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## “TRANSLATOR OF TYLOR AND MORGAN.” ON ALEKSANDRA BĄKOWSKA AND HER SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

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**Abstract:** The article is about the friendship and social activity of two important female representatives of the Polish emancipation movement at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Aleksandra Bąkowska, aristocrat and owner of the Gołotczyzna estate as well as translator of early American anthropological works, and Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit, impoverished noblewoman, leader of the suffragist movement in the Polish Kingdom. Both women were inspired by the ideas of Lewis Henry Morgan, the researcher of the Iroquois culture and the author of, among others, *Ancient Society* (1877), in which he described and compared different systems of kinship in pre- and non-Christian cultures. Bąkowska translated this book into Polish in 1887, which triggered a discussion among early Polish sociologists, anthropologists and cultural philosophers, most importantly about the issue of the historicity of the institution of monogamian marriage and patriarchal family. Bąkowska turned a part of the Gołotczyzna estate into a school for country girls founded on the principles resembling the communist community of rights and obligations as described by L.H. Morgan based on the observation of Indian tribes. Kuczalska-Reinschmit, on the other hand, established the Polish Women Emancipation Association in Warsaw, whose seat – with a reading room, a lending library, a lecture hall – was also organized as a community, mainly for women. Both initiatives led to the dissemination of emancipation ideas in the Polish Kingdom before WWI and contributed to the principle of equality of rights for men and women inscribed in the new Polish constitution of 1918.

**Keywords:** agrarian reform, anthropology, feminism, modernism, Lewis Henry Morgan, Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit, Aleksandra Bąkowska

## Introduction

The paucity of sources for the history of Polish emancipation movements must seem bewildering to anyone who wishes to learn not only about the activities of the mothers and grandmothers of present-day feminism, but perhaps above all to anyone who wants to know who those women were and where they found their inspiration and force to live, work and organize themselves in unconventional ways. While existing studies that have appeared since 1989, including books by Maria Ciechomska (1996), Sławomira Walczewska (1998), Aneta Górnicka-Boratyńska (2001), collected works edited by Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz (1990–2006) or Agnieszka Janiak-Jasińska and Katarzyna Sierakowska (2008, 2009) do contain highly valuable information on the aplomb, inventiveness and ideological solidarity exhibited by Polish suffragists and feminists between the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the outbreak of World War Two, but say little of the women themselves. Dictionaries, encyclopaedias and anthologies usually copy the same data, mainly associated with the suffragists' social activity, and are silent on their personal lives.

Their silence was premeditated, as stated by Jan Hulewicz in the introduction to his edition of the memoirs of Romana Pachucka, one of the youngest collaborators of Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit and member of the Polish Women Emancipation Association. He wrote there of a peculiar “disproportion between the abundance, richness and dynamics of the Polish feminist movement, and the scarcity and the dearth of memoirs on the subject” (Pachucka 1958: v),<sup>1</sup> which differentiated the Polish emancipation movement from those of the US, Britain, Germany or Russia as early as in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and which apparently continues to be a constant feature of Polish feminist writing to this day. Autobiographical documentation has been left by neither the mid-nineteenth-century pioneers of emancipation such as Klementyna Hoffmanowa *née* Tańska, Eleonora Ziemięcka or Narcyza Żmichowska, nor by participants in the Positivist discussion on the “woman question,” for example, Eliza Orzeszkowa, Józefa Dobieszewska or Anastazja Dzieduszycka. The first female students of universities in Poland (Łwów and Kraków), feminist activists of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – Kuczalska-Reinschmit, Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, Maria

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<sup>1</sup> Further quotations from this source will be marked (RP: page number). All have been translated by J.R.

Dulebianka, Kazimiera Bujwidowa, Stefania Sempołowska – all failed to write about themselves. This is why the memoirs of Pachucka, Jadwiga Sikorska-Klemensiewiczowa (1961) and Teodora Krajewska *née* Kosmowska (1989) were seen by Hulewicz as priceless material for a historian of the Polish emancipation movement. Naturally, Hulewicz listed some of the most important reasons for this documental vacuum, including the activists' "excessive" zeal in all manner of work; the need for conspiracy in some of that work due to the fact that Poland was partitioned at the time between three occupying powers; the relatively scant general interest in memoirs on the part of publishers (RP: vi–vii). He was well aware, however, that this was a much more complex phenomenon and that the reasons for the silence differed from person to person: "It is obvious that we are far away at this point from revealing the entirety of reasons behind this quandary" (RP: viii). Nowadays this can be said in a much more direct way: each of the women mentioned by Hulewicz had her secrets she wanted to conceal from the world.

Pachucka devotes almost half of her memoirs to the leader of Polish suffragists, and this is why it remains the most abundant source of information on the life and work of the editor-in-chief of *Ster* (The Steering-wheel). Conversations with Pachucka and her notes allowed Hulewicz to prepare the Polish Dictionary of Biography entries for Kuczalska-Reinschmit and other emancipationists of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Hulewicz 1937, 1948, 1971) and they now serve as reference for contemporary historians of the Polish emancipation movement. It would seem that the reserves of knowledge in Pachucka's narrative have been completely exhausted; thankfully, this is not the case. The only difference is that research has to be continued elsewhere – for instance, in a library.

Kuczalska-Reinschmit could read several languages; throughout her life, she continued to order books for a well-planned feminist collection open to the public on the premises of the Association; it was both a reading room and a lending library. In the words of Pachucka, Kuczalska "was perfectly knowledgeable in the history of the emancipation movement abroad as well as in Poland; in the law and all its articles oppressive to women, sociology, and world literature on women's situation and writing. The reading room was equipped with all these books and the selection was made by Kuczalska herself" (RP: 145). The book that the leader of Polish feminism valued highly was *Ancient Society* by Lewis H. Morgan, published in Washington, D.C., in 1871. Translated into Polish by Aleksan-

dra Bąkowska in 1884 and published in Warsaw in 1887 by the progressive weekly *Prawda* (The Truth), edited in the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Aleksander Świętochowski. Pachucka states the fundamental importance of Morgan to Kuczalska-Reinschmit, yet she does not explain the Polish suffragist's respect for the American anthropologist. This leads to two possible conclusions: either Kuczalska-Reinschmit's motives were so obvious for her contemporaries that no explanation was unnecessary or they remained a mystery. In any case, the importance of Morgan to Kuczalska-Reinschmit makes it impossible not to mention him in any description of her work. If the latter were true, Morgan's *Ancient Society* would be one of the many tokens of remembrance of a person dear to Pachucka, albeit an unwieldy one – as it happens with such a keepsake. Pachucka had no idea what to do with that heritage: to preserve it as a dubious ornament in memory of her deceased friend or, for practical reasons, to discard it. She chose the former. Morgan “sticks out a mile” in the otherwise smooth tale by Pachucka.

I once asked her opinion on the statement by Morgan, the famous scholar, that the decline of ancient civilisation had been caused by the lack of development in women.

Mrs Kuczalska agreed with Morgan. She held that modern civilisation would die if women did not acquire their rights. She believed that matriarchy once existed as civilisation created by women and was of the opinion that, should attempts at world peace by joint government by men and women fail, humanity would be rescued by women, namely by a new matriarchy, since women's solidarity is based on life-giving instincts and motherly love, which is against all dangers threatening humanity's survival. (...) It is the aim of our present feminist movement, she added, to try to create a civilisation based on cooperation of both men and women (RP: 216).

Two other pieces of information can be gathered from Pachucka's narrative that are associated with Morgan in ideological and personal ways.

The ideological element is that, in Pachucka's text, “matriarchy” neighbours on “communism.” The connection between “matriarchy” and “communism” must have been unclear to Pachucka herself, since, despite easy access to the Association's library, she did not associate Lewis Morgan with Jacob Bachofen and Friedrich Engels in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – unlike Kuczalska-Reinschmit herself:

Her personal experience, the evil done to her by her husband, her infirmity and, finally, the Positivist undercurrents in Warsaw all led Kuczalska to take up anew the issue of emancipation, treated as the cause of broadly-understood humanity. She believed that 1. women would contribute to tone down international and internal strife, as she expressed herself in her writings; 2. that collaboration between women would improve the fate of societies; 3. that they would ban slavery, human trafficking and prostitution, a disgrace to humanity; that women would conquer venereal diseases, alcoholism and tuberculosis; 4. that they would improve the living conditions of mothers and children.

Kuczalska's social ideal was communism, although she did not belong to the party. When she spoke of the future social system, she saw women liberated from their duties of housewives and nurses, working professionally on equal terms with men, being provided for their own survival and that of their families, their children's upbringing and education. She dreamed of matriarchy. She maintained that contemporary eroticism had been artificially imposed on women against natural laws, and this she saw as a catastrophe for humanity: the woman, created to bear children, metamorphosed into a mistress, a concubine. She should be cured through professional work, education, independent life. Kuczalska reasoned and demanded much like Mickiewicz: "Equal rights to the woman-comrade!" *Jus suffragi* was a slogan on the Association's postcards, illustrated by a woman's figure shedding her chains (RP: 146–147).

The above fragment, reprinted in numerous materials devoted to Kuczalska-Reinschmit, has been usually interpreted as an expression of views common among women activists, both in Poland and abroad, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but none of the interpreters has paid much attention to what exactly associated "matriarchy" with "communism." Only Aneta Górnicka-Boratyńska addresses the connection between the two ideas, but she merely states it without further discussion. It is worthwhile to quote a fitting fragment from her book *Stańmy się sobą* (Let Us Become Ourselves), from the chapter on Polish suffragists:

[Suffragists] often appealed to the idea of matriarchy, citing Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization* (1877, Polish edition 1887), complete with an extensive commentary by Friedrich Engels. The American anthropologist claimed that the emergence of the monogamian patriarchal family had been preceded by other forms of family and of social community based on maternal law. Engels, associating the rise of patriarchal family with that of private property, thus emphasized one of Morgan's theses:

"The development of economic relationships provided answers to the benefit of men, as the downfall of maternal law (...) followed the growth of extra-

-domestic property (flocks, herds). This breakthrough constituted the historic defeat of the female sex. Men seized the reins also at home, women were turned into slaves of men's lust and mere machines for bearing children." (Engels 1887: 610).

