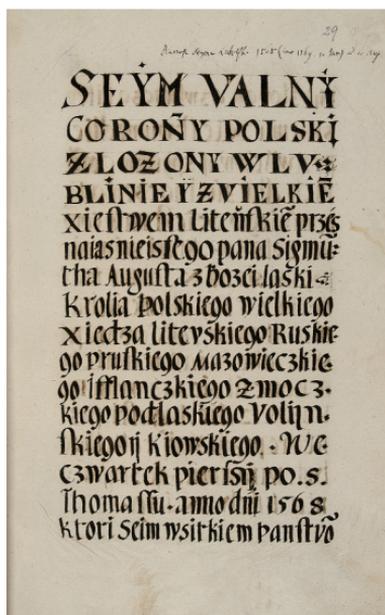


Federalism in the History of Poland



*The free with the free,
the equal with the equal*

F e d e r a l i s m in the History of Poland

*The free with the free,
the equal with the equal*

The exhibition *Federalism in the History of Poland*, prepared by the European Information and Documentation Centre of the Sejm Library, may be viewed on: <http://libr.sejm.gov.pl/oide/wystawy>

F e d e r a l i s m in the History of Poland

*The free with the free,
the equal with the equal*

Exhibition organised upon the initiative of the Marshal of the Sejm Bronisław Komorowski, and presented at the European Parliament in April 2009.

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Allegory of the Commonwealth of Two Nations

unidentified Polish painter, end of the 18th century, Biblioteka Sejmowa

entry in the election field in front of a tent displaying flags with the Eagle of Poland and the Pogoni (pursuit) of Lithuania coats of arms

all around: shields with the coats of arms of voivodeships and lands

– a symbolic depiction of the unity of the Crown and Lithuania.

In the foreground: the election of the marshal of the Sejm electing the king.





The three essays contained in this publication, concerning Polish federal experiences and ideas, were written for the exhibition *Federalism in the History of Poland*. Their subject matter corresponds to the scheme of the exhibition, at the same time broadening and supplementing the range of the information presented in the tables. It is our sincere

hope that the texts will bring the European reader closer both to the history of the Polish-Lithuanian federation and Polish federal thought of the last two centuries, which might be of interest for present-day debates about the values, systemic foundations and future of the European Union.

Federalism played a prominent part in the more than a thousand-years long history of Poland. For over 200 years, starting with the Polish-Lithuanian Union signed in Lublin in 1569, it comprised the foundation of the system of the First Republic. During the nineteenth century, at the time of the partitions of Poland, federalism became the theme of numerous utopian plans and conceptions, which, as part of an all-European structure, were to result in the regaining of independence. In the twentieth century the idea of a federation did not lose its attraction: it was applied upon many occasions, mainly in conditions posing a threat to Polish independence (the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1920 and the Second World War). Nonetheless, federalism did not transcend the stage of projects.

The exhibition stresses that the foundation of Polish federalism and Polish federal thought, the feature connecting the systemic experiences of the Commonwealth of Two Nations and the ideas and projects originating in the nineteenth and twentieth century, was an equal treatment of partners and respect for their distinctness. This approach was succinctly expressed in documents accompanying the Union of Lublin: *the free with the free, the equal with the equal*, a slogan that became the leitmotif of the exhibition. The system of the Commonwealth was based on the liberty and equality of the citizens, as well as the sover-

Medal *Salus Reipublicae Suprema Lex Esto*

struck on the occasion of the opening of the Legislative Sejm
on 10 February 1919, J. Raszka, 1919

Salus Reipublicae suprema lex esto – Let the welfare of the
Res Publica be the supreme law – motto referring to the ideas of
the Commonwealth
of Two Nations.



Emblem elaborated by S. Buszczyński for a future European federation: a cross inscribed within the sun and a ring.

Latin motto reads:

In will – unity. In unity – freedom.

In freedom – salvation.



eignty of the law, while the principle of activity entailed the participation of an essential part the population in public life and an accompanying feeling of responsibility for the state.

Starting with the sixteenth century the essence of the relation of the society or, as it was known at the time, the gentry nation towards the state is reflected in the term *rzeczpospolita*, a literal translation of the Latin *res publica*. Despite the fact that Poland was a kingdom, the state was described as *rzecz pospolita* – *Respublica Regni Poloniae* – which denoted “common good”. This term reveals the gentry’s conception of a state whose citizens are not solely legitimate subjects but actually co-create it. Paraphrasing Louis XIV, the nobility of the Commonwealth could say: *L’État, c’est nous*.

Much attention has been devoted to the Commonwealth of Two Nations since the values on which this federation was built have survived in Polish political culture, comprising the basis of all the pro-independence movements of the nineteenth century and the anti-totalitarian movements of the twentieth century. At the same time, let us underline that both the act and the fate of the Polish-Lithuanian Union continue to be the object of research and discussions conducted by Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian historians. The studies in question have fully developed only recently, and certainly need to be continued.

The first essay presents the roots of the system and the prime features of the political culture of the Commonwealth of Two Nations, without which the success of the Polish-Lithuanian Union would have been probably impossible.

The political system of the Commonwealth was determined by the privileges that turned the nobleman into a free citizen who *via* deputies participated in the enactment of the law and directly chose the king (the *viritim* election), the parliamentary system, which assumed its form in the sixteenth century, and whose prime element was the Sejm and the land dietines – the local forum of the politically active gentry, and, finally, the principle of the sovereignty of the law, conspicuously expressed in the execution of the law movement. This was the period when the conviction about binding the rulers by means of the law and

the necessity of their incessant control became grounded in gentry society.

The author of the first essay paid particular attention to the early *inter-regna* which proved decisive for the ultimate shape of a system based on the self-government of the gentry nation (together with the institution of the confederation, which subsequently became its permanent element) and which fully expressed the civic character of gentry culture. The characteristic features of the society of the Commonwealth listed by the author include the participation of the gentry in public life, the feeling of responsibility for the state, the principle of inner-estate equality, and a striving towards compromise (which, unfortunately, resulted in the *liberum veto*). The last stage in the history of the Polish-Lithuanian federation was the Constitution of 3 May 1791, the first written constitution in Europe, which confirmed the republican foundations of the reformed monarchy and consolidated its federal form in *The Mutual Guarantee of the Two Nations*, added to the text of the Constitution.

The second text in the brochure recalls the most prominent nineteenth-century authors who in assorted ways embarked upon the theme of the federation. During the nineteenth century, at the time of the partitions, the federal idea in Poland changed and became primarily a rather hazy way of planning a future European order in which there was a place for an independent Polish state. In the European debate on ways to conciliate national egoisms with the brotherhood of the peoples, Polish thinkers presented the experiences of the Polish-Lithuanian Union. They referred to the republican tradition of the Commonwealth of Two Nations, envisaged as a model for the future shape of the united Continent. Some of the proposals discussed in the sketch are today known only to a narrow group of historians of political thought, but a closer analysis of such projects as those by Jaszczyński or Buszczyński reveals their astonishing topicality.

Twentieth-century federalism in Poland during the 1918-1952 period, examined in the third sketch, possessed primarily a political dimension, and pertained first and fore-

most to Central and Eastern Europe. At the onset of renascent Poland it was envisaged predominantly as a way of protecting Polish lands against the threats posed by Soviet Russia (the federation policy of Józef Piłsudski, the Head of State in 1918-1922, the concept of the *Intermarium*). Although the "Jagiellonian idea" remained alive, considerable interest was stirred by the projects developed by the pan-European movement launched by Coudenhove-Kalergi. The author recalls the debates conducted at the time of the Second World War, when the federal idea was often evoked and seen as a chance for building a wider-ranging order, at least in Central and Eastern Europe. The essay records the plans for a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation proposed in 1939-1942 by the government of Władysław Sikorski, the conceptions created within the 2nd Corps of General Anders, and the activity pursued in the United States (the periodical "New Europe" and the Central and Eastern European Planning Board). Finally, the author considers federation motifs in the documents issued by various parties in occupied Poland and the achievements of Polish émigré federalists, who at the end of the war and immediately afterwards, and despite a looming division of Europe into two camps, propounded the theses of building a union of the states of Central and Eastern Europe.

We sincerely hope that the presented texts recalling the accomplishments of Polish federalism and the civic values on which it was based, will meet with the readers' interest. From this viewpoint, we may easily perceive that today, in an era of a Europe of "small homelands" and the close cooperation of states recognising liberty, equality and the sovereignty of the law as a systemic foundation, the contemporary problems challenging civic societies are neither as exceptional nor as specific for our times as it is often believed. A remedy for similar problems was proclaimed by an anonymous publicist already in 1838: *Let us be Europeans [...] Let us cultivate our nationality even more for the sake of Europe than for ourselves.*



Union of Lublin, M. Bacciarelli, 1784

On the throne: King Zygmunt Augustus, next to him: the royal secretary Stanisław Hozjusz with the act of the Union, to the right from the throne: Mikołaj Siennicki, marshal of the Chamber of Deputies. Polish and Lithuanian knights hold the flags of Lithuania (blue-green with the *Pogoń*) and the Crown (red with the Eagle), with laurel leaves, and the ribbon displaying the inscription: *In commune bonum - complexu sociata perenni* (for the common good – eternally united).

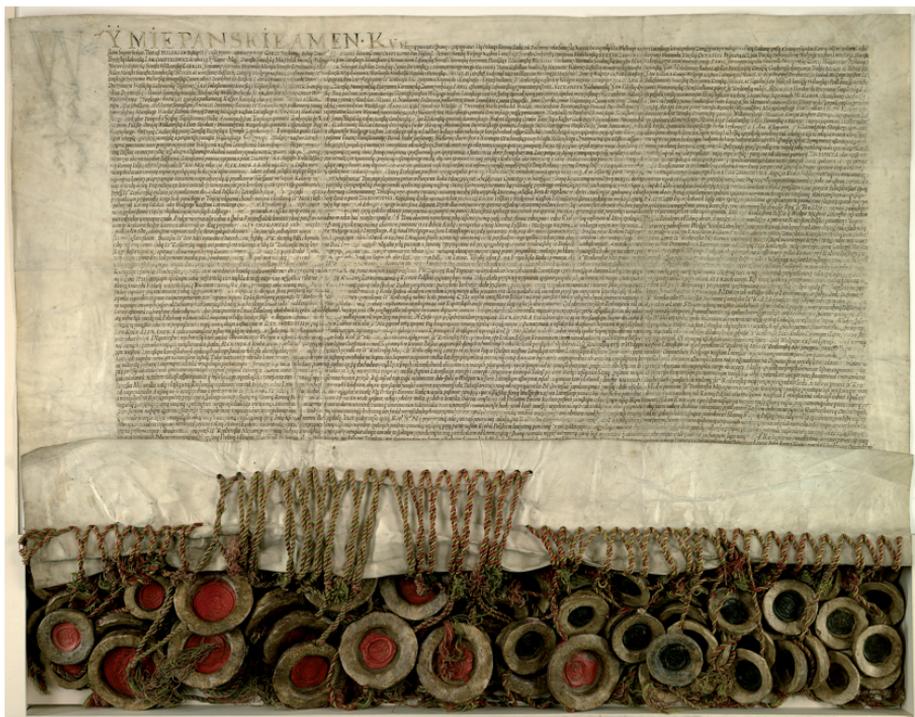
The Commonwealth of Two Nations – Systemic Foundations of the Union

For the love of the Commonwealth we request, admonish and beseech that the citizens of both the Polish Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania be a single indivisible people, a single and not a disjointed Commonwealth...

Testament of Zygmunt Augustus



In 1569 the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania merged into a joint albeit dual state. At this stage it seems worth enquiring which factors exerted a decisive impact on the path leading to the union and the essence of the Polish state. The fundamental role in the shaping of early modern Polish statehood was indubitably played by dynastic crises. In 1370, after the death of King Kazimierz the Great, the last representative of the Piast dynasty, the Polish throne was mounted by his nephew, King Louis d'Anjou of Hungary. The new monarch, however, was without male issue, and in order to pass on hereditary rights to the throne to his daughters, Maria and Jadwiga, he was compelled to win the consent not only of the officials and the clergy but also of the entire nobility (*szlachta*). The price was the privilege issued in Koszyce in 1374. Upon its basis, the king could not levy new taxes without the assent of the gentry estate. The privilege became a foundation for the development of the institution of the General Sejm (Parliament, Diet), and provided grounds for the idea of the equality of the nobility. The situation recurred after the death of Queen Jadwiga d'Anjou (1399), who had no offspring and at the time was the only heir to the Polish Crown.



Act of the Union of Lublin, 1569

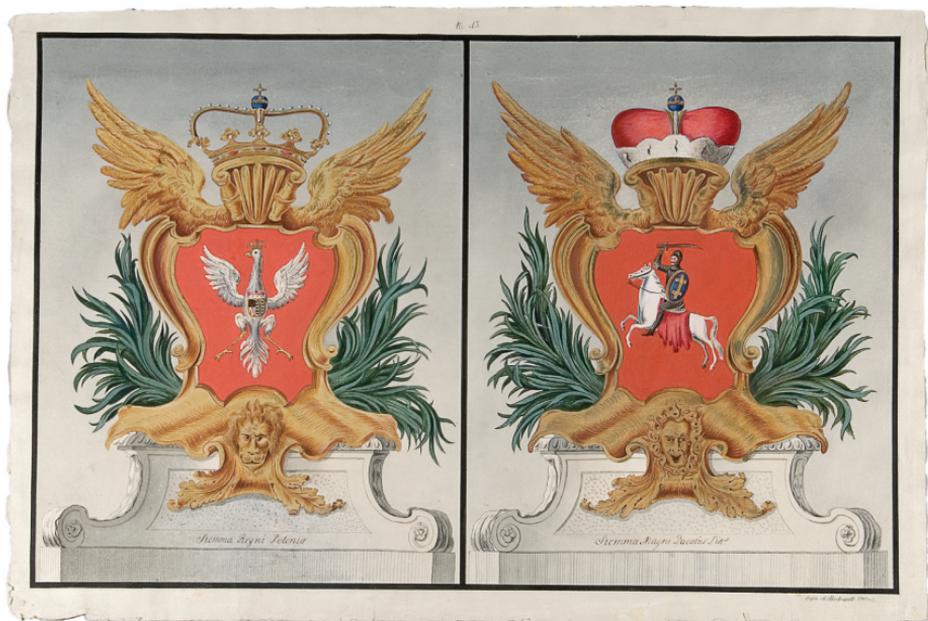
The act of the Polish-Lithuanian union was written down at the Sejm in Lublin in two identical documents dated 1 July 1569, which were then exchanged. The document of the Polish side features the seals of 140 senators and deputies of the Crown. The Lithuanians confirmed the credibility of their document with 77 seals. The latter document is kept in a Polish archive.

In those circumstances, it was possible to establish a different hereditary dynasty or the estates of the Kingdom could have recognised themselves as the heir to the Polish crown. The majority of the gentry favoured the second possibility. The queen's husband, Władysław Jagiełło, the life-long king of Poland according to the union signed with Lithuania in Krewo (1385), and the supreme duke of Lithuania, wished to secure for his children a right to the throne; thus, after the birth of a son (1424) he was forced to embark upon undertakings aimed at winning the assent of the gentry for a Polish succession. He received it in return for a privilege issued in Brześć (and confirmed in 1429 and 1431 in Jedlna and Kraków) in which Jagiełło took upon himself that he would not incarcerate any nobleman unless the latter had been convicted in a court of law. This privilege, known from its opening words as *Neminem captivabimus nisi jure victum*, became the basis of the civic liberties of the whole gentry estate, regardless of diverse financial status. It is also worth stressing that in England a privilege guaranteeing personal and financial inviolability, referring to the resolutions of the *Magna Charta Libertatum* (1215) and known as the *Habeas Corpus Act*, was issued in as late as 1679.

The democracy of the gentry and the shape of the Sejm

Noteworthy factors favourable for the development of the parliamentary system and the gentry liberties include also state crises associated with waging wars. The year 1454, marking the outbreak of the Thirteen Years' War against the Teutonic Order, proved to be particularly important. The nobility, assembled in a war camp in Cerekwica and threatening to return home, demanded that the king issue new privileges. Kazimierz the Jagiellon (1447-1492) promised not to enact any new laws without the consent of the land dietines (*sejmiki*). The latter also won the right to elect local court officials. The privilege was confirmed in Nieszawa in 1454, and became the grounds for the political activity of the land dietines and the Sejm; it also inaugurated the judicial self-government of the gentry.

In 1493 a bi-cameral Sejm ultimately emerged from a Parliament, which functioned according to non-stabilised principles. The upper chamber



Cartouches with the coats of arms of the Commonwealth – the Eagle and the Pogoni

project of decorations for the Chamber of Senators
at the Royal Castle, 1720

was composed of senators (Catholic bishops, voivodes, castellans and ministers). In contrast to other European states membership in the upper chamber was not hereditary but lifelong. The lower chamber was made up of deputies – representatives of the *szlachta*, designated at dietines. A basic role in moulding the system of the state, based on parliamentary representation, was without question performed by a struggle involving the gentry and the senators, vying for political rank. The beginnings of this rivalry are connected with an *interregnum* after the death of King Jan Olbracht (1492-1501). It was then that the senators forced Aleksander the Jagiellon (1501-1506), the grand duke of Lithuania, who tried to ascend the Polish throne as his brother's successor, to issue the privilege of Mielnik. The king granted the senators vital impact upon the domestic and foreign policy of the state and, at the same time, ensured exemp-



The Zygunt Eagle and the beginning of the text of the Union act, 1 July 1569

The lavishly embellished manuscript containing, i.a. copies of the Union documents of the Sejm of Lublin, was probably written within the range of the royal chancery.

tion from the jurisdiction of courts intended for the entire estate of the gentry. The senators thus became the upper gentry, and the Senate – the most important institution in the state. This situation did not meet with the approval of either the king or the nobility, who had lost their political status. Yielding to their pressure, and with the support of the monarch, the Sejm sitting in Piotrków in 1504 resolved that royal landed estates could not be leased or alienated; it also forbade holding two senatorial offices by a single official, and linking senatorial and judicial offices, or senatorial offices with those of the borough *starostas*, within a single voivodeship. In turn, the Sejm which met a year later in Radom permitted in its famous *Nil novi sine omnium consensu* Constitution the enactment of new laws under the condition of obtaining the support of



Portrait of Stanisław Tęczyński, T. Dolabella, ca. 1634

The youngest son of Jan, the voivode of Kraków, is shown wearing typical gentry apparel: a *żupan* (long inner garment) and a fur-lined *delia* (overcoat), with a *karabela* (sabre) at his side, and his hand resting on a book lying on a table covered with a Persian rug.

