

SWEDEN AND THE QUESTION OF POLAND'S INDEPENDENCE (1914–1918)

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ABSTRACT. The author claims that the question of Poland's independence was of great political interest to the Swedes of World War I, especially to Swedish activists who collaborated with Germany. The Polish question was seen in the wider context of aspiration of the Baltic "oppressed peoples". A number of eminent Swedes openly demanded that the right to independent state existence be granted to Poland. The author also discusses the role of various organizations (e.g. the League of Peoples Oppressed by Russia and Information Office "Polonia") active in Stockholm at that time.

Events of World War I, total in their character, should be considered from two perspectives, that of the tragic turmoil of military operations and that of mass propaganda of states involved in the war and those of the Entente. Effective actions of the propaganda machine taken by these military blocs were especially directed at two neutral states, Switzerland and Sweden.

During World War I, Scandinavian states, including Sweden, maintained strict neutrality. This was confirmed by north-European monarchs at a meeting in Malmö in December 1914. Both H. Hammarskjöld, the Swedish prime minister, and K.A. Wallenberg, the minister of foreign affairs, sought permanent and good contacts with Germany, the main recipient of Swedish iron ore and a supplier of coal and food to Sweden.¹ Various contacts with the Reich of Wilhelm were primarily favoured by the so-called Swedish activists, descending from conservative and peasant groups, from classes of great capital, wealthy farmers, officers' corps and academic intellectuals of Lund, Uppsala and Stockholm, and partly from journalists, writers and artists. Although, in the Swedish public opinion, they were a minority, yet they were the most active and mobile minority, gathered around two programme journals "Svensk Tidskrift" and "Svensk Lösen".² They ascertained that Sweden was

¹ On Sweden in World War I: T. Gihl, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia*, vol. IV, 1914–1919, Stockholm 1951, W.M. Carlgren, *Neutralität oder Allianz*, Stockholm 1962, N.V. Franzen, *Under stormen. Sverige under första världskriget*, Stockholm 1986

² T. Gihl, *op. cit.*, p. 90ff. N.V. Franzen, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

in danger as Russia expanded through Scandinavia towards the Atlantic and therefore the German military, economic and political presence in the basin of the Baltic Sea was necessary. Germans treated neutral Sweden as an area where profitable economic business could be contracted and where ideological propaganda could be spread. A pro-English and pro-French stance, given a certain understanding of the military aims of Russia, was mainly taken by Swedish social democracy with Hjalmar Branting, its eminent leader, and by liberal-democratic groups.³ Just as Europe was divided into two opposing military blocs, the Swedish political public opinion was either pro-German or pro-Entente, although politically indifferent and neutral Swedes were also numerous. At the dawn of a world war, an ordinary Swede was primarily occupied with problems of his own country and the Scandinavian region. An interest in Germany was manifested in the Swedish press, in discussions and conversations as political, economic, scientific, and cultural relations with Germany were most solid. In 1916/1917, an ordinary Swede began to appreciate the role and place of England, France and the United States. Under war conditions, the three countries became a desired economic partner, politically closer to Swedish social democracy.⁴ In Swedish understanding, the concept of Eastern Europe was wide and obscure and most often associated with Russia, with the complicated national, political and state problems of the czardom, with civilizational inferiority and different customs and culture. The great Swedish nationalist movement (*storsvensk*), developing at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries in the socio-economic, political, and cultural life, obsessively exposed the threat of Russian military invasion that would annihilate the national and state existence of Sweden. The question of Finland, the country tied to Sweden by history since as early as the middle of the 12th century, and in 1809 included into the Romanov Empire, was considered to be not only an internally Swedish issue but also that of Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. In the years of World War I, the Finnish question captured the attention of Swedish politicians, journalists, scientists and those who reasoned in the categories of the Scandinavian community, especially the cultural-political community.⁵ Swedes thought of peoples on the Baltic (e.g. Latvians and Estonians), Ukrainians and White Russians, and Poles with whom they were related by history, as belonging to Eastern Europe. For an ordinary Swede from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Polish question was seen as a series of national and liberation struggles directed against Russian autocracy. The stronger were the anti-Russian feelings and attitudes of the Swedish public opinion, the stronger was the interest in problems of Poland.⁶

³ T. Gihl, *op.cit.*, p.106ff. N.V. Franzen, *op.cit.*, p.

⁴ Koblik S., *Sweden: The neutral victor: Sweden and the Western Powers*, Lund 1972.

⁵ T. Gihl, *op.cit.*, p.339ff.

⁶ At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, problems of Poland were discussed by such writers as H. Hjärke, H. Almquist, S. Tunberg, T. Collijn, O. Walde, A. Holmberg, A. Jensen, A. Nyström, F. Bööck. Cf. A. Jensen, *Motywy polskie w literaturze szwedzkiej* [Polish motifs in Swedish literature], "Pamiętnik literacki", 1910, vol. IX, pp. 292-305, 491-506, *ibid.*, vol. XI, 1912, pp. 277-288. Also, K. Ślaski, *Tysiąclecie polsko-skandynawskich stosunków kulturalnych* [A millennium of Polish-Scandinavian cultural relations], Wrocław 1977, pp. 383-389. On the growing nationalist trends in the Swedish political culture of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries see especially Ch. Strahl, *Nationalism och socialism. Fosterlandet i den politiska idédebatten i Sverige 1890-1914*, Lund 1983.

A Swede spoke and wrote more often about russification of Poles than about germanization processes on territories annexed by Prussia.⁷

The core of the Polish nation was under Russian annexation. The struggle for Polish independence depended on the attitude of Russia. Such was the understanding of the problem in Sweden. The proclamation of Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich to the Polish nation (of 14th August, 1914), in which he did not exclude a possibility that a certain autonomy would be granted to Poles, was criticized by the Swedish conservative and activist political opinion. The promises of the Grand Duke were questioned by Michał Lempicki, a geologist and a well-known conservative politician, in his letter to the Grand Duke published in a Swedish newspaper in 1914.⁸ As early as the first months of the war, this deputy of Piotrków to the 4th Russian Duma, organized in Stockholm the beginnings of Polish political emigration. He thought that Russia should grant Poland a wider political autonomy, if not independence. Harald Hjärne, a well-known Swedish cultural anthropologist, an eminent liberal journalist, ascertained in one of his articles written in 1914 that the crisis in Eastern Europe was created by Russia by its intolerant national policy, especially towards Poles, who had the right to independence.⁹ Before the outbreak of World War I, trends favouring Germany prevailed not only in the Swedish foreign policy.¹⁰ In the opinion of activists, only Germany, with its victories in Central and Eastern Europe, could satisfy the national aspirations of Finns and Poles within the boundaries of the Russian state.¹¹ Some Swedish activists (for example, Emil Svensén) saw the Polish and Swedish question in a wide Baltic context as, truly, the interests of the great powers (Germany and Russia), both in the political-military and commercial-economic aspects, intersected in the area of the Baltic and Scandinavia.¹² Fredrik Böök, a valued expert on "Eastern issues", a writer and journalist, was convinced that Germany counted on the loyalty of Poles. He valued the German order, dignity, welfare and diligence. Poles were taught all this by German colonizers. Only Russian despotism and monarchism was characterized by expan-

⁷ There were also writers and journalists who admired the economical management and patriotism of inhabitants of the city of Poznan (e.g. Erik Torssander, a newspaper reporter; *Minnen från Polen*, Stockholm 1912). Anton Nyström, who was in Poland in 1899-1902, noticed drastic forms of germanization directed against the Polish population on the territory annexed by Prussia.

⁸ Cf. M. Lempicki's "open letter to Grand Duke, generalissimos of Russia", published in G.F. Steffen, *Krig och kultur*, Stockholm 1914, pp. 229-235. Also, J. Szymański, *Z genezy stosunków politycznych Polski ze Szwecją w latach 1919-1925* [On the genesis of political relations between Poland and Sweden in the years 1919-1925], "Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. Scandinavica", 1978, 1, p.75. On Michał Lempicki's life (1850-1930) see: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* [Polish Biographical Dictionary], vol. 18, 1973, pp. 329-331 (entry written by S. Czarniecki). See also R. Sokolnicki, *Rok czernasty* [1914], London 1961, pp. 332-333.

⁹ H. Hjärne, *Polska framtidsdrömar*, "Svenska Dagbladet", 30th August, 1914; reprinted in H. Hjärne, *Östeuropas kriser och Sveriges försvar*, Stockholm 1914, pp. 242-248.

¹⁰ W. Söderberg, *Vår utrikespolitik och dess uppgifter*, "Svensk Tidsskrift", 1911.

¹¹ Unser gegenwärtigen Verhältniss zu den skandinavischen Nationen, "Deutsche Rundschau", 1914. Also T. Arldt, *Die Völker Mitteleuropas*, Leipzig 1917.