These theses were also stated by Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884, Polish edition 1885), popular at the beginning of the century (Górnicka-Boratyńska 2001: 87–88; trans. J.R.).

Still, a simple comparison between Morgan and Engels is not enough, for it refers us to the socialist trend in feminist thinking, represented at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by August Bebel (1897, 1897a, 1933; Richter 1892), Aleksandra Kołłątaj, Lily Braun (1904, 1908), and propagated in the Polish lands in brochures published by the Polish Women Emancipation Association, for example written by Cecylia Walewska or Edward Chwalewik (1908). Apparently, this should have solved the problem of interpretation once and for all, yet it did not, for a combination of Morgan's ideas with trends, activists and texts rooted in the thought of Marx and Engels would eliminate other interpretations of such associations, other ways of their "existential" reception.

Such a reception calls for a discussion of personal relationships. In Pachucka's story, Morgan does not exist without his Polish translator Aleksandra Bąkowska, herself connected to Kuczalska-Reinschmit by a special intellectual and existential bond. In her own words, Pachucka met "the translator of Tylor and Morgan" a short while before the outbreak of World War One at Gołotczyzna, Bąkowska's estate near Ciechanów, where, in 1909, the latter had established an agricultural school for girls and where, in 1912, Aleksander Świętochowski founded a similar school for boys, "Bratne." This is a portrait of Bąkowska as seen by Pachucka:

(...) Mrs Bąkowska was a woman in her prime, stout, of medium height, with a beautiful head. She carried herself with some pride, with the ease of one who has never known any financial dependence, observing the world with humour and with indulgence for its weaknesses. Her face was extraordinarily expressive, with regular features and dark eyes of great beauty. She was a brunette. Her eyes concealed passion and temperament, irony and humour; these eyes knew how to talk of love, but also how to express disdain or hatred. A powerful and original individuality, high culture, intelligence, great learning that allowed her to translate Tylor and Morgan. That was Mrs Bąkowska (RP: 194).

Pachucka was surprised both by the presence of Świętochowski in Bąkowska's estate and by her educational enterprise. This would sug-

gest that the knowledge of the relationship between the owner and "Poseł Prawdy" (Messenger of Truth, one of Świętochowski's pennames) was not common knowledge among the youngest generation of feminists at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although it was a frequent subject of gossip in Warsaw in the 1880s:

I faced another riddle. What was Świętochowski doing there; why was he roughing it in the remote and provincial Gołotczyzna, why did Mrs Bąkowska establish the "Bratne" school? I could not ask directly, I had to wait to remain alone with Bojanowska. (...) There was a secret of a woman's heart at the bottom of it. Bąkowska was in love with Świętochowski. She was now for him nothing but the past; he for her was still her only love of her youth. She hoped that they would come together again in their common toil for the people at the twilight of their lives. Little did she know, as she was building him a home on her own estate, how bitter the future was to be, how heartless her lover of her life's spring would prove to the defenceless aged woman. Meanwhile Bąkowska worked with her whole enthusiasm, energy and faith for the two agricultural schools on her land. And she was happy. That was when I learned to respect that dignified woman (RP: 197–198).

The last sentence is interesting. Pachucka only "learned to respect" Bąkowska as an educational activist after a prolonged stay at Gołotczyzna and when she realized the extent of her social work; this would suggest that she had not respected Bąkowska as a woman. The owner of the estate divided her land into three parts: one for the girls' school, one for the boys', one she retained for herself. She secured "Bratne" financially; she even built a house for Świętochowski there, according to his wishes, a house "in the style of a country cottage." But the lover "of her life's spring" did not fulfil her expectations, as explained in footnote 22:

In the troubled days of famine during World War One, both ladies, Kuczalska-Reinschmit and Bojanowska, went to Gołotczyzna. I was invited to visit Mrs Bąkowska and the two chairwomen of the Association. I found a heavy and unbearable atmosphere at Gołotczyzna; Mrs Bąkowska herself was changed by the sad experience and alone. Kuczalska and Bojanowska eventually resolved to return to the famished capital. The reason for Mrs Bąkowska's tragedy was Aleksander Świętochowski, who cohabited with a peasant girl called Marysia, right there for everyone to see, in the very "Cottage" Mrs Bąkowska had built for him. I witnessed a scene when the young woman poured scorn on Bąkowska in the most cruel way, emboldened by the support of the old man, who indulged her youth (RP: 197).

It is now time to state the questions that arise from this combination of Morgan, Bąkowska and Kuczalska-Reinschmit: how did the theories of nineteenth-century anthropologists relate to the real lives of the emancipation activists; what was the relationship between translation work and the life of a nineteenth-century translator and reader? In other words: what was the connection between Morgan and the common ventures of Bąkowska and Świętochowski as well as Kuczalska-Reinschmit and Bojanowska? To answer, we need first certain facts about Bąkowska's life and social activity, and then a rundown on the relationship between anthropology, sociology and feminism at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## Aleksandra Bąkowska

There exist few published reminiscences on Aleksandra Bąkowska; she is always associated with Aleksander Świętochowski and never treated as a figure in her own right and with her own history, independent of the biography of the Messenger of Truth. Apart from the above-mentioned memoirs by Pachucka, these include *Wspomnienia* (Reminiscences) by socialist Ludwik Krzywicki, Świętochowski's collaborator at *Prawda* from a younger generation, and *Mój pamiętnik* (My Diary) by Zofia Solarzowa, a village school teacher who did her teacher's training at Gołotczyzna in the interwar period. Documents preserved in manuscript are quoted abundantly by Świętochowski's biographer Maria Brykalska, who provides the greatest body of information on Bąkowska; interestingly, she ignores Pachucka's report. In my work on this biographical note on Bąkowska, I have been using the two-volume biography of Świętochowski, albeit modifying Brykalska's perspective: here Bąkowska is no longer one of many people in Świętochowski's nearest company; it is Świętochowski – while indeed a person of primary importance for Bąkowska – who now becomes one of the many persons around her. I must stress, however, that my study of Świętochowski's biography has convinced me of the need for a rereading of the sources used by Brykalska, if researchers on the history of the Polish emancipation movement would ever wish to look in detail at the life and work of the owner of Gołotczyzna. Therefore, I treat the present text as an outline of the possible directions for research rather than as a complete description of the results.



Brykalska paints the following picture of Bąkowska when, in 1884, the latter entered the life of Świętochowski and the history of the *Prawda* weekly:

As witnessed by her contemporaries, Aleksandra Bąkowska was exceedingly impressive: she had a bearing of a great lady, imposing aristocratic appearance and remarkably good looks; at the same time, she was attractive in her "high spirituality," modesty and sadness. Her "outstanding beauty" was even mentioned by Świętochowski in his *Historia chłopów polskich* (History of Polish Peasants), in his tribute to the sponsor of country education already after her death (...). Descended from a wealthy landowner family, the Sędzimir, the daughter of Aleksander and Karolina *née* Dembińska, she was born at Ślubów near Ciechanów on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1851. She received an outstanding education abroad, mostly in France; she had a good knowledge of French and English. As a girl of 17, she married another wealthy landowner, Kazimierz Bąkowski from the Kalisz province. The marriage was a failure. Her husband was a man of the world; she was interested in research and social matters. There was a story that, as a child, she witnessed a whipping of a serf by an estate administrator and the memory of the injustice remained with her for her entire life; she became an ardent champion of peasantry. The marital situation was made worse by the wife's sexual inhibitions; her husband thought her to be not entirely sane. They parted without rancour; it was said that she played matchmaker in his second marriage. She returned to her family's estate after the divorce, but, received with little enthusiasm, she soon left to live in Warsaw. She spent part of each year at Gołotczyzna, an estate she had purchased near Ciechanów. She began to prepare for studies in Switzerland, assisted in her self-education by Władysław Wilczyński, a physician afflicted by an incurable disease, who remained under her care. It was probably on his advice and that of another doctor friend, Franciszek Rajkowski from Ciechanów, that she contacted Świętochowski about translating Morgan. Already an admirer of the Messenger of Truth, she welcomed the possibility of personal contact and collaboration as an unexpected adventure and a gift of fate. In the opinion of those in the know, her relationship to Świętochowski remained clearly platonic on Bąkowska's staunch insistence. After attempts at breaking down her resistance, her partner could only acquiesce to her wishes, also due to his own personal situation (Brykalska 1987: I, 377–378).<sup>2</sup>

According to *Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych Krajów Słowieńskich* (Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland and

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<sup>2</sup> Further quotations from this source will be marked (MB: volume number, page number). All have been translated by J.R.

