

= Paweł Jasienica =

Paweł Jasienica was the pen name of Leon Lech Beynar (10 November 1909 ? 19 August 1970) , a Polish historian , journalist and soldier .

During World War II , Jasienica (then , Leon Beynar) fought in the Polish Army , and later , the Armia Krajowa resistance . Near the end of the war , he was also working with the anti @-@ Soviet resistance , which later led to him taking up a new name , Paweł Jasienica , to hide from the communist government of the People 's Republic of Poland . He was associated with the Tygodnik Powszechny weekly and several other newspapers and magazines . He is best known for his 1960s books on Polish history ? on the Kingdom of Poland under the Piast Dynasty , the Jagiellon Dynasty , and the elected kings of the Polish @-@ Lithuanian Commonwealth . Those books , still popular , played an important role in popularizing Polish history among several generations of readers .

Jasienica became an outspoken critic of the censorship in the People 's Republic of Poland , and as a notable dissident , he was persecuted by the government . He was subject to significant invigilation by the security services , and his second wife was in fact an agent of the communist secret police . For a brief period marking the end of his life , his books were prohibited from being distributed or printed .

= = Life = =

= = = Youth = = =

Beynar was born on 10 November 1909 in Simbirsk , Russia , to Polish parents , Mikołaj Beynar and Helena Maliszewska . His paternal grandfather , Ludwik Beynar , fought in the January Uprising and married a Spanish woman , Joanna Adela Feugas . His maternal grandfather , Wiktor Maliszewski , fought in the November Uprising . Both of his grandfathers eventually settled in the Russian Empire . His father , Mikołaj , worked as an agronomist . Beynar 's family lived in Russia and Ukraine ? they moved from Simbirsk to a location near Bila Tserkva and Uman , then to Kiev until the Russian Revolution of 1917 , after which they decided to settle in the independent Poland . After brief stay in Warsaw , during the Polish ? Soviet War , his family settled in Opatów , and in 1924 , moved to Grodno .

Beynar graduated from gymnasium (secondary school) in Wilno (Vilnius) and graduated in history from Stefan Batory University in Wilno (his thesis concerned the January Uprising) . At the university he was an active member of several organizations including Klub Intellektualistów (Intellectuals ' Club) and Akademicki Klub Wędzgarów (Academic Club of Vagabonds) . After graduating , he finished training for the officer cadet (podchorząy) in the Polish Army . From 1928 to 1937 he lived in Grodno , where he worked as a history teacher in a gymnasium ; later he was employed as an announcer for Polish Radio Wilno . Here also , Beynar embarked on his career as author and essayist , writing for a local newspaper , Słowo Wileńskie (The Wilno Word) . On 11 November 1934 he married Władysław Adamowicz , and in 1938 his daughter Ewa was born . In 1935 he published his first history book - about king Zygmunt August , Zygmunt August na ziemiach dawnego Wielkiego Księstwa (Sigismund Augustus on the Lands of the Former Grand Duchy [of Lithuania]) .

= = = World War II = = =

During World War II , Beynar was a soldier in the Polish Army , fighting the German Wehrmacht when it invaded Poland in September 1939 . He commanded a platoon near Sandomierz and was eventually taken prisoner by the Germans . While in a temporary prisoner @-@ of @-@ war camp in Opatów , he was able to escape with the help of some old school friends from the time his family lived there in the early 1920s . He joined the Polish underground organization , " Związek Walki Zbrojnej " (Association for Armed Combat) , later transformed into the " Armia Krajowa " (" AK " ;

the Home Army) , and continued the fight against the Germans . In the resistance he had the rank of lieutenant , worked in the local Wilno headquarters and was an editor of an underground newspaper " Pobudka " . He was also involved in the underground teaching . In July 1944 he took part in the operation aimed at the liberation of Wilno from the Germans (Operation Ostra Brama) . In the wake of this operation , around 19 ? 21 August , his partisan unit , like many others , was intercepted and attacked by the Soviets . He was taken prisoner ; sources vary as to whether he was to be exiled to Siberia or conscripted into the Polish People 's Army . Either way he escaped and rejoined AK partisans (the Home Army 5th Wilno Brigade) . For a while , he was an aide to Major Zygmunt Szendzielarz (?upaszko) and was member of the anti @-@ Soviet resistance , Wolno?? i Niezawis?o?? (WiN , Freedom and Independence) . He was promoted to the rank of captain . Wounded in August 1945 , he left the Brigade before it was destroyed by the Soviets , and avoided the fate of most of its officers who were sentenced to death . While recovering from his wounds , he found shelter in the village of Jasienica .

