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(IM)POSSIBLE COEXISTENCE

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

This is the fourth issue of AREI since its launch. It opens with an interview with the Estonian international lawyer Lauri Mälksoo, who analyses the Russian approach to international law from a historical perspective. It seems superfluous to explain why – in the third year of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine – this topic should be of interest to readers who share the universal values that underpin contemporary international law.

We also offer our readers three erudite articles devoted to the wide-ranging problem of relations between the Soviet Union and the nations of Central and Eastern Europe in the 1940s and 1950s. Texts by Mariusz Wołos, Łukasz Dryblak and Radosław Żurawski vel Grajewski are complemented by a historical essay by Jan Kieniewicz on the question of borders and peripheries in the history of Europe, especially Central and Eastern Europe.

We also publish a number of documents concerning the so-called Polish NKVD operation of 1937–1938; these were found in the SBU archive in Kyiv by Yana Prymachenko and have either never been published in English or are completely unknown. This aspect of the Great Terror, which developed into genocidal repression against the Polish minority in the USSR, is still little known outside Poland.

The issue closes, as usual, with some erudite reviews, which I encourage you to read.

ŁUKASZ ADAMSKI
Editor-in-Chief

Interview with Lauri Mälksoo
RUSSIAN INTELLECTUALS WERE MORE INTERESTED IN ISSUES OF JUSTICE THAN IN LAW AS SUCH

INSTEAD OF ABSTRACT

I don't have an impression that Russia is not interested in international law; but like any great power with imperialist ambitions or revisionist claims, it wants to make exceptions for itself to the existing international law. Therefore it has – throughout its history – emphasized many exceptions to the *pacta sunt servanda* principle. Yes, maybe *pacta* indeed *sunt servanda*, but this principle can be challenged when circumstances change.

LAURI MÄLKSOO
(born in 1975) is a professor of International Law at the University of Tartu in Estonia. His specialises in analyses of the development of international law. His publications include two monographs: *Illegal Annexation and State Continuity: the Case of the Incorporation of the Baltic States by the USSR* (Brill, 2022, 2nd ed.) and *Russian Approaches to International Law* (OUP, 2015). Both are currently also available via open access.

Prof. Mälksoo, you are the author of the important book "Russian approaches to international law". What empirical material supports your main thesis that not only Russia's practice but also its understanding of international law differs significantly from Western approaches? Is it the case that the West commits mistakes by looking at Russia through its own lenses?

– To answer your question I have to make a broader introduction.

I have been fortunate to study international law in various countries, which has made me a little bit of a comparativist. I had the privilege to study in Germany, in the United States, in Japan and, of course, in Estonia in the 1990s, so in a country that had just liberated itself from the Soviet system. And although I was a child in the 1980s, I still remember how Soviet society worked, what messages we were told, and what history we were taught. Whenever Russian tsars acquired a new territory, it was a good thing, a necessity for the Russian Empire. Never was it a conquest.

So, the sources of my interest in Russia and comparisons of its legal culture with the West were multiple. As a scholar, I noticed that Russia was pretty much absent in the Western discourse of international law. Of course, there was some literature, also in the West, which dealt with Soviet Union and international law, wondering whether the Soviets understand international law differently. Peaceful coexistence? The Brezhnev doctrine? What do they mean? What attitude did the Soviets adopt to treaties and all these things? I felt, however, that when the Soviet Union ceased to exist and Russia made genuine attempts to become part of Europe – acquiring, e.g., membership in the Council of Europe in 1996 – then interest waned in this comparative study of Russia and international law. Russia was simply in the position of pupil. One assumed that even if Russians had some sort of state-centric concepts of sovereignty, they would eventually have to adopt the doctrines of the mainstream in the West.

Over time, it became obvious that this expectation was not met, so Russia's problem was not only Marxism-Leninism. When one digs deeper in the studies of the history of international law from various periods, you see confirmation of a thesis put forward by one of the leading historians of international law, Wilhelm Grewe, in his book *The Epochs of International Law*. He made the point that, in the nineteenth century, the Central and East European Empires put different accents in the context of international law compared to Western European empires, which were more liberal and democratic.

What were these differences then?

– For example, the relationship to the will of the people, to revolutions, or to uprisings; to democratic ideas.

The basis of the nineteenth-century Russian authoritarian doctrine of international law was legitimacy, namely that the power of the kings or tsars is given by God, whereas illegitimacy is when people want to challenge God's will. In line with this, Russia exercised the role of the gendarme of Europe at certain moments in the nineteenth century: in Hungary, but particularly also in Poland.

International law and its doctrines are inevitably an interplay between international and domestic law. Thus, a big question concerning today's Russia is whether the lack of democracy or the downwards trend in terms of democracy are the main factors shaping Russia's approach to international law.

Then I'll ask my question in another way: what evidence allows you to claim that Russian international lawyers look at international law differently?

Surely, their public statements may lead us to such theses. On the other hand, their perspective might for them also be a means to avoid problems within the Russian system itself which could arise if their public statements were different from the foreign policy expectations of the Russian government. After all, international lawyers are somehow dependent on state financing as they work at state universities and their expertise is needed by the state, which also may nominate them to various international bodies.

So, perhaps they simply write what they think they should write, and thus they justify the policy of the Russian Federation exactly as Russian historians in the nineteenth century justified, e.g., the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth?

Might it be that they privately understand international law in a way that is very similar to Western scholars? What do you think about these doubts of mine?

– Well, it's true that working at Russian universities, writing open pieces in which you call the war by its name instead of 'Special military operation', and sometimes even publishing in Western journals make you liable under Russian law. It is risky when you write freely and want to stay free in Russia.

It's also true that none of us knows how we would behave living in a totalitarian system or an authoritarian system, or what compromises we would make.

Having said that, I think we need to be able to rely on what someone says publicly, since it is impossible to verify what the author really

thought in each case. What matters is what we say in public. If you are saying something that you don't believe, then you become part of the problem and part of the system in any case.

Then let's remember that there were periods in Russian history when authors could express themselves more freely. When I compare, e.g., current Russian works on constitutional and international law against those from before 1914, then it seems to me that international lawyers in the late tsarist period almost had more freedom than in today's Russia. How telling are, for example, the public statements of Russian international lawyers nowadays? They often are silent. When the Russian invasion of Ukraine occurred in February 2022, the International Law Association (ILA) – one of the most respected organizations of international lawyers, which is already 150 years old – issued a statement condemning the invasion as aggression. In response, a letter was published by the Russian branch of the International Law Association, which is the Russian Association of International Law, or more precisely, by its presidium. The authors of that letter criticized the ILA's statement, repeating some of Putin's arguments. The thing is that no one signed this letter by name... Open the website of the Russian Association of International Law and check...

By the way, this kind of justification of actions taken by the Russian state is a very old pattern. When the Great Northern War broke out in 1700, one of Tsar Peter's main diplomats, Peter Shafirov – born in Smolensk to a Jewish family which had settled there when the city was in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – made the argument that Peter had many reasons to start the war. It is interesting that in Russia – as well as, to an extent, the Soviet Union – this text has been celebrated as the foundational text or the starting point of how reflection on international law began in Russia. But, *de facto*, it's a justification of an aggressive war; the challenge that Shafirov faced when making his arguments was that Muscovy had concluded with Sweden the peace treaty of Stolbovo in 1617 and the peace treaty of Cardis in 1661, the latter of which recognized the territories which Muscovy now desired as part of Sweden, so Sweden, of course, said that Muscovy had violated that and was acting against international law.

> **As a historian, I have an impression that Russia simply did not sign agreements in good faith, or 'bona fide', as it is called in Latin. So, Russian diplomats did not sign certain agreements or treaties on the assumption that both parties are obliged to observe them due to morality, honour, and interests: they signed these documents assuming that perhaps, sooner or later, times would come when they would be able to change them or would regain their losses by violating these treaties.**

From the perspective of Polish history, we see this pattern of thinking in the eighteenth century, when after the first and second partitions of the Commonwealth, Catherin II swore that she had no further claims to Poland. We saw it in 1939, when the Riga treaty – a compromise from 1921 that ended the Polish-Soviet war – was recognised by the Soviets as invalid, therefore Poland did not exist anymore as a state. We see it also in 1943, when the Soviet government headed by Stalin severed diplomatic relations with the Polish government, having been restored merely 20 months earlier. Good faith was always lacking when Russia signed agreements with Poland.

In your book you presented the development of Russia's perspective on international law since the seventeenth century. Do you agree with my observation that one of main differences between Europe and Russia is the lack of the notion of good faith in Russia?

– I've thought about this a lot, but more in the context of treaties. What does a treaty mean to Russia in the history of international law? As you know, the main principle of international treaty law is *pacta sunt servanda*. Treaties must be honoured. They must be kept, but throughout history powerful revisionist states have tried to use another principle, which lawyers call *clausula rebus sic stantibus.* If there is a fundamental change of circumstances, these states can try to rescind their earlier commitment. Of course, the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties from 1969 makes *clausula rebus sic stantibus* very small, almost powerless. Yet it has appeared throughout history, and I have an impression that it hasn't sunk to oblivion.

Definitely, Russia has – throughout various stages of its history – emphasized many exceptions to the *pacta sunt servanda* principle. So, the theory has been that, yes, maybe *pacta* indeed *sunt servanda*; but when circumstances change, then this principle is often challenged. One of the nineteenth-century developments in international law was the Treaty of London, signed in 1871 after Russia, having the momentum of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, took its navy back to the Black Sea. That movement was, however, prohibited by the Paris Peace Treaty, signed in 1856 by Russia after it had lost the Crimean War. One of the main stipulations of that treaty was that Russia was not allowed to have a navy in the Black Sea.

Britain, which was really troubled by this step by the Russian Empire, convened a diplomatic conference that included Russia. The participants agreed that the *pacta sunt servanda* rule prevails over *clausula rebus sic stantibus*, but at the same time Russia got *de facto* recognition of the changes it had already made on the ground.

When we talk about Russia and the history of international law, then I will turn your attention to the fact that there are a lot of memories related to the Hague Peace Conference, which, by the way, took place after

Tsar Nikolas II had proposed initiating it in 1899. One of the diplomatic initiatives that Russia brought to the Hague peace conference was that states would recognize *clausula rebus sic stantibus* in order to weaken *clausula: pacta sunt servanda*. So, this a sort of imperial international law, but the proposal was not successful.

Jumping to the Soviets, you have the same approach in the works of authors such as Evgeny Pashukanis, who claims that a revolutionary state can abandon earlier treaties when it expresses certain kinds of class interests. Although authors in the late Soviet period, such as Grigory Tunkin, were usually more cautious, certain earlier Soviet authors who also reflected the Soviet practice at that time said that the Soviet state was a different kind of state that was run by the proletariat not the bourgeoisie, therefore it could change those bourgeoisie treaties. That, by the way, makes the secret protocols to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact more understandable, in a way. The Soviet authorities and diplomats said they were violating international law because the class interest demanded it in order to have more countries governed by communists, and so on. You can violate or abandon treaties, even if you recently promised something different. You can even violate the covenant of the League of Nations, of which the Soviet Union became a member in 1934.

So, I see this problem more in the light of a contradiction between *pacta sunt servanda* and *rebus sic stantibus* principles, because I think that good faith is to some extent a psychological concept which may mean various things for various countries because they read the situation from the perspective of their own interests.

It's interesting that Russia too sometimes uses good faith arguments. Think of the Minsk agreements of 2014 and 2015. In December 2022, former German chancellor Angela Merkel said that, well, those agreements bought time to prepare for the all-out Russian invasion of Ukraine. Russian propaganda immediately picked up on her comments: "You see, never have you been honest brokers; never have you wanted to implement the means provided by the Minsk agreements. You intended to fool us from the very beginning".

So, everyone can use elements of good faith arguments.

Your remark inclined me to ask another question. In your book, you pay attention to the fact that law in the Russian tradition is something more than a system of legal norms: it is also a reflection of justice, and law as such has to be just. Could you specify how Russian people understood law as such? Is law the same as in the Western concept, or is it inseparable from justice?

– I feel I'm only partly competent to answer that wider question, since there is research that deals with this topic in a more detailed way than I can. What I used for my 2015 study was observations of semiotician Yuri Lotman, who died in 1993 but spent his life studying the patterns in Russian culture. He was particularly interesting to me because he was professor at the same university where I teach, at Tartu in Estonia. He wrote that, in the history of thought, Russian intellectuals were more interested in issues of justice than in law as such. They also assumed that law cannot be fully just, and law is secondary to justice.

The problem of the relationship between law and justice is also connected with what some authors, including ones from Russia, consider within the scope of legal nihilism. This means that law can relatively easily be ignored or bypassed – sometimes by invoking even 'higher' principles such as justice. If you're only or mainly interested in justice, then it's also easier for you to violate the existing positive law or find excuses for its violations. After all, everything can be challenged from the perspective of justice.

Justice is a tricky thing also because as notion it is vague. Let's say that for Russian imperialists the diminishment of the territory of the Russian Empire might be deeply unjust, right? This is not the case, however, for Georgian, Moldovans, Latvians or Poles, whose nations also have spent some historically unpleasant time under the Russian Empire and under the Soviet hegemony during the Cold War.

Now I hope to write a kind of follow-up book to that 2015 one. So, I continue my studies on sources from the past and I want to also make more comparisons, but one of the things that I have already noticed from literature is that Russian literature on international law often speaks about great powers and small states, about *velikije derzhavy* and *malye gosudarstva.* Those *velikije derzhavy* are something positive, associated with responsibility and, obviously, with special rights for Russia as a *velikaja derzhawa*.

If you follow, for example, Vladimir Putin's thinking and what Sergey Lavrov says, or what the Russian permanent representative at the UN says about the UN, it's always irritation when someone wants to challenge Russia's unlimited power, particularly its veto power as a permanent member of the Security Council. I assume that their views are just from their perspective, because this is what belongs to great powers.

I wanted to ask you about the great Estonian lawyer who lived in the time of Russian Empire, Friedrich (or Fedor) Martens. He contributed significantly to the development of international law. Martens' famous clause was adopted at the Hague Convention of 1899 and has remained in force until now. It says that in cases which are not regulated by existing rules

of international law, populations and belligerents remain under the protection of principles derived from customs established between civilised nations, laws of humanity, and requirements of the public conscience.

What is the reception of Martens' thought now in contemporary Russia? During Russia's war against Ukraine, there is much evidence indicating that everything except requirements of the public conscience and humanitarian laws now dominate in Russia's actions. You wrote much about Martens in your book.

– Martens has continued to fascinate me personally. He has been used by different forces and by different powers throughout history. It is true that he's a kind of link as he symbolizes Russian international law at the time when Russia was part of Europe. It was Europe ruled by the Empires. However, Russia considered itself part of Europe, not actively positioning itself against 'Europe', as it is currently. Since the 1990s, when Russia was about to return to Europe, interest in Martens also increased because it could be used as a symbol of Russian Europeanness. Recently, Martens' diaries were published in Russia. About five years ago, Russia issued stamps depicting Martens in a series of famous Russian lawyers from history, which is evidence that the Russian state values him positively and has decided to promote knowledge about him. By the way, another lawyer remembered by the Russian state in the same stamp series was Roman Rudenko – the main Soviet prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials.

A problem appears when states become interested in certain personalities and make them symbolic figures for whatever reasons, being at the same time not interested in the full intellectual truth about their personality. So, a lot of energy has been expended to create this link between Martens and international humanitarian law, although Martens' clause was actually a diplomatic compromise between various powers. We must also remember that he was a man of the Russian Empire, someone who defended the Empire, who wrote in his textbook on international law that self-determination of peoples can be a very dangerous idea. Those pre-revolutionary Russian international and constitutional lawyers – even those with non-Russian ethnic and Protestant religious backgrounds, such as Martens – defended the Empire and advanced its glory.

I can tell you another story about Andrei Mandelstam, an important Russian international lawyer who was head of the legal department of Russia's ministry for foreign affairs during the Provisional Government and emigrated to Paris after the Bolshevik coup d'etat. One of the reasons why he's remembered nowadays is his authorship of the resolution adopted by the Institut de Droit International in 1929 during its session in New York. This was the first 'non-official' document referring to human rights in

international law, and it was the predecessor of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the United Nations' General Assembly adopted in 1948.

Despite that, during the Paris peace conference in 1919, Andrei Mandelstam wrote a memorandum in which he laid out Russian republican views on the territorial integrity of the Russian Empire. He claimed that with the exception of Poland, which could be independent, although in 'just' (from the Russian perspective) borders, everybody else from Finland to the Baltic Republics to Ukraine must stay with republican Russia. In his view, they may be entitled only to autonomy, not to independence.

And did he somehow justify or explain this? Why, in his view, was Poland an exception to this general rule that all countries of the Russian Empire had to remain within the new borders.

– When I read his texts, I have this impression that his claim is partly due to the fact that West European nations (to whom he was appealing in a way) had by that time already recognized Poland. In addition, he, as a representative of Russian emigres, was simply obliged to take into account President Wilson's principles and new power relations. He also referred to the peculiar history that Poland had in the Russian Empire. Last but not least, although Western powers at that time were still hesitant about what to do with Finland and the Baltic states – not to speak of Ukraine – the thing with Poland was already decided.

It's interesting that Mandelstam argued that if these places – meaning the Baltic states and Finland – became independent, they would fall under German interests, and that is, of course, something that no one should want, he insisted. And in the end, Mandelstam also made a plea to the 'great Russian culture', Dostoevsky, Turgenev and so on, with suggestions that delegations in Paris cannot harm this great culture and Russia's vital interests.

It sounds familiar... and it also reminds me of Karl Marx. He was another opponent of national movements in our parts of Europe, let alone Central and Eastern European peoples' efforts for independence.

He called them *Völkerabfälle* [peoples being waste – ŁA]. Yet with the one exception of Poland, which – according to Marx – is a historic nation and thus has a right to exist... I have a final question, one which would cast certain light for the future.

What is the Russian Federation's interest now in international law? Is the Russian Federation going to change international law and, in this way, legalise the annexation of Crimea and the East-Southern part of Ukraine? Or rather, does the Russian government want to diminish the significance

of international law so that it is not taken seriously, and everybody has the right to interpret it according to their own assessments and values?

– That's a good question. I think Putin wants Russia to take its, so to say, proper shape. If he achieves that, and if he can make it clear to the world that no one can physically take these territories back from Russia, then he will recommend the world to recognize the new circumstances.

He definitely remembers history, which makes history in this war even more important than it usually is. For example, the United States only established diplomatic relations with the Soviet government in 1933, so between November 1917 and 1933 there were no diplomatic relations between the United States and Russia because Washington conducted a sort of non-recognition policy.

Russia has also learnt international law through its own history, and now it has concluded that sometimes great powers need time to enforce changes or achieve recognition.

So, I don't have this impression that Russia is not interested in international law; but, like any great power with imperialist ambitions or revisionist claims, it wants make exceptions for itself to the existing international law. And it definitely does not want to lose its privileged position in the UN Security Council, which, after all, is also an expression of international law (via the UN Charter). So, I think that we will see, on the one hand, a continued emphasis on international law which matters and which is violated by "others" – Russia's rivals. But when it comes to Ukraine, then the war is presented as a non-war, and aggression is presented not as an attack but as an enforced measure. I have the impression that by studying what Russian media write – what they report on what people think – we can already see that many Russians are told that it was Russia that was attacked in Ukraine. It is a duty of international lawyers to keep saying that this is not true.

I think one or two months after the beginning of the War, Patriarch Kirill said something very similar, namely that Russia had never attacked but had been attacked throughout its history and had to defend its lands. Also Vladimir Putin at the Valdai Club meeting last autumn said that international law has to be changed and adapted to "new realities", but as such it is needed, otherwise we would face permanent chaos. This only corroborates your diagnosis.

Dear Lauri, Dear Prof. Mälksoo, thank you very much for this wonderful, erudite interview and great analyses!

– The pleasure is mine.

Interview was conducted by ŁUKASZ ADAMSKI

Jan Kieniewicz

THE LOST BORDERLANDS AND THE TRAP OF THE PERIPHERY: AN ACCIDENT OF HISTORY OR HISTORICAL REGULARITY?*

In memory of Hayden White (1928–2018)

"Periphery" is the term that is currently most frequently employed to describe Poland's place in the world – so frequently, in fact, that we do not even bother to consider what kind of periphery it is, and of what. In particular, we have lost sight of the consequences of this peripherality for the whole system that Europe continues to be. Meanwhile, the concept of "borderlands" has become so marginal that it is beginning to melt into peripherality. This chaos is no accident. Both terms refer to a space, and both are relegated by defining it. A solution therefore seems to be to refer to history. But which history?[1]

There is no doubt that approaches to history, be they of Poland or Central and Eastern Europe, have been shaped by each of our personal experiences, culture and education. This suggests that we participate in a national community – one of many such communities. When we think and speak, we refer to a relatively common set of concepts.[2] What sets historians apart is that they use these consciously and are sensitive to their variability and diversity when thinking about the "historical dialogue of neighbouring nations".

Borderlands and peripheries play a key role in the concepts that determine the history of the Polish national community. Before trying to present them, I would like to offer two warnings. The first is that I have written about borderlands and peripheries on many occasions,[3] so one might well fear that I will have nothing new to say. The second results from the lengthy time I have spent studying the non-European past. This is what led me to tackle the issue from

* The original version of this essay was 'Utracone pogranicze: jaka historia Polski w Europie?' (Lost borderlands: what kind of history for Poland in Europe?), a contribution to a panel discussion during the conference "History – yes, but which history?", held by the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, Natolin, 28 September 2018.

1 It was this epistemological uncertainty that led me to cite White, whose constant questioning of all set rules did not stop him from being open to new things. See Ewa Domańska, 'Biała Tropologia: Hayden White i teoria pisarstwa historycznego', *Teksty Drugie*, 26 (1994), 159–68.

2 I expressed my concerns about the state of Polish national identity 30 years ago, since when I have hardly found grounds for optimism. Jan Kieniewicz, 'Zagrożenia polskości', in *Nurty życia społecznego*, ed. by Daniel Olszewski (Warszawa: Studium Kultury Chrześcijańskiej, Kościół św. Trójcy, 1987), pp. 82–91. Reprinted in: Jan Kieniewicz, *Ekspansja. Kolonializm. Cywilizacja* (Warszawa: DiG, 2008), pp. 145–55.

3 I tackled this subject in Jan Kieniewicz, 'Pogranicza i peryferie: o granicach cywilizacji europejskiej', in *Cywilizacja europejska*, różnorodności i podziały, ed. by Maciej Koźmiński (Kraków: Universitas, 2014), pp. 81–96. I then returned to it in Jan Kieniewicz, 'Wartości polityczne Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów a granice aksjologiczne cywilizacji europejskiej – kilka refleksji końcowych', in *Wartości polityczne Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów. Struktury aksjologiczne i granice cywilizacyjne*, ed. by Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UW, 2017), pp. 291–308.

a civilizational perspective.[4] For both reasons, I am avoiding a review of research on the various approaches to borderlands and peripheries. In any approach, the Borderland will be connected to the presence of a border.[5] The problem is that civilizations do not have borders. A Periphery, meanwhile, implies the existence of a dominant Centre.[6] Civilizations that are not systems do not form a centre, so they do not know peripheries.

For these reasons, I focus on people and the relationships they form together – relationships in time and space. This human dimension intentionally sets aside the most topical issue of governance and management.

I have in mind firstly people's capacity to form a community, which assumes the evolutionally developed conviction that this is a way to increase chances of survival. Sometimes a community is perpetuated by its readiness to work to sustain the current state of affairs, meaning safeguarding its future by making sure it can continue to exist. Such a collective action, cognizant of the need to make changes, can become a project, "a great collective project for tomorrow".[7] People whose sense of existence is endangered sometimes take steps to protect their identity. This always entails the need for changes that are usually presented as maintaining continuity. Nevertheless, survival may demand much further-reaching (structural) transformations, and this is when projects seeking a new identity appear.[8] This has affected enslaved nations more frequently than those better situated in the world order.

Any ordering narrative, be it historical or based on stories, can emerge if it serves the needs of a community. A nation, for example. Our problem, I suspect, is the lack of clarity "on the theme" of the existence of the Polish nation. Here I am touching upon the key issue of the construction of an identity narrative. Contrary to views that have become common of late, this issue is an important element of academic discourse, as both Fukuyama[9] and Appiah[10] demonstrate. In tackling the problem of the

4 I laid out my concept of civilizational borderlands in Jan Kieniewicz, 'Borderlands and Civilizational Encounter', *Memoria y Civilización*, 8 (2005 [2007 ed.]), 21–49; Jan Kieniewicz, 'The Eastern Frontier and the Borderland of Europe', in *Europa im Ostblock. Vorstellungen und Diskurse (1945–1991)*, ed. by José M. Faraldo, Paulina Gulińska-Jurgiel, and Christian Domnitz (Köln–Weimar–Wien: De Gruyter, 2008), pp. 83–90; Jan Kieniewicz, 'Polskie pogranicza: próba interpretacji kolonialnej', in *Na pograniczach literatury*, ed. by Jarosław Fazan and Krzysztof Zajas (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Universitas, 2012), pp. 67–84 (pp. 67–68); Jan Kenevič, 'Pogranič'ja: pol'skoe, evropejskoe, evro-aziatskoe..?', *Obščestvo. Sreda. Razvitie*, 2 (2013), 82–87.

5 Cf. Karl Schlögel, *W przestrzeni czas czytamy. O historii cywilizacji i geopolityce* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2009).

6 Essential commentaries on this are provided by the studies in *Polska jako peryferie*, ed. by Tomasz Zarycki (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2015).

7 José Ortega y Gasset distinguished between these communities in *España invertebrada. Bosquejo de algunos pensamientos históricos* (Madrid: Calpe, 1921), writing: "Las naciones se forman y viven de tener un programa para mañana", and later "la idea de grandes cosas por hacer engendra la unificación nacional".

8 I am using concepts from general systems theory. Cf. Jan Kieniewicz, 'Ekohistoryk wobec wyzwań przyszłości', *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 1 (2014), 65–80.

9 Francis Fukuyama, *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 99.

10 Kwame A. Appiah, *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity, Creed, Country, Color, Class, Culture* (New York: Liveright, 2018).

Borderland and the Periphery, I am thinking in particular of the identity choices of people who identify with the national community.

I mean identity in systemic terms, namely awareness of the existence of the community (social system) and its capacity for identification. For a community to be fulfilled, especially a national one, it needs history for its participants to recognize themselves as "their own" – for them to be able to not just want this fulfilment but also be able to imagine it. No project of a shared future is possible without history, in the sense of a sequence of narratives about the past accepted by the community. This is the sense of the assertion that "a nation without history will die". This is not a metaphor or an ad hoc slogan like those that even great leaders of national communities have left behind. It means to say that the narratives comprising a national history (*res gestae*) are not always consistent with what historians are inclined to regard as the study of the past. Determining the borderland or peripheral nature of a community and acknowledging a specific status are realized by confronting these discrepancies. At the same time, identification may be – and indeed often is – a consequence of acceptance of external identification. This is crucial to the definition of a community's identity.

This is the first point.

Secondly, I assume that this reflection on Borderlands and Peripheries refers to Poland. I was guided by a question posed to conference participants: "History – yes, but which history?" – an allusion to Juliusz Słowacki's epigram "They marched crying Poland...". This was about reminding Poles of the need for conscious identification. This poet thought that anyone who wanted to be a Pole must be aware of his or her own identity by answering the question "which Homeland?" The later transposition into the question "Poland – yes, but which Poland?" expressed a now multigenerational tradition of conflict over what "our recovered land" should look like and who should rule it.[11] Yet, the crux of the matter still lies – today just as in times of bondage – in determining the nature of Polishness and in the capacity to express readiness to take responsibility for the Homeland. It is in this responsibility that Poles' dispute with Poland – the fundamental circumstance of their dialogue – can be found.[12] That is what makes them Europeans, today just as in the sixteenth century. And we can say the same, incidentally, about the Polish representatives at the Council of Constance, not because of their highly valued qualifications but rather because their

11 For more on this, see Jan Kieniewicz, 'Najpierw trzeba kraj ocalić... Polskie zmagania czy zmagania o Polskę?', in *Quo vadis Polonia? Konferencja naukowa: W drodze do demokratycznego państwa prawa. Polska 1989–2009, 3 czerwca 2009*, ed. by Janusz Kochanowski and Magdalena Kuruś (Warszawa: Biuro Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich, 2010), pp. 655–63.

12 See Józef Tischner, *Polski kształt dialogu* (Paris: Spotkania, 1981), pp. 185ff.; Józef Tischner, *Etyka solidarności oraz Homo sovieticus* (Kraków: Znak, 1992), pp. 19ff.

views raise the fundamental question of human rights.[13] Yet the dispute over the rule of Poland is the opposite of dialogue because every answer to the question "but which Poland?" excludes acceptance of others – excluding them from the community. Ultimately, this leads to civil war. When this is impossible – because of a lack of sovereignty, for example – the exclusory conflict weakens the national bond. In the end, the marchers from Juliusz Słowacki's epigram are left without "the expression on their lips", and then they cry "down with those who think differently than us". Such calls[14] were popular in 1940s Poland, when control by the Soviet army precluded civil war and opponents were dealt with not just through physical violence but also intellectual oppression. Under the pretext of giving a new answer to the question "but which Poland?" (people's Poland, of course), all others were excluded with the (effective) threat of annihilation.

So we see that marching and shouting slogans has a long tradition and can have various meanings. The "marchers'" fight for Poland is not only an attempt at a brief solution but above all signifies the creation of an exclusive history. This is a monological relationship, yet wrangling with Poland requires discernment within oneself, remembering "the expression": it is a dialogical relationship. In this context, I am in favour of history as a sequence of narratives comprising Polishness, but not as a set of scenarios that are deployed to establish rule over Poland. The intention to show this history in a civilizational context leads to the thesis of peripheralization as the outcome of the loss of the sense of Borderland.

To propose such a thesis, the field of study must be expanded. Consideration of the question of identity prompts reflection on East-Central Europe.[15] Poland's history then becomes an enquiry into the place it occupies in Europe. The European perspective should mean the search for participation in civilization, not modelling Poland according to any version of Europe.

And this is the second point.

There is a third point too, resulting from the overwhelming pressure of the present. Any thinking about Poland in Europe and the nature

13 See Robert Frost, *The Oxford History of Poland-Lithuania. Volume I: The Making of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, 1385–1569* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 50ff.

14 The word *preczowanie*, literally "downing", was known before the war, meaning to shout "down with". It was also used colloquially in the 1940s in the Union of Youth Struggles and the Polish Youth Union. Many years later, when the slogan "down with communism" appeared, this verb had seemingly been forgotten.

15 In the vast literature on this subject, it is worth highlighting the 120th volume of the journal *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, no. 4 (2013), which featured, alongside important articles by Marian Dygo and Tomasz Stryjek, significant contributions to the survey issued by the editors: Marian Dygo, 'Czy istniał feudalizm w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w średniowieczu', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 120/4 (2013), 667–718; Tomasz Stryjek, 'Europa Środkowa (Środkowo-Wschodnia), czyli o pochwale różnorodności i komparatystyki', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 120/4 (2013), 761–91. I also recommend the excellent panoramic overview *Understanding Central Europe*, ed. by Marcin Moskalewicz and Wojciech Przybylski (London–New York: Routledge, 2018).

of Central and Eastern Europe is determined by the situation in the European Union.

This is therefore an attempt to treat Europe as a civilization. Poland should feature in this model, so it is the story of its place. Having said this, I must point out that Poland as an imagined construction exists regardless of where its place is deemed to be, whether that is in a civilization or in any other form of Europe. Moreover, as a representation of a human community, Poland has figured in history regardless of our or any other constructions called Europe. But it is not the vicissitudes of the understanding of Europe in history that is the issue here.

The question "which history of Poland?" leads us towards issues that are more civic than academic. The issue is how do we build a project for the future? Not what kind, but how? And here I express my view that the history of Poland was founded in the process of people shaping their own form of existence in a space created by values derived from Roman Christianity: in a civilizational space. I put this in the form of the idea of the influence of the borderland on the formation of this belonging. Being in the borderland concerned the open nature of the border created with Others-Aliens, resulting in a kind of application of this value system – a certain separateness in the world of Western Christianity.

First, then, presence in Europe as creation, not application. Whenever Poles recognized themselves as a nation, they were not "entering" Europe and were certainly not seeking admission to it. They were the "old Poles", free citizens of the Commonwealth who created Europe in the East as they saw fit. Their *Sarmatia Europiana* was European by virtue of its dialogical nature, not because of some external judgement. This, as we know, appeared along with the concept of Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century and following the formation of the West as a form of domination in the global dimension in the nineteenth century.[16] Retreating in the face of Russian expansion and gathering itself against English domination, Europe created a new idea: cutting itself off from the East. This detachment coincided with the Partitions of Poland and removal of its statehood.[17]

More than two centuries have passed since this turmoil, and various histories of Poland have emerged in this time. It is striking just how much these stories have been marked by the trauma of the Partitions! The result was an incessant construction of narratives showing how it came to destruction and how "we will strike out for independence". It is widely

16 Larry Wolf, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on The Mind of The Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994); Jan Kieniewicz, 'The Eastern Frontiers and the Civilisational Dimension of Europe', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 107 (2013), 165–78; Jan Kieniewicz, 'Eurosarmacja. O Europie Środkowej z perspektywy cywilizacyjnej', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 4 (2013), 817–23.

17 Jan Kieniewicz, 'Polacy i Europa końca XX wieku', *Krytyka*, 34–35 (1991), 62–72. Reprint: Kieniewicz, *Ekspansja. Kolonializm. Cywilizacja*, pp. 163–74.

recognized that the acute burden of a rejection complex weighed on these narratives. This tangle of negative attitudes had well-known compensations in the form of myths of grandeur and phantasms of power. I would also add that this mythological character also has an opposite narrative that demonstrates the eternal nature of Polish dependence.

The European story of Poland is one of the borderlands. Furthermore, it is our story about the lost borderland of Europe. The realization in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that the political community in which they lived was Poland was not concerned with the question of whether it belonged to any civilizational realm. The citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were aware of the scope of the common values that composed the nascent Europe: they distinguished it as much from the Turk as from the Muscovite. They were not the only ones to believe in their role as a bulwark, and it was not this ideological creation that mattered. Certainly important was their awareness and conviction that they were fronting up to safeguard Christianity,[18] although I suspect that standing with their backs to the emerging Europe was more important in this role! But it seems important to note that the European expansion in the early modern period produced Borderlands. These were structures, ways of life, and cultures constituting an integral part of Europe but in no way subordinate to it. This reality was a product of our Sarmatians.

> The borderland is in fact a space, real and imagined, formed as a result of recognizing the alienness of what is outside of our identification. As I have said, this process is revealed in crossing borders: those creating alien social systems, but also those marked by our identity.[19] This is because the borderland remains within the community of belonging as a form of behaviour towards alienness within what we recognize as our own. We must therefore distinguish between the Other and the Alien and discern the difference between culture and civilization.
>
> The borderland is always a certain form of life associated with territory. This results from the fact that people belonging to one civilization (must) retain a constant relationship with the alien civilization. The borderland does not mean being "between", still less existence "both here and there". The forms of borderland life are various, but they are always related to belonging to one civilization.[20]

18 Janusz Tazbir, *Polskie przedmurze chrześcijańskiej Europy. Mity a rzeczywistość historyczna* (Warszawa: Interpress, 1987).
19 I give a matrix of transgression in Kieniewicz, 'Borderlands and Civilizational Encounter', p. 41.
20 Kieniewicz, 'Polskie pogranicza: próba interpretacji kolonialnej', pp. 67–84. Cf. Jan Kieniewicz, 'Pogranicza jako przestrzenie spotkania światów', in *Ekspansja. Kolonializm. Cywilizacja*, pp. 192–206.

In this case, that civilization is a European one. In European history, the Borderland was the form and expression of expansion. In the early modern period, its breadth and scope were astonishing, but it did not lead to global domination. This came later, and with it a new narrative about discovering and conquering the world. I therefore make a clear distinction between pre-colonial and colonial expansion, with a dividing line around the mid-eighteenth century.[21] The fundamental difference was the establishment of dominance derived from a new type of economy, later called capitalism. This early expansion gave rise to empires, which, however, remained a form of control and not of transformation. Even in the case of extermination, it was part of the universal experiences of violence. This also concerns the first global empire, created by Spain, and it is even more visible with the Portuguese expansion, for which the concept of empire seems inadequate. These were called overseas expansions to emphasize the role of shipping and control of the seas in the process of gaining dominion over peoples and lands. This process did not occur on the European continent. One gets the impression that Christian countries remained on the defensive here from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. In the Mediterranean world too, we cannot point to any type of expansion. On the contrary, political actions were defensive, and in the economic sphere they were conservative. The only direction of continental expansion was towards the East, and expansion on the eastern flank of the continent was quite different from the western variety. What lay beyond in the West was the ocean, while to the East stretched an equally boundless plain covered with forests and steppe.

Moreover, the continent had always been open to various expansions from the East. From the West and from the sea, the Vikings and Normans were sporadic threats, while from the East there was constant pressure from the people of the steppes and deserts. The Huns, Goths, Slavs, Arabs, Mongols and Turks created a memory of threat, but in the fifteenth century Western Christianity was more worried about the Black Death than the fall of the Eastern Empire.

Thus, the first border was the border of the memory of threat. Indeed, there is scarcely any 'frontier' effect of the bounds of expansion here, but there was also no "border" – no blocking boundary.[22] The borderland in the East of the continent meant above all the border area.

21 I justified this in: Jan Kieniewicz, *Od ekspansji do dominacji. Próba teorii kolonializmu* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1986).

22 Klaus Eder takes a different perspective in 'Europe's Borders: The Narrative Construction of the Boundaries of Europe', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9 (2006), 255–71. I disagree even more with Jan Grzymski's view in 'Europe's Borders and Neighbourhood: Governmentality and Identity', in *CBU International Conference proceedings 2018: Innovations in science and education*, ed. by Petr Hájek and Ondřej Vít (Prague: CBU Research Institute, 2018).

This lengthy digression is important for two reasons. First, we must recall the key role of the reaction of social systems to expansion, which was effectively erased by the colonial narrative. Next, it is essential to consider the adaptation of the people conducting the expansion to the local circumstances. From the fourteenth century onwards, two expansions of historical import were taking place in the eastern part of the continent. This is how I define the creation of a space that allows confrontation between people from different civilizations.[23]

The first, on the Baltic, was pursued by military orders hacking out a living space for themselves at the cost of the last pagan peoples: the Prussians, Yotvingians, and Samogitians. The State of the Teutonic Order gradually became the vanguard of modern political and economic organization. It can be regarded as European. The second expansion, meanwhile, was by no means European. It was pursued by Lithuania, which in the matter of a century consumed almost all the lands between the Baltic and Black Seas that are oriented along the axis of the Dnieper River. Facing constant pressure from the Teutonic Order, it was equally aggressive towards the Ruthenian principalities and Poland.

Meanwhile, the Kingdom of Poland, reconstructed in the first half of the fourteenth century, strove with all its might to take control of the equally important historical axis marked by the Vistula and Dniester rivers. This expansion was European to the extent that it was accompanied by an intensive process of colonization. The turning point was 1385–1386, when the Lithuanian Grand Duke Jogaila was elected King of Poland. We think about this in the context of the unions of Krewo and Lublin as stages in the Polish eastern expansion. We should also take other acts of union into account![24] This does not change the fact that for almost 200 years the Krakow throne was occupied by a Lithuanian dynasty. And when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – the Commonwealth of the "Two Nations" – was founded, its elites were dominated by Lithuanian and Ruthenian families. The dispute over the meaning and significance of the union, the Jagiellonian idea, and the consequences for the historical trajectory of the Commonwealth has lasted for generations and is irresolvable.[25] This is because we know no alternative.[26] What is important is something else, as protecting the eastern flank made it possible to complete the

23 I attempted to show the theoretical model for this phenomenon in: Kieniewicz, *Borderlands and Civilizational Encounter*; a broader discussion is in: Jan Kieniewicz, *Wprowadzenie do historii cywilizacji Wschodu i Zachodu* (Warszawa: Dialog, 2003).

24 Oskar Halecki, *Od Unii Florenckiej do Unii Brzeskiej* (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 1997).

25 Jan Kieniewicz, 'The Jagiellonian Idea and the Project for the Future', *Politeja*, 6 (2017), 5–25.

26 Considering other scenarios is instructive but changes nothing, including the state of consciousness. E.g. Andrzej Chwalba, reflecting on "other" courses of history, does not take this aspect into account. Andrzej Chwalba and Wojciech Harpula, *Zwrotnice dziejów. Alternatywne historie Polski* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2019).

expansion by combining two seas, thus linking the Mediterranean with the Baltic area.[27] In the fifteenth century, Poland took control of the forces emerging on the North-South axis, becoming permanently involved in the dynamics of the European dialogues.

This was a turning point to match the adoption of Roman Christianity, and what made it interesting was that it was fully controlled by Poland's own forces.[28] There was one more way in which the space emerging around this axis proved unique. It took the form of a Borderland. The reason for this was geopolitics, as the post-Union success needed no further partitions: effective defence was sufficient. This turned out to be founded on Christianization and Polonization. In the modern context, this entailed adopting the resources of values long since rooted in Polish culture as well as Latin, the universal language of the elites. At the same time, the new political creation was proving to be open to Aliens, Outsiders. The open border resulted in an Encounter.[29]

Successive generations presented this whole sequence of events to each other in narratives intended to confirm continuity. Myths and legends shaped the community. But what if we reorganize these narratives to make civilization, not the local community, the frame of reference? But what if to this end we do not accept the narrative created by Others – not only because we will not find ourselves in it? And if we see in it our image as Others, even Aliens, perhaps subalterns, then a postcolonial interpretation will not help. It will only perpetuate our inferiority and exclusion complex.

Let me quote myself once more:

> The principle of submissiveness to the hegemon was also implanted in European societies detached from the dominant West. It created the conviction that, in its separateness, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth consigned itself to peripherality and was rightly eliminated. I see matters quite differently. Europe, locking itself into the increasingly exclusive formula of the West, brought upon itself pathologies that in the twentieth century barely escaped causing the annihilation of civilization. So it is about not glorifying sep-

27 Antoni Mączak and Henryk Samsonowicz, 'Z zagadnień genezy rynku europejskiego: strefa bałtycka', *Przegląd Historyczny*, 55/2 (1964), 198–222.

28 This view would of course require further explanation, especially as it is isolated. But I would point out that the subject literature has seldom tackled the question of the autonomy or dependence of Poland's development. A notable exception was Antoni Mączak, *Między Gdańskiem a Sundem. Studia nad handlem bałtyckim od połowy XVI do połowy XVII wieku* (Warszawa: PWN, 1972), chapt. X. See Anna Sosnowska, *Zrozumieć zacofanie. Spory historyków o Europę Wschodnią (1947–1994)* (Warszawa: Trio, 2004).

29 Jan Kieniewicz, 'System wartości i spotkanie cywilizacji', in *Benares a Jerozolima. Przemyśleć chrześcijaństwo w kategoriach hinduizmu i buddyzmu*, ed. by Krzysztof J. Pawłowski (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Benedyktynów Tyniec, 2007), pp. 15–35; Jan Kenevič, 'Obstojatel'stva dialoga na pograniče: nekotorye razmyšlenija', *Debaty IBI AL*, ed. by Jan Kenevič (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Interdyscyplinarnych "Artes Liberales", 2011), IV, pp. 91–108; Kenevič, 'Pograniče'ja: pol'skoe, evropejskoe, evro-aziatskoe..?', pp. 82–87.

> arateness but recognition of participation in the dialogue that shaped this civilization.[30]

The Polish-European narrative speaks of a Borderland of civilizations and its destruction. In the case in question, the annihilation affects both Poland and Europe: it is a shared defeat. In these two "incarnations", we tell our story with full responsibility for both success and failure. Success was assured by the Polish version of dialogicality, and the failure of the Sarmatian project came with the loss of this dialogicality. The narrative about Poland developed after the failure, thus the focus was not on losing the capacity for dialogue but on the distance from Europe.

In short, by accepting or in fact designing their own borderland existence, the "old Poles" invented themselves in a form that from today's perspective I treat as an independent variant of civilization. This Poland was European as it invoked the same Christian, Roman and Greek values. Yet it was also a separate formation as it was established independently. This was manifested in the simultaneous dialogue of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, as well as its Encounter with Alienness. These circumstances resulted in a separate civilizational trajectory.[31] Determining what the Poles of the past thought about it is a major challenge. I don't even know where to start... Tracking the way in which they lost their existence would be an important element of a revision of the history of Poland – a revision that is absolutely essential. Revision does not mean consent to revisionism, to writing a vision of the past as a sequence of historical mistakes. After all, no project can be built without a past, and this past cannot be interpreted without diagnosing the condition of the community seeking its identity. In other words, history is for building bonds, but how can a narrative be formed when the bond of the community weakens? Our problem is the weakening and perhaps even disintegration of bonds, a fact that every successive reconstruction endeavours to disguise. The post-1989 transformation failed, or perhaps succeeded only partially[32]? We don't really know how to answer the question "why?". The question mark refers to the critical assessment of the state of the national bond, as well as to weakening impulses geared towards

30 Jan Kieniewicz, 'Wartości polityczne Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów a granice aksjologiczne cywilizacji europejskiej – kilka refleksji końcowych', p. 308.

31 See Stryjek, 'Europa Środkowa (Środkowo-Wschodnia), czyli o pochwale różnorodności i komparatystyki', 761–90.

32 Ireneusz Krzemiński, *Solidarity: The Unfulfilled Project of Polish Democracy*, trans. by Patrycja Poniatowska (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2019). See Anders Åslund, *How Capitalism Was Built: The Transformation of Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), chapt. 2.

"catching up" but not to "reproducing".[33] Has history been mythologized, invented, and distorted?[34]

Does this deal with the problem put before us? After all, the proposal to interpret the past as a process of "creating Europe" – not as "entering it" as a lost and unrecovered sense of borderland – does not mean questioning past history, regardless of whether we believe in the possibility of recreating a non-existent world, or rather an imagined sequence of stories. My essay aims to show that history, including national history, should answer the question "which future?" Disputes over bygone events, seeking to reconstruct them as accurately as possible, are part of history as an academic discipline, which should be performed professionally, meaning, above all, honestly, but history as a narrative only makes sense if it serves future projects. The dispute is not about interpretation of the past, although it is these narratives that are so important. It is about our awareness of how things are.

The narrative about Poland as a lost Borderland is a relatively fresh and optimistic one, but the perspective of the country as a perpetual periphery of Europe and the world is old and boring. In my view, peripherality is, above all, not an eternal state. It began with the crisis of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the breakdown of its European axis. Political defeat and being pushed away from the West were the consequences. A dual or perhaps rather multifaceted peripheralization marked the fate of post-Partition Poland.[35] Poland reborn did not manage to change its position in the world, and following the disaster of 1939 it got stuck in another version of dual dependence. This is why the attempt at transformation made after 1989 proved so difficult and so difficult to assess. There is a consensus on Poland's peripheral state, but not much more. The periphery is dependent, secondary and imitative. It does not introduce its own resources to solving the problems of the Centre in today's form of the European Union. This perspective limits our thinking and paralyses action. Consequently, it prompts the creation of phantasms, whether of past glories or of eternal nothingness. Peripherality is a falsified consciousness that succumbs to illusions; it is a lack of desire to embrace the challenges of the future. The sense of borderland was once a response to the challenges of those times – a response permitting the autonomous creation of one's own experience.

33 Jan Kieniewicz, 'Przejście i przekształcenie. Perspektywy rozwoju Polski na przełomie XX i XXI wieku', in *Ekspansja. Kolonializm. Cywilizacja*, pp. 175–91.

34 This subject was discussed at the doctoral seminar 'Searching for Identity: Global Challenges, Local Traditions', 9 May 2017. The article 'Przeszłość jako przyszłość: wymyślona, zmitologizowana, zakłamana?' [Past as future: invented, mythologized, distorted?] is awaiting completion and a decision on publication.

35 Jan Kieniewicz, 'Polski los w imperium rosyjskim jako sytuacja kolonialna', in *Ekspansja. Kolonializm. Cywilizacja*, pp. 244–62.

I want to emphasize that the collapse of the Commonwealth's project, resulting in the liquidation of the state and more than a century of absence during the nineteenth-century transformation of the continent, marked a significant change in the formation of Europe. I mean not only the absence of Polish names and Polish affairs in most Western historical studies. What I mean is that the fate of Poles can, at best, be traced in stories about the history of the state that made an agreement to tear the Commonwealth apart. One will not find, for example, a treatment of the phenomenon of emigration from Polish lands, but only from Germany, Russia and Austria. This is something far more serious than the obviously peripheral status of these lands. They simply do not exist in any narrative about nineteenth-century Europe. Only in monographic depictions will we encounter, for example, the "Polish question" as a subject of diplomacy – possibly of some political calculations by the great powers. That is why I have described this state of affairs as the loss of the frontier by Europe narrowing to the West. I want to emphasize how much the West's disconnection affected its subsequent fate: the twentieth-century war and revolution.

In this sense, the history of the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its inhabitants, who did not always identify with Polishness, occupies less space in European history than the former colonies,[36] even if we take Polish migration to the former metropolises into account. This is the effect of today's peripherality, but there is something else too. This specificity was perfectly evident not only in the nineteenth-century powers' consistent *désintéressement* in Poland's fate, but also in the course of the negotiations of Versailles and Tehran. This is where I discern what I called a trap – one could also use the metaphor of a "black hole" – for peripherality was not just the unfortunate fate of people living in this space "beyond the *limes*". Peripherality proved to be a trap for Europe. The consequence of that situation from the nineteenth century was the European catastrophe of the first half of the twentieth century. What emerged was a rump Europe, rescued by the American nuclear umbrella and, though capable of making internal peace, failing utterly to meet the challenges of the coming global century. Pure chance, or rather a regularity of civilizational evolution?

36 This makes attempts to apply different variants of postcolonial theories to Polish research understandable. Cf. the discussions contained in the volume *Perspektywy postkolonializmu w Polsce, Polska w perspektywie postkolonialnej*, ed. by Jan Kieniewicz, Debaty Artes Liberales Series, vol. 10 (Warszawa: Wydział Artes Liberales, 2016).

Entering the structures of the EU did not change Poland's peripheral status. That was not possible without an effective transformation. This responsibility must be accepted, regardless of views,[37] yet failure to notice how the endurance of the European peripheries weakens Europe is an element of a very long process. The borderland was an element that dynamized modern Europe. The loss of the Borderland is not a historical regularity, but what did become one was the peripherality that resulted from this loss, which proved to be a thoroughly unfavourable situation. To rebuild the European dynamic, it seems, it is necessary both to discern the historical consequences of this loss and to understand the significance of eliminating peripherality for the future of Europe.[38]

37 I am thinking of Marcin Król's position, highly understandable in all respects, in: Marcin Król, *Byliśmy głupi* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czerwone i Czarne, 2015).

38 I once attempted to forecast such a pro-European trajectory, but this must be treated as a testimony to naivety. Jan Kieniewicz, 'How to Rebuild European Borderlands', in *A Balanced European Architecture. Enlargement of the European Union to Central Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. by Hartmut Elsenhans (Leipzig: Publisud, 1999), pp. 100–10.

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SUBJUGATED NATIONS OR SEPARATISTS? POLISH AND RUSSIAN EMIGRÉS AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN THE SOVIET UNION IN THE LATE 1940S AND EARLY 1950S*

ABSTRACT

The national question in the Soviet Union was one of the main topics of discussion between Polish and Russian émigrés in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Polish and Russian émigré circles' attitudes towards Promethean peoples, described by the Russians as separatist, were key to the political concepts promoted by these circles. Both émigré groups sought to win each other over to their point of view and vied with each other for influence with the political elite in the US. After the Second World War, the Russian side presented a number of collaboration proposals to Polish political circles, seeking to draw the Poles away from both the pursuit of the Intermarium idea and collaboration with subjugated nations.

In my article, I argue that the dominant anti-imperialist stance in Polish politics and the growing support for Ukraine's independence after the war influenced the thinking of Russian democrats. As a result, and also because of international developments, the Russians were forced to modify their political programmes. From 1918, Russian émigré circles moved from questioning the very existence of subjugated nations to recognising their cultural distinctiveness and (in the case of some socialists) acknowledging their right to determine their fate through plebiscites.

The Poles' promotion of the idea of freedom for "Promethean" peoples also undermined the one-dimensionality of the American (and not only American) view of the Russian problem, dominated as it was by the Russian narrative. Drawing on an analysis of the activities of the most influential Polish and Russian political circles, I answer several crucial questions: How did these two émigré groups influence American politics? Was the Polish side's refusal to cooperate with the Russians relevant to the development of the cause of the subjugated nations? Finally, how did the Poles contribute to the spread among Russian émigrés of the idea of the independence of Promethean nations?

KEYWORDS:

Russia, Poland, Ukraine, exile, emigration

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This article contributes to research on nineteenth-century[1] and post-Revolutionary[2] relations between Polish and Russian émigrés. However, while a considerable number of studies have already been published on relations between Polish and Russian emigrants in the nineteenth century or between the Second Polish Republic and Russian emigrants, only a few have explored this problem in the period after the Second World War. This issue has appeared in studies rather incidentally when discussing other problems, and scholars have mainly focused on contacts between Russian emigrants and the Parisian *Kultura*. This subject has been discussed most extensively in research by Piotr Mitzner, Tadeusz Sucharski, Paweł Bem, Piotr Głuszkowski, and by the author of this article.[3]

It is interesting to note that there are not many academic literary works dealing with relations between Polish emigrants and the Promethean nations or the Promethean post-war movement in general. The issue of these relations is addressed by Krzysztof Tarka in his monograph on the Polish government's diplomacy in exile.[4] The most synthetic approach to this problem, however, is presented by Paweł Libera in his article *Prometheism after Prometheism*. It is also worth mentioning an article by Svetlana Chervonnaya that deals most extensively with the question of the functioning of

1 Wiktoria Śliwowska and René Śliwowski, *Aleksander Hercen* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1973); Geonowefa Kurpisowa, *Aleksander Hercen a emigracja polska w latach 1847–1870* (Gdańsk: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, 1964); *Myślą i słowem. Polsko-rosyjski dyskurs ideowy XIX wieku*, ed. by Łukasz Adamski and Sławomir Dębski (Warszawa: Centrum Polsko-Rosyjskiego Dialogu i Porozumienia, 2014).

2 On Russian emigration in Poland, see, e.g., Adolf Juzwenko, *Polska a „biała" Rosja (od listopada do kwietnia 1920 r.)* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1973); Zbigniew Karpus, *Wschodni sojusznicy Polski w wojnie 1920 roku. Oddziały wojskowe ukraińskie, rosyjskie, kozackie i białoruskie w Polsce w latach 1919–1920* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1999); Jan Zamojski, 'Biała emigracja rosyjska w Polsce; sytuacja, problemy', in *Migracje i społeczeństwo. Imigranci i społeczeństwa przyjmujące*, ed. by Grażyna Waluga (Warszawa: Neriton, 2000), V, pp. 32–63; Andrzej Nowak, *Polska i trzy Rosje. Studium polityki wschodniej Józefa Piłsudskiego (od kwietnia 1920 roku)* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2001); Iwona Obłąkowska-Galanciak, *Gorzkie gody... Publicystyczna i literacka działalność Dmitrija Fiłosofowa na emigracji* (Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego, 2001); Wojciech Stanisławski, *Myśl polityczna emigracji rosyjskiej w II Rzeczpospolitej: interpretacje przeszłości i koncepcje polityczne* (unpublished PhD thesis, Warszawa, 2002); Piotr Mitzner, *Warszawski „Domek w Kołomnie"* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, 2014); id., *Warszawski krąg Dymitra Fiłosofowa* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, 2015); Adam Suławka, *Prasa rosyjska i rosyjskojęzyczna w II Rzeczypospolitej (1918–1939)* (unpublished PhD thesis, Uniwersytet Warszawski, 2018); Marek Świerczek, *Największa klęska polskiego wywiadu. Sowiecka operacja dezinformacyjna „Trust" 1921–1927* (Warszawa: Fronda, 2020); Łukasz Dryblak, *Pozyskać przeciwnika. Stosunki polityczne między państwem polskim a mniejszością i emigracją rosyjską w latach 1926–1935* (Warszawa: Monografie, 2021).

3 *Literatura rosyjska w kręgu „Kultury". W poszukiwaniu zatraconej solidarności*, ed. by Piotr Mitzner (Paryż–Kraków: Instytut Książki, 2016), I; *„Kultura" i emigracja rosyjska. W poszukiwaniu zatraconej solidarności*, ed. by Piotr Mitzner (Kraków: Instytut Książki, 2016), II; Piotr Mitzner, *Ludzie z nieludzkiej ziemi. Rosyjski krąg Józefa Czapskiego* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 2021); Tadeusz Sucharski, *Polskie poszukiwania „innej" Rosji* (Gdańsk: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2008); Paweł Bem, 'Jerzy Giedroyc – czytelnik i wydawca literatury rosyjskiej', in *Literatura rosyjska w kręgu „Kultury"*, pp. 8–55; Piotr Głuszkowski, *Antyrosja – historyczne wizje Aleksandra Sołżenicyna – próba polskiego odczytania* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2008). Some issues related to Russian emigration are addressed in the following works: Anna M. Jackowska, *Sowiety na ławie oskarżonych. Polskie uczestnictwo w propagandowej zimnej wojnie we Francji w latach 1947–1952* (Warszawa: Monografie, 2018); Janusz Korek, *Paradoksy paryskiej Kultury. Styl i tradycje myślenia politycznego* (Lublin: Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2000); Andrzej S. Kowalczyk, *Wena do polityki. O Giedroyciu i Mieroszewskim* (Warszawa: Więź, 2014), I; Łukasz Dryblak, 'Sondowanie przeciwnika czy poszukiwanie sojusznika? Stosunki polsko-rosyjskie na przykładzie Koła Przyjaźni Polsko-Rosyjskiej w Paryżu w latach 1946–1953', *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 2 (2019), 179–218; id., 'Na tropie sowieckich operacji wpływu. Józef Mackiewicz w kręgu rosyjskiej emigracji', *Arcana*, 161 (2021), 64–87; id., 'Siergieja Mielgunowa emigracyjne spotkania z Polską', *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, 1 (2022), 291–312; id., 'Dialog polsko-rosyjski w USA na przykładzie kręgu Wacława Lednickiego', *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* [article submitted for publishing]; id., *Szermierze wolności i zakładnicy imperium. Emigracyjny dialog polsko-rosyjski w latach 1939–1956. Konfrontacje idei, koncepcji oraz analiz politycznych* (Warszawa, 2023).

4 Krzysztof Tarka, *Emigracyjna dyplomacja. Polityka zagraniczna rządu na uchodźstwie 1945–1990* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza RYTM, 2003).

the Promethean League of the Atlantic Charter.[5] Relations between Poles and Ukrainians in exile have been addressed by Sławomir Cenckiewicz, Krzysztof Tarka and Grzegorz Motyka, and Rafał Wnuk, while Jerzy Grzybowski has contributed on Polish-Belarusian relations.[6] Marian Wolański in turn has described the political concepts of the various émigré factions.[7]

In my analysis, I focus on the late 1940s and early 1950s – a crucial period in terms of the formation of American policy towards individual emigrants from Russia and Central and Eastern Europe. This was also a time when the various émigré groups sought to build their position in the eyes of Washington and consolidate their position in relation to each other.

