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PARIS – ROME – LONDON. INFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN FOR THE POLISH QUESTION PRIOR TO THE GREAT WAR (1907–14)

Abstract

The article reconstructs Polish information and propaganda campaigns in Western Europe in the run-up to the Great War. Those initiatives allowed the issues related to the Polish question, especially the persecution of Poles under the Prussian and Russian partitions, to be brought to public attention in the West. The authors trace the process of disseminating information to the intellectual communities of Paris, Rome and London based on participant accounts, reports, propaganda pamphlets, the press from the period and secondary literature. They conclude that propaganda campaigns reached a relatively narrow group of intellectuals, writers, members of the artistic community, journalists, and to a lesser extent, parliamentarians. Although the information campaign could not immediately alter the previously established stereotypes, its specific effects could be observed during the Great War and at the Paris Peace Conference.

Keywords: National Council in Lviv, Galicia, information and press offices, diplomacy, Polish question, Western Europe

I INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the twentieth century, many stateless nations in Central and Eastern Europe, such as the Czechs and Poles, tried to win international support to regain their sovereignty. Those attempts came at turning points in history, during conflicts between world

powers, and through the actions of national liberation movements. The exiled elites that participated in political processes and dramatic events in Western Europe (such as the Franco-Prussian War and the Parisian Commune, 1870–1) also joined the pro-independence efforts. The so-called Polish question involved all attempts to raise the question of Polish independence at the European level since the Spring of Nations (1848–9), through armed conflict (such as Crimean War, 1853–5) up to the turn of the twentieth century with increased tensions between the powers that partitioned Poland at the end of the eighteenth century – Russia, Germany and Austro-Hungary.

At the end of the nineteenth century, political transition in Europe led to the formation of two antagonistic blocks of countries, known as the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. The tensions between them and successive conflicts since the Balkan wars (1912–13) created a favourable environment for the political activity of various Polish pro-independence groupings. The main two, namely the socialist and pro-independence one and the national and democratic (nationalists) one, set the Polish pro-independence agenda. The former initially saw the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary) as an ally in the Polish question debate but then focused on the military action. The latter, however, kept voicing their anti-German views. They established cooperation with Russia and later with the Entente. While socialists tried to make the Polish question heard on the European stage through organisations from the European left¹ and the Polish democratic diaspora, nationalists preferred wide-ranging diplomatic action in the West and used information tools to galvanise European public opinion. The National Council in Lviv was one of a few civic institutions that chose this path prior to 1914 by establishing an Information and Press Office in Western European capitals. Since they had no diplomatic posts, the so-called public diplomacy took over the role of the traditional one.² It involved strategic and coordinated

¹ Socialists did not involve themselves in any coordinated actions through institutions and used their personal contacts instead, as did for example August Zalewski in London when the war started. See Tadeusz Piszczkowski, *Anglia a Polska 1914–1939* (London, 1975), 4–5.

² In the literature on the subject, identifying public diplomacy with propaganda is seen as controversial. Propaganda can create a positive image, but it can also backfire. Public diplomacy, on the other hand, besides its image-creation function also focuses on building positive long-term relations that create good atmosphere

actions in informing Western societies about Polish aspirations to independence and winning their support and understanding through the shaping of social attitudes.

The article describes the conditions in which information campaigns were conducted to address the lack of interest in the Polish question amongst European ruling elites and the wider public. It presents the forms of those campaigns and how they spoke to the intellectual elites of Paris, Rome and London and garnered support from among the public.

The topic deserves special attention because Poles had not run such a large-scale public diplomacy campaign for decades. What is more, the campaign seems unprecedented as none of the stateless Central and Eastern European nations had ever before taken such a wide-ranging and coordinated information campaign. This topic is of enormous significance for reconstructing the changing perception of the Polish question in Western Europe. Had there been no preparations in 1907–14, the conditions to meet Polish independence-related demands after the Great War would have been much more difficult for both the ruling elites and the broader international public opinion. The topic was only partly studied in the secondary literature, focusing on Polish-French contacts and no studies of Polish-British relations.³

for state (governmental) policies. For more see Julian Sutor, *Prawo dyplomatyczne i konsularne* (Warszawa, 2000), 29; Agata Ziętek, 'Dyplomacja publiczna Polski', *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie Skłodowska*, Sectio K, xvii, 1 (2010), 66–70; Joseph S. Nye, 'Public Diplomacy and Soft Power', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, dcxvi (2008), 99; Beata Ociepka (ed.), *Dyplomacja publiczna* (Wrocław, 2008).

³ Contacts between Poland and France before the outbreak of the war were presented by Wiesław Śładkowski, *Opinia publiczna we Francji wobec kwestii polskiej w latach 1914–1918* (Wrocław, 1976); *id.*, *Emigracja polska we Francji 1871–1918* (Lublin, 1980); Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz, *Francuska opinia publiczna wobec sprawy polskiej i Polaków w latach 1895–1914* (Warszawa, 1999); Małgorzata Gmurczyk-Wrońska, *Polacy we Francji w latach 1871–1914. Społeczność polska we Francji i jej podstawy materialne* (Warszawa, 1996); Bruno Drwęski, 'La Pologne dans l'opinion française – quelques orientations', in *Les rapports entre la France et les Polonais de 1876 à 1914* (Paris, 1983), 7–26. See also Klaus Manfrass, 'Frankreich und die polnische Frage zur Zeit der französisch – russischen Allianz 1891–1914', *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, xxi (1975), 125–332; Marius-A. Leblond, *La Pologne vivante (Russie, Allemagne, Autriche)* (Paris, 1910); Kazimierz Woźnicki, *O stosunkach francusko-polskich* (Warszawa, 1912). Information about the operation of the Polish Agency in Paris was published in

The analyses presented in this article are based on rich and diversified source material, including archival materials, participants' accounts, reports, propaganda pamphlets, and the press. The secondary literature was also valuable.

II

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL IN LVIV

The National Council in Lviv, established by the Act of the Polish Parliamentary Group [Polskie Koło Sejmowe] of 29 December 1906, comprised the representatives of various political groups from Galicia. They supported the 'national solidarity', understood as the joint actions of all social classes and groups in the face of a foreign threat. The Council became the administrative centre for district and municipal, national organisations and aspired to lead all participating groups at a national level. The statutory objectives of the National Council included the elimination of infighting between Polish candidates in the parliamentary elections to the Austrian Imperial Council and the National Sejm [Sejm Krajowy]. This later developed into a defence of the properties and assets owned by Poles in eastern Galicia (against Ukrainians) and western borderland (against Germans and Czechs), and support for Polish public organisations, especially in education.⁴ Following a reorganisation that took place in October 1910, the National Council began to put additional emphasis on Russian attempts to separate the Chełm Land from the Kingdom of Poland, as well as anti-Polish legislation in Prussia, tackling 'enemy press', and informing

Marian Seyda, *Polska na przełomie dziejów. Fakty i dokumenty*, i (Poznań, 1927); Janusz Pajewski, *Wokół sprawy polskiej. Paryż–Lozanna–Londyn 1914–1918* (Poznań, 1970); Danuta Pływawko, 'Międzynarodowa ankieta "Prusy i Polska" – ogłoszenie i przebieg (grudzień 1907 – kwiecień 1909)', *Przegląd Zachodni*, xlv, 2 (1989), 123–41; *ead.*, "Prusy i Polska". *Ankieta Henryka Sienkiewicza (1907–1909)* (Poznań, 1994). Cf. Kazimierz Karolczak, 'Zagraniczne biura informacyjno-prasowe lwowskiej Rady Narodowej (1907–1914)', in Jerzy Jarowiecki (ed.), *Kraków – Lwów: książki, czasopisma, biblioteki XIX i XX wieku*, v (Kraków, 2001), 553–67; *id.*, 'Zakordonna informatsiyno-presovi byuro L'vivskoy Natsional'noy radi (1907–1914)', *Visnik L'viv'skogo universitetu. Serya istorichna*, xxxvii (2002), 410–21. These issues were omitted in Ludwik Bazylow (ed.), *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, iii: 1795–1918 (Warszawa, 1982).

⁴ Adam Wątor, *Galiczyjska Rada Narodowa w latach 1907–1914. Z dziejów instytucji obywatelskich* (Szczecin, 2000), 43–51.

public opinion in Europe about the situation on the former territories of Poland. The Council also remained in close contact with Poles living under other partitions and considered a proposal to coordinate the activities of the Polish representatives in various legislative bodies of the occupying powers (German and Austro-Hungarian parliaments and the Russian Duma).⁵

The leadership of the National Council, dominated by Eastern Galicia conservatives and national democrats, spoke in favour of a solution to the Polish question based on cooperation with the Habsburg Monarchy (the so-called Austro-Polish solution) provided that the dependency of Vienna on Germany loosened and cooperation with France and Great Britain was established. This idea, however, did not take into account the growing dependency of the Habsburg monarchy on Berlin. That said, the plan was supported by an attempt to take concrete actions in Western capitals. On the initiative of Tadeusz Cieński,⁶ the head of the National Council, young scholars who were also national activists, among them Stanisław Stroński, Edward Dubanowicz, Stefan Dąbrowski, and Adam Skałkowski, received academic scholarships in Paris and London. Personal and academic contacts prepared the ground for the Polish propaganda and information campaign. Money and a group of supporters, however, were essential to such preparations.

