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Anti-Communism and Anti-Imperialism. Entente Internationale Anticommuniste and the Promethean League: Two Ways of Understanding, Analysing, and Fighting Soviet Russia in the Interwar Period (1924–1939)*

Zarys treści: W artykule porównano sposoby podejścia do analizy sytuacji ZSRR prezentowane przez dwie międzywojenne organizacje antykomunistyczne – Entente Internationale Anticommuniste (EIA) i Ligę Prometejską. Podczas gdy EIA koncentrowała się głównie na ustroju politycznym (komunizmie) i działalności Kominternu, ruch prometejski kładł nacisk na politykę imperialną i narodowościową ZSRR i jej skutki wewnętrzne. W ten sposób w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym wykształciły się dwa spojrzenia na ZSRS, które były podstawową różnicą pomiędzy organizacjami antykomunistycznymi w XX w.

Outline of content: The article compares how two interwar anti-communist organisations – the Entente Internationale Anticommuniste (EIA) and the Promethean League – perceived events in the USSR. While the EIA focused mainly on the political system (communism) and the Comintern's activities, the Promethean movement emphasised the USSR's imperial and nationality policy and its internal effects. Thus, in the inter-war period, two approaches to the USSR emerged, which would constitute the main difference between anti-communist organisations in the twentieth century.

Słowa kluczowe: antykomunizm, prometeizm, imperializm, Rosja, ZSRS

Keywords: anticomunism, Prometheism, imperialism, Russia, USSR

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Following the revolution, in late 1917, power in Russia was seized by the Bolsheviks, who created a 'new type of state' on the ruins of the empire. In its domestic policy, the state was to implement Lenin's utopian vision, and in its foreign policy, it initially highlighted the slogan of world revolution. The official rhetoric was subsequently changed, but throughout the inter-war period, the Soviet communists sought to overturn the Versailles order. In March 1919, they established the Third Communist International, which coordinated the work of communist parties worldwide and enabled them to influence the political situation in other countries, including attempts to change their political systems by force. This 'experiment' attracted considerable publicity worldwide, with some groups looking with interest at a state that was to implement equality and justice in practice. Some saw in this a repeat of the French Revolution.¹ This interest, and in some cases even fascination, created fertile ground for communist activity.

The Bolsheviks' aggressive rhetoric, backed by coordinated actions of various communist parties, raised legitimate concerns not only in countries bordering Soviet Russia. Even in geographically distant states, the communists' activities in Russia and beyond were viewed with concern. Information about this was gathered by the press and state institutions – diplomatic services, the police, and intelligence services. In addition, at that time, organisations independent of the state administration emerged with a similar objective – to follow and analyse, and then combat, communist activity. Most of them limited their operations to the territory of one state and usually functioned for a relatively brief period owing to a lack of permanent funding. In the mid-1920s, two international organisations emerged that operated for a long time and sought to exert influence over the governments of European states. Their objective was to fight the Soviet Union and gather information about it. The organisations in question were the International Anti-Communist Entente (Entente Internationale Anticommuniste, EIA), also known as the Aubert League² – after its founder – and the Promethean League, or the League of Nations oppressed by Russia.³

¹ F. Furet, *Le passé d'une illusion: essai sur l'idée communiste au XXe siècle* (Paris, 1995).

² See, above all, M. Caillat, M. Cerutti, J.-F. Fayet, J. Gajardo, 'Une source inédite de l'histoire de l'anticommunisme: les archives de l'Entente internationale anticomuniste (EIA) de Théodore Aubert (1924–1950)', *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, no. 73 (2004), pp. 25–31; *Histoire(s) de l'anticommunisme en Suisse / Geschichte(n) des Antikommunismus in der Schweiz*, ed. M. Caillat, M. Cerutti, J.-F. Fayet, S. Roulin (Zürich, 2009); S. Roulin, *Un credo anticomuniste. La commission Pro Deo de l'Entente internationale anticomuniste, ou la dimension religieuse d'un combat politique, 1924–1945* (Lausanne, 2010); M. Caillat, *L'Entente internationale anticomuniste de Théodore Aubert. Organisation interne, réseaux et action d'une internationale anticomuniste 1924–1950* (Lausanne, 2016).

³ R. Woytak, 'The Promethean Movement in Interwar Poland', *East European Quarterly*, 18, no. 3 (1984), pp. 273–78; *Ruch prometejski i walka o przebudowę Europy Wschodniej (1918–1940)*, ed. M. Kornat (Warszawa, 2012); *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, ed. P. Libera (Warszawa, 2013); J.J. Bruski, *Between Prometheism and Realpolitik: Poland and Soviet Ukraine*,

The former focused on identifying, analysing, and combating communist influence worldwide, as well as on the Comintern's activities. The organisation was composed of a number of 'national' sections representing anti-communist organisations in various countries, as well as representatives of the Russian émigré community. The Promethean League, on the other hand, brought together representatives of nations subjugated by Russia and seeking to fight together to regain independence. Among the members were representatives of émigrés from Ukraine (the Ukrainian People's Republic), Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Crimean and Kazan Tatars, Ingria, Komi, the North Caucasus Highlanders, Turkestan, as well as those groups of Don, Kuban, and Terek Cossacks, who were active within the so-called Free Cossack movement. Both organisations were founded in the mid-1920s, and although they continued until the early 1950s, their peak activity was in the inter-war period. At that time, they gained some influence in the international community, with information about their activities regularly featured in the most important newspapers.

For over twenty years, the two organisations have been of considerable interest to scholars. Despite numerous valuable studies shedding light on their work, little attention has been paid to how these organisations viewed Russia (the USSR). The issue deserves attention, especially in comparative terms, as the two organisations perceived and analysed the processes taking place in Russia (USSR) quite differently. These two approaches, developed over the inter-war period, also shaped how the USSR was perceived, understood, and fought during the Cold War.

Both organisations operated along similar lines. They collected information about the situation in the USSR, the activities of the Comintern, and various communist parties across the world, analysed it, and then disseminated it through their own publications. They also took numerous measures to limit the USSR's influence on the international community, primarily on the League of Nations. Yet these organisations seemed only similar. In fact, there was a substantial difference between them – in their attitude towards Russia (USSR). The EIA focused on fighting the Comintern and communist influence across the world, but had no intention of interfering in the form of the Russian (Soviet) state. The organisation sought to change the political system in the USSR, but not its territory. The Promethean League primarily addressed the situation of nations subjugated by tsarist Russia and then by Bolshevik Russia, and sought their liberation. From the point of view of the Promethean movement, the Comintern was only one of

1921–1926 (Kraków, 2017); P. Libera, “The International of the conquered” – the Promethean movement and Polish authorities during 1926–1939’, *История*, 26, no. 6 (2018), pp. 612–635; Z. Gasimov, *Warschau gegen Moskau. Prometheistische Aktivitäten zwischen Polen, Frankreich und der Türkei 1918–1939* (Stuttgart, 2022); G. Mamouli, *Les combats indépendantistes des Caucasiens entre URSS et puissances occidentales. Le cas de la Géorgie (1921–1945)* (Paris, 2009); P. Libera, ‘Prometeizm po prometeizmie. Zarys historii ruchu prometejskiego po 1939 roku’, *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, no. 39 (2022).

the tools of the Soviet state, which pursued an imperial policy towards subjugated nations and those bordering Russia. The objective of the Promethean League was not to change the political system in Russia, but to have the subjugated nations break away from the USSR. Thus, the EIA opposed the communist system and the Promethean League against Russian (Soviet) imperialism. This essential difference had a significant impact on the activities of the two organisations, on their relations, and, above all, on how they collected information about, understood, and interpreted Russia.

I. Anti-communism or anti-imperialism – the EIA and the Promethean League vis-à-vis the USSR

The EIA and the Promethean League chose fight against the Soviet Union as their primary objective. Both organisations were founded at roughly the same time and adopted a similar operating style; however, they differed in their attitudes towards Russia and its imperial legacy. The difference was significant enough to prevent not only collaboration, but even any contact between them.

The EIA and the Promethean League

Both organisations were established in the mid-1920s, but their roots go much further back and are associated with different political traditions.

The International Alliance against the Third International (Entente Internationale contre la Troisième Internationale) was founded in mid-1924. Its main objective was to bring together organisations combating the influence of communist parties and the Comintern throughout the world. The founder of the EIA, the Swiss advocate Théodore Aubert, had tried to create such an organisation earlier, but all these attempts had been unsuccessful.⁴ The key moment that led to the founding of the Entente was the trial of Maurice Conradi, who in May 1923 killed the Bolshevik diplomatic representative in Switzerland, Vatslav Vorovsky. Conradi and his accomplice were defended by Aubert, who at that time began to work closely with a Russian émigré and representative of the Russian Red Cross in Geneva, Dr Yuri Lodyzhensky.⁵ Under the influence of the press and the activity of anti-communist circles, the trial turned into a trial of communism. Aubert's

⁴ Caillat, *L'Entente internationale anticomuniste*, p. 110f.

