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Author(s): Heinrich A. Stammler

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Stanisław Przybyszewski and Antoni Chołoniewski: Two Interpreters of the Meaning of Polish History

When in August 1914 the First World War broke out it must have seemed to the Poles that the fervent prayer of their national poet, Adam Mickiewicz: "For a great War, the general War, we beseech Thee, o Lord!" was fulfilled. The armed conflict between the Central Powers on the one hand, and Russia as a prominent member of the Triple Entente on the other side could not but raise again the Polish question which, as a problem of international politics, had lain dormant, as a consequence especially of the Franco-Russian rapprochement which was to culminate in the military alliance of 1893.

As Poland was partitioned between Germany, or rather Prussia, Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire, to the Polish politicians and statesmen who wished to keep the Polish question alive in the public opinion of the world and the belligerent powers in particular, it was from the commencement of hostilities on a foregone conclusion that efforts to this purpose would have to be made in either warring camp. This paper is concerned with some aspects of Polish propaganda directed at public opinion in Germany and Austria. It so seems that the history of these Polish endeavors to inform and enlighten the politically articulate and educated classes of the German-speaking world has not yet been written. And that for perfectly plausible reasons. The outcome of the Great War, the fact that Poland found herself as a victor allied to the triumphant Western powers, and the close ties of the restored *Rzeczpospolita* with France during the twenties made it inopportune to focus much attention on this aspect of the Polish revival. The fact that the first military actions undertaken by Poles fighting under their own standards in this war took place within the framework of the Austrian and German war effort against Russia could not be glossed over. But Polish military history during the period between the two World Wars tended rather to stress the inner independence of the Polish Legions from the aims of the Central Powers than the of necessity close co-operation on the battlefield and in the trenches — a point of view which seemed to be justified by the fact that the Legions were eventually disbanded and their leader, Józef Piłsudski, interned by the Germans at the Fortress of Magdeburg.¹ Nevertheless, as the end of the war could not for a long time be foreseen it remained important to the Poles that their voice be heard also in the councils and circles of the Central Powers, which not only made decisions but also shaped and moulded public opinion.

This is not the place to discuss the presentations and demarches made by Polish

¹ Evidence for this point of view is furnished, among other publications, by an interesting, amply illustrated volume printed in Warsaw in 1929 under the title: *Polska w latach wojny światowej w kraju i na obczyźnie*. The editors do not disregard the fact that the Polish Legions fought against Russia within the framework of the war effort of the Central Powers. They play down, however, the close military co-operation between Poles, Germans and Austrians, and the occasional intimate comradeship in arms resulting therefrom. On the other hand, the fighting experience of Polish volunteer units mobilized in France, Canada, the USA, and Italy is extolled and glorified.

politicians to influence the political and military leaders in Berlin and Vienna. What in this context is of interest is the attempt of culturally representative Poles to revive a sympathetic interest in Polish history, Polish civilization, and to point to the great achievements Poland could boast in the various fields of creative human endeavor. As yet no systematic effort has been made to register and investigate the initiatives proposed for this purpose. Nevertheless, this use of a purposefully directed *Kulturpolitik* must not be overlooked or minimized.

The whole problem is characterized by a certain complexity resulting, on the one hand, from the recognition of the fact that the Poles, at least as long as the Franco-Russian alliance held, could not put great hope in France, despite their historical sympathy for this country and its culture, but would have to try to arrange themselves as best as possible with the Central Powers. On the other hand, the course steered toward Polish independence had to avoid all too close ties with any of the belligerent nations and their governments.²

It cannot be denied, however, that from the autumn months of 1914 on there began in Austria, of course, but also in Germany a lively agitation in behalf of the Polish cause. The library of the Herder Institute at Marburg is in possession of a fascicle of pamphlets and brochures printed in Germany between 1914 and 1916 and devoted to a discussion of the Polish problem. Some of these writings were composed by prominent Poles who seemed at that time willing to stake their cause on the cards played by the Central Powers. Such people could be found in the most various shades of the Polish political spectrum, from the Piłsudskian socialist and man of letters Wilhelm Feldman to the clerical conservative Prince Olgierd Czartoryski.³ In the spring of 1915, before the great Austro-German offensive which wrested almost entire Poland from Russian domination and thereby made the Polish problem and its solution all the more pressing for the governments in Vienna and Berlin, ALEXANDER VON GUTTRY, the Polish publicist and essayist, published his much discussed book "Die Polen und der Weltkrieg," designed above all for purposes of factual information about Poland, her people, geographic distribution, economic resources and the divergent developments in the Russian, Prussian and Austrian areas of the partitioned nation. But the introduction also contains some reflections concerning the mission of Poland, her destinies, and the meaning of her historical existence. Here he formulates succinctly the dominant theme of Polish history which was then to recur again and again in all the various pronouncements coming from the pens of Polish authors with the intention to enlighten and instruct German and Austrian public opinion with regard to Poland and her resurrection as a nation: "It was Poland's mission to protect

² „Denselben Kurs bewußter polnischer Unabhängigkeit, Vermeidung jeder zu engen Bindung an eine der drei Kriegsparteien, verfolgte Piłsudski auch in politischer Hinsicht.“ (MARTIN BROZAT *Zweihundert Jahre deutsche Polenpolitik*. München 1963, p. 138.)

³ The fascicle contains a number of pamphlets concerning Poland and the Polish question, and especially Polish-German relationships. The authors are Poles like Wilhelm Feldman, Prince Olgierd Czartoryski and STANISŁAW PRZYBYSZEWSKI (*Polen und der heilige Krieg*. München, Berlin 1916), or Germans, some of them writing conciliatory in tone and intention, as f. i. the well-known political scientist Adolf Grabowsky, others, however, frankly anti-Polish in the spirit of a militant Prussian "Ostmarkenpolitik" or "Hakatismus."

