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# JÓZEF WINIEWICZ – A MAN OF THE CONGRESS

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to present the silhouette of Józef Winiewicz – “a man of the Congress” who throughout almost the entire period of World War II collaborated with the Ministry of Congress Works as part of the Polish government-in-exile, and later worked for the Bureau of Congress Works in post-war Poland. Only his activities undertaken during his stay in Britain and later in Poland, and related to the works carried out by the above institutions in the years 1940 to 1947 are presented here. His chief responsibilities included development and presentation of Polish demands for the future peace treaty with Germany.

**Keywords:** Józef Winiewicz, Ministry of Congress Works, Bureau of Congress Works, Polish government-in-exile

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the core objectives of the Polish resort of foreign affairs, both during the Second World War and immediately after its end, was the development of national demands for the future peace treaty with Germany. To this end, within the framework of the Polish government-in-exile in London, and later in the newly formed post-war governmental structures in Poland, two institutions were created, referred to as the “congress” ones: Ministry of Congress Works (Ministerstwo Prac Kongresowych, MPK) and the Bureau of Congress Works (Biuro Prac Kongresowych, BPK). MPK was established in 1942, although it had functioned earlier under different names. Its responsibility was directing the work on the preparation of postulates and provisions for the draft version of a peace treaty with Germany after the war. From November 1944 to July 1947, the resort was under joint leadership with the Ministry of Religious Beliefs and Public Education. Finally, the Ministry was abolished by the President’s decree of 10.08.1948. The Bureau of Congress Works, on the other hand, was established by

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the new, post-war Polish authorities. The institution has acted in close cooperation with the majority of other ministries from 2.05.1945 until 15.03.1948. Its activities were not limited to the development of Polish demands for the future peace treaty with Germany – another part of its work was also equipping politicians and diplomats with reasoned, “professional” arguments to support and argue in favour of the Polish postulates and demands concerning Germany, which were presented later on the international arena.

An interesting quirk in the history of both institutions, each of them functioning within conditions and structures very different in terms of ideology, is the surprising and unplanned continuity and consistency of Polish efforts as regards the future state of affairs with Germany. The Bureau of Congress Works was extensively using the achievements of the Ministry of Congress Works, and its efforts to model itself on this past institution were visible in a number of elements, starting with the coincidentally similar sounding name, through substantive achievements, ending with the former employees of MPK who, after returning home, began working within the structures of the newly formed institution. One such character was Józef Winiewicz, pre-war journalist, associated mainly with the editorial department of the daily newspaper “Dziennik Poznański”, but also with the “Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny” and “Gazeta Polska” dailies. After the outbreak of World War II, through Hungary, where he worked as editor of “Wieści Polskie”, and later via Turkey, Egypt and Palestine, Winiewicz came to Britain. He settled in London, where he started working with the Polish government in exile. In 1945 he returned briefly to Poland; once there he was shortly delegated to work as a counselor at the Polish Embassy in London. Later on, he was appointed Polish ambassador to the United States (1947–1956). The crowning achievement of his career was the position of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, which he occupied continuously for fifteen years (1957–1972). As an active diplomat he also represented Poland at the sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations (Chodera & Kiryk, 2005, p. 1634). His ability to adapt to changing political circumstances and activity within structures of power of contrasting ideological convictions left him without a large number of followers, and made Józef Winiewicz an ambiguous figure; he is considered as such nowadays as well.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The aim of this article is to present the silhouettes of Józef Winiewicz as a man of congress (a standard moniker given to persons cooperating with the Ministry of Congress Works and the Bureau of Congress Works). Consequently, only his activities undertaken in the framework of these institutions on both the British and Polish soil, covering the period from 1940 to 1947, are covered by this article.

For this purpose, the author undertook content analysis of extensive documentary material from this period, collected in the Archives of Modern Records and Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw. A valuable source of knowledge about Józef Winiewicz also proved to be his own press articles and memoirs, published in 1985 (Winiewicz, 1985). Interesting facets of Winiewicz’s activities and the opinions of his colleagues were uncovered with the help of numerous memoirs and diaries of Polish diplomats published after World War II.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the most important tasks of the Ministry of Congress Works during World War II was to canvass for and headhunt experts who were to become responsible for working on specific issues, relevant to the preparation of the draft of the future peace treaty with Germany. Enlisting the help of experts was to be a guarantee of the intensity, commitment to and effectiveness of the Ministry works. In practice, the resort resembled a scientific institution rather than a political body. Polish intelligentsia, settled in Britain for the duration of the war, willingly undertook this type of work. Oftentimes, it was their main occupation, providing only livelihood.

