

The Sarmatian Review (ISSN 1059-5872) is a triannual publication of the Polish Institute of Houston. The journal deals with Polish, Central, and Eastern European affairs, and it explores their implications for the United States. It is indexed in the American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies, EBSCO, and P.A.I.S. International Database. Since September 1997, PDF files are available at the Central and Eastern European Online Library (www.ceeol.com).

Subscription price is \$21.00 per year for individuals, \$28.00 for institutions and libraries (\$28.00 for individuals, \$35.00 for libraries overseas, air mail). The views expressed by authors of articles do not necessarily represent those of the Editors or of the Polish Institute of Houston. Articles are subject to editing. Unsolicited manuscripts and other materials are not returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed and stamped envelope. Please submit your contribution electronically and, if requested, send a printout by air mail. Submissions and Letters to the Editor can be e-mailed to sarmatia@rice.edu, with the accompanying mailing return address. Other letters and subscription queries should be emailed to sarmatianreview@yahoo.com. Subscription checks should be mailed to

The Sarmatian Review, P. O. Box 79119, Houston, Texas 77279-9119.

The Sarmatian Review retains the copyright for all materials included in print and online issues. Copies for personal or educational use are permitted by section 107 and 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law. Permission to redistribute, republish, or use SR materials in advertising or promotion must be submitted in writing to the Editor.

Editor: Ewa Thompson (Rice University).

Associate Editors: Tamara Trojanowska (University of Toronto), **Bogdan Czaykowski, 1932-2007** (University of British Columbia).

Editorial Advisory Committee: George Gasyna (University of Illinois-Urbana), Janusz A. Ihnatowicz (University of Saint Thomas-Houston), Bożena Karwowska (University of British Columbia), Joseph A. Kotarba (University of Houston), Alex Kurczaba (University of Illinois-Chicago), **Marcus D. Leuchter, 1909-2008** (Holocaust Museum Houston), Witold J. Lukaszewski (Sam Houston State University), Theresa Kurk McGinley (Lone Star College-North Harris), Michael J. Mikos (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee), Jan Rybicki (Kraków Pedagogical University), Dariusz Skórczewski (Catholic University of Lublin), Piotr Wilczek (University of Warsaw). Copy Editor: Cyndy Brown

Web Pages: Lisa Spiro (Rice University), Kern Vijayvargiya (Rice University).

Web Address: <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~sarmatia>.

In this issue:

Sarmatian Review Data 1517

Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *The Triumph of Provocation* (review). 1519

Katarzyna Dziwerek, *The Polish Language in Canada* (review) . . 1523

Patricia A. Gajda, *Silent Intelligentsia* (review) 1525
Theresa Kurk McGinley, *No Place to Call Home* (review) 1526
Agnieszka Gutthy, *They Said 'No' to the Political Police* (review) . . 1528
BOOKS 1529
Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński, "Fiancée," trans. Rafał Bilski 1531
Adam Mickiewicz, Book Five of *Pan Tadeusz*, trans. Ch. Zakrzewski . 1532

From the Editor

The appearance of the neocons at the center of American political life in the 1990s has had worldwide repercussions. One of them is the confusion of designating who is and is not a conservative. The neocons are all-out for the free market and privatization: in that regard, they stand to the right of socialists and statist communists. It is largely the neocons that advised the post-Soviet countries on how to exit communist economy and create a "free" one. But in the area of values they are more than liberal: "anything goes" as long as it does not interfere with economic activity or does not touch upon shibboleths that currently pass for society's values.

The repercussion in Poland has been confusion in labeling the political parties. *Platforma Obywatelska* is a party that in many ways resembles American neocons. It won the 4 July 2010 presidential election and is labeled "center-right" by commentators sympathetic to it. It stands for free market and privatization (although in practice it is often the former *nomenklatura* that grabs the cash squeezed out of former state enterprises). In the area of values PO is as flexible as the neocons.

The opposition party, *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* is more inclined toward the welfare state. Like Barack Obama, its leader Jarosław Kaczyński has repeatedly defended universal and free health care. PiS's

attitude to social welfare borders on socialism. In the area of values, however, PiS resembles the German CDU in that it is openly Christian and defensive of Polish national interests. Jarosław Kaczyński is no more xenophobic than Angela Merkel or Nicholas Sarkozy. He captured nearly half of the Polish vote in July 2010. Whence comes his negative image in the West?

Part of the answer lies with the media. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the daily with the second-largest circulation, generally follows in the footsteps of the American neocon establishment and it supports PO. *Rzeczpospolita*, the most-cited daily in Poland, is sympathetic to PiS and it can be compared to the conservative German papers. The political life of Poland is circumscribed by these two dailies: they offer strikingly different interpretations of reality. An example is the attitude toward the vetting of those individuals in economic and academic life whose activities in communist times might have made them easy targets for blackmail. The PiS government tried to institute the vetting of *nomenklatura* when it was in power, but PO opposed it, and in that it was vigorously seconded by GW. As a result, the vetting never took place.

So why is PiS called xenophobic and far-right in American and British media? Because these media use virtually exclusively their contacts and stringers in the circles of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, but never *Rzeczpospolita*. Before the presidential elections Adam Easton, BBC's Polish correspondent, wrote a highly ideologized article about Polish politics. He quoted GW, and balanced it off with a quote from a journalist named Jacek Żakowski. What's wrong with quoting two sources? Easton failed to mention that Żakowski is GW's leading columnist. ◇