

LARISA BONDAR

St. Petersburg Branch of the Archive
of the Russian Academy of Sciences

**Litigation over Jan Baudouin de Courtenay
in St. Petersburg in Documents of the Petersburg Branch
of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences**

Jan Ignacy Niecisław Baudouin de Courtenay (1845–1929) is closely connected with St. Petersburg: his studies at the university under Izmail I. Sreznevsky, the defense of his thesis, the beginning of his dialectological activity connected with his business trips to North Italy and Austria (which allowed him to issue 3 volumes of dialectological materials), and a long professorship in St. Petersburg State University (1900–1918). Nevertheless, we can probably affirm that this city did not become one close to his heart¹. In this city, an unpleasant event connected with the scientist took place, which has partially been described by researchers.

The private funds of the academics Aleksey A. Shakhmatov and Lev V. Shcherba in the Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences (SPbB ARAS) contain documents connected with this matter.

A rough copy of a letter from 1914, written by professors of the Historico-Philological Department of the Imperial St. Petersburg University, begins with a description of the case. "...The ruling Senate has confirmed the sentence of the St. Petersburg Appellate Court, condemning the honored professor I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay² **to imprisonment in...** (*accentuation mine – L.B.*)"³.

¹ In his letter to the Finnish linguist J. Mikkola, he ventures on a slight hint of a certain discomfort he felt: *Briefwechsel zwischen Jan Baudouin de Courtenay und Jooseppi J. Mikkola aus den Jahren 1898–1926*, Hrsg. von Raimo Pullat in Zusammenarbeit mit Magdalena Smoczyńska, Studien und Materialien zur Geschichte der Polnischen Akademie der Wissenschaft und Künste, Vol. IV, Krakow 2004.

² J. Baudouin de Courtenay's Russian name is Ivan Alexandrovich Baudouin de Courtenay.

³ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, p. 2. Russian text is quoted in English; Polish text is given in original language. The translations from Polish to English which are given in square brackets come from the editors.

In April of the same year, an article appeared in the Polish press beginning with the words,

“Dzienniki przyniosły wiadomość, która nawet przyzwyczajonych do wszelkich isticie-rosyjskich nieprawdopodobieństw musiała uderzyć swą potwornością. Oto prof. Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, jeden z najwybitniejszych językoznawców współczesnych, uczony o sławie europejskiej, członek szeregu instytucji naukowych, w tej liczbie i cesarskiej akademii nauk w Petersburgu, rzeczywisty radca stanu, mąż prawie 70-letni został skazany na dwa lata twierdzy. Jakąż zbrodnię popełnił ten sędziwy uczony?.. Czy wykryto u niego laboratorium bomb, czy gromadził broń dla jakichś powstańców, czy wreszcie organizował jakąś akcję mogącą na szwank narazić istnienie państwa carów? Nie, wydał niedużą broszurę, która wywołała konieczność wkroczenia władz, zaniepokojonych w najwyższym stopniu jej treścią”⁴.

[The journals brought news which must have shocked even those accustomed to all Russian improbabilities with its cruelty. Here is Prof. Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, one of the most renowned modern language experts, of European fame, a member of a range of scientific institutions, including the Tsar’s Academy of Science in Saint Petersburg, an advisor of the government, a husband almost 70 years old, sentenced to two year’s imprisonment. What crime had he committed?... Had there been a bomb hidden in his laboratory, or had he collected weapons for an uprising, or possibly organized some campaign to overthrow the Tsarist nation? No, he had printed a brochure which had forced the government to intervene as they were severely worried about its content].

The above-mentioned brochure was issued in 1913 and was called “National and Territorial Features in Autonomy”. This small book, which consisted of 84 pages and cost 40 kopecks, was not sold extensively, because it was confiscated by the police⁵. We should say a few words about this work, in which the indictment mentioned a deliberate call for revolt and propagation of disinformation concerning the activity of legal institutions in general, and of some administrators in particular, and accused J. Baudouin de Courtenay under item 1 clause 129 of the Criminal Code and item 3 clause 1434⁴ of the Penal Code.

⁴ Leon Wasilewski, „Zbrodnia” prof. Baudouina de Courtenay, “Krytyka. Dwutygodnik poświęcony sprawom polityczno-społecznym i literacko-artystycznym” 1914, Vol. XLII, no VII, p. 37 (issue of this magazine is also kept in the SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, pp. 140–173).

⁵ According to the newspaper “Речь”, “before its confiscation the brochure had been distributed to the amount of 324 copies...”: “Речь” 1914, no 58, p. 5.

According to the preface of the book, the article was written at the beginning of 1907 “at the request of the editors of the »Collection of Autonomists«”⁶ which was planned in Moscow but wasn’t issued. It was a time when autonomy ideas were very popular with the public. So, J. Baudouin de Courtenay published his work in 1913 (after an unsuccessful attempt to issue the article in one of the magazines in 1910) thinking that it had become more topical at that time. Admitting the fact that he wasn’t a specialist in these questions and offering his ideas presented there as those of a dilettante⁷, J. Baudouin de Courtenay discussed the theoretical problems of ethnology – the terms “nationality” and “autonomy”, and tried to give some practical advice on the organization of Russian autonomic regions.

