

## European and Regional Integration Concepts in Poland (1789–2004)

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### ABSTARCT

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was one of the largest states in early Modern Europe. Its internal public law structure was complex and had several federal features. The existence of different levels of autonomy was no stranger to him. Many nations and denominations (churches) were mixed in this state, which ceased to exist at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but the ideal of independent Polish statehood lived on. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, several Polish independence uprisings broke out, mostly against the Russians, but none of them were successful. Various concepts were born among Polish politicians; these often dealt with a Central and Eastern European federation with Polish leadership. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Poles held Slavic solidarity concepts that sought to reconcile Slavic Poles and Russians. These concepts were popular mainly among the conservative and romantic intellectuals. In time, however, Slavic solidarity took a back seat. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Polish socialist movement was born, which sought more moderate national politics toward the Belarus, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian national movements and wanted to unite some nations of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in a fairer federation. These ideas were also close to Józef Piłsudski, under whose leadership Poland again became an independent state at the end of 1918. He arrived from the Polish Socialist Party, and during the First World War, he organized the Polish legions. At a similar time in tsarist Russia, the Polish National Democratic Party was the second important political movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This nationalist movement was born in tsarist Russia and propagated the rebirth of Poland in the form of a smaller but more Polish national state. Roman Dmowski, a leader of the NDP, had a conflict with Piłsudski that was an important conceptional problem of the second Polish Republic in the interwar period. The new Poland was big state with regional ambitions, but it had two dangerous neighbors—Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The Polish leaders therefore had to think about various federal alternatives, most of which revolved around solidarity in Central and Eastern Europe. Such were the Intermarium or Jagellonian plans. The Polish tragedy during the Second World War and Soviet dominance after 1945 only reinforced these ideas. Many Polish intellectuals began to see the future in European unity, although such ideas existed as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the Polish emigration to Paris worked to reconcile them with the peoples of Eastern Europe (Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Belarusians). The journal *Kultura* played the crucial role in this process. Poland after 1989 again plays an important European role in three regional contexts: Central Europe, the Baltic Sea, and North-Eastern Europe.

### KEYWORDS

Baltic sea, Central Europe, federation, Polish-Lithunian Commonwealth, Ukraine

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## Introduction

The Polish-Lithuanian state union was one of the largest states in Europe before the 18<sup>th</sup> century, inhabited by people of different religions (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim) and nationalities (Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Germans, Tartars, etc.). The nobiliary Rzeczpospolita (Republic) as a state never had a homogeneous structure; however, the Union of Lublin, concluded in 1569, eventually created a union of two formally equal state formations. The Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Principality of Lithuania had a common monarch, general parliament, and foreign policy. Otherwise, both units retained their own political community of nobles, army, treasury, legal system, and customs borders.<sup>1</sup>

There was further internal fragmentation within the Union. The Kingdom of Poland, for example, consisted of at least two major historical regions with their own characteristics: Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) and Lesser Poland (Małopolska). In the northeastern periphery, there was Royal Prussia, which was also the vassal of the King of Poland, as was the province of Kurland, which is today located in Latvia. Regional (Vojvodinal or district) identities were also strong within these territorial entities. Historic Lithuania was particularly diverse, as it included the Belarusians of the Orthodox religion in addition to ethnic Lithuanians and a significant part of present-day Ukraine. At one time, the old version of the Belarusian language had been the official language. However, in 1697, through the voluntary political-cultural assimilation of the Lithuanian nobility of various origins, Polish became the official language throughout the Grand Principality.<sup>2</sup> The memory of the Union of Lublin and the political structure based on local autonomy left deep imprints on the thinking of the Polish intelligentsia, which would have also been reflected in the various conceptions of integration that emerged in the future. In addition, Poland, which had already been a part of Latin culture, has always been closely associated with the currents of the Western European frame of mind, whether it was the 16th-century Latin humanism or 18th-century French enlightenment. Latin cultural attachment brought with it a thorough knowledge of the ancient Roman republic tradition, which influenced the Polish nobility's thinking and partly led to the (in)famous Polish 'noble democracy.' Another important feature was the high proportion of nobility with a relatively uniform status. Nowhere in Europe did this class have as much political weight as here, as they also elected the king.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the concept of a free noble nation played an important role in the opposition of the upper classes of Belarus, Lithuania, and Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> For these reasons, the Poles had failed for a long

1 Řezník, 2006, p. 44.

2 Ibid. pp. 44–47.

3 The key event was the extinction of the Jagiellonian dynasty in 1572. The Lithuanian origin Jagiellonians, after the Piasts dynasty, were the second group that was able to permanently hold the Polish throne.

4 Dylągowa, 1998, pp. 159–160.

time to notice the national aspirations of Belarus, Lithuania, and Ukraine, which later led to many tragedies. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, ‘noble democracy’ had finally weakened the central state power so much that the Polish-Lithuanian state union fell as a victim of the neighboring great powers (Austria, Russia, Prussia) and ceased to exist.

The division of the country took place in three stages (1772, 1793, 1795). The Polish question, on the other hand, occupied Europe throughout the long 19<sup>th</sup> century (1789–1914). The Polish independence rebellions in several waves (1794, 1830/31, 1863/64) and the emigrants in their wake also gave impetus to this. The loss of state independence deeply shocked the Poles, who from the first minute were trying to restore the independence of their statehood, either on their own or with external help. To do this, however, they had to solve two interior questions—the relationship between the Polish nobility and the peasantry and the problem of nationality.

Polish plans were also marked by relationships with neighboring states and their peoples, similar to the concepts of integration and Europe that arose among other peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. The Polish attitude toward the great powers who divided the country developed dynamically over the decades. Although they relied most heavily on French help during the Napoleonic Wars, they could have temporarily reconciled themselves to one or another of the dividing powers if those powers had been able to grant them greater independence within the existing framework. For a long time, Slavic Russia seemed like such a state.

At first, trust in the French did not seem in vain, since Napoleon I founded the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807, for which he even wrote a constitution. The Duchy of Warsaw existed until 1815, when the Congress of Vienna annexed its western part to Prussia, declared Krakow a ‘free city,’ and the remaining territories continued to function as protectorates of the tsarist Empire under the name of the Kingdom of Poland (Congress Poland). The latter initially had significant autonomy in the early periods, but after the suppression of the rebellion in 1830/1831, Tsarism progressively abolished it. In 1874, the kingdom’s separate status was almost completely abolished, and Prussia increasingly resorted to a centralization policy. Therefore, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, only Poles living in the Austrian province of Galicia had real autonomy. Plans to recreate Polish statehood during the period of the partition (1795–1918) often included references to a federal state structure, which would have largely related to the union of nations of the former Polish-Lithuanian state union. Their creators envisaged the country’s independence mostly within a confederation with Russia, the Habsburg Empire, or Germany.<sup>5</sup>

5 Cholu, 2006, p. 116.

## 1. The early modern concepts (16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries)

As a political concept, Europe appeared in Polish public thought in the early 16th century, as the historian and doctor Maciej Miechowita (1457–1523) had already published it in his work *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis Europiana et Asiana et de contentis in eis* in 1517. Under the influence of Erasmus of Rotterdam, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (1503–1572) published his influential work *De Republica emendanda* in 1551, the third volume of which dealt with the issue of war and peace that was constantly a concern for Europeans. Besides Christianity and the rule of law, he thought that the cooperating community of European states also had a role to play in preserving peace. According to him, in case of conflicts, the monarchs of the neighboring states should have appointed some kind of arbitrators, who could then act as mediators.<sup>6</sup>

