

THE BALTIC ZONE, 16th–18th CENTURIES

On December 7, 1992, in connection with the 70th birthday of Edmund Cieślak, a well known researcher into the history of the Baltic region, the Historical Commission of the Gdańsk Learned Society and the Centre for the History of Gdańsk and Poland's Maritime History of the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences organised a session devoted to *The Baltic Zone from the 16th to the 18th Century. Politics — Society — Economy*. The session was held at the seat of the Gdańsk Learned Society and was divided into two parts: the morning part which dealt with political and social questions and the afternoon one at which economic problems predominated.

The session was opened by W. Prosnak, chairman of the Gdańsk Learned Society, and Z. Grzonka, Rector of the University of Gdańsk; next, J. Trzoska presented Edmund Cieślak's scholarly achievements. The first paper was delivered by E. Cieślak (Gdańsk), who spoke of *The Place of Gdańsk in the Commonwealth of the Nobility*, presenting the dynamism of Gdańsk and various aspects of its position, depending on changes in the situation of the Commonwealth and of Gdańsk itself (changes in the role of the king and the *Sejm*, the question of subordination to Polish judiciary, participation in the defence of the state). Next, J. Gierowski (Cracow) discussed *The Baltic Question in the Policy of Augustus II*, emphasising that during that king's reign important events had occurred on the Baltic and that Baltic policy had been the basic question of the Polish–Saxon union at that time (the use of the Baltic Sea for trade and for increasing the revenue as well as endeavours to prevent the maritime actions against Poland). J. Staszewski (Toruń) delivered a paper entitled *Another Leszczyński Than the One We Know*, in which he presented a different psychological portrait of the King Stanislas Leszczyński from the one known so far, characterised Leszczyński's political concepts and, first and foremost, questioned the rightness of denying Leszczyński's authorship of *A Free Voice* on the basis of an analysis of the style of his correspondence. As Staszewski pointed out, the latest research by linguists and literary historians strongly emphasised the difference between the conventional language used in correspondence and that used in political speeches; consequently, a comparison of Leszczyński's letters with the text of *A Free Voice* could not provide grounds for questioning his authorship of this work. H. Olszewski (Poznań) read a paper entitled *Gdańsk and Royal Prussia in the Evaluation of Representatives of the Prussian Historiographic School* in which he showed that these evaluations had stemmed from Prussia's old dislike of Poland (as an ally of France and the Austrian Habsburgs), a dislike which had been strengthened by the view that a nation could not exist without a state and that the Polish Commonwealth had collapsed because it had been worn away by a sickness which had also infected Gdańsk and Prussia. Next B. Wachowiak (Poznań) presented the genesis of the attitude taken by the governor of the Duchy of Prussia in 1657, and M. Komarzyński (Katowice) described the endeavours made by Prince Jacob Sobieski to gain Sweden's help in his struggle to succeed John III to the Polish throne; M. Komarzyński emphasised the role of elements of a Baltic policy in these endeavours. The morning debates concluded with a paper by W. Odyniec (Gdańsk), who spoke of the trip made to Holland in the second half of the 18th century by J. Wybicki and T. A. Dzwonkowski, on the basis of the two men's diaries.

The afternoon debates were opened by M. Bogucka (Warsaw), whose paper *Gdańsk and the Revolution in Baltic Trade in the 17th Century* dealt with various aspects of the profound changes which had occurred in Baltic trade at that time, especially in the technology of shipbuilding and the tonnage of ship. The Gdańsk merchants' withdrawal from shipowning and active overseas trade in the 17th century is a phenomenon on the borderline of economic history and the history of mentality and should, in Bogucka's opinion, be examined from both these points of view. S. Gierszewski (Gdańsk) spoke of *The Slovak Hinterland of the Port of Gdańsk at the End of 15th and in the First*