This was not the first work of J. Baudouin de Courtenay on national issues. Apparently, the scientist was very interested in the problems of “minor nations”. A number of his publicist’s compositions are devoted to them⁸.

Moreover, it was not the first case when politics interfered with the professional occupation of this scholar in a negative way. In 1893 J. Baudouin de Courtenay became a member of the Krakow Academy of Sciences and was hired as a professor of comparative philology in Jagiellonian University. And although, at that time, Krakow was a Galician city, the whole scientific world considered the university in Krakow and the Krakow Academy as institutions of Polish science. So, for J. Baudouin de Courtenay this appointment must have been of particular importance too. However, on the expiry date of his contract its term was not prolonged. The views concerning the reasons behind the refusal to extend the contract differed. The academic A. A. Shakhmatov thought that the problem lay in the burning indignation caused by the fact that J. Baudouin de Courtenay was against the filing of fictitious data on the rental fee for the apartment rented by him to decrease the tax rate of the landlord⁹. Moreover, the scholar published a brochure with

⁶ И. А. Бодуэн де Куртенэ, *Национальный и территориальный признак в автономии*, St. Petersburg 1913, р. III. SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, pp. 92–139.

⁷ И. А. Бодуэн де Куртенэ, *Национальный и территориальный признак...*, pp. 1–2.

⁸ L. E. Bokareva and Alexei A. Leontjev’s article containing the list of all J. Baudouin de Courtenay’s published works, including the publicistic ones, helps to get one’s bearings in his literary heritage: Л. Е. Бокарева, А. А. Леонтьев, *Список трудов И. А. Бодуэна де Куртенэ (1845–1929)*, [in:] *И. А. Бодуэн де Куртенэ (1845–1929) (К 30-летию со дня смерти)*, Moscow 1960, pp. 82–119).

⁹ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, pp. 8–9.

his arguments on this matter, having examined the question with his usual thoroughness and sharpness of statements¹⁰.

J. Baudouin de Courtenay himself connected the refusal of the Austrian authorities to prolong the contract with his trip in August 1898 to the Slovak town of *Turčianský Svätý Martin* (St. Martin of Tours), situated at that time in the territory subject to the Hungarian crown, and which was the main center of intellectual and political life of Slovaks. There, the annual holiday of the Slovak Museum Society and the "Živena" Women's Society was held. The Hungarian authorities exercised supervision and took control over this celebration, being afraid of the propagation of pan-Slavic ideas during the holiday. And it was J. Baudouin de Courtenay who was accused of "pan-Slavic agitations".

"Jakąż to więc zbrodnię, – the scholar wrote, – popełniłem na terytorium świętego Stefana? Oczywiście, musiałem agitować i podburzać – »panślawów« słowackich do buntu"¹¹.

[So was it somehow a crime, – the scholar wrote, – that I committed on the territory of Saint Stephen? Of course, I had to agitate and stir the "pan-Slavic" Slovaks towards revolution].

J. Baudouin de Courtenay, being a man with a heightened sense of justice, made an extensive report about the celebration of this holiday and his stay in Slovakia for the Krakow magazine "Przegląd Tygodniowy", describing in detail the course of celebrations, naming its main participants and specifying the arrangements made by the local authorities for the control over the holding of the event.

For J. Baudouin de Courtenay, the invitation to the holiday was just a chance to visit Slovakia. The opportunity to conduct dialectological research in this territory was of true interest to him. To prevent any suspicion which he could arouse, the scholar, after arriving in the town, appeared

¹⁰ Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, *Jeden z objawów moralności oportunistyczno-prawomyślniej*, Krakow 1898, [in:] Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, *Dzieła wybrane*, Vol. VI, Warsaw 1983, pp. 42–59.

¹¹ Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, *Wspomnienia z niedawnej wycieczki do Słowaków*, "Przegląd Tygodniowy" 1899, no 18–19, [in:] Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, *Dzieła wybrane*, Vol. VI, p. 81.

before a local leader to present himself and explain the reason of his arrival in this land.

“...Była to jednak wielka naiwność z mojej strony, – J. Baudouin de Courtenay writes, – gdyż właśnie ta moja grzeczność nie mogła się pomieścić w głowie [władzy]; mnie więc obrali sobie za kozła ofiarowego i na mnie postanowili wyrzucić zemstę za nieudaną próbę poskromienia »buntu panslawistycznego«”. And this despite the fact that the scholar „nie tylko ani razu nie przemawiałem i nie wznosiłem żadnego toastu, ale nawet prawie bez ustanku milczałem”¹².

[It was, however, great naivety on my side, – J. Baudouin de Courtenay writes, – as my courtesy was not able to fit inside the heads [rulers]; they turned me into a scapegoat and decided to take revenge for an unsuccessful attempt to subdue the ”pan-Slavic revolution”. And this despite the fact that the scholar not once spoke about or raised a toast, but kept quiet almost without exception].

This event acquired deep resonance in the press. J. Baudouin de Courtenay wrote that the local leader, mentioned above, spread the gossip that, due to the “pan-Slavic agitation” of the scholar, a complaint was lodged against him with the authorities.