The national question in the Soviet Union was one of the main contentious issues in discussions between Polish and Russian émigrés. The attitude towards Promethean peoples, described by Russians as separatist, was key to the political concepts promoted by Polish and Russian émigré circles. Obviously, the Ukrainian case attracted the most attention. Both émigré groups sought to win over each other to their points of view and vied with each other for influence with the political elite in the US. In addition, the Polish side mainly sought to follow and neutralise the activity of the Russians. On the other hand, the Russians tried to monopolise relations with the Americans and, by repeatedly formulating collaboration proposals, to draw the Poles away from both the pursuit of the Intermarium idea and collaboration with subjugated nations.

By analysing the stances of the main political milieux, I will try to answer three fundamental questions. How did these two émigré groups influence American politics? Was the Poles' consistent lack of interest in cooperating with the Russians relevant to the cause of the subjugated nations? Finally, how did the Poles contribute to the spread among Russian émigrés of the idea of the Promethean nations' independence?

In analysing the discussions held in selected (but representative) émigré circles, I want first of all to highlight the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Polish Government in exile, the members of the Polish Prometheus Group, the *Kultura* milieu,[8] the Polish-Russian Friendship Circle, and

5 Paweł Libera, 'Prometeizm po prometeizmie. Zarys historii ruchu prometejskiego po 1939 roku', *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, 1 (2022), 40–64; Swietłana Czerwonnaja, 'Liga Prometejska Karty Atlantyckiej (z archiwum Dżafera Sejdameta)', *Wrocławskie Studia Wschodnie*, 7 (2003), 109–43.

6 Sławomir Cenckiewicz, 'Intermarium w myśli politycznej Stanisława Józefa Paprockiego. Przyczynek do historii stosunków polsko-ukraińskich po II wojnie światowej', *Polska-Ukraina. Ludzie pojednania. Ukraińcy na Pomorzu w XX w.*, ed. by Tadeusz Stegner (Gdańsk: STEPAN design, 2002), pp. 84–99; Krzysztof Tarka, 'Kijów–Warszawa wspólna sprawa? Rozmowy polsko-ukraińskie na emigracji w pierwszych latach po II wojnie światowej', in *Podzielone narody. Szkice z historii stosunków polsko-ukraińskich w latach 40. XX wieku*, ed. by Mariusz Białokur and Marek Patelski (Toruń–Opole: Adam Marszalek, 2010), pp. 205–20; Grzegorz Motyka and Rafał Wnuk, '"Pany" i "rezuny" na emigracji. Próby porozumienia polsko-ukraińskiego na Zachodzie 1945–1950', *Więź*, 9 (2000), 197–207; Jerzy Grzybowski, *Pogoń między Orłem Białym, Swastyką i Czerwoną Gwiazdą. Białoruski ruch niepodległościowy w latach 1939–1956* (Warszawa: Bel Studio, 2011).

7 Marian Wolański, *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w myśli politycznej emigracji polskiej 1945–1975* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1996).

8 The best known and most influential opinion-making Polish monthly in exile, edited by Jerzy Giedroyc.

the main Russian organisations, namely New York's League of Struggle for the People's Freedom, led by Boris Nikolaevsky, Aleksandr Kerensky and Rafael Abramovich; Sergei Melgunov's Union of Struggle for the Freedom of Russia; the National Labour Alliance of Russian Solidarists, and the Brussels-based Russian National Union.

During the Second World War, a Polish-Russian discussion group was active in New York. This was thanks to Prof. Wacław Lednicki (the most famous Polish expert on Russian literature), who sought to use relations with Russians for the benefit of the Polish cause.[9] However, the group was not interested in the national question in the Soviet Union, and the professor himself privately believed it was highly unlikely that the call for the liberation of subjugated peoples would find understanding in Washington.[10] After the war, Lednicki focused on research, moving mainly among Russian and Polish scholars, occasionally also having contact with Ukrainian researchers. In 1946, the centre of gravity of the Polish-Russian dialogue moved from the US to France and West Germany. Obviously, Russians active in America continued to attract the interest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in exile, of Stanisław Mikołajczyk, one of the leaders of the International Peasant Union and the Polish National Democratic Committee (PNCD) he had founded, as well as of members of parties represented in the Political Council.[11]

Officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Polish Government in exile, supported by members of the Polish Promethean Group, Poland's Independence League (Liga Niepodległości Polski – LNP) and Federal Clubs, treated Russians mainly as political opponents. However, a different approach to them was adopted by the leaders of the People's Party (Stanisław Mikołajczyk), the National Party (Tadeusz Bielecki) and the Polish Socialist Party (Zygmunt Zaremba). In their programmes, in an attempt to establish cooperation with Russian socialists, they either did not include or did not highlight the question of subjugated peoples. The man who established the closest contact with them was Zygmunt Zaremba, who greatly appreciated the anti-communist stance of the Mensheviks but did not accept their paternalistic attitude towards Poland. In his correspondence with Solomon Schwartz, he ruled out Poland joining – as a result of Sovietisation – a federation that would be the work of a free Russia.[12]

9 W. Lednicki to [S. Kot], 23 October 1942, copy, The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America (hereafter PIASA), New York, Waclaw Lednicki Papers, 7.76, pp. 40–43.

10 W. Lednicki to W. Grzybowski, 22 January 1948, The Polish Library in Paris (Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu – hereafter BPP), Berkeley, Wacław Grzybowski, no. 7896.

11 Political Council (Rada Polityczna): a political body in opposition to the President and the Polish Government in Exile, formed in 1949. It included the following parties: the Polish Socialist Party, the National Party, Polish the Freedom Movement "Independence and Democracy" and the Polish People's Party "National Unity Faction" (Odłam Jedności Narodowej).

12 Z. Zaremba to S. Schwartz, [Paris], 9 July 1948, copy, PIASA, Zygmunt Zaremba Papers, 16/15, p. 135.

However, let us go back to the milieu carrying out the Promethean--Intermarium programme. In 1946 in Frankfurt am Main, Stanisław Paprocki established contact with representatives of the Ukrainian People's Republic. At more or less the same time, Klaudiusz Hrabyk, in order to sound out other émigré groups, initiated a Polish-Ukrainian-Russian discussion on the pages of Frankfurt *Kronika.* Paprocki and Hrabyk were members of the Polish Prometheus Group, in which they closely collaborated with, among others, Colonel Tadeusz Schaetzel. They quickly realised that the Ukrainians had beat the Poles to it and become serious contenders for the role of leaders of the subjugated nations.[13] In 1946, at the first congress of the Promethean League of the Atlantic Charter in the Hague, the Ukrainian professor Roman Smal-Stocki, who had already headed the "Prometheus" Club before the war, was elected president.[14]

The Ukrainians tried to bring together various nations within the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), dominated by the Bandera faction, and the Anti-Bolshevik League for the Liberation of Nations (*Antybil'shovyts'ka liha vyzvolennya narodiv* – ALON), founded in 1948 (composed of ABN, the International of Freedom [Międzynarodówka Swobody] and the Promethean League of the Atlantic Charter).[15] With concern, the Polish side watched the rise of the nationalists' influence and the support given to them by the Germans, who were perceived by the Polish Prometheans and Federalists as allies of Moscow and opponents of the Intermarium nations.

In order to determine what cooperation possibilities existed, the Polish side wanted to provoke the Russians and the Ukrainians into taking a stance on the Polish concept of the Intermarium. As I have already mentioned, such a discussion was initiated by Hrabyk in 1947. The Russian side was represented by S. Stasov, V. Vasil'yev and Konstantin Boldyrev, all of whom were columnists for *Posev*, a periodical of the National Labour Alliance of Russian Solidarists (*Natsional'no trudovoi soiuz rossiiskikh solidaristov* – NTS). As early as 1946, one of the leaders of this movement, Arkady Stolypine (son of the famous assassinated prime minister), sought to get through to the President of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Republic of Poland in exile, which is why the tone of his statements relating to Poles was warm.[16] Similar voices could be heard in the organisation's periodical. One such article by Stasov was reprinted in *Kronika*.[17] On the Ukrainian side, opinions

13 "Both the Prometh. and the DP Agreement [Agreement on Refugees and Displaced Persons – ŁD] were platforms of rather fierce Polish-Ukrainian rivalry"; J. [Ponikiewski] to S. [Paprocki], Hotelbienberg, 1 February 1949, The Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum (hereafter PISM), London, Stanisław Paprocki Collection (Kolekcja Stanisława Paprockiego – hereafter KSP), 30/VI/2.

14 [R. Smal-Stocki to S. Paprocki], 28 April 1946, PISM, KSP, 30/VI/2; Uchwały Zarządu Prometeusza na posiedzeniu z dnia 28.IV.46. [Resolutions of the Board of Prometheus adopted at the meeting of 28 April 1946], PISM, KSP, 30/VI/2.

15 J. Ponikiewski to [S. Paprocki], copy, PISM, KSP, 30/I/4, p. 28; Jan Pisuliński, '"Ukraiński Mazarini"? – Roman Smal-Stocki i Polacy', *Nowy Prometeusz*, 15 (2020), 39–54 (pp. 42–43).

16 Arkadij Stolypin, 'O pol'skoj èmigracii', *Svobodnaja Mysl'*, 6 (1946), (p. 37).

17 Stasov, 'Rosjanie o Polsce', *Kronika*, 40 (1947), p. 5.

were expressed by, among others, Roman Il'nyc'kyj, columnist for *Chas*, and Mykhaylo Voskobiynyk, editor of *Ukrainski visti*.

Vasil'yev agreed that the fight against the USSR had a universal dimension, saying that the NTS was not an imperialist organisation. He pointed out that, according to his organisation's programme, Russia was to be a "free union of free nations". The article was critical about the concept of the Intermarium and Great Ukraine, but it also contained an offer for the Ukrainians:

> The sooner this sober point of view prevails among Polish and Galician parties abroad, the easier it will be for them to be included in the common front of the anti-Bolshevik struggle, and the less they will be cut off from their own masses, from their own peoples, thirsty for real help in the fight against Bolshevism, thirsty for a life not so much in Poland 'from sea to sea', not so much in Galicia from 'Lviv to Grozny', but simply in a free and peaceful Poland, in a free and peaceful Galicia within the framework .... – if possible, without a framework, so that one could travel, live, work more freely, from sea to sea, from Lviv to Grozny, and beyond![18]

The Ukrainians were fierce opponents of the NTS, which is why the solidarists still had to obstruct Polish-Ukrainian cooperation. In any case, this may have seemed to them a sufficient step towards ensuring the implementation of the programme of an indivisible Russia. In October 1948 in the American magazine *Look*, Konstantin Boldyrev published an article in which he presented an embellished history of his organisation, claiming that the Polish-Russian talks held between Włodzimierz Stępniewski, Viktor Baydalakov and Mikhail Georgievsky in Belgrade at the turn of 1941 ended with the signing of an agreement between the NTS and the Polish Government.[19]

Boldyrev's article, as was reported by Juliusz Szygowski, consul general in Chicago subordinated to Jan Wszelaki, was taken note of by the Ukrainians, who saw in it a sign of an alliance between "Polish imperialists" and anti-communist Russians against Ukraine.[20] One year later, Stolypine published an article in which he suggested that although émigrés could not make a decision on the disputed lands in the east, the future Russia

18 V. Vasil'yev, 'Razdel Rossii', *Posev*, 26 (1948), PISM, KSP, 30/VI/8.
19 'The story of one Russian underground organization attempting to overthrow Stalin', by C.W. Boldyreff, as told E.B. Paine, *Look*, 26 October 1948, 25–39.
20 J. Szygowski to T. Gwiazdowski, Chicago, 28 October 1948, PISM, KSP, 30/I/12.

would certainly be capable of negotiating the status of the disputed eastern Polish lands with Poland.[21]

The solidarists also tried to establish contact with General Władysław Anders, cooperation with whom also attracted the interest of members of the Brussels-based Russian National Union (*Russkoye Natsional'noye Obyedineniye* – RNO), whose head, Vasiliy Orekhov, knew Anders from his service in the tsar's army, which made it easier for him to reach him. By pretending their relations with Anders had a higher profile than they actually had, both organisations succeeded in creating the impression that the general supported them. This outraged Ukrainian journalists. The general did not favour the Russians and also maintained contact with representatives of the subjugated nations. However, it has to be said that there were people in his entourage who preferred collaboration with the Russians to that with Promethean nations. This was the attitude of, for example, Colonel Wincenty Bąkiewicz, head of the intelligence in the Polish II Corps, who highly valued *Posev* (the solidarists' periodical).[22] Ryszard Wraga pointed to the provocative nature of relations with the NTS and RNO, but he was not entirely successful in warning Anders against them.[23]

Despite territorial offers made by the Russian émigrés, the Poles rejected cooperation with them. First of all, they did not trust them; secondly, they wanted a solution that would ensure lasting security for the nations of Central and Eastern Europe. The vision of the Intermarium presented in *Kronika* by Hrabyk reflected the concept of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' policy, which was developed with a major contribution from Stanisław Paprocki[24] and the long-time Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tadeusz Gwiazdowski of Poland's Independence League, in cooperation with the leaders of the Federal Clubs, especially the Central European Federal Club in Rome, headed by Juliusz Poniatowski and Stanisław Janikowski.

The eastern border of the Intermarium was to run along the eastern border of Ukraine or the Cossack-inhabited areas on the Don, the inclusion of which in the Intermarium would make it possible to establish contact with the peoples of the Caucasus.[25] *Intermarium Biuletyn* promoted

21 Arkadij Stolypin, 'Puti sud'by Pol'ši', *Posev*, 16 October 1949, p. 9.

22 "[Wincenty Bąkiewicz] was holding *Posev*, 'an excellent periodical, he said, patting a copy of *Posev*, I'm very happy we're meeting, although we differ politically. My assessment of the situation is completely different from Wraga's'. I think that this was again an allusion to the Russian [question] [and] Wraga's Promethean tendencies. [...]"; J. Czapski to J. Giedroyc, [London], [1951], Archiwum Instytutu Literackiego Kultura (hereafter AIL), PoJCz, 19.06.

23 R. Wraga to W. Anders, Paris, 19 September 1952, PISM, General Anders Collection, 295, f. 19.

24 "1. The campaign for the liberation of the nations subjugated by the Soviet Union, according to the plans established so far, was to be carried out in coordinated but independent rounds: A. 'federal' movement of the Intermarium nations; B. organisation of the nations incorporated into the USSR or within the framework of the Promethean League of the Atlantic Charter [...]"; [S. Paprocki] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs [A. Tarnowski], top secret, 5 January 1948, PISM, KSP, 30/VI/2/.

25 G.C., 'O granicach Intermarium', *Intermarium Biuletyn*, 6 (May 1947), p. 7.

a community of its members and respect for the independence of all nations.[26] Europe would become an alliance of regional unions that would be based on the principles of a federation and would maintain balance and prevent other nations from being dominated by either Germany or Russia.[27]

Some shortcomings of the Rome Club's programme were pointed out by Kajetan Dzierżykraj-Morawski, an experienced diplomat. According to him, it was impossible to refer to the Treaty of Riga and, at the same time, to challenge it by calling for independence for Ukraine and Belarus. He said that the Ukrainian cause might become more important to the US than the Polish cause in the long term. In addition, he stressed, referring to the example of France, that an anti-Soviet stance should not be regarded as the same as an anti-Russian stance.[28] In this respect, Dzierżykraj-Morawski's thinking may have been influenced by individuals from the Polish-Russian Friendship Circle.[29] Morawski wondered how to reconcile the federalist and the Promethean programmes. Although the two were interlinked, the proclamation of the latter might, in his opinion, deny the Poles access to Western politicians.

Jerzy Giedroyc also faced such a problem, which is why in his contact with the Americans he tried to present himself as a friend of Russians, at the same time trying to force through a programme for breaking up the Soviet Union. In a letter to Józef Czapski, who represented him in talks held at the Pentagon, Giedroyc and Wraga advised him:

> You have to use here arguments different from those of the Ukrainian nationalists or others. [...] We are seeking a break-up of the Russian empire, and what will come out of this later, whether there will be a federation or a union of free states or a mosaic of completely independent nation states, is a matter for the future, a matter that cannot be decided at the moment, if only because we do not have enough information to talk about what conditions will exist after the break-up of the Soviet empire [...]. We consider a break-up of the Russian empire to be the only possible way of liberating the Russian nation, too, from the hegemony of the idea of the state and of giving this nation a possibility of finally being able to really determine its historical future. Your interlocutors must understand that if such a attitude to the matter usually provokes indignation

26 Ibid.
27 'Memorandum Środkowo-Europejskiego Ruchu Federalnego. Przesłane na ręce delegatów rządów biorących udział w Organizacji Narodów Zjednoczonych – Sesja w Nowym Yorku', September 1947, *Intermarium Biuletyn*, 8 (December 1947), 44–45. The memorandum was signed by representatives of the Clubs from London, Rome, Paris and Brussels.
28 Morawski's views are discussed on the basis of [K. Morawski] to [Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Tarnowski], Paris, 8 November 1947, PISM, Polish Embassy in Paris, A.46/2.
29 More on the Circle: Dryblak, 'Sondowanie przeciwnika czy poszukiwanie sojusznika?', pp. 179–213.

> on the part of all factions of the Russian émigrés, it is not because such a programme or slogan is inexpedient or unrealistic to carry out, but because all these Russian groupings are afraid of historical responsibility [...] and, as a matter of fact, by supporting the thesis of the preservation of the Russian state and statehood at all costs, they are playing into the hands of the Bolsheviks.[30]

The theses of the Rome programme were also disputed by Colonel Tadeusz Schaetzel, who called for a precise definition of Russian emigres' attitudes to the Cossacks, peoples of the Caucasus, as well as the states of the Near and Middle East, which he regarded as natural allies of the Intermarium.[31] The concept he proposed – defined in short as the Baltic–Black Sea–Caspian Sea – was a correction of the Baltic–Adriatic–Black Sea triangle. Members of the Rome Club rejected such a modification, considering it unrealistic. They were afraid that the "planned community of nations would be some sort of monstrous 'Greater Ukraine' (in the literal sense) on Russia's border and would be a function of Russia, or rather an exponent of the fear of its power. However, a true community cannot be a community of fear or negation".[32]

The Polish-Ukrainian-Russian polemic of the mid-1940s did not lead to constructive conclusions. The Ukrainians disregarded the fact that the Russians were being intransigent over the question of the Polish-Ukrainian border[33] in order to win the Poles over. Mieczysław Grabiński, the Munich consul, reported: "The fragmentary statements by the Russian émigrés suggest that the concept of the 'Great and indivisible' not only does not encompass Poland but also grants it the right to Vilnius and Lviv".[34] However, the Poles did not trust the Russian declarations.

From across the Atlantic, Marian Kamil Dziewanowski reported on identical proposals in his notes for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressing that the side that excelled at them was the monarchists, who, by dividing the Ukrainian nation between Poland and Russia, wanted to get rid of the problem of Ukrainian independence.[35] As a Harvard student, Dziewanowski

30 J. Giedroyc [and R. Wraga] to J. Czapski, Maisons-Laffitte, 10 May 1950, AIL, PoJCz, 19.05.
31 Tadeusz Schaetzel, 'Wschodnia granica Międzymorza ', *Intermarium Biuletyn*, 12 (May 1949), 27–29.
32 W...ir, 'Na wschód od międzymorza', *Intermarium Biuletyn*, 12 (May 1949), 29–35.
33 "Only in the event of the Polish nation relinquishing the eastern lands would the Ukrainians be willing to engage in closer cooperation against their common enemy, Russia (Ilnicki). The Ukrainians believe that the Polish-Ukrainian agreement is necessary, but first Poland needs to make some concessions (Czernecki). The best solution to the Polish-Ukrainian question would be, according to Ilnicki, J. Bielski's concept [giving up the Riga border – ŁD]. This is the material content of the 'Polish-Ukrainian discussion' and this is why K. Hrabyk's delight at its outcome is incomprehensible"; Report on the so-called Polish-Ukrainian discussion in Germany, London, 12 January 1948, Pilsudski Institute of London (hereafter PIL), London, Tadeusz Schaetzel Archive (Archiwum Tadeusza Schaetzela – hereafter ATS), 7. The report was probably compiled by Stanisław Paprocki.
34 G. [consul M. Grabiński], International Committee of Refugees and DPs in Germany, 6 June 1948, PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.1472.
35 "The reason [behind the monarchists' stance] is not sympathy for us, but a desire to divide the Ukrainian problem between Poland and Russia", M.K. Dziewanowski, 'Nowa emigracja rosyjska', copy, PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.874.

was able to gather excellent information about the views of Russian émigrés thanks to his tutor Michael Karpovich, the well-known historian of Russia.

As the Polish and the Ukrainian sides were unable to come to an agreement, the Russian émigrés in the US did not waste time, trying to impose their programme on the Americans. Naturally, it seemed more obvious to the Americans to establish cooperation primarily with the Russian émigrés. With time they realised, however, that mobilising emigrants from regions that were part of the USSR within a single organisation on the basis of concepts developed in the Russian milieux was not an easy task because most nations, especially the Ukrainians, advocated a programme of independence and separation from Russia instead of a federation. Both groups could count on their sympathisers in the US. These conflicts between émigré communities irritated the pragmatic Americans, who wanted to force all these nations to collaborate.

Jozef Lipski, who was sent by the Polish government to the US, claimed that the Americans did not have a defined programme relating to the future of Russia.[36] American government circles were flooded with contradictory concepts formulated by Russian and Ukrainian émigrés.[37] Meanwhile, the Promethean idea, according to Dziewanowski, was known only to a few professionals.[38] Lipski thought that this confusion might be used to scale up the Polish propaganda, but this was hampered by the arrival in the US of Stanisław Mikołajczyk in November 1947.[39] Lipski pointed out that for the Americans he was a very convenient candidate for the leader of the Polish émigrés as he was in conflict with the Polish government and accepted the decisions taken in Yalta.[40] A positive opinion about him was expressed also by the leader of the Russian émigrés, Aleksandr Kerensky, as was reported to London by the representative of the Government of Poland in Washington, Jan Wszelaki.[41] In a conversation with Kerensky, Mikołajczyk confirmed the inviolability of the Polish-Russian border on the Bug River, at the same time distancing himself from the cause of the subjugated nations. Naturally, those Polish circles that did not accept Yalta regarded this move as another act of "treason".[42]

36 "Usually I was unable to say that there was any clear concept, among the opinion leaders, of the future of Russia. Both the white émigrés, attracting fugitive Bolsheviks from Russia like Kravchenko, and the Ukrainians are suggesting various ideas to the US government circles", J. Lipski to J. Potocki, ambassador in Madrid, London, 6 February 1948, PISM, Józef Lipski Collection (Kolekcja Józefa Lipskiego – hereafter KJL), 2/10.

37 Ibid.

38 Excerpt from a letter by M.K.D. [M.K. Dziewanowski], 28 September 1947, PISM, KJL, 2/10.

39 See Anna Mazurkiewicz, *Uchodźcy polityczni z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w amerykańskiej polityce zimnowojennej 1948–1954* (Warsaw–Gdańsk: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2016), p. 274.

40 J. Lipski to J. Potocki, London, 6 February 1948, PISM, KJL, 10; [J. Wszelaki] to minister T. Gwiazdowski, Washington, 7 January 1948, PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.1651. Lipski and Wszelaki were right. On the opinions of the Americans about Mikołajczyk, see Mazurkiewicz, *Uchodźcy polityczni z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, pp. 274–75.

41 [J. Wszelaki] to T. Gwiazdowski, Washington, 7 January 1948, PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.1651.

42 T. Borelowski [Michał Grażyński], 'Pakt w Chicago', *Za Wolność i Niepodległość*, 9 (20 January 1948), p. 201; Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz, 'Na lekki chleb', *Lwów i Wilno*, 47 (3 November 1947), 221–25. T. Schaetzel to [W. Jędrzejewicz], Woodlands Park Camp., 23 December 1947, Józef Piłsudski Institute of America (hereafter PIA), New York, Personal File, 897.

On 13 March 1949, New York hosted the first meeting of the League of Struggle for the People's Freedom, headed by Aleksandr Kerensky and Boris Nikolaevski. It featured many well-known émigrés, including Michael Karpovich and Rafael Abramovitch, as well as a minor Ukrainian activist named Dneprov, who played the part of a 'good Ukrainian' – good in the Russian understanding of the term. The speeches echoed the theses that this milieu had already advocated during the war: that the Russian nation was not responsible for the actions of the communists, that the Russian people demanded freedom, and that nations have a right to freedom, but not those nations that wish to deviate from the democratic path (underneath this rather general statement was a threat against émigré groups that might oppose joining the federation).

In addition to the Ukrainians, Kerensky also made offers of cooperation to the Belarusian group of Mikola Abramchyk (head of the Council of the Belarusian Democratic Republic). These activities were sponsored by the Americans, who urged the Belarusians to reach an agreement with the Russians.[43] The unification campaign was unfolding with difficulty.[44] According to Wacław Grzybowski, who cited Wacław Lednicki's conversation with Vasiliy Maklakov, the five Russian organisations' agreement that had been reached in Stuttgart was very fragile.[45] The Promethean activists did not lose hope – in 1952 the Russian organisations' agreement collapsed.[46] Attempts to organise an anti-Soviet campaign on the basis of Russian émigrés failed because the Council for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, established in Stuttgart, disintegrated before it began to function. Indeed, the Russians failed to play the role of representatives of all the subjugated nations, which they did not treat as equals. As Kerensky wrote to Karpovich, "We cannot allow the Coordinating Center [for Anti-Bolshevik Struggle] to turn into a new Prometheus or ABN".[47] The Russians hoped that they would manage to pursue their own policy at the expense of the Americans; they did not expect that the CIA would withdraw financing for the Centre.[48]

Some Russian immigrants were active in the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, the name of which did not satisfy any of the peoples: the Russian émigrés did not like it because, in their opinion,

43 "The local American embassy is exerting some pressure on him to come to an agreement with Kerensky", W. Grzybowski to minister M. Sokołowski, Paris, 25 September 1951, copy, PISM, KSP, 30/I/11.
44 Grzybowski, *Pogoń między Orłem Białym*, pp. 716–18.
45 Ibid. The communiqué about the establishment of the Council for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia was signed by Boris Nicolaevsky and Vladimir Zenzinov (League of Struggle for the People's Freedom), Viktor Baidalakov and Vladimir Romanov (NTS), Aleksandr Kerensky and Ivan Kurganov (Russian National Movement), Boris Jakowlew and A. Krilov (Union of Struggle for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia), Sergei Melgunov and M. Solov'yev (Union of Struggle for the Freedom of Russia); abridged note by S. Paprocki for minister S.Z., 1 October 1951, PISM, KSP, 30/III/1.
46 E. Kirimal to S. Paprocki, Windelsbleiche, 4 January 1952, PISM, KSP, 30/IV/10.
47 A. Kerensky to M. Karpovich, 18 June 1952, Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Bakhmeteff Archive (hereafter CULBA), New York, Michail Karpovich Coll., box 2.
48 Benjamin Tromly, *Cold War Exiles and the CIA: Plotting to Free Russia* (Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 148.

it stressed the significance of separatist peoples, who did not like it because the term used was "Peoples of Russia" not "Peoples of the Soviet Union", a term that would better highlight the multinational nature of the state.

THE PARISIAN CIRCLES (POLISH-RUSSIAN FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE, *KULTURA* AND MELGUNOV'S GROUP).

As I have already said, a Polish-Russian Friendship Circle operated in 1946–1953 in Paris. It was composed primarily of sympathisers of *Russkaya Mysl*, local Polish émigrés represented by various political factions as well as academics associated with the Polish Library in Paris. The main role in it on the Polish side was played by Władysław Pelc, a well-known Promethean activist; on the Russian side, Vladimir Lazarevsky, head of the nationalist Russian National Union, played the main role. The Russian leader of the group was a Catholic, and several Russian members sympathised with Catholicism. Religious dialogue was a bond uniting the Polish and the Russian members of the Circle. Admittedly, it was mainly the Russians who set the tone for the work of the group, toying with the idea of a future united – and Christian – Europe, in which Russia, Poland and France would play a central role. After Lazarevsky's death in 1953, the group ceased to function. With time, the profile of *Russkaya Mysl* changed as well, with that milieu also establishing relations with *Kultura.*

The Polish political factions and the Government of Poland in exile regarded the Circle as a platform for sounding out Russian émigrés. The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs allowed Poles to participate in the group for these purposes, despite the fact that Ryszard Wraga (asked to evaluate the Circle by ambassador Kajetan Morawski) pointed out that some of the Russians involved might be Soviet intelligence collaborators.[49] A similarly negative opinion about this milieu was expressed by Stanisław Paprocki.[50]

Among the members of the group, the most puzzling in his attitude was Pelc, who at the time gave the impression of believing in the possibility of cooperating with the Russians.[51] In retrospect, however, he concluded that Polish-Russian cooperation could not have developed, largely due to the Russians' reluctance to recognise the independence of the Baltic states (they eventually did) and to grant the right to self-determination to the peoples of the Caucasus. However, the dispute focused mainly on the

49 Ambassador K. Morawski to Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Sokołowski, Paris, 25 June 1951, BPP, Kajetan Morawski's file, temp. no. 6.2. He expressed the same opinion in his correspondence with General Władysław Anders (R. Wraga to W. Anders, Paris, 26 November 1952, PISM, KGA, 295, f. 20).
50 S. Paprocki to T. Gwiazdowski, London, 2 July 1948, PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.823.
51 Dryblak, 'Sondowanie przeciwnika czy poszukiwanie sojusznika?', pp. 205, 211.

question of the independence of Belarus and Ukraine, of which the Poles were in favour: "We Poles were in favour of the independence of these nations; the Muscovites were only in favour of some kind of autonomy in a vague 'post-Soviet' phraseology with the inviolable all-Russian assumption of an 'inviolable union' of the Russian peoples".[52]

The biggest effort to establish an honest dialogue with the Russians and sound them out was made by *Kultura*, especially its editor-in-chief Jerzy Giedroyc, who was strongly supported in this respect by Józef Czapski and Jerzy Niezbrzycki. Yet the effects of these attempts were rather modest in comparison with their intentions. The Russians were not interested in such a discussion. They must have feared questions about their attitude to the Promethean nations. A way to obtain information about the Russian position was to be a Russian issue of *Kultura*, which had been in the pipeline since 1946. Giedroyc presented his intentions in a letter to Lednicki in the following manner:

> By publishing a special issue devoted to Russian–Polish matters, we do not intend by any means to butter each other up and keep a wistful note of fraternity. [...] This is especially necessary at the present time, since the manoeuvres among the Russian émigrés here on the European continent (and, as we hear, also on the American continent) are highly alarming. I'm afraid that no one and nothing will teach these good old Great Russian imperialists. Nevertheless, it is necessary to do away with these methods – on the one hand national democratic and on the other *constitutional democratic* (Kadet) – of complimenting and showing affection to each other [...] *Kultura* would like to tear down the wall of hypocrisy in this sphere and create a dialogue – even if very unpleasant for both sides, but held in the same periodical.[53]

Yet were the efforts of the *Kultura* milieu doomed to complete failure? A good example of the fact that this was not the case was the Congress for Cultural Freedom, organised – a fact not mentioned at the time for obvious reasons – by the CIA. Owing to its relations with James Burnham and Nicolas Nabokov, *Kultura* had a significant impact on the organisation and tone of the Congress. It was Giedroyc and Czapski who raised the question of subjugated peoples, successfully demanding that Ukrainian representatives, among others, be involved in the further work of the Congress.

52 Curriculum Vitae, BPP, Akta Władysława Pelca, temp. no. 1, p. 4.
53 J. Giedroyc to W. Lednicki, Paris, 7 January 1948, copy, AIL, KOR RED, 410.

This was accomplished thanks to the support of, among others, Michael Karpovich from the League of Struggle for the People's Freedom (and despite the opposition from his compatriot David Dallin),[54] which had been co-founded, after all, by a fierce enemy of the "separatists", Aleksandr Kerensky. Karpovich also supported Giedroyc and Czapski in lobbying for a university for the nations from behind the Iron Curtain.[55]

Giedroyc feared Kerensky's activity, but this motivated him all the more to enter into a debate with the Russians in order to try to discern and reveal their real views on the issues of key importance to the Polish émigrés. The Russian socialists' regular contact with the Poles influenced the former's views towards the subjugated nations. One of the Russians whom Giedroyc asked to write an article for *Kultura* was Georgy Fedotov.[56] He was the most radical example of the reception of the Polish idea of freedom among the democratic Russian émigrés. In 1946, he published an article in *Novyi Zhurnal*, edited by Michael Karpovich, entitled "Sud'ba imperiy", in which he expressed criticism – shared by the majority of the émigrés – of the imperial idea: "The loss of the empire is a moral purification, liberation of Russian culture from the terrible burden that distorts its spiritual image".[57] Fedotov wrote explicitly that Russia could not be free and democratic by oppressing other nations and suggested that sooner or later it would become territorially restricted to its Centre with Siberia and perhaps Belarus.[58]

Another Russian who maintained relations with *Kultura* was Sergei Melgunov, who was part of the opposite camp of democratic émigrés to that of Karpovich and Fedotov. In his 1951 article "Yedinaya ili razchlenennaya Rossiya", he denied the Ukrainians the right to become separated from Russia but expressed his willingness to recognise the independence of the Baltic States, Georgia, and possibly Armenia; when it came to Poland, he waived the claims to Galicia.[59] He sought in vain to make the Coordinating Centre for Anti-Bolshevik Struggle, founded in October 1952 in Munich, an organisation of various peoples of the Soviet Union that could represent these peoples vis-à-vis the Americans. This did not prevent him from maintaining close links with Ryszard Wraga, a Promethean activist and former head of the Bureau East (Second Department of the Polish General Staff) who in the early 1950s became involved in combating Soviet disinformation in the West and in building a united anti-Soviet front of

54 J. Cz. [Józef Czapski], 'Notatki z Kongresu Brukselskiego', *Kultura*, 39 (1951), 125–28 (p. 127).
55 Mirosław A. Supruniuk, *Przyjaciele wolności. Kongres Wolności Kultury i Polacy* (Warszawa: DiG, 2008), p. 77.
56 J. Giedroyc to G. Fedotov, Paris, 9 January 1948, copy, AIL, KOR RED, 172. Giedroyc asked him for an article about the detrimental nature of chauvinism to the collaboration of Russians, Poles and Ukrainians in the fight against "Bolshevism".
57 Georgij Fedotov, 'Sud'ba Imperij', *Novyj Žurnal*, 16 (1947), 149–69 (p. 169).
58 Ibid., p. 151.
59 Sergej Mel'gunov, 'Edinaja ili rasčlenennaja Rossija?', *Vozroždenie*, 15 (May–June 1951), 130–44 (pp. 130–44).

nations in an effort to bring about a Russian-Ukrainian dialogue.[60] In discussions with the Russians, he tried to convince them that the need to recognise the independence of the subjugated nations (especially Ukraine) was a prerequisite for overthrowing Soviet rule and defeating communism. He was highly respected in Russian circles, although mainly for his uncompromising fight against Soviet agents of influence rather than for his concept of anti-Soviet and anti-communist cooperation between nations.

CONCLUSION

The Poles looked for effective tactics and opportunities to better reach Washington with their ideas, which is why they did not shy away from contact with Russian émigrés, even though most Polish groups had an anti-imperialist programme. A "realistic" programme was advocated by some members of the People's Party, led by Stanisław Mikołajczyk, and by the nationalists, who still hoped that a national Russia would share its eastern lands with Poland after the decline of Soviet rule. However, the Ukrainian suspicions concerning the Poles' alleged collaboration with the Russians were incommensurate with the intensity of Polish-Russian relations, the main purpose of which was sounding out the other side and which never resulted in cooperation against the Promethean nations.

The lack of agreement on the question of the borders and the Ukrainians' tactical approach to cooperation with the Poles made it impossible for the two sides to jointly lobby for the interests of the subjugated peoples and those living in the satellite states and the USSR.[61] Thus, the fact that the Ukrainian independence circles ruled out dialogue with the Russians – a fact welcomed by Polish diplomats – can hardly be regarded as a success.[62]

By engaging in a dialogue with the Russians, the Poles wanted to force them to declare themselves on important issues, with the national question certainly being one of these. The Russians did not think that such a debate was politically advantageous for them, especially at a time when American policy towards the USSR was taking shape. Russian émigrés wanted to impose on the Americans their own views on the national

60 See Dryblak, 'Siergieja Mielgunowa emigracyjne spotkania z Polską', pp. 303–06; Łukasz Dryblak, 'Jerzy Niezbrzycki (Ryszard Wraga) jako znawca Rosji i kontynuator myśli Józefa Piłsudskiego', in *Józef Piłsudski – idee, tradycje, nawiązania*, ed. by Sebastian Pilarski (Łódź–Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2019), pp. 323–62 (pp. 350–51).

61 Cf. Tarka, *Emigracyjna dyplomacja*, pp. 88–91.

62 "The Ukrainians are no longer under any illusions in this respect and, therefore, their anti-Russian front is united", G. [consul M. Grabiński], International Committee of Refugees and DPs in Germany (after: report of 8 April 1948, 6 June 1948), PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.1472; "An agreement between the Russians and the Ukrainians is impossible to bring about. There is no organisational link between them, no cooperation, even in socialist and Orthodox Church organisations", M. Samiczek, *Przyszłość Ukrainy*, New York, July 1948, PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.823.

question in the USSR. For various reasons, a more friendly attitude towards the Russian people – as representing the largest state body in the East – prevailed within the American political elite. Yet, many Russians believed that their policy had failed as they had not become the only partners among the nations of the USSR in talks with the American side.

The visions of the future order in Europe – and thus also the attitude to the national question – presented by the Polish and Russian émigrés were diametrically opposed. Although in addition to concepts based on different variants of the idea of the Russian Empire, in the Russian thought there also emerged concepts – advocated mainly by socialists – of Russia as a federation or even a confederation. Moreover, the idea of Holy Russia (Nikolai Berdyaev and Anton Kartashev) continued to be popular, thus adding a religious dimension to Soviet actions in a reference to the ideas of Slavophile Messianists. A secular modification of this idea was the idea of the "Russian world", which drew on Eurasian thought and was promoted by the NTS, among others. The indivisibility and tri-unity of the Russian nation was firmly advocated by Pavel Milyukov, Aleksandr Kerensky, and even their liberal friend Michael Karpovich, who believed in the possibility of maintaining the unity of the empire through its federalisation and modernisation in line with Western "standards". The thinking of the Russian democrats was marked by a contradiction that was recognised by the Poles as well as by, as I have mentioned, Georgy Fedotov, who, not without bitterness, concluded that Russia would not be free until it had learned from the Poles about freedom and had become divided.

The possibility of a federalised Russia was reluctantly accepted by Sergei Melgunov and Vladimir Lazarevsky. On the other hand, various monarchic and nationalist groupings ruled out a federal political system. Some of them even passed over the very existence of subjugated peoples, although there were also those – like Sergei Voytsekhovsky – who tried to address the problem despite criticism from their own milieu.

In each variant (least of all in the case of the socialists) these concepts clashed with the Polish proposals, which provided for, firstly, the reconstruction of Poland with its eastern border as agreed upon in Riga, or an eastern border revised in favour of a future independent Ukraine and possibly Belarus and Lithuania, or with the Yalta border, but neighbouring on an independent Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, federated with Poland or not. Apart from the nationalists (although exceptions can be found here as well), Polish émigrés supported the federation idea. Not only was Poland to be independent, but it was also to be part of a Central and Eastern European federation, forming part of a European confederation, or to be directly part of a united Europe.

The Polish-Russian dialogue was a confrontation of two diametrically opposed points of view. The biggest difficulty for the two nations lay in finding a way to agree on the fate of the subjugated peoples, a difficulty bigger than that posed by the question of Poland's eastern border, the adjustments of which – whether by inter-state agreements or plebiscites – were, at least in theory, contemplated by the Russians in an effort to persuade the Poles to abandon their Promethean policy.

Despite the fact that the Russian thinking was dominated by the idea of the indivisibility of the empire, Russian political parties did undergo quite an evolution between the late nineteenth century and the 1950s: from denying the Poles their right to independence, to accepting it and trying to develop a new *modus vivendi* in relations with Poland, accepting the independence of the Baltic States, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, as well as recognising the existence of the Belorussian and Ukrainian peoples and, in the case of the socialists, granting them (at least declaratively) the right to determine their fate through a plebiscite.

It was, however, political circumstances that forced the Russians to modify their attitude towards the "separatist" nations: the weak position of the Russian émigrés, the development of national movements, the anti-imperialist stance prevailing among the Polish émigrés, and the increasing support after the Second World War for the independence of Ukraine and even Belarus. The Polish stance, perforce, limited the possibilities for Russian influence and had an impact on the Russian ideas, especially those of Russian democratic groups.

If the Poles had been in favour of dividing the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth between Poland and Russia, this would have weakened the already fragile democratic tendencies in Russian political thought and facilitated the implementation of the concept of an indivisible Russia, be it national or Soviet. The promotion by the Poles of the idea of freedom of nations, referred to as the Promethean idea, also mitigated the one-dimensionality of the American (and not only American) view on the Russian problem, dominated as it was by the Russian émigré narratives, which were often favourable to the Soviet Union.

The idea is still very much alive. Shortly before the Russian attack on Ukraine, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zbigniew Rau, went to Moscow as Chair of the OSCE and during a press conference juxtaposed the concept of indivisible security advocated by Sergei Lavrov with the idea of indivisible freedom of nations.

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AN ALLY FOR SHOW. SOVIET DIPLOMATS AND THE VISIT OF GENERAL WŁADYSŁAW SIKORSKI TO THE SOVIET UNION IN 1941

ABSTRACT

Władysław Sikorski's visit to the Soviet Union in 1941 was one of the most important events in relations between the Polish government-in-exile and the Kremlin. Soviet diplomats prepared for the arrival of this Polish guest with great care. This was demonstrated by a special memorandum prepared on General Sikorski by the Fourth European Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs for their superiors, tracking his whole life and emphasising his anti-Piłsudski and anti-German stance. The deputy head of the Soviet diplomatic apparatus, Andrey Vyshinsky, shouldered the burden of contacts with Poles on behalf of the foreign affairs ministry. The Polish side did not manage to use Sikorski's visit to ensure that the Soviets fulfilled their commitments resulting from bilateral pacts signed in summer 1941: accelerating the process of freeing Polish citizens from jails, gulags and special settlement areas; employing all those fit for military service to form an army; redeployment of the army being formed to areas where it would be easier to obtain British provisioning aid; and evacuation of 15,000–20,000 soldiers to the United Kingdom and Egypt. The Soviet dictator, Joseph Stalin, was personally involved in hosting General Sikorski as this was a very important visit to him. This was expressed in the granting of loans to Poland to organise an army in the Soviet Union and aid for Polish citizens, as well as a number of minor concessions. A declaration on friendship and mutual support was ceremonially signed. The Soviet side ensured that Sikorski's visit was publicised in the press and on the radio, even filming the more important events for propaganda purposes. His radio address was translated into many foreign languages. This was important for Stalin, who exploited the visit of this Polish guest to reduce anti-Soviet moods, not only among Poles living in the Soviet Union, but also among Soviet citizens mindful of the scale of repressions in the 1930s. In reality, the alliance with Poland, including the formation of a Polish army in the Soviets, had been a burden on Stalin from the outset. However, Sikorski's visit at a time of particular danger to the further existence of the Soviet state suited him well. Hence the hypothesis that the Soviet dictator treated his Polish partner as the titular "ally for show", both for his own citizens and for international opinion.

KEYWORDS:

Polish-Soviet relations 1939–1945; Soviet diplomacy; Władysław Sikorski; Joseph Stalin; Andrey Vyshinsky; Stanisław Kot

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In a report addressed to the Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov, half a year after Polish Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief Władysław Sikorski's visit to the Soviet Union, Ambassador Alexander Bogomolov, accredited by the government in exile in London, wrote the following:

> Sikorski is a Polish nationalist, but he relies on England, and since he acts on England's behalf, he acts cautiously, fulfilling the class objectives of both English imperialism and Polish fascism.
>
> The purpose of Sikorski's visit to Moscow was to inspect the army and examine a situation that was very tough for us at the time. His visit came to nothing. The loans he received met with a rather cool reception here because they only formalised the actual state of affairs. The irate émigrés believe that we have an unpayable debt to Poland, and if we do anything for the Poles, then accepting this help by the Poles is a great stunt for them and a great concession to their self-love. I am speaking, of course, about today's nobility, not the Polish nation, with whose moods I am unfamiliar.[1]

Leaving aside the ideological slogans, of which there was no shortage in Bogomolov's report – the array of statements going well beyond the diplomatic craft and his overt dislike of the Polish authorities to which he had submitted his letters of credence – the question remains whether his

1 *Dokumenty do historii stosunków polsko-sowieckich 1918–1945. 1939–1945. Część 1. Wojna i rozejm (1939–1942)*, ed. by Łukasz Adamski and others, IV (Warszawa: Centrum Polsko-Rosyjskiego Dialogu i Porozumienia, 2021), pp. 354–55.

verdict on Sikorski's visit to the Soviet Union was warranted. This issue will be the main focus of my enquiry, but I must also point out that Soviet diplomats in the period in question played only an auxiliary – one might say informational and organisational – role. This was not just because the role of diplomats often becomes marginal in periods of military conflicts, but also due to the specific nature of the Soviet system. In this case, it was the fully-fledged Stalinist totalitarianism – with an extremely vertical power structure, in which the deciding vote in any important question issue belonged to the dictator, namely Joseph Stalin – that sidelined diplomats.[2] This mechanism also applied, inevitably, to the case of Sikorski's visit to the Soviet Union in late 1941. In the documentation I analysed, we can find clear evidence of this.

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The idea of General Sikorski paying a visit to the Soviet Union appeared in Soviet diplomatic documentation as early as the first half of October 1941. In a diary entry for 10 October, Ivan Maisky, the Soviet ambassador to the United Kingdom, who knew the Polish politician well, wrote that Bogomolov had visited him that evening with the information that Sikorski would travel to Moscow without delay. Maisky gives the reason for this step as being the Polish politician's intention to show the world in a quite ostentatious manner the alliances that connected him with the Soviets at such a critical juncture for them, notwithstanding the fact that the recently formed Polish Armed Forces in the Soviet Union were not yet ready to participate in battle.[3]

The matter quickly gathered pace. Two days later, Bogomolov received instructions from his government to relay Moscow's positive response to Sikorski. Then, on 14 October, at a meeting between the Polish ambassador in the Soviet Union, Stanisław Kot, and deputy people's commissar for foreign affairs, Andrey Vyshinsky, it was confirmed that Sikorski would be received "in line with international custom". This was not quite a precise response to the Polish diplomat's question about officially inviting Sikorski as a guest of the Soviet government. Vyshinsky also emphasised that the initiative of a visit to the Soviet Union had come from Sikorski, not from Moscow.[4] I note this detail as it was particularly significant from a propaganda point of view, and it also casts the Polish leader in the role of suppliant to the Soviet hosts, which can hardly be seen as accidental.

2 On Stalin's position as a dictator among the Soviet elite, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team. The Years of Living Dangerously in Soviet Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin. Waiting for Hitler, 1929–1941* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017), pp. 56f.

3 Ivan Majskij, *Dnevnik diplomata. London: 1934–1943*, ed. by Aleksandr Čubar'jan, 2 vols (Moskva: Nauka, 2009), II, p. 57.

4 *Dokumenty vnešnej politiki SSSR* (hereafter DVP), 24 vols (Moskva, 1959–2000), XXIV (2000), p. 367.

Ambassador Kot pursued the subject, intending to capitalise on Sikorski's visit as a form of pressure on the Soviet authorities with the objective of accelerating the process of freeing Polish citizens from prisons, gulags and special settlement areas, using all those fit for military service to form an army, moving the forces being created to areas where it would be easier to receive provisioning aid from the British, and finally evacuating 15,000–20,000 soldiers to Britain and Egypt. Getting ahead of events, we should note that these procedures generally ended in failure.[5] At a meeting with the Polish ambassador on 22 October, Molotov stressed that he understood the purpose of Sikorski's visit well, but he stopped short of an unequivocal confirmation that the Soviet side still wished him to come. He replied indirectly, as it were, by noting the possibility of receiving the Polish prime minister not in Moscow but in Kuybyshev, to which the central Soviet organs were being gradually transferred owing to the progress of the German offensive. At this stage of negotiations, no firm date for Sikorski's trip had yet been fixed. Molotov declared, however, that he would keep Stalin informed and instruct Ambassador Kot as to the results of his conversation with the Soviet dictator.[6] The question of the visit began to drag on, with the final decision – regarding both the date and the nature of the meeting – depending on Stalin's will. Over the next few weeks, the Polish ambassador informed his Soviet interlocutors of the stages of General Sikorski's trip to North Africa and the Middle East, but without receiving any specific information on the organisation of his stay in the USSR in return.[7]

At a cabinet meeting in London (27 October), Sikorski discussed the plans for his visit to the Soviet Union. The prime minister made his trip conditional on obtaining "a guarantee of a positive solution to all the demands made in the Polish-Soviet agreement and the Polish-Soviet military pact". He was referring to documents signed a few months earlier which, referring to the conditions named above, regulated the mutual inter-state relations.[8] Sikorski was sure to assert that a threat to abandon the visit could have an impact on not only Bogomolov but also the Soviet government, in the sense that he was willing to enact the resolutions of the agreements in question. In this case, the Polish prime minister was referring to the dispatches of Ambassador Kot. Yet Sikorski was too optimistic, as he would soon find out. At a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Stanisław

5 *Protokoły posiedzeń Rady Ministrów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, ed. by Marian Zgórniak, Wojciech Rojek, and Andrzej Suchcitz, 8 vols (Kraków: Secesja, 1994–2008), III (1996), pp. 264–65 (also footnote 10); *Sovetsko-pol'skie otnošenija v 1918–1945 gg. Sbornik dokumentov v* četyrech *tomach*, ed. by Michail Narinskij and Artem Mal'gin, 4 vols (Moskva: Aspekt Press, 2017), IV, pp. 219–20.
6 *DVP*, XXIV, pp. 376–79.
7 Ibid., pp. 395–97.
8 *Protokoły posiedzeń Rady Ministrów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, III, pp. 239–40.

Mikołajczyk and Foreign Minister Edward Raczyński at Stratton House, Bogomolov, in response to the instructions received by Moscow, stated firmly that the Soviet government was implementing the resolutions of the agreements formed with the Polish side, but that he saw as impossible making Sikorski's visit dependent on Moscow fulfilling any conditions (6 November).[9] At the next cabinet meeting, Raczyński called Bogomolov's tactics "typical eastern 'face politics' [sic], an attempt to keep up appearances, as if everything were in order" (7 November).[10] However, the matter went much deeper. It concerned not so much the tactics of Bogomolov, who was only an instrument in the hands of his superiors in Moscow, as the tough approach of the Kremlin decision makers towards their weaker Polish partner, which they did not intend to abandon even at a time of defeats on the front line and the absolutely real possibility of a disruption to the entire Soviet structure. Interestingly, some Polish politicians spoke out against checkmating Moscow by withdrawing Sikorski's travel plans, since these tactics would not bring the desired outcome and could be used for propaganda purposes by the Germans and Italians as well as negatively impacting the British or US stance on Polish issues. This was the view of Stanisław Stroński, the information minister.[11]

The positions of Polish and Soviet diplomats regarding the conditions of Sikorski's trip clashed at Raczyński's meeting with Bogomolov (8 November). The latter admitted that the conditions of war made it difficult to implement the resolutions of the agreements signed with Poland. He also expressed his surprise that the Soviet government was expected to "give a travel deposit", especially as "true friendship does not look around for profit". Bogomolov also made a telling suggestion: Sikorski could have his demands satisfied during his stay in the Soviet Union.[12] This was a well-thought-out tactic that from Moscow's perspective could scupper the conditions set by the Polish government while also encouraging Sikorski to visit. And this indeed happened, which essentially meant a concession from the Polish side. Sikorski's visit was important to the Soviets, and this determined their moves in contacts with the representatives of Poland. They were even willing to resort to outright lies. Bogomolov replied to Sikorski's memorandum of 16 October 1941 with a significant delay, for it did not happen until 14 November. He informed that all Polish citizens subject to release from prisons, gulags and sites of forced settlement had

9 Ibid., pp. 273–78.
10 Ibid., p. 265.
11 Ibid., p. 280.
12 Ibid., pp. 280–83 (both quotations).

been freed, as had Polish officers located on the territory of the Soviet Union.[13] But this was very far from the truth.

The Soviets also repeated this lie about all Poles being freed from prisons and gulags to representatives of other countries, including the British ambassador to the USSR, Stafford Cripps, in a discussion with Vyshinsky in Kuybyshev (3 November). The deputy head of the Soviet diplomatic apparatus even claimed that information about Poles being kept in captivity, and especially cases of starvation, were untrue and stemmed from enemy sources. He also took the opportunity to make it clear that the best solution would be direct Polish-Soviet talks without intermediaries, including the United Kingdom. Cripps also adopted the role of advocate for the Polish side. Asked by Vyshinsky about the conditions set by Sikorski as a *sine qua non* condition for his arrival, Cripps replied that:

> [...] according to the information he had received from London, General Sikorski does not see a visit to the USSR as possible given the lack of agreement on these matters, but this should not be treated as a condition. He, Cripps, would not call it a condition. He thinks that Sikorski simply does not consider coming to the USSR as useful before these issues have been resolved.[14]

As late as 12 November, in a conversation with Vyshinsky, Ambassador Kot underlined that Sikorski's visit would be a turning point in Polish-Soviet relations, whereas the trip failing to happen would indicate a deterioration. He also noted that the Polish prime minister's temperament and conduct often fell well short of diplomatic standards, and that this hardly diplomatic behaviour might be displayed if he deemed that the idea of his trip to the Soviets was received in an unfriendly manner in Moscow. Yet Vyshinsky's stance remained firm. He asserted that the Soviet side was positive about the idea of a visit but "does not regard it as possible to link this trip to any conditions, especially those set in the form of an ultimatum".[15] Kot refuted the accusations of an alleged ultimatum made by the Polish side but gratefully accepted Vyshinsky's proposal to set up a meeting for him with Stalin. The tone of the discussion changed immediately. Furthermore, the deputy head of the Soviet diplomatic apparatus asked the Polish ambassador for the names of people

13 Ibid., pp. 310–11 (also footnote 5), 317–18.
14 Iz dnevnika A. Ja. Vyšinskogo. Priem posla Velikobritanii St. Krippsa 3 nojabrja 1941 goda, 4 November 1941, Archiv vnešnej politiki Rossijskoj Federacii, Moskva (hereafter AVP RF), f. 06: Sekretariat V. M. Molotova, op. 3 AVTO, p. 4, d. 31, k. 19–21 (translated into English from the author's Polish translation).
15 Iz dnevnika A. Ja. Vyšinskogo. Priem pol'skogo posla g. Kot i 1-go sekretarja posol'stva g. Arlet, 12 nojabrja 1941 goda, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 4, d. 31, k. 80.

in the USSR whom Sikorski was particularly interested in. He suggested providing them on lists drawn up in advance to speed up the search.[16] This was an evident nod to the Polish prime minister – a gesture of goodwill and an additional argument to convince Sikorski that a visit to the Soviet Union made sense.

The Soviet side was also quick to make concessions in other matters, including minor ones. Here are some examples. The Soviets agreed to tolerate the presence in Tashkent of Jan Kwapiński, a delegate of the Polish embassy, despite having indicated several times previously that his stay had not been agreed with them.[17] Henryk Sokolnicki, the Polish embassy's counsel, tried to obtain additional rooms for the embassy in Kuybyshev on the grounds of General Sikorski's imminent arrival as the building on Chapaevskaya Street was too small to meet its vast needs.[18] Vyshinsky promised to investigate, doubtless intending to consult his superiors and the "neighbours", as the Soviet political police were known in the terminology.[19] They did not have to wait long for the results. Just two days after meeting Sokolnicki, Vyshinsky declared that the Polish embassy in Kuybyshev would receive "for Sikorski and permanent use" an additional eight or nine rooms in a building on Tolstoy Street.[20] These concessions, which essentially cost the Soviet authorities little, can hardly be seen as chance occurrences.

Shortly after his conversation with Vyshinsky, Ambassador Kot flew to Moscow, where he was received by Stalin on 14 November. This was a turning point in the preparations for Sikorski's visit. During their two-hour meeting, in which Molotov and Wiesław Arlet, the first secretary of the Polish embassy, also participated, the Soviet dictator uttered the customary words: "...if Sikorski comes to the USSR, he will be our guest and we will find a common language with him".[21] Stalin also asked about the date of the Polish prime minister's arrival, but Kot was unable to give a precise answer as he was not in direct contact with Sikorski, who was in Egypt at the time. But the case took a turn for the better. The next day, Molotov received Kot and discussed with him a series of issues that were to be the subject of Sikorski's talks, including the situation of Poles in the Soviet Union, the formation of the Polish army, and

16 Ibid., k. 81.
17 Iz dnevnika A. Ja. Vyšinskogo. Priem pol'skogo posla Kot i 1-go sekretarja posol'stva Arlet, 19 nojabrja 1941 goda, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 4, d. 31, k. 114.
18 *Kujbyšev kak centr sovetsko-amerikanskich otnošenij 1941–1943 gg. Sbornik perevodov inostrannych dokumentov*, ed. by Aleksandr Buranok and others (Samara: NTC, 2017), p. 169 (here a photograph of the Polish embassy building in Kuybyshev).
19 Iz dnevnika A. Ja. Vyšinskogo. Priem sovetnika pol'skogo posol'stva Sokol'nickogo, 17 nojabrja 1941 goda, 18 November 1941, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 4, d. 31, k. 107.
20 Iz dnevnika A. Ja. Vyšinskogo. Priem pol'skogo posla Kot i 1-go sekretarja posol'stva Arlet, 19 nojabrja 1941 goda, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 4, d. 31, k. 114.
21 *DVP*, XXIV, p. 421.

the securing of supplies for its soldiers. The head of the Soviet diplomatic apparatus suggested unambiguously that the best solution would be for Sikorski to arrive first in Kuybyshev, and once the latter would choose an appropriate moment to travel to Moscow. Molotov avoided specific details, explaining that it was necessary to consult with members of the Soviet government, particularly Stalin.[22] The dictator was indeed interested in the details of the mutual relations, including the publication of a Polish newspaper in the Soviet Union. Molotov sent the appropriate orders to Vyshinsky regarding speeding up the publication of the press organ targeted at Poles.[23] This question too can be regarded as the Kremlin nodding to Sikorski.

According to Vyshinsky's diary entry, Ambassador Kot, having returned to Kuybyshev, shared his impressions from his visit to the Kremlin, saying that "Comrade Stalin expressed a wish to take part in the rebuilding of the Polish state, but without interfering in Poland's internal affairs" (19 November).[24] If he did indeed utter these words and the record of the deputy head of the Soviet diplomatic apparatus is accurate, from today's perspective they sound rather like a grim joke. It is unclear whether the Polish ambassador interpreted them as such or treated them as a declaration of goodwill from an ally. The latter seems more likely. Kot's discussion with Vyshinsky took place in a good atmosphere, and both sides were highly courteous. The deputy head of the Soviet diplomatic apparatus wrote in his diary:

> Finally, Kot, referring to Comrade Stalin's words, once again returned to the question of an amnesty. He expressed his hope that everything in this matter would be done before Sikorski's arrival. One must particularly consider the impending cold, which will be hard to bear for Polish citizens staying in the North.
>
> I replied that, to us, Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin's word is law. We should now check our lists, because our data are sometimes inconsistent with those of the embassy.[25]

On 22 November, Ambassador Kot also discussed Sikorski's imminent visit with another deputy head of the Soviet diplomatic apparatus, Solomon Lozovsky, this time specifying the date of the Polish prime minister's arrival (no earlier than 27–28 November).[26]

22 Ibid., pp. 426–29.
23 Iz dnevnika A. Ja. Vyšinskogo. Priem pol'skogo posla Kot i 1-go sekretarja posol'stva Arlet, 19 nojabrja 1941 goda, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 4, d. 31, k. 112, 115.
24 Ibid., k. 113.
25 Ibid., p. 115.
26 *DVP*, XXIV, pp. 443–44.