Western civilization, liberty, and progress in freedom and to contain the ever resurgent surf of Asianism. To this mission, i. e., to serve as a bulwark of Central and Western Europe against the Russian advance, Poland remained faithful to the very last days of her existence, in the fulfillment of this task unstintingly bringing the greatest sacrifices. Poland's history bears testimony thereof, of a continual sanguinary struggle undertaken for the defense of Western culture and civilization against the floods of barbarism."⁴ But GUTTRY wanted also to draw attention to the delicate position of the Poles, divided as they were between three great powers in the midst of an armed conflict of unprecedented fury, and therefore forced to pursue policies which had to be carefully balanced between commitment and accommodation: "This is not an easy task to face for a partitioned people which was forced to create for itself in the course of generations a tri-partite national existence."⁵ Another well-known public figure seriously committed to an activation of a closer Polish-German understanding was the aforementioned journalist, publicist and literary critic, Wilhelm Feldman, who edited in Berlin, since October 1915, a periodical "Polnische Blätter," designed to acquaint the educated circles of the capital of the *Reich* with the specific political, cultural and economic problems of his homeland and to influence them in favor of a solution of the Polish question which would be of equal advantage to Germany as well as to a resurrected Poland.⁶ This magazine was the Berlin equivalent of the Polish weekly "Polen" which appeared in Vienna under the auspices of the Supreme Polish National Committee founded on August 16, 1914, in Cracow under the leadership of Władysław Jaworski.⁷ The journal was,

⁴ ALEXANDER VON GUTTRY *Die Polen und der Weltkrieg. Ihre politische und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in Rußland, Preußen und Österreich.* München 1915, pp. VII—VIII. — The translations from Polish and German sources cited in this article are mine. H. A. St.

⁵ *Ibidem* p. XVII. Cf. later pertinent studies published in 1931 by the same author in Paris (in German): *Polens geistiges Antlitz. Eine kulturhistorische Skizze, and: Unbekannte Literatur. Charakteristiken polnischer Dichter.*

⁶ As regards Wilhelm Feldman's evolution from Jewish nationalism via assimilationism and socialism to conscious Polish patriotism see now EZRA MENDELSON *Jewish Assimilation in Lvov: The Case of Wilhelm Feldman*, in: *Slavic Review* 28,4 (1969) pp. 577—590.

⁷ The editor of PRZYBYSZEWski's collected letters (*Listy. Zebrał, życiorysem, wstępem i przypisami opatrzył Stanisław Helsztyński.* 3 vols. Gdańsk, Warszawa, Wrocław 1937—1954), the most erudite and productive representative of Przybyszewski scholarship, points out that the writer was a convinced adherent of the Committee. The Polish politician Hipolit Sliwiński, residing at the time in Vienna, enlisted the poet for the purpose of having him co-operate as a publicist with the Committee, which claimed "to be the nucleus for a future Polish national government" (HANS ROOS *Geschichte der Polnischen Nation 1916—1960. Von der Staatsgründung im ersten Weltkrieg bis zur Gegenwart.* 2nd ed. Stuttgart 1964, p. 22 = *Urban-Bücher* vol. 49). In a letter to the editors of "Polen," written July 15, 1915, PRZYBYSZEWski expresses his gratitude for the acceptance of his article "Von Volk zu Volk," adding that nothing could make him happier than to work selflessly for the holy cause of Poland (*Listy* vol. 2, p. 635). What actually was printed in the July issue 1915 was an article under the title "Haben die Polen versagt?," originally published by PRZYBYSZEWski in the "München-Augsburger Abendzeitung" (June 16/17, 1915). Here the author endeavors to explain why an all-Polish uprising against Russia was not feasible, at least not in a form expected by some people in Germany or Austria. The article "Von Volk zu Volk" was printed by the editors of "Polen" in 1916 only. Originally it had appeared in the "Münchener Neueste Nachrichten" (Vorabendblatt) of April 26—28, 1916. — I am obliged to

of course, close to the advocates of the Austro-Polish orientation which ran counter to the considerations of the German politicians. These cross-currents of incompatible policies as pursued by the chanceries on the Ballplatz and the Wilhelmstraße cannot be discussed here. Suffice it to emphasize that the Poles had in both capitals their German language periodicals founded for purposes of not only political vindication of the Polish aspirations, but also "Kulturpolitik" in the wider sense of the term. FELDMAN published in Berlin an essay under the title "Wege zur polnischen Seele," thereby anticipating the very headline under which later, early in 1917, STANISŁAW PRZYBYSZEWSKI was to bring out his much more ebullient, emotionally charged, but also more controversial booklet "Von Polens Seele," a Polish version of which was edited under the title "Szlakiem duszy polskiej."⁸ Unfortunately Feldman's brochure in the publication of which he apparently was aided by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, the celebrated classical philologist stemming from Kujawy, was not accessible to me. From reviews, however, it can be inferred that he argued the best way to an appreciative understanding of the Polish mind leads through a study of Poland's art and literature — a literature which, with the exception of a handful of specialists, was widely unknown in the West so that even in 1931 ALEXANDER VON GUTTRY could publish in Paris a treatise in German under the characteristic title "Unbekannte Literatur. Charakteristiken polnischer Dichter."

The spirit in which Feldman, above all a man of letters, approached his task can be seen from the final passages of an essay about STANISŁAW WYSPIAŃSKI, written in German, where he speaks about a reputedly lost play, composed by the great Polish dramatist in German and entitled "Mickiewicz in Weimar." FELDMAN points out that in the concluding scene Goethe pressed a kiss upon the forehead of the young Polish poet, and continues: "Was Wyspiański, as he revived this symbol, a poet only or also a seer?"⁹

Feldman's sympathetic characterization of this outstanding Polish painter and playwright appeared as the introduction to a German translation of two of Wyspiański's dramas which deal with tragic episodes in Polish history. This book was printed as one volume in a series called "Polnische Bibliothek" and put on the market by the prestigious Munich publishing house of Georg Müller between 1916 and 1918 — another ambitious venture embarked upon with the aim of making the sophisticated German reader familiar with the greats of Polish literature and thereby rekindling a sense of sympathy for the Polish cause.¹⁰ As editors functioned the already

Professor Günther Wytrens, Director of the Slavic Institute of Vienna University, for having checked Przybyszewski's (not always reliable) statements regarding his contributions to "Polen" for the years 1915/1916.

⁸ The Polish version prepared by Przybyszewski himself diverges in many respects from the German edition. This is the case especially in the second part where the author launches into an impassioned feud with his Polish literary adversaries, coupled with an eloquent vindication of the "Młoda Polska" movement in literature, philosophy and the fine arts.

⁹ In: STANISŁAW WYSPIAŃSKI *Die Warschauerin. Novembarnacht*. (Substantial introduction by Wilhelm Feldman.) München 1918, p. LXV (= *Polnische Bibliothek*. Sect. 3, vol. 2).

¹⁰ Also Przybyszewski evinced an interest in this publishing venture. On February 22, 1916, he began to correspond with Guttry about his possible collaboration. Even a German edition of Przybyszewski's collected works was discussed. This ambitious plan was beyond

mentioned writer and publicist Alexander von Guttry and Władysław von Kościelski, the son of a well-known Polish politician with close connections to the Prussian royal court, who in the nineties of the last century was a much talked of public figure in Berlin political circles on account of his endeavors to help usher in a more satisfactory *modus vivendi* between Poles and Germans in Prussia's Eastern provinces. Even though the policies he advocated eventually failed, it can be seen from the activities of his son that this tradition was not dead yet in the family.