The most influential concept of early Polish unification was linked to the Polish king Stanisław Leszczyński (1677–1766), who twice sat on the Polish throne (1704–1709 and 1733–1736) and then as the Prince of Lorraine from 1738 to 1766. His work *Memoirial de L'Affermissement de la paix generale* was created under the influence of the French Enlightenment. Leszczyński, who was striving for universal peace, wanted to entrust the role of peacekeeping to the European republics, which, in turn, would have been selflessly led by France as one of the strongest states of the age. The author's reference to republics meant the Netherlands, England, and Sweden, which were states where parliament's role was already important. According to Leszczyński, this association of states should have primarily acted as a mediator but should have even had the right to intervene if necessary.<sup>7</sup> Finally, we must mention the Warsaw teacher Józef Skrezutowski (1743–1806), who belonged to King Stanisław Poniatowski's circle. He was focused on eternal peace in Europe, which he wanted to achieve by creating the Republic of European States. He believed the republic should function as a voluntary confederation, with a joint congress for conciliation and another for settlement of bilateral disputes. Moreover, he considered it necessary to have a common legal system based on common legal principles recognized by all member states. He wanted to ban violations of common legal norms, armed initiatives, and organizations against common security.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Polish ideas of integration in the long 19<sup>th</sup> century (1789–1918)

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Polish public thinking was seriously influenced not only by the ideas of the French Enlightenment but also the popular Slavic ideas of that time of cooperation. Literary romanticism, which had begun at the time, and the

6 Stoczewska, 2003, pp. 7–9.

7 Ibid. p. 13.

8 Ibid. p. 14.

emerging cultural-linguistic nationalism further strengthened the Slavic dimension of Polish public thinking. However, the Slavic orientation also posed several dangers for them, as the Poles had just come under the control of Russia, their old regional rival. Moreover, Orthodox Russians had always treated the Catholic Poles, considered ‘Latinized Slavs,’ with suspicion.<sup>9</sup> The strong Polish state traditions hampered the building of an effective Russian Empire.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the youthful friend of Tsar Alexander the First, Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770–1861), was at the heart of forces hoping to improve the Polish situation.<sup>10</sup> The Prince did not particularly like Napoleon, but he was aware that the French Revolution would mark a major cornerstone in the state-building process, which would focus on the issue of equality of nations and freedom.<sup>11</sup> However, as a diplomat, he was also aware of the importance of a balance of power. The aim of Czartoryski was to create a Poland connected to Russia, which was one of the centers of Slavism at the same time.<sup>12</sup> In a memorandum to the Tsar during the time of the Congress of Vienna, he outlined a project for a political alliance between Poland and Russia that would have represented the interests of all Slavs, especially the Balkans.<sup>13</sup>

The Vienna Congress, however, only partially implemented the plan for Slav-based Polish-Russian cooperation. At that time, Stanisław Staszic (1755–1826), a representative of the Polish Enlightenment, formulated his plan for a future European community. He said the division of Poland had violated international law. As a forerunner of Slavophilia, he urged unification of the Slavic nations (then under Russian leadership), from which, in the long run, European unity could have been developed.<sup>14</sup> According to him, the Prussian/Austrian threat and the defense against Napoleon linked Slavophilia to the idea of European unity.

The idea that went beyond Slavic cooperation was formulated by Józef Maria Hoene-Wroński (1776–1853), a Polish philosopher, physicist, and mathematician. ‘The philosophical system of Hoene-Wronski was an attempt to find a universal principle that organizes all fields of science which should lead to discovering the absolute truth.’<sup>15</sup> In his work published in Paris in 1819,<sup>16</sup> he described how a federation of European

9 Głębocki, 2000, p. 42.

10 Czartoryski, as a child of one of the most influential Polish magnate families, was a lifelong believer in a federal solution to European conditions. From 1802 to 1806, he was Minister of Foreign Affairs of the tsarist Russian Empire, thanks to which he became acquainted with how the policy of the great powers operated. In 1830, he had already become one of the conservative leaders of the Polish War of Independence, and after it until his death in 1861, he was the leader of the Polish emigrant movement.

11 Stoczewska, 2003, p. 16.

12 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, p. 44.

13 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, p. 48.

14 See more: Steggherr, 2019, pp. 195–202.

15 Europe of Free Nations, 2008, p. 6.

16 Hoene-Wronski: *Creation absolute del’humanite*, Paris: Éverat, 1819. For details see: Borodziej et al., 2005, Vol. 2 [Regesten], pp. 29–30.

states could have been created, which would have ensured the Continent's security. In his opinion, the federation should be first be formed by states inhabited by one nation, where the defining criterion of a nation is having its own language. This alliance would be the transition to a federation of all peoples. However, forming a world federation could only be achieved if all nations recognized the absolute and pure truth. The goal of all mankind would be to attain the absolute, and thus the quarrels would end.<sup>17</sup>

August Cieszkowski (1814–1894) shared the views of Hoene-Wroński on the special role of Slavism in God's plan. Cieszkowski envisioned the need for unifying mankind in a religious way.

In Cieszkowski's opinion, the prayer 'Our Father' is a revelation of humanity's future, heralding a new age which would fulfil Christ teaching and establish—by way of evolution of political and social relations—the Kingdom of God on earth. This Kingdom, constituting the most stage in the social development, would mean transition of nations from the state of nature to the state of the civilization of societies, to the state of nations' citizenship, to the state of Peoples Republic. Kingdom of God on earth, that is, a republic of independent nations, by joining nations and states, would not deprive them of their individual national features or independent existence but would allow them a harmonious cooperation and eternal universal peace.<sup>18</sup>

On November 29, 1830, a national rebellion broke out in Warsaw against the Russian rule that aimed to achieve Polish independence, the reunification of Poland and Lithuania, and restoration of the 1772 borders. Besides national radicals, the rebellion was supported by the incidentally moderate Prince Czartoryski, who in his book on the art of diplomacy predicted a kind of state arrangement in Central and Eastern Europe that would, along with the rebirth of the historic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, also restore the historic Czech-Hungarian Kingdom as independent state.<sup>19</sup> The Prince was convinced of the legitimacy of nations' aspirations for self-determination, and long before the attempts of 1848, formulated the idea of the United States of Central Europe. The Russian power threatening the Central and Eastern Region of Europa and the growing Prussian threat inspired him to raise his word of warning for the benefit of all the people of the region:

What is needed in this part of Europe is a state that, by its composition and nature, can be nothing more than a defensive force. It is in Europe's own interest for this state to be a permanent and strong component of European balance.<sup>20</sup>

17 Stoczewska, 2003, p. 16.

18 Europe of Free Nations, 2008, p. 11.

19 Romsics, 1998, pp. 1–2.

20 Segesváry, 2004, p. 14.

Czartoryski believed that both small and large states had the right to independence and to develop their national characteristics. However, small states could only provide these if they had appropriate forces to defend them. Thus, Czartoryski proposed to unite smaller and weaker states into one federation:

Europe has almost the right to demand this from small states, because this is the only way for them to make an effective contribution to the successful and expeditious development of the European community. The confederate state, like the federation of states, is a desirable form of consolidation of individual countries, because its purpose has purely defensive nature and inherently cannot threaten the great powers.<sup>21</sup>

After the suppression of the November rebellion, the pre-1830 Slavic-based concepts based on the Russian-Polish alliance no longer seemed to be up to date for Poles forced to emigrate. Contemporary Polish philosophers therefore began to think in a broader European context. Then, Wojciech Bogumił Jastrzębowski (1779–1882), a philosopher, scientist, and soldier, published his work on the Constitution of Europe (*Konstytucja dla Europy*). In this work, the author had already surpassed the ideas of an emerging confederation led by a strong state. In 77 stages, he laid down federal rules for the nations of Europe that, in his opinion, could create European unity. According to the constitution, parliaments would be the national legislators, and delegates from all nations would form the Congress, which would be the European legislator. Legal systems at both levels (European and national) should be based on divine natural law. The former would have been determined by national parliaments and the latter by the European Congress. The European Congress would have to meet in different cities each year, and its working language would be the most widely spoken European language. However, the author did not specify which language this meant. Congress would be the chief arbitrator, but it would also supervise the Joint Armed Forces. The enthusiastic author wanted to dismantle the national armed forces and wanted all weapons to be taken into common ownership. The collected weapons should then have been stored in one place and could only have been in the command of the European Congress.<sup>22</sup>