¹² Svensén, *Världskriget och dess orsaker*, Uppsala 1914, p. 125ff. E. Svensén was convinced about the expansive intentions of Russia in Scandinavia; see also by the same author, *Rysslands vägar till världshaven*, Uppsala 1915, pp. 180-183.

sionism (erövringspolitik) and therefore, in Böök's opinion, Poles should not seek political support in Russia but in Prussia and Austria.¹³ We can come across such opinions expressed in the first months of the war, especially by Swedish activists. In 1915 they issued a decisively pro-German programme on Sweden's foreign policy for the war period.¹⁴ It was pointed out that Russia had two principal directions and regions of its expansive policy – Balkan and Scandinavian (Nordosten in German terminology). It was emphasized that the "harbours of Norway were the goal of Russia and the road to them led through Sweden" and that Finland was the sally port of this policy. In this situation, the Finnish question was at the same time the question of Sweden. Thus, a "Swedish ridge" against expected Russian aggression had to be created. Sweden, as a kind of an "iron ring" between England and Russia, had to arouse the interest of Germany, both in the military-political and economic aspects.¹⁵ In the opinion of the activists, Poland and Poles, the question of their independence, could gain political support of Sweden and military support of Germany. In the same brochure, Swedish social democrats and liberals were accused of their consistent support for the "imperialist" political and military goals of England and France. Hjalmar Branting was quoted to have said that states of the Entente must oppose the dangerous "armoured fist" of Germany.¹⁶ In fact, in one of his speeches, on 15th August, 1915, he warned Swedes against fatal consequences of the political and economic expansion of Germany in the Baltic-Scandinavian region.¹⁷ Swedish social democrats doubted whether the Reich of Wilhelm, by breaching the laws of small nations (for example, Serbians or Belgians), was capable of bringing independence to Finns or Poles.¹⁸

This conviction was only partially shared by Alf Pomian-Hajdukiewicz, Wanda Pomian-Hajdukiewiczowa, economist Waclaw Dzierzanowski¹⁹ or Alfred Jensen, a well-known Slavist²⁰, who cooperated with the Polish Committee, established at the end of 1914 in Stockholm.

In 1915 the territory of Poland, especially Galicia, was the theatre of devastating military operations. In Sweden, the interest in the Polish question increased considerably, especially among news reporters and journalists. The area of Galicia, devastated by the war, was visited by Nils Christiernssen, a Swedish journalist. He was enchanted by the historical monuments of Cracow. At the same time, however, he showed the deplorable state of Galician economy and the universal poverty of the

¹³ F. Böök, *Demokratiens heliga grundsatsar äro för oss icke heligare än omsorgen om vår folkliga tillvare*, "Svenska Dagbladet", 21st April, 1914.

¹⁴ *Sveriges utrikespolitik i världskrigets belysning*, Stockholm 1915. In *German – Schwedische Stimmen zum Weltkrieg* (translated by F. Stieve), Leipzig 1916.

¹⁵ *Schwedische Stimmen zum Weltkrieg*, pp. 24, 39ff, 65ff, 79ff.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 40, 47ff.

¹⁷ Branting H., *Arbetarklassen och världsåget*. Foredrag i Hornbergshage utanför Stockholm, den 15. August 1915, Stockholm 1915.

¹⁸ "Social-Demokraten", 8th December 1914, article entitled: *Sverige, Finland och Ryssland*.

¹⁹ Waclaw Dzierzanowski was a graduate of the Berlin Academy of Commerce. When Poland regained independence, he was Polish consul in Sweden.

²⁰ J. Szymański, *op.cit.* p. 79.

peasant population, embodied in Piłsudski's legions.²¹ Gustav Sjösteen, another Swedish journalist, visited Warsaw in August 1915. In his report, showing the realia of the occupied town, he clearly sympathized with the Germans.²²

In 1915 in Stockholm, Sven Hedin, a known Swedish traveller, published an account of his trip to Poland. We find here his numerous reflections on his stay in Cieszyn, Cracow, Łańcut, Częstochowa, Lvov and Warsaw. He described difficult living conditions of Poles in war. Hedin's account contains also very valuable (often very critical) reflections on Polish customs, mentality and culture.²³ Bengt Berg, a Swedish novelist, in one of his novels, *En German* (A German, published in 1916), described a war campaign in Europe at the beginning of 1915 and pointed to the enormous devastation and poverty of Poles affected by the bloody war. In another of his reports (*Där kriger rasar*, written in 1915) he showed the poverty and illiteracy of Galician peasants. He was shocked by the social attitude of Galician nobility. He also pointed out to the primitive living conditions of peasants. Karl Hildebrand, another Swedish journalist, in his reports on the Habsburg monarchy, saw a gloomy future of Galicia, devastated by the war. He was shocked by the poverty of Galician peasants, forced to continuously render services in kind to the Russian army and administration. He showed the Russian rule in occupied Lvov in black colours. He was disturbed by never-ending nationality conflicts between Poles and Russians, e.g. in eastern Galicia.²⁴ Nils G. Maren, another Swedish news reporter, visited a few towns in Galicia (e.g. Cracow, Lvov, Wieliczka) and wrote a colourful account of the life of their inhabitants, in the context of dramatic realia of the war.²⁵ Nils Lago-Lengquist, another Swedish journalist, devoted much space in his reports to the patriotic feelings of Poles and the iron will of the Polish nation to regain independence.²⁶ Selma Lagerlöf, a great Swedish writer, in one of her letters published in March 1915 in "Iduna", wrote with sympathy about ruined towns, poverty of Poles caused by war operations. She appealed for international aid, and fully appreciated Polish aspirations for independence.²⁷ Ernst Liljedahl, a Swedish liberal publicist, postulated in one of his pamphlets that Sweden should actively support the question of Polish independence at a future peace conference.²⁸ He was not isolated in his appeals. Anton Nyström, a Swedish physician and publicist, fascinated with Polish culture, in one of his pamphlets (translated also into English), appealed to the international community to support Polish aspirations for independence, the aspira-

²¹ N. Christiernssen, *Med Mackensen till Przemysl*, Stockholm 1915, pp. 25-28, 29, 43ff.

²² G. Sjösteen, *Den tyska förvaltningen i Polen*, in: "Det nya Sverige", 1916, pp. 184 and 188, Reprinted in: *Bakom tyska krigetskulisser*, Stockholm 1916, pp. 271-285.

²³ S. Hedin, *Kriget mot Tyskland*, Stockholm 1915, pp. 246, 280ff, 288-306, 508, 716-726ff, 817ff.

²⁴ K. Hildebrand, *Donaumonarkien i krig*, Stockholm 1915, pp. 12ff, 76-78, 90-96.

²⁵ N.G. Maren, *Skuggar och dagar från världskriget*, Uppsala 1916, pp. 69ff, 176ff, 196ff.

²⁶ S. Lago-Lengquist, *Under kejsarrödnar och halvmåne*, Stockholm 1916, pp. 141-163.

²⁷ "Iduna", 11th April, 1915, pp. 233-234 (a letter of 28th March 1915).

²⁸ E. Liljedahl, *Sverige och krig*, Uppsala 1915, pp. 13, 98-105, 134. By the same author, *Kring världskampen*, Uppsala 1916, pp. 20-24, 83. His article: *Polens frihet* in "Aftonbladet", 12th November, 1916.

tions of a people whose traditions of statehood were very old.²⁹ He was one of those who, contrary to the opinion of activists, condemned the Prussian policy of germanization in annexed territories as that which offended elementary human rights.³⁰

The question of Polish national identity found its defenders in 1915 among Swedish liberals and pacifists. One of them, Carl Lindhagen, on 5th February 1915, in the 2nd Chamber of the Swedish parliament (and two years later in the Parliament!), consistently defended the unalienable right of Poles to their own independence. In his opinion, Poland should rise as a united and independent state, with the right to decide about its future. Poland, reborn in accordance with these principles, was to guarantee peace in Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, Lindhagen was aware that both Germany and Russia could significantly contribute to the solution to the complex Polish question.³¹ Anna Lindhagen, in "Forum", defended the rights of each nation, and the Polish nation as well, to self-determine. She thought that a nationality problem should be solved by a patriotic will of a specific community and not by political and military pressures and annexations by great powers.³²

The question of Poland and Poles during World War I attracted the attention of Rudolf Kjellén, professor of Göteborg University and later that of Uppsala. Professor Kjellén created a new science, geopolitics (his coinage!) which synthesized political and geographical assumptions. Geopolitically, a state is a kind of a geographical and biological organism, capable of a spatial "expansion".³³ In his conviction, geographical position, natural resources of a given country and its people are factors which shape the foreign policy of, especially, great powers. In Kjellén's opinion, only great powers have the right to exist as they are politically sovereign and economically self-sufficient units.³⁴ During World War I he claimed that various political, economic and scientific and cultural ties predestine Sweden to politically and even militarily support the Reich of Wilhelm.³⁵ This main spokesman for the pro-German orientation in Sweden appreciated the crucial position of our country between the great powers. On the one hand, he claimed that the partitions of Poland in the 18th century were a consequence of the disintegration of the Polish state, while on the other, during World War I, he defended the view that Poles had matured to regain independence and that Germany could assist them in this venture. In an article published in 1915, he pondered over the solution to the Polish question

²⁹ A. Nyström, *Före, under och efter 1914*, Stockholm 1915, pp. 44ff. In English: *Before, during and after*, London 1916.

