

## REVIEWS

Acta Poloniae Historica  
117, 2018  
PL ISSN 0001-6829

Nataliia Ivanusa, *Frauen im sächsisch-magdeburgischen Recht. Die Rechtspraxis in kleinpolnischen Städten im 16. Jahrhundert*, Verlag Herder-Institut, Marburg, 2017, 312 pp.; series: Studien zur Ostmitteleuropaforschung, 38

A reedited doctoral dissertation, the book covers the important subject of the position of woman in the municipal law of sixteenth-century Lesser Poland (Małopolska). The author is mostly focused on freedom and autonomy of women – in litigation, and in acquisition and management of their property. It is one of quite few German-language studies examining the position of women living east of the Oder River in the early modern period. The publisher is the Herder Institut für historische Ostmitteleuropaforschung, and the volume is the first in the series ‘Studien zur Ostmitteleuropaforschung’ [Central Eastern European Research] to deal with aspects of the history of gender, history of modern law, or social history.

The basic objective Ivanusa has set for herself was to answer the questions: In what ways the gender differences impacted the use of the judicature and judicial system by Małopolska’s burgers? What obstacles the females willing to take part in a litigation came across? And, what strategies did they assume in order to dodge such difficulties? The author also seeks to determine how the law functioned in Lesser Poland’s towns in the sixteenth century, in what aspects the legal practice differed from the constituted standards, in what ways the society influenced the applied law and vice versa. A macro- and micro-level interpretation is declared. The object of study is women of the burgher class, except for non-Christians. The choice of the territorial and temporal framework is legitimate in terms of a homogenous law applicable to the cities or towns within Lesser Poland, with a strong position of the central hub: soon afterwards, Cracow lost its dominant position to Warsaw.

The study is composed of two large sections, the first deals with the legal provisions concerning women and the second describes how such norms were put into practice. Each section has three chapters, subdivided into subchapters where the content is distributed so meticulously that innumerable subchapters-within-subchapters are multiplied (for instance, the *Inscriptio reformationis* passage is placed under number 3.2.2.2.2.).

In the introduction, the author presents her research assumptions and queries, gives grounds for the territorial and chronological framework proposed,

describes the research method, and renders the reader better acquainted with the existing literature. It is incontestable that the situation of women in Lesser Poland's Saxon-Magdeburg law has hitherto been underrepresented by scholars; yet, Ivanusa goes too far in saying that the issue has not been investigated at all (p. 11). Let us remark at this point that, with the abundant list of references disclosed, the author is apparently unaware of a number of recent Polish-language studies which would otherwise have enriched her analysis and prevented her from voicing such a categorical opinion on the present state of research.<sup>1</sup> Ivanusa regrettably ignores also the publications related to the topic she addresses in respect of the Kulm/Chełmno law<sup>2</sup> and land law.<sup>3</sup> She rightly assumes that analysis of laws and regulations is insufficient for understanding the situation of women in a selected historical period. Consequently, her research mostly deals with interpretation of the forensic practice – to be more specific, the trials held at the Higher Court of the German Law at the Cracow Castle. She compares this practice against the Saxon-Magdeburg law registers (*Sachsenspiegel*, *Magdeburger Urteile*, *Weichbild*), their Polish translations and commentaries thereto by Mikołaj Jaskier, Paweł Szczerbic, or Bartłomiej Groicki. The source material is complemented with aldermen's adjudications, inventories, testaments, and legacy agreements, based on the municipal and landed court records published in print.

Particularly disappointing about the introduction is that it misses a presentation of the territory under research. While we find the sixteenth-century Cracow described, the author seems to have ignored that her actual focus is the towns of Lesser Poland; while Cracow was the largest and most important of them, it was still one of the many. Thus, we are not told which towns are to be examined, how many, and of what size or population, who populated

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<sup>1</sup> Katarzyna Justyniarska-Chojak, "Najlepszemu i najściślejszemu przyjacielowi" ... – więzi małżeńskie w testamentach mieszczzańskich z terenu Małopolski w XVII wieku', in Bożena Popiołek, Agnieszka Chłosta-Sikorska, and Marcin Gadocha (eds.), *Kobieta i mężczyzna. Jedna przestrzeń – dwa światy* (Kraków, 2015), 73–82; Maciej Mikuła, 'Statuty prawa spadkowego w miastach polskich prawa magdeburkiego (do końca XVI wieku)', *Z Dziejów Prawa*, vii (2014), 33–63; Małgorzata Delimata, 'Prawo rodzinne w pracach Bartłomieja Groickiego (około 1534–1605)', in Andrzej Karpiński (ed.), *Spółeczeństwo Staropolskie*, iii: *Spółeczeństwo a rodzina* (Warszawa, 2011), 21–37.

<sup>2</sup> Edmund Kizik, 'Zabezpieczenie finansowe wdów w Gdańsku w XVII–XVIII wieku', *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, lviii, 1 (2010), 87–100; Piotr Kitowski, *Sukcesja spadkowa w mniejszych miastach województwa pomorskiego w II połowie XVII i XVIII wieku: studium prawno-historyczne* (Warszawa, 2015); Marek Sędek, 'Czy uprawnienia majątkowe kobiet w Starej Warszawie odpowiadały zasadom prawa chełmińskiego', in Aleksander Gieysztor (ed.), *Warszawa średniowieczna*, i (Warszawa 1972), 135–47.

<sup>3</sup> Anna Penkała, *Panieńskie ochędóstwo. Kwestie posagowe i wienne w małżeństwach szlachty województwa krakowskiego w czasach saskich* (Kraków, 2016).

them, and if they were as pluralistic in ethnic and religious terms as the capital town was. There is not a paragraph that would have described the legal diversity of Poland-Lithuania at the time. It is a pity that Ivanusa neglects the other major municipal law – the one of Chełmno (Kulm), which was dominant in Royal Prussia as well as in Masovia but was binding with urban hubs elsewhere too – for instance, in Lesser Poland's town of Wadowice. Comparing the Saxon-Magdeburg law with the Chełmno law would have been particularly useful when it comes to examining the situation of women, including property-related issues (of focal importance to Ivanusa) where significant differences appeared between the two legal systems.

The first section discusses the Saxon-Magdeburg regulations of law related to selected questions of importance to the situation of women. Chapter 1 presents the categories of goods contributed by maidens upon marriage: *gierada* comes to prominence in this respect. This set of household utensils, fabrics, clothes, and jewellery was exclusively inherited by females and formed a part of the dowry to be managed by the husband after the nuptials. The 'joint property of spouses' functioned based on the fundamental principle that the wife could make no decision with respect to her estate or assets without the husband's approval. Chapter 2 deals with the livelihoods of widows: of particular importance was the *wiano* – that is, the property which the man could bequeath to his bride at marriage, in case he would die. A variety of the *wiano* was the *dożywocie* which only consisted of nourishment and other means indispensable to survive. Such protections were a must due to the widow's restricted rights to her husband's inheritance. Chapter 3 discusses the problem of legal custody: regardless of her age or marital status, every woman had to have a guardian appointed to represent her before the court-of-law. This principle tells us a lot about the legislators' attitude towards women who were apparently considered unable to manage the property on their own and incredible as witnesses, or even untrustworthy as far as independent care about their own children was concerned. Based for the most part on easily accessible editions of Bartłomiej Groicki's legal commentaries, the part of the book in question is descriptive and synthesising.

The second section analyses how the regulations discussed in the previous section were applied at the municipal courts of Lesser Poland. Beginning with the issue of legal custody, the author observes that although husbands were the assigned guardians of their wives, the latter would often have them replaced with other males – relatives, or even professional lawyers who acted on their commission. Chapter 2 resumes the property issues: along the revisited institutions of *gierada*, *wiano*, *dożywocie*, the rules of receiving legacies are discussed pretty at length. The scope of widow's independence in regard of disposing of property and care of children was conditional upon the husband's bequeathed legacy. Analysis of the sources has confirmed that many a man would secure the living of their wives by bequeathing a *wiano* or by means

of another warranty of support during their widowhood. Again, one learns that even though the property might have officially been the wife's, it was managed by the husband, often with – easy to predict – a deplorable effect to the woman's assets. Contrary to the preceding chapters, the third no more deals with the issues initially covered in the first part; instead, it analyses the potential opportunities for women to run a business activity of their own. The towns incorporate under the Saxon-Magdeburg law imposed a ban on women to join guild organisations, and yet they did partake in guild-based manufacturing, particularly when they had a family relationship with the craft masters. Commercial operations pursued by women were broad; female tradeswomen often run their businesses regardless of their spouses. Due to the legal restrictions, using money-lending facilities would have implied an extremely high risk for townswomen of Małopolska.

As one reads through the second section of the Ivanusa book, an irrefutable impression occurs that several conclusions are being repeated which are apparently well known to those interested in the subject. That women had to be subdued to men, were considered to be weak beings, deprived of the ability to lead or organise others; that the situation of widows was tougher than that of widowers, whereas divisions of estates led to family conflicts; and, the regulations were not identical with the practice: all these observations are not particularly revealing. More interesting is the proposed presentation of the strategies of women who brought legal action to secure their interests. Valuable is also the analysis of the support options for widows, especially given the binding restrictions on the reception of inheritance. All in all, the author's remarks are apt, but there are not many new or novel elements which might otherwise have essentially changed our knowledge on the situation of women in the modern era.

The way the study is structured is objectionable, though. The two-part arrangement, theory vs. practice, is apparently obvious. As it however appears while reading this book, such a structure renders the reception of the content and message difficult. The reader interested in, for example, the institution of *gierada* will have to browse through some hundred pages to get the legal regulations in this respect juxtaposed against their implementation. The arrangement of the content also causes unwanted repetitions, to which the author has an inclination; for instance, she explains the *wiano* concept in three different places (in Sections 1 and 2, and in the conclusion). In parallel, the structuring in question is incoherent: for some reason, business activities of women are only presented in the second section, without discussing the legal basis behind it in the previous section. While the conclusions are all presented in the conclusive section, the reading would have been made easier had brief summaries been attached at the end of each chapter. Some of the proposed findings or statements do not refer to the analysis previously made; to give an example, what is the evidence behind the conclusion that

women of Lesser Poland had worse access to education than their peers in German-speaking towns (and, which urban hubs are meant, to be specific)? It seems that merging a discussion of the legal foundations with how they practically functioned would have been a better option.

Although greatly promising, the title of the study is too general. The author has only focused on a number of selected problems of the legal situation of females: their livelihoods, including the rules of inheriting; the functioning of the joint property of spouses; legal custody; and, the scope of autonomy in litigation. While these are extremely important topics, it is probably legitimate to expect that a book on 'women in the law' should have at least mentioned the regulations regarding sexual violence, witchcraft, infanticide, domestic violence against wives, daughters and/or maidservants – all of critical relevance for their life. True, Ivanusa declares her special fondness for the influence of gender differences on the participation in the judiciary; however, she does not mention the gender-laden differentiation of punishments for a variety of crimes. Even the selected property-related topics omit certain questions of importance – such as the father's right to disinherit his daughter if disobedient in situations related to marriage and sexual life. This law was a means of pressure on women and a way of subjecting them to control. Forcing obedience on women with use of legal means is within the scope of the author's interests, hence the omission of the essential topic of disinheritance is astonishing.

Since the introductory section does not render the reader acquainted with the towns to (expectedly) be discussed, maps attached at the book's end would have been helpful to the reader. However, the maps used for the purpose miss the point: instead of a map featuring the Commonwealth of the Two Nations in the sixteenth century, or at least the Kingdom of Poland with the area of Lesser Poland outlined, what the reader comes across is a map of present-day Poland with the largest cities plotted on it. There is no map provided with Lesser Poland's urban hubs, specifying those incorporated under the Magdeburg law. The map showing towns in western Małopolska is illegible as the quality of print does not enable the user to differentiate between the royal and the clerical towns; moreover, this map is not necessarily useful as there was no homogeneous jurisprudence binding for all the area's cities and towns.

Among the major advantages of the book in question is the comparison it provides between the *de iure* situation and the reality prevalent in the courtrooms of the time. This enriches our knowledge on how the early modern municipal law functioned as well as on the real situation of women in the sixteenth century. The detailed discussion of the issues of dowry, inheritance, marital property, and principles of running a business demonstrate what the sources of income might have been like at various stages of the woman's life. The analysis of the functioning of the legal custody institution has shown

the practices of Lesser Poland's townswomen applied in order to gain an ersatz of independence in their own undertakings. These issues are all of critical significance not only for the history of women but, more broadly, for the social, economic, and legal history. Ivanusa has analysed the sources in a convincing fashion, using the reference literature in several languages. In spite of the ill-conceived structure of the study, with certain important threads omitted, plus other deficiencies, the book under review is an important and valuable study which enriches our knowledge about the situation of women in the early modern age.

*trans. Tristan Korecki*

*Jaśmina Korczak-Siedlecka*

Magdalena Gawin, *Spór o równouprawienie kobiet (1864–1919)* [The Dispute over Equal Rights for Women, 1864–1919], Instytut Historii PAN, Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, Wydawnictwo Neriton, Warszawa, 2015, 346 pp.

The centenary of suffrage granted to female citizens of independent Poland induces reflection on both the present and the future state of research in women's history. The questions about the specificity of women's emancipation process in the circumstances of missing statehood, the domestic tradition of struggle for equal rights, and the reception of European projects for making women full-fledged citizens – they all are of growing concern of researchers representing an array of humanities and social sciences; as a result, the history of emancipation has become utterly interdisciplinary. In this context, the issues addressed in the 2015 book by Magdalena Gawin, which attempted at revisiting the history of political emancipation of women in Polish lands in the latter half of the nineteenth century, are worth resuming. In the opening statement the author declares, that “this book is not a history of the first-wave feminism, nor is it a history of women's initiatives or a biographical overview of active women. I have primarily been preoccupied with the idea of equality of men and women in Polish culture, with an emphasis on women's citizen rights. The book is about the idea of women's emancipation and the strategies for its accomplishment” (p. 9).

This apparently foreshadows a revision of hitherto-prevalent research in a way so that the by-now marginalized women's history may ever since form part of the mainstream research of history of ideas and political history. For the purpose, Gawin has implemented a series of methodological and epistemological solutions in constructing her arguments. What she proposes is a re-conceptualisation of the issue under research: the title debate on women's emancipation is set in the context of selected ideologies she deems crucial in terms of the history of Polish society: apart from feminism, these

were liberalism, nationalism, independence-oriented socialism, Christian democracy, and modernism. The ideological panorama thus presented stems from the author's assumed strategy consisting in discussion of the history of the idea of equal rights through the prism of intellectual biographies of women and men whose opinions and actions have markedly influenced the debate. Thus, the biographies of Eliza Orzeszkowa, Maria Konopnicka, Maria Rodziewiczówna, Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit, Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, Bolesław Prus, Gabriela Zapolska, Roman Dmowski, Zygmunt Balicki and, last but not least, Aleksandra Szczerbińska form in the series of chapters a point of departure for demonstrating the multitude of attitudes towards empowerment, explanation of the sources behind the positions presented, with the great disputes of their time shown in the background.

The large share of men introduced among the foreground actors of the historical dispute helps shift the accents in the way the issues in question are presented, rather than reinterpret the debate in question. Therefore the book does not offer us much new information about the well-known and described views or opinions by Prus, or Dmowski, though they would have certainly deserved an attempt at being reread, be it in respect of today's questions about performative aspects of political actions. Most of the biographies under analysis is but a starting point for embarking on a more ambitious task of creating a wide panorama of disputes, arguments and contexts epitomised by the protagonists. The chapters on Orzeszkowa, Konopnicka, and Kuczalska-Reinschmit offer a critical analysis of the history of Polish emancipation discourse in the second half of the nineteenth century, beginning with the women activists after the January Uprising (1863–4), through to the birth of the suffrage movement, the activities of women in the First World War period, and the political rights finally obtained by them in 1918. The biography of Maria Rodziewiczówna became a pretext to introduce an argument for the placement of the circles of United Female Landowners within the frames of Christian Democratic ideology. The attitude of the National Democracy is presented with the opinions of its leaders, Dmowski and Balicki. A counterpoint is posed by the interesting opinions of Kelles-Krauz and the biography of Aleksandra Szczerbińska which provides the groundwork for the story of the involvement of women in the Polish independence movement during the First World War. The chapters are interconnected by the recurring questions about the protagonists' attitude to the idea of women's empowerment and political emancipation, and how these views are placed in a broader worldview plan – and, by the factors shaping the opinions presented – including biographic experience, social context, and political events.

It is impossible to mention all the issues and arguments discussed and tackled by the author; suffice it to remark that there is a total of eighty subchapters (mostly of a few pages) altogether constructing an argument which is essayistic in form and epic in its thematic breadth. However, in consequence

of the author's narrative strategy there appears a tendency for an interpretative routine, which becomes inevitable when a multidimensional story is presented within a few pages: one case in point is the mutual relations of feminist ideas, nationalism, the Jewish question, and patriotic attitudes. The author has at least partly avoided oversimplification, owing to her essayistic temper. From the standpoint of the ambitious purpose of presenting the history of women's emancipation in a revisionist way, the question of the criteria Gawin used in selecting the pivotal biographies is more essential. The choice of the biographies is undisputable as any constellation can be the object of admiration or criticism. Doubts are only raised when, instead of focusing on the validity of analysis of the views of the specified historical actors, the question is posed about a final picture, emerging from the argument, of the ideological map and political territory where the dispute around women's emancipation was going on. It turns out that Gawin focuses on the opinions of the elites – the intelligentsia and landowning gentry – residing mostly within the territory of the Russian Partition. Clearly, Galicia could not have possibly been ignored, since the autonomous province was for a long time the major arena in the fight for suffrage campaign and its accompanying tensions between the national and transnational dimension of emancipation – but this is in Gawin's interpretation a minor topic, most clearly, incidental and secondary to the debate that was going on in the Russian Partition. The author does not dwell a lot on the views of the conservatives, members of the Habsburg Empire's authorities, or the legally operating there party of the Polish Social Democrats. Even more doubt emerges with respect to the description of the Prussian Partition, where neither the legal regulations nor the social structure as the factors determining the forms of activity and the attitude to the idea of women's emancipation are mentioned – the aspects thoroughly researched and presented in a number of publications.

