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National Style in the Reconstruction of Poland After World War I – Theory and Practice

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At this moment, when we are to reconstruct Poland after a historic disaster, developing hallmarks of Polish architecture ... should become a task of central national importance.¹

– Stefan Szyller

Introduction

Polish people, who were hoping to regain independence after a long period of annexation, even before the outbreak of World War I were aware of the necessity of reconstruction of Poland in the material, economic, structural and spiritual dimensions. The long awaited and planned restoration of the homeland not only aimed at providing shelter for destitute residents. Numerous records show the deep conviction of the Polish architectural circles of that time who believed in the importance of architecture for the building of national identity. In order to achieve this goal, an attempt was made to elaborate an esthetic formula that would be able to, according to this point of view, “highlight all unique features of our culture and establish its continuity”² which would have been perceived as a hallmark of Polishness. Hence, “the reconstruction of the country in a national style ... became the duty of

¹ S. Szyller, *Czy mamy polską architekturę*, Warszawa 1916, p. VIII. Szyller’s lecture was earlier published as series in „Przegląd Techniczny” 1913.

² J. Lorentowicz, *Państwowa opieka nad zabytkami*, „Tygodnik Ilustrowany” 1918, no. 25-26, p. 288.

a patriotic society.”³ This sense of the mission was not limited by the single historical moment when the independence was regained. The first attempts at recovering Poland from the state of spiritual and material ruins were undertaken when the country was still under Prussian, Russian and Austrian partitions. The concept of reconstructing the Polish state in the specific, national style of architecture was in my opinion, in perfect accord with the general attitude of architects who had served for their homeland in different ways. During the war many had fought on the front⁴ and when Poland regained independence they offered their services, often *pro publico bono*.⁵ At that time, despite difficult social, material or economic circumstances in the late wartime, an extraordinary historical moment was recognized. Rebuilding the state gave a unique opportunity for the rational, planned and ordered reconstruction of whole regions of the country in a way that would have retained what were perceived as distinctively Polish features. Józef Piotrowski (1837-1939)⁶ wrote at that time:

Let us be aware that it involves not just one or two houses, but hundreds of villages and towns; hundreds and thousands of different buildings⁷ which may adorn our country or deform it for many

³ A. Borowik, *O jednej z odmian narodowego romantyzmu. „Styl wschodniomałopolski”: geneza, twórcy, przykłady*, [in:] *Sztuka Kresów Wschodnich*, eds. A. Betlej, A. Markiewicz, vol. 7, Kraków 2012, p. 212-213.

⁴ Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz (1883-1948) joined the Legions in 1914. Wawrzyniec Dayczak (1882-1968) was active during partitions period in the secret pro-independence organization „Zet” and set up a paramilitary organization for village youth „Drużyny Bartoszone.” He also organized military help for Lviv, which was under Ukrainian siege 1918-1919. M. Dayczak-Domasiewicz, „Z dni wielkich przemian” *wspomnienia architekta Wawrzyńca Dayczaka*, „Rocznik Biblioteki Naukowej PAU i PAN w Krakowie” 2008 (53), p. 402-405.

⁵ Among others, architectural designs drafted gratuitously for the publications associated with the reconstruction are attesting to such interpretation.

⁶ Official head of the state monument protection administration of the Lviv region, author of *Ochrona zabytków a odbudowa kraju*, Lwów 1916.

⁷ According to the records kept by The Fire Insurance Association, the number of buildings destroyed by war actions on the territory of the former Polish Kingdom (part of the Russian partition, also called Russian Poland) occupied by the Austro-Hungarian Empire amounted to 242 855 buildings: 78 036 residential buildings (89% peasants, 3% noble and 8% urban properties), and 164 819 agricultural buildings and factories. W. Jabłoński, *Jak się odbuduje wieś polska?*, „Przegląd Techniczny” 1919, no. 37-38, p. 313. The research conducted by the Galician administration showed that 1323 rural parishes and 112 towns were partially destroyed; and 69 716 residential buildings and 119 265 agricultural buildings were destroyed completely. This number – 188 981 in total – does not include manor houses, farms, factories and religious buildings. Among

years. We now have the opportunity to change freely the outlook of vast areas of our country. We can make them distinctive, individual in a specific, original way. Such an opportunity is unlikely to occur again.⁸

The aim of this paper is to collect and discuss as wide range of material as possible concerning the shaping, propagation and promotion of the concept of Poland's postwar reconstruction in what was called as the 'Polish national style.' The paper concentrates on the ideological frameworks of this ideas and describes the attempts to translate them into design guidelines and architectural practice.

Polish National Style – the Idea

The sense of patriotic mission was firmly anchored in university spheres: "It is our duty, at least in this sole Polish technical university, to create a permanent center of Polish architecture (not by name only)"⁹ – stated renowned architect Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz (1883-1948) referring to the technical university of Lviv. Małgorzata Rozbicka credits also groups connected with the Department of Architecture of the Technical University of Warsaw (opened in 1915) with a special role in the shaping, embedding and promulgation of forms deriving from the Polish architectural tradition.¹⁰

The idea of creating a national style in the interwar period can be discussed in a larger geographical context of similar tendencies appearing in other European countries, especially smaller ones like Holland,

these categories, according to data from 1916, the amount of completely destroyed buildings equals: 39 Catholic churches, 80 Greek Catholic churches, 1378 vicarages and outbuildings; partially destroyed were 319 Catholic churches, 179 Greek Catholic churches and 2505 vicarages and outbuildings. *Centrala Krajowa dla Gospodarczej Odbudowy Galicji. Wyciąg ze sprawozdania od czerwca r.1916 do lutego 1917*, „Przegląd Techniczny” 1917, no. 49-50, p. 404.

⁸ J. Piotrowski, *Ochrona zabytków a odbudowa kraju*, Lwów 1916, p. 55-56.

⁹ A. Szyszko-Bohusz, *Zadania polskiej architektury nowoczesnej*, „Czasopismo Techniczne” 1913, no. 2, p. 18.

¹⁰ She names Jan Heurich, Karol Jankowski, Juliusz Kłos, Rudolf Świerczyński, Oskar Sosnowski. More in: M. Rozbicka, *Dom mieszkalny średniozamożnego ziemianina. Studia nad teorią i praktyką projektową (1918-1939)*, „Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki” 2003 (48), no. 1-4, p. 36-37. However, architecture has been taught at the Warsaw Institute of Technology from its very beginnings under the Russian rule (est. 1898).

Sweden, Romania and Czechoslovakia.¹¹ And although one can confidently present a hypothesis that these stylistic narratives originated in the social and cultural trends in Europe mainly after the modern era political revolutions, in Poland this situation had unique features. In the specific conditions of the time of the postwar reconstruction, that is, in a country which had been missing from the map of Europe from late eighteenth century and was emerging from captivity, the national style in architecture was perceived as part of the struggle for national existence and expression of the national identity, unity and distinctiveness in history and culture. It is important to add, that this current encompassed a whole variety of culture and arts, starting from literature and music and ending with fine arts. The latter, according to artist Władysław Skoczylas (1883-1934), were supposed to “adorn a <reclaimed home> and free it from foreign influences, traces of former annexation.”¹²

The creation of a national style in Polish architecture evolved noticeably. The roots of style labelled as ‘national’ were sought, just as in other European countries, in folk art patterns and in vernacular wooden buildings, especially as the case of the so called ‘Zakopane style,’ dating from late nineteenth century, shows.¹³ In the very beginning, ‘Polish’ features were ascribed to revival modes based on forms of local medieval monuments, especially provincial churches. At first architects turned to the so-called ‘Baltic-Vistula Gothic’ in their search for Polishness. After several years distinctive local features were also detected in the ‘Gothic’ buildings of Lesser Poland region.¹⁴ But, finally it was recognized that

¹¹ A. K. Olszewski, *Nowa forma w architekturze polskiej 1900-1925. Teoria i praktyka*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1967, p. 127.

¹² W. Skoczylas, *O zadaniach Szkoły Sztuk Pięknych*, „Gazeta Polska” 1929, no. 50, p. 3; quoted after: A. Chmielewska, *Styl narodowy w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej: artyści a wizerunek odrodzonego państwa*, [in:] *Naród Styl Modernizm*, eds. J. Purchla, W. Tegethoff et al., Kraków-Monachium 2006, p. 191.