Meanwhile, preparations for Sikorski's visit were ongoing in the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID). On 15 November, Georgy Pushkin, who was responsible for Polish affairs, prepared a very extensive report on the Polish prime minister.[27] This document was compiled on the basis of materials kept in the Fourth European Department of the Soviet foreign affairs minister, where Pushkin was the deputy director. The memorandum was undoubtedly intended for a small group of people in the highest positions in the Soviet Union, including Stalin. A reading of it, notwithstanding the errors in Sikorski's biography, allows us to make several reflections. First, Pushkin emphasised the Polish prime minister's political path, which had led from him being "the closest supporter and a fervent admirer of Józef Piłsudski" to becoming his declared opponent. This opposition can hardly be seen as accidental, and it also matched the repeated declarations of Sikorski himself, who firmly dissociated himself from the politics of the supporters of Piłsudski and Józef Beck. Second, the memorandum paid significant attention to Sikorski's views, which he expressed publicly after the signing of the Franco-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance in 1935, regarding guarantees of collective security and the concept of the Eastern Pact, including Poland's participation in it. It was stated that, unlike the stance of the Polish government at that time, he backed such solutions, which were also promoted by Moscow. The document cited an article that the Polish politician had published in February 1936 in *Kurier Warszawski*.[28] Third, not only Sikorski's pro-French sentiments but also his anti-German ones were underlined, with an emphasis on the threat from the Third Reich, citing a passage from his well-known book *Modern Warfare*, published in 1934.[29] Fourth and finally, the memorandum emphasised the Polish prime minister's decisive contribution to the negotiations and the signing of a pact with the Soviet Union in July 1941, disregarding the opposition of such cabinet members as August Zaleski, General Kazimierz Sosnkowski and Marian Seyda, whose names also feature in the document. Pushkin also added that Sikorski's statement on London radio, following the signing of the pact and on the inviolability of

27 *Dokumenty do historii stosunków polsko-sowieckich 1918–1945*, IV, pp. 199–205.

28 The article in question, written by Sikorski in Paris, was entitled 'Wokół paktu wschodniego' [On the Eastern Pact] and published in *Kurier Warszawski* on 25 February 1936, no. 55 (evening edition), pp. 1–2. The author points to the "Alleged superiority of the German race, [which] supposedly justifies the theories of violence proclaimed by the ideologues of National Socialism". Sikorski perceived the concept of the Eastern Pact as one possible pathway to bringing about peaceful relations in Europe in the future by accepting guarantees of collective security in the form of an effective bulwark against the dangers of war. This vision was identical to the French stance. The general wrote, for instance, that "Poland does not wish to and must not be a marching ground for the armies of any of its large neighbours. It does not have either the intention or the desire to choose between these extreme alternatives imposed on it from the outside. Moreover, the Polish nation does not nurture hostile, let alone aggressive feelings towards either the Soviet Union or the German Reich. For these reasons, no fundamental obstacles exist preventing us from participating in an Eastern pact tailored to Polish needs".

29 Władysław Sikorski, *Przyszła wojna. Jej możliwości i charakter oraz związane z nim zagadnienia obrony kraju*, foreword by Tadeusz A. Kisielewski (Kraków: Universitas, 2010), pp. 66–95.

Poland's 1939 borders, encountered an appropriate reaction from the Soviet press. Taking as our starting point Bogomolov's description of the Polish prime minister quoted at the beginning, Pushkin's memorandum can be regarded as substantive and objective, or even as containing a tinge of sympathy for Sikorski's views and actions, especially compared to other key figures of the Polish interwar and wartime political scene. It is difficult, however, to say whether the Soviet decision makers' reading of this document served only to give them an idea of whom they would soon be dealing with, or maybe it also raised a minimal degree of greater sympathy for the Polish prime minister. Of course, I am posing this question not so much rhetorically as perversely. Knowing the course and outcome of the discussions held with Sikorski in the Kremlin, as well as the Soviet elite's relations with the Polish government in exile, I would side firmly with the former.

Sikorski's speedy arrival in the Soviet Union was of interest to the diplomatic corps accredited in the country. Among others, the Czechoslovak envoy, Zdeněk Fierlinger, asked Vyshinsky whether the Polish leader's stay was connected to the signing of any agreement between the two governments. The deputy head of the Soviet diplomatic apparatus confirmed Sikorski's visit but also declared that a pact had already been signed and there would be no further document.[30] The course of events showed that this did not entirely reflect the truth. On the other hand, we know that the Polish and Soviet governments' joint declaration, whose content was otherwise rather vague, was a rather spontaneous initiative, contrary to the practice of Soviet diplomats, which would prepare such significant documents extremely meticulously, considering every word contained in them.[31] As early as 5 December, the declaration was read out in 16 languages on Soviet radio, with plans to distribute its contents in six further languages, including Chinese and Turkish.[32] The impetus, then, was quite extraordinary. Interestingly, the Polish-Soviet declaration caused confusion among Comintern activists. In February 1942, Sofia Dzerzhinskaya approached the general secretary of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, Georgi Dimitrov, to enquire how the Polish station of the Comintern radio broadcaster, of which she was in charge, should react to the Polish-Czechoslovak declaration on postwar plans to establish a confederation of the two states. Hitherto, Soviet propaganda had emphasised the unity and friendship of all Slavic

30 *DVP*, XXIV, pp. 441–42.
31 For the differing Polish versions of the document, see, e.g., *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1941* (hereafter *PDD 1941*), ed. by Jacek Tebinka (Warszawa: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2013), pp. 842–43; *Dokumenty do historii stosunków polsko-sowieckich 1918–1945*, IV, pp. 218–19 (also footnote 120); for the Russian version, see *Sovetsko-pol'skie otnošenija v 1918–1945 gg.*, IV, pp. 250–51.
32 Report of D. Polikarpov to V. Molotov, 5 December 1941, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 19, d. 244, k. 8.

nations and a resultant emphasis on the importance of the Polish-Soviet declaration from December 1941.[33] In other words, Comintern faced the dilemma of whether to officially contest the idea of a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation, since the document signed by Stalin and Sikorski referred to a postwar "assurance of a lasting and just peace [...] by way of a new organisation of international relations based on the unification of democratic countries and a permanent alliance".[34] It would soon turn out that this contradiction had been resolved unequivocally: fierce criticism of the concept of a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation began, which became a guideline for not only Comintern agencies[35] but also Soviet diplomats.[36]

Just before Sikorski's visit, there was a clash at the diplomatic level. Ambassador Kot lodged a strong protest in response to the resettlement of at least 36,000 Polish citizens, including women and children, from Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan without appropriate security and guarantees of decent living conditions in their new place of residence. He also used an argument that he saw as valid, telling Vyshinsky: "I cannot shake off the thought that there is an inclination to spoil the atmosphere before Sikorski's arrival".[37] Vyshinsky rejected the charges, emphasising that the influx of Poles to Uzbekistan had not been negotiated with the appropriate authorities and that their uncontrolled movements must have caused shortages of provisions, lack of work, and consequently bad living conditions. The Soviet diplomat categorically denied that the actions of the Soviet side were meant to worsen mutual relations. Both sides, however, stuck to their positions (25 November).[38]

The Soviet government put a great deal of effort into organising Sikorski's stay, while also securing information from intelligence sources. Their Polish guest was joined on the journey from Kuybyshev to Moscow (2 December) by representatives of the NKID: Fyodor Molochkov, head of the Protocol Department, and Nikolai Novikov, who was then a young diplomat. On behalf of the People's Commissariat for Defence, meanwhile, Col. Vladimir Evstigneev was present. Actually a military intelligence officer, in February 1942 he was appointed head of the Department

33 *Litva v politike SSSR i v meždunarodnych otnošenijach (avgust 1940 – sentjabr'* 1945 gg.), ed. by Al'gimantas Kasparavičjus, *Česlovas* Laurinavičjus and Natal'ja Lebedeva, SSSR i Litva v gody vtoroj mirovoj vojny. Sbornik dokumentov, II (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2012), p. 542.

34 *Dokumenty do historii stosunków polsko-sowieckich 1918–1945*, IV, p. 219.

35 As early as 2 January 1942, Dimitrov informed Vyshinsky that not only before Sikorski's visit, but also after its conclusion, there had been "anti-Soviet and antisemitic work" going on in the ranks of the Polish Army in the East", albeit in a more covert form than previously; see *Posle 22 ijunja 1941 g.*, ed. by Natal'ja Lebedeva and Michail Narinskij, *Komintern i vtoraja mirovaja vojna*, ed. by Kirill Anderson and Aleksandr Čubar'jan, II (Moskva: Pamjatniki istoričeskoj mysli, 1998), p. 173.

36 For more, see Marek K. Kamiński, *Edvard Beneš kontra gen. Władysław Sikorski. Polityka władz czechosłowackich na emigracji wobec rządu polskiego na uchodźstwie 1939–1943* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2005), pp. 106f.; Valentina Mar'ina, *Sovetskij Sojuz i čecho-slovackij vopros vo vremja Vtoroj mirovoj vojny. 1939–1945 gg.*, 2 vols (Moskva: Indrik, 2009), II, pp. 101–48.

37 Iz dnevnika A. Ja. Vyšinskogo. Priem pol'skogo posla Kota i 1-go sekretarja Arlet, 25 nojabrja 1941 goda, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 4, d. 31, k. 153.

38 Ibid., k. 152–58.

of External Contacts of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army.[39] Security was provided by five NKVD functionaries.[40] Since Sikorski was treated as an official guest, Molochkov asked his superiors for the costs of the visit to be covered by the Soviets, and Molotov agreed.[41] Novikov had accompanied Ambassador Kot in mid-November on his trip from Kuybyshev to meet Stalin in Moscow. Soon afterwards, he was specially posted to accompany the Polish delegation. Years later, he described Sikorski's visit in his diaries, noting the special treatment the guest had received, including the use of a luxury Douglas aeroplane as well as Soviet fighter planes to accompany it near Moscow. Vyshinsky and Novikov also accompanied Sikorski on his tour of the places where the Polish army was being formed. The Soviet diplomat would later write:

> Vyshinsky and I, accompanying the Polish prime minister and commander-in-chief, at every opportunity tried to avoid participation in the endless procession of protocol receptions – so as not to violate etiquette, of course. On that trip, stretching over seven days, we had diplomatic issues to resolve. Vyshinsky and his assistants dealt with these, but I also dealt with them, frequently together with Vyshinsky. Usually the first secretary of the Polish embassy, Arlet, would come to see me in our saloon carriage with his stereotypical démarches and memoranda prepared on the train. Vyshinsky dealt with some of the issues raised by the ambassador on the spot, but we referred the majority of them – which necessitated examining documents and contact with the competent bodies – to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.[42]

Late in the afternoon of 1 December 1941, Sikorski received Vyshinsky in the Polish embassy building in Kuybyshev, with Ambassador Kot and the embassy's first secretary, Alexander Mniszek, present. This was one of the Polish guest's first official contacts with a high-ranking Soviet official. Vyshinsky's description of the meeting gives a good account of the atmosphere of the talks, the issues discussed, and both sides' stances:

39 Vjačeslav Lur'e and Valerij Kočik, *GRU. Dela i ljudi* (Sankt-Peterburg–Moskva: Neva, 2003), pp. 238–39; Michail Alekseev, Aleksandr Kolpakidi, and Valerij Kočik, *Enciklopedija voennoj razvedki 1918–1945 gg.* (Moskva: Kučkovo Pole, 2012), p. 301.
40 Spisok lic, vyletajuščich v Moskvu 2 dekabrja 1941 goda, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 19, d. 244, k. 11.
41 O prebyvanii V. Sikorskogo v SSSR, 30 November 1941, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 19, d. 244, k. 18.
42 Nikolaj Novikov, *Vospominanija diplomata. Zapiski 1938–1947* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo političeskoj literatury, 1989), pp. 103–10 (translated into English from the author's Polish translation).

> In the first part of the meeting, the discussion stuck to protocol and was very general. The questions of opening a second front against the Germans in the West, the military operations in Libya, Japan's position etc. were discussed. In this part of the meeting, nothing interesting and worthy of note was talked about.
>
> In the second part of the meeting, Sikorski and Kot raised a whole host of specific issues.
>
> For example, Sikorski said that he had today visited the evacuation point for Poles in Kuybyshev, where he had viewed the deprivations [*лишения*] of his fellow citizens. Having said that, his mood clearly changed, and he took on a concerned air.
>
> I noted that difficulties are inevitable in the conditions of war, but we were trying to keep them to a minimum.
>
> Kot made a request regarding his representative being sent to Vladivostok with the purpose of receiving and distributing the goods sent to them from the USA. This is also essential because the Americans are demanding information on who will receive their goods. I replied that I would familiarise myself with the problem and respond later. I added that we had dealt positively with the matter of exemption of goods from customs duty. In response to this, Kot said that our government was demanding port fees. I promised to investigate the issue.[43]

The above quotation proves one more thing. Even the deputy head of the Soviet diplomatic apparatus did not have the power to adjudicate on matters of secondary importance, hence his cautious deferral of responses. Even minor matters were the decision of a small committee, and, in reality, Stalin in person.

It is not my intention to recreate General Sikorski's visit to the Soviet Union and the talks he held there in detail. These issues have already been analysed by historians on many occasions and to varying degrees

[43] Iz dnevnika A. Ja. Vyšinskogo. Poseščenie Sikorskogo 1-go dekabrja 1941 goda, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 19, d. 244, k. 47–48 (translated into English from the author's Polish translation).

of precision, albeit with a distinct emphasis on Polish sources.[44] I would like, however, to address several questions that do not necessarily apply only to the actions of Soviet diplomats. The detailed research carried out in recent years by the Russian historian Vladimir Nevezhin unequivocally led to the conclusion that Sikorski's visit to Moscow – and particularly his meeting with Stalin, with an emphasis on the banquet which the Soviet leader held for his Polish guests on the evening of 4 December 1941 – was prepared on the one hand with remarkable panache, and on the other hand with equally remarkable reverence and precision. This was the case even if we take as a point of reference the Kremlin's receptions given around the same time for other not necessarily lower-status foreign delegations. It is worth adding that on 25 November the NKID Protocol Department prepared a detailed "Programme for Sikorski's stay in the Soviet Union", signed by Molochkov.[45] We should also emphasise that the final point of the document noted that the more important moments of the Polish politician's visit should be filmed.[46]

Stalin conveyed the message to Sikorski through his diplomats to assure him that he was prepared to host the Polish prime minister again during his stay in the Soviet Union, regardless of how Sikorski and the head of the British Foreign Office, Anthony Eden, who was also planning a trip, resolved the problem of "their simultaneous presence in Moscow".[47] The dictator presumably knew about London's unwillingness to coordinate the two visits. He thereby put a spanner in the works of the allied states. Kot responded to this *dictum* by saying that Sikorski would like to meet

44 See, e.g., *Protokoły posiedzeń Rady Ministrów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, IV (1998), pp. 73–96; *PDD 1941*, pp. 829–84, 897–98; Stanisław Kot, *Listy z Rosji do Gen. Sikorskiego* (Londyn: St. Martin's Printers, 1955), pp. 191–229; Władysław Anders, *Bez ostatniego rozdziału. Wspomnienia z lat 1939–1946* (Londyn: Gryf, 1959), pp. 85–111; Marian Kukiel, *Generał Sikorski. Żołnierz i mąż stanu Polski Walczącej*, 3rd edn (Londyn: Polska Fundacja Kulturalna, 1995), pp. 184–90; Roman Wapiński, *Władysław Sikorski* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1978), pp. 299–303; Walentyna Korpalska, *Władysław Eugeniusz Sikorski. Biografia polityczna* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1981), pp. 230–34; Stanisław Zabiełło, *O rząd i granice. Walka dyplomatyczna o sprawę polską w II wojnie światowej* (Warszawa: PAX, 1986), pp. 71–73; Eugeniusz Duraczyński, 'Wizyta Sikorskiego w ZSRR', *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 4 (1994), 103–23; Eugeniusz Duraczyński, *Polska 1939–1945. Dzieje polityczne* (Warszawa: Bellona, 1999), pp. 199–203; Eugeniusz Duraczyński, *Stalin. Twórca i dyktator supermocarstwa* (Warszawa: Bellona, 2012), pp. 416–19; Wojciech Materski, 'Walka dyplomacji polskiej o normalizację stosunków z ZSRR (czerwiec 1941 – lipiec 1942)', in *Historia dyplomacji polskiej, 1939–1945*, ed. by Waldemar Michowicz, V (Warszawa, 1999), pp. 251–65; Wojciech Materski, *Na widecie. II Rzeczpospolita wobec Sowietów 1918–1943* (Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 2005), pp. 639–54; Jacek Ślusarczyk, *Stosunki polsko-sowieckie w latach 1939–1945* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2000), pp. 160–66; Walentyna Parsadanowa, 'Polityka i jej skutki', in *Białe plamy – czarne plamy. Sprawy trudne w polsko-rosyjskich stosunkach 1918–2008*, ed. by Adam D. Rotfeld and Anatolij W. Torkunow (Warszawa: PISM, 2010), pp. 393–94; *Pol'sa v XX veke. Očerki političeskoj istorii*, ed. by Al'bina Noskova (Moskva: Indrik, 2012), pp. 320–23. For a broader perspective on Sikorski's conception regarding the Soviet Union in the period in question, see Anna M. Cienciała, 'General Sikorski and the Conclusion of the Polish-Soviet Agreement of July 30 1941: A Reassessment', *The Polish Review*, 41 (1996), 401–34; Anna M. Cienciała, 'Generał Sikorski a rewizja granicy ryskiej. Koncepcje powojennej granicy polsko-sowieckiej, listopad 1939 – maj 1942 roku', in *Z dziejów Europy Środkowej w XX wieku. Studia ofiarowane Henrykowi Batowskiemu w 90. rocznicę urodzin*, ed. by Michał Puławski and others (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1997), pp. 127–41.

45 Vladimir Nevežin, *Zastol'ja Iosifa Stalina. Diplomatičeskie priemy 1939–1945 gg.*, III (Moskva: AIRO-XXI, 2020), pp. 95–96, 110, 139–44, 167, 231–32, 256, 260, 372, 434, 455–71, 532; Vladimir Nevežin, 'Poljaki na diplomatičeskom prieme v Kremle (4 dekabrja 1941 g.)' (article forthcoming).

46 *Sovetsko-pol'skie otnošenija v 1918–1945 gg.*, IV, pp. 213–14.

47 Iz dnevnika A. Ja. Vyšinskogo. Priem pol'skogo posla g. Kot i 1-go sekretarja posol'stva g. Mnišek, 8 dekabrja 1941 goda, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 4, d. 32, k. 39–40.

Stalin again to discuss his planned trip to the United States, but he also hedged his bets by saying that his health might prevent such a meeting. The ambassador concluded the matter by promising that Sikorski would return to the Soviet Union once the formation of the Polish army was complete in order to take command of it. On 10 December, the Polish side officially informed that the Polish leader had left the Soviet Union without a repeated visit to Moscow or Kuybyshev.[48] It was to be the Polish prime minister and commander-in-chief's last visit to the USSR.

On 1 December 1941 in Kuybyshev, Sikorski, in the presence of Ambassador Kot and General Władysław Anders, met Mikhail Kalinin, chairman of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet, as the nominal head of state. According to the diplomatic diary of Vyshinsky, who was also present at the meeting, both Sikorski and Kot clearly opposed Piłsudski and his supporters in the context of their attitude to not only the Soviets but also, interestingly, pre-revolutionary Russia. Equally important for our enquiry is the fact that the Polish prime minister's meeting with Kalinin was filmed, which was by no means the rule in those times.[49] A day-by-day account of Sikorski's visit was also relayed in the main Soviet press organs, such as *Pravda*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Izvestia*.[50] Furthermore, Stalin gave his approval to Sikorski's radio broadcast addressed to Poles in the Soviet Union but living under German occupation. He promised a translation of the Polish prime minister's words into many languages.[51] And indeed, it was broadcast on the radio in some 17 languages, so the scale was indeed impressive in this case too.[52] The Soviets also agreed to their Polish guest giving a speech in Buzuluk to the army that was forming.[53] With astonishing ease, the Soviet side also agreed to raise the amount of the loan given to the Poles to maintain the army to 100 million roubles, whereas as late as early November 1941, Vyshinsky had informed Kot of the Soviet government's decision to allocate a short-term loan of 65 million roubles until 1 January 1942, including the 39 million that the Polish leadership had already received.[54] Then, in the second half of November 1941 at the Polish ambassador's aforementioned talks with Lozovsky, only symbolic amounts had been mentioned: first 3 million, then 10 million roubles, which the embassy

48 Iz dnevnika P.A. Bušueva. Priem 1-go sekretarja pol'skogo posol'stva Mnišek, 10 dekabrja 1941 g., AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 19, d. 244, k. 2.
49 *Dokumenty do historii stosunków polsko-sowieckich 1918–1945*, IV, pp. 206–07.
50 AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 19, d. 248 (here Soviet press cuttings about Sikorski's visit).
51 AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 19, d. 243, k. 9 (here a Soviet press cutting with a photo of Sikorski and the text of his speech); see *Sovetsko-pol'skie otnošenija v 1918–1945 gg.*, IV, pp. 233–36.
52 Report of D. Polikarpov to V. Molotov, 5 December 1941, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 19, d. 244, k. 8.
53 *Sovetsko-pol'skie otnošenija v 1918–1945 gg.*, IV, pp. 252–54.
54 Iz dnevnika A. Ja. Vyšinskogo. Priem pol'skogo posla S. Kota i 1-go sekretarja posol'stva Pol'ši V. Arleta, 5 nojabrja 1941 goda, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 4, d. 31, k. 38–39.

could spend on supporting Polish citizens in the Soviet Union.[55] And it was this loan that was soon raised to 100 million roubles.[56] Ultimately, in January 1942, the Soviet government granted an interest-free loan of 300 million roubles to maintain the Polish army in the USSR, albeit with repayment conditions determined by Moscow, which did not necessarily meet the Poles' expectations.[57]

This is certainly not to say that the Kremlin satisfied all Sikorski's wishes. For example, during his discussion with Vyshinsky, the Polish commander-in-chief expressed a desire to visit, along with General Anders, General Tadeusz Klimecki and Certified Lieutenant Colonel Michał Protasewicz, a section of the front of the battles taking place near Moscow. The deputy head of the Soviet diplomatic apparatus responded that this was not his area and promised to pass the request on to the military authorities.[58] Yet it was not met, and Sikorski and his officers were prevented from crossing this boundary of hospitality. Something of a memento for the Polish side was the arrest during the visit of Wiktor Alter and Henryk Erlich, Polish citizens involved in the formation of the Jewish Anti-fascist Committee and collaboration with Ambassador Kot. Asked about the reason for this step, Vyshinsky told the Polish ambassador that "there are serious compromising materials against these individuals", while also underlining the legitimacy of the charges against them (6 December).[59] Coming from the Soviet Union's prosecutor general and prosecutor in show trials of the Great Terror era, these words must have sounded threatening.

A special cultural programme was organised for Sikorski. In line with the modus operandi of the Soviet diplomatic service, detailed reports were written on each event. On 6 December, for example, a concert took place with a repertoire of Polish, Russian and Soviet composers. In his diary, Vyshinsky wrote that after the Polish national anthem and "The Internationale" were played, Sikorski said to him: "Our anthems blend together beautifully. I would like it to stay that way forever".[60] The Polish prime minister did not hesitate to exceed the canons of courtesy to demonstrate Polish-Soviet rapprochement. His words sound ironic, given the Soviets' policy towards Poland and the Poles since at least 1939 as well as the tragic plight of hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens in the USSR

55 *DVP*, XXIV, p. 444.
56 Materski, *Na widecie*, pp. 648–49.
57 Magdalena Hułas, *Goście czy intruzi? Rząd polski na uchodźstwie wrzesień 1939 – lipiec 1943* (Warszawa: PAN, 1996), pp. 50–52.
58 *Sovetsko-pol'skie otnošenija v 1918–1945 gg.*, IV, p. 232.
59 Iz dnevnika A. Ja. Vyšinskogo. Priem pol'skogo posla g. Kot i 1-go sekretarja posol'stva g. Arlet, 6 dekabrja 1941 goda, 7 December 1941, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 4, d. 32, k. 28.
60 Iz dnevnika A.Ja. Vyšinskogo. Zapis' poseščenija koncerta v čest' gen. Sikorskogo, 6 dekabrja 1941 goda, 7 December 1941, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 3 AVTO, p. 4, d. 32, k. 20–21.

at the moment they were being spoken in the theatre in Kuybyshev. It is worth adding that the diplomatic diary in which, with exemplary diligence, Vyshinsky recorded his interlocutors' words, if not necessarily his own replies, was by no means a personal memoir but an official document. His entries landed on the desks of Soviet decision makers, Stalin and Molotov chief among them.

Finally, I will again quote Bogomolov, who wrote to Molotov almost at the exact time of General Sikorski's departure from the Soviet Union:

> The wisest among the Poles here is Sikorski, although his significance is not great because he tries to avoid the raindrops.
>
> He does not lack the courage or political determination to decide on major bourgeois-revolutionary actions. To announce the abolition of landowners, titled or otherwise, drive the Piłsudskiites and Beckites out of the state apparatus, distribute land to great peasant owners, democratise Poland, and rely on peasants and the petty bourgeoisie. He wants to both keep the counts and be friendly with Stalin. He wants to become England's chief proxy in the battle with communism and Europe as well as to "begin a new life in love and harmony with the USSR".[61]

Bogomolov continued, in his customary manner, by grumbling about the Poles living in Poland, complaining to his superior that Stalin's recent reception of Sikorski had changed nothing in his attitudes to Polish emigration. As before, he had not received any invitations or telephone calls, but he had ascertained that the Poles were angry with Sikorski for his lack of a position on the inviolability of the prewar border with Soviet Union, and even his failure to emphasise Poland's power during his visit to Moscow. Bogomolov was sure to add that he recalled "for himself" Molotov's famous speech of 17 September 1939, and particularly the parts concerning the abilities of Polish state activists. This had led him to clear conclusions that he stated at the end of the document: "Much lofty honour, and no reason". He went even further in his arguments, concluding: "Polish fascism is in many respects identical to the German brand".[62] It is difficult to determine unequivocally whether Bogomolov was writing what he really thought, or what was dictated by reason, as well as, perhaps, fear caused by memory of the Great Terror, which hit the Soviet diplomatic service

61 *Dokumenty do historii stosunków polsko-sowieckich 1918–1945*, IV, p. 224.
62 Ibid. (both quotations).

particularly hard, to please his superiors in Moscow.[63] It is quite possible that one might not have contradicted the other in this case.

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In conclusion, I return to the question asked at the beginning, which is the same as Bogomolov's claim that Sikorski's trip to the Soviet Union came to nothing, although my point of view is completely different from that of the Soviet diplomat. Indeed, the visit of the Polish prime minister and commander-in-chief to the USSR in late 1941 did not contribute to resolving problems in mutual relations. The fortunes of hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens in the Soviet Union essentially did not change.[64] The growing problem of recognition of their citizenship was about to ignite with renewed force. It is even hard to speak of acceleration of the process of freeing Poles from prisons, gulags or forced settlement areas. The fundamental issue of the future Polish-Soviet border remained unresolved.[65] There was also no solution to the problems with the formation, provisioning and equipping of the Polish Armed Forces in the Soviet Union, although figures of as many as 150,000 potential recruits had been mentioned in the talks. The fate of Polish officers, policemen and officials, the subjects of a strenuous search, had not been cleared up because the Soviet side had no plans to do so, feeding Sikorski and his entourage with lies and truly admirable platitudes. For some reason, however, Stalin agreed to receive the Polish politician and commander-in-chief. Furthermore, he ordered that the visit be prepared extremely meticulously, ensuring that it was publicised in the press and on the radio, and even filming the main events.

63 Bogomolov was one of the Soviet diplomats who owed their careers to the victims of the Great Terror departing their positions. He arrived in diplomacy by way of recruitment conducted by Molotov in spring 1939, following long service in the Red Army (1919–1930) and teaching work as a lecturer and head of the Dialectical and Historical Materialism Department of Moscow State University. His diplomatic skills were rather unrefined, as noted by, among others, Edward Raczyński, who knew him well; see *Diplomatičeskij slovar'*, ed. by Andrej Gromyko and others, 3 vols (Moskva, 1984–1986), I (1985), p. 140; Sabine Dullin, *Des hommes d'influences. Les ambassadeurs de Staline en Europe 1930–1939* (Paris: Payot, 2001), pp. 275–76; Edward Raczyński, *W sojuszniczym Londynie. Dziennik ambasadora Edwarda Raczyńskiego 1939–1945* (Warszawa: NOWA, 1989), pp. 143–44, 169–70.

64 Vyshinsky's words written after his conversation with the Polish ambassador on 16 January 1942 sound like a grim joke: "Kot also expressed the Polish government's gratitude for the granting of a loan of 100 million roubles. Information Minister [Stanisław] Stroński gave a radio broadcast on this subject on behalf of the government, emphasising to the people of Poland that the Soviet government was taking care of Polish citizens in the USSR", *DVP*, XXV, 1942 g., 2 vols (Tula: Grif i K, 2010), I, p. 80 (translated into English from the author's Polish translation).

65 Soviet intelligence intercepted the correspondence of diplomatic posts accredited in Moscow. They were also familiar with the contents of the talks held during Sikorski's visit with Ambassador Cripps, including on the Polish prime minister's stance on the possibility of discussing with Stalin the question of the Polish-Soviet border. Translations of the documents were soon on the Soviet dictator's desk. By 14 December 1941, the head of the NKVD Intelligence Administration, Pavel Fitin, relayed the contents of Cripps's telegrams sent to London, in which he wrote: "During lunch, Stalin began to talk about Poland's eastern borders, but Sikorski avoided raising this issue on the basis that if he returned from Russia setting new borders, then 'the whole world would laugh at him'. Stalin referred to the situation with humour, saying that there were no difficulties that could not be overcome at a peace conference and expressing his hope that by the time it convenes they would come to a mutual understanding [on this matter]"; *Lubjanka. Stalin i NKVD – NKGB – GUKR «Smerš». 1939 – mart 1946*, ed. by Vladimir Chaustov, Viktor Naumov, and Nikolaj Plotnikov (Moskva: Materik, 2006), p. 323 (translated into English from the author's Polish translation).

This was for propaganda purposes. The appropriate message reached – as it was intended to – Soviet citizens as well as the international community.

I am uncertain whether Sikorski was entirely aware that he had once again so soon adopted the role of not only a genuine partner but also an ally for show. The first time this had happened had followed the fall of France in summer 1940, when the British, led by Winston Churchill, almost ostentatiously showed their compatriots that they were not alone on the battlefield, still had allies, and would not be struggling in isolation against the Germans. In a sense, Stalin reproduced this same model, but in a different context and with a contrasting message. The Soviet dictator knew very well that after the experiences of the Great Terror, including the NKVD's Polish operation, memory of which remained extremely strong and terrifying, trust in the Soviet government was limited, very shaky, and – seriously challenged by blows from the Germans – could dissipate entirely. In this most difficult period for him, it was important to have the loyalty of Soviet citizens, including the masses of Poles and people of Polish origin in the Soviet Union at the time. Stalin received detailed information on the anti-Soviet moods prevailing in the ranks of the Polish Army in the East from NKVD chief Lavrentiy Beria, even on the day of Sikorski's arrival in the USSR.[66] The dictator could not be unaware that many Poles – under German as well as Soviet occupation – had welcomed news of the outbreak of war between the Third Reich and the USSR and were by no means worried about the Red Army's defeats in summer and autumn 1941. Yet the vast majority remained loyal to the Polish government in exile under General Sikorski. They followed the actions of the Polish authorities in London with hope. To temper anti-Soviet moods, the Polish leader's visit suited the Kremlin down to the ground at the moment of the greatest threat to the Soviet government and Stalin himself. After the Germans were driven back from Moscow, the significance of Sikorski's trip would be reduced for the Soviet dictator – simply less important. The visit needed to be publicised as widely as possible, harnessed for propaganda purposes, and communicated to the world as evidence of allied relations. This was made easier by the fact that General Sikorski, who had quite different motives, himself suggested visiting the Soviet Union. Bogomolov was therefore wrong in his verdict that the trip came to nothing. For Stalin and his entourage, it came to a great deal in ways that were both very concrete and yet difficult to gauge.

Translated by BEN KOSCHALKA

66 *Sovetsko-pol'skie otnošenija v 1918–1945 gg.*, IV, pp. 226–29.

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THE IMPACT OF THE SOVIET FACTOR ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

ABSTRACT

The article is an attempt to observe the evolution of the role of the Soviet factor in British-Czechoslovak relations during the Second World War. In the months preceding and at the beginning of the war, its influence was barely noticeable. The USSR then acted as an ally of Germany. Only in August 1940 did the FO note attempts to establish cooperation between the Soviet government and the Czechoslovak Provisional Government. From the fall of 1940, contacts were developed between the Soviet and Czechoslovak intelligence services. The role of the Soviet factor in Czechoslovak policy began to grow rapidly from the summer of 1941 – the entry of the USSR into the war with Germany and Moscow's full recognition of the Czechoslovak government in exile. The USSR's position on this matter forced Great Britain to similarly recognize the Czechoslovak authorities. Since then on, the Soviet factor as a lever for achieving political goals in relations with the British was used permanently and on an increasing scale by Czechoslovak diplomacy. Moscow's support (this time ineffectively) was also used to force the British to recognize the pre-Munich borders of the ČSR and the so-called "Revocation of Munich" – thus recognizing the invalidity and illegality of the Munich Agreements of 1938 from the very beginning of their existence. London observed with concern the decline of Czechoslovak diplomacy into the position of a Soviet vassal, especially clearly visible in the forced abandonment of its plans for federation with Poland demanding by Kremlin. From these positions, the FO opposed Beneš's visit to Moscow, which was expected already in April 1943 and which threatened to deepen Poland's isolation after the Soviet authorities broke off relations with it. Beneš tried to discredit the opinions about the Soviet invader policy and eventually paid a visit to Moscow and led to the signing of the Czechoslovak-Soviet alliance agreement, but only in December 1943. From that moment on, ČSR was perceived on the Thames as a country in the Soviet sphere of influence and the structures of the Czechoslovak authorities in exile were considered to be infiltrated by communists – and therefore by Moscow. When withdrawing its opposition to the Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty, the British government simply drew pragmatic conclusions from the fact that the Red Army, as an ally in the war with Germany, was a fundamental factor in bringing about the defeat of the Third Reich and as such was needed by London, and from the belief that then the Soviets will occupy the Czechoslovak lands and in any case they will have a huge influence on the decision regarding

them. This belief also largely determined the British activity towards the uprising in Slovakia in 1944 and Prague in 1945. It was considered that this was a Soviet zone of military responsibility and only occasionally any military activity was undertaken there, encountering reluctance from the Soviet side. The title of a voluntary vassal of the USSR permanently stuck to the Czechoslovak government in exile. This situation strengthened the FO's tendency to reduce interest in Czechoslovak affairs. Beneš's capitulation to the occupation and annexation of Transcarpathian Ruthenia to the USSR confirmed, in the eyes of the FO, the thesis that the Czechoslovak authorities were subordinated to Stalin's orders. This became fully visible after the ČSR authorities returned to the country via Moscow, where the government was reconstructed, giving most of the influence to the communists. Attempts to persuade the Americans to outdo Soviet troops in taking Prague, as well as hopes of maintaining British influence in post-war Czechoslovakia, turned out to be in vain.

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This essay is an attempt to trace the evolution of the Soviet factor in British-Czechoslovak relations during the Second World War. Initially, in the months preceding the war, its influence was barely perceptible because Great Britain had reduced its interest in the Czechoslovak question, which was no longer regarded as a current political issue, increasingly being seen rather as an important historical experience. After the capture of Prague by the Wehrmacht on 15 March 1939 and the collapse of the Czechoslovak state, it was unclear whether any political entity still existed that could be viewed as representing Czechoslovak interests, with the relationship with it treated as British-Czechoslovak relations. Neither the authorities of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, which were subject to German rule, nor the government of formally independent Slovakia fit the bill. Meanwhile, the Czechoslovak pro-independence émigré community – at this point politically divided and lacking recognised organisational structures – could be perceived only as essentially private circles of people who were publicly active to various extents and only represented themselves.

It is also no surprise that in May 1939, when questions were being asked in the Foreign Office (FO) about the position the British government should take concerning recognition of the Protectorate's administration, Lord Halifax, the foreign secretary at the time, wishing to keep his options open, opposed discussing the letter sent by former Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš to the League of Nations.[1] In this letter, Beneš protested against Hungary's annexations of Czechoslovak territories. The formal reason for this British opposition was the fact that the letter was from a private individual, as Beneš was at the time, and not from the government of Czechoslovakia (which, after all, did not exist). However, Great Britain and the other world powers represented in the League of Nations Council were forced to change their position by an initiative of Soviet ambassador Ivan Maisky, who, on behalf of his government, on 29 May accepted responsibility for protesting on behalf of Czechoslovakia, thereby moving matters forward. Yet, the outbreak of war meant that further discussion on the subject became irrelevant.[2]

1 Letter from E. Beneš to J. Avenola, 13 May 1939, also sent to G. Bonnet, E. Halifax, V. Molotov, 13 May 1939 (French version), School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), Lis. 3/1/10; Telegram "en clair" from the United Kingdom Delegation to the FO, 22 May 1939, The National Archives (hereafter TNA), FO 371/22898, C7519/7/12, pp. 100–01; 105th Session of the Council of the League of Nations. Extract from final minutes of the 1st private meeting held on 22 May 1939, Geneva, TNA, C7655/7/12, p. 108.

2 Documents collected under the joint title: Communication to the Council of the League of Nations of a telegram from Dr. Benes, TNA, FO 371/22898, C9459/7/12, pp. 159–64; *Memoirs of Dr Eduard Beneš. From Munich to New War and New Victory*, transl. by Godfrey Lias (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954), pp. 71–73; Andrzej Essen, 'Międzynarodowa działalność emigracji czechosłowackiej w latach 1939–1940', in *Niemcy w polityce międzynarodowej 1919–1939, Na przełomie pokoju i wojny 1939–1941*, ed. by Stanisław Sierpowski (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, 1992), IV, p. 386.

In the early part of the war, the USSR was in fact an ally of Germany and had no influence on British-Czechoslovak relations, not counting the antiwar propaganda of Czechoslovak communists in Great Britain who were countering the pro-independence activity of their émigré compatriots and the Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia (PGC) they had established. The communists responded to London's recognition of this government by publishing a pamphlet entitled *Czechoslovakia's Guilty Men. What the Czechoslovak Provisional Government Stands For*, in which they blamed the PGC for the loss of the army in France and accused it of intending to restore the "bourgeois" Czechoslovak state and making use of English imperial interests. They called upon Britain to withdraw its support for Beneš and regarded the Soviet Union as the only power that could be relied on, forgetting that it was still allied with Hitler at this time. The pamphlet gained some traction in the British press (*News Review*, the *Daily Worker*, *World News and Views*, and the *Evening Standard*), which criticised government personnel and the tensions present in the Czechoslovak army that was being formed in Britain.[3] The targets of their attacks demanded an intervention from the FO, indicating Comintern as the driving force behind the campaign, but officials from the FO's Central Department who were dealing with the matter, while acknowledging that the accusations were unwarranted, opted to ignore the protests. Indeed, it was hard to respond in any sensible way, apart from sending denials to the papers, which would have caused further discussion on the issue, but this was in neither the PGC's nor the FO's interest.

Until 1941, the Czechoslovak government did not officially inform the British services about the existence of contacts between the Soviet and Czechoslovak intelligence during the period of German-Soviet cooperation. Yet, such contacts were formed as early as January 1940 through the representative of the Czechoslovak information service in Bucharest, Colonel Heliodor Píka. In July 1940, when the PGC was receiving recognition from Britain, Píka was appointed coordinator of this cooperation

3 *Czechoslovakia's Guilty Men. What the Czechoslovak "Provisional Government" Stands For* (pamphlet, print p. 15), TNA, FO 371/24289, C10777/2/12, pp. 242–48; or *Czechoslovakia's Guilty Men* (copy – typescript), Archiv Ústavu Tomasza Garrigue Masaryka (hereafter AÚTGM), fond 38, sign. 66/1, počet listů 69–169, pp. 139–68; 'Trouble Among Czechs', *Evening Standard*, 15 August 1940 (cutting), TNA, FO 371/24289, C11483/2/12, p. 278; 'Diplomacy. More "Guilty Men" (cutting)', *News Review*, 12 September 1940, p. 279; Robert Bruce Lockhart, 'Entry of 16 and 19 August 1940', in *The Diaries of Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, 1939–1965*, ed. by Kenneth Young, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1973–1980), II (1980), p. 73; Ladislav K. Feierabend, *Politicke vzpomínky*, 3 vols (Brno: Atlantis, 1994–1996), II (1994), p. 34; Jan Kuklík, *Vznik Československého národního výboru a prozatímního státního zřízení ČSR v emigraci v letech 1939–1940* (Praha: Karolinum, 1996), p. 162; Bohuslav Laštovička, *V Londýně za války: Zápasy o novou ČSR, 1939–1945* (Praha: SNPL, 1960), pp. 78–79.

between the intelligence services in top secrecy from the British.[4] In fact, when the PGC was being formed, Beneš was endeavouring to instil a favourable view of the USSR among British politicians. He voiced his belief that Moscow would soon enter the war against Germany and, through his services, provided the British with extensive intelligence on the Soviets. The British intelligence services treated this with a large pinch of salt, however, especially after verification of some information showed that it was mere gossip.[5] Beneš's pro-Soviet propaganda was rather limited in its effects. British politicians (Clement Attlee – the then-deputy prime minister and Labour leader; William Watson Henderson – minister Arthur Greenwood's political secretary; Sir Harold George Nicolson – parliamentary secretary to the information minister) still reckoned that if the USSR finally joined the war against Germany, this would take place in the distant future when the latter country was economically and militarily exhausted by the war with England.[6]

In the second half of August 1940, the British ambassador to Sweden, Victor Mallet, reported on attempts made through the Soviet embassy in Stockholm to initiate cooperation with representatives of the PGC. The Soviets were apparently promising Beneš full recognition of the former status of the Czechoslovak Republic. Influenced by these reports from the Czechoslovak president through the FO, in early September Beneš appointed Vladimír Kučera as Czechoslovak envoy to Sweden and ordered him to encourage the Soviets to embark on further talks in London.[7] The Soviet offer was greeted with profound mistrust in the Central Department. It was anticipated that, in an effort to secure its own goals regarding Czechoslovakia, at the appropriate time the Kremlin would "make use not of M. Benes and his friends, but of Red puppets of their own". No objections were lodged regarding the prospect of Czechoslovak-Soviet contacts, however, on the assumption that "There is always a chance that this kind of

4 'Doc. No. 55, instruction from E. Beneš, 19 July 1940', in *Československo-sovětské vztahy v diplomatických jednáních 1939–1945: dokumenty* (hereafter ČSVDJ), vol. I: *březen 1939 – červen 1943*, ed. by Jan Němeček and others (Praha: Státní ústřední archiv, 1998), pp. 145–47; Antonín Benčík and Václav Kural, *Zpravodajové generála Píky a ti druzí* (Praha: Merkur, 1991), p. 11; Karel Richter and Antonín Benčík, *Kdo byl generál Píka. Portrét čs. Vojáka a diplomata* (Praha: Doplněk, 1997), pp. 60–63. For evidence of these contacts see also Soviet documents: doc. No. 377, 13 September 1940, telegram from I. Maisky to NKID, in *Dokumenty vnešnej politiki SSSR* (hereafter DVP), 24 vols (Moskva, 1959–2000), XXIII, *1940 – 22 ijunja 1941*, 2 vols (Moskva: Meždunarodnye otnošenija, 1995), I, p. 597; doc. No. 598, 18 December 1940, telegram from I. Maisky to NKID, in *DVP*, XXI, II, pp. 221–13. For more, see Jan Gebhart, Jaroslav Koutek and Jan Kuklík, *Na frontách tajné války: kapitoly z boje československého zpravodajství proti nacismu v letech 1938–1941* (Praha: Panorama, 1989), pp. 292–312; Stanislav Kokoška, 'Československo-sovětská zpravodajská spolupráce v letech 1936–1941', *Historie a vojenství*, 46/5 (1997), 37–52; Jan Němeček, 'Edvard Beneš a Sovětský svaz 1939–1940', *Slovanské historické studie*, 23 (1997), 179–93.

5 Robert Bruce Lockhart, *Přichází zúčtování* (Brno: František Borový, 1948), p. 132.

6 Politické věcí, Velká Británie, G. Winter's reports from talks with C. Attlee, 12 October 1940 (2437/dův/40) and with W. Henderson, 18 October 1940 (252/dův/40), Archiv Ministerstva Zahraničních Věcí (hereafter AMZV), LA–D, oddíl 4, regál 70, č. 61; Harold Nicolson, 'Entry of 11 February 1941', in *The War Years, 1939–1945: Volume II of Diaries and Letters*, ed. by Nigel Nicolson (New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 145.

7 Telegram from V. Mallet to FO, 15 August 1940, TNA, FO 371/24291, C8554/7325/12, p. 166; Telegram from E. Beneš to V. Kučera (after 15 August 1940), TNA, FO 371/24291, C8554/7325/12, p. 167; Telegram from FO to V. Mallet, 7 September 1940, TNA, FO 371/24291, C8554/7325/12, p. 168.

thing will furnish us with means of making trouble between the Germans and Russians, if it does nothing else".[8] The fact that the Soviet embassy in London had made contact with Czech émigré circles was also noted.[9]

In autumn 1940, the resumption of cooperation between Czechoslovak and Soviet intelligence was the subject of talks between Beneš and General František Moravec, head of the Czechoslovak intelligence service. In confidential instructions prepared for the general, the president emphasised that Czechoslovak politicians working with the British "are not their minions or slaves" and would collaborate with anyone against Hitler. Due to his mistrust of the Soviets and reluctance to conspire against the British in this matter, Moravec was apparently sceptical about these negotiations. Yet, Moscow insisted on keeping the talks secret, justifying its demands with concerns about compromising its own neutrality. Despite warnings also coming from the resistance movement in occupied Czechoslovakia regarding Moscow's plans regarding the Sovietisation of Europe, Beneš did not share these concerns and ordered Moravec to prepare plans for cooperation with the Soviet intelligence service.[10] He foresaw a mutual exchange of information, with the caveat that the parties would come to an agreement by which materials received by Czechoslovakia from the Soviets would be passed on to Britain.[11] The planned meeting took place in late December. As Moravec reported, "the matter of secrecy of cooperation was, as far as the English were concerned, agreed quickly because both sides had an equal interest in it".[12] From this point, this cooperation continued to develop, although Beneš realised that he would not be able to hide it from the British and Poles forever.[13]

Yet it was only the efforts to secure London's full recognition of the Czechoslovak émigré government in summer 1941 that revealed the rapid growth in importance of the Soviet factor in British-Czechoslovak relations. Beneš first sought Moscow's support in this matter in August 1940, discussing with the Soviet ambassador to London the possibility of receiving such recognition and for the USSR to accept the principle of uninterrupted legal continuation of the existence of the First Czechoslovak

8 Minute of H. W. Malkin, 20 August 1940, minute of F. K. Roberts, 19 August and R. H. Bruce Lockhart, 5 September 1940, TNA, FO 371/24291, C8554/7325/12, p. 164.

9 Minute of F. K. Roberts, 18 September 1940, TNA, FO 371/24291, C8554/7325/12, p. 165.

10 František Moravec, *Špión, jemuž nevěřili* (Praha: Rozmluvy, 1990), pp. 278–81; 'Doc. No. 110, instructions from E. Beneš for F. Moravec, 7 November 1940', in *Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939–1943* (hereafter *AOB&M*), ed. by Libuše Otáhalová, 2 vols (Praha: Ceskoslovenska Akademie, 1966), I, pp. 139–40; Němeček, *Edvard Beneš a Sovětský svaz*, p. 191; Zbyněk Zeman, *Edvard Beneš – Politický životopis* (Praha: Mladá fronta, 2000), pp. 195–97.

11 'Doc. No. 120, note by J. Smutný on E. Beneš's instructions for F. Moravec, 1 December 1940', in *AOB&M*, I, pp. 147–48; or 'Doc. No. 67, report by J. Smutný on a conversation between E. Beneš and F. Moravec, 1 December 1940', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 166–67.

12 'Doc. No. 70, report by F. Moravec on a meeting with the representative of the Soviet intelligence service, 23 December 1940', in ČSVDJ, I, p. 170.

13 'Doc. No. 142, E. Beneš's letter to Col. L. Svoboda, 24 March 1941', in *AOB&M.*, I, pp. 191–92; or 'Doc. No. 64', in *Dokumenty a materiály k dějinám československo-sovětských vztahů* (hereafter *DMDCSV*), *březen 1939–prosinec 1943*, 6 vols (Praha: Academia, 1975–1988), IV (1982), 2 vols, I, pp. 118–19.

Republic. The president's colleagues interpreted this as an expression of his irritation at the FO's stance, which had no intention of going beyond the formula of recognition of the PGC, as well as a means of exerting pressure on the British to persuade them to accept the Czechoslovak demands.[14]

Beneš wielded a whole arsenal of diplomatic measures to achieve this goal. One was the idea of a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation, which he treated somewhat instrumentally and the British strongly supported. Beneš argued that progress on negotiations in this matter was not possible until both sides received equal political and legal status, which in turn required that the Czechoslovak authorities be granted the same legal status as the Polish government-in-exile, meaning full recognition. The Poles and British saw the idea of a confederation as an opportunity to create a political organism in Central Europe that would be capable of maintaining an independent entity between Germany and the USSR. Yet the position presented in talks with the Poles and British by the Czechoslovak side was fundamentally different from that which it adopted in relations with the Soviets. In October 1940, Zdeněk Fierlinger, the former Czechoslovak envoy to Moscow, assured the Soviet ambassador to London, Maisky, that it was the British who were insisting that Beneš should come to an agreement with the Poles, but he "rejected everything targeted against the [Soviet] Union" and would always remain loyal to it.[15] Despite similar pledges of loyalty made to the British ally, the Soviets were informed of the internal relations in Churchill's government and the positions played in it by various ministers. Maisky referred to the information relayed by Beneš on the situation in Germany and Central Europe as "extremely valuable information".[16]

Meanwhile, the developing situation in the war was leading to another strategic breakthrough of fundamental importance for British-Czechoslovak relations. Signals had been reaching London for some time of an imminent German attack on the Soviet Union, leading British intelligence to seek ways of verifying these reports. The Czechoslovaks were considering which diplomatic channels to use to admit to the British that they were maintaining clandestine contacts with Soviet intelligence, when, on 3 June 1941, SOE head Colonel Colin Gubbins visited Moravec seeking information on Czechoslovak views about the expected aggression against the USSR. Doubts remained in the War Office about the prospect of an impending outbreak of a German-Soviet war. Moravec was therefore able

14 Feierabend, *Politicke vzpomínky*, II, p. 96.
15 'Doc. No. 60, extract from report on Z. Fierlinger's conversation with I. Maisky, 2 October 1940', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 152–53.
16 Iwan Majski, *Wspomnienia ambasadora radzieckiego, Wojna 1939–1943*, 3 vols (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1967–1970), III (1970), p. 187.

to inform Gubbins that Czechoslovak intelligence had a liaison officer, Colonel Píka, in Moscow, along with other officers who had been stationed there since late April. No further explanations proved necessary. The only reaction to this information from the British side was to hand Moravec a questionnaire concerning the USSR.[17] Soon after war broke out between Germany and the Soviet Union, the British decided to use their Czechoslovak contacts to forge links with Soviet intelligence. Given the British embassy in Moscow's opposition to directly cooperating with the Soviets and – taking into account the possibility of an anti-communist uprising in the USSR caused by the crisis of the war – its wariness of being compromised by direct cooperation with the Bolsheviks, it was decided that this task would be entrusted to the Czechs, with Moravec being heavily leant on.[18]

Nevertheless, the intensification of collaboration between the British and Czechoslovak intelligence services did not accelerate negotiations on London's full recognition of the Czechoslovak government. The Czechoslovak side (Beneš and Jan Masaryk, the foreign minister) put continual pressure on the FO in this respect, noting practically on the eve of the German invasion of the USSR that lack of progress on this important issue would ultimately lead to a situation in which it was not Great Britain – hitherto Czechoslovakia's most important ally and the only major power at war with Germany – but Moscow that would be the first to recognise the Czechoslovak government, which would be a failure for British policy.[19] Czechoslovak diplomacy made masterly use of the extremely important Soviet factor which appeared in the struggle for recognition of its government in late June. Beneš received news of the outbreak of war between Germany and the Soviet Union ecstatically, and on 25 June informed R. H. Bruce Lockhart, the British government's liaison officer to the PGC, of the Soviet authorities' favourable position regarding full recognition of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile. He also underlined the excellent development of Czechoslovak-Soviet intelligence cooperation with the participation of Colonel Píka[20] in Moscow and Moravec in London, noting his concern that the Czechoslovak government might be recognised by the Soviets before it was by the British and US governments. These warnings were treated very seriously at the FO. Although there were doubts over the Kremlin's

17 'Doc. No. 178, note by J. Smutný, 4 June 1941 based on the account of F. Moravec', in *AOB&M.*, I, p. 222. See also: Benčík and Kural, *Zpravodajové generála Píky a ti druzí*, pp. 24–30; Richter and Benčík, *Kdo byl generál Píka*, pp. 86–89; Jiří Šolc, 'Československá zpravodajská skupina v SSSR (duben–červen) 1941', *Historie a vojenství*, 5 (1997), 53–65.

18 'Doc. No. 206, note by J. Smutný, 22 June 1941', in *AOB&M*, I, p. 252.

19 'Doc. No. 186, note by J. Smutný, 14 June 1941', in *AOB&M*, I, pp. 228–29; Rozmluvy s Lockhartem (od polovice června do 15. července 1941), AÚTGM, fond EB, složka EBL 110/2, krabice 348, Velká Británie, pp. 98–99.

20 Report by R. H. Bruce Lockhart for O. Sargent, 28 July 1941, TNA, FO 371/26410, C8720/4140/12, p. 48.

desire for swift recognition of Beneš's government, since "they may have communist puppets of their own",[21] the decision was taken to accelerate negotiations on this matter.

However, Soviet support for the Czechoslovak government's position proved conclusive. The British felt threatened in their position as leader in the struggle to liberate conquered European nations, fearing that sympathies in some of them could turn towards Moscow. While they were still deciding how to satisfy Czechoslovak demands, on 8 July Beneš met with Maisky, who in the name of Moscow proposed full recognition, offering an exchange of representatives of the two governments and help with organising a Czechoslovak army in the USSR.[22] This proposal brought unbridled joy from Beneš and Masaryk. It also had a sizable impact on the attitudes of the British, whom Maisky informed on 4 July about the Soviet government's intentions regarding recognition of the Polish, Czechoslovak and Yugoslav governments-in-exile in London.[23] "The Soviet Union's full international recognition of Czechoslovakia caused a little perturbation in British government circles and the Foreign Office", Zdeněk Fierlinger rightly noted.[24] Indeed, the broad and immediate form of recognition of the Czechoslovak government proposed by Moscow "forced the hand" of British diplomacy. The Kremlin even promised to accept the argument regarding the legal continuation of the existence of the First Republic and permitted Fierlinger to return to Moscow in his former guise as Czechoslovak ambassador. This turn of events exerted serious pressure on Britain to swiftly satisfy Czechoslovakia's demands, while also placing Beneš's diplomacy in a completely different negotiating position regarding the British government. Great Britain's prestige was clearly at stake. However, the final decision had to be consulted with the dominion governments, which of course took time, especially as the administrations of Australia and the Union of South Africa were opposed to a broader form of recognition. The situation was undoubtedly ripe for final decisions from the British side. A conclusion came at the war cabinet meeting of 14 July, strongly influenced by Soviet actions, which the British were open about. Eden himself offered this argument in favour of his proposals: "Now that Russia had given full recognition,

21 Minute by F. K. Roberts, 28 June 1941, TNA, FO 371/26410, C7140/7140/12, p. 6.

22 'Doc. No. 88, report by E. Beneš on a discussion with I. Maisky, 8 July 1941', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 201–05. Maisky received instructions on this matter from Moscow a few days earlier: 'Doc. No. 75, 3 July 1941, telegram from NKID to I. Maisky', in *DVP*, XXIV (2000), p. 107.

23 'Doc. No. 80, 4 July 1941, telegram from I. Maisky to NKID', in *DVP, XXIV*, p. 111; Alexander Cadogan, 'Entry from 4 July 1941', in *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan O. M. 1938–1945*, ed. by David Dilks (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1971), p. 391; Letter from R. H. Bruce Lockhart to A. Eden, 9 July 1941, TNA, FO, 371/26394, C7680/7140/12, p. 154 (print pp. 16–17); See also: Zeman, *Edvard Beneš – Politický životopis*, p. 198. Only Makins received this information calmly, arguing that, although the USSR's recognition of the Czechoslovak government would likely heighten Russophile moods in Czechoslovakia, it should not have a significant impact on the country's relations with the USSR and Great Britain. See Minute by R. M. Makins, 11 July 1941, TNA, FO 371/26410, C7680/7140/12, p. 13.

24 Zdeněk Fierlinger, *Ve službách ČSR. Paměti druhého zahraničního odboje*, 2 vols (Praha: Svoboda, 1947–1948), II (1948), p. 19.

the Foreign Secretary thought that we ought to do the same, notwithstanding the fact that Beneš's Government did not have the same continuity as the other Governments of States which had been occupied by Germany and had taken refuge in this country". The cabinet therefore decided to fully recognise the Czechoslovak government and inform the dominions of its decision, requesting their comments on the decision taken by HM Government.[25] The British war cabinet also sought recognition of the Czechoslovak government by the United States. The crowning argument was again the need to oppose Soviet influences in Czechoslovakia.

On the morning of 16 July, Bruce Lockhart informed Beneš that the British cabinet had decided to remove the adjective "provisional" from the name of the Czechoslovak émigré government, recognising it de jure and appointing a British government envoy to it, while retaining reservations concerning borders and the continued existence of the First Republic.[26] Yet the Soviets were a step ahead of British diplomacy. That same day, Maisky submitted a draft Czechoslovak-Soviet agreement to the Czechoslovaks which included full recognition of the Czechoslovak government, and he declared Soviet readiness to sign it as soon as it was accepted by the Czech's Soviet counterparts. Clearly aggrieved towards the British, Beneš deemed recognition from Moscow as a highly significant step "because this is recognition in the form of the first inter-state, allied agreement formed by the Third [sic] [Czechoslovak] Republic".[27] It is worth noting the phrase that Beneš uses here, "Third Republic", which casts an interesting light on his official claims about the uninterrupted legal continuation of the existence of the First Republic. A day later, as soon as the Soviet draft was translated into Czech, the president wanted the agreement to be signed the very same day. Masaryk was opposed, wishing to inform the FO about this move first, and indeed on 17 July he took the ready text to Bruce Lockhart to read.[28] "It was now a race between us and the Russians", the British representative commented.[29] The same morning, Maisky loyally warned Eden about the signing of the Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement that would take place the next day.[30] In this situation, on the same afternoon, 17 July, at the next meeting of the British war cabinet, it was decided that in the coming days a public announcement should be

25 War Cabinet 69 (41), 14 July 1941, TNA, Cab. 65/19, p. 28 (print p. 140). See also: telegram from Dominions Office to the governments of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and to the UK High Commissioner to the Union of South Africa, 16 July 1941, TNA, FO 371/26394, C8119/1320/12, p. 219 (draft p. 220); and Minute by F. K. Roberts, 15 July 1941, TNA, FO 371/26394, C7977/216/12, p. 144.

