

of the Solidarity wave of immigrants, and his portrayals of the United States.

The fifth part is titled “Inne Stany” (A Different United States). The first two essays record the image of America in Polish non-fictional literature and in the Soviet-inspired “social realist” journalism. The remaining articles likewise deal with the image of America in Polish prose and drama. Barbara Fride reads Jan Józef Szczepański’s text, *Koniec westernu* (The End of the Western) through the lens of postcolonial theory. Barbara Gutkowska analyzes Sławomir Mrożek’s journals and explores the role of the United States and Mexico in shaping the writer’s worldview. Barbara Dutka examines Andrzej Kijowski’s text, *Podróż na najdalszy Zachód* (Journey to the Farthest West) and the writer’s opinion of America. Aleksandra Zug offers yet another vision of America as experienced by the protagonist of Feliks Netz’s novel. Ewa Bartos looks at the image of America in Stanisław Dygat’s prose. Iwona Puchalska examines a selection of Lilian Szymour-Tulasiewicz novels focusing on national identity, culture, and tradition. The last essay briefly explores Andrzej Bobkowski’s portrayal of the United States.

Finally, “W rytmie latino” (In Latin Rhythms) offers portrayals of Central and South America. Piotr Millati analyzes Andrzej Bobkowski’s attitudes towards Latinos, Jerzy Paszek looks for links between Argentine literature and Witold Gombrowicz’s novel *Trans-Atlantyk*, and Radosław Sioma analyzes Gombrowicz’s *Pornografia*. Jolanta Pasterska writes about the portrayal of Argentina in three Polish women writers: Janina Surynowa-Wyczółkowska, Józefa Radzymińska, and Zofia Chądzyńska. Piotr Garliński-Kucik looks at the Mexican period in Teodor Parnicki’s life and writing.

The title of *Polish Literature of Both Americas: Vol. 1* encompasses a large geographical area. As the title indicates, the editors intend to continue exploring the topic. It should be pointed out that the thirty-nine essays collected in the book deal mostly with those Polish writers who live in, travel to, and write about the North American continent. Quite a few essays are reprints. The editors do not make a distinction

between works by exiled Polish writers living in the Americas, those who only visit and comment on their American experience, and Polish translators of books written in English about America.

MORE BOOKS

Uncaptive Minds: A Publication of the Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe. Special issue commemorating 25 years after 1989: Reflections on the Unfinished Revolutions. **Edited by Eric Chenoweth and Irena Lasota.** Cover design by Małgorzata Flis. Washington, DC: IDEE (1718 M Street, No. 147, Washington, DC 20036. 184 pages. ISSN 0897-9669.

This worthy periodical was one of the best, if not the best English-language serial informing the world about the struggle for liberty in Soviet-occupied countries in the 1980s. A quarter century after the Soviet army moved out of Eastern Europe (this took place as late as 1991 in Poland), activists from the area gathered to assess how much had been achieved and what was still missing.

It is not surprising that seminar participants saw the situation in many post-Soviet countries in terms of an “unfinished revolution.” Corruption, Russian pressure, economic ruin, and primitive selfishness have been all too visible everywhere. It is encouraging, however, that so many participants offer superb analyses of their country’s situation. With such elites, one can remain hopeful about the future.

Many speakers use the terminology of independence and liberty rather than democracy and pluralism, testifying to the view that democracy is secondary to liberty, and that without liberty there is no democracy. In practice, this means that national sovereignty has to be achieved before democracy can be built. Speakers such as Vincuk Viačorka and Ales Bialiatski from Belarus, or Tunne Kelam from Estonia emphasize that each country has to work out its own model of democracy. Such has been the case in Western Europe where some countries built their democracy on the

foundation of monarchy and its traditions, whereas others have placed abolition of monarchy at the center. Eastern European countries likewise need to adjust their traditions to democracy rather than doing away with tradition on the assumption that democracy can be built in a tradition-free society. If the party that wins the election takes as much power as possible, it does not mean that democracy is in danger.

Not all texts sound convincing, however. Smaranda Enache of Romania opines that the main reason for the weakening of civil society in Romania is the shrinkage of funds. While a lack of money is a legitimate problem, the analyst relies excessively on Soviet-engendered ways of thinking about society: withdraw the carrot and interest ceases, offer the carrot and you have crowds coming to meetings and demonstrations. This view is poles apart from what really occurred in Eastern and Central Europe. Likewise, Gabor Demszky from Hungary uses the IDEE podium to campaign against Victor Orban, accusing him of dictatorial moves. What made me wary of his accusations was an invocation of Hungarian journalist and EU Parliament member Zoltan Simon, a declared socialist who published in Bloomberg News an article accusing Orban of authoritarianism and opined that Orban “disregards the rule of law” (60). For Demszky this serves Demszky as proof that the Western media condemn Orban. Exactly the same method has been used in Poland lately: disgruntled supporters of the party that lost the election wrote articles for Bloomberg and Reuters accusing the winning party of sins against democracy. These articles were then declared to represent public opinion in the West and used to shame the winning party into timidity while executing reforms. Demszky was rightly rebuked by Maciej Strzembosz.

