and Professor at the Jagiellonian University, Cracow. He has been a Fellow of the British Academy since 1997 and since 2011 of the Learned Society of Wales. He has been awarded Poland's Order of the White Eagle and in Britain the CMG 'for services to history'. He holds honorary doctorates from several universities in Britain and Poland as well as the honorary citizenship of five cities, and is a life member both of Clare Hall and of Peterhouse Cambridge.

He lives in Oxford and Cracow with his wife, Maria, and has two grown sons, Daniel and Christian.

“There is too much history,” he says, “for anyone to try and understand it all.”

Link: <http://www.normandavies.com/?lang=en>





"Zyczliwec" from Wroclaw in the Covered Market

Wrocław, Poland - Twinned 2018

Wrocław is one of the oldest and most beautiful cities in Poland. Situated at the foot of the Sudetes, by the Oder River, crisscrossed by its numerous tributaries and channels, it is an exceptional city of 12 islands and more than 100 bridges.

The large market square, enclosed by impressive tenement houses, after a thorough renovation in 1997 is particularly impressive.

Wrocław is also a dynamic centre of culture. Numerous theatres, an opera, a concert hall, and many clubs, museums, and galleries ensure a rich programme of artistic events, including music and film festivals of international renown.

You may also come across a few of the bronze gnomes the city is famous for. There are over 300 hundred of them around the city. Oxford has its very own gnome in the city centre. This gift of friendship from Wrocław is a gnome named Życzliwec, or 'well-wisher' and his permanent home is in the Covered Market.

The Oxford Polish Association is actively involved in the Oxford-Wrocław link.

Links:

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20139/oxford_international_links/1297/international_links_-_wroc%C5%82aw_poland

<https://visitwroclaw.eu/en>

<https://youtu.be/G-IWMTZSs-U>





Maria Czaplicka

Maria Czaplicka she was a pioneer of anthropology in Europe and the first lecturer of the subject in Oxford. She rode across the Siberian tundra in a dog sledge to learn the cultures of unknown tribes.

Maria Czaplicka is born in 1886 in Warsaw. As a young woman, she wants to pursue higher education. However, Maria soon realises she doesn't have much choice in the matter: the University of Warsaw won't start accepting female students until 1915.

Czaplicka doesn't come from a wealthy family, so she cannot afford to move to another country. Instead, she teaches at a girls' boarding school and works as a private tutor. In her free time, she focuses on her academic interests, attending meetings in various scientific societies in Warsaw. She becomes increasingly passionate about geography, ethnology and anthropology. Maria's life changes forever in 1910 when she receives a Mianowski Scholarship. It's an unprecedented situation: never before the institution had granted anyone funds for studies abroad. Maria leaves for London with 900 rubles in her pocket.

Once in England, Czaplicka begins her studies in Anthropology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. There, she meets Bronisław Malinowski, who in a few years' time will leave for his expedition to New Guinea. After a year in London, Maria transfers to study Anthropology at Oxford. There, she has a chance to impress English academic circles. The British want to know the results of Polish and Russian research on Siberian tribes. Czaplicka speaks both languages, and so she



is tasked with an important duty: she is to write a book on this topic, based on her reviews of the Russian literature on the people of Siberia.

Czaplicka becomes increasingly interested in the far ends of Siberia. She decides to organise a scientific expedition to those lands. Her goal is to research and describe the Evenks (then called Tungu), indigenous peoples of that area, barely known in Europe.

Maria collects funds, manages to get the support of various scientific bodies, and puts together a team of researchers. In May 1914, the expedition is ready to go. In Moscow, they board the Trans-Siberian Railway. After reaching Krasnoyarsk, they transfer to an English steamer that takes them to the estuary of the Yenisei River. Their work begins there.

Czaplicka, the leader of the expedition, learns the local languages, creates a dictionary and writes down local legends. The ornithologist Maud Haviland observes local birds. The artist Dora Curtis makes drawings and takes photographs. American anthropologist Henry Hall collects exhibits for the University of Pennsylvania and assists Czaplicka with her anthropological research.

During their physically exhausting journey in a reindeer sledge, they will experience cold up to -60°C and dangerous snow blizzards. It's not easy, but the Polish-American duo survives. They eventually reach the lands inhabited by the Evenks and continue their research. They return to London in September 1915, travelling through Scandinavia to avoid the front lines.

Their experiences in Siberia make ready material for a book. Czaplicka knows as such, and so in 1916, she writes **My Siberian Year**, published in a popular non-fiction series. The book is full of anecdotes, exotic facts and blood-curdling stories: and it's all true.

That's not the end of Czaplicka's successes. She is offered a position at the University of Oxford, becoming not only the first anthropologist to teach there, but also the only female lecturer at the whole university. However, her luck doesn't last long. Maria's fellowship is only a temporary position to cover for a professor who was conscripted to fight in World War I. When he returns in 1919, Maria needs to step down.

Maria decides to try her luck in the United States. She gives lectures at several American universities and museums, but she doesn't receive any attractive job offers, and after a few months, she returns to Europe. She starts teaching Anthropology at the University of Bristol. It's not Oxford, but what can she do?

In the end, the fellowship jury did not delay their decision. Czaplicka finds out someone else received the grant. The news is crushing. Her contract in Bristol is coming to an end: what to do now? The next day, she poisons herself with mercury chloride. In her will, she requests to be buried in Oxford.

Links: <https://culture.pl/en/article/maria-czaplicka-whirling-with-shamans>
<https://notesfrompoland.com/2021/05/27/the-trailblazing-female-academic-who-advocated-womens-suffrage-and-polands-independence/>





Mr Alfons Maćkowiak, also known as [Alan Mack](#) (born March 29, 1916 in Berlin, died January 31, 2017 in London) - artillery officer of the Polish Army of the Second Republic of Poland, captain of the Polish Armed Forces, soldier of the 1st Independent Parachute Brigade, after World War II Polish community activist in England, posthumously promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. Mr Maćkowiak, was an **Oxford University Athletic Club coach for 25 years**.

Polish Ambassador to the UK Arkady Rzegocki unveiled the plaque commemorating gen. Alfons Maćkowiak, WWII veteran and athletics coach.

The plaque on the Oxford University campus commemorates Alfons Maćkowiak, who as a Polish Army officer fought against Germany in defending Poland in September 1939 as well as in the paratrooper operation Market-Garden meant to liberate Holland in September 1944.

“After Mr Mack passed away, many people paid tribute to him with the emphasis of his military past. We appreciate that, but today, however, we are honouring a man, who devoted decades of his long life to inspire the youth engaging in sport activities”, said a member of the Achilles club that unites athletes from Oxford and Cambridge universities.

In 1939 Mr Maćkowiak succeeded in escaping from Soviet captivity, which saved him the fate of thousands of Polish army officers who were murdered in Katyń and other locations of the Soviet Union. He managed to get to England and later served under general Stanisław Sosabowski during the Market-Garden operation. After the end of the war, he run a boarding house in Essex.

In 1950 Alan Mack was awarded a medal for heroism by King George IV for saving the crew of a burning British bomber which crashed near his work place. Many years later his friend, the Royal Air Force captain Mark Ponting said that Mr Maćkowiak “was a big loss for Poland, but a great gain for the UK”. Mr Maćkowiak was posthumously promoted to brigadier general rank by the Polish President Andrzej Duda. His ashes were brought to Poland and buried at Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw.

Links: <https://polandin.com/37888901/memorial-plaque-of-polish-veteran-unveiled-in-oxford>

<https://www.special-ops.pl/artykul/id859,general-brygady-alfons-wiktor-mackowiak-1916-2017>

