

# REVIEWS

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Gábor Kármán, *Confession and Politics in the Principality of Transylvania 1644–1657*, Göttingen, 2020, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 302 pp.; series: Refo500 Academic Studies, 69

“What a fascinating study of European history!” – such is how we can describe the monograph under review here. It has had time enough to ripen, from its defence as a dissertation about ten years ago, through its publication in Hungarian five years ago, to its present English version. It is indeed a mature, conceptually well organised (in a chronological manner), and exquisitely documented book.

Its exotic-sounding title might lead the reader to believe that this book is a marginal study of Transylvania’s saga-enshrouded and historically rather insignificant principality. However, this is not the case. It is actually about the international entanglement of the Principality of Transylvania in continental events surrounding the Peace of Westphalia. The author uses the politics of the Transylvanian princes George Rakoczy I (1630–48) and George Rakoczy II (1648–57) masterfully as an occasion to show that historical demarcations such as ‘East-Central Europe’ or ‘Eastern Europe’ etc. are pretty impossible to employ and that French politics had, for instance, a great deal to do with Polish-Lithuanian politics, just as Sweden’s participation in the Thirty Years’ War had a great deal in common with Transylvanian and Ottoman politics. Therefore, this book is about Europe, though it would be more precise to say that when one writes a study on the history of Transylvania around 1648, one is basically writing European history. For it is impossible to describe the political efforts of the two princes mentioned above to gain the Hungarian and Polish crowns without taking into account the significant interconnections these efforts had with political paths taken in France, in the Habsburg Empire, in Prussia, in Poland-Lithuania, in Moscow, in Kievan Rus, in Wallachia and Moldavia, and in Istanbul/Constantinople.

The author impressively accomplishes all of this. The book is a good systematisation of what has been produced by Eastern European historians on the subject since the nineteenth century. However, its particular strengths are that these research results, communicated to the international academic community in English, are purged of any national-historiographical biases. The subject is presented here not as some exotic, peripheral matter but in a plausible way as a Europe-relevant phenomenon.

In ten chapters (accompanied by an introduction and a conclusion), the author describes the politics of the Calvinist princes of Transylvania, whose aim, on the one hand, was to secure for themselves the Hungarian crown, i.e., to make this claim strong against the Catholic Habsburgs, and, on the other hand, to attain the throne of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was also mainly Catholic. The book chiefly covers the reigns of George Rakoczy I and II, without, however, ignoring the important preparatory work done by Prince Gabriel Bethlen (1613–29). The aspiration to take over the crown of St Stephen and the implied competition with the Habsburgs in this respect turned a pure question of power into a question of confession, which pushed the Protestant princes of Transylvania into an alliance with Sweden and France against the Habsburgs. Hence the title of the book. Confessional reasons also played a role in the marriage policy of the Rakoczy family (who tended to seek Calvinist wives) and in the attempt to be elected king by the Senate of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In this respect, the alliance system of the Rakoczys (especially the younger Rakoczy) with the Orthodox Cossack rebels and their leader, Bogdan Khmelnytsky (d. 1657), also had confessional connotations.

Here one cannot help but point out that the book does not live up to the claim made in its title to examine “confession and politics”. We are left with a conventional historical study of rulers and state authority as factors in international politics, while confession is random. This case study is of an conventional state in transition from a medieval *Personenverband* to an early modern territorial state. In it, confessional reasons play only a tangential role, and the author – unfortunately! – treats them marginally. This observation leads to the fundamental question of whether one can speak of separate ‘confession *and* politics’ in this period, given that ‘confession’ *per se* actually means politics (as a legal community of faith relevant to the state, society, constitution, and culture).

This generates another problem: despite introductory reflections on the historiographical paradigm of ‘confessionalisation’, which was articulated and developed in the works of Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling, Kármán’s monograph lacks reflection on ‘confession’ as a term and concept. The fact is that there is no confessionalisation without the confessional formation and the establishment of confessions. Reinhard and Schilling could devote themselves directly to the confessionalisation of the Empire or of France since Ernst Walter Zeeden did the preliminary work on the formation of confessions in the 1950s. This development of confessionalisation heuristics in the history of science is not reflected in Kármán’s book. It leads to the author’s arbitrary use throughout the book of the false synonymy of ‘confession/confessional’ and ‘denomination/denominational’. This much should be stated here: not all Christian denominations in early modern Europe were also confessions and implicitly did not undergo a process of confessionalisation.

For a scholarly account of confession and politics in the principality of Transylvania, one would have expected to be presented with processes of confessional formation and confessionalisation. Meagre explanations of the legal constitution of confessional estates in the system of *receptae religiones* and *nationes* are too few. Relevant here would have been a discussion of the forms of confessional multipliers, the state-building function of confession, social and ecclesiastical disciplining, the homogenisation and levelling of state, society, and culture. For example, the author could have addressed the aggressive Calvinisation policy of the legally or religiously non-recognised Orthodox Romanians and Serbs in the principality of Transylvania under Princes Bethlen, Rakoczy I and Rakoczy II; this confessional policy affected Transylvania's relations not only with Wallachia and Moldavia but also with the Ottoman Empire or the Rus. The author also fails to realise that the broad support of the Ukrainian Orthodox for the Khmelnytsky's Cossacks was not so much due to the oppressive nature of their Polish or Lithuanian landlords (p. 91), but can be explained by common Orthodox faith and Orthodox solidarity against the aggressive enforcement of the Greek-Catholic Unionism established in 1596 in Brest. Of course, economic, social, cultural, and legal issues cannot be avoided but should be fruitfully integrated into the confessional question instead. It might have been helpful to complete the tableau of Rakoczys' Calvinist-Orthodox alliance with the Cossacks against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by embedding it in the previous approach taken by the Transylvanian Calvinist Prince Gabriel Bethlen toward Ecumenical Patriarch Cyril Lucaris' (d. 1638) anti-Catholic plan to isolate Poland-Lithuania on the European scene through an alliance between the Ottomans, Protestant (especially Calvinist) forces, Orthodox Cossacks and the Muscovites. The confessional ties of the Transylvanian Calvinist elites with the Orthodox were thus broader, older, and more ramified.

All this is not to detract from the book's great merits, but merely to support the thesis that we are not dealing here with a study on confessional politics in the first place. Nor should the positive impression of the book be overshadowed by such questionable trifles as the synonymy on p. 27 between the new concept of 'holy war' and the medieval *bellum iustum*, which are not the same; or by the problematic handling of 'confessional tolerance' in Transylvania, where the sources' term *toleratus* did not possess a positive connotation (on the contrary, it referred to the adverse circumstances of lawlessness and lack of juridical and political recognition and of segregation).

In conclusion, while this monograph might not be a proper history of confessionalism in Transylvanian Calvinist politics, it is still a good, source-supported historical analysis of ruling elites' state policies, with incursions into the matrimonial, social, and confessional aspects. It displays a strong sense of historical nuance and constellations, just as it exhibits analytical power and sophistication. This is a work on the interwoven history of Europe

in the early modern period, based on the Transylvanian example, which is well worth reading.

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Kateryna Dysa, *Ukrainian Witchcraft Trials. Volhynia, Podolia, and Ruthenia, 17th–18th Centuries*, Budapest, 2020, Central European University Press, 264 pp., 22 ill

For over a quarter of a century now, one can observe an increasing intensity of research in Polish historiography on the subject of the early-modern witch trials in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In recent years, authors such as Jacek Wijaczka, Tomasz Wiślicz, Małgorzata Pilaszek, and Michael Ostling have provided many books and papers that present numerous examples of witch trials from 16th–18th-century Poland. Unfortunately, those works are almost exclusively devoted to the western parts of the Commonwealth – i.e. the articles and monographs of Jacek Wijaczka and Tomasz Wiślicz focus mainly on the regions of Greater Poland, Lesser Poland, Mazovia and Ducal Prussia (which was under the Polish suzerainty between 1525 and 1657) – while only a few works of Małgorzata Pilaszek cover the Lithuanian part of this vast country. Pilaszek was greatly limited by the previous query of Konstancy Jablonskis, on which she based her work, and, as a consequence, described only the regions of Samogitia and Aukštaitija (so-called ‘Lithuania proper’). One must recall, however, that at its peak in the early seventeenth century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth spread from Greater Poland in the West as far as the Smolensk, Czernihiv and Kyiv voivodeships in the East, i.e. way beyond today’s borders of Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine and only 200 km from Moscow, the capital of the Tsardom of Russia. Even in the time of its decline in the second half of the eighteenth century, after losing the Left-Bank Ukraine, Czernihiv and Smolensk voivodeships, this large country spread over most of today’s Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus and Ukraine. Considering the dimensions of the early modern Commonwealth, it can be seen that large parts of its territory are systematically omitted in many of the works devoted to the subject of early-modern witch trials.

To some degree, this gap in research is filled by the latest book of Kateryna Dysa, *Ukrainian Witchcraft Trials: Volhynia, Podolia, and Ruthenia, 17th–18th Centuries*, published in 2020 by Central European University Press. Although Dysa has published a few articles devoted to this subject in English before,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kateryna Dysa, ‘Orthodox Demonology and the Perception of Witchcraft in Early Modern Ukraine’, in Jaroslav Miller and László Kontler (eds), *Friars, Nobles and*

her latest book is the first comprehensive elaboration of the witch-trial theme in Ukraine published for broader audiences, especially for those who do not speak the Ukrainian, Russian or Lithuanian languages. This is extremely important since Kateryna Dysa is one of few historians that have ever undertaken this issue, therefore even if one rejects some of the analytical aspects of her work, *Ukrainian Witchcraft Trials* will still be considered as the primary source of information about dozens of so-far unknown trials from the Volhynian, Podolian and Ruthenian voivodeships that can be utilised by historians, anthropologists, and scholars of religion.

That being said, it is essential to emphasise that the book discussed here is not entirely new – it is an updated English version of Dysa's *Історія з відьмами*, which was published in 2008 by the Ukrainian publishing house Krytyka.<sup>2</sup> Anyone already familiar with the 2008 edition of Dysa's work should not expect much new information from this English version, since the vast majority of the latest version consists of direct translation: all chapters are translated into English with an unchanged structure, and the new parts of text largely cover the issues of the Polish social strata's specificity and as well contain some most-welcome occasional comparisons between the Western (so-called 'Polish') and Eastern (so-called 'Ukrainian') parts of the Commonwealth (when *Історія з відьмами* was published, there were no current syntheses of the Polish early-modern witch-trials to which Dysa could refer, as Pilaszek's *Procesy o czary w Polsce*<sup>3</sup> was published almost at the same time as hers, while Michael Ostling's *Between the Devil and the Host*<sup>4</sup> was published over three years later).

The book is divided into four chapters, each one devoted to a different aspect of witch trials. In chapter 1, Dysa presents basic information about the specificity of this phenomenon in Ukraine. She elaborates on the legal foundations of the trials, the application of the tortures, the role of the executioner, as well as the importance of gossip in the propagations of the witch beliefs and witch trials among the inhabitants of the western regions of the Ukrainian lands. What is interesting, in this chapter, one can find very little

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*Burghers – Sermons, Images and Prints. Studies of Culture and Society in Early-Modern Europe* (Budapest, 2009), 341–60; *ead.*, 'A Family Matter. The Case of a Witch Family in the Eighteenth-Century Volhynian Town', *Russian History*, xl (2013), 352–63; *ead.*, 'Magical Causes of Illnesses and Their Cures in Eighteenth-Century Ukraine', in Éva Pócs (ed.), *The Magical and Sacred Medical World* (Cambridge, 2019), 78–93.

<sup>2</sup> Катерина Диса, *Історія з відьмами. Суди про чари в українських воєводствах Речі Посполитої XVII–XVIII століття* (Київ, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Małgorzata Pilaszek, *Procesy o czary w Polsce w wiekach XV–XVIII* (Kraków, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Michael Ostling, *Between the Devil and the Host. Imaging Witchcraft in Early Modern Poland* (Oxford, 2011).

information about legal tortures; in the sample examined by Dysa, only in 7 out of 198 investigated Ukrainian trials can one find any information about legal tortures. This, of course, could be, as Dysa states, “partly explained by the lack of skilled executioners in most towns and cities, which led to torture playing a marginal role not only in cases of witchcraft but in most criminal cases as well. The role of torture in witchcraft trials was also marginal because the interrogation results under torture did not have much influence on court decisions” (p. 35). Though one could explain this by the unreliable sample of sources and posit that future queries may change this perspective, it should be stressed that overall, this is a very intriguing argument and definitely should be considered in further studies, especially in the context of the much greater urbanised western voivodeships of the Commonwealth.

In chapter 2, Dysa interprets the issue of Ukrainian Orthodox demonology. The main purpose of this part of her work is to carefully present how the devil, demons, and witches were pictured in Ukrainian iconography and writings. She also deals with the issues of possessions and exorcisms, as well as demonic pacts and the demonisation of neighbours and enemies. She offers a solid elaboration of these themes, with only a few analytical issues that one could argue about. However, in a few instances where Dysa refers to the broader context, she omits some literature that could be a great addition to her work. For example, in the section where she mentions the famous case of demonic possession in Loudun, one could expect to see a reference to Michel de Certeau’s book.<sup>5</sup> I would have been pleased if this chapter contained some references to the relatively new books of Bartosz Marcińczak<sup>6</sup> and Jacek Wijaczka,<sup>7</sup> which consist of elaborations of similar issues in the context of the Western (Catholic) voivodeships. These omissions are not charges towards Dysa’s work, however, since – as I have already mentioned – this chapter is the elaboration of the Orthodox Demonology which predominated among the inhabitants of Ruthenia, Volhynia and Podolia, and as such, it serves its purpose.

Chapter 3, entitled ‘Beyond the Trials, or the Anatomy of Witchcraft Accusation’ is the main part of the book and covers over half of the volume. In this section, Dysa takes up many issues related to the existing power relations (family and witchcraft, rivalry, master-servant relationships), and the topics of the connections between medicine and witchcraft and perception of the phenomenon of witch beliefs in the context of livestock and harvesting. Though most of this chapter is well-written and seems uncontroversial, I must

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<sup>5</sup> Michel de Certeau, *La Possession de Loudun* (Paris, 1978).

