

*Guardians of the Memory
Пазители на паметта*

‘THE INTERNATIONAL OF THE CONQUERED’ – THE PROMETHEAN MOVEMENT AND POLISH AUTHORITIES DURING 1926 – 1939

Pawel Libera

Institute of National Remembrance (Poland)

Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences

Abstract. “Prometheanism” meant the political cooperation of interwar Poland with non-Russian peoples and nations in Russia directed against the tsarist, and later the Soviet empire. The Promethean movement included representatives of Ukraine (Ukrainian People’s Republic – UNR), Caucasus (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Mountaineers of the Northern Caucasus), Crimean and Volga Tatars, Turkestan and nations inhabiting Finland (Ingria, Komi, Karelia), as well as a part of the Don, Kuban and Terek Cossacks. This article focuses on the relations between the Polish side and individual nations and structures of the Promethean front, on those turning moments in its development, as well as on the political and organisational evolution of the Promethean movement.

Keywords: Promethean movement; Russia; Poland; Caucasus; Georgia; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Ukraine; Finland; Cossack

The territorial expansion of the Russian state from the end of the 16th century took place by subjugating or completely annexing states or peoples that bordered it. This policy led to the creation of a huge Empire at the end of the 19th century, in which, despite a consistent Russification, about half of the residents did not consider themselves Russians. It was only the significant weakening of the tsarist state that took place as a result of World War I, the Bolshevik revolution, and the civil war in Russia, that enabled the subjugated peoples to try increasing their autonomy within the Tsar’s state or regaining full independence. In 1918, some of them regained their previously lost sovereignty or attempted to create new states. However, contrary to previous declarations, the Bolshevik state did not intend to abandon the imperial policy pursued by Russian tsars. For this reason, during 1918 – 1921, revolutionary armies eventually liquidated most of the states that arose on the ruins of the Romanov Empire. Political and military elites of conquered, subjugated peoples went into political emigration to Europe, to continue fighting. The common goal and awareness of their opponent’s power led them to unite their forces in one organisation, which was given the name of the Promethean movement. It included

Ukrainians, Georgians, Azeris, Highlanders of the North Caucasus, Crimean and Volga Tatars, Turkestanians and representatives of the Don and Kuban Cossacks, Karelians, Ingrians and the Komi peoples. The Poles were not formally part of this movement, but the Polish authorities and some of the important Polish politicians provided organisational and financial support to the Promethean movement. Its functioning would not have been possible without the support of the Polish authorities.

The Promethean movement should be seen as one of the many international movements created by the nations conquered by Russia/the USSR, who strove together to regain their independence (Stocky, 1947: 330). The aim of these movements was to fight against the imperial policy of the Russian state, and to a lesser extent its political system. In this case, anti-imperialism took precedence over anti-communism, although the impact of the system and ideology on the functioning of the Soviet state and its policy was fully realised. In this context, it is worth recalling that the term 'Prometheism' means both the activity of a political group that functioned during 1926 – 1940, and the trend of political thought, which postulated the necessity of breaking up the Russian state into states of individual peoples. This second phenomenon was undoubtedly broader and included also the thoughts and views of people who were not directly connected with the activity of the Promethean movement (such as Adolf Bocheński, Jerzy Giedroyc, Juliusz Mieroszewski and others) (Libera, 2012: 219 – 220). This text is limited to the presentation of issues related to the functioning of the Promethean movement, which was created in 1926 around the magazine 'Promethee' published in Paris, and which gathered émigrés from various nations conquered by Russia/the USSR. The activity concentrated in a few principal groups of the emigration, mainly in Paris, Constantinople and Warsaw, and the 'Prometeusz' ('Prometheus') Club in Warsaw was the central meeting place (1928 – 1939). The current activity focused on publishing periodicals in various languages, political activity and, to a lesser extent, military and subversive actions. The movement continued to function during the II World War, but in that period its activity practically froze.

For many years, the issue of the Promethean movement was practically absent in historical research. It is only in recent years that a markedly increased interest in researching the Promethean movement history can be seen in both Polish and world historiography. Until 1989/1991, this issue was addressed only in Polish research¹⁾, conducted in conditions where science was more or less dependent on the current policy of the communist Poland. At the time historians did not have access to all Polish or foreign source material, and the perception and interpretation of this issue was subjected to the requirements of current policy. The situation changed after 1989, but the gradual manner of granting access to archival collections meant that the first works dealing with this issue could not appear until late 20th/early 21st century. In recent years, after 2010, these issues are being raised more and more often in other countries: in Russia, Germany, USA, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, France, Georgia, and many others.

