

LECTURES

These selected lectures, extracts and newspaper articles on lectures, 1930-9, were sourced from newspaper cuttings and typescripts, published and unpublished, in the Dobrzynski archive held by the NLI and in private hands. A list of all lecture transcripts is in an appendix.

As a guide, the lectures comprise two extracts to the Rotary Club, 1930; an article on a lecture, Poland of Today, to the League of Nations Society of Ireland, 1936; and a lecture introduction to Alexandra College, 1939.



The Tenth Anniversary of the Repulsion of the Bolshevik Invasion of Poland

Dublin Rotary Club, 13 October 1930¹

It was a strange war from the technical point of view. The same weapons were used as in the Great War, but the tactics were completely different: it was not trench warfare, but a war of manoeuvres of great masses of troops over open country. If, on one section of the front, the tanks and aeroplanes of modern warfare could be seen, on another, cavalry divisions attacked the enemy in open formation, reminding one of the old pictures of the Iron Hussars of King Bathory and of King John Sobieski repulsing the invasions of Muscovites, Cossacks, Tatars and Turks. In this war the genius, imitative and strong will of the chief were of vital importance, and, luckily for Poland, such a chief was at hand.

To return to the deep-rooted belief of the Polish community that, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, Warsaw was not going to fall, I take the liberty to mention an experience of my own. In the tragic days of July 1920 the Polish Government issued an appeal to those exempt from military service, either through being under age or through occupying vital government positions, to enrol in a volunteer corps. Unfortunately for my age, I enrolled in the second category. This volunteer army has got its glorious history in the war and brought valuable help to the regular army which, at this time, was withdrawing along the whole front.

I was attached to the General Staff of the volunteer army and was officer on duty on the night of the 16th August. It was thus my privilege to open the telegram announcing the beginning of

¹ Extract, Ms. Typescript 1930

the glorious counter offensive of the Commander-in-Chief. Was I surprised? No, only a sigh of relief escaped me – at last! At last Warsaw and the country will be free from the invaders! At last Poland is going to take again her rightful place among European countries on the rampart of Western civilisation! If I mention this quite unimportant incident, it is simply because I felt then exactly as hundreds of thousands of my countrymen felt and thought.



Rotary Club Lecture 1930²

(In the introduction he discusses people's perceptions of his diplomatic role) It reminds me of the story of the man who watched the fisherman laying lobster pots, and in the spirit of true chivalry (he was of course and Irishman) , came back at the next tide, pulled up the pots, took the lobsters and boiled them and replaced them in the pots (whether garnished with salad or not is not told). You can easily imagine the feelings of the fisherman who found to his delight that his pots were filled with lobsters that had been so obliging as to boil themselves.

But the kind of people I am speaking of, expect us to catch ready boiled lobsters to put on their table, salad and dressing included.

On the other hand among the nation to which such agent is accredited, you can always find some people inclined to think that his chief business in life is to enjoy himself and to get the best out of local life. When I first came over here I brought with me a Vice-Consul who was a great contract bridge player (as a matter of fact he was one of the pioneers of the game in this country) I remember once talking to one of the partners with whom he usually played and in the course of the conversation he expressed the opinion that I must also be a great bridge player, and on being questioned as to the reason for his remark, he answered that I could easily make my bridge perfect by taking lessons from my Vice-Consul.

I objected that I was much too busy for that: Well, he replied, I quite understand that your afternoons and evenings must be quite booked up with your numerous social engagements, but what about your office hours? Why not call your Vice Consul and have a game with him then when you would be quite free and secure from interruption!



² Extract, Rotarian speech, 30/3/1931 his 'third appearance in less than a year'

Poland of Today³

Under the auspices of the International Disarmament Committee (League of Nations Society of Ireland) an at home was given in the Hotel Russell last night to meet his Excellency the Polish Consul General M. T. W. Dobrzynski

The guests were received by Mrs E R McC Dix. After tea M Dobrzynski delivered an address on Poland Today.

1918 was the year of Poland's restoration, so far as her constitutional regime is concerned. After the passing of the Constitution of 1921, however, bad habits were beginning again to make havoc on the common welfare. Poland, however, had a man who kept the vow not to relapse into earlier abuses. He was Josef Pilsudski.

“The spirit of the new Constitution just passed by the Lower Chamber, and now under consideration by the Senate, is entirely dominated by a desire to avoid the errors of the past. It endows the State with a Government working for the welfare of the State as a whole – the State which is more enduring than the life-span of an individual, a group, a class, or even a generation. Pilsudski's position is based on his moral authority: he is not an expert, but the power behind the expert; he has confessed that he does not consider Fascism suited to Poland, a country of individualists.

Pilsudski does not seek the limelight; there is not the hush of fear, which one finds sometimes in other countries when the name of a dictator is mentioned

History has taught the Polish a lesson which only fools could forget. E believe that the gradual process of disarmament must be made conditional upon the geographical position of any given country and its possible vulnerability, and should be preceded by ‘moral disarmament’.

Two pacts of non-aggression have lately been concluded by Poland with her neighbours, Soviet Russia and Germany. These are perhaps the best expression of the spirit of moral disarmament which animates the Polish Government, on all its moves on the international chessboard, and which forms, in their opinion, the most essential preparatory stage for physical disarmament.

³ *Irish Independent* 27 February 1935

The chairman (Mrs E R McC Dix) in expressing the company's appreciation of M Dobrzynski said Ireland resembled Poland in many points. They in Ireland had also suffered from a hostile propaganda which represented them as aggressive and militarist.

Those present included the Lord Mayor of Dublin (Ald Byrne T.D.); H Briscoe, Royal Hungarian Consul; J C Foley, Latvian Vice-Consul; O G Raymond T D.; Rev Stephen Browne S J; Dr. Myles Keogh, Mrs Sigerson Platt, Miss H Kennedy, Miss H Chenavix, Mrs L O Kingston (hon sec).



The Invasion of Poland⁴

I am very much alive to the fact that you young people are usually taking a very much keener interest in things than the older generation would, that you are so very much more inclined to get happy and excited about subjects you like and to get bored by speakers you dislike and that above all, you have this unmistakable instinct for truth which only use has and which enables you to take a quick and mostly justified attitude towards your elders, an attitude of confidence or mistrust. I know all this, and this is why I am asking you to pardon me all my shortcomings and am begging you, in case you cannot help whispering to each other something like “Oh, the old nuisance” or “how perfectly boring” or “what sort of queer accent he speaks” – to whisper it gently, so that I may leave the room under the impression that you liked my address.

⁴ Introduction of lecture to Alexandra College end 1939; His daughter was a student there

Appendix

List of lecture transcripts, 1929-42

Dublin Rotary Club, 30 March 1931 – International Fair in Poznan

Dublin Rotary Club, c. 1930 – Polish Foreign Trade and Polish-Irish Trade Relations

Dublin Rotary Club, 13 October 1930 – The Tenth Anniversary of the Repulsion of the Bolshevik Invasion of Poland

TCD 160th session historical debating society, 1929 on ‘Depopulation in Ireland’ WTD seconds with Emigration – the Polish experience (report *Irish Times* 31 October 1929)

International Disarmament Committee, League of Nations Society of Ireland 1936 – Moral Disarmament

Alexandra College, November/December 1939 – Untitled, The invasion of Poland

Irish Institute of International Affairs – Contemporary Poland, December 1939

Irish Institute of External Affairs, December 1942 – Polish-Czech Relations (a reconstruction)

Cardinal Hlond, Primate of Poland & Ignace Paderewski (broadcast on Radio Eireann 24/7/1957)