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Data for Creation

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The need for regional styles to exist in architecture has been broadly and long discussed. In general, regionalisms are socially accepted and they should be employed. Discussions usually become more intensified together with the search for inspiration to create new styles in architecture.

In Poland Stanislaw Witkiewicz, arts critic and theoretician, a painter and a writer, created and developed "the Zakopane style" on the turn of the 19th century. This is the only one architectural style focussed on the regional features that has been preserved until nowadays. It referred both to architecture and industrial forms. It was received by the contemporaries with ambivalent attitude, from the uncritical enthusiasm to emotional negation. One side claimed that the style affected the national consciousness and united the nation without the State. According to the other side, "the Zakopane style", when outside the Podhale region, shocked with its non-conformity to the surroundings.

About 1910 there was an attempt to create the style not exactly regional but rather national. The designs referred to neoclassic Old Polish mansion house with a porch supported by columns and high mansard roof. Between 1915 and 1918 projects to rebuild the Polish villages and little towns were thrown open to competition. Afterwards, neatly published project catalogues presented universal, all-Polish type of architecture. In 1918, after I World War and after Poland regained independence, whole housing estates were built in manorial style. At the same time the described sets of competition projects were used together with the new ones, prepared by eg. Polish Hygenic Society (1936). All the project proposals show the all-Polish type of regionalism.

Another intensification of discussion concerning the regional style is linked with the post-modernist ideas. Modernism-lacking ornament, cosmopolitan, without any homely features (by the way, he is jolly smart who knows what this "homeliness" is all about) despite its undeniable achievements has been finally faced with crushing criticism. Together with this reaction the search for inspiration in regional features of architecture has been revived. But then there has been a lack of Witkiewicz's enthusiasm and stubbornness.

We deal with constant attempts to solve the problem of creation in regional style. The situation described allows for the statement that there are two forms of regionalism: one on a narrow, territorial and second on the all-Polish scale. No doubt, "the Zakopane style" was the territorial regionalism, and the manorial architecture-the all-Polish one.

The condition and quantity of traditional forms are really varied in Poland. For these still existing objects to serve as "model" and inspiration, they have to be examined, classified and made accessible to the designers. The next step is to extract the most distinct features of sub-regions and to popularize the knowledge of these problems. At the Faculty of Architecture of Bialystok Technical University the relative data base concerning the regional architecture is being created on the basis of Microsoft's ACCESS. It is still another attempt to preserve and uphold the cultural landscape of Poland.

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