This attire assimilated numerous Oriental elements, and in the eighteenth century a nobleman dressed in a *żupan* and a *kontusz* (long outer garment) was identified with a supporter of “golden liberty”.

all the estates represented at the Sejm. This decision granted the Chamber of Deputies a role equal to that of the Senate. Consequently, the privilege of Mielnik, which introduced a system of oligarchic rule, was, for all practical purposes, annulled. *Nil novi*, which was universally translated as *nothing new without our consent*, assumed the form of a slogan shaping the political consciousness of the society of the gentry.

The new monarch, Zygmunt I (1506-1548), based his reign on the Senate, thus minimalising the importance of the Chamber of Deputies. More, he did not observe law that limited his freedom as regards the nomination and grant policy. The king kept in mind his own interest and that of the senators, who benefited from grants of royal property and an opportunity to cumulate offices. This situation led to an opposition movement of the gentry, based on efforts intent on forcing the monarch and his officials to observe state law. In 1537 the nobility gathered near Lwów for a *levée en masse* (the war against Moldavia) demanded that the monarch apply the principles of the Constitution of 1504. True, Zygmunt had pledged to observe it but did not keep his promise. From that time, the deputies systematically returned to this issue at successive Sejm sessions.

The execution movement and a further tightening of links with Lithuania

The gentry opposition assumed the shape of a movement, which historians describe as the execution of the law. Its objective was the observance of the laws binding in the state. In accordance with the prevailing doctrine, the law in Poland was guarded by the monarch, who relied on the advice of his senators. The violation of the law by the central authorities often leads to a degeneration of the state and negatively affects the morale of the citizens. Meanwhile, in Poland, such conduct contributed to a growing political awareness of the gentry, a dissemination of a conviction about its responsibility for the state, and a consolidation of an attitude, which we would be inclined to describe as constructive opposition. The “executionist” movement did not succeed until 1562, the reign of Zygmunt Augustus, the son of Zygmunt I. Consequently,

a number of reforms fortifying the state was introduced, to mention the establishment of a standing small army (about 3 000 – 4 000 men), financed by revenues from the royal demesne, an enforced restoration of a majority of the royal landed estates illegally leased or alienated, a ban on the accumulation of several offices by one person and, finally, the creation of the institution of a Crown instigator, an official who fulfilled the function of a public prosecutor. Supporters of the movement also demanded the integration with the Polish Kingdom of all territories loosely connected with the Crown, such as Royal Prussia or the Duchy of Oświęcim and Zator. One of the most relevant tasks was to achieve a complete union of the Crown and Lithuania. Once again, emphasis is due to the fact that the struggle for the execution of the law was conducted for decades, and, contrary to the king's will, supported by the senators. In my opinion, this was a period when the conviction that rulers do not respect the law, which they find inconvenient, that they cannot be trusted, and that necessary changes must be imposed, became consolidated. This knowledge became an essential element of the civic culture of the gentry.

A fact that influenced the union of Poland and Lithuania was the awareness of an outside threat. To the mid-fifteenth century the joint enemy of the two states was unquestionably the Teutonic Order. Later, such a role was played by Muscovy, which systematically attacked the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the middle of the 1560s King Zygmunt Augustus (1548-1572), who up to then, similarly to his ancestors, was an adherent of only a personal union of the two Jagiellonian states, now, heirless and conscious of the possibility of a collapse of the alliances, started to support the idea of a real union. The stance represented by the monarch was, without question, a key factor for rendering possible the integration of Poland and Lithuania. The union was achieved in 1569 at a Sejm convened in Lublin. The Chamber of Deputies, which forced through a close integration of the two countries, called not so much for a union as for an incorporation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania into the Crown. The resistance of the Lithuanians, who disapproved of such a solution, resulted in the withdrawal of all radical and unrealistic ideas. Consequently, the

achieved union reflected a partnership of two states. It must be added that in order to overcome the resistance of the Lithuanian senators, who aimed at a very loose union, the Crown carried out, with the consent of the king and the local gentry, the incorporation of four Lithuanian voivodeships (Podlasie, Volhynia, Braclaw and Kiev).

After Lublin

As a result of the Union, the only joint institution of the two states was, alongside the monarch, the Sejm. The upper chamber of the Parliament – the Senate – was expanded. The Lithuanian senators gained a suitably eminent position: the castellans of Wilno and Troki were treated on par with the castellan of Kraków, and granted places next to the voivodes of Kraków, Poznań, Sandomierz and Kalisz, in other words, at the very pinnacle of the hierarchy of the lay senators. The bishop of Wilno enjoyed equally high regard. The Chamber of Deputies included deputies elected in particular voivodeships, similarly as in the Crown.

At the same time, the Union preserved the whole heretofore structure of Lithuanian offices and administration. Both components of the state had at their disposal separate armies, and possessed their own chanceries and treasury systems and, thus, also separate ministers. Lithuania retained its own law (the Lithuanian Statutes) and the Ruthenian language in the chancery and the courts. On the other hand, the local parliaments were abolished, and the structure of the Lithuanian Senate was rendered uniform, following the example of the Crown, a move that met with the approval of the Lithuanian gentry. The introduced joint currency system kept on the reverse of the coins the Eagle (in the Crown) and the *Pogoń* (in Lithuania). After the coronation the Polish king was not compelled to ascend the throne of the grand duke, but he preserved the title, just as Lithuania kept its name. In other words, the Union guaranteed Lithuania the retention of its subjectivity. A declaration that the Union was signed by *the free with the free, and the equal with the equal* was by no means mere empty words. In the wake of the Union the principle of alternation in the Chamber of Deputies finally assumed shape. This meant that if a certain Sejm session was chaired by a marshal (speaker



Polish Sejm during the Reign of Zygmunt Augustus

M. Szarffenberg, 1578

of the house) from Greater Poland, then at the successive sitting the speaker had to be from Little Poland, and at the third one – from Lithuania. In this way, the centuries-old rivalry between Little Poland and Great Poland for primacy in the state was solved, and Lithuania was guaranteed a position in the Chamber of Deputies equal to that of the Crown. Starting with 1678, every third Sejm sat in Grodno, i.e. in the then Grand Duchy of Lithuania. On the other hand, and contrary to the principles of the Union, Lithuania preserved the Lithuanian *indigenat*, an institution which forbade the Poles to hold offices in the Grand Duchy.

The Sejm of Lublin also realised one of the postulates of the “executionist” movement, which aimed at the integration of Royal Prussia and the Duchy of Oświęcim and Zator with the Crown. Voivodes, castellans and

bishops from Prussia now sat in the Senate, and the deputies – in the Chamber of Deputies. The preserved general dietine of Royal Prussia met before and after the Sejm debates. The Prussian *indygenat* made it difficult for the Poles to hold local offices. Royal Prussia thus managed to keep a certain range of its autonomy. In turn, the Duchy of Oświęcim and Zator was incorporated into the voivodeship of Kraków, although respect for local tradition made it possible to retain a separate *sejmik*. The Union of Lublin also regulated the status of Livonia, the former state of the Order of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword, which since 1561 was part of Poland. Now, it was transformed into a territory belonging to both states comprising the Commonwealth of Two Nations. One-third of the offices were reserved for the Poles, one-third – for the Lithuanians, and the rest – for the Livonians. In this manner, Livonia too enjoyed autonomy of sorts.

The sovereignty of the nation of the gentry

The years 1505-1569 can be also described as the time of a struggle waged by the gentry for the systemic shape of the state. The emancipation of the nobility from senatorial influence produced the transference, upon the basis of a Sejm statute of 1520, of the parliamentary elections of Sejm deputies from two general dietines, in Koło for Greater Poland and in Korczyn in Little Poland, to the voivodeship and county dietines. This process enabled a larger group of gentry citizens to take direct part in political life. In the same year, the senators' right to designate up to a half of all the deputies from each *sejmik* was limited. Twenty years later, the senators were totally deprived of this privilege. This was a triumph of the principle of equality within the estate of the *szlachta*, and the vote of each nobleman present at a dietine was treated as equal with that of a senator. The success of the execution of the law movement and the signing of the Union of Lublin sealed the victories of the nobility over the senators, and created grounds for the political sovereignty of the nation of the gentry. The first three *interregna* after the death of the last Jagiellonian ruler, i.e. the years 1572-1587, were of essential importance for the continuous battle for the systemic shape of the state. A special part was played by

Constitutione

Trzech Seymów Ko- ronnych.

Piockowskie Roku 1562. przy nich Przywilej Incorporacyey y Uniey do Korony Ksiestw/Oswiecimskiego y Zatorskiego.

Warszawskie Roku 1563. przy nich Przywilej wthory Melioracyey y Incorporacyey y Uniey do Korony Ksiestw/Oswiecimskiego y Zatorskiego.

Piockowskie Roku 1565. przy nich o Składziach y starych Drogach Miasz Koronnych.

ANTONI ZYGMUNT HELMEL



W Krakowie.

W Drukarni Mikotaja Szarffenbergiera. Roku 1565.

Collective edition of the constitutions of the execution Sejms (1562/1563, 1563/1564 and 1565)

The first collective edition of Sejm statutes published in Polish. This was a response to the enormous interest in the work performed by the Sejms, which accepted a majority of the reforms aiming at an improvement of the state.

the political events of the great *interregnum* of 1572-1576, with an interval for the four-month long reign of Henry de Valois.

At that time, responsibility for the state was assumed by the gentry, since the senators failed to devise principles for the functioning of the state during an *interregnum* or even to determine the time and place of the election of a new ruler, although those were the traditional prerogatives of the Senate. The absence of a monarch and the helplessness of the warring senators were exploited by the gentry, who thus strengthened their position in the state. In doing so, the nobility made use of the institution of the confederation, that is, a union of the estates, whose origin went back to the Middle Ages and which was formed in extraordinary situations for the fulfilment of concrete tasks. The confederation set up in Nowy Korczyn in 1438 served as a model, but old formulas were soon filled with new contents. Particular voivodeships and counties convened local gentry-town confederations, known as *kapturowe*, which took over governance. They also granted legal power to the activity of state offices suspended at the time of the death of the monarch. In addition, the courts were reinforced by the inclusion of gentry *deputats*. The nobility also induced the senators to convene a special Sejm, known as the convocation Sejm, attended by gentry deputies in order to settle issues, which up to then remained within the range of the competence of the Senate. This Sejm, which sat in January 1573, established not only the time and place (Warsaw) of the election but also adopted the famous religious tolerance act known as the Warsaw Confederation Act, which rejected the *cuius regio eius religio* principle applied in many European states and recognised the religious freedom of every citizen. This was the first such extensive religious tolerance act in Europe. It was also decided that the king would be elected by the all noblemen *vir- itim*. In such a *sui generis* general election of the "head of state" each gentry citizen and the large royal towns in their capacity as corporations were granted the right to vote. The election Sejm of April 1573 further reinforced the system of the democracy of the gentry: it enacted the *de non praestanda oboedientia* article, making it possible to withdraw loyalty to the king if he failed to observe the law, compelled the ruler to reg-

The first *interregnum* witnessed a complete identification of the nobility and the state, the Commonwealth. The gentry had come to think of themselves as fully-fledged citizens and sovereigns in the state. They also won a battle for the systemic shape of the Commonwealth, waged against the Senate. At this point, it is worth mentioning that the *sui generis* gentry-burgher republic established for the duration of the *interregnum* functioned according to the principle of a combination of assorted elements of direct democracy (dietines, local confederations, the *viritim* election) and indirect democracy (general confederations set up at the convocation and election Sejm). The formal head of this republic was the *interrex* – the archbishop of Gniezno and the Primate of the Polish Kingdom, whose power, however, was limited in comparison with the king.

The civic character of the culture of the gentry revealed itself fully during the second *interregnum* (1574-1576). The gentry not only forced the senators to officially announce an *interregnum* after Henry de Valois fled in June 1574, but was compelled to confront the Senate in order to force it to respect the principles of the election of a new monarch. In December 1575 a group of 26 senators headed by the Primate, together with several hundred noblemen, elected Emperor Maximilian II as the king of Poland. In response, several thousand noblemen and more than ten senators opted for Princess Anna the Jagiellon, the sister of the deceased Zygmunt Augustus, and her future husband, Prince Stefan Batory of Transylvania. More, a general confederation created at a national convention held in Jędrzejów at the end of January 1576 planned to defend the candidate of the gentry. The instruction addressed to the nobility of the Kujawy region can be considered as characteristic for the attitude assumed by the gentry of the Crown towards the election of the emperor: *We do not accept the duty of acknowledging a person nominated by the archbishop of Gniezno together with several persons as our king and lord*¹. The gathered 20 000 participants of the Jędrzejów convention described themselves as the Republic and supported the election of Princess Anna and Stefan Batory. Once again, a candidate of the nobility had won, and the gentry model of the system was reinforced.

¹E. Opaliński, *Die Versammlung von Jędrzejów 1576. Sieg der Bathorianer und der Szlachta-Interessen im zweiten Interregnum*, in: *Rußland, Polen und Österreich in der Frühen Neuzeit. Festschrift für Walter Leitsch zum 75. Geburtstag*, Wien-Köln-Weimar 2003, p. 138.



Land Court, Sarnicki Statutes, 1594

The self-government of the gentry

The reign of Stefan Batory (1576-1586) was of great significance for the further systemic evolution of the Commonwealth. The Crown Tribunal was created in 1578, and the Lithuanian Tribunal – three years later. Both institutions fulfilled the function of an appeal court and took over petty cases from the Sejm court. The manner of appointing the judges (*deputats*) was equally relevant. Since they were elected for a year-long term of office at the so-called *deputat* dietines, the gentry, which from the mid-fifteenth century influenced the choice of the judicial officials of the lower-level courts (the land and *sub-camerarius* courts), now gained a direct impact on the composition of the appeal court. The *deputat* dietines also began to play a prominent role in the parliamentary system of the Commonwealth of Two Nations. Here, the Sejm deputies were to report about their parliamentary activity. True, they had been

doing so earlier but at the pre-Sejm dietines and thus upon the occasion of elections to the next Sejm. The electors, therefore, were compelled to wait at least two years for the reports of their parliamentary deputies.

The next step was made during the reign of Zygmunt III Vasa (1587-1632). The Sejm of 1590/1591 created a new type of an obligatorily convened dietine known as post-Sejm or de-briefing (*relatio*), which was to assemble within several weeks after the parliamentary debates ended. Here, the deputies presented reports on their activity in the Parliament. In this fashion, the electors gained a chance to control their deputies often and regularly. The parliamentary system in the Commonwealth was finally completed, and from that time it was composed of harmoniously connected elements of direct and indirect democracy. The first included the pre-Sejm dietines, which elected the deputies, and the post-Sejm dietines, at which the deputies presented their reports to the electors. The indirect component was the Parliament. The establishment of the de-briefing dietines started to have a negative impact on the work performed by the Sejm. From the seventeenth century on, the deputies began to express in the Sejm conditional consent to taxes or other resolutions, and rendered their decisions dependent on the approval expressed by the electors assembled at the de-briefing dietine. Such conditional consent was known as presenting decisions *to the brothers*. In this manner, the representative system was being dominated by direct democracy, which could lead to a gradual decentralisation of the whole state. The principle of co-equation was applied as a protective measure against the depreciation of the importance of the Parliament. The principle in question pertained, first and foremost, to the crucial question of levying taxes. By way of example, if the Sejm agreed to a tax of 5 *zlotys per laneus* (about 20 hectares) and, after some of the deputies presented this figure *to the brothers*, several dietines agreed to only 3 *zlotys*, then their lands paid the declared amount of money. Upon the occasion of raising successive taxes, those lands which had paid the lower tax rate were now bound to compensate the obligations previously accepted by other voivodeships. Ultimately, everyone had to pay the same tax, thus



KOŚCIOŁ W ŚRODZIE

Wyobrazenie sejmiku w tem mieście.

*Dietine in Front of a Church in
Środa Wielkopolska, J. N. Passini, 1857*

Churches were a permanent site for the gatherings of land, voivodeship and provincial dietines (during the sessions, however, they assumed secular features after the removal of the consecrated Host); in conducive weather conditions this function was fulfilled by church grounds. In Lithuania the debates were conducted in royal castles.

maintaining the supremacy of the Sejm decisions, but the system as such delayed the collection of taxes. The king was empowered to influence the defiant gentry: if certain debriefing dietines did not accept the taxes paid by their “brothers”, he could again convene an extraordinary dietine and once again submit the question of the taxes. More, the monarch could repeat this procedure until he attained the desired effect.

Rebellions

The reign of Zygmunt III witnessed the development of the institution of illegal gentry conventions, organised without the knowledge, and against the will of the monarch. The first such convention, assembled upon the basis of a decision made by a post-Sejm dietine in Środa (held jointly for the voivodeships of Poznań and Kalisz), took place in Koło in August 1590. Others followed in 1591-1592, and expressed disapproval of the tax proposals made by the Parliament or criticised royal policies. The monarch, however, was not attacked directly, and it was suggested that the Sejm should resolve all controversial questions.

The attitude of the gentry towards illegal conventions was ambivalent. True, the nobility condemned the gatherings, but at the same time did not wish to punish their participants nor were more severe penalties created for convening such assemblies. Presumably, the society of the gentry, well aware of the detrimental nature of the informal meetings, wanted to enjoy an opportunity to benefit from them.

It would be difficult to question the correctness of such reasoning in view of the fact that illegal conventions were used on a wide scale at the time of the Zebrzydowski (1606-1607) and Lubomirski (1665-1666) rebellions. The general reason for the two rebellion movements was a conviction shared by part of the nobility, namely, that both Zygmunt III and Jan Kazimierz (1648-1668) intended to introduce *absolutum dominium*.

