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The Evolution of Cosmopolitan Attitudes in Polish Musical Culture of the Twentieth Century

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This paper aims to examine the varieties of programmes for expanding Polish musical culture beyond Poland's boundaries in the twentieth century. These programmes were based on specific ideas about the place of Polish culture within Europe, and these, in turn, were shaped by discussions involving long periods and generations of participants. They were committed to defining the ideological foundations of these programmes, as well as to planning or investigating their practical premisses. To start with, I would like to explain why, out of the rich selection of terms used in the last two hundred years to indicate expansionist tendencies in cultures, such as expansionism, Europeanism, supranationalism, suprapatriotism, I have chosen the somewhat dated and seemingly pejoratively laden word "cosmopolitanism", associated in common usage with lack of patriotism and a submissive imitation of Western cultural models. One should recall here that this kind of approach, which characterized the ideas prevalent in Polish Enlightenment, was very persistent even later, and, in the nineteenth century, became on a number of occasions a weapon in the discussions about the desired shape of Polish culture, as for instance when Seweryn Goszczyński used it in a total condemnation of the works of Fredro which, according to him, were of little use to the nation.

The pejorative understanding of the term "cosmopolitanism" lasted until the beginning of the twentieth century. The entry for "cosmopolitanism" in Samuel Orgelbrand's *Encyklopedia powszechna* provides us with a model ex-

ample of the general understanding of this term as the opposite of patriotism. It reads: "Cosmopolitanism means a feeling of love for the whole of humanity, and not for a single nation. It is thus wider than patriotism, but should not exclude it". This is followed by a discussion of the conditions under which the cosmopolitan attitude is a noble one, in line with the thesis of a natural law of "looking after those closest to one first". If this condition is not met, cosmopolitanism becomes, according to the author of the entry, "a reprehensible sentiment or theory".

However, by the end of the nineteenth century, there begins a trend in Polish scientific literature and journalism towards using the word "cosmopolitanism" without the nationalist complex coming into play, and even towards contrasting its connotations positively with patriotism. This approach was taken by some of the most prominent positivist writers: Bolesław Prus, who suggested that it was necessary to civilize "wild" patriotism by contact with the high culture of the whole of humanity[1], Aleksander Świętochowski who, in a study in 1882, made "progress of one's own culture" dependent on "the possibility of participating in general civilization", and put this even above aspiring to independence[2], and Eliza Orzeszkowa, who, in an excellent paper entitled *Patriotyzm i kosmopolityzm* in 1879 sketched a vision of a cosmopolitan Europe, founded on the awareness of "the equality of all nations in the face of truth, knowledge about it, labour, and free use of its fruits"[3].

The positivist concept of "good" cosmopolitanism, based on accepting the principle of participation in the development of civilization as a means and a condition of preserving national existence[4], fits in well with the use of the term "cosmopolitanism" in Western European thought which was contemporary to positivism. Nineteenth-century Western understanding of cosmopolitanism refers simply to the coexistence of many nationalities or national features. In France, in the 1880s, the intense and growing fascination for literatures younger than the Western ones (Russian , Scandinavian, Belgian, Slavic) and regarded as "alien", was referred to as "literary cosmopolitanism". Paris and London were described as cosmopolitan centres, as they provided a refuge for a mosaic of nationalities from the South, the North and the East. Western cultural thought of the nineteenth century does not have the categorical oppo-

sition between cosmopolitanism and patriotism. Such entries do not appear in subject encyclopaedias or lexicons devoted to culture. La Mara (Maria Lipsius), who conscientiously recorded linguistic customs of German literature at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in her book about Liszt describes one of her heroines, Maria Kalergis, as a "cosmopolitan", referring to her mixed racial origin and her character[5]. However, her popular collection *Gedanken berühmter Musiker über ihre Kunst*, from 1873, has no chapters on cosmopolitanism or patriotism, while the word "nationality", used a number of times, is part of a discourse about the universal influence of musical affects (p.13, quotation from Liszt), the project for creating a universal musical language (p. 144, quotation from Gluck, p. 193, quotation from Ambrose) , or reflection on the theory of national styles, interpreted in a manner common in the nineteenth century (p. 190, quotation from Wagner, p. 204, quotation from Mendelssohn).

It is now time to explain why I attempt to introduce the concept of cosmopolitanism into the discussion of the programmes and diagnoses relating to Polish musical culture of the twentieth century. Clearly, it is not sufficient to do so just as a reminder that it used to be a constant element of the language of cultural discussions in the period of interest to me: it would be difficult to demonstrate that the effectiveness of analysis of the content of what is said in a discussion depends on whether we conduct it in the language of the participants. Let us say then that my plan stems from a conviction that it is necessary to use with greater care than has been the case so far, a term which has for some time now been the leading concept in our native discussions about the position of Polish musical culture. This is the concept of universalism, which now functions as the counterbalance of nationalism.

