Works of Karol Jankowski (1868-1928), Czesław Przybylski (1880-1936) and Rudolf Świerczyński (1883-1943) as the background for the changes in architectural design teaching at the Faculty of Architecture of Warsaw University of Technology in the 1920s

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Abstract. The 20th century Polish architecture reached its turning point in the middle of the 1920s, a decade after the creation of the Faculty of Architecture at Warsaw University of Technology and soon after Poland had regained its independence. National forms emphasizing the autonomy and distinctiveness of Polish architecture were sought for and enhanced, which is characteristic of the first years of the Warsaw school of architecture. New aesthetic trends of the artistic avant-garde hailing from the West changed the perception of architecture. New, modern architectural perspectives were particularly enthusiastically received by the youngest generation of architectural adepts. Striving for simplicity, for purist forms, was related to the construction and logic of the materials used. Changes in the didactics that emphasised the significance of technical subjects and design resulted in a much more rationalistic approach to the problems of architectural design. These changes are also visible in the works of the professors - practitioners who at that time ran the Architectural Design Departments at the Faculty of Architecture at WUT. Using the works of Karol Jankowski, Czesław Przybylski and Rudolf Świerczyński as the example, I would like to present changes not only in the artistic approaches of the leading creators of Polish architecture of that period, but also those affecting the teaching at the Warsaw school of architecture. As the body of the written texts left by these outstanding teachers is relatively scant, their work remained the most powerful form of expression while assimilating innovative currents of the 1920s - a synthesis of their views and ideas contained directly in their architectural works.

1. Introduction

In 1915, after many years of efforts and still under wartime conditions, a Polish-language technical university – Warsaw University of Technology – was founded in Warsaw. It comprised the Faculty of Architecture, established owing to the great commitment of the Organizing Committee. The members of the Committee included nestors of Polish architecture as well as young architects in their early thirties who had just started their professional careers, having graduated from various foreign universities. They represented different views and experiences, ranging from eclecticism, through secession, to early modernism, which translated into their architectural achievements. The common denominator of their creative attitudes was the search for a typically Polish outlook on native architecture [1-5].

With the participation of an advisory body formed not only by architects, but also an artist-painter and engineers who cooperated with the architects, the Organizing Committee developed a curriculum...
for the newly created Faculty of Architecture. Apart from architectural design and urban planning ("Building Towns"), which at that time were a novelty in architectural education, the curriculum included "professional" subjects in the field of structure, construction and technical infrastructure. Much attention was devoted to art history and architecture as well as to more artistic disciplines (drawing, painting and sculpture). Such a wide range of the subjects studied ensured a balance between the technical, the humanistic and the artistic which lent specific character to the Warsaw school of architecture.

Until the beginning of the 1930s architectural design was taught in three departments: Rural Design, under the direction of Rudolf Świerczyński, Municipal Design, led by Karol Jankowski and Monumental Design, created in 1918 for Czesław Przybylski who had just returned from Russia.

2. Profiles of the professors and the nature of their work in the period before taking up the Departments of Architectural Design.

Rudolf Świerczyński. Majority of the Organizing Committee members became the teaching staff at the Faculty of Architecture established in the autumn of 1915, among them – Rudolf Świerczyński, who had been extremely involved in the organizational work. He was a young architect in his early thirties, at the onset of his professional career. A graduate from German universities, he was entrusted with the task of leading the Department of Rural Design, which was initially limited to designing small, free-standing architectural forms. Świerczyński’s appointment as the Chair of the Department coincided with his first significant professional success. At the beginning of 1915, together with Romuald Gutt, he was awarded the first prize in a nationwide (covering the area of the three partitions) competition for a design of a farmstead. Apart from the "domestic" character of the proposed forms, the presented projects drew attention to the problem of regionalisation of folk architecture. This success resonated widely, also owing to the catalogue of best competition works that was published in the same year [6]. Świerczyński’s involvement in the organisation of the Faculty of Architecture and the prize he had won led to him being appointed a senior lecturer at the Department of Rural Design in the autumn of 1916. In March 1919, after the university statutory matters had been regulated, all department heads were awarded the titles of associate professors. Świerczyński was appointed full professor in 1921. The experience gained and extended after winning the competition proved decisive in the first years of his professional career.

While still a student in Germany, he became acquainted with the ideas coming from England – a broadly defined housing reform and the garden city concept. The latter, although approached selectively in Poland, rather as an idea suitable for garden suburbs, was related to the search for national forms that shaped the style of Polish architecture. Generally speaking, this search for the national style led to the development of the artistic current dubbed “the manor style”. It is within this trend that the first Świerczyński's designs were created [6].

