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Angielski memoriał z 1885 r. o stanie kwestii agrarnej w Królestwie Polskim

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Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w Internecie dzięki wsparciu Ministerstwa Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego w ramach dofinansowania działalności upowszechniającej naukę.

STEFAN KIENIEWICZ

Angielski memoriał z 1885 r. o stanie kwestii agrarnej w Królestwie Polskim

Pułkownik Francis C. Maude był konsulem generalnym Wielkiej Brytanii w Warszawie od połowy grudnia 1876 do końca grudnia 1885 r. Raporty jego, przechowywane w Public Record Office w Londynie¹, świadczą o dość rozgałęzionych stosunkach konsula: zarówno w świecie urzędowym rosyjskim, jak też w kołach polskiej arystokracji i wielkiej burżuazji. Placówka warszawska w owych latach nie przedstawiała dla rządu Jej Królewskiej Mości tego politycznego znaczenia, co we wcześniejszym okresie powstania styczniowego. Konsulat informował centralę głównie o sprawach gospodarczych i handlowych, ubocznie jednak śledził stan umysłów w Polsce, i to nie tylko klas posiadających, ale również inteligencji oraz mas ludowych. Z natury rzeczy interesowała go postawa społeczeństwa w okresie wojny wschodniej 1877 r., w związku z rysującym się wówczas konfliktem anglo-rosyjskim. Z dużym sceptycyzmem odnotowuje Maude zabiegi polskich ugodowców z Z. Wielopolskim na czele, o uzyskanie wpływów w Petersburgu; sporo miejsca poświęca początkom ruchu robotniczego w Warszawie, wymierzonym przeciwko niemu śledztwom i procesom. Bardzo obszernie wreszcie zdaje sprawę z ruchów antyżydowskich, jakie miały miejsce w Warszawie w czasie Świąt Bożego Narodzenia 1881 r. W sumie uznać można raporty Maude'a za źródło stosunkowo bezstronne i nie najgorzej poinformowane o tym, co działo się, przynajmniej na powierzchni życia warszawskiego, w mało dotąd zbadanym jego okresie².

Na schyłku urzędowania, żywiąc już, jak się zdaje, zamiar podania się do dymisji, Maude zwrócił się do Foreign Office ze szczególną inicjatywą: opracowania dla użytku centrali memoriału o stanie kwestii agrarnej w Królestwie Polskim. Oto jak objaśniał przydatność tego przedsięwzięcia w piśmie z 26 września 1885 r., skierowanym do Lorda Salisbury³:

As Your Lordship is aware, Poland has very much in common with Ireland. Situated on the same parallels of latitude; though not enjoying precisely the same climate; each a conquered and a subject race; resembling each other even in the personal features of the people; animated with an almost equal hatred for the dominant nation; they possess, in the main, the common characteristics, which should operate towards success or failure,

¹ Sygnatury FO 65/950, 976, 1016, 1054, 1092, 1126, 1146, 1167, 1193.

² A. Zaleski, *Towarzystwo warszawskie*, Warszawa 1971, s. 228, twierdzi, że Maude „wojny z Bachusem nie lubił”, był „nader ograniczony”, grał „bardzo źle w wista” oraz „mówił źle po francusku”. Ta uszczypliwa charakterystyka zapewne sprawiła, że Maude, w przeciwieństwie do swego francuskiego kolegi, przemilczał pamflet „Baronowej XYZ” w swych raportach. Czy zaś naprawdę w niczym się nie orientował, można wątpić; może tylko więcej słuchał, aniżeli rozprawiał.

³ FO 65/1227.

in any crucial experiment, connected with land tenure, which might be attempted in either country. To obtain trustworthy evidence of the present position of so many thousands persons, it is desirable that I should have an opportunity of obtaining ocular and oral testimony, on the spot, and to test and compare it with the statistics which are procurable here. For this purpose I propose to make a tour in the several governments of the Kingdom of Poland. — I have acquaintances, I may say friends, Russian and Polish, in each of these governments, and I have no doubt I shall receive ample facilities from the respective governors, when I make my object clear to them.

W zakończeniu konsul Maude stwierdzał, że przeprowadzenie ankiety zajęłoby mu sześć — osiem tygodni czasu, w ciągu których zadbałby o to, by nie tracić kontaktu z Warszawą. Koszta odnośnej wyprawy szacował na 10 rubli dziennie.

Nie umiem stwierdzić, czy zainteresowanie Maude'a sprawą agrarną w Królestwie miało istotnie źródło w problemie irlandzkim. Na pewno jednak powołanie się na Irlandię stanowiło trafny argument, gdy szło o zainteresowanie Foreign Office. Lata osiemdziesiąte to okres, gdy Irlandia staje się dla Wielkiej Brytanii problemem palącym. W 1880 r. Karol Parnell poszedł do wyborów na czele pierwszej w dziejach wyspy masowej partii politycznej, pod hasłem określanym wówczas jako *New Departure*, łączącym postulaty autonomii politycznej oraz reformy agrarnej. W ciągu następnego dziesięciolecia Parnell przezywany „niekoronowanym królem Irlandii”, wywierał też ogromny wpływ na życie polityczne, a kilkudziesięciu idących za nim posłów poczęło wkrótce zakłócać funkcjonowanie brytyjskiego Parlamentu. Ten właśnie взгляд miał skłonić opozycję liberalną i sędziwego jej lidera Gladstone'a do wystąpienia z projektem *Home Rule*, tj. autonomii, która pozwoliłaby pozbyć się Irlandczyków z Izby Gmin. Co się zaś tyczy reformy agrarnej, która winna była uwłaszczyć irlandzkich dzierżawców, ta wchodzić zaczęła w życie, i to stopniowo, dopiero począwszy od 1903 r. Rząd carski w podbitym Królestwie wyprzedził na tej drodze Brytyjczyków o lat blisko 40. Łatwo zrozumieć, że brytyjskiego polityka, przynajmniej w teorii, winno było obchodzić pytanie: jakie też skutki — gospodarcze i polityczne — pociągnęła za sobą rosyjska reforma uwłaszczeniowa? I czy nie dałoby się z nich wysnuć jakich praktycznych wniosków dla polityki rządu brytyjskiego w stosunku do irlandzkich chłopów?