The rebellion, *rokosz*, headed by Mikołaj Zebrzydowski, the voivode of Kraków, was preceded by two illegal conventions in Stężyca and Lublin. Already the Stężyca assembly differed basically from heretofore informal gatherings. Even if the assemblies of 1590-1592 did question certain

Sejm resolutions, they respected the authority of the Parliament and took place when the Sejm was not sitting. This time, the *szlachta* was summoned to Stężyca during the Sejm debates, and the convention was not, as was the case previously, a form of pressure placed on the king, but also an instrument for influencing the Parliament. The opposition thus placed itself above the Sejm, committing a grave violation of the systemic principles. Parliamentary debates had been disturbed. Some of the opposition deputies and senators set off to Stężyca. The departure of the opposition was used by Zygmunt III to force through new taxes, despite the protests of scarce opponents. The king paid a steep price for this mistake, since numerous post-Sejm dietines rejected the taxes, and even those dietines, which recognised their purposefulness decided to keep the money in the lands. The monarch also supplied arguments to his adversaries who had assembled in Stężyca, could now accuse him of illegal activity and, concerned with the restoration of the rule of the law, meet in Lublin. Here, the gathered deputies for the first time submitted a postulate of dethroning the king, and although the proposal did not win support, the gentry decided to hold a successive convention in Sandomierz, where a rebellion (*rokosz*) was to be announced.

This time, however, Zygmunt III reacted unconventionally, summoned to Wiślica the entire *szlachta* estate, and personally arrived with his court and army. The debates were held at the same time as the convention in Sandomierz. The nobility congregated in Wiślica formed a general confederation for the protection of the king, while the Sandomierz confederation was directed against the monarch. From that time, there were two centres of power in the state, in the form of two general confederations. It is easy to notice that Zygmunt III disarmed his opponents – by using their methods of conducting a political struggle he deprived them of the right to refer to the will of the whole estate. Now, the stake was to see who would be capable of winning the support of the majority of the nobility.

The rebels established, or rather tried to create, their own courts, but only managed to block the functioning of the tribunal, town and land courts. Under the pretext that the Sejm of 1607 had not taken into con-

sideration the rebellion articles, on 24 June 1607 they withdrew their loyalty to the king and chose a date for the election of a new monarch. Since, however, they had lost the rivalry for winning over the majority of the nobility and were defeated at the battle of Guzów (6 July 1607), they could not realise their plans.

The *rokosz* may be described as a failed attempt at conducting a revolution in the Polish-Lithuanian state. This revolution consisted of, i.a. an attempt at introducing a new legal order, and questioned not only the power of the monarch but also that of the Parliament and the competence of the judicial authority as a whole. The legal order of the *rokosz* was based on a combination of indirect and direct democracy and a conviction that the nation of the gentry is sovereign. It is also worth underlining that although the Zebrzydowski rebellion created acute political divisions, it did not intensify the particularism of the provinces, nor did it result in clashes between Poland and Lithuania. The confederation of Sandomierz encompassed the whole state and involved the gentry from both parts of the Commonwealth. More, the participants of the rebellion considered themselves to be the Commonwealth.

The gentry about the Sejm

Parliament was indubitably the sole central legislative institution. It also comprised the pinnacle of the whole parliamentary system, which included the dietines. Furthermore, next to the king it was the only joint institution of the Polish-Lithuanian state. Was the nobility aware of the significance of the Sejm, and how did it perceive its meaning? An analysis of historical sources leaves no doubt that starting with the 1570s gentry citizens regarded the three “parliamentary estates” debating in the Sejm (i.e. King, Chamber of Deputies and Senate) as a synonym of the state. There emerged a specific triad of meanings: the Commonwealth – the state, the Commonwealth – the estates in the Sejm, the Commonwealth – the gentry as a whole. The above connotations indicate that the gentry not only identified themselves totally with the state and acknowledged the Sejm to be the supreme systemic institution, but also that the Sejm comprised

29
Dziennik Sejmu Lubelskiego 1568 (nie 1569, 16 lipca) 22 16. aug.

SEYM WALNY
CORONY POLSKIEJ
ZŁOŻONY W LUB-
LİNIE I ZWIELKIĘ
XIESTWEM LITEŃKIE PRZES-
NAJASNIEJSZEGO PANA SIGMUN-
THA AUGUSTA Z BOZEJ ŁASKI
KROLIA POLSKIEGO WIELKIEGO
XIECZA LITEVSKIEGO RUSKIE-
GO PRUSKIEGO MAZOWIECZKIE-
GO I FLANCZKIEGO ZMOCZ-
KIEGO PODLASKIEGO VOLIN-
SKIEGO I KIOVSKIEGO. WE
CZWARTEK PIERWSZY PO S.
THOMASU. ANNO DNI 1568
KTORI SEYM WSITKIEM PANSTWO

the quintessence of the state. The afore-mentioned triad of meanings is the most concise definition of the conception of the state as perceived by the nobility. Its citizens regarded themselves not only as the subject of the state, but also as its creators, owners and heirs.

An analysis of the sources produced by the gentry, or within the cultural range dominated by this estate, and thus of correspondence, dietine instructions and resolutions (*lauda*), Sejm diaries, political speeches and publications shows unambiguously that the Polish-Lithuanian Parliament enjoyed the invariable interest and respect of the gentry citizens. More, the *szlachta* also revealed an emotional attitude, evidenced vividly by such expressions as: “the mother of liberty”, “the mother of the law”, or “the mother of insufficiencies”. The latter did not stem from the imperfection of the institution, but solely from the irregularities of the functioning of the state, the defects of human nature, or the political practices of the magnate groups – the factions. Naturally, concern was shown for the authority of the Sejm, specially threatened at the time of the Zebrzydowski rebellion. The defenders of the Parliament declared: *There, in the government, we are to set liberties right, to introduce order into the law (since the Sejm is the law), to change shortages and controversies into prosperity and harmony.* They also stressed that the authority of the Sejm is *an ancient law confirmed by our laws.* How did the Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian nobility see the role of the Parliament? In his speech from the throne, given at the Sejm of 1627, Tomasz Zamoyski, the deputy chancellor of the Crown, stated: *This Sejm is a remedy for all the ills of the Commonwealth, a refuge from threats, an anchor amidst storms.*

In the course of the sixteenth century the architect of the role of the Sejm and its authority in society was the Chamber of Deputies. The last two Jagiellonian rulers were by no means admirers of the Parliament. On the other hand, it must be admitted that no European monarch in the sixteenth century and even more so in the following centuries was willing to share power with a representation of the citizens. The political achievements of the execution of the law movement were, therefore, made possible by the consistent stand of the gentry in the course of several decades and a short-lived alliance with Zygmunt Augustus. They consolidated the

authority of the whole Sejm and ensured the Chamber of Deputies an essential role in the state and the parliamentary system. Historians have no doubt that the characteristic feature of the parliamentary system shaped in the mid-1560s was political culture, based on high civic awareness.

The *paritas votorum* principle

In the Commonwealth of Two Nations, a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-denominational state, the Sejm played a role that simply cannot be overestimated. It remained a factor that strongly united the state organism, and its forum served as a meeting place for senators and deputies from the Crown and Lithuania, for Catholic, Russian Orthodox, and Protestant noblemen who spoke Polish, Lithuanian, Ruthenian or German. The necessity of jointly discussing common issues acted as a factor that united and not divided. Moreover, a parliamentary procedure that could be described as sessions held “between the majority vote and the *liberum veto*” always played an integrating role. The prime principle regulating the activity of the Parliament in the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century was a striving towards compromise, which took into account diverse political interests and the stand of the minority. We may pose the hypothesis that it was precisely the absence of the majority vote rule and respect for the ideal of harmony in parliamentary practice that were the essential features rendering possible a gradual integration of the Crown and Lithuania, and an unperturbed re-Catholicisation of the country. It can be easily imagined what the relations between both parts of the Commonwealth of Two Nations would have been like, especially in the first years after the Union of Lublin, if the more numerous deputies from the Crown had been outvoting their Lithuanian colleagues.

The absence of the principle of the majority vote in the Chamber of Deputies comprised a crucial factor, which prevented the king from introducing systemic changes inconvenient for the nobility. Obviously, the gentry were well aware of this state of affairs, as evidenced by political publicistics from the time of the Zbrzydowski rebellion. One of the anonymous rebel authors declared: *As long as the king shall be able to make anyone he wishes either rich or*

poor, we shall not be able to have libera vota in the knights' or senators' circle, since promises, gifts and senatorial offices, which are plenty in Poland, shall circulate². Royal nomination and grant rights were a powerful instrument of power. Furthermore, the court was always connected with a large group of people – not only royal courtiers and secretaries, but also members of their families. A prominent role was played by those members of the clergy, who pursued their careers exclusively upon the basis of the chancery and, as a rule, were recruited from among the medium or poor gentry. Sejm diaries confirm that the king had on his side usually a majority of the parliamentarians – suffice to take a closer look at the marshals of the Chamber of Deputies, who were almost always regalists. If the binding principle in the Sejm had been the majority vote, then the monarch would have enjoyed considerable opportunities for introducing the changes which he desired. Characteristically, certain publicists who at the time of the Zebrzydowski rebellion supported the majority vote in Parliament simultaneously wanted to weaken the king's nomination privileges. I devoted more attention to this question in order to emphasise that there were no chances for *pluralitas votorum* without limiting monarchic authority. Let us recall that the ultimate abolition of the *liberum veto*, which took place as a consequence of the enactment of the Third May Constitution, was connected with a simultaneous deterioration of the political position of the ruler.

Liberum veto

It is universally accepted that the ordinary Sejm of 1652 was disrupted by a single dissenting deputy. If it were not for the principle of precedence, the fact that Władysław Siciński did not agree to a prolongation of the debates would have been of no significance for the functioning of the Parliament. The outcome, however, proved to be quite different. Interestingly, already at the end of the sixteenth century a number of politicians predicted the harmful impact of a situation in which the Sejm would recoil when faced with the veto of a single deputy. It is characteristic that up to 1652 this sort of conduct was regarded as so shameful that the oppo-

²Rokosz jaki ma być i co na nim stanowiąć
– Pisma rokoszowe, Czubek III, p. 283.

**De nō faciendis cōstitutiōibus sine p̄sen-
su consiliarioꝝ et nuncioꝝ terrestrium.**

¶ Rex noui nihil
cōstituturus in iure
cōi absq; cōi cōsilio.

q
Bonam iura cōia ⁊ p̄stitutōes publice. nō vnus. s̄
cōem populū afficiunt. Itaq; in hac Radomien̄
uentiōe cum vniuersis regi nri p̄latis. cōsiliari
is. baronibus ⁊ nuncijs terraz. equum ⁊ rōnabi
le censuimus. ac etiā statuimus: vt deinceps futu
ris t̄pibus p̄petuis. nihil noui p̄stitui debeat p̄ nos. ⁊ succes
sores n̄ros sine cōi cōsiliarioꝝ ⁊ nuncioꝝ terrestrium con
sensu qd̄ fieret in p̄iudiciū ḡnamēq; reipublice. ⁊ d̄nūm
atq; in cōmodū cuiuslibet: p̄uatum ad inuouationemq;
iuris communis et publice libertatis.

**De constitutionibus nouis p̄pro-
clamationes publicandis.**

¶ Cōstitutiones
noue neminē affici
ent donec primū pu
blicate essent.

n
Ep̄ ignoratā cōstitutionem nouā. quis p̄iā colludi vi
deatur. dum q̄c̄q; fieret p̄ p̄stitutionē. q̄ ad cognitio
ne nō esset de ducta cōem. Recurro in p̄stitutioib; no
stis plane procedere cupientes decernimus **Q̄ nullus obli
gatus erit ad nouam cōstitutionem seruandam. nisi ipsa p̄i
mum per proclamationem in regno publicetur.**

si p̄ de offi. mar
schalcoꝝ. folio
cxiij. vlti. para
grapho.

**De suspectis in crimine. qui bone fa-
me sunt censendi. ⁊ d̄ nō captiuandis
bone fame nobilibus.**

¶ Ter in registris
reptus. vti male fa-
me captiuandus de-
cernitur.

q
Tanq; p̄pter deprauatā adolescentum nobilium mul
titudine. quoz hac tēp̄estate adeo aucta fuerit licen
tia: vt etiaz tanq; p̄digiose istud cōmissum esset. **Q̄**
non posset eozum coherceri temeritas. constitutionibus an
tiquis decernentib;. nullum captiuandum fore. nisi iure vi
ctus eēt Quapropter inuēdo veteri p̄decessoz nostrozum
instituto decernimus nullum nobilez captiuandum. q̄ bone
fame esse quilibet. ter in registris maleficozum descri
ptus. Is ergo vt male fame. absq; iuris processu. presentis
duntaxat itaruti patrociniū capi. detineriq; poterit.

si p̄ fo. arriij
⁊ folio. cxiij.

facit p̄ barā
i p̄stit. kasi. m̄
gni incipit
nagotb. folio

Nil novi and De constitutionibus novis Constitutions

The Sejm of Radom adopted in 1505 the *Nil novi* Constitution on the enactment of universally binding law exclusively by the General Sejm, and *De constitutionibus novis* (On New Public Statutes Implemented by Official Announcements) introducing the principle of the obligatory promulgation of the law.

The behaviour of Władysław Siciński, a deputy from Upita, was condemned. Absence of consent for a prolongation of the debates of a Sejm, which for several days had already been prolonged, was in itself unheard of, notwithstanding that it was the outcome of the conduct of a single deputy. Stanisław Albrycht Radziwiłł, the chancellor of Lithuania, recorded in his diary: *I rebuked this worst of all men who, leaving in the fashion of thieves, doomed the Commonwealth to be the laughing stock of fate*. Nonetheless, Siciński's deed was considered a precedent, and the deputy from Upita was emulated by many others.

Undoubtedly, in the second half of the seventeenth century the great harm of resorting to the *ius vetandi* was universally recognised. Characteristically, the dietines did not postulate the introduction of a majority vote as a remedy, but demanded that the right to veto be limited so as to hinder its practical realisation as much as possible. As a rule, it was suggested that such protests be presented in writing and contain a legal justification, while all the deputies were to decide whether to bear them in mind. There existed a likelihood for the enactment of the royal proposals, which from the early 1660s aimed at radically rendering the Sejm debates, paralysed by the *ius vetandi*, more effective. For quite some time, the prevailing social climate was conducive for abolishing the deformations produced by the *liberum veto*. Unfortunately, the royal court rapidly resigned from those ideas, and started to force through a *vivente rege* election, which had no chances for realisation.

The right of an individual deputy to protest against the Sejm consensus was a destructive factor, and weakened chiefly the state organism and the supremacy of the Parliament. Its ultimate outcome was not so much the disintegration of the state as its decentralisation, evidenced by the development of the competence of the dietines, which were compelled to assume some of the prerogatives of the Parliament.

Confederations

The confederation was a systemic institution whose role in the history of the Commonwealth of Two Nations was undoubtedly crucial. It appeared as a mass-scale phenomenon at the time of the first *interregna*,



Dietine Scribe, J. P. Norblin, 1808

The parliamentary system favoured the emergence and consolidation of a political culture endowed with civic qualities. Civic engagement was expressed, inter alia, in a universal holding of local offices.

and from an extraordinary institution it became an ordinary element of the system, present during an *interregnum*. At the time of the Zebrzydowski rebellion there was a rebel confederation in Sandomierz, in other words, one directed against the king, and a confederation in Wiślica, whose objective was to protect the monarch.

Despite the reassuring pattern set by the confederation of Wiślica (1606), the Polish monarchs shared an aversion to gentry confederations at their side. In the seventeenth century two such confederations were formed, both in extreme situations. The first took place at the turn of 1655 in Tyszowce under the patronage of King Jan Kazimierz and involved the army, the gentry and the towns; its purpose was to wage a war against the Swedes and thus to restore the rule of Jan Kazimierz across the entire Polish-Lithuanian state. The goal of the confederation of Gołąb (1672) was to defend King Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki (1669-1673), ruthlessly attacked by a magnate opposition hoping for his dethronement. The con-

federation had a favourable impact on the last Sejm debates during that king's lifetime by making it impossible to disrupt the sessions with the *liberum veto* (the majority vote remained binding for the duration of a confederation). The institution of a confederation at the side of the king did not enjoy great success until 1794-1795, the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski. Despite the fact that the *liberum veto* had not been abolished, the Sejm could not be broken. Consequently, a general confederation at the king's side became the most effective way to enable the Parliament to function. Nonetheless, benefiting from it depended on the cooperation of the gentry, or at least its large part, with the monarch. At the time of Jan III Sobieski (1674-1696) the *szlachta* did propose such initiatives, but the king rejected this type of governance.

The increasing significance of the dietines and the progress of the institution of the confederation during the seventeenth century, and especially in its second half, were symptoms of a predominance of direct democracy over the representation system. This could lead to a disintegration of the state organism, especially considering that from 1652 Parliament functioned less and less effectively, and could not act as a satisfactory anchor for the floundering ship of state. Such a role could also not have been played by the insufficiently expanded state administration. Without doubt, the integrating factor was the monarch, but since some of the confederations were directed against him, he could not always fulfil his unifying function properly.

The civic political culture of the gentry

What was then the reason that, contrary to all odds, the integrating elements dominated over the disintegrating ones in the Commonwealth of Two Nations? In my opinion, the cohesion of the state was guaranteed principally by the society of the gentry. The factors, which integrated the gentry, were law and civic political culture. The political rights won by the nobility allowed it to take full part in the public life of the Commonwealth; more, they guaranteed the citizens a sovereign status. Naturally, the *szlachta* as such differed strongly as regards property, religion and ethnic origin. Nonetheless, already in the first half of the sixteenth

century the successful principle was that of inner-estate equality. In contrast to the majority of European states, there was no lower or upper gentry in the Commonwealth: all noblemen were subjected to the same law, enjoyed equal access to offices, and were tried by the same courts. A citizen enjoyed widely comprehended freedom and could not be imprisoned or have his property confiscated without a previous court sentence. A deputy, a senator and an ordinary nobleman were entitled to present their opinions, even critical ones, about state issues; they were only prohibited to insult the king. Just as a major part of the population of the Commonwealth, a nobleman could be an adherent of a faith other than the Roman Catholic creed. Extensive institutions of direct and indirect democracy facilitated political and social careers as well as impact upon state policy. An integrating function was played also by the Sarmatian myth. Originally, its essence was the conviction that the Slavs came from the ancient Sarmatians. In the mid-seventeenth century the prevailing view was that the Sarmatians were the ancestors of the entire gentry estate living in the Commonwealth, regardless of ethnic origin or creed.