The aim of this text is to show the contribution of Polish authorities in the establishment of the Promethean movement and in its functioning, and the relations between Polish politicians and activists of the Promethean movement. The key question seems to be the degree of dependence of the Prometheism on the Polish authorities and the extent to which it was used by the Polish authorities in their foreign policy.

Traditions of cooperation between peoples conquered by Russia

It is impossible to study the history of the Promethean movement without recalling the role played at its establishment by the experience and memory of a common struggle against Russia present in the tradition of many nations. It existed in both the Polish tradition and those of other peoples connected with the Promethean movement. It had not always been at the forefront, but most often it was inseparable from the tradition of struggle for the nation's independence. No nation could fight this struggle alone against the greatest superpower in the world.

Polish traditions of cooperation with other countries fighting Russia have focused on three moments. The most distant in time were: the 1720 memorial of the Cossack Hetman Pylyp Orlyk on the anti-Russian alliance with Poland, the 1733 proclamation of the Sandomierz Confederates, and finally the activities of the Bar Confederates who tried to form an alliance with the Crimean Khanate and the Ottoman Porte²). The second stage took place in the 19th century and focused mainly on the eastern policy of Prince Adam Czartoryski and the so-called Hotel 'Lambert'. The third stage, the closest to the Promethean movement, has been the activity of Józef Piłsudski and the *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* (Polish Socialist Party). The idea of cooperation with other nations conquered by Russia was present in the Polish independence movement and a number of close associates of Józef Piłsudski took part in it. Because of the role that this milieu played in the struggle for independence of Poland and in the subsequent period, it is worth writing more about this episode. The issue of nationalist oppression of the tsarist authorities against the conquered nations and the necessity to undertake a common struggle was displayed very clearly already at the 3rd Congress of the Polish Socialist Party in July 1895. Andrzej Nowak writes that Piłsudski believed it to be "the most powerful explosive that could blow up (...) the Romanov state" (Nowak, 1999: 106 – 109, 129 – 130, 138 – 139, 142 – 143). Piłsudski's views on this issue were formulated more clearly in the memorandum he submitted at the Japanese Foreign Ministry on 13 July 1904: "This strength of Poland and its importance among the constituent parts of the Russian state gives us the courage to set ourselves the political goal of breaking up the Russian state into its main constituent parts and providing independence to the countries that had been incorporated by force into the empire. (...) We consider this not only as a fulfilment of the cultural aspirations of our homeland for independent existence, but also as a guarantee of this existence, because Russia, deprived of its conquests, will be so weakened that it will cease to be a threatening and dangerous neighbour." (Piłsudski, 1937: 253)

It should be emphasized that similar traditions of cooperation with other nations in order to organise a common resistance against Russia were also present in the past and

the tradition of other nations, which acted together within the Promethean movement during the interwar period. One of the most important here has been the establishment of the Association of Autonomists and Federalists and the Union of Nations, as well as attempted alliances between various nations.

The Association of Autonomists and Federalists was formed before the 1st Duma was convened in 1905 and its goal was to bring non-Russian peoples of Russia to cooperate, so that they could jointly demand greater autonomy and equality. The leading role in this group was played by two Poles: Aleksander Lednicki (1866 – 1934) and Jan Baudouin de Courtenay (1845 – 1929), but it gathered numerous representatives of nations living in Russia. 115 representatives of 12 nations: Azeri, Belarusian, Estonian, Georgian, Kazakh, Lithuanian, Latvian, Armenian, Polish, Tatar, Ukrainian and Jewish took part in the Congress of the Association of Autonomists and Federalists during 19 – 21 November 1905 in St Petersburg (Bagirova, 1997: 140). The policy of the tsarist authorities made it impossible to implement the demands proclaimed there, but the moment has grown into a symbol of the effort of many peoples directed against the authorities.

The *Office central des Nationalités* and the *Union des Nationalités* were established in 1911 by the Lithuanian politician Juozas Gabrys. His activity focused on the journal 'Les annales des nationalités' and the three large congresses of nations conquered by Russia, which took place in Paris (1912, 1915) and in Lausanne (1916) and gathered more than 20 nationalities. This activity found its continuation in the *Ligue des peuples allogènes de la Russie*, founded in 1916 in Lausanne by Gabrys and Baron Friedrich von der Ropp. Its goal was to split Russia into nation states (Demm, 2002: 139 – 258; Castelbajac, G. De, Soutou, G-H. & Gasquet, 1995). One of the manifestations of the League's activity was to issue, on 9 May 1916, a memorial to President Wilson on the situation of peoples and nations oppressed by Russia.

