



Original text published in Polish:
Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka,
1989, vol. 60, no. 4, p. 121-142
PL ISSN 0037-7511

ADAM GALOS

Wilhelm Feldman in Germany in the years 1894-1895

According to a widespread opinion among scholars dealing with Wilhelm Feldman, editor of the Kraków monthly *Krytyka*, his activity in Berlin during World War I remains the most unknown part of his biography which still awaits thorough study¹. At the same time we know perfectly well that Feldman's departure to the Reich's capital in September 1914 took place suddenly, following the overcoming of his initial resistance, for he intended to take up arms and fight for national causes. It would seem useful to determine the nature of Feldman's earlier contacts with Germans and his opinion on the German state and society, as well as his stance on the situation in the Prussian Partition. To a certain degree it is possible to describe in what mind-set he departed to Berlin with an extremely difficult, if at all possible to be accomplished, mission². Prior to 1914 Feldman was already an advocate of the so-called 'pro-independence programme', but indications thereof had been evident much earlier. What also needs to be mentioned is his attitude towards Russia regarding the existing and famous dispute over orientations. Closer examination of Feldman's statements allows one to consider also his other views.

What is of pivotal importance for the dozen or so years of Feldman's life in the 20th century is the Cracow monthly *Krytyka*—though this material should be also extended by other printed material, especially Feldman's *Dzieje polskiej myśli politycznej w okresie porozbiorowym*, as well as fragments of his correspondence (in spite of the fact that the existing body of this material contains only a fraction of letters produced by Feldman himself), and what is crucial for his stay in Germany in the years 1894–1895, next to merely a couple of letters, is his correspondence published in two periodicals: Saint Petersburg's *Kraj* and Warsaw's *Przegląd Tygodniowy*. That Feldman wrote a number of letters is a fact proven by literature of the subject, but these letters have not yet been thoroughly analysed, and what is important is that they contain plenty of interesting information on Feldman's attitude towards Germany.

Feldman was to a large extent a self-taught person; however, in spite of being very well acquainted with a vast number of various literary works in several languages, he also made use of various education opportunities at a number of international universities. Most probably, while not being a student he attended some lectures at the University of Kraków. Although he was most focused on broadly-defined issues of culture, philosophy literature or arts, and later also history, he also devoted much attention to political and social issues. When it comes to politics, he was rather a commentator than an activist, though with some exceptions. His political activity would gain on strength in the 20th century and its peak time fell on the so-called 'Berlin period'

¹ Cf. views of various scholars in: A. Galos, 'Koniec misji berlińskiej Wilhelma Feldmana' (*Sobótka*, R. LX, 2005, issue no. 1, p. 1).

² On the attitude towards Germany, based on part of available printed sources in: W. Suleja, 'Problematyka narodowa w krakowskiej publicystyce W. Feldmana w latach 1898–1913' (*Sobótka*, R. XXIX, 1974, pp. 505–548).



during the war, when to a certain degree he had to occupy himself with a domain as difficult as diplomacy (although even at that time issues of culture did not escape his attention).

As it has been already mentioned, in the years 1894–1895 Feldman stayed in Germany, first in Heidelberg, then in Berlin, from where he set out for a short journey to Paris.

He was well prepared to the trip to Heidelberg, which may be deduced from his choice of professors whose lectures he intended to attend. This was a deliberate and ambitious plan. Kuno Fischer was one of most eminent historians of philosophy and a representative of the second generation of supporters of Kant's philosophy, and Feldman chose his lectures on Kant, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Lujo (Ludwig) Joseph Brentano, economist and sociologist, belonged to the famous school of political economy. Ulrich Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (brother of the *Oberregierungspräsident* of the province of Poznań) was a classical philologist, a Hellenist, an advocate of using a historical method in the interpretation of Greek literature. Gustav Schmoller, co-founder of 'Verein für Sozialpolitik', the body of the so-called 'socialists from the lecturer's bench' (which would find its reflection in Feldman's correspondence), was one of most outstanding representatives of historic school of political economy. Georg Simmel, philosopher, Neo-Kantianist and theoretician of culture, combined his interests with sociology. In Berlin, Feldman, perhaps, attended lectures of Aleksander Brückner, who as a Slavist focused not only on Polish language and literature, but also on history of culture. Feldman's personal contacts with Brückner developed only few years later (when Feldman published in 1902 first edition of *Współczesna literatura polska*³), and evolved into closer ones following 1914.

As we see, this was an array of excellent scholars, although at some point later Feldman's statements on German professors in general became strongly critical. He accused them of 'passivity of mind and lack of individualism', he reproached them for the fact that 'they enclose themselves in the world of books, theories and philosophical investigations'; and 'their brain cells [are] incapable of assimilating anything which is not connected in one way or another with wise aspects of their speciality, books, nightcaps, bedroom slippers, petticoats or rather petticoat government of »der Frau Professor«, these are the worldly resources of a German professor'⁴. His hot social temperament made him accuse them of living in ivory towers, but he nonetheless truly appreciated their knowledge.

Feldman arrived in Heidelberg around the end of October, 1894 (on the 11th of November he wrote that he had stayed there for 12 days). According to his personal reports, his time there was entirely devoted to studying: every day he first diligently listened to the lectures and then, at home, recorded them on paper. 'This is what my whole life is about', he wrote. Feldman lived in isolation, like a castaway on a desert island, and had no contacts with other people whatsoever, 'I have not a single acquaintance'. For the sake of reading—for this was his third principal activity—he kept neglecting the visits to the municipal canteen, which could have been a meeting point for the local intellectuals. 'As a matter of fact I am cut off from the world—just like the

³ The letters of A. Brückner of 18th of November 1903, 27th of January 1904, 9th of November 1904, 15th of February 1906, Department of Manuscripts in the Ossolineum Library in Wrocław (hereafter referred to as: Oss), 12 277 III. pp. 348–353.

⁴ *Przegląd Tygodniowy* (hereafter referred to as: PT), R. XIII, no. 17, 15 (27) IV 1895, p. 199.



entire Heidelberg'. 'Due to the lack of industry the town lives of the students and visiting foreigners', who flocked there in great numbers indeed. This brought many advantages to Feldman—'This is the only place suitable for both working and contemplation'. Yet, he nonetheless must have engaged in some contacts with people who surrounded him as he wrote: 'I enter new forms of existence with the population'. Besides, his letters were not always in line with the actual truth. Several years later, Kazimierz Przerwa Tetmajer reminded Feldman that he had met him in Heidelberg, at the time when as many as a dozen or so other Poles were also staying there⁵. This was not an easy period for Feldman, for as he admitted: 'I never tried to learn and work decently', as a result of which he was often forced to learn lectures by heart⁶.

In March, 1895, he was already staying in Berlin, but during the Green Week holidays (the 2nd of June) he took a journey to Paris. This was made possible thanks to one of his youngest friends (scholars have not yet found who he was). Feldman returned to Berlin on the 15th of June, which means that his sojourn by the river Seine lasted around two weeks. On departure he was full of anxiety, but he returned convinced that his stay in 'the city of light' was necessary for his further artistic development. He mainly occupied himself with art, and following this journey he was 'full of Paris', and not only content, but also convinced that his life will continue happily as he started to believe in himself⁷. He was a frequent guest in Galicia, and in the first half of August he paid a visit to his family town of Zbaraż⁸.

