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BETWEEN EMPIRE AND NATION: THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF BOOKS IN THE KINGDOM OF POLAND, 1864-1914

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I would like to treat the following considerations as an invitation to a methodological reflection on the social function of books in research concerning the nation and the empire. The subject of the role of books in nation-building processes has been taken up by such outstanding specialists of nationalism as Eugen Weber and Ernest Gellner and, up to a point, it has also attracted the interest of those involved in the study of empires. However, in their studies, the bibliological perspective has not been given due consideration. For this reason, I decided to take a closer look at the achievements of bibliology to date in order to define how these achievements can enrich our knowledge of the national identity processes that were taking place in the “national” Polish peripheries of the Russian empire, which the so called *Privislinskij Kraj* (the Vistula Land) undoubtedly was a part of during the five decades following the January uprising of 1863-1864.

My paper is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the notions of *assimilation* and *acculturation* which I believe to be fundamental in research on the role of books in the process of nation-building or forming other, non-national, identity concepts. In the second part,

I concentrate on the notion of the *social function of books* and proceed from a brief presentation of the most interesting ideas to works describing the practical ways in which books were used in the formation of national identity or alternately in which attempts were made to build an alternative community in relation to the nation (or the dominant nation). In the second, part I shall present two examples of the use of books in the Kingdom of Poland. First of all, I shall present primers for the lowest level schools, the function of which was acculturation of their readers (that is, Polish-speaking Catholic children, usually from lower social strata) with the Russian centre. This was the subject of my paper at the conference *Science in Poland, Science in Russia: Common points, different points (the humanities)*, organized by the Institute of Russian Studies of the Warsaw University on 22–23 October 2015, which was later published in a volume bearing the same title¹. I mention this text because it is a good illustration of the acculturative function of reading aimed at the lower classes of Russian Poland. Second, I shall present the journal *Беседа* (*Beseda*, “Feast”), addressed to the (formally) Orthodox inhabitants of the Lublin and Siedlce gubernyas who, by reading this periodical, were supposed to “discover” that they were Russian².

The following is an attempt to illustrate Russian cultural policy in the Kingdom of Poland after 1864 through a presentation of various methods of “adaptation” of its inhabitants to Russianness. An analysis of the social function of the recommended reading makes it possible to establish who, according to the Russian plans and ideas, the reader should become after having read books recommended by

- 1 Edited version of the paper presented at the seminar of the Workshop of History Libraries and Reading of the Institute of Book and Reading of the National Library of Poland on December 21, 2018. M. Przciszewska, “Elementarze jako narzędzia rosyjskiego imperial building w Królestwie Polskim”, in: *Nauka w Polsce, nauka w Rosji. Miejsca wspólne, miejsca różne (obszar humanistyki)*, eds. M. Dąbrowska, P. Głuszkowski, Warszawa 2016, pp. 85–94 - https://www.academia.edu/36460073/Nauka_w_Polsce_i_Rosji_miejsca_wsp%C3%B3lne_miejsca_r%C3%B3%C5%BCne_obszar_humanistyki_red._M._D%C4%85browska_P._G%C5%82uszkowski_Warszawa_2016 [accessed 29.04.2019].
- 2 Cf. *Беседа*, ред.-изд. Н. Харламовъ, Варшава 1886–1906 [Beseda, red.-izd. N. Kharlamov, Varshava 1886–1906] - <http://ebuw.uw.edu.pl/publication/71602> [accessed 20.02.2019].

the educational authorities in the Kingdom of Poland. In my reflections, I attach fundamental significance to research carried out on nationalism in the Russian empire by Alexey Miller, who drew attention to the heterogeneous character of empires. According to him, in imperial space, nationalism had to function differently than in a state which was to become “national”, that is, representing only one culture. In Russian practice, after the January uprising, a division was made between the imperial “nucleus” - meaning the Russian national area - and “non-Russian” foreign peripheries which were less a part of Russia-nation as of Russia-state. This differentiation was of basic importance for political “decisions” as to whether some categories of inhabitants of a given region were to “become” part of the Russian nation or rather remain “only” loyal subjects of the empire³.

I. SOCIAL FUNCTION OF BOOKS - ASSIMILATION AND ACCULTURATION IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONALIZATION OF EMPIRES

The increase in strong national movements constituted one of the main challenges for the European continental empires in the second half of the 19th century. Imperial elites, with their hierarchical structure, both feared the dissemination of the idea of nation as a sovereign subject of history, and hoped to stand at the head of the young national organisms. This led to the emergence of various models, the aim of which was to preserve the basic features of the empire founded on the strong (though not necessarily absolute) power of the emperor “by the grace of God”, combined with concessions to nationalities that inhabited its territory. A classic example of such changes was the emergence of Austria-Hungary in 1867. In neighbouring Russia, this

3 Cf. A. Миллер, *Империя Романовых и национализм. Эссе по методологии исторического исследования*, Москва 2006 [A. Miller, *Imperija Romanovyh i nacionalizm. Èsse po metodologii istoricheskogo iissledovanija*], pp. 67-74; *Imperial Rule*, eds. A. Miller, A. J. Rieber, Budapest, New York 2004, pp. 9-26; P.M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire. A New History*, Cambridge (Mass.) 2016 (*Imperium Habsburgów. Wspólnota narodów*, trans. S. Patlewicz, Warszawa 2017); D. Lieven, *Empire. The Russian Empire and its Rivals*, New Haven (Conn.) 2001, pp. 3-27, 89-200.

model was seen as an anti-example because – it was believed – only a state founded on the unlimited power of the autocrat of Russia could prevent disintegration and anarchy.

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After 1864, the Russian authorities treated the Congress Kingdom of Poland as an area of activity of dangerous subversives who threatened the very foundations of the Russian state⁴. Meanwhile, rather than winning concessions and some compromise, both the Kingdom and the *Kresy* (*Западный Край, Zapadnyj Kraj*) saw pacification and reprisals. The political and cultural plan was that the Congress Kingdom was to become “completely and finally integrated [...] into Russia” as one of the many Russian provinces with Russian as the official language. All those changes, although referred to in historical literature as Russification policy, were not consistent in character, and they were not accompanied by a coherent reflection on the future of the Congress Kingdom of Poland still treated as “conquered” countries and thus “alien” and “hostile”⁵. Practices that aimed at subjugating the inhabitants included the creation of diverse national or imperial concepts of identity⁶, the aim of which was, on the one hand, “reforming” Polish national identity to make it friendly towards Russia⁷, and on the other hand, “nationalizing” the Orthodox inhabitants until they begin to call themselves Russians.

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- 4 M. Долбылов, “Поляк в имперском политическом лексиконе” [M. Dolbylov, “Poljak w imperskom politicheskom leksikone], in: *Понятия о России*, ред. А. Миллер, И. Ширле, Москва 2012 [Ponjatija o Rossii, red. A. Miller, I. Shirle, Moskva 2012], pp. 292–340.
 - 5 S. Wiech, “Notatka Aleksandra Koszelowa o sprawach Królestwa Polskiego z 1866 r.,” in: *Unifikacja za wszelką cenę: sprawy polskie w polityce rosyjskiej na przełomie XIX i XX wieku: studia i materiały*, eds. A. Szwarc and P. Wieczorkiewicz, Warszawa 2002, p. 191.
 - 6 M. Rolf, *Rządy imperialne w Kraju Nadwiślańskim. Królestwo Polskie i Cesarstwo Rosyjskie (1864–1915)*, trans. W. Włoskowitz, Warszawa 2016, p. 123–136.
 - 7 On the subject of imperial identity see: M. Łuczewski, *Odwieczny naród. Polak i katolik w Żmiącey*, Toruń 2012, pp. 141–144; M. Bassin, “Geographies of imperial identity”, in: *The Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2, *Imperial Russia, 1689–1917*, ed. D. Lieven, Cambridge 2006, pp. 45–64 - <http://www.cultorweb.com/eBooks/Storia/Cambridge%20Hist%20Russia/THE%20CAMBRIDGE%20HISTORY%20OF%20RUSSIA,%20Volume%20II%20-%20Imperial%20Russia,%201689-1917.pdf> [20.02.2019], F. Lindström, *Empire and Identity. Biographies of Austrian State Problem in the Late Habsburg Empire*, West Lafayette (Ind.) 2008; P. Суня [R.G. Suny], “Империя как она есть: имперская Россия, ‘национальное’ самосознание итеории империи” [Imperija kak ona est’: imperskaja Rossija, ‘nacional’noe’ samosoznanie iteorii imperii], *Ab Imperio* 2001, nos. 1–2, pp. 12–30.