Dostępne mi materiały nie pozwalają ocenić, czy sugestia Maude'a naprawdę zainteresowała w Londynie konserwatywnych ministrów. Na jego raporcie znajdujemy następujące adnotacje urzędników Foreign Office:

Pierwszą ręką: *The report will cost from £ 50 to £ 60, and would undoubtedly be interesting.*

Drugą ręką: *I am not sure that Col. Maude is the best of observers, but he will have many advantages. 2-d Sanction. He might have a private hint to confine himself to the question actually before him, and not to be led away into analogies or comparisons.*

Trzecią ręką: *Might it not be well, first to inquire at S. Petersburg whether there is any official Report on the same subject? S. P.*

Mała literka, czerwonym atramentem: *S [Salisbury].*

Z powyższych notat zdaje się wynikać, że inicjatywa Maude'a naruszała rutynę raportów konsularnych i została przyjęta w centrali bez szczególnego entuzjazmu. Pomimo to 4 listopada 1885 poszło do Warszawy związane piśmko ze zgodą na opracowanie memoriału. Najwidoczniej

ambasada brytyjska w Petersburgu nie znalazła żadnych materiałów zastępczych. Maude otrzymał zielone światło — czy ze względu na sprawę irlandzką? W piśmie z 4 listopada nie ma o Irlandii ani słowa; ale i w swoim memoriale Maude już nie czyni do Irlandii prawie żadnych aluzji. Może istotnie otrzymał w tej mierze *private hint*, który nie dochował się w aktach.

O okolicznościach sporządzenia memoriału, który drukujemy poniżej, mówi rachunek zatytułowany: *Expenses incurred by me in the preparation of my report on the condition of the Polish Peasants, 1885*⁴. Rachunek ten, datowany ze Spa (Belgia), 11 lutego 1886 został sporządzony już po ustąpieniu autora z posterunku konsularnego w Warszawie. Oto jego zawartość:

<i>Absent from Warsaw during 15 days à 10 R. per day</i>	R. 150
<i>Railway fare to Siedlce and return</i>	15
„ „ <i>to Lublin „ „</i>	20
„ „ <i>to Radom „ „</i>	20
„ „ <i>to Skierniewice „ „</i>	15
„ „ <i>to Pruszków „ „</i>	5

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The above includes hostess, droschkas etc.

But, in addition to the above, I had to give a dinner at Siedlce to a Russian general, ex-governor of the District of Radom, who was able to give me most valuable information, comparing the state of things in the two districts, and dating back to the year 1862.

I had also to make several presents, notably a box of cigars to a bailiff (of a gentleman residing near Pruszków) who was extremely useful to me in interpreting and questioning the peasants.

I had to give them, in several cases, a Rouble or 2 when they afforded information.

I drove by post across a part of the country, so as to strike a portion untraversed by Railway.

I estimated that the above expenses actually amounted to about £ 20 (R. 200) out of pocket, in addition to my Railway fares etc.

But, as I have previously stated, I kept no accounts whatever; and the above is only an approximation, and to the best of my recollection.

Jak wynika z tego objaśnienia, Maude w ciągu krótkiego czasu, bo dwóch zaledwie tygodni, w listopadzie lub grudniu 1885 r. objechał partie czterech guberni Królestwa: siedleckiej, lubelskiej, radomskiej i warszawskiej. W tekście memoriału twierdzi, że zwiedził sześć guberni na ogólną liczbę dziesięciu — i w istocie powołuje się również na informacje dotyczące guberni kieleckiej, piotrkowskiej i suwalskiej. Być może odwiedził je przy wcześniejszych okazjach, lub też korzystał na ich temat z pośrednich relacji. Zbierał swe dane w rozmowach z urzędnikami, właścicielami ziemskimi, ich oficjalistami i chłopami; pewnej ilości danych statystycznych dostarczyli mu urzędnicy Towarzystwa Kredytowego Ziemskiego. Obszerny memoriał swój opatrzył Maude datą 31 grudnia 1885 r. Był to ostatni dzień jego urzędowania.

⁴ Tamże.

Przysłany do Londynu raport⁵ trafił na odmienioną polityczną sytuację. Wybory rozpisane w listopadzie wprowadziły do Izby Gmin 249 konserwatystów, 335 liberałów oraz 86 Irlandczyków spod znaku Parnella. Ci ostatni okazali się nagle „języczkiem u wagi”; w rezultacie 26 stycznia konserwatywny premier Salisbury podał się do dymisji, do władzy zaś powrócił stary Gladstone i w zamian za poparcie Irlandczyków zapowiedział wniesienie do Parlamentu projektu *Home Rule* oraz reformy agrarnej. W tych warunkach dokumentacja Maude'a, zatracająca o sprawę irlandzką, nabierała dla nowego gabinetu większego znaczenia — i tym się zapewne tłumaczy, że nasz memoriał został powielony, jako druk urzędowy, do użytku służbowego. W aktach Foreign Office dochowały się 2 egzemplarze tego druku, obejmujące 9 stron + 1 nlb. dużego folio. Na jednym z egzemplarzy znajdują się następujące adnotacje:

Pierwszą ręką: *Col. Maude suggested that he should draw up this report on the condition of the Polish peasants as influenced by the great Ukase of 1864 for the liberation of the serfs throughout the Russian Empire [sic]. He thought it might have an instructive bearing on the Irish land question. The report is interesting and contains a good deal of information.*

Drugą ręką: *Though it is not presented in such a manner as to suggest definite conclusions, except to one who is versed in the question. I have sent a copy to Mr. Gladstone's private secretaries. Should copies go to:*

*Lord Spencer*⁶,

*Ch[ancellor] of [the] Exch [equer]*⁷,

*Mr. Morley*⁸,

*Mr. Chamberlain*⁹,

*Mr. Trevelyan*¹⁰,

Anybody else? R. S.