Jastrzębowski outlined not only the plan for a new Europe, but also a vision of nations independent of territory. He broke away from the idea of nation-states with this idea, which was a central element of political thinking at that time. He saw the nation as a unity created by language, independent of the location of the language user/speaker. According to Jastrzębowski, by acknowledging diversity of languages, cross-border unity could have been established, and thus a law-oriented nation could have been created in Europe.<sup>23</sup>

21 Ibid. p. 14.

22 Stoczewska, 2003, pp. 17–18.

23 Choluj, 2013, p. 95.

Thousands of Polish intellectuals emigrated to France and Britain after the November rebellion was defeated.<sup>24</sup> The Czartoryski-led group called Hôtel Lambert was the best organized part of the emigrants in Paris. Hôtel Lambert had a European network whose members represented Polish interests with the support of English and French diplomats. This group had been in diplomacy for forty years, essentially acting as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of a non-existent state.<sup>25</sup>

However, there were several groupings among the emigrants. Of these, the Polish Democratic Society (Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie – TDP)<sup>26</sup> should be highlighted. This Society rejected politics, history, and traditions, replacing them with the revolution of nations and of humanity. They did not acknowledge that the then heavily idealized aristocratic first Republic of Poland could be an example of European democracy; instead, they proclaimed its obscurantism. This perception was changed after 1833/34 when the hope of a European revolution was dissipated. At that time, members of the Society turned again to Polish traditions and Slavic reciprocity. The role of Poland was emphasized in the plan for the democratic unification of all Slavs and thus, for the formation of a community of European people. However, the idea of Slavic unification with Russian leadership did not disappear completely.<sup>27</sup>

Polish independence aspirations also appeared in the realm of an idea conceived in romantic literature, in the so-called political messianism. According to this perception, Poland, divided into three parts, would become the Messiah of nations and bring healing and a peaceful world to all the peoples of Europe through its own pain. One of the representatives of this trend was Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855).<sup>28</sup> According to Mickiewicz's views on the future of Europe, it was necessary to establish European unity:

...the Christian religion which he expected to be radically renewed, introducing the Christian morality into politics, particularly into international relations, as well as national dogma, that is, the idea of integrating Europe to promote its constituent nations. The future Europe was to be a confederation modelled upon the Polish-Lithuanian union, but its construction would be possible only as a result of a universal peoples' war a European-wide revolution which would destroy bondages and injustice of the Holy Alliance Europe.<sup>29</sup>

24 The Great Emigration consisted of about eleven thousand emigrants, the pick of Polish intellectual and political life.

25 The Hôtel Lambert is named after a palace on Île St. Louis in Paris that Czartoryski bought in 1843 and used as his residence. See: Hahn, 1973, pp. 345–374.

26 The most populous group of Polish emigration was formed on March 17, 1832 in Paris. See: Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, p. 53.

27 See more: Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, pp. 52–59.

28 Choluś, 2013, pp. 93–94.

29 Europe of Free Nations, 2008, p. 10.



Concepts based on the need for Poland's fate to be linked to the Habsburg House first emerged in 1848. A group of Krakow conservatives wanted to take advantage of Austria's weakness and envisioned a new Austria. They desired the Slavic Federation to be under Habsburg law in the future.<sup>30</sup> To this end, the Slavic Congress in Prague was organized in June 1848. The congress was convened and chaired by František Palacký from the Czech Republic, who was the most influential representative of Austroslavism in the Czech Republic.<sup>31</sup> This congress was attended by representatives of the Slavs living in the territory of the Habsburg Monarchy and Poles from the Grand Duchy of Poznań as part of Prussia. The leading figure of the latter, Karol Libelt, a Polish philosopher and leader of the Polish League in Berlin, summarized his ideas shortly before the events of March as follows: '... our vast Poland, which stretches from sea to sea, will no longer be reborn as a unified state with national government, but a federation of Lithuanians, Ruthenians, Prussians and other nations.' Although Libelt heavily criticized the oppression of the Slavs by the Germans, he emphasized the independence of nations participating in the federation, even if they were not Slavs. In his conception, the federation was open to, among others, Jews and Germans.<sup>32</sup>

Representatives of Hôtel Lambert favored unification with the Ukrainians and urged an agreement between the Slavs and Hungary. The Czechs who hosted the Prague Congress, however, deviated from these plans. Palacký advocated transforming Austria in a federal way, which according to him would have resolved the Slavic question. In this concept, he said, Austria (and its nations) would have escaped a double danger: the Germans and the Russians.<sup>33</sup> On June 12, Palacký presented the Manifesto of Slavic Congress for the Nations of Europe, which reflected a compromise between Palacký's Austro-Slavism and the All-Slavic idea of Libelt.<sup>34</sup>

Austro-Slavism was accepted by many of the Poles, including the Czech sympathizer, Jerzy Lubomirski. He and Antoni Zygmunt Helcel

presented a plan for an Austrian-Slavonic-union (*Akt unji rakusko-słowiańskiej*) which would include Slavonic peoples in the Austrian Empire. The aim of the proposed union, based on his principle of equality of its members, was to ensure independence of the Slavonic peoples, their territories, and constitutional systems. Hungarians were invited to join in; envisaged was also an alliance with Tyrol and the German part of Styria.<sup>35</sup>

30 Cetnarowitz, 1996, p. 69.

31 The ideas of reforming the state structure of the Habsburg Empire, which advocated the equality of Slavs and thought prospectively of bringing the empire under Slavic control, are collectively called Austro-Slavism. See. Romsics, 1998, p. 3.

32 Choluĵ, 2006, p. 116.

33 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, p. 61.

34 See more: Trzeciakowski, 2004, pp. 331–346.

35 Europe of Free Nations, 2008, p. 18.

The plan of the emigrant Valerian Krasinsky, published in London at the end of 1848, sought to unite the Hungarian and Slavic parts of the Habsburg Empire with Prussian and Russian Poland. Poland would have become the driving force behind this, due to its numerical superiority and historical past. Krasinsky, however, did not want to remove the Habsburgs from the head of the federation, remaining a part of the united states in its internal structure. Like the Czech Austro-Slavic politicians, he marked the basic function of the federation's foreign and security policy as stopping Russian-Pan-Slavic and German-Pan-German expansionism. However, Czartoryski spared much less of the Habsburg empire and the dynastic principle. The national principle had increasingly become the basic principle of his radicalized idea of settlement.<sup>36</sup>

The 1848 revolutions overwhelmed the idea of solidarity between nations in Poland and throughout Europe. Due to the fall of the Hungarian Revolution, the democratic members of the TDP turned against the idea of a Slavic federation because it was perceived as a cover-up of Russian Pan-Slavism.<sup>37</sup> The repeated shaking of Polish Slavophilia could also be observed in the Czartoryski camp. One of the most active associates of Czartoryski from the late 1840s was Franciszek Duchiński, who contrasted Catholic Christianity and Ruthenianism with Slavic cooperation.<sup>38</sup> He argued for 'the complete independence' of 'Little-Russia' (consisting of the Chernihiv, Poltava, and Kharkiv provinces of the Russian Empire), regarding it as a distinct nationality that possessed 'all rights to such sovereignty.'<sup>39</sup>

Czartoryski's camp attracted several men with dual Polish-Ukrainian loyalties (historically known as *gente Rutheni, natione Poloni*) such as Duchiński, the writer and activist Michał Czajkowski, and the Ruthenian priest Hipolit Terlecki, who recognized a separate Ukrainian ethnicity (customs, language, and faith) within a broader Polish national community.<sup>40</sup>

His main thesis was that Russia's conversion to the Christian religion had been made essentially according to the Catholic rite, and only the schism disrupted the religious unity of the Slavs. He argued that instead of committing itself to godless Western values, Poland should bring its own spirituality into line with its domestic way of life. This would unite the Slavic nation and lead them in accordance with Western morality. According to him, the Slavs could choose between two paths: the Slavic Federation would either succeed under the banner of Slavic Catholicism or be crushed under Russian tyranny.<sup>41</sup>

36 Romsics, 1998, p. 4.

37 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, pp. 62–63.

