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BRITISH PATTERNS IN POLISH AGRICULTURE OF THE EARLY 19th CENTURY

In the 18th century significant transformations in agriculture and unprecedented advances in technology made Britain the top farming nation in the world.¹ The most crucial transformations included enclosures and entitlement of lands to landlords, which opened the way for selective animal and plant breeding that had earlier been unprofitable on small broken plots of lands. The medieval open-field three-course crop rotation system was ultimately replaced with four-course crop rotation and artificial fertilization. Agricultural mechanization developed rapidly. In 1782 the mechanical seeder was invented to be followed by the threshing machine four years later. The British Agricultural Revolution brought a division of rural society into landowners, tenants and farm laborers.

Apparently similar conditions for agricultural change appeared in Poland a little later. The Polish landed gentry owning large cultivation areas began to introduce capitalist patterns in farming. Their estates started to be organized on the basis of a rent system. Also Polish petty nobles began to form a tenancy class, mostly remaining in clientage to large aristocratic land-owning families.

Those Polish landlords who knew western European agricultural models from literature or travels abroad, also to Great Britain, were familiar with the new technological developments. They had means of implementation of the new patterns, organized progressive agricultural centers in their estates and

¹ The first version of the article in Polish appeared as a chapter in W. Lipoński, *Polska a Brytania 1801-1830. Próby politycznego i cywilizacyjnego dźwignięcia kraju w oparciu o Wielką Brytanię* (Poland and Britain, 1801-1830: The Attempts to Elevate a Country by the Intervention of Great Britain), Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 1978, pp. 132-160.

tried, albeit with little success, to propagate progressive ideas among the wider spheres of traditional middle and petty Polish nobles.

However, the situation of Polish agriculture was still a far cry from the British model. The reforms were more or less successful in large manor estates; however, their broader implementation was hindered by the conservatism of Polish nobles. While it was overcome in the area of agricultural technology and production, in the social sphere the serfdom of the Polish peasant was a major obstacle to any systemic transformations.

Moreover, one of the characteristics of the British Agricultural Revolution was the fact that large industrial centers stimulated agricultural developments. The increased demand for staple foods intensified agricultural production despite the declining amount of arable land. On the other hand, the depopulation of the British countryside caused by constant migrations of workers to industrial centers facilitated land consolidation, while the shortage of labor force encouraged mechanization of agriculture.

The ambitious launch of industry in the Kingdom of Poland failed to provide such stimuli to agricultural activity with the exception of a few small areas. "Trade relations, handicraft development and affluence of English farmers and general population are obstacles in following their models here".² All attempts to reform the existing social relations in agriculture were bound to be extremely limited. The pioneering enterprises of Joachim Chreptowicz – the last Grand Chancellor of Lithuania and a well-known physiocrat, of the Zamoyskis, the Dzieduszyckis, the Morskis and the Działyńskis as well as such affluent landlords as Alojzy Prosper Biernacki and Dezydery Chłapowski were merely reformist enclaves in the vast territory of agricultural obscurantism and backwardness. However, by slowly overcoming prejudices they became important links between Polish agriculture and European models.

The chronological list of Polish pioneers of agricultural reform should open with two 18th-century Grand Treasurers of Lithuania, Jerzy Detloff Fleming and Antoni Tyzenhauz.³ The latter maintained extensive contacts with British gardeners and brought tree saplings from Keith Richmond of Edinburgh and gardens of Daniel Solander (Swedish botanist living in England).⁴ Many reforms were undertaken in the estates of Duchess Anna Jabłonowska and Prince Michał Hieronim Radziwiłł; however, the preserved documentation of their agricultural activities does not indicate borrowing of any farming patterns from Britain.

The best known agricultural reformer of that time was Count Andrzej Zamoyski. As the author of the reform manifesto of the Familia – the Polish

² M. Oczapowski, *Zasady chemii rolniczej* (Principles of Agricultural Chemistry), Wilno 1819, p. 3.

³ Bohusz, *Krótką wiadomość o rolnictwie litewskim* (A Short Note on Lithuanian Agriculture), "Dziennik Towarzystwa Rolniczego Królewskiego", 1812, no. 1, pp. 13-14.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

reformist party – Zamoyski proposed some liberal improvements in Polish agriculture. His bold proposals to introduce a tenancy system in Poland similar to the one in Britain cost Zamoyski his political career and made him withdraw from public life.⁵

After having retired from politics, Zamoyski undertook a number of reforms in his own estates drawing extensively on British experience. He abolished serfdom, established peasant councils and brought agricultural machines as well as engineers from England. All these undertakings were greatly admired by an English traveller G. Burnett.⁶ Zamoyski also brought English large ear wheat and English breeding sheep, fertilized soil with manure “in the way the English do” and even built breweries producing “English-style porter”.⁷ In many respects Zamoyski even anticipated historic social advances in Great Britain by building hospitals and introducing free health service schemes for farm officials and laborers. Most of his reforms were introduced gradually, initially at two farms in 1760, then in six villages of around Biezuń and finally in all his estates.⁸ The good results came very soon. While peasant indigence was fairly common in Poland by the end of the 18th century, in Zamoyski’s estates: “Grain was at times in such multitude that in some villages there was not enough space to store it”.⁹ The relations with the peasants in his estates resembled the ones in Britain and corresponded with observations of Prince Adam Czartoryski: “The good government is best when the governed live in happiness”.¹⁰

⁵ W. Hejnosz, *Stanowisko prawne ludności wieśniaczej w “Zbiorze praw sądowych” A. Zamoyskiego* (Legal Situation of Rural Populace in the Zamoyski Code), “Roczniki Dziejów Społeczno-Gospodarczych” (Annals of Social and Economic History), vol. V, 1936, pp. 69-84.

⁶ G. Burnett, *View of the Present State of Poland*, London 1807, p. 80; *Jeneral Zamoyski* (General Zamoyski), vol. I, Poznań 1910, p. 3.

⁷ J. Kasperek, *Gospodarka folwarczna ordynacji zamoyskiej w drugiej połowie XVIII w.* (Farm Economy in Zamoyski’s Estates in the Second Half of the 18th Century), Warszawa 1972; pp. 61, 92; “Dziennik Ekonomiczny Zamoyski”, 1803, p. 1036.

⁸ R. Bender, *Reforma czynszowa w ordynacji zamoyskiej 1834-1864* (Rent Reform in Zamoyski’s Estates, 1834-1864, Lublin 1969; A. Chyliński, *Nauka gospodarcza i rolnicza dla pożytku kraju i państwa Ordynacji Zamoyskiej [...] spisana przez komisarza na teże ordynacji do druku podana i publiczności ofiarowana* (Business and Agrarian Teachings for the Benefit of Zamoyski’s Estates and the Country [...], Written by the Estate Administrator, Printed and Published), Zamość 1791; J. Kasperek, op. cit.; R. Orłowski, *Działalność społeczno-gospodarcza Andrzeja Zamoyskiego 1757-1792* (Social and Economic Activities of Andrzej Zamoyski, 1757-1792), Lublin 1965; R. Orłowski, *Położenie chłopów w dobrach ordynacji zamoyskiej w drugiej połowie XVIII w.* (Situation of Peasantry in Zamoyski’s Estates in the Second Half of the 18th Century), “Annales UMCS”, sectio 7, vol. 7, Lublin 1956, pp. 107-170; R. Orłowski, *Położenie i walka klasowa chłopów w ordynacji zamoyskiej w drugiej połowie XVIII w.* (Situation and Class Struggle of Peasantry in Zamoyski’s Estates in the Second Half of the 18th Century), Lublin 1963.

⁹ *Instrukcja dla komisarza dóbr ordynacji Zamoyskiej* (Instructions for the Administrator of Zamoyski’s Estates) [in:] *Instrukcje gospodarcze dla dóbr magnackich i szlacheckich z XVII-XIX wieku* (Business Instructions in Polish Manors and Estates, 17th-19th Century), ed. B. Baranowski, J. Bartyś and T. Sobczak, vol. II, III, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków 1963, p. 52.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

Adoption of British agrarian patterns became a tradition in the Zamoyski family. A prominent member of the next family generation Stanisław Zamoyski and his wife Zofia Zamoyska nee Czartoryska visited England and Scotland in 1803 during the short-lasting peace between Great Britain and France. Their son wrote later in his diaries that “My parents wanted to get to know anything that could be successfully introduced in our country. They were shown tremendous courtesy by the Prince of Wales – the later George IV – and many English families that my grandmother Princess Izabela Czartoryska had established relations with during her earlier visits to Britain with her son Adam”.¹¹