26 Rozmluvy s Lockhartem (od polovice června do 15. července 1941), AÚTGM, fond EB, složka EBL 110/2, krabice 348, Velká Británie, p. 100.

27 'Doc. No. 199, note by J. Smutný, 16 July 1941', in *AOB&M*, I, pp. 244–45, or 'Doc. No. 90', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 208–10; and 'Doc. No. 80, letter from I. Maisky to E. Beneš, 16 July 1941', in *DMDČSV*, IV, I, pp. 146–47.

28 'Doc. No. 202, note by J. Smutný, 17 July 1941', in *AOB&M*, I, pp. 246–47. See also 'Doc. No. 91, letter from E.'Beneš to I. Maisky, 16 July 1941', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 210–11.

29 Bruce Lockhart, *Přichází zúčtování*, p. 159.

30 Letter from A. Eden to S. Cripps, 17 July 1941, TNA, FO 371/26410, C8029/7140/12, p. 32.

made regarding Great Britain's full recognition of the Czechoslovak government, with the dominions also being informed of the intention to make this proclamation if there were no prompt objections.[31]

Meanwhile, at noon on 18 July, Masaryk and Maisky signed the Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement, which did not require ratification and was immediately binding.[32] Four hours later, on Eden's orders, Bruce Lockhart brought Masaryk to the FO. A note presented to Masaryk stated that HM Government had decided to appoint "an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Dr Beneš as President of the Czechoslovak Republic" and was willing to accept a similar representative from the Czechoslovak side. The note also declared that the British government recognised the legal position of the president and government of the Czechoslovak Republic as identical to other Allied émigré heads of state and governments and was committed to using the forms "the Czechoslovak Republic" and "the legation of the Czechoslovak Republic" in future official relations. Henceforth, Great Britain would treat the question of the provisional nature of the Czechoslovak government as an internal matter. The British continued to refuse to recognise the legal continuation of the existence of the First Republic and rejected any commitment to postwar borders in Central Europe. Furthermore, the British government, citing discussions held with the anti-Nazi Sudeten Germans concerning their participation in Czechoslovak government structures, reserved the right to maintain jurisdiction "over certain categories of former Czechoslovak nationals" on British territory.[33] According to the agreement, the new ambassador to the Czechoslovak government would be the experienced diplomat Philip Bouverie Bower Nichols. Recognition in the form adopted by the British government was not entirely satisfactory to Beneš, who demanded that the issue of the Sudeten Germans be removed from the official note, asking for an appropriate caveat to be made in another document – which the British side accepted.

From the British point of view, the plan's objective seemed to have been achieved. It was noted that even the Czechoslovak communists – of course with the Kremlin's approval – had formed a common front around

31 War Cabinet 71 (41), 17 July 1941, TNA, Cab. 65/19, p. 34 (print p. 148); Telegram from Dominions Office to the governments of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK High Commissioner to the Union of South Africa, 17 July 1941, TNA, FO 371/26394, C7797/1320/12, p. 163.

32 Agreement between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Czechoslovak Republic, 18 July 1941, TNA, FO 371/26410, C8083/7140/12, p. 36; or, in the Czech version: 'Smlouva mezi Svazem Sovětských Socialistických Republik a Republikou Československou', in *Šest let exilu a druhé světové války. Řeči, projevy a dokumenty z r. 1938–45*, ed. by Edward Beneš (Praha: Orbis, 1947), p. 258; or 'Doc. No. 118', in *DVP*, XXIV, p. 165. See also: Feierabend, *Politicke vzpomínky*, II, p. 155; Zeman, *Edvard Beneš – Politický životopis*, p. 199.

33 Draft version of note from A. Eden to J. Masaryk, 18 July 1941, AÚTGM, fond 40/XVIII/13/18, Anglie, pp. 358–60.

Beneš.[34] However, amid the voices of satisfaction with the Allies' unity, warnings also appeared in August in the British press (*The Times*, *The Economist*) about bringing about a situation in which German influences in Central Europe would be replaced by Soviet ones.[35]

The Soviet factor proved to be the most important one in the last stage of negotiations as it also affected the final form in which British recognition was given. The USSR's appearance among the participants in the anti-Hitler coalition gave Czechoslovak diplomacy an effective tool for putting pressure on the FO in the form of the Kremlin's support for their demands. From the British point of view, this Soviet support for Czechoslovakia also increased the value of cooperation with its Czechoslovak ally, which had excellent contacts with Moscow and could be useful either in gathering information on the Soviet side, or – in the initial phase – in establishing organisational intelligence cooperation, or also, further down the line, influencing other British allies that were not so enthusiastic about the USSR. However, this change in the importance of the Czechoslovak ally for Great Britain and the strengthening of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile's position towards other Allied governments-in-exile resulted not so much from the legal status of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile but rather from the particular Czechoslovak-Soviet relations and the general course of the country's policy towards the USSR adopted by Beneš. From this perspective, Britain's full recognition of the Czechoslovak government only confirmed the growing importance accorded to this ally due to the importance of the Soviet factor at that time, but Britain itself did not give it any such significance. All the hitherto existing legal and political reservations put forward by the British side remained valid. This was why HM Government, wishing to honour its pledges and treat its commitments seriously, could only give the Czechoslovak side full recognition under certain conditions. As a result, this recognition was narrower than that offered by the Soviets. In the veritable race that began after 22 June 1941 to satisfy the Czechoslovak demands, the FO was at a disadvantage – assuming that it would abide by certain rules of play, boiling down to respect for the British signature on a negotiated document. The Soviets had no such limitations. They could immediately pledge everything to the Czechoslovaks without concerning themselves about the legal aspect. In the practice of Soviet diplomacy, such signatures in no way bound the freedom of its future political decisions, on condition

34 'Doc. No. 212, report by R. W. Seton Watson for PID, 5 August 1941', in *R. W. Seton-Watson and His Relations with Czechs and Slovaks. Documents 1906–1951*, ed. by Jan Rychlík, Miroslav Bielik, and Thomas D. Marzik, 2 vols (Prague: Ústav T.G. Masaryka, 1995), I, pp. 596–97.

35 Feierabend, *Politicke vzpominky*, II, p. 143.

that the Kremlin had sufficient military power to be able to disregard its commitments in a given area.

From this point on, Czechoslovak diplomacy constantly and increasingly used the Soviet factor as leverage for achieving its political objectives in relations with the British. Immediately after securing full recognition of the Czechoslovak government, Beneš began a campaign seeking to annul the Munich Agreement of 1938, deem it non-existent, and thus secure a return to the legal and territorial status of the Czechoslovak Republic. In October 1941, he informed Britain that the issues he was raising concerning the territories lost at Munich were being addressed much more boldly in broadcasts coming out of Moscow and that London's continued silence on this matter could cause disappointment among the Czechoslovak public and radicalisation of moods in this occupied country. For the time being, these arguments were ineffective, as the FO was reluctant even to create the impression that Great Britain felt any kind of obligation to support efforts to restore Czechoslovakia's pre-Munich borders.[36]

Concern was caused, however, by the Central Department's intention to admit communists to the Czechoslovak National Council. It was assumed that Beneš was, on the one hand, bowing to pressure from Czech leftist circles and Soviet ambassador Maisky, and, on the other, was concerned about unfavourable reactions to such a move from the British government. The feeling at the FO was that the Home Office should be consulted, and even the British military counter-intelligence agency MI5, which was expected to be opposed, especially as communist candidates for the National Council had just been released from British internment camps. The thinking was that, should it become necessary to place the Czechoslovakian communists there again, this would be more difficult if they had the status of members of the Czechoslovak National Council and the associated immunity. Generally, the FO treated the communists as "a community which so obviously took its orders from a foreign source".[37] However, Beneš vouched for the patriotism of the four Czech communists identified as future members of the National Council and strongly denied that they were in the service of Moscow.[38] But even then, fresh symptoms

36 Memorandum by E. Beneš, 3 October 1941, What is required from the Czechoslovak point of view for the successful conduct of the war, TNA, FO 371/26389, C11137/235/12, pp. 1–6 (or AÚTGM, fond EB, složka EBL 110/2, krabice 348, Velká Británie, pp. 258–63); Minutes by G. E. Millard, 9 October, F. K. Roberts and R. M. Makins, 10 October, O. Sargent, 11 October, and A. Cadogan, 13 October and F. K. Roberts, 24 November 1941 (no page numbering). See also: Piotr M. Majewski, 'Dyplomacja brytyjska wobec przyszłości Sudetów i planów wysiedlenia mniejszości niemieckiej z Czechosłowacji, 1939–1942', *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 33/44 (2001), 65–86 (p. 70).

37 Minutes by G. M. Millard, 10 October and F. K. Roberts, 11 October 1941, TNA, FO 371/26394, C11155/1320/12, p. 255.

38 Minute by R. H. Bruce Lockhart, 23 November 1941, TNA, FO 371/26394, C11155/1320/12, p. 256; Letter from P. Nichols to R. M. Makins, 26 November 1941, p. 257; Letter from F. K. Roberts to Hutchinson from HO, 27 November 1941, p. 261; Letter from A. I. Tudor (HO) to F. K. Roberts (FO), 8 December 1941, TNA, FO 371/26394, C13765/1320/12, p. 321.

of independent activity – not consulted with the Czechoslovak government – of Czechoslovak communists in Britain were already becoming apparent. It was their initiative, led by Jož̌a David and with the communist Evžen Löbel as secretary, that led in late summer 1941 to the formation of the British-Czechoslovak Friendship Club. There was no uniform British position on this new initiative. While the Ministry of Information and the British Council were opposed, Nichols, unfamiliar with the personalities of the people forming the club, intervened with Ripka to initiate cooperation with it, which ultimately ensued.[39]

In December, while speaking to Eden at a British-Soviet conference in Moscow,[40] Stalin backed Czechoslovak diplomacy's position regarding the country's postwar borders, stating that "Czechoslovakia is to be restored to her former [pre-Munich] frontiers, including Sudetenland. [...] Moreover, the territory of Czechoslovakia is to be enlarged in the South at the expense of Hungary...".[41] Eden avoided any firm resolutions on this issue, citing the commitments the British government had made to the United States that it would not enter into any secret agreements regarding postwar borders in Europe, but he clearly supported the idea of a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation, which Stalin made no comment on.[42] We can assume that Stalin's declaration had some impact on the FO's position regarding Beneš's proposals. Out of concern that Soviet diplomacy might begin to interfere in the issue, it was decided that Beneš should be encouraged to present his plans for the territorial shape of Czechoslovakia, which he did.[43] Hubert Ripka, the minister of state in the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also cited Soviet support regarding the country's future borders when speaking to Nichols in January 1942. Strong pro-Soviet tones in Ripka's statements could also be found in his speech to the Czechoslovak National Council: his pronouncement that "the Czechoslovak-Soviet Alliance may become one of the cornerstones of Czechoslovak policy" caused some alarm in the FO.[44] Playing the Soviet

39 Report by H. Ripka, 16 October 1941, Státní Ústřední Archiv (hereafter SÚA), fond č. 1, H. Ripka 1-5-19-2, p. 98; Report by H. Ripka, British-Czechoslovak Friendship, AÚTGM, fond EB, složka EBL 104/1, krabice 342, Velká Británie, p. 205; Feierabend, *Politicke vzpomínky*, II, p. 148.

40 For more, see Jacek Tebinka, *Polityka brytyjska wobec problemu granicy polsko-radzieckiej, 1939–1945* (Warszawa: Neriton, 1998), pp. 173–77.

41 'Doc. No. 4, record of meeting of J. Stalin, V. Molotov, and I. Maisky with A. Eden and S. Cripps, 16 December 1941', in *War and Diplomacy: The Making of the Grand Alliance. Documents from Stalin's Archives* (hereafter *W&D*), ed. by Oleg A. Rzheshevsky (Amsterdam: Routledge, 1996), p. 11; or 'Doc. No. 328', in *DVP*, XXIV, p. 502. See also: 'Doc. No. 5, Confidential', in *W&D*, p. 22; and Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, 5 vols (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1970–1976), II (1971), pp. 221–23; and Winston Churchill, *Druga Wojna Światowa*, 12 vols (Gdańsk: Phantom Press, 1994–1996), III (1995), 2 vols, II, pp. 252–53. See also: 'Doc. No. 130, report by J. Kraus, 16 January 1942, on H. Ripka's conversation with K. V. Novikov', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 276–78.

42 Eugeniusz Duraczyński, 'ZSRR wobec projektów konfederacji polsko-czechosłowackiej (1940–1943)', *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 29/3 (1997), 129–53 (p. 134).

43 Report by H. Ripka, 22 December 1941, SÚA, fond č. 1, H. Ripka 1-5-19-2, pp. 329–30; Memorandum Regarding the Question of the Frontiers of the Czechoslovak Republic, TNA, FO 800/873, pp. 1–22.

44 Expose on Foreign Policy delivered by Dr. Hubert Ripka to the Czechoslovak State Council on 7 January 1942, TNA, FO 371/30833, C1000/310/12, p. 7 (whole document pp. 1–11); 'Letter from P. Nichols to A. Eden, 23 January 1942'.

card, which Ripka was evidently doing in his discussion with Nichols, was accompanied by a warning that with their policy the British were undermining the authority of President Beneš, who was encountering strong opposition not only in the National Council, but even among ministers much less willing to compromise on borders than he was. However, the only argument in favour of satisfying Beneš's demands that was treated seriously by the FO was the concern that rejecting them could undermine the trust that Britain enjoyed with the Czechoslovak public and a turn of its sympathies towards the USSR. And yet, as Frank Roberts, head of the FO Central Department, noted, "On the other hand, Russian policy, unlike our own, is based on opportunism and can afford to give sweeping paper promises to the Czechs one day with complete disregard to earlier Soviet policy (e.g., breaking off relations with the Czechs), or to future Soviet intentions. We cannot hope to compete with the Soviet Government on this plane and we should not attempt to do so".[45]

The painstaking Czechoslovak-British negotiations on repealing Munich proceeded without visible progress in the following months. Both Beneš and Ripka met with Eden and Nichols on numerous occasions. Among the arguments made in the discussion, Ripka warned that, lacking a plan of action for Czechoslovakia, the British and Americans would be forced to accept the Soviets' position in talks with them and would therefore agree to the rebuilding of the Republic with its pre-Munich borders. This in turn would be interpreted by the Czechoslovak public as a concession forced by the Soviets, meaning that the Kremlin would be seen as the only defender of Czechoslovak interests among the major powers.[46] The FO's stance on the Czechoslovak demands was viewed similarly in memoranda to the Central Department by Bruce Lockhart, a devoted friend of the Czechoslovak cause. He claimed that a lack of support from London for the idea of returning the Sudetenland to the borders of the rebuilt Czechoslovakia, while also accepting Polish ambitions regarding Eastern Prussia, would result in accusations of Britain treating its allies unequally, would provoke jealousy between these allies, and would hamper Polish-Czechoslovak cooperation, pushing the Czechs into the arms of the Soviets "against their will".[47]

In fact, Beneš also sought support directly from Bruce Lockhart and Reginald Leeper, head of the FO's Political Intelligence Department, in an effort to influence Eden. Without backing down from a threat of sorts,

45 Minute by F. K. Roberts, 20 January 1942, TNA, FO 371/308 34, C1101/326/12, p. 35.
46 Report by H. Ripka, 12 February 1942 on a conversation with P. Nichols, AÚTGM, fond EB, složka EBL 110/1, krabice č. 348, Velká Británie, pp. 210–12. See also, in a similar tone, the next conversation: 'Doc. No. 148, extract from H. Ripka's report, from 24 March 1942, on a conversation with P. Nichols', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 311–12.
47 Bruce Lockhart, 'Entry of 9 March 1942', in *The Diaries of Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart*, II, p. 144.

Beneš demanded outright that Bruce Lockhart "explain to Eden that the situation is no longer one in which [Beneš] is permanently standing cap in hand on the steps of the Foreign Office. The English have constant reservations about our proposals, but in doing so they are simply pushing us to appeal to the Russians. We do not want to do that, but indeed, if the Russians agree to our proposals and offer us their support, it is understood that we cannot reject it and so will not reject it".[48] What Beneš said immediately after this warning must have been even more startling to the British. His statements portrayed him as a politician practically forced to work with the Poles, who, treated by him as an anti-Soviet factor, were for fundamental reasons an unacceptable partner for the Czechoslovak side, which was willing for a union with Moscow to sacrifice not only the Polish-Czechoslovak confederation – in this regard a subject of concern particularly for the FO – but even an alliance with the British. "The English constantly wanted to play with the Poles and still wanted an agreement between the Poles and us, but in their games with the Poles against the Russians they are directly hindering if not preventing our agreement with the Poles", he declared. "Indeed, it may be that the Russians will want to play with us on the one hand against the Poles, and on the other against the English. But where this might lead".[49] The last sentence was not a question, making it even more of an assertion that in this game Czechoslovakia could find itself on the Soviet side.

Given the lack of progress in the negotiations, Beneš announced that they were being halted, but as early as April he resumed attempts to break the impasse. However, the FO assessed and consequently rejected his proposals as "clearly hopeless" because they did not go beyond the previous formula. However, questions were asked about what had persuaded the Czechoslovak president to present these proposals, given the foreseeable failure of this initiative. Roberts rightly surmised that a strong impulse for Beneš's actions had been information about the ongoing British-Soviet negotiations over an allied pact, during which the Kremlin demanded London's recognition of the USSR's boundaries from before 22 June 1941. "Clearly Dr. Benes supposes that, having decided to meet the Russians over their frontiers, we cannot refuse to meet him over the Czechoslovak frontiers", Roberts argued.[50] However, the president's calculation was entirely wrong; after all, since, in the agreement being prepared with Moscow, London was challenging the Polish government's claims to the prewar

48 Report by H. Ripka, 12 March 1942. Rozhovor s panem presidentem, SÚA, fond č. 1, H. Ripka 1-5-19-3, pp. 66–69; or 'Doc. No. 145', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 306–07.
49 Ibid.
50 Minute by F. K. Roberts, 20 April 1942, TNA, FO 371/30834, C4047/326/12, p. 120.

eastern borders of the Polish Republic,[51] it was even less willing at the same moment to strengthen Czechoslovak claims to the pre-Munich borders of the Czechoslovak Republic. The FO saw such unequal treatment of Britain's two allies, Poland and Czechoslovakia, as a potential threat for the future of Polish-Czechoslovak relations, whose evolution towards a confederation it still favoured.

All that Beneš's diplomacy had managed to achieve for now was to instil the belief in British politicians that it had excellent relations with Moscow, despite the increasingly clear threat from the USSR to the whole of Eastern Europe. This impression was heightened by Czechoslovak politicians' frequent playing of the Soviet card, which they treated as an important asset that supported their demands. An emphatic example of this was Nichols' next meeting with Beneš, on 1 May. This British representative officially informed the president that the FO had decided to suspend further negotiations but leave the matter open. Beneš, expressing his regret that no agreement had been found on the issue, immediately referred to the ongoing British-Soviet negotiations, aiming to sign an alliance treaty between the two powers also concerning their postwar cooperation. He was surprised that Britain in its talks with the Soviets was considering the possibility of handing East Prussia to Poland, presumably as compensation for its loss of the Eastern Borderlands, while also causing difficulties for the Czechoslovak Republic in matters for which it was largely to blame. He also warned the British diplomat about his plans to visit Moscow in summer 1942, during which he intended in some unspecified way to prevent the Kremlin's interference in internal Czechoslovak matters in the future as well as to discuss the USSR's position on the Polish-Czechoslovak confederation and the future shape of the Czechoslovak state. Nichols was clearly shocked by this information but without hesitation backed the idea of persuading the Soviet government of the benefits of forming a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation. He was also mindful of the fact that the date of the visit to the Soviet Union mentioned by Beneš was simultaneously supposed to represent a time frame within which all the contentious issues in British-Czechoslovak relations should be clarified to avoid a situation in which Czechoslovakia would have settled relations with Moscow but not with London. Beneš made it clear that the consequences for Prague's postwar orientation could be critical.[52]

51 Tebinka, *Polityka brytyjska wobec problemu granicy polsko-radzieckiej*, pp. 199–201.

52 Rozhovory pana presidenta republiky s velvyslancem P. B. Nicholsem. Rozhovor s Nicholsem dne 1 května 1942, AÚTGM, fond EB-V, karton 79–82, Anglie IV; Report by H. Ripka, 1 May 1942, p. 167, TNA, FO 371/30834, C4668/326/12, letter from P. Nichols to R. M. Makins, 1 May 1942. See also: SÚA, fond č. 1, H. Ripka 1-5-19-3, p. 140.

At the FO, Beneš's proclamations about his planned trip to Moscow were seen as a promise of a renewed "diplomatic attack" about annulling Munich immediately after the signature of the negotiated British-Soviet agreement. It was also reckoned that the heralded objective of Beneš's visit to Moscow provided an excellent illustration of the essence of the increasingly evident Soviet political ambitions to stretch the sphere of the Kremlin's exclusive influences to the whole of Eastern Europe. It was expected that the USSR intended to occupy Finland, the Baltic states and Romania, bring about a close union between the Czechoslovak Republic and Yugoslavia, squash Hungary and encircle Poland. This forecast of the development of the situation, it was thought, must by its very nature have been more alarming to Beneš than it was to the FO. This was also the explanation for his intention to attempt to prevent events from developing similarly through diplomatic negotiations with the Soviets, while also persuading the British to support both the Czechoslovak and Polish territorial demands to Germany and Hungary. However, the FO's position was that Great Britain could ultimately accept such a solution, but not at this moment of the war.[53] Furthermore, it was seen as obvious that "this manoeuvring of Dr. Benes will have little or no effect on Russian policy, though it may well be an embarrassment to ourselves".[54] FO officials were convinced that the Soviets would soon give Beneš the choice between co-operation with the USSR and a union with Poland, and thus that Moscow would firmly oppose any plans for a Czechoslovak-Polish confederation.[55] This analysis led to the conclusion that a speedily agreed British-Soviet treaty, even if it might be interpreted as London's consent to the realisation of the Soviet political programme, would in fact put British diplomacy in a better situation than if no such treaty existed because towards the end of the war it would give Britain a certain foothold that it would be able to use in negotiations aiming to curb the Kremlin's ambitions. However, certain high-ranking FO officials (William Strang, Orme Sargent) did not believe that Britain would be able to stand up to the Soviet plans in a situation with a shattered Germany and the USSR as a member of the victorious coalition. Reluctantly, they concluded that the only chance to curb Moscow's expansion would be to retain a sufficiently strong Germany after the war that would be capable of offsetting Moscow's power.[56] No conclusions for the British-Czechoslovak negotiations were drawn from these reflections, leaving them in suspension. Yet the ongoing intensive

53 Minute by R. M. Makins, 7 May 1942, TNA, FO 371/30834, C4668/326/12, p. 138.
54 Ibid.
55 The Soviets made this opposition clear to the Czechoslovak government: 'Doc. No. 163, 15 May 1942, Report by H. Ripka on a conversation with A. J. Bogomolov', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 331–33.
56 Minutes by P. F. Hancock, F. K. Roberts and R. M. Makins, 7 May, A. R. Dew, 9 May, W. Strang, 12 and 14 May, O. G. Sargent, 13 and 14 May 1942, TNA, FO 371/30834, C4668/326/12, pp. 138–39.

British-Soviet talks, during which particularly pro-Soviet views were promoted by Bruce Lockhart, had a strong influence on Eden's decisions,[57] leading on 26 May 1942 to the signing of a treaty establishing an alliance between the two countries that pledged mutual assistance and cooperation for a period of 20 years.[58]

Beneš was genuinely delighted by the content of the Anglo-Soviet agreement. He expressed his hope to the British that this act would also prompt the Poles to rely on an alliance with Moscow. At a meeting with Eden on 4 June, Beneš assured him that "the Soviets will stick to the agreement and loyally implement it – as I know them and can gather from their policy to date"[59], thereby proving that he in fact knew little about the nature of the state whose sincere conduct he was so ardently vouching for. He also repeatedly told his British interlocutors that the USSR had no intention to Sovietise Czechoslovakia or Poland, which was in fact impossible in his opinion. Regarding the repeal of Munich, however, no progress was made. Irritated by this state of affairs, Beneš concluded his next discussion with Nichols on 5 June by informing him confidentially about an official Soviet declaration that A. J. Bogomolov had handed Ripka the previous day. In it, the Soviet ambassador stated that the USSR supported the complete reconstruction of the Czechoslovak Republic with its pre-Munich borders. For now, this was an oral declaration not confirmed by any document, but even in this form it was a major boon to Beneš's position in his negotiations with the British. To mitigate the impression that this information would make on Nichols, the president immediately accentuated the major significance of the freshly signed Anglo-Soviet Treaty, adding that Bogomolov's declaration made no difference to Czechoslovak policy towards Poland, "which we always planned and understood on condition of Polish agreement with the USSR".[60] This final claim marked a significant change in Czechoslovak policy regarding the question of a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation, pointing to a swift collapse of the whole idea. An agreement with the Soviet Union had never previously been presented to the Polish side as an essential condition. However, it was characteristic of

57 Bruce Lockhart, *Přichází zúčtování*, pp. 230–32.

58 'Doc. No. 107, Dogovor meždu Sojuzom Sovetskich Socialističeskich Respublik i Soedinennym Korolevstvom v Velikobritanii o sojuze v vojne protiv gitlerovskoj Germanii i ee soobščnikov v Evrope i o sotrudničestve i vzaimnoj pomošči posle vojny, 26 maja 1942 g.', in *Sovetsko-anglijskie otnošenija vo vremja velikoj otečestvennoj vojny 1941–1945: Dokumenty i materjaly v dvuch tomach* (hereafter SAO), 2 vols (Moskva: Politizdat, 1983), I, pp. 237–40. See also: Martin D. Brown, *Dealing with Democrats. The British Foreign Office and the Czechoslovak Émigrés in Great Britain, 1939 to 1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang AG, 2006), pp. 190–92.

59 Rozhovory pana presidenta s Edenem. Rozhovor s Edenem ve F.O. dne 4 června 1942, AÚTGM, fond EB-V, karton 79–82, Anglie II.

60 Rozhovory E. Beneše 1940–1944. Rozhovor s Nicholsem dne 5 června 1942, AÚTGM, fond EB-V, karton 79/1, Velká Británie, p. 98. On the course of Beneš's meeting with Nichols of 5 June see also: Letter from P. Nichols to R. M. Makins, 9 June 1942, TNA, FO 371/30834, C5797/326/12, pp. 177–79. For the Soviet declaration, see 'Doc. No. 168, 4 June 1942, Report by H. Ripka on a conversation with A. J. Bogomolov', in ČSVDJ, I, p. 342. Molotov further confirmed this declaration in a conversation with Beneš on 9 June – 'Doc. No. 171, 9 June 1942, report by E. Beneš on a conversation with V. M. Molotov', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 348–51.

the hierarchy of importance of problems in the British perspective that Nichols's report completely overlooked information on the Soviet position regarding the Czechoslovak borders but addressed Beneš's declaration regarding the future of the Polish-Czechoslovak confederation, in which the president expressed the belief that ultimately he would have to negotiate with different Poles than those with whom he had spoken in London.[61] Beneš soon confirmed his position to Bruce Lockhart, reporting on his meeting with Molotov on 9 June, at which he had assured the Soviets that Czechoslovakia "would not participate in any larger European confederation without previous consultation with Russia".[62]

Beneš's ever more frequent proclamations, unambiguously demonstrating that the Czechoslovak authorities saw Moscow's assent as a sine qua non condition for Czechoslovakia's participation in any broader Central European confederations with the participation of Poland or Hungary, were of great concern to the FO. The Central Department was also not receptive to the idea of the Czechoslovak president paying a visit to Moscow. On the other hand, the declared intention to convince the Soviets of the need to form a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation, which Beneš cited as the reason for this trip, was welcomed, and it was even proposed that Eden should meet Beneš again to encourage the Czechoslovaks to continue their rapprochement with the Poles. Since the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of 26 May did not contain any mention of borders, it was also reckoned that Beneš's negotiating position had not changed and he should therefore limit his demands, which in the form he presented were regarded as unacceptable, although continued discussion on the subject was agreed to.[63] Further talks took place at Beneš and Ripka's meeting with Eden and Nichols on 25 June. The foreign secretary questioned his interlocutors in detail about the state of Czechoslovak-Soviet relations, especially in the context of the relationship with Poland. As for repealing Munich, he received from the president a rather hypocritical assurance that he wanted first of all to reach an agreement with the British and had never intended to use Soviet help to put pressure on them. However, this came with the information that the Czechoslovak side had received verbal assurance from the Soviets concerning the reconstruction of the pre-Munich Czechoslovak Republic and expected to soon receive a written version. Furthermore, immediately after this declaration, Ripka tried to mobilise the foreign

61 Letter from P. Nichols to R. M. Makins, 9 June 1942, TNA, FO 371/30834, C5797/326/12, pp. 177–78.
62 Bruce Lockhart, 'Entry from 13 June 1942', in *The Diaries of Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart*, pp. 173–74. Cf. Letter from R. H. Bruce Lockhart to O. Sargent, 13 June 1942, and Report by R. H. Bruce Lockhart for O. Sargent, 13 June 1942 (no page numbering – three pages), TNA, FO 800/837; and 'Doc. No. 113, Reception of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic Eduard Beneš (9 June 1942)', in *W&D*, pp. 285–88.
63 Minutes by P. F. Hancock and F. K. Roberts, 11 June, R. M. Makins, 12 June, H. W. Malkin, 13 June, and A. Eden, 14 June 1942, TNA, FO 371/30834, C5797/326/12, pp. 174–76.

secretary to make faster decisions, suggesting that his country wanted to reach an agreement with Britain before it received written confirmation of the USSR's position on Munich. But this only brought an angry reaction from Eden, who declared that such a move from Moscow would counter the "spirit and commitments stemming from the British-Soviet agreement". Beneš sought to mitigate the situation by explaining that it was not a separate Czechoslovak-Soviet agreement that was meant, but merely simple confirmations of the USSR's stance on the matter.[64]

Interestingly, a similar game was played with Beneš by Alexander Bogomolov, the Soviet representative to the governments-in-exile in London. On 13 July, the Czechoslovak president informed him of the course of negotiations with the British on annulling Munich, seeking written confirmation of the Soviet position on the borders of Czechoslovakia. But he only received an assurance that as soon as the Czechoslovaks received an official note on this issue from Eden, Bogomolov would send a relevant report to Moscow. At the same time, the Soviet ambassador suggested a suspension of Czechoslovak-Polish talks on a confederation and three days later officially informed Masaryk that the USSR was opposed to further negotiations aimed at bringing about a union between these two countries. This could only be interpreted as an attempt to link the Czechoslovak authorities' approach to the issue of a confederation, which suited Moscow's interests, with the possibility of obtaining the written Soviet support they desired for the reconstruction of Czechoslovakia with its 1938 borders.[65] As for the demand to break off negotiations with the Poles regarding the confederation, the Czechoslovaks seemed surprised. Although Beneš and Ripka rightly identified the reasons for which the USSR opposed creating larger political structures in East-Central Europe, reasoning that in future this would make it difficult for it to subdue this region, Ripka rejected Nichols's suggestion that Eden might intervene with Maisky on the issue, assuring that in his talks with Molotov the British foreign minister had stressed the FO's favourable position toward the planned confederation.[66]

At this point, information on the Soviet position regarding Czechoslovakia's pre-Munich borders had already reached the press. *Daily Herald*

64 Rozhovory E. Beneše 1940–1944, report by H. Ripka on E. Beneš and H. Ripka's meeting with A. Eden and P. Nichols, 25 June 1942, AÚTGM, fond EB-V, karton 79/1, Velká Británie. It is telling that Eden devoted a three-sentence paragraph to the discussion on revoking Munich in his report on the meeting, whereas his account of the debate on Czechoslovak-Polish-Soviet issues was more extensive: Report by A. Eden for P. Nichols, 25 June 1942, TNA, FO 954/4A, C6483/1257/G, p. 176.

65 'Doc. No. 177, 13 July 1942, E. Beneš's report on a conversation with A. J. Bogomolov', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 362–64; 'Doc. No. 178, 15 July 1942, MZV report on J. Masaryk's conversation with A. J. Bogomolov', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 365–66; Toman Brod, *Osudný omyl Edvarda Beneše 1939–1948. Československá cesta do sovětského područí* (Praha: Academia, 2002), p. 140.

66 'Doc. No. 179, 16 July 1942, extract from H. Ripka's report on a conversation with E. Beneš', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 366–67; Report by H. Ripka on a conversation with P. Nichols, 23 July 1942, AÚTGM, fond EB, složka EBL 110/1, krabice č. 348, Velká Británie, p. 186; Report by P. Nichols for F. K. Roberts, 24 July 1942, TNA, FO 371/30835, C7361/326/12, pp. 57–58.

correspondent Willian Norman Ewer asked the FO about this issue, forcing ministry officials to consider the possible public interpretations of the impact of the Soviet declaration on British policy.[67] Furthermore, on 5 August 1942, when, following painstaking negotiations, an agreement had finally been reached on annulment of the consequences of the Munich treaty, and after an exchange of notes, Masaryk and Beneš suggested in a radio broadcast that Britain had accepted the complete rejection of the outcomes of Munich, causing a wave of criticism at the FO. Central Department officials were particularly surprised by the fact that the Czechoslovak president had paid more attention to the Soviet position on Munich than the British-Czechoslovak exchange of notes on this agreement, which after all offered the opportunity for a public statement on the issue. It was also noted that, by providing information about the USSR's confirmation of Czechoslovakia's pre-Munich borders, both Beneš and the Soviets had ignored Eden's warning that such written assurances from the Kremlin would violate the Anglo-Soviet agreement and could face opposition from the British government.[68] Contrary to his own propaganda, Beneš was of course aware of the differences that remained between British and Czechoslovak views on the legal issues associated with the Munich agreements. He also thought that a major contributing factor in the success of the negotiations was the pressure that the FO had felt as a result of Soviet diplomacy's position on the issue. In his eyes, the British hesitation increased the level of the country's guilt for Munich. The British position did not fully match that of Czechoslovakia. London announced that since the Germans had themselves wrecked the agreement of September 1938 by invading Prague on 15 March 1939, Britain saw itself as released from any obligations resulting from it. Yet this did not mean acceptance of the idea of uninterrupted continuation of the existence of the First Czechoslovak Republic, nor, less still, a commitment to restore its pre-Munich borders. The important albeit not fully understandable reason for this cautious British position on Beneš's proposal to simply acknowledge that the Munich treaty had been brought about by force and was thus invalid from the outset was not only political concerns but also formal and legal ones. After all, in terms of legislative procedure, the agreement had been signed and ratified by the British parliament absolutely legally. Therefore, the risk of accepting that it had been invalid from the outset, as if it had never existed, was that it would create an extraordinary legal precedent

67 Letter from W. N. Ewer to W. Ridsdale, 17 June 1942, p. 184; letter from W. Ridsdale to O. Sargent, 18 June 1942, TNA, FO 371/30834, C6167/326/12, p. 183.

68 Minute by F. K. Roberts, 18 August 1942, TNA, FO 371/30835, C7933/326/12, pp. 80–81; Minutes by F. K. Roberts, 16 August and D. Allen (?), 17 August 1942, TNA, FO 371/30835, C7933/326/12, p. 82, and also letter from P. Nichols to A. Eden, 12 August 1942, TNA, FO 371/30835, C7933/326/12, p. 82.

resulting only from political reasons. In the precedent-based English legal system, this could have serious unforeseeable consequences. The Soviet side, not a signatory of the Munich agreement, did not consider such formal and legal restrictions. This meant that it was able to offer more to Czechoslovakia regarding its annulment, and faster than the British could.

August 1942 also marked a turning point in British attitudes to Polish-Czechoslovak relations. Probably influenced by Soviet declarations, Britain began to show reserve regarding the plans for a union between the two countries.[69] In September 1942, Beneš told Nichols that his country would remain loyal to the Poles, but he also declared that if the Soviet opposition was sustained, the Czechoslovaks would abandon all talks on a confederation.[70] In an effort to rid itself of some of the responsibility for the failure of this idea, Czechoslovak diplomacy tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Soviets to make a clear declaration to the British and Poles regarding its opposition on this issue.[71] At the same time, Eden, during meetings with Beneš and Masaryk on 2 and 13 November, attempted to persuade the Czechoslovak politicians to influence the Soviets in some way in order to allay their doubts over London's intentions concerning the confederation. The foreign secretary continued to support this idea and suggested a meeting of representatives of the British, Soviet, Czechoslovak and Polish governments to jointly discuss the matter. However, Beneš resisted this suggestion, proposing instead a straightforward Polish-Czechoslovak treaty of alliance approved by London and Moscow, and the British side accepted this idea.[72] Issues concerning the alliance dominated Beneš's November discussions with Eden. They were clearly marked by the particular significance that both sides attached to maintaining good relations with the USSR and the good services mission of sorts that the FO was ready to entrust to Beneš.

At the beginning of January 1943, however, some British conservatives' opinion on Czechoslovak diplomacy's pro-Soviet stance seemed to become widespread, reinforced by the Czechoslovaks' approach towards the idea of a confederation with Poland. At Eden's next meeting with Beneš, the president informed the foreign secretary of Moscow's strong opposition

69 Tadeusz Kisielewski, *Federacja środkowo-europejska. Pertraktacje polsko-czechosłowackie 1939–1943* (Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1991), pp. 199–200.

70 Rozhovory pana presidenta republiky s velvyslancem P. B. Nicholsem. Navštěva velvysl. Nicholse, 18 September 1942, AÚTGM, fond EB–V, karton 79–82, Anglie IV, pp. 212–213.

71 'Doc. No. 198, 21 October 1942, Report by H. Ripka on a conversation with A. J. Bogomolov', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 403–07.

72 Letter from A. Eden to P. Nichols, 2 November 1942, TNA, FO 954/4A, C10614/151/G, p. 20; Minutes by F. K. Roberts, 1 November 1942, TNA, FO 371/30835, C10581/326/12, pp. 226–28; 'Doc. No. 202, 3 November 1942, report by J. Masaryk on a conversation between E. Beneš and A. Eden (1 November is given here as the date of the meeting)', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 410–11; Report by H. Ripka on a conversation with P. Nichols and W. Strang, 5 and 10 November 1942, AÚTGM, fond EB, složka EBL 110/1, krabice č. 348, pp. 181–82. See also: Report by H. Ripka, 25 November 1942 on a conversation with F. K. Roberts, 24 November 1942, SÚA, fond č. 1, H. Ripka 1–5–19–4, pp. 390–92; or AÚTGM, fond EB, složka EBL 104/1, krabice č. 342, pp. 411–13; or extract from this report: AÚTGM, fond EB, složka EBL 104/6, krabice č. 342, p. 8.

not only to the plans for a confederation, but even to a Polish-Czechoslovak alliance. Eden promised that the British, and even he personally, would broach this subject with the Soviets as well as the Poles, which seemed to satisfy Beneš. Nevertheless, he confessed to Fierlinger that he did not believe that Moscow would agree to a Polish-Czechoslovak pact, with the latter responding by warning him that another English survey on the subject would cause dissatisfaction in the Kremlin.[73] As it turned out, Eden did not even address this question in his discussion with the Soviet ambassador on 8 February, despite his promise.

Meanwhile, from April 1943, the Czechoslovaks increasingly often signalled to the British that Beneš intended to go to Moscow with the objective of signing an alliance agreement between the Czechoslovak Republic and the USSR. From the FO's point of view, this Czechoslovak initiative appeared at the least opportune moment – when Polish-Soviet relations had been cut off as a result of the Katyn question. Despite this, intensive Czechoslovak-Soviet consultations continued regarding the planned pact. Beneš kept the British informed, while also even passing on to the Soviets confidential information obtained in discussions with British politicians, including Churchill. At the same time, Czechoslovak diplomats suggested to FO officials that the Soviets were interested not in the communisation of Poland but in forcing the British and Americans to agree to their demands for the western borders of the USSR.[74] Beneš himself went to great lengths to persuade British politicians of the Soviet government's genuine intentions and readiness to honour their agreements. He also did what he could to allay any Western concerns about the Soviets' predatory intentions. In a climate of seeking closer ties with the USSR, both diplomacies readily agreed that the condition for building the Kremlin's trust in the Western Allies' intentions was to give it the Baltic states and Eastern Poland as well as assure it the requisite influence on the shape of the postwar political order in Europe.

However, the intention to sign a Czechoslovak-Soviet alliance treaty at this stage aroused major opposition in the FO, which regarded the course of Czechoslovak diplomacy – seeing a swift rapprochement with the Soviets and abandoning links with Poland – as dangerous because it threatened to isolate the latter and weaken its position with the USSR.

73 TNA, FO 954/4A, C1212/859/G, letter from A. Eden to P. Nichols, 29 January 1943, p. 21; Rozhovory pana presidenta s Edenem, abridged description of E. Beneš's conversation with A. Eden, 29 January 1943, AÚTGM, fond EB–V, karton 79–82, Anglie II; 'Doc. No. 261, from February 1943, information from E. Beneš and J. Masaryk for Z. Fierlinger', in *AOB&M*, I, pp. 311–12; or 'Doc. No. 217, 15 February 1943', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 438–39; 'Doc. No. 218, 21 February 1943', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 440–42; Fierlinger, *Ve službach ČSR*, II, p. 112–15. See also: Marek K. Kamiński, *Edvard Beneš kontra gen. Władysław Sikorski. Polityka władz czechosłowackich na emigracji wobec rządu polskiego na uchodźstwie 1939–1943* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2005), pp. 262–63.

74 Report by H. Ripka, 30 April 1943 on a conversation with W. Strang, AÚTGM, fond EB, složka EBL 104/1, krabice č. 342, Mezinárodní vztahy Velká Británie, pp. 145–48; or 'Doc. No. 227', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 464–65.

Nichols presented an official interpellation on this matter to Masaryk, informing him that the British government would deem Czechoslovakia's planned actions a misstep, "especially given Polish issues".[75] Britain's efforts to halt or at least delay the Czechoslovak-Soviet agreement met with a reminder on the issue, sent from Moscow via Fierlinger.[76]

On 16 June, soon after returning from the United States, where he had been since early May, Beneš met with Eden, telling him about the support he had received for his policy towards the USSR from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He also reported on the mission which (he thought) Roosevelt had given him for his planned trip to Moscow, which was to secure from the Soviets a solution to the question of incorporating the Baltic states and Polish Eastern territories into the USSR that would be acceptable to the American public. However, Beneš's avowed intention to begin his trip to Moscow at the beginning of July with the goal of signing a Czechoslovak-Soviet mutual assistance pact was met with protests from Eden, who said that it would violate the so-called "self-denying ordinance" – an informal agreement that Beneš had made with Molotov in 1942 compelling both Britain and the USSR to refrain from signing treaties concerning the postwar period with smaller Allied states.[77] He also pointed to the negative consequences of such a move for Czechoslovak-Polish relations and suggested signing a trilateral treaty that would include Poland. With Polish-Soviet relations broken off, however, this would have been impossible in the foreseeable future, and in fact it entailed a proposal to temporarily abstain from actions in this respect.

Upon informing Bogomolov of his discussion with Eden, Beneš faced pressure not to yield on the matter of the Czechoslovak-Soviet accord, even if it meant conflict with the British. The president agreed with the Soviet ambassador regarding the option of amending the text of the planned agreement in such a way as to circumvent potential reservations from the FO. He also openly admitted that it was purely for tactical reasons – with British and American views in mind – that he had deliberately constructed the draft agreement so that it could be trilateral and seen as friendly to the Polish government. But even this explanation did not change the Soviet ambassador's negative attitude to the prospect of signing an accord including Poland, resulting in Beneš's immediate withdrawal from further

75 AMZV, LA, oddíl 4, regál 68, č. 446, Smlouvy, note of 2 June 1943 (č. 3669/dův/43) – unsigned. Almost identical text see Dispatch from J. Masaryk and H. Ripka to E. Beneš, 2 June 1943, Doc. No. 247, 3 June 1943, SÚA, fond č. 1, H. Ripka 1–161/5; "Report by H. Ripka on a conversation with P. Nichols", in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 490–92.

76 'Doc. No. 228, 7 May 1943, telegram from Z. Fierlinger to E. Beneš on a conversation between A. J. Kornejczuk and K. V. Novikov', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 466–67; and 'Doc. No. 233, 13 May 1943, telegram from Z. Fierlinger to E. Beneš', in ČSVDJ, I, p. 471.

77 For more, see Brown, *Dealing with Democrats*, pp. 194–99.

support for the idea of a trilateral pact.[78] At the next meetings, the Soviets stepped up their efforts to secure a swift deal, denying that there was any informal British-Soviet agreement prohibiting it, but this was met with growing pressure from the FO to thwart Czechoslovak diplomacy's plans. After his next meeting with Beneš on 24 June, Eden noted, "Nevertheless, the more I reflected over his [Beneš's] proposal, the less it appealed to me". He warned that the signing of the planned pact "would undoubtedly be interpreted, not only in this country [Great Britain], but throughout the world, as indicating that Czechoslovakia had definitely joined the Russian camp, if, indeed, it was not said that Czechoslovakia was now in the Russian pocket. This would [...] be [...] clearly against the long-term interests of Czechoslovakia herself". Eden added that the FO would not see any problem if such a treaty were concluded after the war. His proposal was to agree with the Soviet government to sign a joint declaration of the two governments' intention to conclude the proposed pact in the future and prepare guarantees in writing that the USSR was willing to give to Czechoslovakia.[79] While Eden's arguments did not convince Beneš, he received full support for his position at a war cabinet meeting on 28 June.[80]

Beneš therefore faced pressure on two fronts. Caught between the Soviet demand to sign a Czechoslovak-Soviet accord as quickly as possible and the British opposition to it, following his next discussion with Bogomolov he agreed to give the Soviets a decision on a possible postponement of his visit to Moscow and welcomed the promise that Ambassador Maisky would discuss the planned pact directly with Eden.[81] On 30 June, Beneš tried to persuade Eden to give his approval for the visit to Moscow itself, where the proposed treaty had been agreed upon but not signed, but the British minister also found this to be excessive.

Meanwhile, on 2 July, the foreign secretary met Maisky, who assured him that the Soviet government was only interested in expanding the Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty of 18 July 1941 by transforming it into a pact similar to the Anglo-Soviet treaty and extending its validity to 20 years. Maisky also claimed that none of the points of the Anglo-Soviet agreement prohibited its signatories from similar engagement with other countries and that they were therefore free to do as they pleased in this regard. Eden did not share this view, and as proof that it was not the case he presented

78 'Doc. No. 254, 18 June 1943, report by E. Beneš on a conversation with A. J. Bogomolov', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 504–06 and 'Doc. No. 249, 19 June 1943, extract from a report by A. J. Bogomolov for the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR on a conversation with E. Beneš', in *DMDČSV*, IV, I, pp. 367–69.

79 All quotations in this paragraph, see Letter from A. Eden to P. Nichols, 25 June 1943, TNA, FO 954/4A, C7363/2462/G, p. 26.

80 War Cabinet 89 (43), 28 June 1943, TNA, Cab. 65/34, p. 154 (print pp. 108–09).

81 'Doc. No. 264, 30 June 1943, report by E. Beneš on a conversation with A. J. Bogomolov', in ČSVDJ, I, pp. 523–25.

the Soviet ambassador with a recording of the discussion he had had with Molotov on 9 June 1942 as well as a memorandum communicated by the FO to Maisky himself on 27 July 1942, showing that Britain's opposition to the two powers forming agreements with smaller allies, including in the postwar period, was clearly stated.[82] He also explained that the British objections regarding the Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty resulted mainly from concerns at the negative impact it might have on Poland's situation. Maisky rejected these forecasts, warning that any further British opposition would not be met with understanding by Moscow "and not only Russo-Czech but also Russo-British relations would be affected". This ensured that the tone of the discussion remained frosty. With no agreement reached, the sides merely promised to continue to analyse the issue.[83]

In fact, though, the foreign secretary was prepared to make concessions. His position was shared by Alexander Cadogan, the permanent under-secretary for foreign affairs, who thought that Britain was unable to prevent the signing of a Czech-Soviet pact. Eden again addressed the issue at a war cabinet meeting on 5 July, proposing that, given the Soviet denial of the existence of an undertaking not to sign treaties with smaller allies, the British ambassador to Moscow, Archibald Clark Kerr, should be instructed to intervene by reminding Molotov of this commitment. Should this be unsuccessful, the British side were to agree to sign a Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty, while also insisting that it be constructed in such a way as to allow it to be later converted into a trilateral agreement including Poland. The cabinet approved this proposed course of action.[84] Yet before the instructions could be sent to the British ambassador in the USSR, the FO received word that on 7 July Beneš had met with Bogomolov, who had advised him to postpone his visit to Moscow until autumn unless a treaty was signed now.

Discussions on this issue therefore continued between Soviet, British and Czechoslovak diplomats, in London and Moscow as well as within the Czechoslovak government and at meetings of the National Council (16 and 22 July). Most Czechoslovak ministers favoured signing an agreement with the USSR, even if it meant conflict with Britain – although this was something they wished to avoid if possible.[85]

82 Enclosure 1. Extract from record of Mr. Eden's conversation with M. Molotov at the Foreign Office on 9 June 1942, pp. 28–29; Enclosure 2. Aide-mémoire communicated to M. Maisky on 27 July 1942, TNA, FO 954/4A, C7700/2462/G, p. 29.

83 Letter from A. Eden to A. Clark Kerr, 2 July 1943, TNA, FO 954/4A, C7700/2462/G, p. 28.

84 War Cabinet 93 (43), 5 July 1943, TNA, Cab. 65/35, p. 10 (print pp. 127–28); Cadogan, 'Entry from 5 July 1943', in *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, p. 540.

85 Resolution of the Government on July 16th 1943, AMZV, LA, oddíl 4, regál 68, č. 446, Smlouvy; 'Doc. No. 11, 16 July 1943, Report by H. Ripka on a meeting of the Czechoslovak government' in ČSVDJ, vol. II (*červenec 1943–březen 1945*), ed. by Jan Němeček and others (Praha: Státní ústřední archiv, 1999), pp. 36–37.

Meanwhile, in late July the Soviet chargé d'affaires in London, Arkady Sobolev, presented the FO with an official memorandum on the British-Soviet agreement not to sign treaties with smaller allies. The Kremlin accepted that this question had been the subject of informal talks between the two sides but argued that no binding resolutions had been made. Since the FO stuck to its view, the controversies remain unresolved.[86] Discussions on the matter also continued into the next weeks, while the Czechoslovaks, following Bogomolov's advice, waited for the result of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations. Although these did not end until 2 November, they culminated in failure, and, given the lack of agreement, it was mutually agreed that they should be abandoned.[87]

Czechoslovak diplomacy, somewhat sidelined from the discussion in August, also based its view of the situation on the unofficial news it received from minor FO officials. These suggested that the dispute between Britain and the Soviet Union on signing treaties with smaller allies was not just about prestige. The British feared that consenting to the signing of a Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty would become "the beginning of a rush of Central European states to form alliances with one major power or another",[88] which would soon lead to the question of recognition of borders, thereby hampering any chance the powers had of freedom in making decisions at a peace conference. Perhaps a more important argument discerned by the FO against such alliances was the worry that they would lead to the emergence of two blocs of allies and thus create the conditions for a confrontation between them.

On 31 August, the question of a Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty again became a subject of discussion for Eden and Maisky. The Soviet ambassador tried to sound out whether Britain would withdraw its objections to a declaration of the possibility of Poland joining it at any moment. The foreign secretary undertook to consider this issue. After the meeting he concluded that it was incumbent to try to persuade the Kremlin to abandon the idea of an accord with Czechoslovakia and, should this prove unrealisable, ensure that it was "as anodyne as possible".[89]

In the first half of September, it briefly seemed that the FO's opposition to Beneš's visit to Moscow had been withdrawn, but Eden soon disavowed Bruce Lockhart's proclamations on this matter. Although he

86 'Doc. No. 237, 26 July 1943, Pamjatnaja zapiska pravitel'stva CCCP pravitel'stvu Velikobritanii', in *SAO*, I, pp. 408–09; or Enclosure. Aide-mémoire, 26 July 1943, TNA, FO 954/4A, N4280/66/G, p. 30; See also Letter from A. Eden to A. Clark Kerr, 26 July 1946, p. 30; and Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, p. 596.

87 'Doc. No. 282, 1 October 1943, Pis'mo posla Velikobritanii v SSSR narodnomu komissaru inostrannych del SSSR', and 'Proekt noty o soglašenijach meždu glavnymi i malymi sojuznikami po poslevoennym voprosam', in *SAO*, I, pp. 465–67; 'Doc. No. 287, 8 October 1943, Pis'mo narodnogo komissara inostrannych del SSSR poslu Velikobritanii v SSSR', in *SAO*, I, pp. 470–71; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, pp. 598–99.

88 Report by J. Kraus, 18 August 1943, č.j.5913/dův/43, SÚA, fond č. 1, H. Ripka 1–5–24, pp. 45–46.

89 Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, p. 597.

left the final decision to Beneš himself, he warned that should the president decide on a prompt visit to Moscow, "Churchill would certainly be most indignant".[90] The dilemma the Czechoslovak leader faced was framed most emphatically by Strang in four sentences summing up the British stance: "we don't want you to go now; the visit is inopportune because of the Poles; you are head of a sovereign state; if you insist on going, we shall not stop you".[91] Beneš was uncomfortable in such situations and delayed the decision. On 24 September, the Czechoslovak government accepted this position, adopting a declaration that was also communicated to the Allied governments. This asserted the desire that a Czechoslovak-Soviet agreement be made promptly but also declared that a goal of Czechoslovakia's policy was to bring about closer ties between Britain and the USSR and not to deepen problems that emerged. This was also the explanation given for a brief delay in signing the Czechoslovak-Soviet agreement until the controversies between the major powers could be cleared up.[92] Soon after, however (on 2 October), the Czechoslovak government again expressed its wish for a swift accord with the Soviets. This declaration was translated into English, given to the FO, and was again sent to Moscow and Washington. In a dispatch to the Soviets, Ripka requested no further delays with this issue. Fierlinger informed that the Soviets were ready to sign an agreement at any moment; he also noted a change in the draft sent by Beneš that would mean it did not need ratification but would be binding as soon as it was signed.[93] He also denied suspicions of any machinations from the Soviet side and noted the Kremlin's reluctance for the Czechoslovaks to give the British detailed information about the state of their negotiations on signing a treaty. In Moscow, these negotiations were regarded as a purely Soviet-Czechoslovak issue. He also warned that Molotov would be unwilling to discuss this issue with Eden at the planned conference of ministers representing the three major Allied powers that would take place in Moscow between 19 and 30 October.[94]

Meanwhile, Eden – irritated by the repeated declarations from Czechoslovakia about its desire to swiftly conclude an agreement with the USSR, in which all the blame for the delay was placed on the British – on

90 'Doc. No. 23, 8 September 1943, report by J. Smutný on J. Masaryk's conversation with I. Maisky and A. Eden', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 56–57; or 'Doc. No. 301', in *AOB&M*, I, pp. 364–65; Kamiński, 'Władze czechosłowackie na emigracji wobec perspektywy wizyty Edvarda Beneša w Moskwie (czerwiec–październik 1943 r.)', *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 39/3 (2007), 76.

91 Bruce Lockhart, 'Entry of 13 September 1943', in *The Diaries of Sir Robert Bruce-Lockhart*, II, p. 260.

92 Raport MZV on a meeting of the Czechoslovak government, 24 September 1943 (č.6917/dův/43) – English version, AMZV, LA, oddíl 4, regál 68, č. 446, Smlouvy; and Report by Nosek, 2 October 1943; or Politické věci, zprávy: SSSR 1940–1944, AMZV, LA–D, oddíl 4, regál 70, č. 114; Czech version: 'Doc. No. 26', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 59–62.

93 'Doc. No. 282, 2 October 1943, telegram from Z. Fierlinger to E. Beneš', in *DMDČSV*, IV, I, p. 409.

94 Information from J. Nosek from text of Z. Fierlinger's dispatch to MZV, 4 October 1943, AMZV, LA, oddíl 4, regál 68, č. 446, Smlouvy; and 'Doc. No. 33, 7 October 1943, telegram from Z. Fierlinger to MZV', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 71–72; Fierlinger, *Ve službách ČSR*, II, pp. 156–59.

7 October summoned Masaryk and informed him of his dissatisfaction at the way the Czechoslovaks were presenting the situation to the public. He noted that the fact that the postponement of Beneš's visit to Moscow had come at the suggestion of the Soviets was consistently ignored, with the conduct of the British government constantly blamed. He similarly criticised the interpretation of the events associated with the negotiations on the Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty in the dispatches sent by the Czechoslovak government to its British, Soviet and American counterparts. Eden also stated that the FO would officially respond to the Czechoslovak declaration of 24 September. Privately, he added that the Czechoslovak authorities' stance had undermined the British government's sympathy for them. "Your government has gone mad and can think of nothing but an accord with Russia", he asserted.[95]

Informed of Eden's criticism of the actions of Czech diplomacy, Beneš put all the blame for the sharp wording of the declarations and dispatches sent to Washington and Moscow on Minister Ripka, who had apparently not listened to the president's advice to soften the text. Masaryk – the least keen of the Czechoslovak ministers on closer ties with the Soviets but also supinely loyal to Beneš – was clearly agitated by the whole situation and the role he had come to play in it. As foreign minister, he took responsibility for the form of the Czechoslovak notes but could not contain an eruption of anger. "The government approved it, the president too, so I had to accept it", he told Beneš. "But I've just about had enough of this. They all shit their pants [sic] about the communists, everyone quakes before them. I have people in the administration who immediately inform the communists and the Soviet embassy of everything – I don't know who I can talk to and who I can't. It's exactly the same in the National Council – the Soviet embassy knows what's been discussed in the National Council before you do. I have communists alongside me in the government. [Minister of state Jaroslav] Stranský and [Minister of National Defence Gen. Sergej] Ingr announced to me that we must have an agreement with Russia, even if it means completely separating from England and America". Masaryk's opinion made an impression on Beneš, who concluded that "the government's actions, Ripka's efforts to please the communists and Russians, [...] what the National Council [and] Fierlinger have led us [the Czech government] to a losing position with the English, and given us nothing with the Russians".[96]

95 'Doc. No. 317, 8 October 1943, report by J. Smutný on J. Masaryk's conversation with E. Beneš', in *AOB&M*, I, p. 388; or 'Doc. No. 34', in CSVDJ, II, p. 73.
96 'Doc. No. 317, 8 October 1943, report by J. Smutný on J. Masaryk's conversation with E. Beneš', in *AOB&M*, I, p. 388.