The other problem that determines the study's final shape and form is the author's criticism of the feminist-oriented research of women's history. Gawin's comments and remarks might have triggered an interesting and, by all means, most welcome scientific debate, should she have not consistently avoided addressing to the specific works with the interpretations and arguments she polemicalizes. Regarding to the state of art, Gawin prefers a 'historiographical minimalism' as she rarely refers to the findings of excellent and world-class researchers; furthermore, books and articles from the 1980s and 1990s prevail among the works she quotes or refers to. The acknowledgments to Gisela Bock are symbolic in this context: her two studies which are mentioned in the introduction on this occasion do not appear elsewhere in the book. Similarly, there is no identifiable trace of Gawin's reading, be it critical, of the rich literature dealing with women's emancipation in Central and East Central Europe, which would otherwise have answered the question of key importance to the study under review: To what extent, or in what ways, was

the Polish debates over women's equality unique, and to what extent were they an evidence of wider transnational processes? The implicitly present argument that the Polish case *was* unique requires, in light of today's knowledge on the role of gender order in modern nationalist discourse and contemporary scholarship on the history of women's movements, for a critical distance or, better perhaps, for a re-revision of initial assumptions, verification of arguments, and a new interpretative concept. One may disagree with the now-classical concepts of Nira Yuval-Davis, reject the postcolonial perspective, or call into question the similarities of women's organisations which stemmed from their functioning within the given state system. However, ignoring them completely is, merely, detrimental to the arguments and book as such.

Gawin places her own research outside the current scholarship of Polish women's history as well as gender studies, clearly distancing herself from the feminist paradigm and the demand to broaden the research queries by adopting issues related to performativity of gender, politicization of women's body or discourses on sexuality. Whilst repudiating the feminist perspective, which she sees as an instrument of ideologization of historical research, the author herself commits – unconsciously, let me believe – a manipulation that consists in illegitimate application of different interpretive criteria with respect to the men and women participating of the emancipatory dispute. What it concerns is the significance of biographical experience for the shaping of an attitude toward the idea of women's emancipation. In the case of Paulina Kuczalska-Reinszmit, her views on dual morality, and her fight in this regard, are contextualised with use of the introductory information about her syphilis, which apparently has nothing to do with the further argument in the chapter. On the other hand, Gawin would not say a word on Roman Dmowski's venereal disease as one of the possible explanations for misogyny of the National Democracy leader, who Gawin concludes, “did not understand the reasons behind the activities of women, for he simply did not want to understand” (p. 230).

A different situation, one of interpretation of source material used in order to confirm the input hypothesis, comes out when analysing the ideological choices of Irena Kosmowska, a peasant movement activist and member of Premier Ignacy Daszyński's socialist government. It is hard to explain unambiguously the reason(s) how her political biography has been read as an instance of severance of, or perhaps deliberate departure from, the landowner's identity and Christian democratic views, as ascribed to her by Gawin. The biographical details scattered across the book and the fact that the index attached mentions only one person named 'Irena Kosmowska' makes one conjecture that the author has erroneously combined two women, the mother and the daughter, attaching excessive importance to her social background, a gentry-standard education and graduation from the famous school in Kuźnice. In fact, the younger Irena's activity in the 'Zaranie' movement, her

later association with the independence-oriented socialists, and her position with the PSL “Wyzwolenie” party would not confirm Gawin’s perception of Kosmowska-the-younger as a representative of either gentry-women or Christian democracy.

The thing is that any panorama may be constructed with the use of easy-to-find arguments and examples proving the pre-assumed conclusions. What often serves as a charge against feminist studies, namely ideological orientation, has fell to Magdalena Gawin’s lot. She has at all costs tried to build an argument, original in terms of construction and interpretation, which would have broken off with the previous findings of women’s historians. Is the project of a revisionist history of emancipation successful or not, will be demonstrated by the reception of the arguments proposed by Gawin. So far, the impact of the book on the contemporary scholarship of both women’s history and mainstream history has been rather poor.

trans. *Tristan Korecki*

*Dobrochna Kałwa*

Robert Nemes, *Another Hungary. The Nineteenth-Century Provinces in Eight Lives*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 2016, 292 pp., index, ill.; series: Stanford Studies on Central and Eastern Europe

Concepts and dichotomies, such as historical time and centre-periphery, have received a great deal of attention lately, from art historians and literary critics alike.<sup>1</sup> By revisiting the thinking of key figures in social sciences like Louis Althusser and/or giving a voice to previously overlooked local personalities, these scholars are questioning ideas like time and geographic remoteness, instead regarding them dialectically as actors in a constantly changing reality. One of the main aspects of this trend is the above-mentioned notion of *periphery*.

In the context in which the theory and practice of the centres – be they political, economic, or cultural in significance – are re-evaluated due to the complexities of the post-industrial age, the line of demarcation between the centres and peripheries becomes fuzzier and the concepts themselves take on new functions, based on the postulate that a place, idea, or a cause can attain the quality of a centre and periphery at one and the same time.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This review employs some ideas postulated by Foteini Vlachou (1975–2017), an art historian interested in post-colonial dynamics.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout history, there are many known instances in which a place was deemed both peripheral and central. In its modern age, Portuguese Empire did not have an Academy of Fine Arts for a long time, but it had (artistic) colonies like Goa... (Foteini Vlachou, ‘Why Spatial? Time and the Periphery’, *Visual Resources*.

Hence the perception of periphery has shifted from a geographic definition to a temporal one.<sup>3</sup> This latter, in turn, has triggered further reflections about how peripheral a *periphery* really can be. A periphery can be a place or a moment in time which, despite the previous consensus on its remoteness from the centre (e.g. Wallerstein's model), can in fact prove to be creative and inspirational for the centre. It can be something completely different from an eternally lagging behind, conflicted, ignorant, or at best mediocre sphere. Many of the fashions and trends generated by the centre can in fact be intelligently filtered by local intellectuals, public figures, or simple taxpayers who, given their political roles and economic exchanges with the capitals or with some other financial or commercial centre, contest a simplistic world order in which the interactions are strictly unidirectional (e.g. from centre to periphery) and imitative (e.g. the canon of a certain culture or nationality being equally diffused among those coming in contact with it).

In relation to this latter development, it is important to mention that historians of various fields have conducted a closer examination into the role played by the small (e.g. preponderantly border) towns and by regional actors in reconfiguring the relations between centres and peripheries. These dynamics were especially visible in the context of imperial centres and their provinces, in particular those of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy (1867–1918), given the cultural prominence of the area, the multitude of existing sources, and not least, the intricacy of its political and legal system in the modern times (e.g. a dual constitutional monarchy crowning a plethora of nationalities).

Consequently, some historians began to question whether the centrality of the notion of national identity did not diminish and/or overlook the contributions of regional identities for understanding the modern process of state-building of the area (e.g. Pieter M. Judson, Jeremy King, István Deák);<sup>4</sup> while others tried to stress the paramount contribution of communities like the Jewish ones to the birth of civil society in the modern societies of the area, which was known for its mistreatment of minorities throughout the entire nineteenth century and even into the age of the successor states of the Monarchy (e.g. Börries Kuzmany).<sup>5</sup> Others gave examples of how,

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*An International Journal on Images and their Uses*, xxxii, 1–2 [2016], 11), available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01973762.2016.1132500>.

<sup>3</sup> Vlachou, 'Why Spatial?', 10.

<sup>4</sup> Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation. Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, Ma., 2006); Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics* (Princeton, 2005); István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism, A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848–1919* (Oxford, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> Börries Kuzmany, 'The Rise and Limits of Participation. The Political Representation of Galicia's Jewry from the Josephine Era to the 1914 Electoral Reform', *East-Central Europe*, lxii, 2–3 (2015), 216–48.

in the army, the linguistic patterns of the regions could undo the attempts of the imperial establishment to impose a unified language, and in doing so, an imperial identity (e.g. Tamara Scheer),<sup>6</sup> and some re-considered the exchanges of the imperial centre with the various regions by investigating the sexual stereotypes associated with the latter (Stephanie Weismann, Keely Stauter-Halsted).<sup>7</sup> Finally, some historians introduced the idea of overlapping centres and peripheries by tracing the relationship between the unfavourable image of the periphery, in the eyes of the centre, as well as the latter's own identity quest (Ulrich E. Bach, Tag Gronberg).<sup>8</sup>

The latest study of Robert Nemes can be considered a part of the above-mentioned endeavours. Nemes is a professor of Colgate University who specializes in Central and Eastern European history, with a focus on the interactions of ordinary people with the complex and painful process of the birth of democratic institutions in the area. As the title of the book itself suggests, in *Another Hungary. The Nineteenth Century Provinces in Eight Lives*, Nemes identifies the dynamics of a region located in the North-Eastern part of what was then known as Kingdom of Hungary, within the constitutional union of 1867 between Hungary and the Austrian Empire. The area, which today encompasses parts of Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine, is an interesting example of a periphery due to its syncretism, which was visible in ethnic, cultural, and also geographic terms. It was a place where Hungarians and Romanians lived together, where Western Christianity came in contact with its Eastern counterpart, and Hasidism was contested by other Jewish traditions; in short, a place that was symbolic of Central and Eastern Europe in terms of, paradoxically, both its multiculturalism as well as its intolerance and violent social conflicts.

Consequently, the author emphasizes the intricacies of the region by depicting the life stories of eight people – men and women who were born or lived in the North-Eastern part of what was then the Kingdom of Hungary. Although these figures did not hold formal positions of political power in the region, they all led a *public life* in the sense of having acquired a platform for their speeches or writings, such as town-halls, schools, professional

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<sup>6</sup> Tamara Scheer, 'Habsburg Languages at War: "The linguistic confusion at the tower of Babel couldn't have been much worse"' in Christophe Declercq and Julian Walker (eds.), *Languages and the First World War* (Basingstoke, 2016), 62–78.

<sup>7</sup> Stephanie Weismann, *Das Potenzial der Peripherie. Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1836–1895) und Galizien* (Wien, 2017); Keely Stauter-Halsted, 'A Generation of "Monsters": Jews, Prostitution, and Racial Purity in the 1892 Lviv White Slavery Trial', *Austrian History Yearbook*, xxxviii (2007), 25–35.

<sup>8</sup> Ulrich E. Bach, *Tropics of Vienna. Colonial Utopias of the Habsburg Empire* (New York, 2016); Tag Gronberg, 'Inner Man: Interiors and Masculinity in Early Twentieth-Century Vienna' *Oxford Art Journal*, xxiv, 1 (2001), 67–88.

associations, as well as specialized publications and local newspapers. By their religious faith, the protagonists described in *Another Hungary* were representative of the main religious communities of the region (e.g. Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Jews, Calvinists, Lutherans). But more importantly, owing to their professional outlooks and life choices, “they were the provinces’ thinkers, writers, and doers”. Being “hard-working, educated, public-minded, and outspoken”, they could be considered as the *movers and shakers* of their provincial society (p. 4). The public sphere in the nineteenth century was becoming ever more politicized due to, among other factors, the mass press, train travel, and educational reforms. Hence ordinary citizens like the protagonists of the book, who were parts of a network of informal politics, can be viewed as members of a civil society in the making.

The connection between, on one hand, a region of with a wide array of experiences and perceptions as well as intense cultural exchanges (like the ones evoked in this study), and on the other hand the people who tried to map it out in all of its complexities, gives a good picture of what the nineteenth century meant for Central and Eastern Europe. Similar to other parts of the continent, this area had to cope with the massive changes occurring in domains as distinct as transportation and conflict resolution. In addition, it too witnessed the succession of the ‘isms’ of the age, from Liberalism to the more radical ones of the last part of the century like Socialism and Nationalism. Finally, the political and social awakening of its inhabitants was nurtured in the context of increased mobility (e.g. through seasonal work, trade, marriages) and emancipation (e.g. of women, of Jews, of peasants) to such an extent that people who lived in more remote places became able to influence and even guide the political debate and social trends of the regional or imperial centres. In this way the obstacles, both infrastructural as well as ideological, between the small towns and the bigger cities/capitals began to disappear (p. 6). In addition to describing and illustrating the wider social and political phenomena of the nineteenth century, at least three of the perspectives of *Another Hungary* are noteworthy. The first is the already-mentioned importance ascribed to the notion of periphery; the second is related to the relevance of the methods employed; and the third involves the novelty and authenticity of the sources, as well as the prominence of the local ones contained in the study.

Given the basic idea of the book (e.g. that a remote area of an Empire can constitute a laboratory of valuable ideas, (i.e. interesting things can show up in unexpected places)), *Another Hungary* illustrates this from both the author’s as well as the actors’ point of view. For Nemes, whose previous study focused on Budapest, his work on *Another Hungary* involved traveling to small towns located in present-day Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, and accessing previously-ignored resources like town gazettes, obituaries, founding charters and documents of learned societies etc. In addition the protagonists of the book re-defined their place via both their writings and simply their

personal life choices: “All eight sought, in their own ways, to imagine a very different Hungary from the one they saw before them” (p. 12).

The choice of the specific region described in *Another Hungary* seems to be due to the fact it represented an ideal periphery: remote, hence unknown; poor; and an alloy of communities having conflicting national identities and ideas. Yet, the already-mentioned contrasting dynamics of the area – visible in the discrepancy between the small islands of relative wealth and surrounding rural destitution; between a sophisticated elite and a sea of illiterate peasants – served as an impetus for the richness and originality of the political ideas and social projects conceived in the provinces of Austria-Hungary.

Thus, being remote and economically wanting, according to Nemes the North-Eastern part of the Kingdom of Hungary constituted a periphery in the sense of Immanuel Wallerstein’s theory. Yet Nemes does stay wholly within this theoretical framework nor does he examine only the dynamics existing between the imperial centre, Vienna, and the small towns of North-Eastern Hungary. Instead, he underscores the very richness stemming out of the precarious nature of the province. *Another Hungary* clearly aims at countering the preconceptions of the province as being backward, and emphasises what was good by focusing on the local realities. Moreover, being about periphery in its primary meaning, the book prioritizes the aspect of place.

Nevertheless, as we are going to show next in the description of Nemes’ method, the concept of periphery is dialectical, and he perceives it in a temporal manner as well. Indeed, *Another Hungary* is equally a book about time, in that it is a collective biography. Its ambition is not merely chronological in the sense of tracing some evolutions like the development of some ‘isms’, but rather to see the responses to the same idea of periphery through the eyes of different generations and of individuals having different professions and perspectives.

The protagonists of *Another Hungary* are loosely-connected individuals. They possess distinct social, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, and they share contrasting allegiances or views. It follows from this that each of them addressed unique questions, amounting to a micro-history in itself, which in the end depicted “the patterns of everyday coexistence that have too often been obscured” (p. 10) by classic histories, such as social or institutional ones. Taken together, all these micro-histories provide yet another face of the province. In fact, even though none of the involved actors dealt with space in the theoretical and practical senses (e.g. by being geographers or having other related professions) and they did not all even live their entire life in the province, they “were careful observers of the provinces, documenting the region’s cuisine and costumes, landmarks and languages, flora and fauna, train stations and taverns” (p. 11). In short, despite their lack of ‘professional training’, they were nonetheless visionaries. For them, representation took precedence over the place itself, hence in this sense the individuals of the book

taken together gave a polyphonic identity of the province; “a collective portrait that is intimate and panoramic, grounded and speculative, and confident in its reconstruction” (p. 3).

Apart from the fact that the author chose the protagonists of the book precisely because they were not first-hand political personalities, his other criteria that served as reasons for choosing comprised their longevity, mobility, and the multitude of written sources. In an age of increasing life spans like the nineteenth century, most of the protagonists lived well into their seventies (with the significant exception of Margit Kaffka). Thanks to their studies, professions, and passions, they travelled more than the average citizen of their time and region, with most of them experiencing the capital, Budapest, even if for a short period of time. Significantly, they left written traces of their existence, either due to their families’ pre-existing archives or to their professions. These allowed the author to base his collective biography on resources accessible in archives and libraries located in the corners of present-day Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania. Among these we should mention sermons, poems, newspaper articles, novels, letters, business contracts, wills, diaries, and memoirs.

We have alluded several times to the overarching ambition of this book, namely to illustrate and reflect on the fact that a ‘poor and dull’ province hides a complex and surprising reality. Moreover, the book suggests that delayed development and lack of opportunities – features most commonly associated with peripheries in relation to the centre – can in fact encourage unexpected growth.

An equally important aim of *Another Hungary* is to relativize the idea of nationalism when interpreting the history of the region. Indeed, by investigating the North-Eastern part of what was once the Kingdom of Hungary, the book walks in the footsteps of those scholars mentioned in the beginning of this review, namely those who attempted to shift their enquiry focus from nationalism and centralist state strategies to the regions and their identity. In other words, given the mixture of ethnicities nationalism took on a multitude of manifestations, not always based on those emanating from the centres of power. On many occasions indifference and patterns of cultural exchange took precedence over national conflicts. Nemes gives the example of the pragmatic approach to language of some families of the region, such as those who did not choose the school for their children based on the language they were speaking at home, or he elaborates on the cosmopolitan patterns of economic consumption of items like tobacco, according to which the consumers were historically led by a rationale based on quality rather than by slogans of economic nationalism (i.e. to consume what is local).

Last but not least, another ambition of the book is to shed additional light on the life of the Jewish community of the area, where anti-Semitic attitudes were a reality, just like elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe. While this overall trend has been studied extensively, the studies preponderantly

concern the Jewish community of Budapest and other central urban areas of the Habsburg Monarchy. Nevertheless, the relations between Christians and Jews in the small cities and towns, and the interactions among Jews and other residents of the provinces have not been very often explored. *Another Hungary* focuses on these, starting from the assumption that apart from the interracial hatred, upon which many sources that investigate the pre-Holocaust period rely heavily, genuine cooperation between the Christians and the Jews also took place.

Let us now move on to introducing the protagonists of the book and discuss the ways in which they envisaged their province, both in relation to the given epoch in which they lived as well as to the wider dynamics of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. As women and men living in a certain time and place, and as people located on various rungs of the social ladder, from the perspective of their professions and interests each came up with an idea about their province, which, no matter how realistic or, in contrast, obsolete, presents a living testimony of what it meant to be a citizen of the nineteenth century in the North-Eastern corner of what was then the Kingdom of Hungary.

The first chapter, 'The Aristocrat', tells the story of Count József Gvadányi, a naturalized Hungarian aristocrat of a noble family of Tuscany. Born in 1725 in the village of Rudabánya, Borsod county, in North-Eastern Hungary, Gvadányi had a long and successful military career. He was a Catholic in a region dominated by Protestant gentry, and a military man in contrast to most of the nobility of the area, who were mostly involved in managing their estates. Notably, he was a prolific writer, with an output in military sciences, biography, and poetry. His most widely-known work, *The Village Notary's Journey to Buda* of 1790, describes the journey of the Szatmár County notary István Zajtai to Buda. It is a detailed account of the local culture, of the landscapes, customs, food, and, although it compares the province to the capital, it does not do so by subordinating the former to the latter. The city seems to the village notary to be a place of "empty extravagance" filled with "wasteful luxury and affected behaviour", in which aristocrats are slaves to foreign fashions and manners (p. 27), while the countryside, at the same time, hides a much more complex world behind a hierarchical society and bad road infrastructure. Some of the aristocrats were "nearly indistinguishable from the peasants", as they could not read or write, whereas the latter were a syncretic body of languages and religions (p. 25), and both lived in places full of spiritual and ethnographic charm. These, as well as the stress on the provinces social harmony (e.g. there is no mention of the exclusion of Jews or women in his writings), make Gvadányi a promoter of the *myth of the province*, in which he provides a literary map of the region, namely of how the North-Eastern part of Hungary should be. Gvadányi's portrayal of the province is clearly indebted to the city-village/civilization-culture dichotomy which characterised the discourse of many conservative critics of modernity.

