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### **The polish exploration of the Lusatian Serbs (the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century)**

Already from the turn of the 19th century, the Lusatian Serbs, ‘the Slavonic island on the German sea’, their past, presence and future have been generating great interest around the globe: in Germany (especially in Saxony), in the Czech Republic, in Poland and Russia, and in recent decades also among the community of Southern Slavs, in France, and even in the United States of America and Australia, which from the 19<sup>th</sup> century have become home to communities of emigrants from Lusatia.

Both the reasons and circumstances of the wide popularity of the Lusatian Serbs differed depending on the country. None the less, all of them—from Prague, Brno, and Bratislava, through Warsaw, Kraków and Poznań, Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana and Sarajevo, up to Paris, London, Brussels and Washington—shared common characteristics: astonishment and—in most of the cases—admiration that a tiny nation residing at the heart of Europe, isolated from its Slavonic countrymen, continued to last throughout the ages and managed to survive while other ethnic groups were disappearing one after another; and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, from an amorphous ethno-linguistic group, it evolved into a modern nation openly manifesting its right to life and development, and in the period of the Springtime of the Peoples—unlike other, much greater Slavonic nations including the Ukrainians, the Belarusians, the Slovaks or the Slovenians—formulated a mature and feasible nation-building programme.

At the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the future of Slavonic residents of Lusatia was put in jeopardy. The answers to the question: ‘will they perish or survive?’ were mostly that they would soon share the fate of the problematic tribe of Drzewianie, whom the Germans called the Wends of Lüneburg. The assimilation of the Drzewianie with the Germans took place in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. By the close of the 17<sup>th</sup> century their resistance against Germanization in offices, schools and Church was eventually broken. The introduction of punishments for using the Polabian language by the local administration did not meet with any resistance<sup>1</sup>.

The Polabian language managed to survive in the vicinity of Lüchow and Wüstrów, but the young generation was ashamed to use it. In 1725 Jan Parum Schultze (Niebuhr) from the village of Stihten nearby Lüchow wrote: ‘when I myself and three other people from my village die, no one will be left to know how to call a dog in the Slavonic language’. Polabian was also continuously used here and there in church, but the year 1751 marked the last time a sermon was preached in this language (in Wüstrów). It has been recorded that in 1783 the Polabian language was still being used in the poviát of Dannenburg. But these were only its final death throes. In 1798, in the village of Kremlin there died the last villager (named Warac), who knew how to say ‘The

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<sup>1</sup> Iwan Perwolf, *Giermanizacija bałtijskich Sławjan*, Sankt-Petersburg 1876, pp. 39–65.



Lord's Prayer' in Polabian<sup>2</sup>. According to other witnesses in villages found in the Lüneburg Heath (Lüneburger Heide), as late as in the 1820s the oldest local inhabitants were speaking and praying in Polabian<sup>3</sup>. A Polish writer recorded at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that in the vicinity of Lüchow, 'there sit the descendants of the Wends'<sup>4</sup>.

The paradox of history was that it was only in the period of agony of the Slavs of Lüneburg did their language and culture become the subject of interest of teachers and clergymen, local historians, linguists and ethnographers; for instance a dictionary of the Polabian language was created on the basis of the chronicle of Jan Parum Schultz<sup>5</sup>.

The disappearance of the Lüneburg Slavs, who were closest to the Lusatian Serbs, was tantamount to the removal of the last barrier which isolated them from the tight-knit German community<sup>6</sup>. As it was highlighted by a Polish expert on Slavonic Lusatia, for the Lusatian Serbs the disappearance of their fellows was a sign that same thing would happen also to them. A harbinger of such scenario was the rapid shrinkage of the Slavonic territory in Lower Lusatia<sup>7</sup>. A similar explanation of disappearance of the Lüneburg Slavs was presented somewhat earlier by Russian historian Alexander Pypin. 'The fate of the Lüneburg Slavs', he wrote, 'came as a shock to Slavonic patriots'. It was a lesson, warning them to avoid internal conflicts, indifference and mental stagnation<sup>8</sup>.

Irreversible changes were also taking place in the southern and eastern borderlands of the Lusatian Serbian ethnic area. The Sudetes, having been colonized by the Germans, separated the Slavonic residents of Lusatia from the Czechs, and the Germanization of the left-bank Silesia—from the Poles. The Slavonic Lusatia came to be a lonely, small and ever-shrinking island. The Lusatian Serbian villages and settlements nearby Sztorków (Storckau) and Bierków (Bierkau) vanished already in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. At the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was left no trace of the Lusatian Serbs. The range of the Slavonic population was shrinking particularly rapidly in the Evangelical territory of Lower Lusatia, nearby Kalawa, Gubin and Żary<sup>9</sup>. The Lusatian Serbian villages and settlements were vanishing one after another in the Catholic Upper Lusatia, particularly in the powiat of Zgorzelec<sup>10</sup>.

At the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the territory of Lusatian Serbs was about 60 km away from the Czech border and about 90 km away from the ethnographic area occupied by a tight-knit Polish population (in the powiat of Babimost). The populations

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<sup>2</sup> Pastor Christian Hennig z Wüstrow pointed to the following record: '*Nos holi wader, to tai jis wa nebeseif*', and Jan Potocki, who travelled across Lower Saxony in 1794 recorded a slightly different version of the passage: '*Nesse wader, tu toy jiss w a nebis hay*'.

<sup>3</sup> Franz Tetzner, *Die Slaven in Deutschland*, Braunschweig 1902, pp. 346, 387.

<sup>4</sup> Michał Baliński, *Pisma historyczne*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1843.

<sup>5</sup> Antoni Kalina, *Jana Paruma Szulcego Słownik Języku Połabskiego*, Kraków 1892. For more information on the Lüneburskich Wends see Paul Kuhnel, 'Finden sich noch Spuren der Slaven im mittleren und westlichen Hannover?', *Forschungen zur Geschichte Niedersachsens*, I.B, H. 5, Hannover 1907; Paul Rost. *Die Sprachreste der Dravwano-Polaben im Hannoverschen*, Leipzig 1907; Józef Kostrowski, *Tragedia Słowian Połabskich*, Warszawa 1947; Jerzy Strzelczyk, *Po tamtej stronie Odry. Dzieje i upadek Słowian połabskich*, Warszawa 1968.

<sup>6</sup> Arnošt Muka. *Slovane ve vojvodstvi luneburskem*, Praga 1904.

<sup>7</sup> Alfons J. Parczewski, *Jan Ernest Smoler. Ustęp z historii narodowego odrodzenia Górnych Łużyc*, Warszawa 1883.

<sup>8</sup> Aleksander N. Pypin, Władimir D. Spasowicz, *Obzor sławjanskich literatur*, vol. 2, Sankt-Petersburg 1881, p. 1065.

<sup>9</sup> *Wendische and deutsche Dörfer um Sorau*, Sorau 1897.

<sup>10</sup> Parczewski, *Jan Ernest Smoler*.



of the Lusatian Serbs on the right, Lower Silesian bank of the Lusatian Neisse (mainly in the poviats of Żary) were scarce and did not mingle with the populations of Poles<sup>11</sup>. For the Saxon and Prussian authorities this was clear evidence that 'the Wendian backwater' would not endure much longer. None the less, there were no plans to hinder or force through the natural process of ethno-linguistic assimilation, and the initiative was placed in the hands of the schools and army. This was due to the fact that the schools and teachers, the army and non-commissioned officers had long been the most effective instruments of national assimilation.

The Slavonic residents of Lusatia, just as many other ethno-linguistic groups of the contemporary Middle-Eastern and Western Europe, including the Silesians, the Masurians, the Kashubians, the Slovincians, the Belarusians, the Lithuanians or the Brittonians, the Basques, the Catalonians, the inhabitants of Great Britain who spoke Celtic languages—have been for centuries perceived as uniform 'ethnographic mass'. This mass was characterised by similarity of fate, language used by both simple rural and urban folk, as well as by traditions and customs. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the Slavonic residents of Lusatia spoke two separate, yet very closely related languages: the Upper Lusatian language which was similar to Czech and the Lower Lusatian language which was most closely related to Polish. The language, not codified and not recorded in literature, was treated as 'a disappearing dialect', hampering access to real civilization, higher culture, education, technical and mental advancement. According to a widespread contemporary conviction, the access to education, culture and advancement could be granted only to those capable of assimilating the German language and abandoning 'the dialect of peasants' and using it only within the circle of one's family and in church. The narrow group of intelligentsia spoke the literary variety of German they mastered at school and the language of simple folk was for them a somewhat embarrassing issue. Other indicators of ethnicity, 'being part of one ethnographic mass' were also the habits and customs, the songs and dances (passed from generation to generation), the folk garments, and the remarkably beautiful, original rural architecture, with its roots in the ancient pre-Christian times.

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century both the traditional language and culture of the Lusatian Serbs were jeopardized. Their advocates—teachers and clergymen (mostly in one person)—recorded a despairing picture of the contemporary ethnic situation in Lusatia. 'Children at schools were only little taught to read in Serbian, and not a single school offered lessons of writing in Serbian; people were increasingly less preoccupied with their nationality, they kept surrendering to the influence of the German customs and speech, kept forgetting to wear their traditional garments. The language was being more and more distorted by Germanisms, well-educated Serbs were denying their nationality'<sup>12</sup>.

The earliest and the most dramatic expression of pessimism in this respect was a brochure written by an anonymous author (most probably Jan Hórcąnski, one of the few representatives of the Serbian intelligentsia with Slavonic spirit) published in Bautzen in 1782. 'The few remaining representatives of the Wendian clergy are being Germanized,

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<sup>11</sup> The Lusatian Serbs, residing in seven villages on the right-bank of the Lusatian Neisse, nearby Muskau, were relocated in 1945 to Germany (Hanna Popowska-Taborska, 'Dawne pogranicze językowe polskodołużyckie', *Zeszyty Łużyckie*, 5, 1992; Ewa Siatkowska, 'Łużycanie po prawej stronie Nysy. Problem naukowy i polityczny', *ibidem*).

<sup>12</sup> Parczewski, *Jan Ernest Smoler*.



as well as the entire villages, and the ever-shrinking handful of Wends are slowly being transformed into Germans', wrote Hórcanski. 'Under the influence of the Enlightenment, the nation of the Wends, once once so great, now becomes small, defeated and dwarfed by the German might; gradually assimilating German language and customs to merge with the Germans into one nation. Anyway, it has always been so in the world and it always will be'. In line with the spirit of Enlightenment, the author tried to console himself and his Serbian compatriots that people—despite being called differently and despite their different languages and customs still remain human beings and part of humanity, which was all granted life from one and the same God. A wise man considers every other human being his brother, respects the members of all other tribes and the speakers of all other languages—provided they are useful for the society and diligent in fulfilling their duties<sup>13</sup>.

Thirty years later, following the period of Napoleonic Wars, the situation in Lusatia was growing still worse. The Slavonic Lusatia, which formed a political-administrative whole within Saxony (except the Brandenburgian-Prussian district of Kamjenec-Kamenz), was divided between Saxony and Prussia. In this way Saxony was punished at the Congress of Vienna for supporting Napoleon. Indirectly, this was also Prussian retaliation on the Slavonic inhabitants of Lusatia, for their regiments in the Saxon army distinguished themselves from others with particular courage and bravery, frequently making life a misery for the Prussian soldiers.

For the Lusatian Serbs, whose opinion nobody cared about, the fragmentation of their ethnical territory was a tragedy they never forgotten. Their ordeal was further intensified by the Prussian policy. Berlin treated 'the Wendian island' as a natural obstacle which hindered centralization and unification of the Prussian state. The Berlin House of Hohenzollern, which in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century grew wealthier in Silesia, Pomerania and Greater Poland, was clearly anti-Slavonic—quite contrary to the Dresden House of Wettin, who were always more liberal and open to new ideas and intellectual currents, and much more friendly towards the Slavs. Besides, the Slavonic Lusatia had never posed any threat towards the territorial integrity and internal cohesion of Saxony. Its Slavonic population was considered in Dresden as the most loyal (but at the same the most conservative) subjects, always 'faithful to the throne', as well as the most valiant soldiers.

The incorporation of part of Lusatia to Prussia spurred a wave of pessimism and fears for the future among the continuously few Serbian elites. 'Well-educated Serbs were denying their nationality. The nation was so abandoned that it was probably on the verge of extinction'. The only centre which cultivated the Serbian language died out—the Society of Preachers, composed of clergymen ministering religious services in their native language<sup>14</sup>.

Pessimism and lack of belief in the future of one's native nation characterized the attitude of the first Serbian generation—pioneers of Serbian national movement Handrij Zejler, Handrij Lubenski (author of the national anthem of the Lusatian Serbs 'Hišce Serbstwo njezhubcne' which was modelled after Dąbrowski's Mazurka), Jurij Mjen, Jan Dejka—to name those most distinguished. They kept highlighting the importance of 'the despised Wendian language', spurred its

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<sup>13</sup> *Gedanken eines Ober-Lausitzer Wenden über das Schicksal seiner Nation mit flüchtiger, doch unparteyischer Feder entworfen nebst Anmerkungen*, Bautzen 1782.

<sup>14</sup> Pypin, Spasowicz, *Obzor*.



development, produced articles and treatises in this language, and codified it. Yet, the most renowned member of this circle, Lubenski, was convinced that he was the last person who was writing in Serbian at the time, and the witness 'of the last hour' of his native nation. He did not believe in Slavonic solidarity and mutual loyalty. He claimed that other Slavs do not want to know the Lusatian Serbs. He remained a pessimist to the rest of his life, even at the time when the second generation of leaders of the Serbian national movement was starting to emerge. To no avail were the efforts of his friends to convince him to prepare a Serbian dictionary. He did not believe in political and moral reason of actions which were to prevent 'the dying of the nation' or in the need to leave the Slavs 'a memento of their vanishing Lusatian brothers'<sup>15</sup>.

