

THE CONFERENCE ON BENEDYKT ZIENTARA'S PLACE IN POLISH HISTORIOGRAPHY

In connection with the 70th anniversary of the birth and fifteenth of the death of the eminent historian Benedykt Zientara (15.6.1928–11.5.1983) the Historical Institute of Warsaw University and the Young Historians' "Societas Vistulana" Society organised a conference at the Historical Institute on November 17, 1998. The conference was attended by many representatives of Warsaw historians, persons representing other Polish academic centres, in particular Cracow and Białystok, as well as friends and members of the family of the prominent historian. The objective of the session was to shed light on the role played by Benedykt Zientara's works in the studies conducted by young medievalists; this is why the papers presented at the session were written by young historians and even students.

The session was opened by the Director of the Historical Institute of Warsaw University, Bronisław Nowak (Warsaw), who on the basis of his own experience portrayed Benedykt Zientara as a historian, populariser of knowledge and man. He also presented Zientara's plans which, unfortunately, were not carried out. The inaugural paper was read by Marek Barański (Warsaw), who characterised the scholarly work of his Master, pointing out the different lines of Zientara's research and his methods. He also discussed Zientara's many foreign contacts, in particular those with German historians, and emphasised the great influence exerted on Zientara by Marian Małowist's seminars which shaped many generations of Polish historians.

Three papers were read in the first part of the session, which was presided over by Maria Bogucka. Krzysztof Kowalewski (Warsaw) read a paper *Socio-Economic Changes in the Middle Ages in Benedykt Zientara's Interpretation*. He showed how the great historian's interests evolved from economic history to social history and finally to political history, and how from an analysis of minor questions he passed on to a synthesis of general issues. Aneta Pieniądz (Warsaw) read a communiqué *Popularisation of History in Benedykt Zientara's Scholarly Achievements*. She emphasised that Zientara had attached great importance to the popularisation of historians' achievements among non-academic circles. She also recalled that in the preface to the book *Henry the Bearded and His Time*, Zientara warned against the danger of interest in history being confined to a narrow circle of specialists. Maciej Wilamowski (Cracow) dealt with an important issue which had attracted Benedykt Zientara's attention, namely, the formation of nations and of a proper terminology (*Benedykt Zientara's as a Researcher of National Ties in the Middle Ages*). This was a theme which threaded its way through all of Zientara's studies, the crown of his work being the work *The Dawn of European Nations*, published posthumously.

The debates of the second part of the conference were presided over by Andrzej Wyrobisz. Paweł Żmudzki (Warsaw) presented Zientara as a biographer (*Man as the Subject of History or the Biography of Prince Henry the Bearded in Benedykt Zientara's Interpretation*). He pointed out that Zientara's study, which had its roots in Stanisław Smolka's scholarly achievements, was innovative; it presented all the issues of Henry the Bearded's epoch and at the same time, thanks to its form, was addressed to readers who were not necessarily professional historians. A particularly lively discussion followed the paper by Maciej Zdanek (Cracow) *Religion, Religiousness. The Church in Benedykt Zientara's Writings*. He

emphasised that at first the Church did not play a major role in Benedykt Zientara's studies; later he examined it from two different points of view: as an ideology and as an historical phenomenon. In his last writings Zientara treated religion as an important causative factor in history. The speakers who took part in the discussion which followed Zdanek's paper raised the question of Marxist ideology not only in Zientara's works but also in the studies of other post-war historians. Rafał Jaworski (Warsaw) presented a communiqué *Old Russia in Benedykt Zientara's Research* in which he discussed the eminent historian's inextensive synthesis *Old Russia. Despotism and Democracy*, which was free of stereotypes and prejudices despite the fact that it was published clandestinely. Jaworski also recalled other minor Ruthenian and Russian themes in Zientara's earlier works.

The debates were summed up by Henryk Samsonowicz, who pointed out that Benedykt Zientara, though shaped by the tradition of 19th century Polish historiography, avoided its weaknesses. Despite his war experiences, he succeeded in overcoming prejudices, and in his works sought to present Polish-German relations objectively. Samsonowicz emphasised that Zientara wrote in a clear lucid language. He said it was a pleasure to see that the work of this prominent historian was still alive despite the passage of time, and that it was an inspiration for the youngest generations of Polish medievalists.

