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**“When the Polish people will truly arise”.
Patriotic Issues in the Works
by Juliusz Słowacki**

**“Kiedy prawdziwie Polacy powstaną”.
Problematyka patriotyczna
w twórczości Juliusza Słowackiego**

Słowa kluczowe: Juliusz Słowacki, patriotyzm, powstanie listopadowe, Polska, naród

Key words: Juliusz Słowacki, patriotism, November Uprising, Poland, nation

Juliusz Słowacki in his works often wrote about love to his homeland and about his nation. His texts provide the evidence of his feelings to the motherland. This paper is devoted to patriotic issues in the works by the poet. The research investigates selected works from his youth, texts from his mature period of his development and from the Genesis period. The poet referred in them to important historical events and described heroes fighting for the independence of Poland. He knew that poetry in the time of bondage is of high importance, and through his works, he wanted to express the duty towards the homeland. Gizela Reicher-Thonowa emphasizes that Słowacki became “the spiritual leader of the nation” (Reicher-Thonowa 1933: 140).

Zofia Stefanowska points out that the Romantic patriotism should be analysed from a certain distance, as a “historical phenomenon” (Stefanowska 1995: 146). Andrzej Walicki writes about three concepts of Polish patriotism. The first one defines patriotism as “faithfulness to national will”. In the light of the second concept, it is understood as “faithfulness to the national idea”. On the other hand, the third approach sees patriotism as “defence of [...] national interest” (Walicki 1991: 7). Konrad Górski observes that the terms “patriot” and “patriotism” entered the Polish language in the second half of the 18th century (Górski 1991: 683). According to Maria Janion, the origin of modern Polish patriotism, developed by Romanticism, is determined by three songs: *Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła* [*Poland Is Not Yet Lost*] by Józef Wybicki, *Boże coś Polskę* [*God save Poland*] by Alojzy Feliński,

and *Warszawianka* [*Whirlwinds of Danger*] composed by Karol Karpiński to lyrics by the French poet, Casimir Delavigne (Janion 1979: 7). In the opinion of Wiesław Ratajczak, contemporary patriotism is a reflection of the 19th century events. Polish patriotism is of a sepulchral nature, it is related to the feeling of injustice (Ratajczak 2008: 72–73). “Romantic poets pointed to holy places, and also canonized martyrs” (Ratajczak 2008: 74). Janion observes that Polish patriotism features a “dark zone, bordering on sacrum, madness and suicidal death. At the moment of threat to the being of the homeland [...] Polish ‘mad’ patriots become visible. [...] A ‘patriot-madman’ becomes the final embodiment of patriotic self-destruction” (Janion 1989: 7, 9).

Poems from the period of the November Uprising, among other works, provide a poetic expression of Słowacki’s patriotism. Although the poet did not take part in the struggle himself, he was acclaimed the “singer of the revolution” (Makowski 1991: 757). He wrote patriotic poems even in the first days of the Uprising, and his *Hymn*¹ and *Oda do wolności* [*The Ode to Liberty*] were published in 1830. Słowacki becomes the poet of the Uprising. The reasons why he left Warsaw are not known. Literature historians assume that in July 1831 he undertook a mission as a diplomatic courier, probably delivering letters of the National Government from Dresden to London and Paris (Kowalczykova 2014: 108). Stanisław Makowski called the author of *Hymn* “an insurrectionary national poet” (Makowski 1980: 5), while Zbigniew Sudolski described him as “the bard of the Polish revolution” (Sudolski 1996: 95). Jolanta Żurawska emphasizes that Słowacki’s poems from this period are an expression of “hot, patriotic enthusiasm”. “The poet-ego-centric” transforms into “the bard of freedom” (Żurawska 2000: 161–165).

The young poet (aged 20 at that time) in his *Hymn*, published on 4 December 1830 in “Polak Sumienny”, gives hope for the resurrection of the nation:

Wolności błyszczy zorza,
Wolności bije dzwon,
Wolności rośnie krzew.

