

Interethnic Relations in Russian Publicism by M. E. Zdziechowski

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The article analyzes the subject of interethnic relations in the interpretation of the Russian citizen of Polish origin Marian Edmundovich Zdziechowski — linguist, theorist of Russian literature, religious thinker, philosopher, publicist, and public figure. Researchers from many Slavic countries turn to the study of the ideological heritage by Zdziechowski, since his sphere of research interests, as he claimed it himself, was centred at “the study of Slavs”. While we acknowledge the extensive work done in this field, we must admit that works by Zdziechowski published in Russian periodicals of the pre-revolutionary period are still insufficiently introduced by modern scholars into their studies. That is the gap which this article seeks to fill. The article presents and analyzes the Zdziechowski’s opinions on the current system of interethnic relations in Imperial Russia and the cultural policy of that epoch regarding national minorities. The authors show that, in presenting his views, Zdziechowski relied on the authoritative opinions on this issue of well-known Russian cultural figures of the time: Leo Tolstoy, B. N. Chicherin, G. N. Trubetskoy, A. N. Pypin, and V. D. Spasovich. Although Zdziechowski considered the problems of interethnic relations mainly at the example of the analysis of Russian state policy towards Poles living in the country, his views are regarded as important for understanding the nature of the imperial ethnic policy, in general. The editors of *Moskovsky Ezhenedel'nik*, and *Novoe Zveno*, where his texts were published, give their appraisals of the activity of Zdziechowski. The evolution of the thinker’s views from the expressions of hope for a beneficial solution of the Polish question to the emergence of a sense of disappointment and pessimism is traced in the article. The coverage of this problem in the historical perspective reveals the ambiguity of its interpretations and solutions in the past and might help to improve the national policy in modern Russia.

Keywords: Russian Empire, national question, cultural policy, national minorities, education, enlightenment, conservatism.

The multifaceted creative activity of Marian Edmundovich Zdziechowski — literary theorist, philosopher, religious thinker, and publicist — has been the subject of research by specialists from different disciplinary areas. His literary views were described and analyzed by the literary scholar and culture expert B. Bialokozovich, Doctor of Honoris Causa of the St. Petersburg (1981) and Nizhni Novgorod (1995) Universities [1–4]. A philologist and theorist of Slavic literatures, Professor of the Minsk University V. P. Ragoysya noted the high significance of works by Zdziechowski, as well as those by his brother Kazimir, having written several articles about them and having included their names in the 5-vol-

ume *Encyclopaedia of Literature and Art of Belarus* [5], and in the *Encyclopaedia of History of Belarus* as natives of the Belarusian land [6]. Zdziechowski's philosophical views were analyzed by the Jagiellonian University Professor J. Skoczyński [7–8], the Wrocław University Professor J. Krasicki [9–10], and the Baltic Federal University Professor L. A. Maltsev [11]. The worldview and general positions of Zdziechowski were studied by Polish researcher Z. Opacki [12–13]; his social and political views were examined by Belarusian scholar D. V. Scherbik [14]. The interpretations of Catholicism and Orthodoxy in the works by Zdziechowski were analyzed by Russian researcher I. V. Vorontsova [15–16]. Zdziechowski's social initiatives were described by Professor P. Lavrinets, who published part of his epistolary heritage preserved in the archives of the Vilnius University and provided it with a scholarly commentary [17]. The activity of Zdziechowski as the chairman of the "Slavic Club" in Krakow was also regarded as a public initiative [18].

Acknowledging the significance of the research work done, we should note, however, that numerous texts by Zdziechowski, published in pre-revolutionary Russian periodicals, are still not introduced into the research field. This is a special informative layer of his heritage, the main component of which is a reference to the current problems of the Russian Empire, coverage of the existing Polish-Russian relations, description of the peculiarities of Catholic and Orthodox religions, presentation of the views of Polish society, divided that time on for three major empires. The thematic analysis of Zdziechowski's journalistic work testifies to the diversity of the issues raised by him and to the noticeable evolution of his views, which manifested itself in a movement from hopes and dreams to the formation of a mood of disappointment caused by the impossibility of solving the Polish question under the existing situation of Imperial Russia. Publications by Zdziechowski highlighted the peculiarities of Polish national culture, represented characteristic features of the Catholic faith, outlined ideas of the necessity for greater autonomy for Poles, and analyzed the policy toward national minorities pursued in the Russian Empire. The main goal of the activity of Zdziechowski was "the case of an ideal rapprochement between Russia and Poland, which should serve as the basis for their political alliance" [19, p. 33].

