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## WE SEEK AID FOR POLISH ARCHITECTURE IN THE TRADITIONAL

After the Congress of Vienna in 1815 the frontiers of European countries remained fixed for years to come. For many nations there ensued a period favoring the development of their identity. They studied their own cultural achievements, individuated native and foreign characteristics, carried out assessments and began the first serious conservation works.

All this was different in Poland. This country lost her independence and statehood and was enslaved by three occupying powers: Prussia, Russia and Austria. Each of the three parts was dependent on the occupation authorities and began a separate economic and political existence, a process that deepened in course of time. National identity and the feeling of unity could be saved primarily on the level of culture, care of the language and past achievements, the elaboration of new values in various domains of art, also in architecture.

This was not easy. The occupation authorities introduced their native languages into Polish schools, their customs and laws into life and built for their needs in a manner inconsistent with the Polish landscape. In those times it was rather difficult to adapt works developed from the achievements of other nations in virtue of their universal values if they had been qualified principally as foreign. Today we can assess these problems without emotions, according to their objective values, but that was different in the past. Poles were afraid that whatever was foreign might assist in denationalization. This was anyway the intent of many things introduced by the authorities.

Interest in relics of the past could be noticed in Poland since the mid-eighteenth century. Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, the last king of Poland, commissioned Sigismund Vogel, an artist, to paint views of towns and various relics spread throughout the country. Casimir Stronczyński began in 1844 and finished in 1855 an inventory - chiefly in the five provinces under Russian Partition - of architectural relics, 416 objects in all. In 1847 an inventory was undertaken under Austrian Partition by Józef Łebkowski. These and other activities were still insufficient to cognize the country's own achievements in the realm of architecture. This was why, and also due to the fact that Polish architects graduated at foreign schools, they worked in accordance with a spirit alien to their native country. A rare exception was the reference, during the rebuilding of the Lublin Castle in 1823-1826, to the Polish sixteenth century attic. It occurred more frequently that renovations, or rather considerable reconstructions of relics, were carried out in accordance with designs of foreign architects, alien to Polish principles. Such was the case with the reconstruction of the castle at Kórnik realized in the mid-nineteenth century, chiefly based on a project prepared by Karl Friedrich Schinkel; or the part reconstruction of the castle at Książ Wielki carried out in 1846-1848 according to a project by Friedrich Stüler.

Polish history of art as a science was established in the mid-nineteenth century at Jagiellon University in Cracow; the History of Art Commission was established at the Polish Academy of Learning in 1873. Studies of Poland's past became henceforth more extensive and quicker. Outstanding architects gradually became members of the Commission. After 1880 there appeared more and more often criticism of the cosmopolitan architecture in Poland and demands for national architecture. This was supported by publications discussing old Polish architecture.

The search for national architecture took several directions. We shall discuss them briefly keeping in mind that one hundred years have passed since their original appearance - a sufficiently long period to allow us to scrutinize with a greater respect the produced objects, surround them with greater care and what is more, to find out how much they correspond with Polish tradition and are in harmony with the native landscape.

It was Karol Matuszewski who, in 1881, began to propagate forms of the Polish gothic - brick gothic, of course. If we remember that the gothic style in principle never crossed the Vilno-Lvov line in eastern Europe, we may understand why its Polish variety was perceived as "West European" - i.e., different from Russian architecture.

An example of this separateness was the so-called "Polish church" built in faraway Irkutsk in Siberia whereto many Poles were deported. It was built there in 1883 in the Polish neogothic form by the architect Józef Tamulewicz /ill. 1/. I should like to add that at present this church - renovated and enriched with an organ - serves as a concert hall and its origin, proving long-lasting Polish Russian contacts is remembered with sentiment.

After 1898, Jan Sas-Zubrzycki built a church in the spirit of the Cracow gothic in the Cracow suburb Podgórze and in 1910 published a concise work "The Vistula Style" in which he exposed his principles.

The second national trend was connected with renaissance achievements of Polish architecture. It seems that besides less significant works an essential role in spreading Polish renaissance forms was played by Sławomir Odrzywolski's publication "Renaissance in Poland" /1899/ and to a degree by Jan Sas-Zubrzycki's rather confusing work "Sigismund's Style".

The most important architectural work in this spirit seems to be the Church of the saviour in Warsaw /1901-1911/ designed by Józef Dziekoński, W. Żychiewicz and L. Panczakiewicz and buildings designed by Stefan Szyller, for instance the entrance pavilions to Poniatowski's Bridge in Warsaw. Of course, buildings thus styled are quite numerous in southern Poland /the former Austrian Partition/ and in Cracow itself.