Meanwhile, the role of the intermediary between Poland and the German educated public was seized, with the blessing of the Supreme Polish National Committee, by a personality who, in contrast to Wilhelm Feldman e. g., was by no means unknown to German literary circles. In fact, it can be said that around the turn of the century he had enjoyed fame and even notoriety in the centers of German literary life, especially in Berlin. This was Stanisław Przybyszewski who as an author figures in the annals of both German and Polish literature. Although in 1898 he had shifted his permanent residence from Berlin to Cracow to become there the scintillating leader of Polish symbolism, the so called "Młoda Polska" movement, he was not forgotten in Germany the more so as in 1906 he returned in Germany, and took up his residence in Munich where he was surprised by the outbreak of the Great War.

Przybyszewski was born in 1868 in the village of Łojewo in the then Prussian province of Posen [Poznań], graduated from the German gymnasium at Wongrowitz [Wągrowiec] and then went to Berlin to study architecture. But his predominant interest in science, literature and music caused him soon to abandon this career, and when in 1892 he published his essay on Chopin and Nietzsche, a *tour de force* displaying the mark of a precocious, if somewhat erratic genius he achieved literary fame almost overnight. A series of plays, stories, novels and essays, all written in German in a daring, highly provocative vein, Nietzschean, pre-Freudian with intimations of expressionism, made him one of the most widely discussed authors of the day.¹¹ He belonged to the bohemians grouped around August Strindberg when he by turns sojourned in Berlin, and struck up a passionate, albeit vicissitudinous literary friendship with Richard Dehmel.¹² His friends, admiringly, and his detractors,

all possibility of realization, but his novellette "Krzyk" ("Der Schrei") was incorporated in this same series (cf. PRZYBYSZEWSKI Listy vol. 2, pp. 642—643).

¹¹ Concerning the part played by Przybyszewski in German literary circles see JULIUS BAB Richard Dehmel. Die Geschichte eines Lebenswerkes. Leipzig 1926. Older but revealing appraisals can be found in ARTHUR MOELLER VAN DEN BRUCK Die moderne Literatur in Gruppen- und Einzeldarstellungen. Berlin, Leipzig 1899—1902, and ALBERT SOERGEL Dichtung und Dichter der Zeit. Eine Schilderung der deutschen Literatur der letzten Jahrzehnte. Leipzig 1928. A recent treatment is MANFRED SCHLUCHTER's dissertation: Stanisław Przybyszewski und seine deutschsprachigen Prosawerke 1892—1899. Tübingen 1969. PRZYBYSZEWSKI's years in Germany are subjectively described in his memoirs: *Moi współczesni — Wśród obcych*. Warszawa 1926. An excellent, slightly condensed German version was published under the title: *Erinnerungen an das literarische Berlin*. Aus dem Poln. übertr. von Klaus Staemmler. München 1965. Cf. the review of Przybyszewski's memoirs by HERMANN STERNBACH in: *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie* 8 (1931) pp. 503—504, and STANISŁAW HELSZTYŃSKI *Przybyszewski w Niemczech*. Warszawa 1935.

¹² F. W. NEUMANN Stanisław Przybyszewski und Richard Dehmel, in: *Münchener Beiträge zur Slavenkunde*. Festgabe für Paul Diels. München 1953, pp. 259—284 (= *Veröffentlichungen des Osteuropa-Institutes München* vol. 4).

grudgingly, bestowed on him, half in praise, half in irony, the sobriquet "der geniale Pole" [the Pole of genius]. He haunts the letters of Dehmel in the guise of an oddly ambiguous figure, partly devoted friend and kindred spirit, partly taunting and tempting demon.

During the war years this fascinating figure was to make another appearance on the German literary scene, this time as the eloquent champion of the Polish cause before his German *confrères* and readers, and a sort of *praeceptor Germaniae* regarding things Polish, especially things of the mind, the soul, the heart.¹³ Knowing his Germans well he perceived with an uncanny sense of purpose that the best way to impress them would be an emotional appeal combined with a quasi metaphysical approach to the elucidation of the deeper meaning of the historical existence of the Polish nation and its glories. That he overdid it, thereby to some extent robbing himself of his success, was partly the fault of his all too exuberant, sentimental temperament and rhetoric.

Early in 1916 he published a lengthy essay under the title "Polen und der heilige Krieg," a Polish version of which was printed in Vienna shortly before the appearance of the German text. Przybyszewski chose this title because some zealously patriotic German publicists had emphasized that the Great War was a struggle for the defense of the most sacred legacies of the German nation. He countered with the contention that in Polish eyes the Polish cause was no less sacred, and that the Germans in their specific situation ought to arrive at a sympathetic understanding of this historical constellation. He goes on to say: "The present essay . . . is not meant to be a profession of political faith, nor is it concerned with the political prospects, aspirations and hopes of the Polish people: Its sole purpose is to pave the way for an understanding between two highly civilized nations who, despite closest vicinity, have become in the course of time more and more estranged from each other."¹⁴ Considering Poland a belligerent nation, on account of the Polish Legions fighting under Piłsudski in close comradeship of arms with the Austrians and Germans against the Russian hordes, he demands that this sacrifice be fully appreciated and honored. Then he proceeds, in his unmistakably personal, highly emotional as well as hyperbolic style, to enumerate those very qualities of the Polish mind, the Polish soul, the Polish mentality, which constitute the inner meaning of Poland's historical mission and make the Poles richly deserving of a glorious resurrection of their lost commonwealth. These qualities are above all, in Przybyszewski's opinion, a boundless love of liberty and freedom and an all-embracing sympathy and tolerance which found its most memorable realization in the great federation of nations under the Jagel-

¹³ How Przybyszewski envisaged this task becomes clear from a letter of November 1914, addressed to his friend Wilhelm Zielonka, residing at that time in Nuremberg: "Down to this day nothing is known here about the Poles . . . Nothing is so close to my heart than to help build bridges between Poles and Germans . . . It seems to me that finally an understanding between two so highly civilized nations united in a common fight against brutishness and barbarity should not be too difficult a business. At present German society seems to be inclined benevolently toward us Poles. It's a matter now of removing all reasons for mutual distrust and misunderstanding . . ." (PRZYBYSZEWSKI *Listy* vol. 2, p. 621).