During a break in the debates, an exhibition showing the life and scholarly achievements of Benedykt Zientara was opened at the university. It presented many photographs, documents, manuscripts and remembrances of the eminent historian.

Krzysztof Skwierczyński

POLISH AND LITHUANIAN CULTURE IN HISTORY IDENTITY AND COEXISTENCE

The European Heritage Centre of the International Centre of Culture organised a conference in Cracow from 15th to 17th October 1998. The papers read at the conference were arranged in thematic and chronological order. The first general studies concerned the period before Poland's partitions; the subjects discussed on the last day of the conference were closer to contemporary times, but a squaring up of accounts and prognoses predominated during the final debate.

After the opening of the debates, J. Wyrozumski (Cracow) read an introductory paper on the road which had led to the agreement at Krevo and the transition from the legacy of the last Piast kings to Jagiellonian Poland. The next speakers dealt with culture during the Christianisation of Lithuania and the two countries' union. J. Bardach (Warsaw) discussed the reception of Lithuanian law in Poland. The studies by Wyrozumski and Bardach were a kind of clasp connecting the papers read during the inauguration of the conference. K. Czyżewski's (Sejny) strongly emotional paper on the spiritual culture of Vilnius was rather of a literary character.

Jurate Kiaupienė (Vilnius) opened the afternoon session by an analysis of the Lithuanian nobility's political culture in the 16th century; this is a subject which deserves a detailed study and a precise definition of Lithuanian identity at that time. A related question was raised by T. Wasilewski (Warsaw), who discussed the origin and national consciousness of the Polish population in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the Union of Lublin to the January Rising of 1863 and the beginning of Lithuania's national revival. M. Kosman (Poznań) presented the place of Protestantism in Lithuania's national culture from the beginning of the 16th century to the end of the inter-war period. L. Korczak (Cracow) described the role played by religious customs in the survival of national identity. Polish readers will undoubtedly be interested in the views presented by E. Meilius (Vilnius) in his paper on the ethnic affiliation of the inhabitants of Vilnius

and their loyalty to the authorities during the war against Moscow in the middle of the 17th century because they know this period from Henryk Sienkiewicz's novels.

On the second day of the conference Gintautas Šlietos (Vilnius) spoke about the influence of changes in the structure of the Lithuanian elite on the Grand Duchy's relations with Poland. L. Bednarczuk (Cracow) raised linguistic questions (*Linguistic Contacts and Conflicts in the Grand Duchy*) and S. Aleksandrówicz (Toruń) recalled the figure of Józef Naronowicz-Narowski, author of maps of Lithuania and Prussia in the 17th century. The reflections of Leon Brodowski (Warsaw) on the Lithuanisation of Polish culture referred to the world of politics and political journalism.

The papers that followed concerned the time of partitions and later days when Poland and Lithuania regained independence. H. Dylągowa (Warsaw) spoke about the place of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Poles' consciousness in the 19th and 20th centuries. The partitions did not close the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; the Commonwealth continued to live in the minds of its inhabitants and even became part of the fairy-land history adopted by the modern Polish nation, which also included the peasantry; the fate of that class on the Villja and the lower Nemen was different, hence the split and even conflicts between the historic Lithuanian and the ethnic Lithuanian. Other authors raised some detailed questions, e.g. D. Stalūnas and R. Miknys (Vilnius) focused attention on Adam Honory Kirkor, a Lithuanian Pole torn between loyalty to the nation and the state (the question should also be viewed from the Polish perspective if the right conclusions are to be drawn). Pranas Janauskas dealt with the Polish Military Organisation (POW) in Kaunas and asked whether its members were citizens of the old Grand Duchy or traitors. But let us make things clear: what was it that they were supposed to betray — their fatherland or a new state, Lithuania?

