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## Status and Prospects for Research on Polish Opposition Parties and Groupings, and their Attitude Towards Policies of Polish Authorities, in Connection with the Situation Before and During the Polish September Campaign of 1939

*Stan i perspektywy badań nad stosunkiem polskich ugrupowań opozycyjnych do polityki polskich władz w związku z bezpośrednią genezą i przebiegiem kampanii 1939 r.*

### ABSTRACT

Under the influence of the changing international situation in the 1930s and the resulting threat to Poland from Germany, the legal opposition demanded the establishment

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of a government of national salvation. The main goal of organization was to develop a uniform internal and foreign policy and to increase efforts for the defense of the state at the expense of additional burdens on the society of the Second Polish Republic. However, the anti-sanction opposition was unable to develop a common political ground towards the sanitation of the Country – ‘Sanacja’, to force it to compromise on important matters of the state before the outbreak of World War II.

**Key words:** the Second Polish Republic, Sanacja, legal and illegal opposition in the interwar period

#### STRESZCZENIE

Z powodu rosnącego niemieckiego zagrożenia Polski wynikającego z dynamicznie zmieniającej się sytuacji międzynarodowej w latach trzydziestych XX w. legalna opozycja domagała się powołania rządu ocalenia narodowego. Jego zadaniem byłoby wypracowanie jednolitej polityki wewnętrznej i zagranicznej oraz zwiększenie wysiłku obronnego państwa przez wzrost obciążeń społeczeństwa II Rzeczypospolitej. Jednak antysanacyjna opozycja nie była w stanie wypracować wspólnej platformy politycznej wobec obozu sanacyjnego, aby zmusić go do wypracowania politycznego konsensusu przed wybuchem II wojny światowej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** II Rzeczpospolita, sanacja, legalna i nielegalna opozycja w okresie międzywojennym

#### INTRODUCTION

In the 1930s of the 20th century, so-called “Sanacja” authorities tried to build a political bloc unifying pro-Government political, social, and professional organizations, groupings, and parties. That also included political elements of ethnic minorities. In 1927, the Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government (Pol. Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem, BBWR) was created. It was replaced in its role, in 1937, by the Camp of National Unity (Pol. Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego, OZN). Despite of rigging the parliamentary elections, arrests and imprisoning leaders of the opposition, efforts to disintegrate and break political parties and social-professional organizations, confiscation of the opposition political press, the “Sanacja” leaders were not able to stop disintegration process within their own political camp. The second half of the 1930s is the time of a growing threat from Germany and Soviet Russia. The ruling establishment was at that time harshly and intensively criticized by the opposition for its foreign and security policies. Also, it did not allow any opposition grouping to join the Government that would allow to build national unity regarding defense and security. The only one thing that ‘Sanacja’ expected from its political opponents had been a support to defense initiatives, such as National Defense Fund (Pol. Fundusz

Obrony Narodowej), established by the Polish President Ignacy Moscicki. The main objective of such efforts was to support modernization of the Armed Forces, the defense investment programme, incl. Navy Defense Fund (Pol. Fundusz Obrony Morskiej), est. 1933, and Anti-Aircraft Defense Bonds (Pol. Pożyczka Obrony Przeciwlotniczej) of 1939 that was to increase air defense capabilities. The opposition conditioned its support with democratization of the political life in the Country and change of Beck's foreign policy. The ruling establishment did not agree for such terms and took no action with respect to opposition demands, up until September 1939. The main objective of this article is to present positions of main 'anti-Sanacja' groupings and parties about foreign and defense policies of the Polish Government.

#### MAIN POLISH OPPOSITION GROUPINGS AND PARTIES 1938–1939 POLISH SOCIALIST PARTY (POL. POLSKA PARTIA SOCJALISTYCZNA, PPS)

The 1937 was the year of the XXIV PPS Congress in Radom. The main objective of this party was to establish the Polish Socialist Republic in the form of a democratic parliamentary republic, with local governments as well as territorial and/or ethnic/cultural autonomy for ethnic minorities<sup>1</sup>.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government was to replace the 'Sanacja' dictatorship. During the Congress, the proposal to establish a unified front with Communists was not accepted and strongly rejected<sup>2</sup>. The PPS main political opponent was the OZN, which wanted a one-party, authoritarian government<sup>3</sup>. In the situation of the growing military threat from Germany, PPS wanted democratic, free and fair elections and democratization of the State<sup>4</sup>. In November 1937, PPS delegates submitted to President Moscicki the Memorandum on the National Security and postulated internal changes, incl. call for a new election. Again, no response from authorities<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> W. Suleja, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna 1892–1948. Zarys dziejów*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 210–211; M. Śliwa, *Polska myśl socjalistyczna (1918–1948)*, Wrocław 1988, pp. 180–181; See: J. Tomaszewicz, „Faszyzm lewicy” czy „ludowy patriotyzm”? *Tendencje antyliberalne i nacjonalistyczne w polskiej lewicowej myśli politycznej lat trzydziestych*, Warszawa 2020, p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> M. Śliwa, *op. cit.*, p. 181; B. Poboży, *Ruch socjalistyczny*, in: *Polskie partie i ruchy społeczno-polityczne w pierwszej połowie XX wieku*, ed. K. Przybyś, Warszawa 2010, p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> W. Suleja, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 213.

<sup>5</sup> M. Śliwa, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

After the Munich Conference in 1938, PPS considered the sovereignty and independence of Poland as being under grave danger. In March 1939, after annexation of Czechoslovakia by Germany, PPS wanted the establishment of the National Defense Government with all Polish political parties involved.

Such a proposal was submitted to President Moscicki during the second PPS visit to the Royal Castle. However, it there was no response and action on this specific matter<sup>6</sup>. However, PPS continued to support Government's initiatives aimed at building up the national military potential.

On the other side, PPS wanted the change of Minister Jozef Beck foreign policies — to tighten political and military relations with the West, to form a military alliance with "Small Entente", make an agreement with the Soviet Russia — all against the Axis countries, Germany, Italy, and Japan, and against the Hungarian revisionism<sup>7</sup>. It is however to mention that in 1938 PPS supported the annexation of the Cieszyn Zaolzie<sup>8</sup>. The Beck's statements of May 1939 on the change of Polish policies towards Germany were very well received by PPS. On the forum of the Socialist International PPS promoted the direct action against any aggression from the Axis countries. At the same time, it was opposing pacifist tendencies, international neutrality or calling next 'München Conference'<sup>9</sup>. Due to the German attitude, it called for the internal peace in Poland<sup>10</sup>. It even stated that it would be necessary 'to die for Gdansk and Poland in the case of an aggression'<sup>11</sup>.

In June 1939, the PPS General Council called workers to stand up and defend the Country<sup>12</sup>. It also considered that the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact opened the way to war for Germany and divided the Central Europe between German and Soviet spheres of influence. On 20 August 1939, the PPS General Council, together with Trade Unions, issued the proclamation to 'the working people of towns and villages', calling to defend the Nation against German aggression<sup>13</sup>.

Due to ideological reasons, during the interwar period, PPS demanded to stop cooperation with Germany. It wanted a Government of National

<sup>6</sup> W. Suleja, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

<sup>7</sup> Archiwum Akt Nowych [hereinafter: AAN], *Wolność Równość Niepodległość*, ref. no. 205/2, pp. 1–2.

<sup>8</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, „*Faszyzm lewicy*”, p. 219.

<sup>9</sup> W. Suleja, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

<sup>10</sup> M. Śliwa, *op. cit.*, p. 204; B. Poboży, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

<sup>11</sup> W. Suleja, *op. cit.*, p. 215; M. Śliwa, *op. cit.*, pp. 203–204; J. Tomaszewicz, „*Faszyzm lewicy*”, p. 219.

<sup>12</sup> M. Śliwa, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 206.

Defense and introducing political and economic reforms – all to consolidate the Country. PPS wanted an alliance of Poland with Czechoslovakia, building the Middle Europe Democratic Bloc of countries, supported by France and with a helpful attitude of the Soviet Union – to stop the German ‘Drang nach Osten’.

PPS blamed ‘Sanacja’ authorities for the defeat in September 1939<sup>14</sup>. That continued also after the fall of France and the German Blitz in Great Britain in 1940. It considered the neutral posture of Beck to Anschluss in 1938 and to aggressive German policy towards Lithuania and Czechoslovakia as incorrect. That prevented, in PPS view, to form an effective bloc of countries with Hungary, Romania, Balkan and Scandinavian states<sup>15</sup>.

