

**ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATIONS
IN POLAND
AND SILESIA**

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ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN POLAND AND SILESIA

Edited by Tomasz Ciesielski

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Reviewers:

Prof. dr hab. Mirosław Nagielski

Prof. dr hab. Edward Czapiewski

Translator (except Introduction and Chapter 1):

Rajmund Matuszkiewicz

Editor and Technical editor:

Witold Grzelak

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ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN POLAND AND SILESIA

Commemorations of important political, social, and events, and people, important for the given community or nation, is has long tradition in Silesia, as well as throughout whole Poland. Their genesis traces back to the medieval times, and their establishment should be associated with graduate strengthening of the power of Christianity and public institutions. In the first chapter of the present publication, which is a joint publication prepared by researchers from Institute of History at Opole University, Beata Gaj describes the celebrations of patronage holidays in Silesia and other European regions in late Medieval Ages and at the beginning of the Modern Age. These cultural (social and literary) events, which date back to ancient times (especially Hellenistic period), due to the rise of Christian cult, became an important element of European culture. In the second chapter, Tomasz Ciesielski presents the ways of celebration of traditional courtly holidays, connected with the monarch and his family - election anniversaries, coronations, decorations, birthdays and name days, during the Wettin times in Poland. Due to the pompous character of these celebrations, which were held not only in royal, but also baronial courts, in the times of tribunal institutions' ruling, during the times of Augustus III of Poland they gained quasi national character. Officially, their status was not recognized before the year 1792 – the anniversary of the Constitution of May 3 adoption. The character of this holiday, and the way its celebrations were changing, from the 18th century to the present times, is described by Antoni Maziarz. Two chapters are devoted to presentation of International Worker's Day, falling on 1st May, and Month of Deepening the Polish-Soviet Friendship's celebrations in Opole Silesia in years 1949-1956. Adriana David and Mariusz Patelski draw attention to the traditions which played an impor-

tant role in strengthening of communistic power in Poland, and the stereotype of Polish-Soviet friendship. In the last chapter, Marek Białokur describes how the personage of Polish national hero was created and rooted in Polish historical consciousness due to celebration of birthdays and death anniversaries of Napoleonic army's marshal – Józef Poniatowski.

The work was prepared in English and its aim is to present the way Polish people celebrate national anniversaries to the international audience.

Tomasz Ciesielski

OBCHODY ROCZNICOWE W POLSCE I NA ŚLĄSKU

Tradycje obchodów rocznicowych oraz upamiętniających ważne wydarzenia polityczne i społeczne, zjawiska kulturowe, czy osoby ważne dla danych społeczności czy narodu mają na Śląsku i w Polsce długą tradycję. Ich genezy należy doszukiwać się w średniowieczu, a związane są z powolną petryfikacją chrześcijaństwa i instytucji państwowych. W rozdziale rozpoczynającym niniejszą publikację, będącą zbiorowym dziełem pracowników Instytutu Historii Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, Beata Gaj przedstawiła obchody świąt patronalnych na Śląsku i na innych obszarach europejskich w późnym średniowieczu i na początku epoki nowożytnej. Było to zjawisko kulturowe (społeczne i literackie) mające swoje źródło w antyku (zwłaszcza epoce hellenistycznej), a poprzez rozbudowywanie kultu w rycie chrześcijańskim i stało się ważnym elementem kultury europejskiej. W drugim rozdziale Tomasz Ciesielski przedstawił sposób celebrowania w czasach panowania Wettinów w Rzeczypospolitej, tradycyjnych świąt dworskich związanych z osobą monarchy i jego rodziny - rocznic elekcji, koronacji, ustanowienia orderów, urodzin czy imienin. Za sprawą hucznych obchodów nie tylko na dworze królewskim, ale też magnackim w trakcie urzędowania instytucji sądowych stały się one w czasach Augusta III świętami quasi państwowymi. Oficjalnie taki status uzyskały dopiero w 1792 r. rocznice ustanowienia Konstytucji 3 Maja. Losy tego święta i sposób jego celebrowania od końca XVIII w. do czasów współczesnych przedstawił Antoni Maziarz. W dwóch rozdziałach przedstawione zostały obchody na Śląsku Opolskim In-

ternational Workers' Day, falling on 1st May, oraz Month of Deepening the Polish-Soviet Friendship od 1949 do 1956. Adriana Dawid i Mariusz Patelski przypomnieli obchody, które stanowiły ważny element w utrwalaniu władzy komunistycznej w Polsce i stereotypu przyjaźni polsko-radzieckiej. W ostatnim rozdziale Marek Białokur opisał proces kształtowania się postaci bohatera narodowego i jego utrwalania się w polskiej świadomości historycznej przez pryzmat obchodów urodzin i śmierci generała wojsk polski i marszałka armii napoleońskiej Józefa Poniatowskiego.

Publikacja została przygotowana w języku angielskim z myślą o przybliżeniu polskiej tradycji celebrowania obchodów rocznicowych międzynarodowemu odbiorcy.

Tomasz Ciesielski

BEATA GAJ

Institut Historii Uniwersytetu Opolskiego – The Institute
of History of Opole University

***FESTA PATROCINALIA* – ANCIENT ROOTS
AND NEOLATIN TRADITION IN EUROPE
(ESPECIALLY IN SILESIA)**

Festa patrocinalia, the patronal feasts, are ones of the first recurring anniversary celebrations of ancient Christianity. The first collection of epigrams of the martyrs, created by St. Damasus, which were engraved on the tombs in the catacombs, still retains its archaeological and historical importance. Another kind of this type of poems are verses dedicated to St. Felix by Paulinus of Nola and the works of Prudentius, which are perceived as the echoes of the celebration in honor of the holy martyrs. They have been usually presented on the eve of the anniversary of somebody saint's death, and now are considered as the beginning of the hagiographic¹ poetry. Rarely, however, even the leading anthologies and encyclopedias can spot the relationship of the Christian custom with *genethliacón*² genre tradition, which dates back to Hellenistic Greece. It is worth emphasizing, that centuries fourth and fifth AD, crucial for the development of Christian Latin literature, profusely drew on the tradition of ancient Greek and Roman culture. Christian antiquity and the Middle Ages, though largely had deplored and censured the ideological heritage of

¹ M. Starowieyski, *Muza łacińska. Antologia poezji wczesnochrześcijańskiej i średniowiecznej (III-XIV/XV w.)*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 2007, p. XXII.

² Γενεθλιακόν μέλος, γενεθλιακόν ἕσμα is a poem or speech commemorating someone's birthday (γενέθλιος ἡμέρα, γενέθλιον ἥμαρ) with handover a gift or without a gift.

ancient Greece and Rome, were fascinated about it. The basis of education in the VI century AD were the works of ancient writers, and even in the Middle Ages, especially in the cathedral schools, learning about pagan literature was considered as a better preparation to explore theology. The rhetorical and literary education in Greek and Roman antiquity had attached great importance to the *ad hoc* occasional poems. These poems were from the Hellenistic era dominated by the three main life situations: birthday, wedding and funeral and had three parallel branches of the literature called *genethliacón*, epithalamium and epitaph. The graduates of the antique schools, based on the tradition of ancient Mediterranean culture, were very well prepared to ennoble these situations. At various times so-called *agones* were organized that comprised the poetic or literary competitions. This is the tradition which was thriving rapidly in the Middle Ages, and that experienced a blooming period in the Baroque even in the form of the speech. The cultural and literary tradition of a name day was closely related to the earlier tradition of birthday celebration and is now one of the most interesting ways to adapt ancient custom to new needs of Christianity.

However, if we move back to the sources of the ancient Mediterranean culture, we should notice that the mention of the birthday and naming celebrations dates back to Mesopotamia and Egypt to the royal's and nobles's birthdays. They had threw the feasts and street parades because of this occasion. In Greece, the celebration was closely associated with the ceremony called *amfidromia*, celebrated after the birth of a child. The Greeks celebrated the child birthday, organizing a party for family, friends, and even servitors³.

There is a Greek literary genre called *genethliacón* (γενεθλιακόν μέλος, γενεθλιακόν ᾄσμα) which contains, according to the most general and basic definition in *Der neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*⁴, an encaenia of somebody's birthday (γενέθλιος ἡμέρα, γενέθλιον ἡρμαρ) by the way of a poem with a handover of a gift or without it. *Genethliacón* is therefore an essential component of one's individual celebration. Although, the protagonist of the feast seems to be the person who celebrates their birthday, by the nature of Greek religion, which is based on the animatism, there was actually a different mystical person worshiped instead. The name of this person assigned to each human being has been described later in Latin *genethliacón* poems as a *patronus* or a *genius*. As a precursor of this literary genre is considered Callimachus of

Cyrene (Καλλίμαχος ὁ Κυρηναῖος, 310-240 p. n. e.). Callimachus wrote iamb (iamb twelfth- fr. 202 Pf.) for his friend who was celebrating the birth of his daughter. The happy father, Callimachus's friend had to flaunt with the baby girl around the fireside in the presence of invited guests. The mentioned above *amfidromia* were the very well impulse to create a new poem. The seventh day after a child's birth was a very special day because as a patron of it was accounted Apollo. According to the researchers of the Callimachus's works (like, *exempli gratia* Benjamin Acosta-Hughes⁵), this poem should be considered taking into account the internal structure of iambs that the poet deliberately placed in this, and no other sequence. It is not a coincidence that the iamb twelfth is the parabola of the first one. Just as the Apollo hymn was more valuable than all the gifts brought by the other gods to goddess Hebe, so the occasional gift of Callimachus towers over the other offerings. The story of divine birth juxtaposed with the birth of a man keeps for this first *genethliacón* in the history of literature special meaning. The didactic purpose of the iamb is rising at the same time the value of the human birth and poetry. The iamb (fragment 163[202 PF] of the *Anthologia Palatina*⁶) is preserved in fragments. However, the poet's declaration: „I will sing, Muse, for a tiny newborn” (ἄεισομαι Μοῦσα τῆ μικκῆ) precisely defines the genre of a birthday song, which didn't have any similar clear parallels in the previous (saved) ancient Greek or Hellenistic literature. Some modification of this genre was made by Leonidas of Alexandria (Aleksandrinus). It was on the one hand a formal adjustment as the poet applied the type of a verse created from the equal count of syllables, and he also changed the recipient and circumstances: the work is made as a gift to the Emperor „in birthday hours” (γενεθλιακαίῳσιν ἐν ὄραις), ergo is another opportunity to celebrate a birth: not the birth of a new life, but the anniversary of famous person's birthday. In another birthday's poem Leonides mentions „birthday gifts of wealth” (πλουίτου δωῖρα, γενεθλιδία) as a crystal, silver, yellow and green gems for the compilation of the two distiches he created. He won in this „gift rivalry”. The poetical gifts are more likely to be accepted than those material ones and even envy (possibly the envy of the other donors) will not change it. The subsequent birthday literary works are thereby a kind of a special birthday present, although sometimes it is only a complementary gift. For example Krinagoras proffers Prok-

³ Cf. L. Winniczuk, *Ludzie, zwyczaj i obyczaje starożytnej Grecji i Rzymu*, Warszawa 1983, p. 229.

⁴ *Der neue Pauly Enzyklopädie der Antike. Das klassische Altertum und seine Rezeptionsgeschichte*, H. Cancik, H. Schneider (ed.), Stuttgart 2010, Volume 4, pp. 913-914.

⁵ Cf. B. Acosta-Hughes, *Polyeideia: The Iambi of Callimachus and the Archaic Iambic Tradition (Hellenistic Culture and Society)*, Univeristy of California Press, Berkeley 2002, p. 7.

⁶ Cf. *Anthologia Graeca*, H. Beckby (Hrsg.), München 1965, pp. 1-6. All Greek fragments cited in this article and known as the fragments of „Anthologia Palatina” are taken from this book.

los a silver stylus (κάλαμος: *Anth. Pal.* 6, 227). The same benefactor proffers the son of a Simon the bottle strewn with the oil and made of bronze (*Anth. Pal.* 6, 261). It is worth noting that in the second mentioned poem the birthday congratulation later conventionalized has appeared for the first time. There is a kind of regards present now in almost all the congratulations as the wishes „*heart-felt, out of goodness of somebody's heart, straight from the heart*” (in Greek: σὺν φρενί, e.g. in Polish: „*z serca, serdecznie*”). In turn, the roses were dedicated with a birthday poem to one lady celebrating her birthday and wedding (6, 345). Furthermore, the five books of lyrics seem to be the precious gift made by Anacreon (9, 239) for Antonia so as the poem written for the same occasion by Krinagoras.

Γενεθλιακός λόγος (read: *genethliacós logos*) was also a special part of the epideictic rhetoric which is the best evidenced by the works of Aristeides (Aelius Aristides A.D. 117-181) and Himerios (AD 310-385). Especially Aristeides draws the attention to the nature of this branch of rhetoric. The main purpose of it is not only to have a spectacular speech but to indicate, isolate and point something up. So with the reference to the condition for human birth somebody's parents and circumstances of the particular birth need to be pointed up and underlined. The literary genre called *genethliacón* was somewhat absorbed by the rhetoric and used to be very common, since both the Menander Rhetor and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (60 B. C.-after 7 B. C.) devoted a lot of attention to it. Therefore there are many treaties inspired by their works that enjoyed enduring popularity. Let us see, thusly, what *is méthodos genethliacón* used by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his work about rhetoric (3, 1-15). According to Dionysius a connection of poem, speech and birthday wishes first of all has to be a praise. It should begin with praising somebody's family and homeland, then the corporal and spiritual assets, and it should end with a prayer for a good future and long life. In the case of a speech on the birth of a child mainly family background, a parentage and the date on which the child was born should be extra emphasized. During this period the *genethliacón* ceases to be an independent genre, it becomes part of a larger whole, a dedication. There is a good example - the work assigned to Lucian of Samosata (Ad 125-after AD 180) entitled „The long-livers”, „The long-lives” or „The cases of longevity” (Μακρόβιοι) and dedicated to Quintillus as a birthday present. The formula „I offer you a gift” (προσφέρω σοι δῶρον - in Latin „*donum do*”) will be the main and basic form of dedication for long centuries. Lucian or the anonymous author wishes Quintillus that both he and

his children (and just the second child of Quintillus was born) live happily ever after. The author considers the birthday anniversary of Quintillus as a special circumstance both, because of the possibility of making the gift, and also because of the subject matter of this book-gift, which is the story of long-lived people and certain ways how to gain longevity. The case of Nestor has circumstantiated the need to care for the health of the body. Subsequently, there are given some examples of maintaining a proper diet. It is proved that justifiably the priests and philosophers of Egypt and India were long-lived. Also Chaldeans lived more than 100 years and moreover there was a tribe with less than 100 years life expectancy being a norm (Seres). Roman examples are not as spectacular as those mentioned above. They picture the period of 80 years of Numa Pompilius – „*the happiest of the Roman kings*” as a longevity together with the similar age of Servius Tullius and exiled Tarquinius. The author gives a lot more examples of longevity, dividing the „*long-livers*” on certain *social* and professional groups: philosophers, grammarians, rhetoricians. Democritus of Abdera, Sophocles, Anacreon and Eratosthenes of Cyrene, named as the last, were all supposed to live long. The treatise is ended with re-wishes of longevity and health.

Meanwhile, the works praising the birth in ancient Rome should not be considered as a subordinate sequel to the Greek *genethliakón*, but as an unaided and relatively independent genre. Roman *Carmen natale* is closely linked with concepts such as *dies natalis* and in particular with *Genius natalis*. The Romans believed that every life, every place and even the phenomenon had their own genius. Each *genius* was born with the new life, joining in it as a divine element, the symbol of an intangible life. The Geniuses were caring spirits of the ancient Roma's men, and for women there were intangible persons resembling *Juno*. Human Genius was born with man and with him died. Therefore, the sacrifices were submitted to Geniuses on the birthday. Roman birthday *carmina* (the songs) are also associated with the phenomenon of the so-called Roman subjective elegy, which, according to Jacoby's theory⁷ developed from the Greek epigrams. It has expanded by means of the themes from the other literary genres like new comedy, bucolic poems and objective Alexandrian elegy. Roman elegy is a creation of the original expression of individualism, already awakened, and self-knowledge. These themes are no longer viewed

⁷ Felix Jacoby regarded Latin elegy as an enlargement and development of Greek epigram, from which it will have derived its subjective character, its situations and motifs. Cf. Gian Bagio Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, translated by Joseph B. Solodow, revised by Don Fowler and Glenn W. Most, Baltimore-London 1999, p. 322.

as a subject of minor motifs in small works, but account for the great books, artistically composed.

The first example of the birthday Roman elegy is *carmen* composed by Tibullus for Messala (Elegy I, 7). Messala in those days won with Aquitans and by dint of this victory he was awarded a triumph. There is an interwoven commendation (*encomium*) of the Egyptian god Osiris as the inventor of the agriculture and benefactor of the mankind. Osiris and Bacchus are supposed to come to celebrate the Messala's birthday, who probably already sits in a rim of hair moistened with lotion.... The poet wants him to acquire the experience of taking a great pride in his children. They are expected to surpass their father's deeds. These deeds do not mean just the merits of the war, but also the way built to Tusculum and Alba funded by Messala. Every villager in the area worships him by virtue of that. The *carmen* ends with a call to the god of Messala's birthday to come to visit him every year in a more and more wonderful manner.

Also Propertius elegized the birthday. In the elegy 3, 10 he wanted to encourage Cynthia to celebrate birthday messing around with him in the bedroom. It is worth noticing that this elegy begins with a beautiful description of the birthday morning. We can almost imagine the poet torn from his sleep and surprised because *Camena* went to meet Propertius in the glare of the morning sun to remind him about the day of birth. Then Ovidius put in *Tristia* two birthday literary works (3, 13 and 5, 5). Especially the first one (3, 13) alarms the reader because of a pessimism of the poet, who asked whether it was worth to be born. He addresses even his own *Genius* with some kind of resentment despite of the fact that the god of the birthday has to share with the poet a fate of so difficult exile. In the second elegy (5, 5) the poet recalls his wife's birthday. Because he is celebrating that day far away from her, he compares himself to Odysseus, who had to feel similar things about his wife Penelope during the solemn days. Meanwhile, Horace in the eleventh song inserted in the fourth book of his songs (*Carmina*) creates a kind of extended invitation to a birthday party. He wants, of course, to celebrate a birthday of his patron and friend named Mecenae. On this day they are obliged to reject all the kinds of concerns and everybody is rushing („*cuncta festinat manus*”) to make the ceremony truly unique. There are Persius and Statius who also wrote birthday works. *Silvae* written by Statius are one of a kind collection of the occasional pieces with different content, including birthday (*Silva* 2, 3). *Silvae* were very popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (e.g. the term *Silva rerum*)

and the popularity of Statius works during this period certainly contributed to the growth of the interest in creating poems like *genethliacón*. However, greater attention deserves a second of the six surviving satires written by Persius. It is a kind of a philosophical birthday diatribe showing the immorality of human wishes raised to the gods. The diatribe is dedicated to the birthday celebrated by Macrinus. It refers to the prayers used on the occasion of the submission of the sacrifice for genius. Macrinus can say his prayers out loud, while many people pray on this day to get the immoral things, such as the quick death of a rich uncle. There is an interesting passage in this diatribe devoted to superstitious women who lubricate the child's forehead with saliva using the middle finger which has the force of a protection. They say the special wishes like „*that life was a bed of roses*”. The genre of *genethliacón* is placed here by Persius in the quasi 'casket way'. The in later (especially in sixteenth-century) poems of the genre. However, the other poet Martialis (40 AD-c. 102 AD, known in English as Martial), famous for his occasional works, shows the importance of birth usually in a playful tone. The most interesting is epigram 12, 67 which is a kind of a commemoration of Virgil's Birthday. The last non-Christian *genethliacón* has been written by Ausonius for his grandson.

Meanwhile, Christian writers began to bless the day of a martyr death as the birth of a new life for heaven, and this type of work was first published by poet Paulinus of Nola, the worshipper of St. Felix, who was martyred on 14 January 260 AD. A series of poems dedicated to him on the occasion of the next „*birth in Heaven*” is a prelude to the phenomenon of a sort of a Christian agonistic competition. The holy day dedicated to sainted patron becomes an opportunity for creating the poetical, then also the rhetorical performances by various authors. Praising somebody sainted, they compete with each other to invent new arguments and content-metric solutions (for example in this way St. Catharina was praised in old neolatinistic Silesia). The Paulinus's poetical works are created in various meters so to praise the beauty of patronal day and tell the story of the deeds and miracles. Paulinus worships the power of the saint person as a power of God. It is quite evident in the formal declaration of the poet (*Carm.* 29, 12-15) that he claims the same God told him to attribute the *genethliacón* genre to glorification of saints, because the miracles acquired through their mediation manifested the power of God. It soon became apparent that for such a noble work, certainly worth writing those *genethliaca*, poems adapted to Christianity. It was a great opportunity to use the knowledge acquired in (still) pagan schools of the ancient rhetoric and poetics. The

tradition of poetical and rhetorical competitions was also alive and vital a few centuries later.

The *agon*, the rivalry and the competition, have been for centuries connected with the occasional poems and speeches. Then, they were announced competitions for poets and speech makers to create works devoted to various saints. This happened particularly in the south-west of Europe: Spain and France. It is known, for instance, that Miguel Cervantes had attended, among others, such competition in the honor of the Polish and Silesian Saint Jack - *Hiacinthus*. It is worth noticing that it was exactly due to such competitions that the name of one saint and his character grew in the area and became more popular.

The genre of modern *genethliacón* seems to return to the tradition of Callimachus using his stylistics and inter-textual indication. It means, of course, the celebration of the child's birth connected with the praise of poetry and related to the divinity. *Genethliacón* begins to be used for creating poems and songs about the birth of Jesus as the famous *De Partu Virginis* (by Jacopo Sannazaro, AD 1526 year, three books in hexameter). This genre takes an epic form here and the poet, formally using the invocation modeled on Homer, sings not about an anger, like in the *Iliada*, but about the birth of the God thanks to Virgin Maria. Many imitators followed the biblical epic of Jacopo Sannazaro in seventeenth-century Europe. The first Sannazaro's follower in the middle-east part of the continent is assumed to be Gregory Czaradzki, who dedicated to the city council of Poznan (Posnania) his „*Rhythms of the immaculate birth*”, however it was seven years earlier, when the famous Silesian poet Caspar Cunradus wrote his very interesting *genethliacón* (which will be analyzed for a while).

The genre of *genethliacón* is also sometimes associated with modern Christmas carols and dramatic performances such as the *Dialogus in Natali Domini*, and *Ecloga de nativitate Domini*, staged in the Jesuit colleges in the sixteenth century. Rhetorical „*kinship*” connects *genethliacón* with the speech as well, congratulating somebody's child's birth. The critical study of the occasional literature in Renaissance and Baroque⁸ notes frequent references to the initiation rites and liturgical formulas in Polish *genethliacón*. For example there is the poem by Andrew Trzeciecki entitled *Zachariae Gregorii Orsacii filiolii genethliacón*. However, the famous limerick by Jan Kochanowski („*Fraszka*”

3, 65: „*Mate[m]u wielkiej nadzieje Radziwil[łowi]*” - „*To small Radziwill giving great expectations*”) refers more to the tradition of epideictic *genethliacón*, recommending „*little Michnik*” to continue the tradition of the Radziwill family.

There were very interesting forms of *genethliacón* written in Latin, German and Greek in the area of the former Silesia, where the Protestant religion, prohibiting the cult of saints, greatly revived the tradition of the ancient *genethliacón*. In 1537 in city Wroclaw (Breslau, Vratislavia), young lady Elisa Winkler gave a speech including the short birthday poem in Latin. It has been declaimed in the main church of the city and was dedicated to Christmas. There are many other examples of birthday works in Silesian old schools, where the poetical and rhetorical performances were declaimed usually on the occasion of Christmas. Also in private correspondence and in works written for private use anyone could create this kind of occasional poetry. E. g. Silesian poet Abschatzius (Hans Freiherr von Abschatz ABmann) using the Hellenic *ἐπίγραμμα* (*epicharma*) expresses the feeling of happiness because of the birth of his child in private manuscript notation.

