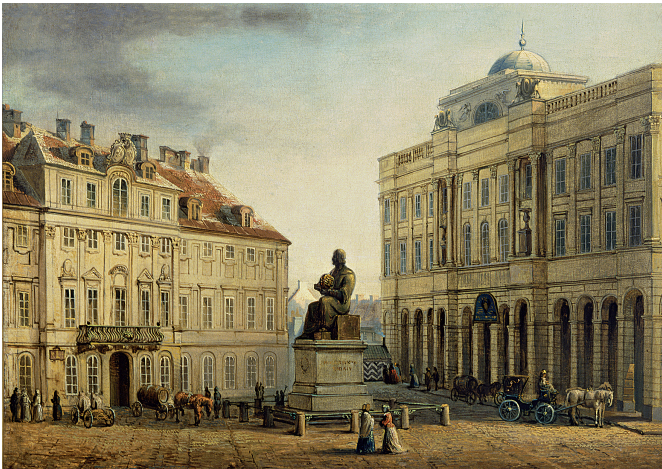


Jerzy Jedlicki

# The Vicious Circle 1832-1864

A History of the Polish Intelligentsia – Part 2



PETER LANG  
EDITION

Jerzy Jedlicki

## The Vicious Circle 1832-1864

The three-part work provides a first synthetic account of the history of the Polish intelligentsia from the days of its formation to World War I. Part two (1832-1864) analyses the growing importance of the intelligentsia in the epoch marked by the triumph of the Polish romanticism. The stress is put on the debates of the position of intelligentsia in the society, as well as on tensions between great romantic ideas and realities of everyday life. A substantial part deals with the genesis, outbreak and defeat as well as the consequences of the national uprising in 1863, whose preparation was to a high degree the work of the intelligentsia. The work combines social

and intellectual history, tracing both the formation of the intelligentsia as a social stratum and the forms of engagement of the intelligentsia in the public discourse. Thus, it offers a broad view of the group's transformations which immensely influenced the course of the Polish history.

Jerzy Jedlicki is Professor emeritus at the Institute of History at the Polish Academy of Sciences where he was head of the research group for the history of intelligentsia. He also was a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington D.C.

## The Vicious Circle 1832-1864

# GESCHICHTE - ERINNERUNG - POLITIK

POSENER STUDIEN ZUR GESCHICHTS-, KULTUR-  
UND POLITIKWISSENSCHAFT

Herausgegeben von Anna Wolff-Powęska und Piotr Forecki

BAND 8



PETER LANG  
EDITION

Jerzy Jedlicki

# The Vicious Circle

## 1832-1864

A History of the Polish Intelligentsia – Part 2

Edited by Jerzy Jedlicki

Translated by Tristan Korecki



PETER LANG  
EDITION

## **Bibliographic Information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

## **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Dzieje inteligencji polskiej do roku 1918. English

A history of the Polish intelligentsia / edited by Jerzy Jedlicki ; translated by Tristan Korecki.  
volumes cm. – (Geschichte, Erinnerung, Politik, ISSN 2191-3528 ; Band 7, 8, 9)

Translation of: Dzieje inteligencji polskiej do roku 1918.

Includes index.

Contents: v. 1. Birth of the intelligentsia, 1750-1831 / Maciej Janowski – v. 2. The vicious circle, 1832-1864 / Jerzy Jedlicki – v. 3. At the crossroads, 1865-1918 / Magdalena Micińska. ISBN 978-3-631-62375-6 (v. 1) – ISBN 978-3-631-62402-9 (v. 2) – ISBN 978-3-631-62388-6 (v. 3) – ISBN 978-3-653-04952-7 (e-book: v. 1) – ISBN 978-3-653-04953-4 (e-book: v. 2) – ISBN 978-3-653-04954-1 (e-book: v. 3) 1. Poland–Intellectual life. 2. Poland–History. 3. Intellectuals–Poland–History. I. Jedlicki, Jerzy, editor, author. II. Janowski, Maciej, author. III. Micińska, Magdalena, author. IV. Korecki, Tristan, translator. V. Title.

DK4115.D9513 2014

305.5'520943809034–dc23

2014040518

This is an academic study financed by the National Program for the Development of Humanities offered by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Poland in 2012-2013. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Ministry cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



NARODOWY PROGRAM  
ROZWOJU HUMANISTYKI

Cover illustration courtesy of the Tadeusz Manteuffel

Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences and Publishing House *Neriton*.

The Copernicus Monument and the Staszic Palace in Warsaw, around 1832, by an unknown Polish painter (National Museum in Warsaw, Inventory Number MP 4893, photo: T. Żółtowska-Huszczka.)

ISSN 2191-3528

ISBN 978-3-631-62402-9 (Print)

E-ISBN 978-3-653-04953-4 (E-Book)

DOI 10.3726/978-3-653-04953-4

PETER LANG



Open Access: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial No Derivatives 4.0 unported license. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

© Jerzy Jedlicki, 2014

Peter Lang – Frankfurt am Main · Bern · Bruxelles · New York ·  
Oxford · Warszawa · Wien

This publication has been peer reviewed.

[www.peterlang.com](http://www.peterlang.com)

*In memory of Ryszarda Czepulis-Rastenis*





# Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1: In lands foreign</b> .....	9
In exile, 1832-1845	
1. The exodus.....	9
2. Parties.....	13
3. Poetry and politics.....	25
4. Years have passed.....	31
5. The Nation and Europe.....	36
6. Messianism.....	43
<b>Chapter 2: Inheritors</b> .....	53
At home, 1832-1845	
1. The defeat's aftermath: repressive measures.....	53
2. The social situation of the intelligentsia.....	59
3. The strategy to adapt.....	72
4. Men-of-the-quill.....	77
5. The Poznań revival.....	90
6. Conspirators.....	98
<b>Chapter 3: Crisis</b> .....	109
The Poznań Province and Galicia, 1846-1857	
1. A terrible year, or two.....	109
2. The intelligentsia's revolution.....	116
3. Daily grind.....	131
4. Doing something of use.....	144
<b>Chapter 4: The End of Tsar Nicholas's epoch</b> .....	153
The Kingdom and the Lithuanian-Ruthenian <i>guberniyas</i> , 1846-1856	
1. Off to Siberia!.....	153
2. Professional environments.....	163

3. Life, private and social.....	190
4. The visible horizon .....	198
<b>Chapter 5: The struggle for primacy .....</b>	<b>211</b>
At home and in exile, 1857-1862	
1. Latency .....	211
2. In diaspora .....	237
3. The Poznań arrhythmia .....	251
4. The intelligentsia in the Polish sense.....	254
<b>Chapter 6: Jump into an abyss.....</b>	<b>283</b>
Warsaw and the country-at-large, 1862-1864	
1. Impatience.....	283
2. Rising and falling .....	315
<b>Index .....</b>	<b>343</b>

# Chapter 1: In lands foreign

In exile, 1832-1845

## 1. The exodus

Wanderers, exiles, pilgrims: so they would call themselves, but the collective term ‘émigrés’ or ‘immigrants’ was most frequently in use. Some of them found their errant destiny to be a must: the tsarist amnesty did not extend to the conspiracy members who commenced the uprising; similarly, to parliamentary deputies who had advocated at the *sejm* that Nicholas be dethroned; National Government or Patriotic Society members; those who had participated in the Warsaw mob-law incidents; military officers that had not laid down their arms after Warsaw surrendered (unless they had their loyalty oath to the Tsar renewed); and, volunteers from the *guberniyas*<sup>1</sup> incorporated earlier on in the Empire. All of them could be certain to be taken to a criminal court, in case they would turn up within the Kingdom or Lithuania. Others could come back to be at the tsar’s mercy, albeit no-one knew what the price could be in each individual case. All those formally covered by the amnesty, particularly if one was a simple soldier or non-commissioned officer, were urged to return – brutally, in many cases, by the Prussian and Austrian authorities, who had provided them with temporary shelter; only if resisting efficiently, would they eventually be dispatched to the West. For many an Insurrection participant, interned once they crossed the frontier, refusal to submit a request for the tsar’s mercy was a matter of honour. They would rather emigrate, which they did – hoping it would not last long.

They felt humiliated through the defeat of the Polish expectations, but still intoxicated by the grandeur of the moments they had just experienced. The worse their situation was, the more they needed to be reassured that they had risen to the challenge. The last Commander-in-Chief pathetically summoned, in his last order-of-the-day, that anything that the war veterans could do should be correspondent with the glory of the Polish name: “The world has its eyes turned

---

1 Usually translated as government, governorate, or province, *guberniya* was a major administrative subdivision of the Russian Empire.

upon us [...], every step we make is history”<sup>2</sup> This was the anointment they set off with – and off they went to France, the country whose government did not help the Insurrection and thus all the more felt obliged to provide shelter to its veterans, to assist and support them.

Fame has shrouded the transit of the subsequent groups of Polish émigrés across the central and southern German states – Saxony, Thuringia, Hesse, Württemberg, Baden, and Palatinate. The bourgeoisie, universities, daily newspapers animated by a liberal spirit welcomed the Poles with the warmest affection, sympathy and admiration, as soldiers of freedom, as heroes who dared to challenge a mighty despotic power, the pillar of the Holy Alliance. These émigrés would later on describe, in dozens of memoirs, the convivial and elevated climate of those German salutations, receptions, and farewells, which seemed to raise them up on the wings of a legend.

As they entered French territory, however, they faced the prose of life: getting registered, and then delegated to establishments (so-called *dépôts*) in Besançon, Avignon, or elsewhere; collecting meagre government-granted allowances (which they would call soldier’s pay, to buoy themselves up); establishing themselves at military barracks or temporary lodgings – all in an alien country, without knowing its language or habits, for the most part.

How many of them there were, is hard to exactly determine today, as it would depend on the moment the calculation would have been made. The movement was two-way, really: some would move up, for any reason; others joined late. Finally, the French Government’s care extended to an estimated six thousand Polish political immigrants, as of 1832; much less sizeable groups also settled down in England, Belgium, Switzerland and, with a delay, in the United States of America. A definite majority of émigrés, regardless of their earlier status or possessions, saw themselves without a subsistence of their own, at least initially – unless their families remaining at home had managed to protect their property from confiscation and find a way to send funds to the outlawed *exulants* – that is, exiles. In most cases, however, the exile condition would level the estate or possession-related differences. Equality, unthought-of at home, appeared prevalent at the *dépôts*.

Emigration/immigration was not a phenomenon unknown to Europe. Religious or political persecution caused from time to time exoduses of people put

---

2 Quoted after: L. Gadon, *Przejście Polaków przez Niemcy po upadku powstania listopadowego* [‘The Poles’ march through Germany after the defeat of the November Insurrection’], p. 13.

under threat or unwilling to come to terms with the order-of-things prevailing in their respective countries. Naturally, those were usually defiant spirits, stubbornly persistent with their faith, beliefs, or convictions. The expulsion of the Jews from Spain, Huguenots from France, and Arians from Poland are all at-hand examples of the occurrence of proactive religious, or confessional, immigrations which made their contributions especially to the development of theological thought in Europe. The United States offered a haven to a number of confessional communities that did not feel safe in the Old Continent or could not overtly pursue their cults. The late eighteenth century marks the start of an epoch of migration triggered by fear of political repression: these would most often include refugees that impatiently awaited the day they would return in glory as winners, if not avengers. The royalists emigrating from France overwhelmed by the Revolution provide the best-known and most massive example.

Expulsion from one's home country, or flight from persecution, has been the shared lot of writers, artists, and philosophers across the ages – just to mention Ovid, Dante, Mme de Staël, Victor Hugo, and many, many others, until our very day. Interestingly, so many of them gained a powerful creative inspiration in their sorrowful outcast exile condition.

Refugees from Poland appeared in the West during the Confederation of Bar (1768-72) and after its fall; thereafter, subsequently, following the Second and Third Partition (1793-5), expecting to find – for instance, together with the Polish Legions within Bonaparte's army – a way back from the lands foreign into the, reborn, home country. The Hellenic immigrants in Russia and France at the same time raised the idea of liberating Greece from the Turkish yoke. Hoping to see Italy unified and independent, Mazzini's republicans would be plotting for long decades, scattered around Europe. The condition of exiles and refugees, upon whom the necessity to replace their settled model of life, their ancestors' graves, the hearth in their mother country, with a homeless freedom, many a time turned out, historically, to be greatly fertile for the development of political thought, as well as for poetry and arts.

The Polish November-Insurrection immigrants stood out against this background, all the same, with their numerical force and composition. Military men of various ranks were predominant among them – primarily, officers, from the old Polish-Army regiments; also the 1831 volunteers, with numerous Lithuanian uprising partisans. There were many people with political or oratorical experience gained under the revolutionary conditions: with the *Sejm*, national government, insurgent press, or patriotic club. The immigrants were almost exclusively males, the percentage of women being inconsiderable. As for age structure, the community consisted of a handful of seniors (the poet J.U. Niemcewicz was

seventy-four in 1831; General Karol Kniaziewicz was sixty-nine; Prince Adam Czartoryski – sixty-one), but young men, aged between twenty and thirty, definitely prevailed. Bachelors were the most common among them; those who had managed to set up a family had naturally more reasons to try and return home after the defeat, if it was feasible.

These immigrants had a rather considerable educational background, given the context of the period. Although not quite as many of them had managed to complete their university studies; still less had qualified professionally before the Insurrection. Instead, there were many students (then called academics), particularly from Wilno; having a secondary education, completed or not, was an ordinary status to that group. In sum, the immigrant community prevalently consisted, so to put it, of a pauperised young intelligentsia – not yet so named, and completely unprepared to live in exile, and confident that this exile status was temporary, the moment they would return, arms in their hands, to their home country's liberation becoming ever nearer.

Such a composition, and disposition, of the Polish emigration augured ill to the French government. Several thousand people to care for, most of whom possessed nothing or were of no useful trade, was a burden to the state treasury; but that was not the end of the story. Once the amount of allowance granted was made determinable by the military rank or the office the beneficiary held in Poland, the related patents or declarations had to be verified. This was not an easy task, far from it: the volunteers, especially those from Lithuania, had not served with a regular army, and many officers ostentatiously demonstrated their disrespect toward them. Keeping order and peace within the crowded *dépôts*, or supervising the young men overcharged with energy but doomed to idleness, called for increased administrative and police surveillance, all the more that the apparently-liberal government of Louis-Philippe did not want the not-overly-trusted aliens to wander across the country as they would be willing to do; in particular, they were not welcome to gather in Paris.

Political trouble did add to the picture. Any public manifestation of émigrés, appeal or proclamation to the nations of Europe, or, at times, merely an article published in a French newspaper, readily provoked protests from the Russian embassy which the French government had to apologise for and calm down. When, to top it all, smaller or larger huddles of Polish people sneaked out stealthily to instigate or support new insurgent attempts in their own country or some half-baked revolution in Frankfurt, Bern or Savoy, expulsions or bans imposed on return to the promoters of such expeditions followed as the consequence. Polish politically radical groups were necessarily related with the French republican opposition or with clandestine 'Carbonaries' organisations which strove for a

revolutionary upheaval in the European states: no wonder that such contacts were kept track of by the police and could give the exiles a bad time – even if not too gruesome, then all the same they contaminated their relations with the French government.

## 2. Parties

The need to maintain a relationship with the authorities and to intervene, in case of trouble, with a ministry or office, was the first reason for the attempts to develop a body which would represent the immigrant community as a whole. The other reason for such endeavour was the need to reconcile and declare the political purpose behind the emigration, its historical mission, and horizon of hopes and expectations. There followed quite a number of attempts at unification and appointment of some legally valid representative authority. Bonawentura Niemojowski, the last President of the National Government, made such efforts; so did, several times, Joachim Lelewel, a historian of authority, who was nonetheless too-unambiguously assignable to the Insurrection left-wing to win the trust of the emigration community at large. Some leaders of the 1831 *sejm* undertook such a project too, believing that reactivation of a *sejm* assembly in exile, be it a truncated one, would serve as the plainest act of legitimation of the émigré community's mission. General Dwernicki undertook such attempts, counting to this end on his personal prestige as a soldier not entangled in the political dispute. None of those attempts successfully led to its intended purpose. Each subsequent committee ended up creating one more organisation which, instead of unifying the Polish exiles-'at-large', merely contributed to their division into separate confessions of a political faith.

It was, therefore, not the establishment of a committee, or issuance of a manifesto, but rather, the preaching of a peculiar gospel that Adam Mickiewicz had in his mind while writing the *Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* ['Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage'], published in Paris in late 1832 – having voluntarily joined the émigré circles (as he was not an insurgent himself). The central idea to which this poet remained loyal till the end of his days was contempt for any politics and policies driven by an egoistic 'interest' – whether dynastic, party-bound, or even national. The Old Testament of interest was juxtaposed in this work against a New Testament of Christian dedication and sacrifice: this is to be workable at home, where the upper classes, animated by the spirit of devotion, would willingly admit people to proprietorship and citizenship rights, and, all the more, with inter-national relations, each nation would fight for the freedom of the other(s). Since the Poles are found to be the most

inclined to devotion among all the nations, the mission to initiate, under the new rules, the construction of a European federation of peoples should therefore fall to them as their lot. Polish pilgrims in Europe are meant to feel like apostles carrying the idolaters of interest a gospel of sacrifice and freedom. This shall not last long, whatever the case, because the entire structure of legitimistic and mercenary Europe is trembling at its foundations; all its institutions – the thrones, ministries, parliaments, and tribunals – have lost their authority, becoming a ‘rabble’s mockery’. This structure is just about to fall into ruins; its rubble shall be swept out by a “universal war for Liberty of Nations”.

The Mickiewicz prophecy, moreover comprising an extended messianic parabola, not only reassured the emigrants with a hope of a forthcoming return but also boosted their self-esteem with the conviction of a mission that was to be assigned to them in the spiritual and political transformation of Europe. What is more, a natural reflex of anguish and rejection, usual to the émigrés’ reaction to their first confrontation with Western bourgeois civilisation, so alien to them, apparently turned out to be evidence of their ethical superiority. No surprise, then, that these Books enjoyed considerable success, becoming a sacrosanct text of the emigrants’ self-knowledge for years to come. However, they proved completely unable to unify the exiles around a shared sacred purpose and order of values. To bring this about, the work was too lofty, and it too ostentatiously scorned party-related emotions that burst the immigrant community.

Those castaways who had to simultaneously bereave themselves of their homeland, home, family, locality and neighbourhood, and social position, wanted primarily to understand who was to blame for their hopes, awoken a mere two years before, smashed. Such feverish settlements are done after every defeat, dashing any calls for unity. The judgements getting crystallised of a recent unexpired past were accompanied by the overthrowing and creating of men-of-authority, formation, in the fire of polemics, of coteries, parties and their political slogans.

The émigré community was outright, from the very outset, divided by two counteracting impulses. The radical impulse insisted on having the national history revised; the guilty of the recent disaster identified and stigmatised; and, on initiating a social change in the home country that would the very next time unavoidably warrant a success. The conservative impulse urged to do tenacious work to preserve nationality and ensure a continuity of the nation’s historical and leadership class. As a matter of course, these impulses differently formed the personalities of emigrants subject to them.

Joachim Lelewel initially figured out that the Polish National Committee that he had set up would represent the entire exile community in France; but this could not happen. Lelewel’s position was not easy. The conservatives perceived



him as a dangerous leader of democratic radicals; the latter, in turn, charged him with nothaving distinctive enough political views. No-one would call his great knowledge and scholarly merits into question. Lelewel was indeed the first Polish intellectual of his calibre, since Kołłątaj's time, to have risked his authority as an academic for politics, with variable luck. The more widespread a vision the enlightened politics had, the scarcer the funds were for its pursuit. The renown of his name enabled Lelewel to easily establish contacts with the republican opposition and conspirers almost across Europe. He wrote or inspired pompous proclamations to the Germans, Italians, French, Hungarians, or Americans, encouraging all of them to demonstrate solidarity with the Polish exiles' cause and to undermine the foundations of the Holy Alliance. A Committee's appeal to the Russians, contributed to by Mickiewicz and summoning Slavic solidarity of the nations oppressed by the tsarist regime, implied a response from the Russian embassy, accelerating the otherwise inevitable expulsion of Lelewel from France.

Inevitable it was, since proclamations or appeals were not the final point. The Polish democrats, particularly Lelewel's people, willingly joined Masonic lodges as well as Carbonari's 'marquees', revolutionary by design, and modelled after lodges; established secret or semi-overt societies such as People's Revenge, Young Poland, and others, which were setting up international agreements under inspiration from Giuseppe Mazzini, Europe's best-known plotter. Moreover, Lelewel lent his hand to inspiring armed expeditions aimed at bringing forth a new insurgent movement in Poland, or supporting the anti-legitimistic revolt in Frankfurt or Savoy. Such ventures could not, clearly enough, be planned or deliberated upon at bustling assemblies; hence, Lelewel was keen to make use of personal contacts: he pursued an enormous correspondence, encouraged and instructed people, collected confidential information and gossip, and built a network of trusted informers and assistants. This style did not arouse trust in the émigré hubs, provoking instead wicked calumnies and lampoons, with tightening police supervision on the government's side; all this eventually led to the writ ordering him, in 1834, to leave France due to having abused the country's hospitality. Lelewel wandered off to Brussels, where he would remain far away from the main Polish foreign-lands centre; consequently, his political activity weakened, offering him more time to deal with his beloved scholarly work. All the same, he would never cease to influence the émigré coterie staying loyal to him, resuming attempts at unifying the emigration. Yet, it turned out soon after that it was not so much his political labours, not quite efficient as they were, but his views and opinions on the history of Poland that exerted a stronger impact on the history of Poland and, broader still, on the nature of historical progress.

The former ‘clubbists’, that is, members of the Patriotic Society, habitually, in the year-1831 Warsaw, took part in stormy deliberations and rough criticisms of the national government and Insurrection commanders, and immediately contributed with their accusatorial rhetoric to the Paris assemblies of the Polish *Ogół* [‘Assemblage’] or the *Komitet* [‘Committee’] organisations, which naturally soon ended up in a cleavage. The radicals left Leleweł’s *Komitet*, deeming it ideologically indeterminate, and established their own party, named the Polish Democratic Society [*Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie*; abbr. ‘TDP’], which was meant to become, for a long time, one of the two centres around which political and social ideas were getting crystallised in exile.

The Society initially featured no commonly reputable names. The best-known clubbist, Maurycy Mochnecki (born 1803), of whom more will be said as we go on, did not join the organisation; he kept back from Paris and the radical circles. The excelling figure was Tadeusz Krępowiecki (b. 1798), a brilliant though demagogic orator and an ambitious and unruly politician. Beside him acted Adam Gurowski (b. 1805), scion of a wealthy landowning family, a philosophically trained and original mind, astonishing with unexpected turns of his lifeline. There was Jan-Nepomucen Janowski (b. 1803), the period’s extremely rare example of a peasant’s son with a university diploma as a lawyer and the experience behind him of being secretary to the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Learning and editor of an Insurrection newspaper. The Reverend Kazimierz Pułaski (b. 1800), a Piarist friar, preacher, leftist campaigner during the Insurrection, and eternal radical was visible and audible there too. Those most conspicuous individuals, and the others, increasingly numerous, following their path, had made up – still before their exodus from Poland – a new formation of people of varied classes and a tolerable educational background, at that time, for whom the Insurrection became a school of public activity, stimulating their aspirations to create history. They contributed to the emigration’s life an inexhaustible energy and the belief that the world was governed by ideas. They put much passion into clothing the ideas they believed in with words apt and thrilling. Together with it, they built an organisation that was meant to be democratically self-governing, submitting each draft for discussion and voting; yet, their individualities were often bursting the statutory framework they had established. And really, the first TDP founders soon dropped out by themselves, in their never-ending severances and splits, quarrelling over the principia, programme wordings, and over the significance to potentially be allotted to the individuals in the Society’s actions.

Krępowiecki gained special publicity after he delivered a grand speech in French, at the celebration of the Insurrection’s second anniversary at the Saint-Germain Abbey in Paris, totally accusing the Polish nobility of estate-based egoism

of the privileged, which he deemed responsible for throwing away Polish strivings for freedom. The speaker opposed the slogan to unify the emigration above the ideological splits: “May the Providence”, he cried, “protect the peoples against unity and trust! Those are the two bastardic and stultifying virtues that have accelerated our fall. [...] Poland has perished because of those who had caught power whilst proving unable to conceive any great idea, or revolutionary thought.”<sup>3</sup>

A piece of rhetoric so aggressive was not to the liking of his democrat colleagues, let alone the more moderate milieu, for which a criticism of Polish systemic arrangements and national history before a foreign auditorium was scandalous in itself. Krępowiecki, Pułaski, and a few other zealots had consequently to part with the just-established Society. This organisation wanted to see itself radical in thinking but wary in behaviour, so as not to alienate the emigration mass from provincial establishments, and to avoid exposing itself to police repression betimes.

This tactics started yielding fruit. Although gnawed with hassles and apostasies, the Society became gradually solidified, multiplying the number of its members (up to some 1,500); it reinforced the organisational bonds between the fragmented clusters of Polish people in France (and outside it), and the authority of the correspondence-elected Centralisation (since 1835). At the same time, it elaborated its own programmatic thought and means of agitation. This labour revealed the journalistic talent of Wiktor Heltman (b. 1796), in his late thirties, who had been active since 1818 with clandestine associations in the Kingdom; he was distinct with an ability to put the programmes and slogans of the ripening democratic thought into an attractive language vestment. Jan-Nepomucen Janowski, already mentioned, bravely kept up with him. Janowski was the only Society founder who stayed loyal to TDP till the end, proving capable of wedding lasting rules with flexibility in matters of secondary importance. There were others too, who shaped up their views and sharpened up their quills on the Society disputes and writings. Efforts were mutually taken to preserve democratic forms in the Society’s internal business, preventing anyone from attempts at coming to individual leadership; this practice benefited collective polishing-up of the worldview. In this respect, the Society’s intellectual and writing output from the 1830s is impressive – particularly if we take into account the poverty its activists were to spend their lives in.

---

3 Quoted after: *Wskrzesić Polskę, zbawić świat: antologia polskiej chrześcijańskiej myśli rewolucyjnej* [‘Resurrect Poland, save the world: An anthology of Polish Christian revolutionary thought’], ed. by Damian Kalbarczyk, Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, Warszawa 1981, pp. 58; 61.

Going into ecstasies, for a start, about French revolutionary thought, not respecting any sacredness or authority, they eagerly read the history of the Revolution by Albert Laponneraye, immensely popular at the time, along with manifestos of the republican left-wing, Carbonari and Saint-Simonists. They understood that the world, or at least Europe, was governed by an idea of unobstructed and unrestrained progress – in science, social ideas, and political systems. Poland, with its nobility and still-coercive peasant serfdom, appears as some archaic relic amidst the world. As such, Poland will not ever gain fellow feelings or solidarity from peoples, upon whom its tomorrow is dependant. Only “when Poland has incorporated itself into the universal ideas and expectations, into common progress; when the rights of humanity, as a most comprehensible concept, are developing within it as well; when its purpose, its striving proves aligned with the striving and purpose of the progressing European education; that is, once it becomes aimed at ensuring social happiness to a prevalent part of its dwellers, who under the name of Poles get tied to one another into a single social bond”, then would the Poles be in a position to expect their cause to become universal.<sup>4</sup>

The conviction that rebellion was ripening all across Europe against monarchs and privileged estates or classes, and the old regime should not resist the peoples, once they rise together and in solidarity, was the wishful thinking of many an emigrant in those years, not only Polish. As the revolutionary hope faded, though, it was becoming apparent that this European rhetoric of the young democrats did not grip the emigrant camaraderie. Perforce, TDP’s writings became saturated, as years passed, with a greater respect for the national tradition, explained in a democratic spirit. This, in turn, meant that Lelewel’s writings had to be read and appreciated – particularly, his presumption of the vulgar, or common, firstlings of the Polish nation. The nobility, this historian argued, extorted from the serfs, centuries ago, and appropriated personal freedom, arable lands, and civil rights, but within its estate has at least preserved the republican and democratic idea, which the entire nation needs being imbued with again, so that it could find within itself a strength indispensable for rising to independence.

The Lelewelian thought was ripening amidst the discussions between TDP activists; albeit the Society did not lose the belief that Poland’s existence remained Europe’s, if not the whole of mankind’s business, yet it more and more noticeably

---

4 *Akt Założenia T.D.P. z 17 marca 1832 roku* [‘The Founding Act of the T.P.D. of 17<sup>th</sup> March 1832’], in: *Postępowo publicystyka emigracyjna 1831-1846: wybór źródeł* [‘Progressive journalism of the Polish emigration, 1831-46: selected sources’], ed. by W. Łukaszewicz, W. Lewandowski, Wrocław 1961, p. 198.

founded the hope for liberation, especially from tsarist oppression, upon the dismembered nation's own forces and the native idea of liberty. The thus-modified orientation was expressed in the 'Manifesto of the Polish Democratic Society', adopted in December 1836, as finally edited (probably) by Wiktor Heltman and signed by all the Society members.

This Manifesto was a historical argument deriving Poland's rights to independent existence, a solemn declaration of the belief in freedom and a radical social programme. Poland has been an immemorial representative of democratic ideas, but the nobility, having expropriated the national idea and bereaved the people from their land and rights, had made the country powerless against its subjugators: "it has not been a simple violence of predatory hordes but the egoism of the privileged that [Poland] has been murdered with". In the endeavours leading toward its resurrection, the cardinal rule should therefore be equality of rights and equality of obligations; without it being established, there may be no freedom, or brotherhood. Equality stands for the omnipotence of the people: a government elected by the people, and responsible before the people/nation. The nobility estate shall dissolve itself; descend into the midst of the people, becoming the people. To regain independence, a democratic Poland will find in its own bosom mighty powers which will empower it to extricate itself from its fall. "Should the new occur", says the Manifesto, "it is then not meant to be a sad reappearance of the old insurrections; the first battle-cry should be to render the people self-willed; to return to it, as unconditional property, the land therefrom extorted; to reinstate the laws; to call everyone, regardless of the difference in the confessions or lineage, to enjoy the benefits of independent existence." Through revival, Poland shall once again become an inspiration for the peoples of Europe who, following its example, in a brotherly union, shall declare a war to any absolutism.<sup>5</sup>

The 1836 Manifesto has made history as one of the most momentous documents of Polish nineteenth-century political thought. It expressed the optimism of its authors and more than a thousand signatories, testifying to an enthusiasm that had not expired over the five onerous years of exile. There was certainty to it, as they have altogether worked out the principles which they decisively promised to stick to: "We shall not shake hands with persons of a different faith", they declared, "for we are not in a position to make any concession of our conscience. For apparent unity, we shall not devote our political belief, nor shall we purchase a momentary concord with a half-measure."<sup>6</sup> This warning was addressed, in

---

5 *Manifest T.D.P.*, [in:] *Postępową publicystyką emigracyjną ...*, pp. 438-448.

6 *Ibidem*, p. 447.

particular, to the organisers of the Federation of Polish Emigration, who were called 'half-measure-men' [*półśrodkowcy*].

The reason for this altercation was not clear to everyone: when compared against each other, the differences between the Federation declarations and the TDP Manifesto seemingly appear most subtle. It happens that they boil down to the question of whether those whose views of the political-system form of a Poland-to-be are slightly different, or if the same is true just for the phraseology of their laws or articles, could they join a single organisation and pursue their disputes within it? The Democratic Society's answer was 'no!', which seemed to the non-members a haughtiness of an order announcing that salvation is only obtainable through its own teachings and faith.

Such rigidity of the Society's principles and its advancing doctrinarism deterred those whose convictions were not that clarified; such prevailed among the émigrés, in fact. As a result, the idea to reunify the emigration was revived in 1836, once again patronised by Lelewel who was disheartened by the TDP, not so much owing to its ideological programme – which was close to him – as the party-focused style of action. The Federation, then emerging, was more open and tolerant for differing opinions, with which it had successfully baited many apostates leaving the Society while infuriating its core. The union had turned into a division: over ten years, the immigrants' souls and votes were rivalled for by two similar organisations, each with its own publishing house, neither sparing harsh language or insidious schemes against the other.

A real chasm separated democrats of any sort, be it of the Society or the Federation, from the confidants of Prince Adam Czartoryski, a group dubbed by the left-wing as 'the aristocratic party'. The first years saw some contact with them, shared committees, meetings, correspondences, publishing projects. Yet, the moment Prince Adam, a born diplomat, dared make reference to the Vienna Congress decisions, addressing British politicians in defence of the rights of the oppressed Kingdom of Poland, the break became unavoidable. Regarding all the partitions as illegal violence, the democrats demanded that the 1772 frontier be reinstated, and they simply disdained the Vienna treaties. They saw symptoms of national treason in Czartoryski's action, and started gathering emigrants' signatures for a protest refusing reliance on such a mouthpiece of Polish interest before European courts. As many as 2,840 signed the deed, it is said – which was almost half of the émigrés.<sup>7</sup> There was no insult spared to the Prince afterwards; all the animosities from the time of the Insurrection were revived, and whoever arrived

---

7 M. Handelsman, *Adam Czartoryski*, vol. I, Warszawa 1948, p. 256.

at a *dépot* had to forthwith determine his affiliation to, or sympathy for, one of the camps. To which side someone adhered, did not necessarily result from a thought-over ideological choice: personal friendships or enmities often proved the vital factor, not to mention coincidence, with a sense of loyalty developing some time afterwards.

Prince Adam's party did not flaunt aristocratism. The related families of Czartoryski, Zamoyski, Sapieha and Plater sure belonged to the aristocracy; yet, once 'on this Paris street', this aristocracy was devoid of at least part of their property, and significance. With this, the glamour of names and titles was fading. The lineage and estate were of little influence on who was to be part of which camp, as the emigrant condition levelled the positions. Consequently, one could come across counts among the democrats, whilst on the other hand, 'cobble' nobles (i.e. those living in towns like townsfolk) and people of various professions appeared among the 'aristocratic' party.

The parties differed between one another more in the rhetoric they used, operating methods and forms of internal relations, than in their composition or programme. The Czartoryskians sensed a conservative impulse about themselves; hence, even though their opinion on the until-recently-prevailing status in Poland and Lithuania was critical, they did not much go for anti-nobility screeds; diving into how Poland ought to be arranged, once it was there again, was not their favourite pastime. What they knew for sure was that they would be against any sudden, revolutionary change; against subverting any social hierarchies – although they were aware that, given the existing conditions, the very striving for preservation of the national hallmarks, saying nothing of the idea for Poland to regain autonomous existence, meant machinations turning the European order upside down.

This group, no less than the democrats, was convinced that it was the Poles' task to rise to independence on their own; what they were afraid of was another wasted bloodletting, and shattered hopes. If ever, another insurrection ought to break out at a propitious moment, the coming of which was conditional upon the system of political interests in Europe. Czartoryski counted on a conflict between the powers for many years – expecting, in particular, England and France – and, if the conditions were conducive, also Turkey and Austria – to ally against the powerful Russian Empire. He consequently tried to maintain relations with European cabinets, rather than with parties or 'peoples' plotting against them. So, he was going diplomatic, taking advantage of the relations and authority he had gained in the once-better time; the 'diplomacy' he pursued was winning him taunts from the democrats, although it was nothing but operating for a European war which was meant to bring Poland an opportunity for freedom.

Prince Adam was capable of winning round people even among once-sworn enemies, whose old outrages he easily buried. The conservative camp esteemed it a success that Maurycy Mochnacki, enjoying the renown of a mettlesome yet exquisite political writer, had approached it. And this quite unexpectedly so, as his former colleagues from the Patriotic Society (1831) – now with the TDP or further leftwards – had counted on him, only so long. But they were cruelly disappointed. Mochnacki's thought ran along a track set in the opposite direction to theirs. Oscillating between Paris, the place he didn't like, and the provinces, and having finally settled in the Burgundian town of Auxerre, devoured by his sickness, bedevilled by poverty, he was frenetically writing his grand work, *Powstanie narodu polskiego w roku 1830 i 1831* ['The rising of the Polish nation in the year 1830 & 1831'], that was meant to bring an answer to the question of, "why Poland has been on a path of failure so far in its endeavours to regain independence"<sup>8</sup> But completing it was not his lot: two volumes were published thanks to the subscribers, in 1834, the year he was to die, a thirty-year-old man. His articles had won him a name before then. For Mochnacki, the nation was the absolute, the only and supreme: a nation that is abased, is rising, is defeated. Whatever reinforced it was good: zeal, devotion and unity in a revolutionary war with Russia (always called 'Moscow', although the capital city was Petersburg); reason and self-confidence in a time of disaster. Whatever debilitated and fragmented it was bad: divisions between the estates, disputes between the parties, inopportune ideas of social reform. A restoration of Poland is impossible without the nobility – the only thinking and sensing class, now and then: when the time comes, the nobility will itself distribute the privileges of citizenship, proprietorship, and experience across the nation. As for today, whoever attacks the nobility, destroys the past and undermines the future, weakening the collective interest of the nation. Whereas, as it is known, "in history, whatever is explainable on the basis of interest, ought always to be explained through interest, never through sentiment; in politics, as long as there is sufficient calculation, let us calculate, affording nothing to feelings," so wrote that romantic fanatic of patriotism.<sup>9</sup>

Owing to his pragmatism, if not political cynicism, by exposing the disbelief and the awkwardness of the leaders of the November revolution, Mochnacki aroused unease, with the suggestibility of his rhetorical style, both during his lifetime and after his death. He would instigate new disputes and historical revisions – something that has always been the intellectuals' task. He remained

---

8 M. Mochnacki, *Powstanie narodu polskiego*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1984, p. 51.

9 *Ibidem*, vol. 2, p. 327.



completely independent in his opinions, but Mochnacki's parting with the democrats, and the waning writer's belief that a Polish national revolution would need an autocrat, did appeal to Czartoryski and his commilitones.

As for Prince Adam himself, with his temper mild and cautious, he was certainly not fit for such a role, which could already be seen in the Insurrection. His being proclaimed, by a part of his followers, a *de-facto* King of Poland in 1839, in a hope that a constitutional monarchy be imposed upon Poland, once revived, caused him trouble alone, and even exposed him to sheer ridicule. He nonetheless appeared quite efficient as the party's superior. The name 'Hôtel Lambert' – the princely family's residence on the Île Saint-Louis, Paris, since 1843 – has clung to the conservative camp, modelled after something in-between a magnate's court and a political coterie. It has become customary with the Democratic Society that its members were on first-name terms with one another, thus emphasising their equality status, whereas Hôtel Lambert observed titles and hierarchies. The financial standing was better in the latter circle: albeit money was not thrown around, something has been preserved from the family fortune, and from the Galician dowry estate of Princess Anna, née Sapieha – in spite of the tsarist confiscations. Comfort and convenience alone did not come out of it, as the Prince was bombarded with requests for endowing emigrants living in poverty, ailing, or creating immortal works. It was impossible to keep up with all those requests, albeit a combination of authority, grace, and affluence caused that around the Prince, the man, his salon and chancellery, a milieu was emerging, bonded with a rather strong tie of loyalty. Some earnest people, whose names have made the history of Polish culture, were among them too.

The national culture was Czartoryski's concern to no lesser a degree than political activity. Setting up associations or societies in view of, for instance, encouraging the emigrants to write down their memories from the recent past, or to compile translations from Polish literature into Western languages, has from the very outset been the aim of various émigrés' initiatives, most of which withered after a short time, be it due to lack of funds, people coming dispersed, or a flash-in-the-pan fading. Similarly, many periodicals appeared to be ephemeral, disappearing once one or a few issues were seen. Prince Adam's position was that he could support such undertakings with modest means and, once on the Isle of St Louis, allocate a residence for them and extend his custody over their protagonists.

This is how the Polish Literary Society emerged and reinforced its presence in Paris. Initially meant to provide French periodicals with historical news on Poland, with time, this organisation offered inducements for scholarly research – especially, for copying all things Polish to be found in European archives. The

Society for Educational Assistance [*Towarzystwo Naukowej Pomocy*] amassed modest funds in order to facilitate education for young Polish people willing to continue or take up studies in France. A not-the-least-numerous group of writers and rewriters, translators and collectors of indispensable resources, found employment with these societies as well as with the chancellery, the Prince's home archive, or with periodicals associated with the camp. Their situation resembled, at times, the condition of residents at a seigneurial court, run by the Prince's ambitious nephew – Colonel Władysław Zamoyski; on the other hand, their situation made them, as it were, the personnel of an influential political institute, capable of achieving a certain autonomy, as allowed by their dignity and talents. The only one to be on equal footing with Czartoryski was Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, a personal friend to the Prince, and twelve years his elder. His was the abundant biography of a deputy to the Great Sejm (1788-92), editor of *Gazeta Narodowa i Obca*, secretary to Kościuszko and trusted companion in his distress (1794-96), thrice an émigré, traveller, chairman (after S. Staszic) of the Society of the Friends of Learning – but first and foremost, a fertile writer, annalist, author of the *Śpiewy historyczne* ['Historical Songs'], let alone the diaries and memoirs he was writing for dozens of years. When Niemcewicz died in 1841, aged eighty-plus, Prince Adam devoted a book to him – a story of his life and merits, thus reversing the customary order of things.

A position so high could not be the case with Karol Sienkiewicz (born 1793), a man who owed everything he was to the Prince: in his young years, namely, he was a librarian at the princely residence in Puławy, secretary and journey companion to Czartoryski, a man performing a variety of orders. When in Paris, he managed the Prince's political chancellery, organised archival queries, edited sources (rather amateurishly), and wrote historical treatises. His greatest merit became, however, the establishment of the Polish Library in Paris, followed by the long years of his care over this most abiding of all the Polish emigrant institutions.

Karol-Boromeusz Hoffman (b. 1798) was the most respectable intellectual in this milieu. Before the Insurrection, he trained and then worked as a lawyer; once in exile, he proved himself to be a columnist and historian dealing with the political system of Poland in its earliest, early-Piast, period, and in parallel, with the country's most recent history. His *Wielki tydzień Polaków* ['A great week for the Poles'], described the first week of the Insurrection, soon after those incidents – and the story became the most popular account, being translated into some foreign languages as well. In his mediaeval studies, he opposed the romanticist theses, like those proposed by Lelewel, claiming that the Polish historical path was of a peculiar individual nature, highlighting, instead, symptoms

of political immaturity and civilisational retardation of the nobility's Poland. An advocate of strong royal authority, he was never to attain significance or influence equal to Lelewel's; yet, he is considered a precursor to the professional historical schools of the century's latter half.

During their lifetime, his wife Klementyna, née Tańska, was better known than him: the first Polish professional woman-of-letters, whose patriotic-religious books for young readers, in particular, enjoyed popularity before the November. In Paris, the Hoffmans moved around freer than many others, with their command of the language and interest in French theatre and literature – not a frequent attitude then at all. Their open house was from time to time a venue where the threads of Polish and French literary life encountered one another.

Adam Czartoryski, a magnate and intellectual, a wise but, most of the time, unfortunate politician, patron of the arts and sciences, is a figure of importance in the history of the Polish intelligentsia. As Curator of the Wilno School District, under Alexander I, he made contributions to the development of Wilno University and Polish schools in the *guberniyas* that had departed for the Russian Empire; still, he aroused resentments owing to his lordly condescendence toward professors – something that Lelewel could never forgive him, for that matter. Among the émigrés, the Prince tried to refrain from using the tone characteristic to the sphere he was an exponent of; nevertheless, his name, title, dignities bygone, and remnants of the family estate did all the same establish a hierarchy – natural as it was for the followers, while serving his political opponents as a favourite object of satire. The Czartoryski salon, especially once the family came into possession of the palace on the Isle of St Louis, was in any case an important venue for emigration talents (and duffers too) to cluster. Chopin and Mickiewicz paid visits there; Juliusz Słowacki, in spite of the malignancies he conferred to Czartoryski in one of his romanticist plays, frequented the venue at times too. And, a number of other poets and artists cropped up at the salon.

### 3. Poetry and politics

In spite of social associations, the relations between the sphere of émigré politics and the one of literature and arts were not overly intimate. Politicising urged to incessantly look out for European outlooks that would be fortunate for Poland, while getting reassured, on a daily basis, about one's own only right option, against the meanness of opinions and individuals from the opposite party. Once the government had broken up the initially crammed Polish clusters in France, dispersing them across the country, and still, they were getting fragmented further up in line with their ideological orientations, then, consequently,

the gatherings of the Paris 'public' and the 'publics' deployed in provincial towns, so clamorous in the first year, were losing their importance. Instead, the émigré press was rising to become the main means of agreement, and of disagreements, willingly getting fed with polemics, if not, at times, with calumnies.

The press in question was a marvel in itself: although a lack of funding, assiduous editors, and the difficulty in meeting French registration requirements caused many periodicals to close down after just a few numbers issued, new ones appeared in their place, with several periodicals appearing more-or-less regularly for a long time. They were instrumental in the exchange of information, clarification of political and social sentiments and opinions of the émigrés and – smuggled through the strictly guarded frontiers – of the concerned milieus at home. Many observers found such press attacks – giving vent to ideological, if not, sometimes, pretty personal animosities – infertile and discouraging: the period's satirical verse articulately expressed this despondency.

Was, then, the literary critic right by saying, in 1840, that the emigration's literature ineluctably bears the "stigma of a belligerent and passionate politics", valuing civic obligations higher than artistic qualities?<sup>10</sup> Even if a little exaggerated, this observation made a rather good point. In itself, the condition of the political émigré, one who intently listens to rumours from his (or her) native soil, not willing at all to become accustomed to the country of their temporary settlement, induced them to expect from poets and artists a consonance of sentiments, a reconfirmation of their hope, or, at least, a homelike tune. No surprise, then, that Bohdan Zaleski's folk songs enjoyed more recognition than the poems or plays of Juliusz Słowacki (born 1809), a tough reading, accused of being a beauty without a soul, feeling, or any outward usefulness. Again, no surprise so many of them remained for so many years in manuscripts, until their poetic powerfulness was finally recognised!

True, Romanticism (albeit the name was used rather rarely then) was penetrating into political thought as well, imposing upon its manifestos a lofty emotion-imbued phrase, tracking in the history of the nation and mankind the fulfilment of God's inmost designs. Adding up a sense that the peripeteia of history did not remove the otherwise obvious non-adherence of the language of prophecies, poetry, or historical philosophy to the usefulness in terms of political ideology, agitation, or diplomacy. The art of combining the one with the

---

10 *Wspomnienie o piśmiennictwie polskim w emigracji* ['A reminiscence of Polish writings in exile'], quoted after: M. Straszewska, *Życie literackie Wielkiej Emigracji we Francji 1831-1840* ['The literary life of the Great Emigration in France, 1831-1840'], Warszawa 1970, pp. 250-251.

other yielded successful effects, for some time, with Mickiewicz: especially in the first years, he inspired many initiatives among the émigrés (for instance, collecting Insurrection-related memoirs by the Literary Society) and pursued random journalism, not ever ceasing to play the role of an inspired bard. His charismatic personality exerted a powerful impact on those around him in a small circle of devoted friends and worshipers for whom the power of spirit and of the word was more meaningful than programmes of political parties.

High tone was characteristic to the emigration's writing output, with its tendency for placing temporary occurrences and Polish disputes within the dramaturgical perspective of the ongoing history of European nations. The émigrés lived by the word – a solemn word, in particular, one that sublimed the shallow reality. They refined their language, exercised a style, and poetised the politics rather than politicised the poetry. They have educated a bunch of writers, many of them anonymous, of whom a considerable fraction wrote using a magnificent rhetorical Polish and practised polemical squabbling: such a type was clearly different from a Western journalist, normally a professional commentator of ongoing incidents.

Columnists and editors gained support from publishers. In the early years of immigration, Polish books and periodicals were pressed at French printing houses in Paris or in the provinces, whichever found it profitable to get equipped with Polish fonts and employ Polish compositors. The craft was undertaken soon after, however, by a few young émigrés, comprehending it as a national mission to be fulfilled in a businesslike manner and with a commercial calculation. It goes to the credit of Eustachy Januszkiewicz (b. 1805) and Aleksander Jełowicki (b. 1804), the two most enterprising Polish publishers in Paris (and associates in the trade, for some time) that they recorded, for their contemporaries and for posterity, the great works of Polish émigré poets, along with more ephemeral genres of the abounding literary production which took advantage of the considerable freedom of speech but could not count on any considerable demand. The publishers, booksellers, periodical editors were all constantly grappling with the emigrants' chronic poverty, who only rarely could afford a volume of verse, diary, or subscribe for a magazine or journal. Emigration prints, poetic stuff as well as political manifestos and brochures, were taken across the border into Poland, via emissaries or smugglers, or, using the intermediation of German booksellers (in Leipzig and Breslau) as well as trusted booksellers in Krakow, Lwów and Poznań. These dealings, always risky and not bearing a return on costs incurred, made the publishers' work all the tougher as they were laying the foundations for the existence of a culture that was cut off with guarded cordons from the nation from which it drew the juices, and for whose future it existed at all.

For the émigré multitude, to tell the truth, poetry was one of the less-important concerns, and there was perhaps hardly anyone on whom it would have dawned that the Insurrection-generation émigrés would one day owe their description as the ‘Great’ Emigration to literature. “The emigration are moreover poor, and pretty foolish, and so not at all disposed to listening to songs”, Mickiewicz once wrote to his poet friend<sup>11</sup>, although he had no personal reason to complain about indifference. What could be a nuisance to him was the shallow, incidental uptake of things among his readers and listeners to whom he was keen to read aloud the books of his poetic epic *Pan Tadeusz*, from a manuscript. But there was not much greater understanding between the poets themselves, whereas slander and derision were well at work. The fact is that literary criticism of that time expressed itself mainly through memoirs or diaries and private letters, only many years afterwards appearing in print or remaining in manuscripts till present. Letters written by poets, not infrequently to the other poets, form nowadays the most valuable part of that heritage, and a genuine treasure of literary opinions and judgments. With emigration periodicals, focusing primarily on politics, literary matters were but marginal.

All the same, the Paris of the Louis-Philippe time, having attracted so many talents and providing them with a modest means of endurance, became the capital of Polish culture which at home was throttled by the three invaders. The conditions for settlement were tougher in other countries. The British government offered more freedom to political immigrants than France did, exercising no administrative supervision over them and allowing them to take residence wherever they found it convenient; yet, on the other hand, Britain did not ever give thought to offering them any benefits whatsoever. Endeavours to address their primary needs were taken by the Literary Association of the Friends of Poland, formed by several English writers and benevolent members of Parliament. The Association held meetings, concerts, and fundraising actions for the benefit of Polish exiles. It became naturally important who would have the best contacts with the organisation: who else, let us be more specific at this point, than Prince Czartoryski and his man in London – Krystian Lach-Szyrma, the former Warsaw professor.

The princely party did not manage to keep for too long its monopoly in representing Polish interests in the Isles. The republican radicals, as well as participants of the half-baked revolutionary expeditions, expelled as precarious people

---

11 A. Mickiewicz to Bohdan Zaleski, 24<sup>th</sup> April 1840, *Listy cz.* II [‘Letters’, Part 2], (*Dziela* [‘Works’, the National Edition], vol. 15), 1954, p. 301.

from France, Belgium or Switzerland, arrived in the country on the Thames. Tadeusz Krępowiecki, already encountered, was among them; there was Friar Pułaski, Stanisław Worcell, and other restless spirits of the Polish émigré left-wing. At the same time, in early 1834, the ship 'Marianna' carrying toward America, against their will, the haughty Polish soldiers who had served two years of forced labour at Prussian strongholds, put ashore at Portsmouth, Southern England. Protracted endeavours and petitions resulted in the British government finally allowing a total of 212 emaciated insurgents to come ashore and settle at a deserted choleric hospital. Those soldiers were simple men, of the peasant or townsfolk class, who had resisted the Prussians' will of being given away to the Russian army. This unexpected inflow of a few hundred Poles, many of them illiterate, combined with pressures from certain factions of British public opinion, finally induced the government and the House of Commons to allocate dole to the refugees to ensure them a minimum of existence.

All the emigration parties contested for the right to enlighten the minds of the Portsmouth soldiers, and it was without a great effort that the rivalry was won by the radicals, with Messrs. Krępowiecki, Worcell, and Seweryn Dziewicki at the forefront; better than the others, they could sense the spiritual needs of the aggrieved-and-humiliated. Stanisław Worcell (b. 1799) was an uncommon figure. Heir to a large landowning fortune in Volhynia, he was one of the first in a long line of well-born revolutionaries revolting against their own class and its privileges. A freemason, columnist, soldier, parliamentary orator, he was active with dozens of undertakings when in exile, changing his organisation membership many a time in the quest for a wider field of action for his talents, his will to devote, and unrestrained energy. A close assistant to Lelewel, he became increasingly excited with the ideas of French Christian socialists (particularly, Philippe Buchez) and the Saint-Simon school. In England, he was temporarily active with the *Ogół Londyński* [London Assembly], then with the Democratic Society, not willing to get subordinated to its ideological discipline. Having coalesced with T. Krępowiecki's group, he became the main compiler of the socialist doctrine of the three so-called Communes of Polish People (*Gromady Ludu Polskiego*) in English land. The ideological biography of S. Dziewicki, Worcell's younger by twelve years, formerly a student of literature at Warsaw University, and those of a few of his colleagues, were similar. All of them were desirous of a belief, of a robust philosophy of history, one that would infer some order and sense into the muddled image of a callous world, displaying Poland's cause as a constituent of humankind-under-perfection. And this was pretty easy to tackle, as newer and newer socialist intellectual systems were being conceived in Europe at that time and were ready to be drawn from. The Portsmouth barrack-like lodgings became

a peculiar laboratory whereat the homeless intellectuals could check how their ideas were getting adapted among the 'Polish people' they had themselves constituted. They taught the wretched soldiers how to read, write, count, deliberate, grasp the rules of socialism, and settle the complex issues of ownership by means of casting a vote. Individual inheritable property is a misfortune, they explained: it has caused and reinforced the split within mankind into estates and classes, slavery, bondage, allegiance and serfdom, oppression of the non-possessing by those who possess. The land ought to be owned by the public-in-general, by the People, who shall dispense to every family for usufruct the amount that would enable them to satisfy their needs; in this way alone shall an "equalisation of the social conditions" be achieved, once the homeland is revived, God willing. The Democratic Society, in its intent to deal out the land to the peasants farming thereupon, is only aiming at multiplying the number of proprietors, its socialist opponents argued; this shall certainly not alter an iniquitous oppressive system. Those are false friends of the people, whereas we are no friends of the people: what we are is the People, heading for genuine freedom, equality, and evangelical brotherhood.<sup>12</sup>

Members of the 'Grudziąż' Commune [*Gromada*] (so named to commemorate the stronghold of Grudziądz/Graudenz, where the soldiers had survived the Prussian internment) could find this rhetoric and logic convincing: they did not cultivate any soil anyway, with or without serfdom. However, in the eyes of TDP, which was getting prepared for secret campaigning across Polish towns, manors and in the countryside, the Communes' manifestos and treatises of their leaders were a mental and political aberration, a nucleus of a sect. As could be expected, reciprocal reproaches and accusations between the Society and Commune-bound apostates were increasingly fervent and full of innuendo on both sides, although neither party of the conflict could possibly test their principles and programmes in real action.

Accusations and mistrust were devouring the inner life of *Gromada Grudziąż* as well, with its leaders reciprocally suspecting one another of designed betrayals and disavowals of their sworn principles of the new faith, in order to get reinstated within the stubbornly unifying émigré community (or perhaps, they could have been agents of the tsarist embassy). Thus, Worcell made his contribution to the removal of Krępowiecki and Dziewicki from the Commune, and finally got removed himself, to join Joachim Lelewel's Federation of Polish Emigration and its authorities, thus joining the mainstream of the emigratory politics with which

---

12 *Wskrzęcić Polskę, zbawić świat ...*, pp. 74-87; 94-123.



he would have a considerable role to play afterwards. As for the *Gromadas*, they indeed started turning into a religious-social sect, without political influence or importance. For the use of this sect, Zenon Świątosławski (b. 1811), the most loyal among the faithful, wrote his ponderous *Ustawy Kościoła Powszechnego* ['The Laws of a Universal Church'], inspired by the ideal of a utopian theocracy and, certainly, strayed far from Catholic Orthodoxy.

#### 4. Years have passed

Any ideological emigration community living in the hope of returning home someday has its peculiar problems with perceiving their home country: its landscapes get nostalgically idealised; historic occurrences congeal into a myth; a faraway echo of resistance to oppression seems to herald a national uprising; a harsh diplomatic note foretells the longed-for war. The post-November émigrés did not find it at all easy, as the waiting time kept being extended. Any contacts with the native country, especially with its Russian Partition section, remained under strict police supervision. To obtain a passport in Wilno or Warsaw in the 1830s was a difficult thing: spas were visited, "the health to retrieve", or Europe sightseen, mostly by loyal, and affluent, subjects of the Tsar. If they ever met any émigrés, be it their relatives, they would do it discreetly, so as to prevent being peeped on by the embassy's spies. Zygmunt Krasiński, the best-known Polish traveller of the time, was protected by his ancestral fortune, and, by his father's position in the Petersburg and the Viceroy's (Warsaw) court; yet, the price this poet paid for such considerable freedom of movement was that his works printed in the West remained anonymous till his death. Recourses from the home country or forbidden stays abroad occurred from time to time, the consequence being confiscations of any remaining property and, usually, broken ties with the family. The forties' decade would see a significantly increased inflow of new emigrants – so difficult and rare a venture in the first decade after the Insurrection.

Letters from and to the home country were written with caution, and often not sent directly to the receiver but, for instance, via a trusted bookseller, banker, or commissioner. The news reached their destination all the same, even if belated, sometimes, or inaccurate. With varying luck, via various ways, but constantly and efficiently still, literature was smuggled from the emigration venues into all the three Partitions: their police forces could each boast themselves on having confiscated collections of banned works during frisking.

All the emigration parties comprehended 'the home country' as Poland within its pre-1772 limits, as all the later-dated treaties of the powers being considered illegitimate. Consequently, the émigrés did their best to stay in touch with all the

provinces, whereas Lithuania and Ruthenia, the areas where an unproportionally large number of immigrants originated from, were their special focus of interest. Emissaries set out for all the provinces too: the Lelewel centre – particularly, the Young Poland organisation – began dispatching them earliest, and soon thereafter, the Czartoryski camp, and, since the late thirties, the Centralisation of the Democratic Society. Each such expedition called for a long preparatory effort: the messenger had to be equipped with money, a false identity and a passport, well-checked contacts and addresses, and, a political instruction; all with the utmost discreetness. Among the emigration labours, an emissary's work was charged with the highest risk – with many gaoled, deported to Siberia, or executed at the gallows. Such tasks were undertaken by people of special dispositions; some were perhaps pushed to the adventure by the futility and boredom of an émigré's existence.

Conditional upon the circumstances, and on by whom he would be sent, and where to, the emissary would usually be tasked with recognising and identifying the sentiments of the various social classes in different parts of the country; tying the over-and-over-ripping networks of conspiratorial contacts; preparing the paths of circulation for pieces of information and printed matters; explaining the thought and programme of their own party; investigating the chances of a future uprising; and, if successful, returning safely back in France. All this required the gift of listening to others and of having them convinced, the skill of becoming adapted to the interlocutors' mentality, permanent readiness to change the place of stay, and, quite often, daring and fantasy. Not everyone passed the test of this job; still, some have become a heroic legend of those years, sad for Poland as they were.

Among them, Szymon Konarski (b. 1808) stood out in the memory. Of a Calvinist nobility background, an officer in the November Insurrection and later on, an émigré associated with the Lelewel group, this man was always ready for any adventure that would rouse him from the sluggishness of an emigrant's life. He took part in the Savoyan expedition, but was also proud of his poor-*ouvrier* condition in Switzerland, a clockmaker's assistant free from the detestable "aristocratic-Polish coercions and customs".<sup>13</sup> Vested with a contemplative nature, prone to melancholy and exaltation, he combined his ardent patriotism, and compassion for his fellow-brethren, homeland-less wanderers, with anticlericalism and

---

13 S. Konarski, *Dziennik z lat 1831-1834* ['Diary, 1831-4'], ed. by B. Łopuszański, A. Smirnow, Wrocław 1973, p. 287.

desolate blasphemy against the indifferent God who had admitted a legitimistic order to reign in Warsaw.

A romantic and democrat, he joined Young Poland and started joyfully preparing for the most risky of missions an emissary could undertake. Let us tell further the story of Konarski in this role, of which the conclusive point three years later was him being caught by the Russian gendarmerie, facing a court trial and being executed in Wilno on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1839. The emigration community was certainly in need of such a legend of a flawless martyr hero: the anniversary of Konarski's death was celebrated for a long time thereafter, as a remembrance day, on equal terms with 29<sup>th</sup> November.

But living a life fed for years and years only with ideas, legends and disputes around the shape assumable by a Poland-of-tomorrow would be impossible. As the mirage of a nigh return with standards and banners began fading away, the trivial prose of daily life claimed for itself. Poverty and melancholy were gripping, as was an idle allowance-supported life, an inevitable sense of social degradation (poignant, especially, to army officers), incessant fraying, raptures of honour – and numerous, some of them mortal, duels taking place in aneurotic community. Quests for a trade, which the aliens in France, Belgium, or England found so hard to find, implied a dispersion of the larger émigré clusters (a trend the French government opposed, for political reasons). While in emigration, not too many initially had any civil profession of use, so they would go for whatever opportunity offered. Mentions of Poles giving lessons of languages that we come across in memoirs are puzzlingly frequent: some taught German in France, for instance, or French in England. Drawing and dancing they taught too – and almost no other subjects, ever.

Education offered the most efficient way to forge the émigré existence into a life opportunity. Lelewel was the first to care that the students from Wilno, Warsaw or (to a lesser extent) Krakow, so numerous as they appeared in exile, could go on with their studies in French tertiary schools, for which a ministerial consent was necessary. Prince Adam also favoured these educational plans. This trail was successfully paved with time, with modest support, from time to time, from the aforesaid Society for Educational Assistance. An estimated twelve hundred Poles – approximately, every fifth immigrant – studied in France in the thirties.<sup>14</sup> Only a fraction of them would have completed their course of studies once initiated at home: when in France, the student's choice was informed by employment prospects. Law departments, particularly difficult for foreigners, did not enjoy

---

14 Barbara Konarska, *Polskie drogi emigracyjne* ['Polish emigration pathways'], p. 11.

popularity; there were many more candidates for medicine or technological sciences, which boasted a very high standard at French universities. Those who prior to the Insurrection did not manage to take up studies, and those who had already received their diplomas but considered them not-too-useful, applied for their right to education. The entrants usually justified their decision to study with the willingness to be useful, in the future, for their mother country. Although no doubt sincere, these intents were not to be fulfilled by many.

Graduation from a renowned French university or college, such as the School of Medicine in Montpellier, the Polytechnic School, the Mining School, or the School of Bridges and Roads in Paris, opened the prospects for a career pursuable internationally – save for Poland: émigrés could only return home at the price of making a servile declaration. The situation for the Prussian Partition appeared more advantageous, and so was it, in the forties, for Krakow and Galicia; returns to Warsaw or Lithuania were anathemised by the émigré opinion.

More than 400 Polish immigrants made it into medical faculties in France, with a reported two-thirds of them completing their studies. Individuals only returned home. The return of doctor Karol Marcinkowski (born 1800) from Paris to Poznań in 1834 turned out to be the best-known and most fruitful: having completed his studies in Berlin, he pioneered organic-work projects in Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) land. Soon after that, Ferdynand Dworzaczek (b. 1804) was back in Warsaw; he was followed, many years later, in 1853, by doctor Wiktor Szokalski (b. 1811), who became famous as an extraordinary ophthalmologist. More numerous returns were to occur only in the late fifties, following a tsarist amnesty. Probably less than ten per cent of certified physicians were seen back home altogether, in fact; most of them straggled around France, with only a small fraction of them successfully developing a profitable practice; some ended up pursuing their practice in a French overseas colony or either of the Americas.<sup>15</sup>

Biographies of technological college graduates were more variegated, though. It is estimated that French *écoles polytechniques*, civil and military, had issued some 500 Polish graduates by 1848. Had at least a part of this number been back home, their skills and expertise would have become a strong asset in the civilisation development plans then undertaken. Only a few eventually returned, however, and only so in the fifties – that is, as their professional careers were declining. Yet, Polish engineers holding French diplomas could otherwise be encountered anywhere else. Let us take Ignacy Domeyko (b. 1802), former

---

15 Ibidem, pp. 36-60; 182-197, plus biographical notes.

Philomath and Wilno University graduate, loyal friend of Mickiewicz's and a frequenter of the Czartoryski circle in Paris. He graduated from the local Mining School and, having done a twelve-month practice in Alsace, he sailed off in 1838 for Chile to take the Chair of Chemistry and Mineralogy at Santiago University. There, he made a great career, working his way up to the position of the university's rector; he is considered today a leading figure in Chilean geology. Wojciech Lutowski (b. 1808), an engineer, settled in Venezuela after graduating from the School of Arts and Crafts; Peru, in turn, was the place of settlement for Ernest Malinowski, a much younger man (b. 1818), later on the renowned constructor of the world's highest-climbing railway. Józef Waligórski (b. 1802), an artillery captain, having complemented his course of studies with the Military School of Metz and at the university in Christiania (Oslo), was promoted to director of Norwegian waterways. Ludwik Nabelak (b. 1804), one of the initiators of the uprising in November 1830, a soldier, democrat, amateur historian and a little bit of a poet, graduated as a mining engineer and managed, for example, the municipal gas station in Barcelona. There were more similar biographies<sup>16</sup>: the nineteenth century opened up extremely wide prospects for technological sciences.

Juridical and political careers were necessarily tougher to pursue, and less beguiling, for foreigners – which is not to say unattainable. The one who excelled in his generation was Ludwik Wołowski (b. 1810): having managed to commence his studies while still in Warsaw, he completed his studies in Paris and, in time, became a well-known economist in Europe, deputy to the French National Assembly and a member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences.

Hence, Poland was irretrievably yielding to the world so many of its creative minds, talents, and youthful energy. This bleeding was not to end soon, as no jobs, positions or offices waited to be taken by them at home. The alien and suspicious administration was in no hurry to make use of their qualifications, while they were reluctant to be stifled in the tight cages of the Partitions – the conditions under which their real skills and abilities would not be utilised. Those who attained a good command of a foreign language, gained useful education, and passed the test of their professions, felt less alienated; with time, they would accept a new citizenship, thus perforce weakening their sentimental bond with Polishness. This was not an iron-clad rule, and there happened reverse processes as well. Yet, the general trend was that the intelligentsia of the idea and of the word, in the first place, obstinately persisted within the circle of matters Polish

---

16 Ibidem, pp. 61-99; 182-197, plus biographical notes; I. Domeyko, *Moje podróże ...* ['My travels ...'], pp. 221-2.

and emigration institutions; beside it, as a background, there was a crowd of people who found it impossible to be anything successful in the foreign lands. Those people more or less acutely experienced their social degradation and hopelessness, out of which they would have only been knocked by the incessantly-awaited general war for the freedom of peoples.

## 5. The Nation and Europe

The emigration intelligentsia with scholarly qualifications could more acutely than the others identify the civilisational distance occurring between the Polish territory and the leading Western actors and how dramatically had it extended resulting from the post-Insurrection repressions. Doctor Szokalski, whom we have already mentioned, bitterly reproached the émigrés in 1845 that they did not at all care about the scientific and economic needs of their country whose economic development had been halted, not even exerting any influence to this end. They would send over poems, historical memoirs or political dissertations – without the otherwise so-useful technological, medical, agricultural, or farming writings: these émigrés would then have “roused the scientific and material pursuit upon the national principles, the way they have thereupon roused the social and the fine literature”.<sup>17</sup>

Worries of this sort did not surface too often, though. Development of education or the economy in Poland seems to have been one of the least concerns of this particular emigration wave. Their superior concern was to maintain the moral tenacity of the nation – the lawful heir to the free and entire Commonwealth. The latter did not appear as a political community of ‘the two nations’, since the sentimental provincialism, so cherished by Mickiewicz and the ‘Lithuanians’ (that is, Poles from Lithuania) who were close to him, came across a backlash. The émigré community regarded themselves as exponents of the political nation in its entirety, not willing to differentiate between provinces within it, or to give away to anyone the lands the invaders had violently incorporated in their respective domains.

The point was, also, that the nation, aware of its identity and rights therein vested, become complete socially – without legal, property-related, or

---

17 Wiktor Szokalski, *O narodowości na drodze nauk przyrodzonych i o wpływie emigracji na materialne potrzeby kraju* [‘Nationality as a natural-sciences concept, and the émigré community’s influence on the home country’s material needs’], ‘Trzeci Maj’, 18<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1845; quoted after: D. Rederowa, *Polski emigracyjny ośrodek naukowy we Francji* [‘The Polish-emigration scientific centre in France’], p. 187.

social-and-moral relics of the estate division. It is clearly telling that most political authors among the émigrés, regardless of their ideological orientation, could still only have in their minds the manor and the countryside, with their mutual relations. Observing the progressing urbanisation and industrialisation in the West, they considered, in concert, the pastoral character of the native land (or, the whole of Slavdom) as a self-contained moral and social value. Mochnacki expressed in 1832 his gladness that Poland had not developed the third estate – those manufacturers, factory owners and chandlers who had slaughtered the aristocracy in order to take their place and continue oppressing the people. “As for our patriarchal Poland, the things turned different!”, he wrote; there were no strident estate-based divisions. “The difference between the French revolution and ours; between the Western and the Slavonic civilisation, is this: France is within the stock-exchange, the stall, the work-shop, and in the street; whilst Poland is in the country-side only, beyond the town.”<sup>18</sup> Owing to this, he believed, the social revolution in Poland would be bloodless, for the nobility would, out of their own will, return to the people their property, heaving it up to the nobility’s equality.

Such conceptual bifurcation of Europe gave birth to a stereotype that grew hackneyed in hundreds of discursive and literary utterances, both in exile and at home. A disdain toward trading activities, handicrafts, and the middle class had for ages been encoded in nobility culture, and now it was inherited by the generation of an eradicated but, mostly, post- -gentry intelligentsia, whom took very long to get accustomed to the new landscapes and the frantic haste of life. What was novel appeared not alluring to them, and seemed to be a treason of moral simplicity, in exchange for a speculator’s profit: “True, poor are we in monies, but in virtues rich”, thus, aphoristically, the issue was depicted by *Pamiętnik Emigracji*.<sup>19</sup> Another organ, using a symptomatic title *Postęp* – ‘The Progress’, argued as follows: “when a nation industrial is not too much attached to its place of birth; when everybody is in search of benefits for his trading, a business for his industry, an agricultural nation is, on the contrary, attached to the land that it cultivates, and to the nesting-sites it inhabits; hence the passion for the home country, hence the love of the fatherland that is primarily characteristic to agricultural peoples.”<sup>20</sup>

---

18 M. Mochnacki, O rewolucji społecznej w Polsce [‘On the social revolution in Poland’], in: idem, *Pisma krytyczne i polityczne* [‘Critical and political writings’], vol. 2, p. 153.

19 Quoted after: Ewa Morawska, *Wielka Emigracja o problemie swoistości kultury polskiej* [‘The Great Emigration on the issue of singularity of Polish culture’], p. 72.

20 Ibidem, p. 71.

The capital of France impersonated everything which put off the incomers to the new civilisation most strongly, at least in the beginning of their stay: the contrasts of opulence and poverty, virtue and vice – and, above all, the uproar that deafened them. In sum, “there’s more of the scream, holler, rumble and mud than you could figure to yourself – one gets perished amidst this swarm”, young Frédéric Chopin reported to his friend.<sup>21</sup> As such, Paris symbolised a meanness of morals, which seemed to them an indispensable characteristic of the new era. French literature and, first and foremost, French theatres, reflected the depravation. There were not many émigrés who, sharing Klementyna Hoffman’s curiosity, would try their best to get to know the town, its museums, theatres, history, and daily life, and who would put it down, like she did, in a diary: “oh what treasures you can find in Paris here!” For this, one had to know the language well, and have some pennies in their pocket, and get rid of their prejudices. And still, Klementyna herself was worried at times that, in such a city, “the heart might dry-out, the imagination, evaporate, and the soul, lose its beautifulness entire.”<sup>22</sup>

Aversion toward the commercial-oriented Europe was known to every single political current. On the one hand, the Polish People Communes’ ideologists burst out with invectives against the Democratic Society, due to its apparent intent, by defending private property, to “transform Poland agricultural into industrial; develop a powerful caste of moneyers, an aristocracy of potatoes and cheeses, workhouse and shop lords; a cast avaricious and squalid; [...] a race whom Christ, in his sacred anger, has chastised with his halter”.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, Aleksander Jełowicki, the publisher and bookseller we have already met, personally close to Mickiewicz and to the house of Czartoryski, had come to the conclusion – as he confessed in 1838 – that the Poles ought not to take a social teaching from aliens as “a reason outlandish proves acquiescent to the Polish reason in no respect whatsoever; what it indeed does is crook it and, take its own power and simplicity off from it. [...] Not in any other way shall Poland rise than by de-foreignising itself, that is, by resuming its own faith and virtues, its own nationality. Whoever should wish to see Poland back, may he render the foreign influence begone from the brains and hearts of the Polish people!”<sup>24</sup>

---

21 *Korespondencja Fryderyka Chopina* [‘Frederic Chopin’s correspondence’], vol. 1, p. 187 (letter to N.A. Kumelski, 18th Nov. 1831).

22 *Pamiętnik Klementyny z Tańskich Hoffmanowej* [‘The Diary of Klementyna Hoffman, nee Tańska’], vol. 2, pp. 46; 111; etc.

23 *Lud Polski: wybór dokumentów* [‘The Polish People: A selection of documents’], p. 116.

24 Aleksander Jełowicki, *Moje wspomnienia* [‘My memoirs’], p. 318.



‘The Polish nation’ was addressed in a similar spirit by Stefan Witwicki (b. 1801), author of *Wieczory pielgrzymy* [‘A pilgrim’s evenings’], a popular work, though probably more in Poland than in exile. To this contrite romantic, and ultra-Catholic traditionalist with time, ‘Frenchness’ was to blame for the destruction of Polish national culture and morals – a notion that would extend to any imitation of alien models, from philosophy and literature through to the home language and attire. His preaching is part of a long tradition of literary men’s combat with the snobbery of the elites – the symptoms of the time adding up to the combat’s justification. The conservatives, in particular, were aware that a home-based upbringing and education and conveyance of tradition by families became a last resort for national culture and identity, since the partitioners exterminated Polish educational institutions. Witwicki brought the otherwise comprehensible concern on this point to an extremity – a cult of voluntary seclusion; he queried, for instance: “what benefit is there from our awareness of things foreign? What sort of good has the whole foreign reason of ours yielded, or is yielding, to us?”<sup>25</sup>

Of the better-known activists, Jan Czyński (b. 1801), a democrat and his own man, fertile man-of-letters and political writer who had carved out a career also with the French press, was the only one to take the floor many a time to remind the others that Poland was no more an agricultural-only but also, an industrial land; that its bourgeois, craftsmen, and labourers might become the most nourishing element in the democracy. Nevertheless, going along the age’s progress, heading for a civic equality of all its dwellers, our country must not stay remote or isolated, focusing merely upon tending to his separate and idyllic traits: “There is many points whereat we have to catch-up with the inhabitants of the Seine; there is many whereat we have to outstrip them; and, at last, we have to accomplish in practice what is the most elevated that the sages of Germania, Gaul, and Albion have invented in the theory.”<sup>26</sup>

But this voice was singular. Defenders of national self-reliance more and more often regarded the language, customs, and any and all tribal characteristics to be its pillars – unaware that, in the long run, an ethnic concept of the nation would not be reconcilable with the heritage of the Commonwealth, and with the demand to reinstate the pre-Partition frontiers. For the time being, in the thirties already, this concept had to clash against the status of the Jewish question in Poland.

---

25 Stefan Witwicki, *Wieczory pielgrzymy*, vol. 2, p. 405.

26 ‘Postęp’, 1834, quoted after: *Postępowa publicystyka emigracyjna*, p. 236.

The more frequently the nation was comprehended as a community of language, faith, and morals, the more reinforced was the perception of the Jewry as a 'nation within the nation' – and there was no will to bear this. As a Czartoryski-camp member author put it: "There is no country that may possibly tolerate therewith a nation within a nation, an estate separate within a collective estate. On their part, the Israelites, if they want Polish citizenship, may they be Old-Testament Poles but may they cease being Israelites, foreigners in the Polish land."<sup>27</sup> For them to become Poles, meant for some authors that they ought to manifest solidarity with the Polish combat for freedom; others would claim, they had better erase "their Jewish identity". But even this would not suffice in every single case, if tracing 'the converts' bearing Polish surnames was so commonplace among the émigrés. Again, therefore, Czyński stood up, virtually by himself, in defence of a patriotism that disclaimed the rule of exclusivity. Using his exquisite writing skills, he fought for an equal right and respect toward all the dwellers of a land: "what crime is it to have been born in the centre of Europe, or on the outskirts of Asia; what crime is it to be a German, a Luther[an], a Greek, a Turk, or a Jew; is it not the first condition of a paternal government, through a just care for rights, to attach to the native soil alien comers too?"<sup>28</sup> Such persuasion usually did not win popularity among the émigré opinion, although, with time, the Hôtel Lambert circle started manifesting their increased understanding therefor.

The formation and fine-tuning of the two notions of nation – the historical nation versus the ethnic nation – among the emigration community might, for the time being, have seemed a paper issue, a difference between formulations without a causal power; yet, it soon thereafter gained a counterpart in Poland, where the said options started inspiring the behaviours of living people and entire Polish milieus – toward Ruthenians, Lithuanians, or Jews.

The most important fulfilment of the emigration's role will not be, after all, the dreamed-of soldierly resumption of a battle for the homeland, but instead, elaboration on an abundance of social reform ideas, visions of Poland in the future, and a glossary indispensable for their articulation. The émigrés naturally made use, in these labours, of the current notions of the European political language of their time, with its varieties – conservative, liberal, or socialist; this, in turn, many a time caused the aforementioned concern of overly succumbing to a "foreign reason".

---

27 'Trzeci Maj', 1846; quoted after: Artur Eisenbach, *Wielka Emigracja wobec kwestii żydowskiej* ['The Great Emigration's view of the Jewish question'], p. 299.

28 As quoted *ibidem*, pp. 327-8.

A piercing sense of dependence upon products and patterns of Western science and civilisation, accepted from the outside, proves to be a common complex with nations that are less developed economically and incapacitated politically. There was, consequently, nothing specifically Polish in the fact that all the emigration parties reproached one another, with the intent to embarrass one another, for drawing ideas from foreign sources. And, they all were right: even if Polish émigrés in France or England lived enclosed in tight circles of people, meeting venues and issues that were completely meaningless to their surrounding world, they did read newspapers, books or magazines of their choice, have their resting points, acquaintances, authorities – and endeavoured to adapt ideas from these ‘foreign’ sources, more or less adroitly, to the domestic conditions.

At long last, they were aware of their borrowings; not caring much for being consistent, they considered it their merit that they had made the Polish cause – each party in its own way – the matter of European progress. True, historians have disputed the extent to which the history of Poland was peculiar, if not unique. Lelewel reinforced his readers’ conviction about how curious this history was, against a better judgement of Karol Hoffman who argued that “ever since it accepted the Christian faith, Poland has been shaped socially and politically after the model of Western Christian nations”<sup>29</sup>, the only difference being that the nobility has prevented a more appreciable development of towns – a factor that caused the Commonwealth, from the sixteenth century onwards, to unfortunately veer off the European course.

The conviction about uniqueness of the former political system of Poland, the native rights and customs, warfare superiorities and political disasters, was plainly better corresponding with the exiles’ needs. Hence, the popularity of Slavdom, reinstated in the emigration community, as a set of values adversarial to the merchants’ West. Poland was namely meant to preside over the rebirth of Slavonic nations, whose announcements were already coming from Bohemia, Croatia, Serbia, or Bulgaria. Incorporation of the Polish people in a brotherly union of the Slavs, recognition of their national characteristics as a manifestation of the character of the entire Slavonic tribe, and their historic vicissitudes as the Slavdom’s mission, all formed a strong ideological belief capable of supporting grand historiosophical structures.

The idea of Slavdom was, however, highly troublesome for the Poles, for it instantly posed the question, “and what about Russia?” Russia’s cultural

---

29 K.B. Hoffman, *Historia reform politycznych w dawnej Polsce* [A history of political reforms in Poland of yore], Warszawa 1988, p. 31.

foreignness, and hatred toward tsarist despotism as an absolute opposite to the Polish fondness for freedom, were the emigrant community's dogma, and *raison d'être*, across its ideological directions. The only admissible reservation was a faint hope that the oppressed Russian people would stand up against the tsars and then, an alliance of two free nations would be accomplished. Any other speculation on a possible reconciliation of Poland and Russia, as two pillars of Slavdom, was subject to anathema, the authors of such ideas had to take account of the slander that they were agents sent by 'Moscow'.

The *émigrés'* literary output, inclusive of private correspondences, had surprisingly little to say, until 1846, on the political occurrences in the Austrian and Prussian Partitions. This is obviously explainable by the history and composition of the emigration community, which was stigmatised with the defeat incurred in the war with Russia. Krakow and Poznań were, in the forties, stations at which emissaries stopped, and through which the literary contraband was smuggled. Here and there, plots were established and the life costs of patriotic involvement rose. Russia all the same incessantly remained the emigration's number-one Satan: a fact that delineated the limits of Polish Slavonic ideology and reluctance toward the West. The Polish thought, namely, whether democratic, or conservative, had set for Poland – once revived, God willing – the mission of an outpost, or rampart, of the European civilisation in the East – and only having taken this for granted, was one allowed to ponder over the visage of this civilisation, which sustained the expellees but yielded so much disappointment to them.

The hope for Polish republicans in the land foreign was an anticipated universal revolution which would sweep away the monarchical order of Europe and, together with it, the spiritual dwarfism of its elites. "Religion, debilitated", thus Mickiewicz wrote in as early as 1833, "and the institutions it yields of clergy, aristocracy, a privileged middle estate, have lost their former character. Everything impeached, scorned, ridiculed. The edifice is still standing, like a house undermined in its foundations, but with the first blow of a wind will if fall. [...] This tempest is being foretold by philosophers, poets, clergymen, countrymen, at various spots on the earth, in various parties and religions."<sup>30</sup>

It is worthwhile, then, to follow the model of the decaying West and its institutions? "Methinks", the poet Bohdan Zaleski (b. 1802), admirer of Mickiewicz, confessed once to his friend, "we have not comprehended our great political role

---

30 Adam Mickiewicz, *Mysli moje o sejmie polskim* ['My thoughts on the Polish sejm'], in: *Pisma prozą* ['Prose works'], part 2 (*Dziela*, ['The Works'], the National Edition, vol. 6), 1950, p. 155.

by this far. A martyr Poland, giving itself away to be crucified in order to redeem European freedom, so disinterestedly devoting itself, amidst the unruly material civilisation of our age, for the peoples putrefying under egoism and debasement – a great idea!, the greatest since Christ's time, that!"<sup>31</sup> This is how the lofty parabola of messianism from Mickiewicz's *Books of the Polish Pilgrimage* soothed the complex of the homeless and estranged.

## 6. Messianism

French or British intellectuals, as well as politicians, were intrigued by Russia – the country which, owing to its Asian conquests, was growing to become the world's greatest superpower, of which the world knew only a little – particularly not knowing whether it was to be feared or not. *La Russie en 1839* [*Empire of the Tsar: A Journey Through Eternal Russia*], a political reportage by Marquis Astolphe de Custine, published 1843, made it real big. Less still was known about stateless Slavic nations of central and south-eastern Europe; there were reasons for seeing them as Petersburg's European expansion area.

Anyway, the concept *des études slaves* seemed to provide an opportunity for an agreement between the visitors and the hosts, of which Prince Czartoryski took advantage by suggesting to some French politicians the need to establish? Slavonic studies faculty at the Collège de France – and to entrust the chair to Adam Mickiewicz. And indeed, the thought sprouted and, not long after, a faculty of Slavonic languages and literature was established, by means of a National Assembly resolution, within the country's most prestigious academic institution; following it, Mickiewicz returned to Paris from the tranquil town of Lausanne where he taught Latin literature at a local university. The news of this distinction electrified the Polish community in Paris, instantly making some enthusiastic about the idea whilst the others jeered at it, perceiving it as a manifested expansion of the Prince's influence. The French partners stipulated that the lectures be purely scholarly, refraining from any political content. Even so, the fact that a Polish poet was assigned with public lecturing at the Collège de France provided a great opportunity for propagation of Polish thought in the West. What sort of thought namely, remained temporarily an open question: the subject was a novelty because the new lecturer who had to compile a schedule for the first time.

In the late years of the first emigration decade, the political tensions of its early years were relaxing. The period's letters and diaries bring many testimonies

---

31 *Korespondencja J.B. Zaleskiego* ['J.B. Zaleski's correspondence'], vol. 1, pp. 40-41 (letter to Ludwik Nabelak, 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov. 1832).

of discouragement for manifestos and polemics, unifications and divisions that were offered no opportunity to pass the test of action. Such futility of political programmes and disputes was also sensed by newcomers arriving from Polish lands. Lucjan Siemieński, for instance, wrote in a letter to his friend about the TDP, an organisation he otherwise found close to himself: “Look at the Society, what sorrowful a picture it produces today: the flame of zeal molten into narrow-minded formulas; there are convictions, there is stubbornness or constancy, name [it] as you will, but there is no impetus, no afflatus that would cause a hotter attachment to the democratic ideas.”<sup>32</sup>

Perforce, a climate of spiritual want was emerging. Matters-literary started playing a more important part than before. The house of Eustachy Januszkiewicz, the resourceful publisher of Polish books, became the favourite meeting venue in Paris: frequented on Saturdays by poets, journalists and musicians. It was there that the legend-famed Christmas-Eve supper took place in 1840, followed by the poetic struggle between the improvising poets Mickiewicz and Słowacki. When Mickiewicz finished, “everybody got teary-eyed; a unison cry of worship was wrenched out of their breast; all fell to their knees before him, [...] there were those who experienced a nervous attack, some convulsive agitation [...]”<sup>33</sup>

Such ecstatic state, induced by a poetic impromptu (whose content the listeners were regretfully unable to render), was symptomatic of its time. The cult of Mickiewicz as a national bard was reinforced after his return from Switzerland, mainly in the émigré right-wing milieu and in the group of the Lithuanian-born poet’s adorers. Yet, this cult was soon after subject to a severe test, as Mickiewicz joined the Circle of the Divine Cause, set up in Paris by Andrzej Towiański (b. 1799).

In the first decade, the Emigration did not distinguish in any special religious zealotry. Alumni of the Congress-Kingdom schools usually grew up in a sceptical atmosphere of the late Enlightenment age. They manifested their proneness to exaltation mostly in the sphere of patriotic symbolism, celebrations of insurrection anniversaries, rather than conventional religious practices. The émigré community were also strongly reluctant toward the papacy, which was caused by the notorious Gregory XVI’s encyclical condemning of the Polish uprising as a seditious movement, which in democratic writings translated every once in a while into an overt -and sometimes indeed very harsh – criticism of the Catholic Church. Hence, if there was a Christian pietism appearing, it would

---

32 Quoted after: Danuta Sosnowska, *Seweryn Goszczyński*, p. 137.

33 From a letter of E. Januszkiewicz; quoted after: Maria Straszewska, op. cit., p. 192.

mostly assume unorthodox forms – just to recall Mickiewicz’s *Dziady* (*Forefathers’ Eve*) or the gospel-like parables of the same author’s *Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*

The Paris-period articles written by Mickiewicz in *Pielgrzym* [‘The Pilgrim’], a periodical he had founded, were imbued with the idea to Christianise European policy, to replace the incentives of interests with the fervour of an evangelical brotherhood of nations. Certain sections in the Democratic Society pointed out ‘materialism’ in the 1836 *Manifesto*, in the name of ‘Christianism’, comprehended as sanctification of the ethics of equality and fraternity. The socialists went further in this direction. Ideological manifestos of the Communes of Polish People were written in a language full of references to the teachings of Christ, explained in an egalitarian spirit. Stanisław Worcell excelled at this: “as Christ’s teaching has grown ripe”, wrote he, “as the seed cast by Christ’s hand started yielding [...] fruits, it was understood that, apart from the kings, nobility, or merchants, there is something existent, grand, absorbing within itself everything whatever has God bequeathed with a will, including those who previously exclusively proclaimed themselves a Nation only, assigning a thought to themselves. And this something was named a People, an existence having been thereto afforded. And ever since, the time began of introducing the teachings of Christ into the political establishments of Christian Societies.”<sup>34</sup> And so forth, on every single page.

The most popular French book among the Poles, and indeed the most frequently smuggled one into their home country, was *Paroles d’un croyant*, a collection of prophetic social visions written down in a biblical style by the Rev. Lamennais, and listed by the Roman Curia in the Index of Banned Books. Plaiting of plebeian-radical or national threads into the religious contexture was in general a hallmark of late-Romantic spirituality; the emigrants’ existential situation, without a right to return, provided a specific substratum for it. In parallel, disappointment with futile attempts at marking up the roads to freedom and the bitterness of the acute triviality of everyday living made the sensitive individuals prone to revelations of great ideas, restoring a sense of meaningfulness to the sufferings and defeats experienced.

The brainwave encountered by a few dozen émigrés on the verge of the forties in contact with Andrzej Towiański is explainable by the magnetic impact of his charisma and also – or perhaps, primarily – by the loftiness of the teachings that seemed to soothe the anxiety of waiting and the sadness of resignation.

---

34 *Wskrzesić Polskę, zbawić świat* [‘Poland to resurrect, the world to save’], anthology, ed. by Damian Kalbarczyk, pp. 116-17.

The Master appointed his elects for the Circle of the Divine Cause like Christ appointed his apostles, making them forthwith sense the grandeur of their destinies. They separated themselves from the world which could not comprehend them, from their until-yesterday-closest friends, with a certainty of their status as the-chosen-few and with the peculiarity of the language they used, comprehensible only to the initiated. Day by day, their Host of the Lord was supposed to strive for spiritual perfection, sanctity, so as to become a worthy instrument in the hand of God who runs humankind's vicissitudes according to His boundless plans. Part of these designs was the inescapable resurrection of Poland, not by way of conspiracies and insurrections, however, but through the strength of the spirit that gets elaborated over generations, consecutive epochs and persecutions which ought to be accepted with humbleness as the deserved 'God's pressures'. The road of mankind's progress toward the Divine Kingdom is, namely, marked with ordeal, sacrifice, and blood.

Towiański's gospel attracted some great individualities, such as Juliusz Słowacki (for a short period, admittedly) or Ludwik Nabelak and Seweryn Goszczyński (b. 1801), a pair of loyal friends, heroes of the Night of 29<sup>th</sup> November 1830. As mentioned elsewhere, Nabelak got educated as an engineer, managed factories and mines; still, his professional practice did not protect him from becoming possessed. Goszczyński, a poet and insurgent, proved himself past 1831 as a tireless conspirer, holding in his hand the threads of clandestine organisations in Galicia and writing down, for use of the Democratic Society, his dispassionate and critical remarks on the moral condition of individual classes of the Galician society. It was only in 1838 that, embattled by the Austrian police, he fled to France where, discouraged from political action, he endeavoured to resume his literary activity: as he wrote in a letter, "I consider writing works to be the most efficient method of serving our cause, in today's situation of the emigration."<sup>35</sup> To survive by writing to emigration periodicals was however impossible, and Goszczyński lived hand to mouth; in the summer, he would be hired as a surveyor with some waterway construction works. Not a religious man, highly distrustful toward Catholicism, he eventually subjected himself, for a number of years, to the rigours specific to a follower of the Circle of the Divine Cause, unexpectedly for many of his friends.

But the major figure was obviously Mickiewicz who, once Towiański was expelled by the French Government in 1842, assumed rule over the Circle, authorised to do so by its founder. And it was to his membership, position and role that

---

35 S. Goszczyński, *Listy* ['Letters'], p. 54.



the Divine Cause Circle owed its extreme resonance, far exceeding its numerical force and real influence. Recognised as religious heresy, national apostasy (due to its manifested conciliatory attitude toward Russia), an occult sect suspected of indecent practices, and, lastly, as mere madness, Towiański's teachings brought about a wave of malevolent pamphlets and raillery, aimed at Mickiewicz himself, in the first place.

But he seemed to have been no longer affectable. With the Circle, he had his own universe; plus, he had his college chair which he could use for preaching his at-last-consolidated, completely explored truth. Starting from his first lecture, in December 1840, before he came across Towiański, he addressed his listeners at the Collège de France more like a prophet, a visionary, than a professor, albeit his daring parables or associations were founded upon his extensive – and not always critical – historical and literary knowledge. He efficiently used the somewhat artificial idea of Slavic kindredness, derived more from an outer perspective than from the tangles of Polish thought, as a starting point, a mythical opposition of the peoples of simple faith and patriarchal tradition against the callous, sophisticating Western civilisation; of the peoples awaiting their historical hour in the world's arena versus a civilisation that was weary, overripe, chilled. This was the well-beaten route for Romantic dismissals of the Enlightenment heritage, rationalism, economics, and the 'official' Church too. But this was not where Mickiewicz would stop. Out of a panorama of Slavonic tales, legends, songs and rites, a critical analysis of selected Polish literary works and political customs of the nobility, a great religious and historiosophical saga was emerging, and taking shape, lecture by lecture; an inspired story of inspiration – Divine rather than poetic, one that arouses the strength of accomplishment, the power of doing.

The Slavic people had hitherto lacked this power – and yet it still had its historic role to play. "This people had until now remained passive; it occupies a measureless area in the map of the world, and still means nothing whether in the literary or artistic, or political history [...]"<sup>36</sup> Among Slavdom, Russia alone had mastered the magical strength of command, the strength of Peter the First, the strength of Suvorov. Mickiewicz's lectures bear a clearly identifiable trace of fascination with the 'tone' of tsarist despotism, whereto he would now be inclined to attribute a domineering idea – conversely to what he did earlier on in *Dziady*. Poland had not yet extracted from itself an equal spiritual power, or managed to forge its eagerness into a great deed. This task would be fulfilled by a great man,

---

36 Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła* ['The Works'], the Anniversary Edition, vol. 10, p. 176; cf. Zofia Stefanowska, *Próba zdrowego rozumu* [An attempt at a sound reason], p. 155.

a God's elect, a messenger of the Word incarnated. Napoleon was the one, after Christ: his ashes had just arrived (in 1840) in Paris. Only France could issue a new Napoleon, once it frees its spirit from the cocoon of materialism and stagnant systemates that had tied it down; once it flares again with a sacred fire which will enlighten the globe entire.

Mickiewicz addressed his listeners in French (with an awful accent but with a magnificent oratorical expression), even though the French who gathered in the lecture-room of the Collège-de-France were less numerous than the Poles and other Paris-based Slavs. He did not chastise their inventive passions: "No-one admires the miracles of industry and its immeasurable powerfulness, which shall finally subdue the whole of the world, stronger than we do; but the point here is a higher-ranking cause: it is about what spirit will make use of all these unfathomable industrial means, what spirit will assume the rule of the world. [...] The Slavonic tribe does know your poets, your orators, and your warriors; whilst your trading franchisers, your encyclopaedists, or – as you call them – specialists, are of no use to it whatsoever."<sup>37</sup> If these phrases were uttered by a traditionalist, it would have been a rather curious one – one that was impatiently waiting for a European revolution to come over, for liberation of the oppressed peoples. "Nations incapable of stoking the sacred flame are ruling, managing the world. Once the first sacred fire has blazed-out in France or in Slavdom, the power of those nations shall be toppled", he persuaded.<sup>38</sup>

A French police agent was among the audiences, taking his notes. In May 1844, with approximately four semi-annual courses done, the government cut short the lecturing of this foreigner who, instead of sticking to his academic schedule, preached some religious heresy, a cult of the Emperor, and some vague prophecies of a new war. The peril behind those lessons was nevertheless illusory. The historians Jules Michelet and Edgar Quinet, Mickiewicz's Collège colleagues must have understood their content; so did, let us guess, the authoress George Sand, plus a handful of friends and female admirers, the latter probably stronger enchanted by the lecturer's personality than his actual views. As for the critics, they regarded Mickiewicz as a possessed mystic from the East.

Yet, the lectures did exert a strong impression on the Poles – those attending and those to whom they were reported; still, there were few of those capable of grasping the Mickiewicz idea and message- let alone approving its keynotes. Some found them offending with their sacralisation of the nobility-bound past;

---

37 *Dziela*, the Anniversary Edition, vol. 11, pp. 18-20.

38 *Ibidem*, vol. 11, p. 30; cf. p. 146.

others, with their religious mysticism and, alongside it, impudent criticism of the 'official' Church. Some were deterred by the Bonapartism, whilst others, with the hard-to-comprehend renunciation of hatred toward Russia and, instead, recognition of Pushkin and 'Muscovite poetry'. There also were those who understood that this *ex-cathedra* messianism was an 'apotheosis of Judaism'. The harshest protest came from the Congregation-of-the-Resurrection Friars (*Zmartwychwstańcy*), that is, members of a small order whose main purpose was to guard the Polish Emigration against a religious despondency and apostasy from the Church, and whose main occupation became, for some time, criticising the messianic ideas of Mickiewicz and Towiański.