It considered the Beck’s policy of balancing and ‘equal distances’ to Moscow and Berlin as helping Germany to continue with their aggressive actions in this part of Europe<sup>16</sup>. PPS even called ‘Sanacja’ – related organizations as the Fighting Poland Camp (Pol. Obóz Polski Walczącej) and Convention of Independence Organizations (Pol. Konwent Organizacji Niepodległościowych) a ‘resurrecting spectre’<sup>17</sup> and was refusing them any right to return to the political life in the independent Poland after the war.

#### ALLIANCE OF TRADE UNIONS – SYNDICALISTS (POL. ZWIĄZEK ZWIĄZKÓW ZAWODOWYCH – SYNDYKALIŚCI, ZZZ)

The Alliance of Trade Unions – Syndicalists, est. 1931, was designed to integrate labour organizations that supported the ‘Sanacja’ Government. The main aim of such initiative was to weaken the PPS<sup>18</sup>. It was one of the biggest federations in the interwar Poland. In 1937, there was the split in ZZZ due to different ideological attitudes towards a future development of the Alliance after the death of Marshal of Poland Jozef Piłsudski<sup>19</sup>. It was also a direct result of the Resolution taken by the

<sup>14</sup> L. Ciołkoszowa, *Publicystyka polska na emigracji 1940–1960*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 24–25; See: A. Pragier, *Wina i odpowiedzialność*, “Robotnik we Francji” 1940, no. 3. He blamed ‘Sanacja’ for the defeat as a result of its internal and foreign policies.

<sup>15</sup> “WRN” 1940, no. 14, p. 4; no. 17, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> “WRN” 1941, no. 47, pp. 1–2.

<sup>17</sup> “WRN” 1942, no. 19, pp. 2–4.

<sup>18</sup> S. Ajzner, *Związek Związków Zawodowych*, Warszawa 1979, p. 51; R. Chwedoruk, *Ruchy i myśl polityczna syndykalizmu w Polsce*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 190–193, 196–197.

<sup>19</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, „Faszyzm lewicy”, pp. 197–198; G. Rydlewski, *Rządy i rządzenie w Polsce 1918–2018*, Warszawa 2018, p. 112 and next.

III ZZZ Congress on support to Republican Spain. The ruling establishment perceived that as a form of communization of the ZZZ<sup>20</sup>.

ZZZ strongly opposed any changes in the electoral law and the new 1935 Constitution. The Alliance strongly criticized the Government for insufficient efforts to minimize the impact of economic crisis that put the working class in very difficult situation. Therefore, it wanted to co-operate with PPS, the Peasant Party and Democratic Clubs<sup>21</sup>. As for main trend, ZZZ navigated in the direction of syndicalism<sup>22</sup>. It refused to join OZN, which supported actions to build totalitarian and authoritarian state.

It was also a strong opponent of Beck's foreign policy<sup>23</sup>. After 'pro-Sanacja' groupings left the Alliance, it was subjected to many repressions<sup>24</sup>. Main problem for ZZZ had been attitudes of PPS and Communist Party of Poland. Those two parties wanted to draw souls and/or take over the rule within the Alliance<sup>25</sup>. The IV ZZZ Congress in 1938 was the event, during which ZZZ strongly opposed monopolization of the issue of national defense by "Sanacja".

It advocated an establishment of a Popular Front, together with PPS, the Peasant Party, the Democratic Party (Pol. Stronnictwo Demokratyczne, SD) and Labor Party (Pol. Stronnictwo Pracy, SP), calling new parliamentary elections and democratization of the form of the government<sup>26</sup>.

ZZZ refused to cooperate with OZN and nationalists, mainly with National-Radical Camp and National-Radical Movement. It was also a strong opponent of Beck's foreign policy that was characterized by lack of proper reaction to expansionist German actions in the Central Europe, with regard to Austria, Nazification of Gdansk, lack of support to the Republican Spain fighting with General Francisco Franco and his allies, Germany, and Italy<sup>27</sup>.

ZZZ proposed the Alliance with Czechoslovakia, in return for granting autonomy to the Polish population in Cieszyn Zaolzie. To an extent, returning this area to Poland was also considered as an option<sup>28</sup>. At the same time, it condemned Polish threats directed to Lithuania as a policy supporting Germany. However, the establishment of diplomatic

<sup>20</sup> S. Ajzner, *op. cit.*, p. 357; R. Chwedoruk, *op. cit.*, pp. 203–207.

<sup>21</sup> R. Chwedoruk, *op. cit.*, p. 215; M. Śliwa, *op. cit.*, pp. 198–201.

<sup>22</sup> S. Ajzner, *op. cit.*, pp. 395–396; R. Chwedoruk, *op. cit.*, pp. 185–190.

<sup>23</sup> S. Ajzner, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

<sup>24</sup> R. Chwedoruk, *op. cit.*, pp. 207–208.

<sup>25</sup> M. Śliwa, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

<sup>26</sup> S. Ajzner, *op. cit.*, pp. 396–397; J. Tomaszewicz, „Faszyzm lewicy”, pp. 202–205.

<sup>27</sup> S. Ajzner, *op. cit.*, p. 400; R. Chwedoruk, *op. cit.*, p. 219; J. Tomaszewicz, „Faszyzm lewicy”, pp. 206–207.

<sup>28</sup> S. Ajzner, *op. cit.*, pp. 401–402.

relations with this 'difficult neighbour' was well received as a good sign for the future.

ZZZ criticized Beck's policies and actions during the München Conference and his aggressive posture with regard to the Czechoslovakian Government. As for Lithuania and Poland, as ZZZ was not aware of plans of the Polish Government, there had been many concerns that Poland would take aggressive actions against this state. This was seen as being beneficial and useful for Berlin. As a result, in general terms, ZZZ condemned the 'synchronization' of Polish policy with German expansion as a serious threat to Poland's security. However, the annexation of the Cieszyn Zaolzie was warmly welcomed and supported<sup>29</sup>.

In April 1939, due to the grave political and military situation, the ZZZ Central Department demanded the democratization of the State and an increase in defense spendings<sup>30</sup>. Since March 1939, ZZZ supported the change in the 'Sanacja' policy towards Germany, partial mobilization since the spring 1939 and welcomed the Beck's speech in Sejm in May 1939. At the same time, it advocated the idea of an establishment of 'National Salvation Government' and changing policies towards ethnic minorities to get their support to national defense issues<sup>31</sup>.

It also supported talks of the Western States with the Soviet Union as they were to build a unified front against Berlin. In August 1939, ZZZ strongly condemned the Soviet Union for its Pact with Germany<sup>32</sup>. The last pre-war ZZZ resolution of June 1939 called the Nation to oppose the Italian-German imperialism, not to agree to any concessions to Germany to save the peace, to continue the ideological fight with Germany, to democratize Poland and annex some territories of Germany with predominant Polish ethnic population after winning the war<sup>33</sup>.

After the breakout of WWII, ZZZ considered that the September 1939 defeat was caused by the aggression of two world powers. It presented the opinion that such a threat was unstoppable and defense of the Polish border with Germany was not practically possible. It underlined that our Allies, France, and United Kingdom did not fulfil their obligations written in agreements. ZZZ also emphasized that Poland did not surrender to Germany like Czechoslovakia. It had not become a 'vassal little country' like Slovakia neither. It offered arguments that the internal source of the defeat was the 'capitalist exploitation and oppression

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 408–409; R. Chwedoruk, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

<sup>30</sup> S. Ajzner, *op. cit.*, pp. 415–417.

<sup>31</sup> R. Chwedoruk, *op. cit.*, pp. 219–220.

<sup>32</sup> S. Ajzner, *op. cit.*, pp. 422–423.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 423–424.



of the popular, working masses<sup>34</sup> and considered that military collapse of western countries in 1940 should contribute to re-assessment of Polish military capabilities and operations. Continuous direct fight and the decision not to collaborate with the invader in any form was to help Poland to restore its strong position in the post-war Europe<sup>35</sup>.

Syndicalists also assessed that the foreign policy was a function, an element of internal capabilities of the State. Problems with the state power emerged due to a passive attitude of the working masses, lack of agrarian reform, low level of industrialization, and ethnic problems. In their opinion, the foreign policy should have secured the development of the Nation, guarantee the security of the Country, unite, and attract allies and go along with ideological developments. Its effectiveness had been however a result of the profile of international political arena of the time<sup>36</sup>.

#### DEMOCRATIC PARTY (POL. STRONNICTWO DEMOKRATYCZNE, SD)

The Democratic Party was established in April 1939 by Lieutenant Colonel Mieczysław Michałowicz M.D, member of the Polish Senate in 1935–1938 and Colonel Mikołaj Kwaśniewski M.D., in the Senate of the same term and Voivode of Tarnopol, Cracow and Poznan voivodeships. After the dissolution of the Communist Party of Poland, some members tried to join SD, but the Party leadership tried to prevent and counter such efforts<sup>37</sup>. The origins of SD could be found in Democratic Clubs, organized since 1937 in the biggest cities of the II Polish Republic<sup>38</sup>. The 1937 saw adoption of the political programme of the democratic movement in Poland, which had clear ‘anti-Sanacja’ accents included.

