

## REVIEWS

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Jakub Muchowski, *Polityka pisarstwa historycznego. Refleksja teoretyczna Haydena White'a* [The Politics of Historical Writing: A Theoretical Contribution by Hayden White], Fundacja na rzecz Nauki Polskiej, Warszawa and Toruń, 2015, 236 pp., bibliog., indexes, summary in English

Hayden White is widely regarded as probably the most famous and respectable theoretician of historiography in the English-speaking academia. He is considered as the single most important initiator of the so-called linguistic turn in historical studies. His best known, and most controversial achievement is in propagating narrativism: a theory regarding historical writing as a form of literary discourse, essentially analogous to fiction, and claiming that the most appropriate method to analyse historical texts is actually the one of literary history and criticism. His best known book remains the path-breaking *Metahistory* (1973), in which Hayden White proposed to view *all* historical writings of the nineteenth century as reducible to four *tropes*, that is rhetorical figures, which he viewed as symbolizing both the cognitive and the ideological aspects of the historical discourse. This grandiose scheme, based on his readings of Michelet, Ranke, de Tocqueville, Burckhardt, and Croce, may be seen as the most impressive application of the principles of structuralism to the theory of historiography.

White has not written anything comparable to *Metahistory* since that time. He has published six more books, most of them being collections of his minor essays and papers. Some of them focused on the theory of history as narrative, radicalizing and clarifying White's position, that had seemed quite equivocal still in *Metahistory*. The others were excursions towards Marxism and the Marxist school of literary criticism, offering a Marxist (or, more precisely, an Althusserian-Jamesonian) interpretation of literary production. Accordingly, White also criticized the traditional methodology, focused on epistemology exclusively, as 'bourgeois' – and history as a discipline as serving the interests of the powerful and reproducing power structures (particularly in his study on Droysen's *Historik*). The application of structuralism married with Marxism (happily or not) for the analysis of intellectual production is actually the problem on which Jakub Muchowski's book is focused.

White's texts have been analysed and reinterpreted by a number of theoreticians in no less than three *Festschrift* volumes, five journal volumes devoted

principally to him, a number of papers and a monograph by Herman Paul. This may seem astonishing as White's contribution to the theory of historical studies appears quite incoherent, stretching between epistemology and morally-based judgements. Moreover, his impact on the actual writing scarcely mirrors his reputation among theoreticians. 'Narrativism' might have triumphed in the 1980s over 'positivism' (if there was any positivism in history writing at that time) in theoretical debates, but that hardly influenced the practice of historical research and writing. White's enthusiasts do not seem bothered by that, nor do they care too much about the criticism by his 'traditional' opponents. His status in their view may be compared to that of a prophet of the renewal of historiography as a social practice freed from the rigors of traditional science-oriented standards, or, if you like, positivist prejudices.

Generally speaking, the present volume by Jakub Muchowski remains in unison with Hayden White's enthusiastic followers. It acknowledges his position as a guru of contemporary humanities without much reconsideration: the entire controversy about White's contribution to the study of history is summarized in one paragraph on page 19. To be sure, Muchowski is aware of many inconsistencies and incoherencies in White's writings, which, however, he claims to have covered with his interpretative method of approaching them as a "constellation". What he means by that is a grouping of his character's texts and ideas without regarding their inner development and chronological order. This, he argues, is appropriate if we wish to discover the "heterogeneity" and the supra-temporal qualities of White's texts.

His main effort, accordingly, is in reconstructing and an exegesis of White's ideas as dispersed in his books and papers from the last forty years. It is questionable, however, whether this method really works: most of Muchowski's analyses remain 'traditional' in their attempts to reconstruct White's ideas chronologically – according to their appearance in subsequent texts – and to ascribe inner consistency to their developments. When this fails, Muchowski seems troubled – as is the case with White's version of a Marxist interpretation of literary fiction, which he has not paralleled with an according interpretation of historiography as a social practice, which would seem logical, as White emphasizes that historiography is essentially similar to fiction. His answer to this problem is to propose his own theory following White's assumptions, and so to fill what he sees as a gap in his hero's legacy. Muchowski also declares that his method aims at revealing the emancipatory potential of historical writing (p. 29). Indeed, he constantly emphasizes his character's moral, or perhaps political declarations, which he carefully traces in the entirety of his oeuvre, in discussion with such authors as Michel Foucault. The impression arises that despite Muchowski's evident fascination, and occasional admiration for White, he is eventually dissatisfied with his character being not consistent, or perhaps not radical enough in his promoting the vision of historiography as an instrument of "resistance" and

“emancipation” (pp. 53–4, 111–12). He sees White’s principal merit in his critiques of the evolution of history towards an ideologically neutral academic discipline, animated by the spirit of objectivity and impartiality (p. 203). An ideal they both seem to share is a discipline more pedagogical, instructive, and politically oriented. Apparently, Muchowski regrets that White has not promoted this ideal more openly, coherently, and passionately.

There are, in my humble opinion, two problems with such an approach. First, Muchowski fully ignores, and effectively omits, any arguments against the political engagement of historiography and in favour of its present status in the academic world. Ideological neutrality and objectivism may indeed be illusory, but they are an idea that deserves at least to be seriously considered before we reject it, an idea that actually created modern historiography as we know it. The fact that Muchowski does not devote any attention to this problem is quite astonishing, and may actually be discouraging for the readers who do not accept White’s greatness as granted. Second, the readers may also have difficulties in understanding the actual purposes of the ‘emancipatory’ function of historiography. Regrettably, the book does not answer the question, who is to be emancipated and from what, nor does it say how history is supposed to undermine the “power structures” – whatever this means. All it says is that history should do that, and Hayden White is the prophet of this programme, or that this is how we are supposed to interpret his writings.

*Adam Kozuchowski*

Patrice Dabrowski, *Poland: The First Thousand Years*, Northern Illinois University Press, DeKalb, 2014, 487 + 21 pp., 13 maps, 13 ill., bibliog. (suggestions for further reading), index

A graduate of the Harvard University, Patrice Dabrowski is a scholar with a renowned international output. She has oftentimes visited Poland to do archive or library queries or taking part in scholarly conferences. She has contributed to several congresses attended by foreign researchers of the history of Poland, which are held every five years in Cracow. Patrice Dabrowski has been awarded, among others, with the prestigious International Cultural Centre (Polish: *Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury*) scholarship.

The study under review comes as a harvest of Dabrowski’s many years of studies in the area of history of Poland and Central Europe and experience gained in her work with American students. It fits well the historical narrative tradition prevalent in the English-language zone. *Poland ...* deserves being considered as one of the most valuable synthetic depictions of the history

of Poland ever penned by an Anglo-Saxon author. It is noteworthy to remark that the United States and the United Kingdom see a new study of the like sort issued every three or four years, which makes a much more frequent appearance rate compared to Poland.

Any new adventurer whoever should like to face the history of Poland has to meet the challenge of what to do in order not to make his/her study a reduplication of any of the previously released ones, to avoid making it a compilation of someone else's ideas – an imitative work, altogether. As is proved by the study in question, Patrice Dabrowski has been aware of these determinants, and managed to compile a really original work, both conceptually and constructionally. The study is composed of four basic sections, dealing, respectively, with 'Poland in Europe', 'the Europe of Poland', 'Europe without Poland', and 'Poland in Europe and the World'. Such a concept has helped the author to easier and more effectively portray the specificity of Poland as a country, nation and state situated between the East and the West, that is, in Central Europe. In order to reinforce her stance, Dabrowski refers to Norman Davies's catchphrase naming Poland 'the heart of Europe'. Furthermore, the innovative structure proposed by the author has enabled her to describe the 'central character's' history in a dynamic manner, taking into account the altering borders and legal-political systems. What is more, the history of Poland is thus depicted in a broader European and worldwide context. The comparative perspective assumed by the author is the book's primary strong point, enabling the reader to watch Poland – the Commonwealth – drift away and approaching the centre of Europe and the world.

In most of the cases, authors of synthetic presentations of the history of Poland have tended to focus on times closer to ours, rather than distant from them – in line with the reversed pyramid rule. Some authors have covered the nine centuries of Poland's history at a length comparable to that for the twentieth century alone. Dabrowski departs from this rule. She has probably decided that in order to understand Poland better, what a historian ought to do in the first place is to show the birth of the country's statehood and society. This is why she makes the progress of the Slavs through the east and south of Europe and the emergence of the first Slavonic countries an important part of her considerations. The earliest Slavic legends are discussed exhaustively: Dabrowski sees them as the founding myths of three European countries – Rus' (Ruthenia), Bohemia and Poland; so are the cultural and political effects of the assumption of Christianity. I am pleased to note that in her account of Polish mediaeval culture and science, the author takes a closer look on King Casimir III the Great's foundation of the university in Cracow 1364 – an early academy in Central Europe, second only to its Prague peer. The report on the Battle of Grunwald/Tannenberg of 1410, the largest battle in the Middle Ages, is meticulous and compliant with the most

recent findings of mediaevalists, with a focus on the political and economic aftermath of the victory of the combined Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian forces.

With its influence on the history of European culture and civilisation and on the neighbouring regions such as the Ottomans' empire or Persia, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth comes to the fore in this study. It was the Commonwealth, the author believes, that has contributed the most to the common treasure trove of mankind. The origins of the country, rather untypical a formation given the European context of its time, are traced back to the Union of Krevo, 1385, and the early reigns of the Jagiellon house in Poland. The decline of Poland-Lithuania in late eighteenth century offered an opportunity for the author to summarise the four centuries of modern-age Poland. Dabrowski emphasises at several occasions that the Commonwealth's impact on its adjacent countries or regions was pretty intense, the Polish language being used in communications between elites in the vast area extending from Constantinople to as far as Moscow, Königsberg, and Stockholm.

Basing on the most recent studies of Polish and international scholars, Dabrowski refers to the constituent of statehood that have proved the most characteristic for Poland-Lithuania. First of all, in the opinion of this author, the union was pretty fundamental to the formation and structure of the common state. It was already at the beginning of the fifteenth century that a team of Cracow-based lawyers elaborated a concept of union of sovereign and independent countries, an idea that formed the basis for the association of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The idea of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a union is closely related to the founding idea behind our contemporary European Union – a remark that would not hold true for the eighteenth-century Polish-Saxon union, for a change. Secondly, religious toleration was an essential constituent of the Commonwealth. Dabrowski is fascinated by the circumstances in which a programme for religious tolerance and denominational freedoms could be assumed in the sixteenth century. There is no coincidence in the fact that the Warsaw Confederation act of 1573, which defined this innovative project, has been listed by the UNESCO as a World Heritage item. Although the tolerance principle tended to be broken in the subsequent centuries, no religion-prompted internal war ever broke out within Poland-Lithuania whatsoever. Thirdly, parliamentarianism attested to the country's peculiar character. Between late fifteenth century and the Commonwealth's very last days, there functioned a shared, Polish-Lithuanian, two-house *Sejm*. (*Seimas* and *seima* are the respective Lithuanian and Latvian presently used names of the lower house of parliament.) In the provincial areas, nobility-based self-government bodies called *sejmiks*, or dietines, operated. Fourthly, the 1791 'Constitution of the Third of May' came as a constitutive quality of the Commonwealth – regrettably, in the final phase of the country's existence. This first-ever

constitution in the European continent is obviously covered at an appropriate extent in the study; heralding a thorough political change for the country, the Constitution eventually provoked intervention from the disturbed Russia and a second partition of the Polish-Lithuanian territory. Fifthly, Dabrowski considers high and everyday culture a landmark: the achievements of Polish 'Golden and Silver Ages' are accurately and meticulously documented, as is the peculiar Sarmatian ideology and culture. The highlight figures of the era are evoked – notably, Nicolaus Copernicus, Andrzej Frycz-Modrzewski, and Jan Kochanowski.

Dabrowski is fascinated by the phenomenon of Poland-Lithuania – a land of multiple ethnic and religious cultures; a country that was internally diverse and rich in assorted values and styles of life, open to foreigners and accepting political immigrants from the Netherlands, Bohemia, Russia, Sweden, Scotland, or Armenia, and offering shelter to thousands of Jews driven from the West of Europe. Jews found hospitality in the Commonwealth and were equipped with special rights and privileges, including a Jewish parliament.

The nineteenth century does not engage much of the author's attention, for there was no Poland within Europe then: with the history of the nation remaining important, of primary importance for Dabrowski is the history of state institutions. The twentieth century is not a focal point, either; still, the reader is made aware of the major constituents of Poland's history in the last two centuries. A primary characteristic of this time was, in the author's opinion, the seeking by Poles of a way to an independent, self-sustaining state and their almost obsessive commitment to liberty. This is what made Poland rise again, anew, even if apparently hopelessly collapsed. The history of Polish national risings is richly documented: from the insurrection led by Thaddeus Kosciuszko (1794), the hero of Poland and the United States, through the 1944 Warsaw Uprising against the German occupiers, to the 'non-revolutionary revolution' of the Solidarity movement (1980–1).

Apparently, the prevalence of the early modern era in the proposed narrative leads, however, to a subverted proportion, thus somewhat weakening the structure of the book. The twentieth century ought perhaps to have been outlined more expressly, as that era is the closest to our day and its description would be of primary interest to many a reader. Yet, I can understand the author's choice: she had to make choices so as to confine the history of Poland within a single volume.

Apart from the substance, the strong point of this book is its fluent style, full of charm and beauty. The author seamlessly leads the reader from one thread to another, through the complicated history of a state and nation that is distant from the American reader's experience and concepts; actually, she takes the role of a guide in this respect.

