Beata DI BIASIO, Mit Europy i jego transformacje w XX wieku / The European myth and its transformation in the 20 century

The exhibition “On Classic Ground”, held at the Tate Gallery in 1990, revealed the union linking two apparently opposite spheres: ancient and modern art. What was the place occupied by the European myth in that art? Alongside the jaunty presentation of the European myth from the very beginning of the 20 century as well as later, more “engaged” instances, revealing the process of the moral and spiritual liberation of women, in the 30’s, works appear which foretell of terror and catastrophe such as Europe was to experience before long. In this way, the trampled human dignity and the violence of the age of two totalitarianisms also find expression in the iconography of the European myth. In the 30’s, during the most powerful period of Nazism, the European myth began to fulfil a new function. In “anti-fascist” painting, Europe-as-woman, this time filling the role of victim; a bull symbolising violence. It might be said that in the period preceding the Second World War, the depiction of the European myth is inscribed in the world of politics. The most representative example is Max Beckmann’s painting, “The Rape of Europe” from 1933. In the East, the ancient European myth is interwoven with the much younger, national myth. The Eastern European version of the European myth assumes the character of the antemurale myth. Revealed on canvas in sundry epochs, the protagonists of the European myth, the bull and the princess, constitute a strange, timeless couple who, continually changing their relationship, contain a richness of symbolic meaning: love, hatred, sensitivity, violence, sadism, devotion and desire. In the end, without relation to their geographical origins and the era in which they lived, for artists, the union between Zeus and Europe was not, when all is said and done, simply the romance of a God and a princess, not merely the story of Europe in painting, but also the story of love between men and women.

Eugeniusz Cezary KRÓL, Czy w polskim filmie fabularnym lat 1956–1995 istnieje wizerunek „dobrego Niemca”? Przyrzeczywki do dyskusji nad heterostereotypem narodowym w relacjiach / Does the image of “a good German” exist in Polish feature films of the years 1946–1995? A contribution to the discussion on the national heterostereotype in Polish-German relations

In the article, an attempt has been made to determine the presence of a German motif in Polish feature films made in the second half of the 20 century. The author conducted a review of films, choosing titles containing images of the German, as well as establishing the Polish-German references present in various historical contexts from the Middle Ages, through modern and most recent history and up to the contemporary, shaped by the Second World War. The materials collected and selected are subsequently subjected to a quantitative and qualitative analysis. Finally, it is established that of the 981 Polish feature films distributed in cinemas during 1946–1995, 236 (24%) contained, to a lesser or greater extent, a developed German plot line, or referred to it in reminiscences. Amongst these films, 85% are linked to the events of 1939–1945. An important section of the article consists of the characteristic
portrayal of the German which appears in Polish films. In what is decidedly the majority of case, these are characters invested with unequivocally negative features. A small number of films made an attempt at differentiating between German roles; only a few included the “good German”, representing a friendly, or, at the very least, well-disposed attitude to the Poles. In discerning the cause of this state of affairs, the author draws attention to an entire complex of emphasis are the experiences of the war which, in Polish eyes, authenticate the presence of the “bad German”. At the same time, the propaganda function of film in post-war Poland must not be forgo en. In the People’s Republic of Poland, film, alongside other mass media, served to prolong the portrayal of the German enemy of Polish society. The final upshot is that after 1989, the “centuries-old” German enemy disappeared from Polish feature films. However, a new formula for perceiving the German has not materialised; that task stands not only before filmmakers, but also before writers, journalists and – last but not least – historians and political scientists.

