

piety of his native Lithuania and was surprisingly open to the entreaties of individual Church leaders.

Many chapters serve as case studies of how leaders from church and state negotiated this difficult terrain with mixed ease and success. Paving the way was the unlikely friendship and partnership forged between Piłsudski and Achille Ambrogio Damiano Ratti. The bookish prefect of the Vatican library with a fiery temper, Ratti was plucked from obscurity by Pope Benedict XV to head the Vatican embassy to Poland and then to serve as the full nuncio to the newly independent nation. In Piłsudski the nuncio saw a Polish Garibaldi, a great man of action, however flawed personally. Ratti was ignominiously sent back to Rome in 1921, having earned the enmity of Polish nationalists for not siding more strongly with Poland in the Silesian border dispute with Germany. His warm relations with Piłsudski nonetheless continued and had a bearing on future Vatican relations, once Ratti—“Il Papa Polacco” as he was dubbed—assumed the papal throne as Pope Pius XI. Under Pius’s aegis, the Vatican and the Second Republic painstakingly worked out the terms of the concordat, a legal document that spelled out the relationship between church and state. The negotiations were prolonged by thorny issues including land reform (potentially involving church properties) and the drawing of diocesan borders to coincide with national borders, a question that threatened to unsettle Poland’s relations with its neighbors.

Notably ill-fated were the forays into the religious affairs of Poland’s religious minorities and neighbors. The appointment of the Marian General, Father Jerzy Matulewicz, member of a Polonized minority in Lithuania, to the bishopric of Wilno (now Vilnius) triggered an ongoing row. In a city whose ownership had changed seven times since his arrival in October 1920, Matulewicz’s moderate course pleased no one. The Polish government requested his removal numerous times (139), and he was eventually given a new assignment as the apostolic visitor to Lithuania shortly before his death in 1927. Moreover, influential voices in both Poland and the Vatican hoped to bring the Orthodox back to the Roman fold. Conversions, some hoped, would pave the way for Belarusians and Ukrainians into the Polish nation state. However, these efforts quickly foundered, so much so that the number of conversions from Orthodoxy was less than those from Uniate Catholicism to Orthodoxy. With support from the Vatican, the Warsaw government attempted to create an autocephalous Polish Orthodox church,

which opened up a wedge between its adherents and the “true” Orthodox (149).

Pease’s chapters on the friends and enemies of Catholic Poland and on Pius XII and the onset of the Second World War will no doubt be of the greatest interest to lay readers. “The interwar Polish Church has earned few commendations from historians for its words and deeds concerning the Jews, and by modern light it deserves none,” he writes; Catholic publicists “dished out crude anti-Semitic invective, pure and simple” (118–119). But, he adds, “the record is not entirely abysmal,” noting that the Polish Church was also home to advocates of toleration who sought to protect this “vulnerable minority.” Pease anchors these anti-Jewish attitudes within the Church’s larger antipathy towards modernity, whose agents within the intelligentsia included Jews, Masons, communists, and socialists. Addressing Pius XII’s refusal to censure Hitler for his invasion of Poland and his unwillingness to take sides in the conflict, Pease notes that “it is trite, but true, that above all Pope Pacelli sought the keeping of the peace nearly to the exclusion of any other end” (206). Pius was the last of the “popes of the old style”—men of diplomacy, inapproachability, and external reserve.

In sum, Pease’s concise work is a first-rate work, one that eschews polemic for balance and nuance. Drawing on an impressive array of archival sources in Poland, London, the United States, and the Vatican, this work deserves to become the standard word on the subject. ▲

Bundist Counterculture in Interwar Poland

By Jack Jacobs. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009. Notes, bibliography, index. 185 pages. ISBN 978-0-8156-3226-9. Hardcover.

