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REPUBLIC IN EXILE – POLITICAL LIFE OF POLISH EMIGRATION IN UNITED KINGDOM AFTER SECOND WORLD WAR

ABSTRACT

The aim of article is to introduce to political life of polish emigration in United Kingdom in the years 1945–1990. In this paper I intend to present the history of polish emigres in Great Britain, which were forming Republic in exile - Poland beyond Poland. In the post-war period polish emigres were developing polish political scene basing on principles expressed in the Constitution of 1935. The main entities which shaping the emigration policy were President and the Government in exile, as well as the Parliament's substitute in the form of National Councils. Moreover, pre-war political parties were also important in polish political life in United Kingdom. They shaped the identity of emigration. The main goal of the Republic in exile was realized – centre of power in exile has retained a deposit of legality and continuity of the state. It became a symbol of independent Poland, which lasted despite the fact that the whole world turned away from it.

Keywords: Poland, exile, polish emigration, political life United Kingdom, London

1. INTRODUCTION – REPUBLIC IN EXILE

The end of Second World War was extremely significant moment for polish political emigration and started new beginning of it. Andrzej Friszke, Rafał Habielski and Paweł Machcewicz (1999) noticed that the event which held in 1939–1945 started „Second Great Emigration”. There was a time when a lot of polish society living beyond their country. They were against political situation after 1945 year (Friszke, 1999). The world military disagreement forced several millions polish people to escape their country. The reason of their decision was anxiety about repressions of German and Soviet occupier, what Tadeusz Wolsza remarked (Wolsza, 2010). The people, who were living on alien land, became the part of political emigration (Friszke, 1999; Kersten, 1974; Wróbel, 2016; Żaroń, 1994). This group included polish

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politicians, intellectual elite of pre-war Republic of Poland, soldiers of allied countries, polish citizens from eastern Poland and polish people who were freed from German death camps (Friszke, 1999; Wolsza, 2010; Żaroń, 1994).

The emigres were forming their own philosophy of functioning on alien land. They created political institutions, social and cultural living in order to prepare to change the system of world power. This act was supposed to regain independence by Poland.

The centre of polish emigration after Second World War was Great Britain. On that account, the Supreme Authorities of Republic of Poland in exile since 1940 year were located there. In spite of global conflict, they did not exist (Rostocki, 2002). The London became temporary capital, where polish traditions, continuity and legality were stored (Habielski, 1995). More and more people were gathering around polish Government in exile in order to act for their captivated state.

However, in 1945 year the global powerhouses with United States and Great Britain stopped to face the polish Government in exile in favour of temporary Government, which was created on polish land (TRJN – Tymczasowy Rząd Jedności Narodowej) (Tarka, 2001). In spite of this fact, Supreme Authorities in London did not stop the struggle for independent Republic of Poland (Friszke, 1999; Rostocki, 2002, Tarka, 2003).

Not only legality Government in Great Britain was the reason of high value this state for polish emigres. They arrived to London because of various motive. Tadeusz Wolsza (2010) said that among emigres were politicians, diplomatists, journalists, scientists, artists, athletes and primarily soldiers. They were forming the most numerous group which consisted 228 thousand of people in July 1945. Moreover, in order to make a point of meaning London for Poles during Second World War, Andrzej Friszke pioneered the definition: „Polish London” and „Warsaw on the Thames” (Friszke, 1994; Wolsza, 2010).

After Second World War, polish political live was expanding in Great Britain. The President of Polish Republic and Government in exile were still continuing their independence activity based on legal constitution of 1935 (Rostocki, 2002). Moreover, during whole period of „states in exile”, political parties were existing (Friszke, 1999). They were acting by National Council, which was the substitute of parliament. The role of National Council was consulting and giving an opinion for President and Government (Turkowski, 2001).

Below, I would like to present the history of polish emigres in Great Britain, who were forming Republic in exile, that was Poland beyond Poland.

