22 | Recenziók

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Polish Perspectives on American History: Insights, Interpretations, Revisions.
ed. by Halina Parafianowizc, Białystok: University of Białystok, 2013. 359 pages.

This volume is a collection of various Polish scholars' essays dealing with different themes and phases of the history of the United States. In many ways it makes one recall the volume that Hungarian scholars contributed to and was published unfortunately only in Hungarian, *Gyarmatokból impérium* ([From Colonies to Empire] ed. Tibor Frank Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 2007). All contributors have been participants in the Andrzej Bartnicki Forum for the Advanced Studies of the United States, an annual gathering of the Polish American Studies profession. The Forum commemorates the late Professor Bartnicki, who is considered the father of American Studies in Poland, in many ways similar to László Országh in Hungary. The Forum provides a place, in addition to seasoned professors of American history, for young doctoral students to present their papers in different fields pertaining to the United States, and the participants receive immediate feedback on their research projects in form of healthy criticism, suggestions, and help from more experienced colleagues. The present volume is a collection of twenty-two essays from participants in the first ten years of the Forum, and it is trying to give a wide scope of the different issues that Polish scholars in the American Studies have been dealing with lately. Although the volume admittedly cannot do justice to the first ten years and thus is not to be looked upon as an exhaustive presentation of the American Studies community in Poland, still, the chosen writings give a good idea of the broad range of what these scholars are trying to achieve.

The essays provide such a vast array of areas within the title of the volume that it cannot be the aim of the reviewer to give an exhaustive picture of all of them. Instead, it might be a more useful approach to select a few that one finds perhaps more compelling than others with personal biases to be sure. The essays range from American exceptionalism through early American history to US diplomatic history, in a chronological order. Not surprisingly, the Polish angle comes forward sometimes, that is, some of the essays deal with Polish-American relations, diplomatic and otherwise. Some of them are more deeply-researched, while a few provide a more informative reading.

Perhaps it is worth mentioning Anna Stocka's essay, which deals with the Polish press review of the highly contested US presidential election of 1876 (103-114). The really interesting part is, as it turns out, that the Polish news readers of the time did not have to rely only on reprint of news coming from Western Europe, since there were two Polish correspondents

providing the news and background information surrounding this pivotal event. Another essay deals with the relations between American trade unions and Solidarity during the 1980 (Agnieszka Subocz-Gwizdek's essay, 315-327), which puts in the limelight a rarely-studied side of the tearing down of the communist era and the minor but still important role of NGOs. Another interesting piece is Mateusz Bogdanovicz's essay that deals with how the United States used its power status and the plight of Great Britain in 1940-1941 to secure economic and strategic advantages (181-198). He argues that Franklin Delano Roosevelt understood the nature of the current situation and both ousted Great Britain of the Western Hemisphere (a long dream of American leadership), plus he made the United States economically undefeatable for a long time to come.

This reviewer found Michał Leśniewski's piece on US-British relations during and around the Boer War one of the best in the collection (115-129). This writing put American foreign policy interests in perspective, and emphasized well what around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the US foreign policy decision makers found most crucial to their liking. How the changed position of the United States in the international arena came to play an important role in supporting British aims notwithstanding popular sympathy to the underdog Boer side. Another strong piece of writing is that of Joanna Modrzejewska-Leśniewska's (131-148), whose portraying the nature and difficulties of establishing US-Afghan diplomatic relations from the late 1910s all the way till 1943, has also repercussions for other countries and regions as well, Central Europe perhaps not excluded. Her conclusion might be as well used for Poland and Hungary in the Interwar years: "For the United States, Afghanistan was one of many far away countries in which the U.S. had limited interests." (147)

