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### The Nineteenth-Century Ideas of Polish Roads to Independence

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Wiesław Caban

## The Nineteenth-Century Ideas of Polish Roads to Independence

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When there fell a country that used to play a significant role in European policy since the memorable battle of Grunwald (1410) till the victorious battle of Vienna (1683), the state of affairs, as such, must have provoked reflection. The arguments and discussions must have been fierce and, I should add, despite years of research, some issues have not been clarified yet. Nevertheless, I do not lay claim to elaborate on all those problems, which have not been appropriately discussed by Polish historiographers – the length of the present text makes it impossible to do so. It is a fact, however, that we speak relatively little of those who went into exile to St. Petersburg after the partitions. Obviously, not all of them renounced their Polishness, thus taking care only of their private careers.<sup>1</sup> That was the conduct of the Polish gentry from the southern Ukraine – they wanted to become a part of the Russian Empire at least since mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The core of the Polish intelligentsia who, led by Prince Adam Czartoryski, found themselves by

1 For further references, see: Ludwik Bazylow, *Polacy w Petersburgu*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1984, pp. 4-206.

the Neva River had a general idea maybe not of regaining independence but definitely of rescuing Polishness. I shall only mention that Czartoryski imagined Poland consisting of the lands from all the partitions but constituting a part of the Russian Empire on federal principles. We can only speculate to what extent that vision was feasible because it was the time when Europe was immersed in the Napoleonic Wars.

The earliest discussions about the Polish Cause were taking place in the 1790s in France. It was there that two emigration political groups – Agency [Agencja] and Deputation [Deputacja] – were deliberating on how to regain independence. Both groups did realize that Poland could not be restored without a military action and the latter, in turn, could not be done without the help of either Prussia, or France. The lack of any social program was not the greatest problem – a majority of the members of both parties admired those who took part in the sessions of the Great Sejm which, as it was known, did not decide to introduce any social reforms.

After a couple of years it turned out that Deputation was gaining advantage over Agency, which was caused by Napoleon's growing renown; it was believed that only he could lead to a maelstrom of war, thus possibly making the Polish Cause pronounced. The creation of the Polish Legions in 1797 and, hence, the organization of quite a big army under Napoleon led to the establishment of the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807, which was based on the Napoleonic legislation of the Revolutionary models. It is true that the Duchy of Warsaw met huge costs of maintaining Napoleon's powerful army. On the other hand, it initiated a modern Polish statehood, what was confirmed by the 1807 Constitution granted by Napoleon. The King of Saxony, faithful to Napoleon, was appointed the ruler of the Duchy of Warsaw. The legislature constituted a bicameral Sejm that was to gather every two years. What is more, there was also established the Council of State, that is, an advisory collegial body holding legislative and judicial entitlements. The Constitution guaranteed that all people be equal before the law and serfdom be abolished. What is more, it also introduced the ordinary justice system as well as confirmed personal liberty. All things considered, that was definitely a breakthrough moment in the social relations, thus also constituting an important element of creating and developing a modern country. The army of the Duchy of Warsaw consisted of 30 000 soldiers. The army held

a significant position not only because it was created thanks to Napoleon's good; the most important was that fact that it was the Polish soldier who constituted the core of the troops.

Introduced in 1808, the Napoleonic Code equalled all individuals and highlighted the idea of personal liberty. It exerted a significant influence on the Polish legal thought not only in the 19<sup>th</sup> but also in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Duchy of Warsaw consisted of the Polish lands restored from Prussia. After the 1809 war between France and Austria, its territory was enlarged by the so-called "West Galicia," which was a part of the Austrian Partition. At that moment, the Duchy comprised 150 000 km<sup>2</sup> with 4.3 million inhabitants. Following the French model, it was divided into departments.<sup>2</sup>

Napoleon's invasion of Moscow in 1812 questioned the future of the Duchy of Warsaw. During that time, the most active party was the pro-Russian group consisting mainly of wealthy gentry who wanted to rebuild Poland with the help of the Tsardom. Interestingly, while opposing Napoleon, that party drew up the so-called 'plan for murdering Prussia' already in 1805.<sup>3</sup> It assumed that Russian would defeat Prussia; therefore, any possible obstacles to creating the Polish country out of the lands ceded by both partitioning powers and federated with Russia would be eliminated. Russia eventually did not support the project; bearing in mind that the final military confrontation with Napoleon was inevitable, Russia realized that it would be Prussia and not a new-born Polish country that could be her ally.

After Napoleon's 1812 defeat, the fate of the Duchy of Warsaw was dependent on Russia. That is why the period 1813-1815 was the time of uncertainty. Despite the fact that Prussia insisted on the Duchy being completely eliminated, Alexander I was quite restrained from taking the final decision till 1814. Everything changed when the Russian troops reached Paris that year. Hidden behind a liberal mask, the Tsar

2 For further references, see: Barbara Grochulska, *Księstwo Warszawskie*, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1966.

3 Marian Kukiel, *Czartoryski and European Unity, 1770-1861*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955, pp. 61-67; idem, *Czartoryski a jedność Europy, 1770-1861*, transl. Jan Maria Kłoczowski, ed. Mirosław Filipowicz, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2008; Mirosław Filipowicz, 'Introduction' to Marian Kukiel, *Czartoryski a jedność Europy*, pp. 91-96.

promised to annex to the Duchy the Lithuanian-Belarusian lands, now controlled by the Tsardom, which used to be a part of the First Polish Republic. Thus created Polish country was to be united with Russia. Unfortunately, both Austria and England did not approve of that idea. What is more, the former even issued a memorandum on returning to the 1795 resolutions, the idea of which met with the English applause. With the war between Russia and Austria supported by England looming, the Tsar, after the so-called Hundred Days, finally resolved to establish the Kingdom of Poland and the 1815 Congress of Vienna approved that decision.