To the Emigration's men-in-the-street, messianism posed overly high requirements, notional and ethical alike. It did elevate the spirit, by indicating that nothing in history occurs without a higher purpose, every victim being taken into account in God's calculation; yet, this powerful vision of Christianity, which was expected to triumph here in this world, and rather soon – a concept that scornfully rejected 'bookish wisdom' and 'infertile academic learning' – glaringly diverted, all the same, from the way of thinking typical to the emigrants en masse. The number of adepts it could win over at home was all the lesser, then – and the local intellectual elites willingly mocked its spirited language. Polish scripts of Mickiewicz's lectures reached his native land, arousing curiosity; now, however, it was no more the poet of rebellion and liberty, whose poems were declaimed in Polish homes in the evening time.

Meanwhile, a few dozen brethren (and, a few sisters among them) professing God's Cause, gathered mostly in Paris and went on pilgrimages to the Master – that is, Towiański, who had settled in Zurich – misunderstood by the people around them, enjoyed their own company, mutually supporting their personal spiritual progress, severely rebuking the lazier spirits. They created very specific rituals for themselves, of which the most characteristic was confession spoken out loud in the Circle. They were increasingly clearly turning into a sect, month by month. Słowacki got out of it earliest, but it was Towianism that he had taken an impulse from for his frenetic creation of his own mystical philosophy of history. He had simply proved organically incapable of subjecting himself to the rigours of a doctrine, a cult of the Master, and his fellow-brethren's inquisitive control. In 1846, Mickiewicz himself carried out a dissent within the Circle: as his accession and humble reverence for Towiański added importance to the whole movement earlier on, now his departure, with a handful of his devoted brethren, in a disagreement about the Circle's quietism and political separation, took away a large portion of importance and authority from God's Cause. The Circle, confined ever since, survived the crisis, though:

Goszczyński remained its loyal member for years thereafter, and an uncritical chronicler – before he also rebelled, in 1862, against the oppression of a ‘sectarian spirit.’

The Emigration was getting older, its bodies and souls ailing, its communities unifying and splitting as usual – believing more and more weakly that they could be of use to the homeland any more. They met one another at funerals from time to time – in Montmartre, Montparnasse, Montmorency or at one of the innumerable provincial cemeteries, where their friends were most often buried in shared graves as not always could funds be raised to make a separate tomb and a small tombstone. Quite numerous were those who, as long as their memory was in working order, took down the recollections of their life and warfare. Some had set up their families and had to care about ensuring them prosperity. Imperceptibly, and somewhat bashfully, the inevitable process of melting into the life of their settlement country was taking place, although there was probably no one in that generation who would daydream of being reshaped into a Frenchman or an Englishman.

A small part of the community still lived by political writing and acting. Younger members of the Czartoryski party proclaimed their principal, in 1839, a de facto king of Poland, as they were convinced that a king alone would arouse the people’s trust in a future uprising. The Centralisation of the Democratic Society arranged correspondence discussions by distributing among the members questions of what warranties could be given to the people that the insurrection cause would be their own, or, how to arrange the authorities when the uprising was on, and once Poland was set free.

All the organisations endeavoured to maintain relations with the home country, and this one thing became easier since Friedrich Wilhelm IV, having come to the Prussian throne following his father (1840), alleviated the police and censorship rigours. Communications between Paris and Poznań became safe, all of a sudden. Emissaries had now a place to rest, and establish contacts. Poznań weeklies, vivid beyond expectation, started accepting articles written by political émigrés. Although the number of emigrants coming from the Prussian Partition was rather small, this new situation did, to an extent, soothe the keen sense of distance from the mother country – a country that was meeting its own challenges, not thinking much about the absent who had left it long ago.

This was not a decline of political emigration – far from it: this emigration would time and again absorb new hosts of refugees preparing for their new tasks. It was just that the first chapter of its history was nearing an end – the formation chapter, full of “untimely intentions, too-late regrets, and confounded

contentions”<sup>39</sup>, as Mickiewicz bitterly wrote years before then. But not everyone judged those contentions thus; as Jan Czyński wrote: “This combat, called by the dunderheads and villains a damaging dissent, is evidence of a higher mental disposition, which gives the present emigration an infinite superiority over the earlier emigrations. This combat has already done its important services to the native cause, the universal cause.”<sup>40</sup>

Whatever one might think, it remains undisputable that the first fourteen years of the history of the emigration has produced an impressive literary heritage and an abundant, ideologically diverse, political thought output. Both will gradually penetrate into the domestic circulation of cultural values. It has remained disputable until today how to measure the influence of the independent emigration word on national history. Whatever the reply, one thing is certain: Poland has paid a high price for its upsurge for freedom, and its defeat. A rather remarkable portion of this price became the drama of expulsion and deformed vicissitudes of thousands of people representing an enormous, all in all, moral and intellectual potential, and the lost capital of social energy.

---

39 Adam Mickiewicz, *Pan Tadeusz, Epilogue*, 1<sup>st</sup> stanza; transl. by Marcel Weygand.

40 Jan Czyński, *Cesarzewicz Konstanty i Joanna Grudzińska, czyli jakobini polscy* [‘Tsarevich Constantine and Joanna Grudzińska, or, the Polish Jacobins’]; quoted after: Lidia and Adam Ciołkosz, *Zarys dziejów socjalizmu polskiego* [‘An outline of the history of Polish socialism’], vol. 1, s. 208.



# Chapter 2: Inheritors

At home, 1832-1845

## 1. The defeat's aftermath: repressive measures

Emperor Nicholas comprehended the Polish revolution as an insane rebellion against the legitimate and sanctified authority. Any and all measures called for were taken in order to knock out from the Poles' heads any similar designs, and turn them into obedient and grateful subjects of the Russian Empire. Such intent was however burdened with a contradiction. The emperor and his ministers primarily charged the military and civil leaders of the insurrection – mostly, the nobility – with responsibility for this rebellion. Still, they did not intend or actually will to alter the composition of social relations in Poland, as such a pattern could have been dangerous for Russia itself. Thus, the nobility deserved its punishment, its political rights taken away, its nobility patents verified with competent offices; but apart from confiscated properties of émigrés and of some deportees, the nobility was still to have its proprietary rights and primacy in access to offices and military grades.

A similar instability was the case with administrative reforms as well. The Kingdom's autonomy was abolished together with the constitution, *sejm* assemblies and Polish army; all the same, the Kingdom was protected against being formally incorporated in the Kingdom by the legitimistic attitude of the European powers – signatories to the 1815 Vienna Treaty. Although the political lot of Poles was of little significance to the superpowers' rulers and ministers, a renouncement of the Vienna Congress provisions would imply an upset of the European balance. This being the case, Field Marshal Ivan Paskevich, the Russian emperor's favourite, raised to the honour of Prince of Warsaw was from now on to exercise a tough soldierly rule in Warsaw. The civil administration subordinate to him, save for a few key positions, was to be cast by loyal Poles – those who stayed away from the 'past disorders'. Although learning Russian was recommended to all the officials, French, of which both parties had a command, remained meanwhile the language of communication between the Polish ministers and the Petersburg court. The existing Polish (or, Polonised) codes of law were preserved in the Kingdom.

The conqueror's punishing hand fell with all ruthlessness on the Polish educational institutions in the Kingdom and in the Lithuanian-Ruthenian lands.

To Tsar Nicholas's mind, and quite rightly so, universities and lyceums (upper-secondary schools) offered the primary breeding ground for rebels. He consequently ordered the shutdown of the University of Warsaw and the Warsaw Lyceum (made a *guberniya* school from then on), the University of Wilno, and the famous Lyceum of Krzemieniec. Remnants of theological faculties remained of these closed-down schools; the Medical School of Wilno still operated, for a short time. Even the zealous tsarist officials in Warsaw believed that these were all merely extemporaneous repressive measures, after which the suspended schools would be gradually reinstated, at least as far as their less menacing departments were concerned. But wrong they were: the emperor resolved to deprive the Poles of higher education opportunities once and for ever, and the order to take over and export to Petersburg the lion's share of the Warsaw University Library and the collections of the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Learning, dissolved together with the University, as well as the Royal Castle treasures, was evidence of his willpower. To take the inventory, plenipotentiary commissioners were delegated from the capital, who, sparing no effort on the job, packed up a hundred thousand books, plus manuscripts, maps, music scores, a collection of Stanislaus Augustus's engravings, coins, paintings, medals, armoury, old banners from the Arsenal and from St. John's Cathedral, minerals, shells, and many private keepsakes and mementos from the palaces of emigrants absent at the time. "Since we have entered into Warsaw by force of arms", Nicholas wrote to Paskevich, "then any like objects constitute our trophies."<sup>41</sup>

For the Polish educated and studying classes, it proved a serious disaster, the final burial of the epoch-making labour of the Commission of National Education (1773-94) and an act of brutal strangulation of Polish cultural aspirations. And this was the point. Considering the fact that a few thousand students and graduates of both universities joined the émigré community, and their hard-to-assess number was induced to the tsarist army or deported 'deep into Russia', it becomes evident that the Kingdom, Lithuania, and Ukrainian *guberniyas*, stripped of their enlightened strata and their skills-and-tools, were meant to be turned into an intellectual desert, submissive to the will of the rightful monarch.

This intent could not fully succeed. The management itself of a subdued country demanded that the natives, with at least the basic skills, be involved in this

---

41 Zofia Strzyżewska, *Konfiskaty warszawskich zbiorów publicznych* ['Confiscations of Warsaw public collections'], p. 12.



work. To reopen gymnasiums (lower-secondary-level schools) in the Kingdom, remaining shutdown for two years after the Insurrection, imposed itself as an urgent need. The tsarist government did make this step but superimposed on the Kingdom a school law compiled by the Petersburg-based commission. Teachers were subject to verification, checking their conduct during the uprising. Those who maintained their posts were instructed in summer 1833 by the governmental Public Education Council that the purpose of school education and upbringing be, ever since, “godliness, unrestricted attachment to the Throne, obedience to the Government, submissiveness to the law, passion for the virtues and order”. The teachers’ task was to instil in their pupils’ or students’ hearts the principles of a morality “not contaminated with the spirit of the age”, their minds to be enriched with information “with no exuberant imagination or detrimental strivings”.<sup>42</sup> These platitudes summarised the entire doctrine of Nicholas’s political philosophy.

The pedagogical doctrine comprised in the instructions for the school authorities assumed that “children brought up according to the fashionable rules, in forbearance and freedom, spoiled already at their parental-house stage, arrive at their schools with the worst inclinations; that, therein, among the numerous gathering of their fellow-companions of this same sort, while not restrained by the strictness of school regulations, they tend to be confirmed in their depravity, they develop the addiction of maleficent unanimity; and, that, lastly, increasing in the spirit of unsubmitiveness, not only do they learn how to offend the authority they first meet once having left their family home, the authority of their teachers and leaders, but go as far as overtly stand up against the same”.<sup>43</sup> The entire pile of punishments was to remain at the disposal of educators or form-masters, so that those evil inclinations could be eradicated, while the rules-and-regulations for students (made more severe in the western *guberniyas* of the Empire than in the Kingdom) filled up their day down to the minute, leaving not a split second unsupervised.

Obviously, Russia was not in those years the only country in Europe where it was recommended that discipline be extorted from the youth by means of severe rigour, if not lashing, in extreme cases. The practice was still rather commonplace, even in some otherwise liberal countries. All the same, compared to the Polish pedagogical thought of the twenties, Nicholas’s system meant a retrograde

---

42 Quoted after: Jan Kucharzewski, *Epoka Paskiewiczowska w Królestwie Polskim: losy oświaty* [‘The Paskevich epoch in the Kingdom of Poland’], Warszawa 1914, pp. 163-4.

43 ‘An exposition of the reasons indicative of the need to alter the regulations re. school discipline’, as quoted *idem*, p. 185.

step, motivated as much by fear of new political fomentations as with the fundamental legitimism of tsarism which regarded “unbound submission toward the authority” as the utmost virtue.<sup>44</sup> No surprise, then, that education became the first department of the Kingdom’s civil service that was made directly subordinate to Petersburg. The Warsaw Education District, established 1839, with a Russian curator, was to report to the tsarist minister of education – the post held at the time by Sergei Uvarov, the codifier of the ideological doctrine of tsarist autocracy.

Each of the *guberniyas* (formerly, voivodeships) was from that point on to have one eighth-grade – since 1840, just seventh-grade – gymnasium, so-called philological, with a more-or-less traditional syllabus, including Latin – an incessantly ‘ennobling’ element; the obvious difference being that history was from then on to be taught using Russian textbooks recognising the Partition of Poland as a righteous historical verdict. A useful novelty was the establishment of a few ‘real’, i.e. middle (junior-high), schools, with a more pragmatic curriculum, more easily accessible to boys of non-privileged classes but not opening the way to a higher education.

These ‘philological gymnasiums’ were meant to serve the sons of officials and of the legitimised nobility; parents representing the other estates were obliged, from 1845, to pay for their sons a few-fold higher registration fee, which was meant to alienate the lower classes from aspirations inapposite to them. “Learning the reading, writing, and beginner arithmetic skills, is a thing good even for a retainer, but being through all the sciences lectured in the gymnasium is, to my mind, even more adverse than drinking vodka before the age of twenty; whilst the uniform, mixing the origins and the estates of the pupils – is it not the first step to a communism, that is, our-contemporary democracy?”<sup>45</sup>: so wrote, in March 1845, General Andrei Storozhenko, the Warsaw *oberpolicmajster* (supreme head of the police). The rule of estate-based classification from one’s date of birth was binding for the entire Russian Empire; however, its imposition upon the Kingdom’s society which had already managed to savour a formal citizens’ equality before the law was an attempt at ramming this society again into a feudal corset – or perhaps, into bureaucratic pigeonholes.

---

44 Cf. school rules-and-regulations and parental obligations at the gymnasiums of Wilno and Białystok, 1833-6, in: L. Zasztowt, *Kresy 1832-1864* [‘Polish Eastern Borderland area, 1832-64’], pp. 272-9.

45 Quoted from the notes of Andrei Storozhenko, *oberpolicmajster* of Warsaw, chairman of the investigative commission, March 1845; after: Kucharzewski, op. cit., pp. 292-3.

Soon, however, a dearth of official, judge, and gymnasium-teacher candidates made their presence felt in the Kingdom. The conceived remedy was the law lessons in upper gymnasium grades, or, post-gymnasium, two-year (later on, one-year) Extra Courses (pedagogical) and Law Courses. It was a patchwork which enabled the preparation of, at the most, clerks capable of rewriting files, or court minuters. Nicholas I by no means consented to reinstate higher schools in the Kingdom: he only agreed that an ecclesiastical seminary?, a Pharmaceutical School, an Agronomical Institute and, lastly (in 1844), a Fine Arts School, with an architecture department, be opened: all these being useful institutions, but not of a university rank. Higher-qualified specialists were expected to get educated, at the Kingdom treasury's expense, with the Petersburg and Moscow universities; and really, the government would send there each year a dozen-or-so meticulously selected scholarship holders who were expected to join the domestic civil service after graduation. And, since the lawyers were at stake most of the time, two faculties of the Polish law: civil and criminal, were formed at both universities – inclusive of the judiciary and administrative procedure. By consent from the Viceroy, students whose parents or custodians could afford to fund their education far away from home could enrol with Russian universities; in practice, this would only be accessible to affluent landed gentry. Similarly, the Polish youth from Lithuanian *guberniyas* would go – in lesser numbers now – to Moscow, Petersburg or Dorpat to study, instead of to Wilno, as they used to before. Those from Ruthenian *guberniyas* joined the newly-established (1834) St. Vladimir University in Kiev which however did not equal to either of the capital-city universities, let alone the former Wilno University.

The Kingdom's Administrative Council expected that the future teachers' "permanent abiding in a country that has not been exposed to any revolutionary concussions; becoming convinced as to blessings poured onto the country by the beneficial government; taking a closer look at the powerfulness of Russia, which would, in principle, frustrate any idea to resist against the same [...]: only this can destroy, basically, the nucleus of error in the young mind; inculcate therein the ideas and images of essential good and love of the monarch who is the source of the very same."<sup>46</sup> This hope turned out to be deceptive, though.

The Insurrection over, the Austrian Partition seemed to be an oasis of freedom: masses of exiles from the Kingdom and Volhynia, army officers and politicians did find shelter – to wait there, usually jobless and with no subsistence, for

---

46 From the minutes of a meeting of the Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1835; quoted after: *ibidem*, p. 387.

some new opportunity for their zest to be made use of. When, however, in 1833, the Russians crushed the pathetic partisan attempt led by General Zaliwski, who in Galicia had his transfer points and a retreat path, repressions started being applied there as well, with emigrants being caught and expelled, rebelling subjects of both emperors arrested. Reinforcement of the alliance between Vienna and Petersburg, as the central axis of the Holy Alliance, added a higher-tier sanction to the Austrian police-and-censorship regime, which was different from the Paskevich-style rule, at the most, in its less corruptible administration which mainly consisted of German and Czech officials.

The Galician province, whose society and law had not been through a modernisation comparable to that occurring before 1830 in the Kingdom of Poland, was growing culturally stagnant. The Lwów University, Germanised and traditionless, educated clergymen and lawyers on a routine basis, and yet its professorship staff did not feature outstanding individualities; the school did not enjoy an esteem and displayed no prospects of becoming a stimulating hub of intellectual life.

It would seem that Krakow University had better conditions in this respect – whatever the case, an honourable institution of the Free City, the last official patch of Polishness. Political freedom and freedom of speech tended however to get increasingly restricted there, whereas the Senate, intimidated and getting scared about their offices, but still formally ruling that tiny Republic, became a docile deliverer of the will of the Conference of Residents of the three ‘protective courts.’ For anyone still cherishing any illusions, the five-year Austrian occupation of the (ironically enough) ‘Free’ City (1836-41) and the expulsion of political ‘emigrants’ from there (inhabitants of the Kingdom of Poland who after the Insurrection found shelter in Krakow) could clearly show to every dweller who the ruling power was.

The staffing of vacant university faculty chairs was formally conditional upon the outcome of appointment competitions; still, any reasonable candidate would first pay visits to the Residents. The memoirists found in concert that espionage and informing embittered the university’s and the town’s air – although the fact that they say so much about it is evidence that they had not yet become accustomed to it. Students from the Kingdom or ‘Lesser-Russian’ (that is, Ukrainian) *guberniyas* were recalled from the University as this institution did not sufficiently warrant right-mindedness all the same. Studying in Krakow was banned, in turn, to graduates of Galician schools. With all this, this Jagiellonian Alma Mater, now under a discretionary dictate from the governmental commissioner, was inevitably becoming a second-rate local school, with its mere four departments (theology, philosophy, law and medicine) and just a few hundred local students.

In spite of anything to the contrary, while extorting an absolute submission of their Polish subjects, Austria and Russia still refrained from an overtly denationalising policy. Such a policy was a Prussian speciality; in the era colloquially named after Eduard Heinrich von Flottwell, the ‘supreme president’ (*Oberpräsident*) of the Poznań Province (1831-40), it was pursued in a systematic fashion, though with the *Rechtsstaat* – state under the rule of law – principles apparently preserved. Once the Prussian *Landrecht* (law-of-the-land) was introduced in the Poznań Province, the undereducated Polish court officers and policemen had naturally to be replaced by their German counterparts, knowledgeable in the law. As of 1832, German was promoted to be the official language of the Poznań Province and it started ousting Polish from the schools. This invasion was not necessarily caused by a conscious nationalism. The Kingdom of Prussia, holding within its limits a particularly high share of Slavic people, used the German language and institutions, simply, as a means of monarchical centralisation. In its perception, Polish schools, offices and publishing houses must have passed as decomposition factors, dubious even when there was no-one to think of taking advantage of them for any separatist purpose whatsoever.

The decade following the fall of the November Insurrection was, in general terms, the time of a total cultural disaster across the Polish and Polish-dominated provinces. The conditions for practising sciences, arts, above-elementary education and modern professions drastically deteriorated everywhere. The workplaces and tools of intellectual and artistic work, whose development was seen during the first three decades of the century, were now destroyed or degraded. Polish thought – political, economic, or even religious – which before 1830 endeavoured to maintain contiguity with its European inspirations, was walled off from these influences with the Holy Alliance’s police cordon. Not political any more but the cultural mission of the Emigration, as the link between Poland and the West, became all the more important – only a narrow, by its nature, profile of émigré creative output, overwhelmingly literary-historical, in principle, was unable to compensate for the decay of the other domains of intellectual work, which required adequately furnished institutions for them to develop. The destruction of such institutions, the universities in the first place, meant the amputation of important, life-sustaining members of the national organism – an operation that exerted its most scathing impression on the lot and vicissitudes of the domestic intelligentsia.

## **2. The social situation of the intelligentsia**

Professionalisation was an expressive trait of the bourgeois civilisation which was ripening, much unequally, across Europe during the nineteenth century. The

said notion stands for the process of professional groups becoming singled out with their defined functions, under conditions enabling them to perform them. As for the conditions, they were more and more frequently formalised into the required diplomas or certifications. Within every professional category, taken separately, the demand and the supply side as well as the establishment of the terms of access are discernible. We can try and describe the phenomenon by depicting, on a collective basis, the entire stratum of clerical workers.

The demand for qualifications is dependent upon the degree of economic or, as a broader concept, civilisational development of a given country. For instance, job and income opportunities for medical doctors are not dependable on the actual number of ill people but on the number of patients – that is, ill or healthy individuals who have learned how to care about their own health, the health of their children or (which is rarer) their aged parents, and how to seek advice, if need be, with a certified physician, rather than the village midwife, witchdoctor or herbalist, and who moreover have disposable funds to pay for the medical service provided. Such requisition for physicians first appeared among aristocrats and thereafter gradually engulfed the society's middle classes, as their education and affluence grew. The demand for engineers and builders was primarily dependant on transport-related investment projects (roads, bridges, channels, railroads – since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> c.) and construction projects (especially, public edifices) undertaken in a given country – and that means, on state funding and private enterprise, the latter raising the capital indispensable for delivery of great projects through the issuance of shares. Barristers and public notaries faced increasing opportunities as the number of individuals and companies partaking in legal transactions grew, ready to use the professional services of advisors and plenipotentiaries.

These processes clearly suffered a deceleration in the 1830s across the provinces of what had been Poland. The markets, tight as they had already been, separated by the customs borders now, shrank even tighter. The Kingdom of Poland – still so, as if ironically, named – was even separated from the Russian Empire, while politically remaining part of it. The countryside, continually (save for the Prussian province) living under the serfdom law almost did not participate in the trade in goods. The country, devastated with wars, had no profuse capital which would seek being invested; there was nothing there to entice foreign entrepreneurs, either. The only remarkable industrial investor was the Bank Polski ('Polish Bank') of Warsaw, which pumped Treasury funds into the expansion of a modern government-owned mining and metallurgical industry of the Western Mining District. Yet, this industrial scheme – gigantic, given the context of its time, and entangled in corruption scandals, ended up in economic and technological bankruptcy and a criminal swindle by the verge of the forties.

At the same time, when north-western Europe was entering the age of Balzac and Dickens, the period of industrial and financial capitalism – marked with drastic social non-equalities, on the one hand, but vigorously breaking the inveterate routine of life, on the other – the Polish territory did not join the process at all. Of the invader powers, Prussia alone could provide some developmental impulses to its provinces; yet, the further eastward, the weaker any such impulses proved to be. Similarly to Russia, Austria was a bureaucratic and conservative monarchy, its chief *raison d'état* being to keep the culturally and politically incoherent whole on a tight leash, instead of any modernisation or liberal designs. Thus, as years passed, the whole country increasingly stood out against the European civilisation *avant-garde* – a circumstance that was nowise a concern for all Polish people. The moment the European liberals' fondness for the Polish insurgents, so daringly fighting against tsarist despotism, faded, by the natural order of things, the lot of that backward Slavic region, detached into pieces, stopped being of interest to anyone in the West.

Dissimilarities in the landscape and customs were becoming increasingly conspicuous: the United Kingdom, France, Holland, Belgium and the German states, with all the differences between them, were becoming plainly bourgeois. The middle class set the tone, dictated the lifestyle, its true part being liberal professions, teachers and public servants or functionaries – in a word, all those who, instead of investing capital, were selling their qualifications and knowledge. Save for individual vigorous parvenus, the Polish provinces saw no West-style bourgeoisie whatsoever. Trading businesses were carried out, at varying scales – particularly in the form of tax collection leasehold or treasury monopolies – by Jewish or, rarer, German or Russian merchants; still, they did not aspire to set the tone, not in the least. Thus, the still wealthy countryside nobility remained the dominant class; having irretrievably lost its political advantages, and deprived of its representation as the estate, it retained a scarce means of social influence: the sparse grand families – mainly them – were still influential and glamorous. They adorned their historic names and hereditary manors-and-acres with their count's titles purchased, primarily, in Vienna, and proved capable of contracting a relationship of trust with the ruling courts or, at least, their governors.

But the nobility completely lost their already-faint cohesiveness as a class – particularly, under tsarist rule. A complicated procedure for proving one's nobility rights in the Russian Empire and, from 1836 onwards, in the Kingdom, categorised the families into those that hastened with the papers in their hands to the Heraldic Office of the Kingdom of Poland, called the 'Heroldia', to evidence their indigenous rights or to wheedle them in exchange for loyal service; those who spurned a futile title; and, a throng of those who failed to meet the arbitrary

law's requirements. In colloquial speech, the name 'nobility' (*szlachta*) was in itself attached no more to the background or coat-of-arms but to a landed estate which still, in all the country's provinces, preserved an economic and social pre-eminence, the social-life aspect included.

The Polish intellectual class was therefore doomed to exist amidst an overwhelmed and hampered society, walled off from European progress trends and deprived of its own institutions, and even of the right to articulate its trivial interests. This society of course had its better economically developed and urbanised regions – along with those whose rural and pastoral landscape, ownership structure and gradation of social respect had not changed much since the eighteenth century. Speaking in general, though, this society's needs evolved, given the circumstances, slowly enough, proving incapable of creating any really extensive field of operation for holders of more or less exquisite professional skills.

Paradoxically, the state became the most absorptive employer in the three Partitions: usually arousing reluctance by its foreignness and repressive policies, but ready all the same to contain within its extended administrative apparatus a large number of local aspirants. And not just officials or clerks of various tiers: there were lawyers; official doctors (tasked with surveillance of the sanitary condition of towns and eradication of epidemics); engineers responsible for the condition of roads and bridges and governmental military and civil buildings or structures; teachers; actors employed with government-owned theatres. What is more, a governmental position or office offered the largest sense of stability: although it was easy to lose it for disloyalty, incompetence was much 'safer' in this respect. One could serve dozens of years with a single institution, the seniority being crowned with a retirement pension – as often opposed to private employers.

There were not many of them, though. On hiring a land-agent, steward, or reckoner, the owner or leaseholder of a nobility estate would ask who had recommended him, rather than what schools had he graduated from; indeed, there was often no such graduation to his credit. Only grand demesnes, such as the Zamoyski Entailed Estate (*ordynacja zamojska*), could offer room for a small number of trained agronomists and, moreover, for a bookkeeper and, for instance, a librarian. Furthermore, a table, a dwelling, and petty wages were offered at noblemen's houses to numerous private tutors or coaches of lordly children: a daily bread of this kind was contested for by poorer gymnasium or university students and, with time, professionally qualified graduates who could not find a better occupation for themselves. Those were, nevertheless, ephemeral positions, entered into based upon an oral agreement and liable to dismissal at any moment: such tutors were treated by their employers patronisingly, often humiliatingly; much depended, after all, upon a personal relationship system.



Factories, if existing, dealt with their businesses, bookkeeping and business correspondence with the help of a few so-called dependents, at the most, or without them, by forces of the owner's family alone; supervision of the work was performed by foremen hired for the purpose, taught a little in the practical operations; they would often be foreigners, if so required by installation and operation of new pieces of machinery imported from abroad. There was a small number of private schools, usually combined with home dormitories, mainly for girls (so-called *pensjas*- boarding schools), since boys from better families were taught elementary matters at home and then studied at a government gymnasium. Private tutors taught at *pensjas* but for some of them it was an extra source of income to their full-time employment with a gymnasium. For those who exercised writing skills of some kind, editorial boards of periodicals were the longed-for starting points: with his name established, once a sought-for contributor, an author could get paid per lineage, on an irregular basis. With book publishers, authors and, more frequently, translators, especially in case of widely-read French romances, could sometimes earn some money. There moreover were jobs where work was performed mainly on order. Painters and sculptors most frequently made their works for the needs of the Church – a rather affluent institution, always interested in arts but dictating to the artist an iconographical programme and certain stylistic preferences. Sculptors found it somewhat easier to make a living as they could moonlight with tombstones, a product always in demand.

Liberal professions formed the elite of the emerging intelligentsia; in practice, there were two such types: barristers and doctors. In each, acquiring the requisite education and diploma implied – domestic academies absent – a serious many-years outlaying of expenses, something not many families could afford. An even greater problem was to become established, reputed, and win a clientele – particularly, affluent clients. The profession of a barrister or solicitor – also, notary – had a century's tradition of the Bar, mostly nobility-based, and was continuously regarded as the most suited for young men from good homes, second to the agricultural class. Still, entering this career was almost impossible without a patronage or the chambers, clients and cases inherited from a lawyer father.

As for doctors, the case was contrary: they had only recently started contending for social respect, leaving the patronage umbrella of the potent, and walling themselves off with their university diplomas from barbers and barber-surgeons. The youth from better noble homes still did not consider the choice of this particular job to be an honour – similarly to what was thought of the profession of a teacher; assessment of real-life opportunities often incited them to make such a choice, though. To be a physician was an extremely urban profession – not only owing to its social composition, absorbing most varied social

elements, but also because it was easier to make a living in the practice where there already were numerous doctors, rather than where there were almost none. It was in bigger cities that the habit of calling a doctor if taken ill was disseminated quickest. Doctors were called and travelled to the patient, almost never the other way round. Hospitals, in turn, were just beginning to distinguish themselves, following Western countries, from old-age asylums and almshouses for the urban poor.

Hence, in sum, the demand for professional qualifications of any sort (handicraft being put aside, of course) was very limited and grew gradually in all the three Partition areas. A narrow class of people intending to make a living on the sale of their skills was much less dependent on the services marketplace than its Western counterparts, and much more so on the state administration – seemingly, a feature characteristic to peripheral societies. After 1831, this dependence soon started pestering the intelligentsia in the Prussian partition, where, as has been said, Germans started squeezing Poles out of decent governmental positions. A similar process took place, on a lesser scale, under Austrian rule. Paradoxically, in the Russian Partition, the Kingdom and Lithuania, the areas where the political and educational repressions were the most afflictive, the number of jobs available to Polish people with governmental institutions was the highest, as there were few Russians ready to settle in those areas.

All three governments introduced the legal conditions for admission to practise certain professions. In Prussia, in order to apply for the post of a judge, a graduation diploma from one of the Prussian universities was a prerequisite and, moreover, a qualification exam had to be passed. The state examination *pro facultate docendi* was also a must, along with submission of a university diploma, for gymnasium teacher candidates – a post highly valued in Prussia. For a physician, to obtain the right to practise, the prerequisite was to hold a doctorate, have a clinical course completed and an ‘approbation’ exam passed, with the obligatory fluency in Latin – the international medical-sciences language of the time.

The access conditions were, for the time being, less formalised under the Russian government. Moreover, all the public-sector employees, from caretaker and clerk to the imperial governor, were granted the official rank relevant to their title or position, out of a fourteen-degree table, with the specified conditions for transfer from one ‘class’ to another and with the right, if not obligation, to wear an appropriate civil uniform with distinctions.

Ryszarda Czepulis has estimated the total numbers for all the ‘white-collar’ categories for the Kingdom of Poland as circa 7,500, as for the 1830s, whereof at least 4,000 (including officials and gymnasium teachers) held full-time

governmental posts.<sup>47</sup> These seven to eight thousand would make slightly above 0.5 per cent of the professionally active population (as far as this category makes sense with an agrarian society). As for the other partitioned provinces, the total number of employed and liberally practising Polish professional intelligentsia members must have been relatively less compared with the Kingdom – with, perhaps, Krakow alone having a larger share. This group was thus still not-quite-significant statistically, albeit its constituent categories already played a social part disproportionately large versus its numerical potential.

Meanwhile, maintenance of this potential occurred to be quite of an issue, considering the thirties' conditions, in the face of the degraded schooling and education system. Galicia and Krakow were apparently the least affected areas: whatever the case, both these provinces preserved their universities. The Lwów academy of the time has left good memories in noone: it was erring with the tedium of lectures read out in German, with its Austrian servilism, and tendency to suppress its students' skills, rather than develop them. It was not a complete university as it only consisted of a philosophical (i.e. general-education), theological and legal departments, as well as a three-year medical study which issued undereducated 'surgeons', obstetricians and apothecaries. Whoever could afford it, preferred to educate their sons in Vienna or Prague. The Krakow University, tight within a tiny miniature state, with everyone knowing one another, 'turning sour', adapted itself to this artificial situation: submissive by all means, it aroused no cognitive curiosity, and no life-related aspirations among its students.

The situation in the Prussian Partition was different. Endeavours, renewed several times, to establish a university in Poznań came across no approval from the authorities due to political reasons – another thing being that the teaching corps would have been hard to establish. Those students who completed their course of learning with a good result could get matriculated with one of the Prussian universities which enjoyed scientific renown. The closest locality to Poznań was Wrocław (Breslau) or Berlin; Pomeranian people would at times choose Königsberg. The distance between those universities and the place of dwelling was not more than two days' travel by a postal stagecoach, and so it was easy to get away to one's family home for a holiday or a festive period. What is more, some poorer students, especially those ready to become teachers by profession, could count on scholarships funded out of the government treasury. Others

---

47 R. Czepulis-Rastenis, *'Klasa umysłowa': Inteligencja Królestwa Polskiego 1832-1862* ['The intellectual class'. The intelligentsia in the Kingdom of Poland, 1832-62'], p. 124.

would enjoy support from their landed-gentry patrons or use gratuities from the Society for Educational Assistance, a Polish social institution. One could also attain consent for spending a year or two with a foreign university, German in most cases, which passed for the best-in-class institutions Europe-wide; or, a French one. It was a matter of custom that a few more universities were visited by tertiary-level graduates – an opportunity medicswillingly used, in their will to learn the healing and treatment methods applied at various European clinics. Thus, the studies in the Prussian system offered a greater, compared to the other provinces, opportunity to come across European science, to listen to lectures delivered by luminaries of the period. Thus, it was even more threatening that Prussia would suck out the most talented Polish graduates, with the Polish elite becoming Germanised. The danger was identified at a fairly early stage, and a number of Poznań initiatives, to be covered at some length further on herein, were aimed at charming it away.

Studying at Russian universities was a different story. The just-established Kiev University was a not-quite-interesting school, with its mere two departments, Philosophy and Law; yet, it was territorially closest and most accessible to students of a nobility background from Volhynia, Podolia and the Kiev *Guberniya*. As the University's curator wrote to minister Uvarov, his subordinate school was to serve the purpose of "rendering the *Guberniyas'* dwellers closer to the Russian character and morals, diminishing the religious fanaticism [i.e. Catholic zeal – J.J.'s note] and rendering their common homeland loveable to them."<sup>48</sup> The authorities did not however consider the fact that over the three decades of existence of the Wilno Education District, the local Polish nobility gained a conviction that education was of value; therefore, their drive for having their sons educated was stronger than among the Russian or 'Little-Russian' (i.e. Ukrainian) people of the time. In effect, Polish students, most of who came from 'civic' houses, accounted in the thirties for some 60% of Kiev's students. This situation would still make a lot of trouble for the educational and police authorities.

Student candidates from Lithuanian and Belarusian *guberniyas* and from the Kingdom of Poland – be it carefully selected scholarship holders obligated to serve, once graduated, a specified number of years with their assigned civil-service position, or students called 'free', that is, studying at their family's expense – were directed to the universities of Moscow or Petersburg. Each of these schools enjoyed renown and boasted established scholars at their faculties,

---

48 Quoted after: J. Tabiś, *Polacy na Uniwersytecie Kijowskim 1834-1863* ['Poles at the Kiev University'], p. 14.

albeit the course of teaching, particularly at the law departments, was continually mnemonic, and the distance between the professor and his students was no lesser than with the German universities.

Polish students did not find it easy to acclimatise – starting with the geographic concerns: the way made by a postal britzka from Wilno to Petersburg, or from Warsaw to Moscow, would take at least a week and a student would normally be back home just once, for a holiday, during his four year course of study. As to the command of Russian among schoolchildren, it was poor, at least in the Kingdom, and students arriving in Russian capital cities initially felt very alien: it was thanks to student society circles or hospitable homes of Polish settled officials, particularly in Petersburg, that they gradually accustomed themselves.

With all that, the situation where the Kingdom's government paid wages to professors of Polish law delegated to a Russian university so they taught Polish students sent there for the purpose was paradoxical, its results indifferent. The number of Polish students at all the departments in Moscow and Petersburg are hard to reliably determine: it is estimated that some 15 to 20 scholarship holders came from Warsaw alone on a yearly basis. Estimation has it that in the forties, every third of the ca. 750 Petersburg University students might have been a Lithuanian or Kingdom-based Pole. What is of importance is that groups of young people living far away from home, in an alien environment, have a tendency to tighten bonds within their herd. This was the case indeed, and Polish alumni of the universities in Moscow and Petersburg alike became visible in the future dramas of their country – not necessarily at all in the roles the government had foreseen for them.

Graduates of all the aforementioned universities were meant to constitute the upper layer of the Polish 'intellectual class' under the partitions, but there were of course much less of them than earlier on, in the twenties, the Wilno, Warsaw and Krakow universities taken together could provide. In the post-Insurrection conditions, university-level education grew much costlier and elitist. In this way, a balance was retained between a stifled demand and a radically diminished supply of graduates holding university diplomas. A rather unsteady balance it plainly was: easy to upset or reduce. As in the year 1839-40, as a retaliatory measure for the youth's participation in a patriotic plotting, a new repression wave overwhelmed Polish schools in the Russian Partition, with the Medico-Surgical Academy of Wilno – the last surviving particle of the former university – being eventually closed down, one could only receive a medical doctor's instruction from the Petersburg Medical Academy or at Kharkov University; their graduates would more frequently become staff doctors with the army than return home. Travels from Russia and the Kingdom to foreign universities, be it no further up than Krakow, were almost discontinued.

Degradation of the school system initially meant a reduced number of jobs for teachers and professors and, a few years later, the inevitable abatement of the threshold of requirements for access to most mental jobs, still, the school authorities were afraid that they could find replacement of retiring employees troublesome. At last, the government itself felt pressed to set up Extra Courses in pedagogy, affiliated to the Warsaw Gymnasium, and later (1840) law courses of a similar type, declaredly in order to get the young people better prepared for their university studies. The courses fared quite well as the classes were run by good teachers, who frequently were former professors with the Warsaw University; yet, the graduates would in most cases cease being educated at this very stage, having no funds or the willingness to obtain further instruction in Russia. The two-year or reduced one-year courses functioned therefore as a surrogate; the director of the Governmental Commission of Justice was not in vain afraid that “undereducated semi-wiseacres”<sup>49</sup> would get instruction from those. The result was nevertheless that having been through some of those courses (if not being just a gymnasium graduate), one could gain in service – not at once, of course – the rank of a candidate judge, a barrister with a lower-instance tribunal, a government commission official or a county school teacher.

The notion of ‘secondary’ school was basically inexistent then: gymnasia as well as practical schools such as a Pharmaceutical School or Institute of Farming and Forestry, which could be joined even without a gymnasium course completed, were commonly referred to as ‘higher’ (than elementary, to be sure). Whatever the case, the Polish intelligentsia became practically *averaged* under the Russian rule imposed after the November Insurrection, its aspirations, knowledge and professional skills being flattened. This was not the end of the story, for between 1832 and 1845, the number of students at complete, eighth-grade gymnasia disclosed a dropping trend, in spite of a growing population, whereas the number of students in fourth-grade county schools was increasing: those were taught by teachers of whom most had not completed, if at all commenced, university-level studies.

Whoever confined himself to such a school, having no noble family estate or at least a decent leasehold to manage as a prospect, could hope, at the utmost, to see himself employed at some shoddy clerical or teaching post. But even students in the higher gymnasia tended to discontinue their course of learning, quitting the school before completion: some due to a scarcity of means, others just conversely: having a financial security to their credit, they saw no reason in

---

49 Quoted after: J. Kucharzewski, op. cit., pp. 475-6.

wasting their time for gaining void skills, as their families perceived it. A gymnasium completion certificate was primarily sought by those who saw in it their only chance to achieve some modest position in life. Their ambition sustained a readiness to relinquish: many memoirs recollect the period of studying away from home as one of penurious digs, down-at-heel shoes, undernourishment, and income pieced together with private tutorials.

In the Kingdom of the thirties, teaching was a particularly arduous profession, with the authorities making the pedagogues subject to the rigours of discipline, symbolised by the obligation to wear a uniform; added to this were the police-like obligations imposed upon them: making sure that students did not meet one another at suspicious trysts or were able to read banned books. All the same, there were some teachers, aged ones first of all, in that frowsty and impoverishing atmosphere, who endeavoured to conscientiously perform their teaching and educational tasks.

The situation in the Grand Duchy of Poznań was somewhat different: in Prussia, the gymnasium was a demanding institution, a way to higher studies by assumption; gymnasium teachers, holding their university diplomas as a rule, enjoyed respect. For many school-leaving pupils, full-time professorship was the utmost daydream. Yet, an acute national rivalry was going on, and only one Poznań gymnasium, the St Mary Magdalene Gymnasium, managed to preserve its Polish and, in parallel, Catholic character. The Polish intelligentsia of the Duchy, in its entirety, had been through this school. And it was only in 1840, when the anti-Polish policy relented, that two more gymnasiums appeared in the province. The programme was 'classical', featuring Latin and Greek and two or three European languages; of interest is the fact that most St Mary Magdalene graduates would later enter higher theological seminaries or a theology faculty; lawyers and teachers were ranked lower as professions.

Having enfranchised the rural areas and introduced compulsory elementary school instruction, Prussia offered somewhat better opportunities, compared to the other Polish provinces, to the talents of young people from lower social classes. For a peasant's son, the position of elementary school teacher or parish curate was the sought-after advancement above the fatherly class. But it could have happened, and so it did, that Karol Libelt, son of a Poznań shoemaker, won a government's stipend, owing to his talents and assiduity, and was earning his deserved doctorate at Berlin University. A year after, his espousal to a maiden from a well-to-do family made him a member of the so-called citizenship (which meant landowners). And it was owing to the works he authored that he attained his position as a leading philosopher and politician, not limited to the Prussian province. Similar career paths occurred sometimes in Krakow, but they would find it much more difficult to unfold under the Russian and Austrian

partition. Peasants, illiterate as they were, did their serfdom duties, and there was an insurmountable abyss between them and their 'lord'. Galician observers of human relations would willingly report on a 'caste-based system'. In the tsarist Lithuanian-Ruthenian *guberniyas*, the Polish nobility was also an estate that lived a life separate from the people, speaking a different language, and said its prayers (in Ruthenia) with a different ceremony or faith.

In the Kingdom, which in the preceding half-century experienced a completely different history, noblesse did not any more mean much. The tsarist bureaucracy wanted to have the living society caught in a net of Russian estate nomenclature, ascribing to its subjects the 'nobility', 'bourgeois', or 'clerical' origin, as though a clerk could not be a nobleman or a nobleman a bourgeois, at the same time. Personal files remaining from various governmental departments tell us about the diverse numerical proportions of those categories – but what do they stand for, or inform us about? A noble origin was declared by a squire owning several villages as well as a grange steward, a husbandman on a piece of land, or a municipal official divested of any property. But the files do not tend to differentiate between these social positions.

Attachment to one's ancestral nobility, whether legally recognised or not, was still strong at the time in eastern Galicia or in 'Ruthenian' *guberniyas*, whilst getting much weaker in the Kingdom; in Warsaw, it was not the proper thing to give oneself airs with such a jewel. There were other criteria at work to set a person's social position.

The discussions on the social genealogy of the Polish intelligentsia sometimes ascribed an exaggerated significance to the class's noble (or non-noble) origin, in disregard of the fact that the mental dowry the new intellectuals imbued the politics and national culture with was less dependent on their pedigrees or filiations and more upon the character of their homes and the milieu they had been brought up in. More recent studies on the history of the intelligentsia clearly prove that the intelligentsia was about being born into a class that absorbed socially heterogeneous individuals, usually of a bourgeois or low-noble origin – the latter being urban dwellers for some time already, in many cases. As years went on, this class would become regenerated, to an increasing extent, through inheriting the professions or, at least, the social position.

It is impossible to neglect at this point foreign acquisitions which, though perhaps not so impressive number-wise, made contributions of importance to Polish culture. If not comers from abroad themselves, who had settled in Poland in various years and for a variety of reasons, then certainly their sons, studying at Polish schools, assuming the Polish language and a national awareness as their own, marked their presence across the provinces and districts of the Commonwealth



and, thereafter, among the émigrés and deportees. A long list of names of illustrious exponents of Polish culture of a foreign origin is conceivable: such origin would mostly be German, more sparsely French (Frédéric Chopin!) or Italian. Just for us not to forget – as it does happen, all too often – that the assimilation movement led in a variety of directions and, in sum, as undeterminable as the proportion can be, Polish culture has supposedly lost no less individualities and talents than gained.

It is certain that the balance of personal exchange at the Polish-Russian contact point was non-advantageous for Polish culture. The Russians almost never felt at home with Poland, at least in the Kingdom; they did not tend to get Polish and only rarely were tempted to remain there after the long years of their service. In turn, a number of well-educated Poles working in Petersburg or other university towns, army officers and regiment doctors included, were getting mentally assimilated into Russian society after the long years spent there. This, in the opinion of Polish people, was usually acceptable as it was found excusable: a worse case in point was for a Polish author to publically renounce solidarity with the fight for freedom – and, worse still, to be suspected of having done so for career reasons. Along these lines, Mickiewicz pronounced, from his Collège-de-France chair, Józef Sękowski (b. 1800), a renowned Orientalist and professor with the Petersburg University, a traitor.<sup>50</sup> There were more similar cases. When deprived of its own national institutions, a society is more severe in passing its verdicts on the cases recognisable as apostasies or defections, particularly if they appear with respect to well-known people of merit.

The assimilation of Jews was only starting in those years, save for the earlier religious conversions to Christianity, of which quite a number occurred in the eighteenth century, giving rise to many Polish families whose descent was becoming blurred already in the following century (though never completely so). The activity developed by ideological leaders of the Jewish enlightenment movement – the *Haskalah* – in Poland, referred to as the *maskilim*, which in Hebrew means exactly ‘the enlightened’, was of a different nature, though. The movement, conceived in Berlin in the late eighteenth century, extended with time to small but influential milieus of reformers of Jewish customs and morals in Polish provinces. In Warsaw, the School of Rabbis, est. 1826, rose to become the movement’s ‘headquarters’: as is known, no rabbi was eventually issued by this school which, instead, under the lead of Antoni Eisenbaum (b. 1791) focalised the strivings for modernisation of forms of religious life and propagation of secular education for Jews, in view of abolishing their isolation from Polish society. The

---

50 *Dziela* [‘The Works’], the Anniversary Edition, vol. 9, p. 251.

*Haskalah* was gaining its followers also in smaller towns of the Kingdom where they felt much lonelier than in Warsaw.

Polish *maskilim* authored and published numerous treatises and moralities in Hebrew, German and Polish, fighting (and being reciprocally responded by) intransigent orthodoxes and expansive *Hassidim*, whilst also guarding Jewish identity and tradition. It would be too early to perceive them as part of the Polish intelligentsia in this generation already. But they were indeed the first to have paved the way for assimilating, by young Jews eager to learn, the dominant surrounding culture: German – in the Prussian Partition; mostly Russian, if in Lithuania; or, Polish – in the Kingdom, Krakow, and Galicia.

Everything said so far concerned the education of young males. As for girls, those of wealthier landed-gentry families were content with a home education and an upbringing that were meant to make them fit for marriage and salon life. Those of low-nobility or urban environments had more opportunities to come across a government or, more frequently, a private girls school whose curriculum was, in approximation, correspondent with four gymnasium grade. The only job they could practically accede, following the completion of such a school and taking the prescribed examination, was becoming a teacher with a school of this type, or a dame with a boarding school or a governess at a landed-gentry house. Girls had no chance to become educated further or to satisfy their higher professional aspirations, and no one had laid claim for such rights for girls yet. All the same, in the late thirties and early forties, a sizeable group of young women gained the floor in Warsaw and Poznań, almost simultaneously trying their skills in literature and the periodical press, eventually taking a noteworthy position in these areas.

Under such condensed existential conditions and restricted opportunities for professional careers, an apparently inconspicuous process was taking place of a maturing self-knowledge of a class that only owed its nevertheless-growing significance to the country to its own mental qualifications. Its leaders did not issue individualities capable of contending with the great Paris-based poets and visionaries of Polish politics, but indeed did not set such a task for themselves. Their valour was owed to their remaining at home and, in awareness of their role, defending – despite any adversities – a few simple values without which the national culture would have had no chance to maintain its historical continuity and outlast this unfriendly period.

### **3. The strategy to adapt**

The idea of incessant insurrection is a political fantasy. Apart from a handful of fanatics or martyrs, few are capable of rebelling on a lifetime basis against political and spiritual oppression, paying the price of loneliness and oblivion.

Better or worse educated Poles found themselves after 1831 in a situation all the more morally tangled in that they lacked even the limited space of freedom a nondescript nobleman in his grange would enjoy. Whether an official, a judge, a teacher, a publisher, or even a builder or doctor, they could not make a step without bargaining with the gracious tsarist or royal government upon whose grace not only their rights but, downright, their existence was dependant.

A split loyalty is possible in short periods of a dramatically critical time. In their daily life, a person – say, a specialist – endeavours to reliably deliver the instructions of the superior authority he gets paid, is rewarded or punished by. Public opinion did not stigmatise anyone working in a *guberniya* government, governmental commission or gymnasium. Firstly, there was no public opinion – it only existed in a bud form as a whispered opinion, in itself dependent upon the severe regents and governors. And yet there existed certain unwritten limits of moral assent, a poignant experience of which was sometimes the lot of those who overly ostentatiously earned the authorities' favours, ready to serve these authorities with the high-ranking munificently paid posts they held.

For instance, Samuel-Bogumił Linde (born 1771; author of the magnificent *Dictionary of Polish Language*, ennobled with the assumed coat-of-arms *Słownik* – i.e. 'Dictionary'), who prior the 1830-1 uprising had custody of the Warsaw University library and afterwards supervised the packing of its resources into chests to be carted away, would issue official opinions on his colleagues' conduct during the Insurrection, albeit he did not evade joining it. In fact, despite his merits for Polish culture, Linde was quite commonly regarded by his contemporaries as a Muscovite sycophant – as was the law professor Romuald Hube (b. 1803) who obediently travelled to Petersburg in order to compile a novel penal code for the Kingdom of Poland. Another such case was Waclaw-Aleksander Maciejowski (b. 1792), an otherwise outstanding professor of law and literature, who, in exchange for a lavish tsarist stipend and an opportunity to travel abroad wrote a history of the political system of early Slavdom to the taste of emperor Nicholas himself. The case of Fryderyk Skarbek, the illustrious economist, also known as a novelist, is more ambiguous. He was saved from sharing, highly plausibly, the lot of a political émigré by rather incidental circumstance: the moment the Insurrection broke out, he was staying on official business in Petersburg. This resulted in his appointment as a member of the new Kingdom authorities; he enjoyed Nicholas I's favours, against a distrust of his own milieu, ever since.

However, an ostracism of this sort was weakening as years passed, and it counted less who had assumed what kind of an office than how he actually behaved holding it. It even became a customary conviction in the Poznań Province and in Galicia that anything ought to be done to maintain the key official

positions for Poles. So, for instance, the duties of censors for Polish books and periodicals were perforce performed by Polish people: whilst obeying the instructions, some of them endeavoured to maintain moderately good relations with publishers and editors. To give an example, Józef Czwalina, a St Mary Magdalene Gymnasium teacher, acted as a censor in Poznań for twenty years, lamented, in 1839, about a “censor’s spiritual torments” experienced in the Prussian province.<sup>51</sup> No need to add that whatever top positions they might have held in the administration, the judiciary, or school authorities, Poles were merely more or less ardent executors – with no power to affect or inform the partitioner countries’ policies, even on a local level.

There always were people applying for a job with the governmental chancelleries, although this usually entailed several years of unpaid applying activity, during which the ordered office actions had to be performed before any post was actually granted. Especially for gymnasium graduates, who could not afford higher education, a clerical post was as if a natural career choice, for apart from shipshape calligraphy, it did not require many special skills whilst giving some social importance. Hence, a crowd of clerks, reckoners and ‘quill’ officials became established across the provinces as a lower mental-class layer – not infrequently with a wavering sense of loyalty – the aspect becoming apparent once temptations of patriotic plotting appeared.

The social distance that divided this army from higher-ranking functionaries, university (especially, Krakow University) professors and freelance specialists was precipitous; there existed a continuity of levels and, virtually, a shared code of conduct. Upon this ground, a sense of solidarity was emerging among members of this new class that wanted to earn its position within society by its own talents and abilities. The class in question was indisputably connected by many family and acquaintance threads with the landed proprietors. These threads were stronger in the Wilno region, in Podolia, Galicia, Krakow, or the Poznań Province, but much weaker in the Kingdom. Yet, those colligations and invitations incited professional employees all the more, regardless of their origin, to at least declaratively contrasting their own hierarchy of values with noble protectionism: according to these values, education, personal merit and usefulness took the place formerly appertaining to being well-born.

This did not necessarily translate into personal relationships, especially as most cultural undertakings – for instance, the founding of a periodical or the

---

51 Grzegorz Kucharczyk, *Cenzura pruska w Wielkopolsce* [‘Prussian censorship in Greater Poland’], p. 63.

establishment of a educational assistance fund – called for an amalgamation of the intelligentsia's initiative and the social and financial position of the enlightened landed gentry, if not the aristocracy. Such was the case, still, in all the provinces of the country. It is also quite plain that people from environments of similar educational backgrounds could feel mutually bound with the common interests and comradeship entailed by their school days. The period's diaries and letters offer us, however, quite a number of testimonies showing that mutual relations, characterised by patronising attitudes on the one hand and a susceptibility on the other, were not free from tensions, so the anti-noble slogans of the Democratic Society would often be cast into a receptive soil. It was a good tone to rebuke those giving themselves airs with pedigrees, attached to their 'castes' and self-reliant social coteries. One's own background was of no decisive importance, and the poor noble youth tended to be particularly sensitive to baronial arrogance.

The class performing mental work willingly situated themselves in the middle of the social ladder, between the 'citizens' and the 'people'. It was not so much a modest economic position than the measure of social respect that set the place for it. Yet, the class's contact with the people, particularly rural people, was illusory; its democracy was expressed through social views rather than daily manners. There was still a hard-to-penetrate barrier separating simple peasants and artisans from the 'lords' and 'young masters', among whom even the most impecunious but good-mannered individuals from 'good families' were featured.

The intelligentsia, spare as it was, was concentrating, like before, in larger cities where they could find employment or clientele. Paradoxically, however, their associations with the merchant-and-industrial class were weaker than those with the landed gentry. In spite of passing by one another in the street, there was no groundwork on which to develop social contact. Part of the reason was certainly the fact that considerable portions of the well-to-do bourgeoisie were German and Jewish people who, even if Polishised, would retain their distinctive cultural and confessional features over a generation or two. Of no less importance was the circumstance that people of mind-based professions did not hold pecuniary businesses or commercial engagements in esteem. In this respect, they inherited noble superstitions, it might be said; the thing is, the grange-based gentry would usually cover their own commercial activity with those superstitions. The intelligentsia did not quite have such an opportunity. Albeit nouveaux-riches were in their ranks, this class owed its social position to criteria other than economic and its group authority, as recorded in posthumous reminiscences, at least, normally enhanced tough living conditions, disinterestedness and liberality, symptomatically neglecting property-related matters.

Out of the bourgeois morality, the intelligentsia took the dictate of assiduous labour, a thrift and abstemious life, keeping a reserve toward capitalistic 'speculations' and dirty 'trafficks'. These implied an instinctive dislike – not common but frequent all the same – toward Western capitalism and its temples, for example, the stock-exchange. In this respect, no significant difference is perceivable between the attitudes at home and in exile. Technological novelties, primarily railroads and steam shipping, aroused admiration for the human genius indeed, but great European cities with their nervous haste of life, as known mainly from the novels of Balzac and his contemporaries, were appellatively accused of competition with greed having poisoned any higher sentiments and decency measures in their dwellers' souls. Although 'progressive', the intelligentsia retained the conservative reflex, an inclination to idealise rural life and native tradition – all the stronger that a patriotic incentive backed it. 'Frenchism' in the language and morals appeared to many an advocate of the enlightened opinion as more weighty an issue than the absence of political autonomy.

This attitude was rather smoothly related with the myth of ancient Slavdom, quite en-vogue at the time. Not supported by any historical experience, a Slavic, or Slavonic, commonwealth of peoples proved tempting as a hypothesis adversative to the rotten West, while it was more politically correct than Polish fancies of the past or a future national independence. Slavic legends penetrated poetry, ethnology, and the philosophy of history; yet it is hard to assess how deeply they were thrust into the minds of students and readers, and whether they were anything more for them than a linguistic manner.

It is certain that sensitive Poles painfully recognised in that unfavourable epoch not only a want of freedom and political censorship but also loosened social tights in urban spaces. Any germ of an association implied a threat of aroused watchfulness from the police and Viceroy's spies. The homeland was becoming an unreal, sentimental being, or was shrinking into the limits of the familiar neighbourhood and landscape. The nation was a theoretical abstraction. How about the Church or the parish? With the urban intelligentsia, not much can actually be said of this. The time was not quite pious in general, and so was the period's literature. The bishops remained under continuous surveillance of one of the governments; many a one paid for his imprudence with the price of imprisonment or deportation. Hence, the Church in Poland tried to adapt its service to the existing conditions, which depressed its attractiveness to the faithful. The Church regarded the new liberal and democratic currents distrustfully, and played, in practice, no distinctive part in intellectual life.

The memoirs of Warsaw, Poznań, Wilno or Lwów allocated much space to salons and dancing or literary *soirées*. Indeed, a private salon in a bourgeois tenement house was a rallying point, not yet a suspicious meeting spot, where news and reading matters were exchanged. This modest salon remained the last redoubt of the intelligentsia: poets, journalists, doctors, officials, and artists, where they could still feel at home, conversing wittily, in the company of ladies, of things mostly trifling.

This was not quite satisfactory for learned people, researchers, who had to satisfy themselves – as in Warsaw – with an astronomical observatory or a botanical garden as the available scientific institutions. Science sought refuge in gymnasium study-rooms or private houses, but this was not enough for it to progress. Only literature could somehow manage it in such conditions. Literature is a cheap thing; it can do without much support. It would always overwinter, for better or worse, wouldn't it?

#### **4. Men-of-the-quill**

The editorial office or board was the major institution for literature. Some Polish periodicals were published even when censorship was really severely gnawing. It was uneasy to get a license for their publication: irreproachable conduct had to be demonstrated, and lots of things promised to the clement authorities: what should not be included in the content, in the first place. Nothing about politics, nothing about the “unreasonable Polish nationality”, or, God forbid, about the European revolutions. Potent patrons were indispensable, as was a modest fund to start with. The undertaking could then turn successful, and the publisher-and-editor (usually so, two in one) had the right to announce a prospectus and collect subscriptions. Announced in a newspaper, the periodical would appear at selected bookstores. Just the first issue, then end of the story, perhaps. But, with a generous patron, having won a good fame, it would go on living for a few, or perhaps more, years.

What kind of periodical is being meant, though? Those published in Warsaw before the Insurrection, even if strictly professional, did not survive the tough time; the editors eventually emigrated, in most cases. Under the new conditions, no daring historical or literary-critical dispute was conceivable. Following the Western pattern, a few so-called ‘magazines’ appeared – that is, weeklies or bi-weeklies comprising curious scientific, technological, or artistic facts and details of all sorts and kinds, rather casually collected, rewritten, for most part, from foreign newspapers. Added to that would be a poem, a short story, a novel in episodes – all this without great value altogether, or a keynote; yet, that was

good enough, given the dry-spell period. Kazimierz Brodziński (b. 1791), a recognition-enjoying poet, professor with a former university and man of literary authority, lent his own hand to the publishing of an encyclopaedicperiodical *Magazyn Powszechny* (1834-6), but did not succeed. It did not come off much better with *Muzeum Domowe* (1835-8), whose editor and publisher Franciszek-Salezy Dmochowski (b. 1801) was the first nobleman-entrepreneur in the Kingdom whose will was to live on literature, and let literature live. He sought support in cheap editions of popular novels by Balzac, Dumas, Paul de Kock and Walter Scott, in slapdash translations; but even he found it impossible to long haul this business which was said to be generating losses rather than expected gains.

Any such periodical attracted, at the start, the curiosity of as many as several thousand readily disposed subscribers, whose number soon dwindled away to a few hundred. For town-based intelligentsia exponents, the periodical was too expensive and, besides, rather meagre, owing to the censors' activity. On the other hand, the 'civic' (i.e. landowning) nobility was accustomed to reading prayer books and calendars (an important literary genre, that), and it called for an awesome effort to encourage them to read something a little more demanding. Józef-Ignacy Kraszewski, a young writer from Wilno who was fast gaining popularity, reprimanded therefore the right-honourables for their 'logophobia', that is, an innate aversion to reading. In parallel, he advised the booksellers that they rewarded themselves with a lower gain per copy but with a higher circulation and delivery of books to fairgrounds. As he wrote, books needed to be "enforced upon the non-reading class almost violently".<sup>52</sup>

This was going rather sluggishly, for the time being, as the country had seconded its literature to Paris, remaining at first rather clueless about how it was getting on there. In the Russian Partition, meanwhile, a periodical issued in the Empire's capital city took the lead, in the prevailing opinion. The *Tygodnik Petersburski* weekly was edited by Józef Przecławski, a well-connected official with the Ministry of Interior, who ingratiated himself with the new authority by condemning the past 'revolution', the present emigration, and any-at-all "vicious demolishers of the public comfortableness". But he was definitely capable of attracting moneyed protectors and, moreover, several skilful penmen to contribute. J.I. Kraszewski had his feuilletons, articles and novelettes printed there for a few years; the literary judgments were run by Michał Grabowski (b. 1804), the most celebrated Polish critic after Mochnacki. Grabowski was, by type, a

---

52 J.I. Kraszewski, *Logophobia* (1838), in: *Wybór pism* ['Selected writings'], Section 9, pp. 55-9.



landowning intellectual who had his existence secured by a hereditary estate, but he busied himself with criticism as a man knowledgeable of his contemporary literature and languages. He repugned the en-vogue French novels – works by Balzac, George Sand, Eugène Sue and their followers – finding them indecent, politically ‘mad’, and at all inapposite as a model for Poles to follow; yet he wanted in lieu of it to promote a native Slavonic novel, possibly historical, following the pattern of Walter Scott, the genre’s exponent who was adored in Europe, with his fictional-story vein and the picturesqueness of the historical background.

It was always befitting not to ignore Grabowski’s consummate opinions, and thus, *Tygodnik Petersburski* was read by Polish readers in Russia, Lithuania, the Ukraine and, moreover, in Warsaw, Poznań and, indeed, sometimes in Paris too – that is, in the circles where the author’s political services were regarded as a national recreancy. Przeclawski and Grabowski had ardently earned such opinion; since 1842, responsibility for the weekly in question was taken over by an ultra-conservative ‘coterie’ led, alongside Mr. Grabowski, by Henryk Rzewuski – an impoverished magnate and tsarist sycophant, but grandly talented as a writer, the author of *Pamiętki Sopolicy*<sup>53</sup>.

For the time being, none of the existing Polish periodicals, wherever published, could aspire to become the mouthpiece of the intellectual and spiritual endeavours of the new class. This small but vivacious flock which did not emigrate in its entirety, was complemented with young generations, and was much in need of some point of attraction, a moral authority. It could have seemed for a while that the said Kazimierz Brodziński would fit such a role. This most outstanding author among those who decided to stay in Warsaw in spite of their activity in 1831, depressed by the repulse of Insurrection-related hopes, endeavoured to find a *raison d’être* and a purpose to work in the captivated country. Yet, he was not lucky enough to pass through a political verification applied by pedagogues. S.B. Linde accommodatingly pointed out in his secret opinion for the authorities that Brodziński “could not refrain from orations and writings” during the revolution: “I would rather he not be offered an influxion on the education of the youth”, the lexicographer wrote<sup>54</sup>. The poet was consequently granted a modest retirement pension; as it was said, he supplemented his income by editing a magazine that contained a little of everything but what he was most concerned about. From the high messianic tone of a national prophet that he used

---

53 Rzewuski’s *Pamiętki Sopolicy* [‘Memoirs of Sopolica’, 1839-4] was a leading example of the ‘noble *gawęda* (stylised tale)’ literary genre].

54 Quoted after: A. Witkowska, *Kazimierz Brodziński*, Warszawa 1968, p. 315.

in his speeches during the Insurrection, he descended to recognising small and tacit merits for the country, given the circumstances. He was writing quite a lot then, but out of everything he bequeathed from those last years, the best known is a distich which in the future was to become a philosophical motto of Polish 'organic workers':

May all be led by God's Spirit within their tether:  
The whole shall so be put together.

[*Czyń każdy w swoim kółku, co każe Duch Boży,  
A całość sama się złoży.*]

It did not tend to do so for the time being; Brodziński, resigned, overcome with sadness and ailment, died in 1835 in Dresden.

Meanwhile, a new figure appeared at the feeble Polish literary stage, one who was fated to play the leading part for long years to come. Together with Józef-Ignacy Kraszewski, a generation was entering the picture which had not been on time for the Insurrection. Born in 1812, to an unpropertied noble family of the Podlachia (Podlasie) region, Kraszewski himself, served the entire uprising time, and more, in a remand centre and prison lazaretto, for his participation in a clandestine student organisation. This 'healed' him from the will to conspire for a long time. He discontinued his university course of studies at that point and ever since, he would manage his education path on his own – and in much a versatile fashion so. He settled in his own village, in Volhynia, and for twenty years lived the life of a landlord-litterateur, his income being yielded more by novels – he could write one within a month – than by the grange.

Kraszewski first made himself known to the reading public as a satirical columnist, mercilessly flogging in *Tygodnik Petersburski* the mental laziness and superficial accomplishments of the nobility: "This country's most numerous class, of so-called citizens", wrote he, "displays a sad image of people living without a purpose, busy yet without a busyness worth their capacity, dying like some wild weed, no useful. With this most numerous class, what is called the real life is leading a bare existence on the acre, between the pigpen and the barn, wherein, a peremptory while over, an espousal over, only the troubles and scum of life remain, a life that is composed of yawning, catarrhs, abundant harvest, name-days, and festive days."<sup>55</sup>

To strike a balance, as it were, another cycle of satirical tales by the same author scolded the moral degeneracy of modern Western civilisation which,

---

55 J.I. Kraszewski, *Choroby moralne XIX wieku* ['The moral illnesses of the 19<sup>th</sup> century'], quoted after: *Wybór pism* ... ['Selected writings'], Section 9, Warszawa 1893, pp. 67-70.

without knowing it personally yet, Kraszewski held to be atheistic, licentious, and depraved by the lust of gain. Aged twenty-plus, this author was smoothly entering the role of a moralist endeavouring to sustain a loyalty toward the national tradition while paving the roads for careful intellectual and material progress, in a spirit of Christian solidarity and protectiveness. Initially enjoying the favouritism of the aforementioned reactionary 'coterie' of H. Rzewuski, he soon started becoming free from this custody which embarrassed his moves and thoughts. He was indisposed toward extremities, in whatever direction they would be going. He managed to set up, in Wilno, his own historical-and-literary periodical – the bimonthly *Athenaeum* (1841), which he edited by himself, from his Volhynian seclusion, furnishing it with articles (written by himself or received from other authors) on graves and other antiquities of Lithuanian counties; on the siege of Częstochowa by the Swedes in 1655; or, for instance, on contemporary German philosophy; and, along with that, literary novelties from all the Polish provinces and many European countries. Admittedly, this was a little tedious – but this was the way a method of maintaining cultural bonds could exist without touching upon unprintable themes.

Kraszewski was head-and-shoulders above noblemen's standard interests – just to mention his importing, via booksellers, reading and summarising French or English periodicals, and his understanding of the role that substantial journalism might play in enlightening opinion and awakening an intellectual movement. The defeat of the Insurrection essentially cut such ambitions short in Poland; hence, one could more easily gain authority – however peculiar the circumstance was – by composing rhymes or novelistic plots, than by uttering his convictions outright, using a discursive language, where every word had to be pondered. Kraszewski himself made use also of this circuitous path to reach Polish hearts and minds.

The intelligentsia of Wilno – the town that had been so proud of its university until quite recently – was notably afflictively decimated. Since the 1823 trial of secret student associations, through the defeat of the insurrectional partisan warfare of 1831, to the detection of a Polish conspiracy network in 1838 – tsarist repressions every few years raked out, deported to Siberia, or forced to flee to the West, the most dedicated portions of consecutive academic age-groups, annulling, at the same time, Polish schools and academies – the sites where the spirit of resistance was being reborn time after time. Walled off from the Kingdom with a cordon, Wilno was degraded to the rank of the Russian Empire's *guberniya* town, no more capable of reconstructing its intellectual milieu, dispersed among Russian universities, hospitals, and garrisons. Given this state of affairs, literature became the chief medium to support an environmental and national rapport between the literate classes.

It was not poetry, however, that acquired the reign in this lair of Romanticism. Mickiewicz's *Ballads*, *Konrad Wallenrod* or *Crimean Sonnets* were continually in surreptitious circulation, but the poet's emigration-period output, in spite of the legendary contraband, reached Lithuania in a very narrow squirt, rather deviating from the disposition of the local frightened public. In the bibliopolical circulation, coming to the forefront were prose forms: the novel, the noble *gawęda*, so-called historical pictures. The authors did not quite want, and probably were not quite so disposed, to touch upon distressing reminiscences such as partitions, the Napoleonic wars, insurrections. What is more, addressing, mainly, a noble reading public, they had to temper social, and all the more confessional, conflicts. They saw an opportunity to be original in regionalism, which for them was the sanctuary of the native landscape, mother tongue, Sarmatian customs, and simple morals – a reserve that valiantly resisted foreign innovations and disquietudes, as well as tsarist bureaucracy.

The Wilno literature of the time discovered, with celerity, the aesthetic value of folk songs, legends and customs. Their exoticism was alluring, encouraging one to overcome linguistic difficulties, which were not serious when drawing from Belarusian sources – in which Jan Czeczot (b. 1796), ex-Philomath and former companion of Mickiewicz's, excelled – but proved more significant in encounters with Lithuanian speech. The indefatigable Mr. Kraszewski played the leading part in this domain, as he did in several others: he wrote and published, in 1840, a mythological poem *Witoloranda*, as the first volume of a trilogy offering a poetic vision of the heathenish and prehistoric Lithuania. The work earned its author considerable esteem among the Lithuanian patriots of both languages.

The men of decisive merit for the preservation of Wilno literary position, in spite of any adversities, were the local publishers-and-booksellers, especially Józef Zawadzki (b. 1781) and, after his death in 1838, his son Adam, as well as Teofil Glücksberg (b. 1796). Having lost their privileges as university typographers and their professor clientele, they did not lose heart and managed, till the early forties, to maintain the rank of Wilno as a centre of the Polish publishing industry, second only to Warsaw.

*Athenaeum* and, subsequently, a series of other, mostly ephemeral, 'collective writings', yielding no profit, were reliant on them. No less importantly, Wilno booksellers maintained a ramified network of business relations with Warsaw and foreign publishers, on the one hand, and with the whole area of the former Wilno School District and Polish settlement, up to Kamieniec-Podolski and Kiev, and inclusive of the Polish colony in Petersburg. Among the landed citizens, highest in demand were calendars and fashionable French novels in cheap Warsaw editions, while the distribution and bookselling-subscription network

was, in its entirety, of inestimable importance to Polish cultural communication. Wilno perseveringly defended its function as one of the network's nodes – it being worth adding that it was an important printing hub for Hebrew books and rabbinical studies.

In Warsaw, it was easier to gather a bevy of people who, recognising the Kingdom's political status as inviolable – ten years after the Insurrection, still had the will to do something of subservience for the national culture. Based upon an agreement of a dozen-or-so individuals from affluent bourgeois, landed-gentry, juridical and clerical circles, a monthly titled *Biblioteka Warszawska* ['The Warsaw Library'] was formed: respectable, programmatically shunning politics and polemics, the editorial board set as the central goal for themselves the propagation of the sciences, arts, industry and civilisational progress overall. Indeed, *Biblioteka* managed for a number of years to keep a decent standard and win over contributors and readers across the partitioned areas. The editors held it as a rule to avoid extremities (reactionary and radical alike) in philosophical, social, or literary opinions. Their weekly editorial sittings, open to the public, at which the received materials were read out and discussed, became well known.

Around *Biblioteka*, a milieu gathered which was characterised not so much by similar views or opinions than by life attitudes. These might be called 'organic works', although this notion was only being hatched in the forties, and primarily in Poznań. Such an attitude was grounded upon the conviction – not necessarily overtly uttered – that people possessing some material or intellectual resources, even if they do not exert any impact on their nation's vicissitudes, may, and indeed ought to, use their available means in order to do something serviceable for the country. And indeed, there were more and more people appearing in Poland who, acting without support from scientific institutions, tenaciously worked, by themselves, in the domain of their choice. Such domains were not necessarily the ones they would be prepared to deal with due to their university studies. Firstly, not everyone who was active in Polish scientific and writing activities in the forties had their studies completed; secondly, their private interests were not in every case associated with their formal education or profession. For example, Antoni Szabrański, the first editor of *Biblioteka Warszawska*, was a lawyer by profession and a translator of German literature by passion. Aleksander Tyszyński (b. 1811), the monthly's leading literary critic, worked for the Government Commission for Internal Affairs. Literature, especially poetry, as well as national history, were particularly attractive then, and dealing with them was regarded as a service done 'for the country'; hence, no one was surprised that, say, an official spending a half of his day with one of the governmental chancelleries would write poetry in his leisure time, translate Shakespeare, or study documents about

the time of King John II Casimir [Jan Kazimierz] Vasa (17<sup>th</sup> century). A remarkable portion of texts published in *Biblioteka* or other periodicals of the time was produced by such assiduous knowledgeable dilettanti.

They poignantly sensed their loneliness, and it was thanks to periodicals that they could learn that there is someone, somewhere, dealing with a similar issue. They would write letters, a lot of letters, usually long and detailed ones, while carefully preserving the letters they received. They wrote to their friends who had dispersed across the world, and to people they did not know but had common interests with. They wrote about their lives and engagements, but primarily, about their beloved work, their quests for historical sources, about what they were reading, writing, and intending to write. They sent one another queries, requests for inquiries or for a copy of the archival document they needed, attached manuscript works for evaluation or publication, bibliographic information, books. Letters and prints circulated above the frontiers of the Partition areas, and between the country and the Emigration, always exposed to the vigilant sight of a customs guard, censor or, worse, police spy; exposed to get 'smearased', confiscated. Hence, the senders wrote some messages in a way incomprehensible to the incompetent intruder; accordingly, years and years after, a historian cannot always comprehend or know who is being meant, if there is no name mentioned in the letter.

There were individuals granted with a special deference; those whose opinion counted most. They received the greatest numbers of letters and, in general, responded thereto scrupulously. Karol Szajnocha, a historian, in Lwów; Karol Libelt, a philosopher, in Poznań; historian (and politician) Joachim Lelewel, in Brussels; writer, Kazimierz W. Wóycicki, an amateur historian and the editor of *Biblioteka Warszawska*, in Warsaw; and, of course, Józef-Ignacy Kraszewski in Volhynia, were the exemplary and crucial figures within that dense correspondence network. The intelligentsia created an invisible Polish postal republic, though 'post' should be approached on a broader basis, for letters would often be dispatched via opportunity carriers – when a familiar person, or someone recommended by acquaintances, was going in the demanded direction. Such bargains were meant to be safer – but they were not always so, as the letters and books carried by the travellers were revised offhand and, occasionally, requisitioned at the border checkpoint. Not all the messengers appeared meticulous, either: a letter would sometimes be returned to its receiver a few months later, if ever at all.

Collections of letters show us the same names over and over again. Polish literature and science of the forties was a few dozen people who counted and a few hundred of those who formed the environment's background. Everybody knew one another, and about one another; albeit they might never have met. They read the manuscripts in circulation, more willingly commending and buoying

up one another than criticising. And they complained about indifferent opinions, clumsy readers, and sluggish and parsimonious publishers. A more serene note would sound rarely, and rather unexpectedly: “The urge for bookishness is great nowadays, and so is the stir in the intellectual world”, Narcyza Żmichowska (b. 1819), authoress and teacher, reported in 1841 to her émigré brother.

The fact was something did break through at the time. Social contacts became more unrestrained; evenings were spent together a greater deal. In Warsaw, specifically, the salon grew to become the milieu’s central institution, along with a periodical’s editorial board. Apartments were spacious and, certainly, with domestic service. The Łuszczewskis were ready to receive their guests on Mondays, the Wilkońskis – on Tuesdays; Mrs. Lewocka, on Wednesdays; the Wóycickis – on Thursdays... Frequenting was a must, for without it, one ceased to exist. The *soirées*, many a time lasting well into the night, each had its ritual: reading aloud new pieces from a manuscript; music-making and singing, sometimes dancing; at times, amateur theatre performances; still, conversations came to the fore: light salon chatting, only rarely touching upon serious and painful matters – detentions, interrogations, deportations to Siberia.

The setting of those social evenings depended on how well-off the hosting house was, but usually was not sumptuous. The participants were ordinarily holders of government posts, well-mannered, chivalrous toward ladies; most of the women had already tried their skills in some writing genre. The intelligentsia met rural citizens and the aristocracy on an equal footing. Sometimes, someone from abroad would come over, turning the salon into a window on the world. The salons’ climate was generally friendly, capabilities and talents and creative activity of any kind were valued; the ladies kept ‘albums’ where the house’s friends would enter a poetic piece or a moral maxim.

This evening-party circle also triggered reluctance, from many sides. A group of young literary men, still with a small output to their credit and even less subsistence funds, scorned the tailcoat and white gloves. There was a peculiar charm in the way they parodied the *beau monde*, clownishly demonstrated their poverty, fraternised in auberges with coachmen and apprentices – as was in the rebellious verse they wrote, permeated with rancour toward the callous world, a romantic longing for (a rather vaguely defined) ideal, and yet correct and printable. Among this milieu, known as “young Warsaw literacy”, and publishing their own almanac, a few indisputable talents appeared on the verge of 1840s – including Włodzimierz Wolski (b. 1824) and Roman Zmorski (b. 1822); but they were not predestined to flash any stronger: some were killed by the ‘chest illness’, some others by booze, the habituation of living without a job or a penny, or, by the need to hastily flee abroad from a menacing arrest.

Another young-aged circle was in search of more philosophical means to express their peculiarity. The central person around which it originally gathered was Hipolit Skimborowicz (b. 1815), a bibliographer, homebred philosopher and indefatigable editor who established a growing number of new learned periodicals once the preceding ephemerid collapsed due to a lack of funds and readership. In 1841, Skimborowicz met Edward Dembowski, the only son of ex-minister and castellan Leon Dembowski – thus, a twenty-year-old heir to a sizeable territorial fortune. Dembowski (b. 1822) was gifted with a magnetic personality, an enormously absorptive mind, charged with Hegel’s dialectics at an early stage, combined with an inconsumable need to act – above all, against his own class, an occurrence that does happen in history. The friendship of these two bore fruit as a monthly was set in 1842 under the promising name of *Przegląd Naukowy* [‘The Science Review’], a name not offending to the censors. The periodical, which Dembowski attempted at imbuing with a philosophical, literary and, as much as practicable, social radicalism, volubly attacked the colourlessness and eclecticism of *Biblioteka Warszawska*; yet, the former did not manage to surpass the latter with the approachability of articles written in an abstruse language, or the quality of literary pieces accepted for print. The magazine started however attracting a small group of young people of both sexes, desiring friendship, a grand idea, and an opportunity, albeit a faint one, to protest against the spiritual sluggishness of the Warsaw society.

Was Mr. Dembowski, a man who evaluated any forms of creative output based on his investigation into the degree of their authors’ “love for the people”, never doubting in the absolute rightness of his beliefs, capable of developing a real ideological alternative to the prudently moderate milieu of the Warsaw intelligentsia? This is hard to predicate, as before two years had passed since he started publishing his periodical, he had to resort to flight, to the Poznań Province, from being detained owing to his parallel conspiratorial activities. Once he was not there anymore, Skimborowicz’s *Przegląd* lost its rebellious colours and the dispute over a people’s Poland failed to gain vigour.

Instead, a rather unusual group of a dozen-or-so young women, who deliberately broke with the salon gallantry convention, emerged and within this environment, in the forties, tightened bonds of mutual friendship. They were called ‘the enthusiastesses’, a term that did not quite render the character of this particular group of individuals who expected from one another seriousness and the explicitness of a spiritual life, tracking their own value not by a social or property position but in the mental or intellectual individualism of each of them, as coupled with high ethical requirements. Most of these women performed a job as a teacher or woman-of-letters, or fulfilled some important duties of their own



choice – be it in the conspiracy, teaching rural children, or staying in touch with the deportees. Various familial and political circumstances caused the *enthusiastesses* soon after to disperse over various regions of the country, but they did their best to cultivate their friendship relations as soon as they could. Narcyza Żmichowska was the most outstanding personality in this group of women who have left the legacy of a hard-to-follow pattern.

Albeit honoured with the name of the capital of the province, Lwów was deprived of the conditions needed for cultural development, resembling even those in Warsaw under Paskevich. Lwów was the most Germ`anised town of the former Poland, which was experienced through the vexing regime of the Austrian bureaucracy and police, rather than knowledge of Schiller's poetry taught at school – albeit this latter aspect was not to be contemned. The sense of Polish national identity, aroused in eastern Galicia in the time of the Insurrection, or during its aftermath, had nothing to catch hold of in the years that followed. The National Ossoliński Institute or 'Ossolineum', employing a mere few custodians and librarians, was the province's only Polish cultural outpost. A disaster fell upon it in 1834 as the police discovered that the Ossolineum's library was secretly printing Mickiewicz's *Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*, Lelewel's *Trzy konstytucje polskie: 1791, 1807, 1815* ['Three Polish Constitutions: 1791, 1807, 1815'], and other subversive booklets. Konstanty Słotwiński, the Institute's director, was taken to an Austrian gaol for eight years, while the Ossolineum was subject to severe supervision which reduced its activity for a longer period to a lethargy state.

Thus, the literature in Galicia had no clear point of concentration. Its adhesion to the noble province was much stronger than in the Kingdom, for example. The biography of almost every writer contains periods of farming in the countryside, with their own or leased property – or, of doing tutorial assignments at potent landed-gentry houses. Marriages of penmen with less opulent maidens from noble families were commonplace. In spite of dispersion, everyone knew one another, was friends to each other, and quarrelled with each other inside small circles, they exchanged books and letters; many of them made their way to Lwów for the wintertime.

Those who were not tempted by a career with a *guberniya* office – boring and nasty but offering permanent subsistence – were not quite willing to complete their studies at the local, no less boring, university, usually satisfying themselves with a couple of courses completed there. Writing, especially poetry-making, was the most worthy activity, for those having means of support. Poets were the boast of the period's intelligentsia: they added an apollonian tune into the hinterland's poor life, and it was them that salons debated on. If a poet, then he,

naturally, had an Insurrection chapter behind him, whether in the Kingdom or in Lithuania; thereafter, instead of making haste, together with the others, to France, he would manage to return to Galicia. Or, as was the case with Wincenty Pol (b. 1807), a Wilno academician who had volunteered for the uprising in Lithuania, rubbed his shoulders with Dresden, met Mickiewicz there, and so made his roundabout wayback to Lwów – the city of his youth. There, a few years after, his insurrectional poems, published anonymously in Paris, but declaimed and sung at Galician manors with great relish, earned Pol the fame of the other Polish prophet-bard. His life and output may exemplarily testify how little significance a line-family or descent may sometimes be. Wincenty, son of an Austrian counsellor named Poll or Pohl, the most recently ennobled by Vienna as von Pollenburg, became the most loyally Polish writer, so strongly attached over the years was he to the noble tradition, customs and morals.

His friend Seweryn Goszczyński (b. 1801), a noble son from Podolia, one of a handful of complotters that had kindled the insurgence in Warsaw, represents an unlikely choice, lot and destiny as a Polish poet. He stayed illegally in Galicia after the Insurrection and, so to speak, chose illegality as his profession and vocation. He comprehended literature, as well as life and conspiracy, as a service done to a democratic idea, a belief in the People who had preserved the treasure of primeval songs, the simplicity of customs, and a pureness of heart. The legendary Ziewonia, goddess of the ancient Slavs, lent her name to a periodical which Goszczyński took to his head to publish, together with his close friends August Bielowski (b. 1806) and Lucjan Siemiński (b. 1807), in order to saturate the literature with the idea of a brotherhood of Slavonic nations, affection toward the Ukrainian steppes, and contempt for the lords. They managed to issue a single volume in 1834; the next one, compiled four years after, was confiscated by the police.

The writers' roads were getting branched off, and the critical thought was becoming permeated with a spirit of parties, which was made overtly apparent once Goszczyński described, in a Krakow periodical (1835), the excellent comedy plays by Aleksander Fredro as deprived of the "stigma of nationality". Count Fredro, a misanthrope, reportedly resentful with such an unceremonious opinion, lapsed into silence for a long time – to the detriment of Polish literature and of the Lwów theatre. The latter, perpetually struggling with censorship and financial troubles, not infrequently flattering the trivial tastes of its audiences, remained in the east of Galicia, after all, the only refuge of the Polish word and national sentiments. The idea of nationality had grown dual by then, though. For some, it meant carefulness for the preservation of a gentlemanly high spirit, the Sarmatian tradition, which was nevertheless easier to achieve on the stage boards than in real life. For the other, that is, romantic conspirers, like

Goszczyński, nationality meant that literature and politics descended into the deep folk sources so as to draw a hope for revival from them. It was increasingly harder to arrive at an agreement between those ideals, whilst each of them easily led to a disappointment. In 1838, Goszczyński and Siemieński, both weary of their poverty and of hiding from the police, slinked off to France and offered their abilities there to the Emigration's democratic periodicals. But this lasted a short time, as it turned out. Goszczyński would soon adhere to the Circle of the Divine Cause – that is, Towiański's sect, in which he found a more devout faith, and a stronger consciousness of the sense of life, than with the democrats. Siemieński, for his part, entered the path that gradually led him toward conservative positions, and backwards home.

A small group of Lwów-based writers and journalists stuck together all the same, most willingly gathering for an eventide coffee at the place of August Wysocki, their patronising barrister and owner of the library recognised as the town's largest. "Here, in the bevy of the country's top intelligentsia", a participant of those trysts recollected, "the opinion was taking shape, propositions clarified, projects emerged whose fulfilment brought about, at various times, a plenty of benefits to the literature and the country".<sup>56</sup>

Although it offered better conditions all the same, Krakow left no special imprint in the national culture of the period. Residents of three protective courts, especially after the émigrés were expelled in 1837, spared no efforts to isolate the Free City from the world. The University, which was only allowed to accept as students young people born in Krakow, was becoming ranked as a third-rate tertiary school in Europe, with no outstanding personalities or significant influence on the general condition of education. In the social life, the tone was set by the lordly or baronial residences which could at times be visited by a professor or a penman of a plebeian descent, if supported by good recommendations and refined salon-like polish. Usually, however, each of the classes lived in its own circle, concerned about not prompting, through some indocility, any further cramping of liberty within that already constrained tiny state. Polish censorship of publications and theatrical performances was not inferior in its zeal to its Austrian or Russian counterparts. The conservative Chapter of Krakow watched over the tranquillity and decency.

Krakow continued to be an important bibliopolical and printing hub, as well as an important station in the trade of smuggling emigration prints to Galicia

---

56 Władysław Zawadzki, *Pamiętniki życia literackiego w Galicji* ['Memoirs of the literary life in Galicia'], pp. 88, 90.

and the Kingdom. Self-instruction and literary groups tried to define their own style in that tight space between the salon, the university and the clandestine union. Young poets, there as well as anywhere else, were obviously romantics, usually writing using a sombrous and gloomy mannerism, enlivened sometimes by a more serene tone of rustic *krakowiaks* which they loved no less than their Lwów colleagues loved Ukrainian *dumkas*. This convention was rarely broken by a transverberating, more sinister, rebellious romanticism of a different type – as, for instance, in the phrases of a poem most recently written by Gustaw Ehrenberg, titled *Szlachta w roku 1831* [‘The nobility of 1831’], with the still-famous song chorus: “Glory be to you, sirs, lords, magnates, // For our enslavement, bonds, fetters!” [*O cześć wam, panowie magnaci // Za naszą niewolę, kajdany!*] The author, born 1818, an alleged son of the Russian emperor and a Polish aristocratic lady, was one of those angry young men who turned with accusatorial fury on the class that had issued them, also opposing the cautiousness of the middle-of-the-road people who were not quite inclinable to assume a position in the expected combat for the past and for the future: “The ostracism of scorn”, Ehrenberg, then a seventeen-year-old, is reported to have exclaimed at a conspiratorial youth meeting, “is what we use to stigmatise the people who, in our agitated and tempestuous time, refrain from enrolling with any banner, and fall asleep in their comfortable eclectic daydreaming of blissful neutrality or common peace, for it not to be christened with blood.”<sup>57</sup>

Those were just words, for the time being; the one who uttered them left Krakow for Warsaw soon after. Krakow remained dormant. So wrote Ludwik Królikowski in 1840 to a friend of his in emigration: “Of Krakow, I cannot report much to you, for what sort of a life should be describable if there is none? It is a tomb where living people hide amidst the dead, not giving signs of life, the way dead corpses do.”<sup>58</sup> One might suspect that such was the distorted perception of the young impatient revolutionaries; however, we can read similar descriptions of a dead-calm city in the memoirs of some sedate professors too.

## 5. The Poznań revival

Poznań rather unexpectedly came to the forefront of the Polish intellectual movement, although it did not have the cultural traditions behind it comparable to those of Wilno or Krakow. Two conditions coincided there instead: a few

---

57 Quoted after: Z. Jagoda, *O literaturze i życiu literackim Wolnego Miasta Krakowa* [‘Literature and the literary life of the Free City of Krakow’], p. 214.

58 *Ibidem*, p. 282.

people appeared with a vision of purpose and vigour, while the political regime eased, enabling them to unfold a couple of not-too-bad ideas.

At first, doctor Karol Marcinkowski returned to Poznań. Born in 1800, this son of a shoemaker completed his medical studies in Berlin from 1817-23 and started a medical practice, but once the uprising broke out in Warsaw, he enrolled with a Poznań cavalry regiment, which he accompanied throughout its Lithuanian expedition as a staff doctor. This eventually led him to emigration in France and England, where he was however more concerned with the clinics than with politics, although he was associated with Prince Adam Czartoryski. He was back in Poznań in 1835, resuming his duties as a physician. He quickly gained popularity and respect due to his qualifications and disinterestedness and, together with this, started implementing the idea whereby the precondition for Polish nationality to be defended in the province should be to awaken the spirit of enterprise and education in the Polish people, starting with small but well-devised legal steps, to which the name 'organic work' [*praca organiczna*] was adhered to.

For his projects, Marcinkowski acquired support from a few grand sirs, and encouraged some number of opulent nobility as well as bourgeoisie houses to cooperate. Collective projects were conceived out of that, among which the Bazar of Poznań and the Society for Educational Assistance appeared to be the major ones.

The name Bazar ['Bazaar'] was attached to a tenement house built by a partnership established for the purpose, which from then on maintained a hotel, let the retail outlet spaces at considerably cheap prices, and run a casino, with a magazine reading room, meeting room and rooms devised for private meetings or social parties and entertainment. The purpose behind the project was to make people of various classes come together, if ready to undertake useful economic and civic initiatives. Smaller towns of the Grand Duchy of Poznań saw, with a similar intent in mind, the appearance of casinos and associations formed in order to support craftsmanship, industry, and practical education. The extemporaneous purposes were veiled by an ideology claiming the need of a parallel moral and material progress, clearly aimed against the patriotic-insurgent rhetoric.

A similar credo was assumed by the editors of *Orędownik Naukowy*, a Poznań magazine ardently fighting any views that might have been derived from people associated with illegal actions. *Orędownik* considered itself a journal which kept away from politics while finding the way to judiciously defend nationality in the severest observance of the purity of the mother tongue and tending to the mementos of the glory of yore. The magazine's editor Józef Łukasiewicz (b. 1799), a historian and librarian, and a trusted man of Count Edward Raczyński – the Duchy's conservative camp's leader, excelled in this exercise.

Invigorating the Polish enterprising spirit and resourcefulness, and organisational skills, Marcinkowski had a more farsighted vision. He wanted to make the Poznań Province the most economically developed and the most enlightened Polish province which, the circumstances befitting, would be able to turn into a germ of national independence. This called for a longer period of external and internal peace, and thus, a mutually supportive effort across society. Such were the assumptions of the Society for Educational Assistance, which set as its goal the extraction of talented young people from the masses, to further make them beneficial for the country by offering indispensable support in shaping their appropriate course of education. Drawing its funds from the generous landowners, in the first place, the Society afforded scholarships to young people to get trained in handicraft professions, elementary schools, teacher training colleges, high schools (gymnasiums), or the university in Wrocław (Breslau) or Berlin.

As these, and other, 'organic ideas' were just becoming incarnated, an event occurred whose consequences proved seminal: the Prussian throne, vacant after Friedrich Wilhelm III's death, was filled in 1840 by his son Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who intended to rule his kingdom more constitutionally and graciously. This opportunity was soon used by the Grand Duchy which successfully elicited the dismissal of the province's execrated governor, Eduard Flottwell. The police-and-censorship regime was relaxed from 1841 onwards; periodicals and bookstores were the first beneficiaries of this change. Within a few months, Poznań turned into a relay station of Polish literary production, acting as an intermediary between the Partition areas and the emigration, and, more widely, between Poland and Europe. Publishing-and-bookselling houses appeared one after another, including those by Jan Żupański (b. 1804), Walenty Stefański (b. 1812) and others, skilfully combining their owners' interests and the interest of Polish literature.

Established in 1838, *Tygodnik Literacki* ['The Literary Weekly'], an ambitious and militant magazine, soon taken over by the married couple of Antoni Woykowski (b. 1815), a young well-off burgher, and Julia Molińska-Woykowska (b. 1816), a governess and zestful authoress, it still gained in temper, winning over contributors from all the Polish provinces, plus from the emigration. *Tygodnik* wanted to be a platform of democratic thought, with favours for Christian socialism in the spirit of Saint-Simon or Fr. Lammennais. It attacked the Sarmatian customs and morals, but foreign influence as well; the aristocracy, along with bourgeoisie; the clergy – and the Towiański sect; conservatism – but also, organic activities like those practised by Marcinkowski who, to the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Woykowski, approached social

questions in an overly “official-practical manner”<sup>59</sup>, apparently with no underlying basic principles.

The *Tygodnik* authors believed that literature needed to be patriotic and progressive, that is, to bear a native, Slavonic, and folk trait. Figures of authority who failed to meet these criteria were knocked off their pedestals: Kraszewski and, of course, Fredro shared this lot – but so did Mickiewicz, as he had allowedly run into mysticism. A radicalism of this sort earned the Woykowskis foes, polemicists and informers denouncing them before the Prussian authorities. Still, it aroused interest, for discussions of this sort had not been seen in a Polish periodical for many a year. *Tygodnik* was smuggled to Galicia and to the Kingdom, borrowed from hand to hand, read by Polish students in Wrocław and in Petersburg, and by leaders of exile-based factions. In the early forties, *Tygodnik* is said to have printed 1,500-2,000 copies – a considerable circulation indeed, by the period’s standards. This gave the editors a promising illusion that literature and principled criticism could exert a real influence on the province, the country, and social relations in general. “Periodical magazines”, Mrs. Woykowska wrote, “reflect, or rather, ought to be reflecting the nation’s spirit, be the revelators of its will, and its teachers.”<sup>60</sup>

Gagged for so long, the nation’s spirit wanted to blow its whistle, in the first place. Indeed, the sparse strangers from Galicia or the Kingdom were amazed with the open character of the ideological disputes going on in Greater Poland, the occurrence of public opinion, placable censorship, and unexpectedly easy contacts with the emigration. Naturally, the movement’s lead was taken by those excelling with their open-mindedness, fluent in their writing skills. Karol Libelt, a philosopher, won a particularly stern authority among them.

