

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR:

Professor Adam Bromke is, of course, entitled to his opinions, some of which I do not necessarily disagree with. But his review of *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution* (*Slavic Review*, 43, no. 4 [Winter 1984]: 705) contains so many outright falsehoods that I feel impelled to rise to the book's defense.

To begin with, I am afraid that simple arithmetic is not Bromke's strong point: not six, but five of the contributors to the book are "political émigrés of a fairly recent vintage": the sixth, Jack Bielasiak, came to this country at rather too tender an age to deserve this sobriquet. (Whether recent émigrés are indeed addicted to "phobias," while those of a more venerable vintage—such as Bromke—are mercifully free of them I leave to the reader to decide.) Only one essay deals with "the activities of dissidents," and three others merely allude to them—not exactly the impression conveyed by Bromke's contention that "the activities of the dissidents are uniformly praised." (As a matter of fact, not even those few essays are "uniformly" uncritical of the dissidents' activities.)

Furthermore, Bromke censures the book for failing to do something it manifestly did not set out to do. Since its objective, as he rightly notes, was "not to describe the dramatic upheaval in the country in 1980–81, but rather 'to delve into its underlying causes,'" it is plainly ludicrous to take it to task for ignoring "the *post mortem* analyses written by the former [?] supporters of Solidarity."

Finally, the fanciful claim that the "separate chapter on anti-Semitism seems to suggest that it is one of the Poles' favorite pastimes." It does nothing of the sort. As the reader can easily ascertain, the aim of this particular essay was not to taint all Poles with the brush of anti-Semitism (which would be contemptible), but to show how anti-Semitism has been exploited by various groups within the ruling party, and to what extent it is one of the sturdiest legacies bestowed on contemporary Poland by the National Democrats (*Endecja*)—a movement with which Bromke is surely familiar.

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PROFESSOR BROMKE REPLIES:

I may be poor at arithmetic, but I am quite familiar with Polish politics, and despite Abraham Brumberg's vigorous defense of his volume, I still do not believe that it makes a major contribution to our knowledge of the subject.

I also know of no historical event which is to be evaluated solely on the basis of its genesis, especially when its consequences are already well known and *post mortem* analyses are readily available. Unless, of course, the title is just an excuse for what in the first place was an obsolete book.

And as to the tradition of National Democracy, I did not realize that *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution* was aimed at its denunciation; but indeed, I am quite familiar with this subject too. And I would suggest that if Brumberg wishes to learn something more of it, he should read an illuminating essay, published in 1983, by a young Polish historian and former Solidarity leader, Aleksander Hall, entitled "The Legacy of National Democracy" ("Dziedzictwo Narodowej Demokracji"); excerpts of it will be available in English in my next book on Poland, to be issued early in 1986.