Other Slavic Countries), Bąkowska bought the Gołotczyzna estate in 1880. The village had been known since mid-18<sup>th</sup> century; at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it had thirty inhabitants living in four houses. The entry for the settlement in the Dictionary runs: “Gołotczyzna, or Gołoczyzna, village on the Sona river, district of Ciechanów, parish of Sońsk. It lies on the Vistula Railroad, 6 versts from Gąsocin towards Ciechanów. 4 households, 30 inhabitants (1827). Presently: 7 households, 122 inhabitants. The G. estate consists of the following granges: G., Strusinek and Bieńki Zarny, and the following villages: G., Łyczki, Pogąsty and Strusin” (Chlebowski 1881: 678). As her later life shows, Bąkowska, an unmarried landowner, bought Gołotczyzna not only as her home and source of income but also with her social-activist goals in mind. That these had been well-defined by 1884, that is, before meeting Świętochowski in person, is confirmed by the fact that she first contacted *Prawda* already with a completed translation of Morgan’s *Ancient Society*. Her choice of an author then little known (and ignored on purpose) in Europe shows her good knowledge of the latest trends in non-traditional and non-Spencerian evolutionist social anthropology.<sup>3</sup> Her steady scholarly interest in anthropology is proved by her later translations: Edward Burnett Tylor’s *Anthropology: An Introduction to the Study of Man and Civilization* (1889) and *On a Method of Investigating the Development of Institutions; Applied to Laws of Marriage and Descent* (1897), and George Laurence Gomme’s *Ethnology in Folklore* (1901).

Bąkowska and Świętochowski were separated not only by a chasm of social difference that the landowner and the literary intellectual were unable to bridge till the end of their lives – as remarked even by Świętochowski’s above-quoted biographer, very clearly his great fan – but also on ethical

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<sup>3</sup> Ludwik Krzywicki saw Morgan’s anti-Spencerianism both in the conclusions of his studies and in his democratic views, expressed among others in his disapproval of aristocracy and his faith in a more just distribution of property among people in the future. Krzywicki wrote: “once we agree with the American’s ideas, Spencer’s whole many-volume sociology – with the exception of the first, which deals with the origin of religious concepts – becomes a study of no scientific value; I do not concern myself with its social significance. (...) The revolution caused by Morgan’s observations (...) is so gigantic that it is difficult to fathom by a non-specialist. Theories and authorities fail. The silence that reigns in Europe’s scientific circles is quite understandable; it becomes even more telling because they have no qualms to reach for the facts gathered by the American – so long as they do not quote their source. (...) It certainly jars with its Yankee disdain for general clichés and scientific ‘truths’ as it discards them like trash, with its democratic freedom in considering this world’s greatness, and with its unheard-of courage when looking into the future” (Krzywicki 1887a: 231–232; trans. J.R.).

grounds, as frequently and strongly emphasized by Krzywicki, much less tolerant of the Messenger of Truth. Krzywicki recalls that conversations between the pair of platonic lovers often degenerated into "constant arguments on the peasant question" (1959: III, 76),<sup>4</sup> with Bąkowska invariably "exhibiting a much more earnest feeling for villagers' misery" (LK: III, 86). They had known of each other – if only by reputation – before Bąkowska entered the office of *Prawda*. Świętochowski had heard of her from Franciszek Rajkowski: in an essay devoted to the advent of Warsaw's first practising female physician, Tomaszewiczowa (later Dobrska), published in *Nowiny* (The News) in 1880, he wrote:

You must agree, reader, that although she is an unwanted personage for our guardians of the women's "priesthood," she is a remarkable phenomenon. You cannot find one like her in your own neighbourhood and you need to travel far to see another like her. I have heard tales, it is true, of a beautiful scholar, who, hidden in the forests of the Ciechanów province, studies physiology and plans to go to a university; I have heard of a few hotheads, who have since grown colder abroad, but there is only one practicing lady doctor in this country (1880: 2; trans. J.R.).

Bąkowska, meanwhile, worshipped the malicious pen and the independent views of *Prawda*'s editor-in-chief, especially those on the woman question. When the "beautiful scholar" appeared before Świętochowski in person, he became interested not only in her translation of Morgan, which he entrusted for editing to Krzywicki, then a young collaborator of the paper, but above all in the translator herself. Krzywicki decided that the translation was "smooth but abundant in numerous faults" (LK: III, 115) and that it required a more disciplined use of terminology. He also noticed that, as the editing went on, Świętochowski, a married man and a father of four, "became increasingly infatuated" (LK: III, 76) in Bąkowska, eventually fell in love with her "like an immature student" and "into his life came an element of irrationality" (LK: III, 133). The only domain where he could impress that "woman of great spiritual as well as physical beauty" was the intellect: Świętochowski – as reminisced by Krzywicki – "was happy with every error I found: this allowed him to flaunt his superiority over the translator, if only under the guise of the publisher whose single care was for the best quality of the translation" (LK: III, 115). The editing

<sup>4</sup> Further quotations from this source will be marked (LK: volume number, page number). All have been translated by J.R.

of the Morgan translation – and the incubation of Świątochowski's feelings – went on for three years: *Spoleczeństwo pierwotne* was published by *Prawda* in 1887; in 1888, Tylor's *Antropologia* appeared as a free supplement to the weekly. Bąkowska, while in awe of Świątochowski's intellectuality, was unflinching in her "obsession with peasants," evident in her sympathy to the new progressive weekly *Głos* (The Voice), promoting peasants' views, much to her admirer's displeasure. Świątochowski saw *Głos* as "as an unnecessary venture, harming his attempts to concentrate the entire progressive and democratic circles around *Prawda*" (MB: I, 406). Inspired by Świątochowski, Krzywicki wrote *Złudzenia demokratyczne* (Democratic Illusions), a series of pamphlets against *Głos*, published in *Prawda* in 1889:

The initiative had been Świątochowski's, but his true inspiration stemmed from his theoretical arguments with A. Bąkowska, a person of much deeper social feeling than her admirer. Raised in the country and remaining in contact with a village community, she felt strongly about the low level of enlightenment among the peasants, the people's passivity and, above all, their misery. She suffered at the evidence of their loyalist reflexes towards Russia, a result of the abolition of serfdom by the Russian government. Her preoccupations were best voiced by *Głos*, at least as far as censorship permitted (LK: III, 123).

At the time, the future features of *Głos* had not yet surfaced, some of which would have offended her as a woman of feeling and a humanitarian, so Bąkowska felt attracted to *Głos* with her entire being (LK: III, 124).

Now Aleksander was displeased with A. Bąkowska's sympathies for *Głos*. He tried to convince her, but with little success (LK: III, 125).

Thus, in the 1880s, Bąkowska became Świątochowski's muse, the official inspirer of his propaganda campaigns and the unofficial heroine of his literary works. Brykalska broadly discusses the heroines and the love themes in Świątochowski's artistic texts, many of which deal with the unfulfilled love of a married man to an unmarried woman. All published in *Prawda*, these include: his early drama *Aspazja* (1885), the tale *Dwugłos miłości* (A Dialogue of Love, 1886), the impression *Asbe* (1886), the short story *Z pamiętnika* (From a Diary, 1886), the fantasia *Krajobrazy* (Landscapes, 1887), the tale *Lew kamienny* (The Stone Lion, 1889), the short story *Sam w sobie. Odczytane i spisane ze skrawków mózgu* (By Himself in Himself. Read and Written from Pieces of the Brain, 1893), the final part of *Duchy* (Ghosts), entitled *Burza* (The Tempest, image 5, scene 1, 1909), the novel *Twinko* (1928) (Brykalska 1974: 243–244). The scholar observes

on this occasion that a change in Świętochowski's literary output appeared at the end of the 1880s:

Love ceases to be the main theme. This would suggest a phase of resignation, of quenched feelings towards Bąkowska. This was, for Świętochowski, indeed a resignation to necessity, since his beloved wished their relationship to remain solely spiritual, intellectual. Any encounters between the two were to be only devoted to an exchange of ideas (MB: I, 384).

Despite its platonic character, the relationship between Bąkowska and Świętochowski threatened the security of the marriage of Aleksander and Wanda Świętochowski, and was perceived by friends and family as the reason for its ultimate demise. Świętochowski only sued for divorce at the end of 1899, but collaborators of *Prawda* noticed symptoms of estrangement as far back as 1895; they were evident to the family even in 1891. This suggests that it was in the early 1890s that the Messenger of Truth realized that Bąkowska would not allow any intimacy with a married man. Krzywicki writes:

I happened to talk of this matter with the husband of a lady very close to Bąkowska. The wife of doctor K.[asprzak] saw Bąkowska as a person of ideal purity and beauty both spiritual and physical. She denied with all vehemence that Bąkowska had ever allowed Świętochowski excessive physical intimacy. Indeed, she strongly accused Świętochowski of unquenched hunger as a man, of his constant readiness for flirtation, if flirtation is the correct word for the fullest realization of lust. In my judgement she was unjust to Świętochowski as I knew him. She seemed to extrapolate the final years of his life, when the aged man lost control over his desires and reflexes, over the entirety of his past (LK: III, 161–162).

The affair was well known; Bąkowska almost became the heroine of a scandal. There were opinions of all sorts about the muse of the Messenger of Truth, as fragments of reminiscences by Krzywicki and by Stanisław Stempowski demonstrate. The former outlines more than just the atmosphere of "male talk" between the Positivists and progressives of the time: while Świętochowski had "no time for ribald repartee", "Bruckner was its inveterate listener and Bronisław Chrzanowski both a listener and a storyteller" (LK: III, 132). Krzywicki also quotes an anecdote about the circumstances of Świętochowski's decision to divorce his wife. According to him, Wanda Świętochowska, who "had had a premonition of something," once entered without warning the study of *Prawda*'s editor-in-chief and found her husband "somewhat too close to Mrs Bąkowska. The

matter became quite clear: the husband announced his wish for divorce” (LK: III, 128–129). As to Stempowski – who seems to have forgotten his own personal history – he had no qualms about openly calling Bąkowska Świętochowski’s “paramour” (Stempowski 1953: 226). Krzywicki, in his evaluation of his boss’s relationship with her, observed that “his passion for Bąkowska, while a misfortune to his entire family,” was “by all means healthy and normal, deprived of impure gesture, and he was attracted to her not only by her beauty, but equally so by her spirituality, which was, in terms of social sensitivity, of a higher order than his own” (LK: III, 133).