As a result of civilizational transformations and the intellectual trends in Lusatia and around the ethno-linguistic group of Lusatian Serbs was gradually evolving into a modern nation with all its typical characteristics: codified language recorded not only in religious and secular literature, sense of independence from other nations (the German, the Czech and the Polish), aspirations and national aims. The process of formation of the modern Serbian nation had local civilizational, economic, social and cultural grounds. It was not an alien implant—Czech or Polish. This is particularly worth to mention especially for the fact that the conviction of alien, external origins and roots of the so-called Serbian national revival was deeply grounded in the extremely rich and multi-language literature devoted to the history of Lusatia and Lusatian Serbs. This process was mostly considered as a reflection of the Czech national revival of the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Polish literature, a view of the Czech contribution to the Serbian national revival coexisted with the view of its Polish roots. For instance, the most eminent Polish Serbist of the interwar and post-war period, professor of the Jagiellon University Tadeusz S. Grabowski wrote that 'the first signals' of the national awakening of the Lusatian Serbs 'emerged in the fellow Czech and Polish lands'<sup>16</sup>. The implant theory, starting already from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was propagated by the anti-Slavonic Prussian and Saxon politicians, publicists, historians and ethnographers. According to them these were only Czech, Polish and Russian influences that 'awoke the Wendian backwater from hibernation' and prevented it from 'peaceful existence and falling into eternal sleep'.

None the less, the criticism of the implant theory is not tantamount to the negation of the Czech, Polish and Russian influences, and most of all, the German ones. When speaking of the German influences, what needs to be mentioned at the first place is the German Enlightenment and Romanticism, especially the ideas of great philosopher Johanna Gottlieb Herder, who claimed that it is traditional culture—songs, dances and customs of the simple folk—that lies at the heart of national identity. Herder was the first scholar in Western Europe to focus on the Slavs and their historical role, while underlining that the Slavonic nations were so far 'occupying more space on Earth than in world history'. In his writings, Herder showed his great liking of the Slavs and he obviously idealized them. He described them as 'peaceful farmers, hospitable to prodigality, fond of freedom, yet submissive and obedient', 'enemies of robbery and plunder' who 'never aspired to rule the world'. Herder's vision of Slavonic history did not have much in common with the contemporary situation and was rather an expression of longing for 'a better world and more perfect civilisation'. By glamorizing

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>16</sup> Tadeusz Stanisław Grabowski. *Łużyczanie, ich walka, klęski i... triumf*, Wrocław 1947.



the Slavonic culture, Herder in fact encouraged 'many Slavs to take interest in their past and develop hope for a rearrangement of existing political constellations'<sup>17</sup>.

Both Herder and the ideology of Romanticism inspired various circles of German scholars, teachers and clerics to 'explore' the Slavs: their past and present, language, traditional culture and aspirations. The gradual extinction of the last Lüneburg Slavs made them realize that what vanishes irretrievably together with people is also their unique language, their songs, dances and rites.

The Lusatian Serbs also found themselves at the centre of attention, especially their language, songs, dances, legends, customs and rites, rural architecture, everyday farm and household chores, as well as other aspects which translated to their unique, original culture. The interest in the Slavs at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to the birth of the German Slavonic and Serbian studies<sup>18</sup>. Most famous for a particularly intense and consistent study of Lusatian Serbian issues were Zgorzelec (Görlitz) and Lipsk (Leipzig). In 1779, on the initiative of Karl Gottlob von Anton, Görlitz saw the establishment of the so-called *Oberlausitzer Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, whose members conducted research on language and traditional culture of the Lusatian Serbs whose settlements were still present in the nearest neighbourhood of Zgorzelec. The association cooperated with Czech and Polish scholars, and provided financial support to Serbian students<sup>19</sup>.

An important role in the Slavonic and Serbian studies, in raising awareness of the issue of Slavs in Germany, was played by the Leipzig University. In the Department of Slavonic Studies research was conducted on history, language and culture of Slavonic peoples. The Department, too, 'since ever' (that is from the outset of the 15<sup>th</sup> century) educated Lusatian Serbs<sup>20</sup>. One of the Polish Slavists-Serbists described Leipzig as 'the Piedmont of Slavonic literary movement'<sup>21</sup>. Animated by the Renaissance and Romantic spirit, the German Slavists of Görlitz, Leipzig and Wrocław were drawing attention of the German and Slavonic communities to the fact that at the heart of Germany, at the gates of Dresden and Berlin, there existed the smallest of all Slavonic nations which had been forgotten over the centuries but which deserves respect and admiration, and has the same right to live and develop as other nations.

<sup>17</sup> Tadeusz Naumowicz. *Wstęp*, [do:] Johann Gottlieb Herder. *Wybór pism*. Warszawa 1989; Peter Drews, *Herder und die Slaven. Materialien zur Wirkungsgeschichte bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, München 1990.

<sup>18</sup> More information of the subject see Wilhelm Zeil, *Slavistik in Deutschland. Forschungen und Informationen über die Sprache, Literaturen und Volkskulturen slavischer Völker bis 1945*, Köln 1994; Wilhelm Pohrt, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte der slavischen Studien in Deutschland von der Spätaufklärung bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts'. [in:] *Študie z dejin svetovej slavistiky do polovice 19. storočia*, Bratislava 1978; Wilhelm Zeil. 'Zu den Anfängen sorabistischer Studien in Deutschland.' [in:] *ibidem*: Wilhelm Zeil. Wilhelm Pohrt. 'Etapy razvitija slawistiky w Giermanii do 1945 goda', [in:] *Metodologiczeskije problemi istorii slawistikii*, Moskwa 1978.

<sup>19</sup> Wilhelm Zeil, 'Zur Bedeutung der Oberlausitzischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften in Görlitz für die kulturgeistige Entwicklung der Slaven und für die Geschichte der Slavistik', [in:] *Studien zu Geschichte der russischen Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Bd. 4, Berlin 1970; *idem*, 'Karl Gottlob von Anton und seine Beziehungen zu den Sorben', *Letopis Instituta za serbski ludospyt*", series B, 151-152, 1968; *idem*, 'Znaczenie Karla Gottloba von Antona (1751-1918) dla rozwoju nauk, w szczególności slawistyki.' *Pamiętnik Słowiański*. 19, 1969.

<sup>20</sup> Eberhard Wolfgramm, 'Die Rolle der Universität Leipzig bei der nationalen Wiedergeburt der slavischen Völker, besonders in der Periode des Vormärz', [w:] *Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig 1409-1959. Beiträge zur Universitätsgeschichte*, Bd. 1, Leipzig 1959.

<sup>21</sup> Tadeusz Stanisław Grabowski, 'Kultura i literatura Łużyczan'. *Strażnica Zachodnia*, 12, 1946, p., 50.



While the impact of the Germans on the Slavs is quite obvious, we must, too, notice that even more significant were the impulses sent to the Slavonic Lusatia from the Czech Prague. Until 1635 almost entire Lusatia was part of the Crown of Saint Wenceslaus. The forceful ally with Saxony, concluded in 1635, did not grant 'once and for all' the return of Lusatia to Saxony—for it provided for the circumstances and conditions of returning the land to the Czechs. The Czechs never renounced Lusatia and memory of their affiliation to the Crown of Saint Wenceslaus was passed from one generation to another. It is worth to notice that also Austrian legal practitioners were arguing that Austria (which owned the Czech lands from the 17<sup>th</sup> century) did not lose its rights to Lusatia. Neither did disappear, following 1635, the close relations between Bohemia and Lusatia, despite the two being ever more separated by the extending 'strip of German settlement' in the Sudetes<sup>22</sup>.

An important testimony to the affiliation of Lusatia to Bohemia and close relations between these two lands was the so-called Lusatian Seminary (Serbski Seminar), which educated the clergy as early as from the outset of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. According to the opinion of Polish experts on Lusatia, the Seminary was 'a living link between the Lusatian Serbs and the Czechs', for the influence of 'Prague education was beneficial for the future Serbian priests<sup>23</sup>. For this reason the Prague Seminary became a thorn in the side of the anti-Slavonic German circles in Lusatia. With clear reluctance and even contempt did they write, for instance in the 1840s, about 'a small handful of Slavs in Prague' (the city considered 'the Slavonic Mecca'), about the Seminary, which only thanks to the support of the Czechs evolved into 'the principal centre of Slavic life' of the Lusatian Serbs and about the resuscitation of their language<sup>24</sup>.

Bohemia was also the earliest country to witness—already in the 1820s—the emergence of systematic and growing academic and political interest in Lusatia and its Slavonic inhabitants. The name of the Czech 'explorer' of Lusatian Serbs was given to Josef Dobrovsky, the founder of Czech Slavonic sciences who placed their language and traditional culture at the heart of academic interest and who worked as a teacher in the Lusatian Seminar from the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Dobrovsky was—as it is unanimously highlighted by German, Polish and Czech scholars—the first Czech who 'devoted such fervent attention to Lusatians and remained faithful to them until the end of his days'<sup>25</sup>.

Almost simultaneously with Dobrovsky's activity the Lusatian Serbian issues were taken up by Pavel J. Šafařík, a Slovak academic who mainly wrote in German—the author of the milestone publication (1836) on Slavonic languages and literature<sup>26</sup>. His crucial

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<sup>22</sup> Heinrich Deumer, *Der rechtliche Anspruch Böhmen-Österreichs auf das Königlich Sächsisches Markgrathum Oberlausitz*, Leipzig 1884.

<sup>23</sup> Alfons Parczewski, *Z Dolnych Łużyc. Kilka zarysów i wspomnień*, Warszawa 1881, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> Jurij Handrik, *Stawizny serbskeho seminara w Prahy*, Budziszyn 1930; Jurij Łusčanski-Wuschanski, *Das Wendische Seminar St. Peter auf der Kleinseite in Prag*, Leipzig 1893; Franz Prihonsky, *Geschichte des Oberlausitzer Seminariums zu Prag*, Praga 1833.

<sup>25</sup> Josef Pata, *Lužice odka naroda*, Praga 1946, p. 23; see also Tadeusz Stanisław Grabowski, 'Józef Dobrowski twórca slawistyki naukowej', *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historycznoliterackie*, 5, 1963; Josef Pata, *Josef Dobrovsky a Lužice*, Praha 1929.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Joseph Schaffarik, *Geschichte der slawischen Sprache und Literatur nach allen Mundarten*, Offen 1826. A year later his paper entitled *Slovansky narodopis* was published in Prague. Polish translations date to the outset of 1840s: 'Józef Szafarzyk, Słowiański narodopis', *Jutrzenka*, 15. 1842; Paweł Józef Szafarzyk, *Słowiański narodopis*, Wrocław 1843.



input to the 'exploration' of Lusatian Serbs is unquestionable, though it would be difficult to agree with the opinion of a Slovak historian that it was indeed him who 'was the first one to present this small nation to the world together with the origins of its culture and its current history'<sup>27</sup>.

Šafařík described the Lusatian Serbs mainly as descendants of the formerly powerful tribes, currently living 'on the island surrounded from all sides by the German language'—namely, an extremely interesting subject of historical, philological and ethnographic study. Yet, he thought their future to be uncertain, for he witnessed 'a horrifying' progress of Germanization, especially in Lower Lusatia. He nonetheless also noticed a ray of hope for them as well, and highlighted that 'mental activity just as electric spark' imbuing all the Slavs, reaches places 'which seem to be devoid of last signs of life', that is, to the Slavonic Lusatia<sup>28</sup>.

A member of the great trio of the first generation of explorers of Lusatian Serbs included a Slovak, Jan Kollar, who wrote in the Czech language. He developed his views on the history of Slavism and Slavonic Lusatia as one of 'the daughters of Sláva'<sup>29</sup> under the clear, conspicuous influence of Herder. The Slavonic inhabitants of Lusatia attracted his attention as early as in 1817, during his stay in Jena. He felt there as he was in 'a Slavonic burial ground', and was emotional about 'the collapse of the local Slavonic nation'—Lusatian Serbs eradicated by the Germans. What he wrote at the time was as follows: 'Each city, each village, river and mountain bearing a Slavonic name to me seemed a grave on this great burial ground'. Despite expressing pessimism and fears for their future (he compared Upper and Lower Lusatia to two solitary, sinking boats)—a behaviour typical of other contemporary connoisseurs of the Lusatian Serbs—Koller believed that Lusatian-Serbs had a latent creative potential, capable to hold back the process of their extinction, to revive the nation and to introduce them to the circle of 'daughters of Sláva'<sup>30</sup>. According to Wilhelm Bogusławski, Kollar belonged to the group of Slavonic scholars, who unlike Dobrovsky and Safarik 'after having noticed at first glance that the Serbian nation continued to show a potential to revive, full of deep faith in the chance for keeping the Serbian nation alive, began to appeal to the compassion of their fellow tribes'<sup>31</sup>. Perhaps it was in fact Kollar's optimism that made his work on the Slavonic reciprocity receive such immense popularity in the Slavonic countries and in Poland as well<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> V. Mrušković, *Slovensko-lužickoserbske literarne vzťahy*, Bratislava 1980.

<sup>28</sup> Szafarzyk, *Słowiański narodopis*. p. 186. Professor of the University of Saint Petersburg, the most eminent Polish expert on Lusatian Serbian history, held a grudge against Šafařík that he perceived contemporary Lusatian Serbs, just as Dobrovsky, as 'pitiful remains of once mighty Serbian tribe', see Wilhelm Bogusławski, *Rys dziejów Serbsko-Lużyckich*, Sankt-Petersburg 1861. p. V; *Pavol Józef Šafařík a slavistika*, Martin 1996.

<sup>29</sup> Brunhilde Neuland, 'Die Aufnahme Herderscher Gedanke in Jan Kollars Schrift *Über die literarische Wechselseitigkeit zwischen der verschiednenen Stammen und Mundarten der slawischen Nation*', [in:] *Deutschland und der slawische Osten*, Jena 1994.

<sup>30</sup> O wpływie Kollara na ruch narodowy Serbów Łużyckich zob. Michał Hórnik, 'Kollar a hužiscy Serbja', [in:] Jan Kollar 1793–1852. Sbornik stati o žiwote, působeni a literami činnosti pevce 'Slávy dcery' na oslavu jeho stoletých narozenin, Wien 1893, pp. 249–251; O. Wičaz, 'Jan Kollar: Ze žiwjenja džela a serbskych počahow wulkeho Slawjana', *Slawjanske Rozhlady*, 4, 1928.

<sup>31</sup> Bogusławski, *Rys*.