[The dawn of freedom shines bright
The bell of freedom peals
The bush of freedom grows]
(Słowacki 1952, II: 61)

The shining dawn and the pealing bells become harbingers of freedom. The above referred bush also becomes the symbol of forthcoming independence. At this point, the poet alludes to the times of the French Revolution, when the custom of planting “trees of freedom” began (Brzozowski, Przychodniak 2005: 715). *Hymn* calls for the knights to fight. Słowacki believes that bells of freedom will

¹ *Hymn* during Słowacki’s lifetime had 20 reprints.

sound soon and the singing of free people will be heard. He also calls Lithuanians to fight. The symbol of nation resurrection is the Phoenix referred to in the poem: “Z popiołów Feniks nowy / Powstał” [A new Phoenix rose from ashes] (Słowacki 1952, II: 62). It is the herald of the nation’s revival. The poem can be combined with patriotic and religious tradition. The first and the last stanza contain reference to the medieval religious song *Bogurodzica* [Mother of God] (Sawrymowicz 1980a: 17). The poet refers in an apostrophe to the Mother of God, asking her to: “Wolnego ludu śpiew / Zanieś przed Boga tron” [Take the free people’s song to God’s throne] (Słowacki 1952, II: 61). The reference to the word of the oldest Polish song is significant. Jan Tomkowski in *Antologia poezji patriotycznej* [An Antology of Patriotic Poetry] emphasizes that the patriotism of *Bogurodzica* is hidden beyond the words of the text – in the circumstances that accompany its performance (Tomkowski 2014: 4). Słowacki in 1832 referred to the text of his own *Hymn*, written in the first days of the November Uprising. As he wrote in his biography:

Wybuchnęła rewolucja – pierwszy głos poetyczny, który dał się słyszeć ludowi, był to śpiew Słowackiego, wskrzeszający dawną, wojenną pieśń Polaków, najdawniejszy zabytek ich mowy. [...] Zmartwychwstanie narodu było chwilą zmartwychwstania poetycznych marzeń Słowackiego.

[Revolution broke out – the first poetic voice, which could be heard by the people, it was the song of Słowacki, reviving an ancient, war song of Poles, the oldest monument of their language. [...] Resurrection of the nation was the moment of resurrection of Słowacki’s poetical dreams.]

(Słowacki 2005: 714–715)

Subsequent patriotic works by Słowacki were published in January and February 1831: *Kulik* [Sleigh Ride] and *Pieśń Legionu Litewskiego* [The Song of the Lithuanian Legion]. Insurrectionary poems by Słowacki launch into “tones of solemn patriotic lyric poetry” (Sudolski 1996: 97). Słowacki expressed here an idea of common freedom, calling again Lithuanians to fight.

Further works by the poet include numerous pieces taking up patriotic issues. They do not show any more this youthful enthusiasm, present in the poetry from the period of the November Uprising. Słowacki becomes more critical towards the freedom fighters. His poetry shows a trend towards settling accounts with the main leaders of the insurrection. In *Kordian*, the poet attempts to answer the question concerning the reasons why the fight for independence was not successful. In the scene of *Preparation*, we see the figures of politicians and leaders of these events so important for Poles: Józef Chłopicki, Adam Czartoryski, Jan Zygmunt Skrzynecki, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Joachim Lelewel and Jan Krukowiecki. The poet heaps blame on them for the failure and a lost chance for regaining independence. He saw the cause of the uprising’s failure in the “social split of the nation” and the immaturity of the generation to fight for freedom (Makowski 1991:

757). Kowalczykowa observes that patriotism of Kordian departs from traditional patterns. In her opinion, the behaviour of the protagonist is contrary to the stereotypical model of a patriot (Kowalczykowa 1977: 44–45).

In *Anhelli*, Słowacki perceived the uprising generation as doomed to fall. He referred to the compatriots belonging to this generation as “exiles” who would never see their homeland again. He believed that they were not able to make an effort to regain freedom. However, he hoped that future generations would have a chance for liberation, for resurrection of the nation. Neither the contemporaries of the poet nor Słowacki himself would live up to this moment: “Ale miejcie nadzieję; bo nadzieja przejdzie z was do przyszłych pokoleń i ożywi je; ale jeśli w was umrze, to przyszłe pokolenia będą z ludzi martwych” [But do have hope, as hope will pass from you to future generations and will revive them; but if it dies in you, then future generations will be from the dead] (Słowacki 1952, III: 13). In the poem [I wstał Anhelli... z grobu...] [And Anhelli raised... from the grave...] Słowacki presents the image of the resurrection: “Wstaliśmy i ku Polsce szli...” [And we rose and headed towards Poland...] (Słowacki 1960, XII, part 1: 280).

The poet refers to the subject of the November Uprising in *Duma o Waclawie Rzewuskim* [*Elegy for Waclaw Rzewuski*] (1833) and in the poem *Sowiński w okopach Woli* [*Sowiński in the Trenches of Wola*] (1844–1845). Presenting the figure of Józef Longin Sowiński in the poem, he stylized him as a martyr, presenting his courage, bravery and patriotism. The protagonist, despite his disability, fights for the homeland. In the poem *Proroctwo* [*Prophecy*] of 1847, the poet includes references to the names of the November Uprising participants: General Henryk Dembiński (oak), Colonel Karol Różycki (rose) and Colonel Mikołaj Kamieński (stone). Juliusz Kleiner emphasized that Słowacki “was playing with the prophecy of the great emigration quest, led by the rose with the stone and the oak” (Kleiner 1927: 198). Under the leadership of those three persons, the fight will begin. The poem can be interpreted as signalling the outbreak of war, as already its title indicates the visionary nature of the piece.

