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SUBJUGATED NATIONS OR SEPARATISTS? POLISH AND RUSSIAN EMIGRÉS AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN THE SOVIET UNION IN THE LATE 1940S AND EARLY 1950S*

ABSTRACT

The national question in the Soviet Union was one of the main topics of discussion between Polish and Russian émigrés in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Polish and Russian émigré circles' attitudes towards Promethean peoples, described by the Russians as separatist, were key to the political concepts promoted by these circles. Both émigré groups sought to win each other over to their point of view and vied with each other for influence with the political elite in the US. After the Second World War, the Russian side presented a number of collaboration proposals to Polish political circles, seeking to draw the Poles away from both the pursuit of the Intermarium idea and collaboration with subjugated nations.

In my article, I argue that the dominant anti-imperialist stance in Polish politics and the growing support for Ukraine's independence after the war influenced the thinking of Russian democrats. As a result, and also because of international developments, the Russians were forced to modify their political programmes. From 1918, Russian émigré circles moved from questioning the very existence of subjugated nations to recognising their cultural distinctiveness and (in the case of some socialists) acknowledging their right to determine their fate through plebiscites.

The Poles' promotion of the idea of freedom for "Promethean" peoples also undermined the one-dimensionality of the American (and not only American) view of the Russian problem, dominated as it was by the Russian narrative. Drawing on an analysis of the activities of the most influential Polish and Russian political circles, I answer several crucial questions: How did these two émigré groups influence American politics? Was the Polish side's refusal to cooperate with the Russians relevant to the development of the cause of the subjugated nations? Finally, how did the Poles contribute to the spread among Russian émigrés of the idea of the independence of Promethean nations?

KEYWORDS:
Russia, Poland, Ukraine, exile, emigration

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This article contributes to research on nineteenth-century[1] and post-Revolutionary[2] relations between Polish and Russian émigrés. However, while a considerable number of studies have already been published on relations between Polish and Russian emigrants in the nineteenth century or between the Second Polish Republic and Russian emigrants, only a few have explored this problem in the period after the Second World War. This issue has appeared in studies rather incidentally when discussing other problems, and scholars have mainly focused on contacts between Russian emigrants and the Parisian *Kultura*. This subject has been discussed most extensively in research by Piotr Mitzner, Tadeusz Sucharski, Paweł Bem, Piotr Głuszkowski, and by the author of this article.[3]

It is interesting to note that there are not many academic literary works dealing with relations between Polish emigrants and the Promethean nations or the Promethean post-war movement in general. The issue of these relations is addressed by Krzysztof Tarka in his monograph on the Polish government's diplomacy in exile.[4] The most synthetic approach to this problem, however, is presented by Paweł Libera in his article *Prometheism after Prometheism*. It is also worth mentioning an article by Svetlana Chervonnaya that deals most extensively with the question of the functioning of

1 Wiktoria Śliwowska and René Śliwowski, *Aleksander Hercen* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1973); Geonowefa Kurpisowa, *Aleksander Hercen a emigracja polska w latach 1847–1870* (Gdańsk: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, 1964); *Myślą i słowem. Polsko-rosyjski dyskurs ideowy XIX wieku*, ed. by Łukasz Adamski and Sławomir Dębski (Warszawa: Centrum Polsko-Rosyjskiego Dialogu i Porozumienia, 2014).

2 On Russian emigration in Poland, see, e.g., Adolf Juzwenko, *Polska a „biała" Rosja (od listopada do kwietnia 1920 r.)* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1973); Zbigniew Karpus, *Wschodni sojusznicy Polski w wojnie 1920 roku. Oddziały wojskowe ukraińskie, rosyjskie, kozackie i białoruskie w Polsce w latach 1919–1920* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1999); Jan Zamojski, 'Biała emigracja rosyjska w Polsce; sytuacja, problemy', in *Migracje i społeczeństwo. Imigranci i społeczeństwa przyjmujące*, ed. by Grażyna Waluga (Warszawa: Neriton, 2000), V, pp. 32–63; Andrzej Nowak, *Polska i trzy Rosje. Studium polityki wschodniej Józefa Piłsudskiego (od kwietnia 1920 roku)* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2001); Iwona Obłąkowska-Galanciak, *Gorzkie gody... Publicystyczna i literacka działalność Dmitrija Fiłosofowa na emigracji* (Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego, 2001); Wojciech Stanisławski, *Myśl polityczna emigracji rosyjskiej w II Rzeczpospolitej: interpretacje przeszłości i koncepcje polityczne* (unpublished PhD thesis, Warszawa, 2002); Piotr Mitzner, *Warszawski „Domek w Kołomnie"* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, 2014); id., *Warszawski krąg Dymitra Fiłosofowa* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, 2015); Adam Suławka, *Prasa rosyjska i rosyjskojęzyczna w II Rzeczypospolitej (1918–1939)* (unpublished PhD thesis, Uniwersytet Warszawski, 2018); Marek Świerczek, *Największa klęska polskiego wywiadu. Sowiecka operacja dezinformacyjna „Trust" 1921–1927* (Warszawa: Fronda, 2020); Łukasz Dryblak, *Pozyskać przeciwnika. Stosunki polityczne między państwem polskim a mniejszością i emigracją rosyjską w latach 1926–1935* (Warszawa: Monografie, 2021).