<sup>32</sup> Stefan Vrtel-Wierczyński, 'Rozprawa Jana Kollara o *Literackiej wzajemności* Słowian i jej odgłosy w ówczesnej Polsce', [in:] *Slovanska vzajemnost. 1836–1936. Sbornik praci k 100. výroči vydani rozppny Jana Kollara o slovanske vzajemnosti*, Praha 1938.



In the context of the peoples of the entire Slavonic territory, these were the Czechs who from the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century played the undisputable role of the explorers of the Lusatian Serbs. They were also the first ones to stimulate their sense of independence, but also the ones to provide them with vital support for the establishment of the first Slavonic organisations and institutions in Lusatia<sup>33</sup>. This does not mean however that remaining Slavonic nations had no share whatsoever in the 'exploration' of Lusatian Serbs. To claim so would be especially untrue when it comes to Poles.

Just as remaining Slavonic nations (except for the Czechs) at the outset of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Poles knew almost nothing about the Slavs living on the other bank of the Lusatian Neisse. Ignorance of the members of Polish intellectual and political elites was a particularly unique phenomenon, especially if we consider that for over sixty years (1697–1763) Poland and Saxony (whose territory was at the time populated by the vast majority of Lusatian Serbs) were joined by personal union, and the relations between Warsaw and Dresden were flourishing. The route from Warsaw to Dresden ran through Wrocław, Görlitz and Bautzen. While on tour, Poles normally paid no attention to 'the locally surviving Slavonic communities'<sup>34</sup>.

The 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup>-century experts on the history of Lusatia highlighted that the Polish nobility was completely unconcerned with the history of Lusatian Serbs and with Lusatian ethno-linguistic issues in general. The Slavonic nobility in Lusatia, just like those in Silesia, Masuria or Kashubia, became entirely Germanized already in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Equally Germanized were the members of the upper classes of all Lusatian cities. The Slavonic 'populace' did not arouse the interest of the nobility, who were most probably completely unaware of their existence<sup>35</sup>.

However, there were in fact some who actually took heed of the Lusatian Serbian people, like the senator—whose name remains unknown—who having returned from Dresden, caused a big commotion at the court of Stanisław August with his news that in Saxony he came across 'a folk whose speech is similar to the Polish language'<sup>36</sup>. The original records of this event attest that the senator was heard out 'with admiration equal to that devoted to Columbus at the court of Queen Isabella'<sup>37</sup>.

The news of the Slavonic nation residing in Saxony at times drew the attention of those Poles who knew that centuries ago numerous Slavonic tribes had populated the territory between the Lusatian Neisse and the Elbe. Their contemporary tracks were searched for in Lower Saxony, around the lower reaches of the river of Elbe, by Count Jan Potocki, who was famous mostly for his authorship of the novel entitled *The Manuscript Found in Saragossa*. He was mainly interested in 'the Slavonic antiquities' located by the river Elbe, to the west and north of the territory of Lusatian Serbs. In 1794, during his exploration of the duchies of Mecklenburg and Pomerania, which brought him as far as Hamburg and Lübeck, he diligently studied 'the Slavonic antiquities hidden among the Wends'<sup>38</sup>. He took interest mostly in 'the few Slavs', who

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<sup>33</sup> For more details see *Naše styky s Luzice*, Praha 1934; Josef Pata, 'Luzickoserbske narodni obrozeni a ceskoslovenska ucast v nem', *Slavia*, 2–3. 1923.

<sup>34</sup> Józef Magnuszewski, *Literatura polska u kręgu literatur słowiańskich*, Wrocław 1993, p. 203.

<sup>35</sup> Józef Leszczyński, *Stany Górnych Łużyc w latach 1635–1697*, Wrocław 1963.

<sup>36</sup> Magnuszewski, *Literatura*, p. 203.

<sup>37</sup> 'Z niedrukowanych rękopisów dra Karola Libelta', *Kraj*, 19 IV 1884.

<sup>38</sup> Michał Baliński, 'Jan Potocki. Wędrownik, literat i dziejopis', [in:] *Pisma historyczne*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1843, p. 155.



according to his knowledge resided by the Lower Elbe and 'who managed to preserve some remains of their native language and, even, partially, their ancient customs'<sup>39</sup>.

The last stage of his journey included the visit to the Lüneburg Heath (Lüneburg Heide), and especially the town called Lüchow, which was considered one of the last Slavonic strongholds, where he hoped to meet the Wends. However, Potocki was unaware that 'the old language was completely extinct' also in Lüchow. He wrote as follows: 'the authorities in Hannover failed to spread the knowledge of German with equal success as they managed to eradicate the Slavic language; the villagers speak in a somewhat jargon-like fashion—omitting articles, conjugation—which is almost as unintelligible as their former dialect'. He noticed as well that the national character of the Germanized Drzewianie and their descendants survived longer than their language, for the local Germans kept 'accusing the Wends of the tendency to rebel, of laziness and of being too reserved, but universally consider them good soldiers'<sup>40</sup>. Yet he meticulously gathered information on 'the vestiges of Slavonic language' on customs, habits and beliefs. As a result, he produced a quite extensive work containing information not only on the remote history of the Polabian Slavs and their assimilation, but also examples of 'vestiges of Slavonic language', description of customs and beliefs<sup>41</sup>.

Nothing was known about the contemporary descendants of Slavonic tribes formerly residing by the Elbe by Adam Naruszewicz, court chronicler of Stanisław August. In his work on the history of the Polish nation (Polish: *Historia narodu polskiego*) he only mentioned 'Slavonic savages', who already at the close of the 9<sup>th</sup> century 'acted wickedly on the other bank of the Odra', about 'wild customs untamed by religion, Slavonic nations residing between the Elbe and Odra. He wrote about Meissen 'populated by free nations of Slavonic Serbs' and about Lusatia ('province taken away from the Slavonic Serbs'. However, Naruszewicz devoted most of his attention to Boleslaus the Valiant, thereby contributing crucially to the creation of myth on the king—'defender of Slavs'—who strove to 'liberate the Slavs completely from the German bondage', and who offered 'support to the Slavonic nations oppressed by margraves', and who, eventually, planted iron posts—famous from our chronicles—in token of national boundaries at the mouths of the rivers Saale and Elbe'<sup>42</sup>.

Priority in the Polish 'exploration' of Slavonic Lusatia was granted to Stanisław Staszic. On his return to Poland from a long term journey across Western Europe, at the outset of the 19<sup>th</sup> century he was passing through Lusatia. While approaching the border between Lusatia and Lower Silesia he recorded that two miles away from Görlitz

<sup>39</sup> Jan Potocki, *Podróż do Dolnej Saksonii*, [in:] *Podróże*. Warszawa 1959, p. 245.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 266–267.

<sup>41</sup> Jak napisał jego biograf, dzieło „podróżnicze i historyczne Potockiego” nosi „cecho sumiennej dokładności, tak w relacjach wędrowniczych, jak i w poszukiwaniach dziczopisurskich, a przytem wytrwałości i pracy niezmiordowanej” (Baliński, *Jan Potocki*). Relacja Potockiego o starożytnościach słowiańskich w Dolnej Saksonii ukazała się po francusku w Hamburgu w 1795 r. Przekład polski jest skrótem, pozbawionym opisu najistotniejszych ustaleń Potockiego. Cf. *Voyage dans quelques parties de la Basse-Sax pour la recherche des antiquites Slaves ou Vendes fait en 1794 par te Comte Jean Potocki*, *Hambourg 1795*, p. 102. More information on Potocki see also Alojzy Stanisław Matyniak. *Polsko-łużyckie stosunki kulturalne do Wiosny Ludów*. Wrocław 1970, pp. 32–40. Według niektórych czeskich sorabistów Potocki był jednak na słowiańskich Łużycach, najprawdopodobniej w 1785 r. J. Petr, K spočátkom zajima polskich slavistov wo serbsku u polobsku problematiku, 'Letopis Instituta za serbski ludospyt'. A, 12/2, 1965, pp. 173–183.

<sup>42</sup> Adam Naruszewicz, *Historia narodu polskiego od początku chrześcijaństwa. Panowanie Piastów*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1803, pp. 94, 105, 112 113, 186 187.



(named by him as Horlicz) 'there can be found the settlements of the Vandals [?]. These are spread at the distance of a dozen miles or so; [people] speak in Slavonic languages, namely, in Wendian. It is possible for Poles to understand them and communicate with them. My comment on the loss of national identity in relation to the Silesian people applies also in this case: farmer-peasant faithful to the last; eight hundred years of living surrounded by the Germans did not change these rural people, even a tiny bit. They pray and preach in Wendian, and their family names differ from those of the Germans'. In Bautzen, 'an old town of the Slavonic ancestry of the Wends or the Vandals [...] the populace use Slavonic language to communicate. A thrifty and good folk'<sup>43</sup>.

Staszic's notes from his journey remained unpublished for over 125 years, and information they contained on the Wends-Vandals were familiar as a somewhat curiosity only to a narrow group of his friends. The Warsaw aristocratic and noble elites were in fact indifferent towards the fate of 'the Wendian populace', just as towards the fate of the Polish-speaking populace of Silesia and Masuria. In this context a somewhat exception were the observations gathered in Lusatia by General Henryk Dembiński, who was stationed there in 1813 with the corps of Prince Józef Poniatowski. 'The local rural folk is less enlightened', wrote Dembiński, 'for these are the Wends, who speak a language which is similar to Polish; and as the government strives to eradicate this language and replace it with German, it supports only the German schools, to which the folk is drawn'<sup>44</sup>.

Almost nothing was known about the Slavonic nation in Lusatia in the circle of the Warsaw Scientific Society established by Staszic in 1808 although its members were many Slavists who largely contributed to the popularisation of knowledge about the Slavs<sup>45</sup>. We have very good reasons to suspect that the fate of for instance the Polabian Slavs, including 'the Wends-Vandals'—just as that of the Slavonic inhabitants of Lower Silesia (residing on the left bank of the Odra river) and Western Pomerania, as well as the expansion of Germanness in the newly acquired by Prussia Greater Poland and Gdańsk Pomerania—became one of the fundamentals of Staszic's political idea, which was most clearly explained in his *Myśl o równowadze politycznej w Europie* (1815) and historiosophical poem *Ród ludzki* (1819–1820). Its essence was the unification of the entire Slavonic population by 'the greatest in the world Slavonic nation'—namely, Russia, the only Slavonic country at the time. Staszic had a vision of a massive, modelled after Charlemagne's Imperium Romanum, association-federation of all Slavonic nations under the power of Russian tsars—'the liberators and benefactors of Europe'. In his poem *Ród ludzki* he prophesied that 'the greatest Slavonic nation in the world' would eventually 'erase all its opponents' and 'would found on their ashes the Slavonic union of

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<sup>43</sup> *Dziennik podróży Stanisława Staszica 1789–1805*, edited by Czesław Leśniewski, Kruków 1932, pp. 394–395; F. Metšk, 'Narodnostne pomery w mešče Budvšinje a socialekonomska struktura jeho serbskeho wobydlerstwa w započatku 19. letostotka', *Letopis Instituta za serbski ludospyt*, 3, 1956.

<sup>44</sup> Henryk Dembiński, 'Niektóre wspomnienia o działaniach korpusu polskiego pod dowództwem księcia Józefa Poniatowskiego w roku 1813 przez naocznego świadka', *Pamiętniki Polskie*, 3, Paryż 1845, p. 141. More information on the subject see Martyniak, *Polsko-łużyckie stosunki*, pp. 43–45.

<sup>45</sup> For more information see R. Piotrowska, 'Początki zainteresowań przeszłością Słowian wśród członków Warszawskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk', *Z polskich studiów slawistycznych*, series 3: Historia, Warszawa 1968; Zofia Klarnerówna, *Słowianofilstwo w literaturze polskiej lat 1800–1840*, Warszawa 1926; Alicja Kuleczka, *Między słowianofilstwem a słowianoznawstwem. Idee słowiańskie w życiu intelektualnym Warszawy lat 1832–1856*, Warszawa 1997; J. Mikulka, *Slovanstvi a polska společnost w XIX století*, Praha 1984.



Europe, which already owes its liberation to the Russians'. Then, it was not without reason that Staszic was described by a modern Japanese historian as 'the first Pan-Slavist'<sup>46</sup>.

At the time when *Ród ludzki* was being published in Warsaw, the exploration of Lusatian Serbs by the Polish scholars was just about to occur. It finally happened so at the outset of the 1820s thanks to Michał Bobrowski, a Greek-Uniate canon of Brześć, a teacher at the Seminary in Vilnius and a comprehensively educated polyglot (he knew Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, French, German, Italian and Russian). In 1817 Bobrowski was sent by his superiors for a five-year education to Western Europe. There, he was to become acquainted with, among others, the structure of theological studies (mainly in Germany), and, so to speak, 'by the way' with the condition of Slavonic literature and languages<sup>47</sup>. The last stage of Bobrowski's journey was Lusatia. It was Josef Dobrovsky, in Prague, who drew his attention to this unknown Slavonic land and its inhabitants. In June 1822, Bobrowski took his first steps in 'the land of Lusatians'. In the borderland town of Hodžij (Góda), in a roadhouse 'he heard people speaking the Lusatian language for the first time in his life'. He instantly noticed the differences between the speech of Lusatians and that of other Slavs: clear influences of the Czech language, German accent, German grammatical forms.

In Bautzen, the capital of the Saxon Lusatian Serbs, he met the few at the time representatives of the local intelligentsia, i.e. pastor and poet Jurij Mjen, 'the first, as far as I know, Lusatian writer', who 'was brave enough to use the Wendian speech in a poem' and proved that 'Serbian speech may be used to create heroic poetry modelled on the Greek or Latin hexameters, as well as to depict great scenes in vivid colours'<sup>48</sup>.