2. POLITICAL LIFE OF POLISH EMIGRATION IN THE YEARS 1945–1990

The history of polish emigration began when the Second World War ended. In that time, the situation of independence emigres, especially the President and Government in exile, was so questionable. International society marginalized the role and meaning of Government in exile. Moreover, the attention was concentrated in Warsaw where was created the temporary government (TRJN – Tymczasowy Rząd Jedności Narodowej). On this area, the regime was structuring by Red Army. The events, which took place in 1945 year, were significant meaning for polish Government in exile. Primarily, the United States and Soviet Union stopped to allow polish Government in exile in favour of Government in Warsaw (Tarka, 2001, 2003).

Toward to these facts, almost all states broke diplomatic relations with polish Government in exile. However, the international pressure was not concern the Spain, Holy See,

Lebanon, Cuba and Ireland. This states still allowed the polish Government in London and did not broke diplomatic relations with government in Warsaw. In spite of this fact, polish emigres did not stop independence actions. The polish Government in exile were continuing their efforts based on constitution of 1935. Moreover, they wished to come back on polish land in appropriate moment (Machcewicz, 1999; Tarka, 2003).

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In 1945 year Tomasz Arciszewski was ruling the polish Government in exile. He was a member of pre-war party Polska Partia Socjalistyczna. In the meantime, the National Council did not exist. It was dissolved on 21th March 1945 since the conflict among political party, which was concerned with polish Government's attitude toward Yalta agreement. The President Władysław Raczekiewicz and Prime Minister Tomasz Arciszewski wished to have a common voice of all political environments in „polish London”. Their aim was to create the new National Council which would support the position of polish Authorities in exile (Suchcitz, 1994). Stronnictwo Ludowe and Stronnictwo Pracy did not present the candidates to National Council. The leaders of these parties wanted to come back to Warsaw to take up political activities. Thereupon, it was raised some dilemma. The President, who could establish the National Council, did not want to do it whole. If he had did it, the National Council was created only part of emigration environments (Buczek, 1996; Friszke, 1994; Rostocki, 2002). In January 1945 politicians concerned with President Raczekiewicz and Prmie Minister Arciszewski made a decision to create special Council (Rada Polskich Stronnictw Politycznych), which contained the parties opposite Yalta agreement (Siwik, 1996). The composition of this council was fluid and her role was limited to issuing statements and organizing meeting where they were debated. Among the participants of council were Stronnictwo Narodowe, Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, Stronnictwo Demokratyczne, Stronnictwo Ludowe „Wolność” and part of Stronnictwo Pracy which supported Government in exile (Friszke, 1999; Turkowski, 2001).

The Prime Minister Arciszewski found that support of council had not been enough in order to have the endorsement of all emigres. He wished to change this situation after replacing Władysław Raczekiewicz at his president post. Since 1944 Tomasz Arciszewski was the official successor for this position. The situation seemed to be beneficial for Arciszewski since Władysław Raczekiewicz was ill (Habielski, 1994; Rostocki, 2002).

However, the President Raczekiewicz was not going to allow Arciszewski as his successor. Władysław Raczekiewicz had send the letter to Arciszewski and informed him to be irreplaceable on Prime Minister post. Moreover, Władysław Raczekiewicz signed in April 1947 act of appointment his successor August Zaleski, who was the leader of presidential civil chancellery in that time. This decision caused the first political crisis in „polish London” (Friszke, 1999; Habielski, 1994; Rostocki, 2002).

