

Stanisław KILIAN 

Pedagogical University of Kraków, Institute of Political Science, Poland

From the “Paris Agreement” to the “London Pact”: Political Aspects of the Democratisation of Poland’s April Constitution of 1935

Od „umowy paryskiej” do „paktu londyńskiego” –
polityczne aspekty demokratyzacji Konstytucji kwietniowej

• Abstract •

In the history of Poland’s April Constitution of 1935, there were two attempts to democratise it, the first one in November 1939 referred to as the “Paris agreement” and the other one in September 1950 included in the formula of the “London pact”, both of which concerned the ways of implementing Article 13 defining the scope of the President’s personal powers. The “Paris agreement” introduced into political life the practice of consultation between the President and the Prime Minister; the “London pact” provided for a thorough change in the nature of the President’s relations with the Government and the planned Parliament-in-exile called the Council of National Unity, as well as strengthened the role of the political parties in political decision-making. Motivated by the notion of the modernisation of the Constitution and its adjustment to the democratic standards of Western states, the postulate to democratise it was put forward by established political actors, the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) and the National Party (SN), supported by the Independence and Democracy

• Abstrakt •

W historii Konstytucji kwietniowej podjęto dwie próby jej demokratyzacji: pierwszą w listopadzie 1939 r., określaną mianem „umowy paryskiej”, i drugą we wrześniu 1950 r., ujętą w formule „paktu londyńskiego”; obie dotyczyły sposobów wykonywania art. 13 określającego zakres uprawnień osobistych Prezydenta. „Umowa paryska” wprowadzała do życia politycznego praktykę konsultacji prezydenta z premierem; „pakt londyński” zakładał gruntowną zmianę charakteru relacji prezydenta z rządem i projektowanym emigracyjnym parlamentem – Radą Jedności Narodowej – oraz wzmacniał rolę stronnictw w decydowaniu politycznym. Z postulatem demokratyzacji konstytucji motywowanym ideą jej uwspółcześnienia i dostosowania do standardów demokratycznych państw zachodnich wystąpiły stronnictwa historyczne: Polska Partia Socjalistyczna i Stronnictwo Narodowe, przy wsparciu utworzonej na emigracji partii Niepodległość i Demokracja. Występując wspólnie pod sztandarem Rady Politycznej, wzięły udział

(NiD) party founded in exile. Appearing together as the Political Council, they took part in negotiations on the formation of a government of national unity after the death of Prime Minister T. Tomaszewski. Representatives of the Polish People's Party did not take part in the talks; its leader, Stanisław Mikołajczyk, rejected the April Constitution in its entirety. The "pact" did not gain the approval of the "Castle": the President defended the Constitution and did not accept concessions as regards Article 13. Nevertheless, the postulates of the "pact" were not nullified as they were used to build a new political construction – the National Unity – from 1954 functioning in parallel to the presidential centre. Due to the importance of the issue, the negotiations can be regarded as a breakthrough event in the political life of the émigré community. It is no exaggeration to say that the roots of the most important political events in the life of the émigré milieu go back to the "London pact".

The research goal of this article is to bring to light the political aspects of the initiative motivated by the idea of democratising the April Constitution, expressed in the formula of the "London pact", against the background of the hypothesis that the leaders of the Political Council, behind the screen of their demand for the modernisation of the political system, aimed at weakening the position of the President as an obstacle on the way to building a new political centre – the Unity camp. They used the stage of negotiations based on the demands of the "pact" to orchestrate an anti-presidential propaganda campaign and to portray Zaleski as an opponent of the notion of unity. At the same time, they promoted the false premise that the democratisation of political life would help unblock the channels of émigré diplomacy and change the position of the Polish cause in the international arena. In this way, taking advantage of the atmosphere of distrust towards the President, they were able to launch their own political project: the National Unity, planned for as early as in 1949. For them, their participation in the Unity's bodies opened the possibility of realising their own political ambitions reserved for politicians from President Zaleski's closest milieu referred to as the 'Castle entourage'.

w negocjacjach na temat utworzenia rządu jedności narodowej po śmierci premiera T. Tomaszewskiego. W rozmowach nie uczestniczyli przedstawiciele Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego; Stanisław Mikołajczyk, przywódca ludowców, odrzucał w całości Konstytucję kwietniową. „Pakt” nie zyskał akceptacji „Zamku”, prezydent bronił konstytucji, nie godził się na ustępstwa w sprawie art. 13. Niemniej jednak postulaty „paktu” nie zostały zniweczone – posłużyły do budowy nowej konstrukcji politycznej, Zjednoczenia Narodowego, od 1954 r. funkcjonującej równoległe z ośrodkiem prezydenckim. Z powodu rangi problemu negocjacje można uznać za przełomowe wydarzenie w życiu politycznym emigracji. Nie będzie przesady w stwierdzeniu, że korzenie najważniejszych wydarzeń politycznych życia emigracyjnego sięgały „paktu londyńskiego”.