The second chapter, 'The Merchant', is dedicated to Ráfél Kästenbaum, an immigrant Jew born around 1750 in Nowy Sącz.<sup>9</sup> Kästenbaum eventually settled in Zemplén County, where he started modestly as a peddler, and afterwards worked as a farm servant. He slowly built up his financial security through lease-holding, money-lending, and eventually ownership of an inn. In his will he made generous donations of money and possessions for the Catholic and Protestant communities, for a planned county hospital, and for the establishment of a Jewish elementary school, Kästenbaum showed that province could be a place where all religions were recognized, where a good level of life should have priority over racial prejudice, and where education was key to progress. The example of the school proves particularly illustrative. Opened in 1838, nine years after his death, it had a curricula that focused equally on secular and religious matters and for more than a century it was a place where loyal citizens of the Monarchy were formed. The further significance of this fact is that the province could be a school of citizenship, and that ultimately dramatic change can occur in unexpected places and under the guidance of unexpected people. A Jew living in a destitute place, with an occupation held in contempt by an otherwise anti-Semitic society, heralded political modernity.

The third chapter, 'The Engineer', focuses on the case of Pál Vásárhelyi, a hydraulic specialist of the first half of the nineteenth century who dedicated himself to mastering rivers via counting and measurements. In fact, mapping and taming the rivers of his home country became his lifelong ambition. Vásárhelyi was born in 1795 in a village called Olaszi (in today's Slovakia), in a multi-ethnic corner of the North-Eastern Hungarian Kingdom. A life-long collaborator with Count István Széchenyi, the massively influential Liberal politician and economist of the 1820s–30s, Vásárhelyi understood that the specific geography of Hungary, namely the richness of its rivers, could be harnessed to promote development. Vásárhelyi's efforts were aimed at connecting rivers to the Danube (1834–6). He believed that regulating the wild rivers could lead to increased transportation, which in turn would favour the exchange of products and ideas between Hungary and the world. In the true spirit of Positivism, Vásárhelyi promoted the geopolitical importance of river regulation through public speeches and newspaper articles. Yet, in contrast to the two protagonists discussed above, Vásárhelyi was attracted to the centre, to Buda-Pest. As it turned out, soon after the start of his projects train transportation became the new fashion, and Buda-Pest supported the creation of a railway network linking mainly the major cities, which would result in deepening the discrepancy between centre and the periphery. In the end, Vásárhelyi's plans to tame the rivers of Hungary's

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<sup>9</sup> Nowy Sącz was located in what 22 years later, during the Austrian Partition, would be known as Galicia.

corners, and thus to put the latter on the map via navigation and transportation, were abandoned in favour of railroads, but it can be said that he brought the province into the public debate and inserted it into the master narrative of progress.

The fourth chapter is one of the too-few chapters of the book that deals with the condition of women in the province in the first half of the nineteenth century, echoing the misrepresentation of women in the public space at the time, 'The Teacher' is centred on Klára Lövei. Lövei was born in 1821 in Sziget, a town of Máramaros County in the vicinity of Galicia and Bukovina, in a noble but poor family of Hungarian Calvinists. Although she was a member of the establishment, she did not manage to continue her education beyond primary school, partly because she was a girl and partly because her parents could not afford a tutor. Yet in 1846 her acquaintance with the Countess Blanka Teleki brought her to Pest, where she would become employed as a teacher. Blanka Teleki came from a well-to-do aristocratic family, and her status allowed her to pursue an extended education abroad. She came up with the idea of a creating boarding school for girls, where young women would be taught patriotic values in an innovative curriculum and in an egalitarian spirit. The school eventually draw the attention of the authorities, and in the aftermath of 1848 Revolution both Teleki and Lövei were arrested and tried as collaborators of the Hungarian revolutionaries. Lövei served three years in prison, after which she returned home to Máramaros, where with the help of her relatives she established a school. In the spirit of and reflecting the local dynamics, Lövei's school was multi-ethnic and multi-confessional, and it ascribed equal importance to education and language conservation. Ultimately, Lövei's case emphasized that the province could maintain the spirit of national traditions even in times when the authorities banned these activities.

The fifth chapter, 'The Journalist' depicts the life of Iosif Vulcan, from an old family of Greek-Catholic intelligentsia, a group that was active in the fight for national rights of the Romanian community which lived in the Hungarian Kingdom. Although of a mixed family (e.g. his mother's family enjoyed strong credentials as Hungarian patriots) Vulcan, who was born in 1841 in Holod, Bihor County (e.g. located in the North-Western part of today's Romania), chose to side with his father's national identity, and thus became a strong supporter of the rights of Romanians in the area. Although he freely moved between the two capitals – Pest, the second capital of the Habsburg Monarchy (e.g. starting 1867) and Bucharest, the capital of the newly established state – it was in the province that he attained most of his renown. In Oradea, the county capital of Bihor, Vulcan was closer to Transylvania, the centre of Romanian nationalist activism and home to ASTRA (*Asociația Transilvană pentru Literatură Română și Cultura Poporului Român*), [the Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People], the most influential para-political organization of Romanians inhabiting the Kingdom

of Hungary. In Oradea, alongside being an active member of the community (e.g. he supported the establishment of a school for girls; the first theatre in Romanian language; and a savings bank), Vulcan founded in 1865 *Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură* [The Family, Journal for the Mind, for the Heart, and for Literature]. This magazine was eclectic in content, comprising articles dealing with history, folklore, theatre, education, music, museums, fashion, religion, and discussions on women's emancipation. Above all, it contained the travelogues of Vulcan in which he tried to map the province according to his wanderings, and to issue a profile of the purest ethnic Romanian community, the highlanders of Bihor County. In other words, Vulcan blended the regional and national loyalties in such a way that it may be said that periphery could turn into a centre for a national idea.

The sixth chapter, 'The Rabbi', discusses the life and activities of Ármin Schnitzer, a Neolog rabbi. Schnitzer was born in 1836 in Hunsdorf in the North-Eastern Hungarian Kingdom (in today's Slovakia). The village was mostly a Jewish ghetto, hence Ármin's family (a blend of modest merchants and educators) encouraged their son to seek escape via learning. At the end of many years of study, he took up a vacant position as a rabbi in the city of Komárom (e.g. in Western part of the Hungarian Kingdom at that time, in today's Slovakia). Here he would spend the rest of his life preaching his life's mission of harmony between the various ideologies and religious groups. He was committed to the Hungarian cause, loyal to the Habsburgs, and a supporter of Zionism, and all these arose out of his patriotism and political liberalism and from his conviction that education would cure intolerance and other social ills. He preached and published his sermons in Hungarian instead of German or Yiddish, in order to signal the importance of a local national culture and the detriments of cultural centralization and of religious intolerance. Through his writings, Schnitzer tried to curtail the anti-Semitic attitudes of the Christian population of Komárom, not only by showing how barbarian the old beliefs were, but also to emphasize the ridiculousness of traditional Jews. In short, he was an 'old faithful Jew in modern dress' (p. 163). Although he basically spent most of his life in the same type of traditional community, he was capable of shortening the distance among the members of the same ethnical group, like the Jews, through education. While his message died with him (e.g. he died in the first months of the First World War), his example remained.

The seventh chapter, 'The Tobacconist', presents Vilmos Dároc, a name connected to tobacco industry, one of the merchant domains that made the Hungarian Kingdom world-famous in the nineteenth century. Dároc was born in 1836 in the village of Király-Daróc in Szatmár County (located in today's North-Western Romania). He came from a well-to-do family whose profits came from agriculture. Upon graduation, he returned home and followed in the footsteps of his family. First, he established a distillery, and afterwards

he became involved in tobacco growing. Soon he became one of the most successful tobacco growers in the area. Bad luck struck however, and Dároczi was forced to start all over again while in his forties. He went to Budapest where he dealt with tobacco export. Shortly after, he became the editor of a paper called *Magyar Dohány Ujság* [Hungarian Tobacco News]. It appeared in 1884, and it addressed all aspects related to tobacco, from growing it to its cultural implications. In his view, tobacco would bring growth to the Hungarian economy, cure its social ills like poor trade, peasants' destitution, and emigration. Finally, he associated tobacco with Hungarianness, encouraging his readers to consume Hungarian tobacco as they should consume any other local good, and criticizing those who preferred foreign products on account of them simply being better: "We avoid and scorn our excellent products and more readily consume foreign-made goods" (p. 198). Dároczi made a myth of the province on account of its economic resources, ignoring all the other socio-political dynamics. Yet these very dynamics, which in *fin-de-siècle* brought about negotiations with the city via the mobility of people from provinces to the capital, would shape the patterns of people's consumption towards making it more cosmopolitan.

The eighth chapter, 'The Writer', focuses on the story of Margit Kaffka. Kaffka is known today as an insightful author, one of the best contributors to literary modernism in Hungary. She was a member of the small but influential literary circle *Nyugat* [The West], which was established in 1908 in Budapest. Kaffka was born in 1880 in Nagykárolyi, a town in Szatmár County. She had a difficult childhood, but similar to Lövei she benefited from intensive full-time programmes of education. By the time she reached Budapest (in 1907), Kaffka had acquired a certain notoriety among the young generation of writers, being a constant presence in the provincial magazines. In Budapest, as she channelled her life towards writing and teaching, Kaffka wanted to find a cure to the misconceptions concerning the provinces. She held an ambivalent attitude towards her native lands. In the two books that tackle the idea of a province, *Színek és évek* [Colours and Years], and *Szatmár Vármegye* [Szatmár County], Kaffka performed an exhaustive analysis of life in the provinces, focusing on the elites. Although she seems rather critical towards them, labelling "the laziness, ignorance, and tyrannical depravity" of the provincial nobility (p. 206) as resulting from their lack of contact with the modern world, she also tried to approach their life from a monographic/sociological perspective (e.g. the economic conditions, the mortality rates, and the profile of the landowning families). The conclusions she reached were that the gentry of the North-Eastern Hungarian Kingdom were experiencing a dual decay, i.e. a physical one along a national one as it became *déclassé*. A humanist in her views, Kaffka deplored the death of a harmonious provincial order in which the gentry did not look down on the peasantry on account of their ethnic and religious background. In the same way as Lövei, Kaffka too

was a peripheral. She faced more than the usual amount of difficulties related to her professional status; she was a provincial coming to Budapest, a city in full boom in the 1900s. This dual status would accompany her throughout her short life. In an autobiography written when she was 32, she explained that “my life has been an unending series of escapes” (p. 208) (e.g. from her native environment, from her family, from public education, from religion, from marriage...). Indeed she saw all these as, we may say, *peripheries of the soul* – factors that keep creativity at bay.

It is not a coincidence that the last of the book’s chosen protagonists was a writer *per se* of the periphery, who, moreover, showed how writers of the periphery can become influential in the capital. To Kafka, the periphery was a *time capsule* in which things would remain unchanged from time immemorial, but also a place of charm and purity. As a matter of fact, we can see that each of the protagonists had a different view of the province (e.g. of the periphery in contrast to the corrupted city; of the contribution of a provincial education to making good citizens for the Monarchy; of the rational mapping and exploitation of its resources; of acquiring citizenship for women to make them good Hungarian nationals; of transforming the periphery into a national centre; of making the periphery a harmonious place; and of using its economic potential).

In short, *Another Hungary* reconstructs the history of the province and shows its multitude of facets. Two themes stand out. The first is that, contrary to the general belief, the ‘nation’ was not an all-encompassing reality in the remote parts of the Monarchy in the nineteenth century. Many of the actors described here envisioned a thriving region in which individuals and communities would be led by economic, gender, secular/religious interests rather than national ones. The second theme demonstrates that remoteness from the capital in geographic terms did not necessarily presuppose temporal remoteness. Many of the actors described echoed the ideas of the time, and some even had the ambition to go ahead of their epoch. In this regard, Rabbi Ármin Schnitzer has a particularly resonance.

Without intending to conclude the review on a critical note or diminish the merits of this valuable book, it nevertheless should be pointed out that the choice of the protagonists in a way reflects the order of the province. The criterion used in the selection of the protagonists, that is the existence of printed materials about the life and activity of such persons, naturally leads to the fact that some important voices of the province, like the peasantry, remain silent. From a post-colonial critical approach, printing is a manifestation of power; hence the life of the less visible segments could be reconstructed via fictional biographies. Of course it is understandable that this was not the aim of the book, but a more balanced structure could have been observed. Secondly, perhaps out of a need for simplification the names of territories are used rather incorrectly. Obviously, lands as complex as those of the North-

Eastern parts of the ex-Hungarian Kingdom, in which multiple languages left their mark on places, cannot be called by all their names ... if only so as not to confuse the reader. Nevertheless, the fact that the author refers to Galicia – as being the name of a province inside the Kingdom of Poland in the 1750s [sic] – (p. 43) is rather inexcusable. Readers unaware of the history of the region might fall into the trap of this oversimplification.

*Proofreading James Hartzell*

*Raluca Goleşteanu*

Dietlind Hüchtker, *Geschichte als Performance. Politische Bewegungen in Galizien um 1900*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main and New York, 2014, 386 pp.; series: *Geschichte und Geschlechter*, 65

In the last couple of years, historical science has seen a proliferation of theories that focus on practices, the production of social realities through agents. This emphasis on practices complements and corresponds to the question of social structures. It highlights agents, which move inside the context of social structures but likewise create these structures with their actions.

Dietlind Hüchtker's study about political movements in Galicia around 1900 adopts this theoretical approach and puts its historical agents and their practices in the foreground. Using the example of the political work of three agents from the Ruthenian national movement, the peasant movement and the Zionist movement, Hüchtker analyses political practices.

An understanding of politics as performance forms the main focus of the analysis. "How are politics made?" the author concisely asks, or, more thoroughly formulated: "How do narratives construct reality, how do habits become habitus, how do they change and arrange relationships between genders, activists, and addressees?" (p. 11).

The book's three protagonists, Maria Wysłouchowa, Natalija Kobryns'ka and Rosa Pomeranz, share similar approaches to the making of politics: the reference to Galicia, an emphasis on women's politics, and their chosen political practices (publication and editorial work, public appearances, union work, educational and reform projects). Thus, the practices presented can also be read as an indication of the range of possibilities of political agitation around 1900: "When you juxtapose their life stories, they complement each other in regard to the possibilities of political engagement despite their differences in origin, education and life path..." (p. 148). At the same time, the practices refer to the specific positions of the three agents in societal contexts: in spite of different life courses, their examples function as a comprehensive treatise of the political methods of educated Galician women at the turn of the century. As such, Galicia and its political movements are understood not as an exception, but as the European norm of

its time. Consequently, the author repeatedly embeds the Galician reform movement in European developments and points to the transnational networks of the movements.

The studied era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is described as “an ambivalent entanglement of tradition and modernity” (p. 14), which also manifests itself in the practices of political action: reform movements, established in the second half of the nineteenth century, shared a focus on progress and the future development toward a better society, as well as a common interest in history. By narrating history while initiating social change, the protagonists “make” history “on two accounts” (p. 10).

Hüchtker’s study empirically explores the ‘making’ of politics and history on the basis of fairly classical sources of research: it is composed of published texts of the three protagonists, along with journals and other print materials of the respective political movements, as well as correspondence and obituaries. The author’s research, however, is rendered innovative due to its use of the concepts of performativity and performance to theoretically frame the question of how politics are made. These refer to the theatrical nature of the political and to the interactive negotiation of interpretational sovereignty and differentiation within the political landscape, which is thought of as an arena – a place that follows a specific set of stage rules. ‘Doing politics’ is what the author analyses within this arena.

Hüchtker arranges her book into four chapters, which are divided into subchapters for each of the three protagonists. The chapters themselves are thematically structured and refer to practices of political action with the headings ‘Finding Tasks’, ‘Propagating’, ‘Organising’, and ‘Mobilising’. The chapter ‘Finding Tasks: The Contributors’ introduces the three agents – Maria Wyslouchowa, Natalija Kobryns’ka and Rosa Pomeranz, each of them assigned a motive for political action: Wyslouchowa, active in the peasant movement, is credited with the heroic narrative as a guiding principle of her political work. She pursued her goal of winning over the peasant population to national involvement primarily by writing popular historical and patriotic texts with a romantic heroine. Kobryns’ka, the protagonist of the socialist oriented Ruthenian national movement, is assigned the motive of artistic director. She cleverly staged politics, being the one “who casted the roles and shaped politics” (p. 114). One of her main priorities was to create places of publication by and for women, such as a self-published women’s almanac, one of her most important projects. Her lively correspondence and her development of cooperatives and networks are studied as part of her directorial self-dramatisation. Rosa Pomeranz is interpreted as a charismatic personality whose political motivation was performance. As a political agent of the Zionist movement, she travelled extensively to deliver speeches, to stimulate the establishment of educational and social reform projects as well as Zionist women’s societies, and to act as political agitator.

The chapter 'Propagating: The Plays' pursues the question, "which role narrative played in the constitution of women's politics" and "how discursive and performative ritualising and differentiation operated in the publications of the three women" (p. 155). If the agents' political projects are regarded as a performance, then, according to the thesis, there needs to be a play arranging these scenes. The literary narratives of the protagonists are analysed as such. The study focuses on belletristic, entertaining literature, since the three agents considered it a highly relevant manner of reaching women, in particular, with political issues. This political aspect of entertaining literature can be seen, for instance, in the construction of collectives, a *We* composed of shared experience and history, but also a shared vision of the future. Various literary texts by the three protagonists are examined, as are the magazines *Przodownica* and *Zorza* published by Wysłouchowa. In doing so, the author demonstrates the extent to which entertainment literature was inherently political at the turn of the century, and how literary and popular historical narratives were used as a means of political agitation. All too often, women had little access to scientific and political literature. Belletristic and popular historical texts provided them with opportunities for political and historical education as well as political action – both as authors and as readers.

The chapter 'Organising: The Stages' focuses on the spheres of political action. The argumentation is based on the thesis that the three women produced and played at both concrete and abstract spaces with their political activities. Their political action in space and their political shaping of space is demonstrated using the example of reading rooms, kindergartens and reform centres. The chapter addresses how the popularisation of knowledge and enlightenment was used as the key to political work, and how political work was conceived as educational work: "All these associations used similar practices of popularising knowledge, reading, and listening. Education was the element that connected these different aspects of the ritualisation of spaces. Therefore, lectures and possibilities of acquiring and borrowing books were essential aspects of the work, and knowledge transfer the essence of their politics" (p. 218).