The struggle against cosmopolitan eclecticism involved not only the imitation of the Polish stylistic homogeneous architectural achievements but also the free linking in one work of elements of a formally and temporally different origin, in the creation of something like a national eclecticism, or the creation of syncretic works. This can be seen in the already referred to Church of the Saviour in Warsaw.

The imitation of folk art was another way of creating a national style. But because these accomplishments were adapted to buildings intended for a different function, some sacral, a new value had to be established. A growing interest in accomplishments of mountaneers, particularly their houses at the foot of the Tatra Mts., was due to intellectuals from Cracow and Warsaw who, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, "discovered" Zakopane. Soon numerous city dwellers spent their holidays at this submontane resort and, at the end of the nineteenth century, some - due to poor health - settled there. Stanisław Witkiewicz, a writer, came to Zakopane in 1886 and stayed there for 22 years. It was he who - next to Maria and Bronisław Dembowski, and also doctor Władysław Matlakowski, author of "Polk Building in Podhale" /1892/, "Ornamentation and Implements of Foles in Podhale" /1901/ - became the initiator of the "Zakopane Style", a designer of villas, chapels and the author of a publication "The Zakopane Style of which part I was issued in 1904.

Witkiewicz propagated this style with ardour believing that at Zakopane, because of the remoteness of this area from centres of civilization, there still prevailed wooden building which was once common throughout Poland. His conviction was confirmed by news arriving - after the publication of his thesis - from all over Poland from men who discovered certain similar details in the wooden architecture in other districts. Somehow, this supported the belief that buildings which survived at Zakopane were once common throughout the country. The first house built in Zakopane, designed by Witkiewicz was "Koliba" /1892/, it was followed by villa "Pepita" in 1893, "Oksza" in 1894, "Zofiówka" in 1896, and the most attractive "Pod Jedlami" in 1897 /ill. 2/, the sanatorium of doctor Hawranek was built in the same year and a chapel at Jaszczurówka - in 1908, that is after the publication of the work referred to. All these buildings were made of wood.

The Zakopane style spread to other areas. In 1900, the architect Franciszek Mączyński received an award in Paris for designing a villa built in this style. Similarly modelled brick buildings included: a "Kurhaus" in faraway Połaga /Lithuania/ in 1902, the railway station at Sytgudyszki /1902/, a country house near Lublin /1903/. The architect Jarosław Wojciechowski built a corresponding house in Warsaw in the years 1905-1906 and the Tatra Museum was built in brick in this style at Zakopane in 1913.

But Stanisław Witkiewicz wanted more, he thought of the possibility to revive applied art in this way. He designed, therefore, also furniture, stoves, jewelry, china and even textiles and lace.

The Zakopane style elaborated by Witkiewicz did not include new solutions concerning space or construction, it was an attempt at introducing certain features hitherto found in village buildings and outbuildings at rich people's homesteads or even at public buildings and utilized to enrich and intensify decorations. There was a certain sacral hue applied to the rural way of building and ornamentation, this made mountaneers to believe in their everyday surroundings and even in what they spurned. Henceforth, they built with a greater conviction, enriched ornamentation in places so far neglected, reshaped garrets to produce rooms for holiday-makers and added verandahs and porches. This became general throughout a large area, was and is exported to other provinces.

One may, of course, have various reservations to this type of building but its conformity to the Podhale landscape cannot be denied. Objects of this type, particularly those formally outstanding, must be protected by skilled conservationists. We may not be aware that what once was only folk craft increased its rank and after being brought into contact with the civilization of intellectuals became general and desired by people of other social classes or professions.

The period of the greatest development of the Zakopane style coincided with the strongest criticism of it. There were various arguments against it, let us quote but two. It was said that regional features cannot be propagated throughout the country and what suits the submontane landscape need not suit lowlands or even seaside areas. The second argument against this style directed attention at the increasing use of construction materials such as steel and reinforced concrete, which would be difficult to utilize in a style deriving from timber. The critics directed attention at other existing experiences of Polish architecture which perhaps also deserved generalization and utilization. They indicated the need to use achievements of ages-old experiences of building manor-houses in the country. Considerable influence in

this matter was exerted by the publication in the periodicals "Kłasy" and "Tygodnik Ilustrowany" of sketches showing Polish manor-houses and nearby life /ill. 3,4/.