The above-mentioned poet Caspar Cunradus has also congratulated his best friend Daniel Bucretius, who became once again a father. *Carmen genethliacón* for the birth of Theodore, the son of Daniel, born of Emelia Langia, also refers to Sannazaro, but the „*high*” epic theme here is relative to the bourgeois family in Wroclaw. There is described the situation of the expected birth of a first son in the house, in which already live three daughters. The dispute between goddesses Aphrodite and Athena about the sex of a child to be born can be cut only by Jupiter. The most important god forbids Venus to desire a girl („*desine velle puellam*”). Despite of this fact the poem is not anti-feminist. The boy has been born only because the house is occupied already by three Charites – the goddesses of beauty. The action also takes place in the women's circle (with the exception of the decision of the Deity), the mother Emelia is the person who gives her son the name „Theodore” - „the gift of God”. Surely you could give many more examples of birthday songs, ancient and modern, for example, many epigrams of Martial and Christian authors could be discussed in detail. What we can know for certain is that both the birth of a child connected with the anniversary of everyone's birth and the name day fest are in European culture a good reason for celebration.

Many interesting examples of regular, annual *genethliacón* competitions were generated in the former Silesia in XVII and XVIII centuries. The eulogies dedicated to saint persons were very abundant. They are still well preserved in

⁸ L. Ślękowa, *Muza domowa: okolicznościowa poezja rodzinna czasów renesansu i baroku*, Wrocław 1991, 175 pp.

Silesian libraries in many copies. They were presented every year in the eve of the feast of the patron saint. The most popular saints were: St. Catherine, St. John, St. Thomas and St. Leopold, although the eulogies in the honor of the other apostles and other saints such as St. Pancratius and the more modern saints like Francis de Sales, also were provided. These poetical orations after a cursory reading may be judged as very similar as they were written according to the same pattern: the long decorative title precedes a multi-page speech. But the speeches differ by the choice of vocabulary and composition and this is indeed the way of original competition. The same very well known material must be looked at from a different angle, presented by a novel method. Important for the understanding of this phenomenon, seems to be the two-page dedication note written by Franciscus Pino *Silesius Opaviensis*⁹. Pino says that the most important is *agonis triumphalis nuncupatio* and *exantlatum cartamen*. Both concepts are connected with rhetorical and poetical competition to reveal somebody's real talent and skills. Pino underlines also, that the value of the competition is their repeatability. The talented authors can meet together every year and take part in the specific contest. The prize for the most promising of the competitors is their work being published.

The motives of *genethliacón* through the centuries remain the same. First of all, the association between the birth of a man and the creation of a poetry is worth emphasizing. There's something metaphysical in the situation of a birth as well as in the situation of naming somebody. There are also important gifts and joy of being a donee or a donator, an opportunity to celebrate somebody's birthday, almost magical desire to bring good for a loved one, and finally the opportunity for reflection, sometimes optimistic, sometimes bitter. The repeatability of these motifs is associated with direct reference to the same circumstances and topic codified in rhetorical theory. The tradition of *genethliacón* used to be very useful for Christianity. The Christian authors combined their *genethliacón* experience with an eulogy and a competition to dedicate their own poems to saint persons. However, the researchers of the European culture should bear in mind to look at this long Mediterranean tradition holistically. The most interesting can be considered the Silesian tradition of the annual eulogy saint person, which was still vibrant in XVIII century.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE - KEY WORDS

Historia chrześcijaństwa, uroczystości rocznicowe, coroczny pean, poemat urodzinowy, carmen (antyczny gatunek literacki), śląska literatura nowołacińska

history of christianity, anniversary celebrations, annual eulogy, genethliacón, carmen (antique literary genre), Silesian neolatin literature

FESTA PATROCINALIA: ANTYCZNE KORZENIE

I NOWOŁACIŃSKA TRADYCJA EUROPY

(ZE SZCZEGÓLNYM UWZGLĘDNIENIEM ŚLĄSKA)

Artykuł dotyczy zjawiska z zakresu historii kultury i historii literatury starożytnej oraz nowożytnej spisanej w języku łacińskim, zjawiska sięgającego epoki hellenistycznej, które wpłynęło w istotny sposób na kulturę Europy oraz zostało przyswojone i wykorzystane przez chrześcijaństwo w zakresie uroczystości upamiętniających w kuli- cie świętych. Dla opisanego zjawiska przytoczono szereg przykładów literackich i historycznych z różnych okresów historycznych – od III w. p.n.e. do końca XVIII w.

FESTA PATROCINALIA: ANTIKE WURZELN

UND NEULATEINISCHE TRADITION EUROPAS

(UNTER BESONDERER BERÜCKSICHTIGUNG SCHLESIENS)

Der Artikel behandelt Erscheinungen aus der altertümlichen und neuzeitlichen Kultur- und Literaturgeschichte, die in Latein verfasst wurden, sowie Erscheinungen, die bis in die hellenistische Epoche reichen, die wesentlich die europäische Kultur beeinflussten und vom Christentum übernommen und bei der Heiligenverehrung verwendet wurden. Der Artikel beinhaltet eine Reihe von literarischen und historischen Beispielen aus verschiedenen Epochen vom 3. Jahrhundert v.Ch. bis Ende des 18. Jahrhundert, die die analysierten Erscheinungen beschreiben.

⁹ F. Pino, *Gemini Triumphi Gloria Quam Arte & Marte Erroris, atque Tyrannidis Victrix Aleksandrina Virgo Catharina quondam gloriosissime meruit*, Vratislaviae 1738, p. 2-3.

TOMASZ CIESIELSKI

Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu Opolskiego – The Institute
of History of Opole University

**ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS
IN SAXONY AND POLAND DURING THE REIGN
OF AUGUSTUS II AND AUGUSTUS III**

At present, an important role in the strengthening of the national identity is played by celebration of national holidays and anniversaries of events from the political, socio-economic and cultural life of the state and nation, or its selected religious, ethnic or class groups. Celebrations commemorating historical events, organised occasionally, are usually related to the so-called round anniversaries, that is full tens of years or quarters of centuries, with full centuries regarded as particularly important. Celebrations related to the national holidays are organised annually, and depending on the tradition and current needs there may be even as many as a few of them in a given year. In the case of the contemporary Poland, we celebrate two national holidays, 3rd May and 11th November, but one has to remember that in the late 1980s there were four national anniversaries, with 9th of May being celebrated as the Victory Day and 22nd July – in relation to the PKWN Manifesto, seen as an act of foundation of the new Poland, the so-called People's Republic of Poland. Both in the past decades and at present, great importance is given to the proper form of celebrating the national holidays and anniversaries. Most notably from the propaganda point of view, which makes it difficult to imagine nowadays that we could do without such celebrations taking place ever few months in the political, social, cultural and educational life.

Similar were the feelings of the population of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 18th century, and notably “the nation of the nobles”. However, the notion of a national holiday was slightly different back then. It was not related to important political events in the history of the state or its nation, but to the person of the ruler and his dynasty, both the immediate and more extended family, as well as the whole dynasty. This resulted from the type of social awareness taking its roots from the Middle Ages, whereby a nation was considered to be the entire collection of subjects of a given monarch, ruling in a given period on a certain territory. The bonds between the subjects and the monarch were based on feudal relations, which did not entirely reflect the realities of the state, where the kings were elected by the nobility.

The problem was noticed by the two consecutive Wettins ruling the Commonwealth, who in their internal politics placed a great emphasis on ensuring the succession of the Polish-Lithuanian throne to their male descendants. That is why they made attempts at strengthening the relations between themselves and the Commonwealth nobility, putting a lot of emphasis on activities that we would now refer to as propaganda. They put into use one of their great assets, a kind of a magnet attracting Polish-Lithuanian elites, namely the royal and electoral court of the Wettins, renowned all over Europe for its rich social and cultural life. It was even considered to be „the greatest and full of gallantry court in the world”¹. Public events played an important role in its life, events in which an important role was played by entertainment provided not only to the invited guests, but also to the numerous subjects, participating as mere spectators. In the 1720s, significance of such events promoting the image of the monarchy was appreciated by August II. And although in the last years of his reign August II shunned participating actively in most celebrations, he took great care of strengthening the etiquette and making the court life public, introducing a hierarchy of games and events, with the most important ones gaining richer scenery and a larger space for their implementation. The space was provided by the expanded and equipped with modern facilities royal and electoral residences in Dresden and Warsaw².

Some of the most important holidays celebrated annually in the Wettins’ court, included the anniversaries connected with the person of the king-elect, whereas name-days and birthdays of the royal spouse and prince Frederick Augustus II were usually treated as private events, celebrated less os-

tentatiously, in the family, depending on where the ruler and his family were residing at a given moment in time. This resulted mainly from the attitude of August II’s wife, Christiane Eberhardine, a strict follower of the Lutheran social standards, and was against sumptuous festivities³. Also after the queen’s death, too lavish revels were avoided on Frederick Augustus II’s birthdays. In 1731 in Dresden, they were limited to wishes being delivered to the prince and an evening concert⁴. One cannot rule out that in the case of celebrations held within the Commonwealth, the eligibility of the Polish-Lithuanian throne also played a part. The anniversaries connected with the person of the prince were played down in order to avoid accusations of promoting him as a potential heir to the Commonwealth throne. In fact, in 1730 August II did organise festivities in Warsaw to celebrate his son’s birthday, but he did that over a month earlier, namely on 3rd September. Undoubtedly, the point was not to celebrate the prince’s birthday during the Sejm sessions in October, but still hold some celebrations. They were not, however, overly sumptuous, and were limited to a mere feast in a limited circle of specially selected guests in the palace garden in the morning, followed by a formal dinner at Saxon Palace, attended by only a few people⁵.

Following 1721, after the birth of more children of Frederick Augustus II and Maria Josepha, the calendar of court events got gradually filled with other celebrations (by seven till the death of August II, since seven of his grandchildren survived infancy). They were, however, private in character, and were organised only in the residencies in Saxony. As a result, the only festivities related to the members of the royal family celebrated both in Saxony and in Poland, was the name-day of the beloved, out-of-wedlock daughter of August II, Anna Karolina Countess Orzelska. In 1730, on 26th July, the king celebrated the occasion in the palace „in the Old Dresden, referred to by some as the ‘Turkish one’” with a dance ball that lasted until 5 a.m.⁶ A year later, the ball and a festive supper were held in the new rooms of the Dresden palace, specially decorated and illuminated for the occasion⁷. In 1732, Anna’s name-day, who by then was the Princess of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Beck (spouse Charles Louis), was celebrated in Wilanów Palace. The festivities took place on 27th July, and they were incorporated in a series of events accompa-

¹ J. Staszewski, *Polacy w osiemnastowiecznym Dreźnie*, Wrocław 1986, p. 51.

² J. Staszewski, *Polacy*, p. 67, 70.

³ J. Staszewski, *Polacy*, p. 53.

⁴ „Kurier Polski”, 1731, no 95.

⁵ „Kurier Polski”, 1730, no 37.

⁶ „Kurier Polski”, 1730, no 32, 33.

⁷ „Kurier Polski”, 1731, no 85.

nying military manoeuvres in Mokotów Field, hence their very special setting. The festivities commenced with the guests extending their name-day wishes, and art performances by women: tightrope dancing and a concert of Italian songs. Then, to the accompaniment of trumpets and kettledrums, a feast began, with the guests being served not only by the court servants but also by stalwart grenadiers. King's court band played, and the regiment bands scattered across the garden, performed military marches. The palace's yards and the entire garden were brightly illuminated, with the permanent lanterns, as well as 20 thousand specially installed lamps. There was a clearly visible sign „Vivat Anna”. The supper lasted until 11 p.m., at which time the king rose from the main table and went to sleep. However, many guests stayed and danced in the palace chambers until 2 a.m. Many outsiders were let into the palace gardens, which resulted in the name-day of Anna Orzelska in 1732 becoming possibly the largest-scale „anniversary” celebration in the last years of August II's reign⁸. The flourish of the celebrations outdid even those organised to celebrate the king himself, the ones taking place on his name-day, at the beginning of August. It has to be stressed that the coronation name was considered to be Augustinus, that is Augustine. The name-day falls on 3rd August and it coincides with the days related to the first name given to both Wettins on the throne at the baptism, namely Frederic – in the Polish calendar 4th August, in the German one – 7th August. The significance of the name-day festivities as a state holiday was further strengthened by August II by linking them with the Order of the White Eagle holiday. At the same time, he managed to keep the celebrations private, with the participation of only the knights of the Order and those about to receive it. It has to be stressed that the group of Knights of the Order was quite large – since its establishment in 1705, the Order of the White Eagle was awarded by August II to 49 persons (August III has transmitted the Order to 334 persons from 1734 to 1763)⁹. However, the receptions organised on the day of the Order were attended by a small number of people, so much so that in 1731 all the invited guests, including women, found their place at two tables laid in the new chambers of the palace in Dresden. The artistic setting consisted of only a theatre performance, and there was no „music”. A ceremony of granting the Order was of a more public character. This could be watched by outsiders, albeit from a distance and when it took

⁸ „Kurier Polski”, 1732, no 136.

⁹ K. Filipow, *Order Orła Białego*, Białystok 2005, pp. 30-37, 49-54; *Kawalerowie i statuty Orderu Orła Białego 1705-2008*, ed. M. Męclewska, Warszawa 2008, pp. 156-161.

place „in Pillnitz or some other open place”¹⁰.

The stormy period of interregnum following the death of August II that led to a war lasting nearly two years resulted in not organising any anniversary celebrations in the Commonwealth for many years, and even in Saxony they were of a rather modest character. The new Saxon elector, and the crowned ruler of the Commonwealth from 17th January 1734, August III, was able to organise appropriately sumptuous celebrations in Warsaw only in the autumn of 1735. First, on 1st October, there were sumptuous celebrations of Emperor Charles VI Habsburg's birthday. The „Great Gala” held on that occasion consisted of a dinner and a reception, with the sound setting provided by trumpets, kettledrums and cannon salutes¹¹. Next, on 7th October, the 39th birthday of the ruler was celebrated, but the scenery setting prepared for the occasion was related to the second anniversary of electing Frederick August II to be the ruler of the Commonwealth, which took place in 1733 on 5th October at field near Kamień. At the Royal Castle, a formal dinner was held, attended by the commanders of the Saxony and Russian troops stationed in Poland, the diplomatic corps, primate Teodor Potocki, ministers, senators and other officials of the Commonwealth, as well as members of the Parliament who had arrived at Warsaw for the Sejm sessions. They were seated at three large tables. During the few hours of feasting, on the river Vistula sailed 15 galleys decorated with banners, from which music and cannon salutes could be heard. All the time trumpets and kettledrums blared. In the evening a dance ball took place in Saxon Palace, and at its yard the guests were welcomed by a Saxon regiment, with salutes, and the soldiers being drawn so that they formed a slogan „Vivat Augustus III Rex Poloniae”. Tables, at which supper was had during a two-hour break between dances, were arranged in the same manner. The ballroom was brightly lit, and some of the lamps formed words „Augustus III”. The dance floor was covered with red cloth and surrounded by a balustrade, beyond which stood officers and servants of the guests, admiring the ball. On the balcony a music band was situated¹².

Since midsummer 1736 the royal couple stayed in Saxony, which did not hinder them from turning the following anniversaries related to the person of the ruler into state occasions, and at the same time, into „Polish” ones. In fact

¹⁰ J. Staszewski, *Polacy*, p. 67.

¹¹ „Gazety Polskie”, 1735, no 64.

¹² „Gazety Polskie”, 1735, no 65; Архив Военно-исторического музея артиллерии, инженерных войск и войск связи, Санкт Петербург (Archive in the Military Historical Museum of Artillery, Engineers and Signal Corps, St. Petersburg), fonds 2, ms. 539, no 16.

it was decided not to return to the tradition from the times of August II and at the beginning of August, the return of the royal couple to Dresden and the ruler's name-day were celebrated separately – gates of triumph were erected, music and cantatas sounded, and the city was illuminated for two evenings. A few days later the king held a reception for the day of the Order of the White Eagle¹³. In October 1736 though, the birthday celebrations were linked with the election of August III to be the ruler of the Commonwealth. In a gala organised in Hubertsburg, both Saxon and Polish dignitaries were present¹⁴. The king's absence was no hindrance to organising the festivities in Poland. The Minister of Treasury Polish Kingdom (podskarbi wielki koronny), Jan Kanty Moszyński, celebrated the king's 40th birthday by throwing a party in his residence in Tarchomin, a party attended by the Emperor's Ambassador, Polish ministers and other dignitaries, officer and numerous other persons – both clergy and laymen. There were no women, since a high water on the river Vistula made it impossible for them to reach Tarchomin. The reception was concluded with a fireworks display in the evening¹⁵.

Undoubtedly, what induced Moszyński to organise celebrations in the praise of August III was the fact that he was one of the magnates closely related to the royal court, and what is more, he was married to the ruler's step-sister (Fredericka Alexandrine Countess of Cosel, daughter of August II and Anna Constantia Countess of Cosel). With his decision to do so, he must have contributed to the fact that the celebration, previously limited to the court, became a public event that anyone in the Commonwealth could have organised. Thus he initiated the process of domesticating the holidays of the electoral and royal court by the Polish and Lithuanian elites, a process which was also immensely helped by the regulations issued by August III in 1737, regulating the life of the court, including more precise definitions of the official holidays to be celebrated by the court. The most important, public ones did not get hierarchised, therefore it only makes sense to list them chronologically. Each year opened with the coronation of August III to be the king of the Commonwealth on 17th January, followed by the king's name-day and the Order of the White Eagle day, usually celebrated on 2nd or 3rd August¹⁶, the anniversary of electing August III for the king of Poland on 5th October, and closed with the joint celebrations of the king's birthday and the day of the first Saxon

¹³ „Gazety Polskie”, 1736, no 7 i 8.

¹⁴ „Gazety Polskie” 1736, no 15.

¹⁵ „Gazety Polskie” 1736, no 15.

¹⁶ K. Filipow, *Order*, p. 36.

order – the Order of St. Henry¹⁷. As far as the day of the Order of the White Eagle, it was not always linked with the ruler's name-day. This most certainly happened in 1740, when the Order celebrations took place on 11th August¹⁸.

An outstanding scholar specialising in the Polish-Saxon personal union, Jacek Staszewski, thought that in the years of August III none of the anniversaries related to August II were celebrated, and only the clergy held prayers on the anniversary of his death in a few Polish churches and monasteries¹⁹. Staszewski's opinion is justified in relation to the court's holidays celebrated in Saxony, whereas the celebrations of the anniversary of August II's death were granted a higher significance. In the consecutive annals of the „Kurier Polski” scrupulously noted the fact of holding funeral rites for the soul of the departed ruler on 1st or 2nd February in the Capuchin Church in Warsaw. It was stressed that it took place at an explicit recommendation from the court, and at the court's expense. The memorial services often had a sumptuous form, e.g. in 1745 a „castrum doloris” was held, with the guard being held by the royal guards, and the court band provided music for the service²⁰. This goes to prove that the electoral-royal court made attempts at promoting the anniversary of August II's death to become a state celebrations, using it in their activities for the improvement of the Wettins' respect with their Polish-Lithuanian subjects. Since 1757, the memorial services were attended by August III and the members of his family who happened to be in Warsaw at the time²¹.

Some of the major holidays that were often granted a public character, but were celebrated only where the royal-electoral court happened to be present, included birthdays and name-days of the royal family, current Emperors of the Reich and their spouses, as well as Russian Tsars. And so, the July celebrations included the name-day of princess Marie Christine, Maria Kunigunde and Maria Anna, and in the 1730s also those of the Russian Empress Anna (26th July)²². In August, apart from the royal name-day, the grandson Charles

¹⁷ J. Staszewski, *Polacy*, p. 77. Order of St. Henry was appointed by August III on 7th October 1736 for commanders of servicemen which stood out on the battlefield or served Saxon of at least 50 years: A. Perlakowski, *Kariera i upadek królewskiego faworyta. Aleksander Józef Sułkowski w latach 1695-1738*, Kraków 2013, p. 153.

¹⁸ „Kurier Polski”, 1740, no 193.

¹⁹ J. Staszewski, *Polacy*, p. 77.

²⁰ „Kurier Polski”, 1745, no 426. See also „Kurier Polski”, 1747, no 530; 1750, no 698; 1751, no 750; 1754, no 29; 1755, no 81; 1756, no 133.

²¹ „Kurier Polski”, 1757, no 5; 1758, no 5; 1759, no 6.

²² „Kurier Polski”, 1740, no 192; 1746, nr 504; 1747, nr 609, 1753, no 829

Maximilian's birthday was celebrated on 24th August²³. Until 1740, 1st October was the day of the gala commemorating Emperor Charles I Habsburg's birthday²⁴. November encompassed the birthday of prince Clemens Wenceslaus on 23rd, and princess Maria Amalia (later to become Queen consort of Naples and Sicily) on 24th²⁵. The last month of the year witnessed the name-day of prince Xavier on 3rd December (held in Warsaw in 1752)²⁶, on 8th December the name-day of queen Maria Josepha (in 1750 jointly with the birthday of Emperor Francis I Stephen)²⁷, and on 29th December, the birthday of Russian Empress Elizabeth (from the 1740s till 1761)²⁸.

The greatest significance in the propaganda policy of the court was given to anniversaries related to the living ruler, which were celebrated both in Saxony and in the Commonwealth. Proper court and state festivities were naturally organised in those places, where at a given moment resided August III, namely in the royal residences. In Dresden, they took place in the prince castle, and in summer in Grosssedlitz palace. In Warsaw, the anniversary celebrations were held on the Saxon Palace and the adjoining garden, which from 1757 to 1762, in the period when August III was forced to remain in Poland, was the main site of celebrating the court holidays²⁹. Exceptionally, in October 1744, the king celebrated the anniversary of his election in the royal castle in Grodno³⁰, and in January 1745, the coronation anniversary was sumptuously celebrated in Cracow, because since from 13th to 20th January, the royal couple resided in Wawel castle³¹.

When organising some of the major court festivities, certain rules applied. During all the royal anniversaries, as well as name-days of the royal family members and those of other, friendly dynasties, a so-called great (full) gala was organised. All the courtiers wore court attires on those days, but also the guests were expected to dress appropriately. This was especially important in the case of holidays related to the Order of the White Eagle. In 1749 all the Knights of the Order turned up in outfits of the same colour³². What is inter-

²³ „Kurier Polski”, 1755, no 116.

²⁴ „Kurier Polski”, 1740, no 200.

²⁵ „Kurier Polski”, 1755, no 125.

²⁶ „Kurier Polski”, 1752, no 846.

²⁷ „Kurier Polski”, 1749, no 692; 1750, no 743; 1751, no 796; 1753, no 53; 1755, no 127.

²⁸ „Kurier Polski”, 1748, no 580; 1749, no 632; 1751, no 747; 1753, no 851; 1754 no 26.

²⁹ „Kurier Polski”, 1757-1760.

³⁰ „Kurier Polski”, 1740, no 310.

³¹ „Kurier Polski”, 1745, no 424, 425.

³² „Kurier Polski”, 1749, no 674.

esting, the royal horse guards, stationed in Warsaw, were expected to wear gala uniforms only at Christmas, New Year, Easter and indeed on 3rd August³³.

Order of the White Eagle celebrations were the only ones that had a private, elite character, since it was only the Knights of the Order who took part in the dinner given on that occasion. Hence a limited number of the diners and participants of dexterity games that followed – for example, in 1750 only 40, and in 1754 only 32 Knights participated³⁴. Other celebrations held on that day, related to the king's name-day, were of a public character. Celebrating other royal anniversaries was made more popular in all its aspects, with not only princes, aristocrats, Polish-Lithuanian senators and magnates, ministers and other state officials, as well as diplomatic corps being invited.

Extending wishes in the morning to August III by ministers, senators, magnates (aristocracy) and members of the diplomatic corps was a fixed element of the birthday and name-day celebrations. After that, the courtiers went to a service – to the castle church in Dresden, and to a palace chapel or one of the churches in the proximity of the Saxon Palace in Warsaw³⁵. In January 1745 in Cracow, the festive mass was held in the Wawel Cathedral³⁶. The votive service concluded with „Te Deum Laudamus”.