3 *Literatura rosyjska w kręgu „Kultury". W poszukiwaniu zatraconej solidarności*, ed. by Piotr Mitzner (Paryż–Kraków: Instytut Książki, 2016), I; *„Kultura" i emigracja rosyjska. W poszukiwaniu zatraconej solidarności*, ed. by Piotr Mitzner (Kraków: Instytut Książki, 2016), II; Piotr Mitzner, *Ludzie z nieludzkiej ziemi. Rosyjski krąg Józefa Czapskiego* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 2021); Tadeusz Sucharski, *Polskie poszukiwania „innej" Rosji* (Gdańsk: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2008); Paweł Bem, 'Jerzy Giedroyc – czytelnik i wydawca literatury rosyjskiej', in *Literatura rosyjska w kręgu „Kultury"*, pp. 8–55; Piotr Głuszkowski, *Antyrosja – historyczne wizje Aleksandra Sołżenicyna – próba polskiego odczytania* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2008). Some issues related to Russian emigration are addressed in the following works: Anna M. Jackowska, *Sowiety na ławie oskarżonych. Polskie uczestnictwo w propagandowej zimnej wojnie we Francji w latach 1947–1952* (Warszawa: Monografie, 2018); Janusz Korek, *Paradoksy paryskiej Kultury. Styl i tradycje myślenia politycznego* (Lublin: Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2000); Andrzej S. Kowalczyk, *Wena do polityki. O Giedroyciu i Mieroszewskim* (Warszawa: Więź, 2014), I; Łukasz Dryblak, 'Sondowanie przeciwnika czy poszukiwanie sojusznika? Stosunki polsko-rosyjskie na przykładzie Koła Przyjaźni Polsko-Rosyjskiej w Paryżu w latach 1946–1953', *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 2 (2019), 179–218; id., 'Na tropie sowieckich operacji wpływu. Józef Mackiewicz w kręgu rosyjskiej emigracji', *Arcana*, 161 (2021), 64–87; id., 'Siergieja Mielgunowa emigracyjne spotkania z Polską', *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, 1 (2022), 291–312; id., 'Dialog polsko-rosyjski w USA na przykładzie kręgu Wacława Lednickiego', *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* [article submitted for publishing]; id., *Szermierze wolności i zakładnicy imperium. Emigracyjny dialog polsko-rosyjski w latach 1939–1956. Konfrontacje idei, koncepcji oraz analiz politycznych* (Warszawa, 2023).

4 Krzysztof Tarka, *Emigracyjna dyplomacja. Polityka zagraniczna rządu na uchodźstwie 1945–1990* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza RYTM, 2003).

the Promethean League of the Atlantic Charter.[5] Relations between Poles and Ukrainians in exile have been addressed by Sławomir Cenckiewicz, Krzysztof Tarka and Grzegorz Motyka, and Rafał Wnuk, while Jerzy Grzybowski has contributed on Polish-Belarusian relations.[6] Marian Wolański in turn has described the political concepts of the various émigré factions.[7]

In my analysis, I focus on the late 1940s and early 1950s – a crucial period in terms of the formation of American policy towards individual emigrants from Russia and Central and Eastern Europe. This was also a time when the various émigré groups sought to build their position in the eyes of Washington and consolidate their position in relation to each other.

The national question in the Soviet Union was one of the main contentious issues in discussions between Polish and Russian émigrés. The attitude towards Promethean peoples, described by Russians as separatist, was key to the political concepts promoted by Polish and Russian émigré circles. Obviously, the Ukrainian case attracted the most attention. Both émigré groups sought to win over each other to their points of view and vied with each other for influence with the political elite in the US. In addition, the Polish side mainly sought to follow and neutralise the activity of the Russians. On the other hand, the Russians tried to monopolise relations with the Americans and, by repeatedly formulating collaboration proposals, to draw the Poles away from both the pursuit of the Intermarium idea and collaboration with subjugated nations.

By analysing the stances of the main political milieux, I will try to answer three fundamental questions. How did these two émigré groups influence American politics? Was the Poles' consistent lack of interest in cooperating with the Russians relevant to the cause of the subjugated nations? Finally, how did the Poles contribute to the spread among Russian émigrés of the idea of the Promethean nations' independence?

In analysing the discussions held in selected (but representative) émigré circles, I want first of all to highlight the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Polish Government in exile, the members of the Polish Prometheus Group, the *Kultura* milieu,[8] the Polish-Russian Friendship Circle, and

5 Paweł Libera, 'Prometeizm po prometeizmie. Zarys historii ruchu prometejskiego po 1939 roku', *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, 1 (2022), 40–64; Swietłana Czerwonnaja, 'Liga Prometejska Karty Atlantyckiej (z archiwum Dżafera Sejdameta)', *Wrocławskie Studia Wschodnie*, 7 (2003), 109–43.

6 Sławomir Cenckiewicz, 'Intermarium w myśli politycznej Stanisława Józefa Paprockiego. Przyczynek do historii stosunków polsko-ukraińskich po II wojnie światowej', *Polska-Ukraina. Ludzie pojednania. Ukraińcy na Pomorzu w XX w.*, ed. by Tadeusz Stegner (Gdańsk: STEPAN design, 2002), pp. 84–99; Krzysztof Tarka, 'Kijów–Warszawa wspólna sprawa? Rozmowy polsko-ukraińskie na emigracji w pierwszych latach po II wojnie światowej', in *Podzielone narody. Szkice z historii stosunków polsko-ukraińskich w latach 40. XX wieku*, ed. by Mariusz Białokur and Marek Patelski (Toruń–Opole: Adam Marszalek, 2010), pp. 205–20; Grzegorz Motyka and Rafał Wnuk, '"Pany" i "rezuny" na emigracji. Próby porozumienia polsko-ukraińskiego na Zachodzie 1945–1950', *Więź*, 9 (2000), 197–207; Jerzy Grzybowski, *Pogoń między Orłem Białym, Swastyką i Czerwoną Gwiazdą. Białoruski ruch niepodległościowy w latach 1939–1956* (Warszawa: Bel Studio, 2011).

7 Marian Wolański, *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w myśli politycznej emigracji polskiej 1945–1975* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1996).

8 The best known and most influential opinion-making Polish monthly in exile, edited by Jerzy Giedroyc.

the main Russian organisations, namely New York's League of Struggle for the People's Freedom, led by Boris Nikolaevsky, Aleksandr Kerensky and Rafael Abramovich; Sergei Melgunov's Union of Struggle for the Freedom of Russia; the National Labour Alliance of Russian Solidarists, and the Brussels-based Russian National Union.

During the Second World War, a Polish-Russian discussion group was active in New York. This was thanks to Prof. Wacław Lednicki (the most famous Polish expert on Russian literature), who sought to use relations with Russians for the benefit of the Polish cause.[9] However, the group was not interested in the national question in the Soviet Union, and the professor himself privately believed it was highly unlikely that the call for the liberation of subjugated peoples would find understanding in Washington.[10] After the war, Lednicki focused on research, moving mainly among Russian and Polish scholars, occasionally also having contact with Ukrainian researchers. In 1946, the centre of gravity of the Polish-Russian dialogue moved from the US to France and West Germany. Obviously, Russians active in America continued to attract the interest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in exile, of Stanisław Mikołajczyk, one of the leaders of the International Peasant Union and the Polish National Democratic Committee (PNCD) he had founded, as well as of members of parties represented in the Political Council.[11]

Officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Polish Government in exile, supported by members of the Polish Promethean Group, Poland's Independence League (Liga Niepodległości Polski – LNP) and Federal Clubs, treated Russians mainly as political opponents. However, a different approach to them was adopted by the leaders of the People's Party (Stanisław Mikołajczyk), the National Party (Tadeusz Bielecki) and the Polish Socialist Party (Zygmunt Zaremba). In their programmes, in an attempt to establish cooperation with Russian socialists, they either did not include or did not highlight the question of subjugated peoples. The man who established the closest contact with them was Zygmunt Zaremba, who greatly appreciated the anti-communist stance of the Mensheviks but did not accept their paternalistic attitude towards Poland. In his correspondence with Solomon Schwartz, he ruled out Poland joining – as a result of Sovietisation – a federation that would be the work of a free Russia.[12]

9 W. Lednicki to [S. Kot], 23 October 1942, copy, The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America (hereafter PIASA), New York, Waclaw Lednicki Papers, 7.76, pp. 40–43.