Irena Lasota’s excellent presentations included a mention of the Olszewski government in Poland “deposed by parliamentary coup” in 1992 (79). Interestingly, a similar comment was made a month and a half later by Polish Minister of Defense Antoni Macierewicz (<http://wpolityce.pl/polityka/273225-macierewicz-u-pospieszalskiego-koalicja-walesy-komunistow-i-innych-grupek->

[doprowadzila-do-obalenia-rzadu-ktory-rozpoczal-oczyszczanie-panstwa-dzis-ich-pogrobowcy-probuja-zablokowac-odbudowe-panstwa](#)). Yes, we are talking of the same Antoni Macierewicz who is hated by the Polish postcommunist Left even more than Jarosław Kaczyński himself. Lasota and Macierewicz touch on a problem of primary importance in Central Europe: some former dissidents have come to the conclusion that the state structures of communism only need slight modifications and should not be totally discarded. They fiercely oppose lustration, or vetting of state officials, and have allowed former communist functionaries to morph into social democrats. The party that lost the election in Poland in October 2015 subscribed to this view, thus causing much damage to civil society. Without vetting, the judicial system in particular remains prone to corruption. Recent revelations about Lech Wałęsa’s past confirm this opinion.

One of the small but important features of this collection of essays and speeches is the correct spelling of nouns and adjectives pertaining to the ethnic background of people who had been subsumed under the misleading name of “Soviets” or, even worse, “Russians.” The Soviet-introduced names for various nationalities of the USSR still appear in articles and books written by otherwise respectable specialists in first-world countries, but members of various ethnicities prefer their own names and spelling. The most glaring example is Belarus and the Belarusan people. *Uncaptive Minds* spells this noun and adjective correctly (my computer’s spell check wants me to return to “Belarusian” or “Belarussian”).

Irena Lasota and Eric Chenoweth deserve praise for allowing this group of social activists to meet and exchange news and views. Such meetings remind the world that countries of Central and Eastern Europe are by no means as safe and secure as those of Western Europe, and that their security and liberty are important not only for them but also for the more general cause of European peace. (SB)

The Soviet-Polish Peace of 1921 and the Creation of Interwar Europe, by Jerzy Borzęcki. New Haven and London: Yale Univ.

Press, 2008. xv + 401 pages. Index, photographs. ISBN 978-0-300-12121-6. Hardcover. \$65.00.

It is with some melancholy that one looks at this excellently written book about the Peace of Riga that ended the Polish-Soviet war and established the eastern borders of the Polish state. The text of the agreement details the border between the two states forever and ever, yet in less than one generation it was broken by the Soviet invader. In 1921 Poland was too exhausted to keep fighting the gigantic communist state, and she agreed to a partition of Belarus and Ukraine. This spared Western Ukrainians the Holodomor during which millions of their eastern brethren perished, but it did not allow them to develop and practice their national identity in peace. The lack of awareness on the part of the Polish educated classes that the time had long passed for polonization of Ukrainians caused major mistakes in policy toward Ukrainians during the interwar period.

The book is a definitive study of the circumstances surrounding the Peace of Riga, and of the major points of the agreement and their implementation. This is one of those scholarly works that are limited in scope but perfectly executed.

A Polish Count in County Mayo. Paul de Strzelecki and the Great Famine (Mayo: History and Society Series), edited by **Gerard Moran and Nollaig O Muraile**. Dublin: Geography Publications (www.geographypublications.com), 2014. 944 pages. Bibliography. ISBN 978-0-906602-683. Hardbound.

Paul de Strzelecki is best known for his nineteenth-century explorations of Australia, including discovery of Mount Kościuszko (*Sarmatian Review*, January 2012), but Quinnipiac University professor Christine Kinealy has documented a different side of Strzelecki: his relief work in Ireland during its Great Hunger. Kinealy, whose scholarly focus is Ireland's nineteenth-century Famine (she is director of the Ireland Great Hunger Institute at Quinnipiac), contributed a chapter (pp. 415–430) to the Mayo volume of History and Society series treating individual Irish counties.

Strzelecki's involvement with Irish relief began in 1847 and continued until 1850. From early 1847 to the third quarter of 1848, he volunteered for the British Relief Commission where he oversaw distribution of clothing and one meal daily to 200,000 children, including more than 55,000 in hard-hit western Ireland. In 1849 he returned to Ireland to disburse "pitifully small" relief monies collected by private charity (the British Government adopted a *laissez-faire*, hands-off approach to the humanitarian crisis), and also gave testimony before Parliament about the "Imperial calamity" the Poor Laws could not address in Ireland. He made his last relief trip to Ireland in 1850, "seemingly . . . on his own initiative."