The new “mental maps” of the Kingdom of Poland showed the country was dominated by the Polish culture, accompanied by the growing importance of other non-Polish ethnic groups. According to the Russian authorities, they should be absolutely cut off from the dominant (Polish) culture and accept the values of the Russian civilisation based on the ideals of the Autocracy, Orthodoxy and Nationality⁸. One of these groups - Uniate peasants from the eastern part of the Siedlce and Lublin gubernyas - was particularly important. The Ruthenian (Ukrainian) inhabitants were seen as a part of the “forgotten” Russian folk, Polonized and Catholicized since the Union of Brest (1596). To restore historical justice, the Uniate Church should have been abolished and the people brought back to the Orthodox Church. The *Воссоединение* (*Vossoedinenie*, Reunion) with the Orthodoxy in 1875 made it possible for them to “come back” to their real Russian identity. The concept of the Kholm Rus’ (*Холмская Русь*, *Kholmsskaja Rus’*) - the forgotten corner (*уголок*, *ugolok*) of the Russian national territory - required the “protection” of its inhabitants from the Polish *propaganda* and the strengthening of their Russian national identity⁹.

One of the basic instruments in creating these concepts was the written word, in the form of books, pamphlets, periodicals, and school textbooks. This tool made it possible to spread views which would position a given community as belonging to a larger - civilizational, religious or national - whole. The ideas that were promoted differed depending on their recipients. In principle, reading recommendations and books varied, depending on whether they were addressed to the gentry youth, to Polish-speaking Catholic peasants or, to the inhabitants of the Orthodox regions of the eastern part of the Russian Poland. The diversification of the types of books and periodicals reflected the varied methods of “approximation” of their inhabitants to the dominating culture, either through assimilation or through acculturation.

8 *Западные окраины российской империи*, ed. М. Долбилов, А. Миллер, Москва 2006 [Zapadnye okrainy rossijskoj imperii, ed. M. Dolbilov, A. Miller, Moskva 1006], p. 194.

9 N. Riasanovsky, *Russian identities: A historical survey*, Oxford Univ. Press 2005, s. 133-135.

The terms *assimilation* and *acculturation*, used in relation to the 19th–20th century identity processes, were mentioned by some historians associated with the so-called new imperial history. According to Benjamin Nathans, “*assimilation* should be understood as a process culminating in the disappearance of a given group as a recognizably distinct element within a larger society. By contrast, *acculturation* signifies a form of adaptation to the surrounding society that alters rather than erases the criteria of difference, especially in the realm of culture and identity¹⁰”. This definition agrees with “classical” assimilation/acculturation characterization¹¹, where assimilation is understood as “a process of becoming similar, joining a new community, adopting a new world view, tradition and emotional attachment” and “acculturation applies to such social adaptation which does not imply a change of identity of an individual or a group”¹², but only “integration of culturally different groups with predominating culture”¹³.

I realize that the use of these concepts has aroused controversy among some anthropologists because they do not describe all types of social adaptation/integration processes. However, in relation to the cultural practices in Russian Poland, this classification can be functional. In brief, it describes the instruments of identity change, but not the process itself. The books intended to bring the reader closer to Russian culture, without any fundamental change of their national and in particular their religious identity, had to *acculturate* the readers. The literature from this group was to serve, as we shall see below,

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- 10 M. Piccin, *La politica etno-confessionale zarista nel Regno di Polonia: la questione uniate di Cholm come esempio di nation-building Russo*, Venezia 2011, pp. 257–270. <http://dspace.unive.it/bitstream/handle/10579/1076/Matteo%20PICCIN%20La%20politica%20etno-confessionale%20zarista%20nel%20Regno%20di%20Polonia.pdf?sequence=1>
 - 11 B. Nathans, *Beyond the Pale. The Jewish Encounter with the Late Imperial Russia*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2002, p. 11; this definition was used by D. Staliunas, “Assimilation or Acculturation? Russian Imperial Policy Toward Lithuanians in the 1860s”, *Central and Eastern European Review*, vol. 2, 2008, p. 4.
 - 12 It is worth noting, that in social sciences William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki were pioneers of studies about cultural change processes: assimilation, acculturation, integration and dissimilation (*The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, vols. 1–5, Boston 1918–1920; *Chłop polski w Europie i Ameryce*, Warszawa 1976).
 - 13 А. Миллер, *Империя Романовых и национализм...*, pp. 57–69.

to pinpoint the civilizational centre around which the readers' loyalty was to be focused and form Polish and religious identity in a way that would complement the loyalty to the Russian empire. Books which served such ends were, above all, textbooks, including those to learn the mother tongue and primers, as well as periodicals addressed to the peasant population. The other type of book group was made up of books serving the readers' *assimilation* to Russianness. Russianness was seen through the prism of nationality and confession, and books serving this assimilation were meant to be the basic medium of nationalization. Their readers were supposed "to become" Russian.

THE SOCIAL SUNCTION OF BOOKS - A BIBLIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The central problem of this paper is the question of the social function of books in forming imperial and national identity. In bibliological studies, this notion has a long tradition and the credit for introducing it to the academic discourse goes to Karol Głombiowski, the founder of the Wrocław (Polish) school of bibliology, the basis of which "was the theoretical concept of the book as an instrument of social communication"¹⁴. Głombiowski's research was developed by Krzysztof Migoń, who assumed that:

"the main object of study should be social functions of the book, and not the development of its form, illustrations or the lot of individual institutions producing and distributing books"¹⁵.

His aim was, on the one hand, introducing the study of the book to the social sciences, and, on the other, recognizing this discipline as a kind of "autotelic" science (hence, e.g., his discounting of literature studies)¹⁶. The task of the bibliologist was supposed to be - according

14 E. Wysocka, "Akulturacja", in: *Encyklopedia pedagogiczna XXI wieku*, vol. 1, ed. T. Pilch, Warszawa 2003, pp. 75-76.

15 H. Niemiec, "Twórcy wrocławskiej bibliologii", *Biuletyn EBIB* 2006, no. 5 (75) - <http://www.ebib.info/2006/75/niemiec.php> [accessed 20.02.2019].

16 Quoted after J. Włodarczyk, "Funkcja społeczna książki. Z problematyki metod badawczych", *Acta Universitatis Lodzianensis. Folia Librorum* 1992, vol. 3, pp. 32-33 -

to Migoń - the study of the purpose and tasks which books were to perform and which they really performed¹⁷.

“An *instrument* in implementing these goals was the book and the periodical. Thanks to their mobility, communicativeness and durability they contributed to the expansion of new trends and social acceptance of new values”¹⁸.

It is worth noting that for Żbikowska-Migoń, what counted as important in research on the history of the social function of the book was both its content and circulation (considering e.g. the publishing market and its repertoire) and the form of the book. Only once all these factors had been taken into consideration was it possible - according to the researcher - to understand the book's effects and consequently the possibilities of spreading the ideas that the book represented. In other words, it made it possible to understand the book (and writing as a whole) as one of the instruments of spreading Enlightenment discourse.

The main achievement of Bednarska-Ruszałowa has been drawing our attention to the fact that, in the 18th century, “learning was first seen as a source of national identity, values and survival”, and, at the same time, “learning, the same way as literature, [...] was to make it easier of rebuild the community”¹⁹. This meant that the book - both scholarly and those making for “pleasant reading” - was faced with two new tasks which delimited the framework of its social impact. These were identity-forming functions and recognition of the book as an instrument of cultural change.

Questions of the social functions of the book have been viewed similarly by the French researcher Jean Hébrard (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales), with the difference that he pushed this function forward to the 1870s, when the “new reader” appeared. Accord-

http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.hdl_11089_6941/c/Acta_Universitatis_Lodziensis_Folia_Librorum-r1992-Wlodarczyk.pdf [accessed 20.02.2019].