One of the workers who started their work with the so-called “Congress Ministry” at the time was Józef Winiewicz. Interestingly, Winiewicz himself suggested he starts working for the department dealing with the peace congress matters to his boss Marian Seyda in 1940 during his stay in Budapest, where he worked as a journalist and editor of the newspaper for the exiled Poles “Więści Polskie” (Kowalska, 2007).

Seyda – not without initial resistance – after consultation with the Council of Ministers agreed to this proposal, and called Winiewicz to Paris, trying to get him also a French visa. Unfortunately, in April 1940, the passage to France from Hungary was already very difficult. Winiewicz offered his services also directly to the Political Department in the Office of Wartime Goals, led by Kazimierz Morawski (it was the institution that dealt with the issues related to peace with Germany before MPK was established). Winiewicz had the ambition to analyze in depth and formulate the final proposal of one the Polish wartime goals – namely, the question of the future western Polish border. He considered himself an expert on the subject, and wanted to focus the Polish public opinion on this specific issue (Pasierb, 1996, pp.195–196). Not without some reluctance, because of his ambiguous political views, the offer made by Winiewicz was accepted. However, he was entrusted instead with addressing the issue of “The German settlement campaign in Poland”. According to the list of commissioned works of the Political Department, the project work was to be completed in the period from 1.11.1940 until 31.01.1940, and the fee amounted to £120 (*List of works commissioned*). He was called to work for the government once again in 1940. However, he reached London, where the Polish authorities resettled, only in March 1941. Upon arrival in the UK, Winiewicz stated that he sub-contracted the task entrusted to him earlier for completion to fellow writer and journalist Józef Kisielewski, whom he met in Istanbul while collecting the relevant materials. This information is difficult to verify today (Pasierb, 1996, pp. 196–197). His memoirs show, however, that the materials sent to France, and which he was able to gather in Budapest and in the course of his later query in Istanbul were used for the preparation by the Office of Wartime Goals of a 600-page long publication “The German New Order in Poland”, discussing the most important issues related to damage caused by the German during the war (Winiewicz, 1985, p. 249).

Activities of Józef Winiewicz in London are difficult to assess in an unequivocal manner – just as his views were not always obvious. As an example may serve his contacts with Stefan Wilanowski (a member of the People’s Party), who got in touch him at the end of 1943/beginning of 1944. Wilanowski was later a representative of the Polish Committee of National Liberation in Britain that has not received official recognition by the Brits (Dobrowolski, 1981, p.41; Materski, 2007, p.34). Initially, Wilanowski offered Winiewicz his services in researching some issue for the “Congress Ministry”. He was also quite open with declaring

his sympathy for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Despite these publicly proclaimed views, Wilanowski received the commission. After some time, Wilanowski also suggested Winiewicz he should share with him the Ministry's materials on territorial claims and plans for the future of Germany. They were to subsequently be sent to "friends" in the Soviet Union (Winiewicz, 1985, p. 303). Winiewicz agreed, without however consulting that decision with anyone. After the war, one of those secret documents was sent to Warsaw from Moscow to help with the current resort works (Pasierb, 1996, p. 235). It is hard to say nowadays whether Winiewicz knew that he was indirectly collaborating with Moscow. However, his subsequent decisions suggest that he was aware of that fact.

During his stay in London, Winiewicz was also collaborating with a thriving research institution: the Polish Research Center, headed by Adam Żółtowski. It was a non-governmental organization, which arranged various contacts with similar institutions in the West for the Polish authorities in exile. It is known that it maintained regular contact with the British governmental and social institution "Chatham House" (popular name of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, derived from the name of the former seat of prime ministers at St. James' Square in London). It dealt with organizing and conducting research on international relations in the field of politics, economy and security. The Polish Research Center also published numerous works centered around the Polish issues, such as the Polish western border, the issue of Gdańsk, Upper Silesia, as well as covering the Polish foreign policy questions, which were intended to serve as materials for, inter alia, the Polish institutions involved in preparatory works for the peace congress. Among the many publications, was also the work by Józef Winiewicz (1943) "Aims and failures of the German New Order". His work "The Questions of German Blood" also appeared in print as part of the series "Polish Studies and Sketches" published by the Center. In the years 1942–1943, five reprints from the journal "Polish Fortnightly Review", published by the Polish Ministry of Information, appeared as part of the aforementioned series (Pasierb, 1996, p.201) .