His stay in Berlin was much more varied than that in Heidelberg. Frequent contacts with friends; social meetings or 'spiritual conferences' were held at his residence and participated by Tadeusz Miciński, Franciszek Mirandola (Pik), Adam Krasiński, Ferdynand Hoesick and K. Przerwa Tetmajer⁹.

According to some records he took part in the so-called 'Polish schools' (Polish: *szkółki polskie*)¹⁰. These were in other words, to use a somewhat anachronistic term, clandestine classes (Polish: *komplety*), during which several dozen children, two to three times a week and two to four hours a day, were taught reading and writing in Polish, arithmetic, as well as basic facts about Polish literature and history. Actually, this was not an illegal initiative.

Initially, school authorities of Berlin verified only the teachers' qualifications to teach lessons. In the capital, sensitivity to the issue of Polish educational activity was much smaller than in the eastern provinces of the Prussian state. Nonetheless the Provincial School College, alarmed by the news of the activity of such schools, communicated its fears to the Ministry of Education (*Kultusministerium*), which resulted with police interventions, bans, fines, and eventually with the schools being closed down¹¹. Therefore, most probably, it was this particular activity of his that became the

⁵ K. Przerwa Tetmajer, *List otwarty do p. Wilhelma Feldmana* (Warszawa 5 VI 1909), p. 7.

⁶ The letter to N. Teltz of the 11th of November 1894, Oss. 12 289 III, pp. 193–196.

⁷ The letter List do N. Teltz of the 15th of June 1895, *ibidem*, pp. 199–202.

⁸ The letters to N. Teltz of the 8th of July, the 9th of July 1895, *ibidem*, pp. 203–207.

⁹ A. Jazowski, *Poglądy Wilhelma Feldmana jako krytyka literackiego*, Wrocław 1970, p. 24, based on the letters of K. Przerwa Tetmajer.

¹⁰ *J. Miś*, 'Idea niepodległości w myśli politycznej Wilhelma Feldmana' (*Twórcy polskiej myśli politycznej, Polska Myśl Polityczna XIX i XX w.*, vol. IV, Wrocław 1978, pp. 110–111).

¹¹ Materials on some of the 'Polish schools' in Zentralstaatsarchiv Merseburg (currently: Berlin–Dahlem), Rep. 77, Tit, 871, Adhib. V. Polenbewegung in der Stadt Berlin, vol. I, b.p.



reason for classifying Feldman as *'lastiger Auslander'* and driving him out of the borderland of Prussia. Already the very fact of him engaging in this sort of educational initiative proves that Feldman also maintained relations with Polish organisations in Berlin (these relations would worsen later on, as we will see).

Feldman was a supporter of socialism but his relations with the Polish Social Democratic Party of Galicia and Cieszyn Silesia was not always free of aggravation. Tensions also accompanied his visit to Berlin. He mentions the subject in letters to his friend Napoleon Teltz. In one of them Feldman reports that he had been drawing much closer to the local workers' movement, both social democratic and patriotic—in both cases these were most probably Polish socialists, those who remained closer to the German party or those who called for wider autonomy for the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) of the Prussian Partition. As a matter of fact both of them were strongly criticized by Feldman, who wrote: 'I do not know which one of them is sadder'. Although he claimed: 'I do not have the right to make judgements', he still wrote about Franciszek Morawski that 'he is the most decent man, but at the same time he is neither an agitator nor a representative of intelligentsia'. What he fingered to him was that in the previous election to Reichstag he received merely 800 votes, that is, 100 votes less than in the election before that¹². The comment was in fact imprecise, for in 1893, that is during the first elections following the abolition of the anti-socialist act, Morawski received exceptionally many, namely, 1102 votes in the district of Moravia, and in 1895, in the much more demanding district of Międzyrzecze-Babimost incomparably less—a result which was virtually impossible to be improved on. It is worth to mention that a couple years later, in 1898, in the district of Katowice-Zabrze Morawski received ca. 10 thousand votes, a record result never obtained by any Polish socialist candidate in Upper Silesia prior to the year 1914. What was also important was that Morawski supported pro-independence initiatives, and his purpose was also to lead to a clear autonomy of the Polish Socialist Party of the Prussian Partition, although he had to consider the fact that the publication of *Gazeta Robotnicza* (*The Workers' Gazette*) was to a large extent financed by the Social Democratic Party of Germany¹³. Undoubtedly, Polish socialists in Berlin were viewed by Feldman from the perspective of relations in Galicia, where opportunities for taking individual actions were incomparably greater.

These relations became rocky in September, following the publication of Feldman's article in *Gazeta Robotnicza*. The reason was a note, or a commentary, which appeared together with the text, where Feldman—as he claimed—was presented as an idiot and a traitor of the worker's cause.

It was mainly Ignacy Daszyński whom Feldman suspected of writing the note or giving inspiration to its author, adding that he 'cannot forget that he was to reconcile with me'¹⁴. It is hard to determine whether the unfavourable or even hostile note was produced by Daszyński (he held the office of editor of *Gazeta robotnicza* only for 5 months in 1891¹⁵, but it is possible that he could have had influence on the periodical also later). When it comes to the relations between Feldman and Daszyński, we have obviously strayed too far from our principal subject, nonetheless, it is still worth to mention that prior to the elections to the Council of State in Vienna in 1907, Daszyński

¹² List do N. Teltza z 8 VII 1895, Oss. 12 289 III, pp. 203–206.

¹³ A. Galos, *Morawski Franciszek* (*Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXI, pp. 712–714, Wrocław 1976).

¹⁴ The letter to N. Teltz, of the 7th of September 1895, Oss. 12 289 III, p. 213.

¹⁵ J. Feldman, *Daszyński Ignacy* (*Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. IV, p. 449).



wrote a letter to Feldman requesting him to support the election campaign of the Polish Social Democratic Party of Galicia, and to forget about resentments and mutual regrets. He wrote as follows: 'this relatively short time which passed, should be enough to relieve all damage inflicted upon both sides'... 'Discover a person in me who harbours no grudges against You and asks You to do the same'¹⁶. In *Krytyka*¹⁷ Feldman rather criticised the party, which: 'has been recently much harmed by various factors', though its *raison d'être* was indisputable. Feldman accepted the so-called 'minimum programme', whereas when it came to the 'maximum programme' he doubted whether it was possible to make it part of the agenda during the current term. He considered several candidates to be ideal, and Daszyński, despite his faults, he described as 'a person that could replace an entire army'. The worst thing was that he proposed to introduce a new faction named the Polish Party for Liberation (*Polska Partia Wyzwolenia*). The answer to this article was an extremely sharp attack of *Naprzód* against Feldman, described by Sieroszewski as boorishness¹⁸. The situation was appeased probably only in the pre-war years in connection with the formation of pro-independence organisations.

Feldman, who was always active, during his stay in Berlin occupied himself also with other matters. From Galicia he received new books and he wrote about them. What is nonetheless of particular importance is that he was also a diligent observer of German political scene. Both for the reason of his unique publicist temperament and for financial reasons, he engaged in writing correspondence to Saint Petersburg's periodical *Kraj* and Warsaw periodical *Przegląd Tygodniowy*. Vast majority of these articles proves how complex was Feldman's attitude towards Germany.