The signing of this act was incompatible with Paris agreement since President Raczekiewicz did not consult his decision neither with representatives of parties nor with Prime Minister (Rostocki, 2002). After Arciszewski had got this information, he arrived to President Raczekiewicz. However, even this meeting did not explain problematic issue. Andrzej Friszke (1999) said that during this meeting Raczekiewicz only wanted to organise a conference of parties in order to keep the Paris agreement. This event took place on 5th June 1947. The main

point of conference was to accept the President Raczkiewicz decision. In the opposition of that, the Prime Minister Arciszewski said that he would not allow August Zaleski as President of Republic of Poland. Towards this fact, new President Zaleski, who had been sworn on 9th June, dismissed the Arciszewski Government. Therefore, General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski received the mission of creating a new government (Habielski, 1994; Wolsza, 2010).

The results of June crisis started the division of Polish political emigration in Great Britain. Polska Partia Socjalistyczna refused to allowing President August Zaleski and removed from his own party the politician, who supported the new President (Friszke, 1999). Moreover, this group and also Stronnictwo Demokratyczne had escaped the council (Rada Polskich Stronnictw Politycznych) and then created new political environment – Koncentracja Demokratyczna. New agreement of parties was formed also by representatives of Polski Ruch Wolnościowy „Niepodległość i Demokracja” and the part of Stronnictwo Pracy, which was led by Konrad Sieniewicz. Initially, the representatives of Stronnictwo Ludowe „Wolność” were also supported this new agreement (Siwik, 1998).

The Government of General Bór-Komorowski was created by the members of Stronnictwo Narodowe and several representatives of Stronnictwo Pracy. It was the weakness of this Government because of the little parties representation. General Bór-Komorowski in 1947 year started to talk with the Koncentracja Demokratyczna in order not to deepen the conflict of Polish emigration. Therefore, the President Zaleski proposed to parties, who disallow him, the opportunity to create the Government representing all emigration environments. This action was not successful (Friszke, 1999; Urban, 1998).

Moreover, the situation was additionally complicated by Stanisław Mikołajczyk who arrived to London. He was not expected since of his attitude toward to Yalta agreement. However, Mikołajczyk escaped London fast because of lack of favour among Polish emigres. He had gone with Kazimierz Bagiński and Stefan Korboński to United States, where he started to act in consultation with Congress of the American Polonia. This fact caused confusion among Polish emigres in London. They had found that the world's states allowed him as representative of Poland and consulted with him all issues instead of „Polish London”. Due to this fact, the Prime Minister Bór-Komorowski again started to converse with the party, which were not allowing the President Zaleski. The lack of agreement and also situation with Mikołajczyk were additionally developing the crisis of Polish political emigration (Buczek, 1996; Friszke, 1999; Hładkiewicz, 1994).

The politicians from Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe ruling by Mikołajczyk, Polska Partia Socjalistyczna and also Karol Popiel's Stronnictwo Pracy formed Democratic Parties Agreement (Porozumienie Stronnictw Demokratycznych) on 15th November 1948. It was the next competition for legal Government. The Stronnictwo Narodowe also had lost the Prime Minister Bór-Komorowski in favour of own action aimed to create agreement with historical emigration parties. They wanted to form „four agreement” with Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, Stronnictwo Pracy and Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Friszke, 1999; Rostocki, 2002, Urban, 1998).

Final failure of Stronnictwo Narodowe mission, no co-operation by historical parties and political changes among Stronnictwo Pracy caused resignation of the Polish Government in exile which was led by Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski. Therefore, President August Zaleski decided to establish a new Government, which was based on social organizations, under leadership

Tadeusz Tomaszewski, who became a Prime Minister. This decision placed pre-war parties in opposition to head of state in exile (Hrabyk, 1972; Wohnout, 1952).

Almost month after this establishment President Zaleski announced appointment of a National Council, which was supposed to be some kind of polish parliament in exile. On 65 places in this council August Zaleski booked 29 for his political allies from different parties and social organizations which supported Tomasz Tomaszewski Government. Other places were waiting for representatives of pre-war historical parties (Friszke, 1999; Mackiewicz, 1958). There was no response from their side. Therefore this political groups started consolidation activities because Presidential decision about establish new Government and National Council marginalized their role in political life in exile. They established Political Council, which was some kind of historical parties agreement in opposition to President Zaleski (Rostocki, 2002).