The parliamentary system favoured the emergence and consolidation of a political culture endowed with civic qualities. What factors were decisive for its essence? Key importance should be certainly attributed to the dissemination, already in the mid-sixteenth century, of the concept of the free citizen – *liber civis*, living in a free Commonwealth – *libera Respublica*, enjoying an unhampered right to speak about public issues both to the officials and the king and, at the same time, obligated to assert his own rights and liberties as well as those of other estates and public laws. The concepts: “free Pole”, “free nobleman” and “free citizen” were used interchangeably.

The very essence of gentry citizenship was, therefore, equality within the estate of the *szlachta* and the identical status of the monarch and his gentry subjects *vis à vis* the law. The king and his citizens were free men. The concept of the citizen was associated with civic virtues, whose crucial role in the state was universally recognised. Citizens should be guided by the virtues of prudence, justice, moderation and valour, while the duties of the virtuous citizen included love for the

homeland above all else, the multiplication of the common good, the avoidance of avarice, and the protection of state borders. During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century views concerning the role of virtue in the Commonwealth, derived from Aristotle and Cicero, changed little.

Another feature characteristic for civic culture was a striving towards compromise, both on and outside the parliamentary forum. Such conduct in the Sejm and the dietine was to a large degree enforced by systemic principles that did not include the majority vote. In other words, decisions had to be made by reaching an agreement and attaining a consensus. Let us add that the concept of the “consensus” held a high rank in the system of the values cherished by the gentry. This stand accompanied a dislike of extreme solutions and even postulates, particularly discernible in attitudes towards political opponents. In 1607 no one called for rigorously punishing the advocates of the dethronement of Zygmunt III. Whenever there was even the merest chance for peace, such an option was always supported, as in the case of an attempt at reaching a peaceful solution of the Cossack uprising under Bohdan Chmielnicki in 1648 and the following years.

Members of the nobility considered themselves to be responsible for their state and were ready to defend it, even by resorting to arms, as shown by participation in the *levée en masse*, which from 1573 depended totally upon the gentry. The pertinent decision was made upon the basis of a Sejm resolution and not an order issued by the king. In 1573-1651 a *levée en masse* was raised upon three occasions (in 1621, 1649 and 1651), and the defensive war waged against Sweden in 1655-1660 involved the strong support of a gentry *levée en masse*. Mention is due also to the mass-scale participation of the nobility in the armed confederations of the eighteenth century and in the last upsurge in the defence of the Polish-Lithuanian state, i.e. the insurrection led by Tadeusz Kościuszko (1794). Another feature typical for the *szlachta* was an unwillingness to wage offensive wars. It was commonly believed that such wars could expose the state to large and unnecessary expenses, lead to destruction and, in case of victory, reinforce the position of the monarch.



Tolerance.

D. Chodowiecki inv. del. & sculp. 1791

Allegory of tolerance speaking to clergymen of various creeds
D. Chodowiecki, 1792

Religious freedoms

Already in the mid-fourteenth century the Polish Kingdom was a land of numerous religions and nations. In 1340, when the testament of the last duke of Halicz appointed King Kazimierz the Great (1333-1370) the ruler of the terrains of present-day western Ukraine, his realm included alongside Poles-Catholics also the Orthodox Ruthenians and townspeople of Armenian origin – the followers of mono-physics. As early as 1440 the Orthodox gentry were granted rights equal to those of the Catholics. The victorious Thirteen Years' War (1454-1466), waged against the Teutonic Order, resulted in the incorporation into the Crown of so-called Royal Prussia, where a large part of the nobility and burghers came from different parts of the Empire and spoke German. In 1569 the wide autonomy guaranteed to the province was limited only slightly. After the Union of Lublin, the joint Polish-Lithuanian state was populated by the Poles, the Lithuanians, the Ruthenians (Byelorussians and Ukrainians), and people of German and Armenian origin, and in Lithuania – by the Tartars and the Karaims. The latter cultivated a religion similar to Judaism but recognised only the Torah, while the Tartars were Moslems. Both parts of the Commonwealth of Two Nations had a large Jewish population.

All non-Catholic groups enjoyed privileges guaranteeing religious freedom. These rights also encompassed the Protestants, formally since the Warsaw Confederation of 1573. An exceptionally extensive autonomy was granted to the Jews. The Jewish communes – the *cabals* – had their own judicial system, and turned to general courts only when it became necessary to appeal the sentences issued by a *cabal* or when the tried cases engaged Christians. The supreme organ of the Jewish self-government was the Waad, also known as the Sejm of Four Countries (1581-1764). The Waad played a large part in designating the taxes levied upon the Jews. It also appointed representatives of the Jewish population to act in controversial issues involving the state. Finally, it resolved clashes between particular *cabals*.



Rabbinic Court in Wilno

J. Krajewski, 1875

Thanks to numerous privileges, the Jews in the Commonwealth gained a far-reaching autonomy.

Fiefs

While writing about the federalism of the Commonwealth of Two Nations mention must be made of two feudal states: the Duchy of Prussia and the Duchy of Courland. The feudal status guaranteed inner autonomy, but the Polish-Lithuanian fiefs were exceptional. Both were the outcome of the secularisation of monastic states – the state of the Teutonic Order became the Duchy of Prussia (1525) and the state of the Order of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword turned into the Duchy of Courland (1561). This process won the acceptance of the Polish monarchs (Zygmunt I and his son, Zygmunt Augustus), and was associated with a guarantee of religious freedom for the Lutheran population in both

duchies. *Nota bene*, the Prussian duchy was the first Protestant state in Europe, and its origin encouraged many European rulers to replace Catholicism with Protestantism.

A number of other small territories possessed a specific status within the Commonwealth of Two Nations. They included the bishop's duchy of Warmia, the duchy of Siewierz, which was an endowment of the bishops of Cracow, and the county of Piltyn. The latter, composed of three enclaves in Courland, was a particularly interesting example. In 1617-1795 the region of Piltyn enjoyed total autonomy, although it belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian state. The local gentry possessed their own dietine, independent *vis à vis* the Sejm and empowered to make decisions about all domestic issues. For all practical purposes, the territory was a small republic of the gentry, subject only to the king.

The Commonwealth of Three Nations

The year 1658 marked a failed attempt at transforming the Commonwealth of Two Nations into a Commonwealth of Three Nations. The third component of the state was the so-called Ruthenian duchy, i.e. the voivodeships of Kiev, Czernihów and Braclaw (today: central and eastern Ukraine). The union signed in Hadziacz was the result of an uprising of the Zaporozhe Cossacks, which broke out in 1648 under Hetman Bohdan Chmielnicki and turned into a bloody civil war; in 1654 the Cossack insurgents recognised Russian protection. Some of the Cossacks, wishing to evade dependence on Muscovy, signed a convention with the Commonwealth. Its principles were modelled on the Union of Lublin and disclosed the farsightedness of the Polish, Lithuanian and Cossack elites. The Union of Hadziacz lasted for only more than ten months; its fiasco was the consequence of the disapproval expressed by a number of the Cossacks and the defeat suffered by the Commonwealth in the war against Russia.

The Third May Constitution

The last attempt at a restoration of the state and, simultaneously, the final chord in the history of Polish federalism was the first European constitution, enacted on 3 May 1791 by the Four Year Sejm. The Constitution



*Enactment of the Constitution
of 3 May 1791*, K. Wojniakowski, 1806

The Sejm session on 3 May 1791. In the background,
i.a. King Stanisław Augustus and two confederation
marshals: of the Crown – Stanisław Nałęcz
Małachowski, and of Lithuania
– Kazimierz Nestor Sapieha.

abolished the *liberum veto* and the confederations, no longer necessary in a situation when the majority vote became binding in the Parliament. The authors of the Constitution introduced a hereditary throne, but restricted royal authority, thus preserving republican elements in a reformed monarchy. The division into executive, judicial and legislative authorities was more consistent than previously. The most prominent state organ was the Sejm, which no longer sat during allotted terms in office but turned into a Parliament “ready” to function on a permanent basis. Let us note that the post-1989 Polish Sejm also holds continuous debates (with a vacation break). The fundamental privilege of the nobility – *Neminem captivabimus* – now embraced also the townspeople. Although the structures of the offices and their competence in both states of the Commonwealth were rendered uniform, the Constitution did not abolish the Union of Lublin. *The Mutual Guarantee of the Two Nations* ensured the distinction of Poland and Lithuania.

Prof. Edward Opaliński



Allegory of Europe

Dziela Stanisława Staszica, Warszawa 1820

All nations belonging to the eternal alliance in Europe are due equal allegiance to European laws.

The existence, independence and property of each nation shall be the object of the particular protection of European laws.

W.B. Jastrzębowski, 1831

19th Century – *Let us be Europeans**

*Pour avancer il faut avoir un but auquel on n'a pas encore atteint,
et pour avancer toujours il faut être capable de concevoir un but
auquel on n'atteindra jamais¹.*

The nineteenth century brought a fundamental change in the manner in which Polish politicians and thinkers perceived the question of federalism. The loss of their own state at the end of the eighteenth century became the reason why they concentrated primarily on ways of regaining independence; thus, it inspired a search for a European order that would contain a guaranteed place for a free Commonwealth. Such a chance was perceived in the construction of a federated Europe. Once federalism ceased being an element of the system of one's state, it became a general idea of a future organisation of the coexistence and cooperation of European nations, a way to conciliate national egoisms with the brotherhood of the peoples. The voice of Polish men of letters and publicists, both those working in the partition areas and émigrés, joined new European reflections about free nations as the subjects of a future order, which occupied an increasingly large place within the panorama of political thought of the first half of the nineteenth century. To this discussion its Polish participants contributed the intellectual accomplishments of the earlier epochs, and in particular the experiences of the Polish-Lithuanian union, broken dramatically by the partitions of the state. Thus, the former republican tradition of the Commonwealth of Two Nations became part of a new European debate on the sovereignty of the nations, the establishment of permanent peace, democratic order, and the unity of the free peoples.

Those thinkers whose achievements may be analysed within the context of federalism represented dissimilar world outlooks and environments; they differed as regards their education and fulfilled assorted political functions.

*This is an expanded version of texts presented at the Sejm in May 2008 for the exhibition: "Europe of Free Nations. Idea of an Integrated Continent in Polish 19th Century Thought".

¹ A. J. Czartoryski, *Sur le système politique que devrait suivre la Russie*, Biblioteka Czartoryskich, Ms IV 5226, p. 25.



Adam Jerzy Czartoryski

They include politicians, philosophers, artists, and men of science and revolutionary activists, conservatives and socialists, representatives of the aristocracy, the petty gentry, and the “third estate”. Their texts are extremely varied, some dealing with concrete “federalist” proposals (although applying such diverse terminology as: an alliance, a union, a league, the Church

of Mankind or even the United States of Europe), while others treated the unification question as a marginal motif. All the authors, however, shared the conviction that the new European order – regardless whether it is to stem from political calculations, moral obligation or pure philosophy – is to possess the nature of a variously comprehended federation, built by the free nations. Each of the authors could thus subscribe to the appeal launched by an anonymous publicist in 1838: *Being Poles we want to be something more, let us be Europeans*².

The chapter of nineteenth-century federalational thought opens with Prince **Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770-1861)**, statesman and writer, in 1804-1806 acting minister of foreign affairs of Russia, one of the leading politicians of the Kingdom of Poland (1815-1831), during the November Uprising of 1830-1831 – chairman of the National Government, and in exile – leader of the conservative Hotel Lambert faction, patron of literature and science.

The memorial from 1803 *Sur le système politique que devrait suivre la Russie* and an instruction for Novosiltzov for talks held in London in 1804, which Czartoryski wrote as an adviser of Tsar Alexander I, contain theoretical comments about the philosophy of politics, as well as certain concrete suggestions concerning a European order after the defeat of Napoleon. This new European order was to be based on a recognition of the right of the nations to self-determination, the constitution as the foundation of the system, and the federation as the principle of a European union. A league of the states of Europe, dominated by Russia and England, was to encompass the Commonwealth within pre-partition borders, linked by means of a personal union with Russia. The tsar, however, rejected the Czartoryski plan.

In *Essai sur la diplomatie*, written in 1824-1828, and published in Paris and Marseilles in 1830, Czartoryski – already as an opponent of the emperor of Russia – sought balance on the European continent and, perceiving the prime threat in Russia, recalled the projects launched by Henry IV Bourbon of France and supported by Queen Elizabeth I of England, whose purpose was to set up European structures that would resolve controversial political and religious issues. Czartoryski maintained that England and France, which possessed a constitutional system worthy of emula-

² Anonymous author, "Młoda Polska. Wiadomości historyczne i literackie", 20 April 1838, no. 11, pp. 119-126.

tion, should return to the initiative of the past. He envisioned the erection of a federation structure of Europe as a voluntary merger of several or more than ten small states within a union that would conduct a joint foreign policy, leaving all local questions to particular countries. Czartoryski was of the opinion that a federation system which respects the independence of its member nations has a chance to embrace a wider European territory.

At home, the idea of a unification of the peoples of Europe was propagated by Rev. **Stanisław Staszic (1755-1826)**, one of the most outstanding thinkers of the Polish Enlightenment, active member of the reform camp during the Four Year Sejm, and member of the Council of State of the Kingdom of Poland and the Government Commission for Religion and Public Education. True, Staszic was aware of the fact that several attempts at a realisation of this idea had been made in the history of Europe (from the time of the ancient Greeks to the rulers of the German-Latin territory) but in his opinion only an initiative within the range of the Slav world would have a chance to succeed.

Staszic presented his project in a historiosophic-didactic poem entitled *Ród ludzki* (The Human Race) 1819-20 and the supplementary *Uwagi* (Comments). The leading thought of the poem and the comments is the conviction that the natural direction of the civilisational development of mankind is a striving towards the realisation of the idea of a union of nations. Such a union was to guarantee each nation its distinctness and a preservation of its language, but at the same time it should possess a joint constitution, a common monetary and a weights and measures system, as well as its own armed forces to protect the borders of Europe.

More or less at the same time, **Józef Maria Hoene-Wroński (1776-1853)** wrote *Création absolue de l'humanité* (1814-1818, Polish edition: *Kodeks prawodawstwa społecznego absolutnego* /Code of Absolute Social Legislation/, 1923) containing the doctrine of Polish messianic philosophy, subsequently expanded in the historical-philosophical treatise *Messianisme. Union finale de la philosophie et de la religion constituant la philosophie absolue* (1831, 1839). This philosopher, mathematician, physicist, and technician-inventor devised a philosophical system which was an attempt at unearthing a universal principle organising all domains of the sciences, that was to result in

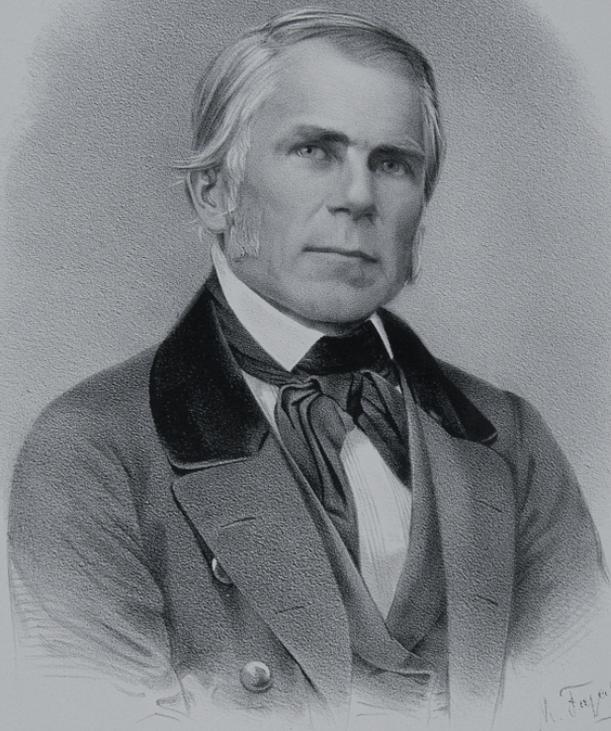
the discovery of absolute truth. One of the elements of this philosophical system was a vision of a European federation. Hoene-Wroński claimed that the federal system is the highest stage in the development of human society, and described its objectives: [...] *The federation of the states, whose goal is the protection of particular states and their mutual independence, and which aims at forming a single universal society, is just as requisite as it was initially necessary for people to unite themselves into particular states for the sake of a mutual protection of their rights and liberties and for shaping individual societies*³.

An initial condition for the establishment of a European federation was, according to Hoene-Wroński, the organisation of independent states upon the basis of a formed national language, i.e. one which is capable of expressing abstract concepts. Next, upon the basis of an affiliation of national languages and cultures, those states would form regional confederations. Finally, as absolute truth becomes grounded in human minds, the national states would start to exist within a community conceived as an expression of a certain philosophical order. This target may be attained, according to the conception expounded by Hoene-Wroński, by means of international congresses, which will resolve controversial political questions by applying pacific methods.

A special place in the history of Polish thought is assigned to a project presented by **Wojciech Bogumił Jastrzębowski (1799-1882)**, naturalist, outstanding pedagogue, and participant of the November Uprising of 1830-1831; under the impact of the bloody battle of Olszynka Grochowska he wrote *Traktat o wiecznym przymierzu między narodami ucywilizowanymi. Konstytucja dla Europy* (Treatise on Eternal Alliance among Civilized Nations. The Constitution for Europe, 1831), choosing for his leitmotif a quotation from Livy: *Pax data in has leges* (peace is given in laws).