The question of rapprochement between Russia and Poland was considered by Zdziechowski in the context of the development of his approach to the Slavophile ideas. On the one hand, Zdziechowski was attracted by the concept of Slavic peoples' identity, which allowed him to describe peculiarities of Slavic cultures; and on the other hand, he accepted a possibility of cultural and social and political integration of Slavs, thereby supporting the ideology of pan-Slavism. In any case, Zdziechowski positioned himself as "a man dedicated to the study of Slavism" [20, p. 31]. This inclination manifested itself already in the early period of the activity of Zdziechowski. In his *Essays on the Psychology of the Slavic Tribe. Slavophiles*, which were published under the pseudonym of M. Ursin, he based on the analysis of Slavic literature and poetry and wrote about the originality of national consciousness of the Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, and other Slavic authors; at that, he revealed the distinctive features of Slavic literature in comparison with the creations of other European nations. The main idea permeating all the works by Zdziechowski was to affirm the equality of all Slavic peoples and to prove the need for mutual respect among them. It led Zdziechowski to denounce imperial ambitions, manifested especially in the policy of Russification of peoples living in the Russian Empire, and forced to actualize the so-called 'Polish question', in its political aspect as well. On the pages of the Russian magazines *Vestnik Evropy*, *Moskovsky Vestnik*, *Severnyy Vestnik*, and *Novoe Zveno*,

Zdziechowski published vivid journalistic articles, which highlighted national problems and advocated a necessity for mutual understanding between the two brotherly peoples.

Although Zdziechowski was born in the Russian Empire, where he became a graduate in Slavic philology from the Imperial University of Dorpat (now the University of Tartu, Estonia), he lived mostly outside of Russia. In the pre-war period, he lived in Krakow (then part of Austria-Hungary), only occasionally visiting Russia and maintaining close contacts with many of major cultural figures of Russia. One of the spheres of these contacts was active journalistic work in the journals and newspapers of those years, mostly published in St. Petersburg, and Moscow. We learn about Zdziechowski's intentions to publish in Russian periodicals and his initial efforts in this regard from his letters addressed to Aleksandr Nikolayevich Pypin, a famous Russian historian, the author of many scholarly studies on the Slavs and Slavic culture.

The Manuscripts Department of the Russian National Library keeps the correspondence of M. Zdziechowski with A. N. Pypin — 9 letters in all. In them Zdziechowski informs about his intention “to publish in a Russian journal an article about the religious and political ideals of Polish society in the last half century”¹. The article was issued in July, in the *Severny Vestnik* journal (1895), published in St. Petersburg from 1885 to 1898, but in a considerably abridged form, which displeased the author. That made him look for another way to publish the entire text. With that intention he turned to L. N. Tolstoy with a request “for moral assistance in the form of a preface”, so that he could assist in the publication of the complete version of the article. Tolstoy responded; as a result, the thoroughly prepared text was published as a separate edition in Leipzig and came out with Tolstoy's review [21].

Journalistic activities of Zdziechowski were more successful in another periodical, *Moskovsky Ezhenedelnik*, published in Moscow from 1906 to 1910. Its editors were brothers Evgeny Nikolaevich and Grigory Nikolaevich Trubetskoy. Zdziechowski had especially friendly and fruitful creative contacts with Grigory N. Trubetskoy, about which he sincerely wrote the following: “Having temporarily interrupted his diplomatic service in 1905, Grigory Nikolaevich moved to Moscow with the intention of devoting himself to public and journalistic activity. He soon became a co-editor of *Moskovsky Ezhenedelnik*, founded by his brother, Prince Evgeny Nikolaevich, — and since then I have corresponded with him on matters relating to my cooperation in this best organ of the Russian press, able to combine in the era of the so-called liberation movement high idealism with a realistic view of life, distinguishing the dream from the reality, the distant from the near and the realizable. Beside the politics, the Prince was deeply interested in and consumed by the religious problem. And in that we met, and it contributed to the strengthening of our friendly relations” [22, p. 135].