Celem badawczym artykułu jest ukazanie politycznych aspektów inicjatywy demokratyzacji Konstytucji kwietniowej wyrażonej w formule „paktu londyńskiego” na tle hipotezy, że liderzy Rady Politycznej za parawanem postulatu modernizacji ustroju dążyli do osłabienia pozycji Prezydenta i usunięcia go jako przeszkody na drodze budowy nowego ośrodka politycznego – obozu Zjednoczenia. Etap negocjacji oparty na postulatach „paktu” wykorzystali do zaaranżowania antyprezydenckiej kampanii propagandowej i sportretowania Zaleskiego jako przeciwnika idei zjednoczenia. Propagowali przy tym fałszywą tezę, że demokratyzacja życia politycznego przyczyni się do odblokowania kanałów emigracyjnej dyplomacji i zmiany położenie sprawy polskiej na arenie międzynarodowej. W ten sposób, wykorzystując atmosferę nieufności do Prezydenta, mogli przystąpić do realizacji własnego projektu politycznego – Zjednoczenia Narodowego – planowanego już w 1949 r. Udział w organach Zjednoczenia otwierał przed nimi możliwość realizacji własnych ambicji politycznych, zarezerwowanych dla polityków z najbliższego otoczenia Prezydenta Zaleskiego – „zamkowej świątyni”.

Keywords: April Constitution; political émigré circles; Polish politics; political integration

Słowa kluczowe: Konstytucja kwietniowa; emigracja polityczna; polityka polska; integracja polityczna

Introduction

From the very first years of arranging the political life of Polish émigrés within the ‘state-in-exile’ formula, doubts were raised about the democratic nature of the April Constitution of 1935 providing the constitutional foundations of that form of state, the most criticised being the powers of the President set out in its Article 13. Leaders of the anti-Sanation Opposition parties appealed to President August Zaleski to take steps to democratise the way in which he exercised his personal powers and hoped that the use of presidential prerogatives would become more flexible. “We do not recognise the creation of a state centre on the basis of a ‘bare constitution’”, said Adam Ciołkosz of the Polish Socialist Party. Members of the Polish People’s Party flatly refused to recognise legalism at all: “The 1935 constitution”, Stanisław Wójcik said, “represents a system of lawlessness, and we did not recognise it in our pre-war and even wartime activity. It would be difficult to take a different stance today” (ASN-5, *Protokół z konferencji stronnictw...*)¹. The leaders of the National Party (Polish: Stronnictwo Narodowe, SN) put forward a proposal to democratise political life by restoring the implementation of the “Paris agreement” of November 30, 1939 and extending its scope, including consultations with the parties within the framework of the planned Council of National Unity, i.e., Parliament-in-exile, arguing that the parties were the centres of political life. The position of the SN and the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), as well as the newly formed Independence and Democracy (NiD) grouping, acting together as the Political Council, was presented in the negotiations on the formation of a Government of National Unity after the death of Prime Minister Tadeusz Tomaszewski. The leaders of the Political Council called for a new type of relationship between the President, Government and Parliament to be formed on the basis of legalism. From the position of its defenders, they opposed the proposals to replace the Government with a National Committee and reconfigure the political system, as suggested by Stanisław Mikołajczyk’s faction of the People’s Party. They took the stand that the interven-

¹ At the stage of source query, the collections of the Archives of the National Party were not cataloged, therefore the materials do not have a full bibliographic description; in the form of photocopies, phonic registration and flashcards they are stored in the personal collection of the Author of this article.

tional nature of the objectives of Polish politics – freeing the nation from the Soviet ideological constraints of Sovietisation, regaining full sovereignty and restoring the territorial integrity of the Polish state (i.e., ‘undoing Yalta’) – justified the postulate of the democratisation of political life while accepting legalism and the continuity of Polish statehood.

The research goal of this article is to bring to light the political aspects of the initiative motivated by the idea of democratising the April Constitution, expressed in the formula of the “London pact”, against the background of the hypothesis that the leaders of the Political Council, behind the screen of their demand for the modernisation of the political system, aimed at weakening the position of the President as an obstacle on the way to building a new political centre – the Unity camp. They used the stage of negotiations based on the demands of the “pact” to orchestrate an anti-presidential propaganda campaign and to portray Zaleski as an opponent of the notion of unity. At the same time, they promoted the false premise that the democratisation of political life would help unblock the channels of émigré diplomacy and change the position of the Polish cause in the international arena. In this way, taking advantage of the atmosphere of distrust towards the President, they were able to launch their own political project: the National Unity, planned for as early as in 1949. For them, their participation in the Unity’s bodies opened the possibility of realising their own political ambitions reserved for politicians from President Zaleski’s closest milieu referred to as the ‘Castle entourage’.