As for the foreign policy, it wanted Polish support to Czechoslovakia’s and Austria’s independence in 1938<sup>39</sup>. SD also criticized the ruling establishment for not countering German expansion in Central Europe, as it perceived Berlin actions as a direct danger to Poland<sup>40</sup>. It didn’t condemn the Government for annexation of Cieszyn Zaolzie but

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<sup>34</sup> “Czyn” 1943, no. 7, pp. 1–2.

<sup>35</sup> “Myśl-PM” 1942, no. 10, p. 7; “Czyn” 1943, no. 7, pp. 3–5; no. 9, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> “Czyn” 1944, no. 12, pp. 1–3.

<sup>37</sup> A. Czubiński, *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne (1937–1989). Zarys dziejów*, Poznań 1998, pp. 82, 95–96.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 37 and next; See: L. Zamecki, *Ruch demokratyczny*, in: *Polskie partie*, pp. 295–297.

<sup>39</sup> A. Czubiński, *Stronnictwo*, p. 89.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 90–91.



expressed a strong criticism for Beck's ultimate political methods towards Czechoslovakia<sup>41</sup>.

As for general directions of the Polish foreign policy, SD wanted the tightening the Alliance with France, forming alliances with the United Kingdom and USA, and building political and economic solidarity with other Nations: Czechs, Slovaks, and Lithuanians. It was very sceptical about any proposal of an alliance with the Soviet Union against Germany<sup>42</sup>.

After seizing Czechoslovakia by Germany in March 1939, Democratic Clubs wanted to build the Government of the National Defense that would focus on security, defense, and democratization of the Country. In April 1939, at the I Congress, SD presented the Programme of the People's Republic (Democratic Poland) that included provisions on countering nationalism, totalitarianism, and authoritarianism of Polish 'Sanacja'.

The I Congress also supported modernization of the Armed Forces and increasing military potential of the Country<sup>43</sup>. One of the postulates indicated the necessity to strengthen the State, also by a change of policies towards ethnic minorities, mainly Lithuanian, Belarussian, and Ukrainian<sup>44</sup>. The main objective of the Party was to restore the democratic system. In 1938–1939, with the threat already visible on the horizon, KD/SD called President Moscicki to take every action to build the 'National Salvation Government' with all Polish political forces<sup>45</sup>.

## THE MORGES FRONT

Front Morges had been an agreement of centre political groupings, established at the initiative of General Władysław Sikorski and the former Prime Minister Ignacy Paderewski. Its main objective was removing 'Sanacja' from power, change of the political system in Poland, and foreign policy to pro-French and pro-Czechoslovakian. All 'anti-Sanacja' elements were invited to join, with the exclusion of Communists<sup>46</sup>. General Jozef Haller, General Marian Januszajtis, Colonel Izydor Modelski, Wojciech Korfanty, Karol Popiel and Włodzimierz Marszewski were among participants of the meeting. They wanted Ignacy Paderewski for

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 78.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 108–109; L. Zamecki, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

<sup>43</sup> A. Czubiński, *Stronnictwo*, p. 102.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 92–93.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 77.

<sup>46</sup> H. Przybylski, *Front Morges*, Toruń 2007, p. 43; A. Andrusiewicz, *Stronnictwo Pracy 1937–1950. Ze studiów nad dziejami najnowszymi chadecji w Polsce*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 33–37.

President and Wincenty Witos for Prime Minister. The Front was formed in Switzerland. In 1937, meeting participants took actions to establish the Labour Party (Pol. Stronnictwo Pracy) in Poland<sup>47</sup>. In practical terms, formula of unified opposition was a failure, as main parties (PPS, SL, SN, ONR) did not want to join the initiative due to ideological differences. Up to the breakout of WWII, Front Morges has not been able to integrate and consolidate opposition of different political colours against 'Sanacja'<sup>48</sup>.

Front Morges was opposing the Anschluss and criticized world powers for standing idle and limiting their actions just to verbal protests, all during the period of direct violation of international treaties by Germany. It also stigmatized 'Sanacja' Government for not protesting against annexation of Austria by Germany and exploiting the situation to launch aggressive actions against Lithuania. This had built the picture of Poland cooperating with Germany against the neighbouring country. The Front demanded from the Government to speed up increasing Polish military potential and build anti-German coalition in Central Europe, to defend the status of Gdansk and develop anti-fascist policies<sup>49</sup>. Front Morges wanted the defense of Czechoslovakian independence and territorial integrity, and did not want any conflict with Prague. It argued that weakening of Czechoslovakia directly influenced the Polish security. Front has also proposed to establish an alliance of Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Poland as a necessary condition to build Central Europe unity. However, it is to note that the annexation of the Cieszyn Zaolzie was warmly welcome by the Front<sup>50</sup>. The München Conference was perceived as a failure of existing western policies.

Front Morges was very disappointed with the position of France, which sacrificed its Ally to save the peace with Germany and Italy and also did not take any action to stop the German imperialism threatening Poland. Therefore, Front was also in opposition to any Government's plans for the partition of Czechoslovakia after München and any alliance with Hungary, as it was considered a strong German ally<sup>51</sup>.

The common Polish-Hungarian border in March 1939, declared by Beck as a great political success was considered a strategic disaster, as Poland was encircled by countries cooperating closely with Germany – Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> H. Przybylski, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 236.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 208–209.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 219–222.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 223–226.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 245–246.

This also did not prevent, in any logical way, according to Front representatives, the war with Germany and the common Polish-Hungarian border was not the event that could have compensated annexations of Klaipėda and Czechoslovakia by Germany

In the foreign policy, the Front Morges bet on tightening alliance with France and more close co-operation with United Kingdom and United States of America<sup>53</sup>. Also cooperation with the Soviet Union was taken into account, in case of war with Germany. The option of anti-German Alliance was not excluded but under the condition of no interference to internal affairs of the other partner.

Front was very critical with regard to the Minister Beck's concept of building, in the Central and Southern Europe, a bloc of neutral countries (so-called 'Third Europe')<sup>54</sup>. Only with France and UK all countries of the Intermarium were able to successfully resist pressure from Germany and Soviet Union<sup>55</sup>. After the München Conference, many concerns had been growing among the Front Morges supporters that Western powers would not be so willing to stop German imperialism in the Central and Eastern Europe. They hoped that Poland would be treated in a different way by the international community, much different than Abyssinia, Austria, and Czechoslovakia<sup>56</sup>. After denouncing Non-Aggression Pact by Germany and May 1939 Beck's speech, Morges supporters counted on decision of President Mościcki to form a National Consensus Government<sup>57</sup>.

#### THE LABOUR PARTY (POL. STRONNICTWO PRACY, SP)

This party was established in 1937 through the merger of the Polish Christian Democracy Party (Pol. Polskie Stronnictwo Chrześcijańskiej Demokracji), National Workers Party (Pol. Narodowa Partia Robotnicza) and the "Hallerczyk" Union (Pol. Związek Hallerczyków)<sup>58</sup>. The process was strongly influenced by the Front Morges. The Party wanted the democratization of the Polish political system and removing 'Sanacja' from power.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 188–189.

<sup>54</sup> W. Paruch, *Myśl polityczna obozu piłsudczykowskiego 1926–1939*, Lublin 2005.

<sup>55</sup> H. Przybylski, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 246.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 247, 256.

<sup>58</sup> A. Andrusiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 66; W. Bujak, *Historia Stronnictwa Pracy. 1937–1946–1950*, Warszawa 1988, p. 18; M. Handerek, *Unia i Stronnictwo Pracy w walce*, Warszawa 2015, pp. 5–10.

They saw Germany and the Soviet Union as the main threat to Poland<sup>59</sup>, France as the main ally and Czechoslovakia a political partner to build a Central European Federation to face above-mentioned potential aggressors<sup>60</sup>. SP wanted co-ordination of Polish policies with France, United Kingdom, and USA as well as talks with Italy to consolidate democratic countries against expansionist plans of Germany. It also looked favourably at talks and possible Alliance of the West with Soviet Russia against Germany<sup>61</sup>.

The Labor Party criticized the Beck's foreign policy, especially towards Germany and for its anti-French accents<sup>62</sup>. However, a part of this was blamed on both on Polish and French side. It emphasized that Poland was not able to build an independent anti-German and anti-Soviet initiative in Europe. Therefore, it strongly advised a Polish diplomatic offensive in France and United Kingdom<sup>63</sup>.