The situation in contemporary Germany was rather specific. In 1890, Bismarck was dismissed from his office, mainly due to the efforts of young Emperor Wilhelm II. The situation in the following years was commonly at the time described as 'the new course'. The Emperor made promises to introduce social policies and Chancellor of the Reich and Prussian Prime Minister Leo von Caprivi attempted to moderate the policy of foreign and internal affairs. In the face of protests, especially of the conservative circles, in 1892 Caprivi was forced to resign from the office of prime minister of Prussia, and in 1894 also from the office of chancellor. What was becoming increasingly evident was Wilhelm's tendency to take over chancellor's duties, all the more so that the new chancellor, ancient Chlodwig Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, was very passive. Plans to rebuild social legislation lapsed into oblivion. What was clearly gaining on force were conservatist and nationalist tendencies; at times designated as 'the era of Stumm-Halberg', a great industrialist from the Saar region. Pastors who remained in close relations with the Emperor, headed by Hofprediger Stoecker, were advised to limit to recruiting workers to their trade unions, and not to mix up in politics. Considerable reshufflings took place in the circle of Prussian ministers. What was one of the most striking moves was appointing an extreme conservatist Ernst Köller to the position of Minister of Internal Affairs, but at the same time people with similar views or simply good connections started to emerge also in other government departments.

This was connected with a significant increase in the number of pro-socialist members of parliament following the abolition of anti-social democratic act in the

¹⁶ List z 2 III 1907, Oss. 12 278 III, p. 103.

¹⁷ *Mowa nie kandydacka* (*Krytyka*, R. IX, vol. I, 1907, pp. 397–410).

¹⁸ The letter of the 10th of June 1907, Oss. 12 284, III, pp. 115–116.



Autumn of 1890, which was considered an indication of attempts to overthrow the existing political system of the Reich. On the 4th of December 1894, the parliament saw a submission of Köller's draft legislation against 'the coup' (*Umsturvorlage*), providing for an imprisonment sanction against persons making any attempts to 'undermine the existing state order'. The aforementioned order was defined as monarchic structure of government, social order, religion, but—on the whole—the notion was largely imprecise and allowed for much freedom in translation. The attack was targeted at socialists, but fears that the new law would be used to harm also science and arts (in cases they were considered by the government as carriers of 'pro-coup' tendencies).

The parliament, elected in 1893, passed a bill on enlargement of army, and also, against the conservatives, concluded a commercial treaty with Russia. In the face of a turnabout in the government policy, intensification of conservative and nationalist influences, the parliament found itself in a state of internal fragmentation. Although an agrarian Association of Farmers (*Bund der Landwirte*) was mollified, conservatives remained unsatisfied. The new government policy was supported only by liberal conservatives (in the parliament: the Reich's Party) and national liberals. Liberal left-wing politicians split into three parties. The 'Polish Circle' in view of the end of concessions of the era of Caprivi was moving to opposition. The decision was on the side of the strong Catholic Centre Party. To a certain degree it was ready for cooperation, but according to its own conditions. Both the harassments of the period of *Kulturkampf* as well as an unsuccessful attempt to increase the role of religion at schools (the draft legislation of Zedlitz-Trützschler of 1892) were not yet forgotten. Some importance was attributed to the moods in scientific and artistic circles; under pressure from public opinion the New Theatre in Berlin saw the premier performance of G. Hauptmann's *The Weavers* (*Die Weber*), but police had long objected to its staging in Wrocław, and justified their decision with Wrocław lying in close proximity to the actual location of the real revolt of weavers; eventually the permission for staging was issued, but on the condition that the prices of tickets be increased¹⁹.

The foretaste of Reichstag's stance was the fate of the proposal to present a tributary address for Bismarck on the occasion of his 80th birthday in March 1895. The bill on this matter was adopted by the Prussian sejm, but a similar one—to the outrage of the Emperor and nationalist circles—rejected by the parliament. Eventually, on the 11th of May 1895 Reichstag rejected the bill concerning the fight with 'the coup'. This did not calm the government and parties who supported its policy and over the following years, until 1899, when the bill on 'the prison act' providing for a punishment sanction for strike agitation—and especially for fighting against strike-breakers—was turned down, these parties made several attempts to tighten internal legal regulations. There emerged proposals of abolishing the four-point electoral law in the Reich. The Emperor, at least in Prussia, wanted to introduce an act which would allow for a more successful fight with the socialists, thereby winning the support of Köller. Alarmed by this fact, the chancellor described his fears for the outbreak of civil war and disintegration of the Reich. He also suspected that supporters of this sharp political turn would want to disgrace Wilhelm, but, in fact, he himself was also a participant of this action. During the celebrations of the 25th round anniversary of the victory of Prussia in the Battle of Sedan, in a speech delivered on the occasion the Emperor not only refrained

¹⁹ A. Galos, *Walka o wystawienie 'Tkaczy' Hauptmanna* (Zeszyty Wrocławskie, R. VI, 1952, no. 2, pp. 61–67).



from using any anti-French overtones, but he calmed Paris and mentioned an external enemy, a horde of people, unworthy of being called Germans. Such was the state of affairs in Germany, when Feldman was producing his commentaries.

German affairs in general found their immediate reflection in Polish newspapers. This considered political, economic, social, as well as cultural issues. Journalists of the Kingdom of Poland or Russia enjoyed much more freedom when writing about Germany than about Russia. At the same time views that were widespread in the Reich were in many respects closer to the Polish ones than in the case of other western countries, perhaps except France. This resulted with the fact that the Reich's issues were reflected in the Polish press. And most frequently critically evaluated. For instance, *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, one of the periodicals Feldman cooperated with, at the close of 1895 published a leading article where the German affairs were severely criticised. Its author claimed that ministerial positions are filled and later vacated by people from nowhere, without 'physiognomy'. A characteristic feature of local relations was acting 'behind the curtain' (although no one knew about the renowned representative of such secret policy, 'grey eminence' of Auswätiges Amt, Baron Holstein). The emperor mentioned unification of the society, but this unification could be based only on its discontentment. The Reichstag, with no majority, is governed by the Centre. National liberals strive to obtain immense benefices, but the voters embark on mass protests against their proposals. There reigns chaos, uncertainty and impotence. Conservatists are disgraced by a swindle concocted by Hammerstein, who stole almost 400 thousand marks from the *Kreuzzeitung's* safe. The domestic policy is devoid of energy, and Berlin is satisfied with small '*trinkgelds*'. The disintegrating state's last resort is to defend the status quo²⁰. Both periodicals devoted much attention to the rejection by the parliament of the tributary address for Bismarck. The state, for one thing, considered the debate as 'both very characteristic and very interesting chapter in the history of parliamentarism and political life', and, for another, quoted statements from the western press that the anti-Bismarck majority was accidental²¹. With clear reluctance did *Kraj* react to the appearance in Saint Petersburg of the new German ambassador, Radolin (as we know in 1988 he persuaded Emperor Frederic to change his name from Radoliński to Radolin). He assured him that he has nothing to do with Polishness (this assurance was of minor importance to the Russian opinion), at the same time rejecting German courtship of rapprochement to Russia²². Such were exemplary reports of other correspondents from Berlin at the time when Feldman was sending his own letters.

They were published in *Kraj* from April to the turn of December, when, as we know, Feldman was forced to leave Prussia. Initially, his letters were appearing under various titles, later they were being published in a newspaper section entitled The Echoes from the West, presenting reports of other correspondents, mainly from the Prussian Partition. Feldman's correspondence was also published in *Przegląd Tygodniowy* from April to November 1895. This volume of letters is smaller, and they are more focused on, for instance, literary aspects than on political issues. More often than not they appear in a section entitled The German Chronicle, together with reports of

²⁰ The stance of Germany (PT, R. XXX, no. 50, 2 (14) XII 1895, pp. 570–571). The access to archival issues of *Przegląd Tygodniowy* was much easier for me thanks to the great help of prof. M. Stolarczyk, for which I would like to thank him most sincerely.