38 The essence of Ruthenianism was the recognition of the Ukrainians claim to independence and their common defense against non-Slavic Russia.

39 Bilenky, 2012, pp. 112–113.

40 Ibid. p. 113.

41 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, pp. 63–64.

The accession of Tsar Alexander the II to the throne in 1855 initiated important changes throughout the Russian Empire, which were ‘softening’ the political situation.<sup>42</sup> Many Polish emigrants abandoned political idealism and planned to return home. Both the idea of European unification and the Slavic alliance disappeared from the works of authors discussing the future. They were replaced by the idea of a federation of former Polish and non-Polish parts of *Rzeczpospolita*.<sup>43</sup>

Although the Spring of the Peoples and the Crimean War escaped Russia-Poland, the idea of national unity and independence survived among Polish patriots, who broke into two main camps. In 1831, the so-called whites considered autonomy as an achievable goal, but the reds wanted full independence. The latter had sparked the rebellion of January 1863, which lasted for 14 months. On the one hand, its defeat resulted in more intense Russification,<sup>44</sup> while on the other, it triggered another wave of emigration.

Representatives of the democratic movement abroad planned to rebuild the Polish state as a national community based on the freedom and equality of nations. The January rebellion caused, in some respects, the democratic idea of popular solidarity in a new, socialist form to flourish. At that time, ideas like unifying the nations of Europe, the independence of Poland, and creating a democratic Slavic federation reappeared.<sup>45</sup> Thus, for example,

the proclamation the Representative Committee of the Union of Polish Emigration (which led the Union in the years 1866–1871), dated November 29, 1866, stated that the aim of the Polish refugees was the struggle for independence carried out in association with other subjugated peoples, for example the Slavs, and also with the peoples of Hungary and Romania; opposition to the imperialist idea of Panslavism; and the unification for the sake of universal alliance. Their ultimate aim was a federation of European nations.<sup>46</sup>

The conservative wing of emigration, under the leadership of Władysław Czarotoryski, son of Adam Czarotoryski who died in 1861, paid increased attention to the situation in Galicia. Because Polish-led Galicia had had autonomy since the mid-1860s. Władysław Czarotoryski therefore considered the good situation of Poles in Galicia to be the cornerstone of Polish hopes. He believed that this part of the country could be the center of the struggle for independence without compromising the interests of the Habsburg Monarchy. In line with the 1848 ideas of the Czechs’ František Palacký, he saw that a strong state should be established or maintained between Germany and Russia. According to him, in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Poles could play a mediating

42 Davies, 2006, pp. 694–695.

43 Borodziej, Brzostek, and Górny, 2005, p. 65.

44 Whites relied primarily on the landowner nobility and insisted on their prerogatives, while reds came from students, urban craftsmen, and young officers. Romsics, 1998, p. 9.

45 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, p. 68.

46 Europe of Free Nations, 2008, p. 18.

role between the antagonistic Hungarians and the Slavs, thus facilitating the trialist transformation of the dualist monarchy.<sup>47</sup>

This concept in part also appeared in the inscription of the Provincial Assembly of Galicia based in Lemberg, addressed to Emperor Franz Joseph. Polish representatives in Galicia in a later brochure also condemned Czech relations with Russia, thus distancing themselves from broader Pan-Slavic concepts. In the long run, they could also imagine the originally dualistic (Austro-Hungarian) monarchy as a trialist (Austro-Hungarian-Polish) formation. However, a different form of federation was also acceptable to them.<sup>48</sup>

One of the most determined Galician federalists was Francis Smolka, who, in his two-volume work *Political Letters on Russia and Poland* called on Austria to make peace with its own nations. In the Galician Sejm, Smolka proposed forming a federation with the participation of Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, Galicia, and Bukovina. This plan was also supported by other Galician Democrats.<sup>49</sup>

The Franco-Prussian War and establishment of a united Germany in 1871 changed the situation of Western Polish emigration in an unfavorable way. The attention of the French turned elsewhere, and under the influence of Russian propaganda in Europe, many began to see troublemakers in the Poles. Those who stayed at home also had to think through their further plans. Among the conservatives, Slavic-centric concepts appeared again, while others expected Germany, which was getting stronger at that time, to drive back Russia. Conservatives were strong, especially in Krakow. For a time, one of the founders of the Slavic Club also worked, the philosopher and linguist Marian Zdziechowski (1861–1938), who founded the journal *Slavic World* at the turn of the century. His case also indicates that the Slavic aspect did not disappear permanently from Polish thought.<sup>50</sup>

From the 1870s, new political trends emerged among the Poles, including people's and socialist movements. Universalism played a more prominent role in the socialist program. The idea of a universal community of peoples was the crowning plan for the federation. The main difference between the various trends of socialism was that the future prosperity of the suppressed strata necessarily adhered to the supranational or universalist framework, or they could have imagined it within the framework of a nation-state.

According to Bolesław Limanowski (1835–1935), a Polish historian and sociologist of Lithuanian descent and one of the early founders of the socialist movement, a free Poland to be restored should have sought a free federation with Lithuania, Ukraine, and Belarus. This idea, which should not be confused with Panslavicism, then played an important role in the later politics of the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna – PPS), which he founded. This concept was also shared by the later

47 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, p. 70.

48 Ibid. p. 71.

49 Ibid. p. 71.

50 <https://www.polskietradycje.pl/postacie/widok/121>.

founder of the State, General Józef Piłsudski. Incidentally, like Limanowski, he also came from Lithuanian Polish nobility.<sup>51</sup>

Contrary to this concept, Ludwik Waryński (1856–1889), the founder and then leader of the early socialist party Proletariat, argued that the task of the socialists was mainly the class struggle rather than taking over the tasks of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat belonged together regardless of national differences, and the liberation of the proletariat went beyond the fate of Polish independence aspirations. The Polish revolutionary, who was young when he died in prison, had close ties with other Russian revolutionaries.<sup>52</sup>

The outbreak of the first Russian revolution in 1905 posed serious theoretical and tactical dilemmas for the various trends of the Polish socialist movement in Russia. The revolutionary faction of the PPS (PPS-Frakcja Rewolucyjna) would have immediately launched a war for Polish independence. The left-wing part of the party (PPS-Lewica) wanted to convene a constitutional assembly (Konstytuanta) in Warsaw, which would have determined the fate of the Russian parts of divided Poland. One of their leaders, the later communist Maksymilian Horwitz (1877–1937), set the party's goal as convening a republican parliament that would have been on an equal basis with the St. Petersburg parliament. The Republic of Poland would have been part of a federation of nations of the old Russian Empire established on a republican-democratic basis.<sup>53</sup> The program of the PPS-Proletariat of 1906 also stated that, although it would be in the interest of the Polish proletariat to unite all Polish territories in one state, this goal was almost impossible to achieve, so federalization of the existing imperial structure should be sought. The radical socialists saw an opportunity for this because of the changes in Russia. According to them, Polish independence would inevitably be resolved in the future European Community.<sup>54</sup>

The outbreak of the First World War caused another crisis of orientation among Poles living in the territory of the three great powers. The Polish Socialists of Independence hoping for the victory of the Central Powers, from which they were expected to weaken Russia, which was considered their main enemy. Most politicians of PPS therefore began to support the German-Austrian Covenant in 1914. Józef Piłsudski began to organize legions with which he wanted to take part in the fight against Russia.