The reasons behind establishing the Kingdom of Poland have been igniting dispute between Russian and Polish historiographers since 1815.<sup>4</sup> Some historians believe that the Tsar decided to support the creation of the Kingdom of Poland only to strengthen his position in Europe, and there is undoubtedly a great deal of truth in that opinion. Others, however, claim that so liberal a Constitution the Tsar agreed to was an experiment Alexander I wanted to conduct before initiating the reforms in Russia, and I find that opinion more convincing. The establishment of the Kingdom of Poland was the best solution for the Poles at the time when Europe was recovering from the Napoleonic wars. It served as a semblance of the Polish statehood; however, it should be also mentioned that Alexander I started to dissociate himself from that liberal project quite soon.

What was the status of the Kingdom of Poland in the light of the 1815 Constitution granted by the Tsar? First of all, it must be stressed that the Kingdom was inextricably connected with Russia by a personal union and the Tsar was to be crowned the King of Poland. Moreover, there was also established an office of the Viceroy, which was given to General Józef Zajączek, a former Jacobin.<sup>5</sup> The Polish Na-

4 That dispute escalated after the failure of the November Uprising and has not been resolved yet. See: Władysław Zajewski, 'Sprawa polska na kongresie wiedeńskim', *Czasz Nowożytny*, 2008, vol. 21, pp. 33-45. Appositely, a friend of the Polish and witness to the first Sejm in the Kingdom of Poland in 1818, Prince Peter Vyazemsky was believed to say, "Will the Polish Constitution temper Russian despotism or will Russian despotism grab the Polish Constitution in its talons?" Marcin Badeni, the Minister of Justice and a friend of both Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz and Stanisław Staszic, maintained, "From plague, famine, war and resurrectionists, deliver us, O Lord!"

5 For further references, see: Jadwiga Nadzieja, *General Józef Zajączek (1752-1826)*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1975.

tion “would for ever have a national representation, which shall consist of the King and of the two chambers; the senate shall constitute one chamber, whereas the Members of the Parliament and deputies of the Commons – the other.” As it was in the Duchy of Warsaw days, the Sejm had the legislative power and its members were to gather every two years. Nevertheless, it was the Council of State and the King who had the legislative initiative. The Government was constituted by the Administrative Council which consisted of five ministers.

The Constitution guaranteed judicial independence and sustained the Napoleonic Code. Interestingly, it also established a new office, that is, the Sejm Court responsible for examining the cases of high treason and abuse of power by senior officials.

According to the text of the Constitution, Roman Catholicism was considered the religion of state, although the document simultaneously guaranteed religious toleration. Polish was to be the language used in court and office and only the Polish were granted the right to take up public service posts. The Constitution of both the Kingdom of Poland and the Duchy of Warsaw did not grant such a right to Jews.

The Kingdom of Poland had at its disposal 30 000 soldiers commanded by the Commander-in-Chief, Grand Duke Constantine, a brother of the Tsar. The Minister of War could only act on an administrative level.

The administrative division of the Kingdom of Poland was of outmost political importance. Similarly to the First Polish Republic, the voivodeships were restored. From a formal point of view, the 1815 Constitution was one of the most liberal in Europe; out of 4 million inhabitants, about 100 000 had the voting right – and that was even more than in France.

The announcement of the Constitution initiated its various interpretations, both in the Polish and St. Petersburg’s circles. The Polish believed that the Kingdom was an autonomous country united with Russia solely by the same ruler. What is more, they also assumed that Alexander I would eventually cede to the Kingdom the Lithuanian-Belarusian lands that had belonged to the pre-Partition Republic – it was the promise the Tsar made in Paris already in 1814. On the other hand, the St. Petersburg’s authorities claimed that the Kingdom of Poland enjoyed a specific kind of autonomy only thanks to Alexander I’s

good will – that opinion was shared by other European courts, especially the English one.<sup>6</sup>

The principles established by the Constitution were not followed; for instance, the Sejm was to gather every two years (and that was happening in the very beginning) but later it was convoked every five years. The sessions were to be open but, with the time passing, proceedings were held in camera. Moreover, the Constitution guaranteed the freedom of the press; however, the censorship was soon introduced. Finally, apart from the government police, there were also established two units of secret police, which were to supervise the Pole's legalism. The former came under Grand Duke Constantine's authority, whereas the latter was subordinate to Nikolay Novosiltsov – the Imperial Commissioner (that office was unconstitutional) and the supervisor of education.<sup>7</sup>

The years 1815-1830 marked the time of economic and education development. Thanks to the commitment of Stanisław Staszic and, later on, Ksawery Drucki-Lubecki, mining and metallurgy also started to develop. Moreover, there were established the East and West Industrial Districts, that is, the areas with both private and state mines and ironworks.<sup>8</sup> Owing to Prince Lubecki's efforts, the Polish Bank was founded in 1828, what significantly contributed to the development of industry. Three years earlier, in 1825, there was created the Society of Land Credit [Towarzystwo Kredytowe Ziemskie], which was to support the development of agriculture within large-scale land ownership.

All those economic achievements notwithstanding, it should be highlighted that probably the greatest success in that field was the establishment of the Łódź Industrial District. The factories of clothing industry were developing really fast due to the fact that there was a huge market, Russian as well, awaiting the results of their production. Łódź, growing that rapidly, was even called 'the Polish Manchester'<sup>9</sup>

6 A similar point of view is presented by a Russian historian Larysa Obuszenkova in her *Kopоневство Польское в 1815-1830 гг.*, Москва: Наука, 1979.

7 The activity of the secret police is most widely discussed by Szymon Askenazy in *Łukasiński*, vol. 1, Warszawa: Wende i Spółka, 1908.

8 Cf. Jerzy Szczepański, *Modernizacja górnictwa i hutnictwa w Królestwie Polskim w I połowie XIX w. Rola specjalistów niemieckich i brytyjskich*, Kielce: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna im. Jana Kochanowskiego, 1997.

