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FOREIGNERS IN POLAND IN THE 10TH-15TH CENTURIES: THEIR ROLE IN THE OPINION OF POLISH MEDIEVAL COMMUNITY

The autor has discussed two periods in the history of the attitude of medieval Poles towards the foreigners, and namely: 1. untill the mid-13th century, when foreigners were treated as desired carriers of new ideas and patterns; 2. untill the end of 15th century, when the intensive affluence of them, mostly Germans, began to cause unfavourable attitude towards the competitors speaking in foreign languages.

1. "A kingdom in which one language and one custom rule is weak and frail" — this sentence can be found among the maxims recommended to rulers in the 12th century.¹ In this case the quotation does not come from a Polish source; it was written in a neighbouring country which was developing in similar conditions. It comes from a collection of teachings meant for a young ruler — a rather popular literature in that epoch — ascribed to the Hungarian King St. Stephen who was said to have written it for his son St. Emerik. But the author is not important

¹ *Libellus de institutione morum*, ed. by J. Balogh, *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, vol. II, Budapestini 1938, pp. 624. The true authorship and the date of the document are disputable but the author himself was most certainly a foreigner.

in this case as the collection contains platitudes common in those times, e.g. that a ruler must be loyal to the Catholic faith, see to it that the clergy enjoy due prestige and be properly provided for, that he ought to be just, kind, and to take care of the weak and poor, etc. In this context remarks about foreigners assume particular importance as they are not an expression of the author's views but reflect "*communis opinio*" of court circles in central Europe at least.

The author argues that foreigners are most useful for any country because they bring with them not only different languages and customs but also "*diversa documenta et arma*" or, as we would say today — foreign achievements in culture and technique. The novelties brought in by foreigners, the author contends, "are an adornment of all kingdoms, add splendour to courts and check the aggressiveness of neighbours." The greatness of ancient Rome stemmed from the fact that it attracted the cleverest and noblest people from the entire world.

So, we see here propagation of the policy of wide-open gates for foreign gains in technique and civilization, a feature common to societies and states which suddenly entered new paths of development.

2. In Poland the attitude towards foreigners was very much the same. Among the few mentioned in old documents, who surrounded the first kings of the Piast dynasty, foreigners formed unquestionably the most numerous group. They were showered with favours by the rulers for the great services they rendered them: bishops — Jordan, Unger, Poppo, and Reinbern, coming from various parts of Germany; monks — John, Benedict, Barnaba, Anthony — all of them from Italy. The country which they come from shows at the same time the main directions of cultural influence. I deliberately do not mention here numerous Czech immigrants for they could be hardly considered foreigners so long as the dispute between the Piasts and the Premyslids round the hegemony over the western Slavs was not settled and the borders were fluid not only between the two future fraternal nations but between states, as well.

Certainly, not only foreign priests were welcomed at the courts

of Polish kings at that time. In his chronicle Gall the Anonymous writes in a separate passage how Bolesław the Brave used to invite foreign knights to his court. "If a gallant stranger won his heart in the knightly service he would be no longer called a knight but a royal son; and if the king happened to hear that some of them did not fare well — then he would lavish on him endless gifts."² We know about such knights in Bolesław's service from the chronicles of Thietmar, the king's contemporary: a German, Erik called Proud, taken prisoner by his countrymen during Polish-German wars, was stocked and presumably spent several years in a dungeon in his native country but later returned to Poland to fall at Bolesław's side during the Kiev campaign in 1018.³ Other foreigners at the court of Bolesław the Brave served their master with true devotion: many of them were even put to prison as king's envoys and bishop Reinbern died in a dungeon at the court of the prince of Kiev.⁴

The marriages of Piasts with non-Polish princesses bound the dynasty with political and cultural centres abroad and promoted the inflow of foreigners to Poland. These unions became particularly valuable when the state and church machinery had to be reconstructed after the disasters of the thirties in the 11th century. Contacts with western and southern lands of the German Empire were increasingly closer, leaving numerous traces on Polish soil. They could be seen not only in the names of abbots of the oldest Polish monasteries, also numerous liturgical manuscripts in our libraries are of German origin. Along with Germans, representatives of other countries arrived in Poland: Walloons, Frenchmen and Italians; contacts were established with Provence (Saint Gilles), and in the 12th century the first Spaniard appeared in Poland. Among those foreigners a special mention is due to those

² *Galli Anonymi Cronica et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum I*, 16, ed. by K. Maleczyński, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (later referred to as *MPH*), Nova Series, vol. II, Kraków 1952, Polish translation by R. Grodecki, *Anonim tzw. Gall. Kronika Polska*, [*Anonymus called Gall, Polish Chronicle*], Wrocław 1965, (later referred as Gall).

³ *Kronika Thietmara [Chronicle by Thietmar]* ed. by M. Z. Jedlicki, Poznań 1963, p. 16, and p. 31.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 72.

people who laid merits to the Polish statehood and Polish culture. Alongside German Otto of Bamberg and the Walloon brothers. Alexander and Walter of Malonne, we have to mention the man whose name remained unknown and origin uncertain — chronicler Gall the Anonymous. The foreigners we are writing about were clergymen and knights because these people were mentioned in the first place in old chronicles and documents. We do not know the names of architects or artisans who were often great artists in their trade and rendered much greater services to Polish culture than sometimes many a soldier or bishop. Even experts in growing vine-plants were coming to Poland — one of them, a Barbez, went down into history as his name is mentioned in one of princely documents from the 12th century.