Another fixed element of the celebrations were festive dinners and suppers, as well as dance balls or at least receptions. As far feasts go, in Dresden as a rule one was organised, which could consist of two parts, namely an early afternoon dinner, followed by a dance ball, reception or a stage performance, followed by a supper. This routine was broken on the queen's name-day on 8th December, with the royal couple giving a dinner and minister Heinrich von Brühl supper³⁷. In Warsaw it was generally accepted that the king gave dinner and supper, and at the time of August III major significance was given to the quality and exquisiteness of the food and drinks served. In the case of drinks, moderation was applied to alcohol. It was served in little amounts, „only to highlight the taste of the food and to facilitate digestion. The most popular beverages included the king's favourite Hungarian wines”³⁸. No moderation, however, was applied to foods, of which over a dozen dishes were prepared for each reception, carefully selected for their taste, but also presentation.

³³ J. Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III*, ed. M. Dernałowicz and Z. Goliński, Warszawa 1985, p. 196.

³⁴ „Kurier Polski”, 1754, no 58, 59.

³⁵ „Kurier Polski”, 1749, no 635.

³⁶ „Kurier Polski”, 1745, no 424, 425.

³⁷ „Kurier Polski”, 1749, no 692; 1750, no 743; 1751, no 796; 1753, no 53.

³⁸ J. Staszewski, *August III Sas*, Wrocław 2010, p. 265.

Guests were free to choose as they liked, enjoying the exquisite taste and visual feast. It was no wonder then that the feasts given at the royal-electoral court soon became a touchstone for the highest quality, which was also reflected in a popular saying „I ate like at the Polish king's”³⁹.

The dance balls began in the afternoon and lasted until late night. The women's fashion of the period, favouring lavish dresses mounted on elaborate structures, eliminated fast and lively dances⁴⁰. Also, the court did not always decide to have dance balls, even in the carnival period. For example, in Dresden, on the anniversary of the coronation in 1750 a reception was held, and in 1751 only a social meeting in the royal apartments⁴¹.

Another element of the anniversary celebrations were theatre performances. August III's coronation anniversaries in January and his birthday on 7th October were celebrated with operas, with the premieres of Johann Adolf Hasse's work being the most anticipated⁴². During the anniversary celebrations in Warsaw in autumn-winter 1748-49, comedies were staged, in the Saxon Garden on 7th October 1748 and in the Saxon Palace on 17th January 1749⁴³. Italian comedies were usually performed at the queen's name-day celebrations in December⁴⁴. In 1759 the royal name-day saw an Italian opera being performed⁴⁵.

On the king's name-day, if the celebrations were not linked with the Order of the White Eagle day, hunting was organised, which was favoured by the end of the protective period on game⁴⁶. It was held on a limited space, as according to the long Saxon tradition, an enclosure was made for the convenience of the ruler, and it was filled with animals to be shot off⁴⁷. A Saxon-style hunting was organised for the king and his sons in 1759 in Warsaw by Hieronim Radziwiłł. It took place on the eve of the anniversary of August III's coronation⁴⁸. On

the day of the Order of the White Eagle hunting was not organised, and after dinner, the king and the knights shot to a target in the garden⁴⁹. In 1750, the Saxon Garden was the site of a target shooting competition, participated in by 40 knights of the Order of the White Eagle. It was won by the Court Marshal of Lithuania Ignacy Ogiński, who was awarded the „Krantzos” crown⁵⁰. The Order of the White Eagle holiday celebrations were often linked with broadening the number of its knights, for example, in 1740 the king granted the Order to 10 new persons, including 4 foreigners, nine in 1744, eight Poles and Lithuanians in 1748, and in 1755, he personally adorned with the Order his one-year-old grandson Joseph⁵¹.

In the staging of the anniversary celebrations, considerable stress was put on the sound and lights. The cities in which the festivities were held had to be noisy. That was ensured by cannon and other gun salutes fired in the morning and during the feasts⁵². As a rule in Poland, one shot salutes when toasting August III's health, that of the members of his family, other monarchs friendly to the Commonwealth, as well as the health of founders, if they were among the senators or other officials. Cannon salutes were usually accompanied by fanfares played on trumpets and kettledrums. That was added to by performances by music bands on the premises of the residences where the anniversary celebrations were held, and sometimes in the city streets. Another important element of the celebrations was evening illumination of the palaces, and sometimes even whole cities. In Dresden, the royal residences (palaces and gardens) were profusely lit up, as well as aristocrats' palaces, the city hall, townsmen's houses and other elements of architecture⁵³. In January 1745 in Cracow, the whole town was illuminated, and the city hall – particularly profusely. The lights display was accompanied by mortar salutes⁵⁴. In Warsaw the illumination was limited to the Saxon Palace and Garden⁵⁵, but in 1754, a large part of the city was lit up, too, with the culmination of an hour-long fireworks display

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 183, 263-264.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 183.

⁴¹ „Kurier Polski”, 1749, no 698; 1750, no 750.

⁴² J. Staszewski, *Polacy*, p. 78.

⁴³ „Kurier Polski”, 1748, no 720; 1749, no 635; *Diariusz życia Ignacego Łopacińskiego pisarza skarbowego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego brata rodzónego wojewody brzeskiego*, „Biblioteka Warszawska”, 1855, vol. 3, p. 416.

⁴⁴ „Kurier Polski”, 1749, no 692; 1750, no 743; 1751, no 796; 1753, no 53.

⁴⁵ „Kurier Polski”, 1759, no 32.

⁴⁶ J. Staszewski, *Polacy*, p. 78.

⁴⁷ Ibidem; J. Staszewski, *August III*, p. 269; W. Zaleska, *Opowieść o polowaniu malowana na porcelanie*, „Spotkania z Zabytkami”, 2006, no 12, s. 9-10: <http://www.spotkania.pl/sources/pdf/2006-12-02.pdf>, access 23.12.2013. Images showing hunts - collection Schloss Moritzburg.

⁴⁸ „Kurier Polski”, 1759, no 4.

⁴⁹ „Kurier Polski”, 1740 no 193; 1744, no 400; 1746, no 505; 1747, no 558; 1750, no 724; 1754, no. 55, 56; 1755, no 109; 1756, no 161; 1757, no 32; 1758, no 32; 1759, no 32.

⁵⁰ „Kurier Polski”, 1750, no 724. About shot to a target as favourite entertainment of III August: J. Staszewski, *August III*, p. 269.

⁵¹ „Kurier Polski”, 1740, no 193; 1744, no 400; 1748, no 611; 1755, no 109. In 1747 nobody was awarded the Order, „Kurier Polski”, 1747, no 558.

⁵² It is regarding especially celebrations organised in Warsaw, „Kurier Polski”, 1744, no 400; 1746, no 513, 514; 1748, no 720, 1750, no 724.

⁵³ J. Staszewski, *Polacy*, p. 78.

⁵⁴ „Kurier Polski”, 1745, no 424, 425.

⁵⁵ „Kurier Polski”, 1744, no 400; 1748, no 611.

over the river Vistula, with cannon salutes in the evening. For the needs of the show, a special structure was erected, one resembling a church, decorated with the Commonwealth and royal coats of arms, and an inscription „Augustus Rex”, lit up so that it looked as if it was burning⁵⁶.

By the early 1740s, not only the process of formalising the ways of celebrating anniversary occasions at the royal-electoral court had been completed, but also that of taking over by the Polish-Lithuanian elites of the custom to celebrate them even in the absence of the royal couple in the Commonwealth. They immediately became public holidays, and later, through observing them almost obligatorily in the proceedings of so important state institutions as Great and Treasure tribunals, they became quasi-state holidays. In 1740, despite August III's absence, first the royal name-day was celebrated in Warsaw, where on 3rd August a special mass was celebrated, followed by a dinner thrown by the crown treasurer, during which toasts for the king's health were raised with an accompaniment of cannon salutes. Three months later in Warsaw, despite August III's being in the city, the anniversary of his election was not celebrated, and only the resolutions of *Pacta Conventa* were read out during the Sejm session. This anniversary was celebrated considerably more sumptuously in Lublin, where the President of the Great Tribunal celebrated a mass and gave a dinner and supper for the Tribunal deputies, with toasts for the king's health accompanied by rifle salutes. In the evening, the house where the supper took place was illuminated⁵⁷.

Four years later, in January 1744, August III was staying in Saxony, but even so, numerous Commonwealth cities celebrated the 10th anniversary of his coronation. In the Warmia Diocese, services were held in several consecutive churches for the total of 40 hours for the prosperity of the royal couple and of the Commonwealth, with the Holy Sacrament exhibited on the altars. Ceremonious votive masses were also celebrated in Poznań and Skierniewice, among others. In the latter, on 19th January, since the primate shifted the celebrations to Sunday, hoping for a higher attendance, and giving a solemn dinner on the same day. The most festive celebrations of the coronation's 10th anniversary took place in Piotrków, where between 17th and 23rd January 1744, president, marshal and two deputies to the Court Tribunal organised receptions, on Sunday 19th January a votive mass was celebrated, and the marshal threw an evening dance ball in a richly illuminated house, whose facade

⁵⁶ „Kurier Polski”, 1754, no 55, 56.

⁵⁷ „Kurier Polski”, 1740, no 201.

was decorated with painted figures, coat of arm cartouches, with inscriptions praising the king⁵⁸.

For two consecutive decades in various cities of the Commonwealth, irrespective of the king's current place of residence, celebrations were held for the anniversaries of coronations, elections, birthdays and joint name-day of August III and day of the Order of the White Eagle. The calendar of state institutions' sessions, notably all the local parliaments and court institutions implied that the coronation anniversaries were most often celebrated in Piotrków, during the sessions of the Great Tribunal, e.g. in 1749 (festive breakfasts, a supper and a votive mass), 1753, 1754, 1758 and 1760⁵⁹. Occasionally, they were organised also in other cities – in 1750 in Kamieniec Podolski, and in 1751 in Cracow and Skierniewice⁶⁰. In January 1754 August III was in Dresden, but in Lwów (Lviv) there were 2 hetmans, 20 lay senators, 3 bishops and numerous other dignitaries, officials and army officers. The Great Crown Hetman Jan Klemens Branicki, seeking support for the majorat of Ostróg threw a festive dinner „for a few tables”, and a masked ball in the evening. All day long cannon salutes were fired, and after dusk, the city hall was lit up⁶¹. In 1756, at the anniversary of August III's coronation, cannon salutes sounded in Poznań, and a festive supper was attended by over 100 magnates and nobles⁶².

Piotrków was also the site of celebrations related to the anniversaries of election and birth of August III, if the foundation of the Tribunal was completed early enough (according to the law, it had to take place on the first Monday after St. Francis day, i.e. 4th October⁶³). Such a situation took place in 1750 (only the monarch's birthday was celebrated, since on the anniversary of the election, on 5th October, the Tribunal was being inaugurated) and in 1756 (birthday only)⁶⁴.

In 1747, the proceedings Lesser Poland (Wielkopolska) term of the Chief Tribunal were prolonged, which resulted in the anniversary of August III's election being celebrated in Lublin⁶⁵. As a rule, the Lesser Poland term ended

⁵⁸ „Kurier Polski”, 1744, no 340, 342, 343.

⁵⁹ „Kurier Polski”, 1749, no 736; 1753, no 853; 1754, no 27; 1758, no 4; 1760, no 4.

⁶⁰ „Kurier Polski”, 1751, no 748.

⁶¹ „Kurier Polski”, 1754, no 28.

⁶² „Kurier Polski”, 1756, no 133.

⁶³ J. Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów*, p. 115.

⁶⁴ „Kurier Polski”, 1750, no 732, 734; 1755, no 117.

⁶⁵ „Kurier Polski”, 1747, no 566.

by 20th September. But because it commenced eight days after Easter⁶⁶, Lublin celebrated „only” the king’s name-day and the day of the Order of the White Eagle. Since 1740s they were celebrated sumptuously, with a votive mass, dinners and suppers followed by dance balls being their fixed elements. These were given by the President, Marshal of the Tribunal, and sometimes by some of the major deputies⁶⁷. In 1748, the celebrations included a fireworks display, illumination of the whole city, firearms salutes during the evening ball that took place in a building decorated with the portraits of the royal couple, royal and state coats of arms⁶⁸. The coats of arms of the Wettins and of the Commonwealth were also placed on the cakes served during the receptions⁶⁹.

Since the late 1740s, the king’s name-day and the day of the Order of the White Eagle were celebrated in Vilnius. In 1749, the celebrations were very solemn and were carefully directed. They commenced with a theatre performance by the Jesuit college students. Next, the participants moved to the arsenal (palace of the artillery), to take part in a supper and a ball, which lasted until 3 a.m. Additional elements of the gala included a parade drill of an infantry unit, a fireworks display, as well as an illumination of the arsenal with a clearly visible inscription made up from lamps „Vivat Augustus Rex Poloniae”. In 1752 the dinner for 240 guests was funded by the Tribunal Marshal Szymon Siruć, and the cannon salutes were fired on the eve of the day at dusk and in the morning on 3rd August. The Vilnius celebrations concluded with a fireworks display over the river Neris, cannon salutes, music concerts, as well as an illumination of the arsenal, city hall, main streets and gates of the city. Similar grandeur was given to the celebrations in 1756 that took place all over the city, with the major dances and the evening ball, as well as the fireworks display taking place in Antakalnis in Sapieha palace and the adjoining garden⁷⁰.

August III’s name-day and Order of the White Eagle Day celebrations took place also in other cities of Poland and Lithuania. In 1746 instead of Lublin, in the nearby Opole Lubelskie, where the funeral of province govern-ess Elżbieta Tarłowa nee Branicka was attended by numerous bishops, prelates, senators, officials, tribunal deputies and nobles. Since the funeral com-

menced with a few days’ delay on 4th August, and there already were several outstanding guests in Opole, on 3rd August a votive mass was said, followed by a dinner and a supper to commemorate August III and the Knights of the Order of the White Eagle⁷¹. In 1752 anniversary celebrations were organised in a few cities. In Warsaw, the Cracow Castellan Stanisław Poniąkowski gave a dinner for 40 persons in appropriately decorated garden (symbolism related to the monarch and the Order of the White Eagle), accompanied by 300 cannon salutes⁷². Festively illuminated and decorated with August III’s portraits and coat of arms, as well as royal rule insignia was the city of Kowno (Kau-nas)⁷³. There was a guild parade and cannon salutes as well. In 1756 the royal name-day celebrations were hosted again by the Cracow Castellan in Warsaw⁷⁴, and in Cracow, the local bishop Andrzej S. Zaluski⁷⁵.

At least twice a whole-day, sumptuous celebrations of the royal name-day were organised by the Radziwills in Nieśwież (Nesvizh) – in 1751 by the Ordinate of Nieśwież (Nesvizh) and Olyka (Olyka), Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, so expressing his gratitude for being promoted to colonel of an infantry regiment, and in 1755 by the Great Lithuanian Hetman Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł. During the latter, similar to the celebrations at the royal court, there was shooting to the target event, held in the afternoon, and a comedy performance in the evening⁷⁶.

By the mid 18th century the custom of organising anniversary celebrations had become so popular that also holidays not related to the monarch began to be celebrated in Poland. In December 1751 in Piotrków, the Marshal and the Tribunal President gave a dinner and a supper celebrating the name-day of queen Maria Josepha, with toasts to the health of the royal couple, the Habsburg family, and with cakes decorated with the Habsburgs’ coat of arms⁷⁷. In December 1756 the name-day of prince Xavier was celebrated in Piotrków, and the queen’s birthday in Lublin⁷⁸. A year later Lublin celebrated only the prince’s name-day⁷⁹, since the queen had died on 17th November 1757 in Dresden.

⁶⁶ J. Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów*, s. 127-128.

⁶⁷ „Kurier Polski”, 1740, no 401; 1745, no 453; 1747, no 557; 1748, no 612; 1751, no 778; 1755, no 108; 1756, no 161; 1758, no 33, addyament no 35.

⁶⁸ „Kurier Polski”, 1748, no 612.

⁶⁹ „Kurier Polski”, 1740, no 401.

⁷⁰ „Kurier Polski”, 1749, no 674; 1752, no 830; 1755, no 108; 1756, no 161; 1757, no 33; 1759, no 33.

⁷¹ „Kurier Polski”, 1746, no 505.

⁷² „Kurier Polski”, 1752, no 829.

⁷³ „Kurier Polski”, 1752, no 830.

⁷⁴ „Kurier Polski”, 1756, no 159.

⁷⁵ „Kurier Polski”, 1756, no 161. Also in 1758: „Kurier Polski”, 1758, no 33.

⁷⁶ „Kurier Polski”, 1751, no 778; 1755, no 108.

⁷⁷ „Kurier Polski”, 1751, no 795.

⁷⁸ „Kurier Polski”, 1756, no 178, 179.

⁷⁹ „Kurier Polski”, 1757, no 50.

At the time of August II and August III, at the royal-electoral court a practice was formalised of celebrating not only throne ascension anniversaries, but also birthdays and name-days of the king and members of his family, which were granted a public character. This helped create an appropriate image of the monarch among his subjects, and in this respect the Wettins did not depart from the European norm. Royal anniversaries were celebrated in a similar way in other countries, organising adequate celebrations and festivities not only at the ruler's court, but also in the major cities of a given country. What was specific for the Commonwealth at the times of August III was the practice of celebrating the anniversaries of elections, coronations, the king's birthdays and name-days so much that the celebrations almost reached the status of state celebrations. They were no longer organised only at the royal court's initiative, but that of ministers, senators and the heads of court institutions gathering every few months. What is more, the custom of sumptuous and almost public celebrations of name-days and birthdays became popular with the magnate courts, whose rhythm of life got to be regulated by such festivities⁸⁰. No wonder then that during the reign of Stanislaus August, the anniversaries of coronations, the monarch's birthdays and name-days gained the status of nearly state holidays, celebrated not only in Warsaw, but also in all the major cities and military garrisons all over the country. The monarch's name-day gained a special significance, since it was the day of St. Stanislaus, the patron saint of the Polish nation, as well as the day of the Order of Saint Stanislaus, established on 7th May 1765⁸¹. Indispensable elements of those celebrations included votive masses, solemn suppers, dance balls, bells ringing, cannon and other firearms salutes, city illuminations and fireworks displays.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE – KEY WORDS

Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów w 18 w., Saksonia w 18 w., dwór królewsko-elektorski, polskie dwory magnackie, uroczystości rocznicowe

Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 18 c., Saxony in 18 c., the Court of Polish-Saxon monarch, the Court of Polish Aristocracies', anniversary celebrations

⁸⁰ F.e. name day of Lithuanian Great Hetman in 29th October 1755 in Nieśwież, „Kurier Polski”, 1755, no 117.

⁸¹ S. Łoza, *Kawalerowie Orderu Świętego Stanisława 1765-1813*, Warszawa 1925.

OBCHODY UROCZYŚĆ ROZNICOWYCH W SAKSONII I POLSCE W CZASACH PANOWANIA AUGUSTA II I AUGUSTA III

W artykule przedstawiony został sposób celebrowania w czasach panowania Wettinów w Rzeczypospolitej dwóch królów z saskiej dynastii Wettinów: Augusta II i Augusta III, tradycyjnych świąt dworskich związanych z osobą monarchy i jego rodziny – rocznic elekcji, koronacji, urodzin czy imienin. Katalog uroczystości dworskich od połowy lat 30. XVIII w. został poszerzony o obchody rocznic związanych z osobami spowinowaconych i zaprzyjaźnionych monarchów, a także ustanowienia orderów polskich i saskich: Orła Białego i św. Huberta. Na słynącym w całej Europie z bogatego życia obyczajowego i towarzyskiego dworze Wettinów uroczystościom tym nadawano rozbudowany program i okazałą oprawę - wręcz obowiązkowymi ich elementami były: nabożeństwa wotywnie, uroczyste obiady lub kolacje, bale lub rauty, bicie w dzwony, salwy armatnie i z innej broni palnej, iluminacje miast i pokazy ogni sztucznych. W czasach Augusta III rocznice elekcji, koronacji, urodzin i imienin króla zaczęły być celebrowane także na dworach magnatów polsko-litewskich, a także w trakcie urzędowania instytucji sądowych. W rezultacie przestały być uroczystościami dworu królewskiego, a świątami quasi państwowymi.

JUBILÄUMSFEIERLICHKEITEN IN SACHSEN UND POLEN WÄHREND DER HERRSCHAFT VON AUGUST II. UND AUGUST III

Im Artikel werden traditionelle Hoffeste zu der Zeit der Herrschaft von zwei Königen aus dem Haus Wettin: August II. und August III. beschrieben, die mit dem Monarchen und seiner Familie verbunden waren, wie zum Beispiel Jahresfeierlichkeiten der Wahl, der Krönung, Geburtstage oder Namenstage. Der Katalog der Hoffeste wurde seit Mitte der 30-er Jahren des 18. Jahrhunderts um Jahrestage von Verwandten und befreundeten Monarchen sowie um die Verleihung der polnischen und sächsischen Orden, und zwar den Orden des Weißen Adlers und den Orden des Heiligen Hubertus ausgebaut. Der Hof der Wettiner war berühmt für sein reiches gesellschaftliches Leben. Die Feierlichkeiten hatten ein ausgebautes Programm und prachtvolle Rahmen, fast schon zur Pflicht gehörten Motivandachten, feierliche Mittag- und Abendessen, Bälle, Glockengeläut, Salutschüsse aus Kanonen und Gewehren, Städtebeleuchtung und Feuerwerke. Zu der Zeit des August III. begann man die Jubiläen der Wahl, der Krönung, der Geburtstage und Namenstage des Königs auf den Höfen der polnischen und litauischen Magnaten zu zelebrieren, auch während der Amtszeit der Gerichtsinstitutionen. In Folge dessen waren sie nicht mehr reine Feiertage des Königshofes, sondern entwickelten sich quasi zu staatlichen Feiertagen.

ANTONI MAZIARZ

Institut Historii Uniwersytetu Opolskiego – The Institute
of History of Opole University

**„LONG LIVE 3RD MAY!”
CELEBRATIONS OF THE ANNIVERSARY
OF THE CONSTITUTION OF MAY 3, 1791**

The end of the 18th century and the whole of the 19th century is an era of permanent struggle by European societies against their rulers. A constitution was expected to be a tool regulating the relations between the rulers and the society. The first in Europe and second in the world (after the American constitution of 1787) document of that type was the Polish *Ustawa Rządowa* (Government Act) of 3rd May 1791, commonly known as the Constitution of May 3rd¹. The document, passed as a result of an agreement between king Stanisław August Poniatowski (reign 1764-1795) and the house of commons of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth Parliament (Sejm), together with other decisions by the Great Sejm (1788-1792), introduced major reforms of the state, which were expected to be the foundation for political rebirth of Poland, mired in crisis and dominated by Russia. The reform attempts seriously worried Catherine the Great, and the *Preamble*, stressing the independent

¹ Bibliography concerning to Constitution of May 3rd has been collated by A. Wierzbicki, *Konstytucja 3 Maja w historiografii polskiej*, Warszawa 1993. Bibliography concerning to the Celebrations of the Anniversary of the Constitution of May 3, 1791 has been collated by F. Sawicka, J. Rupińska, *Bibliografia polskich wydawnictw pamiątkowych 1801-1914*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1973, p. 233-247.

will of the Polish nation, was to her especially unacceptable². A year later, the Tsaritsa sent Russian troops to the Commonwealth and, following a victorious battle, brought back her protectorate.

Russia found major opponents of the reforms among Poles as well (Targowica Confederation, established in May 1772), therefore the advocates of the Constitution took actions to strengthen its influence. One of them was to celebrate the anniversary of its passing, which was stipulated for by the Declaration of the Congregated Estates, forming an appendix to the Constitution. The anniversary was established as a holiday whose aim was „to thank God for the fortunate time of bringing Poland out of foreign force and domestic unrest; for bringing back the government which is capable of effectively ensuring our real freedom and Poland’s unity; for placing our homeland on the path leading to an appropriate consideration from the rest of Europe”³. The Constitution Holiday was set for 8th May, St. Stanislaus Day, patron saint of Poland. However, in 1792, the anniversary was celebrated on the day the Constitution was passed, i.e. 3rd May. Poles’ gratitude was to be expressed through the construction of the Temple of Divine Providence, „erected *ex voto* of all the estates”⁴. The cornerstone for the structure was laid by king Stanisław August Poniatowski. The temple was never erected. By the time the independence was lost (1795), only the foundations were laid, but still for next decades it was the site where patriotic youth of Warsaw would meet, and each 3rd May they would demonstrate the memory of the Constitution and the independent Poland. Rajnold Suchodolski expressed the sentiments in a song sung until this day, „Welcome the Morning Star of May” (*Witaj, majowa jutrzzenko*).