9 Cf. *Łódź. Dzieje miasta*, ed. Ryszard Rosin, Warszawa: PWN, 1980.

It is worth mentioning here one of Prince Lubecki's sayings that for the Kingdom of Poland, economy and education were the most important fields; only later could one think of producing cannons. Similarly to other historians, I also believe that Lubecki was aware of the fact that Polish independence would demand military activity. However, before engaging ourselves in war, we should build an economically strong country, take care of society's education and wait for the circumstances auspicious to the Polish Cause in the international arena.

When it comes to education, the most pronounced roles were played by Stanisław Staszic and Stanisław Kostka Potocki – a contemporary Minister of Education. Supported by other intellectuals, those two statesmen convinced the Tsar to open the Warsaw University in 1816. The same year, on the initiative of Stanisław Staszic, there was established the Mining School in Kielce, which has been often referred to as the Polish polytechnic. As has been recently revealed, the lecturers employed there were closely collaborating with the French geologists.<sup>10</sup>

In 1817, Stanisław Potocki initiated the project of opening primary schools in villages and towns of the Kingdom of Poland since, as he believed, “no city, town or village shall exist without a much needed school” [translation mine]. Unfortunately, Potocki was soon forced to resign. He had come into conflict with the Church hierarchies who thought that Potocki wanted to make them less influential in shaping the educational system and that was the reason behind his 1820 dismissal.

After fifteen years of functioning, that is, in November 1830, the Uprising began in the Kingdom of Poland; that armed bid for independence turned into a Polish-Russian war. It is not possible to point to the singular occurrence that contributed to its outbreak – there were definitely several circumstances that played their part. The most important ones concerned the disrespect for the Constitution as well as difficult situation in the army commanded by Grand Duke Constantin, Alexander I's brother. The military discipline the Grand Duke introduced had never been permitted in the pre-Partitions Republic

10 Piotr Daszkiewicz, Radosław Tarkowski, *Wpływ francuskiej myśli przyrodniczej na rozwój nauk o Ziemi w Polsce i na Litwie: od końca XVIII wieku po rok 1830*, Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2012.

or when the soldiers were fighting under Napoleon. What is more, the young did not have any promotion prospects. Broadly speaking, young people were frustrated. That being so, when the news about the outbreak of the French July Revolution and the Belgian Revolution reached Warsaw, about 100 conspirators from the Infantry Cadet School, led by Piotr Wysocki and Józef Zaliwski, decided to bring about an uprising.<sup>11</sup> Undoubtedly, the conspirators wanted to take control over Warsaw, where there were about 6 500 soldiers faithful to the Grand Duke. However, a lack of both military and political direction brought chaos. People with military and political experience even used to say, “the young have started, the young must finish.” As General Józef Chłopicki, a member of Napoleon’s expedition to Moscow, said, the ‘brawl’ had not been nipped in the bud only because the Grand Duke Constantine, as scared as he was, left Warsaw with his troops.

The turn of 1830/1831 is usually referred to as the time of ‘resolving the revolution’. All attempts made by the Provisional Government at negotiating with the Tsar failed. As the King of Poland, Nicholas I demanded that all conspirators surrender. He could not understand why the Poles dared to take up arms against Russia – the country that had done so much good for them by establishing the Kingdom of Poland. Appositely, the Tsar did not want to consider the Poles as the warring party, deemed them ‘rioters’ and once again requested unconditional surrender. That being so, the Sejm voted on 25 January 1831 for the dethronement of Nicholas I as the King of Poland. The Tsardom responded immediately – at the beginning of February, the Russian army led by Ivan Diebitsch crossed the borders of the Kingdom of Poland, the act of which started a Polish-Russian war. Not only was the area of the Kingdom of Poland affected by the military operation but the riots also spread on Lithuania, Belarus and the Ukraine. Did the Poles have any chances of defeating Russia? One can undoubtedly ponder upon such issues while taking into consideration the army led initially by Diebitsch and then, since June 1831, by Ivan Paskievitch. However, even a hypothetical defeat of the Russian troops would not

11 For a detailed account of the conspiracy of the cadets and the development of the November night, see: Waclaw Tokarz, *Sprzysiężenie Wysockiego i Noc Listopadowa*, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1980 (first edition: Warszawa 1930).

have been synonymous with the end of that Polish-Russian war. It must be stressed that at that moment the Russian Empire had at her disposal the army consisting of over 500 000 soldiers, whereas the Kingdom of Poland could conscript 100 000 men at most.<sup>12</sup> Just as it was in the case of Greece in 1829 and Belgium in 1830, Poland would not have been able to regain independence without the help from the outside, and the chances for receiving international support were then almost non-existent. It would have been possible had a European war broken out but that nobody wanted. The Partition countries, Prussia and Austria, could not have calmly observed Russia being defeated; after all, both Prussia and Austria were well aware that if Poles had won the 1831 campaign, they would have immediately claimed the lands annexed by them. Not surprisingly, the outbreak of the November Uprising was received with evil. On the other hand, the French authorities in Paris felt relieved – the Russian problems in the Kingdom of Poland provided a chance for easing the conflict between Nicholas I and Louise Philippe I. The situation in London was much worse – some even condemned the Uprising. They could not understand why the Poles acted against Russia, that is, the country that allowed them to establish the Kingdom of Poland in 1815. Instead of showing gratitude to St. Petersburg, the Poles organized a military action.<sup>13</sup>

After conquering Warsaw on 7 September 1831, Paskievitch decided to inform the Tsar that their great military success took place at the same day of the 1812 battle of Borodino. The messenger was a grandson of Alexander Suvorov – the vanquisher of Warsaw in 1794. Both the court and the elite were delighted with the news and Paskievitch's victory was widely praised in the Tsardom. It was also commemorated by Alexander Pushkin in 'To the Slanderers of Russia' and 'Anniversary of Borodino'.