10 W. Lednicki to W. Grzybowski, 22 January 1948, The Polish Library in Paris (Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu – hereafter BPP), Berkeley, Wacław Grzybowski, no. 7896.

11 Political Council (Rada Polityczna): a political body in opposition to the President and the Polish Government in Exile, formed in 1949. It included the following parties: the Polish Socialist Party, the National Party, Polish the Freedom Movement "Independence and Democracy" and the Polish People's Party "National Unity Faction" (Odłam Jedności Narodowej).

12 Z. Zaremba to S. Schwartz, [Paris], 9 July 1948, copy, PIASA, Zygmunt Zaremba Papers, 16/15, p. 135.

However, let us go back to the milieu carrying out the Promethean--Intermarium programme. In 1946 in Frankfurt am Main, Stanisław Paprocki established contact with representatives of the Ukrainian People's Republic. At more or less the same time, Klaudiusz Hrabyk, in order to sound out other émigré groups, initiated a Polish-Ukrainian-Russian discussion on the pages of Frankfurt *Kronika.* Paprocki and Hrabyk were members of the Polish Prometheus Group, in which they closely collaborated with, among others, Colonel Tadeusz Schaetzel. They quickly realised that the Ukrainians had beat the Poles to it and become serious contenders for the role of leaders of the subjugated nations.[13] In 1946, at the first congress of the Promethean League of the Atlantic Charter in the Hague, the Ukrainian professor Roman Smal-Stocki, who had already headed the "Prometheus" Club before the war, was elected president.[14]

The Ukrainians tried to bring together various nations within the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), dominated by the Bandera faction, and the Anti-Bolshevik League for the Liberation of Nations (*Antybil'shovyts'ka liha vyzvolennya narodiv* – ALON), founded in 1948 (composed of ABN, the International of Freedom [Międzynarodówka Swobody] and the Promethean League of the Atlantic Charter).[15] With concern, the Polish side watched the rise of the nationalists' influence and the support given to them by the Germans, who were perceived by the Polish Prometheans and Federalists as allies of Moscow and opponents of the Intermarium nations.

In order to determine what cooperation possibilities existed, the Polish side wanted to provoke the Russians and the Ukrainians into taking a stance on the Polish concept of the Intermarium. As I have already mentioned, such a discussion was initiated by Hrabyk in 1947. The Russian side was represented by S. Stasov, V. Vasil'yev and Konstantin Boldyrev, all of whom were columnists for *Posev*, a periodical of the National Labour Alliance of Russian Solidarists (*Natsional'no trudovoi soiuz rossiiskikh solidaristov* – NTS). As early as 1946, one of the leaders of this movement, Arkady Stolypine (son of the famous assassinated prime minister), sought to get through to the President of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Republic of Poland in exile, which is why the tone of his statements relating to Poles was warm.[16] Similar voices could be heard in the organisation's periodical. One such article by Stasov was reprinted in *Kronika*.[17] On the Ukrainian side, opinions

13 "Both the Prometh. and the DP Agreement [Agreement on Refugees and Displaced Persons – ŁD] were platforms of rather fierce Polish-Ukrainian rivalry"; J. [Ponikiewski] to S. [Paprocki], Hotelbienberg, 1 February 1949, The Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum (hereafter PISM), London, Stanisław Paprocki Collection (Kolekcja Stanisława Paprockiego – hereafter KSP), 30/VI/2.

14 [R. Smal-Stocki to S. Paprocki], 28 April 1946, PISM, KSP, 30/VI/2; Uchwały Zarządu Prometeusza na posiedzeniu z dnia 28.IV.46. [Resolutions of the Board of Prometheus adopted at the meeting of 28 April 1946], PISM, KSP, 30/VI/2.

15 J. Ponikiewski to [S. Paprocki], copy, PISM, KSP, 30/I/4, p. 28; Jan Pisuliński, '"Ukraiński Mazarini"? – Roman Smal-Stocki i Polacy', *Nowy Prometeusz*, 15 (2020), 39–54 (pp. 42–43).

16 Arkadij Stolypin, 'O pol'skoj èmigracii', *Svobodnaja Mysl'*, 6 (1946), (p. 37).

17 Stasov, 'Rosjanie o Polsce', *Kronika*, 40 (1947), p. 5.

were expressed by, among others, Roman Il'nyc'kyj, columnist for *Chas*, and Mykhaylo Voskobiynyk, editor of *Ukrainski visti*.

Vasil'yev agreed that the fight against the USSR had a universal dimension, saying that the NTS was not an imperialist organisation. He pointed out that, according to his organisation's programme, Russia was to be a "free union of free nations". The article was critical about the concept of the Intermarium and Great Ukraine, but it also contained an offer for the Ukrainians:

> The sooner this sober point of view prevails among Polish and Galician parties abroad, the easier it will be for them to be included in the common front of the anti-Bolshevik struggle, and the less they will be cut off from their own masses, from their own peoples, thirsty for real help in the fight against Bolshevism, thirsty for a life not so much in Poland 'from sea to sea', not so much in Galicia from 'Lviv to Grozny', but simply in a free and peaceful Poland, in a free and peaceful Galicia within the framework .... – if possible, without a framework, so that one could travel, live, work more freely, from sea to sea, from Lviv to Grozny, and beyond![18]