Mrs Świętochowska never agreed to a divorce and long refused a separate household. “She used a whole manner of ways to move into the flats he rented, forcing him to stay in hotels on the pretext of peace-requiring ailments. This could not remain unnoticed” (MB: I, 481). Eventually, separation was pronounced, and a “favourable” outcome – and his family’s financial security – was only made possible by selling *Prawda*, which began to appear under a new editorial board in 1900. Thus the 1890s were highly unpleasant for Bąkowska; for Świętochowski they were critical. Nothing changed in Bąkowska’s life: she continued to keep house at Gołotczyzna in the summer and come down to Warsaw for the winter; he left his family and sold his paper to be able to do so, the paper he had edited for two decades. The relationship of the platonic lovers remained as it had been.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Świętochowski moved to a flat at Marszałkowska Street “near Aleksandra Bąkowska’s *pied-à-terre* (MB: II, 5). She supported his major social ventures more than financially: in 1903–1905, when he arranged food supplies for workers on strike, the owner of Gołotczyzna and her brother Bronisław sent “several wagons of potatoes” (MB: II, 69); in the winter of 1905/1906, when the Rescue Committee convened by Świętochowski tried to feed Warsaw’s unemployed, Bąkowska “supervised hired help and kept the books” (MB: II, 78); finally, when Świętochowski founded The Society for Polish Culture in 1906, his friend donated a large sum. Yet, at the time, she was chiefly engrossed in her own “peasant” projects as part of her lifelong sympathy for country activists, in which she was supported in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Świętochowski himself, then under her strong influence (LK: III, 159).

## Gołotczyzna

In 1910, Świętochowski decided to create an agricultural school for country boys at Gołotczyzna, similar to the school for girls that Bąkowska had opened in 1909. He wrote to Aleksander Lednicki that he imagined this school as modern, "with no lectures on language, history or religion, i.e. without no doors that let the priest and the policeman in," a school "of nature and pure practical skills, a sort of economic laboratory for boys" (MB: II, 163). The example of the school founded by Bąkowska must have been both encouraging and discouraging, for it brought to the surface the tensions between progressive and conservative social groups in ethnic Polish territories, especially in rural communities. The owner of Gołotczyzna housed the school in a large palace, fully furnished and complete with an imposing library collected by Bąkowska's grandfather; however, all this burnt down in a fire on the eve of the school's inauguration. A local peasant was suspected of arson; he may have acted on the instigation of the parson of Sońsk, Rev. Chechłowski, a sworn enemy of the emancipation of peasants' education from the control of Catholic clergy. The founder did not surrender; she adapted a building that survived the fire and opened a school ran according to the progressive ideas of Positivism by a carefully-selected pedagogical body. Gołotczyzna soon became an important educational, vocational and cultural centre of the Ciechanów region.

Reports of these events appeared in *Prawda*, which also informed about the school's daily schedule and its financial basis. The day started at 6 and was filled with communal work until early afternoon: breakfast, classes, kitchen duty – the students prepared a two-course midday meal – and housekeeping; then came the time for their own study and rest. Thus the institution seemed a cross between a boarding school and a farm. The girl students stayed there throughout the year, only leaving for festivals and holidays; yet they were visited by their parents every Sunday. According to the correspondent of *Prawda*, a year at the school cost sixty roubles; only thirty-two students could be accepted in the first year, for that was the number that could fit into the building saved from the fire. Gołotczyzna was nicknamed by the same report "a new Kruszynek" [an earlier school of similar type], but the author had his highest praise not so much for the practical knowledge taught to country girls as for imparting to them "a modern scientific outlook." In his words, this was the essence of "the public example of Mrs B.," which would soon "encourage other women to imitate, to

light similar fires of purity, culture and social responsibility for the benefit of their less enlightened sisters!” It is worthwhile to quote some fragments of the discussed article, if only to sample the progressive language *Prawda* employed at the end of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

The founder built a large and comfortable school building, she endowed the school, at her own expense, with 180 acres of land, selected a pleasant team of assistants and opened the new institution. (...) It was not enough to cast some of the nastiest possible arrows from the bows of provincial gossip, from pulpits threatening “God’s punishment” on the future school as a sure nest of corruption and atheism: the building burned down with its entire furnishings several days before the classes were to start. The culprits have not been found ...

The local representatives of the traditionalist camp heaved a sigh of relief; they thought that the founder would become discouraged and desist from her plans. The local parson gave a truly inspired sermon when the Gołotczyzna school burned down. He demonstrated to his flock “the wisdom of divine judgment,” the Creator’s care for his parishes, in that He did not allow the corruption that was to spread from the school. (...)

The students are highly interested in natural sciences; the school is now well equipped in tools for physical and chemical experiments. “We create lightnings, we study plants’ leaves and cells under microscopes,” said Mrs. Bąkowska, opening a closet with scientific equipment. “The girls are avid learners; they can now write some pretty good essays on the unity of matter in nature. (...)

Their work is helped by their faith that the aim of all living things is to strive ceaselessly for perfection. Thus the Romantics’ dreams are coming true. Peasants’ daughters now faithfully repeat after Zygmunt Krasiński: “ennoblement is the goal of all universe.” They understand progress as a constant pursuit of freedom, “truth and social justice.” (...) One can feel that the word “progress” is not a mere slogan on their lips; it is something they truly love and they want to fulfil in action (Poraj 1909: 10–11; trans. J.R.).

The reconstruction of the burned palace was no guarantee of the school’s survival, since it functioned as a one-year course, organized under the auspices of the Society for the Support of People’s Industry, much like the girls’ agricultural school at Kruszynek near Włocławek, run by Jadwiga Dziubińska (cf. Świętochowski 1910, 1910a, 1910b, 1910c). At the same time when Gołotczyzna had to struggle against the ill-will of local clergy, Kruszynek, too, came under attack of Catholic priests, who demanded control over the school. Dziubińska succeeded in defending the ideological independence of Kruszynek, but the Society withdrew their financing for the institution and the school was threatened with loss of licence. Therefore,



Bąkowska tried to find another way to ensure the continuity of her school, and was helped by Świętochowski and a group of sympathetic lawyers. It was their idea to disguise the school as an "experimental farm," which removed it from the control of the Ministry of Education to the protection of the Ministry of Agriculture. Late in 1910, the girls' school at Gołotczyzna was licensed in its new form (Świętochowski 1910d), allowing Bąkowska to subsidize it even better; Świętochowski began to envision a similar institution for boys. According to Brykalska, Bąkowska contributed some 90 acres of an estimated worth of fifteen thousand roubles;" Świętochowski added "a sum of 8117 roubles, including 4587 from the jubilee fund, from charities placed at his disposal and from his own income from readings;" "a part of his inheritance and, as a reserve, the proceeds of the sale of the Brzeziny estate" (MB: II, 179–180). He planned to inaugurate the school in early 1912.

Contrarily to Bąkowska, who, as a landowner, was able to achieve her educational plans with no outside ideological or financial help of her own class, Świętochowski was aided in the construction of the boys' school by numerous individuals and institutions. Thus the building's design was proposed by architect Romuald Gutt as a way to repay Świętochowski, who had lent him money for studying abroad; various companies donated building materials (Świętochowski 1911). An appeal by the Messenger of Truth, *Ofiarność obywatelska* (Citizens' Generosity) of 1911, explaining the reasons why the Polish society should tax themselves out of good will for the benefit of national institutions deprived of state assistance, was answered by numerous benefactors, again both private and corporate. It was thanks to them that Świętochowski could report in 1913 that his dream, a centre of country culture (Świętochowski 1912), i.e. "the Bratne agricultural farm," already fared well and equipped its students "with nothing but the most practical instruction, pure knowledge, untainted by tendentious additions; it does not matter to the school what political and social conclusion they may draw from it" (Świętochowski 1913).

Pachucka's memoir contains a report on her first visit at Gołotczyzna, a visit she paid Bąkowska with Bojanowska soon after the inauguration of the boys' school. Because of Pachucka's interest in education and of her function at the Emancipation Association as source of information on schools for girls in the Polish lands, the report is detailed and extensive. Thus Pachucka first writes about the young and modern female teachers, whose "modernity" mainly consists in feminism and pursuit of the latest

pedagogical ideas. She names two who collaborated with the Association and supported the programme of Kuczalska-Reinschmit: Maria Biniekówna was employed “as instructor;” Władysława Weychert-Szymanowska “was at the time a young and energetic teacher of Polish literature and mother of a baby daughter whom she brought up in the most progressive way: without a cradle, rocking or swaddling-clothes. The mother would come every three hours to feed her child, leaving her freely in her cot. The child would eventually fall asleep; when she woke, she would play without crying or tantrums” (RP: 194–195). Having described the teaching staff, Pachucka moves on to the students and the organization of the school:

The group of girls in folk dress acted natural yet well-mannered. Their talk was correct, their writing satisfactory. They knew by heart scores of fragments of poems by Konopnicka, of dramas by Wyspiański, of works by Mickiewicz and Kasprówicz. They produced interesting tableaux and concerts accompanied by choruses of folk songs and dances.

The Ministry of Agriculture had licensed the statute of the school, secured in both legal and financial terms by its generous founder Mrs Bąkowska.

The school’s syllabus included agriculture, gardening, raising plants and animals, veterinary science, beekeeping, sewing, wickerwork and other fields of home industry; also, singing and gymnastics. Theoretical lectures could deal with all disciplines of the natural sciences. The Polish language, history and geography were taught in secret.