Half of the 16th Century (export of copper, import of cloth, industrial products and fish). C. Biernat (Gdańsk) discussed *The Plans to Maintain the Sea Depth of Gdańsk in the Second Half of the 18th Century*, A. Groth (Gdańsk) presented *The Activity of the de Jonge Family's Trading Firm in Memel in 1664–1722*, acquainting the listeners with little known facts about the participation of Jews in the Baltic trade. The last paper, *Gdańsk Trade in the Reports of Jakub Brandlicht, Swedish Resident in Gdańsk in 1724–1728*, was read by J. Trzoska (Gdańsk). Various questions were raised during the animated discussion (more than 30 persons took the floor). In connection with Gdańsk's position in the Polish Commonwealth, some speakers (B. Wachowiak, S. Gierszewski, J. Szymański, A. Zbierski) stressed the necessity of comparative research into the situation of other towns lying on the Baltic (Elbląg, Szczecin, Königsberg), also in Germany (Wismar, Greifswald, Lübeck, Hamburg) and even in Denmark and Sweden. E. Cieślak expressed the view that Stanislas Leszczyński's texts should be analysed from the point of view of their literary value, authenticity, and independence (to what extent were they contributed by secretaries?). Another question raised during the discussion was the personage of Jacob Sobieski, in particular his determination to gain the Polish crown (J. Dydała). Some speakers emphasised the necessity of reassessing the activity of Augustus II, especially his maritime and economic initiatives (J. Trzoska, S. Gierszewski); several persons discussed the changes which had occurred in Baltic trade in the 17th century. In this connection S. Gierszewski proposed that the term "revolution" be replaced by "restructuring". The genesis and development of competition in the Baltic, especially between Holland and Britain, was examined by E. Cieślak, A. Zbierski and S. Gierszewski. The participants took a great interest in the role played by Jewish merchants from Amsterdam in Baltic trade, a question which had so far escaped the researchers' attention (M. Bogucka, M. Komasyński, S. Gierszewski, W. Odyniec) and in questions connected with Poles' travels to the Netherlands, the places they had visited, the social repercussions and even the criminal aspects of their travels (M. Bogucka, W. Odyniec). Many participants discussed the genesis and development of the epoches of dynamism and the epoches of stagnation in the development of various societies, citing Gdańsk and Holland in the 17th and 18th centuries as examples (M. Bogucka, E. Cieślak, W. Odyniec, A. Zbierski, C. Biernat, S. Gierszewski).

The materials from this session, the attraction of which lay in the fact it raised many little known problems and tried to work out new interpretations, is published by the Gdańsk Learned Society.

Maria Bogucka

INTEGRATIVE FACTORS AND CONFLICTS IN MODERN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES (15th–17th CENTURIES)

A session devoted to this subject was organised in Białystok on December 11th and 12th, 1992 by the Commission for Research into the Renaissance and the Reformation of the Historical Sciences Committee, the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Białystok Branch of the Historical Institute of Warsaw University. During the debates which lasted one day and a half 16 papers and communiqués were read (the latter did not differ in size from the former). They can be divided into four thematic groups: 1. Questions concerning social integration and disintegration in Italy were presented in the following papers: P. Salwa's *Fifteenth Century Tuscan Literature (including Alberti) in the Struggle for Social Integration*; A. Kuczyńska's, *The Neo-Platonic Renaissance Ideal of Concord: The Familiarising with or Rejection of Aliens?*; H. Manikowska's *Return to Society — the Ritual of the 'Offering' of Prisoners in Renaissance Florence*. The last-named paper presented the ceremony held on religious holy days at which prisoners were pardoned and reintegrated into society. Moreover, during the morning debates of the first day the participants also heard the paper *The Walachian's Attitude to the Poles and Ruthenians in Little Poland and Red Ruthenia in the 15th and 16th Centuries. Separatism or a Symbiosis?* (G. Jawor), which presented the development of Walachian settlements at the end of the Middle

Agnes and the beginning of the modern era. H. Zaremska read a paper on *The Cracow Outlaws in the 14th and 15th Centuries* in which she analysed the crimes punished by banishment, the social background of the outlaws and, in some cases, their fate after the sentence.