On 29 May 1907, the National Council's National Committee established the Press and Information Office to "defend Polish interests in front of the European public opinion". The press release from the session mentioned the significance of the Office in all parts of partitioned Poland and called for support for this institution.⁷ In line with the adopted statute, a Central Executive Office [Centralne Biuro Wykonawcze] and State Commissions [Komitety Krajowe] were formed. The tasks of the State Commissions included informing

⁵ Biblioteka Ossolineum (hereinafter: BOss.), sygn. 7997 II. Papiery Rozwadowskich. Materiały dotyczące wyborów do Sejmu i Rady Państwa w latach 1902–1913, Regulamin Rady Narodowej, Lwów, 7 Oct. 1910; pismo Rady Narodowej do J. Rozwadowskiego, Oct. 1910, 1–3, 53. Cf. Adam Wątor, *Ziemianin polityk. Tadeusz Cieński 1856–1925. Z dziejów konserwatyzmu wschodniogalicyskiego* (Szczecin, 1997), 38–9, 45.

⁶ Tadeusz Cieński (1856–1925), a Polish landowner, the head of the National Council in Lviv from 1907, member of Polish Senate in the Second Polish Republic, 1922–5.

⁷ 'Rada Narodowa', *Czas*, 131 (11 June 1907).

foreign states about issues related to Poland through (1) the gathering of materials and articles referring to Polish issues; (2) passing information on home affairs to the foreign press; (3) publishing periodicals as well as bulletins and sending them abroad; (4) countering untrue information concerning Polish issues; (5) providing the foreign press with details on Polish issues and acting as an intermediary in terms of the publishing ‘independent Polish articles’; (6) engaging in joint efforts to publish articles in special commemorative editions on Polish issues. “They also inform the Central Executive Office, the national press and Polish deputies about opinions on Polish issues abroad when special needs are identified”, the statute emphasised.

The National Council in Lviv established a secretariat to run the operations of the Central Executive Office. The Lviv Commission’s task was to support the Information and Press Offices campaign abroad and countersign reports and accounts. The Central Executive Office’s headquarters was located in Paris, while branches in other countries were also planned. The Office received information and materials from State Commissions that also acquired financial resources. The Executive Committee, in turn, acted as the State Commissions for Galicia, Cieszyn Silesia and Bukovina. It also established a separate Editorial Commission. The State Commission in Galicia played a special role in approving the budget drawn up by the Executive Committee; it also approved accounts and reports and conducted financial audits. Donations from individuals, institutions and declared sums from the National Council financed the Office. An appeal for donations was issued to the leading political and social figures in Galicia. Wealthy people, mostly landowners, declared their financial support for the following three years regardless of their political views.⁸ Funds also flowed in from the Kingdom of Poland.⁹ The donors maintained the right to “table comments, submissions, and proposals”. Briefings were announced; State Commissions and the Office were obliged to submit

⁸ See Archiwum Dzikowskie Tarnowskich, Oddział na Wawelu (hereinafter: ADzT), sygn. 655, Deklaracja Zdzisława hr. Tarnowskiego, prezesa Stronnictwa Prawicy Narodowej, 1 tys. koron na cele Biura oraz zobowiązanie wpłat rocznych po 200 koron od 1 I 1912 r. do 1 I 1914 r. Dzików, 3 Aug. 1910.

⁹ Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu (hereinafter: BUAM), sygn. 34 IV. Papiery Skalkowskich, List H. Sienkiewicza do T. Skalkowskiego, Kraków, 9 Jan. 1908, 26.

reports. They also envisaged the possibility of a direct dissolution of the Central Office on the one hand and the withdrawal of support for Polish deputies groups in Vienna, Berlin and Saint Petersburg as well as those institutions that “provide the State Commissions with a guarantee that this opportunity will be used in line with the office’s objectives”.¹⁰

In line with the approved statute, the Executive Committee of the National Council established a National Committee of the Information and Press Office on 9 April 1910. Headquartered in Lviv, it involved “people known across the country for their impeccable integrity, national and civic sympathies and achievements in academic and social life”. The Editorial Committee consisted of prominent activists from Lviv, such as professors: Szymon Askenazy, Oswald Balzer, Ludwik Finkel, Ludwik Rydygier, as well as Franciszek Rawita-Gawroński, Zdzisław Próchnicki and Albin Rayski, representing the head team of the National Council.¹¹ Representing various political options, they had significant intellectual capital. The National Council’s secretariat played a coordinating role; it was run by Kazimierz Jarecki, and from October 1910 by Dr Stanisław Węcowski, a school teacher (Lviv, Karol Ludwik Street).¹²

¹⁰ BOss., sygn. 7997 II, Zarys organizacji Polskiego Biura informacyjno-prasowego, 41–4. For difficulties in organising the press branch in Berlin, Vienna and St. Petersburg, see *ibid.*, 54–81. Already at the end of 1906 the establishment of the Telegraphic and Correspondence Agency in Warsaw was planned to “defend Polish interests and issues against Russia and foreign countries”. Biblioteka Narodowa (hereinafter: BN), sygn. 8357 IV, Archiwum Erazma Piltza, 22–3. A similar proposal was voiced by Bronisław Laskownicki (30 Oct. 1909) and Zygmunt Wasilewski (16 July 1910) on behalf of the Polish Journalists Association in Lviv. However, it was not accepted, despite support from the National Council, due to a lack of funds.

¹¹ BOss., sygn. 7997 II, Sprawozdanie z działalności Polskiego Biura Prasowo-Informacyjnego w Paryżu, 45.

¹² Franciszek Rawita-Gawroński was judgemental about the establishment of the Committee, which in his eyes was: “the effect of a wrong selection of people, a wrongful act; and it is easy to guess that its actions will not make any meaningful change”. Franciszek Rawita-Gawroński, *Ludzie i czasy mego wieku. Wspomnienia, wypadki, zapiski (1892–1914)* (Gdańsk, 2012), 126.

III
 AGENCE POLONAISE DE PRESSE AND COMITÉ
 FRANCO-POLONAISE IN PARIS

There were severe obstacles to the opening of the Paris office. “In the face of the egoistic utilitarianism of political thought in France”, recalled Dr Stanisław Stroński, a Polish commentator and expert in France:

where the Polish issue met with no direct interest as it was not current or exotic enough in the face of complications resulting from the alliance of France and Russia and difficulties in accessing an influential press ..., great caution is recommended when it comes to the actions of the new Office not to antagonise by revealing their hand; patience and vigilance are also recommended while reacting to hostile actions, and cultural sophistication allowing a free hand in manoeuvring on a difficult territory.¹³

However, Stroński overlooked a vital element noted later by a Polish historian Janusz Pajewski. In his opinion, in the period before the war, there had been some interest in the Polish question in France, especially in predicting Poles’ reaction in the event of the outbreak of war between Russia and the Central Powers.¹⁴

Before the first Information and Propaganda Office was established, Poles living in France had become more active. As other historians have already elaborated on these issues,¹⁵ we will only indicate the actions that directly preceded the establishment of the Information and Press Office in Paris. First and foremost, an important role was played by Kazimierz Woźnicki,¹⁶ who lived in Paris and had numerous contacts with French literary, academic and journalistic circles, as well as friends among young national activists from Lviv.¹⁷ His efforts, as well as those of others, helped to establish the Society on the Study

¹³ S.Z., ‘Biura prasowe polskie za granicą’, *Rzeczpospolita*, 116 (21 March 1914); ‘Polskie Biuro Informacyjno-Prasowe’, *Słowo Polskie*, 243 (28 May 1910).

¹⁴ Janusz Pajewski, *Odbudowa państwa polskiego 1914–1918* (Warszawa, 1985), 49–50.

¹⁵ Śladkowski, *Opinia publiczna, passim*.

¹⁶ Kazimierz Woźnicki (1878–1949), Polish writer, commentator, journalist, collector, and diplomat.