17 Ibidem, p. 33.

18 Ibidem, p. 37.

19 A. Żbikowska-Migoń, *Dzieje książki i jej funkcji społecznej*, Wrocław 1987, pp. 7-8.

ing to the French researcher, the fundamental turning point in the social functioning of the book in France was the period of mass literacy begun with Jules Ferry's school reform²⁰. It was only then that it became possible to overcome the dichotomic division into oral culture and written culture which differentiated the educated and the illiterate. Thus, the peasants' entry into the circle of "new readers" was, on the one hand, the most powerful impulse behind social modernization, as it made possible forming a community of a different type, namely a nation²¹, and on the other hand, it was an object of constant anxiety about what books should be read by them and whether what they read was "suitable" for them²². The question about the impact of reading on the lowest social strata thus became one of fundamental significance.

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF THE BOOK - THE NATION RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

Beginning from the mid-19th century, the lower social classes in the Kingdom of Poland were intensively encouraged to adopt all things Polish²³, that is, harnessed to Polish national ideology. According to Michał Łuczewski, this ideology can be described as "a set of sentences, images and symbols applying to the nation". Its dissemination, which formed part of the social process, took place through cultural mediums. For this reason, he says, the formation and dissemination of the idea of the nation should be taken discursively, both as its articulation and medium. Under the conditions prevailing in the 19th century, the basic source for transferring the national idea was reading. In the Enlightenment tradition, the book was treated as the most important instrument serving the building of a new society. The

20 K. Bednarska-Ruszajowa, *Uczyć - bawić - wychować. Książka i jej funkcja społeczna w okresie Oświecenia*, Kraków 2004, pp. 23, 26.

21 P. Rodak, *Pismo, książka, lektura. Rozmowy: Le Goff, Chartier, Hébrard, Fabre, Lejeune*, preface by K. Pomian [transl. by A. Gronowska et al.], Warszawa 2013, pp. 113-115.

22 Cf. E. Gellner, *Narody i nacjonalizm*, trans. by T. Hołównka, preface by J. Breuille, trans. by A. Grzybek, 2nd ed., Warszawa 2009, pp. 48-52, 104.

23 P. Rodak, *Pismo, książka, lektura...*, pp. 123-124, 183.

main elements were to be common narrative (separation of the “us” group) and historical narrative (reconstruction of national history)²⁴. Both these component parts of national narrative could be spread with the help of one instrument – the book.

The example of the Galician countryside in the period of autonomy shows that one of the sources of social mobilization which was meant to transfer national ideology from the nationalizing group (mainly the intelligentsia and the Catholic clergy) to the being nationalized group (Polish-speaking peasants)²⁵ was the development of reading habits among the peasants. Łuczewski gives the example of the newspapers *Chata* and *Nowiny*, and also *Wieniec* and *Pszczółka*. The editor of the latter two, Father Stanisław Stojałowski, “was very well versed in the strategies of mass movements” and, at the same time, attentive to an attractive choice of contents. A measure of his success could be a statement quoted by one of his peasant correspondents that these papers “made him realize that he was a Pole”²⁶. A similar role in the nationalization strategies was played by village libraries offering the peasants literature which proved to be “the most powerful transmitter of national identity”. Sienkiewicz’s *Trilogy*, which circulated among the readers from these libraries, was indeed the breeding ground of things Polish.

The subject of the peasants’ nationalization to things Polish, with the help of books and periodicals, has also been taken up by Maria Krisań, who underlined that:

“literature for the people was becoming the most important element of social programmes of the individual magazines which strove to raise the intellectual level of the *backward* country people.”

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- 24 Cf. T. Kizwalter, “Kiedy chłop stał się Polakiem?”, *Newsweek*, 15.04.2018 – <https://www.newsweek.pl/wiedza/historia/kiedy-chlop-stal-sie-polakiem-tomasz-kizwalter-newsweekpl/m2rtzh1> [accessed 16.04.2019].
- 25 M. Łuczewski, *Odwieczny naród...*, pp. 65, 69–74.
- 26 Thus described by N. Bończa-Tomaszewski, “Polskojęzyczni chłopci? Podstawowe problemy nowoczesnej historii chłopów polskich”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 2005, vol. 112, no. 2, pp. 91–111.

The ultimate aim of such programmes was to lift the peasant from the level of “beast to that of citizen”. Although this task did not always bring long-lasting changes to peasant habits (in the country, reading was usually regarded as a “lordly” occupation making no sense whatsoever), in the course of time, a growth of interest in historical novels (Sienkiewicz!) could be observed and, as a consequence, a growing identification with Polishness²⁷.

Studies carried out by Michał Łuczewski and Maria Kriśań fit in the trend initiated by Eugen Weber, who assumed the existence of two basic factors which decided the formation of the French national identity among the inhabitants of provincial France. These were the elementary school together with its library and the development of the press for “the masses”. By supplying children with textbooks as well as calendars, readers and popular literature, the school library had a considerable impact on the socialization of both children and their parents who came in contact with books brought home by their sons and daughters. Such books, written as they were in a standardized literary language, led to the children’s bilinguality, the division into “family” language and “official” language, which has since then been regarded as the “mother” tongue. Using this language during school classes, they “taught children [...] patriotic feelings, [...] explained what is the state” and created an idea of a common motherland which encompassed all provinces forming parts of France²⁸. On the threshold of the 20th century, a role similar to that of school textbooks started to be played by the popular press, which disseminated the same news in all parts of the country and thus helped:

“an acceleration of the process of homogenization on the basis of abstract notions [...], in which national subjects took precedence before what was local and specific”²⁹.

27 M. Łuczewski, *Odwieczny naród...*, pp. 266, 307-311.

28 M. Kriśań, *Chłopi wobec zmian cywilizacyjnych w Królestwie Polskim w drugiej połowie XIX – początku XX wieku*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 32, 50-52.

29 E. Weber, *From peasants to Frenchmen. The modernization of the rural France*, London 1979, pp. 454, 303-332.

It can be accepted that the national project, based on membership of one culture, was an assimilation project *par excellence*, while the groups undergoing assimilation were to be members of the popular strata who thus far had been excluded from the “higher” culture (represented by the gentry and the bourgeoisie).

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF THE BOOK - THE IMPERIAL STUDIES PERSPECTIVE

As I have already mentioned, empires, unlike national states, should be described as heterogeneous organisms by definition. This means that in the conditions of growing nationalisms, their territories were the field of operation of various, often competing, national or proto-national projects. The main task of the state authority was maintaining the loyalty of the various parts of the empire to the centre and creating its own project of “state” nationalism³⁰ based on predominant culture (culture of the elites). Both in Russia (following the January uprising) and in the Habsburg monarchy (after 1867) these two tendencies were present, a result of the challenge which, for the empires, were national ideologies that saw differences between individual nations as fundamental and unchangeable. Under the conditions of undermined legitimacy of the state authority, next to pacification measures, cultural policy was intensified with its aim being “depolitization of national feelings and [...] maintenance of the general principle of interlinguistic equality”; at the same time, the important role of the *lingua franca* (official language) was noted in the state bureaucracy³¹. An important instrument for implementing this task was the school system and together with it - the book. However, school textbooks did not give one cultural identity to all inhabitants of the empire (un-

30 Ibidem, p. 469. In recent years, in response to Weber’s book, there have appeared a number of works, of which I shall only mention a joint publication edited by Gabriella Romani and Jenifer Burns, *The Formation of a National Audience in Italy, 1850-1890. Readers and Spectators of Italian Culture*, London 2017, dealing with the social function of the book in Italy of the Risorgimento period.

31 Cf. Ch. Kohl, A. Schroven, “Suffering for the Nation. Bottom-up and Top-down Conceptualisations of the Nation in Guinea and Guinea-Bissau”, *Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Papers*, Halle / Saale 2014 - <https://www.eth.mpg.de/pubs/wps/pdf/mpi-eth-working-paper-0152> [accessed 20.02.2019].

like in national countries). They were characterized by different approaches depending on the recipient, the instrumental use made of the national narrative (national narratives) in various contexts, the creation of emotional identification with the ruling dynasty and the presentation of the empire through the diversity and greatness of the monarchy. Evidence of this can be found in widely disseminated book series - *Окраины России* in Russia or *Kronprinzenwerk* in Austria-Hungary. In spite of the processes of nationalization of the empires, the aim of textbooks and “educational” publications for the lower classes coming from outside the ethnic “nucleus” was acculturation to the prevailing culture and instilling loyalty to the political centre.

