

degree of academic freedom manifested at Warsaw's *Artes Liberales*.

Four debates are recorded in this book: The Educated Classes and Political Power in Eastern Europe in 1918–1981; National Humanities in the Global Context: Polish and Russian Experience; The Role of Scholars and Intellectuals in the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilizations; *Coda*, or Accidental Interdisciplinarity: On Experiencing the World and Discovering the Future. The debates are followed by an English summary.

***Scriptorum Seu Togae et Belli Notationum Fragmenta. Accesserunt Peristromata Regum Symbolis expressa (Fragmenty pism, czyli uwagi o wojnie i pokoju. Zawierają dodatkowo królewskie kobierce symbolicznie odtworzone)*, by Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro.** Translated into Polish by Jagoda Chmielewska and Bartłomiej Bednarek. Preface by Zbigniew Rau. Introduction by Marek Tracz-Tryniecki. Warsaw: Narodowe Centrum Kultury and Centrum Myśli Polityczno-Prawnej im. Alexisa de Tocqueville'a (13 Płocka Street, 01-231 Warsaw, Poland), 2014. 843 pages. Illustrations, index. ISBN 978-83-7982-063-4. In Latin and Polish.

This monumental seventeenth-century work by one of Sarmatism's leading representatives articulates the Polish perception and practice of political liberty. Fredro writes in the tradition of the Roman Republic rather than the Athenian democracy. At the same time, his text resembles Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Lord Chesterton's *Letters to his Son* because it contains a wealth of practical advice on how the political class should behave in order to build and maintain a strong state and achieve personal prosperity.

Fredro's "republic of nobles" does not deny the existence of a vast sea of peasantry that made republicanism of the titled possible. Fredro was also aware that the nearly perfect democracy prevailing among the nobles was threatened by the magnates, who began to form a separate class in the seventeenth century.

***Senator Stanley Haidasz: A Statesman for All Canadians*, by Aleksandra Ziolkowska-**

**Boehm.** Toronto, CA: Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada, 2014. 214 pages. Photographs. ISBN 978-0-8851-1-2. Paper.

A sensitive biography of a Canadian of Polish background who started his adult life as a doctor and later became a senator in the Canadian Parliament. In addition to the biographical part, the book records exchanges between Haidasz and other members of Canada's political establishment.

## Letters

### Workers' Rights in Canada. Workers' Rights in Poland

(In Memoriam: Brian Hunt, First President of our OPSEU Union Local)

My deepest thanks for the April 2015 issue of *The Sarmatian Review*. I couldn't stop reading the *Requiescat* for Zbigniew Romaszewski. It brought back a flood of sometimes-distant memories from the 1980s in Canada and Poland. During the 1980s I helped to found a Union Local at a very troubled environmental management agency, responsible for managing thousands of square miles of land and water in southern Ontario, Canada.

Unfortunately the manager of the largest division at the agency managed his division by requiring that his employees spy on other employees and report to him about their activities. I refused to spy or report on the activities of other employees, and as a result was not promoted for fifteen years, after which I was hired in a different division under a progressive director where employees worked cooperatively with each other.

This manager continued to operate in a cruel and callous way. A woman who was sexually abused by some of his spies came to me for advice. I told her that if she went to the police without a union, it would be her word against five or six men. She eventually reported the abuse to this manager, and he offered to settle the matter by laying her off so that she could collect unemployment insurance while she looked for another job. Then he laid her off at a time when it was very difficult to find work. Many similar unjust decisions were made by this manager.

I and a few other employees looked into forming a union by contacting OPSEU, the Ontario Public Sector Employees Union. I was very nervous when I went to the first information meeting about forming a Union Local. Before entering the meeting, I had to swear that I would never reveal who was at the meeting. When I entered the meeting room, I discovered that all of the people in the room were mid-level managers, who would be excluded from the union. I was very alarmed to discover that things were so bad that managers, who legally could not unionize, had come hoping to join the union. If managers were considering joining a union, the workplace situation must have been far worse than I knew.

This manager fired people without cause to try to prevent the Union Local from being formed. Drunk with power and the optimistic reports of his spies, he made a decision that sealed the formation of the union. A second large union information meeting was called away from the workplace. The manager sent one of his spies to record all of the license plates on cars in the parking lot so that he could contact the police and track down the names of the attendees at the meeting and begin to punish or fire them. Someone at the meeting went outside for a cigarette, and noticed that the manager's employee was recording license plate numbers. He returned to the meeting and called everyone outside to shame the manager's spy.

Soon after that, numerous employees signed cards indicating that they wanted to form a Union Local with the assistance of OPSEU. Canada is often a nonunion or antiunion country, but that recent license-plate spying and years of other spying and betrayal led to the certification of OPSEU to become the union representing eligible employees at the agency. A union is rarely certified in Canada on the first attempt, but this Ontario Public Service Employees Union was immediately certified as the legal representative of unionized employees at the agency.

I have only been able to touch on some of the high and low points of the unionizing process. I have not covered the years of subsequent attempts by this manager to discredit and decertify the Union Local so that he could begin to get rid of the employees who led the struggle

to form the Union Local.

Throughout this difficult period in the 1980s until our Union Local was founded, coincidentally in 1989, I followed the news from Poland. *Justice Denied* (SR, September 2014?) was the story where I was working, as well as in Poland. Poland gave me the courage and stamina to continue working for justice in the face of continuing attempts by the above manager to discredit and decertify the union. I thought that if the Polish people could continue working for justice in the face of massive Russian power and brutality, and in the face of Soviet spies working throughout Poland, how could I even think about giving up in the face of being fired? If I had been fired, it would have been devastating—I was married with two young daughters. However, at long last in 1988, I and four other Union Local members successfully negotiated the first Collective Agreement at my workplace even though the agency had hired professional negotiators from one of the largest antiunion law firms in Canada in a failed attempt to break the union. Poland and the people of Poland were my inspiration throughout that difficult decade.

Early in the 1990s, as the result of the union making things public, this six-figure-a-year-income manager, with decades of employment, was fired. He was given five minutes to leave the office. He was instructed to take nothing with him, not even a pencil. As he opened the door to leave the office, he met the union president, Brian Hunt, coming in. The former manager yelled at the union president, "At least you've got a f . . . ing Union!"

*James E. Reid, Guelph, Ontario*



- Aquila Polonica Company
- Aquila Polonica is an independent publishing house based in the U.S. and the U.K., founded in 2005 by Terry A. Tegnazian and Stefan Mucha. The company specializes in books based on eyewitness accounts in English, of Poland in World War II.
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