As for defense policy – the Party wanted a close alliance with France and seeking its support to construct a union of countries in the area of so-called 'Intermarium'<sup>64</sup>. The first step was to make an approach to countries of 'Small Entente' and main pillar was to be constructed by establishing Polish-Czechoslovakian federation.

In 1939, SP advised a military alliance with the Soviet Union to counter the German threat and possible invasion. It wanted to change Beck's policy to anti-German and taking retaliatory steps against the German ethnic minority in Poland in return for such actions in Germany against the Polish ethnic minority<sup>65</sup>.

The Party criticized 'Sanacja' for its inaction with regard to the annexation of Austria, Nazification of Gdansk and elimination of the League of Nations from this City – all to continue direct relations with Germany. It also called for a close military alliance with Czechoslovakia<sup>66</sup>, condemned Beck for his aggressive posture towards Prague, but also welcomed the return of Zaolzie to Poland<sup>67</sup>. As for its demands for democratization, SP wanted to co-operate with PPS and SL. During

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<sup>59</sup> A. Andrusiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 88; W. Jakubowski, *Chrześcijańska demokracja*, in: *Polskie partie*, pp. 214–216.

<sup>60</sup> A. Andrusiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 34–36.

<sup>62</sup> A. Andrusiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 120; W. Bujak, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–31; J. Tomaszewicz, „Faszyzm lewicy”, pp. 196–197.

<sup>63</sup> W. Bujak, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 35–36.

<sup>64</sup> A. Andrusiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 121; W. Bujak, *op. cit.*, p. 32; M. Handerek, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.

<sup>65</sup> A. Andrusiewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 122–123.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 123.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 126–127.

the whole period of 1938–1939, the Labour Party maintained its strong posture on defending independence of all countries in Central Europe threatened by Germany.

#### THE PEASANT PARTY (POL. STRONNICTWO LUDOWE, SL)

In 1931, the Peasant Party, Polish Peasant Party “Piast” and Polish Peasant Party “Wyzwolenie” joined forces and form the People’s Party (Pol. Stronnictwo Ludowe, SL)<sup>68</sup>. This new political element wanted democratic party system (People’s Poland)<sup>69</sup> and this put the Party in opposition with ‘Sanacja’ and right-wing conservatists (Pol. Endecja)<sup>70</sup>. SL wanted the cooperation with nationalists but at the price of agreement for an agrarian reform, and with the Front Morges against ‘Sanacja’ to restore parliamentary democracy system<sup>71</sup>.

In 1938–1939, SL was in favor of creating the National Defense Government, with all political forces and groupings included. It emphasized that solving of ethnic problems would have great economic and social impact, as well as significant influence on defense-related issues. The option taken into account was that countries such as Germany and Czechoslovakia will organize migration of their compatriots to the Motherland. As for Belarussians and Ukrainians – this was to be solved by law, new civil rights, new cultural-national laws, and agrarian reform. The Jewish minority, due to economic and social problems, was to emigrate from Poland<sup>72</sup>.

In the foreign policy – SL wanted tight cooperation with the West and countries of the Central Europe to stop the German imperialism.

<sup>68</sup> K. Przybysz, *Ruch ludowy*, in: *Polskie partie*, pp. 114–115; J. Gmitruk, *Ruch ludowy w Polsce. Zarys dziejów*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 16–18.

<sup>69</sup> J. Jachymek, *Ludowcy w pierwszym półwieczu zorganizowanej działalności politycznej*, in: *Dzieje i przyszłość polskiego ruchu ludowego*, vol. 1, *Od zaborów do okupacji (1895–1945)*, eds. A. Kołodziejczyk, W. Paruch, Warszawa 2002, pp. 34–35; See: J. Hampel, *Koncepcja Polski ludowej w programach i działalności ruchu ludowego w latach 1918–1947*, in: *Dzieje i przyszłość*, vol. 1, pp. 701–716.

<sup>70</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, „Faszyzm lewicy”, pp. 134–135; K. Przybysz, *Ruch*, pp. 116–117; See: J. Gmitruk, *Ruch ludowy obrońcą demokracji*, in: J. Gmitruk, J. Jachymek, A. Łuczak, *Ruch Ludowy, tradycja i polityka*, Warszawa 2010, p. 123.

<sup>71</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, „Faszyzm lewicy”, pp. 135–137.

<sup>72</sup> S. Mańko, *Mniejszości narodowe w świetle agrarystycznej wizji Polski opracowanej przez wiciarzy i ludowców (1928–1939)*, in: *Wieś i ruch ludowy w Polsce i Europie*, vol. 1, *W kręgu historii i tradycji*, eds. J. Gmitruk, A. Indraszczyk, Warszawa 2012, pp. 103–113.

It defended the independence of Czechoslovakia but approved the annexation of Cieszyn Zaolzie<sup>73</sup>.

Despite the critical assessment of 'Sanacja' foreign policy, the Party actively supported Government's actions to build up the defense capabilities and co-operated with the Polish Armed Forces within this area. It supported the National Defense Fund (Pol. Fundusz Obrony Narodowej) and Anti-Aircraft Defense Bonds (Pol. Pożyczka Obrony Przeciwlotniczej)<sup>74</sup>.

With a grave threat on the horizon, Wincenty Witos called for the defense of the Country. This happened despite the harsh critics of 'Sanacja' by the SL's leadership<sup>75</sup>. After the breakout of WWII, domestic and émigré Party authorities claimed that it was the policy of the previous ruling establishment that allowed Germany to encircle Poland from the direction of Czechoslovakia. The geopolitical situation of both countries required, according to SL, postwar unity of both countries and building the unified front towards Germany and liquidation of German 'wedges' in Pomerania and Silesia. The Party proposed that Czechoslovakia should take the part of Silesia on the left bank of the Odra River up to the mouth of Nysa Luzycka, and Poland — on the right bank. The border in Zaolzie should be demarcated after bilateral negotiations that would take into account the ethnic situation in the region and economic interests of both sides. SL proposed a compromise that would leave part of the Cieszyn Zaolzie annexed by Poland in 1938 with Poland in return for areas in the Lower Silesia<sup>76</sup>.

SL wanted to be a main postwar political element, a part of the democratic system and launching social reforms<sup>77</sup>. It emphasized that there was no way that 'Sanacja' could return to power<sup>78</sup>. Its main personalities had

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<sup>73</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, „Faszyzm lewicy”, pp. 136, 138.

<sup>74</sup> M. Gieleciński, *Spółeczność wiejska wobec akcji świadczeń na obronność państwa przed wybuchem II wojny światowej*, in: *Dzieje i przyszłość polskiego ruchu ludowego*, pp. 661–670; See: J. Izdebski, *Chłopi a Wojsko Polskie w II Rzeczypospolitej*, in: *Dzieje i przyszłość*, pp. 99–108.

<sup>75</sup> K. Przybysz, *Ruch*, pp. 117–119.

<sup>76</sup> „Polska Ludowa” 1943, no. 1, pp. 11–12.

<sup>77</sup> „Polska Ludowa” 1944, no. 1, pp. 12–16; no. 2, pp. 6–13; no. 3, pp. 6–7; See: A. Bien, *Bóg wyżej – dom niżej (1939–1949)*, Warszawa 1991, pp. 151–153; M. Dymarski, *Stronnictwo Ludowe w strukturach władz polskich na emigracji 1939–1944*, in: *Polska i Polacy poza granicami kraju w polskiej polityce i myśli politycznej*, eds. M. Alberska, R. Juchnowski, Wrocław 2006, p. 206; P. Matusak, *Ludowcy w strukturach polskiego państwa podziemnego 1939–1945*, in: *Dzieje i przyszłość*, pp. 127–135; K. Przybysz, *W konspiracji. Polski ruch ludowy 1939–1945*, Warszawa 2010, pp. 219–223; A. Indraszczyk, *Adam Bień (1899–1998): działalność społeczna i polityczna*, Warszawa 2005.

<sup>78</sup> Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich [hereinafter: ZNO], *Papiery Kazimierza Sosnkowskiego*, ref. no. 16543/II, vol. 2, p. 287; „Polska Ludowa” 1943, no. 2, pp. 8–11; no. 6, p. 10.



to be punished for introduction and exercising the authoritarian regime (1926–1939) and for the September 1939 defeat. It even named OPW and KON as successors of the ‘Sanacja’ dictatorship and guilty of the 1939 lost campaign<sup>79</sup>. SL wanted to politically isolate extremist and nationalist elements of the right-wing groupings as they modelled themselves on the Italian fascism and wanted to build a Polish empire in the Central Europe. According to the Peasant Party, imperial concepts of nationalists and sympathizers of Piłsudski-related groupings discouraged neighbours from any formal relations with Poland<sup>80</sup>.