³⁰ A. Nyström, *Före, under och efter*, pp. 63-68.

³¹ *Andra Kammarens Motioner*, 1915, 175, p. 24; *ibid.*, 1917, 315, pp. 13-14 (mimeo).

³² A. Lindhagen, *Ingen anektering*, "Forum", 1915, pp. 418-419. See also her pro-Polish pamphlets: *The question of nationality*, Stockholm 1916, and: *I nationalitetsfrågan*, Stockholm 1917.

³³ Swedish socialists strongly emphasize Kjellén's pro-German orientation: K. Bäckström, *Istoriya rabochevo dvizhenia w Shvecii (1902-1917)*, Moscow 1966, p. 241 (from Swedish).

³⁴ R. Kjellén, *Staten som livsform*, Stockholm 1916. By the same author, *Världskrigets politiska problem*, Stockholm 1915.

³⁵ R. Kjellén, *Småstaternas problem*, or his work: *Sverige i världspolitik*, in R. Kjellén, *Politiska essayer*, vol. I, Stockholm 1914, p. 184ff.

in the context of groups of great powers which fought against one another.³⁶ Poland was a component of important "political problems" of the world war. Let us add that Kjellén followed all publications, both German and West European, which carried articles on the Polish question.³⁷ The Swedish geopolitician believed in the military, political and economic greatness of Germany but he also made claims about Russian expansiveness, even on sea (e.g. through Scandinavia towards the Atlantic Ocean).³⁸ Kjellén linked geographical, political and nationality questions into one conceptual whole. Geopolitical problems of "states of great spaces" were, in his opinion, in relation to questions of nationality. A national state can originate only from the synthesis of a people and a state. A national state is always the "last word of history".³⁹ Kjellén was in favour of state control when he claimed that only a state integrates in itself unity and freedom. During World War I he saw the complex national problems on the French–German border, in Serbia, Romania or in the Ukraine (Russia irredenta). He was interested in the complicated multi-national issues of the Habsburg monarchy, including the question of the Polish–Russian controversy.⁴⁰ Pan-Slavism, recognized by Kjellén as a bankrupt ideology (Pan-Germanism, however, was not bankrupt!) in the socio-political and economic sense, was, in his opinion, one of forms of Russian nationalism but also that of defensive nationalism in some small communities (e.g. Czechs).⁴¹ Kjellén was aware of the unfavourable attitude of Poles towards this ideology of a great power. For the Swedish geopolitician, Europe was an arena of a "cultural struggle" and the "struggle of ideas" between the German, English and Russian "spirit".⁴² In these political, national and cultural and ideological antagonisms between the great powers, Poland, in Kjellén's opinion, occupied an important place. He perceived the "Polish question" as the question of a divided and enslaved people.⁴³ The fact that Poles, a people with rich literature, traditions, with developed consciousness of their own nationality, were deprived of independence, was considered by the Swedish geopolitician to be a "crime" (Verbrechen) against the "principle of nationality" and the "state feeling of responsibility".⁴⁴ He held Russia responsible for the conquest of Poland, a 21-million people. In the "purely geopolitical" sense, Russia

³⁶ R. Kjellén, *Världskrigets politiska problem*, Stockholm 1915, pp. 92–93, 122, 171.

³⁷ R. Kjellén, *Världspolitikerna 1911–1919 i periodiska översikter*, Uppsala 1920, pp. 216–219.

³⁸ R. Kjellén, *Die politischen Probleme des Weltkrieges*, Leipzig–Berlin 1916, 4th edition, pp. 9ff, 22ff.

³⁹ R. Kjellén, *ibid.*, p. 46ff.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 77ff.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 82ff, 114ff.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 136ff.

⁴³ Kjellén wrote: Eine Nation von 21 Millionen, hoch kultiviert und sozial entwickelt, mit einer reichen Literatur und grossen Traditionen aus einer selbständigen Vergangenheit – eine Nation, über deren Eigenart und starkentwickeltes Nationalbewusstsein kein Zweifel bestehen kann –, lebt somit obdachlos als Staat untergebracht in drei fremden Wohnungen. Ein grösseres Verbrechen gegen das Nationalitätsprinzip ist, rein formell betrachtet, nie begangen worden, als damals, da dies geschah. Das Nationalitätsprinzip selbst kann historisch als ein Reaktionsphänomen gegen dieses Verbrechen erklärt werden" (*ibid.*, p. 75).

⁴⁴ R. Kjellén, *Hvardan och hvarthän?*, Stockholm 1915, pp. 15, 30, 37, 50, 52.

consistently strived to determine its western border on the Vistula and the Carpathian mountain range. For Kjellén, a Pan-Germanist, the role of Prussia in the partitions of Poland was consciously concealed, contrary to obvious historical truth. And yet, this scholar with large political influence among the central states should be credited for a consistent, although tendentious (pro-German), attitude to the question of Polish independence, an open question, to be solved on the international arena.

Meanwhile, in 1915, Germany seized large areas of Russian lands (including areas belonging to Poland) and began a well-organized anti-Russian propaganda, also in the Baltic-Scandinavian region, primarily exposing the importance of the Finnish and Polish problems. For these propaganda and political reasons, the "Berlin Office" (Das Berliner Büro), led by Friedrich Wetterhoff, a resourceful political propagandist, was opened in the German capital on 27th November, 1915. Wetterhoff collaborated with such Finnish activists as, for example, Herman Gummerus, Frh. v. Bonsdorff and R. Erich, a professor of law.⁴⁵ Attempts were made to show the Finnish question in a wider context of the Baltic region, together with a solution to the Polish question. It was hoped that Swedish activists and Polish patriots from the Stockholm centre would help.⁴⁶ At that time, Michał Lempicki established closer political contacts with the German and Austrian embassies in Stockholm. His contacts with the "Berlin Office" cannot be neglected. In February 1915, Dr Witold Jodko-Narkiewicz, an activist of the Polish Socialist Party from Cracow, met in Stockholm with a few Finnish activists. They discussed initial plans to convene an international "conference of peoples oppressed by Russia" which would be supported by Germany. This was one of more effective means of "internationalizing" the Polish question.⁴⁷ Germans tried to interfere with the propaganda of states of the Entente, developing so intensely, spread on the territory of Switzerland. It is on the initiative of these states that an international conference on nationality problems was convened in Paris on 26th-27th June, 1915. A memorial was prepared on the fate of small peoples on the European continent under the conditions of war. It was ascertained in the memorial that autonomous rights of especially small peoples should be respected and guaranteed by super powers and principles of the international law. In international practice, as was emphasized, the principle of national self-determination should win.⁴⁸

In this situation, in 1916 and 1917, Swedish activists (for example, R. Norrlander, P.H. Norrmén) encouraged Germany to become interested in the Baltic and Scandinavian region, a sore point between the central states and the states of the Entente. It is the Baltic states (including Poland) that should be the area of effective German

⁴⁵ H. Gummerus, *Jägare och aktivister. Hågkomster från krigsåren i Stockholm och Berlin*, Helsingfors 1927, pp. 29ff, 42ff, 143ff.

⁴⁶ H. Gummerus, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95, 137ff.

⁴⁷ S. Zetterberg, *Die Liga der Fremdvölker Russlands 1916-1918*. Helsinki 1978, p. 58. Frequent contacts with Poles in Stockholm were also maintained by Konni Zilliacus, a Finnish conspirator (Cf. H. Gummerus, *Konni Zilliacus*, Helsinki 1933, *passim*).

⁴⁸ At the same time Germany strengthened its propaganda, also on the territory of Switzerland (S. Zetterberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48).

political, economic and commercial expansion.⁴⁹ Activist Sven Lindman complained that Swedish neutrality led to political isolationism, whereas political activity and increased international position of Sweden could be stimulated by the revival of national traditions as well as traditions of a great power (so called *Svensk lösen*) and a return to Pan-Germanism through, among other things, political and military cooperation with Germany.⁵⁰

A decision was made to create new forms of cooperation in this domain. At the beginning of 1916, Friedrich von der Ropp, a germanized Lithuanian baron, having relations with political, propaganda, financial and economic circles of Wilhelm Germany, attempted to arouse public feelings in the Scandinavian political circles for "peoples oppressed by Russia". In his opinion, attempts should be made at internal disintegration of the Russian state through, among other things, the awakening of national and state aspirations of small and medium communities (e.g. Poles) in Sweden. German nationalists (for example, from *Alldeutscher Verband*) dreamt of creating a federation of Baltic states under German leadership.⁵¹ The participation of Poland in such a pro-German state union was possible. Ropp was one of the organizers of the Berlin conference of "oppressed peoples" in Russia, held at the beginning of March 1916, attended, in addition to Baltic Germans, Finns, and Georgians, also by Poles (e.g. Wilhelm Feldman, a literary historian). Russian czarism was considered the greatest danger to European civilization. A decision was made to include small and medium peoples of this multi-national empire to the political action directed against Petersburg.⁵² To considerably hamper an increasingly more effective propaganda on nationality questions spread by states of the Entente, a decision was made to organize a future conference of "peoples oppressed by Russia" in Switzerland.⁵³

Finally, in spring 1916, activists from many European countries established the League of Peoples Oppressed by Russia (*Liga der Fremdvölker Russlands*).⁵⁴ The activity of the League was dominated by information- and propaganda-oriented objectives. The aim was not only to "work jointly" in non-Russian states, to present their wishes and aspirations at an international forum, but also to systematically inform about the Russian brutal nationality policy towards "civilized peoples" of Russia (among other things, through press propaganda, influencing the attitude of significant political personalities, etc.). Any subjection to Germany was excluded (although the League's activity was financed by M.W. Warburg, a banker from Hamburg) but de facto the League signed on the dotted line of the political and military circles of the Reich of Wilhelm. The League's press offices were located in Bern (Switzerland was an important propaganda centre of states of the Entente), Stock-

⁴⁹ P.H. Norrmén, *Die nordischen Länder und die Mittelmächte*, Berlin 1916, R. Norrlander, S. Sario, *Die nordische Brücke*, Stuttgart 1917.

