

WIELKA EMIGRACJA: POLSKIE WYCHODŹSTWO POLITYCZNE W LATACH 1831–1862. By Sławomir Kalembka. Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1971. 476 pp. 30 zł., paper.

Although the events of World War II caused the destruction of most of the archives of the history of Polish emigration in the years 1831–62, Polish historians soon resumed publication of monographic studies of this period based on other sources. Eventually a synthesis became possible as well as desirable. One such synthetical attempt has been made by Sławomir Kalembka, the author of the monograph *Polskie Towarzystwo Demokratyczne w latach 1831–1846* (Toruń, 1966). He has produced an interesting, popular book with no pretension to novelty of historical statement.

The volume's main objective is to outline the history (primarily brought about by the failure of the Polish insurrection against Russia in the years 1831–32) of the emigration called "Great" because of the significance of its artistic and ideological achievements. In its seven parts the book is quite informative. The introductory chapter deals with the genesis of the emigration. The following three provide descriptions of the historical events within chronological segments with caesuras at about 1834 and 1837. The fifth chapter is entitled "The Everyday Life of the Emigration." The last two tell the history up to the eve of the next Polish insurrection of 1863.

In keeping with the popular character of the book, the bibliography is short and compact rather than strictly scholarly. However, there is also a calendar of the most important events of the period, which makes the book more useful and comprehensive.

The work's strongest feature is what Kalembka himself suggests in the conclusion was his main attempt: the presentation of a vivid picture of the everyday lives of persons—their actions, problems, and characteristics. Sprinkled throughout the book—written with a definite narrative talent—are interesting statistical data and estimations, little-known facts, and personal anecdotes which prove this attempt to have been successful.

But despite the author's pledges of providing a popular summary, the volume contains too many highly detailed analyses of innumerable emigrant political parties and cliques, and thousands of names, dates, and largely irrelevant events, particularly with regard to the *Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie*—to this day the best-researched party of that period. The enumeration of these particulars may thus easily confuse the general reader, who would probably prefer more information on the everyday life of the emigrant heroes and on the eventual influence of outstanding Polish Romantic artists, who for political reasons did most of their creative work outside the divided fatherland.

Still, there can be no doubt that Kalembka's scholarship and literary skills make the book a valuable contribution and useful source of information on the history of the Polish Great Emigration.

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