Universalism used to be understood as an ethical-religious notion of society, according to which – to quote an economist from Kraków, Ferdynand Zweig, who wrote before the Second World War – "a society represents a certain spiritual whole [...] based on the solidarity of all its members and striving towards spiritual self-improvement"[6]; or it could be understood as an elitist social order based on this principle, realised in the Latin-Hellenic world and in Western Christian Middle Ages, or it could be the economic sys-

tem shaped under this social order, which respected the principle of striving for the common good in the ethical and religious sense, and which regarded spiritual matters as a higher good than material riches, and attempted to build a system for limiting one's needs and the field of activity in the name of moderation[7]. Contemporary Polish discussion about culture also uses the concept of universalism to refer to a set of tendencies or ambitions defined by the need for artists and participants of a culture to go beyond the particularism and separatism of a national culture in its traditional understanding. Moreover, the term "universalist" is applied to the attitudes and achievements of artists who represent greater breadth of interests, and this includes the totality of current ideological and practical proposals deriving from the opinion-forming cultural centres of the world.

If we apply the categories used to define the phenomena described above as generally as possible, it allows us to reconstruct the development of a culture as a complementary chain of domination of one of the two key tendencies: nationalism and "supranationalism"; it also allows us to create transitions between the two, on the principle that a given tendency may "colour" the other to different degrees (nationalism may be more or less "European" and vice versa, up to the final melding of the two elements). The great majority of authors of analyses of national and supranational culture which have been published so far have made use of these transitions. They assume precisely such a complementary treatment of native and European or world values, and promote the idea of building one's own culture both on the patriotic elements and on contact with the greatest achievements of the world/Europe. Aleksander Grzymała-Siedlecki's postulate-aphorism, formulated in 1910, offers the final conclusion of the generalised discussion about Polishness and Europeanism: "there should, as soon as possible, be the certainty: a work is great, and therefore Polish, and therefore also European. Polishness and Europeanism must stop being opposites, they must become synonyms"[8]. The following decades brought only further proposals for repeating this thesis, with many variants introduced by the ideologies of particular generations and political systems.

The flaw in the view of universalism or Europeanism of Polish culture, formulated both in the quoted postulate and its initial formulations from the

beginning of the nineteenth century, is that its perspective on the totality, the whole, is a perspective on a myth, and not a historical fact. Constructing a myth of a whole in order to use it as a counterweight to particularism robs the discussion about the position of a native culture on the global map of concrete content, while its key words become mere labels covering an unidentified "product", which often turns out to be a fake. In order to be able to answer the question: what is a national culture in relation to European or world culture, one should first investigate the historical content of the concepts of universalism and Europeanism, and recognize their limitedness and changeability. These undermine the validity of using a universal (total) perspective, which results from regarding the totality called "the world" (or Europe) as the norm for national cultures; its aim and fundamental potential, by definition of universalism, would determine the status of these cultures as actualizations of the whole.

When Orzeszkowa was writing her study of cosmopolitanism, she was familiar with the concept of historical universalism, shaped during the Middle Ages under the rule of Western christianity. However, she did not base her holistic vision of Europe on that — on the contrary, she emphasised the diversity of national realisations of christianity. As a daughter of positivism, she opted for science as a force much stronger and effective in promoting the development of general human culture than religion; she regarded it as the only fact which reflects world order. The need to oppose the vision of medieval European universalism, which levelled out (in her view, unsuccessfully) the differences between cultures, to that of "modern" cosmopolitanism had, for Orzeszkowa, a deep methodological basis: fascinated by scientism, which promoted analytical method, useful in investigating particular phenomena separated out of the wider reality as facts structured into causal chains, either objective ones or created by the investigator, she followed a route typical for the thinking of her time, here quoted from an article by Antoni Złotnicki: "in order to know the whole, one has to get to know its various parts"[9].

The above aphorism remains relevant in twentieth-century discussion about the position of national cultures on a holistic map, not so much as an objective methodological argument (the possibility of embracing the whole is today a

much more distant and less defined goal than in the days of the the fervent promoters of scientism), but as a point of departure for historically accurate observation of the course of events.

The reason for this is that national culture had never been a part of, or the opposite of, the whole, for those who created programmes for its development, regardless of whether they were proponents or opponents of universalism. It was an element of a complicated system, with selectivity and hierarchical structuring — both opposites of the whole — as superordinate features.

