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MISCELLANEA AMERICANA: INTRODUCTION

The present volume of *Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe* [Krakow International Studies] is as diverse as America is. Many of the problems discussed here seem from the European perspective – or at least the Western European one – exotic, even parochial, but this is a misunderstanding of what the United States is. In America they are real since America is a baroque, extremely pluralistic country, with the citizens devoid of an apologizing attitude towards the democratic process and debating fiercely in public.

The first essay, by Marta Dębska, “A Brief History of Americanization”, is a general, concise historical-comparative study which explains the meaning of this term, crucial for America. The author touches on heated debates about this problem, explains its exclusive and inclusive understandings, showing the processes shaping the very identity of this essentially immigrant society. She focuses on the tension between traditional approaches to immigration issues, captured by the term “melting pot”, and the new, fiercely contested idea of the multicultural approach in building a civil society. Both approaches are essentially commensurate with an inclusive understanding of Americanization. But in the case of the multicultural processes she touches upon their character within a global context, a perspective from which multicultural citizenship can be simply the first step of cultural universalization, which may also be either a part or a mere equivalent of Westernization. This is a fundamental issue touching upon such extremely contested problems, both in America and in the global setting, as the meaning of citizenship, the social or universal sources of rights, and the sovereign state v. the global governance

ideology based on human rights, the latter more and more in crisis as a cohesive doctrine, currently lacking, in the major theories of rights applied internationally, in any clear ontological bases, the neo-Kantian approach essentially in tatters.

Andrzej Bryk takes up an issue which Dębska touches on in the conclusion of her essay. He focuses on the problem of American democracy within the context of the so-called universalization of rights, or rather universalization of justice in the name of human rights, with a subordinating role of constitutionalism and the self-governing procedures of the democratic process. For him America is fiercely defending its constitutionalism, and the self-governing structure of the nation-state, rejecting the unmediated approach to rights and their universalization outside of its democratic procedures.

Marta du Vall analyzes the very interesting phenomenon of American compassionate conservatism as a new version of the welfare state, an issue which has been in the air for a long time. Originally proposed in an overt form in the 1990s by such social thinkers as Marvin Olasky, it became officially adopted by President George W. Bush and developed in a period of a global political, military and ideological conflict by a wide camp of the governing Republican Party, as well as the president's experts and associates. The author shows the philosophical as well as social background of American conservatism in all its various currents, especially pointing out its religiously grounded individualism, rationalism, constitutionalism and the primacy of individual freedom, the latter aspect understood very differently, ranging from Christian conceptions of freedom, through anarchistic ones, to the liberal-left idea of freedom as moral auto-creation.

Maciej Brachowicz discusses the topic of abortion, which in the American context is especially contested. This is so, because the Supreme Court decision of 1973, "Roe v. Wade", has turned out to be one of the most divisive of all decisions, next to the infamous "Dred Scott v. Sandford" of 1857 which justified slavery as constitutional. "Roe v. Wade" cut short all discussions in the state legislatures, which gradually liberalized the law of abortion, taking it into the province of federal law, and constitutional law at that. The decision immediately divided American society, creating the most powerful and active pro-life movement in history, gradually influencing other countries too. The movement is internally divided but there are two most important currents within it, partially overlapping. The first argues that abortion has nothing to do with the Constitution and the Supreme Court declaring abortion a constitutional right usurped its authority and created a non-existent constitutional right. For this reason the issue should be taken back to the states and decided according to the results of a democratic discussion there. The second current is more complicated, but it can be summarized as follows. There is no constitutional right to abortion, and the right to privacy from which it was derived is as ideological as one can imagine. But if there is any constitutional right which touches upon the issue of abortion, that is a negative right, that which protects unborn children, not a right which gives women the right to abort them.

This school has many different shades: it contains a religious argument, but not necessarily so, because it starts from the very deep egalitarian impulse at work in the pro-life movement. The opponents of the pro-life movement want it to be portrayed as preoccupied with abortion, because the movement is allegedly traditionalist, oppressive, religious, or, horror of horrors, Catholic, in other words hopelessly anachronistic. But that is wrong. The pro-life movement has something to do with justice as such, equality, human rights, let alone killings. Because of such a message, for instance, the majority of young women, daughters of the mothers of the “Roe v. Wade” generation which considered it the greatest victory for women’s rights, turned against abortion under the regime of “Roe v. Wade” and became pro-life. In other words the conflict is not about abortion, but about the shape of the society in which we want to live and the deeper anthropology which justifies such a society. This discussion in America is extremely heated, public, democratic and alive, giving rise to very interesting theoretical discussions, in contrast to Europe, which is increasingly moving towards considering the right to abortion a fundamental right of privacy for women as autonomous beings, that is in fact a human right. It can be treated as such only on condition of accepting a particular, narrow and in fact dehumanizing conception of the human being and his/her rights as such. This causes diverse consequences, one of which is the treatment of opponents of such a right, considering them to be unconstitutional and opponents of human rights. In other words abortion is part of a distinctive ideology. Brachowicz’s article is a contribution to that ongoing discussion which shows exactly that side of the debate which focus on the justice and equality problem, the very foundation of the legitimacy of the religious argument in the public sphere as well.

