

and from other regions near Pest county. But there is no evidence that they migrated from Galicia/Ukraine, that is, from northeast Hungary, what is today largely in Ukraine (but was in Czechoslovakia and Romania in the interwar period). These Jews had come from Galicia several generations earlier, but almost no Jews migrated directly from Galicia to Budapest. Third, Lupovitch does not fully explain Neolog Judaism or the Neolog-Orthodox schism. Fourth, Lupovitch should have more pointedly addressed the importance of liberalism for Jewish success. The book is also filled with sloppy mistakes. Lupovitch calls the German-Jewish schools both by their proper name, *Normalschulen*, and also, inexplicably, *Nationalschulen*. He says Jews formed 8% of the population of the Kingdom of Hungary, when they formed 4%. He assumes that large numbers of illegal Jews were unique to Pest, but Vienna, where Jews did not enjoy noble support, also contained many illegal Jews in the middle of the nineteenth century. Finally, Lupovitch provides no evidence for many of his claims.

Criticisms aside, *Transleithanian Paradise* provides a good overview of a large and interesting Jewish community in a period when liberal Hungary kept antisemitism in check.

## **Magdalena Waligórska. *Cross Purposes: Catholicism and the Political Imagination in Poland.***

**Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2023. xii, 376 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. \$120.00, hard bound.**

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On April 8, 1861, a Jewish teenager joined a crowd marching through Warsaw, falling in line behind a cross-bearing priest. When a shot rang out and the clergyman fell, seventeen-year-old Michał Landy took up the cross and led the procession until he himself was gunned down; thus was born the legend of the cross-bearing Jewish martyr of the Polish Nation. Roughly a century later, in the “model socialist city” of Nowa Huta, local authorities sent workers to remove a cross marking the site where permission had been granted, and later withdrawn, to build a church. A crowd of women gathered “in defense of the cross”; mere hours later, the protest turned into one of the largest street riots seen in Communist Poland.

Both events revolved around a cross, understood as a material object and cultural symbol. Both events brought marginalized groups—Jews and women, respectively—center stage. Both were inflected with religious ritual, but neither was a religious event. Both have the potential to help us understand how populists today weaponize the cross for secular ends.

These are two of the historical scenes reconstructed and deconstructed by cultural historian Magdalena Waligórska in her rich, genre-bending volume *Cross Purposes: Catholicism and the Political Imagination in Poland*. The subtitle is misleading, as the book is not a historical monograph about Catholicism, but instead a creatively designed series of six chapter-length meditations on how modern politics entwines the sacred and the secular. Each chapter combines pioneering sourcework with a multi-layered heuristic framework drawing on history, politics, anthropology, sociology, and religious and cultural studies. The result is a must-read volume for any student of Poland—and a creative methodological intervention across multiple disciplines.

At first blush, the figure of the cross—“a ubiquitous, unmarked, and almost transparent element of the public realm” (26)—may seem a rather banal choice to anchor a study of modern Poland. But Waligórska decouples the symbol from theology, revealing a tangled mass of

roles played by the cross throughout Polish history, from “protest symbol” (204), to “tool of domination by a colonizing power” (104), to “shorthand for Polish ethnic nationalism” (304). The cross is both a symbol “beset by contradictions” (306) and the centerpiece of “the visual canon of a nation-in-the-making” (20).

*Cross Purposes* is at once narrative-driven and diachronic. Waligórska serves up concise, grippingly written mini-histories woven into a larger argument about memory, forgetting, nationhood, and modern politics. Following social scientists who have theorized powerfully from the Polish example (notably, Geneviève Zubrzycki and Jan Kubik), Waligórska also engages pioneering Polish-language scholars (Andrzej Leder and Joanna Tokarska-Bakir) to underline “the interethnic violence, antisemitism, and misogyny that have long undergirded the Polish nation-building project” (23). Ch. 2 (on interwar Poland) and 5 (the post-Communist 1990s) show that the cross could, and did, augment state power; Ch. 1 (1860s), 3 (1960s), 4 (Solidarity), and 6 (the presidential plane crash of 2010) recount grassroots defenses of crosses against perceived state illegitimacy. Waligórska amply documents the cross’s function as a “border marker,” establishing and sustaining an “internal boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’” (104).

Some key insights may be less accessible to readers not already well-versed in Polish history. The diachronic approach leaves significant narrative gaps—especially following Waligórska’s decision to skip over World War II, the Holocaust, the Soviet takeover of Poland, and Poland’s Stalinist era. In all fairness, antisemitism is extensively treated throughout the book—note especially the “cross-Jew dyad” discussion in the Conclusion—but chronological lacunae occasionally leave the reader feeling that certain arguments lack adequate support. Waligórska plausibly contends in the Introduction that “new political articulations of the symbol could only truly unfold after the traumatic earthquake that the war-related violence brought with it” (23–24)—but this claim is impossible to assess fully, since Ch. 2 ends in the 1930s while Ch. 3 starts in the 1950s.

Historians of Catholicism will note the near-absence of Pope John Paul II. An iconic figure whose visage gazed from hanging portraits and lapel pins for decades, throughout Solidarity and post-communist eras alike, he nonetheless appears in *Cross Purposes* only in passing.

These concerns notwithstanding, the originality of Waligórska’s work, the force of her prose, and the power of her argumentation assure *Cross Purposes* the status of one of the most important historical studies of modern Poland. From nineteenth-century protests against the Russian tsar to twenty-first-century campaigns by the Law and Justice government tarnishing liberal, Jewish, Muslim, LGBT, and Ukrainian “Others,” Magdalena Waligórska offers a powerful paradigm for making sense of how protest and persecution, solidarity and hatred, co-exist within the politics of the cross.

## **Anna Müller. *An Ordinary Life? The Journeys of Tonia Lechtman, 1918–1996.***

**Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2023. xix, 376 pp. Notes. Index. Photographs. Maps. \$50.00, hard bound.**

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Reading this book, I could not help but think of Heda Kovaly, the Czech Jew who survived World War II only to have her new family torn apart when her husband, a devout Communist,