

Blejwas opowiada historię podziałów i pojednań; przystosowań w drugiej i dalszych generacjach, wpływu wojny, dylematów związanych ze współdziałaniem z komunistyczną Polską, państwem *de nomine* wolnym, ale niemożliwym do uznania za takie w znaczeniu, jakie ze słowem „wolny” wiąże Polonia; a także o zmianach w Polonii, która porzuciła członkostwo PSAA od dziesięcioleci niezmiennie. Blejwas sytuuje historię PSAA na tle dziejów Polonii amerykańskiej, jak i kluczowych wydarzeń w Polsce.

Właściwa historia PSAA liczy 185 stron. Książka zawiera też 52 czarne i kolorowe ilustracje oraz wiele uzupełniających informacji, jak listy urzędników narodowych, chórów członkowskich (łącznie z chórami dziecięcymi), członków honorowych i pieśni śpiewanych w zwycięskich repertuarach na zawodach konwencji narodowych. Zawarte są także życiorysy wybranych osobistości PSAA, odnośniki i bibliografia.

To była ostatnia książka Blejwasa, skończona tuż przed jego śmiercią w 2001 r. Na szczęście zdołała ujrzeć światło dzienne. Wypełnia ona zapotrzebowanie na współczesną historię małej, choć ważnej polonijnej organizacji narodowej. Pokazuje też, jaką stratą jest dla Polonii amerykańskiej odejście Stana Blejwasa.

John M. Grondelski

Tłum. ks. Zygmunt Zieliński

John R a d z i ł o w s k i, *The Eagle and the Cross: A History of the Roman Catholic Union of America* (Boulder, CO: Eastern European Monographs), New York: Columbia University Press 2003, ss. xviii + 359.

Polak to katolik. A traditional aphorism, but in what sense is it true? Postwar changes in Poland's borders produced a religiously homogenous state. For decades under communism, the Church boasted that 90% of Poles were Catholics. In the 15 years since the formal end of communism, however, the outcome of debates on a number of issues suggest that the 90% claim of religious affiliation did not account very well for superficiality. In the Third Republic, some political parties invoked Catholic principles in their political platforms. Their claims have been disputed by fellow Catholics as well as adduced as "proof" by the Left that a "confessional state" was in the making.

If one goes back in time, "*Polak to katolik*" becomes even more problematic. Interwar Poland had a Jewish population of at least 10%. Sixteenth century Poland, at the zenith of its political power, encompassed Jews, Muslims and the Orthodox as well as some adherents of the Radical Reformation.

Religious identity was also entwined with ethnic identity. Even if they lived within Poland's borders, the "Polish" Orthodox were usually ethnically Ukrainian or Belarusan. Nor can ethnicity and citizenship be easily equated historically in Poland:

lots of people who identified themselves in the 19th century as “Polish” were actually subjects of other empires. Many American Polonians, who today proudly call themselves “Polish” (even if they never set foot in the Old Country) are descendants of people who actually arrived on papers calling them “Russians”, „Prussians”, or “Austro-Hungarians”. Those immigrants probably called themselves “Pomeranians” or “Galicians” or “Rusyns” rather than “Poles”. Clearly, the intersection of religion, ethnicity and nationality in Poland is no easy question.

Neither was it an easy question in American Polonia’s history. The existence of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA) and the Polish National Alliance (PNA) attest to this. But, as John Radziłowski (Ph.D., Arizona State University) shows in this sympathetic yet professionally critical history of the 131-year old PRCUA, the PRCUA/PNA divide was more than „simply a matter of one group that stressed Catholicism pitted against another group that stressed a broader nationalism” (p. 87). To reduce the difference between the PRCUA and the PNA to a “Catholic-versus-secular division” (p. 89) is facile. To the degree that it presumes what Richard Neuhaus calls “the naked public square” of contemporary radical secularism, it is also anachronistic. “The PRCUA/PNA difference lay at the level of ideals, emerging from a longstanding division in Polish attitudes that had emerged by the end of the eighteenth century [...] The Alliance emerged out of Poland’s nineteenth-century Romantic tradition. [...] Romantics saw Poland as the ‘Christ among nations’, and its problems were the result of the evil actions of its autocratic neighbors. [...] [T]he Union [...] came out of Poland’s Positivist tradition. [...] They believed Poland had lost its independence due to its own weakness, and its problems could be best solved by building up the nation’s internal resources” (pp. 89, 90).