The Ukrainians were fierce opponents of the NTS, which is why the solidarists still had to obstruct Polish-Ukrainian cooperation. In any case, this may have seemed to them a sufficient step towards ensuring the implementation of the programme of an indivisible Russia. In October 1948 in the American magazine *Look*, Konstantin Boldyrev published an article in which he presented an embellished history of his organisation, claiming that the Polish-Russian talks held between Włodzimierz Stępniewski, Viktor Baydalakov and Mikhail Georgievsky in Belgrade at the turn of 1941 ended with the signing of an agreement between the NTS and the Polish Government.[19]

Boldyrev's article, as was reported by Juliusz Szygowski, consul general in Chicago subordinated to Jan Wszelaki, was taken note of by the Ukrainians, who saw in it a sign of an alliance between "Polish imperialists" and anti-communist Russians against Ukraine.[20] One year later, Stolypine published an article in which he suggested that although émigrés could not make a decision on the disputed lands in the east, the future Russia

18 V. Vasil'yev, 'Razdel Rossii', *Posev*, 26 (1948), PISM, KSP, 30/VI/8.
19 'The story of one Russian underground organization attempting to overthrow Stalin', by C.W. Boldyreff, as told E.B. Paine, *Look*, 26 October 1948, 25–39.
20 J. Szygowski to T. Gwiazdowski, Chicago, 28 October 1948, PISM, KSP, 30/I/12.

would certainly be capable of negotiating the status of the disputed eastern Polish lands with Poland.[21]

The solidarists also tried to establish contact with General Władysław Anders, cooperation with whom also attracted the interest of members of the Brussels-based Russian National Union (*Russkoye Natsional'noye Obyedineniye* – RNO), whose head, Vasiliy Orekhov, knew Anders from his service in the tsar's army, which made it easier for him to reach him. By pretending their relations with Anders had a higher profile than they actually had, both organisations succeeded in creating the impression that the general supported them. This outraged Ukrainian journalists. The general did not favour the Russians and also maintained contact with representatives of the subjugated nations. However, it has to be said that there were people in his entourage who preferred collaboration with the Russians to that with Promethean nations. This was the attitude of, for example, Colonel Wincenty Bąkiewicz, head of the intelligence in the Polish II Corps, who highly valued *Posev* (the solidarists' periodical).[22] Ryszard Wraga pointed to the provocative nature of relations with the NTS and RNO, but he was not entirely successful in warning Anders against them.[23]

Despite territorial offers made by the Russian émigrés, the Poles rejected cooperation with them. First of all, they did not trust them; secondly, they wanted a solution that would ensure lasting security for the nations of Central and Eastern Europe. The vision of the Intermarium presented in *Kronika* by Hrabyk reflected the concept of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' policy, which was developed with a major contribution from Stanisław Paprocki[24] and the long-time Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tadeusz Gwiazdowski of Poland's Independence League, in cooperation with the leaders of the Federal Clubs, especially the Central European Federal Club in Rome, headed by Juliusz Poniatowski and Stanisław Janikowski.

The eastern border of the Intermarium was to run along the eastern border of Ukraine or the Cossack-inhabited areas on the Don, the inclusion of which in the Intermarium would make it possible to establish contact with the peoples of the Caucasus.[25] *Intermarium Biuletyn* promoted

21 Arkadij Stolypin, 'Puti sud'by Pol'ši', *Posev*, 16 October 1949, p. 9.

22 "[Wincenty Bąkiewicz] was holding *Posev*, 'an excellent periodical, he said, patting a copy of *Posev*, I'm very happy we're meeting, although we differ politically. My assessment of the situation is completely different from Wraga's'. I think that this was again an allusion to the Russian [question] [and] Wraga's Promethean tendencies. [...]"; J. Czapski to J. Giedroyc, [London], [1951], Archiwum Instytutu Literackiego Kultura (hereafter AIL), PoJCz, 19.06.

23 R. Wraga to W. Anders, Paris, 19 September 1952, PISM, General Anders Collection, 295, f. 19.

24 "1. The campaign for the liberation of the nations subjugated by the Soviet Union, according to the plans established so far, was to be carried out in coordinated but independent rounds: A. 'federal' movement of the Intermarium nations; B. organisation of the nations incorporated into the USSR or within the framework of the Promethean League of the Atlantic Charter [...]"; [S. Paprocki] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs [A. Tarnowski], top secret, 5 January 1948, PISM, KSP, 30/VI/2/.

25 G.C., 'O granicach Intermarium', *Intermarium Biuletyn*, 6 (May 1947), p. 7.

a community of its members and respect for the independence of all nations.[26] Europe would become an alliance of regional unions that would be based on the principles of a federation and would maintain balance and prevent other nations from being dominated by either Germany or Russia.[27]

Some shortcomings of the Rome Club's programme were pointed out by Kajetan Dzierżykraj-Morawski, an experienced diplomat. According to him, it was impossible to refer to the Treaty of Riga and, at the same time, to challenge it by calling for independence for Ukraine and Belarus. He said that the Ukrainian cause might become more important to the US than the Polish cause in the long term. In addition, he stressed, referring to the example of France, that an anti-Soviet stance should not be regarded as the same as an anti-Russian stance.[28] In this respect, Dzierżykraj-Morawski's thinking may have been influenced by individuals from the Polish-Russian Friendship Circle.[29] Morawski wondered how to reconcile the federalist and the Promethean programmes. Although the two were interlinked, the proclamation of the latter might, in his opinion, deny the Poles access to Western politicians.

Jerzy Giedroyc also faced such a problem, which is why in his contact with the Americans he tried to present himself as a friend of Russians, at the same time trying to force through a programme for breaking up the Soviet Union. In a letter to Józef Czapski, who represented him in talks held at the Pentagon, Giedroyc and Wraga advised him:

> You have to use here arguments different from those of the Ukrainian nationalists or others. [...] We are seeking a break-up of the Russian empire, and what will come out of this later, whether there will be a federation or a union of free states or a mosaic of completely independent nation states, is a matter for the future, a matter that cannot be decided at the moment, if only because we do not have enough information to talk about what conditions will exist after the break-up of the Soviet empire [...]. We consider a break-up of the Russian empire to be the only possible way of liberating the Russian nation, too, from the hegemony of the idea of the state and of giving this nation a possibility of finally being able to really determine its historical future. Your interlocutors must understand that if such a attitude to the matter usually provokes indignation

26 Ibid.
27 'Memorandum Środkowo-Europejskiego Ruchu Federalnego. Przesłane na ręce delegatów rządów biorących udział w Organizacji Narodów Zjednoczonych – Sesja w Nowym Yorku', September 1947, *Intermarium Biuletyn*, 8 (December 1947), 44–45. The memorandum was signed by representatives of the Clubs from London, Rome, Paris and Brussels.
28 Morawski's views are discussed on the basis of [K. Morawski] to [Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Tarnowski], Paris, 8 November 1947, PISM, Polish Embassy in Paris, A.46/2.
29 More on the Circle: Dryblak, 'Sondowanie przeciwnika czy poszukiwanie sojusznika?', pp. 179–213.