In the early 1820s Stanisław’s son, Konstanty Zamoyski introduced in his estates a management system based entirely on Scottish agricultural patterns. He successfully launched the new system in his Gruszczyn manor, before he inherited the entire Zamoyskis’ estates. The implementation of Scottish models in Poland was justified by the high levels of agricultural production in Scotland at that time, as reported by Wincenty Niepokojczycki, a special envoy of Prince Xavery Drucki-Lubecki, the Congress Kingdom of Poland’s¹² Minister of the Treasury. Konstanty Zamoyski visited Scotland himself and liked it so much that he moved there later in his life. The introduction of the Scottish models brought unbelievable success. According to Władysław Zamoyski’s diaries the total revenue from the estates tripled after the implementation of Scottish-style management.¹³ After having settled in Scotland, Konstanty visited one of farms in Poland and met with a group of peasants who advised to him “to go back to those Scots whose ideas turned out be so beneficial to us”.¹⁴

However, the situation elsewhere in the Kingdom of Poland was often far from idyllic. For example, a well-known Polish political activist Tytus Działyński, who took over his wife Celina’s (nee Zamoyska) estate in Oleszyce near Jarosław in 1837, met with “such peasants’ distrust and dislike of their landlords, who despite widespread famine and diseases refused to accept food or medicine from the estate manor being convinced they are poisoned”.¹⁵ As a well-known Anglophile Działyński established quite revolutionary social relations in his estates in Galicia¹⁶. He introduced new farming tools and machinery, organized mutual aid societies for the farmers and even implemented the newest English economic concept – installment plans. “In all their undertakings the Działyńskis were helped by their children’s English governess – Miss Birth”.¹⁷

¹¹ *Jeneral Zamoyski*, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 2-3.

¹² Russian-controlled Kingdom of Poland (1815-1867) established at the Congress of Vienna.

¹³ *Jeneral Zamoyski*, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 514-517.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 517.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 425.

¹⁶ The historical name of the Austrian sector of partitioned Poland.

¹⁷ *Jeneral Zamoyski*, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 425.

Unfortunately, Działyński did not avoid the consequences of Polish peasants' long-harbored resentment and anger. During the Peasant Revolt known as the Galician Slaughter of 1846¹⁸ he was forced to escape from his own estate in disguise. The enclaves of landlords' progressivism were too small to overcome the existing social divisions, conflicts and injustices in the Polish countryside.

Konstanty Zamoyski encouraged his brother Władysław to participate directly in his new projects. The latter wrote: "Listening to my brother I finally realized the situation of agriculture in our country."¹⁹ After he emigrated to France in 1831 following the fall of the November Uprising, Władysław Zamoyski often sent letters of instruction to the family estates, which included his observations and plans regarding the Norfolk crop rotation system or Devonshire cattle breed, which "ate little and grazed perfectly". The Devonshire cattle must have been known in Poland before as Zamoyski also inquired whether "it retained these characteristics in Poland".²⁰

Władysław's and Konstanty's expert advice was taken by their brother Andrzej, who administered the estate lands in Jadów, Kołodziej and Ręczaj. Andrzej Zamoyski was officially banned from corresponding with Władysław about political matters and remained under Ivan Paskievitch's²¹ special supervision. This, however, did not prevent him from receiving shipments from Britain. Zamoyski brought an English threshing machine and a stud and corresponded with his brother about the newest agricultural developments.²²

In 1809 Wawrzyniec Dzieduszycki, having inherited his family estates in Jabłonów and Semenów with all outbuildings and adjacent lands, "indulged in agronomy, botany and pomology and raised his production to a level of perfection".²³ Soon after, together with his sister Magdalena – later the wife of the Polish landlord, Ignacy Morski, he went on a journey to the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to learn Dutch and British agricultural models. After their return Magdalena Dzieduszycka, who was fascinated by Dutch and English architecture, began a comprehensive reconstruction of the village of Zarzecze in the Przemyśl District. The entire village was completely rebuilt in the Anglo-Dutch style, from the manor house to peasants' cabins. This incredible

¹⁸ A two-month peasant uprising in the Austrian sector of partitioned Poland resulting in massacres of many Polish nobles and destruction of their manor estates.

¹⁹ *Jeneral Zamoyski*, op. cit., vol. II, p. 514.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 44; *Dyspozycje dla administratora udziału drugiego dóbr ordynacji Zamoyskiej o chowie bydła angielskiego* (Instructions for the Administrator of the Second Division of Zamoyski's Estates Regarding Raising of English Cattle), [in:] *Instrukcje gospodarcze dla dóbr magnackich i szlacheckich z XVII-XIX wieku* (Business Instructions in Polish Manors and Estates, 17th-19th Century), ed. B. Baranowski, J. Bartyś and T. Sobczak, vol. II, III, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków 1963, pp. 131-132.

²¹ Ivan Paskievitch – Russian general and governor of Warsaw, well known for radical methods of ruling over and against the Poles.

²² S. Kieniewicz, *Dramat trzeźwych entuzjastów* (The Tragedy of Sober Enthusiasts), Warszawa 1964, p. 61.

²³ *Kronika domowa Dzieduszyckich [...] dla własnego użytku* (Dzieduszycki Family Chronicle [...] for Private Use), Lwów 1865, p. 404.

enterprise was then documented in an illustrated book: *Zbiór rysunków wyobrażających celniejsze budynki wsi Zarzecze w Galicji w obwodzie przemyskim leżącej, częścią z natury zdjętych lub uprojektowanych z opisem budownictwa wiejskiego w sposobie holenderskim i angielskim i ogólnymi myślami przy ozdabianiu siedlisk wiejskich* (A Collection of Drawings of Most Remarkable Buildings in the Galician Village of Zarzecze in the Przemysł District, Painted from Nature or Drafts, with Descriptions of Rural Architecture in the Dutch and English Styles and General Remarks on Designing Rural Settlements), published in Vienna in 1836.

Another agricultural reformer was Count Stanisław Wodzicki, who described his experiences in a six-volume work *O chodowaniu, użytku, mnożeniu i poznawaniu drzew, krzewów roślin i ziół celniejszych [...] przy zastosowaniu do strefy naszej* (On Planting, Cultivation and Breeding of Trees, Shrubs and Valued Herbs [...] in Our Climatic Zone) (1824-1828). At the same time Joachim Chreptowicz was transforming the village of Szczorsy in his Lithuanian estates. Chreptowicz had visited Britain in 1770. After adoption of British agricultural patterns in Szczorsy, "The peasants' situation was greatly improved as well as the administration of the estate"²⁴.

However, all those powerful landowners introducing reforms in their own estates rarely displayed any propagation talents. An exception was Alojzy Prosper Biernacki, who was a great propagator of English and Scottish agricultural patterns, although he never visited the British Isles. In his Sulisławice estate in the Kalisz Province Biernacki kept a flock of English Merino sheep and introduced a Norfolk crop rotation system. In the village of Lutowo he founded a school of agronomy, two years before the first state agricultural school was established in Marymont. He published farming handbooks and calendars as well as articles in various magazines. Biernacki's most seminal article was *Pod jakimi względami ważna jest rolnikowi polskiemu znajomość gospodarstwa wiejskiego angielskiego* (Why is The Knowledge of English Agriculture Important to Polish Farmers), published in "Gazeta Wiejska" (Rural Gazette) in 1817.²⁵ The article was an introduction to Biernacki's translation of J. C. Landon's work on Scottish-style farms, which he published two years later in Berlin at his own expense.

²⁴ F. B. Piekarski, *Wzory przemiennego w gruntach żytnych rolnictwa ugory znoszące* (Crop Rotation Patterns Using Rye Plots), Kraków 1820, p. 4; see also S. Demby, *Joachim Chreptowicz 1729-1812* (Joachim Chreptowicz, 1729-1812), [in:] *Album biograficzne zasłużonych Polaków i Polek wieku XIX* (Biographical Album of Famous 19th-Century Poles), vol. 1, Warszawa 1901, pp. 33-37; J. Chreptowicz, *Sposób wypuszczania gruntów na czynsz* (Land Renting Methods), "Dziennik Towarzystwa Królewskiego Rolniczego", 1812, no. 2, pp. 1-15; F. Paszkiewicz, *O gospodarstwie w Szczorsach* (On the Szczorsy Estate), "Dziennik Wileński" (The Vilnius Daily), 1815, p. 372; F. Paszkiewicz, *Powtórna podróż do Szczors* (Another Trip to Szczorsy), "Dziennik Wileński" 1819, vol. I, p. 369.

²⁵ A. P. Biernacki, *Pod jakimi względami ważna jest rolnikowi polskiemu znajomość gospodarstwa wiejskiego angielskiego* (Why is the Knowledge of English Agriculture Important to Polish Farmers), "Gazeta Wiejska", 1817, no. 17, pp. 371-376.

It can be assumed that the agricultural advances in Poland in the first three decades of the 19th century were mostly based on the improvement of production technology, and in this area they strictly followed the British developments. As it will be discussed later, even the most obvious German patterns adopted in Polish farms later on turned out to be indirect transformations of British models. Unfortunately, the development of farming technology in Poland was not accompanied with reforms of social relations in the countryside, with the exception of a few charitable schemes for the peasants.