<sup>6</sup> Bartosz Marcińczak, “Między łacnowiernością i niewiernością”. *Diabeł, magia i czary w “Nowych Atenach” i “Diable w swojej postaci”* (Warszawa, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Jacek Wijaczka, *Kościół wobec czarów w Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVIII wieku (na tle europejskim)* (Warszawa, 2016).

note one matter: on p. 142 Dysa writes that, as elsewhere in Europe, in Ukraine, many accusations of witchcraft “were made among people of equal or almost equal status”, while a bit later she states that the case of witchcraft among the serfs of the nobility [*szlachta*] “was a matter for the manorial court, which did not keep records, and there was no need to turn to the town or castle court” (p. 146). While the statement that in such procedure there “was no need” is undoubtedly true (though there were some exceptions to this rule; i.e. peasants in the private estates of *szlachta* – which predominated in the Commonwealth – mainly were subordinated entirely to the will of their master), there are more than enough examples from the western parts of Poland of *szlachta* ‘inviting’ (as it was usually called in contemporary court protocols) the court from a nearby town to conduct a witch-trial in their manor.<sup>8</sup> I think that it should definitely be considered in the future whether the situation in Ukraine postulated by Dysa was, in fact, the result of different legal traditions in these parts of the Commonwealth, or whether it was the consequence of the lack of witch-trial records from many municipal courts in Ukraine (as Dysa stated in the ‘Introduction’, *black books*, in which witchcraft cases were mostly noted, had much less value than ones that contained economic matters etc., and magistrates did not preserve them for a long time [p. 11]; therefore Dysa found examples from only a dozen or so Ukrainian towns).

In chapter 4, which could be regarded as the summary of the book, Dysa examines the similarities between the two most hideous crimes of the early-modern period – infanticide and witchcraft – in the form of a *case study* in which she describes a trial from the village Schurovchyky. This is a very particular example of a trial that commenced because of a completely different cause, but quickly evolved into a witch trial. Despite being, in essence, just an elaborate summary, one can find in this chapter some interesting points, such as the issue of guilt or innocence of those persons charged with being witches and the issue of the unimportance of the devil in the Ukrainian witch trials.

Dysa’s book is a well-constructed and very inspirational elaboration on the Ukrainian witch trials. The number of discovered and examined sources is impressive (almost 120 as yet unpublished and mostly unknown manuscripts, not to mention the published sources), as are her close examinations of the discussed trials. For future editions, Dysa might look closer at some sentences, which can be confusing for those who are not as familiar with the Ukrainian context as she is. For example, in Chapter 4, when she quotes the words of Orzyszka Liczmanicha, she writes: “Orzyszka said that the herb *pilip ziele* did not grow in their locality and one had to go to Ukraine to find it” (p. 216) – a paragraph or two here about how the inhabitants of the eastern voivodships of the Commonwealth understood the term ‘Ukraine’ would be a great addition in clarifying this allusion. However, given that the *Ukrainian*

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<sup>8</sup> See Ostling, *Between the Devil*, 94–7.



*Witchcraft Trials* is the first vast elaboration of the issue published in English, it will certainly serve for a long time as the main reference to witch trials in the Orthodox world.

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Tomasz Opaliński, *Stan chłopski w Księstwie Warszawskim w świetle akt sądowych* [The Peasant Estate in the Duchy of Warsaw, in Light of Court Files], Warszawa, 2020, Wydawnictwo DiG, 196 pp., tables, list of abbreviations, bibliog., annexes

Despite its short-lived history, the Duchy of Warsaw (1807–15) has quite an extensive bibliography, featuring not only Polish-language studies. Arguably, most monographic studies concerning this Napoleonic satellite state cover aspects of law and administration as well as military history, along with pretty numerous studies exploring its political, social, economic, and cultural history. The synthetic monographs by Barbara Grochulska and Jarosław Czuby are no less important.<sup>1</sup> All this testifies to the historical significance of the civilisational transition during this eventful period in Polish history. This is not to say that the number of potential new topics to be explored is gradually reduced. On the contrary, every new study on the Duchy confronts us with new questions and perspectives. Much helpful in this respect is the relatively rich (despite considerable losses incurred during partitions and the Second World War) and diverse collections of archival records.

As far as social history is concerned, basically, all social strata (including land-owning nobility, the best-analysed group so far) call for new detailed queries as well as new interpretations of the already-known source material. However, especially the social situation of the Duchy's peasants has not been satisfactorily covered yet, despite the frequently visited origins and effects of the notorious December Decree of 1807 (the duke of Warsaw's act which nominally emancipated peasantry but did not secure their right to land; its legal aspects and nobility's perspective have been primarily discussed). The scholars have hitherto displayed a predilection for analysing the peasant issues in a long chronological perspective encompassing several decades. Consequently, the situation in the Duchy itself seems to be relatively obscure. A book has been published recently, though, which is a vital contribution to the historiography of the subject matter in question. Tomasz Opaliński's *Stan chłopski w Księstwie Warszawskim w świetle akt sądowych* is compiled on the

<sup>1</sup> Barbara Grochulska, *Księstwo Warszawskie* (Warszawa, 1991); Jarosław Czuby, *Księstwo Warszawskie (1807–1815)* (Warszawa, 2011).



basis of his master's thesis written in 2018 under the tutelage of Grzegorz Nowik at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. In generative terms, the author (born 1969, according to the brief biographical note on the back cover) cannot rank among young scholars, but formally is at an early stage of his career as a historian (presently working toward his PhD). His publishing debut is successful, showing that the author is a promising social historian and an expert in law and economy. His versatility in these two fields much exceeds a level typical for a history (or generally humanities) graduate. The book would not tell us, however, what its author's basic education background is. The book's reviewers, let us add, were Janusz Odziemkowski and Jarosław Czuby.

The study in question seeks to "outline ... an image of the peasant estate in the Duchy of Warsaw, right after the formal abolishment of serfdom and at the threshold of further change to be brought about in the subsequent decades of the nineteenth century" (p. 7). The image is based on the archival sources left by the courts of peace, which, at least formally, were the lowest-grade courts in the Duchy and with which the peasant population (as was the case with the society in its entirety) had to do most. As the author rightly points out, an analysis of the trials at those courts has the added value of giving us an insight into social relations within one social estate as well as between different estates, due to the common character of the Duchy's judiciary. Opałiński is the first historian (not only among scholars exploring the peasant situation) to have used the available material on such a scale.

His source base is quite restricted territorially, though: he has used primarily the records of the peace courts in Śrem and Konin, supported by the records related to the peer courts in Poznań, Bydgoszcz, and Cracow, for the sake of comparison (plus the published material of the village court at Kargowa). Hence, the findings basically concern the region of Greater Poland [Wielkopolska], which cannot be regarded as representative in social and economic terms of the Duchy as a whole. The author is not to blame: he was limited by the availability of extant records related to the proceedings in which the peace courts of the time were involved (the materials from Poznań, Bydgoszcz, and Cracow are residual). The scope, however, should have been remarked in the book's title. The author's ambition to make his findings more general is understandable, all the more that he has actually exhausted the fundamental source base. However, the title is misleading; the fundamental limitations of the material under study are referred to only in the introductory section. The material addressed is highly valuable, but its fragmentary character ought to have been underscored.

The book includes an introduction and a conclusion, its core content is arranged into four chapters (each of which composed of a few subchapters or, in some cases, even subsubchapters). Chapter one, entitled 'Background', discusses the historical context of the source material. It covers the legal situation

of the Duchy's peasants, the specificity of the peace judiciary, the social/economic structure of the counties of Śrem and Konin, and the diversities inside the peasantry owing to their access to land or the type of labour they performed. All this is based on a reliable discussion of the existing literature.

At this point, the author explains his reasons behind the use of the terms 'estate' and 'peasant' in the title, of which especially the former might arouse doubts. Opaliński resorts to the classical (though strongly schematic) idea of the feudal society's stratification into three clearly distinguishable estates – those of nobility, burghers, and peasants, whose peculiarities were determined by the specific "political and economic monopolies".<sup>2</sup> He deems this division legitimate for the realities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth before the partitions, neglecting the recent arguments of early modern era scholars that contradict this view. For instance, Urszula Augustyniak denied that a 'peasant estate' existed at the time, since this particular social group had no homogeneous legal character (it was primarily the nobility that could be considered an 'estate' in the Commonwealth).<sup>3</sup> Given this context, the use of the term 'estate' concerning the Duchy calls for a much more reliable defence and semantic reflection. Note that the author's central premise was the finding that the economic situation of the peasants did not change compared to the pre-partition age (whereas the economic situation cannot prevail in determining that a given group might have been an 'estate'). The unspecific mention that "relics of personal and forensic bondage still functioned" (without specifying the actual meaning of these terms) is another relatively weak argument. The factual privileged position of the nobility in the Duchy's legal system can render legitimate the use of the term 'estate' basically with respect to this particular social group. (This argument is debatable as well, though: if consistently applied, the British quite recently ceased to be an 'estate society': by 1999, most of the House of Lords members would take their seats based on their family background.)

In fact, Opaliński is not the first author to refer to a 'peasant estate' in the Duchy of Warsaw (Władysław Sobociński and Janina Leskiewiczowa's studies came ahead of his<sup>4</sup>), thereby setting himself in a specific tradition of perceiving the period concerned. However, he also refers to Jarosław

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted after Janusz Tadeusz Maciuszko, 'Staropolska kategoria "stan" – Max Weber i słownictwo szlacheckie', *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxiv, 3 (1983), 447.

<sup>3</sup> Urszula Augustyniak, *Historia Polski 1572–1795* (Warszawa, 2008), 279–80. The evidence provided by Maciuszko to support the view that a 'peasant estate', in Weberian concept, actually existed – clearly affirmed by Tomasz Opaliński – is rather ambiguous and calls for a critical approach. See Maciuszko, 'Staropolska kategoria', 440.

<sup>4</sup> See: Władysław Sobociński, *Historia ustroju i prawa Księstwa Warszawskiego* (Toruń, 1964); Janina Leskiewiczowa, 'Włościanie', in Witold Kula and Janina

Czubaty's recent comment on the problematic status of the terms 'estate' and 'feudalism' concerning the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>5</sup> When writing his book, Opaliński was thus aware that the question is not entirely clear in terms of the most recent historiography. However, for some reason, he refrained from addressing this particular issue. This is not the only case when the author prefers to use terms typical of publications from fifty years ago and earlier, whilst simultaneously proving his familiarity with much younger literature – just to mention the “feudal and new bourgeoisie traits” when describing the Duchy's political system, or “bourgeois reforms” marking the abolition of serfdom and establishment of equality under the law (p. 135).

Chapter two, 'Court records and files', delves into a study of the sources, discussing the respective records in a fair amount of detail, including the condition, subject or topic, character, and authorship of the documents concerned, plus details such as the location of the court sessions. The author embarks on discussing the question of credibility of the records, pointing to the subjective character of disputable events' descriptions (which, however, become extremely valuable in their own right when coming from peasant actors). He accepts the court's opinions (mainly in line with the testimonies of peasant plaintiffs) as the conclusive argument, along with the customary trust for such records, typical of Polish historiography. The group of plaintiffs of peasant descent and the defendants from Śrem and Konin counties, numbering 1,200 altogether, is minutely discussed. However, at this point, we learn about yet another limitation of the surviving source material – this time, of a social nature. It concerned the indigent groups of the rural community, particularly landless peasants, to a minimum degree. This ascertainment is an engaging conclusion that refers to the social effect and reach of the Napoleonic legal revolution in the Duchy.

Further in this chapter, the author's analysis focuses on the cases proceeded, evidence applied, legal acts referred to, and punishments adjudged. This is an interesting contribution to the history of the judiciary, though its dimension is more general. The author notices, for instance, that none of the peace courts concerned made any reference to the pre-partition laws, which could become of interest to the historians dealing with the attachment of the period's society (and, particularly, its elites) to the Commonwealth tradition. The author aptly considers this issue for a while, appreciating its unobvious nature, but the explanation he gives is disturbingly laconic: “apparently, the partition-era laws and the French laws, appearing more modern, passed their test better in the Duchy's realities” (p. 59). It can be regretted that he has

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Leskiewiczowa (eds), *Przemiany społeczne w Królestwie Polskim 1815–1864* (Wrocław, 1979), 57–82.

<sup>5</sup> Czubaty, *Księstwo Warszawskie*, 322.

not commented at more length on this topic, which is of crucial importance to the Duchy's history.

As regards social history, the study's most important section is its last two chapters. Chapter three, 'Central social and economic problems', focuses on selected issues related to the characteristics of the peasant 'estate' of the time, based on the court cases under analysis. The author has found, for instance, that the personal economic situation of the appearing peasants was similar to that of the burghers and Jews who participated in those trials in parallel (the peasants having been a little wealthier than the latter). No wonder all these groups were distanced by the nobility. Moreover, the author points to considerable differences in affluence and the correlation between wealth and the farm's legal status. According to his findings, those who had the more unrestricted right to land were generally characterised by a higher financial standing. Using his knowledge of statistics, Opaliński takes the risk of extrapolating his detailed calculations to the entire Greater Poland, as he states that approx. 20 to 25 per cent of the region's peasants may be regarded as "relatively well-off" (p. 79).

In the subchapter on literacy, the author finds that the ability to sign one's name can be ascribed to little over 10 per cent of the group under study. To compare, almost all the Jews and the nobility could do so, against half of the burghers. We can learn of an interesting case of an illiterate peasant who proved himself to be pretty knowledgeable on arithmetic during a trial. On this occasion, Opaliński points to the poor recognition of mathematical knowledge among Polish peasants in general (not only in the Duchy), compared to studies on illiteracy. Further on in the chapter, cases of women participating in trials are described (violence charges being dominant), thefts and batteries, trading in land (incl. evictions of peasants because of the December Decree; he states that paradoxically such cases were marginal, in light of the available records), family relationships, as well as the issue of peasant honour. In the author's opinion, the peasants he has examined displayed care about their dignity, which confirms the findings of the scholars who have previously explored the issue in the pre-partition period.

The chapter's last subchapter is the shortest but particularly intriguing, as it concerns 'national awareness'. While not explaining the phrase, the author remarks that the view of no such awareness present among the peasant population at the time is prevalent among historians, while the records used by him can nuance the picture. A quotation is cited regarding a farmer who directly refers to himself as a 'Pole'. The author ponders how such a peasant would know "what nation he belonged to" (p. 115). The clue he suggests is the man's potential participation in the Kościuszko Insurrection, the Polish Legions in Italy, or the war of 1806–7, though the record concerned does not indicate such conjectures at all. True, such a hypothesis would be somehow defensible if we did have to do with, at least, a probable expression of national

(ethnic) identification. However, such a conclusion can hardly be drawn from a quote like this one, where 'Poles' are unambiguously opposed to 'Protestants' (which the author emphasises without commenting). Clearly, it is not an ethnic difference, as he maintains, but a religious one – 'Poles', in this case, are simply Catholics.