> on the part of all factions of the Russian émigrés, it is not because such a programme or slogan is inexpedient or unrealistic to carry out, but because all these Russian groupings are afraid of historical responsibility [...] and, as a matter of fact, by supporting the thesis of the preservation of the Russian state and statehood at all costs, they are playing into the hands of the Bolsheviks.[30]

The theses of the Rome programme were also disputed by Colonel Tadeusz Schaetzel, who called for a precise definition of Russian emigres' attitudes to the Cossacks, peoples of the Caucasus, as well as the states of the Near and Middle East, which he regarded as natural allies of the Intermarium.[31] The concept he proposed – defined in short as the Baltic–Black Sea–Caspian Sea – was a correction of the Baltic–Adriatic–Black Sea triangle. Members of the Rome Club rejected such a modification, considering it unrealistic. They were afraid that the "planned community of nations would be some sort of monstrous 'Greater Ukraine' (in the literal sense) on Russia's border and would be a function of Russia, or rather an exponent of the fear of its power. However, a true community cannot be a community of fear or negation".[32]

The Polish-Ukrainian-Russian polemic of the mid-1940s did not lead to constructive conclusions. The Ukrainians disregarded the fact that the Russians were being intransigent over the question of the Polish-Ukrainian border[33] in order to win the Poles over. Mieczysław Grabiński, the Munich consul, reported: "The fragmentary statements by the Russian émigrés suggest that the concept of the 'Great and indivisible' not only does not encompass Poland but also grants it the right to Vilnius and Lviv".[34] However, the Poles did not trust the Russian declarations.

From across the Atlantic, Marian Kamil Dziewanowski reported on identical proposals in his notes for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressing that the side that excelled at them was the monarchists, who, by dividing the Ukrainian nation between Poland and Russia, wanted to get rid of the problem of Ukrainian independence.[35] As a Harvard student, Dziewanowski

30 J. Giedroyc [and R. Wraga] to J. Czapski, Maisons-Laffitte, 10 May 1950, AIL, PoJCz, 19.05.
31 Tadeusz Schaetzel, 'Wschodnia granica Międzymorza ', *Intermarium Biuletyn*, 12 (May 1949), 27–29.
32 W...ir, 'Na wschód od międzymorza', *Intermarium Biuletyn*, 12 (May 1949), 29–35.
33 "Only in the event of the Polish nation relinquishing the eastern lands would the Ukrainians be willing to engage in closer cooperation against their common enemy, Russia (Ilnicki). The Ukrainians believe that the Polish-Ukrainian agreement is necessary, but first Poland needs to make some concessions (Czernecki). The best solution to the Polish-Ukrainian question would be, according to Ilnicki, J. Bielski's concept [giving up the Riga border – ŁD]. This is the material content of the 'Polish-Ukrainian discussion' and this is why K. Hrabyk's delight at its outcome is incomprehensible"; Report on the so-called Polish-Ukrainian discussion in Germany, London, 12 January 1948, Pilsudski Institute of London (hereafter PIL), London, Tadeusz Schaetzel Archive (Archiwum Tadeusza Schaetzela – hereafter ATS), 7. The report was probably compiled by Stanisław Paprocki.
34 G. [consul M. Grabiński], International Committee of Refugees and DPs in Germany, 6 June 1948, PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.1472.
35 "The reason [behind the monarchists' stance] is not sympathy for us, but a desire to divide the Ukrainian problem between Poland and Russia", M.K. Dziewanowski, 'Nowa emigracja rosyjska', copy, PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.874.

was able to gather excellent information about the views of Russian émigrés thanks to his tutor Michael Karpovich, the well-known historian of Russia.

As the Polish and the Ukrainian sides were unable to come to an agreement, the Russian émigrés in the US did not waste time, trying to impose their programme on the Americans. Naturally, it seemed more obvious to the Americans to establish cooperation primarily with the Russian émigrés. With time they realised, however, that mobilising emigrants from regions that were part of the USSR within a single organisation on the basis of concepts developed in the Russian milieux was not an easy task because most nations, especially the Ukrainians, advocated a programme of independence and separation from Russia instead of a federation. Both groups could count on their sympathisers in the US. These conflicts between émigré communities irritated the pragmatic Americans, who wanted to force all these nations to collaborate.

Jozef Lipski, who was sent by the Polish government to the US, claimed that the Americans did not have a defined programme relating to the future of Russia.[36] American government circles were flooded with contradictory concepts formulated by Russian and Ukrainian émigrés.[37] Meanwhile, the Promethean idea, according to Dziewanowski, was known only to a few professionals.[38] Lipski thought that this confusion might be used to scale up the Polish propaganda, but this was hampered by the arrival in the US of Stanisław Mikołajczyk in November 1947.[39] Lipski pointed out that for the Americans he was a very convenient candidate for the leader of the Polish émigrés as he was in conflict with the Polish government and accepted the decisions taken in Yalta.[40] A positive opinion about him was expressed also by the leader of the Russian émigrés, Aleksandr Kerensky, as was reported to London by the representative of the Government of Poland in Washington, Jan Wszelaki.[41] In a conversation with Kerensky, Mikołajczyk confirmed the inviolability of the Polish-Russian border on the Bug River, at the same time distancing himself from the cause of the subjugated nations. Naturally, those Polish circles that did not accept Yalta regarded this move as another act of "treason".[42]

36 "Usually I was unable to say that there was any clear concept, among the opinion leaders, of the future of Russia. Both the white émigrés, attracting fugitive Bolsheviks from Russia like Kravchenko, and the Ukrainians are suggesting various ideas to the US government circles", J. Lipski to J. Potocki, ambassador in Madrid, London, 6 February 1948, PISM, Józef Lipski Collection (Kolekcja Józefa Lipskiego – hereafter KJL), 2/10.

37 Ibid.

38 Excerpt from a letter by M.K.D. [M.K. Dziewanowski], 28 September 1947, PISM, KJL, 2/10.

39 See Anna Mazurkiewicz, *Uchodźcy polityczni z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w amerykańskiej polityce zimnowojennej 1948–1954* (Warsaw–Gdańsk: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2016), p. 274.

