

Anna Mazurkiewicz. *Uchodźcy polityczni z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w amerykańskiej polityce zimnowojennej 1948-1954.* Warsaw and Gdańsk: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Uniwersytet Gdański, 2016. 542 pp. \$24.84, cloth, ISBN 978-83-8098-072-3.

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Commissioned by Anna Muller (University of Michigan - Dearborn)

Gdańsk history professor Anna Mazurkiewicz has long been a fixture of transatlantic scholarly activism, organizing major international conferences in fields as different from one another as Polish American history and Cold War studies, assembling a transnational cast of authors to populate the half-dozen volumes she has edited, and presiding over the Polish American Historical Association. Mazurkiewicz is the rare figure who excels in a field that in Anglophone North America has fashionably become known as the history of “the US and the world” (formerly the history of American foreign relations), all while writing this history in the Polish language, from halfway across the world. Her first two monographs gave her the chance to shine as a scholar of both Poland and the United States, respectively examining American diplomatic responses to and press coverage of the controversial elections that book-ended Poland’s Communist period: in 1947 (the elections that *inter alia* led former London government prime minister Stanisław Mikołajczyk to flee back into exile) and in 1989 (the elections that led to the creation of Tadeusz Mazowiecki’s Solidarność government and the rapid crumbling of Communist rule).[1]

Long-awaited, Mazurkiewicz’s third monograph does not disappoint. It is easily one of the

most important works published in the past decade in the broadly conceived field of “the US and the world.” In 472 densely packed pages of analysis, the author marshals exhaustive empirical research from four countries, an expert command of at least a half-dozen historiographies, and—perhaps most impressively—fine-grained conceptual and heuristic reflections that are clearly the product of years’ worth of careful study. Despite its merely descriptive title (which translates as “Political Refugees from East-Central Europe in American Cold War Policy”), Mazurkiewicz’s book does not lose its way in positivist fixation on minutiae. Rather, *Uchodźcy polityczni z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w amerykańskiej polityce zimnowojennej 1948-1954* manages to be, in exemplary and truly laudable fashion, both deeply Polish and deeply American in methodology and exposition alike. Detailed reconstructions of who was in charge of what organization or initiative and when (see, for example, the tables on pages 190-97) amount to a great act of prosopographic altruism for future scholars of the topic, while each chapter starts and finishes with complex but crisply articulated analysis. This is clearly a scholarly monograph that meets the very demanding Polish standards for empirical detail and discursive footnoting yet manages also

both to be eminently readable in its own right and to set an insightful agenda for future research. Mazurkiewicz has written a phenomenally good book, and she is to be commended.

The book consists of six chapters, organized in part thematically, in part chronologically. Chapter 1 deals with the origins of the Cold War and the United States' role in it—not in a generic way that would merely summarize existing historiography but instead in an imaginative and archival-driven exposition that also showcases noteworthy lexical precision. The author quotes at length and deconstructs in detail US State Department internal memoranda and debates on the overlapping goals of psychological warfare (one of Mazurkiewicz's operative categories in the book), political warfare, propaganda, public diplomacy, and cultural diplomacy. Mazurkiewicz actually undersells her own contributions here: taken as a whole, the book may tend toward top-down analysis of “political elites” emerging from “old boys' networks” of the Ivy League, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), or the Foreign Service, but her history of US foreign policy under Presidents Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower is no repetition of either Melvyn Leffler or John Lewis Gaddis.[2]

Instead of seeing the Cold War world as a sort of 3-D printout designed by the first generation of American Cold Warriors (George Kennan, John Foster Dulles, C. D. Jackson), Mazurkiewicz shows how their designs were only the beginning of a dynamic process of negotiation playing out over the better part of the decade that followed World War II. Their negotiation partners were exiles, émigrés, and refugees who had only just escaped newly established Soviet hegemony over East-Central and Eastern Europe.[3] The story of these Europeans' encounters with the United States was as much one of xenophobia, nativism, and McCarthyism (chapter 2) as of Cold War triumphalism. Kennan, Dulles, Jackson, and others in the Truman and Eisenhower administrations were

playing a long game against the Soviet Union. That strategy necessitated a balancing act: seconding several generations' worth of itinerant transnational political activists into the service of US Cold War aims, while recognizing that reaping the fruits of their talent also required active countermeasures against Americans' own prejudices.