The Legalist Foundations of the ‘State-in-Exile’

Since the Western countries had withdrawn their recognition of the Polish Government-in-exile (on July 5, 1945), doubts emerged in the political circles of the émigré milieu concerning the legal and political legitimacy of the in-exile institutions. When support from Western governments was waning, the basis for the functioning of the Government was the mandate of the nation and the trust of the émigré community. However, it is difficult to determine the scale of this trust, as in the first years after the end of the war, war refugees, emigrant soldiers busy with work, studies, learning the language and overcoming successive barriers to adaptation, showed no interest in participating in political life (BJ, T. Kisielewicz to Z. Berezowski, personal communication, May 25, 1946). They feared poverty, loss of work and deportation, not to mention the nagging to-return-or-to-stay thoughts (Turkowski, 2001, p. 99). “Among the refugees”, notes S. Łukasiewicz, “one could often hear such needs formulated by them as survival, resistance, education (espe-

cially of the younger generation), building an independent political thought, and cultural struggle" (Łukaszewicz, 2016, p. 50). No names of the president, prime minister, ministers or diplomats were mentioned. The refugees did not feel any political obligation towards the émigré authorities and did not engage in any political activity, delegating this task to a small group of several dozen politicians: political commentators and a handful of financially independent, high-ranking military commanders. The process of the politicisation of the émigré community was slow and its effects could be seen only in the early 1950s when the living conditions were improving. An expression of an interest in political life was the growing number of press subscribers and donors to the National Treasury, a source of funding for the state authorities in exile, with only limited involvement of work at the level of parties' clubs or local structures. Political engagement was hampered by the tense atmosphere in the political life of 'Polish' London. For this reason, the émigrés refused to trust the authorities in exile, which is best reflected in the opinion of Kazimierz Tychota expressed in the 1950s. "Here in exile", argued the SN activist, "in our little Polish world everything is about good will, because all our authorities are a sham, as is the *continuity of state authorities*. The thing is that we, the grey mass, while understanding the situation, want to put our trust in these *authorities* and we tacitly approve of this state of affairs" (ASN, K. Tychota to E. Sojka, personal communication, November 10, 1953). This opinion could be disregarded and treated as an expression of the author's bitterness towards the management of his own party but similar attitudes towards the Government-in-exile were expressed by such opinion-forming publicists and politicians as S. Mikołajczyk, chairman of the Polish People's Party (PSL), or A. Ciołkosz. The public opinion influencer Stanisław Skrzypek wrote about the 'fictitious government': "In fact, for a government to exist, it is necessary", he argued, "that it exercises power. It may be unpleasant, but according to international law, the Polish Government is that led by Cyrankiewicz, not any other. Our ministers will soon be as ridiculous as Ukrainian or Georgian ones. A representative body means more in the world than some ministers and prime ministers whom even the Poles themselves no longer take seriously" (ASN-2, S. Skrzypek to T. Bielecki, personal communication, August 24, 1954). The concept of the 'so-called authorities' is used by T. Bielecki (ASN-1, Communication from the SN Presidium No. 2, 1947, p. 7). In a letter to the SN chairman, Zygmunt Celichowski wrote about an "émigré phantasmagoria with legalism in the background", while Jan Optat Sokołowski used the term a 'London joke' (ASN-2, J. Optat Sokołowski to T. Bielecki, personal communication, January 27, 1955). This current of opinion includes the accusations made against President Zaleski by opinion-leading émigré columnists from Chicago and New York regarding his 'fa-

vouring of the Sanation' and 'yielding to the Sanation' (ASN-2, A. Niebieszczański to T. Bielecki, personal communication, December 12, 1949).