An architectural competition to build a new manor-house at Opinogóra was announced in 1908. Of course not only the first prize presented a solution close to the traditional Polish manor /ill. 5/. The project of the Polish pavilion for the Rome Exhibition in 1911 also presented a Polish manor-house /ill. 6/.

Most propositions of manorial architecture were presented in Cracow in 1912 at the exhibition "Architecture in the Garden Interior".

It must be remembered, of course, that despite the utilization of Polish norms, English propositions by Philip Webb and Charles Voysey played a certain role in this case. But when I presented Polish solutions in 1984 in England and Scotland at a special exhibition /ill. 7/, some local critics detected independent or even superior achievements in Polish buildings.

The manor style was utilized also in other houses not only those intended for dwelling, particularly in smaller towns. Sought after were also some simplifications in accordance with the cubistic trend in European architecture in those years /ill. 8/.

Studies of wood and brick architecture of small objects were also continued. They were summed up in 1914 at a Warsaw exhibition "Village and Township" /ill. 9/ published in print in 1916 under the same title. This publication became an often consulted pattern particularly when reconstruction projects - following destructions caused by World War I - were prepared /ill. 10/. Model, perhaps even typical projects of objects well suited to the Polish cultural landscape were produced /ill. 11/. Those who prepared these projects were already well aware of regional differences - there were no more stylistic uniform designs for the whole country. These projects were published in 1915, 1916 and 1918.

After the war the manor-house architecture also became a pattern for newly erected apartment blocks, to mention only some: Żoliborz in Warsaw, at Starachowice, Katowice, Brześć, Łuck, Nieświerz, Duniłowicze /ill. 12/.

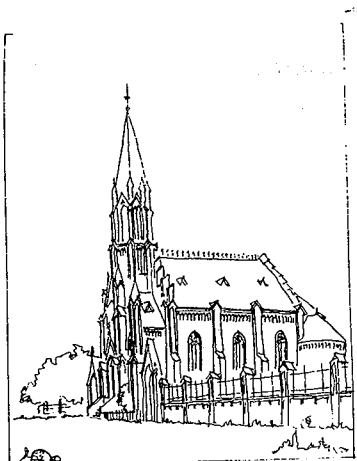
It is of interest that as late as 1930, the Polish Embassy in Ankara was constructed in the form of a large manor-house and the rooms were equipped with furniture designed by the most eminent Polish artists.

Principles of functional architecture have been propagated in Poland since 1924. Despite some opposition it soon gained supporters and, in the end, prevailed. It led to the popularization of hygienic housing and access to the sun. It seemed that it would supply modest living to all. Of course, it also propagated other principles, young architects, who cooperated with international organizations, exchanged news and created an international style, became infatuated with it. The Charter of Athens promulgated in 1933 crowned this cooperation.

Half a century has passed since. Not denying some achievements of functional architecture it must be said that its simplified and deformed version realized in Poland, at present chiefly in large-plate technology, often used in standard arrangements, led to a general contamination if not effacement Poland's cultural landscape. The general notion of contrasting combinations of old architecture and new functional architecture, or attempts at filling out gaps in old towns, where buildings were destroyed but plans survived, with cube-like prefabricated new houses brought lamentable results

not likely to win anyone's approval. The utilization of this type of architecture within groups of old architecture was rather disadvantageous to Poland as a whole.

To save Poland's cultural landscape and maintain national identity we must seek other solutions, indicate new methods of procedure. It seems we should analyze more thoroughly the activities of our predecessors from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Not only to mark out buildings and larger schemes deserving conservation but also to learn how to shape architecture in concert with tradition, adapting it to the existing environment, to the Polish landscape. I do not, of course, propose to ignore what was good and rational in functional architecture. This must be utilized, but sensibly with necessary circumspection. This may be the way towards the revival of Polish architecture; we must also increase our care of relics of the past and remember that what is new need not be a negation but can be a continuation of bygone times.