“This canard in the press reached the Pest newspapers and from there it spread as a telegram to all sides of the world... My denials and impartial explanations, issued in one of the Krakow and one of the Viennese newspapers, repeated later in some others, put an end to these skillfully embroidered rumors”¹³.

The Hungarian papers attainted the scholar for his “actions threatening the integrity of the great »Magyarország«”, and public opinion in the resolution of the Viennese ministry which resolved not to prolong the contract with J. Baudouin de Courtenay detected the influence of the Budapest government. Even Krakow’s “Gazeta Polska” (No 35) published “the precious article... with acknowledgements to the Hungarian authorities, which »on its own initiative« released Krakow from such a malicious person”¹⁴.

However, the scholar considered that the main reason for the racket which occurred around his figure was a phenomenon which he described more than once in connection with a variety of events. The case in point is the phenomenon which J. Baudouin de Courtenay called “pomieszanie pojęć”.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 86.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

“Zamiast ścisłego rozbioru pojęć i ich dokładnego rozróżniania poddajemy się... panowaniu asocjacji czysto wyrazowych i wywoływanym przez nie wrażeniom”. [Instead of the close examination of ideas and their precise differentiation, we give in to... the rule of word association and impressions created by it].

On this occasion, these are the notions “Slavic” and “pan-Slavic”.

“Boć, – the scholar amazes, – proszę tylko pomyśleć: »Słowianin« – »slawista« – »panslawista« – to przecież wszystko jedno”¹⁵. [For, – the scholar amazes, – please just think about it: – “Slav” – “Slavic” – “pan-Slavic” it’s all the same].

Thus, regarding his trip to Slovakia, J. Baudouin de Courtenay supposed that the reason behind blaming him for the pan-Slavic agitation lay in the information picked up in a local Slovak newspaper, that J. Baudouin de Courtenay was a Slavist¹⁶.

The publicistic works of J. Baudouin de Courtenay on national issues did not go unnoticed by those who are interested in this subject. The Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the RAS stores the letters of N. P. Evstifeev, a supporter of Esperanto expansion from Siberia, who was an admirer of J. Baudouin de Courtenay and appreciated his interest in the matter of artificial languages. There are only a few letters of N. P. Evstifeev, which, however, contain interesting information. The reporter became interested in J. Baudouin de Courtenay’s publicistic articles and decided to translate some of his compositions on national questions into Esperanto. Four articles¹⁷ were chosen for translation, which the author intended to translate not entirely but with some extractions.

“...Generally I try, where possible, to issue all that has exclusively Russian, Polish or Polish-Russian meaning and that isn’t clear or interesting for those who aren’t familiar with Russian and Polish affairs and Russian-Polish relations in detail, but at the same time I endeavor to save all that which is of fundamental, pan-human importance, that is plain and instructive for everyone and everywhere”¹⁸,

¹⁵ Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, *O zjeździe slawistów i panslawizmie „platonickým”*, [in:] Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, *Dzieła wybrane*, Vol. VI, p. 101.

¹⁶ J. Baudouin de Courtenay, *Wspomnienia...*, p. 87.

¹⁷ *Kwestia Polska w Rosji w związku z innemi kwestiami kresowemi i „innoplemieniami”*, ”Świat Słowiański”, Krakow 1905; *Проект основных положений для решения польского вопроса*, St. Petersburg 1906; *Ze zjazdu autonomistów czyli przedstawicieli narodowości nie-rosyjskich w Petersburgu*, Krakow 1906; *Autonomia Polski*, Krakow 1906.

¹⁸ SPbB ARAS, F. 102, L. 2, Fl. 106, p. 19.

N. P. Evstifeev writes. Finally, N. P. Evstifeev's Petersburg colleague says in his postcard sent to J. Baudouin de Courtenay that N. P. Evstifeev "started translation of your brochures on national questions into Esperanto and their publication"¹⁹.

However, we shouldn't exaggerate J. Baudouin de Courtenay's role in the development of national questions, especially the political importance of his works. Suffice it to say that the professor's colleagues – a group of Petersburg academics – give a unanimous and, we should note, true estimation of this activity of the scientist, speaking of his enthusiasm for "idealistic ideology often ignoring real, historically formed conditions"²⁰.

"He's never been suited to be a politician or a public figure, because he was always trying to influence the current situation by open blame in the view of his ideal internal world, which didn't correspond to the real things",

writes the academic Vasilij V. Radlov²¹.

"His brochure seems to me an entirely accidental set of thoughts and feelings, which wasn't thought over and analyzed..." revoices A. A. Shakhmatov. "I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay is completely alone in his political ideology – he has neither followers nor like-minded persons. It depends first of all on the fact that he hasn't an integral political ideology at all"²².

L. Wasilewski characterizes his work "National and Territorial Features in Autonomy" as one of the numerous Utopias that appeared in the period of expansion of the ideas in defense of constitutional monarchies²³. In a note signed by Petersburg scientists, we find confirmation of the fact that, being interested in public and political questions, J. Baudouin de Courtenay was aware of his amateurish approach to ethno-political questions, acknowledging his inexperience. "And only in one aspect he wouldn't admit he was wrong: he was firmly sure in his right to express his open opinion about the questions of public and political life worrying him"²⁴.