¹³ However, Stefan Szyller referred to it as to what he called to be a kind of a folk way of wooden construction, one of the “dialects of our architecture.” See: Szyller, *op. cit.*, s. 12.

¹⁴ As far as the so called ‘Vistula-Baltic Gothic’ (*‘gotyk wiślano-bałtycki’*) idiom was based on the provincial medieval churches of Pomerania and Mazovia, influenced by the building culture of the Teutonic Order, many nineteenth-century critics promoted late-medieval architecture of Lesser Poland, especially formal patterns derived from the Cistercian cloisters. Among architects from the Lviv-Cracow milieu the so called ‘by-Vistula style’ of the ‘Gothic’ Revival was conceptualized, based on what was perceived as ‘late-Romanesque/early-Gothic’ idiom of provincial churches build from stone. It was popular in the Roman-Catholic sacral architecture of late nineteenth century in Galicia and beyond. See J. Sas-Zubrzycki, *Styl nadwiślański jako odcień sztuki*

all 'our Gothic' architecture was extensively under German influences. "The Baltic –Vistula Gothic, which was essentially German with only minor Polish traits"¹⁵ was utilized for a couple of decades in the "brick cathedrals"¹⁶ – monumental Roman Catholic churches of 1880s, 1890s and early 1900s. Its critique was accompanied by an increasing anti-Polish bias of the Imperial powers which had annexed the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth territories.¹⁷ Under those circumstances, the style of the buildings based on the German culture was perceived by many as an affront to the Polish landscape. In the first decade of the twentieth century, inspiration was redirected to be drawn from picturesque, now the vernacular architecture of the Early Modern period. Of special interest were provincial buildings influenced by the 'Baroque' works; often their architecture was described as being 'homely.' Szysko-Bohusz gave the following advice to his students:

If we want to become familiar with Polish culture and simultaneously find continuity, we should turn to monuments which do not follow the rules of European art, which are the most independent [in terms of style], and such are many historic buildings dating from the 17th and 18th centuries: churches, chapels, manor houses and finally, synagogues...¹⁸

From the other hand, architect Stefan Szyller (1857-1933) emphasized the fact that in his view 'typically Polish' buildings were secular ones that mostly dated from the Early Modern period, following 'Renaissance' and 'Baroque' patterns.¹⁹ But, the actual and contemporary building work in the national style was supposed to be based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Polish heritage, which

średniowiecznej, Kraków 1910; K. Stefański, *Polska architektura sakralna w poszukiwaniu stylu narodowego*, Łódź 2000, p. 61-82.

¹⁵ "Wędrowiec" 1901, no. 19, p. 367. As Szyller claimed, Gothic buildings were different in Poland than in other countries in regard to the construction and decoration. Apart from pointed arches, flying buttress, vast roofs, multilateral apses, and rib vault there are not many elements in Polish churches that resemble the rich forms of western 'Gothic' style. According to Szyller, in Poland, it was more of a national, folksy, brick-built medieval construction that developed into monumental buildings and created a 'Polish Gothic' style with many local variations of Poznań, Cracow and Wrocław, Toruń and Gdańsk, Vilnius and Kaunas. See also: Szyller *op. cit.*, p. 56, 57.

¹⁶ Stefański, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

¹⁷ To recall the increased Russian repressions after the January uprising of 1863-1864 or Otto von Bismark's policy of Germanization in the Poznań province.

¹⁸ Szysko-Bohusz, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁹ Szyller, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

was also influenced by climate, culture and traditional construction techniques.²⁰ For Szyszko-Bohusz,

“If we will get to know and even fall in love with the unique beauty of our historic buildings, we will be able to encompass elements from them even in the most modern structures. We will be able to use our own language, full of power and beauty.”²¹

Professor Stanisław Noakowski (1867-1928)²² became a symbol of such approach. While living far from Poland he prepared series of pictures of the Polish architectural monuments basing on his memory and adding his own ideas and details. Still, for many he captured in his sketches their character perfectly.²³ He “showed how to proceed to new things but remain connected to old traditions.”²⁴ Similarly new constructions were supposed to preserve the features of the Polish style while at the same time showing a fresh, modern approach based on the contemporary technologies and needs. For the quoted architects, the Polish national style was not to be equated with ‘historicism,’ ‘eclecticism’ or the copying of existing forms and details of historic buildings. “Any random building to which we apply a motive from an old Polish building, will not be automatically Polish in its character,” commented Szyszko-Bohusz.²⁵ Moreover, “if an opinion prevails that there are not and cannot be more beautiful buildings than those which have been already built, architecture will lose its independence, the progressive movement will be lost.”²⁶ Piotrowski shared this opinion and pointed out that “every replication and alteration is not creativity. It

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ Szyszko-Bohusz, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

²² “If we look at the work of the Committee for Reconstruction at the Ministry of Public Works from 1919-1920 then we will see that all these small projects show the immense influence of Noakowski, where the form and spirit of Polish building can be felt and easily recognized;” “the development of government and communal construction works in small towns was modelled after the lead of Noakowski’s ideas. It is enough to recall the erection of the K.O.P. villages and settlements in the borderlands, the reconstruction of north-eastern and south-eastern towns, or simply the colonies built in the borderlands, to see that the architecture was in Noakowski’s spirit.” Quotes of opinions are from P. Wędziągowski, *Próba charakterystyki twórczości Prof. Stanisława Noakowskiego*, „Architektura i Budownictwo” 1928, no. 10, p. 381.

²³ “...understanding the mystery of the spirit [of our architecture,] he [Noakowski] drew not just what existed, but what was alive.” Opinion from J. Dziekoński, *Pomysły prof. Noakowskiego*, „Przegląd Techniczny” 1919, no. 9-12, p. 45.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ Szyszko-Bohusz, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

quickly and easily becomes a soulless template which will never create its own distinctive style.”²⁷ For Piotrowski, “There is a great difference between faking, falsing a historic style and making and recreating something individually.”²⁸ Architect Konstanty Jakimowicz (1879-1960) in this way commented the architectural exhibition entitled *A Village and a Little Town* (1918-1919):

Motifs should not be taken from the past and used arbitrarily, like a single Polish motif in a foreign symphony, but there should be a sense of harmony between the composition and the time, the place and the tradition of local residents, the national architectural language will form Polishness, will be evident in the work of a Polish artist, even though the subject of his composition may be foreign.²⁹

In almost every publication dealing with this issue the need to preserve the so called ‘Polish style’ of architecture was mentioned. But, often the offered guidelines are limited to a vague attempt to outline the general direction of artistic development. Those quoted above show the efforts that were made to define what the Polish character of architecture was expected to be³⁰ and the concrete results of design that would have been based on such ideas. This debate shows a clear desire to transfer the architecture from what was perceived at that time as ‘eclectic historicism’ or simply ‘revivalism,’ to the new paradigm based on a selected inspirations from historic forms and their individual artistic transformation. An article published in the Cracow-based journal “Architekt” in 1910 shows that the above discussed efforts, as well as the constant search for the ‘national’ expression in architecture were widespread:

In every competition, both the judges and the competitors look for a leading theme [of a national character], regardless of its significance for the particular competition, showing understanding that it is forming the most natural and healthy conditions for they art, in harmony with the surrounding atmosphere, spirit of the time and

²⁷ “For both restoration work and for our architectural design it is harmful to use in both new and renewed churches, castles, synagogues and tenement houses, only those allegedly typical Polish Renaissance-Baroque pinnacles and attics being imitations of [facades] of tenements of Sobieski and Anczowski [in Kazimierz Dolny],” quoted after J. Piotrowski, *Ochrona zabytków a odbudowa kraju*, Lwów 1916, p. 22.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

²⁹ K. S. Jakimowicz, *Z Wystawy Architektonicznej Wsi i Miasteczka*, „Tygodnik Ilustrowany” 1919, no. 4, p. 60.