The necessity of selecting, and then identifying with a particular part of the whole, resulted at first from the awareness of the complexity of the actual national interests overlaying the existing political structures. An excellent example of this state of affairs is provided by pre-partition and post-partition Poland, which represented a type of expansionism far removed from the mythologised universalism, but was close to cosmopolitanism as a system capable of reacting to political nuances. These nuances included the need to safeguard one's own separate identity by seeking alliances beyond the camp of the states participating in the partitions; furthermore, the necessity of meeting the challenge of the peculiar geopolitical position in the great "tectonic ridge" between the traditionally understood and accepted Latin Europe, and Russia, which, even if at times ostentatiously aligning with the West (its civilization or aristocracy), remained Asiatic. Maps of European culture, drawn by analysts of Polish culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, took into account the depth of the "ridge" which divided European West from the East, and its influence on the climate in the other parts of the continent. In the view of Polish observers, this climate was cooled by a number of imperialist doctrines being formulated in nineteenth-century Russia, headed by the ideas of Mikhail Danilevski who, in his work *Russia and Europe* presented a vision of the future domination of a Slav empire unified under the Russian sceptre over a Romano-Germanic civilization. The greater the perceived threat from the imperial ambitions of the tsars, the more intense were the attempts of the Poles to have their claims of belonging to the "real" West recognized by that West.

Awareness of the uniqueness of the native culture and its place in Europe

was also shaped through the pressure of knowledge of how Europe perceived Poland's place within its organism. This, as we know, was the awkward position of being the "middle", where variously perceived proportions of Western and Eastern influences were intermixed. Many important diagnoses formulated by German-language authors judged the latter to be predominant. It is enough to refer here to the fragments of the memoirs of Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, where Warsaw is described as a typical Byzantine city, full of contrast and bazaar hubbub, or the monograph on Chopin by Liszt, who on a number of occasions draws comparisons between Polish and Arab cultures and customs. The "oriental nature" of Polish culture, intuited by Western authors, made it in their view similar to Russia. Russia, as we know, was regarded by them as outside Europe, together with the Balkans, Romania and Bulgaria — countries whose links with Latin and Christian roots were weak. In the eyes of the West, Russia was an alien and a young culture; Oswald Spengler claimed to have witnessed its birth to independent existence, describing in his *Twilight of the West* its cultural distinctiveness, using the image of the passive Russian soul, suffering from a lack of the "Faustian" impulse to expansion and to building a living space for itself; a soul which "tries to lose itself — anonymously, submissively — in a horizontal world of brotherhood"[10].

The concept of the "real" West, which made the creators and observers of the development of Polish culture favour "limited universalism" (this terminological paradox appears in many works in the area of cultural geography still today, thereby demonstrating the limited applicability of the term "universalism"), did not, in the nineteenth century, include either Russia or the other predatory conqueror — Prussia. The Europe of the positivists consisted mainly of Paris and London; it was a Europe of the Czartoryski clan, who, at their court in Puławy were building a model (obligatory in the nineteenth century) of understanding the features and obligations of national culture which programmatically excluded Russia from its boundary. The library collection at the Gothic House at Puławy did not contain a collection of Russian literature, in spite of the fact that Prince Adam Czartoryski had spent a long time in St Petersburg[11]. During the second half of the nineteenth century, resis-

tance against contacts with the partitioning states was a permanent feature of the social-political programme, and continuing nurture of spiritual ties to the "old" West as a way of preserving national identity was its significant part. The "old" West was now identified as the area within the boundaries close to those of the nineteenth-century grand tours — journeys undertaken by Poles to breathe in the air of the civilized world and to learn to identify with it. Europe thus included Dresden, Munich, Vienna, Paris, London, Venice, Rome, Naples, sometimes Zurich, Genevea or Madrid. However, within the framework of a grand tour one did not visit Russian, Balkan or Greek cities. Bohemian lands were only travelled through, with cursory observations about the character of their inhabitants and culture.

This system began to change after the 1905–1907 revolution. As a result of the weakening of the Russian state and the simultaneous intensification of democratic tendencies, Poles became increasingly interested in the possibility of establishing contacts with countries of Central-Eastern Europe. They were referred to symbolically as Slavdom, although they also included non-Slavic countres: Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. The beginnings of independent cultural contacts with those countries came from the grass-root initiatives of social activists, writers, journalists, who independently established contacts and put into motion cultural exchanges. The original fora for "Slav" contacts were very often provided by women's organisations, on principle interested in helping those poorer than themselves, and Slav relatives were regarded as such in Poland. The Slav movement before the First World War obviously found support in the political ideologies of that time, and these, by necessity, had to take into account the protection which the erstwhile hegemons: Russia, Austria or Germany, could give to the independent activities of Europe's "lesser brethren".

