

by Kārlis Ulmanis in 1934, when the effort to Latvianize art became more assertive in the service of the state. Pourchier-Plasseraud gives close attention to the cultural symbols found in Latvian state emblems, insignia, stamps, and currency during this period. The reader is left with no doubt that a consolidated Latvian national identity had formed by 1940, *before* Latvia was annexed by the Soviet Union.

This book would serve as an excellent introduction to Latvian culture and history, but even experts will learn from the level of detail that the author has presented, including specific information about the multiple art exhibitions held in Riga in the early 20th century. She also explains how the Latvian experience fits into a wider regional context, whether artists were adopting or rejecting other European artistic trends. Finally, any visitor to Riga today would benefit immensely from the analysis of architecture presented in this volume.

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Coming of Age under Martial Law: The Initiation Novels of Poland's Last Communist Generation. By Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozyova. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2015. viii, 224 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 485.00, hard bound.

Of all the states on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain, Poland was the most restless one. While the 1970 uprising was suppressed by the Polish People's Army and the Citizen's Militia, the Solidarity (*Solidarność*) movement grew to such dimensions that Prime Minister General Wojciech Jaruzelski saw it necessary to declare martial law on December 13, 1981, which was lifted only on July 22, 1983. Whether he rightfully claimed that martial law was the only way to prevent a Soviet invasion as in Prague in 1968 or whether he blamed the Soviets for his own actions is an ongoing debate. Another strike wave forced the socialist leadership to round-table talks with the opposition, which led to the first semi-free elections in 1989, marking the beginning of the end of the socialist bloc.

While 1989 was an important year for Poland's political development, it does not mark a literary change of paradigm. In her study "Coming of Age under Martial Law," Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozyova, associate professor of Slavic languages and literatures at the University of Kansas, states that the break with the dominant Romantic idealism already occurred in the early 1980s. Vassileva-Karagyozyova looks at the people born between 1960 and 1975 and calls them "the 89ers," which may be confusing since the title suggests a focus on the martial law period of 1981–1983. Vassileva-Karagyozyova quotes the journalist Kamil Durczok as commenting on the "Children of Martial Law" generation with the words "We are not shaped by a historical drama . . . pain and fear are more bonding than freedom of choice" (33). These words relate more to the events of 1988–89, and the following range of opportunities for Poland's youth, than to the martial law period.

The author says that "[t]he ultimate goal of these authors is to assert their generation's distinctiveness," but states in the following sentence that "[t]his trend was not started consciously" (7). If this tendency "was not yet evident to the novelists themselves," how could they have had this ultimate goal? Later on, Vassileva-Karagyozyova claims that the 89ers failed "to constitute themselves as a generational community" (11). One of the author's main theses is that literature shaped the generation, not the other way round.

The study takes into consideration around 30 quasi-autobiographical novels

published between 1994 and 2012 by well-known authors such as Izabela Filipiak, 1961 (*Absolutna amnezja*, 1995); Andrzej Stasiuk, 1960 (*Jak zostałem pisarzem*, 1998); and Joanna Bator, 1968 (*Piaskowa góra*, 2009; *Chmurdalia*, 2010), as well as by lesser-known ones. Among the novels mentioned most often are *Dziewczyny z Portofino*, 2005, by Grażyna Plebanek, 1967; *Jutro będzie lepiej*, 2008, by Mariusz Maślanka, 1975; and *Aleja Niepodległości*, 2010, by Krzysztof Varga, 1968. *Panna Nikt*, 1994, by Tomasz Tryzna, 1948, and *Samo-loty*, 2005, by Marek Stokowski, 1957, are quoted frequently as well, so Vassileva-Karagyozyova does not strictly adhere to authors born between 1960 and 1975. Aspects that most texts have in common are the domestic settings and the focus on dysfunctional familial relationships. Parental, state and church authorities are perceived as similarly defunct, leaving the adolescent protagonists without behavioral and moral models.

The first chapter “The Displaced Generation of the Children of Martial Law,” draws attention to the generation’s ambiguous attitudes to politics. The journalistic and philosophical sources quoted by Vassileva-Karagyozyova describe the 89ers as the “antigeneration,” a term coined by the poet Piotr Kępiński, (34). The sociologist Krzysztof B. Kruszewski blames the misbehavior of the Solidarność elites, once they had won political power, for the 89ers’ political disillusionment that made them come up with the contradictory idea of “revolting conservatism” (27).

The genre of choice for the antigeneration’s writers was the *Bildungsroman* in the form of the liminal novel. The protagonists of post-1989 novels fail to find their identities as indicated by the title of Chapter 2, “Arrested Maturation.” “Emasculated Men, Absent Fathers” (Chapter 3), are deplored. The negative depiction of deviant mother figures is at the center of Chapter 4, “Exorcising Mother-Demons: The Myth of the Polish Mother Revisited,” which discusses the Polish mother myth as a part of the dichotomist martyr-warrior myth. Many of the novels’ protagonists are “At the Roots of Apostasy” (Chapter 5), their relation to the Catholic Church is in a transition from firm adherence to institutional distrust.

Vassileva-Karagyozyova takes into consideration aspects of gender, postcolonial literary theory, anthropology, sociology and psychology and draws a convincing picture of a society in transition and its generational struggles. The novels of the 89ers appear as a surprisingly unified body of literature. This observation confirms Vassileva-Karagyozyova’s initial thesis that literature was and is a mode of identification for this (non-)generation.

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Jüdische Räume und Topographien in Ost(mittel)europa: Konstruktionen in Literatur und Kultur. Ed. Klavdia Smola and Olaf Terpitz. Opera Slavica; Neue Folge 61. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014; 274 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Illustrations. Photographs. Tables. €58.00 / \$63.40, hard bound.

In the past decades, Slavic scholars such as Mikhail Bakhtin and Iurii Lotman have significantly contributed to the formation of the *spatial* and the—rather European-based—*topographical turn*. In recent years, the spatial turn has invigorated Slavic Studies. In particular, it has significantly inspired Slavic-Jewish Studies, which has become an active field of interdisciplinary research.

Following publication of the volume *Jewish Spaces. Die Kategorie Raum im Kontext kultureller Identitäten* (edited by Petra Ernst and Gerald Lamprecht in 2010), Klav-