The last chapter deals at length with 'inter-estate relations' – i.e., those between peasants and noblemen, Jews, burghers, and clergymen (peasant-peasant relations are also covered). The last subchapter concerns the situation of peasants against all these other groups. Based on his analysis of the court cases, the author notices, for example, that inter-estate interactions were relatively rare, whereas peasants and noblemen were more inclined to aggression than other social groups such as Jews and burghers. Of particular value are the detailed findings concerning the peasantry-nobility relations, which undermine certain earlier opinions in the Duchy's historiography. Opaliński polemicalises with Anna Rosner who, on the basis of the same source material (in her research into peace courts in general), finds that peasants did not often sue noblemen. To Opaliński, the contrary is true; especially when compared to the cases they pursued against Jews or burghers. The author also calls into question Władysław Sobociński's argument that the period's courts in general tended to severely punish peasants and burghers, contrary to the members of other social strata. Moreover, he would offer no argument to support Janina Leskiewiczowa's statement that peasants were persistently referred to as 'subjects' until the January Insurrection of 1863–4. Opaliński expresses an opinion that the justices of the peace under analysis generally complied with the new constitutional principles of equality and liberty of the Duchy's residents at large. It is an important argument in itself.

This handful of a reviewer's remarks are polemical and potentially useful for the author at the subsequent stages of his research efforts. They do not affect my generally favourable opinion of the book, which fills a significant gap in the research on the Duchy of Warsaw and the history of Polish rural areas in general. The author repeatedly points to several related topics to be addressed, such as the functioning of village courts – to mention just an example. The study by Tomasz Opaliński may serve as a model of how to elaborate on the like issues from an interdisciplinary standpoint, taking into account social and legal and economic aspects.

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Aleksander Łupienko, *Order in the Streets: The Political History of Warsaw's Public Space in the First Half of the 19th Century*, transl. from Polish by Jarek Garliński, Berlin, 2020, Peter Lang GmbH, 272 pp.; ill., bibliog., index; series: Geschichte – Erinnerung – Politik. Studies in History, Memory and Politics, 29

Already the book's title is well chosen: *Order in the streets* points at the Janus-faced nature of space and thus spotlights the underlying theme of Aleksander Łupienko's study. The author presents 'the streets' as spaces of power, at the same time demonstrating the power of space when investigating the deep impact of spatial arrangement and spatial policies on political and social life. Aleksander Łupienko's monograph is by far more than a short 'political history' of Warsaw between 1815 and 1856. It is a case study that addresses the fundamental issue of the entanglement of hierarchies of power and spatial configurations.

The author sets off with two long chapters on concepts and contexts. First, he discusses various conceptual approaches to what could be defined as 'public space'. Aleksander Łupienko stresses that space in general – just as public space in particular – needs to be understood as a physical *and* mental category. The specific nature of *public* space is marked by its accessibility and openness just as much as it is shaped by the intervention of a broader community (in legal, social, discursive etc., ways). In this perspective, public space does not simply exist but is 'created' in the process of permanent negotiations and interactions of various layers of the given community. Thus, dealing with public space opens up the door towards a history of the "complex physical, social and mental construct that was a nineteenth-century city" (p. 11).

In his approach to public space, Aleksander Łupienko combines quite a few concepts. Inspired by Henri Lefebvre, he understands space – or to be more precise: the production of space – as a constant struggle over dominance. Spatial configurations manifest existing hierarchies of dominance and serve as tools for 'learning' such power relations. At the same time, space can be utilised to contest an established order. All this contributes to the 'theatricality of public space': On the one side, it is the place for representations of power and has its share in the long process of disseminating social rules and sets of behaviour. Elites strove towards a monumentality of the city's centres, displaying their power to instil "order in the streets". As a side effect, facades were detached from the buildings and their interior themselves and – charged with public connotations – became, in fact, an integral part of the public realm.

On the other side, concepts of modern urbanism help to re-conceptualise public space as being more than the site of representations of the power elites. As Aleksander Łupienko argues, they point at the multilayered nature of space that also integrated economic and social relations and provided sites

for negotiations and political rivalries, potentially questioning the established displays of dominance and control.

What kind of story does the author – equipped with such conceptual tools – tell us about Warsaw's public space between 1815 and 1856? The fascinating aspect of this book is that it highlights both the impact of broader political-social developments on public space, as much as it identifies public space as an influential *factor of its own* – having a strong impact on contemporary political and social discourses.

This Janus-faced nature becomes particularly evident in the book's first empirical chapter on Warsaw following the congress of Vienna. Public space changed dramatically during these short but intensive 15 years anteceding the November Uprising. The author identifies several central factors affecting public space, and he argues that the time of a constitutional order opened up rooms for new modes of social participation that left its imprint on the ongoing transformation of public space. Novel personal, political and economic freedoms became manifest in reshaping the city's space and how this space was 'used' by contemporaries. At least in the first years following the Vienna congress, they provided a strong stimulus for enlarging a public sphere and giving it the proper spatial representation. The appearance of new government buildings, but also club houses, public utility buildings and commercial properties changed the face of Warsaw in these years. Novel approaches to urban planning were forwarded since 1817/1818, first focusing on the Castle Square, then encompassing broader parts of the city's centre. All of this bore witness to an atmosphere of optimism and hope for a better future to come. The creation of Theatre Square, which took place in the second half of the 1820s, and the opening up of public gardens may serve as further expressions of this general positive mood.

This atmosphere is manifested not only in such construction activities but also in how public space was 'used' and filled with everyday life. Aleksander Łupienko describes 'how public space worked', and it is in this sphere where he first identifies a growing alienation between the town's indigent dwellers and the foreign representatives of the Tsar. Public events like funerals, coronation ceremonies or opening-up rituals of the parliament were displayed in public space and helped produce an increasing disillusionment of Polish citizens. They were facing a new emphasis on the Kingdom's subordination to Russia and witnessed a decline of all displays of Poland's independence and autonomy. Public space turned into a site for experiencing the shift in St Petersburg's policies. It triggered a changing attitude of the city's inhabitants: the growing feeling of being betrayed by the Tsar's promises was fueled by displays of Russian hegemony that increasingly dominated public space in Warsaw.

This interplay of public space and power relations also becomes evident in the second part of Aleksander Łupienko's book. Following the transforma-



tion of public space after 1830 until the death of Count Ivan Paskevich, the author sketches out Warsaw's development for almost a quarter of a century. The period of the Tsar's Viceroy Paskevich brought about severe changes to the town's topography. New governmental buildings, new statues and new guidelines for urban planning reshaped the face of the city. Many of these novelties intended to display the Russian grip on the town and its inhabitants – most prominent with the obelisk “In the memory of loyal Polish generals murdered in 1830” on Saski Square and, of course, with the notorious citadel overshadowing the northern parts of the town.

However, it would be much too simple to reduce the transformation of public space in these years to a mere ‘accomplice’ of Russian suppression. Aleksander Łupienko makes clear that in certain areas – like infrastructure or the city's street and lightning systems – we can indeed speak of an improvement. Taking a closer look at people's multiple ways of making a living and of making public space ‘work’, he draws a colourful picture of the city's every day – including consumer culture and religious practices that all filled the streets with life.

In the end, the question arises: How successful were the Russian authorities in establishing their domination over public space during the reign of Paskevich? Aleksander Łupienko is straightforward in his conclusion. Countless construction projects and ceremonies were meant to create the impression that Warsaw was a city controlled fully by Russians – or, in the author's words, even intended to portray Warsaw as a ‘Russian city’. Referring to examples of effective policing, Łupienko concludes that the authorities indeed managed to surveil the streets. In this picture, Warsaw appears like a city under ‘quasi wartime occupation’, which had a devastating effect on the intellectual atmosphere of the city. Aleksander Łupienko coins this as ‘cultural stagnation’ and points at the lack of dynamism among Paskevich's bureaucrats that in the long run resulted in a noticeable drop of quality of public space: “Hardly any significant buildings were constructed in the city and street life was dominated by the army, the police” (p. 222).

In the eyes of the author, only consumerism worked as a particular counterweight to this general decline. Commercialising public space in some cases facilitated infrastructural modernisation and led to a transformation of certain parts of the town. Unfortunately, Łupienko does not dwell into details regarding this dual process of political stagnation and economic (and partly social) development. It remains somewhat unclear if and how this ambivalent nature of public space left an imprint on the larger social structure of the city's community. Thus, reading this chapter, the impression prevails that public space in the times of Paskevich worked mainly as a site of representations of (Russian) power.

Concluding his book, Aleksander Łupienko takes a brief look at the years following the viceroy's death. The early 1860s once again show well how public

space followed its own logic and could have a strong impact on political and social processes. The seizure of public space by large protesting crowds not only manifested the loss of control of Aleksander Wielopolski's government but it also facilitated its decline of authority. These few pages spotlight how much public space and the turbulent making use of it were part of the political power struggle. It is often said that 'history takes place' – Aleksander Łupienko's study demonstrates well that space has its own share in the making of history.

Summing up, it should be underlined how successful the author has fulfilled his own task – presenting a political history of Warsaw and its streets through the prism of public space. The book serves as a case study demonstrating how deeply political power structures and spatial configurations are interwoven. The English translation will hopefully broaden the readership of the excellent study – reaching out beyond the (limited) circle of experts on Warsaw's and Poland's history.

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Beate Störckuhl and Rafał Makąła (eds), *Nicht nur Bauhaus: Netzwerke der Moderne in Mitteleuropa / Not Just Bauhaus: Networks of Modernity in Central Europe*, Berlin, 2020, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 400 pp., 200 ills; series: *Schriften des Bundesinstituts für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa*, 77

A Journey through Milieus of Modernism in Interwar Central Europe

*Nicht nur Bauhaus: Netzwerke der Moderne in Mitteleuropa / Not Just Bauhaus: Networks of Modernity in Central Europe*, edited by Rafał Makąła, an art history scholar formerly working at the Technical University in Berlin (currently based in Gdańsk), and Beate Störckuhl, an art historian from the Federal Institute for Culture and History of the Germans in Eastern Europe in Oldenburg, is a bilingual (German-English) volume comprising papers delivered at a conference held in Berlin and Wrocław. The volume sets out to show how modernist ideas in architecture, ideas most commonly linked with the Bauhaus school of architecture embodied by the famous figure of Walter Gropius, permeated Central Europe and were variously adopted across the region. The central premise of the volume is the idea that in the interwar period, the old division into centre and periphery in Europe somehow saw its validity diminished and gave way to an array of interconnected local centres across the region, which not only assimilated new ideas, but also disseminated them. Moreover, it is this quality of interconnectedness and overlapping spheres

of influence that in the editors' view characterised modernity, at least in architecture, and this found expression in the book's title: *Networks of Modernity in Central Europe*.

This premise is likewise addressed in the papers themselves, covering a considerable range of geographic and thematic issues; indeed, one section of the book is devoted solely to transnational networks. The book's geographic scope encompasses almost all the new (and in the case of Hungary, not entirely new) Central European states established after 1918, and also includes case studies of Lithuania and Estonia, two states most often treated as parts of a region adjacent to Central Europe: the *Baltikum*, to use its German name. The volume is intended as a narration of the advent of modernism, which in many ways coincided with the new 'urban modernity' (as conceived by, among other things, the authors of another volume, *Races to Modernity*, published in 2014), and though the latter notion is addressed only superficially, some of the contributions do set out to make inroads into it. To be sure, modernity as an urban reality and state of mind had entered the region before 1914, but did not mature fully until the 1920s, and not infrequently as late as the 1930s. Thus, the *Neues Bauen* might well be, and indeed was, seen as an embodiment of modernity and progress. The authors treat the phenomenon of modernity and modernism as intricate and multi-faceted, which lends the volume depth and freshness.

The book is divided into four sections. The first – and largest – is devoted to scholarly entanglements or the way architecture and crafts were taught at schools, along with some excerpts from the theoretical output of selected artists. The second, mentioned above, brings to the fore transnational networks of architects and their organisations. The third deals with the new states in Central Europe and the *Baltikum*; this is the most coherent section in the book, with the content covering interwar Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The volume ends with a section entitled 'The *longue durée* of the avant-garde', which contains only one paper that actually deals with the 'afterlife' of the *Neues Bauen* after the Second World War. This division of texts shows precisely how difficult it was to bring order to the seventeen papers, which cover a wide range of aspects of the subject, vary in the geographic areas they cover and the periods they span, and above all are constructed around very different theoretical frameworks.

The first article, by Stefanie Fink, brings to the fore the practice of architecture teaching at the Technische Hochschule [Technical University] in Charlottenburg at the turn of the twentieth century. This context helps to understand how the modern ideas in architecture, which were not only restricted to new aesthetics, but extended also to new relationships between form and function, and form and construction, were grounded in the nineteenth-century modern theoretical framework. The article lacked space for an overview of theories of different architectural schools, however. Showcasing the ideas that shaped

the new approach to forms, which had Semperian, Wagnerian, or Sullivanian ancestries, would greatly benefit the text.

The second contribution, by Carsten Liesenberg, focuses on the persona of Heinrich Tessenow, an example of a relatively widely known architect who, though not an important protagonist in the story of modernism, embodied many attributes that were to become characteristic of trends in architectural practice throughout the twentieth century. His modesty, warm relations with his acolytes, the austerity of his architectural language, undogmatic approach, and socially-inclined thinking around the role of the architect are all highlighted in the text, which also includes a description of his works in Hohensalza (now Inowrocław, Poland) during the First World War, discovered only around 2000.

The next piece, by Alexandra Panzert, describes the guiding principles and pedagogical practice in various arts and crafts schools in the Weimar Republic. The aim of this is to show the Bauhaus school in its proper context. By detailing achievements such as architectural competitions won and works produced by these schools, the author argues convincingly that in its day, the Bauhaus did not in fact stand out among other schools, nor was it a template to follow; its fame came only later, after the war, the outcome as much of good publicity and the narrations produced about it – not least by the architects involved in it themselves – as of the quality of its works.