This perspective of the role of books in the western peripheries of the Russian empire was observed by Darius Staliūnas who wrote about the ban on publishing Lithuanian books in the Latin alphabet, issued by Alexander II in 1864, which implied the use of the Cyrillic script for Lithuanian books. More than 100 years ago these problems were also the subject of a detailed analysis carried out by the outstanding Polish linguist, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay. In a pamphlet entitled *Kwestia alfabetu rosyjskiego w państwie rosyjskim* (1904) he aptly noted that the aim of this undertaking was not to punish anyone.

“It was the matter of “idea”, of far-reaching measures to bring closer one of the foreign tribes and to distance it from the Polish tribe, which neighboured on it and at the same time lived together with it”³².

According to the conception of the Russian authorities, the change of script was to serve a change of the civilizational vector, that is, transfer from the Latin-western civilization to the Slavic civilization, the latter represented by Russia³³. However, we should not treat this ban as an instrument of the assimilation of the Lithuanian lower

32 J. Baudouin de Courtenay, *Kwestia alfabetu rosyjskiego w państwie rosyjskim*, Kraków 1904, p. 8.

33 Cf. H. Głębocki, *Kresy imperium. Szkice i materiały do dziejów polityki Rosji wobec jej peryferii, XVIII-XXI wiek*, Kraków 2006, pp. 212-213, 322.

strata (meaning “turning them into Russians”). It was meant as a “de-Polonization” measure, and its aim was to cut off the peasants of the Северо-Западный Край (*Severo-Zapadnyj Kraj*) from Polish influence (which was regarded as stronger than Russian influence) and, as a consequence, to bring them closer to Russian culture and Russian civilizational tradition. To support this thesis, Staliūnas recalls the well-researched experiment of Nikolay Ilminsky, an orientalist and missionary of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Volga region, who, in opposition to the growing pan-Turkic influences and the activity of Tartar Islamic missions, propagated the use of the Cyrillic script for the local Turkic languages. “The creation of literature for the local languages in the Cyrillic alphabet was supposed to consolidate local identity against the Tartar and Islamic assimilation projects”. According to Staliūnas, Alexander Hilferding, known as the reformer of the school system in Russian Poland, had a similar aim in view. His idea was, on the one hand, to limit the influence of the Polish language, and on the other, to standardize the Lithuanian language, which was meant to be taught not only in elementary schools, but also in some secondary schools in the Augustów gubernya . Another idea of the Russian authorities was the preparation of primers in two languages, with a short story in Lithuanian on one page and its Russian version on the opposite page. This was to prove the kinship of the two languages, serve to support cultural integration and make easier the (quick) mastering of the state language³⁴. One can therefore say that the function of these books was, above all, their readers’ acculturation to the Russianness.

34 D. Staliūnas, “Assimilation or Acculturation? Russian Imperial Policy toward Lithuanians in the 1860s”, *Central and Eastern European Review* 2008, vol. 2, p. 4 - https://www.academia.edu/5117038/Assimilation_or_Acculturation_Russian_Imperial_Policy_Toward_Lithuanians_in_the_1860s_Central_and_Eastern_European_Review_vol_2_2008_p_1_20_REVIEW_Volume_2_2008_ASSIMILATION_OR_ACCULTURATION_RUSSIAN_IMPERIAL_POLICY_TOWARD_LITHUANIANS_IN_THE_1860s [20.02.2019]; idem, *Making Russian. Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus*, Amsterdam, New York 2007, pp. 189–296; R. P. Geraci, *Window on the East. National and Imperial Identities in Late Imperial Russia*, Ithaca 2001, pp. 47–85.

II. THE CASE OF THE KINGDOM OF POLAND - BETWEEN ASSIMILATION AND ACCULTURATION

The above two tendencies towards the social use of books - that is, the assimilation and acculturation (and also dissimulation³⁵) of potential readers - coexisted in a special way in Russian Poland in 1864-1914. During that period, the former Congress Kingdom had been not only politically degraded and deprived of what had been left of its autonomy, but also its status had changed on the mental map of Russian nationalists, who had become increasingly effective in influencing the Russian state authority. While prior to the January uprising there had been agreement that the Kingdom constituted a separate entity within the Russian empire, as legitimized by the Congress of Vienna and centuries-old political tradition of the old Commonwealth, in 1864 it was acknowledged that this tradition should finally be abandoned and autonomy formally liquidated. The most ardent supporters of this project were educational reformers from the Establishment Committee (Комитет по делам Царства Польского, *Komitet po delam Carstva Pol'skogo*), primarily Nikolay Milyutin and Alexander Hilferding, both coming from the circle of "late Slavophiles". Their views were summed up by the former, who on the occasion of the emancipation reform, spoke of the existence of "two Polands":

"one gentry-clerical [Poland] looking towards the past and inextricably associated with the anachronic tradition of feudal despotism [...] and another, peasants' [Poland], subconsciously faithful to its ancient Slavic roots"³⁶.

According to them, Polishness had three basic aspects (1) national (linguistic and cultural), (2) political: which meant the tradition of the Polish state (*Rzeczpospolita*) and (3) so called *Polonism* - i.e. the "political force deeply connected with the Catholicism, represented by the Polish gentry and clergy". *Polonism* was the reason why the Slavic community was broken and destroyed. It wrecked the primordial

35 D. Staliūnas, *Assimilation or Acculturation...*, p. 14.

36 D. Johnson, *Shakespeare and South Africa*, Oxford 1996, pp. 39-51.

peasant's commune (*mir*) and introduced a feudal system absolutely alien to the Slavic tradition. That is why the Polish question should be resolved by cutting off the "real" Slavic Poland (represented by the common folk) from the evil of the *Polonism*.

The idea that "real" Poland belongs to the Slavic, not Western, civilisation meant that Polishness had, first of all, an ethnic connotation and that other ethnic and religious groups should be emancipated. The latter applied in particular to members of the Orthodox (ex-Uniate) community whom the state authority viewed as "polonized" Russians "forcibly converted to Catholicism" who should now be restored to Russia so that "[this] population returned to the faith of their ancestors". According to the authorities, the area inhabited by Ruthenian (Ukrainians) peasants - Kholm Rus' - had for centuries been occupied by hostile Poland and the Catholic Church and the time had now come to restore to them their national and religious awareness and even to "turn them into [...] the vanguard of the struggle against Catholicism"³⁷.

PRIMERS - AN EXAMPLE OF ACCULTURATION

The models of the integration of the subjects of the Kingdom accorded with the logic of the empire's behaviour. One example of attempts at acculturation is the use made of school primers for the Catholic and Polish-speaking children coming from the lower strata. Acculturation of peasants, who were expected to show gratitude to the Tsar the Liberator for his "granting them land", was meant to create loyal and obliging (*угодных, ugodnykh*) subjects of Russia who would become the main social basis legitimizing Russian rule in the Vistula Land³⁸.

The first primers that appeared in Russian Poland after 1864 were Antoni Celichowski's *Nauka czytania i pisania według zasad za najlepsze uznanych*³⁹, anonymous author's *Elementarz polsko-ruski, do użytku szkół*

37 Quoted after A. Miller, *Imperium Romanowów a polskie powstania z lat 1830-1831 i 1863-1864 - analiza porównawczo-historyczna*, in: *Wbrew królewskim aliansom. Rosja, Europa i polska walka o niepodległość w XIX w.*, ed. Ł. Adamski, S. Dębski, Warszawa 2016, p. 90.

38 A. Walicki, *W kręgu słowianofilskiej utopii*, Warszawa 2002.

39 S. Wiech, *Spółczesność Królestwa Polskiego w oczach carskiej policji politycznej (1866-1896)*, 2nd ed., amended and supplemented, Kielce 2010, pp. 292-293; M. Piccin, *La politica etno-confessionale zarasta nel Regno di Polonia: la questione uniate di Cholm come esempio di*

*początkowych*⁴⁰, *Elementarz dla dzieci wiejskich*⁴¹. All the above-mentioned books seemed apolitical – Russia’s domination over Poland was hardly noticeable. Nowosielski’s primer formulated its educational programme in a very conservative way, combining education with religious formation which was understood as both moral and religious instruction, without an explicitly confessional character⁴². Equally conservative was Celichowski’s *Nauka czytania...*, published by the government printing house of the Commission for Public Enlightenment – a sign of the official character of the primer for which the main point of reference was also Christian morality. The latter textbook introduced a new type of narrative which set its sights on different targets than typical religious and moralizing instructions of the former primer. This new narrative included such ordering of the text as to shape the readers’ identity in both religious and territorial sense.