The journal "Gazeta Wiejska" (Village Gazette, 1817-1819), co-edited by Alojzy Prosper Biernacki, published the majority of articles about British agriculture, but it was not the first one and there had been other similar periodicals. In the years 1803-1804 "Dziennik Ekonomiczny Zamoyski" (The Zamość Economic Daily) was published. In 1812 two issues of "Dziennik Towarzystwa Królewskiego Rolniczego" (Daily of the Royal Agrarian Society) appeared. One of the preserved "Dziennik" issues in the library of the Poznań Society of the Friends of Learning (Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk – PTNP) bears a librarian's note symptomatic of the fate of the early progressive journals devoted to agriculture: "2 issues published, 3rd stopped in press". In 1817 "Pamiętnik Rolniczy Warszawski" (Warsaw Agrarian Diary) was also published but it disappeared after a year. All these periodicals had one thing in common: they were literally "infatuated" with British agriculture considered to be the ultimate standard. They are still valuable sources documenting this type of British influence on Polish culture.

Many works of literature dealing with agrarian issues of the time concentrated on the situation of Polish peasantry. In fact, this issue is not a positive contribution to the optimistic image building of Poland's history. According to T. Łepkowski, while the large land estates in the Wielkopolska Region of Poland reached the European level during the 19th century, small peasant farms in that area developed slower and caught up with their European counterparts only at the turn of the 19th century.²⁶ The British agrarian patterns played an important role in this course of events.

Thanks to a number of written sources: press articles, calendars, diaries and agricultural study reports, the nature of confrontation between the agrarian revolution and rural conservativeness in Poland can be faithfully described.

The administrative means to initiate transformations in agriculture in the Congress Kingdom of Poland and Galicia were initially very limited. The economically weak Polish landed gentry still had significant political influence and displayed a reluctant attitude to any administrative interventions in the established system. An opinion survey carried out among the Polish landed gentry in 1814 confirmed their conservative stance. One of such agrarian conservatives

²⁶ T. Łepkowski, *Polska – narodziny nowoczesnego narodu 1764-1870* (Poland: The Birth of Modern Nation, 1764-1870), Warszawa 1967, p. 55.

stated in "Gazeta Wiejska" that "Each Polish landowner can be proud that among his tenants and laborers he is like a sovereign lord or even like a petty monarch".²⁷ The backwardness and traditionalism of the Polish nobles, at least in the area of farming technology, would start to crumble only after the foundation of two progressive institutions - the Credit Society and the Bank of Poland in 1825.

A psychological barrier to the adaptation of English and Scottish achievements in Polish agriculture were the infamous Corn Laws, which aroused some prejudices of the Polish gentry towards Great Britain. Interestingly, the issue of Corn Laws, widely discussed in Polish popular dailies, was barely mentioned in agricultural magazines. The editors of the latter, who propagated British ideas and inventions, wanted to avoid stirring up anti-British moods. This cautious tactics of the editors was visible in their general attitude towards agrarian traditionalists, who could express their opinions freely in the papers. "Gazeta Wiejska" refrained from "swashbuckling" criticism of the backwardness of Polish landlords and intended to promote technological developments in agriculture and their benefits with moderation: "The new order of things must be explained using good examples and persuasion rather than enforcement".²⁸ The exposition of "good examples" from abroad became the official policy of many editorial boards. As one of the editors declared: "Our objectives will be best attained by making comprehensive presentations of the situation of farmers and agriculture in foreign lands."²⁹

The "foreign lands" turned to be exclusively Great Britain. Although "Gazeta Wiejska" published a number of German articles or articles about Germany, they were mostly about German successes and failures in adopting British agrarian patterns. Sporadically, it published some reports about France and the Netherlands. This disproportionate treatment of agricultural issues in "foreign countries" other than the United Kingdom is hardly surprising. A few years after the journal was closed, Wincenty Niepokojczycki wrote in his report on Scottish farming: "All the admirers of agriculture and France must share my disappointment", i.e. his disappointment with the state of French agriculture which remained far behind agrarian advances in Scotland, which had been an economically backward country not so long ago. In his comparison of German and British farming, the German agronomist Albrecht Thaer reproached his countrymen for poor mechanization, fertilization and overall sloppiness.³⁰ It

²⁷ Greneviz, *Włościanin w Polsce* (The Peasant in Poland), "Gazeta Wiejska", 1818, no. 38, p. 297.

²⁸ Stenger, *Myśli wyjęte z rozprawy pod napisem "Przedstawienie ustawodawstwu gospodarczo-rolniczemu Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego"* (Excerpts from the Study "Economic and Agricultural Legislation of the Grand Duchy of Poznań"), "Gazeta Wiejska", 1817, no. 46, p. 369.

²⁹ *Wydawca Gazety Wiejskiej do jej czytelników* (A Letter to Readers from the Publisher of "Gazeta Wiejska"), "Gazeta Wiejska", 1818, no. 50, p. 398.

³⁰ A. Thaer, *O budownictwie wiejskiem w Anglii* (On English Rural Architecture), "Gazeta Wiejska", 1819, no. 8, pp. 59-60.

should be kept in mind that Thaer was a well-known farming expert from a country whose farming was not considered backward at all.

Thaer's articles translated into Polish and published in "Gazeta Wiejska" outnumbered publications of other authors. His estate in Möglin in Brandenburg became a center of pilgrimages for all progressive Polish landlords. The popularity of Thaer's ideas and works in Poland is an indication of an interesting phenomenon of cultural transfer. While British literature and customs became popular in Poland through French authors, British agrarian culture reached Poland through German authors. A good exemplification of this process was the life of one of pioneers of modern agriculture in Wielkopolska, Dezydery Chłapowski. He had served as a colonel in the French Grande Armée and was wounded during Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. After the French left the Duchy of Warsaw, Chłapowski resigned his commission and returned to the family estate in Turew in the Kościan County to pursue his agricultural interests. As an ardent reader of German farming manuals by Thaer, Block and Koppe, Chłapowski noted that "Those works are either literal translations from English or contain numerous references to British originals."³¹ He then brought from Britain the original works of John Sinclair and Arthur Young and studied them thoroughly during the winter of 1817-1818. In the spring of 1818 Chłapowski visited Möglin, where he personally met Albrecht Thaer who "admitted to him openly that everything he knew he had learnt from the English [...] and advised Chłapowski to pay a visit to England".³² In the summer of 1818 Chłapowski came to England and stayed at the estate of Thomas William Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester, at Holkham in Norfolk, where he did all kinds of farm jobs. He wrote later in his memoirs that it was in Holkham that he learnt all the secrets of crop rotation. Chłapowski then left for Edinburgh to become familiar with the scientific achievements of the Scottish Agricultural College. In Scotland he purchased agricultural machinery, plows, seeds, and even hired a Scottish engineer (not mentioned by name), who later "became a naturalized Pole". In 1819 Chłapowski returned to his family estate and began a total transformation of Turew to the astonishment and indignation of his neighbors.

Another Polish agronomist who made a "pilgrimage" to Möglin was Michał Oczapowski. His travel report about farming innovations to Prince Adam Czartoryski secured Oczapowski academic tenure at the University of Vilnius, where he engaged in different activities promoting scientific agriculture. He published a series of articles in "Dziennik Wileński" (The Vilnius Daily) being mini-lectures from his works *Zasady gospodarstwa rozumowanego Albrechta Thaera* (Albrecht Thaer's Principles of Rational Farming) and *O ważności gospodarstwa wiejskiego w społeczeństwie i środkach*

³¹ Quoted in W. Kalinka, *Jeneral Dezydery Chłapowski* (General Dezydery Chłapowski), Poznań 1885, p. 64.

³² Ibid.

polepszenia jego stanu w każdym kraju przez Sir Johna Sinclaira (On the Significance of Farming in Society and Ways of Its Improvement in Every Country by Sir John Sinclair).³³ Oczapowski's propagation efforts became most visible in the 1830s, when he published numerous works on agricultural chemicalization and new methods of cultivation.

The progressive press of the time, "Gazeta Wiejska" in particular, propagated two types of innovation in agriculture. The first type was related to changes in social relations in rural areas, agricultural economics, organization and hygiene; and the other to technological advancements: farm machinery, cultivation and breeding methods and building constructions.

The social relations in British farming were often presented in those publications as an unattainable standard. This was a false image as the Polish propagators focused exclusively on the positive sides of the British Agricultural Revolution. It remains unknown whether this type of presentation resulted from the authors' unawareness of all aspects of British agriculture, or it was intentionally done to attract prospective imitators. The Poles who traveled to Britain, such as playwright and Anglophile Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, were often uncritically enthusiastic about Britain: "It was a country so beautiful, so fertile, so arable and so evergreen. I got off my carriage and sat on the coach box to enjoy its charms in full".³⁴ As he recollected war-stricken Polish villages and widespread serfdom, Niemcewicz's infatuation with English agriculture, even with all its obvious flaws, could be understandable.