¹⁴ PRZYBYSZEWSKI *Polen und der heilige Krieg* p. 5.

lonian kings, and a sacrificial willingness to defend Western Christendom and civilization against the encroachments of both Turk and Muscovite. The author is not afraid of clothing his exhortations addressed to the German reader in bold, near blasphemous terms when he says, in the spirit perhaps of his beloved Słowacki: "Liberty: I believe I am justified in maintaining that this word has with no other people attained such a significance as with the Poles. With them, basically, it is not so much a term, a concept — rather it is the innermost, deepest substance of a Pole's life and his most sublime religion. He does not need God so much for his salvation — what is salvation to him if he is to live in servitude —, God he needs above all as a helper in the attainment of freedom."¹⁵

Thus some basic motifs, as already broached in the writings of Guttry and Feldman, reappear here with redoubled impact. One particular feature stands in need to be stressed, namely the identification of Mongol, Turk, and Muscovite ("Moskal"). It will be seen that this characterization of the Russian people and Russia's historical role, her westward expansion, the most tragic victim of which was Poland, was not only conditioned by the war situation and the concomitant psychological warfare, but also by certain precedences noticeable in Polish intellectual history of the 19th century.

In the same way as Feldman was to do in his Wyspiański essay, also Przybyszewski, toward the end of his brochure, conjures up the mighty shadow of Goethe, enjoining the Germans to follow the maxim of the sage of Weimar: "There is a step in our development where we feel the weal or woe of a neighboring nation as if it were our own. This level of civilization was appropriate to my own nature," and to apply it to the fates of their Polish neighbors.¹⁶

The observer is not surprised to find the German echo to these exhortations and preachments somewhat faint. So f. i. would the German reader be perplexed at encountering passages like the following: "This, however, I may assert without the slightest trace of nationalistic arrogance that Poland, since the foundation of the Jagellonian University at Cracow at the end of the 14th century was the very focus of the entire European civilization."¹⁷ No wonder that a reviewer coolly remarked: "Only the intention of the writer to prepare the way for an understanding between Germans and Poles is of importance and interest. This aim, so desirable and commendable in itself, cannot be attained by writings like this."¹⁸

New events in the development of the Polish question, new attempts to solve it, however halfheartedly put into execution, may have caused him to take up his pen again in order to resume his role as a mediator between Germans and Poles. He was

¹⁵ Ibidem p. 25.

¹⁶ Ibidem p. 102. It is strange to see how Przybyszewski here has recourse to the authority of Goethe for whom he had nothing but distaste and antipathy. To him can be applied what HERMANN STERNBACH said: "There were and are even nowadays a great number of people in Poland who have not much use for Goethe. He is not sufficiently fervent for them. In their eyes he appears all too olympic as if fashioned of cold marble, even if they are not inclined to deny the powerful influence Goethe exerted on Polish literature." (Goethes Faust im polnischen Gewande, in: Germanoslavica 2 [1932 — 1933] pp. 369 — 372; here p. 370.)

¹⁷ PRZYBYSZEWSKI Polen und der heilige Krieg p. 74.

¹⁸ In: Das literarische Echo 18 (Berlin 1915/1916) col. 1156.

fortunate in finding in Eugen Diederichs not only a generous, understanding publisher, but also a man of vision and humanitarian initiative.¹⁹ Immediately after the publication of "Polen und der heilige Krieg," Przybyszewski commenced work on another essay meant to reveal to the German reader the Polish mind in its most sacred and sublime aspirations. In a letter to Guttry of April 6, 1916, he ventilated the question whether it would not be possible to publish this proposed essay in the series "Polnische Bibliothek" which at that time was in its planning stage.²⁰ He hoped to complete his labors on this treatise by May, 1916. Then, however, the connection with Eugen Diederichs was established which was the more welcome as the publisher was willing to meet the modest financial demands of this author who almost through his entire career found himself in dire material straits. The preparation of the text, however, dragged on for several months; Przybyszewski took pains to point out in communications to his publisher that the elucidation of a whole nation's mentality and character was an uncommonly complex task. He failed to mention, though, that he did not hesitate to make ample use of materials published by him earlier, as e. g. articles printed in various German newspapers or his essay "Szopen i naród," written in 1910 in Cracow.²¹ However that may have been, by the end of October 1916 he put the last finishing touches to his manuscript to be entitled "Von Polens Seele." The proclamation of a revived Polish kingdom, signed by William II and Francis Joseph, on November 5, 1916, seemed to Przybyszewski a singularly propitious date for publishing his essay, and accordingly he urged his publisher to bring it out.²² There were, however, to elapse several months, for the usual technical reasons, before the brochure could appear in May 1917.

It is characteristic of Stanisław Przybyszewski that in justifying a new venture in this direction he referred to the "warm reception" which his pamphlet "Polen und der heilige Krieg" was allegedly accorded by the German public.²³ Undeterred by critical voices, he again chided the Germans for their total ignorance of Polish history, Polish culture, and Polish literature. Then he proceeds to enlighten his educated readers in the lands of German "Kultur" about the true values of the Polish soul, giving good reasons for the role he has taken upon himself with the following conciliatory remarks: "A modest itinerant teacher who, one time by accident marooned in the world of German culture, owes much to it, now wishes,

¹⁹ A circumstance favoring the undelayed acceptance of this *vademecum* for Germans in their troubled relationship to Poland and the Poles was the fact that the noted German student of East European affairs, Dr. Karl Noetzel, who at that time functioned as an adviser to Eugen Diederichs especially in the matter of editing a series of brochures called "Schriften zum Verständnis der Völker," was able to act as an understanding mediator between Przybyszewski and his estimable publisher (PRZYBYSZEWSKI Listy vol. 2, p. 651).

²⁰ PRZYBYSZEWSKI Listy vol. 2, p. 644.

²¹ Occasional articles from Przybyszewski's pen had appeared between 1914 and 1916 in the "München-Augsburger Abendzeitung," "Frankfurter Zeitung" and "Der Tag" (Berlin), all of them dealing with Polish-German relationships, Polish literature, the German "Polenlieder" etc.

²² PRZYBYSZEWSKI Listy vol. 2, p. 665.

