

Tymon Terlecki, *Korespondencja teatralna 1955–1991* [Theater correspondence 1955–1991], selected and edited by Marzena Kuraś (Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki PAN, 2016). 450 pp. English summary, illus., index. ISBN 978-83-65630-03-2.

This book is a thick volume of 275 letters exchanged over a period of thirty or so years between Tymon Terlecki (1905–2000), an eminent Polish émigré theater and literary critic, and his four Polish colleagues, well-known theater historians: Bohdan Korzeniewski (1905–1992), Zbigniew Raszewski (1925–1992), Edward Krasiński (b. 1933), and Jerzy Got (1923–2004). The volume consists of five sections: a long introductory essay by Marzena Kuraś, the editor, is followed by sixty-four letters of Terlecki and Korzeniewski written between 1955 and 1991, fifty-five letters of Terlecki and Raszewski written in 1958–1990, seventy-one letters of Terlecki and Krasiński written in 1960–1991, and eighty-five letters of Terlecki and Got written in 1958–1988.

Korespondencja teatralna 1955–1991 is a remarkable letter collection and a fascinating record of Tymon Terlecki's life and work. The letters he sent from exile—he resided in London and Chicago—to his four colleagues in Poland pass on the information about most of his career after the war. This collection also documents the lives and activities of his four correspondents, as in their many letters written to him over the years they describe in detail their own interests, preoccupations, and accomplishments. Altogether, this correspondence is a chronicle of both the efforts all these scholars made to work together and their actual successful collaboration in the field of theater studies. Also, it is a source of information on much broader issues, including Polish emigration, Polish intellectual life, and postwar European culture. As the exchange begins in the mid and late 1950s—a period after the political thaw in Poland—and ends three decades later at around the time of the collapse of communism, it reflects many aspects of the entire epoch full of social and political changes.

The sixty-page essay that opens the volume serves as a good introduction. Its author and editor addresses the content by presenting Tymon Terlecki, his correspondents, and the main themes of their letters. The editor even reflects briefly on the Polish tradition of letter writing and, in general, on the art of epistolography itself (a letter is an image of its sender's soul—we are reminded of the words of Demetrius Phalereus). But the introduction is above all a detailed presentation of Terlecki—as a critic, journal editor, scholar, writer, and emigration activist. The editor describes his entire life, starting with his childhood, school years, and the beginning of his scholarly career before the World War II, and yet the correspondence in the volume spans only a period of thirty postwar years. Perhaps, this is the best way to capture the drama of the émigré critic's career, which all of these letters also reflect accurately. In the 1930s, young Terlecki was one of the most important creators of theater studies in Poland.¹ The war's outcome and his emigration—he settled in

1. Terlecki lectured on the history of Polish and foreign theater in Warsaw's State Institute of Theatrical Art (PIST), established in 1932, and published extensively in all major Polish journals. See *From The Polish Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3, 2018. Copyright 2018 by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. Complimentary copy—not for distribution without permission.

London after serving in the Polish Army in France and Britain²—influenced his fate enormously. Despite his intense intellectual activity after the war, his presence in theater studies, also in literary criticism, was literally erased in Poland. The communist government imposed strict censorship on his name and works—just like on other émigré writers—and for a long time he himself did not want to publish in the totalitarian state.³

In exile Terlecki's life acquired a new dimension. He became one of the leading figures of postwar Polish emigration and a strong advocate of Polish culture abroad.⁴ Some even regarded him as the emigration's spiritual leader. Indeed, despite all the hardships associated with life in exile, he was able to pursue a successful career as a critic, essayist, and scholar—the fact also manifested by his appointments as literature professor at the University of Chicago, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the Polish University in Exile. From the letters—and from the introduction—we learn about his essays, articles, and reviews published in Polish émigré journals (notably, *Wiadomości* [News], a London-based weekly, and *Kultura* [Culture], a monthly published in Paris), and about his books, such as *Krytyka personalistyczna* [Personalist criticism] (London 1957), *Ludzie, książki i kulisy* [People, books, and coulisses] (London 1960), *Stanisław Wyspiański* (Boston 1983), *Rzeczy teatralne* [Theatrical Matters] (Warsaw 1984), and *Szukanie równowagi* [Searching for a Balance] (London 1985). In the introduction, the editor emphasizes correctly that Terlecki's writings are strictly connected with European literary culture and that they prove his ability to combine knowledge from different branches of learning and art. It is also true that his writings have deep Christian roots and demonstrate a clear system of ethical values.⁵ His language is, indeed, emotional and full of symbols, metaphors, and rhetorical figures. Many of these qualities can be detected in his letters, which are, like all his writings, an important voice on theater, art, literature, and Polish and European cultural traditions.

literary and theatrical journals. For a short time, he was editor-in-chief of the quarterly *Scena Polska* [Polish stage]. He also cooperated with Leon Schiller and other great personalities of Polish theater during the interwar period.