Celichowski divided the native territory into eight circles, that is: home, village, orchards and gardens, fields, meadows, towns, and finally roads and bridges. While the descriptions of these places had a “natural” and geographical character, in the description of towns he said that:

“each country has one main city where the king and the highest clerical and lay officials live. Such city is called the capital. Our capital is Warsaw, formerly Cracow, both those cities are situated on the Vistula. In towns and cities, fairs and markets are held. Country people bring to the markets cereals, vegetables, poultry, eggs, milk, butter, cheese [...]

nation-building Russo, Venezia 2011, pp. 133–134 – <http://dspace.unive.it/bitstream/handle/10579/1076/Matteo%20PICCIN%20La%20politica%20etno-confessionale%20zarista%20nel%20Regno%20di%20Polonia.pdf?sequence=1> [20.02.2019], M. Piccin, *La politica etno-confessionale...*, pp. 169–174.

- 40 According to Dolbilov, Russian elites were no strangers to the view that the January uprising undermined Russian rights to the rule over the Polish Kingdom, cf. *Западные окраины Российской империи*, pp. 209–220.
- 41 A. Celichowski, *Nauka czytania i pisanie według zasad za najlepsze uznanych*, part 1, Warszawa 1865 – <https://academica.edu.pl/reading/readSingle?cid=89573161&uid=89185549> [accessed 27.03.2019].
- 42 *Elementarz polsko-ruski, do użytku szkół początkowych*, compiled by the Government Commission for Public Enlightenment and printed by the decision of the Establishment Committee in the Polish Kingdom, Warszawa 1865 – <https://academica.edu.pl/reading/readSingle?cid=37938592&uid=19720994> [accessed 27.03.2019].

and buy there scythes, sickles, shoes [...]. That is how it is in society: some people need other people and some people work to satisfy other people's needs and convenience"⁴³.

The description of the capital city crowned the description of the state and society and formed a functional keystone pointing to the organic and mutually complementing character of both structures. Although the capital cities, contemporary and historic, were both named, the author mentioned neither the name of the state nor its political union with the village people, who were the main characters of the story. The concentric description of the "fatherland" had a rather traditional character and the peasant reader (pupil) was not supposed to identify either with the state or with the nation. It can therefore be said that the primer was meant to curb the formation of Polish national identity in Polish peasants and to build up loyalty to the authority of the "local country" understood apolitically⁴⁴.

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A separate place among school primers is occupied by those in Cyrillic script, written probably by Stanisław Mikucki⁴⁵. The most popular of his textbooks was *Элементаръ для дзеци вейскихъ* (*Elementarz dla dzieci wiejskich*), published three times in Saint Petersburg, Warsaw and Vilnius in 1865-1869⁴⁶. Stanisław Mikucki, a Slavic and Sanskrit scholar who at the time was the librarian of the Main Library (Biblioteka Główna), was assessed very critically by later researchers (he

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- 43 T. Nowosielski, *Towarzysz pilnych dzieci, czyli początki czytania i innych wiadomości sposobem łatwym i do pojęcia młodocianego wieku zastosowanym wyłożone*, wyd. 4, Warszawa 1866 - <https://academica.edu.pl/reading/readSingle?cid=527125&page=4&uid=527451> [accessed 27.03.2019]. On the subject of primers used in the Russian partition zone, see: F. Pilarczyk, *Elementarze polskie od ich XVI wiecznych początków do II wojny światowej*, Zielona Góra 2003, pp. 111-120 (discussed are primers published in the *Kresy* as well as those in Congress Poland and those used in clandestine education); M. Strycharska-Brzezina, *Polskojęzyczne podręczniki dla klasy I szkoły elementarnej w Królestwie Polskim drukowane grażdanką: wydania warszawskie ze zbiorów Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej w Krakowie, rozprawa filologiczno-historyczna i edycja*, Kraków 2006; E. Staszyński, "Problem języka polskiego w szkołach Królestwa Polskiego", *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty* 1964, vol. 77, pp. 145-171.
- 44 T.S. Nowosielski, *Towarzysz pilnych dzieci...*, pp. 30-33, 18-20, 50-52.
- 45 A. Celichowski, *Nauka czytania i pisanie...*, p. 60.
- 46 Ibidem, pp. 35-62.

was accused of fanatical hatred of everything Polish and manipulation of scholarship – “linguistic hallucination”⁴⁷. He was a member of the commission working on the Cyrillic alphabet for the Lithuanian language, where he cooperated with the author of the school reform in the Kingdom of Poland, Alexander Hilferding. Hilferding, researcher of Slavic studies (and expert in Kashubian and Pomeranian culture)⁴⁸, was convinced that the Slavic, Baltic and Finnish people belonged to a different civilization than their Occidentalized upper strata⁴⁹. The centre of Slavic civilization was tantamount to the centre of the Russian empire which represented the interest of all Slavs. For Mikucki, the conclusion was a need for a civilizational approximation of the Polish peasant to Russian culture and “Slavic civilization”. This was supposed to take place through the “re-Slavicization” of the Polish people, understood, according to the Slavophiles’ project, as the “restoration” of the Orthodox faith and teaching of the Polish peasants to read Polish texts written in the “true” Slavic alphabet – the Cyrillic script⁵⁰. This last task was treated by the reformers as one of primary

47 For more detailed description of these textbooks, see: Maria Strycharska-Brzezina, *Polskojęzyczne podręczniki dla klasy I szkoły elementarnej...*, who also includes phototype copies of: *Elementarz dla dzieci wiejskich*; *Chrestomatija wiejska czyli zbiór wypisów z różnych polskich autorów*; *Grammatyka języka polskiego, Krótki zbiór historii Starego i Nowego Testamentu* and *Początkowa nauka arytmetyki dla użytku szkółek elementarnych wiejskich i miejskich*.

48 [Станислав Павлович Микуцкий,] *Элементаръ для дзеци вейскихъ*, С. Петербургъ 1865 – <https://archive.org/details/ABCPolishCyrillic/page/n1> [27.03.2019]); cf. F. Pilarczyk, *Elementarze polskie...*, p. 322; M. Strycharska-Brzezina, *Polskojęzyczne podręczniki dla klasy I szkoły elementarnej...*, pp. 11-18, 32-44 (see in particular bibliography).

49 J. Baudouin de Courtenay accused him of research manipulation and „linguistic hallucinations”, calling him an “academic prostitute”, see J. Baudouin de Courtenay, *Zarys historii językoznawstwa, czyli lingwistyki (glottologii)*, in: *Poradnik dla samouków*, part VI, vol. 2, fascicle 2, *Dzieje myśli. Historia rozwoju nauk*, Warszawa 1909, pp. 252-253 – <https://www.sbc.org.pl/publication/47832> [accessed 29.04.2019].

50 Cf. the 3rd Polish edition of Hilferding’s work, still highly appreciated by the Slavic scholars, *Resztki Słowian na południowym wybrzeżu Morza Bałtyckiego*, trans. by N. Perczyńska, ed. J. Treder, afterword by H. Popowska-Taborska and J. Treder, Gdańsk 1989. This publication provoked a discussion lasting many years on Hilferding’s reliability, see: *Studia z Filologii Polskiej i Słowiańskiej* 1993, vol. 31; Z. Szultka, “Drugie posłowie historyka do ‘Resztek Słowian na południowym wybrzeżu Morza Bałtyckiego’ Aleksandra Hilferdinga”, *Studia z Filologii Polskiej i Słowiańskiej* 2015, vol. 50, pp. 280-309 – http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.ojs-doi-10_11649_sfps_2015_017/c/sfps.2015.017-1797.pdf [accessed 29.04.2019].

importance and the Cyrillic primer was to serve this purpose. Mikucki simultaneously undertook the “Cyrillization” of both the Lithuania and the Polish language⁵¹.