¹⁷ Stanisław Kozicki, *Pamiętnik 1876–1939*, ed. by M. Mroczo (Słupsk, 2009), 217–18; BN, sygn. 10119 IV, ii: Korespondencja Franciszka Rawity-Gawrońskiego. List A. Skalkowskiego do F. Rawity-Gawrońskiego, 51.

of the Polish question [Towarzystwo Studiów Kwestii Polskiej] in early 1907 in cooperation with the Fédération Régionaliste de France.¹⁸ Its objectives remained aligned with the ideas of the founders of the information and propaganda campaign.¹⁹

The contacts soon bore fruit. Joint academic and cultural initiatives were launched, and a Polish-French language commission led by Senator Louis Martin was established.²⁰ The issue of the Prussian partition was also raised. Dr Victor Nicaise, connected to the Polish community in Paris, informed the French side about the 'land issue' and the anti-Polish legislation.²¹ He also had contacts with Polish politicians, for example, with Władysław Zamoyski.²² A Polish-French commemoration of the anniversary of the Constitution of 3 May 1791 with 200 participants (on 30 April) became a significant event. "The internal operation of the Society – the report states – involved studying Polish social and cultural issues by way of lectures, talks and the joint reading sessions of relevant works". The Overseas Fund for Supporting Education in Poland [Kasa dla Popierania Oświaty

¹⁸ See also Anne-Marie Thiesse, *Écrire la France. Le mouvement littéraire régionaliste de langue française entre la Belle Époque et la Libération* (Paris, 1991), 75–95; François Dubasque, 'Jean Hennessy (1874–1944). Itinéraire militant d'un politique entre milieux réformateurs et réseaux d'influence', *Parlements. Revue d'histoire politique*, vii, 1 (2007), 21–33.

¹⁹ "One of the key shortcomings of our society is the lack of an objective view on the part of individuals on the current gains and future needs of the nation. Because each Pole, who feels a part of the whole, undivided Poland, regardless of where they stay, in order to be able at each moment to offer his services should know not only his part of the country, but the entire Motherland ... That is why our Society wants to bring together Poles abroad for joint studies on the whole framework of the culture of Poland and its aspirations, and while living abroad inform foreigners about Polish issues or correct the so often distorted opinion about Poland, when a need arise". Quote after [translated]: BUAM, sygn. 35 IV, Ustawa Towarzystwa Studiów Kwestii Polskiej, 1 Jan. 1907, 139.

²⁰ Louis Martin (1859–1944), French lawyer, advocate, member of *La Ligue Française pour la restauration de la Pologne*.

²¹ Victor Nicaise, *Allemands et Polonais* (Paris, 1911). He also wrote 'La Martyrologe de l'Enfance dans les Ecoles de la Pologne Prussienne', *Peuple Français Dimanche*, 12 (1908); Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz, 'Intelektualiści i politycy francuscy o sprawie polskiej i Polakach na przełomie XIX i XX wieku w świetle ankiet', *Dzieje Najnowsze*, xxxiii, 3 (1999), 37–51.

²² Biblioteka Kórnicka, kat. 9257: listy V. Nicaise do W. Zamoyskiego 1908–12, 7–27.

w Polsce] was established at the Society on the Study of the Polish Question. Financial support was also provided to the Young Poles Group in Paris and other Polish organisations in France.²³

The Information and Press Office in Paris was finally launched on 1 July 1907 as the Agence Polonaise de Presse with Kazimierz Woźnicki as its head, who “in those conditions could set about accomplishing objectives that were outlined in the statute from the start”.²⁴ Woźnicki’s activities were often controversial, particularly for his failure to run the Office effectively. Nevertheless, the Protective Committee [Komitet Opiekuńczy] that involved prominent Poles living in Paris supported the work of the Office. It was the Executive Committee of the National Council that sent the directives to carry out particular tasks in Paris and other places abroad.

The Paris office’s first action on a broader scale involved informing public opinion in France about strikes in the Poznań area relating to

²³ In 1908, two lectures on Polish immigration, on ‘legal and illegal work’, were delivered alongside one talk on municipal self-government and another on the persecution of Poles under the Prussian partition. Evenings ‘free from lectures’ were devoted to joint reading sessions of books by Stanisław Szczepankowski, *Farys zwycięzca*; Wincenty Lutosławski, *Program wychowania narodowego*; Roman Dmowski, *Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka*. See BUAM, sygn. 35 IV, Sprawozdanie Towarzystwa Studiów Kwestii Polskiej, Paryż, 1 Apr. 1908, 140.

²⁴ BOss., sygn. 7997 II, Sprawozdanie z działalności Polskiego Biura Prasowo-Informacyjnego w Paryżu, 1910, 45–9. For a favourable assessment of Woźnicki’s activities see BUAM, sygn. 35 IV, List T. Cieńskiego do A. Skałkowskiego, Pieniaki, 28 Jan. 1908, 220–2; M. Kalczyńska, ‘Kazimierz Woźnicki (1878–1949) – literat, publicysta, dziennikarz, polityk i bibliofil oraz jeden z bibliotekarzy donatorów Muzeum Narodowego w Rapperswilu. Na podstawie spuścizny znajdującej się w Bibliotece Polskiej w Paryżu’, *Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie. Zeszyty Historyczne*, xi (2010), 225; G. Leszczyński, ‘Młodopoleanie u bram Paryża. Z archiwum Kazimierza Woźnickiego’, *Akta THL w Paryżu*, iii (1996), 113–47. On the contrary, Eugeniusz Romer, following his visit at the Agency’s head on 9 February 1919, noted: “One can say that it did not cause him too many worries”, Eugeniusz Romer, *Pamiętnik paryski 1918–1919*, ed. by Andrzej Garlicki and Ryszard Świętek (Wrocław, 1989), 168. Kazimierz Woźnicki received critical assessment from Franciszek Rawita-Gawroński: “He would have been perfect in the role of Office’s secretary, but he wasn’t suitable for the role of the Office’s head. The Office was his source of income, a way to support himself, not a civic duty point”. Franciszek Rawita-Gawroński, *Ludzie i czasy mego wieku. Wspomnienia, wypadki, zapiski* (Gdańsk, 2012), 118. In a profile drawn up by Wiesław Śladkowski, Woźnicki is described as a “franconised emigrant, with neither temperament nor political imagination”. Śladkowski, *Opinia publiczna*, 46.

a prohibition imposed on religious education in Polish. The pamphlet *L'école prussienne en Pologne* was published at the end of 1907, translated into English a few months later, and these strikes would come to international prominence.

The critical political action of the Paris office came with a protest against chancellor Bernhard von Bülow's Poles expropriation bill introduced at the end of November and the beginning of December 1907, which aimed at making it legal to force Polish landowners to sell their estates to the Prussian Colonization Committee.²⁵ As there was a dramatic turn to the demonstrations on 1 December at the German consulate in Lviv, Poles in Paris responded by boycotting Prussian goods. A well-known social and educational activist, and the head of the Association of National Organisations in Lviv, Wojciech Biechoński, took the helm of the boycotting campaign. The propaganda campaign inspired by the National Council also involved the Polish press in Galicia. However, a project to carry out a broader protest campaign met with some reservations of landowners from Poznań; in their opinion, "such a protest brings no benefits; it only incites ferocity of the Prussian government". Poznań landowners' cautious and reconciliatory approach resulted from their aspirations to keep at least some language and economic policy benefits that they won in the Leo von Caprivi era.²⁶ The Polish group's indecisiveness during the tentative discussions on the expropriation bill was also a hindrance. Despite concerns, Tadeusz Cieński did not abandon the protest campaign and appointed Henryk Sienkiewicz²⁷ to lead it. On 15 December, in collaboration with Woźnicki and Bronisław Kozakiewicz, he sent out a letter/survey to prominent figures to "assess the issue". Although Sienkiewicz did not expect the survey to block the expropriation, he hoped it would facilitate reluctance and condemnation. "In any case,

²⁵ See Michał Pirko, *Niemiecka polityka wywłaszczeniowa na ziemiach polskich w latach 1907–1908* (Warszawa, 1963); *id.*, 'Echa opinii światowej o niemieckiej polityce wywłaszczeniowej na ziemiach polskich w latach 1907–1908', *Zeszyty Naukowe WAP: Historia*, xxi, 5 (1961), 137–57; Józef Buszko, 'Austro-Węgry a sprawa wywłaszczenia Polaków w zaborze pruskim (1908–1914)', *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka*, xx, 4 (1965), 488–526.

²⁶ Leo von Caprivi (1831–99), German chancellor in 1890–4, who temporarily softened the anti-Polish policy.

²⁷ Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916), Polish writer and novelist, Nobel Prize laureate in literature (1905).

it is becoming a European issue, which was not irrelevant".²⁸ The replies to the survey (256 in total) were in the vast majority favourable to the Polish side. They were published, however, only in 1909 in the *Prusse et Pologne* pamphlet. A delay in printing led to Woźnicki's threat of resignation.²⁹ Then a visit to Paris by Stanisław Stroński and Adam Skalkowski³⁰ and actions taken by the Lviv's National Council secretary, Kazimierz Jarecki, who kept up a correspondence with the post in Paris, brought some hope for greater efficiency.³¹

The Office's operations received a fresh boost with the arrival of Roman Dmowski, the leader of the National Democracy, who was going to publish his book *Niemcy, Rosja i kwestia polska* [Germany, Russia, and the Polish Cause] (Lviv, 1908) in Paris. The French edition (*La question polonaise*, Paris, 1909) with a foreword by a Sorbonne professor Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu triggered a hot debate and was interpreted as a step towards the Polish-Russian rapprochement in an anti-German spirit.³²

With the growing anti-Prussian sentiment, the Galician press wrote not only about organising a boycott of German goods. Some unrealistic ideas also emerged to send Polish agricultural workers – through the

²⁸ 'Listy Henryka Sienkiewicza z lat 1908–1909 do Kazimierza Woźnickiego', ed. by Danuta Płygawko, *Przegląd Zachodni*, 5–6 (1985), 87.