2. Terlecki served in the Army's Department of Propaganda and Education, editing the military journal *Polska Walcząca* [Fighting Poland] (1939–1948).

3. Terlecki belonged to those unrelenting émigré writers who, in their manifestation of resistance, vowed not to publish their works in Poland under communist rule. He was one of the initiators of a Polish Émigré Writers' Union Act that obliged writers in exile not to publish their works in Poland. The Act was introduced in 1947.

4. Terlecki's numerous activities included his service and membership in various émigré organizations and institutions. He was a member of the political party "Independence and Democracy," the Polish Writers' Union in Exile, the Polish Veterans' Association, and the Literary-Historical Society in Paris. He also worked for Radio Free Europe.

5. It is important to stress that Terlecki was an original theoretician and practitioner of personalist literary criticism.

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Terlecki's four correspondents—Korzeniewski, Raszewski, Krasieński, and Got—belonged to a group of scholars gathered around the journal of theater studies *Pamiętnik Teatralny* [Theatrical memoir], which was established in 1952 by the Art Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. Bohdan Korzeniewski, the author of the letters in the volume's first section, was the editor-in-chief of the journal, and his ambition was to continue the idea of *Scena Polska* [Polish stage], a similar journal edited by Terlecki before the war. In a letter of November 25, 1959, Korzeniewski even asked him to become an unofficial, "quiet co-editor of *Pamiętnik Teatralny*, just as if you were one in Poland under different circumstances" (p. 103). More importantly, Korzeniewski—and the other correspondents, too—kept asking Terlecki to publish in the new journal. "Your collaboration with us," he wrote in the same letter, "is now more important than ever; precisely because of the return of Stalinism, which threatens our culture with a real catastrophe" (p. 103). To persuade Terlecki he used the argument that his opinions as a critic count enormously and are valued by his colleagues in Poland. The requests submitted to Terlecki over the years urging him to publish with *Pamiętnik Teatralny* form one of the recurring themes in the letters. Eventually, Terlecki did agree to contribute to the journal. Excerpts from his article on Leon Schiller, "Ostatni romantyk sceny polskiej" [The last romanticist of the Polish stage], appeared in the first volume of the journal in 1957. After the political thaw of 1956, sometimes it was easier for émigré writers to publish their works in Poland. Two years later the journal also printed two chapters from Terlecki's book *Pani Helena* [Mrs. Helena] (London 1962), a biography of Helena Modrzejewska (a.k.a. Modjeska), the famous theater actress performing in Poland and America at the turn of the twentieth century.

Terlecki's efforts to write the Modrzejewska biography is another recurring theme in some of the letters. It marks the beginning of his exchange with Jerzy Got, a theater historian from Kraków (in the late 1970s he emigrated to Austria), whose letters are included in the volume's last section. He initiated the correspondence on May 3, 1958, by sending Terlecki a copy of his own book on Modrzejewska. "Since you don't know me, I took the liberty," he wrote, "to send you—through the Publisher—my book, which you may find interesting because of its subject matter" (p. 315). With his first letter he also sent Terlecki his second book, on the nineteenth-century actress Antonina Hoffmann. Terlecki's response was full of gratitude and high praises for the books. In return, he sent Got copies of some of his own publications.

The correspondence with Raszewski and Krasieński—placed in the volume's second and third sections, respectively—also began with a book exchange. In fact, sending books and other publications as well as exchanging information about scholarly matters was a regular practice in the collaboration between these scholars. Thus, very often they commented on the material they sent and received. They also wrote about their various professional activities: doing research, attending conferences, evaluating each other's works, expressing support for their efforts, discussing books and authors, and commenting on theatrical performances. The

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last theme appears frequently in the letters of Korzeniewski who as a theater director was involved in the staging of many plays in Polish theaters. He regularly informed Terlecki of his projects and looked forward to hearing his opinion. For the critic living in exile, this kind of exchange was a means to keep up to date with the most recent developments in the field of Polish theater and theater studies. But the letters in the volume also reveal the private side of their authors, as they wrote about their families, health problems, difficulties of everyday life, and other personal matters. In his letters Terlecki often mentioned his first wife, Tola Korian, an actress and singer. After her unexpected death in 1983, he made every effort to organize and preserve her archive, which later he shipped from London to the library of the Art Institute in Warsaw. It was Edward Krasieński, the director of the Institute's Special Collections Department at the time, who, at the request of Terlecki, received and took special care of the archive.