The acquaintance with the pioneers of the nation-building movement and his own observations allowed Bobrowski to formulate many essential comments on the previously unknown Slavonic nation. Having used the terms such as 'Lusatians', 'Wends', 'Wenedians', 'Lusatian', 'Wendian', 'Serbian', he noticed however that the Slavonic inhabitants of Lusatia (he estimated their number at ca. 170 thousand: 85 thousand in Saxony and more or less the same in Prussia) in fact designate their country as 'Serbian', themselves as Serbs (or Sorbs), and their native language as 'the Serbian speech' (which was divided in two dialects: that of Upper Lusatia, which was close to Czech, and that in

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<sup>46</sup> A. Nakayama, 'Stanisław Staszic and his Pan-Slavism', *Seizyo Shigaku or the Studies in Western History*. 117. Osaka 1989. Szerzej o poglądach i koncepcjach Staszica zob. Tadeusz Korzon. 'Staszic jako historyzof', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*. 1887, pp. 575-570, 581-582. W. A. Francew, *Polskoje sławjanowiedienije konca XVIII i pierwszej czietwierti XIX stoletija*. Praga Czeskaja 1906. Having opposed the popular in the second half of the 19th century negation by the official Russian authorities of the achievements of Polish Slavonic studies, Francew highlighted the contributions of first Polish representatives of this domain, including Staszic, 'in the great movement for the revival of Slavonic nationality at the outset of the 19th century'. The idea of unification of the Slavs united under the rule of Russian tsars was tantamount to the total abandonment by Staszic of his former political ambitions. In his work, published in 1807, including the brief guidelines for potential liberators and rulers of Poland—Staszic presented the idea of the democratic 'Federation of Slavonic and European Nations', but without the participation of the Asian-Mongolian Russia. Poland was to play the role of 'the bulwark of Europe against the Asian invasion' and the propagator of the western civilisation. Situated 'at the very heart of the great Slavonic nation [...] enlightened by France, it [Poland] would enlighten also these numerous peoples whose roots, customs and language are the same as ours'.

<sup>47</sup> Piotr Bobrowskij, 'Uczionoje putieszestwije M.K. Bobrowskogo po Jewropie i sławjanskim ziemljam 1817-1822', *Sławjanskije Izwiestija*, 30th of April and 11th of June 1889.

<sup>48</sup> Francew, *Polskoje sławjanowiedjenije*, p. 320.



Lower Lusatia—close to Polish. Just like Staszic, Bobrowski recorded that the role of ‘the stronghold of nationality’, ‘the depository of the native language, customs and traditions falls mostly to the villagers, and in towns—to the representatives of lower classes. The Slavonic language is used only by the rural folk and low-class town-dwellers. The burghers and intelligentsia use mostly the German language and restrict themselves to the scope of urban culture, namely, the German culture’<sup>49</sup>. He also noticed that it were the Catholic and Evangelical clergy who were crucial for the preservation of the language of Lusatian Serbs<sup>50</sup>.

What did not escape Bobrowski’s attention was the attitude of part of the Germans towards the Lusatian Serbs, their language and culture. ‘Some Germans think’, he emphasised, ‘that Slavonic language is the basic reason for ‘the low civilizational level of Lusatians’. That is why many of them simply ‘strives to eradicate this speech from Lusatia, just as they did so in Lüneburg’<sup>51</sup>. Following his return to his homeland, he shared his observations gathered in ‘the country of Lusatians’ with the team of the *Dziennik Wileński* (a scientific-literary monthly issued from 1815), where they were published in 1824. We do not know what reaction this publication produced among the intellectual elites of Vilnius. Yet, it did not pass unnoticed in the circle of Moscow intelligentsia connected with the Moscow magazine *Wiestnik Jewropy*. In 1825, it published a reprint of an extensive abstract of the article from the *Dziennik Wileński*. Having provided information on its author, and having emphasized that during his long journey around Europe ‘he paid particular attention to the Slavs, their customs, language and literature’, the *Wiestnik* published the text with the unique annotation: ‘the information on the language and literature of the Lusatian Wends is totally new to us’<sup>52</sup>.

Bobrowski was the first Pole to observe and describe the symptoms of the phenomenon, which was deemed for decades as ‘the national revival’ of Lusatian Serbs and which in fact was the process of building of the Lusatian Serbian nation. These symptoms included for instance the establishment of the small group of ‘pioneers of the national revival’ (mostly clergymen), first attempts to codify the language (by means of the so-called Wendian grammar created by Lubeński), transferring spoken language to literature—magazines and publications.

Poland quickly forgot about Bobrowski. In 1824, the authorities accused him of sympathizing with the Vilnius Philaretos Association, for which he was dismissed from his post at the Seminar<sup>53</sup>. In the circles of Russian Slavophiles Bobrowski’s achievements were recounted only 70 years later. They referred to the publications in the *Dziennik Wileński*, but without a single mention that Bobrowski was a Pole and a pioneer of the Polish Serbian studies<sup>54</sup>. In the Slavophile magazines of Saint Petersburg, Moscow and

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<sup>49</sup> Michał Hórnik. 'Michał K. Bobrowski a Izmail J. Srezniewski wo Serbach', *Časopis Macicy Scrbskeje*. Budziszyn 1889.

<sup>50</sup> Michał Bobrowski. 'Wyjątek z dzienniku podróży po Wyższej Luzacji przez ks. kanonika kapituły brzeskiej unickiej w roku 1822 odprawionej', *Dziennik Wileński*, I, 1824, pp. 261–283.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 267.

<sup>52</sup> M. B., 'Kratkaja wypiska iz putieszestwija po Wierchniej Luzacji', *Wiestnik Jewropy*, January–February 1825, pp. 252–264.

<sup>53</sup> Matyniak, *Polsko-łużyckie stosunki*, p. 51.

<sup>54</sup> 'Michał Kirillowicz Bobrowskij 1785–1848 ucziornyj slawist-orientalist', *Sławjanskije Izwiestija*, the 31th of December 1889. As a Slavist he was presented in a biographical sketch written by one of his closest family members, see Piotr O. Bobrowski j, *Michał Kirillowicz Bobrowskij 1785–1848 ucziornyj slawis-orientalist. Istoriko-biograficzeskij-oczierk*, Sankt-Petersburg 1889.



Kiev he was referred to as 'the native Russian' (*istinnij russkij*). This was based on the opinion of Michał Hornik, the leader of the national movement of Lusatian Serbs, who considered Bobrowski to be of Russian nationality exclusively on the basis of the publication in the *Wiestnik Jewropy* (while not being familiar with the text in the *Dziennik Wileński*). Dobrovsky avoided making such mistake. Bobrowski wrote in Polish and considered himself Polish. It was only his family who deprived its progenitor of his true nationality and started to present him as a Russian<sup>55</sup>.

Bobrowski's steps were soon followed by another pioneer willing to explore the Lusatian Serbs—Andrzej Kucharski. He noticed the same phenomena and processes, but he described them in more detail, with special attention to the traditional culture (folklore) of Lusatian Serbs, their customs and habits<sup>56</sup>. He was born in the year which marked the last Partition of Poland in the village of Barany in the Sieradz voivodeship. He graduated from the gymnasium in Piotrków, and from the university in Warsaw. He taught Greek and Latin, as well as Polish history in gymnasiums in Płock, Kalisz and Lublin. In 1825 he was delegated by the Ministry of Enlightenment of the Polish Kingdom (*Ministerstwo Oświecenia Królestwa Polskiego*) to make 'a scholarly journey' to Germany, Italy, Turkey, Hungary and Russia, 'in order to become familiar with various Slavonic dialects and all what could have a greater connection with their study'<sup>57</sup>. During the last stage of his journey, before travelling to Lusatia, he visited Prague. As he mentioned several years later in Prague, it was Dobrovsky who assisted him in perfecting his knowledge of 'Serbian, Upper Lusatian language'. Every Sunday at Dobrovsky's home two young Lusatian Serbs from nearby Bautzen read out loud 'the gospel and epistles' in Serbian. Dobrovsky also entrusted Kucharski with letters of recommendation to Bautzen<sup>58</sup>.

Kucharski travelled to Lusatia convinced that his acquisition of knowledge of the language, literature and history of the unknown to him Slavonic nation—just as the knowledge of the language, literature, and history of Slavonic nations he was already familiar with—would make it easier for him to 'explain and perfect our language, history and literature'<sup>59</sup>. On his way from Prague to Lusatia he passed through Wrocław. At the University he attended lectures on the history of Slavs and Slavonic literature. None the less, during his visit to Wrocław, he mainly occupied himself with studying all the works on the Slavs, Poland and Lusatia that were available in the local libraries<sup>60</sup>. The knowledge on Lusatia gathered by him in Prague and Wrocław he further extended in Görlitz, Bautzen, Dresden, Leipzig and Halle.

He spent five months in Lusatia. In 1827 he wrote to Hanka: 'I have done what I could for the dialect of Upper and Lower Lusatia. I have not only mastered the language

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<sup>55</sup> More information on Bobrowski and his role in the exploration of Lusatian Serbs see Mirośław Cygański, 'Z dziejów przyjaźni i współpracy Polaków z Serbami Łużyckimi w latach 1830–1945', *Acta Uniwersytatis Wratislaviensis, Nauki Polityczne*, 19, Wrocław 1986, pp. 6–7; Matyniak, *Polsko-łużyckie stosunki*, pp. 45–52.

<sup>56</sup> Cygański, *Z dziejów*, pp. 6–7; Matyniak, *Polsko-łużyckie stosunki*, pp. 52–68.

<sup>57</sup> A. Kucharski do Wacława Hanki, 26th of June 1827, [in:] *Pisma k Hankie iż sławjanskich ziemie*, Warszawa 1905, p. 569.

<sup>58</sup> Andrzej Kucharski, 'Szczegóły dotyczące się języka i literatury słowiańsko-czeskiej', *Pamiętnik Warszawski*, 1829, p. 267.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 278.

<sup>60</sup> Wyjątki z naukowej podróży po krajach słowiańskich przez Polaka odprawionej, *Rozmaitości Warszawskie*, issue 327 of the 30th of August 1826; Franczew, *Polskoje sławjanowiedienije*, pp. 395–403.



of the local Serbs, but also attempted to familiarize myself with their history, geography, literature, customs and traditions. When it comes to geography, I have put down, where possible, the names of Serbian villages, cities, mountains, etc. As regards literature, I have not only tried to purchase all Serbian books that are available, but also collected many Serbian, Upper and Lower Lusatian songs<sup>61</sup>. These were the songs that were of particular interest to him, for he regarded them as perfect 'monuments of a living language'<sup>62</sup>. He also devoted himself 'personally, on the spot' to learning folk customs and traditions. He explored the mountains, woodland, solitary hills and rivers, seeking traces of old Slavonic deities, temples and religious rites of 'the prehistoric Slavs'<sup>63</sup>.

He passionately studied both languages (he referred to them as dialects) of the Serbs, Wends and Lusatians—as he called the Slavonic inhabitants of Lusatia<sup>64</sup>. His sojourn in Lusatia, however, did not instil optimism in him. At the outset of 1828, he wrote that the Germans frequently addressed words to him which 'inflicted deepest and most painful wounds to his heart': '*die wendische Sprache soli ausgerottet werden*'... 'What they are talking about is already happening'<sup>65</sup>.

The results of scientific research conducted by Kucharski—the first remarkably great Polish expert on Lusatia<sup>66</sup>—have never been published in their entirety. They were only partially reflected on the pages of the *Dziennik Warszawski*, the *Pamiętnik Warszawski* and the *Gazeta Polska*. Kucharski's output inspired other scholars, including the most outstanding Polish ethnographer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Oskar Kolberg<sup>67</sup>.

Influenced by the views of German Slavists, who kept heralding the inevitable disappearance of the small 'shrinking' patches of Slavonic population in Germany (the Lusatian Serbs, the Masurians, the Kashubians, the Silesians, the Slovincians), Wacław Maciejowski, a historian and graduate of German universities (including the University of Wrocław), from 1817 a professor of Roman law at the Warsaw University, and, on top of that, a high official of the judicature of the Polish Kingdom, famous as the pan-Slavist supporting the formation of a great Slavonic monarchy under the tsar rule. He owed his acclaim in the academic world to his fundamental work entitled *Historia prawodawstw słowiańskich* (1832–1835)<sup>68</sup>.

Following the steps of numerous excellent Slavonic scholars (such as Czech-born Palacky, Slovak-born Stur or Russian-born Srezniewski), who having heard the news of 'the miracle of survival and revival' of Lusatian Serbs made pilgrimages to Lusatia, Maciejowski went there in 1839. The rich material he gathered at the time has never been published. None the less, it served other scholars and Maciejowski himself referred to it in his polemics with the German scholars. He consequently propagated the view on

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<sup>61</sup> A. Kucharski do Wacława Hanki, p. 569.

<sup>62</sup> Part of the song collection gathered by Kucharski was published in 1830 by František Čelakovský in *Časopise Ceskeho Muzea*.

<sup>63</sup> Francew. *Polskoje sławjanowiedienije*, pp. 421–491.

<sup>64</sup> Andrzej Kucharski, 'O dialektach słowiańskich i języku sanskryckim', *Dziennik Warszawski*, 1825, p. 521; Sussmilch, 'Urtheil des Prof. Kucharski über die Wendischen Dialekte in der Lausitz'. *Neues Lausitzischer Magazin*, 6, 1827.

<sup>65</sup> 'Wyjątek z listu rodaka podróżującego po krajach słowiańskich', *Gazeta Polska*, 2th of January 1828.

<sup>66</sup> Matyniak, *Polsko-łużyckie stosunki*, P. 67.

<sup>67</sup> Agata Skrukwa, 'Materiały łużyckie w zbiorach Oskara Kolberga', [in:] Oskar Kolberg, *Dzieła*, vol. 59, part. I, Warszawa 1985, pp. XII–XXV.

<sup>68</sup> For more information on Maciejowski see Juliusz Bardach, *Wacław Aleksander Maciejowski i jego współcześni*, Wrocław 1971.



the Slavs being Lusatian autochthones (which later turned out to be false), he ridiculed the Wrocław scholars, accused them of ignorance and unfamiliarity with the Slavonic language and nationality. He wrote: 'They are lacking of the eyes of soul, they cannot look inside the soul. Just as the wolf or the astronomer they look into the sky' and do not fathom 'the spirit of our nationality', they cannot 'highlight the picture' so that you could 'see the image of heart in it'<sup>69</sup>.