Many controversial questions arose when the debate focused on the 20th century, but the participants knew how to control their feelings. When reference was made to some grotesque incidents, such as Władysław Jagiełło's "trial" held in the waiting-room of the Koszedary railway station in 1930, a trial which ended with a harsh verdict on that prominent politician and monarch, the Lithuanian guests argued that the incident was not known to the general public. But the fact is that it did take place and that it testified to the wide spread of anti-Jagellonian and anti-Union feelings in Lithuania between the two wars. Contemporary Lithuanian historians point out that in the inter-war period serious researchers drew attention also to the monarch's merits. The canonisation fairy-tale current is a thing of the past in Polish historiography; it is a settlement of accounts with our own past that predominates in contemporary Polish studies.

This attitude can also be seen in Lithuania, as was proved at the conference by Bronius Genzelis's (Vilnius) balanced paper based on historical facts and the author's political experience. Genzelis's paper, which bore the significant title *A Change in Psychological Attitudes: the Poles Are Our Enemies, the Poles Are Our Friends*, stood in contrast with some opinions of younger researchers. More optimistic was the concluding paper read by Jan Władczak (Cracow), Poland's former ambassador to Lithuania. It had three question marks in its title: *Polish? Lithuanian? Joint?*

On the eve of the conference Juliusz Bardach published an essay entitled *The Republic of the Two Nations. A History of Poland's Union with Lithuania up to the End of the 18th Century*. The author expresses a high opinion of the union between the two states: "The Polish-Lithuanian union ... was an outstanding achievement, not because of its uniqueness but because it lasted such a long time ... It now constitutes a common historical legacy of the Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. As time goes on and the distance separating us from the union increases, the evaluations of the union become more and more

balanced its favourable effects are beginning to be appreciated also by other nations of the old Commonwealth”.

Marcell Kosman

THE HISTORY OF THE PRESS IN GREAT POLAND

A conference of the cycle devoted to the history of the press in Great Poland was organised by the Institute of Political Sciences and Journalism at the Social Sciences Department of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań on February 27, 1998. A volume containing full versions of the papers read during the conference was obtainable during the debates (*Z dziejów prasy wielkopolskiej XIX–XX wieku (A History of Great Poland's Press in the 19th and 20th Centuries)*, collective work ed. by Marcell Kosman, vol. IV, Poznań 1998, 197 pp.).

These cyclic conference present the results of many years of studies. They are to help produce a general outline of the history of the press in the region of Great Poland. For a historian the appearance of the press meant access to a wealth of information, previously scattered and fragmentary, though the value of this information naturally varied. The press gives the basic material for studies on propaganda and political culture. The planned outline of Great Poland's press history will be no less important than such compendia as *The History of Great Poland* (Poznań 1969–1973, two extensive volumes brought up to 1918), *Science in Great Poland in the Past and Today* (Poznań 1973) and *Great Poland's Biographic Dictionary* (Poznań 1981). Questions concerning the press are also discussed in monographs dealing with Great Poland's main towns, in particular Poznań (4 volumes brought up to 1939), Gniezno and Kalisz. But the subject still requires thorough research into sources.

The programme of this research was presented at the first symposium of the cycle, which took place in the historic Lubrański hall (Small Assembly Hall) of Poznań University on December 8 and 9, 1994. The lecturers presented the sources they had examined (e.g. the Poznań archives concerning the history of the press), the trends reflected in the press during the period of partitions, various issues raised by them in their studies, e.g. the way Russian questions and the personage of Józef Piłsudski were dealt with in the most popular dailies, and the significance of the studies for research into the history of the region. The materials from this conference are contained in volume I of *Z dziejów prasy wielkopolskiej (A History of Great Poland's Press)*, Poznań 1994, 190 pp.).

The materials in the second volume (II, 1995, 164 pp.) concern the role played by the press in the integration of Polish territories during the period of Poland's captivity (1795–1918), after the rebirth of Poland and during the recent period of post-1989 changes (including disintegrating effects). Volume III, 1996, 214 pp. contains studies on links between the press and literature; it was prepared to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Poznań branch of the Polish Writers' Union. The articles in volume III discuss the reception of the works of the eminent novelist Henryk Sienkiewicz, Nobel prize winner, in the Poznań press during the period of partitions; they also present the literary weeklies published in Poznań, the opinions expressed in the press and satirical papers on Great Poland's journalists, writers and literary experts. The volume opens with an encyclopaedic outline of the history of Great Poland's press from 1794 to 1939.