The “Orka” grouping that emerged from the Association of the People’s Intelligentsia and Friends of the Countryside<sup>81</sup> (the group of Wincenty Bryja, “Górski”, “Halski”) considered Piłsudski followers as political enemies<sup>82</sup>. It blamed the establishment for the September 1939 defeat and even for destruction and distortion of Piłsudski ideas<sup>83</sup>. They also wanted to bring ‘Sanacja’ politicians before the Polish State Tribunal for establishing the dictatorship and fleeing the Country in September 1939<sup>84</sup>. Post-war Poland was planned to have a democratic political system<sup>85</sup>.

SL assessed that the policy of world powers did not change the position of Poland on the international policy arena. Hitler and Germany did not care about Polish declarations about anti-Communism and Poland not considering any proposal on the cooperation with the Soviet Union against Germany. Stalin ignored Polish declarations about refusing proposals of an alliance with Germany against the Soviet Russia and effort to build anti-German union of Central Europe countries.

It concluded that both Hitler and Stalin wanted Poland as country that was politically dependent on Berlin or Moscow. Western powers, according to the Peasant Party, considered that the Central Europe is the German sphere of influence, as confirmed by the München Conference (1938).

After German invasion on Soviet Union in 1941, these countries agreed for the Soviet space in the Central Europe, refuting, both during visits and conferences in Moscow and Teheran (1943), the Polish federation ideas.

<sup>79</sup> “Żywią i Bronią” 1942, no. 14, p. 11; “Polska Ludowa” 1943, no. 4, pp. 4–5; no. 7, p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> “Polska Ludowa” 1943, no. 6, pp. 10–13; 1944, no. 2, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> K. Przybysz, *W konspiracji*, p. 77; A.K. Kunert, *Ilustrowany przewodnik po Polsce podziemnej 1939–1945*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 462, 613. The Peasant Party considered “Orka” as its City detachment. W. Bryja was, since 1942, the Head of Finance-Budgetary Section of the Government Delegation for Poland. Then, since August 1944, he was a member and the Treasurer of the Central Management of the People’s Movement (cryptonym: Roch).

<sup>82</sup> “Prawda Zwycięży” 1941, no. 1, p. 3; “Orka” 1942, no. 4, p. 12.

<sup>83</sup> “Prawda Zwycięży” 1941, no. 1, p. 1; no. 4, pp. 1–6.

<sup>84</sup> “Orka” 1942, no. 1, pp. 4–5.

<sup>85</sup> “Prawda Zwycięży” 1941, no. 5, pp. 1–5.



THE UNION OF RURAL YOUTH  
(POL. ZWIĄZEK MŁODZIEŻY WIEJSKIEJ RP "WICI")

This organization was established in 1928 and was cooperating closely with SL, est. 1931<sup>86</sup>. It was launching and exercising 'anti-Sanacja' activities together with the Peasant Party, to fight for the social justice, democracy, civil rights, and interests of the rural population<sup>87</sup>.

The second youth organization operating in the rural areas, "Siew" Young Country Central Union (Pol. Związek Młodej Wsi "Siew"), was cooperating with the ruling establishment, mainly with a left-wing 'Sanacja' grouping — Organization for Reform of the Republic (Pol. Związek Narprawy Rzeczypospolitej)<sup>88</sup>.

THE NATIONAL PARTY  
(POL. STRONNICTWO NARODOWE, SN)

The National Party established in 1928 claimed that Poland should take a place equal to other European powers<sup>89</sup>. It wanted to build the security of Poland on anti-German alliances with France, United Kingdom and Czechoslovakia and cooperation with the Soviet Union<sup>90</sup>. It presented views that the historic mission of Poland was to build a bloc of countries between German and Soviet Russia, as a nation state led by Poland<sup>91</sup>. According to SN, the main political trend in Europe after the Great War had been taking powers by national movements<sup>92</sup>. During the 1930s,

<sup>86</sup> A. Kołodziejczyk, *Ruch ludowy a Kościół rzymskokatolicki w latach II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 2002, p. 387.

<sup>87</sup> K. Przybysz, *Ruch*, pp. 119–121; J. Gmitruk, *Ruch ludowy w Polsce*, pp. 19–22.

<sup>88</sup> K. Przybysz, *Ruch*, p. 121; J. Gmitruk, *Ruch ludowy w Polsce*, pp. 22–23.

<sup>89</sup> A. Dawidowicz, *Myśl polityczna Stronnictwa Narodowego 1928–1939. Wspólnota ideału czy alternacja koncepcji*, Lublin 2017, pp. 331–332.

<sup>90</sup> M. Dajnowicz, *Międzynarodowe bezpieczeństwo Polski w świetle wypowiedzi Zygmunta Berezowskiego i Bohdana Winiarskiego 1918–1939*, in: *Bezpieczeństwo Europy. Bezpieczeństwo Polski*, vol. 1, eds. E. Maj et al., Lublin 2016, p. 536.

<sup>91</sup> *Na drodze do wielkości*, 1943, in: *Broszury konspiracyjne Stronnictwa Narodowego z lat 1939–1946*, ed. M. Orłowski, Poznań 2010, pp. 19–20; See: J. Waskan, *op. cit.*, p. 109; E. Maj, *Bezpieczeństwo ideologiczne w dyskursie politycznym Narodowej Demokracji*, in: *Bezpieczeństwo*, vol. 1, pp. 555–556.

<sup>92</sup> K. Kawalec, *Narodowa Demokracja wobec faszyzmu 1922–1939: ze studiów nad dziejami myśli politycznej obozu narodowego*, Warszawa 1989, p. 154.

SN became fascinated by actions and successes of fascist regimes<sup>93</sup> and did not want parliamentary democracy to be established and strengthened in Poland<sup>94</sup>.

The National Party could have been characterized as a good example of factionalization and this resulted in many different SN opinions on events in Europe in 1938–1939 as well as on position and actions of the Polish Government<sup>95</sup>. During the crisis in relations with Lithuania in 1938, SN wanted this country to become a Polish political-military protectorate and was not excluding annexation of this state<sup>96</sup>. In 1938, it supported views that Czechoslovakia should stand against Germany, break up with masonic-democratic system and become nation and Slavic state within the bloc of Central European countries led by Poland.

SN approved the annexation of the Cieszyn Zaolzie<sup>97</sup>, wanted an alliance with France and Small Entente. It did not want to join Germany in its fight against the Soviet Communism<sup>98</sup>. It had also considered itself an organization that continues the policy of Bolesław Chrobry, an ancient Polish King from the Piast Dynasty. Therefore, it wanted to include Gdansk, Opole Silesia, Eastern Prussia to Poland. SN also demanded the border on Sudety Mountains and lower course of the Odra River<sup>99</sup>.

Despite some ideological sympathies to changes in Germany, nobody in the SN wanted any form of an alliance with Nazis. They were perceived as an element that would bring internal chaos to Germany, a party that wanted to fight with democratic states. They also hoped that such elements would reduce German pressure on Poland<sup>100</sup>. The National Party

<sup>93</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, *W kierunku nacjonalizmu. Tendencje autorytarne, totalistyczne i profaszyzowskie w polskiej myśli politycznej (1933–1939): narodowcy – narodowi radykałowie – narodowi socjaliści*, Katowice 2019, pp. 52–57, 85–98.

<sup>94</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, *W kierunku*, pp. 53–57.

<sup>95</sup> R. Dobrowolski, *Sytuacja wewnętrzna Stronnictwa Narodowego w przededniu II wojny światowej*, in: *Narodowa Demokracja XIX–XXI wiek, dzieje ruchu politycznego*, vol. 2. *Działalność*, eds. T. Sikorski, A. Wątor, 2nd edition, Toruń 2012, pp. 229–245; K. Jajecznik, *Ruch nacjonalistyczny*, in: *Polskie partie*, pp. 43–44.

<sup>96</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, *W kierunku*, p. 50.

<sup>97</sup> M. Nieć, *Niemcy w publicystyce Narodowej Demokracji w okresie międzywojennym 1918–1939*, Wrocław 1998, pp. 202–204; A. Dawidowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 337, 347; J. Tomaszewicz, *W kierunku*, pp. 31–32, 49.

<sup>98</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, *W kierunku*, p. 48; A. Dawidowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 345–346; See: G. Zaskiewicz, *Państwo radzieckie w myśli politycznej obozu narodowego w latach 1918–1939*, in: *Narodowa Demokracja XIX–XXI wiek, dzieje ruchu politycznego*, vol. 1, *Koncepcje – ludzie*, eds. T. Sikorski, A. Wątor, 2nd edition, Toruń 2012, pp. 171–187.