Patrice Dabrowski's account of the history of Poland testifies to her enormous cognitive effort, knowledge of the topic and reference literature.

The author is quite well versed in the most recent studies and makes relevant use of the source funds available. Being a synthetic depiction, the book contains an extremely, and astonishingly, small number of lapses, whether related to the facts or comments.

The author focuses on narrating, mainly, the politics, political system, and culture of Poland and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Considerations regarding economy, society, or civilisation-related phenomena are present in this book to a much less significant degree. This might have been due to the author's concept of concentrating on items that ensure a disciplined and smooth narrative. Multiple diverse threads would certainly have made the reading a tougher experience. While the message is generally acceptable, one may regret the missing facts of social or economic history. The publisher has added a dozen illustrations – some, however, of poor quality and with not-quite-relevant comments.

All in all, this important and original account of the history of Poland is definitely a recommendable piece of reading.

*trans. Tristan Korecki*

*Andrzej Chwalba*

Dariusz Adamczyk and Norbert Kersken (eds.), *Fernhändler, Dynasten, Kleriker. Die piastische Herrschaft in kontinentalen Beziehungsgeflechten vom 10. bis zum frühen 13. Jahrhundert*, Harrasowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2015, 293 pp.; series: Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau. Quellen und Studien, 30

The book contains thirteen essays written by Polish, German, and Hungarian historians specialising in the Middle Ages. The topics cover the contacts between Poland under the early Piast rulers and its closer and more distant neighbours. The publication comes in the aftermath of a scientific session held by the German Historical Institute of Warsaw on 31 May – 1 June 2012, and comprises German-language versions of the essays. The session and, consequently, the book have specified three levels of the contacts in question (as reflected in the title): economic, political, and cultural. From the standpoint of the authors and the editors, the key notion is, seemingly, a network of ties. The initial assumption can be summarised as the shaping of the earliest form of Poland as a state, under external influences determining the developments taking place. The proposed timeframe is not controversial: the analyses encompass the period between the rule of Duke Mieszko I and the key political and ecclesiastical transitions taking place in the specific Polish conditions in the late twelfth to early thirteenth century (with some substantively well-grounded excesses, back or forth).

The tracing of the (inter)relations of the early Piast monarchy and its environment remains a considerable scholarly challenge, and this for one clear reason: the absence or fragmentary character of original sources. The archaeological data as well as written records offer fractionated knowledge and have been subject to most varied interpretations.<sup>1</sup> This provokes two contrasting attitudes among scholars, with a rather far-fetched scepticism clashing against a peculiar cognitive optimism; the latter encourages some scholars to draw or accept far-reaching conclusions, some of them bordering on speculative considerations. Both attitudes are represented, though not at their most extreme, in the volume under review.

Each of the essays in this collection covers a selected, narrowly-defined aspect, with some topics dovetailing with one another. As a result, the reader receives a dozen of fragmentary depictions; to draw broader conclusions, one needs to read the whole thing. The authors of these contributions do not really consider to what extent the changes or transitions of material importance from the standpoint of early Piast Poland were propelled by the native potential, or were determined by the impacts and influences investigated and specified in the studies.

Following the sequence implied by the title, the first group of texts deals with economic impacts, the notion 'merchants' works as a sort of a password. The nature of the best-recognised and best-accessible original records implies that analysis of commercial links or trade connections is based on archaeological findings coupled with the achievements of numismatics, and focuses on the circulation of silver.

The article by Christoph Kilger deals with silver as the means of payment in the Mediterranean. It was not just the coins, we are told. Weighted silver, which compensated deficits of coins, played an important part as well, as the surviving scales and weights clearly suggest. These artefacts, alongside the terms appearing in the records (*Mithqāl* being the key word) and the coins themselves: Abbasid dirhams, or those minted in the Sammanid-ruled Central Asian territory, are indicative of a strong and determining influence of the Arab monetary system on the local Baltic-region economies in the ninth and tenth centuries. As Kilger argues, the accumulation of silver in such forms was the basis for Duke Mieszko's strength as well.

Marek Jankowiak's essay considers a similar topic: the archaeologically graspable presence of dirhams in the Polish territory. As it turns out, two areas privileged in this respect can be discerned for the tenth century alone: Podlachia (Podlasie) and the Greater Poland (Wielkopolska). The former was

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<sup>1</sup> Let me refer in this context to a monograph by Dariusz Andrzej Sikorski, one of the volume co-authors, entitled *Kościół w Polsce za Mieszka I i Bolesława Chrobrego: rozważania nad granicami poznania historycznego* (Poznań, 2011), which offers an array of hypotheses, some of them challenged by the author.



a sort of transit zone: coins were brought into the area probably by Norman/Varangian merchants. The appearance of whole and fragmented silver coins in the finds or troves from the Greater Poland area is interpreted in a different way. It chronologically corresponds with the replacement of the burg-city system in the region on the Obra River by strongholds or boroughs that can be related to the first Piasts. Therefore, in the author's opinion, the phenomenon is possibly interrelated with the role of silver as a currency in the slave trading, which was pursued on a large scale by members of the elite of the new state organisation.

The circulation of currency is also the topic of Peter Ilisch's article, which analyses the inflow into Polish territory of the *grosz* silver coin minted in the tenth and eleventh century and coming from the Reich's territory. This research is based on the coin troves found in Pomerania (Pomorze), Masovia (Mazowsze) and Greater Poland. Owing to the frequency of appearance, a special role can be assigned in that period to *grosz* coins that are associable with Empress Adelheid and her regency in the Ottonian empire. Illich believes that the epoch he investigates into saw an observable trend of the dirhams, predominant until then in the territory of Poland and in the other Slavic countries, becoming squeezed out by the German coins.

The last to go in the section is an essay by Dariusz Adamczyk, which follows up the threads present in the preceding text. In an extensive chronological perspective, outlined is the process of Poland's transition from the monetary dependence on the Saxon silver currency (which was not undermined by Boleslaus the Brave's emissions, long known to scholars) to the minting of Poland's own coin, which initially basically imitated the Saxon cross denarius – the 'hard currency' for this part of Europe for most of the eleventh century. The amounts of Saxon coins that can be found in Polish troves tend to decrease significantly only in the first half of the twelfth century. The study in question shows these processes in their mutual relation with the political and institutional changes. Of significance to the picture are the emissions of coins by the leading Polish magnates (Palatine Sieciech being one of them).

The section on dynastic interrelations opens with an essay by Norbert Kersken, the volume's co-editor. Completed and undelivered matrimonies between Piasts and members of the ruling houses from the territory of Germany, as known from the sources, are presented systematically. Kersken classes these marriages into those extending to members of imperial dynasties (and their close relatives), and those linking the Piasts with *grafs* (counts) and margraves that ruled in the units emerging since the tenth century in the eastern boundaries of the Reich (in a word, with the neighbours). It was this particular group that became absolutely dominant in the latter half of the twelfth century. Kersken considers the reasons and political determinants behind the specified marriages, highlighting the ones arranged by a third (and strong) party and serving its interests – an example being Polish-German

marriages that in the thirteenth century linked the relatives, in-laws and clients of the Bohemian king Ottokar II.

Joanna Sobiesiak's essay describes the history of Polish-Bohemian dynastic associations – the story that begins with the marriage of Mieszko I and Doubravka of Bohemia (Dobrawa) and ends, in the assumed perspective, with the marriage of Casimir II the Just (Kazimierz Sprawiedliwy) and Helena, whose probable background was the Moravian lineage of the Přemyslids. Like the other contributors to the book's genealogical section, Sobiesiak presents the genealogical facts in the context of the political background.

The northern direction in dynastic relationships is discussed by Jakub Morawiec. In the description of the Piasts' associations with the Scandinavian ruling families, the figure of the mother of Cnut the Great, wife of the kings of Sweden and Denmark, clearly holds a prominent spot. Traditionally, though not unanimously, she has been identified with Świętosława [possibly identical with Sigrid Storråda/Gunhild], daughter of Mieszko I and Dobrawa. The background of the marriage of Boleslaus III the Wry-mouthed's daughter with the Danish prince is clarified in terms of political interests of Poland and Denmark around 1130, intermeshing at the time in Pomerania, Rügen (Rugia), and the adjacent Baltic lands.

Hungarian mediaevalist Dániel Bagi discusses the colligations linking the Piasts and the Árpads of Hungary in the eleventh and early twelfth century. Again, legendary stories come onto the stage – one of them being the case of *Bela Knegini* in the outset of the period. Taking into account the prevalent conviction about a long-standing and strong Polish-Hungarian friendship, the essentially small number of marriages confirmed based on the records – especially when compared against the relations of both dynasties with other partners, such as the Rurikovich of Ruthenia – is rather astonishing, Bagi admits.

Finally, Dariusz Dąbrowski in his extensive study draws our attention to the marriages between the Piasts and the Rurikovichs. Of this really extensive topic, the author focuses on the selected twelfth- and thirteenth-century colligations: the marriage of Agnes, daughter of Boleslaus III the Wry-mouthed, with Mstislav, son of Izyaslav, and the one of Boleslaus I the Tall (Bolesław Wysoki) and Zvenislava of Kiev; the relationships between Conrad I of Masovia (Konrad Mazowiecki) and the Ruthenian dynasties, and those between the offspring of Roman, Duke of Halych, and the Piasts of Masovia. Dąbrowski argues that the effects of such marriages were short-lived or, conversely, much long-lasting (the best such example being the marriage of Mstislav and Agnes). In some cases, a marriage devised for a specified purpose turned out to be of a completely different significance under the changed political conditions (for details, the reader is referred to the book).

The third section deals with ecclesiastical relations – more specifically, the presence and role of foreign clergymen. Anna Adamska focuses in her essay

on the chancellery of early Piast rulers in the context of the period's so-called pragmatic literacy. The conclusions drawn by this author from the research conducted in the last several decades, has led to undermining of the traditional view of the rulers' chancellery. Given these findings, the influence of the practices of the Ottonian court on how the authorities functioned and exercised power in Poland at the time is not to be overestimated. Ducal chancelleries increased their activities in Piast-house courts, essentially, in as late as mid-twelfth century – which is not to say that clergymen of alien origin would have not promoted in those hubs a pragmatic use of writing.

Marzena Matla assumes a position with respect to the beginnings of Polish annalism – a discussion that is a story of its own. The questions central to it still concern the German ecclesiastical hubs where the non-Polish records were produced which formed the initial section of the annals, and the relation between early Polish and Bohemian annals-writing until the end of the eleventh century. Who, and from whom, took over the shared information, and in what circumstances did it happen?

Dariusz Andrzej Sikorski discusses the role of the clergy of foreign background in the Polish Church until the late twelfth century, focusing, in fact, on the bishops active in Polish dioceses. Emphasis is put on how difficult it is to examine the very descent of individual Episcopate members. The personal name criterion is unreliable, as Slavic-sounding names do not testify that the hierarchs using them were actually of Polish background, while a universal Christian name would not preclude one's Slavonic origin. Recognition of most of the bishops in a given period as foreigners is supported by a preliminary approach: according to Sikorski, the political position, material status and prestige of Bishop relative to Duke were, for quite a long time, too low for the rank to be feverishly sought by magnate families. Hence, clergymen from Lorraine, Rhineland, or other parts of the Empire found it easier to pursue their careers in Poland. Saint Stanislaus of Szczepanów was probably one of the first representatives of a native elite to have held the office, Gniezno and Kraków having been the first ecclesiastical sees ever sought by magnates.

Krzysztof Skwirczyński concentrates, for a change, on intellectual contacts of Poland under the first Piasts with foreign countries. Actually, almost all the types of ecclesiastical relationships are taken into consideration, including foreign influence on annalism or the canon law taking root in Poland. Emphasised is Boleslaus the Brave's relationship with the Church's intellectual avant-garde of his time. In Skwirczyński's view, the politics of Boleslaus II the Bold and the actions taken, for instance, by Aleksander of Malonne, Bishop of Płock (12th c.), marked the will to keep pace with the trends, in Christian religiosity and not only, that appeared in the West of Europe at the time.

The studies published in the volume are diverse and rich in content. Put together, they offer an inspiring clash between different methodologies and

perspectives. Given the assumed concept, a synthetic take on the influence of contacts with the external world on the history of the country run by the first Piast rulers across all the relevant aspects could not have been produced. Not this time, which makes one hope for more to come.

trans. *Tristan Korecki*

*Michał Tomaszek*

Błażej Brzostek, *Paryże Innej Europy. Warszawa i Bukareszt, XIX i XX wiek* [Paris(es) of the Other Europe: Warsaw and Bucharest in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries], WAB Publishing House, Warszawa, 2015, 509 pp., ill., maps

In an attempt to answer the question whether it is appropriate to regard the countries of Central and Eastern Europe as peripheries in cultural terms, the historian of political ideas Chantal Delsol elaborates on the interactions at work between 'West' and 'East' in the modern period.<sup>1</sup> The beginning of this age was marked by an axiological dichotomy, typical for Enlightenment thinking, which associated progress, located in the West, to moral achievement. Consequently, those who did not possess it (i.e., those in the East) were worthy of contempt. This view became an unquestioned model following the establishment of Communist regimes in the East, which contributed towards widening the physical gap created by borders and fences. This, in turn, translated into the separation of the countries behind the Iron Curtain from what was considered to be 'normal Europe'.

The Western mental framework became accustomed to the existence of a sort of second-rate version, the 'other Europe', visible to the 'civilized' traveller who happened to encounter this less advanced area. Interestingly enough, when traveling in the opposite direction, the inhabitants of the East referred to their region in similar terms, partly out of a reflex of nostalgia after the 'good old times' of the pre-Communist years, and partly from a feeling of inferiority caused by the obvious technological underdevelopment, which marked their region.