„There’s a ruin in a secluded spot,
Where Poles keep their memory.
There, at the times of Constantine
A spy watched our teardrops rise”

² „Persuaded that our common fate depends entirely upon the establishing and rendering perfect a national constitution; convinced by a long train of experience of many defects in our government (...), free from the disgraceful shackles of foreign influence; prizing more than life, and every personal happiness, the political existence, external independence, and internal liberty of the nation, whose care is entrusted to us (...); for securing our liberty, and maintaining our Fatherland and our possessions; with spiritual zeal and firmness, we do solemnly establish inviolable in every part”, *Konstytucja 3 Maja 1791/1791 Gęgotis 3-osios Konstytucija/The Constitution of May 3, 1791*, ed. J. Bardach, Warszawa 2001, p. 201.

³ *Deklaracja Stanów Zgromadzonych*, [in:] *Konstytucja 3 Maja. Statut Zgromadzenia Przyjaciół Konstytucji*, ed. J. Kowecki, Warszawa 1981, p. 105-106.

⁴ W. Smoleński, *Ostatni rok Sejmu Wielkiego*, Kraków 1897, p. 358.

For generations of Poles to come, the Constitution of May 3 became a symbol of freedom, breaking through the national barriers, striving for modernity and at the same time, respect for traditions. It was treated as the last will of the Commonwealth of noblemen. That is how it was depicted by Hugo Kollątaj, Ignacy Potocki and Franciszek Dmochowski - authors of the publication „The Rise and Fall of the Constitution of May 3, 1793”, referred to by Prof. Andrzej Zahorski as „the basic work of the Polish political propaganda”⁵.

The Constitution of May 3 was referred to when Polish independence was reclaimed at the time of Duchy of Warsaw (1807-1815). It was on May 3rd that the „National Eagles” were consecrated for the army. A special character of the celebration was to show the French how Poles are devoted to their stately traditions, and they were also an argument for Napoleon, who was reputed to have doubts as to the future of Polish land conquered from the Prussians. The Emperor set up a Polish state (The Duchy of Warsaw), but its political system was a far cry from what was stipulated for by the Constitution of 1791. In order to avoid bringing back the spirit of independence known from the Polish Constitution, Napoleon did not agree on the Civil Code to be announced on May 3rd, in fact it took place on May 1st, 1808⁶.

In the Kingdom of Poland (set up after the Congress of Vienna), the spirit of the Constitution of May 3 defined the direction of political activity to Polish patriots. The May Constitution was at the heart of the Polish Romanticism. The rebellion of the young generation was rooted, among others, in the process of the Philomaths of Vilnius, accused by the Russian authorities of promoting the Constitution (a fifteen-year-old middle school pupil Michal Plater allegedly wrote on the board „Long live Constitution of May 3!”). The great Polish Bard, Adam Mickiewicz, stressed the significance of the constitution by writing: „During the long years of enslavement, the day it was announced was celebrated secretly in all the provinces of the former Poland, from the Carpathians to the river Dźwina, at homes, churches, at youth’s meetings”⁷. He also wrote in „Books of the Polish Nation and the Polish Pilgrim-

⁵ A. Zahorski, *Początki nowoczesnej propagandy politycznej w Polsce: „O ustanowieniu i upadku Konstytucji 3-go Maja”*, [in:] *Kultura polska a kultura europejska. Prace ofiarowane Januszowi Tazbirowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, ed. M. Bogacka, J. Kowecki, Warszawa 1987, p. 99. See also W. Jurkiewicz, *Propaganda obozu konstytucyjnego*, [in:] *200 lat Konstytucji 3 Maja. Materiały z konferencji naukowej*, ed. M. Pawlak, Bydgoszcz 1992, p. 60.

⁶ B. Grochulska, *Tradycja Konstytucji 3 Maja. Zarys ogólny*, [in:] *Konstytucja 3 Maja. 200-lecie tradycji*, ed. B. Grochulska, Warszawa 1994, p. 62.

⁷ A. Mickiewicz, *Konstytucja Trzeciego Maja*, „Pielgrzym polski”, april-june (kwiecień-czerwiec 1833, p. 17.

age”, which was considered to be the *credo* of the Poles under partitions: „And finally the king and the knights, on the third day of May, had the idea of making all Poles brothers (...). And finally, Poland said: Whoever comes to me will be free and equal, because I am Freedom”⁸. In the opinion of more radical activists (e.g. Wiktor Heltman), the moderation and conciliatory tone of the Constitution of 1791 lay at the heart of later defeats of Poland, which could have been saved only through revolutionary actions.

Its heritage was invoked, in a celebratory way, in the moments of freedom, e.g. during the consecutive Polish uprisings. At those times, the patriotic cult, normally hidden in the refuge of noble mansions, surfaced to the wider forum of social life. This is what happened during Kościuszko Uprising (1794), with the evaluation of the Constitution, however, was not uncritical, especially from the point of view of the left wing⁹. The fortieth anniversary of the Constitution fell on a period of elevation resulting from Polish successes during the November Uprising (victories at Dębe Wielkie, Iganie, spring of 1831). Mass celebrations, however, were opposed to by doctors, warning against the danger of getting infected with cholera in big crowds, a disease that had just been brought from the East by Russian soldiers. Private celebrations were encouraged instead. On the more official note, the deputies and senators remembered the works of the Great Sejm during an official dinner, during which a book containing the text of the Constitution. The meeting’s atmosphere was added to by the display of standards won from the Russian troops. In the spirit of the Constitution of My 3, the fate of peasants was remembered (money was raised to help those who lost their properties in the war). Solidarity with France was also demonstrated. The Society of Friends of Learning organised a conference devoted to the Constitution, just like they had done in the previous years. The event was opened by a deputy to the Great Sejm, poet Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1757-1841). The anniversary was also celebrated by the Polish soldiers in the camps of Kałuszyn and Różane, as well as the Catholic priests, who celebrated solemn services on behalf of the homeland¹⁰.

⁸ A. Mickiewicz, *Księga Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego*, Gdańsk 2000, s. 7 <http://biblioteka.kijowski.pl/mickiewicz/%20adam/pielgrzymstwo.pdf>, dostęp 10.05.2014.

⁹ J. Kowecki, *Powstanie Kościuszkowie wobec dzieła Sejmu Czteroletniemu*, [in:] *Sejm Czteroletni i jego tradycje*, ed. J. Kowecki, Warszawa 1991, p. 191.

¹⁰ S. Kieniewicz, *Tradycja Trzeciego Maja w latach powstań narodowych (1830-1864)*, [in:] *Sejm Czteroletni i jego tradycje*, p. 221; R. Żurawski vel Grajewski, *Obchody rocznicy uchwalenia Konstytucji 3 Maja w czasie Powstania Listopadowego w świetle prasy powstańczej*, [in:] *3 Maja w tradycji i kulturze polskiej*, vol. II, ed. A. Barszczewska, Łódź 1991, p. 103-130; W. Zajewski, *O tradycjach 3 Maja w czasie Powstania Listopadowego*, [in:] *Konstytucja 3 Maja. 200-lecie tradycji*, p. 37-54.

At the time of the January Uprising (1863-1864), the ideas of national unity and including the commoners in the nation were especially strongly stressed. From the perspective of 70 years, the responsibility of the Russian occupant for the backwardness of the Polish land was stressed. The foreign rule not only took away our freedom, they also disrupted the reformatory tendencies, superimposing them with anarchy and lawlessness. It was stressed that it was because of, among others, the May Constitution that the Poles implemented the ideas of *Liberty, Equality and Fraternity* without bloodshed in the internal relations¹¹. The horrifying impression of the massacre that took place on 8th June 1861, when a few hundred innocent people died in Warsaw, as well as poor weather, resulted in the new celebrations on May 3rd being cancelled. A year later, however, not too well familiar with the situation general Mikołaj Krzyżanowski wrote in his letter to the King of Poland governor, gen. Alexander Lüders: „On the third of May, on a day commemorating some kind of a Polish constitution, a large number of students and women gathered in the Holy Cross Church from early morning”¹².

The memory of the May Constitution was cherished by the Polish political emigration. Its informal leader, Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, made a programme speech each May 3rd. The last one was presented on May 3rd, 1861. Similarly, the emigrant Literary Association (promoting the Polish issues on an international scale) held its meetings on May 3rd. The society of Polish conservatives in Paris formed an organisation called the Monarchy Association of May 3rd, and one of its press titles (published in the years 1839-1848) was titled „Third of May”. The Constitution was associated with a programme of moderate, evolutionary reforms. Karol Sienkiewicz (1793-1860), associated with the conservatives, said: „With the Constitution, the nobles commenced freeing the commons, strengthening the industry. The Constitution of May 3rd became a symbol of life, happiness, freedoms, and eventually – the nation’s resurrection”¹³. It was not only the elites, but also masses, who often only on exile raised their national awareness, treated May 3rd as a day of a special relation with the homeland. Celebrations took place everywhere there was a Polish diaspora¹⁴.

¹¹ F. Ramotowska, *Konstytucja 3 Maja w świadomości pokolenia 1863 roku*, [in:] *Konstytucja 3 Maja. 200-lecie tradycji*, p. 80-100.

¹² *Korespondencja namiestników Królestwa Polskiego z lat 1861-1863*, Wrocław 1973, p. 126.

¹³ Cite too: A. F. Grabski, *Program i symbol: 3 maja w polskiej myśli politycznej*, [in:] *3 Maja w tradycji i kulturze polskiej*, vol. II, p. 221.

¹⁴ K. Bartoszewicz, *Księga pamiątkowa setnej rocznicy ustanowienia Konstytucji 3 Maja*, vol. II, Kraków 1891, p. 77-129; D. Szafran, *Tradycja trzeciomajowa w koncepcjach społeczno-politycznych Hotelu Lambert*

Alongside the crystallizing political views on the Polish political scene, the perception of the Constitution of 1791 changed as well. For the right wing, it was the most important element in the shaping of the modern Polish nation, and the centenary celebrations were a key moment in the creation of the Polish national movement. The left wing, on the other hand, was critical towards it, stressing the superficiality of the social reforms. At the same time, representatives of the independence movement on the left (Bolesław Limanowski, Józef Piłsudski) pointed to the Constitution's beneficiary tendencies for the nation in that respect as well¹⁵.

The third of May became an unofficial Polish holiday, celebrated also by scientific circles. Just as it had become customary in the previous years, sessions of Cracow's Academy of Learning (founded in 1871), the Society of Friends of Learning and other social groups, including the Association of Young Industrialists of Poznań.

Centenary celebrations of the Constitution had very special character. It was a Sunday on May 3rd, 1891, which undoubtedly favoured celebrating. These were official in Galicia (Austrian partition), enjoying autonomy. Special religious services were held (of which the most important one took place in the Cathedral of Wawel), rallies, speeches – they all gathered both representatives of the elites, as well as ordinary townsfolk and peasants from the neighbourhood. In many places the anniversary evenings and services were held until the end of May¹⁶. A significant speech on the occasion was made by the poet, deputy and January Uprising participant, Adam Asnyk (1838-1897). In the hall of „Sokół” Gymnastic Association, he pointed to the significance of the Constitution in the process of raising people's awareness, relating the common people to the history of Poland, and stressing the glorious pages of our history. Such celebrations „are a lesson in history brought live under the roofs of workers and under the thatches of peasants, and it will teach them

more and will speak more effectively to their souls than any number of sheer dates (...) Without this stimulus, no social work can be undertaken effectively, as instead of a nation united by common goals and marching in a definite direction, there would be a multitude of individuals, prey to deceitful slogans of the need to fight for existence, arguing about a slice of bread and serving only their own egoism and their own desires. Therefore, it is our duty to support and strengthen the national spirit, wherever we can, within the boundaries that serve us”¹⁷. Adam Asnyk appreciated the opportunity of publicly presenting the work of the Constitution's creators, which was not something his countrymen in the Prussian or Russian partitions could enjoy. In Warsaw, remembering the events from before a century would have been dangerous, as reported by the French consul: „The day of May 3rd, which is the centenary of the Constitution, passed peacefully in Warsaw, on the whole, without any major incidents. The only riots were stirred up by a large group of students, who gathered early in the morning by the Cathedral of St. John, and went to the Botanical Garden in order to lay wreaths in the ruin of the Chapel of Divine Providence. The wreaths were instantaneously confiscated by the police, who also arrested some of the more stubborn students”¹⁸. The young people called themselves together for the celebrations by methods not too distant from the modern ones. In Warsaw City Archives there is a leaflet, which reads: „Remember the Third of May anniversary. Gather in the Botanical Garden in the afternoon” (1894), „Brothers, gather tomorrow, that is May 3rd, near Mickiewicz” (1903)¹⁹. The scale of the celebrations (not only the Constitution ones) was described by some as „the anniversary frenzy”, one has to remember, however, that for whole generations of Poles, it was an important opportunity to express their bonds with the captive homeland, and to show the direction free Poland should develop in. And we were not unique in that respect – mass celebrations were also organised by the French (anniversary of the Revolution, July 14th), or the Germans (the Sedan Day, September 2nd)²⁰.

Together with the growing war atmosphere, related to the expected outbreak of a war between the superpowers, it was easier for the partitioners to tolerate the May 3rd celebrations. Extensive ones took place in 1913, and 3rd

(1831-1861), [in:]: *3 Maja w tradycji i kulturze polskiej*, vol. II, p. 131; A. Pasternak, *Obchody rocznicowe Konstytucji 3 Maja w środowiskach Polonii amerykańskiej*, [in:]: *Ku reformie państwa i odrodzeniu moralnemu członkowi. Zbiór rozpraw i artykułów poświęconych dwusetnej rocznicy ustanowienia Konstytucji 3 Maja 1791 roku*, ed. P. Żbikowski, Rzeszów 1992, p. 230.

¹⁵ S. Kozicki, *Historia Ligi Narodowej (okres 1887-1907)*, Londyn 1964, p. 507; B. Limanowski, *Stulecia walka Narodu polskiego o niepodległość*, Lwów 1906, p. 10; J. Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, Warszawa 1937, vol. II, p. 8; J. Holzer, *Polski ruch robotniczy wobec tradycji Trzeciego Maja*, [in:]: *Sejm Czteroletni i jego tradycje*, p. 255-265; R. Wapiński, *Sejm Czteroletni i Konstytucja 3 Maja w endeckiej myśli politycznej*, [in:]: *Sejm Czteroletni i jego tradycje*, p. 266-277.

¹⁶ B. Wilk, *Uroczystości patriotyczno-religijne w Krakowie w okresie autonomii galicyjskiej (1860-1914)*, Kraków 2006, p. 82-85.

¹⁷ K. Bartoszewicz, *Księga pamiątkowa*, p. 189.

¹⁸ Cite too: *Vivat Konstytucja! W 220. Rocznice konstytucji 3 Maja/Viva the Constitution! The 220th anniversary of the May 3rd Constitution*, Warszawa 2011, p. 63, 67.

¹⁹ Ibidem; Bartoszewicz, *Księga pamiątkowa*, p. 133.

²⁰ See: M. Piotrowska, *Narodowe widowiska kulturalne. Uroczystości żałobne i rocznicowe w Wielkopolsce (1815-1914)*, Poznań 2011; N. Bończa-Tomaszewski, *Źródła narodowości. Powstanie i rozwój polskiej świadomości w II połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku*, Wrocław 2006.

May 1916 was even more solemn, on the 125th anniversary of the Constitution. Apart from religious services, there were numerous public speeches, so-called „live pictures”, and commemorative plaques and exhibitions were unveiled. Despite the reluctance on the part of the Germans, occupying Warsaw at the time, there even was a demonstration²¹. At the same time, in the Prussian partition, all celebrations were banned, so the inhabitants of Poznań could learn about the Warsaw celebrations only from the press²².

After the end of the First World War, Poles were able to celebrate their traditions without any restraints. As early as on 29th April 1919, the Legislative Sejm passed a resolution proclaiming a „solemn holiday until the end of time”. However, when most Europe enjoyed peacetime, Poles still had to fight for the shape of their state’s borderline for another few years. The consecutive Silesian Uprisings (1919, 1920 and 1921) were an important element of that struggle. It was no coincidence that the third, victorious one broke out on 3rd May 1921²³. At the time of the Second Polish Republic (1918-1939), the day of 3rd May was a national holiday (alongside 11th November and 19th March – Marshal Józef Piłsudski’s birthday). It was celebrated officially, with a participation of the highest state and church authorities, foreign diplomacy, but above all – with general and spontaneous involvement of hundreds of thousands of Poles. Remembering the May Constitution was an important element of patriotic upbringing²⁴. It was a day of joy for the regained independence, all the more articulate as it fell on the early spring, which was also important, especially compared to mostly rainy 11th November. After 1926, the authorities of Piłsudski’s Sanation put more emphasis on 11th November, whereas the National Democrats favoured the holiday on May 3rd²⁵.

After the interwar period, Poland was under an occupation again – a more

²¹ *3 Maja 1791 - 1916*, „Kurier Warszawski”, no 122 z 3 V 1916, B. Wachowska, *Obchody krajowe 125 rocznicy Konstytucji 3 Maja*, [in:] *3 Maja w tradycji i kulturze polskiej*, vol. II, p. 151.

²² A.K., *Konstytucja Trzeciego Maja 1791 (w 125. rocznicę)*, „Przewodnik Katolicki”, no 22 z 28 V 1916, p. 226-228.

²³ *Dzień Trzeci Maja w Polsce wielkie święto*, „Katolik”, no 53 z 4 V 1922, p. 3.

²⁴ See *Rocznice narodowe. Wskazówki i materiały potrzebne dla urządzających obchody narodowe*, ed. M. Bogusławska, Lwów-Warszawa 1926, p. 171-194; *Rocznice. Wypisy do obchodów rocznic narodowych*, ed. A. Wiczorkiewicz, E. Oppman, Warszawa 1934, p. 381-416. Such work were published in 19th and began of 20th century: M. Zagórski, *Jak urządzać widowiska i obchody uroczyste w stowarzyszeniach polskich*, Poznań 1911.

²⁵ A. Zahorski, *Geneza i tradycja Konstytucji 3 Maja*, w: *Epoka Konstytucji 3 Maja. Materiały z sesji naukowej zorganizowanej w Uniwersytecie Warszawskim dnia 3 maja 1982*, ed. S. Dubisz, Warszawa 1983, p. 26; A. Chojnowski, *Trzeci Maja w publicystyce piłsudczyków*, [in:] *Sejm Czteroletni i jego tradycje*, p. 280, 284.

tragic one than that known from the 19th century. But also then the 3rd of May was a special day. It was commemorated by writing on walls and hanging out white and red flags²⁶. The Constitution of May 3rd - a symbol of independence - returned in the emigration publications. Its anniversary was a holiday in the Polish armed forces in the West (defilades, speeches and religious services were held). It was also reflected in the newly formed army formations in the East. In 1943 a radio broadcast devoted to the Constitution of May 3rd was aired on the radio of Tadeusz Kościuszko Infantry Division. A critical tone prevailed, attributing a „landowner” character to the document, therefore being backward. It was argued that only communism, to be introduced in Poland with the help of the Red Army, would give the Polish nation a real freedom. It was soon to turn out what such freedom meant in the „people’s” rule. There was no place for tradition in it, but above all – no place for independence, which Poles associated so strongly with the May Constitution. Admittedly, on 3rd May 1945, in an atmosphere of the end of the war, the leader of the Polish communists Bolesław Bierut declared during a meeting of the State National Council that the new rulers would draw on the stipulations of the May Constitution, however as early as in 1946 celebrating its anniversary was strictly forbidden. One of the reasons was an introduction of a new holiday – 1st May, which should not be disturbed in any way, according to the communists. Yet Poles, instead of attending obligatory May Day parades, went to demonstrations supporting the opposition. Academic youth demonstrations (the largest ones took place in Cracow, Poznań and Katowice) were categorically suppressed. Enforcing the Workers’ Day, at the same time supplanting the Constitution Day, was one of the first symptoms of a tug of war between the „new and old”, the most meaningful means of using propaganda of the rival parties²⁷.

After a few years, the Stalin regime made it a norm for banning all holidays that were not „people’s” in character (Law concerning holidays of 18th January 1951). With the exception of 1st May (International Workers’ Day, also known as Labour Day), 22nd July (National Day of Poland’s Revival - an-

²⁶ Celebrations of the Anniversary of the Constitution of May 3, 1791 during the Second World War by different political groups: E. Ponczek, *Tradycja trzeciomajowa. Legenda kościuszkowska. Symbolika 11 Listopada. Z badań nad dziejami idei niepodległości Polski w latach II wojny światowej*, Toruń 2011, p. 40-186.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 158; A. Głowacki, *Obchody rocznicy Konstytucji 3 Maja w środowisku polskim w ZSRR w okresie II wojny światowej*, [in:] *3 Maja w tradycji i kulturze polskiej*, vol. I, ed. A. Barszczewska, Łódź 1991, p. 89-95.

niversary of the communist PKWN Manifesto under Josef Stalin²⁸) and 7th October (October Revolution holiday), all other state holidays celebrated in Poland were banned²⁹. What is more, a ban was introduced on mentioning them in the press, academic publications, the public was not allowed to hang out white and red flags. What it came to was, after mass flag hanging on May 1st, on the next day all the flags had to disappear from the public space, so that there was none left on May 3rd. This practice was extremely painful for Poles. The ban on celebrating the independence traditions was directly linked with the superimposed celebrations of May Day, and the red flags, symbolising the USSR supremacy. Despite the danger of fines or even arrest (decree of 9th December 1955), numerous Poles ostentatiously hung out white and red flags on May 3rd. It is not surprising, therefore, that the launch of the Polish section of Free Europe radio took place on May 3rd (1952), and the broadcast commenced with the tune of „The Mazurka of May”. The founder of the Polish section of RFE, Jan Nowak Jeziorański, suggesting calling it Radio of the Third of May. In Poland, the authorities allowed for limited celebrations of the Constitution’s anniversary after 1956, but with the departure from the spirit of the „October thaw”, there was a growing hatred towards them.

A new surge in the high spirits and courage swept through Poland in the era of „Solidarity”. Yet again the day of May 3rd was an occasion to express a disapproval of the authorities, thriving patriotism and the traditions of independence. It was also an opportunity to „count the ranks” – the most numerous demonstrations and rallies took place then. A mass held on May 3rd 1981 in the amphitheatre of Opole was a good example of such a gathering. In the sermon delivered by the bishop of Opole, Antoni Adamiuk, the following was said: „There can be party members and those independent among us. There can be believers and non-believers. However, the task of building our common home, the homeland, belongs to us all.” This was an expression of the tradition indicating the Constitution Day to be the day of the unity of all Poles, irrespective of their social status, religion or political views. A year later, under the martial law, the 3rd of May turned into a rebellion drowned in blood³⁰. The fact that the idea of freedom is stronger than any regime violence

²⁸ In fact this document was signed in Moscow 20th July 1944.

²⁹ There were beside anniversary of 3rd May also: 15th August - Feast of the Soldier, holiday, which was proclaimed on reminder Miracle of the Vistula”, victory over Red Army; 15th - Independence Day.

