

the election. Next, he presents the course and results of the election campaign for the Senate.

Another advantage of the reviewed book is also its proper construction, live language, good academic knowledge, as well as the abundance of source materials. Arkadiusz Kawecki worked on Polish political science literature, more often than not referring to the press sources, using also extensively election materials, posters, leaflets, and election papers. The author remarkably skillfully presents statistic data referring to the course and result of elections, presenting the former Szczecin District on the background of the whole Poland.

Addressees of the discussed work entitled *From a Plebiscite to Elections: Birth of a Democratic Party System of Regional Societies* are both people that professionally deal with the issues of the creation of Polish

democratic system (academics, researchers, but also students of political science, international relations, history and the law, administration, with special emphasis on the ones deeply interested in the recent history of the Western Pomerania), and practitioners, as well (local authorities, politicians).

To finish with, I would like to strongly emphasize that the reviewed work by Arkadiusz Kawecki is a successful connection of theoretical ruminations on the plebiscite character of the first parliamentary election of 1989, and a practical presentation of the course and results of the consecutive elections in the former Szczecin District. The book must be evaluated as very good and necessary on Polish publishing market. It is a work useful for political science, history, and law students, as well as for academics, politicians, and people that are strongly interested in the issues of election competition.

A publishing review of a work edited by Maria Marczevska-Rytko entitled *Populism at the Turn of the 20th and 21st Century: A Panaceum or a Trap for Modern Societies*, Adam Marszałek Publishing House, Toruń 2006, p. 250.

by Joanna Marszałek-Kawa

Recently on the publishing market there appeared an interesting work devoted to the issue of populism in the current politics. This book definitely deserves special attention. First of all, it successfully fits in the bibliography so far, just to mention the work edited by Ryszard Markowski *Populism and Democracy* or a book by Joanna Dzwonczyk entitled

Populist Tendencies in a Post-Socialist Society. Secondly, the reviewed work presents the reader with a wider perspective.

The academic editor of the reviewed volume is Dr Maria Marczevska-Rytko, a professor at the Maria Skłodowska-Curie University in Lublin, an author an editor of numerous works, academic dissertations and articles

published both in Poland and abroad. Especially worth noticing are the most important works in her career, i.e. *Populism: From the Political Theory and Practice in Latin America*, or *Populism: Theory and Practice*, or *Direct Democracy in Theory and Practice*.

Among the main directions of Maria Marczevska-Rytko's interests are the issues of the history of political thought, religion and faith associations, political movements and systems, as well as international relations.

As it is underlined in the literature on the subject, populism is a political behaviour that is based on popularizing the views that are presently most fashionable in a given social group, views due to which it is possible to become more popular without any need to analyze their sense or wondering about the real possibilities and results of putting them into action. More often than not, populism takes the form of "getting into favour of society and voters by criticizing the ruling authorities".

As typical examples of populism present on the present political scene, especially during election campaign, we can count: a simultaneous statement of the need to lower taxes and of promised rising expenditure for social service, without considering how to balance the budget expense in the provided situation.

In political debate, "populism" is a frequently used epithet, which is supposed to discredit the views and actions of the political opponents. It must be emphasized that, for this reason alone, depending on the represented views and attitudes, it is possible to define various, often considerably differing views and groups as "populist".

It must be pointed out that the popularity of populists depends on numerous factors, e.g. the level of political activation of society, as well as the dissolution of education. In a developed democratic society, populists have little true influence on the shape of politics.

The reviewed work, entitled *Populism at the Turn of the 20th and 21st century: A Panaceum or a Trap for Modern Societies* endeavours to answer the following question: is populism a trap for modern societies or can it be perceived as an effort to make the people in authority sensitive to the problems with which the present ruling liberal democracies cannot cope. The authors of the articles presented in the discussed book also wonder whether populism poses a threat to democracy or its supplement.

The presented collective work consists of three parts and a supplement. The first part was devoted to the discussion of terminology-methodological problems. These issues are dealt with by Jerzy Szacki, who defined the relation between populism and democracy Roman Tokarczyk, who found the constitutive features of populism, Dani Filc, with an endeavour to define the concept, Andrzej Bembenista, who discusses the specific model of populist leadership, Eugeniusz Ponczek, who points at the durability, changeability and results of populism, and the editor of the book, Maria Marczevska-Rytko, who presents the new populism. The second part analyzes the sources, concepts and political conditioning. In this part the authors are e.g. Joanna Dzwonczyk, Agnieszka Kasińska-Metryka, Andrzej K. Piasecki, and Marek Jeliński. The third part of the book contains an analysis of examples of populism in the world. Teresa

Sasińska-Klas, Jery Sielski, and Olgierd Grott present examples of populism in Poland (Andrzej Lepper, "Samobrona", national-socialists), Roman Bäcker and Kazimierz Malak deal with Russian populism. Other authors presented examples from Catalonia, Sweden, Germany, the USA. Wojciech Stankiewicz presented examples of populism in Poland and in the world. The last part of the reviewed work is a supplement which contains an article by Maria Marczevska-Rytko, in which she discusses the phenomenon of populism in "Gazeta Wyborcza" and "Rzeczpospolita" newspapers. Wojciech Zięta in his turn presents a selection of Polish academic literature on populism based on the written resources of the National Library in Warsaw and of university-level schools libraries. In the selection there are both concise publications and academic papers and chosen newspaper articles.

The content of the reviewed book fully reflects the polysemy of the term populism, which at the end of the twentieth century became one of the key terms in political study. It must be praised that the editor divides the collected material into a theoretically-methodological and practical part. The texts are characterized with a proper construction,

animated language, good academic skills, as well as richness of source materials. The authors used both Polish publications and, foremost, from foreign academic literature. In this volume, issues absent so far in Polish publications are discussed. It will most certainly contribute to knowledge of populism.

In the articles presented in the third part of the reviewed work there are some problems not dealt with in Polish academic discourse so far. Another advantage of the book *Populism at the Turn of the 20th and 21st century: A Panaceum or a Trap for Modern Societies* is the presence of foreign authors.

In accordance with the intentions of the editor of the book, it is addressed mostly to people interested in the modern political scene and the processes and transformations that are present there, but also to people that are professionally involved in the subject (academics, researchers, and students), as well as practitioners (local authorities and politicians).

To conclude, provided the very current topic, with very limited number of publication in the subject area, I would like to strongly recommend the reviewed work to everyone interested in the issue of populism in current politics.

Jerzy Muszyński: *Information Society: Political Science Drafts*, Adam Marszałek Publishing House, Toruń 2007, p. 290

by Joanna Marszałek-Kawa

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