And so was born a partnership foundational to the American Cold War effort, binding the US foreign policy establishment of the 1940s and 1950s to activists hailing from (officially) nine different European nations. (In practice, the number was higher: Yugoslav activists received *ad personam* support even though the US diplomatic embrace of Josip Broz Tito precluded official recognition of, for example, Slovenes' “captivity.”) At the heart of this partnership was the Free Europe Committee (FEC), whose most influential offspring, Radio Free Europe, is still operating today. In Cold War historiography, the FEC—chartered as a private corporation under a slightly different name in 1949 and funded by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in successive iterations until the early 1970s—has so far mostly served only as a way station for scholars delving in their writings into the histories of the OSS, the CIA, Radio Free Europe, or individual exile communities that benefited from FEC support.[4] In the various national historiographies of Eastern and East-Central Europe, the FEC receives sporadic mention as a sort of all-purpose explanation for American clandestine support of refugees: invoked (rightly, but often without the right evidence) to indicate how exiles from the Soviet Bloc went from arriving in London and Paris on the verge of penury to becoming (in some cases) serious transnational power brokers. Scholarship on the FEC that transcends traditionally conceived American security studies and East-Central European exile scholarship is only just beginning to come into its own.[5]

And so we find ourselves at a historiographical and thematic crossroads in which Mazurkiewicz's qualifications are unparalleled. In

the decade separating the book under review from her first two books about the entanglement of US and Polish political history at the bookends of the Cold War, she also made a productive foray into diasporic and migration studies.[6] To Mazurkiewicz, neither the American foreign policy specialists nor the most senior exiles (like Hungarian agrarian party leader Ferenc Nagy or Polish Christian Democratic leader Karol Popiel) exhaust the story. But, together, these two sides created an institutional framework (Mazurkiewicz describes the FEC as both a “quango” and, following political scientist Scott Lucas, a “state-private network”) intended to wall a privileged community of refugees off from the vicissitudes of American party politics. Seasoned former OSS handlers joined young Foreign Service officials like the omnipresent John Foster Leich (in many ways, the true protagonist of Mazurkiewicz’s book and also one of her key sources through oral history and private papers). Their brainchild, the FEC, prioritized American foreign policy goals, but at the same time—at least, in the 1950s—committed to protecting its refugee assets in unprecedented ways, even going so far as to issue life insurance policies and retirement pensions.

Along the way, (some of) the East-Central Europeans learned to bend these projects to their own agendas. Sometimes prewar scores were settled within the framework of organizations like the Assembly of Captive European Nations, but more often these fora—as well as US-sponsored exile involvement in transnational political assemblies like the Christian Democratic Union of Central Europe or the International Peasants’ Union—became vehicles for cross-national cooperation among exiles wrestling with the same problems, especially with how to maintain legitimacy without having the opportunity to stand for elections in their home countries. US establishment figures like founding FEC chairman Joseph Grew presented these exile-led initiatives as “sym-

bols of democratic hope for compatriots back in Eastern Europe” (p. 183).

While chapter 3 of Mazurkiewicz’s book reconstructs the creation of the FEC on the American side, chapters 4 through 6 explore in great detail the exiles’ activism under the auspices of FEC initiatives. In substantive terms, the outsized focus on the FEC is both the greatest strength of the book and one of its few weaknesses. The absence of a coherent FEC historiography in any language makes clear the need for this type of focus—and yet, this was not pitched as a book about the FEC, as both the title and the framing of chapters 1 and 2 indicate. True, the book’s conclusion puts the FEC, and especially one of its pet projects, the Assembly of Captive European Nations (according to page 476, the subject of Mazurkiewicz’s next book), front and center among the volume’s take-aways.[7] Yet if Mazurkiewicz’s goal was to write a book about the FEC, then the entire work should have been clearly framed as such. Indeed, despite its breadth and richness of source material, this book reads at times like a synoptic foregrounding of, or prelude to, a much more focused case study. As a result, one can quibble about various important threads left out of the book, though given its already-imposing scope, such quibbling seems little more than an exercise in pettiness.