However, the Soviet pressure to quickly sign an accord continued to grow. On 11 October, Vasily Valkov, Soviet embassy advisor to the Allied governments in London, urged Ripka to ensure that – since Czechoslovakia had already accepted the Soviets' draft treaty – Beneš immediately travel to Moscow to sign it. Yet the Czechoslovak minister of state pointed to the British opposition and demanded from the Soviets that not only Czechoslovak politicians but also Eden state plainly and categorically their determination to reach an agreement with Czechoslovakia. He also had the impression that Valkov had received instructions to bring about a Soviet-Czechoslovak accord before the conference of ministers in Moscow so that Eden could be presented with a fait accompli, while the collection of resultant tensions could be transferred to British-Czechoslovak relations. He was strengthened in this conviction by a visit of representatives of the Czechoslovak communists, who tried to force the same upon him as Valkov, evidently instructed to do so by the Soviet embassy.[97]

At the same time, Beneš and Masaryk began to dampen Fierlinger's zeal somewhat concerning the immediate signing of an agreement. Beneš presented a series of minor remarks on the Soviet draft, which he fundamentally accepted, but this meant that agreeing the final text required a further exchange of correspondence. He wanted the Soviets to understand that Czechoslovakia also had obligations to the British and that any conflict with the latter could be dangerous to his country's vital interests.[98] Beneš was gravely concerned by the news that, before departing for Moscow, Eden had admitted to several leading British journalists that Czechoslovakia's conduct had made things very difficult for him and vowed to be tough in negotiations on Czechoslovak issues. He had also pledged to declare his désinteressement regarding the actions of Czechoslovak diplomacy, stating that all that he was prepared to accept was a declaration of "pro futuro" intentions and the signing of a Czechoslovak-Soviet accord after the war. Beneš's reaction was quite unexpected. He declared that Eden's idea to merely initial a general agreement – saving the signing of a pact until after the war – coincided completely with what he had wanted from the outset. More importantly, he declared that, contrary to the Russians' wishes that he should go straight to Moscow, "he will not go until the atmosphere clears up and will not sign an accord [unless] there is an agreement about this between England and Russia".[99] The FO's negative stance on the intention of signing a Czechoslovak-Soviet pact was

97 'Doc. No. 35, 11 October 1943, Report by H. Ripka on a conversation with V. A. Valkov', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 75–77.
98 'Doc. No. 36, 13 October 1943, telegram from E. Beneš to Z. Fierlinger', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 77–79; or 'Doc. No. 324', in *AOB&M*, I, pp. 396–97; Fierlinger, *Ve službach ČSR*, II, p. 161–63.
99 'Doc. No. 324, 16 October 1943, record of J. Smutný's conversation with E. Beneš', in *AOB&M*, I, p. 395.

confirmed by a note from 16 October. Presenting this, Nichols expressed the hope that the whole matter would be resolved during the forthcoming conference in Moscow.[100] The British anticipated that the Czechoslovak--Soviet agreement would not be signed before the end of the war.[101] Notified of this by Beneš, Fierlinger asked the Soviets to include the issue in talks with Eden, who was already in Moscow, and exert pressure on him to abandon his reservations.[102]

On Molotov's initiative, the future of the Czechoslovak-Soviet pact was indeed discussed at the conference in Moscow on 24 October. Eden's reaction can be described as a hasty retreat from his previous positions, ending in almost overt capitulation. He stated immediately that he was not opposed to Beneš's visit and began to discuss the British-Soviet arrangements not to enter agreements with smaller Allied states. He approved of the proposed accord between Czechoslovakia and the USSR with no reservations, merely requesting 24 hours to consult Churchill on the matter, which Molotov accepted.[103] Eden recommended that the British government should accept the signing of the treaty and approval of the Czechoslovak president's visit to Moscow.[104] The Czechoslovaks were informed of the resolutions first by the Soviets (26 October) and then by the British (28 October).

On 23 November, after preparations lasting almost a month, Beneš departed for Moscow, where, following a long and circuitous journey, he landed only on 11 December, signing the long-awaited pact the following day. The parties in the agreement undertook to offer mutual assistance in the fight against the Third Reich and its allies in Europe, vowed not to take part in any discussions with the German government that did not renounce its aggressive intentions and, without mutual agreement, not to enter peace negotiations with Germany and its allies. Furthermore, the treaty also constituted a Czechoslovak-Soviet military alliance against Germany and its allies that was intended to operate also in the postwar period if Berlin or its allies returned to a policy of expansion. It also contained a resolution on close postwar political and economic cooperation between Czechoslovakia and the USSR with respect for mutual independence,

100 *Memorandum* of British government to Czechoslovak government, 16 October 1943, AMZV, LA, oddíl 4, reg l 68, č. 446, Smlouvy; and 'Doc. No. 39, 18 October 1943, Report by H. Ripka on a conversation with P. Nichols', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 84–85. See also: 'Doc. No. 41, 19 October 1943, Report by H. Ripka on a conversation with P. Nichols', in ČSVDJ, II, p. 90.

101 Eduard Táborský, *Prezident Beneš mezi Západem a Východem* (Praha: Mladá fronta, 1993), p. 182.

102 Telegram from Z. Fierlinger to E. Beneš, 21 October 1943 (the second from that day – according to J. Nosek's report, č.7601/dův/43), AMZV, LA, oddíl 4, regál 68, č. 446, Smlouvy; or Report from J. Nosek, 22 October 1943 č7596/dův/43).

103 Telegrams (No. 1155 and No. 1156) A. Clark Kerr to FO, 23 October (received 24 October) and 23 October (received 25 October) 1943, TNA, Cab. 120/737; 'Doc. No. 303, 24 October 1943, extract from minutes of a meeting of the Moscow conference of foreign ministers of the USSR, USA and Britain', in *DMDČSV*, IV, I, pp. 431–33.

104 Telegrams No. 75 and 81, A. Clark Kerr (on the orders of A. Eden) to FO, 24 October 1943, TNA, Cab. 120/737 and No. 86, 25 October 1943, TNA, Cab. 120/737.

sovereignty, and non-interference in the partner's internal affairs. Clause five of the pact prohibited the parties from signing any agreement or entering a coalition against either one of them. The agreement became valid upon signing and was to remain in force for 20 years, after which time it was to be automatically extended every five years unless one of the parties announced the intention to terminate it. A separate document attached to it was a protocol envisaging the possibility of a third country bordering Czechoslovakia and the USSR which had been the victim of German aggression joining the agreement. While its name was not mentioned, it was clear that only Poland satisfied these criteria.[105]

A wealth of literature and published transcripts exists on the order of proceedings and talks between Beneš and Stalin of 14, 16 and 18 December.[106] These reveal that the Czechoslovak president yielded entirely to the wishes of the Soviet dictator as well as a desire to coordinate Czechoslovak foreign policy with that of the USSR, and even imitation of Soviet models in postwar Czechoslovak domestic policy, with Beneš referring to the need for Moscow's intervention on these matters and repeated mentions of hostility towards Poland and Hungary.

Britain thought that Beneš would be able to play the role of mediator in Polish-Soviet relations and help resurrect relations between the Polish government in London and the USSR. Despite having no specific information on the president's discussions in Moscow, however, Eden soon concluded that the FO should not support his style of mediation.[107] On his way back from Moscow, Beneš met with Churchill in Marrakech. According to the Czech president, the British prime minister claimed that he had always been open to a Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty and emphasised the need for Poland's inclusion. He also agreed to the transfer of Germans from Czechoslovakia, promised the pre-Munich borders and even more, and supported Czechoslovak foreign policy unreservedly.[108] Beneš gave him an account of the Moscow talks and recommended the Soviet proposal to resolve the Polish problem by coopting Kremlin henchmen into the Polish government in London. Having already sanctioned giving

105 'Doc. No. 324, 12 December 1943', in *DMDČSV*, IV, I, pp. 455–57; or in the English version: TNA, FO 371/38920, C2068/35/12, pp. 153–55.

106 Here I will only cite: Doc. No. 1, report by J. Smutný on E. Beneš's discussion with J. Stalin, 12 December 1943: Vojtěch Mastný, 'Benešovy rozhovory se Stalinem a Molotovem', *Svědectví*, 47 (1974), 467–78; or English version: Doc. No. 1, in Vojtěch Mastný, 'The Beneš–Stalin–Molotov Conversations in December 1943. New Documents', *Jahrbücher für Gesichte Osteuropas*, 20/3 (1972), 376–80. Extensive passages have been translated into Polish and annotated by S. Kirkor: Stanisław Kirkor, 'Rola Benesza w sprawie polskiej w 1944 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 26 (1973), 39–56. See also: Stefan Michnik, 'Jeszcze o rozmowach Benesza na Kremlu', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 32 (1975), 215–18.

107 Telegram No. 3161, from FO to HM Government's representative in Algiers, 30 December 1943, TNA, FO 371/38920, C86/35/G/12, p. 47.

108 'Doc. No. 205, 4 January 1944, record of the plan for E. Beneš's conversation with W. Churchill', in *Czechoslovak-Polish Negotiations of the Establishment of Confederation and Alliance 1939–1944*, Prague 1995, pp. 376–77; 'Doc. No. 74, 11 January 1944, extract from E. Beneš's telegram to Z. Fierlinger', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 196–97.

the Polish Eastern Borderlands to the Soviets at the Tehran Conference, Churchill fully agreed with this view.

The Czechoslovak enthusiasm regarding the agreement was accompanied by scepticism and often sharp criticism from FO analysts. "Time will show whether the new Czech realism, which seems to consist of absolute faith in the unqualified support and good intentions of the U.S.S.R [...], is in fact anything more than a façade of realism", was Roberts' verdict.[109] Ultimately, the main priority of British policy resulting from the imperatives of the war – the desire to work together with the USSR – prevailed over all the arguments that led London to express reservations concerning the Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty. Given the British government's far-reaching readiness to make concessions on the Polish question, the increasingly evident fact that the future of this part of Europe would be largely determined by the Red Army that occupied it towards the end of the war, and the enthusiasm of the Czechoslovaks to place themselves in the Soviet sphere of influence, London, mired in a military struggle against the Germans, could hardly be expected to involve itself in a political conflict with Moscow in defence of the future of countries which in reality it was unable to help greatly. In the end, the only winners were the Soviets. By signing the treaty, they managed to further isolate Poland, undermine the prospects of British influence in Czechoslovakia, and weaken the political position of the émigré Czechoslovak government. Although formally this position was strengthened by the pact, in reality it meant that Beneš's administration accepted Moscow's patronage and even sought to encourage the Kremlin to extend its power further still over Poland and Hungary. Late 1943 and early 1944 can also be pinpointed as a distinct political turning point in relations between the Czechoslovak émigré administration and the British government. Britain, whose significance in Czechoslovak policy had diminished since the USSR entered the war with Germany, now definitely lost its position to Moscow as Czechoslovakia's key ally, and Czechoslovak-British relations became much cooler. On the other hand, the British government, having taken strategic – and beneficial to the USSR – decisions at Tehran concerning the future of Central Europe, was also unwilling to become more active in its rivalry with the USSR for influence in what it saw as a less important part of the continent.

Simultaneously, from early 1944 the FO's main subject of interest regarding Czechoslovakia became its relations with the USSR. Against the background of apparently excellent Czechoslovak-Soviet ties, certain actions by the Kremlin were noted that suggested that the structures of

109 Quoted in: Martin Kitchen, *British Policy Towards the Soviet Union During the Second World War* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1986), p. 188.

the Czechoslovak émigré government created around Beneš's group were not necessarily the only political group that Moscow would ultimately be willing to support as candidates to take over the administration in Czechoslovak territory captured by the Red Army. Articles in the Soviet press making the Czechoslovak government responsible for the lack of armed interventions and sabotage against the Third Reich in the occupied country were increasingly frequent, as the FO noted, and the Czechoslovak communists in London made similar criticisms.[110] Responding to British enquiries about the reasons for this, Beneš was evasive, remaining certain of Soviet support on the most important issues for him: restoring Czechoslovakia's pre-September 1938 borders and acceptance of mass resettlement of Germans from its territory. In his view, he did not have to rely too much on HM Government's position in these matters. On 23 March, he told Nichols outright, "Let the British government, the Foreign Office take note that after my trip to Russia we have all international affairs resolved. We also consider our border issues – all of them – to be resolved, not only against Germany and Hungary, but also against Poland, *and I shall not quarrel with anyone about this* [original emphasis]. The pre-Munich borders will be restored [...]. Our foreign policy and diplomatic activity will therefore now be peaceful [and] limited. [...] You will no longer have many endeavours from us. We will quietly await the end of the war".[111] Nonetheless, he proposed launching a discussion on the conditions for a broad understanding on borders, reparations and transfers, adding that the Czechoslovak side had Soviet support on all these matters and did not expect the FO to take a different position.

Meanwhile, the Czechoslovak émigré government was receiving increasingly bad press in the United Kingdom. Beneš's renewed calls to arms to his country, despite his denials, were unanimously interpreted as a consequence of Soviet pressure, and the view that Czechoslovakia would in future lie in the Soviet sphere of influence became increasingly widespread.[112] This was also the moment when the FO began to discern that Czechoslovakia was taking certain actions to improve its image in the West, emphasise its desire to maintain ties with the Anglophone powers, and forge at least minimal guarantees of remaining able to operate in future if the Soviets' actions in the occupied Czechoslovak territory failed to match the hopes of the country's government. These new Czechoslovak

110 Telegram No. 132 from J. Balfour to FO, 18 January 1944 (received 21 January 1944), TNA, FO 371/38920, C924/35/12, p. 97; Laštovička, V *Londýně za války*, p. 334.

111 Rozhovory pana presidenta republiky s velvyslancem P. B. Nicholsem. Rozmluva s Nicholsem v Aston Abbots dne 23. března 1944, AÚTGM, fond EB–V, karton 79–82, Anglie IV. See also: Antonín Klimek, 'Plány Edvarda Beneše na poválečný vývoj Československa. (Od návratu z Moskvy v lednu 1944 do povstání na Slovensku)', *Střední Evropa*, 30 (1993), 25–31 (p. 25); Zeman, *Edvard Beneš – Politický životopis*, p. 218.

112 Zeman, *Edvard Beneš – Politický životopis*, p. 219.

initiatives were, firstly, an expectation that when the Red Army entered Czechoslovakia, the British would help to transport representatives of the Czechoslovak authorities and groups of officials who would immediately set about organising an administration in the liberated lands so that this responsibility lay in Czechoslovak, not Soviet, hands. On the other hand, efforts were made to sign an agreement with the Soviets regulating the status of their army in Czechoslovakia when they arrived, the draft of which was prepared in such a way that it could potentially refer to all Allied armies able to operate there. This was interpreted at the FO as an expression of Czechoslovak diplomacy's desire for the country to be liberated not only from the Red Army, but also from US and British troops. However, it was regarded as being part of the Soviet sphere of responsibility for military activities, which did not mean a lack of British interest in this area. Britain therefore decided to support the idea of the proposed Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty but would not agree to negotiating a similar agreement in which it was included, pointing out that it was highly improbable that its army would find itself in Czechoslovak territory. Moreover, Britain refused to make any commitments to assist in transferring the representatives of the Czechoslovak government and administration, suggesting that this question should be agreed with the Soviets. The reasons for this were technical: the need to make flights over quite a long distance from southern Italy to eastern Czechoslovakia, and above all the belief that without previous consultations with the Soviet government and securing approval for landing aircraft at Soviet airfields, such flights would be very risky.[113] The discussion on striking an agreement on the rules governing the stay of Allied armies in Czechoslovakia was ultimately resolved by the Soviets, who proposed to the Czechoslovak government that the words "Allied forces" be replaced with "Soviet forces", to which they readily agreed. The document was signed on 8 May and immediately came into force.

Despite the negative response from the FO, the Czechoslovak government did not abandon its efforts to form a similar agreement with Britain. It argued that Czechoslovakia needed a treaty with the United Kingdom for broader political reasons, to assure its people that London was not leaving them to the mercy of the Soviets, as well as – by the very fact of its signing – to make an impression on the Soviet government that

113 Letter from P. Nichols to J. G. Ward, 14 March 1944 (46/16/44), TNA, FO 1049/19; See also: Letter from P. Nichols to J. G. Ward, 16 March 1944 (46/18/44), TNA, FO 1049/19; Scheme of Arrangement to Operate when the Allied Armies Enter Czechoslovak Territory; FO instruction (redacted by O. Harvey) for P. Nichols, March 1944 (U2153/2152/G), TNA, FO 1049/19.

would temper any unfavourable intentions it had towards Czechoslovakia.[114] But the FO did not budge from its previous position, arguing that such a move would likely result in a similar request from the Poles and Britain could not offer Poland such a commitment due to the USSR.[115] Eden was willing at best to make a declaration in the House of Commons about Britain's interest in preserving close and friendly ties with Czechoslovakia,[116] but he refused to accept any new treaty obligations. There was a realisation in the British ministry that, while Beneš did not want to be left alone with the Soviets, if pushed to choose between East and West, he would choose the East. This was a very sober assessment of the attitude of the Czechoslovak president, who, at the same time in a conversation with the Soviet ambassador, Viktor Lebedev, suggested that the USSR should already prepare itself for a future war. Beneš predicted that the Soviet Union would be attacked by the West with the use of the rebuilt German forces. "We in any case will go with the Soviets", he promised.[117]

Impressed by the advances of the Soviet offensive on the Eastern Front in summer 1944, the British tried to clarify the objectives and conditions of their own policy towards Central Europe. On 9 August, Eden presented a memorandum containing this as one of its subjects to the war cabinet. This said a great deal about the FO's perception of the political situation at the time and its potential future development in the context of Soviet actions and intentions. It recognised Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary as key countries for the Soviet security system and thus closely associated with the USSR. Soviet opposition to any Central European federations was cited as resulting from fears of a bloc of states under Poland's leadership emerging in this part of the continent that would be hostile to both Germany and the USSR and would form a kind of cordon sanitaire towards the Soviets, referring to a political idea popular since the First World War. The Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty of December 1943 was regarded as a probable indicator of the Kremlin's political intentions for this area. This, it was noted, not only connected Czechoslovakia with the USSR but

114 Letter from P. Nichols to A. Eden, 9 May 1944 with enclosures: Enclosure 1. Agreement concerning the Relationship between the Czechoslovak Administration and the Commander-in-Chief on the Entry of Soviet Troops into Czechoslovak Territory, 8 May 1944, TNA, FO 1049/19, U4177/2152/74; Enclosure 2. BBC Czechoslovak Programme Broadcast by Dr. Hubert Ripka, 8 May, 1944, TNA, FO 1049/19, U4177/2152/74; Enclosure 3. Soviet Monitor, Special Bulletin, 1 May, 1944 (report from Vyshinsky's press conference, 30 April 1944) – no page numbering – in total six pages of print, TNA, FO 1049/19, U4177/2152/74. Telegram No. 2, 8 May 1944, from P. Nichols to FO. Text of agreement of 8 May 1944. See also: Fierlinger, *Ve službách ČSR*, II, pp. 253–54; Hubert Ripka, *S východem a západem* (Londyn, 1944), pp. 80–82; Brod, *Osudný omyl Edvarda Beneše 1939–1948*, p. 293.

115 'Doc. No. 88, 3 May 1944, Report by H. Ripka on a conversation with P. Nichols', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 252–53.

116 He was steadfastly urged to do so by Nichols, who wrote: "It is to our own advantage that they [i.e. the Czechs] should turn to us as well, for they occupy a unique strategic position in Europe to which we cannot remain indifferent. We do not want them to become merely a Russian satellite, and if we don't, mustn't we do what we can to encourage them to look to us as well as to the East?". Letter from P. Nichols to A. Cadogan 20 July 1944, TNA, FO 371/38923, C9608/63/12, pp. 10–10A.

117 'Doc. No. 98, 12 July 1944, extract from a report by H. Ripka on E. Beneš's account of his conversation with V. Lebedev', in ČSVDJ, II, p. 266.

also permitted Poland's accession, thus creating a major bulwark against potential future German aggression. Britain assumed that the Soviets were sufficiently certain of Beneš's support to allow him to sustain a policy of balance between East and West and hoped that in this situation Czechoslovakia could be a bridge between the two parts of the continent that was as useful for the Soviets as it was for Britain and France. It was expected that the USSR would accept Czechoslovakia's social structure and not seek Sovietisation but would use the country as a military buffer against the threat of German aggression. Britain saw its role as to develop economic and cultural exchange with this "'petit bourgeois' State", paving the way to spread British influence throughout Central Europe.[118] Yet the Warsaw Uprising and the associated experiences in relations with Moscow would soon put these views to the test.

With the possibility of an uprising also on the cards in Slovakia, in July 1944 the Czechoslovak government approached the Special Operations Executive (SOE) to request arms. However, although the FO were receptive to this initiative, they made the decision dependent on the Soviet position, concerned that if the Slovak units did not rebel and remained faithful to the Germans, the weapons supplied to them could be used against the Red Army, for which the British did not want to take responsibility. The Czechoslovak government therefore requested armaments from the USSR, but both the British and the Czechoslovak interventions were met with an evasive response from Moscow. Simultaneously, behind Beneš's back, the Soviets began talks with General Ferdinand Čatloš, defence minister in Jozef Tiso's Slovak government. He promised to switch to their side with his army but stood for independent Slovak statehood and demanded that the national character of the Slovak army be maintained, which was, of course, contrary to the political programme of the Czechoslovak émigré government.[119] When an uprising in Slovakia actually started (29 August), it surprised both the British and the Czechoslovak governments. After the experiences with Stalin's stance on the Warsaw Uprising, there were fears in the FO that any bold British initiative regarding support for the insurgency in Slovakia could provoke the Kremlin to take a hostile position. On the other hand, given the seemingly good Czechoslovak-Soviet relations, it was reckoned that the uprising would receive support from the Soviets themselves, and independent requests from the Czechoslovak government

118 Extract from the Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on Soviet Policy in Europe, 9 August 1944, in Vilém Prečan, *V kradeném čase. Výběr ze studií, článků a uvah z let 1973–1993* (Brno: Doplněk, 1994), p. 58.

119 'Doc. No. 105, 26 August 1944, telegrammed instruction by E. Beneš and J. Masaryk for Z. Fierlinger', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 275–77; See also: Eduard Táborský, 'Beneš and Stalin: Moscow 1943 and 1945', *Journal of Central European Affairs*, 13/2 (1953), 154–81 (pp. 169–170); Táborský, *Prezident Beneš mezi Západem a Východem*, pp. 204–07.

would be more effective without British support. British politicians were convinced of the necessity to negotiate everything with Moscow to avoid a repeat of the tragedy of Warsaw.[120] The British government's position was that "Slovakia is in the Russian sphere of operations", leaving the initiative to the USSR.[121] However, numerous attempts to secure Soviet approval for Britain providing the insurgents with tangible support fell short. Either these requests went unanswered or matters were dragged out so long that they became obsolete. Lebedev even suggested that the Slovak Uprising might be a German provocation. Waiting for an initiative or even collaboration from the Soviets would therefore mean abandoning all efforts to assist the insurgency. The Czechoslovak government also did little to influence its Soviet ally in this matter. Admittedly, it repeatedly entreated the British government to supply arms to Slovakia, but it also explained the Soviets' unclear position by citing their surprise regarding the uprising and the uncertainty regarding the extent to which it had been agreed with the Czechoslovak government in London. One even gets the impression that the Czechoslovak government's interventions with both its allies were made pro forma, but in fact they were not interested in securing effective and rapid support for the insurgents. Beneš even expressed understanding for a situation in which it turned out that no support would be offered, leaving the whole issue to the Western Allies to negotiate with Moscow.[122] The apparent reason for this was the president's concerns that the leaders of the uprising could become his rivals for power in the reborn Czechoslovakia.

The experience of efforts to gain help from the Kremlin for the Slovak Uprising, as well as the conclusions that Czechoslovak politicians drew from observing the Soviets' response to the Warsaw Uprising, had a distinct impact on their general attitude to the USSR.[123] Many of them, previously very much pro-Soviet and anti-Polish, in private conversations with FO officials now openly criticised the actions of the Soviet authorities and voiced concerns about their intentions and future plans.[124] As a result, following the American example, on 18 September the British sent their own military mission and some armaments to the insurgent-controlled territory, regarding the Soviets' silence as tacit acceptance of their proposed

120 Prečan, *V kradeném čase*, pp. 78–98; (for more see ibid., pp. 84–86; ibid., pp. 48–49).
121 Telegram from A.M.S.S.O to J.S.M (Washington), 6 September 1944, TNA, Cab. 120/737.
122 Rozhovory pana presidenta republiky s velvyslancem P. B. Nicholsem. Rozhovor s Nicholsem dne 7 září 1944, AÚTGM, fond EB–V, karton 79–82, Anglie IV, pp. 182–83 and "Doc. No. 117, 5 September 1944, Report by H. Ripka on a conversation with P. Nichols", in CSVDJ, II, pp. 294–95. See also: František Vnuk, *Rebelanti a Suplikanti (Slovenská otázka v ilegalite a v exile 1944–1945)* (Lakewood: Jednota, 1989), pp. 135–37.
123 Feierabend, *Politicke vzpomínky*, II, pp. 176–79.
124 Report by F. K. Roberts, 5 October 1944, TNA, FO 371/38921, C14122/38/9/2, pp. 136–37; see also Minutes by A. Eden, October 1944, W. Churchill, 9 October and A. F. C. Gatehouse, 17 October 1944, TNA, FO 371/38921, C14122/38/9/2, pp. 135, 137.

actions and then simply informing them of their implementation.[125] Material Soviet support for the uprising was also offered from 4 September onwards – in fact in its final phase, when its imminent failure was evident. A limited offensive was also mounted in the Carpathians, in the direction of the Dukla Pass, ending with a massacre of the infantry attacking without adequate artillery support and enormous losses, including among the participating Czechoslovak units. In early November, the insurgents' resistance was broken, and Slovakia again found itself under German occupation.

In late 1944, it was evident that since Beneš's visit to Moscow the attitude of the British government and public towards Czechoslovakia had cooled significantly. The label of a willing vassal of the USSR had stuck to the Czechoslovak government-in-exile for good. This situation was exacerbated by the FO's tendency to reduce its interest in Czechoslovak issues in every discussion in which the decision makers' – Eden included – aversion to Beneš's diplomacy and the man himself became visible. The uprising in Slovakia highlighted the weaknesses of both sides' diplomacies regarding the problems that concerned them while also lying in the Soviet sphere of interests. Stalin's position on the Warsaw Uprising laid bare the fragility of faith in the Kremlin's good intentions towards its neighbours, as well as the lack of genuine prospects for the great Western powers influencing Russia's actions without causing open conflict. It became equally flagrantly obvious that the desire to maintain ties between the West and Czechoslovakia , given its government's previous political decisions and the ongoing events of the war, was becoming very difficult. One might also suggest that these governments became a little lost in determining what the objective of their foreign policy should be. Unofficially, the FO continued to receive numerous signals indicating a growing awareness among Czechoslovak politicians of the threat to their country's independence from the USSR; however, priority officially continued to be given to the alliance with Moscow, and this was also the position guaranteed in the confidential discussions of representatives of Soviet diplomacy. This limited desire on the Czechoslovaks' part to emerge from the Kremlin's patronage was discerned at the FO. This, in turn, made it easier for Britain to decide to make certain gestures of support to Czechoslovakia, purely for propaganda purposes. Broader British engagement in defending its influences in the country, given the prospect of potential conflict with the USSR, was not even considered by the FO.

125 Edita Ivaničková, 'Britská politika a Slovensko v rokach 1939–1945', in *Slovensko na konci druhej svetovej vojny (stav, východiská a perspektívy)*, ed. by Valerián Bystrický and Štefan Fano (Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV, 1994), pp. 125–30 (pp. 128–29); Prečan, *V kradeném čase*, pp. 88–90; Vnuk, *Rebelanti a Suplikanti*, pp. 138–39.

It is also not surprising that when, in late 1944, the subject of state independence of Subcarpathian Ruthenia (known by Moscow as Transcarpathian Ukraine) arose in Czechoslovak-Soviet relations, the FO only monitored it rather than assuming an official position. Following Beneš's visit to Moscow, London was confident that the matter had been settled positively in Czechoslovakia's favour. Hence the surprise of both the Czechoslovak and the British government at the Soviets' actions regarding Subcarpathian Ruthenia, which they began to incorporate into the USSR.[126] Czechoslovak politicians regarded not only the very fact of losing part of the area of the pre-Munich Republic, which Beneš was willing to accept, but especially attributing the demanded cession to the will of the local population, as also endangering other disputed Czechoslovak territories where foreign national groups (German, Hungarian and Polish) formed the majority. The situation was further complicated by the appearance of agitation in favour of the establishment of a Slovak Soviet republic and its annexation to the USSR that was conducted by certain communist partisan units in Slovakia, which was evidence of an element of Soviet blackmail of the Czechoslovak government and an instrument of pressure regarding Subcarpathian Ruthenia. Initially, Czechoslovak diplomats tried to proclaim the view that the whole issue was the result of an independent operation by Red Army officers of Ukrainian origin taking place without the Kremlin's knowledge,[127] a version at first believed by the FO. In late December, however, the Soviet government announced that it saw the drive to annex Transcarpathian Ukraine to the USSR as an "expression of the will of the local people" and fully respected it. According to the Soviet government, it could not thwart such intentions as any actions it took to prevent a "spontaneous operation" to annex this province to the Soviet Union would have been interference in internal Czechoslovak affairs. This was prohibited by the December 1943 treaty, which, they claimed, they wished to adhere to.[128] Beneš was shocked by this declaration but decided to accept the situation without an official protest. He intended to discuss this issue during his visit to the USSR that would take place during the Czechoslovak government's planned return to its country from exile, via Moscow.[129] Beneš also concluded that it was essential to visit Slovakia as soon as possible to counteract any attempts to Sovietise this part of the Czechoslovak Republic.

126 'Doc. No. 170 and 171, 5 December 1944, RLUZ resolution and decree', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 365–67; 'Doc. No 219, 5 December 1944, RLUZ letter to E. Beneš', in *DMDČSV*, IV, II, pp. 289–90.
127 Letter from P. Nichols to F. K. Roberts, 20 December 1944, TNA, FO 371/38921, C17903/35/12, pp. 175–76.
128 Eduard Táborský, 'Benešovy moskevské cesty', *Svědectví*, 89/90 (1990), 61–84 (p. 75).
129 'Doc. No. 204, 30 December 1944, E. Beneš's instruction for Z. Fierlinger', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 420–23; 'Doc. No. 205, 30 December 1944, extract from report by H. Ripka on a conversation with I. A. Chichaev and F. T. Gusev', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 424–25; 'Doc. No. 207, 1 January 1945 and No. 208, 2 January 1945, reports by E. Beneš on a conversation with I. A. Chichaev', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 428–30; 'Doc. No. 211, 4 January 1945, instruction from E. Beneš for F. Němec', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 435–37.

By early January 1945, it was already obvious that Czechoslovakia had lost Subcarpathian Ruthenia. Píka reported from Moscow that anyone voicing objections to the province's annexation to the USSR was treated as an enemy of the Soviet state and accused of undemocratic views and even fascism. It became effectively impossible to organise anything on behalf of the Czechoslovak Republic in Subcarpathian Ruthenia.[130] Nevertheless, the Czechoslovak government expressed its view that this matter would not disturb the Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship and accepted its resolution through an agreement, but only after the question of Czechoslovakia's other borders had been settled at a postwar peace conference.[131] Stalin graciously consented to delay the issue until the period following the war with the Germans.[132] This allayed Beneš's fears over Slovakia's future, yet the entire situation clearly showed how much the future of the Republic depended on Moscow's good will and confirmed the Czechoslovak émigré government's satellite status in relation to the Kremlin.

At the FO, meanwhile, the Soviet actions were interpreted as a Kremlin game that was calculated to persuade the Czechoslovak government to swiftly recognise as the government of Poland the Polish Committee of National Liberation, set up in Moscow on Stalin's orders and operating in Lublin, and mobilise the Czechoslovak government to travel to Slovakia, where they would be subject to increased Soviet pressure and simultaneously distanced from British influences. Doubts remained over whether the Kremlin really intended to separate Subcarpathian Ruthenia from the Czechoslovak Republic and annex it to the USSR.[133] In any case, the Soviet government's actions were interpreted as the latest manifestation of Soviet imperialism, interference in internal Czechoslovak affairs, and breaking agreements made previously with Czechoslovakia. Meanwhile, the British warned their Czechoslovak counterparts against succumbing to Soviet pressure for quick recognition of the Lublin Committee as the Polish government in return for a positive solution to the Cieszyn question for Czechoslovakia.[134] These warnings proved to be as justified as they were unsuccessful. Concerns that rejecting the Kremlin's wishes could lead the Soviets to form a committee in Slovakia – modelled on the Lublin Committee – and ultimately to its separation from the Czechoslovak Republic resulted in acceptance of the Soviet proposition. This decision was not

130 'Doc. No. 209, 3 January 1945, extract of a report by H. Píka for MNO', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 430–32.
131 'Doc. No. 219, 12 January 1945, instruction – circular by H. Ripka on the position regarding Subcarpathian Ruthenia', in ČSVDJ, II, pp. 451–53.
132 Táborský, Eduard, 'Beneš a náš osud', *Svědectví*, 89/90 (1990), p.86.
133 Minute by A. F. C. Gatehouse, 15 January 1945, TNA, FO 371/47077, N442/28/12, pp. 16–17.
134 Záznam o rozhovoru s majorem W. Barkerem, 19 January 1945 (manuscript – unsigned), AÚTGM, fond 38, box 9, file 23. Telegram No. 397 from A. Eden to J. Balfour, 25 January 1945, PRO 371/47120, N655/650/12, pp. 9–10; Telegram no. 25 from DO to governments of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Union of South Africa, 29 January 1945, pp. 14–15.

approved by the FO, although it was expected at least from mid-January. The Czechoslovak government's motives were understood and the British side had no particular complaints.[135]

The increasingly pressing problem of the Czechoslovak government's return home – dependent, of course, on the progress of the Soviet offensive – led to major concerns among émigré politicians and in the FO over whether leaving the United Kingdom too soon could lead to their being cut off from the outside world and practical isolation behind the Soviet front. Furthermore, the domestic situation meant that lengthy hesitation on this matter was also impossible. Awaiting the end of the war in London could prove to be dangerous if the Soviets decided to appoint a temporary administration in the territory they controlled, which could easily be transformed into a Czechoslovak government competing with the structures formed by Beneš. The FO did not establish an official position on this subject. One can assume that, given the developing British-Soviet controversies on various other issues, especially the Polish question, British diplomacy was reluctant to increase its involvement in the Czechoslovak authorities' delicate game with Moscow, in which, moreover, they had neither significant goals nor effective instruments to influence the Kremlin's decisions; finally, British diplomats were not particularly encouraged by the Czechoslovaks to participate. They were therefore happy to leave it entirely up to Czechoslovak diplomacy to play the game and deal with any results that might come from it.

Beneš arrived in Moscow on 17 March 1945, together with a large section of the Czechoslovak government. While the representative setting of the visit was similar to that prepared in December 1943, the atmosphere of this set of talks was quite different. The main themes were the Soviets' equipping of the Czechoslovak army, the cession of Subcarpathian Ruthenia to the USSR, and the Red Army's actions in Czechoslovak territory. During Beneš's stay in Czechoslovakia, the country's government was also reconstructed. News of this change reached London in rudimentary form and with much delay. According to the information gleaned by Roberts directly from Beneš, Molotov had promised him support on all the key issues: returning to the pre-Munich borders, transfer of the German and Hungarian population from the Republic, and Poland's acquisition of Cieszyn Silesia. The president pronounced himself very satisfied with the discussions with the Soviets.[136] The composition of the new government

135 Note from A. Eden to W. Churchill, 18 January 1945, TNA, FO 954/4A, P.M./45/37, pp. 41–42; Telegram from O. Sargent to A. Eden, 29 January 1945, TNA, Cab. 121/454, p. 271; report from H. Ripka, 29 January 1945 on conversations between J. Masaryk and H. Ripka and British, American and French diplomats, AÚTGM, fond EB, složka EBL 104/1, krabice č. 342, Mezinárodní vztahy Velká Británie, pp. 11–15.

136 Letter from F. K. Roberts to A. Eden, 16 April 1945, TNA, FO 371/47076, N4886/27/12.

(officially announced in Košice on 7 April) proved to be dominated by communists and their partisans, which absolutely did not reflect the support enjoyed by these political forces in society. Its prime minister was Fierlinger – long associated with Moscow – which for the British represented a clear signal of the scale of the new Czechoslovak government's reliance on the Kremlin.

However, thoughts of sustaining Prague's ties with the West were not abandoned. Certain possibilities in this respect were seen in the development of cultural cooperation as well as maintaining military relations through Czechoslovak units' return from Britain along with their equipment, although it was intended to consult the USSR on this issue. Yet reality soon tested the British plans. The Soviet government caused huge problems even regarding the return of the diplomatic corps to soon-to-be-liberated Prague, forcing both Britain and the United States to delay the departure of their own representatives to Czechoslovakia. Moscow's domination in all issues concerning Czechoslovakia seemed unassailable.

In mid-April, however, something of an opportunity for change arose. On 12 April, when leading American units were around 40 miles from the western border of Czechoslovakia, the idea emerged at the FO to ask Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, the Allies' commanding officer on the Western Front, to command his armies to advance and capture Prague before the Soviets did so. Eden was strongly in favour, and Churchill called the idea "the strategic problem of policy at the time".[137] For the FO, it was clear that such a turn of events would allow the Americans and British to send their missions to Prague without requesting Moscow's approval. Such a step, it was thought, would be hugely important not only for postwar Czechoslovak fortunes, but also for the entire region. Yet certain problems were also discerned that could result from the lack of an agreement with the Czechoslovak government concerning the rules for the American and British armies' stay in the Republic, as well as the anticipated tensions when they encountered Soviet forces, but these were dismissed as immaterial compared to the ensuing benefits. Despite this, the FO considered the possibility of the Wehrmacht holding strongly defended positions in Moravia even when the Americans were already in Prague, thus isolating the Czechoslovak government in Košice from the capital. In these circumstances, it was deemed more important for Nichols to be able to accompany Beneš as early as possible, without waiting for him to arrive

137 Churchill, *Druga Wojna Światowa*, VI (1996), II, pp. 131–32.

in Prague, meaning that his journey through the Soviet-controlled area would remain a valid concern.[138]

The Americans rejected the British suggestion, however, justifying their position with military concerns. Churchill spoke to Eisenhower in person, but neither this nor his intervention with Eden in Washington were able to change this stance. The Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces were also informed of the steps taken, and it was noted that the "present aim of His Majesty's Government is to strengthen Dr. Benes' hand against communists and Russians and against any separatist tendencies. We should like to see Government for whole Czechoslovakia established in Prague as soon as possible. His Majesty's Government have urged on United States Government and American Chiefs of Staff great political advantage of General Eisenhower's forces penetrating as far as possible into Czechoslovakia and liberating Prague if possible".[139] Their objective was to exert pressure not only from the British side but also from the US president and general staff on Eisenhower to change his plans in line with British suggestions.[140] Unfortunately, President Harry Truman approved Eisenhower's position. Churchill was left with no option other than to express his full confidence in the competences of the Allied commander on the Western Front.[141] Eden, however, believed that it was political, not military, factors that had influenced the US general's decision. "The occupation of Prague by the Americans did not expose them to any danger from Germany, yet Eisenhower refrained from advancing the forces under his command forward upon receiving the opinion of the Soviet command. The Americans' failure to enter Prague meant that the Red Army could permanently put the people it trusted in power", he wrote in his diaries.[142] Receiving word of the outbreak of an uprising in Prague on 5 May 1945, Churchill again appealed to the Allied supreme command in the West to command the US Third Army to march on the Czechoslovak capital, but this appeal went unanswered.[143] Amid Soviet opposition, there was also no agreement to the RAF Czechoslovak squadrons being sent to help the uprising. Ultimately,

138 Minute by O. Sargent for W. Churchill, No. P.M./O.S./45/6, 18 April 1945, TNA, FO 371/47121, N4174/650/G12; Telegram No. 1994, from FO to British Embassy in Moscow, 21 April 1945 (received 22 April 1945) – no page numbering.

139 Telegram No. 50 from FO to SHAEF, 2 May 1945, TNA, FO 1049/19, N4701/207/G.

140 Minute by O. Sargent for W. Churchill, No. P.M./O.S./45/42, 29 April 1945, TNA, FO 954/4A, p. 58; *Draft message from the Prime Minister to President Truman*, pp. 59–60; Telegram No. 4353, from W. Churchill to H. Truman, 30 April 1945, p. 61.

141 Telegram No. 4435 from FO to British Embassy in Washington, 2 May 1945, containing telegram No. 30, from W. Churchill to H. Truman, 2 May 1945, TNA, FO PRO FO 954/4A, p. 64 (or TNA, FO 371/47121, N4548/650/G); Minute by O. Sargent for W. Churchill, No. PM/OS/45/76, 6 May 1945, p. 68; Copy of a Minute (Ref: C.O.S. 644/5) dated 2 May 1945 from Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee to the Prime Minister, TNA, FO 371/47121, N4548/650/G; Extract from COS (45) 115th Meeting, 2 May 1945, Operations in Czechoslovakia.

142 Anthony Eden, *Pamiętniki*, 1938–1945 (Warszawa: PAX, 1970–1972), II (1972), p. 420.

143 Churchill, *Druga Wojna Światowa*, IV (1996), p. 180.

the Red Army captured Prague on 9 May. The diplomatic battle that London had waged with the Allied military command and US government for American forces to enter the city – which could have had a major political impact on the future of the Republic – therefore ended in defeat. HM Government clearly discerned a threat in the USSR dominating not only Czechoslovakia but the whole of East-Central Europe. Without support from the United States, however, it was unable to resist it alone. Despite its efforts to engage American forces in the game against the Soviets, Washington's failure to understand the British intentions and the importance of the solutions it was proposing meant that they came to nothing. This was also the moment of the defeat of the Third Reich, meaning an end to the war in Europe.

The previous political elites failed to oppose the communists, who, with Moscow's support, had taken control of key positions in the Czechoslovak government. Although Beneš again took office as president, his actual influence on political life in the reconstructed state was increasingly minimal. Finally, in February 1948, the communists assumed full power in the Republic, amid passivity from the ambassadors of the English-speaking powers and supine acceptance from the president.[144] Czechoslovakia was now under full control of the USSR and would remain so until 1989.

144 Marek Kazimierz Kamiński, *Polska i Czechosłowacja w polityce Stanów Zjednoczonych i Wielkiej Brytanii 1945–1948* (Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 1991), pp. 283–328.

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Maciej Wyrwa

INTRODUCTION. THE NKVD'S "POLISH OPERATION" OF 1937–1938. DOCUMENTS OF A STALINIST CRIME

EDITORIAL NOTE

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The authors would like to thank Sergei Prudovsky from the Russian Memorial Society for his role in acquiring and compiling the documents used in the text. We are publishing the documents, originally written in Russian, in an English translation. We have added footnotes explaining the necessary context, including key information on the individuals mentioned in the text and their functions at the time when the document was produced. Academic transcription has been used, in line with AREI's editorial standards.

The Great Terror unleashed by Stalin in the 1930s continues to cast a baleful shadow over the history of Russia and the countries of Eastern Europe even today. This meticulously planned, organised and ruthlessly implemented atrocity against the dictator's own nation claimed the lives of millions of innocent victims.

The repressions affected, first of all, Stalin's opponents and political rivals in the party, army, and security structures. The symbol of the purges was show trials staged in the media spotlight, at which the erstwhile leaders of the "motherland of the global proletariat" turned out to be traitors and spies; as such, they were mostly condemned to death. The names of tens of thousands of other victims of political repressions, anonymous for many years, were found on execution lists approved personally by Stalin and his retinue.

The Soviet terror machine did not stop here. Order No. 00447, issued on 30 July 1937 by Nikolai Yezhov, the Soviet People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, launched a mass operation against "former kulaks, criminals and other anti-Soviet elements", which in practice could mean anyone. It was during this operation that the "limits of terror", i.e., quotas of people to be condemned to death, were introduced. These quotas, at the request of local NKVD organs, were steadily increased. In violation of the law at the time, the imposed sentences condemned hundreds of thousands of the accused to death or a stint in a gulag.

Among the victims of all these crimes were Poles who were citizens of the Soviet Union.

Yet these were not all the circles of the Stalinist hell. A separate circle concerned the repressions exacted directly on representatives of national minorities. Therefore, Germans, Poles, Latvians, Estonians, Finns, Bulgarians, Macedonians, Greeks, Romanians, Iranians, Afghans, and Chinese living in the Soviet Union were identified as spies and enemies of the Soviet government. Using the same criminal methods and technology, the Harbinites – employees of the Chinese Eastern Railway sold to Japan in 1935 who chose to return to the USSR – were also repressed as Japanese spies.

The operation targeting Poles was not the first "national operation": that had been the "German operation", although when it began its victims were exclusively citizens of Germany living in the Soviet Union.

The NKVD's "Polish Operation", however, commands a unique place among Stalinist crimes. As Timothy Snyder put it, "Stalin was a pioneer of national mass murder, and the Poles were the preeminent victim among the Soviet nationalities".[1]

1 Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), p. 119.

The "Polish Operation" was the largest and bloodiest of the NKVD's "national operations". According to statistical reports sent to the organisation's Moscow headquarters, between 21 August 1937 and 15 November 1938, 139,835 people were repressed, 111,091 of whom received the most severe sentence (shooting), and 28,744 were imprisoned or sent to gulags.[2] So, almost 80% of all those targeted by this operation were murdered. These estimates are certainly not definitive as lack of access to Russian archives precludes verification of the number of victims.

DOCUMENTS OF CRIMES

We hereby present two fundamental documents concerning the "Polish Operation": Order No. 00485 and its justification, previously unpublished in English. Both provide a good illustration of the characteristics and mechanisms of the Soviet terror aimed at the country's own citizens. Order No. 00485 was also a kind of blueprint for the next so-called national operations, defining the categories of people subject to repressions and designating the stages and methods of the operation and the severity of sentences.

On 9 August 1937, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union considered point 564 of the minutes of the meeting, issuing the enigmatic decision to "Authorise the order of the people's commissar for internal affairs of the USSR concerning the liquidation of Polish diversionist and espionage groups and the POW organisation".[3]

On 11 August 1937, Nikolai Yezhov implemented this decision by issuing secret Operational Order No. 00485, formally commencing the NKVD's "Polish Operation". An extensive document "regarding the fascist-insurrectionist, espionage, diversionary, defeatist and terrorist activity of Polish intelligence in the USSR" was attached to the order.

It is worth noting that the public learnt about mass crimes against "unwanted nations" only in the early 1990s, when access to Soviet archives was opened. The content of the order, thanks to the work of researchers from the Memorial Society, was first published in Poland in 1993.[4] In the West, a large part of it first saw the light of day in the book *Le Livre noir du communisme. Crimes, terreur, repression*, which was translated into many languages.[5]

2 Nikita Petrov and Arsenij Roginskij, '"Pol'skaja operacija" NKVD 1937–1938 gg.', in *Repressii protiv poljakov i pol'skich graždan*, ed. by Aleksandr Gur'janov (Moskva: Zven'ja, 1997), pp. 41–59 (pp. 41–43).
3 Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj archiv social'no-političeskoj istorii (hereafter: RGASPI), f. 17, op. 166, d. 577, l. 74. f. (*fond*, collection), op. (opis', inventory), d. (*dieło*, file), l. (*list*, folio).
4 Nikita Pietrow, 'Polska operacja NKWD', *Karta*, 11 (1993), 24–44.
5 Stéphane Courtois and others, *Le Livre noir du communisme : Crimes, terreur, répression* (Robert Laffont, 1997).

The document attached to the order has been published in the original language in Ukraine[6] and Russia.[7] So far, it has only been translated into Polish.[8]

Let us begin, then, by examining the rationale for the criminal decision.

The picture that emerges from the document on the "fascist-insurrectionist, espionage, diversionary, defeatist and terrorist activity of Polish intelligence in the USSR" is one of a Soviet Union entwined with the spy network of the Polish Military Organisation (POW). It was POW that had supposedly planned an anti-Soviet insurrection in the first period of the revolution, had carried out defeatist activities during the Polish-Bolshevik War, and had conducted nationalist agitation on the Polish population of the Soviet Union. It was also responsible for sabotage, diversionary and terrorist activity in the economy, security services, and Red Army, and all this in collaboration with the Trotskyites and other anti-Soviet organisations. Interestingly, it was mainly Polish communists who were apparently behind all these activities. The dissolution of the Communist Party of Poland on 16 August 1938 was therefore, according to this logic, an obvious and justified move.

It should be emphasized that the story outlined by Yezhov regarding the formation and activities of POW is entirely a propaganda invention. The Polish Military Organisation, established by Józef Piłsudski in 1914 as a clandestine diversion and intelligence organisation, was dissolved when Poland regained its independence, with its units becoming part of the Polish Army. Its former members took part in the Polish-Bolshevik War of 1919–1921, but this was the final episode of their operation. Nevertheless, POW became a mythical, ubiquitous spy organisation to which all the economic and political failings of the "first state of workers and peasants" could be attributed in the Soviet Union.

It was POW and its espionage and diversionary activity that supposedly led to the famine that claimed the lives of millions of people in Ukraine. By late 1936, the organisation had apparently become a threat to the entire Soviet Union. The central NKVD body launched an investigation into POW, which concluded with the sentencing of several dozen detainees, including Tomasz Dąbal,[9] who admitted to being the organisation's

6 Jurij Šapoval, Volodymyr Prystajko, and Vadym Zolotar'ov, *ČK–HPU–NKVD v Ukrajini: Osoby, fakty, dokumenty* (Kyjiv: Abrys, 1997), p. 350.

7 Andrej Sudoplatov, *Tajnaja žizn' generala Sudoplatova. Pravda i vymysly o moem otce*, 2 vols (Moskva: Olma-Press, 1998), I, p. 366.

8 Tomasz Sommer, *Rozstrzelać Polaków. Ludobójstwo Polaków w Związku Sowieckim w latach 1937–1938. Dokumenty z Centrali* (Warszawa: 3S Media, 2010), pp. 86–124.

9 Tomasz Dąbal (transcribed as Dombal' in NKVD documents) (1890–1937): political activist of Polish origin. Doctor of Economic Sciences, academician, and member of the VKP(b). He worked as the Head of the Department at the Moscow Institute of Mechanization and Electrification of Socialist Agriculture. He was arrested in 1936 and executed in 1937.

leader throughout the USSR.[10] The materials from the investigation were used when drafting Order No. 00485 and the rationale document.

Let us now analyse the contents of Order No. 00485, thereby shedding light on the mechanism of the NKVD's "Polish Operation" to reveal the "anatomy of the crime".

In a brief introduction, Yezhov condemns the security services' previous bad work, emphasising that the documentation collected and the text attached to the order "paint a picture of many years of relatively unpunished sabotage and spy work of the Polish intelligence on the territory of the Union". Thus, he blames years of negligence on his predecessor Gienrich Jagoda, who was sentenced to death for, among other things, espionage.[11]

He then proceeds to list the categories of people to be arrested. A cursory analysis of these categories shows that it was not just Poles who could be repressed, but practically all the citizens of the Soviet Union. How else should we interpret the instruction that "the most active members of 'POW' identified during the investigation and not yet apprehended" were to be arrested? And this was indeed the case: the victims of the "Polish Operation" also included Ukrainians, Belarusians, Jews, Russians, and representatives of other nations and ethnic groups living in the USSR.

The search for those guilty of the imagined crimes took place through address and passport bureaus, registry offices, and directories of professional and social organisations. Evidence of mere correspondence with relatives in Poland, a stay in Poland or contact with a representative of a Polish diplomatic post was sufficient to warrant suspicion of spying and arrest.

How the arrests in Moscow took place is demonstrated, for instance, by information concerning the archival-investigative case of Ivan Sorokin, the head of UNKVD Section No. 3 for the Moscow Region in 1937–1938. This document contained a report by one Mr Zakharov, assistant head of the Moscow Region Directorate of State Security of UNKVD Branch 1, Section 4, from 13 June 1938: "once we had arrested the active people from national groups, I came to Sorokin and told him I had no one left to take. Sorokin admonished me and asked whether in my district I had Russians or Jews who had previously lived in Germany, Poland and other foreign states. I responded that there were many of them, and Sorokin noted this and said, 'You can always make them into Germans and Poles, but you have to do it carefully not to mess the case up'. After that instruction,

10 *Lubjanka: Stalin i Glavnoe upravlenie gosbezopasnosti NKVD*, ed. by Vladimir Chaustov, Viktor Naumov, and Natalija Plotnikova (Moskva: MFD 2004), p. 41.

11 Genrikh Yagoda (1891–1938): People's Commissar for Internal Affairs (1934–1936) and then People's Commissar for Posts and Telegraphs (1936–1937). Arrested on 28 March 1937. Sentenced to death on 13 March 1938 at the so-called third Moscow trial. Shot on 16 March 1938. Not rehabilitated.

Karetnikov and I began to apply it in practice, i.e., in arrest motions, interrogation protocols and other materials; if the arrestee was a Russian or Jew but they'd lived on Polish territory, we'd write that it was a Pole, and if they'd lived in Latvia, we'd write that it was a Latvian".[12]

In the next part of the decree, Yezhov orders that the operation be conducted in two stages. In the first, those to be arrested were "personnel of the NKVD agencies, the Red Army, military factories, defence workshops of all other factories; railway, water, and air transport; within the electric power sector of all industrial enterprises, gas and oil refineries".

They were to be followed by "all other individuals working within the industrial enterprises of non-defensive significance, state farms, collective farms, and institutions".

In practice, however, analysis of the personal data of people repressed as part of the "Polish Operation" reveals that arrests took place among all these groups at the same time. An undoubted factor in this was the vast scale of the repressive operations conducted during the Great Terror.

Next, Yezhov commanded that special groups of operational workers should be investigated, noting that "the main focus of the investigation should be complete exposure of the organizers and leaders of the sabotage groups with the aim of comprehensive identification of the sabotage network".

What the investigations and interrogations of the accused looked like in practice is vividly demonstrated by the statements of prisoners collected in December 1938, compiled by Olga Shostakowska, head of NKVD Special Section 1, Branch 8. The document cites extracts from 78 statements from more than 30 regions of the USSR.

Here are the most characteristic of them: Altai Krai UNKVD – "They tortured during interrogations, forced us to sign the protocol"; Bashkir Autonomous SSR NKVD – "During interrogations they put [prisoners] in winter clothes next to a hot furnace and beat them on the face and body...", "they kept us on our feet for 14 days without food, beating every day"; Vinnytsia Region, Ukrainian SSR UNKVD – "...Beating with an iron rod, boxing gloves"; Irkutsk Region UNKVD – "...beating, being made to stand still or sit on a chair leg"; Karelian Autonomous SSR NKVD – "Constant interrogation for 20 days without sleep, alternating investigators..."; Georgian SSR NKVD – "During the investigation they tied our hands and feet and blindfolded us, then beat and stabbed with a nail".[13]

12 Information on archival-investigative case No. 716060 concerning I. Sorokin, Gosudarstvennyj archiv Rossijskoj Federacii (hereafter GARF), f. 10035, op. 1, d. P-31787, l. 98.

13 Summary of statements made by prisoners about the use of physical measures during interrogation, Central'nyj archiv Federal'noj služby bezopasnosti (hereafter CA FSB), f. 3, op. 5, d. 2281, l. 45–51.

The use of physical methods was therefore commonplace in interrogations. So, it is hardly surprising that the accused pointed the finger at their relatives, neighbours, and work colleagues as members of a non-existent Polish spy network. Few of the accused did not admit their own guilt, and after all, according to the legal doctrine of prosecutor Andrey Vyshinsky, which was in force in the Soviet Union, a confession by the accused was sufficient proof of his guilt.[14] In fact, those who, despite the beatings and torture, did not admit to the deeds of which they were accused were also condemned.

All that remained was to determine the severity of the sentence. In the next part of Operational Order No. 00485, detainees were divided into two categories depending on the level of their guilt. Those included in the first category were shot, while those in the second were sentenced to between five and 10 years in a gulag or prison. Evidently, the secret order did not bother with euphemisms, i.e., "the maximum penalty".

Executions were mostly carried out in the basements of NKVD detention centres, usually with a shot to the back of the head. Bodies were transported in unmarked cars to isolated forest areas, military training grounds, or NKVD recreation centres (sic), where they were thrown en masse into pits dug in advance. The burial sites were secret. To date, only around a hundred such resting places of the victims of 1930s Soviet repressions have been determined. According to researchers, these are only around a third of all the places where remains were hidden.

The order also specified the procedure for handling cases. A procedure for genocidal decisions was created to facilitate atrocities on a mass scale. This was the simplified, so-called 'album' procedure. Why bother with court proceedings, a defence and witnesses? It sufficed for the "People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (NKVD) of the republic, the Head of Directorate of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (UNKVD) of a particular region or territory, jointly with the corresponding prosecutor of the republic, region, or territory", to divide those arrested into the categories described above. For each prisoner, a brief description of the crimes "knocked out" of them during interrogations was then prepared. The collected descriptions of similar cases were bound into albums, hence the procedure's colloquial name.

The final decision on whether the accused would live or die was taken by the so-called "dvoika" (the NKVD Commission and Public Prosecutor of the USSR). The sentences were therefore signed personally by Nikolai

[14] Andrey Vyshinsky (1883–1954): from 1931 Procurator of the Russian SFSR, then in 1935–1939 Procurator General of the USSR. From 1940, First Deputy of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and in 1949–1953 Minister of Foreign Affairs. Until his death he was the head of the USSR's delegation to the UN.

Yezhov and Andrey Vyshinsky or their deputies. Analysis of the dvoika's protocols shows that Vyshinsky signed the most, while Yezhov more often delegated this task to his deputies, Frinovsky[15] and Belsky.[16]

But even this system of adjudication sometimes proved inefficient as the NKVD Commission and Public Procurator of the USSR could not keep up with prompt assessment of hundreds of protocols coming in from the field. One outcome was problems with already overflowing detention centres.

On 15 September 1938, the Politburo approved the draft order of the Communist Party's Central Committee, presented by the NKVD, on establishing special troikas to deal with cases. These were to comprise the first secretary of the CP Committee of the region or krai, or the Central Committee of the Party in a given republic, the head of the relevant NKVD board and the public prosecutor of the district, krai or republic.

On 17 September 1938, Yezhov brought into effect the Politburo's resolution by signing USSR NKVD Order No. 00606 "On the establishment of special troikas to adjudicate on the cases of people arrested in the procedure of USSR NKVD Orders No. 00485 and others".[17]

This ordered adjudication only of the cases of people detained by 1 August 1938, as well as decreeing separate protocols for each of the so-called national operations.

It is important to emphasise that the procedure for pronouncement of guilt by special dvoikas and troikas entailed lawlessness even in the context of Soviet legislation. These organs had no constitutional or legislative authorisation.

Operational Order No. 00485 prohibited the release from prisons and gulags of people incarcerated for espionage, ordering reconsideration of cases. Yezhov also ordered the acquisition and development of a network of agents "in the Polish segment", recommending cautionary measures to protect NKVD organs from potential infiltration by Polish spies. Information on the course of the operation was to be relayed by telegram every five days.

15 Mikhail Frinovsky (1898/1900–1940): Commissar for State Security First Rank. Head of the NKVD's Chief Directorate of State Security (1937–1938), Deputy People's Commissar for Internal Issues. People's Commissar for the wartime Soviet Navy (1938–1939). Arrested on 6 April 1939. Condemned to death on 4 February 1940. Shot on 8 February 1940. Not rehabilitated.