⁵⁰ S. Lindman, *Det lefvande fäderneslandet, en bok om svensk aktivism*, Stockholm 1916.

⁵¹ VA-Helsinki, *Wetterhoffat's Heritage*. IV, a letter to Class (14th February, 1916).

⁵² F. v. der Ropp, *Zwischen Gestern und morgen. Erfahrungen und Erlebnisse*, 2nd edition, Stuttgart 1963, p. 103ff. . Zetterberg, op.cit., pp.69-74.

⁵³ V. v. der Ropp, op.cit., p. 108, S. Zetterberg, op.cit., p.107ff.

⁵⁴ A monograph on the League has been written by S. Zetterberg.

holm and New York but the central office was in Berlin ("Neutrale Korrespondenz"). Polish questions were significant elements of the League's activity; an 8-person presidium of the organization was headed by Michał Lempicki. Herman Gummerus, an exceptionally active Finn, became deputy chairman of the League and head of the Stockholm office (responsible for information!). Ropp, mentioned above, was a liaison officer between the League and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵⁵ Materials on a "violent russification policy" of the czarism were published in a few language versions and the public opinion was informed about all manifestations of the opposition of "peoples oppressed in the state of the Romanovs".⁵⁶ The League also strived for a greater interest of the Swedish society in the Polish question. There are numerous examples of the Swedish sympathy for our aspirations for independence. Ellen Key, a famous Swedish educator, the author of "A child's millennium", in connection with a conference of neutral states in Stockholm, wrote a pamphlet in 1916 in which she was for, among other things, granting Poles a sovereign national existence and claimed that Prussianism (especially in Poland!) was a violation of the "German spirit".⁵⁷ Olof Sundström, who wrote about the establishment of legions in the Cracow province, emphasized the growing feelings for independence in the Polish society.⁵⁸ Some Swedes who wrote about Polish affairs (e.g. Anton Karlgrén) made the rebirth of independent Poland contingent upon the positive course of political changes in Russia.⁵⁹

Fredrik Böök, invariably exhibiting pro-German feelings, published a book on his trip to Germany (translated also into German).⁶⁰ Previously, he had published feature articles on his trips to Germany in pro-German "Svenska Dagbladet". Böök was interested in various problems of the internal policy of our country (e.g. the Jew question). The picture of Poland and the life of Poles was, however, one-sided, often unfavourable (for example, when Böök stressed the negative features of our character). It is not Poles but Germans who treated the German problem in a realistic and prosaic way. Böök was for coexistence between Poles and Germans, as features of character of the two communities are mutually complementary. Poles, in his opinion, could learn a lot from the German "military and state culture" (for example, about culture, economy, organization of collective life).⁶¹ In Böök's right

⁵⁵ S. Zetterberg, op. cit., pp. 145-146 (programme), pp.147-150. VA-Helsinki. H. Gummerus's Heritage, Diary, 15th April, 4th and 6th May, 1916.

⁵⁶ In German: Kennen Sie Russland? Verfasst von zwölf Russischen Untertanen, Berlin 1916. In Swedish: Ryssland sådant det är. Medan etnografisk karta över Ryska riket. Utgivare De av Ryssland undertryckta folkens förbund..., Stockholm 1916.

⁵⁷ E. Key, Sjäälarnas neutralitet, Stockholm 1916, pp.69, 90, 103.

⁵⁸ O. Sundström, Under Polens örn, Stockholm 1916. The book was highly valued by A.Jensen, an expert on Polish affairs ("Stockholms Dagblad"), 7th October 1916).

⁵⁹ A. Karlgrén, Ryska intervjuer, Stockholm 1916, pp. 69,98-99.

⁶⁰ F. Böök, Resa till Tyskland och Polen, Stockholm 1916; in German: Deutschland und Polen von Fredrik Böök. Berechtigte Übersetzung aus der Schwedischen von Friedrich Stieve, München 1917. Pär Hallström reproached Böök with excessive pro-German attitude (a review in "Svenska Dagbladet", 13th October, 1916).

⁶¹ F. Böök, Deutschland und Polen, pp. 108,129-130. Böök stressed: Der entscheidende Punkt der politischen Zukunft Polens ist: Mit oder gegen Russland! (ibid. p. 130). In his opinion, Poles and Germans must defend western civilization, and czarism is a threat to it (ibid., p. 131).

opinion, the activity of German hakatists* (*deutsche Ostmarkenverein*), was the main obstacle to establishing proper relations between Poles and Germans.⁶² In his opinion, however, Russia was the main, "deadly" (*Todfeind*) enemy and Poles, *volens volens*, must create a common front with Germans to fight czarism. Thus, Böök exhibited here a political stance which was typical of the "majority of Swedish activists", among others, those affiliated with the League of Peoples Oppressed by Russia. Von Ropp was supposed to go to Warsaw to win a wider political opinion of Poles towards propaganda and political work directed against Russia. In spring 1916, Gummerus met with Rabski and Józef Ziabicki to deepen various forms of political cooperation between Polish and Finnish activists in a common struggle for independence.⁶³ In connection with the seizure of Baltic communities by the German army, new offices were established within the League (e.g. Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian).⁶⁴ Meetings between Swedish and Polish activists were increasingly more often devoted to the complex and often controversial relations between Poland and Lithuania. The League's proclamation of 6th May, 1916 to the "oppressed peoples of Russia" bore signatures of representatives of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, as well as those of Michał Lempicki and writer Waclaw Sieroszewski.⁶⁵ The document condemned the nationality policy of czarism, contrary to the principle of self-determination of peoples. The activists also counted on the support of US president, Wilson, a known fighter for the idea of self-determination of peoples. On 8th May, 1916, the Swedish press published a special proclamation to this politician on the fate of non-Russian peoples which inhabit the Romanov empire.⁶⁶ The document presented Wilson as a "fighter for humanistic ideals and justice". In a cable to president Wilson, violation of the Finnish political system and legal order by czarism was emphasized. Mention was made of a war-like terror of Russia directed against the Balts, about systematic violation of the national laws of Ukrainians and White Russians, and also, explicitly, about the liquidation of Polish national and state life.⁶⁷ The newspapers of Swedish activists (e.g. *Aftonbladet*, *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*) fully acknowledged arguments presented in the cable, whereas social democrats (for example, in "Social-Demokraten"), especially Hjalmar Branting, regarded the activity of the League of Oppressed Peoples as serving the "true interests of German expansion".⁶⁸ The League decided to intensify its propaganda, also about the Polish question, on the territory of the United States.⁶⁹

*hakatist – a German sworn enemy of Poles, member of a German chauvinistic organization formed in 1894 for the purpose of eradicating the Polish elements in the Poznan province.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 127. He wrote: *Das Huphindernis auf dem Wege zwischen Polen und Deutschland ist die deutsche Ostmarkenpolitik, die Polen tief gekränkt und verbittert hat (ibid.)*.

⁶³ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, Diary, 28th March and 11th May, 1916.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, H. Gummerus, Diary, 4th April, 1916, 9th and 11th May, 1916.

⁶⁵ S. Zitterberg, *op. cit.*, p. 81ff.

⁶⁶ Text in "Aftonbladet", 125, 9th May 1916.

⁶⁷ In November 1916, M. Lempicki and baron R. v. Ropp acknowledged English prime minister, Asquith, as a defender of Armenians and their national laws.

⁶⁸ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, Acts of the League, a report of 12th May, 1916.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Ms Malmberg's letter to Gummerus of 20th December, 1916, sent from the USA.

