Monthly Publications Update, November 2021, PSA/H-Poland Member Submissions

Discussion published by Patrice Dabrowski on Monday, November 29, 2021

(10 entries: books, articles, article forum, book review essay, encyclopedia article)

Books:


   Keywords: Polish poetry, tape recording, radio, poetry reading, recitation, exile, salon, poetic culture, history of Polish poetry, politics, 20th century.


   Keywords: Poland, Africa, South America, colonialism, imperialism, empire, emigration, settlement

   *Poland in a Colonial World Order* is a study of the interwar Polish state and empire building project in a changing world of empires, nation-states, dominions, protectorates, mandates, and colonies.

   Drawing from a wide range of sources spanning two continents and five countries, Piotr Puchalski examines how Polish elites looked to expansion in South America and Africa as a solution to both real problems, such as industrial backwardness, and perceived issues, such as the supposed overrepresentation of Jews in "liberal professions." He charts how, in partnership with other European powers and international institutions such as the League of Nations, Polish leaders made attempts to channel emigration to South America, to establish direct trade with Africa, to expedite national minorities to far-away places, and to tap into colonial resources around the globe. Puchalski demonstrates the intersection between such national policies and larger processes taking place at the time, including the internationalist turn of colonialism and the global fascination with technocratic solutions.

   Carefully researched, the volume is key reading for scholars and advanced students of twentieth-century European history.


Keywords: Jewish children, Poland, Kraków, Holocaust, World War II, ethnic relations, ghettos, camps

Abstract: This book examines the history of Kraków in German-occupied Poland, Jewish daily life and Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust through the lens of Jewish children's experiences.

https://www.rutgersuniversitypress.org/jewish-childhood-in-krakow/9781978822931

Articles:


Keywords: legislative Sejm, labor, parliamentary rhetoric, social question, interwar Poland, labor legislation, Polish-Bolshevik war

Abstract: This article examines the impact of internal and external pressures on the parliamentary debate concerning the place of the working class within a newly emerging polity. Based on machine-assisted distant reading and close hermeneutics of parliamentary session transcripts, I ask how the first diet of the modern Polish state (1919–1922) responded to labour militancy and war. My analysis demonstrates that social unrest was successfully used by the left to foster inclusion of the popular classes in a political, social, and economic sense, contributing to the democratization of the state. In contrast, the external threat of war had an opposite effect. Although it justified the left advocating greater inclusion of workers and peasants because of their high death toll on the battlefields, it was actually the right that capitalized on national unity and readily used arguments about the Bolshevik threat or traitors among the landless masses to block or even reverse reforms aimed at democratization. The external threat of war, waged against a nominally leftist political force, helped the weak state to reduce the high impact of labour unrest on parliamentary proceedings.

Open access article available here:


Keywords: Wajda, Wyspiański, film, theater, intermediality, philosophy of history

Abstract: This article compares the role played by painting in Stanisław Wyspiański's 1901 play Wesele [The Wedding] and Andrzej Wajda's eponymous 1973 film adaptation. Both Wyspiański and Wajda were trained as painters, and were highly aware of the importance of visual culture in forging a nation's sense of self. Moreover, both found themselves exercising a powerful position as 'the voice' of their nation at a time when it was subjugated by foreign powers. Noting Wyspiański's interest in Nietzsche and Wagner, the article argues that intermediality provides an occasion first for the playwright and, later, for the filmmaker to question the difference between history and myth—as well as their own role in this political context. In the original play, Wyspiański uses painting above all, but also music and dance, to critique the popular belief in a messianic leader who will one day be sent to liberate Poland. It is by bringing these art forms into conversation, that he is able to comment on their deleterious influence in perpetuating a vision of Polish history as myth. Wajda's use of painting in the film is far more ambivalent. By playing with the placement and scale of the paintings, he emphasizes the points of continuity between Wyspiański's time and his own but ultimately evades the question of historical agency.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/polishreview.66.3.0059?refreqid=excelsior%3A207fef945173ae69e028c828bf96446b


Abstract: After the Second World War, Polish nobility was commonly considered an obsolete social group because of the post-1945 confiscation of their properties and the decline of their legal and political privileges. From a formal point of view, the Polish nobility had ceased to exist. However, this group did not simply vanish. For this reason, we should not speak of the disintegration of the former noble milieu but rather its reorganization. To expand deliberation on these “reorganization strategies” with the use of appropriate sociological tools, this paper analyzes major social actors in contemporary Poland who use their noble legacies in their collective identity-building practices.