16 Lev Belsky, actually Abram Mikhailovich Levin (1889–1941): Commissar for State Security Second Rank. From November 1936 to April 1938 Deputy People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR. Arrested in June 1939. Condemned to death and shot in October. Not rehabilitated.

17 Haluzevyj deržavnyj archiv Služby bezpeky Ukrajiny (hereafter HDA SBU), f. 9, d. 672, l. 161–63. Published: *Wielki Terror. Operacja polska 1937–1938. Wełykyj Teror. Polśka operacija 1937–1938*, ed. by Jan Bednarek and others, 2 vols, *Polska i Ukraina w latach trzydziestych – czterdziestych XX wieku. Nieznane dokumenty z archiwów służb specjalnych* (Warszawa–Kijów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej-Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu – Wydzielone Archiwum Państwowe Służby Bezpieczeństwa Ukrainy: Instytut Badań Politycznych i Narodowościowych Narodowej Akademii Nauk Ukrainy, 2010), VIII, II, p. 1489.

The operation was to commence on 20 August 1937 and would last three months. However, this completion date was put back multiple times. Ultimately and formally, the "Polish Operation" was concluded by Operational Order No. 00762 of 26 November 1938, given by Yezhov's successor, Lavrentiy Beria.[18]

Yet the criminal system could not allow witnesses to remain at large. Based on Order No. 00486 of 15 August 1937, also issued by Yezhov, the children and wives of traitors to the motherland were also to face repression.[19] The order decreed that wives were subject to imprisonment in labour camps for a period of at least five to eight years, depending on the level of danger to society, and children were to be placed in camps, NKVD corrective labour colonies, or children's homes with a special regime under the jurisdiction of people's education commissariats in the relevant republics. Breast-fed infants were sent to camps with their condemned mothers, before being taken away from them at the age of 12 or 18 months and transferred to children's homes and nurseries. A document on the repression of husbands of female traitors to the motherland was also produced but did not enter into force.[20]

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The picture that emerges from the presented documents is one of a dehumanised totalitarian system of government that created a bureaucratic mechanism of mass human annihilation. A mechanism that not only murdered innocent people but also erased the memory of millions of victims. Unfortunately, the victims of the Great Terror, including the "Polish Operation", are not accorded adequate space in the general historical memory. We believe that the publication of the documents will change this state of affairs.

We would like to stress that the state authorities of today's Russia are blocking access to documents that would reveal and permit reliable research on all the mechanisms of the crimes. We still do not know the names of all the perpetrators, nor, most importantly, the final numbers of victims and the sites where their bodies were hidden.

18 Lavrentiy Beria (1899–1953): Soviet people's commissar for internal affairs (1938–1945), deputy premier (1941–1953). Directly responsible for repressions in the USSR, including the Katyn Massacre. Arrested in June 1953, accused of spying and attempting to bring down the communist system. Shot in Moscow in December 1953.

19 Operational Order of the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR No. 00486 "On the operation of repression of the wives and children of traitors to the motherland", CA FSB. f. 3. op. 4. d. 14. l. 405–16. Published: Aleksandr Kokurin and Nikita Petrov, *GULAG (Glavnoe upravlenie lagerej). 1917–1960* (Moskva: MDF, 2000), pp. 106–10.

20 Ciphertext on the arrest and imprisonment in gulags of the husbands of traitors to the motherland (unsent), CA FSB, f. 3, op. 4, d. 11, l. 218.

DOCUMENT № 1

August 11 1937, Moscow. Operational Order No. 00485 of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR, Nikolai Yezhov, regarding initiation of the "Polish Operation"

For the Personal Attention of
Chief of the Transportation Control Department (DTO)[1] of
the Main Directorate of State Security (GUGB NKVD)[2]
Kharkov South Railway
Comrade Leopold
Top Secret
Copy No. 71

Operational Order of
The People's Commissar of Internal Affairs
Union of SSR
August 11 1937
Moscow
No. 00485

The letter attached to this order regarding the fascist-rebel, spy, sabotage, defeatist, and terrorist activities of Polish intelligence in the USSR, as well as investigative materials for the Polish Military Organization ("POW")[3] case, paint a picture of many years of relatively unpunished sabotage and spy work of Polish intelligence on the territory of the Union.

As these materials demonstrate, the subversive activities of Polish intelligence have been and still are carried out in such an open manner that the impunity of this activity can only be explained by the poor work of the GUGB organs and the carelessness of the Chekists.[4]

Even now, work on the elimination of the Polish sabotage-spy groups and "POW" on the ground has not been initiated fully. The pace and scale of the investigation are very minor. The main Polish intelligence personnel have managed to evade operational accounting (out of the total number of defectors from Poland, amounting to about 15,000 people, only

1 The Department of Transport Support: a structural unit within the NKVD of the USSR, responsible for logistics within the structure.
2 The Main Directorate of State Security of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the USSR (Russian GUGB NKVD SSSR): institutional structure of state security of the USSR in 1934–1941.
3 Polish Military Organization (Polska Organizacja Wojskowa): a secret military organization founded in 1914 by Józef Piłsudski.
4 A member of The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage under the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR (VChK under the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR): a special security agency of the Soviet state, commonly known as Cheka, from which the term 'Chekist' comes.

9,000 people are accounted for across the Union). In Western Siberia, out of approximately 5,000 defectors on its territory, no more than 1,000 are accounted for. The same situation applies to the accounting of political emigrants from Poland. As for intelligence work, it is almost completely absent. Moreover, the existing agent network typically consists of double agents planted by Polish intelligence itself.

The insufficiently resolute elimination of Polish intelligence personnel is even more dangerous now that the Moscow "POW" centre has been crushed and many of its most active members have been arrested. Polish intelligence, anticipating the inevitability of its further failures, attempts to or in some cases has already activated its sabotage network within the national economy of the USSR, primarily its defence objects.

In accordance with these developments, the main task of GUGB at this moment is the destruction of the anti-Soviet work of Polish intelligence and the complete elimination of the hitherto untouched, extensive sabotage-rebel grassroots of POW, as well as the main human personnel of Polish intelligence in the USSR.

I HEREBY ORDER:

1. Beginning 20 August 1937, initiate a comprehensive operation aimed at complete elimination of local "POW" organizations, primarily their sabotage-spy and insurgent personnel in industry, transportation, state farms, and collective farms. The entire operation must be completed within a 3-month period, i.e., by 20 November 1937.

2. The following are subject to arrest:
   a) the most active members of "POW" identified during the investigation and not yet apprehended, as per the attached list;
   b) all remaining Polish army prisoners of war in the USSR;[5]
   c) defectors from Poland, regardless of the timing of their entry into the USSR;
   d) political emigrants and persons exchanged under the exchange program of political prisoners from Poland;[6]
   e) former members of PPS[7] and other Polish anti-Soviet political parties;

5 Here are mentioned prisoners who were not released and did not return home after the Polish-Soviet war (1919–1921).
6 This refers to representatives of the Polish communist movement.
7 Polish Socialist Party: a Polish left-wing political party, founded in 1892, one of the most important political forces in Poland until 1948.

f) the most active core of local anti-Soviet nationalist elements in Polish regions.

3. The operation is to be conducted in two stages:
   a) firstly, the abovementioned personnel of the NKVD[8] agencies, the Red Army, military factories, defense workshops of all other factories, the railway, water, and air transport sectors, the electric power sector of all industrial enterprises, gas and oil refineries, should be arrested;
   b) secondly, all other members working within the industrial enterprises of non-defensive significance, state farms, collective farms, and institutions should be arrested.

4. Simultaneously with the expansion of the arrests, investigative work should be initiated. The main focus of the investigation should be complete exposure of the organizers and leaders of the sabotage groups, with the aim of comprehensive identification of the sabotage network. All those implicated by the testimony of arrested spies, saboteurs, and subversive elements should be arrested immediately. A special group of operational workers should be formed to conduct the investigation.

5. Once their guilt has been established during the investigation, all arrested are to be classified into two categories:
   a) first category: subject to execution. This group includes all spy, sabotage, destructive, and insurgent personnel of Polish intelligence;
   b) second category: subject to imprisonment in jails and camps for a period of five to ten years. This group includes less-active personnel.

6. Those who during investigation have been classified as belonging to either the first or second category should be included in the lists that must be compiled every ten days. These lists should contain brief descriptions of the investigative and intelligence materials determining the degree of guilt of the arrested and should be sent for final approval to the NKVD of the USSR.

8 NKVD of the USSR: People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the USSR of the Council of People's Commissars, the Government of the USSR, existing until 1946.

Assignment to the first or second category based on the review of the investigative and intelligence materials is carried out by the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (NKVD) of the republic, the Head of Directorate of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (UNKVD) of a particular region or territory, jointly with the corresponding prosecutor of the republic, region, or territory.
The lists are then sent to NKVD USSR and are signed by the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the republic, the Head of the UNKVD, and the Prosecutor of the respective republic, region, or territory. Once the lists have been approved by the NKVD of the USSR and the Prosecutor of the Soviet Union, the sentences should be enforced immediately, i.e., those sentenced in the first category are to be shot, and those in the second category are to be sent to prisons and camps by the orders of the NKVD of the USSR.

7. I order to cease the release from prisons and camps all those who have been convicted of Polish espionage and are nearing completion of their sentences. Submit each individual case material for consideration at the Special Meeting of the NKVD of the USSR.

8. Use all practices accumulated during the destruction of "POW" and other Polish intelligence personnel to skillfully and thoughtfully acquire new agents through the Polish line.
During the selection process of resident agents, pay particular attention to measures that ensure the NKVD against infiltration by double-agents of Polish intelligence.
Send lists of agents designated for recruitment, with a comprehensive profile of each one, to the Head of GUGB NKVD, comrade FRINOVSKII[9], for approval.

9. Report on the progress of the operation by telegram every five days, i.e., on the 1st, 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, and 30th of each month.

Plenipotentiary People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR
General Commissar of State Security YEZHOV[10]

[9] Frinovskij Mikhail (1898–1940): Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR in 1936–1938; head of GUGB (Main Directorate of State Security) NKVD of the USSR 1937–1938; head of the 1st Department of NKVD of the USSR in 1938; one of the organizers and an active participant in the repressions. He was arrested in.1939 and executed in 1940.

[10] Nikolai Ežov (1895–1940): People's Commissar of State Security in 1936–1938. In 1939, he was arrested and confessed to an alleged plot to kill Stalin and the entire Bolshevik leadership, as well as to espionage activities. After a secret trial, Yezhov was executed in 1940.

ACKNOWLEDGED:

OPERATIONAL SECRETARY OF THE GUGB NKVD of the USSR
Bridage Commander (—) ULMER[11]

State Archives of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), f. 9, d. 23, ll. 20–24. Certified copy, typewritten. The document is published in Nikita Pietrow, 'Polska operacja NKWD', *Karta*, (1993), 27–29; Jurij Šapoval, Volodymyr Prystajko, and Vadym Zolotar'ov, *ČK–HPU–NKVD v Ukrajini: Osoby, fakty, dokumenty* (Kyjiv: Abrys, 1997), pp. 347–350. An incomplete version of the document is quoted in Waldemar Moszkowski, 'Między śmiercią a niewolą. Polacy w czasach wielkiego terroru komunistycznego drugiej połowy lat trzydziestych', *Nasz Dziennik*, 19 and 23 October 2002.

11 Voldemar Ulmer (1896–1945): Operational secretary in the GUGB NKVD of the USSR 1937–1938, head of the secretariat of the 1st Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR in 1938. He was arrested in 1939. In 1940, sentenced to 15 years in an ITL (corrective labor camp), he died in jail in 1940.

DOCUMENT № 2

Secret letter on fascist-rebel, espionage, sabotage, subversive, defeatist, and terrorist activities of Polish intelligence in the USSR

August 11 1937

People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) of the USSR
MAIN DIRECTORATE OF STATE SECURITY
TOP SECRET
To be kept on par with the code
Copy No. ___
SECRET LETTER
on the fascist-rebel, espionage, sabotage, subversive, defeatist, and terrorist activities of
Polish intelligence in the USSR
No. 59098
August 11 1937
Moscow

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL
TO THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE UNION REPUBLICS, AND HEADS OF NKVD DEPARTMENTS IN AUTONOMOUS REPUBLICS, REGIONS, AND TERRITORIES.

The NKVD of the Union has uncovered and is liquidating the largest and, according to all available information, the primary subversive spy network of Polish intelligence in the USSR, which existed in the form of the so-called "Polish Military Organization".[1]

Prior to the October Revolution and immediately thereafter, PIŁSUDSKI[2] created his largest political agency on Soviet territory, which was previously leading the now-liquidated organization. Year after year, he systematically transferred numerous cadres of spies and saboteurs into the USSR, disguising them as political emigrants, political prisoners meant for exchange, and defectors. These individuals became part of the overall organization's system operating in the USSR and were supplemented by recruitment of the local Polish population.

1 POW, Polska Organizacja Wojskowa (Polish Military Organization): a secret military organization founded in 1914 by Józef Piłsudski to fight against enemies of Poland. It did not exist in the independent Polish Republic.
2 Józef Klemens Piłsudski (1867–1935): Polish military commander and statesman, the first head of state of the restored Polish state (1918–1922) and commander-in-chief of the Polish army during the Polish-Soviet war in 1920. In 1926, he organized a coup d'etat and established a personal dictatorship in Poland.

The organization was led from headquarters located in Moscow and included individuals such as UNŠLICHT,[3] MUKLEVIČ,[4] OLSKIJ,[5] and others. It had significant branches in Belarus and Ukraine, primarily in the border regions and various other areas of the Soviet Union.

At present, while primarily only the leadership and active members of the organization have been eliminated, it has been determined that the organization's anti-Soviet activities extend to the following entities: the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD), the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army (RKKA), the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army,[6] and the apparatus of the Communist International (ComIntern). The last of these primarily included the Polish section of the ComIntern Executive Committee (IKKI), the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NarKomInDel), the defense industry, transportation, including the strategic routes of the Western Front, and agriculture.

The organization's anti-Soviet work encompassed the following:

1. Collaborative efforts with left-wing Socialist-Revolutionaries and followers of Bucharin[7] to prepare to overthrow the Soviet government, disrupt the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, provoke a war between the RSFSR and Germany, and assemble armed intervention units (1916).

2. Widespread and comprehensive subversive activities on the Western and Southwestern fronts during the Soviet-Polish War, with the expressed intention of defeating the Red Army and causing the cessation of Ukraine and Belarus.

3. Mass fascist-nationalist propaganda among the Polish population in the USSR in order to establish a base and recruit local personnel for subversive, espionage, and insurgent actions.

3 Juzef Unšlicht (1879–1937): Soviet politician of Polish origin; member of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks; VKP[b]), member of the Revolutionary Military Council (RVS) of the Sixteenth Army and the Western Front. In 1919–1920, served as a member of the Revolutionary Committee of Poland, and later as the Secretary of the Union Council of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (TsIK) of the USSR. He was arrested in 1937 and executed in 1938.

4 Romual'd Muklevič (1890–1938): Soviet politician of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b), served as Deputy People's Commissar of the People's Commissariat of Defense Industry (NKOP) of the USSR. He was arrested in 1937 and executed in 1938.

5 Jan Olskij, aka Kulikovskij (1898–1937): Soviet politician of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). In 1927–1930, he served as the Head of the Counter-Intelligence Division of the Joint State Political Directorate (KRO OGPU) of the USSR; in 1930–1931, he served as the Head of the OGPU Special Office. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

6 GlavRazvedUpr RKKA: a foreign military intelligence agency of the General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces, formed in 1918 as the Registration Agency, since 1942 known as GRU RKKA.

7 This group within the All-Russian Communist Party of the Bolsheviks (VKP[b]) consisted of followers of Nikolaj Bucharin, Alexej Rykov, and Michail Tomskij. Instead of advocating for the elimination of capitalist elements in both urban and rural areas, they supported their free development.

4. Skillful espionage work within the military, economic, and political spheres of Soviet life, involving a significant strategic agent network and a broad middle- and lower-level espionage network.

5. Sabotage and subversion activities in major sectors of the defense industry within current and mobilization planning, transportation, and national economy. Creation of a powerful sabotage network for wartime, consisting of both Poles and, to a significant degree, various non-Polish citizens.

6. Contacts and collaboration between subversive, espionage, and other active anti-Soviet actions and the Trotskyist[8] center and its periphery, with the organization of right-wing traitors, and with Belarusian and Ukrainian nationalists for the purpose of joint groundwork to overthrow Soviet power and partition the USSR.

7. Direct contact and agreement with the leader of the military-fascist conspiracy, the traitor TUKHACHEVSKIJ,[9] with the intention of disrupting the preparation of the Red Army for war, and opening our front to the Poles during the war.

8. Deep infiltration of organization members into the Communist Party of Poland, complete takeover of the leading party organs and the Polish section of the Executive Committee of ComIntern (IKKI). Provocative work aimed at undermining and demoralizing the party, disrupting the unity of the popular front in Poland, and using party channels to let spies and saboteurs infiltrate the USSR. Work aimed at turning the Communist Party into an appendage of Piłsudski's Poland with the purpose of using its influence for anti-Soviet actions during Poland's military attack on the USSR.

9. The complete takeover and paralysis of all our intelligence efforts against Poland; the systematic infiltration of organization members into VChK – OGPU – NKVD and RazvedUpr RKKA for active anti-Soviet work.

8 Trotskyism: a Marxist political ideology developed by Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky (1879–1940) and other members of the Left Opposition in the Soviet State. In early Soviet propaganda, it was used as an average image of the enemy, sometimes in conjunction with the image of a fascist and a western spy.

9 Michail Tuchačevskij (1893–1937): Russian military commander; member of the VKP(b). He joined the Red Army in 1918 and served as Commander of the Western Front in 1920 during the Polish-Soviet war; later served as the First Deputy of the People's Commissar of the People's Commissariat of Defense (NKO), the Commander of the troops of the Volga Military District, and held the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

The main reason for the organization's unpunished anti-Soviet activities in the last almost 20 years has been the fact that, from the very start, some leading Polish spies, including UNŠLICHT, MESSING,[10] PILAR,[11] MEDVED',[12] OLSKIJ, SOSNOVSKIJ,[13] MAKOVSKIJ,[14] LOGANOVSKIJ,[15] BARANSKIJ[16] and others, had infiltrated major sectors of anti-Polish work within the VChK. They had taken complete control of all the anti-Polish intelligence and counterintelligence work of the VChK – OGPU – NKVD.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE ORGANIZATION AND METHODS OF INFILTRATING POLISH AGENTS INTO THE USSR

The Polish Military Organization was established in 1914 at the initiative and under the personal leadership of JÓZEF PIŁSUDSKI as a nationalist organization consisting of active supporters of the struggle for the independence of bourgeois Poland. Its members were well trained in the military organizations of the Polish Socialist Party, which was primarily supported by PIŁSUDSKI, as well as in special military schools that he established to prepare the core of the future Polish army.

These schools were established by PIŁSUDSKI between 1910 and 1914 in Galicia. They operated semi-secretly and received subsidies and practical assistance from the intelligence department of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff. Even before the outbreak of the imperialist war,[17] PIŁSUDSKI had at his disposal a number of officers from the Austro-Hungarian intelligence service. These officers trained PIŁSUDSKI's supporters in military affairs, as well as reconnaissance and sabotage techniques. These cadres, formed a little later than POW, were intended for actions in alliance

10 Stanislav Messing (1890–1937): Soviet politician; member of the VKP(b); twice Deputy Chairman of the OGPU of the USSR; in 1929–1931, he was Head of the Foreign Department (INO) of the OGPU; later served as the Chairman of the Presidium of the All-Union Chamber of Commerce of the USSR. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

11 Romuald, aka Roman Pilar von Pilchau (1894–1937): Soviet intelligence officer of German origin; member of the VKP(b), served as the Head of the Directorate of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (UNKVD) for Saratov region. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

12 Filipp Medved' (1899–1937): Soviet politician of Belarusian origin; member of the VKP(b). He was Head of the UNKVD for Leningrad oblast. He was arrested in 1935 and sentenced by VKVS to 3 years of labor camps but was released early in the same year. Medved' was appointed Head of the Kulunskii Intelligence District of the North-Eastern Corrective Labor Camp (ITL) of the NKVD. He was arrested again, sentenced and executed in 1937.

13 Ignacij Sosnovskij (1897–1937): Soviet secret services officer of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). In 1919–1920, he served as First Deputy Head of the UNKVD for the Saratov region and Commissioner of State Security of the third rank. He was arrested in 1936 and executed in 1937.

14 Jurij Makovskij (1889–1937): Soviet secret services officer of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). He worked for the Foreign Department (INO) of the OGPU; later, he was Head of the UNKVD for Omsk oblast. He was arrested in 1935 and executed in 1937.

15 Mečislav Loganovskij (1895–1938): participant of the October Revolution, commander of the light artillery division of the 1st Polish Red Army, diplomat of the USSR. He was arrested 1937 and executed in 1938.

16 Kazimir Baranskij (1894–1937): Soviet politician of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). He worked at the Foreign Department of the Main Directorate of State Security (INO GUGB) of the USSR; in 1936, he became the Head of the Sixth Division of the Transport Department of the GUGB NKVD. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

17 The name of the First World War established in Soviet historiography and propaganda.

with the Austro-German army at the rear of Russian troops, as well as for recruitment by Polish legions in anticipation of war with tsarist Russia.

Therefore, even back then, the members of POW were not only in Poland; they were also sent to Russia and recruited on the spot, creating their organizations wherever possible, primarily in major cities, with the aim of registration and mobilization of their people for communication and intelligence purposes.

At the same time, POW served as a tool for the political mobilization of forces led by PIŁSUDSKI in the struggle for Polish independence. This is how POW secretly infiltrated all Polish political parties, from the far left to the far right, recruiting active members of these parties into its ranks based on recognition of the unquestionable authority and personal will of PIŁSUDSKI, as well as the idea of reestablishing Poland as a great power within the borders of 1772.[18]

Using this strategy, POW accumulated valuable experience in regards to inner-party and cross-party provocations, making the latter its main method of struggle against the revolutionary movement.

At that time, POW was led by the Central Staff (*Komenda naczelna*; KN), which directed the activities of the local organizations of PIŁSUDSKI's supporters. These organizations would receive the same name, with the addition of an ordinal number; for example, in Belarus it would be KN-1, while in Ukraine – KN-3, and so on. Each of these local *Komenda* represented a regional territorial district of POW, divided into the local POW commandant's offices. The number of commandant's offices in each district depended on the local conditions and tasks pursued by PIŁSUDSKI in any given region.

In late 1918, with the formation of Poland, led by PIŁSUDSKI (the ultimate dictator carrying the title of the "head of state"), the main command of POW was incorporated in its entirety into the General Staff of Poland, forming the intelligence department of the Staff.

During the period of PIŁSUDSKI's temporary removal from power in Poland (1922–1926), the chief command of POW (which, for the most part, was excluded from the government by the *endeks*[19] but managed to partially preserve its influence within the intelligence department of the General Staff) continued its subversive and intelligence work on the territory of the USSR independently of the official agencies, getting ready for PIŁSUDSKI's return to power.

18 This refers to the period prior to the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1772 between Russia, Austria and Prussia.

19 Endek: a member of the National Democracy movement (Narodowa Demokracja), a Polish right-wing political movement with nationalistic ideology and one of the main political forces in interwar Poland.

After the so-called May Coup of 1926, after which PIŁSUDSKI was back in power, POW leadership and its activists filled the entire upper echelon of the state and the fascist government apparatus of Poland. A significant number of POW activists remained underground to combat the revolutionary movement in Poland via provocations and political incitement, as well as to illegally infiltrate the USSR.

The activities of PIŁSUDSKI's clandestine organization on our territory increased substantially in 1917, when, due to the events of the imperialist war, a significant number of PIŁSUDSKI's qualified associates from the milieu of legionnaires (PIŁSUDSKI's legions were formed by POW as part of the Austro-Hungarian Army) and refugees from the territory of tsarist Poland, which was then occupied by the Germans, gathered in various parts of our country.

Thus, by the time of the October Revolution, PIŁSUDSKI had accumulated significant POW personnel in Russia, from both the local Polish population and Poles evacuated from Poland.

However, the main personnel of POW during the imperialist war consisted of individuals known for their openly patriotic Polish convictions. Moreover, given the triumphant rise of the Bolshevik Party, in the summer of 1917 PIŁSUDSKI took special recruitment measures to infiltrate the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (Bolsheviks) (RSDRP[b]). At PIŁSUDSKI's personal directive, his close associates launched extensive recruitment efforts among Polish social democrats and the left-wing of the Polish Socialist Party. Both these parties later merged and formed the Communist Party of Poland.

Throughout 1917, members of POW's central leadership, who were then in Moscow and Petrograd – PRYSTOR[20] (subsequently, Polish Prime Minister), PUŻAK[21] (Secretary of the Central Committee of PPS), MAKOVSKIJ (member of the Moscow Committee of PPS, subsequently the Deputy Head of the Foreign Department of OGPU, resident agent in Poland), GOLOWKO,[22] JÓZEWSKI[23] (Volhynian voivode), and

20 Aleksander Prystor (1847–1941): Polish politician, he was one of the founders of the Combat Organization of the Polish Socialist Party (1905). Prystor served as the Prime Minister of Poland from 1931 to 1933, and the Marshal of the Polish Senate from 1935 to 1938. He was arrested by the NKVD in Kaunas in 1940 and transported to Moscow, where he died in prison in 1941.

21 Kazimierz Pużak (1883–1950): Polish politician, one of the leaders of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). He was arrested in Lodz on 3 April 1911, and sentenced by the Warsaw court to 8 years' hard labor. He served his sentence in prisons in Warsaw and St. Petersburg, and from 1915 in the Shlisselburg fortress. He was released in February 1917. Pużak was State Secretary of the Postal and Telegraph Ministry of Poland in 1918 and General Secretary of the Central Executive Committee of the PPS in 1931–1939. Arrested in November 1947. Sentenced to 10 years in prison. Died in Rawicz prison on 30 April 1950.

22 The spelling is as it appears in the document. Correct name: Tadeusz Ludwik Hołówko (1889–1931), Polish politician, publicist. In the years 1921–1925, he was a member of the central authorities of the PPS; in 1921–1925, a member of the Supreme Council of the PPS; in 1924–1925, a member of the Central Executive Committee. In the years 1927–1930, Head of the Eastern Department in the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1930, he was elected as a member of the Sejm of the third term.

23 Henryk Jan Józewski (1892–1981): Polish politician, close collaborator of Józef Piłsudski, advocate of the Polish-Ukrainian alliance. He served as voivode of Volhynia in 1928–29 and 1930–1938.

MATUSZEWSKI[24] (subsequently, the Chief of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff, or PGŠ) – involved a number of Polish social democrats and members of the left-wing of PPS, who later infiltrated prominent positions within the Soviet government apparatus: UNŠLICHT (former Deputy Chairman of RVS OGPU[25]), LEŠINSKIJ[26] (Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Poland), DOLECKIJ[27] (Head of TASS), BRONKOWSKI[28] (Deputy Chief of the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army, RazvedUpr RKKA), MUKLEVIČ (Head of the Naval Forces of the Red Army, Deputy People's Commissar for Defense), LONGVA[29] (Corps Commander, KomKor; Commander of the Red Army Communications Directorate), and several others. In 1918, they formed the Moscow POW center and took over leadership of all POW activities on the territory of the USSR.

Concurrently, in early 1918, PIŁSUDSKI provided certain directives to a selected group of POW members who were part of PPS and were based in the USSR. They were instructed to infiltrate the Soviet government apparatus by staging a split from PPS and adopting a Soviet party line. Those who infiltrated the Soviet system were former member of the Moscow Committee of the PPS, M. LOGANOVSKIJ (who, prior to his arrest, was the Deputy People's Commissar of Food Industry), MAKOVSKIJ, VOJTYGA[30] (the three of them infiltrated the Counter-Intelligence Department of VChKa – OGPU – NKVD), BARANSKIJ (Head of the Foreign Department of OGPU – NKVD), and several others.

In 1919–1920 and later, while striving to gain control of our intelligence and counterintelligence efforts against Poland, alongside infiltrating the aforementioned POW members into the Soviet security apparatus, PIŁSUDSKI took a series of measures to infiltrate highly skilled intelligence officers, specifically officers of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff, into the Soviet security and counterintelligence. With the assistance of UNŠLICHT, MESSING, PILAR, MEDVED' and other prominent Polish

24 Ignacy Hugo Stanisław Matuszewski (1891–1946): Polish politician and diplomat in 1920 during the Polish-Soviet war, he was a Head of Polish intelligence.

25 Revolutionary Military Council, RVS: the designation of the headquarters and the first military and order organs created by the Bolshevik party after the overthrow of the Provisional Government in Russia during the October Revolution.

26 The spelling is as it appears in the document. Correct name is Julian Leščinskij, aka Lenskij (1899–1937); Polish: Julian Leszczyński. Polish and Soviet politician; member of the VKP(b). General Secretary of the Communist Party of Poland; member of the Presidium of the ComIntern Executive Committee (IKKI). He was arrested and executed in 1937.

27 Jakov Doleckij, aka Fenigštejn (1888–1937): Soviet politician of Jewish origin. In 1925–1937, Head of the USSR Telegraph Agency (TASS). He committed suicide in 1937.

28 Bronisław Bortnowski, aka Bronkowski (1898–1937): Polish politician; member of the Communist Party of Poland. In 1924, he started serving as a Deputy Head of RU RKKA and Head of the Intelligence Department; joined ComIntern in 1929. In 1934, he became the President of the Executive Committee of the Polish-Baltic Regional Secretariat of ComIntern. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

29 Roman Longva (1891–1938): Soviet military of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). Head of the Communications Directorate of the Red Army (RKKA). He was arrested in 1937 and executed in 1938.

30 Jan Vojtyga (1894–1937): Soviet politician of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). Head of the Department of the Main Directorate for Motorways (GUSHOSDOR) of NKVD. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

agents, they assumed leadership positions within Soviet intelligence and counterintelligence. For example, IGNACIJ SOSNOVSKIJ (before his arrest, Deputy Head of the NKVD Administration for the Saratov Region), who acted as PIŁSUDSKI's emissary in 1919, as well as the emissary of the resident agents of the Second Department of the PGŠ on Soviet territory, received a directive from Major MATUSZEWSKI, the Head of the Second Department, to infiltrate the VChK apparatus.

In the summer of 1920, using his arrest by the Special Department of the VChK, SOSNOVSKIJ, the leading member of the Polish intelligence services, staged his split from POW with the assistance of PILAR. He was allowed by the Second Department of the Polish General Staff (PGŠ) to disclose only a negligible part of his network and managed to infiltrate the central apparatus of VChK. Shortly thereafter, SOSNOVSKIJ successfully infiltrated an entire group of high-ranking Polish intelligence officers into VChK. The group included Lieutenant Colonel of the Second Department of PGŠ VITKOVSKIJ[31] (he was Head of the Polish section of the Special Department of VChK, before moving on to work at the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry), KIJAKOVSKIJ[32] (Head of the English and Romance Languages Department of the Counter-Intelligence of VChK), ROLLER[33] (prior to his arrest, Head of the Special Department of the Stalingrad region), BŽOZOVSKIJ[34] (Deputy Head of the Special Department for Ukraine), and others.

Several other members of POW, such as BRONKOWSKI, the Deputy Head of RazvedUpr RKKA, with the assistance of UNŠLICHT, seized control of the entire RazvedUpr system, paralyzing all intelligence work against Poland. Other such members included BUDKIEVIČ[35] (Head of

31 Viktor Vitkowskij, aka Marčevskij (1895–1937): Soviet politician of Polish origin. He worked as a planner-economist at the Transportation Department of the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry of the USSR. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

32 Wiktor Kijakowski, aka Kijakowski-Steckiewicz (1889–1932): Polish military. He was a personnel officer of the Second Department of the PGSh; served as a resident agent of the Polish military intelligence services in Petrograd. Later, he served as the Head of the Fourth Department of Counter-Intelligence at OGPU and as the chief representative of OGPU in Mongolia. He died during the suppression of the uprising in the Mongolian People's Republic in 1932.

33 Karl Roller (1896–1937): Soviet military of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as Head of the Detention Facilities Department of the OGPU for the Kursk region and held the rank of Captain in the State Security (GB). He was arrested and executed in 1937.

34 Julian Bžozovskij (1898–1937): Soviet politician of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b); served as the Deputy Head of the Fifth Department of the Main Directorate of State Security (UGB) of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

35 Stanislav Budkievič (1887–1937): Soviet official of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as the Head of the Fourth Department of the Fourth Directorate of the Red Army Staff, and the Academic Secretary of the Soviet Military Encyclopedia Editorial Board; held the rank of Brigade Commissar. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

the Department and foreign resident agent), ŽBIKOVSKIJ,[36] ŠERINSKIJ,[37] FIRIN,[38] JODLOVSKIJ,[39] UZDANSKIJ,[40] MAKSIMOV.[41]

One of the ways these prominent Polish spies were utilized in foreign operations by the Foreign Department (INO) and RazvedUpr was through extensive use of doppelgangers within our resident offices abroad. Subsequently, these doppelgangers, planted by the intelligence services, were transferred to the USSR for espionage and sabotage activities via the system of staged failures.

At various times, the following Polish agents infiltrated and worked in leadership positions within the Red Army: UNŠLICHT, Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council (RVS); MUKLEVIČ, Head of the Navy; LONGVA, Head of the Communications Department of the Red Army (RKKA), KOCHANSKIJ,[42] Corps Commander (KomKor); KOZLOVSKIJ,[43] Commissar of various units, and many other Polish agents who infiltrated a number of departments of RKKA.

The main cadre of Polish agents who infiltrated the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NarKomInDel) was created by LOGANOVSKIJ, who worked there from 1925 to 1931. Here, too, Polish intelligence concentrated on the section of NarkomInDel's work related to Poland (the Polish section was handled by spies MORŠTYN[44] and KONIC[45]) and several

36 Stefan Žbikovskij (1891–1937): Soviet official of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). In 1934–1936, he was a resident agent of the Red Army's Intelligence Service (RU RKKA) in China. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

37 Zdislav Širinskij, aka Šerinskij (1888–1938): Soviet official of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). In 1925, he was recruited by the Chief Directorate of the Red Army Staff and subsequently served as a resident agent in Paris; retired in1935. He was arrested in 1936 and sentenced to five years of labor camps (ITL); later sentenced to execution in 1938 and executed the same year.

38 Semen Firin, aka Pupko (1898–1937): Soviet official of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as the Head of the White Sea-Baltic Canal labor camp; Head of *DmitLag* forced labor camp of the NKVD, and Deputy Head of the Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps (GULAG) of the NKVD; held the rank of Senior Major in the State Security (GB). He was arrested and executed in 1937.

39 Aleksandr Jodlovskij (1900–1937): Soviet official of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). He was a staff member of the Red Army's Intelligence Services (RU RKKA); held the rank of Colonel. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

40 Stefan Uzdanskij (1898–1937): Soviet military of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as the Deputy Head of the Department in the Red Army's Intelligence Services (RU RKKA); held the rank of Colonel. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

41 Maks Maksimov (1894–1937): Soviet military of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b). He worked as an employee of the Intelligence Department of the Red Army (RU RKKA) and held the position of Regiment Commissar. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

42 Vladislav Kochanskij (1897–1938): Soviet official of Polish origin. Member of the VKP(b), Head of the Motorized Armored Forces of the Leningrad Military District (LVO), Commander of the Fifth Heavy Bomber Aviation Corps of the Trans-Baikal Military District. Corps Commander. He was arrested in 1937 and executed in 1938.

43 Juzef Kozlovskij (1895–1937): Soviet official of Polish origin. Member of the VKP(b), Head of the Political Department of the Fifth Aviation Brigade, and Head of the Political Directorate of the Belarussian Military District. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

44 Ieronim Morštyn (1901–1937): Soviet official of Jewish origin. Member of the VKP(b), he was Deputy Head of the Economy Department of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

45 Evgenij Konic-Gorfinkel (1897–1937): Polish official; member of the Communist Party of Poland. Administrative Secretary for the Baltic States and Poland in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

other important directions (plenipotentiaries BRODOVSKIJ,[46] GAIKIS,[47] KARSKIJ[48]).

Having long taken control of the leading agencies of the Polish Communist Party and the Polish section of ComIntern (IKKI), POW systematically transferred its members – spies and saboteurs – to the USSR under the guise of political emigrants and prisoners that had to be exchanged, deliberately staging the arrests and convictions of POW members who had infiltrated the Communist Party.

Regardless of POW, the method of transferring spies to the USSR under the guise of political emigrants was widely used by the Polish political police (*defensywa*), which had a significant number of operatives within the ranks of revolutionary organizations from Polish, Belarusian, and Ukrainian nationalist circles in Poland, Western Ukraine, and Western Belarus.

Concurrently, various Polish Intelligence agencies (primarily, local units of the Second Polish General Staff – Wilno[49] and Lwów[50] *ekspozytura*,[51] border reconnaissance points or *placówki wywiadu*, the political police in the rear and border regions of Poland) sent spies and saboteurs to the USSR under the guise of defectors. This was carried out systematically and on a grand scale.

These "defectors" concealed their criminal objectives of coming to the USSR under various motives and pretexts (desertion from the military; fleeing from police persecution and unemployment; looking for work, reuniting with family, etc.).

As has by now become evident, in some cases, despite having their own independent communication channels with Poland, Polish spies and saboteurs who had been sent to the USSR under the guise of defectors made contact with members of POW on our territory and acted under their guidance. In general, the majority of defectors served as a source of active personnel for the organization.

Several qualified Polish spies sent to the USSR as defectors – specifically, soldiers who had deserted from the Polish army – settled in the Saratov region, where Polish agents PILAR and SOSNOVSKIJ had operated.

Political emigrants and defectors formed the backbone of the Polish sabotage network within industry and transportation, recruiting sabotage

46 The spelling is as it appears in the document. Correct name: Stefan Bratman-Brodovskij (1880–1937). Soviet functionary of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). Plenipotentiary of the USSR in Latvia. He was arrested on 2 July 1937; sentenced and executed on 27 October 1937. Bratman-Brodowski was rehabilitated on May 30, 1956.

47 Leon Gaikis (1898–937): Soviet diplomat of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b). Plenipotentiary of the USSR in Spain. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

48 Mieczysław Krakowski, aka Mikhail Karskij (1900–1937): Soviet diplomat of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b) and plenipotentiary of the USSR in Turkey. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

49 Polish name of the city; now has its Lithuanian name: Vilnius.

50 Polish name of the city; now has its Ukrainian name: Lviv.

51 Ekspozytura: here the name of the field structure of the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Army, i.e., Branch No. 1 of the Second General Staff of the Polish Army in Vilnius, etc.

personnel from among local Polish nationalists and, most importantly, from various non-Polish, deeply conspiratorial anti-Soviet elements.

The organization of POW in Ukraine was headed by LAZOVERT[52] (State Arbitrator of the Ukrainian SSR), who led the partially liquidated center of POW in Ukraine (SKARBEK,[53] POLITUR,[54] WISZNIEWSKI[55]). In Belarus, POW was led by BENEK[56] (People's Commissar for Land of the Belarusian SSR), who, like LAZOVERT, had been a member of the Moscow POW center since 1918.

THE LEAD-UP TO THE ANTI-SOVIET COUP DURING THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE REVOLUTION

During the early period of the Russian Revolution, there were efforts to organize an anti-Soviet coup. They included actions aimed at undermining the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and preparing for an anti-Soviet uprising in collaboration with the followers of Bucharin, as well as left-wing *Esers.*[57] The goal was to encourage Soviet Russia to continue its war against Germany. By that time, PIŁSUDSKI had already shifted his focus towards the Entente powers and was managing the activities of his organizations according to the directives of the French Staff.

Members of this organization, including individuals like UNŠLICHT, LEŠINSKIJ, and DOLECKIJ, along with BUCHARIN[58] and the *Esers*, developed a plan to arrest members of the Council of People's Commissars (SovNarKom), including LENIN. To execute this plan, individuals like PESTKOVSKIJ[59] established contact with the French intelligence representative

52 Samuil Lazovert (1885–1937): Soviet lawyer of Jewish origin. Member of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine, State Arbitrator at the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

53 Bolesław Skarbek-Szacki (1888–1934): Polish communist; editor of the newspapers *Komunista Polski*, *Głos Komunisty*, *Sierp*, and *Trybuna Radziecka*.

54 Henryk Politur-Radziejowski (1899–1937): Ukrainian scholar of Polish origin; Deputy Editor of the Kyiv newspaper *Sierp* in 1927–1929. In 1931, he became a Researcher at the Institute of Polish Culture and the Head of the Department at the Polish Pedagogical Institute. He was arrested in 1933 and sentenced to ten years of imprisonment. In 1937, he was sentenced again and executed.

55 Konstanty Teofil Wiszniewski, aka Wiśniewski (1893–1937): Polish communist; editor of the newspapers *Sztandar komunizmu* and *Sierp*. In 1923, he became the Deputy Secretary of the Polish Bureau of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Ukraine (KPbU). Wiszniewski was sentenced and executed in 1937.

56 Kazimir Benek (1895–1938): Soviet official of Belarusian origin; member of the CK VKP (b) of Belarus. He was also a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Belarusian SSR and People's Commissar of Agriculture of the BSSR. He was arrested in 1937 and executed in 1938.

57 Party of Socialists-Revolutionaries, Esers, a left-wing political party founded in 1901 by revolutionaries originating from the so-called Narodniks. It was illegal until the February Revolution; after the October Revolution, it was banned again by the Bolsheviks. In 1922, SR leaders were arrested and sentenced to death or long prison terms. Due to the protests of socialist activists of the Second International, the death sentences were not carried out, but none of those tried ever left Soviet prisons.

58 Nikolaj Bucharin (1888–1938): Russian revolutionary and Soviet politician; member of the VKP(b). Candidate for membership in the Central Committee of the VKP(b) (1934–1937). Chief editor of the newspaper *Izvestija*. Leader of the so-called right-wing opposition within the VKP(b). He was arrested and executed in 1938.

59 Stanislav Pestkovskij (1882–1937): Soviet political activist of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). Political assistant in the secretariat of Dmitrii Manuilskij at ComIntern. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

in Moscow, General LAVERGNE,[60] and worked with the *Eser* leadership. BOBINSKIJ[61] amassed armed detachments to participate in the left-wing Social Revolutionary uprisings. Additionally, efforts were made to prepare provocative military actions against the German forces on the demarcation line using Polish units that had survived since KERENSKIJ's time.

Despite the efforts, the plan for an anti-Soviet coup and continuation of war with Germany did not succeed. Subsequently, the Moscow branch of POW followed the directives provided by LAVERGNE, as well as those of PIŁSUDSKI's *aide-de-camp*, as well as WIENIAWA-DŁUGOSZOWSKI,[62] an important member of POW who had arrived on Soviet territory illegally. As a result, the organization shifted its focus to making preparations for the intervention against Soviet Russia. These Polish activists and revolutionaries accomplished this goal by creating their own armed forces under the guise of forming Polish units within the Red Army.

The so-called Western Rifle Division that was formed in late 1918 and included, for the most part, Polish soldiers, had its entire command structure taken over by members of POW (division commanders MAKOVSKIJ[63] and LONGVA; commissars LAZOVERT and SLAVINSKIJ;[64] brigade commanders MAJEVSKIJ[65] and DLUSSKIJ[66]; brigade commissars SCIBOR,[67] GRUZEL[68] and ČERNICKIJ[69]). Regimental commanders within the Division were also members of POW. These members formed POW groups within various units of the Division.

60 Jean Guillaume Lavergne: Head of the French military mission in Russia during the Civil War.

61 Stanislav Bobinskij (1882–1937): Soviet revolutionary of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). Secretary of the Polish Bureau of the CK of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and member of the Executive Committee of ComIntern. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

62 Bolesław Wieniawa-Długoszowski (1881–1942): Polish general and diplomat; a trusted man of Józef Piłsudski. In 1937, he was the commander of the Cavalry Division in Warsaw. In 1938–1940, he served as Polish ambassador to Italy.

63 Jerzy, aka Yurii Makovskij (1889–1937): Soviet official of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). He was an employee of the Foreign Department of the OGPU, and Head of the Special Department of the Main Directorate of the NKVD for the Omsk region. He was arrested in 1935 and executed in 1937.

64 Adam Slavinskij, aka Kočarovskij (1885–1937): Soviet official of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). In 1934–1937, he was Head of the inspection group at the Central Directorate of Roads of the People's Commissariat for Communications. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

65 Stanisław Majewski: in 1918, he was a soldier in the Warsaw Revolutionary Red Regiment. In 1919, he served at the School of Instructors of the Western Rifle Division.

66 The spelling is as it appears in the document. The correct spelling is Stanislav Dluskij, aka Stanislav Štyl'-Flatau (1906–1936?): Soviet communist activist of Polish origin; Head of the party school in Kyiv. Head of the Foreign Aid Bureau of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine (KPZU). He was arrested in 1935 and held in custody by the Special Corps of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR.

67 Władysław Ścibor (1891–1938): Polish communist activist. In 1918, he started serving at the Warsaw Revolutionary Red Regiment as a political Commissar.

68 Vaclav Gruzel (1884–1937): Polish military and Soviet official; member of the VKP(b). Military commissar of the 52nd Rifle Division, Western and Southern fronts (1918–1921); senior secretary of the Collegiate of the Caucasus Communist Party under the Central Committee of the VKP(b) for the Yaroslavl region. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

69 Stepan Černickij (1884–1934): Soviet military; member of the VKP(b). In 1920, he became the Commissar of the Fifty-Third Border Division; later, Deputy Head of the Special Inspection of the Main Directorate of the Workers and Peasants' Militia (RKM) attached to the Council of People's Commissars (SNK) of RSFSR. He died in 1934.

DEFEATIST ACTIVITY DURING THE SOVIET-POLISH WAR

In early 1919, the Western Front became the primary theater of operation for the Moscow branch of POW. Utilizing the presence of some of its members in leadership positions within the Front's headquarters (UNŠLICHT, a member of the Revolutionary Military Council, or RVS; MUKLEWICZ, the Commissar of the Front's headquarters; STAŠEVSKIJ,[70] Head of the Intelligence Department of the Front's headquarters; BUDKEVIČ,[71] Commissar of the Sixteenth Army's headquarters; MEDVED', OLSKIJ, POLIČKEVIČ,[72] ČACKIJ[73]) in the Belarusian government (CICHOVSKIJ,[74] Chairman of the All-Belarusian Central Executive Committee, or TsIK, of the Lithuanian-Belarusian Republic), the organization extensively engaged in activities aimed at defeating the Red Army and aiding the Polish capture of Belarus.

The organization's first major operation on the frontlines led to the surrender of Wilno to the Poles, orchestrated by UNŠLICHT, who had taken control of the defense of the Lithuanian-Belarusian Republic.[75]

Throughout various parts of the Western Front, the organization concentrated a significant number of its supporters, gathering them from different regions of the country under the guise of mobilizing Polish "communists" for the front. They infiltrated various Soviet institutions within the front and assumed leadership of the local POW in Belarus ("KN-1"), which had been established by the Poles independently of the Moscow center.

Subsequently, during the entire Soviet-Polish war and under UNŠLICHT's leadership, the organization not only provided the Polish command with crucial information about the plans and actions of our army on the Western Front (UNŠLICHT communicated the plan of attack on Warsaw to the Poles), but also carried out a systematic effort to influence the front's operational plans in a direction favorable to the Poles.

70 Artur Staševskij, aka Giršfel'd (1890–1937): Soviet military of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b). In 1924–1925, he was the leader of the united residency (Foreign Intelligence of the VChK – OGPU and Intelligence Directorate of the RKKA) in Berlin. From 1925 to 1936, he held various positions in the People's Commissariat for External Trade and served as Soviet trade representative in Spain. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

71 Adam Budkevič (1912–1937): Soviet official of Polish origin. He was involved in alcohol production at the Pokryshev distillery. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

72 Vaclav Poličkevič (1890–1937): Soviet military of Polish origin; member of the VKP (b). He held the rank of senior lieutenant of the State Security. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

73 Stanislav Čackij (1899–1937): Soviet official; senior lieutenant of the State Security; member of the VKP(b). In 1920, he joined the Special Department of the VChK. He worked for the NKVD Foreign Department. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

74 Kazimir Cichovskij, aka Vysockij (1887–1937): Soviet political activist of Polish origin; member of the Polish Communist Party. He worked for the Personnel Department of the ComIntern Executive Committee (IKKI). During the Spanish Civil War, he was in the International Brigades. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

75 Lithuanian-Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic: puppet state established in 1919 on the territories occupied by the Red Army in what are now modern Belarus and Lithuania.

POW also initiated extensive sabotage and insurgency work in the rear of the Western Front.

In light of the facts established by the current investigation, there is no doubt that the disbanded POW organization, led by UNŠLICHT, played a significant role in thwarting the Red Army's advance on Warsaw.

FASCIST NATIONALIST ACTIVITY AMONG THE POLISH POPULATION IN THE USSR

During the Civil War, alongside active sabotage and insurgent activities, locally established POW entities, independent of the Moscow center, conducted extensive nationalist work among the local Polish population in Belarus ("KN-1"), Ukraine ("KN-3"), Siberia, and other regions.

After the conclusion of the Soviet-Polish War, local POW organizations adapted to the conditions of peacetime. The overall coordination of their anti-Soviet activities shifted to the POW center in Moscow, which continued to conduct a widespread, ongoing fascist-nationalist campaign among the Polish population of the USSR.

Especially active from the late 1920s onward was the broad infiltration of Polish agents into key positions within the entire system of the Soviet party institutions responsible for working with the Polish population of the USSR. This system was then used to carry out the work of "POW".

Members of POW, HELTMAN[76] and NEJMAN,[77] infiltrated positions as secretaries of the Politburo TsK VKP(b). VNOROVSKIJ,[78] VONSOVSKIJ,[79] and MAZEPUS[80] assumed roles in the Politburo TsK VKP(b) of Belarus. SKARBEK, LAZOVERT, and others did the same within the Politburo TsK VKP(b) of Ukraine. DOMBAL'[81] served as the editor of *Trybuna Radziecka*

76 Stefan Heltman (1886–1937): political activist of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). In 1924–1925, he served as the Secretary of the Politburo of CK VKP(b). Later, he was the Deputy Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Council of the People's Commissariat for Grain and Animal Husbandry of the USSR. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

77 Jan Nejman (1894–1937): communist activist of Polish origin. In 1927–1930, he served as the Secretary of the Central Polish Bureau (TsPB) of the CK VKP(b). In 1930–1933, he was the Chief Editor of *Trybuna Radziecka*. He was arrested on 26 January 1937; sentenced and executed on 21 August 1937. Nejman was rehabilitated on 15 September 1956.

78 Vladislav Vnorovskij (1897–1937?): political activist of Polish origin. In 1921–1923, he served as the Chairman and Secretary of the Russian–Ukrainian delegation in Poland. He was also the Secretary of the Polish Bureau of CK VKP(b) of Belarus. Vnorovskij was arrested in 1937 and executed.

79 Bronislav Vonsovskij (1898–1938): Soviet political activist of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). In 1925, he became the member of the Polish Bureau of the CK VKP(b) of Belarus. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

80 Mečislav Mazepus (1893–1937): Soviet military of Polish origin; member of the Communist Party of Poland and VKP(b). He served in the Main Directorate of State Security (GUGB NKVD). He held the rank of Senior Lieutenant in the State Security agencies. He was arrested in 1936 and executed in 1937.

81 Tomaš Dombal' (1890–1937): political activist of Polish origin. Doctor of Economic Sciences, academician, and member of the VKP(b). He worked as the Head of the Department at the Moscow Institute of Mechanization and Electrification of Socialist Agriculture. He was arrested in 1936 and executed in 1937.

in Moscow, while PRINZ[82] and ŽARSKIJ[83] worked as editors of Polish newspapers in Minsk. Other members of POW took control of the editorial positions in Polish newspapers in Ukraine, as well as Polish sections of the People's Commissariats of Education (NarKomPros), Polish publishing houses, technical colleges, schools, and clubs in various regions of the USSR.

Utilizing their official positions and their authority to allocate personnel, HELTMAN and NEJMAN dispatched members of POW from Moscow. These members concealed their affiliations behind their party membership cards to engage in party, cultural, educational, and economic work in various regions of the USSR where Polish populations resided. They were not limited to Ukraine, Belarus, and Leningrad but were also sent to the Urals, Siberia, and the Far East, where Polish intelligence carried out active, hitherto undiscovered operations in collaboration with Japanese intelligence.

The organization actively exploited its infiltration into the system of Soviet party institutions to create local grassroots POW groups and expand its extensive chauvinistic and Polonization efforts that continue to this day. The primary objective remains the preparation of diversionary and insurgent personnel for potential armed anti-Soviet actions in the event of war.

These same objectives were pursued through the establishment – under the influence of POW – of Polish national rural councils and districts in border regions, often in areas with minority Polish populations. This also provided POW with an opportunity for Polonization efforts among Ukrainians and Belarusians-Catholics.

The organization extensively leveraged its penetration into the system of the Soviet party institutions working with the Polish population to conduct comprehensive espionage activities through its extensive agent network across various regions of the country.

82 Evgenij Prinz (?–1937): Chief editor of the Polish-language newspaper *Orka*, published in Belarus between 1926–1937. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

83 Genrich Zarskij (1902–1937): Soviet journalist of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as an editor for the newspaper *Orka* in Minsk. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

UTILIZATION OF TROTSKYISTS AND OTHER ANTI-SOVIET ORGANIZATIONS BY POLISH INTELLIGENCE

In its practical subversive, espionage, terrorist, and sabotage activities within the territory of the USSR, Polish intelligence extensively relies on Trotskyite agents and right-wing traitors.

In 1931, UNŠLICHT and MUKLEVIČ, having established connections with the anti-Soviet Trotskyite center represented by PIATAKOV[84] and later with KAMENEV,[85] reached an agreement with them on conducting joint subversive and destructive activities. Together with members of POW and Trotskyite-Zinovievite[86] elements, they aimed to undermine the country's national economy, particularly within the military industry.

In September 1932, UNŠLICHT also established contact with the right-wing traitors and received approval from BUCHARIN for the collaboration between the right-wing elements and POW in their subversive activities.

Finally, in 1933 with PIATAKOV's consent, UNŠLICHT established contact with the traitor TUKHACHEVSKIJ, obtaining information about his dealings with the German fascists. They reached an agreement to jointly work towards the liquidation of Soviet power and the restoration of capitalism in the USSR. UNŠLICHT negotiated with TUKHACHEVSKIJ to provide crucial espionage information to Polish intelligence regarding the Red Army (RKKA) and to make the Soviet Western Front accessible to the Poles in the event of war.

All local POW organizations conducted anti-Soviet activities in close coordination with Trotskyites, right-wing elements, and various anti-Soviet nationalist organizations in Ukraine, Belarus, and other regions.

POLISH ESPIONAGE IN THE USSR

Regardless of the activities of its lower-level espionage network, up until its liquidation the Moscow POW center systematically provided Polish intelligence with crucial information about the military, economic, and political situation in the USSR. This included operational and mobilization

84 Georgii, aka Yurii Piatakov (1890–1937): Soviet official; member of VKP(b). In 1931–1932, he served as the Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Board of the National Economy (VSNKh) of the USSR; in 1932–1934, he was Deputy People's Commissar of Heavy Industry; in 1934–1936, 1st Deputy People's Commissar of Heavy Industry. He was arrested in 1936 and executed in 1937.

85 Lev Kamenev, aka Rozenfeld (1883–1936): Soviet official of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b) (repeatedly expelled and reinstated). He was the Director of the Maksim Gorkii Institute of World Literature of the USSR Academy of Sciences. He was sentenced to death and executed in 1936.

86 In December 1925, at the XIV Congress of the VKP(b), Grigorij Zinoviev, with the support of Lev Kamenev and the delegation from Leningrad, spoke out against the group led by Joseph Stalin, which included Vjačeslav Molotov, Alexej Rykov, Nikolaj Bucharin, and others.

materials from the Red Army General Staff, to which UNŠLICHT, MUKLEVIČ, BUDKEVIČ, BRONKOWSKI, LONGVA, and other members of the Moscow center had access through their official positions.

Concurrently, the Moscow POW center and resident agents of the Second Department of PGŠ[87] conducted extensive recruitment of spies among non-Polish elements. For example, in 1932 UNŠLICHT successfully recruited the Head of the RKKA Artillery Directorate, IEFIMOV,[88] and obtained from him comprehensive information about the state of the artillery armaments in the Red Army. Another member of the Moscow POW center, PESTKOVSKIJ, carried out several recruitments within ComIntern, scientific institutes, and other organizations, mainly recruiting non-Polish agents directly for Polish intelligence and, only in some cases, for POW. The Warsaw center occasionally authorized the inclusion of non-Polish elements (Russians or Ukrainians) in POW. LOGANOVSKIJ created a significant espionage network within the NarKomInDel.

SOSNOVSKIJ, resident agent of the Second Department of the PGŠ, and his Deputy Lieutenant Colonel VITKOVSKIJ conducted particularly extensive recruitment work.

For Polish intelligence, SOSNOVSKIJ successfully recruited Assistant Chief of the RKKA, KARIN,[89] who had been a German agent since 1916; Assistant Chief of the RazvedUpr RKKA, MEIER;[90] Assistant Prosecutor of the USSR, PRUSS;[91] Deputy Head of the Dmitrovskij Camp of NKVD, PUZICKIJ;[92] and several other individuals occupying high-level positions in RKKA – OGPU – NKVD and central government institutions.

WITKOWSKI, who had been infiltrated into VChK by SOSNOVSKIJ in 1920, was later transferred to work in transportation and held managerial positions within the national economy. By the time of his arrest, he had created a large subversive and espionage network, consisting primarily of highly qualified professionals.

The Red Army continued to be a significant channel of infiltration for Polish intelligence. This espionage network persisted until the present day. One notable entry point was the so-called Moscow School of the Red

87 The Second Department of the Polish General Staff, which was responsible for military intelligence and counterintelligence.

88 Nikolaj Efimov (1897–1937): Soviet military; member of the VKP(b). He served as Head of the Artillery Directorate of the RKKA. He was arrested and executed in1937.

89 Fedor Karin, aka Todres Krutianskij (1896–1937): Soviet military of Jewish origin; member of VKP(b). He served as Head of the Second Department of the Red Army's Main Political Directorate (RU RKKA). He held the rank of Corps Commissar. He was arrested, sentenced and executed in 1937.

90 Lev Meier-Zakharov (1899–1937): Soviet military; member of the VKP(b). He served as the Deputy Head of the RU RKKA. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

91 Iosif Pruss (1891–1937): Soviet official of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as the Deputy Prosecutor of the USSR. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

92 Sergej PuzicCKij (1895–1937): Soviet military; member of the VKP(b). He served as the Deputy Head of the Dmitrovsk forced labor camp of the NKVD. He held the rank of the State Security Commissar of the third level. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

Communards, which existed from 1920 to 1927 (prior to its disbanding, it was known as the UNŠLICHT United Military School).

This military school, especially during its initial period of existence, was staffed with Poles who were sent there by the Polish Bureau attached to central and local party organizations. Members of POW who had infiltrated the Polish Bureau directed individuals (including those who were already within the organization, as well potential agents of Polish intelligence) to the Red Communards School. These potential agents often maintained their presence in the USSR by posing as captives who were unwilling to return to Poland after the Soviet–Polish War, or by presenting themselves as defectors. In the school itself, a strong POW group conducted its own recruitment efforts.