The role of the audience, the reception of the political performance, is the topic of the chapter 'Mobilising: The Performances'. Reception is considered interactive and interdependent with the production of politics; the audience is active and contributes to the performance. The narrative strategies of the three protagonists are analysed in this chapter and include operating with an imaginary audience or communicating with the recipients via letters from readers. Thus, in analysing the reception, the study remains close to the producers. At the end of each chapter, the author summarises the results and brings the three biographical strands back together in a comparative and complimentary manner. Among other things, it is these excellent summaries that collect the three biographies into a unified analysis, and contextualise them in relation to each other, as well as to the political landscape of their time.

The study is an empirically detailed contribution to various research topics: gender, nation, reform movements, the popularisation of knowledge, and political networks on the regional as well as transnational level, just to name a few, which are discussed in the context of a changing Galician society. One may find the ubiquitous references to theatrical performance a bit exaggerated or at times far-fetched. However, it is precisely these references to the concept of performance in its single facets (finding assignments, propagating, organising, mobilising) that not only frames the work theoretically and structures it guided by theses, but also allows it to be an entertaining narrative. Like the historical protagonists about whom she writes, Hüchtker narrates, stages and dramatises a story – creating a performance herself. This coherence between research subject and methods of presentation successfully zests the analysis and makes the study interdisciplinary. It is much to be hoped that Hüchtker's convincing and readable work will serve as inspiration for a greater theoretical foundation and structuring of historical analyses.

*trans. Francesca Hyatt*

*Nina Reusch*

Tim Buchen and Frank Grelka (eds.), *Akteure der Neuordnung. Ostmitteleuropa und das Erbe der Imperien, 1917–1924/W poszukiwaniu nowego ładu. Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia wobec upadku imperiów, 1917–1924*, epubli, Berlin, 2016, series: Interdisciplinary Polish Studies, 4

Edited by two young experts in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of East Central Europe, this volume combines two themes that are usually addressed separately: the formation of statehoods in the region after 1918, and privatisation of violence after the fall of the Russian and the Habsburg Empires. While quite modest in quantity, this collection of articles offers some interesting and unobvious findings regarding the issues discussed.

The book opens with an introduction written by the editors, situating the said issues in the context of research on the First World War and its immediate follow-ups in the east of Europe. The specific regional conditions and determinants, stemming from the extending state of what was de facto a civil war in this multiethnic territory, are skilfully outlined. Recent reference literature is referred to (incl. Béla Bodó, Robert Gerwarth, Jonathan Gumz, Joshua Sanborn), the aspects that need completion being pointed out. There subsequently follows a set of studies, divided into two groups: the first comprises four articles on frontier questions (by Stephan Rindlisbacher and Sebastian Paul) and political system conceptual thought (Marco Bresciani, Jakob Mischke); the second has three texts on violence in post-imperial space (Dimitri Tolksch, Andrei Zamoiski, Mathias Voigtmann). The edition is

bilingual (in fact, bi-and-a-half-lingual): the first half of the volume contains several articles in German plus two in English; the second, Polish translated versions of all the texts. The index of geographic names, list of maps, and biographic details of the authors are analogously doubled.

Part one begins with Rindlisbacher's article on the bargaining over the border between Russian Federative Soviet Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Republic in the early 1920s. This little-known episode in post-war border disputes – an unusual situation, as it concerned a border within a state – explains the (untypical) final caesura been assumed for the whole volume. Studies dealing with post-war reconstruction of East Central Europe most frequently refer, instead, to the year 1923 – the date as of which the Polish rule of Eastern Galicia gained international sanction and, in parallel, mass exchange of people between Greece and Turkey was decided in Lausanne, thus putting a symbolic end to one of the greatest-ever 'wars of the Pygmies' and determining the territorial order in the east of the continent. The book under review shifts the cut-off date a year forward – up to the moment the committees for border affairs between the two Soviet republics were established. Apart from this astonishing, though rather formal, chronological shift, the article in question points to the striking analogies between Russian-Ukrainian negotiations and the diplomatic game that had taken place not much earlier, at the Paris Peace Conference. Similarly as in 1919, representatives of both parties to the Soviet talks cast against one another their ethnographic, economic, and strategic arguments – while experts, including as outstanding intellectuals as Myxajlo Hruševskij, compiled studies in support of their respective Republics' territorial claims. This picture is complemented by the interesting examples of petitions submitted by local communities demanding that the frontier be pushed in the manner responding to their life needs. Contrary to the expert narratives, nationalism was almost absent in such documents.

The subsequent article, by Marco Bresciani, also departs from the historiographic standard – this time, in description of the Italian fascism on the border areas of Venezia Giulia and Trieste. The author argues that the existing interpretations of the phenomenon have ignored the effect of the empire's decomposition on the internal situation of the territories obtained by the Kingdom, and approached them instead solely as the object of actions taken by Italian fascists. In fact, it was the specific – and different than that in Italy – situation of the Italian-Slovenian borderland that formed the movement's political imagination and the characteristic fetishisation of the state; it was also responsible for suggesting to the fascists the phantasms of Bolshevik and Slavonic threat.

The third text in this part of the volume is a study in the history of law and the history of ideas. Jakob Mischke shows the ways in which the political situation after the First World War informed the constitutional thought of the eminent Ukrainian lawyer Stanislav Dnistrianskyj. His draft constitution

for the West Ukrainian People's Republic, meant to be an argument in the endeavours for political sovereignty, used categories and concepts that best addressed the Ukrainian reason of state: the biological concept of nation; the assumed superiority of one's subjective declaration of national identification to the so-called objective factors (commonly accepted in psychology and national statistics at the time), such as one's spoken language; or, identification of the territory's ethnic character with the nationality of its rural, rather than urban, population. Such elements, ensuing from the then-current needs of Ukrainian national movement, coincided in Dnistrianskyj's thought with the idea of non-parliamentary democracy which would guarantee the rights to the minorities and ensure participation of all the inhabitants in making political decisions.

The last article in this part of the book is an essay by Sebastian Paul which concisely introduces his research project on Subcarpathian Ruthenia. A political history of the province's shift from the Hungarian dominion to Czechoslovakia is outlined. One finds a useful list of the political actors who were active after 1918 at home and in emigration.

The subsequent part (somewhat shorter than the preceding one), centred on violence, begins with Dimitri Tolkatsch's innovative analysis of the struggle for power in Ukraine. The author appreciates the local centres of power, including – at the lowest level – self-governing villages or groups of villages that had their own armed forces (of a sort): in the time of unrest, peasants gathered weapons and were reluctant to get rid of them in spite of calls from the consecutive authorities. In the rural areas of Ukraine, a specific 'peasant nationalism' emerged with a very narrow territorial and political horizon, permeated with egalitarianism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism. As illiterate people were often the carriers of the idea, their political tradition fell with time into oblivion, giving way to the two dominant narratives: the Soviet and the Ukrainian one. As we can learn from the essay, once again, the history recorded in books and documents is not to be identified with the real image of the past.

Contrary to its title, the no-less interesting and original text by Andrei Zamoiski is not entirely focused on the pogroms and the Jewish self-defence in Byelorussian lands after the First World War. In essence, presented is the process of the Soviet authority taking root in Byelorussia – within a triangular structure involving the local peasantry, various armed groupings, and the Jews – the latter falling victim to violence from both of the former. The pogroms, almost never successfully prevented by the sparse and poorly armed self-defence units, helped accelerate certain social processes, driving the Jewish people to larger cities and throwing them, in a way, at the mercy of the new regime.

The volume ends with Mathias Voigtmann's article on the networks of relationships between members of the *Freikorps* and, as a asymmetric comparison, the *Aizsargs* ('Guards') – Latvian volunteer units. Emphasised

are the stable bonds tied in the tempestuous years of fighting in Latvia and Estonia; another case study is added to the phenomenon that has probably been the most completely described by Robert Gerwarth. The Latvian territorial defence is a little doubtful object of comparison, though: in proportion to the population, the formation was considerably larger than the Baltic *Freikorps* and formally reported to the Minister of Interior; thus, it thoroughly differed from them in character and role played in the state. Perhaps, in spite of these differences, the *Aizsargs* corresponded, indeed, with the German paramilitary troops; yet, the article in question does not demonstrate it convincingly.

Each of the articles summarised so far appears in the book in two language versions – German and Polish (those by Bresciani and Zamoiski are in English and in Polish). The rationale behind the editors' decision to have the English texts translated into Polish (but not into German) seems not completely clear, though the concept is not deniable as such.

The introduction penned by Buchen and Grelka promises to open new subjects or themes for research on the reconstruction of East Central Europe after the First World War. The book they have edited, albeit not a voluminous one, does meet the promise. Some of the articles in this volume shed new light on phenomena that are known but repeatedly attract the historians' attention – the Italian fascism or the Ukrainian 'national revolution' among them. The others, usually founded on thorough archive query, add to our knowledge on the peripheral regions. The names of their authors are certainly worth remembering, because the partial outcome of their research published in this volume possibly foreshadows a series of valuable monographs that will, hopefully, come out in a near future.

trans. *Tristan Korecki*

*Maciej Górny*

Piotr Biliński, *Władysław Konopczyński 1880–1952. Człowiek i dzieło* [Władysław Konopczyński 1880–1952. A Man and His Work], Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, Kraków, 2017, bibliography, English abstract, 622 pp.

This book is the first full biography of Władysław Konopczyński, a Polish historian and political activist. Selected fragments have been published by Biliński as monograph articles in a number of Polish journals, including *Acta Poloniae Historica*, and he has re-edited some of Konopczyński's books. As far as its archival and bibliographical research on Konopczyński is concerned, the book seems unchallengeable. Apart from Konopczyński's scholarly and journalistic legacy, the author has reviewed his innumerable letters, and perhaps most importantly, his diary and a number of larger

autobiographical writings kept in his family archive, which enabled him to reconstruct his protagonist's life in great detail. Moreover, Biliński has supplemented his evidence with research into the institutions in which his protagonist was active, and his collaborators, friends, students, and family; thus constructing a broad picture of his activities, impact, and character. In addition to presenting a complete story of Konopczyński's life and his many activities, the book is also an invitation to revisit several issues concerning the inter-war and post-war Polish historiography, and the intersection of academia and politics.

Konopczyński was an outstanding scholar and personality, perhaps the best expert on the eighteenth century among Polish historians, as well as a tutor of several dozens of scholars, whose works extended Konopczyński's influence well beyond his own death. A son of a wealthy engineer, Konopczyński was educated in Warsaw, where he graduated from the faculty of law of the Imperial University with a thesis on the *liberum veto*. He developed his passionate interest in history and research even earlier, already in his high-school years, when he met Tadeusz Korzon, a leading Varsovian historian of the turn of the century. Konopczyński then continued his studies under Szymon Askenazy in Lwów, focusing on the epoch of the Seven Years' War, eventually attaining the position of high-school teacher and *Privatdozent*, as well as earning a remarkable reputation as a diligent archive-researcher and passionate polemicist. He spent most of the First World War in Sweden, and in 1917 he obtained the chair for Polish history at the Jagiellonian University, which he held until 1949. During that time he promoted 46 PhDs, researched and published intensively, initiated several academic organizations and publications (most importantly the *Polish Biographical Dictionary*), and actively participated in local and national politics as a dedicated National Democrat, serving as an expert to the peace conference of 1919, and a deputy to the national parliament (*Sejm*) between 1922 and 1927. As an enemy of Józef Piłsudski and his regime, he incrementally withdrew from active politics in the 1930s, being also disappointed with the radicalized attitudes of his own party.

Among his many writings published in the inter-war years, his most remarkable works concerned Polish-Swedish, Polish-Turkish, and Polish-Swiss relations in the early modern period; the history of English parliamentarianism; the *liberum veto* (the unanimity principle) and confederations in the European perspective, including the eighteenth-century confederation of Bar (part of this project, i.e. the biography of Kazimierz Pułaski, was republished in Chicago in 1947); and the Polish political culture of that time, as well as numerous source-editions. He also participated in a number of collective scholarly enterprises, such as *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, and published a two-volume history of early modern Poland, which was supposed to be part of an (unrealized) collective ten-volume history of Poland. Finally, he authored a chapter in the *Cambridge History of Poland*, published in 1941.

In 1938/9 he served as the dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of Jagiellonian University. In November 1939 Konopczyński was one of 183 Cracovian scholars, students and academic workers arrested by the SS because of their attempt to resume the activities of the University under occupation. He spent three months in prison and in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, until being released, presumably under pressure from the Italian and several other neutral governments, in February 1940 along with the majority of elder professors (except for 19 who died in the camp). Following his return to Cracow, Konopczyński immediately immersed himself in research and underground teaching. He continued his studies on the eighteenth century and on the history of Pomerania, and wrote on Frederick the Great and the political history of the inter-war period (deprived of access to the archives, he supplemented his own memory with interviews with politicians who were present in Cracow at that time). In 1945 he returned to teaching at the University, and also resumed the publication of the *Polish Biographical Dictionary* and the edition of source-documents.

As the most eminent Polish modern historian who survived the war and remained in Poland, he was elected the head of the Polish Historical Society in 1947. However, he soon became a victim of the communist campaign against the 'bourgeois' tendencies in Polish historiography and its resistance to Marxism-Leninism, and was forced to resign from his honorary functions and retire from the University. Konopczyński's involvement in the activities of the National Democrats between the World Wars, as well as his personal conflicts with a number of other scholars, and, last but not least, his refusal to pay homage or loyalty to the communists as well as his advanced age, made him a perfect scapegoat of the campaign to transform the Polish historical studies along Marxist lines. He continued his studies on the Polish political writers of the eighteenth century and his work on a book on the methodology of historical studies until his death in 1952.

Konopczyński's stigmatization by the communists, as well as their partially successful efforts to impose the Marxist paradigm on Polish historical studies, significantly limited his impact on the post-war Polish historiography. Moreover, discouraged from researching the political history of the modern period, the post-war Polish generation of historians typically focused on other fields, such as medieval studies, cultural and economic history, and embraced new methodologies, such as the one advocated by the French *Annales* school. However, many of Konopczyński's studies remain largely unchallenged even today; particularly those on the political culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and on Polish-Swedish and Polish-Turkish relations. Apparently, no Polish historian has ever outmatched Konopczyński in terms of his laborious and detailed archival studies, both of Polish archives (a large number of which were destroyed during the Second World War) as well as those from abroad. His outstanding achievements were possible due to his

impressive personal dedication, his linguistic talents (he read in fourteen languages!), and his determination. As Biliński informs us on numerous occasions, Konopczyński was famous for his discipline and passion for his work: he worked incessantly from secondary-school until his final days, allowing himself almost no leisure, yielding to no addiction, and without hesitation always proceeding according to his plan. A personal tragedy he experienced when his first fiancée rejected his proposal resulted in a one day melancholia, immediately overcome via a number of letters he wrote to family and friends, and then he resumed his methodic studies on the next morning! Konopczyński worked on his manuscripts during sessions of the parliament as a deputy, lectured during his internment in Sachsenhausen, and examined his students riding a bike. His feverish scholarly activity was combined with a serious and robust political engagement for more than a decade, which resulted in some two hundred press articles, a passion for the organization of scholarship and academic cooperation, and a highly polemical temperament which gave rise to innumerable personal letters to his colleagues, friends, and institutions. With more than two dozen monographs and syntheses, a legacy of 594 published texts plus two monographs of 500 pages still in manuscript form, as well as his diary of some 7,000 pages (covering the years 1895–1952), Konopczyński remains a champion of historical research and academic achievement and a monumental figure, whose memory has fortunately been reanimated by the present book.

As mentioned, given the book's impressive source-basis, it seems hardly possible that it will ever be equaled in its minuteness and accuracy. Its only deficiency, which may be simply regarded as invitation for further studies, is that it is more informative than analytical. Biliński approaches his protagonist with evident respect and sympathy, if not fascination. It is therefore disappointing how cautious, not to say timid, are his analyses and commentaries, particularly considering Konopczyński's conflicts with other historians, his controversial political involvements, and finally his scholarly choices. Apparently, one reason for this is that the narrative is guided by Konopczyński's diary and his letters – and thus the general nature of some of his actions and interactions becomes overshadowed by their momentous implications. Biliński clearly avoids taking sides, speculating, or interjecting authorial interpretations, which in my view seems regrettable as he is the person who knows more about Konopczyński than anyone will probably ever know, and so we shall probably never find out, for example, why Konopczyński fought so bitterly against some of his colleagues (with the exception of his conflict with Michał Bobrzyński, which is thoroughly examined and interpreted in the book).

Another problem that arises is that of Konopczyński's intellectual development. Indeed, as he returned to his favorite topics many times during his life, and formed his working habits and research methods early on as a student, it may seem that the entirety of his monumental achievements was fueled by the

same determination, attitude, and perhaps the same set of ideas throughout his entire life. Up until the Second World War Konopczyński was mainly driven by his appetite for new sources, which enabled him to broaden and deepen the limited number of topics he worked on beginning in his youth. His studies on Sweden and Scandinavia were exceptional in this respect, as they resulted from his exile during the First World War. However, as one of his most talented students, Emanuel Rostworowski, argued in the *Polish Biographical Dictionary*, Konopczyński's style greatly changed in the last decade of his life. One may ask: Did this change mirror a shift in his intellectual and methodological attitudes as well? This question seems intriguing, as Konopczyński worked on methodological issues for many years and crowned his interests in this field with a book that has been posthumously published in 2015. Indeed, his belief in the primacy of political history (clearly exposed in his 1916 article, cited on p. 292 of Biliński's book) might have regrettably contributed to his reputation as methodologically anachronistic and relatively uninteresting to subsequent generations of historians. Even though his dedication to political history certainly had to do with the contemporary Polish context, he shared this fate with a number of historians of his generation all over Europe. After all, Konopczyński's achievements, together with his personal involvement in politics, his passion for the eighteenth century and the mechanisms of parliamentary politics, and his unrivaled archival expertise and polemical passion, may perhaps be best compared to that of Lewis Namier (apparently, the two never met, despite their engagement in the workings of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and his contacts with British historians).