With the help of such men Latin civilization was spreading ever wider in Poland to produce here works which even today arouse our admiration. Representatives of the ruling class were acquiring European polish and, in some went cases, quite impressive level of education as some of them abroad to study. Bishop of Cracow Mateusz, Archbishop of Gniezno Janik, the Silesian lord Piotr Włostowic were acknowledged celebrities by their contemporaries: and in the next generation master Wincenty known as Kadłubek wrote a historical-political treaty marked by brilliant erudition at the root of which lay his Paris studies, and nearby trends of the so-called renaissance of the 12th century.

Though the number of Poles possessing indispensable education to hold high church posts was growing the inflow of foreigners did not slow down and they were heartily welcomed at the courts of Polish princes who were ever more numerous in Poland since the 12th century. Foreigners were wanted not only for the novelties they brought in or their elegant manners: the princes whose power was weakening saw in the newcomers from abroad assistants in the struggle with local increasingly powerful magnates. Since the times of Sieciech and Skarbimir, Piotr Włostowic and Wszebor, the princes were giving up their prerogatives, one after another, to the benefit of lords: an advocate of the latter master Wincenty contended at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries that princes should be elected and “people” — that is the nobility — must have the right to bring down the ruler if

he abuses his prerogatives. Wincenty Kadłubek was also the first who used the name *Respublica* when referring to the Polish state. In reward for their support a prince was compelled to give high posts, lands and privileges to the nobles who helped him to ascend the throne, while new dignitaries who came to power deemed it their duty to share the benefits they were enjoying with their close and even more distant prince. The same situation was in the church where bishops descending from the nobility were surrounded by relatives who wanted to have their share in the revenues from the cathedral.

In these circumstances every prince who sought to strengthen his power tried to free himself from the influence of old lords, families by promoting new people who owed everything to their protector especially when they were gifted men and surpassed their powerful rivals in skills and knowledge. Foreigners who knew the world, new techniques and foreign customs, ranked highest among the "newcomers." Such motives are frequently mentioned in old documents to justify the promotion of foreigners by princes: the Czech prince, Bretislav II, who made a German, Herman, the bishop of Prague, says (according to chronicler Kosmas): "Since he is a foreigner he will be more useful to the Church; whatever or fromever he acquires, the family will not make him poorer, he will not have to think about his children, a throng of relatives will not rob him."⁵

But this attitude of the rulers towards foreigners was bound to provoke displeasure of the people against whom this policy was directed. Most powerful among the lords used the good services of foreigners themselves and were glad to have them at their courts, to mention at least the already known Piotr Włostowic.⁶ But those who hoped to make a career at the princes court

⁵ Kosmas, III (*Die Chronik der Böhmen des Cosmas von Prag*, ed. by B. Bretholz, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Scriptores, Nova Series vol. II, Berlin 1923, Polish translation by M. Wojciechowska, *Kosmasa Kronika Czechów [Kosma's Chronicle of Czechs]*, Warszawa 1968).

⁶ His closest confidant was the French or Walloon knight by name of Roger, mentioned in the *Kronika o Piotrze Właście [Chronicle about Piotr Włost]*, unquestionably an authentic person after whom the village of Rozerowo was named. See *MPH* vol. III, p. 773.

were deeply disappointed when the posts they dreamed about went to foreign "vagabonds." Most strong aversion towards foreigners was felt by Polish clergymen as the former filled most of the bishops' and abbots' posts in the 12th century. And it is there that xenophobia began to take roots already at that time.

Of course there is a difference between this strongly motivated xenophobia and the natural mixed feeling of curiosity and distrust which most peoples feel towards foreigners. The latter often turns into a hatred when the indigenous population is wronged by the people speaking a foreign language. Harms suffered from a foreigner are usually more painful, as if by the very fact that somebody speaks the same language as we do he has a greater right to do us harm. Even if a foreigner speaks the language of the country he came to, but his accent slightly differs it is enough to arouse mistrust. In the 12th century every Pole could well understand a Czech but prolonged wars sowed enmity between them stronger even than between Poles and Germans.⁷ Still stronger conflicts were provoked by religious differences between Poles and Pomeranians⁸.

Thus, the feeling of strangeness may be easily transformed into animosity or even hatred if there are motives behind them or slogans stepping up the hatred. There could be hardly noted any

⁷ Gall I, 18, considers Czechs the worst enemies of Poles, see also Kosmas's opinions about Poles (e.g., III, 20) or B. Krzemieńska, *Polska i Polacy w opinii czeskiego kronikarza Kosmasa* [Poland and Poles in the Opinion of the Czech Chronicler Kosmas], "Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego," series I, No. 15, 1960, pp. 75 - 95, as well as J. Miłkowska, *Letopisná literatura v Cechách a v Polsku o vzájemné poměru obu národností* [Chronicles in Bohemia and Poland on Mutual Relations between the Two Nationalities], "Slavia," vol. XXXII, 1963, pp. 481 - 513.

⁸ A. F. Grabski, *Polska wobec idei wypraw krzyżowych na przełomie XI i XII w.* "Duch krzyżowy" Galla Anonima [Poland and the Ideas of Crusades at the turn of the 11th and 12th Centuries. "The Crusading Spirit" of Galla the Anonymous], "Zapiski Historyczne," vol. XXVI, 1961, pp. 37 - 64, especially 54; B. Zientara, *Polityczne i kościelne związki Pomorza Zachodniego z Polską za Bolesława Krzywoustego* [Political and Church Ties of Western Pomerania with Poland at the Times of Bolesław the Wrymouth], "Przegląd Historyczny", vol. LXI, 1970, pp. 192 - 228, especially 198.

permanent hatred towards foreigners in the Middle Ages among Polish lower classes. Sporadic instances occurred which led locally to bloody clashes, but this happened only when a foreigner proved to be a plunderer or oppressor, or if leaders of the people — clergymen and knights — succeeded to put the blame for the existing unbearable situation upon the foreigners. Originally ordinary people had no contacts with foreigners — apart from armed attacks by enemies — unless they were prisoners of war or captives brought from victorious campaigns of the prince. But these people could be hardly envied and therefore there was no reason to dislike them.