The school had been opened for two years, but only now were its statutes confirmed by the government. It had had to struggle, much like Sokołówek and Kruszynek, against a libellous campaign of the clergy and the conservatives. How difficult was the road to bring culture to the Polish villages, to deliver country women from ignorance, superstition, slavery, if no longer physical, then surely moral and spiritual! (...)

The school is governed by true self-rule (said their teachers), since the girls do all the chores and the housekeeping, they take care of the poultry, the pigs and the cows – and yet they have enough time for the lessons; and we do not count the hours spent with them, we are always at their service when we see their true interest in books or when a student needs our help in mastering the art of reading, writing and spelling (...).

“Bratne” had its own new school building and another for its administration, outbuildings, a handsome orchard and a vegetable garden, and its own fields. Mrs. Bąkowska was building a country-style cottage for Świętochowski near her own mansion. That was his wish. (...) We were shown around the entire well-appointed farm. Much like the girls, the boys too had their self-rule

and they could feel their own masters in an institution created by a wise, courageous and generous woman (RP: 195–196).

The atmosphere of working together with other landowners, the intelligentsia and the peasants at Gołotczyzna also helped Świętochowski's writing, who, urged by Bąkowska, soon (during World War One, in 1916) embarked on one of his most significant projects: *History of Polish Peasants*. The idea for this synthesis emerged in conversations remembered by one of the teachers, Janina Bemówna:

The conversations between Aleksander and Aleksandra were of great interest and beauty, and of these I was often a witness, for I had always free access to them, whenever they came together for a chat after dinner. Both full of initiative, they competed in painting beautiful pictures of reformed human life, all the while brimming with sophisticated witticisms – true Attic salt. Bąkowska, an idealist and enthusiast, endowed with flamboyant imagination, would propose such unreal images, so far removed from life in the country, that Świętochowski would be beside himself with laughter; this, in turn, would provoke a little malice on her part as she criticized his coldness. These "arguments," so full of restraint, so cheerful, were true feasts of conversation. (...) Both agreed that they belonged to two different worlds, but their differences were only superficial – and one had a great influence on the other, despite saying otherwise (MB: II, 246–247).

On the restoration of Poland's independence Bąkowska and Świętochowski bequeathed their schools to the state; this not only settled financial issues – in fact more important from Świętochowski's than from Bąkowska's point of view, but above all guaranteed the permanence of these initiatives. Zofia Solarzowa, who did her teacher's training in the humanities at Gołotczyzna in 1923, thus reminisces on the early 1920s in what was now a state-run school for girls, and on the school's founder:

There is much to be told about that woman. Above all, it is rare to meet a person who presents her whole estate and her whole home for good works with no reservations and no exceptions. She gave everything to the girls' agricultural school. She lived in two tiny rooms with an invalid maidservant. When asked for help in the educational work, she would devote several hours to talk with the girls on educational matters, imparting to village maidens the whole treasury of her culture and spirituality. Apart from that, she never interfered with school matters, thus eschewing the role of a generous yet troublesome founder. I was lucky: she took a liking to me. I would take her to Ciechanów, I visited her, I read to her and told her various stories. Not only was she a strong person,

wise and socially sensitive; she was also a remarkably beautiful woman. People whispered behind her back that she did not get over the great writer, that she lived close to him and in friendship with him and his Zosia [Solarzowa is wrong about the name; she meant Maria]. She never betrayed her feelings, but her self-imposed solitude and her life in quasi-poverty continued to amaze her friends and was the source of much conjecture (Solarzowa 1985: 130; trans. J.R.).

Towards the end of her story, Solarzowa mentions Świętochowski's friend at the time, his future second wife Maria Żydowo, who came to Gołotczyzna in 1921 to study gardening and beekeeping. Both Solarzowa and Brykalska report that Bąkowska was not prejudiced towards that relationship, but the affair did not escape the attention of the pedagogical body and the young woman was expelled from the school due to the impropriety of the situation and in order not to offend the founder's feelings. The affair between a seventy-year-old man and a woman fifty years his junior was causing a stir that could only harm the reputation of the new school. By 1922 Maria was already living with Świętochowski in Warsaw; she became pregnant by him a year later and had an abortion to meet his wish. According to the biographer of the Messenger of Truth, Maria's pregnancy was a "catastrophe" for Świętochowski: "He was married and well aware of the fact that his wife, despite their twenty years' separation, would never agree to a divorce, and he did not want to use the last resort of changing his religious denomination" (MB: II, 297). They spent the summer of 1924 at Gołotczyzna, where persons close to Bąkowska demonstrated their "resentment" or "disapproval." Bąkowska herself "did not exhibit any rancour towards Maria:"

She was withdrawing discretely, not only from Świętochowski's life. She wrote her will in February, in which, apart from personal bequests, she donated some 50 acres of land to the Association of War Invalids for a shelter and a farm supervised by Jadwiga Dziubińska, and more land for "Bratne" and "Krzewinia." She also bequeathed her American inheritance for building a house for the future gardening farm, "Krzewinia" (MB: II, 297–298).

In 1925, after ten years of work, the first volume of *History of Polish Peasants* appeared, dedicated to Bąkowska:

To her who has sincerely, deeply and selflessly loved the country people, who empathized with their misfortunes, who could see their moral health, the immense power and the potential to heal Poland; who gave to the people all she could give, who never allowed to publicly disclose her noble deeds and sacri-

fices, who spurred me on to study the history of Polish peasants and to write these pages. It is to her and with the greatest respect that I dedicate the modest fruit of my work (Świętochowski 1925: vii; trans. J.R.).

A year later, on May 9<sup>th</sup>, Bąkowska died in her flat at the school. The wake was celebrated at the mansion of Ślubowo, her parental estate, and she was buried nearby, at Kluków, alongside her parents. She stated in her will that she wanted no tombstone, that she wanted for her grave to be overgrown with grass, but Świętochowski did not respect her final wish and had a tablet erected with an epitaph of his own composition: "She lived in integrity, she died in glory, she is resurrected in the worship of grateful hearts." She also received from him a different kind of monument, an extensive fragment of the second volume of *History of Polish Peasants*, where he writes of Bąkowska and her ventures:

In this domain shone with dazzling light the person of Aleksandra Bąkowska née Sędzimir. The daughter of a rich landowner, brought up in wealth, of phenomenal beauty; already married to a proud gentleman she forsook the aristocratic spheres and, having gained much medical knowledge, she devoted herself with the utmost zeal to the task of healing the people. When she became a widow, she settled in the Gołotczyzna estate (in the Ciechanów district), where she used her work and her influence to assuage a variety of needs of this class, especially in the field of education. Inspired by the example of Kruszynek, she opened a school of agriculture for girls at Gołotczyzna in 1909, licensed – for protection against Russian interference – as "a practical farm." This she ran with a bevy of idealist teachers and with ardent love until its closure due to the outbreak of the Great War. This was not only a school and an educational institution of a high moral standard, but also a centre visited by hundreds of fathers, mothers and older peasants, fascinated by this true hub of peasants' enlightenment. In 1912, Bąkowska set aside 80 acres of her land for another school, for boys, which she founded together with A. Świętochowski, another "practical farm" under the name of Bratne. When, after the war, the upkeep of both schools became too heavy a burden on private means, to ensure the schools' existence as social property, Bąkowska and Świętochowski agreed to donate them – complete with 50 acres of land, livestock and outbuildings – to the Polish state under the care of the Ministry of Agriculture, which continues to run both institutions until today. She reserved for herself a small room with a kitchen and a modest share of farm produce, which in fact she never used in full. Having limited her own needs almost to a level of poverty, wearing old and patched clothes, demanding nothing from anyone and giving away anything that she could spare from her barest needs, feeble with age, she looked on from her little flat's window at the busy and merry flocks of girls, studying

at her school under new supervision. Crystal-pure in her feelings, noble in her goals, generous in her deeds, she concealed her own achievements with such modesty that she never allowed them to be mentioned in public, and the author of this work only dared to ascribe it to her anonymously. She passed away last year, accompanied to her grave by a small pageant of friends and worshippers (Świętochowski 1928: 464–465; trans. J.R.).

Apart from this tribute, Świętochowski endowed the noblest heroines in his literary texts with Bąkowska's features, a fact stressed many times by the writer's biographer. Among these, Marta Zorzecka, the protagonist of his late novel *Nalęcze*, resembles his long-time friend:

She dazzled him not only with her beauty, but also with her reason, the seriousness of her thought, the nobleness of her emotions, and finally with the pure and fresh breath of her soul, clear of all superstition, untouched by the folly of fashion or by an addiction to coquetry. She was an eagle, but of her aquiline nature she only preserved the ability to fly high, while shedding the murderous lust of the claws. She was a rare feminine specimen: a courageous, energetic and dignified human being, clothed in a beautiful, delicate, sensitive feminine form (Świętochowski 1929: 42; trans. J.R.).

After Bąkowska's death, in the late 1920s, Świętochowski moved for good to Gołotczyzna, where he farmed the land bequeathed to him by Bąkowska, supervising both schools; at times he intervened in internal matters of the girls' school. The main reason from these interventions was the frequent absence of Dziubińska, who, conforming to the founder's wishes, performed the duties of the head of the school but, according to Świętochowski, did this with so little care that the institution was torn by organizational chaos and personal squabbles; also, he was of the opinion that she exhibited little respect for the late patron. In a 1930 letter to Be-mówna, Świętochowski wrote:

I went this morning to Kluków to a mass for Mrs Bąkowska, ordered by the Min. of Agriculture. It was attended by numerous teachers and students of "Bratne," while the girls' school only sent two students with a teacher trainee. We were all incensed. I am going to report this lack of respect to the Ministry. This unhappy school, the head of which spent last year on all sorts of leaves of absence, is run meanwhile by her second-in-command, better fitted for a lunatic asylum, who behaves as one of that institution's inmates and completely deregulates the school. Were Mrs B. to rise from her grave, she would repeat, not once but twice, what she used to tell me when she was still alive: "I wish I hadn't given the school to the government" (MB: II, 377; trans. J.R.).