40 J. Lipski to J. Potocki, London, 6 February 1948, PISM, KJL, 10; [J. Wszelaki] to minister T. Gwiazdowski, Washington, 7 January 1948, PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.1651. Lipski and Wszelaki were right. On the opinions of the Americans about Mikołajczyk, see Mazurkiewicz, *Uchodźcy polityczni z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, pp. 274–75.

41 [J. Wszelaki] to T. Gwiazdowski, Washington, 7 January 1948, PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.1651.

42 T. Borelowski [Michał Grażyński], 'Pakt w Chicago', *Za Wolność i Niepodległość*, 9 (20 January 1948), p. 201; Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz, 'Na lekki chleb', *Lwów i Wilno*, 47 (3 November 1947), 221–25. T. Schaetzel to [W. Jędrzejewicz], Woodlands Park Camp., 23 December 1947, Józef Piłsudski Institute of America (hereafter PIA), New York, Personal File, 897.

On 13 March 1949, New York hosted the first meeting of the League of Struggle for the People's Freedom, headed by Aleksandr Kerensky and Boris Nikolaevski. It featured many well-known émigrés, including Michael Karpovich and Rafael Abramovitch, as well as a minor Ukrainian activist named Dneprov, who played the part of a 'good Ukrainian' – good in the Russian understanding of the term. The speeches echoed the theses that this milieu had already advocated during the war: that the Russian nation was not responsible for the actions of the communists, that the Russian people demanded freedom, and that nations have a right to freedom, but not those nations that wish to deviate from the democratic path (underneath this rather general statement was a threat against émigré groups that might oppose joining the federation).

In addition to the Ukrainians, Kerensky also made offers of cooperation to the Belarusian group of Mikola Abramchyk (head of the Council of the Belarusian Democratic Republic). These activities were sponsored by the Americans, who urged the Belarusians to reach an agreement with the Russians.[43] The unification campaign was unfolding with difficulty.[44] According to Wacław Grzybowski, who cited Wacław Lednicki's conversation with Vasiliy Maklakov, the five Russian organisations' agreement that had been reached in Stuttgart was very fragile.[45] The Promethean activists did not lose hope – in 1952 the Russian organisations' agreement collapsed.[46] Attempts to organise an anti-Soviet campaign on the basis of Russian émigrés failed because the Council for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, established in Stuttgart, disintegrated before it began to function. Indeed, the Russians failed to play the role of representatives of all the subjugated nations, which they did not treat as equals. As Kerensky wrote to Karpovich, "We cannot allow the Coordinating Center [for Anti-Bolshevik Struggle] to turn into a new Prometheus or ABN".[47] The Russians hoped that they would manage to pursue their own policy at the expense of the Americans; they did not expect that the CIA would withdraw financing for the Centre.[48]

Some Russian immigrants were active in the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, the name of which did not satisfy any of the peoples: the Russian émigrés did not like it because, in their opinion,

43 "The local American embassy is exerting some pressure on him to come to an agreement with Kerensky", W. Grzybowski to minister M. Sokołowski, Paris, 25 September 1951, copy, PISM, KSP, 30/I/11.
44 Grzybowski, *Pogoń między Orłem Białym*, pp. 716–18.
45 Ibid. The communiqué about the establishment of the Council for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia was signed by Boris Nicolaevsky and Vladimir Zenzinov (League of Struggle for the People's Freedom), Viktor Baidalakov and Vladimir Romanov (NTS), Aleksandr Kerensky and Ivan Kurganov (Russian National Movement), Boris Jakowlew and A. Krilov (Union of Struggle for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia), Sergei Melgunov and M. Solov'yev (Union of Struggle for the Freedom of Russia); abridged note by S. Paprocki for minister S.Z., 1 October 1951, PISM, KSP, 30/III/1.
46 E. Kirimal to S. Paprocki, Windelsbleiche, 4 January 1952, PISM, KSP, 30/IV/10.
47 A. Kerensky to M. Karpovich, 18 June 1952, Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Bakhmeteff Archive (hereafter CULBA), New York, Michail Karpovich Coll., box 2.
48 Benjamin Tromly, *Cold War Exiles and the CIA: Plotting to Free Russia* (Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 148.

it stressed the significance of separatist peoples, who did not like it because the term used was "Peoples of Russia" not "Peoples of the Soviet Union", a term that would better highlight the multinational nature of the state.

THE PARISIAN CIRCLES (POLISH-RUSSIAN FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE, *KULTURA* AND MELGUNOV'S GROUP).

As I have already said, a Polish-Russian Friendship Circle operated in 1946–1953 in Paris. It was composed primarily of sympathisers of *Russkaya Mysl*, local Polish émigrés represented by various political factions as well as academics associated with the Polish Library in Paris. The main role in it on the Polish side was played by Władysław Pelc, a well-known Promethean activist; on the Russian side, Vladimir Lazarevsky, head of the nationalist Russian National Union, played the main role. The Russian leader of the group was a Catholic, and several Russian members sympathised with Catholicism. Religious dialogue was a bond uniting the Polish and the Russian members of the Circle. Admittedly, it was mainly the Russians who set the tone for the work of the group, toying with the idea of a future united – and Christian – Europe, in which Russia, Poland and France would play a central role. After Lazarevsky's death in 1953, the group ceased to function. With time, the profile of *Russkaya Mysl* changed as well, with that milieu also establishing relations with *Kultura.*

The Polish political factions and the Government of Poland in exile regarded the Circle as a platform for sounding out Russian émigrés. The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs allowed Poles to participate in the group for these purposes, despite the fact that Ryszard Wraga (asked to evaluate the Circle by ambassador Kajetan Morawski) pointed out that some of the Russians involved might be Soviet intelligence collaborators.[49] A similarly negative opinion about this milieu was expressed by Stanisław Paprocki.[50]

Among the members of the group, the most puzzling in his attitude was Pelc, who at the time gave the impression of believing in the possibility of cooperating with the Russians.[51] In retrospect, however, he concluded that Polish-Russian cooperation could not have developed, largely due to the Russians' reluctance to recognise the independence of the Baltic states (they eventually did) and to grant the right to self-determination to the peoples of the Caucasus. However, the dispute focused mainly on the