3. The situation changed when German colonists started arriving in Poland — the first foreign plebeians who were coming in large number to the country and to towns, but they were privileged plebeians. But even then there were no widespread conflicts. The rulers and lords tried to isolate the newcomers from the local population. German peasants were settled mostly on unworked lands. An example of segregation on other territories is the location privilege granted to Cracow, in which the prince forbids to admit Poles to that town.⁹ The reason for that policy lied in the fact that local population bore the main burden of maintaining the court and naturally the latter did not want to give them privileges enjoyed by the colonists. But these attempts proved vain: the Polish people responded not with the hatred against the newcomers but with a growing pressure upon feudal lords for extending “the German law” to all inhabitants. Thus, instead of a privileged group of foreign colonists a reform of the whole system in the countryside had to be introduced, laying foundation under a uniform class of peasantry. Isolation did not last long either.

Beginning with the 13th century the problem of foreigners in Poland was limited to the of Germans in Poland. This was caused by the sweeply rising number of German immigrants and their tremendous influence on the future destinies of the Polish nation. Small groups of Flanders and Walloons which settled in

⁹ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny miasta Krakowa* [Diplomatic Code of the Town of Cracow], ed. by F. Piekosiński, vol. I, Kraków 1879, No I.

Silesia in the 12th century or later, were quickly absorbed by the local Polish population or by German colonists: it is not worth mentioning individual Italians and French monks, or Czech, Ruthenian and Hungarian knights who usually accompanied their princesses going to marry a Polish prince or else were political exiles. They returned to their mother country or were totally assimilated. The situation was different as far as Germans were concerned. In some areas (Sudeten mountain foot, towns in almost all parts of Poland) they were so numerous that they formed separate groups preserving their national identity, playing an important role in trade and handicraft as well as exerting an influence in the Church and courts of some of the Polish princes.

In rural and town communities relations between newcomers and local inhabitants developed smoothly at first. Mutual contacts prompted assimilation, helped foreigners to develop bonds with the new motherland and get used to local conditions. They came here to have a better life than in their own country which they had left mainly because life was difficult there; they easily got here rights and privileges for which they would have to fight throughout generations in their own country. A song of Flemish settlers about their journey to the East where life is better reflects to some extent also the feelings of German colonists, and even more so of German knights and priests. By analogy it is worth quoting perhaps the praise of the "happy country" — Bohemia — sang also by a foreigner who became later a patriot of the new home country, knight and poet Ulryk von Eschenbach in the 13th century.¹⁰

Along with the "German law", Polish peasants and artisans learned from the Germans new technical methods. The traces of that process can be seen in the names of some tools, clearly of German origin. Although they are less frequent nowadays than some fifty years ago they bear an evidence to the contribution the newcomers made in shaping the life of their new motherland. Their influence on other spheres of life was also great. Since Aleksander Brückner described them in detail, it is not necessary to dwell on

¹⁰ See B. Zientara, *Konflikty narodowościowe...*, pp. 202, 209.

the subject, but the German impact was felt in everyday life, dresses, dishes, entertainments, dances and rites.¹¹ This influence would not be possible in conditions of isolation — there had to be long and close contacts between local populations and the newcomers. That this was so can be seen from a gloss to *Kronika Wielkopolska* [The Great-Poland Chronicle] which astoundingly differs from the old stereotype understanding of Polish-German relations. It says: "There are not other nations in the world so well and friendly disposed towards one another as Slavs and Germans."¹² The same opinion seems to be confirmed in a verse preserved in the Lubiąż monastery. An ironic characteristic of various countries and peoples, the verse reads in one place though: *diversi generis homines Polonia nutrit* — Poland feeds people of various origins.¹³

We must remember also that assimilation that was one of the results of that relationship, went into both directions dependently on which of the languages proved stronger in the local environment. The process was speeded up by mixed marriages of which we have quite numerous records considering scanty source materials. The developing relations led to assimilation that went through various bilingual stages to form eventually local ties linking people of different origin not only on account of common interests but also through their emotional commitment to the district which was their common local home country. Obviously enough, this local patriotism developing most evidently in Silesia, but noticed also in other regions — though there the causes were somewhat different — did not favour centrifugal tendencies. But in spite of that the awareness of affiliation to *Regnum Poloniae* — the still vivid traditional community which revived in the second half of the 13th century — was strong also among the new residents of the Piasts state.

¹¹ A. Brückner, *Dzieje języka polskiego* [History of the Polish Language], Fourth Edition, Wrocław 1960, p. 89.

¹² Ed. by W. A. Maciejowski, *MPH*, vol. II p. 471 (Polish translation by K. Abgarowicz, *Kronika Wielkopolska* [Great-Poland Chronicle], Warszawa 1965).

¹³ *Monumenta Lubensia*, ed. by W. Wattenbach, Breslau 1861, p. 34.

4. And yet, an unbiassed observer, a French Dominican who in 1308 put down his remarks about the then situation in the states of central and eastern Europe, noted casually that there existed *naturale odium*¹⁴ between Poles and Germans. What is more, when one traces down the origin of the well-known Polish proverb: *Jak świat światem, nie będzie Niemiec Polakowi bratem* [As long as the world exists the German will never be brother to the Pole] he inevitably will come very close to the epoch under review.¹⁵ Already Stanisław Kot drew attention to similar declarations in the Czech chronicle of Dalimil from the early 14th century, though these concerned of course Czech-German relations.¹⁶ I think these feelings penetrated at that time to Poland and gave birth to the later well-known proverb which, for that matter, had many variants: in the 16th and 17th centuries it was in common use like a duplicated stereotype, reactivated in case of a new political need. But its origins must be looked for at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries in the same milieu which produced the Dalimil chronicle — among anti-German oriented knights.