Trzecia ręką: *Copy also to Lord Granville*¹¹.

Czerwonym atramentem: *I am keeping this copy. R.*¹² 3 III 1886.

Ołówkiem: *Done. 5 III 1886.*

Na drugim egzemplarzu druku znajdują się następujące adnotacje, związane z pokryciem kosztów sporządzenia memoriału:

Pierwszą ręką: *Consul Gen. Maude, Warsaw, Dec. 31, 1885. Rec[ieve]d... P e a s a n t r y i n P o l a n d, present condition of*

Col. Maude asked for £ 1 a day, while employed in drawing up this report, to repay travelling and other expenses. He estimated that it would take from 5 to 6 weeks. He has drawn for £ 50. I am not sure that the

⁵ Tamże.

⁶ John Poyntz, lord Spencer (1835—1910), były Lord-Lieutenant Irlandii, w gabinecie Gladstone'a Lord President of the Council.

⁷ Sir William Harcourt (1827—1904).

⁸ John Morley (1838—1923), jeden z najbliższych zaufanych Gladstone'a, później pierwszy jego biograf; w tym gabinecie sekretarz stanu dla Irlandii. Od 1908 lord Morley.

⁹ Joseph Chamberlain (1836—1914), znany szermierz imperializmu brytyjskiego. W gabinecie Gladstone'a President of the Local Government Board. Ustąpił z rządu już 15 marca 1886 na znak protestu przeciw projektowi *Home Rule*, po czym stanął na czele secesyjnej partii unionistów, by przejść w następstwie do obozu konserwatywnego.

¹⁰ George Trevelyan (1838—1928), znany historyk, w gabinecie Gladstone'a sekretarz stanu dla Szkocji. Ustąpił z gabinetu wraz Chamberlainem.

¹¹ George Leveson-Gower, Lord Granville (1815—1891), wielokrotny minister spraw zagranicznych; w tym gabinecie stał na czele Colonial Office.

¹² Archibald Primrose, lord Rosebery (1847—1929), w gabinecie Gladstone'a minister spraw zagranicznych.

report shows an amount of research to justify so large an expenditure, but it is interesting, and he is retiring from the service¹³.

2. Recommend to Treasury for the amount claimed?

Or for £ 40 only?

Drugą ręką: *I would leave it to the Treasury to reduce the sum asked. Il ne faut pas marchander la copie. R.*

Można powątpiewać, czy członkowie gabinetu Gladstone'a podjęli studia nad memoriałem o stanie chłopów w Królestwie Kongresowym. Mieli inne kłopoty na głowie. W kilka dni po powieleniu tego druku nastąpił rozłam w partii liberalnej, właśnie na tle opozycji przeciwko *Home Rule*. W czerwcu 1886 r. projekty reform Gladstone'a zostały odrzucone w Parlamencie, nastąpiły nowe wybory, a w ich wyniku konserwatyści wrócili do władzy. Projekt autonomii Irlandii został pogrzebany, co pociągnąć miało za sobą, już w XX wieku, powszechnie znane następstwa.

Historyk polski zaś zawdzięcza tym irlandzkim okolicznościom dość interesujący dokument, dotyczący naszych własnych spraw. Dokument ten wart jest opublikowania w całości, zwłaszcza że poświęcony jest w przeważnej części tematyce, dla której nie rozporządzamy nadmiarem źródeł: a mianowicie warunkom bytu chłopów i jego obyczajowości. Rzecz jasna, że jest to spojrzenie przybysza z bogatej Anglii, pouczanego w dodatku przez właścicieli ziemskich. W sumie jednak Maude ocenia polskiego chłopów z dużą przychylnością i trafnie zapatruje się na możliwości dalszej jego ewolucji. Warto w związku z tym uwydatnić jego uwagi na temat postępującej proletaryzacji wsi, zaostrzającej się walki o serwituty, z drugiej zaś strony podnoszenia się stopy życiowej wsi polskiej. Niemal zupełnie pominięty został w raporcie problem administracji gminnej oraz szkolnictwa wiejskiego.

Autor operuje miarami, wagami i inną terminologią angielską, nie zawsze pasującą do rzeczywistości polskiej. Tłumaczenie podobnego tekstu na język polski pociągało za sobą ryzyko zniekształcenia treści — woleliśmy więc ogłosić dokument w języku oryginału. Poprawiono w nim bez komentarza drobne omyłki w nazwach geograficznych.

AN E K S

MEMORIAŁ PŁK FRANCISA C. MAUDE'A KONSULA GENERALNEGO W. BRYTANII W WARSZAWIE O STANIE CHŁOPÓW W KRÓLESTWIE KONGRESOWYM

Warszawa, 31 grudnia 1885

Or.: *Public Record Office, London, FO 65/1227.*

Printed for the use of the Foreign Office. January 1886

CONFIDENTIAL

REPORT BY CONSUL-GENERAL MAUDE ON THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE PEASANTRY IN POLAND, AS THE RESULT OF THE IMPERIAL UKASE OF 1864

Nothing in any way resembling or corresponding to the Russian „Ziemięstvos” exists in Poland.