Jastrzębowski started with the premise that peace is the supreme value of each man. He thus presented a project of such a political system of Europe, which would eliminate the causes of war and base relations between peoples and nations not on violence but on natural law, i.e. equality. Equality was to be ensured by just law, alike for all and suitable for *all*

³ J. M. Hoene-Wroński, *Ogólna federacja państw* (1818) [in:] 700 lat myśli polskiej. Filozofia i myśl społeczna w latach 1831-1864 (prep. by A. Wąlicki), Warszawa 1977, p. 120.



Rys z natury i Lit. M. Fajansa

Odbito w Lit. M. Fajansa w Warszawie 550.

WOJCIECH JASTRZĘBOWSKI.

Wojciech Jastrzębowski

Wojciech Bogumił Jastrzębowski

*nations loving the truth and respecting both their own independence and that of others*⁴. The equality of people comprising a nation – which he envisaged as a community of language – was to be guaranteed by national laws, while the equality of the nations of Europe – by European laws. Only the introduction and strict observance of legal norms, common for all and contained in a European constitution, could be a foundation of permanent peace. Jastrzębowski wrote: *All nations belonging to the eternal alliance in Europe are due equal allegiance to European laws*⁵.

The European Constitution defined the competences and principles of the functioning of the authorities, the sanctions for violating legal norms, and the basic rights and duties of the citizens. National laws should be passed by a Sejm (parliament), while European laws must be enacted by a Congress composed of representatives of all nations, whose equal numbers are to be elected by national Sejms. The guardian and executor of the national laws was to be a patriarch, and of the European laws – a Congress. The patriarch was to rule with the assistance of ministers, without whose signature none of his resolutions would be binding. The office of the patriarch was to be inherited by his male successors, and: *Nations which for centuries have maintained close friendship and kinship may [...] have a common patriarch who shall pledge to each nation an allegiance*⁶. It is easy to surmise that the author had in mind the nations of the First Commonwealth, and that while designing a system resembling a constitutional monarchy he simultaneously indicated a path towards the unions between such states. The European Congress, apart from legislative competence, was to perform the delineated tasks of an arbiter in all controversies involving the members of the alliance; it was also to steer the foreign policy.

The eternal alliance was to be open to all states, including non-European ones, which would accept the established principles. Another essential element of the Constitution was a radical plan for disarmament and a defence coalition. War arms were to be deposited in specially assigned places and remain at the exclusive disposal of the European Congress, which could deploy them only for the protection of the alliance.

⁴ W.B. Jastrzębowski, *Traktat o wiecznym przymierzu między narodami ucywilizowanymi. Konstytucja dla Europy* (prep. by F. Ramotowska), Warszawa-Lódź 1985, p. 180.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Jastrzębowski proclaimed not only the equality of all citizens before the law, but also religious tolerance and the freedom of speech and print: *A difference of religion and birth shall not result in divergent rights; each person, therefore, regardless of his religion or status, shall enjoy the equal protection of national and European laws, and have an equal right to all honours. [...] The freedom of speech, writing and print, which does not threaten the laws accepted and sanctified by nations, shall be unlimited*⁷.

Jastrzębowski launched the idea of educating the youth of Europe for life in peace, tolerance and friendship between the nations, i.a. by means of a suitable presentation of history – all events which could stir mutual hostility were to be depicted as the remnants of barbarity. From the time of the establishment of *the eternal alliance* the prime source of the glory of nations would be no longer war but *science, the perfection of laws, good governance and industry*⁸. The European Congress would yearly award accomplishments in this domain. Jastrzębowski postulated the abolition of the death penalty, and wished to change all those national emblems, which contained symbols of violence, such as swords and spears as well as the figures of predators, e.g. eagles or lions.

After the November Uprising Jastrzębowski's brochure, considered a prohibited print, was confiscated by tsarist censors. It was published again in 1937 in the periodical "Polityka Narodów".

Another participant of the November Uprising was **Zygmunt Edwin Gordaszewski (1806-1862)**, painter and writer; after the Uprising he emigrated in France, participant of the Hungarian revolution of 1848. Under the impact of the Spring of Nations he published in Paris (March 1848) a brochure entitled *Fédération générale des États libres, dédiée aux amis du peuple*. Gordaszewski hoped that the revolutionary events transpiring in Paris, Berlin and Vienna would lead to a new political order in Europe, which he envisaged as a universal federation

of free states. His fundamental premise was the recognition of the right of each nation to independent existence: *The nations have a right to choose their own nationality and existence independently of other states. [...] Conquests are abolished. Conquered countries become free and independent*⁹.

⁷ Ibid., p. 187, 194.

⁸ Ibid., p. 195.

⁹ Z.E. Gordaszewski, *Powszechna federacja wolnych państw* [in:] P.O. Loew: *Polskie wizje Europy*, Wrocław 2004, p. 74.

Gordaszewski proposed the establishment of a two-rung federation. *The federation agreement may be joined by every nation possessing a republican or constitutional government*¹⁰. The lower rung was to be composed of three regional federations of the Latin, German and Slav nations, each obligated to organise every three years its own congress to resolve the political aspects of the functioning of a federation and problems relating to trade relations. The fundamental objective of the regional federations was the development of commerce between the member states. The higher rung was to be a federation of all European states, whose chief organ was a general congress meeting every ten years. Each state would be entitled to dispatch to the congress, similarly as to the regional congresses, three representatives: two representatives of the nation and one representative of the government. The general congress would be granted the right to make decisions binding for all the member states.

The large group of the participants of the November Uprising who shared the ideas of a European federation included **Karol Libelt (1807-1875)**, philosopher, disciple of Hegel, social and political activist, deputy to the Prussian Diet (1859-70), and one of the initiators and leaders of scientific and cultural life in Greater Poland. In *Samowładztwo rozumu i objawy filozofii słowiańskiej* (Self-power of the Mind and the Features of Slavonic Philosophy), recognised today as his most important text, Libelt presented a summary of the ideology of Polish Romanticism, arguing that contemporary Polish philosophy and literature aim at creating an original Slav philosophy. In his opinion, this was a *philosophy of deed*, activity referring to the imagination, bonds with nature and the unity of matter and spirituality, contrasted with the *philosophy of reason*, i.e. rationalistic idealism. Writing about the mutual relations of the nations and mankind, Libelt opposed the hegemony of one nationality *vis à vis* another and emphasised the principle of equal rights. He predicted a future Christianisation of politics and a unity of mankind within federation-folk forms. Similarly to numerous Polish thinkers of the period, Libelt called for setting right the suffering incurred upon the Polish nation by means of *a restitution of its homeland in whole*, underlining that this compensation and respect for the sovereignty of all the members of the federation are a condition for peace and order in Europe. This is the context within which one should consider his *Projekt manifestu do narodów słowiańskich* (A Draft Proclamation to Slavonic Nations), presented at ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.



Wyraźni z ryciną: lit. M. Pajarski

Odrys w lit. M. Pajarski w Warszawie Uł. Litwaga 150

KAROL LIBELT

Karol Libelt.

Karol Libelt

a Slavonic congress held in Prague in 1846, in which Libelt postulated a Slavonic federation based on the cultural affinity of the Slavs, harmonious cooperation and respect for all nationalities. Assuming that: *The future of Europe is a great social and political union of the peoples*, Libelt remained open to all forms of unification, with the reservation that: *Particular Slav nations which had won freedom, must unite into a federation, that is, a federated union state, without forejudging the possibility of a state union with non-Slav nations*¹¹.

The interesting text published by **Stanisław Gabriel Worcell (1799-1857)**, revolutionary activist, thinker, socio-political writer, deputy to the insurgent Sejm, and émigré after the fall of the November Uprising, was written under the impression of the revolutionary events of the Spring of Nations. Worcell was a supporter of utopian socialism, which he combined with mysticism based on the ideas of evangelical social equality and with national liberation slogans. In his *Polska-Węgry* (Poland-Hungary), issued in 1849 in instalments by “Demokrata Polski”, he forecast the construction of a European federation composed of the regional unions of independent states. Europe was to become the site of three political systems: south-western, with France, Italy and the Iberian Peninsula, central – with Germany and eventually Scandinavia, and north-eastern, organised around Poland and stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Worcell believed that peace and order in Europe could be guaranteed by setting up a Polish-Hungarian-Romanian-Vlach federation. He treated federations as unions which, without impairing national identity or sovereignty, serve the solution of conflicts and the assumption of a joint stand in foreign relations. *The mutual needs of nations and governments result in assorted conventions, which, written down, became known as alliances and treaties. [...] If they are caused by joint vital tasks for all the signatories and conceive means for a constant mutual communication for the purpose of a joint foreign policy or the solution of misunderstandings then they attain the level of unions and in diplomatic language take on the name of a Federation*¹².

¹¹ K. Libelt, *Projekt manifestu do narodów słowiańskich*, 1848 [in:] *Filozofia i myśl społeczna w latach 1831-1864* (prep. by A. Waliński), Warszawa 1977, pp. 379-383.

¹² S.G. Worcell, *O związkach przyrodzonych i społecznych, stąd o rodach i narodach, o ojczyźnie i ludzkości, o kosmopolityzmie, solidarności i federacji ludów* [first edition in:] B. Limanowski: Stanisław Worcell. *Życiorys*, Kraków 1910, pp. 396-397.



Stefan Buszczyński

ZBIOROWE WYDANIE PISM STEFANA BUSZCZYŃSKIEGO.
TOM VIII.

UPADEK EUROPY.

Andi Israel! Dominus Deus noster Do-
minus unus est.

Deuteronomium VI. 4.

Dominus Deus tuus unus, et illi soli

servies.

VI. 12.

Moyse.

Serpe! Tolle grabatum tuum et ambulat.

E. v. s. Joh. V. 8.

Jesus Christus.



Tom pierwszy.

Część I.

Obraz Europy w XIX. stuleciu.

Część II.

Czy rewolucja w Europie potrzebna jest i możliwa?

Janu. 11
1895

W KRAKOWIE.

CZCIONKAMI DRUKARNI ZWIĄZKOWEJ

pod zarządem A. Biegunskiego.

1895.

Marga Kropelschng

Stefan Buszczyński

A prominent place among the Polish authors of a conception of a federated Europe belongs to **Stefan Buszczyński (1821–1892)**, historian and publicist, pro-independence activist, and opponent of armed warfare, although an active participant of the January Uprising of 1863–1865; after the fall of the Uprising he emigrated to Switzerland and then to France. Buszczyński was also an excellent diagnostician: in 1867 he published anonymously a dissertation entitled *La décadence de l'Europe*, in which he opposed the political system of Europe, and criticised the materialism of the culture of the period and the decline of spiritual values. Buszczyński contrasted the European crisis with an ideal image of a fraternal union of free nations. His publication met with the interest of the European intellectuals of the time and was commented on by several score journals and scientific periodicals. “Revue Contemporaine” wrote

¹³ “Revue Contemporaine” no. 1, 1 December 1867. that this is *a book written with energy, [...] hurling cruel truths into the face of the present [...]*¹³.

In Poland, due to insufficient interest, it did not appear in print until 1896. In 1916, dedicated by the author to “the Peoples and Soldiers of Europe”, it was published in Switzerland in a new edition as a work that, according to its publishers’ intentions, was to prepare the ground for the construction of a post-war order in Europe.

The project proposed in *La décadence de l’Europe* was supplemented by a second important publication on European questions, *Die Wunden Europas*, a study issued, once again anonymously, in Leipzig (1875). This time Buszczyński considered the question of European bureaucracy and militarism, estimating that the costs of the administration in Europe are much higher than in the United State of America, a country that he praised for its high input for education, free trade and industry and what he described as “the freedom of movement”. Buszczyński predicted a catastrophe on the Continent, where expenses for the army and covering the state debts rose up to 75% of the whole budget (in 1873). The only solution was to be sought in profound reforms.

The ideas contained in both works comprise a rather cohesive project, which, in the opinion of the author, was to guarantee universal peace (a European equilibrium) and result in the creation of a united Europe of free nations. Buszczyński prepared detailed projects for the political construction of a future Europe. The foundation of the new European order should be the nation, which as an independent political entity creates a so-called *ethnopolis* (Greek *éthnos* – nation, and *politeia* – state) living in historical *natural* boundaries. *Ethnopolises* affiliated through their origin and culture should join into unions known as basic *cenopolises* (Greek *koinôs* – common), and then, upon the foundation of alliances and conventions – into tribal *cenopolises*. It is worth noting that one of the ten mentioned *cenopolises* was to be the Polish *cenopolis*, which would embrace the lands of the former Commonwealth, Silesia and Ducal Prussia.

Buszczyński presented a plan for the political system of the *ethnopolis* and the *cenopolis*, proposing to create on the Continent three powerful unions of nations (i.e. tribal *cenopolises*): a Latin *cenopolis*, a Germanic *cenopolis* and a Slavonic-Turan alliance. A thus constructed order could ensure true equilibrium and permanent universal peace in Europe.



Allegory of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, P. Maliński

Fragment of a bas-relief from a statue of the Union of Lublin, which in 1826 was placed upon the initiative of Stanisław Staszic (a propagator of the idea of a unification of European nations) on the spot of a 16th-century obelisk, demolished by the tsarist authorities.

The second foundation of a united Europe was to entail human rights, which the author derived from natural rights, including the freedom of movement and economic activity as well as the free circulation of thought: [...] *Free movement, free thought, and free labour are the natural rights of all men. Hence it follows that all artificial political boundaries, all barriers hampering communication between men, the exchange of ideas, free industry and trade, such as: passports, customs, press prohibitions and such like,*

*should be eliminated once and for all in the whole of Europe. "Laisser marcher, laisser faire, laisser passer" [...]*¹⁴.

A conception of a fundamental reconstruction of European relations was outlined by **Bolesław Limanowski (1835–1935)**, socialist activist, historian and publicist, who during the First World War acted as a patron of the Polish Legions and the pro-independence campaign launched and conducted by J. Piłsudski. In *Naród i państwo* (Nation and State) Limanowski accepted as his point of departure the assumption that nations enjoying equal rights should create such political and economic unions which they recognise as of greatest benefit for themselves, with general elections as the foundation of the new order. He predicted the establishment of a European federation emulating the Swiss model. General issues of the union would be resolved by a joint parliament, and all controversies between the member states – by the highest tribunal. The competence of the executive power would encompass the execution of the decisions made by the parliament and the tribunal. Such a union would render war *redundant and impossible*. Moreover, a republican-democratic Europe cooperating within a federation would also make it possible to eliminate economic struggle, *concentrated on frontier customs chambers. What would then prevent the nations from uniting into a single joint republic, upon the basis of the ancient Polish principle: the free with the free, the equal with the equal? After all, Switzerland is a beautiful example that nations using different languages can live together in harmony, freely and comfortably, without hindering their intellectual progress but supporting and assisting each other in their economic development*¹⁵. The state frontiers would then lose their former significance.

During the First World War, Limanowski, a firm supporter of the federation and an admirer of the Polish-Lithuanian union, propagated the idea of once again federating the nations of the former Commonwealth as a step towards the construction of a federal Europe. He recalled the ideas advocated by Polish democrats at the time of the Spring of Nations, who claimed that a renascent Commonwealth cannot belong only to the Polish nation but should be the joint property of all the nations populating it.

¹⁴ S. Buszczyński, *Rany Europy. Fakta statystyczne z objaśnieniami etnograficznymi i dziejowymi*, "Warta" [Poznań] 1884–1885, no. 548, p. 5097.

¹⁵ B. Limanowski, *Naród i państwo, studium socjologiczne*, 1906 [in:] *Socjalizm jako konieczny objaw dziejowego rozwoju. Wybór pism*, Warszawa 1989, p. 432.

Many other nineteenth-century Polish authors also referred outright, although frequently in an idealised form, to the experiences of the Union of Lublin, and maintained that the historical association of Poland and Lithuania would be not only the foundation of a future independent Republic but a model for a united Europe and, at the same time, its basis. Some were even of the opinion that a unification of the nations of Europe, treated as an expression of a divine plan – and thus inevitable although distant in time – had been already embodied in the form of the Polish-Lithuanian union. These motifs, which to an increasing extent thwarted Lithuanian aspirations for creating an independent state, remained present in Polish thought up to the First World War¹⁶.

Thinkers who idealised the Polish-Lithuanian past included the great Romantic poet **Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855)**. As an active émigré publicist he postulated the unification of Europe for the sake of the development of the nationalities comprising it, in the belief that the condition of particular nations is the resultant of the condition of the whole of Europe. This was always so: *The stronger Poland felt herself to be and shared the family feelings of Europe, the happier and more renowned she was; the more distant she grew from Europe, the more conspicuously she grew weaker [...]*¹⁷.

The future Europe – liberated and united – was to be a federation or a confederation modelled on the example of the Polish-Lithuanian union, which would be achievable only after an all-European revolution, or a *universal people's war*. In his *Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* (Books of the Polish Nation and Its Pilgrimage), written in Paris in 1832, Mickiewicz declared that: *This union and marriage of Poland and Lithuania is a symbol of the future union of all Christian peoples in the name of Faith and Liberty*¹⁸.

¹⁶ Cf. S. Michałowski, *Wizje integrującej się Europy w polskiej myśli politycznej okresu zaborów*, *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska, Sectio F*, vol. LIV/LV, 1999/2000, pp. 75–85.

¹⁷ A. Mickiewicz, *O duchu narodowym*, [in:] *Dzieła*, vol. VI, Pisma prozą, part II, prep. by L. Płoszewski, Warszawa 1955, p. 73.

¹⁸ A. Mickiewicz, *Księgi narodu i pielgrzymstwa polskiego*, Paris 1933, pp. 24–25.

A similar point of view was represented by **August Cieszkowski (1814–1894)**, outstanding philosopher of Polish Romanticism, economist and social activist. In his most important work: *Ojciec Nasz* (Our Father), published in Paris in 1848, Cieszkowski outlined a vision of building a Kingdom of God on Earth, which he com-

prehended as a Commonwealth of free nations that, while linking states and nations, would not deprive them of their distinctive national traits or sovereign existence, but would render possible harmonious cooperation. Cieszkowski stressed the achievements of the Polish nation and its state which, aiming at the realisation of the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, was *based not on conquests but on voluntary unions*¹⁹. In his opinion, a Polish-Lithuanian union was to constitute a contribution to the creation of an epoch of universal brotherhood and eternal peace.