Karol Jankowski. The oldest and most experienced of the presented teachers, graduated from the Riga University of Technology. While still a student, he took the leading place in the prestigious architectural competition for the museum in Riga. Despite his success, he decided to go to Warsaw and accept the proposal of his colleague Franciszek Lilpop. He started a long-term cooperation with him on equal terms. His decision to go to Warsaw and the establishment of a joint architectural office influenced Jankowski's rapidly developing career. Most of the projects were signed by harmoniously cooperating architects. The distribution of accents was probably such that Lilpop was more involved in technical projects, such as factories or warehouses, while Jankowski was more involved in projects where functional and aesthetic problems prevailed [7].

Jankowski was one of the co-founders of the Faculty of Architecture. His invitation to the Organizing Committee resulted from his active participation in the professional association - the Koło Architektów, where from 1913 he held the position of the first vice-president. However, the most important factor
was his rich and varied architectural achievements. Until 1918, Jankowski moved from eclectic and Art Nouveau forms "wrapping" modern functional solutions, through the search for forms suitable for the national style, to strictly early-modern forms, using the achievements of new technologies and materials in connection with modernised historical forms. In this search, the influence of ideas and currents present in Western architecture was clear. Architecture referring to native forms shows the influence of Arts & Crafts doctrine and English residential architecture, for example in the works of Charles F. A. Voysey. Solutions based on the cottage pattern can be seen, among others, in the implementation of the presbytery in Małkinia – Figure 1. Lilpop-Jankowski's provincial projects are part of the search for modernised national forms, far from imitating "domestic" forms, but using simplified forms, mainly folk and medieval, adapted to the local tradition, with attention paid above all to the correct solution of functions and harmonious composition of the mass. The company's city projects also notice the influences coming to Poland from the West. These inspirations do not only concern the form, but also modern constructional and technological solutions. An example is the reference to the skeletal structures of the "Chicago School" present in several Warsaw projects, but in reinforced concrete technology. They are distinguished by a characteristic grid of pillars, reflected in the composition of the flat façade, with large glazing between the vertical and horizontal frames of the wall stripes and a limited decoration [7] - Figure 2. The flagship work fitting into Warsaw's early modernism is the Department Store of the Jabłkowski Brothers, where design and construction solutions are closer to the patterns of German department stores from the beginning of the 20th century.

Numerous realizations of public utility architecture and their high quality resulted in Karol Jankowski being entrusted with architectural design classes at the Municipal Design Department.

**Figure 1.** Presbytery in Małkinia, according to the design by F. Lilpop and K. Jankowski. [8] -1913, No. 9-10, Table 26

**Figure 2.** Warsaw, 18 Bielańska St, Department Store (not preserved) built ca 1912, to the project of F. Lilpop and K. Jankowski. [9] - sygn. 3092

**Czesław Przybylski.** Przybylski did not become a member of the Organizing Committee of FA because he stayed in Kiev from 1915 to 1918. He was well known in the Warsaw technical community (in 1913-1915 he held the position of the second vice-president of the Koło Architektów) and was generally respected for his professional activity. He began his architectural practice in 1909, after returning from studies in Paris, Karlsruhe and Vienna. The opus magnum of his work at that time was very well received building of the Polish Theatre from 1913 - Figure 3. It was a complex project in the spirit of modernised classicism, with elegant interior design and modern technical solutions. At the beginning of his career, Przybylski successfully participated in architectural and urban competitions, which also brought him fame in the community [10].
At the beginning of 1918 he returned to Warsaw, responding to a proposal to lead the Department of Monumental Design at the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology.

Figure 3. Warsaw, Polish Theatre, according to the design by C. Przybylski, 1912-1913. [11] - 1936, No. 8-9-10, p. 271

3. 1915-1924: teaching design in the first years of the Faculty of Architecture
The first years of the Faculty of Architecture’s educational activity coincided with a difficult time of the war, euphoria of the independence regained in 1918, struggle to defend it during the Polish-Soviet war of 1920 and the country’s reconstruction. The search for and enhancement of national forms emphasizing the independent and distinct character of Polish architecture was symptomatic for the early period of the Warsaw school of architecture.

After the First World War many European countries experienced a shift towards native historicism; this widespread phenomenon followed the period of early modernism of around 1910. It was related to general tendencies resulting from the economic as well as psychological effects of the war, and the post-war economic situation that required the use of uncomplicated materials and techniques. Architecture of that time favored traditionalism with a touch of romanticism.