Nine papers were read at the latest conference. These were: Halina Turowska's (Kalisz) *The Weekly "Kaliszanin" as a Source for Research into the Life of Polish Provinces in 1870–1873*; Bogumiła Kosman's (Bydgoszcz–Poznań) *The Ties Linking Ignacy Kraszewski (1812–1887) with Great Poland's Press. Program for a Monograph*; Jerzy Konieczny's (Bydgoszcz) *Poznań's "Tygodnik Polski" (1904–1905). A Forgotten Press Initiative of the Polish League in Prussian Poland*; Marcell Kosman's (Poznań) *Celebrations in Honour of Henryk Sienkiewicz in 1916 and 1924 in the Accounts of Poznań's Press*; Władysław Gill's (Poznań) *The*

Local Press of Krotoszyn 1919–1939 as a Source to the History of the Town and Region; Zaneta Polowczyk's (Poznań) *The Question of the Wilno Region in "Kurier Poznański" in 1918–1922*; Joanna Wojciech's (Wrocław) *The Silesian Rising in Great Poland's Press in the Light of "Kurier Poznański"*; Jacek Sobczak's (Poznań) *The 1927 Concordat between the Apostolic See and the Lithuanian Republic in the Opinion of the Polish Press*; Wojciech Adamczyk's (Łódź–Poznań) *The Development of Local and Sublocal Media in Poland after 1989*.

Volume IV of the *History of Great Poland's Press* has been dedicated to the prominent researcher of 20th century press, Jan Załubski, on his 65th birthday. The next conference of the cycle is planned to be held in the middle of 1999, and after 2000 readers should receive a general outline of the history of the press in Great Poland, a region which was the cradle of the Polish state and which played an important role in all Poland's history.

Marcell Kosman

CRISES IN POLISH–RUSSIAN RELATIONS DURING THE EARLY MODERN ERA

An International scientific session on *Crisis in Polish–Russian Relations from the Sixteenth to the End of Eighteenth Century* was held on 19–20 October 1998 at the Institute of History at the Polish Academy of Sciences. The texts of the presented eleven papers and three communiqués, dealing with select problems from the history of relations between the Commonwealth of the gentry and the tsarist state, were frequently based on earlier unused sources, both from Russian and Polish archives.

The first day of the debates started with a presentation of a paper by Margerita E. Bychkova (Moscow) on the mutual impact of the cultures of both states during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The author describes the role played by Poland as an intermediary in the assimilation of Western European culture by Muscovy, and the shaping of the image of Russia in the West. Much attention is paid to the visit of tsar Alexy Mikhailovitch in Vilno in 1655. In the opinion of the author, this was a period of intensive influence exerted by Polish culture upon Russian elites and, simultaneously, a time which intensified the convictions harboured by the tsar about the peril encroaching from the West. The ensuing discussion drew attention to the fact that the author failed to mention other routes of the transmission of Western culture to Russia (Gdańsk, Livonia) as well as neglected the political and military circumstances of the tsar's stay in the Commonwealth.

Hieronim Grala (Warsaw) read a paper entitled *Panowie rada i bojarzy dumscy między wojną a pokojem. Poglądy elit na charakter wojen polsko–moskiewskich w XVI w.* (*The Lords of the Council and the Boyars of the Duma in the Period between War and Peace. Views of the Elites on the Character of Polish–Muscovy Wars in the Sixteenth Century*). In a proposed thesis about similarities between the Lithuanian and Muscovy political class, the author outlines the view held by those elites about the reasons for constant conflicts between Vilno and Muscovy. Reflecting on the possibilities of avoiding such conflicts, Grala indicates assorted sources of pacifistic attitudes on both sides of the border. He also devotes considerable attention to propaganda intent on justifying the rights of Muscovy to Lithuanian lands. The summary stresses, i.a. the significance of the unions of Lublin and Brześć for the intensification of differences between those elites, which previously understood each other so well.