Against the background of heroic and great past did he draw a modern image of the Lusatian Serbs. 'Today, in some places they still live like previously, speak the language of their predecessors, but impoverished intellectually and physically, they live in humiliation, as part of the district population'<sup>70</sup>. Following the death of Maciejowski (1883 r.) a popular Warsaw weekly published a commentary where it was written that 'he highlighted the prevalence of Slavs over the Germanic tribes in the earliest phase of their history in terms of their customs, civilisation and district structure [...]. His research shed light to all the beautiful qualities of Slavonic peoples, he drew a clear dividing line between them and the Germanic tribes, who were so boastful for their long-lasting civilisation'. It was highlighted that Maciejowski was the first western scholar to secure for them—'the immemorial owners of the eastern stretch of Europe'—'the right for a separate nationality [...], whereas the Slavs were always considered by these scholars as a some sort of an immigrant folk from Asia, a slave tribe, never possessing any national qualities nor civilisation'<sup>71</sup>.

Maciejowski's materials were also used by Aleksander Tyszyński, a lawyer by education, a writer, a literary critic and a philosopher. His picture of 'the Slavonic Lusatia' was painted in extremely dark colours. 'The existing at the remotest western edge of Slavonic lands' inhabitants 'of the Slavonic Lusatia' were rather 'half-Slavs'. Their 'native writing' is at 'the budding stage', however, in recent years they are showing 'more emphasis on care, devotion to the native language as well as its propagation both in speech and writing'.

Tyszyński was the first one to draw attention to the fact that in the emerging Lusatian Serbian literature there often recurred the motive of 'the Polish king', that is, Boleslaus the Valiant (Bolesław Chrobry), which 'attests [...] the historical connections between Poland and Lusatia'.

The responsibility for the underdevelopment of the culture of 'the Slavonic Lusatia' he placed particularly on the Evangelical clergy (which was only partially justified). The clergy's majority acquired 'the Germanic nationality' (that is, yielded to the eradication of their native nationality) and owing to their social role became 'the destroyers of their native nationality' and 'the noisy hindrance' in the process of revival of national traditions and speech<sup>72</sup>.

Bobrowski, Kucharski, Maciejowski were the most outstanding representatives of the trend to approach the Lusatian Serbs from academic perspective in the period prior to the Springtime of the Peoples, the pioneers in developing a new branch of the Polish

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<sup>69</sup> Aleksander Maciejowski. *Uwagi nad dziełem Ludwika Giesebrachta pod tytułem Historie wedyjskie, Biblioteka Warszawska*, 1, 1844, p. 563.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 565.

<sup>71</sup> W. D., 'Wacław Aleksander Maciejowski', *Wędrowiec*, 22th of February 1883.

<sup>72</sup> Aleksander Tyszyński. 'O przyjaciółach Słowian w Warszawie i ich obecnych zajęciach'. *Tygodnik Petersburski*. 66–67, 1839, *idem*, 'Rys historyczny oświecenia słowiańskiego', *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 1, 1841.



Slavonic-Serbian studies (Lusatian studies). On exploring their findings, thoughts, and opinions on the future of Lusatian Serbs many years later one cannot resist the impression that they were acting hastily, attempted to collect as much information and evidence on Slavonic Lusatia as possible just as if they were afraid that the subject of their study would soon share the fate of the Lüneburg Slavs.

The Polish focus on the Lusatian Serbs was never of purely academic nature. Polish newspapers published in all Partitions and beyond—for the emigrant circles—around the close of the 1830s were devoting more and more attention to the issue Lusatia and Lusatian Serbs, but mostly to the aspects of political nature. However, what's remarkable is that in the Russian partition many questions were consequently avoided. These were for instance all references to the Polish and Russian views on 'the Slavonic issue' and 'the Slavonic reciprocity', the critical evaluation of Saint Petersburg's policy towards the Slavonic nations, denying the national identity of Ukrainians and Belarusians, presenting Russia as the protector and defender of Slavonic nations and Slavonic minorities in Turkey, Austria and Germany. The critique was directed only against the policy of Germany (Prussia and Saxony). The press of the Prussian Partition normally did not address the issue of the anti-Slavonic policy of Prussia. The blade of critique was directed against Saxony (considered the enemy of Prussia), although its policy towards the Slavonic inhabitants of Lusatia was—as compared with the policy of Prussia—flexible and relatively liberal. This sort of limitations and inhibitions did not generally apply to the Polish centres in Galicia (Cracow and Lviv) and emigrant circles. Their publicist articles without any hesitations presented the policy of Saint Petersburg and proved that by opposing the policy of the tsarist Russia, Poland acts to the benefit of the entire Slavonic community.

In line with this trend were for instance the views and political visions of Piotr A. Semenka, a monk, a messianist and a mystic. He wrote in the *Postęp* periodical in 1834 about 'a somewhat fatalism the Slavonic tribe is burdened with'. The historical role of Poland was according to him to rely on eradicating this fatalism and turning the flow of Slavonic history. The modern Poland is predestined to continue the work of the first Piasts, and most importantly of Boleslaus the Vailant—the ruler who 'freed the Slavdom from [...] the sneaking Germanization'. Boleslaus headed westwards 'supported by the mighty idea of unification' as its 'missionary and executor'. Meissen, Lusatia, Bohemia, Moravia, Poland and Ruthenia all focused around him as if he was ... a warming fireplace. Thanks to this, at the end of the Slav lands 'he raised iron mounds for the sake of their power and continued existence'<sup>73</sup>.

Similar ideas and concepts were presented in the *Sławianin*, published from 1837 in Lviv by Stanisław Jaszowski. The first issue of this annual publication contained the extensive article on Lusatia by Ksawery Bronikowski, a participant of the November Uprising, and then an emigrant, a supporter of the pro-Slavonic policy of Prince Adam Czartoryski. When writing about Lusatia Bronikowski showed his extensive knowledge of its history, facts about the Germanization of its Slavonic population, as well as their language, customs and traditions, which were being preserved for centuries (it follows from the text that the author was familiar with all fundamental works by German authors on Lusatia and its Slavonic inhabitants which were currently available). His description of the situation in Lusatia was opened by Bronikowski in an unusual way: he

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<sup>73</sup> Piotr A. Semenka, 'O narodowości', *Postęp*, 1834, pp. 68 and following.



recounted 'the times of joy' of its Slavonic people under the rule of Polish and Czech dukes. The breaking of political bonds with Poland 'orphaned the vanguard of the Slavonic lands and exposed it, like the piece apart from the whole, to the full impact of its western neighbours'.

Based on medieval German chronicles Bronikowski presented the ancient predecessors of the contemporary Slavonic inhabitants of Lusatia as a warlike and valiant nation, but most importantly as a nation for whom freedom was of such great value that 'they had little regard for the disasters of war', were proud, 'had much patience for labour', 'were undemanding about food and greedy for amusement', brutal towards its enemies, but privately gentle, conscientious, virtuous and hospitable. He also underlined that 'the modern' Slavs of Lusatia preserved many qualities of their ancient ancestors, which also attracted the attention of German writers of the close of the 17<sup>th</sup> century: 'they do not look after the foreigners who do not speak their language, regarding them as disrespectful towards them; when drinking they like to sing religious songs; a stranger who speaks their language is welcomed by them with joy and they would even think the world of him; they are used to hard work and poverty [...], they are very respectful towards their priests and they take their words as if they were the words of God'. Bronikowski also noticed (what escaped the attention of Bobrowski and Kucharski) that the contemporary Lusatian Slavs formed two halves of the so-called 'Slavonic tribe': the first one, residing in Upper Lusatia, describes itself as the Serbs, and the other, in Lower Lusatia—as the Wends. Their settlements and towns, mountains and rivers, as well as other places now carry German names, but 'their former names are respected to this day by the local Slavonic folk'. The towns were Germanized centuries ago, but the Germans 'thanks to staying in touch with the peasants often speak their language'. The inhabitants of villages and settlements are mostly Slavs. 'They occupy themselves with statute labour; they value farming more than commerce and industrial life and distinguish from others with perfect physical build and robustness'. Fascinated with the phenomenon of 'lasting and surviving' of the Lusatian Serbs, Bronikowski aimed at bringing their fate into the attention of the Polish elites of Galicia, suggesting them for instance that it would be worth to support them, to take interest in their past and presence, collect and publish their songs, legends and tales<sup>74</sup>. The editorial board of the *Sławianin* magazine invariably declared that 'being at faithful service of Poland means being at service of the interests and freedom of the entire Slavonic nation'. There will come a moment when they understand us and decently evaluate the extent of our efforts and sacrifices<sup>75</sup>.

The idea of unity of the Slavs and their unification around Poland was typical not only for the supporters of conservatism and messianism. It was for instance promoted by Tadeusz Krępowiecki, a representative of the radical left-wing politicians-emigrants circle. Having proclaimed the idea of 'the Slavonic nation', he alluded to the example of French Revolution. 'What we find here is a mixture of various peoples: the Gauls, the Franks, the Goths, the Basks, the Italians, the Normans, the Burgundians. All of them call themselves Frenchmen, all share a common nationality and even the Alsatians and the Lotharingians consider themselves French, although they do not speak this language'<sup>76</sup>. His views were further highlighted in 1847 by the leading article in the *Demokrata Polski*

<sup>74</sup> Ksawery Bronikowski, 'Luzacja', *Sławianin*, 1837, pp. 168–175.

<sup>75</sup> 'Do Rodaków i Braci Sławian', *Sławianin*, 1841.

<sup>76</sup> Tadeusz Krępowiecki, 'Narodowość', *Postęp*, 1834.



magazine on the historical mission of Poland for the sake of Slavonic lands, where Poland was presented as 'the Messiah of nations', 'the vanguard of civilisation' whose role—centuries ago—was to defend the values of Christian civilisation against 'the northern barbarity'. Organized in 'a civilizational army', Poland combined 'the scattered Slavonic tribes into one body' and 'carried the light of civilisation as far as the Baltic Sea and Euxine' (that is the Black Sea), uniting, one after another, 'Silesia, Croatia, Lusatia, Meissen, Pomerania, Prussia, Ruthenia, and eventually Lithuania, into one whole'. This way Poland formed a mighty country, whose borders were constituted by the rivers Elbe and Dnieper, as well as the Baltic Sea and Black Sea. This 'powerful country' was performing the role of 'the pre-trench earthwork which over the centuries parried all the attacks launched against the civilization by the barbarians from the north'<sup>77</sup>. Due to its historical mission and represented values, it was Poland—not the possessive, imperialist Russia which oppressed other Slavonic nations and hypocritically called itself their protector and defender—which was granted the moral right to unite the Slavonic nations, both at the time and in the future, in defence against the aggressive and offensive 'Germanism'.

It would be worth to notice that the idea of perpetual fight of the Slavonic world with the Germanic world was often brought up by the emigrant press. For instance, the newspaper of Hôtel Lambert, the *Trzeci Maj* weekly, published at the outset of 1848 extensive commentary on the lectures on the history of Slavonic literature delivered by eminent French Slavist Robert Cyprien. The lectures' leading theme was the fight of the Slavonic world with the impact and the expansion of Germanism. Cyprien adhered to the history of Slavonic nations from between the rivers Elbe and Odra, pointed to 'the sad result of the campaign for nationality' in these territories and in the coast of the Baltic Sea, where the Slavonic language and customs almost entirely vanished. According to him the main source of weakness and defeat of the Odra-Elbe Slavs was that they were not united. Just as centuries earlier 'the situation of both parties of the conflict is again the same. The resolution of the argument is now dependent on the conclusion of close alliance and unity'. The Slavs have to remember that the enemy they are dealing with 'has never spared the defeated ones, never forgiven to any of them'<sup>78</sup>.

The Polish focus on the Lusatian Serbs prior to the Springtime of the Peoples centred on history, language and traditional culture. Its main subjects included the question of survival, ever-threatening danger of extinction of the people of Slavonic Lusatia and sharing the fate of the Lüneburg Drzewianie and the beginnings of the so-called national revival. The Lusatian Serbs were not fully engaged in a wider political context, especially that international one, they were nonetheless not free from political references and innuendoes, due to the connection between the entirety of the historical struggle of 'the Slavonic world' with 'the Germanic world'. Political subtexts, allusions, and references were becoming clearer in the last years prior to the Springtime of the

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<sup>77</sup> 'Pośłannictwo Polski wobec przeznaczenia ludzkości', *Demokrata Polski*, 3th of July 1847.

<sup>78</sup> 'Roberta Cypriena kurs historii literatur słowiańskich'. *Trzeci Maj*, 29th of January 1848. What needs to be mentioned, however, is that the concepts of 'Slavonic brotherhood' and 'Pan-Slavonic country' were strongly criticised by many emigrant circles. The proclamation of idea of 'Slavonic brotherhood' following the bitter experience of the November Uprising was described as 'coup d'état' and 'service for the tsar'. 'Kilka słów o braterstwie słowiańskim', *Kronika Emigracji Polskiej*, 2, 1834, pp. 241–247; *Narodowość*, *ibidem*, 3, 1835, pp. 291–298; for more information see Leszek Kuk, *Orientacja słowiańska u myśli politycznej Wielkiej Emigracji (do wybuchu wojny krymskiej)*. Geneza, uwarunkowania, podstawowe koncepcje, Toruń 1996.



Peoples. The development of the national movement of the Lusatian Serbs at the time met with extremely kind reaction and open liking in Poland, and most importantly in the Prussian Partition.

The example of publication that was clearly political in character and pointed against the anti-Slavonic Saxon policy was for instance the extensive article (report) in the Leszno newspaper *Przyjaciół Ludu*, published in 1845. Its author, most probably a student of the Wrocław University, was staying in Lusatia (i.e. nearby Mużakow by the Lusatian Neisse, where the ethnic border runs between Upper and Lower Lusatia) and meeting with the leaders of the budding national movement. His estimates of the number of the Lusatian Serbs were very optimistic—ca. 200 thousand people. This was—as he highlighted—merely ‘a tiny fracture of the great nation which formerly ruled the entire state. Their presence, contrary to the openly idealized past, was painted by him in dark colours. He did not spare criticism towards the Saxon government, which would back up for decades ‘the plan of destroying’ the Lusatian Serbs. ‘The contempt for the Lusatians showed by the Saxons is perhaps as great as that of the Englishmen for the Irish [...]. The Slavonic inhabitants of Lusatia were deprived of schools, where they would have the chance to learn their native language, and even the folk schools they had access to provided education only in German, thereby depriving them of their national identity. The languages of the Lusatian Serbs were banned from institutions and courts. And such events were taking place in the mid-19th century ‘in the heart of Germany; how terrible violence this is [...], how terrible wounds are inflicted upon the most precious mementoes of the nation’. The author nonetheless believed that the Lusatian Serbs would manage to revive their nationality, just like the Czechs.