¹³ Następca Maude'a w konsulacie warszawskim, Henry Grant, pobierał rocznie £ 900, a ponadto £ 200 *for Office Expenses*; jednorazowo otrzymał £ 200 *for outfit*. FO 65/1277.

Under the Constitutional Government of which the Marquis Wielopolski was a member in 1862, some application of this scheme was proposed in Poland.

But it never came to anything.

It should be borne in mind that, according to previous Ukases, notably that of the Emperor Nicholas of 1848¹, all peasants holding their land under Polish proprietors (or „Nobles”, as it is more convenient to call them), whether by rent or other tenure, had been confirmed in those holdings, and could not be dispossessed, so long as they performed their part of the covenant.

This, in by far the majority of cases, consisted of the „corvée”, or allotted labour. The better class of peasants sent a man, with a cart and a pair of horses or oxen, for either one, two, or three days a-week, to work on the Noble's land, being free to work on his own land during the rest of the week. Naturally such men possessed a certain amount of substance, and had mostly been for many years previous in a comparatively good position.

It is, consequently, from among this class that the principal part of the purchases of land from the Nobles have been made since the Ukase of 1864.

But besides this class there was also a poorer class, who owned less land, and gave their personal services in lieu of rent.

And again, there were the farm-labourers (or „palfreniers”²), who had only a little plot of ground; who lived in a single room (or part of a room) belonging to the Noble, and who received their wages for the most part in kind.

This class is at present in existence, almost without change.

In many cases the peasants were not only comfortably off, but even comparatively wealthy. Accustomed for generations to extreme frugality, they often had large sums of money put by. In those days coin was stored up, but now that it is practically non-existent in the country the peasant finds that his little heap of dirty rouble notes is apt to rot in the ground, or to be nibbled by field mice or rats, or to be burnt or stolen; consequently, he never loses an opportunity of investing his savings, and for this purpose he generally chooses to do so in the purchase of more land, if occasion offers.

Ever since the promulgation of the Ukase they have been bringing out their hoards, at first consisting of almost every conceivable coin, mostly however of silver; and this they have put into land, purchasing sometimes from one another, but principally from those^a of the Nobles, who found themselves brought to ruin by the deprivation of the labour on which they had been accustomed to depend.

In the districts of Radom and Koziénice alone, only a few square miles in extent, more than 3,000,000 roubles (at that time 500,000). were invested by the peasants in the purchase of land from the Nobles between the years 1864 and 1875. And these purchases are continually being effected.

In many cases the peasants club together and buy up the whole estate, parceling it out afterwards among themselves, according to the respective amounts of their deposits. In some cases they only pay a portion of the purchase-money down, the rest by annual instalments. Naturally, the second and third class of peasants above described take but little part in such investments.

In some districts, notably that of Kielce, on the Austrian frontier, small plots of land, of exceptional quality and position, are bought at almost fabulous prices by the peasants. As much and more than 100 l. an acre has lately been paid by them for such lots.

¹ *Powinno być: 1846.*

² *Francuski, osobliwy ekwiwalent terminu "fornale".*

^a *Wyraz skreślony; na marginesie dopisano: the proprietaries.*

In the district of Suwalki, on the north, or „Head” of the Kingdom of Poland, the peasants are in many cases quite wealthy. They are very fond of driving a good team of horses, and sometimes give as much as 100 l., and even 150 l., for a horse; 50 l. is a common price. Such peasants own from 70 to 90 or 100 acres of land. But even in this district, as will be seen later on, the peasants are suffering, in common with the Nobles, from bad prices.

It is difficult to imagine greater frugality than is practised by the Polish peasant.

With the exception of the first class peasants above alluded to, no Polish peasant ever eats butcher's meat during the whole year, unless at Easter, or on some grand occasion, such as a marriage in the family.

But nearly every peasant keeps a pig or two, and now and then he allows himself the relish of a very small quantity of bacon with his potatoes, pease, millet or buckwheat.

Black rye bread and potatoes are his staple food. I once heard a Polish farmer say that he always wished the potato crop to be a failure, as in that case the labourers were always more tractable. It was a hard remark, but it shows how much the Polish peasant depends upon potatoes for food. And it must be remembered that butcher's meat is extremely cheap in the country districts of Poland. Even in the provincial towns fairly good beef can be bought at from 2 d. to 3 d. per Polish pound of 14 ounces. The Polish pound is nine-tenths of the English pound. Mutton only costs 1 1/4 d. per pound.

The peasant or his wife makes nearly all his own clothes. He generally has a few sheep, mostly black merinos, and weaves a strong and durable cloth from the wool, which fetches 2 s. the „ell” of 2 feet. Each peasant grows a patch of flax, and the family linen is made from this in the winter evenings. He is usually very skilful with the axe, and the forest supplies him with firewood, building materials, and furniture. There is a Polish saying that „If a peasant goes into the wood with an axe, he comes out with a horse and cart”. There is a sly allusion here to his want of honesty, which is not altogether without foundation. Horse-stealing is largely prevalent in Poland; the carters invariably are obliged to sleep in the stable, taking it by turns when more than one pair of horses are kept. Pilfering of crops, and of most other things, is extremely common.

Still, with good management, and when well watched, Polish labourers do a fair amount of work, even for hire; and the feeling of respect for the Nobles has by no means died out amongst them.

Even in the cases where they have become comparatively rich, they have not lost their simplicity of life.

In one family which has been pointed out to me, one of the sons has been educated at the University, at which he so distinguished himself as to become one of the professors³. In another case a peasant's son became an officer owing to his services in the late Turkish war, and returned covered with decorations. The brothers of these two successful young men, themselves not without means, thought nothing of driving them to call on the Notables of the neighbourhood, and would remain outside the house for hours with the horses, without the idea of visiting the family themselves.