One of the most pleasing piece of writing is Halina Parafianowicz's article, "Between the Spoils System and Professionalism: U.S. Diplomats in Poland, 1919-1939" (149-163). This thoroughly researched article is surveying the American attitude toward Poland in the interwar years with an eye on the choice of the certain ministers and ambassadors accredited there. Since Poland was perhaps seen as the most crucial of the new Central and Eastern European countries (it was one of the seven countries in the whole of Europe to boast of having an American ambassador), it is expected that the United States showed a large amount of interest, a fact that should have been reflected in the careful choice of diplomats sent to Warsaw. Poland was seen as an important country between defeated Germany and Bolshevik Soviet Russia. Still, except for the first American diplomat sent there, Hugh S. Gibson, the interest hoped for did not materialize. After Gibson's stint the following representatives were more typically political appointees and not professional diplomats. This was not an isolated phenomenon to be sure. Other countries in the region "suffered" the same fate. On the one hand, in the wake of the Rogers Act of 1924, the aim to fill up the ranks of American diplomacy was a slow process, while on the other, the Eastern-Central European region, with other places around the globe, had lost much of its significance to Washington, and only with the coming of World War II got in the focus again, about that proved to be too late.

Halina Bieluk's essay explores US cultural diplomacy during the Cold War (227-242), and provides a window onto how many–sided the American effort was in trying to counter communist indoctrination anywhere in the world and expand the understanding of America. Another side of this Cold War cultural diplomacy is the topic of Renata Nowaczewska's essay (243-256), which takes a closer look at the United States Information Agency (USIS), which was known as United States Information Service (USIS) in Europe. Interestingly, while the promotion of US culture and policies seem to have been among the highest interest of the various US governments, Congress gave a cold shoulder to the undertaking.

On the other hand, several essays deal with anti-Americanism, or, at least, negative feelings concerning the United States, thus providing the largest structural coherence in the volume. What is somewhat surprising but not totally shocking is that this phenomenon appeared and still appears not only in Polish communist discourse (Jakub Tyszkievicz's essay, 215-225), but also in the Netherlands, where, as it turns out, there has been a long tradition

of anti-American sentiment with periodic waves towards animosity (Anna Wyrisz's study, 199-213). Tomasz Gajewski's "The Origins of Anti-Americanism in the Middle East" (279-297) shifts the focus out of Europe to the constant trouble spot of post-World War II. While after the First World War the image of the United States was clearly positive in the region, thanks to oil companies and Cold War politics, and the American-backed establishment of Israel, led to a drastic change by the late 1950s: "the perception of America in the Arab world from a positive, unselfish power to an imperial, anti-Arab, anti-Islam, pro-Israeli force" (286-287). With backing sometimes oppressive regimes for possible gains on the Cold War chessboard, let alone the military muscle used on many occasions, the United States was more and more perceived as an imperial giant. Also, deep-lying differences on worldview in general fueled by religious differences – all this by today has led to a seemingly unbridgeable gap of fervent anti-Americanism in the Middle East. By bad political choices in the past has transformed the region into the most hostile territory for the United States in which it does not wish to be embroiled but still, it simply cannot escape it. As a final piece to this theme, Ewelina Waśko-Owsiejczuk's piece deals with anti-Americanism in the world at large after the shameful events at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo during the Iraq war under George W. Bush' presidency (329-343). As she rightly observes, this caused perhaps the biggest setback to American prestige around the world in recent decades. Not only in the Arab and Muslim countries did the United States suffer a huge loss of credibility, but also among many allied countries among NATO members. Perhaps nothing left as shameful a mark on George W. Bush's presidency as these human rights violations during the war on terror. Fervent anti-Americanism, never a long-absented feature in the world, only seems to have reemerged in the wake of these acts and, as recent events show, it is here to stay.

The closing essay is again connected to Polish-American relations. The title of Jadwiga Kiwerska's essay (345-359) is setting the tone: "America: Poland's Perfect Ally." The title notwithstanding, what she explores comes as somewhat ambiguous perfection. Although she rightly states of the relations of Poland with the United States as "incredibly positive baggage" (345), the question perhaps should be put into: "in relation to what?" The turbulent and tragic centuries of Polish history obviously orients the country toward the United States, for both realistic and ideological reasons. However, as the author herself points out frequently in the essay, the American partner can never see Poland as a strategic partner for simply because it cannot weigh in comparison to such countries as Russia or Germany when it comes to the big picture. The United States considers Poland as an important partner, but nothing more (not that it is not a positive sign). However, Polish political and average opinion is disillusioned with the American position vis-à-vis Poland, in which the latest disappointment was the American decision under Barack Obama not to have the missile site built on Polish ground. Therefore, it is little wonder that in the conclusion Kiwerska warns against seeing the United States as a perfect ally, rather "a powerful and valuable partner" should be the realistic expectation (358). Perhaps then, a question mark would have been legitimate in the title of the essay.