¹⁹ SPbB ARAS, F. 102, L. 2, Fl. 106, p. 20.

²⁰ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, p. 9.

²¹ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, p. 61.

²² SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, p. 16.

²³ L. Wasilewski, „Zbrodnia” prof. Baudouin de Courtenay..., p. 41.

²⁴ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, p. 8.

Anxiety for the current reality caused some emotionality of his phrases, the inability to be just an impartial observer which was noticed by his friends and gave additional arguments to the investigators for his accusation of the instigation to revolt. The colleagues of J. Baudouin de Courtenay outlined his awareness of civil duty, which was really a “live and creative feeling” for him.

“It never advises I.A.B.²⁵ to keep silent, but, on the contrary, desperately demands from him to express his thoughts and beliefs. And this demonstrates one of the most typical features of I.A.B. – his frankness and sincerity: ...cunning, tortuosity are unusual for his clear nature. I.A.B. had to suffer much just because of such understanding of his civil duty”²⁶.

V. V. Radlov takes up,

“But, unfortunately, he thought that his civil duty was to express his views not only sincerely but harshly... I.A.B.’s vehemence and frankness hurt only him alone during all his long life”²⁷.

But J. Baudouin de Courtenay didn’t acknowledge his extreme expression of emotionality. Trying to defend himself from the accusation of “hate” towards Russia, J. Baudouin de Courtenay asks his acquaintance M. Zdziechowski in a letter to read carefully those places which served for such accusation, “I neither hate nor like anybody there. This isn’t my speciality”²⁸.

J. Baudouin de Courtenay avoided active politics. We find confirmation of this fact in the remaining copy of his letter of 22 January (4 February) 1905 addressed to Sergey Y. Vitte. When the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers asked J. Baudouin de Courtenay to take part in a discussion of the “Polish question”, the scientist preferred to evade participation in this matter²⁹. So, the questions raised in the brochure couldn’t have a practical

²⁵ I.A.B. – Ivan Alexandrovich Baudouin de Courtenay.

²⁶ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, p. 8. In the letter signed by Russian academics, perhaps, those difficulties are meant which Baudouin de Courtenay felt in view of his complicated relations with people who accompanied him during his passages from one university into another.

²⁷ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, p. 61.

²⁸ Bazyli Białokozowicz, *Jan Baudouin de Courtenay i Marian Zdziechowski*, “Przegląd Humanistyczny” 1968, Vol. XII, no 2, p. 150.

²⁹ However, he couldn’t refrain from stating his view “on the question of Polish lan-

character. “The proof of the fact that he didn’t strive to excite anybody by his brochure can be found just in the event that it wasn’t published at its time, when it would find a susceptible soil”, assures V. V. Radlov³⁰.

However, the court had another opinion about it and it was possible that one could suffer even being far from the real politics.

The judicial authorities conducted a strict trial, which drew the attention of the press. As early as 1 March 1914 there appeared articles in the newspapers “Den” (“Day”) No 58 and “Rech” (“Speech”) No 58³¹ under the very name “The Case of Prof. I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay” covering the beginning of this campaign. One of the newspapers reported quite tendentiously,

“Russian justice has finally managed to expose the criminal activity of this person, who has been freely teaching our youth for 50 years... who occupies an honorable place in all European encyclopedias... It happened yesterday, on 28 February³² 1914, during the session of the Special Office of St. Petersburg Appellate Court...”.

The case began with the ordinary examination of the defendant, continues the anonymous author of the article,

“which was conducted by the Senior Chairman of the Senate, Nikolay S. Krashennikov, some answers of the professor being especially interesting for the Appellate Court. – Your nationality? – Pole. – Ah, Pole! And your religion? – Roman Catholic. – Ah, Roman Catholic...³³. The examination continued in the same spirit for about an hour...”

specified a reporter of the newspaper “Rech”.

“The accusing deputy prosecutor, Myakinin, was amazed by the fact that it was Prof. Baudouin de Courtenay who abused the Russian government which had given him the rank of valid councilor of state, the title of honored professor and ten long years of business trips abroad”.

guage rights” and on the problem of “national and religious issues”. SPbB ARAS, F. V, L. 1-B, Fl. 107, pp. 117–118 reverse.

³⁰ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, p. 61.

³¹ The given issues of these newspapers are also among documents of the SPbB ARAS, in L. V. Shcherba’s fund: SPbB ARAS, F. 770, L. 1, Fl. 14, pp. 82–83.

³² Whether it was carried out on purpose or was a coincidence, the proceeding over the professor described in the press so fully had taken place just the day before, and the articles in the newspapers “Речь” and “День” were issued on the scientist’s birthday (1 March) when J. Baudouin de Courtenay was 69.

³³ “День” 1914, no 58, p. 3.

and after that the prosecutor demanded “the supreme penalty – exile”³⁴. After the speech of an advocate in the person of the attorney at law M. G. Kazarinov, who, according to the newspaper “Rech”, prepared witty but, according to the newspaper “Den”, non-argued reasons for his defense, the word was given to the respondent. His performance, reflected by the press, ended with an interesting statement,

“Even if I’ve really sinned against something”, the professor finished his speech, “it was the breach of three precepts, three wise rules: firstly, being a scientist I shouldn’t have digressed from my special scientific work; secondly, I shouldn’t have been interested in public and political matters and, finally, if I was interested in them I had to keep my thoughts and feelings inside...”³⁵.

