

All in all, most of “Architektki” became public figures and women in power not only because of their political choices and new order after 1945, but also because of the capitals brought from their intelligentsia homes—even if they were shaping their biographies against their habitus. Mrozik constantly tries to include the popular classes, the so-called average women. For this reason, Mrozik’s work not only complements the so-called popular turn in Poland, but also contributes to the women’s history both in the case of Eastern Europe and global feminism.

It is not easy to trace biographies of those who are doubly absent in history: expelled by their gender but also by political choices—the totalitarian paradigm intertwines with patriarchy. During their lifetime “Architektki” repeatedly experienced discrimination like belittling their achievements, the glass ceiling or sticky floor—all processes described in the case of advancing women in leadership positions. And all this efforts to be cancelled form the history of feminism by their potential heirs, as shown by Magdalena Grabowska in “Zerwana Genealogia” (2018). Mrozik’s book reveals all mechanisms of patriarchy at work, and moreover exposes also the Western domination in knowledge production: that is the expulsion of socialist modernization by Western feminism, which reproduced itself in a homegrown context after the 1989. She demands to recognize socialist feminism as a part of a general movement, marginalized—if not ousted—part of women studies and the history of political thought. In the 1990s, Polish feminism was hegemonized by liberal western feminism, and socialist heritage was not only forgotten by repulsively locked into the totalitarian paradigm. Mrozik’s work brings back these great absentee, the socialist feminism, back to the light. And hopefully thanks to Chiara Bonfiglioli’s or Zsófia Lóránd’s ERC-funded projects, we can expect more interesting interventions and bringing back of socialist feminist voices in forthcoming years.

## **Denis Clark. *Passion and Restraint: Poles and Poland in Western Diplomacy, 1914–1921.***

**Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2022. xi, 298 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Maps. Photographs. CAD\$ 130.00, hard bound.**

Jan Jacek Bruski

Jagiellonian University, Kraków  
Email: [janjacek.bruski@uj.edu.pl](mailto:janjacek.bruski@uj.edu.pl)

doi: 10.1017/slr.2024.354

Denis Clark’s monograph is by no means the first book on the Great Powers’ attitude to the rebirth of Poland. A whole series of studies should be mentioned here: from Titus Komarnicki’s classic 1957 monograph, through the works of Anna Cieniala, Jan Karski, Kay Lundreen-Nielsen and Mieczysław Biskupski, to the excellent *Pierwsza zdrada Zachodu* (2016) by Andrzej Nowak. Clark draws on all of them, with perhaps the latter owing the most. However, he goes in a slightly different direction. The result is a fresh look at a (seemingly) quite well-researched topic.

Clark challenges the common view that the Western “foreign-policy-making elites” were guided solely by rational considerations. He argues that statesmen’s perceptions of reality and their political decisions were heavily influenced by various unspoken assumptions, preconceived ideas, prejudices and stereotypes, especially those relating to the collective “character” of various national groups. In analysing the attitude of Western elites towards Poland and Poles, Clark largely follows in the footsteps of Larry Wolff, who uses Edward

Said's concept of Orientalism. In the eyes of Westerners, Poles, as white Europeans with their culture and long state traditions, deserved, if not independence, then at least a certain degree of freedom. As "less civilised" and "immature," however, they should submit to the guidance of the Western powers. For Allied diplomats and politicians the primary criterion for assessing the East Europeans was their ability to keep restraint and emotional detachment. Moderation and compromising attitudes were valued, but their rejection and attempts to step out of the supplicants' role were met with irritation.

In the first three chapters, Clark discusses the fate of the "Polish question" during the Great War. There was widespread sympathy in the West for the Poles as an oppressed nation, but for much of the war, due to the alliance with the Romanov Empire binding France and Britain, the Polish issue was treated as an internal Russian problem. The situation did not begin to change until the second half of 1915, when most of the Polish lands, heavily affected by the war, came under the control of the Central Powers. Compassion to the "suffering Poles" then made it possible to launch international relief operations, and Polish emissaries became active in Western capitals. The real breakthrough, however, was to come only as a consequence of the revolutionary events in Russia. The Bolshevik's withdrawal from the war forced a revision of Allied war aims. However, with the Allies recognising the restoration of Poland as one of the conditions for peace, the problem of the borders of this state arose, and the inevitable conflict between Western governments and Polish representatives. The latter abandoned their subservient attitude and began to make far-reaching demands, which was interpreted as a lack of restraint. The image of Poles began to deteriorate rapidly at the turn of war and peace. Supported by the Allies, the Paris-based Polish National Committee was unable to come to an agreement with the Warsaw government. The young Polish state also found itself immediately in conflict with most of its neighbours. Finally, world opinion was negatively influenced by the Jewish pogrom which took place in Lemberg. All this shaped an image of Poles as a quarrelsome, disorganised, and anti-Semitic nation.

In the next two chapters, Clark shows how the preconceived notions influenced the key decisions taken on Polish issues during the Paris Peace Conference. In most cases the Poles could count on the support of France, seeking to strengthen Poland, perceived as an ally against Germany. In the end, however, the British point of view proved more influential. The British wanted to curb Polish territorial aspirations out of fear that bringing too many minorities under Polish sovereignty would lead to the creation of more "Alsace-Lorraines." Key was the opinion of David Lloyd George, who saw Poles as impractical, lacked the ability to govern and nationalistic. Clark also writes about Western misconceptions about the profound instability of the Polish political system and constant fears of a Bolshevik-style revolution in Warsaw.

The final chapter focuses on the culmination of the Polish-Soviet war in 1920. Clark writes about the Allies' outrage caused by Piłsudski's Kyiv campaign, widely seen as a manifestation of Polish imprudence and imperialism. The turn in the fortunes of the war and the Bolsheviks' launching of a counter-offensive were watched by Western policymakers with concern but also malicious satisfaction. Their opinions on "swollen-headed" Poles, combined with the belief in the inexperience and disorganisation of both the Polish authorities and army, led Western observers to conclude that a Bolshevik victory was inevitable and discouraged any more serious involvement on the Polish side. In this situation, the final Polish success came as a huge surprise in London, Paris and Washington.

The great strength of the book is its rich source base. Clark made use of a wide range of British, American and French archival documents, as well as an impressive literature on the subject. The book suffers from occasional factual errors or oversimplifications, but the author's overall argument is convincing and well documented. Clark offers an inspiring approach that opens up new prospects for both researchers of Polish and international history. In particular, it allows for a better understanding of irrational, hidden motives of political decision-making.