The article by Vladimir Šlapeta concentrates on the Fine Arts and Crafts Academy in Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland), which acquired academy status in 1911 and also taught architects, some of whom are profiled here as well. It was directed by none other than the well-known architect Hans Poelzig, a native of the city, but it was closed down by the Nazi regime in 1932. This article is followed by a longer and more analytical paper by Beáta Hock, who shares the results of her studies on the Bauhaus. One of the two aspects that the author addresses is the transnational character of the school, i.e. its potential as a 'springboard to the world'. She follows the careers of Bauhaus alumni who were later active in Palestine, and also in Nigeria. The second part of the paper is about women and their career chances at the Bauhaus. Though the school's policy was to allow quite extensive participation of female architects, the careers eventually forged by professional women (like the photographer Irena Blühová) tended to be attributable more to personal abilities and talent than to the system itself, because in fact this most modern of architectural schools created no real structural change in this respect. The final contribution in this section explains some of the artistic ideals of perhaps the most famous artistic couple in interwar Poland, Władysław Strzemiński and Katarzyna Kobro, members of the group 'Praesens'. The author, Małgorzata Jędrzejczyk, argues that although the Bauhaus influenced them significantly, the two Polish artists genuinely followed their own paths. Thus she implies that it would be most accurate to speak of interwar modernisms, or routes to modernity in arts and crafts, in the plural.

This leads to the ‘transnational’ section of the volume, which opens with a text by Carolin Binder about the artistic journal *Devětsil* and its editor Karel Teige. It showcases Teige’s international network of contacts, and reveals his personal contacts with Walter Gropius. The journal is dubbed a ‘kaleidoscope of modern cultural currents’, and the person of its editor its ‘seismograph’. The Czech and Slovak artistic communities are also addressed in the following contribution, from Christopher Long, who examines the atelier of Adolf Loos, one of the pioneers of the *Neues Bauen*, who chose to remain in Czechoslovakia after 1918. The author asks to what extent the villas designed by the ageing and ailing Loos were, in fact, the work of his local underlings, among them Karel Lhota and Heinrich Kulka.

The Hungarian journal *Tér és Forma* and its editor Virgil Birnbauer are the focus of the following paper, by Ágnes Anna Sebestyén. The author maps the wide range of Birnbauer’s contacts, and also those of the architect Fargas Molnár with the CIAM [Congrès internationaux d’architecture moderne]. The latter organisation of architects and local institutions – or rather its eastern wing, established in the late 1930s – is the subject of the next essay by Martin Kohlrausch. Here the salient figures are those of the Polish architects Helena and Szymon Syrkus, the Hungarian Farkas Molnár, and the Czech František Kalivoda. The author explains the political choices made by CIAM-East activists, and the interregional role played by the organisation as a whole.

This section is followed by case studies of some of the new states: Lithuania by Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Estonia by Mart Kalm, Poland by Andrzej Szczerski, and Czechoslovakia by Alena Janatková. The historical tour of Lithuania includes three main centres of modernism: Memel/Klaipėda (a mainly German centre), Šiauliai (an industrial centre later ravaged by the war), and the capital Kaunas. Kaunas, already a well-known centre of interwar modernism, supplies most examples of modernist architecture given by the author, designed by the likes of Vladimiras Dubeneckis and Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis. The reader is given an overview of the debates on architecture that dominated in the city: gable or flat roofs? Genuine modernism or Art Déco? – ultimately, the latter choices would win out in both cases – and of the issue of the nationalisation of the space, and a new style, based on Lithuanian Baroque. The Estonian professional landscape was populated by architects of diverse backgrounds, in both ethnic (Russian, German, Finnish) and artistic terms (the important Riga school, the Petersburg school, and others), so the real challenge was to create a platform of contacts and collaboration for them all in this small Baltic state. The architect communities in Lithuania and Estonia were small, and almost none of their members had studied at the Bauhaus, which lent the architectural scene in those states more independence and originality, if sometimes also a particular idiosyncrasy. The Polish case is narrated via a depiction of three modern(istic) cities: the new port of Gdynia, the mining hub Katowice, and the administrative and cultural centre of Lwów (now Lviv,

Ukraine). The author observes that the new monumental architecture was leveraged to prove the new Polish state's *raison d'être* on the international arena. The Czechoslovak case is examined through the lens of the Werkbund arts and crafts organisation in Austria, which split into regional branches. The Czechoslovak Werkbund [or Svaz Československého Díla, from 1920] was established in 1913/14. Its activity in the interwar period met with the resistance of local Germans, who ultimately constituted an institution of their own, the Werkbund der Deutschen in der Tschechoslovakei. This is but one of a series of examples of national tensions in the country, which gained momentum since the mid-nineteenth century.

The last section of the book is the most diverse. The paper by Kai Wenzel shows how a small nineteenth-century factory in the town of Niesky, producing prefabricated wooden 'Doecker' barracks, expanded and to some extent paved the way for fast, cheap residential construction, anticipating future mass housing projects. The company (Christoph & Unmack) is depicted from its heyday, when it could boast the cooperation of architects including Hans Scharoun and Konrad Wachsmann, through later periods, when it provided barracks for labourers, and later also concentration camps during the Third Reich, until its reincarnation in the U.S. after the Second World War. This section also takes the reader to Haifa (penned by Tzafirir Fainholtz), a hub of Austrian and German émigré architects of Jewish origin in the interwar period. Architects like Paul Engelmann or Leopold Krakauer brought modernistic approaches to public buildings such as market halls, cultural centres and residential architecture, as in the Mediterranean Loosian-style villas and the German workers' Siedlungen. The essay by Ewa Chojecka is intended as an epilogue to the volume. This renowned art historian from Upper Silesia profiles a new research project that seeks new interpretations of the post-1945 Silesian *Neues Bauen* and a language to describe it.

The scope of these numerous articles touches on so many aspects of, histories of, and case studies in modernistic thinking among architects working outside Western Europe and the French or German flagship institutions such as Bauhaus that the reader is sometimes overwhelmed. The volume shows that it is hard to talk about a hierarchy of artistic centres and institutions in interwar Europe, and that it is more useful to think of the structure as a web of (semi-)independent centres that leveraged the broad networks of contacts fostered by the growing web of intermediaries such as journals, and which strove to seek solutions to major issues of the age, such as housing, modern regional and urban planning, and the propagation of new aesthetics in the international arena. The volume stresses the Europe-wide commonality of these issues and the approach of sharing individual solutions forged in autonomous centres on an international forum. It also raises the question of whether it is justifiable to speak of cultural transfers in this respect, though this is a dilemma that is only touched on superficially, and the reader



is given no answers. An unfortunate issue common to many similar large edited volumes is that the authors could not offer an in-depth examination of the subjects, largely giving the reader no more than overall outlines with selectively chosen sketches of exemplary institutions, works, and ideas. But it is still an interesting, beautifully illustrated journey through the main hubs of modern thinking in architecture in the newly-established states of post-First World War Central Europe.

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Nils Fehlhaber, *Netzwerke der "Achse Berlin–Rom". Die Zusammenarbeit faschistischer und nationalsozialistischer Führungseliten 1933–1943*, Köln, 2019, Böhlau Verlag, 343 pp.; series: Italien in der Moderne

Research into the history of fascism has long been focused on fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Like others, Jerzy W. Borejsza, the most prominent Polish scholar of this subject, began his examination of fascism with Mussolini's Italy and its international aspirations.<sup>1</sup> Within this framework, researchers have been interested in smaller and provincial fascist movements as reflections or more or less faithful copies of these two influential regimes. In the last three decades, the historical and social sciences have paid increasing attention to less influential, peripheral parties and groups, especially concerning their ideological formations and their national contexts and characteristics. Transnational references in border regions have also appeared in recent studies. These more recent publications have shown fascism – not only as a new type of political regime but also as a separate political culture – to be much more complex and diverse and more heterogeneous in its aspirations; as such, it eludes the various obvious schemas suggested by earlier studies. This also applies to transnational references, interactions and transfers between different movements and regimes. In no known case were state actors the only ones involved in these exchange processes. Instead, new works demonstrate that fascism has above all been a dynamic movement with global goals that have

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<sup>1</sup> Jerzy W. Borejsza, *Mussolini był pierwszy...* (Warszawa, 1979); *id.*, *Rzym a wspólnota faszystowska. O penetracji faszyzmu włoskiego w Europie Środkowej, Południowej i Wschodniej* (Warszawa, 1981). See also *id.*, *Historia faszystów europejskich, 1919–1945* (Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków, 2000). Most of these works had foreign language editions, cf. *Il fascismo e l'Europa Orientale: Dalla propaganda all' aggressione* (Roma, 1981); *Schulen des Hasses: faschistische Systeme in Europa* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999).



taken root in essentially all European countries. Fascism has gained support within, and sometimes even dominated, the local political scenes even among stateless national communities and ethnic groups, including in Ukraine, Slovakia and Croatia, and among Transylvanian Germans.

The study of the interdependencies and dynamic relationships between fascists in Europe and beyond has made significant progress over the past two decades. These studies have also shown that the development of particular fascist movements and regimes can by no means be explained solely from an internal perspective.

Nils Fehlhaber, a German scholar of the new generation associated with Leibniz Universität Hannover, belongs to this research current (the book under review here is a revised version of his doctoral dissertation). However, his starting point is the rather original thesis that it was essentially the interactions between fascist German and Italian politicians that constituted the alliance between these two countries and ultimately rendered it stable. Although the two countries' foreign ministries tried to control these relations (pp. 38 ff.), they could not stop, let alone alter, the dynamics of the internal struggle for power within both dictatorships, which – in Fehlhaber's view – was one of the fundamental engines of evolution for both of these regimes. According to Fehlhaber, it was, therefore, the "polycratic power structures" [see chapter 2; the author refers here to Martin Broszat's classic work *Der Staat Hitlers* (1969), where Broszat demonstrated that the Third Reich was a polycracy (from the Greek, rule by many) and not a monarchy (rule by one, in this case, Adolf Hitler) – author's note, G.K.] of both regimes that ultimately had a lasting impact on the development of bilateral relations.

Fehlhaber's work consists of four extensive chapters preceded by a comprehensive methodological introduction and followed by a highly detailed list of sources used by the author.

He examines four cases in detail: 1. Efforts by ministers of both countries responsible for propaganda, Joseph Goebbels and Galeazzo Ciano (and later Dino Alfieri), to gain internal political power through cooperation; 2. The role, position and activity of Joachim von Ribbentrop as a foreign policy expert in negotiations on accession to the Anti-Comintern Pact (1937); 3. Cooperation between the leaders of the regimes' fascist organisations – Baldur von Schirach from the *Hitlerjugend* and Renato Ricci from *Balilla* – in the mobilisation of German and Italian youth in 1933–7; and 4. Preparations for Hitler's first visit to Italy (1934), which were led by vice-chancellor Franz von Papen and, above all, Hans Frank in order to strengthen Frank's position in the Nazi dictatorship as a result of close relations between the Academy of German Law [Akademie für Deutsches Recht], founded in 1933, and the Association of Foreign Friends [Vereinigung der ausländischen Freunde].

In terms of methodology, Fehlhaber's scholarship fits along with recent research approaches to the cultural history of foreign policy, understood not

only as a field of practical activity in pursuit of a state's foreign interests but also as a field of dynamic internal exchange and communication between particular centres of power and interests. Moreover, the author adopts and refers to ideas from the field of praxeology, which is supposed to enable analysing those patterns of action that create meaning and order in a new system. He thus adopted the notion that fascism in both countries had comprehensive aspirations from the very beginning; that it, therefore, first of all, did not mean the continuation of earlier traditions and motifs but instead brought about their fundamental reevaluation; and that it, secondly, contained within itself the idea of new world order. In the light of the extensive explanation of his work's methodological and theoretical foundations, it is somewhat surprising that Fehllhaber directly avoided the use of the concept of network studies, which seems to be one of the most dynamically developing trends in the study of transnational relations.

Fehllhaber's presentation of various interactions shows, in an evocative way, that actions taken by actors from individual Axis countries were influenced, if not determined, by the extent to which their positions in authority structures were weak or threatened (again, a reference to Broszat). Meetings between these people were often deliberately and meticulously staged, and their style, aesthetics and entire "system of signals" were similar (p. 209). As the author points out, this activity was in line with ambitions to rejuvenate the two regimes and was, at the same time, intended to stabilise their alliance. The Alliance was thus based, especially in terms of foreign policy, not only on efforts by Hitler and Mussolini and some of their associates to cooperate closely. Although both dictators personally defined the most important criteria for cooperation in each case, it was only the involvement of subordinate actors determined to defend their own interests, which revived agreement between the main Axis states and allowed it to take root. According to Fehllhaber, the lack of balance that emerged in 1938, especially after defeats sustained by Italian troops in Greece and North Africa, remained limited latent for a long time.

However, the author also points out that, sooner or later, changes in the geopolitical situation could not help but affect bilateral relations and the nature of Axis cooperation. Even Mussolini's visits to the front and his meetings with Hitler in 1941–3 could no longer hide the alliance's apparent asymmetry – i.e. the Third Reich's rapidly strengthened position vis-à-vis its southern partner. Relations between the two countries and their institutions changed significantly.

It should be emphasised that not all of the problems and issues highlighted in this work's foreword were adequately explained. It seems that the growing tension between the two regimes was too briefly analysed, which indicates that Fehllhaber was sometimes more interested in theoretical models than factual findings based on the source material. Moreover, functionaries in both regimes who worked to establish and maintain bilateral contacts by no

means succeeded in strengthening their internal political position, at least not in the long run. Thus, one of this work's main protagonists, Renato Ricci, was unable to oppose the ambitions of the stronger secretary of the fascist party [Partito Nazionale Fascista], Achille Starace, whom Mussolini chose in September 1937 to lead the youth organisation Opera Nazionale Balilla; all of this took place against the backdrop of the very good relationship between Schirach and Ricci. In this respect, Fehllhaber's brilliant re-interpretation cannot explain Starace's victory.

In other respects, the author also reflects too little on the limits of his interpretations and the possibilities of applying them to other, less obvious cases. For example, he does not consider essential interest groups in both regimes, such as high-ranking military officers, cultural activists and entrepreneurs, nor does he consider the effects of bilateral visits by the two leaders on social life in the Third Reich and fascist Italy. He basically marginalises cooperation between the two regimes to resolve the so-called Jewish question. It seems that in future research, scholars will have to take into greater account the ideological affinities and ambitions of other interest groups within the government.