= = = Post @-@ war = = =

After recovering from his wounds in 1945 , Beynar decided to leave the resistance , and instead began publishing in an independent Catholic weekly Tygodnik Powszechny . It was then that he took the pen @-@ name Jasienica (from the name of the place where he had received treatment for his injuries) in order not to endanger his wife , who was still living in Soviet @-@ controlled Vilnius , Lithuania . Soon he became a member of the weekly 's staff and then an editor . In 1948 he was arrested by the Polish secret police (Polish : Urz?d Bezpiecze?stwa) but after several weeks was released after the intervention of Boles?aw Piasecki from the PAX Association . In gratitude to Piasecki , he worked with PAX in the future , leaving Tygodnik Powszechny for PAX in 1950 . From 1950 he was a director of Polish Caritas charity . His essays were published in Dzi? i Jutro , S?owo Powszechne , ?ycie Warszawy , Po Prostu . From at least this period till his death he would live in Warsaw . His wife W?adys?awa died 29 March 1965 .

Over time he became increasingly involved in various dissident organizations . In December 1959 he became a vice president of the Union of Polish Writers (Zwi?zek Literatów Polskich , ZLP) . He also published in the magazine ?wiat (1951 ? 1969) . In 1962 he was the last president of the literary discussion society , Klub Krzywego Ko?a . In 1966 he was a vice president of the PEN Club . While in the late 1940s and 1950s he focused mostly on journalistic activity , later he turned to writing popular history in book format . In the 1960s he wrote his most famous works , historical books about history of Poland - the Kingdom of Poland in the times of the Piast dynasty , the Jagiellonian dynasty , and the era of elected kings (the Polish @-@ Lithuanian Commonwealth) . His book on the Jagiellonian Poland was recognized as the best book of the year by the readers .

Jasienica was , however , very outspoken in his criticism of the censorship in the People 's Republic of Poland . On 29 February 1968 during a ZLP meeting , Jasienica presented a harsh critique of the government . These acts , and in particular his signing of the dissident Letter of 34 in 1964 against censorship and his involvement in the 1968 protests led to his being labeled a political dissident , for which he suffered government persecution . Partly as a response to government 's persecution of Jasienica , in 1968 the satirist Janusz Szpota?ski dedicated one of his anti @-@ government poems , Ballada o ?upaszce (The Ballad of ?upaszko) , written while Szpota?ski was in Mokotów Prison , to the writer . In the aftermath of the 1968 events , Polish communist media , and communist leader , W?adys?aw Gomu?ka , on 19 March 1968 , alleged that in 1948 Jasienica was freed because he collaborated with the communist regime ; this allegation caused much controversy and damaged Jasienica 's reputation . He was subject to much invigilation by the security services . In December 1969 , five years after his first wife 's death , he became married again . This marriage , after his death , proven to be highly controversial , as his second wife was in fact a secret police informant before the marriage , and continued to write reports about him throughout their marriage . Since then , till his death , his books were prohibited from being distributed or printed .

Jasienica died from cancer on 19 August 1970 in Warsaw . Some publicists later speculated to what extent his death was caused by " hounding from the party establishment " . He is buried in

Warsaw 's Powązki Cemetery . His funeral was attended by many dissidents and became a political manifestation ; Adam Michnik recalls seeing Antoni Słonimski , Stefan Kisielewski , Stanisław Stomma , Jerzy Andrzejewski , Jan Józef Lipski and Władysław Bartoszewski . Bohdan Cywiński read a letter from Antoni Gołubiew .