He saw the chance for the national revival of the Lusatian Serbs in the developing sense of Slavonic connection and solidarity. The bonds with ‘remaining tribes of the same origin’ were to strengthen the sense of independence and identity of Lusatian Serbs, contribute to the revival of their ancient traditions, to make them ‘rise to a different life’. The author appealed to the Poles to support the Lusatian Serbs ‘in the name of common origin’ wherever possible—‘in letters and in sejms’—and defended ‘the nationality of the related tribes’<sup>79</sup>.

All Slavonic capitals and all centres of Slavonic national movement witnessed with satisfaction the foundation in Bautzen (1847) of the *Matica srpska*—a cultural-scientific and educational society (the fourth organisation of this type) of the Slavonic lands, the successor of the Serbian society of 1826, the Czech society of 1831 and Croatian society of 1842 r. According to its flagship motto: ‘To God for glory and to the Serbs for benefit’ (*Bohu k česci a Serbam k wužitku*) The *Matica* became ‘the first public manifestation of the nationality of Lusatian Serbs’<sup>80</sup>, ‘the climax of the development of spiritual and cultural life of the Lusatian Serbs prior to the Springtime of the Peoples’<sup>81</sup>.

The foundation of the *Matica* within the smallest Slavonic nation came as a surprise to the Leszno (Greater Poland) periodical *Przyjaciół Ludu*. This event was interpreted by the magazine as the symptom of an unusual phenomenon, even bordering on a miracle: ‘here we see that the last survivors of the formerly great tribe of the Wends do not lose their spirit’. The magazine reprinted the society’s statute and its appeal for financial support. This was however accompanied by the pessimistic

<sup>79</sup> ‘Luzacy’, *Przyjaciół Ludu*, 12th of July 1845.

<sup>80</sup> Pypin, Spasowicz, *Obzor*, p. 1084.

<sup>81</sup> Jan Šořta, Hartmut Zwahr, *Geschichte der Sorben*, Bd. 2, Budziszyn 1974.



commentary: 'in the province [namely, in Greater Poland], where Polish literature is barely known to anyone and is neglected and unsupported, where almost no one places the native literary works higher than baubles and historical relics etc.—it would be difficult to find individuals willing to look after the interests of their fellow tribe'<sup>82</sup>.

To show their solidarity with the Lusatian Serbs, the representatives of the entire Slavonic world—the Czechs, the Russians, the Slovaks, the Serbs, the Croatians, the Slovenians and the Poles from all the Partitions—were joining the society and providing it with financial support. Already in 1847, in the first months of the society's existence, it gained new members in the persons of Prince Jerzy Lubomski of Przeworsk and Mieczysław Paszkowski of Lviv<sup>83</sup>.

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<sup>82</sup> 'Matka Łużycko-Serbska w Budziszynie', *Przyjaciel Ludu*, 31th of August 1847

<sup>83</sup> Based on the reports of the society authorities we have managed to complete the list of nearly a hundred names of its Polish members (until the outset of the 20th century). In alphabetical order, these were Bohdan Adam, landowner of Zadworze nearby Lviv; B. Adamowicz of Saint Petersburg; Józef Andruszkiewicz of Kaunas; Franciszek Andrzejewski of Poznan; Czesław Bagiński of Kazan; Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, Professor at the University of Saint Petersburg; Władysław Białkowski, doctor of medicine of Ropczyce in Galicia; Edward Bogusławski, historian, Professor at the University of Warsaw; Wojciech Bogusławski, historian, Professor at the University of Saint Petersburg; Stanisław Bzowski, attorney of Kalisz; Hugo Cedziak, priest of Siemianowice in Upper Silesia; Leonard Chmielowski, solicitor of Kalisz; Józef Chocieszewski, publicist of Chełmno in Pomerania; Count Seweryn Cieński of Polikra in Lithuania; Wojciech Cybulski, notary of Kalisz; Franciszek K. Eyszymont, landowner of Wielka Czemiówka; Aleksander Falewicz; Jan Falewicz; Wojciech Gindzik of Lublin; S. Glezmer, manufacturer; Kazimierz Grabowski, agronomist; Ludwik Grabowski, landowner of Zawady in the Polish Kingdom; Henryk Grodzicki, attorney of Kalisz; Hipolit Grodzicki of Lviv; Henryk Grodzki, attorney; Konstanty Grot, Professor at the University of Warsaw; Eugeniusz Jabłoński, engineer; Stefan Janowski, engineer and colonel of Saint Petersburg; Januszewski of Warszawy; Wilhelm Jelski, agronomist and publicist of Warsaw; Adam Jocher, landowner and engineer; S. Juszyński, landowner; Otto Kałaur, manufacturer; dr Jan Karłowicz, poet and publicist of Heidelberg; Szczepan Kaszecki of Kościelec in Galicia; Adam Keller of Warsaw; Bazyl Kopytczak, gymnasium teacher of Tarnopol; Juliusz C. Korska; Adam Krzyński; Michał Krzyżanowski, Professor at the University of Saint Petersburg; Konstanty Kunicki, engineer of Saint Petersburg; Stanisław Kunicki, engineer-colonel of Saint Petersburg; S. Lewicki of Saint Petersburg; Józef Lisiewicz, painter; W. Loa-Zawadzki, gymnasium teacher of Winnica in Ukraine; dr med. Jan Loras of Cieszyn; Henryk Łopaciński, gymnasium teacher of Lublin; S. Łopaciński; Mieczysław Łopatecki; Ksawery Malinowski, parish priest in Komorniki at Poznań; Modest Mariański of Berlin; Stanisław Mayer, bookseller of Poznan; Stanisław Mayr of Poznań; Henryk Merezyng, Professor at the school of engineering in Saint Petersburg; J. Migdalski of Saint Petersburg; J. Mikulski, engineer of Kiev; Wincenty Młynarski, attorney and notary of Kalisz; Oktawian Murzynowski, merchant; Piotr Musioł, landowner of Przygodzice at POznań; Władysław Nchring, Professor at the University of Wrocław; Kazimierz Nitsch, Professor of the Jagiellonian University; J. Papłoński, a schools inspector of Warsaw; Melania Parczewska, social activist and publicist of Kalisz; Alfons Parczewski, attorney of Kalisz; Józef Parczewski, landowner of Grabianów in Greater Poland; Stefan Ramułt, writer of Lviv; Marcin Rodkiewicz, officer of Saint Petersburg; Zygmunt Rogalski, attorney; J. Rokicki; J. Roszkowski, landowner; Maksymilian Roszkowski, a reserve officer of Saint Petersburg; Przemysław Rylski, engineer; Feliks Rynowicz, doctor of medicine; Prince Adam Sapieha of Lviv: Sękowski, attorney of Warsaw; S. Skórkowski, engineer; Leonard Smilewski, attorney of Kaunas; J. dr Staśkiewicz of Kaunas; Albert Stefanowicz, doctor of medicine; Feliks Stejnik, merchant of Warsaw; Feliks Stobruwski, engineer-general of Saint Petersburg; Edmund Szablewski, doctor of medicine of Dresden; Stefan Szerszeński; Aleksander Szumowski, gymnasium teacher of Warsaw; Hilary Treter, landowner of Łaszki Królewskie in Galicia; dr Włodzimierz Tylko, gymnasium teacher of Radom; Count Eustachy Tyszkiewicz, archaeologist of Vilnius; Henryk Ułaszyn, linguist, Slavist of Lviv; Karolina Urbanowska of Kalisz; Adam Węgliński, landowner of Szczuczki nearby Nałęczów; Ignacy Wierzbicki, doctor of medicine; Czesław Wiśniewski of Nowogrod; Ludwik Wojciszak, priest of Strzelce Wielkie in Opole Silesia; dr Leon Ziółkowski, subdeacon of Gniezno; Michał Żur, parish priest of Ligota Turawska in Opole Silesia.



The Slavonic 'Springtime of the Peoples' in Lusatia, the attitude of the Lusatian Serbian national movement towards the political transformations in Germany (most notably in Saxony) and its attitude towards the events in the Slavonic countries were monitored with considerable interest. The attention of Slavonic observers was centred, first and foremost, on the rapid increase in the speed and range of the national movement in Lusatia, its unique and characteristic features, which included loyalism and legalism. Its promoters did not exceed the law-permitted limits and permanently manifested their loyalty to the Royal House of Wettin. What is characteristic from this perspective is the Lusatian Serbian episode of the activity of Mikhail Bakunin—a renowned revolutionist-anarchist—already in the 1840s. In the spring of 1849 Bakunin persuaded Jan Smoler, an unquestioned leader of the national movement of Lusatian Serbs, to support the lasting from the 3rd of May 1849 uprising in Dresden, by organizing the act of sabotage at the rear of the Saxon army, which was to involve attacks on German landed properties. In exchange for the aid in overthrowing the Saxon monarchy, Bakunin promised support for European revolutionists in realizing the national aspirations of Lusatian Serbs. Smoler nonetheless firmly rejected Bakunin's proposal<sup>84</sup>.

The Lusatian Serbs not only distanced themselves from the Dresden Uprising, but also contributed to putting it down. Following the fall of the uprising the King was thankful for their help (the Serbian regiment had played a crucial role in saving the Wettins from downfall) and personally thanked Smoler. The King's son, Prince Albert, who served in the army stationed in Bautzen, decided to learn Serbian language (his teacher was Smoler himself). By the way, it is worth to notice that the attitude of the Lusatian Serbs at the time of the Dresden Uprising incriminated them in the eyes of the contemporary left-wing politicians, and especially in the eyes of its extreme socialist fraction. From the perspective of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the Serbs-Wends—as Marx deemed the Slavonic inhabitants of Lusatia—'the wretched remains of extinct Slavonic peoples' played at the age of the Springtime of the Peoples 'in the heart of revolutionary Germany' a disgraceful role of 'the Slavonic Vendée. 'The reactionary Slavonic mass has betrayed the revolution', sympathizing with 'despotism and reactionism', thereby condemning themselves to 'the ultimate extermination', to 'the merciless revenge and retaliation', to being wiped out of the world's surface by the victorious socialist revolution'<sup>85</sup>.

In exchange for declaring their loyalty to the monarchy, the leaders of Lusatian Serbs demanded being granted rights, which were due to them 'from God and nature'. Their principal requirement was the elimination of the unjust, unfair and weakening their vital powers division of Lusatia between Saxony and Prussia. With the advent of spring 1848 petitions concerning the usage of the Lusatian Serbian language at offices, schools and church, as well as on the education of native Lusatian Serbian teachers and clergymen were coming to the authorities from all corners of Lusatia. In July 1848 a delegation of 'the Wends who were loyal to the King' submitted at the royal throne a

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<sup>84</sup> The exact description of Bakunin's meeting with Smoler was presented based on Smoler's notes by Parczewski. *Z Dolnych Łużyc*, pp. 51–52; for more information on the attitude of the Lusatian Serbs towards the Dresden Uprising see E. Hartstock, 'Wohhlos na Drjezdźański mejski zbezk Ida 1849 n Budyšinje a wokolinje', *Rozhlad*, 5, 1964.

<sup>85</sup> For more information see Roman Rosdolsky, 'Friedrich Engels und das Problem der *geschichtslosen* Völker', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 4, 1964, pp. 87–282.



petition signed by five thousand people, demanding (or rather 'humbly requesting') the ruler to award 'the Wendian language with the same rights on the Wendian-speaking territory as the German language on the German-speaking territory, especially when it comes to its usage in schools and church, as well as in contacts with the authorities and in court'. There were demands that the native language be introduced in schools as medium of instruction, in Churches of both denominations, 'in the process of ordaining Wendian priests', in local 'Wendian courts where judicial proceedings were to be conducted in Wendian', be used by the Wendian officers of state administration (including also these higher) as well as for the publication of laws and other legal acts 'in Wendian language version'. The petition was not left unanswered. The royal decree of August 1848 permitted the usage of the language of Lusatian Serbs at schools, offices and courts, and the decrees of 1851—in gymnasiums and seminaries (taught as an optional subject)<sup>86</sup>.

The national programme of Lusatian Serbs became a somewhat model due to its realistic character, adjustment to the feasibility of realization. For this very same reason it was not did not gain the approval of the Marxist historiography. A typical example would be the study of a female Soviet researcher conducted in 1955. 'Instead of a revolutionist battle,' she wrote 'the Lusatian petty-bourgeois activists initiated a campaign of petitions', formulated 'quite restrained demands', and to avoid the adherence to the populous 'they sought support among the liberal Czech bourgeoisie'<sup>87</sup>.

The acknowledgement by the House of Wettin of the ethnic-linguistic independence of Lusatian Serbs presented—as it was highlighted by Slavonic researchers—the forgotten, despised nationality in a completely different light. It openly appeared on the social scene, reading Serbian literature became a necessity to the villagers; the moral liberation from the oppressing yoke, peacefully regulated relations with the feudal landlords improved the material situation of the villages—they grew wealthier, and the Lusatians were becoming the best farmers in the country'<sup>88</sup>. An important indication of civilizational advance was the increase in the native-language readership. Following 1849, the magazine *Tyždenskie Nowiny* had over 1200 subscribers (from the population of 90 thousand Lusatian Serbs in Upper Lusatia), and the Lusatian Serbian calendar issued by Smoler in 1854 was distributed in 2 thousand copies), which was really extraordinary as for this part of Europe.

A stir in the Polish publicist literature was caused by the participation of representatives of the community of Lusatian Serbs in the Prague Slavic Congress. This fact brought about serious doubts and controversies in the national movement of Lusatia. Among the supporters of their participation in the Congress was dr Jan P. Jordan (from 1842, an associate Professor at the University of Leipzig), a co-founder of the *Slavische Centralblatter* weekly, which was published from the spring of 1848 in Prague and which played the role of 'the body of Slavonic party in Austria'. The weekly devoted much attention to the Lusatian Serbs and their emancipation efforts, published information 'from the remote Slavonic corner'. The watchword which was promoted by the weekly in Lusatia was as follows: 'every one cares about the Serbianness (the

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<sup>86</sup> For more information on the Springtime of the Peoples in Lusatia see Bernard Piotrowski, *Rzqdy niemieckie Saksonii i Prus a ruch naruduwo-kulturalny Serbów Łużyczych 1815-1819*, Poznań 1971, pp. 46–60.