The idea of introducing the Russian script in Polish writing had a long tradition. The initiator was Tsar Nicholas I, who apparently expressed the wish that in order to “really merge the Kingdom with Russia”, “the Polish alphabet [should] be replaced with the Russian one”. Although the commission working on the implementation of the plan included among its members the minister for education, Sergey Uvarov, the plan was not carried out in practice, apart from the preparation of detailed instructions on the transliteration of the Polish alphabet into the Cyrillic script (in 1844). Another project with a similar aim was the instructions prepared by Peter Dubrovsky. These were used in practice in the book entitled *Wzory języka polskiego prozą i wierszem dla Rosyjan* (Correct Polish in prose and verse for Russians, Saint Petersburg 1852), which was used in some schools (as evidenced by the seal of the *realscole* in Równe in the copy of the book in the National Library of Poland). It was only the changes in the wake of the January uprising that enabled the Russian authorities to implement this plan.

For the Russian authorities, both in Saint Petersburg and Warsaw, the Polish issue was the subject of endless discussions. The Russian bureaucracy failed to take a coherent position on how it should be solved. Examples of different understandings of this question were provided by the policy of Dmitry Tolstoy, the education minister in 1876–1882 and, in Poland, that of Alexander Apukhtin, school superintendent of the Warsaw School District. Although many authors show Tolstoy as a disciple and follower of Mikhail Katkov⁵², it should not es-

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- 51 Cf. П. Лавров, “Гильфердинг, Александр Федорович, in: Русский биографический словарь в 25 томах”, изд. *Под наблюдением пред. Императорского Русского Исторического Общества А.А. Половцова*, Москва 1916, vol. 5 [Lavrov, Gil’ferding, Aleksandr Fedorovich, in: Russkij biograficheskij slovar’ v 25 tomakh, izd. Podnabljudeniem pred. Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshhestva A.A. Polovcova, Moskva 1916, vol. 5], *Герберский-Гогенлоэс*, изд. под ред. Н. М. Чулкова [Gerberskij-Gogenloès, izd. pod red. N. M. Chulkova], pp. 195–204 -<https://dlib.rsl.ru/viewer/01002897085#?page=197> [accessed 29.04.2019].
- 52 H. Głębocki, *Fatalna sprawa. Kwestia polska w rosyjskiej myśli politycznej (1856–1866)*, Kraków 2000, pp. 450–451; D. Staliūnas, *Making Russian...*, pp. 194–199.

cape our notice that, as a practitioner and politician of the conservative empire, he had to treat the Polish *status quo*, especially as regards the Polish upper classes, much more pragmatically than immediately after the crushing of the uprising. Shortly after the situation became relatively “calm”, the plan to introduce the Cyrillic script for Polish literature was recognized as unrealistic and shelved.

In the period following the January uprising, the most popular textbook for elementary schools was *Elementarz polsko-ruski do użytku szkół początkowych*, which had many editions and was in use almost in the entire period under discussion (the years 1865–1902)⁵³. All editions were meant to contribute to the formation of the pupils’ “Slavic” identity. However, it was understood differently than the textbooks ascribed to Mikucki. The instrument of “Slavicization” was not to be the alphabet, but the arrangement of the book. The Polish and Russian texts on opposite pages made the pupils learn in two languages simultaneously. As regards their contents, the texts were much closer to Nowosielski’s primer. They were characterized by a complete lack of political issues as well as a harmonious, cheerful description of the natural and divine order, “naturally” introducing the readers into religious life⁵⁴.

One of the tasks of the primers was to inspire veneration for the monarch. A good example is the second edition of Antoni Celichowski’s *Nauka czytania i pisania* (1872) which contained anecdotal and at the same time moralizing texts about Peter I (about his apprenticeship with an Istrian blacksmith). Together with the story of the tsar’s industriousness, the column of *Powieści i zdania moralne* contained a portrait of a good queen – Jadwiga of Poland. The examples of Peter I and the 14th century Polish queen were by no means political (civic) in

53 H. Głębocki notes that the Cyrillic alphabet used by Hilferding was a rival idea in relation to the Polish Slavophilic project. He reminds us that work on creating such alphabet on the basis of “Polish letters” was carried out by Fr. Franciszek Ksawery Malinowski, see: “Александр Гильфердинг и Славянофильские Проекты Изменения Национально-Культурной Идентичности На Западных Окраинах Российской Империи” [Aleksandr Gil’ferding i Slavjanofil’skie Proekty Izmenenija Nacional’no-Kul’turnoj Identichnosti Na Zapadnykh Okrainakh Rossijskoj Imperii], *Ab imperio* 2005, no. 2, pp. 135–166.

54 D. Staliūnas, *Making Russian...*, pp. 112–123.

character. The point was rather to show an ideal picture of an active, masculine monarch and an “angelic”, “merciful” queen who could not bear the “sight of the wretchedness of the neighbour”, and at the same time to present them as the people’s monarchs, unrelated to the upper classes. The peasants were to remain passive, “reasonable” and “good-natured”.

Together with the changes brought about by the year 1905, the primers accepted by the Warsaw School District proved different to the earlier ones. Special attention is due to the primer written by an educational activist and undoubtedly a Polish patriot, Bolesław Wocalewski, entitled *Strzecha rodzinna*, parts 1-3, Łódź 1905. The programme guidelines of this textbook can be best summed up by a short verse which opened its part 2:

Come on, children! Hey-ho, to school! All together! / [...] In this book which is called “The Family Thatch” / Many interesting and beautiful things / May be found. / You will learn from it how to love the Maker / With all your hearts, / How you must live to be / Happy in the world [...] You will learn from it how the Almighty God / Created the world. / You will learn from it to love the native / Country, the people. / To work, children! God will bless your effort⁵⁵.

This textbook was definitely much more eloquent in its appeal to love “the native country” which - as we learn further on in the book - was understood as a love of Poland. This is obvious when we look at several texts, of which one (Maria Konopnicka’s *W zapusty*) is about a carnival dance with children dressed as “one of us”, meaning the inhabitants of the whole of ethnic Poland, including the highlanders, Cracovians, Mazurians and Kuyavians⁵⁶. In another text we find a poem by Jadwiga of Łobzów, entitled *Dzielnice*, which ends with the following appeal:

55 Cf. for data on individual editions see the card catalogue of the Warsaw University Library (BUW) - <https://zwarte.ckk.buw.uw.edu.pl/> [accessed 13.05.2019].

56 *Elementarz polsko-ruski do użytku szkół początkowych (z dodaniem ruskiego wzorku)*, Częstochowa 1877 - <https://academica.edu.pl/reading/readSingle?cid=72095214&uid=70400401> [accessed 27.03.2019].

Whoever has a Polish heart / Who loves his fine country / Should know the lands - / Which formed the country. / And must know the name / Of each of its parts / Because all of this is ours - / Lying under our skies⁵⁷.

Another text (*Imieniny Józia*) tells about children who were supposed to impersonate important figures from Polish history, science and culture, e.g. Józef Poniatowski, Stanisław Żółkiewski, Wanda (daughter of Krak), Stanisław Jachowicz, Piotr Skarga and Nicolaus Copernicus⁵⁸. The Polish Kingdom which “forms a part - as the author underlines - of the Russian Empire”, described as “our country”, was, from this viewpoint, above all a geographic and administrative term, not encompassing everything Polish⁵⁹.

Such change in the attitude to presenting “Polishness” in primers was associated with the changes that took place in the educational system after 1905. Indirectly, the reason was competition posed by the primers used in clandestine and private schooling (primers by Promyk, Celina Niewiadomska and Władysław Bełza). In a situation wherein the Polish intelligentsia built up an almost openly Polish national identity among the peasants, the Russian authorities had only one option left: to allow such textbooks in the school system which “equalized” this identity with loyalty towards the Russian empire.

It is worth noting that the authors of these books did not in any way undertake to build up Russian identity among the Polish pupils. Their role was different. Shortly after the January uprising, it consisted in separating the lower classes from the Polish gentry which was engaged in the “Polish rebellion” and in changing the civilizational vector among the Polish peasants towards Russia and the Russian emperor (Tsar Liberator) rather than towards the ideals of the Polish independence tradition. Polishness had only a cultural significance (not historical) and the task was to “win it over” for the Slavic world

57 B.T. Wocalewski, *Strzecha rodzinna. Książka do czytania i ćwiczeń*, 12th ed., Łódź 1917, part 2, p. 2 - <http://bc.wbp.lublin.pl/publication/16357> [accessed 27.03.2019].