After the first consideration of the case, the sentence was changed. The Appellate Court acquitted J. Baudouin de Courtenay under clause 1434⁴ but accused him under clause 129.

“After a very long consultation³⁶ the Special Office of the Appellate Court sentenced I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay, 70 years old³⁷, to 2 years of imprisonment, acting to take him under guard until the submission of six thousand rubles bail”³⁸.

The Polish press writes about the events with a special emotionality,

“Przewodniczący sądu z całym naciskiem podniósł fakt, że prof. B. d. C. jest Polakiem i należy do kościoła rzymsko-katolickiego. Prokurator wskazywał na to, że oskarżony ma tytuł rzeczywistego radcy stanu i wskutek tego zobowiązany jest do wdzięczności względem rządu rosyjskiego. Wogóle cały proces był prowadzony z bezwzględną tendycyjnością w duchu nacjonalistycznym”³⁹.

[The head of the court emphasized the fact that Prof. B. d. C. is a Pole and belongs to the Roman-Catholic church. The prosecutor pointed out that the accused was a state advisor and, as such, had the obligation to be grateful towards the Russian government. In general, the trial was conducted with a nationalist tendency].

³⁴ “Речь” 1914, no 58, p. 6.

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ The Appellate Court consulted for about two hours: “Речь” 1914, no 58, p. 6.

³⁷ This is a mistake of the newspaper reporter, for, as it was mentioned above, Baudouin de Courtenay was only 69.

³⁸ “Речь” 1914, no 58, p. 4.

³⁹ L. Wasilewski, „Zbrodnia” prof. Baudouin de Courtenay..., p. 42.

One of the Petersburg witnesses of the events, signed as A. R-sky, reports the same in his letter to the editors of the Polish magazine "Krytyka":

"Tendancyjnym więc był cały proces profesora, aktem zemsty... Prezes sądu Kraszennikow ... prowadził też indagację w formie oburzającej, głosem i pytaniami wprost torturował wielkiego uczonego, potem otoczył go żandarmami z szablami obnażonemi, póki gen. Babiński nie złożył kaucji". "Akademia Umiejętności naradza się nad krokami w sprawie swego członka: nie było bodaj dotąd przykładu, by »akademik« został zasądzony"⁴⁰.

[The professor's whole trial was an act of revenge... The chairman of the court Kraszennikow ... also conducted an interrogation in a revolting way, simply torturing the great scholar with his voice and questions, then he surrounded him with officers with swords at the ready, until Gen. Babiński paid his bail. The Academy of Learning is contemplating steps to take in the issue of its member: there has never been such a case when an "academic" was convicted].

But the scientific world of Petersburg didn't remain indifferent to the event. Professors of the Historico-Philological Department of the St. Petersburg Imperial University, where J. Baudouin de Courtenay worked, prepared the letter, mentioned earlier, on four sheets for the Minister of Public Education with the request to submit a petition for a pardon⁴¹. Moreover, according to the above-mentioned A. R-sky, unrest began among the students of the university, including female students of higher courses (courses of Bestuzhev) and students of the Psycho-neurological Institute (educational institution where J. Baudouin de Courtenay taught), which could turn into demonstrations. In connection with this, the professor, trying to "suppress the storm", stopped reading his lectures for some time⁴². V. V. Radlov expresses in his letter his readiness to speak in the court as a witness⁴³.

And in the April issue of the newspaper "Russkoje Slovo" ("Russian Word") of 1914 there was an article under the name "»Case« of Prof. J. Baudouin de Courtenay", in which another action for the professor's defense was described,

⁴⁰ L. Wasilewski, „Zbrodnia” prof. Baudouin de Courtenay..., p. 42, foot. 1.

⁴¹ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, pp. 2–5.

⁴² L. Wasilewski, „Zbrodnia” prof. Baudouin de Courtenay..., p. 42, foot. 1.

⁴³ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, p. 61.

“... Recently a meeting has been held, in which the academics Aleksei Aleksandrovich Shakhmatov, Vasily Vasilievich Radlov, Sergei Konstantinovich Bulich, Prof. Nikolai Ivanovich Kareev, Lev Vladimirovich Shcherba, Lev Iosifovich Petrazhitsky and Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Zhizhilenko and lawyers participated. During this meeting it was decided to lodge an appeal for the sentence of the Special Office of St. Petersburg Appellate Court, which condemned Prof. Baudouin de Courtenay to two years of imprisonment”⁴⁴.

Probably, the main organizer and instigator of this activity was the above-mentioned Russian linguist, since 1894 a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Aleksey A. Shakhmatov⁴⁵. Among other documents of this case carefully kept by the academic⁴⁶ we can find several editions of the appeal letter for mitigation of J. Baudouin de Courtenay’s sentence⁴⁷ signed by the academics V. V. Radlov, and Pyotr Vasilievic Nikitin, professor Sergey K. Bulich, the academics Mikhail I. Rostovtsev, Sergey F. Oldenburg (Permanent Secretary of the Academy of Sciences), Philip F. Fortunatov and Karl G. Zaleman, the professors Pyotr A. Lavrov and Fyodor I. Shcherbatsky, ordinary professor of St. Petersburg University Nikolay Y. Marr, freelance university lecturer V. Shcherba, and the academic A. A. Shakhmatov.