Finally, it is necessary to note the very significant experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, when cooperation of many nations inhabiting the Empire took place, including the Muslim nations (among others during the all-Russian Islamic conventions in 1917 in Moscow and in 1918 in Kazan) (Isakov, 2004), as did attempts of cooperation on a smaller scale between various nations conquered by Russia. The latter include the traditions of the Caucasian nations: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Highlanders of the North Caucasus, who attempted to create a common state, the Caucasian Confederation³⁾, in the face of danger.

All these experiences were a valuable precedent for the creation of the Promethean movement after 1921 and were repeatedly referred to.

Short independence of the nations conquered by Russia in 1918 – 1921

From the last months of 1917 until the early 1920s, taking advantage of the weakening of the Russian state, numerous nations that had previously been part of the Tsar's Empire proclaimed independence. Gradually a number of 'okrainas' (borderlands) became independent from the Russian state, including the Crimean People's Republic (25 November 1917), Ukrainian People's Republic (22 January 1918), Kuban People's

Republic (16 February 1918), Autonomous Republic of Turkestan (February 1918), Idel Ural (1 March 1918), Republic of North Caucasus (11 May 1918), Georgia (26 May 1918), Armenia and Azerbaijan (28 May 1918), Poland (11 November 1918), Republic of Northern Ingria (22 January 1919). Contrary to earlier declarations, the Bolsheviks decided to continue the imperial policy of the tsarist Russia and from the very beginning began to fight the emerging states. Only a few of those, like Poland or the Baltic states, managed to retain their independence. The vast majority were conquered by the Bolsheviks between 1918 and 1921/1922⁴⁾.

Despite the victory of the Bolsheviks, guerrilla units continued to operate in many regions, facing the Bolsheviks. However, the political, intellectual and military elite of the nations conquered by Bolshevik Russia had to emigrate to Europe to continue their struggle. Initially, the first attempts to fight for independence took place at the peace conference in Paris, where representations of individual nations sought to be heard and supported by the international community. These efforts ended in a complete fiasco. Much better results were achieved in bilateral cooperation between the Caucasian nations and Poland. Direct and constant contact with émigrés from the Caucasus was made by the Polish military attaché in Constantinople, Col. Leon Bobicki. In the first place, a close military cooperation was undertaken: in 1921, the Polish authorities agreed to accept into the Polish Army a group of cadet officers and officers from the Caucasus as contract officers. The first group of Georgian servicemen began training in Poland in December of that year. The following year, they were joined by the Azeris and Caucasus Highlanders, but the offer to accept the Armenians into the Polish Forces was rejected, as they were accused of Russophilism. The purpose of this cooperation was to prepare personnel for the future Caucasian armies that would fight for independence. By 1939, more than 120 contract officers from the Caucasus had served with the Polish Forces (Materski, 2016; Rukkas, 2001).

It was much more difficult to establish close political contacts. In March 1921 Poland signed a peace treaty with Bolshevik Russia, which ended military action and imposed on Poland a ban on supporting émigrés who were hostile to Russia. These provisions were particularly harmful to the Polish-Ukrainian military alliance of April 1920 and the cooperation of the Polish authorities with Belarusian and anti-Bolshevik Russian troops, but they also affected the policy towards émigrés from other nations. During this period, it was primarily the influential circles of followers of Józef Piłsudski concentrated in the *Związek Zbliżenia Narodów Odrodzonych* (Union of Rapprochement of Reborn Nations), the club with a similar name and the *'Przymierze'* ('Alliance') journal advocated the cooperation of nations conquered by Russia (Kornat, 2004). Despite attempts to propagate this idea among politicians and the creation of a similar club in Helsinki, the activity of this milieu died out in late 1921/early 1922. The resignation of Józef Piłsudski in 1923 prevented development of further cooperation, and his successors tried to limit the number of contract officers from the Caucasus and formally opposed cooperation with émigrés from the nations conquered by Russia.

The birth and expansion of the Promethean movement 1925 – 1932

Cooperation between Polish authorities and émigrés of nations conquered by Russia gained more dynamism in 1925, when Polish representatives in Constantinople: Polish MP Roman Knoll and the military attaché, Col. Tadeusz Schaetzel established closer contacts with émigrés from the Caucasus. According to some later accounts, both Schaetzel and Tadeusz Hołówko, who cooperated with him, apparently acted on the explicit recommendation of Józef Piłsudski (Podoski, 1972: 180) who, despite his withdrawal from political life, accepted visits of émigrés, including Georgians and Crimean Tatars, at his manor in Sulejówek (Kirimer, 1950).