In the introduction to his *Zasady chemii rolniczej* (Principles of Agricultural Chemistry) (1819), Michał Oczapowski noted that "England was the first nation to elevate agriculture to the level of excellence. The English are a free people and they value all good and useful things. It is a nation covered in glory, which assigns great importance to skillfulness".³⁵

Such didactic apotheoses were also made by the English – of the Poles. During his appeal to Parliament to improve the situation of the British farmer, Marquess of Londonderry made a reference to the situation of the Polish peasant as – a pattern to follow: "Let us follow the example of Polish farmers, who are better clad than English peasants. Although they have to live in small mud huts with their families, they never lack bread, meat or beer".³⁶ Londonderry might have based his surprising opinion on the conviction that, if Poland had exported staple crops for hundreds of years, the Poles must have had plenty of agricultural produce for themselves. K. Sztek replied to Londonderry in the Anglophile magazine "Pustelnik Londyński" (The London Hermit): "I think

³³ "Dziennik Wileński", 1819, 1820. Quoted in J. Bieliński, *Stan nauk matematyczno-fizycznych za czasów Wszechnicy Wileńskiej* (Natural Sciences at the University of Vilnius), Warszawa 1890, p. 155.

³⁴ J. U. Niemcewicz, *Pamiętniki czasów moich* (Memoirs), vol. 1, Warszawa 1957, p. 227.

³⁵ M. Oczapowski, op. cit., p. 3.

³⁶ Quoted in *Opinia o narodzie polskim w Anglii, Francji i Niemczech* (Opinions about the Poles in England, France and Germany), "Pustelnik Londyński", 1822, no. V. pp. 133-134.

Marquess of Londonderry is mistaken, as it seems very unlikely that the Polish peasant would be more affluent than the English peasant. I doubt whether any Polish peasant can afford foods from the English peasant's table. I doubt whether any Polish peasant has more than 3,000 zlotys in cash, while some British farmers have raised significant capital. And I am not talking here about Irish peasants whose sorry plight [...] makes Polish peasants far happier than their Irish counterparts".³⁷

Truly, there were also favorable opinions of Polish peasantry – in defiance of existing reality – expressed by the agrarian traditionalists: "Our country folk is hard working, healthy, happy, neat and tidy, well-fed throughout the year, content with their living conditions and never complaining".³⁸

Nothing, however, was further from the truth than the idealization of the situation of the poorest farmers in Britain. According to Biernacki, "There is no other country in which the farmers are so well-protected and cared for. All farm works in Britain are done by well-paid apprentices".³⁹ He also observed "common affluence, even among the lowest classes in England." Albrecht Thaer expressed a somewhat more cautious opinion about British farmers and described their situation as a decline of yeomanry gradually replaced by cottagers, however, he saw nothing wrong in it: "They own or rent cottages with gardens and work on one-day or long-term contracts".⁴⁰

In fact, the actual situation of English cottagers was far from idyllic. This layer of English rural society suffered greatly during the Napoleonic Wars, and due to declining wages and fluctuations of grain prices found itself in a critical position after 1815. One year before the publication of Biernacki's article farmers' protests in some English counties erupted into violent riots. Houses and granaries were set on fire. In Norwich the unruly mob fought in the streets against mounted troops. In Littleport near Ely a three-day riot ended in an open battle.⁴¹ The riots also broke out in London. Chłapowski, who was in the British capital during the winter of 1814-1815, described the events: "Several thousand people gathered together. They broke windows in houses of those MPs who voted for the Corn Laws and in residences of government ministers. The entire city was in a state of revolution".⁴² As a matter of fact, many of these riots, despite their brutal quelling by the government, resulted in pay rises, which was also fought for by William Cobbett and his newspaper "The Weekly Political Register".

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ K. z O., *Uwagi nad krytyką ugorowego gospodarstwa w Polsce* (Comments on Criticism of Fallow Farming in Poland), "Magazyn Powszechny", 1835, p. 615.

³⁹ A. P. Biernacki, op. cit., p. 372.

⁴⁰ A. Thaer, *Rys ogólny gospodarstwa angielskiego* (An Outline of English Farming), "Gazeta Wiejska", 1818, no. 49, p. 384.

⁴¹ A. L. Morton, *Dzieje ludu angielskiego* (A People's History of England), Warszawa 1948, pp. 234-235.

⁴² D. Chłapowski, *Pamiętniki* (Memoirs), Part I, Poznań 1899, p. 161.

Biernacki and Thaer made no mention of these events. One of the Polish agrarian Anglophiles wrote in "Gazeta Wiejska": "When our peasants live in extreme poverty for most of the year, the English farmers are well off in their villages".⁴³ In fact, the English cottagers were indeed better off than the Polish peasants at the time.

The widespread idealization of British farming and customs in Poland was ridiculed by a renowned Polish playwright Count Aleksander Fredro in his play *Cudzoziemszczyzna* (Foreign Fashions):

What I took as ridiculous stuff,
Others applauded and followed.
And when I asked why,
They said this was what the English did.⁴⁴

Some newspapers defied this fascination with Britishness, but their opposition was mostly based on poor arguments to defend tradition. A sharp criticism of British farming can be found much later in a work by Tomasz Potocki written under his pen name Adam Krzyżtopór *O urządzeniu stosunków rolniczych w Polsce* (On Organization of Farming in Poland) in 1859. Although Potocki was captivated by the technological developments in British agriculture, he assessed the situation of English cottagers in a dialectical way: "It is quite terrifying to see the growing pauperism of English farmers along technological advancements in agriculture". He also compared the situation of English tenants and landless laborers: "While we are amazed by the wealth of the former, we are struck by the indigence of the latter. Pauperism in England is an official institution, with its own organization, revenue, laws and privileges".⁴⁵ Attempts to adopt a similar system in Poland, so much advocated by Biernacki who was fascinated with the capitalist prospects in agriculture, were regarded by Potocki with utmost horror: "The Germans will launch this plague in the Poznań Province and Galicia, and then it will be adopted in the Kingdom of Poland in hundreds of ways".⁴⁶

The relations between landlords and tenants were presented by the Anglophile apologists in a more objective manner. Biernacki dubbed such relations in Poland as "the War in the Vandee" and hoped that "the constant conflicts between Polish landlords and tenants should be solved in the English way to the benefit of both parties."

⁴³ H. G. Hasse, *Co stoi na przeszkodzie powszechnemu zaprowadzeniu gospodarstwa płodozmiennego* (Obstacles to Full Implementation of the Crop Rotation System), "Gazeta Wiejska" 1817, no. 36, p. 284.

⁴⁴ A. Fredro, *Cudzoziemszczyzna* (Foreign Fashions), [in:] *Pisma wszystkie* (Collected Works), vol. 2, Warszawa 1965, p. 153.

⁴⁵ A. Krzyżtopór [T. Potocki], *O urządzeniu stosunków rolniczych w Polsce* (On Organization of Farming in Poland), Poznań 1859, pp. 150, 151.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. IX.

Indeed, the legal situation of Polish tenants was in chaos. As the editors of "Gazeta Wiejska" were unable to change the legal regulations, they appealed to the good will of both sides of the conflict. Both Biernacki and Thaer, who must have witnessed similar problems in Germany, saw the solution to the problem in mutual understanding and respect. They were convinced that these issues in Poland and Germany did not have to be subject to legal regulations since they were resolved in Britain by means of conventions. They advocated, first of all, conclusion of fair land lease contracts and amicable resolution of any conflicts by both sides: "A landlord must not use legal oppression against the tenants had he not foreseen contention while drafting the lease terms".⁴⁷ "The landlords should be content with lease contracts that bring them revenue [...] but never demand anything more than a down payment for a six-month lease, and they should conclude at least twelve-year lease contracts".⁴⁸ They considered the system in England a model: "Fixed term leases contain much better benefits for both parties there [...] but oblige them to strictly keep the contract terms. Such leases are particularly common in England, where the level of agriculture is close to excellence".⁴⁹ Both authors emphasized long-lasting tenancies, which greatly affected farming efficiency without increasing expenses. Such contracts allowed tenants to make long-term plans and never treat their land leases as transitional means to make the highest profit at the lowest cost. The suggested lease for twelve years was not incidental. A nine-year contract was often insufficient to properly implement a four-course crop rotation system, and tenants were unwilling to introduce any changes if they were not profitable. None of them favored an altruistic approach or contemplated prospects of benefits only for the generations to come: "I have never considered altering my nine-year lease and introducing four-field crop rotation as it is well-known that this system yields the best crops only in the second sequential full circle, thus I would have to leave it to my successors".⁵⁰

According to Thaer, "In many regions of England tenants regard their farms as freehold property they can bequeath to the children or even sell, always with the permission of their landlords, who very often do not cause any difficulties".⁵¹ He then observed that the relation between landlord and tenant was regulated by mutual reliability rather than law. "If a landlord evicts a tenant farmer for no apparent reasons, farmers in the area show aversion to him and prospective tenants are deterred. If good tenant farmers and their families, who pay good rents and run their farms properly, are not bothered, they are

⁴⁷ A. Biernacki, op. cit., p. 376.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ A. Thaer, *Rys ogólny*, p. 386.