The political situation which arose after 1918 threw new light on the ideas about Poland and its culture's entry into Europe. The main, most widespread version of the project brought back the traditional affection for France, England and sometimes also Italy, and renewed hostility towards the previous partitioners. This hostility intensified as a result of observing the changes in the political systems of Germany and Soviet Russia, which were perceived as

being opposed to humanism and traditional values. The permanent political correspondent of *Kurier Warszawski*, Stanisław Szpotański, made the following statement, which summed up those diagnoses and discussions of European plans current in Poland between the wars and of interest to us here: "We cannot be bolsheviks or followers of Hitler; we carve our way forward according to different engineering principles, and our fellow engineers are elsewhere"[12]. By "fellow engineers" Szpotański of course meant the French. The journalist-politician had many predecessors in debates of this kind, politicians who came from the circles embracing national democracy and its sympathisers, such as for instance Władysław Jabłonowski, who published a number of essays about the spiritual kinship of Poles with the representatives of Latin-Christian West, even before 1914.

However, not all commentators found this vision convincing. The same newspaper published in 1936 an article by I. Pannenkov with the provocative title: "Does Europe exist?"

The author took the view that Europe was not the central focus of the post-war world. It lost the status of being the main, the only centre because of demographic and economic changes, as well as the fact that Latin-Christian roots were no longer the universal point of self-identification for the European community.

The article referred to here, both in its title and its content, smuggled in elements of a new geographical-cultural awareness which denied the obligatoriness of previous limits, above all those which, only recently, had been decisive in adopting the attitude, today called "colonial", by the creators and analysts of Polish culture. As we know, it is in a sense convergent with the old, "bad" cosmopolitanism. This attitude contains an element of dependence, even submissiveness, towards the opinion-making centres; it places its own interests within these centres, while demonstrating total indifference towards the aspirations of those centres which share its colonial status or, to use another term — are regarded as peripheries.

A significant part of the idea being developed in inter-war Poland, of moving away from the position of a colony, was the renewal, consolidation and expansion of the existing, still very weak, ties with the other European "colonies"

— the countries of Central and North-Eastern Europe. It had little to do with the old plan of creating a Slav empire under a Russian, Austrian or even Polish sceptre (even though there was a strong feeling of the powerful position and leading role of Poland among the countries included in the idea of expansion). The essence of inter-war aspirations in the area of establishing a network of contacts between countries was the awareness of their mutual equalisation in political and cultural interests ("Slavs can talk to each other on equal terms" – is an anonymous quotation from a reporter at the congress of the Association of Slavic Tourist Societies in Sofia in 1936[13]), followed by more active concrete initiatives ensuing from adherence to the idea of contacts. Poland's example abounds in such initiatives. They concern, most prominently, the official policy of leading musical institutions, for instance Warsaw Philharmonia, which in the 1930s organised on its premises systematic reviews of the music of the countries which shared common political interests with Poland, or simply shared the location in the area of Europe which appeared blank when looked at from the Western perspective. In 1936 the board of directors of the Philharmonia declared officially that "one of the plans of the board of directors of Warsaw Philharmonia is to provide the opportunity of at least a cursory acquaintance with the current achievements of these particular countries"[14]. The countries in question were Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Estonia, — almost the full complement of countries which used to lie "on the other side" of Europe's boundary. Organisers of pre-war musical competitions had similar aspirations, openly regarded by the public and the critics as international competitions with political significance; similar aspirations can be seen during the inter-war years in the initiatives of many other Polish institutions representing both high and popular musical culture, and those of individual artists who enthusiastically penetrated the young markets of Slavic countries, creating a new cosmopolitanism, with a different direction in relation to the traditional one, but in fact not oppositional but complementary to it. This new cosmopolitanism seemed to bode well for the future at the outbreak of the Second World War. However, political and regime changes which took place after 1945 stopped its development and, moreover, led to the question-