Following the May 1926 coup and Józef Piłsudski's return to power, the Promethean contacts and work were immediately activated. As a result of cooperation of the Poles and the émigrés from the Caucasus, the Caucasus Independence Committee was established in Constantinople in 1926. It was soon joined by representatives of the Ukrainian People's Republic and by émigrés from Turkestan headed by Mustafa Shokay, and in November 1926 they began to edit the 'Promethee' journal published in French in Paris, which became the official tribune of nations oppressed by Soviet Russia (Mamoulia, 2009: 101).

The largest dynamics of creating structures of the Promethean movement took place in the second half of the 1920s. During this period, the organisational framework for the entire movement was created and the goal was set: to create a broad front of the nations conquered by Soviet Russia. On the Polish side, the main role in cooperation with the nations conquered by the USSR was played by the Eastern Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was the actual decision-making centre at the time, headed by Tadeusz Hołówko (1927 – 1930) who was close to Piłsudski. Other institutions, such as the 2nd Department of the General Staff (intelligence), or the Ministry of Military Affairs, took part in it to a lesser extent.

The largest groups of émigrés were in Turkey (Constantinople) and France (Paris), but due to the policy of these states, reluctant towards any anti-Soviet activity, and Poland's increasing involvement in supporting the Promethean movement, Warsaw became the third Promethean centre very quickly. According to the original assumptions, the movement was to concentrate around the 'Promethee' journal and the Prometeusz (Prometheus) Club, which was to be founded in Paris. Due to administrative difficulties on the part of the French authorities, the Club was finally established in November 1928 in Warsaw⁵). Subsequently, its branches were established in Helsinki, Harbin and Paris. In addition, there were other Promethean centres in Warsaw. The *Orientalistyczne Koło Młodych* (Orientalist Youth Circle) was to promote the Promethean idea among young people from Poland and the nations conquered by the USSR. It was established in early 1929, and the following year it began publishing the *'Wschód-Orient'* ('East-Orient') journal and award scholarships to foreign students. At the beginning of 1931, the Polish supporters of the Prometheism took over another institution, the Eastern Institute established in March 1926 by Stanisław Korwin-Pawłowski⁶). Moreover, other Warsaw-based institutions cooperated closely with the Promethean movement, such as the *Instytut*

Badania Spraw Narodowościowych (Institute of National Affairs Studies), the Ukrainian Institute of Science and many others. There were also two press agencies: the 'Express' Telegraph Agency in Poland, which operated since 1925, and the 'Ofinor' agency in Geneva, established in 1929.

The aim of creating the Promethean movement was to achieve an agreement between as many nations conquered by the USSR as possible and to create a platform to combat the common enemy. To this end, during 1926 – 1928, the Polish authorities established contacts and pledged financial support to politicians from the Caucasus (Georgia, Azerbaijan and North Caucasus), Ukraine, Turkestan, and then the Tatars (Crimea and Idel Ural) and the Cossacks (Don and Kuban Cossacks). Negotiations were successfully conducted with Karelians and the inhabitants of Ingria, contacts were attempted in Manchuria, as was the establishment of a Prometheus Club in Harbin. Discussions with the Armenian emigration (Dashnak) took the longest, ending as late as May 1940. Because few of the nations had emigration institutions with the rank of exiled governments (e.g. Georgia, the Ukrainian People's Republic), the Polish side exercised pressure to create so-called National Centres of individual nations, which were supposed to be equivalent to exiled governments and to coordinate the struggle for independence. In order to increase support for these centres, it was attempted to create them by as many political parties of individual nations as possible. For this reason, during 1926 – 1932, the Poles interfered with internal relations between various political groups in order to reduce and calm down the disputes. These activities concerned primarily the Caucasian nations: disputes among the Azerbaijani Musavat between Amin Rasulzade and Alimardan Topchibashov, among the Caucasian Highlanders (between Said Shamil and Haidar Bammam) and among Georgian politicians (between the Menshevik exiled government and the party of national democrats) (Mamoulia, 2009: 117 – 122, 143 – 144). In addition to political cooperation, reflected in activities on the international forum and in propaganda for the liberation of the nations conquered by the USSR and publicising their difficult situation, there were also extensive publishing activities (in all languages of the nations of the movement). Military activity was another field of cooperation, this time between Polish authorities and individual nations. It manifested itself mainly in the acceptance of contract officers from the three Caucasian nations into the Polish Forces, and from 1928 also of the Ukrainians. In addition, the Polish side supported the underground military organisations of the Ukrainian People's Republic (Potocki, 1999: 227 – 292) and Georgia (Georgian Military Organisation) (Zachariadze, 2013).