58 Ibidem, pp. 193-196.

59 Ibidem, p. 197.

under Russia's leadership⁶⁰, and later periods saw a gradual departure from Slavophilic utopias. Primers which tried to bring the Polish readers closer to Russia used texts presenting figures from Russian history and culture. Prior to the Great War, the Polish pressure was so powerful that the Russian authorities consented to the appearance of elements of Polish patriotism in the primers' narrative, but this was limited only to the ethnically Polish parts of the country (also from outside the Kingdom of Poland) and always in a way favourably disposed towards Russia. It should be mentioned that the emotional attitude towards "Polishness" represented by individual authors was often varied - from decidedly unfavourable (Mikucki) to extremely positive (Wocalewski). Irrespective of the authors' personal mindset, primers served to consolidate an imperial identity in which there was also room for Polishness understood loyalistically.

БЕСЕДА - ASSIMILATION OF RUTHENIANS TO RUSSIANNES

A completely different function was ascribed to the non-Catholic and non-Polish-speaking population, notably the Ruthenian (Ukrainians), who in 1875 were administratively recognized as Russian Orthodox. As the Establishment Committee claimed, the territory inhabited by the Orthodox peasants was part of ancient Rus, the space which from time immemorial (*искони, iskonni*) had belonged to the Russian nation. The first periodical addressed to the Orthodox inhabitants of the eastern gubernyas of the Vistula Land was *Беседа*, published twice monthly in 1886-1906 in the Warsaw gubernya typography, under the supervision of Nikolay Kharlamov, superintendent for peasant affairs of the Grójec county⁶¹. Unfortunately, we know nothing about its circulation; its price - 1.5 roubles for an annual subscription - was not excessive, an indication perhaps that its publishing was financed from the state budget. As to the purpose of publishing the *Беседа*, some light is cast by correspondence, preserved in the docu-

60 Ibidem, pp. 197-203.

61 Ibidem., 9th ed., Łódź 1912, p. 139, chapter "Królestwo Polskie". In the 1917 edition the chapter is entitled "Królestwo Polskie (Polska)", and the bit "forms a part of the Russian Empire" is no longer there (p. 189).

ments of the viceroy's chancellery in Warsaw, between Fyodor Berg and Galician Russophiles on winning over authors for the new newspaper and opinions on the most effective mode of "operation aimed at convincing the obstructive who were influenced by the opponents' propaganda"⁶². In his letters the author of the above quoted excerpt, Ivan Naumovich, leader of the Russophile movement, expressed his doubts as to the success of the operation of attracting Orthodox peasants and suggested first of all the tactic of making the *Беседа* more attractive visually by "adding illustrations which our people are so fond of". Another correspondent, Vakh Guryev (Вахх Васильевич Гурьев), pastor of the Orthodox cathedral in Kalisz, was for applying the tactic of "short steps", that is, attracting peasants with articles on everyday matters and only later going on to getting them interested in "painful subjects", such as "the Union and Polishness". It is also worth noting his proposal to popularize reading habits through the dissemination free of charge of pamphlets addressed "in particular to school children"⁶³.

In order to convince the newly converted Orthodox readers about the good sense of reading the new paper, the first issue, which appeared on 1 January 1886, contained fictionalized dialogues between two peasants. In the text, entitled *Зачем нам нужна грамота* (*zачem nam nuzhna gramota, why should we read*), one of them is not convinced that it is worth sending children to school. In answer, the second one gives him three basic reasons why reading is important: it gives people access to devotional and "moralizing" literature, makes it possible to learn about their own history and consequently "discover" their own national identity, and finally teaches them how to run their farms

62 A. Walicki, *W kręgu konserwatywnej utopii*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 360-361; Idem, "Zarys myśli rosyjskiej od renesansu religijno-filozoficznego", Kraków 2005, p. 195; H. Głębocki, *Polska w myśli politycznej Jurija Samarina*, [w:] *Polacy a Rosjanie : materiały z konferencji „Polska-Rosja : rola polskich powstań narodowych w kształtowaniu wzajemnych wyobrażeń”*, red. T. Epszstein, Warszawa 2000, s. 129-157.

63 Kharlamov was the author of a pamphlet entitled *Сельское и гминное самоуправление в губерниях Царства Польского*, Варшава 1902 [Sel'skoe i gminnoe samoupravlenie v gubernijah Carstva Pol'skogo, Varshava 1902], AGAD (Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw), shelf mark 1783, doc. 8., dedicated to the peasant self-government in the Polish Kingdom after 1864.

more effectively. The main role of reading was to transmit historical narratives, as evidenced in their predominance in the *Beceda*, thanks to which the peasant reader would be able to announce proudly:

“Now I know that our state came into being over a thousand years ago, and that the first prince of Rus was Rurik whose baptism took place during the reign of Vladimir who was recognized as saint: that Rus for a long time suffered under the Tartar yoke and it was saved from the threatening Lach [Polish] yoke thanks to the heroism of a simple butcher Minin and [...] prince Pozharsky. We also know what tsars ruled in Russia and I could tell you about Peter I - about him working as carpenter and joiner [...] with his own hands; [...] I also know that 70 years ago during the reign of Tsar Alexander I the Blessed, the French emperor Napoleon with his vast army entered Russia and wanted to conquer it, but our great Tsar forced him to retreat [...] and give up all conquests. [...] I know that we were freed from serfdom by the EMPEROR ALEXANDER II, called by the people Tsar Liberator”⁶⁴.

Russian national identity was to be based on a threefold narrative according to which the history of Rus-Russia formed a continuous whole, the state authority of the autocrat-tsar was the main factor in the development of the state, and the monarch was united with “his” people.

Next to the historic narrative, the *Beceda* engaged in spreading word of the second fundamental factor of national identity, that is, membership of the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox religion was shown mostly through the socio-cultural prism as the Russians’ “natural faith”⁶⁵, whose adoption or rejection could not be decided by such “subjective” factors as a person’s individual decision. Until the freedom of religion was legally adopted in 1906, division into confessions and religions was treated in the Russian empire rather as a cultural-ethnic division and applied not so much to individuals as to social groups. For this reason, individual confessions were treated proto-nationally in accordance with the principle: “Russian faith” means Orthodox faith, “Polish faith”

64 *Beceda* 1886, no. 1, p. 3 - <http://ebuw.uw.edu.pl/publication/234956> [accessed 20.02.2019].

65 P. Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faith. Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia*, Oxford 2014, pp. 166-173.

means Catholicism and “German faith” means Lutheranism. In the view of the Russian authorities, Eastern Rite Catholicism was “internally contradictory” in both religious and historical respects. Observed by “Russian peasants”, it preserved (in spite of its “catholicization”) continuity with the Orthodox tradition, but it remained under the control of Rome. In the view of the Russian bureaucracy, the abolishment of the Union was to be the “liberation” of the “eternally” Orthodox faithful and restoration of historic justice⁶⁶. By the same token, the Uniate Catholicism, as a “sect”, found itself outside the sphere of acceptable tolerance to which other religious communities were entitled⁶⁷.

With the abolishment of the Union Church in the late 1830s, the Orthodoxy and “Russianness” were “primordialized” in the Западный Край . Following the January uprising and Congress Poland’s loss of its autonomy, its eastern borderlands were seen as “forgotten” Russia which had in the past formed an integral part of Holy Russia - the mediaeval Kievan Rus⁶⁸. Therefore, Orthodox and national propaganda on the pages of *Беседа* was to serve above all Russian nationalization which would recognize Russianness as “eternal” and “natural” in “its own” territory. In one of its issues in 1886, this question was discussed by the peasants Nikita and Stepan, who related a meeting with another peasant in the following way:

“He said to me “For the love of God”, how could you agree to convert to Orthodoxy? After all you lost your soul [...] And I answer him: Tell me, if you please - what faith was here 300 years ago? I have happened to hear more than once that Orthodoxy was then everywhere, even when we were under the Polish yoke and our fathers saw *Polish faith* [my emphasis - MP] in grand churches and performed corvée work for landlords and priests”⁶⁹.