1. Irkuck /Russia/, "Polish Church", Józef Tamulewicz, 1883



2. Zakopane, villa "Pod Jedlami", Stanisław Witkiewicz, 1897



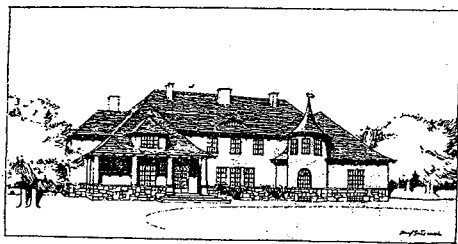
3. Manor-house at Smardzew, "Tygodnik Ilustrowany" 1872, Vol. X. p. 260



4. Manor-house at Sadowie, "Tygodnik Ilustrowany" 1876, Vol. X, p. 380



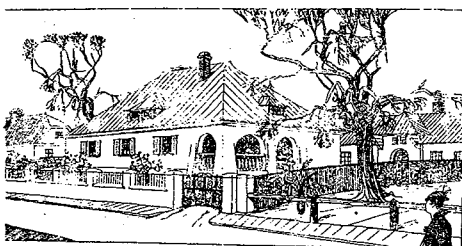
5. Henryk Uziembło and Kazimierz Wyczyński, Competition project of a manor-house at Opinogóra, 1908



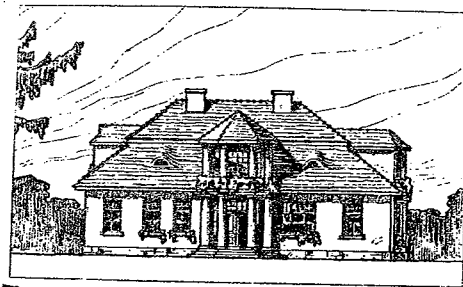
7. Józef Gałęzowski, Project of the manor-house at Sinołęka, 1911-1912



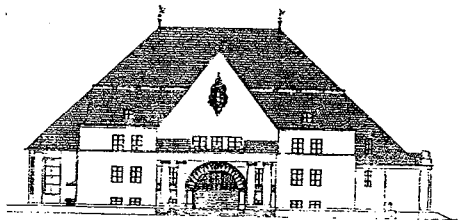
9. Jan Matejko, Houses at Wiśnich, 1885. Sketch published in "Village and Township" 1916, il. 109



11. Kędzierski, Project of a house with an ironworker's shop, in "The Reconstruction of Polish Townships" 1916, p. 28



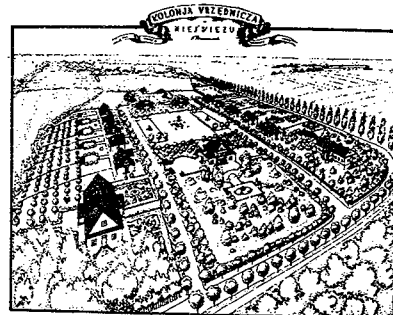
6. Tadeusz Szanior, Competition project of the Polish pavilion at the Rome Exhibition in 1911



8. K. Krzyżanowski and M. Rzepecki, Competition project of the manor-house at Niegowić, 1913



10. Stefan Stępkowski, Project of communal office in "The Reconstruction of Polish Townships", 1918, p. 87



Arch. Dept. Teodor Bursze i inż. Józef Kępczyński

Wzrost projektowania i budowy osiedli w Nieświeżu

12. Teodor Bursze, Project of civil servants' settlement at Nieśwież, 1924



## WE SEEK AID FOR POLISH ARCHITECTURE IN THE TRADITIONAL - Summary

In 1825 when frontiers dividing European states were permanently settled and most nations could develop their cultural heritage to define their identity, Poland - partitioned between Prussia, Russia and Austria - faced bleak prospects. Apprehensive of denationalization Poles regarded architectonic designs and realizations introduced by the occupants as alien. There were limited inventories of building relics, more complete studies were instituted in the mid-nineteenth century when history of Polish art was acknowledged as a subject at Cracow's Jagiellon University. Polish architects who graduated from foreign universities remained for years under the influence of foreign designs.

It was necessary to get acquainted with native achievements and develop patterns that could be contrasted with cosmopolitan architecture, particularly buildings typical of the occupying countries. The knowledge that in the past gothic architecture did not reach Russia increased interest in the Polish variant of this style and gave rise to the "Vistula Gothic". Its forms were transported by Polish exiles even to distant Irkuck. The effects of studies of the Polish Renaissance led to the development of the "Sigismund Style".

Attempts were also made at imitating country-style building Stanisław Witkiewicz elaborated the so-called "Zakopane Style", modelled on buildings of Tatra highlanders. Basically involving wooden constructions this style was also adapted to more durable materials: bricks, plaster and stones. These objects are not limited only to Zakopane - a popular holiday resort in the Tatra Mts. - they may be found also in 800 kilometres distant Lithuania.