³⁰ In the mentioned publications the concept of ‘specific,’ ‘native’ Polish character was usually applied.

current tendencies in all areas of art. [...] Designers comprehend it more and more, that this quest for a homely is not like guessing a secret, which is hidden somewhere in the state of readiness in the country, nor like trying to find new forms, which might be recognized as being national sometimes. There is only a genuine desire to find the character, the original self-expression in building work, the quest for beauty, which could be eagerly recognized as our own.³¹

It can be seen as a paradox, that such a general formulation of a 'national style' left architects a vast, open space for their creative invention. Hence, it is not surprising that the materialization of what was called as the national architectural ideas took on very different forms used by different artists and evolved in time. Preparing a research catalogue of the 'Polish national' interwar architecture one can find buildings which came under the label of a manor house architecture, lavishly decorated with interpretations of 'Baroque' forms; these represented the so called 'Eastern-Little Poland' type of the national style. On the other hand at play were also simplified forms with some traditional features but with a touch of modernized approach to form. Still, the understanding of the purpose, which was the creation of a national style in architecture, was common for all architects and designers. But the actual realization of the ideas was not such a simple matter. The formal features of the national style were often described by means of a comprehensible but not a very specific or exact vocabulary: published sources containing descriptions and critique of this architecture frequently described its qualities by adjectives like 'pretty,' 'lovely,'³² 'picturesque,' 'familiar,'³³ 'nice,' 'enjoyable,' 'simple,' 'pleasing'³⁴...

An attempt to categorize specific features of the Polish architecture can be found especially in the Szyller's work. His lecture *Czy mamy polską architekturę* (*Do we Have Polish Architecture?*),³⁵ delivered at the meeting of the Warsaw Circle of Architects in May of 1913, addressed

³¹ *Konkurs na projekt kościoła we wsi Orlów*, „Architekt” 1910, no. 4, p. 58.

³² Dziekoński, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

³³ “Moving to the East, one may encounter many provincialisms, however, one may also experience the unusual picturesqueness that transforms a work of art not into a good copy but into an individual creation, full of freshness and charm.” See: *Pierwiastek swojski w architekturze monumentalnej polskiej*, „Przegląd Techniczny” 1920, no. 12, p. 64.

³⁴ Polish builders “created very original works of art, which have simplicity and charm.” Szyller, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

³⁵ It was issued as *Czy mamy polską architekturę?* firstly in „Przegląd Techniczny” 1913, no. 34-39, no. 43-44, no. 51-52. In the much widened version it was published in 1916 under the same title. Compare note 1.

succinctly the possible doubts regarding the very existence of typically 'Polish' architecture. He also referred to the influences and cross permeation of different national cultures.

I have heard opinions that architectural elements which may be described as typically Polish are so few, that they cannot be the basis for a new style. [...] It is not the number of elements, but the way of applying them that determines a style.³⁶

For Szyller an illustration for such argument was the architecture of ancient Rome, where, in his view, only one new basic element was introduced to the Greek legacy: an arch and a dome vaulting resting on it. According to him, these features later became the fundamental element of 'Byzantine' and 'Romanesque' styles. So, for Szyller "each style possesses only a very limited number of specific [original] elements."³⁷ Poland, as belonging to cultural circle of western European civilization, should be comparable to its currents in architecture as well, stated Szyller, adding: "Similar, but not identical, in fact even very different!"³⁸ To fulfill this objective of national distinctiveness an architect with great perception skills will show deep attention to detail, displaying typically Polish elements and modifications of a local ('homely') character – "our national additions to European architecture"³⁹ – bearing in mind that artistic expression of architectural elements is derived from building's construction. For Szyller the latter "creates the form of the building, determines its character, its style."⁴⁰ Małgorzata Omilanowska in her study on Szyller's work and ideas, though showing intuitiveness of his thought, tendency to overinterpretation of sources and lack of objectivity in his own historical studies, does however underline the fact that:

...the list of components typical of Polish architecture prepared by Szyller, ... though often falsely justified, did however create a sort

³⁶ S. Szyller, *Czy mamy polską architekturę?*, „Przegląd Techniczny” 1913, no. 43, p. 567.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ S. Szyller, *Czy mamy polską architekturę?*, Warszawa 1916, p. VIII.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 18-19: „To apply the forms of our architecture it is necessary to penetrate into their structure, otherwise we will create counterfeit things, deprived of its internal content ...” Szyller proposed a complex lecture based on many specific examples, indicating structural sources of forms of what he perceived as the Polish architecture. However, thoroughness of Szyller's historical research and correctness of his inference have been often criticised. See: M. Omilanowska, *Architekt Stefan Szyller 1857-1933*, Warszawa 2008.

of catalogue of forms that played an important role in the development of national romanticism in Polish architecture in the interwar period... [becoming] a source of inspiration in design [...]. The list of 'homely' elements drawn up by Szyller was accepted by a large group of Polish twentieth-century architects as an ideal point of reference to their work in the style of national romanticism.⁴¹

The Scale of War Damages and Plans for Reconstruction

The reconstruction of Poland after years of partitions and enormous in scale wartime destructions had to be conducted in an organized way. Poland could count also on the full ideological commitment of the majority of those who were able to offer their services; they "were aware of the significance of the time and were motivated by strong bonds of allegiance to their beloved country."⁴² They "offered their services in the work of reconstruction"⁴³ and "confirmed their commitment to their duty and ideals as citizens,"⁴⁴ as contemporary publication underlined. Already in January of 1915, the Committee of Polish Technicians was established in Vienna, being the biggest refugee center.⁴⁵ The Committee send to all central agendas *Memoriał w sprawie odbudowy miast, miasteczek i wsi* (*Memorial Regarding the Reconstruction of Cities, Towns and Villages*).⁴⁶ Simultaneously (in 1915), in Cracow, under the leadership of

⁴¹ Omilanowska, *op. cit.*, p. 88- 89. The term 'national romanticism' was derived from the English and German historiography (see: P. Devey, *Arts and Crafts Architecture*, London 1995; M. Scharabi, *Architekturgeschichte des 19. Jarhuderts*, Berlin 1993). Małgorzata Omilanowska proposed to use it for the studies on the Polish architecture of that time as being the most complex, without subdivisions like 'homely' or 'manor house' styles. See: M. Omilanowska, *Poszukiwania stylu narodowego w polskiej architekturze końca XIX i początku XX wieku*, [in:] Stanisław Witkiewicz. Człowiek – artysta – myśliciel, ed. Z. Moździerz, Zakopane 1997, p. 286.

⁴² W. Günther, *Memoriał techników polskich w sprawie odbudowy miast, miasteczek i wsi*, „Czasopismo Techniczne” 1916, no. 3-4, p. 26.

⁴³ I. Drexler, *Działalność Polskiego Towarzystwa Politechnicznego we Lwowie*, „Czasopismo Techniczne” 1916, no. 3-4, p. 22.

⁴⁴ A. Drexler, *Memoriał Tow.[arzystwa] Politechnicznego we Lwowie do Wydziału Krajowego w sprawie rozpiszania konkursów na regulację miast i wsi*, „Czasopismo Techniczne” 1916, no. 3-4, p. 35.

⁴⁵ The Committee worked until July 1915 and then was dissolved, because most of its members returned to their Polish homeland. Then its objectives were covered by the works of the Polish Engineering Association in Lviv.

⁴⁶ J. Krauze, *Wiedeńska Komisja odbudowy miast, miasteczek i wsi*, „Czasopismo Techniczne” 1916, no. 3-4, p. 21, 22.

Juliusz Leo (1861-1918), The Citizens Committee for Reconstruction of Villages and Towns was formed.⁴⁷ In the following year, the Committee published a book of plans prepared by architects who offered their services free of charge: *Odbudowa polskiego miasteczka. Projekty domów* (Reconstruction of a Polish Town. Designs of Homes).⁴⁸ It was followed by two similar patternbooks: *Odbudowa polskiej wsi* (Reconstruction of a Polish Village)⁴⁹ and *Odbudowa polskiego miasteczka. Projekty budynków użyteczności publicznej* (Reconstruction of a Polish Town. Designs of Public Buildings).⁵⁰ Creation of a database of standard, typical designs was one of the main activities of architects engaged in the material reconstruction of the country. These publications were also to stop a flood of similar patternbooks containing German designs.⁵¹ However, according to the authors' wishes:

...designs should not be used as ready-made plans or patterns ready to be executed; because this way of applying the publication, or a general recommendation to apply typical projects, could have a more detrimental effect than a positive one. The main aim of this publication ... was ... to stimulate creativity of the Polish architects.⁵²

But, pattern-projects were of key interest of the wartime administration of the Polish territories, occupied by Central Powers. The department of the National Center for Galicia's Economic Restoration responsible for the rebuilding of villages (COG)⁵³ was commissioned to prepare "[projects for] several typical farmhouses, suitable for the conditions of local counties and ... to construct model examples of such

⁴⁷ W. Ekielski, *Wstęp*, [in:] *Odbudowa polskiej wsi. Projekty chat i zagród włościańskich*, Kraków 1915.