²⁹ More details in Płygawko, 'Międzynarodowa ankieta', *passim*. In February 1909, Stefan Dąbrowski wrote to Woźnicki: "as long as the Survey does not see the day light, the people will not provide more considerable support to the office". Danuta Płygawko, 'Listy Stefana Dąbrowskiego do Kazimierza Woźnickiego w zbiorach Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu', part 2: '1906–1937', *Acta Towarzystwa Historyczno-Literackiego w Paryżu*, iii (Paris, 1996), 164. See 'O bezprawiach pruskich Ankieta Sienkiewicza', *Gazeta Narodowa*, 4 (5 Jan. 1908); 'Ankieta Sienkiewicza', *Czas*, 292 (12 Dec. 1907); Dunin-Wąsowicz, *Francuska opinia publiczna*, 68–72; *Prusse et Pologne, Enquête internationale organisée par H. Sienkiewicz* (Paris, 1909).

³⁰ "However, we are observing that also in Paris the presence of Mr Adam [Skalkowski] has already been felt". See also BUAM, sygn. 35 IV, List T. Cieńskiego, Pieniaki, 28 Jan. 1908, 220–2.

³¹ "Our operations, those undertaken by the press office and the hardworking and enterprising Mr K. Jarecki, are widening to a great extent [sic!]" BUAM, sygn. 35 IV, T. Cieński do A. Skalkowskiego, Lwów, 17 Feb. 1908, 223–5.

³² Cf. Pajewski, *Odbudowa*, 41. It was emphasised that the French-German rapprochement would not materialise without the freedom of language and ownership in Alsace, Lorraine and Poland. 'Zbliżenie francusko-polskie', *Rzeczpospolita*, 11 (29 May 1909); Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, 'Rosja, Polska i Niemcy', *Rzeczpospolita*, 12 (12 June 1909).

Polish Emigration Society established in Cracow – not to Germany, but France.³³ The society tried to distribute a *La Société Polonaise d'Emigration, ce qu'elle est et qu'elle veut en France* pamphlet across France about hiring Polish agricultural workers. The contact was established with the French Société Centrale d'Agriculture de Meurthe-et-Moselle while PTE Offices were set up in Paris, Soisson and Nancy. Workers from the Polish Kingdom were also flowing in because of the agreement between Warsaw Agricultural Society and Syndicat Central des Agriculteurs.³⁴ The Polish Labour Office also worked towards a similar goal. According to unrealistic calculations by economic and industrial activist engineer Józef Lipkowski, out of the 300,000 seasonal workers who travelled to Germany to work, 80,000 could be sent instead to northern departments of France and 50,000 to south-eastern departments. Meanwhile, the survey showed that three years before only 8,000 Poles had been employed in France. Some difficulties regarding behavioural and cultural differences as well as language problems also came to the fore. "Having arrived in France – Józef Lipkowski wrote – many workers disappointed, homesick, and unable to comprehend the language and new work conditions, ended up leaving their jobs, wanting to go back home; but due to a lack of funds, they moved to Paris instead, from where, as far as I know, they will be sent back to Galicia". The workers lacked coordinated support and professional counselling. In Paris, a Support Group for Poles who sought work was established, led by Baron Gustav Taube and his deputy Lipkowski,³⁵ but the Paris office was unprepared to deal with such problems; they did not have adequate staff, among other reasons.

³³ Leopold Caro, 'Nie dajmy im robotnika', *Nowa Reforma*, 555 (2 Dec. 1907); *id.*, 'Kwestia obecnego u nas bojkotu. Dyskusja w kwestii bojkotu', *Przegląd Powszechny*, x–xii, 24 (1908); 'Bojkot towarów pruskich', *Słowo Polskie*, 555 (30 Nov. 1907). The sporadic boycott action came down to attacks on shops selling German goods. Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi istorychnyi arkhiv Ukrainy u misti Lvovi, Papiery Namiestnictwa, sygn. 146/8/1310, 20–1.

³⁴ Jerzy Danielewicz, 'Na pograniczu dwóch stuleci (1871–1914)', in Andrzej Tomczak, Karol Górski (eds), *Polska – Francja. Dziesięć wieków związków politycznych, kulturalnych i gospodarczych* (Warszawa, 1983), 301–2.

³⁵ BOss., sygn. 15112 II. Papiery Wacława Gąsiorowskiego z lat 1869–1939, Section III: Materiały do działalności Polonii francuskiej. Organizacje i stowarzyszenia, lii; a paper by J. Lipkowski entitled: 'Wychodźstwo zarobkowe robotników polskich rolnych i fabrycznych z Galicji do Francji' (1911).

To a large extent, promoting knowledge about the Polish question depended on winning over the French press. Such efforts were made by distinguished Polish pianist and political activist Ignacy Jan Paderewski, who was in close contact with the National Council in Lviv and its Paris branch. He wrote to an unknown addressee:

Despite its importance, the Polish question has had no representation so far to tell Europe how significant it is. The French and the English know little about us; they do not talk about us at all. Instead, they judge us with disdain, believing our nation is a dead body. However, recent years have seen a big change for the better. They have started to engage with us. Especially in France, where some clear streams of affinity towards us have emerged, the roots of which we should see not in our misery but in our strength. Articles, pamphlets and even whole books on the Polish question are published more and more often, societies such as Société Franco-Polonaise are established, and we also have the involvement of prominent artistic, academic and political figures – so, in a nutshell, Poland became fashionable.

Paderewski informed that for the price of 1,000 francs per year, one of the dailies was going to accept the task of defending the Polish case for three years. “This will be sensible and careful defence, with calmness and dignity, the best warranty of which is basing it on the French-Russian alliance, i.e. the benefits drawn by those both allied governments, one wanting to borrow money and the other wanting the money not to be wasted and a strong ally”.³⁶ This also illustrates the efforts made by Polish politicians on the French side.

Despite numerous difficulties, the operations of the Paris office did yield results. The report from 1910 boasted that it had made comprehensive and significant inroads in the areas of information dissemination and publications. Since its establishment, the Office had gained numerous contacts from the world of politics, academia, and media. It established relations with prominent French and other foreign dailies and magazines abroad. The Office used strategies for keeping its affiliates informed: orally, through individual contacts,

³⁶ ‘List z Riond Bosson, początek X 1910 r.’, in *Archiwum polityczne Ignacego Paderewskiego*, i: 1890–1918, ed. by Witold Stankiewicz, Andrzej Piber (Wrocław, 1973), 29. The authors of the publication, Stankiewicz and Piber, suggested the following magazines: *Journal des Débats* (because of the contacts between Ignacy J. Paderewski and Maurice Muret) and *Gil Blas*, ‘Archiwum polityczne Ignacego Paderewskiego’, 30.

and in written form through periodic and special publications, Polish and French circular letters to the Polish and French press on current political matters.

Before 1 July 1910, 112 such circulars and letters had been sent. The following titles expressed an interest in the Polish issue: *Gil Blas*, the first to pick up the issue *Journal des Débats*, *L'Action*, *Gazette de Lausanne*, *Le Temps*, *Le Croix*,³⁷ *L'Echo de Paris*, *Gaulois*, *La Victoire*, *Le Siècle*,³⁸ and periodicals: *Revue des Deux Mondes*, *Le Correspondent*, *La Revue*, *Les Marches de l'Est*, and *La Revue hebdomadaire*. The quoted report was over-optimistic in saying that most magazines expressed a keen interest in the issues relating to Poland.³⁹ On the other hand, the publishing activity of the Office was impressive, boasting the production of books, brochures, and smaller informational publications, part of which was sold and the other sent to politicians, academics, and journalists.⁴⁰ For propaganda purposes, they also prepared German cartographic publications that “promoted annexation of the world by Germany” or displayed “Groß Deutschland” without marking the territory of Austria, Netherlands and Belgium. As noted by Tadeusz

³⁷ The 28 Dec. 1910 issue of *Le Croix* cited a memorial on the Chełm issue *L'orthodoxie russe contre le catholicisme polonais*. See Biblioteka Jagiellońska (hereinafter: BJ), sygn. 180/78, Papiery Zygmunta Wasilewskiego, 79.