A similar standpoint was taken by the leaders of the Political Council groups, Ciołkosz and Bielecki, who accused Zaleski of continuing the political line of the Sanation. They both defended legalism as an asset of Polish policy in the international arena. Unlike the Socialists, offended by the refusal to hand over the presidential office to Tomasz Arciszewski, Bielecki regarded the nomination act as 'properly drawn up' and did not question the legality of Zaleski's presidency seeing no formal faults there, for the act appointing Zaleski as the President's successor was published in the journal of laws *Monitor Polski* two days after President Władysław Raczkiewicz's death, with the retroactive date of June 6, 1947 (Kulka, 2009, p. 122; Majchrowski, 2000, p. 255). Using the argument of bringing the state-in-exile system into line with Western democratic standards, he strove to make the implementation of Article 13 more flexible. "We want", he argued, "to adapt the sometimes anachronistic legal and constitutional forms of 1935, which were literally untenable already during the war, to the new conditions in which we had to fight to rebuild the state in 1950" (ASN-1, Communication from the SN Presidium No. 8, August 10, 1950, p. 2). The accusation he formulated of the 'appropriation of legalism by a single man' did not arouse much interest at the time. The émigré community did not find any deeper sense in establishing whether Zaleski was a legitimate president or not; the prevailing opinion was that resolving the question would not change the nature of their life as emigrants, nor make the task of émigré diplomacy any easier. "Legalism cannot be an end", emphasised Z. Celichowski, "but a means to some action" (ASN-2, Z. Celichowski to T. Bielecki, personal communication, January 15, 1951). Members of the People's Party's faction of Mikołajczyk in the USA expressed their views in a similar spirit.

Doubts were also raised about the appointment of a successor set out in Article 24 of the Constitution. While its Article 13 was to some extent 'softened' by the commitment of the "Paris agreement", Article 24 defining the duration of the office as "his [i.e., the President's – Author's note] period of office shall last until the expiration of three months after the conclusion of peace", was used against Zaleski to prompt his decision to resign from office and appoint a successor. Politicians from the 'Castle' camp expressed the view that the German capitulation was not tantamount to the conclusion of peace as there existed no act establishing a state of peace. In this context, Zaleski was a president of a state of war and could, under Article 24, hold office until the expiry of three months after the conclusion of peace. In the opinion of politicians from the Political Council, the argument of a state of war sounded absurd; already cited, Skrzypek argued as follows: "I believe that mar-

tial law has not been there for a long time, as proved by the fact that representations of the Government-in-exile operated on the territory of Germany on the basis of the consent of the Government in Bonn. Although the Constitution stated that until peace was concluded, there was a state of war in place that prevented the normal election of the President. The method of appointing the President during a war was therefore what the English call an emergency measure” (ASN-2, S. Skrzypek to T. Bielecki, personal communication, August 24, 1954). Regardless of opinions on the fictitious state of war argument, it survived into the 1970s and was used by ‘Castle’ politicians to refuse to recognise the parallel continuity of the state resulting from the Act of Unification (Friszke, 1999, p. 371). The leaders of the Political Council did not take the argumentation of the ‘Castle’ seriously and for this reason they seemed to have given up on referring this issue to experts in international law for evaluation. They based their hypothetical scenario on a state of war – the vision of the Third World War in which, after a victory over Soviet Russia (USSR), the President – using Article 24 – could hold office uninterruptedly. “Since peace”, one could read in a communication of the Praesidium of the Political Committee of the SN, “can be concluded very late – in spite of the beating of the Soviets – in practice it amounts to an indefinite office of the President, which isolates legalism still further and creates the risk that we will enter a period of war broken into several camps” (ASN-1, Communication from the SN Praesidium No. 9, September 25, 1950, p. 2). The President could also refuse to consent to the election of the Head of State until peace was concluded, which conflicted with the plan of the leaders of the Political Council that the validity of the April Constitution would be limited to the interim period until free elections and a constitutional referendum were organised.

The Significance of the ‘London Pact’ in the Political Life of the émigré Community

The term ‘London pact’ refers to the political negotiations conducted by Professor Henryk Paszkiewicz, the presidential candidate for Prime Minister, concerning the formation of a Government of National Unity – a cabinet based on a broad political platform and equal parity (3 + 3) of representation between the groupings of the Political Council (PPS, SN, and NiD) and the National Council (Labour Party, Independence League and People’s Party ‘Freedom’) (Adamczyk, 2008, pp. 383–386). On September 16, 1950, the participants in the negotiations agreed on a document containing three paragraphs referred to by Professor Paszkiewicz as

the “London pact”, and it was that name that politicians of the Political Council used to define their own position on the modernisation of the political system of the ‘state-in-exile’. The document read as follows:

1. Article 13 of the Constitution shall be executed by the President in consultation with the Prime Minister, acting on the basis of government resolutions. In the event of a conflict between the President and the Government, the Council of National Unity shall decide by a resolution adopted by a simple majority of votes.
2. The Council of National Unity shall pass a vote of confidence or non-confidence in the Government. In the event of a government breakdown, the President shall consult the Prime Minister and the heads of parties sitting on the Council and designate the Prime Minister. The new Government shall stand before the Council of National Unity and must receive its vote of confidence.
3. The successor to the President shall be appointed in consultation with the parties sitting on the Council. The President shall appoint a successor supported by a majority of the parties. In the event of a tie, the President shall have the decisive vote (ASN-1, Communication from the SN Presidium No. 9, pp. 3–4).

