

Ethnographic materials in the columns of the geographic magazine "Poznaj Świat" ["Get to Know the World"] during the years 1945-1989

The subject of this thesis is an analysis of ethnographic materials in the columns of the popular scientific magazine "Poznaj Świat" from the beginning of its existence, i.e. since 1948, and until the beginning of political system transformations in Poland in 1989. "Poznaj Świat. Magazyn Geograficzny" ["Get to Know the World. Geographic Magazine"] was an organ of the Polish Geographical Society and was issued as a monthly magazine of national reach in Poland since 1948.

In total, the magazine issues from 36 years (414 issues) have been analysed while investigating the character of the contents not only purely in relation to ethnography but also in the light of the contemporary scientific terminology related to folklore, anthropology and generally ethnology. The monthly "Poznaj Świat" in the considered here period enjoyed extraordinary popularity among the readers, the majority of whom were the youth. That was due to high cognitive value of the periodical but also due to the existing limitations of travel possibilities, and thus directly getting to know the world. The magazine would fire the readers' imagination by encouraging them to deepen the knowledge regarding other countries and peoples during the period when obtaining a passport was a privilege of the few. The popularity of "Poznaj Świat" was demonstrated by the quantity of the issued magazine reaching, during the top period, 165 thousand copies. A characteristic feature of the periodical during the investigated by us period was a high factual level of the publication, diversity of the content and attractive graphic design, that to great extent was thanks to a talented team of scientists and journalists. The significant stability of "Poznaj Świat" was also favoured by an exceptional continuity of the staff of the magazine editorial committee, as well as a permanent circle of collaborators and authors. In the team of authors of the magazine there were, among others, young scientists, later professors of ethnology and anthropology: Antoni Kuczyński, Aleksander Posern-Zieliński, Lech Mróz, Sławoj Szynkiewicz, Zbigniew Jasiewicz, Leszek Dzięgiel. Apart from the aforementioned scientists, cooperation with the magazine was also established by young researchers of the cultures and peoples of Asia - Krzysztof Wolski, Janusz Kamocki, Iwona Kabzińska-Stawarz, Krzysztof Renik; of Africa - Marek Arpad-Kowalski, Jolanta Koziorowska; of South America - Borys Małkin, Anna Kowalska-Lewicka, Teresa Walendziak; and of Oceania - Aleksander Lech Godlewski and Maria Wrońska.

The information presented by them was related to the spiritual and material culture of the described peoples, their customs, beliefs, dress, folklore, physical appearance, architecture, craft, and artistic creativity.

Interest in the subject of ethnic studies was also demonstrated by researchers representing other fields of knowledge, including geographers, geologists, archeologists, historians, naturalists. Apart from scientists, there was also a significant contribution from travelers professionally dedicated to journalism, as well as from collaborating with the magazine doctors, engineers, alpinists, diplomats, missionaries, and sailors. Due to the facility of observation and short time of stay in a single place, they principally provided descriptions of the material culture of the local peoples, and therefore the appearance of the houses, dress, tools, weapons, craftsmanship and artistic products.

The reports printed in "Poznaj Świat" taking the form of richly illustrated popular science articles, travel reportages and paragraphs, would include descriptions of peoples inhabiting nearly all the continents. The largest number of ethnological analyses was related to Africa, South America and Asia. The authors paid significantly less attention to Europe, North America and Australia in terms of the researched topics. Particular interest in the non-European topics was an expression of continuous fascination of the magazine readers by the "exoticism", or, in other words, such elements of culture that differ most from the European cultures, and are therefore most easily recognisable.

A particular feature of the investigated magazine was its largely apolitical character. The periodical to very limited extent would react to the political transformations taking place in Poland and around the world over several decades. An exception to this can be the interest of the editorial office in the subject of Africa observed during the 60's, and related to the intensification of the process of decolonisation of the countries of the African continent. The moderation of the authors in expressing ideological contents and lack of involvement of the editorial staff in construction of the socialist system in Poland led in January 1951 to suspension of the activity of "Poznaj Świat". Also after the reopening of the periodical in December 1955, the magazine did not deal with the phenomena of the national contemporary politics, which was, however, disrupted by impetuous social and political events. Apart from few mentions relating to the political crisis of 1956, the magazine essentially did not react to the historical transformations taking place in the country. Even such important events, from the most recent history of Poland, as the student and workers protests and manifestations of 1968 and 1970, the introduction of the martial law in 1981, and even the political system transformation in the country in 1989 were not reflected in the pages of the magazine. "Poznaj

Świat” did not aspire, therefore, in any way to be a political indicator. Avoiding controversial topics from the point of view of the then authorities, allowed the periodical to survive every period of political turmoil, serving at the same time for a number of years a didactic function and fascinating the readers with the geographical and cultural diversity of the world. The magazine was advantageous not only in form of extraordinary value of documental and illustrative message together with high competence of the authors, but also huge popularisational value. It is worth highlighting that reading “Poznaj Świat” has had influence on numerous Polish geographers and ethnographers born before the World War II and immediately after it. Young readers, under the influence of the magazine, frequently decided to undertake geographical and ethnographic studies or at least they were interested in these fields of knowledge.

The work has been divided into four parts. The first chapter is dedicated to the history of publishing travel and geographic magazines in the Polish territory with particular consideration of ethnography. In the first part of this chapter, the author conducted a review of the Polish travel magazines publications, commencing from the end of the XVIII century until 1918 in search of ethnographic and folkloric materials. The second sub-chapter presents the place of ethnography in the press organs of the Polish geographical societies during the interwar period. Another, the third, sub-chapter is a review of the Polish popular science and popular magazines functioning simultaneously with the investigated by us periodical.

The second chapter of the dissertation, divided into four parts, has been dedicated to the genesis, history, and profile of the investigated by us publication. The first three sub-chapters demonstrate the history of “Poznaj Świat”, commencing from its creation in 1948, and until the most recent history of the magazine. In the fourth sub-chapter, I magnify the personalities of selected ethnologists and anthropologists, who, in the investigated by us period, undertook cooperation with “Poznaj Świat”.

The following, third chapter of the work focuses on popularisation of the ethnological knowledge in the “Poznaj Świat” monthly. In this part, a detailed review of materials of the ethnographic and ethnological character has been conducted. It has been supplemented by information related to the tradition of the Polish research and observation of non-European cultures. The material has been presented in the historical (chronological) order, commencing from the end of the 40’s, and concluding with the decade of the 80’s of the XX century.

The last, fourth, chapter of the work, divided into five sub-chapters, depicts the investigated by us periodical with the background of the historic socio-political transitions, taking place in Poland and globally over a period of nearly forty years (1948-1989).

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