²¹ *Kraj* (hereafter referred to as: K.), R. XIV, no. 12, 28 III (9 IV) 1895, pp. 12–22.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 23.



other correspondents. In general, *Kraj* published more news from foreign countries than *Przegląd*, and apart from this, it devoted much more attention to Greater Poland and other parts of the Prussian Partition. Presumably this was not unconnected with the fact that censorship in Warsaw was stricter than that in Saint Petersburg.

Feldman's attitude towards Germany was particularly well illustrated in his correspondence devoted to political issues, though these often also contained information on other questions. In his first letter, Feldman continued to focus on the issue of cult of Bismarck, which was already addressed by the editorial board some time earlier. The parliamentary debate was no longer in focus, but celebrations which were to be held on this occasion. Hostile attitude towards Bismarck as expressed by Polish public opinion was not an isolated case. It was a crucial determinant of Feldman's views on the 19th-century history, which was confirmed by his later works, especially the one entitled *Dzieje polskiej myśli politycznej*²³. He described the very ceremony as 'hurricane', but what was most characteristic was that he contrasted several tributary addresses with dozens of protests—and in fact not only with protests but also with the fact of the very absence of the ceremony. What was more important for Feldman than manifestations and protests was that public feelings were not manifested. He added ironically that if Bismarck had been born two years earlier, many doors would be now closed for him; he was referring to the situation from prior to 1892 when due to Wilhelm's reluctance towards the ex-chancellor Bismarck, during his visit in Austria he was riotously welcomed by the German nationalists, but on the order of the German Emperor he was ignored by the embassy. On conclusion Feldman stated that Bismarck's ceremony had nothing to do with true Germany.

On this occasion another interesting statement appeared in Feldman's correspondence. He was against the view that the subject of national independence should not be brought up, and that emphasis should be placed rather on developing European cooperation, and even leading to the establishment of 'the United States of Europe'. The year 1870 saw a rise in Europe of a new trend in journalism based on the conviction that following the unification of Italy and Germany, following the introduction of dualism in the Habsburg monarchy, the matter of national independence needs to be closed. Nations which failed to obtain independence had then rather small prospects for a change in this respect. This was not the first and not the last time when the issue of national independence was given up as a threat of destabilization of diplomatic relations in the old continent. This also hindered the efforts of Poland in this respect. What we may notice here is the genesis of a subsequent publication of a questionnaire in *Krytyka*, appealing to European public opinion for support for the Polish aspirations for independence. What was remarkable was that this took place during Feldman's stay in Germany²⁴.

Naturally, Feldman could not pass over the issue of the bill against 'the coup'. Catholics and the Centre Party—he wrote—are against the bill, and the government is unwilling to consent to an analogous bill prepared by the Centre. The government is to a large extent resorting to falsehood. The publicized alleged memorial of Georg Vollmar—one of socialist leaders, where he was to write that nothing more may be gained through parliamentary battle, and therefore suggested that it was necessary to change the

²³ The analysis of Feldman's views on the history of the attitude of Prussia and Germany towards the Polish affairs will be discussed in a separate article.

²⁴ K., R. XIV, no. 13, 30 III (11 IV) 1895, p. 21.



methods of combat—turned out to be a fake, as it was proven on the pages of the *Preussische Jahrbucher* by a renowned historian and conservative publicist Hans Delbrück. As a matter of fact, Feldman stated laconically that such acts were unable to destroy a movement with millions of supporters²⁵.

What was also characteristic about Feldman's attitude were his commentaries of the 25-anniversary of the victory of Prussia over France, and especially the anniversary of the Battle of Sedan celebrated at the outset of September. The occasional speech of the Emperor encouraged the author of the commentary to state: 'the fireworks are fading, and what comes to the fore is a harbinger of internal conflict'. Same was the tone of the description of the very celebrations. 'Not far from the main arteries of Berlin there starts another world'—he wrote—'a different world, a hostile world; masses gathered there either remain silent or criticise the celebrations, just as the official illuminations, garlands and flags were aimed against them. The Emperor was surrounded by 30 thousand children from folk schools lined up in rows, cordons of police, army and civil agents and eventually, in the far distance there stood a silent crowd with no flags or other emblems whatsoever'. The structure of this description makes it not only underline the existence of these two separate worlds but also herald an internal turmoil. In this second world Lassalle was venerated, and the juxtaposition actually highlighted a threat of revolution²⁶. Feldman was sensitive to social issues, and in connection to criticism towards the relations in Germany such surely exaggerated evaluation of situation was really hard to avoid.

In Feldman's commentaries, we may find much more similar remarks on the internal 'destruction' of social relations, which had its grounds also in the juxtaposition of Prussian spirit and liberalism or even socialism. He described futile attempts to arouse enthusiasm through an inauguration of the monument of Kronprinz Frederic (latter Emperor) near Würth, where he commanded the Prussian army in 1870.²⁷ He noted the emergence of a number of historic papers, but these did not mention the issue of counterfeiting the Ems Dispatch by Bismarck²⁸. The enthusiasm towards the celebrations was artificial, and it was expressed only by national-liberal newspapers and owners of bars. He added that there were frequent squabbles between the government and the parliament, for the funding allotted to the celebrations by the parliament was merely 4 million marks, whereas the government demanded that the sum be 8 million.

Feldman often criticized the Emperor. The act of laying foundation stone under the monument of Wilhelm I was considered by him as an attempt to create a false impression that the first emperor was greater than he really was—against the historical truth—and he also added that the Prince of Baden was the only German ruler who attended the event²⁹. In this particular case, Feldman was to a large extent right, for Wilhelm II wanted to make his grandfather be remembered as greater than he in fact was for the reason of his personal aversion towards his father, and the nickname he was using—the Great—never caught on. Feldman emphasized that the Emperor transformed the celebrations into a military event, where civilians were merely distant viewers. The reading of an English biography of the Emperor made him recount the ironic name given

²⁵ *Ibidem*, no. 17, 27 IV (9 V) 1895, pp. 21–22.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, no. 35, 31 VIII (12 IX) 1895, pp. 11.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, no. 42, 19 (31) X 1895, pp. 22–23.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, no. 28, 13 (27) VII 1895, pp. 21–22.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, no. 34, 29 VIII (5 IX) 1895, pp. 11–12.



to Wilhelm: '*Reisekaiser*'³⁰. Again, he contrasted grand celebrations with failures in the sphere of foreign affairs, bankruptcy of the new state currency, the defeat of government and the growing influence of socialism—a general growth of conflict.

Feldman did not devote much attention to foreign affairs. Nonetheless, in a note on Franz Joseph's visit in Szczecin during fleet manoeuvres, he highlighted that it did not make a good impression, and relations between the Reich and Austria-Hungary were evaluated by him as chilly. Vienna was mainly occupied with Bulgaria, and in Germany, according to him—not quite rightly—'the eastern issue' was still, as in 1878, 'not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier'³¹. It happened so that Berlin's policy towards Bulgaria was described by him as stemming from German nationalism³².