Drunkenness is no longer common in Poland, an immense improvement in this respect having taken place of late years. It is no doubt attributable to the high price of spirits. Beer is very little used, and pays also a high excise duty. But I believe that the improvement is mainly due to the influence of the priesthood, which is

³ *Prawdopodobnie mowa o Jerzym Aleksandrowiczu (1819—1894), profesorze botaniki w Szkole Głównej. Był on synem gospodarza z Kumieciszek w gub. augustowskiej.*

still very great in Poland; and deservedly so, for instances of gross excess of any kind on their part are very rare. There are a great number of feast days in the Polish Calendar and these interfere with agricultural work: the more so that of late some of the Russian festivals have been added. But, on the other hand, the working day is long enough, namely, from sunrise to sunset, and the carters have to get up earlier than this, so as to feed their horses or oxen before the day's work begins.

Morality in Poland is of an average quality. It is much encouraged among the peasant class by the value which is attached to children, whose labour enriches the family, whether they are working on their own land or on that of the Noble. No artificial restraints to population are even known in Poland. On the contrary, the more children a peasant has the better he is pleased.

I have observed several instances of fecundity on the part of the peasant women; such as is rarely paralleled, except perhaps among the French Canadians.

In one group of peasant's houses which I visited, I found two women, each of whom had nine children only; but with a difference of age of 20 years between the eldest and the youngest child in each case.

They are generally kind to their children, though they beat them now and then, but hardly ever cruelly. They also beat their wives now and then. During the past few months I have witnessed two cases of wife beating.

In the interior of the better class of peasant's houses there is usually great cleanliness, and the linen is generally of spotless purity. But in other respects the principles of hygiene are absolutely ignored or defied.

The general appearance of the Poles is pleasing. They resemble the Irish in features to a remarkable extent. The women and children are often very pretty, bright and intelligent. During the seven or eight months of warmer weather the two latter never wear shoes or stockings, either at work or in the house, shoes being only worn on Sundays or other holidays. But the men, at least after the age of 18, are never seen without their long, high boots, into which the trousers are tucked. These boots cost from 15 s. to 22 s., and usually last two years.

The sheepskin coat, which is almost universally worn in Poland, usually comes from the interior of Russia, and costs from 1 l. to 1 l. 10 s. They are mostly tanned either white or yellow, and are worn with the wool inside. They are picturesque looking and very warm. The better class of peasants usually wear them for two or three winters, and sell them to the poorer class for 12 s. or 14 s.

The Poles are mostly of average height, lithe and active, but not very strong. The men generally ride well, but are not to be compared to the peasants of the Ukraine or the Cossacks of the Don in this particular.

They are all, from the highest to the lowest, very fond of dancing. The greater part of numerous feast days, especially Sundays, are spent in this amusement, often in an atmosphere where the oxygen is sadly out of proportion to the tobacco smoke and other mephitic vapours. Yet the next morning the peasants are all at their work at daybreak, merry and lighthearted as ever.

The rate of wages varies a little according to the locality, following the laws of supply and demand, but the following will be found to be about the average throughout Poland: —

The men earn 6 1/4 d. a-day in winter, women 4 d. to 5 d. a-day, and children 2 1/2 d.

In summer a mower or reaper with a scythe gets from 1 s. 10 d. to 2 s. 1 d. per „morg”, equal to 1 1/3 acre (four thirds of an English acre).

The women, in harvest time, who are employed in binding and so forth, get from 7 1/2 d. to 9 d. a-day; children, from 4 d. to 5 d.

But the regular farm-labourers, who are employed all the year round (the hiring being annual), get paid almost entirely in kind: so many bushels of rye, of barley, of pease, and so forth, with lodging, and a patch of land for potatoes or cabbage.

It is extremely difficult to obtain reliable statistics as to the produce of land in Poland, and, indeed, upon any subject, for reasons which it is not necessary to mention. But I am assured, on good authority, that the following is about the average produce of fairly good land throughout the kingdom. They are reduced to English measures: —

An acre of sugar beetroot produces from 4 l. to 5 l.

An acre of wheat gives only about 3 l. to 4 l.

An acre of rye is only worth about 2 l. 10 s. to 3 l.

Oats, a very uncertain crop in Poland, may be counted at about the latter value.

But the majority of the land in Poland is a sandy loam of fair quality, and, when properly manured, and cleaned of the twitch, with which it is infested, ought to, and in fact does, produce crops which compare favourably with those of almost any country.

Opinions are somewhat divided as to the relative produce of the land cultivated by the Nobles, and the peasants respectively.

The officials of the Crédit Foncier of Poland, courteous gentlemen, who are generally excellently well-informed, and to whom my best thanks are due for much valuable information, declare that the balance is clearly in favour of the larger proprietors. But as education spreads, and unless the increase of money in the country keeps up with it, I am of opinion that the balance will be found more and more in favour of the peasant who is working with his own hands and with those of his own family on his own land.

The present is a good opportunity to cast a glance at the state of things shortly after the promulgation of the Ukase of 1864, although the Returns were necessarily not completed for some years afterwards.

Let us say, then, in 1871. The Kingdom of Poland was divided into 1,313 communes, or parishes, which were composed as follows: —

Parishes containing from 100 to 200 houses ...	30
" " " 200 300 " ..."	177
" " " 300 400 " ..."	355
" " " 400 500 " ..."	343
" " " 500 600 " ..."	214
" " " 600 700 " ..."	114
Of more than 700 houses ...	80
<hr/>	
Total ...	1,313

The population of these houses was 5,273,136, which gives an average of very nearly ten souls in every house; double what is usually quoted as the number of persons in each house, but not representing (as I venture to think) the crowded state of by far the majority of houses in Poland, of no matter what class.