As was the case with Marcinkowski, Libelt’s (b. 1807) background was the handicraft class, his family being, moreover, of German origin. He owed his elevation to his industriousness and skills – supported, as they were, by a Prussian Government’s scholarship which enabled him to study at the St Mary Magdalene Gymnasium and, later on (1826-30), at Berlin University where he attentively listened to Hegel’s lectures. His array of interest in reading matters was extremely extensive, embracing ancient history and philology, through to mathematics and astronomy. With his course of studies completed with ‘summa cum laude’, he set off for the then-customary long journey through Europe, which he aborted once he learnt of the outbreak of a rising in Warsaw. He was soon back there, to do

---

59 Quoted after: Bogdan Zakrzewski, „*Tygodnik Literacki*” ..., p. 184.

60 Ibidem, p. 170.

the combat trail with General Różycki's corps, as an artilleryist – the move he was doomed to expiate by his internment by the Austrians and, subsequently, several months served in a stronghold in the Prussian town of Magdeburg; lastly, the Grand Duchy's school authorities several times rejected his requests to take a job as a teacher. Meanwhile, by means of his match, he entered relationships with the landed gentry of Greater Poland, becoming from 1840 one of the best-known figures within the Poznań intellectual milieu, otherwise a narrow group. Warsaw and Lwów periodicals started seeking articles from Libelt too.

Libelt's ambition was to create an original system of national philosophy or, better still, a Polish-Slavonic philosophy which endeavoured to balance the rationalism of Hegel's philosophy and his idea of progress and enrich it with a mystical belief in the special, historic missions of peoples/nations, determined by God. This speculative synthesis of completely incongruent intellectual or spiritual orders was too difficult to grasp for minds less trained in philosophy – all the more that Libelt, similarly to Bronisław Trentowski (b. 1808) in Freiburg, created a peculiar dictionary of philosophical and psychological notions, so he could express his intuitions in a type of Polish, which was in fact his own specific, language. His system, characteristic to the style of philosophical research in the late Romanticism, has never played a great role in the history of the Polish mentality or intellectual spirit; instead, his articles, more popular but also written in a mannerist language, did exert an impact – with the dissertation *O miłości ojczyzny* ['Love of the Homeland'], coming to the fore. Published in 1844 in a serious periodical *Rok*, edited by Libelt himself, it considered the sources of people's attachment to their things native or vernacular, identifying learning toward perfection in "any branch of sciences" to be the number-one task for young people, as a means of developing "*the nation's intelligentsia*". "It is established", Libelt wrote, "by all those who, having received a thorough and extensive training from higher schools and institutes, now head the nation as scholars, officials, teachers, clergymen, industrialists who lead it resulting from their higher-level education".<sup>61</sup>

Thus, the new class has at last been named. The name, Latinate, came from Germany where it occasionally appeared in the philosophical writings of the Hegelian school. Libelt was the first to transplant it onto Polish soil where it soon came into circulation. Then, only after twenty years, was it adapted by Russian literary production and other Slavonic literatures. Libelt's definition discerned the intelligentsia as an educated and professionally-working class, this giving it the reason to lead the nation: apart from it, this author added, "there are masses

---

61 K. Libelt, *O miłości ojczyzny* ['Love of the Homeland'], *Rok 1844*, No. 1, p. 53.



of people lying, as if enormous layers of earth, from over which those tower up like hills".<sup>62</sup> Such leadership obviously did not mean a real power: no such thing was a reality for Poles in any of the partitioned provinces. The idea was that the intelligentsia had by then become ready to take over from the *szlachta* – the nobility – the responsibility of setting the direction for the nation's labours.

In the Grand Duchy of Poznań, aspirations of this kind could seem very premature. As a rule, Poles were taking rather modest positions as far as the clerical, judiciary or teachers' hierarchy went. They received their qualifications from Prussian universities – mostly, in Berlin or Wrocław/Breslau; and yet their chances to get a promotion were usually weak in rivalry with their German competitors for jobs. Poles were always burdened with the authorities' suspicion of being incompletely loyal toward the state. The long years of endeavours to establish a university in Poznań suffered a rebuff over and over again. Poznań did not even manage to arrange a permanent local theatre and had to content itself with performances given by troupes invited from beyond the cordon. Greater Poland was increasingly clearly turning into a second-rank Prussian province, populated by two nationalities that cooperated for no good reason to the contrary while sincerely disliking each other – if not three, taking into account the Jews who did not attend the Polish-German rivalry.

This being the case, a social initiative, combined with the organisation of a nationally-conscious and fairly-educated elite was the condition for progress. However, this intelligentsia had material resources too scarce to create anything on its own. Just to mention the idea of the aforementioned Society for Educational Assistance – that is, a scholarship fund for talented youths wishing to continue their education with a high school (*gimnazjum*) or university – which required cooperation between the intelligentsia and the landed gentry, the tradespeople and the Church – the latter still enjoying quite a high position in the Poznań Province.

Medical doctors enjoyed considerable respect among the intelligentsia. Although they too had to solicit the Government's grace when applying for the post of 'county physicist' (*sic*) or head physician with a hospital; yet, it was private practice that ensured, at least those most in request, a sense of relative independence and extensive social relations. Marcinkowski made skilful use of them in infecting the Province with his vision of 'organic progress'. He was immensely liked, and popular: after he died of a lung disease in November 1846, his funeral was turned into a great manifestation of sentiments across the urban and provincial classes.

---

62 Ibidem.

Broadly speaking, the intelligentsia of Poznań was neither numerous nor economically autonomous. Its most numerous, though separate, part was public-school teachers, i.e. those teaching in elementary schools, largely of peasantry descent, mostly without a high school diploma – and snubbed by the educated classes. Nothing like being some ‘intelligentsia of the nation’ ever came up to their minds. For its part, the better educated layer of intelligentsia represented no social force but did gain a sense of its significance, especially in that short period when public opinion, created to a large extent by this same intelligentsia, was becoming activated.

The enlightened opinion was hesitant between the reasonable and conservative ethos of organic work and the temptation toward a democratic radicalism which was enticing with the idea of grand social change and, above all, of leaving the narrow parochial hurdles for a broad highroad where European nations combated the despotic kings – particularly, the Holy Alliance monarchs. The thought was exhilarating, and it incited a sense of great occurrences approaching for which one had to be prepared.

In spite of alleviated censorship, one could not write or speak of these things overtly, but authors and editors could find their ways to share their expectations with their apt readers. “There is a need to be deeply convinced that it is only with united forces that one can do great things; that people, if holding one-another’s hand and encircling the globe, then they would be able to cast it into a different space”<sup>63</sup>, historian Jędrzej Moraczewski (b. 1802) wrote in 1843, for that matter.

The democratic faith broadened the horizon of thought, aroused a sense of might, a conviction that it might be fairly easy to remove any injustice by means of a European revolution, which should be incited by Polish national activity and achievement. This belief was reinforced by Edward Dembowski who, having fled from the Kingdom before his infallible detention, paid a year-long visit to the Poznań Province, where he contributed with a few potent articles to *Tygodnik Literacki* and *Rok* – written as fast and frantically as their author lived and conspired. Dembowski tended to bend the language of the Hegelian philosophy of history to his own revolutionary vision whereby history would be a never-ending transformation of thoughts into a chain of collective actions materialising in Progress. Essential for (the) Progress to become real (always spelled with a capital ‘P’) is the contradictory social elements clashing, not infrequently in

---

63 Jędrzej Moraczewski, *Kilka słów o szczególnym stanowisku piśmiennictwa naszego* [‘The special position of our literature, in brief’], *Rok 1843*, vol. 2, p. 37; quoted after: Kizwalter, Skowronek, op.cit., p. 115.

torment and blood; Progress is trammelled by all those who prove eclectic in their rational thinking, as they do not bring their ideas to the final outcome. In action, such ones limit themselves to searching for timorous half-measures, as their love for the people is untrue and the spirit of sacrifice is alien to them.

Dembowski's fanaticism, infectious especially to young people, aggravated disputes as it pushed *Tygodnik Literacki* toward a more pugnacious rhetoric, which was expressed in the diatribes, more frequent now, against the nobility and the clergy. Radical philosophy and politics was accompanied by poetry – the latter, in its romanticist way. Ryszard Berwiński (b. 1819), a friend of Dembowski's, wanted to express his feelings as a *pogrobowiec* – i.e. 'posthumously-born', who cannot even mourn as he has never experienced freedom in his native country. His powerful poems from the early forties are obsessed with disgraceful captivity and a stifling contempt for those who have resigned themselves to captivity, just minding their meagre daily business. Berwiński regarded the Poznań Province as a land of spiritual deadness and meanness, of "The heroes, notorious-fame-shrouded, // Pre-occupied for half-a-century // Distilling, cheese-making, all clouded".<sup>64</sup> His rebellion against the nobility, which was his own background, and against the 'old God', deaf to the complaints of the disinherited, gave rise to a passionate waiting for revolution, be it a bloody one as long as it is purifying – one that would sweep away the world of harm and misery forever, leading the people, hungry for bread and justice, into their promised land.

Dembowski's philosophical and Berwiński's poetical fever was obviously appalling to noble conservatives who could only see in them an eruption of irrational hatred. Yet, the Poznań democrats, who did foresee that a nationwide uprising against the partitioners and the related reforms of agrarian relations was a must, did not go that far in their radicalism and, in particular, wanted to avoid frightening and repulsing land owners with whom they were related personally and through property or the estate, and without the participation of which it was hardly possible to undertake anything – for example, without a blessing from the Church. From 1841, Libelt and Moraczewski were active with a conspiracy developed in the Poznań Province by emissaries of the Polish Democratic Society [in exile], while in parallel supporting legal organic labours and educational or publishing initiatives, giving the grounds for why those were needed, and seeing no contradictoriness in this combination. As far as may be deduced, 'eclectic', in

---

64 R. Berwiński, *Ostatnia spowiedź w starym kościele* ['The last confession at an old church'], in: *Księga wierszy polskich XIX wieku* ['A book of Polish nineteenth-century poems'], vol. 2, p. 77.

such a way, was the attitude of the active group within the Grand Duchy's intelligentsia. Still, it was, in reality, increasingly difficult to marry these two orientations, for when one would suggest patience, the other implied impatience; one called for a national agreement neglecting the differing orientations, the other exacerbated social relations; lastly, one awaited an acquiescence from the authorities, even if disinclined, whilst the other challenged them.

## 6. Conspirators

Living a double life – a public one in parallel with secret and illegal one – fell at that time to some young people, still at school or graduates, in the Russian Partition, Austrian Partition and in Krakow. Apparently life had little to offer them. Those who could not inherit a village, for instance, could usually see no prospects for themselves but the long years of an unpaid apprenticeship with an office or court-of-law, to eventually gain through such service a mean placement within a governmental service. The most sensitive complained about boredom and futility. Following a meagre and trite school education, they were keenly pestered by the lack of spiritual stimulants and higher aspirations. Everything around them seemed small, sickly and woefully parochial.

Whenever they had access to the banned books, they would absorb them fervently, experiencing moments of illumination. Those books were, first of all, in-exile editions, among which there was Mickiewicz's fourth poetry volume containing *Part Three* of his arch-Romantic play *Dziady*, the poem *Reduta Ordona* ['Ordon's Redoubt'], written as a homage to the insurrection, and the *Books of Pilgrimage*. These pieces were succeeded by the then-extremely-popular *Paroles d'un croyant* by Fr. Lamennais, a Catholic rebel; then came the cahiers of Polish periodicals issued in Paris, M. Mochnacki's history of the insurrection – *The uprising of the Polish Nation*, political manifestos of factions. The books were expensive – the risk was included in the price. The police and customs houses received permanently updated lists of books to be confiscated. Yet, the books were finding their routes into Krakow and Poznań, where the trusted booksellers kept them for their trusted customers; from these places, the concerned distributors (including ladies, less suspicious in this respect) smuggled them further along to Lwów, the Kingdom, Volhynia and Lithuania, and even to Petersburg. Newer and newer transfer routes, meant to be safer, were invented.

Galicia also saw its first illegal local prints appearing, quoting some foreign place of edition, for avoidance of recognition. This is how Niemcewicz's *Śpiewy historyczne* ['Historical Chants'] or *Czy Polacy mogą się wybić na niepodległość* ['Can Poles rise to independence?'] started circulating, along with many other

patriotic prints. It came to a bad end, as the Austrian police tracked the dealings down, finding that the small-sized volumes were illegally printed by a legal publishing house of the Lwów-based Ossoliński Institute.

This catastrophe muffled for some time the clandestine trading in Polish books, never damming it up for good. There had already appeared an active, though not yet numerous or affluent, class of people for whom the circulation of the free word was a thing worth sacrifice. Especially in young minds, banned readings aroused a yearning for great sentiments and great deeds, along with critical thought on social relations in Poland. Along with the books, a friend would appear, knowing the answers of many of the questions. He would know what was really important, and worth the sacrifice. A few talks later, the new aspirant could appear to be trustworthy enough to be accepted as a member of the secret association. For many, it was a moment of an almost religious illumination. Everything became simple and clear within a single moment: rendering the people 'citizenized' and reinstating ownership of arable lands extorted from them ages before, plus a social revolution, were the conditions for Poland to be liberated – and, subsequently, for the establishment of a single great homeland of free and equal people; of a Europe of fraternised nations.

Thus, meaning was added to empty lives, the futile existence of those young men thus suddenly gained a meaning. Each of them recollected this moment of initiation in their investigation testimonies: "Our situation was strange", one of them wrote while gaoled at the Warsaw Citadel, "we were young, we had the will to work, we needed to have an activity, but were estranged and harrowed by the poetry, drawing by a means so illusory the vainness around us and the vainness ahead of us. Such was the state our minds shared while the thought of a democracy occurred. [...] The frenetic thought of democracy initially ensnared us so strongly that it expelled any and all other feelings from our hearts." Another one said: "At that time, I had no constant way of thinking or viewing things; my powers of reasoning were completely dormant whilst my imagination was inflamed with the poetry I then read and inclined toward accepting every kind of a form or system, as long as it was poeticised. I did not cogitate at all upon political systems, having only an idea of their entirety." Yet another one: "The new democratic theory, requiring so many ratiocinations, had an enthralling allure to me; it seemed to me that I had found the philosophers' stone with which one could ease all the pains of the human race."<sup>65</sup>

---

65 All quotations after: *Stowarzyszenie Ludu Polskiego w Królestwie Polskim* ['The Association of the Polish People in the Kingdom of Poland'], pp. 278-9; 249; 332.

This peculiar combination of political reasoning and romantic poems was characteristic to that generation: for them, the insurrection's effusions and defeats were memories of their childhood. The democratic rules, on equal terms with mutinous poetries, made them sense the loathsome banality of life as temporary and doomed to imminent annihilation. Conspiracy was their real life ever since – an order of friends who possessed the truth and resolved to be its apostles. They assumed the rules of a 'political faith', the association's statutes, the rules of the underground and plotting, and the principles of seniority. To start with, each of the members campaigned to win over a few colleagues. Then, their task was to find a way into the 'people', through a craftsman or forest-ranger they were acquainted with. Once the people became enlightened, knowing their rights, dignity and power, there would be nothing to stop them. The bondage and the grievances would surely fall into ruins, perhaps without bloodshed; class-related privileges would be abolished; an era of the people's unlimited power and supremacy would finally follow.

Galicia, including Krakow, turned out to be a fertile land for Polish complots. It was from there that small guerrilla units of Colonel Zaliwski's expedition slunk into the Russian Partition in 1833. The area offered the easiest hiding and activity places for messengers of emigration factions. It was there that the country's first nuclei of "charcoal *ventes*" (i.e. sections), modelled after the European conspiracy of *The Carbonari*. And it was there that the Society for the Polish People [*Stowarzyszenie Ludu Polskiego*; SLP] was established, thanks to the Young Poland emissaries, intended to extend to all the provinces of the former Commonwealth within its pre-Partition limits. These organisations were short-lived by nature: they would easily become fragmented and consolidated, alter their programme rules and statutes, and end up being recognised by the police when most of their cast reconvened in a remand centre. New, younger people were sure to come over soon, setting up yet another organisation, with a different name.

The Society's activists were rovers becoming acquainted with everyday perils – usually, without a house of their own, a family, or possessions. Most of them have been through a year or two of university-level studies, interrupted by an insurrection or plotting labours. Lesław Łukaszewicz (b. 1809) was a budding literary critic; he had an outlined history of the Polish literature published to his credit. Stanisław Malinowski (b. 1812) was, so to put it, one of the first Polish professional revolutionaries – the core business of his young years. Seweryn Goszczyński, plotter and poet, was already spoken about above. In 1838, these three men managed to flee to France once the Austrians ferreted out their association; however, Łukaszewicz soon returned to Galicia as an emissary of the Polish Democratic Society in exile. Gustaw Ehrenberg, the youngest of the Galician

SLP leaders, decided to return to Warsaw at age eighteen to set up the Society's cells in the Kingdom where the game was even riskier than under Austrian rule.

This was the first generation of the Polish underground intelligentsia, willing to devote their talents to a fight for freedom, against a thousand times mightier antagonist. The calculation of forces was not their strong point: it might have only paralysed the action. The crucial issue for the underground movement of the thirties was how to inspire the will to fight across the nation. Once the insurrection had fallen, it was believed, owing that the masses not having been raised, then, awakening the people and returning land proprietorship to them consequently had to become the supreme concern. Those zestful 'friends of the people', of a noble or bourgeois origin, had nevertheless no idea at all of how to tackle the challenge: their 'people' was a mythical notion, not having much in common with the real convictions and emotions of the Galician rural environment. The cultural strangeness of the two worlds was hard to cross.

A political, and practical, problem was, in turn, the complotters' attitude toward the land possessors. Influenced by émigré democrats, the SLP ideology was anti-noble, albeit rarely in a form as aggressive as in the abovementioned Ehrenberg poem. The key question was whether the squires, or land-owners, would freely agree to quit the system of serfdom and bestow the ownership of land to the peasants, and whether a resistance on their part ought to be taken into account while propagating democratic ideas. Emissaries and radically-inclined activists, such as Szymon Konarski or Seweryn Goszczyński, soon realised that the land-owning gentry was still – despite all its historical vices – the society's most self-sacrificing and dedicated class; antagonising it would deprive the democratic movement of its social basis of operation. It was more reasonable, therefore, to seek support from them, rather than repel them with anti-nobility declarations. But a policy like this meant, particularly in Galicia, that the democrats would be resigned to the distrust of the peasant countryside.

The time horizon of the conspiratorial movement was the other disputable issue. Its more level-headed leaders were aware that the conspirers formed an infinitesimal handful among a mass of neutral or frightened inhabitants, and that the idea of common equalisation of civil rights was a by-then-unknown novelty. Consequently, the Society's awakening and awareness-raising influence was to be, by their concept, a many years' labour, before this country might ever ripen for a rising. The less patient conspirators did not however intend to wait that long: they believed that it would suffice to enkindle an insurrection so it proliferated like a fire. Any conspiracy, threatened on a daily basis by denunciation and detentions, normally tends to push forward for a quick solution, pressed to this end by the political emigration milieu.

A paradoxical feature of any secret organisation is that the more active it is, and the broader its influence, the more visible it becomes and thus, the more exposed it is to police recognition. The radical Krakow centre of the clandestine SLP was smashed in as early as 1837. Control was taken over by the central, Lwów-based division (called *Zbór Główny*), led by more sedate and grown-up lawyers; one of them was Franciszek Smolka, of a Polonised Czech family, who was still to play a great role in the Austrian monarchy's institutions. The Society canvassers went on campaigning more and more daringly: they started recruiting members and sympathisers from theological seminaries and military barracks, which obviously triggered the utmost vigilance in the police, eventually accelerating the exposure of the association's main nexuses.

The matters went on somewhat differently in the areas incorporated into Russia. Playing first fiddle there was the lot of Szymon Konarski, who made his way to Volhynia, after he merged and stimulated to action the Society for the Polish People in Galicia. He turned out to be an emissary of boundless energy, skill in gaining the confidence of friends and dexterity in slipping out of the nets of police forces tracking him – Austrian and afterwards, tsarist. Over the two-and-a-half years of his activity he traversed vast tracts of Volhynia, Podolia, the Ukraine and Lithuania – he probably visited the Polish colony in Petersburg too – everywhere tying the ripping threads of conspiracy. An anti-noble radical by belief, he had to seek support from the manors as in those *guberniyas* only the landowners had the funds and the relations that could form the basis for any illegal activity.

Yet, Konarski found his bravest adjuncts among the intelligentsia of those lands. Two of them deserve our special mention here. Antoni Beaupré (b. 1800), a physician from Krzemieniec, cleverly combined his professional practice and relations with contributions to the Society, collaborating with Konarski, among other things, in endeavours to arrange a secret printing house, which he expiated with a severe investigation and deportation to Siberia. Franciszek Sawicz (b. 1815), son of an Uniate priest from Polesie, a might-have-been doctor, established the patriotic union of the Medico-Surgical Academy in Wilno and consolidated it with Konarski's conspiratorial network. Polish students from Kiev, Petersburg and Dorpat [Tartu in Estonia today] were willing to cooperate and contribute as well.

All that was of little avail. Konarski, betrayed by one of the conspirators, was finally caught by gendarmes in May 1838; his conspiratorial network, stretching from Kamieniec-Podolski to Dorpat, was inquired about and thrashed out: the organisation was never again to recover from this disaster. A few dozen young men, following a brutal investigation, were transported by *kibitkas* to Nerchinsk mines or to other remote areas of the boundless empire. Konarski, having borne



his remand imprisonment with fortitude, was shot by firing squad in public, in a Wilno suburb, on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1839. For the emigrants, as has already been said, as well as for the deportees, the date grew sacred; in Lithuania and Ruthenia, the story left a paralysing fear of any covert activity.

Warsaw saw the first circles of the Society for the Polish People being established by comers from Krakow, already conversant – like Gustaw Ehrenberg – with the rules of democratic faith and the rituals of conspiracy. They encountered young people with whom their contact was natural: junior-high-school (*gimnazjum*) students, judicial trainees they knew, and any clerical lesser fry that were to constitute a Polish People, for the time being. These boys were attracted by the secrecy of the oath and the great works they expected to be appointed for; the functions and duties entrusted to them impressed them. They decided which province to take charge of, so as to convert it to a democratic faith and prepare it for an insurrection. Not much later, they would confess this to their investigation officers: “Initially”, one of them owned up, “I was intoxicated by this new, imaginary post of mine. So young am I, thought I to myself, and already am making an appearance in the world, in a moral-political sense. I considered myself to be something of the upper sort, than I essentially knew myself to be.”<sup>66</sup>

In a conspiracy older by a few years, which quit the oath-swearing ritual, the psychology of initiation was not much different. As one of the complotters testified, he believed “that the Poles were to make a revolution without an army, with no money, in a word, with their bare hands. [...] I started getting crazed at that point. I thought, at the age of nineteen, I already am a political person; I already can be useful to the homeland, to mankind – which lured my self-love, and I decided to devote myself to that.”<sup>67</sup>

The police usually scooped them up within one night. The military investigation commission was patient: they admonished, humiliated, and waited. The walls of the Tenth Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel were thick and solid, as was the entire immense state of Nicholas I. Behind those walls, in the outside, life went on as ever before, and indeed not too many noticed their disappearance. They were there on their own, and there was but a handful of them. Each of them stayed alone in his cell, and was put on his own before the Investigative Commission. Confronted with the inexorable order of the world. What have they attempted? What with, and in the name of what? Days, weeks, and months were

---

66 *Stowarzyszenie Ludu Polskiego w Królestwie Polskim*, p. 302.

67 *Rewolucyjna konspiracja w Królestwie Polskim 1840-1845* [‘Revolutionary conspiracies in the Kingdom of Poland, 1840-5’], p. 347.

passing on these lonely considerations. Despondency, fear, languor for freedom and family were eating into their souls. Suddenly, an illumination came: all that they had believed in was some derangement, madness, delusion, some childish naivety indeed. The remand prisoner was sobering up: the reality of life was regaining its rights. The remand prisoner had grown mature: he became ready to judge himself. Encouraged by his investigators, he would request a pen, ink and paper so he could confess his guilt in his own hand, that is, in a thoughtful manner: "There's been five years now without my having been to confession. At last, the divine finger of Providence urges me to make before the High Commission a confession of my almost entire life, of all my acts, thoughts and sentiments. And my confession could have occurred at no more appropriate a time, for I have been through much suffering, whilst the confession of sheer truth has an assuaging powerfulness to it; and, with no more appropriate preparation, for a sincere and bitter regret accompanies the confession I am making."<sup>68</sup>

And so he went on confessing, describing or orally revealing his crimes: whom he obtained the books from, what he read, whom further on he lent them to, with whom and about what he talked, and of what he daydreamed. In case he was at pains to conceal his colleagues, hiding behind oblivion, their own testimonies were read out to them or placed before their eyes. So, there was nothing more to hold back, and there was no point. "There is nothing I should have to add up to, detract from, or change within, my testimony. I am confident that it was not only in my conduct that I had erred, but had become truly felonious, since man has no right, not only by deed but by the act of word either, to rise up against the institutions whose order originates in the Divine laws, surpassing the ideas of a mind; what remains for me is to beg the generous Government for pardon, so that they could deign to alleviate the punishment I have deserved, having regard to my young age and the sincere resolution on my part to render the previous wrong acts annihilated in my further life."<sup>69</sup>

The vicious circle was closed. An attempt to move out of the captivity, from a lifeless life, eventually led many to an even more devouring enslavement, abasement, renouncement of one's own life and dreams. Few proved capable of resisting it – persevering, and testifying nothing in specific. Karol Levittoux (b. 1820), a twenty-year old leader of a school-student organisation in Łuków and Warsaw, chose death by self-combustion in his prison cell.

---

68 Ibidem, p. 235.

69 *Stowarzyszenie Ludu Polskiego ...*, p. 263.

There was still a long epilogue remaining. The tsarist military procedure did not respect the rules of an open court trial. Judgements in a number of cases were passed in default, based on the evidence gained through investigation, with no defence counsel appointed. Reading of banned books and setting up secret societies caused the magnanimous government to sentence the regretful criminals to years of forced mining labours (the *katorga* penalty) followed by a settlement in Siberia. Some of the convicts, having served their term, would return home; we can still thereafter see them doing some legal labour or, it could happen, a clandestine one again. It is not always clear which of their adolescence conversions they considered genuine, and which an allurements.

Those who were sentenced by Austrian courts to be gaoled at Spielberg or Kufstein, notorious for being extremely heavy prisons, had no lighter a burden to bear. The fight fought over hundreds and thousands of identical days and nights to outlast and not turn mad, was a difficult experience to which neither romantic(ist) poetry nor a democratic doctrine could make anyone resistant. The only thing possibly making it easier was the awareness that a resistance still went on outside, with friends fighting and waiting – and having the right to assess the conduct of their imprisoned comrades. This was the lot of not too many in Poland, though, the will and determination to offer resistance were pulsating.

Set up in 1836, the Warsaw conspiracy of Gustaw Ehrenberg and Aleksander Wężyk, was smashed before it turned two years of age. Its remnants started forming up a new rejuvenated Warsaw-Lublin organisation at the outset of the forties; again, the police wrecked it, in 1843. The Rev. Piotr Ściegienny (b. 1801) had contacts with it; afterwards, he built his own organisational network, more ramified in the province than the other ones: specifically, in the regions of Lublin (where he was a country parson), Kielce (where he came from and then moved to again), and Radom (where he found associates). Son of a peasant, a clergyman and an evangelical prophet of the people's liberation, Fr. Ściegienny was an exceptional figure in the Polish conspiratorial landscape. All the same, his secondary-level education and short career as a clerical trainee, followed, once ordained, by his years as a teacher with a Piarist school, allow us to consider him a representative of the Kingdom's intelligentsia then being formed. Ściegienny's revolutionary and egalitarian campaigning and the brochures he ably wrote were targeted at peasants, burghers and soldiers, painting for them, in detail, a utopian picture of common happiness in an equitable future system; nonetheless, human resources were supplied to this particular, and all the other, secret organisations of the middle of the century, primarily by office trainees and clerks – always the most devoted Polish revolutionary element.

The all-Polish uprising was due to kick off in Kielce, on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1844 by proclamation of liberty, equality and fraternity, and the abolishment of any serfdoms, socage rents, customs duties, and church fees: “and later, the dwellers of Kielce, assisted to this end by the small-farmers, led by their commanders, will take the members of the despotic government, the military commanders, and incarcerate those ones under a strong and certain guard, disarm the army. [...] On the tenth day, they shall approach Warsaw and shall tighten it progressively; [...] there, a battle might occur. We shall however have several-times one-hundred thousand scythes. [...] Our people are good and graceful by nature; they shall listen and most exquisitely perform whatever is to be enjoined for their happiness.”<sup>70</sup>

Denounced by a peasant two days before the due date, the priest was arrested, together with a hundred of his associates.

The essays and testimonies of the leaders of patriotic plots are striking with the naivety of their ideas of a future insurrection. Some seemed to believe that it would just suffice to have the date and time fixed, and the rest should go on, propelled by its own impetus. Others, Ściegienny among them, made extremely detailed hostility plans for non-existing people’s armies. Henryk Kamiński (b. 1813) embarked on the task in a more level-headed manner. Son of an army general, former aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief in the year 1831, an affluent proprietor of villages in the region south of Lublin, well-read and knowledgeable of Europe, Kamiński was a self-generated noble intellectual who decided to dedicate his intellect and writing skills to the uprising’s cause. Influenced by emigration writings of the Polish Democratic Society, he grew zealous about the idea that an insurrection against the partitioners must start with the proclamation of the common leasehold enfranchisement of peasants, forthwith to be followed by a people’s war for an independent Poland. It was not the conspiracies, which squander the Best of the country’s forces that were supposed to prepare the moment: instead, propagation of the democratic principles, done by everybody whoever has grasped and adopted them, should do the job. Propaganda like this, diffusing like an avalanche, would become unreachable for the police or spies. Kamiński followed this idea up in his books (*Prawdy żywotne narodu polskiego* [‘The vital truths of the Polish nation’], 1844; *Katechizm demokratyczny* [‘The democratic catechism’], 1845), published abroad under a pseudonym but at his own cost – later telling the others to smuggle them into the Kingdom and dole them out there. The class whose ardour and leadership he particularly counted

---

70 From a manuscript work by P. Ściegienny, *Trzeba tylko chcieć* [‘The will to do is crucial’]; quoted after W. Djakow, *Piotr Ściegienny i jego spuścizna* [‘P.S. and his legacy’], pp. 355-8.

on was, to him, a “middle estate” – that is, village scribes, stewards and leaseholders, encountering the common people on a daily basis; to his mind, their own interest would not dissuade them from granting ownership rights to the people.

Although Kamiński had loose contact with the youth of Warsaw or Lublin, and with emissaries of emigration parties or factions, his optics remained thoroughly countryside-bound: a landholder himself, distrusting his own class, he did his best to appreciate and raise the value of the grange officials’ class, which was for most part petty-noble, forming, as it were, a rural counterpart to the intelligentsia – but, as a rule, worse educated, dispersed across the country, and strongly dependent upon their masters. Contrary to Kamiński’s desire, this ‘intermediate class’ nowhere near played a spontaneous political role. Neither did Kamiński, who, in spite of his cautiousness, did not evade detention and imprisonment at the Citadel; his writings, more appreciated by the emigration than at home, and valued by historians, did not manage to radiate extensively enough to have a bearing on the course of events. This course was from now on the case not with the Russian Partition, a successfully pacified area, but in the Prussian and Austrian Partition territories.

Suave police supervision resulted in the uprising preparations being the most advanced in the Duchy of Poznań by 1845. Democratic Society messengers shuttled undisturbed between Paris and Poznań – holding fake passports, of course; Ludwik Mierosławski (b. 1814) came to the fore among them. Ambitious and articulate, he enjoyed the opinion of an expert in the art of war who geared up for the responsibilities of the leader of a revolutionary army. No surprise, then, that he strove for combat. As he confessed seven years later, in his flowery style, in order to pull out the country from torpidity and helplessness, an “insurrection surgery, as nimble as possible”, was a must, with any kind of armoury to hand.<sup>71</sup>

January 1846 saw the establishment of a secret National Government, meant to represent the Polish territory in its entirety; Karol Libelt the philosopher was appointed representative of the Poznań Province therewith. Political and military preparations for the fight against the three powerful countries were now in full flow: proclamations, enactments and statutes, and instructions were being written. The revolution to come was to be a ripe, carefully planned venture, spanning from Silesia to Samogitia, from Pomerania to Podolia; the peoples of Europe were expected to support it enthusiastically, the German nation to do so in the first place. 21<sup>st</sup> February was the fixed date. All the commanders and leaders were scooped up by the Prussian police a week before then.

---

71 L. Mierosławski, *Powstanie poznańskie w roku 1848* [‘The Poznań insurrection of 1848’], Paris 1852, pp. 59-60.



# Chapter 3: Crisis

## The Poznań Province and Galicia, 1846-1857

### 1. A terrible year, or two

Prepare an insurrection: what did that actually mean? Conspirators debated and disputed this at their secret assignations: is the Kingdom ready yet? Is Ruthenia? How about Galicia? And, the Poznań Province? No, said some, the country has not grown ripe yet, more campaigning is required in towns and in the countryside. Act, and there's the best canvassing method, those less patient responded. There's no point just waiting, and waiting, forever: people will get disheartened, the zeal will abate. The police will spot us all; the movement's whole managing team. Extended preparation time, wider propaganda, implies a greater risk of betrayal.

Better preparation, others argued, means more people are able to comprehend the purpose of the uprising, and are ready to appear at the fixed day and place. And then? The very first day, it is a must that the peasants, in the Russian and Austrian districts, will be announced to that from now on, they shall be free and receive the land they cultivate as their property. No serfdom shall be continued ever since, whatsoever – which has, by the forties, become an axiom. The peasants will join the uprising as one; from then on, the uprising will become their own cause.

But what if not all the landlords are willing to announce the remittal of the statute labour? Or, if not all the population will obey the revolutionary authority? A form of 'terrorism' has been prepared in case this should happen. The option that compulsion measures might be used was explicitly heralded in the conclusive statement of the Polish Democratic Society's *Manifesto* of 1836 – and it was the Society that had imposed the direction of the secret propaganda in the country. Members of the Society's Centralisation, gathering in Versailles, were not inclined to pose as the Polish 'Robespierres', but they had read in their books that this was the way to ensure revolutionary discipline. "We are glad whenever named 'Jacobins'", a Centralisation member declared.<sup>72</sup> The point was made even more emphatically by the aforesaid Henryk Kamieński

---

72 Wojciech Darasz in *Pismo TDP*, 1839; quoted after: Janion, Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia* ['Romanticism and the history'], p. 172.

(publishing under a pseudonym): revolution, assured he, is not willing to get stained with unnecessary bloodshed but has to have capital punishment in reserve, in case someone resists its commands, for “any revolution that is to come true rapidly and strongly, cannot possibly be successful without terrorism; otherwise, its opponents would be romping the way they liked, and would not allow it to develop.”<sup>73</sup>

This declaration affrighted the nobility, evoking in their imagination scenes from the French Revolution, a vision of the guillotine, or the slaughter of the nobility in the Ukraine’s peasants’ rising of 1768. “Ugh!”, shuddered Zygmunt Krasiński, poet and aristocrat, after he read the *Democratic catechism*. “Dipping the quill in the ink quietly at the table, so that a knife be made with this pen someday, and blood out of the ink! [...] ignoble is such courage, bawdy the virtue!”<sup>74</sup> For the time being the blood was, true, ink-made; but the stake in the game was trusted or mistrusted toward the nobility – virtually the only class to have thitherto preserved a Polish national sense, an association with the tradition and a readiness, at least declarative, to act for the ‘deyoking’ of Poland. It was for the first time that conspirers preparing an uprising addressed the noble landowners suspiciously as the former demanded that the latter not only risk their lives for the homeland but also abnegate their practically unlimited authority over the villein countryside and the profits they had been drawing from a costless labour for ages. This sacrifice was required, in the name of an unknown authority, by some young nameless reasoners or anonymous authors of pamphlets threatening, just in case, a *stante pede* death, which could in turn raise no trust among the property-holders.

Kamiński’s *Prawdy żywotne* was responded to by *Demokrata Polski*, the main organ of the Polish Democratic Society: Ludwik Mierosławski wrote that this author exaggerated with his willingness to punish passiveness or resistance with death at once, while he all too graciously assessed the nobility’s favour toward the cause of insurrection: a resilient authority, once installed at the first moment of the movement, was to be all-decisive.<sup>75</sup>

---

73 *Katechizm demokratyczny przez Filareta Prawdoskiego* [‘The democratic catechism, by Filaret Prawdoski’], Paris 1845; quoted after: *Rewolucja polska 1846 roku: wybór źródeł* [‘The Polish revolution of 1846: selected sources’], ed. by S. Kieniewicz, Wrocław 1949, pp. 12–13.

74 Z. Krasiński, *Listy do Adama Sołtana* [‘Letters to Adam Sołtan’], p. 478 (letter from Heidelberg, 11<sup>th</sup> July 1845).

75 *Uwagi nad dziełem „O prawdach żywotnych narodu polskiego”* [‘Remarks on the work titled *O prawdach ...*’] excerpt from *Demokrata Polski* [1845].



Zygmunt Krasiński had not much in common with the countryside nobility. He would drop by his Kingdom and Podolia estates once every few years; he heartily loathed talking to plenipotentiaries. He felt at his best in Naples or Nice. Yet, reading Kamieński's books, he sensed some solidarity with his nilly-willy-class: for it was only them who could, "God in their hearts, sabre in hand, //Weave the history's thread, of spirit."<sup>76</sup>

These words and thoughts were paraphrased in a variety of ways before Krasiński's *Psalmy przyszłości* ['Psalms of the Future'] were published, also anonymously, in the summer of 1845 in Paris. Of the three *Psalms*, especially the *Psalms miłości* ['Psalm of Love'] was a response to Kamieński's *Prawdy żywotne* and *Katechizm demokratyczny*. One may doubt whether there were many readers that comprehended the proposed lofty vision of history as a progress of spiritual noble-mindedness, expressed in the form of a septisyllable/octosyllable; a few of the stanzas entered the national memory for the whole of the century, with the following distich coming to the fore:

*Jeden tylko, jeden cud:  
Z szlachtą polską polski lud...*

Now, one miracle at the end:  
Commons and nobles as one stand.

The psalm's author begged in a rhymed appeal for solidarity and love of the whole nation - "above all, for a future insurrection, when the peasants should stand abreast with the lords."<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps the soothsaying poet himself doubted whether things would go on just like that. He had not entered a relationship with any emigration-based faction, nor did he take part in any conspiratorial works; yet, he felt "that we have arrived at the eve of a grand deed, a great crisis whose signs are all recognisable on our Crown and Lithuanian realms."<sup>78</sup>

That a crisis was coming nearer, Juliusz Słowacki had no doubt either. (Once a bosom friend of Krasiński's, now he became his antagonist.) In Słowacki's historical vision, crises – be them bloody, be them merciless, at times – did not form an obstacle to the development of the angelic spirit. On the contrary: it is a crisis that entails a progress; that "the Spirit – eternal revolutionist" acts through. Hence, neither the urban folk nor the Ukrainian scythes should be feared; there's no point in dreaming that hetmans of the mouldered noble world would wake

---

76 From a draft version of *Psalms miłości* ['Psalm of Love']; quoted after: Z. Sudolski, *Zygmunt Krasiński*, p. 287.

77 Z. Sudolski, *Zygmunt Krasiński*, pp. 287; 295.

78 Z. Krasiński, *Listy do Konstantego Gaszyńskiego* ['Letters to Konstanty Gaszyński'], p. 326 (letter from Nice, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1845).

up to “inflare a sacred mutiny”. Once the battle cry is uttered, the populace, led by God’s hand, will join in for the fight.<sup>79</sup>

That was an unusual phenomenon: a political and social dispute was elevated to the heights of visionary mystical poetry and a Romanticist philosophy of history. This solemn dispute of poets took place on the eve of the real crisis: the earthly one, in February 1846.

Everything turned out different. The revolutionary authority did not have enough time to come out and announce its decrees and put them into force – not to say, consider the use of ‘terroristic’ means, as morally dubious as they were. Terrorism did reveal itself, and quite horribly so, against the revolutionaries – and no one had ever warned against such a form of it. The democrats rushing for the rising and the hesitant nobles in western Galicia were being slain together by enraged bunches of peasants; those of both groups were robbed and tortured, and together populated the cells of Austrian prisons. Prepared for several years across the three Partitions, with the support of the emigration, the uprising was now nipped in the bud, before it broke out. This marked the thorough defeat of any preparation, canvassing, and anticipation.

Ah yes, there was Krakow. There, the insurgents managed to take power, thanks to the incompetence of the Austrian commanders who withdrew the army from the town. “The cheers lasted all night long, though everybody behaved seemly and level-headedly. [...] On Monday morning, [...] everyone pinned the national ribbon onto their hats – strapped up their cutlasses, armed themselves the way they could, some with a rifle taken from the Austrians – a fowling-piece – pistols, scythes, [...] in a word, the diversity in the clothing and arms was such that it had the apparition of a carnival in Venice”<sup>80</sup>, a memoirist recollected.

The National Government published at once a *Manifesto*, hastily retrieved from memory, since its text, prepared beforehand – Libelt being reportedly the author – had been destroyed at the moment of panic. In spite of this trouble, it was a groundbreaking and nobly-grandiloquent text, bidding God’s blessing, proclaiming equality and fraternity among Poles and summoning the insurgents “not to foul themselves with drunkenness or pillaging, not to stain their consecrated weapons with wilfulness or murdering of defenceless dissenters

---

79 J. Słowacki, *Odpowiedź na Psalmy przyszłości Spirydionowi Prawdzickiemu* [‘Reply to the Psalms of the Future, to SpirydionPrawdzicki’], *Liryki i inne wiersze* [‘Lyrical poems and other verse’] (*Dzieła* [‘The Works’], vol. 1), 252-3.

80 From *Pamiętnik* [‘A Diary’] of Lucyna Kraśnicka, in: *Rewolucja polska 1846 roku*, pp. 121-3.

or foreigners, for it is not the peoples but our oppressors that we conduct our combat against.”<sup>81</sup> If the success in the fight for freedom is to be measured by the frequency with which this proclamation was quoted and published in anthologies – in its own time and later on, over a hundred years, and more – then the Krakow uprising may be named successful. Karl Marx himself approved of it.

The National Government’s appointed leader was thirty-five-year-old Jan-Józef Tyssowski, a brave volunteer-artillerist in the November Insurrection, and later, a Doctor of Laws and a *Privatdozent* with Vienna University, a would-be barrister in Lwów, participant in the insurgent conspiracy, and a revolutionary agent in from the Tarnów District. As Tyssowski could not manage to discipline two members of the Government, selected off-hand, he consequently proclaimed himself a dictator – a well-sounding notion in any revolution. Michał Wiszniewski, a literature historian, appalled with the revolution, tried to overthrow him, aided to this end by his students; but Edward Dembowski, who arrived just in time, freed the Dictator and reinstated his authority, himself becoming his secretary – and the chief animator of the further events which were to last for three days.

Staying long in the national memory was not Tyssowski’s lot, for some reason. True, he only exercised power in a single town for a mere couple of days, ordering to shot noone. Or, the reason may be that, caught by the Saxons as he tried to flee, and given over to the Austrians, he gave evidence too conscientious for a revolutionary. He was subsequently allowed to sail to America where over the subsequent ten years he was active with various Polish democratic associations, taking up various professions, ending up enrolling, as an official, with the Patent Office in Washington – far from a legendary saga.

On the other extreme, Edward Dembowski had a personality of an uncommon calibre. His revolutionary enthusiasm, propelling his unbelievable dynamism for action, appreciated no obstacles, ‘half-measures’, or disillusionments. In case the reality did not reach his ideas, all the worst for the reality. Flitting from one partitioned province into another, he told the locals that where he had just come from, everything was ready yet for the insurrection. It was just a few days after the Galician ‘bloodthirsty Shrovetide’ that Dembowski perorated in the Krakow daily *Dziennik Rządowy* that “the Galician ex-nobility are astonished that folk are not following them for the fight!” How could folk possibly join a perverse ex-nobility in the fight, if they had not announced a social revolution to them: liberty, equality, and fraternity? “O! You but do love the people,

---

81 *Rewolucja polska 1846 roku*, pp. 121-2.

and propagate thereto the social Revolution, and they shall trust you, and they should follow you, be it down to the hell.”<sup>82</sup> The mind of this feverish, dreadfully courageous and intellectually outstanding lad comprised inexhaustible measures of naivety, for which he paid the price of his life as he was killed – together with the ten-day Krakow uprising.

This bitter defeat was immediately followed, as usual, by considerations about who was to blame. Once the first, late and imprecise, pieces of news from Krakow reached Paris, Prince Adam Czartoryski recognised the supremacy of the National Government – a no-more-existing body at that moment! And once it turned out that the uprising was but a local incident, its reverberation being muffled by the scaring reports from Galician villages, the conservative press immediately ascribed blame for the disastrous course of occurrences to the managing team of the Democratic Society.

The most audible and reverberating was a lampoon, written by Margrave Aleksander Wielopolski in French, titled *A letter of a Polish nobleman to Count Metternich on the Galician manslaughter*. The author blamed the “social disorder party, titling itself a democratic party of the Emigration”, for the miscarried insurrection. The nobility, he explained, took part in it “only superficially: scribes, stewards, a certain number of leaseholders, youths, a few lower-ranked once-serVICemen, and a few ruinous landlords: this is the contingent they have supplied.” The nobility was, therefore, innocent, living quietly amidst their rural seclusions, till the Austrian government baited them with the peasants – attached to their noblemen but depraved by Prince Metternich’s system! The peasants kill their lords. This is a mortal tragedy for the Polish nation, and a disgrace eternal for Austria. Ever since, there was no other way for the Poles to go but seek custody from the Emperor of Russia, and become a loyal part of the “Slavic civilisation, young, virile, and full of future opportunities.”<sup>83</sup>

Few commentators ventured upon drawing conclusions so radical, and Wielopolski’s Russophilic declaration was alienating. Yet, it was noteworthy that the ‘nobility’ was ultimately contrasted with a ‘disorder party’ – a view bearing far-reaching consequences. Bronisław Trentowski, the philosopher, glancing at what occurred in Poland from his remote Freiburg site in Baden, proposed an even blunter evaluation in his dramatic, and scathing-styled, *Wizerunki duszy narodowej* [‘Effigies of the national soul’] (Paris, 1847). In his view, the Parisian ‘demagogues and Jacobins’ were outright the Polish allies of Chancellor

---

82 *Rewolucja polska 1846 roku*, pp. 135-6.

83 *Ibidem*, pp. 209-216.

Metternich: “Those miscreants, having arrived here from Paris and Poznań, feasted at the lords’ whilst ordering the peasants stealthily to sharpen the knives against them.”<sup>84</sup> These were plainly phantasms, but they deepened the abyss – no more between the nobility and its subjects but between the nobility and the democratic ‘intelligentsia of the nation’, at home and in the emigration.

The émigré community had the most reasons for yielding themselves to despair, as its enormous labour of thought and organisation seemed to have been derided by the very course of occurrences. It was to them that Trentowski exclaimed: “You were once received in your home country, wanderer democrats, as beloved brothers; today, they’ll pelt faeces at you, spit in your eyes. You have dealt a mortal blow, not solely to the nobility and Poland but also, to yourselves. [...] Your social revolution has staved off a political uprising for several decades.”<sup>85</sup>

If the democrats did not sprinkle ash on their heads all the same, it was probably because the situation prevalent in Europe seemed encouraging to them, with an everywhere-apparent increase in the influence of the liberal press, and requests for constitutional freedoms. Also the Democratic Society, albeit losing its authority at home, gained strength in the emigration as a formation which at least had given a sign of life. In 1847, however, the focus of Polish opinion, and of the opinion well-wishing toward Poland, was on Moabit, the Berlin prison where 254 plotters accused of having acted against the Prussian state waited for their trials. These people were of varied age and all classes – visible proof of the social range of Greater-Poland and the Pomeranian conspiracies, along with the efficiency of the Prussian police.

The conditions in Prussian gaols were much better at that time than those in their Austrian or Russian counterparts. The initial investigation could be followed by a permit to receive books and writing materials, receive visitors and communicate with others. Libelt initially complained, in letters to his wife, that the worst thing for him was “this measly killing of time, with no production of the spirit; this wiping out of its forces by an inactivity so long-lasting”<sup>86</sup>. At last, he obtained for himself, by begging, the conditions necessary for his work on the subsequent volumes of *Filozofia i krytyka* [‘Philosophy and criticism’]. In the investigation, he consistently, following the oath, denied everything, never quoting anyone’s name. Mierosławski, for a change, talked much too much: although he

---

84 *Wizerunki duszy narodowej... przez Ojczyźniaka*, p. 114.

85 *Ibidem*, p. 134-5.

86 K. Libelt, *Listy* [‘Letters’], p. 100.

admittedly charged himself, and the Democratic Society, with the core responsibility, he 'shared' the burden with his companions in misery too.

The authorities resolved, in accordance with the new law, to hold an overt trial. This gave a chance for public notoriety, and Mierosławski, a born orator, could not miss the opportunity. Mickiewicz tried to make an impact on Libelt, much in the same spirit: the worthiness of the cause called for making an appearance before the court head on, only afterwards requesting for clemency, if ever. Libelt rejected this suggestion scornfully. "To my mind", he replied, "it would be an idiocy to make such an acknowledgement with regard to oneself; with regard to one's own country, to which I individually belong - it would mean to foolhardily squander myself; with regard to the others - an unreasonable boastfulness. Do boast about what you've done and not what you intended to do! [...] Stay silent as a wall: this is your obligation!"<sup>87</sup>

This is how two different patterns of the prisoner's behaviour during the investigation and at the show trial clashed against each other. Mierosławski greatly succeeded, for the time being. He had delivered two grand romanticist speeches - one in Polish and the other in French; he moved the Germans with his eloquence and gesture, albeit they did not understand either of the speeches - and grew famous the morrow across all of Europe, wherever dailies were read. "A country, subdued and enslaved, has the right to complot, and complot it shall!", he cried in the courtroom.

He was sentenced to death, together with seven other culprits. Libelt received a twenty year prison sentence. The Prussian court applied more severe penalties to noblemen and the intelligentsia, up to life imprisonment. Still, more than half of the detained were acquitted. In sum, the trial, started on 2<sup>nd</sup> August and ended on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1847, was a power chord that rendered service to the Polish cause, bringing it out into the open from the dark of conspiracy. The sentenced, for their part, were lucky: less than three months later, Europe started creaking.

## 2. The intelligentsia's revolution

Lewis Namier, the great British (Galician-born) historian, called the year 1848 'the revolution of the intellectuals' (the English semantics of the latter word being closer to the Polish term 'intelligentsia' / *inteligencja*) - somewhat exaggeratingly, of course, since the 'intellectuals' did not make the revolution on their own. The unexpected, communicable revolts, the first of which swept away the Orléans

---

87 Ibidem, pp. 184-5.

monarchy and established a republic in Paris, the following ones shaking the thrones in Vienna, Berlin, and other German cities, were fomented by the bourgeoisie, the middle classes. Yet, it was poets, professors and attorneys that led them, everywhere demanding constitutional freedoms, free elections and a government responsible before parliament.<sup>88</sup> It was no different in Polish districts, where the initiative was in the local intellectuals', or intelligentsia's, hands.

It was quite natural that the intellectuals/intelligentsia came to the forefront: the revolutionary movement in Prussia and Austria endeavoured to stay within legal, or at least peaceful, limits; it was becoming organised, putting pressure on the rulers and their ministers, imposing reforms – never, or at least till possible, striving to refuse obedience to the king or emperor. The crucial weaponry was collective addresses to the throne, proclamations, newspapers, ephemeral prints, parliamentary speeches – all those being measures giving advantage to those capable of skilfully using the oral and written word, including the arsenal of en-vogue liberal notions, such as freedom of the press, equality of rights, the people, or the constitution. What is more, the movement was spontaneous, this time not springing out of a conspiratorial network, which had been torn up two years before; towns were its birthplace now, especially capitals of the provinces where multitudinous and loud support could be mobilised within a few hours. Perforce, this fostered the gain in popularity as well as influence on the events by resourceful and smooth-tongued townspeople, particularly journalists and barristers. The landed gentry, save for some individuals, stayed reserved – especially in Galicia, where they were paralysed by a mortal fear of a reappearance of the scenes of February '46.

The revolutionary movement in Central Europe had however a nucleus of contradictoriness to it, which finally, as it occurred, determined its downfall. Appearing in its first outburst against the despotism of conservative monarchies, the movement united, in view of the common cause, an intellectual elite of Germans, Poles, Czechs, Hungarians and Croats. This unity was expressed by the expeditious amnesty enforced by the Berliners for the lately-convicted Polish political prisoners and their enthusiastic welcome on the day they were freed, which reminded the veterans of the wave of German sympathies for the November Insurrection. But once the European space of freedom was opened, which primarily meant the possibility to become organised and freedom of speech, the movement's ideological leaders wanted, unsurprisingly, to make use of this freedom for their national strivings; but those at once led to a conflict of interests.

---

88 L. Namier, 1848: *The Revolution of the Intellectuals*.

Greater Poland was the first to have experienced this contradiction, and there it was aggravated. The first moments of liberty triggered euphoria, the state of spirit making anything seem possible. “The tomorrow of Poland has been resolved yet”, *Gazeta Polska*, established in Poznań by Hipolit Cegielski, revealed in late March. “All people are equal to one another – and so, all must be free. Since nations are the work of God, [...] they cannot be enslaved, but free and independent instead.”<sup>89</sup> A disillusion followed fast and proved bitter.

In the German states, the Kingdom of Prussia included, the freedoms of 1848 seemed to be opening the way for the unification of a fragmented Germany, which had for three decades been the daydream of the liberals and educators of the nation. The leaders of the Polish community in the Grand Duchy of Poznań could not come to terms with such a prospect: they clearly realised that remaining – till the time comes, as they expected – a province of a multinational kingdom was different than entering an alien national state in its integration phase. The only unification that could be desired by the mindful Poles in the Prussian Partition was an independent Poland. Hence, the establishment of an armed and well-trained Polish army that would enter the Congress Kingdom and proclaim a general-national rising against Russia became, in March and April, the main goal for the Poznań-based and emigration politicians, with Mierosławski at the head.

German public opinion was initially not hostile toward such a country rebuilding strategy, since the liberals anyways expected an armed intervention from the Russians, with an intent to suppress the conflagration of liberty and frustrate the plans to rebuild the Reich. Hence, they were ready to support the Polish movement as an outpost. Still, the Prussian government had a say to it; Friedrich Wilhelm IV, debilitated now, did not intend to provoke Nicholas I, his fearsome brother-in-law. Moreover, the Duchy’s German population, accounting for a third of the total, did not even want to hear about the idea to cut Poznań out of the unification process. The Duchy could consequently be divided, with a demarcation proving very unfavourable to the Poles – the loss of the city of Poznań inclusive, whereas the military camps in the east of Greater Poland were threatened with a compulsory disarmament.

The leaders of the Polish movement, organised into a National Committee – a body semi-legalised by the Prussians – scuffled inside the loop which, more and more clearly, offered them a choice between surrender and a hopeless defence struggle. A situation this dramatic was primarily the lot of Karol Libelt, the

---

89 *Gazeta Polska*, 1848, No. 3; quoted after: M. Janowski, *Polska myśl liberalna do 1918 roku* [‘The Polish liberal thought, until 1918’], p. 111.



philosopher, who was unexpectedly pushed by the occurrences directly from a Berlin gaol to the movement's fore. Among his closest associates was the already-mentioned Ryszard Berwiński, poet and complotter, held in prison for the previous two years; there was Jakub Krotowski, a no-more-young barrister of German descent, who revealed himself as a zestful organiser of the Poznań movement; and, Walenty Stefański, a bookseller, editor, and a radical conspiracy activist before 1846. Hence, a philosopher, a poet, a solicitor and a bookdealer formed the movement's leadership stem, with a few moneyed landlords (Jędrzej Moraczewski, the historian, among them), two priests, one farmer, and one locksmith imparted to them.

Asa strategist of genius (as he believed himself to be) and a military fantast, Mierosławski pressed for a war with Russia; if impossible with Russia, then with the Prussians at least, to start with. He was in permanent search of an army, at the head of which he would fight and defeat a manifold stronger enemy. The National Committee was, in turn, aware of the responsibility the Poles of Poznań had been flung into by a fatal moment of latitude. The German liberals expressed aversion, if not disdain, for the piqued Polish aspirations – first, in the press and somewhat later, in the course of the National Assembly session in Frankfurt, in the summer and autumn of 1848. Libelt, a scholar strongly associated with German culture, suffered this as yet another moral defeat. Before this happened, Committee representatives signed a compromise pact in Jarosławiec – a sort of honorary capitulation which all the same did not save the Polish military camps from a desperate fight and final dispersal. The Polish policy in Prussia thereafter had to quit its general-national ambitions and again contained itself within the tight confines of the Poznań Province, with West Prussia and Silesia added to it.

The matters in Krakow and Galicia turned somewhat less dramatic: no Polish armed troops were actually formed in those areas, unless National Guard squads meant to function as a municipal police could be regarded as such. The said split between the convergence of liberal slogans, which was commonplace in Europe, and the quarrelling of the national postulates, took its toll there as well – this time, within the Austrian monarchy.

For its failed uprising of 1846, Krakow paid with a loss of its apparent independence that it had been enjoying under the Vienna Treaty. November '46 saw the city's final incorporation into Austria, albeit the equalisation of its rights and institutions with those binding for Galicia still needed time. Deprived of its commercial privileges, the city grew poorer and duller; the university, half-Germanised, led a bare existence; the mail censorship did not admit foreign newspapers or magazines. However, Vienna was no foreign city: for a year then, it had even had a railroad connection with Krakow, so the news of the revolution

and the expulsion of Chancellor Metternich arrived there very quickly, triggering “uncommon joy” in the city. Nevertheless, there was no readiness to be exposed to new blows, for the time being. The mood prevailing among the Krakow intelligentsia was accurately expressed by forensic medicine professor Fryderyk Hechel, who noted down in his diary: “Thus, let us thank God already for what he has granted us at the moment, and let us wait quietly as the enormous European revival evolves further on, so our homeland will assuredly arise out of the political relations of the peoples, becoming de-yoked, and blossom anew.”<sup>90</sup>

Political convicts were on their ways back from Austrian prisons. The university adopted a petition to the throne for freedom of teaching and keeping Polish as the language of instruction. A National Guard was being formed, with the consent of the head authorities. Using the opportunity of abolished censorship, a daily appeared bearing the promising title *Jutrzenka* [‘The Daybreak’], which however made no serious references to the political situation in Europe.

April saw groups of emigrants from France arriving. Arranged in ‘columns’ by the Democratic Society and the newly-established Polish Emigration Committee, they set off, using whatever means and ways available, for the Poznań Province and Galicia, via Germany – convinced that the time of return and liberation, for which they had waited for seventeen years, was near. Understandably, they wanted to prepare themselves for a war against Russia, and the Krakow-style procrastination and diplomatising seemed inconceivable to them. “They announce to us”, the chronicler remarked once again, “that there be up to several thousand of our brothers coming back from exile; and glad we are, but we together are a little afraid of them too, zealous with French republicanism and the will to most betimes resurrect the homeland, becoming the reason for some misunderstandings between the government and us, or something worse still, of which we are now seeing a plain example with the Duchy of Poznań.”<sup>91</sup>

The city’s patriotic excitement was intensifying. Everybody was wearing white-and-red ribbons pinned up; newer and newer proclamations were posted on street corners; guardsmen exercised their parade drills on common land, secretly ordering lances and scythes from blacksmiths; student parades, marching songs on their lips, marched past carrying their banners – or, in the evening, German-style flambeaus, the *fakelzugs*; or, making a charivari to punish the Austrian officials or clerks they disliked. The most improbable hearsays circulated by word of mouth every day.

---

90 F. Hechel, *Kraków i ziemia krakowska* [‘Krakow the town and the Krakow land’], p. 89.

91 F. Hechel, op.cit, p. 130.

Bronisław Trentowski had arrived from Freiburg; his lectures on the present-day European movement attracted “all the thinking public of Krakow”<sup>92</sup>, though his speaking and writing style was rather convoluted. At the same time, Michał Wiszniewski, regarded as the best university lecturer, also remembered as the author of an inauspicious attempt at the authority of commandant Tyssowski in the one-week rising of 1846, left Krakow circumspectly and moved to Milan. The shattered Krakow public did not manage in 1848 to appoint from among themselves any person of authority; one that would be capable of conducting the city’s and the academia’s enlightened opinion.

“Initially”, Hechel noted, “everyone shared the strongest conviction that the Austrians ought not to be accosted; rather than that, they should be fraternised with, with anything being expected from German fondness; yet, the Germans right at the beginning started turning cool toward us, not responding to our wooing...”<sup>93</sup> Gradually, the sentiments in the city were turning anti-Austrian. The National Guard and the Austrian army looked at each other less and less friendly: but a spark could trigger an explosion. And the spark was the prefect’s (*starost’s*) order to ban letting any more emigrants into Krakow. Agitation was on the rise: where was it that the first shot was fired from, there was no way to determine. Six weeks of a political carnival, and the Kraków Spring was cut short with the bombing of the city by the Austrians and its absolute capitulation – the second time within two years, funerals for the killed, and the taming of daydreamers.

Thus, early in May, Krakow was excluded from the game. The abject emigrants were to once again bear the brunt of the dislike from the staid intelligentsia of liberal views: “We do know very well”, this same diarist wrote, “what we need, and shall exquisitely do [...] without teachers preoccupied with a social idea, rather than the native country’s good. May they accomplish their ideas somewhere in a foreign country, and, like they did in France, erect castles on the ice again. [...] They wanted to teach us in everything, and head us, not in the least knowing our situation, or the disposition of peasants, or our actual needs.”<sup>94</sup> This judgement was not equitable – but never does the time right after a defeat foster equitability.

Lwów became the capital of Polish democracy for the rest of 1848. A group of aspirants with a poor education in law that the local university could provide

---

92 Ibidem, p. 131.

93 Ibidem, p. 151.

94 Ibidem, p. 156.

hanged around the governor's offices; their promotion opportunities were faint as the senior posts were usually kept for Germans or Czechs. Along with journalists, those aspirants and assistants formed a fortifying element of a Galician movement that was launched as the news of a revolution in Vienna broke out. Is the Lwów movement also to be named a revolution? The movement did not overthrow the emperor's authority, and did not even controvert it, although its authority was temporarily weakened. It created a climate of impudent licence, which it then was unable to exploit politically.

Those March days seemed to yield, there as well, a promise for a complete alteration in European geography and politics. "We have experienced a whole century within those few days", a clever Lwów commentator so put it down in his diary. "A new epoch has begun to shine for the world, and therein, the Poles, who through their two insurrections and continuous martyrdom gave the sign to the European peoples that their nationality is living. [...] With their love for their homeland, social freedoms, their glorious historic past, the Poles shall not be forgotten."<sup>95</sup>

It took just a day for three Lwów barristers, Franciszek Smolka (b. 1810), Florian Ziemiałkowski (b. 1817) and Robert Hefern, to write an address to the emperor. As to the form, it was a petition from "the owners of estates and dwellers of the city of Lwów", containing, as for content, truly revolutionary demands: a separate provincial administration, with a Polish *sejm*, national army, civil service, courts-of-law and schools, abolition of peasant serfdom and of any serf's duties, equalisation of rights across the classes and confessions, political amnesty, and the abolishment of censorship. This address made the whole city enthusiastic: over 12,000 signed it within two days, while its organisers originally expected a few dozen signatures.<sup>96</sup> The popular local journalist Jan Dobrzański (b. 1820), listened to by the Lwów mob and students, grew in those days to become a tribune of the people. But neither he nor anyone else had a clear plan of action. By the governor's decision, amnesty was granted forthwith to prisoners serving their sentences locally. A factual freedom of printing set in. But, what could one do with a liberty so unexpected? A deputation set off for Vienna to present and address. They waited for a week before the emperor received them, then had to wait even longer till the ministers replied – whilst Galicia was waiting for them to be back and share their news from 'the world'.

---

95 Aleksander Batowski, *Diariusz wypadków 1848 roku* ['A diary of the events of the year 1848'], pp. 89-90.

96 The source for this figure is: Ziemiałkowski, *Pamiętniki* ['Memoirs'], p. 8.

The deputation hesitated between the will to daringly come out in the name of Poland-under-regeneration and diplomatising in the Vienna salons. They passed their time considering and discussing things. One of the envoys, Ziemiałkowski, was equally afraid of some incitements for insurrection, with its inestimable consequences, and exaggerated timidity in releasing the suppression bonds: “our tongues have zdiffened [*sic*; stiffened] through a long bondage; our thought has lost its wings, and even the sensation [...]. To see us cold as we are complaining about our common persecutions, this is thrilling: have they already extirpated the thought and the sentiment amongst us?”<sup>97</sup>

It was difficult to assess, however, how far one could advance without endangering everything. A similar irresolution was also characteristic of the Austrian liberal opposition. The Vienna court and the bureaucracy, still dependent upon it, grew weakened, yielded ground, but could expect the army to stand up for them. The Galician nobility deliberated over an urgent need to abolish serfdom but were terribly frightened that the *starosts* might incite the peasants against them, in case something went wrong. Hence, most of them preferred to stick to a loyal attitude, waiting. The task to have and keep the society organised was, perforce, overtaken by the intelligentsia.

A Central National Council, organised in April, plus two or three democratic dailies edited in Lwów became the organs of the latter. The Council received no formal entitlements or powers but gained respect; it represented Polish public opinion against the authorities, and managed it. It was a self-proclaimed body, branched off by cooptation to a hundred members, of which there was no more than twenty making a real effort. Writers, lawyers and university readers held sway: aware of the responsibility charged upon them, they lacked political experience. Hence, their inclination to deliberate for ages any trifle or split hairs and protract deliberations endlessly. With time, Aleksander Batowski (b. 1799) was increasingly frequently appointed to chair the Council sessions: owner of a village near Lwów, a keen collector of historical mementos, bibliographer, cataloguer of the Ossoliński Institute manuscripts, he was a reliable and honest man.

The minutes of the National Council meetings reflect the country’s condition and the period’s tough dilemmas that this “moral authority” of the country had to grapple with. The ‘Ruthenian’ question was the most important among them. From the Polish standpoint, the Galician Ruthenians, like the Kashubians or Podhale mountaineers, formed an offshoot of the Polish nation; it is just that they fostered their religious rite and ‘dialect’. The Lwów intelligentsia was

---

97 F. Ziemiałkowski, *Pamiętniki*, p. 81.

ready to most sincerely respect those disparities, very much refraining from exacerbating mutual relations. Poles usually did not understand that the sense of identity among the Ukrainians in the Austrian Partition fed on resentment – remembrance of the humiliations suffered from the Polish nobility – clearly tending toward a separation. The Polish demands regarding rights for the Polish language and nationality instantly entailed similar demands from the Ruthenian intelligentsia, formed for the most part by Uniate priests. In 1848, there was no other option but to arrange neighbourly relations based on the recognised equality of rights of the two nations; this, in turn, was expressed in the Ruthenians' demand to have Galicia divided into two autonomous provinces: western – Polish, and eastern – Ruthenian. This want was however unacceptable to any fraction of Polish opinion, whilst being willingly supported by the Vienna ministers and the governors in Lwów.

Meanwhile, relations with the Jewish minority seemed simpler. There were no problems of territorial division; there were, in turn, certain old-standing anxieties and prejudices that the democrats tried to overcome by recognising the necessity of equal rights for all religions, in line with the postulates of the liberal movement which in Austria, Prussia, Italy, and everywhere else demanded that Jews be admitted to have legal, factual, civil and political rights, the right to enter the public service included. Hence, care was taken that the National Council and the deputation be joined by representatives of the Judaic communities. Consequently, as part of the deputation to Vienna, Krakow rabbi Ber Meisels (b. 1798) proved himself to be an undisputed follower of the Polish option for autonomy and, simultaneously, as an adherent to “the principles of freedom, extension of political rights, and participation of all citizens in those rights”<sup>98</sup>. A progressive Committee of Poles of the Israelitic confession was established in Rzeszów, which set as a goal for itself the teaching and learning of Polish history, language, and national literature. It is not known whether the founders of that Committee, or of another Israelites' Society, or a club, mentioned in the sources, managed to develop any activity; the idea in itself testifies, though, to the emergence of a secular Jewish intelligentsia, friendly toward Polish national aspirations.<sup>99</sup> The

---

98 These words of Meisels are quoted after: A. Eisenbach, *Emancypacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich* [‘The emancipation of the Jews in the Polish territory’], p. 383.

99 W. Heltman, *Galicja w 1848 roku* [‘Galicia in 1848’], in: Heltman, Janowski, *Demokracja polska na emigracji* [‘Polish democracy in the emigration’], pp. 277-8. Also, L. Zienkowicz (ed.), *Wizerunki polityczne dziejów* [‘The political portraits of the history’], vol. 4, p. 248; M. Bałaban, *Dzieje Żydów w Galicji* [‘The history of the Jews in Galicia’], pp. 162-3.

political emancipation of the Jewish bourgeoisie in Galicia was at that time more advanced and more strongly connected with the Polish movement than was possible in the other districts of the country, particularly in the Poznań Province, where the wave of anti-Jewish excesses accelerated the assimilation of the local Jewry into German culture. But in Austria, liberal reforms were also easier to adopt at the Vienna parliament than in Galician towns which offered efficient resistance to the admission of Jews to active or passive electoral rights with local municipal governments, and to the settlement of Jewish people outside of their assigned, Jewish, districts.

The relationship between the Council and the Galician landed gentry had been tense from the very beginning, since the nobility, save for certain exceptions, looked suspiciously at bourgeois democrats, who were alien to them; as for the transformations taking place in the state, the nobility assumed a waiting position. To counteract the National Council's influence, an association called 'Ziemiaństwo' ['Landed Gentry'] was established, along with its organ – the periodical *Polska*, whose editorship was entrusted to Hilary Meciszewski, a talented journalist brought for the purpose from Krakow. An ideological dispute, without any mincing of words, was going on between *Polska* and *Gazeta Narodowa* edited by Dobrzański, thus somewhat diversifying Galicia's torpid political life.

All that constellation led the Lwów intelligentsia to regard themselves, the first such case in Poland ever, as a separate class in society; the class's very name, adopted into Polish only recently – in the Prussian Partition, to be sure – began circulating in the 1848 in Lwów as a notion from the political sociology vocabulary, and was taken more or less broadly. Thus, Batowski proposed "that, in order that the National Council represent a complete set across the populace's classes, should this be the case, the Council summoned the handicraft guilds so that everyone had a representative therein out of his retainers; thereby, the clergy estate, the landed estate and the craftsmen's estate shall be part of the Council – apart from the intelligentsia, which may and indeed should belong to all the three."<sup>100</sup> Again, in the course of the Council's discussion on a draft qualification-related right to stand for election to a provincial diet, he noted: "Dylewski [a barrister] recognises the intelligentsia in the first place, but he takes it in terms too general, saying that [...] only those be admitted to the election that can read and write. [Henryk] Schmitt and myself, in turn, regard as intelligentsia only the scholarly people, merchants, lawyers, mostly of the town, in totality, and of the rural

---

100 A. Batowski, *Diariusz wypadków 1848 roku*, p. 163.

population, only those who represent themselves, save the farmers.”<sup>101</sup> The word, in increasingly common use, was up and running, serving as an ennobling self-identification device.

Those homebred Lwów politicians were elevated by circumstances to a broader political forum. The first attempt, following the address deputation, was the Slavonic Congress convoked in Prague as an initiative of Czechs and Croats. The Polish delegation – Galicia and Poznań delegates combined, under the guidance of Karol Libelt – was the only one to represent a nation which was only partly subject to the Habsburg rulership. Their situation was most delicate. For the Poles, the idea of Slavic unity was after all a rather artificial concept, more literary than political. Meanwhile, such a unity was emerging within the Austrian monarchy mostly against Hungarians with whom Poles, in turn, traditionally had a friendly relationship. Austria was regarded by Poles, in turn, as an invasive state, its union with Galicia being temporary: contrary to the Czechs, with historian František Palacký as their spearhead, who were eager to see the Slavonic potential increased within the monarchy, in a way so as not to debilitate the latter and prevent its incorporation in the German Reich.

The Galician Poles had their own trouble with the Ruthenians who composed together with them a single, though not too coherent, section: they spent a remarkable portion of their time pounding their common position. This venture was successful insofar that the issue of division of Galicia, the main bone of contempt, was postponed till a future *sejm* assembly. The Prague convention – unfinished as of June, a fortnight after its opening, the assembly was dispelled by the imperial army pacifying the revolted city – disclosed the deep incongruities between national interests. Still, it was a school of strenuous bargaining carried out by politicians who, for the time being, had nothing else to do or achieve, so they attached enormous attention to every single word in any piece of minutes or manifesto.

The Austrian Reichstag, a constitutional parliament, appointed for the first time ever through a general election, turned out to be another such school. The intelligentsia were quite easily electable in Polish towns; they solicited the peasantry's votes with lesser success, especially when it came to Ruthenian peasants who preferred to elect their own people or Austrian clerks.

It was at the Reichstag that the uncommon political talent of Franciszek Smolka was revealed. The biography of this son of a Silesian father, an officer with the Austrian army and, later, a salt-mine controller, and a Hungarian

---

101 Ibidem, p. 219.



mother, daughter of a state property warden in Galicia, was eventful. Smolka studied law in Lwów; he did not join the 1830-1 insurrection, albeit in 1834 he entered the secret Association of the Polish People, with which his position grew quite influential. He became an attorney in 1840, and married a maiden from a German clerical family. A year later, betrayed by one of his union comrades, he was detained and, after four years of investigation, received – the procedure customary in Austria – a death sentence together with a reprieve from the emperor and the loss of his civil rights. The year 1848 paved the way open for him to pursue political activity legally: adamant from then on in demanding a national autonomy for Galicia, always however within the frame of the Austrian monarchy.

Elected a Reichstag deputy, Smolka encountered in Vienna a climate much more charged than in Lwów, a provincial venue, in any case. “Radical attitudes”, he wrote in June, “is enormously intensifying – journalism being a real power here, of which you have got no idea yet in our place, and? A peculiar thing, this street journalism, kreutzerlike, [...] breathes with a purely democratic spirit.”<sup>102</sup> He endeavoured for Galicia to elect as many deputies as possible from the intelligentsia, as he specially counted on them. Supported by several attorney colleagues, Florian Ziemiałkowski among them, he enjoyed a growing authority in this multinational assembly as a parliamentarian capable of peaceably resolving tough conflicts. “The liberty slogan”, he wrote to his wife, “acted like morphine, exciting and heightening political passion. [...] There was generally no indulgence for people of the contrary opinion; one camp regarded its opponents as despicable flunkeys – the other, as demagogues that fear neither God nor man ...”<sup>103</sup> He personally offered an example of a different political culture, time and again – for instance, when writing of Count Adam Potocki, the leader of the Krakow conservatives: “While not agreeing with him as to all the political questions, I do respect him greatly, considering him to be a very righteous, high-principled, talented, and courageous man.”<sup>104</sup>

Respect for opponents enabled him to alleviate the Polish-Ruthenian dispute or adroitly act as an intermediary in the conflict of mutually contrary Slovak and Magyar aspirations – and, moreover, work advantageously on a draft federative constitution of the state. The time of the toughest examination came over in October, along with the second Vienna mutiny and Emperor Ferdinand’s retreat

---

102 F. Smolka, *Dziennik 1848-1849w listach* [A Diary, 1848-9, in the form of letters’], pp. 286-7.

103 Quoted by Stanisław Smolka, *O ojcu i jego listach* [‘My father and his letters’], *ibidem*, p. XLVII.

104 *Ibidem*, pp. 169-170.

to Innsbruck and the Government's, to Olomouc. Smolka was first elected Vice-President and shortly afterwards, President of the Parliament, the body that factually seized the executive power in the rebellious capital. He kept his cool in this dramatic situation, warning the others against a menacing civil war and speaking out "against the reactionary as well as anarchy". He kept well and with pride in the days of the siege and military pacification of Vienna, also as the parliament was evicted to Kroměříž in Moravia, until it was dissolved in the name of the new emperor, the young Franz Joseph, in March 1849.

Smolka was no revolutionary but a liberal and conciliatory politician, a Polish patriot loyal to Austria, in spite of the ordeal he had gone through in his youthful years. His gain from the revolution was that the government had reinstated his rights, withdrawn once following a court verdict, to run an attorney's practice. This was to become his job again, till the era of autonomy yielded the conditions for him to resume his political activities.

When the monarchy's fate – and, indeed, the fate of Central Europe as a whole – was being decided in the autumn of 1848, Lwów, not as yet realising then that the situation was tilting toward the old regime's forces, was firing up on national grounds, which was expressed mainly through the external signs of 'Polish attire', the drill of the academic guard, white-and-red trimmers, and the singing of patriotic songs. Societies and committees of various sorts were being established. Probably the most active of them was the Society of Private Officials, formed of court scribes and clerks who had lost their jobs resulting from the abolishment of serfdom and the dominion jurisdiction, or merely desired to feel worthy and deserving – that is, exactly, part of the 'intelligentsia'.<sup>105</sup>

The overpowering need to get associated and act, raised after years of passiveness, manifested itself also in the number of leaflets, speeches, constitutional drafts and, above all, daily papers, particularly those of forward-looking colours, with more and more new titles appearing. Emigrants from France contributed to this civic movement; quite a number of them reached Galicia, no-one knowing the actual figure, all of them preparing for a war with Russia for the freedom of the entire and indivisible Poland within its pre-partition limits. Once the expectations relating to the Poznań Province failed, they became ready to organise legions in Galicia. The National Council and civil committees received them with respect and affection, and had much trouble with them afterwards: no legions were welcome there, whilst aged emigrants returning home needed to be fed and provided with some trade to do. The most illustrious among them

---

105 L. Zienkowicz (ed.), *Wizerunki polityczne dziejów*, vol. 4, pp. 250-1.

was Wiktor Heltman, a chief leader of the Democratic Society in exile, who, once back, started editing a radical paper titled *Dziennik Stanisławowski*, advocating the need for social reforms in Poland in the spirit of Gospel and socialism.

All those national-life currents and institutions were developing well in Lwów and in the province, but as it had once begun with a signal from the outside, so did it end. Once the army crushed the revolts in Vienna and Prague, it appeared obvious that the counteroffensive of a monarchical legitimism would not stop harassing the Polish movement. The conflict between the National Guard and the regular army soldiers would probably have remained a meaningless incident, had the command of the Austrian garrison not just been waiting for a pretext for humiliating the town. The bombing of Lwów on All Souls' Day did not save the university and its library, the Technological Academy, the town hall or the theatre. Dissolution of the Central National Council and its related district councils, expulsion of emigrants and the restoration of censorship for printed contents put an end to that longest-lasting Polish enclave of a relative licence.

The last chapter of this 'revolution of the intelligentsia' was the Polish participation in the war for Hungary's freedom. Herds of youths were slinking into Hungary from Galicia, from the Kingdom, and from the Ukrainian *guberniyas*. A Polish legion which was being formed, not completely till it set off, though, under the command of General Józef Wysocki, "consisted", a diarist wrote, "of intelligentsia, half of it, of Galician school students, the other half, of students from behind the cordon; artisans, clerks and scribes would only enter the same in an insignificant portion, perishing within the student crowd."<sup>106</sup> Some Polish volunteers did not make it to the legion and so were enrolled with Hungarian squads, but regular Galician regiments also fought on the Austrian side and it happened that their prisoners and deserters eventually joined the Polish legion.

The vicissitudes of this legion, and of the Poles of outstanding merit in that Hungarian campaign at all, were clinched by an intervention of a Russian corps which, led by Field-Marshal Ivan Paskevich, Viceroy of the Kingdom of Poland, marched in August 1849 through Galicia in order to save the Austrian army from a disaster. There was no way back for the Polish volunteers: the corps was interned in Bulgaria, under Turkish authority. Part of its members remained in Turkey for good, some others, the result of a long bargaining process, sailed in 1850 to England, or to the United States, if that was their choice. The plight of the homeless turned even worse than the destiny of the 1831 generation: the

---

106 T.T. Jeż, *Od kolebki przez życie* ['From the cradle-time, through my life entire'], vol. I, p. 279.

interest in the Polish cause had lessened in Europe and, therewith, the sense of some commitment toward those émigrés dwindled. The French Republic after 1848 reluctantly received back the wandering old Polish emigrants – and, moreover, expelled beyond its frontiers the Polish Democratic Society’s Centralisation, mostly owing to the organisation’s contacts with the French radical opposition.

The revolutionary forces were losing in Austria and in the German states, losing at least part of their just-attained rights and civil freedoms. This did not mean, in most cases, a resumption of the old order from the Holy Alliance epoch, for the electoral rights, once granted, could not be withdrawn, for instance; still, the initiative, along with the political power, was being taken over everywhere by conservatives and monarchists.

For the Polish lands, the period 1848-9, posthumously earning, ironically enough, the name of ‘The Spring of Nations’, once again marked a collapse of the hopes piqued for an integration and independence for Poland, and a bitterness shared by another losing generation. A new host of young people in the course of their education disgorged out of the country, following the call of duty or fearing repressive measures. The intelligentsia, having for the first time ever sensed its collective importance, ended up paying the severest price for the defeat.

From then on, the usual thing, some shouted, was that it should have been done more recklessly; others said, more prudently. “After all”, a Galician critic wrote, “by part, out of the conviction of our immaturity, and by part, out of the fatal necessity of the events, have we kept a grip on the legal-constitutional pathway, that monstrous brainchild of this year’s stupidity – that abnormality, that sphinx whom, it is said, no-one can possibly understand, or guess, or define. [...] Avoidance of any collision had thenceforth to be all our political reason, all the travail wasted to no avail. A veritable navigation, that, betwixt a Scylla and Charybdis.”<sup>107</sup>

Another Lwów intellectual expressed a completely different judgement: “Everyone has become convinced, the road of tranquil development only leads us to the goal. [...] Whoever is more than enough confident about our country’s impuissance [...], be it those most ardent ones, comprehend that our conduct has by this far been preposterous, and instead of benefits, it has solely been making us saddled with disasters. [...] I am now crying now everywhere that everyone whoever should be willing to make a revolt commits the crime of treason of

---

107 Correspondence from Lwów, 31st December 1848 in: *Wizerunki polityczne dziejów*, vol. 4, pp. 268-270.

the country – for, you tell me, where is it you could betake?”<sup>108</sup> “The way we have hitherto been guided along”, another critic would say, “the revolutionary way, from frenzies and impatience leads to impotence and weariness.”<sup>109</sup>

However, Wiktor Heltman, whose role in Lwów has already been mentioned, charged the blame, along with the perfidious Austrian government, upon the Polish “denationalised aristocracy” that helped the government paralyse the revolutionary movement: and yet, if only a reconciliation with the folk had been achieved, “at least a part of the year-1846 programme [programme]”, believed he stubbornly, “could have turned deliverable: attack, with larger or smaller troops gathered up, on the fright-taking enemy on the other side of the Vistula and the Zbruch. The Krakow country was ready. The combat, once commenced, would have entailed the Poznań Province, then already armed. What would the outcome have been? Only God knows this. We would have thereby fulfilled our duty.”<sup>110</sup>

This conviction stays close to Juliusz Słowacki’s certainty whereby not so much organisation and weaponry was required to be victorious but, rather, an enormous intensification of the nation’s spiritual will; then, “having stood up in the God’s Spirit, one may be stronger than the wind, rule the thunderbolts.”<sup>111</sup>

Such will of might is hardly observable, though, in the occurrences of 1848. Moreover, no deep political thought was visible there. One has to bear in mind, though, that the Polish cause, being a splinter of the European revolutionary wave, was, after all, its side constituent, and it was not on that stage that the lot of the Spring of Nations came to its final resolution. It is highly debatable whether any other strategy or political tactics could have yielded a better solution for Poland. A bloodier one – yes, definitely.

### 3. Daily grind

Whoever later on recalled the years after 1848, would write of apathy, a loss of hope, any will to act suppressed. In Krakow and Galicia, which had been through the year the most intensely, already gaining a taste of freedom, the demise of public spirit was, perforce, most blatantly obvious.

---

108 Henryk Schmitt, *Listy do żony* [‘Letters to his wife’], pp. 151-2.

109 W. Kalinka, *Galicja i Kraków* [‘Galicia and Krakow’] (1853), p. 14.

110 W. Heltman, J.N. Janowski, *Demokracja polska na emigracji* [‘Polish democracy in the emigration’], p. 280.

111 Zob. M. Janion, M. Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, pp. 529-531.

It was only then that Krakow started experiencing the effects of deprivation of its own institutions, to which it had become accustomed to over the past thirty years – along with free-trade privileges, the foundation of the city's relative prosperity. Separated with a customs cordon from the Kingdom, and simultaneously subject to the rule of alien, immigrant officials and Austrian codices, it felt on a par, as to its rights, with Galicia – the state it never wanted to be a part of. Martial law was active, any associations or societies were banned, foreign periodicals forbidden, local ones subject, anew, to severe censorship. To crown this all, a terrible fire which in July 1850 consumed a considerable portion of the city, undercut the existence of many a merchant house and numerous tenement-houses, and burned down two ancient churches. Fortunately, the watchfulness of students prevented the fire from overwhelming the university library and the other university buildings.

That was probably not the most suited moment for giving the whole city a lash of satire, but it just so coincided that *Listy o Krakowie* ['Letters on Krakow'] by a certain Pećłowski, supposed to have been written in 1849, reached Krakow, from a Poznań printing house, only in the following year, rendering some indignant and others, maliciously joyful. The brochure's author, having assumed the posture of a cross prophet-bard, spared nobody. He accused the Krakow youth of having no zest present in their hearts, no will to learn and no thoughts in their heads, and called their patriotism a fondness for clichés and parrot-like flamboyance. Maids were reproached for their hypocrisy and empty conventionalities. He dealt in the severest way with teachers who had apparently forgotten that their duty was to educate young people to become the country's citizens someday. University professors had the gravest insults darted in their faces: "A cold spirit of egoism is blowing out of your mouths, and around you, some sultry atmosphere, poisoned with the venom of death, is floating. You are the apostles of lies, as you are lying to our obligations, to your repute, to the past of this university and the swaggers predicated every year." This apostrophe was followed by a survey of all the faculties, proving that the chairs were, for most part, sluggards, bromides, if not, in some cases, ignoramuses. The medical department alone could defend itself against the en-bloc censure: "Look and see where this *alma mater scientiarum* is standing today, where you have led that Casimir-bred pearl of science, and how you have brought up that youth! [...] Sons of the city charged with a stern course of eternal dream..."<sup>112</sup>

---

112 [Walerian Kalinka], *Listy o Krakowie* ['Letters on Krakow'], passim. 'Casimir-bred' [orig., *Kazimierzowska*] refers to King Casimir III the Great (Kazimierz III Wielki), the University's founder (1364).

The author of this exalted lampoon was recognised as Walerian Kalinka (b. 1826), a judicial trainee until recently: once a cantankerous democrat, he was under transformation into a conservative at the time. In the vastly rich repository of Polish lampoons or pamphlets on the intelligentsia, the Kalinka brochure is probably the earliest item. As customary with pieces of this sort, the oration proved blatantly iniquitous, its twenty-four-year-old author being completely unauthorised to have used a tone so preceptorial; seemingly, almost a stylistic exercise. In a book written a few years later, he weighed his opinions more cautiously, charging the dull Austrian bureaucracy with the main responsibility for the fall of Krakow.<sup>113</sup> Whatever the case, putting the exaggerated tenor aside, there was something apt to the diagnosis he proposed. Grown humble after the calamities it had suffered, the city of Krakow indeed seemed languorous and deprived of any ambition, its university having been bogged down in a formalist routine – just as the empirical sciences in Europe were undergoing an imposing breakthrough.

Fryderyk Hechel, mentioned several times above – a rather poor scholar but a clever witness to his own age – also made a survey of all the university faculties in his diary. His judgment of their mental, moral and didactic qualities and qualifications appeared merciless for the theology department professors; a more diverse evaluation was attached to the law and philosophy departments (the latter being a kind of preliminary course, encompassing physics and mathematics, as well as literature and history). Hechel's stereotypical assessment, to quote an example, goes: "weak not only corporally but mentally as well; has nothing written to his credit, and nothing will he have". Or, "a learned jurist and assiduous teacher; nevertheless, an abject character, he prostrates himself before the Austrians, repudiating his own nationality."<sup>114</sup> In sum, the portrait drawn by Hechel confirms an image of the Krakow academy as a provincial school whose association with European science was, at least, impaired. Although many of its professors complemented their own studies at a foreign university, usually, a German-speaking one (to include those of Vienna and Prague)<sup>115</sup>, when coming to their post as the chair, they did not deem it appropriate to further follow the progress of their respective disciplines.

---

113 Idem, *Galicja i Kraków pod panowaniem austriackim*, ['Galicia and Krakow under the Austrian rule']; in: *Dzieła* ks. Waleriana Kalinki [*The Works of Fr. W.K.*], vol. 10, pp. 439-461.

114 F. Hechel, *Kraków i ziemia krakowska*, pp. 281-2.

115 J. Kras, *Życie umysłowe Krakowa* ['The intellectual life of Krakow'], pp. 66-77.

The school in question defended its Polish identity as long as it could; still, that was a double-edged action too: graduate lawyers in particular could only count on taking an official position if their command of German was fluent and their knowledge of terminology was excellent. Many lectures in theology and medicine were held, traditionally, in Latin – the language which neither the professors nor the students could properly manage any more. It was mostly customary among the law and medicine professors to pursue a private barrister or doctor's practice, and they cared more about this, as it yielded better gains for them, than about their academy activities or classes.

With all that, the medical faculty enjoyed an opinion a little better than its other counterparts. Hechel actually was not lenient with himself, finding that "a capacity is not always on a par with the willingness", but was ready in turn to do justice to several of his colleagues – particularly, Józef Majer (b. 1808), a physiologist that enjoyed general respect, one of the fathers of Polish medical terminology, a man of great merits for the university as its several years' rector. The interrelation of theoretical teaching and the clinic and laboratory work was nevertheless only in its germ stage; the knowledge of recent reference literature was rare, with the university library not quite able to apply itself to obtain new industry releases. As a result, quite a few professors taught using the same textbooks year on year.

Against the background of such academic drabness, a handful of larger-calibre personages stood out: there was Antoni-Zygmunt Helcel (b. 1808), a historian of the law, erudite, editor of Polish-law mediaeval source texts, and, one of the animators of the Krakow circle of conservative thought; or, Józef Kremer (b. 1806), a philosopher and art theoretician, of the Hegelian school; or, Michał Wiszniewski (b. 1794), a philosopher identifying himself with quite the opposite, the empirical, 'Scottish' orientation, venturing – as not unusual for the period – into domains as distant from each other as political economy and the history of Polish literature. Those scholars had had some experiences with many a foreign university, had considerable original output to their credit; yet, none of them had students and continuators produced. Besides, Helcel's teaching career was short, for he did not enjoy the government's confidence; as for Wiszniewski, he quit his faculty in 1848, as aforesaid, and moved to Italy.

It was no coincidence that intellectual individualities kept their scholarly houses mainly in the fields of philosophy and the humanities, because these were the only areas wherein one could work on his own, to a larger or lesser advantage. As for teaching activities, there were merely 276 students at the entire university in the year 1851-2 (118 and 95 whereof with the medicine and the law



department, respectively)<sup>116</sup>, and the school's influence on the country's life and future seemed to be coming to a standstill.

But a thing once occurred that aroused a momentary animation. Wincenty Pol (b. 1807) happened namely to have obtained from the Vienna ministry of education, by his entreaties, that a universal geography faculty was to be established for him at Krakow university. Pol was enormously popular as a poet in Galicia, if not in the whole of Poland: it was simply not done not to have his patriotic *Pieśni Janusza* ['Songs of Janusz'] learned by heart; also his later epic poetry, distinctive with its simplicity and naturalness of phrase, plus soldierly and plebeian hints, were admired by many. As for the author, he was getting superbly assimilated among the Galician aristocracy, increasingly distanced from insurrection-like bewitchments, closer and closer to legalistic tendencies and organic-work axioms, for which some of his former friends spared no criticism of him. At the same time, his other passion, alongside rhyming, was, from a certain moment on, hiking: at first, styled after a romanticist folk-mania, but with time assuming the form of annual, and increasingly methodical, geological, climatic, hydrographical, botanical and, of course, ethnographic observations. People still tended to walk on foot in that time, and Mr. Pol, together with Mr. Łobarzewski, a botanist, walked across the entire northern mountainsides of the Polish Carpathians, and across the Prussian districts, Silesia in particular. He read German works – above all, those of Alexander von Humboldt, the traveller and geographer enjoying enormous popularity across Europe. He was thus an autodidact, without a scientific background, but his preparedness for taking the university chair was perhaps more than good, albeit the subject of his interest was only gaining a position for itself in academia.

Wincenty Pol's first lecture, delivered in January 1850, attracted a flock of students and audiences from outside the university – especially, high-society ladies who arrived there attended by their footmen. This dismayed the university people, inciting the lecturer himself to request the dean of the philosophy department “to issue an instruction prohibiting the attendance of outsiders.”<sup>117</sup> As it however befitted to do something for the clever ladies, Pol hit upon the idea that professors should deliver public lectures. Hence, Pol himself, along with Mr. Kremer, a philosopher, Mr. Zejszner, a geologist, and Mr. Kuczyński, a physicist, delivered for several months, popular lectures which could be attended by inquisitive auditors, ladies in particular, with entry ticketed.

---

116 Ibidem, p. 48.

117 Quoted after: Jadwiga Rosnowska, *Dzieje poety* ['The life history of a poet'], p. 283.

The experiment was run for a few months, after which interest in it declined: the professors were not quite able to keep it up, and besides that, it was not customary to approach cognitive curiosity in women seriously. Characteristically, the most interesting place at the time in Krakow's mental culture was the salon hosted by Zofia Węgierska, an individual from the circle of the Warsaw female 'enthusiasts', who was notorious because of a divorce scandal. She shocked the city's opinion with her shortcut hair, cigar smoking, amours, and sharp tongue. She made her contribution, it is said, to the aforementioned Kalinka's *Letters on Krakow*; soon after, having settled in Paris, she made a name for herself as a shrewd and penetrating correspondent with the *Czas* and *Biblioteka Warszawska* magazines. Yet, instances of such independence were quite rare. Although the social and, sometimes, literary position of home-educated women was at times high, admitting them to junior high schools, let alone higher or tertiary schools was unthinkable; actually, it was not even befitting for them to walk out of their home alone.

For some time after the revolutionary movement was suppressed, the authorities maintained the appearance of constitutional freedoms; but soon after, a line of rigorous centralism prevailed in Vienna, named 'the Bach era', after the interior minister's name. No decentralising strivings were tolerated. Once the Polish democratic circles were dispersed following the 1848 defeat – with part of the activists having sought refuge abroad, some others becoming quieter, hoping that the police would forget about them – the conservatives became an issue for the authorities, as they were suspected of underhand hankering for autonomy. A strong blow was, exemplarily, dealt with in 1852 against the University, with the unexpected dismissal of four of its professors, Antoni Helcel and Wincenty Pol among them. Thus, the individuals who were sincerely loyal toward the Austrian government were punished, resulting from, it may be guessed, a denunciation from an envious colleague, only that they enjoyed authority among the Polish enlightened classes, and resistance could possibly have been expected on their part against the re-enforced Germanisation of an academy now devoid of any autonomous council of its own.

In spite of the troubles occurring, the conservatives had become the only milieu retaining certain expressive potential, and this owing to the daily *Czas*: though censored, it was tolerated, as opposed to more progressive newspapers. The daily's financial foundation was the care of a landed-gentry partnership plus Wincenty Kirchmayer (b. 1820), a Krakow banker; the political line was supervised by Paweł Popiel (b. 1807), and the editorial work was entrusted to talented people representing the conservatively-disposed intelligentsia. Lucjan Siemieński was the first of them: as he remained in refuge in France, his youthful

radicalism had evaporated, giving way to a volubility characteristic of a combative literary critic and columnist pricking with his sharp-tongued quill anyone who would be suspected of designs for some new upheaval, be it in politics or ethics. His closest associate was Maurycy Mann (b. 1814), yet another Polish intellectual coming from a German clerical family, himself familiar with Europe and devoting himself entirely to the informal conservative faction, called the Krakow bunch, gathering around *Czas*.

Judging by the diaries, Krakow was a city that vigilantly observed social hierarchies, each class therewithin forming a separate social coterie or, as the democrats would willingly say, caste. Titled landowners, having their palaces or houses in Krakow, no doubt constituted the most exclusive coterie; nonetheless, based on shared interests, the elite of talents would sometimes be admitted to it, regardless of their background: writers such as Pol or Siemieński; artists, such as Wojciech Stattler (b. 1800), a painter in-demand; some University professors too, or medical doctors, as long as they could adapt themselves to the social forms imposed by high society. The lower intelligentsia, that is, in the first place, clerks or officials, and lawyers, of any contingent, entertained themselves in their circle, and on a modest footing, in line with their income. Immigrant functionaries, Austrians and Czechs, were kept by the Polish covey at a distance – and themselves did not crave for this society, save for some rare exceptions.

Lwów, a more vivid city at the time, which was more deeply ‘infected’ in the course of the seven months of its unruly freedom, had less rigorous social divisions, the numerical force of its intelligentsia being twofold higher in that capital of the ‘country’. The most populous category there, and in the whole of Galicia, was state-administration and judiciary officials; teachers, also considered public servants, came second. In the aftermath of 1848, the quaint category of “privately employed public servants” disappeared – once including, namely, assignees and justiciaries who, while subject to governmental rule, had to be maintained by estate owners. With bondage and serfdom abolished, only some of them found employment with the administration, the rest forming a restless noble-clerical proletariat, eagerly assuming the name of the ‘intelligentsia’.