Franciszek Duchński (1816-1893), historian and émigré politician, referred to the process of setting up a federation of affiliated peoples as a superior organisational form of society. He perceived the voluntary establishment of the Commonwealth of Two Nations as a model for the foundation of a future federation of Slavonic nations.

In the discussions held in the course of preparations for the January Uprising (1863-1865), the **Central Committee**, which was to become the National Government, assumed the establishment of a federal state composed of Poland, Lithuania and Rus', created in liberated lands according to the principle of good will and after a plebiscite: *Provinces and people are kept in a union not by means of centralisation, violence or the police, but by applying the principle of respect for will and individuality, whose excellent example was given by our forefathers in the Union of Lublin and the Pacts of Hadiacz*²⁰.

References to the motif of the significance of the Union of Lublin for the erection of a federation of the peoples of Europe were made also after the fall of the January Uprising. A proclamation of the **Representative Committee of Polish Exiles** (29 November 1866) stated that the objective of the Polish exiles was a struggle for independence based on associations with other oppressed peoples: *A nation which for centuries impressed upon its history a union of the free with the free, and the equal with the equal [...] cannot be either ignored or the last in a universal alliance of the peoples [...]*²¹.

¹⁹ A. Cieszkowski, *Ojciec Nasz*, vol. 1, Paris 1848, pp. 251-254.

²⁰ W. Feldman, *Dzieje polskiej myśli politycznej w okresie porzbiorowym*, vol.1, Warszawa, pp. 425-426.

²¹ *Powstanie II Rzeczypospolitej. Wybór dokumentów 1866-1925* (ed. H. Janowska and T. Jędruszczak), Warszawa 1984, p. 33

Deklaracja polska w sprawie Litwy.

Stronnictwo i kierunki polityczne w osobach niżej podpisanych swych przedstawicieli w imieniu społeczeństwa wskrzeszonego państwa polskiego żądają niepodległego bytu państwowego także dla ziem dawnego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego.

Polska dążyć będzie niezłomie do wznowienia związku z niepodległą Litwą w moenym przekonaniu, że ludy, Litwę zamieszkujące: Litwini, Polacy, Białorusini, w dobrowolnym i zgodnym połączeniu obu Państw znajdą zabezpieczenie narodowego, kulturalnego i ekonomicznego rozwoju wszystkich warstw społecznych.

Liga Państwowości Polskiej
Wydział Wykonawczy
Centralizacji

Ligi Państwowości Polskiej:

(podpisy) Prezes: *Dr. Rafał Radziwiłłowicz,*
Viceprezes: *Stanisław Garlicki,*
Sekretarz: *Józef Dąbrowski,*
Karol Stawceki,
Dr. Ludwik Zieliński,
Zygmunt Chmielewski.

Centralny Komitet Narodowy:
(podpis)

W. Stawceki.

Stronnictwo Narodowe:
(podpisy)

Kazimierz Olszowski,
J. Wierniewicz,
W. Mazurkiewicz,
K. Gniazdowski.

Narodowy Związek Robotniczy
Zarząd Główny:
(podpisy)

Władysław Malankiewicz.

Partja Niezawisłości Narodowej
Zarząd Główny:
(podpisy)

W. Sieroszewski,
S. Śliwinski,
Stan. Thugutt,
Piotr Górecki,
M. Downarowicz,
T. Szpotanski.

Zjednoczenie Stronnictw
Demokratycznych:
(podpisy)

St. Patek,
Fr. Paschalski,
Bohdan Straszewicz,
Eugeniusz Smiarowski,
Z. Gąstorowski,
Wacław Łypniewicz,
Michał Sokolnicki.

Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe
Zarząd Główny:
(podpisy)

J. Osiecki,
T. Nbcznicki,
A. Graff.

Polska Partja Socjalistyczna
C. K. R.

Polska Partja Socjalistyczna, zgadzając się z zasadą powyższego oświadczenia, uważa za konieczne ze swej strony dodać, że stosunek wzajemny Polski i Litwy powinien być określony przez porozumienie się Konstytuans warszawskiej i wileńskiej, wybranych przez pięcioprymiotnikowe głosowanie.

Zjednoczenie Ludowe:
(podpisy)

Prezes: *Jan Sadlak,*
Sekretarz: *Antoni Piątkowski.*

A great supporter of the construction of a United States of Europe and of emphasis on the historical accomplishments of Poland in this particular domain was **Józef Hauke-Bosak (1834-1871)**, one of the most prominent leaders of the January Uprising, and later an émigré activist. At a congress of the League of Peace and Freedom, held in Lausanne in 1869, he declared: *This solution corresponds to our task, namely, a republican federation of the peoples, since already in the sixteenth century republican Poland implemented it together with Lithuania and Rus' [...]*²².

The federal structure of pre-partition Poland was also evoked in the programmes of political parties emerging in Polish lands at the turn of the nineteenth century. An excellent example is the programme of **Związek Młodej Polski Ludowej** (Union of Young People's Poland) from 1907, which referred to the tradition of the Union of Lublin, with the assumption that the restoration of the union of Poland, Lithuania and Rus', inevitable and desired also by the *Lithuanian and Ruthenian brothers*, would be the first stage along a path leading to the erection of a universal federation of the peoples of Europe.

This stand was vividly expressed in the **Declaration of 17-22 May 1917** signed by many political parties active at the time on Polish soil (including the National Party /Stronictwo Narodowe/, the Polish Peasant Party /Polskie Stronictwo Ludowe/ and the Polish Socialist Party /Polska Partia Socjalistyczna/), which called for independence also for the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania and assured that: *Poland will strive unyieldingly towards restoring a union with an independent Lithuania in the firm conviction that the peoples inhabiting Lithuania: the Lithuanians, the Poles and the Byelorussians, will discover in a voluntary and harmonious union of those states a guarantee of the national, cultural and economic development of all the social strata*²³.

Soon it was to become apparent that the reconstruction of the Commonwealth in its old formula was absolutely impossible. The world emerging after the First World War made it necessary to seek other solutions.

Polish federal thought in the nineteenth century was dominated by an idealistic, often outright utopian perception of the world. The outlined

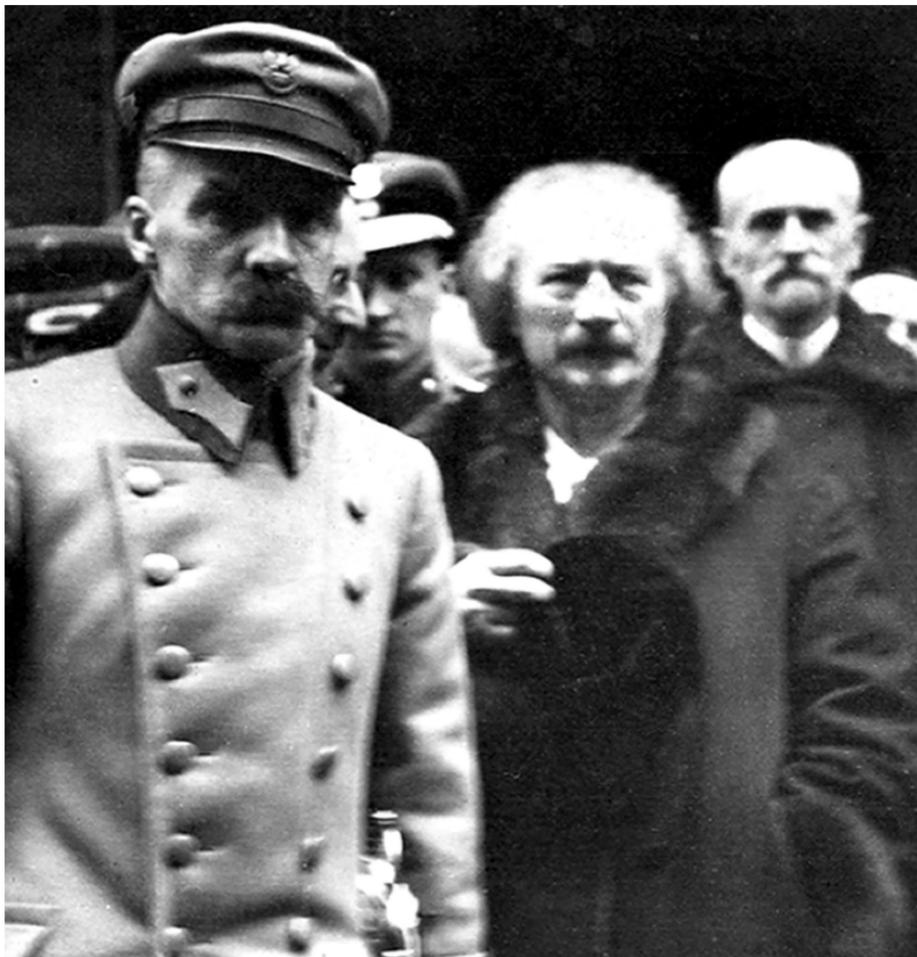
²² *Radykalni demokraci polscy. Wybór pism i dokumentów 1863-1875* (ed. F. Romaniukowa), Warszawa 1960, p. 76.

²³ *Powstanie II Rzeczypospolitej...*, p. 338.

projects referred to the lofty slogans of universal peace, brotherhood and faith in the construction of a new federal order in Europe, based on the right of the nations to self-determination. At the same time, the philosophical and scientific deliberations or publicistic include numerous proposals that remain surprisingly topical, such as a joint currency (Staszic), the freedom of trade, industry, labour and movement (Buszczyński), a joint constitution (Jastrzębowski), and the right and duty of each citizen to participate in public life (Cieszkowski). The authors also cultivated the “unity in diversity” principle, observed today. Europe was to comprise a single body, in which unity and diversity should remain in a perfect harmony. Unity was to signify mutual supplementation and, predominantly, it was to be built upon the basis of a pluralism of national cultures and creeds. This resultant of two divergent tendencies was rather aptly captured by an anonymous author, appealing to his countrymen in “Młoda Polska”: *Let us cultivate our nationality even more for the sake of Europe than for ourselves*²⁴.

Regina Wąsowicz

²⁴ Anonymous author, “Młoda Polska. Wiadomości historyczne i literackie”, 20 April 1838, no. 11, pp. 119-126.



Józef Piłsudski, Ignacy Paderewski and Stanisław Wojciechowski
leaving Warsaw cathedral after a Holy Mass celebrated upon the occasion
of a ceremonial opening of the Legislative Sejm (10 February 1919)

Polish Federation Ideas for East-Central Europe 1918-1952

*Poland is capable of ensuring independence and security
for herself only in a federation system.
Every federation is always a sum of compromises¹.*

Benedetto Croce wrote that in the wake of the First World War Europe was seen as *impoverished, troubled, mournful, all divided by customs barriers, the gay international society that used to gather in her capitals dispersed, each nation busied with its own cares and with the fear of worse, and therefore distracted from spiritual things, and the common life of thought, and art, and civilization extinguished²*. The exaggeration present in the words of the outstanding thinker reflects the moods of the European intelligentsia, including those of its representatives who were to embark upon pursuing plans for the reconstruction of the world in order to avoid new misfortunes. From the Polish viewpoint, the above-mentioned customs barriers were connected with the frontiers of a reborn state, and the prevailing moods, also those of the intelligentsia, did not have to be similar.

The autumn of 1918 witnessed the emergence of the outlines of Polish statehood, which did not require the protection of a strong neighbour. The two fundamental options associating the establishment of the Polish state with a *sui generis* union – either with the Central Powers (e.g. *via* a reconstruction of Austro-Hungary – for a certain time this variant was linked with Józef Piłsudski) or with Russia (the idea of the National League expounded by Roman Dmowski and later on by the National Democracy) thus ceased being topical. The form of this statehood, however, remained an open question. Assorted conceptions included a complicated federal structure, whose project was presented in the Sejm in May 1919 by Józef Buzek (1873-1936), economist, head of the Central Statistical Office, member of a constitutional commission, and in the following decade – member

¹ J. Mieroszewski, *O międzynarodową brygadę europejską* “Kultura”, no. 11/49, 1951.

² B. Croce, *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*. Translated from the Italian by Henry Furst. London: Georg Allen & Unwin 1934, p. 351.

ODEZWA NACZELNEGO WODZA.

„Do wszystkich mieszkańców Ukrainy!

Wojska Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na rozkaz mój ruszyły naprzód, wstępując głęboko na ziemię Ukrainy.

Ludności ziem tych czynię wiadomą, że wojska polskie usuną z terenów przez naród ukraiński zamieszkałych obcych najeźdźców, przeciwko którym lud ukraiński powstawał z orężem w ręku, broniąc swych sadyb przed gwałtem, rozbojem i grabieżą.

Wojska polskie pozostaną na Ukrainie przez czas potrzebny po to, aby władzę na ziemiach tych mogli objąć prawy rząd ukraiński.

Z chwilą, gdy rząd narodowy Rzeczypospolitej Ukraińskiej powoła do życia władze państwowe, gdy na rubieży staną zastępy zbrojne ludu ukraińskiego, zdolne uchronić kraj ten przed nowym najeźdem, a wolny naród sam o losach swoich stanowić będzie mocen, żołnierz polski powróci w granice Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, spełniwszy szczytne zadanie walki o wolność ludów.

Razem z wojskami polskimi wracają na Ukrainę szeregi walecznych jej synów pod wodzą atamana głównego, Semena Petlury, które w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej znalazły schron i pomoc w najcięższych dniach próby dla ludu ukraińskiego.

Wierzę, że naród ukraiński wyteży wszystkie siły, aby z pomocą Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej wywalczyć wolność własną i zapewnić żyznym ziemiom swej ojczyzny szczęście i dobrobyt, któremi cieszyć się będzie po powrocie do pracy i pokoju.

Wszystkim mieszkańcom Ukrainy, bez różnicy stanu, pochodzenia i wyznania, wojska Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej zapewniają obronę i opiekę.

Wzywam naród ukraiński i wszystkich mieszkańców tych ziem, aby nosząc cierpliwie ciężary, jakie trudny czas wojny nakłada, dopomagali w miarę sił swoich wojsku Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w jego krwawej walce o ich własne życie i wolność.

(—) Józef Piłsudski, Wódz Naczelny Wojsk Polskich.

Dnia 26 kwietnia 1920 r., Kwatera Główna.

ODEZWA GŁÓWNEGO ATAMANA

PETLURY.

„Narodzie Ukrainy!

Ciernistą drogą toczą się twoje dzieje.

Oto już trzy lata mija, jak usiłujesz zaprowadzić ład w swojej republice, zdobyć dla siebie wolność,

równość i niepodległościami —

moskiewskimi —
Zczyliście wielkie
Zniszczone siły
winnych, lży, wywołane
przez bolszewików
zliczone szeregi
Ukrainy — oto w
nów o największe

Umicierając, bledziej tę ciężką walkę
całemu, że i naród
samodzielności i
i kierować swą

Latem roku zeszłego
czyła do serca Ukraińców
drugi wróg nasz —
perjałista, niedobry
wyzyskując rosyjskie
wództwa, skłonił
ległości Ukrainy.
przez swych wódzów
wroga, stawiając
bez wyjścia, praw

Armia nasza, była cofać się
w sercach starszych
dnia i ta walka
i w zdolność naszego
państwowego i
nie, i klęskę.

Zważywszy to, że
nowiczeowi Pawłowi
walkę z bolszewikami
chwili wymagały
znalazła przytulę

I oto teraz do
armii na ziemiach
Do armii tej pod

Część armii
Udowiczenki, w
ziemiach Podola,
wysiłkiem oba od
ziemi i połączą się
armję, znowu brzo
wolności i twoje

Trzy lata, naród
pomniany przez
wrogowie twoi nie
wokowali cie, nie
się mianem ukraiń

Dzisiaj dokonany

Proclamation of the Head of State to the population of Ukraine, 26 April 1920

Document preparing the Kiev operation. Announcing an alliance with S. Petlura, the proclamation promised that the Polish Army would stay on the Dnieper only up to assumption of power by a "legitimate Ukrainian government".

of the pan-European movement. Buzek proposed the creation in Poland of 70 union lands, each with a population of 200 000 – 500 000 and its own constitution. The division was to be carried out from above, without social consultation, but in four years the structure would be completed to universal approval. This project can be treated as a vision of the new foundations of European order, stemming from wartime experiences and fear of burgeoning nationalisms. The Buzek plan, although never discussed in the Sejm, expressed wider tendencies. In a Europe seeking institutions capable of protecting it against a recurrence of the recently experienced disaster, and in a Poland searching for a suitable political and geographic outline, federalational ideas preserved a certain attraction. In 1918-1945 such conceptions became part of a political plan implemented by the Polish authorities upon two occasions. First in 1918-1921, when attempts were made to resolve the problem of the emergent eastern frontiers and to assure security for the region by resorting to a federation. The Peace of Riga put an end to this idea. The second such occasion occurred in 1939-1943, when the émigré Polish government inaugurated plans for a Polish-Czechoslovak federation, with the support of Great Britain. The projects were abandoned once it became clear that they would not be backed by the powers. Various factors were regarded as facilitating the federation or outright rendering it a natural solution. Apart from a shared fear of powerful neighbours, references were also made to the cultural community of Central Europe, the moral-cultural community of the Slavs, the Christian community, affiliation to the culture of the West, threatened by Bolshevism, as well as the geographical and economic features of the region. Mention was also made of Poland's supposed calling to gather neighbouring lands, together with a conviction about her role as a great power.

The Polish-Lithuanian union and the *Intermarium*

The rebirth of Poland was accompanied by an image of the vast Commonwealth from the time of its splendid past. This vision survived in the consciousness of the elites throughout the partition era, when *the territory of the Commonwealth of the gentry was the foundation, idea and model for delineating the frontiers of a future Poland*³. The image was reflected in

³W. Wrzesiński, *Polska: kraina przejściowa, pomost czy obszar narodowy* [in:] *Do niepodległości. Wizje, drogi, spełnienie*, ed. W. Wrzesiński, Warszawa 1998, p. 15.

two competing designs for moulding the state. The incorporation scheme launched by Roman Dmowski assumed the recreation of the state in the widest possible borders, but making allowance for the assimilation of the minorities living in its territory. The federalational conception was associated with the name of Józef Piłsudski and the tradition of the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna – PPS).