It was precisely among the Polish ruling classes, the clergy and the knights, that the feeling of threat was growing throughout the 13th century, caused not by the inflow of German peasants and townspeople who were actually encouraged by representatives of Polish lay and clerical lords to settle in their estates, but by the large number of German knights and priests coming to Poland. The privileges bestowed on them by Polish princes the fact that they occupied high posts, the arrogance of the newcomers who were in favour with the rulers and showed their superiority over local old knights' families — all that aroused resentment which gradually turned into hatred.

Princes and bishops lavishing favours upon the newcomers were

¹⁴ *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, ed. by O. Górka, Cracoviae 1916, p. 56.

¹⁵ G. Labuda, *Geneza przysłowia "Jak świat światem nie będzie Niemiec Polakowi bratem"* [Origin of the Proverb "As Long as the World Exists the German will Never be Brother to the Pole"], "Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. A. Mickiewicza," *Historia*, No. 8, 1968, p. 18.

¹⁶ S. Kot, *Nationum proprietates*, in: Oxford Slavonic Papers, vol. VI, 1955, p. 25.

watched with a growing suspicion and disapproval by the local community: they went sometimes as far as to denounce loyalty to their princes surrounded by Germans; Siemomysł duke of Kuyavya of had to face for that reason repeated rebellions of his knights and in 1273 he solemnly pledged "not to maintain at his court and in his land German knights or sons of German knights."¹⁷ In the action brought by Archbishop Jakub Świnka against the Cracow bishop, Jan Muskata, the main charge repeated by all witnesses in the trial, was that "he did not promote Poles but foreigners and Germans," "bestowed benefits upon Germans and did not promote worthy Poles:" one of the witnesses even said that "he did not promote Poles who deserved it, saying they are incapable to hold responsible posts."¹⁸

The identification by some dignitaries who fell out from grace of their own outrage with an alleged contempt for their whole nation could be observed much earlier in Bohemia; a contemporary of Gall the Anonymous, Kosmas, already accuses Germans of inborn conceited haughtiness and contends: "they always held Slavs and their language in contempt."¹⁹

It is worthwhile to contemplate the latter accusation for it could not be groundless. It was made at a time when Germans coming to the courts of Slav rulers did not have to learn their language as they found there a lot of countrymen and, besides, local people knew German. For, together with technical and cultural gains, together with new customs, Polish courts took from newcomers also their language. While Latin was a common language of clergymen, the upper German language won the courts together with chivalrous habits. It was the language in which ballads about knights and love verses were sang at the courts in central Europe.²⁰ Every respectable knight had to know that language and if he did not he at least pretended he does. Al-

¹⁷ *Kronika Wielkopolska* [*The Great-Poland Chronicle*], MPH, vol. II, p. 594; *Kodeks Dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski* [*Diplomatic Code of Great Poland*], (later referred to as *KDW*), vol. I, No 482.

¹⁸ *Monumenta Poloniae Vaticana* [later: *MPVat*], vol. III, Cracoviae 1914, No 121.

¹⁹ Kosmas, I, 40.

²⁰ B. Zientara, *Konflikty narodowościowe...*, p. 205.

ready at the time of Kosmas the German language was more or less a class slang of court knights in Bohemia: when a bishop was inaugurated clergymen used to sing "*Te Deum Laudamus*," princes and lords sang the German son "*Christus keinado*," while "ordinary and uneducated people" raised a cheer "*Kierlesz*."²¹ In the 13th century Czech lords were giving German "fashionable" names to their castles, all sorts of Rosenbergs, and Falkensteins, and shortly after that Poles started to imitate them with their Olsztyns, Lanckoronas and Łañcuts. This does not mean of course that all of them were Germanized. Prince Bolesław Rogatka attempted to use German though he had difficulties with pronunciation which aroused uproarious laughter of his audiences.²²

The hatred of the rivals speaking a foreign language, that was becoming increasingly general among the Polish clergy and knights, extended as time went by to the language itself. It is interesting to watch how in the 13th century the criteria of national affiliation were changing: the loyalty to *Regnum Poloniae* and to the Piast dynasty (more and more divided) was being gradually overrun by loyalty to the Polish language: the latter was becoming a value in itself. In later years this feeling would find an expression in appeals to write in the native language but for the time being it was the main factor separating "home folks" from "strangers." The word "language" becomes the synonym of the nation. How it looked in practice we can see from protocols of witnesses testimonies made in the 13th-15th centuries during canonization procedures. *Theutonicus* — was as a rule a name given to a person using German language; in some cases it was stressed that a given person speaks solely that language: for instance, Katherine, wife of George, a shearman from Cracow, was described as "*mulier in toto Theutonica*;" Stephen, a baker from Cracow, was "*Theutonicus per omnia*;" while John, a bricklayer from Toruń, was defined as "*Pruthenus*" — a Prussian — but also "*homo utriusque idiomatis Po-*

²¹ Kosmas, I, 23.

²² *Cronica Principum Poloniae* by Piotr of Byczyca, ed. by Z. Węcłowski, MPH, vol. III, p. 497.

lonici et Theutonici." When a witness spoke two languages he was described according to the country from which he had come.²³

The language criterion used predominantly to describe one's nationality was a common feature in central Europe in the 13th - 15th centuries. After a period of some obliteration in the 15th - 18th centuries it will revive with a new strength in the 19th century in the same area.