The second thematic group was connected with urban question. During the afternoon debates A. Wyróbisz delivered an extensive paper on *Minority Groups in the Towns of Early Modern Europe* in which he dealt in detail with the overlapping of ethnic and religious differences (Jews, Gypsies, Tartars, etc.), the role played by the Reformation in this process, the establishment of ethnic groups recognised by law and the emergence of minority subcultures. R. Szczygieł presented *Social Conflicts in Polish Towns in the 16th Century. Their Geography and Causes*, focusing his attention on the movements which developed in the year 1519–1526. W. Jarmolik discussed *Differences in the Legal Situation of the Inhabitants of Podluchian Towns in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, laying stress on the role of the German law, which was then being introduced in Podlachia and on the religious stratification in that region. The other two papers read in the afternoon went beyond the theme of this group. H. Gmiterek presented *Religious Relations as a Factor of the Cultural Integration and Disintegration of Society in Poland and Bohemia in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, in which he discussed, among other things, the role played by Catholicism in Polish–Czech contacts. E. Dubas–Urwanowicz read a paper entitled *A Foreigner or a Pole on the Throne? The Polish Nobility's Perplexities during the Political Crisis of the First Inter-regnum*, in which she pointed out that the sense of danger and continuity of the state had promoted the integration of the nobility.

On the second day of the debate the participants concentrated on the third thematic group in which custom and mentality prevailed. S. Grzybowski presented *The General View of the Boundaries of European Civilisation from the 15th to the 18th Century*, a paper based mainly on the observations of travellers during that period. H. Dziechcińska (*Attire, Gesture and Custom in the 16th and 17th Centuries*) showed how manners and attire had reflected the social status. M. Bogucka (*Custom as a Factor of Social Integration in 16th and 17th Century Poland*) presented the role of custom in the formation of social structures, in determining the borders between social groups and strengthening the ties within each group. She suggested that during that period centripetal influence from the top had been stronger than centrifugal influence from the bottom, as a result of which Sarmatism had played an integrative role on the scale of the entire state. In his paper *The Public Good — Particularisms — Conflict of Interests. The Nobility's Dilemmas in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, J. Urwanowicz dealt with the elements integrating a federal state, such as the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was at that time. The last two papers delivered during the session belonged to the fourth, philosophico–theoretical group. J. Domański read the paper *Change in Aristotle's Philosophy* in which he presented the conception of change in the Greek philosophy preceding Aristotle (Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plato) as the groundwork on which Aristotle had developed his concept. J. Kurcewska dealt with *Social Change in Theoretical Perspective* in which she presented the views of various sociological schools and the latest research in this field.

All the papers were followed by an animated discussion. The participants discussed the question of source materials for research, the necessity of submitting them to criticism (H. Mańkowska, H. Zaremska, A. Mączak, S. Grzybowski, S. Dubas–Urwanowicz) as well as the necessity of distinguishing the difference between various types of culture, depending on the country, in particular as regards the development of urban culture and the genesis of these differences (H. Zaremska, A. Mączak, M. Bogucka); some speakers raised the question of whether the dichotomy between enlightened and popular culture could be applied to the situation in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (H. Zaremska, A. Mączak, M. Bogucka), question connected with the “growth of the world of things” as the threshold of the modern era (A. Manikowski, A. Mączak, S. Grzybowski), the necessity of distinguishing the specific character of the custom and culture of small towns (H. Samsonowicz, A. Mączak, S. Grzybowski), and the genesis of the “ill fame” of certain nations and occupations (H. Manikowska, A. Wyczański, J. Tazbir, J. Goldberg); interest was also aroused by such questions as the character of punishment in the Middle Ages and in the 16th and 17th centuries and the way the punishment was linked with deriding and humiliating the

culprit (M. Bogucka, H. Manikowska, H. Zaremska, J. Tazbir), the emergence of groups with regard to which compassion was not obligatory (H. Zaremska, M. Bogucka, J. Tazbir, A. Mączak), and the role of "ghettos" in large-scale social disintegration and the parallel strengthening of ties within the smaller communities (J. Goldberg, A. Wyczański, J. Urwanowicz, R. Szczygieł). Lack of time made it impossible to deal with many questions in depth.

The session provided an opportunity for a broad exchange of views and opinions.

The scope of the subject raised was probably too broad to be comprehensively examined in one day and a half. However, the organisers plan to publish the papers read during the session so the book will most probably serve as the foundation for further research and disputes and for the continuation of the already started research.

Maria Bogucka