That was the form in which the “pact” was handed over to the President. Not waiting for Zaleski’s position, the SN representatives announced the continuation of negotiations on the addition of para. 4 in the following wording: “The Government shall be based on the main political parties thus binding it to Home Country” (ASN-1, Communication from the SN Presidium [w/o number], August 25, 1950, p. 1). The introduction of this paragraph was motivated by the desire to avoid a scenario when the established parties would be outnumbered by newly formed groupings and social organisations, all the more so because they were perceived as Zaleski’s political backing. Socialists from Ciołkosz’s group also had their doubts and agreed to accept the provisions of the “pact” only conditionally, making the final decision depend on President Zaleski’s clear declaration on the appointment of his successor and resignation from office. The announcement of the addition of paragraph 4 and the Socialists’ demand conflicted with the position of the ‘Castle’ and did no favour to the very notion of reaching an agreement. Regardless of this, the Opposition’s leaders failed to present a clear argumentation justifying the demand for a self-limitation of the President’s constitutional powers. In the official communications concerning the “pact”, they limited themselves to mere slogans, such as: ‘putting Polish politics on a new track’, ‘creating an effective political leadership’, etc. In the personal correspondence of the SN chairman in his role of the

Opposition’s main negotiator, the same arguments appear in the form of a fight with Zaleski, referring to ‘August’s self-rule’ or ‘August’s one-man rule’. Zaleski certainly knew the indiscriminate language of the Opposition’s accusations and its intentions, as well as the scale of the political ambitions of the party leaders, so he may have feared an escalation of the demands to resign or to reduce his position to that of a guardian of state symbols.

The Motive for the Fight against the Sanation

From the very outset, the negotiations were marred by an atmosphere of distrust and personal animosity against the background of historical resentments. Zaleski was of the opinion that, under the mask of democratising the system, the Political Council’s factions were trying to weaken his position as the guardian of independent Polish politics and the main barrier to the transformation of the Government-in-exile into the National Committee financed from ‘foreign’ – i.e., American – sources. Zaleski’s fears were justified; the first signals to this effect appeared in March 1947. “Elements connected with international circles”, wrote the chairman of the SN, “even closer than Piłsudski’s followers, are quietly promoting the idea of creating something like a Committee and thus making things easier for the Anglo-Saxons in the event they had to speak about the Polish cause, as it is undoubtedly not a nice thing for them to deal with a legal government which they have not recognised and towards which they have international obligations which they have broken” (ASN-2, T. Bielecki to F. Sz wajdler, personal communication, March 26, 1947). Zaleski assumed that the Washington administration, fearing Moscow’s reaction and avoiding accusations of violating the Yalta commitments, had promised to recognise the ‘non-governmental’ centre – as a political partner which could subjectively participate in the anti-Soviet Cold War front of ideological struggle. He did not share Mikołajczyk’s argumentation that the Committee would change the position of the ‘Polish cause’ in the international arena and would make Polish émigrés’ diplomacy more dynamic. Bielecki was opposed to the concept of the Committee for similar reasons, and defended legalism and the legal-political continuity of the Polish state, seeing this as an asset of the Government-in-exile and the foundation of the political system. “Americans”, he argued, “still prefer the Committee to the Government, and if there were a complete break [with legalism – Author’s note], the position of the Government would be untenable, and in a year they would stop talking about it in America and, more importantly, in exile” (IPiMS, notes from J. Wszelaki talks...).