The loyalties of officials and judges toward the government varied, but the time of secret plotting was over – and the whole course of life was dependent upon the graciousness of the authorities that could move a clerk from one town or county to another, promote, grant or refuse to grant a leave. There is no big surprise in that the functionaries, accustomed to a strict drill from their school years, had not faltered in their clerical officiousness even in the days of patriotic festivals, not to say after the pacification. Known to us are diaries of officials whose primary care was to deserve the graces and favours of the authorities, and

to gradually climb up the rungs of the official hierarchy: in the time that Agenor Gołuchowski was Governor of Galicia, the way to higher-ranking positions in this province was no more barred for the Poles.

Perforce, the intellectual climate of the epoch was mostly shaped by those who chose for themselves a condition that made them less dependent upon a governmental, or imperious or lordly, grace: first, literary men – the name that applied to anyone engaged in writing activity. Karol Szajnocha in Lwów enjoyed the greatest authority among them. Born in 1818 to a half-German and half-yeomanry family, he shared a romantic adolescence with several of his generation, entangled in conspiracies and with an episode as a prisoner, which cut his university studies short and taught him cautiousness for the future. Like all the others did, he wrote poetry and made his living as a private tutor. 1848 saw him, mostly, keep himself to himself, not really believing that the collective intoxication might come to a good end. The authorities could therefore tolerate him when he took editorship of *Dziennik Literacki*, a newly-instituted magazine that was intentionally directed by a “conscious, manlike reason, distant from any religious or political paradoxes, from any poetical and quasi-scientific reverie...”<sup>118</sup>

But journalism was not the actual calling of this assiduous maverick who discovered for himself, at some point, a love of the history of his mother country, combined with an usual writing talent. He looked intently at, and took example from, the enormously widely-read historiographers such as Thomas Macaulay in England or Jules Michelet in France, the authors who had made masterpieces out of historical storytelling. And so struck home, thus meeting a deep unsaturated need shared by the intelligentsia, who, let down once again in their hopes, were thirsty, as never before then, to at least have a fertile, eventful and dramatic national past. This is what Szajnocha was able to conjure up, and armed against the thrust of a German element, that is, ‘Teutonism’, which, as he wrote, in the Piast dynasty’s time “was forcibly distending across the villages and towns, encompassing the cloisters and temples, disfigured the mores, poisoned the familial blood in the royals’ veins.”<sup>119</sup>

It was tough, a usual thing, at the beginning; once, however, the publishers and the readers across the three Partitions cognised the style and content, they began waiting impatiently for more volumes to occur. Their author investigated historical sources, to the extent physically available to him; and what he could not know for

---

118 *Korespondencja Karola Szajnochy* [‘Karol Szajnocha: Correspondence’], vol. 1, pp. 248-9.

119 Karol Szajnocha, *Jadwiga i Jagiełło 1374-1413* [‘Hedwig and Jogaila’], vol. 1, p. 80.

certain, he pieced together using his imagination. For instance, he excogitated that the Polish nobility was descended from the Norman invaders, an idea seemingly flattering to many of his readers. In the end, Lelewel himself also fantasised with regard to prehistory; Szajnocha did the same, but with larger narrative imaginativeness.

As his fame progressed, this recluse dwelling in a Lwów suburb turned into a keystone of an increasingly extensive network of relations. At first, he maintained mailing contacts with a narrow circle of his friends from Lwów and thereabouts: Kornel Ujejski, a young poet; August Bielowski, a commonly respected figure and a historian himself, custodian of the Ossoliński Institute since 1850; plus a few others. With time, the circle was widening, attracting artists who did not have an opportunity to meet one another in person, and could exchange in this way their impressions from books read, updates on their writings, translating or publishing projects, transcripts of historical documents, advice on where and how to outsmart the censors; lastly, they could also share their family occurrences. The *postal republic*, aforementioned, blossomed all the more in the fifties: the literary intelligentsia of the three Partitions and (not without concern) of the emigration, sometimes of the exile, formed an impressive correspondence network: Mr. Szajnocha in Lwów was one of its key nodes wherein the threads stretching from all over converged.

Those letters, unlike any other source, convey the physiognomy of the time, knowledge on the senders and receivers, on the whole literate class, and their perception of the world. A sentimental affectation of friendship could still occur there, as in Szajnocha's apostrophe to Ujejski: "I kiss you, my swain, a thousand times". Similarly, in the emigration-time letters of Seweryn Goszczyński, no less effusive toward his friends; not to mention the impassioned Zygmunt Krasiński. All the same, a more prosaic, informative style prevailed – also in letters to mothers and fiancées. Across one year, strongly awoken hopes and complaints about a national stupefaction appeared a great deal. "Krakow has spiritually died, completely", Teofil Lenartowicz wrote to Szajnocha. "The torpor of today's public and, clearly, an abhorrence for works needing being considered upon deeply", so Karol Baliński diagnosed the Poznań Province. Szajnocha himself reported that Galicia turned out to be a "literary desert",<sup>120</sup>

All the stronger was their conviction that even if the soil was unappreciative, it was their obligation to care about knowledge, tradition, and national awareness. Many were tormented by moments of doubting in the sense of tacit activity, but did not lose heart. They buoyed one another up, praising the importance of each single volume of history or containing edited historic sources relating to

---

120 Ibidem, vol. 1, pp. 166, 209, 321.

what had been the Commonwealth. Almost all of them were, in a positive way, self-taught devotees, not enjoying support from university faculties, state subsidies, or generous backers. The middle of the nineteenth century was a time of dilettantish culture – and it is owing to this culture that the continuity of Polish intellectual history has been preserved.

In Galicia, the only institution which could support these efforts was the Lwów-based Ossoliński Institute. Subject to a strict Austrian custody, time and again rebuilding its fragile autonomy, this institution saw the whole elite of the Galician intelligentsia – Pol, Szajnocha, Bielowski, Batowski and many others – coming and going there, taking care about its collections and publications, compiling catalogues and bibliographies, and themselves using, in exchange, for a longer or shorter time, the financial allowances it offered. A majority of those individuals considered historical studies to be the major cultivation field, and, besides, almost the only one that was at all cultivable, given the conditions. With a great difficulty so, of course, be it for the fact that there was no legally regulated access to domestic archives, and the search for documents of early periods was an adventurous undertaking. Collecting manuscripts, engravings, arms and historical ‘memorabilia’ of any and all sorts was of value – although the intelligentsia could not, understandably, compete with the aristocratic houses in this respect. What they could do was apply for employment with them as private librarians: an option combining subsistence and ease of use of the collections.

Interestingly, Wincenty Pol – a poet, after all, and one of a romanticist provenance – was the first in Galicia to have become worried about the narrow, one-sided character of the time’s culture and lack of interest in natural sciences. Their pursuance was, as he comprehended it, the condition for the country’s civilisational development, industrialisation, pursuit of the moving-away Western Europe, as well as a mental redevelopment of the educational system. “The industrial direction is so mighty and adamant today that nothing may resist its prevalent drift with impunity. Every country, every nation that would not follow this way, so distinctly laid-out in today’s time, shall remain in destitution and obscurity, letting the good he has acquired fall, for those who will outdistance him in the opposite pursuits of the age shall turn the local wealth to their good account – the wealth of his own land which he had proved incapable of using, and assign they shall quite a second-rate and inferior position to his property, his abilities and strengths within the social arrangement of things.”<sup>121</sup> So wrote Pol

---

121 W. Pol, 1847; quoted after: J. Michalski, *Historia nauki polskiej* [‘A history of Polish science’], III 277.

in 1847, convinced that romanticism, plotting and revolutions drive the country and its youth to perdition – whilst knowledge about the world, the physical universe in particular, may rescue those young people. He entertained for several years the idea of a Nature Museum project, finally undelivered: “the need is there”, as he wrote to his friend, “to build in the time when so many things have been destructed, and to resist that unfortunate negation which leads our nation to ruin.”<sup>122</sup>

Viewed on a larger scale, the early fifties was too early a time to bring about such a reorientation, and even the evolution of W. Pol’s interests did not always entail well-wishing responses. Yes, laborious efforts were made in view of fruit to be borne in a distant future, but this had to concern national heritage, rather than little known Europe. The intentions were respectable: August Bielowski worked on a multi-volume documentary edition titled *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*; Helcel, in Krakow, prepared *Starodawne prawa polskiego pomniki* [‘The ancient monuments of Polish law’]; the Ossolineum undertook its work on a new updated edition of S.B. Linde’s dictionary of Polish. Dilettanti become focused on work too. Kazimierz Turowski, a rundown nobleman, became hooked in the middle of the decade on the idea to publish a grand series of works headed *Biblioteka Polska* – ‘The Polish Library’, which was meant to break the known Galician citizens’ reluctance to reading; he consequently began publishing dozens of literary volumes quickly, cheaply, and in a slapdash manner, enticing whoever he could into copying the texts. He was busy writing heaps of letters recommending the venture whose objective was a patriotic mission rather than entrepreneurial profit, and took part of the circulation across the border into the Kingdom and Greater Poland. All the same, having lost the charm of novelty, *Biblioteka* soon started losing its subscribers, and falling into decline.

More will be said further on of similar ideas in the Russian Partition. It always appeared that based upon good intentions and willingness, and a sense of civic duty, without disposable capital or a trained team of people, many a beneficial undertaking could be commenced but it was much harder to get them through to a happy ending. This notwithstanding, such intents and their initiators attracted those who desired to add meaning to their existence, and having the means to afford such independence.

No resolute statement can be made as to the provenance of the mid-nineteenth-century Galician intelligentsia – the clerical, the literary one and men of ‘liberal professions’ (self-employed professionals): the clerical workers’

---

122 List do Edmunda Krasickiego 1849: W. Pol, *Pamiętniki* [‘Memoirs’], p. 337.

background was, to a more or less equal extent, petty nobility as well as townspeople, whereas the intelligentsia as such was increasingly frequently from their lair – and this is to say that they inherited their condition and, in many cases, profession from their fathers. The percentage of people of a foreign, that is, German or Czech origin, was rather significant. Those were usually sons of officials settled in Galicia, becoming Polonised, quickly and eagerly, through school, and, at times, in clandestine organisations. Pol, Szajnocha, Smolka, Mann, or Schmitt are to be recalled here. There were still a few peasants' sons, or Jews, educated and rooted in Polish culture: there is no trace that they would have had their assimilation obstructed; this was to come with time.

Rivalry with the Ruthenians became a big issue, for a change. Before 1848, they were approached as Poles, differing, at the utmost, with their Greek ritual of, surely, the common religion – with a language distinctness usually disappearing as their school learning progressed. When it turned out in 1848 that the clergy and the then-still-not-numerous Ruthenian intelligentsia harboured a separate, Ukrainian, feeling of national identity, which was moreover marked with a strong resentment against Poles, the East-Galician intelligentsia encountered this with astonishment, suspecting Austrian, or Muscovite, intrigue behind it.

The democrats tried to approach the suddenly-recognised Ruthenian aspirations, especially the rights of the Ukrainian language, with respect, only contending with the idea to divide Galicia, supported by the Vienna-based government. It was nonetheless too late to efface the differences, or even to keep friendly relations, imbued with mutual trust: the Polish-Ruthenian separation and competition at school, in courts, offices, at provincial diets and in the State Council in Vienna – in a word, across the tangential fields – had from then on become an everyday experience. The Polish prevalence maintained in all those institutions satiated the Ukrainian sense of separate national interests even more keenly.

The intelligentsia which was becoming consolidated in Galicia (Krakow included) maintained its connections with the landed gentry, family-related or economic. Quite a number of people, outstanding personages like Szajnocha, agreed to teach landowners' children for money; some others, in turn, combined their intellectual job with possession (for example, Ujejski) or lease of a village; still, their awareness of having a separate reason for being socially respected was distinct already. The relations with the lordly houses, if not characterised by mutual respect, as was the case with W. Pol, but rather by a unilateral condescendence, aroused an acute reluctance which was not always allowed to speak in real life, but more often in letters or memoirs. The democratic lesson was to an extent learnt from and followed in this respect, triggering mistrust on both



sides anyway. The intelligentsia's rivalry with the landowning gentry was to soon become an essential problem – not so much social anymore but ideological.

A different lifestyle and ways of spending leisure time gradually emerged: more typical to a city than nobility. Because characteristic to urban life was spending a holiday or vacationing in the countryside: modest May-day picnicking, or long hiking tours with a noble-minded sightseeing or ethnological purpose, mountain treks – especially in the Tatra mountains, a place just becoming fashionable in Galicia. The custom of spending summertime months in health resorts spread increasingly, with Szczawnica becoming popular as a spa site. The wealthier set out further up, 'to the waters' (as the then-customary phrase went): Karlsbad, for instance, or Salzbrunn, attractive with their rich and busy, and rather uninhibited, social life, together with the bathing and the prescribed drinking of mineral waters. Hydrotherapy was making an incredible career all over Europe, and few were sceptical enough to call its therapeutic potential into question. The intelligentsia used healing opportunities more willingly than the other classes, as they trusted the science more – and the science was just undergoing an accelerated evolution, from its naive age (bloodletting as a panacea) to clinical diagnostics; experiments on patients were now frequent, with varying outcomes. Doctors would still be called to visit their patients at home, not the other way round; the puerperium was also spent at home, hospitals only outgrowing their role as shelters.

The social life of the intelligentsia was modest but usually animated, particularly during the Lwów or Krakow Carnival, with dance soirees proving the year's most exciting events, as may be inferred from the preserved diaries. This was true at least for the occasions at which marriageable girls could be met: for them, those balls, obviously under surveillance of their mothers or chaperones, were usually the only opportunity to meet any young people. Girls were namely wrapped in cotton wool and sheltered till they were married, brought up through home education: sending maids to boarding schools was only becoming a habit.

Many a house was furnished with a pianoforte or fortepiano, or upright piano; home music-making and singing is mentioned by a number of diarists. To spend an evening congenially was seemingly the purpose more often than music in itself. Touching upon entertainment, the 'whirling table' frenzy ought not to be neglected. Overwhelming probably the whole of Europe in 1853, it left numerous traces in the Galician reminiscences: whilst some satisfied themselves with stating that the table was set in motion by a mysterious force after a chain of plaited hands was held long and patiently enough above it, the more ambitious witnesses hailed the spirits of great historic figures and asked them questions about the world's future fortunes.

#### 4. Doing something of use

Leaving Galicia for a while and setting our sight now on Greater Poland, of the fifties, we can spot some quite essential differences. Although the 1848 revolt resulted in a much bloodier conclusion in the Poznań Province than the Krakow and Lwów events, the authorities' response was relatively moderate: no personal repression this time; the National Committee members were saved, for instance. The Kingdom of Prussia headed for a centralistic but constitutional order; no 'national organisation' for the Grand Duchy could even be thought of from then on, and that was it. Compared to the liberal freedoms of the forties, public life saw considerable regress, at any rate.

Prussia abolished preventive censorship in 1851, replacing it with a restrictive press law threatening with confiscation any printed matter whose content would go beyond the limits of freedom of speech, not too clearly set, for a change. The right to appeal a police decision with the court made the new regulations apparently liberal; yet, the practice became more restrictive than before for the publishers and this because of the cost of a minacious confiscation. In spite of all this, one could afford a little more in Prussia, in print and in book trading, compared to the other provinces.

Polish education crammed into the corset of Prussian school system was not a completely adverse thing, since German gymnasiums – i.e. academic high schools – and universities passed as Europe's best. Hence, the curriculum principles imposed a decent standard of teaching, whilst at the same time humiliating the students whose right to learn in their own language was becoming increasingly straitened, if not merely ignored – this being true for the university level. Consequently, the rivalry with Germans for any regular post as a teacher or administrative worker remained the supreme imperative for the Polish enlightened classes, regardless of their social and/or ideological diversity.

Prussia placed a strong emphasis on the spread of elementary schools, also in the countryside; still, a mere 4 or 5 per cent of those schools' graduates continued their learning in a gymnasium. There, in turn, over a half came away or were eliminated en route, failing to make it to the mature examination – i.e. the finals. The entire education system was constructed in a way so as to single out and privilege the sparse educated elite, while in parallel hindering access thereto for aspirers of a nationality other than the ruling one. As per the 1860s data, in the Grand Duchy of Poznań itself, not more than 25% of all the practicing doctors were Polish, the same percentage being true for high-school teachers; the Poles' share in the clerical population was definitely lower still. The Catholic clergy alone had a definitely prevalent share of Poles, while less than half of

elementary-school teachers were Polish. This state of affairs entailed the threat that the Poles in the Poznań Province would be maintained on the level of a plebeian society operated by an extraneous intelligentsia.

Greater Poland's proprietary nobility, affluent and relatively not-quite-numerous, offered their sons professional prospects most willingly (if anything) as lawyers or, in rarer cases, as physicians or gymnasium professors. The class's share in the overall Poznań intelligentsia was not in excess of 15%, as calculated by Witold Molik. The intelligentsia's ranks were replenished to a much greater extent by townspeople's sons, who approached education in terms of a good investment: depending on the profession, they accounted for 25% to 45% of the Polish intelligentsia, the clergy included. The solicitous and more talented peasants' sons would be enrolled with theological seminaries or studied to be public-elementary-school teachers, a job regretfully not enjoying a considerable repute.<sup>123</sup>

Established on Doctor Marcinkowski's initiative, the Society for Educational Assistance successfully endured the turbulent period and continued its scholarship action, seeking support mainly from Greater-Poland landed-gentry resources. This allowed for offering gymnasium-level education or a course of study with a teacher-training or theological seminary, or, with a German university to several dozen of the promising boys from poorer classes. In spite of the support provided, some of them did not complete their course of education, the others, however, eventually joined the sparse Polish professional intelligentsia in the Prussian Partition.

Most interestingly, in the middle of the century, the intelligentsia was already reproducing itself, inheriting from its fathers a motivation to become instructed, to achieve social status and, not infrequently, the profession. This clearly testifies to its becoming distinguished as a class, an open-ended one, but still – a decent class, aware of its collective identity. In the Poznań Province, the intelligentsia's financial situation was in most cases better than that experienced by its counterparts in the other districts; it had to severely defend its positions. Any civil servant, that is, officials and clerks, judges, teachers, or county doctors would have a personal file, or dossier, set up to record any detected default, including membership with some of the legal Polish association, so unwelcome to the authorities. As a consequence of such annotations, the individual's recommendation for a promotion could be prevented; he could be removed to some remote place, or merely discharged from the service.

---

123 W. Molik, *Kształtowanie się inteligencji polskiej* ['The formation of the Polish intelligentsia'], pp. 85-89ff.

Not so surprisingly, then, the managing roles within Polish organisations were assumed by people whose position, wealth, or connexions made them relatively independent from the authorities. August Cieszkowski (b. 1814) was definitely one such person: his family estate in Podlasie, and subsequently, a village in the Poznań Province – an additional purchase, enabled him to freely travel all across Europe, study in Berlin, Heidelberg and Paris, strike up acquaintances with scientists and scholars, and, finally, become the most comprehensively educated Pole of his time: he was a philosopher, theologian, economist, and politician. He could write with equal fluency in French and German, and had treatises on Ionian philosophy, English finance, money and credit, nobleness, modern romances, and countryside orphanages published to his credit. By the middle of the century, he had become Europe's best-known Polish intellectual, remaining an erudite without a university chair, keeping his magnum opus in the sock drawer: writing for posterity.

1842 saw Cieszkowski settle down in the Poznań Province; soon after, not sparing his indefatigable energy, he began influencing the area's public life. His was, for the most part, to support the idea to establish, in summer 1848, from the Polish League – an organisation that allowed the preserving, and even expanding of the field of national and social activity after the crushing defeat of the Greater-Poland revolt, be it for a short time. Its operating principle was, intentionally, “the varying opinions coming to a mutual agreement and being redirected, on a common ground, to a single focus”<sup>124</sup>; when, however, this conciliatory formula was not accepted by the democrats represented by Libelt, it was replaced by another, more insipid one, though still declaring a will to cooperate between various ideological opinion splinter-groups, and, obviously, all the classes.

The League founders wanted to merge, under the patronage of educated landed gentry and intelligentsia, the forces and resources of the entire Polish community for a legal effort aimed at protecting Polish education and developing an economic initiative and home-rule – in accordance with the mechanistic and organic idea of *associations* Count Cieszkowski observed with the French socialists.

The achievements of the Polish League were not on a par with its intents, and this was for several reasons. Firstly, distrust between rural folk and townfolk on the one hand, and the ‘citizen’ classes on the other, was too large for the attraction peasants and artisans to their recommended organisation to be easily

---

124 Quoted after: S. Kieniewicz, *Dramat trzeźwych entuzjastów* [‘A tragedy of the level-headed enthusiasts’], p. 81.

accomplished. Secondly, the number of gifted, persistent people willing to pursue disinterested social activity was too small. Thirdly, the new Prussian law on associations, of 1850, superimposed formal restrictions that the League was not in a position to meet. These premises altogether caused the League's activity to wither two years after its setup: its short life came to a complete end in 1852. Its durable heritage was the notion of 'organic works (or labours)': promoted by the Poznań press, it soon after 'made it big' in Polish life.

The Polish intelligentsia was too weak in the Prussian Partition to undertake major social initiatives on its own. It would normally act hand in hand with the landowning gentry, which usually was a more conservative group, although the political differences not necessarily corresponded with those related to property. A few meaningful biographies testify, however, to advancement opportunities that proved feasible under the circumstances of the time and place.

The career of Hipolit Cegielski (b. 1813) was unusual in this respect. Son of a poor leaseholder, he earned his living in his young years as a coach and then as a private tutor in aristocratic houses. A talented student himself, he obtained a governmental scholarship, enabling him to get instruction in philosophy and classical philology at Berlin University. Once back in Poznań, he was employed as a teacher of Latin, Greek, and Polish with the St Mary Magdalene Gymnasium. He wrote and published *Nauka poezji* ['Learning poetry'], a popular handbook-guide, reissued several times afterwards. Cegielski fed the Poznań press with his articles on Polish language and literature; it is worth emphasising, though, that this philologist criticised the excessive appearance of classical languages in the school syllabuses, advocating the idea of creating middle (junior-high; so-called 'real') schools of a more practically-oriented profile. A turning point in his life was his dismissal from the post for his obstinate refusal to have the schoolboys' rooms inspected in search of secret prints. Not willing to render his existence any longer dependent on the whims of the Prussian authorities, he opened at the Bazar an ironworks retail outlet, offering mainly farming implements. Owing to his owner's good relationships with estate owners, the shop proved prosperous; this allowed Cegielski to open three years later a workshop of his own, manufacturing agricultural tools and, soon after, machinery. The Latinist had meanwhile obtained a technological education aligned to his needs, and by the late fifties already ran a factory producing machines and steam threshers that supplied all the Polish areas – the largest manufacturing plant in Greater Poland, in operation to date. A path that had led a resourceful intellectual, of a noble origin, to a career as an industrialist was unique, albeit not only in line with the idea of organic works but also yielding a personal success. It needs to be added that Cegielski never ceased to take an interest in intellectual life: in 1848-9, he

edited a liberal magazine *GazetaPolska*, and ten years later established *Dziennik Poznański* which he furnished with a number of articles that he wrote himself. He also accepted the duties of the Vice-President of the Society for Educational Assistance and as such, again, endeavoured to make the Poznań intelligentsia and landed gentry aware of what a challenge to Poland and what an opportunity for its intelligentsia was the European progress of science and technology. “Telegraphic lines and railroads are weaving us stronger and stronger in a great movement of education, industry, and European interests – both moral and material. This movement will abduct and crush us if we fail to take an active seat within the wheels of its revolution”, he warned the Society’s members in 1853.<sup>125</sup>

The life of Doctor Teofil Matecki is an example of high professional standards combined with a devoted service in favour of national affairs. Born in 1810 to a family of modest means, he joined the Insurrection in the Kingdom in 1831. He managed to get away from the tsarist persecution, but did not choose the émigré’s lot for himself. He studied medicine in Wrocław/Breslau, and passed his physician qualification exams in Berlin; when back in Poznań, he joined the circle of Karol Marcinkowski, but did not keep away from participation in the democratic conspiracy and so did not avoid the detention wave of early 1846. He was one of the accused in the Berlin trial. Released, together with the others, by the 1848 revolution, he returned to the Duchy and started setting up lazarettos for wounded insurgents, and wrestled with the cholera epidemic in the following year. After the untimely death of Marcinkowski, Matecki rose to become the best-known and most respected medic across Poznań and the Province, with a considerable practice to his credit; in parallel, he participated in all the educational and social projects. The Matecki family house (related by marriage to K. Libelt) was “a focus of the national life, always full of visitors, quite a lot of them from abroad, heartily received there”<sup>126</sup>, as a memoirist put it.

A trait of the fifties was a general despondency toward political action, clandestine or legal – as both had left a sediment of disillusion. Although Polish deputies made their appearances in the Prussian parliament in Berlin, Cieszkowski posed time and again his interpellations for a university for Poznań, this was all without a visible result, and so the interest in taking such actions was declining.

The inter-Partition movement became much hindered both for individuals and for the circulation of prints, compared to the preceding decade: with

---

125 H. Cegielski’s speech at a general meeting of the Society, 1853; quoted after: W. Jakóbczyk, ed., *Wielkopolska (1851-1914)*, 277.

126 Marceli Motty, *Przechadzki po mieście*, vol. 1, pp. 318-328.

this, Poznań booksellers-and-publishers were losing their authors and a wider reader market. There were no refreshing intellectual impulses from the outside; the emigration, spiritually lacklustre, also ceased to be the source. The Prussian Province's relations and interests were shrinking into a tight local framework. Letters from the decade's former half express multiple grumblings about the overall apathy, torpor, lethargy, inertness – so many descriptions were used to render the condition that was so harassing to the intelligentsia, and for which it could find no antitoxin! “One is losing any hope that Poland might be here ever again. All is going forth headlong into a precipice; and this apathy [is extinguishing the zest] for the good goals, for the intellectual movement, for unifying and replenishing, all in all, for elevating the spirit, as it has never occurred before”<sup>127</sup>, wrote Libelt in a letter.

His vicissitudes are characteristic to the epoch. His wife inherited a small property in 1850, and the family moved from Poznań to the countryside. The philosopher still exchanged an abundant correspondence – the circle of his mailing friends was joined by, for example, Jan-Nepomucen Janowski, a veteran of the Democratic Society in exile, who in 1851-3 discreetly tarried in the Province. The importance of this exchange of news and thoughts was unlike the one in the previous decade, full of life and expectations. “The time of conspiracy is gone”, Libelt wrote – and it did seem that the time of romanticist poetry and philosophy was passing too. Mickiewicz's poetry was read with piety as before, but his infatuation with Towianism was understood there by nobody. Practicality and usefulness were en vogue now. The scarce surviving Polish newspapers dealt now with unassuming husbandry or household business. Libelt was fretted as there was no public opinion in the Province any more, although he did not strive to keep up his personal authority, being expected to do so. “They do not know”, he wrote in one of his letters, “that who has busied himself with farming in the countryside, he has bid farewell to literature.”<sup>128</sup>

Something of use – modestly, and on a provincial scale – was all the same attempted. Ewaryst Estkowski, a pedagogue, also pitied, in a letter to his friend in Lwów, “what a dilatoriness, in Poznań itself too, the city Libelt had called a few years ago ‘the new Athens.’ This sluggishness is supported by a lack of magazines, particularly, a lack of a political daily...”<sup>129</sup> Yet, Estkowski (b. 1820) was the last of those who could be charged with tardiness or slothfulness. Son of a poor steward

---

127 Libelt to J.N. Janowski, June 1856; *Listy*, pp. 298-9.

128 Libelt, *Listy*, p. 316.

129 *Korespondencja Karola Szajnochy*, vol. 1, p. 289.

of village estates, he stubbornly broke through his elementary school course, often on a dry roll and some tea all day long, then, through a Germanised teacher training seminary and, lastly, Breslau University, which he did not manage to complete due to fund shortages. He became a hothead of popular education – the first one who actively comprehended that this was the field for the battle for the survival of Polish nationality. The Society for Educational Assistance caught talented individuals among the folk, helped them gain an education; having excelled, those wards would rarely return to a village or small town, their native environment, from which they had been lost. Estkowski's will was to inspire the landed gentry, the intelligentsia and priests with the conviction that elementary schools ought to be pulled out from the Prussian bureaucracy's hands; consequently, an immaculate Polish, and basic historical information, should be taught in such schools, so that the Greater-Poland peasantry may stand by Polishness. Moreover, the children should not be taught through fright of abuses and the rod of a lowbrow usher but, instead, in a way approachable to their minds, and engrossing. Estkowski studied the writings and handbooks of the Commission of National Education from the late eighteenth century, read the works of the famous Pestalozzi, the Swiss pedagogy reformer, Trentowski's *Chowanna*, and used those varying sources to knock together his own doctrine and practice – arguably, an eclectic one, and yet innovative, given the conditions. He published a Polish primer and a volume on methodological guidelines, founded a magazine *Szkola Polska* ['The Polish School'] which he mainly filled with his own texts, contending with the authorities' resistance and bewilderment suffered from his peers. He developed the thought of the destroyed Polish League almost completely on his own. He endeavoured to lend professional dignity to elementary teachers, those pariahs among the intelligentsia, and demanded better remuneration for them. Tuberculosis and effort beyond his power finally overpowered him at the age of only thirty-six (in 1856). His magazine and body-of-work were not followed up for some time but a model of ideological work remained of him, and the message to the intelligentsia that there are always things to do, regardless of the conditions, and one must not give in.

The Polish intelligentsia of the Poznań Province, infirm as they were in the face of the actual social and national needs, grappling at every step of their way with the reluctance of the provincial authorities, did all the same have a scant milieu offering mutual support. No such back-up group appeared in the Vistula Pomerania, in Varmia and Mazuria, in Upper Silesia. There, the Poles were mostly a farming populace, displaying some elementary skills, at the utmost; whoever managed to gain some higher-level education would isolate himself through a German school. Pastors and, rarely, teachers were the only intellectuals



to maintain a language contact with the peasant-plebeian society. It sometimes happened that one or the other established the combat for preservation and the rights of the Polish language as his lifetime mission – be it at one’s school, church, office, or court-of-law. 1848 proved to be a strong reinforcement of a belief in the sense of action for such people. Krzysztof Mrongovius (Mrongowiusz; b. 1764), alumnus of Königsberg University, an Evangelical pastor residing in Gdańsk/Danzig, and an author of a Polish grammar compendium, had behind him a huge amount of work done on the preservation of the Mazurians’ and Cashubians’ speech and their language-related rights in the Kingdom of Prussia. His one-generation-younger colleague and associate, Gustav Gisevius (Gustaw Gizewiusz; b. 1810), a pastor in Ostróda/Osterode, while declaring his loyalty to the King of Prussia, was aware that, in keeping with the spirit of the time, language testified to nationality. By resisting the Germanisers, who believed that “supporting the Mazurian Jargon, as Gizewiusz wants it, means a retrograde step for our people’s culture”<sup>130</sup>, the pastor earned trust among the Evangelical Mazurians who elected him their Landtag deputy in 1848; his sudden death in the same year cut his mission short, though.

The rights of the Polish were eagerly defended in the Vistula Pomerania (part of the West Prussia Province) by Ignacy Łyskowski (b. 1820), a landowner from near Brodnica/Strasburg, who had acquired refinement with a few German universities. Since 1848, an activist with the Polish League, he inspired group petitions and interpellations, at the Prussian parliament and the German parliament in Frankfurt, against the project to incorporate the Gdańsk Pomerania in the German Confederation, and in defence of the language that was superseded by the Prussian bureaucracy, the German clergy and the school system. He contributed to the League’s Pomeranian organ *Szkoła Narodowa*, and published a local magazine in Chełmno/Kulm, coupling a work on the peasantry’s national awareness with teaching crop rotation techniques and collecting folk songs.<sup>131</sup>

Pomeranian towns were bi-national, the Germans being backed by favouritism of the state administration and enjoyed, quite frequently, a cultural prevalence. The coexistence of the two nations became more antagonistic after 1848. The Polish movement, led by a part of the landed gentry, a handful of clergy – a

---

130 Quoted after: J. Jasiński, *Poczucie pruskie a polskie Gustawa Gizewiusza* [‘Gustav Gisevius’s Prussian/Polish nationality self-identification’], in: *Między irredentą a kolaboracją* [“], p. 103.

131 Biography of I. Łyskowski, ed. by A. Bukowski, *PSB* [‘The Polish Biographical Dictionary’], vol. 18, pp. 602-5; moreover, *Historia Pomorza* [‘A history of Pomerania’], vol. 3, Part 2, pp. 345-361. [Chociszewski?]

group split language-wise, and some courageous teachers, scarce in number, was only now learning how to use resistance methods in legal forms, spanning many years, with only the germ resources of the professional intelligentsia.

A similarly headstrong effort carried on in Silesia, and for many years, by Józef Lompa (b. 1797), a teacher and newspaper editor; he too collected, and published, part by part, Silesian 'fables and tales', proverbs and songs. A young Krakow archaeologist Józef Łepkowski (b. 1824) succoured him from 1848 onwards. All that meant strenuous and, usually, secluded efforts made by hotheads endeavouring to save a culture that seemed to be languishing. Under the Prussian, formally legalistic, regime, such actions yielded, despite everything, rather modest results – leaving to the successors a model of assiduous and serviceable labour.

# Chapter 4: The End of Tsar Nicholas's epoch

## The Kingdom and the Lithuanian-Ruthenian guberniyas, 1846-1856

### 1. Off to Siberia!

“Don’t you trifle with scoundrels”, the Emperor wrote in 1846 to his loyal Viceroy in Warsaw, “but court-martial them mercilessly, there is no other way to tackle them. If there is a number of guilty ones in that gymnasium, you do order to close it down. [...] Send the youngsters to their parents, and dispatch the teachers into the depths of Russia, if they are dubious but a little; and so you do in the future too.”<sup>132</sup> Paskevich followed the recommendation and this gendarme-style socio-technology proved extremely effectual. 1846 saw Krakow and Galicia seethe, whereas the lands subdued to Russian rule were the scene of just one incident, which paid the price of three plotters hanged and the other few sent to *katorga*. In the Empire’s Lithuanian *guberniyas*, small groups of complotting Poles did not even dare to take up arms, but the police agents picked up their trail all the same: the Wilno and Kowno Inquiry Committees were kept busy for many months.

In the spring of 1848, almost the whole of Europe was shaken – Russia remaining unaffected. Notified of the revolutions in France, Austria and Prussia, Nicholas I put his army, gendarmerie, spies, and civil servants on the highest alert. Reinforced troops were sent to the western border, with more censors dispatched to post-offices to unseal letters and read them. Uvarov, the Minister of Education, ordered the superintendents to keep an eye open for “the spirit of what is lectured at schools” as well as “the students’ conduct and way of thinking”, with the purpose “that redundant sophistries of maleficent innovators be prevented from penetrating into our numerous scientific institutions”. “The youth”, he went on instructing, ought to be imbued with “humbleness against the authorities” and “the conviction of the necessity and beneficial quality of the cardinal institutions of our government”.<sup>133</sup> While imbuing with humbleness probably did not end up in a success, as opposed to something like coming to terms with the prevalent reality, and a fear of Siberia.

---

132 Quoted after: J. Kucharzewski, *Epoka Paskiewiczowska* [‘The Paskevicz period’], p. 302.

133 *Ibidem*, pp. 317-8.

While no local newspaper was allowed to cover the revolutionary occurrences from the outside world, the news was all the more bumped up by the communal rumours disseminated by word of mouth. It was expected that a Prussian army would soon enter the Kingdom and afterwards, Lithuania, followed by Polish legions led by Mieroslawski, and so the whole country would rise up. On awaiting such adventures, clandestine associations, already reborn in Warsaw and Wilno, crouched down, giving not much sign of life.

A Lithuanian Youth's Fraternal Association was branching out in Wilno, attracting, in the first place, upper-grade gymnasium students, along with graduates, tutors, clerks, and a few seminary students. These young people were propelled by the Romantic spirit – secretly reading Mickiewicz's poems, *The Uprising of the Polish Nation* by Mochnacki, the Democratic Society's manifesto. Following the Wilno Philomaths of the 1820s, they intended to steer their peers away from playing cards and other frivolous forms of entertainment, ameliorate the mores, and buoy up Polish nationality. Their background was, in most cases, non-affluent petty nobility, multiplied in Lithuania, and denied their rights by the tsarist legal system. Suffering debasement at every turn, they were compelled to hold back their sentiments and attachments, feeling unanimous with their elder colleagues dispatched in *kibitka* hooded carts to Siberia. They dreamed of a Poland of free and equal people, one where peasants, Jews, and others would be citizens with full rights. They managed to gain for their organisation a host of Wilno craftsmen, mostly apprentices, some of whom were also of noble parentage. In 1848 they desired to proceed to action, waiting for a signal to start; yet, no signal came. In his appeal from Paris to his compatriots, Prince Czartoryski recommended that they remain patient, so that “the country is not driven again to inopportune and atrocious disasters, to the detriment of its prospective fortunes”<sup>134</sup>. This opinion was shared by local men of authority, the prudent people.

Young people were meanwhile typically more impatient and became excited once again by the Hungarian evens of 1849. In Wilno, Lida, and Minsk, as everywhere else, they were raising their spirits by fantasising that a Hungarian corps led by Generals Józef Bem and Henryk Dembiński would cross the Carpathians any day, stride into Galicia and then, into Ruthenia and Lithuania; the only question was whether to wait for the Hungarians to come or to start an uprising without them. There was nothing to start with, though, and there was no one to

---

134 Cf. D. Fajnhauz, *Ruch konspiracyjny na Litwie i Białorusi* [‘The conspiratorial movement in Lithuania and Belorussia’], p. 249.

commence such actions soon after: before they managed to achieve anything, the gendarmerie husked them, one after the other – first, the craftsmen and soon after, the entire fraternity. Thus, a series of long prison talks with the Wilno Inquiry Committee began.

The organisation based in the Kingdom was more grown-up and better versed in the international situation. Democratic-Society emissaries exhorted to set up such an organisation in 1847, but their influence on it was not significant, as a result. The idea to have it established was conceived within the milieu of Warsaw lawyers and graduates from Moscow University. As remarked above, Paskevich would send talented students from the Warsaw Law Courses to Moscow and Petersburg, so they could be educated there, at the government's expense, into loyal officials and judges for the Kingdom. Meanwhile, the intellectual climate at Moscow University, where the liberals disputed with Slavophiles, was stimulating and did not at all foster an education of cringers. Polish students returned to the Kingdom holding their doctoral degrees (as 'Candidates of the Laws') – and cherishing aspirations not to be satisfied with the ancillary post they were offered with any of the *guberniya* governments. They found it tautly, dull and hollow there; they greedily read the smuggled books that opened their minds to a broader world of ideas: apart from the prophet-bards' verse, Mickiewicz's *Lectures on Slavic literatures*, works by Trentowski and Cieszkowski, and, obviously, by Hegel and Tocqueville were all on their reading lists. The revolutionary movement of the year 1848 seemed to be an opportunity for Poland not only to regain independence but also, to connect with the European thought current.

Knowledgeable about the errors committed by their predecessors, the Warsaw conspirators of 1848, all aged twenty-five to thirty, acted carefully and not overly emotionally. They did not introduce ritual oaths, or canvass zealous youths, and endeavoured to observe the rules of conspiracy. They gradually expanded their contacts to the Kingdom's provincial areas, but did not find it easy to reach beyond their own sphere. The landowning gentry had too much to lose and so did not crave for a risky game for freedom. The association, with the membership peaking at some 200, was definitely intellectual: the leading group (ca. 40%) were officials, apprentices or trainees with a law degree, the remainder were formed of attorneys, teachers, physicians, pharmacists, writers, artists, leaseholders, clerks and scribes, railroad-men and craftsmen. Contrary to what was in Lithuania, their class background did not mean much to them: what counted was who they had become, rather than who had delivered them.

A few priests attached themselves to the organisation. Moreover, a few or perhaps a dozen-or-so females were enlisted with the secret association, for the first

time ever, and on equal terms. These women were to play an essential part in this organisation, particularly in their mission as messengers maintaining contact with the Poznań-based National Committee and smuggling publications from behind the Prussian or Austrian frontier. Those ladies were members of the 'enthusiastesses' and *Przegląd Naukowy* circle: Anna Skimborowicz, wife of the monthly's editor, and the authoress Narcyza Żmichowska strongly marked their participation.

The organisation successfully endured through the unquiet time as it behaved quietly without making its presence felt. This prudence protected its members from capital punishment but not from being unmasked, which followed step by step from autumn 1849. All the significant activists and leaders of the associations, once gaoled at the Citadel, started making their testimonies in writing, with their own hand: the more profuse they were, the higher the source value of his or her confession for historians.

Two of the members, who knew virtually the whole structure and cast of their organisation, gave up dozens of their comrades in the investigation, thus gaining a relative clemency from the judges, up to release (in a single instance). Others entered into a tough game with the Inquiry Committee, who were trying to divulge only the facts that must have been known to them from other reports. Some could meander like that for two years in their lonely imprisonment. In most cases, though, it would sooner or later end up in a 'sincere confession.'

The fight was fought by Henryk Krajewski, the organisation's founder and chief leader. Holder of a Candidate-of-the-Laws degree from Moscow University, this Warsaw Governorate Government official was arrested in February 1850 and long denied his membership with the association. He made his first testimony a year later, shifting responsibility for the managing the organisation onto his deputy, who was also detained but had by then become the main informer to the police. Krajewski represented himself as a philosopher who searched for ways of mental and moral improvement of the nation, which was not even an attempted offence, as he highlighted, for chatter was the utmost outcome: "it was just words, talks, debates. [...] I have heard several times here that the whole affair is a stupidity. I would agree, to the extent that we did no reasonable a thing, but it seems to me that there was nothing stupid that we were doing, and this is because we were doing nothing"<sup>135</sup>

---

135 Inquisition testimony by H. Krajewski, *Wiosna Ludów w Królestwie Polskim* ['The Spring of the Nations in the Kingdom of Poland'], pp. 420-1.

The Commission was not, of course, satisfied with such self-criticism. It was not particularly keen on philosophical or literary issues but always wanted to know who hatched plots and with whom; who, and to whom, handed in or recommended a banned book, and what book it was specifically. When Krajewski's second testimony, equally estimable and clever, was deemed insincere once again, he laid violent hands on himself. He was rescued, and his interrogation was continued; the delator was placed 'into his eyes', and Krajewski made him feel his contempt. The Commission finally decided "that there can be no hope relative to the sincerity and betterment of this culprit" and so court-martialled him, but the Court Martial was not successful, either, in inciting him to plead guilty, or to indicate his accomplices.<sup>136</sup>

Imprisonment and inquisition, somewhat less brutal than those applied to her male peers, did not break Narcyza Żmichowska's back. She did not want to tell lies, or maybe was not able to, even if her interlocutor was the notorious police general Yolshin who gloried in his ability to squeeze the truth of vices committed from anyone. The Commission demanded a 'sincere confession' from her, so Narcyza wrote down for them the story of her entire life, experiences and friendships – a true and explicit story, silent about illegal contacts and works. Yet, there was much she must have known about, as she served the organisation as a courier, maintaining communication with Poznań and Krakow. A few more women from that circle served a shorter or longer time at the custody suite, usually keeping on bravely.

Żmichowska's gaol was in Lublin; although tackled bearably herself, she was shocked by the fact that some of her conspiratorial comrades revealed to the Commission everything they knew. Having made her written 'testimony', she did not answer any question. Having endured more than eighteen months of questioning, she eventually consented to write another 'deposition', which all the more deserves being put in inverted commas. This document is extraordinary: a prisoner waiting to be sentenced accuses the tsarist authorities not of the partition itself but, this time, of the systematic depravation of Polish society. Żmichowska writes about the moral and family-related effects of conscription to the tsarist army (with conscripts being enlisted for fifteen to twenty-five years!); the children being levied for the Cantonist Corps; the nobility titles and privileges being resurrected; the inefficient, and thus lamentable, denationalisation policy; the enlistments of informers snooping in their milieus; the spirit-breaking techniques applied in the investigation.

---

136 Ibidem, pp. 435; 444-5.

There is no identifiable trace indicative of the Inquiry Committee overly concerning themselves with this peculiar ‘testimony’, but no special revenge was taken either. Having spent almost thirty months in the remand prison, Żmichowska was partly freed without trial – specifically, she was allowed to dwell at her family’s place in Lublin, under police custody, without the right to leave the city.

Her friends were to face severer administrative or court verdicts, which was, almost, much of a muchness, since the court martial consisted of a single, brief and formal, interrogation without an attorney, the verdicts were determined in default and approved by Section III of the Imperial Chancellery in Petersburg (which dealt with tracing political threats) and signed by the tsar himself, and read out to the convicts moments before their execution or deportation. Death sentences were carried out not so quite often: they were basically limited to those political offenders who were caught with arms in their hands (like the three unfortunate 1846 insurgents), or the extremely dangerous emissaries – such as Szymon Konarski who was executed in Wilno in 1839. A practice sometimes employed, certainly in the Kingdom, was that the sentenced man first heard his sentence to be hanged, and only once having stepped up the scaffold, the noose put on, could he hear the tsar’s deed of mercy, which meant that the execution was replaced by *katorga*.

The condemned were categorised by their type of adjudicated punishment. Induction with the army (*‘idti v soldaty’*, as the popular Russian phrase went), with the assignment to join one of the frontier corps – the Caucasian or Orenburg one – was formally a lenient but in practice, the most poignant punishment. The military service lasted, essentially, fifteen years, and participation – especially when in the Caucasus – in cruel and bloody expeditions against the revolting mountaineer tribes was a must. Surviving such adventures, and saving honour in those circumstances, verily called for unusual fortitude, and luck. “The most awkward facet, perhaps, of the *soldat service* was the moral right to perpetually humiliate [the enlisted soldiers], which ensued from the relation of the *soldat’s* dependence upon the entire range of his superiors. [...] Guard-standing and drilling ranked amongst the physical afflictions attached to the *soldat service*. Many of our brothers have fallen of powerlessness under their burden. [...] Nothing to say about those who have spent their whole life with a book or at an office table, of whom so many were raped directly from their school bench! For each of them, the *soldat service* was a real agony, not yielding to the hard labour at a mine”<sup>137</sup>, one of the convicts wrote.

---

137 W. Staniszewski, *Pamiętniki więźnia stanu* [‘Memoirs of a prisoner-of-state’], p. 268



All the deportees found their trip to Siberia their toughest experience: bound to wear heavy shackles (unless the prisoner was a nobleman), they rushed, contained in a gendarme *kibitka* mercilessly bumping along on the pot-holes, or walked thousands of miles on foot, fixed with chains, one after the other, to an iron rod. Such an itinerary could well have lasted some twelve months, with 'stage imprisonment' interruptions, the descriptions of which are usually the most frightening chapter in *Sybir* (Siberia-related) memoirs. Many never reached their allocated destination.

For those who, in turn, luckily did arrive there, the detention settings usually turned out less horrible than expected. The lead and silver mines in Nerchinsk, beyond Baikal Lake, where most of the *katorzhniki* (hard-labour convicts) were directed, were reluctant to employ political prisoners that were not robust or trained enough to do the mining work and were expected to work wheelbarrow-bound. Thus, in most cases, *katorga* labour was done in a nearby factory – a salina, for instance, and normally it did not exceed a few years, or even months, which was followed by entering into the rights of an ordinary deportee.

The exiles were dispersed across many localities of southern Siberia (of which a western and eastern part was discerned) and European Russia. The Poles absolutely formed the most numerous share of the deportee population – and its best-educated group. The local governors and commandants of mining establishments who were responsible for the supervision of exiles usually realised that their inmates' skills could be made of better use than simply making them do hard physical labour. Those with means available were allowed to rent an accommodation within the town and could enjoy the freedom of moving around the closest vicinity. Quite many, if their command of Russian was satisfactory enough, were offered a job as a clerk with the *guberniya* government. Many Polish exiles earned their wages as tutors instructing the children of local dignitaries or merchants – teaching languages (French or German), in most cases; sometimes, drawing or music. Astonishing careers were sometimes the case along these lines: Konstanty Wolicki, for example, who was arrested in 1833 at his Kuyavian estate, for having given a hand to one of the fleeing insurgents of the Zaliwski riot, was made bandmaster of the governmental orchestra in Tobolsk. The first rehearsal with the ensemble over, "I luckily establish for myself the repute", he joked years afterwards, "and grew to a notability of an Asian Bethowen [*sic*; Beethoven] and was strictly maintained in this opinion [...] for the entire seven years"<sup>138</sup>

---

138 K. Wolicki, *Wspomnienia z czasów pobytu w cytadeli warszawskiej i na Syberji* ['Recollections from the time of my stay at the Warsaw Citadel and in Siberia'], p. 84; cf.

These are anecdotal and extreme instances, the fact being that Polish convicts entered, in many a Siberian town, into neighbourly relations with the local elites, thus winning alleviated conditions for their stay, to an extent. Physicians fared quite well: albeit not formally allowed to pursue their practice in exile, their skills were willingly used. Antoni Beaupré, the medical doctor from Krzemieniec, sentenced to death for his contribution to the Konarski affair but eventually deported for twenty years to the Nerchinsk mines, earned a considerable fortune there, which enabled him to take a grange on lease, employ *katorzhniks* and policemen there, extend care to his companions in exile, and run an open 'Polish house' with a library, which became a muster site for deportees from the entire Baikal area – or, to be more specific, *Zabaykalsky* land.<sup>139</sup>

The story of Franciszek Sawicz, another helper of Konarski's, is really unusual. Son of an Uniate priest from Polesia, he was the charismatic founder and inspirer of a democratic circle of students at the Wilno Medical Academy; before he completed his own studies, he entrusted himself and his association to Konarski, sharing his deeds and intents. And, he did pay his price: following an extremely brutal investigation, he was induced with one of the Caucasian regiments. He deserted, changed his identity and apparition, and wandered across the Ukraine; caught as a tramp, but not recognised by the police, he escaped again, and settled in a small town called Janishpol – to make a name for himself there as a disinterested physician of the indigent, almost a saintly man. He died a sudden death during a cholera epidemic in 1846, having revealed his secret to a Polish poet.<sup>140</sup>

Incidentally, it is worth mentioning that Polish doctors with their studies completed in Russia on governmental scholarships could be encountered in frontier military corps as they were bound, in exchange, to work off ten years with the army.

However, not that many *sybiraks* (Siberian deportees) held a diploma confirming their professional qualifications, and the great challenge for all was to endure the slowly-dripping empty days, months, and years. The exiles tackled their lot in a variety of ways, not infrequently filling their time by playing cards and drinking vodka, albeit many reports in the letters and memoirs testify to an agitation, and sense of a wasted life, they were devoured as: "The fond grows

---

W. Śliwowska, *Zesłańcy polscy w Imperium Rosyjskim w I połowie XIX wieku* ['Polish deportees in the Russian Empire in 1<sup>st</sup> half of 19<sup>th</sup> century'], pp. 680-1.

139 I owe the information on doctor Beaupré's Siberian activity to Prof. Wiktoria Śliwowska; see also: W. Śliwowska, *Ucieczki z Sybiru* ['Escapes from Siberia'], pp. 108, 119, etc.

140 For a biography of F. Sawicz, prepared by W. Śliwowska, see: PSB, vol. 35, pp. 351-2.

duller, the mind becomes more and more indolent, any will to work is perishing; you live, or rather, vegetate day by day.<sup>141</sup> Some did at least try, at any cost, to break this apathy and, in the natural order of things, developed their interest in the exotic world that surrounded them: hence, the numerous Polish descriptions of Siberian nature and Siberian peoples, their beliefs, customs and mores. Those studies were not carried out according to a scientific methodology: they were mostly, amateurish observations, however, they did testify to the need to transgress the vicious circle of the native affairs circle and one's own grief-stricken lot – and, indeed, the skill of doing so.

This sometimes implied the idea that the history of the exile community would also deserve to be preserved, or recorded. Generations encountered each other there: the thirties' and forties' exiles could still meet the last Philomaths, that is, Wilno students sentenced back in the twenties: and they inherited considerable-sized libraries from them, incessantly enriched with consignments received from Poland and books miraculously smuggled through all the stages of the roam. They had time to read and to talk, once there. They moreover made acquaintances with Russian Decembrists and found common ground with some of them – for instance, with Mikhail Lunin or Sergey Volkonsky.

Agaton Giller (b. 1831) was a non-nobleman and thus walked all the way to Irkutsk, led on a chain; still, this did not deny his boundless interest in the surrounding world and a conviction that it was his duty to record the Polish vicissitudes in it. His description of the Baikal territory, *Opisanie zabajkalskiej krainy*, testifies to his willingness to notify his readers of everything – starting from meteorology details, through to Polish graves he meticulously detected in the local cemeteries (in 1855) and took records of, finding out about the lives and merits of the buried. This made him a sort of bond between the cohorts of expatriates from the different periods – and the first historian of the Polish-Siberian diaspora.<sup>142</sup>

The number of *katorzhniks* and exiles from the inquisitions of the 1830s and 1840s – from the Kingdom, Lithuania and Ruthenia, escapees denounced by Austria and Prussia included, was an estimated 1,500. That was certainly not a huge number given the area of the Caucasus, the Arkhangelsk and the Orenburg *Guberniyas*, the Kyrgyz steppes, and western and eastern Siberia. Yet, it marked a dramatic depletion of the scare Polish intelligentsia: if not the most prudent, then at least no doubt the most idealistic group of youths, who were

---

141 Quoted from a letter by Dionizy Skarżyński, in: P. Wilkońska, *Moje wspomnienia* [‘My memoirs’], p. 311.

142 A. Giller, *Opisanie Zabajkalskiej krainy w Syberyi* [‘A description of the Zabaykalsky land in Siberia’], 3 vols., Leipzig 1867.

being educated or already with some educational background, and had had to interrupt their only-just-commenced adult life and the work performed for their own and for their country's benefit. Fifteen or twenty years torn out of their lives was the price they paid for reading banned books, having unlicensed thoughts and sharing unauthorised daydreams, and establishing illicit associations.

Maintaining a connection with their family, country, and, finally, with Europe was of extreme importance to these people: their psychological fitness depended upon it, and this was important to their relatives too, keenly sensing their absence and waiting to see them back home. Letters were sometimes delivered one-way in a matter of several months, with a stop at Section III's censorship unit.<sup>143</sup> Usually, however, they would reach their addressees – if expressions or news potentially triggering the censors' suspicion were avoided. Regardless of family correspondences, or in their replacement, when family ties were torn for ill-fated reasons, there were a few women in Poland who devoted themselves entirely to the contact maintenance mission. Róża Sobańska (b. 1798) and Ksawera Grocholska (b. 1807), friends from affluent Podolia families, ran the ramified care action, sending letters, newspapers, prayer-books and other books, stationery, musical instruments, pipe tobacco, gardening seeds, and whatever else might have been needed by those in Siberia. Also, they facilitated trips for the wives or fiancées, if ready to join their dearest ones. Emilia Gosselin, one of the former 'enthusiastesses', coordinated a similar activity in Warsaw.

All this could make the dolour of separation easier to bear. The exiles themselves endeavoured to maintain brotherly bonds between them. Wherever there lived a dozen-or-so, or several dozen, deportees, in a town or thereabouts, they would form a 'community', a gathering, whoever was available, to chitchat in the evenings, meet to celebrate feasts together, share pieces of news and income support received from their home country. Their memories tended to idealise those ties afterwards, naming them a "tangle of spiritual kinship" or the "solidarity of the exile-brethren"<sup>144</sup>, consigning to oblivion any episodes which could have stained the picture. It is a matter of fact all the same that such relations, an instrument of reciprocal control, helped keep up high ethical standards – an aspect not to be neglected, given a situation that fostered neuroses and dissensions.

The deportees formed an almost entirely male community. Women, if ever condemned to deportation, would usually serve their sentence in a European-Russian

---

143 Section III of the Imperial Chancellery exercised political surveillance over the Russian intelligence and gendarmerie.

144 W. Staniszewski, *Pamiętnik więźnia...* ['Memorials of a prisoner ...'], pp. 185, 271, etc.

*guberniya*. In Siberia, very few could enjoy the company of their wives or fiancées joining them. These men, mostly young, found female partners for themselves locally: the fraternal opinion – exactly the opposite of its domestic counterpart – tolerated informal relationships, while scornfully berating marriages with Orthodox wives, considering them to be a national apostasy and confessional schism, and the husband's implicit declaration of staying for good in his exile location.

The belief in returning home, back with the family and mother country again, raised spirits and was a moral commandment – like it was with the émigrés. The remaining years of exile were counted down, amnesty or clemency was awaited. Few resolved to flee: it was a risky venture, more than words can say. Once a deportee disappeared, the whole police apparatus of the grand Empire would start hunting for him, often supported by the corruptible local peasants, especially, the Buriats in the Baikal area. The chance for one to dodge the chase and reach as far as beyond the European frontier of Russia was infinitesimal, although the option was successfully used, with a series of thrilling adventures, by some individuals gifted with cunning, good health, language skills, and not denied that indispensable bit of luck. If caught fleeing, the wretch was subject to the cruel and humiliating penalty of whipping, with the regime, now reinstating a severer *katorzhnik*. To make the things worse, he could not even count on compassion from his companions in distress as they did not welcome such individual stunts: maximum-security measures were suffered by all of them ever since.<sup>145</sup>

Around the year 1852, once the repression apparatus finally disposed of the Warsaw and Wilno complotters, new convicts no longer appeared in the remote *guberniyas*. Among the last to arrive there were volunteers hasting in 1849 to join the Polish legion in Hungary, if having been caught or taken captive by Paskovich's intervention corps or given out to the Russians by the Austrians. The romantic epoch of Polish conspiracies was declining – or at least it seemed so. The hopes bred by the Spring of Nations of 1848, now buried across the three Partitions, eventually disillusioned the proud, whereas the nobility and the intelligentsia at large saw the vainness of the infantile endeavours.

## 2. Professional environments

The memory of youthful upsurges and of those temporarily absent, whose lives had been stigmatised for many years, had to recede somewhere to the back of one's mind. The prose of daily life, contained within the county or, at the utmost,

---

145 W. Śliwowska, *Ucieczki z Sybiru*, passim.

a single partitioned province, now categorically surfaced to the forefront. In the Russian Partition, the years of the European revolution left no heroic legend to recollect anyway, more peculiar to it was a complex of non-fulfilment – and yet even this is difficult to prove.

The Kingdom's landscape was changing insignificantly. The Huta Bankowa steelworks in Dąbrowa and other mining establishments of the Bank Polski ['Polish Bank'] located around it, now run at the expense and under the supervision of the governmental Treasury Commission, were immersed in a crisis and operated at a fraction of their theoretical capacity. Democratic mail coaches carried passengers of all the classes along the bumpy roads. Two steamships appeared on the Vistula, arousing a sensation: they were to commence a regular steamer navigation, as long as the river did not dry out or rise excessively, and the boilers did not go out of order, by chance. The Kingdom's first railroad was of a greater practical significance: in 1848, owing to the State Treasury's effort, the line reached the Austrian border, thus connecting Warsaw and Krakow, and, indirectly, Vienna – as its name heralded (the 'Warsaw-Vienna Railroad'); soon after, Katowice and Wrocław/Breslau, through Silesia, were incorporated in the network. The electrical telegraph was a novel, imagination-capturing invention: now, the Tsar in Petersburg could be informed within a few minutes about what was happening in his Kingdom of Poland; Warsaw bankers could, in turn, learn the price of wheat in Amsterdam or the price of shares in London without delay.

In spite of those novelties, travellers crossing the state border between Prussia and Russia were gaining the impression that they had all of a sudden landed on another continent: so striking was the slovenliness, poverty, negligence and untidiness; the importunity of the customs officers and gendarmes; the corruptibility of officials. Obtaining a passport to go abroad with was still a proof of grace; instead, in his strife for blurring the differences between the Kingdom and the Empire, Nicholas I repealed in 1850 the customs frontier between them. This yielded multiple consequences. The best advantage was taken by the young cotton industry, which ensconced itself in the area of Łódź, suddenly seeing the vast and absorptive Russian market staying open for it, which was particularly true for the unindustrialised Lithuanian-Ukrainian *guberniyas*. The Łódź manufacturers could take advantage of the market tide.

The 'landed citizens', merchants and intelligentsia members from the Wilno and Grodno regions, and from Volhynia, could now travel to the Kingdom, and vice versa, without a permit. Family and friendly meetings, many after years of separation, revealed mentality dissimilarities at times: even under the gruesome rule of *Namiestnik* Paskevich, the Kingdom was still a scrap of Poland and was going through a democratic, even if superficial, education. For instance, noble

titles did not mean much anymore even for those who could identify themselves before the Heroldia officials. Behind the Bug and Niemen Rivers, the estate or class rights still set impassable social divisions and determined an individual's position. In the Kingdom, it was not the done thing to give a volunteer son away to the tsarist military, or at least to boast about it; in Lithuania or Ruthenia, no one among the Polish nobility was scandalised any more at it.

In the middle of the century, class differences grew clearly acuter in the Russian and Austrian Partition territories: Wielkopolska, then under Prussian rule, was the only area where the educated intelligentsia and educated landed gentry formed milieus communicating with each other without showing arrogance or 'ancestral pride'. In the Russian Partition, the distance separating these two classes had grown plain by that time, which is not to tell us that the historical stereotypes of an always-reactionary nobility versus an always-progressive intelligentsia should be trusted. It all varied by case: the story of the lives of Edward Dembowski and Henryk Kamieński, as recalled before, is convincing evidence that revolutionary thought and liberality could hatch upon a rich hereditary domain. Yet, the landowning nobility, or gentry, taken in its generality, was trammelled by the still-present economic and psychological dependence upon the feudal service, if not peasant serfdom, as in Lithuania and Ruthenia. This bothersome estate-related privilege had long before been cursed by democratic thought – as for the idea; it turned out not to be capable of ousting it in practice, though.

In this respect, Russia, together with its annexed territories, was a European relic of an agrarian feudalism which resisted the rights of the market and the rights of humans. The intelligentsia were free from this ballast, regardless of their background – and their background milieus were varied. It is obvious that a noble origin appears in most cases with lists of people of various intellectual professions; yet, this is a qualified remark. Firstly, the school forms and duty files, the resources that we rely on most, had not all of their blanks filled in. Secondly, the offices still adhered to the estate/class nomenclature which, especially in the Kingdom, no longer reflected the actual social splits and so its informative quality is low. Thirdly, as has already been said, the offices followed the Russian pattern of creating an extra 'clerical class', along with the nobility and the bourgeoisie – an aspect that further blears the clarity of categorisation. Lastly, following a dozen-or-so years of the 'Nobility Law' of 1836 as the binding law, a numerous category of 'non-identity nobility' [Polish, *szlachta niewylegitymowana*] emerged, encompassing families which, due to their insufficient keenness or lack of the necessary documentation, did not manage to prove their estate rights before the Heroldia, and yet were not completely deprived of them. All this makes the period's social background statistics untrustworthy.

The tsarist education policy got entangled in a contradiction: on the one hand, the authorities did not trust the Polish nobility, whilst on the other, they endeavoured to introduce in Lithuanian-Ruthenian *guberniyas* the estate or class arrangements similar to those prevailing in the rest of Russia, clearly privileging the noble estate proprietors. One zealous deliverer of this policy was Pavel Mukhanov, the infamous superintendent of the Warsaw School District; his counterparts in the Kiev and Wilno districts were not second to him.

A rule that did not change over the years claimed that young people did not need to gain knowledge above the level regarded as indispensable for the individual's own class and profession. For instance, as regards 'minor' elementary schools, numbering in excess of 1,200 in the Kingdom, the superintendent recommended that the teachers be selected "among the local populace", rather than "learned men": the thing is that a teacher "ought to stick to the knowledge standard as only indispensable for the peasants and urban population of the lowest class, excelling in honesty, modesty, [...] obedience to the Throne, observance of the laws and respect for the authorities, and, as far as practicable, shunning any love for ideals."<sup>146</sup>

Fourth or fifth-grade county schools were devised for the bourgeois and indigent-noble youth. Some of them were transformed into 'real' (middle or junior-high) schools whose orientation was, by definition, mainly technical and computational. The authorities' chief concern was to protect young minds from unnecessary 'reasoning', be it mathematical.

Also, seventh or eighth-grade gymnasiums were classed into 'philological' (that is, comprehensive, according to the mould of the time) and 'real' ones. Only graduates from the former were authorised to enter a university or governmental service. One such school was left in each *guberniya*, accessible basically only to the self-identifiable nobility, state officials, and army officers. A small number of sons of merchants or of people of unknown class could be permitted to study upon payment of a few-fold higher entry fee and annual fee. In Russia, though, harsh regulations could at times be softened by bribery, so headmasters did not always scrupulously check the entrant's Heroldia certificates.

The trend set by the government thus openly placed a bet on reconstructing the fading estate divisions and education barriers. In Lithuanian-Ruthenian *guberniyas*, where class and, among the nobility, property-related splits, were

---

146 From Mukhanov's memorandum of 1850; quoted after: K. Poznański, *Oświata i szkolnictwo w Królestwie Polskim* ['The education and schooling system in the Kingdom of Poland'], vol. 3, p. 172.



very clear, such an education policy could seem natural; yet, it perforce placed the Polish landed gentry in a privileged position, which was not the government's actual intent. In the Kingdom, however, where democratic notions had already taken root, such a retrograde pursuit did not enjoy popularity. In spite of this, the government formed even more elitist boarding schools – in Warsaw, Wilno, Grodno, and Minsk – called 'nobility institutions'. To have a son placed and provided for there was a costly venture, and yet – as far as it may be known – the number of applications usually exceeded the vacancies available: graduation from either of such institutions was to pave the way open for a civil or military career, which had become by the middle of the century a seductive prospect, at least in Lithuania and the Ukraine.

For the urban and petty-nobility youth craving for education, 'real' gymnasiums, offering a more practical profile, were allocated. Schools of this type appeared everywhere in Europe in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as the developments in industry, commerce, banking and transport called for employees qualified otherwise than a proficiency in Latin grammar or trigonometry. The Warsaw 'real' gymnasium was regarded as a better school than its parallel philological schools anyway. Thus, regardless of the Russian government's intent, 'real' gymnasium students could reap their benefits.

In general, however, an educational policy of this sort resulted, first of all, in a decreased number of gymnasium students, in spite of an increased population; second of all, the social composition of the students and graduates was forced, in some measure, toward a bigger share of the nobility and the officials' children. As has been remarked here and there, the figures prove uncertain, but the scale of change is impressive. The school year 1846-7 saw a total of 3,600 students attending eight gymnasia in the Kingdom, whereas in 1855-6, the six preserved gymnasia had only 1,500 pupils, which marked a revealing collapse – all the deeper that the Warsaw 'real' gymnasium saw the number of students drop rapidly from 1850, a result of increased fees, whilst it grew for county schools where the course of education was completed at the age of twelve, on average.<sup>147</sup>

The number of students at school, without a division into grades, is not-too-trustworthy anyhow, for the upper gymnasium levels were losing their students year by year, be it for financial reasons or because parents did not regard the further education of their kids as indispensable. The eighth grade, which was

---

147 J. Kucharzewski, *Epoka Paskiewiczowska ...*, pp. 560-570; J. Schiller, *Portret zbiorowy nauczycieli warszawskich* [A group portrait of the Warsaw teachers?], pp. 91-92.

the final grade, was sometimes twice less populated than the fifth.<sup>148</sup> The system thus repeatedly produced a class of an undereducated intelligentsia, without any clearly defined skills.

Rather than facilitations for the landowning nobility, discrimination against young people of a worse origin was the case: they found it increasingly difficult to enrol with a gymnasium – this was particularly true for Lithuanian-Ruthenian *guberniyas* where the offspring of unidentifiable, small-farmer nobles or of nobles already registered as the *bourgeois*' estate were displaced from “higher scientific institutions” by the government's decision.

The tsar, his ministers and his superintendents were convinced that the schools ought to identically reflect the order that was kept throughout the state – which meant absolute obedience to superiors, with any initiative on the part of the educators or their wards dampened. Teachers were supposed to, willy-nilly, fulfil police and censorship functions as well; moreover, each of the schools had its so-called ‘inspector’ as well as its ‘custodians’ – predominantly, veteran warrant-officers whose task it was to supervise the political and moral order, report on, and punish, any and all infringements and deviations. The regulations overtly awarded informing, which was perceived in terms of obligation, and virtue.

Considerable attention was attached to everyday religious practices and attendance at Orthodox church services, regardless of the pupil's confession, on dynastic celebration days. The collective memory has primarily recorded the authorities' fight with beards and long hair. Both were categorically forbidden: beards, because so-called ‘Garibaldi-style beards’ (*garibaldkas*) were en vogue, grown as a sign of kinship with the Italian national movement hero. Long hair was regarded “as a trait of a revolutionary disposition”. A moustache was an insolent act of owning up to the republican and Sarmatian tradition. In any case, “once caught in the street, the moustache-wearer would be led to the town-hall, and then released, clean-shaven, having done his time”<sup>149</sup>

A pedagogy of this kind was binding across the state – and especially in Polish schools, or such where Polish students prevailed. An essential difference remained however between the Kingdom and the Empire's western *guberniyas*. The Kingdom under Viceroy Paskevich did not pursue a denationalisation policy.

---

148 R. Czepulis-Rastenis, *Szkolnictwo* [‘The educational system’], in: *Przemiany społeczne w Królestwie Polskim* [‘Social transformations in the Kingdom of Poland’], p. 192.

149 I. Baranowski, *Pamiętniki* [‘Memoirs’], pp. 61, 65; for more, see: J. Jedlicki, „*Golono, strzyżono...*”, in: *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 1971, No. 46.

The role of the school was indeed to inculcate love and reverence toward the Emperor and Russia into the students; the Russian language was taught, along with the literature, history, and geography of Russia, and their general counterparts; still, most of the subjects were taught in Polish. No patriotic poetry or post-Partition history was even mentioned, whether in the handbooks or in the lessons: the knowledge of both was fading already in the student generation of the fifties; so say the memoirists. For all that, it is hard to juxtapose this with the situation in the schools of the Wilno and Kiev educational districts, where ‘Catholic’ (that is, Polish) teachers were being replaced by ‘Orthodox’ ones, the teaching language was Russian, with Polish having either been completely ousted or regarded as a facultative subject. For those willing to pursue a career as an official or teacher in those areas, evidenced loyalty and obedience was not sufficient, unlike in Warsaw: one had to be converted and metamorphose into a Russian.

The school system at all – regardless of the territory – was in the first place to serve the purpose of forming up a committed and reliably faithful corps of functionaries, also out of Polish intelligentsia members. And this policy was not inefficient. For lower-tier clerks, it must definitely have been humiliating, forcing them to incessant dissimulation. A way to break away from the circle of degradation and debasement was to become identified with the rationale behind this policy, and to stay ready to serve its purpose. Could it have ever been a sincere attitude? Hard to say, really; it was perhaps much a matter of individual perception.

Fryderyk Skarbek, who has already been covered in this story to an extent, an economist and man-of-letters, certainly one of the period’s luminaries of the Polish intelligentsia, skilfully won the trust of the Emperor and his *Namiestnik*: in the forties, he occupied the high, though not political, posts of chairman of the Fire Society (i.e. fire department), the Board of Insurances and the Main Council of Charity Institutions, and worked for all these institutions competently and, no doubt, to the country’s benefit. November 1854 saw him appointed director of the Governmental Commission of Justice, which meant that he joined the Administrative Council – a substitute of the Kingdom’s government. When in office, “it befitted for one”, he confessed years after in his memoirs, “to carefully conceal his way of thinking, so as not to lose a single opportunity to serve the country with anything. With all that [...], to expose oneself to charges and sneers from public opinion, and pass as a dissenter of the national cause.”<sup>150</sup> Skarbek steered a middle course between those extremes rather deftly, believing it

---

150 F. Skarbek, *Pamiętniki* [‘Memoirs’], p. 272.

was a better option for Poles to hold major offices in the Kingdom, rather than give them up to Russians. In critical moments, he could defend his individual opinion; in a history of the Kingdom that he wrote in the sixties, he crushingly accused the system of Russian rule in Warsaw that he was an officer of.

The status of Józef Korzeniowski (b. 1797), a popular novelist and playwright, whose name was usually mentioned second to Kraszewski, was similar, in a sense. He served as a school inspector in the Kiev educational district, and later, in the Warsaw district, and, in spite of a suspicion hanging over him of contact with the Konarski conspiracy, he did not lose the trust of the authorities.

In spite of what Skarbek tries to tell us, the public opinion of the fifties approached such career paths with forbearance. A principled position could be taken by emigration factions or magazines; this was practically impossible at home, for some time at least: after all, the Government was the major, sometimes simply the only, employer. The fiscal, mining, judicial, school, forestry, provincial, or municipal administration did open to a multitude of the destitute and medium-educated youth the only accessible path of gainful work, a circumstance that eventually turned each applicant into a small cogwheel in the governmental bureaucratic machinery. The only functional difference was that some conceived official memos whilst others rewrote them calligraphically.

The tsarist hierarchy of clerical ranks encompassed fourteen classes. Those holding the posts classed the lowest, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, are normally not categorised by historians as part of the intelligentsia, finding that neither the character of their duties (as, for example, apparitor or clerk) nor their social position situated them within the brain-worker environment, then under formation. The number of full-time jobs in the 12<sup>th</sup> class and above was growing year by year, exceeding 5,000 in the fifties in the Kingdom alone, making the civil servants the most numerous category of people with secondary, or higher (not in each case complete, either) education. The truth is, if the random research of 'service balance' forms are to be trusted, that no more than ten per cent of officials across the hierarchy could boast the status of any studies completed, which otherwise was not the condition to be promoted to higher positions.

The social backgrounds of the civil servants reveal that some 75% could refer to their noble affiliations, albeit those not self-identified heavily prevailed. Even among the self-identified, just every fifth came from a family still holding some landed wealth, with every tenth representing a nobility that possessed an urban reality.<sup>151</sup> As a rule, then, appointments with offices were sought for by young

---

151 R. Czepulsi-Rastenis, *'Klasa umysłowa'...*, pp. 68-74; 140-148; 228-230.

people without a different concept of what to do with their lives, or with no other individual potential; their lineage, whether noble or bourgeois (a peasant lineage occurred as a sheer exception), did not influence their prospects, or worldview.

Apart from 'service balance' reports, where any change in the official's rank and status was marked, some institutions have preserved 'reputation lists' with columns headed: "Is he diligent and talented?"; "Is he virtuous and righteous?"; "Is he prone to any addiction?"; "Does he maintain a relationship with individuals not deserving of the Government's trust?".<sup>152</sup> Thus, clerks and officials remained under the permanent guardianship of other officials whose task it was to trace their conduct and to inform their head authority in case some wickedness or turpitude was discovered. In spite of this, a noteworthy thing, the Kingdom officials' reminiscences and letters more often complained about the emptiness and poorness of their work, rather than about being beset by informers and supervisors. Whether they suffered a discomfort caused by serving the invader, is not easy to decide: most of them did not even know any other normality.

Judges, public prosecutors, and court officials formally did not differ much from administrative clerks: the elder ones found it hard to maintain the remains of an autonomy admitted by the French Civil Code, still in force in the Kingdom (first introduced for the Duchy of Warsaw), and by the Retributive Code of the Kingdom of Poland, enacted in 1818. The elbowroom was however limited as the new Code of Capital and Correctional Punishments entered into force in 1848. Developed in Petersburg under the guidance of Romuald Hube (b. 1803), a respectful though obsequious professor of Polish law, the latter Code was modelled after its Russian counterpart and, given its brutality and casuistry, marked a remarkable regression against European juridical and criminological thought. Among other things, it sanctioned the penalties of deportation to hard labour sites and to timeless settlement in Siberia, imposed in practice for years by then anyway; it also sanctioned stigmatisation and ruthless lashings – while imposing numerous estate-related inequalities against the law. Even if one takes into account that the judgement of political offences remained an area of responsibility for Russian court-martials, it was Polish prosecutors and judges that necessarily became the executors of the superimposed law, which contrasted with the spirit of their native legislative tradition.

The rule of the non-revocability of judges was suspended and finally, completely annulled: from then on, they were subject to the Government Commission for Justice, the Administrative Council, and the Viceroy. Moreover, barristers,

---

152 Ibidem, p. 256-7.

divided into several categories, although not making their livings from governmental posts, were also approved, and disciplined, by the Government. In parallel, since 1832, there was no opportunity to study law in the Kingdom, for even the Law Courses offered in Warsaw to gymnasium graduates were cancelled after 1846. A handful of Government scholarship holders and freelance students attending Russian universities was not sufficient to meet the Kingdom's needs, especially that – as we have seen – a part of the Moscow graduates were doomed to make their way to Siberia shortly after joining the service. Hence, given the circumstances, promoted to the positions of judges were gymnasium graduates, following their application period of a few years; also “the posts of defenders for the courts of peace, of patrons and barristers, were open for those who have graduated from a *guberniya* or county school and had appropriate practice to their credit”<sup>153</sup> Appointed Chief Director with the Governmental Commission of Justice in 1854, Skarbek, alerted that students with gymnasium patents “are turning out completely non-disposed for the forensic service”<sup>154</sup>. In such conditions, the prestige of the juridical professions, traditionally high in Poland, inevitably deteriorated.

A similar abatement of the requirements took place in the teaching profession. The middle of the century saw the first departures of teachers educated before 1830 at the Warsaw or Wilno university; not too many of those who replaced them could boast that they held a diploma of graduation from some Russian or foreign university. Typically, therefore, a gymnasium graduate would become a gymnasium teacher, possibly with his qualification fine-tuned with the Extra Courses in pedagogy, functioning in Warsaw till 1848. The precondition for one to become employed with a governmental school was a corroboration of his qualifications by the Examination Committee, whose over-austereness was not something one could learn about.

In spite of low wages, employment with a governmental school offered one a sense of stability and, with years worked, the right to a retirement pension. Many a gymnasium teacher topped up their income by working at private girls' boarding schools, of which there was an abundance, especially in Warsaw – watching themselves carefully so as not to run afoul of their superiors. Loss of a job resulting from denunciation occurred extremely rarely, which may mean that this milieu was pacified or, less plausibly, extremely mutually supportive. The Russian language, and the history and geography of Russia were to be managed

---

153 *Historia państwa i prawa Polski* [A history of the state and the laws of Poland], vol. 3, p. 492.

154 J. Kucharzewski, *Epoka Paskiewiczowska*, p. 531.

by Russian teachers; yet, in spite of the larger endowments granted to them, the latter were not eager to arrive in larger numbers to the Kingdom, the other burden being that some knowledge of Polish was still then required from them. Polish teachers in Lithuanian and Ruthenian *guberniyas* were required, for a change, to have a command of Russian.

The Polish schools rather efficiently, by inertia, resisted Russification – even in the Empire *guberniyas*; they however unnoticeably yielded themselves to conformity and to the policy of distrust toward rationalism that was characteristic to Nicholas I's entire reign, especially in its later years. The Minister of Education instructed his superintendents in 1848 to watch “that redundant sophistries of maleficent innovators be prevented from penetrating into our [...] scientific institutions”, whose task is to inculcate into the youth “the conviction of the necessity and beneficial quality of the cardinal institutions of our government.”<sup>155</sup>

The notions of ‘high’ or ‘secondary’ and ‘higher’/‘tertiary’ education are not quite clear for the period in question, which makes any statistical calculation difficult. Fourth-grade county schools, with which home learning could merely be complemented, certainly did not earn the name of ‘secondary’ and it is doubtful whether their teachers can reasonably be viewed as part of the intelligentsia. On the other hand, there were a few schools functioning in the Kingdom whose status was intermediate, between the gymnasium and a tertiary school. These included the Pharmaceutical School, the Institute of Farming and Forestry, the Theological Academy, and the Fine Arts School with its construction department – the only faculty accessible to those with their eighth-grade gymnasium course completed.

A number of professors teaching at those schools also worked in a gymnasium or ‘real’ school, most of them, naturally, in Warsaw; or, had a full-time job with one of the departmental government commissions; for instance, a professor with the Farming Institute could be an official with the Department for Estates and Forests of the Governmental Commission of the Treasury and receive much higher emoluments from it than from the college. Scarcity of experts in all the fields fostered such multi-job practices. It was still relatively easy to find teachers of languages, as when a foreigner was engaged, his teaching skills would not be checked too scrupulously. It was a harder task to cast the faculties of physics, chemistry, botany, or zoology. Those were taken by people of, not infrequently, vivid biographies, who had studied piecemeal at various Russian and German universities, or, less frequently, French ones or still elsewhere, not in each case

---

155 Ibidem, pp. 317-18.

having their course of study crowned with a doctorate. It so happened that they had no formal qualification at all to teach their discipline; but they made it good with a penchant and self-teaching. For instance, before the insurrection of 1830, Wojciech Jastrzębowski (b. 1799) studied physics at Warsaw University but botany became his passion. Employed from 1836 with the Farming Institute, he was expected to teach there matters as diverse as physics, mineralogy, botany, zoology and horticulture. He was a dilettante in all those, as it seems; yet he had a pedagogical talent, and was reportedly adored by the student youth. The holiday-time excursions across Poland – covering all the Partitions, from the Hel Peninsula in the north to the Tatra Mountains in the south – were organised for his students, during which they collected together plants for the Botanical Garden.<sup>156</sup>

Some of the students of the Warsaw Real School recollected in their memoirs, written years after, that the teachers that they nursed respect for were usually naturalists: less hampered in what they could deliver, they moreover ran experimental workshops, which quite diversified their classes.<sup>157</sup> In the heavy atmosphere of police severity, where pedagogical routine and distrustfulness was experienced by the youth in their school and student years, any opportunity for settling the student-teacher relationship, on the basis of their coincidental interests and mutual trust, was of value. And a rare thing indeed.

The profession of doctor enjoyed the opinion of one that allowed for a larger independence from the authorities' supervision and censorship than the others ones. It was not completely true, however. As we know, after 1840, medical studies were offered neither in the Kingdom nor in Lithuania any longer. Those willing to enrol had to go to one of the Russian or German or, possibly, French universities or colleges. All of those options were very costly, and conditional upon the police's and superintendents' opinion. In case they expressed no objection, once could elicit a modest government scholarship for his studies in Russia, but then, he had to undertake to serve at least eight years in the army or administration, in the place allocated by the head authority. The condition was not easy to accept – and yet, Polish exiles could several times come across a compatriot serving as a military surgeon in the Caucasus, the Orenburg line, or Siberia. Among 747 surgeons who had managed to graduate from the Wilno academy, almost half (355, to be specific) served with the tsarist army, transitionally or for life, with 164 (22%) working for the administration.<sup>158</sup>

---

156 Cf. a biography of W. Jastrzębowski, ed. by Z. Kosiek: *PSB*, vol. 11.

157 [A. Kraushar], *Kartki z pamiętnika Alkara* ['Sheets from Alkar's diary'], vol. 1., p. 24.

158 L. Zasztowt, *Kresy 1832-1864* ['The Eastern Borderland, 1832-64'], p. 75.



On the other hand, as has already been said, medicine had become a popular area of studies among Polish émigrés in France; the graduates were doing better or worse – depending on their talent, place of stay, and luck. Some lived from hand to mouth, others gained considerable wealth. The model for the latter was doctor Seweryn Gałęzowski (b. 1801), graduate and lecturer with Wilno University. During the insurrection, he served as a doctor in field hospitals; afterwards, in 1834, he sailed to Mexico, and grew famous and rich as a surgeon and organiser of a medical training system. Back in Europe, he would mark his presence in the history of the Polish Emigration. Enough to mention, for the time being, that Polish doctors with French diplomas could be encountered virtually all over the world: in Egypt, Turkey, India, or Brazil – while the Kingdom of Poland itself had barely five-hundred-or-so doctors in the fifties, against a population totalling over six million (i.e. one per 12,000 inhabitants; to compare, Prussia had 1 per 4,000).<sup>159</sup>

With the number this small, many of them, especially those settled in the provincial areas, earned less than modest means for their practice, as the masses of the peasant and the indigent urban populace had not yet to make it their habit to seek a doctor when ill, and to, moreover, gratify him financially for the service. A doctor would usually be called by houses of the nearby nobility and local officials, but these appointments did not always suffice in terms of a decent subsistence. Therefore, doctors applied for posts as that of county, urban, or prison doctor, so as to be placed within the hierarchy of clerical ranks and receive a fixed salary, and the served retirement pension in their senescence. An official medical doctor had a number of duties to attend to, including care for the sanitary condition of his town, surveillance of pharmacies and hospitals, forensic examinations, provision of free-of-charge medical care and treatment to the indigent, military-men and prisoners; in the first place, he was supposed to eradicate epidemics, particularly, cholera, which for some still-unknown reason haunted Russia and the Kingdom of Poland every few years, harvesting the threatening crop of death. An official position was held by, roughly, each third physician in the Kingdom: though it helped expand their private-practice range, the status made them dependent on the governor's or county head's mood swings.

It is easier to reconstruct the histories of lives and career paths of those doctors than to find what their factual skills were, and how they cured their patients. The middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century marked a breakthrough in European medicine, with superfluous observation 'at the patients' bed', intuition and mental speculation

---

159 R. Czepulis-Rastenis, 'Klasa umysłowa' ..., pp. 92-93.

being replaced by methods backed by empirical attestation, including, in particular, an in-depth knowledge of anatomy and physiology. This change in the patterns of the substantiation of diagnosis and therapy did not reach the Polish provincial areas to a satisfactory extent then; all the same, the Warsaw or Wilno medical milieu elites were aware of it.

A special influence in this respect was exerted by those doctors who were educated or complemented their education with one of the Western clinics – whether as 1831 émigrés or students on their legal trips, or travelling physicians. With the experience so gained, they returned home where, in order to receive the right to pursue their practice, they had to take an exam before the Medical Council.

Aleksander Le Brun (b. 1803) first studied at Warsaw University but received his doctor's degree in Paris in 1827. Afterwards, he spent the rest of his days in Warsaw but travelled to the West many times to become aware of how hospitals and lunatic asylums were organised there. He was namely head doctor with the Infant Jesus Hospital, the famous Warsaw charity institution he tried to turn into a medical centre. Le Brun became famous as a versed surgeon: the name [*chirurg* in Polish], standing not long ago as something like a barber-surgeon or hospital attendant [*felczer*], had already described the full-right medical profession. Le Brun was one of the first in Poland to anaesthetise with chloroform and, later on, with ether for surgery, and had a separate operating theatre built within his hospital, for operations had been performed in the ward till the middle of the century. From 1849-56, he was Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Warsaw Medical Society.<sup>160</sup>

Doctor Ferdynand Dworzaczek (b. 1804) was one of the first among those who, enjoying the tsar's grace, returned to the Kingdom when the insurrection was over. He was back in 1835, following a few years spent in German and French clinics, where he became acquainted with the then-most-recent 'percussion and auscultation' method, his life in medicine was to last over the following century, and more. Dworzaczek was made head physician with the Evangelical Hospital in Warsaw, but at only the age of forty started losing his sight, which cut his excellent career short. He found a worthy successor, though, entrusting the care of his hospital to doctor Tytus Chałubiński (b. 1820).<sup>161</sup>

Ludwik Natanson (b. 1822), of a wealthy Jewish family that was soon to play an outstanding part in the assimilation process, commenced his studies

---

160 Cf. a biography of A. Le Brun, ed. by T. Ostrowska, *PSB*, vol. 16, p. 590-1.

161 Cf. a biography of F. Dworzaczek, ed. by L. Zembrzusi, W. Ziembicki, *PSB*, vol. 6, pp. 25-26.

with the Medico-Surgical Academy of Wilno and completed them in Dorpat, after the academy was shut down. He pursued a practice in Warsaw, was active with the Medical Society as a member of a committee for epidemic diseases, a committee for sewerage systems, and others; he organised a “Support Fund for impoverished doctors and poor orphans remaining of them” as a form of reciprocal insurance. In parallel, he founded an industry weekly *Tygodnik Lekarski* (in 1847), providing funds for it and editing it on his own. There were numerous studies that he penned in the domains of physiology, neurology (then an emerging discipline), hygiene, nutrition, upbringing and education published with the magazine. It took place on the verge of medicine and therapeutics becoming specialised: with, practically, all-purpose doctors still operating, individual directions became distinguishable in the science.<sup>162</sup>

This being the case, Polish ophthalmology owed its initial developments to doctor Wiktor Szokalski (b. 1811) being permitted to return the Kingdom in 1853. The insurrection over, he studied in Germany, practised in France, and was associated with the Czartoryski camp; he eventually sought his right to return having spent over twenty years in foreign lands. The Austrian government did not consent for his taking the newly-established ophthalmology faculty, to which Krakow University had invited him. Then, his kind-hearted acquaintances and relatives obtained for him, by pleading and through favouritism, the right to return to Warsaw. Once back there, Szokalski soon gained authority, liking, and patients, animated the Medical Society, and restored the Ophthalmic Institute, then in decline, to an appropriate standard.<sup>163</sup>

The aforementioned doctors formed the avant-garde of their profession, ones that could afford to procure specialised literature and to travel and visit Europe’s leading clinics. Their biographies cannot tell us about the skills, intellectual format or life-affecting success of average county ‘consiliaries’. Whatever the case, they at least formed an environment whose elite was distinctive, against the common spiritual torpor, with its aspirations that managed to save their Medical Societies – in Warsaw as well as in Wilno, along with modest possibilities to have their reports or communications published in industry periodicals.

The fact that no successors could be educated, owing to the tsarist verdict, for a quarter of a century (in Wilno, since 1840), ranked as a scandal. With no schools, clinics or research workshops of its own (save for those in Krakow), Polish medicinal art was of necessity – and with rare exceptions – imitative, at its

---

162 Cf. a biography of L. Natanson, ed. by T. Ostrowska, *PSB*, vol. 22, p. 605-7.

163 W.F. Szokalski, *Pamiętniki* [‘Memoirs’], vol. 3.

best: mostly through reading, and less by personal contacts and experience; in the worse cases, it was antiquated and routinised.

Given the conditions, doctors did their utmost. They did not rebel. This profession was ready, unlike any other, for receiving the idea of patient organic work – in the Russian and, earlier still, in the Prussian Partition. They had several occasions to come across poverty and primitivism in life, and saw the immensity of the tasks that were ready to be tackled on the civilisational fallow-land. It is a significant thing that a heated discussion on tangle, or plica, developed in 1855 in the Warsaw periodicals: is it a sickness, or just the result of many years of dirt and hair negligence? Tangle had long borne in Europe the medical name of *plica polonica*; at least two doctors who became well-known in later years, Karol Kaczkowski (b. 1797) and Aleksander Le Brun, obtained their doctoral degree – the former, in 1821 in Wilno; the latter, in 1827 in Paris – having submitted their dissertations on the ‘Polish plica’; Szokalski, for his part, wrote of this allegedly medical subject-matter for a French magazine. Once back in his home country, he changed his mind and unleashed a stormy debate in the Medical Society; Ludwik Natanson added the chair of a specially established ‘plica commission’ to his numerous duties.

On the other hand, a doctor, by the very nature of his profession, had contact with a number of family homes and was usually a welcome guest at the salons, especially in a city like Warsaw. The increasing prestige of this bourgeois profession was spectacular: not worthy of a nobleman not so long ago, now it was being ranked quite high. Doctors such as Dworzaczek, Szokalski, or Tytus Chałubiński, Warsaw’s favourite, made friends with writers and artists, they were connoisseurs and, many of them, were collectors of art; as it will be shown, no social undertaking or project could be carried out without their participation.

The prosperity and development of professions related to technology depended, to a degree exceeding any others, on the condition of the country’s economy. Both in the Kingdom and in Lithuanian-Ruthenian *guberniyas*, the economy was overwhelmingly agricultural and serfdom-based, with peasants being compelled to do their labour on a landowner’s grange. This conservative arrangement of social and legal relations obstructed any modernisation impulses. *Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego* annuals, published since 1842, encouraged larger proprietors to introduce a ‘comprehensive farm-keeping’ by calculating the outlays and their expected outcomes, and by taking advantage of the achievements of science, inventiveness and ingenuity. Yet, the efficiency of such modernisation propaganda was frustrated by the lack of cheap credit, the lack of developed contract-work or a wage-labour market, the wariness of conservative ‘landed citizens’ and, lastly, a shortfall of knowledgeable experts. Such were

educated, true, by the Farming Institute near Warsaw – one of the few vocational schools surviving Nicholas's suppression – but the number of its graduates, and their skill levels, with just two years of studies behind them, was definitely too little to overcome the ancient routine practices of running the agricultural holding. Equipped with their modest educational background, the agronomists were dispersed across the country, not forming an influential environment.

Industrial technologists did not constitute one whole either. The insular metallurgical or manufacturing industry, concentrated in a few areas of the Kingdom, tended to hire foreign mechanics to install and operate machinery imported from the West. Not in the least were all of them genuine experts, though: such workers were not so eager to enter multiyear contracts to do a project in a country unknown in Europe. Many an incomer thus turned out to be an inefficient mechanic or technologist – but they were expensive and sometimes contributed to their patron's fall into a financial ruin. Still, there were no domestic specialists available that would be able to replace them. The industrialisation of the Kingdom, albeit in progress, had not as yet gained any momentum; education did not follow anyway.

In practice, then, architects and civil engineers were in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the two professions identifiable as the 'technological intelligentsia'; both were dependent to the utmost degree on government authorities.

Few architects were still active in the fifties who had been educated before the November Insurrection – with Warsaw University or the Polytechnic Institute's Preparatory School (no such Institute was eventually established); Karol Podczaszyński (b. 1790) did his studies in Wilno and Petersburg; Henryk Marconi (b. 1792) was imported from Italy. The younger generation had lesser opportunity to be educated. A 'real' gymnasium could offer initial technological training and qualification, but it was only in 1851 – the moment the earlier-date body of professors were in departure – that the authorities resolved to open a construction department at the Warsaw Fine Arts School; in line with the school's name, emphasis was put mostly on the history of styles or 'architectural orders' rather than construction technology. Yet, central to the education of any aspiring architect was a foreign journey, usually lasting a few years, combined with studies complemented at a Western university of technology. Such a journey could be undertaken with the Government's consent and, in most cases, at its expense – an option available to those who had won the authorities' trust. On one's return, a career could start by seeking employment as a county builder, with responsibilities including the supervision of all the construction projects within a county. A governmental post enabled one to gain renown indispensable for earning a living with a private practice, but the latter was no less dependent

upon the authorities, since the major design, renovation and accomplishment commissions came from the Government or from the Church; in the East, aristocratic residences were yet another such source. Erection of tenement houses as a bourgeois profit-oriented investment was only at its germ stage, which was primarily true for Warsaw.

Some of the regulation plans implemented in the twenties' decade were completed, and some were abandoned: now, cities were redeveloped and extended the way they wanted it. Warsaw was coerced, in addition, with a ring of citadels and forts. Henryk (Enrico) Marconi, a Polonised Italian and the period's best-known Warsaw architect, after Antonio Corazzi, designed and built churches, palaces, prisons, hospitals, the Warsaw-Vienna Railway Station (1845), the 'Europejski' Hotel – each edifice separately. The other builders who were lucky enough to have their potential fulfilled in those years had similar experiences to their credit. Their delivered projects referred, as a rule, to the past; an epigone pseudo-Classicism was in dispute with the Gothic turrets trend, imported from England and applied even in railway station decors.

It goes to the credit of that generation, with its obvious political opportunism, that Polish architectural thought – however secondary it was – has retained its continuity. This was enabled through didactic and publishing endeavours: they published their studies, designs, and lectures wherever possible, or left them as a manuscript, with the hope that someone would sometime find them somehow of use. A characteristic thing was that, while preparing under their fathers' wings, many of them formed professional dynasties: Marconi, himself the son of an architect, had all his five sons educated as builders or engineers, only one of them became a painter. Karol Podczaszyński's son, Bolesław-Paweł, took his studies in Berlin and Paris to become a sought-for architect afterwards – not anymore in his father's Wilno but in Warsaw. There, he rebuilt the Kazimierzowski Palace and never complained about a scarcity of commissions, from the Government as well as private individuals.<sup>164</sup>

Engineers found it harder to pave their way through. Their profession, whose name meant an ingenious man in French, was first known to the military, as a skill for constructing fortresses, strongholds and fortifications. In defiance of a vocation so one-sided, the civil engineer was born as a specialist in road and bridge constructions, in the first place; soon after, railroads became another

---

164 For a biography of H. Marconi, see: S. Łoza, *Słownik architektów* [‘A dictionary of architects’], pp. 207-211; biographies of K. Podczaszyński, B.-P. Podczaszyński, ed. by V. Drema, M. Rożek, *PSB*, vol. 27.

speciality domain, ensuring a great life career, provided one was the Government's favourite. Stanisław Kierbedź (b. 1810), was doubtless one such. Born to a Polish landed-gentry family in Lithuania, he gained his first education in mathematics and physics at Wilno University and thereafter, the Institute of Transportation Engineers in Petersburg. He toured Europe in 1837-8, and contributed, when he returned, to the construction of the Petersburg-Moscow railway. A remarkable work of his was the bridge on the Neva River, of his own design, built in extremely hard technical conditions, given the circumstances of the time. Having this success recorded to his credit, he obtained any and all the honours the Empire could bestow upon its talented son. He marked a trace in the Polish memory as the one who constructed the first fixed bridge on the Vistula in Warsaw, the work he delivered in the turbulent years 1859-64.<sup>165</sup>

The profession of the civil engineer ignited the imagination, offering a field extraordinarily clear, but it required that the ruling and hiring party be reckoned with. Before the uprising of 1830-1 and in the course of it, Feliks Pancer (b. 1798) was a member of the Polish Army's engineers corps but did not emigrate afterwards, putting himself at the new authorities' disposal instead. He joined a body called the Builders' Council and a related examination committee, and then was a member on the board of the Warsaw district of land and waterway transport. What is more, however, Pancer gathered young technicians or technologists in his studio to teach them.<sup>166</sup> As no technological tertiary school was available, a number of engineers gained on-the-job-training by practising under the supervision of their masters. Before Stanisław Janicki (b. 1836) grew to become an outstanding and internationally recognised engineer and entrepreneur in channel and port construction projects, he was trained at the machinery and tool factory on Solec street in Warsaw, then at a steam-engine and bridge factory in Paris, and as part of the Kierbedź bridge project. The railroads – first, Warsaw-Vienna and afterwards, Warsaw-Petersburg and Warsaw-Bydgoszcz – whose construction required the erection of railway bridges, among other features, became a great school of technological and economic pragmatics.