⁴⁸ *Odbudowa polskiego miasteczka. Projekty domów opracowane przez grono architektów polskich*, ed. J. Gałęzowski, Kraków 1916.

⁴⁹ *Odbudowa polskiej wsi: projekty chat i zagród włościańskich*, ed. W. Ekielski, Kraków 1915.

⁵⁰ *Odbudowa polskiego miasteczka. Projekty budynków użyteczności publicznej, opracowane przez grono architektów polskich*, ed. J. Pokutyński, Kraków 1918.

⁵¹ *Państwowe Biuro Odbudowy (wzmianka)*, „Przegląd Techniczny” 1918, no. 39-40, p. 218.

⁵² Gałęzowski, *Przedmowa*, [in:] *Odbudowa polskiego miasteczka. Projekty domów...*

⁵³ One can see the scale of the program led by this institution considering the well-developed structure of its headquarters. It contained five sections. The first one – the Construction Section, was divided into eight agencies. Three of them are of special importance for this paper – Restoration of Cities and Towns, Restoration of Villages and Restoration of Churches, Vicarages, Farms and Schools. See: *Centrala Krajowa dla Gospodarczej Odbudowy Galicji...*, p. 404.

buildings, so dwellers would have the possibility to follow them.”⁵⁴ In October of 1918 efforts to organize the Office for Reconstruction at the Department of Construction and Reconstruction of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs⁵⁵ were undertaken.⁵⁶ The new institution also stated that its main aim was to preserve the ‘homely’ character of architecture during the reconstruction.⁵⁷ In 1919 the Professional Association of Industrial Builders arranged a series of lectures on the reconstruction of the country,⁵⁸ stressing the same goal. As already mentioned, individually working architects also often expressed their concern that reconstruction ought to be executed in the ‘national spirit.’ In 1917 architect Józef Holewiński (1878-1952) published a book entitled *Jak zbudować chatę i urządzić zagrodę włościańską* (*How to Construct a Cottage and a Country Farmyard*) which showed how contemporary construction methods could be adopted while preserving Polish vernacular culture in building.⁵⁹ Architect Karol Iwanicki (1870-1940) made his contribution by preparing a comprehensible manual of building techniques entitled *Budownictwo wiejskie: poradnik przy wznoszeniu zabudowań na wsi* (*Rural Construction: a Manual While Building in the Countryside*). Although most of it was devoted to technical issues, Iwanicki pointed

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 405.

⁵⁵ Ministry of Internal Affairs was created in early 1918 from the Department of Internal Affairs. Until November of 1918 it was subordinated to the Regency Council of the Kingdom of Poland, formed in 1917 by Central Powers as temporary highest authority in the occupied Polish territories.

⁵⁶ Due to the limited budget, the activities of the office were confined to co-operation (in technical, organizational and economic matters) with residents reconstructing their homes. See: *Państwowe Biuro Odbudowy*, „Przegląd Techniczny” 1919, no. 39-44, p. 218.

⁵⁷ For this purpose they intended to create public consultation agencies in the provinces. Architects would have encouraged the development of specific buildings, village homes and small townhouses as well as farm buildings. They would have created or corrected designs and would have been able to show through lectures, in brochures or architectural plans the advantages ensuing from creating solid constructions. Vocational training courses in construction for technicians were to contribute to professional reconstruction. See: *Ibidem*, p. 219.

⁵⁸ A. Janowski spoke about the impact of landscape on architecture and about the architecture of the East and West and the combination of both factors. Szyller lectured on basic features of folk construction and its influence on the Polish architecture. Z. Wójcicki referred to technical matters in the restoration of cities, towns and villages. J. Wojciechowski prepared presentations about buildings destroyed by war and discussed their historic value. Full texts: *Sprawy bieżące i rozmaitości. Odczyty w sprawie odbudowy kraju*, „Przegląd Techniczny” 1919, no. 3-4, p. 28.

⁵⁹ J. Holewiński, *Jak zbudować chatę i urządzić zagrodę włościańską?*, Warszawa 1917.

out that “as long as we will use foreign art, we will not elaborate any distinctive features of our own.” “In order to educate in good taste” he included some photos of old Polish estates, country houses and manors which in his view “retained so many memories of our glorious past, at the same time beating the marks of the homely, Polishness and the national tradition.”⁶⁰

Architectural Practice

Translation of the theory into practice took place on different fields. The first was housing, with special emphasis on village, rural buildings: homes for peasants and manors for landowners as well as the construction of houses for clerks and labourers in towns. The second was the construction of offices and civic buildings, and military objects, especially along the eastern border. Of special importance was sacral architecture, because apart from its main purpose, it included for many a symbolic function as a sign of the Polish Catholicism. In the following parts of my paper I will briefly discuss these three major fields.

Residential Buildings

In the difficult circumstances of a country destroyed by war, the most urgent need was rebuilding of houses. Architect Władysław Ekielski (1855-1927) explained that it was the greatest task in villages, where many farmhouses were almost completely destroyed. “Everybody felt the loss, which left its mark on the nation”⁶¹ because it was not only a material loss, but a cultural one as well. “Before our own eyes enchanting Polish villages are disappearing.”⁶² Because of that fact, the above mentioned publications, promoting the preservation of the character of the reconstructed buildings were of valuable assistance. Piotrowski commented over them in high esteem.⁶³

⁶⁰ K. Iwanicki, *Budownictwo wiejskie: poradnik przy wznoszeniu zabudowań na wsi*, Kijów-Warszawa 1917, p. 176-177.

⁶¹ *Odbudowa polskiej wsi...*, p. 8.

⁶² Ekielski, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁶³ Piotrowski, *Ochrona zabytków a odbudowa kraju...*, p. 49 and following.



Postwar reconstruction of a village in the Cracow region, designed by W. Krzyżanowski; houses in Bibice and Bosutów, street view in Węgrzyny village [„Architekt” 1922, no. 2]

There is a perfect example of a successful reconstruction of a dozen or so villages in the Cracow region, which had been completely destroyed by the Austrian army, to mention Dziekanowice, Boleń, Prokocim, Olszanica, Bosutów, Bibice only.⁶⁴ This task was managed by Krzyżanowski between the years 1918-1920. The reconstruction was conducted by a small group of architects and engineers. Their priority was to follow tradition and preserve the almost extinct architectural forms of exterior of traditional local buildings.⁶⁵ They also took into consideration the requirements of modern farms and improvements in hygienic conditions,⁶⁶ being aware of the fact that progress in civilization, sanitary requirements and fire regulations would have an impact on the

⁶⁴ W. Krzyżanowski, *O dobrej odbudowie*, „Architekt” 1922, no. 2, p. 23.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁶ The plans of the buildings were purposefully based on traditional settings, with the entrance halls made more spacious, the living rooms higher in dimensions and the windows bigger. They strove to create the best functionality and were executed with the most efficient technical means as possible.

reconstructed villages. Nevertheless they made the effort not to lose those features which were perceived as the most typical for the region. Above all, they wanted to prevent villages from architectural 'novelties' that in their view overshadowed the national tradition and folklore. As far as structural and esthetic matters were concerned, they focused on the preservation of high, hipped roofs with the so called 'country overhang'.⁶⁷ It was important also to maintain appropriate overall proportions of structures, with enlargement of windows and preservation of the custom of bleaching the walls for practical and esthetic reasons. Moreover, the varieties in regional architecture were to be preserved.⁶⁸ Such an approach to reconstruction was aimed at laying the foundations for the "material and moral culture of future generations."⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the actual reconstruction process was often disputable in details as being organized in haste and hence provisional.⁷⁰ Also, dwellers who suffered so many disasters were focused on obtaining the highest compensations as possible for the recovery, rather than on care for the beauty and cultural value of reconstructed buildings.⁷¹ Scarcity of funding from the newly restored state also resulted in a reality where many of the ideas for rational reconstruction remained on paper only. Moreover, Krzyżanowski described a specific conflict between the theory and practice:

From 1916 the matter of village reconstruction has been solved simultaneously: intelligentsia had an idealistic point of view, trying to show through articles, discussions, studies, drawings and models the ideal postwar rural settlement and the government is acting in reality, conducting the reconstruction through its own means. [...]