The “Curzon line” proposed in Paris in 1919 as the eastern border of the Republic of Poland did not correspond to Polish strivings aimed at creating a state. Piłsudski wished to establish Polish impact as far to the east as possible, by resorting to arms and in cooperation with the nations inhabiting the lands lying between Poland and Russia. The federation project, addressed to the Lithuanians, Byelorussians and Ukrainians, was to win their support for the Republic, while Russia *was to be weakened as much as possible and repelled [...] as far as possible*⁴. Piłsudski was more of a practician than a theoretician or an ideologue of federalism. Indubitably, his federation-oriented reflections also possessed an emotional background: he was raised in a terrain where the memory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and its union with Poland was very much alive.

Henryk Wiercieński, Piłsudski’s adherent, wrote that the union could not be broken since it had never ceased to exist. A project of its revival was devised already in 1917-1918 by Witold Kamieniecki (1883-1964), philosopher, historian, expert on mediaeval Lithuania, and head of the federal Lithuanian Committee. Kamieniecki proposed a system for a Lithuanian State stretching from the Baltic to Ukraine, and with frontiers along the Dźwina and the Dnieper. The state would be a federation resembling the Swiss model, with Kowno, Wilno and Mińsk as the prime centres; it would also have land sejms (diets) modelled on Austro-Hungary. Three languages would enjoy equal rights in the administration and the army. The central union government in Wilno would be held responsible to a union Sejm, of which half was to be elected and the other half composed of delegations of the land sejms. The Lithuanian State would be part of a union with Poland, which would solve all the economic questions, but it would not indicate any sort of expansionistic tendencies. On a wider scale,

⁴A. Nowak, *Polska i trzy Rosje. Studium polityki wschodniej Józefa Piłsudskiego (do kwietnia 1920 roku)*, Kraków 2001, p. 195.

the Polish-Lithuanian union should join forces with Scandinavian and Balkan federations, thus creating a belt of countries (a Union of European Federations headed by a joint council) separating Russia from Germany. Such a powerful *Intermarium* would guarantee peace and stability on the Continent. As Tadeusz Hołowko, Piłsudski's collaborator, proclaimed, Poland would have to be *the guardian and organiser* of such a federation.

Apart from the frequently divergent assessments of their joint past, Poland and Lithuania were embroiled in a controversy over Wilno. The seizure of the town by the Poles destroyed – contrary to Piłsudski's plans – the idea of a federation and blocked the relations between the two states. On the other hand, hope for a Polish-Ukrainian federation was offered by a convention signed with Simon Petlura, head of the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic. An attempt at establishing an independent Ukrainian state ended in failure, and the great offensive of the Red Army was halted on the outskirts of Warsaw in as late as the summer of 1920. Polish authors maintained that the Polish-Bolshevik war was to prove that the Republic was once again a bulwark (*antemurale*) of Western civilisation, thwarting the further expansion of communism. One could speak about a clash of two federational visions – after all, the communists too proposed their own version. Lenin perceived the pre-1917 global socialist state more as a centralised union, but in Soviet Russia popularity was enjoyed for a certain time by conceptions of a federal extension of the rule of the people's councils. In 1918-1919, when the Bolsheviks harboured hopes for expanding the revolution to the West, they outlined visions of a federation together with Poland (Stanisław Pestkowski, Julian Marchlewski), or even a federal Polish Soviet republic, including Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Byelorussian territories (a view propounded by the periodical "Komunista Polski" in Kiev). The federation plans launched by Piłsudski were no longer politically topical after the Polish-Russian peace signed in Riga in 1921.

The *Intermarium* project failed to become a successful part of European diplomatic manoeuvres during the early 1920s. The pre-eminence of the Republic of Poland in the region was by no means obvious. The Czechoslovak diplomats supported the French vision of a Slavic bloc (including Yugoslavia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia as a leading force). Polish suggestions of inviting Hungary were rejected. Consequently, Warsaw considered a Polish-Hungarian-



Aleksander Lednicki (1866–1934)

Head of the Polish Committee of the Pan-European Union

Ardent supporter of the creation of a European federation predominantly upon the basis of economic cooperation. Pacifist ideas inspired him to enquire into the solidarity of the nations of Europe as well as its legal forms and foundation. In his opinion the solution was to be sought in a United States of Europe.

-Romanian alliance as a counter-balance. Ultimately, a so-called Small Entente (Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia) emerged to the south of Poland under the aegis of France. In Polish diplomacy the North-South current thus became surpassed by an East-West axis. A union of Central European states was mentioned in the announcements made by the cabinet of Wincenty Witos, created in June 1923, but it never went beyond parliamentary declarations and non-binding talks held with, i.a. Romanian politicians. The unwillingness of Czechoslovakia (and personally of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Edvard Beneš) to change the formula of the Small Entente hampered the realisation of those conceptions.

The idea of a revival of the Union of Lublin was kept alive by a small group of the intelligentsia. In publicistics it continued to return as the “Jagiellonian idea”, recalled by representatives of the most varied options. In 1929 Witold Kamieniecki contrasted it with the *clamour of national struggles* waged at the time in Central Europe. He described the Jagiellonian doctrine as a *political system* that made it possible to draw towards Poland, by means of vol-

⁵W. Kamieniecki, *Ponad zgiełkiem walk narodowościowych. Idea Jagiellońska*, Warszawa 1929.

untary accessions, *territories* stretching between the Carpathian Mts. and the Baltic⁵. Meanwhile, the fate of the lands divided after

the Peace of Riga proved to be exceptionally dire. During the Stalinist “five year plan”, eastern Ukraine was to suffer from a famine, while in the 1940s western Ukraine became the site of Polish-Ukrainian clashes and bloody confrontations. In 1938 Lithuania established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Poland – the German threat resulted in a brief renaissance of alliance projects. Soon, however, Poland was to be wiped off the map of Europe, and Lithuania – after its short-lived delight in regaining Wilno – was transformed into a Soviet republic.

The United States of Europe and Paneuropa

What I saw there must have struck any thinking and feeling European as a return to paradise and inspired an attempt at creating also in Europe conditions for building such a ‘heaven on earth’: mutual trust, optimism, prosperity, also among the lowest strata, satisfaction, and a readiness to render help! – wrote the violinist Bronisław Huberman after his trip to the USA in 1920⁶. Contrasted with the United States, an impoverished Europe, suffering from conflicts and inflation, and divided by customs barriers, could have appeared to be a sub-continent without a future. It is not surprising, therefore, that the USA acted as one of the prominent inspirations of federal thought.

The United States of Europe was mentioned also by Jan Kucharzewski and Tadeusz Hołówko, supporters of the policy advocated by Józef Piłsudski. The USA was treated as an example of concrete constitutional solutions, and even more often – as a symbol. (Already during the Second World War one of the publicists proposed the establishment of the United States of the Nations of Central Europe with a banner modelled on the North American original but featuring certain modifications: stars, symbolising members of the federation, against a red background resembling *jointly spilled blood*⁷). During the inter-war period references were made to the Swiss Confederation or (less enthusiastically) to Austro-Hungary or more distant examples – the German Union, the Polish-Lithuanian Union (which attracted particular attention) or *pax romana*, all conceived as systemic models worthy of emulation. Regardless of the selected ideals, these

⁶B. Huberman, *Europa w walce cel, klas i narodów*, “Res Publica Nowa”, 5/2003, p. 28.

⁷B. Wielkopolski, *Nowe podstawy rozwoju Polski i ludzkości*, St. Andrews 1942, p. 273 sqq.

visions contain a discernible and considerable dose of idealism, the motor force of the pan-European movement of the 1920s.

The movement, founded in Vienna in 1924, was an initiative of Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, an extremely vigorous man, *publisher, author of an endless series of all sorts of publications, from popularisations to geopolitical-sociological works, editor of a periodical, animator of the movement, and congress organiser*⁸. Kalergi envisaged Pan-Europe as a vast international organisation, in which he did not foresee a place for Great Britain (*overly linked with its enormous empire*) and the Soviet Union, *with its non-matching political system*. Poland found herself among those countries in which the ideas of the pan-European movement had been successfully installed. Its participants included intellectuals and aristocrats, together with leftist activists and members of student organisations. The Paneuropean Congress held in Vienna in 1926 was attended by, i.a. Aleksander Lednicki, the leading Polish promoter of the movement, lawyer, political activist and financier, Prince Zygmunt Kaczyński, the violinist Bronisław Huberman, and Marian Dąbrowski, parliamentary deputy and editor of “*Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*”. In the following years these men established in Warsaw a Polish Committee of the Paneuropean Union, headed by Lednicki. The Committee was composed of, i.a. the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Aleksander Skrzyński, the vice-Marshal of the Sejm Hipolit Gliwic, Stanisław Thugutt from the Polish Peasant Party “Liberation” (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe “Wyzwolenie”) and authors of earlier federation plans – Józef Buzek and Witold Kamieniecki. Participation in the Committee was the outcome not only of support for its ideas but also of the directives issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Regional committees were established, including the ones in Wilno with the philosopher Marian Zdziechowski and in Kraków with the historian Stanisław Estreicher – both rectors of the local universities. Lednicki outlined visions of an economic community favourable also for the *rationalisation* of political life, which was affected by nationalism and *social-revolutionism*. In the future, the regional federations and alliances could merge into a United States of the World⁹.

The pan-European movement overlapped the movement of the Friends of the League of Nations, which had circles in university centres (the largest in Warsaw), and

⁸ Y. Muet, *Le débat européen dans l'entre-deux-guerres*, Paris 1997, p. 17.

⁹ A. Lednicki, *L'idée nationale et son évolution*, Warszawa 1928.



Edvard Beneš, prime minister of the government of Czechoslovakia, and Władysław Sikorski (1881-1943), prime minister of the government of the Republic of Poland (1939-1943)

co-authors of Polish-Czechoslovak conventions about the post-war union of the two states.

the activist movement. The Kraków milieu of pacifists and Friends of the League of Nations reflected the great inner diversity of the movement: it was composed of socialists, members of peasant parties, conservative Catholics and Zionists. This variety, however, testified to the limited and elitist range of pan-European thought, which attracted part of the young intelligentsia and idealistic aristocracy. The evolution of the stand represented by Coudenhove-Kalergi, who tried to win over German politicians and perceived Polish-German tension as an obstacle, reduced the movement's range. In 1927 the Count's rather unfortunate statements suggesting that Poland should surrender Gdańsk to Germany in return for a fragment of Lithuanian territory, provoked a sharp polemic on the part of Lednicki. The Polish Committee kept its distance from the founder of the movement, and the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not recommend dispatching Polish representatives to the Congress in Vienna. The Committee outlived Lednicki, who died in 1934, by only several months. When after the fall of Poland Kalergi tried to draw the attention of General Sikorski, an adherent of the federalisation of the Continent, to his conceptions, he encountered a chilly reception.

The pan-European movement launched by Kalergi remained a page in the history of intelligentsia idealism; at the end of the 1920s it found itself overshadowed by a political project associated with the name of the French Prime Minister Aristide Briand, statesman and laureate of the Nobel Prize. Briand tried to interest the political elites of the Continent in projects for a European Union, which he proposed in 1930. Their backdrop involved the Great Depression, which in Europe produced reactions fervently opposing the pro-integration stands, namely, the application of customs barriers to separate the European states. Faith in the sense of federal thought declined – by way of example, the Polish Socialist Party, whose earlier programmes contained such motifs, now abandoned them entirely. The crisis was so powerful that it appeared to simultaneously destroy all hopes for positive changes within the moulded world order. It did, however, inspire extremist political movements, which had a vision of an entirely different social, political and moral order.

In the face of defeat

After the outbreak of the Second World War a considerable part of the Polish intellectual and political elite became scattered across the world. The dimen-



Anatol Mühlstein (1889–1957)

Diplomat, in the interwar period at the Embassies of the Republic of Poland in Brussels and subsequently in Paris; member of the majority of Polish delegations to the League of Nations assemblies; from 1940 – in the US, co-publisher of the periodical “New Europe”; after the war – collaborator of the Paris-based “Kultura”.

sions of the defeat and an uncertain future inclined towards reflections about the reasons for iniquity and towards outlining projects for a new order: federal thought developed parallel in assorted centres and, more importantly, gained the support of the most prominent political forces. The promoters of the integration projects included General Władysław Sikorski, the prime minister of the Polish government in exile (first in Paris and then in London). A Central and Eastern European Planning Board was established in the USA, while the 2nd Polish Corps under General Władysław Anders in the Middle East and later in Italy proved to be another centre of pro-federation thought. In occupied Poland federation projects appeared in the programmes of those parties which comprised the National Political Representation (a political structure of the Polish Underground State): the Polish Socialist Party “Liberty, Equality, Independence” (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna “Wolność, Równość, Niepodległość” – PPS-WRN), the Peasant Party “Roch” (Stronictwo Ludowe “Roch”), the Labour Party (Stronictwo Pracy) and the National Party (Stronictwo Narodowe), which to a great measure continued the traditions of the political currents of the Second Republic.

PPS-WRN supported the plans of General Sikorski, and Kraków-based intellectuals, connected with the party, met at the “Esplanada” café to discuss the federation. Contacts were also established with the Czech Underground. In turn,

the National Party referred to the Jagiellonian idea (Poland of Three Seas), and the National-Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny) wanted to build a *great Poland*, conceived as the centre of an anti-Soviet federation. The Confederation of the Nation (Konfederacja Narodu), “Szaniec”, the Union for the Reconstruction of the Republic (Związek Odbudowy Rzeczypospolitej), the Union of Polish Syndicalists (Związek Syndykalistów Polskich), the Polish Movement for the Unification of the Slavs (Polski Ruch Zjednoczenia Słowian) and the Front for the Rebirth of Poland (Front Odrodzenia Polski) brandished the slogan of a *Slavic empire* (the Grand Slav Empire envisaged by the Labour Party). The occupation Underground also referred to the mission of the Christians (Jerzy Braun from the “Unia” organisation and his underground Institute of Central Europe). The chief representative of the “peasant” current in federal thought was the Peasant Party “Roch”, which supported the Polish-Czechoslovak talks. According to the vision advocated by this party, the federation of Central Europe should be based on an economic division of labour in Europe. The industrialised west would be nourished by a federation in the east, which, however, was to be neither an agricultural periphery nor “Europe B”, but an equal partner. Another propagated conception was that of an “Economic Paneuropa” (without the USSR but with the support of the USA). This plan foresaw electrification and the construction of roads, warehouses, cold storage facilities, etc. Other premises included a reduction of customs, a considerable nationalisation of the economy, and the financing of investments by exacting reparations from Germany.

Wartime “federalional” publicists contain numerous proposals of smaller or larger federations, unions and blocs conceived as salvage against recurring misfortunes. One of the factors inclining towards federation plans was to be, first and foremost, the necessity of protecting the region from its neighbours – thus the federation excluded the USSR and Germany. The only exceptions were some of the pan-Slavonic visions or those whose authors counted on the disarmament and reconstruction of Germany. There also appeared conceptions of a vast European federation or local blocs, which could merge in the future. Mention was made of an extensive federation (with Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia), two (southern and northern) or three regional federations (a northern one composed of Poland and Czechoslovakia, a Danube federation with Austria, Hungary and Romania,

and a southern one), a Balkan bloc with Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece, and two blocs: concentrated around Poland and Czechoslovakia, and around Greece and Yugoslavia.

In 1943, Tadeusz Bielecki, the exile leader of the National Party, outlined visions of a military-economic *bloc of Latin states* in Central Europe under the leadership of Poland. Mieczysław Gliszczyński, associated with this movement, wrote about the *Lechite idea*, referring to a legend about the brothers Lech, Czech and Rus, the founders of the Slav states. In the future, the Lechite state would expand, thus creating a Universal Slavonic Union. Two powers – Poland and Russia – would rule along the Baltic.

In London, aged General Lucjan Żeligowski, a former collaborator of Piłsudski, proclaimed Slavonic unity. In accordance with his semi-mystical and semi-geo-strategic reasoning, a merge of other *races* – Anglo-Saxon, German and Scandinavian – would make it necessary for Poland to *turn her eyes eastwards*. Żeligowski wished to see Polish-Russian conciliation in the name of a joint struggle waged by the Slavonic *race* against the German onslaught¹⁰. An important element of this unity of the Slavs was, according to the author, their peasant culture and the features attributed to it: hospitality, mildness, an awareness of beauty, and patriotism associated with attachment to native soil. Alongside the Jagiellonian tradition or the role of the bulwark of the West, it was precisely those traits which were recognised as an element of Central European identity. They could become a foundation for the integration of a region creating a moral-cultural community.

The new order entailed a quest for different models. Visions of a confederation – looser, less restricting for its members, with a presidential office modelled on the Swiss example, i.e. held in turn by the heads of particular states, and with a capital in Kraków or Bratislava (T. Piszczkowski) – were put forward. References were made to the nineteenth-century German Union, the British Commonwealth of Nations and, more rarely, to certain solutions applied in Austro-Hungary (the structure of the army or parliamentary representation), usually perceived as an unequal union. Frequently, the projects made little of inner contradictions, assuming that the fall of the old order and the catastrophe of the war should

¹⁰L. Żeligowski, *O ideę słowiańską*, London 1941, pp. 22-24.

change the stands of the nations and predispose them towards integration. Wartime calamities

were considered to have been so apocalyptic that the image of post-war Europe was paradoxically idealised according to the principle of contrasting the age of darkness and the sought after land of happiness. Visions of this sort were resisted by the “realists”, who referred to arguments derived from the theories of international relations or economy. Anatol Mühlstein or Mieczysław Szerer questioned the idealistic premises of a federation, and pointed to losses and gains, with the reservation that a federation would not protect against conflicts (here they recalled the example of the American Civil War), and that the appearance of a federation would incite hostile states to create competing unions.