While British political and economic philosophy declared a hands-off approach to Irish starvation, Strzelecki did what he could on a human level to ameliorate the humanitarian disaster. Recognized for his efforts at the time but since forgotten, Strzelecki's memory has been revived by Kinealy, who wants to erect a monument in Ireland honoring his labor. Her first step is this lengthy article, documenting Strzelecki's work to relieve starvation in the Emerald Isle. (*John M. Grondelski*)

O senatorze doskonałym studia: Prace upamiętniające postać i twórczość Wawrzyńca Goślickiego, edited by **Aleksander Stępkowski**. Warsaw: Senate Chancery, 2009. 227 pages. ISBN 978-83-60995-44-0. In Polish.

A collection of essays on Wawrzyniec Goślicki (1530–1601), Bishop of Poznań, philosopher, and senator, author of *De Optimo Senatore*, or *O senatorze doskonałym* (1568), twice translated into English. Particularly valuable is Professor Stępkowski's essay on Goślicki's interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*.

A Question of Balance: A Study of Legal Equality and State Neutrality in the United States, France, and the Netherlands, by **Brenda J. Norton**. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield (www.rowman.com), 2016. vii + 167 pages. Bibliography, index. 978-1498-523967. Hardcover.

This work is a dissertation. It is well written, but its point of view is so thoroughly secular that it does not allow any historical memory. The author's argument about legal equality and state neutrality takes for granted that in the long run the United States and European countries can exist without an underlying network of customs, habits, and modes of behavior that are rooted in their Christian past (and, in some cases, present). No set of secular laws and no imaginary social contract could make life bearable, let alone pleasant, for citizens if they do not continuously hear echoes of those ancient teachings about loving one's neighbor as oneself. Of course most of us do not do it, but we are constrained in our behavior and in our laws by this powerful echo. Without it, why even bother to make our neighbor's life bearable?

Martha [1873]

Eliza Orzeszkowa's *roman à thèse*
(excerpts)

Translated by Anna Gašienica Byrcyn
and Stephanie Kraft

Editor's Note: *Martha* (*Marta*) is Eliza Orzeszkowa's most didactic novel. From the point of view of twenty-first-century skepticism, it may sound like a caricature: surely no one is so unable to take care of oneself as Martha, the novel's heroine. She is left penniless after her husband's sudden death. Orzeszkowa was a passionate spokesperson for the rights of women—not just the right to vote, but the right to be treated seriously in the public sphere and the right of women to utilize education as offering the means to compete for a job, should it become necessary. Her novel uses abbreviations and shortcuts as well as a very peculiar omniscient narrator in order to persuade the reader that the problem of single women with children in urbanized society is urgent and requires instant remedies.

On a beautiful autumn day not many years ago the Graniczna Street, a lively thoroughfare in Warsaw, was filled with people. They were walking and riding, hurrying as business or pleasure dictated, without glancing to the left or the right—without paying any attention at all to what was happening in one

of the adjacent courtyards. The place was clean and quite large, surrounded by tall brick buildings on all sides. The building farthest from the street was the smallest, yet its large windows and wide entrance, set off by a handsome porch, suggested that the dwelling inside was comfortable and attractively decorated.

A young woman with a pale face, dressed in mourning, stood on the porch. She was not wringing her hands, but they dangled helplessly, as if she were profoundly sad and distressed. A four-year-old girl, equally pale and also in mourning, clung to them.

Over the wide and clean stairs leading to the upper floors of the building, people in heavy clothes, and heavy and dusty shoes descended continuously. They were porters carrying furnishings from a residence that was not large or lavish, but certainly pleasant and tastefully appointed. There were mahogany beds, couches and armchairs covered in crimson woolen damask, graceful wardrobes and chests, even several consoles inlaid with marble, a few large mirrors, two enormous oleander trees in pots, and a datura on whose branches a few white blossoms still hung like chalices. The porters carried all these things down the stairs, passing the woman on the porch. They arranged them on the pavement of the courtyard, placed them in the two wagons standing near the gate, or carried them out to the street. The woman stood motionless, glancing at every piece of furniture that was being taken from her. It was clear that the objects she was leaving behind had not only material value for her; she parted with them as with the still-visible signs of the vanished and irretrievable past, the mute witnesses of lost happiness. The pale, dark-eyed child pulled harder at her mother's dress.

"Mama!" she whispered. "Look! Papa's desk!"

The porters carried a large, "masculine" desk down the stairs and put it on a wagon. It was handsomely carved, adorned with a gallery back, with the top covered in green cloth. The woman in mourning looked for a long time at the piece of furniture to which the child pointed with a thin finger.

"Mama!" whispered the girl. "Do you see that big black stain on father's desk? I remember how it got there. Father was sitting in front of the desk