'*Inna Europa*', a construction where the adjective 'inny' signifies in Polish something that may be atypical, different in both positive and negative ways, is a central concept employed in the book under discussion, *Paryże Innej Europy. Warszawa i Bukareszt, XIX i XX wiek*, by Błażej Brzostek, historian who works on the twentieth-century European history at the Institute of History of Warsaw University.

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<sup>1</sup> Chantal Delsol, 'Faut-il trahir les pays du centre-est européen comme des périphéries?', in Jerzy Kłoczowski and Hubert Łaszkiwicz (eds.), *East-Central Europe in European History. Themes and Debates* (Lublin, 2009), 73–83.

The investigation aims to depict Warsaw and Bucharest in the crucial moments of their existence in the last two centuries. These range from the foreign occupations, the introduction of modern urban features, the cities' transformation into symbols of central power and the gloomy years of Communism, to their adjustment to the market economy. Warsaw and Bucharest are profiled, starting with the moment these cities acquired political significance: the first in early eighteenth century as the site of negotiations between the magnates and the King, the second a century later as the nest of the independence movements of the Balkan nations against the Ottoman Empire. These are imaginatively enriched with suggestions of counterfactual histories, such as that of Polish-Romanian relations developed in the context of the 'exodus' of Polish citizens from their occupied land in 1939 (p. 233).

*Paryże Innej Europy* ... is a daring comparison of two cities, which, from the perspective of their political, social, and urban histories, represent two competing models. The first is a city sharing the structure of the German burghs of the Middle Ages that was tragically dismissed from its position of capital in the nineteenth century. The second is a cluster resembling the settlements of Oriental inspiration that, at about the same time, surprisingly took on the Western European patterns of urban development. Later on, the cities experienced similar traumas, but at different times. In the turmoil of the Second World War, Warsaw suffered massively from both the German and Russian occupations. Bucharest, in the last years of the Communist regime, underwent a large-scale programme of demolition meant to change the old structure of the town. In the first years after the war, Warsaw was 'reinvented' through its reconstruction. Although it paid tribute to the new power in Moscow through the erection of the 'Palace of Culture', the historical city was redesigned along the original model, thereby assuring a connection, albeit partial, with the past. Bucharest experienced much harsher and longer Stalinist years, and the devastation of the 1980s indelibly associated in the public mind Communism with the destruction of the city (p. 379), a catastrophe visually represented by the 'House of the People'.

In addition to presenting Warsaw and Bucharest's challenging histories, the book gives the reader an extended account of the cities' position towards the influence of their physical *colonizers* (be they Istanbul, Saint Petersburg or Moscow), but also towards their *imaginary* ones (Paris, New York), through the aspirations of the local elites. This involves the depiction of the ways in which these cities tried to cope with their inferiority complex in relation to the West, but also their feeling of superiority over the countries to the East and their ambiguous position on the 'West-East' scale, expressed, for instance, in Warsaw's status in Communist times as "being the East of the West and the West of the East" (p. 200).

The inferiority complex of being part of the Orient or on the periphery and the sense of the ephemeral in politics and the city landscape resulting

from the vagaries of the external politics, together with the mechanisms of compensating for them *via* aspirations, were shrouded in myths, images and *self-stereotypes*. The author orders them to fit a general theme, that of *finding itself*. *Inna Europa* tries to *find itself* at certain moments precisely because it lives with the complex of “being worse than Western Europe” (p. 405). Consequently, *finding itself* proves to be the perfect strategy for these cities in times of identity crises to connect with past models, be they Byzantine, German or French, real or imaginary.

In both cases, the most enduring of the myths was that of the *Little Paris*, the heyday of which was the nineteenth century. The association did not necessarily grow out of a physical resemblance, but rather a desire to neutralize the image of these cities as “Oriental cradles of barbarianism of Turkish or Russian origin” (pp. 14, 18). To educated society, their cities’ resemblance to Paris allowed Warsaw or Bucharest to join an ‘exclusive club’, made them a symbol of elegance and granted them aristocratic origins. However, Paris was also employed as model for a wide range of cities, including Buenos Aires, Tbilisi or even Shanghai, due to its democratic heritage, which included its revolutionary past and rational leanings as expressed in the geometry of the Haussmannian boulevards.

Apart from the tendency, already discussed, of the local elites to compensate for the not-so-old origins or not-so-famous architecture of their cities, the myth of *Little Paris* was cultivated by some travellers to the region, too. The latter saw these cities primarily as a passageway *to* or *out of* ‘civilization’, depending on the traveller’s direction: i.e., whether they were arriving in Warsaw after encountering the poor villages of Russia, or entering Bucharest after seeing the wild areas that accompanied the road from the Danube to the capital. Warsaw or Bucharest, with their hotels mimicking the Parisian style, with their elegantly dressed women, with streets displaying luxury stores filled with exquisite merchandise, felt like Paris removed from its natural setting.

In the twentieth century, following the transfer of the nexus of power and prestige to the ‘New World’, the myth of *Little Paris* was replaced by that of *Little New York*. The myth of *Little New York* was designed to justify the internal position of the two cities as capital cities of newly established states. Warsaw and Bucharest faced the need to define themselves *vis-à-vis* the elites of the newly acquired territories. These, having had different cultural influences and institutional procedures, perceived Warsaw and Bucharest as alien and unattractive; in short, to them, Warsaw and Bucharest were places unloved and unimpressive.

Warsaw and Bucharest themselves cherished self-stereotypes that added spice to these perceptions: Warsaw saw itself as the place of “Slavic duplicity, aggressiveness, laziness and lack of initiative and expertise” (pp. 29, 201), whereas Bucharest was the place where nothing was lasting or taken seriously,

a place that, antithesis of the “pristine Transylvania, was spoiled by Turkish influences” (p. 210).

In the end, while emphasizing the survival of these myths through the cities’ historical traumas, the author shows that, after 1989, Warsaw was not so keen anymore to be perceived as the *Little Paris* of the East, but rather the resurrected Phoenix. By contrast, Bucharest, in the desire to erase the humiliation of Communist times, reconnected with both myths, that of *Little Paris* and *Little New York*. We could add that, nowadays, Warsaw itself plays on some associations (architecturally, at least) to New York, but the author does not discuss this.

The chain reaction of inferiority complex – aspiration – compensation brings together Warsaw and Bucharest in a comparison that employs theories and concepts borrowed from imagology, intellectual history, travel and urban studies. Thanks to the author’s employment of the contributions by Edward Said, Larry Wolff, Maria Todorova, and Milica Bakić-Hayden, the reader can single out the criteria under which the dual reflection West-East takes place. Apart from making the comparison more cohesive, this also introduces the reader to the interesting domain of mutual reflections of the two nations. In order to emphasize the multiple views of a single subject, the author appeals to *histoire croisée*, the method elaborated by Bénédicte Zimmermann and Michael Werner. When applied to our cases, this method evokes the image of, for instance, the Polish traveller who perceives the city he is travelling to *via* his domestic representations, at the same time explaining to his home audience something that it has never seen. In short, we are talking about a construct, a subjective selection of what is known and what is unknown, and, in the end, of what deserves to be known.

*Paryże Innej Europy ...* deserves attention because it is the first attempt to concentrate on the two countries over such a long time span. Consequently, it occupies an important place in the materials dealing with Polish and Romanian cultures. Previous attempts either explored classic historiographical topics such as the 1848 Polish and Romanian Revolutions (e.g. Małgorzata Willaume) or simply focused on Romanian history with only indirect references to the Polish context in order to present the Romanian case to the Polish audience (e.g. Kazimierz Jurczak, Bogumil Luft).

In addition, the work under review is the first undertaking of a Polish social observer to approach Romanian realities from a preponderantly urban point of view. This sets *Paryże Innej Europy ...* apart from the other books, which have assigned Bucharest, and Romania by extension, the character of the exotic: *Kurz i krew* [Dust and Blood] by Małgorzata Rejmer is a journalistic writing interested in picking up grotesque features of the local popular culture; the historian Adam Burakowski studies the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu, underscoring the Communist leader’s vampiric inclinations; Andrzej Stasiuk includes Romania, especially

the South, in a wider Balkan space, which is a colourful area filled with esoteric happenings.

Błażej Brzostek employs an impressively rich range of sources such as travelogues, collections of travel memoirs, and personal histories. For the twentieth century, of particular importance are press articles from the most important daily newspapers, periodicals dedicated to – for example – women’s or cultural issues, diplomatic reports (including documents of the ex-political police), archives, etc.

*Paryże Innej Europy* ... is made up of five chapters and an introduction, suggestively entitled, ‘Między Paris i Ris-Pa’ [Between Paris and Ris-Pa]. This pun of the political thinker and activist of the nineteenth century, Stanisław Worcell, signalled the local ‘snobbism’ of imitating foreign models accompanied by the ‘denationalization’ of the local folkways (pp. 20–21). The introduction sets forth the premises of the book, circles out the main themes, defines the key concepts and their roots, including Czesław Miłosz’s contribution to the discussion on the *other Europe*, and displays the methodology employed and sources used.

Chapter 1, ‘Miasta niewymyślone’ [Un-invented towns] evokes the types of urban settlements to be found in Central and in South-Eastern Europe since the end of the Middle Ages. Both these types are opposed to the Enlightenment ideal of the city, which saw the urban space as the mirror of the rational social system. When measured against this standard, Warsaw and Bucharest are described in their attempts or failures to comply with the model. The driving idea of the chapter is the author’s suggestion that in terms of clothing, urban facilities, political institutions, Warsaw came into direct contact with French influences (*via* Napoleon’s occupation at the beginning of the nineteenth century), whereas Bucharest experienced mediated French influences (at about the same time *via* Russian occupation) (pp. 71–8).

Chapter 2, ‘Małe Paryże’ [Little Parises] measures the dynamics of the two cities in the nineteenth century against the background of the most important events of the time: the loss of statehood in the Polish case and the birth of the state in the Romanian. Consequently, the cities’ identity was shaped by their new statuses: Warsaw, as a physical *colony* dependent on Saint Petersburg, acquired political message while it was a city in an empire (although it lost this quality after 1830); Bucharest, as an imaginary *colony* dependent on Paris, embarked on a radical program of civilizational renewal. Thus, Bucharest is an example of a *quasi-colony* that absorbs the Western – here in the form of French – influences; the *colonization* took place spontaneously under the aegis of a willing local elite. By contrast, Warsaw is typical of a *quasi-anti-colony*, because it cultivated these influences as an internal reaction to the external authority of the Russian Empire, which was seen as the representative of Eastern culture, especially in the realm of religion (p. 120).



Chapter 3, 'Male New Yorki' [Little New Yorks] deals with the new aspirations of the two cities as symbolic centres of extended territories (and, in the Polish case, as a recreated state). The dynamism of the American metropolis, which embodied the optimism of the years following the collective traumas of the war, its influence on Warsaw's and Bucharest's adoption of sky-scrapers, neon-lights, and jazz clubs provided a suitable background for the birth of the anti-modernist criticism of the anti-Western thinkers, Berdiaev and Spengler. Indeed, the post-war period brought excessive enthusiasm, reflected architecturally in the construction of modernist buildings – which was particularly visible in Bucharest's case. At the beginning of the 1930s, however, this enthusiasm slowed down and turned into the known radical discourse that, by the end of the decade, signalled the engulfment of the public sphere by right-wing views and styles (p. 157).

The author compares the distinct styles of modernism in Warsaw and Bucharest: the former was more inclined to international themes and aesthetic innovations, while the latter retained some native motifs *via* the cultivation of a national style. Here, the author underlines the differences between the two types of nationalism. Polish right-wing radicalism was committed to urbanization and technological progress, whereas the Romanian equivalent retained strong religious leanings and the cult of the village world (p. 159).

Chapter 4, 'Male Moskwy' [Little Moscows] examines the symbolic transfer between Paris/New York, as embodiments of refinement and civilization, and Moscow, as the occupier and centre of the 'new world'. The liquidation of the old world that went hand in hand with the construction of a new myth and the reconfiguration of the relations of the new regimes with the Western world were evident in the cities' appearances. The streets of Warsaw and Bucharest bore the traits of the Stalinist years, despite the differences in severity of the countries' regimes. The author attempts to explain why the immediate postwar decade was much gloomier for Bucharest than for Warsaw. His answer alludes to a breed of local political culture that is more inclined to authoritarianism and intrigues. By contrast, Warsaw drew on its experience of the nineteenth century of adopting an anti-colonial stance against the colonizer (pp. 252, 286).

Chapter 5, 'Ubu-kareszty' [Ubu-charesents], like the character of the king in Alfred Jarry's play, hints to the two cities as realms of the absurd, where people queue for toilet paper. In the 1970s and 1980s, the basic items of everyday life were chronically absent from the shops. Consequently, the dominant model is that of the *mask*: the democratic, prosperous surface that hides the people's misery. Despite the efforts of the Communist authorities, this lie could not be concealed from the eyes of Western travellers to the Eastern Block. Nor could it satisfy (even as a propaganda tool) the inhabitants of the East who made it to the West in that period. The model of the *mask* is perfectly illustrated by the years of the so-called liberalization from the

beginning of Ceaușescu's regime, when under the illusion of the possibility to consume Western products, the political authoritarianism of the late 1980s was already making inroads. Although both societies were economically bankrupt, Poland witnessed the rebirth of the public sphere in the 1980s with the establishment of the *Solidarność* trade union (pp. 369–71).