But this style was incompatible with more and more frequently used steel and reinforced concrete. Endeavours were made to suppress it in favour of the "Manor-house Style", which won many supporters especially after 1918 when Poland regained independence, because it referred to times before this freedom had been lost and revived the past bypassing the years of subjugation.

All these endeavours at developing a national architecture had one obvious advantage: they were adapted to the Polish landscape, kept up tradition and contributed to the revival of native skills connected with building craft.

Principles of functional architecture have been propagated in Poland since 1924. The leading figures in this trend were associated with the international avant-garde and their works were recorded in achievements of the international style contrasting with the surrounding space.

There was not much of it until 1939. The situation changed essentially after the war, particularly since 1960. The simplified and misshapen version of functionalism which penetrated into every city and township or even village, filling the country with uniform prefabricated building blocks, has led to the contamination and dreariness of the Polish landscape. It should be saved.

Perhaps the architecture that developed a hundred years ago and embraced native tradition could provide an example of a correct procedure, it is also a high time for the society and conservation workers to direct attention at outstanding examples of these achievements.

## CHERCHONS RESSOURCE POUR L'ARCHITECTURE POLONAISE DANS CELLE DE TRADITION

Après 1825, quand les frontières des pays étaient pour longtemps établies en Europe, et plupart des nations pouvait s'occuper de leur héritage culturel pour déterminer leur identité, nation polonaise, partagée, restante sous l'occupation de Prusse, Russie et Autriche, était sujette à tel processus entravé. Formes et solutions architectoniques, réalisées par occupants, étaient traitées comme étrangères, de crainte de dénatalisation, restrictivement, le dressement d'inventaire des monuments, mais études plus détaillées dans ce domaine n'étaient commencées qu'en seconde moitié du XIXe siècle, quand à l'Université Jagellonien /Cracovie/, histoire d'art polonais a pris naissance, comme science. Architectes polonais faisaient études aux écoles supérieures étrangères, et pour cela subissaient, pendant plusieurs années, influences étrangères.

On commençait de se rendre compte de nécessité de connaissance d'acquis particulier, pour élaborer standards, capables de faire face à l'architecture cosmopolite, notamment celle des occupants.

Connaissance que, dans le passé, gothique n'avait pas pénétré jusqu'aux terres russes, inspirait intérêt croissant dans variatio polonaise de ce style, et formation du "Gothique sur Vistule". Formes de ce dernier étaient transférées par déportés polonais même jusqu'à Irkoutsk. Effets des études sur renaissance polonaise ont mené à formation du "Style Sigismondien".

On essayait d'imiter la construction populaire. Stanislas Witkiewicz, à base d'acquis d'art des montagnards, habitant près des Tatra, a élaboré ainsi dit "Style de Zakopane". Ce dernier était prévu pour application dans construction en bois, mais était mis à profit dans matières plus solides: brique, enduit et pierre. Objets dans ce style sont rencontrés à Zakopane, capitale de Régio près des Hautes Tatras, et aussi en Lithuanie, distante de 800 km.

Cependant, ce style était étranger à acier et béton armé, souvent utilisés. Pour cela on commençait de le combattre, et propager ainsi dit "Style de Manoir". Ce dernier a surtout gagné partisans, après recouvrement d'indépendance par la Pologne, en 1918, comme faisant suite à l'époque d'avant partages, suite au passé, négligeant temps de servitude.

Tous les essais de formation d'architecture nationale avaient eu une valeur incontestable: adaptation au paysage polonais, continuation de tradition, contribution pour renaissance de savoir-faire natif de métier de construction.

Dès 1924, on commençait en Pologne de propager principes d'architecture fonctionnelle. Créateurs illustres de ce courant, étaient fermement attachés à l'avant-garde internationale, leurs oeuvres s'inscrivant dans acquis du style international, contrastant avec espace environnant.

Jusqu'à 1939, cette tendance ne se manifestait pas fort. Autrement, après guerre, dès 1960 particulièrement. Version simplifiée et déformée du fonctionnalisme dont exemples ont pénétré dans chaque ville, bourg et campagne même, comblement du pays de cubes semblables, préfabriqués - ont causé dégradation, destruction du paysage polonais. Il faut le sauver, s'opposant aux essais de ce procédé nuisible.

Il se peut que justement architecture, créée il y a 100 ans environ, continuante la tradition native, pourrait devenir exemple de procédure convenable, et il est grand temps que les meilleurs exemples de cet acquis-là soient pris sous protection de toute la société et des services de conservateur.