⁶⁷ "The most beautiful are the [so called] homely eaves that should be added to all buildings with timbering, residential buildings, stables, warehouses and factories [...]." One of its most important functional and esthetical features that result from the construction is that "it is created by the outside parts of the balks outside the walls of the house, that are always on the same level, in spite of differences in width." *Komunikat Koła Architektów w Warszawie w sprawie odbudowy wsi polskiej III. O charakterystycznych cechach dachu, okien i drzwi chaty polskiej*, „Przegląd Techniczny” 1915, no. 19-20, p. 193. See also: Z. Czartoryski, *O stylu krajowym w budownictwie wiejskim*, Poznań 1896.

⁶⁸ More: *Komunikat Koła Architektów w Warszawie w sprawie odbudowy wsi polskiej*, „Przegląd Techniczny” 1915, no. 19-20, p. 193-195; *Odbudowa polskiej wsi...*, p. 7-8.

⁶⁹ Krzyżanowski, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁷⁰ „The main goal of the Austrian authorities was the improvement of agricultural production, which was the strategic factor during the war. ... As a result a large number of temporary residential buildings were hastily erected ... overtaking rational reconstruction plans, which were put off for the future.” Krzyżanowski, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*.

The influence of the idealistic aspirations of intelligentsia to the wider comprehended purposefulness of the government's actions in reconstruction of villages was rather limited.⁷²

Architect Paweł Wędziagolski (1883-1929) assessed this situation similarly, but went even far in his opinion:

...villages were not rebuilt according to the plans worked out by the Comission, but frankly dreadfully, both in terms of general culture and artistic points, much worse and less healthy than had been done 20 years ago.⁷³

Referring to the topic of reconstruction of the countryside, one can not mention a type of a building that is perceived as a typical symbol of the Polish architecture and which form was supposed to add some 'familiarity' to our landscape, even when it was remodeled to serve as pattern for a town house or a civic building. The traditional countryside manor houses – called by Noakowski "the purest treasure of the Polish soul."⁷⁴ This building type was believed to combine the influences of various cultures but fitted perfectly with our climate, cultural traditions, customs and landscapes.⁷⁵ At the same time, from an ideological and symbolic point of view, according to architecture historian Piotr Libicki:

... in a situation of external captivity ... the Polish manor ... was becoming a small, limited area of freedom, a kind of a sacred tabernacle, a relic of the Commonwealth. As a result, when at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries there was a quest for style that could be called national ... the folk style of Zakopane promoted by Stanisław Witkiewicz was rejected, while turning to the form of the noble's house from the Saxon era and the period of Stanislaus August Poniatowski's reign, modernized by application of motifs from [contemporary] English cottage-style houses and subjected to the influence of the early modernism. It was the origin of the so called "manor house style" or, more accurately, the Polish style, that was the common style after Poland regained independence. Schools, post offices, railway stations, town and country villas, landowner and peasant houses were built in this style.⁷⁶

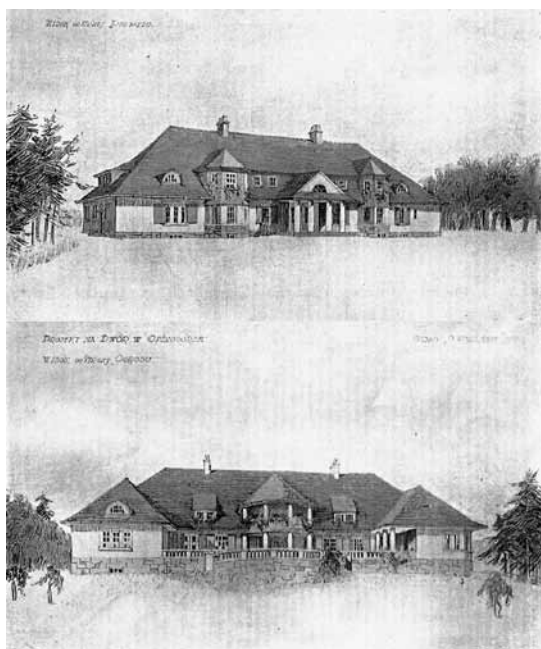
⁷² *Ibidem*.

⁷³ Wędziagolski, *Próba charakterystyki twórczości...*, p. 381; Ekielski, *op. cit.*, p. 1-3.

⁷⁴ Rozbicka, *op. cit.*, p. 37; S. Noakowski, *Do czytelników*, „Kalendarzyk Polskiego Białego Orla. Rok Polski 1925,” Warszawa 1924, [in:] *Stanisław Noakowski. Pisma*, ed. M. Wallis, Warszawa 1957.

⁷⁵ *Konkurs na szkice dworku polskiego na wystawie w Rzymie*, „Architekt” 1910, no. 5, p. 82.

⁷⁶ P. Libicki, *Dwory i pałace wiejskie w Małopolsce i na Podkarpaciu*, Poznań 2012, p. XV-XVI.



The best examples of designs for manor houses, which had a definite influence on the emerging Polish style, were works submitted to competitions – to name only a few: the manor house in Raszków (1903), Opinogóra (1908),⁷⁷ Niegowić,⁷⁸ a typical-model house surrounded by a garden (exhibition in Cracow, 1912), or a small manor house design prepared for the world exhibition in Rome in 1910.⁷⁹ In almost all of the appraisals of the competition entries the direct references to the importance of preservation of the national character of the buildings were underlined.⁸⁰ Such designs (especially those for Opinogóra and

Designs submitted to a competition for a manor house in Opinogóra, I prize: J. Gałęzowski (on the left), II prize: J. Czajkowski (on the right) [„Architekt” 1908, no. 4]

⁷⁷ The project was materialized finally between the years 2006–2008, with contemporary materials and techniques, which did not seem to improve the general look of the building.

⁷⁸ However, the winning project resembles more of a palace rather than a landowner’s manor house. The actual building was constructed after the Great War, in the spirit of ‘French Baroque,’ according to a more humble design by Bogdan Treter. More: P. Szlezynger, *Dwór szlachecki w Niegowici – historia, problemy konserwatorskie*, „Ochrona Zabytków” 2012, no. 1–4, p. 50.

⁷⁹ It has to be added that this project was not accepted at the exhibition because of political correctness, as Polish architects, who represented a nonexistent country were not allowed to participate. *Konkurs na szkice dworku polskiego na wystawie w Rzymie*, „Architekt” 1910, no. 5, p. 80.

⁸⁰ For example, Romuald Gutt’s project was awarded for its approach, with modernization of specific formal motifs. From the other hand, Tadeusz Szanior’s work was



The competition designs for a small manor house, displayed at the International Exhibition of Art in Rome (1911), awarded designs from 1910 by J. Czajkowski (on the left) and J. Jankowski (center) and T. Makłowski (on the right) [*„Architekt”* 1910, no. 5]

Niegović) showed the possible directions in which the national style could develop. Many of the new manor houses constructed between the wars in Poland were inspired by designs of those competition entries. They may be considered as the link between country and urban architecture, because according to the summary report produced for the “*Architekt*” magazine after the jubilee exhibition in Rome, this form of manor house was supposed to define the further directions for developments of housing architecture in general:

Our architects have addressed ... the question about the character of future developments of Polish residential buildings, whether it is for individual houses in villages surrounded by a gardens or countryside, that are now becoming the ideal of a housing in general, even in towns, of course those considered as modern.⁸¹

This type of a manor house associated with the Polish nobility became an ideal for the interwar architecture being ‘national.’ Its formal vocabulary was mainly characterized by a single-storey buildings with corner projecting pavillions, high-hipped roof and garret rooms.⁸² Various porticos and porches with small columns were often added to the building. The stylistic concepts were mainly derived from the ‘Polish Baroque,’ ‘Empire’ styles or the various modes of classical tradition. Such vocabulary remained the stylistic base for the so called ‘Manor House

criticized for lack of understanding of vernacular motifs. J. Jankowski and T. Mokłowski’s designs of a picturesque facade from Lviv were appreciated. *Konkursy*, *„Architekt”* 1910, no. 4, p. 69-70.

⁸¹ *„Architekt”* 1910, no. 4, p. 69.