The subject of Tocqueville and slavery has always fascinated students of America, and Wojciech Kaczor is no exception. He analyzes the problem from the point of view of a French aristocrat who was looking at the issue, subconsciously at least, from an angle which resembled the peasants’ serfdom liquidated not so long before in Europe. The author locates Tocqueville’s views in the historical context and confronts them with the opinions of his contemporaries. In turn Piotr Musiewicz analyzes the question of the 19th-century movement reforming the doctrine of the Anglican Church and the repercussions of this reform for the American Episcopal Church. This movement, at the center of which stands the person of John Henry Newman, represents a particular version of modern conservatism and can be very useful for an analysis of the contours of American Protestant denominations, especially the Episcopalian Church, and their relation to church tradition. This in turn has diverse consequences not only for the legitimate presence of religion in public life, but also for the modern democratic language of the conservative movement, an issue not only important for America, but also for Europe.

Rafał Marek takes up another topic connected with this religious side of American life, the issue of the Orthodox Church in the United States in the context of American church-state relations. This is an analytical and historical study, firmly

placed within the context of American cultural and religious pluralism. It is also interesting because of another, less widely noticed phenomenon. A large number of the conversions of intellectuals to Christianity in the United States are conversions to the Orthodox Church, mainly because of the beauty of its tradition, its uncompromised, and its spiritual crystal-clear transparency, not contaminated yet by modernist currents which, for instance, have destroyed the mainline Protestant denominations and also ravaged the Catholic Church in America and elsewhere.

Anarchism is a doctrine as well as a movement which is popular in the United States, and historically it has been fairly prominent. The list of Americans who have described themselves as anarchists includes such figures as Henry Adams, Paul Goodman, Norman Mailer, Dwight Macdonald and Edward Abbey. The latter's novels, written in the second half of the 20th century, feature merry anarchist heroes who live by Abbey's anarchist creed: "Be loyal to your family, your clan, your friends, and your community. Let the nation-state go hang itself". Marta Majorek takes up the work of one of the best-known scholars and thinkers of anarchism, Robert Paul Wolff, living proof of the robust presence of the anarchist streak in the American psyche full of mistrust of state power.

Beata Szyjka addresses the topic of the visa lottery in the United States, placing it within the historical, legal and social context of American immigration law. The author treats immigration law and the visa lottery as an integral part of American politics, also a method of enabling illegal immigrants to legalize their stay in the United States. She stresses that the visa lottery is a relatively new phenomenon, introduced at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, kind of a new phase of the American immigration policy.

The last article in the volume is an exception to the entirely Polish group of mainly young students of America publishing in this volume. It is written by one of the most distinguished American scholars of political philosophy, Catherine H. Zuckert of the University of Notre Dame. It is devoted to the work of Ralph Ellison. Zuckert locates him among the giants of American literature, comparable to Herman Melville or Mark Twain, stressing especially his influence – like theirs – as far as the humanization of race relations in the United States is concerned. She focuses on the most distinguished work of Ellison, *Invisible Man*. Ellison, famous at his time, was for a very long time a forgotten writer, and it is only recently that he is being discovered and his ideas considered relevant for contemporary discussions as well. Although the text is slightly different in character from the rest of the volume, it is published here since the work of Ellison is important, less known and worthy of recognition.

As usual the American volume of *Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe* contains its Archive section. This time we publish an excerpt from a work by Richard John Neuhaus, who died in 2008. Neuhaus was one of the most important public intellectuals in the United States. A social activist, radical in his youth, a Lutheran pastor and then a convert to Catholicism and a priest, the editor of the influential

monthly *The First Things*, Neuhaus became famous and will remain famous for a long time because of one spectacular book, *The Naked Public Square*. This is a description of the slow process of banning religious language, practice and argument from the public square. Neuhaus considered this phenomenon, supported fiercely by liberal-left elites, treating this process as a way of neutralization of the state, as not only wrong historically in America as far as the real intentions of the Founding Fathers were concerned, but also as a development dangerous to the cause of liberty.

The next volume of the *Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe* will be published in his memory and devoted entirely to many aspects of the above problem. Neuhaus was a friend of Poland, and such a tribute is only fitting for a publication devoted to him, a publication which is located in Krakow, the site of a seminar devoted to public ethics and freedom hosted in the Dominican Church. The seminar was set up and led by him and his intellectual friends from Poland and America. It has become until today the home of many students from the United States and Poland who love their own countries, freedom and democracy, having no qualms about combining that attitude with religious convictions, a countercultural sign of a rebellion against modernity and its “naked public square”.