Orientation toward the Central Powers could also be observed in other political groups. In July 1914, the National Committee (Naczelny Komitet Narodowy) was formed in Krakow, with the participation of representatives of the Socialists, Conservatives, Nationalists, and Populists. Its participants were united by the plan to supplement Galicia with the Russian part and thus transform Austria into a monarchy of three nations. Among others, Michał Bobrzyński (1849–1935), a former Galician

51 Cottam, 1972, pp. 38–39.

52 Graczyk, 2018. Available at: <https://historia.interia.pl/drogi-do-wolnosci/news-ludwik-warynski-i-pierwszy-proletariat,nId,2619134>.

53 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, p. 78.

54 <http://lewicowo.pl/program-polskiej-partii-socjalistycznej-proletariat/>

governor and then a conservative historian in Vienna, assisted in drawing up the program.<sup>55</sup>

Polish national politics also had a nationalist wing that relied more on the victory of the Entente and saw the Poles' place as on the side of the Russians, from which they expected unification of the Polish territories and then their serious autonomy and emancipation. Its chief leader was Roman Dmowski (1864–1939), who saw the main lurking threat of the Poles' aspirations and modernization program in strengthening the Germans. The National Democratic Party, which he founded and then led, was also characterized by strong anti-Semitism. Dmowski, as Piłsudski's main rival, did not believe in a federation to be established in the territory of the old Polish-Lithuanian state; instead, he became an advocate of assimilating a Polish nation-state. However, he did not want to assimilate the large number of Jews. At the time of the First World War, he was close to the Czech-Russian Neo-Slavic movement, which was thinking about the Slavic transformation of Austria according to Slavic aspects and about Slavic federalism. At the beginning of the First World War, Dmowski still voted for Russia, but his main long-term goal was to create a Polish nation-state that would be under Russian protection if protection was necessary. He moved his headquarters to Switzerland and then to France, making him one of the main advocates of Polish interests in the peace talks around Paris. However, he was Foreign Minister only for a short time in 1923.<sup>56</sup>

In 1916, the Central Authorities decided to create a conflicting but not completely independent state from the Kingdom of Poland, which belonged to Russia before the war but which they now occupied. According to this plan, the new Polish state would have belonged to the allies of the two Central European empires and would unite with them in a customs union. In foreign relations, however, German diplomacy would have represented the Poles.<sup>57</sup> In contrast, Nicholas II declared the reconstruction of Poland a Russian war target. The tsarist government had declared that it would not stand in the way of a future voluntary Polish-Russian federation. The Polish question thus became an important element in the policies of the warring superpowers in the last two years of the war. However, neither side wanted to give a clear promise of independence.

Ignacy Paderewski (1860–1941), a world-renowned composer-pianist who wrote a memorandum to the American President, Woodrow Wilson in early 1917, played an important role in the Entente-friendly Western Polish emigration. He envisioned an independent Polish state to be restored as a federation within the boundaries of 1772. In addition to the Polish territories belonging to Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine, Paderewski would have linked Prussian Silesia and parts of Prussia to the

55 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Michal-Bobrzynski>; Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, pp. 83–84.

56 <https://dzieje.pl/postacie/roman-dmowski> and <https://www.rp.pl/historia/art1614171-ojcowie-niepodleglosci-wspoltworcy-odrodzonej-rzeczypospolitej>

57 See Proklamacja z dnia 5. listopada 1916 r. és Rozporządzenie z dnia 6 grudnia o Tymczasowej Radzie Stanu w Królestwie Polskim. In: Konieczni and Kruszewski, 2002, pp. 330–332.

federation. He also envisioned Galicia, Czech Silesia, Spiš, and the Orava region as part of the federation. He emphasized the liberal nature of the new state and made explicit reference to individual and collective human rights. The federation he envisioned was stylistically called The United States of Poland, which would have divided the autonomous Kingdoms (specifically the Kingdoms of Poland, Lithuania, Polesia, Halic-Podolyn, and Volhynia). In the long run, this state, together with other Entente-friendly Central and Eastern European states (especially Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia), could have been one of the means of counterbalancing German influence.<sup>58</sup>

Toward the end of First World War, therefore, a significant number of centrist and socialist Polish politicians, honestly or for tactical reasons, stood in some form on the platform of a wider federation in which Poles would have played a leading role. However, it soon became clear that among Belarusians, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians, this idea did not find an echo at all, unlike what many had hoped. Several aspects and systems of argument were combined in these ideas of federation. These included general concerns about the dominance or outright aggression of neighboring large states, as well as a common European heritage, Slavic and/or Christian solidarity, and community consciousness. Neither the geographical and economic affiliation of the wider region to Europe nor the leading role of the reborn Poland among the neighboring Slavic peoples were incidental, either. The behaviors of the authors of these federal plans were sometimes contradictory, often lacking a proper link, and often ignoring each other's views. The frequently strong and sometimes dreamy personalities of the authors of these visions of the region and Europe's future prevented them from crossing their narrower horizons and drawing up a common plan.<sup>59</sup>

### 3. Decades between the two World Wars

Although the Polish state, which was formed in the autumn of 1918, did not need to defend either Germany or Russia, its existence faced serious challenges because of these two states. The ideas of a federation during the war did not materialize, but the reborn Polish state clearly acquired lands of nationality, which it then tried to Polishize. Nevertheless, there was no shortage of varying depths of federal proposals.

For example, Józef Buzek (1873–1936), director of the Polish Statistical Office, a key member of the Constituent Sejm and a future participant in the Polish pan-European movement, drafted a Polish constitution on May 30, 1919, in which, based on the American model, he proposed creating a federation of 70 provinces.<sup>60</sup> The population of each territorial unit would have ranged from 200,000 to 500,000 people, and each would have had its own constitution. Although the structure would have been

58 Kusielewicz, 1956, pp. 65–71.

59 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, p. 87.

60 Sokół, 2021, p. 24.

determined without consulting the units concerned, it would have had to be reviewed after four years.<sup>61</sup>

In the rebirth of Poland, the dominant politicians considered the ‘first Rzeczpospolita,’ that is, the state before the partitions, as the main point of reference, which was also applied to the imminent delimitation of borders. This tradition also played an important role in the two contradictory ideas of that time. One was the so-called incorporation concept of the national democrat Roman Dmowski (1864–1939) and the other was the federation plan of the originally socialist Józef Piłsudski (1867–1935).<sup>62</sup> Dmowski planned to unite Polish territory with the 1772 borders, except for places where foreign ethnic groups settled during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to him, the territories inhabited by Belarusians and Ukrainians should have been annexed to the eastern part of Poland and then polonized. For this reason, he opposed the independence of Ukraine<sup>63</sup> and the Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian-Ukrainian federation plans.<sup>64</sup> Instead, he wanted to build a strong Polish nation-state. The plan originally also presupposed cooperation with civic and Slavic Russia, but this failed due to the victory of Bolshevism.<sup>65</sup>

For Piłsudski, the so-called Curzon Line,<sup>66</sup> recommended by Western diplomacy as the eastern border of Poland, was unacceptable, and he wanted to extend the country’s territory beyond the 1772 borders. His offer, which he would have been militarily ready to implement, was a federation with Poland for Lithuanians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians. These states would have been given cultural autonomy, but they would have been politically dependent on Poland. Enlargement of the Polish-Lithuanian Union with Belarus and Ukraine offered an option for the rebirth of the Jagello Empire.<sup>67</sup>

Later, the idea of the Intermarium was a further development of this idea, developed by historian and archivist Witold Kamieniecki (1883–1964).<sup>68</sup> The Intermarium would have extended from Scandinavia through the Baltic States to the Black Sea. This federation of independent Slavic states would have guaranteed peace and security in the area between Germany and Russia. Poland was destined to play the role of founder and patron in Warsaw.<sup>69</sup> The Intermarium project was accompanied by intense diplomatic activity. This was all the more necessary as Poland’s neighbors were not enthusiastic about the plan. The plan undertaken by Piłsudski was somewhat

61 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, p. 88.