Popularization of the Polish position on various issues turned out to be the one aspect of Winiewicz's stay in London on which most material can be found. It also garnered him a wide network of contacts, and ensured his name became known in the British circles and beyond. In 1944, his comprehensive English-language monograph "The Polish – German frontier", entirely devoted to the matter of Polish territorial claims in the west appeared in print. Winiewicz dealt there not only with the historical evolution of the issue, but also discussed its economic and demographic grounds and implications (Winiewicz, 1944). The focus of his expertise on the Polish western border meant the Soviet representatives – who at the time were intensely seeking, even among the Poles, support and justification for their border outline plans – were particularly interested in his work. A highly – not to say extremely – positive review of his book was published in the journal "War and the Working Class" by Soviet historian Evgenij Viktorovič Tarlé, an expert on the Napoleonic era. Winiewicz (1985, p.299) recognized this in his memoirs as an extraordinary distinction, without commenting in any way on the fairly obvious involvement of the Soviet authorities in the appearance of this review (Jędrzychowski, 1987, p.136).

After the war, the new Polish authorities tried to recreate the diplomatic corps. In 1945, it was composed of fourteen people from the Polish Workers' Party (PPR), eight representatives of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), and several from the Polish People's Party (PSL) and the Democratic Party (SD). From among the "old-timers" – the cadre of pre-war diplomats,

politicians, writers and journalists associated with the government of Stanisław Mikołajczyk – who often remained independent of any parties, employment was offered to Józef Winiewicz (since 1947 in Washington, DC), Jan Drohojowski – in Mexico, to Henryk Strasburger (former Secretary of the Treasury in the London-based government) – in London, Mieczysław Rogalski in Norway and finally to Tadeusz Chromecki, deputy director of the Political Department, who made a name for himself as a witness in the Trial of Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek (Dobrowolski, 1981, p.46).

Preparatory work for the peace treaty with Germany was intensified as well, and the discussion of Germany-related matters took on a new ideological dimension. In London, a peace congress department continued to operate as part of the Ministry of Religious Beliefs and Public Education, which was also dealing with the same questions. Meanwhile in Poland, the Bureau of Congress Works was created by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the only time in history directly modeling it on the organizational formula employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Polish government-in-exile in London. At that moment, BPK has become the main institution elaborating the Polish official position on the German issues (Dobrowolski, 1981, p.47).

The Bureau of Congress Works was founded on 5.02.1945, in order to collect and draw up preparatory materials necessary in drawing up a draft of the peace treaty with Germany, and materials that the Polish diplomats might need during a possible peace congress (*Report – a chronicle of activities*). The staff structure of the Bureau was not too extensive. Only few permanent staff were hired, and the Bureau activities were carried out mainly by a multitude of co-workers working under a contract of mandate or doing short-term commissioned work. The scope of their duties was usually specified in an individual commission or services/works order. The difficulty in the selection of experts consisted in the fact that in addition to professional experience they should also be able to appropriately influence politicians and enjoy their respect (Pasierb, 1996, pp. 224–225). In August 1945, the Bureau of Congress Works received a new seat in Warsaw, which allowed to improve the working conditions of the institution. More and more people were recruited to work at the Bureau. Initially, expertise and professionalism counted the most as a hiring factor, but with time the political and ideological pedigree began to play an increasingly important role. One of the representatives of the Polish community in London wanting to cooperate with the new authorities was Józef Winiewicz. As commented Marian Naszkowski, later head of the Main Political Administration of the Polish Armed Forces, Deputy Minister of National Defence and Foreign Affairs and, finally, a representative of the Polish People's Republic to the International Labour Organisation in Geneva, Winiewicz “was a figure formed from a different mold. Before the war, he was a journalist with convictions far from veering to the left, editor-in-chief of one of daily newspapers in Poznań. In general, very much a man from Poznań... he spent the war years in England, where he was active in the government-in-exile circles. After the war, he volunteered immediately and put himself at the disposal of the government in Warsaw. He started his diplomatic career at the embassy in London” (Naszkowski, 1986, p. 156 – author's translation).