Ewa NASALSKA, Wysiedlenie Niemców jako element szkolnej edukacji historycznej w latach 1956–2006 / The relocation of Germans as an element in the teaching of history in schools in the years 1956–2006

The subject of the article, which is based on three school textbooks for the teaching of modern history during the period 1956–2006, is an analysis of history teaching in schools as it pertains to the forming of a picture of the compulsory relocation of Germans in Poland. Changes which the field under study has undergone are discussed in terms of both the choice of historical facts and of their interpretation. In text books from the period of the People’s Republic of Poland, the compulsory relocation of the Germans receives mention merely as a sideline to the issues of the changes to Poland’s western borders. The shifting of Poland to the West, however, is interpreted as the returning to Poland of the “old land of the Piast dynasty”. The rhetoric of the concept of the “Regained Territories” disappeared from school text books only after 1999. The 90’s brought change to the presentation of the relocation. From 1999, the prevalence of a variety of curricula, and thus of the text books, brings a departure from the unity of presentation of the relocation issue and the same differentiation in the teaching of the contents. A common feature of both gymnasium and post-gymnasium school text books is the discussion of the issues of the relocation of the Germans within the broad perspective of compulsory migration in the 20 century. A substantial change in the presentation of the discussion of the issues in relation to the period of the People’s Republic of Poland is also the increasingly widespread recording of the wrongs sustained by the German civilian population during the displacement operation. The changes in this sphere are the result not only of the ‘reclamation’ of areas of popular memory which until now have been pushed into the shadows, but also the introduction of binding contemporary moral norms and international law in evaluating the events of more than sixty years ago.

Paweł POPIELIŃSKI, Wyjazdy młodych ludzi z podwójnym obywatelstwem w poszukiwaniu pracy / Work-related migration of the dual nationality youth

Polish one; the so called "double passport holders" in search of work (mainly seasonal) in the countries of the "old" European Union. Also presented are the results of a survey carried out amongst the young members of the German minority in Upper Silesia with regard to their
travelling abroad, in order to work, as well as to their holding of a German passport. Thanks to the holding of a German passport, a large group of people of German descent, particularly from Upper Silesia, enjoyed the experience of unlimited access to the Union's job market considerably sooner than did the (single nationality) Poles. These people migrate abroad mainly because of the difficult financial situation (the high level of unemployment in Poland, or low earnings) or because they have become accustomed to a better standard of living. For several years now, it has been possible to observe that seasonal migration to work in Holland and Germany enjoys a greater popularity. It is mostly young people who tend to become migrant workers, with seasonal work, mainly in Holland, being particularly popular amongst the youth. After vocational or secondary school, young people frequently see no future prospects in Poland and abandon further education in order to go abroad to work and make money as quickly as is possible. People working abroad principally do heavy work, frequently not in their own field but in those occupations which the Dutch and Germans have no wish to practice. The phenomenon of work-related migration is giving rise to a great many social problems. In its social dimension, it is, in principle, bringing about more troubles than benefits.

Joanna SZYMONICZEK, Działalność Biura Informacji i Poszukiwań Polskiego Czerwonego Krzyża. Wybrane zagadnienia / The operations of the Polish Red Cross Tracing and Information Bureau. Selected issues

The acknowledgement of moral suffering as one of the greatest tragedies which war brings in its wake, gave rise, at the end of the 19 century, to the widespread emergence of national information services. The Polish Tracing and Information Bureau came into being in 1918 and from the very beginning it was one of the most active institutions of this type. Amongst its main tasks were, and still are, the collection and registration of all information with regard to prisoners of war, receiving under deposit personal items and documents belonging to prisoners of war and left behind during their repatriation, release, escape or death, collecting and registering all information which may help in the identification of the dead, wounded or missing, as well as passing on the information to their closest relatives, facilitating correspondence between members of divided families when all other connections have been broken off, tracing missing persons, as well as those of whom their relatives have no information, obtaining documents from institutions and administrations, issuing various types of document e.g. certification of captivity or death, and travel documents, tracing the victims of war, armed conflict and natural disaster, searching for war graves, participating in the exhumation of war victims, and passing on messages (the Red Cross messaging system) to and from countries caught up in armed conflict. The most difficult period in the Polish Service’s activity was the period of the Second World War and its immediate aftermath. The loss of the archives twice during the war, the impediments placed in the way by the Polish authorities and the lack of access to Soviet documents and to the millions of people in need of help meant that discharging the tasks with which it was entrusted became exceptionally difficult. Even now, more than sixty years after the end of the war, it is matters relating to the war which predominate in the work of the Tracing and Information Bureau of the Polish Red Cross.