- 12 In his work, *Szanse powstania listopadowego. Rozważania historyczne* (Warszawa: PAX, 1980), Jerzy Łojek did not take into consideration that problem.
- 13 There have been written numerous works on the November Uprising. I shall only mention three of them as these are the ones that try to provide an overall assessment of that fact: Waław Tokarz, *Wojna polsko-rosyjska 1830-1831*, Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen, 1993 (first edition: Warszawa 1930); *Powstanie Listopadowe 1830-1831. Dzieje wewnętrzne. Militaria. Europa wobec powstania*, ed. Władysław Zajewski, Warszawa: PWN, 1980; Władysław Zajewski, 'Powstanie Listopadowe 1830-1831', [in:] Stefan Kieniewicz, Andrzej Zahorski, Władysław Zajewski, *Trzy powstania narodowe*, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 2006, pp. 151-279.

The failure of the November Uprising made Ivan Paskievitch the Viceroy, whose first decisions were connected with uniting the Kingdom of Poland with Russia. The 1815 Constitution was replaced in 1832 by the Organic Statute of the Kingdom of Poland [Statut Organiczny dla Królestwa Polskiego], thus sending a signal to Europe that Russia did not violate the decisions of the 1815 Congress of Vienna but solely modified its provisions.

The Organic Statute clearly stated that the Kingdom of Poland became 'eternally incorporated' into Russia and, hence, constituted her 'inseparable part'. The Sejm and the Polish army were officially abolished. What is more, since 1832, the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Poland were drafted into the Russian army on a regular basis. Broadly speaking, the number of all national institutions was limited – there survived only those that were indispensable for economic functioning. Serving as the government between 1815-1830, the Administrative Council was restored but it was completely submitted to the Viceroy's will. Polish remained the official language.

A significant emphasis was put on education since, as Nicholas I believed, it was the erring education that made the young rebel. As a result, the University of Warsaw was closed down and the collection of the University library, including valuable manuscripts, was taken away to St. Petersburg. A similar fate happened to the Warsaw Society of Friends of Learning [Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk], which was established in 1800. Secondary education was reorganized so as to follow the Russian model; what is more, the courses in the humanities were significantly limited. Following that trend, elementary education was no longer available for all children.

Particularly strong repressions were instituted in the Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus. According to the directives issued by Nicholas I, those lands were to be incorporated into Russia and supervised by the Committee on the Western Gubernias, which was established in 1831. Many manors were sequestered and their owners – the local gentry – deported deep into the Russian Empire, especially to Siberia and Caucasus. Thus expelled Polish officials were replaced by the Russian. Moreover, Polish schools, together with Vilnius University and the Krzemieniec Lyceum, were all closed down. The children of Poles were not allowed to enter the schools located within the Kingdom of Poland and boys from gentry families were to be sent

to free military academies. The communication between Poles from the Taken Lands and compatriots from the Kingdom of Poland was significantly hindered.

Józef Dutkiewicz, a historian specializing in the November Uprising and its political aspects, wrote, “In the history of the Polish national liberation movements, the November Uprising is at their heart. We surrendered to violence – there is no doubt about it, but, simultaneously, we did reveal impressive fighting strength and excellent strategic thought, which, unfortunately, had not been properly realized. We were fighting with the army that was considered the strongest in the European continent. It was the army that defeated Napoleon in 1812 and conquered Turkey in 1828/1829 – that happened not without problems, but still” [translation mine].<sup>14</sup> In so doing, Józef Dutkiewicz supported those historians who believed that the war with Russia was necessary, even though it was doomed to failure from the start. After all, we had to fight to show Europe that the Poles were still alive and wanted independence. That problem will be discussed in detail in the subsequent part of this article. However, we have to pose a question now whether it was reasonable to fight with the largest army in the continent, knowing that there were no chances for victory and the Kingdom of Poland would fall prey to retributions. As it has been already mentioned, the Tsar did not respect the Constitution and that fact caused political tensions; on the other hand, it is also true that the Kingdom of Poland did have opportunities for social, economic and cultural development, thus exerting influence on the most important national issues. I consider the decision of starting the Uprising wrongful but it seems that historians should not express such opinions openly as they would be instantly labelled as unpatriotic. That is why it is safer to write about uprisings while crawling on one’s knees than not to be considered a patriot.<sup>15</sup>

14 [W historii naszych ruchów narodowyzwoleńczych Powstanie Listopadowe zajmuje honorowe, poczesne miejsce. Ulegliśmy przemocy, to fakt, ale wykazaliśmy imponujące wartości bojowe i wyborną myśl strategiczną, choć nie najlepiej realizowaną. Walczyliśmy przeciw z armią uważaną za najsilniejszą na kontynencie europejskim, armia która pokonała w 1812 roku Napoleona i pobiła, choć z wysiłkiem Turcję w 1828/1829]. Józef Dutkiewicz, ‘Znaczenie powstania listopadowego’, [in:] *Powstanie Listopadowe 1830-1831*, p. 453.

15 Cf. Wiesław Caban, ‘Jak pisać o powstaniach narodowych?’, *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny*, 2014, vol. LIX, no. 1-2, pp. 107-112.