At the same time, on 27th June, 1916, in Lausanne, another "conference of oppressed peoples" was held, especially peoples oppressed by Russia. It was attended by almost all national minorities from Russia, including Poland, whose delegation was headed by Michał Lempicki. The conference discussed the issue of a future national and state status of Finns, Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians, also of White Russians and Ukrainians as well as that of peoples living on territories lying beyond the Caucasian mountains. However, only Finns and Poles consistently demanded that they be granted independence.⁷⁰ M. Lempicki, in his clearly anti-Russian speech, was in favour of the establishment of free and independent Poland. He often remarked that Poland constituted (especially in the cultural aspect!) an integral part of the West European world. Von Ropp embraced Lempicki, thus indicating that the future of Poland was the future of all oppressed peoples of Russia.⁷¹ A kind of "programme charter" was developed which emphasized the ideal of self-determination of peoples. The charter was sent to the governments of European countries and to the administration of the United States. However, delegates of a few minorities declined to sign the charter.⁷² To Russian authorities, the Lausanne conference was the work of "German agents and pacifists of all sorts". "Novoye Vremia" held Konni Zilliacus, a Finnish patriot, and Michał Lempicki responsible for the organization of the "scandalous conference".⁷³ Swedish press of different political orientations gave extensive coverage to the conference.⁷⁴ In German newspapers, comments on the Lozanna conference and its results were cool and scarce. After all, some delegates condemned the germanization system (for example, in Alsace and in the Poznań province) and the expansive actions of, for example, the German army in the Baltic countries.⁷⁵

In June 1916, in "Tiden", a newspaper of social democrats, Carl N. Carlsson wrote in favour of the establishment of united and independent Poland and of reparations for war devastations.⁷⁶ However, these were sporadic opinions expressed by social democrats. Meanwhile, in summer 1916, the question of Polish independence suddenly became an urgent issue in the political circles of the League and those of Swedish activists. In early June 1916, v. Ropp went to Warsaw to agitate for the restoration of the Polish state on the side of Wilhelm Germany. V. Ropp met with Rev. Franciszek Radziwiłł, count Adam Ronikier and with other conservative politicians.⁷⁷ In addition to Michał Lempicki, also Władysław Studnicki

⁷⁰ B. Colliander, *Lausannemötet 1916. Ett ideologiskt varsel under första världskriget*, Acta Academiae Aboensis, Series A, vol. 29, 2, Abo 1964, Zetterberg, op.cit., p. 117ff.

⁷¹ S. Zetterberg, op.cit., pp. 127-128. H. Gummerus, *Jägare*, pp. 237-238.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ VA-Helsinki, Acts of governor general Seyn, Hd 104, "Novoye Vremia", 22nd June (9th August), 1916. "Helsingin Sanomat" (of 25th May, 1916) wrote about the activity of "German agents" during the conference.

⁷⁴ Swedish press gave extensive coverage to the conference (S. Zetterberg, op.cit., pp. 137-138).

⁷⁵ S. Zetterberg, op.cit., p. 138ff

⁷⁶ C.N. Carlsson, *Annexioner och krigsskandestånd*, "Tiden", 1916, p. 219ff.

⁷⁷ S. Zetterberg, op.cit., p. 183. V.Ropp, op.cit., pp. 112-114. At a meeting in Stockholm, attended by about 5,000 Swedes, the question of independent Poland was discussed. Poles, for example, Lempicki, Parczewski and Pomian, wrote about Polish problems in such Swedish newspapers as Stockholm's

proved very active, especially in late July and early August of 1916. In late summer of 1916, Swedish and Finnish activists became convinced that an independent Polish state could only be established with the support of Germany. In September 1916, these problems were most hotly discussed between von Ropp, Wetterhoff, Gummerus and M. Lempicki.⁷⁸ However, considerable political differentiation of the Polish society and difficulties in a definite settlement of boundaries, especially in the East, were pointed out. Meanwhile, Dr Stanisław Wędkiewicz, a Romanist from Cracow, began his political activity in Stockholm.⁷⁹ His job was to inform the League about current feelings in Poland. He favoured the establishment of closer contacts between Polish and Finnish activists.⁸⁰ Wędkiewicz's current responsibilities also included taking an interest in the reaction of the Swedish society to the Polish question (e.g. in the press). Two years later, he published interesting bibliographical materials pertaining to these problems.⁸¹ He did not forget his scholarly work; he researched Polish influence on Swedish onomastics and toponomastics and published a dissertation on this problem.⁸²

"Feelings in Poland are uneasy", wrote Gummerus in October 1916 in his diary following his talks with Wędkiewicz. Creation of an anti-Russian political alliance of Baltic states was not easy in view of important controversies between Lithuania and Poland.⁸³ Lithuanians had their own committee in Stockholm which was interested in the complex political situation in Lithuania, occupied by the German army, and which dealt with Polish-Lithuanian relations.⁸⁴ Gummerus, in a publication of the League of Oppressed Peoples, presented the Russian rule in Poland, focussing on the russification system of czarist authorities.⁸⁵ In autumn 1916, the League began to publish a bulletin in which it informed about events in Poland, the Ukraine, Finland, Lithuania and in countries lying beyond the Caucasian mountains. Information about Polish problems, however, was not honest. Herman Gummerus thought it necessary to publish a separate magazine to discuss nationality problems of Russia.⁸⁶

Dagblad and Stockolm Aftonblad (VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, Diary, 12th December, 1916).

⁷⁸ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, Diary, 21st August and 16th September 1916.

⁷⁹ Cf. Z. Ciesielski, Stanisław Wędkiewicz jako badacz i propagator Skandynawii [Stanisław Wędkiewicz as a researcher and propagator of Scandinavia], "Przegląd Zachodnio-Pomorski", 2, 1969, pp. 83–84.

⁸⁰ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, Diary, 28th September, 1916.

⁸¹ S. Wędkiewicz, *La Suède et la Pologne. Essai d'une bibliographie des Publications suédoises concernant la Pologne*, Stockholm 1918. Positive reviews in Swedish newspapers: "Nordisk tidsskrift för bok- och bibliotekväsen", 1918, pp.275–277, "Historisk tidsskrift", 1919, pp. 119–120, "Biblioteksbladet", 1919, pp. 65–83 (a comprehensive and positive review by A. Holmberg, a known expert on Polish affairs).

⁸² S. Wędkiewicz, *Z dziejów języka polskiego za granicą* [On the history of the Polish language abroad], I. *Polskie rzeczy w języku szwedzkim* [Polish nouns in Swedish], Cracow 1919. Z. Ciesielski, op. cit., p. 84.

⁸³ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, Diary, 25th October 1916, 29th October 1916.

⁸⁴ Ibid., v. Kieplin's letter to Gummerus of 25th October, 1916.

⁸⁵ In: *Rysslands sädant det år*, pp. 133–146.

⁸⁶ "Korrespondenz der Nationalitäteten Russlands" (also in French and English). Cf. also S. Zetterberg, op.cit., pp. 169–175.

Meanwhile, T. Bethman Hollweg, chancellor of the Reich, following numerous discussions with German politicians and the military, agreed to establish independent Poland (Königreich v. Polen) with a provisional State Council and a separate army. The hereditary Polish monarchy with an ersatz constitutional system was officially proclaimed on 5th November 1916. The following day, Gummerus organized a meeting in Stockholm with Polish politicians (e.g. M. Lempicki, Dr S. Wędkiewicz) on Polish reaction to the "act of 5th November".⁸⁷ Gummerus (like his Polish associates) treated the German national concession to Poles as the "first great result of the League's aspirations". On 8th November, the League issued a proclamation on Polish independence in which it warmly welcomed the act of the German occupation authorities and recalled the Polish struggle against Russian expansionism, over one hundred years long.⁸⁸ M. Lempicki's opinion was similar. In January 1917, he joined the State Council. Gummerus and his Polish colleagues, however, were concerned that the autonomy and independence question of Lithuania were in collision with Polish political aspirations.⁸⁹

The Swedish press and published opinion, especially the activists' circles, accepted with satisfaction the act of 5th November.⁹⁰ Articles about a true rebirth of sovereign Poland appeared in "Svensk Lösen", a newspaper of the activists, and "Nya Dagligt Allehanda" fully supported the Polish right to "independent existence" in conviction that Poles and Finns must build their states on concrete and independent foundations.⁹¹ Rudolf Kjellén accepted with great satisfaction the news about the restoration of sovereign Poland, inspired by Germany.⁹² At a conference held in Sördetlje (3rd December, 1916), Ernst Liljedahl considered the "act of 5th November" an event of historical significance to Poles.⁹³ On 22nd November, 1916, at a meeting, Anton Nyström, a loyal friend of Poland, expressed his conviction that Poland should be a united and truly sovereign state and, as such, it should be recognized by states of the Entente.⁹⁴ Social democratic newspapers (e.g. "Social-Demokraten") recalled that states of the Entente had many advocates in Poland, and that the "act of 5th November" was accepted by them rather coolly.⁹⁵ The Swedish and Finnish activist circles believed that Poles would positively accept the November decisions made by Germany, whereas activists of the League thought that the establishment of independent Poland, although within limited boundaries, was a factor which politically and militarily weakened Russia.⁹⁶

⁸⁷ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, 6th November, 1916.