⁵ G. Lodygensky, *Face au communisme (1905–1950). Quand Genève était le centre du mouvement anticomuniste international*, ed. Y. Lodygensky, M. Caillat (Genève, 2009), pp. 207–234. I use the French version of the memoirs; the Russian version, published in 2007 (Ю.И. Лодыженский, *От Красного Креста к борьбе с коммунистическим Интернационалом* [Москва, 2007]), was censored by the publisher, as well as remarks on the subject in M. Caillat, 'Introduction', in Lodygensky, *Face au communisme*, pp. 11–12.

brilliant speech not only led to the acquittal of the two defendants but also publicised the dangers brought to Europe by the communist system.

In 1924, Aubert and Lodyzhensky set up the organisation's temporary office, and on 23–24 June 1924, they convened a founding conference in Paris. It featured representatives of anti-communist organisations from nine countries: Britain, Belgium, Finland, France, Norway, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia, as well as representatives of the Russian émigré community. The guests were selected along political lines. According to Michel Caillat, Aubert invited representatives of organisations that had similar political views: right-wing and even bordering on fascism.⁶ This had severe consequences – among the EIA members, there were no dissidents who had left the communist movement. Their knowledge, personal experience, and understanding of the mechanisms of the communist movement's operations proved useful to various anti-communist organisations active after the Second World War or even before, as evidenced by the example of Boris Souvarine.⁷

The EIA quickly grew in the following years. Formally, the organisation was headed by the Council, composed of representatives of all member organisations; in fact, the day-to-day work was managed by the Geneva-based Permanent Bureau (Bureau Permanent). As time went by, the EIA was joined by new anti-communist organisations from various countries. Contacts were sought in Europe (Germany, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and the Baltic States) as well as in North America, South America, and Asia. Although not all attempts to establish contact were successful, and the cooperation did not always fully meet expectations, the EIA's network of contacts and connections grew considerably over time. Member organisations were obliged to provide information, regularly pay membership fees, and use the EIA's materials in their publications. Over time, the EIA expanded its interests to include other aspects of the communist movement's activities, leading to the emergence of new structures addressing issues related to youth, women, colonialism, and religion.⁸ A key question was the financing of the EIA's activities. As Caillat's research shows, the funds came from two sources: fees from member organisations and donations from wealthy industrialists and banks. However, this did not secure permanent funding, as significant funding from banks and industry could be secured only for a limited period, and collecting membership fees encountered considerable obstacles.⁹

The EIA sought to influence the policies of the governments of non-communist countries as well as the policies of international organisations towards the USSR. To this end, it very quickly established its own periodical and then a bulletin for its members and subscribers. In addition, it published books and pamphlets with

⁶ Caillat, *L'Entente internationale anticommuniste*, p. 113.

⁷ J.L. Panné, *Boris Souvarine: le premier désenchanté du communisme* (Paris, 1993).

⁸ The issue of religious activity has been described by Roulin, *Un credo anticommuniste*.

⁹ Caillat, *L'Entente internationale anticommuniste*, pp. 215f.

information about communist activity in various countries. The organisation also established close cooperation with the Swiss press, which publicised all EIA initiatives.

The Promethean League was founded in 1926, but its ideological roots can be traced to nineteenth-century Polish political thought and to the tradition of cooperation among non-Russian peoples living in the Russian Empire. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Polish political thought came to recognise that the Russian Empire was predominantly non-Russian and that the tsarist authorities applied the same policy of Russification and denationalisation against these peoples. Due to the numerical superiority of the Russians, it was difficult for the nations subjugated by Russia to fight against it on their own, but this should prompt them to cooperate in order to fight a common enemy. This idea was present in the writings of the Polish Great Emigration, especially in Adam Czartoryski's milieu; at the turn of the twentieth century, it was developed by Józef Piłsudski, an independence and socialist activist.¹⁰ In the late nineteenth century, the idea found its way into the programme of the Piłsudski-led Polish Socialist Party, and Polish socialists established contacts with representatives of other nations subjugated by Russia. In 1918, when Poland regained independence, Piłsudski sought to develop close relations with these nations and support them in their fight. During the Polish-Bolshevik War of 1919–1920, Poland was supported in its fight against the Bolsheviks by Belarusian, Ukrainian, Russian, and Cossack troops. Piłsudski supported the national liberation aspirations of the Belarusians, sent a special political mission to the Caucasus to establish contact with countries in the region (early 1920), and in April 1920, signed a political and military agreement with the Ukrainian People's Republic. At the same time, an association called the Union of Reborn Nations (Związek Zbliżenia Narodów Odrodzonych) was established in Warsaw to develop relations with representatives of nations fighting against Russia.¹¹ Attempts to create an international movement failed at the time, but were resumed at the turn of 1926. Piłsudski's close associates were instrumental in establishing the Caucasus Independence Committee, which brought together Georgians, Azerbaijanis, and North Caucasus Highlanders.¹² They were soon joined by Ukrainians, Turkestanis, representatives of the Crimean and Volga Tatars, peoples living in northern and eastern Finland: Karelians, Ingrians, and Zyrians, as well as the Cossack factions that formed the so-called Free Cossack movement. The group gathered around the monthly magazine *Prométhée*, launched in mid-November 1926 in Paris and soon giving the movement its name.¹³ The main

¹⁰ A. Nowak, *Jak rozbić rosyjskie imperium? Idee polskiej polityki wschodniej (1733–1921)*, 2nd revised and expanded edn (Kraków, 1999).

¹¹ Gasimov, *Warschau gegen Moskau*, pp. 95–112.

¹² P. Libera, 'Polish authorities and the attempt to create the Caucasian Confederation (1917–1940)', *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 52, no. 3 (2018), pp. 231–252.

¹³ See J.J. Bruski, *Between Prometheism and Realpolitik: Poland and Soviet Ukraine, 1921–1926* (Kraków, 2017).

principle of the movement was the idea of bringing together representatives of legal governments-in-exile, and in the absence of such, of the so-called 'émigré centres', which brought together representatives of different political groups and parties. In practice, most of them held left-wing, socialist views, although there were also representatives of right-wing parties, such as some factions of the Georgian National Democrats. Unlike in the case of the EIA, members of the Promethean movement included some activists with past links to the communist movement. This is evidenced by the example of Józef Łobodowski, a Polish writer and poet, who in 1935 abandoned the communist movement and was actively involved in the editing of Promethean writings in Polish. Some Promethean activists knew the Bolsheviks from their time in the socialist movement in Russia before 1917 (for example, a number of Mensheviks) or a brief flirtation with the Bolsheviks in 1917–1921 (for example, Muhammad Amin Rasulzade or Zeki Validi Togan). The goal of the Promethean movement was both to regain independence and to liberate itself from Bolshevism. The belief was that only when countries regained their independence would they be able to establish normal relations with Russia.¹⁴ Poland was not formally part of the Promethean movement, but it supported it financially and organisationally and, to some extent, influenced its form and direction.¹⁵ The funding came primarily from a Polish government fund and was allocated to the financing of various national organisations and governments (centres) in exile.¹⁶

Attitude towards Russia

Both organisations differed primarily in their attitude towards Russia. The EIA's attitude towards a future Russia and non-Russian peoples seeking to regain independence gradually became clearer in the second half of the 1920s. The question of who should be the EIA's main enemy, the Comintern and the international communist movement, or the Soviet Union, was formulated already at the very beginning of the organisation's existence, at the 1924 Paris conference. It was then that Aubert was said to have proposed that it was possible to fight communism without directly attacking the USSR as a state. This was to facilitate the operation of the EIA's various sections in countries that had recognised the USSR. Most conference participants agreed with the proposal.¹⁷ There is no doubt that such a stance stemmed at least partly from Lodyzhensky's influence on Aubert. We know that a few months later, he warned the Swiss lawyer against collaborating

¹⁴ 'Le bolchevisme et les peuples de l'Union', *Prométhée*, no. 3 (1927), pp. 1–3.

¹⁵ See the outline of the Promethean movement and the participation of the Polish authorities in it, in Libera, "The International of the conquered", pp. 612–635.

¹⁶ On the support for the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic, see A. Руккас, 'Польська фінансова підтримка еміграційного уряду Української Народної Республіки', *Історія та історіографія в Європі*, 4 (2006), pp. 84–104.

¹⁷ Caillat, *L'Entente internationale anticommuniste*, p. 118.

with organisations of “separatist” Ukrainian émigrés, “and other [émigrés]”,¹⁸ and, indeed, the EIA did not start such collaboration.

It is worth noting that, thanks to Dr Lodyzhensky’s involvement, the EIA had within its ranks a strong representation of ‘White’ Russian émigrés from the very beginning. At the 1924 Paris congress, the Russians were the second largest nationality after the French. Among them were Alexander Guchkov, Anton Kartachev, Vladimir Hurko, and General Shatilov.¹⁹ They represented milieux associated with the former tsarist leadership and sought to restore the system that had existed in Russia before 1917. On the other hand, there were no representatives of Russian political parties that wanted to change the regime in Russia and create a democratic state. There were no socialists of any kind, who were also fierce opponents of Bolshevik rule. The man responsible for such a selection of representatives of the Russian émigré community was Lodyzhensky,²⁰ who himself was associated with right-wing Russian émigré parties and was a trusted associate of General Wrangel.²¹ That there were close links between these groups of Russian émigrés is also evidenced by the fact that General Wrangel was said to have been one of the EIA’s founding members and to have given the organisation 20,000 francs.²² Over time, Russian émigrés’ activities within the EIA were organised into a separate Russian section, established in 1927.²³ The links between the EIA and the Russian émigré community were so strong that sometimes the EIA was perceived as a cover for the operations of Russian émigrés.²⁴

The problem was raised in a slightly different form four years later, in May 1928, during an EIA conference, when discussions arose over whether the organisation should focus on its activities among Russian émigrés or on separatist movements seeking to break up Russia. It was decided that the first solution was better.²⁵ Its supporters were to be found not only among Russian émigrés, but also among representatives of other countries. In November 1928, Alfred Schebek, one of the most important Czechoslovak EIA activists, drafted a memorandum on the role of Russian émigrés in the anti-communist movement. He stressed that the Russian émigré community was one of the most important factors making the fight against the communist movement possible and that its devotion in this respect was underestimated. He called for the establishment of a Russian government-in-exile and

¹⁸ Lodygensky, *Face au communisme*, p. 259.