The tragic end of the November Uprising intensified discussions about the possible roads to independence. The most heated debates were taking place in exile due to the fact that there were favourable conditions for such activity. Words of the arguments were reaching Poles living within the Kingdom of Poland as well as those deported to Siberia or drafted annually into the Russian army. All deliberations began with pondering upon the reasons for the fall of the November Uprising. Some claimed that it was the fault of particular commanders' ineptitude; others maintained that by not abolishing serfdom, there were no peasants who would be ready to fight.<sup>16</sup>

Run by Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, the conservative Hôtel Lambert soon became convinced that military activities would not be successful without the outside help. Bearing in mind the examples of Greece or Belgium, which were supported by England (Greece was also significantly helped by the Russian Empire), the Hôtel Lambert was striving for winning favour for the Polish Cause with France, England or even the Vatican, although the latter had severely condemned the November Uprising. The least difficult task seemed to be undertaken in France; a much worse situation was in England, whereas the Vatican closed all doors to Czartoryski's allies due to the Prince and his closest circle's alleged liberalism. It is worth emphasizing that attributing liberal views to the members of the Hôtel Lambert was not a kind of misunderstanding but a conscious act of the Vatican diplomacy; its aim was to trivialize the influence of the Hôtel Lambert not only in Rome, but also in the entire Western Europe.<sup>17</sup>

Of different opinion were the members of the Polish Democratic Society [Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie; TDP]. The majority of them believed that it was necessary to bring about the co-operation between independence and insurrectionary movements, especially those in Italy. That is why the Poles engaged themselves in the 1834 Savoy expedition, which was to lead to the Italian unifi-

16 These issues are discussed in detail in Alicja Barszczewska-Krupa's *Reforma czy rewolucja. Koncepcje przekształcenia społeczeństwa polskiego w myśli politycznej Wielkiej Emigracji 1832-1863*, Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1979; Sławomir Kalembka, 'Publicystyka Wielkiej Emigracji o Powstaniu Listopadowym i przyczynach jego klęski', [in:] *Powstanie Listopadowe 1830-1831*, pp. 436-431.

17 For further references, see: Henryk Żaliński, *Poglądy Hotelu Lambert na kształt powstania zbrojnego (1832-1846)*, Kraków: WSP, 1990.

cation and establishment of the republican government. Formulated already during the November Uprising by the members of democratic parties, the motto 'For our freedom and yours' [Za naszą i naszą wolność] was also gaining more and more recognition. I will discuss its message in detail in the subsequent part of this article but let me just mention now that that idea came down to the co-operation between the Polish and Russian democratic movements.

Within the emigration circles, the arguments over the political system of a future independent Poland were breaking out on a regular basis. The Hôtel Lambert maintained that the best solution would be to follow the premises of the Constitution of 3 May. While being undoubtedly a huge success of the Reform Party, the Constitution of 3 May was incompatible with the contemporary situation. That document organized the political system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth but did not determine fundamental political transformations which would lead to the development of capitalist economy. To do that, however, it was indispensable to abolish serfdom and the Hôtel Lambert either was apprehensive of dealing with the problem, or simply was against it.

The most heated debates were taking place within TPD, which had been established in 1832.<sup>18</sup> Initially, the majority of its members were convinced that a widespread European revolution was the only chance for Poland to regain independence. They also believed that the Carbonari would seize power in the Western Europe and Poles ought to be prepared for that beforehand. On the one hand, it was necessary to introduce serious social reforms, especially the abolition of serfdom; on the other, the exiled veterans of the November Uprising should be prepared to offer military help to all revolutionary movements. What is more, the TDP members claimed that before rebelling against Russia, Poland should not propagate the mottoes of being *Antemurale Christianitatis* – the bulwark of Christianity. From now on, there should be spread a vision of an independent Poland becoming the brooding ground for democratic ideas in the East. Sławomir Kalembka noticed that the concept of regaining independence through the European

18 For further references, see: Sławomir Kalembka, *Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie w latach 1832-1846*, Toruń: PWN, 1966.

revolution had been formulated to some extent on enthusiastic reactions the exiled November insurrectionists had aroused in the countries they had been marching through to the West.<sup>19</sup>

The Poles became involved in the Carbonari risings in Italy, France and German countries. Unfortunately, their failures and a complete disaster of Zaliwski's 1833 expedition to the country undertaken to incite a rising against Russia anew,<sup>20</sup> made the TDP members reconsider their plans. They decided to return to the idea of Poland relying solely on herself. If so, the reforms could not be postponed any longer because the risings must occur simultaneously in all three partitions. The first attempt at doing so was made in 1846 but it turned out to be a complete failure. Due to treason in the province of Poznań, the commander, Ludwik Mierosławski, was sent to prison. In the Kingdom of Poland there was only one rebellious episode in Siedlce. When it comes to Cracow, there was organized a coup in February thanks to determination of Edward Dembowski. The local gentry from the southern part of the Kingdom of Poland did try to support the insurrectionists<sup>21</sup> but, unfortunately, that rising was not successful either.

Let me return here to the Cracow Rising as it was then that the Manifesto of the National Government created by Karol Libelt was announced. According to that document, serfdom would be abolished, landless peasants would be granted lands from the national resources and social security system would be supported by the country and not by some charitable societies or the so-called foundations. Thanks to such premises, the Manifesto of the National Government has been part of the European democratic thought.

After the 1846-1849 risings and wars, TDP returned to the concept of regaining independence by Poland through a European revolution. That idea was to be finally successful and, as it was believed,

19 Idem, 'Spojrzenie na polskie drogi do wolności w epoce rozbiorów (1794-1870)', [in:] idem, „*Onasza i wasza wolność*”. *Studia z dziejów polskiej myśli politycznej doby romantyzmu*, Olsztyn: Ośrodek Badań Naukowych im. Wojciecha Kętrzyńskiego, 1997, p. 21.

20 For further references, see: Alina Barszczewska, Józef Śmiałowski, *Z dziejów partyzantki Józefa Zaliwskiego w roku 1833 w Królestwie Polskim, Studia i Materiały z dziejów wojskowości*, vol. 7, pt. 1, pp. 225-305.

21 For further references, see: Wiesław Caban, 'Uczestnicy krakowskich wydarzeń 1846 roku na syberyjskim zesłaniu', [in:] *Rok 1846 w Krakowie i Galicji. Odniesienia, interpretacje, pamięć*, eds. Krzysztof Daszyk, Tomasz Kargol and Tomasz Szubert, Kraków: Historia Jagellonica, 2016, pp. 97-111.

was truly nigh. The members of TDP also started to advance a thesis that the Poles should co-operate with the emerging democratic movement in Russia.