At the end of May in early June 1945 he received a telegram from Moscow calling him to Warsaw. He was instructed him to bring the dossiers prepared by the Ministry of Congress Works, containing the argumentation supporting the Polish wartime goals in terms of territorial demands. Winiewicz made the decision to return to the country basically immediately (Pasierb, 1996, pp. 234–235), especially as even Stanisław Mikołajczyk was urging him to do

so. As mentioned by the diplomat, ambassador to – inter alia – Mexico and Egypt, Jan Drohojowski: “When I was taking my leave of Mikołajczyk, he pressed upon me the obligation to arrange as soon as possible for Winiewicz’s arrival from London with the materials from the Ministry of Congress Works” (Drohojowski, 1969, p.264 – author’s translation). Because he did not manage to obtain any help with the transport of said materials, Winiewicz took only as much as his luggage limits allowed.

For the Bureau of Congress Works, Winiewicz was a great asset – an expert with vast experience gained during cooperation with the Ministry of Congress Works in London. He was known in various circles, and had a vast array of contacts that he could put to use. After his return, his first meeting took place at the offices of Minister Zygmunt Modzelewski, who “expressed his regret that I did not come in the spring, for they could have benefited from my presence in Potsdam. I managed to speak only one sentence: – Minister, I would like to openly confess what thoughts and what path led me to you – I started – Dear sir – answered Modzelewski – we know very well who you are. You most likely also have no doubts as to who we are. Let’s leave it at that”. (Winiewicz, 1985, p. 325 – author’s translation).

One of the people associated with the Polish government-in-exile who were considering a possible return to Poland was also Marian Seyda. It is to Winiewicz that he turned to ask for help in enabling his departure from London. However, he wanted to make sure that in Poland there will be some post waiting for him, as he had had offers from American newspapers, recruiting him to work as a correspondent. He did not want to take such a job until the opportunities awaiting him in Poland became clear. He would have preferred to return to the country, and continue his scientific and journalistic career there, but he wanted to be reassured, as he wrote in a letter to Winiewicz that “this kind of cooperation will be for me in Poland possible, that is to say, that I will not be constrained in expressing my impartial, substantive, positive views and my articles will not lose all their value due to their chronic detention at the censorship office” Winiewicz reproached himself that he did not do more for Seyda. He did, admittedly, communicate on Seyda’s behalf his offers of cooperation to “Kurier Poznański” newspaper and several journals of a national-democratic bent, but he claimed: “For lack of time, I could do nothing more for Seyda that to put, so to speak, my official stamp on his letters and cooperation proposals” (Winiewicz, 1985, p.317 – author’s translation). In the end, Seyda did not return to Poland. For some time he lived in London, to eventually move to Argentina with his family. He still maintained a semblance of contacts with Poland by, inter alia, publishing articles in the Polish press – for example in “Odra” (Seyda, 1947) and “Rzeczpospolita” (Seyda, 1947a).

After his arrival in Poland, the responsibilities of Winiewicz within the new structures of power have proven to be very specific. As per the command of Józef Olszewski, the then Director of the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs he was, following the example of MPK in London, to draw up a detailed roadmap for establishing the Bureau of Congress Works, and to develop a plan of its future operations. Subsequently, Winiewicz was told to get in touch with Regina Fleszarowa, who had already started working of establishing the new institution (Winiewicz, 1985, pp.325–326). He was also appointed as the President of the national boundary commission for the German border. In the end, however, he could not serve in this role as he once again left for the United Kingdom.

Józef Winiewicz presented his plans entitled: “Concerning the Bureau of Congress Works” at the Ministry on 25.09.1945. In this work, he was mostly copying the organizational

statutes of the Ministry of Congress Works of the Polish government-in-exile in London, approved 18 months earlier, on 8.03.1944 (Meeting of the Council of Ministers, 1944). According to his concept, the main task of the facility was “preparing for the Foreign Ministry and diplomatic missions of all materials needed to establish the Polish point of view in international discussions, and encourage decisions in favour of this view in connection with international conferences. The Bureau of Congress Works is therefore a research and study base of the Foreign Affairs Ministry”. As stems from this description, the Bureau was to work not only on matters entrusted to it by the Ministry, but also to collaborate with academic institutions engaged in similar research. According to Winiewicz’s idea, the Bureau was to be divided into four departments: political, legal, economic and statistical-cartographic one. its activity was to a large extent be based on collaboration with experts (*Concerning the Bureau of Congress Works*).