In process of forming bipolar political scene in „polish London” was not only one problem for polish society in British exile. In May 1950 former Prime Minister Stanisław Mikołajczyk create in United States of America Polish National Democratic Committee. This group included politicians from part of Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, which supported Stanisław Mikołajczyk, and from Stronnictwo Pracy, which was led by Karol Popiel. The above situation was very complicated for polish community in exile. It created third political centre of polish people in free world (Friszke, 1999; Rostocki, 2002, Urban, 1998).

Decomposition of polish political emigration deepened with each month. During this period the Prime Minister Tomaszewski suddenly died. Therefore President Zaleski had to establish new Government. He discussed with politicians from Political Council, to create common Government, but his actions have failed.

In this time President Zaleski and his political environment „Zamek” (Castle) tried to lead own, independent policy. Philosophy of August Zaleski leadership based on claims that polish policy in exile had to be independent from any political influence. He was observing the process of establishing relations from Political Council to United States of America and Free Europe Committee. Therefore he was afraid about financial support, by „west world”. President claimed that this agreement could affect the direction of polish emigration. He gathered around himself politicians who wanted to pursue an independent policy – without financial support from any sources. For this political environment, except this financial aspect, the most important value was constitutional legality. This thought was based on a firm claim, that only polish constitution from 1935 could be source of power. Moreover – only head of state, President, and Government in exile, which was appointed each time by President, were the only power among polish community in free world. One of the people from his political group was General Roman Odzierżyński, who started lead work of Government at autumn 1950. He was the successor of prime minister Tomaszewski (Friszke, 1999; Hładkiewicz, 1994; Hrabyk, 1972; Turkowski, 2001).

In the years 1950–1954 „polish London” started period which was direct prelude to permanent political division. The growing conflict was tried to soften. General Władysław Anders, general Marian Kukiel and Professor Henryk Paszkiewicz tried to mediate but they actions were unsuccessful (Wolsza, 1995). In 1952 general Kazimierz Sosnkowski was involved in conciliation talks. He was one of the most important polish men who lived in „free world”. This thought was presented by general Anders, President Zaleski and Prime Minister Roman Odzierżyński. Political Council looked at this suggestion very friendly.

It was probably connected with the huge trust that General Sosnkowski had received. He was officially invited to London to develop an appropriate agreement as part of a compromise program, as well as jointly decide on the appointment of the successor by President Zaleski (Katelbach, 1975; Ziętara, 1995). Kazimierz Sosnkowski, probing the possibility of concluding a compromise, developed a 12-point program, which was called the act of unification. President Zaleski submitted his comments regarding this document, because in his recognition they did not comply with the provisions of the Constitution of 1935 (Katelbach, 1975).

At the end of 1952, August Zaleski, in a letter to General Sosnkowski, expressed his objections to the proposed act of unification (Katelbach, 1975, Rostocki, 2002). Nevertheless, it did not prevent him from expressing his willingness to appoint Kazimierz Sosnkowski as his successor, which did not take place, because he did not agree to the nomination without consulting this decision with the Political Council (Katelbach, 1975; Ziętara, 1995). Sosnkowski leaving the present case open and he returned to the United States. His plan for this situation was simply clear – he wanted to give time for antagonized environments in “polish London” to work out a common position on the proposed draft act of unification (Friszke, 1999).

Moreover, despite his objections to the content of the document President Zaleski declared, at 16th May 1953, that after the expiration of his term of office he would step down from his presidential function (Friszke, 1999; Rostocki, 2002, Urban, 1998). The declaration of August Zaleski was accepted with hope, but he himself was becoming colder every day with regard to the shape of forced unification. The turbulent atmosphere in “Polish London” complicated even more information regarding the “Berg case”, which referred to the cooperation of the parties in the Political Council with the US services, mainly the CIA. Financing the actions of the parties by the Americans who were supposed to create an information and intelligence network in Poland disqualified in the opinion of President Zaleski, the persons representing the Political Council. The data on the scale of this cooperation revealed by the communist services in Poland constituted the main argument of August Zaleski’s camp against the project of unification (Friszke, 1999; Hładkiewicz, 1994).