Overall, the book suggests the existence of a less crystallized political sphere in Bucharest in comparison to Warsaw. At the end of the seventeenth century, Warsaw was already fulfilling the role of political representation, a status enhanced by its participation in the insurrections of the first half of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, Bucharest interacted with the Western Powers that temporarily occupied the province in the first half of the nineteenth century through social events where the local elite had the opportunity to imitate the lifestyle of the guests. Although the author seems reluctant to award this process a political meaning, it is noticeable that the imitation of Western manners by the local Romanian elite, particularly obvious at the level of clothing and language, producing a diachronic blend of the 'European' and 'Oriental' in an individual's outfit or vocabulary, was political: it contributed to women's emancipation and the change of power relations within the traditional community. Modernization, even under the auspices of the Great Powers, is a political process *per se*.

Later on, the balance was reversed. Warsaw became one of the cities of the Russian Empire whereas Bucharest was the capital of a newly established state. During the interwar years, Warsaw regained part of its lost political meaning as the capital of the reconstructed state, whereas Bucharest had to cope with yet another political meaning, becoming the capital of a state twice the size it was before 1918. The Communist period recreated the gap between the two cities. Warsaw benefited from a relatively free public life, which allowed the political culture to persist, albeit in a somewhat rudimentary version. By contrast, Bucharest would cultivate what we may call 'a culture of nostalgia'. In the last stage of Communism, the difference would become even more dramatic: after the birth of *Solidarność*, Warsaw witnessed the strengthening of the political element of the public sphere, whereas Bucharest became engulfed by a neo-Stalinist regime.

This general picture is accurate. However, one should add that the Romanian society also witnessed political acts under full Stalinism, although these were less conspicuous. Somehow, the author does not notice the similarity between the Romanian elite's attempt to promote French in private discussions and for the education of their offspring to the adoption, one century earlier, of French instead of Russian by Polish nationals working in institutions under the Russian administration (p. 93).

*Paryże Innej Europy ...* has a good balance of scholarly facts and of anecdotes, which means that it addresses not only specialist readers, i.e., students of urban history or experts of Central and East European studies, but also

a wider public. In addition to a thorough use of dates, statistics, and political concepts, the book alludes to chapters in the histories of the two countries not often mentioned in history textbooks, but which are no less revealing. For instance, the description of Western airline companies through the eyes of 'Easterners', illegal commerce and circumstantial prostitution during the Communist period, and even the depiction of regional clichés and animosities in the two countries make this work a real page-turner.

Nevertheless, in the effort to satisfy both categories of audience, *Paryże Innej Europy* ... took the risk of leaving some blank spaces. Sometimes, a reader not fully familiar with both cases will find it difficult to follow all the book's trains of thought. The photographs included are the most conspicuous example. These are rather few in number and do not have the best production quality. They definitely are means of highlighting parts of the text. However, the lack of detailed explanations accompanying them or even any references explaining their connection with the book's key ideas undermines their usefulness. Finally, these do not do justice to their intrinsic value.

Undoubtedly, *Paryże Innej Europy* ... is a book about elites: it deals with aspirations and those who possessed the tools and opportunities to turn them into reality. A common view is that modernization in Central and Eastern Europe was a process introduced from above. Nevertheless, even though it might have seemed anachronistic to introduce voices that, for much of the period covered in the book, did not play significant roles in the public affairs, perhaps the work would have benefited if it had included more diverse viewpoints. It is true that, here and there, there is talk of members of a Russian sect who were coachmen or ambulant merchants from the south of the country (in the Romanian case). However, their role is depicted as exotic, and thus does not depart from the dominant view of the epoch. The same can be said of Warsaw. It is traditionally accepted that the Russian administration in Warsaw of the nineteenth century had negative connotations. Yet, how did the ordinary people on the streets such as press vendors, military-music players, or governesses react to Russian occupation? What were their life strategies? Where was the line between the public and the private? Did they value political freedom more than economic development?

In the Romanian case, the Jews are conspicuously absent. While we have to recognize that the Jewish community of Bucharest was less significant in numbers than that of Warsaw, we must emphasize that, as a proportion of Bucharest's inhabitants, the Jewish population cannot be ignored: it was the second confessional group after the Eastern-Orthodox; for instance, in 1904, there were approximately 50,000 people of the Mosaic faith trailing the 205,000 declared Orthodox believers.<sup>2</sup> Although the author makes short

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<sup>2</sup> Frédéric Damé, *Bucureștiul în 1906* (Pitești, 2007), 144. The figures are most probably exaggerated, the official statistics give 40,500 as number for the years

references to the moments of tension between the two communities, the everyday presence of Jews in Bucharest's commercial centre or the Jewish contribution to the city's profile is overlooked, as is the survival in the popular language of words related to the Jewish community, or the Jewish influence on Bucharest's modernism. It may be the case that the travelogue writers employed as sources for the description of Bucharest simply did not notice the Jews. While in Warsaw they were visible due to their clothing (i.e., as Ashkenazi Jews), in Bucharest, as Sephardic Jews, they were wearing the Turkish-Oriental outfit, which rendered them indistinguishable from the rest of the population. However, after the administrative Union of 1859, many Ashkenazi Jews of Moldova, themselves former immigrants from the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria, came to Bucharest, and they outnumbered the local Jewry. They kept their dress, meaning they were 'visible' in the public sphere.

These comments regarding an otherwise overwhelmingly impressive book should warn against the fact that, by promoting dominant voices, there is a danger that the reader retains the images of the 'Catholic Polish-insurrectionist' or the 'Christian Romanian-defender of civilization'.

*proofreading Christopher Gilley*

*Raluca Goleşteanu*

Jesse Kauffman, *Elusive Alliance: The German Occupation of Poland in World War I*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA and London, 2015, 285 pp., index, ill., maps

This book by Jesse Kauffman appears as part of the recently ever-more-vivid trend of research focused on the occupations in the First World War years. The topic has long remained somewhat neglected by studies that otherwise concentrated on military and diplomatic issues. The occupations affected, for a change, the civilians supervised and administered by the conquering country: the soldiers and diplomats played second-rank roles in their functioning. And, since the 1914–18 occupation experience affected East Central Europe to an extent much larger than the West of Europe, the topic could not earn much popularity. In the West, almost the whole of Belgian territory and a significant portion of northern France were overwhelmed by Germany. In the East, Russia temporarily occupied East Prussia and, somewhat longer, Galicia; Germany and Austria-Hungary seized, for a change, vast territories

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1900, but it still renders Bucharest as the settlement with the biggest Jewish community on the territory of Romanian Kingdom, in Leonida Colescu, *La popula-tion de religion mosaïque en Roumanie. Étude statistique* (Bucureşti, 1915), 14.

of the Russian Empire, Serbia, and Romania; Bulgaria absorbed Macedonia and a part of Serbia; lastly, Romania took up Bessarabia. The popular culture as well as historiography have so far tended to derive the image of the First World War primarily from the Western Front developments. It hence follows that the trend of putting the other fronts aside, if not neglecting them, was quite equal to negligence of the occupation experience.

An impulse for a change was given by Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius's book on the military occupation of the Lithuanian/Belarusian and Latvian territories, the east of Poland and a part of Estonia, which altogether formed the so-called Ober-Ost (in full, *Oberbefehlshaber Ost*) commanding area.<sup>1</sup> A support area of the Eastern Front, these territories were subjected to a military administration. Liulevicius described the economic policies pursued by Germany, symptoms of cooperation versus passive resistance from the locals, and – apparently the key significant factor in the research on both World Wars – the emergence of a specific image of the European East in the minds of German Ober-Ost soldiers. His argument is that it was the the First World War experience in the geographies under consideration that incited the conviction that the 'subhumans' dwelling there deserve no respect, or even pity. The cruelties of the subsequent German occupation in Eastern Europe came, in this concept, as a direct consequence of these acquired convictions and stereotypes.

The interpretation proposed by Liulevicius harmonised with the (rather modest) Polish classical research in the German occupation of the Kingdom of Poland, which typically focused – as in the pioneering studies by Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz<sup>2</sup> – on the ruthless economic exploitation of the country and political clashes involving the occupiers and the occupied. Newer research has come in the recent years: the studies of Arkadiusz Stempin,<sup>3</sup> Marta Polsakiewicz,<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Gumz,<sup>5</sup> and Stephan Lehnstaedt<sup>6</sup> propose a different view of the German occupation – not really owing to the use of new sources or a different interpretation of the facts, but primarily due to the context of analysis. Related to the comparative wealth of the peace time, the occupation

<sup>1</sup> Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge MA, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz, *Warszawa 1914–1918* (Warszawa, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Arkadiusz Stempin, *Próba "moralnego podboju" Polski przez Cesarstwo Niemieckie w latach I wojny światowej* (Warszawa, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Marta Polsakiewicz, 'Spezifika deutscher Besatzungspolitik in Warschau 1915–1916', *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, lviii, 4 (2009), 501–37.

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Gumz, 'Losing Control: The Norm of Occupation in Eastern Europe during the First World War', in Jochen Böhrer, Włodzimierz Borodziej, and Joachim von Puttkamer (eds.), *Legacies of Violence: Eastern Europe's First World War* (München, 2014), 69–87.

<sup>6</sup> Stephan Lehnstaedt, 'Fluctuating between "Utilisation" and Exploitation: Occupied East Central Europe during the First World War', in *ibidem*, 89–111.

indisputably brought along poverty, starvation, diseases, and a load of new charges, the party to blame being the German Reich (the Austrian occupation being considered by historiographers, formerly and presently, as having proved softer, more liberal and – now, a disputable point – less destructive to economy). The aches and pains related to the German occupation in the First World War pale into near-insignificance when it comes to the subsequent, the Second World War occupation, which was so different in all respects. As epitomised by the German education policy: the former attempted to restore a Polish schooling system, including tertiary education (universities and technology colleges), whilst the latter aimed to completely destroy the education system: the point aptly remarked also by Kauffman. More significantly still, as opposed to the period 1939–45, the exploitation of the occupied areas did not basically differ from the exploitation of the Germans' own hinterland. To use a figurative image: when the residents of Warsaw starved, so did the Berliners; the supplies received by residents of Vienna were normally worse than those provided to any larger city within the Austro-Hungarian occupation area.

Kauffman's book offers many a valuable and detailed piece of information on the image of the first German occupation, and basically agrees in the evaluation of this occupation with the aforementioned recent studies. *Elusive Alliance ...* encompasses the period 1915–18. It opens with an introduction discussing the present state of research (let us remark that Kaufmann had no opportunity to get acquainted with some of the most recent publications, the Stempin book among them). Chapter 1 deals with the beginnings of the German occupation and briefly characterises the economic issues. The following section discusses the Polish question-related policies until autumn 1917. The next three chapters analyse the crucial aspects of the *Generalgouvernement's* home policies, such as administration, elementary and secondary education and opening of tertiary schools. The last, sixth chapter describes the last eighteen months of Germany's occupation in the 'Congress' Kingdom, with the debilitation and, finally, abolishment of the rule of Colonel General Hans Hartwig von Beseler as Military Governor of the German-occupied part of the Polish lands' zone. The conclusion section deals with continuations of, and parallels between, the two occupations under the two World Wars.

A strong point in Kaufmann's argument is his skilful outlining of some apparently unobvious lines of political conflict. As he convincingly argues, for most of the occupation period the major lines did not go between the ruling Germans and the ruled Poles. There were quite many active participants in, or contributors to politics and they represented much diverse programmes and interests. Governor-General von Beseler is covered to quite an extent; Kaufmann makes a point that his intentions conflicted not only with the views of the German nationalists Hindenburg and Ludendorff, but also with the ones advocated by the German Government. Beseler's aim was to create a Polish state under the German custody, a country that in the future, once

Germany wins the war then going on, would become (somewhat enforcedly) an ally to Germany and a lasting protection against Russia. The actions taken by General Beseler – primarily, a gradual formation and empowerment of Polish local self-government and central authorities – were meant to make the objective come true. Beseler opposed greater territorial annexations for Germany, which were otherwise discussed in the Reich ever since the war broke out. He believed that any correction of the border (benefitting Germany, of course) ought to have been slight, its significance being strategic rather than economic. With respect to the Poles, the Governor's attitude was that of an usher or schoolmaster: he considered himself to be their benefactor and educator. Finally, however, neither his good will (which Kaufmann would not doubt) nor his pedagogical verve came across the gratitude he would have expected.

The conflicts on the part of the occupied nation(s) became even more acutely visible. The chapters dealing with local government, school system and higher education highlight the role played in all these spheres by the Polish-Jewish rivalry. This conflict remarkably contributed to the student strikes and was the major reason for the clashes between students and German gendarmerie. The occupiers' stance with respect to the Polish-Jewish dispute was not consistent. Whilst in the tertiary schools the gendarmes intervened against Polish nationalists, Jewish lower-tier education was gradually passed over to the control of the Poles. The German minority was the only one that enjoyed autonomy in relation to Polish education authorities.