This letter appeals with pedantry, fitting the professor, to the contents of J. Baudouin de Courtenay’s brochure and proves, line by line, the groundless-

⁴⁴ According to the same article in “Русское слово”, “the appeal is prepared and submitted to the Senate. The appeal will be defended in the Senate by attorney of law Gruzenberg”. The clipping is kept among documents of A. A. Shakhmatov’s fund: SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, p. 89.

⁴⁵ There is the following document among A. A. Shakhmatov’s papers, “Ivan Grigorjevich, the Russian Language and Philology Department of the Imperial Academy of Sciences applied to me with the request to solicit for a pardon of the honored professor of the Imperial St. Petersburg University Ivan Alexandrovich Baudouin de Courtenay, sentenced to a two-year imprisonment. Admitting the fact that the prominent scientific achievements of J. Baudouin de Courtenay, as well as his declining years, give grounds necessary for mercy of His Imperial Majesty towards him, I ask you to present a respective petition when you find it opportune”: SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, p. 19.

⁴⁶ Besides it, A. A. Shakhmatov minutely studied the very text of the brochure which is testified by numerous references to the text in letters and also by the remaining summary of this article on 23 sheets: SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, pp. 62–84.

⁴⁷ Hand-written variant on 5 sheets: SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, pp. 8–12, and also three typed supplements of the text: pp. 20–30 with hand-written supplements; the second printed variant – pp. 31–38 with hand-written supplements; the last, perhaps, clean printed variant – pp. 39–45 and its copies – pp. 46–52, 53–59.

ness of his accusation of the instigation to revolt. Admitting that “his harsh statements, baseless charges against some representatives of the authorities and the governmental politics on the whole deprived I.A.B. of the possibility to defend himself from... the accusations preferred” and not approving J. Baudouin de Courtenay

“for evasion from that calm judgment of state and public affairs which befit a citizen, wishing to be really useful for his homeland, most of all”, the authors of the letter assure, “His friends and pupils can testify with entire conviction that I.A.B. was always looking at Russian as at his mother, not a stepmother”.

The authors of the letter add to it humane words about J. Baudouin de Courtenay’s “moral personality”, approving his emotionality by a

“hot and enthusiastic temper, those features of his character which induce him to always energetic, active statements... He loves his people with all his sensitive and tender heart and can resort to a harsh word or violent condemnation for the sake of this love, but a forgiving feeling always smolders in his heart”⁴⁸.

On 12 May 1914, A.A. Shakhmatov, unsatisfied with this appeal, sent on his own behalf a letter to His Imperial Highness the Grand Prince Konstantin Konstantinovich Romanov⁴⁹, at that time the President of the Imperial Academy of Sciences. In this letter, A.A. Shakhmatov, representing the request of the Russian Language and Philology Department of the Academy of Sciences, begged the Grand Prince “to order the Minister of Justice to pardon I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay out of the monarch’s charity”.

“Since my youth I’ve respected the name of I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay as of a famous linguist and Slavist”, writes A. A. Shakhmatov kindly about him. “And now I still consider him a prominent scientist. When I got acquainted with him personally I realized that he was a frank, sincere but very sensitive and sometimes emotionally unstable person. I liked him for his kind heart and would acknowledge my absolute blindness, if I was told that he treated Russia and Russian people with hostility”.

⁴⁸ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, pp. 9–12.

⁴⁹ A rough copy of the letter is kept in A. A. Shakhmatov’s personal rapiers: SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, pp. 16–16 reverse, its fair copy is in the Grand Prince Konstantin Romanov’s personal rapiers: SPbB ARAS, F. 6, L. 1, Fl. 37, pp. 14–14 reverse.

Enclosed is a rough copy of a rescript for the Minister of Justice, and at the end of the letter we find the ardent words,

“Your Imperial Highness, for many years I have been using your kind attitude towards me which I often abused. But this time I’m referring to you being completely sure that your gracious appeal for J. Baudouin de Courtenay is necessary. It’s necessary not only for him, a sixty-nine-year-old man, who will be broken by two years of imprisonment, but also for us, for our family of scientists, since we derive strength for life and work in the conviction that truth and justice rest not only on a formal basis”⁵⁰.

On 15 July 1914, J. Baudouin de Courtenay prepared a letter for His Imperial Majesty where the scientist tried to provide explanations concerning his brochure, supplying his narration with numerous quotations from the work, and to assure him that, setting out his views, he “adhered to solidarity with the Russian state and followed, first of all, the wish of welfare for both the whole state and its parts”.

“All my life”, writes J. Baudouin de Courtenay,

“was dedicated to service for science and teaching... Apart from some years spent abroad, I have always been working within Russia. Soon it will be fifty years of my scientific and literary activity. As a university teacher, I didn’t spare my strength and time and always tried to do more than I was bound and required to do. A special linguistic trend, drawing attention of the clerisy, appeared with my assistance”.