⁸⁸ S. Zetterberg, *op.cit.*, p. 185, Gummerus, *Jägare*, *op.cit.*, p. 281.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Diary, 10th November, 1916.

⁹⁰ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, Diary, 12th November, 1916.

⁹¹ D. Järte, *Det eniga fronten*, "Svensk Lösen", 17th November 1916, "Nya Dagligt Allehanda", 11th November, 1916, article entitled: Polen och Finland.

⁹² R. Kjellén, *Polonia rediviva*, "Nya Dagligt Allehanda", 7th November 1916, and by the same author, article entitled: Krigslogik (*ibid.*, 19th November 1916).

⁹³ "Stockholms Dagblad", 4th December, 1916 (a report on the conference).

⁹⁴ A. Nyström's pamphlet in French: *La Pologne et son rétablissement*, Stockholm 1917. (In Swedish: *Polen och dess återupprättande*).

⁹⁵ "Social-Demokraten", 8th November, 1916.

At the beginning of 1917, activists of the League again intended to convene a conference of "peoples oppressed by Russia". In December 1917, Wilson suggested that states in a state of war with each other should make peace. States of the Entente, as is known, were ready to accept the suggestion provided that Germany and its allies withdrew from territories they had seized. Nationality problems could be an important bargaining factor. Von Ropp and Gummerus, backed up by M. Łempicki, were for the convening of such a conference and for the appointment of a provisional Committee to deal with these matters.⁹⁷ A meeting preceding the convening of the conference, held on 29th January 1917, was attended by Dr S. Wędkiewicz. The conference was thought to be a discussion forum for politicians, scholars and journalists, as well as for the clergy and voluntary workers from the so-called oppressed peoples and neutral states. Wędkiewicz was for a political meeting in order to creatively express opinion on current aspirations of the "oppressed peoples", not only from the territory of Russia.⁹⁸ Activists of the League were especially interested in Polish problems and those of the Baltic states. The League opened its own press centre in Warsaw, headed by Władysław Wiskowski. Numerous reports on political orientations and feelings in Poland were made for the purposes of pro-German "Neutralen Korrespondenz". On 23rd January 1917, Dr Wędkiewicz visited Gummerus. He was pessimistic about the solution to the Polish question. In his opinion, the State Council lacked eminent persons, and the Polish society continued to be politically disintegrated. Von Ropp assured that the League was interested in a just solution to controversies between Poland and Lithuania.⁹⁹ Some Swedish activists were even convinced that Germany would strive for a Polish-Russian personal union.¹⁰⁰ In 1916/1917, Finnish, Swedish and Polish activists were against any attempts to make a separatist peace between Russia and Germany. It was hoped that the German eastern offensive, in the Ukraine or in the Baltic states, would be victorious. At the same time, it was also hoped that Finland, aided by the Germany army, would regain independence.¹⁰¹

In this situation, in late January 1917, the League decided to intensify its propaganda, especially among intellectuals of peoples inhabiting Russia, and to pay greater attention to nationality problems of the Baltic states (especially those of Lithuania). These issues were also discussed at a secret conference of the League held in the end of February 1917. The need of a new legal-state status of non-Russian nationalities in Russia was discussed. It was emphasized that the so-called foreign nations had moral and physical right to self-determine their fate.¹⁰² Gummerus also suggested that through information and press propaganda, national oppression in states of the Entente be indicated. However, the suggestion did not

⁹⁶ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, Diary, 16th November, 1616 (conversations between Gummerus and Wędkiewicz), *ibid.*, 30th November and 1st December, 1916.

⁹⁷ S. Zetterberg, *op. cit.*, p. 190ff.

⁹⁸ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, Diary, 29th October, 1917.

⁹⁹ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, Diary, 19th February, 1917, S. Zetterberg, *op. cit.*, p. 186

¹⁰⁰ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, Diary, 28th February and 11th March, 1917.

¹⁰¹ H. Gummerus, *Jägare*, pp. 197-200, 291-297, 305-306.

¹⁰² VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, conference programme.

attract many supporters.¹⁰³ Controversies about the programme became apparent among members of the League, and the propaganda of states of the Entente was intensified, especially in Switzerland, where the League's office was closed. Attempts were made to expand the activity of the Stockholm office.¹⁰⁴ In view of growing controversies, in early April 1917, it was decided to cancel the conference. The March revolution in Russia offered new possibilities and impulses for the solution to nationality problems, although Gummerus and his Polish associates thought that the problem ceased to be an internal question of Russia and that they acquired an international significance.¹⁰⁵ The permanence of democratic revolutionary rule in Russia was distrusted. M. Lempicki, a conservative, did not want to hear about any forms of agreement with the new leadership.¹⁰⁶ Gummerus hoped that the political chaos in Russia could be advantageous to Finns who demanded national independence. In May 1917, Gummerus began a more close collaboration with Polish activists, for example, with M. Lempicki, J. Ziabicki, W. Kunowski, M. Rostworowski, and with activists of the Baltic states as problems of the future of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia dominated at the general assembly of the League in the middle of 1917.¹⁰⁷ There were fears that settlement of the Polish-Lithuanian antagonism would not be possible. In summer 1917, Gummerus intended to establish a kind of a World League of Oppressed Peoples (*Weltliga der Unterdrückter Völker*), but, due to Polish resistance, the plan failed.¹⁰⁸

In early September 1917, Aleksander Lednicki, a well-known Polish politician, arrived in Stockholm. As a minister in the Provisional Government, he held talks with Thiwbault, the French deputy in Stockholm. They analyzed different solutions of the Polish question and the current state of political life in Poland. Lednicki also held talks with Wojciech Rostworowski, the former director of the Political Department of the Provisional State Council, who informed him that Germany made efforts to make separate peace with Russia.¹⁰⁹ J. Ziabicki and Lednicki also talked with Gummerus. They assured him that a national government would be established in Poland and expressed their will to cooperate with Finnish activists. At the same time, they tried to convince Gummerus that a satisfactory solution to the Lithuanian question was very difficult for Poland.¹¹⁰ In autumn 1917, an interest in the Lithuanian question grew in the political circles of Swedish activists in Stockholm. The question of Latvia and the importance of the problems of Baltic states and communities also emerged after the conquest of Riga by the German army.¹¹¹

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, Dr H. Gummerus, *Aufgaben des Verbandes von den Ententemächten unterdrückten Nationen* (of 19th June, 1917).

¹⁰⁴ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's *Heritage*, Diary, 20th February, 1st March, 1917.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, H. Gummerus's *Heritage*, vol. 51-52 (correspondance with v. d. Ropp of March 1917).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, H. Gummerus, *Diary*, 20th and 23rd April, 1917.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, H. Gummerus, *Diary*, 14th and 15th May, 1917. By the same author: *Jägare*, p. 341ff.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, H. Gummerus, *Diary*, 18th June, 1917.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. J. Pajewski, *Sztokholmska misja Aleksandra Lednickiego* [The Stockholm mission of Aleksander Lednicki], *Historia i Współczesność*, vol. I, 1977, pp. 10-21.

¹¹⁰ VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's *Heritage*, vol. 50-51, Gummerus's letters to v. Ropp of 18th November and 10th September, 1917.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, H. Gummerus, *Diary*, 25th October and 4th November, 1917.

Individual Baltic states had their information offices in Stockholm. No wonder then that on 31st October 1917, Dr S. Wędkiewicz visited Gummerus and suggested that Polish information and propaganda office "Polonia" be opened.¹¹² In the following month the office began propaganda and information activity. A decision was made to inform Swedes about current affairs in Poland. For this purpose, the office began to publish "Polsk bulletin". In 1917, the number of publications about Poland in Swedish grew. J. Armfelt and W. de Pomian published a book on Polish history and culture and on the possibilities of formation of the Polish state with the help of central states.¹¹³ In 1917, a series of valuable studies was developed by a group of researchers and publicists headed by Alfred Jensen, a known Swedish Slavist, Jens Raabe, a Norwegian, and Age Meyer Benedictsen, a Danish.¹¹⁴ In the introduction the authors said that the Polish question gained in significance during the world war. Marika Stjernstedt, a lover of Polish culture, wrote a long essay on the life and work of Adam Mickiewicz (with fragments of Mickiewicz's poetry, translated into Swedish). Alfred Jensen, with his translation of "Bogurodzica" [Mother of God], presented the noble figure of queen Jadwiga to the Swedish readership. Julia Ledóchowska, the foundress of the Grey Ursulines, doing charity work in Scandinavia, showed the cult of the Madonna of Jasna Góra in Polish culture. J. Raabe, a Norwegian, showed the patriotic activity of more eminent Polish women, for example, Barbara Radziwiłłówna, Emilia Plater, Izabela Czartoryska, Klaudyna Potocka-Działyńska. Ellen Kay, with Reymont's "Chłopi" [Peasants], recalled the presence of peasants in Polish literature and culture. Anton Nyström, writing about the "intelligent Polish people", about its courage and patriotism, quoted numerous examples of sympathy towards Poles, especially after the January Rising. He also hoped that Europe would support Poles' right to their own state, to separate culture and science.¹¹⁵ Jens Raabe reminded Swedes how Norwegian poet Henrik Wergeland, in his beautiful lyric poetry, praised Poland and Poles fighting for their national rights.

