

2022 has been declared the Year of Maria Konopnicka



This year marks the 180th anniversary of her birth.

Maria Konopnicka was born in Suwałki on 23 May 1842. Her father, Józef Wasiłowski, was a lawyer. She made her debut as a writer in 1870. Maria gained her popularity after the 1876 when her poem “*On a winter morning*” was officially published and gained attention of other writers including future Nobel Prize laureate Henryk Sienkiewicz.

In 1884 she began writing children’s literature. Her most famous and popular work was “*On Dwarfs and a Little Orphan Mary*”.

In addition to being an active writer, she was also a social activist, organizing and participating in protest against the repression of ethnic and religious minorities in Prussia. She was also involved in women’s rights activism. Between 1884 and 1887 she was an editor of the democratic women’s magazine *Świt (Dawn)*. Her attempts at radicalising its programme sparked opposition in the conservative public opinion and from the censors.

In 1901/1902 Maria Konopnicka started coordinating one of the major protests against violent anti-Polish actions in the Prussian Partition. In 1901 Prussian authorities sent a directive that religion should be taught in German. In Wrzesnia, parents refused to buy new schoolbooks and told the children not to answer in German. On May 20th 1901 the teachers punished the children, whipping them. When parents tried to intervene, repression started. During the trial, on November 19th 1901, 24 people were sentenced to many months in prison. Children reacted with a school strike, brutally ended by the Prussian government in 1902.

Maria Konopnicka died of pneumonia on October 8th 1910 in Lvov. Her funeral was attended by almost 50,000 people, and to this day this great poet has her own and special place in the hearts of ordinary Polish people.



Lychakiv cemetery in Lviv

By decision of the International Astronomical Union, one of the craters on Venus was named Konopnicka.

Selected works:

Poems, four volumes (1881, 1833, 186, 1896)

On the Road (1893_ a collection of short stories)

On Dwarfs and a Little Orphan Mary (1896)

Berry foraging (1903)

Rota (1908)

Bibliography:

Poems by Maria Konopnicka- <https://www.poemhunter.com>

Maria Konopnicka a symbol of an independent woman and a writer. <https://ampoleagle.com>

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