⁵⁰ J. G. Elsner, *Opis gospodarstwa trzypolowego urządzanego jak bydź powinno* (Description of a Properly Organized Three-Course Crop Rotation Farm), Warszawa 1829, p. 16.

⁵¹ A. Thaer, *Rys ogólny*, p. 385.

happy and [...] may even treat the landlord as a father figure”.⁵² These informal and cordial relations between landlord and tenant were also pointed out in Wincenty Niepokojczycki’s report to Prince Drucki-Lubecki: “It is a true spectacle of rare prosperity, freedom and respect enjoyed by the land owner [...], who treats his tenant farmers as family members and compete with them in innovations”.⁵³

Agricultural economics was also often discussed in Biernacki’s and Thaer’s publications. They would first consider the economic power of Great Britain and the role of individual farmers. In Biernacki’s opinion, “An Englishman, who invests his large capital in trade or government bonds, is very cautious in putting it up in his farm. He carefully and wisely allocates the capital in his business, while in Poland money is spent without a plan, on the spur of the moment, following incomprehensible advice of random individuals. In England the farms are like perfect entities formed by fine craftsmen [...] in our country they look like chaotic patchworks of various incompatible pieces.”⁵⁴ The skillful calculation of the English was also praised by A. Thaer: “When an Englishman considers the price of a purchase he thinks 33, 25 or 20 years ahead. He carefully calculates long-term revenue, regardless of any possible benefits from the country’s future industrial development”.⁵⁵

The dire financial situation of Polish manors in the Congress Kingdom, following the enormous debts of the former Duchy of Warsaw,⁵⁶ has been well attested in various studies,⁵⁷ popular brochures, e.g. A. Bielski’s *Sposoby do ocalenia majątków obywateli Księstwa warszawskiego od przypadków im zagrażających* (Ways to Save Landed Estates in the Duchy of Warsaw) (1809), and in literary works of Józef Korzeniowski and Aleksander Fredro. The state of Polish manor estates was conditioned by specific social and economic factors, and changing it through appeal in the press was impossible. Also before Poland lost its independence in 1795, the Polish landed gentry lacked skills of modern economic thinking. On the other hand, in England since the Tudor times, landed estates could be purchased by burghers and traders. It means that the English landed gentry also incorporated a number of business-oriented individuals with excellent economic skills. An English squire and his “non-noble” landowning neighbor went into fair economic competition with each

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Niepokojczycki to Lubecki [a copy of M Dornbasle’s letter], Drucki-Lubecki’s Archives (ADL), ms. 24, “Niepokojczycki” file.

⁵⁴ A. P. Biernacki, op. cit., p. 374.

⁵⁵ A. Thaer, *Rys ogólny*, p. 389.

⁵⁶ Duchy of Warsaw (1807-1815) – a petty Polish principality under Napoleon’s supervision.

⁵⁷ A. Eisenach and D. Rzepniewska, *Zadłużenie własności ziemskiej w okresie 1795-1806* (Landed Property Debt, 1795-1806), [in:] W. Kula, ed., *Spółeczeństwo polskie XVIII i XIX wieku* (Polish Society in the 18th and 19th Centuries), Warszawa 1970, pp. 187-311. See also A. Bielski, *Sposoby do ocalenia majątków obywateli Księstwa Warszawskiego od przypadków im zagrażających* (Ways to Save Estates of Citizens of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw), Kalisz 1809.

other, which led to a positive emulation. In Poland such competition had not existed until the introduction of the Napoleon's *Code* in the Duchy of Warsaw, whose regulations in this matter were later upheld by the Congress Kingdom of Poland. Shortly before the outbreak of the November Uprising in 1830, Prince Xavery Drucki-Lubecki planned for sales of government estates to affluent burghers and tenants, which could have provided some "fresh blood" to the existing relations, albeit to the detriment of landless peasants. The uprising of 1830, however, thwarted Prince's plans. The Polish nobles were reluctant to acquire new economic knowledge and remained largely ignorant of the appeals of the progressive press. As late as 1835 "Magazyn Powszechny" (General Magazine) staunchly defended the Polish "old ways": "What our forefathers did was far better than what the contemporary advocates of change have to offer"⁵⁸. Such opinions illustrated the economic thinking of a typical Polish landlord of that time.

The innovations in agricultural production were also regarded with utmost reservation. The aversion and sharp and obscurant polemics evoked by publications of Biernacki, Thaer or Oczapowski were often unbelievable.

Crop rotation was probably the most controversial issue. The first signals of this important farming innovation had reached Poland by the end of the 18th century; however, they found no followers. At that time and much later a common opinion was shared that the three-course open-field system was enough for bad soils as "good soil never becomes depleted".⁵⁹ The editors of "Dziennik Towarzystwa Królewskiego Rolniczego", aware of the backwardness of this system but at the same time trying not to antagonize the traditionalist land owners, reported on the new tendencies in farming very carefully and in a seemingly objective manner: "The Royal Agrarian Society abstains from promoting any specific farming system".⁶⁰ All these attempts, however, did not prevent the closing of the magazine.

Crop rotation was probably introduced in Poland for the first time by Alojzy Prosper Biernacki in 1802, which he mentioned in an agricultural manual published in 1814 in Wrocław. He was then followed by Franciszek Borgiasz Piekarski, who advocated adherence to the new system.⁶¹ In 1803, Joachim Chreptowicz used crop rotation in his estate in Szczorsy.⁶² "Dziennik Wileński" reported on Chreptowicz's initial agrarian experiments, which soon became farming practice: "Now, there are no fallow lands in Chreptowicz's es-

⁵⁸ K. z O., op. cit., p. 603.

⁵⁹ D. Bugajewicz, *O rolnictwie* (On Agriculture), Poznań Society of Friends of Learning (PTPN), ms. 79, column 46.

⁶⁰ "Dziennik Towarzystwa Rolniczego Królewskiego", 1812, no. 1.

⁶¹ F. B. Piekarski, op. cit., p. 3.

⁶² Ibid.

tates". In 1812 crop rotation was introduced by Jan Nepomucen Kurowski in the village of Starołęka near Poznań.⁶³

Alongside the first experiments with crop rotation in some Polish landed estates, a number of publications on the topic appeared, most notably a Polish translation (from French!) of Charles Pictet's work on crop rotation from 1805. Two years later, to balance a rather unfavorable reception of Pictet's book, a Polish translation of P.G. Poinso's *L'Ami des cultivateurs* (Friend of Cultivators) was published which pandered to the more conservative agrarian attitudes. Poinso openly distanced himself from crop rotation and other innovations in agriculture stressing that "It was my father who taught me land cultivation, and I cultivate land the way it is traditionally accepted in my area. If I follow these new incomprehensible principles, I would bring destruction upon myself".⁶⁴ Poinso also advised against artificial fertilizers "whose costs exceeded their usefulness", and propagated the wooden plow, which had been disused in Britain and even in some Polish landed estates for a long time. No other book corresponded so well with the traditionalist mentality of Polish landlords! Also the responses of illiterate Polish peasants to the new agrarian developments were unfavorable and at times humorous. Piekarski describes a meeting of a certain commune head named Jakób with peasants from a village near Kraków, where he tried to explain the principles of the new system. The reaction from the peasants was as follows: "Maryna, one of the peasant girls, cried out: 'Jakób! What is wrong with you? Where are we to graze our cattle? It will surely die of hunger!'"⁶⁵

With the exception of Biernacki's calendars and some singular press articles, other publications from that time ignored the crop rotation system. Piekarski's manual for overseers from 1810 makes no mention about it, although its author would become one of the most outspoken advocates of farming innovations later on.⁶⁶

Only "Gazeta Wiejska" reported regularly on crop rotation in following its social strategy to undermine the traditional thinking of Polish landlords. Each issue of the magazine, from its launch in 1817, included articles encouraging the use of crop rotation.⁶⁷ The magazine campaign began boldly by explaining the system in England: "Clever English farmers follow a strict rule never to sow winter crops in the same plot three times in a row. They also avoid sowing

⁶³ Z. Gloger, *Jan Nepomucen Kurowski 1784-1866* (Jan Nepomucen Kurowski, 1784-1866), [in:] *Album biograficzne zasłużonych Polaków i Polek wieku XIX*, p. 313.

⁶⁴ P. G. Poinso, *Przyjaciel gospodarzy i ogrodników* (Friend of Cultivators), Wrocław 1807, p. IV.

⁶⁵ F. B. Piekarski, *Kmieć proszowski synom, synowom, córkom, zięciom, wnukom i prawnukom* (The Proszów Peasant to Sons, Daughters-in-law, Daughters, Sons-in-law, Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren), Kraków 1811, p. 72.