Irrespective of the tensions which arose in the émigré circles over what was called the presidential question, the sources of the dispute with the Sanation went back to the years of the Second Republic; the Opposition was holding Sanation factions responsible for the mistakes committed in the interwar Second Republic. The scale of accusations was broad: from ruining social life, through yielding to the demands of the German policy, to the country's unpreparedness for war and its defeat in September. In this vein, recalling the sins of the past, Jędrzej Giertych warned against the Sanation threat in the 1970s after Zaleski's death (Sikorski, 2016, p. 39): "The political camp", he wrote in an open letter to Poland, "which in the war of 1914–1918 went together with Germany, which after taking power in Poland after 1926 through an armed coup d'état and a three-day civil war ruined and disorganised Poland with its harmful, thirteen-year rule, and which with its erroneous policy led to the September debacle and a new partition of the country, and which even today betrays tendencies which are dangerous from the point of view of Polish interests" (ASN-6, J. Giertych, *List otwarty...*). The authors of letters to the SN chairman described the Sanation regime in a similar fashion using insulting epithets such as 'gang', 'clique', 'scum', and 'Sanation hydra'. By means of personal letters, most often in the form of reports from the battlefield against Zaleski and the Sanation, the SN chairman revived the émigrés' interest in the life of their community as well as building a front of moral support for the goals of political activity. The accusations against the President ricocheted off him hitting his immediate entourage, yet they also affected the military community, e.g., General Władysław Anders, the architect of the policy for Polish émigrés, who – as Zaleski's advisor – was counted among the supporters of the Sanation. Politicians from the Political Council failed to see the difference between Piłsudski's adherents and 'Sanators'; the very fact of cooperating with Zaleski was an argument sufficient enough for them to see someone as a member of the Sanation camp and one's soldierly past or ideological roots did not matter much. This is how the hero from Monte Casino found himself in the ranks of the Sanation: "Perhaps we differ", wrote Z. Celichowski, "in our assessment of the person of Anders and his clique. I watched their work for a few years from up close and from the inside. I believe that this is a clique of careerists and materialists identical to the worst Sanation scum from Brest and Bereza [Byaroza], and I think that they should be fought like the plague and not allowed to continue to use their methods in Polish life" (ASN-2, Z. Celichowski to T. Bielecki, personal communication, March 22, 1953). General Sosnkowski was not spared from accusations of yielding to the Sanation: "I have no illusion", wrote an opinion-forming columnist, "as to Sosnkowski's political affili-

ation – I find the Sanation's supremacy dangerous" (ASN-2, S. Skrzypek to T. Bielecki, personal communication, August 24, 1954).

Accusations against authorities in military circles and architects of émigré life were an element of the strategy of 'laying siege to the Castle', which was to lead to the defenders' desertion. Bielecki hoped that the attacks would lead to a weakening of Zaleski's position and a gradual atrophy of the traditional model of the presidency, which was to discourage the defenders – the President's closest circle – from continuing to defend him. He noticed the first signs of a crack in the ranks of the 'Castle' defence as early as in 1949. "There are already quite a number of Sanators", he noted, "who are thinking about how to let August off the hook quickly. Another group of Sanators, long accustomed to their posts, obviously do not want to leave and are taking an unyielding stance" (ASN-2, T. Bielecki to Z. Łasiński, personal communication, December 23, 1949). However, his expectations regarding desertion from Zaleski's entourage did not come true; the vision of personal political gains prevented the Sanators from seceding and joining the Opposition; in Zaleski's circle, they could count on being honoured with posts, which was not guaranteed by the leaders of the Political Council's parties. Bielecki was of the same opinion and saw in the idea of democratising political life an opportunity to lend moral credibility to a new political project, the National Unity, based on the assumptions of the "London pact" and opposed to the presidential camp. In a situation of political stabilisation in the world on the horizon, the vision of a Third World War becoming more distant and the hope of returning to Poland fading away, the motif of a fight with a historical opponent – the Sanation personified by Zaleski – grew to become the main factor of political activity. In the battle for the democratisation of the political system fought on the 'oppose the Sanation' ticket, the leaders of the established parties (PPS and SN) not only neutralised Zaleski's accusations that Polish politics was dependent on 'foreigners' and pushed back the vision of the National Committee that did not benefit the party system, but, more importantly, they met the expectations of the Americans regarding the takeover of the helm of Polish politics by a representative political centre, detached from legalism and based on party principles – the Provisional Council of National Unity (PCNU), an initiative taken up in this form already during the negotiations of the established parties held on July 16, 1949.

The Aspect of Strengthening Diplomacy Pursued in Exile

Another argument in the stance taken by the leaders of the Political Council in the course of negotiations concerning the “London pact” was the premise – in my opinion intentionally formulated – that there was an interdependence between the position of the Polish cause in the international arena and the democratisation of the political system including the establishment of a Government of National Unity based on the established parties. The official memorandum handed over to Zaleski on September 25, 1949 stated: “Only a government based on the fullest possible unity of the Poles [...] can fight effectively for the aims of Polish politics. Only such a government can count on the recognition of the world, which will see in it an important representation of the nation fighting for its rights” (ASN-1, Communication from the SN Presidium No. 9, 1950, p. 1). Bielecki, the author of this memorandum, was of the opinion that the attainment of Polish political goals in the face of an approaching world conflict depended on the democratisation of the political system and unity. The war motif was not genuine and served to mobilise the political émigré population as well as to revive hopes for the coming prosperity for the Polish cause and a return to the homeland. As a matter of fact, the SN chairman did not anticipate the outbreak of the Third World War, as convincingly demonstrated by the excerpts from his letters from the first years after the end of the war: from 1946 – “I do not think that an armed clash between the East and the West will take place soon” (ASN-2, T. Bielecki to W. Anders, personal communication, January 16, 1946), and from 1947 – “I do not foresee a conflict supported by the threat of war in the near future” (ASN-2, T. Bielecki to A. Macieliński, personal communication, December 17, 1947), as well as from the following years – “I have never deluded myself that they would liberate us, especially militarily, so I do not blame them, we will liberate ourselves” (ASN-2, T. Bielecki to L. Kopec, personal communication, August 18, 1960).