Staying longer in Poland, however, was not at the time part of Winiewicz’s plans, hence in the presented roadmap as one of the most important tasks of the Bureau he listed the creation of a branch office of the Bureau of Congress Works in London. The plan for establishment of a branch office was presented by him in great detail, what was due largely to his excellent knowledge of the British reality and opportunities for action in that country. He saw the need for such a branch to be established, and for the Polish position towards Germany to be carefully documented for a number of reasons. Firstly, he expected an “attack: of the so-called Anglo-Saxon countries against the Polish policy on Germany, as he saw evidence of decidedly pro-German sympathies in the UK, and of existence and intense activity of influential “German circles” in the United States. The choice of London as the seat of the branch was also not accidental. Winiewicz recognized it as the best place because in the near future London was to become a host of many international conferences and meetings. Moreover, as he emphasized, a subsidiary of the Bureau could somehow control the activities of “the London-based group of Poles”. The new institution was to be called the Congress Works Bureau of the Polish Embassy. It was also to be very closely linked to the Polish Embassy, with its head enjoying the diplomatic status and a position of *attaché speciale*. In Winiewicz’s opinion, the position should be occupied by a person who is well versed in Polish-German relations. His plan was, obviously, to take on the role of the head of this institution. For this purpose, he also commenced discussions with experts who he wanted to work with him in the future. He managed to convince eight specialists: prof. Edward Szturm de Sztrem, intended to deal with the economic and statistical problems; PhD. Ludwik Grodzitski – ethnographer and cartographer; Irena Łukaszewiczowa – cartographer; prof. Bogdan Zaborski – geographer, PhD Włodzimierz Moderow – who would be responsible for international organizations (UN); Eng. Jan Dąbrowski – to take on the issues of damages and economic disarmament of Germany; attorney Aleksander Bramson – who would deal with the problems of international agreements and war crimes and finally Eng. Adam Rybiński – an expert on economic affairs of the western territories. All these specialists were ready to work both in Poland and in the UK (*Concerning the Bureau of Congress Works*).

The branch office in London should, according to the concept of its author, work closely with the Bureau in Poland, which co-operation would consist in the exchange of material acquired, as well as employee exchanges. An important task for the London branch Winiewicz saw in recovering and send to Poland the full documentation of the former Ministry of Congress Works of the Polish government-in-exile in London, which he himself had been

unable to transport to Poland in its entirety. The subsidiary was also to obtain for the Bureau the series of publications by the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Institute of Political and Economic Planning, to supplement the collections of Polish libraries, heavily depleted during the war (*Concerning the Bureau of Congress Works*).

Finally, the London branch started its operation at the beginning of January 1946, and Józef Winiewicz was indeed appointed as its head. After arriving in London from Warsaw, in the then prevailing situation he could only rely on his own relationships and contacts. Thanks to his pre-war publications he was known among the British, what has admittedly smoothed his path significantly at the beginning (*Report by PhD A. Wilder on the activity of the London branch office*).

One of the main tasks of the agency was to keep the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed of what is position of the British government circles on particular issues related to the future of Germany and Austria. Of particular interest to headquarters in Warsaw, of course, was the issue of the new western Polish border. What's more, the London subsidiary was required to immediately react – through publications in the British press – to all unfavorable opinions expressed about the border being drawn along the Oder–Neisse line (*Report on the activities of the Bureau of Congress Works, Report by PhD A. Wilder on activity of the London branch office*).

Among the responsibilities of the branch office of the Bureau of Congress Works was also direct cooperation with Polish diplomats. During the conference of deputy foreign ministers in London in late January and early February 1947, representatives of the Bureau were actively supporting the efforts of the Polish delegation (*Report on the activities of the Bureau of Congress Works, Report by PhD A. Wilder on activity of the London branch office*).