¹⁹ Caillat, *L’Entente internationale anticomuniste*, pp. 110, 117.

²⁰ Roulin, *Un credo anticomuniste*, p. 33.

²¹ Caillat, *L’Entente internationale anticomuniste*, pp. 90, 110.

²² О.К. Антропов, *Российская эмиграция в поисках политического объединения (1921–1939 гг.)* (Астрахань, 2008), pp. 238–240.

²³ Ibid., p. 242f.

²⁴ Roulin, *Un credo anticomuniste*, p. 68.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 39; Bibliothèque de Genève (hereinafter: BGE), Entente Internationale Anticomuniste (hereinafter: EIA), no. 3026.

for the consolidation of the Russian émigré community. In addition, he suggested an International Committee of Friends of Russia be established to support the activity of the Russian émigré community and its representatives. In his memorandum, Schebek did not mention the existence of non-Russian peoples demanding independence and seeking to break free from Russia. He only wrote about the “recent machinations in the matter of Ukraine”, which should make the need for a Russian government-in-exile all the more apparent. On the other hand, he stated that a reborn capitalist Russia would be much less dangerous to other countries than Bolshevik Russia, but that it should provide reassurances and guarantees, for example, to England regarding India, and to countries bordering Russia that their independence would not be threatened by Russia.²⁶

Finally, the issue of the attitude towards Russia and the peoples living within its borders returned for the third time in a pamphlet published by the Russian section of the EIA in 1929. Little attention was devoted to the nationality issue in the future Russia. The author of the pamphlet limited himself to saying that, given the impossibility of bringing about change in Russia through a military intervention, it was necessary to support the activities of anti-Bolshevik organisations in exile. He clarified that there were two types of such organisations. Russian organisations were seeking to liberate Russia from the communist yoke, and organisations wanting to bring about a break-up of Russia and the creation of independent states. There was no discussion of national liberation aspirations of the various nations, which were not even listed. The author just mentioned that such tendencies were the strongest in the Ukrainian movement. The Ukrainian national liberation movement was described disparagingly as an “Austro-German creation” which originated during the First World War and was supported by countries “seeking to weaken Russia”, including, above all, Poland, which supported the government of the Ukrainian People’s Republic. A series of arguments was made against the activities of the ‘separatist’ movements, including the claim that their activities would help the Soviets consolidate the entire population of the USSR around the defence of territorial integrity, thereby making it harder to fight the communist system. On the other hand, in the future, the new Russia would have no imperialist tendencies, as it would be busy rebuilding the country from the destruction brought by communism. However, no mention was made of the attitude towards the people who would like to regain independence. It should, therefore, be concluded that such a possibility was not contemplated.²⁷ These statements finally clarified the attitude of the EIA and its member organisations not only towards Russia (the USSR), but also towards the national liberation movements of the non-Russian peoples in the Soviet Union.

²⁶ Hoover Institution Archives, P. Struve Papers, no. 37/14, A. Schebek, Memorandum, Nov. 1928.

²⁷ *Le mouvement de libération de la Russie. Publication du Secrétariat de la Section Russe de l'Entente Internationale contre la IIIe Internationale* (Chambery, 1929), pp. 19–22.

A completely different view of the matter was held by representatives of non-Russian émigrés from the USSR who were part of the Promethean movement. Their goal was not to fight the Russian political system, but to regain independence. Most of these nations had traditions of statehood, and in 1917–1921, they tried to recreate their own states. The editorial to the first issue of the journal *Prométhée* included a reminder that after 1917 the empire of the tsars had been reborn in a new – Bolshevik – form, but had continued to pursue the same imperialist policy. This ran counter to the ideals advocated during the French Revolution and, above all, to the principle of liberty of peoples, which gave them the right to independence and freedom. Standing in the way of this principle was the Russian Empire, which had subjugated non-Russian peoples. The manifesto published in the first issue of the periodical also featured a programme for Russia: after the liberation of the peoples of the Caucasus and Ukraine, Russia would be liberated from “the spirit of domination that has oppressed it”, would “win recognition of all [nations]”, and would be able to join the League of Nations.²⁸ The goal of both organisations – the fall of the Bolshevik regime – would only be achieved when the nations subjugated by Russia could regain their freedom – wrote the president of the Georgian government-in-exile, Noe Zhordania.²⁹ The issue was consistently raised in official statements by émigré governments,³⁰ joint letters, and protests addressed to European governments or the League of Nations. Such pieces were regularly published in the Promethean press.

The press of the Promethean movement closely followed statements by representatives of the Russian émigré community, which, as a rule, was against the independence of these nations. Even the congress of Russian émigré organisations, convened in Paris in 1926, was not very specific on the issue. It was officially admitted that, in the future, Russia should guarantee them freedom as well as the development of cultural and religious rights,³¹ but internal congress documents contained statements that, although Russia granted independence to the Caucasian republics and the Baltic states, it nevertheless hoped that they would conclude agreements with it. The question of Ukraine was not discussed in this context.³² Most Russian émigré communities, even those with democratic views, opposed the independence of non-Russian peoples or accepted only the autonomy of selected peoples within a mandatory federation with Russia.³³ The attachment of

²⁸ *Prométhée*, no. 1 (1926), pp. 1–3.

²⁹ N. Ramichvili, ‘La crise du bolchevisme et la Libérite des Peuples’, *Prométhée*, no. 1 (1926), pp. 11–13.

³⁰ Activity of the UPR’s government, see e.g. О. Шульгин, *Без території: ідеологія та чин уряду УНР на чужині* (Паріж, 1934); for Georgian government, see C. Kandelaki, *The Georgian Question before the Free World (Acts – Documents – Evidence)* (Paris, 1953).

³¹ *Российский Зарубежный Съезд. 1926. Париж: Документы и материалы* (Москва, 2006), pp. 671–674.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 442–444, 574–581.

³³ A. Chouguine, ‘La paix ou la guerre?’, *Prométhée*, no. 4 (1927), pp. 12–14.

the Russian émigrés to the empire was so strong that fears of its break-up made them willing to give up their support of non-Russian peoples in the fight against the common enemy.³⁴ In the eyes of the Promethean movement's representatives, this gave rise to a passive attitude towards communism. According to the Promethean press, the position of some Russian émigrés was even more emphatically put in a statement by M. Miliukov, who in 1927 observed that the British policy was not against Soviet Russia, but 'simply against Russia' and said that as a consequence he was siding not with Britain but with the Soviets.³⁵ There were disputes over the issue, also with the Russian socialists.³⁶ Such polemics lasted throughout the inter-war period and did not lead to the development of a joint position.³⁷

II. Information activity and ways of collecting information about the Soviet Union

The activity of both organisations, the EIA and the Promethean League, was focused on two areas: the international scene and information. The former included activity within international organisations and consisted of drafting memoranda condemning the USSR's actions. The memoranda were addressed to governments and to international organisations, primarily to the League of Nations.³⁸ The other sphere of activity consisted of gathering, analysing, and publicising information about the actions of the communist movement. Both forms of activity were open and public, and both organisations wanted the information they provided to reach as many people and organisations as possible, to raise public and elite awareness, and then to influence decisions to proscribe communist parties or to break diplomatic relations with the USSR. In addition, the Promethean movement engaged in education and research. This involved primarily young people from the nations subjugated by Russia, people who were to become part of the future cadres of the Promethean movement and the national liberation movements. It was supervised by the Orientalist Youth Club at the Eastern Institute in Warsaw and the Ukrainian Scientific Institute in Warsaw. The EIA did not engage in such activity.

In addition to their official work, the EIA and the Promethean League also conducted covert military and intelligence operations. They were kept very secret, and only a few individuals in the leadership of the two organisations knew about them. In the case of the Promethean movement, this meant training with the Polish

³⁴ 'Dans le camp antibolchevik', *Prométhée*, no. 15 (1928), pp. 1–4.

³⁵ 'Le problème russe', *Prométhée*, no. 9 (1927), pp. 1–2.

³⁶ N. Jordania, 'Nos désaccords', *Prométhée*, no. 15 (1928), pp. 5–9; N. Jordania, 'L'exégèse du bolchevisme', *Prométhée*, no. 21 (1928), pp. 1–6.

³⁷ A.T., 'Le rapport de M. Milioukov', *Prométhée*, no. 86 (1934), pp. 14–18.