In 1932 Świątochowski became a widower; this allowed him to make legal his ten years' relationship with Maria, whom he also made one of the executors of Bąkowska's spiritual testament. He remembered well that when the owner of Gołotczyzna transferred the school buildings to the state in 1919, she received a verbal promise that one of the houses would be used to create an orphanage. The promise was not kept, the house in question was converted into the teachers' quarters. In a codicil to his own last will of 1933, written a year later, Świątochowski restated the unfulfilled promise and bequeathed a charity he supervised for the orphanage, which was to be supervised by Maria after his death.

The school suspended its activity during World War Two but reopened in the first year after the liberation and has been in uninterrupted operation since 1945. In 2009, during the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gołotczyzna agricultural schools, it held its 6<sup>th</sup> alumni congress (Lewandowski 1984, 2009). In 1984 it had been named, contrary to expectations, after Aleksander Świątochowski, rather than after Aleksandra Bąkowska.

## Agrarianism, sociology, anthropology, feminism

Bąkowska's multifaceted activities at Gołotczyzna belong to a significant yet still unfathomed early phase of the social phenomenon known as Uniwersytet Ludowy (Folk High School), which assumed its final form only in the interwar period. Polish activists in all three partitions were inspired in this respect by the religious, cultural, social and political views of Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872), Danish poet and writer, Protestant minister and theologian, historian, philosopher, teacher and politician, lawgiver of Denmark's modern national identity. Crucial for the importation of Danish ideas was an essay by J.H. Siemieniecki (Józef Hłasko) entitled "Cesarz niemiecki w Kopenhadze – uniwersytety chłopskie w Danii" (The German Emperor in Copenhagen – Folk High Schools in Denmark), published in *Głos* in 1888. The author presents the consequences of the Second Schleswig War of 1864 and the resulting loss of Schleswig and Holstein by Denmark to Prussia, which in turn stimulated Danish patriotism among its village population, and led eventually to the creation of such schools. Siemieniecki proposed that Poles follow the Danish example, obviously with some adaptation to Poland's specific conditions. Bąkowska was a reader of *Głos* and supported its editors' views – much to

Świętochowski's displeasure – so she must have encountered the idea of folk high schools and formed an opinion on the subject, since she devoted to it her entire adult life and her entire property.

According to Bronisław Gołębiowski, the idea of the *Głos* publicist had a powerful impact on the Poles. A Society for Folk Education emerged in the German partition in 1872 to counteract the Germanisation campaign; banned in 1880, it was replaced by the Society of Folk Reading Rooms, which survived until the restoration of independence. Thanks to the efforts by poet Adam Asnyk, the Austrian partition saw the creation of its Folk School Society. The Russian partition's most spectacular campaign was that of opening folk schools initiated by the well-known activist of PSL "Wyzwolenie" (Polish People's Party "Liberation"), Jadwiga Dziubińska (1874–1937), who collaborated with a group of individuals gathered around the paper *Zaranie* (Daybreak, 1907–1915) (Gołębiowski 1994: 18). Another researcher of folk high schools, Feliks Popławski, lists the first institutions of this kind founded by Dziubińska: Pszczelin near Warsaw, 1900, for male youth; Kruszynek near Włocławek, 1903, for female youth; in 1909, Dziubińska became head of the agricultural school for men in Sokołówek near Ciechanów; she also helped with the creation of the girls' school at Gołotczyzna and of "Bratne" for boys in the Ciechanów district, and another girls' school at Krasienin near Lublin (Popławski 1985: 23; trans. J.R.). Gołębiowski sums up the first phase of the Polish patriotic and educational movement as follows: "this 'prehistory' of Polish folk high schools is unknown and unappreciated" (Gołębiowski 1994: 19; trans. J.R.).

In the twenty years between the wars, the reflection on the status and the tasks of the peasant class and of folk culture in Poland was being developed by thinkers, activists and politicians as varied as Władysław Grabski, Jan Lutosławski, Józef Niećko, Ignacy Solorz, Zdzisław Maćkowski, Jan Dec, Stefan Jaracz, Stefan Buczkowski, Józef Bełch, Artur Górski, Ferdynand Machay or Stefan Wyszynski (cf. Miłkowski 1988; Piątkowski 1983; Lech 1991; Chrobak 1998). For the sake of the present discussion, however, the greatest significance must be granted to the thought and work of Ignacy Solorz, who combined the idea of folk high schools with that of agrarianism. It was his wife Zofia, who, in the 1920s, went through her teacher training at Gołotczyzna and made use of her experience when she founded the first folk high schools with her husband. Solorz's agrarianism has been described by scholars of this phenomenon as "personalist," manifest in "a just quest for harmony and compromise between interests



of individuals, of social and professional classes, in a democratic rule of law state," "a just partnership, based on significance and numbers, in the influence of the village population on the state with other social forces." Personalist agrarianism was to rely not so much on "private, or capitalist, property" as on "personal-familial or cooperative property; certainly not on the Bolshevik type of barrack collectivism," for "individual, private, familial property" was perceived as "the most pro-nature [the contemporary term would be 'pro-ecological'] model of property relationships, one conducive to non-exploitative and non-destructive relationship between the agricultural producer and the land and nature as inalienable and irreplaceable assets of humanity as a whole" (Gołębiowski 1994: 41–42; trans. J.R.). This called for a harmonious combination of "market economy and planning, of private property and limitation of differences in income, of social ethics and market laws;" for "a combination of economic effectiveness and social justice" (Szymański 1991: 45; trans. J.R.).

Most probably, the schools founded by Bąkowska at Gołotczyzna were an attempt at an agrarianist utopia, the dream of their founder and patron, derided as impractical by Świętochowski in the conversations recorded by Solarzowa in her youth. This private utopia was to be ruled by general equality and common property, respect for humans and nature, lack of differentiation into masters and servants, honest and fallen women, children born in and out of wedlock. The history of Gołotczyzna shows that Bąkowska was closest to the realization of her project in the initial phase of her school's existence, when the whole venture was at once private and social: private because founded with Bąkowska's money and land; social because it employed idealists sharing Bąkowska's views on the cultural, social and patriotic mission of places like Gołotczyzna. Under state tutelage, both the schools (that for girls and that for boys) acquired institutional and financial security, but they lost its agrarianist, socialist, ecological and feminist utopia, as is usually the case with beautiful slogans packed into school syllabi and obligatory reading lists.

At this point one might return to the discussion about the connections between matriarchy and communism in the early thought of Polish feminists, who combined both ideas and realized them in practice, among others in their agrarianist utopias, allying themselves with such social ventures as the peasant movement. It would be of interest, from this point of view, to compare the statutes and the syllabi of the girls' agricultural schools organized by Dziubińska at Kruszynek and later also at Gołotczyzna to

establish the extent to which Bąkowska's social programme assimilated, or differed from, the tenets of the activist of PSL "Wyzwolenie." The great respect that Kuczalska-Reinschmit had for Bąkowska as a woman, activist and translator, and the importance she attached to the visits of members of the Emancipation Association to Gołotczyzna (they did not pay such visits to Kruszynek; Kuczalska-Reinschmit only informed her readers on its fate in *Ster*) may suggest that Bąkowska's project was closer to feminist ideology than to any programme of a peasant party. I am of the opinion that the results of Morgan's research, with their elements of emancipation (equality of sexes), democracy (government by the people), socialism (a just distribution of property) and ecology (respect for nature) served as Bąkowska's inspiration, while the Danish idea of folk high schools offered a way of translating sociological and anthropological conceptions into living practice. Bąkowska certainly had all that a woman needed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to realize such bold projects as her social experiment at Gołotczyzna: personal freedom, noble birth, education, property. She also had a friend, we should add, as the role played by Świętochowski, her intellectual and emotional partner of more than four decades, proved of tantamount importance. The problem of reciprocal relationships between man and woman seems crucial for a true understanding of the person and the activity of Bąkowska; the required insight might be provided by Morgan's anthropology.

Bąkowska assimilated Morgan's thought at the same time as Friedrich Engels, who published *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats* (The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State: In the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan) in 1884.<sup>5</sup> It was translated into Polish under the above title by Jadwiga Warska; first published in 1906, this translation appeared several more times throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Engels 1906). Yet the first Polish translation dates back to 1885, when Ludwik Krzywicki published Engels's book as *Początki cywilizacji. Na zasadzie i jako uzupełnienie badań Lewisa H. Morgana* (The Origins of Civilisation. Based on and Expanding on the Research of Lewis H. Morgan, Engels 1885). In his preface, Engels presented Morgan as the scholar

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<sup>5</sup> When Bąkowska brought her translation of Morgan's *Ancient Society* to the *Prawda* office, Krzywicki was already translating Engels's work, which he then published in *Walka klas* (Class Struggle). The importance attached by Świętochowski and Krzywicki to Morgan's ideas is evident in the fact that *Prawda* announced the forthcoming publication of his "work of genius" as early as 1884 (Świętochowski 1884).

who provided scientific evidence for the materialist conception of history. He wrote:

For in America, Morgan had, in a manner, discovered anew the materialistic conception of history, originated by Marx forty years ago. In comparing barbarism and civilization, he had arrived, in the main, at the same results as Marx. (...) According to the materialistic conception, the decisive element of history is pre-eminently the production and reproduction of life and its material requirements. This implies, on the one hand, the production of the means of existence (food, clothing, shelter and the necessary tools); on the other hand, the bearing of children, the propagation of the species. The social institutions, under which the people of a certain historical period and of a certain country are living, are dependent on these two forms of production; partly on the development of labour, partly on that of the family (Engels 1885: iii–iv).