⁸² Szlezzynger, *op. cit.*, p. 50.



style,' popular until the 1930s.⁸³ Its roots can be traced before the Great War, when the expedient atmosphere of traditionalism characterized the artistic scenes in Europe.⁸⁴ Marta Leśniakowska,⁸⁵ quoting Andrzej Olszewski, interprets this style as a Polish version of the contemporary concepts of 'rational' residential architecture formulated by the Arts and Crafts movement. This idea was expressed in the architecture of English cottages and had a significant influence on the development of medium and small single family homes for the middle classes in the contemporary Europe. In Poland it was adapted to buildings based on the local traditions and merged with esthetic expectations of the Polish national style, based on the conviction that

The manor house in Kuznocin (1923-1924 by architect Franciszek Morawski) [courtesy Muzeum Ziemi Sochaczewskiej i Pola Bitwy nad Bzurą]

...the past has left us some really beautiful manor houses that are in harmony with Polish nature and Polish landscape. A Polish manor house is unpretentious. It is pretty. It invites the eye to linger on it. It invites people to live in it."⁸⁶

⁸³ Rozbicka, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

⁸⁵ M. Leśniakowska, *Polski dwór, wzorce architektoniczne, mit, symbol*, Warszawa 1996, p. 60.

⁸⁶ *Wystawa architektoniczna Józefa Czajkowskiego w T.Z.S.P.*, „Tygodnik Ilustrowany” 1919, no. 5, p. 77.

The designs of the landowners' manor houses turned out to be flexible enough so that adaptations did not require fundamental changes to the basic structure and distinctness of the facades of the model. The new manors erected in the interwar period like these in Adamowizna, Gołębiówka or Osiek turned out to be perceived as patterns for the style of urban housing for civil servants. These manors were solid, with a touch of Classicism in their style, with gambrel roofs, elevated gables highlighting the central part of the building and porched entrances. Also a significant group of buildings which were supposed to bear formal marks of Polishness, based on the manor house designs, were houses built by the state for office and factory workers in urban residential neighborhoods. "Manor houses in the Polish style, built in the period between the wars, were not much different from the houses of lawyers, army officers, doctors, businessmen or engineers."⁸⁷ State-built settlements for clerks and officials were erected in almost all of the bigger towns of eastern provinces (Nowogrodek, Polesie, Volhynia and Vilnius Voivodeships). According to the official publication, constructing the houses and civic buildings in a traditional Polish way was also in a direct political purpose of:

...carrying on the work of our ancestors who introduced Polish culture to the East, and to change the local residents' commonly held opinion,⁸⁸ that Polish administration on the eastern borderlands was only temporary.⁸⁹

It was also a much urgent response to material requirements. According to the report published in 1925 as a comment to the reproductions of architectural housing designs prepared especially for the eastern parts of Poland, "the need for housing for civil servants was immense in the whole of Poland, but in the eastern territories it swelled to disastrous dimensions."⁹⁰ Due to the necessity to work quickly and on a vast scale, a decision was made to use ready-made designs.⁹¹ How-

⁸⁷ P. Libicki, M. Libicki, *Dwory i pałace wiejskie na Mazowszu*, Warszawa 2009, p. 186. The authors compared manors in Adamowizna, Boguszkówka, Ujazdów and Kurczowa Wieś with clerk houses in Warsaw, Konstancin, Milanówek and Podkowa Leśna.

⁸⁸ Reinforced by Communist Party of Western Belarus and Communist Party of Western Ukraine, as well as by an unstable and hazardous situation in the border area caused by numerous Soviet assaults.

⁸⁹ *Budowa domów dla urzędników państwowych w województwach wschodnich*, Warszawa 1925, p. 12.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

⁹¹ Some of them were put together from prefabricated elements manufactured in a state factory in Persenkówka near Lviv, which lowered their costs considerably. "Kresy" 1925, no. 8, p. 5.



ever, there was a recommendation that these should be “harmonized with the local buildings and ought to follow the rules of contemporary urban planning.”⁹² In accordance with the program established by the Ministry of Public Works, 180 (or 189⁹³) residential buildings⁹⁴ were expected to be erected in 44 towns,⁹⁵ mostly in seats of county administration. By January 1925 eighty-one of them were completed.⁹⁶ Later, these ‘colonies’ for government administration were supplemented by construction of public buildings.

One of the best preserved of such residential areas can still be found in Brest (Brześć on-the-Bug), the former capital city of Polesie Province, destroyed by the Russian army during its withdrawal in September of 1915. The construction of the New District, situated between the old town and the fortress, was started in 1924. It consisted of

Brześć on-the-Bug, urban housing estate for state officials, typical house for two families, now housing the municipal museum [photo by Julia Mickiewicz, 2015]

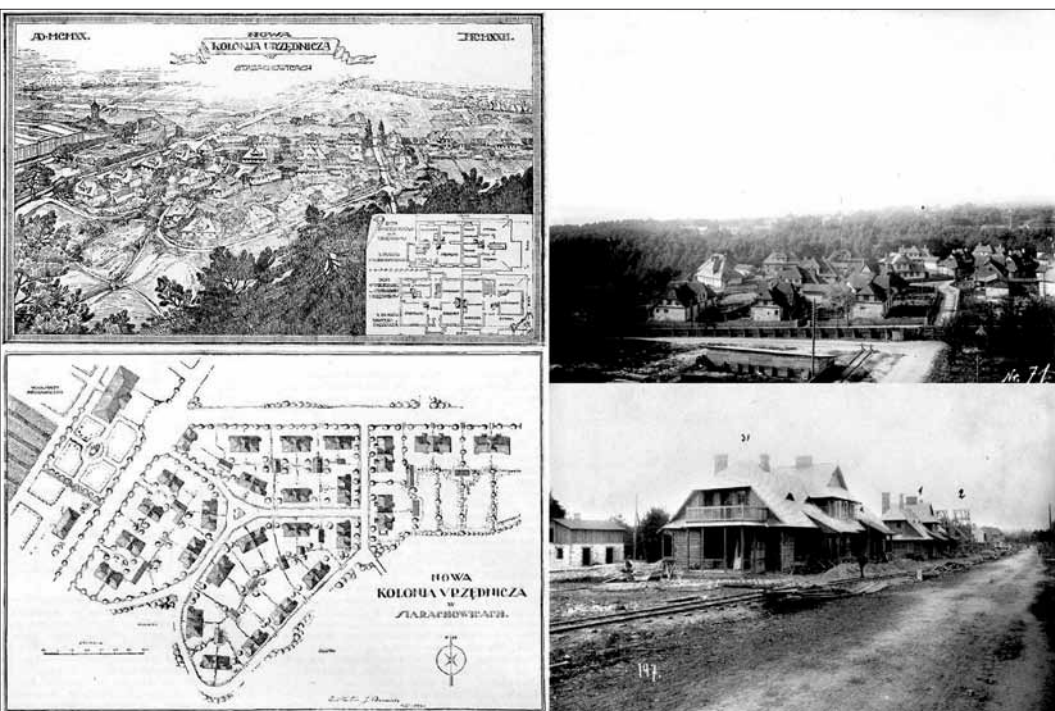
⁹² In order to achieve this 32 urban plans were prepared. *Budowa domów dla urzędników państwowych...*, p. 5-6. On this subject, compare Marek Czapelski's essay in this volume.

⁹³ According to „Kresy” 1925, no. 8, p. 4.

⁹⁴ *Budowa pomieszczeń dla korpusu ochrony pogranicza i domów dla urzędników państwowych w województwach wschodnich*, Warszawa 1925, p. 3.

⁹⁵ The towns which were rebuilt included: Braśław, Hermanowicze, Szarkowiczyna, Zalesie, Plissa, Głębokie, Święciany, Duniłowicze, Smorgnie, Wilejka, Olkieniki, Wołożyn, Lida, Horodyszcze, Nowogródek, Stołpce, Nieśwież, Baranowicze, Słonim, Kossów Poleski, Prużana, Kobryń, Drohiczyn, Pińsk, Brześć-on-the-Bug, Stolin, Kamień Koszyrski, Sarny, Kowel, Luboml, Włodzimierz, Łuck, Równe, Horohów, Krzemieniec.

⁹⁶ *Budowa domów dla urzędników państwowych...*, p. 6, p. 11.