66 M. Piccin, *La politica imperial zarista...*, pp. 150-158.

67 P. Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faith...*, pp. 82-83.

68 М. Долбилов: *Русский край, чужая вера. Этноконфессиональная политика империи в Литве и Белоруссии при Александре II*, Москва 2010 [M. Dolbilov: *Russkij kraj, chuzhaja vera. Ėtnokonfessional'naja politika imperii v Litve i Belorussii pri Aleksandre II*, Mockva 2010].

69 W. Osadczy, *Święta Rus. Rozwój i oddziaływanie idei prawosławia w Galicji*, Lublin 2007, p. 13; J. Billington, *Ikona i topór. Historia kultury rosyjskiej*, trans. by J. Hunia, Kraków 2008, p. 117.

In this religious-nationalistic combination, one more factor is worth noting, which may be called the “estate” factor. Its essence is the conviction that the “Polish landlords” (and *only* they) resisted the emancipation of the peasants. Religious differences were supposed to reflect the “national” differences and thus explain the permanent conflict between the peasant and the landlord. This was meant to show the differences between the two social groups as having an antagonistic character, and this antagonism, due to the inherent difference between the two “nationalities”, were seen as insurmountable.

In the situation in which the roles of individual nations - Poles represented by the Catholic “landlords” and the Russians by peasants who were poor and oppressed by those landlords - were clearly defined, it was necessary to explain the problem of resistance to Orthodoxy. Until the year 1905, the main task of the Russian administration in the east of the Kingdom was the matter of the *упорствующие* (*uporstvujushchie*, the resistant), the former Uniates who refused to convert to Orthodoxy and remained, in a way, outside any institutional church⁷⁰. Explaining this situation, which was difficult to accept for both the Russian bureaucrats and the clergy, became one of the favourite motifs in the *Beceda*.

In the column headlined *About the resistant, and why they resist*, the author argued that the reason for this state of affairs lies mainly in the characteristic of the “backwardness” of the peasant estate in Russia, which sets the latter apart from the “progressive” peasants in other parts of Europe, notably in Germany, Belgium and England where:

“the wise and literate peasant gets down to books whenever he has no other work to do and through books he talks as it were with wise people and listens to their advice”⁷¹.

70 *Beceda* 1886, no. 4, pp. 28–29 - <http://ebuw.uw.edu.pl/publication/234960> [accessed 20.02.2019].

71 On the subject of the “resistant” see A. Szabaciuk, “*Rosyjski Ulster*”. *Kwestia chełmska w polityce imperialnej Rosji*, Lublin 2013, pp. 41–48 - https://www.academia.edu/7923035/_Rosyjski_Ulster_.Kwestia_che%C5%82mska_w_polityce_imperialnej_Rosji_w_latach_1863-1915 [accessed 20.02.2019].

The editors of the *Беседа* were convinced that the acceptance of Orthodoxy by former Uniates must have been a result of their awareness of their own roots, passed down not from generation to generation (as with traditional oral tradition), but thanks to modern written culture. Russian nationalization of the former Uniate region was to take place due to the modernization of that region. Its element was to be, above all, an “understanding” of one’s *true* Orthodox identity which was treated, in both nationalistic and confessional terms, as eternal and unchangeable.

The ability to read the desirable Orthodox literature supported by the state and church authorities (“various cheap pamphlets and booklets on spiritual and scientific subjects” were mentioned) among which the first place was to be occupied by the ten-page “Троицкие листки [Troickie listki]”⁷², published in many copies by the Trinity Lavra of St Sergius near Moscow, was to work as an antidote to Polish propaganda. The latter was viewed as particularly dangerous due to the above-mentioned “backwardness” of “people, Russian by birth, who however have forgotten about their famous [Orthodox] forefathers”. Meanwhile, the situation was such that the Polish “Master Karol”, who was a “secret Polish propagandist”, enjoyed the support of the Uniate priests in Galicia and “read and explained to people *The Book of Prophecies* where it was said that Poland with the help of Austria will defeat Russia and all those who converted to Orthodoxy will be tortured”⁷³. Reading and listening to “inappropriate” books was the main worry of the Russian authorities in the eastern gubernyas of the Vistula Land, and the only way their influence could be “neutralized” was to actively propagate reading in Russian.

72 *Беседа* 1886, no. 6, p. 1 - <http://ebuw.uw.edu.pl/publication/234962> [accessed 20.02.2019].

73 А.Н. Стрижев, *Никон Рождественский – великий святитель XX в.*, “Благодатный огонь” 2000, no. 5; Архимандрит Никон [Рождественский], *Мои дневники*, вып. 7, 1916, Сергиев Посад 1916 [A.N. Strizhev, Nikon Rozhdestvenskij – velikij svjatelj’ XX v., “Blagodatnyj ogon’” 2000, no. 5; Arhimandrit Nikon [Rozhdestvenskij], *Moi dnevniki*, вып. 7, 1916, Sergiev Posad 1916] - <https://dlib.rsl.ru/viewer/01004114796#?page=2> [accessed 20.02.2019].

Russian nationalization of the former Uniates proceeded mainly through their earlier Orthodox confessionalization. The tasks of Russian literature for the people, presented here with the use of the example of the paper *Беседа*, were to challenge Polish literature through the separation of the “us” group of Orthodox Russians and alienation from this group of all the “aliens”⁷⁴ - “Polish landlords” and the Catholic Church; to build up regional identity according to which the territory inhabited by the former Uniates was eternally part of the sacred sphere of Russianness (Holy Russia); and finally to reconstruct national history through the creation of an attractive historic narrative with which the new “Russians” could identify.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the social function of the book in the second half of the 19th century opens up possibilities for research on the shaping of both the national and imperial identity which was seen as a counterbalance to the processes of (Polish) nationalization of the lower strata. In both cases, the main instrument was to be reading, either forced (e.g. school textbooks) or voluntary. The task of the books which were to be instruments in the process of national formation was first of all the separation of the “us” group with its own “eternal” history and “its own” territory by means of an attractive narrative easily understood by the less practised readers. A different function was to be performed by books which supported the acculturation of those inhabitants of the empire’s peripheries who were not viewed as members of the dominating (“ruling”) nation. As evidenced by the quoted examples of elementary school primers in the Kingdom of Poland, textbooks were meant to “inscribe” Polish national awareness and professed Catholicism in the imperial context. Loyalty to the Russian state was understood as acceptance of the Russian civilizational mission, according to which Russia was treated as the “saviour of Slavdom”. Over the course of time, such programme of (imperial) Polish national identity was

74 *Беседа* 1886, no. 22, p. 1 - <http://ebuw.uw.edu.pl/publication/234978> [accessed 20.02.2019].

introduced less and less consistently. It became more and more essential to adopt certain elements of Polish patriotism which remained complementary to the allegiance to the Russian state.

The division into assimilative and acculturative functions of reading makes it possible to differentiate methods of winning over support for Russianness (understood in terms of both state and nation) and to encourage deeper reflection on the subject of the aims of Russian cultural policy in the period following the January uprising. Research on the ideas that motivated publishers of primers, newspapers for the “people” and also founders of libraries, both for the upper and lower strata, may contribute - I believe - to a better understanding of the mechanisms of both nation-building and empire-building in the Kingdom of Poland⁷⁵.

translated by Bogna Piotrowska

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SUMMARY

The article presents methodological aspects of social functions of books in the research on nations and empires. Its first part focuses on the notions of assimilation and acculturation in the context of various Russian cultural policies in the Kingdom of Poland in the years 1864–1914. The main tool of these policies were schoolbooks and popular press. The author believes that analyzing them makes it possible to determine what sort of change - according to the ideas and guidelines of the Russian authorities - was supposed to occur in a reader after getting acquainted with the books recommended by school board and the Governor-General of the Kingdom of Poland. The second part of

75 The term meaning the creation of the category of the Other by emphasizing distance and hostility: J. Fabian, “Presence and Representation. The Other and anthropological writings”, *Critical Inquiry* 1990, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 755 - <http://ewa.home.amu.edu.pl/Fabian,%20The%20Other%20and%20Anthropolgical%20Writing.pdf> [accessed 20.02.2019].

the article (1) discusses in detail the books intended to make Polish national identity and Catholicism harmonize with the imperial context, and (2) introduces the magazine *Beseda* aimed at shaping Russian national identity among Orthodox inhabitants of the Kholm Rus’.

KEYWORDS: Russia, empire, nation, Congress Kingdom of Poland, social function of book