In the poem *Uspokojenie* [*Silence*] (1844–1847) Słowacki heralds a future uprising of the Warsaw people. The text was published for the first time in 1861, after patriotic manifestations in the capital city (Kleiner 1927: 180). In *Grób Agamemnona* [*Agamemnon's Tomb*], the poet compares the failure of the November uprising to the failure of the Greeks at Chaeronea. He accuses Poles to have lost their national identity. Poland became “a parrot of nations”, “a servant of others”.

The patriotic issues are also visible in the Genesis philosophy of Słowacki. The poet demanded transformation of the nation. He was a supporter of the so-called revolution of spirit. Makowski observes that although Romantic poets used the category of the “spirit of nation”, or “mission of nation”, they understood them in different ways (Makowski 1993: 103). Słowacki, presenting the concept of the nation in his *Dialog troisty* [*Triple Dialogue*], attributed specific significance to bloody revolutions:

[...] przez rewolucje leczą się przestarzałe narody – albowiem rozbicie czarów formy, która duchy ugniatała, dopomaga wyjściu na wierszach większych duchów... a na właściwe niższe miejsca strąca te niedołączne – a uprzywilejowane.

[obsolete nations are treated through revolutions – since breaking the spells of the form that have been pressing the spirits, helps to reveal higher spirits... knocking off those sick ones – although privileged.]

(Słowacki 1954, XIV: 316)

The Polish nation plays a key role in Słowacki’s texts referring to patriotic issues. “Through horrible suffering that hardened and strengthened the Polish spirit, the Polish nation exceeded others with its heroism and holiness, took the ‘papacy of the spirit’, became the saviour of peoples, blazing the trail towards the Kingdom of God on Earth” (Walicki 1977: 97).

The Genesis nation is a collective form, gathering individual spirits within one entity; it is one of developmental “levels” of the spirit. What proves an important factor for Słowacki is a common spirit, idea, aim and not the territory where this community, making up the nation, gathers (Makowski 1993: 103).

The Polish nation is the highest and the most perfect form of the Slavonic identity (Makowski 1993: 104). “Ta pierwsza więc rasa świata... rasa pierwsza w Słowiańszczyźnie = ta Polska” [Thus, this first race of the world... the first race in the Slavonic = this Poland] (Słowacki 1956, VII: 309). Słowacki presents the Slavonic race as a model and contrast with the Franconian. In the letter *Do Księcia A. C.* [*To Prince A.C.*] he writes:

[...] słowiańska rasa jest jedną z ras późniejszych... na przyszłość przez Boga przygotowanych. [...] Polak wszystko to... co Francuz... uczyni –, najpierwszemu frankońskiej rasy człowiekowi nie ustąpi; [...] Francuzów zatem czynność: szwędanie się ciągle za niskimi dociekaniem praw postępu, może być dla nas doskonałą igraszką... ale nie wzorem przyszłości – nie formą – nie nadzieją dla ducha takiego, jakim jest duch W. Ks. Mości = Polski Duch wytrawiony.

[the Slavonic race is] one of later races... prepared by God for the future [...] A Pole will do everything... that a Frenchman... will do –, will not be second to the first man of the Franconian race; [...] Therefore, the French practice: continuously loitering to follow their mediocre inquiries concerning the laws of progress can be a great fun for us... but it is not the model of future – not a form – not a hope for the spirit such as the spirit of Your Grace = the Polish etched spirit.]

(Słowacki 1956, VII: 308–309)²

² Cf. Jakóbiec (1959). See also the opinion of Jan Gwalbert Pawlikowski concerning the Slavonic race: “In Słowacki, we meet an apparent contradiction: one time he speaks about the young age of this race, and another about the ‘seniority’ of its spirit. This is related to the following view: ‘Races are new urns for old spirits’. [...] Thus (physically) younger races can be inhabited by old spirits [...]” (Pawlikowski 1930: 90).

In the opinion of Polish Romantic poets, the Slavs play a leading role in the human history. According to Adam Mickiewicz, it is the “Slavonic man” that reveals the universal secret of man. The Slavs are almost a symbolic “pre-nation”, in the soul of which one can find the key to understanding mankind (Witkowska 1973: 170). Jarosław Ławski emphasizes that Mickiewicz “believed in the supra-linguistic and supranational community of Poles, Lithuanians, Ruthenians, Jews and other nations” (Ławski 2010: 390).

