

he professes contributing a broader and more objective view of the Holocaust, his title reveals a primary interest in Polish victimization, which indeed is reflected in his overly positive, philo-Semitic Polish history of World War II and Polish-Jewish relations. In addition to his criticism of Jewish historians for subsuming or trivializing the tragedies of non-Jewish Poles to the Jewish Holocaust, Lukas makes sweeping generalizations regarding Jews in twentieth-century Poland. These generalizations, which Lukas uses to explain Polish anti-Semitic sentiments, include deficient Jewish assimilation, Jewish Polonophobia, and Jewish collaboration with the Soviets. Lukas's work lacks references to Hebrew and Yiddish literature and testimonies, relying excessively and almost exclusively on Emanuel Ringelblum's diary testimonies for a Jewish foil.

Originally published in 1986, *The Forgotten Holocaust* compels a shift in World War II historiography to restore a balanced record of both Jewish and Christian Polish victimology. The extensively documented book offers a compelling study of the plight and bravery of Christian Poles in their military and social resistance efforts to save all Polish citizens from Nazi terror. From the aloof bystanders in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* to the pigs in Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, Poles are habitually portrayed as apathetic and anti-Semitic Holocaust witnesses. In *The Forgotten Holocaust*, Lukas challenges the stereotype of the anti-Semitic Pole who willingly sides with the Nazis, a stereotype that persists in both dominant historical discourse and popular media in the West.

Amongst the scores of Holocaust publications, *The Forgotten Holocaust* differentiates itself through Lukas's distinct insights into Poland's specific yet largely understudied Holocaust history. The third edition's added features bolster a deeper understanding of Polish Resistance history, securing the merit of Lukas's book not only for its interpretations but also for its applied pressure to broaden the field of Holocaust studies. Δ



## MORE BOOKS

*The Clash of Civilizations or Civil War*, by **Zbigniew Stawrowski**. Kraków: The Tischner Institute ([www.tischner.org.pl](http://www.tischner.org.pl)), 2013. 127 pages. Index, bibliography. ISBN 978-83-60911-14-3. Paper.

This is one of those essential books that everyone should have in his/her library. Professor Stawrowski takes on the fundamental concepts of our civilization: democracy, freedom, religious tolerance, community, ethics, and morality, and shows by means of a Socratic argument how many inconsistencies are built into the popular understanding of these terms. He intimates that these inconsistencies may eventually lead to the collapse of such ill-defined projects as the European Union or any other ostensibly democratic and tolerant society.

Among the inconsistencies present in contemporary democracies is ambivalence concerning human life, abortion and euthanasia among them. The implications of using in-vitro or rented-womb procedures are also startling. Stawrowski points out that we are the first civilization that actively engages in the destruction of human life in nonmilitary situations. For the first time in history, a civilization has given consent to procedures that have much to do with eugenics: we choose those lives that seem to have the best chance of developing well and actively engage in the destruction of those that we deem unwelcome, deformed, or defective.

Stawrowski further argues that what is sometimes touted as "religious freedom" is in fact a misnomer. There is no way to avoid being "religious"; the atheist's belief in the nonexistence of God is a form of religion, as is any person's belief in any principle whatsoever, be it the principle of satisfying one's physical desires and surrounding oneself with comforts, or the principle of charity toward others. The very fact of naming individuals implies commemoration of saints or heroes of one's religious tradition (Muhammad, John, David). Furthermore, the sense of community that every society must have (otherwise it is a group of creatures hostile to each other and unable to cooperate on any project) is also religious in

origin. The ethical (as opposed to moral) bonds that every community feels bound to cultivate is a form of religious expression as well. Thus the struggle to remove religion from the public square is in fact a struggle to return to the state of Hobbesian barbarism in which the situation of *homo homini lupus* must prevail.

Stawrowski's book is based on a profound knowledge of the European philosophical tradition, from Plato all the way to Luther, Hegel, Kant, Edmund Burke, and John Paul II, to name a few. His ability to show where Europe went wrong and Poland went right (as in the Warsaw Confederacy of 1570 that established the correct understanding of religious tolerance and made Poland a refuge for all kinds of religious dissidents from all over Europe) is also to be noted. Finally, Stawrowski quotes a book by Italian Jewish philosopher J.H. H. Weiler, who argues that the retreat from acknowledging Europe's Christian roots (as demonstrated in the present constitution of the European Union) was and is a grave mistake. (SB)

***Polska elita polityczna 2013*, by Rafał Matyja and Błażej Sajduk.** Kraków: Wyższa Szkoła Europejska im. Ks. Józefa Tischnera ([www.wse.krakow.pl](http://www.wse.krakow.pl)), 2014. 72 pages. ISBN 978-83-60005-40-8. Paper. In Polish.

This compact book gathers together demographic and other information about the nomenclature surrounding the Civic Platform government that has now been in power for seven years. It offers data concerning age group, region of birth, education, gender issues, and experience before joining the elite. The authors conclude that the excessive length of tenure of the Donald Tusk government has resulted in one party's (PO) excessive control over the central and local government structures in Poland. The authors also note that since 2005 the Polish Sejm (Parliament) has absorbed a large number of originally provincial politicians, and that a large group of MPs began their careers as bureaucrats for one party (PO). The majority of parliamentarians are over forty years of age; again, before becoming parliamentarians many of these persons were working in the party apparatus or in youth organizations. Warsaw and the Warsaw voivodship are overrepresented among the MPs.

Finally, mayors of cities usually enjoy the longest tenure in office, while secretaries of state and their deputies the shortest. This indicates that while on the local level stabilization has been reached, at the top of the pyramid there is little stabilization and much uncertainty. Δ

### Correction

In the review of *Wołyń we krwi 1943* by Joanna Wieliczka-Szarkowa (SR, April 2014), the name of the book's author was misspelled. It is *Wieliczka-Szarkowa* and not *Wieliczko-Szarkowa*.

## A Report from Poland on the Economy

**Richard J. Hunter, Jr. & Leo V. Ryan, C.S.V.**

Consider this optimistic quotation:

In just 20 years, Poland has reversed 500 years of economic decline. It hopes to soon join the euro zone of single currency nations. Foreign investment is flowing and the Warsaw stock exchange continues to grow. The remake of Poland is a remarkable feat, considering this nation, pinned between Germany and Russia, has spent the better part of the past 200 years fighting invasions, near complete destruction and communism's iron grip.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the Polish Ministry of Economy summed up its 2013 report as follows:

In 2008 and 2009, the global economic crisis exerted an unfavorable influence upon the economic situation in Poland. As a result, the economic activity in the country has dwindled, with the GDP growth rate dropping to 1.6 percent. The two subsequent years brought about an increased growth rate, reaching 3.9 percent and 4.5 percent in 2010 and 2011 respectively. In 2012, the Polish economy was hit by the second wave of the economic crisis, causing the growth rate to fall to 1.9 percent.<sup>2</sup>

Despite what may be seen as less than optimal news, a series of reports from government