It is worth mentioning that newcomers — when firmly established in the new motherland — remained faithful to her interests even if they spoke their native language. We have to remember, though, that the first generation of German settlers in Slav towns sympathized sometimes with German enemies of the countries they had come to live in. This could be seen, for instance, in the attitude of some west Pomeranian towns or Gdańsk towards aggressive moves of Brandenburg, as the inhabitants of those towns in majority of cases had come precisely from Brandenburg. But such instances were not so drastic as to provoke "anti-German" or "anti-burgher" feelings among rulers.

But much more numerous were examples of loyalty to princes and the country, or even of specific patriotism among people of German descent. Even Ladislaus the Short who otherwise oppressed German burghers and clergy, had his "good German," a dweller of Radziejowo by name of Giero who hid the king's wife Jadwiga when Ladislaus had to flee the country after the defeat of 1300.²⁴ During the trials of Teutonic Knights, especially the one held in Warsaw in 1339, town inhabitants with German names who were summoned as witnesses testified against the Teutonic Order.²⁵ As for tough measures Ladislaus the Short used against German patricians of Cracow, Poznań, Wieliczka and Sandomierz, they must be viewed not only in the context of nationality. In

²³ *Miracula venerabilis patris Prandothae episcopi Cracoviensis*, ed. by W. Kętrzyński, MPH, vol. IV, pp. 454, 465, 467.

²⁴ J. Bieniak, *Wielkopolska, Kujawy, ziemie Łęczycka i Sieradzka wobec problemu zjednoczenia państwowego w l. 1300 - 1306* [Great Poland, Kuyavya, Łęczyca and Sieradz Lands and the Problem of the Unification of the State in the years 1300 - 1306], Toruń 1969, p. 77.

²⁵ *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum*, Second edition, vol. I, Poznań 1890, pp. 267, 311, 318, 344, 362, 383.

Cracow the king acted undoubtedly under the pressure of local knights who strongly resented the wealth and power of town dwellers.

However, already during the rule of Leszek the Black, Cracow inhabitants put up resistance against the knights of Little-Poland and defended the prince; against the will of the same knights they backed Henry Probus and Waclaw II in their struggle for power. Besides, some knights had personal reasons for disliking German town settlers. We view today from an angle different than in the past the concept of uniting Poland and Bohemia under the rule of Premyslids, the concept fostered by a majority of knights and clergymen with Jakub Świnka in the lead; the 1311 rebellion of Cracow townsmen also must be considered not as a rising against Poland but a demonstration of support to one of the candidates to the throne, namely the one who was believed to guarantee Polish towns better chances of development.²⁶ Reprisals resorted to by Ladislaus the Short after the suppression of the Cracow rebellion later affected Wrocław's stand which — as is known — virtually decided the fate of Silesia.

5. Against the background of those interlocking class, national and language conflicts patriotic ideology was developing in the 13th century, based mainly on the tradition of the unity of the Polish state and the striving to reconstruct it. To that were added anti-German sentiments.

A document from those times sharply criticises infiltration of Germans into Poland and paints in black colours their role in this country, accentuating dramatically the ensuing danger to "*genti Polonicae*" — the Polish people. The document dated January 1285 is an appeal to cardinals of the Roman curia sent by Archbishop Jakub Świnka in protest against the separation of Silesian Franciscans (of German descent) from the Czech-Polish monastic

²⁶ J. Dowiat came out with the most resolute defence of the Czech-Polish union and the concept of the unification of Poland under the rule of Premyslids, *Polska państwem średniowiecznej Europy* [Poland a State of Medieval Europe], Warszawa 1968, p. 292, but underrated national conflicts of that period.

province and their admission to the Saxon province.²⁷ This fact, linked with the ongoing struggle between the prince of Wrocław Henry IV and bishop Thomas II, in which the Franciscans backed the prince against the bishop, was an alarm signal for the Polish clergy (whose views were expressed by the archbishop). The document adopted at the synod of Polish bishops at Łęczyca reflected all the fears caused by the infiltration of foreigners into Poland. It generalized and dramatized the situation, was full of abuses and additional arguments meant to incite mercenary instincts of the Roman curia.

Priests and monks of German origin were no longer the only people who threaten the interests of the local clergy, as Kosmas claimed, equally dangerous were German knights and peasants coming to Poland "to take villages and towns possessed until then by Poles," as well as "German Princes who seize Polish borderlands." "*Gens Theutonica*" were overrunning Poland, while "*gens Polonica*" were "oppressed and despised" by the Germans "pested by wars, deprived of their noble rights and customs, robbed of their possession in the quietness of the night." Here, noteworthy are two facts: first, the linking of the external danger to Piast duchies threatened by German neighbours with the internal expansion of German immigrants in Poland, second, the opposition of all Germans to all Poles. The language criterion is used now instead of the former nationality mark: all those who speak German, whether in Germany — *principes Theutonie* — or people living in Poland for several generations — are enemies. Hence, their language is also dangerous and hostile for the advocates of the above views. In Silesia and Kuyavya princes and some knights were still learning the fashionable "courtly" Upper German language, while another trend was already emerging and quickly spreading among the knights and the clergy. It is not so important whether knights in Little-Poland, after having suppressed the Cracow revolt (1311), did really kill everybody who could not spell correctly the words: *soczewica* (lentil), *koło* (wheel), *miele* (grinds), *mtyn*

²⁷ KDW, vol. I, No 616.