To sum up, as regards the cooperation of the two fascist regimes, Fehllhaber drew attention to an important factor that has so far been neglected in historiography, one that is often even downplayed. The great strength of his work is the strictly analytical link between domestic and foreign policy; the author skilfully combined highly theoretical self-awareness with extensive reading in the subject and knowledge of the source material. This book can give new impetus not only to the historiography of German-Italian bilateral relations but also – and perhaps above all – to research on multilateral transnational relations between fascist movements and regimes.

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Izabela Wagner, *Bauman: A Biography*, Cambridge, 2020, Polity Press, 500 pp., bibliog., appendix

Zygmunt Bauman was one of the most prominent scholars from the socialist bloc who made a career in 'Western' academia. More importantly, upon being forced to leave a socialist country, Bauman's experience was in contrast to that of many of his colleagues as he joined the ranks of left-wing academics instead of becoming a cruel critic of Marxism and socialism as a political programme. On the one hand, this circumstance deprived him of the glory of becoming a national hero in the anti-communist movements, which brought about the downfall of the socialist bloc at the end of the twentieth century. On the other hand, this made him a thinker who proposed a form of political

and sociological theory that was more suitable to the agenda of the 'Western' humanities and social sciences in the post-1968 era. These characteristics of Bauman's biography make the publication of his biography written in English a significant event in the intellectual life of the reading public. The fact that this biography was written by sociologist Izabela Wagner, who knows from the inside very different European academic traditions and possesses the language skills required for tracing the winding paths of Bauman's biography, makes the reader expect a fascinating story about an extraordinary person.

The introduction to the book – which begins with a description of Bauman's lecture given in Wrocław in 2013, which was accompanied by right-wing demonstrations against his presence in Poland – shows that, from Wagner's perspective, the story told in her book has significant relevance to the analysis of the current political developments. Due to this, Bauman's biography repeatedly refers to issues that have not lost their importance in the early twenty-first century.

Bauman was born into a Jewish family in Poznań, a city with a relatively small percentage of the Jewish population and a stronghold of the Polish nationalist movement. Thus the issue of antisemitism, which will be the *leitmotif* of Wagner's book, assumes its central role already in the description of Bauman's childhood. According to Wagner, the factors that shaped Bauman's childhood included multilingualism, a classical music education, and a striving towards excellence in educational and cultural issues, discrimination, intentional underestimation of his school scores, and fear of being beaten for no reason. At the same time, the fact that most of after-school activities were organised by the Catholic Church for Polish – or at least Catholic – children caused Bauman to spend most of his free time reading books in libraries (p. 24). This early interest in reading played, according to Wagner, an important role in the formation of Bauman's cultural preferences.

Meanwhile, the creation of a 'real' community that would help Bauman get a sense of 'belonging' was also an important factor which, according to the author, determined Bauman's early experiences. The participation of Bauman's father in the Zionist movement made the youth organisation *Hashomer Hatzair* (The Young Guard) a space for Bauman's extracurricular activity. Based on later memoirs, Wagner repeatedly emphasises that the engagement with the Zionist youth movement was, for Bauman, above all, an opportunity to become an equal member of society. It was not Zionism but the ideas of equality that attracted Bauman to the *Hashomer Hatzair* and became an important element in forming his political sympathies. Due to this, his engagement with the community of young Zionists became, according to the author, the key factor that turned young Bauman to socialism (p. 36). Thus, the exclusion from the 'normal' social life due to his Jewish origin and the non-recognition of his Polish identity, which he strove for through his literary and intellectual experiences, were the factors that influenced the childhood years of Bauman,

who could find only limited satisfaction for his need for 'belonging' in the socialist ideas of the youth Zionist movement.

The beginning of the Second World War changed Bauman's world and started the story of his travel experiences. As residents of the Western regions of Poland, Bauman's family was among the first to face the onslaught of incoming Nazi troops and the introduction of discriminatory regulations against the Jewish population. The Baumans commenced their forced journey to the East. It was a journey that, in many respects, determined the milieu in which Bauman would spend his formative years. After lengthy negotiations with the representatives of the Nazi and Soviet administrations established in the Polish Republic's former territory, Bauman's family was allowed to enter the territory occupied by the Red Army. Thus, as Wagner writes, Bauman "found [his] Zion in Molodeczno", a small town not far from the Western border of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. There Bauman faced very new realities. Firstly, he became a schoolboy with equal rights and achieved excellent scores. Secondly, Bauman was perceived as a bearer of Polish culture, a role which he assumed very readily. Additionally, having learned Russian when reading the Soviet propaganda newspaper *Pravda* [The Truth], Bauman became a successful Soviet student who joined the youth communist organisation *Komsomol* (p. 53). Thus, according to Wagner, the escape to Soviet territory helped Bauman implement his childhood striving for excellence in school subjects and satisfy his feeling of 'belonging' within a communist youth organisation.

Nevertheless, the beginning of the war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union reminded Bauman again of his 'otherness'. Bauman and his family fled to the depths of Soviet Russia and, after some experiences with a *kolkhoz* (collective farm) life, he was enrolled at the University of Gorki (currently Nizhny Novgorod) to study physics. However, Bauman's foreign citizenship broke the idyllic picture of 'belonging'. The fact that foreigners were forbidden to live in big cities such as Gorki made the continuation of his studies at the university impossible. This circumstance forced Bauman to spend a significant period of the war time in the small urban town of Vakhtan, which according to Wagner, possessed a good library with Russian and Soviet literature. In pauses between logging wood, Bauman improved both his cultural level and language skills in Russian by reading books from this library. It was in Vakhtan that Bauman learned about the creation of the Union of Polish Patriots, an organisation that was aimed at implementing Stalin's designs regarding the post-war fate of Poland. Inspired by this project, Bauman decided to join the 'Polish Soviet' project, which was in dire need of persons with his background. After several years in Moscow militia (p. 75), Bauman was allowed to show his propaganda talents in the Polish 1st Tadeusz Kościuszko Infantry Division, which was to become a Soviet laboratory for creating a Soviet 'Polishness'. There Bauman gave lectures on political issues and

also taught soldiers Polish literature and culture. According to Wagner, in this way, Bauman gained his first experience as a communist propagandist whose Polish identity and knowledge of cultural and historical issues was required and encouraged.

Bauman's engagement with the 'Polish Soviet project' was not reduced to participation in the propaganda campaign to promote the regime established in Poland after the war. From the perspective of the current criticism against Bauman from the right-wing camp (the fact the author never forgets), Bauman's service in the Internal Security Corps (which was supposed to fight 'the internal enemies' in the Polish territory liberated from the Nazi occupation) represents a much bigger argument regarding his possible participation in the 'crimes of communists'. Therefore, it is crucial for Wagner to point out that "there is nothing in the available documents that indicates Zygmunt Bauman was a communist criminal" (p. 132). Additionally, after several years of his service for the security services, Bauman decided to start an academic career. In fact, he started his philosophical and sociological studies while still being a military officer. The Institute for the Formation of Academic Cadres, headed by the Marxist philosopher Adam Schaff, became an institution that provided a platform for the transition from the role of an army officer to the role of a "fighter on the ideological front". According to Wagner, Bauman was a diligent student and an active participant in the life of the Polish United Workers' Party [PZPR]. When required, Bauman disowned his father for his 'Zionist-attitude' (p. 167) and became an active propagator of the official line in science and scholarship (p. 178).

In commencing his academic experiences, Bauman learned about the key actors of Polish academic life of the time, some of whom significantly influenced his intellectual development. The author emphasises that the Marxist sociologist Julian Hochfeld, with his research programme based on 'Open Marxism', played a special role in Bauman's academic formation (pp. 179–83). Another significant figure of the Polish intellectual landscape whose role is especially important for Wagner's book was Leszek Kołakowski (pp. 174–6). If Hochfeld became not only a teacher but also Bauman's lifelong friend (until Hochfeld's death in 1962), the changes in the relationship between Bauman and Kołakowski, and the differences in their life strategies serve, in Wagner's narration, as a marker of the peculiarity of Bauman's life path. In any case, in the 'socialist period' of their activities, both Kołakowski and Bauman shared the fate of a Marxist scholar. They were recognised and established by the state and strove to improve the methodological aspects of the Polish intellectual agenda using the opportunities available to them in post-war Polish academia.

The first crisis of the socialist system in 1956 became, on the one hand, the first act of Bauman's public disagreement with the dominant ideology and, on the other hand, opened new opportunities for discovering the academic realities



of 'the West'. Having defended his doctoral thesis, Bauman became (in 1957) a visiting scholar at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Having received excellent references ('despite his rigid Marxist background' as it was formulated in the report of his mentor, the political scientist Robert McKenzie, p. 212), Bauman returned to Poland and made a typical career for a socialist academic there. The key 'atypical' feature of Bauman's academic track was, according to Wagner, the unbelievable speed with which he passed the required steps on his path to professorship. Having finished a habilitation thesis in three years after completing his PhD, Bauman was soon promoted to the rank of 'extraordinary professor' [*profesor nadzwyczajny*]. On the one hand, Wagner repeatedly emphasises that not all research projects invented by Bauman (for example, his study on the party elites and communist youth, p. 215) could be carried out in socialist Poland. On the other, the reader can see that Bauman enjoyed not only all the academic privileges available in the Polish state but also almost freely participated in conferences and gave talks at seminars, both within the socialist bloc and in the 'capitalist' countries. According to the author, Bauman corresponded with his colleagues in English, French, German and Russian (p. 221), which illustrates his striving to internationalise his research programme.

As is well known, the key year in Bauman's personal and academic life was 1968. The rise of antisemitism among the Polish security services attracted the attention of secret police to Bauman who became, for them, once again a Jew but not a Pole. Additionally, the fact that the relatives of Bauman's family lived in Israel made him a potential target of the antisemitic campaign of 1968. However, the crucial action that determined Bauman's fate was his support of the student demonstrations, which provoked a new crisis of the socialist system in Poland. Bauman signed (together with other professors) the letters of support for the arrested and expelled students. As a result, Bauman (together with philosopher Leszek Kołakowski and other professors) was sacked from the university, forbidden to teach, and accused of organising student demonstrations (p. 275). Wagner emphasises that Bauman was one of the most popular professors and the students were ready to defend him against the party leadership, but the regime would not back down. This dismissal was not the only problem for Bauman's family, as his wife, Janina, also lost her job due to her Jewish origin. Against the backdrop of the political developments in the Polish state, the Baumans were allowed (or forced) to leave the country. Having gone through the humiliating procedure of renouncing their citizenship, Bauman's family started their journey to a new life.

Wagner highlights that, having gained a good reputation in 'the West', Bauman had many invitations from various European universities. Nevertheless, the 'feeling of duty' towards the country which made their emigration possible (p. 288) brought them to Israel. There Bauman received his first full professorship and learned Hebrew at a level that enabled him to give lectures



in this language (p. 294). However, there were two factors that, according to Wagner, complicated Bauman's further academic development in Israel. Firstly, Marxist theory, which was the field of Bauman's specialisation, did not find a receptive response in Israeli academia (p. 298). Secondly, Bauman did not wish to adopt the Israeli version of nationalism (p. 306). These factors determined the most crucial change in Bauman's career – he decided to accept the invitation of the University of Leeds. Having received Leszek Kołakowski's recommendations regarding buying a house (Kołakowski had already settled in Oxford, p. 314), the Baumans moved to the United Kingdom. Wagner emphasises that the British academic context was not unproblematic for Bauman and required a new adaptation. On the one hand, Bauman was shocked by the closed character of the British social sciences, which were not significantly affected by the French and German sociological ideas which made up the core of his academic background (p. 323, 324). On the other hand, Bauman was pleasantly surprised by the high social status of British sociologists compared to their German and French colleagues (p. 319). In any case, the adaptation to the British academic realities and the commencement of his publishing career in English brought Bauman the fame which made his name recognisable to scholars on all continents.

If the central part of Wagner's book represents a narration based on the personal experiences of Bauman and his family, in the final two chapters, she offers the reader an analytical perspective on Bauman's academic work. In the chapter titled 'An Intellectual at Work', Wagner analyses the working conditions in which Bauman wrote his books and essays. Bauman's enormous productivity is examined from the perspective of his lifestyle. According to Wagner, Bauman would wake up about 4 a.m. and start writing when everyone else was still sleeping (p. 340). Thus, the reader sees Bauman as a scholar who worked a lot and was very demanding of both himself and his colleagues (p. 346). Additionally, according to Wagner, Bauman worked very quickly by himself, but absolutely lacked teamwork skills (p. 345). A special subchapter of Wagner's book is devoted to Zygmunt Bauman's wife Janina's role in her husband's academic activity. Not only did she contribute a massive amount of editorial work and translations, but Janina's personal writings also influenced Zygmunt Bauman's ideas. Thus Wagner demonstrates that without Janina's book on her experiences in the Warsaw ghetto (*Winter in the Morning: a Young Girl's Life in the Warsaw Ghetto and Beyond*, 1986), Zygmunt Bauman (who had not had such experiences) would not have written his most prominent book *Modernity and the Holocaust* (p. 349). Wagner discusses another important issue: the publishing house which made Bauman's international fame possible. According to the author, Polity Press, which had initially been a small publishing house, was able to implement a 'cultural translation' (p. 354) of Bauman's ideas into a language that made his theories accessible for the left-wing reading public, which soon accepted Bauman as one of their

classics. This status led, among other things, to difficulties not only with Bauman's reputation among Polish intellectuals but also to the conflict with Kołakowski, who had become one of the key critics of Marxism and was much more involved in Polish 'national issues' (p. 360).