³⁰ *Stan wojenny w Polsce*, ed. A. Dudek, Warszawa 2003; W. Polak, *Dni protestu. Wydarzenia 1 i 3 Maja 1982 w Toruniu*, Toruń 2004; http://ipn.gov.pl/strony-zewnetrzne/wystawy/ostatni_3_maja/galeria.html, dostęp 22 VII 2013.

was remembered on 3rd May 1983 by the Pope John Paul II: „The Third of May is a memorable day in the history of the nation. The Constitution that was passed on that day was supposed to fix the Republic of Poland back then, when it was threatened by a deadly danger. It turned out to be stronger, but the Constitution survived, proved to be the evidence of the nation’s being alive, being independent.” The two opinions by high rank Catholic Church clergy mentioned above are just two small examples of how the priesthood was involved in the May celebrations. The fact that the third of May is also the church holiday of Our Lady the Queen of Poland, made it even easier and more natural. The day naturally linked religious and national issues. Undoubtedly, for the lowest social strata, patriotic issues being mentioned in the church was an important element of identification with the nation and its history. At the same time, for the imposed rule, it was a major obstacle in obliterating the memory of the May Constitution. In the 20th century, it was most strongly reflected in the celebrations of the millennium of the Polish state, whose culmination was organised by the Catholic Church on 3rd May 1966 (state celebrations were held on July 22nd).

The decades to come demonstrated that the message of the *Government Act* was more important than its actual stipulations³¹. For over two centuries, the Constitution of May 3rd embodied the core of major symbols of Polishness. It embodied unity and understanding beyond divisions of status, nationality, religion, giving up privileges in the name of the national interest, reaching aims through agreement, but above all – the independence of Poland and continuity of struggle to regain freedom. For generations of Poles living with the lack or limitations of freedom, the following words from the Constitution were extremely important: „all government of human societies has its beginning in the will of the nation”. A characteristic scene is drawn upon by a Polish historian, Prof. Marcin Kula: „It happened a few months after the martial law was imposed, on 3rd May 1982. We gathered in Royal Castle in Warsaw to talk about the Constitution among historians, on the anniversary of the Act. Prof. Emanuel Rostworowski was delivering a lecture. He was talking about a sudden disruption of the reforms. He concluded quoting the words of Rousseau addressed to Poles, about us having to become indigestible, seeing as we’d been swallowed. That very moment we could hear noises of a demonstration being dispersed in Zamkowy Square. All the audience rushed to the windows.

³¹ S. Kutrzeba, *Historia ustroju Polski w zarysie*. Korona, Poznań 2001, p. 206; Grabski, *Program i symbol*, p. 233; A. Grześkowiak-Krwawicz, *Konstytucja 3 Maja – narodziny mitu*, [in:] *Ku reformie państwa*, p. 143; Grochulska, *Tradycja Konstytucji 3 Maja*, p. 59.

We saw the youth doing their best to be indigestible”³². And the attempts were not in vain – after years of struggle, Poles regained freedom, and in the new political reality, the May 3rd celebrations have received a very special political and social meaning.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE – KEY WORDS

Historia Polski XIX w., Historia Polski XX w., konstytucja 3 Maja, święta państwowe w Polsce, uroczystości rocznicowe

History of Poland in 19 c.; History of Poland in 20 c., Constitutions of May 3, 1791, public holidays in Poland, anniversary celebrations

„NIECH SIĘ ŚWIĘCI 3 MAJA!”. OBCHODY ROCZNICY USTANOWIENIA KONSTYTUCJI 3 MAJA 1791 R.

Jedno z najważniejszych świąt państwowych przypada w Polsce na dzień 3 maja. W tym dniu upamiętniamy uchwalenie pierwszej na kontynencie europejskim konstytucji. Dokument ten, niezależnie od poglądów politycznych i zmieniających się okoliczności historycznych, łączył Polaków, jako symbol jedności narodu, jego dążenia do niepodległości i budowy nowoczesnego państwa opartego na tradycji. Z racji niewoli narodowej, w dwóch ostatnich stuleciach obchody święta Konstytucji miały przeważnie charakter nielegalnych demonstracji, zwalczanych zarówno przez władze zaborcze, jak i komunistyczne. To 3 maja ogłaszano programy polityczne, inaugurowano działalność instytucji narodowych. W wolnej Polsce – obok 15 sierpnia (Dzień Wojska Polskiego) i 11 listopada (Dzień Niepodległości) to najważniejszy dzień dla Polaków przywiązanych do tradycji patriotycznych. Podobnie, jak w XIX i XX wieku 3 Maja to synonim wolnej Polski.

„Es lebe der 3. Mai!”. Jubiläumsfeierlichkeiten der Verabschiedung der Verfassung vom 3. Mai 1791

Einer der wichtigsten staatlichen Feiertage in Polen ist der 3. Mai. An diesem Tag gedenken wir der Verabschiedung der ersten Verfassung auf dem europäischen Kontinent. Dieses Dokument, unabhängig von politischen Ansichten und den sich verändernden historischen Bedingungen, verband die Polen als ein Symbol der nationalen Einheit, des Drangs der Nation nach Unabhängigkeit und des Aufbaus eines modernen Staates, der jedoch die Tradition als Grundlage behalten hat. Wegen der Teilung

³² Cite too: *Vivat Konstytucja! W 220. Rocznice*, p. 88.

Polens wurde dieser Tag in den letzten zwei Jahrhunderten als illegale Demonstrationen gefeiert, die gleichwohl von den Besatzern als auch der Kommunisten bekämpft wurden. Der 3. Mai war der Tag der Bekanntmachung von politischen Programmen und der Inauguration der Tätigkeit von nationalen Institutionen. Im freien Polen, neben dem 15. August (Tag der Polnischen Streitkräfte) und dem 11. November (Unabhängigkeitstag) ist das der wichtigste Tag aller Polen, die patriotische Traditionen pflegen. Ähnlich wie im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert war der 3. Mai ein Synonym des freien Polens.

ADRIANA DAWID

Institut Historii Uniwersytetu Opolskiego – The Institute
of History of Opole University

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE OPOLE SILESIA IN THE YEARS 1949-1956

The International Workers' Day, falling on 1st May, was one of the most important holidays in the Communist calendar. The character and scale of the May Day celebrations organised in Poland after World War Two underwent a considerable evolution over the years¹. In 1949, after the foundation of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR), the core elements of the celebrations were established, and since then they were implemented in accordance with the scenario superimposed by the Central Committee (hereinafter CC) of the Polish United Workers' Party (hereinafter PUWP). A year later the Workers' Day was announced an official state holiday in Poland. Until 1956, in the period of strict Stalinism, the May Day celebrations were of a particularly coarse character, and were organised under strict supervision of the Party authorities. The scale and expansion of the celebrations can be traced back thanks to meticulous and numerous reports and

¹ About celebrations of the International Workers' Day mor in f.e.: P. Sowiński, *Komunistyczne święto. Obchody 1 maja w latach 1948-1954*, Warszawa 2000; A. Dytman-Stasienko, *Święto zawłaszczonych znaczeń. 1 Maja w PRL. Ideologia, rytuał, język*, Wrocław 2006; *Życie PRL: praca, rozrywka, ludzie*, ed. E. Majdak, Warszawa 2011; S. Marchel, J. Sowińska, *Pochód pierwszomajowej poprawności. Święta Pracy na Opolszczyźnie w latach 1945-1989 w świetle materiałów archiwalnych wybranych z zasobu Archiwum Państwowego w Opolu*, Opole 2014.

evaluations of the preparations and the course of the Workers' Day prepared by local units of the PUWP in the Opole Silesia².

Despite the scenario being replicated each time, the atmosphere and significance of the each celebrations changed, reflecting the current issues in the internal or international policies. When preparing the May Day celebrations in 1949, the Opole Silesia authorities placed a special emphasis on their anti-Catholic campaign. The next year, attempts were made to make the holiday „double good” because of the 60th anniversary of the International Workers' Day celebrations. 1st May 1951 was dominated by slogans popularising the National Peace Plebiscite. In 1952 the May Day celebrations coincided with those connected with the 60th birthday of the Polish President, Bolesław Bierut. The following year, on the other hand, was dominated by mourning after Joseph Stalin's death. The celebrations of 1955 were linked with, among others, collecting signatures under the Appeal of the World Peace Council, preparations to the 5th World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw, 85th anniversary of Vladimir Lenin's birth, and the political and economic achievements of the post-war decade.

Campaigning for the implementation of resolutions by conventions and plenums of CC PUWP, and state economic plans – were a permanent element of the May Day propaganda. Thus, in the initial stages of celebration preparations, as early as at the turn of February and March, appeals were made for the May Day work, i.e. increasing work effectiveness, saving raw materials, introducing new, innovative solutions, stricter adherence to the discipline of labour. Farmers were encouraged to, among others, increase breeding volume and supplies of milk, raise the yield per hectare, or an earlier completion of spring work in the fields. Additionally, on top of the collective commitments, in mid April individual work watches were being undertaken. In 1952 such commitments were undertaken not only to celebrate the Workers' Day, but also B. Bierut's 60th birthday, hence the then work watches were referred to as Bierut watches. The value of May Day work increased each year. In 1951 the profit from such work done in Opole Voivodeship was estimated to reach 18,763,396 zlotys³. Two years later, there were 7,651 individual commitments

² Opole Silesia is identical from Opole Voivodeship (Province) created in 1950 and existing to 1975. In this years celebrations of the International Workers' Day were coordinated by Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in Opole. To 1950 on the organization of the celebration supervised Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in Katowice.

³ On industry fell 7 786 544 zł, and on commerce 646 654 zł. Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu (cit. APO = State Archive in Opole), KW PZPR w Opolu (= Voivodeship Committee of the

and 2,536 collective ones undertaken, to a total value of approx. 56 million zlotys⁴. In many cases, the commitments undertaken covered work which would have been done without the special May Day mobilisation, notably the spring clean-up work. Other popular forms of social work done before May Day included collections of recyclable materials, renovation work, water and sewage construction, as well as removing the debris in towns and cities. Much of the work declared aimed at facilitation of the organisation of May Day celebrations. For example, in the Opole Voivodeship, young people dyed red fabrics to be used for the holiday decorations, the army took care of the PA system on the route of the May Day parades, construction companies renovated the premises where May Day celebrations were supposed to take place. All of the work was performed without remuneration, as extra work, and in the official interpretation by the Party, they were an evidence of public involvement in the organisation of the celebrations. Since each year attempts were made to improve the celebrations and make them more attractive, the scale of commitment aiming at the enrichment of the programme also grew. According to the 1954 celebrations plans, the puppet theatre in Opole was expected to stage a specially prepared political performance. The „Malapanew” and „Andrzej” Steel Works declared setting up the first steel-work philharmonic, whose first concert was to be a part of the Voivodeship celebrations on 30th April. The Opole Music Association was to provide their orchestra free of charge for the entertainment events organised on Bolko island on the 1st of May, whereas the Regional Cinema Management declared organising open-air movie screenings. May Day work was done mainly in industry and agriculture. According to the official evaluation by the Party authorities in Opole, those initiative were highly effective. it was claimed that thanks to the public being involved, an economic deadlock was overcome, shortcomings and delays from previous months were made up for, production levels were exceeded, waste was reduced. In actual fact, most of the work undertaken had a showy character only, and the work that was declared to be done, was in fact feigned. Also, orders for work to be performed, received from above, contributed to ruining the holiday atmosphere, resulting in May Day being associated mainly with work.

Organisation of the Workers' Day celebrations was usually commenced at the turn of March and April, when the May Day celebrations committees

PUWP in Opole), ms. 247, *Sprawozdanie z wykonania zobowiązań 1-majowych*, card (c.) 245. [All titles and quotes in original version].

⁴ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 270, *Ocena przebiegu kampanii i manifestacji 1-szo majowej w roku 1953 w woj. opolskim*, c. 73-83.

were founded, uniting representative of various organisations and communities⁵. The Voivodeship Worker's Day Celebrations Committee set up in 1951 in Opole consisted of 44 persons, of which seven were its presiding officers⁶. The Voivodeship Committee supervised all the similar committees set up at the levels of districts, boroughs, communities, as well as those set up in companies, schools, institutions, offices, etc. Organisational structures of some of the teams involved in the celebrations were quite complex. In 1951, the municipal committee in Opole comprised 8 commissions: propaganda, order, financial, entertainment, sports, artistic, decorations and radio broadcasting. Although in 1953, the issue of an excessive number of commissions and sections was regulated so that their competences did not overlap, the number of people involved in the preparation grew each year. In 1953, committees devoted to the preparations of the celebrations consisted of a total of 1,400 people⁷. Their effectiveness, however, did not satisfy the PUWP Voivodeship authorities in Opole. Each year, the committees were criticised for their slight involvement and poor coordination of May Day preparations.

Although there were the organisation committees, decisions concerning the celebrations were in fact made by the PUWP. There was a three-person coordination board operating in the Voivodeship Committee of the Party in Opole, whose aim was to make sure proper preparations to the holiday do take place. Additionally, the so-called seven (*siódemka*) was set up, whose responsibility covered the central Voivodeship celebrations in Opole itself. The Opole PUWP strived to involve an ever growing number of its members in the preparations for the May Day. Special agitators, whose task was to supervise the preparations, were sent from the Voivodeship level to the district committees, and further to the boroughs and companies. Effects of those actions was poorer than envisioned, and the work by the party emissaries was more often than not only feigned.

Workers' Day celebrations were also used to conduct a wide-scale recruitment of PUWP members. It was also 1st May that nurseries, village community rooms and culture centres were officially opened.

The May Day campaign reached its peak in the week preceding the holiday itself. In most locations, especially on the district and borough level, cel-

ebrations were held, including matinees or soirees, attended by representatives of local party authorities and mass organisations. May Day celebrations took place also in all the schools and major companies. Their programmes had to meet specific ideological requirements, therefore the scenarios of any of those celebrations had to be approved by the district PUWP Committees, and the actual events were monitored by party members delegated to this task by the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP in Opole. Despite these rigours, programmes of some celebrations organised in the Voivodeship of Opole contained elements that were unwanted by the PUWP, e.g. western dances, like foxtrot and tango, or skits ridiculing officers of Civic Militia (*Milicja Obywatelska – MO*) and the Polish Army. The celebrations were usually topped by a speech by a representative of the local PUWP, which was supposed to cover some ideological issues alongside some of the local problems, tasks and achievements. Oratorical skills of the speakers, however, more often than not proved to be poor, and the speeches tiresome and derivative. The celebrations also hosted the local shock workers, who would publically report on the implementation of the May Day commitments. Finally, those praiseworthy received rewards and decorations. The official speeches and appearances were followed by the artistic part of the celebrations. Programmes of most celebrations included music pieces, notably revolutionary and patriotic ones, including „The International”, „Anthem of Democratic Youth Federation”, „Mazur in Shackles”, „Millions of Hands” and „Labour Song”. In Brzeg, where a Russian Army unit was stationed, the district celebrations always featured the anthem of the USSR. They also staged dramas promoting the socialist ideology, e.g. „The Family” by Ivan Popov. Social realism writers' works were also read out (e.g. „The Mother” by Maxim Gorky). There was also a place for gymnastic shows, folk dances and concerts. Many of the events took place with a participation from art groups which went to the Opole Silesia from the Voivodeship of Katowice (aka Stalin City) under the „links of cities with rural areas” programme. More often than not, the responsibility for the celebrations was with teachers and their students. In 1951, the celebrations in Tarnów Grodkowski were added to by performances by nursery school kids. Despite their young age, their repertoire was full of pathos and simply difficult. The children recited poems by Maria Konopnicka, fragments of poetry in Russian, Workers' Day and revolution theme poems. The report from that celebration mentions a four-year-old who, „having recited a May Day poem about tractors, assured the audience that she was going to study hard in order to

⁵ In 1951 city committee of commemoration in Opole has emerged already on 27th February.

⁶ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 247, *Informacja o przygotowaniach do Święta Pracy w dniu 1-go Maja 1951 r.*, c. 234-235.

⁷ APO, Komitet Miejski (dalej KM = City Committee) PZPR w Opolu, ms. 50/IV/11, *Ocena przebiegu przygotowań do 1. maja w r. 1953*, without pagination.

become a shock worker”⁸. The artistic level of the celebrations varied. Some of the events proved to be too long or so boring that the audience were leaving before the end, including on occasion some of the local party secretaries. According to party reports, the rooms in which the events were held were full of people. The official party data from 1953 claim that between 26th and 29th April, there were 590 events (of which 218 in villages), attended by a total of 82 thousand people⁹. For many participation in the May Day events was obligatory, and they took part in them at explicit orders from the authorities or their superiors. The events in companies were attended mainly in order to receive medals and awards, and above all, money bonuses. However, it was not always enough to ensure high level of attendance. For example, in the cement factory Piast, out of ten shock workers who were to be handed a savings books during the May Day event, only one turned up¹⁰. Attendance was doctored by film screenings or dance parties organised after their conclusion.

On the eve of the Workers' Day, some companies organised short, 15-minute mass meetings, at which an appeal was voiced for the employees to take an active part in the May Day celebrations. In the afternoon on 30th April, the main Voivodeship celebration took place, an event organised in Opole since 1951. In line with the party intentions, it was to be a major event. It was attended by the most important representatives of the regional party organisations, the authorities, institutions, companies and mass organisations. The Voivodeship celebrations commenced with a speech by the First Secretary of the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP in Opole. The artistic part of the event was also long-lasting, consisting usually of: a historical montage, patriotic songs and folk dances. The events usually turned out to be repetitive and boring, and the 1953 celebrations were considered to be notably overloaded. The Voivodeship celebrations in Opole usually took place on the premises of the Opole Land Theatre (*Teatr Ziemi Opolskiej*), but also the sports hall of the „Budowlani” club at Dubois Street was used, as well as the Officers' Club of the Polish Army. It was estimated that in 1953, the Voivodeship celebrations were attended by approximately 2 thousand people. Those who were unable to enter the hall itself, could listen to a live broadcast through a PA

system arranged throughout the city. In the evening, after the completion of the Voivodeship celebrations, there were numerous tattoos and bonfires for the youth held all over the city.

On 1st May, there were parades organised in all the major towns and cities of the Voivodeship. The greatest of them all was held in Opole. The May Day celebrations commenced early in the morning. In Opole, at 6 o'clock a wake-up call was sounded from the city hall tower, announcing the beginning of the celebrations. Since dawn, groups of Polish Youth Association (*Związek Młodzieży Polskiej – ZMP*, hereinafter PYA), paraded down the city streets with loud singing and music accompaniment. The PA system broadcast propaganda music, interwoven with May Day slogans and reports on May Day commitments completed. As early as 8:30, the parade participants gathered in designated spots. At 10:00, speeches by the central authorities in Warsaw were broadcast, and the parade itself was planned between 10:30 and 1:00 p.m. More often than not, this time was longer, because the groups marched in an irregular order and with far too big gaps in between. In 1953 it was successfully formed into 12-person rows, considerably shortening the proceedings. On the other hand, in 1954 the head of the parade marched very quickly, which resulted in some groups having to run to catch up with them.

There was a special stationary platform with seats of honour, which constituted the central point of the parade. The seats were taken by the members and activists of the PUWP, National Councils, trade unions, the PYA, the United People's Party, the Democratic Party, Women's League, Polish Army, the Red Army, shock workers and miners' representatives. In line with the Party authorities in Opole, this honorary assembly had to include local representatives. The platform of honour in Opole was very crowded, since some of the invited guests brought their family members along. In order to prevent that, from 1954 access to the honorary platform was only possible for special pass holders, checked by militia officers. Next to the platform of honour, there was another, smaller one. for those appointed to give cheers and propaganda slogans, that were to be responded to by the participants of the parade. Most of them, however, did not demonstrate much enthusiasm, and marched the length of the parade, including in front of the honorary platform, in silence. This lack of commitment, joy and verbal expressions of support for the idea of the holiday promoted by the PUWP was often discussed by the members of the party authorities in Opole. Each year, the Executive of the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP in Opole struggled to mobilise the

⁸ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 1813, *Sprawozdanie z odbytej akademii 1-szo majowej w Tarnowie Grodkowskim w dniu 29 IV 1951*, c. 188.

⁹ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 270, *Ocena przebiegu kampanii i manifestacji 1-szo majowej w roku 1953 w województwie opolskim*, c. 73-83.

¹⁰ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 1816, *Sprawozdanie Stanisława Greli z obsłużenia akademii z 30 IV 1951*, c. 171.

PYA members, school headmasters and leaders of party committees to encourage the parade participants, yet the effects were rather meagre. The May Day celebrations in Opole lacked propaganda singing or booming chanting of pro-party slogans. According to the Voivodeship authorities of the PUWP, the parades, notably those organised in smaller towns, resembled Catholic processions.

The route of the May Day parade in Opole evolved as well. In 1950, it went down Tadeusza Kościuszki Street for the first time, giving up on marching down 3 Maja Street, as it was scarcely inhabited and bore traces of war damages. The parade commenced at Ługniańska Street. In 1952, it commenced at Plac Armii Czerwonej (Red Army Square), and then proceeded down the following streets: Władysława Reymonta, Ozimska, J. Stalina, T. Kościuszki and Katowicka. That year, for the first time the honorary platform and the end of the parade were placed at Nysy Łużyckiej Street. The following years brought slight corrections to the route, with the parade going directly to W. Reymonta Street from the Red Army Square, avoiding fragments of Ozimska and J. Stalina Streets. The party authorities strived to ensure high level of participation in the parades. It was especially important in 1949 and 1955, when May Day fell on a Sunday, and there were Sunday church services held alongside the May Day parades. According to the official data, the Opole May Day parade in 1951 was attended by 31,130 people, and 42,887 in the next year¹¹. In 1953 children's participation in the parades was given up. Despite that, the attendance was still relatively high – 136 parades organised in the Voivodeship were attended by a total of approx. 360 thousand people, of which 47,118 people in Opole alone¹². In 1955, the Voivodeship parade gathered some 55 thousand people. Most of the parade participants were obliged to take part. Down the streets of towns and cities there marched representatives of the authorities, party organisations, offices, institutions, companies, as well as individual farmers and employees of state farms and production cooperatives, as well as social organisations. A special stress was put on the participation of the PYA members and secondary school students. At the head of the parade, right behind the colour guards, marched athletes. From 1954 on, representa-

¹¹ APO, KM PZPR w Opolu, ms. 50/IV/3, *Sprawozdanie z przygotowań do obchodu uroczystości I majowej z 3 V 1951*, wp.; APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 50/IV/7, *Ocena przebiegu święta klasy robotniczej 1-szego maja na terenie miasta Opole na posiedzenie egzekutywy KM PZPR w Opolu z 8 V 1952*, wp.

¹² APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 50/IV/11, *Ocena przebiegu przygotowań do 1. maja w r. 1953*, wp.

tives of companies were grouped by industries. The parade ended with horse teams and vehicle groups, presenting machines, including farming equipment, as well as tractors and cars.

The parades were supposed to look colour and lively. The participants were equipped with banners, flags, flowers, paper doves of peace, propaganda slogans, portraits of working class leaders, diagrams showing the economic results achieved in the region. Similar elements were used to decorate the parade routes. The initially modest decorations were added to each year. Towns in the Voivodeship of Opole used, among others, glass cases illustrating economic achievements, lit up globes a few metres in diameter, or a two-and-a-half-metre red star developed by the coking plant in Zdzeszów. At Ozimska Street in Opole, an 11-metre replica of Warsaw's Palace of Culture and Science was erected, surrounded by a portrait gallery of working class leaders. Some of the decorations were aimed at ridiculing and discrediting the policies of the West. In the parades organised in the Voivodeship, caricatures and effigies „representing war instigators, depicting the depravity and bloodthirstiness of the imperialists”¹³. There was a funeral hearse, bearing symbolically the imperialism. The district demonstration in Namysłów featured an effigy of the American president Harry Truman astride a bacteriological bomb. A float carrying a calf, a goat and a pig bore a banner saying „We want a war!” Another aim of the parade was to illustrate the country's economic successes. Staff of factories and companies, as well as farmers prepared models and diagrams illustrating the results of their production, farming and breeding. The parades in Opole also featured models of companies, a miniature of Opole's Old Town, as well as a cannon, used to scatter around May Day flyers. In 1952, the audience's attention was drawn by a woman, elevated on a special platform, who was welding a steel structure. Some groups presented choreographic arrangements during the parade. Community centre groups danced, athletes played football, fenced. The parade participants arranged themselves to form state symbols or the word „peace”. The team of the State Theatre of the Land of Opole staged a special satirical, anti-western performance during the event in Opole in 1952.