Engels pays particular attention to Morgan's description of the monogamian family, a chronologically final yet sadly imperfect stage in the history of the institution, as its high economic potential is achieved at the price of cultural, social, economic and political subjugation of women to men. The monogamian family "is founded on male supremacy for the pronounced purpose of breeding children of indisputable paternal lineage" and the "indisputable parental lineage" is required because only the rightful heirs can "inherit the fortune of their father." This form of the relationship between man and woman thus exhibits a greater stability than forms practiced previously, but, in real life, the man can still enjoy his erotic freedom and cast off his wife. On the other hand, "if the woman remembers the ancient sexual practices and attempts to revive them, she is punished more severely than ever" (Engels 1885: 26–27). According to Engels, this subjugation of women "was avenged in the men" and, in consequence, in the entire culture, breeding such pathologies as prostitution and adultery, for monogamy was not founded on the essentially democratic "individual sex-love," as in the earlier eras, but on "economic conditions." Thus, in Protestant countries, monogamy "leads both spouses to shared boredom, labelled wedded bliss," and in Catholic countries leads to "immorality" (Engels 1885: 32–33). Ultimately, "monogamy" proves not to be "a reconciliation of man and wife, and still less the highest form of marriage;" instead, "it enters [history] as the subjugation of one sex by the other, as the proclamation of an antagonism between the sexes so far unknown" (Engels 1885: 518).

In his summary of Morgan's views, Engels points out monogamy's inherent contradiction: "Monogamy was a great historical progress. But

together with slavery and private property, it marks at the same time that epoch, reaching down to our days, where all progress is also a step back, relatively speaking, and the welfare and advancement of one is the woe and submission of the other” (Engels 1885: 518). According to Engels, the hope for realization of true monogamy as understood by Morgan lies solely in a working-class marriage, which is monogamian in the “etymological” rather than “historical” sense of the word, for, in the proletarian marriage, the woman works as equal to the man and is often the sole breadwinner: “Thus the family of the proletarian is no longer strictly monogamian, even with all the most passionate love and the most unalterable loyalty of both parties, and in spite of any possible clerical or secular sanction” (Engels 1885: 33). The economic equality of the couple leads to the disappearance of prostitution and adultery, and secures the woman’s right to divorce the man when a harmonious union proves to be impossible.

Yet it was only Bąkowska’s translation of Morgan’s treatise that allowed Polish readers to discover the original theses of the American anthropologist. I treat Morgan as an anthropologist, but Jerzy Szacki, Polish historian of sociology, follows the example of Western scholars and places Morgan at the intersection between sociology and anthropology, i.e. in sociological anthropology (Szacki 2006: 307). He does so because *Ancient Society* is a perfect instance of the unity of sociological and anthropological thought at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the two disciplines were still emerging and when neither their common ground nor their basic differences were identified.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, Ludwik Krzywicki places Morgan among sociologists in one of his several reviews of Morgan’s work: “When one thinks of the revolution brought about by sociological theories of the New World, Morgan’s name must come first” (1887: 220; trans. J.R.). Yet the most complete presentation of the emerging discipline was penned by Adam Mahrburg in his review of Tylor’s *Anthropology* translated by Bąkowska. To quote but a fragment: “Anthropology is the study of man and of civilisation as a product and an achievement of mankind, which has been developing for ages in accordance with the conditions of its natural environment. (...) There is no agreement today on the precise object of anthropology and on its legitimate range of goals. Some would like to see it as part of the knowledge about humanity, discussed above all in its corporeal aspect, about its morphological properties as compared to those of other forms of the animal world, about the division of mankind into races, the descent of man, his fossil traces. Others would prefer to include man’s spiritual nature, the significance of which stems from its close association with, and dependence on, the corporeal aspect. Still others also include mankind’s creativity in all fields, which derives from its basic physical and spiritual features, and bears the general name of civilisation” (Mahrburg 1889: 535, 537; trans. J.R.). “Now anthropology is a branch of knowledge which is supposed to fulfil that need; it strives to combine elements analyzed and studied separately

Eventually, anthropology "focused on primitive non-Western societies," while sociology "had for its aim the study of Western societies" (Marshall 2005: 17); still, both analyzed the same institutions, such as the family, the school, the government. Thus despite seeming differences in time and space when it came to the objects of studies conducted by anthropologists, their results and conclusions on primitive societies often proved of import to sociologists working on modern societies of the West. The preferred method was comparative,<sup>7</sup> and all that was possible within the most influential strand of sociology at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, namely evolutionist sociology. It came up with "a repertoire of terms, hypotheses and methods which, for at least thirty years (1860–1890), were seen as part of sociology and social anthropology as a whole rather than the property

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by specialist sciences into a single whole according to a concrete formula, that of man. It is the task of anthropology to present mankind, its complete physical and spiritual nature, to show the relationship that this entity has to the rest of nature, and to demonstrate how the idea we refer to as civilisation is a direct result of man's physical and spiritual nature, affecting, in its own way, the conditions of the environment. That is a peculiar development of a part of zoology. (...) It seems that this is also how Tylor understands anthropology, or at least that seems to be the conclusion drawn from the content and the range of his *Anthropology*" (Mahrburg 1889: 572–573; trans. J. R.).

<sup>7</sup> Krzywicki wrote of Morgan's study: "Where nothing but anarchy had been observed, where no order at all could be seen, where, instead, all that had been seen was a blind struggle of wild instincts and a jungle law with no heed of property, family and government, Morgan discovered an entirely different picture: there is order there, and property, and family, even if it has been formed differently than in Europe. Civilised peoples have not emerged from despotism and lawlessness; they arise from a system many aspects of which are now part and parcel of the loftiest ideals of our time" (1887: 231; trans. J.R.). Mahrburg wrote of Tylor's work in very much the same terms: "All this has been presented in a comparative way: the continuity of subsequent stages of the developmental process and the historical significance of each stage have been recreated and explained by comparison and analogy between past and present phenomena; what has changed its significance or bears no significance for us at all, what has or had such a significance for various races and tribes at various levels of civilisation and in various environmental conditions; the complex and the secondary with the simple and primary. The groundwork of this method consists in the hypothesis that mankind has been developing, everywhere and at all times, according to the same basic laws, inherent in the common features of physical and spiritual organization; and that consequently all complications, degenerations and departures from the chain of development need to be explained either as the impact of different environmental conditions, or by lost traditions of the lower civilisational stages that mankind must have gone through, or by the emergence of new views and ideas among old preserved forms and conditions. In a word, the comparative method and the developmental hypothesis that paves its way are two allied powers in anthropological study as in any other directed at the explanation of the changing forms and actions of living things (Mahrburg 1889: 535; trans. J.R.).

of a ‘school’ in social sciences” (Szacki 2006: 280; trans. J.R.).<sup>8</sup> Above all, evolutionist sociology was naturalistic, synthetic and universal; it focused on the mechanisms of evolution rather than on individual cases; it did not explain individual historical facts and events as typical of a given cultural period and sphere, for the main interest was in things that would happen anywhere if change proceeded without distortions. Therefore, evolutionist sociologists were usually uninterested in the category of “nation;” they preferred to deal with that of “mankind,” as is well exemplified by a fragment of Morgan’s Preface to his *Ancient Society*:

Since mankind were one in origin, their career has been essentially one, running in different channels upon all continents, and very similarly in all the tribes and nations of mankind down to the same status of advancement. It follows that the history and experience of American Indian tribes represent, or less nearly, the history and experience of our own remote ancestors when in corresponding conditions. Forming a part of the human record, their institutions, arts, inventions and practical experience possess a high and special value reaching far beyond the Indian race itself (Morgan 1887: iii–iv).<sup>9</sup>

The fetish of evolutionist sociologists, “change,” was, according to them, omnipresent (hence their interest in the mechanisms and directions of evolution rather than its genesis), systemic (this is why a transformation of an element brings about the transformation of the whole), identical with progress, slow (revolution was out of the question, for the creation of higher forms from many lower forms requires a long time), and derived from the inner need of a given society. From the point of view of 19<sup>th</sup>-century feminism, evolutionist sociology supplied ideas that both activated and hampered the emancipation movement: it strengthened the belief in a future equality of men and women, but it also discouraged any acceleration of changes that were bound to happen anyway. The feminists of the time were well aware of the fact that change must first take place within the sphere of human, familial and marital rights, and in property. Thus they

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<sup>8</sup> Mahrburg wrote that the discovery of Charles Darwin was “like daybreak that brought new horizons not only to biologists, but also to all those who worked in domains that are associated with biology (...). The later history of evolutionism is an expressive example of how great ideas act powerfully and instantly on our minds. From then on, for the next thirty years, anthropology extended and broadened its scope, and never ceased in its progress” (1889: 537; trans. J.R.).

<sup>9</sup> Further quotations from this source will be marked (LHM: page number). All have been translated by J.R.

were attentive readers of those among the sociologists and the anthropologists who studied family systems.

Morgan was one of the most interesting representatives of classical evolutionism, and his *Ancient Society* has never been forgotten, not only as part of the canonical Marxist reading list, but above all for its formulation of key issues in anthropology. And not only in anthropology – in feminism too. These included: “an introduction, into the theory of social evolution, of technological and economic development as a primary variable,” “the association of the genesis of political organization with the development of private property,” “an attempt at defining the correlation between transformations in various kinds of institutions” (Szacki 2006: 308; trans. J.R.). In other words, Morgan discussed exactly the same issues that the feminists used as the key to their critique of the patriarchal society: the link between the political system, the economic system, and the form of the family.