³⁸ *Le Siècle* published some information on Polish political groupings. See ADzT, sygn. 655, Pismo Rady Narodowej do Zdzisława hr. Tarnowskiego z prośbą o dane dotyczące Stronnictwa Prawicy Narodowej, Lwów, 9 Sept. 1910, oraz odpowiedź M. Chylińskiego, Kraków, 21 Sept. 1910.

³⁹ BOss., sygn. 7997 II, Sprawozdanie z działalności Biura informacyjno-prasowego, 45–9.

⁴⁰ Office's publications: 1) *Prusse et Pologne. Enquête internationale organisée par Henryk Sienkiewicz*; 2) *L'Ecole prussienne en Pologne (1906–1907), documents*, 1907; 3) Franciszek Rawita-Gawroński, *La Russie et la Prusse à la lumière d'un nouveau Congrès*, 1909; 4) Stéphane de Górski, *Les Allemands dans le Royaume de Pologne, avec préface de M. René Henry*, 1909; 5) “Pages Modernes”, numéro sur la Pologne politique, économique et sociale, December 1908; 6) *170 Procès de Prusse, documents pour survivre à l'histoire des persécutions de la presse polonaise par le gouvernement prussien au cours de trois dernières années*, 1908; 7) Stanislaus Zieliński, *Die Ermordung des Statthalters Grafen Andréas Potocki. Materialien zur Beurteilung des ukrainischen Terrorismus in Galizien*, 1908; 8) Marcel Bolesta, *Est-ce vrai?* (a brochure by O.H. Mohla S.J. in defence of the Catholic clergy under the Russian partition – a response to the publication by Rev. Palmieri, *La chiesa russa*). Franciszek Nowodworski, ‘L'affaire de Chełm, “Pages Modernes”, La Pologne littéraire, artistique et scientifique’, BOss., sygn. 7997 II, Sprawozdanie z działalności Biura informacyjno-prasowego, 49.

Skalkowski, a landowner and lawyer, the National Council activist: "That could make a new leaf to the laurel wreath of the Office that had already done so much".⁴¹

An important role was also played by the Comité Franco-Polonais, established in May 1910, known as 'a valuable partner' of the Paris office. Four years later, it had 140 members.⁴² Its goal was to bring Polish and French people closer together by organising lectures, meetings, and formal concerts. Both institutions organised commemorative events for Juliusz Słowacki, Fryderyk Chopin, Zygmunt Krasiński, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski and a commemoration of the Grunwald battle anniversary [*obchód grunwaldzki*], a large patriotic rally in Cracow. There was a public reading by a Sorbonne Professor Ernest Denis *O sprawie chełmskiej* [The Chełm Question], Henri Welschinger from the French Institute *O Grunwaldzie* [On the Battle of Grunwald]. There were also occasional Polish-French dinners. The Office and the Polish-French Committee were used as intermediaries when French people travelled to Poland. They included Henri de Noussanne, chief editor of *Gil Blas*, journalists Ary and Marius Leblond (Aimé Merlo and Georges Athénas), Paul Cazin, translator of literature and editor of *L'Echo de Paris* and a friend of Woźnicki, André Lichtenberg, founder of *Alliance Française* in Warsaw, Maurice Muret, the editor of *Gazette de Lausanne*, Georges Clemenceau, Edouard Herriot and a French Army lieutenant Léon Bernardin.⁴³ Leon Bernardin's visit to Cracow (together with Pierre Comert from *Le Temps*) was most certainly

⁴¹ It was Kazimierz Krotoski's idea, a junior secondary school teacher from Nowy Targ who notified the secretaries of the National Council. K. Jarecki and J. Leszczyński, 'List T. Skalkowskiego do syna [1908]', in *Papiery Skalkowskich*, BUAM, sygn. 34 IV, 54–5.

⁴² The committee members included: J. Gałęzowski, W. Gasztowtt, E. Korytko, B. Kozakiewicz, A. Potocki, W. Gąsiorowski, J. Lipkowski, and French academics and columnists: H. Gaidoz, E. Denis, A. Leroy-Beaulieu, Ch. Richet, M. Barrès, G. Bienaimé, H. Chantavoine, G. Dauchot, J. Herbette, A. Lichtenberg, M. Muret, P. Cazin, J.-H. Rosny aîné, G. Sarrazin, 'Ary and Marius Leblond'. Śladkowski, *Opinia publiczna*, 54–7; Alina Longiewska, 'Działalność Komitetu Francusko-Polskiego i Towarzystwa Polskiego Literacko-Artystycznego w Paryżu w latach 1909–1916: w świetle archiwum Wacława Gąsiorowskiego', *Rocznik Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich*, ix (1976), 129–94.

⁴³ BOss., sygn. 7997 II, Sprawozdanie z działalności Biura Informacyjno-Prasowego, 49; Śladkowski, *Opinia publiczna*, 54–6. A French correspondent Eugène Bertholet was killed in electoral riots in Drohobych. Archiwum Akt Dawnych

an intelligence-gathering mission.⁴⁴ French people who visited Lviv were hosted by the board of the National Council led by Tadeusz Cieński and Albin Rayski.

There were plans to erect a statue of Adam Mickiewicz in Paris as a joint Polish-French initiative.⁴⁵ The French-Polish Committee also wanted to establish its branches in the key centres of Poland: Lviv, Cracow, Warsaw and Poznań, and involve prominent and respected figures to whom it could turn for help in many cases. The Paris statue committee was led by Ernest Denis and the Lviv committee, established on 29 March 1911, by Prince Andrzej Lubomirski. In 1910, thanks to the efforts of Waław Gąsiorowski and Józef Lipkowski, who knew France well, and Prince Witold Kazimierz Czartoryski at the helm, the Polish Literary and Artistic Society [Towarzystwo Polskie Literacko-Artystyczne] was established and also ran several supportive actions.⁴⁶

However, all these positive voices on the activities of the Paris office diverged from its actual achievements in promoting knowledge about the Polish question in France. What really counted were concrete actions, and these did not meet expectations. The replies to the 1912 *Poland and France* survey prepared and distributed by Kazimierz Woźnicki were less than encouraging. They proved that the French public saw the Polish question related to anti-German issues and not Polish-Russian relations. In the view of some Poles living in Paris, the survey was an unnecessary undertaking that did not bring measurable benefits to the Polish question in France.⁴⁷

w Warszawie, Ministerium des Innern, F. 42, P. No 6004/M. J. 1911, 21 June 1911, 348–50.

⁴⁴ Michał Sokolnicki, *Rok czternasty* (London, 1961), 112–14.

⁴⁵ See Śładkowski, *Opinia publiczna*, 58; BJ, sygn. 183/78, Papiery Z. Wasilewskiego.

⁴⁶ In addition to the above-mentioned, the following organisations operated in Paris between 1912 and 1913: L'Association des Anciens Elèves de l'Ecole Polonaise, Brotherly Support of Polish Academic Youth [Bratnia Pomoc Polskiej Młodzieży Akademickiej], Polish Youth for Independence Society 'Filarecja' [Stowarzyszenie Polskiej Młodzieży Niepodległościowej], Polish Youth Society 'Koło' [Towarzystwo Młodzieży Polskiej], and 'Polonia' Society [Towarzystwo Polonia]. BOss., sygn. 15112 II, Papiery Waław Gąsiorowskiego.

⁴⁷ *Francja i Polska. Ankieta w sprawie stosunków francusko-polskich urządzona staraniem Biura Informacyjno-Prasowego Rady Narodowej w Paryżu* (Lviv, 1912); Śładkowski, *Opinia publiczna*, 62–3.

IV
AGENZIA POLACCA DI STAMPA IN ROME

Work on the French branch was well-thought-out and encouraged an expansion of propaganda activities in Western Europe. Already in June 1910, it was, therefore, announced that the next task of the Executive Commission of the National Council in Lviv would be to expand the activities of the Paris office by establishing its regional offices in Rome and London and opening media and information offices with a similar scope of duties in other parts of partitioned Poland. The plans did not fully succeed. The preparations to open the Polish Press Agency [Agenzia Polacca di Stampa] in Rome started in December 1910. The Agency was launched on 7 February 1911. According to its prospectus, it was an “artistic, academic and literary agency”, meant to serve as the Paris office’s “regional branch”.⁴⁸

The chairman of the National Council, Tadeusz Cieński, was personally involved in organising the work of the Agency and travelled with that purpose to Rome. Some propaganda campaigns concerning the persecution of Poles under the Prussian partition had already been launched in Italy.⁴⁹ The campaign intensified with the arrival of a young historian linked to Szymon Askenazy’s Lviv’s school of history, Maciej Loret.⁵⁰ He was on a research trip and became the head of the Agency.