Crisis of the Promethean movement in 1932 – 1935

The dynamic expansion of the Promethean movement that took place after Józef Piłsudski came to power was significantly weakened in the first half of the 1930s. The main reason for this was the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union signed by Poland on 25 July 1932. Among others, it required Poland not to support any anti-Soviet organisation. The Promethean policy of the Polish authorities had to be subordinated to the main directions of the foreign policy, but this did not mean a withdrawal of the Polish

authorities from supporting the Promethean movement. This cooperation became more secretive, and direct contacts with activists of the Promethean movement were maintained by a separate cell: Branch 2 (Ekspozytura 2) of the 2nd Department of the General Staff (intelligence). Nevertheless, all key decisions were still taken in close cooperation with the Eastern Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, the Promethean movement suffered a significant blow during this period: a significant cut in the budget for supporting the Promethean campaign. The budget reduction took place in two turns: in late 1932/early 1933 and in 1935, but it must be admitted that also in the later period there was a reduction in funding, although to a lesser extent. These restrictions were mainly explained by the economic crisis and general restrictions in the budget of the state. The scale of budget reduction is demonstrated by data: in 1931/1932, when the budget for financing the Promethean movement reached its peak and amounted, according to various sources, to between 1.2 million and 1.45 million zlotys. In the last year of 1938/1939, the budget fell to 800 – 920 thousand zlotys (Libera, 2013: 52 – 53).

The signing of the non-aggression pact and the reduction of funds for the Promethean activity had no major impact on the most important activities. Despite the difficulties, the cooperation continued at various levels. In fact, no part of the joint activities has been completely eliminated: during the budget cuts the funds were reduced, but all forms of activity were maintained. A few new fields of activity should be mentioned briefly. In order to activate the Ukrainian section and the Polish-Ukrainian cooperation, a new journal was created in 1932, the *'Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński'* ('Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin') edited by Włodzimierz Bączkowski, an activist of the Orientalist Youth Circle (Qruchik, 2009). In 1932, the Prometheus Club in Helsinki was also established and a local variant of the Promethean journal ('Prometheus') was issued (Libera, 2018). Negotiations with Caucasian politicians continued, and eventually in 1934 they were persuaded to sign the Caucasian Confederation Pact, and a year later to create the actual executive body of the Confederation: the Caucasian Council (Mamoulia, 2012). At the same time, joint actions were taken on the international forum, including a protest action against the USSR's admission to the League of Nations in September 1934.

Further expansion of the Promethean movement was threatened by a negative impact of two factors: the mood of discouragement present among young immigrants on the one hand, and on the other hand, the interest of other countries: Germany, Japan and to a lesser extent Italy, in using émigrés from the nations conquered by the USSR. The discouragement of the young people was caused by the lack of ability to find fulfilment within the previous forms of activity, because they were already manned by older politicians, and on the other hand, by the conviction about the need for a more active fight with the enemy. Seemingly, this opportunity was offered by the countries mentioned above. Apart from the financial perspectives, the younger political activists of the oppressed nations were also tempted by the vision of an 'active' fight against the USSR, not just the propaganda, press and diplomatic struggle supported by Poland. The attempts at reforming the Promethean movement with the aim of radicalisation of the whole Promethean front and of activation

of the youth were blocked by Col. Tadeusz Schaetzel, the second most important figure of the Promethean movement after Tadeusz Hołowko⁷⁾.

Attempts to reform the Promethean movement in 1936 – 1939

The last period of the Promethean movement before the II World War was primarily recorded as the time when a reform of the Promethean front was attempted. This does not mean, however, that the essential fields of Promethean activity were changed. First of all, the propaganda and political activity was continued by publicising the situation of the population in the USSR (e.g. at the congress of linguists of conquered nations in Warsaw in May and June 1936)⁸⁾ or by demanding that this issue be raised on the forum of the League of Nations (in 1936 and 1937)⁹⁾ and in books and periodicals. Military cooperation was also continued. However, the issue of necessary changes in the Promethean movement comes to the fore.

After the death of Marshal Józef Piłsudski in May 1935, his close associates came to power, which apparently guaranteed maintaining the same policy, including that on the Promethean movement, but also led to hopes for reforms that were becoming more and more necessary, as was confirmed by rapid changes in the international situation. Some countries: Italy, Japan and Germany, showed an increased interest in the Promethean movement, readiness to provide financial support and to use it in their policy. From the Polish side, this raised a justified anxiety, especially after the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact in November 1936. The newly created anti-Comintern front formed a new, powerful opponent for the USSR, and a new potential ally for the émigrés from the countries conquered by the USSR. This situation has led to increasingly frequent actions interpreted by the Polish side as attempts at conflicting the milieu and breaking up of the Promethean front. A perfect example here is the memorial handed in May 1937 to Marshal Edward Smigły-Rydz on behalf of the Union of the Black Sea States. Its authors: Armenian, Georgian and Ukrainian politicians who were in opposition to the Promethean movement, proposed to the Polish authorities to establish contact and to provide support for the initiative they represented, which was the organisation of struggle against the USSR¹⁰⁾.