At times Feldman's letters constitute a chronicle of expressions of discontent, and, at the same time, of actual or heralded government repressions. What was left after the celebrations of the anniversary of the Battle of Sedan were only confiscations of periodicals, arrests of editors, bans on public gatherings and threats to introduce the state of siege. National liberals keep demanding the introduction of an act against the coup and the revival of cartel agreements (a pre-election agreement between two conservative parties and national liberals concluded in 1887). He aptly mentions rumours which were actually in circulation and which illustrated plans of the government or political parties; so was the case with the bill against the *Umsturz*, which was to be introduced in the Prussian sejm—in his commentary, Feldman describes the bill as emblematic of weakness of the government and claims that moderate circles perceived it as a coup d'état³³. He recounts repressions in Schleswig, where 20 teachers had been charged with severe fines for participation in a procession of a Danish nationalist organisation³⁴. The announcements of tightening the Prussian act on meetings and associations concealed the actual pressures of the Emperor, who—for instance—attempted to introduce an order demanding that public meetings be held in German³⁵. Besides the Emperor, Feldman also criticised ministers, Prussian government, as well as right-wing parties, and at times even entire society. In his texts he did not omit to inform about scandals (for instance about the aforementioned fraud of Hammerstein, against whom a warrant of arrest had been issued), as well as about the court camarilla³⁶, which would be only few years later disgraced by articles, published in the '*Zukunft*' weekly by its editor Maximilian Harden, on the subject of homosexuality, which was punishable at the time.

Feldman probably based his correspondence mostly on the Berlin press and wrote first and foremost about the German capital, for it was the place where all the threads of governance over both Reich and Prussia came together. The issue of his negative attitude towards this city will be addressed by us further in this paper. He mainly cooperated with left-wing-liberal newspapers, which were often thirsty for sensation and critically disposed towards the government. Even when his tone softened at times, for instance he pondered whether Wilhelm in his (aforementioned) speech of the 2nd of September was expressing only a surge of a ruler, 'whose sacred feelings

³⁰ *Ibidem*, no. 30, 27 VI (6 VII) 1895, pp. 13–14.

³¹ *Ibidem*, no. 23, 20 VI (2 VII) 1895, pp. 21–22.

³² *Ibidem*, no. 32, 10 (22) III 1895, pp. 16.

³³ *Ibidem*, no. 36, 7 (19) IX 1895, p. 14.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, no. 45, 9 (21) XI 1895, pp. 21–22.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, no. 40, 5 (17) X 1895, pp. 17–18.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, no. 44, 2 (14) 1895, pp. 21–22.



were hurt', or whether he was preparing a rational plan, whose aim was to 'recover from terror inflicted by the gang'³⁷; these were rare exceptions in his letters.

He often wrote about the increasing influence of socialism, and much rarer about the very socialist party. He suspected that the future convention of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in Wrocław would be of major importance³⁸; it is hard to determine whether he was aware of the fact that this would be the first such important address of Edward Bernstein—critical of Marxism in his stance on the agrarian issues. Following the convention Feldman reported that Bernstein balanced between a revolution and a reform³⁹. The transformations of the socialists would be soon deemed by the German public opinion as 'moulting' (German: *Mauserung*).

The picture of the system of government, as it has been already mentioned, was presented by Feldman in a highly critical light; undoubtedly, his pronouncing internal chaos and assuming that Germany was on the verge of heavy internal crisis was too far-fetched, yet it is a clear statement on the negative attitude of the author, who less than 20 years later would be forced to seek support for Poland in Berlin.

Since I have put forward a supposition that in many cases the contemporary relations in Berlin were evaluated by Feldman based on the contents of newspapers, it was different when it came to the Reich's parliament. He appeared there in person, and he did so for the reason of debates on the aforementioned bill against 'the coup'. The visit could be also connected with new building of the Reichstag, which was put into use in December of 1894.⁴⁰ That is perhaps why Feldman devoted so much attention to this building in his correspondence. He was not the only one to criticize the investment. Against the official statement that the building is a 'memorial of power, self-knowledge and art', he described it as a monument of pure Prussian spirit. He described it as a heavy, bloated mass, devoid of proportions and attributes of German Gothic art. 'The only decoration', as he wrote, 'is a thousand Prussian eagles, Protestant style is dominant, the entire whole is cold and gloomy'. He also criticised the building's awful acoustic.

He wrote less on the subject of sessions, and focused his attention on the deliberations on government and parties. According to him, the new chancellor Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst was a background character, 'short, with graying hair and refined features, reading his speech in a low voice'. Instead, it was minister Köller who played the leading role, a typical Pomeranian junker: despising literature and national spirit. Even here, Feldman noticed lack of unity of the government—a blend of various groups—and he was not at all surprised that it suffered a defeat. The only strong aspect was the Prussian spirit, dominating over the government and the chancellor (strictly speaking only the chancellor constituted the Reich's government for secretaries of the state were only in charge of their own resorts, and they were subject to the chancellor). 'Parties are dominated by extremists, which is true especially in the case of conservatives' (at this point Feldman recounted a saying which was particularly popular at the time and which characterised extreme right-wing politicians: 'und der König absolut, wenn er insert Willen tut'. In the opposing political camp, August Bebel

³⁷ *Ibidem*, no. 36, 7 (19) IX 1895, p. 14.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, no. 28, 13 (27) VII 1895, p. 18.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, no. 40, 5 (17) X 1895, pp. 17-18

⁴⁰ About the building of Reichstag cf.: L. Trzeciakowski, *Posłowie polscy w Berlinie 1848-1928*, Warszawa 2004, pp. 86-89.



surpassed Köller in terms of culture, but the speech of another socialist politician, Vollmar, was compared by Feldman to a storm, but a storm which was not sufficiently 'thunderbolt-generating'. Feldman was most fond of the speech of Barth, MP of the *Freisinnige Vereinigung*, 'a courageous lawyer', one of the most able members of the chamber, but, as he quickly added with scepticism: 'almost no one listened to him' (Barth, a liberal and a democrat, in 1908 would become a determined opponent of the anti-Polish paragraph in the act on associations and gatherings, and he even attempted to establish a new grouping, yet with to no avail). He praised the Centrist Gröber only for the fact that he protested at the bill against 'the coup'.

Yet, the most important conclusion that came to Feldman's mind was the contradiction between the Prussian spirit and the common voting system. The spirit predominated over the government but it also forced one's way into the parliament, which was founded on the four-point voting. These aspects could not be brought together. In addition, liberal-left-wings were growing weaker—internally divided from the time of elections of 1893 when the number of seats won by both parties together was smaller than that possessed in Reichstag before the elections by only one of them⁴¹.

Such contradiction was in fact an issue. For one thing, there were no prospects for a reform of electoral statute of the Prussian sejm, for another, the change of system of parliamentary elections would trigger incalculable internal consequences. But such situation continued from 1867 onwards and it was only a cataclysm as great as defeat in the I World War that eventually changed it.

What is particularly striking in the context of Feldman's critical remarks about the political system of the German Reich is his correspondence containing reports on economic and—to some extent—social issues.

Sometimes these were only report articles⁴², but we are mainly interested in those illustrating the views of their author. Feldman praised social reforms, whose purpose was to lead the workers' movement to the road of peaceful and lawful development, for instance, through the extension of insurance system. As we know, already during the tenure of Chancellor Bismarck, Germany (as one of the first countries in the world) introduced insurance for the elderly, against accidents and disease. According to Feldman, new plans predicted either nationalization of various enterprises like power stations or gasworks or entrusting them to self-governments. The process of 'socialization', as described by the author himself, was to be extended to include more and more plants. What is more, Berlepsch, Minister of Commerce in the Prussian sejm, and Miquel, Deputy Prime Minister (on other occasions criticised by Feldman), submitted two bills which were to grant low loans for construction of residential apartments. There were also plans to launch facilities of social welfare for travelling workers and for their workshops. The aid package for agriculture was to include setting up a fund of 200 million marks for low percentage loans. 1 million hectares of land was obtained in eastern provinces for the establishment of the so-called 'rent estates' or leases, and at the same time 1/3 of the capital remained under management of state, which was to obtain a pre-emptive purchase right (one of the purposes of this plan was to buy out Polish land—and Feldman was unaware of this fact). Due to the growth in prices of petroleum, demands to nationalize the petroleum trade were put forward⁴³.