49 Ambassador K. Morawski to Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Sokołowski, Paris, 25 June 1951, BPP, Kajetan Morawski's file, temp. no. 6.2. He expressed the same opinion in his correspondence with General Władysław Anders (R. Wraga to W. Anders, Paris, 26 November 1952, PISM, KGA, 295, f. 20).
50 S. Paprocki to T. Gwiazdowski, London, 2 July 1948, PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.823.
51 Dryblak, 'Sondowanie przeciwnika czy poszukiwanie sojusznika?', pp. 205, 211.

question of the independence of Belarus and Ukraine, of which the Poles were in favour: "We Poles were in favour of the independence of these nations; the Muscovites were only in favour of some kind of autonomy in a vague 'post-Soviet' phraseology with the inviolable all-Russian assumption of an 'inviolable union' of the Russian peoples".[52]

The biggest effort to establish an honest dialogue with the Russians and sound them out was made by *Kultura*, especially its editor-in-chief Jerzy Giedroyc, who was strongly supported in this respect by Józef Czapski and Jerzy Niezbrzycki. Yet the effects of these attempts were rather modest in comparison with their intentions. The Russians were not interested in such a discussion. They must have feared questions about their attitude to the Promethean nations. A way to obtain information about the Russian position was to be a Russian issue of *Kultura*, which had been in the pipeline since 1946. Giedroyc presented his intentions in a letter to Lednicki in the following manner:

> By publishing a special issue devoted to Russian–Polish matters, we do not intend by any means to butter each other up and keep a wistful note of fraternity. [...] This is especially necessary at the present time, since the manoeuvres among the Russian émigrés here on the European continent (and, as we hear, also on the American continent) are highly alarming. I'm afraid that no one and nothing will teach these good old Great Russian imperialists. Nevertheless, it is necessary to do away with these methods – on the one hand national democratic and on the other *constitutional democratic* (Kadet) – of complimenting and showing affection to each other [...] *Kultura* would like to tear down the wall of hypocrisy in this sphere and create a dialogue – even if very unpleasant for both sides, but held in the same periodical.[53]

Yet were the efforts of the *Kultura* milieu doomed to complete failure? A good example of the fact that this was not the case was the Congress for Cultural Freedom, organised – a fact not mentioned at the time for obvious reasons – by the CIA. Owing to its relations with James Burnham and Nicolas Nabokov, *Kultura* had a significant impact on the organisation and tone of the Congress. It was Giedroyc and Czapski who raised the question of subjugated peoples, successfully demanding that Ukrainian representatives, among others, be involved in the further work of the Congress.

52 Curriculum Vitae, BPP, Akta Władysława Pelca, temp. no. 1, p. 4.
53 J. Giedroyc to W. Lednicki, Paris, 7 January 1948, copy, AIL, KOR RED, 410.

This was accomplished thanks to the support of, among others, Michael Karpovich from the League of Struggle for the People's Freedom (and despite the opposition from his compatriot David Dallin),[54] which had been co-founded, after all, by a fierce enemy of the "separatists", Aleksandr Kerensky. Karpovich also supported Giedroyc and Czapski in lobbying for a university for the nations from behind the Iron Curtain.[55]

Giedroyc feared Kerensky's activity, but this motivated him all the more to enter into a debate with the Russians in order to try to discern and reveal their real views on the issues of key importance to the Polish émigrés. The Russian socialists' regular contact with the Poles influenced the former's views towards the subjugated nations. One of the Russians whom Giedroyc asked to write an article for *Kultura* was Georgy Fedotov.[56] He was the most radical example of the reception of the Polish idea of freedom among the democratic Russian émigrés. In 1946, he published an article in *Novyi Zhurnal*, edited by Michael Karpovich, entitled "Sud'ba imperiy", in which he expressed criticism – shared by the majority of the émigrés – of the imperial idea: "The loss of the empire is a moral purification, liberation of Russian culture from the terrible burden that distorts its spiritual image".[57] Fedotov wrote explicitly that Russia could not be free and democratic by oppressing other nations and suggested that sooner or later it would become territorially restricted to its Centre with Siberia and perhaps Belarus.[58]

Another Russian who maintained relations with *Kultura* was Sergei Melgunov, who was part of the opposite camp of democratic émigrés to that of Karpovich and Fedotov. In his 1951 article "Yedinaya ili razchlenennaya Rossiya", he denied the Ukrainians the right to become separated from Russia but expressed his willingness to recognise the independence of the Baltic States, Georgia, and possibly Armenia; when it came to Poland, he waived the claims to Galicia.[59] He sought in vain to make the Coordinating Centre for Anti-Bolshevik Struggle, founded in October 1952 in Munich, an organisation of various peoples of the Soviet Union that could represent these peoples vis-à-vis the Americans. This did not prevent him from maintaining close links with Ryszard Wraga, a Promethean activist and former head of the Bureau East (Second Department of the Polish General Staff) who in the early 1950s became involved in combating Soviet disinformation in the West and in building a united anti-Soviet front of

54 J. Cz. [Józef Czapski], 'Notatki z Kongresu Brukselskiego', *Kultura*, 39 (1951), 125–28 (p. 127).
55 Mirosław A. Supruniuk, *Przyjaciele wolności. Kongres Wolności Kultury i Polacy* (Warszawa: DiG, 2008), p. 77.
56 J. Giedroyc to G. Fedotov, Paris, 9 January 1948, copy, AIL, KOR RED, 172. Giedroyc asked him for an article about the detrimental nature of chauvinism to the collaboration of Russians, Poles and Ukrainians in the fight against "Bolshevism".
57 Georgij Fedotov, 'Sud'ba Imperij', *Novyj Žurnal*, 16 (1947), 149–69 (p. 169).
58 Ibid., p. 151.
59 Sergej Mel'gunov, 'Edinaja ili rasčlenennaja Rossija?', *Vozroždenie*, 15 (May–June 1951), 130–44 (pp. 130–44).

nations in an effort to bring about a Russian-Ukrainian dialogue.[60] In discussions with the Russians, he tried to convince them that the need to recognise the independence of the subjugated nations (especially Ukraine) was a prerequisite for overthrowing Soviet rule and defeating communism. He was highly respected in Russian circles, although mainly for his uncompromising fight against Soviet agents of influence rather than for his concept of anti-Soviet and anti-communist cooperation between nations.