Exhibits, decorations and performances prepared for the parade were controlled by special boards, set up for this purpose by the party and celebrations committees. Similar procedure applied also to the decorations placed

¹³ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 50/IV/3, *Sprawozdanie z przygotowań do obchodu uroczystości I majowej z 3 V 1951*, wp.

along the parade's route, as well as those displayed in other places, e.g. in schools, companies, etc. The May Day set design had to conform with central instructions from the PUWP. In 1952, the Voivodeship Culture Centre in Opole organised an exhibition of model May Day compositions and decorations¹⁴. There was also a special board for portraits, whose task was to eliminate those likings of the working class leaders that were deemed inappropriate. Officially sanctioned portraits of J. Stalin and B. Bierut were distributed through the chain of Dom Książki bookshops. Centrally controlled was also the content of slogans to be printed on banners. Lists of sanctioned maxims and sentences were sent to the organisers from the Central Committee of the PUWP. The slogans, slightly modified each year, were a concise representation of the PUWP doctrine, reflecting current events in the internal and foreign policies of the state.

Abundant decorations of the parade was intended to promote the communist ideology, as well as present the economic achievements of the region and the state. Creating images of success did not always work, and in some cases assumed grotesque proportions. During the district parade in Koźle in 1952, a barefoot and ragged couple with a sick child crossed the parade in front of the honorary platform just as banners bearing economic achievement diagrams were featured¹⁵. There were cases when the vehicles, tractors or machines to take part in the parade, simply broke down and blocked the passage of other participants. In 1952, some old, dilapidated cars were presented in the Voivodeship parade. This situation was perceived by the party authorities as an act of sabotage and ordered prosecution of those responsible. Numerous public, gathered mostly against their will, demonstrated their distance and scorn for the May Day spectacle. At both rallies and parades, the speeches by party bosses were ignored, with omnipresent noise and babble of voices. After the end of the parades, the streets were scattered with banners. Also, anti-communist flyers were sometimes distributed among the participants. Officers of the Security Service, the militia and voluntary services were supposed to fight against any behaviours or actions like that, as well as to impose discipline and peace. Their effectiveness, however, was extremely low, especially in the opinion of the Voivodeship level party authorities in Opole.

The May Day celebrations were also an occasion for money raising. In 1949, funds were collected for the construction of the Central Youth Centre

¹⁴ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 50/IV/7, *Sprawozdanie z przygotowań do I-go Maja*, wp.

¹⁵ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 1814, *Meldunek z akademii i uroczystości 1-majowych w pow. Koźle z 2 V 1951*, c. 164.

(Centralny Dom Młodzieży) in Warsaw, in the two following years – for the Peacekeeping Fund and the World Peace Council Fund. The last fundraising in the Stalin period took place in 1952, and the money was collected for the sanitary needs of children in Korea. Public fundraising was governed by strict rules as to the number of fundraisers, the composition of such groups, auditing boards, stages of reporting, propaganda methods, training, etc¹⁶. According to Paweł Sowiński, the scope of preparation and organisation work, formalities that had to be met for each fundraising, most certainly exceeded the possible profits¹⁷.

The afternoon of 1st May was the time for entertainment events, mainly tournaments and sports shows, dances, art performances, as well as games and competitions for children. The Voivodeship celebrations also included, among others, book lotteries, river boat rides down the Oder, firework displays and film screenings. In 1953 in the Voivodeship, there were 235 folk dances, 209 sports events and several art performances. In line with the PUWP directives, all the events had to be accompanied by political propaganda issues. In actual fact only some of the sports events, dances or performances were preceded by ideological speeches, and the repertoire of only some films or rallies included ideological content approved of by the PUWP. Some of the events were mired in organisational chaos. Open-air film screenings and a puppet theatre performance of the theatre in Opole that were planned for 1st May 1952 did not take place due to a large delay in the proceedings. There was a shortage of music bands, due to which not all dance events could have taken place. Some sports events were cancelled because the teams invited to take part in them did not turn up to play. Organisers were also often unlucky as to the weather conditions. Because of rainfall, events had to be cancelled in 1949, 1954 and 1956.

To attract participants to the May Day parades, grocery outlets were opened – kiosks, stands, off-the-car sales and peddler were run. During the Voivodeship celebrations in 1952, there were 41 stationery and 18 movable sale posts, whereas three years later there were 45 stands and 35 shops opened¹⁸. The authorities did their best to ensure the supplies were possibly the best, and the parade participants had an opportunity to purchase otherwise unavailable products. In 1954, at the orders from the party authorities in Opole, 5 tonnes

¹⁶ See f.e. APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 247, *Instrukcja w sprawie przeprowadzenia w dniu 1 Maja zbiórki na Fundusz Światowej Rady Pokoju*, c. 236-239.

¹⁷ P. Sowiński, *Komunistyczne święto*, p. 19-20.

¹⁸ APO, KM PZPR w Opolu, ms. 50/IV/7, *Sprawozdanie z przygotowań do I-go Maja*, wp.; APO, KM PZPR w Opolu, no 50/IV/22, *Ocena z przygotowań do obchodu Święta 1go Maja 1955 r.*, wp.

of sausages were manufactured, and stocks of intestines from the entire Voivodeship were used up for that purpose. Stock of goods prepared for the occasion usually turned out to be insufficient, especially in the case of cured meats. Higher supplies on May Day resulted in drastic decrease of supplies in shops directly after the holiday. Shops suffered shortages of groceries, as well as paper, whose quota was used up for the holiday decorations.

Organisation of the May Day celebrations was costly. Financial problems related to it brought about polemics and comments within the party authorities in Opole, as they did in 1954, when there was a dispute regarding the distribution of 70 thousand zlotys received for that purpose from the Central Committee of the party¹⁹. Some costs were borne by larger companies, which were obliged to prepare some of the decorations, the honorary platforms, or install the PA systems. In 1953 the District Committee of the PUWP in Prudnik raised money to cover the cost of decorations and May Day events by organising paid dancing events²⁰. Shortages of red linen were a common ailment for the May Day celebration organisers. Because of that, they were advised to be frugal as far as the red fabric is concerned, and make decorations out of paper. Amplification equipment, outfits and uniforms for the parade participants were in short supply as well.

In the reports by party officials, information about the shortages, problems with supplies and lack of social commitment to the idea of Workers' Day is hidden behind pathos-filled reports about fantastic effects of the celebrations. They claimed that the ideological awareness of the population of the Voivodeship of Opole was growing, and the May Day celebrations were prepared better and better each year, and their scale was growing. Whereas the playful, entertainment part of the celebrations had its supporters, the enthusiasm and social approval for May Day work, collections, rallies and parades was meagre and mostly feigned.

¹⁹ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 278, *Protokół nr 15/54 z posiedzenia egzekutywy KW PZPR w Opolu z 23 IV 1954*, c. 181-185.

²⁰ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 269, *Informacja o stanie przygotowań 1-szo majowych na terenie województwa opolskiego*, c. 146-150.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE – KEY WORDS

Historia Polski, historia Śląska, święta państwowe w Polsce, 1. Maja, Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza

History of Poland, History of Silesia, public holidays in Poland, 1-st May - the International Workers' Day, the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society

OBCHODY ŚWIĘTA PRACY NA ŚLĄSKU OPOLSKIM W LATACH 1949-1956

Przypadającym na 1 maja uroczystościom Święta Pracy w latach 1949-1956 towarzyszyła intensywna akcja propagandowa, w jej przebieg zaangażowano ogromne rzesze ludzi. Obchody święta zaczynały się już w marcu podejmowanymi zobowiązaniami pracowniczymi, w kwietniu w zakładach pracy, szkołach i świetlicach odbywały się akademie pierwszomajowe, kulminacyjnym momentem obchodów była urządzana 30 kwietnia akademia wojewódzka. Sam dzień pierwszego maja, oficjalnie wolny od pracy, obliżował do udziału w pochodach. Uroczystości towarzyszyły dekoracje, występy artystyczne i imprezy rozrywkowe, wszystkie organizowane i urządzane według odgórnie narzucanego scenariusza.

ERSTER MAI IM OPPELNER SCHLESSEN IN DEN JAHREN 1949-1956

Die Feierlichkeiten zum Ersten Mai in den Jahren 1949-1956 begleitete eine intensive Propaganda, in die Massen von Menschen einbezogen wurden. Schon im März begannen die Vorbereitungen mit diversen Verpflichtungen der Arbeiter, im April fanden in Schulen, Werken und Tagesstätten Festveranstaltungen zum Ersten Mai statt, den Höhepunkt bildete die am 30. April veranstaltete Festveranstaltung auf der Woiwodschaftsebene. Der Erste Mai selbst war ein arbeitsfreier Tag, aber es galt eine allgemeine Pflicht bei Umzügen teilzunehmen. Die Strecke des Umzugs war geschmückt. Am Rande fanden Auftritte von Künstlern und Unterhaltungsveranstaltungen statt, die einem strengen Plan folgten.

MARIUSZ PATELSKI

Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu Opolskiego – The Institute
of History of Opole University

**INDOCTRINATION OF THE PUBLIC
IN OPOLE VOIVODESHIP BY THE COMMUNIST
AUTHORITIES UNDER THE „MONTH
OF DEEPENING THE POLISH-SOVIET
FRIENDSHIP” CELEBRATIONS (1950-1956)**

In 1945, the Red Army finally pushed the German troops away from Silesia. In the history of the region and entire Poland, a nearly half-a-century period began, a period of communist dependence and Soviet domination. A few years after World War Two, with a backing from the Soviets, the Polish communists from the People's United Workers' Party managed to crush any political opposition and grab all the power over the country. In the next period, referred to as the Stalin times (early 1950s), the rulers undertook an attempt at restructuring the Polish society after the Soviet fashion. That period was a time of a total terror directed towards all the real and imaginary enemies of the system, a war against the Catholic Church, attempts at collectivisation of agriculture, as well as fierce communist propaganda, in which the declared friendship with the Soviet Union was a major factor¹.

¹ A. Paczkowski, *Polacy pod obcą i własną przemocą*, [in:] S. Courtois, N. Werth, J. Panne, A. Paczkowski, C. Bartosek, J.L. Margolin, *Czarna księga komunizmu. Zbrodnie, terror, prześladowania*, Warszawa 1999, p. 351-399.

Mass pro-Soviet propaganda was conducted also by local authorities within the Voivodeship of Opole, an administrative entity set up in 1950. The region of Opole was unique among other Polish regions in its ethnic composition. Next to the settlers from the eastern frontier and replaced people from central Poland, the region was inhabited by the local, Silesian population who had a German citizenship before the war. The above mentioned groups of people suffered to varied degrees during the war, and also as a result of activities by the Soviet authorities, the NKVD and the Red Army. As a result of the first Soviet occupation of the Polish eastern borderland, in the years 1939-1941, special repressions were suffered by the Poles from the east – persecuted, murdered and deported to the interior of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. On the other hand, the Poles from Silesia had suffered an unimaginable cruelty of the Soviet troops, who conquered the region in January and March 1945².

In the new social and political situation, the Polish communists undertook an operation that aimed at changing the negative image of the Soviet Union, dominating among the Polish public. From now on, the eastern neighbour was to be perceived as a country of progress, world peace, the main barrier to the German revisionism and the most important ally of Poland. The rebuilding of the Soviet Union's image was introduced gradually from the very beginning of communist rule on the Polish land.

To this end, actions by the censorship were devoted, among others. As early as in 1945, a memo from the Ministry of Information and Propaganda banned the use of the ill-perceived by communists term „sowiecki” (pejorative „Soviet” in Polish) in print and on banners, and replace it with an artificial term „radziecki” (translated into English also as „Soviet”, but sounding somehow less hostile in Polish)³. Some of the traditional Polish holidays and anniversaries were banned too, including the Polish Army Holiday, celebrated on 15th August, on the anniversary of a victorious battle of the Bolsheviks on the Vistula, which was replaced by the Day of the Polish Army, celebrated on 12th October, on the anniversary of the battle of Lenino, „in recognition of merits of the People's Army of Poland, who on the battle track from Lenino, through Warsaw to Berlin was victorious against the Nazi invader, at the side of the famous Soviet Army”⁴.

Within the Voivodeship of Opole, just like in other parts of the country, the communist authorities each year decided on the anniversary celebrations

related to the USSR. At the beginning of each year, an anniversary of the „liberation” of individual towns and cities of the Opole Silesia by the Red Army was celebrated, which in various places fell on a different date, sometime between January and March. In the following months the anniversary of the Red Army foundation was celebrated – 23rd February, as well as the anniversary of III Reich capitulation (National Day of Victory and Freedom), celebrated in the Soviet version – 9th May⁵. Culmination of celebrations connected with the Soviet Union fell between November and December, which is when, starting from November 7th, various events related to the anniversary of the October Revolution anniversary were organised on a large scale. Since the celebrations usually took a few weeks, the whole period was named „Month of Deepening the Polish-Soviet Friendship”. Since 1953 the timetable for the „Month...” celebrations began changing. The 10th anniversary of the battle of Lenino was included, and so the celebrations started as early as 10th October, and ended on 7th November⁶. In the next years, the „Month of Deepening...” took place even earlier. The celebrations started on 14th September, on the anniversary of capturing the east-bank Warsaw by the Red Army, and finished on 12th October, on the Day of the Polish Army⁷. The „Month of Deepening the Polish-Soviet Friendship” and the anniversary of the October Revolution were not the only occasions for celebrating the Polish-Soviet friendship. The communist propaganda year ended on a strong note, with Generalissimus Joseph Stalin's birthday, celebrated each year on 18th December.

In 1950 the authorities of the Voivodeship of Opole organised the „Month of Deepening the Polish-Soviet Friendship” for the first time⁸. Appropriate directives were issued by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the PUPW⁹. At the Voivodeship level, appropriate directives referring to the

⁵ Dziennik Ustaw, 1945, no 21, position 116; Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu (dalej: APO), Komitet Wojewódzki PZPR w Opolu (dalej: KW PZPR), sygn. 1880, *Informacja z przebytych akademii w związku z 33 Rocznicą powstania Armii Radzieckiej na terenie Województwa Opolskiego*, [Opole 1951], c. 19-20.

⁶ Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu (cit. APO = State Archive in Opole), KW PZPR w Opolu (= Voivodeship Committee of the PUPW in Opole), no 1880, *Informacja z przygotowań obchodu Miesiąca Pogłębiania Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej na terenie województwa opolskiego w roku 1953*, card (c.) 47.

⁷ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms. 1881, *Ramony program obchodu „Miesiąca Pogłębiania Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej w województwie opolskim na rok 1954*, c. 9.

⁸ First „Month of Deepening the Polish-Soviet Friendship” probably was organized in 1948: Entady, *Stalinizm w „Ogólniaku”*, <http://www.namyslowianie.pl/blog/entady/stalinizm-w-ogolnaku>, dostęp 31.10.2013.

⁹ „Biuro Sekretariatu KC PZPR, Notatka w sprawie organizacji miesiąca pogłębiania

² P. Madajczyk, *Przyłączenie Śląska Opolskiego do Polski 1945-1948*, Warszawa 1996, p. 88-94.

³ J. Wrona, *System partyjny w Polsce 1944-1950*, Lublin 1977, p. 91.

⁴ Dziennik Ustaw, 1950, no 45, position 411.

preparations and the goals of the „Month...” were issued by the party authorities, led by the First Secretary Roman Nowak and the secretary responsible for propaganda, Jadwiga Lewińska, whereas the official organiser of the celebrations was appointed to be the Polish-Soviet Friendship Association, led by its local chairman Karol Toczek, and the local secretary, Witold Szpruch. Mass organisations and state institutions were deeply involved in the organisation of the celebrations, including notably the Women's League, Union of Peasants' Cooperatives, Union of Polish Youth, as well as schools and trade unions.

The main idea of the 1950 celebrations was „to emphasize the role of the Soviet Union in the struggle for peace and the decisive impact of the Soviet assistance in the performance of the 6-year plan”. In a letter from the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP in Opole, there were instructions to „particularly emphasize the opposition of the peace construction in the USSR (water power plant, irrigation canals, changing river beds, protective forests) on the one hand, and the increasing crisis and the political adventurism of the imperialist war instigators on the other”¹⁰. In 1953, the main idea was: „We are continuously strengthening and deepening the friendship and alliance of the Polish nation with the nations of the Soviet Union – a bastion for peace, independence and flourish of our People's Homeland”¹¹.

Celebrations of the „Month of Deepening...” were preceded by long-lasting preparations, growing in length each year. As early as late summer each year, an organisational campaign was launched, run by the propaganda departments of the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP in Opole and those of the District Committees. In 1950, at the Voivodeship level, a Celebrations Committee was founded, consisting of a few dozen representatives of political parties, social organisations, national councils and institutions. Similar committees were founded at the district, municipal, town and company levels. In 1950, 1224 committees were set up, in which 5000 activists operated¹². A year later, the Voivodeship Executive Committee at the Regional Board of the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society was founded as early as September 5th. In order to prepare the various forms of propaganda even better, and Executive

przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej w 1955 r.”, Polska Biblioteka Internetowa, [www.pbi.edu.pl-book_reader.php=26652](http://www.pbi.edu.pl-book_reader.php?26652), dostęp 11.02.2013.

¹⁰ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Pismo do I Sekretarza Komitetu Powiatowego PZPR*, [Opole 1950 r.], c. 1.

¹¹ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Informacja z przygotowań obchodu Miesiąca Pogłębienia Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej na terenie województwa opolskiego w roku 1953*, c. 46.

¹² APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Owena z przebiegu akcji miesiąca pogłębienia Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej na terenie województwa opolskiego*, [Opole 1950], c. 12.

Board was chosen, whose members were responsible for the various sections of the Committee: organisational, propaganda, event-artistic, speeches and economic administration¹³. In 1952, a Committee responsible for the preparations of the „Month...” was founded on August 6th. Starting from that year, the bulk of preparation work within boroughs, villages, production companies and state institutions was borne by the management of the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society at the various levels¹⁴.

The „Month of Deepening...” usually commenced with solemn gatherings celebrating the October Revolution anniversary. Between 5th and 9th October 1950, 1376 anniversary gatherings took place in various schools, companies, production cooperatives, state farms, machine centres, boroughs and villages, attended by a total of approx. 236 thousand people. Taking into account a large number of the „Month...” participants quoted in the reports, one has to conclude that some of those people must have taken part in more than one event. During the anniversary gatherings, political speeches were made by the secretaries of PUWP of various levels. The arts part of such events was a responsible of schoolchildren and youth, together with their teachers, local culture centre groups, trade unions and amateur groups of the Farming Cooperatives¹⁵. In 1952 a political speech during the central, Voivodeship gathering was made by the secretary of the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP, comrade Aleksander Majewski, and an unnamed representative of the Soviet air forces. As stated in the official report, these speeches were „interrupted by spontaneous cheers praising the leader of the whole progressive part of the world, comrade Joseph Stalin, leader of the Central Committee of the PUWP, comrade [Boleslaw] Bierut, and the friendship between the Polish nation and the nations of the Soviet Union”¹⁶.

Schools of Opole had a special task to perform during preparations for the „Month...” and while it was in progress. The author of an article on the history of a Grammar School in Namysłów wrote: „during teachers' meeting, a calendar of meetings of young people of Namysłów with Lenin, October Revolution and Moscow. Naturally, the event was to be celebrated

¹³ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Informacja o przygotowaniach do Miesiąca Pogłębienia Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej w Województwie Opolskim*, Opole 4 X 1951 r., c. 21.

¹⁴ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Informacja z przygotowań obchodu Miesiąca Pogłębienia Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej w Województwie Opolskim na rok 1952*, c. 34.

¹⁵ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Owena z przebiegu akcji miesiąca pogłębienia Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej na terenie województwa opolskiego*, [Opole 1950], c. 12.

¹⁶ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Informacja z przebiegu Miesiąca Pogłębienia Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej za okres 6-15 XI 1952 r.*, c. 40-41.

with a revolutionary gathering (...). In order to decorate the school building properly with red banners, slogans and paper decorations, it was decided that each class has to make an October contribution. Each student had to bring to school 10 kg of metal scrap, 1 kg of scrap paper, and each class collectively, 50 empty vodka bottles. Instructors of sports teams had to go to the country, to the villages of Wilków and Smarchowice, in order to *give showcase volleyball matches* and they were forced to make speeches on the achievements of Soviet athletes. Twice a week, during Tuesday and Saturday assemblies starting at 7:30 a.m., there were also speeches on the superiority of the civilisation and culture of the Soviet Union over the degenerated world of Western Europe. During science classes at special interest groups at schools, students concentrated on the biographies and achievements of Soviet scientists. School gardens were turned into Michurin gardens, and Janusz Korczak's principles of upbringing were replaced with those of Makarenko. October in the 1960s was also a time of intensive purchases of socialist realism Soviet books for school libraries, obligatory subscription and purchases of Soviet press¹⁷.

Similar preparations to the „Month of Deepening...” celebrations were held also in other schools in the Voivodeship of Opole. Young people prepared assemblies, bulletins and speeches, as well as competitions related to the USSR. Keeping up a correspondence with the Soviet youth was a special form of participating in the anniversary celebrations. In the preparations of secondary schools to the celebrations, activists of the Union of Polish Youth were especially active, specially sent there by the Voivodeship Board of the organisation¹⁸. Another form of involvement of school youth in the anniversary celebrations were the „commitments of voluntary work” (also referred to as „anniversary commitments”) to celebrate the Revolution. In 1951 Grammar School in Prudnik undertook, among others, to work 800 hours in potato harvesting in Łąka Prudnicka State Farms. At the same time, a group of 700 students from schools in Opole work at potato harvesting in the cooperatives in, among others, Sidzina and Krogulna. Students of the Grammar School in Koźle undertook to work at potato and beet harvesting, as well as planting „mulberry saplings, with prior soil preparation”¹⁹.

¹⁷ Entady, *Stalinizm w „Ogólniaku”*.

¹⁸ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Informacja o przygotowaniach do Miesiąca Pogłębiania Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej w województwie Opolskim*, Opole 4 X 1951 r., c. 23.

¹⁹ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Informacja o przebiegu przygotowań do obchodu 34 rocznicy Rewolucji Październikowej na terenie województwa opolskiego*, Opole 29 X 1951 r., c. 29-30.

During the celebrations of „Month of Deepening...” the public was forced to manifest their friendship towards the Soviets also through laying flowers and wreaths on Soviet cemeteries. In 1950 the cooperative in Sidzin in the district of Grodków was highly praised for „the entire community ostentatiously laid wreaths on the graves”²⁰. Two years later, according to the authorities, the most effective demonstration of the kind took place at a cemetery in Racibórz. It was attended by 3000 people, together with a band, and the graves were adorned with as many as 70 wreaths²¹.

During the celebrations a large number of propaganda meetings were organised. In the first year of the Voivodeship's existence, there were 8000 talks and presentations, attended by approximately 481,000 people. In various locations, „other forms of propaganda, such as (...) music soirees, song and dance, literature evenings, meetings with authors, news-sheets, distribution of Soviet press, self-educating group meetings studying Russian, festival of Soviet films, exhibitions of Soviet books, sports events, as well as other forms of ideological propaganda” (banners, slogans, decorations)²². Another important aim of the celebrations was „to massively popularise the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society clubs”, i.e. recruitment of new activists for the Society. In fact, the number of its members actually grew each year, mainly thanks to the fact that whole classes at schools were being enlisted.

Attractiveness of the events organised, attendance and activeness of the participants was of great interest to the state and party authorities. One of the institutions gathering relevant information on the level and impact of individual propaganda projects was Voivodeship Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows (Wojewódzki Urząd Kontroli Pracy, Publikacji i Widowisk – WUKPPiW) in Opole, headed by Karol Frycz. The Office cooperated closely with the Propaganda Department of the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP, head by an influential secretary Jadwiga Ludwińska. In the survey forms sent out to the subordinated institutions, the management of the VOoCoPPaS asked in detail about, among others, the number of assemblies and talks held, number of controlled events, about the members of arts groups who took part in the individual events. The Office was particularly in-

²⁰ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, KW PZPR w Opolu, *Ocena z przebiegu akcji miesiąca pogłębiania Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej na terenie województwa opolskiego*, c. 14.