The Bureau subsidiary also dealt with the preparation of publications related to issues currently discussed in the international arena. On the initiative of Winiewicz, the institution also became involved in the matter of war damages compensation and restitution. Winiewicz believed that Poland should receive “from the scientific institutes in Germany everything that it is directly related to Polish matters. For example, we should get from the German Foreign Institute in Stuttgart all the files relating to the German minority in Poland; on this matter we will focus next. I would like to add that already during the war I promoted this concept in the Allied Committee on Disarmament of Germany, justifying it on the grounds of great importance of moral disarmament of Germany, on a par with its demilitarization. We at the time had full support of France and smaller states in this regard”. (*Letter of J. Winiewicz to the Minister of Foreign Affairs*). Based on surviving sources, unfortunately, it cannot be clearly concluded whether – and if at all, to what extent – Winiewicz managed to complete this project. It is known, however, that in November 1946 the London branch of BPK served as an intermediary in the transfer of “4 boxes of materials” from the former Ministry of Congress Works of the Polish government-in-exile in London. All recovered documentation has been forwarded to the Library and Archival Department at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and is accessible today in the Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (*Report on the activities of the Bureau of Congress Works*).

In his organizational proposal “Concerning the Bureau of Congress Works”, Winiewicz also considered the creation of branches of the Bureau in the United States (*Concerning the Bureau of Congress Works*). His plan, however, was never realized. In 1947 Winiewicz began working as ambassador in Washington, in a way using this position to further the peace congress related works. He repeatedly emphasized the role of the United States in the post-war arrangements not only concerning Germany, but also Poland. In mid – 1947 Winiewicz,



seeing the progressive cooling of the Polish-American relations suggested to Minister Modzelewski: “The United States in every situation will remain a country with which we should strive to be, if not in the most cordial, then at least in the most correct of relations. The meaning of *in every situation* excludes, of course, the circumstances of a fundamental, open conflict”. Winiewicz believed that such proper relations can be maintained even if “the division of the world into two camps becomes absolutely clear. We will then, for the United States, be a small country in a different ‘zone of influence’, we will be a country with which Washington will definitely want to maintain some sort of a relationship” (*Letter of the Polish ambassador to the United States J. Winiewicz*). The vision of the future Polish-American relations in reports written by Winiewicz was not particularly optimistic, however. He did not believe in the possibility of their taking a positive turn: “How can we build consensus, ‘build bridges’, create foundations of peaceful coexistence of countries with such different political systems?” (Winiewicz, 1985 – author’s translation).

During his tenure in Washington, however, Winiewicz managed to complete the task which he originally had allocated to the possible American subsidiary of BPK. Namely, he managed to acquire the materials of the Ministry of Congress Works collected in the United States. About recovery of a part of these archives he informed Minister Modzelewski on 17.06.1947. He included a copy of the recovered *Aide Mémoire*, created at the “Congress Ministry” in London and later on adopted by the Polish government-in-exile in London in November 1942. The document was subsequently, in December 1942, communicated by Prime Minister W. Sikorski to the U.S. President F.D. Roosevelt and transmitted by Ambassador Raczyński to Minister Eden. The letter concerned mainly the Polish demands after the war. Particular emphasis was put by its authors on the shape of the new western Polish border. The final border outline has not been specified there, although the *Aide Mémoire* contained a provision on the need for inclusion of Szczecin into the Polish territories (*Report of J. Winiewicz for Minister Z. Modzelewski*).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The activity of Józef Winiewicz in the framework of “Congress institutions” during both World War II and shortly thereafter was one among the chief achievements of this diplomat. In the center of his interests lay primarily the matter of the Polish western border. However, he quickly realized that Poland will not play too large a role in settlement of this particular matter on the international arena. During the Paris peace conference lasting from July to October 1946, the representatives of the great powers managed to agree on a treaty of peace for all the European allies of the Third Reich. It seemed at the time that the division between the East and the West is not so great, and that the peace process with Germany will be managed jointly. Yet, in post-war Europe, Germany proved to be a country around which centered the conflict between the greatest powers. The country was too important – in terms of location and territory, population, and economic potential – to ignore. The world waited with bated breath for the United States, Great Britain, France and above all the Soviet Union to undertake any action (Middleton, 1949, p. 226). Most of the governments of the countries that suffered the greatest losses during the war were waiting for the upcoming peace conference in Moscow to take part in discussions on Germany. Not all diplomats, however, were of the same opinion. Józef Winiewicz so remembers that time: “We had rid ourselves of the illusion

that there would be a peace congress aimed at ending the state of war with Germany; the issue clearly remained in the hands of the great powers” (Winiewicz, 1985, p. 356 – author’s translation). The matter had, indeed, been settled much earlier, during the conference of Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs in London in late January and early February 1947.

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