One more fascinating question concerns the impact of Konopczyński's political involvement with the National Democrats on his studies. As Biliński informs us, Konopczyński regularly employed historical parallels in his political pamphlets, comparing his contemporaries with historical actors from the time of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It would be more difficult to answer whether this mechanism worked the other way round. As Konopczyński's declarations regarding the *Polish Biographical Dictionary* suggest (Biliński, p. 420), he viewed this initiative as a weapon against popular historical mythologies and a romanticized image of the national past. His admiration for Józef Szujski, the first historian to occupy the chair of Polish history at the Jagiellonian University and famous as one of the founders of the so-called Cracovian school of history, seems to confirm this attitude, as does his respect for Roman Dmowski, the leader of the National Democrats, known for his extremely critical attitude toward the Polish romantic tradition. However, his conflict with Michał Bobrzyński clearly demonstrates his sentimental attachment to the Commonwealth and its legacy, and the limits of his criticism of Polish national historical mythologies. It may be that all his life Konopczyński hesitated between a 'popular' image of Polish national

history, with its immanent sentimentalism about past glory, and a highly critical approach to the legacy of Polish constitutionalism and ‘the Polish anarchy.’ Eventually however, he struggled to transform the former with his studies – most notably, perhaps, with his history of the Confederation of Bar, his project on a multi-volume history of Poland, and finally with the *Polish Biographical Dictionary*. A number of his studies, moreover, were clearly inspired by the immediate political context – his passionate study on Frederick the Great and his studies on the history of Pomerania may serve as the best examples of this approach. Apparently Konopczyński himself, in a truly Rankean manner, saw no contradiction between his highly political inspirations and his high professional standards, and believed he was capable of satisfying them both. In contrast to Ranke, he indeed believed that bias is a necessary prerequisite in historical studies.

Furthermore, Biliński’s book, so rich with details of academic life, personal conflicts, and attempts to influence scholarly policies, offers a fascinating insight into the functioning of the university hemisphere of the first half of the twentieth century, with its intersection of academic and ideological engagements. One needs to bear in mind that inter-war Polish academia, with just six full universities, was a limited field and that competition for positions was particularly harsh, with a professorship viewed as a ticket to Olympus. As all sciences and humanities were organized within the Faculty of Philosophy, all personnel decisions were made by a board consisting of people who knew each other well, but were specialists in radically different fields. Supposedly, this situation caused personal and ideological animosities to play a crucial role, making it particularly difficult for radicals and innovators, as well as Jews and women. Moreover, open pressure was exercised by the authorities of both the post-1926 and the post-1945 regimes, and a constant element of the university’s strategy to preserve its autonomy was to sacrifice those labeled as the most stubborn enemies of the government. In short, an academic career was a path which required discipline, hard work, and tenacity. The outsiders, i.e. men of humble social origins and those who had no dedicated wife to support them, could hardly make it to the top – a professorial chair. It was also a school of methodological uniformity and the reproduction of high, albeit fixed, academic standards imposed by many years of studies under tutorial supervision. While Konopczyński was famous for granting his students relative liberty in their choice of topics (pp. 212–57), seen from a more distant perspective this liberalism seems elusive, and his students made up a methodologically and thematically homogenous group. One is tempted to speculate whether the political, ideological, and personal animosities among the professors were, except for those fueled by the radicalizing world outside academia, partly a by-product of this homogeneity.

Finally, the story of Konopczyński’s political involvement represents a fascinating example of the mentality of the generation brought up before

the First World War and predestined to form the elites of the Polish Second Republic, but having difficulties in embracing the democratic realities, and helplessly watching the rise of totalitarian radicalism. As Biliński observes many times, Konopczyński's personal moral standards were shaped by his upbringing under the tsarist regime, when political engagement was *de facto* illegal: he believed that political involvement was a moral obligation and never got discouraged when struggling against the odds or a mightier opponent. This perhaps explains why he never adapted his ideas to the changing political situation, never compromised, and never preferred politics over his academic career. His reputation clearly suffered the most from his anti-Semitism (he was an advocate of academic quotas for Jews, both while in the parliament and in his press articles). As Biliński emphasizes, his prejudices did not prevent him from promoting students of Jewish origin nor supporting them in their academic careers and offering them protection during the Second World War. Apparently, Konopczyński refused to recognize that his anti-Semitism of 1925 was outdated by 1935, and was truly shocked by its 1940 Nazi version. He was disappointed with the post-1918 democracy and devastated by the 1926 coup, as well as the rise of political violence. His ideal was apparently Britain, but it was the old Britain with its high electoral census, ruled by the law and a wealthy elite (he himself authored a utopian project of an electoral bill giving priority to the votes of the educated). Konopczyński represented the generation that was helplessly anchored in the nineteenth-century elitist liberalism, was euphoric to witness Poland's independence, and subsequently frustrated with the rise of mass-radicalism. Luckily for him, his unrivaled work discipline never allowed him to despair as his world was crumbling down around him.

*proofreading James Hartzell*

*Adam Koźuchowski*

Marcin Jarząbek, *Legioniści i inni. Pamięć zbiorowa weteranów I wojny światowej w Polsce i Czechosłowacji okresu międzywojennego* [The Legionnaires and Others. The Collective Memory of the First World War Veterans in Poland and Czechoslovakia], Universitas, Kraków, 2017, ill., 309 pp., indices

The centenary of the outbreak of the First World War has visibly contributed to a revival in research into the topic, which by this far had been systematically neglected by Polish historians. The wave of publications, conferences, and projects that rose in 2014 will probably persist into 2018. For the tide not to go down immediately after celebrations of the other centenary are completed, it seems that studies ought to be produced which would bond together the two topics, all too often dealt with separately from each other: the Great

War and the regained independence of Poland (as well as a number of other countries in this part of Europe). Marcin Jarzabek's book is an excellent case in point. The comparison of the situation of the veterans of the imperial armies (customarily referred to in Poland as the 'partitionist' armies) against the lot of their colleagues who served with the units fighting under Polish banners has enabled to merge the European (and, American) history of the 'lost generation' with the national narrative of the combat for independence, the latter being typical of East Central Europe.

The study is also a comparative one, in that it juxtaposes the cultures of memory of the First World War and independence combats in interwar Poland and Czechoslovakia. The author's choice of the components of this registry is quite apt. There occurred a whole series of structural similarities between the two countries, beginning with the circumstances in which their independencies were gained, through to a considerable diversity of the veterans' war-front experiences and the privileged position enjoyed by the Legions' members. At the same time, the differences between the two remain significant – if only to mention the political systems. While Poland walked a path from parliamentary democracy to autocracy in the interwar period (1918–39), Czechoslovakia remained a liberal-democratic country; this affected the social position of various groups of veterans as well as the narratives of the War and Independence. The study carefully investigates the area where both cultures of memory came into direct contact with each other – that is, the Cieszyn/Těšín Silesia. This regional variant of collective memory forms yet another (third) element of the comparison, allowing in parallel to take a closer look at how certain relevant phenomena functioned on a local level.

The book opens with an introductory section where the basic assumptions, terms and underlying sources are concisely described. The methodological issues are tackled again in the first of the two Annexes, which discusses the research on collective memory related to the First World War. Such distribution of the content seems reasonable: at the opening, the reader receives the information necessary for him to understand the content of the chapters to follow. The author's own evaluation of contemporary memory studies and historiographic state of the art is not a must at this point – yet, it does testify to Jarzabek's excellent versedness in the existing literature.

Chapter 1 introduces the central personae dramatis: the Polish, Czech, and Slovak participants of the War. Following the literature, analysed is a variety of data regarding the size of the 'national' military units, the numbers of Poles, Czechs and Slovaks mobilised to serve in the Empires' armies, and wartime losses. In each case, estimates can only be taken into account – and this not only due to the chaotic character of the warfare in the Eastern Front but also owing to the difficulty to determine the nationality or ethnic status of a number of soldiers. The subsequent chapter takes the reader back in time as it describes the literary and artistic visions of the War and the works

inspired by it, produced before 1914 and in the several years afterwards. By referring to works of diverse standards (Jan Łysek, a Cieszyn-based poet, juxtaposed with the outstanding Czech modernist poet Petr Bezruč), Jarząbek demonstrates that the patterns and motifs of the later story of wartime commitment had developed in an earlier time, before the War broke out. The reality subsequently adjusted to the ready-to-use linguistic and symbolic structures. This process of inscribing content into ready scripts started before November 1918 – as the author demonstrates using the example of the cult for the Battle of Zborov, fought in the summer of 1917 by Czechoslovak volunteers in the Russian army.

Chapter 3 is the most conventional section as it incorporates questions fairly well described in the historiography of the last dozen-or-so years<sup>1</sup>: it namely discusses the legal situation and the organisations of veterans in both countries concerned, their divisions and attempts to centralise them, their political instrumentalisation and grassroots accession to the State's memory policy. Compared to the earlier publications authored by Julia Eichenberg or Natali Stegmann, a focus on the veterans' living problems, illustrated by concrete examples, is apparently a new aspect. Particularly interesting is the story of a forged circular of Polish Prime Minister Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski, dated 1936 (pp. 91–3), which encouraged to apply directly to the Premier for posts, salary increases and allowances for those merited in the combat for the country's independence. With use of this and other, perhaps less spectacular, anecdotes the reader becomes acquainted with the human and material dimension of the activities of the combatant organisations, whose main purpose was to seek to improve the living standard of its members.

Chapter 4 analyses the canons of memory of the War in Poland and in Czechoslovakia, along with their competitive dissident and regional narratives. In the first place, the floor is given to the two codifiers of the history of combat for independence who were most-widely read in their respective countries: the relevant fragments are summarised of Roman Dmowski's *Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa* [Polish politics and the rebuilding of the State] and of *Světová revoluce* [World Revolution, title of the first English translation was *The Making of a State*] by Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. Both statesmen looked to making their own diplomatic actions central to the story of winning the liberty, the military-men being afforded supporting roles (Dmowski moreover avoided any commendation of his opponents – the political background of the Polish Legions). Apart from these authoritative voices, narratives were

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<sup>1</sup> Cf., i.a., Julia Eichenberg, *Kämpfen für Frieden und Fürsorge. Polnische Veteranen des Ersten Weltkriegs und ihre internationalen Kontakte, 1918–1939* (München, 2011); Katya Kocourek, *Czechoslovakista Rudolf Medek. Politický životopis* (Praha, 2011); Natali Stegmann, *Kriegsdeutungen – Staatsgründungen – Sozialpolitik. Der Helden- und Opferdiskurs in der Tschechoslowakei 1918–1948* (München, 2010).

produced by the circles of former Polish and Czechoslovak Legionnaires. Contradicting tendencies competed within them. On the one hand, the ambition of the Legions movement was to wield a monopoly on the memory of war and the related discursive authority. On the other hand, there appeared manifestations of elitism as narrow groups of the depositaries of 'the true' merits tended to isolate themselves from all the other veterans. Peripheral to the dispute on memory were the organisations representing war-disabled persons and their families, who defined themselves not in terms of merits for the new state but through the sacrifice of health they had incurred in combat wearing the Austrian, Hungarian, German, or Russian uniforms.

The last chapter offers a case study from the Polish-Czechoslovak borderland – the Cieszyn/Těšín Silesia. We can see how competitive reminiscences and interpretations of the war effort coincided and overlapped in the region. The buildings or monuments commemorating the associations between the locals and the Legions, financially supported by the central authorities, gradually 'absorbed' the local traditions and recollections. It was in their own interest that the veterans emphasised the relation between their own military acts and what the authorities cherished the most.

The conclusions drawn by the author from the proposed comparisons between the Polish and Czechoslovak matters are of importance not only to the cultural history of both countries in the interwar period. An interesting aspect is what this history can tell historians dealing with memory cultures of the Great War, in the European and global dimension. The observation comes to the fore that – contrary to France, Germany or Britain – in the newly-emerged East Central European countries it was usually not the veterans who (super)imposed their memory of the war on the State and society but, conversely, in was the State that 'taught' those who partook in the War what they were supposed to remember, and how to do it. The individual groups of veterans could basically toe the line with the central State institutions creating the politics of memory, or end up marginal, with all the prestige-related and financial consequences.

With all the similarities between the Polish and the Czechoslovak culture of memory of the War, differences are also pointed out; two of them seem prominent. First, Czechoslovakia earlier than Poland saw a centralisation of the independence combat narrative and a canonisation of the legend of the Legions. In Poland, the process advanced after Józef Piłsudski's coup of May 1926. Second, under the conditions of a well-founded democracy, the memory of the War remained pluralistic in Czechoslovakia throughout the interwar period. In Poland, after 1926 the previously 'soft' tools of fighting for a dominance over the War discourse were complemented with administrative measures and supported by State-controlled violence.

The book under review is captivating with the elegance of argument which is not overcharged with excessive memory-science terminology or heaps of

reference material. The ability to select the material goes to the author's credit, testifying to his mature scholarship. Yet, it is the omission of certain threads that can be viewed as somewhat detrimental to this study; some of them, perhaps, should have deserved more attention. One such thread, to my mind, is what the author refers to as 'constructions of memory': what he means by this is a group of books which are critical for interpretation of the independence-oriented endeavours during the First World War. Juxtaposing Masaryk and Dmowski, in their double role as witnesses to the events and historians, is a good compositional device. However, ascribing to their books the role of a canonical memory on the combat for independence is an exaggeration. In terms of popularity and circulation, both studies were surpassed by the Karel Čapek's bestselling extended interview with Masaryk.<sup>2</sup> If there is a single book that has shaped the Czechoslovak line of thinking about the Great War, it is the *Hovory s T. G. Masarykem*, written in a clear and vivid language, rather than the *Světová revoluce*, a bit too long and slow here and there. As regards the influence on the interpretation of the history of the 'Czechoslovak revolution', more efficient than Masaryk was, apparently, František Soukup, who represented the 'national resistance movement' and authored the monumental *28. Říjen 1918. Předpoklady a vývoj našeho odboje domácího v československé revoluci za státní samostatnost národa* (Praha, 1928); the same is true of the publicist Ferdinand Peroutka in his no less extensive study *Budování státu 1918–1919* (Praha, 1932–8).

Female veterans fell into another gap in the narrative: while their merits in the combat for freedom were willingly reminded, they were never to join the main current of the War memory. Jarząbek virtually neglects this aspect. Monuments is yet another rather superficially addressed topic. Although dealt with in more detail in the chapter on Cieszyn/Těšín Silesia, this thread appears in the other sections incidentally. The point is, commemorations such as the would-be General Milan R. Štefánik monument in Bratislava (and the dispute around the Bohemian lion which was meant to be featured at its pedestal) seem to offer an excellent illustration of the singularity of the Legions tradition in Slovakia. First of all, such commemorations appeared (or were meant to appear) in the public space, thus appealing to a much broader circle of people than the Legions' periodicals or even daily press. One more omission I would like to point out concerns the Polish-Czechoslovak *histoire croisée*. In the book, the memory cultures under discussion enter into direct contact only in the Cieszyn/Těšín Silesia chapter. I wonder whether, in order to emphasise the similarities and differences between the two countries, description of the other types of such contacts would have not been worthwhile – one case in point possibly being the round anniversaries of the Zborov battle. Since, coincidentally, the key site of memory as far as combat for Czechoslovak

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<sup>2</sup> Karel Čapek, *Hovory s T.G. Masarykem*, 2 vols. (Praha, 1928–35).

independence was situated within the territory of interwar Poland, any action taken by Prague in connection with it had to take the Polish opinion and administrative decisions into account, Zborów sometimes became the arena of common Polish-Czechoslovak celebrations, with threads of both memory cultures intertwined. It would probably have been an interesting addendum to the history described in the book under review.

All these doubts concern matters the Author could have visited; he has chosen not to do so, and cannot be blamed for it. Without these additional threads, the book provides sufficient material for us to complement our knowledge on the memory of the Great War and the specificity of the young East Central European countries that once emerged out of the whirl of the war. Jarzabek skilfully passes from a historical detail to a smart generalisation, his argument being clear and interesting. It would be of benefit to the research on the First World War if the book be translated into one of the congress languages.

*trans. Tristan Korecki*

*Maciej Górny*

Martyna Grądzka-Rejak, *Kobieta żydowska w okupowanym Krakowie (1939–1945)* [Jewish Woman in Occupied Cracow, 1939–45], Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Wydawnictwo “Wysoki Zamek”, Kraków, 2016, 488 pp.

Perceived from the standpoint of the various social groups, the history of the Holocaust will probably continue to enjoy increasing interest among scholars. It can be expected that the specific, gender-oriented focus within this field of research will enjoy no lesser popularity. Historian and Judaist Martyna Grądzka-Rejak, presently employed with the National Remembrance Institute’s (IPN) Historical Research Office based in Warsaw, has embarked on a task of this sort, her approach being based on the guidelines proposed by Raul Hilberg, the noted Holocaust researcher. She aptly quotes the American scholar’s opinion that the occurrences that affected males and females in the time of Holocaust were dissimilar, the interpersonal roles and relationships were altered, and the ways women and men experienced their traumas and stresses were different. The study under review is a doctoral dissertation submitted in June 2015 at the Pedagogical University of Cracow.

The research-related purpose of the study is clearly defined by the author in the introductory section: it seeks to analyse the daily lives of Jewish women in the occupied Cracow, and outline the changes occurring at that time and place in their family lives – all this being set in a broader perspective of the Jewish community as a whole. It has to be admitted with great confidence that both of these major objectives have been fulfilled. The introduction

presents a broad picture of the present state of research on the Holocaust with particular focus on the situation of women which regrettably tends to be mostly omitted by historiographers.<sup>1</sup> The research issue addressed by Grądzka-Rejak, so far not elaborated on in a synthetic fashion, appears thus all the more a shrewd choice.

The proposed chronological framework is rather broad, and transparent. The retrospections into the interwar or even earlier years are most welcome as they offer a better insight into the situation of Jewish females pilloried by Hitlerism. It may be regretted, though, that the timeline ends with the year 1945: the extent to which the wartime experiences impacted the emancipation of females in orthodox Jewish milieus as well as in the state of Israel, created shortly afterwards, might have been subject to analysis, among other threads. The thematic framework is extensive, extending to some controversial topics (rarely visited by scholars) such as sexuality or religious life of Jewish women under the German occupation. With respect to sexuality, a fact of interest is that in spite of the Nazi *Rassenschande* regulation, the Germans often entered into affairs with Jewish women; rapes or sexual assaults committed on Jewish women by German perpetrators were no rarity. As regards the geography, the author's remarkable merit is that she meticulously highlights the daily life of Jewish female inmates of the Płaszów camp. As Ryszard Kotarba aptly points out, the camp was in fact an extension of the Cracow ghetto.<sup>2</sup> Scholars analysing the Holocaust events in Cracow often belittle this fact – as exemplified by Elżbieta Rączy's book on the annihilation of the Jews in the Cracow District.<sup>3</sup>

The study relies on a reliable set of records. Grądzka-Rejak has penetrated a number of archives, in Poland and abroad (in the United Kingdom and Israel). I particularly appreciate the fact that she has managed to use the records kept in church, including conventual, archives to which access is normally limited to secular scholars. The number of studies she has taken advantage of is considerable – though I am a little surprised that she has not used Anna Czocher's *Wojna to męska rzecz?*,<sup>4</sup> a book on the situation of women in

<sup>1</sup> The Introduction mentions several available foreign-author studies on the topic, the most important of them being S. Lilian Kremer, *Women's Holocaust Writing. Memory and Imagination* (Lincoln, 1999); Jonathan C. Friedman, *Speaking the unspeakable. Essays on Sexuality, Gender and Holocaust Survivor Memory* (Lanham, 2002); Sonja M. Hedgepeth and Rochelle G. Saidel (eds.), *Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust* (Waltham, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Ryszard Kotarba, *Niemiecki Obóz w Płaszowie 1942–1945. Przewodnik Historyczny* (Kraków, 2014), 16.