62 Józef Piłsudski was the head of state of independent Poland (1918–1923), the marshal of the second Republic of Poland, and the leader of the coup in May 1926.

63 Ld. Kornat, 2011.

64 Morawiec, 2012.

65 Kornat, 2011.

66 Demarcation line between Poland and Soviet Russia proposed by Lord Curzon of Kedleston in Versailles, in 1919.

67 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, p. 89.

68 Witold Kamieniecki was a Polish historian, diplomat, senator in the Second Republic, professor at the University of Warsaw, and head of the Lithuanian Federalist Committee (1917/18).

69 Morawiec, 2012.



contradictory to the regional aspirations of Czechoslovakia, which, besides the Little Entente, also supported the Federation of Slavic States. At the same time, the Poles wanted to include Hungary in the federation, but Czechoslovak diplomacy rejected it because of a fear of Hungarian revisionism. Therefore, a Polish-Hungarian-Romanian covenant was being planned in Warsaw as an alternative. Incidentally, in autumn 1919, Polish diplomacy wanted to win Britain to their cause of a north-eastern federation with the Baltic states, in which Warsaw would also have played a dominant role. However, due to the Polish-Lithuanian conflict and the British fears of gaining French influence, this plan stalled. Finally, after the Treaty of Riga (1921), the Intermarium plan lost its relevance.<sup>70</sup>

Between the two world wars, the plan to create the United States of Europe was raised several times within various circles; the Pan-European Union was established in support of this. Poland was one of the states where Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi managed to find serious supporters. In 1927, the Polish Committee of the Pan-European Movement was established in Warsaw and led by Aleksander Lednicki (1866–1934). Lednicki was a member of the leadership of the Russian Liberal Constitutional Democratic Party (shortly cadet) during the time of tsarism. He also held various positions in independent Poland.

The influence of the Pan-European movement on the Polish elites changed following the political twists and turns of the spiritual father of the movement. In Poland, which had alliances with the Entente and felt like a winner of the war, initially had high hopes for the League of Nations and various multilateral concepts. This determined their relationship with the Pan-European plans. On the other hand, they no longer liked the fact that Coudenhove-Kalergi, who was afraid of Bolshevism, was also seeking the support of German politicians and was aware of the need to settle the fate of the German state.<sup>71</sup> The conflict between him and the Polish section of the pan-European movement deepened in 1927, when the Earl advised the Poles to resign Danzig to the Germans; as compensation, they would receive some parts of Lithuania. Lednicki condemned the plan, and national democrats saw the Pan-European movement as a cloak for Franco-German reconciliation. The Polish Pan-European movement, whose leadership, in a decree in 1931, described Coudenhove-Kalergi's ideas about German-Polish relations as harmful and dangerous to European peace, gradually began to decline. In 1933/34, the Polish Foreign Ministry repeatedly made negative statements about the Pan-European movement and did not advise the Poles to participate in the Pan-European congress. The Polish section's activity decreased, and Lednicki committed suicide because of a financial affair.<sup>72</sup>

The Jagiellonian concept formed the basis of the federal plans that relied on the tradition of Jagiellonian power in Poland, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, and Hungary in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. These ideas idealized the leadership and power of the old

70 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, p. 91.

71 Stoczewska, 2003, p. 20.

72 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, pp. 95–96.

Rzeczpospolita. Witold Kamieniecki understood Jagellonism as an integration system that would have connected the area between the Baltic Sea and the Carpathians to Poland. Based on this idea, Stefan Gużkowski envisioned a federation that Austria, Bulgaria, and Estonia in addition to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia and Hungary would have been joined to. According to him, the federation would have been based on the principle of *coperare sine violentia* instead of the slogan of ‘divide et impera.’ The original Polish conceptions of the European Federation stem from the messianic tradition of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>73</sup> A prominent representative of this trend was the philosopher Wincenty Lutosławski (1863–1954), who, in addition to advertising abstinence, also practiced yoga. Lutosławski proclaimed the romantic concept called the ‘Symphony of Nations,’ in which all nations would contribute to a harmonious whole.<sup>74</sup>

Feliks Koneczny (1862–1949), a professor at the universities of Krakow and Vilnius, formulated a more concrete and realistic concept. Koneczny was skeptical of the League of Nations and the durability of the Versailles system because both were created artificially and served the dominance of the strong. Alternatively, he called for a European federation that would aim to protect the weak against the strong. According to him, regional and then continental federalization was unavoidable to guarantee peace. Koneczny believed in gradation and, in today’s terminology, in multi-speed integration. Initiating the integration process required at least two strong states to function as the cores of integration. In the background, he was also afraid of German and Russian militarism. Incidentally, he considered the values of European Christian civilization a good foundation for integrating states and nations.<sup>75</sup>

Socialists (PPS) were the main Polish political forces after 1918/20 that were concerned with the concepts of European integration and Eastern European federation. In this, they were able to rely on their previous traditions. At the congress of the party in 1920, it was announced that the realization of socialist principles could even lead to the birth of a European United States, guaranteeing security for Europe. They also enthusiastically accepted the formation of the League of Nations, but over time, they became more realistic about the possibilities of this organization. The survival of the Franco-German opposition also warned them to be cautious, so they put greater emphasis on economic cooperation. The customs union, the principle of maximum trade preference, and the harmonization of immigration policy would have been the main cornerstones. They imagined European integration as a gradual process.<sup>76</sup>

The implementation of the Polish federation’s plans between the two World Wars was prevented by antagonisms within the Eastern and Central European regions, in which Poland was an active participant. Several smaller states were distrustful of Warsaw’s plans to apply for medium-power status. The Czechoslovak-Polish

73 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, pp. 96–97.

74 Kusiak, 2014.

75 Stoczewska, 2003, pp. 23–24.

76 Ibid.

relationship was overshadowed by territorial disputes in 1919/20, even though these two new states had, in many respects, similar geopolitical interests and powerful allies. The situation was also hampered by the tensions between winners and losers in the Versailles system. All these things together then took great revenge in the bloody Second World War.

#### 4. The years during the Second World War

The second World War prompted almost all actors to rethink their previous policies; this was especially true for Czechoslovakia and Poland. This realization encouraged the two emigrant governments to find a way to each other. The convergence kept the minds of the socialists, who had always been open to European and regional integration, occupied, as well as the People's Party, which represented peasant interests. The head of the emigrant government, General Władysław Sikorski, also supported the issue of cooperation. Sikorski relied heavily on Joseph Hieronim Retinger (1888–1960),<sup>77</sup> who foresaw the emergence of several regional federations in post-war Europe, which should have brought together mainly small nations. This tendency would primarily strengthen Poland's geopolitical position, as it was wedged between its two strong and aggressive neighbors.<sup>78</sup>

The Czechoslovak-Polish union plan of the early 1940s finally proved to be the most concrete idea at the time. Although originally focused on these two states, in the long run, it wanted to be open to several states in the region (e.g., Austria, Lithuania, Hungary, Romania, etc.). The preparatory document on the constitutional foundations of the federation envisioned a joint Federal High Council, which would have included the two heads of state and 2-2 delegates from their parliaments. A joint president would be appointed to head of the federation. Based on a rotation principle, the post would always have been filled by a politician from another country. They also counted on a joint Federal Prime Minister and Secretaries of State leading each Ministry. The task of the elected Federal Assembly would have been to adopt the budget and common laws and to ratify international treaties. The Union would also have had a common Constitutional Court. However, realization of these ambitious plans was sealed by the resistance of Moscow, throughout distrustful of the Polish government, and the hesitation of Czechoslovakians. In 1943, the Czechoslovakians concluded a special cooperation friendship agreement with the Soviet Union, which largely buried the cause of the Czechoslovak-Polish union.<sup>79</sup>

During the Second World War, it also emerged among Polish emigrants that the Central European Union could be created as a hereditary constitutional monarchy

77 The Polish intellectual politician, with excellent western connections and with a somewhat mysterious background, always believed in European integration. In the 1950s, he was a midwife at the birth of the Bilderberg Group.