Urban housing estate for state and local administration officials in Starachowice, perspective rendering, plan and interwar photograph views [courtesy Urząd Miejski in Starachowice]

an administrative zone and four suburban areas (Oficerska, Schronisko, Tartak and the biggest one – Gabriela Narutowicza, named after the first President of the restored Second Polish Republic). These areas, often named also as ‘colonies’ consisted of multi-family residential blocks, in their plan resembling Ebenezer Howard’s (1850-1928) idea of a garden city. The management of the building site was entrusted to an engineering graduate of the University of Karlsruhe, architect Marian Lisiecki (1881-1944), who had actually designed some of the buildings which were to be erected. The design of these was very close to the above mentioned manor houses. While keeping standards of the national style they had a more ‘modernist’ appearance. The best example of his approach is the building that now houses the Museum of Town History, originally designed to accomodate two families.

Villas or houses in residential areas which looked like manors were not only built in ‘*Kresy*.’ They also appeared in the rebuilt and expanded cities of central Poland – in the Olsza and Officers district of Cracow, in the Professors’ and Officers’ parts of Żoliborz in Warsaw or in the First Warsaw Housing Cooperation District designed by Bruno Zborowski

(1888-1983) but destroyed in 1944 during the Warsaw Uprising. Finally, such pattern was also popular in many smaller towns. One such example is the so called Clerks' neighborhood designed by Jan Borowski (1890-1966) for an architectural competition and built from 1921 to 1922 around a new weapons factory in Starachowice.⁹⁷

Public Buildings for Government, Military or Railroad Companies

As I have already stressed special attention has to be paid to the eastern provinces, which had to wait for peace until March 1921⁹⁸ and even then were regarded as insecure areas, often portrayed in Polish mass media as the conflict zone of western and eastern civilizations:

‘Kresy,’ notorious for robberies, needed the most intensive work for their development. It is difficult to find any area in Poland where so much was built as there. This construction movement shows Poland’s historic mission, in opposition to such a different Russian spirit of destruction.⁹⁹

The long (of 1442, 657 km) and dangerous borderline received new military protection in the end of 1924. The Government created the Border Protection Corps (KOP).¹⁰⁰ The organization of its units was accompanied by a huge building program which was aimed at establishing a material base for the Corps. “The building program for the Construction of the Border Protection Corps required the erection of 238 guardhouses and 111 support buildings. Due to the lack of funding the

⁹⁷ J. Borowski, *Nowa kolonia urzędnicza w Starachowicach ziemi radomskiej*, „Architekt” 1923, no. 3, p. 27, illustrations p. 26, 29.

⁹⁸ The Polish eastern border was eventually established after the Polish-Bolshevik war, at the Treaty of Riga of 1921.

⁹⁹ *Kronika Lokalna: Dziennikarze warszawscy w Łucku*, „Lud Boży” 1925, no. 22, p. 192.

¹⁰⁰ There was constant unrest in the region due to the intensification of aggressive activities of Soviet factions supported by the authorities of the Soviet Republic, which did not observe the agreements of the treaty. In 1924, more than 200 assaults and acts of diversion were committed in the Polish – Soviet border area. The Corps were established as a direct result of a robbery led by a Red Army officer in a unit in Stołpce (Nowogródek Province). During the robbery a railway station and police headquarters were destroyed, and houses and shops were plundered as well. W. Materski, *Na widcie. II Rzeczpospolita wobec Sowietów 1918-1943*, Warszawa 2005, p. 258-259.



The railway station in Żyrardów from 1920s, designed by Romuald Miller [courtesy Muzeum Kolejnictwa, Warsaw]

number was reduced to 61 guardhouses and 134 support buildings.”¹⁰¹ The construction of housing for civil servants, which had started earlier, was carried on simultaneously. As regarding eastern provinces of Poland, articles in current magazines showed that private initiatives were not able to obtain funding or loans in the first interwar years, so most of the construction in the 1920s was government-based.¹⁰² The question of national style in the designs of erected buildings was a frequently discussed topic in reports regarding the reconstruction of the borderline territories:

If we discuss the postwar building ..., the true builders of the eastern territories should be mentioned, who put in a lot of work and energy into the building movement, which was the real work to strengthen the Polishness.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ *Budowa pomieszczeń dla korpusu ochrony pogranicza...*, vol. 3, p. 4.

¹⁰² “Shortage of financial credit makes private building practically impossible... Only the Polish State builds a lot, firstly because of necessity and secondly because it has the financial means. As a result, post-war construction is mostly government-backed in its character – here in borderlands it is even more often the case as in central [parts of Poland]. Private initiative moves at a slower pace but if the economic situation gets better, it will definitely prosper.” Quote from *Budownictwo powojenne na Polesiu*, „Kresy Ilustrowane” 1925, no. 8, p. 2.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

Such statements were related while describing smaller buildings too, less vital for administrative or political purposes.

At the beginning of the season, we were building linemen's houses along the road from Brześć to Kossowo. Seven of them were completed. Although the work was minor, it was interesting. The buildings were pretty, in the Polish style.¹⁰⁴

Last but not least, of special interest for architects and authorities were the new or reconstructed railway stations built all over the country.¹⁰⁵ In the period between the wars about 600 of them were erected.¹⁰⁶ Their designers also frequently copied forms of the national style, drawing from the 'Baroque' or 'manor house style' heritage. Designs by Romuald Miller (1882-1945) (e.g. in Pruszków, Żyrardów, Grodzisk Mazowiecki and Gdynia) and Konstanty Jakimowicz (1879-1960) (in Wilanów, Klarysew, Otwock) belong to the most representative of this type.

Reconstruction of Roman Catholic Churches

During debates on national style a special role in shaping the Polish landscape was given to architecture of Roman Catholic churches, which for the public opinion, especially in 'Kresy' were often associated with ethnic-nation-based concept of Polishness.¹⁰⁷ This can be compared to the role of the Orthodox church architecture as a container or symbol of the Imperial Russian hegemony. So the rebuilding or even demolition of Orthodox churches was politically or nationally motivated during the interwar period.¹⁰⁸ However, in spite of a few cases, the problem of endorsing

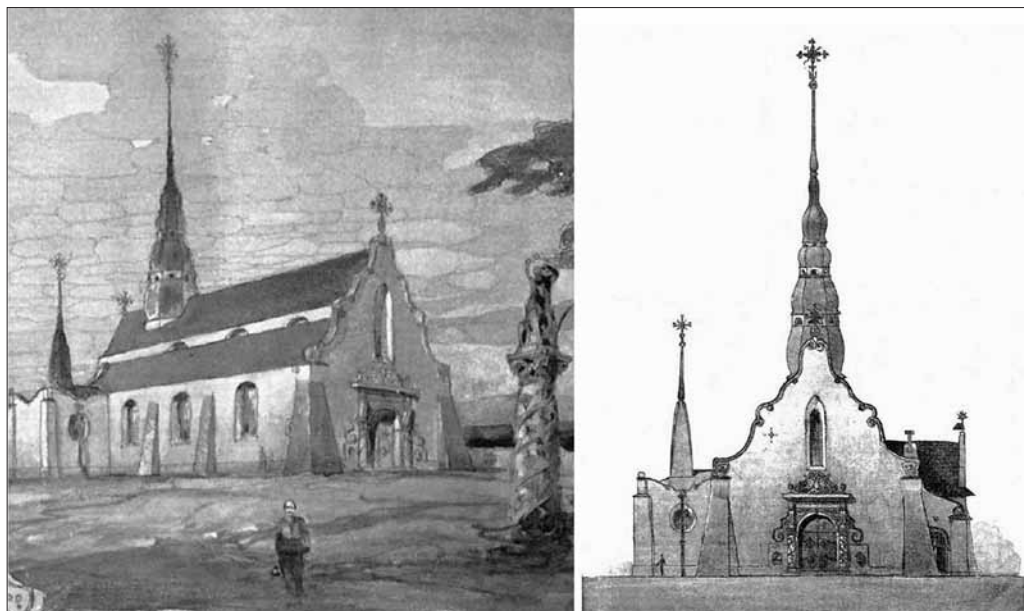
¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁵ According to some assessments, four thousand railway buildings were destroyed during the Great War. H. Faryna-Paszkiewicz, *Geometria wyobraźni, szkice o architekturze dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*, Gdańsk 2003, p. 259.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 259; *Polskie Koleje państwowe 1918 – 1928*, Warszawa 1929, p. 60.