³⁸ 'Mémorandum remis à la huitième Assemblée de la Société des nations par les représentants des peuples du Caucase et de l'Ukraine', *Prométhée*, no. 11 (1927), pp. 2–9.

Army provided to officer cadets and contract officers from Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Caucasian Highlanders and Ukrainians. In the future, they were to form the national armies of the various peoples.³⁹ Later, discussions arose to expand the group to include representatives from Turkestan and the Crimean Tatars, but this did not happen in the end.⁴⁰ Moreover, intelligence operations were carried out in collaboration with the intelligence bodies of the Ukrainian People's Republic and the Georgian government; this involved not only information gathering but also the dispatch of couriers and emissaries, maintaining contact with territories under Russian occupation, and training small sabotage groups.⁴¹ In the case of the EIA, military and intelligence operations consisted mainly of its collaboration with the Russian All-Military Union (ROVS).⁴² Those involved in it were mostly representatives of the Russian émigré community. This is a topic that remains underexplored.

It should be pointed out, however, that military and intelligence operations were not the mainstay of the two organisations. Their core activity was to gather information about and create the image of the USSR in Europe and beyond. Information about what was happening in the Soviet Union and in communist organisations across the world made it possible to explore, interpret, and correctly diagnose the processes unfolding in the USSR, and then to spur the international community, as well as the governments of various countries, into action. The information was disseminated primarily through serials (journals and bulletins) and one-off publications (pamphlets and books).

Information activity

Attempts to found an EIA periodical were made as early as 1926, but they failed after a few months.⁴³ It was not until the late 1930s that the EIA again attempted to launch a regular periodical, *La revue anticomuniste*, published in 1938–1939. The periodical's subtitle (*édité avec la collaboration du Bureau pour la Préparation*

³⁹ R. Karabin, 'Gruzińscy podchorążowie i oficerowie kontraktowi w Wojsku Polskim 1921–1939', *Pro Georgia*, no. 4 and 6 (1994); A. Rukkas, 'Georgian Servicemen in the Polish Armed Forces (1922–1939)', *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 14, no. 3 (2001), pp. 93–106; A. Rukkas, 'Ukrainians in Compulsory Military Service in the Polish Armed Forces (1921–1939)', *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, 62, no. 2 (2013), pp. 254–272; W. Materski, 'Gruzini – oficerowie kontraktowi Wojska Polskiego w kampanii wrześniowej 1939 r.', *Pro Georgia*, 26 (2016), pp. 243–284; R. Palmowski, *Kaukascy oficerowie Wojska Polskiego: słownik biograficzny*, 2nd revised edn (Bydgoszcz, 2021).

⁴⁰ *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, pp. 354–360.

⁴¹ T.B. Бронська, В.С. Сідак, *Спецслужба держави без території: люди, події, факти* (Київ, 2003); J.J. Bruski, 'Mykoła Czebotariw i placówka "Hetman". Z dziejów ukraińskich służb specjalnych na emigracji', *Dzieje Najnowsze*, no. 2 (2013), pp. 53–65; A. Рукас, 'Він стояв на чолі військової розвідки УНР у міжвоєнний період: життя та діяльність сотника Василя Недайкаши', *Військово-історичний меридіан. Електронний науковий журнал*, no. 2 (2013), pp. 86–96.

⁴² Антропов, *Российская эмиграция в поисках*, p. 259.

⁴³ Roulin, *Un credo anticomuniste*, pp. 55–56, 65–66.

du premier Congrès Mondial Anticommuniste) suggests that it may have been financed, partly or wholly, by the Third Reich, with which the EIA established closer relations at the time.⁴⁴ As it proved impossible to launch a regular periodical, the EIA published most of its activities in bulletins for subscribers as well as thematic pamphlets. The most important among them was the bulletin *La Documentation mensuelle*, published from May 1927 until 1939. Initially, it was also issued in English and German, but after a while, translations were abandoned and the bulletin was published only in French. In 1933, it went from being published monthly to being published every two months,⁴⁵ and with time took the form of more substantial thematic issues. Attempts to develop the EIA and expand the scope of issues discussed led to the founding, in 1930, of a press bulletin (*Bulletin de presse EIA*), which in 1933 was replaced with three bulletins: *Bulletin de renseignements économiques* (1931–1935), *Bulletin d'informations politiques* (1933–1939), *Bulletin d'informations économiques / industrielles* and *Bulletin d'informations religieuses*.⁴⁶ Particularly important among them was the bulletin devoted to political matters, which to some extent became the EIA's main periodical. It also proved impossible to set up a press agency – attempts to found it were made in collaboration with Germany in the second half of the 1930s.⁴⁷ Apart from books and bulletins, the most important tools for disseminating information to a broader audience were pamphlets dealing with issues such as the admission of the USSR to the League of Nations, Soviet disarmament policy, and the persecution of religion or communism in China.

Like the EIA, the Promethean movement, too, devoted a lot of attention to publishing. The movement's main periodical was *Prométhée*,⁴⁸ which was published in Paris in French from November 1926 to mid-1940 and contained the most important information about the activities of the Promethean League. In the mid-1930s, the organisation also launched a secret bulletin in Russian, which was published in a small number of copies and sent to organisations that were part of the Promethean movement.⁴⁹ However, the main focus was on official press publications, which is why each of the nationalities within the Promethean movement published its own periodicals in national languages. In addition, several periodicals devoted to the subject were published in Polish in Poland. Books were published as well, in both national languages, and in French and Russian; these included books by the leaders of national movements and people associated with them. Unlike the EIA, the Prometheans almost never published pamphlets; on the other hand, they paid a lot

⁴⁴ Caillat, *L'Entente internationale anticommuniste*, pp. 287–292. The journal is mentioned by neither Roulin nor Caillat.

⁴⁵ Roulin, *Un credo anticommuniste*, p. 57.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 57.

⁴⁷ Caillat, *L'Entente internationale anticommuniste*, pp. 532–537.

⁴⁸ In 1938 the periodical changed its title to *La revue de Prométhée*.

⁴⁹ See copies of discovered issues (1–2, 4–6) in *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, pp. 501–532.

of attention to reaching out to the European press. To this end, they set up three press agencies. The first among them was the Express Telegraphic Agency established in Warsaw, with the purpose to influence the Polish press. The 'Ukraintag' press agency was set up in Bucharest; it published a Ukrainian-language bulletin for the Ukrainian press and had local coverage.⁵⁰ The third, 'Ofinor' Press Agency, was based in Geneva and Rome, and published press bulletins in several languages. It was headed by the Ukrainian journalist Mykhailo Jeremijew (Yeremiiv), but was seen as an 'all-Promethean' agency to publicise the cause of all peoples within the Promethean movement. The agency had the greatest impact on the international press, and its information was often cited by newspapers across Europe.⁵¹

Sources of and ways of gathering information

For both organisations, the main source of information about what was going on in the USSR was the official press and publications – reports, guides, calendars – published in the Soviet Union. This does not mean that the two organisations used the same sources – the sources overlapped only to some extent and their selection differed, depending on the organisation.

Not all the information published in the EIA bulletins had its sources cited; only some included such references. However, the internal reports on the EIA's activities did list the titles of newspapers used.⁵² Another good source complementing all this information is made up of bibliographic overviews of Soviet and Sovietological publications included, with comments, in nearly every issue of the bulletin *La Documentation mensuelle* as well as a catalogue of press titles preserved in the EIA Archive and today kept in the manuscript collection of the Geneva Library.⁵³ This enables the identification of the sources of the most important information published in the bulletins. These were, above all, Russian-language press publications issued in Moscow and Leningrad. A particularly important source was the Comintern's publications, including printed reports, records of speeches, and transcripts of the most important meetings, as well as periodicals published by the organisation: *Inprekorr* (that is, *Internationale Pressekorrespondenz*) and *Internationale Communiste*. Another important source was the daily Soviet press: *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, as well as other high-circulation newspapers (like, for example, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*⁵⁴). Other central publications (*Trud*, *Bezbozhnik*, *Krokodil*)

⁵⁰ Bibliothèques et Archives de Canada/Libraries and Archives of Canada – Ottawa (hereinafter: BAC/LAC), M. Jeremijew Archive, box no. 18.

⁵¹ The best preserved are the French (Paris), see BAC/LAC, M. Jeremijew Archive, boxes nos. 14/21–15/31, and Italian (Rome) editions, cf. boxes nos. 11–12 and 12/2–13/40.

⁵² BGE, EIA, nos. 3001–3018.

⁵³ Inventaire des archives [imprimées] de l'Entente internationale anticomuniste (EIA), section slave en caractères russes, établi par M. Dobrik, 1960, cote BGE Aa 3855/2.