The population in 1872 was thus divided: —

Roman Catholics	4,348,694
Jews (but surely these are understated)	371,920
Protestants (Evangelists)	283,760
Unitarians (? Deists) ⁴	256,500
Greek Church (Russians)	9,913
Mahommedans	2,310

To this must of course be added the army in Poland, which averages about 120,000 men.

The land of the country, exclusive of water and roads, consists of 18,170,991 "morgs", or about 24,000,000 English acres.

Of these, 9,062,038 morgs, or about 12,000,000 acres, belong to the peasants, who number 694,747 families; which gives an average of about 18 acres to each family.

Their actual holdings are classified as follows: —

204,705 families owned less than 4 acres each;

280,141 families owned less than 20 acres each; and

205,904 families owned more than 20 acres each.

The amount of annual taxes levied upon this land, and paid to the Government and to the local authorities, is 6,174,000 roubles, equal at present rates to about 620,000 l., and representing an average of nearly 1 l. per family, being an average of a little over 1 s. per acre for the land they own; and these are all the direct taxes the peasants pay in Poland.

The Nobles pay proportionally far more.

The Nobles are absolutely forbidden to purchase land from a peasant, and this is rigorously enforced.

In certain very rare cases, and after an immense amount of correspondence with S. Petersburg, a Noble is allowed to exchange a piece of land with a peasant; the latter always getting by far the best of the bargain. In one case which I know, the Noble had been for years in communication with the authorities regarding an exchange of land; and at last he received the permission; when, just before the act was signed, the Commissary discovered that another peasant had a claim to part of a house, on part of the land about to be conveyed to the Noble; and the affair consequently fell through.

Similar instances of part-ownership of houses, by the peasants and Nobles conjointly, are very common, being the result of the instantaneous enforcement of the Ukase. I could name several, where one of the rooms in a house belongs to a peasant and the rest to the Noble. Similarly, a peasant was mowing part of the Noble's garden, at the moment that the Commissary passed, and that portion was adjudged to the peasant in fee simple.

In the very rare cases where the minerals found upon a peasant's land are of a high value, sales have been effected to capitalists. This has been usually effected through the agency of the "Voigt", or "Reeve" of the district, who buys the peasant's land, and lets it at a 999 years lease to the intending brick or other manufacturer, the "Voigt" receiving on behalf of the peasant, a sum largely in excess of its agricultural value. Such evasions of the law are winked at, but the buyers run a great risk.

As a general rule, the exception being where beetroot is cultivated for the neighbouring sugar factory, the peasants adopt a rotation of three courses of crops, namely, oats, potatoes, and rye; dividing their land so that all three crops are produced every year. Besides which, as has been said, a strip is reserved for flax,

⁴ *Idzie, rzecz jasna, nie o unitarians (deistów!), lecz o unitów.*

pease, cabbage, and millet. Their land is rarely sufficiently manured, except in the neighbourhood of towns.

This year, for the first time, and only in the Piotrkow district, peasants have had the courage to sow lupin, and plough the crop in for manure. A proof of awakening intelligence which is full of promise for the future.

The education of the peasants has hitherto been much neglected but it is now being attended to in a greater degree. In consequence of the largely increased numbers of workpeople employed in various manufactures which have sprung up since the establishment of a protective policy, the Government is taking in hand the question of infant labour, and also of infant education. But at present the Regulations on this subject are but a few weeks old, and are as yet hardly completed.

Generally speaking, there can be no manner of doubt that the position of the Polish peasant of 1886 is far superior to that of the date of the issue of the famous Ukase. But, of course, there are also many cases where the peasant, either from ignorance, indolence, drunkenness, or dissipation, has neglected his land, and has already paid the inevitable penalty. Usually in such a case the neighbours buy the land, and add it to their own. In the course of my inquiries, I was more than once startled with the exclamation on the part of a peasant, that he would prefer to return to the old system. Upon my remarking "But then you could be beaten by your landlord," he replied, "Yes; but that very seldom happened, and at all events one was sure to have one's belly filled, which is not the case now-a-days."

And the Russian Governors of districts have told me that they often hear this complaint; but of course it must be received *cum grano salis*; and in fact must be treated as a pure fiction on the part of the peasants.

The tenacity with which peasants cling to their dwelling places is very remarkable. Before the Ukase it was usual to give to each farm labourer for his family one room, in which to dwell, cook, in fact for all purposes.

But in a large number of cases two families used to occupy the same room. These dwellings were for the most part in the immediate neighbourhood of the Noble's house; and they all had the land adjoining them for growing their own crops. When, however, they received this land in fee simple, and ceased to work for the landlord, it is natural that the latter would be very glad to see them moved a little further away from his own dwelling.

But it is extremely difficult to get them to consent to it, even when more land is offered to them, of superior quality and a lump sum in cash, with which to construct dwellings with much better accommodation than they at present enjoy. In one house of very modest dimensions I myself saw no less than twelve families, some of them numerous, occupying in all just six rooms; of which, besides about 3 acres of land, each family was the actual possessor. Each room was about 16 feet square and 8 feet high. In one room which I visited, I saw a boy sleeping restlessly and moaning, who works all night in the neighbouring sugar factory. On a cot in the window lay a little weazened old man, coiled up under a sheep-skin, who announced himself to me, in a shrill treble voice, as the father of the mother of one of the families.

Each of these families has two cows, which graze together with the landlord's in the summer. For this privilege he offers them each an acre and a-third of good land, worth at least 20 l., but they will not accept it, probably because it would involve the cultivation of forage crops; whereas at present they all, men, women and children, work either on the neighbouring proprietor's land or at the sugar factory.

It seems to me that when the low rate of wages which I have above quoted is taken into consideration, such an indisposition on their part to increase their freehold and enlarge their dwellings is full of matter for reflection.

Fortunately the families so thrown together rarely, if ever, quarrel with each other, which speaks volumes for the good nature of the race; but domestic differences such as I have above described are not unknown.