Engineers, constructors and builders who won some repute and were satisfied with the number of orders they received or with permanent employment at the government's service, belonged to a narrow elite of high-paid professionals finding it relatively easy to do study trips to the west of Europe, having their

---

165 Cf. a biography of S. Kierbedź, ed. by S. Brzozowski, *PSB*, vol. 12; also, *Słownik biograficzny techników polskich* ['A biographical dictionary of Polish technicians, engineers and technologists'], vol. 3 (ed. by B. Chwaściński).

166 Cf. a biography of F. Pancer, ed. by B. Chwaściński, in: *PSB*, vol. 25, and *SBTP*, vol. 7.

retirement pension ensured and the education of their sons facilitated. Those less gifted or enterprising, and not favoured by the authorities, lived from hand to mouth in periods of construction stagnation, daydreaming of a position with the county structures or *guberniya* board of transport.

Individual endeavours undertaken several times to set up a Polish technological magazine were torn, as a rule, several years after as the government provided no support, the number of subscribers or correspondents was unsatisfactory, and no backing was offered by any association – no such body could successfully be established, under no circumstances. Polish technological thought had perforce no institutional conditions to develop (in comparison with its Russian counterpart, at the very least); still, the engineer milieu gained at least a relatively considerable opportunity to stay in touch with European developments, and copy the solutions created by the others.

A professional environment that bound the entire Polish intelligentsia, not limited within the Russian Partition, was formed by writers and journalists; in spite of the heaviest censorship oppression, Warsaw started regaining a central position in this respect after 1848, threatened as such before then by Poznań and Lwów alike. This was a great deal to the credit of *Biblioteka Warszawska*: deftly prevaricating under the censors' eyes, evading talking of matters that might arouse their watchfulness, it eventually grew strong as the most important Polish scientific-literary periodical – thematically varied and eclectic, for what else could it be, given the circumstances. Being published in one of those cahiers, issued on a regular monthly basis, was regarded as a honour – all the more that the editorial board paid modest royalties to the authors – not a rule then. Kazimierz-Władysław Wóycicki (b. 1807) was an editor with *Biblioteka* in the fifties. Proficient in this function, his was an antiquarian mind, a commonly loved collector of anecdotes and biographies of merited people. He kept up the tradition of weekly editorial-board sessions, open to visitors, at which incoming manuscripts were read out and subject to collective judgment. Everyone who enjoyed a position in Polish literature or science in the mid-nineteenth century attended one such session at least once in their lifetime; recollections of visits to that oasis amidst the Warsaw desert have come down to us from many a frequent visitor. How narrow that tiny intellectual stratum was can be judged by *Biblioteka*'s circulation, numbering a mere 200-300 subscribers.<sup>167</sup>

As it was simply impossible to survive on writing alone, the men-of-the-quill dealt, as a rule, with a non-literary source of upkeep: Józef-Ignacy Kraszewski

---

167 K. Estreicher, *Bibliografia polska*, 'Biblioteka Warszawska' 1862, vol. 3, p. 528.



had a hamlet of his own in Volhynia; Ludwik Kondratowicz (b. 1823), known by his penname Władysław Syrokomla, leased a small grange near Wilno; Józef Korzeniowski was a school inspector – as already mentioned; historian Julian Bartoszewicz (b. 1821) was a gymnasium teacher; K.W. Wóycicki was the manager of a library and a court printing-house. Literature, as a broad concept, was an extra activity of each of them, at least meanwhile; a source of rather a small profit, it determined their social position, after all. The common motif reappearing in the novels and private letters was the humiliating endeavours of authors, particularly young ones, trying to encourage publishers to buy from them, be it for pennies, a manuscript of their new work. Only an established name and popularity with the reading public could imply the reverse: a publisher or editor striving for manuscripts, the royalties offered forming a family budget's item; but this was a rare thing. After all, selling the fruits of art still seemed a somewhat bashful 'squander' to those who created them, although life was making them abandon such romanticist scruples.

Many debut-makers putting pen to paper started off with poetic attempts, with a special inclination for wistful epigonic-romanticist lyrical verse. The critics in fact scoffed over and over at the 'soothe-saying frenzy' and 'pretended poeticity'; Józef Kremer (b. 1806), a philosophy and aesthetics professor from Krakow, jeered at the childish pathology of rhyming and versifying that offered dispensation to a variety of 'mediocers' "for the labour of learning or some other honest work performable in life".<sup>168</sup> No great talent manifested itself at home, though; the contraband of emigration poetry grew much weaker after 1848. Syrokomla was thus the most popular poet in the Kingdom and Lithuania – and he was the only one who could vie with the fame of Wincenty Pol, beaming from the land of Galicia.

The reading public was mostly gracious toward novels – and Józef-Ignacy Kraszewski, whose popularity peaked in that very decade, was the outright sceptre-bearer of this genre. As for his social condition, Kraszewski combined two spheres, since his wife's dowry made him a quite well-off landowner, pursuing farming activities and property dealings; still, he devoted most of his time, obviously enough, to his literary work. In Lithuania and Ruthenia, similarly to the other parts of what had been the Commonwealth, there was a certain number of such luminous Polish estate or property owners who, having their existence secured, could indulge in their artistic or intellectual passions and, for

---

168 J. Kremer, *Listy z Krakowa* ['Letters from Krakow'], vol. 2, pp. 26-27; also, cf. K. Wóycicki, *Walka na Parnasie*, pp. 13-29.]

instance, write a history of their county or, as Teodor Narbutt (b. 1784) did, of the Lithuanian nation (*Dzieje narodu litewskiego*). They bought up and collected 'antiquities', a capacious notion could equally well stand for copies of antique statues and seventeenth-century court files. They willingly showed their guests their collections and libraries, not infrequently impressive, and maintained communication between lovers of arts and sciences, similar to themselves. Such houses, usually aristocratic ones, were strongly discernible against their noble neighbours who did not take particular care about tending to the intellectual culture and readership.

Albeit he did not make it to his finals in his university education, whose course was interrupted by the insurrection, and remained a talented autodidact, Kraszewski does not completely fit this team of votaries. Well, he too had an appreciable collection of books, engravings, maps, or copies of archival documents in his tiny manor in Volhynia; and he engaged himself, as it behoved, in studying the history of the land he had settled down in. Yet, he was turning into a real professional writer with time, developing in himself a most critical attitude toward his noble neighbourhood and its mentality. Husbandry and farming was a burden to him, and he finally demised his small estate and moved with his family, in 1852, to Żytomierz [Zhytomyr in Ukraine today], then the capital town of the Volhynian *guberniya*.

Although the Wilno magazine *Athenaeum* that he edited on a remote basis ceased being issued at that very time, because of an insufficient number of subscribers and losses incurred by the publisher, Kraszewski was never short of businesses to attend to. No Polish author has ever paralleled him in his assiduity, his ease of writing, the number of works written, and the scale of subject-matters tackled. While in Żytomierz, he sent articles to various Polish magazines, feeding *Gazeta Warszawska* with correspondences on a permanent basis. He busied himself with historical studies, treatises on art, literary criticism, sightseeing and touring accounts, reports on European intellectual movements, verse, historical novels. With all that, his contemporary novels triggered interest among publishers and readers alike, in the first place. It was he who instilled this genre in Polish literature, the intent behind it being to combine an observation of the mores, a psychological portrait of the characters, and a moral tendency. It is perhaps disputable to what extent such a novel could be realistic if hampered with a resolute – albeit imprescriptible – convention of decency, an avoidance of drastic scenes, a daring eroticism or an overly-sincere introspection; tied up with the censorship prescriptions, it had to shun touching, even if discrete, upon topics such as the defence of the nationality, conspiracies, insurrections, repressive measures applied by the invaders, informing, searches, imprisonment,

emigration, deportation and exile. Enough to mention that the novels of Kraszewski and his contemporaries do not even mention a Russian gendarme, the country where the plot is set remaining usually unnamed.

Given such preclusions, social relations in the countryside and in the urban environment remained the central focus of a writer's observations. Their fictional depiction normally aroused the most vibrant interest among readers, and has not lost its informative value until today. The most popular narrative tangle in the period's novels, and dramas, was a conflict between the nobility and the intelligentsia, on the one hand, and the 'lords', that is, representatives of a well-off ancestral 'citizenship' (gentry) on the other; a conflict expressed in the way the characters reasoned and all within the embroilments of a romance plot. These 'two worlds' would reappear time and time again, testifying to an egalitarian resentment emotionally experienced among the indigent nobility whose pride could easily be prejudiced, but whose literary offspring felt – like Syrokomla – appreciated through its fame and 'nobleness of the soul'. The intelligentsia's children, like for instance sons of clerks and officials, were also tied by school fellowship with those of landowner estates, but seem to have been less injured by their familial haughtiness as their own generation drew its own sense of dignity from a different entitlement.

Kraszewski did not limit himself to the aforementioned conflict pattern. In his Volhynian-Polesian novel cycle from the forties and fifties, he repeatedly made the grievances of peasants, still living under the servile law, the central narrative knot. Their ethnical traits, Belorussian or Ukrainian, added tone or local colour whereas not being of an issue in themselves. In turn, any transgression by the 'young master' over the inviolable line of class division, especially if caused by an amorous passion, led to the peasant humanity being downtrodden, with a disaster overwhelming the whole family. Kraszewski's moral/social and customs-related realism, social criticism, and romanticist sociology have all contributed to a fairly successful attempt at breaking the genre's conventions, strengthening the perception of his works as progressive.

Żytomierz became in the century's middle years one of the main foci of the Polish mailing republic. The correspondence the writer received, meticulously stored by him and surviving by a stroke of luck, is a collection of 7,000 letters sent by 1,300 authors (as for the period 1829-63)!<sup>169</sup> Anyone who mattered, in one way or another, in Polish literature, and many of those who did not matter at

---

169 R. Czepulis-Rastenis, *Inteligencja nieromantyczna* ['A non-romanticist intelligentsia], *Przegląd Historyczny* 1989, p. 490.

all, or very little, but were eager to leave a trace of themselves, wrote to Kraszewski who thus became, willy-nilly, a confessor and advisor to probably every Polish man-of-letters. They notified him, from all the Polish provinces, about any undertaking or project meant to form even the most modest contribution to the edifice of Polish national culture – or requested a suggestion for what useful things could be worth tackling, what to seek for, and write about.

Dominik Chodźko requested his addressee to advise him on what sort of historical or literary effort he should take, “what a manhandling of a tiny brick for the edifice that is being erected through you, Sir, and your worthy companions”. Syrokomla confessed to Kraszewski, in 1846, that he was working on translations of the Latin works of early Polish authors, for “it is improper that their beautiful thoughts be ageing [confined] within the Latin crust”. Bolesław Podczaszyński reported, in 1855, that he undertook to edit and publish *Pamiętnik Sztuk Pięknych*, a fine arts periodical conceived as a collection of “any information that may be needful and useful to the lovers and adherents of art”. Oskar Kolberg boasted in 1857 that he was “publishing the songs of Polish people, at his own cost and expense, that I have managed over a dozen-or-so years to collect in the Polish land” – owing to the effort of an “officer that makes a living on the labour of his mind and his hands”. Jan Dobrzański assured that in publishing his Lwów-based *Dziennik Literacki*, a literary magazine, he would not deviate from the once-established goal he described as “criticism, and acquaintance with our own history”.<sup>170</sup> Each single page filled with characters called, seemingly, for the authority’s assent.

Thus, the writer’s desk, located in a place remote from cultural centres, was where the news coincided on almost all the editorial and publishing projects and doings of the Polish intelligentsia – the actions mostly dispersed and modest in scale, not infrequently unprofessional, but all in all protecting Polish culture against getting ultimately decomposed into the separate provinces. The period’s writers and journalists had a sense of measure and degree: they did not strike the pose of prophet-bards, or make reckless attempts at creating great works – whilst at the same time remaining aware of the significance of literature and history in maintaining a national existence. “The penman is today in the place of arms-men and statesmen, and everybody is turning his or her eyes on him”, Kazimierz Wóycicki wrote to Kraszewski.<sup>171</sup> The latter, for his part, poked fun at the lackadaisical pretences of such contribution-makers, whilst on the other hand, in 1842, he

---

170 Ibidem, pp. 492-5.

171 Ibidem, p. 505.

made the following sublime confession: “Having regarded the national element as the only one that may render the literature a living entity, ones that responds to the expectations of the age, are already truly of the nature of Chaplains of the nation. [...] They become the fore-runners and moral governors of their age. [...] A writer ought to be the generality’s conscience.” And yet he warned, “Courage is a must for one to be a conscience of his people, for its wicked part will bridle, growl, rise, and threaten.”<sup>172</sup> He was soon to see how real this forewarning could be.

The domestic literature of the fifties’ decade saw the ceasing romanticist stereotype of the poet wrestling with the strangeness of a cold outside world and sensing in his chest a calling for the national priesthood; the character and purpose of such a calling was not overtly expressible, becoming lost within trivial novelistic matter. The priesthood was converting into usability, service to the country, love of labour and effort – the notions from a different vocabulary. Poetry too was depreciating its high and lofty tone. Gifted with an uncommon rhyming talent, Władysław Syrokomla robbed his sincere compassion for any wrong, injustice or misery of this world, and the irony and sadness of existence, in simple, melodious, tale-like forms so appealing to the public and making famous this ‘enduring village lyricist’ he stylised himself as: he could taste the fruits of this fame as the public of Warsaw or Poznań gave splendid dinners to honour the visiting poet. After all, no other type of creative output did not incur, at home, losses comparable to those that poetry did: Norwid chose freedom in Paris; Berwiński carried himself away to Turkey; Lenartowicz wandered across Europe, before he settled for good in Italy; some less lucky ones rambled to exile or to join the Caucasian regiments. Wanderer poets, Mickiewicz included, slowly fell into oblivion in their home country, for, as the conspiracy faded, the routes of organised book smuggling became overgrown – dealings in which one could easily be deported to Siberia for.

Ladies strengthened their position in the thinned-out ranks of writers. Warsaw critics tended to evaluate pieces written by females benevolently, with a slightly concealed connivance. It was regarded as an axiom that women were more sentimental and affective than men, whilst proving more weakly furnished by nature with intellectual skills. Some ladies too would agree with this stereotype. Hence the conviction whereby “the tilt-yard of reason and research of a science unadorned with imagination [...] are too tight for the sensitive womanly hearts”<sup>173</sup>, the domain appropriate for the female sex being sentimental poetry.

---

172 J.I. Kraszewski, *Studia literackie* [‘Literary studies’], pp. 66-67.

173 H. Skimborowicz, *Umysłowość kobiet w Polsce* [‘The mentality of females in Poland’] (1844); quoted after: R. Czepulis-Rastenis, *Pierwsze pokolenie literatek polskich* [‘The first generation of Polish women writers’], in: *Kobieta i edukacja na*

Severer opinions could be heard from behind the frontier cordons. Libelt, a democrat; Trentowski, a liberal; or Siemieński, a conservative, all did not expect much from writing women. Lucjan Siemieński, who with the Krakow *Czas* magazine distinguished himself as a leading critic of literature and the mores, authoritatively claimed that the numerous women who had put pen to paper did not quite contribute to the enrichment of literature. The strength of females is, namely, he effused, “in their weakness, in the exquisite delicacy of the senses, in the sickly petulance of the nerves”: yet, whenever they endeavoured to rival males in writing genres calling for extensive studies and real-life experience, their influence appears each time prejudicial. After all, as the readers, they had instituted in this country – to the detriment of the grandeur and seriousness of literature – the fashion of French novelisticity, a ‘licentious literature’. “The real literature, worthy of its name, draws the spirit and strength from the male chest.”<sup>174</sup>

At the same time, staying in Lublin under police supervision, Narcyza Żmichowska saw the sex-related distribution of talents and tasks otherwise: “Any male policy”, she wrote to a Poznań friend of hers, “was crushed amidst the latest years’ occurrences; now, the days have followed of different endeavours for Poland.” What it meant was the time of clandestine associations – a male entertainment, chiefly – came to an end, replaced now by a time of daily labour, small works, village schools, and, in the first place, the formation of characters; woman can do more in such ordinariness. “I have called it for myself a scarification of inherence.”<sup>175</sup> Her own reading, knowledge, bravery of spirit, and the writing tasks she posed for herself plainly contradicted Siemieński’s grotesque depiction.

In the middle of the century, the Warsaw intelligentsia had their first opportunity to directly come across educated Jews. The *Haskalah*, the already-mentioned Jewish enlightenment movement, had several orientations to it, depending on the emphasis put on Biblical studies, the learning of Hebrew and the assimilation direction: toward German or Polish culture. In the Kingdom, the strife for Polishness definitely gained the upper hand, in most cases preserving an association with Judaism. The *maskilim*, whose considerable share graduated from the Government-maintained School of Rabbis in Warsaw, formed a small reforming section of the Jewish community, contended with by the orthodox rabbinate and by *Hassidim*; since, however, their intellectual and economic potential

---

*ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku* [‘The woman and education in Polish territories in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century’], ed. by A. Żarnowska, A. Szwarz, p. 316.

174 L. Siemieński, *Kilka rysów z literatury i społeczeństwa* [‘A few sketches on literature and society’], pp. 224-231; 250-255.

175 N. Żmichowska, *Listy* [‘Letters’], vol. 2, pp. 80; 87.

was significant, they in fact ran the Warsaw religious community and two synagogues, a Polish and a German one. The sermons at the former were delivered in Polish, since 1852, by Izaak Kramsztyk (b. 1814), who by the deeds of his whole later life proved his attachment to Polish cause.

The Jews in the Russian state did not have the right to apply for official or clerical posts, and encountered severe impediments in access to state schools and universities. Medicine, as already mentioned, was the first profession for which a small number of Jews managed to become educated and start practising. It was Jewish book-dealers, however, that were closest to the Polish intelligentsia and culture. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, a bookseller usually combined within a single firm several undertakings, inseparable at the time: the publishing of books and periodicals; the sale of books; subscription handling; a printing house; often, running an antiquarian bookshop, a library; and, the secret importation of banned prints. Owing to the narrow market and the surveillance of the censors and police, the profession was encumbered with considerable risk, required bargaining with the authorities, and called for trust among consumers; dispassionate commercial calculations had to be combined with decency toward authors. The period's novelists and the press held a large grudge against book-dealers: they apparently paid beggarly royalties (if not telling the author to pay for having his or her book printed) whilst selling books at high prices, thus stifling the development of a readership. So was the men-of-letters' viewpoint.

Half of the twenty-six bookshops in Warsaw belonged to Jewish owners, the remainder being run, in equal proportion, by Poles or Germans. Jewish family businesses were usually managed with greater background experience and swing, absorbing the lion's share of publishing production, and not infrequently crossing the frontiers of countries or provinces. Thus, the Merzbachs had their publishing bookstores in Warsaw and Poznań; the Orgelbrands, in Warsaw and Wilno; the Glücksbergs, in Warsaw, Wilno, Krzemieniec, and Kiev. They published works of Old-Polish and contemporary literature, poetry and novels, lexicons, scientific dissertations, religious books, general and, sparse, expert periodicals: in a word, no one pursuing an activity in the Polish culture of the time could avoid their participation, and their merits were usually appreciated, in spite of occasional clashes occurring.

These booksellers of the century's middle years had, as a general rule, a secondary secular education behind them, and were capable of evaluating the suggested publications submitted to them; they also had certain ideas of their own, and selected partners of their choice to deliver them to. Rather understandably, almost all of them were active with the assimilation movement: some remained with the Old-Testament Community, even holding key positions within it; others

would sooner or later break bonds with it, assuming baptism (in the Catholic or Evangelical rite) in an intent to become completely integrated with the Polish intelligentsia or bourgeoisie. The first families started emerging in this environment for whom having their sons educated with a university became a standard, along with combining business and scientific or research activities, with the addition of efforts toward a Jewish-Polish rapprochement. The Natanson family, who issued a number of outstanding Polish scholars, serves as a case in point.

### **3. Life, private and social**

As is therefore apparent, the intelligentsia was growing in number and significance, proving to be an open-ended class, absorptive for professionals of a most varied descent: sons of 'landed citizens' and indigent nobility, bourgeoisie, Jews and foreigners settled in Poland. Moreover, the intelligentsia became self-reproductive, in an increasing share, in the following generations: it would be a rather rare thing for the son to gain a worse education than his father. It is true that the education collapse that followed the disaster of 1831 across the former Commonwealth's provinces made this succession highly difficult; but still, it did not obstruct it. No one has yet calculated (if this is doable at all!) the percentage of 'intellectual' children remaining without a tertiary education or another qualification for 'brain' work, or having been successfully de-Polonised resulting from their studies at a German or Russian university; such numbers seem all the same not to have been dramatically high. Paradoxically enough, membership of a nation under oppression usually reinforces emotional identification: an alien environment and well-learned foreign language would never replace it, although they may stifle it in the course of a common life.

The young intelligentsia was a thoroughly urban class. It had virtually no contact with the rural populace; a doctor would be called, at the most, to see a dying individual, the living doing 'well' with no need to consult one. A peasant's son enrolling with a gymnasium and becoming a clerk, official or teacher was still a rare thing before the peasantry was enfranchised – one that could happen only when a gifted boy was lucky enough to come across a potent carer, ready to set a direction for the ward's educational process.

This new class did obviously have associations with the possessor nobility, which was the social background of a part of the professionals, and whose needs were served by clerks from various offices or chancelleries, barristers and notaries, physicians and teachers, family-portraitist painters and gravestone sculptors. A considerable bunch of private tutors and governesses were dispersed to the landowning gentry's manors. And, it would still happen, though less and



less frequently with years, that a mental worker who had managed to save a tiny amount of money, would buy himself, or take on a lease for (or, take as a dowry, together with the wife) a small countryside property, thereby buying his way into a 'citizenly' (i.e. landowning) neighbourhood. In spite of this, the intelligentsia's range of interests and aspirations were very clearly diverging with the nobility's lifestyle. Posthumous memoirs and biographies published in periodicals, as well as the period's novels and the so numerous moral or social 'pictures' brought some poignant or sarcastic phrases referring to the mental indolence and narrow-mindedness of the landed gentry. Furthermore, as already observed, the intelligentsia had, in the forties, absorbed democratic ideas, to a larger extent than the other social classes, and in most cases, advocated the enfranchisement of peasants. What is more, a certain reversal of snobbery is identifiable: it would at times happen, much more than once, that a well-off landed 'citizen' of a high-tier family was willing to draw a sense of his personal value mostly from his knowledge and cultural merits, eagerly seeking an exchange of thoughts and ideas with men of science and talent.

The memoirs highlight the character's achievements and what he has attained through his own assiduous effort; in case he happened not to inherit any material or intellectual resources from his family house, his (or her) personal merit was all the more appraised. An affinity with the Franklinian benchmark of bourgeois virtues is identifiable here; yet, there are apparent differences. Intelligentsia-related biographies and moralistic novels of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century did not pay special attention to one's economic merits or financial success. Fortune-making did not enjoy an esteem. Of value were mainly works, even if most modest, undertaken for the benefit of progress in the sciences and fine arts, as long as they had in view a "care for the public good" and a "love for the family land" – obviously, the censurable-vocabulary synonyms of 'love of the homeland' service or desert to its benefit.

While absorbing, as has been said, emigrants from various spheres and nationalities, the intelligentsia was imperceptibly assimilating them. The Polish bourgeoisie did not show such absorptive capacity: Polish, Jewish, German artisans, merchants and entrepreneurs could live one beside the other in isolated environments, preserving their own language, religion, and customs.

The intelligentsia was a socialising class, but in a different way than the nobility was. Little attention was attached to the 'Old-Polish hospitality' code, that is, plentiful food and beverages. The repast served at an urban salon was usually modest: of importance was who was to be met there, and the expected subject of conversation. Yet, Warsaw, not to say any of the smaller towns, had safe public places to frequent: the 'citizens' and merchants' *resursas* (clubs) remained

under strict surveillance and mainly served as card-playing and carnival ball giving venues. Cafes, it was feared, remained under the watch of Paskevych's spies. Home salons and *Biblioteka Warszawska* editorial meetings were the only opportunities remaining. Matters national or political were not debated there either, as informers could find their ways around, but a style of cautious conversation on social and intellectual subjects did develop, with ideological views and literary assessments becoming crystallised.

Evaluations were usually divergent, which is obvious; the differences were not nasty or dangerous, though. The barely perceptible pulse of public life alleviated the disputes. As we shall see, disputes were not extinguished but no more antagonised the parties to the extent precluding the possibility to meet. The Warsaw intelligentsia sustained the style of kind forbearance for unconventional ways of thinking, providing that good manners were preserved. Sociable soirées, featuring excerpts of new pieces of verse read aloud (usually, by habitué actors), some music-making, or, sometimes dancing, and, in the first place, talks held in small groups, would often last well into the night, with no-one complaining about losing his or her time, since this was the main form of coexistence and interaction, binding people of different professions into a shared environment. The surviving letters and memoirs from the decade have a prevalent tone of reciprocal kindness, sentimental friendships fostered over the years, courtesy for ladies. The latter were treated as intellectual partners and confidantes; a lady's inaccessible 'album' had to be filled with a wistful patriotic poem or a moral maxim; she had to be consoled whilst in misfortune, or, could offer comfort whenever sought for.

Technological novelties were encroaching into daily life. The railroad and the telegraph have already been mentioned. Karol Beyer (b. 1818) opened in 1844 the first-ever photographic laboratory in Warsaw, which aroused animated interest, and where portrait photographs could be made. Newspapers started turning for the better, more vividly paged now, and replacing, to the extent feasible, reprints from foreign newspapers with communications prepared by their own correspondents. The relations with the Viceroy, and his impeccable loyalty, enabled Henryk Rzewuski (b. 1791) – the author of *Pamiętki Soplicy*, a book beloved by the reading public – a broke magnate from the Ukraine, now living on a governmental salary, to obtain a licence for a new daily paper. This allowed him to invite for cooperation a team of gifted Warsaw authors, regardless of their views. Spring 1851 saw the kick-off of *Dziennik Warszawski*, under, seemingly, the best possible auspices, having an opportunity to become – in spite of the censors' watchfulness – the Kingdom's first modern newspaper and, in parallel, a source of extra income for its editors as well as its authors whose short stories and novels were published in episodes, a customary thing then already. As many

as 2,300 subscribers were registered for it hand over fist, it is reported: a figure unattainable to any Polish paper before then. Yet, it soon turned out that those reckonings were too simple-hearted. Published with support from a governmental allowance, *Dziennik* actually turned into a personal organ of its chief editor and his ultraconservative views. The Warsaw public would perhaps have taken a forgiving attitude toward a humble Russophilism, deeming it an indispensable tribute, given the circumstances. Yet, Rzewuski blasted in his verbose stylised tales (called *gawędas*) and treatises the liberal and democratic ideas of his age, the entire Western civilisation, and Polish national reveries – and this proved too much for Warsaw, and not only: the subscribers, disgusted, started withdrawing, accompanied by some editorial-board members; eventually, *Dziennik*'s influence was insignificant. Polish public opinion could be pacified and made remain silent, but proved non-purchasable – albeit its living conditions were far from enviable.

Senior state officials, tribunal-of-appeals judges, notaries, and the most sought-for doctors could live like lords; the rest of society had no sense of stability, with health conditions and life expectancy performing averagely. Those cautious enough to ward off a citadel gaoling, deportation, or the need to stay abroad breadless, had still a considerable chance to fall victim to tuberculosis, or cholera – the latter reappearing every few years and was particularly menacing, especially for physicians. The care of daily existence, promotion, and family maintenance to a decent standard, were the activities so absorbing that they did not leave much room for cultivating ceremonial values. The primary postulate in this category – to ‘preserve nationality’ – boiled down, mostly, to tending to the language and selected elements of the historical tradition, with a Polish-style upbringing and education being provided for children.

This would not be an ambitious lifetime programme for Warsaw, or even in any of the Kingdom's provincial *guberniyas*; however, things were different in Wilno or, say, Volhynia. After the Wilno Scientific District was abolished, together with the University, de-Polonisation of schools and institutions in Lithuanian-Ruthenian *guberniyas* progressed imminently, whilst the economic power of the Polish landed gentry, which still ruled hundreds and thousands of its subjects, remained undisturbed, and re-secured with noble self-government. The latter authority, with certain judicial and tutelary competencies vested therein till 1840, could nowise counterbalance tsarist bureaucracy: on the contrary, it had become its complaisant instrument.<sup>176</sup>

---

176 D. Beauvois, *Trójkąt ukraiński* [‘The Ukrainian triangle’], pp. 352; 373-5.

The lands designed to be fully and forever united with Russia saw much harsher and severer repressive measures applied by the police, especially once Konarski's conspiracy network was discovered, than those encountered in the Kingdom. Espionage, house searches, imprisonment, confiscations of goods and deportation under administrative or forensic procedure, and, lastly, executions finally hit the target: the nobility and the intelligentsia could still feel them in their bones; any will to conspire did not tempt them any longer; the situation of those who have to stifle inside themselves any disobedient or rebellious thought is unenviable. The easiest way to dodge such discomfort would be to abnegate the disobedient or rebellious thoughts. Nicholas I tried to make this easier for affluent noblemen, attracting 'citizenry' sons to do service with the Corps of Cadets or with a *guberniya* office, so that their ways be tied for good to the glory of the Empire.

The intelligentsia in this territory was a thin layer, settled mainly in Wilno, and painfully experiencing nostalgia for the University and the Medical Academy. "Here, in Lithuania", Syrokomla wrote to his Warsaw friends in 1851, "there is a horrid hollowness in the literary domain: not that we should not be capable of affording some symptoms of life, of a sort, but the censorship, a tremendous purgatorial censorship, is suppressing with its heavy paw every, be it the most innocent, breath of the chest. It is not so bad with the harshness of the law, but the ignorance, laziness, and timidity of the censors would erect an impassable weir between those who write and the public."<sup>177</sup> In such conditions, any organisational initiative was doomed to force a triple barrier: the unwilling administration and censorship; miserly material resources; and, the milieu's inertia. All the same, the environment's intellectual potential in Wilno was still considerable enough, and the need for a community strong enough, for something to be created together at times. Most of the time, it was true for manifestations of literary life: if not a periodical magazine, for which it was most difficult to obtain a licence, then, at least, an almanac or *noworocznik* ('new-year magazine'), a library collecting remnants of a pillaged university book-collection, or a theatre that would stubbornly fight for its existence.

In Lithuania, Belorussia and the Ukraine, the intelligentsia's family ties with the nobility and the farm household were stronger than in the Kingdom – a fact that bore multiple consequences. On the one hand, it was easier to attract enlightened, and brazen, citizens for the delivery of promising publishing concepts. On the other hand, literature had to wrestle with the Sarmatian tradition, which was particularly vivacious in Lithuania. The land was, after all, the nursery of the

---

177 P. Wilkońska, *Moje wspomnienia*, p. 266.

noble tale (*gawęda*) – a genre which was very alluring to readers but was a sanctuary of moral traditionalism, nostalgia and bigotry, resistant to new currents of life. The ideological and moral rupture between the ‘landed citizenry’ and the intelligentsia – its main reason being the postulate of voluntary renunciation of serfdom, and freedom offered to peasants – would manifest itself in Lithuania and Volhynia by reciprocal recriminations, more coarse than elsewhere.

As usual with a disaster period, the mid-century Wilno intelligentsia left a trace of itself thanks to a few enthusiasts who did not become prejudiced by adversities and were able to attract others. Adam-Honory Kirkor (b. 1818?) is the first to be introduced in this context. A clerk with the Treasury Chamber and, afterwards, the Statistical Committee, his formal education being limited to gymnasium level studies, a man without clearly defined professional qualifications, he became an untiring cultural animator. Theatre was his first passion; but the Wilno theatre, a private enterprise, with a team of talented actors, could hardly sustain itself, till it was transformed, in 1845, into a Government-owned institution: although Polish actors continued to stage Polish plays there, the audiences and the reviewers could no longer influence repertoire policy.

Kirkor advocated conciliation, and encouraged clemency with the authorities in order to be able to wheedle and settle things that could have been achieved in no other way whatsoever: an eternally scabrous dilemma of culture in a police state. He fostered his personal Lithuanian patriotism at the same time. What it meant, needs being determined in the historical context. The Polish, or Polonised, nobility from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania always considered themselves Lithuanians, which defined their provincial identity within the Commonwealth. A relic of such identification lasted till the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century – with a new element emerging in parallel: archaeological passion and folksiness.

Archaeology was taken as a broad concept: it replaced history, (that was suspicious to the authorities). Archaeology meant any search for ‘antiquities’, buried in the ground or preserved in the folklore’s memory and speech. Entering into folklore and collecting its legends, describing the rites, meant in Lithuania crossing the border of the Polish-nobility universe. The legendary heathen past of Lithuania had attracted the Romanticists, and now aroused the imagination of the new generation. Teodor Narbutt (b. 1784), a homebred historian, wrote and published his multivolume *Dzieje starożytne narodu litewskiego* [‘The ancient history of the Lithuanian nation’] (1835-45); J.I. Kraszewski had two volumes of *Litwa starożytna* [‘Ancient Lithuania’] issued (1847-50); Syrokomla and others followed them, combining and mixing poetry and truth, apocrypha and documents. Kirkor was enthusiastic about this turn, which was to stimulate the surfacing, in literary life, of a genuinely Lithuanian idiom and national spirit.

Called an ‘archaeologist’ by his friends, Kirkor dug up Lithuanian hillocks and treaded out the Petersburg antechambers, till he elicited, in 1855 – together with aristocrat Eustachy Tyszkiewicz (b. 1814), possessed with the same idea – consent to set up an Archaeological Commission in Wilno, plus a donation-founded library and an Antiquities Museum. Encouraged with this success, he solicited a concession for a Polish newspaper. This venture, however, belongs to the following period – along with the bitter expostulations he brought down on himself from his fellow-countrymen.

The open houses kept by Kirkor and Syrokomla, as well as that of composer Stanisław Moniuszko (b. 1819), were the most important venues for the Wilno intelligentsia to meet at. Wilno owed to those houses and their attending social circle its sustained presence on the map of Polish culture in that coarse time, radiating into faraway areas, especially, Volhynia, Podolia and the Ukraine, where Wilno University pupils could still be met. Isles of Polish culture could be encountered everywhere there. The most vivacious one was in Kiev, around the young Russian university, which lagged behind its best counterparts in educational standards but half of its students were Polish, and noble.<sup>178</sup> It was there that *Gwiazda*, a youthful periodical, was edited for a couple of years (1846-9), hotly bickering with the conservative *Tygodnik Petersburski*. Polish tradition was confronted there (similarly to in the eastern Galicia) with an emerging Ukrainian identity, a topic to be covered further on.

The Polish colony in Petersburg was much more loyalty-coloured, as it was mainly formed of officials employed with the Secretariat of State for the Kingdom and professors of the local university, the most renowned in the Empire, which perforce promised the greatest prospects of a scholarly career. Several of them could take advantage of the opportunity – to name the medicine professor Józef Mianowski (b. 1804), a physiologist; Leon Cienkowski (b. 1822), an outstanding naturalist; or, Antoni Muchliński (b. 1808) and Józef Sękowski (b. 1800), Orientalists, experts in Turkish and Arabic languages. Sękowski, in particular, became notorious as a renegade – the reason being, perhaps, that during his youthful years in Wilno he had some experience with the Philomath society but later shut himself out from the Polish environment. Mickiewicz, at his Collège-de-France professorial chair, ranked him among the writers who “have committed the capital treason, who have renounced their ancestral faith, their native past [...], so

---

178 J. Tabiś, *Polacy na Uniwersytecie Kijowskim* [‘Poles in the Kiev University’], pp. 30-40.

as to gain the oppressors' favours".<sup>179</sup> Such was the price of careers supported by the Russian chancelleries, which was also part of the experience of Polish lawyers lecturing in Petersburg and compiling new laws for the Kingdom there, in line with the tsarist palace and Government's expectations – such as the aforementioned Romuald Hube, or Cyprian Zaborowski; or, Józef Kowalewski (b. 1801), a former Philomath and exile, who earned his fame as a notable student of Mongolia who held the position of chancellor of Kazan university.

\*

The Polish intelligentsia was thus ripening in an enormous dispersion, with deepening border divisions. Inter-Partition contacts between 1848 and 1855 were suspicious to all three governments and their police services. Exchanging correspondence, be it a family one, with émigrés was all the more dangerous; secret smuggling of their works to Polish territory was seemingly diminished, compared to the earlier years – with no actual figures being attainable, obviously. Tsarist customs officers had an obligation to open and inspect any and all book deliveries, including their foreign-language content, and to compare the content with the lists of banned books: if something illicit appeared, the parcel was resent to the sender, at his expense. In case just an incriminated passage was found, the pages were torn out or blotted out with black paint.

Luckily, there cannot ever be a system of completely unyielding frontier controls, or completely tight censorship. Where the name of Mickiewicz could not be mentioned, the 'songster of *Grażyna*' was mentioned (after this author's poem), and was comprehensible to all. Yet, a communication of this sort, even if accompanied with clandestine circulation, having its natural restrictions, remained on a level of catchwords and signals, contributing to no ideological discourse. The fact that everyone could quote a few Mickiewicz stanzas from memory does not imply that the great Romanticism of our expatriates populated the cogitation of the Polish intellectual class.

And, more importantly perhaps, it would not have found an easy way in those years into minds and hearts, as the disposition of a fearful country, embarrassed with its daily-life prose, started strongly departing from the political fundamentalness of the exiles and the high tone of their poetries.

---

179 A. Mickiewicz, *Literatura słowiańska* ['The Slavonic literature'], Second Course; transl. [French to Polish] by L. Płoszowski, in: *Dziela*, the Anniversary Edition, vol. 9, p. 251.

#### 4. The visible horizon

“Seven years of Egyptian famine followed the year ’50, the entire soil of exactly that inner indigenous history got powdered with ash, skinny cattle and empty spikes remained. [...] It could seem that the victims cast into the over-twenty-years-long precipice and those deportations to Siberia, and those imprisonments in casemates, and those gallows, instead even of fertilising, as it was supposed to be, at least, have only impoverished our native land’s soil of its vital juices. For this is what has really occurred, and not otherwise. Twofold has been the vein through which the nation’s soundest blood bled away: exile and conspiracy.”<sup>180</sup> Żmichowska’s descriptions of social apathy are unrivalled in their vividness, sincerity, and despair. No good-natured consolation. There was no rapport between the conspirators and the enlightened social classes; not to say, the urban circles.

As she wrote, from Lublin, to her female friend in Poznań: “[...] in vain am I looking for Poland in the Poles around me today. [...] Fooleries, believed to have been slain since long ago, are transpiring overtly, the youth are enlisting themselves unashamedly with the Muscovite ranks, parents speak most unconcernedly about sending their sons to the army or to the cadet corps. That great alternations have been brought about in the school arrangements, is perhaps a half-bad thing; [...] that they [i.e., basically, students] are supervised in corridors, in streets, and even inside their houses by non-commissioned officers, with the right to stalk them. [...] But all this is less painful, it is only the defunct abandonment of our lads, it is only their decrepit lack of concern or mindless joy toward all those novelties, the dis-Polonisation of their instinct that had so loyally, so watchfully safe-guarded the national sensations – oh! this is really tearing the heart asunder [as if] with forceps.”<sup>181</sup>

But, what could be done? With no prospect for change, one has to adapt to the contemporary situation, find a place for himself/herself, and adapt the ethical dictates, the tone of philosophy and poetry, to the state-of-play. Adaptation meant reduction, in the first place. If one could not openly write of, or expatiate, one’s national aspirations, politics, liberty and freedom, or constitution, why should then it be worthwhile thinking about it. Public opinion, social attitudes – can any such notions be spoken about under these conditions? Or, worldviews, for that matter?

Well, they can, it turns out – but without requirements being set too high. The testimonies coming down are fragmentary and dispersed: mainly, letters; some cautious articles; at times, an exchange of opinions, bursting out and being torn

---

180 N. Żmichowska to Seweryn Elżanowski, 4<sup>th</sup> October 1859; *Listy*, vol. 2, pp. 380-1.

181 N. Żmichowska to Bibiana Moraczewska, December 1852, *Listy*, vol. II, p. 83.



very soon. Our lot nowadays is to make use of intuition, venture to formulate hypotheses without a pretence of infallibility.

If any domain was identifiable as enjoying a rather common respect among the reading class, regardless of its members' profession, history was the one. History alone could save, and give excuses for, the sense of national identity which at times seemed so uncertain and fragile. It was, however, a history of the country without the Partition and its aftermath: the more remote the past, the safer. This was partly the reason, the primary one being the predilection for historiosophical speculation, that the authors of historical enquiries most heartily fantasised about the prehistory of Poland, hidden in the preliterate shade, successfully piquing the curiosity of the not-quite-broad public with the subject-matter.

In the past not remote, let us make it plain, Lelewel, a fastidious scholar, did not shun filling the unknown territories of Slavonic prehistory with conjectures suggested to him by a democrat's intuition: this was how he has conjured the original egalitarian 'communal-sovereignty' and the later-lost 'citizenship of the yeomen's class'. These interpolations were known to the historians at home, who spun a denser and more fabulous tale on their own. The underlying, and almost apparent, concept was the still-living – as in the period before November '30 – hypothesis, derived from Herder's books, of the idyllic, serene, peaceable nature of the Slavs. How invincible was its pregnantness! However, its precondition of a shared Slavonic stem, from which tribal or national boughs started branching off with time, became somewhat suspicious as righteous Poles were unwilling to have their origins identified in terms of an ethnical trunk shared with the Muscovites. Still, this was exactly the way that Slavic prehistory was modelled by Waclaw-Aleksander Maciejowski (b. 1792), author of the monumental *Historia prawodawstw słowiańskich* ['A history of Slavic legislatures'] (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: 1856-9) and *Pierwotne dzieje Polski i Litwy* ['The original history of Poland and Lithuania'] (1846), who, in addition, received his wages from the Government, was on friendly terms with General Storozhenko, the head of the interior and the police, chairman of the Inquiry Committee, stern for Warsaw locals. Thus, Maciejowski could obtain his passport in readiness – which caused some reserve toward him whilst not precluding him from society. In the end, more than half of the intelligentsia members lived on governmental wages: the only difference was, they took their money for their clerical functions, whilst those others, for their research and writing: a little more subordinated, after all.

It needed to be thought up in what a way those good-natured patriarchal Slavs could possibly develop a state. The thing is, they did not muster it up on their own. It was only the Slavic Lechites, a tribe settled on the Elbe, Maciejowski argued, that took over the military and administrative organisation patterns

from the Germani; afterwards, they set off eastwards, toward the Vistula, where they subdued the agricultural Polans people and built a feudal duchy. Fryderyk Lewestam (b. 1817), a literary critic, and author of *Pierwotne dzieje Polski* ['The original history of Poland'] (1841), contrived, for a change, a Celtic tribe named Llach [Llyakh] (spelled with double 'l'), were said to have arrived in our territory from the south, and taught our ancestors obedience to authority; having assumed our barbarian language, they originated the Polish nobility. Those concepts were nonetheless topped by Karol Szajnocha of Lwów, who told that the Norman Lechites invaded, in 6<sup>th</sup> century, the Slavonic people from Scandinavia, subjugated them, and, with time, fused into one with them.

Maciejowski, a great erudite otherwise, eventually concluded that the entire of Slavdom, inclusive of a proto-Poland, assumed Christianity, at first, from the East, of the Greek rite, which only at a later date was superseded by its Western, Latin counterpart. Such a concept could not be welcome to the Roman Church, which in the abstruse Polish matters followed the opinion of the Resurrection-Order (*Zmartwychwstańcy*) Friars: their endeavours eventually led to Maciejowski's works being Index-listed (in 1858), making it all somewhat unpleasant.<sup>182</sup>

The period's historians – all of them, perhaps, and by no means Polish only – shared the conviction whereby every people has its permanent moral character which only can be changed – usually, for the worse – if exposed to an overpowering pressure from the outside. A statement claiming that Christianisation had corrupted the Slavic people's nature and culture proved unsustainable amidst a Christian society; still, imports of a date younger than the Baptism – such as the German laws, or the Jesuit schemes – did not enjoy much esteem. The authors, naturally, differed in their opinions, but the dominant domestic line was an 'inbred' history of a nation that was doing well wherever it developed by itself, rebuffing any temptations of foreign influence.

A follower of the German historical-legal school, Maciejowski put an emphasis on a fundamental disunity between the Slavic and Germanic civilisations: "As much as Germania breathed with war and cruelty, with peace and suavity the Slavdom inspired." The Germanic civilisation was reason-based while the Slavonic civilisation was affection-based; the former was pervaded by 'coarse materialism' – the latter, with a spirit of sacrifice.<sup>183</sup> Bronisław Trentowski started

---

182 J. Bardach, *W obiektywie nauki i w lustrze pamięci* ['The lens of science and the mirror of memory'], p. 237-8.

183 W. Maciejowski, *Historia prawodawstw słowiańskich* ['A history of Slavic legislatures'], 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 1, p. 485; cf. M. Kulecka, *Między słowianofilstwem a słowianoznawstwem* ['Between the Slavophilism and Slavonic studies'], pp. 209-212.

proclaiming, from a distance, an intransigent clash between these two civilisations – once he became deeply disillusioned, in 1848, with the German liberals.

The image of the eighteenth century was, plainly, the key application, or touchstone, of such an inbred doctrine. Henryk Rzewuski openly stated his hatred toward the French philosophy of the time: “That frenzy which emerged in the eighteenth century in France, disseminated today, has deviated civilisation to the extent that there can be nothing in common between it and Christianity.”<sup>184</sup> He reproduced this thought in all his texts from the forties and fifties, marked by the conviction that scientific rationalism and religious scepticism are a moral disaster for mankind. The extreme doctrinarism and Russophilism disclosed by this author was regarded by the intelligentsia more as an intellectual provocation rather than a revelation.

Kraszewski was a different story; on founding his Wilno magazine, he nonetheless heralded (in 1841) that “it shall not accept anything that would smack of the rotten philosophy of the French school of 18<sup>th</sup> c., or of opinions new but detrimental, which, whilst only passing as new, prove to be a whited sepulchre of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>185</sup> And he remained loyal to this opinion for a long time.

Lelewel too, in his Brussels years, was a defender of the idea of noble republicanism, which was said to become spoiled at the time it started diverging, influenced by Western system-wide or structural models, from its rules of liberty and equality within the knightly estate. Poland had developed these principles in its laws before the West did, and hence there was apparently no reason to complain about our conjectured retardation. Informed to an extent by the Lelewelian concepts, Henryk Schmitt (b. 1817) developed, in Lwów, the idea whereby the key “to resolve any and all issues of nationality” lies not in foreign social theories but rather, in the native country’s past; faithlessness toward the generic ‘communal-sovereign’ principles in the Third-of-May Constitution of 1791 had contributed to the Commonwealth’s fall.<sup>186</sup>

Such theories of endogenous development, being accomplished through transformations of native institutions only, had by the mid-century seemingly become an ordinary banality related to the assessment of contemporary European civilisation from a Polish standpoint. And this assessment tended to be, at least in the Russian Partition, very critical, in most cases – judging by the press and

---

184 H. Rzewuski, *Cywilizacja i religia* [‘Civilisation and religion’], in: *Dziennik Warszawski*, 1851, No. 21.

185 Quoted after: W. Danek, *Józef Ignacy Kraszewski*, p. 113.

186 H. Schmitt, *Narodowość polska...* [‘The Polish nationality ...’], pp. 3; 32; 62.

literature; it disclosed apprehension, aversion, and a sense of moral superiority. These sentiments, no doubt widespread, could however have various functions.

They could express attachment to the traditional forms of life with defence against it being knocked out of the habitual track. A defence of this kind was characteristic, primarily, to countryside nobility – be it possessors, leaseholders, or residents. An unsurpassable testimony to such a state-of-mind can be found in the works of Ignacy Chodźko, unfolding an idyllic vision of traditional rural life in Lithuania: “In the modest mediocrity and simplicity of household life-together, and in the noble righteousness of behaviours, have we found the unrestrainedness and calmness of mind – [...] that you shall not ever find, in your deep investigations and in dubious sophistry!”<sup>187</sup>

This genre of moralistic writing, based on a combination with an idealisation of the past, was still rather frequent, particularly with authors from behind the Bug and Niemen rivers. This mannerism was already a bit irritating to the intelligentsia, but who could ever think then of restoring the anti-nobility tirades like those of 1846. Dembowski’s or Heltman’s revolutionary rhetoric (let alone Mierosławski’s harangues) was worn-out and defunct, whilst the nobility even so endured and lived on, albeit not in the best condition. W. Kalinka regarded it (in Galicia, that’s true) as “the *sanctuarium* of Polish nationality”, an impersonation of devotion to the homeland.<sup>188</sup> Trentowski claimed that the “nobility alone is the nation still”: “it is in it that Poland’s destiny, the future of the Slavdom, and redemption of Europe from the Asian inferno are deposited within it”.<sup>189</sup>

This mythologised heritage had willy-nilly to be somehow reconciled with Europe, with the contemporaneity of the West which was already dealing with a wholly new scale of values. The “Parisian lay-stall”, cursed by traditionalist authors, albeit “undermining the age-old truths”, “perverse, slatternly” and outright “dishonourable”<sup>190</sup>, was tempting all the same. Novels by Balzac or George Sand were read in their French originals or in Polish translations, whichever one found more convenient; the Paris chronicles by Zofia Węgierska, regularly published in *Biblioteka Warszawska*, became the reader’s beloved piece of reading, their little window to the world. This correspondent turned out to be a bright

---

187 I. Chodźko, *Dworki na Antokolu* [‘The manors of Antokol’], 2nd ed., Vilna 1854, p/ 394.

188 W. Kalinka, *Galicja i Kraków pod panowaniem austriackim* [‘Galicia and Krakow under the Austrian rule’], pp. 53-54.

189 B. Trentowski, *Wizerunki duszy narodowej* [‘Images of the national soul’], pp. 2; 389.

190 F.S. Dmochowski (1855); as quoted in: P. Wilkońska, *Moje wspomnienia...*, pp. 138-9.

observer of the life and literature of the Second Empire, the period of tempestuous change taking place in Paris, France, and Europe – in the very centre of the visible world. What was beyond it seemed weightless and secondary; it was there, after all, that any and all inventions, revolutions, styles and fashions originated, whereas the Polish enlightened class devoutly listened to sermons condemning that Babylon of anarchy and fornication – and then eagerly devoured the news and novelties arriving from there. Ms. Węgierska served them abundantly, not concealing the shameful lining of the bourgeois city and world. In her chronicles, Paris was represented, as a cultural sociologist puts it, “in dual form: as a menacing Leviathan, swallowing its victims, and as a splendid metropolis, the habitat of the most exquisite arts and science; a bellwether and arbiter of the cultural world”.<sup>191</sup>

This duality seems to be characteristic to the Polish – or, putting it more carefully: the Warsaw-intelligentsia of the time; to its intellectual culture. It was at times distributed into parts: Kazimierz Wóycicki, for instance, scolded the eighteenth century for it having infected Poland with the bacillus of foreign influence, an impudent criticism of religion and the past; yet, Wóycicki himself, as editor of *Biblioteka*, published the chronicles by Węgierska, along with other authors praising the age of enlightenment, Voltaire, and tolerance.

Józef Gołuchowski (b. 1797), an erstwhile lecturer in Philosophy at Wilno University, a landowner (‘landed citizen’) in the Kingdom in the century’s middle years, an author of two books (published in Poznań and Leipzig, respectively) on the peasant question in Poland and in Russia, showed the market-based civilisation as materialistic, arousing in people an unsaturated greed and craving for pleasure and enjoyment, and emancipating itself from the rule of religion and morality. A civilisation like this, Gołuchowski prophesied, must trigger a ‘satanic envy of the disinherited’ and shall assuredly lead to an apocalyptic revolution that will put an end to European culture. Should the peasant problem have not been resolved in the ‘Slavdom’, the latter would be immersed, in its entirety (that is, actually, Poland and Russia) and together with the West, in the whirlpool of a new barbarism which would “put off the beautiful light of civilisation, maybe for several ages”.<sup>192</sup>

---

191 A. Kłoskowska, *Z historii i socjologii kultury* [‘Elements of the history and sociology of culture’], p. 85.

192 J. Gołuchowski, *Kwestya włościańska w Polsce* [‘The peasant question in Poland’]; quoted after: J. Jedlicki, *Jakiej cywilizacji Polacy potrzebują* [‘The civilisation the Poles need’], pp. 224-8.

How powerful those fears could be is hard to say. There is a galore of texts testifying that Western capitalism, viewed from the lands on the Vistula, Bug, or Niemen, by people who had not ever seen a bit of it, or had come to know it superficially, did arouse anxiety – combined with temptation; horror – and admiration. Those apparently contradictory perspectives somehow coexisted, the yearly issues of *Biblioteka Warszawska* being proof. Edward Dembowski liked to describe the style of thinking represented by this magazine as ‘eclecticism’, which, in his language, meant a philosophical and political hesitancy, an inclination for half-measures, and an avoidance of assuming extreme positions. And this evaluation was not groundless. Reflecting the interest of the intellectually excited fraction of the intelligentsia, *Biblioteka* avoided growing radical or harsh polemics, and this not only for censorship-related reasons: out of conviction too. Its readers and contributors had democratic inclinations, and would probably willingly support an abolition of serfdom – but did not intend to canvass for the case. The West and the ideas radiating from it was their focus of interest; they had in mind, though, that their own subsistence was dependent upon the Russian authorities. They perceived the developments of industry, communication and transport as a vehicle for the progress of humanity; but feared, at the same time, that the steam-roller of industrial civilisation would level any national individuality. They had absorbed and accommodated certain categories of the Hegelian philosophy of history, as well as the Polish ‘national’ philosophy; but tried their best – as August Cieszkowski did – to reconcile them, as far as practicable, with Christian theology, which was not always a simple task to do. In any case being tackled, they situated themselves at some cautious ‘in-between’ point; and perhaps, who knows, this was the only reasonable intellectual tactics to assume then.

Political economy was a fashionable science in the whole of Europe and it aroused vivid interest in Poland too, particularly in the Kingdom. Along with *Biblioteka Warszawska*, the discipline owed its promotion to *Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego* – an organ of well-to-do educated landed gentry and intelligentsia associated with it: the group which was particularly interested in seeing agriculture, the farming industry, and agrarian relations modernised. This called for an audacious severance with the routine of serf-based husbandry – not because of an ideological or humanitarian inducement: the economic premises were definitely the incentive. Whatever the case, the overcoming of the mental inertness and resistance of the noble economy required quite an effort: in this respect, the circles of *Roczniki* and *Biblioteka* could count on each other.

In the ethical dimension, however, the free-trade economy was regarded as the gospel of capitalism. The latter, as is known, had some good and some ominous features, and this duality was reflected in almost every article. Although

Tomasz Potocki (b. 1809) argued that “capital has contributed to an emancipation, education, and betterment of humankind”, whilst free competition benefits the universal prosperity: thus, “it is the purpose for which every friend of humanity ought to pine, and every statist [i.e. statesman] strive”.<sup>193</sup> Yet, there were serious doubts about the issue. Capital gave birth to wealth – and poverty as well; destroyed human individuality and social bonds, replacing all the rules of coexistence with market gambling. “Solely political economists”, one article published in the Krakow *Czas* stated, “have not lost a belief in the rules of their science and are repeating their ordinary song of progress and civilisation. Stock-exchange profiteers act as reformers, heralding a new order of things. [...] Celebration of matter [is occurring] everywhere, and it seems that locomotives, telegraphs and bills-of-exchange have become the leverages of progress in our time.”<sup>194</sup>

For the time being, those were reports from the other world, whose intellectuals – contrary to what was stated in the preceding passage – had considerable anxieties and a sense of foreboding as to the direction in which the industrial civilisation was dashing. The once-Polish territory was situated at the roadside of the period’s Europe. Although the first steam trains had already been launched there, the provinces under Russian rule still floundered in an agrarian feudalism – with all the legal differences between the Kingdom and the Empire’s western *guberniyas*. Laying claim to the moral superiority of the European agricultural East was lined with a sense of inferiority – and no-one felt this more keenly than educated people did.

A splintering of the values and a sense that one lives, as it were, at the civilisational crossroads, seems to have been characteristic of the period: with this, public discussions on this subject-matter of the country’s incorporation in the Russian empire was as if ignored, or at least, not taken into consideration. The evaluations of the country’s social and economic situation, especially, of the Kingdom of Poland (which still bore this name – deridingly, it would seem), were tacitly skeletonised of any political or geographic context – being permeated with a sentimental moralism instead.

Such an intellectual climate was far away from romanticism, whose dramatic dilemmas seemed outmoded and vestigial, only present in home clipboards of keepsakes and festive values; sometimes, too, in lyrical poetry, usually stamped

---

193 Krzyżtopór, *O urzędzeniu stosunków rolniczych* [‘The arrangement of the agricultural relations’], 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1859), pp. 23-27; cf. Jedlicki, *Jakiej cywilizacji ...*, p. 245.

194 M. Słomczewski, *Charakter i niebezpieczeństwa cywilizacji przemysłowej* [‘The nature and perils of industrial civilisation’], *Czas – Dodatek Miesięczny* [a monthly supplement], 1857, vol. 7, p. 590.

with misanthropy. The domestic writing output after 1848 expressed accommodation, to a prevalent extent; for the first time since long ago, no underground current or ideological contraband was traceable in its shade. The intelligentsia were learning how to pose tasks for themselves whose solution, even if partial – or, just giving them a whirl – came within their reach, not exposing anyone to a disaster, whether individual or collective. This showed itself also in quitting the elaboration of studying the great history-of-philosophy and mission-of-nations systems, in favour of empirical and educational issues, guided by the authority of Copernicus, Bacon, and Newton; Jan Śniadecki was their vernacular counterpart. ‘Temperance’, or ‘dispassionateness’ [*trzeźwość*], was the beloved notion of these treatise authors, in the name of which they repelled the claims and ‘conceits’ of messianists, Hegelianists, and other metaphysicians.<sup>195</sup> Which is not to say that they had got rid of an inclination for theoretical speculation, or theological-moral reasoning; nonetheless, the Warsaw signpost – like the Poznań one before then – had now turned toward ‘positive’ science and ‘organic’, habitual, landlordly and domestic labour.

Of significance was the considerable contribution to those considerations of mathematicians, physicians, and naturalists, who in the earlier times would rarely feed magazines with their articles. Presently, evidence was given for them by the authority of natural sciences, growing in Europe – a relatively recent phenomenon; although they could not be offered an opportunity to gain a respectable position in the sciences, most of them being gymnasium teachers, they all the same contributed to tipping the scales of the debate on the universe toward the ‘organic’ and rationalistic side. In Galicia, Wincenty Pol, the poet, eagerly endeavoured after ensuring a more significant place for natural sciences: this man at some point was made, out of his will, a professor of physical geography (for a short time, though). Narcyza Żmichowska traversed a similar route, from poetry to geography – albeit much more discreetly – in Warsaw.

The significance of such conversions is not to be overestimated, they simply marked the growing rank of empirical sciences within the world-view horizon of the educated class. Doctor Szokalski, an ophthalmologist, considered worth recollecting his, for some time, daily trysts at a Warsaw café, attended by those fostered by Russian universities: “Aleksandrowicz, the botanist; Jurkiewicz, the mineralogist; Pęczarski, the astronomer; [...] Przystański, the physicist; Taczanowski, the zoologist; Kramsztyk, the aficionado of everything; etc.” The

---

195 B. Skarga, *Narodziny pozytywizmu polskiego* [‘The birth of Polish positivism’], pp. 66, 89, 91, 100, & passim.



diarist continues: “Our conversations, although in a separate room, not accessible to everyone, were held aloud, and this was almost sauciness, in the face of the crippling dread of the time. [...] We did not go beyond the scientific range, and had nothing to make a secret of. Admittedly, we were suspected, and spies were incited against us; but those, having heard enough of earthquakes, or logarithms, which they could not in most cases understand, yawned and eventually, having beckoned us, left to where they were bound for, never coming back again.” Astronomer Adam Prażmowski (b. 1821) would sometimes invite his colleagues, together with their wives and daughters, to pay him a visit at the observatory; there, watching the stars, “we were taking our time merrily, daydreaming incessantly of founding, some time, an environmental association; but there was not the slightest hope towards it, for Paskevych was becoming enraged at the very mention of an association of any sort.”<sup>196</sup>

Those were – let us add, following Żmichowska’s observation – empty years, calendar sheets humbly entreating upon the historian to give attention for a moment. The sense of meaningfulness and of a need for collective existence was wandering off; private strategies for life did not seem particularly promising, either. Those young people who sensed the imperative to fight for freedom, or a will for adventure, exited in 1849 – if gaoling at the Warsaw Citadel was incidentally not their lot – to Hungary, the adventure they came across being an internment in Turkey and wandering about the world, not infrequently for a long time. The Polish diaspora became scattered over many a country, trying to live somehow, become organised, and leave a trace of themselves – a bridge or a school there, merely a reminiscence elsewhere. Romantic heroes and fantasists oversaw and inspected railroad construction works, made cheeses, or soaps, gradually becoming familiar with the fact that everywhere they were strangers, not necessarily of their own volition.

In Poland, strangeness and loneliness were less gnawing, but the loss of an ideal, sense, and way-of-life concept was the more acute, the more exuberant the hope for a change had been. The cages of the partitioned provinces made it feel tight to those for whom travel and science were luring.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, an age so proud of its achievements, Polish culture was slowly becoming the domain of patient, industrious, but undereducated and self-taught people. It was for them, and by them, that an ideological project of organic works was devised – the only one which could give them a sense of usefulness, designed in view of a distant but, it would seem, real future.

---

196 W. Szokalski, *Pamiętniki*, vol. 3, pp. 36-37.

To see what lasting things this particular generation of the intelligentsia has bestowed us with, it befits to indicate, in the first place, the initiation of the monumental source editions. Even in Warsaw, the original Latin, and Polish, texts of *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* were launched to the world, in 1854. The Galician documentary publications have already been covered, to an extent. In Poznań, aristocrat Tytus Działyński undertook to edit and publish, at his own cost and expense, a series headed *Źródła do dziejów unii Korony Polskiej i Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego* [‘Sources for the history of the union between the Polish Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania’]. This is but a handful of the most ambitious undertakings: there were many more, of varying importance and value. The rules of editorial art were only becoming determined, and one would rather refrain from measuring the period’s publications by measures of today. Their underlying and guiding idea was to save the past – for posterity. The editions of chronicles, statutes, or works by Old-Polish authors (15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> c.) fell to a smaller extent within the censors’ restrictions than historians’ studies, and did not age that fast. But it is worth adding that Lelewel’s popular history of Poland – *Dzieje Polski* had many editions, impressed chiefly in German towns, and was among the books most frequently smuggled into the Russian Partition, although Karol Szajnocha’s books were wider-read. Under the existing conditions, so unfavourable as they were, with no universities, colleges or scientific institutes in place, quite a lot, and quite sensibly, was done in this respect; and, the aristocratic patronage and sponsorship did work out once again. None of those editions would have become feasible, if not for a cooperation functioning, with use of exclusively private means, between the Partitions: the reciprocal searching and copying of documents. Maintenance of cultural bonds beyond the frontiers was the main concern shared by the intelligentsia – and their honourably fulfilled devoir.

A second current of tradition burgeoned in parallel – the registering of the resources of folk culture, deemed by Romanticism to be an inestimable source of spiritual values. In all the provinces of the former Poland, Lithuania, Ruthenia, as well as Pomerania and Silesia, town-bred writers walked from one village to another, recording and preparing printable editions of songs, traditions and legends, and customs of many regions. These activities marked the first fruits of Polish ethnography, which still had the elaboration of scholarly recording methods ahead of it. Oskar Kolberg (b. 1814) was, since the thirties, one of those keen wayfarers. This unassuming bookkeeper with the Warsaw-Vienna Rail-Road, and subsequently, with the roads and bridges board of the Government Commission for Revenues and the Treasury, had gained an instruction in composing music and piano playing in his youth. This enabled him to record the sung

poems and their melodies; in 1856-7, he published in Warsaw his first cahiers of *Pieśni ludu polskiego* ['Songs of the Polish Folk'], being a sort of harbinger of his monumental magnum opus that belongs to the epoch of after 1863.

It would be awkward to expect more. A country divided into three powers where any manifestation of non-humbleness was punished, caused a deep collapse in education and civilisation in all of the three Partitions, albeit in a different way in each. Polish people were receding from the European intellectual centres in every respect, and had virtually no say in the boisterous progress of sciences and skills that overwhelmed Western universities and laboratories in the middle of the century. A national pride prevented the Poles from realising this gap for a long time.

The year 1853 brought a political opportunity unprecedented since the Vienna Congress and prayed for by Polish emigrants for the preceding twenty years. France and England decided to support the Turkish sultan and hold back Russia's expansion toward the Bosphorus and Dardanelle straits by military action. In the course of an over-two-year war, which history has named the Crimean War, whose theatre was virtually limited to the Russian Empire's seashores, the Hôtel Lambert diplomatic team endeavoured most zealously for the two Western powers to acknowledge a resurrection of Poland – or, at least, a reinstatement for the Kingdom of a constitutional form of government – as one of the objectives for the war and, later on, peace negotiations. These efforts appeared futile, which means that the weaving by Prince Adam Czartoryski, for so many years, of an intricate network of contacts and influences, and the whole experience accumulated in the course of this work, was of no use. The diplomatic service, consummate but not backed with the repute and powerfulness of a state, turned out to be helpless. The democrats always foretold this, and now could feel a sort of a Schadenfreude.

The strivings for the establishment of a Polish legion in the Turkish service also yielded an effect much below expectations: the point was that the Russian resistance would hopefully be overcome, a rising fomented in the Ukraine, and afterwards, who knows, perhaps in the Kingdom as well. This matter, which in any case did make the Sultan's milieu nor Istanbul's legations of Western powers enthusiastic, additionally became acrimoniously debated between two fractions of the Hôtel Lambert party. Adam Mickiewicz became entangled in those disputes, or intrigues: for the second time in his life, the poet decided that the formation of a soldierly legion – an area he had no particular competence for – was a more sacrosanct task for him than writing poetry. He died a sudden death in Istanbul, in November 1855, in circumstances not completely clear so far – reportedly, of cholera, although there was no epidemic at the time.

Apart from the deliberations of coffeehouse strategists, the Crimean War implied no commotion in the country – although if there was ever any chance for an uprising whose initial success could have possibly forced a diplomatic recognition of the Polish cause, this was the only moment for it to occur: the year 1854-5. Nothing budged, however, for there was nobody to utter the battle-cry. The aftermath of the 1848-9 defeat was that no Polish clandestine organisation, political concept, or military cadre was in place. On top of all that, a number of Polish officers bravely fought in the Crimea, in the staffs and ranks of the Russian army, presented with orders for their contribution to the defence of Sevastopol.

The Paris peace treaty of 1856 passed over the Polish claims in complete silence. The only auspicious occurrence, accelerated perhaps by Russia's wartime reverses in the Crimea and in the Balkans, but perhaps accompanying them accidentally, was the unexpected death of Nicholas I, on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1855, which followed the thirty years of his brutal rule. Less than a year later, on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1856, his beloved and loyal Field-Marshal, Ivan Paskevych of Erivan, Duke of Warsaw, Viceroy of the Kingdom of Poland, closed his eyes for the last time.

This marked the end of an epoch.

# Chapter 5: The struggle for primacy

## At home and in exile, 1857-1862

### 1. Latency

They waited all day long, till dusk fell. “All the apartments were deserted, probably, in the whole of Warsaw”, a diarist noted down. The folks were waiting, and so were the society gentlemen and ladies. The flambeaux were lit. Only at ten at night did the imperial carriage appear from the bridge’s side, in Zjazd Street, and flashed by to the Castle, at full gallop. Warsaw, the diarist reassures, “was overwhelmed by a frenzy of rapture”.<sup>197</sup>

For it was their emperor, nonetheless. For a mere year now, he had ruled a power that was still tremendous but had been humiliated with the lost war and the dictated peace conditions: accordingly, people dared to expect a change, in Russia and Poland, all the more so. In Petersburg and Moscow, even the press expressed a visible intensified ferment in the minds of the slender local liberal intelligentsia, as well as among the Slavophiles. “One cannot be there in Europe, and refrain from its overall development”, historian Nikolai Pogodin wrote already during the time of warfare – a man otherwise convinced that Russia was marching along its own peculiar path.<sup>198</sup> Alexander Herzen, then based in London, summoned the new tsar to wash the shameful stigma of serfdom from Russia, giving freedom and land to the peasants, and freedom of speech to the enlightened.

Warsaw, which had already become customary for it, did not take much interest in the intellectual and literary life of Russia, whilst there was no opportunity or means to express this community’s own needs. Yet, the atmosphere of expectation of some auspicious occurrences was contagious to all; it caused that in that May of 1856, the city exceeded the limit of ceremonial protocol envisioned for the new Tsar’s official visit. There was a splendid illumination setting arranged in Łazienki Park, a fireworks display, an exquisite ball, or two, or more, pompous cheers and a polonaise by Kurpiński, now refreshed,

---

197 J.K. Janowski, *Pamiętniki...* [‘Memoirs ...’], vol. 3, p. 43.

198 Quoted after: L. Bazyłow, *Dzieje Rosji 1801-1917* [‘A history of Russia, 1801-1917’], p. 203.

composed over thirty years ago in honour of Alexander I: “Hail, o King of Polish terrain ...”.

Alexander II must have found that enthusiasm somewhat suspicious – or, perhaps, his counsellors suggested to him that too unreasonable and excessive expectations of his Polish subjects might certainly be the underlying cause. Only after the emperor left, did news start disseminating, never officially confirmed, about harsh words of admonition that the ruler did not spare at an audience for representatives of the nobility. He announced that he should not intend to alter what his father Nicholas I had resolved, and that the Kingdom may expect a better future only in amalgamation with Russia. “No reveries, gentlemen!”: this famous phrase, uttered in French (“*Point de rêveries, Messieurs!*”) and bitterly repeated by the Poles, has gone down in history.

An admonition like this was not really a must at that very moment. The daydreams of independence, even if limited to a merger of the Kingdom with Lithuania and Ruthenia, did not fall into oblivion but turned muffled and disembodied. The dreams were now diffident and unassuming – and indeed became gradually fulfilled. The amnesty for Siberian deportees did not change the system but was an incontestable blessing for at least a few thousand Poles serving their penalty of *katorga* and exile in the remote Asian (European too, as a rarer case) Russian *guberniyas*, or conscribed by court verdict into Caucasian regiments. The authorities extended their grace of amnesty on an individual basis, refusing it, for instance, to the captured escapees, and preventing collective returns: whatever the case was, the ‘*sybiraks*’ (Siberian exiles) and ‘Caucasians’ returned home one after another between 1856-8, settling in the Empire’s western *guberniyas* or in the Kingdom. The oldest of them, age-wise or with the number of years spent in ‘*Sybir*’ (Siberia), were the 1831 insurgents who had survived a quarter of a century in that commodious soldier-prisoner camp.

All of them were somehow stigmatised by their deportee experience and did not find it easy to re-accommodate to ‘normal’ life – all the more so that, having, as a rule, an education higher than average, they had not necessarily the skills considered of use at home. Their way to governmental service was rather obstructed; some would have found a job with the Credit Society, in the extensive estates of the Zamoyski Fee-tail, or with the boards of railroad-development companies; for many, after the short-lived joy of the greeting, turned into a burden to their families. They feared very much, on the whole, incurring the authorities’ displeasure again and being back to where they had arrived from; on the other hand, they could not do much about the fact that young non-humble people wanted to see their natural guides in the former plotters and martyrs.

This had many *sybiraks*, as they would now be named, embroiled in a conflict of roles – an aspect that will be revisited later.

The amnesty for the emigrants, with its attached condition of swearing a ‘loyalty and obedience’ oath, produced much more meagre results number-wise. The offer was rejected, due to its humiliating aspect, by all the émigré political camps; moreover, not all of those who reported at the Russian legation in Paris or London were deemed worthy of the grace of return. So, the amnesty opportunity was used, it is said, by not much above a hundred of the lesser-known émigrés – for return to the Kingdom alone; this would not have been very decisive for the course of events in Poland.<sup>199</sup>

All the same, something started changing – at least in Warsaw. The new viceroy, Prince General Mikhail Gorchakov (b. 1793), who had for a number of years served as the chief of staff under Paskevich, and subsequently was a not-quite-fortunate commander in the Crimean War, was now reluctant to introduce a strict police regime in the Kingdom, contrary to his predecessor. By the act of tsarist grace, martial law, continually in force there since 1832, was eventually abolished. The censorship was somewhat abated; obtaining a passport became easier, and cheaper. People became a little less frightened; they started to talk with one another more unrestrainedly, and travel more extensively. The Warsaw intelligentsia, the class that was intrinsically most sensitive to the changes in the political climate, primarily benefited from these developments. Yet, for Poles not to think they could be up to anything, Pavel Mukhanov (b. 1798), the unendurable superintendent of the Warsaw School District, was appointed Director of the Government Commission for Internal Affairs, retaining, in parallel, his previous post.

All the same, after the years of torpor, the very circumstances in which someone could design something, or create something, was an enormous change. The emperor’s consent in 1857 to found a Medical-Surgical Academy in Warsaw was dictated by the no-longer-postponable need to educate doctors, whose deficit was heavily taking its toll on the Kingdom. This was, actually, the first Polish institution established after so many years; it was meant to gather teachers and young people, about whom it is never known what they would like to see

---

199 S. Kalembka, *Wielka emigracja* [‘The Great Emigration’], pp. 405-6. M. Berg wrote, in turn, of ‘crowds of the emigrants’ returning then; cf. *Zapiski o powstaniu* [‘Notes on the insurrection’], vol. 1, p. 54. W. Przyborowski writes, in his *Historia dwóch lat* [‘A history of the two years’], vol. 1, p. 88, that according to the official data, some 9,000 emigrants were said to have returned between 1857 and 1860 – probably to all the lands under the Russian rule: this figure is completely implausible, though.

some day. Thus, the decision was charged with a risk for the authorities – not illegitimately, as it turned out later.

The risk was also of a pedagogical nature – on the Polish side, for a change. A university-level school was easy to close down, but much harder to reinstate with a ruptured generational succession. Warsaw had a handful of clever practitioner doctors, but had no learned doctors: where would they have been produced? As doctor Wiktor Szokalski, a re-emigrant, recollected, the entire cast of the Kingdom's Medical Council was imbued with the spirit of the Wilno Academy, which had existed the longest; since its time (i.e. circa 1840), the team had not progressed in knowledge and skills. The stormy European development of physiology and clinical knowledge was virtually not contributed to at all by Polish physicians. "It is under our own steam", the editor of a magazine propagating hygienic theory stated, "that we are dragging the plough of civic duties across areas overgrown with thorns and hawthorns"<sup>200</sup>

For the time being, the Academy sought, for its first-year purposes, lecturers in theoretical domains: physics, chemistry, zoology, and botany; they were recruited mainly among gymnasium teachers. The Pharmaceutical School was incorporated into the Academy; the trouble about it, however, was that the School lecturers did not have a doctor's degree, or even, in many cases, a mastery of pharmacy; such diplomas were thus hurriedly dispensed to them. As Szokalski writes, there was no one knowledgeable in anatomy in the country, and so a doctor from Kalisz was assigned with lecturing on this subject; speaking in his favour was the fact he had once been a reader with the Faculty of Anatomy in Wrocław.<sup>201</sup> Only at a later date was Ludwik Hirszfeld, the outstanding anatomist and preparator, drawn from Paris: the appointment of a Jew for a faculty position required a special permission from the Emperor.

This is how it was being thrown together.

There was a throng of candidates running for medical studies – due to, say, no other opportunities being available, and because there were plenty of job opportunities, especially in the province; moreover, the tuition fee was made relatively low, to encourage interest, and it was not too difficult to get a fee relief.

Some 250 students were enlisted for the first – initially, the only – year; of those, 150 reportedly submitted a gymnasium completion certificate (a poor background, that; especially if the high school was philological!). The remainder were transferred from the Pharmaceutical School, students of which had to

---

200 *Przyjaciel Zdrowia*, 1862, No. 22 (based on excerpts by Ryszarda Czepulis).

201 W. Szokalski, *Pamiętniki* ['Diary'], vol., pp. 80-81.



have four gymnasium grades plus a year of pharmacist traineeship behind them; otherwise, they had to face a not-too-ruthless examination jury. That was, all things considered, a weird miscellany: “The thing was, principally, that the youth be made wear their [student] uniforms, placed at the Academy’s assembly-hall, and shown to the emperor”, is how a diarist saw it, perhaps a bit too roughly.<sup>202</sup>

About that youth, you never knew. A certain young man, son of a Warsaw tailor, made use of the fact that the school authorities had ceased to require evidence of nobility to be submitted, and, having completed his gymnasium course, went off to Moscow to do his medical studies. Once there, in a large circle of Polish students, he was subject to a summary patriotic education, as “the Polish national idea was flickering within the heart of Russia, stronger then already than in Warsaw and our country”; and, it was much easier to reach for banned books there. The paucity of his fatherly means incited the boy, however, to move after a year to the just-established Warsaw Academy. “Nevertheless, the youth of herein has so-far been thinking about things completely different to what we were doing in Moscow. An elegant uniform, an epee on the side, glazed gloves, a small tavern and whatever else therewith: those were the ideals of the Academy’s first students.”<sup>203</sup> Well, the uniform was compulsory; frequenting cafes would not mean anything, in fact. But the ideals were soon to alter.

A parallel attempt at establishing a School of Law in Warsaw failed. Count Fryderyk Skarbek, Director of the Government Commission for Justice in those days, engaged in battle over the affair with the all-powerful Mukhanov, which he paid dearly for as his career as an official came to an end. This gave him time, in turn, to resume economics after thirty years, and publish *Gospodarstwo narodowe stosowane* [‘National economy applied’] (1860), and tell the history of the Duchy of Warsaw and the Kingdom of Poland, write memoirs, and, use his quill to revile the government he had loyally served throughout his lifetime. The said government otherwise knew that the Kingdom was in need of lawyers no less than of doctors, but they also knew that a school would, alas, not do without students, and students, once greater in number, were a dangerous element in Poland.

In turn, Mukhanov complied with the request to support a project proposed by Warsaw painters. Those had their School of Fine Arts, as mentioned before, which since 1844 was separated from the ‘real’ gymnasium. Apart from a separate construction department, already mentioned, the school did not

---

202 Ibidem, p. 81.

203 F. Śliwicki, *Wspomnienia b. studenta Szkoły Głównej* [‘Memoirs of a former Main School student’], in: S. Kieniewicz, (ed.), *Spiskowcy i partyzanci 1863 roku* [‘Conspirers and partisans of 1863’], pp. 418-419.

offer a top standard of education, but introduced the students into the basics of drawing, engraving and etching, painting or sculpture; the three years spent together learning made almost all the young, or relatively young, Warsaw artists colleagues. These professions were subject to a tough transformation then. The tutelary patronage extended by aristocrats was fading out, little by little; drawing teachers for good-family-bred maidens were less sought-after, while the custom of displaying works of art for sale had not developed yet. The Polish public, landed-proprietor or bourgeois, those who could sometimes afford commissioning a portrait or landscape, did not value native art highly – more perhaps out of snobbery and fashion than real connoisseurship. Descending from most various layers of society, Polish artists obviously had to obtain extra instruction from foreign museums and ateliers: thus, they applied, willy-nilly, for government scholarships, or, sometimes, private ones, to at least hang around in Rome, Paris, Munich, or Petersburg. Once back home, they would be greeted by distress or accept artistic subjection in the form of a teacher's berth, or, producing sacred pictures and statues for churches, or banal decorations for a theatre. This milieu was one of the first to have begun becoming organised, having Wojciech Gerson (b. 1831) as their valiant bellwether, alongside at least a few talented painters.

The press sought consciousness of the duty to support 'fellow-countrymen', offering rather considerable room for the fine arts. It was inevitable, given the conditions of the time, that the subject-matter of a painting, especially if referring to a sublime scene from national history or legend, was regarded to be a more important trait than the painting's formal qualities.

In 1857, opinion was agitated by an article published in the Paris-based *Wiadomości Polskie*, and very soon after (characteristically to the censorship thaw) reprinted by Warsaw newspapers. Julian Klaczko, the known publicist, argued, namely, that Poland had had, and would have, great poetry, and yet, there were no conditions for the pursuance of genuine art, which might only be fecklessly imitated instead. The article provoked an animated discussion on what was indigenoussness or nationality in arts, and in what ways should it manifest itself; the Warsaw milieu of painters were encouraged, out of spite, to take care about their own collective interest. The government apparently did not perceive this painters' coterie as threatening: in 1858, consent was granted for the first public exhibition of Polish artists' works in thirteen years, and not long after, in 1860, for the establishment of a Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts, modelled after the German *Kunstvereins*, and second after its Krakow counterpart.

The Society was an association of affluent amateur lovers of art and artists who were promised to have a permanent gallery run on their behalf, combined with a reasonable purchase policy. This marriage, rather easy to guess, was pregnant

with conflicts, as it implied the threat that the creative artists' liberty might be subjected to the tastes, usually conservative, of their protectors and purchasers. For the time being, though, it offered passable ground, support and security, of importance, particularly, to young artists who had not made themselves well known yet and could not expect generous commissions coming immediately.

The various intelligentsia milieus began producing new initiatives, projects, and professional and overall periodicals: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* (since 1859), for instance, was a new type of popular magazine, with a rich historical-and-touring section, illustrated with numerous engravings. All those were small steps, marking the formation of local institutions, whose very existence was an important factor of building a friendly environment for the growth of local intelligentsia, and without which a modern society would not be capable of maintaining its life functions. Each of these institutions required being humbly pleaded for as a grace of His Majesty and the gracious Government; each success of such humble petitions encouraged more claims, in turn. Progress, even if fractional, stimulated the nationally-aware social strata, on the whole, to be proactive, while providing arguments to adherents of loyalty and paction. Although the government was barely giving back crumbs of what it had taken off and destroyed, but it really did, and so allowed the takers to maintain an appetite for more.

The Polish intelligentsia in Lithuania and the Ukraine were taking advantage of the post-Sevastopol thaw, as it was called in Russia, and so, taking a new breath. Its members were not numerous, and the group was only beginning to discern themselves against the nobility background. In Volhynia, Podolia and the Ukraine (the latter name was normally applied to the Kiev *Guberniya*), the Polish landed gentry was, still, a property-related and social elite, attaching importance to educating their sons (daughters – not yet then). Gymnasiums in Ruthenia were Russian but their students were predominantly Polish, and it was them who were to take at least half of the benches in the lecturing halls of the St Vladimir University in Kiev afterwards. The studies were not too rigorous, and part of the wealthy youth, having slept away from their fathers' protection, enjoyed their time playing cards and carousing. But, indeed, a so-called *purists* circle excelled in the fifties amidst the milieu, who – whether following the Kiev-based 'Gwiazda' group of a decade earlier, or the almost legendary Philomaths of Wilno, decided that their student time should be an opportunity to develop a moral character and a view of the world. They took interest in peasant reform – the central theme in Russia in those years, and considered the issue without the ballast carried still by their fathers.

The end of the sixth decade aroused discussions within this group about how society was arranged, assuming an accusing tenor against the noble 'cast', the background of a majority of them, but also against the disdained bourgeois

parvenus. In the course of those considerations, which bore fruit in the form of a multi-author volume published under the pseudonym 'Gromadzki', a distinct current named '*chłopotomania*' – which stands for the exalted idealisation of the peasantry, 'peasant-mania' – perceiving the Orthodox Ruthenian people as the real host of the land, started emerging. A severe split in opinion, comparable to what happened in Eastern Galicia in 1848, was eventually not the case in Kiev, this time; nonetheless, Włodzimierz Antonowicz (Volodymyr Antonovych; b. 1834), himself of noble kin, came to the top as a charismatic leader of the Ukrainian orientation, gradually departing from his Polish patriotic friends. 1861 resultantly saw, necessarily, the definitive separation of the roads of the Polish intelligentsia of a noble background and the Ukrainian national movement; their purposes appeared irreconcilable.

The tsarist authorities trusted neither the Poles nor the Ukrainians, nor the Russian liberals. Indeed, the General-Governor admonished Nikolai Pirogov, superintendent of the Kiev School District – and too liberal a figure, to his mind – pointing to ideas and notions penetrating the university that apparently "threatened the accepted order and good of the society". This was accompanied by the urge to spare no available means to protect the youth "against the pernicious influence of the utopists whose thoughts are occupied by state upheavals"<sup>204</sup>. Such protection could not be efficient, for the time being, as an intellectual movement and social criticism were already swelling in the whole of Russia, while the Polish milieus had their good reasons to enjoy the somewhat loosened control.

In Wilno, the locals tried their best to intrude into any crevice of legality. They already had their Archaeological Museum and Committee, obtained at the price of so much endeavour, the invited members being history aficionados from Warsaw, Poznań, Lwów and Krakow; they established relations with scholars from Russia, Bohemia and Germany. Their hope was that, once a favourable time comes, their modest institution would be developed and, who knows, perhaps the unforgettable University of Wilno would be reborn, with time. The announced visit of Alexander II to Wilno in September 1858 offered an opportunity not to be wasted. So that the Tsar be made predisposed, it was quickly resolved that an album in his honour would be prepared. The idea was conceived by the indefatigable Adam Kirkor; the historian Mikołaj Malinowski (b. 1799) ardently applied himself to the work, producing an essay on the indissoluble union between Lithuania and the magnanimous Russia. A tributary poem (*Przyjdź Królestwo Boże!* ['Arrive, Kingdom of God!']), nominating Tsar Alexander as a

---

204 Quoted after: J. Tabiś, *Polacy na Uniwersytecie Kijowskim*, pp. 92-93.

successor to the Jagiellons, was given by Antoni-Edward Odyniec, formerly a companion of Mickiewicz; protection over the beloved Lithuania was entrusted to the Monarch by Ignacy Chodźko, the popular noble author.

If in reply to these sycophancies some essential tsarist concessions had occurred to the benefit of Polish language, education and administration in Lithuania, perhaps public opinion would recognise this act, years after, as the circumspect origination of a political conciliation. Yet, this was not to be the case, and could not have been, for Alexander II, following his father's opinion, regarded the western provinces of the Empire, to be a forever-Russian country, not even admitting to give thought to a revival of Polishness, or Lithuanianness, there. The reckonings of the album's authors thus fell through; instead, they exposed themselves to condemnation from principled patriots, especially those in the emigration. Still, they worked in a province where not a single step forward could be made without a kind permission from the authorities – whether it came to publishing anything, or having one's children taught at a school. The life itself forced compromise, although its limits were variously set by various people. The circle of Kirkor and Malinowski was active for another few years, gathered around *Kuryer Wileński* – a newspaper that Kirkor the editor set at a decent standard. For minimalists, this was, well, good enough; owing to their docility, Wilno did not completely succumb to numbness and Russification. Their time was coming to an end, however; the younger generation would prove less eager to practise obsequiousness before the tsarist governors, endeavouring instead to keep pace with Warsaw.

And this would become easier owing to the technological progress in transportation. The years 1857-62 marked the hurried completion of the construction of the Warsaw-Bydgoszcz and Warsaw-Petersburg railroad projects, meant to connect the Kingdom, even if indirectly, with the capital cities of all three of the partition powers. This considerably facilitated the traffic of people and goods. Moreover, the building of those railways and the privatisation (1857) of the earliest railroad, the Warsaw-Vienna one, sold by the government to a shareholders' association with, mainly, a German capital share, provided a strong stimulus for industrial investment and private banker projects. The Kingdom's incorporation in the Russian customs area started yielding benefits as well: cheap cotton products from the vicinity of Łódź gained thus new markets, especially in the agricultural Lithuanian-Ruthenian *guberniyas*. A few districts of the Kingdom saw the emergence of small, for the time being, but technologically modern, clusters of industrial establishments using the power of steam routinely already. All this increased the hitherto-low attractiveness of the Polish market, causing inflows of foreign capital.

Ever since, an industrial and financial bourgeoisie in the Kingdom has been a fact; it was formed by, and made of, German, Jewish, Russian, and Polish aristocratic families, associated and allied with one another in a variety of ways. A leading figure in that class, then on the rise, was Leopold Kronenberg (b. 1812), a Jew by origin, Evangelical by confession, and Polish by upbringing and education, whose wealth ripened upon the lease of a tobacco monopoly and other financial operations, and governmental contracts. Kronenberg was an entrepreneur of great breadth, connexions and ambitions, not limited to property or assets at all.

The incursion of capitalism, still on a limited scale then, triggered a variety of responses. The landed gentry's opinion, especially, was cleaved in this matter. Although the traditional nobility's morals and manners, dating to the *sejmik* (regional-council) age were decaying almost everywhere, they were, all the more, cultivated in the theatre and in the images and ideas of a devout life. To noble moralisers, the invasion of machinery and accountancy seemed to undermine the very foundation of the social order: the sons' attachment to their fathers, the wives' – to their husbands, kind-hearted peasants to a kindly and honest lord, the nation's to its history and faith. The more the ongoing family and social relations were related to pecuniary calculations, loan facilities and mortgages, the more a nostalgic tone became audible in literature.

In his Volhynian novels, Kraszewski gave a lashing to the unkind and disobliging citizens for their exploitation of villein country-folk, for their brutality and greed, combined with intellectual indolence. After all, his *Choroby wieku* ['Diseases of our age'] (1857), a slightly fictionalised moralising lament of a countrified nobleman-reasoner, scared by the invasion of a cold and callous civilisation founded on the account of profits and losses, gained a notoriety incomparable against his other works.

This, rather meagre, thesis novel, initially printed in episodes by a Warsaw newspaper, furnished with a telling subheading *Studyum patologiczne* ['A pathological study'], triggered a flood of letters sent to the editorial board or directly to the author, from eulogists as well as critics. The intelligentsia usually stood by the critics: knowing Western Europe – if not from travel then at least from newspapers and novels, educated people fretted over the Polish territory's civilisational backwardness rather than spoiled morals and manners, a phenomenon ascribed to modernity. Not that they would not be aware of the negative aspects of the big city and its proletariat-inhabited quarters. The press did not spare any ink to report things from the capitalist purgatory: this was a hot topic, and a 'censorship-admitted' one.

An influential counterbalance to the noble nostalgic moralistic was formed by the aforementioned milieu gathered around Count Andrzej Zamoyski and the journal *Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego*, contributing a moderately-liberal

leaven to the sluggish world of 'landed citizenry'. Alexander II's consent for the formation of the Agricultural Society in 1858 came as a great success for this group. Organised in a fast and efficient fashion, this organisation was meant, initially, to deal with soil fertilisation methods and cattle breeding improvements; being, however, the Kingdom's only legal association, it soon gained an informal position as a representative of enlightened Polish opinion.

The faction's ideological leaders crossed polemical swords with their two opponents. First, they withstood the noble idolaters of tradition, such as the arguer in *Choroby wieku*, assuming a distrustful attitude toward any technological, economic, or pedagogic 'novelties', and still eager to live by the tradition and mores of their fathers and forefathers. On the other hand, they had to resist the democratic ideas, the strivings of the radicals (also called socialists), for making peasants the proprietors of their plots of land – without indemnification, and overthrowing the solidified social hierarchy, which in the opinion of conservatives would imply an annihilation of the entire European civilisation. Yet another danger, not to be spoken about out loud, was the despotic rule of Russia, which not only throttled Polish independence aspirations but, moreover, prevented any freedom of speech or trade, and therefore made the country isolated from European progress trends.

Among the threats so defined, the Agricultural Society activists wanted to build a happy-medium party; it proved too conservative for liberals but too liberal for conservatives; too conciliatory for patriots, and yet, too impudent for compromisers. The association was eager to arouse enterprise typical of the nobility, to inculcate into the landed gentry a disposition to invest in the modernisation of agriculture, to develop affordable lending and transportation institutions. The West was the model to follow – in specific, England and its Tories; Poland was to become, in the east of Europe, a vanguard of Western civilisation, its limitless property rights, freedom of trade and print, but without, God forbid!, an Enlightenment-style scepticism and incredulity.

Andrzej Zamoyski, an aristocrat from head to foot, had declared much earlier "that the nobility ought to take control of the improvements of interest to the country, once it has been deprived of another resource".<sup>205</sup> But no hereditary privilege had been vested in the nobility any more since long ago, the camp's ideological spokesmen argued; this class had, instead, to earn a guiding position in society, and prove its worth for keeping it.

---

205 Quoted after: S. Kieniewicz, *Między ugodą a rewolucją* ['Between reconciliation and revolution'], p. 17.

The authors representing this formation had not yet noticed that the hegemony of 'landed citizens' was put under threat not so much by democratic or socialistic agitators, as those had quietened down after 1848, as by an uneventful, though incessant, increase in the importance of the urban intelligentsia. This class did not throw down any gauntlet to the landed gentry – this was not their style; but it was them that took charge, more and more visibly, of the Kingdom's not-numerous thought and social-labour workshops, (publishing houses in the first place). Under the regime of censorship, admittedly somewhat relaxed, one needed to have some command of languages and literature to be able to advise ambitious publishers on what undertaking would be worth investing their money into – be it for profit, or for a honorary purpose.

The end of the fifties' was a promising time for publishers. The public was as if awakened, and was willing to get to know more about the world. Within a mere few years, a whole series of Western – primarily, French – economic works were issued, in better or worse translations.

It is not exactly known to us whether the idea to publish a universal encyclopaedia – the *Encyklopedia powszechna* – was conceived by the Warsaw bookseller Samuel Orgelbrand (b. 1810) on his own, or prompted to him by someone else; enough to say that in the time when most collective projects ended up in a fiasco after a short time, the Orgelbrand encyclopaedia was issued, as it turned out, with an astonishing punctuality. A rising or a martial law, the subsequent volumes were turning up: a complete set of twenty-eight items was issued within ten years (1859-68). The work was, in a sense, a summa of knowledge accessible to the Polish intellectual elites of the time, and a workshop which, owing to the ambitious entrepreneur's capital and obstinacy, had managed to draw some 150 authors and scholars that Warsaw and its inter-district cultural back-up could provide. Not all of them were luminous figures. Fryderyk Lewestam (b. 1817), not quite a German or a Dane, a Pole by education and upbringing, a long-term inspector of governmental schools and literary critic, was usually perceived as a functionary obliging toward the authorities, but nobody could deny his thorough knowledge of Polish and universal literature, and it was for such a section that he was made responsible for with the encyclopaedia's editorial board. Franciszek-Maksymilian Sobieszkański (b. 1814), an autodidact, was, firstly, a secret collaborator of the Third Section (the political police), then, a thoroughly apparent censor enjoying the full trust of his superiors; in parallel, he was an expert in the history of art, and a highly merited researcher and populariser of the history of Warsaw. And this was how it worked, at times: small careerists were sometimes highly merited to Polish culture, while righteous and brave people were affected by moments of infirmity and breakdown.



A partnership of two young booksellers, Gustaw-Adolf Gebethner (b. 1831) and August-Robert Wolff (b. 1833), opened (since 1857) a new epoch in the history of Polish publishing houses, combining a good knowledge of the market, financial reliability, and versatility in their literature. The entity's kick-off was rather cautious (financially and politically); its importance for Polish culture would only become perceptible, and could be appreciated, with time.

The eased police and censorship regime implied new problems and conflicts, absent or repressed – one example being the infatuation triggered by a new legal publication of Mickiewicz's works, the first in some twenty-five years. By then, the printing of the works, and even mentioning the name of their author, had been banned. In 1857, however, Samuel Merzbach (born ca. 1798), a Warsaw bookseller and publisher, wheedled the emperor's consent for having the poet's writings published. His design was to prepare an eight-volume edition, but the issuance of the first in the series incited considerable commotion: the edition was heavily censored. No one would obviously expect a full edition in the Kingdom, in Lithuania, or Ruthenia, and thus, it was normally accepted that Mickiewicz like this, mutilated, would be better than having no edition at all. Dresden or Paris editions of the Mickiewicz verse, printed in Polish, circulated, an obvious thing, in a clandestine circulation, and was recited at various patriotic trysts; this is not to imply, however, that their knowledge was universal in the fifties. There is a memoirist's testimony noting that the students of the Warsaw 'real' gymnasium heard nothing about the poet until the year he died (1855)<sup>206</sup>, which is as if young English students did not know of Byron, or their German peers, of Schiller. Many young people owed their first encounter with Mickiewicz's poems thanks to the Merzbach edition; once this had happened, they could be willing to search for what the Warsaw edition could not offer. There were pretences coming from the emigration, however, that they had agreed in Warsaw to have the national Prophet-Bard censored. It was easier to assume a fundamental position in Paris, though; the life at home induced compromise.

