

of the cold war. Yet, concentrating mainly on the period between 1939 and 1942, Carswell judges the Scottish attitude in the early days of the Second World War as “positive.” Initially, spontaneous effusion greeted the Polish fighters. Carswell commends the “educated young officers” on “their generally impeccable manners and behaviour, matched by their elegant appearance” (153). The Poles could also count on the Catholic Church and a few fellow Catholics in Scotland, as well as on all anticommunists. Poles remain grateful to Sir Patrick Dollan, Scotland’s staunchest supporter of the cause of Poland’s freedom.

Rachel Clement discusses the Scottish press between 1940–1946 and 2006–2009. Her conclusions about the first period concur with those of Stachura and Carswell. She details anti-Polish propaganda techniques in the press: “Including Poles in stories on crime and politics presented them as deviant and a threat to the status quo. Poles went from being portrayed as ‘gallant heroes’ . . . to increasingly dysfunctional” (178). The author states that initial reluctance of the press to report the size of the Polish community in Scotland yielded to the increasing use and abuse of statistics about the Polish exiles, in particular after 1945, which indicated “that Polish exiles began to lose favour in the press” (176). Her assumption is that inflating the numbers of foreigners engenders fear in the mainstream. She notes that “in 1946 . . . Polish exiles were presented as an alleged threat to the interests of a majority group, putting pressure on postwar resources, in this case jobs and housing. This technique is commonly used in the press to discredit minority groups, creating an implicit connotation that ‘we’ (the majority group) will get less (or worse) because of ‘them’ (the minority group)” (176). Her comments on Poland’s accession to the EU in 2004 are worth noting. Compared to the general British press, “the Scottish press were much less satirical, and received post-2004 Polish migration with great enthusiasm”. Clements detects “a wider nationalist agenda” (181): “Polish presence in Scotland was resoundingly celebrated for addressing two Scottish specific issues, population decline and skills shortage” (182). Yet this scholar fails to consider that Poles were also preferred over third-world immigrants. Why else would the press refer to Poles rather than Pakistanis as “the new Scots”? Not everything was lovely, of course. I recall reading in a Polish paper that the Protestant soccer hooligans of the Glasgow Rangers were invariably infuriated at Glasgow Celtic’s goalie, Polish and Catholic Artur Boruc, who routinely crossed himself during games. Clements mentions him but

not the hostility that the soccer player encountered (182).

The final paper reports on post-1989 Poland’s consular activities, and also contains a touching personal account of Scotland by art historian Grażyna Fermi that is very flattering to the SPK. ▲

Ruch ludowy przed, w czasie i po wojnie (Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej)

(The politics of peasant parties before, during, and after the Second World War. Bulletin of the Institute of National Remembrance, nos. 10–11 [105–106]). October–November 2009. Edited by Jan M. Ruman. Warsaw: Institute of National Remembrance. 156 pages + CD “*O prawo głosu*.” Paperback. ZŁ. 8. In Polish. Portions available at <http://www.ipn.gov.pl/portal/pl/24/10969/nr_10112009.html>.

Anna Gąsienica-Byrcyn

This double issue of the INR *Bulletin* offers conversations and reminiscences of people who had been active in the Peasant Party of Poland (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*, or PSL), a party renamed by the communists as the United Peasant Party, and then renamed again as the Polish Peasant Party (even though, according to one of the conversationalists, in the 2000s the reins to the party were still held by those who controlled it in the communist period).

In the initial conversations Andrzej Kaczorowski, Franciszek Gryciuk, Antoni Kura, and Mateusz Szpytma reflect on different visions of Peoples’ Poland by the PSL and PPR (the name the communist party bore in the 1940s) in the area of land reform, forced collectivization, disintegration of Stalin’s economic and political system, the role of women who opposed collectivization of farms (which never succeeded in Poland), the function of activities of representatives of the Polish farmers’ movement abroad, and the communists’ efforts to divide and dysfunctionalize the Polish émigré milieu.

In “Peoples’ Movement during World War II,” Tomasz Skrzyński emphasizes that the *Stronnictwo Ludowe* (Peasant Party) was a major political power with over 150,000 members before 1939. After the invasion of Poland by Germans and Soviets, many SL leaders were arrested either by the Gestapo or NKVD. Nonetheless, the party continued to operate integrating young people from the countryside *Wici* movement and eventually developing into the largest political party in occupied Poland, while also creating structures known as SL *Roch* in Paris and London. The party’s main goal was to liberate Poland. The military units of SL *Roch* operated mainly in

the countryside warning against German roundups, rescuing people from transports to prisons and concentration camps, destroying German places of work in provincial towns, sabotaging military deliveries, and collecting intelligence. Additionally, SL delivered food to impoverished workers' wives and children, to Jews, and to members of the Polish elites including writer Maria Dąbrowska and philosopher Tadeusz Kotarbiński.