In their argumentation concerning Article 13, the Political Council negotiators used the false premise that the President’s rigid, uncompromising stance was thwarting the efforts of diplomacy in exile and spoiling the image of the Polish cause in the eyes of the public opinion in the West. Analysis of the reports from the consultations of the Political Council leaders (Bielecki, Ciołkosz) held in Washington does not confirm the veracity of this assumption. Representatives of the American administration – interlocutors of the ‘London’ diplomats – did not perceive the Polish cause as a factor in European security. The Polish policy objectives expressed in the formula of restoring the Riga border found understanding neither in US political circles nor among the émigré circles of Central and Eastern European

countries (AAN, S. Skrzypek, *Polska a Ukraina*; Tarka, 2003, p. 82; Machcewicz, 1999, p. 102). Irrespective of that, the demand to 'undo Yalta' was at odds with the objectives of the Ukrainian emigration policy as the Yalta Agreement met the territorial aspirations of the Ukrainians. Moreover, where the motive for war as a factor in the Polish policy was weakening and the Western signatories abandoned renegotiation or annulment of the Yalta Agreement, diplomats in exile failed to define realistically sounding postulates to the West and were unable to specify their political expectations from their American interlocutors. This is illustrated by Gen. Sosnkowski's conversation with Gen. Dwight Eisenhower and Governor Adlai Stevenson conducted during the election campaign in the carriage of an election staff train at Pennsylvania Station in New York in 1952. Asked by Governor Stevenson about his strategy for pursuing the goals of the Polish policy, Gen. Sosnkowski stated that "his views on the matter had been expressed in his recent lectures on the Soviet strategy" (ASN-4, *Poufna notatka...*, 1952). A similar formula of a loose exchange of observations and opinions, without any clear declarations as to the form of political involvement, was followed in the 1950s and 1960s by the diplomats in exile representing the Unity camp. Western diplomats did not spare their gestures of sympathy and moral support but refrained from making any uniform declarations; nor did they make political involvement dependent on the progress in the democratisation of the Constitution, resolution of the presidential question or completion of the party unification process.

The position of the Polish cause in the international arena did not change with the signing of the Act of Unification; neither Bielecki as the chairman of the PGNU, nor Ciołkosz as the head of the National Unity Executive succeeded in embedding it in the catalogue of US foreign policy objectives. American interlocutors did not see the former as a political partner, receiving him in the press room or at occasional banquets, not asking questions about the political life of the 'Polish' London, and not interested in the shape of the political system of the 'state-in-exile'. Over time, which is most clearly visible at the beginning of the 1970s, matters concerning the political life of 'Polish' London ceased to interest even politicians of Polish origin (ASN-3, T. Bielecki's Notes..., 1971). The handwritten notes from diplomatic talks in Washington and Paris do not even mention the unification of Polish émigré milieus. Bielecki's diplomatic goal was to strengthen his media image in the Polish press as a politician of significance in Western political circles. It would not be an exaggeration to say that his trips to the US (apart from the first one in 1949, which was the least well-known) display features of image diplomacy. He stopped counting on US military involvement in the Polish cause. "No American government", he wrote to Sosnkowski, "wanted to cancel the Yalta agreements

[...] both America and the West want to and indeed are talking to the Soviets. If they did not talk to them, they would have to decide on war, and that is something they fear like hell” (ASN-2, T. Bielecki to K. Sosnkowski, personal communication, June 5, 1962).

Conclusion

On September 25, 1950, under the influence of divergent positions on what was known as the presidential question, Prof. Paszkiewicz abandoned the mediation (Wolsza, 1995, p. 137). From that moment on, both sides of the negotiations went their separate ways in terms of political choices, with the ‘Castle’ groupings defending independent Polish politics and the anti-presidential camp uniting. Exercising his constitutional powers under Article 13 and acting as the guardian of legalism without consulting the leaders of the political parties and ignoring the obligations of the “Paris agreement”, the President appointed a social government bypassing the political groupings and entrusting the post of Prime Minister to General Roman Odzierzyński (who was sworn in on September 26, 1950). The President’s opponents, the leaders of the established PPS and SN parties, began preparations to build a new centre of political life – the National Unity – based on the foundation of legalism, functioning according to the principles set out in the “London pact”. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the roots of the most important events in the political life of the émigré community go back to the very source, i.e., the “London pact”.

