

shaped by the conditions of his society. Górski appears to argue convincingly that the environment was decisive, but in reality he sidesteps the issue by virtually ignoring the detailed mathematical and astronomical revolution which Copernicus wrought. Nevertheless, this book provides some very useful insights into specific aspects of Copernicus's outlook and activity, particularly in connection with the Knights of the Teutonic Order. In addition to fifty-one black and white illustrations, a good critical bibliography, and a useful chronological summary of Copernicus's life, Górski also provides an excellent short note on portraits of the astronomer.

The final book in this Copernican quartet is the handsomely illustrated and beautifully written popular biography by Jan Adamczewski. Printed in Poland, but given wide distribution in this country through Charles Scribner's Sons by the Copernicus Society of America and Mrs. Paul's Kitchens, Inc., this book provides a judicious, sensitive evocation of the time, the land, and the man. There are neither notes nor bibliography in this work, but its learning is reflected in the skillful quotation from both the sources and the best modern authorities and in the careful, cautious judgments on such controversial issues as the question of Copernicus's ordination, his language, and the sources of inspiration for his scientific work. The text is complemented beautifully by scores of black and white photographs and illustrations (many of them not widely used in other illustrated works) and by eight color plates. The only weakness of this book is the surprisingly limited attention given to Copernicus's astronomy and the technical side of his accomplishments.

This last observation is also characteristic of many of the popular works on Copernicus which have recently appeared, including those under review here. One must search for an adequate scientific introduction to Copernicus in such specialized treatises as the commentary by Professor Noel Swerdlow on the *Commentariolus* (in *Symposium on Copernicus*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1974), or in the scholarly publications appearing in the Polish series *Studia Copernicana*. Thus the quinquecentennial celebration of the astronomer's birth seems to have brought with it for the general public a richer and deeper understanding of Copernicus's country and his times, but not necessarily of his work.

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SOZIALVERFASSUNG UND POLITISCHE REFORM: POLEN IM
VORREVOLUTIONÄREN ZEITALTER. By Jörg K. Hoensch. Beiträge
zur Geschichte Osteuropas, no. 9. Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1973.
xv, 500 pp. DM 72.

The author of this important study has made a name for himself as a diplomatic historian of East Central Europe. The current work represents a chronological shift from the twentieth to the eighteenth century and a geographic shift from Czechoslovakia to Poland. The shift has been very successful.

It is not accidental that Hoensch chose as the motto of his book a quotation from R. R. Palmer's *Age of the Democratic Revolution* concerning the partitions of Poland. In fact Hoensch responds to the question raised by Palmer about the difficulty of forming an "accurate impression of the social changes or emerging interests that motivated the new ideas" in mid and late eighteenth-century Poland. Relying on his own archival research and putting to good use recent Polish con-

tributions, Hoensch explores the complexities of “social structure and political reform”—the title he gave to his book. Combining difficult techniques of constitutional, social, and political-intellectual historians, the author has produced a remarkable and thought-provoking study. The book is divided into three major parts, which deal with the concepts of the reformers concerning the existing social structure, the importance of political party life for the reform of the nobles’ republic, and the reform of the institutional structure of the *Rzeczpospolita*. An introductory chapter covers reform policies and writings up to the middle of the eighteenth century.

A short review can neither do justice to the scope of this volume nor raise the multitude of questions that Hoensch touches upon in one way or another. The first part, which contains an analysis of the position of the *szlachta*, the church, the towns, the peasantry, the Jews, and the dissenters, is rich in material and interesting in interpretation. Although one may not agree with everything Hoensch says (for instance, about the castelike nature of the gentry), his is an impressive and perceptive analysis.

The author shows convincingly the native tradition in which the reform movement was embedded and recognizes the political maturity, the self-criticism, and the realism of the reformers. He stresses the continuity of the reform movement from the middle of the eighteenth century down to the May 3, 1791, constitution. He shows the destructive context created by the policies of Catherine and Frederick of Prussia. While older Russian and Prussian historians have condemned the *szlachta* on the grounds that it had failed to react to the socioeconomic changes of the eighteenth century, Hoensch rejects this criticism by pointing to the real awareness of these problems. If the reforms had been fully carried out, Poland would have entered the path of a modern, “capitalist-like” society: “It was not because of lack of original and practical political concepts, but only because of the inability to carry them out in the teeth of the noble society opposition and of that of the neighbors interested in a weak Poland, that the *Rzeczpospolita szlachecka* collapsed.”

Hoensch is right in describing his book as both a synthesis based on existing monographs and a synthesis that breaks new ground. Whatever criticism the experts on the various problems discussed by Hoensch may contribute, I feel that his work deserves serious attention. The bibliography is impressive, and the occasional mistakes in Polish names and words—though irritating—are not of major significance. If the work is bound to be controversial by its very nature, the author has shown a fairness toward his subject and a scholarly approach which merit respect.

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POLSKA A “BIAŁA” ROSJA (OD LISTOPADA 1918 DO KWIETNIA 1920 R.). By *Adolf Juzwenko*. Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1973. 296 pp. 60 zł.

This important book by the Polish historian Adolf Juzwenko discusses the political relations between Poland and “White” Russia during the years 1918–20, a subject that is of continuing interest and debate. Juzwenko points out that Poland could see no political gain if either Admiral Kolchak or General Denikin came to power. On the contrary, she saw only serious danger to her independence and to the