⁴⁸ BOss., sygn. 7997 II, Pismo Rady Narodowej do J. Rozwadowskiego, Lwów, June 1910, 37. Stefan Dąbrowski was critical about the work of the Office: “I can see the hopes of many people are disappointed when it came to the Paris office. The contrast is placed in even sharper relief when we compare the activity of the Paris Office and the newly established Agenzia in Rome. In the latter, Loret’s reliability, communication skills, precision and political momentum gained popular approval. Undoubtedly, his background in history and political experience enabled him to take the appropriate course all issues. Perhaps, it always tends to begin like this and the momentum fades away with time”. ‘List do K. Woźnickiego, Lwów, 8 V 1911 r.’, in Pługawko, *Listy S. Dąbrowskiego*, part 2, 178.

⁴⁹ BUAM, sygn. 35 IV, Sezione Italiane della Lega Latino-Slava Per la Polonia, Roma 1908, 140.

⁵⁰ Anna Szklarska-Lohmannowa, ‘Maciej Loret (1880–1949)’, in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (hereinafter: *PSB*), xvii (1972), 557–9; Natalia Wojtanowska-Bąk, ‘Działalność polityczno-kulturalna Macieja Loreta w Rzymie przed wybuchem Wielkiej Wojny’, *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 1, 3 (2018), 29–55; Mieczysław Wieliczko, ‘Maciej Loret i jego działalność w Rzymie w latach “Wielkiej Wojny”’, *Teka Komisji Historycznej OL PAN* (2009), 114–26; Natalia Wojtanowska, ‘Prace naukowe Macieja Loreta (1880–1949) w ramach Ekspedycji Rzymskiej w latach 1904–1913’, in Piotr Biliński

Loret's actions met with a positive response because of his competence, engagement, and the tangible effects of his work. By popularising earlier political initiatives of the Paris office, he endeavoured to win over Italian governmental, cultural and academic circles as well as public opinion for the state of affairs under Prussian partition and the persecution of Poles by the Prussian authorities. Following in the footsteps of his colleagues in Paris, he issued periodic bulletins and short press releases on the issues related to Poland. His knowledge of Italian politics and culture aided him in his efforts.⁵¹ In November 1912, again emulating the efforts of the Paris Office, Loret conducted a survey among Italian politicians and academics on expropriation under Prussian partition. He received twenty replies, which he then published in a brochure entitled *Lespropriazione forzata delle terre polacche in Prussia* [Forced Expropriation of Polish Territories under Prussian Partition].⁵²

Following the outbreak of the First World War, Loret co-organised Pro Polonia Committees in Rome and beyond.⁵³ From December 1914, he published *Rivista di Roma*, a magazine that featured issues relating to Poland and in April 1915, the *L'Eloquenza* conducted a survey on the Polish question. Loret managed to forge links with Italian politicians and parliamentarians, especially with senator Luigi Montresor. In 1916 the Central Polish Agency headquartered in Lausanne became responsible for the Rome Office,⁵⁴ which from 15 August 1917 continued

and Paweł Plichta (eds), *Krakowska szkoła historyczna a Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne. Studia historiograficzne* (Warszawa–Kraków, 2017), 337–61. According to Roman Dmowski, *Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa*, ed. by Tomasz Wituch, i (Warszawa, 1988), 262, Maciej Loret “run propaganda activities brilliantly”. Similarly, Konstanty Skirmunt, *Moje wspomnienia 1864–1945* (Rzeszów, 1998), 61, 63.

⁵¹ See Maciej Loret, *Italia współczesna* (Rome, 1932).

⁵² *Lespropriazione forzata delle terre polacche in Prussia. Giudizi italiani. Risposte ad un'Inchiesta del 'Consiglio Nazionale della Galizia'. Voci della Stampa* (Roma, 1913); BOss., sygn. 18637 III, Materiały Macieja Loreta związane z działalnością Agencji Prasowej Galicyjskiej Rady Narodowej Lwów w Rzymie z lat 1911–1918, i: 85; Wojtanowska-Bąk, ‘Działalność polityczno-kulturalna Macieja Loreta’, 48.

⁵³ They were established in Rome, Turin, Milan, Genoa, and Venice. The Rome committee included prominent Italian politicians: Benedetto Croce, Pietro Orsi, Ernesto Nathan, and Gabriele D’Annunzio. Wojtanowska-Bąk, ‘Działalność polityczno-kulturalna Macieja Loreta’, 31.

⁵⁴ Among the pro-Polish politicians there were: Paolo Boselli, Giorgio Sonino, Luigi Lazzati, Arturo Labriola, Ferdinando Martini, Onorato Caetani, Alberto

its work under Konstanty Skirmunt, who acted as a representative of the Polish National Committee in Paris.⁵⁵ In the end, the results proved minimal and made only a limited impact on the perception of the Polish question among Italian decision-makers.

V

THE POLISH BUREAU IN LONDON

Establishing an office in London turned out to be the most difficult of tasks. Stanisław Stroński was right to write about “difficult conditions, similar to those in which Paris office started its work but with none of those sympathies or traditions that had managed to prevail in Paris”.⁵⁶ Also, other statements from that time unambiguously emphasised a lack of interest in issues related to Poland in Great Britain.⁵⁷ From the moment Poland lost its independence, the Polish question became peripheral. However, changes in the international arena and an intensifying conflict between the members of the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente contributed to a growing interest in the fate of Poland.

There is then no surprise that the objectives of British policy did not gain recognition from among Polish politicians. The nationalists under Austrian partition followed the movements of the British with concern. There is much more to say about the judgements on London’s political objectives made by Polish commentators, here we only want to emphasise that Chancellor David Lloyd George’s announcement

Emmanuel Lumbroso and others. See Seyda, *Polska na przełomie dziejów*, 178, 294; Andrzej Szczepaniak, *Od autonomii do niepodległości. Działalność polityczna Erazma Piltza w latach 1914–1929* (Opole, 2015), 193.

⁵⁵ Polish National Committee in Paris – a body officially representing Poland in Western Europe and considered to be the informal Polish government in exile. Its goal was to rebuild the Polish state with the help of the Entente.

⁵⁶ *Rzeczpospolita*, 116 (21 March 1914). See Stanisław Węckowski’s paper on works in Paris and preparations for launching The London Office, ‘Z Rady Narodowej’, *Gazeta Narodowa*, 291 (17 Oct. 1912).

⁵⁷ Based on a letter sent by a colleague from the *Manchester Guardian*’s editors office, a socialist Stanisław Mendelsohn wrote on 23 May 1905 to Wilhelm Feldman: “At most, remarks about Poland are made when former prisoners who required care are mentioned ... It’s a bad time in London, because many people have left”. BOss., sygn. 12281 III, Korespondencja Wilhelma Feldmana z lat 1893–1919, 75.

of restrictions on defence spending in order to tackle social problems was regarded by the Polish public opinion as a step towards disturbing the balance in Europe and therefore strengthening the position of Germany.⁵⁸

Some attempts were made to draw the British people's attention to the issue of the anti-Polish expropriation policy in Prussia. Józef Skrochowski began canvassing prominent figures. Skrochowski hailed Paderewski's arrival in London as "providential"; at a time when "our society leaves no stone unturned to defend itself against expropriation – which, as each crime, is the easiest to condemn when the perpetrators have been caught red-handed".⁵⁹ Sadly, these efforts and the attempts to draw attention to the 'coal business' in Galicia failed to gain any traction. That said, Skrochowski did make a significant contribution by collecting documents on the anti-Polish actions of the Prussian authorities. He spoke on behalf of Poznań's landowners who signed up to the protest against the Prussian expropriation policy: "Any protest of the English would raise their spirits in the best manner that is so needed now" – Skrochowski so contended.⁶⁰

Polish politicians attempted to engage with influential figures in British public life with various degrees of good fortune. Having arrived in Britain, the leader of the National Democracy party Roman Dmowski made overtures *via* Ignacy J. Paderewski to publisher and journalist Viscount Northcliff,⁶¹ proposing that Northcliff commissioned a series

⁵⁸ 'Teoretycy', *Słowo Polskie*, 355 (31 July 1907); 'Trójprzymierze a potrójne porozumienie', *Słowo Polskie*, 119 (12 March 1909); 'Niebezpieczny sojusznik', *Słowo Polskie*, 144 (27 March 1909); 'Lloyd George o zbrojeniach', *Czas*, 8 (8 Jan. 1914).