(mill); at any rate, an appropriate passage in a chronicle²⁸ indicates that such desires were cherished by some people. They were certainly giving a willing ear to their Czech neighbours who dreamed about the expulsion of all Germans after cutting off their noses first.²⁹ Such feelings were fanned by rumours and legends about Germans as a whole and about their individual representatives or Polish sympathizers: in his letter to cardinals, mentioned earlier, Jakub Świnka accuses Silesian Franciscans of an intention to transform Poland into Saxony; Włóściborz, canon from Kleparz near Cracow, claimed that bishop Jan Muskata not only hated Polish people but prevented them from promotions and was reported as saying he would rather die than give up the work he had started of destroying the Polish nation. The charge is confirmed by Klemens, a vicar of the Cracow cathedral, another priest awaiting clerical advancement, who contended that bishop Muskata wanted "*exterminare gentem Polonicam*." The gallery of biased witnesses who testified in the trial brought against Muskata by archbishop Świnka and were unanimously accusing the Cracow bishop (a Wrocławian by descent) of the desire to exterminate the Polish nation, includes also numerous fresh converts: Herbord, the dean of the Sandomierz chapter, and Teodoryk, another clergyman from Sandomierz, both doubtless thoroughly polonized by that time, made similar accusations.³⁰ Charges of this type were made against other persons, too, and they seemed to enjoy particular popularity and evoke wide social response in the first decade of the 14th century. In the Great-Poland Chronicle we find an accusation that advisers to young princes of Głogów ruling also over Great-Poland "advised them to exterminate the entire Polish nation, both clergymen and lay people, and especially the knights;"³¹ the annals of the Cracow Chapter alleged in turn that Teutonic Knights intended to "exter-

²⁸ In the so-called *Rocznik Krasińskich* [*The Krasiński Annals*], ed. by A. Bielowski, *MPH*, vol. III, p. 133.

²⁹ It is a favourable motif of the so-called *Kronika Dalimila* [*Dalimil Chronicle*], *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. III, Prague 1882, pp. 140, 153.

³⁰ *MPVat*, vol. III, No. 121.

³¹ *MPH*, vol. III, p. 41.

minate the Polish language,³² with the latter being obviously the synonym of the nation.

The comparatively few documents that survived from those times and the famous song about Cracow bailiff Albert³³ are a proof of the negative attitude towards Germans which was widespread among the clergy and the knights. The chief exponent of those sentiments was Jakub Świnka — quoted here many times — who used to call Germans “dog’s heads;”³⁴ the epithet was not of his make for that matter, for already the *Lubiąż Chronica Polonorum* from the late 13th century explained that “Poles called Germans dogs.”³⁵ Germans are also “friends of deceit,” “hidden enemies of peace,” and their inborn feature is “*furor Germanicus*.”³⁶ The saying: “As long as the world exists the German will never be brother to the Pole” was coined on the ground of those feelings.

But it would be wrong to condemn indiscriminately the advocates of such views: they formed an inseparable part of patriotism as understood in those times and stemmed from a real threat to the national existence of Poles in that crucial epoch. At such historical moments hatred of foreigners carries a far greater mobilizing force than brotherly sentiments towards countrymen; a combination of the two feelings seen in the majority of Poles at that time helped to hold on, imbued in them perseverance and encouraged to sacrifices in the struggle against home and outside enemies, for the resurrection of a united Polish Kingdom.

6. Throughout the 14th century, particularly under the rule of Casimir the Great, the wave of anti-German feelings was abating and language patriotism was gradually turning into a sense of solidarity of the citizens of one state. Immigration of foreign knights was checked and the strife between the indigenous pop-

³² *MPH*, vol. II, p. 815.

³³ Ed. by E. Długopolski, *Bunt wójta Alberta* [Riot by bailiff Albert], “*Rocznik Krakowski*”, vol. VII, 1905, pp. 184 - 186.

³⁴ This name is quoted in the *Kronika zbrasławska* [Zbraslaw Chronicle], *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. IV, p. 82.

³⁵ *MPH*, vol. III, p. 630.

³⁶ *Rocznik kapitulny krakowski* [The Cracow Chapter Annals], *MPH*, vol. II, p. 815.

ulation and newcomers for offices and dignities was replaced at that time by a ferocious rivalry between the inhabitants of Great and Little-Poland, that led to equally sharp antagonisms: the Polish language was not sufficient to separate "one's own folk" from strangers and the just born national awareness was expressing itself more frequently in a negative sense — by excluding strangers — than in positive manifestations — by bringing together countrymen. And then quite unexpectedly, in the second half of the 14th century xenophobia flares up again, but this time it was not directed against Germans. Several years of the Polish-Hungarian union were enough for the Polish gentry to arrive at a conclusion that Hungarians are "savage and coarse people" prone to plundering and cruelty. Polish knights gave vent to their feelings in a row that took place in December 1377 in the Cracow Castle; the row turned into a massacre of Hungarian courtiers during which more than 160 of them were killed. Anti-Hungarian sentiments are clearly visible in the chronicle of Janko of Czarnków³⁷ or in the opposition of the Polish gentry against the union with Hungary after the death of Lewis I the Great (1382).

This outbreak of anti-Hungarian feelings was an isolated and unforeseen result of the rule of the Angevin dynasty. But in general, in the 14th and 15th century Poles kept an open mind to foreign ideas and influence: until the Cracow massacre foreign ideas were willingly accepted from the south throughout the rule of Ladislaus the Short and Casimir the Great: apart from the Hungarian influence on the structure and organization of the army, some Italian and French ideas were reaching Poland across Hungary before Poles established direct contacts with France through Avignon. These contacts did not result in an infiltration by Frenchmen, instead the first wave of Italians came to Poland at that time: some of them settled in Cracow and assimilated there.³⁸

The extension of the borders of the Polish state to the East compelled in a way to renounce the narrow language of nation-

³⁷ Ed. by J. Szlachetowski, *MPH*, vol. II, pp. 649, 675.