James R. Thompson

On my first reading of this book I tended to agree with the contentions of Bernard Johnpoll and Antony Polonsky that the politics of the Bund were “the politics of futility” (101). True, the Bund did provide some medical care for very poor Jews, but as a political force it did not seem to make a difference. One has to do a bit of head scratching to see its lasting political and cultural contributions. The Bundists were strongly Marxist secular Jews who had no intention of

leaving Poland, but were very keen to change Poland and its culture. We note that “during the Polish-Russian War of 1920–21, the Polish government hounded the Tsukunft [a youth group closely tied to the Bund], which opposed that war” (9). Inasmuch as it was the Soviet Union who invaded Poland during that war (we remember Trotsky’s famous outcry that “the struggle with Poland . . . must become the most important, fundamental and leading task for all Workers’ and Peasants’ Russia”), one must suppose that those in Poland who “opposed that war” were in favor of letting Trotsky’s Red Army simply march across Poland unopposed. Some might interpret such “opposition” as support for the Soviets and write it down as high treason. Indeed, in 1920 the Bund tried to join the Comintern, but were unwilling to accept the Soviet conditions for doing so (9). Professor Jacobs does not tell us what the conditions were, but the desire of the Bund to maintain its Jewish identity would seem to be a possibility.

Professor Jacobs importantly notes that the founder of the Second Polish Republic, Józef Piłsudski and his government opposed anti-Semitism even after all the Bundist attempts to favor the Soviet invasion of Poland (37) and Bundist support for the Comintern after that failed invasion. The Bundists regarded the Zionist organizations as organizations of the rich and used to tear down Stars of David from their holiday decorations. The Bund was Yiddishist, Marxist, and secular (51). It had minimal political clout and seemed to never win elections beyond a few municipal ones. This is the reason, one supposes, for the opinions restated in the first paragraph of this review.

The really great disappointment with the Jacobs book is that it is very sparse in information about what the Bundists did during the Second World War and afterward. Certainly a great many of them were murdered by the Germans, but there was a significant number of survivors. What happened to them? On p. 149 we read, concerning the period after the war, that “the Bund in Poland was forced to liquidate itself as a result of pressure put on it by Communists.” What became of the Bundists?

According to Professor Andrzej Paczkowski, the former Director of the Institute of National Memory in Poland, the proportion of Jews in the security apparatus leadership positions of “People’s Poland” was approximately 30 percent (Paczkowski, “Zydzi w UB—próba weryfikacji stereotypu,” in *Komunizm: ideologia, system, ludzie*, edited by Tomasz Szarota, Warsaw: Institute of History of the Polish Academy of

Sciences, 2001, p. 197). There were approximately 24,000,000 Polish Catholics in Poland in 1945. In that same year there were approximately a quarter million Jews in Poland (Grzegorz Berendt, “Zydzi w Polsce Ludowej lat 1944–1970,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 4 (1987), April 2008, p. 69). The probability that a survivor of Jewish background would be a member of the “security apparatus” was at least 42 times greater than a person of Catholic background being so employed.

Is it possible that many of those clasped to the bosom of the Jakub Berman-Bolesław Bierut leadership were in fact former Bundists? Berman’s favorable treatment of the Zegota member Zofia Kossak Szczucka (Irene Tomaszewski and Tacia Werbowksi, *Zegota: The Rescue of Jews in Wartime Poland*, Montreal, Canada: Price Patterson 1994, p. 104) indicates that Berman had nothing against Jewish communists maintaining their Jewish identity (Berman’s brother was a prominent Zionist). It would appear that a Bundist would be an ideal candidate for Berman’s decision-making circles and secret police. Bundists did not want to go to Israel or indeed any place other than Poland, and they keenly wanted to change the nature of Polish society. The postwar Polish communist party would appear to be just what the Bundist doctor ordered.

As to who supervised the “Polish People’s Republic” for the Soviets, this has been an unasked and unanswered question. The invocation of the Jakub Berman-Bolesław Bierut team is a mantra that does not disclose the real workings of the secret police apparatus. I personally saw few Russians in my many trips to Poland during the Soviet control days. The Americans and the British conveniently forget that after the Nazi defeat Poland passed from Nazi control to Soviet control, with all implications of such control. For Polish Catholics, the Soviet control was actually even more dreadful than that of the Nazis (see Jan Tomasz Gross’s *Revolution from Abroad*, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1st ed., 1988, p. 229), and it lasted for fifty years. Is it possible that the Bund provided a fair number of those who ran “People’s Poland” in the first two decades of its existence? This is a question that Professor Jacobs neither asks nor answers.