The subject matter of the design works developed within the Department of Rural Design harmonized with the "domesticity" of the forms of small, freestanding objects in picturesque rural surroundings. Rudolf Świerczyński's implementations from this period were compatible with the subject he taught. Modernized forms of traditional Polish architecture were introduced not only to the designs of manor houses that were so willingly commissioned to him, but also to housing estate projects, the flagship example of which is the design of the Officers' Colony in Warsaw’s Żoliborz district, dating from 1922-1923 – Figure 4. The houses had been inspired by the German housing architecture promoted by Herman Muthesius, especially by the designs of the Hellerau estate of Heinrich Tessenow, with whom Świerczyński had contact during his studies in Dresden.
In the Department of Municipal Design all design classes were preceded by lectures by Karol Jankowski on the propaedeutics of municipal construction. The subject matter of the design works included both residential and public utility buildings, such as department stores, hotels, banks.

Jankowski's didactics was supported by his professional activity which at that time became a continuation of the early modernist solutions applied in his company’s realizations from before 1914 (Department Store of the Jabłkowski Brothers in Vilnius, 1921-1923).

The design tasks undertaken at the Monumental Design Department (established in 1918) focused mainly on the aesthetic side, with the intention to create an aura of solemnity and grandeur appropriate for the rank of the projects at hand. The designs created within the Department drew mainly from the traditions of the Classicism, Renaissance and Baroque. Here, too, the development of design skills among the architectural students' harmonized not only with the professor's indications given as part of the corrections, but also with his architectural output. In the case of Przybylski his impressive achievements included both competition entries and implementations, as exemplified by the first prize won for designing the building of the Central State Archive in 1921, or the conversion of the former Russian barracks into the seat of the Ministry of Military Affairs in 1923 – Figure 5.
4. The second half of the 1920s. A turn to modernity.

The turn towards traditional forms which followed the period of early modernism of around 1910 was a typical and widespread phenomenon that occurred in many European countries after the end of the First World War. Gradual disappearance of this trend in Poland is noticeable after 1924. It was caused by the economic situation which stabilised slowly, the completion of the first stage of the country’s reconstruction and consolidation as well as by entering the modernisation phase.

Another factor was the revival of contacts with the artistic avant-garde of the West. Publishing endeavours of progressive artistic and architectural circles - "Blok" (1924-1926) and "Praesens" (1926-1930) - popularized the achievements of the leading Dutch, French and German architects. Thanks to the grassroots initiative of the students led by Szymon Syrkus, a graduate of the Faculty of Architecture from 1922, and with the approval and help from professors Świerczyński and Jankowski, the First International Exhibition of Modern Architecture was held in Zachęta gallery at the beginning of 1926. The exhibition featured works by Le Corbusier, as well as architects from the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and the USSR [9]. Apart from the "young" architects from Poland (the Syrkus’ team, Barbara and Stanisław Brukalski, Bohdan Lachert, and Józef Szanajca), works of the older generation of recognized architects were also presented, including the projects of Professor Czesław Przybylski. Increasing popularity of modern architecture translated into new student projects and changes in the specialised architectural education. Architectural design teachers also yielded to new trends in their works.

5. Transformations in the works of professors teaching architectural design

In the works of Lilpop and Jankowski, the second half of the 1920s has seen a trend towards combining the achievements of early modernism with functionalism and northern European brick expressionism. Their implementations of that time - the WUT’s Aerodynamics Institute, 1924-1926, as well as the
Church and Educational Institution of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, 1924-1930, are two examples of the Warsaw’s “grey brick” movement within moderate modernism of around 1925. The irregularity of the floor plans corresponded to the rules of designing “from within” - the compatibility of form and function in tune with the structure. With a simultaneous preservation of the classical composition of the elevation, the façades were decorated with brick ornaments of the Expressionist chiaroscuro provenance – Figure 6.

Figure 6. WUT’s Aerodynamics Institute in 1926, according to the design by F. Lilpop and K. Jankowski. [11] - 1926, No. 4, p. 16

Jankowski valued rationalism in architecture most highly. He instilled in students the importance of utilitarian and technical building solutions, but also emphasised the psychological and spiritual needs of the end user, i.e. the question of the aesthetics. For him the composition of the body of the building and the way it fit in with the surroundings were the most important. His open attitude towards progressive tendencies was expressed in his corrections, lectures and occasional public appearances [7]. However, despite the fact that he had embraced new ideas so early on, the Professor’s death in 1928 prevented his work from being more deeply rooted in modern architecture - Figure 7.