³⁸ J. Ptaśnik, *Kultura włoska wieków średnich w Polsce [Italian Medieval Culture in Poland]*, Warszawa 1959, p. 18.

alism. Though there are strong anti-German accents in the works of Jan Długosz and Jan Ostroróg, nationalism as such was in regress. This is proved by the fact that German burghers and knights from Prussia were allowed to come to Poland, a thing in itself impossible, should the feelings of the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries continue to exist. What is more, German or Germanized Silesian inhabitants declare repeatedly their readiness to such an access, though on condition that they will be supported in their struggle against Hussites,³⁹ a condition unacceptable for Poland at that time.

When Andrzej Tęczyński was murdered in Cracow in 1461 the gentry exploited the fact to unleash a campaign against burghers of Cracow, however, there were no nationalistic undertones in the accusations against the latter.⁴⁰ This does not mean there were no language conflicts in the 15th century: on the contrary, by that time they had been transferred to towns. Polish inhabitants of towns who grew in strength tended to break the monopoly of German patricians and trade guilds for power. The struggle between the masses and patricians for power and control of municipal administration was a typical feature in Europe at the turn of the 14th to 15th centuries, but in Poland social postulates went together with language claims of the Polish commons in Cracow, Lwów and some other towns. The hatred of people speaking a foreign language intermingled with a struggle for economic and social interests made urban conflicts even more fierce, and there were occurrences that Hussite slogans were used.⁴¹

³⁹ E. Maleczyńska, in: *Historia Śląska [Silesian History]* ed. by K. Maleczyński, vol. I, part 2, Wrocław 1961, pp. 239, 276.

⁴⁰ In a well-known Polish poem on the murder of Andrzej Tęczyński, ed. by W. Taszycki, *Najdawniejsze zabytki języka polskiego [The Oldest Monuments of Polish Language]*, Fourth Edition, Wrocław 1967, p. 210 — the main epithet used against Cracovians was "peasants". A. Strzelecka, *Niektóre okoliczności krakowskiego rozruchu mieszczańskiego [Some Circumstances of the Cracow Burghers Riot in 1461]*, in: *Mediaevalia. W 50 rocznicę pracy naukowej Jana Dąbrowskiego*, Warszawa 1960, pp. 285 - 299, the author suspects an organized action by Teutonic Knights behind the murder of Tęczyński, but there are no sufficient grounds to arrive at such a conclusion.

⁴¹ J. Ptaśnik, *Miasta i mieszczaństwo w dawnej Polsce [Towns and Burghers in Old Poland]*, Kraków 1934, p. 311.

But these local conflicts did not involve lords, the gentry or the clergy the majority of whom had abandoned long ago the ideology of language nationalism. New criteria are beginning to appear in describing one's nationality — a Pole is an inhabitant of the Polish Kingdom.⁴² This state criterion was not however in itself the source of sarcastic remarks about other nations, so popular at that time in Poland and in the rest of Europe: these critical opinions were usually disseminated by roving students who contributed no doubt to create stereotypes that survived hundreds of years, but in the 15th century they did not affect yet the formation of broad public opinion in any significant way.

A reader of the Długosz chronicle will notice, like Czech historian Jaromir Mikulka did,⁴³ an animosity the father of our historiography felt against Czechs, and will perhaps be inclined to believe these feelings were reflecting public opinion. However, a great caution would be advisable in this instance. Even his most stinging remarks about Czechs Długosz repeated after Gall and Kadłubek; he was himself strongly influenced, no doubt, by those formulations, all the more so as they corresponded to his own views about a nation "poisoned" by the Hussite heresy. A faithful follower of Oleśnicki, Długosz shared all his views about the Hussites and fears that the Czech heresy will spread in Poland. But just for that reason Długosz cannot be regarded a typical representative of the public opinion of his time. The 15th century was the period of very close contacts between Poles and Czechs and of great influence of Czech culture in Poland.

The attitude of Poles towards Russians or Lithuanians was hardly mentioned in the literature of the 15th century, probably because there were no conflicts yet between these three — apart from the dispute between the Polish and Lithuanian states round Volhynia or religious antagonisms which were insignificant though. Of course, Poles considered themselves culturally su-

⁴² See S. Kot, *Świadomość narodowa...*, p. 24. J. Tazbir, *Rzeczypospolita i świat...*, p. 40.

⁴³ J. Mikulka, *Annales Jana Długosza a Czechy [Annales of Jan Długosz and Bohemia]*, "Odrodzenie i reformacja w Polsce," vol. VIII, 1963, pp. 19 - 38.

perior to "barbarous" Russians or Lithuanians, the same as two hundred years ago Germans had sneered at barbarous customs of Poles and their poor economy. But these are common manifestations of national megalomania which needs not provoke conflicts after all. Besides, Lithuanians invented soon a "Roman" genealogy which in their opinion was a sufficient antidote to Polish megalomania,⁴⁴ this reciprocity was not an obstacle to mutual contacts and assimilation of the gentry of the "dual nation."