CONCLUSION

The Poles looked for effective tactics and opportunities to better reach Washington with their ideas, which is why they did not shy away from contact with Russian émigrés, even though most Polish groups had an anti-imperialist programme. A "realistic" programme was advocated by some members of the People's Party, led by Stanisław Mikołajczyk, and by the nationalists, who still hoped that a national Russia would share its eastern lands with Poland after the decline of Soviet rule. However, the Ukrainian suspicions concerning the Poles' alleged collaboration with the Russians were incommensurate with the intensity of Polish-Russian relations, the main purpose of which was sounding out the other side and which never resulted in cooperation against the Promethean nations.

The lack of agreement on the question of the borders and the Ukrainians' tactical approach to cooperation with the Poles made it impossible for the two sides to jointly lobby for the interests of the subjugated peoples and those living in the satellite states and the USSR.[61] Thus, the fact that the Ukrainian independence circles ruled out dialogue with the Russians – a fact welcomed by Polish diplomats – can hardly be regarded as a success.[62]

By engaging in a dialogue with the Russians, the Poles wanted to force them to declare themselves on important issues, with the national question certainly being one of these. The Russians did not think that such a debate was politically advantageous for them, especially at a time when American policy towards the USSR was taking shape. Russian émigrés wanted to impose on the Americans their own views on the national

60 See Dryblak, 'Siergieja Mielgunowa emigracyjne spotkania z Polską', pp. 303–06; Łukasz Dryblak, 'Jerzy Niezbrzycki (Ryszard Wraga) jako znawca Rosji i kontynuator myśli Józefa Piłsudskiego', in *Józef Piłsudski – idee, tradycje, nawiązania*, ed. by Sebastian Pilarski (Łódź–Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2019), pp. 323–62 (pp. 350–51).

61 Cf. Tarka, *Emigracyjna dyplomacja*, pp. 88–91.

62 "The Ukrainians are no longer under any illusions in this respect and, therefore, their anti-Russian front is united", G. [consul M. Grabiński], International Committee of Refugees and DPs in Germany (after: report of 8 April 1948, 6 June 1948), PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.1472; "An agreement between the Russians and the Ukrainians is impossible to bring about. There is no organisational link between them, no cooperation, even in socialist and Orthodox Church organisations", M. Samiczek, *Przyszłość Ukrainy*, New York, July 1948, PISM, MSZ, A.11.E.823.

question in the USSR. For various reasons, a more friendly attitude towards the Russian people – as representing the largest state body in the East – prevailed within the American political elite. Yet, many Russians believed that their policy had failed as they had not become the only partners among the nations of the USSR in talks with the American side.

The visions of the future order in Europe – and thus also the attitude to the national question – presented by the Polish and Russian émigrés were diametrically opposed. Although in addition to concepts based on different variants of the idea of the Russian Empire, in the Russian thought there also emerged concepts – advocated mainly by socialists – of Russia as a federation or even a confederation. Moreover, the idea of Holy Russia (Nikolai Berdyaev and Anton Kartashev) continued to be popular, thus adding a religious dimension to Soviet actions in a reference to the ideas of Slavophile Messianists. A secular modification of this idea was the idea of the "Russian world", which drew on Eurasian thought and was promoted by the NTS, among others. The indivisibility and tri-unity of the Russian nation was firmly advocated by Pavel Milyukov, Aleksandr Kerensky, and even their liberal friend Michael Karpovich, who believed in the possibility of maintaining the unity of the empire through its federalisation and modernisation in line with Western "standards". The thinking of the Russian democrats was marked by a contradiction that was recognised by the Poles as well as by, as I have mentioned, Georgy Fedotov, who, not without bitterness, concluded that Russia would not be free until it had learned from the Poles about freedom and had become divided.

The possibility of a federalised Russia was reluctantly accepted by Sergei Melgunov and Vladimir Lazarevsky. On the other hand, various monarchic and nationalist groupings ruled out a federal political system. Some of them even passed over the very existence of subjugated peoples, although there were also those – like Sergei Voytsekhovsky – who tried to address the problem despite criticism from their own milieu.

In each variant (least of all in the case of the socialists) these concepts clashed with the Polish proposals, which provided for, firstly, the reconstruction of Poland with its eastern border as agreed upon in Riga, or an eastern border revised in favour of a future independent Ukraine and possibly Belarus and Lithuania, or with the Yalta border, but neighbouring on an independent Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, federated with Poland or not. Apart from the nationalists (although exceptions can be found here as well), Polish émigrés supported the federation idea. Not only was Poland to be independent, but it was also to be part of a Central and Eastern European federation, forming part of a European confederation, or to be directly part of a united Europe.

The Polish-Russian dialogue was a confrontation of two diametrically opposed points of view. The biggest difficulty for the two nations lay in finding a way to agree on the fate of the subjugated peoples, a difficulty bigger than that posed by the question of Poland's eastern border, the adjustments of which – whether by inter-state agreements or plebiscites – were, at least in theory, contemplated by the Russians in an effort to persuade the Poles to abandon their Promethean policy.

Despite the fact that the Russian thinking was dominated by the idea of the indivisibility of the empire, Russian political parties did undergo quite an evolution between the late nineteenth century and the 1950s: from denying the Poles their right to independence, to accepting it and trying to develop a new *modus vivendi* in relations with Poland, accepting the independence of the Baltic States, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, as well as recognising the existence of the Belorussian and Ukrainian peoples and, in the case of the socialists, granting them (at least declaratively) the right to determine their fate through a plebiscite.

It was, however, political circumstances that forced the Russians to modify their attitude towards the "separatist" nations: the weak position of the Russian émigrés, the development of national movements, the anti-imperialist stance prevailing among the Polish émigrés, and the increasing support after the Second World War for the independence of Ukraine and even Belarus. The Polish stance, perforce, limited the possibilities for Russian influence and had an impact on the Russian ideas, especially those of Russian democratic groups.

If the Poles had been in favour of dividing the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth between Poland and Russia, this would have weakened the already fragile democratic tendencies in Russian political thought and facilitated the implementation of the concept of an indivisible Russia, be it national or Soviet. The promotion by the Poles of the idea of freedom of nations, referred to as the Promethean idea, also mitigated the one-dimensionality of the American (and not only American) view on the Russian problem, dominated as it was by the Russian émigré narratives, which were often favourable to the Soviet Union.

The idea is still very much alive. Shortly before the Russian attack on Ukraine, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zbigniew Rau, went to Moscow as Chair of the OSCE and during a press conference juxtaposed the concept of indivisible security advocated by Sergei Lavrov with the idea of indivisible freedom of nations.

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