In the final section of his book, Kauffman attempts to verify Liulevicius's argument with respect to the German occupation of Polish lands. Whilst agreeing with the statement that there was a link between this occupation and the unparalleled brutality of the German policies during the Second World War, the author renders this intuitive finding even more precise, in an original fashion. In specific, Kaufmann believes that it was not the relatively liberal rule in the Kingdom (at least, given the wartime context) that taught the Germans contemptuousness toward the East and hatred for Poles and Jews. The actual factor was the pathetic closure of the period of the Reich's political dominance in the Kingdom. Disarming and evacuation of German units was carried out pretty efficiently, mainly (as Kauffman remarks) owing to the diplomatic talents of Józef Piłsudski, who had come to an agreement with representatives of German soldiers' councils. However, what was successful from the Polish point of view (and, in the perception of the German conscripts, then on their way back home), was almost instantly included in the 'knife stabbed in the back of the combating army' narration. In association with the anti-Semitic hallucinations (the utterances quoted by Kauffman insinuated a Jewish-Polish plot against the Reich, doing it, take note, at the point when a considerable part of Polish public opinion was inclined to believe in a Jewish-German conspiracy targeted against Poland), frustration

accompanying the departure from occupied Poland and, then on, the 'dictate of Versailles' provided the substratum for the racist theories of the Nazis to develop: "The toxic legacy left by the experience of the Great War and its aftermath in Germany helped ensure that Poland and its citizens, both Gentile and Jew, did not stand a chance when the Germans returned in 1939." (p. 219)

The book under review is a competent description of the important aspects of German policies in the German-occupied Kingdom. The local case studies artfully braided into the narrative enable the reader to learn not only about the designs of the administration and the events Warsaw lived and breathed, but also about the practical effects of the educational system's reform or the course taken by the local government election in the provinces. All these advantages are suppressed, to some extent, by the author's not-quite-exquisite style, abounding with irrelevant repetitions. Facts-related and linguistic errors appear in the Kaufmann book rarely and are not much of significance. The Bishop of Włocławek and the Bishop of Kuyavia and Kalisz were in fact one and the same person (p. 148). The mention of the execution of the 1830–1 insurgents is an unmatched brachylogy (p. 51). The Legionnaires' respect for the professionalism of German instructors seems dubious, not only in the light of the many recollections published in the interwar period but also in respect of the argument, referred to not much further on, that the Legionnaires did not value barrack-room life, cherishing instead a sense of pre-eminence based on their own warfront experience (p. 97). A few literal or typographic errors appearing in the names of Polish organisations (pp. 177, 180) complement the short list of deficiencies.

In the summary section, the question of historical context is resumed. The role of this aspect has proved crucial to recent interpretations of the first German occupation. Contrary to the mental constructs or habits of thought, it is worth realising that in the time when Beseler's policy was developed, the emergence of an independent Polish state was still pretty unconceivable; moreover, the very idea of self-determination had not yet taken a final shape by then. With this circumstance in mind, the German policies with respect to the Polish question ought to be regarded as an attempt at developing some form of restricted sovereignty. The objective behind the Polish state to be finally formed by the Germans was to develop and domesticate the imperial 'shatterzone', and thus, to effectively pacify the potential threat to the Reich's stability. In reality, once there, in confrontation of the not infrequently competing interests of local ethnic and political groups, to keep such sustainable control turned out to be an unexpectedly tough task. Jesse Kauffman's book contributes to an enrichment and rearrangement of our concept of the period's ideological positions, whilst placing an emphasis on the internal differentiation of the two parties of 'the occupiers—the occupied' system.



Katarzyna Sierakowska, *Śmierć, wygnanie, głód w dokumentach osobistych. Ziemia polskie w latach Wielkiej Wojny 1914–1918* [Death, exile and hunger in personal documents: The Polish territory in the Great War years, 1914–18], Instytut Historii PAN, Warszawa, 2015, 268 pp., bibliog., index of personal names, ills.

This book by a respected scholar specialising in twentieth-century history of women and family is innovative, and this quality is not confined to the Polish soil. In spite of the cultural turn's influence, which has been intensifying in Poland as well, it is a rare occurrence for the history of the First World War to so resolutely disregard the military aspects and the realities of diplomatic service. The book in question is confined in the facts almost exclusively to the elementary placement in time and space of individual and group experiences shared by Polish military-men and civilians. The author's attempt to systematise the abundant material (drawn from a hundred diaries, memoirs and correspondence collections) is with respect to sentiments and feelings, mechanisms of fear, suffering, hope, and despair – rather than logical reasons behind, and consequences of, wartime occurrences and episodes.

The tract basically consists of three chapters, corresponding with the 'Riders of the Apocalypse' alluded to in the title. The first, entitled 'Śmierć' [Death], analyses the differences in the accounts on deaths in the battlefield and elsewhere (hospital or behind the frontline) and offers some very interesting observations of moral attitudes accompanying the extreme experiences. Using well-matched examples, Sierakowska demonstrates the ways in which people try to embrace the fear of death, make excuses to their own conscience for having failed to offer help to their dying mates, and grow indifferent to the passing of the others, their relatives included. The subject-matter is dealt with by tracing typical patterns of experiencing mourning and commemorating the deceased, and by taking a closer look on deaths indirectly caused by the war: victims of contagious diseases or child-murderesses willing to conceal, by hook or by crook, their infidelity from their mobilised husbands. A separate subsection discusses the situation of the wounded who oftentimes perceived their condition as a sort of suspension between life and death. One of the most conspicuous conclusions based on this part of the book is a paradoxically undemocratic character of death. The value of someone's lost life depended on the 'cause' for which the man had fought – and this not only in terms of the national propaganda but also in the perception of the contemporaries. Not every single corpse could have turned into a victim. A dead soldier of Józef Piłsudski's Legions deserved, in the opinion of many, greater respect and more lasting a memory than a colleague of his who has served with one of the imperial armies. Descriptions of soldiers' deaths were clearly different from the ways in which the deceases of civilians were

described: a nimbus of romantic mysteriousness shrouded the former only, and mainly with the accounts whose authors had had rather modest warfront experience, if any at all.

The exile experience is the focus of the subsequent chapter. A brief introduction outlining the reasons and the circumstances that generated the largest waves of wartime emigration from the Polish lands is followed by a systematic catalogue of the phenomena that accompanied the flight: bursts of collective panic, gossips, rumours and hearsays, confusion and uncertainty, hopeless search for lost family members – and death, again. Particularly moving testimonies are about women fleeing with their little children or babies. The chapter also discusses the conditions at the refugees' target or intermediate destinations, such as camps or alien localities, where they every so often came across aversion from the locals or cruel handling by the guards.

The last chapter, analysing testimonies of wartime famine, is composed analogously. The facts related to shortages in the market and transportation crisis, otherwise known to historiography (such as omnipresent ersatzes, food rationing system, queues, aid actions, profiteering, to name the major facts), have been illustrated with personal reminiscences or notes taken on the spot by inhabitants of the Polish territory, plus complemented with information from the period's press. As is the case with the preceding sections, the result is extremely interesting and, at times, touching, albeit the reader might find the longer fragments composed of quotation-collages somewhat fatiguing. For a change, historians will certainly value high the enormous amounts of autobiographical material that has remained largely neglected before then.

The novel approach is based, partly, on the author's consistent focus on subjective feelings of the characters portrayed. No less valuable is her resolute (and, in this respect, quite rare in Polish literature) assumption of a gender perspective – not really by means of methodological references but rather in terms of research praxis. Sierakowska often considers the specificity of female experience, as opposed to the male counterpart. Her focus is very much on certain details which often tend to be ignored by historians. One such riveting observation is the motif of lamenting women: it only appears, the author tells us, in testimonies of male tellers (p. 148). Family relationships form an essential aspect in this context. The war has radically transformed certain traditional norms in this sphere. The traditionally assumed rules of conduct and gender roles were disturbed in places such as, for instance, camps for Galician refugees where the Austro-Hungarian guards, females as well as males, maltreated and abused the evacuated women. Not confining herself to describing the established facts, Sierakowska points out to how such events affected, in post-war time, the authority of husbands and fathers who have 'proved incapable' of defending their wives and daughters against violence (p. 175).

The emphasis put in this book on cultural gender has to do with the author's attentiveness toward some important aspects of life that sometimes

prove hard to distil from the sources. Such an attitude calls for the researcher's sense and skilful interpretation of testimonies that appear enigmatic or stylised. The fragments on the role of sex in taming the soldiers' fear of death provide a good illustration of the approach. For instance, Sierakowska has noticed an astonishing concordance between the soldier-authors of diaries she analyses, of whom none owns up to have dealt with prostitutes. At least in some of the cases, such statements are most probably contrary to the facts. Like the mentions of venereal diseases, such issues appear in the recollections in reference to the others.

Analysis of this sort makes necessary the strife for taking into account a variety of aspects of life, not limited to those which the diarists and memoirists themselves considered worthy of perpetuation. The image of wartime experience would have been quite fragmented and sketchy without a sensibility for the omitted, the superseded, or the absent. The author for the most part proves capable of reading well between the lines. She meticulously mentions every single instance of her sources keeping silence or some social group of importance not having produced a relevant source. Such is the case, for instance, with refugees: as noticed by the author, they would normally not have testified in writing to their vicissitudes; instead, they are often featured in the accounts of those they came into contact with, as well as in press articles or official documents. Well versed in the literature, Sierakowska knows what sort of questions ought to be asked with respect to these sources, and usually does not leave them without an appropriate context being evoked. One of the very few exceptions to the rule is the passage on supply difficulties in Galicia (pp. 212–15). The opinions expressed in Polish Galician press describing the supplies situation in Vienna as an (allegedly) better one, left uncommented, testified, naturally, to the Polish authors' frustration with the extremely poor situation in supplies at the time, but had nothing to do with the actual realities of the monarchy's starving capital city; as a matter of fact, in mid-1918, Vienna did not live at the expense of the municipalities of its provinces.

In the conclusion of her book, Sierakowska attempts at describing the types of narration dominant in the sources she has used, and tries to grasp the more general trends appearing in wartime reminiscences. Referring to oral history (a rather remote inspiration, given the time distance between the historian's effort and the dates the original accounts were produced), she considers the differences between the diaries and memoirs as well as between the way in which war stories are told by females (less demonstrative, more focused on daily affairs), males and children (the latter's accounts being of special value in the reconstruction of emotions generated at the time). Sierakowska uses the autobiographical notes to point out to the year 1916 as a caesura after which the war became commonplace to the people, losing its air of peculiarity and gradually becoming a new normality. This

interesting observation coincides with the findings of cultural historians who point out to a diminishing enthusiasm and growing pacifistic sentiments amongst European intellectuals in the latter half of the war.<sup>1</sup> The author's hypothesis with respect to the impact of the wartime image of Jew on the ethnic relations in the interwar Poland (p. 241) is more difficult to agree with. It would rather seem that leitmotifs of interwar anti-Semitism had had a much longer tradition: the First World War reinforced and radicalised the attitudes occurring earlier.

Katarzyna Sierakowska has managed to present certain not-quite-well-known aspects of the war experience. She has made use of accounts that until recently were considered not-too-important as they concern the sphere of emotion rather than the battlefield or diplomatic bargaining facts, with a feel for historical context as well as social processes and psychological mechanisms occurring during the war and heavily affecting the authors of the recollections and the characters therein portrayed. Should this book still leave one craving for something, this would be the case not because of its author's erroneous interpretations but rather owing to its limitation to Polish sources only. In fact, the effect of the restricted resource is experienced in each of the sections. The chapter on the death experience talks more, perforce, about the experiences of Polish Legionnaires than of the soldiers of any other formation who fought and fell within the Polish territory – and the fact is worth realising that a multiple greater number of non-Poles were killed in the area in question. The chapter on exile ('Wygnanie') should have used the recollections of Jewish expatriates – and the author is aware that they are blatantly missing. Jews accounted for a high proportion of refugees and expelled; at the target sites, they were often grouped separately from Christians and treated differently (incidentally, the camp in the Czech town of Choceň, covered at some length in the book, was a Christians-only camp). The reader will not learn much about the attitudes of the people living in the areas where the refugees were kept, mainly in Czech lands, Moravia, and Lower Austria. Polish reminiscences and documents would rarely mention the widely spread (according to Czech sources) prostitution practised by Polish women from Galicia. The residual figures from a hospital in Jaroměř, Hradec area, have recorded, for instance, more than twenty Polish women suffering from venereal diseases receiving treatment there in January 1915 alone.<sup>2</sup> The figure must have been manifold higher in the areas where expatriates formed

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Bürgerliche Kultur und politische Ordnung. Künstler, Schriftsteller und Intellektuelle in der deutschen Geschichte 1830–1933* (Frankfurt am Main, 2000), 206.

<sup>2</sup> Martina Halířová and Milena Lenderová, 'Století dítěte? Možnosti a limity válečné sociální péče', in Milena Lenderová, Martina Halířová, and Tomáš Jiránek, *Vše pro dítě! Válečné dětství 1914–1918* (Praha, 2015), 143.

larger clusters. I have already mentioned the gaps to be filled with respect to hunger. The subjective perspective of certain accounts would probably become relativised in the context of experiences other than Polish alone.

Yet, all these objections nowise diminish the importance of the study under review. It is a privilege of historians to confine the subject matter and the sources used. The materials used for this particular purpose have proved to be pretty sufficient for painting a fascinating image of the Great War – from the standpoint of those who have experienced it firsthand. Thus, a way has been paved for more and more questions to arise.

*trans. Tristan Korecki*

*Maciej Górny*

István Deák, *Europe on Trial: The Story of Collaboration, Resistance, and Retribution During World War II*, foreword by Norman M. Naimark, Westview, Boulder, 2015, 282 pp., bibliog., indexes, ill.

This new book by the outstanding American historian is certainly not a typical study of the academic historiography sort. Free of excessive cautiousness, as is otherwise standard with studies written with an academic qualification purpose in mind, this particular study is concise and does not shun unambiguous opinions. It does not avoid daring comparisons, either, talking to the reader outright, using an uncomplicated and clear language (which makes the reading much easier to cope with than the title would suggest). The author does not conceal, from the very outset, his personal associations with the (historic) facts and figures described in the book. These autobiographical references is yet another strong point of this quite interesting book.