The third trend that appeared within the Polish emigration communities was Christian socialism. Created in the middle of the 1830s in England, its supporters – the Polish People [Gromady Ludu Polskiego] – promised to build a socialist system that would be based on the Holy Bible. That trend was represented in the country by Rev. Piotr Ściegienny from Bilcza near Kielce, who organized a rising in 1844. He believed that independence would be won by peasants. Unfortunately, Ściegienny's plans were nipped in the bud and he himself had to do penance for his ideas in Siberia.<sup>22</sup>

The ideas of TDP soon reached other conspiratorial societies in the Kingdom of Poland and the so-called Taken Lands, that is, Lithuanian-Belarusian, which used to be part of the First Republic. One of them was the Association of the Polish People [Stowarzyszenie Ludu Polskiego], which was established in 1835 thanks to the initiative of Szymon Konarski. The members of the Association highlighted that “fighting ... is the sacred responsibility and vocation of man and the whole nation, thus becoming the national vocation; it is the sole means of maintaining nationality that is based on equality, freedom and brotherhood; this is the cornerstone of the national prosperity” [translation mine].<sup>23</sup> The grand conspiracy ended in a fiasco – the leader was hanged in Vilnius and the other conspirators were sent to Siberia. Konarski supposed that only by fighting with Russia was Poland able to manifest in Europe both her existence as well as the fact that she would never stop asserting her right for independence.

In contrast to Szymon Konarski's uncompromising attitude to fighting with no regard paid to the partition countries or England and

22 For further references, see: Włodzimierz A. Dżakow, 'Słowianofilstwo i chrześcijański socjalizm w poglądach ks. Piotra Ściegiennego', [in:] *Ksiądz Piotr Ściegienny. Epoka. Dzieło. Pokłosie*, ed. Wiesław Caban, Kielce: Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1996, pp. 103-123.

23 [walka ... jest świętym obowiązkiem i powołaniem pojedynczego człowieka, tak równie jest powołaniem ogólnym całego narodu, jest więc powołaniem narodowym, jedynym środkiem utrzymania narodowości, opartej na zasadach równości, wolności i braterstwa, kamieniem węgielnym pomyślności narodowej]. *Stowarzyszenie Ludu Polskiego w Królestwie Polskim. Gustaw Ehrenberg i „Świętokrzyżcy”*, eds. Włodzimierz A. Dżakow, Stefan Kieniewicz, Wiktoria Śliwowska, Wrocław-Warszawa: Ossolineum, 1978, p. 162.

France, Bronisław Zaleski – an exile at the Orenburg Line for conspiracy in the 1840s – believed that a rising must be properly prepared and nothing could be gained without the help from the outside. Just like the majority of conspirators, Zaleski also considered England and France the allies of Poland but, simultaneously, he included in that group Austria, Prussia and even Sweden. Zaleski's plan assumed that the Poles would first invade St. Petersburg, what, in turn, would lead to the division of Russia into several separated countries, that is, the Ukraine, Sibir, Kazan and Moscow. The eastern frontier of Poland was to reach Moscow, whereas the western – Berlin and Potsdam. Outlined as such, Poland would be able to liberate other European nations, especially those living under the Habsburg monarchy.<sup>24</sup> It seems that Bronisław Zaleski's idea was even more utopian than the plan of Rev. Piotr Ściegienny, who believed that peasants alone would be able to win independence and then build Poland in accordance with the Holy Bible. Not fulfilling his idea, Zaleski continued his work at the Hôtel Lambert and later became a director of the Polish Library in Paris.

Polish soldiers conscripted to the Russian army after the failure of the November Uprising also assumed that regaining independence would not be so long a process. The most well-known action prepared by them was the so-called Omsk Conspiracy Affair, which happened in 1833. Near the end of 1833, there were about 2 300 Polish soldiers in the Omsk Independent Regiment. They came up with the idea that their rising could be supported by Russian soldiers and Siberian civilians. The latter were to be won over through propagating the legend about the Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich, who was allegedly living in a monastery and needed help. In Russia, it was widely believed that the Duke had been unlawfully deprived of the throne but, had he been liberated, he would free the Russian and Polish nations from the tyranny of Nicholas I and make Siberia an independent country.<sup>25</sup>

The exiled to Caucasus were trying to find a different road to independence. Influenced by the agents from the Hôtel Lambert, they

24 For further references, see: Wiesław Caban, *Z Orenburga do Paryża. Bronisław Zaleski 1820-1889*, Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej, 2006, pp. 27-35.

25 For further references, see: Алексей. С. Нагаев, *Омское дело 1832-1833*, Красноярск: Изд-во Красноярского университета, 1991.

were deserting from the Imperial army to join the Caucasus insurrectionists who, led by Shamil, were fighting against the Russian between 1830s-1850s. It was believed that Shamil, together with the Cherkess, would defeat Russia, thus making it possible for the Polish to claim their independence. At first glance, that idea advanced by the Hôtel Lambert seemed beneficial to the Polish Cause if the Hôtel Lambert had been more familiar with the Caucasus problems.<sup>26</sup>

Let us now ponder upon the conclusions that the conspirators preparing the January Uprising could and did draw from both the failure of the November Uprising and the arguments within the emigration circles in the 1850s. Without any doubt, the most salient conclusion was the conviction that to trigger any armed struggle, it was essential to establish a special military direction in the form of government administration. The 1863 conspirators created the underground state, which did serve its purpose during the warfare. Moreover, it was also assumed that no rising could break out without the abolition of serfdom.