The following months only consolidated the position of the President as the opponent of the act of unification. Ignoring it, almost all political parties in “Polish London” signed the agreement on 14th March 1954. However, the President did not recognize this act, he did not designate General Sosnkowski as his successor and he cancelled the decision about his resignation (Friszke, 1999; Rostocki, 2002). In view of Zaleski’s determined attitude, even the Government appointed by him resigned. Condemning himself to isolation, the President could only count on the strong support of Stanisław Mackiewicz, who was the most important person who strengthened him in the belief that he would abandon the assumptions of the act of unification (Friszke, 1999; Habielski, 1994; Hładkiewicz, 1994).

In connection with the above, the conflict in “polish London” was inevitable. Władysław Anders, who in the meantime refused to be the successor of the President, because he would have to commit himself not to implement the act of reunification, publicly stopped recognizing Zaleski as the head of state. On the other hand, the parties that signed the agreement announced on 9th June 1954 that, according to August Zaleski’s announcement of 16th May 1953, the term of his office ended. The presidential environment, however, citing Article 24 of the Constitution of 1935 legitimized its extension (Rostocki, 2002).

Representatives of the Political Council, disregarding the position of the President, decided to proceed with the provisions of the act of unification. One of his demands was the establishment of the Temporary Council of National Unity, to which the President had to nominate the representatives of political parties and social organizations. Due to the inability to overcome this situation, individual associations themselves nominated their own delegates, and the inaugural meeting of the Council took place on 31st July 1954. The aftermath of this meeting was the decision to appoint the Council of Three as the three-man head of state, which was to exist until the President's decision to nominate General Sosnkowski as his successor. The Council of Three was able to appoint the Executive of the National Union, which was supposed to be a temporary Government. The substitute for the parliament was the Temporary Council of National Unity mentioned above (Friszke, 1999; Habielski 1994; Hładkiewicz 1994, Siwik 1994; Turkowski, 2001). The division outlined above dominated the political scene of emigration for the following years. On the one hand, President Zaleski created a narrative about the "rebels" under the sign of the Unification, and on the other, he himself insisted on being recognized as a full-fledged head of state. His environment continued to pursue a policy based on constitutional legality. August Zaleski established new Governments, which, however, enjoyed less and less recognition of Polish emigration (Friszke, 1999).

Impact on this fact was connected with the return to Poland of Prime Minister Hugon Hanke and then Stanisław Mackiewicz. One of the most important politicians of the Zaleski camp cooperated with the national communist services, which further compromised presidential environment (Tarka, 2007) The next offices of Antoni Pająk (1955–1965), Aleksander Zawisza (1965–1970) and Zygmunt Muchniewski (1970–1972) created only the political space around President Zaleski, without being able to significantly influence the conversion of own perception by Polish emigres (Rostocki, 2002).

In turn, the "unification camp" tried to implement the assumptions of the act elaborated in 1954. In the Council of Three, the only pillar was only Edward Raczyński, who sat in this group in the years 1954–1972. An approximate seniority was also honoured by General Władysław Anders, who was a member of the Council until 1970. Moreover, Tomasz Arciszewski, Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, Roman Odziejewski, Stanisław Mglej, Alfred Urbański and Stanisław Kopański were in this Council in different periods of time (Siwik 1994; Turkowski, 2001).