In 1918, a group of Polish scholars published an extremely valuable monograph on Polish history and culture, with the Swedish readership in mind. The book, published in Swedish, was edited by two local Slavists, A. Jensen and A. Ehrenpreis.¹¹⁶ Władysław Konopczyński, one of the contributors, an assistant professor of history at the Jagiellonian University, on a sabbatical in Lund, wrote an outline of Polish history. He emphasized the power of the Jagiellonian times but also extensively sought the reasons for the fall of the Polish Republic in the 18th century. He touched not only upon russification mechanisms at the partition time but also condemned

¹¹² *Ibid.*, H. Gummerus, Diary, 31st October, 1917.

¹¹³ Armfelt J. och W. de Pomian, *Polen nu och i forna dagar*, Stockholm 1917.

¹¹⁴ *Polonica. Kulturbilder från det äldre och nyare Polen*, Stockholm.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 139. In this publication Age Meyer Benedictsson included a wonderful essay on T. Kościuszko and Maciej Szuszkiewicz wrote an essay on Jan Matejko, Waclaw Zb. v. Wyszyński described the development of Chopin's talent. Ernest Luninski presented the relations of Danish sculptor Thorvaldsen with Poland.

¹¹⁶ *Polackerna. Ed. av M. Ehrenpreis och A. Jensen*, Stockholm, 1918.

the germanization policy of Prussian authorities.¹¹⁷ In an outline of Polish geography, appended to this valuable publication, Pomerania, Wielkopolska and Silesia (including Opole Silesia) were thought to be integral parts of Polish ethnic and historical area. At the same time, difficulties of more precise determination of Polish future eastern border were indicated. Józef Mokrzyński, a Polish economist on a visit to Sweden, gave a comprehensive account of the indispensable natural resources and of the potential of Polish agriculture; industry and commerce in the restored Republic.¹¹⁸ Aleksander Brückner, an eminent Polish Slavist, presented the image of a Pole in the cultural and anthropological aspects (everyday life, clothes, bases of material existence and anthropological types) and the millennial development of Polish culture with its ups and downs.¹¹⁹ He rightly emphasized that at the partition time, Polish culture performed an important function of maintaining Polish identity, threatened with russification and germanization processes,¹²⁰ and pointed to its importance in our times. Wilhelm Feldman, somehow politically related to Swedish activists, wrote an outline of Polish literature¹²¹ Feliks Bryk, resident of Vienna, presented the achievements of Polish art, from Chodowiecki, through Matejko, Grottger, Siemiradzki to Kossak, Wyspiański and Stanisław Witkiewicz. In the same publication, Oskar Halecki, an assistant professor at the Jagiellonian University, wrote about the role of the Polish problem in international politics. He said that Polish national risings of the 19th century had international repercussions. In Halecki's opinion, the historical, linguistic and ethnographic situation created a framework of a uniform Polish state, although it was more difficult to determine its ethnic eastern and western borders.¹²² He was also right in saying that the russification and germanization processes, employed for over one century, significantly weakened the extent and vitality of the Polish element, and that only Austria was favourable to Poles.¹²³ Halecki ascertained that nationalistic trends, which appeared after the war, placed the Polish question in a new light, always seen in political and human (ethical) categories.¹²⁴ The book was the basic source of information to Swedish intellectual about Poland and Poles, about their complex political, cultural and economic problems.

The book was written on the initiative of and with financial support of the Information Office "Polonia", mentioned above, and Alfred Jensen, an exceptionally active Slavist. In 1917/1918 the Office intensified its activity. On 20th December,

¹¹⁷ W. Konopczyński, *Historisk översikt*, *ibid.*, pp.

¹¹⁸ J. Mokrzyński, *Ekonomisk översikt*, *ibid.*, pp. 47-61.

¹¹⁹ A. Brückner, *Det polska folklivet*, *ibid.*, pp. 62-80. Brückner speaks about 20-25 million Poles and gives their territorial allocation.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-124, 131.

¹²¹ S.W. Feldman, *Den polska literaturen*, *ibid.*, pp. 131-172. Swedes learnt about Polish literature and political thought from Feldman's book: *Geschichte der politischen Ideen in Polen seit dessen Teilung. Krakau 1917* and A. Brückner's book: *Geschichte der polnischen Literatur*, Leipzig 1901.

¹²² F. Bryk, *Den polska konsten*, in: *Polackerna*. Also *ibid.*, G. Halecki's reflections, pp. 296ff, 220-221, 224-227.

¹²³ *Polackerna*, pp. 236-241.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 248. A map of Poland was appended to the book: *Polackerna och deras Grannfolk*.

1917 a Committee was affiliated to the Office which dealt with economic problems of Poland and which, at the beginning of 1918, changed its name to the Polish Economic Society (Polska Ekonomiska Sällskapet).¹²⁵ It was created by a group of Poles who worked in Stockholm and a few other Swedish towns. The group included, for example, J. Mokrzyński, M. Malinowski, W. Mendelsohn, W. Świącicki, J. Tołłoczko and A. Wysokiński. Specific issues of Polish economy (e.g. electrification, paper and wood industry, marine economy, problems of road transportation, etc.) were discussed and solved. Some associates of the Society (for example, A. Pomian) rightly assumed that for the reborn Republic Sweden could be a favourable economic and trade partner.¹²⁶ Economic problems were extensively written about in "Polsk bulletin", a newspaper published with a Swedish readership in mind. Lubomir Sawicki, a known Polish geographer and economist, in one of his articles, rightly concluded that from the natural, geographical and political viewpoints Poland was prepared to build foundations for a well organized national economy.¹²⁷ Józef Mokrzyński, in a more extensive study in "Polsk bulletin", rightly concluded that despite Prussian and Russian national oppression, differences in the level of economic development of specific Polish territories, rebuilt and independent Poland must constitute a political, ethnic and socio-economic unity.¹²⁸ He did not doubt that Poles were capable of organizing their economy. In one of his articles he rightly noticed that Poles had won their struggle for land with the German Colonization Commission in Pomerania and Wielkopolska.¹²⁹ Polish intellectuals, living in Stockholm in 1917 and 1918, realized that settlement of relations with Germany would be one of the most complex problems in the Polish state system to be formed.¹³⁰ It was also emphasized that the so-called Prussian Poles must constitute an integral part of the Polish state.¹³¹ It was believed that Poland could not exist, politically, nationally or economically, without access to sea. The need to annex Gdańsk to Poland was speculated. At the same time, knowledge of the complicated ethnic situation in Gdańsk Pomerania, inhabited by both Poles and Germans, was common.¹³² Furthermore, independent Polish economy could not develop without the raw materials of formerly Prussian Silesia.

¹²⁵ Information: "Polsk bulletin", 1918, 4-5, pp. 17-18. The bulletin carried current economic information from Poland (Ekonomiska Meddelanden).

¹²⁶ Pomian's article in "Svenska Dagbladet", 4th August, 1919.

¹²⁷ L. Sawicki, Den polska nationsekonomiens geografiska förutsättningar, "Polsk bulletin", 1, 1918, pp. 13-15.

¹²⁸ J. Mokrzyński, Polen efter Wienkongressen, Under Preussen-oket, "Polsk bulletin", 12, 1918, pp. 3-6, 14-15.

¹²⁹ J. Mokrzyński, Kampen om jorden i Väst-Preussen och Posen, "Polsk bulletin", 10, 1918, pp. 4-6. The question of the struggle for land also attracted the interest of Swedish scholars: A. Lindquist, Där germaner och slaver mötas de sista årtiondennas oblodiga strid om jorden i öster, "Det nya Sverige", 1918, pp. 235-263 (detailed economic and political data).

¹³⁰ Cf., for example, Polacker och tyskar, "Polsk bulletin", 2-3, 1918, pp. 6-7.

¹³¹ Preussens Polacker för att enat Polen, "Polsk bulletin", 10, 1918, pp. 2-3.

¹³² J. Mokrzyński, Polens tillträde till havet, "Polsk bulletin", 10, 1918, pp. 6-9. It was suggested on one map that territories formerly annexed by Prussia, including Upper and Lower Silesia but without Western Pomerania and Lubuska Land (since the latter two were germanized), should also become part of Poland.