<sup>3</sup> Elżbieta Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945* (Rzeszów, 2014), *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Anna Czocher, *Wojna to męska rzecz? Losy kobiet w okupowanym Krakowie w dwunastu odstonach* (Kraków, 2011).

Nazi-occupied Cracow. While the said study is not a compendium on the subject, it does provide a considerable portion of interesting information that would certainly have been useful. Otherwise, while Grażdzka-Rejak could not have read the Polish-language version of Maren Röger's study on the relationships between Polish women and the Germans during the occupation, she might have used its original German version (published in 2015).<sup>5</sup> She did use the major foreign-language monographs that bring up the topics raised in her book; she only used a small amount of available scientific articles, especially by Joan Ringelheim.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, though, I would not argue that the use of (any of) these studies or materials might have heavily influenced the content – all the more that the book in question concerns a single city.

While the structure of the study is mostly correct, it might arouse certain minor doubts. I fully approve of the subject arrangement of the chapters, primarily because the book under review concerns a period whose chronology is basically narrowly defined. The first chapter deals with the situation of the Jews in the context of the Nazi occupation policies; the subsequent one describes the situation of Jewish women in the two interwar decades, in light of the most important aspects of everyday life. One might ponder whether it would not have been reasonable to reverse the sequence of these sections. In any case, let me point out that the title of the second chapter is somewhat misleading as it uses not only an anthropological perspective: there are perspectives present related to social and religious life of the Jewish women. The subsequent sections are not too well correlated with the chapter in question, while the author's presumed intent was for Chapter 2 to enable a better understanding of the information comprised in the book. However, a number of issues outlined in the chapter is irrelevant given the following content of the study, which renders its enormous potential largely wasted. For instance, the section in question pretty meticulously describes Judaism's attitude toward abortion, whereas the subsequent chapter perfunctorily mentions the fact that abortions must have rather frequently been carried out under the occupation circumstances (pp. 101–2). Not quite clear is the purpose of specifying the age at which one comes of age among Jews, or the remarks concerning the institution of engagement and matrimony, since these pieces of information appear not to relate in any detectable way to the remainder of the study. Whether – and to what degree, namely – the Jewish regulations determined the decisions made by the Jewish women in face of the tragic dilemmas imposed on them by the wartime realities, remains basically unknown. If I were to write this study, I would have completely skipped the

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<sup>5</sup> Maren Röger, *Kriegsbeziehungen. Intimität, Gewalt und Prostitution im besetzten Polen 1939 bis 1945* (Frankfurt am Main, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Joan Ringelheim, 'Women and the Holocaust: A Reconsideration of Research', *Sigms: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (1985), 741–61.

chapter, using instead the relevant summarised pieces of information or data in the other sections, wherever appropriate, and confronting them against the specified behaviours of Jewish females during the German occupation.

Chapter 2 opens with a description of the diversity of Jewish women of Cracow, in a variety of aspects, emphasising that there were “emancipated, independent, well-educated, irreligious, neophyte, as well as assimilated women” among them, also including “communists, socialists, and also Zionists whose intention was to leave their country of residence” (p. 82). At this point, the author stresses that she has sought to show the behind-the-scenes of the life of women across these diverse social groups. The problem is, her focus rests prevalently on orthodox Jewish families – which is true for the entire study. It is in vain that the reader may look for information on socialist, communist or emancipated women and how their worldview informed the attitudes and behaviours when confronted with the occupation’s realities. Having said all this, the book ought rather to be entitled *Religious Jewish Women in German-Occupied Cracow*, for it overwhelmingly deals with orthodox women. To me, personally, this is the major shortcoming about the study under discussion. Another important issue refers to the national identity of the Jews and their assimilation. In the interwar years and, consequently, under the occupation, the phenomenon was extremely intricate and complex, tending to take shape mostly in the aftermath of the Zionist movement.<sup>7</sup> The author should have, to my mind, made it clear whom actually the term ‘Jewish community’ refers to.

Grądzka-Rejak tends to generalise the specificity of the phenomena she describes, using single examples. One cannot be certain whether – and, if so, to what an extent – the cases being described were actually representative for the community as a whole. When quoting individual examples, we ought to have been told in each such case, in my opinion, whether the given example is casual or, conversely, typically coming as an aftermath of a certain reoccurring perspective.

The author almost never refers to statistical research, and has seemingly carried out none herself. No tables or diagrams, or any like statistical breakdowns, can be found in the book. The point is, the situation of Jewish women in Cracow was pretty labile, which applies to the Jewish community in its entirety, not only in demographic terms. At one point (p. 149), we are presented with statistics concerning the mortality rate among the Jewish community of Cracow; yet, it would be far more useful to have the data

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<sup>7</sup> Anna Landau-Czajka’s findings have shown that Polish Jews often did not identify themselves unambiguously with Poles or Jews, forming a separate ethnic group instead; see Anna Landau-Czajka, ‘Trudny wybór. Asymilowani Żydzi o problemie tożsamości narodowej w II Rzeczypospolitej’, *Zamojsko-Wołyńskie Zeszyty Muzealne*, ii (2004), 71.

shown in the form of a chart rather than verbal description. The findings of Anna Czocher tell us that the number of marriages in the part of the city populated by Poles has not decreased or otherwise altered during the war years, compared to the interwar period. What about the analogous correlation with respect to Jewish women? The author should have sought the answers to this and the like questions.

Grądzka-Rejak would not refrain from getting the reader entangled in the intricacies of human physiology and sexuality, and sometimes shows such aspects in an overly detailed manner, which some readers might find repellent. What I find glaring is, for example, the quotation of a song's lyrics with a sexual tint, which was sung by Płaszów inmates (p. 264), described by the author as 'obscene'. While this is the case, why to quote such lyrics at all?

Citations of diverse sorts, some of them pretty lengthy, are often used in the book. Beside quotes from the sources, cited are communications or reflections of authors of several other studies. One or more quotations (of varied length) can be found on each single page, some of them seemingly purposeful, if not indispensable – as with concrete cases appearing as part of the experience of the eyewitness(es) to the occurrence under analysis. Again, however, there are too many citations in this book, in my view.

The substantive content of the study would have been reinforced through extended historical or geographical context, I believe. We are not told whether the situation of Jewish women in Cracow was parallel to the well-known and ever-reappearing everyday realities typical of the ghettos of German-occupied Europe, regardless of the place, or perhaps distinct (completely or in some relevant aspects) and characterised by its own unique specificity. We would not learn which of its elements were common and which were unique to Cracow, the capital of the *Generalgouvernement*. The situation of the Jewish women could have been confronted, moreover, against that of the Polish women on the 'Aryan' side. Research and its analysis would not have been as painstaking as with the Jewish women hiding in that part of the occupied Cracow. To offer yet another example: when mentioning the slackening of morals in the ghetto and in the Płaszów camp, the phenomenon could have been referred to in the context of its counterparts appearing in other German concentration camps. As Alicja Glińska has shown, for instance, slackened morals was nothing out of the ordinary with Auschwitz-Birkenau inmates.<sup>8</sup>

In spite of these critical remarks, which are not of paramount importance, my overall appraisal is that I fully respect the positive outcome of the great amount of effort put by the young scholar. She announces at the outset that her approach would be interdisciplinary, and a diversification of the various fields of knowledge employed for the purpose – including history, sociology, and psychology – is evident indeed. The study complements the existing

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<sup>8</sup> Alicja Glińska, 'Moralność więźniów Oświęcimia', *Etyka*, ii (1967), 199.

historiography of the Holocaust, primarily in its female-focused aspects – the new threads related to religiousness of Jewish women in the Second World War years coming to the fore. Given the context, certain controversial issues are addressed, such as religious conversions of Jewish women to Catholicism. Let us emphasise that Martyna Grądzka-Rejak is one of the few Holocaust historians who does not attack the Catholic Church when embarking on the problem of relationships between Jews and the Church during the war; her approach to the latter is more like apologetic.

trans. *Tristan Korecki*

*Przemysław Sołga*

*W poszukiwaniu innej historii. Antologia tekstów opublikowanych na łamach periodyków Instytutu Literackiego w Paryżu* [In Search for Another History. An Anthology of Texts Published by the Literary Institute in Paris], ed. by Rafał Stobiecki, Sławomir M. Nowinowski, in cooperation with Anna Brzezińska and Milena Przybysz, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Stowarzyszenie Instytut Literacki Kultura, Łódź and Paryż, 2015, 928 pp., index of persons, biographical notes; series: Jerzy Giedroyc, *Historycy i Świadkowie Historii*, 1

Jerzy Giedroyc (1906–2000) was an emblematic figure of the Polish culture of the twentieth century, whose impact on Polish literature, historiography, and political ideas can hardly be overestimated. He was involved with the political establishment of the Second Polish Republic from 1930, when he also started his career as an editor and journalist. During the Second World War he served in diplomacy and in the Polish Army in the West. In 1946 he initiated the activities of the Literary Institute, the publisher of *Kultura* monthly (1947–2000), based in Maisons-Lafitte in the suburbs of Paris. *Kultura*, alongside with *Zeszyty Historyczne* quarterly (1962–2011), which he also edited with his brother and a small number of friends (Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, Zofia and Paweł Hertz, Józef Czapski) became the most famous and influential Polish periodical in exile during the communist period. Due to his laborious and stubborn commitment to his work, high intellectual and moral standards, and his uncompromised dedication to the idea of free and critical thought, Giedroyc earned much respect among the Polish emigration, and in Poland – a destination his periodicals illegally reached, and where they were highly desired by the anticommunist opposition. He also owed his reputation to his openness to the anticommunist intellectuals in the West (such as Albert Camus, Arthur Koestler, George Orwell, Simone Weil), and, no less importantly, immigrants from other communist countries, particularly

the Soviet Union. His editorial house (in the literary sense of the world, as the residence in Maisons-Lafitte served both as the office and home to his editorial team for half a century) differed significantly from other Polish journals and periodicals in exile precisely because of its international rather than purely Polish political and intellectual agenda. Moreover, in sharp contrast to other Polish émigré publishers, Giedroyc showed much sympathy and interest for both ex-communist expiates who fled from the Peoples' Republic of Poland after 1945, and for the unorthodox communists and the so-called 'fellow travelers' in Poland who thought independently and formed a limited opposition against some policies of the regime.

Except for his promoting such authors as Czesław Miłosz or Witold Gombrowicz, Giedroyc's contribution for Polish culture and politics rests predominantly in his dedication to the idea of reconciliation of Poles with their eastern neighbors: Lithuanians, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians. The origins of this idea, which owed a lot to the inspiration of Józef Piłsudski, were of political nature: Giedroyc believed that Polish independence could only be secured by the independence of Poland's eastern neighbors. This included the recognition of the post-1945 eastern Polish frontier, which was an anathema for large segments of the Polish emigration back in the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, and perhaps paradoxically, Giedroyc, who earned his fame in Poland due to his position in the West and his contacts with Western intellectuals, remained in a way faithful to his Byelorussian-Lithuanian familial origins, the political traditions of the Second Republic, and the legacy of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Obviously, history played a crucial role in his program.

The present publication commemorates and rediscovers the contribution of *Kultura*, and *Zeszyty Historyczne* to the Polish image of history and historical debates, by reprinting 96 texts published by both journals between 1940s and 1990s. Just two of them originated from the pen of the editor-in-chief. The texts have been divided into nine chapters. Chapters 1–6 present original articles by individual contributors, including reviews and polemics. Chapter 7 contains interviews with historians conducted by Giedroyc's collaborators. Chapter 8 presents obituaries, including those dedicated to the authors and members of Giedroyc's team whose texts are represented in the volume. The obituaries were also an opportunity to present the legacies of people who had spent their final years in communist Poland, where their activities could not be discussed in public because of censorship. Chapter 9 includes six texts that had originally been published elsewhere, and were reprinted by *Kultura* and *Zeszyty Historyczne*. In sum, it is a rich choice that certainly may be qualified as representative for the two journals' legacy.

Like all successful editors, Giedroyc had an inclination for controversy, which is perfectly mirrored by the present volume. His main personal merit in this respect was in his disrespect, and indeed his animosity against all

sorts of national mythologies and sacred interpretations of the past. Historical exceptionalism has been a fundamental part of Polish national consciousness since Romanticism. As the volume demonstrates, Giedroyc and his authors conducted a peculiar campaign against this myth. On one hand, they argued that the idea of Polish historical exceptionalism is just a psychological reaction of the Polish minority complex that should be neutralized for the sake of the nation's mental health. On the other, they analyzed the mechanisms of the Polish preoccupation with history which, as Piotr Wandycz argued (pp.74–8) might be explained with the condition of life under censorship, and the inability to discuss politics in public. However, one could also claim that their focus on history in a way reproduced the Polish obsession with the national past: killing the demons for a long time makes you one of them.

Of course, Giedroyc also had his favorite themes: the Second Republic, the Second World War, national minorities, and the histories of Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Lithuania. Eventually, Giedroyc was less a defender of democracy than he was an advocate of multiculturalism, tolerance, and the free thought. He was not particularly inclined towards social history either. However, the ambition of the present volume is more about the legacy of *Kultura* and *Zeszyty Historyczne* than about the personal preferences of their editor-in-chief, even though it is his name that is part of the title. Still, the choice of texts represented in the volume clearly reflects his general attitude towards history and policy making as an elitist activity. Fighting against the totalitarian regime that made claims to represent the working masses, Giedroyc and his authors appealed to the intellectuals as actual and potential dissidents, discouraged both by the regime's brutality and its ideological inconsistencies and intellectual poverty. Moreover, their choice of topics clearly reflected the most painful traumas of their generation, which were directly linked to the geopolitical questions of the inter-war, and cold war periods. Hence, a number of essays included in the volume concern the problems of inter-war, and the Second World War international politics and diplomacy, including the issues that the Poles of this generation found most controversial: could Poland have avoided its catastrophes in 1939 and 1944–5?

The problem that is nicely exposed by the present volume is their struggle against Marxism and the so-called historical materialism. This issue is covered by the essays included in the first three chapters. They address both the flaws of Marxism as a theory of historical determinism, and the actual flaws and ideological complications of contemporary socialist historiography in Poland, and particularly its attempts at rewriting Polish national history according to the Marxist, and occasionally also the Stalinist principles. Remarkably, the volume reflects Giedroyc's decision to fight the challenge of Soviet Marxism, that was still alarming in the 1950s, with the pens of foreign, rather than Polish, authors: Benedetto Croce, Ignazio Silone, Bertram D. Wolfe, and Michel Heller (the last one was Giedroyc's lifelong personal friend). Several

essays concern the troubles Polish historians under socialism encountered while adapting the traditional interpretations of Polish history under the partitions and beyond to the Marxist scheme, and desperately trying to avoid the difficult questions of the Polish-Russian, and the Polish-Soviet relations. To be sure, Giedroyc and his authors must have observed the striking inconsistencies of the socialist historians' approach, furtherly complicated by the rapid changes in the official line of the Communist Party with bitter satisfaction. Furthermore, the volume mirrors Giedroyc's policy of observing and commenting the evolution of attitudes towards history, and some other general trends in intellectual life under communism; this strategy made it possible for his journals to serve as a platform for open discussion that was impossible under communism, and so made them desired by the public in the People's Republic.

Finally, chapter 4 includes seven essays discussing the condition of the political emigration. Giedroyc and his authors were painfully aware that with time their perspective and their sensitivities unavoidably departed from those of the Poles living under communism. As noted, they tried to make up this distance by serving as a platform for the free discussion of contemporary issues, and by providing a voice for the 'belated' refugees from the communist Poland. However, Giedroyc was also proudly aware of the traditions of the emigration, dating back to the post 1831 period, when the majority of Polish politicians were active in exile in France and Britain. As the essay by Kamil Dziewanowski (pp. 305–9) testifies, he skillfully played with this historical analogy, claiming the legacy of Hotel Lambert – the most longstanding and influential, liberal institution of the nineteenth-century Polish emigration. However, one more tradition was dear to him: that of Alexander Herzen's liberal *Kolokol* [The Bell], published in 1857–67 in Britain, which for a time exercised a powerful impact on the Russian intellectual and political life. Certainly, *Kultura* played a similar role in the life of communist Poland, for a much longer period.

As the editors inform us, the present volume is the first one of a planned series of three. The following ones are supposed to include a choice from Giedroyc's correspondence with his contemporary historians and political figures (although Giedroyc scarcely published his own texts, he wrote several letters a day (occasionally more than a dozen) for more than half a century). Although the Literary Institute, that has been transformed into an archival center and a museum, offers access to large parts of its collections via Internet, the series should clearly be a great help and inspiration for students of the Polish intellectual history in the second half of the last century.

*Adam Kozuchowski*

Jerzy Kochanowski, *Rewolucja międzypaździernikowa. Polska 1956–1957* [Inter-October Revolution: Poland, 1956–1957], Znak Horyzont – Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, Kraków, 2017, 478 pp., ills.

Poland was always the ‘odd man out’ in the Soviet Block. With its powerful Catholic church, well-developed links to ‘Polonia’ around the world, vibrant (despite the censorship) press, and high degree (relatively speaking) of private enterprise, the PRL provided a stark difference from more ‘model’ socialist states like the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and – most of all, of course – the USSR. But this was not always the case. The importance of 1956 and the ‘revolution that did not quite happen’ in Poznań and elsewhere has long been emphasized in the historiography, but Jerzy Kochanowski’s book provides the first book-length study that discusses both the events of that crucial year and – even more – the changes to Polish society that occurred in 1956–7. As Kochanowski points out, the initial opening of 1956 was soon turned back in significant ways – the closing down of *Po Prostu* in 1957 is emblematic of this attempt to tighten up some of the freedoms initially allowed. Still, as Kochanowski makes clear, after the opening in economic, political, even touristic spheres in 1956, the party could not – and was unwilling to – return to pre-1956 Polish Stalinism.