⁵⁹ J. Skrochowski do I. Paderewskiego, London, 2 Dec. 1912, in *Archiwum Paderewskiego*, i, 39–41. Antoni Plutyński, a financier and industrialist from Lviv, maintained contact with the London Parr group that showed some interest in building railways in the Kingdom of Poland and canals in Galicia. Through some well-wishers he acquired information from the Foreign Office about London's *désintéressement* on Polish issue. BJ, sygn. 35/62, Antoni Plutyński, *Wspomnienia studenta (1898–1904)*, 16. Plutyński declared that there was an opportunity to publish articles "about our Polish issue in English magazines". He was asked to produce a 'factual' memo on the Chełm issue. 'List S. Dąbrowskiego do K. Woźnickiego' (Paris, 1910), in *Listy S. Dąbrowskiego*, ii, 176.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Alfred Charles William Harmsworth (1865–1922), founder of The Amalgamated Press. See Georges D. Boyce, *Harmsworth Alfred Charles William Vinscount Northcliffe (1865–1922)* (Oxford, 2004); J. Lee Thompson, 'Fleet Street Colossus: The Rise

of articles on the Polish question in *The Times*. Reporting on his meeting with Northcliff to Paderewski, Dmowski wrote: “He asked me how many Poles are there in total and in each of the three states, and if they share one language and feel like a nation”. Northcliff ended up offering to publish an article on the Polish question. “I believe – Dmowski wrote – it is important to find some space for the Polish question in the *Times*. Hence I willingly accepted the invitation, adding that I would prepare a résumé about Poland and Polish issues for his own benefit. I believe this is an honorary introduction for my collaborator. Otherwise, my articles could be incomprehensible and thrown into the bin”. Dmowski noted the lack of differences on the Jewish question, and concluded: “From that conversation, I gather that he [Northcliff] will not work on the Polish question himself because he does not know about it, but he may allow me to work on a piece for *The Times* to some extent”.⁶²

The efforts of the ND leader corresponded with those of the organisers of the information and propaganda campaign. However, the initiative did not bring measurable benefits. In July 1914, visiting another British partner, a liberal associated with the *Manchester Guardian*, Professor Bernard Pares,⁶³ Dmowski accused the British of paying too little attention to Russian-German relations, believing that a conflict in Eastern Europe “lay only in the distant future”.⁶⁴

The Polish Bureau in London was opened on 1 March 1913, made possible due to the efforts of Ignacy J. Paderewski, Władysław Zamoyski, Józef Korzeniowski (Joseph Conrad) and Józef Hieronim Retinger.⁶⁵ Before visiting London, the latter met with leading Polish

and Fall of Northcliffe 1896–1922’, *Parliamentary History*, xxv, 1 (2006), 115–38; *id.*, ‘To Tell the People of America the Truth: Lord Northcliffe in the USA, Unofficial British Propaganda, June–November 1917’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, xxxiv, 2 (1999), 243–62.

⁶² ‘List z Londynu, 4 XII 1912 r.’, in *Archiwum Paderewskiego*, i, 42–3. Cf. Dmowski, *Polityka polska*, 117, 135–6, 172.

⁶³ Michael Karpovich, ‘Sir Bernard Pares’, *Russian Review*, 8 (1949), 183–5; Robert W. Seton-Watson, ‘Bernard Pares’, *Slavonic and East European Review*, xxviii, 70 (1949), 28–31.

⁶⁴ ‘List do S. Kozickiego, 22 VII 1914 r.’, in M. Kułakowski [J. Zieliński], *Roman Dmowski w świetle listów i wspomnień*, i (London, 1968), 398–9.

⁶⁵ For Intelligence Service information’s on Retinger who arrived in England in Oct. 1912, see Jan Ciechanowski, ‘Józef Retinger (1888–1957) w świetle brytyjskiego wywiadu z lat 1913 do 1941’, *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paryż), 50 (1982), 200–1.

politicians in Galicia, led by Tadeusz Cieński and Archbishop Józef Teodorowicz. Retinger recalled:

They asked me to go on their behalf to France and England as soon as possible. I received straightforward instructions. I was to act for the sake of an independent Poland with as much boldness and determination as I could muster. They assured me that they would support my every action towards the achievement of this goal. They knew that their voice would not be heard in the event of a war, and communication would be uncertain. I received from them documents authorising my actions in England and France. These documents were for British and French foreign affairs ministries with dozens of signatures.⁶⁶

Unfortunately, we did not come across the copies of materials handed over to Retinger. However, we should not ignore the fact that the last activity of the chief of the Polish Bureau in London, especially during the Great War, met with criticism of the national democrats.

According to the Information and Press Office's report from 1 January 1912 to 31 March 1913, some information on the Polish question was published in *The Spectator* and *Pall Mall Magazine*. In London, the Polish Bureau started to publish the *Okólnik dla prasy angielskiej* [A Circular for the English Press] and *Książka o Polsce* [A Book about Poland].⁶⁷ "Getting closer to certain circles of the English public opinion" was recognised as a success. Alongside the Viscount Northcliff mentioned above, Hilaire Belloc and Laurence Alma-Tadema also were listed as guests during a patriotic rally in Cracow, known as *grunwaldzki obchód* (the unveiling of a battle of Grunwald Memorial by Antoni Wiwulski to commemorate the historic Polish victory over the Teutonic Order in 1410; the rally on 15 July 1910 turned into a manifestation of patriotic feelings).⁶⁸ Also, a journalist and the editor of the *Observer*, James Louis

See also Roman Wapiński, 'Retinger Józef', in *PSB*, xxx (1987); Olgierd Terlecki, *Barwne życie szarej eminencji* (Kraków, 1981).

⁶⁶ Jan Pomian, *Józef Retinger. Życie i pamiątki "szarej eminencji"* (Warszawa, 1990), 40.

⁶⁷ ADzT, sygn. 655. There were also published, among others: Józef H. Retinger, *The Poles and Prussia* (London, 1912).

⁶⁸ Hilaire Joseph Belloc (1870–1953) ran the *Illustrated London News* with Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874–1936). Following celebrations in Cracow, Paderewski and Alma-Tadema were hosted in Lviv. BOss., sygn. 14086 II, *Wspomnienia Stanisława Cieńskiego*, 94. Alma-Tadema's work (1865–1940) in England to Galicia Committee,

Garvin, took a pro-Polish stance. There were talks about establishing a Friends of Poland Society, but the scope of its activity proved to be incomparably smaller than what was being done in Paris. In its first moves, the Polish Bureau in London also suffered from lapses, such as Retinger's action to give Irish children a letter with 40 thousand signatures from Polish children living under the Prussian partition. "Irish children", Retinger recalled, "boycotted English schools and so did Polish children towards German schools". Fortunately, in London's bureau's prevailing opinion: "The mistake turned out not to be so huge, for the English, for whom to tell the truth it all meant very little".⁶⁹

In May 1913, in the circles associated with the National Council in Lviv, an idea emerged to organise a scholarly and diversionary trip to England because there was "a need and necessity to establish relationships between our country and our nation and the Western nations in order to bring Poland into the sphere of reciprocal cultural, economic and political interests and hence popularise knowledge about Poland and our issues abroad in order to familiarise them with our lives and our national aspirations". The National Council backed that project, providing moral support to the organisers and also taking part in preparations via the Polish Bureau in London and Lviv. The objective of the trip was, first and foremost, "a direct encounter on the soil of London and England with certain circles representing English public opinion to establish a direct relationship that could in the future bring multilateral benefits to bring the two nations closer together". The nature of the trip, according to its organisers, required a dose of confidentiality; hence the intention was not communicated to the press and was limited to personal and mail communication.⁷⁰

then English Victims Relief Fund was discussed by Norman Davies, 'The Poles in Great Britain 1914–1919', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 118 (1972).

⁶⁹ Pomian, *Józef Retinger*, 30. Pro-Polish sentiments were also expressed by: Geoffrey Drage, George Peabody Gooch, Charles William Oman, Herbert George Wells, Robert William Seton-Watson, Henry Wickham Steed, Rolf Buttler, and others. See Romer, *Pamiętnik paryski*, 202; Seyda, *Polska na przełomie dziejów*, 175.

⁷⁰ BOss., sygn. 7997 II, Pismo Rady Narodowej do J. Rozwadowskiego, Lwów, 16 May 1913, 111–13. "The island nation was tempting for many because of its particular characteristics, the homeland of great thinkers, scholars and inventors, a land of great social devices, has so far not been visited often due to language barrier or lack of appreciation for understanding relations of Great Britain". The tour programme included Berlin, Brussels, Ghent, Ostend and London (15–20 Sept.

International gatherings of academics were also used as a place for establishing contacts. One such event was London's International Congress of Historical Sciences (April 1913) with papers presented by Polish delegates: Władysław Konopczyński, *Antyteza zasady wolności. Liberum veto* [Liberum veto. The Antithesis of the Principle of Freedom], Marcei Handelsman, *Napoleon a Polska* [Napoleon and Poland], Władysław Jabłonowski, *Orientacja dzisiejsza literatury w Polsce* [The Orientation of Contemporary Polish Literature], and Aleksander Jabłonowski, *Metoda historyczno-geograficzna stosowana przez Instytut Towarzystwa Naukowego Warszawskiego* [The Historical and Geographic Method Used by Warsaw's Academic Society Institute]. The Polish delegation was hosted by Alma-Tadema. Contact was also established with Józef Retinger.⁷¹

Every opportunity was taken to strengthen political contacts. One of those opportunities came with Józef Conrad Korzeniowski's visit to Galicia in the summer of 1914, where he met with leading Polish politicians.⁷²

The propaganda campaign in Britain prior to the outbreak of the First World War had little influence on London's attitude towards the Polish question. The Foreign Office rejected Retinger's attempts to bind the British government to commitments to Poles in the manifesto of the Russian Commander in Chief, Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich. In September 1914, they received only an offhand letter

1913). Eight working groups were to be established: friends of city-gardens, artistic, medical, industrial, trade, tourist, economic and sport. The tour was organised by a Munich Travel Bureau. BOss., sygn. 7997 II, L. Nieczuja-Wierzbiicki, Naukowo-turystyczna wycieczka do Anglii, 113–15.