Słowacki believed that the Slavonic race is the only “model for the future”, as it demonstrates creative possibilities and spiritual power. In *Król-Duch* [*The Spirit King*], he wrote:

I rzekła: „Cóż jest w tym Słowian narodzie,
 Żeśmy tak wszyscy są w nim zakochani?
 Nie wiem – ojczyzny są inne na ziemi,
 A ta się zdaje nad gwiazdy złotemi

Wysoko – jednak – jednak nie wiem czemu
 Ja do niej lecę – ją kocham – jej żądam.

[And she said, What is in this Slavonic nation,
 that we all are so in love with it?
 I don't know – there are other homelands on Earth,
 but this seems to stay above the gold stars,

High – but – yet, I don't know why
 I am flying towards it – I love it – I desire it.]
 (Słowacki 1975, XVII: 897)

These words are uttered by one of the listeners to the rhapsodist's song – a “proud lady”, beautiful as Venus. She delivers a hymn for the Slavs. The Slavs show the direction which should be followed by other nations.

Among the Slavonic nations, the first place falls to Poland. The Polish nation is the community of “the highest and the oldest spirits on Earth” (Słowacki 1956, XIV: 255). In the letter *Do Księcia A. C.*, the poet writes that the Polish nation was created from spirits overwhelmed with the idea of freedom. This is the “class” of the oldest, therefore most experienced and most excellent, spirits.

Słowacki places the Poles “at the ultimate level of the human history and claims that ‘in future, the entire earth should be Polish’ [...], i.e. it must reach this level of excellence that has been reached by spirits forming the Polish nation” (Makowski 1993: 106). Poland is the highest nation; it provides a stage which other nations must pass in future. When all of them already reach the level of Poland, the nationalities will be “dissolved”: “To dissolve nationalities – by the height, by the angel nature of the Polish spirit, is one of the messianic missions” (Słowacki 1955, XV: 484).

In *Samuel Zborowski*, the Lawyer claims that the path to the final aims leads just through Poland, and its spirits must sacrifice and die for it:

Że przez ojczyznę naszą... szło zbawienie,
Że ona była ostatecznym końcem
 Żywota ducha ludzkiego – że ona
 Mogła tę ziemię jedna wziąć w ramiona
I umiłować – i oddać ją słońcem.

[That through our homeland... salvation came,
that it was the ultimate end
 of the human spirit life – that only it
 could take this land in its arms
and love it – and to give it back as the sun]
(Słowacki 1963, XIII, part 1: 216)

Poland (homeland) is the final incarnation of the human spirit – “the ultimate end”. Spirits, in order to reach the Jerusalem of the Sun (the final aim), must “pass” through Poland and sacrifice for it. Poland is “the aim and the peak of the earthly holiness” (Słowacki 1954, XIV: 254). Włodzimierz Szturc believes that Słowacki make the time of the coming of God’s kingdom conditional on national revolutions and the widespread revolution, and he assigned a particular role in salvation to Poland and the Slavonic (Szturc 1997: 65). The Slavs are “factors of spiritual freedom” for Słowacki (Słowacki 1956, VII: 311).

In *Samuel Zborowski*, in letters *Do Księcia A. C.*, in the brochure *Do Emigracji o potrzebie idei [To Expatriates on the Need for an Idea]*, the poet emphasizes the role of freedom in development of the nation, praising “an ancient Polish Idea” – the idea of golden liberty. Stefanowska points to the fact that Romantic interpretation of *liberum veto* took a symbolic meaning; it was an expression of modern individualism (Stefanowska 1995: 150). From Słowacki’s perspective, the old Polish *liberum veto* defended rights of an individual, made it possible to oppose the community. *Liberum veto* is considered by the poet to be the highest achievement of the idea of freedom, as it permitted the sustaining of the individual will of the spirit. In his opinion, abolition of this right is equal to the impediment to growth. Słowacki demands restoration of *liberum veto* principles, as it was to warrant the spiritual freedom (Kryszczuk 2011: 252).

In *List drugi do Księcia A. C. [The Second Letter to Prince A. C.]*, Słowacki asks the Prince to save “the National Spirit of Golden Polish Liberty” (Słowacki 1955, XV: 320), since the poet believes that restoration of this right will ensure that an individual will not be forced to subordinate to the community (Kowalczykowa 1973: 293–294). “Golden Liberty”, “holy spiritual freedom” of the former Polish Republic did not hinder or restrict an individual, since “the will” of one citizen was respected by everybody. It was only later that “victuals”, “goblets”

and “money” distorted the idea of *liberum veto*, “buying” the unanimity of the human voice.