An intensive correspondence ensued between Zdziechowski and Trubetskoy, from which it appears that Trubetskoy appreciated Zdziechowski's participation in the weekly he published and edited. In a letter from December 3, 1908, Trubetskoy wrote about his desire to pay more attention to the Slavic question, about his wish to bring a certain completeness to the coverage of this matter, and to have a lively exchange of views with prominent representatives of Slavs in various regions. Addressing Zdziechowski in this connection, he continued: “You are certainly the most valuable collaborator for us in all

¹ Zdziechowski, M., Letters (9), *Russian National Library, Department of Manuscripts*, F. 621, f. cr. 345. (In Russian)

respects and especially due to the spiritual kinship that exists between our basic motives of worldview. Everything that you write will be gratefully received by us” [22, p. 147].

The subjects of Zdziechowski's articles published in the journal were very diverse: in them he responded to significant dates important for the interpretation and understanding of Polish-Russian relations [23], informed Russian readers about the main features of Polish idealism and religious beliefs [24]. But most of all during that period he was concerned with the problems of national autonomy of Poles living in the Russian Empire. Zdziechowski wrote about the “state instinct” that led Russia to “consciousness of its obligation towards Poland”; as for the Poles, they were required to “be doubly careful” because they were “exposed to the danger of new fierce attacks of the Russification system and could lose what little they had gained through the liberation movement, i.e., the right to teach in Polish in private schools in the Kingdom of Poland and the right to print Polish books and newspapers in the Lithuanian-Russian provinces”, which “promotes the development of state instinct and political prudence” [19, p. 32]. Developing his thoughts on the peculiarity of the state instinct, Zdziechowski wrote that this instinct “might not exist in Russia, quite coinciding with the moral conscience, being one of its branches” [19, p. 34]. Zdziechowski repeatedly stressed in many of his works the idea that “political morality not only cannot appear to Russia as an object of luxury, but even constitutes its vital interest. By giving justice to the subject peoples, satisfying their legitimate demands, and spreading happiness around itself, Russia will not weaken either its strength or its importance; on the contrary, its charm will increase, it will attract European peoples, and by the power of its moral authority will force other states to follow the path it has drawn” [19, p. 34–35]. Zdziechowski declares the necessity of “a steep turn in Russia's domestic politics”, the realization of which long before the war with Japan was present in the people who “embodied the highest principles of the Russian spirit”. “And despite all their failures and mistakes, only they represented the essence of Russia; only on the triumph of the principles they proclaimed at the *zemstvo* conventions did the possibility of a new life for us in alliance with Russia depend” [19, p. 30].

The circle of people on whose ideas Zdziechowski drew was not small: it included not only real political figures, but also university professors, authoritative thinkers with whom Zdziechowski sought to establish personal contacts, entered into correspondence. He relentlessly reported on it in his articles and devoted separate texts to the presentation of their work. Among them was the writer and lawyer V. D. Spasovich: “...being our indefatigable advocate in the face of Russia, at the same time, he has never ceased to excite good feelings for it in us, and with the optimism of his never dying faith in the spiritual qualities of the Russian people he encouraged and strengthened us” [19, p. 33]. Zdziechowski cited a fragment of a conversation with Spasovich caused by the need to place an article on Russian literature in the Polish newspaper *Kray*: “Addressing me, Spasovich energetically and quickly counted nine names on his fingers: ‘Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Belinsky, Herzen, Turgenyev, Shchedrin, Dostoyevsky, Lev Tolstoy should become our spiritual treasure on a par with Schiller, Goethe, Byron.’ Of the old writers he forgot here about Alexey Tolstoy, of the new ones he forgot to mention Vl. Solovyov” [19, p. 33].