The School trained personnel for commanding positions in infantry, cavalry, and artillery specialties, and these people were sent to various parts of the Red Army; inevitably, among them there were Polish spies who had graduated from the School.

Communication with Warsaw was systematically maintained with the help of various methods. Prominent representatives of the Warsaw POW center, as well as those of the Second Department of PGŠ, regularly visited the USSR. They established contact with UNŠLICHT, PESTKOVSKIJ, SOSNOVSKIJ, VTKOVSKIJ, BORTNOVSKIJ, and others.

These representatives traveled to the USSR under various official pretexts (as diplomatic couriers, inspectors of Polish diplomatic missions, businessmen), under personal cover {as tourists, for family visits, transiting},[93] and even illegally. Specifically, to maintain regular contact with SOSNOVSKIJ and OLSKIJ, the personnel of the Polish military attaché in Moscow included KOWALSKI[94] and KOBYLAŃSKI[95] – officers of the PGŠ Second Department who were close to PIŁSUDSKI. These meetings were legalized by organizing fictitious recruitment of two officers for OGPU by OLSKIJ and SOSNOVSKIJ.

A number of organization members had covert contacts with the Polish military attaché in Moscow and other members of the embassy residency (WIŚLAK,[96] BUDKIEVYČ, DOMBAL′, NAUISKAYTIS,[97] KONIC, and others).

93 Text enclosed in curly braces {...} is text inserted between lines.

94 Tadeusz Kowalski (1896–?): Polish military, Lieutenant in the Polish Army, Assistant Military Attaché of Poland in Moscow. In 1924, he was recruited by the OGPU. In 1931, he started working at the Polish legation in Tallinn. In 1933, he served as the military attaché at the Polish consulate in *Daugavpils*.

95 Tadeusz Kobylański (1895–1967): Polish military and diplomat. In 1923, he started working at the Second Department of the Polish Ministry of Defense. In 1924, he became the Assistant Military Attaché of Poland in Moscow. In February 1929, he was transferred to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1935–1939, he served as the acting Vice Director of the Political and Economic Department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and as the Head of the Eastern Division of the Ministry.

96 Jan Wiślak, aka Hempel (1877–1937): Polish communist. He worked at *Trybuna Radziecka*. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

97 Kazimir Nauiokaytis (1896–1938): Soviet official of Lithuanian origin; member of the VKP(b). He was the Head of the Regional Department of Counterintelligence of the NKVD in Saratov oblast. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

Others members of POW who infiltrated positions that allowed them to officially meet the embassies' staff used their locations for espionage and communication (LOGANOVSKIJ, at official receptions; MORŠTYN, at the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs or NKID; PESTKOVSKIJ, within various Polish-Soviet committees, etc.)

Members of the organization who were working abroad, in either official Soviet or undercover positions, established contacts with representatives of POW and the Second Department of PGŠ (LOGANOVSKIJ and BARANSKIJ in Warsaw; BORŽOZOVSKIJ [98] in Finland, Czechoslovakia, and Japan; LEŠINSKIJ in Copenhagen; BUDKIEVYČ in France, etc.).

Finally, several high-ranking resident agents (SOSNOVSKIJ and PESTKOVSKIJ) had complex codes and passwords for communication.

Through these communication channels, all the intelligence information, especially in regards to the activities of the organization, was systematically transmitted to Warsaw. In return, the main center of POW and the Second Department of PGŠ provided financial support and directives for the organization's activities.

SABOTAGE AND SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES OF POLISH INTELLIGENCE WITHIN THE SOVIET NATIONAL ECONOMY

Following the end of the Civil War, Polish intelligence – through the Moscow POW center and other co-existing channels – began subversive activities initially aimed at disrupting the reconstruction of the Soviet industrial sector.

In 1925 during his visit to Moscow, a representative of the Warsaw POW center, M. SOKOLNICKI,[99] conveyed a directive to UNŠLICHT: the Moscow center had to intensify its subversive work. Shortly after, the directive was supplemented with instructions to transition to sabotage operations.

In accordance with these directives and up until its liquidation, the Moscow POW center carried out a wide range of sabotage and subversive activities aimed at undermining the defense capabilities of the USSR.

Prominent members of POW infiltrated the leadership of the Red Army (RKKA) and the Red Navy (RKKF), as well as civilian institutions responsible for defense matters (RKKA General Staff, the Directorate of

98 The spelling is as it appears in the document. The correct name is Genrich Bržozovskij (1899–1937): Soviet military of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as the Deputy Head of the Main Directorate of State Security (GUGB) of the NKVD. He was arrested in 1936 and executed in 1937.

99 Michał Sokolnicki (1880–1967): Polish politician and diplomat; member of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). In 1931–1936, he served as Polish envoy in Denmark, then as the Polish envoy in Turkey in 1936–1945.

Naval Forces, defense, transport, and metallurgy sectors of the State Planning Committee, or GosPlan of the USSR, the Main Directorate of Maritime Shipbuilding, or GlavMorProm, and others).

In 1925, the military-economic department of the mobilization management was formed at the RKKA headquarters. A POW member, S. BOTNER,[100] was infiltrated into this department's top position. He participated in active espionage and the subversive GORBATIUK[101] group, which operated within the military-scientific sector.

Together with GORBATIUK, BOTNER conducted significant subversive work within the Mobilization Department of the RKKA headquarters, aimed at preparing for the defeat of the Soviet Union in the impending war.

For example, when working on mobilization issues, the group, by shifting the focus to rear support issues, intentionally reduced the army's requests for wartime resources, claiming they were artificially inflated. The timelines for mobilizing the industrial sector were extended to a year or more, essentially leaving several enterprises unprepared for the defense. As for resolving issues related to supplying the Red Army with military equipment and improving its effectiveness, they were systematically delayed.

In 1927, the GosPlan Defense Sector was established. It was supposed to play a major role in the preparation of the country's defense, industrial mobilization, and transport.

To seize control of this crucial sector, the Moscow center of POW infiltrated key positions in the Defense Sector of GosPlan. Initially, the center placed the abovementioned BOTNER in the leadership position within the sector. Later, with the assistance of BOTNER and UNŠLICHT, other members of POW, V. A. KOLESINSKIJ,[102] Anna MUKLEVIČ,[103] and Zaslaw ŠIRINSKIJ, infiltrated this sector. In 1931, UNŠLICHT, the Deputy Chairman of GosPlan, also became part of this infiltration. These individuals, in turn, engaged the leading employees of the Defense Sector in their organization.

In terms of its practical activities, POW's primary goal was to undermine the development of the military-industrial complex.

Initially, POW members openly opposed the construction of military factories, arguing that it was too expensive and unaffordable. Subsequently,

100 Stefan Botner (1890–1937): Soviet official of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as Head of the Defense Sector of GosPlan, as well as senior editor of the *Voiennaia mysl* magazine. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

101 Aleksandr Gorbatiuk (1891–1937): Soviet military; member of the VKP(b); served under the command of the Personnel Directorate of the RKKA. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

102 Vaclav Kolesinskij (1898–1937): Soviet functionary of Polish origin. He served as the Deputy Head of the Second Main Directorate of the People's Commissariat of Defense Industry (NKOP). He was arrested, sentenced and executed in 1937.

103 Anna Muklevič (1900–1937): Soviet functionary; member of the VKP(b). She served as Head of the Department of Material Balances and Material Supply of GosPlan. She was arrested and executed in 1937.

they subversively recommended that military production should be integrated with civilian industries.

To achieve this goal, UNŠLICHT, KOLESINSKIJ, BOTNER, and others aligned themselves with the anti-Soviet Trotskyist group headed by SMILGA[104] (the group was part of the Supreme Council of the National Economy, or VSNKh).

Consequently, moving away from risky, explicit opposition to military construction, the organization adopted more covert methods of undermining the Soviet defense base.

While working out the plans for the capital construction of the military-industrial complex, the members of the organization deliberately dispersed funds among various construction projects and failed to provide the necessary resources for projects of critical importance. As a result, the construction of military plants was prolonged, incompetence within individual workshops was fostered, and the practice of construction without proper plans was encouraged.

In this regard, the disruption of the construction and reconstruction of ammunition factories is particularly telling. This disruption, combined with other subversive actions, was intended to create an "ammunition famine" during wartime.

In some regions, such as the Urals, only munition factories were built, while ammunition factories were absent. This led and continues to lead to a situation in which the production of projectile bodies is located thousands of kilometers away from where they can be equipped. In cases when the construction of ammunition factories did take place, their development was intentionally slowed down, while the infrastructure supporting these factories (water, steam, energy, sewage) was disrupted.

The construction and reconstruction of projectile body production plants was intentionally disrupted as well. UNŠLICHT, KOLESINSKIJ, and BOTNER, in active cooperation with the Trotskyist organization within the industry (PIATAKOV, SMILGA, JERMAN,[105] KROŽEVSKIJ[106]), deliberately reduced the capacity of these plants, prolonging their construction and reconstruction.

104 Ivan Smilga (1892–1938): Soviet politician of Latvian origin. He was expelled from the VKP(b) in 1934 as a trotskyist. In 1924–1927, he was Director of the Moscow Institute of National Economy. He was arrested in 1928 and sentenced to four years of exile. He was released in 1929 and worked as the Deputy Chairman of GosPlan and a member of the Presidium of VSNKh. He was arrested again in 1935 and sentenced to five years of imprisonment. In 1938, he was executed.

105 Semen Erman (1900–1937): Soviet official of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as the Deputy Head of the Main Military Mobilization Department in the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry (NarKomTiazhProm). He was arrested in 1936 and executed in 1937.

106 Markel Kroževskij (1898–1937): Soviet official of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as the Deputy Head of the Main Military Mobilization Department of the NarKomTiazhProm. He was arrested in 1936 and was sentenced and executed in 1937.

A similar situation existed with the production of gunpowder. During the planning stage of the new gunpowder factories within the Defense Sector of GosPlan, UNŠLICHT, KOLESINSKIJ, and BOTNER adopted and implemented Ratajčak's[107] subversive instructions, including calculations of capacity based on outdated norms. Concurrently, subversion was carried out to delay the construction of new facilities (e.g., the Aleksin Gunpowder Plant in the Moscow region), to disrupt the supporting infrastructure of gunpowder factories, and to sabotage the reconstruction of old gunpowder plants (Kazan Plant No. 40, Kosiakov Plant No. 14, etc.).

In terms of planning, POW intentionally underestimated consumption plans for metals for military orders and provided false and knowingly understated information about the production capacities of the defense industry, arguing that the procurement plans of the Military Commissariat (VoienVed) for the defense industry were unachievable. The mobilization orders from the VoienVed and the People's Commissariat of Communication Routes (NKPS) were reduced drastically, resulting in year-to-year underperformance of the defense construction programs and shortages in mobilization reserves.

Plans for providing mobilized industry with labor were abandoned for several years.

Despite the deficit in supplying military production with non-ferrous metals during wartime, measures to replace non-ferrous metals were deliberately delayed, just like the development of the rare-metal industries.

Certain areas of mobilization preparation within the Defense Sector of GosPlan were intentionally neglected, particularly in the fields of healthcare and agriculture.

Specifically, UNŠLICHT, with the help of the Trotskyist JEMŠANOV,[108] whom he recruited, conducted significant subversive work within the transportation sector of GosPlan.

These subversive actions were aimed at disrupting the delivery of raw materials for factories and impeding the export of finished goods. This result was achieved by intentionally lowering the norms and indicators. Necessary repairs to transportation were consistently delayed by decreasing NKPS requests for metal. The elimination of areas of congestion was artificially slowed down through subversive allocation of funds when approving capital construction projects within the transportation industry.

107 Stanislav Ratajčak (1894–1937): Soviet functionary of German origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as the Head of the Main Department of Chemical Industry at NarKomTiazhProm. He was arrested in 1936 and executed in 1937.

108 Aleksandr Emšanov (1891–1937): Soviet functionary, manager of the Caucasian Railway (KVZHD). In 1926–1931, he served as the Chairman of the KVZHD Board. In 1931–1934, he headed the transportation sector of the State GosPlan. In 1934, he started working as the Head of the Moscow–Donbass Railway. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

For an extended period, the plan for mobilization transportation along railway routes was drafted in such a way that economic transportation would almost entirely cease upon the outbreak of war. This would have meant a disruption of industrial mobilization and ordinary life in the rear of the country.

One of the leaders of POW, R. A. MUKLEVIČ, carried out serious subversive and diversionary work within the framework of the Naval Fleet and the Main Directorate of GlavMorProm.

From the moment of his appointment as the Chief of the Workers and Peasants' Red Navy (RKKF) in 1925, MUKLEVIČ energetically assembled anti-Soviet personnel to be utilized within POW.

MUKLEVIČ involved his Deputy, the Zinovievite P. I. KURKOV[109] (he was a member of an anti-Soviet organization within the Navy), in subversive work and used this group to the advantage of POW.

MUKLEVIČ's subversive work in the Navy began with the slowdown of construction of a torpedo boat, a patrol ship, and the first series of submarines. The design of these vessels was entrusted to IGNATIEV,[110] who headed a group of subversives within the Committee of Science and Technology. The deadlines for the design and construction of these vessels, which had been approved by the Revolutionary Military Council (RevVoienSovet), were arbitrarily violated and changed. Vessels that had been laid down on slipways were dismantled and re-laid multiple times. Orders for equipment were untimely and incomplete.

Upon assuming the position of the Head of the Main Directorate of GlavMorProm in 1934, MUKLEVIČ formed a subversive and diversionary organization there while maintaining contact with the anti-Soviet organization within RKKF.

MUKLEVIČ involved more than twenty leading specialists from among the Trotskyists, Zinovievites, and anti-Soviet-minded specialists in the subversive organization within the shipbuilding industry. With their assistance, MUKLEVIČ launched extensive subversive and diversionary activities in GlavMorProm and at shipbuilding plants.

As a result of this activity, the construction and delivery of a number of ships and submarines to VoienVed were delayed. For example, by delaying the production of diesel engines, the delivery of submarines to the Far East in the current year was disrupted. In the case of the *Maliutka*

109 Petr Kurkov (1889–1937): Soviet military; member of the VKP(b). He worked at the People's Commissariat of Defense (NKO) in the personnel management department of the RKKA. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

110 Nikolaj Ignatiev (1880–1938): Soviet scientist, not party-affiliated. He was the Deputy Head of Department "A" at the Scientific Research Institute of Naval Shipbuilding. In 1931, he was sentenced to death with commutation to ten years of forced labor. He was released in 1934, arrested again in 1937, and executed in 1938.

submarine, its dimensions were maliciously increased, making it impossible to transport by railway. The construction of serial destroyers was disrupted. On the flagman-destroyers, the hull of the ships were made too light, hindering the use of aft artillery. On cruisers, different parts of anti-aircraft artillery were placed in such a way that they could not be used simultaneously. The preparation of slipways for the laying of battleships at the Nikolaiev shipyards was disrupted as well.

In accordance with the agreement with the anti-Soviet organization within the RKKF, the testing of already completed ships was systematically delayed, and they were not put into service.

In addition to extensive subversive activities, MUKLEVIČ also prepared acts of sabotage.

For example, as directed by MUKLEVIČ, two members of POW within the shipbuilding industry, STRELTSOV[111] and BRODSKIJ, were to disable the large slipways at the Baltic shipyard. The plan was to carry out this act of sabotage either by closing electrical circuits, which were abundant in the surrounding scaffolding, or by organizing an explosion. However, MUKLEVIČ was unable to proceed with this plan.

Preparations were also made to disable a number of major defense plants in Leningrad, including certain units of the Kirov Plant. The Plant's Assistant Director, Leon MARKOVSKIJ,[112] was also a member of POW.

Sabotage groups were created at major aviation plants (Plant No. 22, Perm Aviation Plant, etc.) and artillery plants (Molotov Plant, *Barrikady*, Tula Plant, Kiev Arsenal). Within the chemical industry, individuals such as LOGANOVSKIJ, BUDNIAK,[113] ARTAMONOV,[114] and BARANSKIJ organized sabotage groups as well.

The largest base for the sabotage network within the industry was created by defectors and emigrants from Poland who had settled mainly in the Urals and Siberia. However, in recent years major defense enterprises have been purged of these elements. Therefore, in order to create a highly conspiratorial sabotage network, Polish intelligence and POW recruited various non-Polish elements who have been working in the defense industry but have not been exposed.

111 Boris Strelcov-Zal (1886–1937): Soviet naval engineer of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b). He worked as Chief Engineer of the Baltic shipyard, as well as the Head of the Second Main Directorate of the NKOP. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

112 Leon Markovskij (1895–1937): Soviet official of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b). He was the Deputy Director in charge of administrative and economic affairs at the Kirov Plant. He was arrested and executed 1937.

113 Daniil Budniak (1886–?): Soviet functionary of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). He was Director of the *Barrikady* factory in Stalingrad. He was arrested in 1937.

114 Konstantin Artamonov (1892–1937): Soviet functionary; member of the VKP(b). He was Deputy Head of the Third Main Directorate of the People's Commissariat for Defense Industry of the USSR. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

The diversionary activities of Polish intelligence were primarily focused on the railways of the Western theater of war and the Trans-Siberian Railway, especially its Ural section. The aim of these activities was to cut off the Far East from the central part of the Soviet Union. However, the work of exposing the Polish diversionary groups within the transportation sector still remains largely unfinished.

In some cases, to test the readiness of the diversionary network created for wartime, the organization carried out diversionary acts in several locations.

For example, under the directive of the Ukrainian POW center, WEICHT,[115] a member of POW in the Dnipropetrovsk oblast, carried out a diversionary act at the Kam'ianska power station, resulting in its complete destruction.

TERRORIST WORK OF POLISH INTELLIGENCE

Under directives from Warsaw, individuals like UNŠLICHT, PESTKOVSKIJ, MAKOVSKIJ, DOMBAL', WIŚLAK, and MATUSZEWSKI, along with the Trotskyists, were engaged in preparing the central terrorist acts.

For instance, MATUSZEWSKI established a POW group within the Moscow police apparatus and involved a considerable number of police personnel (including non-Poles) in it. Together with ŠIPROVSKIJ[116] (former Secretary of the Police Party Committee, or PartKom), he conducted subversive activities within various sections of the police service (external service, communications, metro security, and the Police Communist Educational Institution, or KomVUZ).

Following the directives, DOMBAL', MATUSZEWSKI, and ŠIPROVSKIJ prepared central terrorist acts, taking advantage of the fact that group members were in charge of securing facilities frequented by government officials.

Recruited by SOSNOVSKIJ in Saratov, the Polish agent KASPERSKIJ[117] (editor of the regional newspaper *Kommunist*) was part of the Trotskyist organization. He was linked with the Saratov regional Trotskyist center and, in addition to his involvement in its subversive and sabotage

115 Edward Weicht (1902–1937): Soviet electrician of Polish origin. He worked at the Dniprodzerzhynsk branch of the All-Union Electrical Association. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

116 Adam Šiprovskij (1893–1937): Soviet communist of Polish origin. He was Secretary of the Party Committee of the Main Directorate of the Workers' and Peasants' Militia (RKM). He was arrested and executed in 1937.

117 Vladimir Kasperskij (1896–1938): Soviet writer and journalist; member of the VKP(b). He was a writer and senior editor of the newspaper *Pravda Saratovskogo kraia*; Chief Editor of the newspaper *Kommunist*. He was arrested in 1937 and executed in 1938.

activities (at a plant for combine harvesters, a lead-acid battery plant, Plant 195, etc.), he also participated in preparing central terrorist acts.

SOSNOVSKIJ and PILAR, who took part in preparing terrorist acts, also had a business contact with the regional Trotskyist center in Saratov.

Through KASPERSKIJ, the Saratov POW group had connections with an anti-Soviet right-wing organization in Saratov.

The POW branch in Dnepropetrovsk oblast, which is currently being eliminated, was involved in preparing central terrorist acts in collaboration with the Trotskyist and left-wing *esers* organization in Dneprodzerzhynsk. POW was in contact with them throughout their subversive and damaging activities.

In addition to terrorist activities, Moscow POW center received a directive to prepare several combat groups for committing central terrorist acts at such time that military aggression occurred against the USSR.

The work of creating such groups was led by PESTKOVSKIJ, a member of the Moscow POW center.

SABOTAGE WITHIN THE SOVIET INTELLIGENCE AND COUNTERINTELLIGENCE WORK

After the end of the Soviet–Polish war, the main POW personnel returned to Moscow. Using UNŠLICHT's positions of the Deputy Chairman of the VChK – OGPU and later Deputy Chairman of the RVS, they began work on gaining control over crucial areas of VChK – OGPU activities (PILAR was Head of the VChK Counterintelligence Department, or KRO; SOSNOVSKIJ and his group were members of KRO VChK; OLSKIJ was Head of the Belarusian GPU; IKHNOVSKIJ[118] was Head of the Economy Council, or EKU OGPU; MEDVED' was chairman of the Moscow Extraordinary Commission, or MChK, later he replaced MESSING as the People's Commissar of OGPU in Leningrad Military District, or LVO; LOGANOVSKIJ, BARANSKIJ, and others were within the system of the Foreign Department, or INO VChK– OGPU –NKVD; finally, in RazvedUpr RKKA, there were BORTNOVSKIJ and others).

In the last year, the organization's work within the system of VChK – OGPU – NKVD and RazvedUpr RKKA was streamlined in the following directions:

[118] Marian Ichnovskij (1886–1937): Soviet political activist of Polish origin, not party-affiliated. He was Head of the Department of the All-Union Trade Association with the Mongolia and Tuva Republics (SovMongTuvTorg). He was arrested and executed in 1937.

Complete paralysis of our counterintelligence efforts against Poland; ensuring the successful and unhindered work of Polish intelligence in the USSR; facilitating the infiltration and legalization of Polish agents on Soviet territory and in various sectors of the country's economic life.

PILAR, OLSKIJ, SOSNOVSKIJ, and others in Moscow and Belarus, as well as MESSING, MEDVED', JANIŠEVSKIJ,[119] SENDZIKOVSKIJ[120] and others in Leningrad systematically disrupted our agencies' activities against Polish intelligence, safeguarded local POW organizations from destruction, warned POW groups and individual members about available materials and upcoming operations, preserved and destroyed information received from honest agents regarding POW activities, infiltrated the intelligence network with double agents who worked for the Poles, prevented arrests, and halted investigations.

Capture and paralysis of all the intelligence work of NKVD and RazvedUpr RKKA against Poland. This strategy involved extensive and systematic disinformation campaigns against us, as well as the utilization of our intelligence apparatus abroad to provide Polish intelligence with the necessary information about other countries and to engage in anti-Soviet activities on the international stage.

For instance, a member POW, STASZEWSKI, who was assigned by UNŠLICHT to work abroad, used his stay in Berlin in 1923 to support BRANDLER[121] in undermining and suppressing the proletarian uprising in Germany. He did so in accordance with directives from UNŠLICHT.

Another POW member, ŽBIKOVSKIJ, dispatched by BRONKOWSKI for overseas work within RazvedUpr RKKA, engaged in provocative activities to complicate relations between the USSR and England.

Following UNŠLICHT's directives, members of the organization, LOGANOVSKIJ and BARANSKIJ, utilized their positions within Warsaw INO during the period of JÓZEF PIŁSUDSKI's removal from power. Under the guise of being part of the OGPU's diversionary organizations of PILSUDKI's followers, who targeted the *Narodowa Demokracja* (*endeks*) government in Poland, they prepared a provocative assassination attempt on French Marshal FOCHE upon his visit to Poland. This was done to disrupt the establishment of normal diplomatic relations between France and the USSR.

119 Dionis Janiševskij (1898–1938): Soviet official of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). He was Deputy Head of the Special Department of the LVO. He was arrested in 1934 and sentenced to two years of labor camp. He served his sentence in the Kolyma region. He was released in 1936 and appointed manager of a gold mine operated by the Far North Construction Trust (DalStroi). He was arrested again in 1937, transferred to Leningrad and executed in 1938.

120 Ivan Sendzikovskij (1895–1937): Soviet official of Polish origin; member of the VKP(b). He worked for the Regional Department of the NKVD in Leningrad Oblast. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

121 Heinrich Brandler (1881–1967): German politician; one of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany (KPG). In 1921–1924, he served as Chairman of the KPG. He was expelled from the KPG in 1929.

Exploitation of the positions held by POW members within VChK – OGPU – NKVD for extensive anti-Soviet work and espionage recruitment.

JÓZEF PIŁSUDSKI's emissary and resident of the Second Department of PGŠ, Ignacy SOSNOWSKI, utilized his position extensively within the agencies to establish contact with various predominantly nationalist anti-Soviet elements. He also led their subversive activities in the South Caucasus, Central Asia, and other regions.

However, perhaps the greatest harm was caused by the theory and practice of passivity in counterintelligence work that was persistently and systematically executed by the Polish spies who had infiltrated VChK – OGPU – NKVD. By seizing key positions within our counterintelligence apparatus, Polish spies reduced its entire scope of work to narrow defensive measures within our territory. They prevented our counterintelligence agents from penetrating foreign intelligence centers and engaging in proactive counterintelligence actions.

By disrupting and preventing the primary method of counterintelligence work, which involves transferring our struggle against foreign intelligence to their own territory, Polish spies within our ranks achieved a situation where Soviet counterintelligence, originally entrusted by the proletarian state with the task of combating foreign intelligence and their activities as a whole, was transformed into a powerless apparatus that chased after individual petty spies for a number of years.

In cases where attempts at counterintelligence operations beyond our borders were made, they were either used by Polish intelligence to infiltrate their major agents into the USSR (the case of SAVINKOV[122]), or to establish contact with the anti-Soviet elements and generate their activities (the case of MOSKVIČ-BOYAROV, Prof. ISYČENKO,[123] etc.).

PROVOCATIVE ACTIVITIES BY POLISH INTELLIGENCE WITHIN THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF POLAND

The infiltration of a large Polish intelligence network into the Communist Party of Poland, the Polish section of the IKKI, and the apparatus of ComIntern was predetermined by the fact that when the Communist Party of Poland was formed at the end of 1918, a number of prominent

122 Boris Savinkov (1879–1925): leader of the Combat Organization of the Socialist Revolutionary Party; Head of the anti-Soviet Union for the Defense of Homeland and Freedom. In 1920–1921, he resided in Warsaw. In August 1924, he arrived in the USSR illegally and was arrested in Minsk. He was sentenced to execution in 1924; the sentence was later changed to ten years of imprisonment. Savinkov ended his life by suicide in prison in 1925.

123 Petro Isyčenko (1882–1924): Ukrainian scholar, not party-affiliated. He was a Professor at the Moscow Cooperative Institute. He was arrested and executed in 1924.

members of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS-Left, or *Lewica*) and the Polish Social Democratic Party automatically joined the leadership of the Communist Party.

Regardless, the leadership of POW systematically introduced its agents into the ranks of the Communist Party through various provocative activities. Concurrently, the leadership recruited new agents from among the nationalist-leaning intelligentsia who had joined the communist movement. These agents were promoted within the party's higher echelon with the aim of undermining the Communist Party and being used to POW's benefit. POW also extensively utilized political emigration and exchanges of political prisoners to mass-infiltrate their agents into the USSR.

An example of one of the largest political provocations by the Piłsudski regime was the creation of the so-called PPS-*Opozycja*[124] in 1919. The leadership of this opposition, headed by ŻARSKI, LANDE-WITKOWSKI,[125] and Witold SZTURM-de-SZTREM,[126] consisted of prominent provocateurs known as *peoviaks*.[127] Initially, their task was to prevent revolutionary elements from leaving the PPS and joining the Communist Party. However, as they were unable to control the working masses who had separated from the PPS in 1920, this "Opposition" merged with them and joined the Communist Party of Poland, seizing several key leadership positions within the party.

Another major act of extensive political provocation carried out within the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) by the Piłsudski supporters who had infiltrated its leadership was the use of the KPP's influence among the masses during PIŁSUDSKI's May Coup of 1926. These provocateurs put forward and implemented a policy of supporting the Piłsudski Coup through the KPP.

Anticipating that some POW members (WARSKI,[128] KOSTRZEWA,[129] KRAJEWSKI,[130] and LANDE-WITKOWSKI) who had infiltrated the leadership of the KPP and directly worked on using the KPP to assist

124 Polish Socialist Party – Opposition (PPS-Opposition), a branch of the Polish Socialist Party operating in the period 1912–1914.

125 The spelling is as it appears in the document. Correct name: Adam Landy, aka Witkowski (1891–1937). Polish communist activist. He was a lecturer at the Higher School of Professional Advancement at the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (VTsSPS). He was arrested and executed in 1937.

126 Witold Szturm de Sztrem (1888–1933): Polish political activist; member of the Communist Party of Poland, one of the leaders of the PPS-Left. In 1919, he joined the RKKA. He served as a member of the covert residency of the RU RKKA in Austria. In December 1933, he disappeared in the vicinity of Vienna (according to a different version, he was killed by agents of the OGPU due to the risk of defecting to the enemy).

127 In NKVD documents from the mid-1930s, the word *peoviak* (*poviak*, *poeviak*) referred to membership in the POW.

128 Adolf Warski, aka Adolf Jerzy Warszawski (1868–1937): Polish communist leader, one of the founders of the KPP. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

129 Wera Kostrzewa, aka Maria KoszuCKa (1876–1939?): Polish communist activist, one of the founders of the KPP; member of the CK KPP. She emigrated to USSR in 1930; represented the KPP in the Executive Committee of ComIntern. She was arrested in 1937 and executed in 1939.

130 Antoni Krajewski, aka Władysław Stein (1886–1937): Polish communist politician. He was a member of the Bureau of the International Control Commission and served as Head of the IKKI Press Department. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

the Piłsudski Coup would be compromised and removed from the leadership, POW had another group of POW members on standby, led by LEŠINSKIJ. This group, externally detached from supporting the 1926 Coup, was intended to take control of the KPP leadership after the failure of WARSKI's group.

After the May Coup, in order to divert the working masses from opposing the establishment of Piłsudski's new fascist regime and to weaken and disintegrate the KPP from within, POW developed and executed a plan for extensive factional strife between LEŠINSKIJ's group (known as the "minority" within the KPP) and WARSKI-KOSTRZEVA's group (known as the "majority"). Both groups managed to involve their party masses in factional struggles and paralyzed the party's work for a long time.

As a result, the leadership of the party was seized by the POW group led by LEŠINSKIJ, who was a member of the Moscow POW center. He focused on undermining the party even further and continued hindering the revolutionary movement in Poland.

In recent years, all the efforts of the Warsaw and Moscow centers of POW in terms of their work within the KPP have been directed towards undermining the unity of the popular front in Poland and, primarily, towards preparing to use the KPP for anti-Soviet actions during Poland's military aggression against the USSR.

To this end, special work was carried out by UNŠLICHT and LEŠINSKIJ to use party channels for the Polish intelligence service's communication during the war. In addition, a plan for a series of political provocations (presenting ultimatums to ComIntern and the VKP(b) on behalf of the KPP regarding the "integrity of Polish independence", issuing anti-Soviet appeals to the Polish working class, causing a split within the party, etc.) was developed.

Starting from 1920, and especially after the May Coup, POW began using the channels of the Communist Party and the Polish section of ComIntern, which had been infiltrated by prominent members of POW, such as SOCHATSKI-BRATKOWSKI,[131] LEŠINSKIJ, PRÓCHNIAK,[132] BERTYNSKIJ,[133] BRONKOWSKI. They used these channels for systematic and extensive transfer of diversionary and espionage agents of various standing to the USSR as political emigrants and political prisoners. For

131 Jerzy SochacCKi-Bratkowski, aka Czeszejko-Sochcki (1892–1933): Polish communist politician; member of the PPS and KPP. He was a candidate for membership in the Presidium of ComIntern. He was arrested in 1933 and died in prison the same year.

132 Edward Próchniak (1888–1937): Polish communist. In 1921–1937, he served as a representative and executive of the KPP in ComIntern. In 1936–1937, he was a member of the KPP Politburo abroad. He was arrested on 8 July 1937; sentenced and executed on 21 August 1937.

133 Viktor Bertynskij, aka Żytlovskij; (1900–1937): Soviet-Polish communist activist of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b). He emigrated to the USSR in 1924. He served on the Executive Committee of ComIntern and the Special Department of the OGPU in Moscow. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

instance, Polish spies like PILAR, BUDZINSKI, NAUISKAYTIS,[134] VYSOCKIJ, DOMBAL', and BELEWSKI[135] were sent to the USSR under the guise of being political prisoners, while individuals like WISLAK, Henryk LAUER[136] (who headed the metallurgy sector of GosPlan), ZDZIARSKI,[137] GENRIKHOWSKIJ,[138] BŽOZOVSKIJ, and many hundreds of others were sent as political emigrants. These agents infiltrated various sectors of the Soviet state apparatus, industry, transportation, and agriculture.

It wasn't just the KPP that was used as cover for spies and saboteurs: Polish intelligence agents were also sent to the USSR under the guise of belonging to the Communist parties of Western Belarus, Western Ukraine, and other revolutionary organizations that Polish intelligence actively infiltrated for provocative purposes.

For example, the so-called "Belarusian Hramada", a mass peasant organization in Western Belarus, was actively used by Polish intelligence and the fascist organization of Belarusian nationalists in Wilno to crush the peasant movement in Western Belarus and transfer its agents to the USSR.

Similarly, the mass organization known as the "independent peasant party" *(nezależna partija chlopska)*[139] in proper Poland was created by a major provocateur, an officer of the Second Department of the PGŠ, WOJEWÓDZKI,[140] specifically to intercept the revolutionary movement among Polish peasants. It was also used to transfer agents to the USSR under the guise of "peasant" activists escaping police persecution.

All the materials of the investigation in this case overwhelmingly and undeniably prove that the vast majority of the so-called "political emigrants" from Poland were either members of POW (originating from the proper Poland, including Polish Jews), agents of the Second Department of the PGŠ, or agents of political police (Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians, etc.).

134 The spelling is how it appears in the document. The correct name is Nauiokaytis.
135 Jan Paszyn, aka Bielewski (1892–1937): Polish communist. He served as a representative of the KPP in the Executive Committee of ComIntern. He was arrested and executed in 1937.
136 Henryk Gustav Lauer (1890–1937): Polish mathematician and communist activist of Jewish origin. He was Head of the Department for Mining and Metallurgy of GosPlan. He was arrested and executed in 1937.
137 Mirosław Zdziarski, aka Wojtkiewicz (1892–1937): Polish communist activist. He worked as a scientific researcher at the Institute of World Economy and World Politics. He was arrested and executed in 1937.
138 The spelling is how it appears in the document. The correct name is Abram Genrikovskij (1904–1937): Soviet-Polish journalist of Jewish origin, not party-affiliated. He worked as a proofreader for the newspaper *Trybuna Radziecka*. He was arrested and executed in 1937.
139 Independent peasants party, a radical left-wing Polish people's party founded in 1924 by a group of PSL "Wyzwolenie" deputies. In 1927, it was dissolved by the Minister of Internal Affairs.
140 Sylwester Wojewódzki (1892–1938): Polish communist and military man. In 1931, he emigrated to the USSR. He was arrested in 1931. In 1933, he was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment. He was detained at the Yaroslavl political isolator. He was arrested again and executed in 1938

ANTI-SOVIET ACTIVITY OF POLISH INTELLIGENCE IN BELARUS AND OTHER REGIONS OF THE USSR

In Belarus, POW was led by members of the Moscow center, like BENEK, as well as members of the Minsk center, such as VONSOVSKIJ, KLYS.[141] Under the guidance of PILAR, SOSNOVSKIJ, HELTMAN, and DOMBAL', POW established organic connections with the Belarus nationalist-fascists organization, the Trotskyist underground, and right-wing anti-Soviet organizations. This resulted in a unified anti-Soviet conspiracy in Belarus, led by CHERVIAKOV,[142] GOLODED,[143] and BENEK.

The unified underground carried out extensive subversive and destructive activities in Belarus, which were linked to the military plans of the Polish-German general staff.

The subversive work of the unified underground affected all sectors of the Belarusian economy, including transportation, planning, the fuel and energy sector, construction of new enterprises, all branches of light manufacturing, agriculture, and the construction of state farms.

Over the past few years, the unified underground, through the artificial spread of infectious diseases (such as meningitis, anemia, and plague), conducted significant work in the extermination of swine and horse populations in Belarus. In just 1936 alone, over 30,000 horses were exterminated in BSSR.

During its preparations for the seizure of the BSSR by the Poles, the unified underground initiated and attempted to carry out a destructive project of draining the Polesie marshes, which served as a natural obstacle to offensive actions by the Polish army. Concurrently, DOMBAL', who was developing projects like the *Great Dnieper* with destructive intentions, planned for the excavation of a deep-water canal in Belarus. This canal was meant to provide access for Polish military vessels to Soviet territory.

Simultaneously with subversive work in the BSSR's agriculture, the unified underground actively prepared insurgent cadres and armed anti-Soviet uprisings. It also extensively used various methods to artificially incite dissatisfaction with the Soviet authorities among the population. These methods included deliberate "excesses" during various economic

141 Jan Klys (1896–1938): Soviet functionary of Polish origin. He was the Director of the Stackovskoj Machine and Tractor Station (MTS). He was arrested in 1937 and executed in 1938.

142 Aleksandr Červjakov (1892–1937): Soviet communist of Belarusian origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as the BSSR representative to the Central Executive Committee (TsIK); later, Chairman of the TsIK BSSR. He committed suicide in 1937.

143 Nikolaj Goloded (1894–1937): Soviet statesman of Belarusian origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as Chairman of the BSSR Council of People's Commissars (SovNarKom). He was a member of the Bureau CK VKP(b) of BSSR and a candidate for membership in CK VKP(b). He was arrested in 1937; later the same year, he committed suicide.

campaigns in rural areas, as well as over-taxation, illegal mass confiscations for tax evasion, and so on).

While maintaining direct connections with Poland through various channels, including the Moscow POW center, the Polish Consulate in Minsk, the Wilno center of Belarusian nationalist-fascists, and the Twelfth[144] Department of the PGŠ were directly involved in espionage activities. They had several contacts within units of the Belarusian Military District and were in touch with the military-fascist group led by the traitor TUKHACHEVSKIJ through one of this group's members, UBOREVIČ.[145]

Under the direct instruction of ZINOVIEV,[146] a Trotskyist named HESSEN[147] established a terrorist group from the participants of the unified underground. This group was working on an assassination attempt against comrade VOROŠILOV[148] during his stay in Minsk in the autumn of 1936.

The NKVD of the BSSR eliminated the leadership of the anti-Soviet underground movement in Belarus based on minimal data obtained during an initial investigation in Moscow, as well as through repeated interrogation of the previously arrested Belarusian nationalist-fascists. This demonstrated NKVD's skillful operational use of limited initial information to crush the organizing forces of the enemy.

The work to eliminate POW in the Far East, Siberia, the Sverdlovsk and Chelyabinsk regions, as well as in Ukraine, has been unsatisfactory so far. Despite having exceptional opportunities in 1933–1935 to expose the underground activities of POW (including the arrests of SKARBEK's, STASIAK's[149] and KONIECKIJ's[150] groups),[151] the apparatus of the NKVD in Ukraine did not initiate investigations to the extent necessary for the complete exposure of POW activities in Ukraine. This situation was exploited

144 The correct name is the Second Department.

145 Ieronim Uborevič (1896–1937): Soviet military of Lithuanian origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as the Commander of the troops of the Belarusian Military District and held the rank of the Army General. He was arrested and executed in 1937.

146 Grigorii Zinoviev, aka Geršon-Radomysl'skij (1883–1936): Soviet politician and official of Jewish origin. In Organizational Bureau of the CK RKP(b). In 1934, he was arrested and sentenced to ten years in prison. 1936, he was sentenced to the ultimate punishment and was executed the same year.

147 Sergej Hessen (1898–1937): Soviet functionary of Jewish origin; member of the VKP(b). He served as an authorized representative of the NarKomTiazhProm of the USSR for the Western Region. He was arrested in 1934. In 1935, he was sentenced to six years of imprisonment. He was arrested again in 1936 and executed in 1937.

148 Kliment Vorošilov (1881–1969): Soviet military man and politician; member of the VKP(b). In 1926–1952, he was a member of the Politburo CK VKP(b). In 1934–1940, he served as the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR and held the rank of Marshal. He was never held responsible for his involvement in the purges.

149 Wiktor Stasiak, aka Bronisław Berman (1903–1943): Polish communist activist; member of the IKKI. He was arrested in 1935 and detained by the Special Corps of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR. In 1936, he was sentenced to ten years of labor camps. Died in Usolsk ITL.

150 Juzef Koneckij, aka Leon Rozin (1900–?): Soviet communist activist of Jewish origin; member of the KP(b)U; member of the Executive Committee of the Young Communist International. He was Deputy Head of the Culture and Propaganda Department (KultProp) of the CK KP(b)U. He was arrested in 1935 and detained by the Special Corps of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR.

151 The following individuals were involved in the group criminal case: Józef Konecki (Juzef Koneckij); Wiktor Stasiak; Janusz Sosnowicz, aka Ignacy Tom (1902–1938?), senior editor of the newspaper *Sierp*; Stefan Rybnicki, aka Skrzydlewski (1901–1938?), Head of the Editorial Board of *Sierp*; Michał Gruda, aka Emil Demke (1902–1964?), Head of the Industrial Department of *Sierp*.

by SOSNOVSKIJ, a spy who had been working at the Special Department of Central Intelligence, to localize the overall failure.

While distributing collections of the interrogation protocols of individuals like UNŠLICHT and others who were arrested, I SUGGEST that all Heads of the Operational Departments within GUGB and leading personnel of the Third Departments familiarize themselves with this letter.

Plenipotentiaries: PEOPLE'S COMMISAR OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE USSR, PEOPLE'S COMMISAR FOR STATE SECURITY (N. YEZHOV).[152]

ACKNOWLEDGED: OPERATIONAL SECRETARY OF GUGB NKVD of the USSR, brigade commander [*signature*] (ULMER).[153]

Zakrytoe pis'mo o fašistsko-povstančeskoj, špionskoj, diversionnoj, poraženčeskoj i terrorističeskoj dejatel'nosti pol'skoj razvedki v SSSR, 11 August 1937, Central Archive of Federal Security Service of Russian Federation (TsA FSB RF): f. 3, op. 4, d. 14, ll. 43–85.

Originally published in: Jurij Šapoval, Volodymyr Prystajko, and Vadym Zolotar'ov, *ČK–HPU–NKVD v Ukrajini: Osoby, fakty, dokumenty* (Kyjiv: Abrys, 1997), pp. 350–377.

152 Nikolai Iezhov (1895–1940): communist party official and secret police officer. In 1936, he started serving in the State Security agencies. In 1936–1938, he was Narkom of the Internal Affairs of the USSR (NKVD). In 1938–1939, he served as the People's Commissar of Water Transport. In 1935–1939, he was Secretary of the CK VKP(b). In 1937–1939, he was also a candidate for membership in the Politburo CK VKP(b). He was one of the top organizers and active participants in the implementation of the Great Terror. He was arrested in 1939 and executed in 1940.

153 Voldemar Ulmer (1896–1945): Soviet functionary of Swedish origin. In 1938, he was Head of the Secretariat of First Deputy NarKom of Internal Affairs. He was arrested in 1939 and sentenced to 15 years of labor camps. He died in detention.

FROM THE EDITORS

The NKVD's "Polish Operation" of 1937–1938: the Story of One Family

The AREI editorial board decided to publish documents that describe the fate of a Polish-Ukrainian family that became a victim of the NKVD's "national operations". More family stories you can read in the collection of documents *W cieniu "operacji polskiej". Represje na sowieckiej Ukrainie 1937–1938 w dokumentach*, that will be published at the end of 2024. The collection of documents is the outcome of project number 2015/19/B/HS3/01823, for implementation of the research project "The NKVD's Polish Operation 1937–1938. Victims, Documents". Project leader: Sławomir Dębski.

We suggest to your attention a short story abosut how a fabricated case and the principle of collective responsibility – which the NKVD actively used in the fight against "enemies of the people" – caused the extermination of an entire family. Having started with the "purge" of the leadership of the Soviet Workers' and Peasants' Police, NKVD officers discovered that one of its leaders, to his misfortune, was married to a Polish woman. This fact predetermined not only his fate but also the fate of his entire Polish family. Even the fact that the militia officer himself was a native of the NKVD system did not help.

Below, we publish documents from the criminal file of Nina Berko – wife of Gavriil Berko, the former head of the special department of the Kyiv Regional Administration of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR, later head of the investigation department of the URCM of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR. In her statements and complaints, Nina Berko repeatedly pointed out the use of psychological and physical measures against her.

Initially, her husband was accused of embezzling state money for personal purposes. However, Gavriil Berko's case was quickly and without proper grounds reclassified as political during the investigation. Gavriil Berko was accused of espionage in favour of Poland and sentenced to execution.

These events led to the arrest of Gavriil Berko's relatives. His wife, Nina Berko, and her brother, Kazimir Olearskij, were arrested almost simultaneously. The latter was an actor of the Polish theatre in Kyiv, which the state security agencies had already taken into "development." It was only a matter of time before participants of the Polish counter-revolutionary nationalist organization were identified there. At the time of Olearskij's

arrest, several arrested theatre actors had already testified against him, which predetermined his fate.

The arrest of her husband and brother became an "aggravating circumstance" and actual proof of Nina Berko's guilt. Polish by nationality, Nina Berko fell under Order No. 00485 and was sentenced to the 2nd category, receiving ten years in the camps. In the 1950s, Nina Berko was rehabilitated, but her life was ruined. More details about the case of Nina Berko and her family, as well as the punishment of the perpetrators who beat her testimony out of her, will be available in above mentioned collection of documents.

YANA PRYMACHENKO
Managing editor

DOCUMENT № 1

Interrogation Protocol of the witness Nina Vladimirovna Berko,
24 October 1958

Interrogation Protocol

24 October 1958

CITY OF LVIV

Investigator of the KGB Investigative Department at the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR in the Lviv *oblast*, Junior Lieutenant Klimenko, on the current day of 24 October 1958, interrogated the witness

Nina Vladimirovna Berko
born in 1906, a native of Krakow,
Polish, a citizen of the USSR,
holding a secondary education, not party-affiliated,
previously convicted of espionage, currently unemployed,
residing at 9 Lomonosov Street, apt. 2, Lviv

Witness N.V. Berko was warned about the consequences of refusing to provide the testimony, or for knowingly providing false testimony under articles 87 and 89 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR.

Question: **The interrogation will be conducted in Russian. Do you speak Russian and do you need an interpreter?**
Answer: I speak Russian well, and I do not need an interpreter.

Question: **When and for what reasons was your husband, Gavriil Semenovič Berko, a former NKVD officer, arrested?**
Answer: My husband, G. S. Berko, was arrested by the NKVD authorities in August 1937. At that time, my husband was an NKVD officer himself, serving as head of a department, with the rank of a Senior Lieutenant, working in Kyiv. On the day of my husband's arrest, I was at my sister's in Voronezh. The reasons behind his arrest are still completely unclear to me. I returned from my sister's on August 16th, while my husband was arrested on August 15th, and none of the officers could really explain why

my husband had been arrested. When I arrived at the apartment on August 16th, it was sealed, and our neighbor, Ljubov' Vasil'evna Čerepenko, warned me not to get inside the apartment. I went to the building management and requested that they open the apartment door for me. Upon my request, I was given just one room in our apartment, where they had left a bed and a chair, while all other items had been sealed in other rooms. On August 21st, 1937, I was arrested by the NKVD authorities as well.

Question: **When and under what circumstances did you arrive in the USSR? What was your family composition, and where do your relatives reside currently?**

Answer: I moved to the USSR from Lviv. [We arrived] in Kyiv in 1915 with my entire family. Along with me came my father, Vladimir Antonovič Olearskij; my mother, Anna Petrovna Olearskaja; my sister, Galina Vladimirovna Olearskaja; my brother, Kazimir Vladimirovič Olearskij; and two other brothers, Tadeusz Vladimirovič Olearskij and Edward Vladimirovič Olearskij. I am not sure, exactly, what was the reason for us to move from Lviv to Kyiv, but I know from the stories related by my mother that our family, along with other Polish families, was relocated to Ukraine, Kyiv, by the tsarist authorities. My father, Vladimir Antonovič Olearskij, died from typhus in Kyiv, in 1920. My mother, Anna Petrovna Olearskaja, born in 1880, currently lives with me in Lviv. Both my brother, Edward Vladimirovič Olearskij, born in 1915, and my sister, Galina Vladimirovna Baraškina, reside with us in Lviv. My [other] brother, Kazimir Vladimirovič, worked as an actor at the Polish Drama Theater in Kyiv up until 1937. He was arrested by the NKVD in 1937, and his fate remains unknown until today. My middle brother, Tadeusz Vladimirovič Olearskij, born in 1912, lives in Lviv [*oblast*] in [the village of] Zymni Vody[1] and works as a photographer.

Question: **Why did you, your mother Anna Petrovna Olearskaja, and your brother Kazimir visit the Polish embassy in Moscow and the Consulate in Kyiv? Who did they speak to at the Consulate and what was discussed?**

Answer: After my father's death in 1920, we were left with only my mother and young children in a very difficult financial situation. My mother couldn't support our family of six on her own and decided to move to Poland, to Lviv, where her relatives lived. However, in 1921, when we received permission to leave, she couldn't do so due to the children's illness; in 1922, the exit visa had to be obtained through the Polish Consulate in Kyiv. For this purpose, my mother visited the Consulate in Kyiv once and

1 This is the location that appears in the text. The actual name is Zymna Voda.

was denied the exit visa, so she sent me and my older brother, Kazimir Vladimirovič, to the Polish Embassy in Moscow to seek the exit permission. My brother and I indeed went to Moscow in 1922 and were received at the Embassy, but our request was denied. After that, we didn't pursue this issue further. I cannot say exactly who my brother spoke to at the Polish embassy.

Question: **Why did you intend to leave the USSR, and how did you explain your visit to the Polish Consulate in Moscow during the preliminary interrogations?**

Answer: The reason for, or rather, the intention of our family to move to Poland had to do with the difficult financial situation. My mother hoped for support from our relatives in Poland and, therefore, sought to leave. I gave the same testimony during the preliminary investigation in 1937. I don't know what is recorded in the investigation materials, as I personally did not read them.

Question: **Were you subject to criminal prosecution and arrested by the police for any crime, particularly for moonshining, between 1920 and 1925?**

Answer: As I have already mentioned, there were five of us left, all minors, and it was very difficult for our mother to raise us. She sought ways of earning additional income for our upbringing and indeed, at the suggestion of our neighbor, she engaged in moonshining in 1924. When the police learned about it and searched our apartment, I took all the blame upon myself. I was charged with criminal offences and sentenced to six months in jail. I was under arrest for two months, and then I was released. I didn't tell anyone about this, not even my husband. I testified exactly the same during the investigation, as I have just related.

Question: **What do you know about the reasons behind the arrest and conviction of Kazimir Vladimirovič Olearskij for anti-Soviet nationalist activities?**

Answer: My brother was arrested on August 15th, 1937. As I have already indicated, I was not at home at that time. My brother, Kazimir, worked as an actor at the Polish Drama Theater in Kyiv. I am not aware of the reasons for his arrest, and his current whereabouts are unknown to us. In response to a complaint from my mother, the KGB at the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR in Kyiv reported that they did not have any information on Kazimir Vladimirovič Olearskij.

Question: **Did you have relatives in Poland before the [Great] Patriotic War? What were their occupations and where did they live? What do you know about the activities of your uncle, is he a member of the Polish defensywa[2]?**

Answer: In Poland, in the city of Przemyśl, lived my father's brother, Jan Antonovič Olearskij, who died in 1957, when he was already retired. None of our relatives served in the Polish *defensywa*.

Question: **Who among your acquaintances can give you and your husband a reference from a political and business standpoint?**

Answer: Among mine and my husband's acquaintances, that would be retired Colonel Fedor Vasil'evič Čerepenko, who currently resides in Kyiv at Karl Liebknecht St., 3/5. Čerepenko worked in the same department as my husband and was under my husband's supervision; we lived next door in the same hallway. The apartment where Čerepenko now lives partially belonged to us up until 1937.

I cannot provide the names of other individuals due to the passage of time, but I think Čerepenko could name a few colleagues who knew my husband.

Question: **What specific illegal investigative methods were applied to you by Samojlov, and did he witness Pugač and two other NKVD officers threatening, insulting, and physically abusing you?**

Answer: My case was managed by investigator Pugač. The Head of the Third Department, Samojlov, whom I previously knew as my husband's colleague, participated in the interrogations as well. Additionally, during the last interrogation two civilians were present; I did not know their names. After a prolonged interrogation and demands to confess that my husband, Berko, was allegedly engaged in counterrevolutionary activities, while I supposedly assisted him, Samojlov approached Pugač and started asking me why I was being stubborn, hiding my husband's alleged hostile counterrevolutionary activity, as well as my own complicity. I told him that this accusation did not correspond to reality and asked Samojlov to appoint another investigator for my case. Samojlov immediately ordered me to be taken to another investigator, and then Pugač and the two civilians took me to an isolated room, where they again demanded confessions from me and began applying physical pressure. I don't remember how I was brought back to the previous room. Regaining consciousness, I saw Pugač and the same two civilians by my side. After a while, Samojlov came up to me and asked how I was feeling and whether I intended to continue denying [the

2 Polish political police.

allegations]. He then announced that, supposedly, my husband had confessed everything a long ago, and that I was needlessly hiding his activities from the NKVD. After these statements, he told me that if I kept hiding [the information], I would be brought to a different investigator again, to the same isolated room where I fainted. He then dictated the content of a statement that I had to write regarding myself and my husband. Having become aware of all the further torment and deprivation, I thought to myself that everything would be sorted out, somehow, and wrote what was demanded of me. I don't remember if I wrote about my husband too.

Samojlov was not present in person when I was physically abused; however, he gave the corresponding orders, since he asked me afterwards how I liked my new investigator. I have nothing to add to my testimony. The protocol has been read by me and recorded correctly. [*Signed*] Berko

Investigator of the KGB Investigative Department
at the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR in the Lviv oblast
Junior Lieutenant
(Klimenko)

Central State Archive of Public Organizations and Ukrainian Studies (TsDAGOU): f. 263, op. 1, d. 49928, ll. 48–54

DOCUMENT № 2

Indictment in the Case of Nina Vladimirovna Berko, 11 October 1937

INDICTMENT

In case No. 862, regarding the accusation of Nina Vladimirovna BERKO
under Article 54-6 part 1 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR.

Approved by the Military Prosecutor of Kyiv Military District
26 November 1937 *[Signature]*

Nina Vladimirovna Berko was arrested on the grounds of materials received by the Third Department of the Directorate of State Security (UGB NKVD) of the Ukrainian SSR, indicating that she had arrived in Kyiv from Krakow during the imperialist war, held anti-Soviet attitudes, and visited a consulate of a foreign state.

In 1923–1924, she visited the embassy of a foreign state in Moscow, allegedly in connection with a possibility of leaving the USSR for Poland.

Her mother visited a foreign consulate in Kyiv.

In 1923–1924, she [Nina Berko] attended a military school in Kyiv and maintained connections with cadets.

Nina BERKO's uncle, who resides in Poland, is a member of the *defensywa*.[1]

Her brother, Kazimir Vladimirovič OLEARSKIJ, who used to live in Kyiv, was engaged in counter-revolutionary nationalist and espionage activities (*case sheets 9, 10, 11, 12, 13; packet No. 1*).

Nina Vladimirovna BERKO pleaded not guilty to the charges brought against her.

NOTE: Nina Vladimirovna BERKO's brother, Kazimir Vladimirovič OLEARSKIJ,
as well as her husband, Gavriil Semenovič Berko,
have been convicted of espionage activities
in favor of a foreign state.

1 Polish political police.

In accordance with the order of the GUGB NKVD USSR № 00485,

I RULED THE FOLLOWING:

To forward case No. 863 on the charge of Nina Vladimirovna BERKO to the GUGB NKVD USSR.

ASSISTANT TO THE CHIEF OF THE THIRD DEPARTMENT OF UGB
JUNIOR LIEUTENANT OF THE STATE SECURITY (PUGAČ)
"APPROVED"
ASSISTANT TO THE CHIEF OF THE THIRD DEPARTMENT OF UGB
NKVD USSR
CAPTAIN OF STATE SECURITY (SAPIR)
Compiled on October 11, 1937
Kyiv

Central State Archive of Public Organizations and Ukrainian Studies (TsDAGOU): f. 263, op. 1, d. 49928, ll. 15–16

DOCUMENT № 3

Indictment in the Case of Gavriil Semenovič Berko, 1 November 1937

Case No. 862

INDICTMENT

Against Gavriil Semenovič BERKO
under Articles 54-6 Part I and 104 Part 2 of
the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR.
Approved by the Deputy of the Military Tribunal of the Kyiv Special Military District
Signed 26 November 1937

The Third Department of the State Security Directorate (UGB NKVD) of the Ukrainian SSR was informed that Gavriil Semenovič BERKO, a resident of the city of Kyiv, employee of the police force, had been engaged in espionage activities for a foreign state. Additionally, as a senior police officer with access to state funds due to his official position, he embezzled these funds for personal purposes.

As a result of the investigative actions, it has been established that in his capacity of the Head of the Investigation Department of the Directorate of the Workers' and Peasants' Police (URKM) attached to the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR, G. S. Berko embezzled secret operational funds for personal purposes and allowed state funds to be spent for personal purposes by his fellow officers.

To justify his fraudulent activities, G. S. Berko produced fictitious documents (*case pages 12–19*).

Gavriil Semenovič BERKO stated:

"...I plead guilty to spending the funds for personal purposes, as well as facilitating the embezzlement of state funds by the Deputy Head of the URKM NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR, KUPČIK; by the Head of the Investigation Department, AUZEN; and by the authorized operative of the Investigation Department of the URKM NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR, JASTREMSKIJ. The embezzlement took place during my appointment as Head of the Investigation Department of the URKM NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR, while I had access to the funds provided by the state for the operational needs of investigative work."

(Berko's statement from October 10, 1937, case sheet 12).

In 1928, G. S. Berko was recruited for espionage activities by a foreign intelligence agent, Al'bert Janovič AUZEN, who instructed G. S. Berko to collect espionage materials regarding the units of the Red Army for foreign intelligence. G. S. Berko was expected to use his official position

as a staff member of the Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU) of the Ukrainian SSR. (case sheets 22, 23, 25–28.)

UPON CONSIDERATION OF THE ABOVE, WE ACCUSE

Gavriil Semenovič BERKO, born in 1896 in Glukhiv, Chernihiv oblast; Ukrainian; citizen of the USSR; not party-affiliated; prior to the arrest – Head of the Investigative Department of the URKM NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR; senior lieutenant of the police,

Of:

1. Embezzlement of state funds for personal purposes, as well as facilitating the embezzlement thereof by his fellow senior employees during his appointment as a senior employee of the URKM NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR.
2. Acting as an agent of foreign intelligence and engaging in espionage activities in the USSR on its behalf, i.e., in crimes referenced by Articles 54-6 Part I and 104 Part 2 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR.

[BERKO] plead partially guilty. [BERKO] was incriminated by the testimony provided by Al'bert Janovič AUZEN.
In accordance with the order of the GUGB NKVD USSR № 00485,

I RULED THE FOLLOWING:

To forward the case No. 862 on the charge of Gavriil Semenovič BERKO to the GUGB NKVD USSR.
NOTE: Kazimir Vladimirovič Olearskij, the brother of G. S. BERKO's wife, was convicted of espionage.
BERKO's wife, Nina Vladimirovna BERKO, was arrested for espionage.