At the end of his letter, J. Baudouin de Courtenay mentioned the necessity

“to complete at least some of my numerous important scientific works, part of which was entrusted to me by the IMPERIAL Academy of Sciences, and whose finishing is absolutely impossible without my direct participation”⁵¹.

Finally, owing to the consolidation of powers, the Petersburg intelligentsia won. The sentence was mitigated⁵², and the grateful professor sent a letter on 9 October 1914 to Grand Prince Konstantin Romanov which began with the words,

⁵⁰ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, pp. 16–16 reverse.

⁵¹ SPbB ARAS, F. V, L. 1-B, Fl. 107, pp. 12–13 reverse.

⁵² After that, new attempts to acquit J. Baudouin de Courtenay were made. There is a letter in defense of the professor in A. A. Shakhmatov’s file written after the reduction of the term of imprisonment: SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 1, Fl. 429, pp. 85–88 reverse.

“Your Imperial Highness, I have learned that only thanks to your intercession was my penalty reduced from two years to three months of imprisonment”. ”You forgave my imprudent, one-sided and abrupt statements... and, despite all my faults, supported the appeal of the Imperial Academy of Sciences and, using your authority, influenced the decision of my case in my favor”.

Certainly, the sentence mitigation facilitated J. Baudouin de Courtenay’s fate. But from that very letter we learn about his other fears connected with this case. J. Baudouin de Courtenay writes,

“As early as July the Appellate Court, deigning to concede my request supported by medical examination, was ready to allow me to spend some time in a resort before the sentence execution. The war prevented me from using this permission. However, since owing to this very fact my health didn’t improve but, on the contrary, became even worse, I asked the Appellate Court, already after receiving the notification of mitigation, to postpone the sentence execution for at least two months. But this request was rejected and, probably, I’ll be imprisoned some day soon”.

As for his residence in the Petersburg prison “Kresty”, J. Baudouin de Courtenay pointed it out himself – 2 months and 1 week (November 1914 – January 1915)⁵³. There is J. Baudouin de Courtenay’s letter from “Kresty” to the academic A. A. Shakhmatov which is full of unexpected optimism and energy. Here he says that he feels fine both in a physical and moral sense, that he manages to lead quite a settled life with a constant regime, gymnastics and “walks”, that he has the possibility of filling gaps in his education. In general, concludes the author of this letter,

“I prosper”. “After all, questions here are decided in exactly the same way as in that large prison which is called the modern state. The difference is only quantitative but not qualitative... The administration is mainly decent and much better than different ministers and persons like that”⁵⁴.

However, despite J. Baudouin de Courtenay’s assurances that “it’s even better here”, these events couldn’t pass without a trace and, in particular, reflected on the professional status of the scientist. In his above-mentioned letter to the Grand Prince Konstantin Romanov, we read,

⁵³ J. Baudouin de Courtenay, *Kwestia żydowska w Państwie Polskiem*, Warsaw 1923, p. 39.

⁵⁴ SPbB ARAS, F. 134, L. 3, Fl. 160.

“Besides it, the Ministry of Public Education discharges me from the office and deprives me of the right, connected by regulations with the rank of honored professor, to be a member of the professorial board of Petrograd University”⁵⁵.

J. Baudouin de Courtenay was dismissed from the university and spent much time outside its walls, at least according to the official status. An article of 1916, published in the newspaper “Sovremennoje Slovo” (“Modern Word”) (No 3005 of 17 July)⁵⁶, informs,

“Two years ago Prof. I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay... had to leave the chair of linguistics in Petrograd University. I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay’s resignation was by application, but, as they report, he was suggested to submit it. Nowadays, **Prof. I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay has presented to the Ministry of Public Education a petition for his admission to teaching** (*author’s accentuation – L.B.*)... We have been informed that this petition is to be rejected by the minister of public education”⁵⁷.

We should mention that it was not the first time when J. Baudouin de Courtenay’s activity was prosecuted. In 1912 there was a juridical examination of his schoolbook “The Polish Language in Comparison with Russian and Church Slavonic. A School-Book for Practical Training in »Comparative Grammar of the Slavic Languages« and for Self-Learning” (St. Petersburg, 1912) where J. Baudouin de Courtenay used extracts from his “Myśli nieoportunistyczne”⁵⁸ (“Non-Opportunist Thoughts”) as the texts for trans-

⁵⁵ SPbB ARAS, F. 6, L. 1, Fl. 37, pp. 35–36. Full text of the letter is published in the edition: Владимир Семёнович Соболев, *Августейший президент. Великий князь Константин Константинович во главе Императорской Академии наук. 1889–1915 годы*. St. Petersburg 1993, pp. 159–161.

⁵⁶ In documents of the SPbB ARAS this article remained in the form of a clipping: SPbB ARAS, F. V, L. 1-B, Fl. 107, p. 16.

⁵⁷ There are bases to believe that this proceeding was a reflection of trends of nationalist activity of that time. The academic A. A. Shakhmatov, in particular, drew the attention of Grand Prince Konstantin Konstantinovich to it, speaking of attacks on academic scientists which became more frequent: SPbB ARAS, F. 6, L. 1, Fl. 37, pp. 5–7 (Published in: В. С. Соболев, *Августейший президент...*, pp. 155–157).