By sparking the Uprising in 1863, the conspirators expected to receive the support of the governments and nations of the Western Europe but nothing like that happened. Napoleon III only pretended to be the saviour of nations, whereas England considered the Polish Cause an interior affair of Russia – just like during the November Uprising. The people of Europe were not eager to join the conspirators either – there were only about 4 000 volunteers from different countries but that was almost of no importance then. After all, the Russian army was larger than 1 200 000 soldiers at that time.

According to the National Government, an independent Poland should resemble the 1772 country so, from a territorial point of view, a return ought to be made to the situation from 30 years ago. Admittedly, there was suggested a small correction – the Lithuanian-Belarusian lands were to consist part of the Republic on federal principles. The January Uprising made the Polish realize, however, that a vision as such could not be fulfilled due to a number of reasons. This is a very

26 Wiesław Caban, *Śłużba rekrutów z Królestwa Polskiego w armii carskiej w latach 1831-1873*, Warszawa: DiG, 2001, pp. 168-171. For a detailed discussion of the Caucasus problems and their relations to the Hôtel Lambert, see: Ludwik Widerszal, *Sprawy kaukaskie w polityce europejskiej w latach 1831-1864*, Warszawa: Neriton, 2011 (first edition: 1934).

complicated issue that cannot be dealt with in detail in so small a work but at least it should be mentioned here that, first of all, Russia would never agree to that plan and, secondly, the 1863 fightings contributed to the revival of national awareness of Lithuanians and Ruthenians. In recent years, Lithuanian and Belarusian historians have been highlighting that if the Lithuanian-Belarusian people joined the insurrectionists it does not necessarily mean that they were wholeheartedly supporting the Polish Cause. It did, of course, indicate that the rebellion was directed at tsarism but the underlying cause might involve a conviction that, by joining Poles, the Tsardom would be weakened, thus making it possible for both the Lithuanian and Belarusian nations to establish a form of independent statehood. It would be very difficult to refute these arguments.<sup>27</sup>

During the course of the January Uprising, the issue of collaboration between the Polish and Russian democratic movements revived once again. After Nicholas I's death, the Romanov monarchy entered a phase of reforms that were being introduced on an unprecedented scale. Both in the army and at the universities there emerged a will to take a stand against tsarism. However, the moment the discussions between the Russian and the Polish began, the discrepancies in establishing the national borders emerged almost immediately. No consensus could be reached on that issue. The Russian democratic movement opted for organizing a referendum to clarify the problem but its result was a foregone conclusion. The Polish communities at the Borderlands constituted merely a few percentages of the total number of inhabitants; the only exception was the Slutsk District – there were about 11% of Polish people.

Another standpoint on regaining independence was represented by Margrave Aleksander Wielopolski. He was not as enthusiastic about fighting with Russia as were, for instance, the radical 'Reds'. Why was it like that? I believe that the answer to this question is pretty obvious. During the November Uprising, Wielopolski was delegated to London to gain the English support for the insurrectionists. It was there that

27 Cf. Леонид Е. Горизонтов, *Парадоксы имперской политики. Поляки в России и Русские в Польше*, Москва: Индрик 1999; Egidijus Aleksandravičius, Antanas Kulakauskas, *Pod władzą carów. Litwa w XIX wieku*, Kraków: Universitas, 2003.

he soon realized that the West was absolutely indifferent to the Polish Cause and considered it the internal affair of the Russian Empire. When the successor of Nicholas I decided to introduce reforms, Wielopolski suggested a return to the idea of the Kingdom of Poland from 1815-1830. The 'Reds' considered Wielopolski's idea as obtuse and that it was advanced only because of the fact that either he was a loyalist, or a common traitor.<sup>28</sup> That was a misconception. Wielopolski, later appointed the Head of the Civil Administration, simply realized that only a plan as such could be supported by the countries, which signed the Treaty of Vienna in 1815. He believed that his proposition would be accepted not only by the partition countries but also by the West European empires. Especially the latter were expected to conform to such concessions since they did not violate the premises of the Treaty of Vienna. It cannot be stated without any doubt whether Alexander II would agree to Wielopolski's plan. For sure, Alexander II would not give consent to re-establishing the Polish army but the remaining ideas would be, in my opinion, acceptable by the Tsar. It was the time when the Russian was not that interested in absorbing the Kingdom of Poland; their primary preoccupation was to re-gain the so-called Taken Lands. As far as my insight into the situation is concerned, the St. Petersburg authorities were fully aware (since at least the reign of Alexander I) that they would not be able to hold the Kingdom of Poland for ever and sooner or later Warsaw would stop being under the Russian control. The Tsardom as well as the Bolsheviks were especially concerned with subduing the Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian lands.

Wielopolski did not fulfil his plan – he was opposed by the 'Reds', who were pushing for a military action as well as Count Andrzej Zamoyski, who wanted the leadership over the Polish gentry for himself. That was not the first time when two political leaders have not been able to come to an agreement. Then, everyone lost – the 'Reds', Wielopolski and Zamoyski, too.

The failure of the January Uprising led to further repressions in the Kingdom of Poland and the Lithuanian-Belarusian lands –

28 For further references, see: Andrzej Żor, *Ropucha. Studium odrzucenia*, Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2005.

the unification policy was, therefore, resumed without any scruple.<sup>29</sup> Nonetheless, the defeat for the January insurrectionists did have one positive effect, that is, serfdom was finally abolished and for the first time the debate was undertaken on such issues as common nationality or civil society.<sup>30</sup>

An honest reckoning with the January Uprising conducted by the positivists was not intended to reveal their dissociation from the fighting for independence. Knowing that the latter would be co-terminous with military activity, the positivists decided to wait for the most appropriate moment such as, for instance, the War of the Nations that both Joachim Lelewel and Adam Mickiewicz had been praying for after the failure of the November Uprising. For the time being, however, one had to focus on doing the actual groundwork, which was supposed to rebuild and enrich the body of the Polish nation. In contrast to some historians' opinion that such an approach was solely a temporary solution, I strongly believe that the 'temporary solution' did enliven social and cultural life at the province of the Kingdom of Poland. Unsurprisingly, the youth were not convinced by the Warsaw positivists and Aleksander Świętochowski since they identified themselves with the Manifesto of the Association of the Polish People [Manifest Stowarzyszenia Ludu Polskiego] – only the military activity against the enemy would make us still exist.