⁵⁴ BGE, EIA, no. 1802, *Documentation* for 1938.

were used as well, as was the regional press (for example, *Leningradskaya Pravda*, *Tichookeanskaya Zvezda*, *Bakinskiy Rabochiy*, *Pravda Vostoka* and *Sovetskaya Sibir*) and trade newspapers (for example, *Uchitelskaya Gazeta*).⁵⁵ Valuable information was also provided by the Russian émigré press, especially the Riga daily *Segodnia* and *Sotsialisticheskiy Vestnik*. On the other hand, no use at all was made of the press published in the USSR by national minorities in their national languages. This may have been caused by a lack of familiarity with these languages, although this was probably not the only reason. Similarly, there were no citations from the press published by émigré organisations of national minorities, although some titles were issued partly or wholly in Russian (for example, the newspapers of the Caucasian Highlanders or the Free Cossack movement) and contained important information about the situation in the Soviet Union. All these data were compiled by the staff of the EIA's Permanent Bureau, who came exclusively from the ranks of Russian émigrés.⁵⁶ One of the reasons was the fact that other staff members did not know Russian.

The situation was slightly different when it came to the publications of the Promethean movement. In the case of the leading Promethean periodical, *Prométhée*, information about the sources used can be found in the articles and in notes from the 'Chronicle' section. The catalogue of the press titles used was similar to that in the EIA's case, with an emphasis on Soviet dailies, although much more use was made of newspapers published in the various Soviet republics (for example, the daily *Visti* published in Soviet Ukraine). These were newspapers published in both Russian and the languages of the Soviet republics in question.⁵⁷ A valuable source of information could be found in the newspapers published by émigrés of the 'Promethean' nations. The press of the Russian émigré community was used to a lesser extent than in the case of the EIA, though titles such as *Segodnia* and *Sotsialisticheskiy Vestnik* were also regularly cited. The situation was slightly different for the press bulletins of the Ofinor Agency. The bulletins themselves do not always make it possible to identify the source of the information given, all the more so as they usually provide only the geographical location of the city in which the Agency's correspondent resided. Specific press titles were cited less often, although we know that bulletins were also produced based on newspapers published in the USSR and abroad. An analysis of the contents of the bulletins usually confirms⁵⁸ the earlier observations concerning the source of information in the Promethean press, although they need to be complemented by reports sent directly to Jeremijew (Yeremiiv) by Promethean movement activists.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Ibid., *Documentation*, Nov.–Dec. 1938.

⁵⁶ Caillat, *L'Entente internationale anticommuniste*, pp. 138–146.

⁵⁷ E.g. in Azerbaijan, cf. M.V., 'L'alarme des bolcheviks en Azerbaïjan', *Prométhée*, no. 4 (1927), pp. 6–9.

⁵⁸ BAC/LAC, Jeremijew Archive, no. 11/1–16/14.

⁵⁹ BAC/LAC, Jeremijew Archive, no. 6/18–6/26.

It is also worth noting that a significant source often used by the Promethean movement press was information directly sent from the territory of the USSR. Numerous articles featured annotations that the information contained in them came from 'our own correspondents', or extensive reports sent from the Soviet republics. Examples include reports sent from Tiflis in 1926 and the following years,⁶⁰ as well as from Azerbaijan and the Caucasus (sometimes published without the exact name of the place in question, only with the first letter).⁶¹ There is evidence to suggest that the organisation had such informants also in Moscow.⁶² Such material, published relatively frequently, is all the more interesting given the fact that it often contains very detailed information which did not appear in the European press. An excellent example is an article about the unrest in the North Caucasus in 1927.⁶³ Significantly, similar informants also worked for other Promethean periodicals published by émigrés in national languages and cited by *Prométhée*.⁶⁴

Mutual use of information

Despite the fact that the two organisations operated at the same time and were active in very similar fields, they did not maintain any relations and did not inform each other of their activities. Even when they simultaneously undertook similar actions, for example, when they simultaneously sent letters of protest against the admission of the USSR to the League of Nations. Nor was it their custom to cite information provided by the 'rival' organisation. Although the publications of the Promethean movement, including its most accessible periodical *Prométhée*, featured information to which the EIA had no access, the EIA did not quote these publications even once. This applied even to information 'from our own correspondents' from the USSR – for example, from Tiflis – with valuable details of repressions and arrests.⁶⁵ The situation was similar with information from the regional press, published in national languages, and dealing with, *inter alia*, actions of regional security agencies.⁶⁶ The press and bulletins published by the EIA very rarely and exceptionally mentioned the political activities of the nations associated with the Promethean League.⁶⁷ It is hard to resist the impression that this was a deliberate choice.

⁶⁰ Cf. 'Chronique: La Géorgie', *Prométhée*, no. 2 (1926), pp. 25–27; 'Lettres de Géorgie', *Prométhée*, no. 10 (1927), pp. 26–28, no. 12 (1927), pp. 28–31.

⁶¹ 'Chronique: L'Azerbaïdjan, Le Caucase du Nord', *Prométhée*, no. 3 (1927), pp. 24, 27–28.

⁶² E.g. the report on Bukharin's statement delivered at a meeting in Moscow, 'On nous écrit de Moscou', *Prométhée*, no. 3 (1927), pp. 27–28.

⁶³ X, 'Un soulèvement contre les bolcheviks', *Prométhée*, no. 4 (1927), pp. 10–12.

⁶⁴ 'Chronique: Azerbaïdjan', *Prométhée*, no. 9 (1927), p. 29.

⁶⁵ Cf. 'Chronique: La Géorgie', *Prométhée*, no. 2 (1926), pp. 25–27.

⁶⁶ Cf. M.V., 'L'alarme des bolcheviks en Azerbaïdjan', *Prométhée*, no. 4 (1927), pp. 6–9.

⁶⁷ E.g. A. Bernardini-Sjoestedt, 'Un crime de la Tchéka. L'assassinat de Petlura', *La revue anticomuniste*, no. 8 (1938), pp. 356–366.

This lack of relations and use of press material is all the more surprising given that the EIA must have been perfectly aware of the existence of the Promethean League. There are at least three arguments to substantiate this conclusion. First, the EIA library has some copies of Promethean newspapers.⁶⁸ Second, the EIA had its headquarters in Geneva, which is also where the main Promethean press agency, 'Ofinor', was based. Third, both organisations – the EIA and the Promethean movement – had close relations with one of the most important Geneva dailies, *Le Journal de Genève*, and its editorial team. The daily regularly reported on the activities of both organisations and on their initiatives. In 1934, the EIA signed a cooperation agreement with the daily,⁶⁹ and in the same period, the newspaper's director, Jean Martin, as well as its leading columnists like Edouard Briquet or Prof. Edouard Chapuisat, supported the Promethean movement, spoke at Promethean meetings, and often published their articles in the *Prométhée* monthly.⁷⁰

A symbolic summary of the reflection on the relations between the two organisations is the only trace of contact between the EIA and the Promethean movement found to date. It is a note by a representative of the EIA on a conversation with the director of the 'Ofinor' press agency, Mykhailo Jeremijew, a conversation that took place most likely in the autumn of 1941. According to the author of the note, the conversation was brief, and in its course, Jeremijew apparently formulated the accusation that the EIA activists did not understand Russia and were trying to rebuild the 'Great Russia'.⁷¹ Unfortunately, the Jeremijew Archive and Jeremijew's correspondence with the Polish authorities from that period contain no references to this conversation.⁷²

III. Similarities and differences in the perception and analysis of the situation in Soviet Russia by both organisations

The different objectives of the two organisations and different sources of information had a crucial impact on their perception and understanding of the processes taking place in the Soviet Union. An analysis of the two organisations' publications requires a more detailed study, but for the purpose of this article, I will limit myself to selected examples that highlight the differences in the

⁶⁸ BGE, EIA, no. 2045 (includes copies of the Polish Promethean journal *Wschód-Orient*, which also featured translations of selected pieces into English, French or German).

⁶⁹ Caillat, *L'Entente internationale anticommuniste*, pp. 292–300.

⁷⁰ Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe – Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Central Military Archives – Military Historical Bureau), Oddział II Sztabu Generalnego (Second Department of the General Staff), ref. no. I.303.4: 5521, 5617, 5782; *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, pp. 342, 438.

⁷¹ BGE, EIA, no. 3007/9, note from the meeting with M. Jeremijew, n.d. [Oct. 1941?].

⁷² Archiwum Akt Nowych (Central Archives of Modern Records, Warsaw), Poselstwo RP w Bernie (Polish Legation in Bern), ref. no. 182, 186.

information disseminated by the EIA and the Promethean League. There is no doubt that in some areas – such as the Comintern's activities, the fight against religion, daily living conditions, or economic matters – the views and information presented by the periodicals and bulletins of the two organisations were not much different. The differences lay in the way the information was conveyed or in the level of detail, but there was no contradiction between the two. However, in other areas, the information and analyses of processes taking place in the Soviet Union published by the two organisations were markedly different. We can even speak of two different kinds of knowledge, on the level of both facts and interpretation. This applied primarily to issues like nationality policy, the most important changes in Soviet legislation or repressions against the population of the Soviet Union, including the way of describing the Holodomor in Ukraine and the events of the Great Terror.