Conducting profound changes in the Promethean movement became more and more urgent. The reform project was prepared in April 1937 by a Pole, Władysław Pelc. He claimed that first of all, one should bet on the young cadre and attract young activists of Promethean emigration. To this end, it was necessary to break with the current practice and provide the same place in the common Promethean front to those nations and peoples who could boast of a long-standing state tradition (such as Georgia) and those who had never had their own state (such as Cossacks or Karelians). The demands made by Prometheus should be more radical and firm, and their aim should be an open demand to regain independence. Pelc noted that the young activists were more radical, and their views were definitely closer to the right wing, so in order to win them over, the old emigration should be influenced to reject its socialist sympathies and

contacts. This was particularly true of the Georgian Mensheviks who belonged to the 2nd Socialist International (Mamoulia, 2009: 173).

The radicalisation of public feelings has also affected Polish activists of the Promethean movement. Young people, such as Włodzimierz Bączkowski or Władysław Pelc, played a more and more important role. In contrast to the generation of socialists who had built the foundations of the Promethean movement, young activists were more open to cooperation with right-wing groups. The new Promethean magazine *'Myśl Polska'* ('Polish Thought'), established in 1936, was to help rapprochement between the previously hostile political trends. Its goals, apart from propagating the Promethean ideology, included the 'propaganda of the independent young thought of Piłsudski followers, expressed in terms of constructive nationalism' (Bączkowski, 1936). The magazine promoted views that were definitely alien to the left wing, it showed interest in integral nationalism, declared support for the idea of the *Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego* (OZN; Camp of National Unity) and Marshal Śmigły-Rydz. Attempts to reconcile the views identified with the OZN with the Promethean movement were not easy. The attitude towards ethnic minorities in Poland, and especially the Ukrainians, was the main point of the dispute. Supporting many assumptions of the OZN policy, the Polish activists of the Promethean movement could not agree with such repressions against the Ukrainian population in the second half of the 1930s. In 1938, in two tests of strength between the Promethean activists and the decision-makers in Poland, the former were defeated. First when Henryk Józewski, who tried to bring the Poles and Ukrainians to cooperate in Volhynia, was dismissed from the office of the province governor in Łuck (Snyder, 2005: 167 – 174), and then when the 'Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin' was liquidated (Jussis-Gończyński, 2011; Libera, 2011). First of all, not without argument and violent discussion, a reform of the flagship 'Promethee' journal was carried out on the basis of Pelc's project, changing the title to 'La Revue de Promethee' and turning what used to be a Caucasian-Ukrainian-Turkestan magazine into a platform of the entire Promethean front (Mamoulia, 2009 : 179 – 180). In Poland, the Eastern Institute was reformed on the basis of changes suggested by Włodzimierz Bączkowski (Maj, 2007: 148 – 155). The reforms were crowned with the congress of Promethean activists from all nations in Warsaw in May and June 1938. Resolutions for further activity were adopted at the congress.

Carrying out the reforms described above was a significant achievement, but it was not enough to fully reactivate the Promethean movement. To this end, it was necessary to obtain the decision of the supreme authorities, which should determine the place of Prometheism and the Promethean movement in the policy of the Polish state. Maj. Edmund Charaszkiewicz tried to obtain such an answer from his superiors since the death of Piłsudski, but he never received it¹¹). For this purpose, in the second half of 1938, the Branch 2 of the 2nd Department of the General Staff prepared an extensive report on the previous activities and the goals of the Promethean movement and on the importance of contacts with it. The report presented the relations between the Poles and émigrés 'in terms of political and military benefits for the Polish *raison d'état* in the East'. The

main idea of the study was to present the Promethean movement as a great opportunity, but also a necessity for Polish foreign policy. The authors of the paper claimed that in contrast to the first years of struggle for independence in the east, when the emerging nations did not fight together, they have created a common Promethean front in exile. Currently, they want assistance in the fight against the Soviets, and anyway, supported by Poland or not, they will act 'towards weakening the Russian potency, and thus in favour of Poland. However, in order to fulfil its role in the East, Poland must create in advance the conditions to largely guide the course of these phenomena.' In addition, they claimed that: '(...) a strong Polish state is needed by the future states of the Promethean front and vice versa, Poland's security from the East and our political expansion, and in consequence the cultural and economic one, in this direction is only possible if instead of one aggressive Russian state, we have a number of smaller nation states as neighbours'¹²⁾. This paper submitted to Śmigły-Rydz probably in March 1939, when it was too late to make such a decision. Edmund Charaszkiewicz received no answer to his 1938 report until the end of the war (Charaszkiewicz, 2000: 79).