<sup>87</sup> M. J. Siemirjaga. *Łużiczanie*, Moskwa 1955, pp. 30–31.

<sup>88</sup> Aleksandr Gilferding, *Narodnoje wozroždienije Serbów-Łużiczjan w Saksoniji*, Moskwa 1856.



Serbian nationality), is proud of it, wants to become and remain a Slav. Jordan perceived the Congress as the chance for communicating the contemporary Slavonic (and European in general) situation, aspirations and postulates of the Lusatian Serbs to the international opinion and gaining its support for the cause of 'maintaining Serbianness' in Lusatia. The Congress was to certify that the Lusatian Serbs were known to the Slavonic world, were perceived by it as its brothers and considered something more than just 'an honoured relic'<sup>89</sup>. Jordan actively participated in the preparations to the Congress, passed information on this subject to the management of the Matica and towards the close of May 1848, officially invited its representatives to visit the Congress as guests. The invitations contained references to 'the Slavonic solidarity', 'throwing off the yoke' and uniting Slavonic forces in order to oppose the Germans. The management of the Matica nonetheless refused to take part in the Congress for fear of being accused by the Germans of Pan-Slavism<sup>90</sup>.

During the Congress, the national rights of Lusatian Serbs were represented and defended by Czechs and Poles from Greater Poland (Jędrzej Moraczewski, Karol Libelt, Wojciech Cybulski, Ryszard Bcrwiński, Kazimierz Potulicki, Bolesław Łącki, Jan Janiszewski). The Lusatian Serbian accents were incorporated into all fundamental documents of the Congress. The manifesto which announced the Congress contained declarations that 'all Slavs need to work hard', in order to i.e. 'prevent the Saxons from destroying the nationality of the Serbs called the Wends, who live nearby Bautzen, and Prussians from destroying the nationality of the Serbs residing in the Prussian Lusatia' and in order to put an end to the eradication of Slavonic nationality, persecuted for a millennium<sup>91</sup>. The statement of the Congress policy of the 21st of May 1848 contained the following passage: 'we are expecting from the enlightened Saxon nation that it would not attempt to destroy this harmless cluster of Lusatians because it still remembers its Slavonic origins... We are expecting the same from the Prussians'<sup>92</sup>. The words of appeal to the Saxons and Prussians were repeated in the so-called 'Manifesto to the Peoples of Europe', which concluded the Congress<sup>93</sup>.

The Polish press (mainly the Cracow press) reported the events of the Congress, but published the fragments of documents concerning Lusatian Serbs with many-months-long delay. Only at the outset of January 1849, did the *Gazeta Krakowska* reprint (most probably due to the mentioned publication of Moraczewski) the appeal to 'the enlightened Saxon nation' and to the Prussians, requesting them to abandon the policy of depriving the Lusatian Serbs of their nationality<sup>94</sup>.

The impetus for the Polish interest in Slavonic Lusatia in the period of the Springtime of the Nations was also the support shown publically by the leaders of Lusatian Serbs for the national aspirations of the Poles in Galicia, Greater Poland and Silesia. The Polish press drew attention to the fact that periodicals such as *Tyždenska Nowina* and *Serbski Nowinkar* devoted much of their attention to the events in Greater Poland, expressing hope that 'the entire Polish nation would be awarded freedom'.

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<sup>89</sup> Miloš Schmidt. Dr. Jan Petr Jordan. *Jeho žiwjenje a skutkowanje wól leta 1848*, Budziszyn 1962, pp. 15–30.

<sup>90</sup> 'Die Lausitzer Sorben und die Slavenversammlung', *Slavische Centralblätter* of the 5th of June 1848.

<sup>91</sup> Jędrzej Moraczewski, *Opis pierwszego Zjazdu Słowiańskiego*, Poznań 1848, p. 15.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibidem*. pp. 83-84.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 109; Cygański, *Z dziejów*, p. 9; Piotrowski, *Rządy*, p. 51.

<sup>94</sup> For more information on the Prague Congress see *Gazeta Krakowska* of the 9th of January 1849.



Poland was described in Lusatia as 'the formerly great and mighty tribe', who 'was deprived of freedom illegally, violently and disgracefully', while stigmatizing the violence inflicted by the Austrians to Galicia and by the Prussians to Greater Poland<sup>95</sup>. Not without reason did the leaders of Lusatian Serbs expect that the change in the situation of Poles in the Prussian Partition would make a positive impact on their own situation and improve the effectiveness of their nation-building efforts.

In the period of the Springtime of the Peoples direct Polish cooperation with the Lusatian Serbian national movement was launched for the first time. It was Roman Zmorski who acted as a link between the Polish national movement and its Lusatian Serbian counterpart. Zmorski was a native citizen of Warsaw, a publicist, a poet, a translator, and one of the first representatives of Polish bohemian artists, a political extremist, a member of Warsaw conspiracies, and following 1843, 'an eternal wanderer' (for he visited Greater Poland, Silesia, Germany, Belgium, Turkey, France). In the years 1848–1850 he stayed in Lusatia where he became very well familiar with the budding national movement of Lusatian Serbs. Together with Jan Arnošt Smoler, the most eminent at the time figure of Lusatian Serbian movement, he published in 1849 in Bautzen a weekly entitled *Stadło. Tygodnik rzeczom polskim i słowiańskim poświęcony*, which cooperated with such writers as Joachim Lelewel, Teofil Lenartowicz (a friend of Zmorski, a participant of the independence movement in Galicia, residing in Lusatia from May of 1849), Edmund Chojecki (the author of a work which was fundamental for the period: *Czechia i Czechowic przy końcu pierwszej połowy XIX stulecia*) and Tomasz A. Olizarowski, a poet and playwright. The *Stadło* magazine popularized the ideas of Slavonic solidarity and reciprocity perceived in line with the spirit of political and social radicalism. The editorial board declared that it would be very desired that the Poles become familiar with the problems experienced by Slavonic peoples, 'with this great family which was until recently completely unknown to us, with its history, character, education, traditions and fruits of the spirit'<sup>96</sup>.

The Lusatian Serbian issues were nonetheless taken up rather occasionally, in spite of the fact that Zmorski and Lenartowicz possessed great knowledge on the subject. Only in the first issue a more extensive article was presented on 'journalism in the Serbian Lusatia', which contained basic information on the contemporary literature of Lusatian Serbs<sup>97</sup>. The immense knowledge of Lusatia and Lusatian Serbs gathered by Zmorski between 1848 and 1850 would be communicated to the Polish opinion only a few years later. Many years following his death (in 1867 in Dresden) the Warsaw weekly *Kłosa* wrote that his passion and vocation was 'the great and sincere love for the Slavonic nation in all its numerous tribes'. In Lusatia 'he kindled the sparks from the ashes', and by means of the Bautzen *Stadło* he attempted to spur and preserve 'the spark of Slavonic fire, dying down under the burden of Germanism oppressing this ancient Slavonic gord'<sup>98</sup>. He included the motifs of Lusatian Serbian legends and customs into the poem *Święto majowe*. He translated several Lusatian Serbian songs into Polish (they were published in 1859 in *Gazeta Warszawska*), including—as he described it—the

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<sup>95</sup> Cygański, *Z dziejów*, pp. 8–9; Józef Gołąbek, *Dzieje narodu łużyckiego*, Katowice I 939.

<sup>96</sup> 'Od Redakcji', *Stadło*, 1, 1849.

<sup>97</sup> 'Dziennikarstwo u Serbskich Łużycach', *Stadło*, I, 1849.

<sup>98</sup> A. Półkocic, 'Roman Zmorski. Iskry z popiołów', *Kłosa*, issue no. 1 of the 8th of October 1885.



marvellous knightly rhapsody' from the times of war against the Germans, written by Smoler many years before<sup>99</sup>.

Zmorski's works introduced the Lusatian Serbian issues to the pages of the Polish daily *Gazeta Warszawska* (from 1774) and *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*—an influential and the most widely-read at the time Polish weekly (published from 1859). Zmorski familiarized the readers with the past and present of 'the last remains of the great Slavonic family [...] just like a tiny island surrounded from all sides by the flood of Germanism'. He wanted to convince the Polish elites that this 'small cluster of fellow people' is an extremely interesting phenomenon, which deserves liking and support. He appealed to the Poles to explore and help 'their fellow people' since their language, customs, folk tales 'provide so much data which is crucial for their research' and since 'their lands abound in ancient Slavonic relics, which are being preserved in an almost untouched'<sup>100</sup>.

Full of admiration for the lasting of Lusatian Serbs he did not hide his fears for their future. The source of these fears was nothing else than the policy of Berlin and Dresden, but also the inevitable socio-economic processes which were pushing 'uncontaminated Serbianness' to the 'Marshland' (*Spreewalde*), to remote villages and settlements hidden among the mountains or forests, where lied the 'true habitat' of the Serbian nationality, tradition and customs. The disproportion of forces made Zmorski ask a question: would the handful of Lusatian Serbian intelligentsia be able to save their people from drowning in the German sea?<sup>101</sup> And then he left this question with no answer.

Polish publications devoted to the Lusatian Serbs in the period of the Springtime of the Peoples were presenting a new, formerly unknown motif: the principle of nationality. According to this principle a new international order was to be created and organized following the overturning of the old, unjust one, introduced by the superpowers at the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

What was regarded as particularly unique about the emancipation efforts of Lusatian Serbs was their expression of 'an insurmountable force of national ideas'. The character of nationality—as wrote Lenartowicz—which may not be erased by any force, is proven by this handful of Slavs. They survived despite much historical turmoil and preserved the tales of the once free Serbia<sup>102</sup>. Distinctively political in character were the texts on Lusatian Serbs published in the press of Greater Poland, and especially in the *Przegląd Poznański*, an otherwise conservative and pro-clerical periodical. Its publication of 1849, the so-called *Slavonic letters* (*Listy słowiańskie*)—formulated in line

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<sup>99</sup> This 'marvellous knightly rhapsody' entitled *Serbów dobyca*, which became a recurring motif in many Polish publications on the Lusatian Serbs up until the modern period, spoke of the Serbs who 'went to battle with the Germans [...] saddled up their horses, attached their spurs and their sharp swords, headed to the broad field, fought the first battle with their enemy which brought them great benefits [...]. Having heard the news, the King summoned all the participants of the battle at his feet, presented them with new garments, grateful for their effort'.

<sup>100</sup> Roman Zmorski, 'Serbskie Łużyce i ich mieszkańcy', *Gazeta Warszawska* of the 14th, 16th, 28th, 29th of October and of the 5th, 8th, 10th of November 1859: *i d e m*. 'Łużyccy Serbowie. Ich kraj, zwyczaj i pamiątki. *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* of the 5th, 19th of July and 2nd, 16th, 30th of August 1862.

<sup>101</sup> Roman Zmorski, 'Serbskie Łużyce i ich mieszkańcy', *Gazeta Warszawska* of the 10th of November 1859; 'Serbskie Łużyce. Ze zbioru pism ś.p. Romana Zmorskiego', *Kurier Poznański* of the 17th–21th, 25th, 26th, 29th of May 1881; Edward Pieścikowski, *Poeta-tułacz*, Poznań 1964; Jan Magnuszewski, 'Roman Zmorski a Łużyce', *Pamiętnik Literacki Słowiański*, 12, 1962; W.A. Francew, *Polskij sławjanofil Roman Zmorski*, Praha 1919.

<sup>102</sup> *Podróże Polaków na Łużyce w XIX w.*, prepared by Andrzej Zieliński, Wrocław 1975, p. 65.



with the spirit of messianist 'Slavonophilia' and characteristic Polish Pan-Slavism—which constituted an interpretation of the attitude of Poland towards Slavism, as well as moral and political obligations towards it. The Slavonic letters included extensive and unique passages on Lusatia (Luzacja) and Lusatian Serbs, 'an ancient folk, but one closely related to us, in which "the spirit of nationality" has awoken in recent years'. The Serbs-Wends, despite being 'merely the few survivors of the formerly mighty Wendian state', still constitute 'a significant link between Greater Poland and Bohemia; and every link in the chain running between Gdańsk and Trieste is precious for it secures the Slavdom from the influx of members of the Germanic tribe'<sup>103</sup>. Bearing this context in mind, the author of the Slavonic letters lamented the fact that the ties between the Poles and the Lusatian Serbs are frail and that only the Bohemians maintained permanent and lively contacts with the Lusatian Serbs. And he concluded that therefore it is the duty of Poland and Poles to 'support the Serbs, to send them our journals and to join the Matica srpska'<sup>104</sup>.

Particularly great was the attention devoted to the activity of the national movement of Lusatian Serbs by the Polish circles in Silesia, who closely observed and commented their efforts to acquire national rights. Józef Lompa, one of the leaders of the Polish national movement, viewed the struggle for emancipation of the Lusatian Serbs—the so-called 'relic of the Slavonic tribe [...], formerly mighty, peaceful, and free', their strategy and methods of fight within the limits of the law—as an example worthy of imitation<sup>105</sup>. The few surviving 'Wends—brothers of ours', seven times less numerous than the population of the Polish inhabitants of Upper Silesia (Lompa estimated that the population of Lusatian Serbs in Saxony exceeded 84 thousand, and in Prussia—ca. 40 thousand), managed to establish and maintain the Serbian Motherland ('since the Wends call themselves Serbs in their native language'). 'And so, Silesian brothers', wrote Lompa, 'you may witness how these remains of the formerly great nation, just like a solitary island surrounded by the German waters from all sides, take care of the preservation of their nationality. And you should too avoid indolence. Do not bury your talents, so that the Wends wouldn't make you feel embarrassed'. He also appealed to the Upper Silesians to—following the example of 'their Wendian brothers'—establish a national organization for education and literature, to which 'we, too, may give the name of the Mother of Silesia, since She wants and strongly desires—both physically and spiritually—to look after our nation'. Similar voices were heard also in the Polish press of Greater Poland<sup>106</sup>.