At the same time, this book suffers from one fatal flaw: it was written and published in Polish, without—as I understand—any plans for an English-language edition. Mazurkiewicz’s (possibly?) forthcoming English-language volume about the Assembly of Captive European Nations would certainly make an important contribution in its own right to the history of “the US and the world.” But Mazurkiewicz has already written a major book—this book—that is synoptic, crafted for a cross-field and cross-national readership, and researched and framed more exhaustively and more thoughtfully than almost any other monograph that I have ever read. This is a major book: as Mazurkiewicz rightly notes, “The interdepen-

dent interests of both sides and the mechanisms of cooperation with émigré politicians put into effect in the years 1948-1954 became a model that Americans reproduced, with mixed results, for other groups of Cold War refugees” (p. 472).

Yet, even for the purposes of this review, I find myself retranslating source quotations originally written in English back into that language, from the Polish in which Mazurkiewicz has published them. The result is a frustrating situation that forces readers either to seek out the archival originals themselves or to court likely imprecision or error in the process of back-translation. The author clearly expended painstaking effort—not to mention months of her time—carefully rendering these quotations into Polish, and I cannot but ask myself: Why? Mazurkiewicz is right that, not only in Poland, but worldwide, this book represents the very first effort “to reconstruct the activities of refugee political organizations from the standpoint of the American administration” (p. 8). So why not publish it in English? The principal target audience for this book is in the United States, Canada, and the British Isles, not in Poland; few Polish-language scholars will read it, and most of those who do will not appreciate the depth and breadth of its empirical and historiographical engagement. Worst of all, most non-Polish-language scholars (certainly, those specializing in “the US and the world”) will continue on blissfully unaware of this book’s existence. My great fear is that *Uchodźcy polityczni z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w amerykańskiej polityce zimnowojennej* may prove to be as little-remarked as it is empirically and methodologically path-breaking in its research and analysis, a prospect that I personally find heart-breaking.

Notes

[1]. Anna Mazurkiewicz, *Dyplomacja Stanów Zjednoczonych wobec wyborów w Polsce w latach 1947 i 1989* (Warsaw: Neriton-IH PAN, 2007); and Anna Mazurkiewicz, *Prasa amerykańska wobec*

wyborów w Polsce w latach 1947 i 1989 (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2009).

[2]. Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); and John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014).

[3]. Mazurkiewicz uses all three terms but convincingly justifies these choices on pages 117-18.

[4]. See, for example, Scott Lucas, *Freedom’s War: The American Crusade against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); A. Ross Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: The CIA Years and Beyond* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); and Sławomir Łukasiewicz, *Third Europe: Polish Federalist Thought in the United States, 1940-1970s*, trans. Witold Zbirohowski-Kościa (Saint Helena, CA: Helena History Press, 2016).

[5]. See, for example, Piotr H. Kosicki, “Christian Democracy’s Global Cold War,” in *Christian Democracy across the Iron Curtain: Europe Redefined*, ed. Piotr H. Kosicki and Sławomir Łukasiewicz (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 221-56; and Katalin Kádár Lynn, “At War while at Peace: United States Cold War Policy and the National Committee for a Free Europe, Inc.,” in *The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare: Cold War Organizations Supported by the National Committee for a Free Europe/Free Europe Committee*, ed. Katalin Kádár Lynn (Saint Helena, CA: Helena History Press, 2013), 7-70.

[6]. Anna Mazurkiewicz, ed., *East Central Europe in Exile*, 2 vols (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2013).

[7]. See <http://helenahistorypress.com/book-acen.html> (accessed June 6, 2019).

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