The Promethean movement after 1939

After the outbreak of World War II, the politicians of the Promethean nations left Poland for Western Europe, but the contract officers in the Polish Army fought together with the Poles against both the Germans and the Soviets. Immediately after the Soviet army attacked Poland on 17 September 1939, Soviet security forces sought people associated with the Promethean movement. A number of contract officers were arrested at that time, but they were not shot together with the Poles at Katyn or other places of execution, but were deported to Moscow and not further trace of them was found. Cooperation between the Polish authorities and the Promethean movement continued. The outbreak of the Soviet-Finnish war in November 1939 and the allied considerations of an offensive action against the USSR gave the impression that the Promethean movement could also be used in these plans. However, the caution of the Allies and the peace signed between the USSR and Finland ultimately put an end to these hopes. The last chords of Polish-Promethean cooperation included the 'La Revue de Promethee' journal still published in Paris until April 1940, and the inclusion of Armenia's representatives in the Caucasian Confederation in May 1940¹³⁾. Later, it entered a vegetation stage. The outbreak of the Soviet-German war in June 1941, which transferred the USSR to the Allied camp, finally put an end to the hopes of using the Promethean movement in this war (Kornat, 2012: 79 – 82). Some of the military (and to a lesser degree political) elites previously associated with the Promethean movement sought support from the Third Reich, others maintained contact with the Polish authorities, took part in the fighting of the Polish underground resistance movement in Poland (such as Maj. Walerian Tewzadze).

After the war, most of the people connected with the Promethean movement, both the Poles and other nationalities, found themselves in political emigration in Western Europe, North America and other parts of the world. Only a few stayed in Poland. The authorities of the communist Poland after 1945 sought them throughout the country, sent

information about them to Soviet security authorities¹⁴⁾, and sometimes even handed the identified activists of the Promethean movement over to the Soviets (e.g. a Ukrainian contract officer Aleksander Kuźmin)¹⁵⁾. Those who remained in Poland were supervised by the security police, and even tried and sentenced to long-term imprisonment (such as Józef Zautaszwili) (Karpus & Wołos, 2007). There is also a case of a Georgian contract officer who was hiding for the rest of his life under an assumed name and was never found by the security police (Col. Walerian/Waliko Tewzadze) (Kresa, 2014). After the II World War, attempts were made to revive the Promethean movement in exile. Despite the fact that they were successful initially, they failed to bring such visible and lasting effects as those before 1939. In the mid-1950s the activity of the Promethean movement died out.

Concluding remarks

Establishment of close cooperation between Polish authorities and political activists from the nations conquered by Russia was dictated by both the long-standing tradition of joint struggle against Russia under the slogan 'for your freedom and ours' and the awareness of the constant danger that Russia was to Poland. The international conditions and the geopolitical position of Poland did not allow the use of the Promethean movement in the current Polish foreign policy. The Promethean movement was an alternative that could only be used in the event of an internal destabilisation of the Soviet state.

What was the balance of Polish-Promethean cooperation? It should be clearly emphasized that there was no clear position among Polish politicians regarding this issue. The Promethean movement required a large financial commitment of the Polish authorities and in practice it brought no immediate benefit. The involvement of Polish authorities in supporting and financing the Promethean movement was criticised by some Polish politicians and military. It was believed that the considerable resources absorbed by the Promethean activity could have been used in a much better way, for example in the development of Poland's military potential or the subversive capabilities of Polish intelligence¹⁶⁾. The Polish supporters of the Promethean movement presented a different point of view. They believed that the implementation of the Promethean plans is part of a long-term strategy to provide security to Poland, and to support the nations that had fought against the same enemy as Poland¹⁷⁾. It can certainly be said that the financial support for political emigration from the countries conquered by Russia had an impact on strengthening the national consciousness and national liberation trends in these nations. Magazines and publications issued in exile and smuggled into the USSR contributed to the strengthening of resistance and of national consciousness in the nations conquered by the USSR. Finally, for Poland, establishing close contacts with the elites of these nations was beneficial culturally and politically. It contributed to building a positive image of Poland, as well as creating a wide range of friendly politicians who could be used in various missions for Polish affairs (such as Roman Smalstocki's missions to Kaunas in 1927 and to Berlin and London in 1935) (Smaly-Stotsykyi, 1956; Senn, 1966: 186). The contacts were maintained after 1945.