Similarities in descriptions of the situation in the USSR

The role of the Comintern

Let us remind ourselves that the main thesis of the propaganda of the Soviet authorities and the Communist International was that the Comintern was an organisation independent of the Soviet government. Both the Promethean League and the EIA knew perfectly that this was a groundless assertion. Both organisations equated the Soviet policy – the policy of the government and the party – with the activity of the Comintern. Publications of the EIA and the Promethean League often stressed that the Communist International was completely dependent on the Soviet authorities and that it was implementing Stalin's policies. It was pointed out that the Comintern's policy was identical to that of the VKP(b) and Soviet diplomacy, and that both the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and the Comintern received their orders from the same VKP(b) Politburo.⁷³ Both organisations argued that the Soviet government was a façade and that real power in the USSR belonged to the Political Bureau of the VKP(b), which also ran the Comintern.⁷⁴ Similar comments were included in official documents of both organisations, for example, in the memorandum submitted by the Promethean League to the League of Nations in October 1927 and the EIA's January 1928 memorandum to governments.⁷⁵ To document in greater detail the relations among various centres of power in the Soviet Union and their impact on the Comintern, the EIA

⁷³ 'La politique extérieure du Moscou', *Prométhée*, no. 2 (1926), pp. 1–3.

⁷⁴ Batraz, 'La politique générale de la paix et le bolchevisme', *Prométhée*, no. 22 (1928), pp. 12–16; Bashak, 'Le Gouvernement des Soviets et L'internationale communiste', *Prométhée*, no. 12 (1927), pp. 14–19.

⁷⁵ BGE, EIA, no. 1793, *Documentation mensuelle*, Feb. 1928; 'Mémorandum remis à la huitième Assemblée de la Société des nations par les représentants des peuples du Caucase et de l'Ukraine', *Prométhée*, no. 11 (1927), pp. 2–9.

also published diagrams illustrating these relations.⁷⁶ In addition, every now and again, it published personnel lists demonstrating that the same people were part of various – officially independent – institutions.⁷⁷ Examples of communist parties' activities in various countries were regularly recorded, with particular attention paid to the new areas of the Comintern's expansion in Third World countries, in Africa and Asia, as well as in the Middle East's Islamic countries.⁷⁸ In this context, there were frequent reminders of the growing importance of the so-called colonial question in the Comintern's policy,⁷⁹ and examples were given of concrete actions, such as the establishment of a special 'university' for the 'peoples of the East' in Moscow⁸⁰ or communist parties' initiatives in Iran and Afghanistan.⁸¹ When it came to judging the Comintern's activities, there were no major differences in the views of the two organisations, although each had its own way of presenting the relevant information. The EIA included it in regular thematic sections of its bulletin *Documentation mensuelle*. They were devoted to the general activities of the Comintern, its actions in individual countries, communist activity in Asia and Africa, and from time to time, special issues were also published on these topics.⁸² Publications of the Promethean movement usually featured such information in separate articles or in the 'Chronicle' section.

Persecution of religions

A hostile attitude towards religion and persecution of followers of all faiths were undoubtedly one of the characteristics of the Soviet regime. From the very beginning, both organisations carefully monitored the actions of the Soviet authorities in this respect. It should be noted, however, that the EIA examined the topic more closely. In addition to examples of repressions, a lot of attention was devoted to analyses of anti-religious legislation and statements by various anti-religious activists, primarily Yemelyan Yaroslavsky.⁸³ In order to analyse anti-religious repressions in the USSR, in 1934 the EIA set up the Pro Deo commission, which established contact with organisations representing various Christian denominations, coordinated their activities, and published a separate bulletin.⁸⁴ It should be pointed out at the same time that the EIA focused primarily on publicising the persecution of Christian denominations, the dominant denominations in the USSR at the time

⁷⁶ *Tableaux d'organisations soviétiques travaillant à la révolution dans tous les pays (accompagnés de notes explicatives)* (Genève, 1928).

⁷⁷ E.g. BGE, EIA, no. 1795, *Documentation mensuelle*, July–Aug. 1930.

⁷⁸ BGE, EIA, no. 1793, *Documentation mensuelle*, Sept. 1928.

⁷⁹ BGE, EIA, no. 1792, 1793, *Documentation mensuelle*, June 1927, July 1928.

⁸⁰ D. Andriewski, 'L'Eurasie', *Prométhée*, no. 6 (1927), pp. 25–29.

⁸¹ J. B., 'Les Bolcheviks et le Proche Orient', *Prométhée*, no. 22 (1928), pp. 22–24.

⁸² BGE, EIA, no. 1802, *Documentation*, Jan.–Feb. 1938.

⁸³ Ibid., *Documentation*, June–July–Aug. 1938 (the entire issue was devoted to an analysis of anti-religious legislation).

⁸⁴ Roulin, *Un credo anticomuniste*.

(in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century they represented over 80 per cent of believers). Only sporadically did it mention repressions against other faiths: Islam,⁸⁵ which, according to data from the turn of the twentieth century, represented around 10 per cent of the population, or Judaism.⁸⁶

The Promethean League was less focused on repression against religion and did not set up specialised units to deal with the matter. However, the topic was constantly present in the movement's publications. Events and examples of violations of the rights of the faithful were constantly publicised; changes in legislation and statements about religion were constantly examined. The issues were discussed in both extensive articles⁸⁷ and the 'Chronicle'. Although the most often described examples were of repressions against Christian denominations, such as the fate of the Patriarch of Georgia, Ambrose,⁸⁸ owing to the presence of Muslims in the Promethean movement much more attention than in the EIA publications was given to repressions against followers of Islam.⁸⁹

Living conditions of Soviet citizens

Communist propaganda proclaimed the introduction of universal prosperity and, especially, an improvement in the situation of peasants and workers. Publications of both organisations regularly confronted such statements with the actual situation of workers and peasants, families, children and women. Drawing on information from the Soviet press, the EIA bulletins presented the real picture of the "workers' paradise".⁹⁰ Attention was also drawn to the situation of women and families in the Soviet Union,⁹¹ with special issues of the bulletins being devoted to the everyday life or situation of children, on the basis of information from the official Soviet press.⁹² The topic was also regularly present in the main periodical of the Promethean movement, *Prométhée*, although it focused more often than the EIA's publications on the situation in the various Soviet republics, for example, the situation of families in Azerbaijan.⁹³ We can also get the impression that *Prométhée* featured fewer drastic examples which were given by the Soviet press and which were intended to demonstrate the demoralisation of Soviet society.

⁸⁵ E.g. BGE, EIA, no. 1798, *Documentation mensuelle*, Sept. 1928.

⁸⁶ BGE, EIA, no. 1799, *Documentation mensuelle*, Feb. 1929.

⁸⁷ E.g. 'Persecution religieuse en URSS', *Prométhée*, no. 105 (1935), pp. 7–11; 'Moscou intensifie la lutte contre les religions', *Prométhée*, no. 130 (1937), pp. 17–20.

⁸⁸ 'Sa Saintété Ambroise, patriarche de Géorgie', *Prométhée*, no. 6 (1927), pp. 1–2.

⁸⁹ E.g. the closure of four mosques in Baku, which were turned into a library, a kindergarten, and a boarding school: 'Chronique', *Prométhée*, no. 106 (1935), p. 32,

⁹⁰ BGE, EIA, no. 1792, 1793, *Documentation mensuelle*, July 1927, Sept. 1928.

⁹¹ *Documentation mensuelle*, Jan. 1932, *Documentation*, July–Aug. 1935,

⁹² BGE, EIA, no. 1803, *Documentation*, March–April–May 1939; ibid., *Documentation*, Nov.–Dec. 1938 (issue devoted to the daily life in the USSR based on articles from the Soviet press).

⁹³ Azeri, 'La destruction de la vie de famille parmi les musulmans', *Prométhée*, no. 9 (1927), pp. 12–15.

Economy

Both organisations devoted a lot of attention to economic matters. Particularly closely watched was the situation in rural areas and collectivisation, as well as the accelerated industrialisation of the USSR. Official plans and economic goals set by the Soviet authorities were analysed, as were the course of and reports on the implementation of the successive plans. A lot of attention was devoted to the USSR's economic policy as well as its dumping policy. There were no major differences in descriptions of these issues between the two organisations' narratives. The fundamental thesis that can be found in the EIA's analyses of economic problems is that the USSR is failing to manage the economy, and is leading the country and its economy to collapse. In turn, activists of the Promethean movement stressed in their publications that the well-publicised achievements of the Soviet economy were made possible by the exploitation of the capital and natural resources of countries conquered and subjugated by Bolshevik Russia after the 1917 revolution.⁹⁴ It was also noted that Soviet economic policy had imperial objectives toward the subjugated states. For example, according to one Ukrainian author, the five-year plan was intended to bring about closer unification of the territories conquered by the Soviets.⁹⁵

Differences in the descriptions of the processes taking place in the USSR

The Soviet Union's nationality policy

The main difference between the two organisations' descriptions and analyses of Soviet reality stemmed from noticing or ignoring the nationality aspect. It is very easy to see that the subject of nationality policy in the USSR was not addressed at all in EIA publications. No mention was made in them of the Soviet 'federalism' or the separate nature of the republics that were part of the USSR. There were occasional references to Soviet Belarus, Ukraine, the Caucasus or the Central Asian republics, but only in the context of reporting on specific events and not in the context of nationality policy. Authors did not touch upon the issues relating to *korenizatsiya*, which consisted in granting the nations of the USSR some linguistic and cultural rights; in the 1920s it was the basis of the Bolsheviks' nationality policy. The implementation and the effects of this policy were not described, nor were the subsequent abandonment of it and gradual limitation of the rights granted earlier. Very rarely was the existence of non-Russian peoples within the USSR mentioned. For example, when the topic under discussion was petitions addressed to the International Red Cross and concerning the mistreatment of Georgian prisoners in Soviet Georgia.⁹⁶ We may even have the impression that

⁹⁴ A.A. Topchibachi, 'L'industrie du naphte', *Prométhée*, no. 120 (1936), pp. 22–24.