⁶⁶ F. B. Piekarski, *Ekonom kollegom kraju nowo wcielonego* (To Overseers in the Newly Established State), Kraków 1810, p. 3.

⁶⁷ *O użyteczności płodozmianu* (On the Usefulness of Crop Rotation), "Gazeta Wiejska", 1817, pp. 33-34.

winter crops in the same plot two times in a row”.⁶⁸ Thaer also added that “The Norfolk crop rotation is the most common and appropriate system of land cultivation in all regions of England. It truly deserves our interest”.⁶⁹ The magazine also printed L. Fischer’s entire study of crop rotation”.⁷⁰

The opponents of agrarian changes were also given space in “Gazeta” to publish their contributions to the debate: “The existing land cultivation system in Poland is not that backward, as it shows elements of new industrial developments [...] If we cannot envision the introduction of some new farming methods on Polish soil, it is not because we are ignorant of them or do not want to learn them, but because they may turn less productive for us”.⁷¹

Such opinions seemed to have had a great impact on Jan N. Kurowski, who used crop rotation in his estates, but in the face of landlords’ opposition to the new system he decided to come to a compromise, which strengthened the traditionalists’ stance: if the landlords seek no change, let them perfect the old methods then. In 1829 he translated and published a book by a German author J. G. Elsner *Opis gospodarstwa trzypolowego urzadzonego jak bydź powinno* (Description of a Properly Organized Three-Course Crop Rotation Farm) (1829).

The strength of the opposition to crop rotation in Poland can be illustrated by the fact that the ardent defense and attacks against this method lasted for over thirty years after the pioneering experiments. Nearly twenty years after “Gazeta Wiejska” launched its propagation campaign, the discussion started anew with unprecedented intensity. When “Magazyn Powszechny” printed a sharp critical review of the three-field system, the crop rotation system became subject to a more devastating critique than ever before in the history of the argument (which became, however, the debate’s turning point). The critics of the new system displayed what amounted to exemplary backwardness, disguised as defenders of tradition: “By sincerely upholding our forefathers’ farming, we will at least do justice to their ashes [...] Those who reproach the Poles for bad land cultivation because the system is better in foreign lands, and demand from the Poles to sow all their fields, because the foreigners have no fallow land, give ill advice without any prior deliberation”.⁷²

The resulting confusion between progress and tradition made even some otherwise progressive authors speak against crop rotation. Józef Marciszewski in his *Zasady oceniania dóbr ziemskich* (Principles of Evaluation of Landed Estates) (Warszawa, 1820) called for new agricultural economics and at the same time, as the reviewer of his book wrote, “duly left one third of his field

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 33.

⁶⁹ A. Thaer, *Rys ogólny*, p. 392.

⁷⁰ “Gazeta Wiejska”, 1818, nos. 42, 43, 46, 47.

⁷¹ *O rejestrach ekonomicznych* (On Business Registers), “Gazeta Wiejska”, 1818, no. 35, pp. 273-274.

⁷² K. z O., op. cit.

fallow”.⁷³ This way both the author and the reviewer subscribed to the antiquated three-course open-field system.

The mentioned confusion was due to the fact that the new economic calculations themselves were easier to adopt than the crop rotation system, whose full agricultural output was expected after many years. The Polish landlord calculated profits in “antiquated” ways, while the “new calculations” could bring profits faster. The effects of wrong calculations were experienced summarily, and they necessitated the knowledge of new calculation methods in economy. This psychological dilemma of Polish landlords was illustrated by A. Fredro in *Cudzoziemszczyzna*:

I am in desperate need of money, without a penny in my pocket
And this, my dear lady, is what affects my soul.⁷⁴

Thus good calculation skills were universally praised; however, those with such skills were very few. The anonymous author of the work *O rejestrach ekonomicznych* (On business registers) pointed to the messy and inaccurate accounts in Polish manors,⁷⁵ although he justified these problems (as many would do later) with the dire historical experiences of the Poles. Piekarski, on the other hand, did not blame the landlords for this state of affairs, but overseers and land agents: “I know you do not like doing accounts, my friends, but without accounting no business is possible”.⁷⁶

Therefore, while the “new accounting” was not questioned publicly, “new cultivation” attracted various counterarguments, especially that the pioneers of new cultivation methods often failed in their undertakings. “Gazeta Wiejska” published grievances of landowners, whose potato crops failed because they were planted in a “modern” way.⁷⁷ Those who were held responsible for crop failures were often foreigners who were brought to Poland to introduce the new methods but did not know the specificity of Polish climate and soils. They were mainly Germans and the Swiss, but also Englishmen and Scotsmen. An Englishman is, for example, blamed for agricultural failures in Fredro’s play *Cudzoziemszczyzna*, which accurately reflects the conflict of agrarian traditionalists and progressivists present in the press of the day. While the latter claimed the failure of the new methods resulted from the country’s backwardness, the former emphasized the old, dependable domestic methods and shielded them from foreign influences:

⁷³ “Gazeta Literacka”, 1821, p. 338.

⁷⁴ A. Fredro, op. cit., p. 190.

⁷⁵ “Gazeta Wiejska”, 1818, no. 36.

⁷⁶ F. B. Piekarski, *Ekonom kollegom*, p. 3.

⁷⁷ *List do Wydawcy Gazety Wiejskiej* (Letter to the Publisher of Gazeta Wiejska), “Gazeta Wiejska”, 1817, no. 48, pp. 383-384.

I have this Englishman, who is a skillful manager,
But he is among Poles, and is often lost.⁷⁸

Fredro also scolds the uncritical enthusiasts of foreignness:

If the manager becomes lost, let him be lost in England.⁷⁹

The crop rotation method based on alternation of deep-rooted and shallow-rooted plants is also frowned upon by Fredro. One of characters in *Cudzoziemszczyzna* named Jakub, who expresses the playwright's own opinions, cannot understand the purpose of sowing Tartar buckwheat, and is completely unaware of its function as an important meliorating crop in the crop rotation system. He is unable to comprehend the alternating courses of crop rotation and thinks that, if a turnip crop was successful one year, there is no need to change crops but to sow turnip again and again:

This Englishman sows Tartar buckwheat in vain!
What a pitiful manager!
I'm not a farmer, but I'm not blind,
Instead of wheat, he would harvest one thousand bushels of turnip.⁸⁰

In fact, Fredro, whose ridicule of foreign fashions in customs and dress was justified, hardly made any contribution to the progress of agriculture.

The foreigners' failures in farming were often publicized. In 1810, Piekarski complained that the foreigners took away Polish managers' jobs: "Foreigners were brought to cultivate our forefathers' land that we had defended with our blood [...], we were deemed unfit to work as if [English] language would be enough to cultivate crops, not our hands, legs, eyes and heads, and thus we have become drifters in our own country".⁸¹ Some, like the character Radost from *Cudzoziemszczyzna*, were disappointed with foreign farming patterns leading to crop failures:

[...] all these islanders,
I will have them banished tomorrow.⁸²

Not only was crop rotation the talk of the town. When Chłapowski for the first time sowed ryegrass in his estates, which he brought from London (and which he was unable to purchase in any place closer to his estate – an illustra-

⁷⁸ A. Fredro, op. cit., p. 152.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 173.

⁸¹ F. B. Piekarski, *Ekonom kolegom*.

⁸² A. Fredro, op. cit., p. 189.

tion of the difficulties experienced by the pioneers of new farming methods), he was derided by many as a madman. Some even attempted to make Chłapowski's father stop him.⁸³ Grass was considered as "something that grows wild", and although Poland's meadows were thought to be "in a deplorable state, their cultivation was left to nature."⁸⁴ Occasionally, "manure, ashes or lime was spread on them".⁸⁵

The failures of newly cultivated crops, especially those originating in Britain, resulted from the lack of coordination between various initiatives, their occasional and experimental character and lack of patience and perseverance among farmers. A given crop could be poor or abundant, depending on whether it was grown on a large or small area. In his article about the "English methods" Biernacki noted: "The lack of visible improvement in our country's farms run by different individuals, who use the new experimental methods, is owing to the small scale of their implementation. It is as if drops of culture were lost in an ocean of wilderness [...] our innovations must be on a mass scale. What improvements can be expected, if one buys but a few pounds of seeds, one ox or a pair of rams?"⁸⁶

Serious conflicts also arose from the process of agricultural mechanization. Inefficient service of farming machinery, lack of service equipment and mending facilities in rural areas, and finally low-quality output were factors contributing to the growing criticism of mechanization in farming:

The good old tools have been replaced by fancy machinery
That works for half an hour after two days under repair.
There are steam engines as far as the eye can see,
But the mill, the brewery and the thresher are all out of order.⁸⁷

Fredro's lines were not far from the truth. A Polish landlord M. Karski complained in his order for a new threshing machine from the Białogon factory that had bought earlier two defective threshers from a factory in Skape, which stopped his production for a long time.⁸⁸ However, the Białogon factory employed British engineers, who took very good care of high-quality production.