I have not mentioned yet one more foreign element which became so important in the next centuries, namely the Jews. A first note about them appears in the 10th century when they are mentioned alongside other foreigners; there are more remarks about Jews in the 12th and 13th centuries when a stress is placed already on their different religion which provided a ground to mark them out in legal terms into a separate group subordinated to the duke.⁴⁵ Later to that was added another factor that made them different from the rest of the population — they went in for the trade forbidden to Christians — usury. But they could hardly be considered a different language group: for Poles at those times they were a specific group of German immigrants and at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries felt no doubt all the consequences of belonging to the "German language." Till the end of the Middle Ages Jews had been treated in Poland as Germans forming a separate religious group; anti-Jewish feelings coming from the West, which became more pronounced in the 14th century, provoked also in Poland sporadic riots but in most cases they were local incidents among German burghers:⁴⁶ all anti-Jewish pronouncements uttered quite often by representatives of the Polish clergy did not probably have any greater influence on the Polish population outside towns. The government authorities, in measure to their possibilities, were putting a brake on

⁴⁴ J. Jakubowski, *Studia nad stosunkami narodowościowymi na Litwie przed Unią Lubelską* [Studies on Nationality Relations in Lithuania before the Lublin Union], Warszawa 1912, p. 32.

⁴⁵ R. Grodecki, *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce do końca XIV w.* [History of Jews in Poland till the End of the 14th Century], in: by the same author, *Polna piastowska* [Poland of Piasts], Warszawa 1967, pp. 595 - 702.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 678.

anti-Jewish excesses. An example of that was the thwarting by Casimir the Jagellonian, in 1452, of a pogrom campaign conducted in Cracow by the famous Bernardine preacher, St. John Kapistran, who a year earlier had incited with success to pogroms in Wrocław.⁴⁷ No wonder therefore, that in Jewish writings of those times Poland enjoys a good opinion; on the other hand, our country came under criticism by church representatives in western Europe where Poland would soon get the name of "*paradisus Judeorum*."⁴⁸ An, indeed, a large wave of Jewish immigrants flew into Poland in the second half of the 14th and in the 15th centuries. They came from the West and settled among others, in the towns of the Lithuanian Great Duchy. The chronology, directions and the course of this immigration have not been investigated yet.

7. In medieval Poland the attitude towards foreigners and foreign influence oscillated between two tendencies which were also observed in other European countries, especially in those neighbouring with Poland.

The first tendency was a result of the interest in foreign countries and a desire to exploit their experience to improve various spheres of life in Poland. This trend was reflected in various postures towards foreigners: beginning with careful selection of people representing definite trades who were invited to come to Poland to introduce new techniques or perform special artistic, scientific and economic tasks, and ending with a slavish worship of everything that is foreign and foreigners themselves for a sole reason that they came from the West.

The second tendency was a counterreaction to the extremes of the former and became predominant when the inflow of foreigners threatened the ethnical structure of the country, especially

⁴⁷ A. Jelicz, *Życie codzienne w średniowiecznym Krakowie* [Everyday Life in Medieval Cracow], Warszawa 1966, p. 51. See J. Długosz *Historiae Poloniae libri XII.*, ed. by A. Przeździecki, vol. V (*Opera omnia*, vol. XIV), Cracoviae 1878, p. 188 (translated by K. Mecherzyński, *XII Books of Jan Długosz's History*, Kraków 1870, p. 175).

⁴⁸ F. Grabski, *Polska w opiniach Europy...*, p. 26.

so as far as the ruling classes were concerned. This led to the creation of a specific situation in central Europe where language was identified with nationality. This tendency reached its climax in the second half of the 13th century and the first half of the 14th. Political stabilization of Poland and the consolidation of the position of the Polish gentry considerably weakened though did not liquidate completely this tendency which had a clear anti-German edge. The antagonisms reemerge at times of political tensions when animosity towards Germans, that persisted among some circles, flared up again. There were sporadic outbreaks of antipathy towards Czechs or Hungarians, always caused by some current political difficulties. But on the whole a friendly attitude towards the outside world was predominating in the 14th and 15th centuries. It was one of the factors that stimulated quick economic and cultural development of Poland, allowed her to make up for backwardness and to win political successes.*

(Translated by Halina Górska)

* In this article prepared as a paper for the conference on the "battle against foreign influence in Polish culture," organized in October 1971 by the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, I did not give references to the rich literature on that subject, leaving only references to source materials. I quote only the more recent works: R. Grodecki, *Powstanie polskiej świadomości narodowej* [*The Rising of the Polish National Consciousness*], Katowice 1946; B. Zientara, *Nationality Conflicts in the German-Slavic Borderland in the 13th - 14th Centuries and their Social Scope*, "Acta Poloniae Historica," vol. XXII, 1970; R. Heck, *Świadomość narodowa i państwowa w Czechach i w Polsce w XV w.* [*National and State Consciousness in Bohemia and Poland in the 15th Century*], in *Pamiętnik X Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Lublinie*, Warszawa 1968, vol. I, pp. 126 - 151; studies on later period were made by S. Kot, *Świadomość narodowa w Polsce w XV - XVII w.* [*National Consciousness in Poland in the 15th - 17th Centuries*], "Kwartalnik Historyczny," vol. LII, 1938, pp. 15 - 33, and lately by J. Tabir, *Ksenofobia w Polsce w XVI i XVII w.*, w: *Arianie i katolicy* [*Xenophobia in Poland in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, in: *Arians nad Catholics*], Warszawa 1971, pp. 238 - 278, and by the same author: *Rzeczypospolita i świat. Studia z dziejów kultury XVII w.* [*The Polish Commonwealth*

and the World. Studies in the History of the 17th-Century Culture], Warszawa 1971. The attitude of the outside world towards Poland in the Middle Ages was presented in two works by A. F. Grabski, *Polska w opiniach obcych X - XII w.* [*Poland in the Foreign Opinions in the 10th - 13th Centuries*], Warszawa 1964, and *Polska w opiniach Europy zachodniej XIV - XV w.* [*Poland in the Opinion of Western Europe in the 14th - 15th Centuries*], Warszawa 1968. All those works give more or less full bibliographies of older literature.