⁹⁵ K. Macevic, 'Le partage de la Russie (fin)', *Prométhée*, no. 96 (1934), pp. 23–24.

⁹⁶ BGE, EIA, no. 1792, *Documentation mensuelle*, Jan. 1927.

nationality-related topics would appear primarily when it was impossible to ignore them. This was the case of reports on the 1929 trial of the alleged Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, which, according to *Pravda*, was seeking to separate Ukraine from the USSR and hand over the influence and control over it to a ‘neighbouring bourgeois state’.⁹⁷ The situation was similar in the case of the death of the people’s commissar for education of the Ukrainian SSR, Mykola Skrypnyk, who was charged with ‘seeking to separate Soviet Ukraine from Russia’.⁹⁸ It was a rare event when the ‘colonial legacy’ of the tsarist period was mentioned in the context of Kazakhstan, Khiva, Turkestan, and Bukhara.⁹⁹ However, this was not associated with any analysis of the situation of non-Russian peoples in the USSR or the nationality policy of the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, in publications associated with the Promethean movement the Soviet authorities’ policy towards non-Russian peoples living within the USSR’s borders was one of the most frequently raised issues. Much attention was devoted to the new policy of *korenizatsiya*, which was to facilitate the development and strengthen the position of national languages of the various republic (for example, Ukrainian republic).¹⁰⁰ Despite criticism of the Soviet press’s lack of independence and repetitive content published in languages other than Russian, its importance for the development of various nations was recognised. In addition, Soviet figures from 1935 were cited, showing that a third of the newspapers in the USSR were published in national languages.¹⁰¹ Irrespective of these changes, there was a continuity between the Russification policies of the tsarist authorities and the Bolsheviks. Russification measures implemented in all regions with non-Russian populations were noted and condemned. Such information was mostly placed in the ‘chronicle’ published in every issue. One author observed that although the Bolshevik state officially advocated the idea of the freedom of nations, and had even created individual republics and autonomous regions/oblasts, it was following a policy towards these nations similar to that of the tsars.¹⁰² As early as in the mid-1920s Bolsheviks were seen to be making Russification attempts in various Soviet republics. Pressure of this kind was exerted even in such detailed and minor matters as, for example, the allegation that the abstract of an article in a Georgian scholarly journal was only in German. The Georgian communist Filipp Makharadze publicly criticised the journal’s editorial team for abandoning the “language of Lenin”.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ BGE, EIA, no. 1794, *Documentation mensuelle*, Dec. 1929.

⁹⁸ BGE, EIA, no. 1810, *Bulletin d’informations politiques*, no. 2, 18 Dec. 1933.

⁹⁹ BGE, EIA, no. 1794, *Documentation mensuelle*, Sept. 1929.

¹⁰⁰ *Prométhée*, no. 5, March 1927, p. 32.

¹⁰¹ J. Tarne, ‘La “Journée de la presse” du 5 mai et les nationalités de l’Union Soviétique’, *Prométhée*, no. 103 (1935), pp. 3–6.

¹⁰² ‘Le problème des nationalités dans l’Union Soviétique’, *Prométhée*, no. 4 (1927), pp. 1–3.

¹⁰³ ‘Chronique’, *Prométhée*, no. 1 (1926), p. 39.

Much more significant changes in the Soviet policy towards various nationalities occurred in the early 1930s. Restrictions were imposed at the time on the activities of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, which had previously tackled Ukrainian subjects too often; works of classics (like Taras Shevchenko) began to be censored; and changes were introduced in Ukrainian language dictionaries. The changes were accompanied by purges among Ukrainian communists. The ultimate symbol of the abandonment of the previous policy was Skrypnyk's suicide.¹⁰⁴ The same moves by the Soviet authorities were also observed in other regions of the USSR, for example, in the Soviet republics of the Caucasus.¹⁰⁵ The abandonment of the policy of *korenizatsiya* was associated with the dismissal of government officials – local communists – on charges of having 'nationalist', 'Menshevik' or 'counter-revolutionary' views.¹⁰⁶ Such situations occurred in all non-Russian regions of the Soviet Union, in Ukraine, the Caucasus,¹⁰⁷ Turkestan,¹⁰⁸ and even in the Comintern, where all representatives of Soviet Ukraine were removed from the Executive Committee during the 7th Congress in 1935.¹⁰⁹

The Soviet constitution of 1936

An excellent example of the differences between the two organisations' views on Soviet reality is the adoption of the new Soviet constitution on 5 December 1936. The awareness of the importance of nationality policies meant that in the Promethean movement, activists kept a very close eye on all changes in Soviet legislation. The contents of the various provisions of the constitution were of key importance not only to Soviet citizens, but also to the Soviet republics, which were formally part of a 'federation'. That is why the new constitution was frequently discussed in the Promethean press, even at the drafting stage, and then during the voting process and the period following its adoption. Attention was drawn primarily to provisions that were crucial for the political system as well as for nationality policy. The new constitution introduced much greater centralisation of the USSR than before. Authors of publications devoted to the topic stressed that in the light of the new provisions, the republican Supreme Councils (equivalents of parliaments) had lost a significant part of their powers, because the laws they passed had to conform to Soviet legislation. The people's commissariats of the various republics (equivalents of ministries) became subordinated to the people's commissariats in Moscow. In addition, severe restrictions were imposed on

¹⁰⁴ V. Sadovski, 'L'Ukraine soviétique à un tournant d'histoire', *Prométhée*, no. 104 (1935), pp. 7–12.

¹⁰⁵ 'Mémorandum sur le problème du Caucase, Protestation contre l'imperialisme rouge', *Prométhée*, no. 118 (1936), pp. 5–11.

¹⁰⁶ 'Chronique', *Prométhée*, no. 106 (1935), p. 32.

¹⁰⁷ 'De la déviation nationale en Azerbaïdjan', *Prométhée*, no. 88 (1934), pp. 5–7; 'La déviation nationale dans l'Azerbaïdjan soviétique', *Prométhée*, no. 100 (1935), pp. 9–14.

¹⁰⁸ Janai, 'Les événements au Turkestan Chinois', *Prométhée*, no. 86 (1934), pp. 18–21.

¹⁰⁹ N. Kovalevsky, 'Komintern sans Ukrainiens', *Prométhée*, no. 107 (1935), pp. 5–7.

budget preparation, which had to be approved by Moscow.¹¹⁰ All these changes were to contribute to the centralisation of the USSR and, consequently, increased oppression of non-Russian peoples.¹¹¹ The objections to the new Soviet constitution were formulated in the form of a protest by representatives of nations of the Promethean movement, which was submitted to the League of Nations on 25 September 1936.¹¹² The protest was reprinted by the Promethean press. Yet EIA publications paid no attention to the new constitution, did not take it up, and devoted no single article to it, either during the drafting stage or later.¹¹³ No mention was made either of the protest submitted to the League of Nations. The 'Bibliography of Documentation mensuelle' listed various Soviet publications devoted to the new constitution, but they were not analysed.¹¹⁴

Communist repressions

Repression was often described in the two organisations' publications, but in different ways. The EIA wrote about repressions against people, but rarely mentioned their nationality. On the other hand, publications of the Promethean League paid special attention to repressions against the non-Russian peoples of the USSR. These included repressions against the university community in Tiflis,¹¹⁵ arrests of members of the Azerbaijani Musavat party in late 1927 and early 1928,¹¹⁶ as well as repressions in Central Asia and in the territories located between Finland and the Soviet Union. Some of that information was very detailed. An excellent example is that of the data obtained from the Karelians and Ingrians associated with the Promethean movement. The data showed that since the early 1930s, the Soviet authorities had pursued a policy of displacing the indigenous population living on the Finnish-Soviet border. In 1931, some 18,000 Ingrians were displaced,¹¹⁷ with further waves of displacement following in the autumn of 1935,¹¹⁸ and in the summer and autumn of 1936.¹¹⁹ Notes on the subject contained many details, including the names of villages and the exact number of deportees from each village. Much attention was also paid to repressions in Soviet Ukraine.

¹¹⁰ N. Jordania, 'La constitution octroyée', *Prométhée*, no. 117 (1937), pp. 1–8; O. Oguz, 'La nouvelle constitution soviétique', *Prométhée*, no. 118 (1936), pp. 18–22.

¹¹¹ Mir Yacoub, 'Le problème national et la nouvelle constitution soviétique', *Prométhée*, no. 121 (1936), pp. 8–13; M. Danko, 'La constitution de l'oppression nationale', *Prométhée*, no. 121 (1936), pp. 17–22.

¹¹² 'Protestation contre l'imperialisme rouge', *Prométhée*, no. 118 (1936), pp. 1–5.

¹¹³ Cf. BGE, EIA, no. 1799, *Documentation*, 1936.

¹¹⁴ See BGE, EIA, no. 1801, 'Bibliographie', *Documentation*, March–April 1937,

¹¹⁵ M. Khoundadze, 'L'Université de Géorgie sous le régime soviétique', *Prométhée*, no. 20, July 1928, pp. 21–26.