This conflict between Bauman's 'national' and 'global' roles is crucial in the last chapter, entitled 'Global Thinker'. Wagner repeatedly emphasises Bauman's sentiments towards Poland and Polish culture. The Baumans' house was full of Polish literature; they preferred Polish cuisine and, during parties, song Polish songs. Thus, according to Wagner, 'Zygmunt Bauman was in love with Poland', but it was an 'unrequited love' (p. 368). Bauman's Jewish origin, his refusal to assume the role of a critic of Marxism, as well as the lack of interest in the life of the diaspora, made Bauman 'foreign' for the Polish public. This is one of the key arguments in Wagner's book: Bauman was not and, more importantly, is not 'welcomed' in Poland. Thus, the reference to the current time (i.e. the year 2013) with which Wagner began the book becomes the central issue in the final sections of her Bauman biography. The revival of the antisemitic discourse, the ideas of a 'POLexit', the burning of Bauman's photo during demonstrations, and the attack on Bauman in a Warsaw airport (p. 393, 394) are, for Wagner, links in a chain. Bauman was especially honoured in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and South America (countries and regions in which Marxist ideas enjoyed particular popularity, p. 376); he was welcomed by Pope Francis (Bergoglio), who was happy to speak to him (p. 395, 396); but was rejected in his native land. In the 'appendix' to the book, Wagner clarifies that this 'injustice' in the Polish right-wing discourse towards Bauman became the primary motivation for writing this biography. Interestingly, Wagner remarks that, being educated in France, she initially knew Bauman only as the husband of Janina Bauman, the author of memoirs about the Warsaw Ghetto (p. 403). Nevertheless, the first Bauman lecture that Wagner heard in Poland sparked the idea to write the book currently accessible to the reading public. "This book", writes Wagner in the last page of Bauman's biography, "describes the significant people in Bauman's life, and his activity and choices as a scholar and observer of society who wished to create a better world" (p. 409).

Indeed, Wagner's book tells the reader a very personal story. The interviews that Wagner had conducted before Bauman's death in 2017 represent unique sources that would not appear if she had not decided to write this book and make the reader 'listen' to Bauman himself telling his life story. Moreover, the fact that the author was able to speak not only to Bauman himself but also to the members of his family helps the reader see Bauman both as a scholar or political figure and as a father, husband, and friend. Thanks to Wagner's style of narration, the reader can perceive the enthusiasm of Bauman's former students, above all the sociologist Keith Tester (who unfortunately died before the book was published and to whom Wagner dedicates her book),

who willingly assisted the author in writing the biography of their teacher. Of course, the interviews are not the only source for Wagner's book. When working on Bauman's biography, Wagner examined many archival materials and found, among other things, the diaries of Bauman's wife Janina, which had been confiscated before the family left Poland (p. 308) and were unavailable even to the Baumans themselves. In addition to this inspiring discovery, Wagner read the documents of the security services on the case of Zygmunt Bauman (p. 228–57), which can help us to understand the changes in Bauman's status in post-war Poland from the perspective of the secret police. In this way Wagner's approach to the analysis of the archival material does not contradict her guiding idea – to present a very personal perspective on the life of Bauman, who is unfairly stigmatised in his native country as a communist criminal. Additionally, the photos selected by Wagner to accompany her book help the reader to 'share' with Bauman some of the happy and miserable moments in his life.

Describing the role of Polity Press in Bauman's success, Wagner remarks that the editors improved the texts written by Bauman stylistically, which made his books and essays so clear and easily readable (p. 352–4). I confess that I enjoyed reading Wagner's book, published by the same publisher. The text is written in simple and accessible language. Additionally, Wagner clarifies all the necessary contextual issues and makes the text understandable for readers without a deep knowledge of Polish history.

At the same time, it should be acknowledged that several mistakes on the part of the technical editors may cause some confusion for the reader. The major criticism in this respect concerns the system of bibliographical references in several chapters which cover Bauman's formative years. The most important source – which is the cornerstone of the narration in these chapters – is (by all appearances) Bauman's memoirs. The reader finds the bibliographical reference in the book to 'Bauman 1986/7' (see, e.g. pp. 8, 14–17, 19–22, etc.). However, there is no Bauman's work published in 1986/7 in the 'Bibliography'. It is even more confusing that the only book with this publication date is Janina Bauman's memoirs on her younger years (p. 479). Taking into account the fact that this reference is used very often and provides, as a rule, first-person narratives/statements (in which the gender of the speaker can hardly be identified in English), this mistake can create some serious difficulties for a reader who wished to check a quotation in the 'Bibliography'. Of course, this is obviously just a typo: all references to Janina's publications are marked as 'J. Bauman'; and in the periods discussed in the quotations with the 'Bauman, 1986/7' reference, Zygmunt and Janina did not know each other. However, these and other minor editorial issues (for example, the reference 'Bauman, 199?:10' p. 106) can cause some difficulties for those who would like not only to enjoy reading an interesting story but also to use Wagner's book in their academic work. For example,

I was extremely intrigued by the fact that Adam Schaff characterised Zygmunt Bauman as ‘this Stalinist’ in one of his letters (in 1982) to the historian Andrzej Walicki (p. 439). Unfortunately, no bibliographical/archival reference could help pinpoint this letter’s identification, which perfectly characterises Schaff’s character. Additionally, the reader can be confused by some spelling/translation issues, like the case of *Związek Patriotów Polskich*, which in some fragments is translated as “The Union of Polish Patriots” (p. 71), while, in others, as “The Association of Polish Patriots” (p. 69).

There is another aspect of Wagner’s narration that is particularly noteworthy. There is no question that Bauman’s Jewish origin became a factor that played an essential role in his life. Bauman did not ‘belong’ to the ‘national’ community in the eyes of both the security services and the right-wing Catholic groups due to his Jewish origin. However, the author’s efforts to make this argument coherent led to some minor inaccuracies. Thus, in comparing the perceptions of the figures of Bauman and Kołakowski in post-socialist Poland, Wagner writes that Kołakowski “was [unlike Bauman] not a Polish Jew, originating instead from a Catholic family, and he had returned to his ancestral religion” (p. 370). It is difficult to say that Kołakowski’s family was Catholic: his father was a socialist, and it is very likely that Kołakowski had not even been baptised. Additionally, he never called himself a Catholic, even after changing his Marxist views and becoming a philosopher of religion. However, this minor reservation does not contradict the more general argument, which is important for Wagner. For the academic work of Bauman, ‘national issues’ did not play a significant role since he was, first of all, a ‘global thinker’. Additionally, another factor determined the difference in the perceptions of the legacy of Bauman and other Polish émigré scholars like Kołakowski. In most European countries that did not find themselves in the socialist bloc after the Second World War, the left-wing ideologies were becoming more and more popular.

Most importantly, especially after 1968, ‘Western’ academia became more and more interested in non-totalitarian versions of Marxism, which led to an increase in the audience of persons interested in Marxist scholars. The ‘national ideologies’ that played a key role in the defeat of the socialist bloc were not so relevant for the ‘Western’ public, which was (is) looking for answers to social inequality in the works of the left-wing thinkers. Even though this argument is, in fact, present in Wagner’s book, a greater emphasis on this global perspective in the activities of the ‘global thinker’ would perhaps help the author to make her central arguments more understandable and palpable to the ‘Western’ reader of the book, which sometimes focuses more attention to the issue of the ‘injustice’ of Bauman’s native country’s attitude towards him than to his work as a Marxist scholar.

Despite these somewhat numerous minor reservations, I think it is evident that the biography of Zygmunt Bauman written by Izabela Wagner

is a successful and welcome project. Wagner's Bauman is a very coherent person who is represented retrospectively against the backdrop of the twentieth century. The reader will not find in the book a detailed analysis of the academic and journalist texts written by Bauman in different periods of his public activity. Thus, it is difficult to trace the changes in Bauman's ideas throughout his life. However, all these issues can be examined in further publications on the legacy of Zygmunt Bauman. Wagner has written a book that could not be written later. This personal perspective on Bauman's life will remain in historiography thanks to her research. Even if some other publications with a more detailed analysis of Bauman's ideas soon appear, I would highly recommend a reader to start exploring Bauman's legacy with the book written by Izabela Wagner. Without the context provided by Wagner, Bauman – a Pole of Jewish origin, theorist of modernity, and global thinker – cannot be adequately understood.

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Anna Sosnowska, *Explaining Economic Backwardness. Post-1945 Polish Historians on Eastern Europe*, Budapest–New York, 2019, CEU Press, 372 pp., bibliog., name and subject indices

In English-language literature, a book on Polish historiography appears quite seldom, even rarely. Therefore, it is a good thing that Anna Sosnowska's monograph, published in Polish in 2004, has been translated and published by the Central European University Press.

The author's chosen topic is important for several reasons. First, it is part of the international debate that has been going on for several decades over the specificity of Eastern Europe, over the region's (to some extent) separate developmental path and the various resulting consequences. Second, it provides the opportunity for an intriguing analysis of the polyphony of Polish historians, which has so far been too muffled in the international arena, and which is often at odds with the more or less stereotypical notions that the West entertains about Eastern Europe. This is, of course, a broader problem, to which I am merely pointing here, one that involves the causes behind the presence/absence in the global scientific discourse of the humanities produced in the (half) periphery.<sup>1</sup> This presence/absence happened although a relatively large number of the works whose concepts are analysed in Sosnowska's

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<sup>1</sup> For more, see Krzysztof Abriszewski, Adam F. Kola, and Jacek Kowalewski (eds), *Humanistyka (pół)peryferii* (Olsztyn, 2016). In an essay by Kola, Marian Małowist and his concepts are referred to as a case study.

book were translated into world languages. Third, this Warsaw sociologist's considerations rehabilitate, to some extent, the historiography of the Polish People's Republic; they show that in the face of ideological pressure and official censorship, Polish scholars actively participated in international debate and made original contributions toward explanations for what is identified in Sosnowska's title as Eastern Europe's 'backwardness'.

It is not easy to precisely classify Anna Sosnowska's work. She herself locates it within the tradition of historical sociology, which first took shape mainly in the 1960s. Sosnowska pointed to two competing formulas for practising historical sociology, the first is closer to history than to sociology; one could even say it is part of social history. At the centre of her interests is a specific fragment of past reality, i.e. the history of classes, social estates and strata, workplaces, families and everyday life. The second is closely related to sociology. Citing the opinion of Ewa Morawska, Sosnowska writes that it consists in the use of "comparative methods of sociological analysis" and "the study of 'big structures' and long processes" of social transformation (p. 23). This second trend is characterised by great questions about "the origin of nation-states, capitalism, liberal democracy, and global inequality" (*ibid.*). As can be concluded based on her entire work, Sosnowska is much closer to the latter perspective. However, her study could also be classified as intellectual history or a history of ideas. To some extent, it is also a work that falls within the spectrum of what in the literature is sometimes called global history.

However, what makes Sosnowska's work original is not the disciplinary divisions that are clearly and consciously crossed but a certain methodological credo. She herself describes it as follows:

Studies that I would like to categorize as belonging to historical sociology share the following features: 1. A tendency to understand history in terms of processes and cumulative change, however slow; 2. Interest in mass phenomena; 3. A tendency to organize historical material in the form of a model ... [p. 25].

The fundamental problem addressed here, indicated even in the book's title, is the phenomenon of economic backwardness as seen in Eastern Europe. The author is interested in examining the scope of Eastern European economic development, the causes and dynamics of the region's backwardness, together with its course. In this regard, she writes: "The purpose of my analysis is to identify those elements of the debate that belong to the historical sociology of backwardness, particularly of Eastern Europe" (p. 1).

The work's protagonists are post-war and (one might say) eminent Polish scholars and their economic and social studies on the history of Eastern Europe from the end of the Middle Ages through the nineteenth century. Among this group of scholars, Sosnowska included Witold Kula, Marian Małowist, Jerzy



Topolski and Andrzej Wyczański. Sometimes the pages of her monograph contain statements made by their students, for example, Jerzy Jedlicki, Jacek Kochanowicz, Antoni Mączak and Maria Bogucka.

The chronological framework of the book covers the years 1947–94. The book's starting point is Kula's habilitation thesis entitled *Przywilej społeczny a postęp gospodarczy*, and it ends with Topolski's *Polska w czasach nowożytnych. Od środkowoeuropejskiej potęgi do utraty niepodległości (1505–1795)*. As would be expected, Sosnowska goes beyond these limits in several places, referring either to works from the interwar period or to texts from the end of the 1990s.

The book's structure is problematic. It consists of an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion, followed by a bibliography and name and subject indices.

The first chapter is introductory. Its main goal is to outline the background and international context of the debate. In it, Sosnowska discussed Immanuel Wallerstein and his concepts along with the related considerations of Hungarian scholars Iván Berend and György Ránki, the vision of Fernand Braudel (who, like Wallerstein, referred to the findings of Marian Małowist, among others), remarks by Robert Brenner and Perry Anderson, and finally Jenő Szűcs and his idea of a Third Europe.

The next chapter focuses on the presentation of the work's above-mentioned main characters. Here, Sosnowska outlined, in a rather encyclopedic way, the intellectual biographies of Polish historians and their associated contexts and dilemmas. The author defines them all as 'sociologising historians', which remains a debatable matter, especially – I believe – in the case of Jerzy Topolski.

The foundation of the next chapter, entitled 'Eastern Europe Compared to Other Regions: The Historical Geography of Development', is based on considerations referring to geographical perceptions of the region, its place in a divided Europe, and finally, the possible applicability of specific models to explain the eponymous economic backwardness. In subsequent chapters, the author preceded her main comments with a short introduction presenting the main arguments in the dispute over how to define Eastern Europe geographically. She demonstrated the similarities and differences between visions of Slavic Europe, Eastern Europe, Central and Eastern Europe and Central Europe that were already rooted in the interwar period. Such a demonstration is important because those visions constituted an important, though not always directly expressed, point of reference for post-war concepts put forward by Polish historians.

Considering the potential applicability of the models analysed by Sosnowska, one can detect the broadest and most universal dimension in the scheme put forward by Małowist. According to Sosnowska, the decisive influence in this regard was the Polish historian's broad interests, ranging from research



on European trade (his famous 1947 work on the Genoese colony of Kaffa in Crimea), through studies on East-West economic relations, to works on the Portuguese Empire and Asian countries. Małowist's concept also arose out of his declared opposition to the practice of history from the perspective of national historiography alone. Sosnowska rightly emphasised how the Warsaw historian's approach resembles the one taken by the omnipotent representative of the second generation of the French *Annales* School – Fernand Braudel. Here is a characteristic passage:

The most striking feature of Małowist's vision was that he categorized economic entities in terms of the geographically defined economic area to which they belonged. This categorization was implicit and was not accompanied by a methodological commentary, but it remains very clear. Similarly to Braudel, for Małowist an economic area had to have some sort of objective creative force that was the outcome of its natural qualities – geography, climate, demography. This objective potential was then transformed (e.g., maximized or minimized) by history [p. 91].

