

Recapitulating, although the author takes a long shot, it seems that he finds a way out, and with quite good results. Of course, the wide topical draft and the synthetical, not indepth approach to the material may raise some hesitation, but we should remember what was the main target of the author – a depiction of the centuries long transformation of tactical aspects of combat. And this target has been successfully achieved.

The importance of these reflections seems significant, because treating a war from State and Armies point of view, could not include a full answer, to the most basic question of a historian: “Wat was it really like?”. While an explication of the aspects determining soldiers: weapons that they depended on, their training, mentality and organisation of their

unit – certainly improve the truthfulness of the thesis. The book of Professor Jaroslawa J. Piątek gives every reader the possibility to be introduced with these issues and using the author’s analysis go further, looking for what will be adequate.

Regarding the future, readily depicted in lots of military books and scientific positions, the author wrote clearly: “We cannot today, basing on fragmentary materials, predict what will the future of combat look like. This look we are leaving to others”. And the author is right, because regardless of the way, that yesterday and today events will be analysed, the future will definitely surprise us. So the only thing that we could do, is to: “Better understand the military transformations affecting the development of modern tactical solutions.”

**Book review: *Local Government: A Politological Study*,  
ed. Joanna Marszałek-Kawa, Wydawnictwo Duet, Toruń 2007, pp. 262.**

*by Mariusz Popławski*

The history of local government on Polish territories is not shorter or less fascinating than in other European countries. However, political obstacles, military conflicts, changes in the statehood system or finally its loss caused that what wherever else is the basis for further development of local democracy in Poland has to be built from the start. I mean here of course the long-lasting tradition of independent shaping and strengthening patterns, views and visions of local & regional self-governance, of which chance to fully develop Poland had not have. The socio-political reality of today’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic is a dynamically evolving country,

which due to the rapidness of that change demands strong support from its finest researchers and scientists. The goal set for them is to present a wide range of concepts that will allow to program the future direction of progress. This way the necessary fundamentals for Polish democracy at the regional and local level, and a tradition of discussion and sustainable development is born. In my opinion a good attempt to take part of the mentioned responsibility was the book edited by PhD Joanna Marszałek-Kawa from Univeristy of Nicolaus Copernicus in Torun, Poland.

Being acquainted with many publications

written or edited by Joanna Marszałek-Kawa, and being curious of an another one, this time dedicated to the main field of my personal interest, I have reached for "Local Government. A Political Study". First, I would like to express that I am aware of the fact that giving judgments concerning edited publications that have many authors is a real challenge and a huge work has to be done by the editor to bring the publishing process to an end and to keep the scientific level as high as possible. In such cases a general evaluation could be unjust, but here my impression is that analyzing "Local Government. A Political Study" I'm allowed to give a general opinion while it is a valuable book as a whole as well as when looking at its each part made in fact by a different person. Summing up, I would like to state that one shall not underestimate the job of the editor of that specific book.

One could ask about the purpose of a book, while we have loads of articles presenting Polish system of local and regional power. That is in fact true, but nevertheless we shall not forget how wide is the area of research on that field and Polish one is not the only system. The publication "Local Government. A Political Study" is a good example that we still need to think of areas concerning research on local government that yet have not been fully explored.

The character of the book convinces me that it is not a handbook. We shall not recommend it to students that are just starting to consider such problems as decentralization or the rule of subsidiarity. But it does not worsen my impression. I would even like to say that it is a great advantage, since authors of each article try to focus on topics that, as

I wrote, are not fully explored. They do not just rewrite this same analysis that have already been made by scientists universally acknowledged as an authority on the subject of local power as, i.e. Professor Hubert Izdebski or Professor Jerzy Regulski. An attempt to go a step further is made here.

Despite the will of giving a general judgment I would like to comment on some articles placed in the book. A theme that connects some of them is elections, however I would like to emphasize that the articles do not cover, meaning do not repeat the same analysis. I would like to point the attention to the article of the editor – Joanna Marszałek-Kawa, titled "Local Government Elections in 2006 and the Issue of Amendment of the Local Elections Law" (*Wybory samorządowe 2006 a kwestia nowelizacji samorządowej ordynacji wyborczej*), is an accurate analysis of the backstage intentions, that stood behind the change of the title law. The author thoroughly does her political scientist duties, who shall get into the level of intentions and motives that directed the then government and parliament members. The basis is made on various and numerous examples picturing the presented thesis that it is possible that the legislator treated the issue of elections in a pragmatic way, taking into account that it may be another set of offices to be filled with members of their political faction.