²³ STANISŁAW PRZYBYSZEWSKI Von Polens Seele. Ein Versuch. Jena 1917, p. 1 (= Schriften zum Verständnis der Völker).

as a token of gratitude, to pay back his debt by introducing his German hosts to his own Polish civilization and its treasures." What later, in 1933, was to be stated by Max Vasmer in a widely discussed symposium on Polish-German relations, namely that the most astonishing fact with regard to the relationships between these two vicinal peoples is their general mutual ignorance about each other, was anticipated by Przybyszewski: "An understanding between Germans and Poles must be utterly desirable also for the Poles. Mutual distrust is a consequence of a deep mutual ignorance of the national psyche of either people."²⁴ Subsequently the author elaborates a systematic construct designed to define some characteristic, and at the same time opposed traits in the mental make-up of the two nations. While to the Pole the German temperament appears dominated by objectivism, factualism and a certain inclination toward philosophic abstractionism, the Polish mind seems to be determined by emotionalism, refined sensibility and a cult of ideas only as far as they result from sentimental values. Przybyszewski, however, is ready to admit that the Germans, on account of residues of once intensely cultivated values of sensibility and the heart, as opposed to the pure reason, have much more in common with the Poles than the Latins with their rationalism, sensuality and ice-cold, disillusioned clarity. It is significant that nothing is said in this context about the Anglo-Saxon mind, although in other writings Przybyszewski passes harsh verdicts on excessive English utilitarianism, materialism and hypocritical, mercantile morality.²⁵

The Russians, at least in their majority, are for him nothing but Mongols, Asiatics under a thin Western veneer; he has nothing but a fine contempt for figures like Leonid Andreev, Maksim Gorkij and even Lev Tolstoj. Dostoevskij is for him the embodiment of the basically anti-Western Russian nature, forcefully rebelling against Europeanization imposed from above.²⁶

²⁴ Ibidem p. 3. — Cf. MAX VASMER *Der deutsche Einfluß in der polnischen Literatur*, in: ALBERT BRACKMANN (ed.) *Deutschland und Polen. Beiträge zu ihren geschichtlichen Beziehungen*. München, Berlin 1933, pp. 41 — 50.

²⁵ STANISŁAW PRZYBYSZEWSKI *Szlakiem duszy polskiej*. Poznań 1917, pp. 90 and 96.

²⁶ PRZYBYSZEWSKI *Von Polens Seele* pp. 23, 25 and passim. Cf. the letter to Wilhelm Zielonka quoted above (note 13) where he says: "[On account of German ignorance about Poles and things Polish] . . . constant misunderstandings have occurred, because people here all the time take us for Russians, and with all this there can hardly exist a deeper gulf between two nations than between us and the Russians. . ." (emphasis added, H. A. St.). In his attempt to confront Germans and Poles in terms of differences in national character Przybyszewski, of course, does not stand alone. J. K. KOCHANOWSKI had published in 1913 in Warsaw a book "*Nad Renem i Wisłą*" devoted to an antithesis of the Polish and German national "soul." Having done research in the history of the German middle ages the author takes pains to explain the differing national traits of the two peoples as the consequence of the different historical course both nations traversed in their political and cultural development. In his later work "*Polska w świetle psychiki własnej i obcej. Rozważania*" (Warszawa 1920; 2nd ed. Częstochowa 1925), written under the influence of the Austrian sociologist Ludwig Gumplowicz and Houston St. Chamberlain, KOCHANOWSKI, occasionally echoing ideas of the neo-messianistic philosopher Lutosławski, views the Poles as the purest representatives of the Aryan race, in many respects superior to the other branches of the Indo-European family of nations. Also Przybyszewski time and again argued that the Poles are the most cultured nation as

What is reiterated in Przybyszewski's second illumination of the Polish-German problem is the vindication of Polish tolerance and the cult of freedom. The terms have not been essentially changed, only the emphasis, the high pathos appear to be strengthened. The same is true of the somewhat exaggerated claims he prefers for Poland's decisive role in the cultural development of the occident. So when he advances the quite untenable thesis that the Reformation had, properly speaking, its roots in Poland, simply because of some anti-papal murmurs among the Polish nobility and some of the humanists associated with the Alma Mater Cracoviensis, even before Martin Luther nailed his theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church.²⁷ I am citing this here as but one example of Przybyszewski's propensity toward hyperbolic statements. Of greater interest, however, is his intuition that Poland's European mission, the meaning of her historical existence is not exhausted with being the *antemurale*, the *propugnaculum* in the defense of Western Christendom and civilization. The *Rzeczpospolita* was also the mighty fortress of freedom and liberty, the very seat of broad-minded tolerance at a period already when most of Europe was darkened by the night of fanaticism and bloody persecution — a tolerance, by the way, which was not the fruit of rational cerebration as in Western and Central Europe but of the naturally sweet disposition of the Polish soul, the *dulcis sanguis Polonorum*. The Polish soul has from the earliest beginnings been an *anima naturaliter christiana*.²⁸

A further characteristic trait of the Polish soul is a specific brand of yearning, a deep sentiment the Germans call *Sehnsucht*, and the Poles *tęsknota*. This yearning is, according to Przybyszewski, tantamount to a flight into the infinite, a sublime urge to become one with the absolute, in absolute freedom to attain personal and national fulfillment in communion with the deity. As crown witnesses for this ideal striving he adduces the great Polish poets and artists from Kochanowski to Chopin and Kasprówicz, singing their praise in the most exalted tones.²⁹

The most sublime mission for Poland and the Poles does perhaps not even consist in the eventual triumphant rebirth of their state, but the extension of the limits of the human soul and sensibility, or in his own words: "The amazing synthesis of the refined civilization of the West with the infinitely profound Slavic feeling: The synthesis of the outstanding culture of the mind, built up in the course of thousands of years, with the sublime culture of the heart, the specific achievement of the Slavs — a culture of the heart saturated by such an intense exuberance of feeling that it sometimes gets almost lost in the twilight of mystical ascensions, and reaches out into

compared with the other societies of the Western world. J. ZAMORSKI in an article under the heading "Dziejowe przemiany polskiego typu" (in: *Przegląd wszechpolski* 4, 6, and 10, Warsaw 1925) sees constancy in the Polish national character as one marked by the prominence of sensibility and a delight in tradition. In a study published in 1926 under the title "Cechy moralne narodu jako wynik historii," K. TYMIENIECKI, on the other hand, sees as typically Polish traits a great love of freedom, a certain lack of discipline and perseverance, and, among the social gifts, a considerable talent for parliamentary forms of government, administration and justice.

²⁷ PRZYBYSZEWSKI *Von Polens Seele* p. 26.

²⁸ *Ibidem* p. 22.