²¹ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Informacja z przebiegu Miesiąca Pogłębiania Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej za okres 6-15 XI 1952 r.*, c. 40.

²² APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, KW PZPR w Opolu, *Ocena z przebiegu akcji miesiąca pogłębiania Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej na terenie województwa opolskiego*, c. 14.

terested in the attitudes of the local communities towards the events, therefore the attendance and activeness of the recipients of the events were scrutinized, as well as kinds of questions from the audience asked during the talks.

In the answers to the surveys attempts were made to prove the propaganda effectiveness of the events held, and the possible flaws were always explained by unforeseeable problems. In 1950, when asked by his superiors, a district representative of the VOOCoPPaS from Niemodlin (head of the social and administrative section of the District Office of the National Council) – Wincenty Ples wrote to the VOOCoPPaS that: „A general attitude of the public towards the above mentioned events is good. Unforeseeable occurrences, like changes of the monetary reform, planned purchase of crops and National Census drew the activists slightly away from the Month of Deepening Polish-Soviet Friendship, which had an adverse effect on the attempts at pass popularisation of the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society clubs”²³.

The censors in Opole performed a continual and strict control of the local press, looking at, among others, a proper, consistent with the intentions of the authorities, provision of information to the public about undertakings related to the „Month of Deepening the Polish-Soviet Friendship”. In 1953, censor Leszek Baldysz criticised the editors of „Trybuna Opolska”, who in his opinion, treated the „Month of Deepening...” unfairly. The editors of „Trybuna” did, in fact, publish an article about a meeting of a Soviet machining specialist A. W. Pavlov with the workers of „Wagonówka” factory, but that was an exception as most of the articles published by the press related to the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP were reprints from central and Soviet press²⁴. The report by Baldysz must have had an effect, because the next evaluation of „Trybuna” contained praises of the editorial team. Baldysz wrote that the paper published „more well-aimed articles”, and the text „A letter from a Soviet turner A. W. Pavlov to the workers of Opole” used „all the important propaganda elements”. The censor criticised, however, the information about the festival of Soviet films, stating that the majority of material is just reviews, being in fact film summaries²⁵.

²³ APO, Starostwo Powiatowe Niemodlin (= County Straostwo in Niemodlin), no 49, *Sprawozdanie z 33. Rocznicy Rewolucji Październikowej i 71. rocznicy urodzin Józefa Stalina*, Niemodlin 30 XII 1950 r., c. 14-15.

²⁴ Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (cit. AAN = The Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw), Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk (cit. GUKPPiW = Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows), no 3663, L. Zembaty, *Ocena tygodniowa „Trybuny Opolskiej” okres od 19-25 X 1953 r.*, c. 42.

²⁵ AAN, GUKPPiW, no. 3663, L. Zembaty, *Ocena tygodniowa „Trybuny Opolskiej” za okres od 26 X*

Similar control was extended over the Opole Branch of the Polish Radio. In 1953, the censor responsible for the radio, H. Stankiewicz, expressed appreciation for the programme „Barbara Klein uses the Korbelnikova method”. In his paper he wrote that the programme drew on the Polish-Soviet friendship and showed „a positive process of growing awareness in routine workers, and their conviction about the need to adopt new, better methods of work”. At the same time, he criticised the editors for not undertaking the subject of „popularisation and control of commitments undertaken under the October work”²⁶.

During the anniversary celebrations, a bulk of the propaganda events were addressed to the rural population. In 1951, the celebrations of the „Month...” were organised under the banners of „peasants mobilising themselves to increase production tasks, to tighten the friendship between the two nations even more”. The entire celebrations were supposed to be „a time of extensive work on deepening the knowledge in the peasant masses about the great achievements of the Soviet Union in the areas of art, the powerful progress in its communist economy, industry and construction”. In order to popularise he achievement of the Soviet Union, only between 14th and 20th October in nine districts of the Voivodeship of Opole there were 180 talks in communal centres, and the community editorial teams prepared 14 news-sheets presenting the achievements of the kolkhozes and the Soviet industry. Apart from that, 27 book fairs and 25 exhibitions of books by Soviet writers were organised. The agency responsible for art performances – State Organiser of Art Events „Artos” prepared seven shows for audiences in rural areas. The agency had a special responsibility towards the German autochthonous communities. The events they organised had to put a special emphasis on the achievements at building socialism in Poland, and fight against imperialist elements, especially the West Germany. Programmes developed for the autochthonous communities favoured Silesian songs, intertwined with „anti-Adenauer couplets”.

The anniversary propaganda was also run by means of the s-called „Autumn Parades”, attended by the members of People’s Sports Teams, and representatives of the Polish Army. Only on 14th October 1951, the event gathered 4,673 members of the PST from the districts of: Brzeg, Namysłów, Niemodlin and Koźle. The second wave of assemblies and talks was to take place between 4th and 7th November, in connection with the anniversary

do 1 XI 1953 r., Opole 3 XI 1953 r., c. 46-47.

²⁶ AAN, GUKPPiW, no 3630, H. Stankiewicz, *Ocena tygodniowa audycji Ekspozytury Programowej Polskie Radio w Opolu za okres od 26 X do 1 XI 1953 r.*, Opole 3 XI 1953 r., c. 165.

of the „Great October Revolution”. It was planned to hold 540 assemblies, 1,229 talks and lectures in various municipal institutions, and 523 talks and lectures in villages. Also the Symphony Orchestra of Opole was involved in the celebrations, with „15 concerts of Soviet and Polish music to be held in district towns”²⁷. In the following year, it was the rural areas that underwent a more intensive indoctrination. The Peasants’ Cooperative Union organised trips to cinemas and theatres. For the local peasants, a special trip was organised to Poronin, Nowa Huta and Cracow. 400 people took part in it²⁸.

In 1953, during the „Month of Deepening...” celebrations, special emphasis was put on the role of armed forces, in connection with the 10th anniversary of the Polish Army. On the Voivodeship level an exhibition was organised „Accomplishments of the reborn Polish Army based on the traditions of brotherhood in arms of the Polish Army with the Red Army”. All over the country, wreaths were laid on the tombs of the Polish and Soviet soldiers, and in Opole there was a reunion of reservists of the First Polish Army.

Another important element of the then celebrations was meetings with leaders of workshop. „Taking into account a wide application of the Soviet methods of labour in the Opole region, the Voivodeship Board of the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society initiated organisation of: a) gathering of Timurovec members, b) a Voivodeship council of Michurinovec, c) Voivodeship council of labour streamliners and major leaders of workshop”. In order to make the 1953 celebrations more attractive, a meeting of the construction workers who erected the Joseph Stalin Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw with the people of Opole and Racibórz was organised²⁹.

According to available documentation, in 1954 the „Month of Deepening the Polish-Soviet Friendship” took place between 14th September and 12th October. It was the first time that they had not covered the October Revolution anniversary, which had been the main event of the previous „Months...” The main motto of the 1954 celebrations was „further strengthening of the bonds between the Polish nation and the Soviet nations, further reinforcement

²⁷ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Informacja z dotychczasowego przebiegu Marszów Jesiennych w ramach Miesiąca Pogłębiania Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej po linii Związku Samopomocy Chłopskiej*, Opole 25 X 1951 r., c. 25-26, 30-31; I. Miernik, *Państwowa Organizacja Imprez Artystycznych „Artos” (1950-1954). Monografia historyczna*, Toruń 2005, p. 108.

²⁸ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Informacja z przebiegu Miesiąca Pogłębiania Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej za okres 6-15 XI 1952 r.*, c. 44.

²⁹ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1880, *Informacja z przygotowań obchodu Miesiąca Pogłębiania Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej na terenie województwa opolskiego w roku 1953*, c. 46-47.

of the Polish nation’s accomplishments – achieved under the leadership of the Polish United Workers’ Party – on the road to the socialist economy”³⁰.

The „Month...” celebrations commenced with the anniversary of the liberation of the east-bank Warsaw – 14th September. This was followed by events related to the „4th anniversary of the USSR Government Resolution concerning the construction of the Kahov Water Power Plant on the Dnieper, the South-Ukrainian Canal and the North-Crimean Canal”, „50th anniversary of Nikolai Ostrovski’s birth”, and the anniversary of the „19th Convention of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, laying out the passage for the Soviet public to get from socialism to communism”. The „Month of Deepening...” celebrations of 1854 were to end with the anniversary of the battle of Lenino – 12th October. The main themes of the events during the last „Month...” was similar to those in the previous years – it was dominated by lectures and talks, Soviet book and press popularisation activities, as well as meetings with the leaders of workshop. Similar to the previous years, Soviet literature soirees and concerts were organised, too³¹.

In 1955, the „Month of Deepening the Friendship...” commenced on 9th September, as this was the date when the Soviet government signed a decree of 29th August 1918 concerning the annulment of partition treaties, and announced that they „accept the undeniable right of the Polish nation to independence and unity”³². During the celebrations, three theme areas were covered: „A Michurin Week” 11th-18th September, „Decade of Soviet Streamlining and Technology” 20th-30th September, and „Belorussian Culture Days” 1st-9th October³³.

Despite a mass pro-Soviet propaganda undertaken by the Opole authorities in the mid-1950s, the majority of the public still cherished anti-Soviet and anti-communist sentiments. Throughout the Stalin era, in the Opole Silesia organisations founded in order to fight the communist system were set up. On numerous occasions, „acts of hostile propaganda” took place, i.e. distribution of leaflets and painting murals – with anti-Soviet and anti-communist messages³⁴.

³⁰ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1881, *Ramowy program obchodu Miesiąca Pogłębiania Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej na terenie województwa opolskiego na rok 1954*, c. 8.

³¹ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 1881, *Ramowe założenia obchodu Miesiąca Pogłębiania Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej w październik-październik 1954*, c. 21-23.

³² Biuro Sekretariatu KC PZPR, *Notatka w sprawie organizacji miesiąca pogłębiania przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej w 1955 r.*, Polska Biblioteka Internetowa, www.pbi.edu.pl/book_reader.php?book=26652, dostęp: 11.02.2013.

³³ *Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty*, 1955, no 11, position 104.

³⁴ *Kronika MO i SB w XXX-leciu*, Opole 1976, p. 57-79.

In the year of a breakthrough, 1956, after the 20th Convention of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the report by Nikita Khrushchev on the „Personality Cult”, the sense and propaganda effectiveness of the „Month...” were questioned. On 25th August 1956, there was a meeting of the Executive Board of the Voivodeship Committee of PUWP in Opole, during which a document titled „Analysis of the strengthening of Polish-Soviet friendship and preparations for the Month of Deepening”, presented by the Voivodeship Board of the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society. During the meeting, a number of concerns were voiced as to the forms of celebrating the „Month...” so far, as well as the organisation of the PSFS itself. Journalist Werebejczyk, representing the „Trybuna Opolska”, was especially harsh in his criticism of the recruitment of new members of the organisation, saying that „Distributing membership cards is often too formal. A lot of formalism was done away with through replacement of the full-time personnel”. The „Trybuna...” journalist questioned also the difficulties in sending journalists over to the USSR, and the lack of interest in the members of the public who had been resettled from the east, people who „have a certain degree of grudge for having to leave that area”. The Secretary of the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP Wanda Goljanowa also confirmed the information about adverse effects of distributing the PSFS membership cards, and in her speech she also quoted negative examples of forcing farmers to make extra contributions, for the reconstruction of Warsaw, or the PSFS membership stamps, among others, while collecting property tax.

The harshest criticism was voiced in the speech by the head of the Voivodeship Board of the Union of Polish Youth, Bąkowski. In his speech he pointed to the growing critical sentiments towards the USSR after the 20th Convention and publishing the address „On the Personality Cult”. Further, he made a plea for more comprehensive information on the changes in the Soviet Union to be available to the public, because, as he claimed, „the direction of hostile propaganda focuses on there being no changes in the Soviet Union. A lot of jokes ridiculing the Soviet Union leaders are in circulation, too”. In conclusion he said that „sticking to the month of Polish-Soviet friendship is also extremely obsolete and wrong. One might conclude that it is only in that month that the friendship should be deepened”.

Activists of the PSFS, Marusiak and Sadowski – members of its Voivodeship Board – and Gumnior – Secretary of the Voivodeship Board – spoke in defence of the organisation. In their speeches they pointed, among others, to the lack of support for the PSFS actions from other mass organisations, and

to the unwillingness of the youth to participate in the PSFS activities or the courses of the Russian language. Marusiak’s speech was notably meaningful, in which he pointed out that the Society still has numerous members, but shortage of funds is a major obstacle. He concluded by saying, „if we don’t have the money, there will be no propaganda”.

The discussion ended with a speech by Secretary Ludwińska, responsible for the propaganda, who tried to appease the temperature of the meeting. In her speech she took some of the responsibility on herself and the department she was the head of. „Our propaganda in the Voivodeship, in the Department of Propaganda, has created a kind of a gap, as far as information is concerned. We used to varnish everything up, and now the varnish has been falling off, and all the issues discussed by the 20th Convention are really painful. We did not fill that gap. In that disturbance of feelings, we did not undertake any actions towards restoring that disturbed balance”. In response to the misunderstandings as to the information about trade between Poland and the USSR, among others, hinted by the previous speakers, Ludwińska said that they would have to apply to the Central Committee for access to materials explaining the economic and commercial relations, especially in the area of import and export, assistance in the development of Polish industry, and other relevant materials”.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a resolution was made to develop relevant conclusions for the area of propagating the Polish-Soviet friendship. It was to be a responsibility of the staff of Department of Propaganda of the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP, as well as members of the Voivodeship Board of PSFS³⁵.

In the preserved archives of the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP, the document with those conclusions referring to the „Month of Deepening the Polish-Soviet Friendship” has not been found, and neither is it clear to what extent the events related to the „Month...” at the end of the stormy year of 1956 were carried out, if at all. The fact is, however, that many of the participants of that August meeting of the Executive Board soon lost their positions. As a result of post-October shuffle within the party, the following secretaries of the Voivodeship Committee of the PUWP lost their positions: Wanda Goljanowa, Jadwiga Ludwińska and Eryk Wyra. The editor-in-chief of the „Trybuna Opolska” also lost his job, and soon emigrated to Israel.

³⁵ APO, KW PZPR w Opolu, ms.. 299, *Protokół nr 23 z posiedzenia Egzekutywny KW PZPR Opole, odbytego 25 VIII 1956 r.*, c. 100-106.

During and immediately after the „October events”, there was also a culmination of anti-Soviet atmosphere. Anti-Soviet slogans were voiced during student rallies and demonstrations in Opole, among others in front of the Red Army barracks. The public of the Land of Opole, similar to those in other parts of Poland, demonstrated their solidarity and sympathy for the Hungarians fighting against the Soviet aggression. In numerous towns school youth was active in that area. In the district of Nysa, students burned Russian coursebooks, and in Strzelce Opolskie, they demanded the Katyń situation to be straightened out. Also the public of Brzeg demonstrated strongly against the Soviet domination, and they demanded the Soviet troops to leave the town. The people of Brzeg also demanded sacking Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky, doing away with the obligatory Russian courses and even returning the eastern borderlands to Poland³⁶.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE – KEY WORDS

Komunizm, propaganda, Związek Sowiecki, województwo opolskie, Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej

Communism, Propaganda, Soviet Union; Opole Voivodeship (Province), The Polish-Soviet Friendship Society

INDOKTRYNACJA SPOŁECZEŃSTWA WOJEWÓDZTWA OPOLSKIEGO

PRZEZ WŁADZE KOMUNISTYCZNE W RAMACH OBCHODÓW

„MIESIĄCA POGŁĘBIANIA PRZYJAŹNI POLSKO-RADZIECKIEJ” (1950-1956)

Okupacja sowiecka Polski oraz brutalne działania żołnierzy Armii Czerwonej wobec ludności cywilnej, prowadzone w czasie II wojny światowej i po jej zakończeniu, utrwaliły w społeczeństwie polskim głęboką niechęć wobec Związku Sowieckiego. Aby zmienić negatywny obraz wschodniego sąsiada, komuniści polscy podjęli, prowadzone na wielką skalę, działania propagandowe. Ich szczytowe natężenie miało miejsce w czasie „Miesiący pogłębiania przyjaźni polsko-radzieckiej”, które organizowano co roku. W artykule opisano przebieg tych działań na terenie województwa opolskiego w latach 1950-1956 r. Mimo wydatkowania znaczących środków materialnych oraz

³⁶ C. Jasiak, Z. Bereszyński, *Kalendarium ważniejszych wydarzeń na Opolszczyźnie*, [in:] *Komunistyczny aparat represji i życie społeczne Opolszczyzny w latach 1945-1989*, pod red. Ksawerego Jasiaka, Opole 2012, p. 459.

wykorzystania licznych grup prelegentów i propagandzistów, postrzeganie Sowietów w społeczeństwie polskim zmieniło się jedynie w niewielkim stopniu. W czasie odwilży 1956 r. doszło też do masowych demonstracji antysowieckich oraz prób burzenia wzniesionych wcześniej pomników ku czci sowieckich żołnierzy.

INDOKTRINATION DER GESELLSCHAFT IN DER WOJWODSCHAFT OPPELN DURCH DIE KOMMUNISTISCHEN BEHÖRDEN IM RAHMEN DER FEIERLICHKEITEN DES „MONATS DER VERTIEFUNG DER POLNISCH-RUSSISCHEN FREUNDSCHAFT“ (1950-1956)

Die sowjetische Besetzung Polens und das brutale Vorgehen der Rotarmisten gegenüber der zivilen Bevölkerung während des Zweiten Weltkrieges und danach, verfestigte in der polnischen Bevölkerung eine tiefe Abneigung gegenüber der Sowjetunion. Um dieses negative Bild des östlichen Nachbarn zu ändern unternahmen die polnischen Kommunisten eine breite Propagandaaktion. Der Höhepunkt sollte während des „Monats der Vertiefung der polnisch-russischen Freundschaft“ erfolgen, der jedes Jahr stattfand. Obwohl große finanzielle Mittel für Vorlesungen und Propagandaveranstaltungen verbraucht wurden, hat sich die Einstellung der polnischen Bevölkerung gegenüber den Sowjets kaum verändert. Während der Tauwetter-Periode 1956 ist es zu antisowjetischen Massendemonstrationen gekommen, es wurden auch Versuche unternommen die früher errichteten Denkmäler der sowjetischen Soldaten abzureisen.

MAREK BIAŁOKUR

Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu Opolskiego – The Institute
of History of Opole University

**TWO ANNIVERSARIES, BUT NO FESTIVITIES
AROUND THE BIOGRAPHY OF PRINCE
JÓZEF PONIATOWSKI ON 250TH ANNIVERSARY
OF BIRTH AND 200TH ANNIVERSARY
OF DEATH IN THE BATTLE OF LEIPZIG**

Historical biography of Prince Józef Poniatowski, whose 250th anniversary of birth and 200th anniversary of death was in 2013, is often summed up by two quotations attributed to him: „God vested in me the honour of Poles, and to God I shall return it” and „Dying has to be done in a manly manner”. The following words by a French journalist Jacques Bainville are equally popular: „Poniatowski se noya – symbole de Pologne vainement confiante et vainement fidèle.” Stanisław Cat Mackiewicz, translating the above literally as „drowned was Poniatowski, a symbol of Poland, trusting and faithful in vain,” pointed to the fact that the Polish, *ugly* phrase „na próżno” (in vain) does not reflect the melancholy or exactness of the French „vainement”. A combination of the above quotes makes for a perfect reply to the question why Poles have loved Poniatowski for the last 200 years. Not Stanisław August Poniatowski, but his nephew, the one who was „saved” to Polishness by the king.

Prince Józef Antoni Poniatowski, Ciolek coat of arms, was born on May 7th, 1763, in the Viennese palace of the Kinski family, and was brought up in the German circles of Vienna and Prague. „Pepi”, as he was called at home,

using a Czech nickname, was more fit to be a faithful subject of the Habsburg monarchy than a hero of the Polish nation. His life, however, turned otherwise, and Prince Józef entered the pantheon of the Polish national heroes. His biography abounds in myths, of which some slandered the prince's good name, and some overrated his achievements. Undoubtedly, what he achieved both in his lifetime and after death could be desired by anyone who understands what mortal and eternal happiness is. The most popular biographies of Józef Poniatowski were written by Szymon Askenazy and Jerzy Skowronek. Both of them were published within eighty years from one another, with Askenazy's book in the early 20th century, and Skowronek's one in 1984. The beginning and the end of the 20th century were two different eras, yet the fates of Poniatowski's countrymen were similar. With no independence, freedom of speech, forced to seek greatness in the past, Poles in the early and late 20th century found Poniatowski to be an extraordinary person, full of fantasy, and mature enough to sacrifice themselves fully for the Homeland. Contemporary historians value the book by Jerzy Skowronek more highly. The author, considered to be one of the most outstanding researchers into the history of the Polish nation and state of the late 18th and the early 19th centuries, drew the person of the prince with sympathy, but not without critical observations. To the point, well-sourced text is just as good a read as Askenazy's biography, often praised for being very accessible. According to Skowronek, since early childhood Józef Poniatowski was destined for the military, which was supposed to give him career opportunities, as well as highest honours, including the position of the army chief (Grand Crown Hetman). In his childhood, „Prince Pepi, lively, busy and playful, was apparently being spoilt by all the family, which largely influenced his personality as a youth. On the basis of his early portrait (by Marcello Bacciarelli, from 1778) and memoir notes, one can assume that his appearance alone made his aunts and others around him treat him with indulgence. Not too tall, slender, with a tender and delicate face, exceedingly serious, with gentle look of the dark eyes, curls of dark hair surrounding his forehead – all this made him look extremely child-like, at the same time resembling his father's physique and bearing a promise of a handsome man in the future. This further deepened his natural egotism, turning *the pretty cherub* into the centre of interest and popular admiration. It also boosted his tendency to be the leader, albeit without any special, consistent efforts. This added to the prince's personality too much feminine gentleness and penchant for the ephemeral – not too strong, but strongly manifested, in accordance

with the convention of the period. Add to that a tendency for a comfortable living, surrounded by those in favour of the prince, and a penchant for joyful pleasures – and the prince's character will turn out to be in line with his aristocratic peers – the last generation of *ancien régime*, brought up in the atmosphere of play and premonition of a fundamental crisis of the system, prone to sybaritism and egoistic, opportunistic cynicism, but occasionally capable of boldly demonstrating their personal attitudes with a nonchalance, even when facing death”¹. It is only thanks to king Stanisław August Poniatowski that his nephew, brought up in a non-Polish environment, in an atmosphere of cosmopolitanism, developed a strong connection with Poland, and in time fully sacrificed himself to his homeland.

The Polish monarch strived continually for his not so wealthy nephew to have a regular income, making it possible for him to lead an appropriately affluent lifestyle. During his first longer stay in Poland in the years 1778-1779, Prince Józef must have been shocked by the lifestyle of the Polish nobility, which was in stark contrast with the model followed in the centralised and modernised monarchies of the era of enlightened absolutism. Yet the playful Warsaw, more easy going than Vienna, soon entranced the young, barely twenty-year-old prince. However, women, horses, carriages, dances, cards, tobacco and alcohol did not lessen his critical opinion of the Polish political life. That was manifested in the letter that he wrote to his sister in the early 1788. According to Skowronek, in the letter he confronted the situation in Poland and the attitudes of the Polish nobility with the classical and enlightenment ideas, as well as the sentimental and romantic ones, i.e. those of sacrificial patriotism and being ready to give oneself up to the homeland, at the same time retaining one's personality, feelings, bravery and reliability. Very soon did he find himself in a situation where he had to face those challenges, when summoned by his uncle to Poland in 1789, and had to stay there until 1792. That was a time of critical events not only in Poland, but entire Europe. What is more, Austria was in a war against Turkey, a war that had prospects of being victorious. Prince Józef, yielding to the suggestions from his crown-bearing uncle, gave up a promising career in the Habsburgs' army and headed for Poland, a country he cannot have known well or valued as a homeland. „The proceedings of the Four-Year Sejm, political and personal struggles and gossip around the reforms provided some colour and new inspirations, broad-

¹ J. Skowronek, *Książę Józef Poniatowski*, Wrocław 1986, p. 13. It belongs to notice, that prince problems of rates with women are solid element presented in and scientific publication, see f.e.: S. Leśniewski, *Dandys wodzajem*, „Polityka”, 2013, nr 19 (2906), p. 54.

ened the salon circles and enriched the forms of society life. (...) The atmosphere of patriotic and political salons, began – possibly – to slightly change the cosmopolitan personality of the prince, albeit slowly, imperceptibly, like a drop drilling a rock²². In such an atmosphere, surrounded by never ending sighs of adoring him women, as well as the looks of men trying to imitate him in clothing and conduct, prince Józef felt better in Warsaw with every passing week, every month.