⁵⁸ Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, *Myśli nieoportunistyczne*, Krakow 1898. Already in his letter of 1898 addressed to the Finnish linguist J. Mikkola J. Baudouin de Courtenay speaks particularly of this brochure as of the one prohibited by censorship: *Briefwechsel zwischen Jan Baudouin de Courtenay und Jooseppi J. Mikkola...*, p. 36.

lation from Polish into Russian. Even after editing of the schoolbook, the thoughts expressed in this work were considered quite defiant, and the court ordered the removal of the given pages from the book⁵⁹.

In spite of the official governmental position, the scientific authority of J. Baudouin de Courtenay wasn't undermined and, of course, shouldn't be undermined. The year of 1915 was J. Baudouin de Courtenay's jubilee, for it was the year of his 70th birthday, and his colleagues and friends were preparing a worthy present for the great scientist. Already in 1914 a circular was drawn up and signed by 27 scientists from St. Petersburg, Kazan, Yurjev, Moscow, Krakow, Warsaw, Leipzig, Copenhagen, Paris, Graz and Vienna, which began with the words, "On 1/14 March 1915 Professor Ivan Alexandrovich Baudouin de Courtenay will be 70. On this occasion, his undersigned friends and pupils have decided to issue a collection of articles on linguistics by this day dedicated to Ivan Alexandrovich". This document was printed typographically in four languages (Russian, Polish, German and French) and sent out to the university centers of Europe⁶⁰.

By J. Baudouin de Courtenay's seventieth birthday, a letter had been prepared with apologies for the impossibility to celebrate the jubilee worthily in view of World War I.

"Painful events experienced by us have deprived your friends, pupils and admirers of the possibility to celebrate your seventieth birthday in the way which they considered the most deserving of you and your life's work. They had to delay execution of their plan for a more opportune moment..."

The lines of this letter can also be a worthy ending of the subject,

"From 70 years of your life, at least 50 were consciously dedicated to disinterested and self-denying service... to truth as you understand it, and if mankind is destined to reorganize its life on other, higher and worthier grounds after this disastrous world fire... it will be pleasant to think that, in the total amount of everything made for the reconstruction of violated precepts of conscience, rights and justice, there is a considerable share of your noble, tireless and selfless work"⁶¹.

⁵⁹ Irena Spustek, *Jan Baudouin de Courtenay a czeska cenzura*, "Przegląd Historyczny" 1961, Vol. 52, no 1, pp. 114–116.

⁶⁰ The given circular is frequently found in documents of the SPbB ARAS: SPbB ARAS, F. 770, L. 1, Fl. 14, pp. 47–48 and others; F. V, L. 1-B, Fl. 107, pp. 14–15.

⁶¹ SPbB ARAS, F. 770, L. 1, Fl. 14, pp. 1–2.

PODSUMOWANIE

Proces J. Baudouin`a de Courtenay w Petersburgu w dokumentach Petersburskiej Filii Archiwum Rosyjskiej Akademii Nauk

Artykuł ukazuje jeden z fragmentów życiorysu polsko-rosyjskiego językoznawcy Jana Ignacego Baudouin de Courtenay (1845–1929) – oskarżenie profesora i jego uwięzienie w 1914 r. w związku z wydaniem w Petersburgu jego książeczki *Территориальный и национальный признак в автономии* (1913), poświęconej kwestiom narodowym w Imperium Rosyjskim. Na podstawie dokumentów archiwalnych oraz materiałów prasowych została opisana historia tego uwięzienia oraz wystąpienie w obronie J. Baudouin`a de Courtenay naukowców petersburskich, członków Akademii Nauk. Nie było to pierwsze prześladowanie uczonego w związku z jego zainteresowaniami sprawami narodowymi. W 1898 r. przebywał w słowackim miasteczku Św. Marcin Turczański, a po powrocie do Krakowa, gdzie był zatrudniony jako profesor nadzwyczajny Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, został oskarżony przez władze austriackie o agitację pansłowiańską. W wyniku tego jego kontrakt z Uniwersytetem nie został przedłużony.

SUMMARY

Litigation over Jan Baudouin de Courtenay in St. Petersburg in Documents of the Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences

The article presents one fragment of the life story of the Polish-Russian language expert Jan Ignacy Baudouin de Courtenay (1845–1929) – the accusation made against the professor and his imprisonment in 1914 connected with the publication in Petersburg of his book *Территориальный и национальный признак в автономии* (1913), dedicated to nationalistic matters in the Russian Empire. On the basis of archival documents and press materials, the story of this imprisonment and the defence of J. Baudouin de Courtenay by Petersburg scientists, members of the Academy of Science, are presented. This was not the first victimisation of the learned professor in connection with his interest in national matters. In 1898, he visited the Slovak town of Turčianský Svätý Martin (currently named Martin), and after his return to Krakow, where he was employed as a professor of Jagiellonian University, he was charged by the Austrian powers with pan-Slavic agitation. As a result, his contract with the university was not extended.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Jan Ignacy Baudouin de Courtenay, językoznawstwo, Petersburg, kwestie narodowe

KEY WORDS: Jan Ignacy Baudouin de Courtenay, linguistics, Sankt Petersburg, national issues