The study opens with three introductory sections. The first, penned by Norman N. Naimark, sketches a portrait of the author and briefly outlines the book's topic. The other, by Deák himself, makes us acquainted with the personal premises behind the writing of this book: a tragic death of his family member during the war, and the author's complicated identity, with its Hungarian, Jewish, and Catholic layers. The third introduction summarises the book's major points and arguments. The study 'proper' is chronologically arranged. It starts with a section on the earlier occupations and the international legal agreements regulating them. Deák primarily considers the influence of historical experience on the aspects of the Second World War of his special interest. The Partition of Poland, the insurrections, and the brutality of the occupiers during the First World War, to an extent, all have influenced, in one way or another, the Third Reich's occupational policies. On the other hand, however, the author notices that the crimes committed by German

soldiers, even if approved or directly ordered by their superiors, proved contrary to the Wehrmacht's rules of conduct still in force then. Crimes remained crimes also within the meaning of the German law of the time.

Chapter 2 describes Hitler's initial conquests: the *Anschluss* of Austria, the seizure of Czechoslovakia, and the war against Poland. The key issue of collaboration and its accompanying cowardice or treason (being the categories used by the author to evaluate the Austrians' attitude toward their country) appears along with these occurrences; Deák makes a strong point that the European powers could, and indeed should, have taken the fight against Hitler head on in 1938 or 1939, at the latest. The fact that they failed to do so, and their later conduct inclines the author to make express but apparently quite well-grounded opinions: he namely argues that desistence from fighting turned into the first step toward the later collaboration of the societies in German-occupied Western Europe. The following chapter outright argues that without the cooperation from the West European nations and countries, Hitler would have found it much tougher do invade the eastern parts of the continent (p. 45).

In his analysis of the Europeans' attitude toward the Third Reich, Deák refers to the commonly applied caesurae. Until 1941, a considerable portion of the public opinion believed that Hitler's Germany was doomed to win, whilst the communists vigorously supported the greatest ally of the Soviet Union. Hitler's invasion on the Soviet Union implied the second phase, where both Moscow and London did a lot to incite the residents of the German-occupied countries to strenuously resist. The Stalingrad battle came as the turning point: from the moment of this spectacular German defeat, the ranks of collaborationists began melting, with only fanatics and losers remaining.

This framework is filled by concrete examples of attitudes of people and institutions, spanning between collaboration and resistance. While many of these facts are not quite revealing, they are not too widely known. Such is the case with the description of German occupation of Denmark, a country that not only saved its government and political parties (with a really free election taking place in 1943) but joined the Anti-Comintern Pact out of its own initiative (p. 46). It is the differences between the everyday lives in the various parts of Europe under German occupation that the author tends to focus the most on (often sharing his cutting comments). Whilst emphasising the role of the 'human factor' (the attitudes of those under occupation depended heavily on the degree of fanaticism displayed by the local Nazi governor), Deák does not ignore the pragmatism of the German politics. The occupiers would normally not seek support from local fascists (of whom there were quite a plenty, as the author argues) but rather, from exponents of the political centre and conservatives.

One of the major subjects in the book is the part played by the German-occupied European nations in the Holocaust. Deák points out to a paradox

that was based on the fact that the West European anti-Semitism was primarily targeted at the East Central European Jewry. Western Jews suffered from it to a lesser degree and their chance to survive was much larger. Another point he makes is that in the countries allied with the Third Reich, the cooperation with Hitler was not at all tantamount to a betrayal among a part of the political elite. In most of the cases, this pragmatics responded social or public sentiments quite faithfully. The subsection on the Norman Islands comes as a crowning of the critical typology of the attitudes typical of the West European populations: the local population readily gave up the few local Jews to the Germans occupying their country, remaining in parallel totally indifferent to the fate of the Soviet POWs who were dying of hunger in a camp located on one of their islands. As Deák pungently remarks, albeit the British propaganda summoned the German-occupied societies of continental Europe to stand up against Hitler, it has never attempted at a like mobilisation with respect to the British subjects.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on various forms of collaborationism with Germany in East Central Europe and in the Balkans. The key question in this section is whether Hitler's allies were really of a help to him, or rather turned out to be a burden, at the end of the day. Deák is inclined to the latter answer, noticing that Slovakia, Croatia, Hungary, or Romania made use of the prevalent political constellation in order to satisfy their own goals. The most important among these goals was, in Deák's view, the final removal or elimination of ethnic minorities (and thus, Germans themselves became, paradoxically, the last victims to the process among the East Central European nations). Instead of giving commands, Berlin had oftentimes to act as a mediator between the countries that, whilst apparently allied, fostered a long-standing tradition of mutual hatred. That the Reich's allies were autonomous is indirectly proved by the lot of the local Jewry. The countries that simply refused to give them up to Germans did not suffer any unpleasant response from their hegemonic patron. Italy, extremely autonomous in this respect, went as far as extending consular care to its citizens of Jewish background residing in the Reich. The strategic reorientation which almost all of these parties decided to follow in the course of 1944, came as a final confirmation of long-term deleteriousness of the allies for the policies pursued by Hitler.

The next three chapters deal with the resistance movement. Also in this respect, albeit not too many novel or unknown facts are proposed by the author, he appears repeatedly astonishing in the way he tackles the subject. He starts off by stating that the demand of Germany's unconditional capitulation agreed by the Allies at the 1943 Casablanca conference contributed to extending the war and increased the number of its victims, as it hindered possible internal opposition against Hitler. In describing the resistance practices (the German plotters being part of the picture), Deák challenges the myths surrounding it. As he says, not the Germans were shot at most

of the time, but instead, the native collaborators or political competitors. The society's support for the partisans was rather poor, the same being true for their military force (this was the case with Western Europe: Deák finds the Polish *ruch oporu* much more efficient). The author quite seriously ponders on the effects of partisan actions on the civilians; he does not dodge the question whether an action that without a doubt implied bloody German repressions should be regarded morally acceptable. When focusing on East Central Europe and the Balkans, he aptly observes that the resistance in those areas became one more element to the omnipresent bloody chaos and many-sided slaughter. Using three examples: Italy (German-occupied), France, and the Hungarian-occupied zone of Serbia, he considers the question of whether, and to what extent, the partisans ought to be perceived as terrorists rather than fighters for national liberation.

The last three chapters deal with the various phases of cleansings, trials, and impunity shared by so many perpetrators of war crime. The differences between Western Europe and the (then emerging) Eastern Bloc are quite clearly outlined again. The apparent general conclusion is that those most prone to punishment are weak and not extremely guilty individuals: women accused of 'horizontal collaboration' (the topic is recurring in the book, with statistics of children born out of affairs with German soldiers quoted for several Western European countries); German civilians; petty collaborationists; and, as far as international perspective is concerned, the weak and poor countries in the East of Europe, rather than the richer and stronger ones in the West. Deák emphasises that among the Axis powers' military-men, post-war justice did not extend to German high-ranking military officers in the first place. Hungarian generals sentenced to capital punishment could envy their German colleagues who did not suffer severely on the like account, in most of the cases – the finding that is well illustrated by a few specific examples. The Cold War period obviously came as a direct cause for imbalance in administering justice to war criminals. The passages on the Nuremberg Trials offer interesting and competent considerations on the legal qualification of the deeds charged to the accused. As the author points out, some of these deeds were not instances of crime, whilst some of the accusations could have equally well been cast at the Allies. There appeared many a local difference in the way collaborators were treated. It is easy to see that the author is more at home with this particular topic, compared to, for instance, military history. In spite of many objections, the general evaluation of the post-war justice is positive: never before had so many guilty ones been brought to justice, even though some were put before the court as late as in the 1990s.

Apart from its literary qualities, *Europe on Trial* ... offers a fresh look on the topics it deals with, and a broad perspective in which they are set, enabling to grasp (cor)relations and associations between phenomena that usually tend to be perceived as separate: these being collaboration, resistance,



war crimes and attempts at judging them. These strong points enable one to more easily glose over the weak ones in the Deák book. If these are to be indicated, they would include a (strong, but not exclusive) dependence on English-language sources and reference literature and no references made to the author's own source- or archive-based research. These deficits are made up for by the author's good command of the recently published translations from some of the languages inaccessible to him and, partly, thanks to the help of his friends having the knowledge he needed (Jan Tomasz Gross, in the first place). This is combined with the author's own knowledge, evidenced with exquisite publications, of the functioning of the armies, and robberies and pillaging of Jewish properties.<sup>1</sup> The geographical and personal names are mostly correct (Lwów/Lviv being misspelled as 'Lviv'; the surname Mihajlović misspelled on p. 199 are exceptional and mostly owing to the editors rather than the author). The surprising thing in the map of interwar Europe (p. 25) is that apart from the capital cities, Pinsk is plotted, a town that has never been a capital. Authoritative generalising statements, appearing in a few places, possibly come as annoyance. Deák tends to refer to nations that have 'decided' or 'resolved' to do something; the residents of the Balkans are, in his view, "not peacefully inclined people" (p. 62). Ukrainian and Belorussian lands were within the borders of Poland-Lithuania before 1772, rather than 'Ukrainian and Russian' ones. The approach of the 1920 Polish-Bolshevik war as a Polish attack on the Bolsheviks (p. 36), albeit frequently proposed by historiographers, does not withstand scrutiny.

The author is perhaps too hasty and, at times, somewhat biased in the opinions he puts forth; he is moreover overly determined, to an extent, in shifting the burden of responsibility for the complicity in the German crimes from the East to the West of Europe. All these shortcomings pale into insignificance against the substantial strengths: clarity of argument, good knowledge of the complex matter of ethnic conflicts in East Central Europe and in the Balkans – and, above all, empathy. Deák would not shun moral questions while writing of collaborators or analysing the consequences of resistance movement's actions. Looking across the continent, he says that ethnic 'cleanness' was the obsession of everyone: the East of Europe began meeting this goal, simply put, at a later date.

trans. *Tristan Korecki*

*Maciej Górný*

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<sup>1</sup> Above all, his *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848–1918* (New York, 1990) being an exquisite analysis of the worldviews of the Austro-Hungarian officer cadre; also (co-edited with Jan Tomasz Gross and Tony Judt) *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, 2000).

François Guesnet and Gwen Jones (eds.), *Antisemitism in an Era of Transition: Continuities and Impact in Post-Communist Poland and Hungary*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2014, 301 pp., bibliog.

The term ‘anti-Semitism’ is attributed to the journalist Wilhelm Marr who popularized it during the early 1870s in Germany. According to Shulamit Volkov, it “was applied as the proper name of a full-fledged new ideology, a complete world-view, grounded in what was then considered a new scientific theory, proving once and for all the spiritual and racial inferiority of the Jews and the imminent danger they posed to humankind in general and to the unique cultures of Germany and France ... in particular.”<sup>1</sup> Volkov argues that by the end of the nineteenth century anti-Semitism had become a ‘cultural code’, “a sign of cultural identity, of one’s belonging to a specific cultural camp”.<sup>2</sup> One key element that ‘pre-modern’ and ‘modern’ anti-Semitism have in common is the mental structure of conspiracy: in the anti-Semitic world-view, a world-encompassing, secret, endless power is ascribed to the Jews – in Christian anti-Semitism the power to kill God, in modern anti-Semitism the power to exercise world domination by means of capitalism, socialism, communism, liberalism etc.

The volume *Antisemitism in an Era of Transition. Continuities and Impact in Post-Communist Poland and Hungary*, edited by François Guesnet and Gwen Jones, examines the role anti-Semitism has played within the political cultures of Poland and Hungary since the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Reading the various contributions we begin to understand why anti-Semitism never went away in both countries. The majority societies in Poland and Hungary still need the anti-Semitic figure and image of ‘the Jew’ for the construction of their own national community and identity. The volume focuses on the question of the continuity of anti-Semitism covering a period from early twentieth century through the post-war years to the fall of communism and the subsequent decades. The volume includes a substantial bibliography of secondary literature compiled by Agnieszka Oleszak and supplemented by Gwen Jones.

In the introduction, the editors outline similarities and differences between the two countries under examination, referring to the most important historical works on the subject matter. Generally speaking, Jews in Hungary

<sup>1</sup> Shulamit Volkov, ‘Anti-Semitism as Explanation’, in Moishe Postone and Eric Santner (eds.), *Catastrophe and Meaning. The Holocaust and the Twentieth Century* (Chicago and London, 2003), 34–48, here 35.

<sup>2</sup> Shulamit Volkov, ‘Antisemitism as a Cultural Code. Reflections on the History and Historiography of Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany’, *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute*, xxiii, 1 (1978), 25–46, here 34–5.

were considered a religious group, not an ethnic minority. In contrast, Jews in Poland were considered a national minority. As far as the place of anti-Semitism within the political discourse in Poland and Hungary is concerned, the editors state that it is an integral part of “a specific collective *souci de soi*” (p. 26), which envisions a concept of community based on exclusion. According to the editors, the two national cultures are each characterized by an obsessive attempt to define both their present and their future by means of “a teleological construction of the past” (p. 26).