The emigre political scene in the period after 1954 did not experience such turbulent conflicts, although of course there was still a visible division. After 1956, the main topic among Polish emigration was the attitude to the country. At that time was shaped a bipolar dispute about the role and tasks of emigration. The "intransigent" emphasized the immutability of Poles' situation in emigration, and they did not redefine the goals of independence activities, which concerned the lack of acceptance of the Yalta decisions or the achievement of full sovereignty by Poland. The second group, which was called "realists", wanted to define new tasks of emigration along with the changing international situation (Habielski, 1995; Siwik, 1994).

It is also worth mentioning the important, from the point of view of the representation of the Polish community, universal suffrage to the Council of National Unity, which has been deprived of the temporariness. The election of 1962 showed a lack of interest in this issue,

which was manifested in the fact that only 12,000 attended the 100,000 eligible Poles. It was generally considered a failure of the “unification camp” (Friszke, 1999).

The gradual departure from the determined positions meant that at the beginning of the 1970s, the two antagonized environments started to discuss again about the agreement. The death of President Zaleski in 1972 and his replacement by Stanisław Ostrowski only intensified this process. The newly nominated President declared with his assumption that he would strive to unite Polish political emigration in Great Britain. Within a few months, the appropriate agreement between the two camps was signed, the Council of Three recognized the binding force of the act appointing the successor of President August Zaleski, and dismissed the Executive of the National Union and the National Unity Council. On 18th November 1972 Stanisław Ostrowski appointed Alfred Urbański as Prime Minister, whose Government consisted of representatives of both communities. In addition, in December this year he appointed one of the greatest authorities of the then emigration as his successor - Edward Raczyński (Kania, 2014; Rostocki, 2002; Szkuta, 1996; Turkowski 2001, 2002).

In order to appropriately periodize the history of Polish political emigration, it should be emphasized that after Alfred Urbański the mission of creating the Government was entrusted to Kazimierz Sabbat in 1976, whose election ran according to the principles of the “Paris Agreement” providing for the President’s consultations with political parties (Danel, 2000). In 1979, the office of the President was taken over by Edward Raczyński, whose functioning in this position was associated with a change in the activities of the emigration authorities. He focused on the activity addressed to the country. Edward Raczyński was the President actively supporting the Workers Defence Committee, as well as NSZZ “Solidarność”. He organized universal fundraisers for the opposition in Poland, called Fundusz Pomocy Krajowi (Kania, 2014; Machcewicz, 1999). Successor of Edward Raczyński was Kazimierz Sabbat, who sat in the presidential chair in the years 1986–1989. His nomination to the office of the President also caused changes as Prime Minister. The mission of creating a new Government was entrusted to Edward Szczepanik, who was the last of these functions. The purpose of the factual supplement should be emphasized that in July 1989, Kazimierz Sabbat suddenly died. His successor was Ryszard Kaczorowski. He ended the more than half a century epic of independence in exile, transferring the insignia of power to President Lech Wałęsa in 1990 (Danel, 2000; Friszke 1994, 1999; Habielski, 2000; Szkuta 1996; Turkowski, 2002)

3. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, it should be emphasized that the emigration political scene in 1945–1990 brought the banner of faithfulness to an independent homeland. The bases of its operation were pre-war political parties whose historical heritage shaped the identity of emigration. The development of the Polish political scene, with all its disadvantages and advantages, could have emerged by the principles expressed in the Constitution of 1935. Apart from emigre divisions and political disputes, it should be emphasized that through the fact of maintaining state-legal continuity from the Second Polish Republic, national and autonomous political life could develop in “Polish London”. The value of the existence of the Supreme Authorities of the Republic of Poland, headed by the President and the Government in exile, as well as the Parliament’s substitute in the form of National Councils, was associated with the possibil-

ity of conducting multifaceted and often independent political activities around them, which their compatriots in the country could envy them.

Despite the turbulent history shaping the character of the “polish London”, it is worth noting that the centre of power in exile has retained a deposit of legality and continuity of the state. It became a symbol of independent Poland, which lasted despite the fact that the whole world turned away from it.

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