National issues especially worried the associates of the Information Office in Stockholm. Nationality problems of Eastern Galicia were also complicated in connection with an open conflict between Poland and the Ukraine. Extensive coverage to these questions was given in "Polsk bulletin". Complex religious and national problems of the Chełm Land and Podlasie were discussed in the same newspaper by Eugeniusz Romer.¹³³ Leon Wasilewski, a known expert on European nationality problems, was worried about the future of relations between Poland and Lithuania. The dramatic realia made renovation of the historical union impossible.¹³⁴ Let us add that in 1917–1918, the problems of the political status of Lithuania as a sovereign or union state were often discussed in the Lithuanian Office in Stockholm. Problems of education and culture in reborn Poland were discussed in "Polsk bulletin" on the inspiration of Dr S. Wędkiewicz.¹³⁵ Wędkiewicz was for a wider exchange of cultural values between Sweden and Poland. "Polsk Bulletin" also carried articles discussing problems related to the formation of the Polish army.¹³⁶

In autumn 1918, Polish intellectuals in Stockholm became interested in the difficult problem of the formation of Polish western border. They knew that the German press and public opinion were against annexation of Wielkopolska, Gdańsk Pomerania and Silesia by reborn Poland. German reactions to these issues were followed.¹³⁷ Stanisław Wędkiewicz, referring in "Polsk bulletin" F. Naumann's concept of Mitteleuropa, seeing its imperialist character, pointed out that Poland, situated in the Vistula basin, must also have its estuary with Gdańsk.¹³⁸ In an article published in this bulletin in May 1918, it was rightly ascertained that Polish borders, both eastern and western, must be optimal from the political, economic, and primarily strategic points of view.¹³⁹

In spring and summer 1918, "Polsk bulletin" carried more information on the activity of the State Council in Warsaw. However, doubts were expressed whether, under the conditions of German occupation, the complex and various problems of Poland could be solved.¹⁴⁰ Józef Mokrzyński, presenting economic and commercial interests of the Council, could not come to terms with the economic and government

¹³³ Till problemet polsk-ukrainsk (Frågan i Galizien), "Polsk bulletin", 11, 1918, p. 5. Also E. Romer, Nationaliteterne i Chelm och Podlachien, "Polsk bulletin", 2–3, 1918, pp. 7–11. Oskar Halecki, in one of his articles, also wrote in favour of the annexation of these lands to Poland (O. Halecki, Polens historiska rättigheter till Chelmlandet och Podlachien, "Polsk bulletin", 1, 1918, pp. 3–6.) By the same author, "Polsk bulletin", 12, 1918, pp. 15–19.

¹³⁴ Cf. Szlupas John (Jonas), Essay on the past, present, and future of Lithuania, Stockholm 1918, pp. 7–16 (relations with Poland). Also, L. Wasilewski, Polska frågan i historiska litauenområden, "Polsk bulletin", 12, 1918, pp. 19–20.

¹³⁵ Cf. Wędkiewicz's article in "Wiadomości polskie", 189–190, 1918; also "Polsk bulletin", 6, 1918, pp. 5, 7 (questions of Polish education and Warsaw University).

¹³⁶ For example, General Józef Dowbor Muśnicki, "Polsk bulletin", 1, 1918, p.13.

¹³⁷ Kampen om västra Polen, "Polsk bulletin", 21, 1918. A polemic with the German innuendo in "Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger" that Poles wanted to annex Eastern Prussia.

¹³⁸ "Polsk bulletin", 6, 1918, p. 7. Wędkiewicz polemized with the German concepts of Mitteleuropa (ibid., 12, 1918).

¹³⁹ Konungariket Polengränser ur strategisk synpunkt, "Polsk bulletin", 4–5, 1918, pp. 9–12.

¹⁴⁰ "Polsk bulletin", 7, 1918.

circles of Sweden. In 1917/1918, the Swedish authorities considerably relaxed political and economic contacts with Germany and were not willing to recognize the "Polish Kingdom", so much dependent on the Wilhelm Reich. In 1918, however, Stockholm showed greater interest in Polish questions. Formerly, this interest was limited to specific political and publicist circles in Sweden.

In 1917/1918, the group of politicians preoccupied with the Polish question, relaxed contacts with the League of Peoples Oppressed by Russia. Hermann Gummerus was more interested in problems of his native Finland which, on 6th December 1917, proclaimed independence, and in events in such countries as Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. At the beginning of 1918, however, he defended a view that the newly formed Baltic states should establish close cooperation. The Finnish politician regretted that Poland and the Ukraine were recognized only by the central states. The League continuously faced the difficult internal problems, especially socio-economic, of the Baltic states.¹⁴¹

On 25th March, 1918, representatives of Polish, Lithuanian, Finnish and Estonian activists met in the Polish Office in Stockholm to discuss the problem of a new conference of non-Russian states situated in Russia. Formation of a "joint provisional organ for the Baltic peoples" was suggested. At a conference, different forms of cooperation between small communities of the Baltic-Scandinavian region were proposed. Polish activist Malinowski emphasized an urgent need to make a thorough study of the tactics of political action employed in relations between small and great states.¹⁴² During the meetings, Poles felt that their complex political problems were of lesser significance to, for example, Estonians or Finns (an idea of a federation state of Estonia and Finland was born).¹⁴³ Owing to the initiative of H. Gummerus and F. von der Ropp, the East-European Union for the Establishment of the League of Nations (*Der Osteuropäische Verband zur Begründung des Völkerbundes*) was founded in October 1918. Polish conservative politicians, for example, Prince F. Radziwiłł and Count Rzyppowski, contributed to the work of the Union. At the time, the idea was to establish a federation of "states and peoples" which were formerly part of the Russian state and which were to form a kind of League. The League would especially help the communities which, as yet, had not gained independence, and which aimed to solve their political future (for example, a peaceful solution to border problems).¹⁴⁴ The League did not, however, develop its activity. At the same time, in autumn 1918, Poles ceased their activity in the League of Peoples Oppressed by Russia as, under new political conditions in Russia, the activity of the League was very restricted. In the second half of 1918, German influence in Sweden was considerably minimized, while that of states of the Entente was extended, in view of new economic and political realities of the foreign policy of Stockholm.¹⁴⁵ J. Piłsudski's assumption of power and the proclamation of

¹⁴¹ S. Zetterberg, *op.cit.*, pp. 245-246.

¹⁴² VA-Helsinki, H. Gummerus's Heritage, minutes of the meeting (25th March, 1918).

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, H. Gummerus's Heritage, (his correspondence with v. d. Ropp).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, H. Gummerus, Diary, 13th, 14th, 15th October, 1918. Also: S. Zetterberg, *op.cit.*, pp. 253-255.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Koblik S., *Sweden: The neutral Sweden and the Western Powers (1917-1918)*, Lund 1972.

a sovereign Polish state on 11th November 1918 was welcomed with great satisfaction by Polish political circles in Stockholm and by the Swedish press and public opinion.¹⁴⁶ The Swedish cabinet was interested in problems of reborn Poland, although it recognized its independence as late as on 3rd June 1919. On 22nd July 1919, Jan Zygmunt Michałowski, extra-ordinary deputy and minister plenipotentiary was accredited in Stockholm.¹⁴⁷ Poland and Sweden, as two independent states on the Baltic, became partners with full rights in various political, economic and cultural contacts.

The following conclusions can be drawn on the basis of what has been said thus far:

- the Polish question, in addition to the Finnish and Russian questions, seen in the context of problems of East Europe, was of the greatest political interest to the Swedes of World War I. The Polish socio-economic, cultural and political reality was closest to Swedish activists who collaborated with Germany. Among them, there were such politicians, publicists, scholars, and writers as H. Hjärne, F. Böök, S. Hedin, R. Kjellén. To them, Russia was the source and nest of all political, national, social and economic crises in Eastern Europe. It made the solution to the Polish question very difficult. The latter was seen in the wider context of aspirations of the Baltic "oppressed peoples" (for example, Finns, Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians). Interest in the Polish question among Swedes was stimulated as early as 1915. A faction of Swedish advocates of cooperation with the Entente (for example, social democrats) was only marginally interested in Polish problems.
- Swedes of the rank of Alfred Jensen, Anton Nyström or Carl Lindhagen openly demanded that the right to independent state existence be granted to Poles.
- Stockholm was one of the centres of pro-German activity of the League of Peoples Oppressed by Russia, and Michał Lempicki, exceptionally active in Swedish political circles, was its president. In press and information propaganda and at international conferences (for example, in June 1916 in Lausanne), Polish aspirations for independence were consistently supported as long as they were not in conflict with the interests of Germany (therefore the so-called Act of 5th November was backed up). Dr Stanisław Wędkiewicz was an exceptionally active associate of the League in 1916-1918.
- Information Office "Polonia" with its own newspaper "Polsk bulletin", as well as the Polish Economic Society, which researched the economic potential of future Poland, were active in Stockholm in 1917 and 1918.

¹⁴⁶ Den polska staten—ett faktum, "Polsk bulletin", 9, 1918, pp. 2-3.

¹⁴⁷ J. Szymański, *op.cit.*, pp. 80-81.

¹⁴⁸ On Sweden in World War I: T. Gihl, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia*, vol.IV, 1914-1919, Stockholm 1951, W.M. Carlgren, *Neutralität oder Allianz*, Stockholm 1962, N.V.Franzen, *Under stormen. Sverige under första världskriget*, Stockholm 1986.

¹⁴⁹ T. Gihl, *op.cit.*, p.90ff. N.V.Franzen, *op.cit.*, *passim*.

- The political and publicist circles of Sweden were more interested in Polish problems than the Swedish government which recognized sovereign Poland as late as on 3rd June 1919.

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