It is also worth noting that after the end of the II World War, while former Promethean activists were being pursued by security services and tried in court in the countries behind the Iron Curtain, attempts were made to reconstruct the Promethean movement in Western Europe. An organisation with a similar name, rules and nationality composition functioned in the 1940s and 1950s. It quickly turned out that without financial and organisational support, it was practically unable to conduct any activity. Later, the model of cooperation of conquered nations was taken over by various organisations. The most well-known among them were the Congress for Cultural Freedom, the Anti-Bolshevik Block of Nations and the Assembly of Captive European Nations, which benefited from the support of the American authorities. They included representatives of almost all nations that had previously operated in the Promethean movement.

NOTES

1. The works dedicated to this issue published until 2013 have been described above all in: Pisuliński, J. (2012). "Prometeizm – problemy i pytania historiograficzne", in: *Ruch prometejski i walka o przebudowę Europy Wschodniej...*, ed. M. Kornat, pp. 91 – 104; Libera, P. (2013). *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, Warszawa, pp. 18 – 27. Many noteworthy studies which have since appeared, but discussing them would require a separate publication.
2. Hetmana Filipa Orlika plan sojuszu polsko-kozackiego z 1720 roku, ed. H. Głębocki, „Arcana”, 1999, no 2, pp. 52 – 60; E. Charaszkiewicz, *Przebudowa wschodu Europy. Materiały do polityki wschodniej Józefa Piłsudskiego w latach 1893-1921*, „Niepodległość” vol. V, 1955, pp. 125 – 130.
3. See: Мамулия, Г. (2012). Кавказская Конфедерация в официальных декларациях, тайной переписке и секретных документах движения „Прометей”. Сборник документов, Москва; Libera, P. (2017). Polish authorities and the attempt to create the Caucasian Confederation (1917 – 1940), in: „Studia z dziejów Rosji I Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, vol. 3, pp. 231 – 252.
4. See more: Pipes, R. (1964). *The Formation of the Soviet Union*, Cambridge (Mass.).
5. Z działalności Klubu „Prometeusz” w r. 1929/1930, in: *Prometeusz 1930* [Warszawa 1930], p. 8
6. See: Maj, P. I. (2007). *Działalność Instytutu Wschodniego w Warszawie (1926 – 1939)*. Warszawa.
7. See: Protokoły z konferencji u Tadeusza Schaetzela z 12 listopada w sprawie ogólnego sanu sprawy prometejskiej i wytyczne Tadeusza Schaetzela do pracy prometejskiej, 5 December 1934, in: *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego...*, ed. P. Libera, pp. 309 – 315.
8. Zjazd Językoznawczy narodów uciemnionych ZSSR. „Wschód-Orient”, Warszawa 1936. R. VII, no 2 – 3, p. 406.

9. Memoriał Ligii "Prometeusz" do Ligii Narodów, "Kurier Poranny", Warsaw, 28 January 1937.
10. Memoir of the Union of the Black Sea States to Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły, 21 May 1937, in: II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego..., ed. P. Libera, pp. 406 – 412.
11. Cpt. E. Charaszkiwicz to Maj. W. Dąbrowski, 5 December 1935, in: II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego..., ed. P. Libera, pp. 346 – 348.
12. Report to Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły on the significance of the Promethean movement in Poland's policies, 1 March 1939, in: II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego..., ed. P. Libera, pp. 474 – 494.
13. "La Revue de Promethee", t. IV, no 1 – 2 (8 – 9), 25 avril 1940.
14. Libera, P. (2010). Zwalczanie ruchu prometejskiego w Polsce Ludowej. Wstęp do badań, „Historia i Polityka” part 1: no 4 (11), pp. 205 – 242, part 2: 2011, no 5 (12), pp. 201 – 230. See also: Соцков, Л. (2003). Неизвестный сепаратизм. На службе СД и Абвера. Из секретных досье разведки, Москва.
15. Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw, file no BU 2911/1.
16. The Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum, London, B Collection, file 970: cpt W. Lipiński's report, 10 February 1940,
17. For.ex. Bączkowski, W. (1984). Prometeizm na tle epoki. Wybrane fragment z historii ruchu, "Niepodległość", vol. XVII, pp. 28 – 54.

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✉ **Dr. Pawel Libera**

Institute of National Remembrance
7, Wołoska St.
02-675 Warsaw, Poland

Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History
Polish Academy of Sciences
29/31, Rynek Starego Miasta
00-272 Warsaw, Poland
E-mail: pawel.libera@interia.pl