⁴¹ *Szkice z parlamentu niemieckiego*, K., no. 22, 1 (13) VI 1895, pp. 1, 6–8.

⁴² Feldman wrote i.e. on sugar industry, *ibidem*, no. 45, 9 (21) III 1895, pp. 21–22.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, no. 19, 11 (23) V 1895, pp. 21–22.



Feldman's views were fully manifested in his writings on the so-called 'socialism from the lecturer's bench', represented by Verein für Sozialpolitik. It is hard to say whether he was a participant of a scientific course organized by this association in November 1895. With much acclaim he stated that despite high entrance fees, the event gathered as many as 800 participants who had a chance to attend lectures delivered by 'most eminent university professors'; next to the lectures also evening discussions were held. During one of them a renowned economist, Adolf Wagner, adhered to the fact that a number of lectures praised the ideas of national socialism and asked whether any members of the audience were in favour of liberalism. In the face of the lack of answer from the participants, Wagner stated authoritatively that economic liberalism had died. This particular statement became the point of departure to Feldman's commentary. His extensive texts, which appeared in both periodicals, were also based on the recently published by Zofia Daszyńska (-Golińska) book entitled *Najnowsze kierunki w nauce gospodarczej*⁴⁴.

Feldman opened his commentary with the aforementioned 'Wagner's episode' ('one scene I will never forget'—he wrote) he totally agreed with. What is more, he even stated that liberalism was dead already long before: 'not only in Germany but also in Austria, Russia and even England; only France is still behind the others in this respect'. Besides referring to the event organized by Verein für Sozialpolitik, he also invoked other conferences supportive of the increase in the national interventionism, for instance in Switzerland or Austria. He also cited a statement of one of researchers, who already in mid-1880s maintained that principal economic issues include revenue and industrial policy, which have more to do with arts than with science. According to him, science does not give answers to practical questions; politics on the other hand does not seek truths but practical solutions. Even the supporters of economic freedom had recognized that the state may not only concentrate on being a gendarme (or rather a policeman), who keeps order. 'In France', as wrote Feldman, 'freedom stages its last orgies, being responsible for the scums of the Panama scandal and southern railways'. He cited a renowned economist, Gide, and emphasized the dynamic evolution of the rejection of liberalism. In terms of ethics, which Feldman was always close to, what becomes important is the fact that it is impossible to adhere only to human energy, but it is necessary to demand intervention of the state. 'Despite the differences between the views of Wagner, Schmoller or Brentano, what develops is the common school of solidarity. It is towards this school that historical research is heading, demonstrating the necessity of the state's participation in economic development; it is the state which joins units into a society. The programme includes socialisation by the state of lower government levels (like districts) of various areas of life: buying out railway, introducing labour inspectors, common insurance; according to Feldman the state would even take control over all pharmacies and entire commerce'.

This is not the right place for explaining the actual extent of the contemporary crisis of liberalism (it must be mentioned that the picture provided by Feldman is surely biased but the direction of transformations to certain extent corresponded with reality). Another thing is important. What is first and foremost characteristic is that it was actually Germany that became the example to follow by other and to occupy a leading

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*; PT, R. VIII, no. 47, ss (23) XI 1895, 'Przeglądy literatury', *Najnowsze kierunki w nauce gospodarczej*, translated by Z. Daszyńska, Warszawa 1896 (at the time books published towards the close of the year were often post-dated in order to highlight their currency).



position in the process which was praised by Feldman. The country, which he normally evaluated so negatively, in this particular case gained a favourable position. For one thing, some of his letters, as we have already mentioned, heralded the threat of internal catastrophe, for another, the state was to take over new spheres of life.

Feldman was not a socialist in terms of his acceptance of the party's political programme, but he was rather sensitive to social issues; he belonged to a generation which believed that when one is not a socialist in his youth, one becomes a pig at his old age (only some time later would an opposite expression would be formulated by a French politician Clemenceau that one who is not a socialist in his youth has no heart, but one that remains a socialist in his adult life has no reason). He did not know much about economy and he was easily influenced by academic papers devoted to the subject of common good of broad masses of society.

It has been already mentioned that Feldman's reports were based on situations he encountered in Berlin, and which he evaluated negatively. In one of his letters he wrote that Berlin was simply becoming bankrupt and that he was not going to write anything about the city⁴⁵. Although this bankruptcy concerned mainly political and social issues rather than those economic ones, on a different occasion he stated that many people in Germany, in general, consider Berlin as 'a negative value', for talents flocking there from other cities 'burn out'⁴⁶. This also concerned an industrial exhibition, announced to take place in 1896, about which thundered the 'trumpets of advertising', but the organisational committee did not design sufficient lighting of the city, for this would cost 300 thousand marks.⁴⁷ With satisfaction he thoroughly discussed 'the booklet with a red cover' displayed in windows of Berlin bookshops: *Das Berlinertum in Litteratur, Musik und Kunst*. The booklet was to incite people from the provinces to rise against Berlin in the area of literature and arts. The muses were dissatisfied with the hegemony of the capital city in the area of literature and arts, therefore they were begging people of the provinces to deprive 'the modern Babylon of the baton'. The work was produced by rather not too caustic writers, whose remarks were not always to the point, but the truth was flowing even from not really 'fluent mouths'. The capital city did not manage to replace the 'dethroned' courts. In reaction to the booklet a cry was raised by the Berlin journalists, whose ambitions had been clearly hurt. With a lordly air they attempted to prove the representativeness of the German spirit, which was shaped in the capital city. Yet, according to Feldman, in the capital city there was no room for romantic or classical art, ideals were redundant, and what dominated was brutal cynicism: 'Arts, which brings tears to the eyes of audiences in Vienna, in Berlin raises laughter, and there prevails egoism and misdeeds. Theatres are eerie empty. Farces and vaudevilles do much better, and tingle-tangles—the best. A philistine would not honour

⁴⁵ K., no. 23, 20 VI (8 VII) 1895, pp. 21–22.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, no. 44, 2 (14) XI 1895, pp. 21–22.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, no. 44, 2 (14) XI 1895, pp. 21–22. He also emphasized numerous organisational undertakings, saying that the Berliners 'set briskly to work and their aim is to abolish the worldwide conviction of the inhospitality of the Germans, whatever the cost may be. Who knows whether this eagerness should not be partially attributed to the attempt to weaken the conviction that only the French know how to set up displays'. Not long later he writes about the quarrel and polemics in the context of the question whether a right should be granted to the buyers to taste the displayed food products; for one thing there were protests against materialistic approach towards shop displays, for another, questions were raised whether a buyer should make his choice only based on the product's appearance —this also referred to articles sold in perfumeries and even at the jewelleryes. PT, R. XXX, no. 17, 15 (27) IV, 1895, p. 100.



a dramatic actor, and instead he howls and stamps his feet to the sound of a smutty song. A typical heroine is a carpenter's daughter, looking for a wealthy lover, for virtue is an anachronism, and fun is the essence of life. Jokes are flat, and Berliners do not know what true humour is about. A composer becomes famous when the press reports that he possesses 500 ties. Folk songs are no more sung, and a street clod is a judge of contests. Art of composers may be equalled with art of whistling, for only this brings money. The press show disrespect to literary language and use Berlin slang⁴⁸. This picture is highly distorted, and the positively evaluated booklet proved at most the grudges of the province, but what was important was Feldman's reaction to it. His evaluation of centralism was definitely exaggerated, especially when it came to cultural phenomena; Munich was a stronger centre of painting, and the Wrocław school of arts drew its inspiration rather from Vienna than from Berlin, a town which was much poorer in historical monuments. The patronage of rulers of small German states was proven even by the level of the Meininger theatre. Some his writings were nonetheless presenting a picture of Berlin, which was similar to that later presented for instance by Heinrich Mann in his book *Im Schlaraffenland. Ein Roman unter freien Leuten*. Feldman was not familiar with other cities, but his opinion of Berlin to some extent determined his general views about Germany.