Kochanowski’s book is particular strong on social history, that is, on how these years were experienced by millions of Poles. Suddenly, compared to the first decade of post-war Poland, Poles could travel fairly easily, indulge in a modest level of consumerism, and see films from abroad (Brigitte Bardot was certainly more important to the Polish masses – at least those of the male persuasion – than Konrad Adenauer, Adam Smith, or even Albert Einstein). This material history is fascinating and important: a tale of retail stores, luxury goods brought from abroad, various *geszefty* carried out by Polish entrepreneurs in neighboring lands, and the efforts of the Polish party to develop a personal automobile for the masses (starting with the terrifyingly-named Brzdąc). At the same time, with more openness came the fear (and, to some extent, the reality) of disorder, hooliganism, and criminality. Thus the story – like all true history – is a mixed one, but never dull. Kochanowski writes in a lively vein and spices his narrative frequently with political cartoons for which the PRL was appropriately famous (compare, as a negative example, the excruciatingly unfunny Soviet ‘humor’ periodical, *Krokodil*).

The book begins, appropriately enough, with a short account of the crucial events of 1956. As is well known, the worker protests in Poznań and the brutal reaction of the ‘forces of order’ almost led to a Soviet intervention in Poland but, happily, Władysław Gomułka was able to stare down Nikita Khrushchev and stave off an invasion. The Hungarians, of course, were less lucky. Despite the relative calm (compared to Soviet tanks in Berlin in 1953 and the

full-scale street war in Budapest in 1956) in Poland, contemporaries viewed these years as full of chaos and hooliganism in which “*giną spokojni ludzie*” (ordinary people are perishing!). Thus from the start and throughout this period of greater freedom of speech, movement, and economic activity, there were calls for a cracking down on what was seen as excessive looseness that mainly profited anti-social or at least anti-socialist elements.

Another great worry of these years was unemployment. While the socialist system may not have produced brilliant economic growth, at least compared to the contemporary situation in most of western Europe, it did guarantee steady employment. Now, it seemed, this crucial gain of socialism was under threat. Inevitably, as Kochanowski documents, any effort to streamline the economy, to get rid of ‘redundant people’ (whether in office jobs or in factories) ran into opposition from worried workers. The economic situation in smaller towns was even more dire. Places like Góra Kalwaria, Mogielnica, Pułtusk, and Zakroczym (to name a few) had not recovered their prewar population ten years after war’s end (primarily because of the murder of Jewish inhabitants during the *Shoah*). Following the logic of socialist development which favored large factories and big cities over smaller centers, these peripheral towns had little to be optimistic about. Kochanowski shows that workers perceived the economic situation as bad enough to petition for the right to emigrate, at least temporarily, in search of work, a rather shocking demand in a socialist country.

The threat of unemployment was not all that worried or excited Poles in these years. There was also a revolt among Polish youth, in particular within socialist organizations. The revolt was not just one of fashion and frivolity, as is sometimes suggested by the term *bikiniarze*, but was also derived from serious demands for more democracy within the party. Kochanowski analyzes the results of a survey carried out in 1957 by *Sztandar Młodych* about the ideals and aspirations of contemporary youth. While most respondents claimed to still cherish certain ideals (not necessarily orthodoxly religious or socialist in nature), fully one third had serious misgivings about idealism and one fifth rejected such beliefs entirely. Many wrote critically about the false propaganda that had surrounded their youth and expressed pessimism for the future or limited their personal goals to achieving individual success in career. As for activities, reading and music topped the list, but many remained passionate about politics. To be sure, older people (e.g., Maria Dąbrowska) often perceived this generation as cynical and without firm values as a result of the devastations of war, *Shoah*, and Stalinism.

Among the most important ‘openings’ in 1956 was a new relationship between the Polish socialists and the Catholic Church. As Kochanowski shows, this fundamental policy change was engineered with a good deal of distrust on both sides. More than any other socialist country, the PRL forged a peculiar marriage of convenience between church and state, to the benefit

of both. The Catholic hierarchy saw to it that open discontent with socialist policy was kept within strict boundaries and the party allowed the church freedoms that were quite unthinkable in neighboring fraternal socialist lands. The strangeness of this *mésalliance* did not go unnoticed by humorists, as several caricatures reprinted here show, but in the end it may have been one of the wisest of the post-1955 reforms.

It is impossible to go into all the aspects of change analyzed in this study, but the opening (relatively speaking, of course) of foreign travel, liberalization of small-scale entrepreneurship (private shops and artisans), and the appeal of consumerism (including the possibility of a car for the masses – discussed but not yet achieved in the late 1950s) deserve mention. In these cases and others, Kochanowski admirably discusses the contradictions of policy. For example, one could travel – sometimes – abroad, but the Polish złoty was worthless outside the PRL so semi-legal (or entirely illegal) workarounds were often necessary. Similarly, privatization was allowed and in some cases encouraged, but the state continued to favor its own enterprises to the detriment of entrepreneurs, a situation that guaranteed a fairly high level of corruption.

As Kochanowski makes clear, the initial impulse toward reform in 1956 soon slowed down and was even turned back. Still, the command economy and rigid repression of the PRL's first decade was gone forever. It was precisely in these crucial years, 1956–7, that we see the birth of the crazy state of the 1970s and 1980s in which everything was for sale – but only for dollars and where ‘proper’ black market currency exchange rates were published in the official press (at least, I remember this with some astonishment from the mid-1980s). The hybrid and contradictory nature of the post-1956 PRL allowed the development of Polish civil society in ways unique to the communist block and this development helped make possible the astonishing events of 1989 that changed world history.

Jerzy Kochanowski's *Rewolucja międzypaździernikowa* analyzes a period fairly well known in Polish history, but with a novel social history approach based on an unprecedented breadth of sources. For anyone interested in post-Stalinist Poland, this book is enthusiastically recommended.

Theodore R. Weeks

Agata Ignaciuk and Teresa Ortiz-Gómez, *Anticoncepción, mujeres y género. La 'píldora' en España y Polonia (1960–1980)*, Los Libros de la Catarata, Madrid, 2016, 237 pp.

The book is an interesting comparative study in the history of medicine, covering the social and cultural aspects of its functioning; in specific, the history of contraception. Discussed are contraceptive practices of women

as well as representations of gender in medical and popular discourses, agency and power relations. As demonstrated by the authors, the history of contraception pill in post-war communist Poland and in Spain of the 1960s and 1970s may be an important interpretation of the character of both political regimes. The rationale behind the proposed comparison between the two countries in the aspect of their 'contraception cultures' and the history of the 'pill', a symbol of the sexual revolution and an important artefact in twentieth-century modernisation, is explained in the introductory section. The communist regime in Poland and the Francoist system in Spain were different in a number of respects, including the policy in the area of gender and sexuality. Poland admitted abortion 'for social reasons' since 1956; the state openly propagated contraception and family planning; gender equality rhetoric was predominant, which was reflected to a degree by the contraception and sexuality discourse. Family planning and the very use of contraception were shown in terms of measures of emancipation for women. In Spain, for a change, women did not even enjoy a formal-and-legal equality; abortion, sale and propagation of contraceptive methods were banned by the Law of 1941 (possession of contraceptive agents was not liable to penalisation). Spanish women were much less professionally active than their Polish peers; they were perceived by the regime primarily as wives and mothers. The medical profession was male-dominated in Spain still into the sixties; in Poland the share of female doctors was considerable, which theoretically might have positioned the medical circles favourably for family planning.

Similar about both countries concerned was the functioning in them of non-democratic regimes (based on contrary ideologies), censorship, regulated market, and a dominant role of the Catholic Church. However, the position of the Catholic discourse was different in these countries: in Spain, the Catholic teaching was part of the official governmental narrative and translated into the civil law; in Poland, it was tolerated at that time (and could manifest itself in publications) but was, in parallel, exposed to attacks and fought by the state.

As it however appears – this certainly being the most interesting result of the proposed comparison – it was in Spain, rather than Poland, that the contraceptive pill was disseminated earlier on and on a much larger scale. In the People's Republic of Poland, the pill was launched in the late sixties; however, the limitations typical of the socialist economy, in combination with the powerful medical discourse on the detrimental effect of the pill and the generally weakly developed family planning culture (in spite of the effort taken since 1957 by the Society for Conscious Motherhood), Polish women rarely resorted to using it, given the availability of abortion. In Spain, for a change, despite the ban on popularising contraception, proprietary contraceptive drugs appeared at a rather early stage, in guise of 'investment projects' by Western pharmaceutical companies. They were debated on within circles of professionals as 'ovulation-obstructing' agents, of potential use in

therapies of various afflictions. The contraceptive aspect was, to a degree, subject to tabooisation, but it practice a number of women did have access to the pill, regardless of medical recommendation. The propagation of the pill was supported by advertisements in medical journals. Consequently, the popularity of the contraceptive pill, with a comparable population, significantly exceeded in Spain the Polish statistics and still grew in the seventies. The economic and cultural factors turned out to be decisive for spreading of the hormonal pill, as opposed to political and ideological factors. As for Spain, the emerging feminist movement and the migrations to the countries where the pill was available without constraints were not without significance. At the same time, both Poland and Spain lagged behind the countries where the pill dominated the contraceptive practices (such as West Germany or Britain).

Chapter 1 presents the research approach, the reproductive policies and medical practices applied in both countries concerned. The subsequent chapters analyse aspects of the functioning of the pill, beginning with its manufacture and imports (chap. 'Pharmaceutical industry and the State'). The different economic models functioning in Spain and Poland had its far-reaching consequences. The Spanish pharmaceutical market was based in the sixties' decade on the local output, with a share of foreign businesses. On a larger scale, the pill became applied in Spain in as early as 1964; late in the decade, as many as fifteen brand names functioned in the Spanish market. The companies who cared about popularisation of their products adapted their advertising to the local conditions. The consumption of the pill in Spain increased fourteen-fold between 1967 and 1978. In Poland, with the central planning system and a considerably constrained imports (due to the currency barrier), there was no such influence, which translated into a relatively poor dissemination and availability. The first pills arrived at Polish clinics as contributions from Western pharmaceutical companies; it was only in 1967 that imports were allowed, which (at 42,000 packets per year, on average) appeared much unsatisfactory; the pill was offered through specialised pharmacies. The pills were manufactured in the Polish market not earlier than in 1969. Their still-low output and distribution problems remained problematic; moreover, advertising these particular products in medical circles was very limited, compared to Spain.

The next five chapters analyse the ways in which the pill was present in medical discourse and practices, in the popular mass media – 'opinion-shaping' or 'women-oriented', as well as in women's accounts and interviews. Each of the chapters has a section relating to Spain and, separately, Poland, plus a summary and a comparison section. The argument thus laid out is very clear. The authors are well-versed in relevant international literature and use it to outline a broader context; comparisons with other countries are intertwined in the story of Poland and Spain.

The comparative material available enables the authors to draw interesting conclusions. The authors used in the research archival materials of a leading pharmaceutical company, to show advertising strategies and provide data on sales, as well as the archival resource of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Analysed have been the abundant collections of press articles and scientific literature (journals). The authors moreover refer to public opinion research carried out in both countries as well as to the interviews they have held.

The query with use of Polish sources, especially archives, raises some doubt. The references to the materials of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party [KC PZPR], the Ministry of Health, or the Supreme Chamber of Control [NIK] are pretty limited compared to the extent declared by the authors. It seems that Polish archives still comprise a considerable quantity of documents which could shed more light on the contraception culture in Poland in the period in question (for example, the surviving files of the local Society for Conscious Motherhood/Society for Family Planning structures). A more extensive query (certainly a time-consuming exercise) would have enabled a better reconstruction of the state's attitude toward the pill. Among the numerous periodicals, *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Więź* were selected as representative of the Catholic stance. One may doubt whether this choice is apt, for these particular magazines presented opinions of open-minded and progressive circles within the Church – in contrast to *Gość Niedzielny*, for instance. Let me stress, though, that selecting representative press when it comes to any like research project is always subject to dispute.

There are some errors appearing as well. That in the late 1970s as many as ninety per cent of Polish women used the extended post-maternity leave option is a misstatement; the true figure is 12.7 per cent of the employed females. Unpaid three-year leaves were used to a slight degree exactly because they were unpaid; hence, one of the Postulates submitted by the August 1980 protesters was to introduce allowances for the leave period. Erroneous names of institutions and personal names can be found in the book as well.

The final chapter deals with women's experience, which appears to have been of high importance from the standpoint of analysis of contraceptive culture. In spite of the legal constraints, Spanish women used the pill, particularly in the seventies, as an efficient method. Spanish women's interest in the pill helped overcome the limitations implied by the dictatorship system. In Poland, the limits of socialist economy, in the areas of production and distribution, coincided with a contraception culture based on male contraceptives and abortion. The dominant expert discourse had it that women in Poland feared side effects of the hormonal means. Availability of abortion is what the authors associate the reluctance toward the pill with, among the other aspects.

The interviews furthermore demonstrate that knowledge on contraception in Poland was limited – pretty paradoxically so, since the Society for Conscious Motherhood had existed since 1957; supported by the state, the organisation promoted contraception by means of pamphlets and books. The latter thread could have been more elaborated on. Why, in spite of the campaign for contraception pursued since the late fifties, the knowledge of contraceptive methods was so negligible? The authors interpret the limited use of contraceptives, probably aptly, in terms of a specific contraception culture and economic situation, which does not really explain the lack of knowledge. Although the Society's experts alerted how damaging abortion might be, warning against infertility and other potential effects, and how harmful the coitus interruptus might be, whilst others would talk about inefficiency of 'natural methods', those were, in any case, the broadest applied methods of birth restriction well into the seventies. On the other hand, the Polish sources analysed in this book point to inefficiency of the Catholic Church's campaign severely condemning abortion. Although in the accounts gathered by the authors abortion appears as the 'emergency exit' in a tough situation, rather than a devised means of birth control, the procedure was not charged with a negative moral assessment. Thus, the pragmatics stood in glaring contrast to the two dominant discourses around family planning, apart from the relatively popular use of intrauterine devices and condoms. The problem of the attitude of women (and their partners) to birth control remains an open subject.

Nonetheless, there were certain similarities between the contraception cultures in both countries. In Poland as well as Spain, withdrawal long remained the most popular birth control method, which, in the authors' opinion, had to do with the male and Catholic contraception culture. Coitus interruptus is apparently indicative of a dominant role of man in initiating sexual intercourse, and thereby, of control over fertility. In Poland, dominance of non-medical birth control means was favoured by a limited availability and poor quality of medical supplies (hormonal pills and other), reinforced by the discourse going on in the women's press.

The book by Agata Ignaciuk and Teresa Ortiz-Gómez is a strong argument in favour of importance of comparative studies. Research of this sort is rather scarce with respect to the socio-cultural historiography of Poland under communism; as the study under review shows, even when showing a relatively small fragment of the past, such research may lead to interesting conclusions regarding the character of what was the People's Republic. The history of the contraceptive pill in 1960–80 very well demonstrates the role of limitations of a socialist economy for the shaping of a modern family planning and women's empowerment. The investigation moreover confirms what experts in the sixties wrote of abortion and family planning: namely, liberalisation and availability of free-of-charge pregnancy termination service did not favour the development

of ‘conscious maternity’ or birth control. The comparative perspective enables moreover to examine absent or underrepresented phenomena – as is the case with hormonal contraception in communist Poland.

The book provokes new questions. Further investigation of the attitudes toward contraception and birth rate is a must, since there are sources available. What did these attitudes depend upon? In what ways did the family or marital arrangements inform such decisions, and, what was the role of males and females in this respect? The argument that the contraception culture was basically ‘male’ ought to be further verified, to my mind. Another question concerns the dynamism of attitudes and discourses, especially in the context of the teachings propagated by the Catholic Church. To what extent did the discourses alter depending on the Church’s position in politics, and on the changes in religiosity?

A broader question inspired by the comparative study on communist Poland and Franco’s Spain concerns the agency of women and emancipation/empowerment potential. Polish women – in spite of an equality discourse strongly manifested in the official mass media already in the 1960s, educational and employment opportunities, had limited agency in respect of family planning. The difference still deepened in the seventies: the dictatorship in Spain came to an end and feminist movement could unfold unrestrainedly ever since (among other options, the pill could be criticised from a feminist standpoint). In Poland, the family rhetoric and a moderate pro-natalist policy, coinciding with the economic crisis at the decade’s end, did not favour the articulation or implementation of the emancipation postulates.

*trans. Tristan Korecki*

*Natalia Jarska*

*Iliana Löwy, Imperfect Pregnancies. A History of Birth Defects & Prenatal Diagnosis, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2017, 296 pp.*

The line between imperfect and perfect pregnancies, as well as between ‘normal’ and ‘impaired’ foetuses, is very blurry and given the increase in diagnostic capabilities and diffusion of prenatal testing it has become even more complex and vague. This is shown in an imposing fashion in Iliana Löwy’s study on the development of prenatal diagnostics. The emergence of increasingly better technological tools and less invasive tests have still not completely eliminated the uncertainty about the projected future condition of a yet-unborn child, and moreover, it has produced lots of dilemmas, often tragic in nature. The consequences thereof, together with the causes of prenatal diagnosis-related stress and anxiety, cannot yet be fully estimated. However, the prenatal testing that has developed over the years, from the rare testing

of women at so-called 'high risk' in the 1960s–70s into routine pregnancy supervision from the 1990s onwards, has immensely changed the experience of pregnancy, parental expectations, the perception of risks and disabilities, the classification of inborn anomalies and non-infectious pathologies, as well as both the interests and approaches of private and public health services. These changes are, as Löwy's work highlights, neither linearly nor culturally indifferent. They always have to be located in time and in their geographical, political and historical context, and in case of Löwy's study they have been rooted in the cultural space of Western industrialized countries, with only a few short references to other countries, like Brazil (pp. 164–8) or Poland (pp. viii–ix, 118).

Löwy perceives prenatal diagnosis not through the lens of a single technology or single medical approach, but as a *dispositif* – that is as a certain complex 'regime of truth' that is formed out of and through medical, political, and social practices and institutional forms, legislative regulations, treatment measures, scientific and philosophical statements and movements, as well as architectural framing and morals. Accordingly, in the study all these elements are given a lot of exposure and the author outlines how many-faceted and interwoven the history of prenatal diagnosis is, in contrast to its frequent presentation as an unproblematic and continuous improvement of already-existing measures. This broad perspective is one of the book's major strengths and weaknesses at one and the same time. It is its strength as it draws a complex web of connections and reciprocal dependencies that demonstrate, for example, how the growing environmental movement, with its interests in environmental risks, has favoured the development of teratology and the search for foetal and birth defects in humans (pp. 79–80). In some instances, however, the broad approach evades some complexities and becomes a weakness. This is the case, for example, when Löwy shows the importance – in order to personalize and accept people with mental disabilities (in terms of pre-natal diagnosis) – of visual images of mental deficiency reproduced in the 1920s–30s or in the 1970s in medical books. When recalling the use and function of images in the history of psychiatry, especially of deviance and hysteria, it would be desirable to pursue a broader insight instead of restricting it mainly to the very early images and some bibliographical references in the endnotes, although admittedly the all-or-nothing principle can hardly be used in scientific studies. On the other hand, the author undoubtedly deserves a great credit for her complex research and her erudite way of presenting it, as well as for shedding new light on the changing experience of pregnancy and the patterns of homogenization and standardization of highly heterogeneous technologies and approaches on the path from 'simple supervision' and the detection of foetal malformations and hereditary conditions to the study of foetal genomes, the use of general screening and uncovering rare conditions with highly variable anomalies.