It would be also nice to see a similar edited volume of various essays coming from the other ex-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the countries from their vicinities. Thus, a collection concerning perception of the United States in a historical perspective done by Czech, Romanian, Bulgarian, or other scholars could broaden the view of their Hungarian and Polish counterparts.

The Inauguration of "Organized Political Warfare": Cold War Organizations Sponsored by the National committee for a Free Europe/Free Europe Committee, Katalin Kádár Lynn, ed., Saint Helena, CA: Helena History Press, LLC, 2013. 604 pages.

This bulky book, which is a collection of expansive essays representing a wide array of contributors, concentrates on one aspect of the American Cold War psychological warfare strategy. Namely, on the Free Europe Committee, a large organization mainly made up by

Eastern and Central European political refugees who believed that with American backing their respective native countries might be liberated from Soviet domination. After World War II and in the soon-to-spread Cold War, it is understandable that the American leadership was looking for new ways to challenge the new type of danger. The Soviet Union with its inimical ideology and robust military power meant a direct affront to the United States. Since traditional war between the two superpowers was out of the question, it was left to fight it out mainly in the political, economic, and cultural spheres. The covert psychological warfare belonged chiefly to the first, and was aiming to undermine the Soviet Union and its puppet satellite countries in every way possible short of war.

The eleven thoroughly researched essays in this book take a look at different angles of the aforementioned US effort during the Cold War. All of them are about the Free Europe Committee and its different regional councils, such as Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania, or the Baltic States. Some of the essays deal with overall attempts to win some sort of "victory" by the help of the Free Europe University, for example. Some of them concentrate rather on an individual imbedded in the early phase of the Cold War. Together, they offer an impressive collection of an important and so far undeservedly neglected sphere of the period. This is first and foremost thanks to the editor, Katalin Kádár Lynn, who is also the author of two articles in the volume. The goal of a review cannot be but only the overall impression with highlighting some of the most interesting aspects of the studies.

In the first such article, "At War While at Peace: United States Cold War Policy and the National Committee for a Free Europe, Inc.," (7-70) Lynn overviews the launch of the American psychological warfare, the covert means based on organizations made up by private citizens, first and foremost from the émigrés and refugees from the countries representing Central and Eastern Europe that had found themselves under the sudden political yoke of the Soviet Union by 1948. By that summer, the US leadership had understood and accepted that covert means must be a way of dealing with the Soviet Union; the Americans had to do something about the Soviet effort to expand their way of ideology and influence. Like many other ideas, this notion, coated in the national security jacket, also sprang from George F. Kennan, the famous author of containment, the basic American Cold War strategy. His understanding of the history and recent actions of the Soviet Union and his own native country made Kennan argue for the launch of a secretly funded private organization with the overt aim, via covert means, to gain whatever inroad in the newly acquired satellite countries in the Eastern and Central European region, and thus to undermine the Soviet regime and its influence within these countries. (17-20) The most spectacular branch was the well-known Radio Free Europe (RFE from 1951) and the Assembly of Captive European Nations (ACEN from 1954).

Lynn well outlines the story beyond the foundation of the Free Europe Committee. The organization "operated under the stewardship of the State Department and the Department of Defense and covertly funded through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for the life of the organization from 1949 – 1971". (24) Possibly none other than Allen Dulles was the principal organizer, who gathered around him highly trustworthy colleagues from his spying past. (23) The National Committee for Free Europe, Inc. (NCFE), as the organization was called between 1949 and 1954, comprised such household names as Adolph A. Berle, Jr., Dwight D. Eisenhower, Joseph C. Grew, Henry R. Luce, or Darryl Zanuck, together with the ubiquitous Allen Dulles. These people shared the common worldview that communism was a deadly threat and should be stopped. The NCFE, Inc.'s main purpose was propaganda activities in various forms.