The next part of this text, which Sosnowska does not cite, eloquently reflects the significant distance that separated the Polish historian from his French colleague. She wrote:

The most important role of this process was played by the dominant social classes within the area in question. Małowist's world was divided into Europe – dynamic and prosperous thanks to its free and profit-hungry bourgeoisie – and the rest of the world, exploited by Europe, fragmented into political entities, and usually governed by self-serving and snobbish elite. It was thus a vision clearly inspired by Marxism [I would add, unequivocally inspired by Marxism, or it can even be considered Marxist – RS], one characterized by antagonistic forces in which the wealth and development of one group was conditional upon the impoverishment of another [p. 91].

Wyczański's approach found itself on the other extreme, not only because it was chronologically limited and related primarily to the sixteenth-century Commonwealth, but also because Wyczański repeatedly emphasised his reluctance to make far-reaching generalisations and did not try to apply his remarks to the broader context – Eastern Europe. In this sense, I would argue that Wyczański largely remained, in conditions dominant under the People's Republic of Poland, a defender of the thesis that the Polish historical process is specific and unique, not only in the economic dimension.

Chapters four and five are the most analytical. The first of these two is devoted to interpreting models of backwardness in works by historians of interest to the author. The second is focused on the visions of Polish society that emerge from these models. Through an examination of the 'beneficiaries'

and the ‘victims’ of economic change, this chapter serves as an interesting *pendant* to contemporary discussions about the folk vision of Polish history evoked by, among others, Adam Leszczyński.<sup>2</sup>

It is impossible to summarise the author’s arguments here; let me just mention that she distinguishes four points which in a sense compete with one another, but which also share certain things in common: Małowist’s model, referred to as ‘colonial’; Wyczański’s concept defined as a model of catching up with Europe; Topolski’s vision, which she calls the model of ‘unfortunate coincidence of historical circumstances’; and Kula’s model of ‘hybrid development’. Incidentally, we might add that Małowist’s model is an imitation model to the greatest extent, in contrast to Wyczański’s concept, highlighting the originality of socio-economic solutions practised in the Commonwealth.

Such a book structure is undoubtedly clear and thoughtful. It successfully combines three perspectives: a historical perspective explaining, in terms of causes, the phenomenon of backwardness itself; a sociological perspective focusing on interpreting the mechanisms of change that took place in European economic development at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of modern times; and – the least important from Sosnowska’s perspective – a biographical view that emerges from the experiences of a generation of historians.

Like every interesting and original work, Sosnowska’s monograph encourages us to formulate some controversial comments.

I am not entirely convinced by the use in this book of the category ‘Eastern Europe’. The author emphasises that this is not a random choice, realising that she is also not ‘innocent’ (p. 11). She argues that she made this choice for two reasons: the concept of ‘Eastern Europe’ is the most popular, and it refers to “post-communist Europe; the Europe that recently [sic!] joined the European Union or that still remains outside it” (p. 11). There are two reasons for my doubts. First, Sosnowska seems to be forgetting that the category ‘Eastern Europe’ is saturated with evaluative context. During the Cold War, the term was commonly used to refer to countries that lacked sovereignty, and the West saw ‘Eastern Europe’ sometimes even as a homogeneous annexe to the Soviet Union. Fortunately, these times have passed. In 1994, the State Department officially deleted from its vocabulary the concept ‘Eastern Europe’, which until then had been a synonym for countries under Soviet domination; it was replaced with ‘Central Europe’. In France, the category ‘Eastern Europe’, identified with the Russian sphere of influence, was also abandoned and replaced with *l’Europe Centrale* (Central Europe) or *l’Europe*

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<sup>2</sup> Adam Leszczyński, *Ludowa historia Polski. Historia wyzysku i oporu. Mitologia panowania* (Warszawa, 2020). Magdalena Nowicka-Franczak has written in an interesting way about other works in this current; see her ‘Intelektualiści harczą wokół ludu’, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 1–2 (2021).

*Centre-Est* (Central and Eastern Europe). What is understood by these terms remains exceptionally broad and most often covers the area from Finland to Greece, including Belarus and Ukraine. Second, when browsing through the most recent bibliographies of academic works devoted to the area of interest to me, one can get the impression (Sosnowska mentions this) that such terms as 'Central Europe' or 'Central and Eastern Europe' have clearly superseded the term 'Eastern Europe'. Personally, I would favour using 'Central and Eastern Europe' as the most voluminous in geographical terms and as one that is relatively neutral.

Reading the work, one gets the impression that Sosnowska is too one-sided and selective about the Marxist heritage present in her considerations – or, more precisely, about historical materialism in Polish historiography. This can be seen both in this work's biographical treatment of its protagonists and the interpretative examination of their views. Also, it concerns that she omitted mention of Małowist and Kula's involvement in the Stalinisation of Polish historiography, which takes nothing away from their later work to liberate the Polish community of historians from the embrace of dogmatic Marxism-Leninism. It is also difficult to agree with the author's decision to include both of those historians on her list of revisionists (p. 89). Sosnowska views Marxism primarily from a methodological perspective and thus clearly marginalises its ideological layer. Hence, she devotes relatively little space in her deliberations to the theory of socioeconomic formations, which, until 1989, marked the symbolic boundaries between the 'possible' and 'impossible' in thinking about the past, not only Poland's past but also Europe's.

It is a pity that the English version of this work does not include an updated bibliography. Since the publication of the Polish version (2004), Polish historiography (I omit other disciplines here; otherwise the below list would be significantly extended) has been enriched by a dozen or so important monographs, which should have been noted in this book's 2019 English edition. I am thinking here of a three-volume publication devoted to Oskar Halecki entitled *Oskar Halecki i jego wizja Europy*, vols 1–3, ed. by Małgorzata Dąbrowska (2012–14); Maciej Górny's *Przed wszystkim ma być naród. Marksistowskie historiografie w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej* (2007; published also in English as *The Nation Should Come First: Marxism and Historiography in East Central Europe*, 2013); Maciej Górny's 'Historical Writing in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary', in Axel Schneider, Daniel Woolf (eds), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, v (2011); Marcin Kula, *Mimo wszystko bliżej Paryża niż Moskwy. Książka o Francji, PRL i o nas, historykach* (2010); Marcin Kula, Jerzy Jedlicki, *historyk nietypowy* (2018); Wojciech Piasek, *Antropologizowanie historii. Studium metodologiczne twórczości Witolda Kuli* (2004); Patryk Pleskot, *Intelektualni sąsiedzi. Kontakty historyków polskich ze środowiskiem "Annales" 1945–1989* (2010); Tadeusz P. Rutkowski, *Nauki historyczne w Polsce 1944–1970. Zagadnienia polityczne i organizacyjne* (2007);

Tomasz Siewierski, *Marian Małowist i krąg jego uczniów. Z dziejów historiografii gospodarczej* (2016); the collective work by Krzysztof Abriszewski, Adam F. Kola, and Jacek Kowalewski (eds), *Humanistyka (pół)peryferii* (2016) has already been mentioned in a footnote. I would also like to mention my own three monographs: *Historiografia PRL. Ani dobra, ani piękna... ale skomplikowana. Studia i szkice* (2007); *Historycy polscy wobec wyzwań XX wieku* (2014); and *Klio za Wielką wodą. Historycy polscy w Stanach Zjednoczonych po 1945* (2017).

For many years, the two sciences about the man – sociology and history – remained alien to each other, separated by different views of the past, different intellectual traditions and different methodologies. Today, these differences are much less visible, though this does not mean they have completely blurred. Both disciplines understand the category of time slightly differently. While historians naturally tend to view things through a diachrony to grasp the causes and effects of successive events, sociologists view things through synchronicity, i.e. the coexistence of phenomena in time and the study of their mutual dependencies. While historians were long (and some still are) interested rather in individual events or, in a sense, exceptional events, sociologists are different; their historical material is made up of repetitive events, typical events, those that can be summarised in certain regularities. Further consequences follow from this difference. While historians prefer to study the individual and individuality, sociologists are inclined to study the group, the collective. Finally, and importantly, the two disciplines understand the relationship between the subject of research and the present in a different way. Historians like to declaratively emphasise, as a rule, that they are interested in the past as such; they treat it as a closed area, and they oppose tendencies aimed at updating history in one way or another. Sociologists, in turn, perceive the past in its integral relation with the present (which can be seen in the work under review here); they emphasise the historical roots of the current state, its anchoring in the past.

Sosnowska's work demonstrates that in academic practice, in the analysis of a specific problem, these differences often disappear or become entirely marginal. In this sense, her book serves, to some extent, not only as a manifesto about the need for cooperation between history and sociology but also as instructive (certainly for me) evidence that a marriage of sociology with history can bring interesting and inspiring results.

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Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz, Piotr Perkowski, Małgorzata Fidelis, and Barbara Klich-Kluczevska, *Kobiety w Polsce 1945–1989: Nowoczesność – równouprawnienie – komunizm* [Women in Poland 1945–1989: Modernity – Equality – Communism], Kraków, 2020, Universitas, 520 pp., bibliog., ill. and list thereof, index of personal names

This volume is the first comprehensive guide to the history of women in state-socialist Poland. Co-authored by four renowned specialists in women's and gender history, it offers readers a broad perspective on women's lives, including women's professional work, the household, the family and sexuality, beauty practices, and political engagement. Each chapter is written individually or by two of the authors. As reflected in the title and explained in the introduction, the analysis in the book is shaped by three concepts: equality (or emancipation), modernity, and communism. These three dimensions help to contextualise the changes and evolutions experienced by Polish women in the second half of the twentieth century as part of the broader modernisation processes that were underway in both East and West in the period covered by the study, and the realisation of the communist-driven women's emancipation project. These three categories are also close to the sources: equality, as the authors point out, was a term widely used in the period, the same can be said of 'modern' and 'modernity', while 'communism' is a dominant term in both Polish historiography and popular memory of the period. The authors do, however, problematise these concepts throughout the book. The three-fold perspective is also fruitful to profile diverse actors: the state, journalists, experts, and women in their various societal roles.

The book draws on a rich body of diverse sources: party and state documents, press articles, professional writings (expertise), published and unpublished memoirs, products of popular culture, and oral history interviews. The authors do not prioritise the party and state documents; on the contrary, they give voice primarily to non-official actors. Their sources provide a comprehensive overview of discourses and policies, and reveal how communism was lived by women. The authors profile the gendered discourses that were clearly dominant in a range of spheres such as the family, motherhood, work, and the household, and the changing social norms. They underline the importance of political shifts and point to the year 1956 as a turning point; while it is usually seen as the end date of Stalinism in Poland, the authors suggest that it actually marks the end of the first half of the twentieth century. The Edward Gierek decade (1970–80) marked another significant shift in gender policies, and finally, the last years of communism (the 1980s) ushered in a deep crisis that – the authors argue – made it extremely difficult to pursue the modernisation project. The social and cultural approach adopted

in the book, and the close reading of many different sources also facilitates exploration of heterogeneous discourses within the periods indicated, and the multiple reactions to them by the various social actors.

The book has many strengths. First of all, it is a well-written and compelling synthesis of women's history of the period, which draws on existing literature but also fills in some important gaps and builds on original research. When the authors began working on this book project in 2014, the scholarship on women's and gender history in post-war Poland was still scarce and scattered. Most of the chapters required utterly new research. Fortunately, in recent years, our knowledge on many of the topics has increased significantly, which is visible in the book. While there are still gaps that remain uncovered and stories still untold, the book addresses several new, previously rarely tackled issues.

One of these is the history of girlhood (chapter written by Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz). The author charts an exponential change from the late 1950s, owed both to global modernisation processes and communist ideas. Despite the persistence of conservative notions surrounding young women's sexuality and education, the emergence of youth cultures and leisure, and changes in educational patterns, had a huge impact on everyday life and reshaped women's experiences.

Another topic that the book brings into the spotlight is the history of women in the countryside, which is addressed in many chapters. So far, studies on women in rural areas have been few, and not integrated with the mainstream (urban) women's history of the period, whether in Poland or the broader region. And yet, the communist modernisation project had a rural prong, and peasant women were also actively involved in shaping modernisation themselves, taking advantage of new possibilities and tackling constraints, such as the general underdevelopment of infrastructure.

These two examples point to the importance of the diversity of women's experiences and a need to integrate categories other than gender – such as generation and class – into research. This intersectional approach could have been further developed in the book by paying more attention to differences between working-class women and white-collar and more highly educated women. Indeed, this is an aspect of the discussion that is absent on a wider scale from the scholarship on women's and gender history in the region, and the themes suggested by the books can and should inspire future research.

Another interesting theme that recurs throughout the volume is the question of feminism and feminist ideas. Feminism as a concept does not play a role in the book, but some of the chapters acknowledge the issue. Małgorzata Fidelis refers to some debates on women's paid work as 'feminist', while Piotr Perkowski mentions that the press commented on and made reference to Western feminism. Feminism is one of the questions that require further exploration, whether from the angle of intellectual history or of history of activism, above and beyond state-sponsored organisations.



Besides addressing a few new topics and providing new categories of analysis, the book stands out in terms of its extensive scope and contextualisation within the scholarship on women's history in other state-socialist countries, and for its selection of literature on women in Western Europe. While the bibliography could have been even more wide-ranging and fuller, the authors make it easy for the reader to read the history of women in Poland in the context of the broader history of the region and beyond. Developments such as educational advancement, female/male professions, the increase in the importance of beauty practices, the medicalisation of birth, and access to modern contraception have to be understood and interpreted, the authors argue, in the context of both the socialist state and changing gender regimes in socialist Poland and the broader modernisation process. They make extensive reference to the rise in (socialist) consumption and industrialisation and changes in the role of media and professional expertise as global trends that also affected gendered discourses and women's experiences in Poland. One very interesting comparison with Western European trends is supplied by the chapter on beauty practices (by Małgorzata Fidelis and Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz). This traces similarities and connections with ideals of beauty developed in the post-war period in the West, but also explores the differences (the 'socialist' version of beauty) and women's agency in shaping beauty cultures while faced with shortages, and – last but not least – challenges some persistent stereotypes such as the 'masculinisation' of women's bodies under Stalinism. The chapter historicises and contextualises beauty practices and gender in communist Poland in an interesting way.