ASSISTANT TO THE CHIEF OF THE THIRD DEPARTMENT OF THE UGB NKVD OF THE UKRAINIAN SSR JUNIOR LIEUTENANT OF STATE SECURITY (PUGAČ)
APPROVED: DEPUTY HEAD OF THE THIRD DEPARTMENT OF THE UGB NKVD OF THE UKRAINIAN SSR
CAPTAIN OF STATE SECURITY (SAMOJLOV)
Compiled on November 1, 1937
Kyiv.

State Archive Branch of the Security Services of Ukraine (GDA SBU): f. 6, op. 1, d. 47810fp, ll. 30–32

DOCUMENT № 4

Approved
Signature

INDICTMENT

Investigation case No. 863 against the accused,
KAZIMIR VLADIMIROVIČ OLEARSKIJ
under Article 54-6 Part 1 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR.

Kazimir Vladimirovič OLEARSKIJ was arrested based on information received by the Third Department of the Directorate of the State Security (UGB NKVD) of the Ukrainian SSR, indicating that he had been engaged in counter-revolutionary nationalist activities in the circles of the actors of the Polish Theater, spreading counter-revolutionary nationalist literature.

(*See packet No. 1*)

During the Theater's tours in the border regions, OLEARSKIJ attempted to establish connections with locals, displaying interest in military information.

(*See packet No. 1*)

OLEARSKIJ's uncle, who resides in Poland, is a member of *defensywa.*[1]

(*see packet No. 1*).

OLEARSKIJ's sister, Nina OLEARSKA, was associated with the embassy of a foreign state.

(*see packet No. 1*).

According to the testimonies of the two people convicted in the case of the "Polish Military Organization", FIALEK and KRAVECKIJ, OLEARSKIJ is a member of the Polish nationalist organization.

The accused OLEARSKIJ did not plead guilty in the charges presented to him.

NOTE: Nina OLEARSKA and her husband BERKO have been convicted on charges of espionage for a foreign state.

Guided by the order of the NKVD USSR, No. 00485 –

1 Polish political police.

I RULED THE FOLLOWING:

To forward the investigation case No. 863 against the accused Kazimir Vladimirovič OLEARSKIJ to the NKVD USSR.

OPERATIONS OFFICER OF THE 3RD DEPARTMENT OF UGB NKVD USSR SERGEANT OF STATE SECURITY /LEJBOVIČ/
"APPROVED": DEPUTY HEAD OF THE 3RD DEPARTMENT OF UGB NKVD USSR CAPTAIN OF STATE SECURITY /SAMOJLOV/

Central State Archive of Public Organizations and Ukrainian Studies (TsDAGOU):
f. 263, op. 1, d. 49893, vol. 1, ll. 20–21

Tomasz Stryjek

NATIONAL AS POSTCOLONIAL: THE NARRATIVE OF THE HISTORY OF UKRAINE AS A COUNTRY STANDING AT THE GATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Book Review: Serhy Yekelchyk, *Writing the Nation: The Ukrainian Historical Profession in Independent Ukraine and the Diaspora* (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2022)

I regard Serhy Yekelchyk's thematic collection of essays *Writing the Nation: The Ukrainian Historical Profession in Independent Ukraine and the Diaspora*[1] as being complementary to Yaroslav Hrytsak's synthesis of Ukrainian history *Подолати минуле. Глобальна історія України*,[2] also published in English as *Ukraine. The Forging of a Nation*.[3] Within a year and a half of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, therefore, two volumes were added to global Ukrainian studies: a new perspective on the entire history of Ukraine, as well as an analysis of the writing of this history in the diaspora as well as how it is written and taught in Ukraine. Whereas Hrytsak presented a visionary interpretation of the formation of the Ukrainian national community as a response to challenges from the West, Yekelchyk showed that contemporary Ukrainian historiography and teaching of history have adopted – and continue to do so – the achievements of Western humanities and social sciences.

Hrytsak's synthesis has now also been published in Polish.[4] Yet, the collection by Yekelchyk, an author known in Poland for his book *Ukraine. Birth of a Modern Nation*,[5] awaits a Polish translator. I think both volumes should be available in the languages of all countries today which have some interest – not only academic – in Ukraine. Without these books, it is impossible to understand how to interpret the past, how the future of Ukrainian society is defined by its intellectual elite, or how – taking the impact of Ukrainian intellectuals into account – it understands itself.

Yekelchyk, a history graduate from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv who has since worked at the universities of Alberta (Edmonton), Michigan

1 Serhy Yekelchyk, *Writing the Nation: The Ukrainian Historical Profession in Independent Ukraine and the Diaspora* (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2022).
2 Jaroslav Hrycak, *Podolaty mynule. Hlobal'na istorija Ykrajiny* (Kyjiv: Portal, 2021).
3 Yaroslav Hrytsak, *Ukraine. The Forging of a Nation*, trans. by Dominique Hoffman (London: Little, Brown Book, 2023).
4 Jarosław Hrycak, *Ukraina. Wyrwać się z przeszłości* (Kraków: MCK, 2023).
5 Serhy Yekelchyk, *Ukraina. Narodziny nowoczesnego narodu* (Kraków: WUJ, 2009).

(Ann Arbor), and currently Victoria (Vancouver), is a scholar of subjects such as social images of the past and the place of politics in the lives of people in Ukraine in the Stalinist period.[6] His latest publication is a series of essays on historiography and historical education in contemporary Ukraine. By linking this issue with changing beliefs about the history and identity of Ukrainian society between 1991 and 2022, he has ensured that there is also an aspect of political science in this work.

With the above in mind, I will focus particularly on showing the elements of Yekelchyk's book that contribute to explaining what is happening in the historiographical space in Ukraine and around it in the world today and what, in my view, it would be useful to add. I will look at the latter from the angle of the suitability of the author's proposed narrative on Ukrainian history for the needs of a country aspiring to join the EU. In the final section, I will outline what is missing in the book and what could expand upon the research it presents. I am concerned with dealing with the social functioning of beliefs about the past in Ukraine. Such research requires combining the efforts of scholars of historiography and the history of ideas with sociologists of identity and collective memory. Yekelchyk, with his insight as an experienced researcher of historiographical discourses, would be an indispensable partner in such studies.

Yekelchyk cites three arguments to justify the major role played by the historiography of Ukrainian history in recent decades:

- The Ukrainian diaspora has played a fundamental role in shaping the contemporary historical narrative of Ukraine – as a guardian of concepts prohibited in the USSR and a guide that introduces scholars in the homeland to the world of Western research methodologies.
- Studying Ukrainian history has become increasingly global; the boundary between researchers from the homeland and from the diaspora has been breached; the former participate in international research projects and academic debates on a level footing with Western historians.
- The increasingly globalised study of Ukraine's history is challenging the neo-imperial historical narrative of contemporary Russia on a scale no smaller than the challenge that Mykhailo Hrushevsky laid down to the Russian Empire in the early twentieth century by establishing a separate paradigm of national history.[7]

6 Serhy Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004); Serhy Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Citizens: Everyday Politics in the Wake of Total War* (New York: Oxford University, 2014).

7 Mychajlo Hruševs'kyj, 'Zvyčajna schema "russkoji" istoriji j sprava racional'noho ukladu istoriji schidnoho slov'janstva', *Stat'i po slavjanovedeniju*, 1 (1904), 298–304.

Using these arguments, Yekelchyk first identifies a conclusive breakdown in the barriers in cooperation between the country and the diaspora. He also points to the success of the diaspora's strategy in the last fifty years or so,[8] involving long-term, patient support of independent research in Ukraine; finally, he predicts a time when historiography in the country will be cleansed of the influence of Soviet-era methodology and language. Although, as he shows, until 2022 this influence was still significant in the explanation of the course of history and structure of narrative, proposals emerging in the diaspora before 1991 were already dominant at the conceptual level of the synthesis of Ukrainian history. These were supplemented both by concepts and theories proposed by scholars from the field of global nation and nationalism studies (mainly Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Miroslav Hroch and Roman Szporluk), and by the individual concepts of authors who, after the opening of an exchange between the diaspora and the country around 1990, called upon both the first and the second sources.[9]

In making these three arguments, Yekelchyk connects the geopolitical and identity-based processes of transformation in Eastern Europe with the historiographical process. He shows that researching and interpreting Ukrainian history is, in some way, part of the struggle with Russia's aggression against Ukraine. He interprets this struggle as a fight for universal values. This perspective views historians dealing with Ukraine's past as representing an open civic concept of the nation and state and an orientation towards European integration that encompasses all the nation-states in the continent that fulfil the relevant criteria.

The crux of the book is the answer to the question of whether it is possible to find a perspective on Ukrainian history that encompasses three criteria: firstly, one that takes the national community as its essential subject; secondly, one not influenced by Soviet and neo-imperial Russian models; and thirdly, one taking into account the dominant trend in contemporary Western historiography that avoids accounts of history that use the traditional "national paradigm", instead adopting transnational and regional interpretive frameworks as more modern and resistant to mythologisation and politicisation. While the first and second aspects seem easy to combine, and the second and third appear possible, connecting the first with the third is difficult at best. However, the author ultimately

8 Meaning the period approximately since 1976 and the formation of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, the main research institution in the Ukrainian diaspora community in the world.

9 Natalja Jakovenko, *Narys istoriji Ukrajiny vid najdavnišych časiv do kincja XVIII stolittja* (Kyjiv: Heneza, 1997); Jaroslav Hrycak, *Narys istoriji Ukrajiny: formuvannja modernoji ukrajins'koji naciji XIX–XX stolittja* (Kyjiv: Heneza, 1996); Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (New York: Basic Books, 2015) (Ukr. ed.: Serhij Plochij, *Brama Jevropy. Istorija Ukrajiny vid skifs'kych vojen do nezaležnosti* (Charkiv: KSD, 2016).

resolves this problem by placing the proposed narrative on Ukraine's history in a postcolonial studies perspective.[10] He argues that the view of both Ukrainian history and the country's present-day political situation constructed since the Orange Revolution are – in terms of mainstream changes – simultaneously anti-Soviet, anticolonial and pro-European, as well as based on a civic and culturally heterogeneous concept of the nation.

Yekelchyk argues that the sequence of political events in Ukraine in 2004, 2014, 2019 and 2022 created circumstances conducive to not only the ultimate formation of a narrative about its history based on the outlined premises but also its dissemination and internalisation by society, especially in the context of its expectations of accession to the EU. In the final part of this text, I will return to the question of the future challenges for which this narrative will prepare Ukrainian society, but for now I will briefly present the author's main themes and arguments.

DIASPORA AND COUNTRY: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?

Yekelchyk's presentation of the interaction between historiography in Ukraine and its diaspora in the period since 1991 is, I believe, an accurate reflection of reality. The scholar writes: "[i]n the 1990s. the 'national paradigm' of Ukrainian history – a grand narrative focusing on the Ukrainian ethnic nation's struggle for its own state – replaced Soviet models of 'socialist construction' and the 'friendship of peoples' with a similar sort of dogmatism" (p. 34). He adds that this happened not entirely in the way that diaspora historians imagined, but still with their overwhelming participation. Specifically, Orest Subtelny's then-popular synthesis[11] – on the one hand incorporating the premises of the national paradigm, but on the other supplemented by other influences such as "Miroslav Hroch's scheme of the three-stage development of national movements in stateless nations and Bohdan Krawchenko's sophisticated sociological analysis of overcoming the 'incompleteness' of the nation's social structure" (p. 36) – was read in Ukraine in the simplest way. This meant an interpretation suggesting that the author had started with a primordialist understanding of the nation and justified the thousand-year continuity of the Ukrainian nation's

10 The historians whose texts are compiled in a book edited by Georgiy Kasianov and Philipp Ther, *A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009) proposed combining particularly the second and third element, resulting in a perspective that, while intellectually interesting, shifted the nation to such a distant position that I suspect the country's contemporary inhabitants would find it hard to find themselves. Kasianov also recently voiced scepticism about the use of a colonial perspective in a narrative about Ukraine's history – Georgiy Kasianov, 'Nationalist Memory Narratives and the Politics of History in Ukraine since the 1990s', *Nationalities Papers*, 2023, 1–20.

11 Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 4 eds (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988, 1994, 2000, 2009) (Ukr. ed. I: Orest Subtel'nyj, *Istorija Ukrajiny* [Kyjiv: Lybid', 1991]).

desire for independence. The concepts of diaspora historians therefore contributed to the 'nationalisation' of Ukrainian history at home, as well as to the renewed legitimisation in post-1991 research of eulogists of the "centuries-old aspiration of the Ukrainian nation with the brotherly Russian nation". At the same time, these diaspora historians brought domestic historiography closer to the models employed in Western scholarship by disseminating the concepts of such figures as Omelian Pritsak, Ihor Ševčenko, Roman Szporluk and, above all, Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky.

Nevertheless, Yekelchyk argues, inspirations in the three decades since 1991 have no longer been confined to one direction. Increasingly, domestic historians have taken on the baton of reception of modern approaches. Whereas Ukraine in the 1990s witnessed attempts to adopt the concepts of representatives of the diaspora, such as in the aforementioned syntheses by Yakovenko and Hrytsak, in the next two decades monographic works took inspiration from international sources in the fields of regional history, new social history, oral history and women's history, without the mediation of historians from Ukrainian studies centres in Canada and the United States (examples being such authors as Kateryna Dysa, Andriy Zayarnyuk, Volodymyr Masliichuk and Tatiana Zhurzhenko). Yekelchyk's ultimate verdict on the central state research institution, the Institute of History of Ukraine at the National Academy of Sciences in Kyiv, is quite positive. With its leadership's considered strategy of investing in rejuvenating and training staff, it gradually transformed from being a mainstay of post-Soviet interpretive patterns and an upholder of positivist methodology in the 1990s to become today one of the most important sites of modern research on Ukraine's past.

Yekelchyk's summary of the more than three decades of direct relations between the diaspora and the domestic scene sounds almost like an acknowledgement that the former's mission has been accomplished: "[a]s Ukraine enters the fourth decade of its independent state existence, historical scholarship is coming of age as a worthy partner in the family of the world's 'national' yet increasingly international historiographies" (p. 53). On the other hand, Yekelchyk certainly shows that profound changes have taken place in Ukraine at the level of the participants of international and domestic academic historical debates, while to a lesser degree reaching Ukrainian historiography in a broader sense, and particularly academic institutions in smaller centres and school textbooks.

In-depth analysis of the accomplishments and current state of both sides of the relationship provides the main content of Yekelchyk's book. Regarding the first side, there is no exaggeration in his verdict on the fundamental role of the diaspora's academic centres as a laboratory in

which a shift in the understanding of Ukrainian history took place in the half-century following the Second World War. From Hrushevsky's territorial and ethnic-cultural perspective, which was dominant until 1939, it moved to a view constructed around the history of the historical imagination and autonomist initiatives of social elites, cultural and identity transformations, Ukraine's twentieth-century territorial and political integration, and finally modernisation processes and the emergence of new social classes. As it ultimately turned out, this shift provided authors of narratives on Ukraine's history with more arguments for its continuity than Hrushevsky's populist concept. As the author argues, the main contributions to developing a new concept of Ukrainian history in the diaspora were made by Viacheslav Lypynsky, Dmytro Doroshenko, Oleh W. Gerus, Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky and Orest Subtelny.

Yekelchyk discusses the sociological interests of Lypynsky, who emphasised the role of elites in the history of Ukraine and, together with Doroshenko, laid the foundations of the statist school in Ukrainian historiography. As such, Lypynsky became the source of inspiration for Lysiak-Rudnytsky and Subtelny, historians whom the author identifies as the founders of the narrative integrating the premises of the populist and statist schools. Analysing Doroshenko's contribution, meanwhile, Yekelchyk highlights two roles: first, as the author of a concise synthesis of the history of Ukraine; second, as a historian who became the first – visiting Canada twice with a series of lectures (in 1936 and 1947) – to popularise interest in this history on the American continent, including in the diaspora community itself. Yekelchyk cites Gerus as the scholar who developed Doroshenko's synthesis of Ukraine's history to include the period from the 1920s to the 1970s. In doing so, he restored to Ukrainians in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic the role of the main entity in the country's history following the Ukrainian Revolution of 1921, whereas for Doroshenko it was the diaspora that was the mainstay of national identity and activity.[12]

Not without reason, the author attributes a fundamental role in the history of Ukrainian historiography to Lysiak-Rudnytsky. Yekelchyk presents him as the founder and most eminent representative of the Ukrainian "history of social thought", meaning a way of reflecting on the past that combines the history of ideas with social history. The author laments the fact that this historian was not well understood in Ukraine after 1991. Although he began to be cited very frequently, this was generally by scholars vaguely seeking to legitimise their own arguments. They were also unable to adopt his methodology, which assumes, following Max Weber,

12 See Dmytro Doroshenko, *History of the Ukraine* (Edmonton: Institute Press, 1939); Dmytro Doroshenko, *A Survey of Ukrainian History*, ed. by Oleh W. Gerus (Winnipeg: Humeniuk Publication Foundation, 1975).

interdependency but also "relative autonomy of two large spheres of human existence: culture and ideological processes and social processes" (p. 110). Furthermore, according to Yekelchyk, Lysiak-Rudnytsky's approach represented a challenge not only to historians in Ukraine but also previously to some representatives of the diaspora. This was because it corresponded to defining the nation in a way closer to the later constructivists, with Benedict Anderson ("imagined community") foremost among them, thereby excluding a "primordialist approach arguing in favour of the eternal existence of Ukrainians". As Yekelchyk writes, Lysiak-Rudnytsky represented a concept of the nation "according to which language and other ethnic characteristics per se do not create a nation. Most important is the awareness of oneself as a political community and active subject of history" (p. 112).

The majority of representatives of Ukrainian humanities after 1991 refer to Lysiak-Rudnytsky as a historian who supposedly justified the exclusive belonging of the Ukrainian historical process to Western history. This is something that Yekelchyk explains less as a misunderstanding and more as a process of canonisation with the conscious approval of its participants. As the author shows, certain scholars – keen to prove to their own society and the world that Ukrainian culture was and continues to be European through and through – cited certain views from Lysiak-Rudnytsky's essay 'Ukraine between East and West',[13] disregarding neighbouring opinions in such a way as to make the ultimate meaning of the statement unambiguous. However, as Yekelchyk points out, while this historian placed a strong emphasis on the congruities and similarities between phenomena from Ukrainian and Western history, he also maintained that the Eastern influence on Ukraine was equally significant in the past. In the conclusions, as Yekelchyk reminds us, Lysiak-Rudnytsky argued that the mission "to unite the two traditions [of the East and West] in a living synthesis" (p. 201) remains unaccomplished in Ukraine.

Yekelchyk praises Lysiak-Rudnytsky, who died prematurely in 1984, above all for calling upon his colleagues for critical self-reflection, "which should help rid Ukrainian scholarship of its age-old affliction – the 'subjective-romantic treatment' of a research subject, which was expressed stylistically through 'patriotic emotionality and tendentiousness'" (p. 115).

Subtelny, meanwhile, was for Yekelchyk primarily the author of a synthesis of Ukraine's history whose popularity in the 1990s made the greatest contribution to the domestic reception of the achievements of diaspora historiography.[14] By emphasising the process of socioeconomic

13 Ivan Lysjak-Rudnyc'kyj, 'Ukrajina miž Schodom i Zachodom, politykoju', in *Miž istorijeju ta politykoju: Statti do istoriji i krytyky ukrajins'koji suspil'no-polityčnoji dumky*, ed. by id. (Mjunchen: Sučasnist', 1973), pp. 5–16.
14 Subtel'nyj, *Istorija Ukrajiny*.

modernisation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and recognising it as a change resulting in the development of the Ukrainian national movement, he made his synthesis relatively easy to adopt for historians from the former Ukrainian SSR, who continued to interpret the history of the Soviet republics as a modernising project.

Yekelchyk's essays also show the roles played by other historians who have contributed to the formation of Ukrainian research centres in Canada and the United States. These include – to mention only those with the largest output – Paul Robert Magocsi, the author of a synthesis of Ukrainian history constructed in line with the premises of Canada's contemporary multiculturalism policy;[15] Zenon Kohut and Frank Sysin, authors of studies on the early modern period;[16] Volodymyr Kravchenko, a specialist in urban history and the history of the Ukrainian-Russian borderland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries;[17] Serhy Plohy, whose books include an intellectual biography of Hrushevsky[18] and a volume on the relations between religion and identity in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ukraine;[19] and, finally, John-Paul Himka, perhaps the historian in the (currently) older generation of the diaspora with the broadest interests and widest spectrum of research methods. It is to Himka, Yekelchyk claims, that Ukrainian historiography owes the use of the theory of Marxism for analysis of the emergence of the class system and the socialist movement in Galicia in the nineteenth century,[20] the constructivist approach in the study of Ukrainianism and Ruthenianism as alternative directions of national identity formation in the eastern part of the province,[21] and critical reflection on the concept of the region in historiography in studies of representations of Last Judgement icons in the Carpathian Mountain region[22] as well as on the Ukrainian nationalist radical movement's participation in the Holocaust in Ukraine.[23]

As a result, in Yekelchyk's essays, Ukrainian historiography in the diaspora appears to be an exceptional phenomenon compared to the historiography of nations whose elites escaped in the twentieth century to

15 Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine: The Land and Its Peoples*, 2 eds (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1987, 2010, rev. 2013).
16 Zenon E. Kohut, *Making Ukraine: Studies on Political Culture, Historical Narrative, and Identity* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 2011), Frank E. Sysyn, 'The Khmelnytsky Uprising and Ukrainian Nation-Building', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 17 (1993), 141–70.
17 Vladimir Kravčenko, *Char'kov/Charkiv: stolica Pogranič'ja* (Vilnius: European Humanities University, 2010).
18 Serhii Plokhy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).
19 Serhii Plokhy and Frank E. Sysyn, *Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine* (Edmonton–Toronto: CIUS Press, 2003).
20 John-Paul Himka, *Socialism in Galicia: The Emergence of Polish Social Democracy and Ukrainian Radicalism* (Cambridge, MA: HURI, 1983).
21 John-Paul Himka, 'The Construction of Nationality in Galician Rus': Icarian Flights in Almost All Directions', in *Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation*, ed. by Ronald G. Suny and Michael D. Kennedy (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp. 9–64.
22 John-Paul Himka, *Last Judgment Iconography in the Carpathians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).
23 John-Paul Himka, *Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust: OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry, 1941–1944* (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2021).

the countries of the West from Russian and Soviet rule in Central and Eastern Europe. In no other nation in the critical years of 1989–1991 did émigré historians play such a major intellectual as well as organisational role (mainly by funding research) as in the case of Ukraine. At the same time, the author's analysis shows how historiography in the diaspora was affected by limitations resulting from its physical distance from the country. Before Ukraine gained independence, its representatives concentrated on researching intellectual history and reconceptualising perspectives on national history in the light of the challenges posed by global historiography. They could only begin research in Ukraine – both archival and social, conducted together with representatives of other disciplines – after the country crossed the threshold of state sovereignty in 1991.

As for the other side of the relationship – the domestic situation – Yekelchyk sketches a picture in which historiography for around the first 20 years after 1991, not including researchers maintaining contacts with Western scholarship, continued to be influenced by Soviet academia. This concerned both terminology and the way of understanding causality in history and the interpretation which saw Ukraine's past as being filled with the experiences of the nation, understood as an ethnic community unchanged over millennia. The aforementioned circumstance – dealing with economic subjects that were privileged in the Soviet period –additionally influenced the broad reception of Subtelny's synthesis and had a negative impact on the wider methodological openness of Ukrainian historians. Those who had long devoted themselves to economic research introduced into their arguments, instead of the category of social class, that of the nation, yet they stuck to their previous explanations. As Yekelchyk shows, for some diaspora historians this at first even seemed rather convincing as they wrongly thought that the Marxism in historiography in Ukraine was no longer Soviet Marxism but increasingly Western neo-Marxism, serving as a research methodology in social history. Ultimately, the author perceptively explains the source of neo-Marxism's failure to play an inspirational methodological role in Ukraine that would have fostered the deconstruction of the Soviet legacy in historiography. In his view, this would have happened if it had also been accompanied by reception of the "linguistic turn" in Western humanities. Without this, Western inspirations in the country were adopted in a way that did not affect the existing customary explanations of social reality.

Yet there is one area in which Yekelchyk's view on domestic historiography is brighter. This concerns the continuation of the Ukrainian traditions of spatial history, dating from the 1920s, when Hrushevsky

developed research on the regions of Southern Ukraine.[24] Although regional studies in the country were forced to a halt by Stalinist centralisation, they were then revived in subsequent decades. They were, let's add, an asset of Ukrainian historiography in comparison to the country's western neighbours, where (in Poland, for instance) stronger nationwide integration in terms of territory and identity in the twentieth century was not conducive to their development. Today, as Yekelchyk shows, this tradition is gaining a methodological impetus from Western urban history studies. This is resulting, on the one hand, in the publication of innovative works by authors of the middle and younger generation, both in Ukraine and in the diaspora; on the other hand, it is resulting in urban history research and activity of popularisation centres, spearheaded by the Centre for Urban History of East Central Europe in Lviv.

The author summarises the state of historiography in Ukraine in the first two decades after 1991 as follows: "the wholesale restoration of the traditional canon of national history was accomplished in Ukraine without abandoning Soviet narrative models or conceptualization tools. As a result, the 'national' version of the Ukrainian past looks surprisingly 'Soviet', and belated resistance to this Soviet legacy is taking the form of questioning the national history paradigm, in which both the teleological vision and the template of collectively written multivolume histories point to the historiographical practices of the Soviet past" (p. 73). To use a vivid adage, Yekelchyk's comment regarding critics of the "national" paradigm sounds like a warning not to "throw the baby out with the bathwater". Those impatient historians seeking to modernise historiography in Ukraine argue in favour of stripping the nation of the role of the basic entity that gives meaning to the narrative about the country's history. Yekelchyk does not state whose criticisms in particular he has in mind; however, he clearly confirms his support for the idea that Ukraine still needs a narrative that has the history of the nation at its core.

THE POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES PERSPECTIVE IN THE NARRATIVE ON UKRAINE'S NATIONAL HISTORY

Let's return to the most important point that Yekelchyk argues in the book: the use of a postcolonial studies perspective in the narrative about Ukraine's history. The author's argument in favour of its application is twofold: first, Ukraine's past is characterised by a certain colonial experience;

24 Mychajlo Hruševs'kyj, 'Krok i bil'še v istoriji Ukrajiny: Kil'ka sliv ščodo pljanu i perspektyv c'oho doslidžennja', *Ukrajins'kyj istoryk*, 3–4 (1991–92), 54–68.

secondly, the postcolonial narrative corresponds to contemporary social expectations. Regarding the first argument, it is based on the stance of literary and cultural scholars from the diaspora, notably George Grabowicz, as well as domestic researchers who have followed their lead, with Tamara Hundorova prominent among them.[25] Yekelchyk posits that the rule of Russia/the USSR (seventeenth to twentieth centuries) and Poland (fourteenth to eighteenth centuries) had colonial characteristics in the form of cultural discrimination of Ruthenians/Ukrainians. These did not have a racial aspect (as in classical West European colonialism) as they did not close the path of individual advancement to the population of Ukraine as a cost of assimilation to the dominant culture, but they discriminated against it as a whole by refusing to recognise it as a separate nation and denying its right to realisation of its own political aspirations. The consequence of this discrimination, Grabowicz argued, was and continues to be the collective traumas of Ukrainians.[26] We might add that the scholars holding this view were not historians and, as such, did not broach the question of whether Ukraine under the rule of these two states also experienced the next feature of classical colonialism, namely socioeconomic exploitation. Yekelchyk does not answer this question directly, although one can assume that his view on this matter would not be unequivocal. It is necessary to add that nineteenth-century rule and Soviet rule featured no fewer examples of treating Ukrainian lands as a place of modern investments and development than as an area of absolute exploitation to the benefit of the centre. The author just points out that the representatives of academic Ukrainian historiography did not recognise Ukraine's status in the empire as colonial – neither in the diaspora nor domestically.[27]

I find no reason to challenge Yekelchyk's interpretation of the state of Ukrainian society's beliefs after 1991 as postcolonial. There is no space here to discuss how many (and which) criteria the history of a given country should fulfil to be included in the history of colonial nations. I agree with the Yekelchyk, however, that Ukrainian society – although this term was not used outright in public debate until the Orange Revolution (with few exceptions) and has only become more widespread since Euromaidan – saw itself, and continues to do so, as a postcolonial society. Reckoning with this social fact justifies the adoption of a postcolonial studies perspective for the narrative on Ukrainian history.

Yekelchyk adds a new argument to document this state of Ukrainians' beliefs about their country's history. He interprets Mark von Hagen's

25 Tamara Hundorova, *Tranzytyvna kul'tura: Symptomy postkolonial'noji travmy* (Kyjiv: Hrani-T, 2013).
26 George G. Grabowicz, 'Ukrainian Studies: Framing the Contexts', *Slavic Review*, 54 (1995), 674–90.
27 I share Yekelchyk's view on the Polish governments in Ukraine until the collapse of the state in 1795 as satisfying certain criteria of the colonial type.

call in 1995 to search for other models for the narrative about Ukraine's history than those based on the principle of the European nation state,[28] as well as certain views expressed subsequently in international debate, as expressions of a belief in the suitability of the colonial angle for this history. Yekelchyk argues that the appeal was understood not quite as von Hagen intended it, which was to give studies of Ukraine's history a legitimised status in global scholarship equal to that enjoyed by research on the history of Russia and Poland. This interpretation by Yekelchyk is also convincing.

In my view, moreover, with his analysis of both the ways of writing the history of general and Ukrainian culture in that century and the narrative and construction of post-1991 national history textbooks, Yekelchyk makes an important contribution to showing that the Ukrainian elites' convictions about the past in the twentieth century were – and those of the entire society today are – postcolonial in nature.

Yekelchyk refers to the 1991–2005 period (until the Orange Revolution) in Ukrainian culture and humanities as a time of post-Soviet neo-imperial hybridity. Regarding the syntheses of cultural history published in this period, he pertinently argues that this hybridity following independence was primarily a consequence of a continued emphasis on ethnic culture, with the difference that this culture – in contrast with Russian culture – having ceased to be East Slavic (Ruthenian) and begun to be a strictly Ukrainian one. It is a great asset of the book that Yekelchyk highlights the co-occurrence[29] of various diverse or even contradictory features. Among these are the myth of Ukraine as a source of achievements of general civilisation; acknowledgement of Russian culture as one that, together with Western cultures, produced the most outstanding achievements of human civilisation; the distance towards contemporary Western culture as questioning traditional values; the understanding of Ukrainian national culture as exclusively high culture and the resultant ignoring of the fact that mass culture in Ukraine was chiefly Russophone; and understanding Ukrainian culture as a solely ethnic culture, resulting in omission of the cultures of national minorities.

To conduct an analysis of textbooks for teaching Ukraine's history from the three decades after 1991, Yekelchyk starts from the positions of classical postcolonial studies.[30] On this basis, he treats the interpretation

28 Mark von Hagen, 'Does Ukraine Have a History?', *Slavic Review*, 54 (1995), 658–73.

29 Either in different textbooks functioning in education in various parts of the country or even within the same textbooks.

30 Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1993); Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for "Indian" Pasts?', *Representation*, 37 (1992), 1–26; Gayatri C. Spivak, 'Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography', in *Subaltern Studies IV: Writings in South Asian History and Society*, ed. by Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford University, 1985), pp. 338–363.

of all the historical manifestations of social dissatisfaction in Ukrainian lands that are repeated in these textbooks as evidence of the existence of a distinct Ukrainian identity as a consequence of the postcolonial imposition of the Western European template of nationalism and its product of the nation-state on the country's history. Yekelchyk rightly identifies the paradox of the "normalisation" of Ukraine's history in line with the Western model, pointing out its three manifestations. Firstly, the authors of textbooks demonstrate the country's "Europeanness" by arguing for the multicultural coexistence of Cossack Zaporizhzhia and Tatar Crimea. Secondly, the authors assure that Ukraine played the role of defender of Europe against threats "from the East". Thirdly, they introduce to nineteenth-century Ukrainian history Hroch's model of phases A, B and C in the development of nation-forming movements. Hroch assumed a gradual inclusion of the masses by the elites to participate in these movements, but the authors of these textbooks do not realise that his model conflicts with the traditional idea of Ukrainian historiography, whereby the people in Ukraine were always a bulwark of national identity, while the higher classes at times lost their national identity. Yekelchyk's hypothesis that these textbooks' narratives erase aspects of the past that are not associated with the nation is also confirmed by noting that the authors of the chapters on the revolutions of 1917–1921 avoid mentioning the class and internationalist aspects of these events.

In the introduction, Yekelchyk signposts the problem of how in a narrative about the history of Ukraine, on the one hand, to maintain the status of the nation as the main entity giving it meaning, and, on the other hand, to definitively remove the Soviet and neo-imperial influences and avoid the repetition of the traditional "national paradigm" created by the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I would argue that, in the end, the solution of introducing the perspective of postcolonial studies is justified convincingly. In the conclusion, the author summarises this hypothesis as follows: on the one hand, "in the Ukrainian case, the national paradigm played a progressive role as a tool for deconstructing the imperial version of their history" (p. 229); on the other hand, "[t]he quest for joining European historical narratives turned out to be a decolonization strategy that outgrew the constraints of geopolitics to reveal its potential for transnational and comparative history informed by Postcolonial Studies" (p. 230).[31]

Nonetheless, although my view of the transformations in Ukraine and the interpretive framework proposed for it resembles the author's,

[31] See also Barbara Törnquist-Plewa and Yuliya Yurchuk, 'Memory Politics in Contemporary Ukraine: Reflections from the Postcolonial Perspective', *Memory Studies*, 12 (2019), 699–720.

I must point out that certain aspects are not sufficiently acknowledged. Firstly, the author does not attach sufficient importance to the position in the public debate in Ukraine of a narrative that is anti-Soviet and anti-imperial and declaratively pro-European, but at the same time entirely, or at least predominantly, satisfies the criteria of a traditional "national paradigm". Secondly, the author fails to consider the fact that the collective emotions that began to grow in 2014 and reached a pinnacle after the invasion of 24 February 2022 and the actions that resulted from this involved a large section of Ukrainian society rejecting Russianness per se, not just in its Soviet and neo-imperial Putinist form. A starting point for my argument could be a simple result of quantitative research: in Yekelchyk's book, the name of Volodymyr Viatrovych does not appear a single time, even though, as director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UiNM) in 2014–2019, he held a significant part of the power to establish symbols of the past in the state, and he was a representative of the traditional "national paradigm" regarding twentieth-century history[32]. The term 'derussification', meanwhile – unlike decolonisation – features just once.

Yekelchyk correctly pinpoints to 2019 the beginning of the transition in the state memory politics from decommunisation towards decolonisation. He accurately identifies that historians in Ukraine started playing the role of activists from 2014. He also aptly gives to this phenomenon the term "Public History Reborn". These historians opposed the neoimperial interpretation of Eastern European history transmitted by the Kremlin and presented by Putin in its canonical version in a speech on 12 July 2021. According to this version, Ukrainians either do not exist or are presented – as in the Russian Empire until 1917 – as part of the 'triune' Russian nation, composed of Great, Little and White Russians. Finally, to exemplify this role of historians, Yekelchyk rightly emphasises the activities of the social organisation "Likbez. Historical Front"[33] and its publication of the "History Uncensored" series of books.

It is important to note, however, that this role also had an aspect symbolised by Viatrovych, who became director of the UiNM in 2014, having worked in the field of civil society organisations dealing with history and drawing support from, among others, the diaspora, specifically Український центр визвольного руху (UTsVR) in Lviv. The style in which he led the UiNM had previously been honed in the UTsVR, both by opposing the Russian neo-imperialist narrative and by unilaterally heroising the OUN and UPA, overlooking the crimes committed by their

32 Volodymyr Viatrovych, *The Gordian Knot: The Second Polish-Ukrainian War, 1942–1947* (Toronto: Horner Press, 2019).

33 For a critical dissection of this role, see Yuliya Yurchuk, 'Historians as Activists: History Writing in Times of War: The Case of Ukraine in 2014–2018', *Nationalities Papers*, 49 (2021), 691–709.

members against Jews, Poles and other minorities during the Second World War. We should also add that only Viatrovych's resignation as director – after Petro Poroshenko's defeat to Volodymyr Zelensky in the presidential elections – and his replacement by Anton Drobovych paved the way for Ukraine's politics of memory to move from decommunisation to decolonisation.

Yekelchyk does not omit in his book the question of the very limited representation in the Ukrainian public debate of the OUN and UPA as radical nationalist organisations which committed atrocities.[34] He writes that the Holocaust in Ukraine is most often treated today as the doing of the Third Reich, without addressing the participation of representatives of national society and while focusing on cases of individual help given to Jews. He also shows that references to the sources of ethnic cleansing of Poles in Volhynia in 1943–1944 fail to take into account the OUN's nationalistic ideology, concentrating purely on the objectives of the UPA's struggle for independence and the context – created by Nazi ad Soviet crimes – that allowed mass atrocities to be committed by both the Ukrainian and the Polish side of the conflict. Yet the author only tackles these questions when analysing the narratives of textbooks. He neither identifies the sources of society's reception of narratives that one-sidedly heroise the actors of events of the Second World War in Ukraine nor analyses the question of who spreads them and how.

I am not trying to suggest that Yekelchyk's book should include one more chapter about the politics of memory in Ukraine since 1991, in which he would show how some political actors presented the "dark sides" of the country's history in the twentieth century and why other actors did not present them at all. My point is that Yekelchyk's argument that Ukraine today is dominated by a social "horizon of expectation"[35] to which the best response is a narrative that is at once national, anti-Soviet, pro-European and anticolonial, is suspended, as it were, in a vacuum of knowledge about social beliefs, and particularly people's motivations for professing these convictions. Of course, the author does not manage to take into account in the book the results of surveys from the first months after Russia's invasion of 24 February 2022, which showed that that the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian society regarded the UPA and Stepan Bandera as national heroes. However, he might have been expected to consider the systematic increase of unequivocally positive evaluations of these symbols

34 For more on this subject, see Anna Wylegała, 'Managing the difficult past: Ukrainian collective memory and public debates on history', *Nationalities Papers*, 45 (2017), 780–97.

35 Reinhart Koselleck, '"Space of experience" and "horizon of expectation": two historical categories', in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, ed. by Reinhart Koselleck (New York: Columbia University, 2004).

at least since 2014. In any case, the results of studies from 2014–2022[36] show that Ukrainian society is not prepared to gain full knowledge of the events that cast a shadow over the history of the independence movement in the 1930s and 1940s.

While again acknowledging the general suitability of the postcolonial studies framework for shaping the narrative about the history of Ukraine and analysing the contemporary historical discourses in the country, an important question cannot be avoided. In societies in which the belief that their members were the victims of colonialism has become entrenched, is there room to speak publicly also about the agency of the ancestors who committed atrocities and their descendants' responsibility for them? In other words, in view of the strengthening of the victim syndrome, will there be room in Ukraine to shake off yet another consequence of foreign rule, namely failure to take responsibility in the name of the nation for all the past events in which its representatives participated?

This question becomes topical as Ukraine's accession to the EU draws nearer. Yekelchyk's argument absolutely has a chance to play a role in the West by explaining why it is valid to interpret the history of Ukraine in colonial terms but its society's contemporary beliefs in postcolonial terms. However, it does not seem that Western public opinion – even if it is already convinced that this is an accurate interpretation – has begun to perceive Ukrainian history in the same way as it does that of postcolonial countries that once belonged to the overseas empires of European states. Can this public opinion consider acts of violence as manifestations of anticolonial retaliation by representatives of the oppressed if they were associated with the ideology of integral nationalism and the political stake of victory in the war of the Third Reich and resulted in mass atrocities? Although it is, of course, not Yekelchyk's intention for this to happen, I think that it is essential to also consider the possible consequences of Ukrainian society internalising the postcolonial narrative. This should be done not in order to argue that the EU should set sine qua non conditions concerning the historical narrative to candidate states or to sound the alarm regarding the supposed deluge of integral nationalism in the past decade, but to show that during this process Ukraine will face the prospect of assuming a critical approach towards part of its own past. Positions taken in such works as Himka's aforementioned book about the OUN and UPA's participation in the extermination of Jews or in such

36 Sociolohična hrupa Rejtynh, *Desjate zahal'nonacional'ne opytuvannja: Ideolobični markery vijny 27 kvitnja 2022* (Kyjiv: Sociolohična hrupa "REJTYNH", 2022), <https://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rg_ua_1000_ideological_markers_ua_042022_press.pdf> [accessed: 10 March 2024].

voices in the debate as Hrytsak's arguments about the UPA from 2004[37] will then demand not only the support of voices both in Ukraine and in the diaspora but also understanding from public opinion in the country.

Before this prospect arrives, I think that it is ultimately necessary to combine the research on intellectual history and historiographical discourses conducted by Yekelchyk with wide research in Ukraine on social beliefs about the national past and values professed. Previous international and domestic projects have emphasised research on questions of identity, including such markers of identification as language or religion, as well as interpretation of the results in the light of differentiation of such social characteristics as age or region inhabited.[38] At the same time, there has been a lack of appreciation of the role of historical convictions and how they correspond to the state of professional knowledge on the past, as well as the links between these convictions and values. Nor has sufficient attention been given to the assimilation of images of the past derived from various kinds of sources, including those with mass reach. Such research would have to be wide-reaching and involve greater use of qualitative methods, as well as participation of researchers experienced in analysis of historiographical discourses. This would entail, among other things, the introduction to Ukraine of research on historical culture in a broad sense.[39] Such an expansion of the research horizon would, I suspect, help to bring together intellectual history with social history in Ukraine regarding the period since 1991 in a manner that has not yet been undertaken on a wide scale, either in the diaspora or domestically.

~~Translated by BEN KOSCHALKA~~

37 Jaroslav Hrycak, *Tezy do obhovorennja pro UPA*, *in Strasty za nacionalizmom. Istoryčni narysy*, ed. by Jaroslav Hrycak (Kyjiv: Krytyka), s. 90-114 (ed. originally: *Krytyka*, 7–8 [2004], 9–15).

38 E.g., *Regionalism Without Regions. Reconceptualizing Ukraine's Heterogeneity*, ed. by Ulrich Schmid and Oksana Myshlovska (Budapest–New York: CEU, 2019).

39 See the first attempt to apply German concepts of historical culture (mainly by Jörn Rüsen and Berndt Schönemann) to a comparative study of Poland and Ukraine: *The Politics of History in Poland and Ukraine: From Reconciliation to De-Conciliation*, ed. by Tomasz Stryjek and Joanna Konieczna-Sałamatin (London: Routledge, 2022).

Igor Gretskiy

Book review: Ryszard Zięba, *Poland's Foreign and Security Policy: Problems of Compatibility with the Changing International Order* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2020)

With extensive studies on Poland's foreign and security policy being published rather infrequently, it is not surprising that the monograph by Prof. Ryszard Zięba that is reviewed here was destined to receive close attention from the research community. The book describes Poland's interactions with leading international organizations and the most influential countries in the world. It provides a detailed overview of the challenges and issues that Poland's foreign policy faces. In addition, the author shares his original perspective on what the European security system should look like, and what role in it should be assigned to Poland.

Prof. Zięba chooses neorealistic theory of international relations as his main theoretical framework. In his book, he frequently cites Kenneth Waltz and Stephen Walt; concurrently, the influence of John Mearsheimer, the founder of offensive realism, remains particularly strong. Following the latter, Prof. Zięba often deviates from the postulates of neorealism and resorts to primitive geopolitical conspiracy theories, oversimplifying the subject matter. For example, he claims that after the collapse of the USSR a new world order was established, at the foundation of which was the "hegemony of the United States". One should note here that the hegemony of one state has never existed within international relations: one state cannot effectively control security at the global level. In other words, the notion of such a hegemony is a misconception. Even offensive realists acknowledge that in a world where several nuclear powers exist, achieving hegemony is absolutely impossible.[1]

Prof. Zięba's main thesis revolves around the idea that the defining role in international relations is assigned to the five "great powers", namely the permanent members of the UN Security Council. In doing so, he almost completely de-subjectivizes the small and medium-sized European states. In this regard, Prof. Zięba contradicts the theoretical framework he himself has chosen. While neorealism prioritizes the "great powers", it does not reduce the small and medium-sized countries to mere puppets or "vassals". For example, Waltz argues that all states are sovereign and have the opportunity to choose their "strategies for survival".[2]

1 John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), p. 6, 140.
2 Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1979), p. 96; Kenneth N. Waltz, 'Structural Realism after the Cold War', *International Security*, 25 (2000), 5–41 (p. 38).

The impression left by the book is undermined not only by its methodological inconsistency, but also by systematic carelessness in presenting facts. Let me mention several representative examples. For instance, Prof. Zięba claims that during the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, only Poland and the United States promoted the idea of Ukraine and Georgia's membership in NATO (p. 262). In fact, both these candidate countries were fully supported by Canada, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia.[3] For example, on the eve of the summit, Traian Băsescu, the President of Romania, stated that "Romania supports with no reservations and with many arguments" Ukraine's participation in the NATO Membership Action Plan,[4] while Toomas Hendrik Ilves, the President of Estonia, called on allies not to succumb to Russian blackmail and to support Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations.[5]

Consciously or not, Prof. Zięba has made yet another gross factual error. Accusing Polish leadership of militarizing the country, he writes that the military parade organized in Warsaw on 15 August 2018 in honour of the Polish Armed Forces Day, in which some 1,000 soldiers and 900 reenactors participated, supposedly exceeded the scale of the Victory Parade in Moscow on May 9th (p. 121). In reality, in 2018 more than 13,000 soldiers[6] participated in the parade in Moscow, making the Warsaw parade a rather modest event overall.

Furthermore, Prof. Zięba erroneously claims that during the process of German reunification, the USA and its European allies committed to Russia not to build NATO military infrastructure on the territories of the new member states, allegedly confirming such a commitment in the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act (p. 41). By doing so, he ignores the abundance of research carried out by historians at various archives, as well as memoirs of politicians testifying that the West did not give – and could

3 Judy Dempsey, 'U.S. pushing to bring Ukraine and Georgia into NATO', *The New York Times*, 3 November 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/13/world/europe/13iht-nato.4.10021504.html> [accessed: 12 December 2023]; Adrian Vieriţa, 'The Bucharest Summit: Romania's Perceptions of NATO's Future', *Wilson Center*, 26 March 2008, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/the-bucharest-summit-romanias-perceptions-natos-future> [accessed: 12 December 2023]; Visegrad Group, 'Joint Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Visegrad Group Countries', 23 April 2008, <https://www.visegradgroup.eu/2008/joint-statement-of-the> [accessed: 12 December 2023]; Government of Canada, 'Prime Minister Harper Backs Ukraine's Progress Toward NATO Membership', 2 April 2008, <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2008/04/prime-minister-harper-backs-ukraine-progress-toward-nato-membership.html> [accessed: 12 December 2023]; Hugh Williamson, 'Germany blocks ex-Soviets' Nato entry', *Financial Times*, 1 April 2008, <https://www.ft.com/content/ab8eb6a6-ff44-11dc-b556-000077b07658> [accessed: 12 December 2023]; Sergey Sukhankin, 'Ukraine's Thorny Path to NATO Membership: Mission (im)possible?', *ICDS Commentary*, 22 April 2019, <https://icds.ee/en/ukraines-stony-path-to-nato-membership-mission-impossible/> [accessed: 12 December 2023].

4 Traian Băsescu, 'On the road to the Bucharest Summit', *NATO Review*, 27 March 2008, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2008/03/27/on-the-road-to-the-bucharest-summit/index.html> [accessed: 12 December 2023].

5 NATO, 'Joint press point with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves', 4 February 2008, <https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2008/s080204a.html> [accessed: 12 December 2023].

6 President of Russia, 'Military Parade on Red Square', 9 May 2018, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57436> [accessed: 12 December 2023].

not have given – any promises to Moscow regarding the non-inclusion of Central and Eastern European countries in NATO.[7] In fact, in 1990 the discussion revolved around ensuring that NATO military infrastructure would not be extended to the territory of East Germany, and NATO fulfilled this obligation. As for the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997, it recorded NATO's commitment not to deploy nuclear military facilities on the territories of its new member states, and this commitment is still being fully implemented by the Alliance.

It is puzzling that Prof. Zięba demands Warsaw to abide by certain oral promises regarding NATO expansion, allegedly given at a time when Poland was not yet a member of the Alliance. This persistence on the professor's side seems even more odd when we consider that, within the neorealist paradigm he has chosen, the great powers' disregard for written, let alone oral, international norms and rules is considered quite normal from the standpoint of the anarchic nature of international relations.[8]

Prof. Zięba considers NATO expansion the main threat that has provoked a crisis in the modern European security system. This thesis echoes the misconceptions of Kenneth Waltz, who falsely equated NATO expansion with the expansion of the Roman, Russian, and British Empires.[9] Waltz completely ignored the fact that the aforementioned empires expanded through wars and forcible annexations, whereas NATO is an organization whose members join through a process of voluntary accession, without bloodshed, by their sovereign will, rationally assessing the benefits and consequences.

Meanwhile, in his deliberations on NATO, Prof. Zięba goes further than Waltz. While Waltz writes about Russia's "reasonable fears" regarding the accession of post-Soviet states to the NATO Alliance, Zięba argues that NATO expansion has engendered "justified fears" in the Kremlin regarding the hostile intentions of the West towards Russia itself (p. 190). Even after the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Prof. Zięba continues to assert, in line with official Russian propaganda, that "NATO expansion" disregards "Russia's vital security interests", while its power could be used directly against Russia.[10]

7 For detailed analysis of the subject, see Mary Elise Sarotte, 'A Broken Promise? What the West Really Told Moscow about NATO Expansion', *Foreign Affairs*, 93 (2014), 90–97 (p. 96); Hannes Adomeit, 'NATO's Eastward Enlargement: What Western Leaders Said', *Security Policy Working Paper*, 3 (2018), Federal Academy for Security Policy, <https://www.baks.bund.de/sites/baks010/files/working_paper_2018_03.pdf> [accessed 12 December 2023]; Steven Pifer, 'Did NATO Promise Not to Enlarge? Gorbachev Says "No"', *The Brookings Institution Commentary*, 6 June 2014, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/did-nato-promise-not-to-enlarge-gorbachev-says-no/> [accessed: 12 December 2023].

8 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 362–65.

9 Kenneth N. Waltz, 'NATO expansion: A realist's view', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 21 (2000), 23–38 (p. 34).

10 Ryszard Zięba, 'Where Does NATO Enlargement Lead To?', *Transatlantic Policy Quarterly*, 22 (2023), 39–51 (p. 40).

Prof. Zięba views Poland's accession to NATO extremely negatively. He writes that in doing so Warsaw has assumed the role of a "US satellite" (p. 270). He advocates for Poland to play the role of a bridge between the West and the post-Soviet space (p. 38). This somewhat outdated concept was completely rejected by the Polish leadership as early as the mid-1990s.[11] Its acceptance would lead to the demise of Poland's prospects for European integration, as well as its entrenchment in the grey buffer zone between Russia and the West. Today, the majority of Polish experts rightly recognize that a "balancing act" between the West and Russia would be detrimental to Poland as it would contribute to Russian attempts to isolate Poland from the Euro-Atlantic structures that largely guarantee its security and sovereignty.[12] Understandably, Prof. Zięba does not belong to this circle of experts. On the contrary, he seeks to isolate Poland on the international stage and reduce its level of interaction with the US, without taking into consideration how detrimental such a step could be for both Poland and Europe.

In Prof. Zięba's worldview, Poland is often portrayed as a "satellite state", "client state", and "vassal" of the USA, unconsciously playing the assigned role of the "local sheriff" for Eastern Europe. He does not delve into the analysis of these terms, as is customary in reputable scholarly literature. He does not specify the differences between them, while the main confirmation of Poland's compliance with these roles, in his opinion, lies in Warsaw's unwavering support for the 'colour' revolutions in the post-Soviet space (p. 108). He writes extensively and eagerly about them, immersing the reader in a world of conspiracy theories. Prof. Zięba falsely claims that the change of regimes in post-Soviet countries was orchestrated by the USA and the CIA (p. 174). He defines the colour revolutions as a Western tool for exporting democracy "in the Eastern part of Europe" (p. 244). Thus, he completely devalues the internal factors of political change in the post-Soviet space.

Prof. Zięba's view on the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity in 2013–2014 demonstrates a particularly large amount of speculation and bias (pp. 181–82). For example, he believes that the refusal of the Ukrainian government to sign the Association Agreement with the EU in Vilnius was due not to Russian blackmail but to "Ukraine's great economic difficulties and close economic ties with Russia, in which Ukraine was the dependent party". Following Russian propaganda, Zięba refers to the change of power

11 Przemysław Grudziński, *Raport Polska-Rosja: niezgoda i współpraca* (Warszawa: Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych Instytutu Spraw Publicznych, 1997), pp. 49–50; Krzysztof Górski and Krystian Piatkowski, *Dylematy polskiej polityki wobec NATO i Rosji* (Warszawa: PISM, 1995), p. 9.

12 Justyna Gotkowska, 'Wymyślić siebie na nowo? Transformacja Zachodu a bezpieczeństwo Polski', *Klub Jagielloński*, 29 marca 2021, <https://klubjagiellonski.pl/2021/03/29/wymyslic-siebie-na-nowo-transformacja-zachodu-a-bezpieczenstwo-polski/> [accessed: 12 December 2023].

in Kyiv in February 2014 as a "coup d'état". He characterizes the position of the Polish government regarding the annexation of Crimea as "hysterical" since, in his view, there were no grounds to believe that Russia would commit an act of armed aggression against Poland or the Baltic States following Crimea. Essentially, this statement suggests that Zemba would hardly object to the Russian army seizing not only Crimea but also all of Ukraine. Overall, when describing Ukraine, Prof. Zięba uses exclusively negative epithets, portraying it as an undemocratic, corrupt country controlled by oligarchs. He also claims that manifestations of fascism are allegedly tolerated in the western part of Ukraine (pp. 29, 180).

A substantial part of the book is dedicated to an overview of the trajectory of Poland's Russian foreign policy. Russia appears to be one of the most frequently mentioned foreign states in the book. This can be explained by Prof. Zięba's aversion to the "hegemony of the USA" in international relations, and the fact that he sees Russia as a counterbalance. Moreover, the book does not offer any serious objections to the idea of Russia dominating the post-Soviet space and satisfying its territorial claims at the expense of neighbouring states. Instead of blaming Russia for the illegal annexation of Crimea, Prof. Zięba blames the USA and NATO (p. 48). According to him, their involvement in geopolitical competition for Ukraine provoked Russia's annexation of Crimea and support for separatism in Donbas. Presumably, Prof. Zięba justifies Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 in the same vein.

When it comes to Russian–Polish relations, Prof. Zięba observes that they are now at their worst in thirty years. He puts the blame on Polish authorities for their alleged deeply rooted "Russophobia". He believes that the claim that Russia poses a threat to Poland's independence is greatly exaggerated and is the result of social engineering" (p. 67). As he has written elsewhere, "politicians from Poland and some other new EU member states attribute to Russia expansionist aspirations and efforts to widen its sphere of influence in Europe. They do this in order to justify their policy of pushing Russia out of Europe".[13] History has already proven that those politicians and analysts who, after the Russian-Georgian war of 2008, warned that Russia would not stop there and that Ukraine would be its next target, provided entirely adequate assessments of European security challenges. Those who downplayed the threat from Russia, characterizing the warnings by Polish politicians as "hysterical" and urging the West to appease Putin's empire, turned out to be wrong.

13 Ryszard Zięba, 'Międzynarodowe implikacje kryzysu ukraińskiego', *Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations*, 2 (2014), 13–40 (pp. 15–16).

By labelling Poland as "Russophobic", Prof. Zięba employs the same trick of substituting concepts as Russian officials would. The Kremlin constantly labels justified assessments of the security threats posed by its aggressive foreign policy as "phobias" – groundless and irrational fears that aim to portray Poland and the Baltic states as irrational and incapable states.[14] Therefore, with his monographs Prof. Zięba assists the Kremlin in this endeavour. Instead of discussing the real danger posed by Putin's Russia, Zięba urges Warsaw not to antagonize Russia (p. 41) and not to increase spending on national defence, spreading instead horrifying predictions of a new arms race and a third world war (p. 121).

In his endeavour to whitewash Russia, Prof. Zięba goes so far as to accuse the Polish government of failing, in 2015–2019, to make any progress on returning the wreckage of the presidential plane that crashed in 2010 (pp. 67–68). His accusations against the Polish government are entirely unfounded, as in this case the responsibility for returning the wreckage lies entirely with the Russian side. According to Annex 13 of the Chicago Convention of 1944, Russia is obligated to return debris to the Polish side immediately upon completion of the technical investigation. All technical procedures had been completed by the Russian Interstate Aviation Committee as early as January 2011, and a report was published.[15] In May 2012, during her visit to Warsaw, Valentina Matviyenko, Chairwoman of the Federation Council, assured the Polish side that Russia would return the wreckage "within the next few months",[16] but this has never happened. In 2015 and 2018, respectively, the European Parliament and PACE adopted resolutions calling on Russia to return the wreckage to Poland in accordance with international law.[17] It should be noted that since the completion of the technical investigation into the crash, the Polish government, regardless of its partisan composition, has regularly appealed to the Russian side to fulfil its international obligations. The last time this was done was by Zbigniew Rau, the Polish Foreign Minister, in the fall of 2021 during the UN General Assembly meetings in New York.[18] The Russian side left the request unanswered.

14 See The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 'Interview of the Foreign Affairs Minister of Russia S. V. Lavrov to the television channel "Russia Today"', 24 December 2013, <https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1661141> [accessed: 12 December 2023]; President of Russia, 'A large press-conference of Vladimir Putin', 18 December 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47250> [accessed: 12 December 2023].

15 International Aviation Committee, 'Ty-154M N101', 10 April 2010, <https://mak-iac.org/rassledovaniya/tu-154m-n101-10-04-2010/> [accessed: 12 December 2023].

16 Zespół wPolityce.pl, 'Szefowa Rady Federacji Rosji Walentyna Matwijenko: w ciągu kilku miesięcy przekażemy Polsce wrak Tu-154', 22 July 2012, <https://wpolityce.pl/polityka/132950-szefowa-rady-federacji-rosji-walentyna-matwijenko-w-ciagu-kilku-miesiecy-przekazemy-polsce-wrak-tu-154> [accessed: 12 December 2023].

17 European Parliament, Resolution 2015/2592 (RSP), 12 March 2015; Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Resolution 2246 (2018), 12 October 2018.

18 'Zbigniew Rau i Siergiej Ławrow rozmawiali w Nowym Jorku. Mają się spotkać kolejny raz', 23 September 2021, <https://tvn24.pl/polska/onz-szefowie-dyplomacji-polski-i-rosji-zbigniew-rau-i-siergiej-lawrow-spotkali-sie-w-nowym-jorku-5424196> [accessed: 12 December 2023].

Overall, despite its rather ambitious title, Prof. Zięba's monograph can hardly be considered a successful example of profound and serious analysis of Polish foreign policy. Rather, it can be described as a pseudo-scholarly way of promoting Kremlin propaganda narratives. This book will undoubtedly appeal to conspiracy theorists and anti-Americanism adherents, but it is highly unlikely to be regarded among Polish decision-makers as a source of wisdom and forward-thinking decisions.

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