

MIROSLAW J. LESZKA

### **Constantina, Wife of Emperor Mauricius**

Constantina, emperor Tiberius II's daughter and emperor Mauricius' wife was born most probably before the year 570. The unclear evidence that comes from John of Ephesus and Euagrius have become the basis of a popular claim that primarily she was named Augusta. The hypothesis, however, appears to be of little probability. Her father, just before his death in the year 582, granted her the title of Augusta and betrothed to Mauricius, a person of merit and a trustworthy general who had been proclaimed his co-emperor. At the time of entering into the marriage, Mauricius was 43. He was an adult and experienced man, while Constantina was a teenager. The age difference must have had influence upon the way they relationship developed and worked. Mauricius was the dominant person in the couple. State affairs were reserved for him, while his wife took care of the family and was busy with official engagements. As the time went by, the empress was more and more involved in the activities of her husband. She tried (even if unable to collaborate as far as important state affairs are concerned) at least to be informed about crucial problems, and especially the problems of the Church.

The usurpation of Phocas in the year 602 was turning point in her life. She lost her husband and sons. However, she appeared to be strong enough not to be broken by her personal tragedy. She started the fight to re-establish her position. Her participation in a plot against Phocas lead her to the tragic end. Constantina and her daughters were ordered by the emperor to die (605?). Constantina was not a ruler of calibre Theodora, the wife of emperor Justinian, and Sophia, the wife of Justin II (who participated in wielding power on a par with their husbands). She was a basilissa who became the symbol of the mother-empress. Besides, she was a tragic figure whose fate made her live through the most excruciating experience, the death of all her nine children.

WOJCIECH SZCZYGIELSKI

### **The permanent *Seym*. The parliamentary struggle for its creation and its role in Polish political life at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century**

The idea of the permanent *Seym* was introduced into Polish political culture at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century owing to Stanislaw Staszic's work entitled *The Remarks on Jan Zamoyski's Life* (1787). The permanent *Seym*, permanently in session and consisting of the same members, combined legislative and executive power. It was hoped that the creation of the permanent *Seym* would lead to the abolition of the Permanent Council (a kind of government under Russia's protectorate) and as a result, Poland was supposed to gain full independence by political means. At the same time, the permanent *Seym* was to make the middle gentry the dominant power of the Commonwealth, and free the State from magnates' supremacy.

At the beginning of the debates of the Great *Seym* (1788–1792), the idea of the permanent *Seym* appealed to the gentry very much. However, the permanent *Seym* was never formally created due to the fact that the political initiative at the *Seym* was taken over by the Puławy party, whose leader Ignacy Potocki and his followers did not approve of the idea of the permanent *Seym*. Instead, they were in favour of the ready *Seym* – ready to be convened. At the turn of 1788/89 a compromise was reached between the parliamentary majority represented by the middle gentry who supported the permanent *Seym*, and the Puławy party. The essence of the compromise was that the *Seym* which was currently in session was to become the permanent *Seym* and in the future it was to be transformed into the ready *Seym*.

After the overthrow of the Permanent Council (19 January 1789) the Sejm in session became the permanent Sejm. Its creation contributed to the increase of the gentry's political culture and first of all their sense of responsibility for the State. However, at the same time, the weaknesses of the Sejm became visible: first of all its inefficiency as the highest executive power. Gradually, the gentry became more and more aware of the necessity of existing of a separate executive power like the Guardians of Law, which would function as a government. Consequently, a compromise between the middle gentry and the king was worked out, which resulted in passing the Third of May Constitution by the Sejm. The compromise meant that on the one hand, the principle of the separation of powers was adopted and the Guardians of Law – a kind of government was established (in accordance with the king's intentions), whereas on the other hand, the sovereignty of the Sejm was strongly emphasised without keeping the balance of powers (in accordance with the intention of the gentry). And such was the final result of the creation of the permanent Sejm.

WOJCIECH MATERSKI

## **II Republic in the Soviet Policy 1918–1939**

This article attempts an assessment of the Soviet Policy towards Poland in all the inter-war period. On the basis of a detailed analysis it demonstrates radical changes in this policy which in turn resulted from the changes within the Soviet Empire. In the years 1918–1939 “The New State” underwent three phases: ideological, pragmatic and imperial. Respectively, Poland was in turn: an obstacle, an ally-to-be and an object of some wider political designs aiming at Paris, Berlin or Geneva.

Up until the mid-twenties the Bolsheviks had their active policy towards Poland which ended when “The Rapallo Line” was finally established. Nevertheless, after Locarno and the Berlin Treaty Poland grew unimportant and secondary: therefore, understand the policy of this period one should concentrate on the Soviet activity all Europe, especially along the lines Moscow-Paris and Moscow-Berlin. In the 1930-s Poland was for the Soviet Empire only a part of these two political triangles and its importance kept decreasing.

Finally, the question of Poland in the Soviet policy was settled in the Soviet-German Agreement of September 28, 1939 which is generally and justly viewed as a founding stone of “The Fourth Partition of Poland”.

KRZYSZTOF LESIAKOWSKI

## **The Creation of Powszechna Organizacja “Służba Polsce” in 1948 Stalinist Policy toward the Polish Youth**

One of the most important goals, to which the Polish communist government aimed after world war II, was to subordinate the young generation. The rule over the young generation was the guarantee of power for next decades. It soon turned out that, the political organizations intended for the young did not get enough support, and in 1948 it was decided call up a new organization the Powszechna Organizacja “Służba Polsce” (The Universal Organization “Service to Poland”).

As soon as in June of 1945, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers Party (PPR) said, that there is a necessity of embracing the whole youth from the age of 15 in one organization, “which will help to get to the part of the youth by the democratic camp, which was not reached by other democratic youth organizations”. From the beginning the army supported this plan. Bringing up a universal youth organization, would allow the army

to embrace with army training the whole young generation. Also very important were the economic aspects. It assumed, that the bringing up of “SP” would allow to mobilize a large, and cheap work force, which would be able to do certain urgent work quickly.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> February of 1948 the parliament (Seym) passed through a law about general duty of preparation for work, the army and about physical education. In part III of the statute, were the rules of forming and the functioning of organization calls of the Powszechna Organizacja “Służba Polsce”. Everybody between the ages 16 to 21, and the citizens which did not serve in the army up to the age of 30, had to service and work in the “SP”. The youth was obligated to periodical work in brigades, occasional work, as well as finish military training. The integral part of the statute from 25<sup>th</sup> of February were the punishment regulations. Every young person, who did not participated in the mandatory work for the “SP” was subjected to punishment of 3 month in jail or 50 thousand zlotys in fine.

The bringing up of “SP” was an act with no precedents in the history of the policy toward the youth from the Polish government. The Organization registered in completely to the policy of the Polish communists of bringing up a “new man”. In spite of the propaganda, which showed the doubtful advantages of “SP”, the society, and especially the older generation, was not fooled. The inhabitants of Polish country and cities, took the mandatory work in the paramilitary “SP” as a announcement of the forthcoming of world war three. Despite this in 1948 in the brigades of “SP” there were over 60 thousands of young people.