What is sometimes missing in the book, though, is a reference to certain historiographical debates. For instance, the framing of protective legislation in state-socialist countries is interpreted not only as a pronatalist biopolitical measure and a form of 'conservatism' that strengthened gender inequalities and essentialism but also as an integral element of the state-socialist women's emancipation project, in which providing long maternity leaves was deemed a positive measure as it helped women to combine work and childcare. Women activists from the League of Women advocated these changes, believing they were improving women's lives. Another debate that could be integrated is the discussion about the progressiveness of socialism in shaping policies and discourses around sexuality; it had different dynamics in each country, but recent research challenges the generalised perception about the 'backwardness' of this side of the iron curtain.

Another striking facet of the book is its authors' attempt to bridge post-war and interwar history and reject the approach prevalent in Polish historiography, which treats the year 1945 as a 'zero year' following the destructive period of war and occupation. In social and cultural history, attention paid to continuities can often produce better explanations of historical developments. Likewise, following increasing trends in the scholarship on socialism and

post-socialism, the authors underline continuities between the late communism and post-1989 periods.

A further strength of the work is the complexity of its approach and the fact that its authors avoid oversimplified arguments and straightforward answers. Each chapter offers a highly nuanced perspective and explains the reasons for both women's emancipation and the constraints they had to face. The volume also gives a perspective on essential changes in gender regimes, but the argumentation is also nuanced. While the authors (especially Małgorzata Fidelis in the chapter about professional work) advance the claim that 'conservative modernity' was the dominant framework after 1956, and that protective legislation and maternalistic rhetoric developed in the Gierek era, they also point to other significant changes that nuance the overall argument suggesting that state socialism in Poland followed an increasingly conservative trend. Piotr Perkowski, for example (in the chapter on women in politics), observes that in the mid-1970s, women activists supported the socialist model of partnership in marriage and the family – with more equal gender relations and greater involvement of men in household duties, while Barbara Klich-Kluczevska stresses that the 1970s brought a more open approach to women's sexuality. These two arguments complicate the interpretation of the Gierek decade as focused on traditional women's roles.

The book draws on both international scholarship on women's and gender history in the region, and traditions of writing social and cultural history rooted in the Polish historiography of communism over recent decades. It combines conceptual frameworks with great attention to everyday life. It opens with a chapter by Małgorzata Fidelis, dedicated to writing women's and gender history, which explains the evolution of women's history in CEE countries. This chapter will be beneficial for Polish readers, who –many scholars included – tend not to be familiar with the women's and gender history perspective and often get lost in the concepts and theoretical frameworks it uses. Herein lies one of the book's strengths: as well as being a very useful guide to women's history in post-war Poland, which I am sure will provide a point of reference for many students and scholars, it is also a guide to gender history 'for beginners'. In the later chapters, the authors show how women's cultural and social history can be approached.

Nevertheless, what may seem striking is that the parts of the first chapter that explain the evolution of the international (English-language) scholarship on the subject do not mention any works by authors based in Polish academia. It gives an impression that there are two separate historiographies: the Polish and the international, and that Polish authors, even if they publish in English, form a different field. While this may simply be a technical omission (it is impossible to refer to all works published in one brief summarising chapter), it may initiate a discussion about local, regional, and international knowledge

production and the way different scholars position themselves in respect of these categories given their particular backgrounds.

The book is a rich, well-organised guide to women's history in post-war Poland. Even if, as the authors themselves recognise, the book falls short of exploring some vital aspects of the subject, such as the influence of Catholicism and the Catholic Church exhaustively, it is nonetheless a comprehensive volume. Building on long years of research and an impressive collection of sources, it provides a broad and nuanced picture of women's experiences and gender history under communism in Poland. Last but not least, it opens up interesting new questions for further research.

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Béla Tomka, *Austerities and Aspirations. A Comparative History of Growth, Consumption, and Quality of Life in East Central Europe since 1945*, New York, 2020, Central European University Press, 456 pp., appendix, notes, bibliog., index

*Austerities and Aspirations* is an excellent compendium of comparative social and economic data on European societies in the second half of the twentieth century, proving a valuable addition to the libraries of all researchers of East-Central European societies and economies.

Béla Tomka takes a comparative look at the social history of three societies of East-Central Europe (ECE): Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia and its successor countries. Comparisons are drawn both between these three societies and, more significantly, between them as convergent entities and Western European countries. Although statistics and trends spanning the entire twentieth century are discussed, the most detailed assessments examine the Cold War and early post-communist decades of the 1990s. The book adopts what the author calls 'a triple approach' to economic development and social change in these ECE countries. To avoid incomplete or biased analysis, Tomka considers not only economic growth but also consumption and quality of life. He investigates trends in economic output measured by GDP, productivity, and employment – indicators widely used by economists and often criticised by social scientists. His analysis also takes in the level and structure of consumption, with housing and leisure as very telling yet unobvious components. Finally, following commonly accepted standards for investigating sustainable development, Tomka also examines the quality of life (well-being) of his studies' populations. Here, his analysis focuses on life expectancy and infant mortality, significant components of the Human Development Index.

The book comprises seven chapters, including an introduction and a conclusion. Chapter 1 sets out the research objectives, the existing literature, the data together with the data selection and analysis methods. This chapter supplies interesting information on the reliability of the existing data circulating in the literature on the twentieth-century economic history of ECE. In particular, Tomka criticises the data set prepared by Paul Bairoch and popularised by the influential publications of Iván Berend and Georgy Ranki. His own analysis is based on less well known but more reliable data gathered by the Dutch researcher Angus Maddison of the Groningen Growth and Development Center (GGDC), a research institute at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands (6). All researchers of East-Central European societies, and especially admirers of the works of Berend and Ranki (myself included), will appreciate this methodological discussion.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 discuss the three aspects of ECE development enumerated in the book's subtitle: economic growth, consumption, and quality of life. Chapter 5 engages in a discussion of long-term trends and factors at play in them. It analyses the relationships between economic growth, consumption, and quality of life in ECE and Western Europe and looks at convergence and divergence trends in the post-war period. Chapter 6 plays the role of appendix to the main part of the book. It summarises the main changes that occurred within the European Union after the admission of the Eastern European states in 2004 and 2007; it tracks the economic progress made and challenges faced by these states due to their EU accession.

Each of the chapters 2 to 6 is similar in structure. Each one starts with a review of the literature in the field and separate discussions of post-war trends in Western Europe and East-Central Europe, illustrated by a mass of statistical data in easy-to-read tables. The book is thus characterised by immense clarity and an encyclopedic quality in the best sense of the phrase, and ease of location of individual statistics. At the same time, Tomka provides insightful discussion and interpretation of the data, rooted in comparative economic, sociological, and demographic research.

The work provides a good sense of the challenges facing comparative economic history researchers and a superb set of methodological instructions. The comparative approach can be painfully arduous. It requires recalculation of GDP in local currencies and for purchasing power. The author has taken great care over comparability in this area. By selecting three neighbouring countries for comparison, he has avoided what is often a serious challenge in comparative research – cultural differences, e.g. in consumption preferences. He demonstrates that the consumption style and economic performance of Poland, Czechoslovakia and its successors, and Hungary converged in the post-war era, and that the three societies formed 'a convergence club' as the vast differences in economic output, consumption, and lifestyle that had

set Czechoslovakia apart from Hungary and Poland before the Second World War disappeared in the second half of the twentieth century.

Another difficulty in research that involves a comparison between Western and Eastern European economic history arises from the scarcity and limited reliability of data on the latter region. Archives of statistical data in East-Central European countries tend to be poorer and less systematic than those in Western Europe.

Scholars of the subject are in universal agreement that information about the historical economic performance of the countries of East Central Europe is lower in quality and smaller in quantity than the available data pertaining to the national economies of Western Europe. The individual countries of East Central Europe differ considerably in this respect. Data concerning Hungary are arguably the most reliable in the region, but the comparability of this data is often problematic for this country as well [p. 37].

Statistical data in Poland and Czechoslovakia have only been systematically gathered since the 1950s. In all three centrally planned economies, Tomka argues convincingly, the economic statistics were less reliable than in Western Europe. "Enterprise managers obviously had an interest in embellishing the performance of their companies, and the central economic and party bureaucracy also strove to depict the economic situation in a favorable light" (p. 37).

Chapter 3, which deals with consumption, contains what is probably the most revealing comparative data on everyday life in Western and East-Central European societies in the post-war era, as well as an interpretation of the connection of this area to world views and politics. Tomka takes a relatively broad approach to consumption. His 'consumption' includes not only quantities of food, clothes, housing, household appliances, and cars purchased and used, but also leisure, transportation, access to education, health care, and culture that, taken together, produced quite divergent lifestyles on the two sides of the Iron Curtain. This chapter gives the most explicit demonstration of the book's central thesis as expressed in its title. Unlike Western European societies, which could reap the benefits of post-war economic growth peacefully, East Central European societies lived and consumed irregularly, from one period of economic austerity to the next, and struggled to meet their own aspirations, which increased steadily as the war receded. What is also innovative about Tomka's interpretation of the latter process is that he addresses the roots of the growing consumer expectations. These were not only, Tomka argues, the East Central Europeans' desire to imitate the standard of living and lifestyles of Western societies. Aspirations increased organically due to the upward mobility that took place on the local ground for the masses of East-Central Europeans who received a better education in the course of the Cold War and often had better jobs than their parents. Moreover, the juxtaposition of the official ideology of historical

materialism and working-class material progress with the actual shortages and poor quality of available goods entrenched East-Central Europeans' materialism and their focus on consumption. Referring to the very influential theory of Ronald Inglehart that connects value and life orientation with the level of economic prosperity, Tomka demonstrates that while Western European societies saw a shift in the 1970s towards postmaterial values, East Central European ones remained materialistic and consumption-oriented. While for the Western European generation that grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, political activism and civic engagement became the norm, for their Central and Eastern European peers, the dominant trend, especially in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, was a retreat from Party-dominated politics and a focus on private consumption.

Tomka demonstrates that "the societies of East-Central Europe did not merely lag behind in almost every significant aspect of consumption, they actually dropped further behind their Western European counterparts in the post-Second World War period" (p. 202) despite the authentic economic growth, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. In his explanation, Tomka emphasises the divergent policies of investment and consumption of accumulated profits in the East and in the West.

In Western Europe, "consumption grew at slightly lower rates than economic output over the course of the twentieth century". For instance, "from the middle of the 1920s to the middle of the 1970s, the value of the per capita GDP in Germany grew 245 percent, while consumption rose 213 percent. In the United Kingdom, the corresponding numbers are 130 percent and 108 percent" (p. 94). For all the Western European countries analysed, per capita GDP increased by 225 per cent, compared to a 177 per cent rise in consumption levels between the 1920s and 1970s. According to Tomka's estimate, over the entire Cold War period from 1945 to 1990, "the pace of consumption growth in Western Europe as a whole was about one-fifth smaller than the pace at which gross domestic product grew" (p. 95).

East Central European societies were not allowed to consume the effects of the post-war economic growth to the same degree as their Western European counterparts.

After World War II, however, the share of accumulation in the regions grew, only in certain years, initially, but later for longer time spans, and thus the share of consumption in the GDP there dropped. As a result, the consumption gap between the eastern and western halves of the continent grew even faster than the disparity in economic performance [p. 150].

The general style of consumption in Western Europe changed over the post-war era so that "the range of available goods and services expanded and was simultaneously transformed, while the number of hours spent at work



dropped substantially” (p. 95). For example, the share of individual expenditures on food in Germany dropped from 36 per cent in 1960 to 16 per cent in 1990, while the share of spending on health rose from 4 to 14 per cent, and outgoings on transport and communication went up from 8 to 17 per cent (p. 98).

East-Central European societies entered the post-war period with a significantly lower level of basic consumption than Western Europeans and even than the poorer Southern Europeans. The early communist period brought a significant improvement in the diet;

per capita food consumption grew markedly starting in the mid-1950s, and thus East Central Europeans’ consumption of basic foodstuffs like flour, meat, and eggs soon reached levels on par with those of Western European countries. While the quality and variety of their food did not improve as significantly, these populations, which had suffered through the poor provisions and, in some places, outright famine of the wartime and post-World War II years, undoubtedly experienced this improvement as a great achievement [p. 156].

Polish society, as Tomka stresses, unlike its Hungarian and Czechoslovakian counterparts, struggled with a scarcity of food, especially meat, until well after the 1950s. This translated into political protests in 1970, 1976, and 1980. “Moreover, this gap between the Eastern and Western halves of the continent would continue to grow over the following decades ... [The share of outgoings spent on food] still averaged 40.2 percent of a Czechoslovakian household budget and 48.8 percent of a Polish budget in 1978, and 44.9 percent of a Hungarian budget in 1980” (p. 157).

Another point of divergence between Western and East-Central European societies was the availability of leisure. In all Western European countries, the post-war period brought more leisure and shorter working hours, and the development of mass but privately and commercially organised tourism. East Central Europeans – especially women – on the other hand, enjoyed significantly less leisure and entertainment. Tomka demonstrates that Hungarians especially further limited their own leisure time from the 1970s by engaging in the informal economy, including services performed after regular working hours and entrepreneurial tourism. Tomka omits one aspect of the same category of individuals reducing their own leisure time, and that is short-term international economic migration and the combination of industrial and agricultural work characteristic for Polish *choporobotnicy* (a term used after the Second World War to describe peasants who combined farm ownership with permanent work in industry and services) in the same period.

Even in 1990, the first year for which data on this subject for Eastern European countries was available to Tomka, Western Europeans, with the significant exception of the Irish, were still enjoying more leisure time on

average than Eastern Europeans. The most industrious Italians put in an average of 1,864 working hours that year, compared to 2,017 for the Poles, 1,890 for the Czechoslovaks, and 1,945 for the Hungarians. In the same period, the Danes worked an average of just 1,463 hours. Interestingly, the number of working hours in Poland continued to increase after 1990; it is the only country in Europe in which this happened.

A final interesting divergence that Tomka points out is the different shape of the welfare state in post-war Western and Eastern Europe. By the 1960s, countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain shared a trend of high public consumption in areas such as health care and education. However, while Western European countries devoted public spending to transportation infrastructure and social services, the socialist countries provided more in-kind services, such as childcare, collective tourism, “subsidized public transportation, heating fuel, rent, milk and bread, theatre tickets, and recordings of classical music” (p. 162).

As demonstrated above, *Austerities and Aspirations* might not engage those who seek exciting stories and historical details. Nonetheless, it will undoubtedly provide historians, sociologists, and economists with a much-needed reliable data checkpoint for their qualitative research.

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