The authority of V. S. Solovyov was very great for Zdziechowski: he constantly referred to his ideas, followed them, and found support for his own beliefs in them: “The Russian man Vl. Solovyov gave the question of the mutual relation of morality and politics the most concise and powerful formula of all existing ones saying the immortal words:

‘It is better to give up patriotism than to give up conscience’ [19, p.35]. To the list of authorities whose ideas Zdziechowski followed in his life, one should add the name of B. N. Chicherin, about whom he published several essays in Russian [25], German, and Polish [26]. His German-language and Russian-language publications were highly appreciated by G. N. Trubetskoy in his review of Zdziechowski’s book *Die Grundprobleme Russlands* published in Vienna/Leipzig [27]. Zdziechowski found confirmation of his own reflections on the proper nature of inter-ethnic relations and the necessary responsibility of statesmen for the policies pursued in the country toward the peoples of ‘other nations’ in the texts by Chicherin. Zdziechowski often quoted Chicherin’s words, “great words that redeem all the malice and nastiness of Russian nationalist atrocity: ‘Lordship over alien peoples is not only a right, but also a high moral obligation’” [19, p. 35].

Zdziechowski was not only concerned about the nature of relations between Poles and Russians within the borders of the Russian Empire, he turned to the analysis of the most complicated relations between Poles and Ukrainians living in Galicia at that time — this subject was discussed in his article published in *Moskovsky Ezhenedel'nik* [20]. The response to that publication was given by G. N. Trubetskoy in a letter to Zdziechowski from April 6, 1907: “Your article on the Polish-Rusinian dispute is going to be placed in its entirety, in accordance with your wish, in No. 14 of the *M. E.* Tomorrow we will be ready to send you 25 reprints. Personally, I have read with deep interest your objective assessment, covering so little known aspects of Slavic life in our country. Unfortunately, the time has not yet come for a serious thoughtful attitude to this kind of issues. Sympathies and passions arise as easily as they disappear quickly in our lacking culture society, and the Polish question, which was fashionable last winter, now seems to have fallen temporarily off the scene. All because the Poles in the Duma have shown themselves to be realists” [22, p. 146]. And then, there followed some assessments of the edited periodical: “Our weekly does not keep up with the evil of the day, and, admittedly, we don’t care much about it. It seems to me that our task is more cultural than political. Everything that can contribute to the deepening of public consciousness in the spirit of Christian idealism will always be accepted by us with particular joy; and that is why your articles are always welcome for us” [22, p. 146].

Over time, political issues increasingly gripped Zdziechowski. Some of his texts were written very emotionally and contained harsh assessments concerning the national policy pursued in Russia at that time, but, we believe, thanks to constructive and friendly advice from publishers, Zdziechowski has still managed to avoid censorship obstacles and restrictions for a long time. One of the harshest articles about the Russification of Poles appeared as a result of the proposal to write a review of the book by A. L. Pogodin *Main Trends of Polish Political Thought (1863–1907)*. In that article, Zdziechowski did not so much write about the book, as about the ‘burning issue’, he denounced the policy of “introducing the Polish people into the Russian family”, argued that the implementation of that policy had led to a result, directly contrary to the intended goal, and that “it represented one of the saddest examples of political stupidity and banality in human history” [28, p. 35]. Despite the journal editors’ praise of the activity of Zdziechowski, his cooperation with that periodical was suspended due to censorship concerns, and soon the journal was terminated because of the lack of funding.

Zdziechowski’s journalistic activities continued in another periodical, the weekly *Novoe Zveno*, whose publisher and editor was A. N. Bryanchaninov. *Novoe zveno* initially