A feature characteristic for a certain part of wartime publicistics was distrust of the state as an organiser of national life. Current experiences sufficed as a justification. The desire to evade traditional political parties and national divisions was linked with this trend. In an idealistic manner it was expressed by Bogdan Wielkopolski, the author of an extremely complicated plan for a *Christian system* that would prevent war and poverty: the parliamentary deputies of a Central European federation would sit in alphabetical order: [...] *next to a Polish worker – a Slovak judge. Next to a Ukrainian bishop – a Jewish rabbi. Next to a Czech factory owner – a Byelorussian scholar*¹¹. On the other hand, despite the failure of the Second Republic and the great power or Promethean ideology, the inclination to ascribe to the Poles the role of the saviour and leader of other nations was still alive.

All these projects had a very limited impact, but testified to a search for an idea of Poland's entirely new position in the post-war order. It would be difficult to compare them with a plan that was starting to assume political shape, namely, the Polish-Czechoslovak federation.

The Polish-Czechoslovak federation

Two figures played a key role in the London-based federation plans of the period. The (behind the scenes) ideologue and propagator of the vision was Józef Hieronim Retinger (1888-1960), the extraordinarily energetic adviser of Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski. Retinger took part in the creation of the Polish-Czechoslovak federation, conducted diplomatic operations in Moscow, and maintained contacts with the Greek and Yugoslav politicians who in January 1942

¹¹B. Wielkopolski, *Nowe podstawy...*, p. 217.

signed in London a convention about a future Balkan union. He also contributed to the establishment of the Planning Board in New York.

In wider public opinion it was Sikorski who in 1939-1943 was to become the chief promoter of the federal idea. In October 1939 Sikorski presented at a session of the Council of Ministers a vision of a regional union of states, repeated in a government declaration made in December, which mentioned the "leading role of Poland". Such a bloc was to counterbalance the USSR and Germany. The best-known consequences of this mode of thought were the Polish-Czechoslovak and Polish-Lithuanian talks from 1939-1942. In the autumn of 1940 the General Staff of General Sikorski, who was also the commander-in-chief of the Polish armed forces, embarked upon efforts at a military integration of anti-fascist forces. Memorials prepared by the Staff for the British authorities contained a new version of the *Intermarium* programme – a project for a bloc separating Russia from Germany, and spanning from Scandinavia to the Balkans.

In November 1939 the Sikorski government initiated non-binding talks with Edvard Beneš and Milan Hodža, the most important representatives of the Czech and Slovak exiles. The talks were by no means facilitated by the absence of a Czechoslovak government in exile and by the existence of two independent organisations: the Czech National Committee with Beneš and the National Slovak Committee headed by Hodža. Beneš, supported by Western governments, turned out to be stronger in the rivalry between the Czechs and the Slovaks, and was regarded as the main partner in the talks. This fact was associated with the acceptance of the fundamental unity of Czechoslovakia, and thus with a tendency to ignore Slovak aspirations towards autonomy. The talks were also hindered by remembrances of the past: the Polish attitude towards the partition of Czechoslovakia and, first and foremost, the armed invasion of Zaolzie. Already during the first talk with Beneš, Sikorski disproved the pre-war policies. The course of the talks revealed the divergence of the proposed conceptions; Beneš saw the federation as a customs and monetary union, and as cooperation involving parliaments, the executive authorities and military staffs. In other words, he stressed rather economic integration than its political counterpart. Just as different were the preferences concerning the expansion of the union: Poland was interested primarily in Lithuania and the Baltic states, and the Czechoslovak side – in the southern countries.



General Sikorski accompanied by Mjr. Miszke and Józef H. Retinger who took an active part in devising the initiatives of the Polish government in exile concerning Central Europe (i.a. a project of a Central European federation). After the war, Retinger organised the Hague Congress in 1948 and was involved in the creation of the European Movement.

On 11 November 1940 the governments proclaimed a “Polish-Czechoslovak declaration” expressing the intention of creating a political union. In this fashion, they opposed the propaganda campaign conducted by the Reich and its scheme for a “new Europe” under German leadership. The Polish-Czechoslovak Coordination Committee, established in January of the following year, was to prepare the union’s outline. The meetings were few, and their outcome remained slight due to differences of views, mainly concerning relations with the Soviet Union. Beneš was interested predominantly in close contacts with Moscow, which could protect his country, and perceived the Polish-Russian antagonism as an obstacle. The outbreak of the German-Soviet war, the resultant recognition of the USSR as an ally of the West, and the Polish-Soviet convention of July 1941 eliminated for a certain time some of the fears harboured by the Czechoslovak side. At any rate, Moscow did not make any statements about the federation. This state of affairs did not last long.

The final encouraging moment in the talks took place in January 1942 when their participants accepted a project of constitutional principles, according to which the union would be based on consultations conducted at periodical meetings of the councils and parliamentary delegations. In other words, this would be very loose union. During the succeeding months Beneš’s striving towards an agreement waned considerably. His policy now granted pride of place to the Soviet Union (the only state which “did not betray” Czechoslovakia in 1938).

The aloof attitude of the Soviet Union towards federation projects possessed a number of permanent features. After June 1941 the Soviet state faced defeat in a confrontation with Germany, but a gradual reversal of the situation inclined Stalin to formulate conditions of his own. In February 1942 Beneš was informed about the negative Soviet stand towards plans for a federation. In the summer the Polish-Czechoslovak committee ceased to meet, and in the émigré Czechoslovak press the question of relations with the USSR supplanted information about contacts with the Poles. On 17 May 1943 the Czechoslovak side officially announced the severance of such contacts, thus confirming the actual state of things. The military successes enjoyed by Stalin were accompanied by a crystallisation of the conception of a “sphere of influence” in Europe, subsequently confirmed at the conference in Teheran. Prime Min-

ster Sikorski, who to the very end believed that it was possible to create a political union in Central Europe, died tragically in July 1943. In publicist polar models slowly replaced the model of a federalised world. In 1943 the American author Walter Lippman wrote about “three orbits” – Allied, Soviet and Chinese – which should introduce international order. Soviet policy clearly aimed at the construction of such an orbit, and in the initial stage this stance was supported by a slogan calling for a unity of the Slavs *vis à vis* the German element; local federations would only weaken such unity. Theses of this sort were proclaimed by, i.a. the Czech and Polish communists, at the time living in the Soviet Union. Federal conceptions were thus attacked by Alfred Lampe, co-founder of the Union of Polish Patriots, whose articles warned the Czechs against contacts with the Polish government in exile, and tackled the projects outlined by the exiles, described as a “reactionary utopia” and an attempt at creating an anti-Soviet bloc.

In the Anders army and in New York

The 2nd Polish Corps under General Władysław Anders occupies a separate place in the history of federalational concepts. The Anders army was created in the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941 after the signing of the Polish-Soviet convention; a year later it was evacuated to Persia. In September 1942 General Anders merged it with other Polish detachments, thus establishing the 2nd Polish Corps, which found itself in Egypt; in the winter of 1943/1944 it was transferred to Italy (where it fought in, i.a. the battle of Monte Cassino). Far from its homeland, this vast group of soldiers of different nationalities and faiths comprised an excellent foundation for the emergence of original state thought¹².

Particular importance was assigned to the Department of Culture and Press, headed in 1942-1944 by Józef Czapski, and including such renowned collaborators as Jerzy Giedroyc, Juliusz Poniatowski or Juliusz Mieroszewski. The Department published the periodical “Orzeł Biały” and books, without obstruct-

ing controversial views and discussions.

¹²K. Jaworska, *Doświadczenia uchodźstwa. Z dziejów 2 Korpusu we Włoszech* [in:] *Pamięć zbiorowa w procesie integracji Europy*, ed. Józef Łaptos, Kraków 1996, p. 96 qq.

“Biblioteka Orła Białego” issued several specially noteworthy works, the first being a book by Jan Szułdrzyński (1943), containing a historical vision of the mighty

Jagiellonian state, an apotheosis of the Third May Constitution which was to “conciliate Polish individualism with the state”, and comments about the accomplishments of Polish independence-oriented thought from the end of the eighteenth century to Józef Piłsudski, who wanted a “great” and not a “little” Poland. These traditions were to become the grounds for a Polish policy aiming at the creation of a “large state system” of a supranational nature, i.e. a union¹³. The brochure produced polemics made public in “Orzeł Biały” – with the author being charged with national megalomania.

References to the powerful Poland of yore and suggestions concerning an equally magnificent future were avoided by Adam Pragier (1886-1976), economist, lawyer, and active member of the PPS. His *Cele wojenne Polski* (Polish Wartime Objectives) was published in “Biblioteka” in 1945. Pragier envisioned a Central-Eastern Federation from the Baltic to the Balkans and Greece, and composed of two blocs: northern and southern. With a population of 110 million, this creation would be an independent subject of international law. The federation’s purpose would be to render equal the level of the economic development of its particular parts (and the differences were enormous – from Czechoslovakia to Albania). Land governments would conduct a joint foreign, military and economic policy. The armies would remain national but, following the example of Austro-Hungary, a joint fleet or air force could be distinguished. As in Austro-Hungary there would exist a parliament composed of the delegations of land diets. Pragier foresaw that Europe would turn into an archipelago of federations coordinated by a European Council.

In the same year “Biblioteka” issued a study by Antoni Plutyński (1880-1965), publicist and economist, previously connected with the national movement. This publication can be recognised as a summary of wartime reflections, pursued at a time when all hopes for a rapid establishment of a federation in Central Europe had vanished. Plutyński presented a balance sheet of the war: the West had abandoned its eastern allies, and Russia managed to realise her intentions from 1920. The federation cause, however, had not been lost thanks to the resources at the disposal of the region. These economic and cultural resources conspicuously distinguish the

¹³J. Szuldrzyński, *Dziejowa idea państwa polskiego*, Jerusaleń 1943. Szuldrzyński included into such a union also Poland, Romania, Hungary, Croatia, Czechoslovakia, and the Baltic states.

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Title page of the monthly "New Europe", 1 December 1940

Article by A. Mühlstein is the first in a series containing a project of the United States of East-Central Europe.

countries in question from their neighbours, and are based on a peasant tradition, a memory of struggles waged for the sake of liberty, and an identification of the defence of the country with that of Christianity. Plutyński discussed the possible shape of a federation, resembling Austro-Hungarian solutions (with a parliament as a gathering of delegations, and separate armies, albeit under joint command). The condition for setting up such a federation would be the support extended by the West, and for its survival – strong armament. Furthermore, it is necessary to win the backing of Western public opinion: this is the role of the émigrés, who should convincingly argue about the significance of a potentially 100 million strong federation. A suitable impression must be made not only by natural resources or the communication potential but, chiefly, by a high birth rate. In an introduction to Plutyński's book, General Anders referred to the idea of the *Intermarium*, blocked by the Soviet Union. There shall come a day, he wrote, *when the shackles of red imperialism will disintegrate*¹⁴. Naturally, it was impossible to pinpoint that day. In 1943-1945 the Soviet Union was gradually growing increasingly powerful, and the exiled politicians began withdrawing their federation projects at a similar rate.

Significant centres of integration thought created in 1940-1942 – the periodical “New Europe” edited by Feliks Gross and the Central and Eastern European Planning Board – also ceased to exist. The participants of public discussions held by the periodical and the Board included the Polish diplomat Anatol Mühlstein, who also outlined the systemic principles of a potential federation, eminent Czech politicians Jan Masaryk and Hubert Ripka, and the representatives of Greece and Yugoslavia. In the USA the Board was a conspicuous forum for the expression of the ideas and interests of Central Europe; it also prepared a number of premises for the post-war order, including a project for a European university. In 1945 their value was mainly documentary, but in a bipolar reality they retained a certain attractiveness as the visions of a better world.

In a bipolar world

For several more years federational designs were kept alive in those milieus, which refused to come to terms with the post-war configuration of forces in Europe. They were expressed by the establishment of a network of clubs, to a great measure composed of Poles from 2nd Corps circles ¹⁴Idem, *passim*.

Na prawach rękopisu

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“INTERMARIUM, the fate of 150 000 000 Europeans!” – propaganda slogan
from the cover of “Biuletyn Intermarium”, no. 9, March 1948

(including Adam Pragier and Juliusz Mieroszewski). The first such club was established in London in as early as 1940; five years later it gathered Byelorussian, Czech, Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish, Slovak, Ukrainian and Hungarian activists. The chairman was Lev Prchala, a Czech, and his deputy was Sylwester Karalus, a Pole. Members of the Polish Circle included Jan Nowak-Jeziorański and Adam Żółtowski. The Central European Federal Club, created in Rome in the summer of 1945, was headed by Mihail Krek, a Slovene, and the deputy was Juliusz Poniatowski. The club tried to pursue wide activity by founding branches in Beirut and Jerusalem (in existence until 1948) as well as a students' circle in Bologna. In 1945-1951 the Roman club issued "Biuletyn *Intermarium*", edited by Mieroszewski. Federal clubs existed until 1949 in Paris, Brussels, Frankfurt on the Main, and Innsbruck; Poles congregated at the Polish Federal Circle, headed by Edward Strauch.

The chief accomplishment of the Roman club was "The Free *Intermarium* Charter" (autumn 1945), which contained a vision of a federation composed of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech lands and Slovakia, Greece, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Hungary, the Baltic states, Byelorussia and Ukraine. The Charter signified non-recognition of the integral nature of the USSR, whose breakdown was awaited by the members of the club. On principle they also refused to recognise the division of Europe, and reacted with distrust to the undertakings – including integration-oriented ones – of all those who had come to terms with the presence of the Iron Curtain. Hence the hostility towards the United Europe Committee, created by Churchill with the assistance of Retinger, the criticism of the Schuman plan, and the attacks launched by "Biuletyn *Intermarium*" against the policy of the Western states. Federational projects arose among various exile milieus; Rowmund Piłsudski (1903-1988), head of the Polish Freedom Movement "Independence and Democracy" (Polski Ruch Wolnościowy "Niepodległość i Demokracja") and a pre-war activist of the great power movement, also outlined his own version.

The rank of such conceptions was slight, and the émigré groups became accustomed to the thought about the permanence of the post-Yalta order. Their elites were burdened with unresolved conflicts from the past, which the supporters of federalism viewed as particularly harmful. Since there appeared to be no chance for changing the geopolitical configurations in the near future, it became

necessary to shape the mentality of the émigrés – such was the opinion of Juliusz Mieroszewski, voiced in the Paris-based “Kultura”. One can speak about the independence of the Central European nations, he argued, exclusively in a completely differently shaped Europe: only a federation of those nations is capable of creating a force that would effectively oppose the political and economical supremacy of the neighbouring states. It is necessary, therefore, to abandon nationalist prejudices and to mentally prepare oneself for new times: the political representation of the nations in exile should support pro-integration initiatives¹⁵. This view expressed the general line propagated by “Kultura”. In July 1950, Jerzy Giedroyc and Józef Czapski, speaking in Berlin at the Congress for Cultural Freedom, suggested the establishment of a university intended for students from behind the Iron Curtain. Already in November a college for students from nine countries “occupied by Soviet Russia” was opened in La Robertsau near Strasbourg, with French as the language of instruction. This was the initiative, which Mieroszewski depicted as the root of the future elites of a federalised Central Europe.

In the region itself, now living in the shadow of Stalinism, all federalational thought had been moribund since 1947/1948. Up to this period there was still hope, connected with the Yugoslav-Bulgarian talks, of creating a federal union in Central Europe. *The idea of Polish-Czechoslovak cooperation* – wrote Tadeusz Marczak – *or, more widely, of a regional Central European one, was aired also in the press. Its characteristic trait, however, consisted in emphasizing the economic aspects of cooperation and the avoidance of any sort of political accents. The words ‘union’ or ‘federation’ were never mentioned*¹⁶. In 1948 even such cautious reflections entirely vanished.

Dr. Błażej Brzostek

¹⁵J. Mieroszewski, *O międzynarodową brygadę europejską*, “Kultura” 11/1951, pp. 75-82;
J. Mieroszewski, *O reformę „Zakonu polskości”*, “Kultura” 4/1952, pp. 5-13.

¹⁶T. Marczak, *Srodkowoeuropejskie tendencje federacyjne po II wojnie światowej (1945-1949)* [in:] *Federalizm. Teorie i koncepcje*, ed. W. Bokajło, Wrocław 1998, p. 255.

Dr. Błażej Brzostek

Historian, assistant professor in the Historical Institute at Warsaw University. Writes about the most recent history of East-Central Europe, social life and the history of culture. The author of, i.a. *Robotnicy Warszawy. Konflikty codzienne (1950-1954)*, Warszawa 2002; *Polnische Europa-Pläne des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Option Europa. Deutsche, polnische und ungarische Europapläne des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. Borodziej, H. Duchhardt, M. Morawiec, I. Romsics, Göttingen 2005, vol. I, pp. 43-134; *Za progiem. Codziennosc w przestrzeni publicznej Warszawy lat 1955-1970*, Warszawa 2007.

Prof. Edward Opaliński

Historian, professor in the Institute of History at the Polish Academy of Science (Warsaw) and the Jan Kochanowski University of Humanities and Sciences (Kielce). Visiting professor at the University of Mainz and Kyoto University. Writes about the social history of the sixteenth-seventeenth century, the elites of power, political culture, and parliamentarianism (the Commonwealth of Two Nations and the Empire). Author of more than a hundred publications, including monographic studies: *Elita władzy w województwie poznańskim i kaliskim za Zygmunta III*, Warszawa 1981; *Kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej (1587-1652)*, Warszawa 1995; *Sejm srebrnego wieku*, Warszawa 2001; *Rodziny wielkosenatorskie w Wielkopolsce, na Kujawach i Mazowszu za Zygmunta III*, Warszawa 2007.

Regina Wąsowicz

Head of the European Information and Documentation Centre of the Sejm Library, editor, author of the scenarios and texts of the exhibitions: *Europe of Free Nations. Idea of an Integrated Continent in Polish 19th Century Thought and Federalism in the History of Poland*.

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BN	Biblioteka Narodowa
BUW	Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego
NAC	Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe
MNW	Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie
AGAD	Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych
APK	Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie
ZK Wawel	Zamek Królewski na Wawelu
MNP	Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu
CAW	Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe

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Aleksandra Rodzińska-Chojnowska

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