In "The Struggle for Democracy: PSL 1945–1947," Marzena Grosicka discusses the problem of land reform. The PSL program envisioned effective and profitable family farms making Poland into a strong agricultural and industrial country rising quickly from the ashes of war. The PSL also proposed reforms in education and health emphasizing advance in learning and hygiene among country dwellers. In 1945–47 the party struggled to gain wide peasant support and confronted the PPR in an unequal battle, and finally suffered repressions by the Soviet-controlled government.

Franciszek Dąbrowski's article offers little-known information about PSL leader Stanisław Mikołajczyk's secret departure abroad. Mikołajczyk decided to leave Poland in mid-October 1947, and asked the American Embassy for help in arranging a secret departure. He traveled to Gdynia in a car carrying American diplomatic mail to the British Embassy, then embarked on the ship *Baltavia* to Great Britain. Only a few people knew about Mikołajczyk's departure and his absence was not noticed for several days. The enraged communist authorities and the political police (UB) ordered the entire leadership of PSL to be replaced.

Grzegorz Łeszczczyński discusses the persecutions and murders of members of the Polish Home Army (AK) by the NKVD, Red Army, and UB. Soviet atrocities against AK members began during the Second World War. After the war a special liquidation group "eliminated" members of the AK, PPS, and PSL. Łeszczczyński gives an account of one such murder: five people were to be "liquidated" in the town of Grójec. One of them, Józef Sikorski, pretended to be dead but was only wounded. He managed to escape from the place of execution and thanks to a friend, made it to Warsaw and informed PSL authorities about the UB capture and execution. Łeszczczyński retells in great detail the complex story of this communist crime and reports that in 1992 a monument dedicated to the victims was erected in Grójec.

Bogusław Wójcik concentrates on PSL history in the area of Rzeszów in 1945–49. The PSL had sixteen chapters in this region composed of seventeen counties.

The Rzeszów area population was strongly pro-PSL. Prewar PSL leader Wincenty Witos came from this area; other PSL leaders from Rzeszów include Stanisław Mikołajczyk, Józef Nieko (second vice-president), Władysław Kiernik (third vice-president), Stanisław Wójcik (secretary), Jan Witaszek (deputy secretary), and Wincenty Bryja (treasurer). The strong PSL presence in the area of Rzeszów alarmed the PPR activists who devoted their local Central Committee meeting in July 1945 to devising methods of manipulation and intimidation of local farmers to prevent noncommunist farmers from being elected to positions of importance. Despite massive arrests of PSL members, the party continued to grow and even generated a women's section that organized conferences and meetings in twelve counties.

Mateusz Szpytma offers explanatory insights on the genesis and history of the communist-created United Peasant Party (ZSL). Toward the end of 1947 communist politics required quick liquidation of the PSL. This was accomplished by absorbing into a new organization the weaker structures of the PSL and a few members of the SL. Nonetheless, the process of liquidating the PSL dragged on. Between 1947–49 the "unification" of the upper strata of the SL and PSL into the ZSL took place. The ZSL was centralized and its activities were directed against the interests of the peasants who were taken advantage of and forced into collective farm arrangements against their wishes. The only positive aspect of the ZSL's activities was its encouragement of literacy in the countryside.

In "On the Paths of Treason" Witold Bagieński presents the personage of Bolesław Zachariawicz/żeleński aka "Kmicic" and his activities in the AK underground during the war, his subsequent activities in the PSL, and then his betrayal and involvement with the communist police and the criminal Ministry of Internal Affairs controlled by Moscow. Similarly, Krzysztof Tarka portrays Adam Gaś who was active in the Polish underground during the war, experienced Auschwitz and Mauthausen, and moved to Great Britain after the war. In London Gaś taught the Polish language and literature in Polish Saturday schools and was active in Polish organizations, especially SL *Wolność* under the leadership of Jerzy Kuncewicz. At the end of the 1950s Gaś was approached by a certain Jan Kuczawski (aka "Orkan") who interviewed him about the Polish Saturday schools system in Great Britain and the Polish émigré milieu in London. Gaś became a part of the communist intelligence. He

gathered information on PSL activities abroad, for which he was well rewarded.