¹⁰⁷ „national affiliation used to be evaluated only according to the Roman Catholic religion,” as commented by one architect. See: W. Dayczak, *Z dni wielkich przemian (wspomnienia architekta)*, vol. 1, Jarosław 1963-1968, p. 61; Borowik, *op. cit.*, p. 215. „in the local population's eyes Polishness nature and Catholicism are being identified” the letter of administrator of Łubnice district, after M. Zgliński, *Forteca i znicz. Nowe kościoły katolickie w województwie poleskim (1921-1939)*, [in:] *Sztuka kresów wschodnich...*, vol. 7, p. 260.

¹⁰⁸ For this issue see Elżbieta Błotnicka's Mazur and Piotr Zubowski's essays in this volume.



Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz,
design for a typical
village church in the
Kingdom of Poland
[„Architekt” 1910, no. 9]

a parliamentary bill¹⁰⁹ regarding the revendication of Catholic churches which had been turned into Orthodox ones occurred.¹¹⁰ A significant number of Catholic places of worship in the eastern provinces (of Lviv, Ternopil, Stanisławów) were constructed because some churches had been destroyed during the war, others were still not reclaimed and finally, as a result of increase of Roman Catholic population, as many new settlers had arrived in the area.¹¹¹

Szysko-Bohusz was undoubtedly the initiator of the national current in Polish sacral architecture.¹¹² His design for a typical rural church for the Polish Kingdom (1909)¹¹³ was a very creative interpretation of

¹⁰⁹ It was issued on 12th May of 1919, demanding the return of all Roman-Catholic churches and chapels which had been changed into Orthodox temples.

¹¹⁰ *Lepiej późno niż wcale*, „Lud Boży” 1924, no. 44, p. 356-7: „In Volhynia, there are 17 Roman-Catholic churches and 46 Uniate-Catholic churches, which are still administered by orthodox clergy.”

¹¹¹ More: Borowik, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

¹¹² In the meaning specified by architects of the period between the wars. See: F. Burno, *Świątynie nowego państwa. Kościoły rzymskokatolickie II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 2012.

¹¹³ *Kronika*, „Architekt” 1910, no. 9, p. 134-135. The term Polish Kingdom is used here to name 10 Polish provinces that were part of the former Commonwealth. The Kingdom was established in 1815 at the Vienna Congress and during the nineteenth century was mostly unified with the Russian Empire, forming the Warsaw General-Governorate between 1867-1915. Sometimes called Kongress Poland or Russian Poland.

provincial church architecture of Early Modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Several works of his students from Lviv followed a similar pattern, to recall designs by Jan Siemiątkowski, Zygmunt Kuczyński and later Bronisław Wiktor (1886-1961). Zdzisław Mączyński (1878-1961) from Warsaw received the first prize for his design of a church in Mąkoszyn before 1914 (Nieszawa county, Polish Kingdom). His design had a perpendicular, soaring roof, supported by an undulating wall encompassing window arches, massive buttresses and a tower. In its overall appearance of the design for Mąkoszyn was similar in character to



the afore mentioned church proposed by Szyszko-Bohusz, being affiliated to the national style discourse. Also another project by Mączyński, the one awarded during the competition for the church in Galician Limanowa, also belonged to the picturesque, Polish national trend. Both of the mentioned churches were constructed during the Great War, but because their architecture presented features that were regarded as being 'typically Polish,' they were considered as one of the starting points for the architecture of Poland during the reconstruction period.

After the independence had been regained, the most characteristic national trend in church architecture was the so called 'Eastern-Lesser Poland style.' Its most successful examples were constructed in the district of Lviv thanks to the official monument conservator Józef Piotrowski. He propagated the national style in the reconstruction of eastern parts of Poland, being also able to support financial means.¹¹⁴ An excellent example of this esthetic is the church in Stara Sól, rebuilt from wartime destructions by Wiktor, who followed Szyszko-Bohusz's ideas and Piotrowski's recommendations. The latter were based on the idea of 'creative conservation,'¹¹⁵ which allowed an architect to leave the mark

The church in Mąkoszyn, design submitted to a competition, 1 prize by architect Zdzisław Mączyński, rendering [„Architekt” 1911, no. 4-5]

¹¹⁴ Borowik, *op. cit.*, p. 211-228.

¹¹⁵ The 'creative conservation' was an approach that rejected reconstruction, rebuilding or conservation in favour of complex adaptation to modern functions, in-



The church of Saint Michael in Stara Sól
[photo by Grzegorz Rąkowski, 2008]

of his epoch on the historic building he was reconstructing. The new facade with an uneven line of gable and rich sculpted details, with the new, domed chapel of the Holy Trinity, the new addition of a vestibule also with a cupola and finally, the modernized architectural details gave the church a characteristic touch of the national style, based on the Polish provincial 'Baroque' motives. This building can be regarded as one of the interwar Poland's architectural pearls, which now, after a long period of negligence, is fighting for survival and the restoration of its parish life.¹¹⁶

A much better was the fortune of the Roman Catholic church buildings that stayed within the Polish borders after the World War II. Worth mentioning is the church of the Holy Trinity in Rudnik-on-the-San,¹¹⁷ built according to the winning design of Lviv-based architect Jan Bagieński's (1883-1967). This is another example of one of the late buildings erected in the national style with a much more simplified form, lacking the formerly popular sculpted decorations but still 'Baroque' in shape. This church did not suffer during the World War II, and still serves its parishioners in an unchanged form.

cluding rebuilding in contemporary, creative fashion to supplement original values of historic architecture. See: A. Szyszko-Bohusz, *Stosunek sztuki nowoczesnej do konserwacji zabytków*, „Rocznik Architektoniczny Uczniów prof. Szyszko-Bohusza w Szkole Politechnicznej Lwowskiej,” 1912-1913 (1); Piotrowski, *Ochrona zabytków a odbudowa kraju...*; J. Czubiński, *Wawelski spór Stanisława Tomkowicza z Adolfem Szyszko-Bohuszem*. „Wiadomości Konserwatorskie – Journal of Heritage Conservation” 2013, no. 36, s. 38-45.

¹¹⁶ In the Stalinist period the church was turned into an explosives arsenal. In the 1970s a fire engulfed it. It was extinguished with brine (!), which increased the damages.

¹¹⁷ The former church was burnt down during the Great War. Preparations to its reconstruction lasted until 1920, but it was rebuilt between the years 1927-1928.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is worth drawing attention to the extraordinary unanimity among architects of that particular period in adopting 'national' architectural forms. This can be seen in the report from the exhibition Village and Town, where the general agreement about the character of national architecture was stated, despite the fact that its materialization was taking different forms.¹¹⁸ Architectural historian Andrzej Olszewski drew attention to the fact that for some time that style was followed by almost all active architects.¹¹⁹

From the late 1920s, the 'Polish national style,' often simply called the 'manor house style,' have been slowly supplanted by 'functionalism'/'modernism,' especially in towns. Despite being disparagingly called as "provincial traditionalism,"¹²⁰ despite the accusation that it shaped mainly residential buildings and not public ones (apart from railway stations and churches), it is undoubtedly an important part of the architectural heritage of Poland's rebirth. It was an expression of the architects' sincere concern for a new, but rooted in tradition, architectural landscape and also for their wish to preserve the identity of the cultural legacy they were accountable for. It provides the evidence that the architects of that time were deeply convinced about the role of the 'Polish architecture' in the restoration of a national identity.

S. ANNA TEJSZERSKA

National Style in the Reconstruction of Poland After World War I – Theory and Practice

This article attempts to show how ideas of an emerging Polish national style in architecture were developed through the creativity of architects who were concerned with the direction that reconstruction would take after years of occupation and the First World War. It presents the efforts that were made through publications and architectural plans in forming the new landscape of a country devastated by war. It shows unanimity amongst architects in their ideology, while at the same time variety in their creative interpretations. It presents different approaches to the creation of a national style, in the decade very significant for the Polish culture and architecture, a period following the World War I in the realities of the reborn Second Polish Republic.

¹¹⁸ Jakimowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

¹¹⁹ Olszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 30, 35.

¹²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 195 (text concerning Paweł Wędziągolski's outlook).