The discussion of ‘political anti-Semitism’ and ‘exclusionary anti-Semitism’ demonstrates that for the Jews discrimination and persecution did not end with emancipation. On the contrary. The editors interpret the enforcement of a *numerus clausus* for Jews in public universities as “a strong indicator of the far-reaching impact of antisemitism as a cultural code legitimizing exclusionary practices” (p. 12). While this makes sense, the sentence “over-representation of Jews in medicine, law and journalism [in Hungary] would continue to fuel competition for prestigious middle-class positions up to and beyond World War One” (p. 11) would certainly make sense from the perspective of an anti-Semitic world-view. Why? Because in “the space of anti-Semitism, the ‘Jew’ stands for social antagonism as such: without the Jewish intruder, the two classes would live in harmony.”<sup>3</sup> The premise “over-representation of Jews” is in itself spurious. The statement cited above implicitly conceptualizes anti-Semitism as a group conflict that has a basis in reality, as suggested by the word “competition”. The statement also fails to acknowledge that Jews were attacked and persecuted as a group irrespective of their social status and affiliation. Unfortunately, the editors do not provide us with their own definition of the term anti-Semitism. Guesnet and Jones as well as some of the contributors to the volume seem to suggest that anti-Semitism is best understood not by a definition of ‘the Jew’ or ‘the Jews’ but by attitudes to Jews (see the article by Brian Porter-Szűcs on the relationship between Polish Catholicism and anti-Semitism and Adam Ostolski’s on anti-Semitism and the transition of public memory of the Second World War in Poland in the years 1980–2010, as well as that by Mikołaj Winiewski and Michał Bilewicz on anti-Semitism in the political and public discourse in Poland after 1989 – one chapter of their article is entitled ‘Attitudes towards Jews: Change over time?’).

Let us not lose sight of the fact that anti-Semitism, whatever else it is, is based on false projection, as Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno put it. Perpetrators of anti-Semitic violence react to the figure of ‘the Jew’ that has been constructed within their culture. In other words, anti-Semites feel hostile toward an imagined ‘Jew’. Gentiles keep track of who is a Jew.

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<sup>3</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Absolute Recoil. Towards a new foundation of dialectic materialism* (London and New York, 2014), 369.

To give an example: In his analysis of the persistence of anti-Semitic schemata after 1945 in official Communist party discourse in Hungary, András Kovács found that the Gentile obsession of noting who was Jewish existed both in the private sphere (friendships, interactions in neighborhoods and at work) as well as in official party politics. The Hungarian Communist party kept an eye on how many 'Jews' there were in leading positions, attempting to make sure that their number did not exceed a certain percentage (see p. 141). Kovács convincingly argues that it was the "restless preoccupation with the 'Jewish question'" that has kept anti-Semitism alive in recent decades after the political transformation brought about by the fall of Communism (p. 137).

In a volume concerned with anti-Semitism in Poland and Hungary one would have expected the inclusion of an article on the myth of Judeo-communism and its impact. Instead, there is an article by Victor Karady entitled 'Jews and the Communist Commitment in Hungary and Eastern Central Europe after 1945' – a subject more fitting for a volume on Jewish history in Eastern Central Europe. Karady claims that "large sectors of 'modernized' Jewry were prepared, long before Sovietization, to accept and adopt the implications of the identity change required by Communism" (p. 123). Leaving aside the fact that the author does not explain what he means by "'modernized' Jewry", he does not provide evidence for his 'fundamental thesis'. The most illuminating part of his text is an analysis of the situation facing Jewish survivors after the Shoah. He emphasizes that "the choice for Jewish political participation was ... imbued with the promises and hopes of the project of a new, egalitarian society free from antisemitism" (p. 126). One might add, this is equally true for Jewish Holocaust survivors in post-war Poland. The title of Karady's chapter 'Communism and the Jewish over-investment in matters of identity' is irritating and raises the question in the reader's mind of what – following the author's logic – the 'right' amount of investment would be.

In his article entitled 'Between *Realpolitik* and Redemption: Roman Dmowski's solution to the "Jewish question"' Grzegorz Krzywiec demonstrates how anti-Semitism did not only become part of Polish nationalism but also part of Polish political culture as a whole. Emphasizing that Dmowski believed in the need to build "a new utopian public order, a world free of Jews and 'the Jewish spirit'" (p. 84), the author draws an analogy to Hitler's and the Nazi elite's redemptive anti-Semitism. While the Nazis did aim to erase 'the Jewish spirit', we have to keep in mind that Hitler's anti-Semitism was totally and from the very beginning "*eine Sache des Handelns*", a matter of taking action, as Shulamit Volkov put it.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Shulamit Volkov, 'Das geschriebene und das gesprochene Wort. Kontinuität und Diskontinuität im deutschen Antisemitismus', in *eadem*, *Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (München, 1990), 54–75, here 74.

It seems to me that this volume would have greatly benefited from an analytical framework. Such a framework might have stimulated the reader into new thoughts and allowed him or her to place characteristic national manifestations of anti-Semitism (such as the persistence of the 'Tiszaeszlár blood libel' in Hungary, examined by János Dési) in the broader context of the theoretically-oriented research of anti-Semitism. Where a contributor does refer to an analytical framework, its explanatory potential remains dubious. I do not see for example how Michael Herzfeld's theory of cultural intimacy, referred to by Ostolski in his text, enables us to understand how anti-Semitism functions. I recognize the value of analyzing the expression of anti-Semitism in public debate and discourse. In their contributions, Hanna Kwiatkowska (in her text on the anti-Semitic discourse in Poland since the 1990s) as well as Winiewski and Bilewicz demonstrate how anti-Semitic statements and hate speech have become part of the official public debate and media in Poland. Article 256 of the Polish criminal law codex stipulates that the incitement of hatred "based on national, ethnic, racist, religious differences" is a criminal offence. However, the prosecution of those who propagate and disseminate hate speech is not regarded as a priority by the Polish courts. Reflecting on the reasons for the reluctance on the part of the authorities to respond, with all the legal means at their disposal, to the dissemination of anti-Semitic views, Kwiatkowska mentions several factors: the "reluctance to limit freedom of speech", the fear that court cases "would push the phenomenon underground and even give it a further boost" (p. 239), and the perceived risk that any public legal proceedings would result in free publicity for the perpetrators. All of the above arguments remain unconvincing. First of all, hate speech cannot be subsumed under the category of "freedom of speech". Secondly, the author fails to mention the important function that court cases against perpetrators of hate speech fulfil for society as a whole: they make clear to the general public that statements that humiliate people and deprive them of their dignity, are not to be tolerated and that hate speech is an illegitimate discourse for which there is no justification whatsoever. If we fail to criminalize and prosecute hate speech, we only confirm the perpetrators in their false belief that they have the right to degrade other people and that they are right in doing so.

The volume testifies to the apparent weakness and lack of resolution when it comes to making anti-Semitism socially, politically and morally unacceptable, particularly when attempting to utilize legal means as a weapon against it.

*Katrin Stoll*

Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova, *Coming of Age under Martial Law: The Initiation Novels of Poland's Last Communist Generation*, University of Rochester Press, Rochester, 2015, 224 pp., bibliog., indexes

Did the final stage of state socialism in Poland spawn a specific generation, a 'generation of 89'? This is a question that on occasion has preoccupied historians, social scientists and journalists alike and their findings did not necessarily produce unanimity on the subject. In her book *Coming of Age under Martial Law*, Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova tackles the question from the perspective of a literary scholar. The author approaches the problem whether Poles born between 1960 and 1975 embody a specific generation by exploring the genre of the *Bildungsroman* – the initiation novel – produced by Polish writers from these age-cohorts and “their attempts to constitute themselves as a community marked by the experience of the cataclysmic fall of communism in 1989.” (p. 6) What makes the undertaking stand out is that the generational narrative in the approximately thirty novels she elucidates is the product of the respective writers' memory at a later stage in life. Through the quasi-autobiographical depiction of coming of age in the final years of state socialism a commonality of experiences becomes clear in which the writers' “self-thematization efforts resulted in a strikingly consistent biography of a unique generation whose most distinct feature is its ambivalence as determined by its transitional location in history.” (p. 7)

It is exactly this ambivalence that characterises this generation which in its self-identification came to straddle the caesura of 1989, delineating the symbolic divide between the very different political and social-economical systems of state socialism on the one hand and liberal democracy and free-market capitalism on the other hand. The initiation novels upon which the book's analysis is based thus include a dual vantage point with regard to the experience of late state socialism in Poland – that of a child growing up in the last two decades of the communist regime and that of a young adult dealing with the challenges of the transition. More so, this generation is further determined by its relation to the generation of its parents, symbolised by the so-called 'generation of 68'. The novels tend to portray a generational clash in the domestic sphere, but this tension similarly plays out in the political sphere where the 89ers have contested the prolonged dominance of the 68ers. The author therefore asserts that the “pathological family dynamic depicted in the novels is a metaphor for a generational shift gone wrong.” (p. 12)

Using the various stories portrayed in the *Bildungsromans*, Vassileva-Karagyozova uncovers some of the key points that define the ambivalence in the self-perception of the members of the 'generation of 89'. The most significant of these serve as the main themes in five consecutive chapters.

The first chapter deals with the self-portrayal and ensuing discussions hereof by members of this generation and starts with tackling the difficult issue of defining this generation as such. It elaborates on the mutual differences perceived by its members and points to the ambiguous role of the 'formative event', i.e., the prolonged transition from communism that started with the imposition of martial law in 1981 and the role herein played by the 'generation of 89' or the 'Children of Martial Law'. In sum, the demise of communism perhaps did not take place in a sufficiently sudden and cataclysmic manner for this generation to see itself as having matured thereby provoking doubts about its own self-identity and existence. Nevertheless, a significant commonality can be identified in this generation's aspiration for a cultural shift to take place in part fuelled by the tension with the elder 'generation of 68'. Drawing upon Margaret Mead's anthropological approach to the generational problem, Vassileva-Karagyozova concludes that "the '89ers represent the transition between the configurative and prefigurative cultural model." (p. 37) The members of the 'generation of 89' thus no longer accept the traditional norms and rituals (as they experienced them under state socialism) and although they have had some success with the challenges of the transition they are still not confident enough and need the approval of their elders who in turn are suspicious of them and the possible change they represent.

The second chapter analyses the genre of the *Bildungsroman* as produced by the writers from the 'generation of 89'. These post-1989 initiation novels deviate from the classic model, in particular, because their protagonists portray a disruption in the coming-of-age process resulting in a suspension of the transition to adulthood. Vassileva-Karagyozova posits that the quasi-autobiographical personae took on unusual maturation trajectories. Since the problems of their 'rite of passage' to adulthood were compounded by coinciding with the disintegration of state socialism and the transition to liberal democracy and a free-market economy, they were unable to "achieve a healthy compromise between personal aspirations and social reality" and were therefore prone "to adopt various escapist strategies and to occupy the margins of society." (p. 45) While this could be either constructive or destructive, it is ultimately framed negatively as the young protagonists "emerge from their prematurely aborted quest for self-identity fragmented, incomplete, ontologically disoriented, and doomed to end their lives tragically." (p. 57) At most, there is a gendered difference as males are unable to find a healthy balance in their lives whereas females were more pragmatic and adaptable with less need for heroism. The 'rite of passage' gone wrong as depicted in the novels was primarily caused by the lack of authority figures indicating parents' failure to cater to their children's needs and emotions and to function as adequate adult role models.

This generation's parental figures, the fathers and mothers, are the subject of the third and fourth chapters of the book. The relationships with their

parents are revealed as dysfunctional, to large extent the effect of a clash between traditional family relations on the one hand and the communist regime's intrusion into the private sphere and its gender policies on the other. The regime aimed to do away with the old 'bourgeois' patriarchal order and weakened the status of men in society. As a result, in late state socialism, three types of father figures could be identified: (i) those who were absent due to death, divorce, emigration, or involvement with the political opposition; (ii) those who were communist party members with thriving careers but oppressive at home; (iii) and those who failed to successfully position themselves privately or professionally. The latter constituted the largest and most problematic group showing 'compensatory behaviour' as alcoholics, physical abusers, or engaging in marital infidelity which severely complicated the relationship with their children. As the author points out, growing up with such dysfunctional paternal figures would have far-going psychological consequences for the 'generation of 89' and its members' self-understanding.

Not that the maternal figures were less problematic though. In Poland, the longstanding cult of the Virgin Mary and the myth of the Polish Mother were powerful cultural constructs which the communist regime modified to serve its needs. The dysfunctions that were created by these policies led women to emotionally and physically neglect their children. Moreover, the mothers in socialist Poland provided for bad role models entrenching the most disturbing aspects of 'traditional' gender roles like wife-beating as acceptable while 'child parentification' appeared as endemic. Children were manipulated by 'toxic mothers' in exploitative relationships victimising the child. The latter was often expected to take up adult responsibilities while deprived of the environment for proper and psychological development. As Vassileva-Karagyozova underlines: "the parentifying national tradition and infantilizing political order robbed the younger generation of selfhood and agency and destined them to a dangerously vulnerable adulthood." (p. 126)

The final chapter of the book is devoted to the topic of this generation's religiosity and its attitude *vis-à-vis* the overtly present Church. Sociological studies have indicated that the influence of institutional Catholicism had been waning after 1989. The childhood narratives in the initiation novels confirm this trend but also link it to the disintegration of the traditional family and gender roles. At the core of the process was a generational rebellion, one that had much to do with the quest for self-identity of the 'generation of 89'. The author notes that "the apostasy of Poland's last communist generation is not a mere disengagement from institutional Catholicism; it is a symbolic act of deliberate reflection of a forced collectivist identity ... and a conscious embracement of an individualist outlook." (p. 162)

*Coming of Age under Martial Law* ultimately deals with how literature creates a generation and not the other way around. So did the final stage of state socialism in Poland spawn a specific generation? Vassileva-Karagyozova's



analysis of the *Bildungsromans* not only provides an affirmative answer by corroborating the various quasi-autobiographical accounts of growing up in the final stage of state socialism, it also dissects the sphere of emotions and inter-personal relationships, the anxieties and hopes that accompanied them. The book's approach, methodology and conclusions are of great value to both historians and social scientists who more often than not work with different source material when dealing with the topic.