Surprisingly, these letters—perhaps with the exception of Korzeniewski's sober reflections on the cultural policy of communist Poland—do not say much about politics, even though they were written during the Cold War and were sent across the Iron Curtain. Most clearly, their authors were more than aware of the watchful eye of the communist censor who placed their words under close scrutiny. Therefore, they chose subjects other than politics to write about and, as scholars, they had plenty to discuss or reflect upon. But, by all means, it was politics and the political division of postwar Europe that determined their fates and kept them apart. Their collaboration encountered many obstacles and the letters often reveal them. Terlecki's correspondents wrote about them—especially about censorship—every time they had a chance to travel abroad and send their letters from there.⁶ Indeed, Terlecki and his colleagues found ways to overcome the divisions and barriers. It seems that the difficulties to communicate even intensified the contacts between them.

The volume gathers a large number of the letters and yet it is only a selection. But the omissions or gaps in this correspondence do not create any major difficulties in reading and understanding it. The exact dates and the contents of each letter, as well as the editor's added (on occasion, repetitive) footnotes, provide enough information to fill in for the missing or unpublished items. Only at times does the reader wish that the long breaks between some of the letters were not there, that a given

6. They sent Terlecki some of their letters from France, Austria, and the United States. While presenting interesting facts about these scholars' foreign trips (and Got's later emigration to Austria), the correspondence is also a record of their plans to meet and of their actual meetings with Terlecki (see, for example, the letters of March 30, 1957, May 2, 1960, June 4, 1967, June 8, 1967, October 16, 1963, November 9, 1981). These were, however, rare and even one-time occurrences: the meeting of Raszewski with Terlecki in Paris in December of 1960; a few-hour meeting of Korzeniewski with Terlecki in Washington, D.C., in June 1967; Got's one month stay in Terlecki's house in London in November 1963; and Krasieński's meeting with Terlecki in New York City on December 9, 1981, on the eve of the imposition of martial law in Poland.

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theme had its definite closing, and that the last letters did not end so abruptly. It is important though that at least the included letters are published in their entirety.

In the introduction, the editor writes that all the letters come from either the National Library in Warsaw or the correspondents' home archives and that this volume contains the correspondence that—with the exception of Krasiński's letters, which are printed here for the first time—was published previously, in *Pamiętnik Teatralny* in 2011. The editor also explains that *Korespondencja teatralna 1955–1991* is part of a larger publishing project and that the second volume of Terlecki's theater correspondence is being prepared. This second volume, which has now been published,⁷ collects the letters of Terlecki and his colleague, Jerzy Timoszewicz, a theater historian who belonged to the same circle of scholars gathered around *Pamiętnik Teatralny*. His name already appears dozens of times in the letters of the present volume. The reader is prepared then to continue reading about what is naturally a further part of Terlecki's voluminous theater correspondence—truly, an invaluable record of his significance for Polish theater studies and an important chapter in the history of intellectual life in postwar Europe.

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Urs Heftrich, Robert Jacobs, Bettina Kaibach, and Karoline Thaidigsmann, eds., *Images of Rupture between East and West: The Perception of Auschwitz and Hiroshima in Eastern European Arts and Media* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016). 547 pp. Illustrations, bibliographies, appendix, index. ISBN 978-3-8253-6548-6.

In late May 2011, the Internationales Wissenschaftsforum Heidelberg held a conference with the same title as the publication under review, with the exception of *The Perception* in the subtitle, which replaced *The Iconography*. Twenty-three papers were presented by scholars of East European culture and, with the addition of a paper by Tvrtko Jakovina, were organized by the four editors into the present volume. The aim of the conference and of the resulting publication was to study the post-World War II perception of Auschwitz and Hiroshima in East European countries behind the Iron Curtain, which were controlled ideologically by the Soviet Union. As the editors state, “For far too long comparative research on Auschwitz and Hiroshima has been dominated by Western perspectives,” and “we should no longer ignore the region that builds a natural bridge between Europe and Asia” (p. 11).

The book is divided into six sections. The first is entitled “Between East and West: Auschwitz and Hiroshima in American, German, and Japanese Perspectives,” the second, “Auschwitz and Hiroshima in Eastern European Perspective: Soviet Union.” The third deals with Poland, the fourth with Czechoslovakia, the fifth with

7. Tymon Terlecki and Jerzy Timoszewicz, *Listy 1960–1993*, ed. Marzena Kuraś (Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki PAN 2016), 458.

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