While Löwy's story of this long journey essentially starts in the 1960s, when the living foetus became a new object of medical attention, she begins with a short excursion into the early modern period, with its fascination with monstrous births, and the late nineteenth century/first decade of the twentieth century, with its focus on embryological development, the labelling of 'birth defects', integration of biological anomalies into the natural order, and heredity defects. Löwy claims that the rise of prenatal diagnosis was shaped by the "wish to diagnose the Down syndrome" (p. 32) and grounded primarily in the generalization of the screening for Down syndrome and in the stabilization of obstetrical ultrasound as one of the most significant diagnostic tools. In 1959, thanks to the continuous improvement of methods of visualization/staining human chromosomes, leading to advanced studies on human cells, the Down Syndrome was able to be diagnosed as trisomy 21. Subsequently cytogenetics, coupled with clinical genetics, became an up-and-coming star of prenatal diagnosis, raising hopes for early cures of chromosomal anomalies. What followed, however, was not the fulfilment of these hopes but initially the identification and naming of chromosomes and new conditions of chromosomal anomalies. The door to prenatal detection of chromosomal anomalies had however been opened. The establishment of amniocentesis as the accepted diagnostic tool in the early 1970s, despite its related risk of miscarriage or harming the foetus, favoured the diffusion of prenatal diagnostics and the development of further invasive, and subsequently non-invasive, methods. The early 1980s promoted obstetrical ultrasound as one of major tools for detecting foetal anomalies, and the 1990s advocated for serum tests, then the triple tests for Down syndrome, while the 2010s promoted NIPT (non-invasive prenatal testing – DNA testing of maternal blood). The intensified search for improving the diagnosis of Down syndrome and in general for a better understanding of human chromosomes and irregularities led to the intensification and classification of further chromosomal anomalies, like the Turner or Klinefelter syndrome, which in turn has drawn greater attention to the search for the so-called 'sex chromosomes'. The history of these two syndromes is reviewed in a separate chapter (Chapter 5: 'Sex chromosome aneuploidies') aimed at highlighting its intersection with prenatal diagnostic by picturing its broader context and related research.

The shift in prenatal diagnosis from one focused on targeting the group of women deemed of 'higher risk' to the prenatal screening of all women at risk underwent several stages. It has been transformed, as Löwy demonstrates, from developing new methods of diagnosis of foetus malformation (such as, *inter alia*, amniocentesis, obstetrical ultrasound, serum markers of Down syndrome risk, banding, or NIPT), to classification of chromosomal anomalies, promoting new fields of research (like teratology or fetopathology), to arguing for the liberalization of the law and medicalization of pregnancy, to a changing awareness about risks and testing possibilities, to discussions

among experts, public health administrators, feminist activists, and the industry over collective versus individual health and the pro and cons of general screening, its costs, and reliability, as well debates over the right to health risks and market regulations.

During these processes, the experience of pregnancy has changed, abortion has become accessible to more and more women, and in the 1970s the promoters and pioneers of prenatal diagnosis established genetics counsellors and genetic consultations that sought to support parental choices. An advanced genetics consultation could certainly take place only in countries with legalized abortion, thus in the early 1960s it was available only in a few areas like Scandinavia or Japan. The liberalization and/or legalization of abortion, which was implemented in further countries from the late 1960s onwards, was prompted in part by the thalidomide scandal of 1961 (the Contergan-Scandal), as well as by the German 1962–4 measles epidemic. It can hardly be seen as a simple result of the sexual revolution of the 1960s or of the rise of the feminist movement, as is often suggested. Interestingly, especially in the 1970s–80s some feminist activists became close with opponents of abortion. Whereas the latter combated abortion for a foetal anomaly and pictured prenatal diagnosis as a crime against disabled persons, the former feared a rising instrumentalisation of women, which could reduce them to “machines that produce high-quality children” (p. 7) and lead to the loss of hard-won self-control – an argument that has never completely vanished from the feminist narratives and was seized again years later, for example in the debates about male oral contraceptives, as Nelly Oudshoorn demonstrates. The thalidomide scandal that was responsible for massive births of deformed, limbless children and the German measles epidemic that caused infection-related malformations could be seen as a wake-up call for many medical professionals. They realized that an unwanted pregnancy is neither limited to lower-class women nor a selfish whimsey of immoral women. The thalidomide scandal further favoured the development of teratology by directing attention to nonhereditary-related malformations, as well as contributed to the diffusion of monitoring of birth defects together with the standardization of birth defects’ registers.

The liberalization of abortion went hand in hand with the above-mentioned professionalisation of genetic consultation. Especially in the 1970s, genetic counsellors tried to advise women in a neutral way, distancing themselves from earlier involvements that were more emotionalized or tended to control the gene pool in the society by advising female carriers of defective genes to remain childless. Nowadays, while still trying to remain neutral, they focus more on advocating birth defects and the ‘unborn child’, as the studies from the USA or Germany show. In Israel, however, women and their families are placed more in the spotlight than the unborn child and its protection. In cases of an affected foetus the Israeli counsellors tend to advise termination of the

pregnancy. These opposing approaches might be explained by the different cultural framing. The Israeli consulting practices are deeply rooted, like the whole of Israeli history, in the narrative of catastrophe and thus possible foetal defects are seen as a threat. Ultimately, prenatal screening in Israel is enthusiastically welcomed and much more requested than, for instance, in the Netherlands, where admittedly it is not cultural framing that is primary, but the structure and discourse of prenatal care, which are determinative of the lower diffusion of prenatal screening. The supervision of a pregnancy in the Netherlands takes place – in contrast to Israel, France, or the United Kingdom – in a non-medicalized setting and most of the time is conducted by midwives, who focus more on maternity care than on possible risks. The right to “ignore the health status of the foetus” (p. 117) is considered outweighed by the right to a balanced parental choice. Unfortunately, no mention is made of how these opposing approaches influence the birth rates and women’s dealing with disabilities.

In her conclusions the author approaches the general medical debate about ‘screening for risks and screening as a risk’, and investigates the biomedical management of risks and the uncertainty that is still an integral part of every final prenatal diagnosis. Through references to related studies, we learn about maternal anxiety and how the prognostic uncertainty can influence the mother-infant-interaction and parental choices. This analysis leads Löwy to discuss the omnipresent eugenic implications of prenatal diagnostics, since it has shifted the focus “from progenitors to foetuses” (p. 190). Whereas some pioneers of prenatal diagnostics were not free of eugenic considerations, the roots of prenatal testing are not to be found in eugenic movement. The accusation of a eugenic implication has mainly emotional origins, as Löwy shows by displaying modern debates among the sociologists and historians of eugenics. In this sense, the final conclusions rather open new debates than offer a re-summation.

This book serves as a great entry point for study of the medical, political and social effects of cutting-edge biomedicine and its impact on public health care and on the individual and very intimate pregnancy experience. The non-expert reader is taken on a highly enriching journey through the history of prenatal diagnostics, although (s)he might lose the overview of the big picture as the narrative sometimes gets lost in details and precise descriptions of each innovation. Such close observations situate the story of prenatal diagnosis historically, politically and socially. However, the insight is stretched at points by detailed presentations of evidence and thus the ways of knowledge production and active materialization of technology fade into the shadows. Certain aspects, especially the material side of prenatal diagnostics, the consulting framework or the voices of pregnant women which are the target of this high-tech biomedicine, could have been given more attention. These few criticisms should not, however, deprive the reader of enjoying

the content of this book, which is highly informative and provokes valuable insights and reflections.

*proofreading James Hartzell*

*Justyna Aniceta Turkowska*

Agnieszka Kościańska, *Zobaczyć łosia. Historia polskiej edukacji seksualnej od pierwszej lekcji do internetu* [To See the Elk. The History of Polish Sex Education from the First Lesson to the Internet], Wydawnictwo Czarne, Wołowiec, 2017, 420[4] pp.

The author's starting point is the observation that even in the 1980s, at the end of communist rule in Poland, sexual education was a subject which caused (and still causes) enormous dissent. The example she uses is a schoolbook on sexual education by Wiesław Sokoluk, Dagmara Andziak, and Maria Trawińska,<sup>1</sup> which had been approved by the Polish Ministry of Education and was introduced to public schools only to be removed under pressure from the Catholic Church. The author emphasizes that these conflicts, which germinated within the anti-Communist opposition, persist until today.

The example illustrates the tensions around sexual education in Poland. Kościańska's study compares manuals on sexual education published from the nineteenth century until today and follows debates between educationalists, psychologists, and sexologists. The study follows a certain pattern, first describing contemporary problems and debates that took (and take) place at the end of the Communist regime (or, after 1990, in the Third Republic), and then going back in history into the nineteenth or early twentieth century. This allows the author to describe similarities and differences in thinking and educating about sexuality. Kościańska looks at different themes, such as the development of sexual education starting at the beginning of the twentieth century, the problem of venereal diseases in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (in the Polish territories as much as anywhere in the Western world),<sup>2</sup> and the interlinked issues of prostitution, promiscuity and unwanted pregnancies, masturbation, pornography, homosexuality, as well as rape and sexual assaults. Additionally, Kościańska presents diverse participants in the discourse, such

<sup>1</sup> Wiesław Sokoluk, Dagmara Andziak, and Maria Trawińska, *Przysposobienie do życia w rodzinie* (Warszawa, 1987).

<sup>2</sup> Roger Davidson, *Dangerous Liaisons: A Social History of Venereal Disease in Twentieth-Century Scotland* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA, 2000); Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (London, 2016); Daniel Joseph Walther, *Sex and Control: Venereal Disease, Colonial Physicians, and Indigenous Agency in German Colonialism, 1884–1914* (New York, 2015); Jennifer Burek Pierce, *What Adolescents Ought to Know: Sexual Health Texts in Early Twentieth-Century America* (Amherst, 2011).

as authors and social reformers who tried to improve the situation, especially of women.

Although the author attempts to discuss publications from the late nineteenth century until nowadays, the main focus is on the years from 1956 onwards. This is related to the fact that the field of sexology developed dynamically in the 1960s and 1970s, when sexologists started to publish widely in journals and newspapers. In 1957, the Association for Conscious Motherhood (*Towarzystwo Świadomego Macierzyństwa*, TŚM) was founded, its main objective being the spread of sexual knowledge. This was also highly desirable, because even in the 1970s, only few parents talked with their children about sex, and abortions were widely perceived as the only method of preventing an unwanted pregnancy.<sup>3</sup> Another problem was venereal diseases, although their impact lessened after the epidemic that followed the Second World War.<sup>4</sup> These issues were to be resolved by a better education that not only taught parents not to scare their children (as is the case with Kazimierz Imieliński's works), but also, since the 1980s, saw 'progressive' sexologists and educationalists put an emphasis on 'pleasure' and equal rights for both sexes to *enjoy* sex. This led to harsh critique from Catholics, for whom the presentation of extramarital intercourse and masturbation as 'normal' was anti-Catholic. According to Kościańska, Catholic critics saw a link between masturbation and homosexuality as late as the 1990s and stressed that children – especially boys – had to be taught self-control, referring to a model of behaviour which can be traced back throughout the whole twentieth century, including even the 'progressive' sexologists of the 1970s. For the critics, this model corresponded with patriotism and the understanding of Poland as a Catholic nation (p. 63). The liberal attitude towards masturbation that typified the 1980s changed in the early years of the Third Republic.

The author analyses the intertextual connections between the publications and the role models and patterns of behaviour presented in them. She also describes the influence of the Catholic Church, which was able to dominate the public discourse, especially in the 1990s. Not all books were removed and destroyed like the above-mentioned example by Sokoluk *et al.*, marginalization being the more common occurrence. The 1990s were a decade

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<sup>3</sup> Agata Ignaciuk, 'Reproductive Policies and Women's Birth Control: Practices in State-Socialist Poland (1960s–1980s)', in Lutz Niethammer and Silke Satjukow (eds.), "Wenn die Chemie stimmt..." *Geschlechterbeziehungen und Geburtenkontrolle im Zeitalter der "Pille"*. *Gender Relations and Birth Control in the Age of the "Pill"* (Göttingen, 2016), 305–28.

<sup>4</sup> Piotr Barański, 'Walka z chorobami wenerycznymi w Polsce w latach 1948–1949', in Marcin Kula (ed.), *Kłopoty z seksem w PRL. Rodzenie nie całkiem po ludzku, aborcja, choroby, odmienności* (Warszawa, 2012), 11–98.

of growing tension between ‘progressive’ educators – sometimes publishing their views on sexuality in the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza* – and conservative Catholics supported by the Church hierarchy. The author, therefore, takes a closer look at Catholic teaching on sexuality in the twentieth century and focuses on official publications, such as the Papal encyclicals or writings by Catholic clerics like Karol Wojtyła (p. 287). In this respect, the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* is one of the most important and controversial writings from the Catholic Church that also had a (negative) impact on other Catholic states, such as Ireland.<sup>5</sup>

One interesting – and often misunderstood – aspect of sexual education and knowledge about sex is the stereotype of the pious, and therefore sexually ignorant, rural population. Kościańska exposes the falsity of this stereotype, starting with observations about sexual knowledge in the countryside in the seventeenth century, backed up with interesting sources that criticise the dominant view – e.g. among Polish ethnologists – on the dichotomy between progressive cities and backward rural areas. Similar observations can be made concerning the twentieth century: in the countryside, common knowledge about sex was relatively high because children were often exposed to animal copulation as well as births. Polish sexologists of the 1960s concluded that even small children living in the countryside had a basic knowledge of ‘carnal behaviour.’<sup>6</sup>

Summarizing her analysis, Kościańska describes “sexual culture” as a “culture of dialogue” (p. 363) and concludes that, especially until the Third Republic, ‘progressive’ and ‘conservative’ views on sexuality operated in mutual correspondence and rivalry. This changed in the 1990s, when conservatives started to dominate sexual education. The Polish public discourse of the recent years, as well as the problems connected with the introduction of sexual education in public schools, corroborate Kościańska’s findings.

In my opinion, one of the main problems with the publication is that citations make a large number of sources hard to identify. There are parts of the text where all the sources are cited in one endnote. Furthermore, although the author tries to reconstruct developments dating back to the early twentieth century, especially the interwar period is underrepresented. The 1960s and the following decades receive more attention. The author’s focus on public debates and publications is an advantage, because it enables

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<sup>5</sup> Mary Daly, *The Slow Failure: Population Decline and Independent Ireland, 1922–1973* (Madison, Wis. 2006), 231; Robert Savage, *A Loss of Innocence? Television and Irish Society, 1960–72* (Manchester, 2010), 2; Louise Fuller, *Irish Catholicism since 1950* (Dublin, 2002), 207.

<sup>6</sup> An example can be found in Izabela Bielicka, *Kłopotliwe pytania* (Warszawa, 1965), 17.

a focussed and concentrated analysis of all relevant publications on the given theme – as the title of the work suggests, “from the first lesson until the Internet” – and excellently elaborates the currents of the discourse. One disadvantage might be that the author does not look behind the scenes of the debates – though I agree that this would have broadened the study to an uncomfortable length. The problem is that in most cases these discussions ‘under the surface’ are hard to trace. One example is the current (early 2018) inaccessibility of one of the most important corpuses of sources – the files and minutes of the Association for Conscious Motherhood or the Association for Family Planning (*Towarzystwo Planowania Rodziny*, TPR).

However, there are some hints about the unofficial debates in the files of the state authorities, as well. One example may be the discussions about the introduction of sexual education in eighth grade in the late 1960s. As files in the Archive of Modern Records suggest, the Ministry of Education considered that option from 1963 onwards. Before implementing the programme in public schools, the Ministry asked known sexologists and educationalists for their reviews of the planned curriculum.<sup>7</sup> Another promising source might be the files of the Censorship Administration (*Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk*, Central Office for Control of the Press, Publications, and Performances) that are located in the Archive of Modern Records and might give interesting insights into unofficial discussions between censors and authors.

Another problem is the vast amount of polls and statistics produced by different authors, mainly members of TSM and TPR. Their findings are sometimes very diverse and it would be highly recommended to discuss the numbers and their vast array, although the findings underline, e.g., the omnipresence of masturbation within the youth.

Last but not least, there is a problem with the ‘reality’ of sexual behaviour in Poland under the Third Republic. Although the controversy was (and still is) very loud and leads to harsh disputes, its impact on actual behaviour is hard to analyse. This is not the book’s fault, but concerns all works in this field of study because of the difficulty involved in obtaining reliable statistics and empirical results, especially in recent years.

Besides these minor remarks, Kościańska’s book is, on the whole, a splendid analysis of developments in the field of sexual education and the fierce debates between different protagonists and experts, especially in recent years. The contextualization of these debates in a *longue durée* of medical, educational, and national thought is a pioneer work and gives an elaborate insight. Combined

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Michael Zok, ‘Säkularisierung im Intimbereich. Sexualität und Reproduktion in Irland und Polen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg’, *Střed | Centre. Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies of Central Europe in 19th and 20th Centuries*. i (2018), 55–100.

with works by Magdalena Gawin,<sup>8</sup> Małgorzata Fidelis,<sup>9</sup> and others, it shows how eager experts and moralists (as well as state and Church authorities) tried to condition sexual behaviour in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Poland.

*proofreading Antoni Górny*

*Michael Zok*

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<sup>8</sup> Magdalena Gawin, 'Seksualność i prokreacja w polskiej publicystyce eugenicznej 1905–1939', in Anna Żarnowska (ed.), *Kobieta i małżeństwo. Społeczno-kulturalne aspekty seksualności. Wiek XIX i XX* (Warszawa, 2004), 73–88; *eadem*, 'The Social Politics and Experience of Sex Education in Early Twentieth-Century Poland (1905–39)', in Lutz D.H. Sauerteig and Roger Davidson (eds.), *Shaping the Sexual Knowledge of the Youth: A Cultural History of Sex Education in Twentieth-Century Europe* (London and New York, 2009), 217–35.

<sup>9</sup> Małgorzata Fidelis, 'Młode robotnice w mieście: percepcja kobiecej seksualności w Polsce w latach pięćdziesiątych', in Żarnowska (ed.), *Kobieta i małżeństwo*, 453–75.