In *Ivan Grozny v trudakh polskikh istorikov XVI v.* (*Ivan the Terrible in the Works of Polish Sixteenth-century Historians*) Inna P. Starostina (Moscow) considers predominantly the origin and contents of *Sprawy wielkiego księcia moskiewskiego* (*Affairs of the Grand Duke of Muscovy*). The following author — Aleksander V. Vinogradov (Moscow) — discusses diplomatic relations be-

tween the Commonwealth and Russia together with Crimea, as well as the mutual conflicts of the interests pursued by the two states.

The paper by Nikolai M. Rogozhin (Moscow) and Dmitriy V. Lisaytsev (Moscow), entitled *Poyavleniye novikh traditsiy v russkoy diplomatii nachala XVII v. (The Emergence of New Traditions in Russian Diplomacy at the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century)*, portrays changes in the diplomatic praxis of the tsarist state and its new trends, with particular emphasis on the *Smuta*.

Relations between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and, subsequently, the Commonwealth and Russia are examined in a paper by Zbigniew Wójcik (Warsaw): *Na przełomie stosunków Polski z państwem moskiewskim (początek XVII – schyłek XVII w.) (At the Turn of Relations between Poland and the State of Muscovy. Beginning of the Seventeenth Century – End of the Seventeenth Century)*. The author demonstrates the reasons for the growing significance of Muscovy and the accompanying decline of the Commonwealth. Participants of the discussion accentuated that the elements of an expanded bureaucracy (*prikazi*), to which the author ascribed considerable importance for the consolidation of Russia during the seventeenth century, appeared already during the sixteenth century; they also indicated the emphasis placed on the role of the precentors, and the insufficiently stressed significance of the *dvorianstvo*. In the paper: *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie a Moskwa — początek XVII w. (The Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Moscow — Beginning of the Seventeenth Century)* Henryk Wisner (Warsaw) outlines political relations between the two states, with a detailed examination of the candidate of the tsar to the Polish throne in 1587 and the involvement of the Lithuanian elite in the *Smuta*.

The second day of the session was commenced by a lecture by Janusz Kaczmarczyk (Cracow), entitled *Moskwa a kozaczyzna zaporoska w latach 1648–1658 (Moscow and the Zaporozhe Cossacks in 1648–1658)*. The author presents the outcome of studies on the reasons for the subjugation of the Cossacks to the impact and, consequently, direct rule of Russia. The following paper by Andrzej Rachuba (Warsaw) pertains to negotiations conducted in Niemierza in 1656. Arkady Komisarienko (Moscow) spoke about the influence of the secularisation of Church property, carried out in Russia by Catherine II, upon the internal situation of the state.

The successive four studies concern Polish–Russian relations during the eighteenth century. Urszula Kosinińska (Warsaw) based her communiqué: *Rosja wobec sejmu 1720 r. (Russia and the Sejm of 1720)* on the correspondence of ambassador Grigory Dolgorukov in order to show the background of the Russian stifling of the ratification of the treaty of Vienna by Poland in 1719. The reign of King Stanislas August Poniatowski is the topic of two other communiqués: Dorota Dukwicz (Warsaw) discusses *Stackelberg wobec króla Stanisława Augusta w przededniu sejmu rozbiorowego 1773–1775 (Stackelberg and King Stanislas August on the Eve of the Partition Sejm of 1773–1775)* and Ewa Zielińska (Warsaw), *Stackelberg w perspektywie sejmu 1782 r. (Stackelberg against the Background of the Sejm of 1782)*. Zofia Zielińska wrote *Stackelberg między Stanisławem Augustem a polityką Petersburga (Stackelberg between Stanislas August and the Policy of St. Petersburg)*. The last three papers deal with the period from the Sejm of 1773–1775 to the Four Year Sejm, and focus on the evolution of the attitude of Stackelberg towards King Stanislas August as well incessant Russian resistance against any attempts at reforms, even extremely limited, within the Commonwealth. According to Boris Nosov (Moscow), one of the participants in the discussion, this stance contributed to the emergence and consolidation of the inimical and, in the wake of the partitions, hostile attitude of the majority of Polish society towards Russia.

Ewa Zielińska