Chłapowski, who had anticipated such problems with new machinery, brought a Scottish engineer to his estate; however, not every Polish landlord could afford hiring skilled staff from Britain. He was helpless when he saw that

⁸³ W. Kalinka, op. cit., p. 68.

⁸⁴ Stenger, op. cit., p. 68.

⁸⁵ F. B. Piekarski, *Kmieć proszowski*, p. 78.

⁸⁶ A. P. Biernacki, op. cit., p. 374.

⁸⁷ A. Fredro, op. cit., p. 189.

⁸⁸ *List dziedzica Karskiego, Zbiory Dozorstwa w Białogonie* (M. Karski's letter, Białogon Collection) no. 179, column 1, quoted in J. Pazdur, *Zakłady metalowe w Białogonie, 1814-1914* (The Metallurgical Plant in Białogon, 1814-1914), Wrocław 1957, p. 147.

his farmers were not able to learn how to use the Scottish plow and often refused to work with the new tool.⁸⁹ However, problems with adaptation of innovative machinery were experienced not only in Poland. The director of School of Agriculture in Marymont near Warsaw, Jerzy Benjamin Flatt reported after his visit to A. Thaer's estate in Möglin that "the English plow is excellent but their plowing technique is very poor there".⁹⁰

These problems with new farming technology could be resolved by learning and perfecting new technical skills. As far as social relations were concerned, the difficulties were far more serious. The Polish countryside began to suffer from overpopulation and underemployment, while the new machines improved the work quality but took away jobs from farm laborers. This issue was frequently discussed in "Gazeta Wiejska".⁹¹ Progress in hygiene and medicine, although slow, was reaching the Polish countryside. Flatt observed in 1818 that "More and more people are born every year, and Dr. Jenner's cowpox vaccine has saved more people than the Napoleonic Wars killed".⁹² Even the ardent enthusiast of reforms, Alojzy Prosper Biernacki, claimed that the new engines were only used in English farms and no place else (!): "as the English do not use any other machines than threshers".⁹³ On the other hand, he struck a prophetic note about the prospective use of the thresher, which was extensively blamed for taking jobs from the farm laborers: "I am convinced that the threshing machine will be so common in the future that farmers threshing with flails will be ridiculed as much as if today's millers would grind corn in the quern instead of the mill".⁹⁴

The reasons for reluctance towards new machinery were sometimes mundane. Landlords complained about the mechanical seeder and, in particular, the new plow, which was "too heavy to use and should be modified before our weaker horses or oxen can pull it".⁹⁵ In fact, weak horses and oxen could be found even in the best organized Zamoyski's estates. G. Burnett openly pointed out these shortcomings: "The cattle and horses here are meager and commonly very poor".⁹⁶ It can be assumed that a vast majority of Polish landlords followed Poinso's conservative guidelines rather than took interest in English-made machinery. Not only did the Frenchman dissuade the farmers from using cast-iron plows to "unload the horses", but he also wanted them to remove iron parts from the traditional wooden plows: "If a wooden plow is too heavy then its wheels go too deep underground and thus overburden the oxen. It is much

⁸⁹ W. Kalinka, op. cit., p. 68.

⁹⁰ J. B. Flatt, *Uwagi rolnicze* (Remarks on Agriculture), "Gazeta Wiejska" 1819, no. 20, p. 160.

⁹¹ *O machinach* (On Machinery), "Gazeta Wiejska", 1818, no. 34, pp. 269-270.

⁹² J. B. Flatt, op. cit., p. 166.

⁹³ A.P. Biernacki, op. cit., p. 372.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

⁹⁵ J. B. Flatt, op. cit., p. 158.

⁹⁶ G. Burnett, op. cit., p. 34.

better to use wooden wheels without iron-cast parts”.⁹⁷ Regardless of the reasons, such recommendations impeded agricultural advances.

The most prevalent concern was, however, that the new machines would deprive peasants of their jobs. It is therefore hardly surprising that J. B. Flatt distanced himself from endorsing intensive mechanized farming: “What we need now is not intensive but expansive agriculture [...], what we should propagate instead of English-style farming are Holstein and Mecklenburg patterns”.⁹⁸

Fortunately, the proponents of progressive thinking grew in number every day. This increase was best illustrated by the expanding manufacturing of farming machinery. In 1823 two British engineers J. Morris and T. Evans founded the first company manufacturing agricultural machinery in Poland. Just three years later, their factory was significantly extended to meet the growing demand for farming machinery.⁹⁹ The aforementioned manufacturing plant in Białogon underwent a similarly rapid development. Until the mid-1820s it had manufactured only threshers and chaff cutters, in the mid-1830s the factory added also reaping machines to their offer, and its industrial output amounted to thirty-three threshers a year.¹⁰⁰ J. Pazdur in his monograph on the Białogon plant reported on landlords’ increasing interest in the farming machinery from Białogon. Some of them, like the owner the Chomentów estate Feliks Tyminiecki, delivered their own designs to the factory. Tyminiecki’s reaper was later refined by Białogon’s chief engineer William Preacher and went into production.¹⁰¹

It may seem from the present-day perspective that the progress in farming contributed to the upholding of the social position of the declining class of Polish landowners. There were, however, some positive aspects of this process. First of all, adaptation of innovations by the noble class paved the way for the development of the middle-class. Besides, the new farming tools, regardless of their ownership, made the work of farm laborers easier than before. Finally, the benefits of the new methods were, to a various degree, enjoyed by the whole society rather than by the landowning class itself.

The new patterns in farm architecture were much less controversial. It was a subject of numerous publications and it attracted very little criticism. Contrary to the new land cultivation methods, whose success was often uncertain, new farm buildings were a tangible proof of “English benefits”.

⁹⁷ P. G. Poinsoł, op. cit., p. 19.

⁹⁸ J. B. Flatt, op. cit., p. 169.

⁹⁹ A. Szczypiorski, *Ćwierć wieku Warszawy 1806-1830* (Warsaw in a Quarter of Century, 1806-1830), Wrocław 1964, p. 86.

¹⁰⁰ J. Pazdur, op. cit., p. 147.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. pp. 147-148; *Żniwiarka Tyminieckiego* (Tyminiecki’s Reaping Machine), “Rocznik Gospodarczy Krajowy”, 1845, vol. VII, pp. 363-367.

While innovations in crop cultivations were hampered by domestic and French prejudices (Poinsot), the new British patterns in farm architecture were often thwarted by some “German tendencies”, which could be described as “farm-building monumentalism”. In the 1820s the wealthy landlords from Wielkopolska began to construct heavy buildings of impressive size but limited functionality. Such architecture was to be a manifestation of a landlord’s economic position in the eyes of his neighbors. Large barns, stables and granaries were often constructed on estates without any consideration of their usefulness or production capacities. Numerous subhastations, i.e. public sales or auctions of landed property, announced in the press in the Grand Duchy of Poznań, originated from the expensive and flamboyant construction of farm buildings. The heavy German farm architecture, relying on single-purpose farm buildings, was a serious hindrance in the development of flexible farm production, as opposed to English-style and Scottish-style farm buildings. The latter were small, light, multi-functional and easily adaptable constructions with innovative auxiliary facilities. This type of farm architecture was cheaper and determined by the agricultural patterns in the British Isles. Individual farming works, e.g. threshing, were spread out evenly during a year to avoid situations in which particular farm buildings, for example, barns or granaries, would be only used for limited periods of time. As Thaer observed: “A common custom in Britain is slow threshing of grain. Small amounts of grain are produced that can be easily disposed of and thus the storage space for grain is always available. This explains why the size of farm buildings in Britain does not correspond to the vastness of land estates”.¹⁰² The British model was more dynamic and flexible than the static German grain production, and it also required farming machinery of a much smaller size.

On a German farm a particular farm building imposed the ways of its use, while in Britain it could be used for a variety of purposes. The functionality and minimization of expenditure were characteristic features of British farm architecture. For example, large and heavy stone and wooden barns, so common in Germany and Poland, were almost unknown in Britain. Instead, the British built, frequently although not always, light roofed field barns on posts.

The British farm architecture of haystacks and hayracks drew criticism from German and Polish detractors, who considered stacking crops on hayracks more expensive than storing them in barns. They also claimed that much more straw was wasted during haystacking outdoors due to rain and ground moisture.¹⁰³ According to the enthusiasts of the British farm architecture these arguments could be easily dismissed with the low construction costs of watertight thatched roofs and special all-season foundations of hayracks preventing

¹⁰² A. Thaer, *O budownictwie wiejskim w Anglii*, p. 30.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

moist and insects.¹⁰⁴ Low labor expenditure was also a factor: it was easier to run a thresher along a row of haystacks rather than remove crops from a barn for manual threshing.

