

2011

## Richard Edgar Pipes

John A. Drobnicki  
*CUNY York College*

### How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Follow this and additional works at: [http://academicworks.cuny.edu/yc\\_pubs](http://academicworks.cuny.edu/yc_pubs)

 Part of the [Diplomatic History Commons](#), and the [International Relations Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Drobnicki, John A. 2011. Pipes, Richard Edgar. In *The Polish American Encyclopedia*, edited by James S. Pula, 362. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.

This Book Chapter or Section is brought to you for free and open access by the York College at CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications and Research by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact [AcademicWorks@cuny.edu](mailto:AcademicWorks@cuny.edu).

Merit, Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Presidential Unit Citation, and Air Force Outstanding Unit Award ribbon with three oak leaf clusters.—

*James S. Pula*

SOURCE: *Zgoda*, April 15, 1985.

**Pipes, Richard Edgar** (b. Cieszyn, Poland, July 11, 1923; d.—). Historian. Born into an assimilated Jewish family in Austrian Silesia, Pipes displayed an early interest in music (piano), art history (Giotto), and philosophy (Nietzsche), before the family was forced to flee after the German invasion in 1939. Traveling on forged papers, the family eventually made its way to Rome where the Polish ambassador issued them Polish passports enabling them to migrate to the United States in 1940. Pipes became a naturalized United States citizen in 1943, the same year he joined the U.S. Army Air Corps. He applied for the Army's Specialized Training Program and was assigned to study Russian at Cornell, where he received a baccalaureate degree in 1945. After being discharged from the Army in 1946, he studied history at Harvard, receiving his M.A. in 1947 and Ph.D. in 1950. Appointed an instructor at Harvard in 1950, he was granted tenure in 1958 and served on the faculty until his retirement and appointment as Professor Emeritus in 1996. Pipes' major contribution to historical literature was his rejection of the accepted view that the Bolsheviks had the popular support of the proletariat and that the rulers of the Soviet Union behaved rationally. Pipes traced the origins of Soviet totalitarianism and autocratic traditions to Tsarist times. Unlike those who thought that Stalin was an aberration, Pipes firmly believed that Stalinism derived directly from Leninism. He compared Bolsheviks to Nazis, warning that since the USSR thought it could win an offensive nuclear war the idea of détente was a dangerous fallacy. His hard-line speeches and writings brought him to the attention of politicians, resulting in an appointment by CIA Director George H. W. Bush in 1976 to head "Team B," a group of non-government experts who critically evaluated the CIA's estimate of Soviet strategy for nuclear weapons. After serving on Pres. Ronald Reagan's transition team in 1980, Pipes became head of the National Security Council's East European and Soviet Desk from 1981 to 1983, where he argued for strong sanctions against the Soviet Union after the declaration of martial law in Poland. Pipes' stance against the Soviets infuriated liberals, one of whom dubbed him "Reagan's Dr. Strangelove." His many books

include *The Russian Revolution, Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime*, and a two volume biography of the Russian economist and intellectual Peter Struve. Pipes' first book, *The Formation of the Soviet Union*, was awarded the American Historical Association's George Louis Beer Prize in 1955. Among his many honors are an honorary doctorate from the University of Silesia, which was conferred by its Cieszyn branch (1994); honorary citizenship of Cieszyn (1994); the Commander's Cross of Merit of the Republic of Poland (1996); honorary consul and honorary citizenship, Republic of Georgia (1997); and the National Humanities Medal (2007) awarded by Pres. George W. Bush for "peerless scholarship on Russia and Eastern Europe and for a life in service to freedom's cause."—*John Drobnicki*

SOURCE: Richard Pipes, *Vixi: Memoirs of a Non-Belonger* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).

**Piszek, Edward** (Edward John Piszczek; b. Chicago, Illinois, October 24, 1916; d. Fort Washington, Pennsylvania, March 27, 2004). Businessman, philanthropist. Piszek moved with his family to Pennsylvania as a child and earned a degree in business from the prestigious Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1946, when he was working at General Electric, workers went out on strike so he and a friend sold crab cakes at a local tavern. When they did not all sell, he placed the remaining cakes in a freezer and found that customers enjoyed them when they were later thawed. With this idea, he and his friend John Paul put together \$350 and went into business manufacturing frozen fish. In the 1950s, Piszek bought out his partner and his business Mrs. Paul's Kitchens became widely popular for its fish sticks and other frozen seafood. In 1982 he is reported to have sold his company to Campbell Soup for some \$70 million. A noted philanthropist, he gave millions of dollars to fight tuberculosis and fund Little League Baseball in Poland. He spent a half-million dollars on a national advertising campaign and established the Copernicus Society, both to promote knowledge of Poland and its people and culture. Piszek also purchased the residence in Philadelphia where *Tadeusz Kościuszko* resided during his second visit to America. He donated the building to the National Park Service and it became the *Thaddeus Kościuszko National Memorial*.—*James S. Pula*

SOURCES: Edward J. Piszek and Jake Morgan, *Some Good in the World: A Life of Purpose* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2001); Douglas Martin, "Edward J. Piszek, Who Founded Mrs. Paul's Brand, Dies at 87," *New York Times*, March 30, 2004, C15.

**Pitass, Jan** (b. Piękary, partitioned Poland, July 3, 1844; d. Buffalo, New York, December

11, 1913). Priest. Growing up in German-occupied Silesia, he went to Rome to study as a seminarian at the Gregorian University in Rome. There, in 1872, he was recruited by Buffalo's Bishop Stephen Ryan to minister to a small but growing community of Polish immigrants. After arriving in the Diocese in May of 1873, Pitass completed his studies at Niagara University and was ordained on June 7, 1873. On the following day, he called a meeting to organize St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr Church, the first Polish parish in the Diocese of Buffalo. As pastor for more than forty years, Pitass saw his parish grow from 82 families to approximately 5,000. Beyond these numbers, however, Pitass played a significant role in defining the character of Polonia in Western New York by creating a multi-dimensional service organization that would become a prototype for 24 other Polish parishes in the diocese. As pastor, Pitass established a school that would achieve a peak enrollment of more than 2,000 students, introduced the Felician Sisters to Western New York, and helped to organize numerous fraternal organizations and societies. After other Catholic cemeteries notified Pitass that they would no longer accommodate the deceased members of his parish, he promptly developed a twenty acre farm into the Saint Stanislaus Roman Catholic Cemetery. Due to his many successful efforts, in 1894 the bishop designated Pitass as dean of all Polish parishes in the diocese. Pitass also extended his leadership into many aspects of community life. He owned a daily newspaper, *Polak w Ameryce*, in which he often expressed political positions, and became an acquaintance of Theodore Roosevelt who visited Pitass at his parish. As president, Roosevelt directed his personal emissary to suggest that the Vatican consider Pitass for a hierarchical appointment. On a national level, he worked to organize American Polonia into a more united community. With Msgr. *Dominik Majer* of St. Paul, Minnesota, Pitass established the *Polish Union of America*. He helped to organize the first Polish Catholic Congress, which met in Buffalo in September of 1896, and in 1901, at the second Polish Catholic Congress which again met in Buffalo, Pitass successfully promoted the concept of sending a mission to Rome for the purpose of presenting a petition advocating a greater Polish presence within the Catholic hierarchy of America. At his passing, his wake attracted more than 20,000 mourners, with 188 priests participating in his funeral services. Traveling from Chicago, Bishop *Paul Rhode*, the first Pole to be consecrated a bishop in America, delivered the funeral oration at St. Stanislaus Cemetery.—*Carl L. Bucki*