ing of the usefulness of maintaining contacts with countries whose cultures, in their constrained form, became again typical colonial cultures. Discussions of the postcolonial status and self-identification as cultural peripheries[15] of the cultures of Central Europe, usually refer to the consequences of captivity under totalitarianism. Maria Delaperérre, who specializes in modern Slavic literatures, points to such consequences in her study *Jak się wydobyć z partykularyzmu?* [*How to overcome particularism?*], devoted to a description of cultural pluralism born in the two decades between the wars among the representatives of literary avantgarde in the "peripheral" countries. "It could not withstand the pressure of history" – she claims, adding that the rebirth of such an attitude after the war was hampered by the fashion, persistent in the West, for actively politically committed creative work[16]. It would be difficult mechanically to extend her conclusions to cultural reality outside literature; nevertheless a reference to the pressure of history may explain a lot when it comes to the attitudes of those who create Polish musical culture today. After 1989 there has not been one single attempt to shake off post-colonialism and to reach back to the achievements of the inter-war period in the area of modernising cosmopolitan attitudes, in the sense of harnessing contacts with the old and new neighbours in creating an image of culture and plans for its development. Eloquent evidence of this is provided by the policies of festivals of contemporary music being organised in Poland. The leader in the field in this respect is the "Warsaw Autumn" festival, whose decision-makers declared some years ago the need to "reach down" to the contemporary "lesser brethren" of musical culture, but limited themselves to penetrating Scandinavian countries, which today are generally perceived as belonging to the "old" West. The cosmopolitanism of modern Polish musical culture is not very different from the nineteenth-century cosmopolitanism, althought the premisses for choosing the contact points have changed — from political to economic. The Europe of a musical Pole is the Europe in which flourish the refined programmes of Beethoven Easter Festival, arranged according to the prescriptions of pre-war German concert guides. To what extent are they, and can they be, the "universal" guides for us? The answer to this question cannot be another easily-made declaration. It demands new directions in research,

which would create the opportunity of bringing back to the general awareness the relevant events from the more and less distant past, among them those discussed in this paper.

Notes

1 Bolesław Prus, *Kronika Tygodniowa* [*Weekly Chronicle*] [1897] Quoted after: *Publicystyka okresu pozytywizmu 1860-1900. Antologia* [*Publicism of the Positivism Era 1860-1900. Anthology*], ed. Stanisław Fita. Warszawa 2002, p. 202.
2 Aleksander Świętochowski, *Wskazania polityczne* [*Politic Indications*] [1882]. Quoted as above, p. 191.
3 Eliza Orzeszkowa, *Patriotyzm i kosmopolityzm. Studium społeczne* [*Patriotism and Cosmopolitism. Social Study*], Warszawa 1879, p. 123.
4 Orzeszkowa's framework includes also "bad" cosmopolitanism, to which she refers as "antipatriotism", and which she associates, very innovatively, with, among other things, "the distancing of members of society from taking on public roles and tasks" (as above, p. 230).
5 La Mara [Maria Lipsius], *Liszt und die Frauen*, Leipzig 1919, p. 145.
6 Ferdynand Zweig, *Cztery systemy ekonomii. Uniwersalizm – nacjonalizm – liberalizm – socjalizm* [*Four Systems of Economics. Universalism – Nationalism – Liberalism – Socialism*], Kraków 1932, p. 50.
7 See Ferdynand Zweig, *Cztery systemy...* [*Four Systems...*], op. cit., pp. 51–54.
8 Adam Grzymała-Siedlecki, 'Polskość i europeizm' ['The Polish Character and Europeanism'], *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 1910 No. 13, p. 248.
9 Antoni Złotnicki, *Człowiek, istota jego i przyszłość* [*The Man, his Being and Future*], Warszawa 1902. Quoted after: Barbara Skarga, *Porządek świata i porządek wiedzy* [*The Order of the World and the Order of the Knowledge*], in: *Z historii filozofii pozytywistycznej w Polsce. Ciągłość i przemiany* [*Some Problems of the History of Positivism Philosophy in Poland. Continuousness and Changes*], eds. Anna Hochfeldowa and Barbara Skarga. Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1972, p. 29.
10 Oswald Spengler, *Zmierzch Zachodu* [*The Decline of the West*], transl. Józef Marzęcki. Warszawa 2001, p. 193.
11 See: Alina Aleksandrowicz, *Izabela Czartoryska polskość i europejskość* [*Izabela Czartoryska — the Polish Character and European Character*], Lublin 1998, pp. 22–23.
12 Stanisław Szpotański, 'Polska w świecie łacińskim' ['Poland in the Latin World'], *Kurier Warszawski* 1935 No. 122.
13 'IX Kongres Związku Słowiańskich Towarzystw Turystycznych' ['The 9th Congress of the Union of Slavs Tourist Societies'], *Kurier Warszawski* 1936 No. 253.
14 Bis [[Leopold Binental?], 'Z muzyki' ['Some Music Problems'], *Kurier Warszawski* 1936 No. 338 (the excerpt quoted is a quotation from *Przewodnik Koncertowy* [*Concert Guide*] published by the Filharmonia).
15 See Maria Delaperiérre, *Dialog z dystansu* [*Dialogue from Distance*], Kraków, p. 226.
16 Ibid., p. 228.