References:

- Adamczyk, A. (2008). *Piłsudczycy w izolacji (1939–1954). Studium z dziejów struktur i myśli politycznej*. Bełchatów: Instytut Józefa Piłsudskiego w Warszawie.
- Friszke, A. (1999). *Życie polityczne emigracji*. Warszawa: Biblioteka WIEZI.
- Kulka, G. (2009). *Komisje prawno-ustrojowe Rady Narodowej RP na emigracji w latach 1939–1991*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe.
- Łukasiewicz, S. (2016). Emigracyjny system polityczny. In: S. Łukasiewicz (Ed.). *Polska emigracja polityczna 1939–1990. Stan badań* (pp. 36–62). Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej.
- Machciewicz, P. (1999). *Emigracja w polityce międzynarodowej*. Warszawa: Biblioteka WIEZI.

- Majchrowski, J. (2000). Kwestia sukcesji prezydenckiej na obczyźnie. In: B. Stoczevska, & M. Jaskólski (Eds.). *Mysł polityczna: od historii do współczesności* (pp. 253–260). Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka.
- Sikorski, T. (2016). „Wyznajemy zasady narodowe polskie i uniwersalne katolickie”. Stronnictwo Narodowe na emigracji (1939–1992): zarys działalności i myśli politycznej. In: T. Sikorski (Ed.). *Angielski łącznik. Albin Tybulewicz (1929–2014)* (pp. 11–83). Warszawa: Muzeum Historii Polski.
- Tarka, K. (2003). *Emigracyjna dyplomacja. Polityka zagraniczna rządu RP na uchodźstwie 1945–1990*. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza RYTM.
- Turkowski, R. (2001). *Parlamentaryzm polski na uchodźstwie 1945–1972 w okresie rozbięcia emigracji politycznej w Londynie*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe.
- Wolsza, T. (1995). Próba pojednania emigracji w 1950 r. Misja prof. Henryka Paszkiewicza. *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 28(4), 137–140.

Archival sources and unpublished materials:

- AAN – Archiwum Akt Nowych [Archives of the New Files], Akta Stanisława Łuckiego; sygn. 174, Skrzypek, S. (1980, March). Ukraina i Polska. *Biuletyn Stronnictwa Narodowego w AP*, 1, p. 7.
- ASN – Archiwum Stronnictwa Narodowego w Warszawie [Archives of the National Party] (now in the possession of the Museum of Independence):
- ASN-1 – Komunikaty Prezydium SN z lat 1947–1950 [Communication from the SN Presidium from the years 1947–1950] (materials for internal use).
- ASN-2 – Personal Correspondence between T. Bielecki and Gen. Władysław Anders, Zygmunt Celichowski, Ludwik Kopeć, Zbigniew Łasiński, Adam Macieliński, Adam Niebieszczański, Jan Optat Sokołowski, Stanisławem Skrzypek, Gen. Kazimierz Sosnkowski, Franciszek Sz wajdler, Kazimierz Tychota.
- ASN-3 – T. Bielecki’s Notes from the Talks with Henry Helstovski, Roman Puciński, Klemens Zabłocki (Washington, October 27–28, 1971).
- ASN-4 – *Poufna notatka o rozmowach gen. Sosnkowskiego z gen. Eisenhowerem i gub. Stevensonem w ostatnim tygodniu amerykańskiej kampanii wyborczej* [Confidential Note about General Sosnkowski’s Talks with General Eisenhower and Gubernator Stevenson in the Final Week of the US Election Campaign]. New York, 1952 (typescript).
- ASN-5 – *Protokół z konferencji stronnictw PPS, PSL i SN* [Protocol of the Conference of the PPS, PSL, and SN Parties]. London, July 16, 1949.
- ASN-6 – J. Giertych, *List otwarty do społeczeństwa polskiego w Kraju* [An Open Letter to Polish Society in the Country]. London, June 1, 1976.
- BJ – Biblioteka Jagiellońska [Jagiellonian Library]; Odział Rękopisów, sygn. 11837–11855, Zygmunt Berezowski Papers.
- IPiMS – Instytut Polski i Muzeum im. gen. Sikorskiego w Londynie [the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum], sygn. 39/11, Jan Wszelaki Collection.