From time to time he most probably used to look through criminal chronicles of Berlin newspapers. He then wrote about moral corruption, like for instance frequent cases of couples engaging in extramarital relationships, and at times his conclusions reached beyond the city limits. When he had once read about a girl who shot her lover, a medical practitioner, probably because he refused to marry her, he commented that there are thousands such doctors in Berlin—which was obviously a premature conclusion. When based on commentaries of the celebrations—we have already mentioned—he heralded tempests and struggles, he also added that although at the time relations between junkers and villagers in rural areas remained peaceful, in the nearest years the villager may turn out to be dangerous, and such announcement was risky from the Berlin perspective⁴⁹.

Several times did Feldman address the issue of women. Under the influence of socialist literature (especially Bebel's, *Women and socialism*), he placed it in the context of class conflicts. Despite many transformations in this sphere he viewed it as continuously preserving many traditional characteristics (we must mention here that women were not only devoid—as everywhere else in the world—of political rights, especially those electoral ones, but it was also forbidden for them to attend any kind of political gatherings), which results with discontent and may be considered a tinderbox of conflict. He also mentioned attempts to improve the situation, though only partial⁵⁰. The women's rights movement was already present in Germany at the time, but its role was not yet significant.

A phenomenon which was typical for Germany of the close of the 19th century, though rather much more common following the year 1900, was periodic emergence of booklets or even more extensive books, where authors, writing mostly under pseudonyms, forecasted the future of the Reich. At times these works were descriptions

⁴⁸ K., no. 34, 24 VIII (5 IX) 1895, p. 12.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, no. 35, 31 VIII (12 IX) 1895, p. 11.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, no. 25, 29 VI (12 VII) 1895, pp. 11–12; no. 40, 5 (17) X 1895, pp. 17–18; PT, R. XXX, no. 24, 3 (15) VI 1895, pp. 277–278, no. 41, 30 IX (12 X) 1895, pp. 459–460.



of conquests with detailed listings of successive wars, or even quotes of concluded peace treaties. Feldman found one of such whimsical articles in a serious weekly *Gegenwart*. His author claimed that a community composed of 70 million Germans (he extended this group by Dutchmen and Flemish people) and 60 million Russians cannot maintain any single language group (and it was 57.5 million people he was talking about). And that the Germans and Russians would be forced to share this territory, and then the Germans would join Great Britain. The point of departure to these forecasts were Bismarck's successes (although he himself claimed that the Reich is already 'satiated', which means that he did not think about further conquests) and the conviction of actual or exaggerated power of the state. Yet, what is more important than the significance of this phenomenon is Feldman's statement that such forecasts are more tangible than various leagues of peace⁵¹. The last ones were totally disregarded by Feldman, also—as we have already mentioned here—for the fact that they ruined the Polish cause.

At the same time he placed a much stronger emphasis on the ethical movement—though he was also aware of the weaknesses of the entire initiative. He devoted much attention to it, when he reported of the death of Jerzy (and more specifically Georg) Giżycki. According to him this was 'one of the most eminent figures of the German learned world'. Ironically enough, although he held a title of professor, he did not resemble any of the scholars, who were so criticized by Feldman, confined in the world of their research and insensitive to human suffering and poverty. He called him 'a unit with soul so great, altruistic, a colossus among pygmies', 'an ideologist in the best possible sense of the word', 'evangelical expression'. He adhered to ideals, 'which are met with a shrug of shoulders and scornful though outstandingly clever smile by know-all philistine'. His roots were Polish, but his family who had lived in Germany from the 17th century eventually became German, and he himself became a propagator of ethical culture. The Ethical Society he established in 1892 was spreading such culture in Germany. Feldman made it clear that 'we refuse to attribute great meaning to the impact of moral propaganda'; for evil 'is the outcome of too profound and complex reasons', and his 'venom bit into the organism of civilised humanity'. In spite of this fact Feldman attributed high value to the activity of Giżycki among the members of the Society and people from the outside, 'independently of one's social position, as well as his religious and political denomination'. What was condemned was racial and religious hatred, and wrong was justified by the brutal struggle for survival. The aims were to be accomplished through influence on education system; ethical-social courses were offered, folk reading rooms and libraries were supported, free legal courses were offered etc. All this made great impression on Feldman, though he noted that the influence of the Society may be insignificant as it has only 1800 members⁵².

Feldman devoted an extensive article to Nietzsche. His most important remark about the philosopher was that he considered him 'a free spirit', namely, 'a thinker incompatible with the current situation in the German Reich'. Feldman attempted to place Nietzsche in the context of principal philosophical trends, the split between the so-called spiritual and experimental sciences, with growing predominance of the latter. He

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, no. 41, 12 (24) X 1895, pp. 20–21.

⁵² PT, R. XIII, no. 17, 15 (27) IV 1895, pp. 199–200. On the Ethical Association and on the widow after Professor, Lily von Giżycki, there later emerge mentions in a similar tone, we do not know whether their author is Feldman (PT, R. XXX, 50, 2 (14) XII 1895, p. 576, signed with letters Ev). Lily soon married a socialist named Braun and became a writer. The 'ethical movement', naturally, did not have any particular meaning.



eventually noted that this metaphysician, 'being a descendant of the nobility of the Greater Poland (as we know this was slightly probable), he speaks German as good as no other German'⁵³.

Owing to his personal interests Feldman frequently wrote about cultural issues, and especially about literature and theatre. At the same time this particular sort of correspondence of his yields much less evidence which would allow one to draw conclusions on the actual views of its author, even more so that it often contains his evaluation of certain works merely from literary perspective.

Yet, Feldman's output also abounds in general criticism of German literature, again mainly referring to works published in Berlin. Berlin's literature includes the works of Przybyszewski, Hamsun and Brandes. 'This is your literature?'—Feldman asks rhetorically⁵⁴. On other occasions his criticism concerns German dramaturgy, which he accuses of being excessively imbued with German spirit; he even describes it as 'barbarian'⁵⁵. Many times he compares German works with their French counterparts, which were often a point of departure for Feldman, whereas the former ones he perceived as superior (Austrian works he valued even higher). For him, free theatre, avant-garde in character, did not equal with Antoine's theatre (it is unclear whether he had a chance to familiarize with the latter one during his short stay in Paris)⁵⁶. He claimed that despite obvious merits, the Berlin theatre was simply lacking in spirit and poetry⁵⁷. In assessing the entire theatrical season, he deemed it devoid of energy, even though he appreciated the emergence of talents, for—as he stated—'there reigns *mechanical production*, ideals are being betrayed, and false is also the attitude towards religion'⁵⁸. Having visited a painting exhibition, he wrote about artistic poverty of Berlin.