For the PNA, priority belonged to the *naród*, “all Poles and persons of Polish descent residing anywhere in the world” (p. 89). For the PRCUA, priority belonged to the *okolica*, the local environment and neighborhood. The nationalists wanted to build from the top down, instilling ethnic consciousness in peasants who, prior to their emigration, probably never traveled far from their villages. The PRCUA wanted to build from the bottom up, starting with vigorous local communities centered on local parishes (p. 90).

In PNA eyes, at least at the start, American Polonia was ephemeral: “once Poland regained its independence, most Polish immigrants would return home” (p. 90). PRCUA more quickly recognized that American Polonia was something here-to-stay, and was thus more readily invested in building it up. Paradoxically, the PNA was the greater proponent of naturalization and assimilation, convinced that American Polonia could leverage their U.S. ties to the advantage of the Polish cause. The PRCUA, more fearful that a secularist, materialist and consumerist culture could lead Polish Catholics astray, sought to forge a comfortable Polonian subculture that would keep those evils at bay. How many people know, for example, that the PRCUA launched its own colonization program? In seeking to keep Polish villagers down on the farm, it promoted settlement in Polonian communities formed in Nebraska in the 1870s. That effort was not marginal: its impact could be felt a century later. “In 1980, Sherman County, Nebraska, had the highest percentage of Polish Americans of any county in the United States” (p. 64).

“Organic work” was the credo of Polish Positivism and the motto of the PRCUA. Building up families and communities were the PRCUA’s goals. Radziłowski discusses their varied contributions, from establishing a social safety net through insurance funds and death benefits for immigrants thrust into the cauldron of 19th century industrial America to camps and sports programs aimed at maintaining Polish cultural identity among youth to efforts to provide relief and reconstruction assistance to Poles and Poland following two world wars. Polish Americans played a key role in the struggle of America’s labor unions, and PRCUA assisted its working class members both by demanding workplace social justice as well as providing assistance to strikers.

The changing demographics of Polonia, new patterns of immigration and the atomization of American life to the detriment of civil society and voluntary organizations all have their impact on PRCUA today. Radziłowski is aware of the problems faced by Polish-American organizational life, but he keeps perspective while sounding an upbeat note: “It would be easy to magnify the Union’s problems in the 1990s. Yet, earlier generations faced far greater problems with far smaller resources. The PRCUA, today an organization with close to \$300 million in insurance and millions more in home mortgages and real estate, began as a loose collection of church societies with no central administration, no funds, no death benefits, no headquarters, no library, no museum, and only a semi-official newspaper. The Polonia of that time was universally poor, poorly educated, politically impotent, and oppressed. The Polish homeland was little more than a colony of foreign powers. A century and a quarter later, the picture is completely different, like night and day” (p. 313-14).

Amplly illustrated and well documented, this book deserves to be on the bookshelves of all Polish-Americans. The photographs and cartoon sketches truly prove that “a picture is worth a thousand words”. A special chapter is dedicated to the unappreciated resource of American Polonia, the Polish Museum of America. As always, Radziłowski anchors the history of PRCUA against the larger backdrop of the histories of American Polonia, Poland, and America. Highly recommended.

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Wykazy osób z akt parafialnych diecezji łuckiej do 1945 roku, oprac. ks. Waldemar Witold Żurek, t. I, Lublin 2004, ss. 1000; t. II – 2005, ss. 782 + 2 nlb.; t. III – 2006, ss. 856; t. IV – 2007, ss. 816.

Polacy mieszkający w kraju i za granicą otrzymali cenną pomoc do poszukiwań swych korzeni. W ostatnich latach w Bibliotece Instytutu Archiwów, Bibliotek i Muzeów Kościelnych przy Katolickim Uniwersytecie Lubelskim Jana Pawła II ukazały się cztery tomy prezentowanej publikacji, a w przygotowaniu jest kolejny (V). Wy-