The Warsaw press, livening up year by year (operating also in the *guberniyas* beyond the Niemen and the Bug), would increasingly often mention the phrase 'public opinion' – the notion was becoming reinstated after years of absence. This public opinion was, intrinsically, unsteady and unstable, but contention for gaining an influence upon it continued. There was a wealth of topics public opinion could not take a position against, so it became excited with the admissible ones (within certain limits), if emotive. The Jewry was clearly one such

---

206 [A. Kraushar], *Kartki z pamiętnika Alkara*, vol. 1, p. 11.

subject-matter, and Jews became the object – and, to an extent, the subject – of the hottest exchange of opinions in the Warsaw newspapers in 1859.

It all started from an apparently trivial incident: a reviewer with *Gazeta Warszawska*, the Kingdom's most widely read paper – conservative and trying to be conciliatory with the government, thus preventing making itself trouble – complained that the concert hall was fairly empty at a performance of two Bohemian female artists as a certain tribe that likes to support their fellow members had colluded to disregard the show. The review's tone clearly testified that *Gazeta*, known before then for its belligerent sallies against Jews, now sought a pretext to taunt. The curious grudge against an absence heralded something new to the issue.

A group effigy of the 'Israelite tribe' whose members obligatorily feature identical character traits had long been obtrusively reproduced in European literature: for example, in novels, genre scenes, and political journalism. Polish literary output, with some symptomatic exceptions, followed the convention and perfected it in its own way. The most distinct feature of the tribe under accusation, from a Rotszyld (Rothschild) to the most wretched factor, was, certainly, a love of money, without which a Jew would not be a Jew; this readily implied his cunningness, propensity to swindle, exploitation of peasants, and sucking out of the nobility's resources. The innumerable repetitions of this all-embracing image could be diverse in local colour, but always characterised a community whose degree of civilisation and moral development was low, it was argued; one which contrasted with its attire, tongue, religion, and manners, and was therefore approached with supercilious contempt or indulgent disdain, rarely arousing any stronger sentiments. On the Jewish side, the utterances forming an obtrusive standard in mutual relations, were mostly ignored.

This started changing after the concept of human and civil rights settled in Europe, with, at least, some liberals deciding that these rights ought to serve everyone who possessed a property and paid taxes. Contrary to such doctrines, influential Polish opinion believed that the Jews had to become civilised, in the first place, and obliterate their blemishes, before they could ever be admitted to rights on an equal basis with Poles. Since, however, civic rights could not be dreamed of or talked about after 1831, the inequality could only refer to civil and fiscal rights and the litigation procedure. Yet, separate rights, obligations and bans for Jews were preserved in all those areas, in the Kingdom and in the Empire: for instance, a ban on the acquisition of landed property, or, on any dwelling outside the demarcated 'circuit' and in the border zone (the 'sedentariness [i.e. settlement] zone', in the Empire); special taxes; an interdiction to enter governmental service; and, a number of others. Some of those exclusions could be individually repealed for a holder of capital, a university diploma or a

‘respectable citizen’ title; whenever, however, the Petersburg committees considered the projects to abolish the discriminatory regulations, the Polish officials in Warsaw, supported to this end by Mukhanov, zealously gave grounds legitimising their indispensability, arguing that Jews had not yet attained the moral development standard at which admitting them to equal rights could be effected without prejudice to the rightful Christian populace.

Now, all of a sudden, a Warsaw newspaper reveals that a success of a musical concert might have depended on a Jewish audience! A rather considerable covey of Jewish intelligentsia had been formed over the past quarter a century: doctors, teachers, artists of various arts and crafts, agronomists and lawyers of high cultural aspirations. They faced clerical obstacles piled up across their way, and had to overcome reluctance in their native environment, which had no confidence toward secular teachings, given in a foreign language. Hence, the traditionalists considered the will to devote oneself to such things to be either an eccentricity of the emancipated *maskilim*, or a road to a schism, not always being wrong in that view. The option of a secular career – say, as a doctor – perforce drove the novice beyond the circuit’s cultural frontiers: professional qualifications could not be gained other than by leaving the enclosed world, guarded by the confessional orthodoxy. Whether someone would give it up for good, assuming a new religion, identity and reference group, or preserve the family and confessional ties with it, was a matter of individual choice. Whatever the case, every educated Jewish intelligentsia member had to seek appreciation from the Polish milieu (or, Polish or German, as in the Poznań Province and Galicia) within which it was his lot to practise.

Polish opinion noticed the group in question in the fifties, perceiving it, at first, as a problem that uncovered a uselessness of the hitherto-applied line-of-defence against the aspirations of Jews. It was awkward, though, to raise the charge of self-isolation, outer contrast and a ‘low degree of domestication’ in reference to people who wanted, conversely, to be non-contrasting, and did their best to overcome isolation, and paralleled the Polish elite, in fact, as far as education and culture were concerned. The nobility, accustomed for centuries to regarding Jews condescendingly, found it particularly hard to recognise them, all of a sudden, be it not many of them, as their peer and as respected people. Public discourse thus started articulating new ways to substantiate a sense of superiority: instead of claiming that Jews tend to separate themselves, it was now said that the opposite was the case: they push their way through, always supporting their compatriots, whilst their apparent refinement, education, or even baptism, would never efface their innate tribal craftiness. It is them who, having subjected all human values to the passion for gain, that fare best in the time that the world

is governed by capital and the interpersonal and international relations are based upon the materialistic rule of interest and business.

An insolent banker, rather than an emaciated peddler, an inn-keeper or tailor from a small town, was now to impersonate the Jew. “The whole country’s poor but there’s money with the Jews”, a Warsaw correspondent with a democratic emigration magazine moaned. “Now that we are patching up our fathers’ old gowns, they are sinking in silks and glittering with gold. [...] Horror!... In our own home are we the slaves, the side-locked Jews giving us commands. There is some wind of materialism blowing now, in the history of mankind; industry, trade, gold, are the world’s divinities...”<sup>207</sup> Jewish gold and the occult rule of the world are in those very years becoming the unalienable elements of a rhetoric fed on resentment, which responded to the social advancement.

Creating the image of a mighty ruthless enemy, instead of, or rather, beside the mimicked tribe of ingratiating factors and tenants, funnily distorting the Polish language, this rhetoric referred, perforce, to deeper emotions. Before he rose to be a supreme influence on the Kingdom’s landed gentry, Andrzej Zamoyski believed that the Jews formed “a clandestine society ruled by the precepts, principles religious and moral known to none of the Christians”; hence, their admittance to public schools and inducement to alter the attire might be calamitous in its consequences for, “once educated, cheat will they us too; and when the Jews change their clothes, we shall not even recognise them”. For such a threatening menace to be prevented, Józef Gołuchowski, the learned philosopher and ‘landed citizen’ in one, hit on the idea, well ahead of his time, that Russia should open to the Jews a homeland somewhere far away, in its immense terrain, whereto they could move. Otherwise, having gained both education and civil rights, they will seize all the country’s offices, buy out noblemen’s properties, and turn the Christian people into their servants.<sup>208</sup>

Such, and the like, phantasms had for several years been triggering resistance from the Warsaw Judaic community, informed by the enlightened *maskilim* – inciting, however, no public polemic. Things went on otherwise after the aforesaid *Gazeta Warszawskia* taunt, though: the pretence it expressed, though derisory, insulted the dignity and the sense of action of those forming the avant-garde of the emancipation movement: calling for equality of rights, which implied respect, they could not leave affronts and innuendos unnoticed. Mathias

---

207 *Przegląd Rzeczy Polskich*, 1858, 12<sup>th</sup> July; also, see: A. Eisenbach, *Kwestia równouprawnienia* [‘The equality-of-rights issue’], pp. 265-8.

208 Eisenbach, op. cit., pp. 386-7, 390-1.

Rosen (b. 1807), a banker and philanthropist; Henryk Toeplitz (b. 1822), a merchant and industrialist; and the aforementioned Natanson brothers – all turned out to be consummate polemicists acting on behalf of Jews, deeming an ideal Poland to be their native country and expecting, in exchange, that their tradition and pursuits be respected.

However, censorship prevented an unrestrained unfolding of the press discussion, and so the opportunity was used by *Gazeta Warszawska*, (having at its disposal other means to popularise its position: distributed proofs, ephemera, leaflets or posters). The Warsaw Jews' cause was supported from abroad, by means of brochures, by Ludwik-Ozjasz Lubliner (b. 1809), an 1831 insurgent, emigrant and barrister in Brussels, priding himself on his friendship with Lelewel, and many a time combating as an experienced penman, skilfully in Polish as well as in French, in defence of the democratic rules of coexistence between Christians and Jews – the latter not even coining the idea yet of recognising themselves as a separate nation.

Antoni Lesznowski (b. 1815), a combative *Gazeta Warszawska* editor, brought a criminal action against Jewish protesters and heated up the dispute by distributing warnings in the city against “the might of a brood which, made welcome in this land ages ago, is reigning an exclusive reign today in a thousand branches of our country's life”. It was time, he summoned, that the country trembled, and saw through.<sup>209</sup>

The dispute, toward which the Polish province remained rather indifferent at first, similarly to the indigent Jewish masses in Hasidic small towns, impassioned and partitioned the Warsaw intelligentsia milieu. The part of it that strongly inherited in the noble mentality proved susceptible to Lesznowski's lucubration. The other part, which willingly called itself progressive, did not get rid of a certain distance even toward educated Jews; still, insulting and repelling those who pointed the way to Polishness for their coreligionists, seemed abject and stupid to this group, from a national point of view.

The prospect of a national assimilation of the Jews, observing the religion and its behests, was outlined, and gained an initial acceptance on this occasion. The old Lelewel saw himself as a patron of such a programme: he concluded his brochure *Sprawa żydowska w roku 1859* [‘The Jewish cause in the year 1859’] with a certitude that “whatever the fellow-countryman's confession, he shall enter himself in the civilian register according to his will, so that he enjoy the full civil and

---

209 Quoted after: K. Bartoszewicz, *Wojna żydowska 1859 roku* [‘The Jewish war of 1859’], pp. 43-45.

political rights the Polish citizen is deprived of today”. “The light of the age”, the great historian trusted, “shall suppress any and all obstinacies and prejudices”, and the Poles shall be ashamed of them.<sup>210</sup> He could not forebode, however, how rocky and beset with obstacles this road would be.

Both parties to the dispute competed to make Kraszewski take to them. The country’s supreme moral authority received letters and personal suasions at his seclusion. Not completely free of prejudice, himself being regularly published with *Gazeta Warszawska* anyway, vacillated between the opposing positions. The one to tip the scales, however, was Leopold Kronenberg, who offered the writer the post of editor with a lesser Warsaw paper, *Gazeta Codzienna*, which he intended in those days to acquire and develop. There could have been no better moment for the offering to be made to this author: on very bad terms with the Volhynian nobility, whom he had many a time insulted due to its social torpidity and stubborn attachment to the serfdom, he seriously considered breaking free of the stagnant hinterland, whilst the opportunity to run an influential press organ indulged his ambitions and talents.

Such an organ seemed deserved to Kronenberg as well, and not for profit’s sake at all. A man of boundless energy and resourcefulness, his interests reached beyond the domain of doing business. Of Evangelical-Reformed confession himself, bound through joint ventures with Andrzej Zamoyski and other great families, Kronenberg approached the Jewish cause as a secondary one, always in an assimilatory spirit. He primarily cared about the Polish cultured strata being educated in economics, their disinclination toward trading and industrial occupations breached, so that fresh means and resources could be channelled toward the labours aimed at the country’s civilisational development. In a letter to Kraszewski, he sketched the journal’s ideological programme in highly general terms: “respect for the past, demonstrating, for us to be taught, what was pestilent; inducement to make progress based upon the rules of humanness, in accord with the idea of pure Christianity, all that set against a national background”.<sup>211</sup> His wish as a publisher was to retain influence on the selection of contributors and evaluation of articles to be published; at the same time, he addressed “Dear Sir Józef” with trust and deference.

The conservative, sermonising diagnostician of the ‘diseases of our age’, seemed not to best fit a liberal-eclectic project like that; therefore, he was all the more valuable an acquisition for Kronenberg – the very name of Kraszewski

---

210 J. Lelewel, *Polska, dzieje i rzeczy jej* [‘Poland, its history and things’], vol. 19, p. 271.

211 Kraszewski – Kronenberg, *Korespondencja* [‘Correspondence’], p. 4.

was, in fact, a warranty of success. The novelist, however, having received his first-ever passport at the age of forty, spent five months of 1858 abroad, touring Krakow and other places he had never been too before: Vienna, towns in Italy, Paris, Brussels, Saxony, he tasted travel by rail and steamship; once back home, his view on the progress of 'materialised civilisation' grew toned-down. Thus, he did not find it very hard to come to terms with Kronenberg. *Gazeta Codzienna* was from then on in new hands: since autumn 1859, Kraszewski formally took control of the editorial board. February 1860 saw him move to Warsaw, together with his family – the fact that sealed his parting with the noble province and assumption of the condition of a well-paid professional journalist and man-of-letters. The price he happened to pay for that life change was the outrages striking him in anonymous letters, in *Gazeta Warszawska*, threatened now by its rival, in gossiping, or even in his own father's and brother's admonitions: a great author had, apparently, betrayed his nation and sound principles, having sold himself off to the Jews and capitalists. "I endure this", he once wrote to Kronenberg, "like a cross God has sent down unto me, but [...] there are moments I feel powerless and that's enough to make angels weep."<sup>212</sup>

Kraszewski's view on the role of journalism was commanding: a steady reader of French and German newspapers, he did not appreciate those that were "a mere bleak registry of events, a list of yesterday's corpses taken away from the battlefield", the exclusively commercial ones. A daily paper or 'temporal magazine' (periodical) has a *raison d'être* if its ideological countenance is distinct, with 'a colour of its own'; as for Poland, the first task for the press should moreover be "to establish anew the bond linking us with Europe through the entire commonality of intellectual life, the bond that has for a time certain been so unfortunately tousled...".<sup>213</sup> Symptomatically, the phrasings, so cautious, appeared in an article published abroad, in a Lwów magazine.

Soon after, nevertheless, more could be smuggled in Warsaw too – as long as the wording was shaped allusively rather than directly, affairs politic not touched upon, and the editors got on well with the censor. Kronenberg went as far as accepting one of the censors as a full-time editorial-board employee. Editing a newspaper called for prevarication amidst the reefs and the skill to give way whenever there was no chance to efficiently defend one's reasons. It did not go on too badly all the same: *Gazeta Codzienna* had its format expanded, content

---

212 Idem, p. 159.

213 J. I. Kraszewski, *Gawędy o literaturze i sztuce* ['Chats on literature and arts'], pp. 82-103.

diversified, language vivified; a whole herd of domestic and foreign correspondents were contracted, the finest literary and scholarly penmen attracted – and soon after, with its seven or eight thousand subscribers, made its mark as the number one among Polish journals, outdistancing its Warsaw rival and *Czas*, the Krakow daily.

The editor and the owner collaborated admirably harmoniously, having regard to their varying formations. There was obviously no doubt as to who was to set the tone and tune. Kronenberg from the very first moment set for *Gazeta* a clear direction, in continuation of the Enlightenment ideas of Staszic and the Śniadecki brothers. Cleverly eluding any political questions, the authors recruited for cooperation and mercilessly uncovered the civilisational backwardness of the Polish lands. Mocking at the routine of the nobleman's husbandry, shielded by moralistic clichés, they marched down the road pointed by *Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego* and the Agricultural Society, but could proceed much more daringly as *Gazeta's* existence was not dependent upon a conservative opinion of the nobility, which was not favourable to it throughout. *Gazeta* relied on a new reading public, formed from the progressive landed gentry and the Warsaw bourgeoisie and intelligentsia: as it turned out, such a public did exist and had its significance.

As *Gazeta Codzienna* was willing to win this group over and educate it, it unfolded the standards of political economics as the queen of sciences and recognised industry as the bravest source of national welfare. This marked a deep turn in social education. In a country accustomed to the idea that nothing is doable, *Gazeta* argued that there were plenty of feasible things, given the existing conditions, once the priorities were reset and one started keeping both feet on the ground. This called for standing up to an idealised, sentimental idyllicity and familiarity, on the one hand, and romantic(ist) daydreams, not capable of being clearly named and whose condemnation would be unbecoming, on the other.

Essential to poetry, *Gazeta* stated, was, after all, a preoccupation with the purpose of our life and combat; this being the case, every age has its poetical facet, and conquering the forces of nature may prove more poetical than wars, so extolled by poets. “There is no question, then, whether the real sciences be abandoned in favour of poetry [...], or poetry be abandoned in favour of industry”: man strives to achieve the full potential, comprehensiveness, and harmonious development of the powers of soul and body.<sup>214</sup>

---

214 W[ładysław] B[ortkiewicz]., *O rzeczach naszych i nie naszych* [‘Things ours and theirs’], GC 1859, No. 157.



The same is true with the country: “What we have found, and it feels acute to us to pose this finding, is that our neighbours have got ahead of us on the way of progress and civilisation; that there is some childishness or provincialism prevailing among us, which hinders [...] the development of our intrinsic forces and personally[-]national attributes.”<sup>215</sup> Our minds are provincial; our novel is insular; our customs are conventional. “Let us ask now to what extent we, as the nation, have contributed to the spiritual progress of humankind.”<sup>216</sup>

The reply to questions like those was brutal; Poland was knocked down from the messianic altar – but there was a purpose: so that energy for social self-organisation and civilisation-oriented labour could be released in it. The nineteenth century was, after all, an age of great achievements of the mind and industry. In this country, however, “in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century”, a pseudonym-holder ranted, “there are people who name industry a pernicious idea, one that bereaves us of afflation and of the spirit of dedication; an idea that obstructs any-and-all lofty thoughts and affections! In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century [...] there still are such who dote on the immemorable [*sic*] attitude of the lord toward the serf, naming it a fatherly attitude!”. These are “social heresies”, and society, having “only finally got out from underneath the medieval moulds”, is being footled with them. Such prejudices need being grubbed out, rather than proliferated, for they bring us down “into the rank of the poorest and least-enlightened nations”. It is high time to creep out “from the swaddling-cloth of economic infancy.”<sup>217</sup>

Humanity is marching forward and upward, in line with the rule of progress. It has spewed out of the chaos and ignorance of the primal ages, then passed through “the ten centuries of mediaeval barbarism”, and finally reached a time when its development is driven by science. Natural, technological and social sciences are undergoing so excellent a development in Western Europe – whereas here, neither intellectual effort nor technological achievements are valued; instead, the West, which had allegedly lost the spirit, is willingly perorated against. But platitudes of this sort cannot withhold progress; mankind will follow the track pointed to it by Providence. “No extravagances of evil faith can overpower the historic truth; no dark dialectics may overthrow the high principles of economy; time shall heal stubbornness and infatuation, civilisation shall enlighten the dim [...], purge the sick at mind and heart.”<sup>218</sup>

---

215 Ibidem.

216 GC, 1859, No. 204.

217 *Badania ekonomiczne* [‘Economic studies’], GC, 1859, No. 197.

218 *Badania ekonomiczne*, GC, 1859, No. 238.

Another author, in a separate brochure, dissected the popular theory of a ‘peculiarly Polish’ developmental pathway. The degree of development, he wrote, obviously varies by populace, but the road of civilisation is uniform for all: “Whether a mathematician or an architect, engineer, lawyer, or medicine-man, they all have to draw their learning from the same sources and elements, be it in England, America, or in Germany, so that their purpose may be responded.” Separate habits, eating and drinking relishes, clothing, or construction methods do not really make different the nations, but smaller regions, and these local varieties would fade away as progress “in the field of social forging” goes on.<sup>219</sup>

The campaign, promoting the industrialisation of the country, used all sorts of arguments – national, economic, moral, aesthetic, even religious, thus resembling the haranguing of French Restoration-period ‘industrialists’. A symptomatic retardation, that! The construction and operation of railroads was making headlines in *Gazeta Codzienna* – clearly, a personal touch added by Kronenberg who invested in the transport industry and strove for snatching the Warsaw-Vienna Railway from the German capital’s rule. “By saving the people’s time, rail-road extends their life-time; by saving the transportation expenses, it adds them possessions; by rendering nations closer to one another, it brings the tropics closer to the poles. Telegraphs complement the great benefits that humanity is drawing from the rail-roads: the former renders bodies closer – the latter keep the minds in taction and, regardless of the climate, space, and time, drive them toward a unification in the truth”, a *Gazeta* correspondent wrote.<sup>220</sup> Whoever had the means available to educate their sons abroad, the Editors advised, the French technological colleges was the choice for them to make now, for there was a sore lack of Polish communication and transportation engineers.<sup>221</sup>

The *Gazeta* authors did not shun grandiloquence when describing the triumphs of Western civilisation, which would assuredly replace wars by peaceful achievements of science and education. “Let us turn all our powers towards there, as it is from there that we shall receive our new, tenfold-enlarged forces from; it is there that the new worlds are, waiting for their Columbuses to arrive!”<sup>222</sup> This rhetoric concealed the design of throwing over the national points – setting a new direction for the young Poles’ aspirations.

Kraszewski initially did not find it easy to make himself comfortable among these enthusiasts of modernity. He spared no effort, devoting his entire time to

---

219 W. Statkowski, *Słowo o narodowości* [‘A word on nationality’], pp. 1; 11; 15.

220 Zofia Węgierska, GC, 1859, No. 269.

221 GC, 1860, No. 263.

222 W[ładysław] B[ortkiewicz], *O rzeczach naszych i nie naszych*, GC, 1859, No. 157.

*Gazeta* activities. He was meandering ideologically, in a way, in an effort to persuade the readers, and himself, that there was no contradiction between the ‘diseases of our age’ and the approbations of capitalism, since any work was decent, as long as its purpose was spiritual, rather than just economic. All his texts were saturated with evangelical moralising and the ideal of social solidarity; yet, he increasingly frequently used emollient irony against the arguments of the type that he had very recently bandied himself. He now derided the dissembling defenders of homeliness, who tend to shield any of their own interests with the ‘good of the homeland’ cliché: “the end it comes to is”, wrote he, “that the cook-shops selling Polish tripe, Polish borscht, Polish collops – are the national institutions!”<sup>223</sup> He sarcastically retorted “the loudmouths that scare the society with a phantom of materialism. [...] Telling them of labour – appears materialistic. Attach a great importance to social sciences, to the resolution of economic questions – appears materialistic. Study nature, deal with exact sciences – appears materialistic. Making aqua-vitae would be passable, but to manufacture sugar is the heaviest materialism.”<sup>224</sup>

This is how the recent defender of indigenous kind-heartedness was approaching the liberal formation for which *Gazeta Codzienna* became an articulate, and somewhat naive, advocate. Kraszewski’s moral sensitivity to human grievance, penetrating through his correspondences from the three consecutive travels to the West, somewhat dampened the enthusiasm of the authors who did not care much about the symptoms of proletarianisation, day-labourer’s destitution, and the brutality of competitive rivalry in France or in England.

The everyday drudgery was done for *Gazeta* by the editorial board’s secretary Edward Sulicki, penman and reviewer, and Kronenberg’s trusted man. Soon, other noteworthy people appeared. The banker tried to offer employment, wherever he could, for *sybiraks* returning on amnesty, whose financial situation and adaptation to a new life was, in most cases, excessively difficult. Two such men eventually joined *Gazeta*: Gustaw Ehrenberg, the poet and plotter from the thirties, who had spent over twenty years in exile, and Karol Ruprecht (b. 1821), a once-embassy for the Polish Democratic Society from France, captivated in the Kingdom of Poland in 1846 and pardoned by imperial grace once up on the scaffold. Both of them, reluctant now to delve into conspiracy anew, became associated with a small but influential circle of Warsaw intelligentsia, most often referred to as the Jurgens circle.

---

223 GC, 1860, No. 121.

224 GC, 1859; quoted after: J.I. Kraszewski, *Wybór pism* [‘Selected writings’], vol. 9, p. 210.

Edward Jurgens (b. 1824) was one of the rare people whom everyone, including ideological opponents, held in unfeigned esteem. Born to a German artisan family from Plock in Mazovia, after graduation from Law and Administration in Dorpat, he settled in Warsaw where he was given a modest post as a reckoner with an office of the Government Commission for Internal Affairs. Although he left no writings for posterity, he impressed an indelible footprint on the minds and memory of those to whom his influence extended. He impressed others through talking – usually, in a small group. He always used a low voice, never raising it, as members of the circle could remember; but the logic and strength of his beliefs was compelling.<sup>225</sup>

Jurgens developed a programme of action for the Polish enlightened classes which were meant to keep away from political abdication and from – a romanticist concept – measuring one's forces according to one's aspirations. The programme's central idea was to build an autonomous society which would be democratised in its mores and capable of getting organised for delivery of collective social and educational purposes. It was not about conspiracies, though: this model was subject in Jurgens' circle to an extremely critical assessment; establishing legal associations – overt and open-ended ones, in any case – was the point, instead. The prototype was to be a Society for Scientific Aid, modelled after its Poznań counterpart, which would help talented students lacking sufficient funds be educated, and set up people's reading rooms. Following Dr Marcinkowski and other Poznań activists, endeavours of this kind started being referred to as organic work; the tacit assumption was that, in the Kingdom area, the purpose of the effort was independence-oriented, in a remote future.

The action method elaborated in the circle was to create social faits accomplis, exact the authorities to tolerate, if not legalise them, and thereby expand the sphere of self-government. The programme was primarily tailored to be used by the intelligentsia: Jurgens was indeed visited by teachers, doctors, clerks, students, and the like, making themselves subject to his influential power. The intelligentsia alone did not have sufficient means of delivery, though: neither instruments of impact nor funds. This made Jurgens address the Agricultural Society on account of his initiatives, but he was received reluctantly there: in the landed-gentry environment, one had to matter to be given a hearing. Moving closer to Kronenberg and *Gazeta Codzienna* was an easier task: Jurgens might have had less understanding of its economic orientation but the programme of indispensable social reforms – self-government for municipalities, rural

---

225 E. Jenike, *Ze wspomnień* ['From my memories'], vol. 1, pp. 38-44.

enfranchisement, equal rights for Jews – was coincident for both groups. Karol Ruprecht, the aforementioned former Siberian exile, became a natural bond between Kronenberg and Jurgens, as he belonged to those two groups; he was soon to become the main author of the intellectual-bourgeois camp's political programme.

Besides Jurgens, the circle's excelling figure was Narcyza Źmichowska, of established repute as an author, mentioned many times already. It was in her Warsaw apartment that the Jurgens circle most often met. It was natural that when Seweryn Elżanowski (b. 1821), editor of *Przegląd Rzeczy Polskich*, a periodical representing the Paris faction of the Polish Democratic Society, sought partners in Warsaw, he came across this woman. He wanted to learn whether there was readiness in the Kingdom for re-establishing relations with the emigration and reconstructing the conspiratorial network to start preparations for a rising. The reply given to him by Źmichowska, who consulted with her friends and sent it to Paris via an opportunity messenger in October 1859, testifies to deep re-evaluations having taken place in the minds of those of the intelligentsia who had conscientiously thought over the recent years' experience.

The starting point for the opinion she expressed was the poignant notice that the elapsing decade, after 1848, witnessed an atrophy of national sentiment and personal dignity. "It was then that any and all political immodesties grew almighty, voices of reactionism and conservatism became preponderatingly heard; the prejudices, superstitions, stupidities, sins, caste persecutions of yore surfaced like grease stains. Reasoned theories were coined to acquit the ignominy. [...] Pietism, in its ravenous submissiveness, incited to abnegate the mundane homeland. The youth, unpunishedly, not infrequently with acquiescence from the public opinion, joined the Russian army, for career's sake."<sup>226</sup>

A similar trivial adaptation to living in captivity, the suppression of deeper attachments and solidarities, reared its ugly head right after the forties' conspiracies, "representing all the noble-minded feelings, the entire national intelligence", were routed. What were all those sacrifices for, then, if "those sacrificed and elected have left *almost no* trace of themselves, to the extent that their endeavours slipped into a complete mischance?" This acute question would for a number of years disturb Polish awareness. Źmichowska came to a brutal answer: the sacrifices were made in vain. Conspiracy, intrinsically, forms an enclosed, alienated world of its own, one wherein "banned writings were transferred from confident hands into the other confident hands", the converted were converting

---

226 N. Źmichowska, *Listy*, vol. 2, p. 380.

the converted – outside of the circle, one had to conceal their mindset. Hence, the nation knew nothing about them, and it could not have been otherwise: “The *kibitkas* were carrying away the good-cause defenders, one after the other; the Warsaw crowds did not even bother to ask, ‘Who are they? Why are they being deported? What is it that they had been after?’”<sup>227</sup>

Was that testimony of a revolutionary’s loneliness romantic(ist) in its spirit? Yes – to the extent that it testifies to those plotters with a deep reverence. What Żmichowska was doing was a clear-headed reckoning whereby the sacrifices made at the National Independence altar were charged, in their entirety, against the national losses. The most excellent ones were doomed, always: conspiracies have devoured “such ones indeed who might have given voice to the opinion, stood up as a model, teach through their lives and combats, catechise with word uttered and deed done. Some of them have decayed – gaoled, in *Sybir*, in vagrancy amidst the aliens; some, incomparably more numerous, have decayed on the spot, in despondency, disability, or vile apostasy, for the latter is a true thing as well.”<sup>228</sup> The country in every generation gets rid of, or lets squander, young people who might have been the germ of its development.

In any case, conspiracies, she goes on arguing in her letter, would not prepare a revolution, as it could clearly be seen in Warsaw, fearfully silent in 1848. Why, the precondition for a revolution is to awaken public opinion, and the latter may only be managed by men of authority, not to be formed by the conspiratorial gloom: “*Life* is the school for those people; the teaching method being *openness*”. Openness, Żmichowska emphasises most strongly, her friends reaffirming this at various occasions, is not to be mistaken for legality, or obedience to the authorities. Once the Moscow government bans everything, telling us not to write, read, or talk about Poland, publicly become organised, educated, enlighten the country, then what the government bars needs being done overtly. There is a long-lasting labour for us to do, requiring civil courage from everybody, readiness to imperil yourself against the authorities, but “without conspiratorial moulds, amidst daily life, within the limit[s] of one’s ordinary relations”. Such a hard graft has already started, its first fruits, reviving the hope anew, have been borne yet. “And still, this all can be easily demolished, with just an artificial warmth sweltering too much; with the national labour whose task is to bring the nation to its own consciousness [...] just too early being dissipated

---

227 N. Żmichowska to Seweryn Elżanowski, 4<sup>th</sup> October 1859; *Listy*, vol. 2, pp. 383.

228 *Ibidem*, pp. 381-384.

into extraneous undertakings or rebelling attempts, and we shall have a Saharan drought back with us tomorrow.”<sup>229</sup>

The ethos of civil combat, articulated so distinctly in Poland for the first time, was not precluding armed struggle for independence but removing it forward in time, once reinforced by external circumstances and internal maturity of the nation. For the time being, the intelligentsia's lot would be to embark on an organised, obstinate effort, aligned with its civilian skills. A labour of this sort – Żmichowska clearly saw it this way – was to form a different type of personality and a different kind of interpersonal relations than conspiracy-bred: the plotters were bound by the rule of hierarchy and the oath (not always observed) of loyalty to the cause and comrades in struggle, organic workers would rather place a bet on egalitarian friendships and voluntary cooperation, not precluding intellectual recognition and moral authority of a leader. In the years to come very soon, this axiology would be severely tested – before Żmichowska's prophecy more than comes true.

## 2. In diaspora

The political emigration was increasingly drifting away from their native country, and the country drifted away from them. This had to be so. During the twenty-and-more years since going off to exile, the bonds with family remaining at home weakened, the memory of the people, utensils and appliances, customs and habits faded away. The luckless expedition of some emigrants in 1848 to Galicia, overwhelmed with revolutionary fever, was an explicit lesson: there is no return to the native country, and there will be none. The testimonies from the first years of the following decade reflect an overall apathy and dejection. In 1853, the hope was revived once again that the long-awaited war of England and France against Russia, supported, as they deluded themselves, by an insurrection at home, would reinstate Poland's existence, be it residuary, in Europe; howbeit, the peace treaty of Paris, of the year 1856, which did not even mention Polish aspirations, clinched the sense of irrevocability of the émigré condition. The emigrants' energy was increasingly absorbed by the struggle for survival: severe especially for the young émigrés who took refuge in the West after the Spring of Nations, and particularly, after the Hungarian uprising. Unlike in 1832, there were no governmental allowances or accommodation facilities provided, and they had to get to grips with life straight away, usually without a practical command of the languages.

---

229 Ibidem, pp. 388-390.

Some decided (if there was someone to pay the cost of their voyage) to sail to the United States, where it was easier to get a job. But it not for everybody: as Lelewel's correspondent wrote in 1854 from Washington, "things are the worst here for the so-called intelligentsia, those who cannot do anything of use, but expatiate, and no one can earn their bread with words here".<sup>230</sup> Most of them, however, somehow finally settled in, taking up various pursuits, but, dispersed across American cities – and separated in 1861 by the Civil War front – they found it hard to keep up the breaking organisational communication.

Alina Witkowska concludes her book on the emigration experience of Poles with a chapter entitled 'The space of oblivion': "This would be composed", as she wrote, "of forgotten fortunes, in a literal sense [...], of human existences vanished almost without trace, moving over the sheets of someone's memoir at times, like shadows. Who will ever count up and remember those voiceless existences, and complete their interrupted biographies?"<sup>231</sup> This is the sad truth about the capacity of national memory. What is more, however, the paradox of emigration as a fraction of the Polish intelligentsia consisted in the fact that those who managed to obtain a diploma and a good job – and, with it, decent living conditions – as, for instance, doctors or engineers, found it easier to become assimilated than the others, to set up families and blend in with the bourgeoisie of their settlement country. In a word, they emigrated from their emigration – whilst their fellow émigrés were becoming impoverished, embittered, and if they ever met one another as a larger group, funerals were the most frequent opportunity.

Of those who deemed it their obligation to hang on like grim death and write political dissertations, just a handful remained in the fifties – and even those seemed healed of illusions whereby their way of thinking and imagination might be decisive to the lot of Poland and Europe. Their distribution had changed: in 1849, Louis Napoleon, then still the President of the Republic, ordered the restless bellwethers of the Polish democracy to leave hospitable France. The Centralisation of the Polish Democratic Society, reduced then to three members, moved its office to London, where neither the government nor the police asked anyone about their views or activities.

London grew in the 1850s to become a refuge for irreconcilable revolutionaries from all over Europe. Giuseppe Mazzini, the perennial emigrant and republican conspirator; Lajos Kossuth, the recent leader of the Hungarian uprising; the Romanian liberal Ion Bratianu; the French democratic radical Alexandre

---

230 *Listy emigracyjne Lelewela* ['Lelewel's emigration letters'], vol. 4, p. 209.

231 A. Witkowska, *Cześć i skandale* ['Reverence and scandals'], p. 189.



Ledru-Rollin, the German communist Karl Marx, the Russian dissident Alexander Herzen, and many other, lesser known figures had all settled down there. They differed in many a thing, and not always cherished respect for one another, but did gather together at meetings held on a variety of occasions (for instance, on the anniversary of the November Insurrection of 1830, or the Krakow Uprising of 1846), all declaring their obstinate belief in a solidary collaboration of the nations fighting for liberty.

In political terms, the Polish emigration was powerless, but regarded itself as an authorised collective representative of the nation, its unexpired rights and honours; hence, all its camps rejected the amnesty offered by the new tsar. *Demokrata Polski*, an emigration periodical, claimed: "As long as [...] Poland has not regained its independence, that is, all the normal bodies and authorities, and functions of national life, the Polish emigration, and thus, any of the emigrants, cannot abscond from their position or denounce their political service."<sup>232</sup>

Among the London Polish community of the time, Stanisław Worcell was the greatest individual. As was mentioned in the first chapter, he was, in the thirties, a co-originator and ideologist of Communes of Polish People in the British land; interceding on behalf of the People (always spelled with a capital 'P'), he reprimanded the nobility and tradespeople, abolished individual property, and established a republic of citizens equal in everything. With time, however, disheartened with the Communes' sectarianism, he got on closer terms with Lelewel, joined the Federation of Polish Emigration and, finally, in 1846, became associated, together with the whole Federation, with the Polish Democratic Society, so despised earlier on. With this organisation, he came to a leadership position as a member of the Centralisation, appointed by correspondence; it was in the fifties, the time when the Society was losing importance at home and in the emigration.

Those who contacted Worcell in person, including his befriended Herzen and Mazzini, have depicted him as a holy figure, a philosopher of extensive knowledge, who had bereaved himself of property and any personal ambition, living only for the cause's sake. The rhetoric of his writings was a sublime combination of the gospel of Christ and his contemporary socialism and democracy; Polish republicanism with a brotherhood of European nations. A sickly asthmatic, he passed away on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1857; his funeral at the Highgate cemetery turned into a great manifestation of the revolutionary democrats of Europe, dreaming

---

232 *Demokrata Polski*, 1856; quoted after: A. Ciołkosz, L. Ciołkosz, *Zarys dziejów socjalizmu polskiego* [An outlined history of Polish socialism], vol. I, p. 429.

of a Universal Commonwealth that would be free of labour exploitation and of any form of national oppression.

Their agreement was flanked at the left by the International Association (est. 1856), a more radical organisation whose Polish section assumed the name of The Polish People – Revolutionary Commune of London [*Lud Polski – Gromada Rewolucyjna Londyn*]. Those announced in their manifestos that the armed People, once they come to their due omnipotency, shall proclaim any private property to be common property of the entire nation (and, subsequently, the whole of humankind); all the officials and priests working for tyrannies will be put before a people's court; "all the children, of either sex, in the Polish land beget, and Polish children beget anywhere, shall the nation take care of, giving everyone an identical upbringing to teach them how to be a good-hearted and honest citizen..."<sup>233</sup> Such propositions did not seem tempting to everybody, and so the appeals for unification of the democratic part of the emigration remained wishful.

Wishful also remained all the Polish moonshines of the fifties, as there was no way to foresee upfront which of them might one day win the hearts and minds of multitudes. The London Poles eagerly observed the gauntlet Alexander Herzen threw down to the tsarist autarchy, and willingly helped him set up a Russian print-works which was to issue revolutionary leaflets, brochures, and, soon, the newspaper *Kolokol* – 'The Bell', which were to go to Moscow, Petersburg, and to the military. The mutual admiration and affinity were nonetheless lined with mistrust ensuing from a disparate ideological formation. In utterances to his Polish friends, Herzen noticed a sediment of Catholicism, unpleasant to an atheist, and culturally alien to him; moreover, of nobility's grandeur and qualities – and, attachment to the 'old world' which, in his personal dictionary, impersonated the egoism and materialism of the corrupt bourgeois civilisation of the European West. The Polish democrats, in turn, were deterred by Herzen's Slavophilism: he stubbornly saw the revived peasant and communal Russia in the avant-garde of a European revolution.

Slavonic encrustations recurred in the writings of Polish democrats as well, having however a different ideological meaning. Firstly, Slavdom in its Paris or London version was not so much a spiritual antithesis of the West as, rather, a pretender to fulfil a salutary mission in Europe. Secondly, in spite of the unpopular doctrine of the Towiański circle and the then-outmoded Paris lectures by Mickiewicz, the emigration was not inclined toward considering the century-old dispute with Russia closed and diluted in a common historical mission of the Slavs. On the contrary: a theory advocated by an emigrant (Ukrainian-born) amateur historian

---

233 A. Ciołkosz, L. Ciołkosz, *Zarys dziejów ...*, vol. 1, p. 472.

Franciszek Duchiniński (b. 1816), whereby the Muscovite state was excluded from the Slavdom and Europe, traced down its origins to some mythical 'Turanian' or 'Mongolian' – in any case, Asian – civilisation, entered into the discourse of the late fifties. These speculations were not taken seriously by scholars, but some emigrants liked such a denial of ethnical kinship between Poles and 'Muscovites'.

Their mutual strangeness and irreconcilable enmity was all the more strongly consolidated by the emigration press of any and all colours as a national axiom, ever since there was a fear that a part of national opinion might get captivated by Alexander II's attenuated home policy, his plans for an agrarian reform or amnesty ukases. The anathema did not obviously extend to Russian adversaries of tsarism. The democratic review *Przegląd Rzeczy Polskich*, published in Paris, disputing with Herzen on ideological precepts and fair limits, considered him, like the London democrats, a reliable friend of Polish freedom, after all. *Wiadomości Polskie*, also lying in the hands of Hôtel Lambert, did stay in touch with Herzen, albeit the periodical saw the Russian revolutionary movement as no less a menace for Europe than tsarism. Whatever the case, Russia remained the supreme, and tough, problem for Polish political thought: one could speculate on possible agreements with Austria or even Prussia, in case the international conjuncture spoke in favour of such a turn. No arrangement with Russia was even conceivable at all.

This axiom was breached, following the Paris peace treaty of 1856, by a few authors, including one who could not be just dismissed. Henryk Kamiński expiated his involvement in the conspiratorial activity of the years 1843-5 with an interrogation at the Warsaw Citadel and, subsequently, a fairly lenient exile in Vitka, European Russia. He was back in his estate in the Lublin region four years after, he rentified his peasants and, having transferred the wealth to his sister in exchange of annuity, left the Kingdom for good in 1852, at the age of forty. He settled down in Switzerland and considered it his obligatory mission to explain to Europe what Russia was. This is, namely, what the West has no understanding of: the West is incapable of grasping Russia as a sightless, sensorial power, a barbarian one and expansive by its very nature. The enlightened Europe will not be capable of repulsing this expansion, the menacing 'Cossack flood', unless it speaks up for the liberty and independence of Poland and all the subdued nations. Otherwise, Poland will be left with no other opportunity than forthrightly league with Russia, conquer it spiritually, and then, sally forth, with the entire might of unified Slavdom, "against the inhuman rule of the world exercised by the framed nations".<sup>234</sup>

---

234 H. Kamiński, *Rosja i Europa. Polska*, ['Russia and Europe. Poland'], p. 456.

Kamiński was sincerely convinced that Poland, captive but entrusted with an apostolic mission, held the key to the future of Europe, if not the world entire; this entitles it to pose the conditions whose fulfilment would define what would prevail. Having taken a close look at Russia, he could differentiate the people, diverse as they were, from the system of rule, and renounced a generalised hostility: consequently, the alternative political option he outlined gained psychological plausibility and could, as its author intended, be used as a means of exerting pressure on the powers dictating the conditions of European peace. Admittedly, the convoluted speculation of this author, who hid himself behind the pseudonym 'X.Y.Z.' and published his treaty at his own expense, could not count on resonance. The magazines of both the main emigration parties identified in it, however, a danger of a breach in the anti-Moscow rampart, while a conservative Poznań publicist considered the ideas of X.Y.Z. to be downright national apostasy: "Let the apostate", he punch-lined, "just name himself a pan-Slavist, and then shall he deem himself shielded from unhonour [i.e. dishonour]"<sup>235</sup>

This was a charge Kamiński certainly did not deserve: his fault was that he had broken the commandment. Zygmunt Krasieński, once an ardent critic of Kamiński's *Prawdy żywotne narodu polskiego* ['Vital truths of the Polish nation'], took a more indulgent approach toward this author: he surmised who the author of *Rosja i Europa* ['Russia and Europe'] was, and sent him his voice of demur. For him, Catholicism and the Moscow schism were two irreconcilable environments: once Kamiński set the religious tradition aside of his account, he could, as Krasieński put it, give the reins of "the reason's political speculations". Krasieński believed then, in the last year of his life, like before, that the "radical faction" was destroying the national tradition no less efficiently than the tsarist government: this is why a conservative Poland, on the borderline of the West, would protect Europe against a Muscovite conquest and a social revolution. Should the West "be incapable of mentally grasping and conscience-wise recognising the Polish cause, and supporting it with action", it shall certainly be exposed to infallible bale. Krasieński prophesied it similarly as Kamiński, in spite of any contradictions between the two authors.<sup>236</sup> Forecasting a key role for Poland in Europe was meant to compensate for the abasements of the political nonentity.

---

235 *Przegląd Poznański*, 1857; quoted after: W. Karpiński, *Polska a Rosja: Z dziejów słowiańskiego sporu* ['Poland vs. Russia: Chapters of the history of a Slavonic dispute'], p. 95. Cf. A. Nowak, *Polacy, Rosjanie i biesy* ['Poles, Russians, and demons'], pp. 125-144.

236 W. Karpiński, op. cit., p. 100.

Meanwhile, as was mentioned, tsarist police agencies had liberalised the passport policy, following a signal from Petersburg; this being the case, the noblepersons, merchants, intelligentsia, and even officials and clerks from both sides of the Bug and the Niemen began travelling, with relish, “to the waters, for the purpose of convalescence” – the most frequently quoted reason in the effort to leave. Not a fanciful one, though, as the belief in the miraculous healing properties of mineral waters overwhelmed the medical practice; the opportunity was taken by nationals to set appointments with emigrants in the *bads* (spas), which Europe teemed with. And, it was more and more daringly, though always somewhat timidly, that Polish visitors dropped into Paris – not solely to stroll down the boulevards and listen to an opera, but also to pay a visit to the Polish Reading Room to read plenty of banned magazines. Thus, emigration periodicals, after a longish period of torpidness, identified themselves again with the current of ongoing events and could aspire to influence young minds.

This gust of impetus was skilfully caught and put to best use by Ludwik Mierosławski. Residing permanently in Paris, he had long been fronding in opposition to the Democratic Society authorities, fed his articles to Seweryn Elżanowski’s periodical *Przegląd Rzeczy Polskich*, independent of the London-based Centralisation; always convinced about his own warfare genius, he politicked off his own bat. He associated the lot of Poland with Napoleon III and, on the other hand, with a new rising against Russia, which he was consciously aiming at, being on the lookout, upfront, for the role of commander for himself. His gift of eloquence, which he found much of use at a café table and in a public hall alike, self-confidence and blunt vocabulary lured young people who, under various pretexts, now made pilgrimages to Paris to take in the General’s orations. His address “to the young generation” at the celebration of 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of November ’30, in 1858, was particularly evocative: printed out, it was indeed much in demand, making the rounds and deluding the impetuous whilst arousing dismay amongst Polish nobles who deemed its author as a minatory terrorist, albeit he has earned much of this fame through his tongue. In his revolutionary zeal, Mierosławski taught his young listeners disdain for the bourgeois civilisation of the West. This was his oracle’s leitmotif: it was meant to justify the incongruity of social reforms and organic labours in an enslaved country that only needed chivalrous valour and unspared blood sacrifice.

The Czartoryski faction had to oppose this oration, which was meant to be a manifesto, with a voice of equally strong persuasion. This task was assumed by Julian Klaczko (b. 1825), at that time the leading columnist with the conservative *Wiadomości Polskie*, beside the Rev. Walerian Kalinka. To start with, he ridiculed piled-up metaphors and baroque-style phrases, for which Mierosławski was

famous, and grumbled about the time when “the like rhetors turn into party leaders.” This said, the critic drew a sad picture of the contemporary generation of the Polish youth which had received no civic education. It is a crime, he remarked, now to inculcate hatred in them toward the reputedly degenerated West, as there is for Poland no way other than in unity with the West. “There is art in the West, there is science and education, and only there it is; the education whose very frail dusk and reflection, once it has needled its way through the thick clouds of our undereducatedness and incompetence, stands readily for the sun. [...] There is concern about the obligations, respect for toil, and disdain for idleness in France [...], all these material attributes of generations called and chosen for the doing, whom our innate and fatal Slavic laziness [m]ay be able to recognise!”<sup>237</sup>

This marked an irate refutation of the tirades, so multiplied and hackneyed in the nineteenth century, against civilisation, insensate and cold; Klaczko puts an emphasis not on technological inventions and riches, but, exactly, on manifestations of a spirit of devotion and compassion, which are nowise found disappearing in contemporary France. This introduction over, an airy-styled oration followed praising organic work, as enduring, increasing the country’s material and moral resources. For the rebirth of Italy, Klaczko rhetorically asks, did not Cavour, the statesman and diplomat, act more efficiently than Mazzini, the perpetual conspirator? The question, therefore, is as well applicable with the Poles: “what is better to do: enlighten the minds, or fool the fancy, [...] extenuate the powers or agglomerate and multiply them, labour with the trust of prudence, or toss about in a frenzy of despair?...”<sup>238</sup>

Mierosławski sneered that the fruits of devout labour would be harvested by the tsar, raked up by profiteers. “But”, Klaczko responds, “will Poland, free someday, will the emerging Poland not be in need for doctors and physicists, factories and workshops – can there be a state without them, a national war without them?” The thing is, though, that in this country of ours, any and all hardships taken “in view of arranging our affairs organically and progressively” always fell victim to bawlers, or to the nation’s indifference. Mierosławski, moreover, goes as far as threatening the Polish nobility with annihilation: is it to be similar to what happened in ‘46? Why, once the youth, seduced by him, has unleashed such an uproar, they will, together with their own families, be the first to fall “of flail and stanchion”<sup>239</sup>

---

237 J. Klaczko, *Katechizm Nie-rycerski* [‘A Non-Knightly Catechism’], in: *Rozprawy i szkice*, s. 425.

238 Ibidem, p. 431.

239 Ibidem, pp. 434, 437, 441.

The dispute was illustrious for the late fifties – a fight for the souls of the young generation which had consciously experienced neither the flush nor the bitterness of the previous decade. Klaczko's position in this dispute was weaker: firstly, what he summoned for was judiciousness and learning, not the sabre; secondly, he was a man-from-nowhere in Polish political life. A son of a cloth merchant, he was an issue of an enlightened Jewish family of Wilno, and was attracted since his young age by secular science and poetry. Educated with German universities, in Königsberg and Heidelberg, he contributed with his articles to a liberal Prussian journal; he was cured, however, from these sympathies by the radical experience of 1848; he witnessed those occurrences then in the Poznań Province. Polish Romanticist poetry, particularly the works of Mickiewicz and Krasiński, became his true love and fascination. He had managed to meet both in person, and quoted their poems from memory. He grew to completely identify himself with Polish culture and the Polish national cause within a short time – the bridge many Jewish intelligentsia families used two or three generations to cross. Having settled down in Paris, he delved unreservedly into the Polish milieu. After his father's death in 1856, Julian was baptised. He offered his uncommon writing talent in the service of Hôtel Lambert, before he turned into a famous French political columnist.

Klaczko made himself known first and foremost as a literary critic, watchfully following what was released in Warsaw, Krakow and Poznań. He measured the literary works and pieces he subjected to analysis against the prophet-bards' poetic output, but not in terms of artistry – rather, their fundamental idea or keynote was what mattered to him; Klaczko was namely convinced that literature was capable of sustaining a high tone and idealism even if subject to vigilant censorship. Abased ideals in the national novel became the main target of his impassioned criticism. He in general considered the novel to be a low literary genre – and he was not the only one; a symptom of adulation, in the commercial epoch, of the unrefined tastes of the public. In Poland, where literature was tasked with upholding the national spirit and the will to resist, such trivialisation of art, condescension to a 'sanctification of everyday life' or 'kitchen morality' seemed a capitulation to him. His exemplum was the novel *Krewni* ['The next-of-kin'] by Józef Korzeniowski (b. 1797), a very popular author in the Russian Partition. Klaczko did admit the author's talent and the skill of watching contemporary life; the charge he brought against this didactic novel about bankruptcies and careers of a Kingdom's pauperised noble family was thus all the more serious. "What is striking about this chronicle", wrote he, "is the overall distressing horizontality of the afflatus, [...] the incessant apotheosising of reason and usefulness at the expense of the dearest daydreams and noblest elations [...]"

and the recommendation of this mediocre virtue and virtuous mediocrity [...], this moderated temperature that at the thermometer of the heart marks the zero point between the warmth of affection and the coolness of reason.”<sup>240</sup>

The treatise’s final chord was a condemnation of Korzeniowski’s fictional idea whereby one of the characters, a feeble aesthete, is doomed to developing a vigour of character due to his voluntary service with the tsarist army in the Caucasus. The critic considered this a vile deviation of the author. Two years later, he even more pungently condemned the ‘apostates’ among the Wilno writers: Antoni E. Odyniec, Mikołaj Malinowski and Adam Kirkor, who published (as mentioned above) the servile album to celebrate Alexander II’s visit. The tone he employed while forbidding them to thank the emperor for his consent to publish Mickiewicz’s poetic works was wrathful: “his masterworks ought to be a twinge for your consciences and a damnation of your ‘mental capacities’”<sup>241</sup>

This is how Klaczko, a neophyte, became in those years the most articulate guardian of national dignity and conscience – and indeed, this is what he singled out as the special calling of the emigration. His severe condemnations entirely ignored the point that society was not able to endure for a long time the moral heights of romantic tragedy, nor could poetry permanently live on sublimity. More importantly, this critic, who considered the words and incantations of Polish romanticists to be the utmost measure of a national genius, also defended, as we could see, political responsibility and organic labours. His own explanation for this apparent contradictoriness was that “the lower is [poetry] bound to descend among the brethren pre-occupied with a matter mundane, the higher it ought to reach for the ardour of national spirit”<sup>242</sup>

This recipe was not easy to apply. Mundane things – wealth and property, a career, a family, the national economy – absorbed the landed gentry as well as the intelligentsia under the partitions, by all means. But, it was hard to strike the flame of ardour out of them, which would appear thrilling to the young who had not experienced their generational initiation yet. Klaczko’s stinging opinions spread abroad, echoing among the reading public at home – more in the form, however, of social sensation rather than a positive guideline. They definitely could not countervail Mierosławski’s coxcombs.

In *Jeneral* Mierosławski’s spirit, albeit less floridly, the writer and emissary Zygmunt Miłkowski (b. 1824) spoke out of the columns of *Przegląd Rzeczy*

---

240 J. Klaczko, *Rozprawy i szkice*, p. 338.

241 *Ibidem*, p. 471.

242 *Ibidem*, p. 418.



*Polskich*, a Paris periodical. His argument was that, providing a *cadre* is formed, a 'detachment of sacrifices', be it of a thousand of the members, and some money collected to buy weapons with, the instigation of a rising would become "easy and simple"; even though a loss may be the lot, rise once again we shall, for inactivity stands for death of the nation.<sup>243</sup> Who did not share this philosophy seemed to be a man of little faith. Kalinka warned against such a foolhardiness, explaining that it led to a national suicide and exhorted the Poles to do 'organic work'.<sup>244</sup>

At home as well as in the emigration, Romanticism was going through its declining phase, as the emerging posthumous cult of the 'prophet-bards' [*wieszczs*] was going hand in hand with a conventionalisation of the reading of their works as extracts for patriotic recitation. The reading of the emigration poets was, in fact, very selective, since a great portion of the pieces, particularly those of Słowacki, not to mention Norwid, remained in manuscript: such was the will of their authors, or the reason was a reserve with which the publishers, booksellers and vendees referred to as 'incomprehensible', that is, harder-to-read and less catchy pieces.

Romanticism began deviating from the reality, in a variety of ways. Reluctance toward industry and trade, the current's essential hallmark since the beginning, had not abated. Paris, the capital of Polish literature and political thought in the middle of the century, was, true, completely overwhelmed with a technical and technological, economic and lifestyle/morals revolution of bourgeois capitalism; and yet, in the documents of Polish emigration, this radical change was reflected scantily and mostly in negative terms, as a symptom of the devaluation of the world. This condition was in itself not specific to the Polish perception, as various literatures of the period represented a strongly pessimistic current and anxiety as to whether the progress being made by the industrial civilisations was of a moral benefaction.

The peculiarity of a peripheral country was, however, that the issues carried by European modernity – which was reaching the eastern territories, with delay, as construction of the railroads and telegraph lines progressed – found it so hard to pave their way into the intelligentsia's minds. Although *Gazeta Codzienna* was a journalistic vanguard of industrialism, Polish poetry was continually overwhelmed by pastoral, noble or rustic motifs, the town being allowed to speak only sporadically.

---

243 Wilhelm Feldman, *Dzieje polskiej myśli politycznej* ['A history of Polish political thought'], vol. 1, pp. 372-375.

244 Walerian Kalinka, *Plan konspiracji i kadrów powstańczych* ['A plan for conspiracy and uprising cadres'], in: *Dziela* ['Works'], vol. 4, Kraków 1894, pp. 91-101.

If there was anything that penetrated Polish life from the intellectual and industrial dynamism of contemporary Western Europe, it was not happening via the emigration, which could not act as a civilisation platform, as by its very nature this group was more nationally egocentric than the period's intelligentsia at home. Symptomatically, the reality of the age of inventiveness exerted the strongest impression, among Polish authors of the time, in the thought and output of a solitary and alienated poet. Especially after his return from America (1854), Cyprian-Kamil Norwid (b. 1821) comprehended the emerging civilisation as an expansive whole, gradually encircling the entire globe, whilst itself being axiologically entangled, posing a challenge to 'stupid Slavs'. Far from being enthusiastic for bourgeois progress, he did sense, contrary to a wealth of his contemporaries, the accelerated pulsation of the epoch of machines and laboratories – and, on the other hand, the lethargicity of a “cosmic sour-lettuce-patriotism”.<sup>245</sup>

His was a strong expression of an awareness of the changes taking place in the situation of culture, related to the development of the market and the work performed for an anonymous, not necessarily cognisant, public. The matter directly related to the means of the writer's or artist's existence. A painful problem about Poland was not so much development, however, as, to be sure, underdevelopment of the market, the paucity of a somehow-educated strata, the censorship, and the distance between emigration poets and their would-be readers. As for Norwid himself, he keenly sensed the lack of respect (at home and in emigration alike) for intellectual work, penury and – somewhat exaggeratingly – the “subservient humiliation of the intelligentsia”, the factors that (as he stated as soon as 1863 was over) caused, to his mind, inane discharges of national energy and, in retaliation, a “manslaughter in every generation”.<sup>246</sup>

With 1848 over, the emigration became ever more dispersed than before, rushing around the world in search of a livelihood, driven by the desire to serve, be it illusorily, the fight for liberty, and, by an inner unrest, the police invigilation, the loneliness, and a curiosity for the world. The map of Polish routes, apart from the already-domesticated West-European countries, featured now more exotic places, such as Turkey or Serbia. Writers and poets not infrequently assumed the roles of emissaries wandering through the world. The increasingly dense network of railways and vessel lines perforce intensified the mobility of

---

245 Norwid to Władysław Bentkowski, May 1857, in: *Pisma wszystkie* [‘Collected works’], vol. 8, p. 307; also, see: Zofia Stefanowska, *Strona romantyków* [‘The Romantics’ side’], pp. 42, 77ff.

246 Norwid to August Cieszkowski, December 1864, and to Marian Sokołowski, January 1865, in: *Pisma wszystkie*, vol. 9, pp. 150-156.

expatriates, while the efficiency of European postal services facilitated their mutual communication, leaving to historians a plenitude of letters, providing an inexhaustible source of knowledge about the thoughts, concerns and deeds of the Polish diaspora.

Plotted on the map were also certain fixed points. One of them was the unassuming Brussels cubbyhole of Joachim Lelewel, covered with books and maps. Lelewel did not play in the fifties a significant role in the emigration political community any more, and so, all the more tirelessly did he occupy himself with scientific work, becoming a European authority in numismatics, the history of mediaeval geography and cartography, and a very popular historian of Poland. A lifelong abnegate and recluse, he earned his living on measly royalties; instead, he received innumerable and, usually, unannounced visits paid by guests from the emigration and from Poland, which disturbed him while he was working but normally gave him pleasure as a source of news and gossip he then on repeated with gusto in his abundant correspondence with scholars, publishers, activists, and factotums. He did not leave Brussels until, in May 1861, his Paris publisher and doctor carried him away, seriously ill, to a Paris hospital where Lelewel died three days later, at the age of seventy-five.

He was shortly after followed by his main political adversary: Prince Adam Czartoryski died, a ninety-one-year-old man, on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1861. His importance in the history of Poland in general, and in the life and actions of the emigration in particular, is hard to overestimate. An illustrious diplomat, respected by the European courts, principal of a faction called (not quite rightly) aristocratic, admired and loved by some and hated by others, he remained strenuously active till his very last days, and mindful about political succession. In view of managing the expanded Hôtel Lambert office, he betimes trained his younger son Władysław Czartoryski, supported to this end by his cousin Władysław Zamoyski and talented co-operators as respectable as Julian Klaczko and Walerian Kalinka.

The demises of Lelewel and Czartoryski, the two best known members of the 1831 National Government, symbolised the closing of a great chapter in the history of post-November-Insurrection emigration. The year of 1861, in connection with the manifestation movement spilling over out of Warsaw into the entire country, marked the new serious tasks posed for the emigration to tackle – the ones to be taken up now by the younger generation.

Prince Adam was also a protector of a number of emigration institutions, such as the Historical-Literary Association and the Polish Library. Their existence was secured to the extent that they could survive their founder and patron, and still serve the subsequent cohorts of émigrés, whose inflow was soon to increase

again. The Polish School, established in 1844 in Paris, in order that children of Polish emigrants could speak Polish and be aware, at least a little, of their native history, literature and geography, was one such institution. Over the course of the years, the School tended toward becoming a fully-fledged gymnasium, paving for its graduates access to the higher grades of the French lycée, and thus, to high-school finals. These two purposes: preserving nationality and preparation for life were not easy to reconcile, and hence the dispute on what was to prevail assumed at times acute forms.

In 1854, on request of Mickiewicz, whose sons were students at the Polish School, doctor Seweryn Gałęzowski (b. 1801) was appointed chairman of the School's Council. Gałęzowski was an important figure in the history of the emigration, a man of an unwonted biography. A graduate of the Medical Department at Wilno University, he managed to achieve associate professorship with it, by 1828. During the Insurrection, he worked as a military surgeon; subsequently, he complemented his education with German clinics. In 1834, he finally decided to leave Europe, sailed for Mexico, and settled there for fourteen years, organising medical studies and intensely pursuing a practice that earned him fame and wealth. As he learned about the liberal revolutions of 1848 in Europe, he returned to Paris where he became a home doctor to many Polish families, the Mickiewicz family included, and a man highly valued in the émigré milieu. He devoted his indefatigable energy and horse sense to the Polish School. In the late fifties, the School had more than 200 students, many of whom went on to college or university.<sup>247</sup>

Besides Gałęzowski, Adam Raciborski (b. 1809) was another doctor and social activist. He gained his education when already in France. It was on his initiative that the Paris Society of Polish Physicians was set up, in 1858; Gałęzowski was made its chairman and Raciborski, his junior, a secretary. The Society did its best to gather doctors of Polish descent working in France and, in parallel, facilitate for physicians at home to complete their education in France and exchange scientific publications. The point was, namely, as Raciborski put it, "to establish between Paris and Polish physicians a certain type of intellectual circulation"<sup>248</sup>

The Polish emigration has marked a trace in national history mainly with its literary accomplishments and political ideas. Initiatives of doctors and engineers demarcated another route, less impressive but more durable, in that they opened for the Polish intelligentsia opportunities for continuous professional

---

247 Noe Gruss, *Szkoła polska w Paryżu* ['The Polish school in Paris'], pp. 102-118.

248 Quoted after: B. Zaorska, *Śladami lekarzy – polskich uchodźców* ['Following Polish refugee doctors'], pp. 86-90.

development and ‘intellectual circulation’ under tough conditions. The traffic along the platform has been two-way ever since: knowledge and skills were imparted West to East, while talents and ambitions roamed East to West. It is very difficult to assess one against the other.

### 3. The Poznań arrhythmia

The country’s intellectual life was subject in that century to a symptomatic arrhythmia. Every insurgent spurt, and every arousal of feverish political activity and national expectations, was followed by a long period of dispiritedness. The intelligentsia was particularly susceptible to such exhaustion of vital energy, as people of this sort could not – apart from rare exceptions – find refuge with household activities or support from institutions which would open the field for satisfying social involvement or intellectual debate.

The fifties’ was, as has already been pointed out, a period of such painful inertia, only partly explainable by the response from the partitioning states, exacerbated censorship and police surveillance. The reduced vitality was accompanied by a condensed range of interests, provincialised thinking and weakened inter-provincial contact. The area of Wielkopolska, or Greater Poland, experienced the decline in a particularly acute manner; only strong individualities, with a clearly defined purpose, could resist the trend.

The resistance offered to the official and entrepreneurial German language, joint but strictly observing legality, was in those years a supreme imperative for the Polish community in the Poznań Province, in all of its clusters and crystallisation hubs. A proactive economic and educational strategy, whose model was proposed by Hipolit Cegielski, did not win followers round. The tone, in Poznań and in the Grand Duchy’s hinterland, was set since the mid-century by the Church which could ensure the relatively greatest chance of individual advancement. Very telling is the data regarding the choice of field of studies: in 1851, for example, out of sixty-one Polish secondary-school graduates in the entire Grand Duchy, Theology was taken up by thirty-nine, Medicine by eight, and Law, by five.<sup>249</sup> Given these conditions, the conservative, defensive, Catholic-landowning orientation, associated with the Church, gained considerable influence upon courts-of-law and the attitudes of the educated class. Its articulate mouthpiece was *Przegląd Poznański*, edited by Jan Koźmian, a repatriant, and favoured by the Prussian authorities.

---

249 Data quoted after: J. Michalski, *Historia nauki polskiej* [‘A history of Polish science’], vol. 3, p. 314.

It was only around 1857 that portents of the province's awakening from lethargy started appearing. The said year saw a successful attempt at establishing a Society of the Friends of Learning in Poznań, with a historical and moral sciences department and a less conspicuous department of natural sciences. The founding members made it clear at the outset that their Society would not touch political matters, not to mention, God forbid, the present-day methods of ruling the Grand Duchy. All the same, the Prussian head authority 'advised' teachers, clerks and official physicians 'against' joining this organisation, which outright denied the new association participation from its best-predestined candidates. The Society nonetheless survived and underwent development, under the presidency of, at first, August Cieszkowski, and soon after, the broadminded aristocrat Tytus Działyński (b. 1796); it held scholarly sessions (usually, contributory), collected 'antiquities' and, with time, built up a substantial library – but remained, naturally, as its name had it, a society of friends of learning, or sciences, rather than scientists or scholars, and did not have the sufficient critical mass to reinstate in its environment a non-formable university. *Dziennik Poznański*, a diary established by Cegielski in 1859, propagated organic work, but suffered from a lack of verve and vigour, and prospects for the future.

The Poznań Province was nevertheless regaining its position as a zone intermediating between the emigration and Poland. The traffic along this route was for several years restricted, as not much was occurring in the emigration, either; toward the decade's end, however, the situation started changing, as was already mentioned. Both the democratic *Przegląd Rzeczy Polskich*, edited by Seweryn Elżanowski, and the ambitious *Wiadomości Polskie* under the eye of Czartoryski, sought contact with the home country, dispatched people – not to form new plots any more but to recruit readers, correspondents and authors to contribute. For such emissaries, Poznań was a transfer station before they would go on; for some, it was the terminus. The contraband routes were being restored for emigration publications which were relatively easily to import from abroad into the Poznań region – while it was harder and less safe to transfer them from there to Galicia, the Kingdom, or further on still. The authoress Bibiana Moraczewska (Jędrzej Moraczewski's sister; b. 1811) noted down in 1860 that up to five thousand volumes were transferred through her hands within a year and then dispatched further on eastwards.<sup>250</sup> She perhaps exaggerated about the number, but there were certainly more such home repositories.

---

250 B. Moraczewska, *Dziennik* ['Diary'], p. 75.

Booksellers played a special part: by their agency, almost any foreign book was secretly importable. But that was not all. A wealth of Polish books were printed in Saxony, mostly in Leipzig: the imprint of a well-known publisher did not arouse the vigilance of Prussian or Austrian police like the one triggered by Paris editions. Hence, the durable merits of the Leipzig-based Polish publisher Jan-Nepomucen Bobrowicz or the famous German company Brockhaus for the circulation of Polish poetry, Old-Polish literature and the political writings of the emigration. Some Berlin or Breslau booksellers vied with them, as agents or publishers; their Poznań counterparts dared to do so more and more often.

The Prussian press law of 1851 abolished preventive censorship, establishing in lieu of it a severe financial accountability for editors and publishers; their entire print-run of a suspect book or periodical cahier could be detained by the police and confiscated by the court, with the penalty of a fine additionally imposed upon the perpetrator(s). Booksellers entered the game all the same: dealings in this business would have been awkward without a bent for risk-taking – be it for the sake of an idea or money-making. Jan-Konstanty Żupański, the already-mentioned most respectable Poznań bookseller, a lawyer by education, and a journalist and translator by his earlier practice, who from 1839 owned a publishing-and-distribution bookstore with a reading-room and a lending library, and was active member (since 1857) in the Society of the Friends of Learning, coped with his business excellently and commendably. His speciality, and pride, was historical works as well as memoirs. Such publications did not sell fast or easily. Żupański was aware that his capital investment was made in view of a slow turnaround, and so helped his business by selling Kraszewski's novels, school textbooks, prayer-books, and thus somehow broke even at the end of the day; his bookstore also made a customary venue for the Poznań intelligentsia to meet at.

The city's and the province's pulse was beating faster again. In June 1858, Poznań was visited by Władysław Syrokomla, then at the height of his fame as a Wilno bard. The locals gave a grand dinner to honour him, lofty toasts were proposed one after the other, and the poet supposedly improvised, as the custom had it. The gist of his replies was invigorated with hope: "No frontiers can separate what the centuries have bonded!"<sup>251</sup> And the attendees had a two-hour-long impression that they were in the heart of Poland again. Well, indeed, ever since inter-provincial travel became easier, the old emigrants started meeting the country-based youth without much risk. The clear-headed Wielkopolska dwellers

---

251 K. Libelt, *Listy* ['Letters'], pp. 322-3.

were making up for the arrears, leafing through the volumes of Słowacki's and Krasiński's verse; but they did know well where is it that poetry ends, and a real life begins.

#### 4. The intelligentsia in the Polish sense

The Cracovians knew this as well. Following a slowly passing period of stillness, a fresh breeze blew there as well – from the West. “Since the Crimean War, the Treaty of Paris and the first Universal Exhibition in Paris [1857], which everyone from Krakow and Galicia would go off to visit, the life is striking with a double pulsation [here]”, a diarist remarked.<sup>252</sup>

For the time being, however, there was no room for any political initiative to develop: because the city seemed efficaciously immune against a recurrence of patriotic fever, whilst no legal wheeling-and-dealing would be admitted by the vigilant eye and the heavy hand of the Viennese reaction. The monarchy had nonetheless faltered after Magenta and Solferino – that is, the war defeats of the summer of 1859, in the clash against the Piedmont army, supported by the Emperor of the French. Not even the fact that Austria, having lost Lombardy and only still keeping Venice afterwards in its possession, was forced out of the Apennine Peninsula, but that the myth of Austria as an imperturbable stand-by of European legitimism waned, appeared ominous.

The Italian *risorgimento* attracted warm sympathies in Krakow, as well as all across Poland; the humiliation of Austria seemed to increase the chance that it could make concessions to national demands. The Hungarians were the first to make use of this impotence in the Empire: it was their pressure that coerced Franz Joseph to issue the October Diploma of 1860 which opened the era of the decentralisation of the state and a relative autonomy for its provinces. The following six years saw a challenge between the elites, then becoming organised, of the nations forming the monarchy and the Austrian bureaucracy which defended its prerogatives: concessions would follow one after another, withdrawn or pared moments afterwards, and then again, appeasements forced by the government's weakness. Galicia would sense most severely these swings between federalism and centralism, between optimism and disillusion.

The Krakow intelligentsia, preponderantly clerical, and thus, uniformed and crammed in the corset of official pragmatics, had for the time being a minimal say in developing the field of provincial politics. The city was enlivened, for a

---

252 L. Dębicki, quoted after: K. Wyka, *Teka Stańczyka* [‘The Stańczyk file’], p. 16.



while, by so-called *sejmik krakowski* – ‘the Krakow Diet’ which gathered in late December 1860 in order to elaborate the shared postulates of Galicia after the October Diploma. This assembly represented the various Galician milieus, and sent once to Vienna a delegation of as many as 200, which the Emperor did not deign to receive. Shortly afterwards, the ‘February Patent’ tightened the rights of the just-established country parliament.

The opportunity of the moment was taken advantage of by the university which demanded that lectures be Polonised, and an in-house reform allowed. Doctor Józef Dietl (b. 1804) took both tasks upon himself as professor of internal medicine and pathological anatomy, he was appointed Dean in 1856, and elected Rector in 1861. Dietl was the son of a German official in Galicia, he attended schools in Nowy-Sącz and Lwów, but then studied in Vienna and practised there for almost twenty years. The moment he was appointed, in 1851, for the Krakow chair, his command of Polish was not fluent, a small disadvantage that he quickly made up for soon after. He appeared to be a man-of-the-moment for the university, as he fought, sparing no energy, with a more or less fortunate outcome, for ensuring self-governing autonomy to that rundown school with a beautiful tradition behind it, and for leveraging its rank.

As of 1860, Krakow University had barely thirty professors. A relatively small share of them had been through a course of studies, complete or complementary, with a German-speaking university (Vienna – 7; Berlin – 3; Prague and Heidelberg – 2 each). Most of them held a diploma obtained in Krakow or Lwów, which must have caused a sort of parochial encrustation. The terms of appointment for professorship – i.e. presentation to the Minister of Education for nomination – were not excessive. It happened that very young people were appointed, aged below thirty; moreover, recommendations extended to practising doctors, attorneys or gymnasium professors, without bothering them with questions about their academic achievements.<sup>253</sup>

Dietl had a programme for the modernisation of his academy: he improved and expanded its departments, laboratories, and the Jagiellonian Library; and, he insistently struggled for medicine founded upon a scientific basis and principles (his merit was, among others, the evidenced injuriousness of the immemorial practice of phlebotomy, or bloodletting, in lungs-affecting diseases). In his rectorial inauguration speech, he boldly criticised the Austrian supervisory system, demanding – with a qualified success – that Polish be reinstated as the language of instruction, and that the university become autonomous, a “hearth

---

253 J. Kras, *Życie umysłowe w Krakowie* [‘The intellectual life in Krakow’], pp. 66-77.

of education for all the Polish lands”.<sup>254</sup> This temerity brought about his punishment: the government dismissed him as Rector and divested him of the faculty and clinic he had run.

Associated with the University was, more on a personal than formal basis, the languorous Krakow Scientific Society, where especially the natural sciences suffered from decrepitude: they were in urgent demand of a fresh European air. Józef Majer (b. 1808), a former Rector of the University, and a doctor of medical sciences and physiology, made attempts to increase the significance of this domain. Assuming the honourable office of the Society’s Chairman, he ruefully found that natural sciences “do not strike the nation’s heart as directly as things regarding its history, language and social relations”. Yet, it is owing to these very sciences that humans have subdued nature and gained benefits from it, “irreplaceable with any other exertion of the spirit”. For it is not to be feared, he calmed his audience down, that these sciences might undermine the principles of religion and morality; on the contrary, by arousing in us a humble reverence and admiration, they unveil, deeper and deeper down, the Creator’s accomplished thought.<sup>255</sup> The calming-down was well-timed: Darwin’s work *On the Origin of Species* (1859) was not yet known in Poland, but the upheaval in biology and its philosophical consequences were already breaking in, and the scientists did not find it quite easy to reconcile the novel discoveries of empirical reason with theology.

Another branch of knowledge appeared troublesome too. The zest for searching ‘national antiquities’ below and above the ground had for several dozens of years been animating enthusiasts of Slavdom and collectors of early art; however, the diggings were made amateurishly, not based on an established method, without the skill of evaluating the age of the findings, out of which many a time fantastic conclusions were drawn, flattering national pride, about a great forgotten Slavonic civilisation. This started changing in the fifties, as archaeological commissions and museums emerged in Wilno and Poznań – not much later than in Germany, for instance – and press reports on their works started abounding; Mazovia and Małopolska (Lesser Poland) did not lag behind, in fact. The bringing to Krakow and exposure to the public in 1851 of a retrieved statue of the

---

254 Quoted after a biography of J. Dietl, compiled by A. Wrzosek, in: PSB, vol. 5, pp. 158-166; also, see: A. Śródka, *Uczeni polscy XIX-XX stulecia* [‘Polish scholars of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century’], vol. 1, pp. 367-370.

255 Speech by Józef Majer, Chariman of Krakow Scientific Society, of 25<sup>th</sup> February 1860; quoted after: B. Skarga, *Narodziny pozytywizmu polskiego* [‘The birth of Polish Positivism’], pp. 98-99.

pagan deity-idol Światowid, triggered enormous interest in educated spheres, with further impulses hitherwards being provided by the restoration of the city's monuments after the fire of 1850. This inquisitiveness about the old and primeval past was excited by sapient authors, Pol and Kraszewski coming first. The inspiring role to this end was played in Warsaw by the outstanding architect and art connoisseur Bolesław Podczaszyński (b. 1822); his Krakow counterpart was Józef Łepkowski (b. 1826), the first Polish professional archaeologist. Conversant with the methods and achievements of, particularly, French archaeology, they both incorporated the discipline into the canon of modern science.

The Krakow Scientific Society set up an Archaeology and Fine Arts section, which turned out to be overly active in that it undertook and supervised the excavation works, then proliferating in Galicia, and prepared an exhibition of 'antiquities' in Krakow in 1858, following an earlier Warsaw peer event. The display aroused enormous interest and was frequented by crowds. Owing, to a considerable extent, to Łepkowski, Krakow came to the lead of a national-scope movement that had actuated a trans-border exchange of information and a network of interrelations.

It obviously took much longer for archaeology to set itself free from national servitudes – first and foremost, from the Polish-German disputes trying to establish which specific tribe had settled down at an earlier date in Greater Poland or Pomerania. The discipline's worldview importance was primarily rooted in the fact that, while extending the history of tribal cultures far away into the past, it had to call the Biblical chronology into question. The confrontation of calendars so diverse was immensely reinforced by the most recent discoveries in palaeontology, including the finding in Westphalia, in 1856, of a skull of a specimen that was named the Neanderthal. The earth was giving its secrets away, and these secrets became a challenge for the simpleminded beliefs of the enlightened.

The Scientific Society's ambition was to become an institution of all-Polish importance – and so it invited scholars and penmen from the Russian and Prussian Partition, and those in emigration, to join. It prided itself with a considerable number of foreign members (eighty-six in 1860), apart from emigrants; among them there was quite a number of celebrities from various European countries, most of whom were, of course, from Austria. Significantly enough, those included a group of six outstanding Czech intellectuals, the historian and leader of the Czech national movement František Palacký among them. Thus, the intellectual elite of Krakow expended care to overcome the provincialism of the former Commonwealth capital and at least symbolically participate in the impetuous European scientific movement.

An institution that no less efficiently crossed the tight borders of Galicia was *Czas*, the Krakow journal. The origin of this most respectable Polish newspaper, established 1848, has already been mentioned. Within a decade, under the editorship of Maurycy Mann, an experienced journalist, the paper grew strong – primarily, as an information journal carefully keeping track of international occurrences and constituting an earnest authority for the nobility and intelligentsia in all the parts of Poland. *Czas*'s editorial board articulated its own political opinions guardedly: Austria, despite everything, was considered the best of the partitioner powers; legal labour, loyal to the Emperor, was advocated, whilst the editors counted in exchange that Polish aspirations, limited as they were, should be recognised.

From 1855 to 1860, *Czas* issued a monthly extra – *Dodatek Miesięczny*, containing more detailed articles on social, scientific and literary matters. The conservative position of the 'Krakow circle' – in particular, of its leading publicist, moralist and reviewer Lucjan Siemieński – was expressed most completely there. This former democrat, now a member of the *Czas* editing team, became a militant conservative, flogging in a wrathful squib style the en-vogue French 'licentious literature' and the native 'novelists' ['*powieściarstwo*'] as well as all the 'folk-flattering' democrats and romanticists. Rationalists (whatever the description was meant to signify) and disbelievers were held at his gunpoint too: "Those gentlemen", wrote he, "pay a common homage to the idol called *progress*. The word, earlier unknown [...], serves today most of all as a pretence for the destruction of whatever is, even though it might be the salutariest and worthiest thing; and thus, the Church is unprogressive, as it sticks to the dogma; society is unprogressive, as it holds the family's bond tight; politics is unprogressive, for it does not patronise the people's omnipotence; literature is unprogressive, for it instils respect for religion, rulership, the family, and moral and social forms."<sup>256</sup>

Siemieński expected however that 'the learned tribe', disappointed with 'the utopias of rationalism', the eighteenth-century philosophy, would one day submissively re-join the Church<sup>257</sup>. Walery Wielogłowski (b. 1805), a returnee ideologically close to the Resurrection Order, was more pessimistic in this respect, for a change. He published, in Krakow, a weekly *Ognisko* (from 1860), which he mainly fed with his own articles, thinking hard about how to fill in "that grand emptiness of our country" – a spiritual one, as a matter of course. The time of insurrection

---

256 L. Siemieński, *Kilka rysów z literatury i społeczeństwa* [A few sketches on literature and society], 1859, vol. 1, p. 17.

257 *Ibidem*, vol. 1, pp. 12-17; 56-60; etc.

has passed away. Now, therefore, the authority as it stands ought to be recognised; it should be requested for not much; ought to be told the truth; but, no rebelling is relevant – because “the primarious attribute of the Polish nation” has always been “good faith rooted in religion and love”. The Christian apostolic mission “in the East” (that is, in Russia) has been God’s calling for Poland. Yet, Poland has betrayed it, turning its visage instead toward the West; ever since, “as if a satellite of France, it started gleaming with the light being borrowed from her”, till the point it downright turned into a “parody of the western nations”. Hence, it is not the partitioners that are so menacing as those who are killing the soul, destroying within us the principles of Catholic faith and morality. It is only with love and forgiveness, rather than weapons, or vengeance, that our nation may win its enemies.<sup>258</sup>

The recollections of the years 1846 and 1848 had withered. *Czas* and sermons by Fr. Golian, a vehement cathedral preacher, expressed more or less precisely the ideas or, at the very least, intuitions of the ‘landed citizenry’ and clergy – the classes that ruled Krakow under the tutelage of Austrian officials, marking the city with the stigma of a conservative defence of tradition. The degree in which those secular and spiritual sermons were heard and penetrated the minds of intelligentsia is unidentifiable to us. Luminaries of this class usually endeavoured to reach higher society, thereby taking over its opinions. The lower strata of the intelligentsia (of whom not more than a thousand people could be identified for Krakow, all the professions included) were stricken by the care about their existence and dependence on the government to an extent not enabling them to devote much time or courage to expanding their intellectual horizon and forming their own outlook on the world – not to say, in writing, if their testimony were to survive to be read by someday-historians. Individuals of foreign origin formed moreover quite a share of this stratum, which was especially true for teachers. One of the memoirists tells us that in a Nowy-Sącz gymnasium he had once attended, the teaching staff included a Bohemian, a German and a Croatian, apart from the Poles; in a word, to quote him, people “of Galician nationality, which was at that time represented by many of the intelligentsia in our region”. This apt, somewhat mischievous, description suits not only the comers from various parts of the globe, but also a certain cultural type. Unfortunately, this author goes on, the gymnasium teacher is, by nature, a conservative who cannot stand changes to the routine practice.<sup>259</sup>

---

258 W. Wielogłowski, *Polska na drodze pokoju i miłości* [‘Poland on the road of peace and love’], *passim*.

259 K. Chłędowski, *Pamiętniki* [‘Memoirs’], vol. 1, pp. 38-43.

An opposite extreme was nonetheless being formed, just then. It was in 1858 that young writers, mostly students, met for the first time in a spacious atelier, former cloister premises, of the sculptor Parys Filippi (b. 1836), to discuss art questions. It was no sort of a new conspiracy, for those close-knit friends were not quite interested in politics; for the time being, at least. They formed a peer-age literary group, liberated from the embarrassing wardship of their families, the university, or the Krakow venerable ones. Alfred Szczepański, who would soon make himself known as the initiator of student petitions for the re-Polonisation of the university, distinguished himself among them. The other one was Michał Bałucki (b. 1837), son of a tailor and a neophyte mother, gifted with a literary talent, and a rapacious critic of the mentality of Galician nobility. Its sort-of-defender, in turn, was Józef Szujski, a little older than Bałucki (b. 1835); himself descended from impoverished nobility, he excelled at an early age as a gifted columnist (and worthless poet). It was fated for this threesome to take in the years to come a serious role in Polish intellectual, literary and political life. Some twenty friends gathered around them, most of whom were former students of the St Anne Gymnasium, the nest of almost the entire Krakow intelligentsia. Young entrants in literature and arts were sickened by the conformism of Galician society, and deterred by the shallowness of the ideals of contemporary Polish novels.

They discovered the poems of Słowacki, which had only started entering domestic circulation, in the Leipzig edition by Brockhaus, ten years after their author's death. Most of these pieces, Bałucki would recollect, "were a sheer novelty for us, a novelty that enraptured, ravished, excited and roused us".<sup>260</sup> They would not however accept the great Romanticists' messianic ideas. These dispassionate enthusiasts were bourgeois democrats, defiant against rigid social hierarchies and eager to introduce rural folks and townspeople, the Jewish community included, into participation in the national output and culture. There was no periodical in Krakow through which they could have come into being as a group. In Lwów, for a change, there was a group of authors similar to them, with two magazines favourably disposed towards them: *Dziennik Literacki* (covering matters literary) and *Czytelnia dla Młodzieży* (targeted at young readers).

Things were going alike in Lwów, with a dissimilarity in colour that had always made the two cities different from each other. Lwów was twice as big as Krakow, with a population in excess of 70,000 as of 1860.<sup>261</sup> Lwów was the capital

---

260 M. Bałucki, Z moich wspomnień ['From my memories'], *Przegląd Literacki* 1897, No. 24.

261 *Encyklopedia Powszechna* [The Orgelbrand Universal Encyclopaedia], vol. 17, 1864, p. 478.

of a province, seat of the governor office and, since 1861, the provincial Diet (of Galicia and Lodomeria). Its number of resident public servants and municipal officials and clerks was much larger then, in excess of 5,000. Local or stranger, they were of diverse social strata, and were bound to display a fluent command of German, be knowledgeable of Austrian law, and were expected to show unconditional loyalty.

Hence, most of them kept away from any Polish politics, remaining careful about their own careers and drawing a sense of personal dignity from imperial service. The black-coat workers functioned alongside court-of-law employees as well as elementary and junior-high (gymnasium) school teachers, remaining on the same degree of dependence and constituting, with few exceptions, a clerical 'caste' which in Eastern Galicia consisted of Polish and, separately, Ruthenian people.

The ideological ferment we are going to cover now was caused by a pretty small particle of the Galician intelligentsia – the group whose living conditions were less dependent on the favours of imperial dignitaries. The sphere's material elite was formed, as already mentioned, of Lwów barristers, followed by journalists and penmen – the latter name [*literats*] being bestowed on anyone whoever wrote anything and had any sort of written items printed. To survive on this was a hard thing, though; hence, literature writers were not eager to break up their ties with the nobility, that is, with landed property. Even the most sought-after authors – Pol, Ujejski, and others – would take some villages on lease, and when in trouble, they took the liberty to use support and condescension of mighty friends and devotees of their talents. There were lordly clans in Galicia that took pride in the education of their sons and efficiently turned crumbs of their fortunes into the advancement of the arts and sciences. The families of Dzieduszycki, Lubomirski, and Pawlikowski were *those ones* with whom several 'meagre' writers or painters could always nourish themselves at a time, officiating as librarians or tutors, or having no assignment at all. In spite of such close mutual relations of these socially unequal spheres, tensions between the two was acutely perceptible in the east of Galicia.

Since 1848, the intelligentsia had mostly been aware that, being a class of a weak financial standing, its significance in politics and society was getting established anyway. Its ideational aspirations began to formulate with a group of young writers and journalists admitted by Jan Dobrzański, one of the subsequent editors of the thus-far rather inanimate *Dziennik Literacki*, to fill in his literary magazine's columns. This approach turned mutually beneficial. Dobrzański was a professional journalist and penman, a democrat by belief. A leader of the opposition movement in 1848, he paid for this activity with a few years of punitive

service with the imperial army; he afterwards resumed his profession – but found it progressing with difficulty, as long as he had no periodical-supporting environment around him. A milieu of this kind appeared in 1858-9: the sway-holders were impatient young men who wanted the cultural climate of Galicia changed quickly: poet Mieczysław Romanowski (b. 1833), journalists Julian Starkel and Karol Cieszewski, plus their several colleagues. The Cracovians of ‘the Filippi atelier’ established with this group a thread of understanding – especially, Bałucki and Szujski, who began frequently indwelling in *Dziennik*. The older and already known authors, benevolent toward the youth were Kornel Ujejski, Henryk Schmitt and, with a reserve, the historian Szajnocha whom we have already met. As the editor wanted to make *Dziennik Literacki* a nationwide periodical, he headhunted contributors from the Poznań Province and from among the diaspora.

The milieu was nowise consentaneous, with considerable differences in views and sentiments appearing between its members, repeatedly leading to friction. The bonding driver was, however, democratic sentiments, in the broadest sense, and the earnestness with which they approached the role of writer as the nation’s instructor. They necessarily wrote poems (was there any young man at the time who did not?), edifying historical short stories, contemporary novels, pictures ‘from the life’ – always with an appropriate moral, although morals would sometimes be discrepant. The nation was the shared reference for everyone: a sanctity, the key notion of the age’s any and all social theories and political agendas. This entailed an ostentatious lack of interest in provincial, loyalist politics, having in view certain concessions for Galicia, expected from Vienna, rather than the integrity of the former-Commonwealth territory. Secondly, the absolute primacy of the nation meant a definite rejection of class campaigning in the spirit of 1848. And that was logical: if the nation was to embrace with time all the classes of Polish society, one group or fraction should not have been instigated against the other, as Edward Dembowski once wanted to see.

Regardless of how critical someone’s opinion might have been on the historical role of the nobility, this class was not to be cut out of a nation expected to be established after a victorious uprising, God so willing. Whatever the case was, the nobility (that is, in the Galician language, actual landowners) was a class whose inherent sense of national identity and incessant continuity of national history was the strongest. Many a writer held it as an axiom, following the disasters of the forties. The philosopher Bronisław Trentowski, already quoted elsewhere, earlier on a severe critic of the nobility’s past, announced in 1847, after all, that the recognisable cornerstones of Polish nationality are “the native language, the Catholic faith and Polish nobleness [nobility]”. Nobility is the only one, he



added, to “make out a nation here, and to breathe with patriotism”; hence, agitation against the nobility is only helpful to the partitioners.<sup>262</sup>

This turn of democratic opinion toward solidarity with the nobility effectively appeared rather sustainable, but it had to be reconciled with the no-more-negligible occurrence of a new class which also claimed its right to national heritage and to showing the direction of collective action. Szujski, who had a gift of such notional operations, took on the task to elaborate a formula for shared purposes, if not for a complete fusion into a single entity. He published, in *Dziennik Literacki* (1860), a brief discourse titled *Szlachta i inteligencja* [‘Nobility and intelligentsia’], apotheosising not so much the old nobility, boasting about their lineages and coats-of-arms, as the immaculate idea of Polish nobleness. The author revived the old concept proposed by Kołłątaj, Mochnacki, and Krasiński, according to whom the nobility, “the nation’s alpha and omega”<sup>263</sup>, was expected to gradually “nobilitate the nation entire”, heave the nation toward it, and thereby abolish the feudal prerogative. This has been partly accomplished, in Szujski’s view, since “the mighty national magnetism, gathered in the old nobility [...], attracts whole ranks of new champions: grotesque parvenus, converts, and national-dissenters turn into decent citizens of the nation, whether by themselves or in the following generation”.

That is to say, the hereditary nobility is just turning into a new ‘nobility (gen-try) of merits’, that is, a national intelligentsia. This suggestive text triggered considerable resonance; such historical filiation did not suit the taste of everyone, though. The Polish nation, poet Karol Baliński (b. 1817) wrote from Poznań, has since ages ago split into the nobility and the peasants, and then the nobles were not willing to fight in defence of the Commonwealth and, worse still, by ingesting the “Western venoms” and having accepted the rules of alien reason, tousled the knot of the faith shared with the people, ending up as a “nameless cosmopolites”.<sup>264</sup>

The simple folk is the only keeper and custodian of nationality: save from it, “Poland is nowhere else today, and nowhere can it ever be”.<sup>265</sup> With the pressure of such anathema, and with the shifts taking place in the social prestige ladder, the traditional course of snobbery was being reversed: now, the landowning

---

262 [B. Trentowski], *Wizerunki duszy narodowej*, pp. 16-18; 201.

263 J. Szujski, in: *Dziennik Literacki* 1860, No. 50, pp. 393-4.

264 K. Baliński, *Mysł narodu i jej koleje* [‘The nation’s thought and its successions’], in: *Dziennik Literacki*, 1862, No. 12, pp. 89-90.

265 Idem, *Odwieczne czarodziejskie zwierciadło* [‘The dateless enchanted looking-glass’], *ibidem*, 1861, No. 43, p. 343.

gentry in Galicia willingly assumed the title of the ‘rural intelligentsia’, which is evidenced by quite a few memoirist and literary attestations. In parallel, this class defended itself against being incriminated across the board. A rural correspondent of *Dziennik* expressed his gladness of the fact that, as he put it, “you’ve already changed your tone, strident, passionate, festering, one with which all the progressive dailies once used while speaking to us”.<sup>266</sup>

As can thus be seen, every kind of combination was possible. Thus, one of the options put the intelligentsia at the lead of a self-aware nation, while staying clearly delimited from the nobility. We could already see such dention in Libelt, in 1844; now, a similar thought was followed up in an article titled *O inteligencji w znaczeniu polskim*, whose author hid himself behind the cryptonym ‘C. Ch.’.<sup>267</sup> This was, seemingly, the first announcement in Polish literature when a new class had itself determined the place and role it aspired to: “it has been for only a dozen-or-so years now that the word ‘intelligentsia’ has entered into use among us, and, once bookish, has by today become an almost domestic word, satisfying our daily needs. [...] Any abecedarian would know that *intelligere* is called to understand in Polish, but what to understand, there’s the rub. What is the kind of understanding, then, that our society requires upon the intelligentsia, so that they may be described with this denomination [...]?”<sup>268</sup>

The author’s intent is to give the term, straight away, a distinguishing meaning: the education qualification as such cannot be an admission ticket to the intelligentsia, for the word, quote, “has, in the Polish concept, some spiritual arms, unmeasured by the eye [...], and hence it would by no means be applicable only with a specialism [...]”. Upon those whom it would like to call the intelligentsia, society “requires that they comprehend the national cause, come to love it, work and devote themselves to it; in a word, the requirement is that the homeland be loved”. Consequently, a scholar who does not care about his country’s past or the combat going on within it “for innate human and civil rights” (which was to mean the right to an independent existence) is not part of the nation’s intelligentsia. On the contrary, a simpleton whose heart is well-wishing toward the country, his will toward it kind-hearted, is more intelligent, in the Polish concept, than the distant erudite[e] indifferent to the nation, and even more intelligent than any

---

266 Atanazy to Janusz, *ibidem*, 1861, No. 90.

267 ‘C. Ch.’, *O inteligencji w znaczeniu polskim*, [‘On intelligentsia, in the Polish sense’], in: *Dziennik Literacki*, 1861, No. 100.

268 *Ibidem*.

Muscovite renegade and *tschinovnik*<sup>269</sup>, even though one might have all the answers in the world [...]”<sup>270</sup>

A criterion so sublime and idealising could not remain long; at any rate, education and specified professional qualifications were the first discriminant of the new class. All the same, ethical and ideological conditions, formulated in this way or another, and imposed on the substantive, sociological definition, or merely replacing it, have caused an ever-since inseparable ambivalence of the notion of the intelligentsia. And there is nothing especial to this: as could be seen, the notion of *szlachta*/nobility has been subject to a similar, if not even stronger, discrepancy in the inclusion criteria versus the multitude of meanings: be it genealogical, heraldic-and-legal, economic, cultural, or, idealising. Such interferences are responsible for a number of misunderstandings and confusions in disputes – but it was thanks to them that disputes and discussions were so lively, so attractive for the participants and for the observers.

Ludwik Gumplowicz (b. 1838), of Krakow, a historian of political systems and the law (and, later on, a known sociologist) tried to bring the debate down to the historical soil. His concept was that in the nineteenth century, a changing of the guard had taken place under the Partitions: “The non-noble layers of the Polish society, aroused for a national life, with remains of the former nobility which had not fallen off this life yet, constitute altogether the national intelligentsia which has occupied today the place kept in the former time by the nobility.”<sup>271</sup> This concept appears quite dissident from Szujski’s idea: instead of the nobility adopting non-noble elements, we can see here these elements assimilating the “remains of the nobility”, creating a new historic stratum.