<sup>99</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, *W kierunku*, pp. 48–49; A. Dawidowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

<sup>100</sup> M. Nieć, *op. cit.*, pp. 160–161.

presented an opinion that Nazis would not cooperate with the Soviet Union<sup>101</sup>. Therefore, young members of the Party did not welcome the 1934 Declaration of Non-violence with Germany as they thought it would increase German influences in Poland and weaken Polish efforts directed at the German ethnic minority<sup>102</sup>. After repeated violations of the Versailles Treaty by Germany, SN called for tightening relations with the West<sup>103</sup>. However, pacifist attitudes of western nations and politicians created a cause for concern from the point of view of SN. It was also afraid of the German revisionism with regard to Central Europe under the mantra of reunification of the German nation in one country. It considered the union of Poland and Lithuania as an option and a good response to such a threat<sup>104</sup>.

German expansionist policies towards the South and West were considered a positive trend for Poland. SN was not totally against such elements but only in case, when Eastern Prussia, Gdansk, Polish parts of Pomerania and Greater Poland would go back to the Polish State<sup>105</sup>.

After Anschluss, SN considered that the main objective of the Polish policy should be preventing a war with Germany and its victory in the East. It proposed the unity of Central European nation-states and anti-German alliance with Roman countries<sup>106</sup>.

After the München Conference, SN wanted a Polish-Hungarian alliance against Germany, even that before it did want any serious relations with revisionist states in Europe<sup>107</sup>. It supported the idea of Slovakia independence and annexation of Subcarpathian Rus by Hungary to avoid having Ukrainian Piedmont in this part of the Continent<sup>108</sup>.

The denouncing of Non-Aggression Pact by Germany in April 1939 was perceived as a bankruptcy of the 'Sanacja' foreign policy. On the other side, SN considered the Polish-British political declaration as provoking war with Germany and this was to be avoided<sup>109</sup>. The Beck's speech of May 1939 was assessed as a failure of his pro-German policy and indication of war that is coming to Poland<sup>110</sup>.

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 174.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 170–171.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 182.

<sup>104</sup> M. Nieć, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–197; A. Dawidowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 347–348.

<sup>105</sup> M. Nieć, *op. cit.*, pp. 198–199.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 202–204; A. Dawidowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

<sup>107</sup> M. Nieć, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 210–211.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 214–215.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 215.

In June 1939, the National Party stated that Poland would demand Oder, Sudety, Silesia, Eastern Prussia and Gdansk and all allies of Germany would be treated as Polish enemies<sup>111</sup>. The alliance of Poland, France and United Kingdom was considered a guarantee to bring a defeat to Germany. However, the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact was perceived as an indicator that Berlin would go to war with Poland<sup>112</sup>. According to SN, the 1939 defeat resulted from insufficient preparation of Poland to the modern war, incompetent, inept command and control, lack of effective efforts to assimilate ethnic minorities and ineffective social and class structure of the Country<sup>113</sup>. In January 1943, the Congress of Delegates of SN secession groups, considered as the National SN Congress, stated that pro-German 'Sanacja' policy ended with a total failure in 1939. It announced isolation of the former political establishment, also with regard to parties referring and supporting the 1935 Constitution and excluding such people and elements from the post-war political life<sup>114</sup>.

#### NATIONAL RADICAL CAMP

(POL. OBÓZ NARODOWO-RADYKALNY ABC, OP-ONR, ONR "SZTAFETA")

In 1933, after dissolution of the Camp of Great Poland (Pol. Obóz Wielkiej Polski) by Polish authorities, nationalists established new, radical organization for young people, independent from the National Party – the National Radical Camp with secret Polish Organization (Pol. Organizacja Polska, OP)<sup>115</sup>. ONR assimilated parts of the SN Youth Section (Pol. Sekcja Młodych SN) and the Association of Young Nationalists (Pol. Związek Młodych Narodowców) that cooperated with OZN supporting 'Sanacja'.

<sup>111</sup> M. Nieć, *op. cit.*, p. 216; A. Dawidowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 348–349; See: R. Dobrowolski, *Związek Akademicki "Młodzież Wszechpolska"*, in: *Narodowa*, vol. 2, pp. 141–157.

<sup>112</sup> M. Nieć, *op. cit.*, pp. 216–217.

<sup>113</sup> ZNO, Papiery Klaudiusza Hrabyka, ref. no. 16320/II; K. Hrabyk, *Problem rosyjski w polityce endecji*, Warszawa 1971 pp. 127–129. Tadeusz Rybinski (National Club, Pol. Klub Narodowy) stated on 12 May 1942, during the session of the National Council (Pol. Rada Narodowa) in London that the 'Equal distance' policy to Berlin and Moscow of the prewar ruling establishment was a failure. In addition, Beck failed to build a political bloc with Romania and Hungary.

<sup>114</sup> AAN, Delegatura Rządu na Kraj, Biuro Prezydialne, ref. no. 202/I/54, pp. 312–315.

<sup>115</sup> K. Kawecki, *Działalność i myśl społeczno-polityczna Obozu Narodowo-Radykalnego ABC 1934–1939*, Warszawa 2009, p. 15; W.J. Muszyński, *Duch młodych. Organizacja Polska i Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny ABC 1934–1944. Od studenckiej rewolty do konspiracji niepodległościowej*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 61–67; K. Jajecznik, *op. cit.*, pp. 36–37.

ONR did not want to be associated with German and Italian fascists as they had close relations with Big Capital and did not accept the Catholic morality<sup>116</sup>. ONR considered Germany a Polish enemy and Nazism a trend that reinforced already existing tendencies. It was suspicious of an agreement with Berlin (1934) and was convinced that Germany wanted war with Poland<sup>117</sup>.

In July 1934, authorities dissolved the ONR due to its anti-Semitic excesses and fighting with other political groupings, also with small arms<sup>118</sup>. In addition, a number of ONR members was arrested and transferred to Bereza Kartuska prison. ONR went underground. Some members went to 'pro-Sanacja' Association of Young Nationalists<sup>119</sup>.

Another part wanted to join the SN Youth Section, but such requests were rejected by the SN leadership. In 1935, a new movement was established out of the ONR, the National Radical Movement of Bolesław Piasecki (Pol. Ruch Narodowo-Radykalny Bolesława Piaseckiego)<sup>120</sup>.

The 1936 was the year of launching talks with authorities. ONR ABC pushed for a Government of National Accord with 'Sanacja', SL, SN and ONR. After fiasco of this initiative, ONR ABC proposed to establish the "Polish Confederation" (Pol. Konfederacja Polska) with SN, ONR Falanga (RNR) and ONR ABC<sup>121</sup>.

Next talks of the ruling establishment with the ONR ABC took place in autumn 1937. They were followed by the joint meeting in the office of Marshal of Poland Edward Śmigły-Rydz in 1938. All initiatives failed. ONR also demanded closure of Bereza Kartuska and removal of President Moscicki from the office<sup>122</sup>.

ONR considers both Germany and Soviet Union as the enemies of the Polish State. In opinion of its representatives, Soviet Russia should be isolated from European problems, but Europe should not interfere with Soviet internal issues. Any fragmentation and/or partition of Russia would have been in interest of Germany. The worst-case scenario would be German-Soviet Alliance. To isolate Germany from Soviet Union, Poland should have organized a new Central Europe with other countries

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<sup>116</sup> K. Kawecki, *Działalność*, p. 29; W.J. Muszyński, *op. cit.*, pp. 203–205.

<sup>117</sup> K. Kawecki, *Działalność*, p. 29.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 33–34; W.J. Muszyński, *op. cit.*, pp. 73, 81–87; See: K. Jajecznik, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–44.

<sup>119</sup> T. Kenar, *Droga do secesji. Geneza Związku Młodych Narodowców*, in: *Narodowa*, vol. 2, pp. 215–228; K. Jajecznik, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>120</sup> K. Kawecki, *Działalność*, pp. 34–36.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 38–41.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 64.

of the region. In addition, ONR also proposed to establish an agreement of all German neighbours and postulated to organize Polish colonies in the Central Africa, Angola, or Congo.

ONR deplored the German threat to Czechoslovakia but did not see any form of anti-German alliance with this country. This was due to ideology of Czechoslovakian establishment headed by Edvard Beneš. It had a lot of sympathy towards Slovakia and offered a warm welcome to Zaolzie annexation and common Polish–Hungarian border<sup>123</sup>. ONR did not want any Alliance with the Soviet Union as it aimed to light the fire of Communist revolution throughout the whole Europe<sup>124</sup>. It hoped that Italian policies, being independent from Germany, would save the peace. Poland was to take neutral position towards rivalling democratic and totalitarian countries.