²⁹ *Ibidem* p. 54.

the distant otherworldly regions of messianic yearning — a culture of the heart in the case of which the cultural value proper tends to lose its import, as it strives to become a veritable religion.”³⁰ Przybyszewski finishes his essay with the typical remark: “For us Poles, a Poland from sea to sea is perhaps a utopian postulate, but to extend the kingdom of a Poland of the spirit reaching from one pole of the world-soul to the other — that is our mission.”³¹ One wonders which expressions Roman Dmowski and his political friends would have used to comment on these lucubrations of the visionary from Kujawy had they but deigned to take notice of them . . .³²

Again the German echo tended to be somewhat vague, half-way between rejection and recognition. Thus, the noted expert in East European cultural affairs, Dr. ARTHUR LUTHER, stated in the widely read literary review “Das literarische Echo:” “A poet with a fiery soul tries hard to endow his own people with all noble qualities imaginable. Eventually one gains the impression that only the Pole is the true human being to whom we others must look up in shy admiration and worship. No wonder, then, that soon a critical reaction will set in. It will not prevail, however, since Przybyszewski’s fervent eloquence carries even the reluctant reader along. As the last impression there will remain the thought: A nation which has found such a truly inspired advocate, must be a great nation.”³³

Somewhat dizzy after a bout with Przybyszewski’s metaphysical fantasmagorias the observer feels relieved to have firmer ground under his feet when he approaches the attempts made by Antoni Chołonewski to interpret the inner meaning of the history of the Polish nation. For even though this author also is inclined to idealize certain characteristic features in the historical development of Polish society, he, nevertheless, takes as his point of departure not so much the witness of poets and artists but rather the actual course of Polish history itself.

Chołonewski was born in 1872 in Stryj in Eastern Galicia. After graduating from secondary school he worked as a journalist in Lemberg [Lwów], and since 1903 in Cracow where he became a correspondent and reporter for the Warsaw journal “Świat,” a contributor to Wilhelm Feldman’s review “Krytyka,” and an editor of the daily “Głos Narodu.” Soon after the publication of his popular biography of Tadeusz Kościuszko, an exercise in rather conventional hero-worship, he made a

³⁰ Ibidem pp. 90—91.

³¹ Ibidem, the grand finale of this remarkable exercise in metapolitics.

³² They may not have taken cognizance of these metapolitical effusions of a poetic soul gone astray in the maze of politics. But the leading figures, politicians, editors and publicists, of Polish National Democracy knew very well that originally Przybyszewski had thrown in his lot with the Supreme Polish National Committee, Piłsudski and the orientation represented by men like Guttry and Feldman. Even after he had become completely disillusioned with his former pro-German enthusiasms he was never allowed to forget these political “sins” he had committed under the stress of the historical moment. (In a letter to Śliwiński of January 2, 1915, Przybyszewski had made no bones about his hostility toward the *Endecja* because this party was so adamantly opposed to a Polish-German *détente*.) This added much to the bitterness and loneliness under the shadow of which he spent the last years of his life.

³³ In: Das literarische Echo 19 (Berlin 1916/1917) cols. 1159—1160. The recension by ALBERT M. WAGNER in: Deutsche Literaturzeitung 38 (1917) Nr. 35 (September 1) is much more negative in tone stating that Przybyszewski’s endeavors to arrogate to himself the role of a mediator between Poles and Germans must be judged as unfortunate and ill-advised.

name for himself as an historico-political publicist. He strongly vindicated, even at that time, the right of Poland to have a territorial access to the Baltic Sea, especially in his book "Nad polskim morzem" of 1912, which was followed in 1919 by the pamphlet "Danzig, ville polonaise," written in the same spirit.³⁴ Generally considered a spokesman for Polish National Democracy ("Endecja"), he was not swayed, however, by Dmowski's arguments for an accommodation with the Russian Empire, but insisted on the historical mission of Poland in Eastern Europe in his dissertation "Istota walki polsko-rosyjskiej" (Kraków 1916), pleading for a rapprochement between Poles, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians, so as to roll back the frontiers of a menacingly expansionist Russia.³⁵

In his political and historical views he was influenced, above all, by Stefan Buszczyński, whom he ardently admired; he also edited some of Buszczyński's writings. Buszczyński, who flourished between 1821 and 1892, had originally seen a solution of the Polish question in the formation of an Austro-Slavic Habsburg empire with the capital shifted from Vienna to Cracow. Realizing the unrealistic character of such designs Buszczyński transferred his attention to a critical examination of the course of Russian history. Availing himself, albeit in a somewhat journalistic and dilettantic manner, of ethnographic and statistical methods of investigation, he undertook it to prove that the Russian people was basically not of Aryan, Slavic stock, but of Mongol and Turkic origin, only thinly covered by a historically accidental Slavonic veneer. This train of thought which tended to exclude the Russians from the Slavic-speaking family of the Indo-European nations was set in motion by the ideas and writings of Franciszek Henryk Duchiński, a Polish publicist and political activist in the emigration who, hailing from Kiev, lived between 1816 and 1893. The main theme set forth in his books and pamphlets consisted in the attempt to demonstrate the racial and cultural differences between the Slavs as members of the Aryan group of nations and the Russians as Turanians. Having established for himself a reputation as a politically influential figure by his activities as an agent of the Hotel Lambert, his participation in the Crimean War, his agitation against Russian-inspired Pan-Slavism and his commendable exertions on the post of

³⁴ Przybyszewski had in 1920 taken up his residence in Danzig where the Polish government had found a small sinecure for him in the management office of the Polish railroads. Completely frustrated in his erstwhile hopes for a Polish-German rapprochement he now sought to become a spokesman for Polish culture and general Polishness in the Free City. In his uphill fight with the aim to make people forget his former German connections he even made some feeble attempts to come to terms with men who were considered close to the National Democrats, so, f. i., Chołoniewski who faithful to his role as a protagonist in the Polish struggle for an access to the sea had moved to Bromberg [Bydgoszcz] where he edited a review entitled "Zmartwychstanie." In a letter dated June 21, 1922, Przybyszewski using flattering as well as hypernationalistic terms and expressions approached him with the request to be admitted as a contributor to the journal. This initiative remained completely barren, and, as the editor of Przybyszewski's letters remarks, did nothing to save him from further N. D. invectives (PRZYBYSZEWSKI Listy vol. 3, pp. 252—253).