The intelligentsia’s rivalry with the nobility manifested itself more acutely in the symbolic space than in the real one, where it was tenderised by the aforesaid personal and family entanglements. The usual case was that the non-clerical intelligentsia, having not much to lose, was more daring in thinking and in acting, while the nobility, with a domestic instruction background, combined with rural manners and social tradition, were more cautious in their thinking and doings. And, the nobles lavished spiteful sideswipes on the intelligentsia. The abovementioned pious conservative Walery Wielogłowski gave them, at pleasure, a hard time: in his dialogues on “the society of to-day”,

---

269 This originally Russian term is used in Polish as a derogatory name for a Russian state official.

270 Ibidem.

271 L. Gumplowicz, *Słowo o umiejętnościach prawniczo-politycznych* [‘Briefly on juridical-political skills’], *Dziennik Literacki*, 1862, No. 28, p. 218.

he made Krakow merchants discourse on the intelligentsia, for a change. So, they recollected (impliedly) 1848. One of these interlocutors evoked an image of grubbily clothed gabblers, sitting around in wine-vaults and reversing the social order: "Also have I told those intelligentsia this same thing: 'Hey, Honourable Sirs the Educated-Formalists! [...] Do not you unavailingly seduce the silly people, for your quill is light but our poverty heavy. – You will be carried away somewhere by a tempest again, and our lot will be to pick up the bloody fruits you have sown.' – And, were they listening willingly?... 'A privileged!...' is what they said of me: 'He's decaying amidst the old superstitions!,' they would say. – And it in fact turned out that the wise one was I, and the stupid ones, them."<sup>272</sup>

The intelligentsia has time and again been perceived and portrayed as wiseacres and subversives, and such a perception would fuse with the popular idea of this class as strongly as its complimentary self-portrait as a prudent group, wholly devoted to the country. Such bantering could have a significance not limited to literary aspects. The year was 1860; 1861 was just around the corner, with the election for the promised provincial Diet and suspended preventive censorship in Galicia; there was news disquieting but exciting too, coming from Warsaw. The young generation, those who had not experienced anything yet, were entering the stage and its leaders wanted to have their footprint impressed on history. They obviously stayed loyal to the dogma of national unity but were eager to see the views struggling, public opinion conquered – if there was to be one, revived, following a ten years' absence. "Journalism", as J. Dobrzański, their protector, wrote, "may only develop wherever there are opinions colliding [...], where everyone considers himself a soldier who in matters national not only with the weapons in his hands but with the word and the pen is bound to fight". Dobrzański wanted to see a number of journals different in colour, contending against one another not on literary tastes but over political principles, and contesting not for profit. He would not approve of an art or science for art's or science's sake, which held true for *Dziennik* contributors as well. No thought, artistic and/or creative activity, or any action has a *raison d'être* unless it serves the nation's purpose, particularly, the nationalisation of the commons. The nation is namely in a unique position, the writers', scholars' and artists' only task being to think how to educe it from it. Futile is the learning and scholarship of archaeologists or other erudites who prove incapable of stepping from a cosmopolitan

---

272 W. Wielogłowski, *Spoleczeństwo dzisiejsze w obrazach* ['The society of today in pictures'], pp. 136-8.

position of science down to the national one: the walls obstructing education and liberty cannot be punctured with erudition, can they!<sup>273</sup>

An antiquarian and abstract knowledge, not serving a civic instruction and education, was *Dziennik's* favourite object of contempt. An author from the provinces, signed with a cryptonym, expounded such an opinion bluntly: "If the science, from the unreachable peaks of its niveous and icy wisdom, only deigns to toss to us some alms of its incomprehensible and unhelpful recipe, we shall then not be grateful to it and shall recognise no merit."<sup>274</sup> So fanatic a subjection of the entire intellectual culture to the purposes (to call a spade a spade) of a national uprising had not been the case since Mochnecki's time.

Cognition and understanding of national history is the most urgent task of the intelligentsia, it was declared. And it was not at all about apotheosising the past. Historical stories occupied a lot of space in the pages of *Dziennik Literacki* and its ideologically kindred *Czytelnia dla Młodzieży*, and it becomes apparent how that popular history endeavoured to break with the romanticist pietism and encomium of the old-Polish mentality and style. Written history was meant to be critical and useful: a historian, Dobrzański wrote, ought to feel the nation's heart beating, whether the nation "is in a hectic disposition, or in deadly apathy" and seeks deliverance, by "elucidating all those matters historical whose cognisance it extremely needs today."<sup>275</sup>

Such matters included, in particular, elucidation of the reasons of the fall of the Commonwealth. Imperatively dominant in this matter was the thinking style of Lelewel, keen now till an extremity originally alien to its author. The history of a nation is the development of its thoughts, ideas, or principles entrusted to it by God. Such a principle with respect to the Polish nation is a republican equality: at first, communal, later on, civic. Whenever the nation's mighty ones proved disloyal to the principle, the nation was suffering disasters. This was clearly expounded by Henryk Schmitt (b. 1817), a patient autodidact who, after his turbulent young years spent in conspiracy and in prison, made himself into a historian of authority, albeit he was not gifted with a narrative talent comparable to Szajnocha's. The Third-of-May Constitution was, to his mind, a sad example of deviation from the national road: those who created

---

273 J. Dobrzański, *Zapiski literackie* ['Literary notes'], *Dziennik Literacki*, 1860, No. 3, p. 17; No. 8, p. 57; No. 16, p. 121; No. 58, p. 457; etc.

274 A.R.S., *Głos z prowincji* ['A voice from the provinces'], *Dziennik Literacki*, 1860, No. 73, p. 577.

275 J. Dobrzański, *Zapiski literackie* ['Literary jottings'], *Dziennik Literacki*, 1860, No. 25, p. 193; No. 30, p. 233.

it, instead of merely removing the abuses of the free election of monarchs and laying down the requirement of a unanimous vote to enact parliamentary laws, did not get an insight into the spirit of history and impudently laid their violent hands on the republican principles themselves, thus contributing to the decline of the homeland.<sup>276</sup>

The said Constitution of 1791 had for twenty years been a cult sign for the Czartoryski camp in the emigration. Necessarily, Polish democracy leaders had to subject it to ruthless criticism. Wiktor Heltman declared the Constitution to have been a work of “infirmness and non-reason”, which in effect turned into Poland’s tombstone; Jan-Nepomucen Janowski saw May the Third as a “deplorable memento”.<sup>277</sup> It could therefore be said that Schmitt and his other contemporaries repeated this same old cliché – modified, to an extent: Heltman or Janowski desecrated the Constitution for its lack of consistency, its focus on half-measures, and its non-egalitarian character. The Lwów democrats condemned it for being a formation of a foreign mind, launching in Poland an alien monarchic principle.

Across twelve 1862 issues of *Dziennik Literacki* there ran, with interruptions, a treatise by Karol Baliński entitled *Mysł narodu i jej koleje od roku 1764 do chwili obecnej* [‘The nation’s thought and its developments between 1764 and today’]. Sent by the author from Paris, it made a central object of critique the French Enlightenment philosophy, that rotten fruit of “the most disgusting beastly materialism”. From there, the pestilence came over to Poland, causing a moral disaster. A dreadful fall of our society of that time manifested itself most emphatically in nothing else than the doings of the Four Years’ *Sejm* deputies – it was namely their lot to perform an operation on the living flesh of the Commonwealth. With a pompous circumlocution and exaltation, Baliński spins out his deliberations on the angelicalness of the Polish nation whose history is “a continuous religious improvisation, from the spirit”. All of a sudden, “the election, that very one, the free election of a king [...] has been struck by the constitution of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May; and it thereby cuts off the thread linking Poland with heaven, reverts Poland from seeking and fulfilling the will of God, kills the nation’s belief in God’s rule on earth, whereas it instead prompts a faith in the reckoning of human reason only, in diplomacy.”<sup>278</sup>

---

276 H. Schmitt, *Narodowość polska...* (1862), pp. 32, 62.

277 W. Heltman, J.N. Janowski, *Demokracja polska na emigracji* [‘The Polish democracy in the emigration’], pp. 211, 559.

278 K. Baliński, *Mysł narodu i jej koleje* [‘The nation’s thought and its developments between 1764 and today’], *Dziennik Literacki*, 1862, Nos. 12-15, 21, pp. 60-66.

Baliński was beforehand a fierce enemy of the nobility – and, worth mentioning, of the Jesuits too. An intransigent democrat in his youth, with years served in prison and in *Sybir* to his credit, he finally sided with the Towiański sect, and his messianistic rhetoric assumed an extreme tone, completely divorced from the prosaic reality. Nonetheless, reviling Western civilisation became almost obligatory for *Dziennik Literacki* authors. Szujski, who stubbornly searched for a rational medium between the extreme attitudes, was also convinced at that time, after all, that the Polish nation had over the ages “retained a virginal immaculateness of the domestic and religious existence” and it was only “in as late as the end of the eighteenth century that Poland was inundated by the hot *simoom* of Western civilisation”.<sup>279</sup>

This conviction that a modern civilisation is as if the temptation of Christ by Satan, which had to be resisted by our native, domestic, rustic virtues, had at least half a century of history behind it; and yet the early sixties, bringing about the intelligentsia’s intensified contact with the West, had also intensified the fear of the latter’s sinister influence. Such fears, combined, in the insurrection current as well as the conservative one, with a glorification of the national character and its historical manifestations, were a trait of a declining romanticism which prevailed, once again then, over a rationalistic worldview. This is what could at least have seemed to readers of literary magazines, which in Polish conditions had to replace the political rostra.

And so, Kornel Ujejski, the romanticist poet, and a democrat, embarked in *Dziennik Literacki* on analysing the poems of Wincenty Pol and discovered therein two, as it were, completely different authors. One of them wrote *Pieśni Janusza*, the popular and catchy poems on the November Insurrection (1830-1), which everyone could declaim or sing. These songs, full of compassion for heroism and devotion to the simple soldier of the common people, ranked, as Ujejski put it with emphasis, “among those books which are awaited by centuries”; “the entire nature of the history of Poland” has been contained in them. The critic included in this phase of Pol’s output a few more of his pieces, among which was the broadly-known *Pieśń o ziemi naszej* [‘The Song of Our Land’]. Nevertheless, after the events of 1846 and 1848, Pol betrayed, to Ujejski’s mind, the ideals of his youth, becoming a favourite of the lordly or baronial salons, and started publishing rhymed chats apotheosising the eighteenth-century nobility, its boorishness and willingness to live at someone else’s expense; most importantly, however, he

---

279 J. Szujski, *Czyste dusze i mętne dusze* [‘Pure souls and turbid souls’], *Dziennik Literacki*, 1861, No. 1, pp. 2-3.

doubted the nation's future, this being a deadly sin. A poet is not supposed be doubtful, "he's not so allowed among us here!" It is, after all, "the Polish spirit's lot to be reborn in a despaired world".<sup>280</sup>

The impression this attack made was extremely powerful. It was a social scandal, as it affected the two best-known Galician poets, whose mutual relations had remained friendly until recently. Their split symbolised the acuteness of the society's mental and political divisions into a maturing concord camp and a maturing insurrection camp. The Galician entourage became split up: the nobility and the elders basically took sides with Pol, the young intelligentsia mostly with Ujejski. The former coterie prevailed as turning literary criticism into a political tribunal did not appeal to everybody. Szajnocha was since his school years a cater-cousin of Ujejski's, so his opinion was now awaited; he uttered it cautiously: such hectoring articles could excuse themselves "amidst revolutionary shockings", whilst in the course of quiet work "they in essence disseminate but quarrel and revulsion, and despondency toward everything, finally".<sup>281</sup>

The thing was, however, that the time of quiet work was coming to an end – and this is what Ujejski actually had in mind. Lucjan Siemieński, a first-rate conservative, deemed his speech an instance of moral terrorism and an insult rendered to literature: "This voyaging St. Just puts his guillotine in the midst of any casual square, and readily passes the beheading sentence. No-one has given him the authorisation, for the country's opinion speaks just for sacrificing."<sup>282</sup> And moreover, he argued, poetry's actual function is not to manage society: "O you poor heads, distended by the winds of haughtiness! O you poetical blockheads, to whom it seems that once they puff out and stifle with rhymes, they shall come to power over the world! Ujejski, the poor one: he's really dreaming of people of to-day yielding to a rule and leadership of dithyrambs!"<sup>283</sup>, he remarked in a letter to Szajnocha.

The defensive exaggeration of the conservatives equalled the one they stigmatised. Siemieński had a good reason to be angry: his own sixteen-year-old son had just "bolted abroad" and joined Mierosławski: "This stripling is saying in Paris that, himself a democrat, he could not come to terms with his aristocrat father." Some cells have been made for us in the brains, the betrayed father

---

280 K. Ujejski, *O Januszu i panu Wincentym Polu* ['On Janusz and Mr. Wincenty Pol'], *Dziennik Literacki*, 1860, Nos. 37-39; cf. Idem, *Listy spod Lwowa* ['Letters from a place near Lwów'], pp. 33-244.

281 *Korespondencja Szajnochy* ['Szajnocha's correspondence'], vol. 2, pp. 231-2.

282 Ibidem, vol. 2, pp. 219-20.

283 Siemieński, in: *Korespondencja Szajnochy*, vol. 2, p. 220.



lamented: “one is democratic, and the other, aristocratic. People have been sorted according thereto, and juxtaposed ones against the others. A social war indeed, that. This is joined by a tribal war between Ruthenians and Poles; at the end, a war of children against their parents...” Hence, bitterness, and rage at the “stupid magazines”, poetaster rhymes, and at Dobrzański who was corrupting those impudent gamins.<sup>284</sup>

This dichotomous image of the world was much simplified. The Galician intelligentsia had in its ranks, as everywhere else, quite a number of people without conspicuous views or those whom would change their views or unveil them depending on the prevailing trend, and whose horizon of expectations did not reach beyond the compass enabled by the Vienna-based government. Such people probably accounted for the majority among the educated strata. However, the young indeed gave into the charms of the rhymes, as it chanced that Lwów became, by the end of the fifties, the venue of a belated cult of Juliusz Słowacki, the arch-Romanticist who died in Paris in 1849. It was in Lwów that his manuscripts eventually arrived, after a variety of tribulations *Dziennik Literacki* published pieces from this pool over and over; for instance, the ravishing *Testament mój* [‘The Testament of Mine’]. The Krakow and Lwów theatres now staged plays by Słowacki, which familiarised the audiences, accustomed to a realism in morals and manners, with the different, fantastic poetics of the theatre.

This poetry and dramaturgy satisfied young people’s longing for freedom and spiritual effusions. Słowacki was quoted by many, and many wanted to feel and write like Słowacki, or, at least, like Ujejski, which could yield no fine result. At last, therefore, a declining romanticism, with its patriotic exaltation and image clichés, subdued in those very years the imagination of Krakow and Lwów students, providing them with means to express the moods of mourning and desperation, intensified through the news coming from Warsaw. It was not hard to regard it as evidence of the “enormous, almost sovereign power poetry wields in this miserable nation.”<sup>285</sup>

Ludwik Gumplowicz was one of those few who fretted over such a one-sidedness of Polish thought, while understanding the reason for it. Once Poland collapsed, explained he, the disputes over social theories came to an end in this country, since there was no way to try them out in real life. “Hence”, he overdrew the point a little, “juridical-and-political literature has disappeared, the place of all the social questions having been taken by a single grand national issue [...].

---

284 Ibidem, vol. 2, p. 288.

285 J. Klaczko, *Rozprawy i szkice*, s. 259.

the question of existence". The national idea is expressed through poetry and history, rather than social and political thought. Hence, a complete immaturity of the notions Poles use in questions such as those over the abolishment of peasant devoirs, the equality of confessions or the freedom of trade and arts-and-crafts: in these matters, we have been substantially outpaced by Western civilisation.<sup>286</sup>

Very telling was the democratic intelligentsia's helplessness in its relations with the commons – or rather, in its inability to enter into such relationship. It was even worse in this respect in Galicia than in the Russian Partition, as the memory of the blood-stained year of 1846 had not vanished yet; in the countryside, fear prevailed that the lords were plotting again to reinstate a feudal service system. Democrats could well declare, a thousand times, their affection for the kind-hearted folk, but if they husbanded and did farm work themselves, they were not quite skilful in making the common people, and themselves too, convinced about this love. Innumerable divagations on this subject ended in the nobility being instructed that schools needed to be set up in the country, peasants enlightened and made 'nationally aware' – all that expressed in a condescending tone toward the proprietors and toward the village that had just received suffrage.

The intelligentsia's contact with the enfranchised countryside was sporadic, with, practically, scarce means at hand to deliver the educatory programme. This did not escape the attention of the nobility who pointed out to the 'men-of-letters' a detachment from reality: "That's easy for them there in the town, at a table, a pen in their hand, to grumble about us, the nobles, whilst being entranced by the kind-heartedness of a people that they do not know not at all, to scrawl about the hidden virtues' treasures in its bosom, this being a veritable brilliant uncut. [...] May someone of the men-of-letters settle in the countryside and give himself up to husbandry. [...] Repeat to him his own mottos we will: now, go live with the folk! Go fraternise with that bumpkin who's feeding you! How come? Have you not overpowered the commons' distrust yet?", a letter to the editors sneered.<sup>287</sup>

Although the intelligentsia's intellectual/mental and ideological endowment could have considerably departed from the nobility world's mentality, its family-based and social relations with that world (which was truer for the aristocracy than the lesser nobility) remained rather dense in Galicia, as we have seen. To offer an example: once Mieczysław Romanowski (b. 1833), a poor poet, following his

---

286 L. Gumpłowicz, *Słowo o umiejętnościach prawniczo-politycznych u nas* ['Briefly on juridical-and-political skills in this country'], *Dziennik Literacki*, 1862, No. 27, p. 210.

287 [Author unknown], *Atanazy do Janusza* [Atanazy to Janusz'], *Dziennik Literacki*, 1861, No. 90.

graduation in Lwów, started farming in an inherited tiny estate, in the absence of any other subsistence, he became terribly disgusted with his neighbourly contact with nobility members whom he had nothing to talk about with. For a change, he felt at home with his wealthy friend Mieczysław Pawlikowski (b. 1834), who similarly did not like his own social sphere: the two shared an intellectual culture and interests. At last, Romanowski accepted with satisfaction the lousy job of a 'reading-room supervisor' with the Ossoliński Institute, as it enabled him to return to the urban environment, leaving the care of his wheat, maize and beans over to his parents and sister.<sup>288</sup>

On the other hand, duels – the drastic issue – testified to a penetration of the noble into the intelligentsia's ethos, regardless of their distinct mutual divergence. The custom had already come across arraignment from various milieus; nonetheless, refusing to 'give satisfaction' was not the done thing. One of the most crude Galician memoirists would defend the devoir to wash the insulted honour with blood, recognising all the same that "honour is not an exclusive treasury of the nobility" – having such a thing happens even with intellectuals, albeit rarely.<sup>289</sup>

It is undisputable, in any case, that regardless of the wealth or declared beliefs system, the main barrier of class foreignness continually detached the peasants from the 'frock-coat lords', regardless of the bondage having been terminated a dozen-or-so years before. As a consequence, the intentional range of the category of nation, central to the ideologically marked discourse, was very distant from the real one. On the verge of Galicia's autonomy (1867), some eighty per cent of its dwellers had no sense of national self-identification. This was no better with the other partitioned areas: a Poznań correspondent of *Dziennik* wrote that thirteen years after the 1848 Poznań uprising, folk "cannot even comprehend the sacred name of Pole, or use it, remaining content with the name of Catholic".<sup>290</sup> There is a galore of examples. Intentionally, however, 'nation' was to encompass all of them, regardless of class/estate origin or ethnic background. Ruthenian and Lithuanian peasants were to be covered as well.

The unusual European career of the idea of a nation in the middle of the nineteenth century drew its powerfulness from the sense of deprivation and wrongness experienced by ideological leadership elites who could not identify

---

288 M. Romanowski, *W promieniu Lwowa, Żukowa i Medyki* ['Within the compass of Lwów, Żuków and Medyka'], passim.

289 L. Jabłonowski, *Pamiętniki* ['Memoirs'], pp. 189, 366.

290 Tworzymir [Józef Chociszewski], *Korespondencja z Wielkopolski* ['Report from Wielkopolska'], *Dziennik Literacki*, 1861, No. 23, p. 184.

themselves with the empires and dynasties under whose power they were made to exist by the historical doom: either they found the incorporated provinces too insular, or, the mighty empires proved too ample and capacious for them. The national irredentism movements stimulated by intellectuals carried an anti-legitimistic potential – the greater if combined with the liberal slogans of human rights or combating despotism. Together with this, their becoming increasingly powerful generated three types of conflict: national aspirations clashing against the state order; various national claims for a single ethnically mixed territory, clashing against one another; and, the maximalists clashing against the ‘moderants’.

This pattern was fully applicable with the Polish lands, with certain modifications to it. Irrespective of their own family backgrounds, Polish nineteenth-century intellectuals considered themselves the eligible heirs of the Commonwealth, feeling humiliated by its dilaceration and incorporation into the three partitioner states. Their concept of (the) nation was, therefore, historical and political, and, understandably enough, blended with aspirations to invalidate the effects of violence and to reinstate the Polish-Lithuanian state territory from before the First Partition (i.e. 1772). In the kingdom of ideas, this was an axiom, and any diplomatic attempts at circumventing it and, for instance, by acknowledging the Vienna Congress (1815) decisions on a pro-forma basis exposed the politicians to fierce protests, which Prince Adam Czartoryski could, distressfully, see for what they were.

The axiom could obviously not be operational in the practice of life, as such an assumption was impossible to cope with at home, even if completely in private. The democratic strand of Polish political thought, willing to incorporate peasants as members of a political nation, or even regard the commons as identical with the nation, was becoming entangled in an incurable incongruity already in the sphere of ideas and projections. It was rather hard to cause, as a matter of fact, that the country-folk felt themselves the heirs of the deceased Commonwealth whose name and symbols simply meant nothing to them, or induced dreary associations. The only, though for now unreliable, method to have the peasantry gradually incorporated into the Polish nation could be to evoke and refer to the unity of language and belief, and turning them against the alien officials and proprietors – thus passing to an ethnical idea of nation, with all the resultant consequences.

The democratically disposed intelligentsia found it unfeasible to extricate from such incoherence of its concepts of national community which overshadowed, in particular, Polish-Ruthenian relations. For half a century, and more, the Polish – especially, non-noble – opinion regarded the Ruthenians (the Austrian

as well as the Russian ones) as Poles, our dear beloved brethren who just happened to speak a somewhat different dialect and say their prayers in a slightly different rite. Indeed, the Galician Ruthenians of the Greek-Catholic rite, emancipating themselves and attending high schools (gymnasiums), sons of peasants or Orthodox-popes, were willingly becoming Polonised, as this opened up for them the entrance door to the entourage and made promotions in grade easier. The experiences of 1848 caused this inclination to wane. The Polish intelligentsia began encountering its Ukrainian counterpart, conscious of its own national awareness – a rival now in the universities and offices. The process was irreversible, and no reviling against a Muscovite or Austrian schema could possibly withhold its radiation.

It proved hard to part with the illusions. A notion as peculiar as ‘artificial/delusional nationalities’, allegedly developed by Viennese centralists in order to fight the pretensions of ‘real’ nationalities – ones well-tested by history – was to justify the patronising attitude. Henryk Schmitt zealously defended such a theory, without being bothered by the admission that “thousands of pens have been raised in Berlin and Vienna to persuade the world that [the concept of] Polish nationality ranks among delusions”.<sup>291</sup> Such sophisms were not of much use, though. The inventive concept whereby a single nation might encompass a variety of ‘nationalities’ was of no help either. Once the emperor offered autonomy to the crown country, thereby transferring a small part of authority, including the franchise, to the province’s populace, the seeds of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict were ripening like a doom hanging above those lands.

The rules governing programme utterances made in public and those of confidences preserved in private letters were divergent. A democratic correctness told the Poles to challenge Russian tsarism, and the Prussian or Austrian government; private letters more often took the liberty of expressing a declared aversion toward the ‘Muscovites’ and the ‘Germans’ as such, attributing to them the stereotypical traits of national character. It is a legitimate inference that colloquial language was even coarser. The various types of expression were of course not rigorously separated, and hence individual phrases and invectives from a real-life speech level penetrated into the public debate language, and conversely.

This is easy to trace with the pronouncements made on Jews. The Galicia of those years did not see sharp clashes, nor demonstrations of fraternisation similar to those witnessed in Warsaw. The rule of liberal discourse had it that the conviction was expressed, on both sides, that linguistic and moral assimilation

---

291 H. Schmitt, *Narodowość polska*, pp. 72-73.

would lead the Jews to a Polish civic feeling, with their religion retained. In private letters and novels, this optimistic forecast was usually muffled by the stereotypical tribal characteristics, according to which a Jew was a Jew, and that was that.<sup>292</sup> The moment, however, the Austrian government abolished (in 1859-60) a part of the laws handicapping the civil rights of the Galician Jewry, which could be followed by alignment of their political rights with those of the Polish community, resistance against these designs unified Roman-Catholic bishops and secular conservatives and democrats into a single front. Henryk Schmitt again became the most articulate mouthpiece of this opposition, agreeing, at the utmost, to individually admit to rights equal with the Christians those Jews who held academic diplomas and those who had contributed to improved education of their fellow-believers or had some special merits for the country to their credit. None of the Galician periodicals ever entered into controversy with this stance. The challenge was only met by emigration democratic organs, expressing a regret that a serious writer yielded himself to old prejudices<sup>293</sup>; this intervention from afar did not quite affect Galician opinion.

The intelligentsia's attitude toward the Church was put under a severe test once Pius IX, as the State of the Church ruler, started a fight through excommunications with the Italian unification movement, enjoying keen fondness in Poland. The Pope's policy as a whole, with his increasingly acute condemnation of liberal principles, stimulated a reflex of protest in the democratic camp, and dismay and division within the Hôtel Lambert group. Only the Resurrection-Order Friars defended it, in a principled fashion. In this situation, many Polish intellectuals of faith did not seek their mainstay with the institutional Church, although they were not free from spiritual quandary.

A crisis in faith was a pan-European phenomenon: it affected not the naive, folk faith, but the one of the enlightened ones, who had to somehow make fit the new discoveries of natural sciences and the axiology of the bourgeois civilisation into their own Weltanschauung, trying to reconcile the contradictions and patch the ruptures.

The conviction that scientific and technological progress had been accompanied since the autumn of the Middle Ages or since the Reformation, or at least from the Enlightenment age onwards, like a shadow, by a spiritual collapse of Europe, was many a time repeated in, very likely, all of the continent's languages,

---

292 W. Wielogłowski, *Spółeczeństwo dzisiejsze w obrazach*, p. 142.

293 A. Eisenbach, *Emancypacja Żydów...* ['Empancipation of Jews ...'], pp. 436-443, 458-461.

commencing with Victorian England. In an argumentative novel by Szujski, published in episodes by *Dziennik Literacki*, such an opinion is voiced by an obdurate conservative named Artur, but his historical pessimism triggers a retort from Stanisław, the author's mouthpiece. He namely says that Christianity would not admit such despondency: "In spite of any rationalism, the depths of the soul of every European people is genuinely Christian; materialisation of Christianity preoccupies a majority of thinkers and utopists. [...] The ages of analysis, destruction, and revolution over, there slowly but most certainly comes a *time of synthesis*, construction, and organisation." Civilisation concatenates with tradition; new ideas with the old rules. Religion has spewed forth from the briny into which the Encyclopaedists, Voltaireans and Jacobins once plunged it; owing to Providence, it "is beating in mankind's chest more strongly than previously". True, the Church, as a mundane institution, is corrupt with depravity, but it has its dogma preserved intact, Stanisław pontificates.<sup>294</sup>

A consolation of this sort did not perhaps appeal to everybody; still, it does express, using a discursive language, an eclectic compromise between the dissonant orders of values which for a definite majority of the intelligentsia proved to be the only possible solution. Around 1860, one could criticise the Pope and his bishops; it even behoved to do so, sometimes. But there was no one to publically demonstrate a religious scepticism; in any case, state censorship, together with the ecclesiastical one, guarded the faithful against scandal and outrage.

Trust for science, admiration for technological inventions and affirmation of economic progress could be related – in Galicia as well as in other partitioned provinces – with extremely different philosophical attitudes and political orientations. The grand landowners, gathered around Prince Leon Sapieha, propagated the progress of the domestic economy and management through the development of railroads, whose construction they invested in, having regard to their own interest, but also to an upgrade of the provinces. Propagation of industry, especially agricultural, and of Polish commercial companies by Walery Wielogłowski in *Ognisko*, a periodical he set up (in Krakow in 1861) and furnished with texts himself, was underpinned by fervent orthodox Catholicism; the intent behind it was to retract the intelligentsia and the youth from independence-oriented conspiring. *Kółko Rodzinne* (est. 1861), the organ of a group of democratically disposed Lwów writers, recommended – as opposed to *Dziennik Literacki* – modest aspirations, familiarity with the commons and patient educational effort in "the

---

294 J. Szujski, *Czyste dusze i mętne dusze* ['Pure souls and murky souls'], *Dziennik Literacki*, 1861, No. 31, p. 246.

home-country at a small size”<sup>295</sup> All these circles, taken together, were not in a position to prevail the emotional gratification furnished especially to young people through Warsaw-style patriotic songs and low-voiced talks on a new uprising that was coming up nearer and nearer from behind the cordon.

Józef Supiński (b. 1804), a lonely freak, a returnee from France, a spontaneous economist and a sociologist, earning his living as a clerk with the Lwów Savings Bank and in his time-off developing his own philosophical and economic system, undertook the gravest attempt to present a philosophical alternative to political romanticism. This system, which was only partly contained in two considerable, ambitiously entitled volumes: *Mysł ogólna fizjologii powszechnej* [‘A general concept of universal physiology’] (Lwów, 1860) and *Szkoła polska gospodarstwa społecznego* [‘The Polish school of social economics’] (Lwów, 1862), introduced the reader into a sphere of notions entirely unfamiliar to the Polish literature of the period, and to the Polish educated class, especially in Galicia. Those ideas were either adopted from French philosophy and economics or, more frequently, designed by the author. These works, harshly welcomed by the reviewers, laid deposited in a book storehouse; their forerunning quality was only appreciated in the seventies, by Warsaw Positivists. Consequently, a history of the intelligentsia before 1863 could have ignored Supiński, but it is certainly the right thing at least to mention him here, as he unhesitatingly placed Poland within the developmental route of the European capitalist economy, denying his country any special attributes allegedly owed to its particular situation, or a Divine mission and message. Similarly to all the other countries in this geographic zone, Poland was tasked, Supiński argued, with multiplying its *social resource* – that is, the civilisational output accumulated in works of creative and productive labour, without intervention from supernatural elements, and with the admittance of foreign capital instead.

Regardless even of the system’s assumptions and intellectual structure, it marked a complete subject-matter change in the context of the period’s Polish thought: national oppression was almost a passed-over question in this way of seeing. Instead, cultural and economic patterns came to the forefront, and these were provided by the West – the area whose materialistic attitude, frigidity, corruption and demoralisation were continually contrasted against a more sensitive Poland. Supiński flew into a fury at sermons like these: “Romantics, idealists,

---

295 Quoted after: K. Poklewska, *Grupa pisarzy Dziennika Literackiego* [‘*Dziennik Literacki* contributing authors’], typescript. Institute of Literary Studies [IBL] Library, p. 130.



troubadours!” he thundered, “you whose will is to arouse in us detestation toward everything being a matter; you, who have perhaps spared in your entire lives not even a month of work on laborious studies of things social – just stick to the limits you have lined out for yourselves, and which ought to be observed by civic conscience! Bear in mind that matter is the condition for the terrestrial existence of people and nations [...], allow us to exist bodily, if you are not willing to be suspected sometime that you were hired to annihilate your fellow-brethren.”<sup>296</sup> More exclamations of this kind can be found in these writings; they make one think of Henryk Kamiński’s earlier admonitions in his *Filozofia ekonomii materialnej* [‘A philosophy of material economics’], some remarks made by Fryderyk Skarbek, but most of all, the socio-political journalism of *Gazeta Codzienna/Polska* we have focused on for a while: its affinity with Supiński’s educative tendency is at times striking.

Supiński did not recommend a thoughtless copying of English or French institutions or morals or manners. A liberal, he was not a doctrinaire: he advocated the idea that the general rules of economics and social development ought to be adopted to the local conditions and needs of a ‘retarded’ country – although it was not entirely clear who, specifically, ought to identify such needs and care about the adaptation, there being no national government in place. Yet, all that social science and persuasion, whose orientation started being called ‘organic work’, following the concept developed in Poznań, came over not at the best of times: there was nobody, whether in the Kingdom or in Wilno, or in Galicia, to have a head for dealing, and being concerned, with such matters. What is more, the historians of the time held as their governing thesis, let us remind, an ‘inbred’ history of the nation that had been punished by Providence whenever it took example from foreigners.

Paradoxically, it was the conservative periodical *Czas* that made its columns wide open to information on the industrial and intellectual movement in the West. Reports appearing in this Krakow daily were most often accompanied by critical, at times caustic, commentaries, but in effect surmounted to an isolation from the world maintained by the Austrian censorship during the arbitrary rule, supported by the province’s parochialism. Quite characteristically, an extensive critical discussion of Thomas Buckle’s *History of Civilization in England*, which was to become the bible of young Positivists, was published (in 1860) in a monthly extra (*Dodatek Miesięczny*) of *Czas* before a Polish translation of the work appeared.

---

296 J. Supiński, *Znaczenie kapitału i kredytu* [‘The significance of capital and credit’], (1857), in: *Pisma* [‘Writings’], vol. 5, p. 235.

Pieces of news and ideas found it easier now to circulate – and people could travel with less effort: the railroads and alleviated passport restrictions made travel faster and cheaper. Some would take the opportunity to see Naples and the ‘Sistine Madonna’; others went ‘to the waters’ and to meet their relatives; others still, or even the same travellers, to meet and collude with Mierosławski, Elżanowski or Władysław Czartoryski – whatever, they would find the right or convenient thing to do. There were those who travelled to watch the rules of aseptic procedure being observed in clinics, or the way railroad bridges were constructed.

Many of those travellers found it grievous that Poland had so thoroughly disappeared from European awareness: it had been completely forgotten, in fact. Well, it would reappear in the spring of 1861, as the confrontation between the unarmed people of Warsaw and the gendarmerie and the Cossacks, the tsarist potency’s military arm, proved fascinating to correspondents of great journals. Warsaw would be notorious for a while, and even embedded on the map. The conclusion was drawn in Poland that something needed being done for ‘Europe’ to ‘take notice of us’.

It has so coincided that the Galician politics were revived at the same time. It was a ‘home-country at a small size’ and it had a like politics, but something could become dependent on the Polish community again. Mockers claimed that the provincial Diet in Lwów had only the right to deliberate on how to patch holes in a bridge; still, there was a certain number of somewhat larger holes to patch. The figures known from 1848 – Smolka, Ziemiałkowski – appeared back on stage. A traffic between Lwów and Vienna started, entailing quite real temptations for men-of-letters and barristers: ‘Should I run for a parliament seat?’; ‘Will there be new job opportunities for Polish nationals in offices and courts?’ And, the disturbing questions: to what degree might the Galician autonomy limits extend? How about civil rights? Is one really supposed to swear a loyalty oath to the Emperor? Is there any chance that Austria could turn into a federative state? Should Polish politics support such orientation and undertake any commitments? In whose name and on whose behalf, if so?

These were the absorbing questions, and one would find it hard to try and find the answers without monitoring what was going on very nearby – behind the border. Is our capital city Warsaw, or is it Vienna today? This had to be resolved. A legal Galician magazine had just published *An important message from the inhabitants of Warsaw to all the compatriots in the Polish land*, for which the periodical was shut down, and its editor jailed. Are we to count on Prague, Pest, or Warsaw and Wilno? Taking risks is all right – but, where are the limits? Responsibility: for whom? The country? But, which country? What are its borders?

Who is there to be listened to, obeyed: the clandestine Central Committee, or, the imperial government?

The restless young writers from the Krakow circle, and those associated with *Dziennik Literacki*, did not engage in parliamentary politicising: what they knew was that when the hour strikes, they should not hesitate on where to appear, albeit without believing they might win. Significantly enough, *Czas*, ordinarily so cautious, assertively supported the Warsaw movement, sparing no acute criticism for Margrave Wielopolski. A call for combat is overpowering in Poland: it tends to be replied to also by those who would deem it a call for national suicide. It is so because what everyone fears most is being accused of having flinched in a critical moment, renouncing solidarity with those who went away.

Henryk Schmitt, the historian, who in the summer of 1862 happened to stay for some time in Paris, wrote to his wife about the awe he experienced: “Oh God, my head is spinning and my brain shrivelling when I remind myself that multiple victims might be falling again [*sic*] with no purpose and, sadder still, the cause might be withdrawn. Those of influence and seniority are not courageous enough to daringly oppose the tenacity which is inimical at present [...], for they fear losing their reputation about which they apparently care more than about the success of [our] cause. What we desperately need today is quietness for a short time, to become organised – but they are disturbing it with their incessant pranks, keeping the nation in continual feverishness, which is obviously not a friendly disposition toward organic works without which none of our designs can possibly turn successful whatsoever.”<sup>297</sup>

---

297 H. Schmitt, *Listy do żony* [‘Letters to his wife’], p. 428.



# Chapter 6: Jump into an abyss

## Warsaw and the country-at-large, 1862-1864

### 1. Impatience

On 5<sup>th</sup> May 1860, Giuseppe Garibaldi, together with his thousand valorous men, set forth on two pretendedly hijacked ships from near Genoa, sailing southwards. 11<sup>th</sup> May saw him land at the western headland of Sicily; the conquest of Palermo came on 27<sup>th</sup> May. Two months later, he appeared in Messina: the factual dictator of the whole island.

Europe held its breath. A legion of journalists, adventurous tourists and female admirers of the General drifted behind the Redshirts' camps and supply columns. Thousands of volunteers streamed in, more than filling the gaps caused by the fallen or wounded. August 1860 saw Garibaldi ferry through the strait and cross Calabria like a whirlwind, suppressing the tenfold larger crews of the stupefied King of the Two Sicilies. On 7<sup>th</sup> September, the minister of police betrayed his ruler and let Garibaldi into Naples, without a struggle. The victorious commander offered Naples and Sicily, on 26<sup>th</sup> October, to Victor Emanuel II, King of Sardinia and Piedmont, addressing him, for the first time as 'the King of Italy' – true, not the whole of it yet then.

This marked the peak moment of his European fame and the legend of the 'Hero of the Two Worlds' found a more fertile ground nowhere else than in Poland. Garibaldi was popular there already before – as a dauntless, although losing, defender of the Roman Republic in 1849; young people in the Kingdom, to the fury of Paskevich and his gendarmes, grew their beards to resemble the Italian hero. This cult was revived ten years later, as the commander of the Alpine Riflemen in Piedmont's service tantalised the Austrians and defeated them in their combat for the freedom of Lombardy. Lastly, the Sicilian expedition simply excited sheer enthusiasm in Warsaw and in Krakow. This romantic hero, a wrangler and a revolutionary condottiere for those of the old regime, despising cabinet policy-making and diplomacy, repeatedly showed what was achievable with a motley of meanly trained group of blusterers, in plain clothing, with no tight hand kept on them through drill or muster – if imbued with patriotic ardour, belief in their leader, and contempt for death. A fanatic of an integral and independent Italy, unseen on the political map ever before, shattered the frontiers of

duchies and kingdoms in pursuance of his vision, replacing the art of warfare with guerrilla extemporising – and, winning. Since the time of Bonaparte, no one else had caught the imagination of young Poles of various classes so enthusiastically – all the more that he from time to time expressed his warm feelings toward Polish people and was pleased to welcome Polish volunteers. News of his march toward Naples was traced in newspapers and wherever else, red shirts and Calabrian hats suddenly appeared plentiful on the streets of Polish towns, and minds started fancying that, who knows, maybe liberty would come again *to Poland from the Italian land* (as a well-known song had it, which was later to become the Polish national anthem).

Ludwik Mierosławski, a bearded man too, posed as a ‘Polish Garibaldi’. This unfortunate commander of the lost 1848 insurrections in Greater-Poland and Baden was devoured by a biting sense of unfulfilment and could hardly bear his emigrant idleness, unwaveringly confident in his military and oratorical talents. He had an opportunity to test this latter gift while delivering a speech at the Paris celebrations of the November anniversaries of 1858 and 1859, bringing the house down as he spoke directly to the young people who had arrived from Poland. His florid rhetorical style, abundant with accumulated metaphors, pathetic and, seconds after, derisive, mercilessly mocking the idea of organic labours, proved impressive.

This braggart, at loggerheads with everyone and humiliating everybody, could not count on gathering uncritical listeners around him in the emigration. Hôtel Lambert considered him a dangerous fanatic and demagogue. Julian Klaczko’s polemic with his elocution has already been covered here. The old democrats had also had enough of him, although they did realise how powerful an impact was exerted by such a call for action upon the generation bred in bondage and without a civic-education formation behind them.

Warsaw students were eager to gain a guideline, a direction, and an authority. Their thrust to act, to break the boredom of an existence devoid of ideals and lacking ideological content, coincided with Mierosławski’s imperative for captancy. His idea for the time of combat was a ‘disciplined revolutionism’ or ‘orderly, dictatorial democratism’<sup>298</sup> – and now he had, or at least so it seemed to him, those subordinate men whom he had sent instructions to via his adjutant Jan Kurzyna, a fugitive from the Kingdom, who was once a Medical Academy student.

The tsarist ministers had their reasons when they did not want to give their consent for tertiary schools in Poland, knowing full well that to permit a large

---

298 *Pamiętnik Mierosławskiego* [‘Mierosławski’s memoirs’], ed. J. Frejlich, pp. 55-56.

number of students to amass in one place would in fact be to allow for clandestine organisations to form. And indeed, this appeared to hold true also for Kiev where more than half of the students were Polish (mostly from territories east of the Bug), and all the more so for Warsaw. The latter city had, in total, two schools worthy of their academic status: the School of Fine Arts and the Medical-Surgical Academy; circles and home trysts started appearing with both, with banned books being read, unauthorised topics discussed and objectionable songs sung. A case would be held between Jurgens' and Mierosławski's bewitched subalterns for influence on these circles and, thereby, on the souls and minds of their participants. For the moment, both groups supported patriotic church services, singings and manifestations flooding onto the streets of Warsaw from out of the churches. However, while Jurgens' followers perceived these occurrences as a lever on the authorities in their strife for reforms, Mierosławski's adherents considered them to be an initial phase, breaching the trepidation, and a means of canvassing, intended to introduce the rising's preparations.

They were becoming proficient in evoking and consolidating religious-national symbols – historical anniversaries, funerals, processions, supplications, the anthem *Boże coś Polskę* (the refrain, subject to alteration till our day, depending on the political situation, going “O deign to reoffer us our homeland and freedom, Lord!”), ensigns, emblems (the White Eagle with the Lithuanian *Pogoń* and Ruthenian Michael the Archangel holding a sword), *konfederatka* square-topped hats, flambeaus – in a word, everything that so infallibly aroused affection and exaltation in the people of Warsaw. The *jeneral* himself, then still in Paris, grew impatient at those “beggarly wailing”<sup>299</sup>, already busy organising a military school in Genoa, to which he had tacit consent from the Piedmontian government and Garibaldi's blessing, while at home he wanted to have at his entire disposal a completely submissive conspiracy, ready for everything.

Meanwhile, the manifestations, which in the winter of 1860-1 were more and more ostentatious and public, gave the participants an earlier-unknown sense of brotherly fellowship and power. “My God!”, Żmichowska reported to a young friend of hers, in January, “in my time, people were getting killed at the gallows, and there was no one in our region to take care about them, even the whole Congress-Kingdom failed to imprint their names in its memory. Now, the boys have but sung a song, and it resounded with echo before long. [...] In

---

299 Ibidem, p. 10.

a word, there is a stir arising everywhere – from a street gamin to counts stupid with sleep”<sup>300</sup>.

Students tended now to not apply themselves much to learning, because they found that the things going on in town more exciting than the lessons at the anatomical amphitheatre or drawing exercises. This pleased and, simultaneously, disturbed cautious opinion leaders who began to realise how hard it would be to control a movement so dynamic. Making appeals to reason was not convincing, though, for the inflamed bellwethers of the movement: the organic work postulates or the signing of addresses to the tsar requesting the reinstatement of a university in Warsaw seemed nothing more than a shield for the intelligentsia’s cowardice and procrastination. Karol Majewski, the leader of Medical Academy students, was hesitant between the two positions. He found Jurgens’ arguments convincing but did not utter them openly, dodging them instead, so as not to lose the trust and esteem of his fellows.

The civil and military authority functionaries in Warsaw lacked experience in coping with a situation like this. Mikhail Gorchakov, the Viceroy, had no inclination to reinstate martial law. He deluded to the idea that Warsaw would at last become tired with demonstrations which would subside by themselves. On the other hand, telegrams from the emperor demanded with increasing urgency that order be re-established uncompromisingly; the high-rank officers at the Castle opted for the same.

The demonstration climaxed at the end of February 1861, ending up in a salvo fired by a military troop at the crowd in Krakowskie-Przedmieście Street, with the resultant five killed being completely casual victims. That single salvo instantly created a new situation: an increased patriotic exaltation and, on the other hand, a dread of the *Namiestnik* (Viceroy) who feared a people’s rising and desired to appease the conflict, or at least gain time. At that very moment, the initiative was taken over by the moderate circles, capable of undertaking mediation. With the consent of the Viceroy and acquiescence from the Warsaw street, the task of keeping order in the town was entrusted to the Municipal Delegation, initially formed of thirteen people, approved by a pretty informal meeting of respectable urban citizens, who gathered ad hoc at the Merchants’ Club (*Resursa Kupiecka*). The Delegation’s cast featured L. Kronenberg; J.I. Kraszewski; Ksawery Szlenkier, a merchant (b. 1814); Tytus Chałubiński, a physician; wealthy shoemaker Stanisław Hiszpański, and two priests. Later, rabbi Ber Meisels, chemist Jakub Natanson, former Siberian exile Henryk Krajewski and some

---

300 N. Żmichowska, *Listy*, vol. 2, pp. 405-6.



others were attached. An impromptu civic Guard, named 'the constables' (following the English model), was formed mainly of students, and was led by Jurgens and Ruprecht, among others.

The Delegation and the Guard won authority, behaved obediently in the city's streets, and had access to the Viceroy. For forty days then (called *ex post* 'the Polish days'), Warsaw had a sense of hitherto-unknown liberty: policemen and gendarmes disappeared from the streets; Mukhanov, the abhorred commissar for the interior, was dismissed; a majority of those detained at the Citadel were released; open political disputes were held; priests delivered patriotic sermons; and, the re-titling of *Gazeta Codzienna* as *Gazeta Polska* (i.e. 'daily' into 'Polish' newspaper) was regarded as a symbolic act. Kraszewski declared on this occasion that *Gazeta* would support the equal rights of estates, confessions and social classes<sup>301</sup>, which was the head postulate of Jurgens' circle, not to mention the radicals.

It could therefore seem that a circumspect liberal fraction of the Warsaw intelligentsia, together with the bourgeois elite and the Agricultural Society managerial team, was in control of the situation, mitigating the impatient zealots and encouraging the authorities into reflection. It was, however, only a transitory guise. Following a numerous but quietly celebrated funeral ceremony for the five fallen victims, demonstrations burgeoned, posing an open challenge to the tsarist regime. Gorchakov's revealed compliance, considered quite rightly as the government's indulgence, encouraged the organisers to be even more ostentatious. Clear-headed observers could now see that this was heading forthright to a confrontation.

There is a cluster of young people, young striplings, I could say, for all that's between age 24 and 12, reckoned against the [birth] certificates. They have contained their entire political system within the wish: their will is to get killed. What for? What's the purpose? In the name of what national benefit? [...] Don't you ask them about it? They're willing to get killed by the Muscovites, and because of this, they are rending themselves to anything the Muscovites would be ready to withhold by homicide.

[Żmichowska to her brother in France, 5<sup>th</sup> April 1861; *Listy*, vol. 1, pp. 179-180].

The course of events was heading in this direction from the other side too, in fact. Alexander II demanded that the self-appointed Municipal Delegation be dissolved and the demonstrations unconditionally stifled. In exchange, he promised that a Council of State would be reinstated in the Kingdom, along with municipal

---

301 *Gazeta Polska*, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1861; reprinted in: J.I. Kraszewski, *Wybór pism*, vol. 9, p. 480.

and county (*powiat*) councils. Most importantly, he consented for a reform of schools, which was to be carried out by Aleksander, Margrave Wielopolski, and the Director of the Commission for Enlightenment (i.e. Education), newly appointed on Gorchakov's request. This man brought along a completely new element to the political stage: a dovish politician, he assured the Emperor that he was capable of calming down the rough waves, but would bring this in return for reinstated, self-governing Kingdom institutions. The offer of such a deal came nonetheless across resistance in the courtly salons of Petersburg and in the streets of the revolting Warsaw. Wielopolski was not a man to be liked: he had estranged the landed gentry and the intelligentsia with his disdainful disrespect for public opinion which he demonstrated in several lawsuits. More importantly still, the suggestion that a compact possibly was reachable with the government appeared too late, at the moment when it became psychologically hard to accept for society. One of the reasons was that Wielopolski limited his designs, in a principled manner, to the Kingdom, regarding Lithuania and Ruthenia as lost forever. Polish opinion could not reconcile itself with such an idea.

Still, the margrave was a strong-willed man, audacious in his beliefs: with his new post, he did his bit, irrespective of his lack of popularity: he indeed became even more unpopular by pushing the Administrative Council's and Viceroy's decision to dissolve the Agricultural Society which, under the leadership of Andrzej Zamoyski, wanted to forestall the government in proclaiming the abolishment of the *corvée* and, overall, laid claim to acting as an exponent of not only the landowning gentry but, put simply, of Polish national opinion in general. The scheme proposed by Wielopolski was all the same very tempting for the badly faring intelligentsia: it included abrogation of the subordination of Polish schools to the tsarist ministry of education and a promise for their modernisation; it announced the reinstatement of a university in Warsaw, and the Polonisation of the Kingdom's administration at all levels. All this was meant to open new prospects for the personal careers of clerks and officials, teachers, as well as those aspiring for prospective multiple vacancies. However, the climate in Warsaw did not induce the locals to declare a readiness to collaborate with the new minister; finally, the removal of the Municipal Delegation and the bloody massacre of 8<sup>th</sup> April of the defenceless and unaggressive demonstrators in Zamkowy Square, at the foot of the Royal Castle, bringing to an end the short-lived 'Polish times', flung open the abyss between the government and the city.

There were at least a hundred killed, or more: a complete list has never been compiled. There were no well-known people among them. This time, holding a solemn funeral was inconceivable: the corpses were buried at night by soldiers, passers-by were searched by street patrols, and theatres, clubs, and even

cafes were all made to close. Eighty-five people were detained. But the city was not intimidated as a result. Patriotic and mourning chants were going on, no longer just flooding out of the churches and into the streets now. The patriotic movement was descending to the underground, setting up secretive printeries, spreading proclamations, attracting spheres so-long less active, officials, priests, journeymen, servants; it spilled over to the smaller towns of the Kingdom and further onto the Lithuanian *guberniyas*, building the fundamentals of a clandestine organisation, popularly called 'Red' ever since. It proved larger, socially wider and more operative than any other in the past. This movement called the tune and dictated the canons of decency; among them was the instruction to stay neutral toward any reforms undertaken by the government.

On the morrow of 8<sup>th</sup> April, Wielopolski was entrusted by the Viceroy with the directorship of the Government Commission for Justice, alongside his post as Chief Presiding Director with the restored Government Commission for Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment. This combination gave him accumulated authority but did not augment a friendly attitude toward him from Russian generals or from Polish public opinion. He was charged with the responsibility for the bloodshed, threatened by anonymous letters, and considered a traitor. The influential Krakow newspaper *Czas*, conservative and, once, close to the Margrave, now openly pronounced against him. Even gymnasium students recalcitrated and jeered at him avowedly. The Catholic clergy were mistrustful, fearing aversion from worshippers no less than governmental repressions.

The clergy had their own reasons to stay reserved. The new Denominations Commission Director apodictically warned the priesthood against dealing with politics; at the same time, ostentatiously giving up the noble stereotype, he announced that all the confessions would be approached on an equal footing, in the spirit of "genuine tolerance, one of the great acquirements of this age".<sup>302</sup> These words were understood, quite rightly, as a herald of equality of rights offered to Jews. This was, in fact, what Warsaw opinion felt inclined toward at that moment, captivated by the unanimous participation of Jews, together with rabbis, at the funeral of the five fallen and at the incidents of 8<sup>th</sup> April. Patriotic sentiments were something very different than a government's declaration, to which the Church proved not mentally prepared.

The intelligentsia were divided. A remarkable share of this class – especially, students, articulated clerks, and lower-ranking officials without promotional

---

302 Address by Aleksander Wielopolski, March 1861; quoted after: Z. Stankiewicz, *Dzieje wielkości i upadku* ['The history of greatness and fall'], p. 141.

prospects – clung to the ‘Reds’, and entered the hastily formed ‘tens’ and ‘hundreds’ structures, risking a lot but gaining the conviction in return that they were taking part in creating history, helping the fatherland revive. Another part of the class, mostly the adults, with a professional or political – and, in many cases, prisoner/Siberian – experience behind them, gathered within Jurgens’ circle of influence, trying not to lose contact with the Reds, so as to restrain their fantasy. Thus, they had to keep themselves at a distance from Wielopolski, even though their programme ideas were not very dissimilar. Instead, agreement was sought with members of the dissolved Agricultural Society who, as a rule, proved more conservative in their peasant reform concepts but equally cautious as far as insurrection plans were concerned.

The social base which could form the foundation for Wielopolski’s reforms was rather slender, then. Its core consisted of officials of the two government commissions who could now spread their wings and collect materials and suggestions for the assumption of a new organisation of schools as well as courts. Enlightened gymnasium, semi-tertiary and tertiary teachers, as well as lawyers, if not stuck by routine and apathy, also expected a successful outcome from these reforms. All realised, of course, what the political limits of the Polish initiatives were; all the same, Russia itself saw a great intellectual and social ferment going on, so one could count on a more advantageous attitude of the authorities toward European educational patterns and legal doctrines.

The Margrave’s strong point was, paradoxically, the revealed strength of the national movement, for it was the only reason Petersburg was finally inclined to make some allowances. The eighth of April aroused, however, a social reluctance toward the intended compromise and augured ill for the institutions that were to be called into being. In addition, Gorchakov, the one who patronised Wielopolski, died on 25<sup>th</sup> May, and a period of constantly changing imperial *namiestniks* started, intertwined with the political inconsistencies of Alexander II and his ministers, exacerbating and mollifying, by turns, the police/military regime in the Kingdom. And there was nothing that could exasperate Polish opinion more severely than those swings.

The celebrations of the Lublin Union anniversary (12<sup>th</sup> August) galvanised the faltering demonstration activity in the whole of the Kingdom and in Lithuania. For the government, it was a provocative challenge as the Empire’s western *guberniyas* were considered to be genuinely Russian country and no concessions for autonomy could be pertinent to them; hence, the General-Governor of Wilno responded right away by imposing martial law in a dozen-or-so counties. In Congress-Kingdom towns, the authorities reacted more carefully to the incessant worship services ‘to the Homeland’s welfare’, patriotic chants, and

caterwauling arranged for unloved functionaries – so as not to exacerbate the situation before the municipal and county council election.

The said election became a challenge between the two orientations of the Polish movement. The Jurgens/Kronenberg milieu was of the opinion that the elective councils should be joined in order for them to be used as outposts of influence on the government and society. The Reds opted, for a change, either for boycotting the election completely or for making use of it as yet another demonstration – through publically handing the elected councillors the ‘mandate from the people’, which was a list of political demands they obviously would not be in a position to fulfil. The election for Warsaw’s Municipal Council was therefore of major importance.

The moderate faction prepared themselves studiously: they compiled lists of electors and candidates, endeavouring, to the extent possible, to be up to the census-related conditions discriminating in favour of realty owners. They managed, as a result, to introduce to the Council quite a number of members from the former Municipal Delegation (of March), among them: the doctor Tytus Chałubiński, the shoemaker Stanisław Hiszpański, the barrister and former *sybirak* Henryk Krajewski, the bankers and merchants Leopold Kronenberg, Ignacy Natanson, Mathias Rosen, Ksawery Schlenker and, moreover, Andrzej Zamoyski, the chairman of the dissolved Agricultural Society, who still enjoyed great popularity, along with a few of his associates. This formed, in sum, an earnest and responsible team, preponderantly a bourgeois-intelligentsia one. The demonstration action performed rather dimly, in turn; it could seem that the small-steps policy had the upper hand at that moment over the politics of refusal and confrontation.

But this was so just for a couple of days! For Lambert, the *Namiestnik*, restless at the unceasing rallies, and hustled by the emperor, finally decided – after the multitudinous funeral of Archbishop Fijałkowski, and on the eve of services held for the anniversary of Kościuszko’s death – to impose martial law in the Kingdom, without warning. The dwellers of Warsaw woke up on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1861 to see a completely different city: they saw military troops camping in the streets, canons in the squares, official notices on the walls forbidding any gatherings attended by more than three participants, as well as chants and mourning attire, requiring that torches be carried by those walking in the streets after dark, and subjecting any offence to the attribution of court-martials.

At that very moment, Viceroy Lambert, considered too mild, tendered his resignation, and Wielopolski followed him. The rule at the Castle was taken over by army generals and gendarmes, not inclined to banter with anyone. The Citadel started being filled with prisoners again. The experiment of limited, apparently

reasonable settlement between the authorities and society seemed irrevocably finished, the just-completed council election ridiculed.

All those who were irritated by the poetics of ecclesiastical and jingoistic supplications, and who, more importantly, had long considered the demonstrations to be pinching the lion, were now, bitterly or rancorously, in the right. Nevertheless, the organisers and the ringleaders of the demonstrations did not intend to surrender, let alone repent for their sins. On the contrary, the unprecedented mass character of this urban movement, its enormous emotional fervour and drive, gave its participants a steadfast sense of legitimacy and strength. This was confirmed right on the day following the proclamation of martial law: the soldiery surrounded St. John's Cathedral, broke into the Bernardine Church and drove out hundreds of detained people directly into the Citadel. In response to such a profanation of the temples and the lives of the faithful being put at risk, the diocese administrator ordered the closure of all Warsaw churches. The Reds gained a feeling, somewhat excessively, that the Church stood by them. Thus, they were even more convinced in the belief that parleying with the enemy was pointless, that meek docility departs from national dignity; and therefore, becoming prepared for a rising should be the only reasonable strategy. October 1861 marked a break-up: things would from now on be heading toward a fatal clash.

Those pushing the course of events in this direction were no immature, half-learned hobbledoys. On the contrary, several uncommon personalities took the movement faction's helm. A talented poet and comedist from Volhynia, Apollo (yes, naturally!) Korzeniowski (b. 1820; a mature-aged man, then), had no idea that he would ever contribute to the history of world literature as the father of a certain Konrad (later to make a name for himself as Joseph Conrad, the writer), then aged four; for the time being, once on the Warsaw pavement, he vigorously organised the Movement Committee, demanding that *millenerian* [*sic*] illusions be abandoned. Yet, he got into trouble himself in October 1861 and soon after was deported, which probably saved his life but deprived him of any influence over the rising tide. Overt participation in demonstrations exposed the leaders to thrust, was not in concert with the conspiracy rules which it befitted to practice, for the time being.

Witold Marczewski (b. 1832), already mentioned above, deftly combined his participation in the movement's leadership with his professional activity as a rail engineer, as head of the technological department with the Warsaw-Vienna Rail-Road and as chief supervisor of the Bydgoszcz Road construction project. Although still rare in the Russian Partition and not forming a network, the railroads had already begun functioning as transportation nerves, and the clandestine organisation endeavoured to have its loyal people there. Bronisław Szwarcze,

an émigré's son, (b. 1834) and educated in France, a rail engineer himself, proved to be an excellent acquisition. He gained a job, via a French society, with the construction of the Białystok section of the Warsaw-Petersburg Rail-Road, and assembled a complete network of conspiratorial communication which substantially consisted of railroad staff. Endangered with arrest, this daring and forceful activist, and amateurish poet in one, hid in a Warsaw funk-hole in the summer of 1862, and only then joined the movement's management team: for half a year, till he fell into the clutches of the gendarmerie.

The youngest in the bunch, Russian army captain Jarosław Dąbrowski (b. 1836), had an especially valuable military experience behind him, with four years spent fighting in the Caucasian war and the subsequent graduation from Petersburg's General Staff Academy, where he joined the ranks of a deeply secretive Polish officers' circle set up by his elder friend Zygmunt Sierakowski. Dąbrowski's relations with Russian officers, a good few among whom sympathised with the Polish movement, turned out to be a highly important asset. He was assigned to the staff of a division stationed in Warsaw and instantly, in April 1862, took an executive position with the Reds' organisation. His personality was charismatic; acumen, cogency, and an outstanding gift for leadership were all characteristics of this man. He was detained a few months later, in August.

Agaton Giller (b. 1831) had a completely different biographical background. A former plotter, punitively enlisted "with far-off garrisons", which he reached after a year and a half of marching, most of which he completed while stuck to a rod and handcuffed – the opposite of most of his exile companions, he was ready to take part once again in risky adventures, with an element of prudence instilled. Giller was, in the first place, an irrepressible penman: he knew how to gather materials of relevance, and could write irrespective of conditions. He brought from this five-year stay in Eastern Siberia priceless studies on the exiles' fortunes and descriptions of the Transbaikalia region and its populace. In Warsaw, since the summer of 1861, he devoted himself to creating and editing the underground press – the phenomenon unusual on a European scale which was to become the main instrument of constructing the movement's ideological and organisational coherence. *Strażnica*, the first underground periodical, was first published in July. The number of secret newspapers was increasing under martial law: some were, formally, organs of the Municipal Committee or, later on, the National Central Committee – especially *Ruch*, edited by Giller himself; others were issued by various groups or even individuals, appearing in a variety of volumes and at varying time intervals, often irregular, out of necessity.

Until the insurrection broke out, the underground press published relatively small portions of news: its main task was to propagate the movement's purposes and mission, relative to 'surface' occurrences and to recommended protocols and a way-of-life. The reach of influence of those newsheets is not easy to measure: the largest, as far as may be known, printed 2,000 copies, a circulation quite a few legal newspapers of the time would envy. Their projected readers were the intelligentsia, the student community and the clergy, in the first place, but they were also read by craftsmen, grange clerks, or, less frequently, the peasantry; plainer pamphlets were sometimes issued for the latter.

The technical handling, the editing, the distribution and the colportage of the underground press absorbed a remarkable share of the movement's potential, resulting, in parallel, in tightened milieu bonds, creating an infectious climate of involvement and adventure, involving, especially, women and young people. The urban intelligentsia was becoming accustomed to such a bifurcated life, and to a degree larger than at any time before: in the daytime, they earnestly performed their work at their offices, chancelleries or hospitals, and in their spare time, participated in the secret circulation of news and patriotic instructions.

An unyielding contradistinction between the Polish movement and tsarist rule was the underground press' fundamental principle. No scheming! No compromise! This would be, at best, a self-delusion; a treason, at worse. The enemy's image was reinforced with the appropriate phraseology: instead of 'Russia', they would follow the ancient tradition of writing 'Moscow' and 'Muscovite(s)' [*Moskal(e)*]; they would tell their readers of 'incursion/invasion', 'incursive/invasive hordes', 'barbarism', 'Mongol(ian) tsarism' – a whole stock of invidious racial invectives contributed to the construction of a wall, trespassing over which, thereafter, would be morally unlikely for a righteous Pole. Declarations of an alliance with those Russians who, following Bakunin and Herzen, fought against tsarism, was a rather poor counterpoise.

The language the secret press employed was emphatic, full of rhetorical reinforcements, triple exclamations, pathos of struggle, and disdain for any doubts mollifying the will to wrestle. The crime of partition calls for being annulled; Poland may only be rebuilt integral and intact within its 1772 limits, which means, the Crown with Lithuania and Ruthenia, stretching as far as the Dnieper – the other two partitioned areas actually lacking any considerable coverage. The union with Lithuania is a matter of obviousness, for "wherever Polish culture laboured over the ages, wherever the intelligentsia is Polish, wherever the wealth rests in Polish hands and may only be utilised for the Homeland's purpose, any outrage and any artifice of incursion would not contrive to extort the



fundamentally indigenous elements”<sup>303</sup>. Should, however, the Lithuanians, our brethren, or the Ruthenians, our brethren, like to detach themselves in the future, they would be allowed to do so; now, however, it is not the right time to make such arrangements.

The time was not right, either, for holding discourse on whether Poland ought to be a monarchy or a republic; what was known was that liberty would prevail in it, and a uniform law for everyone, regardless of their class/estate, background, or religion: “a lord, a peasant, a Jew, or a burgher, all are equal with respect to Poland; Poland carries freedom, equality, and independence to all.”<sup>304</sup> As for now, the unity of the entire nation in the face of the invasion comes to the fore: if any lords are still defending their cast-related privileges; if they pride themselves on their musty parchments of nobility, not agreeing to remit the kind-hearted peasants their thralldom and, moreover, perish the thought, call the Cossacks to extort it, they thus exclude themselves from the nation.

There is the human truth in Polish patriotism, and it is through it that Poland sustains its powers and its unity. We are not willing to replace this patriotism with any ethnographic, social, communistic, economic, or political theory, because it encompasses all of them within itself and is the source of them.

[*Strażnica*, 14<sup>th</sup> May 1862, *Prasa tajna* [‘The clandestine press’], I, 50].

There obviously are more sophisticated lines of reasoning appearing in those magazines, along with small historical treatises on the reasons for Poland’s misfortunes, but the chief task of the underground press was to mobilise the nation, its rhetoric and view of the world being subordinated to this governing purpose. The need was to be on standby and wait for the signal. Victory would only be dependent on ‘our will and determination’, for once the whole nation rises with one accord, sparing no blood offering, there is no power that could hold it off. What it meant was not to look before the leap, without a realistic calculation of chances, for the question about chances was itself rebuked as an act of defeatism. Interestingly, however, this discourse, held in a Romantic strain, almost completely lacked citations from the bard-prophets. If any references to that tradition happened to occur, the Kościuszko Insurrection would be the most frequent choice – due to the up-to-dateness of its scythe-bearer and shoemaker legend; the November Night was another such reference, whereas literary citations are simply not traceable there.

---

303 *Strażnica*, 29<sup>th</sup> September 1861: in: *Prasa tajna* [‘The clandestine press’], vol. 1, p. 16.

304 *Strażnica*, 29<sup>th</sup> September 1861; *ibidem*, p. 27.

A reasoning of this sort had doubtlessly a considerable persuasive power and, within the reach of their impact, practically frustrated the ability to make use of political reason, a skill that calls for analysing the changing situation and adapting the tactics to the circumstances. The communication system of the underground press in the years 1861-2 was, on the contrary, rigid, not allowing to discern between fractions within the government and to gain one's cause amidst their conflicting interests. This perception made Wielopolski more dangerous than the gendarmes: he was seen as the one who split society and attracted a particle of it that was ready to collaborate. Since he was back in Warsaw with Grand Duke Constantine and a reform package, the entire "fulsome tribe" had been gathering around him, cowards and dodgers who "invented the title of legalists for themselves" while heading for national treason, for "things have already stood up at the degree making one follow either Moscow, or the nation. Any intermediate road is out of the question."<sup>305</sup>

Indeed, the Margrave's success came too late. Had his policy not collapsed in autumn 1861, he still might have had a chance, in spite even of the bloody 8<sup>th</sup> of April, to win a significant faction of Polish public opinion. Instead, it fell that his lot was to linger for the whole winter and spring in Petersburg and persuade Alexander II, his ministers and court camarilla to accept his plan. He returned in August 1862, accompanying the emperor's brother, now the Viceroy, elevated to the post of Chief of the Civil Government and with three ukases, forming the pillars of his strategy: rentification, reform of education, and equal rights for Jews. The intelligentsia, however, impregnated for a year by the refusal propaganda, as abovementioned, was mistrustful toward any governmental designs. Their distrust would have been even greater if they had been aware of the tough-minded instruction given by the emperor to his brother, announcing that any further concessions to the Poles were completely out of the question.

In Warsaw, the Grand Duke and Wielopolski were received coldly. Who ordered the three consecutive attempts on their lives has remained not quite certain to this day: nobody has owned up to it. The individual behind the plots was almost certainly Ignacy Chmieliński, the leading adherent of revolutionary terror among the Reds. The attacks proved ineffective and, moreover, embarrassed the Polish cause in Europe; still, they showed to the Government-affiliated party that they could count on no detente. The government and the court, by hanging in the open all three of the young and unwieldy assassins, made it clear, on

---

305 *Strážnica*, 27<sup>th</sup> August 1862, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1862; *ibidem*, pp. 75, 83, 85.

its part, that the struggle would not be withdrawn in spite of martial law being formally suspended.

*Dziennik Powszechny*, edited, under the Margrave's control, by Sobieszczański, a former censor, attacked the conspiratorial underground in a style not so much different from that described above. The rhetorical function 'invasion' or 'incur-sion' that was attributed in the underground campaigning was fulfilled in this journal by 'sedition'. The Reds were denied patriotism, much in the way they approached the legalists. The role of press spokesman for Wielopolski, also during his stay in Petersburg, was taken by Józef-Aleksander Miniszewski, a writer, who had, in his younger days, hung around in the Warsaw democrats' milieu, although he did not enjoy their respect; now, he offered his adroit writing skills to the Margrave's service. He argued in his articles that receipt of civic freedoms and political rights was something every nation has to grow up to; the means being self-government and education – the great achievements of civilisation, of which Poland had for a number of years been deprived and which were now coming back thanks to the reforms announced. He thus dropped a hint that Wielopolski's reforms were the first step, possibly to be followed by subsequent ones. However, lack of patience, premature political excitement and the challenging of social authorities, he explained, could wrench the whole project: "The nation of ours has too slender intelligentsian resources for us to leave opinion in the hands of commonness. There should be a source and the guard of opinion in our place, where all the mature opinions are conceived. [...] Commonness has a sense of good and evil, a sense of its needs, but the national intelligentsia, being the content, reason, and head of this commonness, is the only one that is capable of managing the matters of nations, commanding opinion."<sup>306</sup>

The meaning of the year-long cycle of Miniszewski's articles may be deciphered as an offer for a settlement between the government's reformatory wing and the comprehending 'national intelligentsia', an alliance aimed against the dull, 'semi-enlightened' tsarist bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the 'sedition' party on the other. This programme was not distant from the one that had actuated the Whites; nevertheless, in mid-1862, such an agreement, even if tacit, was not feasible any more: the moderates were benumbed by the angst that they would be reputed as traitors and lose any importance in the revolted urban community.

The voice rose to shouting in an anonymous pamphlet attributed to Miniszewski, and edited in Leipzig after the three attacks. The strivings through which the plot is willing to make of Poles "a nation of Cains" and bring it "to the ultimate

---

306 J.A.M., *O opinii* ['About the opinion'], *Dziennik Powszechny*, 1861, No. 34.

meanness – to the most atrocious anarchy”, are ignoble, it cried. All the less pardonable is the cowardice of those too faint-hearted to withhold and overpower this satanic organisation, and those who moreover support it with their contributions: responsibility will fall on them for the wrecked hope of a better future.

A military rule, stern and ruthless, will appear in this place. This rule shall be decimating to us every day, pull out the suspected members from their family circles. Not a martial-law would it be, but a siege-law instead. At the courts, suspicions will serve as evidence, sufficient for condemnation of the accused or suspect. [...]

Woe to a nation in whose bosom there's nothing but disquiet! It has already been erased from the rank of living nations!

[*Rzut oka na rozwój polityczny i społeczny w K.P. ...* [A glance at the political and social development in {the} K.{ingdom} of P.{oland}], 1862, pp. 77-8, 80].

Did the author of this admonition say that out of his deep conviction and dismay, or was he perhaps, as it is usually thought, a cynical and corruptible ‘scribbler’ who soon after, under a secret verdict, was to be deservedly punished, and stabbed with a dagger for his lampoons? The historian finds it hard to resolve; whatever the case, though, the afore-quoted brochure testifies to a tragic isolation in which the Chief of the Civil Government put his reforms into effect. The first of those reforms, the rentification of peasants, was conservative and belated, and thus, abortive. The other two were of historical significance, considering the epoch's context.

The public education law, announced on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1862, was not a simple decree of the authorities: it was compiled following the opinions that were gathered from “superiors of scientific institutions in the Kingdom and other people known for science or experience in a pedagogical profession”. The main editor of this piece of legislation was Józef Korzeniowski, the popular novelist and playwright mentioned several times before, the inspector of Kingdom schools, and the director of the enlightenment (i.e. Education) section – in a word, an outstanding exponent of the intelligentsia faction that recognised Wielopolski as a statesman who consistently endeavoured to reinstate, in an inseparable union with Russia, an autonomy for the Kingdom and Polishness for schools.

The single education act extended to the entire educational and schooling system, from elementary to tertiary schools. This rather conservative law took the reality into account, particularly in respect of the village schools which were to be kept, as before, under the supervision of the parson, squire or village-mayor, also, if set up, then at the government's expense. By traditional custom, or moralistic platitude, it regarded imbuing children with “the duties toward God, their parents and superiors”, forbidding teachers to enter into discoursing uncertain

“theories or systems”, a factor of clear worldview purport in those years of evolutionary disputes. With all that, the education reform, applied to an educational environment smothered and demoralised by an extremely reactionary system, could become a breakthrough, reinstating a sense of identity and purpose. The Kingdom’s education system became thereafter excluded from the authority of the tsarist Ministry of Enlightenment and completely Polonised; in at least two post-elementary schools all estate or wealth related restrictions and distinctions were abolished. The law basically reinstated permeability to the school system by extending a network of county schools and higher-organised gymnasiums. Its makers did not however bring themselves to limit the educational impairment of girls, of whom only very few could enrol with the country’s only “female higher school”, that is, in today’s terms, a secondary one, located in Warsaw; the remainder (representing so-so educated classes, naturally) had either to be satisfied with home education, as it had been up to then, or to be content with an education from one of the pricey private boarding schools, which offered quite a varied teaching standard, after all. It was a matter of fact that social pressure in this respect was still very weak.

The climax of the system proposed by Wielopolski and the most famous item of the whole legislation package was the restitution of Warsaw University, now under the euphemistic name of ‘Main School’. The School was to consist of four faculties: Medical – i.e. what was the Medical-Surgical Academy before; Law and Administration; Philological-Historical; and, Mathematical-Physical. Wielopolski was very much in a hurry, so as to have the School open as soon as possible. The kick-off was preceded by year-long preparatory courses, available from the autumn of 1861, intended to standardise, to an extent, the candidates’ preparation for the studies. Those assessing their school report-cards and qualifications were instructed to take a liberal approach: the future would be the verifier. No strict conditions were established for those applying for a professorship: no such candidate was asked about a doctorate, even a tertiary graduation diploma was not a sine-qua-non. The thing was, there was not a great many of those seeking a job – and those organising the School had to seek for prospective lecturers wherever they could, encouraging their chosen ones to accept the offer. There was a host of reasons for the reserved attitude: a lack of confidence in the project’s tomorrow and in the new academy’s prestige were probably the most frequent motives for sluggishness or a polite refusal; alongside them was an unwillingness to get involved, which was perceived as, willy-nilly, support for Wielopolski’s policy – and, the low salaries offered, as the Civil Government Chief’s ambitions were not followed – for the time being, at least – by generosity from the Revenues and Treasury Commission.

The competent department of the Enlightenment Commission, managed from June 1862 by Kazimierz Krzywicki (b. 1820), a man close to the Margrave, looked for suitable Polish candidates in Russian, Austrian (the two Galician ones included) and German universities. Some yielded to the request: in the first place, those who had no certain prospects for a scholarly career yet. The temptation ended in failure with Zygmunt Helcel, an excellent Krakow historian of law, befriended with the Margrave, and with the literary historian Antoni Małecki (b. 1821) of Lwów, an expert in, and publisher of, Słowacki's poetry, and with Julian Bartoszewicz, a historian from Warsaw who did not like Wielopolski. Włodzimierz Spasowicz (b. 1829), a Petersburg liberal, was denied the faculty of law by the authorities; Aleksander Maciejowski, by his colleagues. The casting progressed with great difficulty, so then, and in effect, a considerable share of the faculties' and lecturer's positions were taken by well-performing gymnasium teachers or court officials, without much scholarly output to their credit. If so required and if worth it, the authorities would send some of them abroad so they could become acquainted with the most recent progress in their disciplines at a German or French university: a practice that was pretty encouraging, at any rate.

At the same time, Wielopolski developed the seed of the Polytechnic Institute in Puławy, on the foundations of the Agronomic Institute; this technological, engineering, agricultural and forestry college found it no easier than the Main School to assemble its teaching staff. Endeavours were made to elevate the Fine Arts School's rank to academy status, with its Construction Department, in particular.

Financial and human resources and concepts were not sufficient for everything; in any case, it marked the first, since 1830, constructive rather than destructive, effort made in the public sphere. It was accompanied by endeavours to reconstruct, at least partially, the university library after the requisition of 1832; to renovate the mineralogical and zoological collections and the meteorological and astronomical observatories. A remarkable inflow in autumn 1862 of student candidates, in excess of plans, with a special interest enjoyed by the law faculty, reassured the Wielopolski team that the work they conducted was advantageous and vital for the country.

Doctor Józef Mianowski (b. 1804), a physician specialising in women's diseases, and an imperial courtier, brought from Petersburg for the purpose, was appointed the Rector of the Main School. His address at the School's inauguration in October 1862 made a good impression. Rather unexpectedly, the Rector spoke of the tradition of the Wilno University which was his own background, and whose heir he wanted the Warsaw Main School to be. He summoned the audience to respect this abode of knowledge which was under so effortful

reconstruction, and not to expose it to blows. It seemed that he convinced the newly-enrolled; his words certainly harmonised with the thoughts of those believing that the Margrave adopted the only efficient method of action and that school reform was the first step toward a reinstatement of Polish institutions and put the country on the road to European progress. Those convinced that way included medical doctors, not inclined to romantic poeticising, setting up instead academic clinics in the hospitals of Warsaw: Wiktor Szokalski, Aleksander Le Brun, Tytus Chałubiński and his young assistant Ignacy Baranowski (b. 1833), who was excelling in his job, and is the author of memoirs from the period that are rich in content. Apart from them, Stanisław Przysański (b. 1820), a promoted teacher and lecturer of physics, was the reform's enthusiast and became Wielopolski's committed assistant in the construction of the Main School and in overcoming the towering difficulties, just to mention the housing problems: various governmental offices perched on the former university's premises, and there was nowhere to evict them to.

Education is an area whose reform fruits can only ripen after a number of years. It was impossible to rectify within a year what had been spoiled by Nicholas's policies for over a quarter of a century. A direction for change was defined and fresh air was let into the stagnated edifice. Too late, though: public opinion, at least the part of it which yielded to the clandestine authority's persuasion, rejected and jeered at anything that bore the government's official stamp. Whatever he would do or make, Wielopolski would always remain a disdainful "loyal servant of the tsar"<sup>307</sup>. A foreign government cannot have "an interest in developing and increasing the material or intellectual force of the nation"<sup>308</sup>, something obvious enough.

Standing against the government is the nation, with its endless protestation and repudiation, which in its conscience and in its essence makes it spoil and tear to pieces all the commands, institutions and superimposed laws. [...] The legalists under the Moscovian-Prussian-Austrian rule have thus no national foundation, whereas assuming legal methods, they thereby legalise and recognise the incursive government, and so they cease being Poles loyal to the national laws and spirit.

[*Ruch*, 8<sup>th</sup> July 1862, *Prasa tajna* ["The clandestine press"], vol. 1, p. 336.]

That was, plainly, an unambiguous anathema. Thus, in the middle of 1862, when the underground groups and circles were becoming unified under the rule of the Central National Committee, resolutely aiming already by then at a forthcoming

---

307 *Pobudka*, 15<sup>th</sup> November 1861, in: *Prasa tajna*, vol. 1, p. 144.

308 *Ruch*, 5<sup>th</sup> July 1862; *ibidem*, p. 333.

rising, the curse of treason and exclusion stigmatised not just the 'legalists' but any and all opponents of insurgent determination and hesitant 'moderate' or 'White' ones. The strategy was one of a revolutionary sect, dividing society, or at least its politically active class, into patriots and defectors, unwilling to have any 'yes, buts', arguments, or consensuses transcending divisions.

There were divisions, of course: there was no way to avoid them.

Students and their teachers found themselves perplexed: they did comprehend what sort of a lifetime opportunity might open for them if they buckled down to work at the just-opened School; on the other hand, the charm of conspiracy was at work. In the student community, the conspiracy was barely covered, establishing its own hierarchy of duties where poring over textbooks was rather a second-rate activity.

Also perplexed were clerks and officials – that is, a major part, after all, of the national intelligentsia: consumers of governmental bread, continually propelled by a hope of promotion. They were now addressed by the organisation, admonishing that “loyal, devout service is a crime for them” and particularly those serving with the police and gendarmerie shall, “at the peremptory moment”, be arraigned as traitors of the national cause. All the same, thus, a sane organisation did not tell functionaries to abandon their governmental service, the source of their livelihood; it only demanded, once the ‘peremptory moment’ was coming over, that they submit to the secret authority: “The Central National Committee expects that all the officials, regardless of their rank and descent as to nationality, shall be obedient to its ordinances and, in strictly fulfilling them, shall inform the organisation of all the orders and intentions of the foreign government as may be detrimental to the nation, and shall not have their hand in effectuating those harmful intents.”<sup>309</sup> Cleavage of loyalty suddenly became a daily problem even for those employees who endeavoured to shun any politics, and now learned that whatever they conduct might be, they would certainly be considered traitors by either of the parties.

Jews had special reasons for quandary. At least those of them who were interested in the course of political matters realised that secret authorities and the Kingdom's civil government rivalled for their attention. This situation, with centuries of humiliation behind them, was utterly unusual. The Reds had declared their brotherhood with Jews since the demonstrations and great funerals of 1861, attended by numerous Warsaw Jews – at the price of their dozen-or-so fellow-believers seen among the victims of the massacre at

---

309 *Ruch* 27<sup>th</sup> December 1862; in: *Prasa tajna*, vol. 1, p. 363.



Zamkowy Square on 8<sup>th</sup> April. This aroused in the cities a reflex of sympathy and appreciation, as expressed in the caring and solemn tone of the Polish movement's proclamations 'to the Israelite Poles' – the way it now became customary to say or write it. The admission of Jews to rights equal to those that Poles enjoyed – civic, whatever that was meant to mean, civil or citizen's – was made the slogan of the day. For the Jewish intelligentsia and bourgeoisie, this marked a change in the ambience, arousing optimism and gratefulness. These feelings were testified to by the educated preachers of the two 'progressive' Warsaw synagogues: Markus Jastrow (b. 1829) and Izaak Kramsztyk (b. 1814), delivering their addresses in Polish. Both were punished for it by investigative inquisitions with deportation from the Kingdom. Encouraged by the publicity of the news from Warsaw, the Jewry of the other towns, Lithuanian ones included, started joining Polish demonstrations and squeezed with emotion the hands extended to them.

And, when Wielopolski announced a year later the tsar's ukase on the rights of Jews in the Kingdom of Poland, obtained thanks mainly to his efforts, dismay overwhelmed the ranks of the Reds. The secret press reminded the ukase's beneficiaries who had been the first to shelter them and offer them affection, and assured them that the government's only intent was to bribe them with apparent benefactions, and draw them away from the Polish movement. This was only partly true: the Reds, as usual, did not want to acknowledge that the Margrave was pursuing his own policy, at the price of loyalty to the emperor.

Accounting for more than a third of the Kingdom's urban population, and more than half of urban dwellers in the lost *guberniyas*, Jews had a population and commercial potential not to be sniffed at. Tsarist dignitaries talked among themselves or wrote many a time that granting this community equal rights could provide a counterbalance to Polish aspirations. Such political speculations did not however fructify by themselves in terms of appropriate legislation. The impulse was only given by Wielopolski, who was convinced about the need to give Jews equal rights before the menace of a Polish insurrection ever appeared. Astonishingly free from superstitions otherwise common in the nobility class, he assumed equality of rights as an essential element of his worldview, expecting from its resolution not an opposition but, indeed, a closer acquaintance of both groups of the urban populace – or even three, if Germans should be included – and their resultant integration into a single 'third estate'. "In spite of ensured tolerance and equality, and contrary to the spirit of civil law", the Margrave wrote in the first days of 1861, "Jews have not ceased to be the target of separate and unique legislation; the treasury and administrative arrangements, forbidding them to transact or enter into certain methods of wage-earning, trammelling

a merger of their interest with the interest of the country that has been their fatherland for centuries now.”<sup>310</sup>

Laws of such importance and scale are not compiled in a slapdash way. Study works lasted for more than a year, taking into account the legal environment and public opinion in Western countries, as well as the aspirations of the Jewish intelligentsia and bourgeoisie, whose respectable exponents – to name Mathias Rosen, an enterprising and eloquent man; Izaak Kramsztyk, a preacher; or, Daniel Neufeld (b. 1814), the editor of a newly-established Polish-Jewish weekly *Jutrzenka* – submitted their clarifications and desiderata whilst not yet experiencing conflict between sympathies for patriotic manifestations and the support for a rational law-making process.

The landed-gentry’s opinion endeavoured to withhold the process, in turn: active to this end was not only its ultraconservative wing but also the leaders of the dissolved Agricultural Society, who repeated stereotypes and clichés in this matter, in defiance of the ostentatious climate of fraternisation. Rabbinate milieus also displayed scruples about the new draft law, detecting in it an assimilatory tendency, and they were not quite wrong. The supreme rabbi of Warsaw, Ber Meisels, known for his earlier activities in Krakow and Vienna, was of a contrary opinion, though. He combined Talmudic orthodoxy with genuine Polish patriotism; again, in spite of his political foresight, and this earned him persecution during the period of martial law.

Wielopolski’s draft had still a long way to go. Let us just mention the firmness with which the author, much weakened at that moment, defended his work, in autumn 1861, against his colleagues, who spoiled it, in the Administrative Council and in the Council of State departments: this struggle has been described in detail by Artur Eisenbach<sup>311</sup>. The Justice Commission director was supported by *Gazeta Polska*, which otherwise did not love him: once Jews are afforded rights equal to those of Christians, the journal remarked, this will be evidence “that we have broken off with the medieval superstition, that we are entering the European family anew, to set off for a further pilgrimage of progress together with it”<sup>312</sup>. The secret magazine *Strażnica* became entangled, giving excuses for the existing restrictions on rights for Jews, it ended up taking no clear position for or against: a governmental bill could not deserve appreciation, after all.<sup>313</sup>

---

310 Quoted after: A. Eisenbach, *Kwestia równouprawnienia Żydów* [‘The issue of equal rights for Jews’], pp. 411, 532.

311 A. Eisenbach, *Kwestia równouprawnienia ...*, pp. 456-490.

312 Quoted after: *ibidem*, p. 491.

313 *Strażnica*, 10<sup>th</sup> October 1861, in: *Prasa tajna*, vol. 1, p. 18.

A romantic aura of conspiracy and the suddenly revealed respect from Polish peers enticed many a Jewish gymnasium or university student, shop assistant, clerk or official to join the underground labours, particularly, the distribution of publications. Not a few of them were soon arrested and hurriedly dispatched to Siberia; others joined to replace them. Interrogators and governors kept wondering about this sudden friendship. “The age-old reciprocal hatred between the Poles and the Jews”, the General-Governor of Warsaw Nikolai Krizhanovsky consoled himself as he commented on rabbi Meisels’s interrogation testimony, “could not have died out just like that, all of a sudden, at a single thought of common nationality. The Poles, in need of Jewish capital, extended their fraternal hand to them [...], while the Jews, summoned for the first time to take part in a shared cause, caught hold of that hand, convinced that it would pay them enormous percentages [i.e. interest] in a future.”<sup>314</sup> Some tsarist functionaries endeavoured to understand this process, which they found astonishing, in a more insightful fashion:

What the history of Jewry teaches us is that when education blossoms out among them, they tend to propose, always and everywhere, newer and newer demands and, very often with fervour, energy, and passion do they make themselves part of a current of patriotic sentiments. We owe it to ourselves to be reminded of how they behaved in 1848, at the barricades of Paris, Vienna, Lwów, Pressburg, etc. Also, in the present-day turbulent time, in Warsaw, as is known, some of the well-known and authoritative Jews solemnly declared themselves on the side of the Polish nation. [...] The Polish language is becoming a sacred and literary language for the Jews there.

[Vasilchikov, General-Governor of Kiev, to the Minister of Interior, 25<sup>th</sup> November 1861; in: *Żydzi a powstanie styczniowe: materiały i dokumenty* {‘The Jews and the January Insurrection: materials and documents’}, p. 44].

In the final debate at the Council of State, Wielopolski’s draft was undermined, in his absence, by deputy secretary of state Platonov, who paradoxically stood by the identity of the Jews: they certainly ought to be “won over by the Government but not turned into Poles, and left what they are instead, not affecting their religion, language, or nationality”.<sup>315</sup> This time, the Council’s landed-gentry majority spoke in defence of the bill, arguing “that the Jews, who have settled down in this country for several hundreds of years, cannot be regarded as a separate nation but rather, a fraction of the Polish nation, which they consider themselves

---

314 *Żydzi a powstanie styczniowe: materiały i dokumenty* {‘The Jews and the January Insurrection: materials and documents’}, p. 42.

315 Quoted after: Eisenbach, op. cit., p. 508; also, cf. 533.

to be<sup>316</sup>. The preservation of separate elementary schools for Jews became the dispute's central subject-matter, which the Margrave vigorously opposed, opining that this would ruin the reform's underlying logic.

The ukase *On the rights of Jews in the Kingdom of Poland* was refined by Petersburg's ministerial committees. The bill proposed by Wielopolski, with secondary modifications, for all that, gained at last the emperor's sanction and was published on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1862 in Warsaw, together with the public education and peasant rentification ukases. The act brought to an end the feudal restrictions on the settlement of Jews, the ban on their purchase of landed property and urban realties as owners, and the exclusive confession-dependent taxes, humiliating and economically severe as they were. Repealed was the unequal treatment of court testimonies or notarial declarations; the abolishment of certain limitations in access to public schools and professions was also announced. In practice, these restrictions were deleted gradually, and not without resistance on the part of the administration as well as from Polish assemblies (of craftsmen, merchants, physicians), which found it rather hard to directly pass from emotional declarations to accepting Jews as their members, let alone entrusting them with elective functions.

Once the law was at last made flesh, the clandestine committees were confounded. It was unthinkable to contemptuously reject a reform that introduced an equality of citizens before the law, as promised since the nineteenth century's earliest years. Democrats announced the idea in their manifestos but were not capable of making it part of the binding code of laws or enforce it in practice. The Reds' fear that Jews, similarly to peasants, would accept their much expected rights with gratefulness to the tsar, abandoning the precarious Polish cause, could be appreciated. Preventing such a course of things was the intent behind the National Central Committee's proclamations to *Our Brothers the Poles of the Mosaic Confession* of autumn 1862, debasing – not too convincingly – the motives and the importance of the new law, as well as all the initiatives of Wielopolski in general. The government, it was argued, had granted Jews their rights with the sole purpose of ripping their hearts off Poland which, allegedly, had long ago settled “this so-called Jewish question” of its own volition.

Do not you give any symptoms of sympathies to the Government, but do labour, together with the rest of the nation, in view of the resurrection of Poland which, like a good mother, shall give equal happiness to all her children, but shall punish those who would disown her and bow before her enemies, her murderers and tyrants.

[Anonymous proclamation; quoted after: Eisenbach, *Kwestia ...*, p. 552].

---

316 Ibidem, p. 509.

The Jews themselves warned their fellow-believers even more severely: those affiliated with the conspiracy or with the emigration, like Ludwik-Ozjasz Lubliner, expressed the deepest concern as to the imminent consequences of today's erroneous choice. The governmental party did not lounge, either: the leaders of the disobedient Warsaw Jews – rabbi Meisels, Jastrow and Kramsztyk, the latter deported into the depths of Russia – were allowed to return, whereas Mathias Rosen was appointed member of the Council of State. Wielopolski made an effort to discount his legislative success and dissuade Jewish activists of authority from supporting illegal undertakings. Such temptation from two sources only deepened the existing divisions. The young Jewish intelligentsia, then under the influence of Polonisation, and young artificers were spoiling for service, shoulder to shoulder, with Poles, in conspiracy and, any day, in the uprising. The bourgeoisie and conservative rabbis considered such involvement to be hazardous and advised that the safe legal road be stuck to.

This division became visible in a pretty similar way in the Polish-Christian intelligentsia and the affluent bourgeoisie circles. Those who valued practical labour over disputes about grand ideas and future frontiers of a sometime-revived Poland, were glad to join the still slender group of the Margrave's associates who vigorously developed curricula for schools of all grades. Excelling in this group was Kazimierz Krzywicki, a talented lawyer, educated in Dorpat, who deftly climbed the ladder of the Petersburg dicasteries. Wielopolski wanted to make use of his competencies and dexterity in Warsaw, entrusting him with the directorship of the Commission for Confessions and Enlightenment, which he himself presided over in the preceding year. As Józef Korzeniowski was terminally ill, Krzywicki soon became the main organiser of the novel education model. Gathering around him, as full-time clerks or members of the Government-appointed Education Council, were people differing from the Mukhanov-style of bureaucracy through their honesty and pragmatic approach.

A choice of this sort could bring about measurable results and gratifications, but called for self-denial and persistence due to the infamy which cast a shadow on any follower of Wielopolski. Doctor Ignacy Baranowski, who entered the circle in good faith, admitted many years later in his diary that adverse opinion on the patriotic side was feared more than the police. "The society, in its majority", as he put it, "has lost a consciousness and a sense of law. Rebellion became the ruler for them, the rebellion's exponent – a 'secret committee'. [...] Lunacy is overwhelming the entire country."<sup>317</sup> Any discussion,

---

317 I. Baranowski, *Pamiętniki* ['Memoirs'], pp. 426, 434.

he continued, became impossible, for anyone talked to displayed an unwavering certainty of his (or her) reasons. As for himself, the most severe experience was that his until-recently friends from the circle of Żmichowska, Jurgens and Ruprecht started distancing themselves from him, deeming him a collaborator.

Indeed, the moderate or the White ones, although their attitude toward the authorities usurped by 'secret committees' was highly critical, remained reluctantly distanced from Wielopolski. Although the trend assumed by his reforms was close to them, they had their old reasons not to trust him – and, after all, they were afraid of displeasing the harsh and mistrustful 'opinion'. Similarly, *Gazeta Polska*, influenced by Kraszewski, tried to write as little as possible about the Margrave's actions, not willing to praise them and being incapable of criticising them. Kronenberg, a businesslike and practical man, was one of the very few not to avoid paying visits to the Brühl Palace, the Civil Government Chief's residence; the others were a few members of the Zamoyski coterie (although "Pan Andrzej never set foot there himself").

The Whites had to set off their alternative programme against the impatient conspirers, and make it encouraging for the former Agricultural Society milieu, and for the 'young nobility', which was to be the ground of the party of reason. They tried to play the part of a non-legalised, yes, but at least tolerated opposition, whilst, in parallel, retaining a modifying influence on the movement's underground structures. Such a position required real acrobatics, could not be consistent – and still, could not be denied reasonableness. The urban hub of the loose organisation of the Whites, much frailer than the landed-gentry one, prevailed over the latter intellectually: the group included some people who were capable of a dispassionate and unprejudiced evaluation of the situation. Karol Ruprecht came to the fore among them: although without a Jurgens-like charisma, he knew how to express himself in writing. Two booklets authored by him and anonymously edited in Paris (1862) formed a full-blown ideological programme for the moderate faction.

Ruprecht emphasised with all his might that Polish aspirations had to be governed by political and social thought, which had no conditions to be formed during the bondage regime. This was, therefore, the prime task of the broadly-defined intelligentsia: "The elements of villages and towns, constituting the country's intelligentsia, conscribed to do works along this course, should also be assigned the part of national tasks which badly needs intellectual work – which calls for quietness, not for passion – and whose condition is the reason's command over affection straining into behind what is possible and feasible at a given moment." A thought that would enlighten the goal and the way to achieve it is

needed today, he wrote, more than exciting slogans and symbols: “what a vast range is showing itself to the Polish thought!”<sup>318</sup>

Personal freedom, dignity and the rights of humans was, in Ruprecht’s concept, the basis for any national programme. A rare thing in Poland, this marked a testimony to a thinking based upon a liberal individualistic axiology. Hence, the programme expressed the conviction that a peasant as well as an Israelite (it only used this confession-related name) ought in the first place to be assigned the dignity of a free citizen before both gradually mature, through participation in communal and municipal local government, so as to recognise the national community as their own one. This was going to be a time-consuming labour, in which it would fall to one’s lot to subdue and employ in the service of the national purpose the government-licensed institutions, such as municipal or county councils. May enfranchisement be announced to the peasants, and they will readily join battle for a free Poland? This was a fallible conception: there was no such automatism applicable to social processes – which was particularly true for the situation where the peasants and the nobility had been mutually separated by an aged hatred and distrust. The revolutionary means would consequently turn out to be disastrous, or forceless. Enfranchisement ought to have been devised in a manner preventing a ravage of the nobility’s properties, as this would assuredly thrust the whole countryside and agriculture into poverty and anarchy: the proprietary right, from which there stems the state duty of indemnification, was not to be subverted.