⁷¹ BOss., sygn. 12858 I, Władysław Jabłonowski, Z biegiem lat. Wspomnienia z lat 1886–1939, 330–42.

⁷² BOss., sygn. 14086 II, Wspomnienia Stanisława Cieńskiego, 13: "I remember his tall, skinny figure with grey beard, he did not speak Polish". He had troubles with his return to England due to the outbreak of war. He published two articles about his visit to Poland: 'Poland Revisited' in *Daily News* and 'First News' in *Reveille*. In August 1916, jointly with Retinger he presented a memorial in the Foreign Office on the reconstruction of the Polish state. Zdzisław Najder, 'Joseph Conrad-Korzeniowski', in *PSB*, xiv (1968–1969), 173–86. Also Richard Curle, *Joseph Conrad: A Study* (New York, 1914); *Conrad and Poland*, ed. and an introd. by Alex Kurczaba (Lublin, 1996; East European Monographs); Jeffrey Meyers, *Joseph Conrad: A Biography* (New York, 1991); Józef Retinger, *Conrad and His Contemporaries* (London, 1941).

with 'expressions of sympathy' for the manifesto which was 'welcomed' by the British public opinion.⁷³ London's lack of interest in the Polish question was often accompanied by negative moods towards any kind of engagement in issues peripheral to British interests in Europe.

The Information and Press Office was more successful among the Polish diaspora in the United States. It launched a series of activities with the Polish National Council [Polska Rada Narodowa, PRN] in Chicago. This organisation brought together Catholic and National circles who had left the pro-left-wing and pro-independence Committee of National Defence. T. Cieński and S. Węcowski, the head and the secretary of the National Council, respectively, attended the PRN's gathering (7–8 July 1914). A decision was made to establish the Information and Press Office in Chicago and a special 'liaison commission for the National Council'. Founded at the beginning of October 1914, the Central Polish Committee in America (which later transformed into the Central Rescue Committee) recognised the activities of the Polish Information and Propaganda office as 'useful' and maintained contacts with J. Gałęzowski (Paris), M. Loret (Roma) and J. Conrad (London).⁷⁴

Despite its limitations, lack of adequate funding, and a relatively small circle of partners not always prepared to carry out such works, the Polish propaganda campaign prior to the outbreak of the First World War contributed somewhat to a widening interest in the Polish question in Western Europe. S. Stroński noted with intended

⁷³ Tadeusz Piszczkowski, *Anglia a Polska 1914–1939 w świetle dokumentów brytyjskich* (London, 1975), 4.

⁷⁴ Krzysztof Groniowski, 'Polonia amerykańska a Narodowa Demokracja 1893–1914', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, lxxix, 1 (1972), 44–53; Mirosław Frančić, *Komitet Obrony Narodowej w Ameryce 1912–1918* (Wrocław, 1983), 44–67; Marian M. Drozdowski, 'Działalność Polonii amerykańskiej w walce o niepodległość Polski w latach 1910–1918', in Halina Florkowska-Frančić, Mirosław Frančić, and Hieronim Kubiak (eds), *Polonia wobec niepodległości Polski w czasie I wojny światowej* (Wrocław, 1979), 63–70; *Polonia Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki 1910–1918. Wybór dokumentów*, ed. by Marian M. Drozdowski and Eugeniusz Kusielewicz (Warszawa, 1989), 57 ff.; Tadeusz Radzik, 'Polonia w USA wobec niepodległości państwa polskiego i walki o granice II RP (1914–1921)', in Adam Koseski (ed.), *Polonia w walce o niepodległość i granice Rzeczypospolitej 1914–1921* (Pułtusk, 1999), 22–40; Mieczysław B. Biskupski, 'Paderewski as Leader of American Polonia 1914–1918', *Polish American Studies*, xliii, 1 (1986), 37–56; Elizabeth McKillen, *Chicago Labor and the Quest for a Democratic Diplomacy 1914–1924* (Ithaca–London, 1995), 41.

exaggeration: “It had been the first Polish campaign of its kind since Prince Adam Czartoryski”, referring to the Great Emigration from the first half of the 19th century.⁷⁵ Successes came mainly in France, where the Office’s actions were favourably met, mostly because France was interested in courting allies when facing the prospect of an international conflict and having closer ties with Russia. S. Kozicki connected those campaigns and Polish activity at the Paris Peace Conference.⁷⁶

The delayed opening of the Information and Press Office in Rapperswil (1 December 1913), led by Stanisław Zieliński, did not play an important role before the First World War but became a centre of the political life of the Polish pro-independence left.⁷⁷

VI CONCLUSIONS

Public diplomacy conducted by the Polish Information and Press Offices was crucial in raising public awareness in the West. Those actions introduced the Polish question into a broader public debate, and Western elites gained a fuller picture of Polish territories under the partition. For many, the topic was a complete novelty. It is fully justified then to say that such diplomatic actions and imperatives positively influenced public reception in terms of the Polish question.

This topic is of enormous significance when reconstructing the changing perception of the Polish question in Western Europe. Had there been no preparations made in 1907–14, the conditions to meet

⁷⁵ Quote [translated] after: ‘Edward Dubanowicz’, in Adam Ordega and Tymon Terlecki (eds), *Straty kultury polskiej 1939–1945*, i (Glasgow, 1945), 64.

⁷⁶ “I believe that the Agency’s actions were very beneficial as it brought together the whole group of French intellectuals who then during the World War and at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, and later, made a big contribution to our case”. Kozicki, *Pamiętnik*, 218.

⁷⁷ F. Rawita-Gawroński wrote critically as usual: “the choice of place was terrible. It’s a dead-end from which it is difficult to lead on the case. Geneva would be better with its read by everyone *Journal de Genève* and *La Tribune*”, he praised, however, the choice of the Office’s head. Rawita-Gawroński, *Ludzie i czasy*, 119. See Danuta Pływawko, *Sienkiewicz w Szwajcarii. Z dziejów akcji ratunkowej dla Polski w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej* (Poznań, 1986), 49; Karolczak, ‘Zagraniczne biura’, 565–6; *Rzeczpospolita*, 116 (21 March 1914). Stanisław Zieliński (1880–1936), historian, secessionist from National Democracy (1908), head of the National Museum Library in Rapperswil.

Polish independence-related demands during the Great War would have been much more difficult for both the ruling elites and the broader international public opinion.

The developments in international affairs worked to the benefit of Poles. The Polish question was seen first and foremost – especially in Paris – as an element of the future conflict with Germany and part of Poland and Russia’s relations. Polish information and propaganda campaigns reached a relatively narrow group of intellectuals, writers, members of the artistic community, journalists, and to a lesser extent, parliamentarians.

The broader public in the West knew little about Poland-related issues, which changed only slightly and could not immediately alter the previously established stereotypes. These barriers were easier to overcome in France, where pro-Polish sympathies had survived among intellectual elites. In Britain, however, it required more efforts and became visible only during the Great War and at the Paris Peace Conference.⁷⁸

proofreading Barry Keane

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⁷⁸ It is worth noting the efforts of National Democracy’s leader Roman Dmowski during the First World War. See for example Małgorzata Gmurczyk-Wrońska, ‘Not Russia, but France and England shall decide about Poland: the diplomatic action of Roman Dmowski in 1916–1917’, *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, lii, 3 (2017), 27–45; Krzysztof Kawalec, *Roman Dmowski* (Poznań, 2016); Jolanta Niklewska, ‘Roman Dmowski w Londynie i w Paryżu w świetle jego archiwum z lat 1915–1919’, in Jan Engelgrad (ed.), *Mysł polityczna Romana Dmowskiego* (Warszawa, 2009), 45–66; Marian Leczyk, *Komitet Narodowy Polski a Ententa i Stary Zjednoczone 1917–1919* (Warszawa, 1966); Piotr Wandycz, ‘Dmowski’s Policy at the Paris Peace Conference: Success or Failure?’, in Paul Latawski (ed.), *The Reconstruction of Poland 1914–1923* (London, 1992), 117–32; Paul Latawski, ‘Roman Dmowski, the Polish Question, and Western Opinion 1915–1918: The Case of Britain’, in *ibid.*, 1–12.

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