Despite the harsh anti-Communist rhetoric and campaign often led by the NCFE/FEC from the late 1940s and up until 1956, the Polish and Hungarian uprisings, Kádár emphasizes that "United States foreign policy of this era was based on pragmatic perspective that recognized the post-WWII European status quo and accepted the prevailing balance of power with the Soviet Union." (45) The NCFE/FEC's goal changed in time and tone accordingly. Thus, the main aim was "a broad program of psychological warfare and the further development of

the radios and their propaganda program." (51). From that time on, the organization first and foremost was involved in helping refugees' lives in the West, mainly in Western Europe. (56) The organization came to a halt in 1971 to lack of funds, which was again a reflection of the policy shift in US foreign thinking. (59) In Kádár's conclusion, the NCFE/FEC played a positive role, however, especially from the émigrés' and refugees' point of view, because support was provided by various means "keeping intact the exiles' national spirit, their cultures and languages." (60) Whether such an organization and its spawns really "helped hasten the final disintegration of the Soviet occupation of Central and East Europe" is, in the opinion of this reviewer, a little bit farfetched though. (60)

Kádár's other article deals with the history of the Hungarian National Council ("the most successful of the national councils sponsored by the NCFE/FEC") from 1947, later to be called Hungarian National Committee. (300) This was the very first well-organized national council of the Soviet satellite countries' exile communities. The HNC was criticized to be only a propaganda tool of US foreign policy but not a true representative of the American Hungarian community, a valid claim. (246-47) Internal schism and intrigue were constant features that plagued this council just like the others (248-258), many members being unable to adjust themselves to the new environment and new rules of the political game. Understandably, the HNC was most active during and in the aftermath of the 1956 revolution in Hungary. (277-293) As a subchapter to Kádár's exhaustive study, it is worth noting the specialized short chapter on one individual's brief introduction to his exile years. Tibor Frank's article on the Hungarian sociologist-politician Imre Kovács gives a nice example of a person's complicated role in and out of both the Hungarian National Council and the NCFE/FEC. (307-322)

Maria Kokoncheva's piece studies the Bulgarian National Council, but first and foremost puts its dynamic leader, Georgi Mihov Dimtirov, in the spotlight. (363-395) Her conclusion might be applied to the whole tragedy of these national councils in the framework of the Cold War: "All of these efforts bore very few practical results, often going no further then [sic] to make the West aware that there were people who still had the hope and desire to continue the fight for political and personal freedom in the countries behind the Iron Curtain." (390)

Aside from the obvious political agenda that these organizations followed, one of their major contribution was helping their fellow refugees to settle down in the United States. Also, they sent aid packages to those remaining behind, and tried to secure and relay information pertaining to the domestic situation in their home countries.

An unfortunate but typical feature was disunity among the respective exiles. Disagreement, strife, quarrels, and jealousy were the order of these years, and this rule bore out basically in every national council. A good example for this was the Czechoslovak exiles' case in Francis Raska's study on the history of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia. (71-120) For the better part of three decades, the various members showed little unity. In this case, even such nationalistic disputes erupted as between the Czechs and Slovaks within the Czechoslovak exile community. (80) Next to the almost continuous funding problems, another feature that was omnipresent in every exile community was the lack of unity between the first and second generation exiles. The first group often saw the latter as non-legitimate since living for a number of years in their home countries and often filling governmental posts.