The British farm architecture was also strongly influenced by the early introduction of designated facilities, each serving a different function. Thaer noted that “An English farm is unlike ours. It is not a combination of various crafts and farm buildings, but rather focuses on one type of production, which it constantly improves.”¹⁰⁵ This new approach to agricultural production was often emphasized in numerous publications. The English and Scottish farms were not self-sufficient any longer: “Industrial products necessary in agriculture are supplied to English farms from plants specifically manufacturing farming machinery. This way a system of domestic trade is being developed, which greatly contributes to currency circulation and diversity of employment”.¹⁰⁶

Britain had also many achievements in animal husbandry and British expertise in this area was especially praised. Thaer devoted a large part of his monograph on English farm architecture to English stables, which he considered “exemplary and deserving imitation. An English stable is clean and spacious with window vents and many useful facilities”. He described in detail ventilation and steam-heating systems in stables, feeders, sewage systems and even horse foam drainage systems in mangers used for decay prevention. Finally, he contrasted stuffy and confined pigsties and byres in Poland and Germany with a system of outdoor breeding in Britain.

Thaer also noticed that the functionality of British farm architecture did not harm its esthetics. At the same time, he reproached German landlords and, indirectly, Polish nobles, for making palaces out of their estate buildings “to live their lives in the lap of luxury and differ from the commoners.” Thaer suggested that the energy and expenditure put in the construction of such palaces should be used to build farm facilities, for instance kitchen rooms with proper equipment. In fact, some Polish manor houses had been equipped with English-style kitchen stoves known as “angielki”¹⁰⁷ before; however, they were rather elements of interior design.

The first comprehensive attempt to rebuild a landed estate in the English (and Dutch) fashion was the transformation of the village of Zarzecze by its owners Magdalena and Ignacy Morski. The preserved drawings of the new buildings in Zarzecze not only reflect a new architectural theory, but also their tremendous practicality. They are evidence that at least some Polish landowners took the principles of functionalism seriously. In the words of Magdalena Morska: “Buildings are the most important elements of a rural settlement. They

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 52.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 26-27.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 27.

¹⁰⁷ “Dziennik Towarzystwa Królewskiego Rolniczego,” 1812, no. 2, p. 108.

should be characterized by noble simplicity and lack of ornaments. Extensive decorations of rural buildings are unnecessary”.¹⁰⁸

The living quarters on an English farm, according to Thaer, displayed the same construction patterns as other farm buildings, i.e. they were light, easy to pull down and adjustable: “No one builds permanent quarters, but leaves their successors possibilities to adapt it as they would wish”.¹⁰⁹ Thaer was impressed with large windows and high insolation of farm buildings in England, however, the reason for such architectural patterns was the controversial English window tax. The English constructed buildings with only one or two windows on each wall. Thaer also recommended that a good country house should have an office, cider cellar, dairy room and bedrooms for servants in the attic.

Each publication on British agriculture pointed to the tidiness of English farms. It has been common knowledge that the improvement of hygienic standards in Polish farms, in particular in Wielkopolska, was due to the adoption of German farm management patterns. However, diarists of the day indicate that it was Wielkopolska, a region seemingly most exposed to trends from Germany, which was most reluctant towards German influences in agriculture and most willing to adopt patterns from Britain. Additionally, Thaer shows that the neatness and cleanliness of German farms in the 19th century was due to propagation of English and Scottish standards:

Neatness, calmness and order can be found everywhere among farm buildings in England. The German tendency to build living quarters behind farm buildings creates a startling contrast between residences with decorative columns and facades, and ugly feeders and stinking manure pits [...] The English have a natural talent for furnishing their residences and farmyards in convenient and inexpensive ways as well as for combining functionality with grandeur. Only the English are able to lay out gardens in the most remote parts of their country and make the simplest objects picturesque and neat. The principles of English rural architecture are the best pattern to follow, considering the fragmentation of our formerly large landed estates. No other people have created better designs for less wealthy landowners who take pleasure in order and comfort.¹¹⁰

The question remains what recommendations were followed in daily practice in Polish farms. Many preserved 19th-century farm buildings at former

¹⁰⁸ M. Morska, *Zbiór rysunków wyobrażających celniejsze budynki wsi Zarzecze w Galicji w obwodzie przemyskim leżącej, częścią z natury zdjętych lub uprojektowanych z opisem budownictwa wiejskiego w sposobie holenderskim i angielskim i ogólnymi myślami przy ozdabianiu siedlisk wiejskich* (A Collection of Drawings of Most Remarkable Buildings in the Galician Village of Zarzecze in the Przemysł District, Painted from Nature or Drafts, with Descriptions of Rural Architecture in the Dutch and English Styles and General Remarks on Designing Rural Settlements), Vienna 1836, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ A. Thaer, *O budownictwie wiejskim w Anglii*, p. 27.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

landed estates can definitely provide evidence of the adoption of British agricultural patterns in Poland; however, further research into this issue is required. The buildings of the famous Polish state stud farm in Janów Podlaski were constructed following British patterns. There are documents indicating transformations of entire villages after the British fashion, e.g. the Zarzecze estate. Princess Izabela Czartoryska in her book *Mysli różne o sposobie zakładania ogrodów* (Various Ideas on Garden Designs) advised less affluent landowners, who could not afford large English-style gardens, to arrange the existing farm buildings and areas to form scenic landscapes. Princess Czartoryska's recommendations were implemented in hundreds of places in Poland. In 1803, the Zamoyski family caused a sensation by proposing constructing storied houses for peasants in their estates, similar to English cottages: "Such constructions might seem too expensive and extravagant, but after some mature consideration, we will see they are not".¹¹¹ The Zamojskis, who traveled to Britain frequently, were convinced that "If we follow the ways the English construct and furnish their farm buildings, it can greatly improve our ways of managing landed estates".¹¹²

Dezydery Chłapowski built hayracks in his estate in Turew in an English fashion, instead of German-style heavy barns. He introduced the English system of farm management, designed functional and efficient farm buildings and facilities, and often criticized publicly German "monumentalism" in rural architecture: "He learnt from the English good models and implemented them in Wielkopolska, where many landowners ardently followed the German fashion of constructing lavish buildings, wasting great amounts of money".¹¹³ During Chłapowski's visit to Holkham, Thomas William Coke tried to persuade him to stay in England "not to squander his talents among the Poles".¹¹⁴ Chłapowski, however, decided to raise the level of farming in Poland through sharing his experience and influencing his own community. He refused to stay in England and bid Coke farewell stating that "The Poles have their faults [...] but they can improve. I want to contribute to this improvement through my work and setting good examples".¹¹⁵

After his return to Turew, Chłapowski concentrated on restoration of his own estate, which his father had brought to ruin. He began propagating agriculture reforms in Wielkopolska while incarcerated in a Prussian prison, where he had been sent to after the fall of the November Uprising, and where he wrote his masterpiece *O rolnictwie* (On Agriculture) (Poznań 1835). Chłapowski's

¹¹¹ "Dziennik Ekonomiczny Zamoyski", 1803, p. 806.

¹¹² *Jeneral Zamoyski*, vol. IV, op. cit., p. 44.

¹¹³ W. Kalinka, op. cit., p. 71. See also A. Syta, *General Dezydery Chłapowski 1788-1879* (General Dezydery Chłapowski, 1788-1879), Warszawa 1972, p. 135.

¹¹⁴ Z. Gloger, *Jeneral Dezydery Chłapowski 1788-1879* (General Dezydery Chłapowski, 1788-1879), [in:] *Album biograficzne zasłużonych Polaków i Polek wieku XIX*, pp. 134-139.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

book was a practical manual, without any superfluous introductions or glorifications of Britain, so characteristic of many writers of the day. It opened with the line: "Soil consists of...". In 1834 Chłapowski started recruiting numerous trainees to work in Turew. He successfully trained a few dozen landowners, who then carried their skills and knowledge of new agricultural methods and patterns to many other estates. Landlords and even peasants traveled to Turew from the Grand Duchy of Poznań and other sectors of partitioned Poland to observe and learn the new patterns. One of them wrote: "Like a Muslim who must make a pilgrimage to Mecca at one point during his lifetime, so each Polish landlord should make such a pilgrimage to Turew".¹¹⁶ P. Popiel in his eulogy for Dezydery Chłapowski published in the magazine "Czas" (Time), wrote that Chłapowski's life "was for fifty years a model for all Polish landed gentry".¹¹⁷ Although these words could be treated as homage paid by one landlord to another, however, the opinion of a 20th-century historian, who frequently scolded Polish landlords for their destructive impact on Polish economic history, must be regarded as an objective assessment of Chłapowski's activities: "His great successes encouraged many Polish landlords to introduce progressive reforms in their own estates".¹¹⁸

Dezydery Chłapowski's activities were the highlight of the British influences on the development of progressive agriculture in Poland in the first half of the 19th century.

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¹¹⁶ Z. Gloger, op. cit., p. 138.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ J. Rutkowski, *Sprawa włościańska w Polsce w XVIII i XIX wieku* (Peasantry in 18th-Century and 19th-Century Poland), Warszawa 1921, p. 41.

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