= = Work = =

Jasienica book publishing begun with a historical book , Zygmunt August na ziemiach dawnego Wielkiego Księstwa (Sigismund Augustus in the lands of the former Grand Duchy ; 1935) . He is best known for his highly acclaimed and popular historical books from the 1960s about Piast Poland , Jagiellon Poland and the Polish -Lithuanian Commonwealth : Polska Piastów (Piast Poland , 1960) , Polska Jagiellonów (Jagiellon Poland , 1963) and the trilogy Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów (The Commonwealth of Both Nations , 1967 - 1972) . This trilogy made him one of the most popular Polish history writers . Throughout his life he avoided writing about modern history , to minimize the influence that the official , communist Marxist historiography would have on his works . This was also one of the reasons for the popularity of his works , which were seen as a rare , legally obtainable alternative to the official version of history . His books , publication of which resumed once again after his death , were labeled as " best -selling " , and became the most reprinted postwar history of Poland .

His Dwie drogi (Two ways , 1959) about the January Uprising of the 1860s represent the latest historical period he has tackled . His other popular historical books include Trzej kronikarze , (Three chroniclers ; 1964) , a book about three medieval chroniclers of Polish history (Thietmar of Merseburg , Gallus Anonymus and Wincenty Kadłubek) , in which he discusses the Polish society through ages ; and Ostatnia z rodu (Last of the Family ; 1965) about the last queen of the Jagiellon dynasty , Anna Jagiellonka . His Rozważania o wojnie domowej (1978 ; Thoughts on Civil War) were the last book he has finished ; unlike majority of his other works , this book is ostensibly about the civil war (Chouannerie) in Brittany , France . This work does however contains numerous arguments applicable to more modern Polish history ; arguments that Jasienica thought would not be allowed by the censors if the book discussed Polish history .

In addition to historical books , Jasienica , wrote a series of essays about archeology - Słowiański rodowód (Slavic genealogy ; 1961) and Archeologia na wrywki . Reportaże (Archeological excerpts : reports ; 1956) , journalistic travel reports (Wszak pojechał za cianek , Kraj Nad Jangtse) and science and technology (Opowieści o żywej materii , Zakotwiczeni) . Those works were mostly created around the 1950s and 1960s .

His Pamiętnik (Diary) was the work that he begun shortly before his death , and that was never finished .

In 2006 , Polish journalist and former dissident Adam Michnik said that :

I belong to the generation ' 68 , a generation that has special debt to Paweł Jasienica - in fact he paid with his life for daring to defend us , the youth . I want for somebody to be able to write , at some point , that in my generation there were people who stayed true to his message . Those who never forgot about his beautiful life , his wise and brave books , his terrible tragedy .

Polish historian Henryk Samsonowicz echoes Michnik 's essay in his introduction to a recent (2008) edition of Trzej kronikarze , describing Jasienica as a person who did much to popularize Polish history . Hungarian historian Balázs Trencsényi notes that " Jasienica 's impact of the formation of the popular interpretation of Polish history is hard to overestimate " . British historian Norman Davies , himself an author of a popular account of Polish history (God 's Playground) , notes that Jasienica , while more of " a historical writer than an academic historian " , had " formidable talents " , gained " much popularity " and that his works would find no equals in the time of communist Poland . Samsonowicz notes that Jasienica " was a brave writer " , going against prevailing system , and willing to propose new hypotheses and reinterpret history in innovative ways . Michnik notes how Jasienica was willing to write about Polish mistakes , for example in the treatment of Cossacks . Ukrainian historian Stephen Velychenko also positively commented on Jasienica 's extensive coverage of the Polish -Ukrainian history . Both Michnik and Samsonowicz note how Jasienica

's works contain hidden messages in which Jasienica discusses more contemporary history , such as in his Rozwazania

= = Awards = =

Medals :

Order of Polonia Restituta , Grand Cross , awarded on 3 May 2007 (posthumously)

Order of Polonia Restituta , Knight 's Cross , awarded on 22 July 1956

Cross of Valour , awarded by the Wilno Region Headquarters of Armia Krajowa in 1944 , confirmed by Polish Ministry of Defense in 1967

Armia Krajowa Cross , awarded in 1967 in London

Awards :

2007 laureate of Poland 's " Custodian of National Memory " Prize .