ONR had a reserved attitude to security guarantees offered to Poland by Western powers and wanted to establish closer relations with other nationalist movement in Europe<sup>125</sup>. In case of war, ONR saw Poland within the group of democratic countries and considered each German ally as an enemy. After the war, ONR would have demanded to seize the German seaside up to the estuary of the Odra River<sup>126</sup>. It supported calls to finance the Armed Forces, as it happened in the case of the National Committee of the Anti-Aircraft Defense Bonds established during the meeting at the Royal Castle in Warsaw under the patronage of President Mościcki<sup>127</sup>.

ONR claimed that Slavic minorities had all the rights to live in Poland but for the security reasons they should assimilate to the Polish society. As for German and Jews, these two ethnicities should emigrate<sup>128</sup>. It also supported the Government during the Lithuanian Crisis in 1938 and Cieszyn Zaolzie annexation<sup>129</sup>. In March 1939, ONR leadership issued the directive to its members to support efforts saving the social peace within Poland due the threat of German aggression. In May 1939, it stated that it would cooperate with the Government to defend the Country<sup>130</sup>. ONR and RNR also continued their activities to re-legalize organizations, but authorities had not taken any action to respond to such a request<sup>131</sup>.

<sup>123</sup> K. Kawecki, *Działalność*, p. 90; idem, *W imię Wielkiej Polski. ONR w świetle pism programowych*, 2nd edition, Warszawa 2013, pp. 216–220.

<sup>124</sup> K. Kawecki, *Działalność*, p. 91; idem, *W imię*, p. 220.

<sup>125</sup> K. Kawecki, *W imię*, pp. 211–214; W.J. Muszyński, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>126</sup> K. Kawecki, *Działalność*, pp. 92–93.

<sup>127</sup> K. Kawecki, *Działalność*, pp. 66, 92–93; W.J. Muszyński, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>128</sup> K. Kawecki, *Działalność*, pp. 82–89; W.J. Muszyński, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–199.

<sup>129</sup> W.J. Muszyński, *op. cit.*, pp. 183–184.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 190.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 189.



NATIONAL RADICAL MOVEMENT  
(POL. RUCH NARODOWO-RADYKALNY, RNR, ONR "FALANGA")

In April 1935, one of the splinter groups, the Bolesław Piasecki faction, left ONR. This specific group was fascinated and impressed by achievements of totalitarian movements and headed in the direction of Polish imperialism. It also was rejecting the liberal-democratic model of the state<sup>132</sup>. In 1937, ONR established close relations with the OZN Union of Young Poland, (Pol. Związek Młodej Polski, ZMP). That cooperation continued till April 1938, when the Piasecki faction left OZN after the resignation of Colonel Adam Koc<sup>133</sup>. It is to note that during the 1939, before the war, RNR has undergone a total collapse and internal decomposition<sup>134</sup>.

POLISH COMMUNISTS

Since 1920, it was possible to identify two main trends within the leadership of the Communist Workers Party of Poland (Komunistyczna Partia Robotnicza Polski, KPRP; such a name for the party was used in 1918–1925, then – the Communist Party of Poland, KPP), one – proletarian nation state, second – international Soviet republic<sup>135</sup>. Komintern supported action within the second direction as it was to lead to international integration of proletariat.

After the Polish-Soviet war, KPRP supported the proposal to establish the Polish Soviet Republic as a part of world Federation of Socialist Soviet Republics<sup>136</sup>. However, till the dissolution of the Party, in August 1938, KPP leadership was opposing any direct action to build a Communist Polish State. Resolutions of II KPRP Congress (1923) and IV KPP Conference, and decisions of its National Secretariat from 1936 to establish

<sup>132</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 96–98; See: A. Dudek, G. Pytel, *Bolesław Piasecki. Próba biografii politycznej*, London 1990.

<sup>133</sup> K. Kawecki, *Działalność*, pp. 44–45; W.J. Muszyński, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–105; K. Jajecznik, *op. cit.*, pp. 44–45.

<sup>134</sup> K. Kawecki, *Działalność*, pp. 45–46.

<sup>135</sup> M.K. Dziewanowski, *The Communist Party of Poland. An outline of history*, Cambridge 1959, pp. 80–87; T. Żenczykowski, *Dwa komitety 1920, 1944. Polska w planach Lenina i Stalina*, Paris 1983, p. 40; H. Cimek, *Komuniści, Polska, Stalin 1918–1939*, Białystok 1990, pp. 21–22; B. Gadomski, *Biografia agenta: Józef-Josek Muetzenmacher (1903–1947)*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 30–37; J. Wilamowski, A. Zasieczny, *Afera Joska Mitzenmachera. Tajemnice policji politycznej*, Warszawa 2005, pp. 67–70, 127.

<sup>136</sup> M.K. Dziewanowski, *op. cit.*, p. 100; K. Trembicka, *Między utopią a rzeczywistością. Myśl polityczna Komunistycznej Partii Polski (1918–1938)*, Lublin 2007, pp. 250–251.



a Communist State in the Country has been approved but only after the pressure from Komintern<sup>137</sup>. The main reason for such a state of affairs was the ethnic distribution within the Party files and ranks (Poles, Jews, Ukrainians, Belarussian, and Germans) and ideas that the nation state and patriotism were elements that had their origins in so-called bourgeois nationalism. This made building the class consciousness and international Communist structures quite difficult.

1935 was the year of VII Communist International and its Resolution to build unified anti-fascist front in Europe. As a result, KPP change its position towards idea of self-determination of Gdansk, Upper Silesia, and Pomerania. It was aware of the German threat and possible war. Since then, KPP supported the issue of Polish independence but without 'Sanacja' ruling establishment that, in its view, was cooperating with Germany<sup>138</sup>. The Party wanted to influence SL and PPS leaderships to organize a left-wing Popular Front in Poland and eventually introduce a Communist dictatorship<sup>139</sup>. Therefore, since 1936, Communists were joining and supporting SL and PPS political protests and social industrial actions against 'Sanacja'<sup>140</sup>.

In March 1938, the Central Committee of KPP proposed to PPS establishing a joint government that would get the trust and support of the masses. It also protested against revisionist plans of Germany with regard to Poland<sup>141</sup>. In March 1938, KPP attacked the Polish Government for its inaction towards annexation of Austria by Germany. As for the conflict with Lithuania, the ultimatic position of Poland towards Lithuania was called by KPP 'the disgrace to the Polish fascist ruling establishment'.

KPP condemned 'Sanacja' for alleged alliance with Germany to start partition of Czechoslovakia. It also considered that Poland wanted a war on Zaolzie and partition of Slovakia together with Hungary<sup>142</sup>. Earlier, Polish and Czechoslovakian Communists promoted the right of the Polish minority in Zaolzie to self-determination. According to Communists, the Polish Soviet Republic was to be built with citizens only of the Polish ethnicity<sup>143</sup>.

<sup>137</sup> K. Trembicka, *op. cit.*, pp. 254–255.

<sup>138</sup> A. Czubiński, *Komunistyczna Partia Polski (1918–1938). Zarys historii*, Warszawa 1985, pp. 243–245; See: J. Tomaszewicz, „Faszyzm lewicy”, pp. 232–233.

<sup>139</sup> K. Trembicka, *op. cit.*, pp. 192–193; J. Tomaszewicz, „Faszyzm lewicy”, pp. 233–234.

<sup>140</sup> A. Czubiński, *Komunistyczna*, p. 254.

<sup>141</sup> H. Cimek, *KPP wobec Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej (1918–1938)*, Warszawa 1988, p. 131.

<sup>142</sup> H. Cimek, *KPP*, pp. 131–132.

<sup>143</sup> K. Trembicka, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

Just before dissolution of the Party, in the June 1938 manifesto, KPP again condemned Polish authorities, mainly for the Beck's foreign policy. It linked Polish security with the security of Czechoslovakia, where the Czechoslovakian Communist Party operated as a legal entity and was one of parties that strongly supported Republican Spain, along with the Soviet Government. For Communists, potential alliance of Poland with Germany was a direct threat to the Soviet Russia. That was one of the reasons for a KPP claim that any closer relations of Germany with Poland would directly lead to the loss of sovereignty by our Country and a loss of western lands to Berlin<sup>144</sup>.

According to H. Cimek, KPP had real problems to reconcile the Polish *raison d'état* with Soviet Union interests<sup>145</sup>. Communists had a dilemma – to defend the Second Polish Republic against German invasion or allow Poland to lose the war and fall. They did not want to cooperate with the Country allegedly posing a threat to Soviet Union.

After the dissolution of the KPP, Communists wanted to infiltrate PPS and SL. They also enlisted voluntarily for the military service, to launch anti-German propaganda activities and 'fight with fascist Sanacja'<sup>146</sup>. The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact had become a big problem for Communists as it meant, in practical terms, the German-Soviet alliance, joint partition of the Central Europe and support to German aggressive politics in Europe<sup>147</sup>.