In the prince's biography, 3rd May 1791 turned out to be especially important. The constitution that was passed on that day was regarded by Józef Poniatowski as a major step towards strengthening the existence of the state, and supporting the king's grandeur. He saw it as an act of will of the noble nation, which should be respected by all the subjects of the king. It was commonly known that the reform of the state had a lot of enemies. Therefore, on May 3rd 1791, the prince, together with a unit of cavalymen, protected the sessions chamber at the Royal Castle. The monarch entrusted him with an important task of „keeping at bay” the hetmans' opposition and making it possible for them to break the proceedings. The task was performed excellently by the prince, who in the months to come, as an active member of the Friends of the May Constitution stressed on many occasions that „when you have decided to do something so important, you need the courage to support the deed in all circumstances”. Unfortunately, although at the same time alongside Poniatowski, the Polish history was written by the likes of Tadeusz Kościuszko or Jan Henryk Dąbrowski, the Polish Enlightenment predominantly abounded in thinkers, writers, people of culture and art, not politicians or military men. Although Sejm speakers were trusted, with their speeches full of pathos, but money was scarce for public causes, especially for a strong army that would be able to protect the achievements of the Four-Year Sejm.

During the Polish-Russian war of 1792, prince Józef was a determined and brave protector of the May Constitution. The battle of Zieleńce, fought on 18th June, went down in history. Its course and impact on the results of the war were probably far from the significance that the monarch was trying to impute in his propaganda attempts, calling it the first Polish victory since the wars fought by Jan III Sobieski. The prince himself was far more modest in his evaluations, and years later he was even critical towards himself for not destroying the 11-thousand troops under gen. Yevgeny Markov. The only permanent „achievement” of the battle was the Order (originally a medal) *Virtuti*

²²J. Skowronek, *Książę Józef*, p. 34.

Militari (For Military Valour) that was established in its memory. Characteristically, the idea of its establishment was the prince's himself, with which he came up even before the battle, probably not expecting it to be implemented so soon. The order was modelled after the Military Order of Maria Theresa, the first modern military distinction established to commemorate the victory of the Habsburgs' troops over the Prussians in the battle of Kolin on 18th June 1757.

The success of the Targowica Confederates, and in fact of Russia, brought an end to Poniatowski's first longer stay in Poland, and at the same time, his first period of serving the state. Despite the military failure, the time in Poland was a beautiful stage in his life, and made him become a Pole not only through choice, but above all, out of his own deepest conviction³. „At that time, his main characteristics got strengthened, namely proneness to joyful play while at the same time treating his duties seriously and reliably, taking care of his soldiers, having the ability to gain people's support and select partners, while at the same time being impatient and unwilling to submit himself to any kind of control. Alongside the reluctance to systematic administrative work, all of that contributed to the traits often found in the nobility of the Enlightenment. At the same time, difficult conditions and duties began to enrich the prince's personality. They established his feeling of self-dignity and his role, added to his sense of honour. Despite appearances, it was not about the sheer military honour, the sense of soldier's duty. Similar to a small fraction of his generation, Poniatowski was striving towards a re-establishment of the attitude that was referred to by Romans as „virtus” in the public life. He dreamt of re-establishment of the national honour, allegiance to the military but also to the political oath, valour in the public life and condemnation to any kind of treachery, not only on the battlefield⁴. This attitude of the prince was influenced by the Enlightenment fascination with the Ancient Roman standards, as well as his conviction of a person's autonomy and their role. Features that were even strengthened in the next era - the Romanticism.

Leaving the country also had an impact on the prince's attitude. Loyalty to the monarch, who initially joined the Targowica Confederation, and then agreed to the so-called second partition in 1793 and a loss of a considerable territory of the state, diminished also the authority of Prince Józef among the patriotic part of the nation. Discouraged from taking any action, the prince

³J. Łojek, *Ku naprawie Rzeczypospolitej. Konstytucja 3 Maja*, Warszawa 1988, p. 179.

⁴J. Skowronek, *Książę Józef*, p. 64.

did not believe in the success of any possible uprising against Russia. He was critical towards all kinds of conspirator, partisanship, any military actions organised ad hoc. In an uprising under the leadership of his subordinate from the 1792 war, Tadeusz Kościuszko, Prince Poniatowski got involved as late as May 1794, having been summoned in writing twice by the king. The prince fought valiantly in the uprising, but eventually it brought him a lot of unpleasantness, including gossip being spread around that his actions were in fact a diversion undertaken in cooperation with the king. Acting in consultation with the king was a fact, but treachery and lack of patriotism - slander. Historians stress that as a result of the events of 1794, Poniatowski developed a penchant for the solitary, or being with a closed circle of friends. At this point one has to stress that Poniatowski was not really a suitable person for a commander in the so-called little war, in irregular, spontaneous and mass war efforts. The reluctance for improvisation was to remain his trait for the rest of his life.

The years 1795-1806 are rather hard to be clearly defined in Prince Józef's biography. On the one hand, he was rather idle as far as public activity goes. On the other hand, the prince spent his time gaily, focusing on the pleasures and private worries of everyday life. Having spent three years in Vienna, the prince returned to Warsaw in 1798. In the former capital of a country that had been erased from the map of Europe, he was most often to be found at Pałac pod Blachą (Copper-Roof Palace). At that time, he did not take a decided position in the political conflicts between Poles about the limits of compromise and loyalty towards the oppressors. According to Skowronek, „unlike some of the Polish aristocracy, the prince did not become an advocate for a pro-Russian orientation. Yet, he was even further from any inclinations towards France under the Directory, and then the first Consul, General Bonaparte. He had probably heard about the great victories of the outstanding Corsican in the numerous north-Italian campaigns against Austria and Sardinia since 1796, but he could not sympathise with the French fighting against the old world order, against the world to which he was bound through the family, wealth, friendship and old habits”⁵. The fact that politics and social issues were far from the spheres of the prince's interest was further evidenced by the fact that in the Copper-Roof Palace he had merely 150 books. That did not affect the prince's good taste, though. The interiors of the buildings he stayed at were furnished tastefully. And even if it was down to the people he was surrounded with, like Henrietta de Vauban, it still testifies to the prince's good taste.

⁵ Ibidem, s. 94-95.

Such standard of living required financial means, which the prince suffered a shortage of. However, he was not prepared to give up luxuries, which made him a target of personal criticism. His getting closer to the Prussian court, where he sought financial support, was also badly received. To make matters worse, the forty-year-old prince had begun losing his good, manly looks. Years later, Juliusz Falkowski wrote that he had been trying to hide boldness under the wig – in vain. The prince's conduct in the years 1794-1806 was criticised both by his contemporaries and by historians. According to Skowronek, in the 12 years of being idle, Prince Poniatowski totally became a *man of leisure*, further strengthening the dislike for his person in the society. He did take his time before undertaking service for one of the occupational powers, but towards the end of that period, his financial interests and social relations began pushing him towards easing his former reluctance towards Prussia and Russia. And from that point, as stressed by the prince's biographer, it is not very far from becoming an advocate of Berlin or Petersburg. This, however, did not happen, and in the following years, despite his initial distrust for Napoleon, he remained faithful to the French Emperor till the end of his days.

The fact that in 2013, similar to a century earlier, in 1913, the person of Prince Józef Poniatowski is quoted as an exemplary national hero, was brought about by the last period of his life, parallel to the history of the Duchy of Warsaw⁶. It does not mean, however, that there was some kind of a clear cut boundary dividing his life at that time from when he was despised by his co-patriots as a traitor. Quite the opposite. One has to remember the atmosphere among the Warsaw population after the battle of Raszyn (19th April 1809), as the resultant surrendering Warsaw to the Austrians by the prince, who shouted at him: „Treason!”, „All the traitors to the gallows, those who sold us to the enemy!”, „The uncle sold Poland to the Russians, this one is selling it to the Austrians!”, „Down with Poniatowski!”. The prince heard those slogans, and they probably gave him a difficult time, which is evidenced by his words to his companion, Frenchman Jan Pelletier: „I fear I might have signed an infamy.” A place in history and peaks of popularity were brought to him by events that took place only about a fortnight later – when on 7th May 1809 he set off south, leading all the forces under his command, to free Galicia from under the Austrian occupation. Poles living in that province had been looking forward to some changes since the end of 1806, changes that could mean only

⁶ In this problem they are consistent authors of Poniatowski's biographies, but particular desert to Szymon Askenazy, who perfectly find a moment of birth of Poniatowski's legend (S. Askenazy, *Książę Józef Poniatowski 1763-1813*, edition seven, Warszawa 1974, p. 210).

one thing - an end to the much despised rule of the Habsburgs. Some scepticism towards the campaign, which eventually turned out to be a military, political and propaganda success, was demonstrated only by the aristocracy and the wealthy nobility, who were afraid their property might get confiscated as a revenge for assistance offered to the Polish troops. A victorious procession of Poniatowski's army across Galicia soon triggered enthusiasm also in those groups, as well as the faith in Poland's rebirth. Wawel castle had not witnessed such enthusiasm since the declaration of an uprising by Tadeusz Kościuszko on 24th March 1794. The military and political successes made Poniatowski's name extremely popular. „In many people's mind he appeared as a knight-rescuer, and he also had the ability of gaining popularity thanks to his gentle ways, modesty, and still good appearance: *he was among the most beautiful people of his time. The beauty of his facial features, medium height, solemnity of movements and courtesy in speech melted people's hearts. His splendour when mounted on a horse was unrivalled* – as one of his subordinates recalled him years later”⁷. Poniatowski's popularity was also influenced by his personal policy. Decision that he made often showed that he was far from action grittiness, and his designations for civil administration posts were absolutely mindful, and he appointed people whose activity and initiative were a guarantee of quick and efficient work. It is also worth mentioning that in that key period in his biography, dance balls and social functions were some the prince's favourite forms of leisure. The „Polish Alcibiades”, just like his antique prototype, revelled in wealthy, pleasant and merry life, which he was able to skilfully blend with the everyday duties of the Minister of War in the Duchy of Warsaw.

The triumph was relatively soon, as early as in 1812, followed by a defeat, or even a disaster – how else could one describe the fiasco of Napoleon's gigantic offensive against Russia. The events took a significant place in the Polish historic consciousness – thus they were related in the first lines of the eleventh book of *Pan Tadeusz*:

“MEMORABLE year! Happy is he who beheld thee in our land!
The folk still call thee the year of harvest,
but the soldiers the year of war; old men still love
to tell tales of thee and poets still dream of thee.”

In only 6 months, an army of over 500 thousand was broken up, and army whose major part consisted of – next to the French ones – Polish soldiers. Unlike other non-French units, the Poles were faithful to Napoleon until the

end of the lost campaign. Although he was the most active of the Polish generals, and did not avoid the hardships of the campaign, Poniatowski did not live to be praised by Bonaparte. Quite the contrary, the Emperor blamed Poniatowski for operational and tactical deficiencies of his decisions, although he himself did not create proper conditions, dividing the units among the multinational corps and divisions of his Great Army. Jerzy Skowronek evaluated the prince's command in the Russian campaign of 1812 and stressed that although one might have reservations to his actions in the first two months, he was by far more efficient, even outstanding in his fighting and command. On many occasions he demonstrated a personal courage, speed in decision taking on the battlefield, as well as an ability to implement manoeuvres that he had learnt from Napoleon himself, namely in operating smaller units and being persistent in activities by the avant-garde and the rearguard. What has to be stressed, Poniatowski's attitude during that campaign was praised also by his enemies.

The circumstances of his death also have not only historical, but also symbolic significance in prince Poniatowski's biography. Historians agree that although in the waters of the Elster he lost his life, but he did not lose his honour, since capitulation was the last solution that he might have been considering. Szymon Askenazy wrote that between 16th and 19th October 1813, in the Battle of Nations at Leipzig, an iron circle of the coalition closed on Napoleon, evidently abandoned by his lucky star. On its eve, on 15th October, Bonaparte announced to his army that he had awarded prince Poniatowski the title of a Marshall of the Empire. A Scottish writer, Archibald Gordon Macdonell wrote in his popular work on the Marshalls of Napoleonic France, first published in 1934, that behind Poniatowski's nomination was the need to get the Polish troops to make a maximum effort on the Leipzig battlefield⁸. For three days Poniatowski proved to be fully worthy of such an honour. The last day of the battle was no different, but it was also the last day of the prince's life. Let us again quote the words of Askenazy: „It was a chilly, windy and cloudy morning on the 19th October. A thick, white fog hovered above the muddy riverside, and spread on the vast flatland, soaked with the vapours of fresh blood, was joined here and there by a piercing, autumn rain, by the smoke from the burning outskirts of Leipzig and continual cannonade of artillery and hand guns. It was so thick that one could see only several steps away. Almost an entire army had already passed to the other side when suddenly,

⁷ J. Skowronek, *Książę Józef*, p. 168.

⁸ A. G. Macdonell, *Napoleon i jego marszałkowie*, Londyn 1992, p. 195.

after 11 o'clock in the morning, the Pleissie bridge was blown up prematurely by the French sappers. Prince Józef, accompanied by mere few hundred men, was suddenly cut off. He was just retreating from the western suburbs of Leipzig, from Borny, leading a very meagre escort of cuirassiers and light cavalry, charging now and again the swarms of the enemy infantry. It was then that he got shot in the hand for the third time, but, having dressed it with a handkerchief, remained in the saddle. The surrounding staff, generals Malachowski, Grabowski and others, seeing that there was to retreat way, or no way to continue the defence any more, begged him to surrender and preserve his person for the sake of the country. He would not listen. His eyes were bloodshot, his face was unnaturally flushed, he was tired, totally exhausted, weak from wounds, feverish, half conscious. He replied to all the pleas: *One has to die bravely (il faut mourir en brave)*. He threw himself into the waves, but he was unable to control his horse any more, swept by the river current. Just as he was freeing himself of the drowning horse, he was followed by a young French captain, Bléchamp, and taken out to the opposite bank of the river. The prince proceeded to go on foot to the Elster, through the muddy land, already filling with the enemy infantry. This is where he received his fourth bullet. Staggering, he fell in the arms of a few officers still keeping pace with him. After a moment, he came round, with difficulty mounted a fresh horse that was delivered to him, but he was swaying in the saddle. He was bleeding profusely, the wounds must have already been fatal, there was death in his eyes in his expression. When hurried by his companions, he no longer responded, only mumbled something disconnected, about Poland and about honour, in angry rage. Suddenly, noticing some of the enemy infantry approaching him, he used his last resorts of strength, pulled the horse, and jumped with it into the water of the Elster. It was there that he received the last bullet in his left breast, pierced through, he falls off the horse and after a short struggle – he disappeared under water. Thus lived and died Prince Józef Poniatowski⁹. Jerzy Skowronek stresses that Poniatowski paced towards his death through a conscious choice of the best – in his opinion – service to his country, and the greatness and significance of the struggle at the walls of Leipzig gave his decisions and his death a special dimension. Prince Józef Poniatowski's death was symbolic since it marked the end of the Polish army at the side of the French Emperor. An expert in the period, and especially its political conditions for the future of Poland and the Poles, wrote that „the hopes of the greatest optimists collapsed, the hopes

⁹ S. Askenazy, *Książę Józef*, p. 256-257.

that Napoleon was capable of keeping up the existence of Poland as a state. Thus, Prince Józef's death was not merely a knightly gesture and a symbol of a certain attitude. It became a living symbol, one making an emotional appeal, of the end of the Napoleonic era, and above all, of the *Napoleonic Poland* and the Polish hopes linked with Napoleon¹⁰.

Summing up the outline of Prince Józef Poniatowski's profile presented in the article, one has to quote Jerzy Skowronek once again, saying that „with his heroism, determination and his death, Prince Poniatowski became a symbol of a dramatic period in the Polish sacrificial struggles and Polish disasters, and at the same time, to some extent, with his name *he made the nation rise and shine*, a nation that at the end of the 18th century lacked people of great character among its politicians¹¹. Although Poniatowski was more of a military man than a politician, his achievements in the latter area is also worth noting. Despite numerous obstacles, both internal and external, he totally consciously and for good chose Poland, whereas many people from his circles chose political orientations that ensured them careers in other courts, or a peaceful existence and enjoying their wealth.

I would like to end the above biographical outline of Józef Poniatowski with a statement that the questions that historians studying the prince's life and legend have been posing for years, have not lost their appeal. That is because the geopolitical situation of Poland basically has not changed since the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. Both Russia and Germany are powerful neighbours of the Republic of Poland, and they will not stop at anything in order to put through their strategic political, economic and military aims, they will make alliance above the heads of Poles, with little respect to the state and nation in which for centuries jobbery has come first, before the popular interests. In the same way, the politics of two western European powers, France and Great Britain, has not changed in the last 200 years, which proves that Poland only temporarily and to a limited extent has any significance whatsoever to those states. Naturally, Poland is no exception among the states of Central and Eastern Europe. Our problem, paradoxically, consists also in our history – over a thousand-year-long and full of wonderful and mighty events – as well as the population and area of the country, which place us among significant states of the old continent. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that in the political disputes, which we not only witness, but are a part of, the following

¹⁰ J. Skowronek, *Książę Józef*, p. 259.

¹¹ Ibidem, s. 261.

dilemma is discussed: to struggle for the most ambitious aims, both internally and externally, not to renounce them and not to push them into the sphere of dreams, hoping they will come true one day. Or to assume that arranging our lives at our own account is basically beyond our possibilities and in fact is among the aforementioned dreams. To confirm these words, one could quote the characteristic and widely commented words of the famous metaphor by Władysław Bartoszewski about the „ugly marriageable lady” as an expression of the necessity for Poland to be submissive on the international arena, and the „proud Poles” fighting for their position and significance, words that have been popularised by the poet, writer and playwright Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz. Settling this dilemma has to be done by everyone individually, and the story of Józef Poniatowski may be of some help in those considerations. The story of a prince who has been more important to Poles for the last 200 years than the king bearing the very same surname.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE – KEY WORDS

Historia Polski, Józef Poniatowski, bitwa narodów Lipsk (1813), świadomość historyczna, uroczystości rocznicowe

History of Poland, Józef Poniatowski, the Battle of the Nations, Leipzig 1813, knowledge of history, anniversary celebrations

„DWIE ROCZNICE, ALE NIE ŚWIĘTA”. WOKÓŁ BIOGRAFII KSIĘCIA JÓZEFA PONIATOWSKIEGO W 250 ROCZNICĘ URODZIN I 200 ROCZNICĘ ŚMIERCI W BITWIE POD LIPSIEM

Polacy od 200 lat kochają się w Poniatowskim. Nie w królu Stanisławie Auguste Poniatowskim tylko w jego bratanku. Biografię księcia Józefa Poniatowskiego, którego 250 rocznicę urodzin i 200 rocznicę śmierci obchodziliśmy w 2013 r. często opisują dwa przypisywane mu cytaty „Bóg mi powierzył honor Polaków, Bogu go oddam” oraz „Trzeba umrzeć mężnie”. Józef Poniatowski ma szczęście do historyków. Autorami jego dwóch najpopularniejszych biografii byli Szymon Askenazy i Jerzy Skowronek. Bardzo dobre współczesne prace biograficzne napisali Andrzej Nieuważny i Waldemar Łysiak. W biografii księcia szczególnie ważny okazał się dzień 3 maja 1791 r. Obchodzenie w wolnej Polsce po ponad dwustu latach tego dnia jako Święta Narodowego Trzeciego Maja w rocznicę uchwalenia pierwszej konstytucji nowożytnej Europy, pokazuje iż książę nie pomylił się uznając ten dzień za jedną z najpiękniejszych chwil swego życia. Było tak dlatego, iż dostrzegł w dziele Sejmu Wielkiego

niezwykle istotny krok na drodze do umocnienia egzystencji państwa i wzmocnienia królewskiego majestatu. Konstytucję uznawał za akt woli ówczesnego narodu, którą szanować i przestrzegać winni wszyscy poddani polskiego monarchy. W obronie Konstytucji 3 Maja książę stawał dzielnie w trakcie wojny polsko-rosyjskiej 1792 r. Do historii przeszła w szczególności stoczona 18 czerwca bitwa po Zieleńcach. O tym, że w 2013 r., podobnie jak było to sto lat temu w 1913 r. postać księcia Józefa Poniatowskiego przywoływana jest jako przykład narodowego bohatera zdecydował ostatni okres jego życia, pokrywający się z historią Księstwa Warszawskiego. W biografii księcia Poniatowskiego nie tylko historyczny, ale również bardzo symboliczny wymiar mają okoliczności jego śmierci. Historycy są zgodni, że w nurtach Elstery stracił życie, ale nie honor, gdyż kapitulacja była ostatnią rzeczą jaką wówczas brał pod uwagę. Szymon Askenazy napisał, że pomiędzy 16 a 19 października 1813 r. pod Lipskiem, w bitwie, która do historii przeszła jako bitwa narodów zamknęła się żelazna obręcz koalicyjna dookoła opuszczonego przez swoją gwiazdę Napoleona.

„ZWEI JAHRESTAGE, ABER KEINE FEIERN“. RUND UM DIE BIOGRAPHIE VON JÓZEF PONIATOWSKI AN SEINEM 250. GEBURTSTAG UND DEM 200. JAHRESTAG DER SCHLACHT BEI LEIPZIG.

Die Polen sind seit 200 Jahren in Poniatowski verliebt. Nicht in den König Stanisław August Poniatowski sondern in seinen Neffen. Die Biographie des Fürsten Józef Poniatowski, dessen 250. Geburtstag und 200. Todestag wir in 2013 gedachten, beschreiben zwei Zitate, die ihm zugeschrieben werden: „Gott vertraute mir die Ehre der Polen an, Gott werde ich sie zurückgeben“ und „Man muss tapfer sterben“. Józef Poniatowski hatte das Glück, dass sich gute Historiker für ihn interessierten. Die berühmtesten Autoren seiner Biographien waren Szymon Askenazy und Jerzy Skowronek. Sehr gute neuzeitliche Arbeiten verfassten Andrzej Nieuważny und Waldemar Łysiak. In den Biographien des Fürsten erscheint der 3. Mai 1791 als besonders wichtig. Heute im freien Polen wird nach über 200 Jahren der Dritter Mai als Tag der Verabschiedung der ersten Verfassung in Europa gefeiert. Dies zeigt, dass der Fürst richtig lag, als er diesen Tag als einen der schönsten seines Lebens bezeichnete. Er erkannte im Werk des Großen Sejms einen wichtigen Schritt auf dem Weg zu einem starken Staat und einer starken Monarchie. Die Verfassung verstand er als ein Akt des Willens der damaligen Nation, den alle Untertanen des polnischen Königs respektieren und befolgen sollten. Er verteidigte die Verfassung vom 3. Mai während des polnisch-russischen Krieges in 1792. In die Geschichte ging die Schlacht bei Zieleńca am 18. Juni über. Aber nur der letzte Abschnitt seines Lebens entschied darüber, dass im Jahr 2013, ähnlich wie vor hundert Jahren, Fürst Józef Poniatowski als ein Nationalheld gefeiert wird. Dieser Abschnitt ist Zeitgleich mit der Geschichte des Herzogtums Warschau. In der Biographie des Fürsten Poniatowski hat sein Tod eine historische

und eine symbolische Dimension. Die Historiker sind sich einig, dass er in der Elster sein Leben verloren hat, aber nicht seine Ehre, da die Kapitulation die letzte Sache war, die er in Erwägung gezogen hat. Szymon Askenazy schrieb, dass zwischen dem 16. und 19. Oktober 1813 während der Schlacht bei Leipzig, die als Völkerschlacht in die Geschichte überging, die Koalition gegen Napoleon sich verfestigte.