Throughout the whole of Poland the peasants' houses have the same appearance and shape, and are mostly of the same size. They consist of four rooms on the ground floor, one of which is used as a kitchen, one as a store-room for potatoes, cabbage, and so forth, one a sleeping room for the elders, and in the fourth the younger portion of the family sleep; usually the meals being taken in the kitchen. The cottages are sometimes built of brick, but much more usually of wood, and are invariably thatched, and the walls usually whitewashed at Easter. During my tour of inspection in Poland, which included six out of the ten districts into which the kingdom is divided, I saw very few new barns or stables among the hundreds of villages. Nor did many of the houses appear to have been built during the past twenty years. The trees, mostly poplars, which have been planted around some of the cottages, seemed about that age. But they are very fond of planting a kind of willow, which is of a marvellously hardy nature, all about their boundaries. A few orchards, some dozens perhaps altogether, are being planted in the country. But an orchard requires a fence, and of a solid kind, which is almost unknown in Poland. It is curious to notice that the orchards of the Nobles, which are almost universally attached to their gardens, are nearly always let to a Jew, who, with some of his family, squats there during the summer, watching all night, and prowling about at intervals during the day, in his long coat and slippers.

Neither paint nor tar are ever used in the preservation of the peasants' fences or buildings, so that their general appearance is decidedly mean and squalid; and as the greater part of Poland is very flat, and the soil generally of a sandy nature, it may be fairly decried as a very ugly country, which is but little relieved by the frequent forests, mostly of the gloomy pine.

It is impossible to realize the position of peasants and Nobles in Poland at this moment without adverting to the vexed and ever-burning question of the peasants' rights, or "servitudes", as they are generally called, somewhat erroneously.

From time immemorial the cattle of the peasants were in the habit of grazing together with those of the Noble throughout Russia and Poland. The peasants also enjoyed the privilege of cutting wood, under certain restrictions, in the forests of the Nobles, which covered the greater part of the Russian Empire.

It is obvious that the progress of civilization, entailing in many cases the sale of the timber, the increased desire to create parks, gardens, and pleasure grounds, the increasing scarceness and value of game, the improvement in the breeds of cattle, and many other products of recent enlightenment render such privileges more and more intolerable to the land-owners.

Even twenty-one years ago, at the time of the issuing of the Ukase, this was felt to be the case, and the instructions to the Commissioners, in Russia proper, were such that in a very short time the majority of these "servitudes" were arranged amicably between peasant and Noble, the former being restricted to their own lands, both as regards pasturage and cutting wood; a reasonable, but far from excessive, compensation being awarded to them, out of the lands of the Nobles, for the privileges they had formerly exercised.

Apart from the tenour of the instructions privately given to the Commissioners in Poland, it must be remembered that here they are all Russians, and, consequently, aliens; while in Russia they were among their own countrymen.

But it has been universally admitted to me, even by Russian officials, that the Ukase was conceived and administered in a very different spirit in Poland from that which obtained in the rest of the Empire.

Following as it did immediately after the unhappy and insane insurrection of 1862—63, the shape which it took was decidedly of a penal nature.

The compensation given to the Nobles in "letters of liquidation" payable in sixty years, and for which they themselves were taxed (as well as, in a minor degree, the peasants), was notoriously inadequate.

And the peasants were treated, in their demands for pasturage and woodcutting, in many cases, with an indulgence which almost amounted to the spoliation of the Nobles. And the fact remains, that although twenty-one years have gone by since the Ukase, only 20 per cent — or one-fifth of the "servitudes" as regards the rights of forestry, though a larger proportion of the pasturage rights — have been arranged by the Commissioners.

And the authorities make no secret of their wish and intention of leaving things for the most part as they are. General Albedynski, the predecessor of the present Governor-General⁵, held other views, and during his reign a good many "servitudes" were arranged.

In very glaring cases, where the desire of the peasants to arrange the matter is evident, and where their interests in so doing can be shown to be overwhelming, the permission is reluctantly, but rarely, accorded. The Russian authorities admit that they prefer to keep the "sore" open, considering it to be for the good of the body politic; and it is obviously in the interest of the Commissioners not to commit, so to speak, a "happy dispatch", and put an end to their own *raison d'être*.

I have described the state of things as intolerable, and it cannot be said that the term is too strong in certain instances which could be given. But at the same time it must be allowed that, theoretically, the Nobles are protected, and, in some cases sufficiently.

All forests where "servitudes" exist are divided into ninety parts, one of which can be cut by the owner every year, and during the fifteen years subsequent to the cutting, while the young trees are growing up, the peasants are prohibited from sending their cattle in. Besides which the peasants are restricted as to the number of days and the amount of wood they can cut.

But the surveillance which is necessitated to enforce the law is costly and vexatious, and there is no doubt that the frequent threats of, and attempts at, assassination of the landlords, which are becoming more and more common in Poland, are entirely due to this burning question.

Nor are the threats idle, or the attempts always unsuccessful. Recently several cases of murder have occurred.

The Polish press is by no means free, nor is it so well supplied with news as our own; but I may quote two instances, which are of very late occurrence, and where the scene would appear to have been laid in quite another country. In one a lady was dangerously wounded.

In another a popular young landlord was riddled by shot in the open day, and only lived to reach his own door, where he fell dead, having galloped for 2 miles at full speed with a shattered arm and side. In this case he had been warned by his own people not to go near two of his discontented peasants. And the popular superstition of a hare crossing his path will have gathered strength in that part of the country, as it was pointed out to him a few minutes before his assassination.

But agrarian murders are not confined to the Nobles. I am assured by persons competent to speak on the subject, that many a brother, father, or mother, is done to death among the peasants themselves, when the life stands in the way of a coveted inheritance.