They could have condemned Beck for an alleged alliance with Hitler, but not Stalin – for the alliance with Germany and joint Soviet–German aggression on Poland<sup>148</sup>. KPP propaganda main objective was to safeguard Soviet interests in Europe. It supported the Moscow imperialistic actions against Poland as Russia considered Poland as allegedly non-independent and weak capitalistic country<sup>149</sup>. Since the VII Komintern Congress, KPP ceased direct attacks on the Polish State as such but claimed that it was fighting with its bourgeois political system and the fascist ruling establishment. KPP did not want to defend Polish independence and all its tactical moves were inspired by Komintern<sup>150</sup>.

Only after the signing by Poland the Non-aggression Pact with Germany in 1934, KPP started to defend issues related to western parts

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<sup>144</sup> H. Cimek, *KPP*, pp. 132–133.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 133–134.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 134.

<sup>147</sup> H. Cimek, *Komuniści*, p. 138.

<sup>148</sup> H. Cimek, *KPP*, pp. 136–137.

<sup>149</sup> K. Trembicka, *op. cit.*, p. 242; J. Tomasiewicz, „*Faszyzm*”, pp. 238–239.

<sup>150</sup> K. Trembicka, *op. cit.*, pp. 254–255.

of Poland and Gdansk. It also was accusing Warsaw of desire to attack Czechoslovakia and Soviet Union<sup>151</sup>. After the breakout of WWII, former KPP members still supported Soviet Russia against Polish authorities, both at home and on emigration<sup>152</sup>.

According to Polish Communists, Warsaw's rejection of the alliance with the Soviet Union, the only one power in Central and Eastern Europe that played a role in the difficult security situation, resulted in the fall of Poland in September 1939. They considered Poland as economically and militarily weak country. Fascist 'Sanacja' divided the Nation and was not able to solve social and ethnic problems, as stated by KPP<sup>153</sup>. According to the Polish Workers Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza, PPR), formed in 1942, the tragedy of September 1939 was a direct result of pro-German 'Sanacja' policies, which allowed Berlin to start and conduct expansionist actions with regard to Central Europe<sup>154</sup>. It was the political position of Poland, in PPR view, that prevented the establishment of an alliance of Soviet Union with France and United Kingdom and led to outbreak of WWII<sup>155</sup>. According to PPR propaganda, it was Poland again that made any industrial developments in Soviet Union difficult and forced Moscow to resort to German investments and technical assistance.

It continued to try to convince readers that an alliance of Poland, Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Balkan states would have prevented the war. Another propaganda point referred to an idea that Polish reactionist authorities planned to fence off the Soviet Union from the rest of Europe by creating the Central European Federation. If allied with the Soviet Union, Poland would have not been a colony for a foreign capital. It would have had secure borders in the West and friends in the East. This would have brought Poland freedom, power, and political importance<sup>156</sup>.

Also post-war Communist propaganda claimed that Beck and Śmigły-Rydz's foreign policy was aimed at building reactionary anti-Soviet bloc of countries. It often stated that they had been following the

<sup>151</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 264–265.

<sup>152</sup> H. Cimek, *Komuniści*, p. 141.

<sup>153</sup> Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne – Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe, Związek Walki Wyzwoleniejszej, ref. no. II.38.1, p. 1.

<sup>154</sup> AAN, Polska Partia Robotnicza [hereinafter: PPR], ref. no. 190/I/1, p. 15; "Gwardziści" 1944, no. 2, p. 2.

<sup>155</sup> "Głos Warszawy" 1944, no. 22, p. 1. 'The main and only reason for the failure of British–French–Soviet talks in August 1939 had been the position of the Polish Government. It did not want to discuss and agree for provisions that would include 'march' of Soviet troops through the Polish territory. In 1939, the political clique of 'Sanacja' and OZN allowed Hitler to launch the war and defeat Poland'.

<sup>156</sup> AAN, PPR, ref. no. 190/I/1, pp. 70–78.

track of Piłsudski-Petlura agreement (1920) to destroy the first country of the world proletariat<sup>157</sup>. Communists emphasized that the rejection of an alliance with Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia led to the fall of both Czechoslovakia and Poland<sup>158</sup>. They even were making statements about Poland supporting Germany in launching, waging the war, and taking next Slavic countries<sup>159</sup>. Propaganda also claimed the 'Sanacja' had been a type of Polish fascism that supported Italian aggression on Abyssinia, Japanese attack on China and breaking provisions of the Versailles Treaty. It also used arguments that Poland, together with Germany, conducted an imperial policy towards Lithuania and Czechoslovakia in 1938.

According to the Communists, Poland was undermining efforts to establish a British–French–Soviet alliance in 1939 and saved Hitler from waging the war on two separate fronts. They also tried to convince the society that annexing Eastern parts of Poland in 1939 by the Soviet Union, prevented Germany in 1941 from seizing Moscow and Leningrad. If this happened, Germans would have ruled the world<sup>160</sup>. They claimed that Poland, due to its imperial plans, had been at odds with all its neighbours and was ruled by fascists. It countered Czechoslovakian efforts to unify countries of Central Europe, used Zaolzie as a political argument, supported Hungarian revisionism and Slovak fascists separatism (Slovak People's Party). In their views, Poland wanted an alliance with Germany and Italy to destroy the Versailles Treaty political order.

As a buffer and the country of secondary importance Poland was not able to balance its policies and distance itself from both powers. It was the main reason, according to the Communist propaganda, that Poland was not able to play any significant political role in Central Europe, destabilized the European security system and contributed to war<sup>161</sup>.

## SUMMARY

During the interwar period, the centre and left-wing legal 'anti-Sanacja' opposition wanted to stop cooperation with Germany due to ideological reasons. It wanted an establishment of a National Defense Government, which would have been able to start program of political and economic

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<sup>157</sup> "Wolna Polska" 1944, no. 22, p. 3.

<sup>158</sup> "Wolna Polska" 1945, no. 117, p. 1.

<sup>159</sup> "Wolna Polska" September 1943, p. 3.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1.

<sup>161</sup> AAN, Komenda Główna Armii Krajowej, Biuro Informacji i Propagandy, ref. no. 203/VII/62, pp. 386–397; Narodowe Siły Zbrojne, ref. no. 207/17, pp. 56–65.

reforms – to consolidate the Nation and enhance defense capabilities. Poland should have concentrated on cooperation with western powers against the coalition of totalitarian and revisionist countries. Then, it should have established a democratic bloc of Central European states, cooperate closely with France and work to get friendly and supportive posture of the Soviet Union, all to stop German expansion to the East.

‘Anti-Sanacja’ national groupings viewed Germany as the main threat to Poland. Therefore, they wanted close cooperation with Roman countries and western powers. Its attitude towards Soviet Russia was sceptical and cautious. However, they also considered that some forms of anti-German activities would be possible.

All legal opposition supported efforts to increase Polish military potential. At the same time, it strongly criticized the monopolization of state structures by ‘Sanacja’. Illegal interwar opposition attitude, i.e. of Polish Communists, to Polish authorities and Polish State was to a great extent influenced by Komintern decisions and Soviet interests. This could be clearly seen in the Communist propaganda of the time,

Divided opposition was no threat and problem to ‘Sanacja’. Even on the eve of war, the ruling establishment had not made any significant concessions. So far, research activities on attitude of opposition parties towards Polish authorities concentrated on their efforts to democratize the II Polish Republic and prevent its transformation to a totalitarian state, as for example was advised and promoted by OZN. A good indicator of ‘Sanacja’ readiness to introduce changes in the political system would have been its position to the postulate to establish a ‘National Salvation Government’, which would be able to convince the Nation to accept new social burden for the defense.

So far, we do not have a comprehensive study on legal opposition vision on a common foreign policy and finding ways to save the Country in the complicated prewar international political environment. ‘National Salvation Government’ was to become a coalition type of government. However, that would have required to work out a compromise on defense spendings, acceptance of a decrease in the standard of living, changes in policies towards ethnic minorities to win their mind and hearts for defense of Poland, changes in the foreign policy, mainly with regard to Germany, Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and France.

The effort to build a cross-party political platform in the second half of 1930s of the 20th Century from groupings of the legal opposition failed (Front Morges). Therefore, it would be necessary to study programs and media linked to opposition parties and groupings. This should be done with regard to actions of the ruling establishment, mainly in defense sector, to domestic and foreign policies and social costs of an increase

in defense spendings. This would create a possibility to prepare a synthesis of opposition proposals in 1938–1939 directed to the ‘Sanacja’ camp.

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