

**Bitter Legacy: Polish American Relations in the Wake of World War II by Richard C. Lukas (1982), 190 pages.**

This monography deals with America-Poland relations within one specific period, 1945-1948. The author considers it a sequel to his earlier book titled *The Strange Allies*, which was dealing with the War. Although this scholarly work was published some twenty years after the events, it is an exemplary offering of a significant piece of history. No wonder, for the author wrote many excellent works in this field. As he was born in 1937, he has to rely on his sources and wisely refrains from personal views, although we recognize where his sympathies lie. While the main facts are pretty well known, it is instructive to refresh our memories of this sensitive subject.

Firstly, there is the Potsdam Conference. Here, near Berlin, the victors of the War met. In July 1945, the new American President Harry S Truman confronted for the first time his partners. His talks with Stalin had a serious impact on Polish affairs, particularly because Churchill had just been voted out of office. This was not a happy time for Polish delegates who faced an uphill fight regarding exact western frontier. How this problem was handled will be of great interest to the reader.

Secondly, there are chapters about the post-war relief. Political considerations deeply affected relations-between the American and the Polish governments. UNRRA shipments and other assistance were heading towards Poland and were of tremendous help. Consider that 90% of Polish children were undernourished and 25% of them had TB. Still, there was always an undercurrent of doubt in the U.S.: are we assisting the communist regime or are we engaged only in an emergency mission of mercy. One is reminded of the Hoover Mission in the late 20s, when thousands of packages marked "amerykańska kaszka manna" were widely distributed in Poland and became a constant symbol of American aid. But at that time there was no political angle.

Thirdly and lastly, we follow an intriguing yarn in the diplomatic world. American ambassadors during this period were Arthur Bliss Lane and Stanton Griffis. It seems today that they were placed in an impossible situation. Poland was in a violent upheaval, with no bright prospects in sight. The Lublin Government was deeply suspicious of the West. This was not only obvious in the economic negotiations (the offers of the Marshall Plan were rejected) but also evident in the reception of returnees from the West who were viewed with suspicion. The U.S. ambassadors kept sending their urgent warnings to Washington but to no avail. By 1948 the fraudulent elections took place, and prominent leaders such as Mikołajczyk, Stefan Korboński, and Mierzwa were compelled to escape to the West. The Iron Curtain descended. The bitter legacy, in the author's words, "was the consequence of Washington's having habituated the Kremlin to deal with political issues in eastern Europe without the United States during the war years."

***George Suboczewski***