⁵ *Piotr Albedyński był general-gubernatorem warszawskim w latach 1880—1883; następcą jego został gen. Józef Hurko.*

By the terms of the Ukase, the subdivision consequent upon the death of the head of the family was limited to 8 acres; that is to say, that no subdivision can take place by which any member of the family gets less than 8 acres. This is a very significant fact, and it formed a portion of my most particular inquiries.

The invariable reply which I received to my question, as to what was the minimum quantity of land upon which a peasant can maintain himself and an average family, was 20 acres of land of an average quality, or 13 acres of the best land. It must be borne in mind that the maintenance consists of rye bread, potatoes, only a scrap of pork now and again, and never a morsel of butter the whole year round.

I was told on all sides that already the subdivision of the land is becoming an important and disagreeable question, and that an agricultural proletariat is being rapidly created, and this only twenty-one years since half the land in the country was given to one class.

To conclude the question of the peasant rights, numbers of instances could be given to show the excessive increase in the demands of the peasants for compensation, in lieu of their rights of pasturage and forestry; but probably three, which are typical, will suffice.

In one, which was furnished to me by an official of the *Crédit Foncier* in one of the provincial towns, he found his property burdened with "servitudes", which would, if they had been carried out, have actually exhausted the whole of his forest. This he was able to prove to the satisfaction of the *Commissionners*, immediately after the issue of the Ukase, and, by great good fortune, he succeeded in getting the (fifty or sixty) peasants to accept each about 2 acres of land in lieu of these rights. His neighbours at the time remonstrated with him at such an excessive concession. Now every one of them would have to give up 10 acres for each similar arrangement. In another case the demands of the peasants, if conceded, absorb the whole of the proprietor's land. In a third case the Noble has offered no less than 130,000 acres (100,000 "morgs") to arrange the servitudes, and he cannot succeed.

So that it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that in 1864 the Emperor gave half the land in fee simple to the peasants, together with the rights of pasturage and forestry over about half of the remaining portion.

But although the peasants have benefited they are by no means exempt from the common lot which appears to have befallen agriculturists during the last year or two in Europe. And instances could be very freely given to show that they are at this moment suffering quite as keenly as those in the British Isles from the fall in the prices of produce. Even in the favoured district of Suwalki, where the peasants and farmers were comparatively wealthy, I have heard well-authenticated cases of their having fallen into the hands of the Jews, who are pressing them remorselessly for payment. In order to meet their liabilities, in many cases they have burnt down their barns, which, with the contents, were heavily insured, and so raised a temporary sum to hand over to the usurers. The same has been told me of other districts, and those insurance offices which are conducted upon the mutual system are almost all insolvent throughout the country. Besides the thriftless grumblers of whom I have spoken, I know that many a peasant has had a very hard fight to keep the wolf from the door, which is, perhaps, more literally true in Poland than in most countries. And I have heard of whole villages which are hopelessly bankrupt, their crops being held, as in Suwalki, by their Jewish creditors.

It is difficult to pronounce an opinion offhand as to the probability in the future of Polish peasants and other agriculturists being able to compete with the other wheat-growing countries of the world. My conviction, however, is that if the communications, roads & c., were improved and elevators constructed, while no hindrance is placed on the exports by other countries, such as Germany or Austria,

Poland ought, by reason of the low price of labour and of land, at least to be able to hold her own.

If more attention were given to the nourishment and housing of all kinds of stock, and some improvement made in the breeds, a quality of meet could be produced which would find a market in Western Europe. Even as it is, when one remembers that Warsaw is within 43 hours of rail from London, and that mutton is only 1 1/2 d. per lb., it seems marvellous that no one undertakes the enterprise.

Small-pox, which used to be a dreadful scourge, is very much kept under by constant attention to vaccination.

Typhus fever, however, makes awful ravages, whole villages being sometimes decimated; this is solely due to the absolute neglect of the most ordinary sanitary precautions.

The population, however, is steadily increasing, and will, in my opinion, in future be sufficient to consume all the rye which the country at present produces, although just now this cereal has fallen in price, owing to the import duty put upon it by Germany.

Poland lies in the same parallels of latitude as England; the climate is, however, colder in winter than in Britain.

Strongly as one may sympathize with the oppressed race of Israel, one cannot shut one's eyes to the fact that the trade of Poland is almost entirely in the hands of the Jews, and this even applies to agriculture. They peddle the wheat and rye, buying it in small quantities, and retailing it in the pettiest fashion. It is a curious fact that no Pole in the country districts can buy or sell the smallest article, or complete any sort of transaction, without the intermediary of a Jew. Unless in the more common case that the Jew is himself the merchant, he must at least be the go-between.

Of course they are also the chief bankers and money-lenders.

But the cause of much of the depression is commonly attributed to the persecution of these people some three years ago, which has certainly given a paralysis to Polish trade.

At this moment Poland is suffering from another cause of depression, which largely affects the agricultural interest, namely, the fall in the price of beetroot sugar.

And it will be a great pity if this crop is reduced in Poland, as, independent of its money value to the grower, it cleans the ground better than any other, owing to the numerous weedings it requires. But, like every other product fostered by protection, it has arrived at the point of over-production, and no help can come to the producers, a foreign market being impossible.

The consideration of this question, full of interest as it is, would far exceed the limits of this Report, but I hope I may be allowed to add, in conclusion, that no one can reside, as I have done, for over nine years, among this kindly, sympathetic, chivalrous, and light-hearted people, without feeling a sincere interest in their prosperity, and a wish for their future material and industrial development.

Nor at the same time would it be fair to conclude this Report without expressing my thanks for the courtesy which I invariably received at the hands of all officials, Russian and Polish.

(Signed) Francis C. Maude

Warsaw, December 31, 1885