

***Rebelia i reakcja: Rewolucja 1905 roku i plebejskie doświadczenie polityczne.***

By Wiktor Marzec. Łódź-Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego/Universitas, 2016. 524 pp. Notes, Bibliography. Index. PLN 22.00, paper.

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Since 1989, Polish historiography has gone in a number of new directions. At the same time, the traditional field of labor history has been largely neglected, even scorned as old-fashioned and overly ideological. Wiktor Marzec's new book demonstrates that labor history remains important and can integrated cutting-edge theoretical models. A frequent contributor to *Praktyka Teoretyczna* and author of numerous articles in English as well as Polish, Marzec wants to take recent approaches in philosophy and cultural studies and apply them to the revolution of 1905 in the Kingdom of Poland, most particularly (though not exclusively) in Łódź. The result is a fresh look at the revolution that Lenin called a "dress rehearsal" for the Great October. This is definitely not your grand/father's 1905 revolution!

Marzec, it should be said immediately, is not by training a historian, but a sociologist. He is less interested in ascertaining what happened than interpreting the meanings—both contemporary and subsequent—of events. In particular, he aims to illuminate the meaning of this revolution for the development of what he calls "plebeian consciousness." That is, how did different parties conceive the process of creating class consciousness among workers and how were these conceptions taken up (or not) by actual industrial laborers in Russian Poland during this era of revolt and revolution. Marzec examines in some depth not only party platforms, leaflets, press, and other such sources from socialist parties such as the PPS (and then its fractions after the split) and SDKPiL, but also from the right-wing National Democrats, and in particular their organization for workers, NZR (Narodowy Związek Robotniczy, National Workers' Union). In the case of the NZR, Marzec is primarily interested in the anti-discourse, as it were, aimed at convincing Polish workers that both PPS and SDKPiL represented not the interests of Polish labor, but of Jews and Moscow.

While conversing with the general line of both socialist and nationalist propaganda during the 1905 revolution, Marzec's contribution is to delve deeply into this political and even moral discourse that developed precisely during the years of disruption and revolution, more or less 1904–1907. Marzec divides his books into three large sections: *Rebelia*, *Rewolucja*, *Reakcja*. It is indicative of his interests that by far the shortest of these is the section focusing specifically on "revolution" and by far the longest is the first, which sets up the "rebellion" that burst onto the public stage during the revolutionary years. This rebellion, Marzec argues, was not merely anti-capitalist and anti-tsarist: it more broadly developed the vision of a new society in which workers will at last be the subject, and not merely the object, of historical processes.

In a profound sense Marzec's story is a tragedy. He describes processes leading toward a more humane and progressive society (and state) which are stymied—partly by tsarist intervention but possibly even more by nationalist counter-revolution—in 1906 and subsequent years. Even more tragically, when "socialism" comes to Poland, it comes not through the effort of Polish workers, but as a foreign and from the start despised import from the east. In this sense, Marzec's book certainly also has something to say about present-day political discourse in Poland, its edges and its limitations.

This book is excellent in presenting a sophisticated analysis of a variety of political texts, both socialist and nationalist. But what about the reception of these texts? How did workers actually perceive, act on, or reject these words? Here the analysis is on rather shakier ground. To be sure, Marzec incorporates as much as possible

evidence from the archives and from workers' memoirs, but—probably inevitably—after reading this book we know much more about what political parties said to workers but not so much about what workers heard or understood. It may well be, alas, that the mentality of Polish workers during the years 1904–1907 is in the nature of things beyond our grasp. With this small caveat, anyone interested in a fresh, scintillating look at the effect of the 1905 Revolution on worker culture in Poland should definitely read Wiktor Marzec's *Rebelia i reakcja*.

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***Krieg der Täter. Die Massenerschiessungen von Katyn.*** By Claudia Weber. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2015. 471 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. €35.00, hard cover. doi: 10.1017/slr.2017.293

In 1940, after the Soviet annexation of eastern Poland as a result of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, Iosif Stalin's police shot 21,857 Polish prisoners of war, policemen, gendarmes, and other representatives of the fallen Polish state. In the words of People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, Lavrentii Beria, these were "hardened, irremediable enemies of Soviet power." A substantial minority of the executions took place in the forest of Katyn, Smolensk region. "Katyn" later came to stand for the entire killing operation, because from 1943 the Germans used the uncovered mass graves for a concerted propaganda campaign. The Soviets instead blamed the Germans, conceding responsibility only in 1990. From 1995, an immense amount of archival material on the affair was published in multi-volume Russian and Polish collections. An essential selection was translated as *Katyn: A Crime Without Punishment*, the standard work in English (Anna M. Cienciala, Wojciech Materski, and Natalia S. Lebedeva, eds., Yale University Press, 2007, 119 and 332 for quotations and numbers cited above). This new flood of primary sources became the basis for a fairly large literature of new secondary works in Polish, Russian, and English.

German historians were somewhat more reluctant to revisit a topic that used to be deeply enmeshed in Goebbels' propaganda and apologetics for the Wehrmacht. Claudia Weber, who teaches at the University of Frankfurt (Oder), has shown considerable bravery in tackling this politically sensitive topic in an incredibly detailed reconstruction of the history, memory, and politics of both.

Soon, Weber found herself in the historiographical line of fire in a country where history books make the newspapers. She was accused of apologetics for Stalin, because she speculated that the German refusal to take more Polish POWs as part of a population exchange explains the timing of the decision to kill them—a transfer of responsibility to the Germans and "exculpation of the Soviets" in the opinion of one reviewer (*FAZ* 15.6.2015). If anything, however, Weber damns Stalinism by treating it as equivalent with Nazism. In Poland, she writes, the two dictatorships ran a joint "war of extermination" (*deutsch-sowjetischer Vernichtungsfeldzug*, 13).

To put Katyn in the context of a shared and entangled history of violence (*Gewaltgeschichte*) between Nazism and Stalinism in 1939–41 does not help us understand the origins of the Katyn murders, however. The Germans also refused to take back Polish Jews who, after experiencing severe hardship on Soviet territories in the aftermath of their flight from the Wehrmacht, wanted to return to their homes on the German side of the demarcation line. The NKVD did not kill, but instead deported them. (In one of the bitter ironies of the Soviet Second World War, this deportation saved many of them from destruction in the Holocaust.) Why not choose this option