Another article worth readers' special attention is by Piotr Olszewski. This time he presents the aspects of political discourse over the creation of local government on a regional level in the article "The Dispute over Creation of Regional Self-Government

between 1989 a 1998” (Spór o utworzenie samorządu wojewódzkiego w latach 1989–1998). Piotr Olszewski is the author of a very important to Polish political research book, “Local Self-Government in Political Parties Programs in Poland (1989–1998)” (“Samorząd terytorialny w programach ugrupowań politycznych w Polsce 1989–1998”). We might assume that the article was part of his research dedicated to the general problem presented in his book. Nevertheless, it is only a guarantee that the author is one of the best qualified to present the topic of political struggle and war over the regional self-government issue. Olszewski used a chronological order, which is here allowed and even right, as the analysis has got also a strong historical aspect. He concentrated first of all on parliamentary archives of Polish *Sejm*. Loads of materials had to be read and studied to give the final judgment. Also party informational materials and bulletins have been used here. Probably lack of similar works made the author use such amount of source materials, which shall be here strongly noticed. The article is valuable for those who try to predict further development of opinions of certain political factions on decentralization as value of a modern European state. Too few opinions or general conclusions cause some scientific ‘want’, but despite that fact it is still worth getting acquainted with.

Definitely such conclusions we find enough in the article by two ‘opening’ authors – Wojciech Tomasz Modzelewski and Arkadiusz Żukowski. During my still short scientific work I was interested in the international cooperation aspect of local government institutions. It is almost impossible to point

one Polish-language handbook that would explain all sorts of dimensions of that problem. The article by the two authors is a kind of an answer of what we can currently show as Polish scientific achievements. It is still only an outline of what we shall now demand and expect but I think that thanks to undertaking the topic it will be presented in a publication dedicated only to international cooperation of local government units.

Thanks to Modzelewski and Żukowski one shall notice how a wide issue this is. International contacts have various aspects, of which the usual cultural exchange of peasant music bands and pupils is only a part. The authors point out the fact that despite only a symbolic role of local and regional governments in international relations and foreign policy it shall not be underestimated. Municipalities and region fulfill a huge historical gap in this matter. Contacts and cooperation of those units bring everyday small societies closer together braking the past stereotypes of other nations. Due to that fact and not involving these upper-politics conflicts and disagreements a step towards united Europe is made. One can even say that thanks to these low-level contacts we can really create one European identity.

At the end of this part of my review I would like to mention two texts by still active Polish politicians, who also are members of our scientific community. In my opinion this kind of linking being a researcher and at the same time being a subject of that work is hard, in this context that it is very easy to lose the border between the two. However, it is worth getting familiar with opinions of participants of important to Polish history

of local government taking into account that 'they are with scientific research tools'.

These authors are Krzysztof Janik and Lech Nikolski. The first one prepared an evaluation of elections to local government one-person executive bodies titled "Direct Elections of *Wójt, Burmistrz and Prezydent* – Genesis and Experiences of the Elections" (Bezpośrednie wybory wójta, burmistrza i prezydenta miasta – geneza i doświadczenia dwóch elekcji), and the second – 'Polish Elections to the Regions' (Polskie wybory do regionów). Both texts have similar character as they are kinds of analytic diaries but their value is placed rather elsewhere. After whole texts, that begin with statements that they do not pretend to be strongly scientific, we have an impression that the authors understand and have a special ability to notice mechanisms that stand behind the official image. It is very important also that they have a huge knowledge of the current situation and certain matters, which is usually impossible to get for not participating in politics scientists without a detailed research.

Summing up I would like to express my positive attitude towards such initiatives. The only problem with such publications is that

one hardly ever has an opportunity to get information about them, and this is why I have decided to prepare this review. It certainly does not finish the issue of reviewing it. I hope that the space that is left will find its further reviewers. In my opinion research on local democracy is important as the professionalism of performing those everyday tasks decides about the quality of life of our citizens. Here I would like to end with a quotation from Professor Regulski that ends the book, reminded by PhD Grzegorz Radomski (reviewers' translation): *It is much easier to talk over various 'global' matters than certain system issues, despite the fact that the insufficient development of civic society and lack of engagement in public affairs is seen as a serious obstacle for the development (...) of a central view on Poland, as if from a birds' eye, leads to ignorance of those all local civic activities, thanks to which so much good is now happening in Poland*<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> J. Regulski, *Samorządna Polska*, Warszawa 2005, p. 11, after: G. Radomski, "Samorząd terytorialny jako element ładu ustrojowego we współczesnej polskiej myśli politycznej"; [in:] *Samorząd terytorialny. Studium politologiczne*, ed. J. Marszałek-Kawa, Toruń 2007, p. 262.

**Book review: *Faces of Conflicts: Collection of Analyses and Case Studies*. Under the edition of Jarosław J. Piątek and Renata Podgórzeńska. Adam Marszałek Publishing House, Toruń 2008, pp. 330.**

*Sylwia Ewelina Serwońska*

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries the notion of conflict took a new meaning. The issues of wars, terrorism and nationalism

interchangeably identified with a conflict have gained popularity. It gives the explanation to the present state of things. Our times