Abstract: Citizenship is usually seen as a product of modern nation-states, or of other political entities which possess institutional infrastructures and political systems capable of producing a coherent framework that defines the relationship between that system and its members. In this paper, we show that an early system of modern citizenship was created in the absence of a formal state, notably by the cultural elite of a stateless nation. The Polish case illustrates that an elite may
become a dominant class in the given society only later, and institutionalize that early citizenship system within the framework of a newly founded state. As a result of the legacy of the emergence of citizenship predating the restoration of statehood, the contemporary Polish citizenship model is influenced by a strong and largely overlooked cultural component that emerged at the turn of the 19th century. This model uses the figure of the intelligentsia member as its ideal citizen. Despite the dramatic political and economic changes in the decades which have passed since its emergence, this cultural frame, which was institutionalized during the interwar period, still defines the key features of the Polish citizenship model. Consequently, we argue that the culturalization of citizenship is hardly a new phenomenon. It can be seen as a primary mechanism in the formation of civic polities within the imperial context. Moreover, it shows that such processes can have many ambiguous aspects as far as their Orientalizing forces of exclusion are concerned.


Article Forum:

8: Forum: The Environmental History and the Holocaust. Journal of Genocide Research, 2021 (online first)

Contents:

Omer Bartov, What is the Environmental History of the Holocaust?

Eric Katz, The Holocaust as an Environmental Problem

Jessica Rapson, The Environmental History of the Holocaust

Ewa Domańska, Jacek Malczyński, Mikolaj Smykowski & Agnieszka Kłos, "The Legacies of the Holocaust Beyond the Human and Across a Longer durée (In Response to Omer Bartov, Eric Katz and Jessica Rapson)"


Keywords: Holocaust, anthropocentrism, colonialism, genocide, ecocide, environmental ethics, witness trees

Abstract: This article discusses the critical remarks and comments that Omer Bartov, Eric Katz and Jessica Rapson offered in response to our articles published in the theme issue of the Journal of Genocide Research on the Environmental History of the Holocaust (vol. 22, no. 2, 2020). In our response, we clarify our understanding of how an environmental perspective can contribute to
Holocaust studies. We focus on three issues; firstly: we position our research in the context of critical Holocaust studies, an emerging field in Poland, in order to draw attention to the geographically conditioned global distribution of knowledge and thus undermine convictions that non-Western humanities are necessarily peripheral. Secondly, we emphasize that the comparative perspective we adopt to address different genocides and ecocides neither seeks to undermine the uniqueness of the Holocaust nor deprive victims and survivors of their individual identity. What we do resembles the “experiments in thinking about the Holocaust” proposed by Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg, demonstrating that new approaches to Holocaust studies do not want to compete with dominant modes of research, but rather supplement and complement them. Thirdly, we argue that transcending the anthropocentric perspective in Holocaust studies can expand the spectrum of testimonies and evidence to also include non-human objects, such as trees. What we propose, then, is an analysis of new kinds of sources in an effort towards developing new approaches and methods for exploring this subject. We show how current ecological debates mean that it is crucial to take into account environmental factors when planning sites of Holocaust commemoration. In light of this, we not only ask how an environmental history of the Holocaust can expand knowledge on the relationship between genocides and ecocides, but also how future-oriented thinking about the legacies of the Holocaust can influence strategies and practices of preserving it. We see potential in posing questions relating not only to how the Holocaust can provide a point of reference for studying other genocides, but also in how an environmental (and also indigenous and postcolonial) perspective can further develop and enrich research on the Shoah.

Book Review Essay:


https://www.sourcesjournal.org/articles/home-and-history

Encyclopedia Article:


Abstract: This article recovers Alina Nowak’s Oratorium oświęcimskie (Auschwitz Oratorio, 1970) from cultural amnesia and outlines a comparison of her play with Die Ermittlung: Oratorium in 11 Gesängen (The Investigation: Oratorio in Eleven Cantos, 1965), an Auschwitz oratorio by Peter Weiss.

https://www.litencyc.com