78 Stoczewska, 2003, p. 28.

79 Ibid. pp. 29–30.

headed by the Prince of Kent, George from the Windsor House. Edvard Beneš did not find monarchist ideas realistic.<sup>80</sup> The writer Jerzy Braun (1901–1975), who was the last delegate of the London government to Poland and for some time the Chairman of the National Unity Council (i.e., the underground parliament) was a member of the group of people who stood close to General Sikorski. At a young age, he was under the influence of the messianic ideology of Hoene-Wroński, politicized in Catholic organizations, and later became a member of the Labour Party. Braun was also thinking of building a multi-stage European federation, one of the first stages of which would have been the Central-Eastern European Federation. Its borders would have been washed by three seas (the Adriatic, Baltic, and Black Seas), the most important rivers being the Oder and the Danube. It would have been based on Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation.<sup>81</sup>

## **5. Ideas for integrating Poland and Polish emigration between 1945 and 1989**

Poland suffered a great deal in the Second World War and found itself in an ambivalent situation in 1945 in several respects. On the one hand, it got rid of the German Nazi occupation and officially ended the war on the side of the victors; on the other hand, despite all its resistance, it soon became an integral part of the ‘Eastern Bloc’ led by the Soviet Union. Located between historic Germany and Russia, Poland (along with Finland and Romania) played a key role in the post-war Soviet plans. This greatly narrowed its geopolitical elbowroom. Thanks to the victories of Second World War, the country partly ‘moved’ to the west, but in the meantime, its ties with the East were strengthened. The Poles gained former German territories in the west, but in exchange, they lost the eastern part of their former country, which went to the Soviet Union.

In the first months, the country had two governments—the émigré government of London, which has long been recognized by the anti-fascist coalition, and the Lublin-based Polish National Liberation Commission (Polish abbreviation: PKWN) set up by the Soviet Union. The latter served Soviet and communist interests. In 1945, under the pressure of the Great Powers, a mixed Interim Government was formed from these two initiatives. Circles of emigrants dissatisfied with this step, however, continued to maintain the Expatriate Government of London, which had increasingly lost its importance but persisted until 1990. The Provisional Government composed of coalitions, on the other hand, gradually came under communist influence. One and one-half to two years after the election in 1947, the power structure and political hinterland of the Polish People’s Republic were finally established.<sup>82</sup>

80 Podstawski, 2003, p. 45.

81 Ibid. pp. 44–45.

82 This process was described by Davies, 2005. Next important work: Paczkowski, 1995.

It is interesting to note that in the first transitional years after the Second World War, the plan to establish several parallel federations appeared again in the ranks of the Polish Independence Movement for ‘Independence and Democracy.’ This draft envisaged Latin, German, Scandinavian, and, separately, a Western and an Eastern European federation, which together would have formed the European Confederation. This Confederation later would have been one of the building blocks of the new global system, alongside the British Commonwealth, China, the Soviet Union, and the US. The intellectuals belonging to the moon yard of the People’s Party later tried to rethink this multi-stage cooperation concept, but it no longer had any real significance.<sup>83</sup>

Between 1948 and 1989, Poland, led by the Communists and its intellectuals, could not afford to deal with integration plans that Moscow did not support. However, the Polish People’s Republic was involved in various Soviet-led Eastern European integration and cooperation initiatives. Between 1947 and 1956, it took part in Kominform, which united communist parties. From 1949, it participated in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and after 1955, in the Warsaw Pact for military defense. The latter two ceased only after the change of regime. Soviet troops were stationed in the country until 1993, which defined its sovereignty and international elbowroom.

Geopolitical restraint was especially true of any concept that would have questioned the post-World War II power constellation and the Soviet Union’s leadership. The different alternative ideas of integration were therefore born mostly in the circles of the opposition (dissenting) and emigration intellectuals. In the first years after the Second World War, the ideas that had emerged in the previous two decades had an impact within the ranks of the remaining political parties. Among the remnants of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) and the National Democrats (SN), which were forced to emigrate, the idea of a Federation of Central European states still existed in the late 1940s; this would have comprised Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Romania as well as Poland.<sup>84</sup>

After 1948, Polish alternative political thought had three main emigration centers: the marginalizing emigrant government in London, the US-funded ‘Free Europe Radio,’ and the Journal *Kultura* in Paris. The most genuine ideas for integration came into being thanks to the latter’s operation, whether it was European integration or reconciliation with different neighboring nations. In Poland, after some time, interesting debates began in various intellectual journals related to the Catholic Church and in opposition or semi-opposition intellectual newspapers (*Tygodnik Powszechny*, *Znak*, *Więź*, etc.) Opposition groups organized in the 1970s and 1980s, such as the Workers’ Protection Commission (KOR), the Free Trade Union of Solidarity, and the Confederation of Independent Poland, gave new impetus.<sup>85</sup>

83 Stoczewska, 2003, pp. 30–31.

84 Master, 2014, p. 159.

85 Ibid. p. 159.

The Polish integration thinking at that time was basically determined by three factors: subordination to the Soviet Union, the tragic experiences of the Second World War, and, in this context, the effort to put relations with neighboring nations on a new basis.

There are also three main lines of thinking in relation to the Soviet Union in the hinterland of the Solidarity Trade Union. The alternative left wing, dissatisfied with the dictatorship, sometimes called the revisionists,<sup>86</sup> actually treated Soviet dominance as a fact and accepted the post-war status quo. They had no favorable opinion about American imperialism, either. At the same time, they found the Western social democratic and critical Marxist tradition attractive. The realist wing of the movement,<sup>87</sup> which had a close relationship with the Catholic Church, also accepted geopolitical realities, but required more elbowroom for Poland. They did not want a conflict with the Soviet Union, but they were expected to take greater account of the independence and sovereignty of the Polish State and civilizational impregnation of Polish culture. The third trend was the most radical, because the restoration of real Polish independence was most important to them.

At the same time, these circles were concerned not only about the Polish-Soviet relationship, but also about Polish-German relations. The Poles still did not trust the Germans. Those who supported a more moderate independence,<sup>88</sup> on the other hand, saw before themselves the basis for future Polish-German reconciliation and compromise.<sup>89</sup> According to them, the Poles should have recognized the Germans' right to national unity, and the Germans should have accepted the new Polish-German borders.<sup>90</sup>

One of the most original and important intellectual centers of emigration was the Journal *Kultura*, led by Jerzy Giedroyc (1906–2000), chief editor. In its background was the Institute of Literature, which he founded in 1947, working first in Rome and then in the town of Maisons-Lafitte near Paris. As a lawyer, the editor-in-chief first worked in Polish administration before the war, fought in the Second World War, and in the spring of 1945, oversaw the European Department in the Ministry of Information of the London Emigrant Government. Besides the journal *Kultura*, he had been publishing historical booklets since 1962.<sup>91</sup>

Giedroyc developed a very serious, intellectual workshop hosting several trends around him. Giedroyc did not just want to run a journal in line with a political trend; he also tried to stay away from the internal quarrel of the London Emigrant Government.

86 Jacek Kuroń was one of its emblematic leaders.

87 An important representative was the later prime minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

88 Their main brain-truster was the opposition group called the Polish Independence Consensus, which relatively early, proposed achieving Polish independence and withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact. They dealt a lot with Polish-German and Polish-Jewish relationships.

89 Their leader was Zdzisław Najder. This idea, for example, was close to Władysław Bartoszewski, who was Foreign Minister after the change of regime.