Figure 7. Warsaw, 11a Warecka St, Building of Stefczyk Agricultural Cooperatives. One of the last projects by K. Jankowski, designed in 1927. [11] - 1929, No. 10, p. 359
Czesław Przybylski's reaction to the new architectural trends was initially quite restrained. His projects from the breakthrough period in Polish architecture were characterized by the use of simplified, monumentalised classical forms. He propagated the values of this style, combining "modern purism with classical monumentalism" among his students during lectures on the principles of design. The change in Przybylski's work is clearly visible at the end of the 1920s. His projects from 1929 - extensions of the Warsaw University of Technology and the Warsaw Central Railway Station - are striking examples of this - Figure 8.

![Figure 8. WUT’s Chemical Technology pavilion, designed by Cz. Przybylski in 1929.](image)

[11] - 1936, No. 8-9-10, p. 312

Rejection of classical composition in favour of a harmonious, multidimensional juxtaposition of forms resulting from the functional needs and flexible structural solutions, treatment of the wall as a smooth surface, with traditional details replaced by the texture of façade materials - these were the new formal and stylistic features of his work. It should be noted, however, that he did not succumb uncritically to the fashionable doctrines, leaving himself the freedom to choose the appropriate means. He did not completely reject the classical perception of architecture and, depending on the context, he skilfully used both classical forms and new means of expression.

At the Faculty of Architecture Rudolf Świerczyński was one of the first enthusiasts and propagators of the latest trends in architecture. Hence the change in the subject matter of the projects carried out in the Department of Rural Design, especially those leading towards a diploma, which had less and less in common with the rural areas, and began to be more focused on the metropolitan developments typically associated with modernity. The acquisition of the Municipal Design Department’s chair by Professor Świerczyński (after Professor Jankowski's death) was a natural consequence of his didactic and professional activities almost exclusively related to public utility architecture. The gap in his professional activity between 1924 and 1926 was also significant; it was the time when he introduced his students to the works of Le Corbusier and other leading modernists, while at the same time fully approving of their works inspired by these architectural prophets [6]. Świerczyński had a specific way of conducting his classes. Basically, he did not lecture, and his corrections were limited to some laconic comments and occasional harsh statements to the effect: "Architects with academic education need to be creative, not imitate mindlessly ", or "Form must be justified, shaped in the process of long
discussions, until, finally, only that which is necessary is left” [12]. One could say that by shaping the attitudes of the adepts of the Faculty of Architecture he simultaneously formed the character of his mature work.

In 1927, Świerczyński won a prestigious competition for the headquarters of the Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego in Warsaw, which launched a series of remarkable projects that served prestigious state functions – Figure 9. His projects from the second half of the 1920s combine a modern, skeletal structure of the building with the verticalism of its body. The repetitiveness of the façade module was interrupted by the prominence of the main entrance axis, behind which he developed classically arranged representative interiors of the entrance halls. The incorporation of modern ideas based on a traditional compositional layout which is visible in these projects would, in later years, undergo formal and stylistic transformations, heading towards clearer references to Le Corbusier’s design principles.

Figure 9. Headquarters of the Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego in Warsaw according to the design by R. Świerczyński from 1928-1929. [13] - Phot. H. Poddębski, 1938

6. Conclusion
New aesthetic currents of the artistic avant-garde hailing from the West changed the perception of architecture. Striving for simplicity, for puristic forms, related to the construction and logic of the materials used, was particularly enthusiastically received by the youngest generation of architecture students. Changes in the didactics, emphasising the significance of technical subjects and design, resulted in a much more rationalistic approach to the problems of architectural design. These changes were also visible in the works of the professors - practitioners, who at that time ran the Architectural Design Departments at the Faculty of Architecture at WUT. As the body of the written texts left by these outstanding teachers is relatively scant, their work remained the most powerful form of expression while assimilating innovative currents of the 1920s. It is a synthesis of their views and ideas contained directly in their architectural works. This particular time of breakthrough in Polish architecture, the transition from modernized historicizing forms, perceived as national, to modern forms, visible in the works of the professors of the Faculty of Architecture, has all the features of evolutionary process. All professorial projects from this breakthrough period are characterised, above all, by their rationalism whose functionalist and technological aspects were based on the strong foundation of the Vitruvian triad: firmitas, utylitas, venustas (durability, usefulness, beauty).
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