Słowacki justifies the need to restore the rules of confederation as an old Polish form of gathering. He considers it to be the best organisational form of Poles in exile. This form is founded on *liberum veto*, the idea of contradicting³. He believes that foreign constitutional models should not be followed, as this will contribute to the destruction of Poland and impede progress. The French constitutional system cannot be applied in Poland, as every nation must create its own constitutional forms: “Inne więc formy rządu z natury ducha naszego wynikają – inna chwała republikańskie duchy nasze w Europie uwieńczy...” [Therefore, [...] other forms result from the nature of our spirit – our republican spirits in Europe will cover themselves in another glory...] (Słowacki 1955, XV: 321). The nation – as the “leader”, “model to the people” – betrays its own idea and the Genesis principle of world development when it becomes an “imitator” of other nations.

The poet wants to cover the entire humanity with the idea of the Polishness. Poland’s independence is to be a condition for completing the Genesis growth. Poland is to be a new Saviour:

[...] zmartwychwstania Polski dawnej z ducha Bożego oczekujemy jako Messjasza Narodów, który ani z ziemi, ani z obłoków, ale z serc i z duchów naszych urodzi się i stanie jako milijonowy Zbawiciel.

[we are awaiting the resurrection of former Poland upon the Spirit of God as the Messiah of Nations, who will be born neither from the earth nor from clouds, but will be born from our hearts and spirits to become the Saviour of millions.]

(Słowacki 1954, XIV: 254)

Poles must sacrifice their life not only for themselves, but also for nations “indolent” in bodily forms. Słowacki sees the cause of the collapse in idleness and apathy of the nation. The bondage was the punishment for spiritual stagnation. Poland became a “beggar” of nations, miserable and oppressed. However, the poet believed in the “true” revolutionary struggle. In his poem [Kiedy prawdziwie Polacy powstaną...] [When the Polish People Truly Arise], he criticises the Galician Uprising of 1846, which failed because it was not yet a demonstration of spiritual maturity (Sawrymowicz 1980b: 102–104).

Makowski, interpreting the Genesis theory of Słowacki, observes that the poet believed that “the Slavs and the Poles [...] are to give to humanity the Genesis Pope, the global Spirit King who will lead the world towards ultimate aims” (Makowski 1992: 59).

³ Cf. Kridl (1924: 341). About the idea of *liberum veto* and confederation, see also Markiewicz (1994: 171–179) and Kryszczuk (2011: 251–257).

Słowacki's patriotic feelings are expressed in his enthusiastic reaction to the information on the Spring of Nations in 1848. The poet wanted to be in the centre of the events (Nawrocka 2012: 224). Disregarding his health condition, he went to Greater Poland to join revolutionary operations. On 27 April 1848, he participated in the meeting of the National Committee in Poznań. According to Julian Klaczko, the poet took part in the discussion. However, the Greater Poland Uprising was not successful (Siwicka 1995: 181). Nevertheless, Słowacki treated it as a demonstration of development of the society. “Among all fellow countrymen met in Poznań and Wrocław, he propagated the idea of Genesis Messianism and patriotism” (Makowski 1987: 173).

Michał Kuziak considers the author of *Kordian* to be a critic of Poland and Poles. “The Polish identity presented by the poet seems to be undecided, ambivalent and full of contradictions [...] Słowacki is aware of the need to break with the past, while at the same time, he is searching in the past for the sources of the present time” (Kuziak 2010: 80).

This paper refers only to some pieces reflecting the presence of patriotic issues in the oeuvre of the author of *Król-Duch*. Early texts prove the poet's enthusiasm for revolutionary actions. In the pre-mystic period, Słowacki criticises the November Uprising, accusing the nation of losing its identity. In *Anhelli*, he harshly evaluates Siberian exiles. Genesis works bring a new concept of the nation – Poland in Słowacki's interpretation aims not only towards the freedom of the Polish nation, but also all of humanity.

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Summary

This article discusses patriotic issues in the works of Juliusz Słowacki. It focuses on the texts devoted to the November Uprising. The poet's early (youthful) works, including the very first ones, in which he showed ways of regaining independence, are subjected to interpretation. In these works, Słowacki writes about his love for his homeland, and thus they are testimony to his patriotic feelings. The poet demands that the nation undergo a transformation. The independence of Poland is his poetic dream. Słowacki takes up the subject of important historical events and recalls the figures of heroes fighting for a free homeland. The resurrection of the nation is Słowacki's poetic dream.