90 Master, 2014, p. 161.

91 Paczkowski, 1995, pp. 416–417.

The thoughts expressed in the journal also reached Poland. Therefore, not surprisingly, after the change of regime, the ideas expressed in the Journal *Kultura* played an important role in laying the foundations for new Polish foreign policy thinking, especially concerning its Eastern dimension. According to Giedroyc, Poland's weight in the world depended on its influence in Eastern Europe. Lech Kaczyński, former head of state, later summed it up that '... the more friends we have in the East, the greater our importance in the West.'<sup>92</sup> This led to the realization that Polish-Ukrainian historical reconciliation should be ended as soon as possible and that the birth of an independent Ukraine should be supported.

The reconciliation policy also applied to another successor state of the medieval and early modern Polish-Lithuanian community—Lithuania. A Catholic priest, Józef Majewski, stated in his letter published in 1952 in an issue of *Kultura*, that to do so, Poles would have to give up their future demands on the two cities with predominantly Polish culture and past, Lemberg (Lviv) and Vilnius. Because the forward-looking author recognized that the Poles could not demand the return of the Oder-Neisse border and the return of territories ruled by the two cities at the same time, a federation with these states has been advocated.<sup>93</sup>

However, the Polish Emigrant Journal of Paris not only dealt with Poland's Eastern neighbors, but also published articles on the future of all Europe. Among the authors, Józef Bocheński (1902–1995) and Juliusz Mieroszewski (1906–1976) were the most supportive of the idea of a European federation. They both saw the future not only in economic cooperation, but also in a European political and cultural union. The Dominican monk and scholar Bocheński—similar to Giedroyc—saw that Poland could only feel itself safe in a united Europe, where the inhabitants would not only feel themselves to be Polish, but also European from the 'Polish canton.' Mieroszewski, who was a journalist dealing with German affairs before Second World War, considered Poland would either be one of the cantons of Europe or it would not exist at all. At first, he wanted to fight the Soviet Union on all fronts; however, he later realized that it would be redundant, and rather believed in the progressive evolution and particular Europeanization of the Soviet State. The cited authors also wanted to see Ukraine in the European Federation to rein Russia's expansion.<sup>94</sup>

Feliks Gross (1906–2006), a left-wing lawyer and sociologist who was close to the Polish Socialists before the war, published his views on European federalism in the 'New Europe' periodicals in the US. He argued that we should not return to pre-war economic foundations because he said the myth of self-sufficiency and political nationalism led us to the last European catastrophe. He saw the solution in setting up regional federations, which would then create the European Union. He considered the federation of the nations of Eastern and Central Europe as the most important. According to him, the EU was intended to function as a pledge for a policy of collective

<sup>92</sup> Illés, 2010, p. 3.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Master, 2014, p. 160.

security and a good neighborhood.<sup>95</sup> Zbigniew Jordan (1911–1977), one of the most important philosophers of the Polish emigration, stated that the existence of the atomic bomb would change the content of security. Moreover, if the nations of Europe want to survive, they will sooner or later be forced to join in a federal union. The idea of a federation was not far from that of the historian Oskar Halecki (1891–1973), who saw one of its possible role models in the former Polish-Lithuanian community.<sup>96</sup>

## **6. The period of free Poland and integration thinking between 1989 and 2004**

Poland was a foregoer country during the democratic transition of Central-Eastern Europe. For the first time, roundtable talks were held there, followed by also involving the democratic opposition in governance. Krzysztof Jan Skubiszewski (1926–2010), a Foreign Minister who was previously a professor of international law who had been a non-partisan supporter of the Solidarity Union since the 1980s, helped redefine Polish foreign policy after the change in regime. First, he became the Head of Foreign Ministry in the Government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki; he continued to hold this position in the next three government periods<sup>97</sup> and until 1993.<sup>98</sup> During this period, the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union ceased to exist, Germany was reunited, and Poland built new relationships with the western member republics of the former Soviet Union. Several regional co-operations have also emerged (Visegrád and Weimar Triangle). The Poles have signed a series of good-neighborhood treaties and their Euro-Atlantic integration has just begun.<sup>99</sup>

Roman Kuźniar presented the goals of Polish foreign policy after the change in regime in an analytical three-pole formula. His keywords were: sovereignty, security, and development. The first one was achieved between 1989 and 1992 when the Warsaw Pact ended and Russian troops withdrew from the country. The second objective was achieved with NATO accession in 1997. In the third stage, Poland integrated into the EU, which most people have seen as a pledge of economic development and prosperity.<sup>100</sup> The starting point of these objectives was the gradual departure from Russia on the one hand and the optimization of Polish-German economic and political relations on the other. The improvement in Polish-German relations owing to German unity was supported by Poland, and Poland's western borders were finally recognized by Germany. At first, the historically strained Polish-Russian relations developed quite

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Halecki, 1993, p. 151.

<sup>97</sup> These leaders were the following politicians: Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, Jan Olszewski and Hana Suchocka.

<sup>98</sup> Kranc, 2010.

<sup>99</sup> Master, 2014, p. 179.

<sup>100</sup> Kuźniar and Szczepanik, 2008, pp. 28–30.



well, even though in 1992, Poland set full NATO membership as a reachable goal.<sup>101</sup> During this period, the American-Polish relationship has also deepened. The Polish democratic transition's major achievement was that the opposition was not as deep as at the time of the debates between J. Piłsudski and R. Dmowski.<sup>102</sup>

In Poland, which was in a difficult economic situation in the early 1990s, there was a broad consensus on European integration efforts. The popularity of the West was also increased by the fact that creditors gathered in the Paris Club eventually released a part of the Polish public debt; the remission reached 70% in the case of the US. Polish government debt fell by 17 billion dollars.<sup>103</sup> Within the PHARE program, which was originally aimed toward Poland and Hungary, between 1990 and 2003, Poles received an amount equivalent to almost four billion euros.<sup>104</sup> Germany has progressively become Poland's main foreign economic partner, while members of the Visegrád Group are only in second place.<sup>105</sup>

The integration consensus began to loosen after achieving the main integration goals. At that time, there was also a fault line in Polish politics that divided the proponents of deeper integration and greater national sovereignty almost everywhere. Proponents of looser EU cooperation have been characterized not as much by German federalist conceptions but by the cautious British attitude. For the Polish national right-wing parties, the 'nation-state Europe' France has called for for a long time was more sympathetic than the 'Europe of the regions' favored by the Germans. The key Polish political forces judged the German leadership in the EU differently and there has been deeper integration since then. The regional road searches are also subject to this dilemma. This applies to Visegrád, which is only one of the options for the Poles. The Eastern Partnership program of the EU is important for Warsaw; this idea was raised by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski in 2008.<sup>106</sup> Poland was then actively advocating the NATO membership of Ukraine and Georgia.<sup>107</sup> One of the most important old-new regional Polish initiatives is the Three Seas Initiative, which builds on the conceptual background before 1939 but was re-launched by President Andrzej Duda in 2015. The target group of these initiatives is 12 Eastern and Central European countries located between the Adriatic, Baltic, and Black Seas. For the present, the project focuses on energy policy, transport, and digitalization.<sup>108</sup>

To evaluate Polish integration concepts, we consider Poland's often tragic history, the outstanding size of the Polish nation, and the geographical location of the Polish state. It shall never be forgotten that this is the most populous society in Central

101 Tálas and Sz. Bíró, 2010, p. 68.

102 Illés, 2010, p. 4.

103 Danielewski, and Kloc, 1991, p. 19–23; Master, 2014, p. 171.

104 Master, 2014, p. 200.

105 Gniazdowski, 2015, p. 167.

106 Illés, 2010, p. 8.

107 The current Polish-Ukrainian relationship is again becoming more complicated, partly due to history and partly due to migration.

108 Kóbbányai, 2021.

and Eastern Europe, and it has benefited greatly from the changes in the last three decades. Moreover, Polish foreign policy thinking has a long tradition and strong European roots. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine European stability without the Polish contribution. Finally, it is important to note that Poles not only have great diplomatic potential, but also a scientific and professional background. Among other things, this is reflected in some of the above concepts.

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