Morgan’s conception was based on a division of the history of humanity into three periods: savagery, barbarism, and civilisation, each subdivided into lower, middle and upper subperiods, each with its characteristic features.<sup>10</sup> In the period of savagery, humans assimilated natural resources in a natural way and with primitive tools: bow and fire, and thus lived in mobile communities of hunter-gatherers; in barbarism, they mastered agriculture, animal breeding and building with brick and stone, and thus lived

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<sup>10</sup> This division has been instantly criticized by sociologists and anthropologists. This was how Władysław Anczyc revealed its shortcomings: “In his rejection of the division into stone, bronze and iron ages as insufficient for the archaeologist and entirely unsuitable for the historian of civilisation, the author differentiates three states in human history: those of savagery, barbarism and civilisation. (...) Such a division strongly facilitates the author’s task in subsequent parts of his work and probably enhances the book’s clarity; yet it is devoid of satisfactory scientific grounds that could make it more certain and allow it a broader impact. While the main points of this division present natural stages of the civilisational progress, they lack equal significance and sufficiently characteristic basis that would make them of equal worth. Neither the invention of the bow nor of pottery are equal to the much more pregnant features: the use of fire, the melting of ore. What is more, not all of these carry the same general impact. The bow and arrows were not used by the Polynesians (which, according to the author, places them at a much lower state of savagery) not because of their inferior intelligence, but because these tools were less necessary for their hunting than anywhere else, the mammals of their lands being limited to dogs, rats, pigs and bats. As a result, bows were known in many Polynesian islands, but only as children’s toys (...); the need for their different use did not develop due to the lack of any practical significance” (1888: 11; trans. J.R.). And later: “Apart from tribal organization, Part Three, that on the development of the family, is the best and the most original element of Morgan’s work” (Anczyc 1888a: 14; trans. J.R.).

in stable settlements; in civilisation, they invented the alphabet and learned how to modify nature. Each of the main three eras produced a different form of family and while Morgan lists as many as five basic forms,<sup>11</sup> these can be simplified in a system in which group marriage was characteristic of savagery, the pairing family for barbarism, and the monogamian marriage for civilisation. Yet while transformations in the group and pairing families were influenced by natural factors, monogamy came about as a result of social conditions. The discovery of paternity and the transformation of economy at the stage of barbarism and the pairing family led to a civilisational breakthrough: natural law, maternal law were abolished for the benefit of conventional law, paternal law, as the family's wealth began to depend on extra-domestic work performed by the male (working fields, raising livestock, industry). From then on matriarchy has been supplanted by patriarchy; inheritance of name and property occurs in the male line.

At the same time, the community undergoes a parallel change from the tribal to the territorial. The tribal system characteristic of barbarism was humanity's "golden age" from the point of view of the feminists, with its supposed equality of all members of the community: there was no private property, all members worked and lived together, men and women entered and left relationships at their will, there was no differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate children. A deep longing for this state of the society seems to be uniting the feminists and the socialists of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which is evident in fragments of Ludwik Krzywicki's commentary that accompanies Bąkowska's translation, fragments reminiscent of descriptions of the biblical Eden, the Greco-Roman Golden Age or the New World that fired the imagination of European travellers, discoverers and conquistadores:

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<sup>11</sup> These include "the consanguine family" ("founded upon the intermarriage of brothers and sisters, own and collateral"); "the punaluan family" ("founded upon the intermarriage of several sisters, own and collateral, with each other's husbands, in a group; the joint husbands not being necessarily kinsmen of each other. Also, on the intermarriage of several brothers, own and collateral, with each other's wives, in a group; these wives not being necessarily of kin to each other, although often the case in both instances. In each case the group of men were conjointly married to the group of women."); "the pairing family" ("founded upon marriage between single pairs, but with no exclusive cohabitation. The marriage continued during the pleasure of the parties"); "the patriarchal family" ("founded upon the marriage of one man with several wives; followed, in general, by the seclusion of the wives"); and "the monogamian family" ("founded upon marriage between single pairs, with an exclusive cohabitation") (LHM: 422).



The tribal system knew no servitude and no masters – it was the most prodigious side of that social structure. There were no soldiers, police, nobility, kings, judges, trials or prisons; after all, everything functioned as it should. The entirety of those involved, namely the gens, the phratry, or the tribe, made their ruling on events or cases; violent revenge happened at times, yet rarely. While more matters needed to be solved publicly than nowadays, since households were run jointly by several families on the basis of partnership and territory, from which gardens were exempt, and all was joint property of the entire tribe, we would fain be looking for a complex machinery of rule and execution. Participants ruled on each individual case; mostly, however, that perennial common law had already made its ruling once and for all. There were no poor, there were no rich people to be found; the common household and the tribe did not forget their duties to the sick, the elderly and the infirm. All were equal and free, even women. There was no place for enslaving anyone. And anyone who has had to do with an Indian untouched by civilisation can attest to the human types produced by this society: they unanimously praise his personal dignity, truthfulness, force of character and courage (Krzywicki 1887b: 611–612; trans. J.R.).

Feminists of the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century would attach the greatest significance to three elements of Morgan's anthropology. First, his portrayal of marriage and family as an institution with a long and complex history, with the monogamian marriage and the patriarchal family as its final and certainly not the most perfect stage. This is how he explained the objectives of the third part of his work, entitled "Growth of the Idea of the Family:"

We have been accustomed to regard the monogamian family as the form which has always existed; but interrupted in exceptional areas by the patriarchal. Instead of this, the idea of the family has been a growth through successive stages of development, the monogamian being the last in its series of forms. It will be my object to show that it was preceded by more ancient forms which prevailed universally throughout the period of savagery through the older and into the Middle Period of barbarism; and that neither the monogamian nor the patriarchal can be traced back of the Later Period of barbarism (LHM: 421).

Second, his affirmation of the idea of progress, stemming from the observation that the patriarchal family and the monogamian marriage also evolved towards ever more perfect forms that corresponded better and better to the needs of humanity, especially of women, at the ethical, intellectual and technological level that was achieved in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Morgan foresaw a bright future of monogamy:

We have a record of the monogamian family, running back nearly three thousand years, during which, it may be claimed there has been a gradual but continuous improvement in its character. It is destined to progress still further, until the equality of the sexes is acknowledged, and the equities of the marriage relation are completely recognized (LHM: 428).

And later on, in the recapitulation of that part of his study:

As the monogamian family has improved greatly since the commencement of civilization, and very sensibly in modern times, we may at least suppose that it is capable of still further improvement until the equality of the sexes is attained. Should the monogamian family in the distant future fail to answer the requirements of society, (...) it is impossible to predict the nature of its successor (LHM: 536–537).

Finally, his critique of the foundations of Western European culture, that is, of Greco-Roman Antiquity, for its “principle of egotism or studied selfishness at work among the males, tending to lessen the appreciation of woman, scarcely found among savages” (LHM: 518). Morgan was a crucial male ally to women fighting for equal rights; the more so as the women were well aware of the persuasive power of the criticism of patriarchy pronounced by one of its beneficiaries:

It still remains an enigma that the race [Greeks and Romans], with endowments great enough to impress their mental life upon the world, should have remained essentially barbarian in their treatment of the female sex at the height of their civilization. Women were not treated with cruelty, nor with discourtesy within the range of the privileges allowed them; but their education was superficial, their socializing with the opposite sex was denied and their inferiority was inoculated as a principle, until it came to be accepted as a fact by the women themselves. The wife was not the companion and the equal of her husband, but stood to him in the relation of a daughter; thus the fundamental principle of monogamy as the institution in its highest form was opposed. The wife is necessarily the equal of her husband in dignity, in personal rights and in social position. We may thus discover at what a price of experience and endurance this great institution of modern society has been won (LHM: 519).

## Conclusion

The life and work of Aleksandra Bąkowska were anything but common – as were the life and work of Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit. I would like to see the unconventional feminist ventures of both these women of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century more as a result of their original intellectual activity, existential courage and personal sacrifice rather than just as a consequence of their negative personal experience, the necessary element of the stereotype of the suffragist, the feminist, the social activist. The agricultural school for girls at Gołotczyzna founded by Bąkowska before World War One seems a utopia come true, a space of freedom, equality and justice for all inhabitants of the estate, irrespective of gender, similar to another realized utopia, the Polish Women Emancipation Association founded by Kuczalska, with its Warsaw headquarters a true women's enclave in the male universe of the city: a private living space, a place of work for income and of emancipation activities in equal degrees.

It is noteworthy that Bąkowska or Kuczalska with Bojanowska have been able to set up their personal lives without male "protection," despite their friendships and collaboration with men. They were well aware that, in the era they had been born into, solitude combined with financial independence allowed a woman her freedom, which was unattainable to even the most aristocratic and the richest married women. Works by men – historians, sociologists and anthropologists – such as Morgan's *Ancient Society* only confirmed their intuitions and observations: a woman's status in the society depends on a combination of political and economic conditions grounded in science, religion and art. They produced arguments for the critique of contemporary injustice; they provided encouragement for protests against the present. Contradictions in Morgan's system – and he was quite unorthodox, from the point of view of evolutionist sociology, in ascribing equal significance to "natural," slow transformations from lower to upper forms in the process of change, and to human "will" (which could not modify the direction of change, but could influence its rate) – allowed the feminists to believe that emancipation was but a matter of time; and to hope that their individual and joint actions could shorten the wait.

**trans. Jan Rybicki**

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