³⁵ In his "Geschichte der politischen Ideen in Polen seit dessen Teilungen (1795—1914)" (München, Berlin 1917) WILHELM FELDMAN quotes this work to corroborate his statement: "...und man kann sagen, daß seit dieser Zeit [the last years of the 15th century] der polnisch-russische Krieg eigentlich gar nicht aufgehört hat" (p. 10).

the curator of the Polish National Museum at Rapperswyl in Switzerland, he cultivated his relationships with French, Swiss, and German liberal writers and historians. Thus he was able to exercise some influence on the views of the French politician and historian HENRI MARTIN, expressed in the latter's book "La Russie et l'Europe" (Paris 1866), which was also translated into German. Although Duchyński's racist theories were repudiated as unscientific and fantastic by the Polish linguist Baudouin de Courtenay and the Russian historians Kostomarov and Pypin, his rationalization of what originally was merely a term of opprobrium and defiance hurled in the face of the Russian conqueror, namely that the Russians were not Europeans, but Asiatics, was accepted by wide circles of Polish society with considerable applause.³⁶

In 1917 Chołoniewski published, simultaneously in German and in Polish, an essay under the title "Duch dziejów Polski" or "Geist der Geschichte Polens." With this interpretation of the spirit of Polish history the author may have pursued three different aims. Firstly, he intended to give a summary of his long running feud with two schools of Polish historiography, that is the conservative Cracow group and the Warsaw positivists, who both, their principal differences in outlook notwithstanding, tended towards a highly critical evaluation of certain phenomena of Polish history which a more romantically inclined view was apt to overpraise and idealize. Chołoniewski himself in his ideas about Polish history belonged rather to the camp of the patriotic idealists than to the conservative or progressive realists in either Cracow or Warsaw. Thus it was his second aim to help Polish society see their own past in Chołoniewskian terms. Thirdly, although, unlike Przybyszewski, he did not address himself expressly to German or Austrian readers, he nevertheless must have counted on spreading his idealist and patriotic views also among the German reading public. Otherwise, he would not have seen to it that a German version was published together with the Polish one at a time when the Central Powers were engaged in a life and death struggle with the Russian Empire. It is highly probable that he himself prepared the German text since no translator is named on the title page, and certain

³⁶ For Chołoniewski's views and Buszczyński's influence upon him see LUDWIK ZAKULSKI's essay in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*. Vol. 3, Kraków 1937, pp. 406—408. About Henri Martin and his role as an advocate of the Polish cause in France cf. ERNST BIRKE *Frankreich und Ostmitteleuropa im 19. Jahrhundert. Beiträge zur Politik und Geistesgeschichte*. Köln, Graz 1960, pp. 285 ff. (= *Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* vol. 6). Birke also mentions Duchyński's influence upon the formation of Martin's views regarding the naturally hostile relationships between Poles and "Muscovites." The eminent Polish philosopher and sociologist MARIAN ZDZIECHOWSKI speculated in his book "Die Grundprobleme Rußlands. Literarisch-politische Skizzen" (Aus dem Poln. übersetzt von Adolf Stylo. Wien, Leipzig 1907), especially in the chapter "The Pan-Asiatic Dream," about how some Russians like Sergej Jużakov and Prince Esper Uchtomskij, whom one could classify as forerunners of the "Eurasian" school in the interpretation of Russian history and civilization, turned tables, as it were, seeing in Russia's affinity to "Asia" no longer a mark of opprobrium, but a great historical, geo-political and cultural advantage. Zdziechowski states that Prince Uchtomskij "propounded the thesis of Russia's physical and spiritual unity with Asia, i. e., what years ago the Pole Duchyński had tried to prove, and what then had been regarded by all Russian patriots, particularly in the camp of the Slavophiles, as the most outrageous shame one could heap on Russia" (p. 162).

stylistic and orthographic peculiarities point to a non-German author however well he may have otherwise mastered the German language.

Chołoniewski's interpretation of the spirit of Polish history follows about the same lines as drawn by other Polish authors. He stresses the altruism of Polish policies which used the vital forces of the Polish nation to the advantage of other peoples by making Poland the protective wall of Europe against Turk and Mongol, Mongol being used in this context also as a synonym for Muscovite. Also Chołoniewski sees in Poland the glorious safe retreat of tolerance, freedom and liberty, in his formulations visibly influenced by his mentor's, BUSZCZYŃSKI's book of 1882 "Znaczenie dziejów Polski: Walk o niepodległość," which he edited in 1917 in a German translation under the title "Freiheitshort. Deutung der Geschichte Polens."

In the name of these sublime virtues the Polish constitution was written according to perhaps untimely, but eternal, bold and exalted principles. Even when Chołoniewski adduces the testimony of men like Mickiewicz or Chopin he does not proceed, like Przybyszewski, in the spirit of a myth-creating romanticism, but of a publicist engaged in a passionate love affair with the history of his motherland. While Przybyszewski's eulogies of the native Polish love for freedom easily take on the character of an involvement in poetic and metaphysical, almost mystical concepts of freedom, Chołoniewski's emphasis on the Polish dedication to liberty is based rather on a politically democratic ethos. So he states that while in Europe under the system of monarchical absolutism there was encouraged the type of the unreasonably obedient subject of the sovereign, in Poland there was in force the proud maxim: *Nil de nobis sine nobis*, so that all the libertarian principles of a state and order based on law, for which in modern times rivers of blood were shed, evolved in Poland already since the 15th century.³⁷ Also the modern idea that the government is there for the sake of the people, and not the people for the sake of the government is basically a Polish conception. For the Poles, from medieval times on, maintained that the king is there for the benefit of his people and not vice-versa. For this reason the sorry phenomenon of regicide was unknown in Polish history since the spirit of the *Szlachta* was republican, egalitarian and democratic, animated by a justified pride in liberty and the rule of law.³⁸

Furthermore, he goes on to say that the spirit of federation was a spirit of sympathy and brotherhood, and that in opposition to the Western military monarchies and also Russia the binding power keeping the Commonwealth together was love, not brute force.³⁹

This made it possible to organize Polish society in the spirit of luxuriant autonomism, in contrast to the deadening centralism of Western Europe and Muscovy. It goes without saying that such a political and social disposition of the nation could not but affirm and practise the broadest religious tolerance also, thereby setting a shining example for the entire civilized world.⁴⁰

³⁷ ANTON CHOŁONIEWSKI *Geist der Geschichte Polens*. Krakau 1917, pp. 10—11.

³⁸ *Ibidem* pp. 15 and 23.

³⁹ *Ibidem* pp. 24—25.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem* p. 37.