¹¹⁶ 'Chronique: Arrestations et deportations', *Prométhée*, no. 14, Jan. 1928, pp. 29–30.

¹¹⁷ R.K., 'Les atrocités soviétiques en Ingrie', *Prométhée*, no. 101 (1935), pp. 13–17.

¹¹⁸ 'Lettre de Carélie Orientale', *Prométhée*, no. 109 (1935), pp. 18–20.

¹¹⁹ X., 'Expulsion des Finnois d'Ingrie', no. 118 (1936), pp. 25–26; on the earlier repressions in the region, see 'Revue de presse', *Prométhée*, no. 112 (1936), pp. 28–29.

Holodomor

The Great Famine, or Holodomor, which affected much of Soviet Ukraine and the southern part of Soviet territory between 1932 and 1933, attracted considerable interest in publications produced by the EIA and the Promethean League. For nearly two years, the Promethean press carried out detailed analyses of Soviet statements and collected all the available data on the subject. Descriptions and accounts obtained from the areas affected by the famine were often cited. The blame was most often attributed to exaggerated exports, poor management, and misguided decisions of the Soviet authorities, unwilling to take advantage of Western assistance.¹²⁰ The Promethean press also made attempts to provide estimates of the human losses suffered by Ukraine during the Holodomor. Such an attempt was made by, for example, Volodymyr Kubiyovych, a Ukrainian geographer and lecturer at Kraków's Jagiellonian University. His research covered the period until 1932, but for some reason, the announced continuation of his analysis was not published in the following issues of the periodical.¹²¹ The topic was taken up by Mykola Trotsky (Danko), a well-known Ukrainian journalist from Geneva, who estimated the human losses, based on official Soviet sources, at over 2 million.¹²² On the other hand, the Holodomor was described in a somewhat surprising way in the EIA's bulletins. Although the topic of the monstrous famine appeared regularly in the Documentation bulletin from mid-1933 to mid-1934, no mention was made that it affected the Ukrainian population. The tragedy was described without specifying the nationality of the famine victims. Even when the map published in the *Documentation* showed that the famine affected mainly Soviet Ukraine, no comment was made.¹²³ It is also hard to understand why only one item among the vast Ukrainian literature on the Holodomor published at the time was included in a bibliography from that era.¹²⁴

The Great Terror

The events that took place in the Soviet Union during the Great Terror period were very closely followed by the press all over the world. A lot of attention was paid to them, especially by periodicals published by centres or milieux dealing with the USSR, like the EIA or the Promethean League. However, their analyses

¹²⁰ E.g. H.M., 'La famine en URSS', *Prométhée*, no. 81 (1933), pp. 22–25; OLTK, 'La famine en Ukraine', *Prométhée*, no. 82 (1933), pp. 10–18; 'La famine en Ukraine', *Prométhée*, no. 84 (1933), pp. 24–27.

¹²¹ V. Koubiyovitch, 'Le mouvement de la population de l'Ukraine soviétique au cours de ces dernières années', *Prométhée*, no. 107 (1935), pp. 8–13; see also *Бібліографія наукових праць проф. д-ра Вол. Кубійовича* (Краків, 1943).

¹²² M. Danko, 'La lutte actuelle de l'Ukraine contre Moscou', *Prométhée*, no. 119 (1936), pp. 11–37.

¹²³ BGE, EIA, no. 1798, *Documentation*, July–Aug. 1933.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 'Liste des publications sur la famine de 1933 en Russie soviétique parues dans différents pays', *Documentation*, Sept.–Oct. 1933.

and interpretations of the events demonstrated that each organisation focused on a different aspect of the problem.

According to the authors writing for *Prométhée*, the purges carried out during the Great Terror period in the republics and regions inhabited mainly by non-Russians were not only intended as political repressions, but also, above all, had nationalistic overtones. In this way, the Soviet authorities put an end to the *korenizatsiya* policy, which, to some degree, had strengthened the sense of national belonging of the non-Russian peoples living in the USSR, and got rid of people who were not trustworthy enough in their eyes. The *Prométhée* authors stressed that the Kirov assassination was immediately followed by repressions launched in regions far away from Leningrad, regions that had nothing to do with the assassination. They affected, among others, Ukrainian and Caucasian communists, who were arrested and sentenced to death.¹²⁵ The Promethean press published detailed information about those arrested and convicted, as well as about the successive waves of repression. The events prompted the Promethean authors to look for reasons behind Stalinist repressions beyond purely political ones. They stressed that the first Moscow trial and execution were also followed by arrests of 'Ukrainian, Caucasian, and other separatists'.¹²⁶ The repressions of the second half of the 1930s were linked to the earlier ones from the 1920s. According to the Promethean press, the term 'Trotskyism' used by the Soviet agencies carrying out the repressions was, in fact, meant to refer to the separatist movement in Ukraine, which had previously been called 'Petliura movement'.¹²⁷ In this approach, the Great Terror had a nationality dimension as well. The topic of repressions was also present in the EIA's publications. The repressions were reported on in great detail, and their analyses suggested that they were leading to a dictatorship not even of one party but of one man.¹²⁸ However, the nationality issue was not raised. The nationality dimension of the Great Terror was completely absent from the EIA's publications.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the analyses of the Great Terror carried out in the publications of both organisations coincided on one point. According to the EIA's studies, the trials and repressions of the Great Terror period testified to the growth of social discontent, the existence of opposition to the government,¹²⁹ and the fact that the communists had not yet taken complete control of the state because there was opposition to the authorities.¹³⁰ Similarly,

¹²⁵ G.G., 'L'Assassinat de Kirov', *Prométhée*, no. 97 (1934), p. 104; 'Chronique', *Prométhée*, no. 98 (1935), p. 29.

¹²⁶ 'Chronique', *Prométhée*, no. 118 (1936), p. 32.

¹²⁷ M. Danko, 'Les nations opprimées par Moscou et le danger de guerre', *Prométhée*, no. 120 (1936), pp. 10–15.

¹²⁸ BGE, EIA, no. 1802, *Documentation*, Sept.–October 1938.

¹²⁹ BGE, EIA, no. 1810, *Bulletin d'informations politiques*, no. 10, 7 Dec. 1934; no. 11, 7 Feb. 1935; no. 1811, *Bulletin d'informations politiques*, no. 20, 22 Sept. 1936.

¹³⁰ BGE, EIA, no. 1801, *Documentation*, July–Aug.–Sept. 1937.

according to the press of the Promethean movement, they testified to a growth of resistance and genuine opposition to the government,¹³¹ with the successive waves of repression being the best evidence of this.¹³² In this respect, both organisations were mistaken in their analyses of the situation in the USSR.

Conclusion

The International Anti-Communist Entente and the Promethean League were two seemingly close organisations that collected, analysed, and publicised information about processes taking place in the USSR during the inter-war period. Yet they differed in their attitude toward Russia as a state. The EIA, which relied on Russian émigrés, sought to fight the communist system, but not Russia as a state. The Promethean movement, which brought together representatives of non-Russian nations subjugated by Russia, sought independence for these nations and thus sought to break up Russia (the USSR) into various individual states. This fundamental difference made each of these organisations see and analyse the processes taking place in the USSR differently. The EIA focused primarily on the communist system and completely overlooked the nationality issue, although it was writing about a state made up mainly of non-Russian peoples. The Promethean movement focused primarily on the nationality issue, although it also recognised other aspects of the Soviet government's actions. In both organisations, the choice of how to perceive Russia (the USSR) was fully conscious. The differences had serious consequences for the recipients of information disseminated by the EIA and the Promethean movement, who received an incomplete picture of reality, which, in turn, influenced society's views and political decisions.

This distinction is key in describing the organisations, commonly referred to as 'anti-communist', both in the inter-war period and, above all, during the Cold War. These organisations did not maintain any relations with each other, did not cite each other's publications, and did not undertake joint actions. Their activities, in fact, represented two distinct positions towards Soviet Russia, formulated in the inter-war period. These examples were so strong that they had a considerable impact on the attitude of various countries and the international community towards Russia, also in the post-war period.

Abstract

The article compares the perceptions and interpretations of events in the USSR in the inter-war period by two international anti-communist organisations: the Entente internationale anti-

¹³¹ Cf. e.g. 'Chronique', *Prométhée*, no. 120 (1936), p. 28; Danko, 'La lutte actuelle', pp. 11–37.

¹³² BGE, EIA, no. 1802, *Documentation*, Sept.–Oct. 1938.

communiste (EIA) and the Promethean League (Promethean movement). The EIA brought together representatives of anti-communist organisations from various countries as well as Russian émigrés, while the Promethean movement brought together representatives of nations subjugated by Russia / USSR. Both organisations regarded the USSR as their opponent, but analysed the processes occurring within its borders differently. Although the USSR was a multinational state, the EIA focused only on the communist system and the Comintern's activities, failing to recognise the country's nationality problem. The Promethean movement analysed both the Comintern's activities and the USSR's nationality policy, which had an impact on many processes within the USSR (for example, the Great Terror). Thus, in the inter-war period, two approaches to the USSR emerged, which would constitute the main difference between anti-communist organisations in the twentieth century.

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