At times books, which were critical of contemporary social relations in Germany (or Berlin) served him to justify sharp social inequalities. So was the case with Sudermann's drama entitled *Honour (Die Ehre)*, where the frontage of a tenement residential building (*Yorderhaus*) clashes with an outbuilding (*Hinterhaus*). The tenement building was adopted as the symbol of society. It houses two worlds which are separated by hostility, contempt, and hatred⁵⁹. On recording that *The Weavers (Die Weber)* were performed 75 times in the Neue Bühne theatre, he added that this was because of Köller's inadvertent publicity⁶⁰.

Feldman's evaluation of individual literary works was often positive, but we cannot say so about his general opinion about entire literature in general. This was to some extent owing to a low intellectual level of the audience—the fact we have already mentioned.

The level of German education was at the time the highest in the world and this fact obviously could not escape Feldman's attention. Nonetheless, when he sometimes mentioned events connected with scholarly life, he did not hesitate to judge them critically. He wrote for instance about a gap which separated scholars from the rest of society. When in his correspondence he mentioned the session of the Prussian Academy,

⁵³ *Psychologia Nietzschego* (PT, no. 38, 9 <21> IV 1895, pp. 423–425).

⁵⁴ K., no. 23, 20 VI (2 VII) 1895, pp. 21–22.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, no. 13, 30 III (21 IV) 1895, p. 21.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, no. 17, 27 IV (9 V) 1895, p. 21.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, no. 36, 7 (19) IX 1895, p. 14.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, no. 19, U (23) V 1895, p. 22.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, no. 17, 27 IV (9 V) 1895, pp. 14–15.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*.



which, as he highlighted, was participated by such eminent scholars as lawyer and historian and later Nobel Prize winner, Theodor Mommsen, renowned physiologist Emil du Bois-Raymond and others; lack of common interest in this session Feldman summed up with a statement that 'an average French citizen is proud of the French Academy, whereas its German counterpart is proud of a regiment of grenadiers'⁶¹. Feldman did not elaborate on German militarism, though it was the subject of much critique in many countries at the time, yet, even this short excerpt from his writings shows that he was familiar with the concept.

At times Feldman kept exact trace of scientific conventions, and so was with the convention of naturalists and doctors in Lübeck in September 1895 r.⁶² It was the time of scientific breakthrough in research on radioactivity, new elements and the structure of atom, which led to the change of attitude towards materialism and relation between matter and energy; some even proclaimed the crisis of materialism or its bankruptcy. Feldman's interests and competence were diverted away from this issue, nonetheless he attempted to relate to claims of physiologist Heinrich Ostwald of Leipzig, who attributed primary importance to energy. In his correspondence Feldman contradicts the bankruptcy of materialism, but when writing on three theses of Ostwald he admits that energetic theory enables the existence of natural sciences, free from more or less metaphysical hypotheses, and for him explanation of science is no less important than its description. It is hard to expect from the publicist that he would be able to predict the development of science during the entire quarter of century, starting from the close of the 19th century. What is indeed evident based on this example is that Feldman's interests were versatile and that he devoted much of his attention to scientific life in Germany.

Feldman's sceptical comments regarding Polish immigrants residing in Berlin appear already in his letters to Teltz we have already discussed above. Same is the case with his printed correspondence. When during the rally in Charlottenburg, a famous patron of Polish employment partnerships promoted the idea of unification of those of them existing in Berlin, Feldman wished him good luck with somewhat doubt⁶³. He criticised the fact that the Association of Polish Industrialists managed to gather a rather insignificant number of members⁶⁴. On informing about the order to dissolve the association of students he complained that lectures of Professor Brückner gather only 5 or 6 in 300 Poles studying Berlin⁶⁵. At the same time he wrote with much approval about translations of Polish papers or exhibitions of Polish painters.

Yet, when we think of Feldman's engagement in the initiative of 'Polish schools', we may assume that despite these critical remarks—we do not know whether they were known in Berlin—his current relations with the Polish community in Berlin were not as bad as they would seem. They worsened several years later as a result of an incident which took place in 1902.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, no. 27, 6 (18) VII 1895, p. 18.

⁶² A shorter mention in *Kraj*, no. 38, 21 IX (9 X) 1895, p. 18–19; *Przegląd Tygodniowy* published a report of a naturalist (signed with initials FB) and Feldman's as a philosopher, PT, no. 41, 30 IX (13 X) 1895, pp. 457–458. Feldman also wrote about the convention of the German Anthropological Society in Kassel or no more scientific Catholic convention in Munich, but these reports do not fully present the author's opinion.

⁶³ *K.*, no. 17, 37 IV (18 V) 1895, p. 15.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, no. 33, 17 (29) VII 1895, p. 18.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, no. 17, 27 IV (9 V) 1895, pp. 14–15.



In 1892, the University of Berlin saw the arrival of Professor Theodor Schiemann of Courland. He specialized in history of Eastern Europe, especially that of Russia, but also of Poland. He owed his strong reputation mostly to close relations with the Emperor. During one of his lectures he made spiteful comments on Polish history, which spurred the outrage of students, who—as it was common at the time—shuffled their feet in protest. This resulted in a wave of inspections of student centre, detention of ca. 40 (among other records 45) students in Berlin and Charlottenburg, and students who originated from Galicia and the Kingdom, were expelled from the country. At the time there rose a rumour that these were students from the Prussian Partition that had denounced their colleagues from abroad. This rumour was picked up by Feldman's *Krytyka* (I failed to find evidence for this fact in annals of 1902), which caused indignation in Greater Poland and in Polish community in Berlin. The students of Berlin protested against this insinuation in writing, and the protest was further continued by the Polish Scientific Society. Yet, such scenario is indeed slightly probable. The protest raised by the students during the lecture was too trivial a fact to justify resorting to more severe measures, like for instance legal actions, or contacting university authorities and expelling all participants of the incident. Conscious of Schiemann's high status, the police most probably intended to use some sort of repression against the perpetrators, and the easiest way was to punish 'the immigrants' was to expel them. The incident surely added to Feldman's popularity in Berlin⁶⁶.

Feldman's extensive Berlin correspondence draws a very complex picture. His writings on the German Reich, its principal governing bodies, Emperor, government and even parliament, were highly critical. He frequently writes about destruction and forecasts internal conflict, just as if the state was on the verge of revolution. This diagnose is contrary to his evaluation of the proposed reforms, as well as of the activity of 'the socialism from the lecturer's bench'. Also unequivocal was his opinion on the contemporary situation in culture, but even in this case it was frequently negative. His somewhat circumspection towards the Polish community in Berlin did not herald its general critique. More often than not his comments were made from Galician perspective.

Based on the presented material it is reasonable to suspect that Feldman's attitude towards Germany did not encourage him to engage in the activity similar to one which would await him following the year 1914 in Berlin. Nonetheless, he travelled there 19 years later, and in order to find the answer to the question on the 'baggage' he took there, it would be necessary to become familiar with Feldman's statements from this particular period, as well as with his views on the history of the attitude of Prussia and Germany towards Polish affairs.

translated by Katarzyna Hussar

⁶⁶ B. Abrahamowicz, *ze wspomnień rodowitego berlińczyka*, Zielona Góra 1979, pp. 217–218; *Polacy w Berlinie*, według materiałów A. Gołąbka oprac. J. Kaźmierczak, Inowrocław 1938, pp. 16–17.