Ruprecht endeavoured not to indispose the landed citizenry, and, not to aggravate the polemic with the Reds. On the contrary, he used a long piece of reasoning to persuade that both orientations were mutually complementary and ought to go together, collectively, respecting each other, for each had a different task to tackle. Whether such conciliation was sincere or just tactical, is hard to assess. It is certain that the Whites insistently stuck to their mediocre way, defending the importance of ‘internal labour’, the openness of public debate, civil courage, tolerance, and responsibility; in sum, quite a non-romantic set of values. They were afraid, deadly afraid, that an untimely uprising would wreck all that and leave a scorched earth behind it.

What remains for me to do is to appeal to those hot hearts and noble minds for whom armed insurrection is the only thought and only daydream. Consider, you young brethren of ours, how grave is the responsibility you are assuming, by accepting to bear

---

318 *Zadanie obecnej chwili* [‘The task of the moment’], pp. 7, 46; *Kwestya socyalna* [‘The social question’], p. 2.

everything on your shoulders. Tell me, and be frank with me: do you really lay trust in the auspicious outcome of the outbreak? O, beware! beware! So your zeal may not go to the detriment of the country; so you, moving forth overmuch speedily, overmuch impudently, avoid thrusting our homeland into long years of bondage, maybe into an utter annihilation. [...] We can feel how tough patience is for us, and yet, you may have no other possible way to go: this is yet an attempt, the only one perhaps; maybe, the last one. [*Kwestya socyalna*, pp. 37-38].

Organic work will, with time, train and prepare the forces for a future revolution, which will be “a revolution without anarchy and internal struggles, [...] a rising kept under discipline of the national will”. But this was to happen sometime in a future: today, “we can feel that the moment of resurrection has not come over yet; that Poland would only rise as a spectre today, to fall asleep, probably, for long years again...”<sup>319</sup>

Norwid stated that in Poland, any deed would come too early, and any thought, too late. Nobody wanted to read or listen to Ruprecht’s arguments by late 1862 anymore. The Polish symbolic space was overwhelmed by the absolute rule of the Reds, who approached any symptom of despondency as recreant cowardice, opportunism, or, simply, a Targowica-like renegation. To be a patriot meant to support the impending insurrection, and not many dared oppose this logic. As Kraszewski wrote, in a private letter: “The thing is, on the one hand, frenzy takes the lead in this country, driven to the utmost of its power and prancing extravagantly, whilst on the other hand is arbitrariness; moderate people are standing scattered and cannot bring themselves together. The truth is in the middle, as it always is, but the sparkles go off, like in an electrical conductor, at the extremes.”<sup>320</sup>

Żmichowska, that wise and sceptical woman, was one of those who took a dim view of the course of events, avoiding getting intoxicated with slogans. “The apotheosis of foolery is assuming a frantic size”, she wrote to her emigrant brother, “I could have never expected anything like this.”<sup>321</sup> Jurgens, who was close to her, could possibly accept the idea of an insurrection – as soon as there appears the slightest chance that the sacrifice of blood will not be in vain. The blood of the others must not be squandered just for nothing, besought he. “The fight, if unhesitating, has to be victorious; there’s no one to be supposed to

---

319 *Kwestya socyalna...*, p. 60.

320 From a letter to Z. Kaczkowski, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1863; quoted after: W. Danek, *Józef Ignacy Kraszewski*, p. 325.

321 To Erazm Żmichowski, from Warsaw, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1862; in: N. Żmichowska, *Listy*, vol. I, pp. 185-6.



commence it on his own, with a hotness of fervour or despair.”<sup>322</sup> Quick-witted people, regardless of their background, felt impotent and distressed: they could see that nobody was listening to admonitions any more, and everything was dashing toward an inevitable disaster.

The Whites had financial resources and a background behind them, but their position between the spears of relentless adversaries was harder and harder to hold. They had a man who for a long time had been a member of the ‘Red’ Central Committee and endeavoured, as long as he could, to restrain the combative radicalism of his colleagues: Karol Majewski (b. 1833), initially excelling as the organiser of a circle of Medico-Surgical Academy students. Contacts and talks were also held between Ruprecht and his Siberian fellow Agaton Giller who had delved deep into conspiratorial labours and tried to stave off the prospect of a rising, which remained completely unprepared.

Yet, conspiracy has its inexorable rules: it may either be quickly recognised and smashed by the police, or, threatened with denouncement, and pushed forward to outspoken conflict. True, the political police was rather ineffective in the Kingdom: they had no efficient agents in the clandestine national organisation. The reverse was true, in fact: it was the organisation that had its trusted men inside the police, who warned about the appearing threats. In spite of this, the authorities successfully picked out some of the active plotters. This is how Apollo Korzeniowski was caught. Then, in August, Jarosław Dąbrowski was detained. This fearless, insolent conspirer, holding the key function of Municipality Superior, engineered officers’ plots in the Russian army and spun fantastic daydreams about capturing the Citadel and the Modlin fortress in the night and equipping the insurgent troops with arms and weapons from these captured arsenals. Lastly, just before Christmas, the indefatigable Bronisław Szwarce, who stored the entire secret organisation in his memory, was captured, an armed man. Others were immediately taking their places, but it was not easy to replace such gifted, purposeful and resolute leaders.

The history of clandestine committees is full of scheming, altering casts of members and sudden turns of events – not so much owing to the menacing dangers as to the responsibility their members were encumbered with. Zealots, such as the aforementioned Ignacy Chmieliński, bickered with activists less inclined to political rashness and military hazard, Mierosławski’s followers quarrelled with his fanatical critics. Whatever the case, the organisation was governed

---

322 Quoted after: T. Szarota, *Powstanie styczniowe 1863* (a collection of essays), vol. 2, p. 225.

by the young intelligentsia, most of whom were aged under thirty. Not many of them had a rich life experience behind of them, like Dąbrowski, or Giller. For all of them, conspiracy was a dangerous but also extremely exciting adventure, which moreover offered a foretaste of power. The organisation was spreading and deepening like never before: subordinate committees were set up in the provinces, in large and small towns; its impact extended to Lithuania and Ruthenia, Galicia and the Prussian Partition, everywhere contesting against the rather sluggish Whites' network. It gained a foothold primarily in Warsaw where it embraced increasing numbers of young people – now not only students or clerks but, first of all, the crafts and plebeian youth – a hot-blooded element, not so keen on ideological disputes, but spoiling for defeating the Muscovites instead.

In June 1862, the subsequent five-member Movement's committee team resolved to assume the name of the Central National Committee, which meant that from then on it would no longer be merely a body managing the organisation's structures but one that considered itself a quasi-public authority, giving commands, imposing 'national' taxes, forming its own police forces and delegating its representatives for foreign trips.

We hereby represent that the Central National Committee, which is an expression of not only the military but also the national, moral organisation of this country, [...] shall ever since appear and act as an over guide, as the real national Government of our own, that it has been legitimised to this end by the trustfulness and support of the nation, as long as it should be acting in the capacity of a government, and as long as the nation has not taken its trustfulness away of it with its unrestrained vote. [...]. Whilst calling on you to stay united and work against the enemies, and be obedient to the national authority, we do believe that a mass action performed in concord will render closer the hour at which we shall be able to summon you for an efficient combat for freedom and independence of Poland!

[*Dokumenty KCN i RN* {Central National Committee/National Government documents'}, pp. 15-16].

This could arouse amusement in some circles, annoyance in others; still, the authority of this anonymous self-appointed government was undisputable. Miniszewski derided this authority in the satirical magazine *Komunały* that he put into circulation; the Whites endeavoured to call it into question; Mierosławski, an envious and incessantly scheming man, did not acknowledge it: all that was in vain, as the Reds in their proclamations skilfully inserted the words and assurances their public was avid for. They were hardly resistible. For instance, the clergy of the Sandomierz Diocese, at a secret convention, of which the local bishop was unaware, resolved in late October 1862 that they would desist from supporting the 'rural Direction faction', that is, the Whites who deferred the homeland's

salvation to a remote future; instead, they should subordinate themselves to the Central National Committee which “is heading for the target in a simpler and more unhesitant manner, through actively calling and drawing the whole people into the Homeland’s case”.<sup>323</sup>

The enormously mighty magic of appellations, words, proclamations and oaths was at work, increased by secretiveness and risk. The senders and addressees of patriotic communications invigorated one another, forming a closed circuit within which the expectations of the moment could seem the image of obviousness. The Central Committee devoted much consideration to how to commence the uprising; much less, to what would follow. It was very difficult to assess what was pure revolutionary fantasy and what a daring idea, perhaps, but nonetheless, confined to the limits of probability. Military training was done at secret musters. “What a joy that was, amidst those associated”, the leader of Warsaw medical students would say, when inquired, three years later, “when we brought along to the Tens’ meetings [...] several dozens of poniards and lance-spikes, showing them as the products of our furtive weapons factory, for such was the high-sounding title we gave to that tiny workshop where there were just two people working.”<sup>324</sup>

The civilians forming part of the Committee could have no idea of the type of war they were preparing for; how could they know? The scythe-bearer myth was still in operation: a belief in the might of the peasant’s scythe and pike. The trained staff officers – Sierakowski, Dąbrowski, Padlewski – had, it seems, no better idea of partisan warfare; their imagination and the audacity of their plans was greater, though. A few hundred young people were subject to a summary training at a Polish ‘military school’ in Cuneo, Italy. By the end of 1862, the Committee authorised its foreign agents to purchase larger batches of firearms; however, the vigilance of the French police was not taken into account beforehand. Three plenipotentiaries were detained at a Paris hotel, together with their money, before they managed to run their errands. They were released two weeks later, but the orders placed for them and the information on planned weapon smuggling routes were transmitted from the Paris prefecture to a Russian secret agent.

The emigration’s political literature for thirty years dealt mainly with how to rouse the people for a battle for Poland; this, if successful, was meant to indisputably offer a victory. The clandestine press offered testimonies of a similarly

---

323 Quoted after: S. Kieniewicz, *Powstanie styczniowe* [‘The January Insurrection’], pp. 316-317.

324 G. Daniłowski, *Notatki do pamiętników* [‘Notes for my memoirs’], p. 67.

insouciant conviction. As a strategist reckoned in the Central Committee press organ, "Poland has a population of more than 22,000,000 [within the pre-Partition limits – J.J.'s note], and thus has sufficient power to defeat its adversaries, just if this force is used in an appropriate manner, if it ceases, in certain of its strata, lying fainted with benightedness, shrouded in passiveness. [...] It is the educated populace's mission to address the benighted, rural as well as urban, layers of society and to mount the matter upon the mighty self-righting people's foundation. [...] All the methods of propaganda, [...] enlightening, change in the peasant relations and, mainly, ensured participation in the national cause, may elevate the people and position it upon a political stand in the country, and pass offensive arms into its hands. There is a key of the future in these endeavours; the wrath of triumph is waiting on this road."<sup>325</sup>

What could the boring organic-work adherents and frightened procrastinators counteroffer against such a belief? 'Our friends, the Muscovites' – to quote a well-known Mickiewiczian phrase – were moreover counted on. Andrei Potebnia, a noble and intrepid lieutenant, a Ukrainian anyway, and a handful of his conspiracy comrades at the garrisons were to give sufficient warranty that, once the sign was given, the battalions would open the gates of strongholds before the insurgents, refuse to follow command and turn their bayonets against their own people. How could one not believe it, if a leaflet of the Russian Officers' Committee stated as follows: "From Petersburg and Bessarabia, from Ukraine and the Don, from the Black Sea and the Caucasus, go forward we shall, a restrained array, across the Russian land, preventing any unwanted bloodshed, letting the people unrestrainedly govern themselves in communes and districts, convening for the popular assembly (*Zemsky Sobor*) the individuals elected by the entire Russian land, in view of a common association and to establish themselves wisely."<sup>326</sup>

Phantasms of powerfulness prove to be an indispensable trait of revolutionary thinking. All the same, the Central Committee also included more conscious people who at least strove to delay this day of destiny – in the hope that spring would draw near; perhaps, weaponry would arrive; or, who knows, perhaps some French troops would roll in? Agaton Giller and Oskar Awejde risked their honour as they entered a waiting game. With all that, the swollen stream could not be dammed anymore.

The Government announced a levy for the army by an unusual procedure: not via lot-drawing, as it would normally have done, but according to personal

---

325 *Ruch*, 29<sup>th</sup> July 1862; in: *Prasa tajna*, vol. 1, p. 339.

326 Quoted after: S. Kieniewicz, *Powstanie styczniowe*, p. 334.

lists of disreputable people, prepared for specified towns. This was the sinister idea of Wielopolski who envisaged that he would use such a crafty method to pacify the Kingdom. Meanwhile, however, the Central Committee had promised to its people that it would protect them at the moment of conscription, and declare an uprising. The Committee knew very well that it was not only rifles but also boots that it did not have for its armed force. There were no commanders. There was no money. No maps, either. There were proclamations, but they were deficient too.

Somewhere around Christmas, voivodeship commissioners gathered, clandestinely and wilfully, demanding that the rising be accelerated. Should the Central Committee still be putting it off, they would renounce allegiance to it, and start the action by themselves. The Warsaw 'Tens' and 'Hundreds' exerted an even harder pressure on the Committee, fearing, not illegitimately, that the gendarmes would take them out, one after the other, and dispatch them to the Caucasian regiments. And indeed, on the night of 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> January, the impressment [known as the *branka*] in Warsaw became a fact: during a single night, a total of 1,657 listed individuals were shaken awake and driven to the Citadel, for the time being. The waiting could extend no longer, or else the whole resistance movement and its two-year-long labours would be ridiculed.

A court trainee, a fresh law department graduate, a revenue officer, a junior architect, a priest and a military officer – all of them, exponents of a somewhat-educated population – heavy-heartedly, made the decision that was doomed to have a bearing on the fate of Poland and, to some extent, Lithuania and Ukraine for a good half of a century, if not even longer than that.

## **2. Rising and falling**

The point was, at the very outset, mainly to conquer a town, possibly some piece of Polish land, so that a proclamation could be published, the Provisional Government divulged, and a statement made along the lines of: it is from this very place that we are commencing our battle for freedom, equality, and independence. The fortress of Modlin was at first taken into account in this respect; later on, Płock became the target. Once both options failed, members of the would-be-government started touring the country on their rented chaises with forged documents in their hands, in search of the insurrection they had announced, waiting for a dictator who was expected to come all the way from Paris, to come to the power being offered to him. This is how that strange war started; a war that could rather easily be missed if you happened to pay a visit to Warsaw at the time. The days apparently went on, one after another, like they did before; only

gendarmerie patrols appeared denser and the streets were being emptied in the evenings. An awkward war, without a front or combat over a territory; with no staff or strategy; a war against one of the world's largest armies, challenged by tiny squads composed of half-soldiers armed with scythes, rods, double-barrel guns used for hunting roe-deer or hares, without warm pabulums, warm shoes, or a change of underwear.

People could pretend for some time they did not know about this war, or would not even be willing to know, minding their own business as usual: entering treasury monies into books; teaching their children; helping to deliver babies; soothing bequeath disputes; measuring property-lands; or, performing as a singer at the opera – whatever was allotted to them by their profession and fortune. All this could, and indeed had to be done, for without these daily labours and chores, society would have decomposed or, at best, regressed a good hundred years, to say nothing of families being provided for. Grand History tends not to consider or commemorate any such commonplace business.

These matters were trivial – essentially, the prose of life; but, someday, an unknown man would present himself to the treasury clerk, telling him he's appearing here on behalf of the National Government (who has appointed such a body?), or Municipality Superior (appointed by whom, namely?), demanding that the clerk become less eager from now on in his collecting of taxes for the Muscovite (who has named it so?) government, since a national tax shall be collected from now on (who is to square the accounts, and before whom?). Grand History was catching up with the small, private histories of human lives, demanding that a clear answer be given: Who are you? At whose service are you? The National Government, under the severest penalty, forbid “the treasury clerks and officials [and] authorities established by the Muscovite government [...] from enforcing, or participating in any transformation (apart from their ongoing actions), of the present-day state of the public funds, financial labours and institutions”<sup>327</sup>. What was an ‘ongoing action’ and what would be regarded, instead, as a ‘transformation of the present-day state’, could be problematic, in fact; what was doubtless, instead, was that a clerk or official was receiving instructions from two authorities, one banning him to execute the orders of the other.

An act of insubordination of this sort obviously implied the immediate loss of a job and the position a modest clerk had been earning for himself over many years. The National Government, aware of this circumstance, proclaimed that

---

327 Decree of 10<sup>th</sup> May 1863, *Dokumenty KCN i RN* [‘Central National Committee/ National Government documents’], Wrocław 1968, p. 113.

“all those who have been removed from their duties by the incursive government for their ministries incurred for the national cause shall be provided with any possible assistance and care, both at present and in the future”.<sup>328</sup> It was not known whether this National Government would be in a position to keep its promises; whatever the case, a functionary accustomed throughout his life to being told to reliably and without a murmur fulfil his superiors’ instructions, felt torn all of a sudden as he would not know which authority to obey. Such a rip could actually have been very concrete in the case that, for instance, a tallyman, teller or usher with the Government Commission for Revenues and Treasury – trustworthy people, after all – to whom custody had been entrusted over the Kingdom’s central cashbox, most unexpectedly learned that the Nation demands that they dispense with the vault keys. And so they did, being good patriots, and on the following day, with the *Organisation*’s help, left the country hurriedly; the one who was late to catch the train shot himself in the head.

Those who could afford it could still evade from such a choice abroad. The condition was that the incursive government had given him, or her, a passport, and so had the underground Municipality Superior; such a document, the National Government announced, should only be issued “to those who need, of necessity, to expel themselves from their domicile, be it for the retrieval of health or to attend to their property or family interests, but, this being the case, any such individual is bound to submit a physician’s certificate or any other relevant evidence”.<sup>329</sup>

The National Government hereby ordains as follows:

1. All Polish citizens, whatever their sex, class or confession, shall henceforth be called for to take up the labours aimed at disentangling the Homeland being in bondage, and therefore no one shall be allowed to leave the frontiers of Poland without the National Government’s permission.

[...]

3. Citizens now remaining outside the limits of the country shall be bound to return, or obtain a permit for their further stay there, within 21 days of the date that this present Decree is published. [...]

4. Anyone failing to comply with the provisions hereof shall, as those evading their civic obligations in the sacred cause of the nation’s independence, be deprived of their civil rights, their names to be published in public journals.

[...]

[Decree of 14<sup>th</sup> May 1863; *ibidem*, p. 119.]

---

328 Decree of 8<sup>th</sup> June 1863, *ibidem*, p. 131.

329 Regulations of 14<sup>th</sup> May 1863, *ibidem*, p. 167.

It was therefore not easy to stay aside and not identify oneself with any of the fighting armies. Such neutrality was completely impossible for army officers and soldiers, of course. “Nobody is bound by the oath, compelled through tyranny upon you and your unfortunate country; it was sworn, to God’s outrage, against our own Mother the Homeland, and God did not listen to it”, the Central Committee, acting as the National Government, assured them. “Your military honour does not forbid you to leave the tsarist banners; nay, it tells you to carry your lives forth for independence of your nation. Brothers, join the insurgent ranks; stand up together for a sanguinary battle; together, for happiness in a free Homeland!”<sup>330</sup> Many obeyed, and forthwith took command of the insurrection troops. Those are known to us; we know less of those who did not pay heed to the appeal and who happened to shoot at their own countrymen, who no more appeared as such; or, to interrogate them.

Mayors and municipal officials in small towns found themselves in a severe predicament. An insurgent troop would enter the town, ordering the double-headed eagle to be thrown from the town-hall turret, and to fix instead the tripartite emblem featuring the White Eagle, the *Pogoń* and St. Michael the Archangel, then take part in a divine service to the Homeland’s welfare, then dispense the municipal cashbox and then provide horses-and-carts for the wounded. The following day, the legitimate authority was back and they had to excuse themselves for all that. In some cases, this was, in fact, a choice between who would give them a thrashing, or hang them.

Warsaw did not find it all that dramatic, but the time was not good for those who had their own views and sentiments about what was good for the country. If in Krakow, or in Poznań, one could afford the luxury of their own views: in Warsaw, it was easy to earn the name of a traitor: who would not tremble at such a prospect? The ranks of overt followers of Wielopolski, never too numerous at all, were now dwindling away dramatically. Their last bastion was the Main School – the university, finally obtained by prayers: emerging moments before, its lot was now to become the hostage of events.

The professors, picked up and put together from across the globe, had not yet managed to better acquaint themselves with one another, forming small circles of friends rather than an academic milieu. Some intended to live with the new School until their deserved retirement; one such professor was Józef Kowalewski, reportedly Europe’s best expert in Mongolian languages, brought along from Kazan, a former Philaret and deportee, completely Russified over the years;

---

330 Summons of 10<sup>th</sup> April 1863; *ibidem*, p. 91.



he was commissioned in Warsaw to lecture on antiquity, albeit he had no expertise in this field at all. For many others, though, the School was an unexpected gift of fate, a lifetime opportunity, so it was not circumspect to meddle in matters which could spoil that chance. Some of the professors could experience this first-hand: Benedykt Dybowski, for instance, a zoologist whose atelier was the meeting venue for the clandestine Government's officials, would soon wander off to research the fauna of the Baikal Lake vicinity, instead of teaching the young people of Warsaw. This was one of the exceptional cases, though: the aspiring lecturers had had to display not so much their knowledge but, in fact, their politically pristine life. This is why Henryk Schmitt from Lwów eventually did not take the faculty of Polish history: the reputation of this democrat from the forties' and former political prisoner under the Austrian Empire seemed suspicious. Thus, the Margrave could normally count on loyalty from his charge pedagogues whose contact with their students was rather limited anyway: they just read their lessons, as the custom had it; no one would think of holding a seminar then.

The students, all freshmen, apart from those on the medical lecture course, remained unaided, without a guiding authority. In January, after the Christmas holiday, there remained not much for them to learn: they all listened attentively to the news and rumours, disputing with one another whether, and when, to rise. Students' trysts were held almost openly; the police, strangely enough, seemed not to interfere.

Inside the clinic, I came across a numerous conflux of academicians, waiting there impatiently. They hushed as I entered. A couple of candles put up on the professor's desk, enlightened the grand room poorly, casting their rather faint light on the students' benches, filled with the audience. [...] Having approached the table, I took a seat thereat and, amidst a deep silence, started presenting to them the purpose of our assembly. [...] They listened with heightened attention, not interrupting me with a word; but as I started mentioning the insurrection, whose date I could not say as yet, though, so as not to reveal the secret, but whose distance I marked with days or, almost, hours, those untoward began rebelling, voices of protestation and threats were heard; a clear explanation was demanded, delay insisted on, and I was asked whether I should think that the Committee could not postpone the outbreak.

[W. Daniłowski, *Notatki do pamiętników* {'Notes for my memoirs'}, p. 191].

The opinion eventually prevailed that an uprising made without arms, in the middle of winter, would be premature, whilst a collective egress of students would expose the freshly-opened School to a ruthless blow. The moment the command to rise was uttered and Warsaw started receiving news of the first skirmishes, young people's attitudes abruptly changed. The time of deliberations came to an end. Ardent opponents of the insurrection idea quietened down as

they feared being charged with cowardice or, as it at times happened, betrayal. Once our brothers are fighting, spilling their blood, no Pole may lie by: his right place is with a troop or, at least, with a municipal organisation. Students of the Polytechnic Institute, becoming organised in Puławy, went off to join the insurrection en masse; many of the Fine Arts School marched out too. The Main School remained more considerate, and yet the lecture rooms were still decimated. It was not easy to learn, say nothing for devising the prospects of life. "I remained under a most complete influence of the general disposition of those days", one of those students who finally resolved not to join remembered. "I was a grey speck in the cloud of dust rising in thick swirls and obscuring reality and a clear view of the future".<sup>331</sup>

The Whites' directorial team, astonished at the course of events unfolding, issued some indistinct declarations. Every step could now seem dissonant. Jurgens' circle became disintegrated; friends were diverging. Most of them, Jurgens included, decided that there was no choice in the situation as it stood, other than to submit to the Central Committee. This is how the most responsible and judicious group of the Warsaw intelligentsia ceased to exist. The thought of civil resistance and organic work was stifled. Jurgens himself was detained at the Citadel in February, without a clear charge: the vengeful blows of the legitimate authority were struck at random. His low, reasonable voice would be heard no more: Jurgens was never to leave the prison, as he died less than six months after he was arrested.

The Reds were of the opinion that the insurrection's power, military and political, had to be held by one pair of hands: a dictator was needed. This was a distant reverb of the November Insurrection, although the experience of 1831 was not so encouraging in this respect. Neither would the new one be: Mierosławski, a conceited mythomaniac, utterly ridiculed the idea of a dictatorship, offered to him and accepted by him: this two-day dictator, ruling the area of one commune, finally took flight behind the Prussian frontier, threatening he would be back some day.

His revolutionary eloquence continually made him the bugbear of the nobility; hence, an inventive plot of the Poznań and Krakow Whites hastily offered the name and responsibilities of a dictator to General Marian Langiewicz, who in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains ruled the only, after the January defeats, patch of free Polish land, and became a European hero for several weeks. His poor insurgent resources or strategic talents could not, however, meet the high expectations. His

---

331 K. Szymański, *Z Warszawy i Heidelbergu* ['From Warsaw and Heidelberg'], p. 188.

lonely crossing of the Vistula (not to ignore Miss Pustowojtów, a brave maiden who acted as his aide) and the following internment by the Austrians put an end to the not-too-commendable history of the 1863 dictatorship. The Central Committee, lying secretly in ambush at private Warsaw apartments, reconsidered itself the authority of the country fighting for its freedom. The team was initially afraid that their anonymous status would debilitate the body's authority. The contrary appeared to be true: its mystique added to this committee of five unknown men a mythical dignity and charm. Who they were, did not matter. The imprint of a stamp placed below an order of the secret authority made the team reliable and respectable.

The Central Committee recognised itself, formally now, as a National Government – and acted as such for as long as it managed. Those composing it, more prudent once, but ardent and uncompromising at other times, were modest people, most of whom displayed no commanding ambitions. The case of Stefan Bobrowski was peculiar in this context. A son of a Volhynian landowning family, brother-in-law of Apollo Korzeniowski (a name mentioned several times above already), he studied law first at Petersburg University and then at Kiev University, he was a novice on the Warsaw soil, and was made a member of the Central Committee by his friend Zygmunt Padlewski. When Padlewski set off to the battleground, and the Central Committee dispersed itself in search of the uprising's centre, Bobrowski took over the duties of Municipality Superior and for nearly two months held tightly the threads of the insurgent disposition. Whoever recollected this man afterwards, would say of him as a preternatural individual, head-and-shoulders above his colleagues in his character, intellect, vigour, and organisational talent. And now, challenged for a duel by a cynical schemer who felt offended by being legitimately incriminated for subterfuge around the dictatorship offered to Langiewicz, this twenty-three-year-old, a determined leader of the national rising, this – let us repeat – natural-born-leader was leaving his post at the climax of the national drama and crossing the cordon line: a near-sighted man who could not see further than five steps ahead was so easily killed by the first pistol bullet shot at him. This is how the Polish intelligentsia paid its last tribute to the nobility's Poland and its concepts of honour.

This Insurrection happened to come across no other Bobrowski. Let us refrain from telling here more histories about the subsequent national governments. They were formed of young and middle-aged people who put their own lives at risk, aware of the responsibility lying heavily upon them for the lives of thousands of others and for the lot of the country; still, they felt carried by the wave of events rather than being the makers. Their educational backgrounds and jobs were diverse, but all had studied something before, completing their studies

or not, and now sacrificing their life plans for the benefit of what they considered their patriotic duty. These were mostly officials or clerks, probationers or apprentices with various offices and commissions, reckoners, lawyers, teachers – and, as soon as it was possible, they even tried to combine their earning work with scheming against the government they served.

They had no military knowledge, and their ideas of the insurrection's prospects seem astonishingly naive if they were sincere: the rifles were to be captured from the Muscovites with the use of scythes, and then cannons would be won with the rifles. Troop commanders were very often amateurish too. True, officers that had been through a course in the Polish military school in Italy or even those who had deserted from the Russian army did not manage much better, since guerrilla warfare had not much in common with the art of open warfare: the relevant experience could only be gained as the war went on.

The enemy did not have any experience in this respect, either – but they did have a crushing advantage in terms of numbers, armament, equipment, victualing and communication, and even if they were incurring losses, these could be resupplied with incomparable ease. The insurrection since its very outset broke into dozens of mutually unbound troops and battle scenes, and had no command, and no strategic thought to cement it till autumn 1863. The histories of these troops are somewhat similar to one another: they lasted for a few days, or weeks, their main content being eluding the prevailing Muscovite forces, and accepting a battle when unavoidable. The dominant trait in the insurgents' memories, at least in the first months, was the destitution of untrained, unequipped, often hungry and cold soldiers, and the mortal exhaustion from incessant marches in the day and in the night.

The situation changed for the better during the summer in that the troops were increasingly frequently formed and equipped behind the Galician or, an extremely rare thing, Prussian cordon, choosing the moment and the place for marching into the Kingdom on their own. The point was to enter unnoticed – a rare success indeed, as the Russian army had its informers inside the Austrian and Prussian police. So, the troops were in most cases cornered betimes, and pressed against the frontier: those not killed on the spot had a way to retreat, but to use the opportunity they usually had to quit their precious weapons. More numerous groups, if formed, only contributed to more severe losses. Underhand tactics, against the drastic disparity of forces and resources, could be pursued more efficiently by minor, brisk troops, capable of assailing the enemy and rebounding forthwith.

Joining the insurrection became a patriotic obligation in the Kingdom, Lithuania, Galicia, and even in the Prussian Partition, the most isolated one. Not to

join when all the others are: how come? So, one had to go, and taste the wandering in the woods, sleeping anywhere, and then, the way is free to quickly be killed for the Fatherland, be taken captive or, in a luckier event, be back some day in the safe hub of Krakow, with the sense of an obligation fulfilled. The rising had to go on, until France, Great Britain and Austria colluded, as was expected, and came to the Poles' assistance. And so it went on and was expanding, in spite of a failed beginning: since the Whites' directorial team decided to quit acting as an opposition force, acknowledge the National Government and self-dissolve, the landowning gentry started to more willingly support the insurrection with volunteers, horses and money – and, perhaps most importantly, with a network of neighbourly contacts. Also the country-folk, at least in some regions, were gradually growing convinced that the enfranchisement decree was not just an idle lordly talk, and started reacting on the insurrectionists less inimically; young peasants, it would happen, joined the troops where all the social classes appeared mixed. A young master, a land-steward, a peasant, a Jew, or a cobbler, all were equal to one another and had the equal right to a nameless death on the battlefield, but certain distinctions were apparently retained, if we see Traugutt admonishing his commanders, in as late as November, that they do not let the scythe-bearers be disregarded and see “that the riflemen as well as the scythe-bearers and the cavalry experience coequal conveniences [!] and that the intelligentsia people avoid crowding exclusively into one type of armed-forces, [because] such discrimination between the people-of-education and the simple folk causes a severe damage to the national cause”<sup>332</sup>

From our standpoint, particularly worth noting is the insurrection's civil organisation – an undisputable work of the intelligentsia. The conspiratorial National Government, operating from Warsaw, built in the course of several, mainly spring, months a network of clandestine and efficient information services transmitting decrees, orders and the press from top to bottom, reports and demands from bottom to top. The courier and railway postal service, dealing also with the smuggling of people, arms and money, covered the Kingdom area with its dense network, reaching out to behind the cordons, if it was needed. The collection of a national tax, tentative at first, produced with time measureable results, registered by the accountancy: even high-ranked Kingdom officials paid the tax, as it was not befitting to evade it, and it could even be unsafe to do so. Given the enormously dispersed warfare effort, a centralised, disciplined civil

---

332 Quoted after: W. Przyborowski, *Dzieje roku 1863* [A history of the Year 1863], vol. 5, p. 392.

organisation bonded, under the occupation conditions, an appreciable share of the society, devoted to the movement, involving thousands of people of various ages and forming a trust-based civic nation in which women played a distinct part too as excellent liaisons, couriers, ammunition smugglers, quartermasters and press distributors, and, lastly, housemothers to the insurgents' families.

The five-member government, burdened with a growing number of military, political, administrative, commercial, and transport matters (foreign acquisitions and contraband materials such as weaponry, ammunition, etc.), had to form its subordinate departments, offices and commissions, which, for safety reasons, moved from one place to another within Warsaw. The legalisation services supplied the network's workers with fake passports and registration books, whenever there was a need. The rules of conspiracy were mastered gradually. Till the late autumn of 1863, the number of giveaways, not to say denunciations, proved astonishingly low, considering the undertaking's scale. It happened that, acting under strong pressure, people burned out and asked for dismissal, or, put under threat, escaped abroad – but for the entire year, neither the government nor any of its sections were tracked down by the police authorities.

The government's cast was changed several times, usually by the procedure of dramatic extortions called 'coups', to the accompaniment of accusations of a lack of zest or, conversely, excessive radicalism. What, if not verbal, the expression of this radicalism was like, did not always appear clear. The rising's military weakness caused that too daring or unrealistic ideas were screened – regardless of the mind that hatched them. The civil organisation had its own police in Warsaw which penetrated into the Kingdom's police, gendarmerie and offices, and intently listened to the local populace's sentiments and gossip. A formation called Security Guard, separate from it, was tasked with protecting the government and eradicating dangerous spies and informers. This facet of activity, perhaps a necessary one, did not add glory to this uprising. Who, and on what grounds, was one to decree the guilt of treason, was unknown; the craft of the executioners, called 'sicariuses' [*sztyletniki*], triggered dread, rather than gratefulness, in the city. A similar problem aroused with the forest troops: some commanders would, without much ado, sentence to the halter a peasant, a Jew, or rarely, a squire, a leaseholder or a steward, if they were suspected of having shared with the Muscovites (even if under duress) information on the insurgent troops' movements. There was no time to verify such suspicions, often malicious delations; no excuses were listened to; the execution was usually instantaneous. With time, treason accusations reached the insurgent authorities: this could serve as a handy explanation in case of failure. The obsession with a lurking treason expresses the fear and uncertainty of their existence, and seems inseparable from any uprising or revolution.

Those who face death every day, inflict it more easily on others. The tactics of lightning raids were growing increasingly cruel. The insurrectionists took no prisoners, as there was nothing reasonable they could do with them; indeed, there were not too many opportunities. In the throes of combat, the Russian soldiers more and more frequently finished off the wounded on the battlefield, letting the local peasants rob them, and then the fallen were buried in common, hastily-dug pits. With scarce sanitary or medical field-services present, injured insurgents were not likely to survive. Those caught armed, especially if by a commander or voivodeship superior, were commonly sentenced by courts-martial to death at the gallows, and were hanged in public.

As time went on, the insurrection unveiled manifestations of the human condition that the romanticist poetry and patriotic eloquence preferred not even to touch. In these circumstances, the intelligentsia – doubtlessly, the most disinterested and devoted social class, showed off (without the blurring of individual differences) the strongest determination and pluckiness amidst the adventures that they had had no time to get accustomed to. This concerned, not uniquely at all, those who opposed the idea of an insurrection, or at least wanted to delay its outbreak. One such man was Karol Ruprecht, who has been mentioned in this book several times already: this Siberian deportee, a *millener* (millenarist), an independent intellectual, and a member of the Whites' directorial team and, since spring 1863, of the National Government, was later on seconded abroad to keep a lookout for a non-materialising national loan. He was one of the most flawless actors of the Polish struggle for liberty.

Agaton Giller, a friend of Ruprecht, a *sybirak* himself, a National Government member, and the editor of a number of underground magazines, was blamed many a time by his contemporaries and by historians for his reluctance to radicalise the movement which, some said, could have employed his revolutionary potential. This potential was an inseparable myth of Polish democracy: peasants, even though they had an opportunity to listen to the Manifesto of January that was announced to them together with the enfranchisement decree, were, as a mass, a far cry from having a sense of national awareness. Agitating them could stymie the insurrection cause, rather than support it. A prudent politician during the insurrection, Giller would someday afterwards become its first historian, the defender of its reasons, good name and repute.

The National Government had its departments and civil service run by teachers, lawyers, railroad engineers, architects, men-of-letters and students – displaying more perseverance and competency than could be expected from them. Wilno-born Waclaw Przybylski (b. 1828), for that matter, worked, after graduating in Petersburg, as a biology teacher at Wilno's Institute for Nobles[\*],

he dabbled in scientific and literary translation activity, and wrote, at times, correspondences for journals. When the insurrection broke out, he put himself at the Provincial Department's disposal; he was dispatched to Warsaw and became the National Government's delegate for Lithuania. In June, the Government appointed him a clandestine Superior of Warsaw; in autumn, Traugutt entrusted him with the administration of foreign affairs: Przybyłski fulfilled all of his duties with indefatigable spirit and organisational talent.

Another biology teacher, with a Warsaw gymnasium, was Bronisław Radziszewski (b. 1838), a Moscow University graduate. His task in the insurrection was, at first, manufacturing gunpowder and, then, later on, organising an efficient governmental forwarding outpost and, finally, managing a civil organisation in the Augustów voivodeship till summer 1864. The insurrection over, he managed to retreat abroad, receive a doctor's degree in Belgium, gain a professorship with Lwów University and became a meritorious originator of the Polish organic chemistry school.

There are no two identical biographies, but the reappearing trait is that the uprising extracted out of people devoted to science and modest professional activity fortitude and talents they could not have suspect themselves of possessing amidst their daily routines.

It is they who have created a document of the time as unusual as the underground press, with its printing infrastructure and circulation as considerable as several thousand copies of magazines, published and distributed under high-risk conditions. The press's main task was to reinforce the community of a nation fighting for its freedom, and to keep up its determination: this purpose was to be served by the informative and journalistic functions. The 'news from the battlefield' was, perforce, not always reliable: partly resulting from delayed receipt of the reports in Warsaw, but primarily perhaps, from their aggrandisement. One could read, especially in the first months of the insurrection, that the Muscovites were incurring much larger losses in the battles than the insurgents. The governmental press, Russian as well as Polish – *Dziennik Powszechny*, in particular – showed things with a completely reverse depiction.

The language of the press articles, with their literary style, full of historical comparisons, with Latin or French insertions not uncommon, indicates that the underground magazines, save for a few, were targeted at the intelligentsia, which, together with the clergy and the enlightened bourgeoisie, formed the main reading and ideological circle. Unity and discipline was the insurrection propaganda's leading motto. The obligation to obey the decrees, commands and appointments of the clandestine National Government was clearly emphasised: any instance of dissent, or disputes between the Reds and the Whites, were to lapse into silence



in the face of the common national cause. A freedom and conflict of beliefs and convictions would be fine once we win; it's not the time now.

The revolution being on, all the country's forces ought therefore be, called for the combat: some to take the arms, others to give advice. [...] Be vigilant about minds, so that no inopportune dejection or sophisms undermine the movement itself. Negligence of this should without fail bring defeats and a fall of the revolution. It was with unfeigned sadness that we have seen, since the beginning of the present movement, how our country's intelligentsia, whether coaxed with doctrines or induced by egoism, shed their crocodile tears on the agitators' deviations. Such self-withdrawal [...] is a sin against the Homeland. It was explainable as long as the scythes were being prepared; now, ratiocinations about the need or ineptitude of armed insurrection would be vicious."

[*Prawda*, 7<sup>th</sup> May 1863; *Prasa tajna*, Part 2, p. 28.]

'Ratiocinations' or 'reasoning' was out-of-place and ill-timed, as it disseminated scepticism and dissuaded one from fighting. A secret Krakow newspaper, of a 'White' inclination, sadly reported that a part of the Galician youth was militating with their tongues at cafés, instead of on the battlefield, seeing no chance in the fight with Moscow: "On the one side are they, the intelligentsia; on the other, barbarian savages. May the death of even a hundred of such brutes, the Muscovites, compensate for the destruction of one intelligentsian existence, like those ones? [...] This is a question they have endlessly considered among themselves, one that they have not yet decided to solve."<sup>333</sup>

A sense of doubt or a lack of faith in victory was stigmatised by national opinion as treachery. The opinion's pressure was overpowering to the point that some considered it a moral terror. If there were any polemics appearing in the Warsaw underground press, they were limited to alluding to something unwritten. The Galician press, also clandestine, felt less hampered all the same, and the altercation between the 'loudmouths' and the 'laggards' was harsh and severe. It was a common axiom, all the same, that the fight against the Moscow Tsar was a life-or-death situation, without mercy. The more blood that was shed, the more apparent it became that, regardless of its opportunities, the insurrection would accept no tsarist clemency or amnesty, or agree to any arrangement or conditions, but that of complete independence. The clandestine press familiarised the reading public with the observation that nothing could be expected from European diplomacy: even if Moscow does not reject the notes from the three powers (France, England and Austria), then their postulates, limited to the reinstatement of an autonomous Congress Kingdom, shall not be accepted

---

333 *Naprzód!*, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1863; *Prasa tajna*, Part 2, p. 146.

by the National Government. Recognition of Lithuania and Ruthenia, within the pre-Partition limits, as inherent parts of the Commonwealth, being equal to Poland, and fomenting partisan activity in the East, at any price, posed an insurmountable barrage to any possible arrangement with Russia – always not-quite-probable anyway.

The political uncompromisingness went hand in hand with an established conviction that the Polish insurrection was – as the Manifesto already pronounced – a struggle of European civilisation against Asian barbarity: “Poland shall not become reconciled with the Muscovite tsar, for Poland has, for a sequence of centuries, aspired to light, equality and freedom – whilst Moscow, has aspired to obscurity, despotism and bondage; for Poland’s task has been, and shall be, to elaborate on individual freedom and elevate every individual up to a sense and use of all the rights of human beings – whilst Moscow has been, and shall be striving to render torpid, despoiling millions of their appurtenant rights...”<sup>334</sup>

Europe could still not understand this, but “this is how every Pole feels it, and this is why the whole of Poland, from sea to sea, would rather turn into a stack of cinders soaked with blood, into one mound of twenty-million people, than drop weapons and bow its neck under the tsar’s yoke”. The nation is ready to bear any sacrifice, it “will devote everything, give all its property away, and give the last drop of its children’s blood”.<sup>335</sup> The authors and editors revelled in their grandiloquent rhetoric, their rigidity and their inexorability. An individual, wrote they, is nothing; we are all servants of the nation. It is base to flee from the battlefield; the rout of a troop is dishonourable. *Niepodległość* so wrote after the defeat of *Jeneral* Taczanowski’s formation: “Dreadful was the view of those scurrying away in disarray, throwing their arms away, and then mercilessly slashed by the Muscovites [...]. Good Lord! It is still that not enough plagues have affected our poor land, as you are sending down the most horrible one: a lack of civic virtue in the soldiers who ought to have been killed for liberty, but were falling like defenceless sheep in a slaughter-house?”<sup>336</sup>

But that was nothing, really: just episodes. “The nation has proved its will to be free, and free shall it be; intimidated it shall not be by any adversity, for it was aware that, by commencing a combat of the titans, it should not be able to conclude it within a few months; it knew well that before the enemy is expelled, an entire generation of gallant men might have to be killed, so as to ensure

---

334 *Niepodległość*, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1863; *Prasa tajna*, Part 2, p. 350.

335 *Ibidem*, p. 351.

336 5<sup>th</sup> October 1863; *ibidem*, p. 450.

the happiness and sovereign existence of the nation; the country entire, from the Warta to the Dnieper, could be turned into a heap of debris and ashes, but free shall the debris be.”<sup>337</sup> An expense account so munificent was being taken down in the insurrection’s late phase, when the fallen were no more reckoned and bulletins’ columns were filled with reports on gallows, sequestrations, and contributions.

In the summer of 1863, Petersburg finally dismantled the system built by Wielopolski; the Margrave tendered his resignation and went away, to Germany, never to come back. Soon after, in September, Grand Duke Constantine left the office of Viceroy. The Kingdom again fell under a military-and-police rule, with General Fyodor Berg as the *Namiestnik*. The governmental offices were subject to severe surveillance: the authorities realised, after all, that many officials had a foot in both camps. Censorship was exacerbated again. *Gazeta Polska* after Kraszewski’s departure did not retain its standing and influence on intellectual minds. *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* lost half of its subscribers, but managed to go on somehow, describing and engraving old collegiate churches, castles and new bridges and railroads, and serving, by the way, as a legal beachhead for authors deeply involved in underground labours – among them, the writer Władysław L. Anczyc (b. 1823); Waclaw Przybylski, a journalist and a teacher; and, Rafał Krajewski, an architect (b. 1834).

Thus, the two realities contacted each other, each governed by its own principles and ethics. Switching from the dominion of one into the realm of the other called for an adaptive dexterity and, often, an altered identity. The insurrection’s reality was as if temporary, the moods fluctuated depending on the news coming from the battlefield, and from foreign newspapers. Whatever their source, the news could only bring momentary consolation: so it was in August, when General Kruk (who had the *nom-de-guerre* of M. Heidenreich) startled and smashed, on the Lublin road near Żyrzyn, a strong convoy escorting a military cashbox. Each fleeting victory for the insurgents, however, inevitably caused a hasty concentration of Russian forces and the resulting debacle of the troop. Similarly, every instance of aroused hope of the powers’ intervention ended in bitter disillusion.

As the summer declined, the dispersed warfare began to subside. The extended civil service kept on bravely. The National Government produced enormous quantities of proclamations, statutes, decrees, instructions, declarations, powers-of-attorney, and appointments, as if the underground state and its laws were to endure and manage many long years to come. This output, uniquely

---

337 *Niepodległość*, 12<sup>th</sup> September; *ibidem*, p. 431.

combining a sublime and a juridical language, leaves no doubt as to its authors' literary and legislative competencies. Whatever anyone's opinion, the insurrectionist administration was the binding agent of the entire national undertaking, a centralisation which fought against guerrilla disintegration and chaos.

But even this administration could not do much against incrementing dispirit- edness and the debilitated will to extend a hopeless fight. Such an atmosphere bore the fruit of reciprocal recriminations and a regenerated quarrel of factions. An example of the rhetoric is offered by a leaflet by some radical Reds from Krakow, of 3<sup>rd</sup> July, attacking the national "government patronised by the Jesuits, lords, and Wielopolski", faithless to the heroes' testament: "Combating youth!", the lampoon instigated, "you docile instrument of those who rule, periodically dispatched to take a bloodbath, in small, tiny troops [...], it is your destiny to serve as gladiators to the beggars for European commiseration. [...] Nation! In spite of your greatness, of the blood you have shed, of your heroism and devotion, you have to die, unless you can issue, out of your bosom, the guides worthy of you!"<sup>338</sup>

As with any uprising, the declining phase heard the reverberating sacramental demand to track down behind-the-scenes treason and do justice to those guilty of the adversities. The National Government, willing to restrain a summary justice by imposing some procedure upon it, established Revolutionary Tribunals "in every county and, separately, in the C.[ity] of Warsaw"<sup>339</sup>. This mostly remained on paper, however, these decrees exerted on European opinion a bad impression of the Polish insurrection. In practice, administering punishments for political offences was the commander's competence; otherwise, no less arbitrary adjudications were made by the flying 'hanging gendarmes' – or, if in Warsaw, the aforesaid 'sicariuses'. Making mistakes and being ruthless was rather easy there, although this was beyond comparison with the tsarist terror of 1863-4.

This insurrection fed on myths. These myths extended to an expected French intervention, Emperor Napoleon III's armed expedition, a European war that one had to stay for rather than drop weapons. Ruthenia, was willing, it was believed, to remain in a durable union with Poland, within the borders from before the Partitions. To the approaching hour of a levy-in-mass, with the whole nation standing ready, every male aged eighteen to forty-one, peasants in the first place, taking up arms, scythes and pikes. The hour of a 'second uprising' was to strike after the harvest-time, or perhaps in the spring; once this comes true, the nation shall, with God's help, become unconquerable.

---

338 Quoted after: S. Kieniewicz, *Powstanie styczniowe*, p. 536.

339 *Dokumenty KCN i RN*, pp. 129-130.

But the will abated all the same, pecuniary resources exhausted, the people dropped off; it was more and more difficult to replenish losses, to invent new premises and to bind up torn contacts. "Social life", a Government's secretary recollected, "came to a complete standstill in the intelligent strata".<sup>340</sup> The terror implemented by *Namiestnik* Berg, especially after an unfortunate attempt at his life, did not match the cruelty of what was unleashed in Lithuania (including the Byelorussian and Augustów *guberniyas*) by Governor-General Mikhail Muravyov, deservedly nicknamed 'Veshatel' ('The Hangman'), but was plainly sufficient for inquiry committees to extract, even from the casually detained, useful information and to recognise, step by step, the structure of the underground institutions. The clandestine authorities' clerical meticulousness was bearing its fruit, now that their papers started falling into the police's hands.

Romuald Traugutt (b. 1826) effected a coup-d'état in quite a bizarre fashion. He simply came to a meeting of the 'Red' Government, which during the few weeks of its power-exercise had not managed to win any respect, and told its members, with his quiet voice, to get lost, and they obeyed him without objection. This voluntarily-recruited officer with the Russian army, Staff-Captain [*shtabs-kapitan*] of Sappers, a veteran of the 1849 Hungarian campaign and of the defence of Sevastopol in 1855, retired in 1862 at the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, with seventeen years of impeccable service behind him, to settle down with his family in his inherited village in Polesia. As far as is known, he took part in no conspiratorial activities, and it was only in April, once Lithuania and Byelorussia moved forth, that he took command of a forest troop which, like the rest, were killed almost to a man. Strung out and sick, Traugutt was nursed by a young Eliza Orzeszkowa; once recovered, he broke through to the Kingdom and yielded himself to the National Government's service. His determination and earnestness proved impressive; hence, the Government, run by Karol Majewski, entrusted him with an important foreign mission. When Traugutt was back in Warsaw, having discharged the commissions that he accepted for Paris and Galicia, those who had sent him were deprived of their functions, and the insurrection was drifting toward anarchy and decomposition. It was one of those moments in history when someone willing to take charge of a sinking vessel was expected: the one who did was a man known to very few in the city or in the country at large, without a background, and yet arousing confidence by the strength of his will, character, and conviction.

---

340 J.K. Janowski, *Pamiętniki* ['Memoirs'], vol. 2, p. 286.

He turned into a 'dictator' within a moment, on 17<sup>th</sup> October – albeit he would never use this pretentious title himself – and started giving orders and instructions in the name of the National Government. He would repeat, and sincerely so, that, given the circumstances, assuming power was a sacrifice rather than an ambition. Yet, he was not a desperado: he believed that new powers to fight could still be mustered up from Poland, subjected to an iron discipline, and infused with a belief in victory. He knew how to select appropriate partners: in that late hour, under the incessant terror of arrest, he assembled departments, sections and services made of devoted and diligent people. Those included, like before, gymnasium teachers, a Main School lecturer, a physician, an engineer, a barrister, a court or bank clerk, all accustomed to doing a dependable work. He turned the team into an efficient executive apparatus – but the decisions were his own; he spent long nights writing long letters to authorised commissioners in the country's voivodeships and provinces, explaining his expectations and requirements. He was a deeply religious man who never quit prayers and services, never losing his belief in a Providence that might be severely testing a nation with trials and tribulations whilst otherwise unfailingly favouring the right and sacrosanct cause. Whoever met this man, was always impressed by his tranquillity: Traugutt would not raise his voice, ever. He aroused respect and trust – a romantic with a bookkeeper's apparition and meticulousness.

He took badly the criticisms he learned of, considering any resistance 'mutinousness', to be exterminated like weeds. He demanded from the last commanders of this uprising that they be absolutely disciplined, forbidding the disbandment of troops after a lost battle, under pain of court-martial. He worked on developing an insurgent army consisting of 'regular' corps, divisions, regiments, and battalions; this idea was deliverable on paper only, though. The only commander who endeavoured, be it pro forma, to carry out the order was General Józef Hauke-Bosak who, irrespective of a stern winter, operated in the area of the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, with a force of a few thousand soldiers. The others mainly thought about how to finish, honourably or not, the insurgent bloodbaths, and what they were to do next with themselves.

Traugutt counted on folk staying mostly passive and embosomed the mirage of an imminent insurrection of the whole nation. In every village which was but for a while under the 'national' rule, he instructed that the enfranchisement decree be observed by the proprietors and leaseholders alike. This Lithuanian nobleman was deeply embittered at the landed citizens' (whom he called, the old way, noblemen) withdrawals from the insurrection. He did not trust the nobility, and ordered that squires be punished with death for the slightest act of disloyalty – and forbearance be shown to peasants, who should be treated as citizens.

But all that could not reach its demand. On 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1864, Alexander II signed enfranchisement ukases, much more advantageous for the Kingdom's peasantry than what was enacted earlier on in Russia; one ukase provided for the establishment of rural communes with the exclusion of the landed gentry. Bringing the reform into effect, although it was to take several years, was certainly more effective than any good will shown by the several national governments, whose delegates appeared to be rolling stones. In this way, the long years of the Polish democratic intelligentsia's programmatic work, done in exile and at home, went down the drain: the peasantry was lost to the national cause for a period of two generations.

Traugutt's elevated proclamations were now being cast into the social void, hinting over and over at a messianic tone: "The blood of the martyrs is fertile", he wrote in a December address to the clergy. "It is not only with the weaponry but also, with the martyrdom of her children that Poland is preparing a salvation for herself, and a triumph of justice to the world."<sup>341</sup>

It is not only ourselves that we are fighting [*sic*] for and because of: we rebuff away the egoism's apophthegm whereby the blood of every nation only ought to be spilled for this same nation. Being Christians, a particle are we of the humankind for which Christ had shed his own blood; we are also willing to work like him; we have been fighting for the whole of mankind and because of the mankind, suffering have we been for the mankind entire [...]. A year ago, a handful of courageous sons of our gentle capital town cast themselves on the enemy, with their hands almost bare, and the enemy could not manage it; so rise up now, in the name of God, o Polish nation, rise with all your might, and crush and shatter you will your fierce myrmidons.

[National Government's {Traugutt's} address to the nation, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1864; *ibidem*, pp. 308-9].

The Warsaw intelligentsia of 1864 was more level-headed, and less disposed now to a romantic exultation, even in its addresses modelled on special poetics; still, some part of it was attracted by that heart-warming belief, combined with the will not to be objected to, which extended the insurrection's agony by half a year. The organisation was becoming diminished – at a faster pace on the bottom, in the military and civilian ranks, and at a slower pace in its upper stratum, among the executives. The most loyal people did not lose heart nor give in till the very end. Marian Dubiecki, the closest fiduciary and housemate of Traugutt, taught at a school and then attended his commissioned business after hours until the day he was detained. This same house, on Smolna Street, was visited by the

---

341 *Dokumenty KCN i RN*, p. 290.

police on the following night, of 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> April 1864, to grab the defenceless and completely unguarded dictator.

The remand centre on Pawia Street, henceforth called 'Pawiak', was turning into the battlefield. Not too many could win in this solitary trial. A prisoner, aware that the cause he had devoted himself to had lost, and was even now cursed by those who had survived, was losing his, or her, point of reference and, together with it, the belief in the purpose of resistance. Not so many were strong enough to give a reply such as the one given by doctor Włodzimierz Dybek, a professor with the Main School, a trusted physician and close associate of Traugutt, to the Commission of Inquiry. According to the record, he said "To the query made to me by the Commission, whether I know Traugutt, Romuald; whether I have visited him, or the same visited my place, I declare that I refuse to reply to the questions being given to me, for the reasons I cannot explain [...]. I am relying upon fortune and upon the responsibility that comes out from the course of the pending investigation, and this is why I do not intend to acquit or accuse myself, and refuse to provide any self-excuse whatsoever."<sup>342</sup>

Most of them entered into some game with the investigators, admitting what the Commission must doubtless have known by then anyway. But the Commission knew more and more, and, as all investigators worldwide do, read out to the prisoners the evidence given by their less perseverant, or simply earlier imprisoned, comrades; arranged ocular confrontations, produced before them letters or notes found during a search; scared and, alternately, offered the expectation of clemency if the truth was sincerely confessed. A prisoner, so pressed, tended to yield to an extent, doing his best not to incriminate anybody else nevertheless – except for those, perhaps, who had fled abroad – and to diminish their own role, in parallel. Some did this worthily, as far as they could; others, just conversely, fawning and crawling immoderately in their self-incriminations or requests for pity. This is how Tomasz Ilnicki repented, for instance. A fifty-year-old clerk with the Polish Bank and, toward the insurrection's end, the National Government's chief booking clerk, wrote thus in his own hand: "My God, a few days of weakness and obscurity, through which I unwittingly drifted with a pernicious frenzy, once it overwhelmed a considerable portion of this country's dwellers, [...] it did frustrate the effects of the nearly thirty-two years of my clerical service, an irreproachable one, the certification of whose fervour, I am so hoping to myself, shall not be refused by the bank's authority, and has brought me to a

---

342 *Proces Romualda Traugutta i członków Rządu Narodowego* ['The trial of Romuald Traugutt and National Government members'], vol. II/2, p. 299.



moral and material fall.”<sup>343</sup> And so he went on, over several long pages; still, even he was cautious not to give names, although this was what the Commission was really after, making nothing of the regrets and penitential tears.

The volumes of inquiry evidence contain real tragedies of people with splendid biographies, who, left alone, sometimes treated with rods, could not do anything but break with scare, with fear of what might happen to their loved ones – and, not infrequently, with a sense of guilt. Rafał Krajewski testified thus: “I have used one of the three sheets of paper dispensed to me at the Commission to write an unreliable statement: I endeavoured to protect myself, by condemning the others. Having read what I have written, I did recognise my crime, and returned to the road indicated to me by the Divine laws. I have destroyed that script [still, it has been preserved in the files – JJ’s note] and I declare that, truthfully, I was the Director of the [National Government’s – JJ’s note] Internal Affairs Department. I know what I should be expecting now. The human law ordains that I be hanged – the Divine law tells me to do no harm to people. May I be hanged, but betray shall I no one for perdition.”<sup>344</sup>

But indeed, quite a few were giving the others up, having comprehended that this should be the only way to plead for a more clement sentence for themselves. Having made a hesitant start, a prisoner that agreed to collaborate gradually became increasingly effusive – up to the moment he told everything he was aware of, and coaxed his friends that he was confronted with to confess. It was collaborators of this sort, whose functions were rather second-rate, that gave up Traugutt.

As for Traugutt himself, he initially denied his identity, sticking to his adopted name. At the point he could disavow no longer, he admitted his real name and that he had commanded his troop in Kobryn in the spring of the preceding year; in Warsaw, betokened he, “I, for the most part, stayed home, reading books, and if I ever went off, I would go for a walk after dinner”<sup>345</sup>. Once the Commission broke this line of defence too, he finally owned up that he had held his function, and overtly divulged his political views, not mentioning any of the names of his co-operators or subalterns. “The idea of nationality”, he claimed, “is so mighty and is making so brisk a progress in Europe that nothing can defeat it; withholding its progress would only serve the people of most revolutionary beliefs, who can see no other means to satisfy the desires of the many peoples but

---

343 Ibidem, vol. II/2, p. 147.

344 Ibidem, vol. II/2, p. 107-108.

345 Ibidem, vol. II/1, p. 274.

an overwhelming social tempest and a complete overturn of the existing order of things, to gather strength and popularity.”<sup>346</sup> One could recognise this statement as an ideological testament of the one who uttered them; hidden in the inquiry files, it was only found sixty years after the insurrection, in an independent Poland – just to mention it.

This insurrection was not, and indeed could not, be concluded by an act of capitulation. It is not even easy to find when it actually ended. 5<sup>th</sup> August 1864 is sometimes considered to be the symbolical date: on that day, by the wall of the Warsaw Citadel, witnessed by thousands of locals, the uprising’s last leader was hanged at the gallows – along with four of his associates, arbitrarily selected, as a warning to others: Jan Jeziorański (b. 1835; a clerk), Rafał Krajewski (b. 1835; an architect), Józef Toczyski (b. 1828; a former Siberian deportee, and an accountant by profession); and, Roman Żuliński (b. 1830, a teacher of mathematics).

Or, perhaps the end of the insurrection was marked by the day the last functionaries of the National Government, remaining in hiding and simulating a continuity of political power, destroyed the famous round stamp that had the magical power of command. The trouble is, the exact date is not really known. But, twenty-two-year-old Aleksander Waszkowski, a student of Petersburg University, the one who had arranged the daring robbery of the Central Cashbox of the Kingdom, still acted as the last Municipality Superior. Recklessly audacious and elusive, he alone was the insurrection almost by the end of 1864: his proclamations, put up by a few brave ladies, appeared in the city over and over again. So, perhaps the insurrection’s end was marked by the hanging of Waszkowski at the gallows, on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1865, at the very same place, on the slopes of the Citadel?

Till the end of April, the legendary and tiny troop under the command of Fr. Stanisław Brzóska (b. 1834) still resisted the enemy in Podlachia, though; perhaps, then, his execution, on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1865, in Sokołów-Podlaski, should be considered the closing chapter of this rising, later named the ‘January Insurrection’?

The numbers are uncertain, estimated, and not easily verifiable. Worse, they sum up very diverse individual lots and destinies, heterogeneous dramas, tragedies, and characters. Let us say the following, then: the insurrection decimated the generation of men born between 1830 and 1845, brought up in clerical, landed-gentry, bourgeois, or Jewish homes, in the Kingdom of Poland, Lithuania, Ruthenia, Galicia, and Greater-Poland; high-school or university-level students (attending, in most cases, Russian universities), or those who had just

---

346 Ibidem, vol. II/2, p. 218.

begun their professional careers only to then quit them. The volunteers' social conditions were aligned as their fleeced corpses covered the battlefields, local peasants throwing them into nameless pits.

Thousands of insurrection soldiers and members of the civilian organisation, in Lithuania and in the Kingdom, were subjected to brutal investigations and ended up at the gallows, before the firing squad or, more frequently, with a sentence of deportation to Siberia, to the Nerchinsk mines, to a convict gang, or, just settlement afar off. Some of those people, especially if disgraced in one way or the other, eventually managed to save their hides by fleeing abroad, thus forming a new wave of the homeless political émigré community. Initially restless and at loggerheads, like the antecedents of 1831, becoming organised into various conflicting factions, this community abated after France's defeat in the 1870 war and the Commune of Paris, and gradually blended into a number of foreign societies. Some of these émigrés moved, after 1867, to Galicia, which now was given autonomy – the only province where Polish language, education and national identity regained the right to publicly exist.

The Russian Partition featured the charred remains of burnt villages, trampled fields, rundown towns, confiscated or forcibly sold estates; notches left by one more lost generation. Alongside these losses, a compulsory silence fell amidst the terrorised society, forced to experience the devastation of institutions bestowed a few years before, police surveillance over Russified schools and offices, a stifling regime of censorship, and a suppression of any national sentiments and symptoms of social life.

In Lithuania, the tsarist regime took an even more ruthless revenge than in the Kingdom. The Empire's 'Western Country' was finally forced to acknowledge that it was an integral part of Russia, on the same footing as Russia's indigenous *guberniyas*. Public executions, not spared to the dwellers of Wilno by Governor-General Muravyov, were meant to kill off any thought of autonomy or resistance. The dissolution of Polish institutions, which – to mention the Wilno archaeological committee, gymnasiums, or the theatre – had developed for a little while, in the later half of the fifties, was now intended to familiarise the local population with the inalterable order of things. The choice for the intelligentsia, teachers and bureaucrats in particular, was to either become Russified, or to get lost. The petty, unproven nobility, deemed by Petersburg, not without reason, to have been a nourishing element of the rebellion, was formed into a peasantry class, and the Government made efforts to resettle the entire small-farm settlements – not always successfully – to the south-east of the Empire. Repressive measures affected the only-just-budding Lithuanian national movement: temporarily allied with its Polish counterpart, its purpose proved contrary to the monarchy's centralistic

interests; ever since, books and magazines ‘in the Lithuanian vernacular’ were to be printed in the Russian alphabet only.

Bitter mutual accusations, the settling of old scores and reckonings had begun before the final conclusion, deepening right afterwards, like with the November Insurrection. These threads were carried along multiple lines. The insurrection’s first historians and judges were some of the prisoners, a fact known to us today. Oskar Awejde (b. 1837), a lawyer, and a member of the several consecutive National Governments, yielded after the execution of Traugutt and his comrades to his investigators’ demands and began sharing with them his knowledge of the organisation’s secrets and activists. Over the course of eight months, he completed thirty-four notebooks at Pawiak, he was conscientiously particular about his account’s details and revealed the absurdity of the venture that he had significantly contributed to. And, he could legitimately expect – or fear, perhaps – that his story would be made public.

Writing of the insurrection in the press, we shall prove, in our own hand, what it was like in reality, and this is to say, weak, anarchistic, not capable of winning anybody, harmful, repeatedly misleading, let alone the black spots at the moments of awoken infatuations. [...] And, overall, openness in this respect will make the society understand that revolution is misfortune; that there is nobody to be prayed to, there are no saints; hence, to follow our example would be a horrible thing, pestilent to the country. In a word, I do hope that openness in this country shall prevent this insurrection from affecting the imagination of the young generation to come, as a gigantic, sacrosanct phenomenon leading to the fatherland’s salvage.

[*Zeznania śledcze i zapiski [...] Oskara Awejde* {‘Oskar Awejde’s [...] inquiry evidence and notes’} pp. 106-107; cf. *Zarys powstania styczniowego opracowany w warszawskiej cytadeli* {‘An outline of the January Insurrection, compiled in the Citadel of Warsaw’}, pp. XII-XIII].

Did he write this because he was expected to do so? Or, was it his own perception of recent history, from his standpoint as a prisoner? This is hard to rate. Karol Majewski soon followed in his footsteps, as did three activists lured from Paris by means of an adroit provocation of an agent fulfilling the instructions of General Trepov, Warsaw’s *oberpolitsmeister*. The inquiry committee encouraged their culprit historiographers to mutually comment on their narrations – a task they fervently applied themselves to: willing to save their skin, or, for history’s sake? Whatever their intent was, contrary to what certain editors in the inquiry jury devised, these prisoners’ stories of the insurrection would remain hidden for a hundred years.

The investigation into the documents, the reading of the testimonies, and the writing down of the history of the Polish rebellion were the tasks delegated to

special functionaries from the Ministry of War and some selected and trusted Russian publicists. At least one among them, Nikolai Berg (not related to the Kingdom's Viceroy) left behind a work that is in fact biased but, in fact, also penetrating and reliable, given the context of its time.

At liberty, printing houses located in Krakow or, more frequently, abroad, issued precipitant judgements and, often, obstinate polemics between the surviving actors or observers. These writings, brochures and pamphlets, as was the case with every preceding disaster, unravelled two currents of afterthought, becoming two legends. The first, mercilessly critical, charged the 'Red' inspirers with the responsibility of having dragged the country into an abyss of misfortune. The second claimed that the uprising ended in defeat owing to its insufficient revolutionary zeal and people's background, with the nobility being offered excessive consideration, an armed demonstration pursued instead of a national war. The development of those two trends of criticism, extending into the historiography, is part of the subsequent period.

Silence fell in the provinces that had been the civil war's theatre: no discussion, just a single allowed interpretation of the criminal *polskiy myatezh* ('Polish rebellion'). Moreover, Russian liberal intelligentsia milieus, that had been until recently favourable toward Poland, were now eventually overwhelmed by an inimical nationalistic wave, with a contribution from official propaganda, and conduced to a policy that eliminated any trace of Polish autonomy. Exponents of this intelligentsia soon took part in the destructive works of the Organising Committee established in Warsaw.

Judging by the memoirs and novels, a memory of the insurgent days appears to have been denied, with time, even in family talks, especially in the intimidated eastern lands. The continuity of tradition was broken down or subdued; Galicia was the only area where it could be cultivated. Years passed before writers, historians or publicists started discovering the lost threads intertwined, understandably enough, with the martyrdom legend – and, together with it, in a pitiless critique of political unreason, or, in comforting rationalisations such as “Their blood has not been spilled for naught”; “This Insurrection enabled us to survive as a nation”, etc.

The intergenerational continuity of Polish thought was likewise discontinued. Not just political thought either: philosophical too, with economic and technological knowledge added to that. The Polish intelligentsia would now have to start to become educated from the ground up, once again.

The January Insurrection and the enfranchisement of the peasantry marked the end of the nobility's Poland. This is obviously not to say that landowning nobles, or the landed gentry, would disappear. Their politically disgraced or

economically ruined representatives would indeed lose their properties and move to towns, with the remnants of their surviving resources or simply broke and bare, imbibed by the petite-bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, or the working class. Great property was however to survive, across the provinces of a divided country: in the east, it would continue for half a century more; in central, western and southern Poland, it lived eighty years. And this was for how long it retained its moral-and-social culture, its distinct place in society and, in some provinces and periods, its political influence as well.

The landed gentry would not, however, regain its leading social position and the lost authority that it owed, until a certain time, to its true-born nature, the possessions, access to schools, honours and statuses, that it had received more easily than the other classes could have. Within the three decades covered by the present part of our work, educational background, qualifications, skills and abilities became the main source of esteem and significance in Polish society. Although nowhere amounting to more than a tiny percentage of the population, the intelligentsia formed into a separate social class, adopting the name invented to describe it and, in rivalry with the nobility, came to the front of national undertakings and projects, incurring enormous human losses along the way.

Two spheres of activity are worth distinguishing in the history of this class.

The first, and the most natural one is, of course, professional activities. As the years progressed, with specialisations and expertise being enhanced, we can see how professional milieus, bound by shared interests and a behavioural style, stood out, at least in the big cities; hence, the intelligentsia, as a whole, seems to have been at its most coherent in those early years, when there was so little of it. As to its professional functions, there was no particular difference between the intelligentsia and the educated bourgeoisie of West- European countries, which were known by many a member of the class in question, trying their best to follow their model and example. Probably the only reason the local intelligentsia was, on average, not-so-well-educated and, usually, not-so-well-paid, was the scarcity of tertiary education available in their native country – a circumstance not helping them at all.

The other area where the intelligentsia started playing a central role, both in the emigration and at home, was in the production and propagation of ideas – regardless, in fact, of their type of professional competencies. And, it was no peculiar function, apparently: it was performed in all the countries of the modern era, on a permanent or haphazard basis, by people called (only since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) *intellectuals*, whose education was, usually, philosophical, legal, economic, or historical, and who exceeded the confines of their scientific speciality and professional practice. Characteristic to the Polish situation was

an oppressive dominance of national issues and aspects of political and social thought. However, this particular trait was common to many European nations of the epoch: Italians, Hungarians, Romanians, etc. – in a word, to all those who had their national awareness aroused, at least in their intellectual elites, but could not find fulfilment in their own independent state. The question about the actual social forces and roads to independence normally becomes primary in such a situation, subordinating to itself all the social, philosophical, and even religious, questions.

If it comes to searching for a reply to such a query within a despotic regime, intolerant to the freedom of political debate, under conditions of civilisational regression, in regards to the European avant-garde, a system of reasons emerges generating a special ideological role for the intelligentsia. This system makes the intelligentsia's task paradoxically entangled: since the fight for freedom and independence drives it toward the road of illegal – in extreme cases, revolutionary – action, whereas the civilisation-oriented task calls, conversely, for a long-term strategy, a legal one, if not conciliatory. Both these purposes are in the intelligentsia's own interest: it can look forward to economic benefits, combined with increased significance, yielded by the nationalisation of state institutions and the development of proprietorship, wealth, education and the cultural needs of the society. Yet, these tasks appear, as a general rule, to be contradictory within a short timescale: each of them generates a different system of values, and a different type of behaviours.

In Poland, this inner conflict of purposes and aspirations has burdened the intelligentsia severely. There is nothing surprising in the fact that recognition of the absolute primacy of the independence target favoured an ostentatious disdain for civilisation-related tasks, which often manifested itself in struggles with foreign influence; and, vice versa: the pre-eminence of the liberal idea of progress benefited rendering patriotic ideals inferior. There is no good solution to this dilemma under despotic and conservative rule: this is what the drama of the Polish intelligentsia – if not of Eastern and Southern Europe, in general – ultimately consisted of.

1863 was the tragic zenith of this drama; the intelligentsia, at least the less patient part of it, was primarily responsible for it, and paid a horrific price, if one counts the loss of life alongside the political and cultural catastrophe.





# Index

- Alexander I, tsar, 25, 212  
Alexander II, tsar, 212, 218, 219, 221,  
241, 246, 287, 290, 296, 333  
Aleksandrowicz Jerzy, 206  
Anczyc Władysław, 329  
Antonowicz Włodzimierz, 218  
Awejde Oskar, 314, 338  
Bacon Francis, 206  
Bakunin Michaił, 294  
Baliński Karol, 139, 263, 268, 269  
Balzac Honoré de, 61, 76, 78, 79, 202  
Bałaban Majer, 124  
Bałucki Michał, 260, 262  
Baranowski Ignacy, 168, 301, 307  
Bardach Juliusz, 200  
Bartoszewicz Julian, 183, 300  
Bartoszewicz Kazimierz, 227  
Batowski Aleksander, 123, 125, 140  
Bazyłow Ludwik, 211  
Beaupré Antoni, 102, 160  
Beauvois Daniel, 193  
Bem Józef, 154  
Bentkowski Władysław, 248  
Berg Fyodor, 329  
Berg Mikołaj, 213  
Berwiński Ryszard, 97  
Beyer Karol, 192  
Bielowski August, 88, 140  
Bobrowicz Jan Nepomucen, 253  
Bobrowski Stefan, 321  
Brătianu Ion, 238  
Brockhaus Friedrich Arnold, 253, 260  
Brodziński Kazimierz, 78, 79, 80, 81  
Brzozowski Stanisław, 181  
Brzóska Stanisław, 336  
Bucheż Philippe, 29  
Buckle Henry Thomas, 279  
Bukowski Andrzej, 151  
Cavour Camillo Benso di, 244  
Cegielski Hipolit, 147  
Chałubiński Tytus, 176  
Chłędowski Kazimierz, 259  
Chmieleński Ignacy, 296, 311  
Chociszewski Józef, 151, 273  
Chodźko Dominik, 186  
Chodźko Ignacy, 202, 219  
Chopin, Frédéric, 25, 38, 71  
Chwaściński Bolesław, 181  
Cienkowski Leon, 196  
Cieszkowski August, 146, 148, 155,  
204, 252  
Conrad Joseph, 292  
Corazzi Antonio, 180  
Custine Astolphe de, 43  
Ciołkosz Adam, 51, 239, 240  
Czartoryski Adam, 12, 20, 21, 22, 23,  
24, 25, 28, 31, 50, 114, 153, 209,  
249  
Czartoryski Władysław, 249, 280  
Czczot Jan, 82  
Czepulisko-Rastenis Ryszarda, 64, 65,  
168, 170, 175, 185, 187, 214  
Czwalina Józef, 74  
Czyński Jan, 39, 40, 51

Danek Wincenty, 201, 310  
 Daniłowski Władysław, 313, 319  
 Dante Alighieri, 11  
 Darasz Wojciech, 109  
 Darwin Charles, 256  
 Dąbrowski Jarosław, 293  
 Dembiński Henryk, 154  
 Dembowski Edward, 86, 96, 97, 113,  
 163, 202  
 Dembowski Leon, 86  
 Dębicki Ludwik, 254  
 Dickens Charles, 61  
 Dietl Józef, 255  
 Djakow Włodzimierz, 106  
 Dmochowski Franciszek-Salezy, 78  
 Dobrzański Jan, 122, 125, 186, 261,  
 266, 267, 271  
 Domeyko Ignacy, 34  
 Drēma Vladas, 180  
 Dubiecki Marian, 333  
 Duchiński Franciszek, 241  
 Dumas Alexandre, 78  
 Dwernicki Józef, 13  
 Dworzaczek Ferdynand, 176  
 Dybek Włodzimierz, 334  
 Dybowski Benedykt, 319  
 Działyński Tytus, 208, 252  
 Dzieduszycki family, 261  
 Dziewicki Seweryn, 30  
 Ehrenberg Gustaw, 105  
 Eisenbach Artur, 40, 124, 226, 227,  
 304-306  
 Eisenbaum Antoni, 71  
 Elżanowski Seweryn, 235  
 Estkowski Ewaryst, 149, 150  
 Estreicher Karol, 182  
 Fajnhauz Dawid, 154  
 Feldman Wilhelm, 247  
 Ferdinand I, emp., 127  
 Fijałkowski Antoni Melchior, 291  
 Filippi Parys, 260  
 Flottwell Eduard, 92  
 Franz Joseph, emp., 128, 254  
 Fredro Aleksander, 88, 93  
 Frejlich Józef, 284  
 Frederick William IV, king of Prussia,  
 50, 92, 118  
 Gadon Lubomir, 10  
 Gałęzowski Seweryn, 174, 250  
 Garibaldi Giuseppe, 283, 285  
 Gebethner Gustaw-Adolf, 223  
 Gerson Wojciech, 216  
 Giller Agaton, 161, 293, 311, 312, 314,  
 325  
 Gizewiusz Gustaw, 515  
 Glücksberg Teofil, 82  
 Golian Zygmunt, 259  
 Gołuchowski Józef, 203, 226  
 Gorchakov Mikhail, 213, 286, 287,  
 288, 290  
 Gosselin Emilia, 162  
 Goszczyński Seweryn, 46, 88, 89, 100,  
 101, 139  
 Grabowski Michał, 78, 79  
 Gregory XVI, pope, 44  
 Grocholska Ksawera, 162  
 Gruss Noe, 250  
 Gumplowicz Ludwik, 265, 271  
 Gurowski Adam, 16  
 Handelsman Marcelli, 20  
 Hauke-Bosak Józef, 332  
 Hechel Fryderyk, 120, 121, 133, 134  
 Hefern Robert, 122  
 Hegel Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 86,  
 93, 94, 155  
 Helcel Antoni-Zygmunt, 134, 136, 300

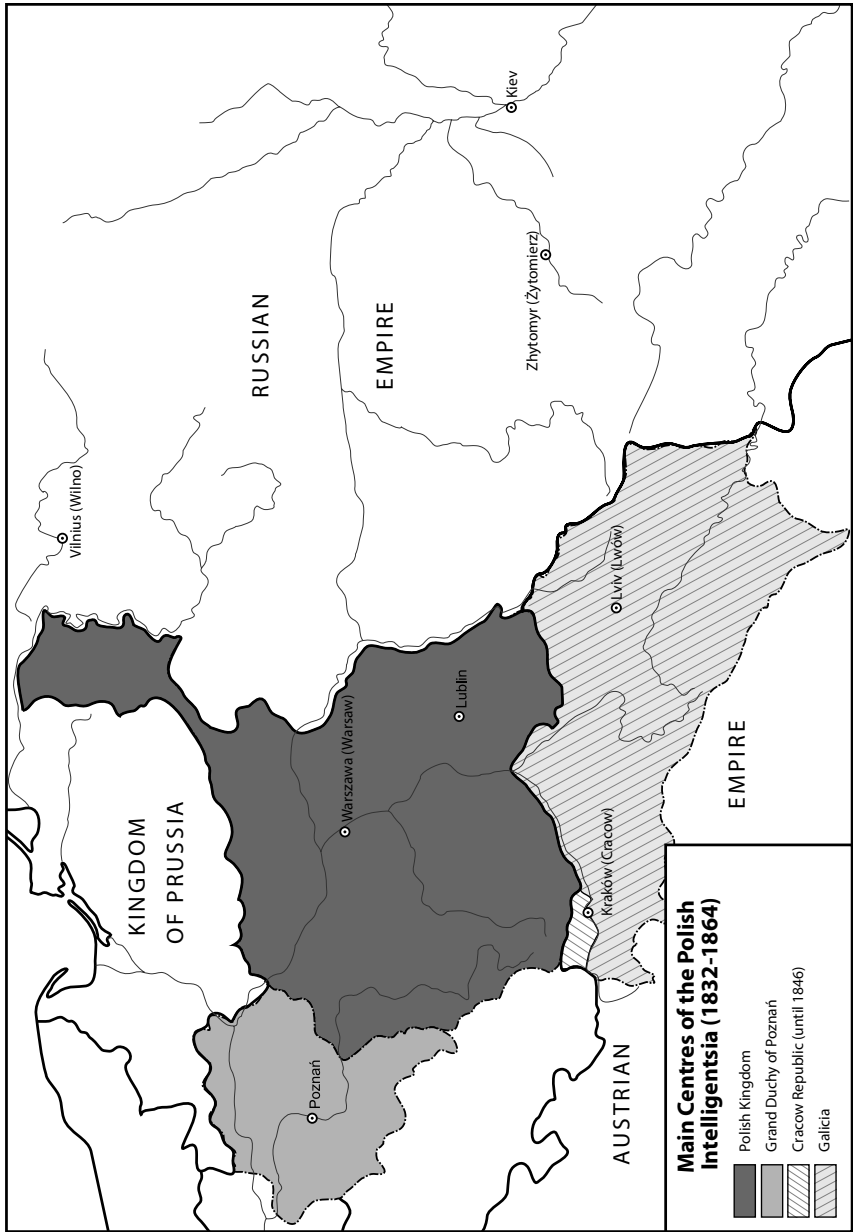
Heltman Wiktor, 17, 18, 131, 202  
 Herzen Alexander, 211, 239, 240, 241, 294  
 Herder Johann Gottfried von, 199  
 Hirszfeld Ludwik, 214  
 Hiszpański Stanisław, 286, 291  
 Hoffman Karol-Boromeusz, 24, 25, 40  
 Hoffman Klementyna, 37  
 Hube Romuald, 73, 171, 197  
 Hugo Victor, 11  
 Humboldt Alexander von, 135  
 Jabłonowski Ludwik, 273  
 Jagoda Zenon, 90  
 Jan Kazimierz, king of Poland, 84  
 Janicki Stanisław, 181  
 Janion Maria, 109, 131  
 Janowski Jan-Nepomucen, 16; 17, 149, 268  
 Januszkiewicz Eustachy, 27  
 Jasiński Janusz, 151  
 Jastrow Markus, 303, 307  
 Jastrzębowski Wojciech, 174  
 Jedlicki Jerzy, 168, 203, 205  
 Jelowicki Aleksander, 27, 38  
 Jenike Ludwik, 234  
 Jeziorański Jan, 336  
 Jurgens Edward, 234, 235, 308  
 Jurkiewicz Karol, 206  
 Kaczkowski Karol, 178  
 Kalbarczyk Damian, 17, 45  
 Kalemka Sławomir, 213  
 Kalinka Walerian, 132, 133, 136, 202, 243, 247, 249  
 Kamiński Henryk, 106, 107, 110, 163, 242, 279  
 Karpiński Wojciech, 242  
 Kieniewicz Stefan, 110, 146, 215, 221, 313, 314, 330  
 Kierbedź Stanisław, 181  
 Kirchmayer Wincenty, 136  
 Kirkor Adam-Honory, 195, 196, 2018  
 Kizwalter Tomasz, 96  
 Klaczko Julian, 216, 243, 244, 245, 246, 249, 284  
 Kłoskowska Antonina, 203  
 Kniaziewicz Karol, 12  
 Kock Paul de, 78  
 Kolberg Oskar, 208  
 Kołłątaj Hugo, 15, 263  
 Konarski Szymon, 32, 33, 101, 102, 158, 160, 170, 194  
 Korzeniowski Apollo, 292, 311, 321  
 Korzeniowski Józef, 170, 183, 245, 246, 298, 307  
 Kosiek Zdzisław, 174  
 Kossuth Lajos, 238  
 Kościuszko Tadeusz, 24, 291, 295  
 Kowalewski Józef, 197, 318  
 Koźmian Jan, 251  
 Krajewski Henryk, 156, 157  
 Kramsztyk Izaak, 189, 206, 303, 304, 307  
 Kras Janina, 133  
 Krasicki Edmund, 141  
 Krasieński Zygmunt, 31, 110, 139, 242  
 Kraszewski Józef-Ignacy, 78, 82, 84, 93, 170, 181, 185, 201, 220, 228, 233, 257  
 Kraśnicka Lucyna, 112  
 Kraushar Aleksander, 174, 223  
 Kremer Józef, 135, 183  
 Krępowiecki Tadeusz, 16, 17, 29, 30  
 Kronenberg Leopold, 220, 228, 229, 230, 232, 233, 234, 235, 286, 291  
 Krotowski Jakub, 119  
 Królikowski Ludwik, 90

Krzywicki Kazimierz, 300, 307  
 Kucharczyk Grzegorz, 74  
 Kucharzewski Jan, 55, 56, 68, 153,  
 167, 172  
 Kulecka Alicja, 200  
 Kumelski Norbert Alfons, 38  
 Kurpiński Karol, 212  
 Kurzyna Jan, 284  
 Lamennais Hugues Félicité Robert,  
 45, 98  
 Langiewicz Marian, 320, 321  
 Laponneraye Albert, 18  
 Le Brun Aleksander, 176, 178, 301  
 Ledru-Rollin Alexandre Auguste, 239  
 Lelewel Joachim, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20,  
 24, 25, 29, 31, 33, 84, 139, 201, 227,  
 239, 249  
 Lenartowicz Teofil, 139, 187  
 Lesznowski Antoni, 227  
 Levittoux Karol, 104  
 Lewandowski Władysław, 18  
 Lewestam Fryderyk Henryk, 200, 222  
 Lewocka Katarzyna, 85  
 Libelt Karol, 69, 84, 93, 94, 97, 107,  
 119, 126, 149  
 Linde Samuel-Bogumił, 73, 79, 141  
 Lompa Józef, 152  
 Louis-Philippe, king of France, 12, 28  
 Lubliner Ludwik-Ozjasz, 227, 307  
 Lunin Mikhail, 161  
 Lutowski Wojciech, 35  
 Łepkowski Józef, 152, 257  
 Łobarzewski Jan Kanty Hiacynt, 135  
 Łopuszański Bolesław, 32  
 Łoza Stanisław, 180  
 Łukaszewicz Józef, 91  
 Łukaszewicz Lesław, 100  
 Łyskowski Ignacy, 151  
 Macaulay Thomas Babington, 138  
 Maciejowski Waclaw-Aleksander, 73,  
 199, 200  
 Majer Józef, 134, 256  
 Majewski Karol, 286, 311, 331, 338  
 Malinowski Ernest, 35  
 Malinowski Mikołaj, 218, 246  
 Malinowski Stanisław, 100  
 Małecki Antoni, 300  
 Mann Maurycy, 137, 142, 258  
 Marcinkowski Karol, 34, 91, 92, 95,  
 145  
 Marconi Henryk, 179, 180  
 Marczewski Witold, 292  
 Marx Karl, 113, 229  
 Matecki Teofil, 148  
 Mazzini Giuseppe, 11, 15, 238, 239,  
 244  
 Meisels Ber, 124, 286, 304, 305, 307  
 Merzbach Samuel, 223  
 Metternich Klemens Lothar, 114, 115,  
 120  
 Mianowski Józef, 300  
 Michalski Jerzy, 140, 251  
 Michelet Jules, 48, 138  
 Mickiewicz Adam, 13; 14, 15, 27, 28,  
 36, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 51,  
 93, 117, 153, 197, 209, 250  
 Mierosławski Ludwik, 107, 110, 115,  
 116, 118, 119, 154, 202, 243, 244,  
 246, 280, 285, 311, 320  
 Miłkowski Zygmunt, 246  
 Miniszewski Józef Aleksander, 297,  
 312  
 Mochnacki Maurycy, 16, 22, 37, 78,  
 98, 154, 263  
 Molik Witold, 145  
 Molińska-Woykowska Julia, 92

Moraczewski Jędrzej, 96, 97, 119, 252  
 Moniuszko Stanisław, 196  
 Mrogonowiusz Krzysztof, 151  
 Muchliński Antoni, 196  
 Nabelak Ludwik, 35, 46  
 Napoleon I, 11, 48, 284  
 Napoleon III, 238, 243, 330  
 Natanson Ludwik, 176, 178  
 Neufeld Daniel, 304  
 Newton Isaac, 206  
 Nicholas I, tsar, 57, 73, 103, 118, 153,  
 164, 173, 194, 210, 212  
 Niemcewicz Julian Ursyn, 11, 24, 98  
 Niemojowski Bonawentura, 13  
 Norwid Cyprian-Kamil, 187, 247, 248,  
 310  
 Nowak Andrzej, 242  
 Odyniec Antoni Edward, 219, 246,  
 Orgelbrand Samuel, 222  
 Orzeszkowa Eliza, 331  
 Ostrowska Teresa, 176, 177  
 Padlewski Zygmunt, 313, 321  
 Palacký František, 126, 255  
 Pancer Feliks, 181  
 Paskevich Ivan, 53, 54, 87, 153, 207  
 Pawlikowski Mieczysław, 273  
 Pestalozzi Johann Heinrich, 150  
 Pęczarski Nikodem, 206  
 Pius IX, pope, 276  
 Podczaszyński Bolesław, 186, 257  
 Podczaszyński Karol, 179, 180  
 Pogodin Nikołaj, 211  
 Poklewska Krystyna, 271  
 Pol Wincenty, 135, 137, 140, 183, 206,  
 257  
 Popiel Paweł, 136  
 Potocki Tomasz, 205  
 Poznański Karol, 166  
 Prażmowski Adam, 207  
 Przeclawski Józef, 78, 79  
 Przyborowski Walery, 213, 223  
 Przybylski Waclaw, 225, 326, 329  
 Pułaski Kazimierz, 16, 17, 29  
 Quinet Edgar, 48  
 Raciborski Adam, 250  
 Raczyński Edward, 91  
 Radziszewski Bronisław, 326  
 Rederowa Danuta, 36  
 Romanowski Mieczysław, 262, 272,  
 273  
 Rosen Mathias, 227, 291, 304, 307  
 Rosnowska Janina, 135  
 Rożek Michał, 180  
 Różycki Karol, 94  
 Ruprecht Karol, 233, 287, 308, 309,  
 310, 311, 325, 335  
 Rzewuski Henryk, 79, 81, 192, 193,  
 201  
 Saint-Just Louis Antoine, 23  
 Saint-Simon Claude Henri de, 29, 92  
 Sapieha Leon, 21, 23, 277  
 Sawicz Franciszek, 102, 160  
 Schiller Friedrich, 87, 223  
 Schiller Joanna, 167  
 Schmitt Henryk, 125, 142, 162, 201,  
 262, 267, 268, 275, 276, 281, 319  
 Scott Walter, 78, 79  
 Sękowski Józef, 71, 196  
 Shakespeare William, 83  
 Siemieński Lucjan, 44, 88, 89, 136,  
 137, 188, 258, 270  
 Sienkiewicz Karol, 24  
 Sierakowski Zygmunt, 293, 313  
 Skarbek Fryderyk, 73  
 Skimborowicz Hipolit, 86  
 Skowronek Jerzy, 96

Slotwiński Konstanty, 87  
 Słowacki Juliusz, 25, 26, 44, 46, 49,  
     111, 131, 247, 254, 260, 271  
 Smirnow Anatol, 32  
 Smolka Franciszek, 122  
 Smolka Stanisław, 127  
 Sobańska Róża, 162  
 Sobieszczański Franciszek Maksymil-  
     ian, 222, 297  
 Sokołowski Marian, 248  
 Sosnowska Danuta, 44  
 Spasowicz Włodzimierz, 300  
 Staniszewski Walerian, 158, 162  
 Stankiewicz Zbigniew, 289  
 Starkel Julian, 262  
 Staszic Stanisław, 24, 230  
 Statkowski Wincenty, 232  
 Stattler Wojciech, 137  
 Stefanowska Zofia, 47, 248  
 Stefański Walenty, 92, 119  
 Straszewska Maria, 26, 44  
 Strzyżewska Zofia, 54  
 Sudolski Zbigniew, 111  
 Sue Eugeniusz, 79  
 Sulicki Edward, 233  
 Supiński Józef, 278, 279  
 Syrokomla Władysław, 183, 185, 186,  
     187, 194, 195, 196, 253  
 Szabrański Antoni, 83  
 Szajnocha Karol, 84, 138, 139, 140,  
     142, 200, 208, 262, 267, 270  
 Szarota Tomasz, 311  
 Szczepański Alfred, 260  
 Szlenkier Ksawery, 286  
 Szokalski Wiktor, 34, 36, 177, 178, 214  
 Szujski Józef, 260, 262, 263, 265, 269,  
     277  
 Szwarc Andrzej, 188  
 Szwarce Bronisław, 292, 311  
 Szymański Karol, 320  
 Szyrma Krystian Lach, 28  
 Ściegienny Piotr, 105, 106  
 Śliwicki Franciszek, 215  
 Śliwowska Wiktoria, 160, 163  
 Śniadecki brothers, 230  
 Śniadecki Jan, 161  
 Świętosławski Zenon, 31  
 Tabiś Jan, 66, 196, 218  
 Taczanowski Edmund, 206, 328  
 Tocqueville Alexis de, 155  
 Toczyski Józef, 136  
 Toeplitz Henryk, 227  
 Towiański Andrzej, 45, 46, 47, 49, 89  
 Traugott Romuald, 323, 326, 331, 332,  
     333, 334, 335, 338  
 Trentowski Bronisław, 94, 114, 120  
 Trepov Fiodor, 338  
 Tyssowski Józef, 113, 121  
 Tyszkiewicz Eustachy, 196  
 Tyszyński Aleksander, 83  
 Ujejski Kornel, 139, 142, 261, 262,  
     269, 270, 271  
 Uvarov Sergei, 56, 66, 153  
 Victor Emanuel II, king of Italy, 283  
 Waligórski Józef, 35  
 Waszkowski Aleksander, 336  
 Węgierska Zofia, 136, 202, 203  
 Wężyk Aleksander, 105  
 Wielogłowski Walery, 258, 265, 277  
 Wielopolski Aleksander, 114, 290,  
     296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 303,  
     304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 315, 329  
 Wilkońska Paulina, 85, 161, 194, 202  
 Wiszniewski Michał, 113, 121, 134  
 Witkowska Alina, 79, 238  
 Witwicki Stefan, 39

Wolff August-Robert, 223  
Wolicki Konstanty, 153  
Wolski Włodzimierz, 85  
Wołowski Ludwik, 35  
Worcell Stanisław, 29, 30, 45, 239  
Woykowski Antoni, 92, 93  
Wóycicki Kazimierz W., 84, 85, 182,  
183, 186, 203  
Wrzosek Adam, 256  
Wyka Kazimierz, 254  
Wysocki August, 89  
Wysocki Józef, 129  
Zaborowski Cyprian, 197  
Zakrzewski Bogdan, 93  
Zaleski Bohdan, 26, 42  
Zaliwski Józef, 58, 100, 159  
Zamoyski Andrzej, 221, 226, 288  
Zamoyski Władysław, 24  
Zaorska Barbara, 250  
Zasztowt Leszek, 56, 174  
Zawadzki Józef, 82  
Zawadzki Władysław, 89  
Zejszner Ludwik, 135  
Zembrzuski Ludwik, 176  
Ziembicki Witold, 176  
Ziemiałkowski Florian, 122, 123, 127,  
280  
Zienkowicz Leon, 124, 128  
Zmorski Roman, 85  
Żarnowska Anna, 188  
Żmichowska Narcyza, 84, 85, 157,  
188, 198, 206, 235, 237, 310  
Żmichowski Erazm, 310  
Żmigrodzka Maria, 109, 131  
Żuliński Roman, 336  
Żupański Jan, 92, 253





## **Geschichte - Erinnerung - Politik**

Posener Studien zur Geschichts-, Kultur- und Politikwissenschaft

Herausgegeben von Anna Wolff-Powęska und Piotr Forecki

- Band 1 Machteld Venken: Stradding the Iron Curtain? Immigrants, Immigrant Organisations, War Memories. 2011.
- Band 2 Anna Wolff-Powęska / Piotr Forecki: Der Holocaust in der polnischen Erinnerungskultur. 2012.
- Band 3 Marta Grzechnik: Regional Histories and Historical Regions. The Concept of the Baltic Sea Region in Polish and Swedish Historiographies. 2012.
- Band 4 Lutz Niethammer: Memory and History. Essays in Contemporary History. 2012.
- Band 5 Piotr Forecki: Reconstructing Memory. The Holocaust in Polish Public Debates. 2013.
- Band 6 Marek Stoń (ed.): Historical Atlas of Poland in the 2nd Half of the 16th Century. Voivodeships of Cracow, Sandomierz, Lublin, Sieradz, Łęczyca, Rawa, Płock and Mazovia. Volume 1-4. Translated by Agata Staszewska, Editorial Assistance Martha Brożyna. 2014.
- Band 7 Maciej Janowski: Birth of the Intelligentsia 1750-1831. A History of the Polish Intelligentsia – Part 1. Edited by Jerzy Jedlicki. Translated by Tristan Korecki. 2014.
- Band 8 Jerzy Jedlicki: The Vicious Circle 1832-1864. A History of the Polish Intelligentsia – Part 2. Edited by Jerzy Jedlicki. Translated by Tristan Korecki. 2014.
- Band 9 Magdalena Micińska: At the Crossroads 1865-1918. A History of the Polish Intelligentsia – Part 3. Edited by Jerzy Jedlicki. Translated by Tristan Korecki. 2014.
- Band 10 Anna Wolff-Powęska: Memory as Burden and Liberation. Germans and their Nazi Past (1945-2010). Translated by Marta Skowrońska. 2015.

[www.peterlang.com](http://www.peterlang.com)