The debates concerning Polish roads to independence within the socialist movement took a completely different turn. A group of its members went so far as to heavily criticize the November and January Uprisings, what was met with indignation in other political circles. It must be, however, clarified that the first socialists were convinced that had the Uprisings led Poland to independence, the peasant and the worker would have been still oppressed. Over the course of time, there emerged two approaches within the Polish socialist movement. The first one, Polish Socialist Party – Revolutionary Faction [PPS-Frakcja Rewolucyjna] focused on fighting with the Tsardom; the second

29 A very interesting opinion on that issue is expressed by Malte Rolf, a German historian, in his *Rządy imperialne w Kraju Nadwiślańskim. Królestwo Polskie i cesarstwo rosyjskie (1864-1915)*, transl. W. Włoskowicz, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2016.

30 For further references, see: Alicja Kulecka, *Ku społeczeństwu obywatelskiemu. Czas walk i polemik 1863*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2016.

one – Polish Socialist Party – Left [PPS-Lewica] and Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania [SDKPiL] both supported the co-operation with the Russian labour movement to abolish tsarism. The moment the power was seized by the proletarian revolutionaries, the problem of national oppression would cease to exist. As Sławimir Kalemka noticed, that class perception of the issue of independence was an original idea in the Polish social and political thought.<sup>31</sup>

In 1887 in Geneva, an old democrat and January Uprising participant, Zygmunt Miłkowski, became actively involved in establishing the Polish League [Liga Polska], which was modelled on TDP. The aim of the League was to concentrate all national forces on regaining independence and, hence, return to the 1772 borders “on federal principles, by paying special regard to national differences and those parts of the Republic, which had been lost earlier”. With its transformation into the National League in 1893, the leadership over the organization was granted to Roman Dmowski and Jan Ludwik Popławski. Blood, iron and political reason became the tools indispensable for gaining independence. However, it was already in 1904 that Dmowski openly criticized the idea of adhering to independence whatever the costs might be and, instead of following the motto ‘For our independence and yours,’ he advocated the ethics of national egoism. Dmowski considered a military action against Russia unrealistic. He believed that all defensive effort should be directed against the German Empire which was more developed in terms of civilization and, hence, much more dangerous than the Tsardom of Russia when it comes to the Polish Cause.

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the leading figures at the Polish political scene were Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmowski, who represented completely different stands on gaining independence. Piłsudski was of the opinion that one always had to fight, regardless of the cost. Dmowski, on the other hand, was determined to bring together the Poles from all three partitions and, at the earliest international opportunity, demand independence. It seemed that an opportunity as such appeared in 1904, that is, during the Russo-Japanese war. Piłsudski and his supporters came to the conclusion that

31 Sławimir Kalemka, ‘Koncepcje odzyskania niepodległości w polskiej myśli politycznej doby zaborów. Zarys problematyki’, *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Historia*, 1978, vol. 14 (101), p. 20.

it was the perfect moment for establishing a Polish legion that would fight alongside the Japanese army. Consisting of the Poles conscripted to the Russian army and then taken captive by the Japanese, the legion, as Piłsudski believed, was to be joined by other Poles, who would desert from the Russian army. In the Kingdom of Poland, there was also organized conscription to the legion but, in contrast to what has been claimed, it was a futile endeavour.<sup>32</sup> Firstly, the Polish soldiers from the Russian army did not want to desert; secondly, the members of Polish Socialist Party [Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, PPS], led by Piłsudski, could not conscript more people in the Kingdom of Poland and, finally, Japan was not interested in supporting the establishment of the Polish legion. The Japanese army had no problems with defeating the Russian troops; moreover, the government in Tokyo wanted to avoid any unsettling matters in Europe and the creation of the Polish legion might become a reason for an unnecessary stir. Not knowing that yet, Józef Piłsudski and Tytus Filipowicz went to Tokyo in June 1904 to ask for help. By accident, Piłsudski met there Roman Dmowski, who had arrived to Tokyo earlier and already started explaining to the Japanese government that PPS was of little importance in the Kingdom of Poland. The conversation between those two leaders lasted nine hours; Dmowski was trying to convince his interlocutor that the standpoint represented by PPS was harmful to the Polish Cause. Great differences of opinion notwithstanding, Piłsudski and Dmowski remained on good terms.<sup>33</sup>

It is very difficult to judge the Tokyo visit of those two most influential contemporary Polish politicians. There occurred, however, certain fact that cannot be denied. Firstly, Piłsudski managed to get a positive help with weaponry that was later used by the PPS units. Secondly, he also received from the Japanese a substantial amount of money that allowed him to organize paramilitary troop in Galicia, what subsequently led to the establishment of the Polish Legions in 1914. The latter

32 Mariusz Kulik, Jacek Legieć, 'O udziale Polaków w wojnie rosyjsko-japońskiej (wybrane problemy)', [in:] *Mity i legendy w polskiej historii wojskowości*, ed. Wiesław Caban, vol. 1, Kielce: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 2014, pp. 235-242.

33 For further references, see: Andrzej Garlicki, *Józef Piłsudski 1867-1935*, Kraków: Znak, 2017; Włodzimierz Suleja, *Józef Piłsudski*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2010; Roman Dmowski, *Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa*, Warszawa: Księgarnia Perzyński, Niklewicz i Ska, 1926.

played a significant role in gaining independence. However, it is of utmost importance to remember that without the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the 13<sup>th</sup> Point of President Wilson's statement (8 January 1918), gaining independence by Poland would be much harder.

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