Grzegorz Łeszczyński writes about *Jest*, a film by Krzysztof Krauze based on Pope John Paul's pilgrimage to Poland, June 16–23, 1983. The Pope's visit helped rebuild the self-confidence of the Polish nation. *Jest* deals with the inhabitants of Zbrosza Duża who were led by Father Sadłowski on a pilgrimage to Częstochowa to see the Pope and reminisce about their struggles to build a church and parish house in their village. The scenes were filmed in the picturesque meadows and orchards of the Polish countryside. The film took two years to produce and five years to obtain communist officials' permission for screening. It received a number of awards.

Lastly, Andrzej Kaczorowski discusses the Solidarity movement in the Polish countryside in 1980. He points out that the movement was supported by local parishes and bishops, and in many instances churches served as meeting places. Even PAX and the Clubs of Catholic Intelligentsia supported Solidarity. Needless to say, the authorities tried to prevent cooperation between rural and urban Solidarity groups.

This collection of essays belongs to a vital area of historical scholarship. It offers previously unavailable information about activities of Polish farmers under communism. No study of Soviet dealings in East Central Europe can ignore the information it provides.▲

They Came to See a Poet

Selected Poems

By Tadeusz Różewicz. London: Anvil Press Poetry, 2011. 3rd ed. revised and enlarged, 283 pages.
Translated and introduced by Adam Czerniawski. ISBN: 978-0-85646-436-2. Softcover.

James E. Reid

In 1941, when Tadeusz Różewicz was twenty years old, he joined the Polish Home Army and fought the communist occupation of Poland. As the Second World War ended, he also lived through the horrifying revelations about conditions in the Nazi concentration camps in German-occupied Poland, and then saw Stalin's apparatchiks take over Poland. These experiences would be enough to silence lesser writers. In 1973 he wrote about the effect of these experiences when he was a young man: "I felt that something had forever ended for me and for mankind, something that neither religion nor science

nor art had succeeded in protecting" ("Do źródła," *Proza*, Wrocław, 1973, p. 493).

In spite of and because of the effects of what he had seen and heard, Różewicz began to write, eventually publishing over twenty books of poetry. *Anxiety*, his first volume, was published in 1947. It is permeated with the bleakness of someone who has seen his country live through hell on earth, and has returned to write about it. One of his best known poems, "The Survivor" concludes with these blunt lines: *I am twenty-four / led to slaughter / I survived*. The enduring resonance of his poetry is strong enough that almost thirty years later one of Poland's fine poets, Anna Kamieńska, restated his lines: *We were all twenty-four . . . we all survived being led to the slaughter*.

The critical reception of a poet's work often changes over the years. In "*The Survivor*" and *Other Poems*, a bilingual selection of Różewicz's poetry from 1976, translators Magnus J. Krynski and Robert A. Maguire describe him as "the most influential Polish poet of the entire postwar period" (ix). This is high praise for a poet from a country that is renowned for the esteem in which many of its poets, such as Nobel laureates Czesław Miłosz and Wisława Szymborska, are held in the world.

Szymborska and Różewicz are contemporaries, born two years apart. They approach similar concerns in very different ways. Różewicz wrote about a near-death experience and arbitrary survival in "The Survivor" perhaps several years after it happened. The poem presents the bleak, hard, and almost complete hopelessness of what he witnessed. The narrator in Szymborska's "There But for the Grace" also looks back at Poland under German occupation, and at the utterly arbitrary survival of someone the poem's narrator loves. God is absent in both poems, but the poem suggests an intimate hope: *Listen / how fast your heart beats in me*. Some might argue that Szymborska's is a stronger poem, but each poem will touch the reader in a different way, depending on what the reader brings to each poem.

In his introduction to Różewicz's poems in his *Anthology of Postwar Polish Poetry* (1965 and later editions), Czesław Miłosz is hard on the long-lived Różewicz: "His scorn for 'art' is quite programmatic, with all the contradictions such an attitude involves. He is a nihilistic humanitarian, constantly searching for a way out of his negation" (85), an argument Miłosz extends in 1983 in his *Witness of Poetry* (82–83). The reader may tend to agree with Miłosz after reading a poem such as Różewicz's gritty "Fight with an Angel."