Tom Junes

Tomasz Stryjek, *Ukraina przed końcem Historii. Szkice o polityce państw wobec pamięci* [Ukraine Facing an End of History: Essays on Memory Policies Pursued by Countries], Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa, 2014, 412 pp.

Jerzy Giedroyc, one of the greatest Polish twentieth-century intellectuals, perceived the history of Poland as extremely 'hypocritical', which he defined as easy yielding to national (or, ethnic) stereotypes and myths as expressed in Polonocentric attitudes of the 'elephant versus the Polish cause' type.<sup>1</sup> Today, these harsh words can be referred to the situation in Ukrainian historiography and memory politics.

Tomasz Stryjek has embarked on finding an explanation of the background and the essence of the problem. A Polish historian and political scientist, known also to Ukrainian historians, political scientists and readers, Stryjek focuses in his research on Ukrainian historiography and policies pursued with respect to memory.<sup>2</sup> Will a 'New' Ukraine emerge within a 'New' Europe? Such is, essentially, the research query posed in his last book (under review), published in 2014. The monograph is a collection of essays and articles on modern Ukraine and an analysis of politics of memory. When reading this book, one instantly comes across a clear panorama of the extensive historical context, in which the empirical material appears that has been used as the

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<sup>1</sup> See Jan Pomorski, *Historiografia i pamięć: myśl historyczna Jerzego Giedroycia*, based on Tadeusz Bujnicki, Krzysztof Stępnik (eds.), *Ostatni obywatele Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego* (Lublin, 2005), 155–69.

<sup>2</sup> Tomasz Stryjek, *Jakiej przeszłości potrzebuje przyszłość? Interpretacje dziejów narodowych w historiografii i debacie publicznej na Ukrainie 1991–2004* (Warszawa, 2007), 852. The following book by Stryjek was published in 2015 in an Ukrainian translation: Томаш Стрієк, *Невловні категорії. Нариси про гуманітаристику, історію і політику в сучасних Україні, Польщі та Росії*, trans. by С. Серяков, В. Склякін, І. Склякіна, А. Павлишин (Київ, 2015), 320.

basis for the proposed analysis, drawing from the recent trends in European historiography. In effect, the book does benefit from this combination of the author's reliable knowledge of sources and 'state-of-the-art' concept. The employment of a comparative approach and the use of modern theoretical concepts in memory research have led Stryjek to propose a convincing synthetic analysis of contemporary Ukraine. His research, let us stress, is broadly interdisciplinary, skilfully combining politological and historiographic analysis; referring to the notion of 'transitional justice', the author makes use of it as a tool in analysing the memory politics in Ukraine.

The point of reference for the author is the condition of Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Stryjek seeks to demonstrate that this former Soviet republic has not *yet* met an 'end of History' (in Francis Fukuyama's approach). Quite importantly, Stryjek researched into the issue when the Kiev *Euromaidan* wave of demonstrations and civil unrest was on. Given the proposed comparative context, there is a need for such an attempt at interpreting the Ukrainian history of memory policies, let us emphasise. The actual question is: Will a successful investigation in this area really help explain what is taking place in Ukraine nowadays?

This approach ignores, however, the very basic question: Is Ukraine part of Europe, geographically or politically – or, is the 'Ukraine is not Russia' (as the title goes of the book by Leonid Kuchma, Ukraine's former, second, President) the only apt definition? Since the late eighteenth century, the division of Europe into a Western and Eastern part (adding to that, possibly, an East Central Europe – following Oskar Halecki's concept) may have been approached as an ideological phenomenon that has influenced or affected various systems of values. Stryjek uses the description 'Central and Eastern Europe', thus highlighting the region's internally diverse character. Yet, such an approach would not explain the role of Russia in constructing this particular territory (as part of Europe). The Warsaw-based author is not quite convincing at this point, for the new incarnation of Eastern Europe, with its borders as imagined by our contemporary Europeans, has directly to do with Russia's renewed 'imperiality'.

Should, however, Eastern Europe be understood as a constructed notion, its borders would have resulted from the dissemination of certain values and social norms. It may be presumed that Ukraine is merely geographically within Europe in this respect. Mykhailo Hrushevsky, an outstanding Ukrainian historian, believed that the entire Ukrainian history was marked by a permanent turn toward Europe. He considered Ukraine definitely part of Eastern Europe,<sup>3</sup> assigning the Ukrainian nation a leading role in the development of this region. What is, then, Ukraine's actual position in this 'mental map'? The suggestion proposed in Stryjek's study is pretty clear:

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<sup>3</sup> Михайло Грушевський, *Історія України-Руси*, I (Київ, 1991), 16, 85 and *passim*.

Ukraine cannot possibly be modernised in case the country abandons the European perspective.

On the other hand, the deep economic crisis presently suffered by this country, the warfare in Donbas and the annexation of Crimea prove that comprehension of values always remains hostage of the specified historical tradition. In his considerations, Stryjek is oriented towards the European tradition, which otherwise is not always helpful in understanding the situation in Ukraine. He attempts to make Ukraine's case part of the European context, but such an approach is not quite undisputable. Ronald Inglehart, an American sociologist, has convincingly demonstrated that values tend to develop depending upon the individual and social demand, which puts a question mark over the existence of continental or national types of values of any sort.<sup>4</sup> In sum, although Stryjek's view may be helpful in understanding the internal problems related to politics of memory or history-oriented politics, it would not take into account the influence of forces external to Ukraine.

Stryjek tries to challenge the 'European' interpretation of the development of Ukraine as a sovereign country, freed from an 'imperial' dominance and post-communist heritage. This being the case, I should now like to highlight a few of his arguments. As he notices, Ukrainians have historical problems with the shaping of a national and ethnic identity, which is due to a postcolonial historical legacy. Second, Ukraine could, and still can, become an integral part of Europe, and should become part of European historical narrative. Stryjek believes that any and all sceptical opinions ought to be viewed as attempts at calling into question the singularity of Ukraine's history and the collective memory of Ukrainians. Third, the political and cultural change, economic squeeze and breaking the law in Ukraine all indicate how tough the process of implementation of European values in East European countries is. Fourth, Stryjek adopts the view whereby identity divisions prevail in Ukraine, and tries along these lines to explain the reasons behind the 'history wars'. All these observations help shed light on the 2013–14 *Euromaidan* events, viewed by the author as a manifestation of emergence of a modern nation-state. For Stryjek, the revolution was a thoroughly democratic moment (p. 81) – this controversial opinion is based upon his personal assessment of some of the active participants of the events.

Nonetheless, Stryjek neglects another important dimension of the Ukrainian events. What has happened there has, in my view, to do with a revision of Europe-centrism, and testifies to an attempt at redefining the European values which until quite recently seemed universal worldwide. As a worldview notion, Europe-centrism is criticised among various European political activists and intellectuals. Juliusz Mieroszewski, an outstanding literary critic and

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<sup>4</sup> Paul Abramson and Ronald F. Inglehart, *Value Change in Global Perspective* (Ann Arbor, 1995), 136–7.

editor with Paris-based *Kultura* periodical, wrote an article entitled ‘Final klasycznej Europy’ [The classical Europe comes to an end] already in 1950. Obviously, this polemical text ought to be examined in the context of the conclusion of the Second World War and the establishment of the communist regime in Poland. Mieroszewski is preoccupied with defending Europe and facing the shadow of a third world war – as he notices, it was Europe that once gave birth to the two giants, Russia and the United States.<sup>5</sup> Mieroszewski’s conclusion makes one think about Europe’s dependence on Russia and the U.S., rather than conversely.

Important in Stryjek’s narrative is a comparative analysis of the situation of Ukraine and of other European countries, such as the Baltics, Poland, Russia, Spain, or Croatia. The purpose behind such an approach is clear: it is meant to show the Ukrainian case without calling its European character into question, and to formulate an appropriate language of description. Stryjek begins with analysing the ‘memory wars’ in Central and Eastern Europe in 2005–10, discussing at length the models and strategies of memory politics. The Ukrainian model is described as “non-integrated” (p. 167). As a matter of fact, though, a problem identical to that shared by Eastern and Central European countries is emerging these days: namely, how to (counter)balance the image of victim, hero, and crime perpetrator (p. 170). And the author is right in his appraisal of the issue; the latter is common to all post-communist countries. On the other hand, apart from this particular problem, Ukraine is facing the need to choose new victims, heroes, and perpetrators – a decision that is dependent more on the ruling political forces than on the Ukrainians themselves.

Meanwhile, today, in the time after the *Euromaidan*, Ukraine’s policy with respect to memory resembles the situation in the Baltic countries or Poland, where Russia establishes itself as the central ‘Other’. The ways in which this particular process influences and affects the shaping of a modern national identity amongst East Central European nations have been studied by the Norwegian political scholar Iver Neumann;<sup>6</sup> the activities of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance after 2014 show it even more clearly.<sup>7</sup>

In the chapter on Spain, Stryjek offers an explanation of the semblances between the transition from authoritarianism toward democracy. Why should

<sup>5</sup> See Juliusz Mieroszewski, ‘Final klasycznej Europy’, *Kultura*, 2/28–3/29 (Paryż [Paris], 1950), 3–4.

<sup>6</sup> Ивэр Нойманн, *Использование “Другого” Образы Востока в формировании европейских идентичностей* (Москва, 2004), 211.

<sup>7</sup> See an article by Georgiy Kasianov (a member of *Acta Poloniae Historica*’s Advisory Committee) analysing the activities of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance in 2006–16: <<http://www.historians.in.ua/index.php/en/dyskusiya/1755-georgiy-kasyanov-k-desyatiletiju-ukrainskogo-institutu-natsionalnoi-pamyati-2006-2016>> [Accessed: March 12, 2016].

Spain's tough transition road be interesting from a Ukrainian standpoint? Firstly, Spain has demonstrated how difficult it is to search for a new model of approaching one's own past. Secondly, the Spanish memory policy may be set against the Ukrainian one, in order to even better understand the role of ethno-nationalistic symbols in the history-based politics discourse. Thirdly, of relevance is the Spanish practice of 'oblivion' in the public life sphere concerned. As Stryjek concludes, no 'Ukrainian-Ukrainian reconciliation' is possible without Ukrainians getting reconciled with, respectively, Russians, Poles, Jews, and Germans (p. 253).

The attempt at comparing the memory politics in Ukraine and Croatia seems to be the most controversial idea. Clearly, certain conditions and the evolution of history-oriented politics are quite similar in these two countries. Due, however, to the religious aspect, some of the author's opinions are arguable. As is known, the seventy years of Soviet domination and atheism has informed the consciousness of Ukrainians. They have contributed to the development of the power system. The Ukraine of today hosts three Orthodox Churches functioning, alongside a Greek Catholic Church, and multiple other churches. In this regard, one can say that religious identity has not always played a decisive part in forming the nation as an imagined community. The situation in Croatia is diametrically opposite. For Croatians, membership with the Catholic Church was a means of getting distinct from Serbs, a circumstance whose role was quite important in the shaping of the national identity. It is the religious denomination that, in the awareness of political elites and the society, forms a peculiar character of memory politics in that country.

This has been favourable to tackling the question of integral nationalism, which is ranked by some historians or political activists together with fascism *sensu largo*. Stryjek has shown new interpretative options with respect to the phenomenon in question, viewing it in terms of eliminationalism. Although the author's reasoning is interesting, there comes a question whether it is worthwhile to seek for new definitions of what has already been named?

The last chapter analyses the research of Alexei Miller, a known Russian historian, one of the most frequently quoted Russian scholars investigating the nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of East Central Europe. Stryjek shows how certain ideological and political myths influence the explanation of questions of importance, thus shaping the meanings appearing in Miller's texts. He argues how political views and sympathies may inform a historian's interpretations, and the other way round. Miller's image as a historian and researcher is, in Stryjek's considerations, based upon the esteem on account of his research and activities as an intellectual partaking in the debate over the future of Russia. In his analysis of the modernising concept of emergence of a Ukrainian nation in the Russian historian's imagination, Stryjek concludes that employment of this approach by Russians often tends to be perceived

as substantiation of the unequal rights between Russia and provinces of the former empire to possess their 'own' historical narratives (p. 355). Stryjek's assessment of Miller as a commentator of Ukrainian affairs is sceptical. As a result, it is hard to definitely state how the former perceives the latter: as a public intellectual, or a historian affiliated to Mr. Putin's regime?

The Stryjek book does not raise or touch upon all the important issues related to Ukrainian memory politics. For instance, there are no considerations related to the development of history-based politics pursued by Ukrainian authorities in Donbas, and there is no answer to the question of how to interpret the slow pace at which the national identity is emerging in this particular region of Ukraine. In spite of such and other blanks, the interpretation proposed by this author can generally be considered successful. The present-day Ukrainian humanities have produced no comparable study, which would try and solve the research issues from a perspective of the like.

The book under review is worthy of honest reading. Not only does it deepen the knowledge of Ukraine in Polish academic milieu but it is no less important for the Ukrainian reader. The book's definite strong point is the demonstrated significance of 'the Ukrainian question' for a future development of Europe and for dissemination of the values that bind Europeans together. Clearly, the author's considerations gain in importance in face of present-day developments in Ukraine after the *Euromaidan*, which may be regarded as a struggle between democracy and totalitarianism (both internal and external one). In my personal opinion, a translation of Stryjek's book into Ukrainian ought to become a matter of honour to Ukrainian publishing houses.

trans. *Tristan Korecki*

*Gennadii Korolov*