positioned itself as an organ of independent liberal thought, but later the weekly got a broader name: *Organ of United Slavs and Independent Liberal Thought*. The weekly was published in St. Petersburg in 1913–1915. Zdziechowski collaborated with that periodical from its first issue. The topics of his publications became more acute and very frank, as the titles of his articles testify: *What Do Poles Want?* [29], *On the Ruins of Dreams* [30], *The Fruits of Sincerity* [31], etc. Recalling his publications of earlier years and the problems he covered at the time, Zdziechowski wrote: “Looking then at the liberation movement at its very height, I came to the conclusion that the Polish and Russian peoples could complement each other. Russia was absorbed by the ideal of social reorganization; as to us, we, like any oppressed people, have put forward and above all national demands, the basis of which is the possibility of the free development of national culture. But the notion of culture merges with the notion of an evolutionary way of action, opposite to the revolution, and due to this we represented in the movement of that time the conservative element of the development, necessary for the success of the cause. We stood on the right flank, holding the state point of view. Many of our prominent people did not hesitate to declare openly that the Poles needed ‘a free, strong and powerful Russia, because an alliance with a strong Russia gives the best guarantee of complete freedom in achieving our cultural objectives” [30, p. 176–177]. On the pages of that newspaper Zdziechowski confessed to the grievous feeling that took hold of him, which appeared when he realized the way he had passed. In his youth, he wrote, fascinated by the beauty of the creative ideas of Russian poets and thinkers, he enthusiastically sought that ideal Russia, which they portrayed, believing in its spiritual power and world mission. Zdziechowski saw the project of a renewed Russia “in the aspiration to the ideals of the West”, believing that “the first step on this path was an autonomous Poland, and on this depended the enormous significance that the revival of Russia should have for all mankind” [19, p. 31]. Later, as time passed, Zdziechowski lost faith in his youth’s enthusiasm and realized the unrealistic character of his ideals: “Give me a break from the present, let me forget that there is Russia and Russians, goodbye; I go to my work, in the depth of far from politics religious and philosophical issues” [29, p. 22]. Commenting on the pessimistic views and sometimes denunciatory phrases of Zdziechowski, the editor expressed his disagreement with him, as he could not leave them without protest: “We understand and share the author’s burning pain, but is it correct to believe that the whole Russian people is in solidarity with the policy of persecuting Poles?” [29, p. 20]. In connection with the unfolding World War and understanding the trials and tragedy of the divided Polish people living in the warring empires, the editor expressed very optimistic judgments and admonished Zdziechowski: “After the destruction of Austria-Germany, the Polish culture will not die, but will blossom in union with Russia with unprecedented brilliance. One should believe in it, want it and work tirelessly for it instead of indulging in pessimism” [32, p. 18]. However, history decided otherwise, and the coming cataclysms no one could foresee. Zdziechowski left Russia forever, the Poles gained statehood.

In conclusion, let us note that the journalistic activity of Zdziechowski in Russian periodicals of the late 19th — early 20th century, rich in content and varied thematically, allows us to understand not only the evolution of the Russian-Polish thinker’s creative path, to see the breadth of his coverage of current social and philosophical problems, but also to understand better the specifics of the social and political situation in the pre-war and pre-revolutionary Russia.

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Трактовка межнациональных отношений в российской публицистике М. Э. Здеховского

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В статье анализируется тематика межнациональных отношений в трактовке российского подданного польского происхождения Мариана Эдмундовича Здеховского — лингвиста, теоретика русской литературы, религиозного мыслителя, философа, публициста и общественного деятеля. К изучению идейного наследия Здеховского обращаются исследователи из многих славянских стран, поскольку сфера его научных интересов, по его собственному заверению, состояла в «изучении славянства». Признавая большую проделанную работу на этом поприще, следует признать, что все еще недостаточно вовлеченными в область исследования являются работы Здеховского, опубликованные в российской периодике дореволюционного периода. Именно этот пробел призвана восполнить данная статья. Представлены и проанализированы суждения Здеховского по поводу сложившейся системы межнациональных отношений в имперской России и проводимой в то время культурной политики относительно национальных меньшинств. Показано, что в изложении своих воззрений Здеховский опирался на авторитетные мнения по этому вопросу известных российских деятелей культуры того времени: Л. Н. Толстого, Б. Н. Чичерина, Г. Н. Трубецкого, А. Н. Пыпина, В. Д. Спасовича. Хотя проблемы межнациональных отношений освещались Здеховским главным образом на примере анализа государственной политики России в отношении проживающих в государстве поляков, его суждения расценивались как

значимые для уяснения характера имперской национальной политики в целом. Приводятся оценки деятельности Здзеховского, данные редакторами «Московского еженедельника» и «Нового звена», где публиковались его тексты. Прослеживается эволюция взглядов мыслителя от высказывания надежд и упований на благотворное решение польского вопроса до появления чувства разочарования и пессимизма. Освещение данной проблемы в историческом ракурсе показывает неоднозначность ее трактовки и способов решения в прошлом, что может способствовать улучшению национальной политики в современной России.

Ключевые слова: Российская империя, национальный вопрос, культурная политика, национальные меньшинства, образование, просвещение, консерватизм.

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