Even the wars the Poles had to wage in the course of their history were wars in defense of their own existence, or campaigns undertaken for high ideal goods, witness Sobieski's victory over the Turks under the ramparts of Vienna in 1683. Another testimony to this spirit is the fact that the only king on whom Polish history has bestowed the designation "The Great" was Casimir, not a conqueror and great captain in the field, but a wise lawgiver, administrator and prince of peace. And in the 16th century the Polish declaration: "Abhorrent lectissimi et dulcissimi mores nostri ab omni crudelitate, natura ipsa nostra ad omnem humanitatem facta, refugit ferocitatem" — was echoed by the statement of a French envoy to Poland who amazed by what he saw in that country exclaimed (in 1573): "Cette nation déteste l'effusion du sang, si n'est contre les ennemis déclarés."⁴¹

In conclusion of his exposition of the moral and social significance of Poland's history Chołojewski sums up his findings: "A higher type of political and social organization led to the undeniable moral superiority of Poland over her closer or more distant neighbors. This commonwealth which inculcated in its school children already that politics must not be *macchiavellistic*; which in the midst of the reign of predatory instincts did not wage wars of aggression, examining every military emergency from the point of view of justice; which in view of a ubiquitous fanaticism gave, as the only country in Europe, a splendid example of religious and national tolerance; which did not persecute anybody for what he believed or for what he was; which did not assassinate its kings, but also did not permit them to slaughter their subjects; this society which held the splendor of the law in higher esteem than the splendor of the crown, which felt a horror before all depredation and brought liberty to its neighbors — this commonwealth, in the course of its entire history, has surpassed morally and socially all the other European countries of today as well as of yesterday."⁴²

Chołojewski's idealistic interpretation of the spirit of Polish history resulted partly from the fact that he had his own axe to grind. Finding support in the writings of his revered master, Buszczyński, he wanted to correct the sharply critical and, as it seemed to him, all too negativistic conclusions which other Polish historians had drawn from the collapse of the Polish state in the 18th century. Although he does not name them he refers in several passages of his treatise to what he calls false and unfair inferences made by some historians with regard to the character and ethos of historical Polish society. Only the efforts of Russian historians to ascribe the tragic finale of the history of Poland as an independent nation to anarchy and moral disintegration he labels as downright slanderous and mendacious.⁴³ Likewise he does not address himself so directly and intimately to the German reader as Guttry, Feldman or Przybyszewski had done. He does not go to the trouble of enlisting German or Austrian sympathies by extolling the exploits of the Polish Legions. He mentions them but briefly, comparing them to the legions raised by Dąbrowski to serve in Napoleon's armies.⁴⁴ It is doubtful whether this comparison could strike a

⁴¹ *Ibidem* p. 58.

⁴² *Ibidem* p. 78.

⁴³ *Ibidem* pp. 79 — 80.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem* p. 7.

sympathetic chord in the minds of German or Austrian readers while their countries were involved in a titanic struggle against a coalition the most prominent continental member of which was France. The name of Piłsudski whom other Polish propagandists in the camp of the Central Powers tended to glorify as a great military leader in a war of liberation, at least during the first two and a half years of the conflict, does not appear at all. This is only natural with a publicist who in his writings published before August 1914 had proclaimed that Poland would have to be freed not only from the Russian, but also from the Prussian yoke. Nevertheless, it is evident from his emphasis on the virtues and noble ideals of the Polish spirit, that his arguments for justice for Poland ran roughly along the lines followed by Przybyszewski and other Polish writers engaged in the pursuit of the same task, regardless of their inner-Polish political affiliations, sympathies and antipathies. They all concur in vindicating the Polish cause by an appeal to the sense of justice and reference to great ideals which, as they wanted to assure their readers, were virtually realized in the historical evolution of the Polish commonwealth. These were: A lofty idealism, a noble and unselfish striving for sympathy and brotherhood between the Poles and other nations, a native democratic ethos and passionate love of freedom and liberty, a generous adherence to the principle of religious tolerance and, last but not least, the willingness to make unstinting sacrifices for the protection of Europe from the powerful peril in the East, be it Mongol, Turk or Muscovite. It would be interesting to speculate and investigate which moral arguments for the resurrection of Poland were advanced by the advocates of the Polish cause in the camp of the Western allies, especially after the Russian revolution and the failure of all attempts to reconcile Polish aspirations with the war aims of the Central Powers. They cannot have been very divergent from those addressed by Polish writers to the educated and influential circles in Berlin and Vienna, with the sole difference that what was added here as a potent ingredient was a very strong anti-German, or rather anti-Prussian orientation. It is known, after all, that Dmowski, for example, was ready to condone even an *Anschluss* of rump-Austria with Germany, if only Poland could sufficiently be enlarged in the West at Prussian expense. But otherwise what Przybyszewski, Chołoniewski and others told the Germans in order to remind them of justice for Poland was then apparently so much part and parcel of the Polish national ideology and self-knowledge that slight variations, applied according to shifting political aims and constellations, could and would not essentially alter its substance.

On conclusion the interesting fact may be noted that some of these vindications of the spirit of historical Polish society have surprisingly reappeared in recent German historiography concerning Poland. In any case, it would be no exaggeration to state that the German conception of Polish history has undergone during the last twenty five years considerable changes in outlook and interpretation. What can be observed is a definite move away from an embattled historiography employed in the service of national or even nationalistic claims and aspirations. An objective appraisal and presentation of the facts regardless of contemporary political arguments appears to be the precept of the hour. This new departure entails a considerable effort to understand the intrinsic moral and psychological values the Poles feel are embodied in the historical development of their society. Such studies demonstrate with commendable impartiality and empathic understanding that some of the claims preferred by the

Poles in defense of their historical commonwealth, its mission, and the spirit animating it, have some basis in fact, even after being shorn of excessive idealization and poetic embellishment.⁴⁵ Who knows whether a future generation will not remember with gratitude the efforts of men who tried so hard to work for understanding and reconciliation under most unfavorable circumstances which could easily have deterred even better minds than they were?

⁴⁵ I am referring here to works by historians and publicists like: OTTO HEINRICH V. D. GABLENTZ *Die Tragik des Preußentums*. München 1948; GEORG BARON MANTEUFFEL-SZOEGE *Geschichte des polnischen Volkes während seiner Unfreiheit 1772—1914*. Berlin 1950; HARALD LAEUVEN *Polnische Tragödie*. Stuttgart 1955; PAUL ROTH *Deutschland und Polen*. München 1958 = *Schriften des Arbeitskreises für Ostfragen* vol. 4; HANS ROOS *Geschichte der Polnischen Nation 1916—1960. Von der Staatsgründung im ersten Weltkrieg bis zur Gegenwart*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart 1964 = *Urban-Bücher* vol. 49; MARTIN BROZAT *Zweihundert Jahre deutsche Polenpolitik*. München 1963; GOTTHOLD RHODE *Kleine Geschichte Polens*. Darmstadt 1965 (2nd ed.: *Geschichte Polens. Ein Überblick*. Darmstadt 1966); GÜNTHER STÖKL *Ost-europa und die Deutschen. Geschichte und Gegenwart einer spannungsreichen Nachbarschaft*. Oldenburg, Hamburg 1967; WERNER CONZE *Polnische Nation und deutsche Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg*. Köln, Graz 1958 = *Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* vol. 4, et al. From the point of view of a "revisionist" appraisal of historical Polish-German relationships on the Polish side, the late ALEKSANDER BREGMAN's interesting book: *Jak światem? Stosunki polsko-niemieckie wczoraj, dziś i jutro* (London 1964) deserves attention.