At the time of the Springtime of the Peoples, the Polish publicist literature, especially in Greater Poland, began to attribute pivotal importance to the historical episode involving the inclusion of Lusatia in Poland—the so-called 'Boleslavian Chapter' of Lusatian history and its preservation in the collective memory of the Lusatian Serbian nation. The aforementioned Teofil Lenartowicz wrote that 'it is awkward to hear the news that so many lords had ruled this nation, but that history recorded only one of them, and that he was neither Bohemian nor German, nor Moravian; that the folk keeps singing a song of a Polish king', 'the Great Boleslaus' and 'of the sleeping knights, who having once awoken from their sleep, shall chase the Germans away right to the end of

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<sup>103</sup> 'Listy słowiańskie', *Przegląd Poznański*, issue no. 8, 1849, p. 405.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 405–406.

<sup>105</sup> Józef Lompa, 'Dzisiejsi górnołużyczcy Wendowie', *Telegraf Górnio-Szląski* of the 10th of March 1849.

<sup>106</sup> 'Wyjątek z listu o ziemi łużyckiej', *Gazeta Polska* of the 12th of October 1849.



the world. Each record of Poles, full of love, proves that we had been spreading freedom for centuries, since we left records like these<sup>107</sup>.

The press of Poznań described Lusatia as 'the Boleslavian part of Poland', preserving Slavonic character, national independence and identity. Also in connection with 'the Boleslavian episode' the characteristic words were said: 'we were there and perhaps once we shall return to the ancestry of our Valiant [Valiant in Polish means Chrobry, which is the name of the native dynasty of Boleslaus] King<sup>108</sup>. From the Springtime of the Peoples 'the Boleslavian episode' involving the inclusion of Meissen and Lusatia to the Polish state came to be a frequent theme taken up by the Polish publicist literature devoted to Lusatian Serbian issues, and at the same time, one of the principal arguments supporting the future incorporation of Lusatia in the reborn Polish country. 'The Boleslavian episode' was frequently invoked during the period of partitions, especially in the last decades of the 19th century. A characteristic example would be the article of the *Gwiazdka Cieszyńska* of 1874, which praised Boleslaus the Valiant for the fact that 'he centred his politics on Lusatia, whose inhabitants, aware of the tribal relationship with Boleslaus, courageously supported his doings'. It was also to them that the ruler of Poland owed 'largely his victory over the Germans'. From the times of Boleslaus the Valiant Lusatia is part of 'the common Motherland' which has been separated from her<sup>109</sup>.

The Boleslavian theme settled in the Polish publicist literature during World War I, when the future of Lusatia and Lusatian Serbs became to some extent a subject of international criticism. At the time, the most enthusiastically and frequently evoked historical episode was that of the Battle of Grunwald, but the publicists discussing the issue of future of Lusatia and Lusatian Serbs following the victory over the Germanism also referred to 'the Boleslavian episode', to the testament of Boleslaus the Valiant, the current meaning of the western policy of the first Piasts. The publicists connected with the political-ideological circle of Roman Dmowski moved from the general idea of returning to the western policy of the first Piasts, the vision of Poland reborn as 'the bulwark of Slavdom in its western borderland' to more crystallized projects concerning the solving of the Lusatian Serbian issue in line with the spirit and historical meaning of 'the testament of Boleslaus the Valiant'. Therefore, there emerged projects-visions of forming 'the Duchy of Wrocław', which was to be connected with Poland, this including also the Saxon Lusatia<sup>110</sup>. Other authors went even further, proclaiming the formation of an independent Lusatian Serbian state in the historical territory of Lusatia, constituting a characteristic 'Slavonic bridge' between Polish Silesia and Bohemia<sup>111</sup>.

In the interwar period, friends and supporters of the Lusatian Serbs, advocates of their 'liberation from the German burden' and 'unification with Poland', invoked the political idea and work of Boleslaus the Valiant and his successors who continued 'the

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<sup>107</sup> *Podróże*, p. 65.

<sup>108</sup> A letter excerpt.

<sup>109</sup> 'Łużyce i Łużyczanie', *Gwiazdka Cieszyńska* of the 28th of February 1874. It is worth to note at this point that 'the Boleslaus' episode' was highly evaluated in the Lusatian Serbian publicist literature (which was an exceptionally rare phenomenon), and what is more, it was taken up by a Russian magazine. One of the youngest Serbian activists of the outset of the 20th century, Janko Brył, described 'the Boleslavian episode' as 'one of the brightest periods' of Lusatian Serbian history, see Jan Serbin, 'Łużickije Serby', *Ślawjanskije Izwiestija* of the 22th of April 1913.

<sup>110</sup> Faustyn Rasiński, *Polska etnograficzna*, part 2: *Sily twórcze*, Piotrogród 1916.

<sup>111</sup> Mściwoj Łahoda, *Zachodnia granica Polski*, Moskwa 1917.



mission of defending Slavdom from the Germanic oppression'. It was Boleslaus the Valiant's policy that was given the credit for the fact that 'the handful of Lusatians who lived through the extermination' managed to live on and last until the modern times. The year 1018—marking the date of the peace in Bautzen and liberation of Lusatia—was considered the beginning of 'the perpetual interest' of Poland and Poles in Lusatia and its Slavonic inhabitants<sup>112</sup>.

In the last years and months prior to the German invasion of Poland 'the Boleslavian episode was integrated into the vision of 'Poland as superpower', propagated by the publicists of radical-nationalist fraction. The German power—they stated—must be defeated once and for all. Poland must stand firmly by the Odra river and mark it with 'iron border posts'. We need to arouse 'the lion's spirit of Boleslaus the Vailant' in the nation and set about 'creating a Slavonic period in history'<sup>113</sup>. Nearly at the same time the right-wing *Kurier Poznański* published a poem with the following passage: 'sposobią rycerze miecze, śpiewając Boga Rodzice, ruszył Bolesław Chrobry na Milsko i Łużyce' (the knights are preparing their swords, singing Bogurodzica, Boleslaus the Vailant attacked Milsko and Lusatia)<sup>114</sup>.

During World War II, in dozens of underground magazines and political brochures, mostly those connected with the National Democratic circle, there emerged and settled such expressions as: 'the testament of Boleslaus the Vailant', 'the line of Boleslaus the Vailant', 'the brilliant idea-plan of Boleslaus the Vailant' or 'iron posts in the river Saale'. They usually appeared in the context of the idea to resolve the Lusatian Serbian issue following the disintegration of Germany—involving either creation of an independent state, or making it a federated state of Western Slavs, or, eventually, part of 'the Slavonic Empire' headed by Poland<sup>115</sup>. At the close of the War, in Jarocin, which was included in the Third Reich, an advocate of Lusatia and an activist of the pro-Lusatian movement wrote that the Lusatian issue 'is returning once more and becomes, just as during the Boleslaus Valiant's reign, one of the fundamental worries of the Polish policy'<sup>116</sup>.

Following the conclusion of the War, when Poland aspired to the incorporation of Lusatia (competing with Czechoslovakia) or promoted the concept of establishing the Lusatian Serbian state, 'the Boleslavian episode' was particularly intensely exploited. Its political-ideological context was clearly reflected by the passage of the poem by Edmund Osmańczyk: 'między Odrą a Łabą rozparci, / Karabinem niszczymy zły czas, / Na łużyckich ziem zrdzewiałej tarczy, / Prus złowrogich rozbijamy czas' (lounged between the Odra and the Elbe, / with our rifles we shatter the evil time, / on the rusty face of the lands of Lusatia, / we shatter the era of malevolent Prussia).

The press of all ideological and political orientations wrote bombastically and proudly that 'the Slavonic Lusatia for the first time since the rule of Boleslaus Chrobry, saw the flapping of white-and-red banners', and that in the collective memory of the Lusatian Serbian nation 'there lives a Polish king who defended this Slavonic folk from

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<sup>112</sup> Władysław Pniewski, *Łużyce. Przeszłość i teraźniejszość*, Poznań 1924; G r a b o w s k i, *Łużycanie*; Tadeusz Powidzki. 'Polska i Łużyce na przestrzeni dziejów', [in:] *Łużycom wolność*, Poznań 1946.

<sup>113</sup> Paweł Musioł, 'Odra i Bałtyk', *Kuźnica* of the 15th–31th of May 1939.

<sup>114</sup> S. Krzywda, 'Polska', *Kurier Poznański* of the 21th of May 1939.

<sup>115</sup> Marian Orzechowski, *Odra-Nysa Łużycka-Bałtyk w polskiej myśli politycznej okresu drugiej wojny światowej*, Wrocław 1969.

<sup>116</sup> Leon Kaczmarek, *O prawo życia dla Łużyczan*, Jarocin 1945, p. 6.



the Germanic invasion<sup>117</sup>. Appealing to ‘the Boleslavian episode’, the withdrawal of Poland from Lusatia was commonly deemed a strategic mistake. ‘It would be of extreme importance for the further development of the Polish state—wrote an eminent Slavist—if this conquest turned out to be a permanent one [...]. The loss of the Serbian posts crossed out the broad opportunities which opened up for Poland abroad’<sup>118</sup>. Others, in turn, complained that in contemporary Poland ‘there faded the memory [...] of the deeds of Boleslaus the Valiant, of the Polish border running along the Black Elster and Połcznica, of the sounds of the Slavonic speech, preserved like a precious treasure in the rural households by the river Spree and Neisse’<sup>119</sup>.

‘The testament of Boleslaus’ the Valiant’ and ‘the Boleslavian episode’ were invoked by the pro-Lusatian PROŁUŻ movement (Polski Ruch Obrony Łużyc, English: Polish Movement for the Defence of Lusatia). Its emblem was the sword of Boleslaus the Valiant and the defensive wall surrounding Lusatia, and its watchword was ‘Nad Łużycami polska straż’ (Polish guard over Lusatia)<sup>120</sup>. The publications of the pro-Lusatian movement invariably repeated the following slogans: ‘the second Bautzen after the Second Grunwald’, ‘by helping Lusatia we are acting according to the last will of Boleslaus the Valiant’. Boleslaus the Valiant was promoted as ‘the greatest national hero of Lusatian-Serbs’, the press wrote about ‘the line of Boleslaus the Valiant’ and ‘the returning of Bautzen to Poland’.

What was also repeated numerous times was the view that Poland ‘during the rule of Boleslaus the Valiant was the author of the best pages of Lusatian history’; ‘Just like the thunderbolt which crushes evil forces, the sword of Boleslaus the Valiant drops down on Lusatia. Lusatian Serbs fight arm in arm with the Polish knights [...]. Above the liberated Bautzen there burns the flame of our hopes’<sup>121</sup>. Boleslaus the Valiant’s battle for ‘the honour of the Polish nation and the freedom of Lusatia’ is continued by Mieszko II, who defends ‘the last bastion of Slavdom with changing fortunes.’ Nonetheless, Poland ‘in the following centuries forgot about the political ideas of the first Piasts and detached from its western fellows. The Polish movement of Friends of Lusatia should make the contemporary Poland stop repeating mistakes of the past and make use of the one and only opportunity in history to conclude the everlasting tragedy of the Lusatian nation and fulfilling the last will of Boleslaus the Valiant’<sup>122</sup>.

Nearly 30 years following the conclusion of World War II and the ultimate solution of the Lusatian Serbian issue, ‘the Boleslavian episode’ reappeared in Polish publications. The author of a monograph on the Polish Second Army in Lusatia wrote that ‘the military regiments of Boleslaus the Valiant also passed through the Lusatian

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<sup>117</sup> Orzechowski, *Odra*.

<sup>118</sup> Jan Widajewicz, ‘Rzut oka na przeszłość Łużyc’, [in:] *Zagadnienia łużyckie*, Poznań 1946, p. 23.

<sup>119</sup> Wanda Goebel, *Wyspa zapomnianych*, Poznań 1947, p. 10.

<sup>120</sup> *Ratujmy! Jednodniówka prołużycka*, Poznań 1946.

<sup>121</sup> Goebel. *Wyspa*.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibidem*; Grabowski. *Łużyczanie*. By the way we should nonetheless note that the constant adherence in Poland to ‘the Boleslavian episode’ resulted in protests from the Czech advocates of Lusatia. The Czechs aspired to unify Lusatia with Czechoslovakia, referring to its centuries-long affiliation to the Crown of Saint Wenceslaus. The Czech press mentioned ‘the beautiful tradition of Boleslaus the Valiant’, but usually highlighted that it was the matter of ‘the remote past’, and furthermore that the conduct of Poles in Lusatia following its annexation by the Polish Second Army deprived Poland of the right to invoke the tradition of Boleslaus the Valiant.



Gate to bring freedom to Lusatia and to document the right for these historical Slavonic territories by driving border posts by the river Saale [...]. The Polish King Boleslaus the Valiant is still alive in the memory of Lusatians, a king who ruled here for several years and defended this Slavonic nation from the Germanic oppressions [...]. The period of Polish rules in Lusatia was one of the brightest periods in the mostly tragic history of the region'<sup>123</sup>.

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The hopes connected with the Springtime of the Peoples bore fruit neither in Poland nor in Lusatia. The emancipation movement of the 'smallest Slavonic nation' nonetheless managed to live through all the turmoil, in spite of the fact that its principal goal—the unification of Lusatia—was not accomplished.

The period of the Springtime of the Peoples saw the consolidation of faith in Poles that the Lusatian Serbs 'would survive and triumph'. They did not cease to take interest in the fate of Lusatian Slavs—subjugated for centuries but stubbornly preserving 'their nationality in language and traditions'<sup>124</sup>. What is more, from the mid-1860s, the interest in Lusatian Serbs in Poland was significantly growing<sup>125</sup>.

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<sup>123</sup> Kazimierz Kaczmarek . *Na łużyckim szlaku*. Warszawa 1973. pp. 11–12.

<sup>124</sup> 'O Słowianach', *Nadwiślanin* of the 18th of December 1850.

<sup>125</sup> For more information see Jan Petr, 'Polska učást v živote luzických Srbou w 1 pol XIX stol.', *Slavica Pragensia*, 1,1956, pp. 207–220; Matyniak, *Polsko-łużyckie stosunki*, pp. 68–73.