If disunity was a typical feature of these councils, then the Polish exile groups took the cake. Anna Mazurkiewicz's study well represents this schism that took almost epic proportions, and went so far that on the Assembly of Captive European Nations there were two separate Polish exile organizations represented. (323-361) These people simply could not manage to send representatives of one single unified group to ACEN in more than a quarter of a century. Marius Petraru's piece on the Romanian National Council, for example, points out that the Romanian exiles represented a constant crisis management and disunity. (128-131, 143-153) The Romanian National Council is also a good example of agony taking place when funding proved difficult. After the Nixon administration decided to cut funding to the various national

councils at the end of 1971, most of them found themselves in dire straits, and soon the Romanian Council basically ceased functioning. (184-186)

Jonathan H. L'Hommedieu calls attention to the unique and ambiguous example of the national councils of the three Baltic States, which had been incorporated to the Soviet Union by tacit American and British approval. Therefore, originally the NCFE omitted these exile groups from its activities. (202) As elsewhere, the various factions among émigrés was a contentious issue here too. (204-208) In the spring of 1951 the Baltic consultative panels were created and their activities were brought under the auspices of the NCFE, and one year later were the respective national councils of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania established. (206) The US non-recognition policy concerning the Baltic States ensued another issue, namely, where to broadcast: through Radio Free Europe (where they wanted) or Voice of America (the official American propaganda tool, where after a short spell they were, to their dissatisfaction).

Mazurkiewicz' other study focuses on a very short period at the end of the 1950s. (397-437) In it she discusses the ACEN's role in trying to modify US foreign policy in light of the highly visible tours of various Soviet leaders, that of Nikita Khrushchev's standing out naturally in September 1959. Although the ACEN tried relentlessly through its lobby work to decry the efforts of the Eisenhower administration trying to find closer common ground with the Soviets, the obvious possible gains for American foreign policy were much more important than to listen to conscientious slogans from representatives of the captive nations of East and Central Europe. As the tension grew between official American foreign policy and the ACEN's agenda, the State Department and the FEC "begun to slowly but steadily phase out – politically and financially – the ACEN." (427) Interests come always first.

The last two essays in the volume are case studies of how far the NCFE/FEC tried to combat communism on various levels. One is Veronika Durin-Hornyik's study on the Strasbourg-located Free Europe University in Exile (439-514), which was a gathering place of East and Central European youth to finish their respective higher education. Obviously, the goal was to teach democratic values and "prepare" them for the intellectual struggle against Soviet encroaches in scientific and cultural fields. The plan was to have a capable and relatively young intellectual group poised to help in leading their countries after their respective liberation from the Soviet yoke. Or, in Adolph A. Berle's words, to provide "the raw material for democratic leadership." (457) The November 1951 opening of the institution, however, was a rushed one, with a confused student and teacher body, without clear guiding principles, and plaguing linguistic inadequacies, which all contributed to the basic problem. (478-485) The changing international political landscape did not leave the FEUE immune to it either, and after some changes in functions for a short time, the College, after being "nothing more than a sinking ship," came to a halt in 1958. (497)

As another unique aspect of the larger scope in the volume, one interestedly reads Toby Charles Rider' study on the Cold War activities of the Hungarian National Sports Federation. (515-546) Sports were a special facet of the Cold War, where the nationalistic and ideological warfare was carried on in the wins or losses. In George Orwell's words, "Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play… in other words it is war minus shooting." (520) The HNC created its sports faction in 1949 (this was the Hungarian National Sports Federation) with the overt aim of using sports as a counterblow to the communist system. (522) Helping prominent athletes and coaches to defect and resettle was a primary goal of HNSF, especially at the Melbourne Olympic Games in 1956 right after the crushed Hungarian Revolution, in which case thirty-four Hungarian athletes did defect. (527-530) Since the FEC sponsored the HNSF until 1963, this is a very good example how many tentacles the organizations really had. This concluding essay is also a good call for further studies to be explored that can be connected with the FEC and its anti-communist struggle during the Cold War.

The whole book is a welcomed and much-needed addition to Cold War studies and the history of the Cold War. Albeit always on the sidelines in the epic struggle between the two

antagonistic camps, the various national councils gained a measure of importance for their respective nationalities, whether at home or in the West, mainly in the United States. Some of the articles might be a little bit too detailed for a reader only with average curiosity in the Cold War, still it is an important contribution to the field, and not only for specialized readers. And it seems sure there is more to be found, so a second volume would be welcomed, where the various researchers go even deeper in the national councils' work and achievements, or the lack of.